

THE BIRDS, THE BEASTS, AND THE BAT

THERE was once a big battle between the Birds and the Beasts.

Hesitating as to which to join, the Bat kept away from the contest and looked on till he thought the Beasts would win the day.

Then he went among them. When they saw him, they said, "But you are a Bird."

"No, indeed," said the Bat. "Look at my body covered with hair and at my mouth with its sharp teeth."

After a while, as the fight went on, the Birds began to have the best of it, and then away flew the Bat to their side. "What Beast comes here?" said the Birds.

"I am not a Beast," said the Bat; "I am a Bird. Look at my wings. This is my battle as truly as it is yours."

But the Birds would have nothing to do with him. And to this day the Bat seems ashamed to show himself in the daytime but hides in lonely places, away from all other creatures, and only flits about noiselessly in the dark, when both Birds and Beasts are asleep.