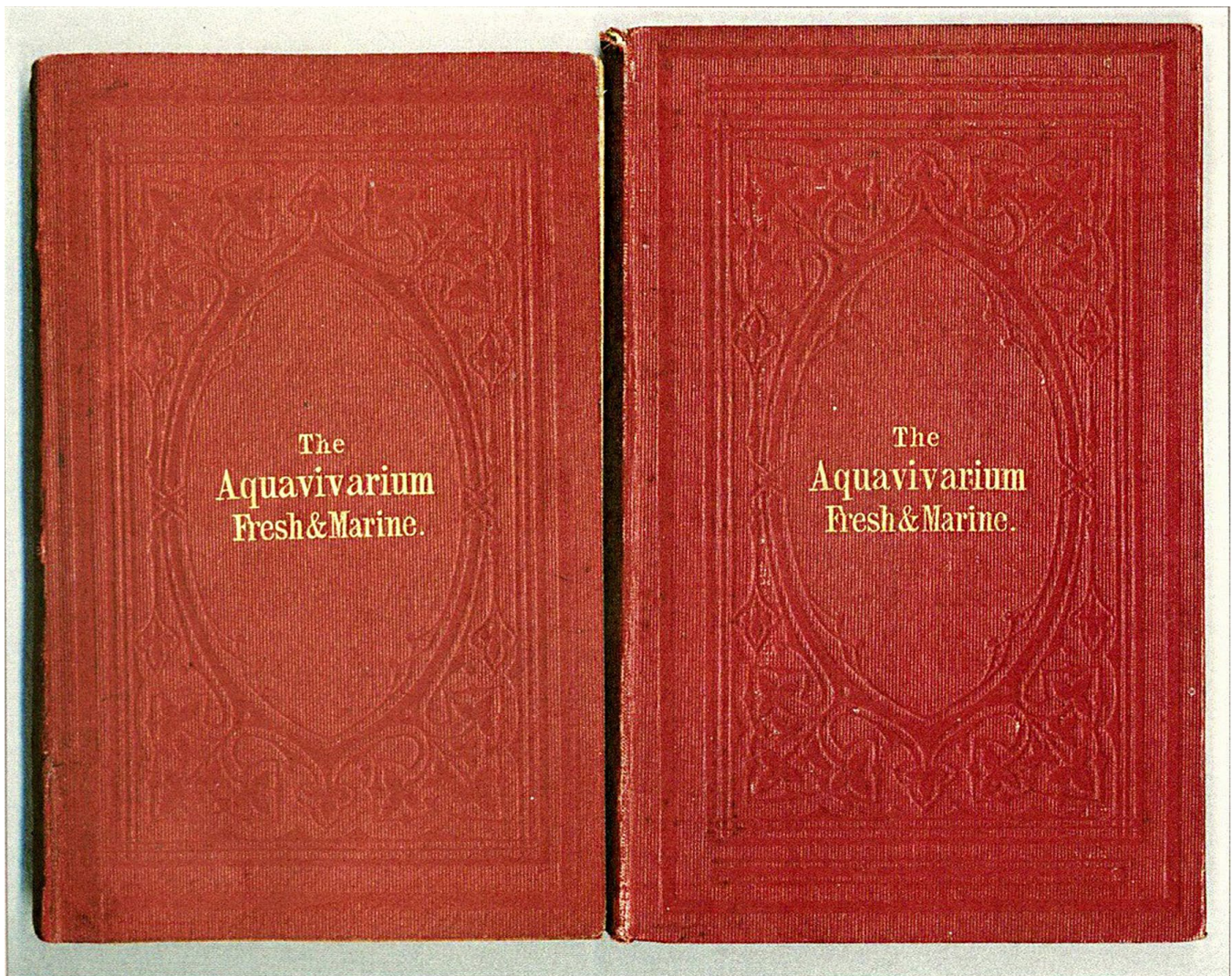




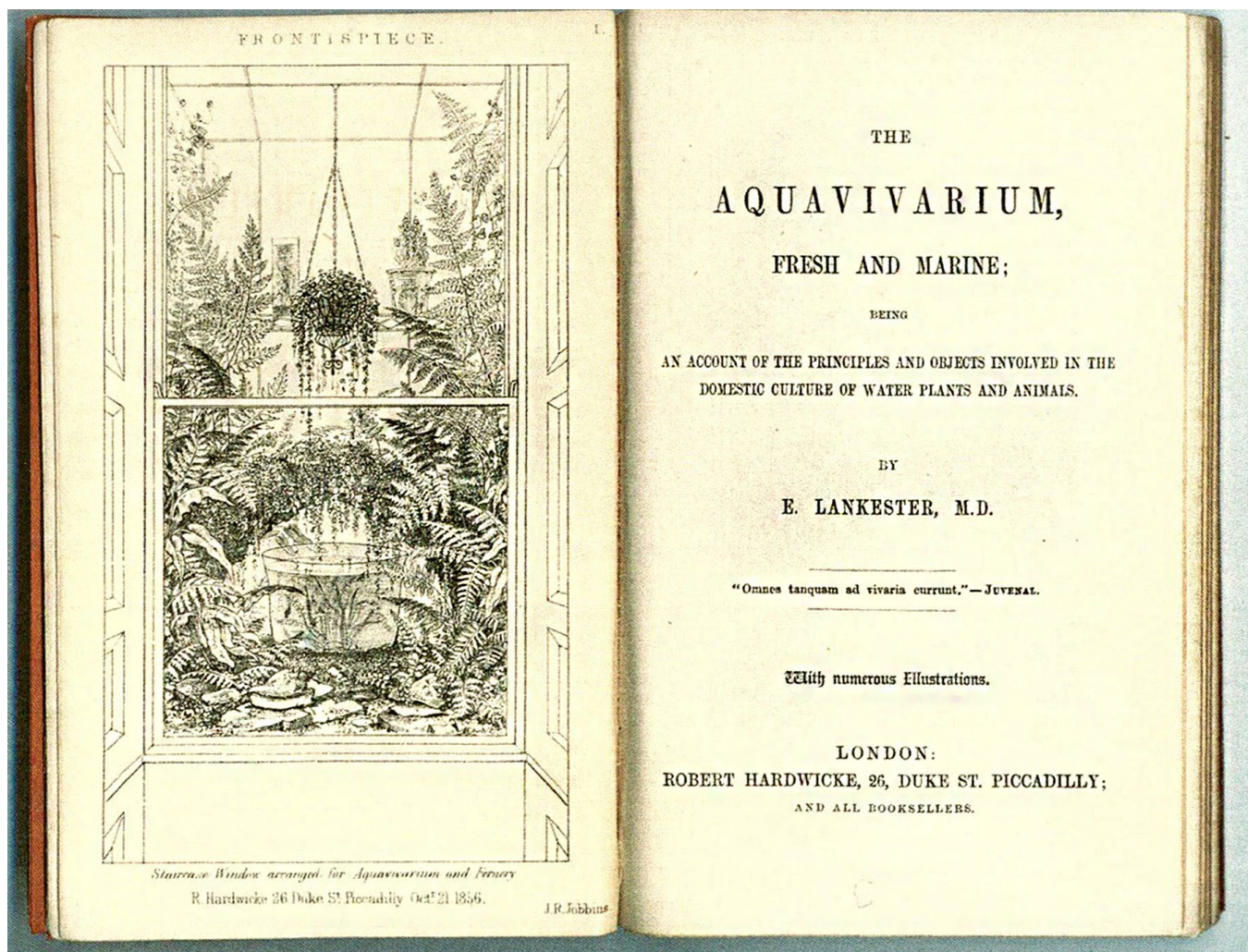
Vivarium Literature: Historical Aquarium and Terrarium Books

By Frank Fritzlen



The Early Days of Vivaristic Literature Abroad (Part 2)

In 1856, several remarkable aquarium books were published in England, and I would first like to introduce the one by Edwin Lankester (1814-1874). It was published by Hardwicke in London under the lengthy and somewhat cumbersome title: *"The Aqua Vivarium, Fresh and Marine, Being an Account of the Principles and Objects Involved in the Domestic Culture of Water Plants and Animals."*



The book is in a small octavo format (16 x 10.5 cm or 17 x 11 cm) and consists of 34 text woodcuts, with a total of 158 pages. It is illustrated with numerous wood engravings. Two editions of the book exist, differing as follows:

- Smaller format: Bound in a flexible red linen cover with a gold-embossed title on the front and edges. Both plates and text illustrations are uncolored.
- Slightly larger format: Bound in a solid red linen cover with gold-embossed spine and front title, as well as gilt edges. The spine includes the gold-embossed label "colored." Both the plates and all text illustrations in this edition are hand-colored.

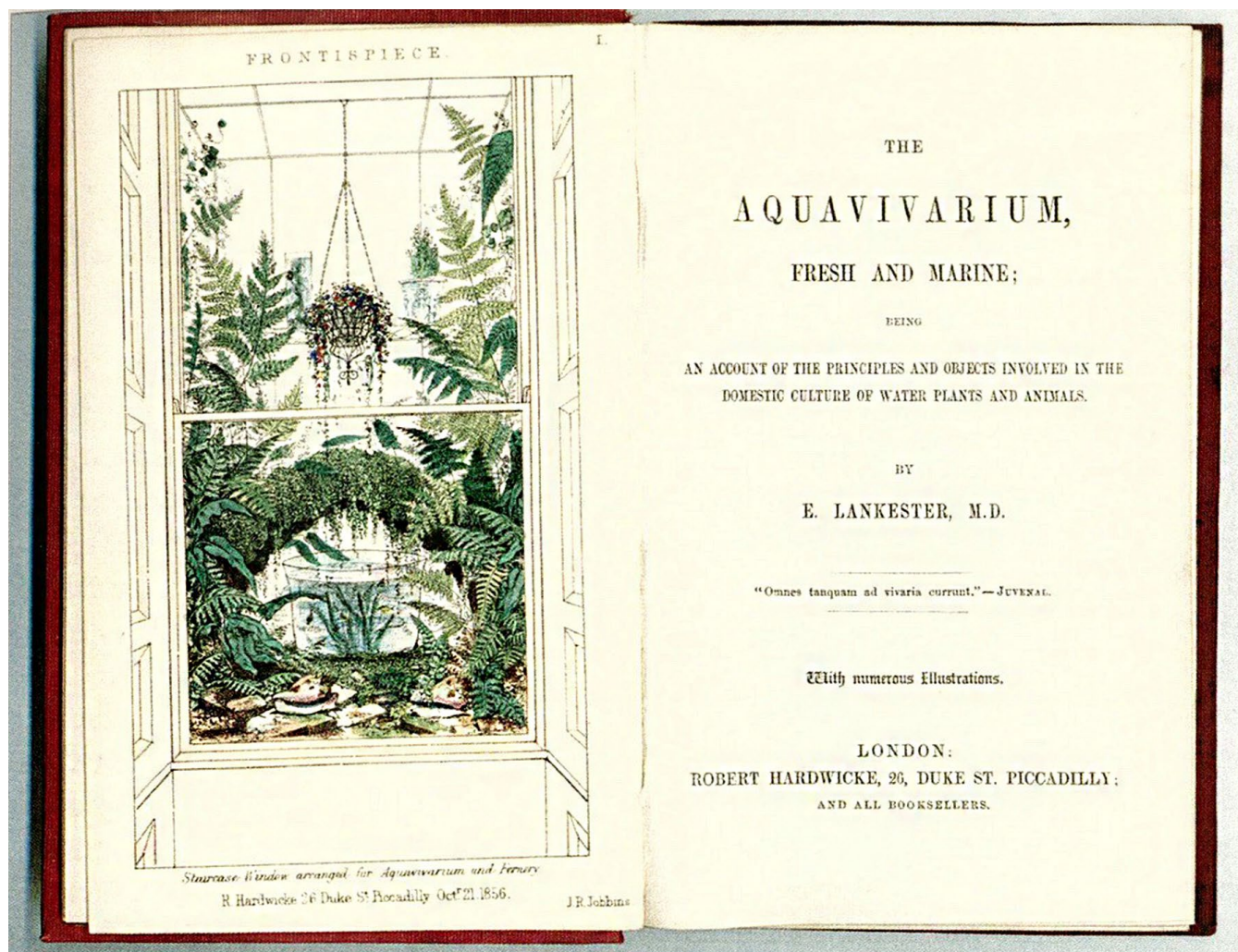
Before publishing this book, Lankester contributed an article on the "*Aqua Vivarium*" for the "*English Cyclopaedia*" -- a conversational encyclopedia published in 23 volumes between 1854 and 1862. This encyclopedia was quite popular at the time, but it ultimately could not compete with the overwhelming dominance of the "*Encyclopedia Britannica*."

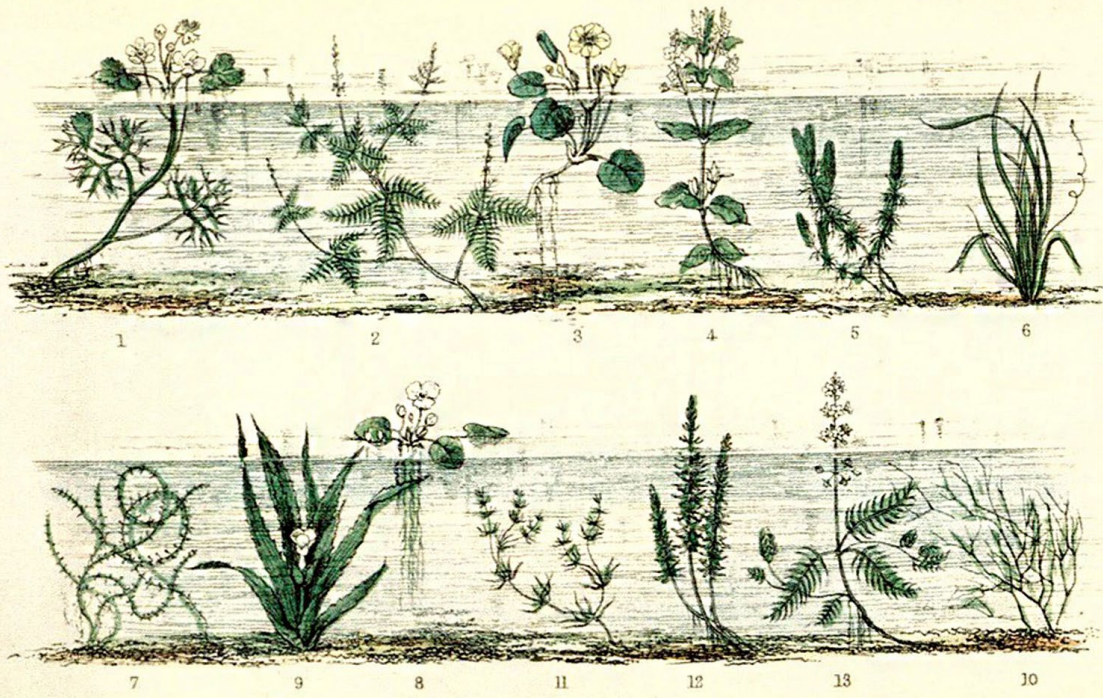
In the book's preface, Lankester writes that the positive reception of his encyclopedia article, along with numerous requests to make the subject more accessible in a detailed and extensive format, prompted him to write the book.

Unlike its predecessor, "*The Aquarium*" by Gosse -- commonly considered the first aquarium book worldwide -- Lankester's "*Aqua Vivarium*" is entirely focused on aquariums. Gosse's work, by comparison, primarily deals with marine fauna and flora, dedicating only one chapter to the aquarium.

I personally regard "*The Aqua Vivarium*" as the better aquarium book and would not have hesitated to recommend it as an introductory text to any beginner interested in aquaristics at the time. Unfortunately, it was published in a small print run and is now almost impossible to find.

The uncolored edition is already very rare, while the hand-colored version ranks among the greatest rarities in early aquarium literature. This makes it a highly sought-after collector's item for enthusiasts of historical aquaristic books.





R. Hardwicke 26 Duke St Piccadilly Oct 21. 1856.

J.R. Jobbins.

their tails continue (Fig. 1), and although they lose their gills, they come to the surface of the water to breathe.



FIG. 1.

We have two kinds of Newts, or Efts, in Great Britain. The COMMON SMOOTH NEWT, EFT, or EVER (*Lissotriton punctatus*), is the most frequent of the two. There is scarcely a pond in Great Britain where they may not be found, and they are everywhere regarded by school-boys as legitimate prey.

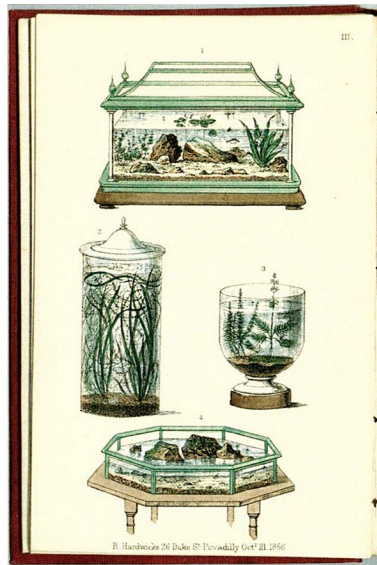


FIG. 2.

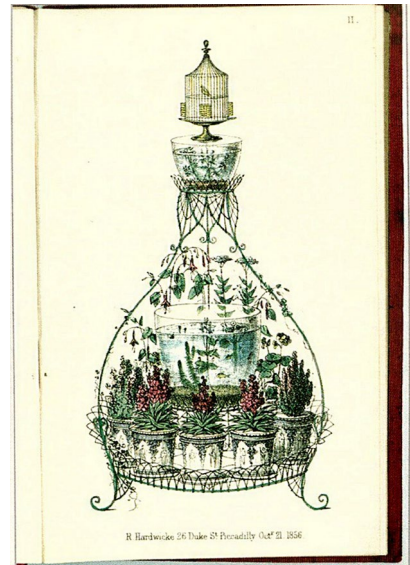
Although frequently thought to be poisonous, they are perfectly harmless, and may be handled with impunity. The engravings, Figs. 2 and 3, represent the male and female of this species. In the spring



FIG. 3.



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