

GREAT BIG TOY BOOKS.

CHILDREN IN THE WOOD,
A STORY OF THE OLDEN TIME.



FISHER & BROTHER,

No. 12 North Sixth Street, Philadelphia;
64 Baltimore Street, Baltimore.

THE CHILDREN IN THE WOOD.



There lived in Norfork a great many years ago, an old gentleman and his wife, who had two children, a boy and a girl named William and Jane. These little children were very kind to each other, and were ever happy in each other's company. Their father and mother were very much pleased to find their little children whom they loved, so much attached to each other, as all children should be, and they hoped that such attachment would never have an end, but grow stronger, and stronger, as they grew in years.



One day the father was called away on business, and was compelled to stay for a short time; while he was absent he was attacked with a very severe cold, which caused him to return. He soon recovered, but his health continued to be impaired until a severe fever set in. He grew worse daily, and his wife also took sick. Both their lives were despaired of. His brother hearing of their sickness, hastened to the house. Before they expired, they called their young children to the bed side and kissed them, and after confiding them to the care of their uncle, the good old couple died.



The children who were taken to the house of their uncle after the funeral had terminated, still loved each other, with as much child ardor as before. The uncle received the will from the dying father, in which sufficient wealth was bequeathed them to keep them above poverty during their lives, and in which he also was not forgotten.

Ah! sad is the lot of those young children whom Heaven may in its wisdom be pleased to leave parentless. The troubles of life come to them before even its spring has yet opened in full glory upon them. They are stripped of hope even when that hope should be brightest!



While they lived with their uncle, their manners daily made friends for them. They had also commenced to read, and so attentive were they, that their teacher liked them very much, and praised them to every person who enquired about them. When they played in the house it was at some nice gentle amusement, that could not annoy any one. They loved each other, and it was in loving and enjoying each other's company they passed the time, which they had not to devote to their books.

My little reader won't you be,
A meek obedient child;
Like Jane and William learn to see,
The joy of patience mild.

Pray unto God by day and night,
For He has placed you here;
And you should love him with delight,
That you may nothing fear.

Oh love Him now, and He will guide
You from all danger free;
On earth He'll e'er be by your side,
In heaven you'll with Him be.

Love your dear sister and your brother,
And join with them in prayer;
And bless your father and your mother,
For their undying care.

'Twas this that made God love so well,
Young William and young Jane,
That in their hearts He chose to dwell;
And cheered them in their pain.

He was to them when all were gone,
A parent true and good;
And He was their true friend alone,
When they lay in the wood.

And He will do the same for you,
If you will bless his name,
And do for Him whate'er you do,—
And you may from Him claim

That tender care which He bestows,
On children who are good;
To aid you when in bondage close,
You lie in sin's dark wood.

Fear sin, because it is the foe,
Which haunts us all through life;
Reducing us to darkest woe,
And brings us pain and strife.

It makes us love the world, and all
The things that it contains;
It worked our great forefather's fall,
And brought us fears and pains.

Fear sin,—it has no bliss, no joy,
No lasting good for men;
Its object is but to destroy,
And make us fall, and fall again.

For us sin put on the serpent's shape,
And in the garden fair
The death he never could escape,
Planted forever there.

In all your actions never cease,
To hate with all your strength and might
The fiend that robs you of your peace,
And mingles ruin with delight.

With prayer o'ercome his crafty smiles,
And spurn the charms he always shows;
Each one with guilt your soul defiles,
And death and sorrow from it flows.

Then fear this sin, 'tis but the smile
The sky puts on when storms are near;
'Tis full of darkest, deepest wile,
Though bright its form may now appear.

And God will bless you with his love,
And make you happy here below;
To fit you for his home above,
Where none but worthy people go.



They had lived with their uncle happily for about a year. At length the uncle began to consider that he would be far richer if he had their property. He forgot the vow which he had made to their dying father, and his mind yielded to a wicked design. He found two bad men, whom he bribed, for a large sum of money, to entice them into a lonesome wood, for the purpose of killing them. They knew that the innocent victims who were to be so foully murdered would have no suspicion of their vile plot, and they could lead them to whatever spot they pleased.



The ruffians accordingly led them to a certain place, where a carriage was waiting to carry them to the wood.

One of them acted as coachman, and the other sat inside between poor little William and Jane, and heard their innocent conversation. Their simple language was full of appealing eloquence, and it touched the wretched man's heart, so that he repented having consented to murder them, and determined to save them if possible. They at length arrived at the wood, and the children were taken out of the coach, and told by the ruffians to play about, while they were preparing to kill them.



Now when the ruffian who had driven the carriage was about to commence the assassination, the other prevented him. A desperate fight took place between them, and the man who was trying to save the children struck the other so forcibly that he fell dead. The little children gazed on them with great terror. They clung closely together, and heeded not the sports which had amused them but a short time before. They trembled not for their own lives, for they saw not their danger, but the looks and acts of the ruffians who had brought them to that wild place shed fear over their hearts, and they grew pale, and wept, and wished they were at home.



The man spoke very kindly to them when the fight had ended, and they asked him for something to eat. He led them to a place where there were many blackberries and told them to pick them until his return from the next town, where he was going to get bread. Little William, like a good boy, took his weeping sister by the hand, and led her through the wood, giving her at the same time all the blackberries he could reach.

They wandered about in this way until the evening star looked out in Heaven. At length they grew so tired and weak that they lay down in each other's arms and fell asleep.

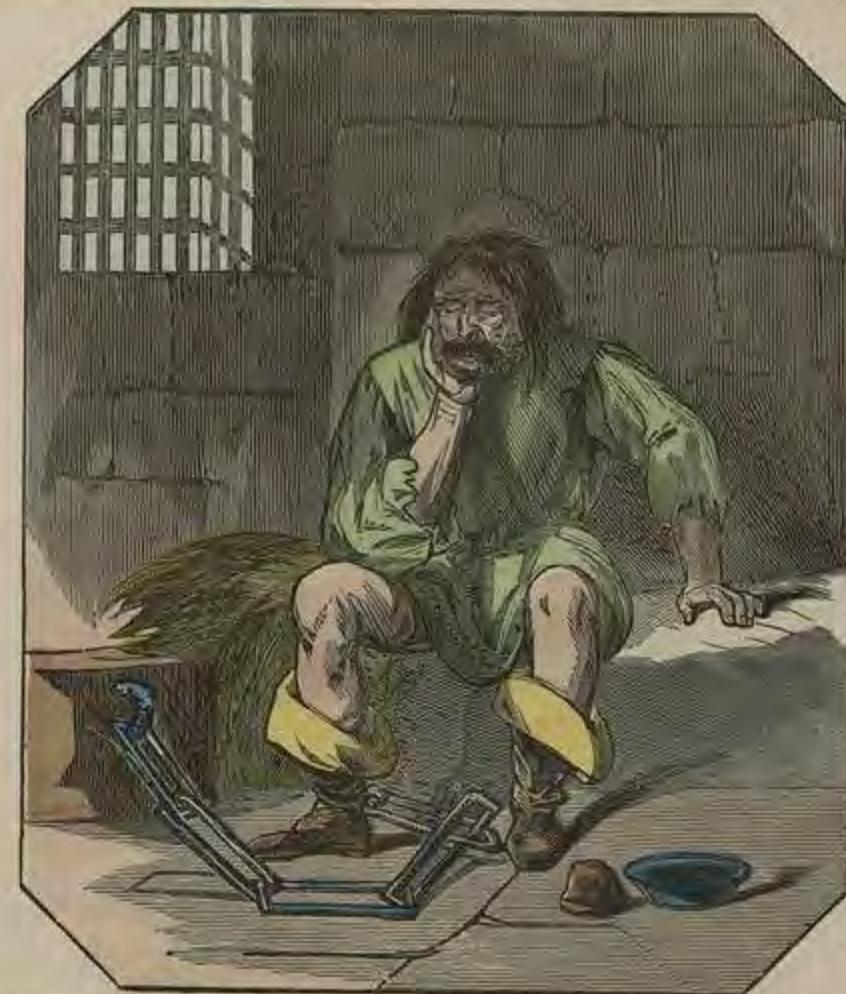


As the evening grew later, the birds returned to their homes. Many of them beheld the children sleeping on the cold ground, and with an instinct approaching to knowledge, came with leaves in their mouths to scatter over the unsheltered bodies of that helpless brother and sister.

Night at length spread its gloom around—the stars twinkled in the sky. The man had not yet returned to soothe the anguish of the little sufferers. Alas! their's was a sad fate—so young, so fair, so innocent. That Heaven that is ever ready to come to the assistance of the vilest sinner, we trust will surely look down on innocence with a pitying smile, and help them out of this desolate place.



They had not been long in their cold bed, before Heaven sent them relief. A poor old woman who had come out into the wood to gather sticks found them. She awoke them and took them to her house. As she was leaving the wood the man came; for his conscience pressed him to return and save them. When he saw the woman with them he passed by and said nothing. This good woman did all she could, but as she was poor she placed them in a charitable Institution, which was near to where she lived. The robber staid a few days in the neighborhood to see what would become of them. And then, sad to say returned to his old bad habit of life.



Wickedness is always sure of its reward, so here you see this wicked man is at last in prison. He was arrested for robbery, and sentenced to death. After his sentence had been pronounced, he related the whole story about the children in the court house. The Judge and all who were present felt great pity for them. He also told them that the orphans had been taken out of the wood by an old woman, and placed by her in a Parish school. He was hanged;—and soon after the uncle died in prison, having been sent there for debt. The children whom he considered dead, became heirs to his encumbered estate, his own sons having been drowned in a terrible storm, while on a voyage to the coast of Spain.

To God, oh! let us give our hearts,
And love to prize what he imparts,
His eye is always watching o'er us,
His home he tells us is before us;
The very home in which He lives,
To sinning man He freely gives,
Oh what a glory to be there,
The bliss of Heaven e'er to share.

Like Jane and William, we are born,—
Like them were pure in life's young morn;
And if like them we love to be
True children of the Deity,
In heart, and soul, in act and deed,
To gain his love, is all we need,—
To have Him with us everywhere,
Our hope in pleasure and despair.

He knows our strength—He asks no more,
Than that our hearts to Heav'n should soar,
And if they mount in thought to Him
From sin's abyss so dread, so dim,
He'll greet us with a heavenly smile
That sin or sorrow can't defile,
And we'll grow purer every hour
Though earth's dark storms around us lower.

Oh! let us love Him, and though all
The elements should on us fall
Their wrath will be as harmless
As the tree in the wilderness,
When poised above the serpent's head
The fiend that raised it fell and bled,
The victim of that bloody doom
Destined to make the children's tomb,
And bring on earth a darker gloom.

Oh, little children ne'er forget
That you shall be in Heav'n yet,
If you but serve your God as well
As Holy Writ doth show and tell;
And He will aid you if you try
To gain that holy home on high,
Which is the home of all who serve him—
Himself the host, if we deserve him.

But ah! too frail are mortal kind,
They shun the bliss for them designed,
They seek the pleasure here below,
Which brings them dread eternal woe,
Which plunges them in misery,
Where hope or comfort ne'er can be,
Where peace, nor light can ever come,
To change the awful fiery gloom.

Alas! how sad it is to see
Men seek such an eternity,
So full of wretchedness and pain,
While God is calling them in vain,
And pointing out the road to come
Unto his bright—his blessed home,—
The home which language cannot speak
Asylum of the poor and weak.

Oh! children seek that mansion bright,
Where summer knows no change, no night,
Where nothing but delight abounds,
Where naught but melody resounds;
That home is Heaven, the home of bliss—
A world worth myriad worlds like this;
The home of God—the world of light,—
Where all is pure and blest delight.



And now my dear, young reader, we may behold a good act rewarded. The children were given into the charge of the good old woman who saved them. She lived with them ever after, and they treated her with the greatest kindness and love. When she could no more leave her bed,—when age had taken away her strength—Jane was ever by her bed-side to comfort her, and to read papers for her. She loved her as a mother, and as the mother, who, had not only saved her own life, but her brother's also. Such was the fate of these two loving children; if their young days were made miserable by the treachery of their uncle, their future lives were crowned with comfort and happiness.

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