

the same way. Upon the top of the wall, there were again the marks of badger; and some ravellings of a sack had caught on a briar.

Benjamin climbed over the wall, into a meadow. He found another mole trap newly set; he was still upon the track of Tommy Brock.

It was getting late in the afternoon.

Other rabbits were coming out to enjoy the evening air. One of them in a blue coat by himself, was busily hunting for dandelions.--"Cousin Peter! Peter Rabbit, Peter Rabbit!" shouted Benjamin Bunny.

The blue coated rabbit sat up with pricked ears--

"Whatever is the matter, Cousin Benjamin? Is it a cat? or John Stoat Ferret?"

"No, no, no! He's bagged my family--Tommy Brock--in a sack --have you seen him?"

"Tommy Brock? how many, Cousin Benjamin?"

**"Seven, Cousin Peter, and all of them twins! Did he come this way? Please tell me quick!"**

**"Yes, yes; not ten minutes since . . . he said they were caterpillars; I did think they were kicking rather hard, for caterpillars."**

**"Which way? which way has he gone, Cousin Peter?"**

**"He had a sack with something 'live in it; I watched him set a mole trap. Let me use my mind, Cousin Benjamin; tell me from the beginning." Benjamin did so.**

**"My Uncle Bouncer has displayed a lamentable want of discretion for his years;" said Peter reflectively, "but there are two hopeful circumstances. Your family is alive and kicking; and Tommy Brock has had refreshment. He will probably go to sleep, and keep them for breakfast." "Which way?"**

**"Cousin Benjamin, compose yourself. I know very well which way. Because Mr. Tod was at home in**

the stick-house he has gone to Mr. Tod's other house, at the top of Bull Banks. I partly know, because he offered to leave any message at Sister Cottontail's; he said he would be passing." (Cottontail had married a black rabbit, and gone to live on the hill).

Peter hid his dandelions, and accompanied the afflicted parent, who was all of a twitter. They crossed several fields and began to climb the hill; the tracks of Tommy Brock were plainly to be seen. He seemed to have put down the sack every dozen yards, to rest.

"He must be very puffed; we are close behind him, by the scent. What a nasty person!" said Peter. The sunshine was still warm and slanting on the hill pastures. Half way up, Cottontail was sitting in her doorway, with four or five half-grown little rabbits playing about her; one black and the others brown. Cottontail had seen Tommy Brock

passing in the distance. Asked whether her husband was at home she replied that Tommy Brock had rested twice while she watched him.

He had nodded, and pointed to the sack, and seemed doubled up with

laughing.--"Come away, Peter;

he will be cooking them; come

quicker!" said Benjamin Bunny.

They climbed up and up;--"He

was at home; I saw his black ears

peeping out of the hole." "They

live too near the rocks to quarrel

with their neighbours. Come on

Cousin Benjamin!"

When they came near the wood

at the top of Bull Banks, they went

cautiously. The trees grew amongst

heaped up rocks; and there, beneath

a crag--Mr. Tod had made one of

his homes. It was at the top of a

steep bank; the rocks and bushes

overhung it. The rabbits crept up

carefully, listening and peeping.

This house was something

between a cave, a prison, and a tumble-

down pig-stye. There was a strong door, which was shut and locked. The setting sun made the window panes glow like red flame; but the kitchen fire was not alight. It was neatly laid with dry sticks, as the rabbits could see, when they peeped through the window.

Benjamin sighed with relief.

But there were preparations upon the kitchen table which made him shudder. There was an immense empty pie-dish of blue willow pattern, and a large carving knife and fork, and a chopper.

At the other end of the table was a partly unfolded tablecloth, a plate, a tumbler, a knife and fork, salt-cellar, mustard and a chair--in short, preparations for one person's supper. No person was to be seen, and no young rabbits. The kitchen was

**A partially unfolded tablecloth, an empty pie-dish, a large carving knife and fork, a chopper, a plate, a tumbler, a knife and fork, salt-cellar, mustard, and a chair set for one person's supper.**

