

HANDY-VOLUME SERIES.

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HAPPY THOUGHTS.

BY

F. C. BURNAND.

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PREFACE.

WHETHER it will be a Happy Thought to write a preface to any book, big or little, is a general question which will, I suppose, remain for ever undecided: the jury, composed partly of writers, partly of readers, being unable to agree upon a unanimous verdict. It seems to me that there is the same difficulty as to Apologies. Nor does it facilitate the matter to write a preface which shall be an apology, or to call that an apology which ought simply to be a preface. Let me put it down then as a Happy Thought to call these few lines in advance an Introduction. An Introduction! But, ladies and gentlemen, for we have met before, you require no introduction—Mr. *Punch* has already appeared as the Third party. We (not the editorial “we,” but you and I, my good readers, confidentially, if it so please you) will, then, consider the introduction over; we know one another, and I am inclined to be communicative. These Happy Thoughts were commenced by the side of a deli-

cious river (from which position I was driven by perpetual barge-ropes and horses), were continued in the lovely gardens of two counties (one being less famous for wasps and hornets than the other), and in the course of a year grew gradually into their present shape.

Impressed by the river and the gardens, I had originally noted down my jottings as "Happy Thoughts collected in Happy Hours," and intended merely a few chapters of observations, not on men but insects, a method of teaching by illustration of which I need hardly say I am not the originator, who indeed had fair warrant for noting it down as a Very Happy Thought. Somewhere about the third or fourth chapter this idea was abandoned entirely.

You see, I had as it were made my balloon, filled it with gas, labelled it as just stated, and then wanted it to go in one particular direction. Not a bit of it. My insect arrangements held the car down to the earth with strongest cable power, and, as the wind wouldn't change, I determined, as a Happy Thought, to accommodate myself to the wind. Having settled, therefore, my probable course and the most likely point of descent, I cut my ropes, and away we went, sailing easily until my first Haven was in view. Which first Haven is the Finis of this series of Happy Thoughts; for it will be seen that these Happy Thoughts end with the Happy Thinker's marriage. Is there any covert satire in this? On my