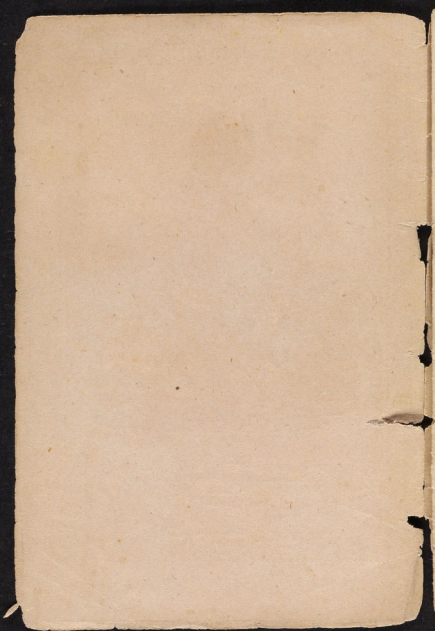


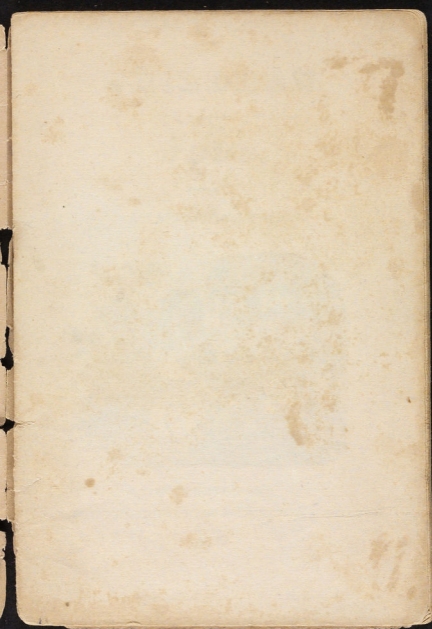
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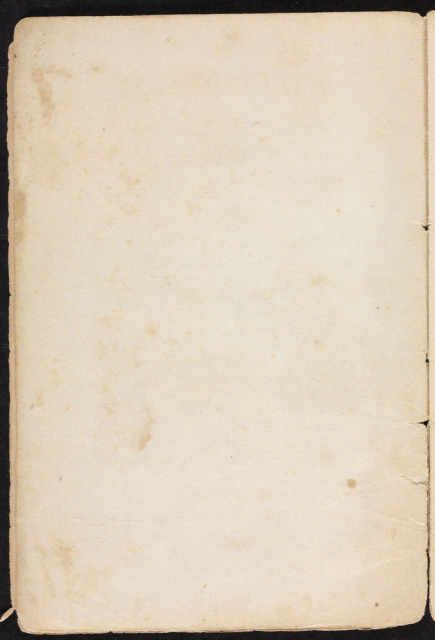


COOPERSTOWN:
Printed and sold by H. & E. Phinney.

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THE
CHILDREN
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—
AN AFFECTING TALE.



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1842

THE

WORLD



BY J. W. WOOD

CHILDREN IN THE WOOD.

A GOOD little boy, whose name was Edgar, and his sister, whose name was Jane, were the children of a gentleman and lady who lived in Norfolk. Edgar and Jane were often told, that happiness depended on goodness; and that to be good and happy, they must love each other, and never quarrel.—Admired by every body for their dutiful behaviour to their father and mother, and their affection to each other; they were still in their infant years, when they had the misfortune of losing their kind parents.

Was not this a sad thing for little Edgar and Jane? Indeed it was, and although very young, they were exceedingly grieved when their poor sick father and mother were dying. When together in the parlour, one morning, during their parents' illness, Jane said to her brother:

JANE. Edgar, will you come and play with me?

EDGAR. Yes, sister, but what shall we play at? we must not make a noise while papa and mamma are ill.

JANE. Well, then, I will put away my dulcimer and my ball, and make Dolly a frock and a cap.

EDGAR. And here, sister, is the book my aunt gave me: while you work, I will read you a story.

JANE. Oh, thank you, brother; I shall like to hear the story about the Little Girl and the Eagle.



EDGAR. Oh, Jane, you have heard that one a great many times. I will read to you about the Boy and the Robin. Shall I, sister?

JANE. Yes, brother.

EDGAR. Very well: now listen to

THE BOY AND THE ROBIN,

An amusing Story.

There was once a little boy, named Charles, who was very fond of birds, and because he was good and diligent at school, his father bought him a pretty canary bird, that could sing delightfully, and a bullfinch that could both talk and sing so well, that he amused all the company who came to the house. Being great favourites, they were kept in the parlour in fine gilt cages. At dawn of day, they began to warble. This sweet music always waked Charles, who was obliged to rise early to attend school. It was now no longer necessary to ring the bell, which summoned Charles to his duty; the pretty warblers et nim know, that he must waste no more time in bed.—School was a mile distant; so, in the summer time,

he left home at five o'clock in the morning, and in winter at seven. It was cold, frosty weather, when Charles was trudging across the fields, with his satchel on his back.—

The ground was all covered with snow, and the trees and the hedges were so white, that the birds hid themselves in the hedges, and if they ventured out to seek for food, the sportsman's gun stopped their flight, and put an end to the life of these harmless little creatures. Charles was very sorry to see them killed, and said, that he would never amuse himself with such a cruel diversion. Well, as Charles was going across the fields to school, a Robin Redbreast flew out of the hedge, and perched upon his shoulder, then it hopped after him until he came to the stile. Charles had in his pocket some gingerbread, that was given him by his mother, so he broke it into very small pieces, and fed this pretty, sociable bird. He was unwilling to leave his little companion; but, as his master had desired him always to come early to school, he could not stop to play in the field. So he made haste to school and learned his lesson, and when he returned home, he begged of his father to let him have a cage for the Robin; he said that he was sure he could catch it, it was so tame. But his father told him, that it would be cruel to confine it in a cage, and as it had sought protection of him during the inclement season, he must not deprive the poor thing of its liberty. The canary and bullfinch, he told him, had always been accustomed to confinement; for that reason if he gave them plenty of seed and water, they would live very happily in their fine gilt cages; but the pretty Robin will not like to be a prisoner. Charles then asked his father how he should take care of the Robin which had flown to him for protection? You may bring him hom

Charles, and let him fly in the great hall, but remember to feed him every day. Charles assured his father, that this he would never forget. With the expectation of meeting his sociable companion, he rose earlier than usual the next morning, although it was a very hard frost, and much snow had fallen in the night. In vain, however, he walked very slowly through the field, to look for Redbreast.— Charles returned home disappointed. It was too cold for Robin to venture out. The following morning, Charles went again to the field. After walking up and down two or three times, and peeping very often into the hedge, out flew Robin, and perched upon his hat.—Charles was very glad to see him again. Very gently he pulled off his hat, and took him in his hand, then gave him some crumbs of bread, which he had brought on purpose for him. Poor thing, it was so very hungry, that it soon eat up all the bread, for the weather was so cold, that it had nothing since Charles gave it the gingerbread. It lived very happily in the great hall all the winter, and Charles was delighted to hear its soft note, for he did not know that a Robin could sing. In the spring, when the leaves were on the trees and the meadows were covered with green, Robin Redbreast quitted his sheltered habitation, and winged his flight to the woods. Charles regretted the absence of his little friendly companion ; but, as he had the pleasure of seeing him in the field frequently, when he went to school, he hoped he might again afford him protection in the ensuing winter.

JANE. Go on, brother.

EDGAR. There is no more, Jane ; I have finished the story.

JANE. I am sorry that is the end. I should like to know if the Robin ever came back to Charles.

EDGAR. So should I. I love Robin Redbreast.

JANE. If Robin came here, we would give him some bread and some cake.

EDGAR. Oh, Jane, what pretty bird is that pecking at the window? I believe it is Redbreast.

JANE. Let us open the window, Edgar, and it will come in. Pretty creature, it seems very hungry.

EDGAR. I am afraid it will fly away, when we open the window.

JANE. We will open it very softly: oh! it is gone, we have frightened it!

EDGAR. Well, don't let us make a noise, Jane; perhaps it will come back presently.

JANE. I think I see it in that high tree.

EDGAR. Yes, it is coming: now it is in the bush. If I put the cake outside the window, I dare say it will return.

JANE. Here it is, brother; I am very glad.

EDGAR. Don't frighten it, sister; oh, how prettily it pecks! it pecks out of my hand.

JANE. And, brother, it eats too what I give it. It has almost pecked up all the cake.

EDGAR. Then I will get it some more.

JANE. Brother, brother, it is gone.

EDGAR. Oh, dear! Pretty Robin, I wish it would come and stay with me, as it did with Charles.

JANE. It will not; it is quite gone, brother; I see a great way off.

EDGAR. I am very sorry; I hope it will come again.

Here one of the servants, with tears in her eyes, came and told them, that their poor father and mother, who were dying, had sent for them up stairs.—They did not know what dying meant ; so they left the parlour, happy to go to their kind parents

The children on entering the room, ran to embrace them, and while they were proving the affection of their innocent hearts, they burst into tears, for they now saw their father and mother worse than ever ; very pale, and



hardly able to speak. “My dear children,” said the father, in a feeble voice, “I sent for you to receive my last blessing, as it is the will of Almighty God that I should shortly leave you. He is the only giver of all good ; pray to him night and morning for his protection.—This, my dear children, I have often told you ; but remember now, that I can never tell it to you again.”

His feeble voice was almost exhausted ; but pausing, he revived again and added, “When I am in my grave,

your uncle will take you home to his house ; you must then obey him as you do me, and I hope you will always be good and happy." He was quite tired with this exertion, for he had but a few minutes longer to live. Tenderly embracing them again and again, he bid them adieu, until they should meet in another world. Scarcely had he uttered these words, when his weeping infants beheld him close his eyes in death.—This gentleman's brother, the children's uncle, had come to visit him during his illness. He recommended the children to his care, telling him that he had no other friend on earth, and unless that he was good to his boy and girl, they might be greatly injured.—"You must," said he, "be father, mother, and uncle, all in one ; for I know not what will become of our dear children when we are dead and gone." Their mother then begged of him to be very kind to her sweet babes. "On you," said she, "dear brother, depends our children's happiness, or misery, in this world ; and God will reward you according as you act towards them."—With many tears she bid Edgar and Jane farewell ; clasping them in her arms, and commending them to the protection of the Almighty, she reclined her head on the pillow, repeating "God bless you ! God bless you, my dear children !" After saying this, she was never heard to speak again.

The uncle had promised his brother and sister he would do all they had asked of him ; but how faithfully he kept his promise will be seen by and by. He lived in a fine house, surrounded with a large park, a great many miles distant ; so he ordered his servants to prepare the carriage, that he might take home these little orphans to his elegant mansion. In the mean time he opened his brother's will,

which made him the guardian of the property left for Edgar and Jane. Edgar was to inherit three hundred pounds a year when he was of age ; Jane's portion was five hundred pounds in gold, to be given her on the day she was married ; but in case they died while infants, their uncle was to take possession of the whole fortune.

All the neighbours were much grieved at the death of this gentleman and lady. The rich regretted the loss of two worthy friends, whose society was always pleasing and agreeable ; while the poor lamented them, because that they were deprived of kind and benevolent protectors.

The little orphans were still weeping, when their uncle sent for them, and bid them cry no more. They remembered their father's dying words, which charged them to obey their uncle, so they wiped away their tears, though they remained very dull for a long time afterwards.

The carriage was now ready to convey them to their uncle's seat, and with heavy hearts they left their native home.

After travelling about ten miles, they stopped at a small village for the coachman to refresh his horses. As Edgar and Jane were regretting the loss of their good parents, they had not been so cheerful on their journey as usual, so their uncle determined to stay here about an hour, and strive to amuse them by walking about. It was a very pretty place, and being the residence of several wealthy families, was adorned with elegant houses, and grounds beautifully laid out.—On alighting from the carriage, they inquired the name of this delightful village. It was the Vale of Content. The beauty and good order of it were really remarkable ; and notwithstanding the number of poor cottages, there was not one beggar or idle person.



Now, how do you think this happened?—Because that the rich took care to assist the poor, and see that their children were well employed as soon as they were able to work, and this was the reason that the inhabitants were all happy, and that they called their residence the Vale of Content. A few years since, a large commodious work-house was erected for the reception of those poor, whom age or illness rendered burdens to their families. Here were likewise received all the poor little boys and girls who had lost their parents; and these helpless orphans were supported and educated at the expense of the parish.—Edgar and Jane were passing this building while the children were amusing themselves. Some were playing at trap and ball, some at marbles, whilst others were reading little story books which had been given them as the reward for their diligence. At the sound of a bell they all quitted their amusements and returned into the house to employ themselves in reading or writing, and be instructed in those trades by which they were to gain their livelihood



in future. They were now all assembled, and the spinning wheels and weaving machines began to move so briskly, that the noise surprized Edgar and Jane very much, who stood peeping through the rails. One of the overseers drew near the window to pull down the sash, and observing the three strangers, begged of them to walk in. Very willingly they accepted the invitation, and ascending a few steps, entered a long room, on one side of which were placed the spinners, and on the other side the weavers. The spinning consisted of wool, which was brought here in large quantities at the time of sheep-shearing.—This store lasted all the winter until the returning season for collecting this useful commodity. Some were employed in picking and combing it, while others standing at little wheels made on purpose for children, prepared it for weaving and knitting.

When spun it is called *Worsted*, from a town in Norfolk, famous for woollen manufactures. The art of weaving was brought into England in the year 1331, and having been much practised ever since, is now arrived at very

great perfection. The loom, and the machine by which the balls of worsted were wound into skeins, were considered very wonderful inventions by the travellers, who had never seen such a manufactory before. The spinners, the winders, and the weavers, would have engaged their attention longer, had they not been asked to visit other rooms, where reading, writing and knitting, were going forwards. All they saw amused them very much : but at last their uncle summoned them to leave this little seat of



industry, and to return to the carriage ; for he said he was afraid they would scarcely reach his house before the close of the day. With that prompt obedience which all good children show, even to the wish of a parent, they instantly complied, and accompanied by their uncle, left this well ordered school of industry. In repassing the Vale of Content, Edgar and Jane again admired the beauty, the order, and the neatness that reigned there. But their uncle, who had no taste for the simple pleasures which appeared to favour the happiness of the people in this village, hastened the children on to the carriage. The coach

drove fast, and about seven o'clock in the evening, they reached an elegant, spacious mansion, placed in an extensive park, which was well stocked with deer. Their uncle now told them that this was his dwelling, and that it was called Bashaw Castle.—They all alighted from the carriage; and the children being wearied with their day's excursion, even novelty lost with them all power of attraction, and they begged permission to go to bed: so they wished their uncle good night, and Betty lighted them up to their chambers. Like good children, who had been well instructed, they immediately knelt down and said their prayers, for no fatigue could make them forget this duty.—But though so tired, instead of falling asleep directly, as might have been expected, the stillness of the night, and the gloom which to weak minds seems always attendant on darkness, brought back to their minds the remembrance of their loved parents, who were now, alas! lost to them for ever. Many a tear did they shed at this recollection; but sleep at length overpowered them; and in the morning they arose with the happy spirits of youth. They now descended, hand in hand, walked about, and gazed at all the fine things they saw: they looked with astonishment at the spacious halls, the lofty chambers, the extensive flower gardens, and the fine hot-houses.

How different is all this, said Edgar, from my father's small house, his nice orchard and pretty cornfields?

JANE. So it is, Edgar; but I liked home better, because papa and mamma were with us then, and they were so good and indulgent, that we were always happy.

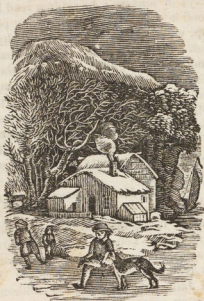
EDGAR. Yes, sister, so we were. But I think my uncle must be very happy too, with so many good things around him, and such a fine house.

Master Edgar little thought that his uncle, tho' thus surrounded with seeming plenty and luxury, was a stranger to all felicity ; for he was very wicked, and had therefore no internal comfort, in which happiness consists ; he passed his days in idleness ; he seldom read his bible, or any other good book, nor did he attend any place for divine worship, which might be one reason why he continued so wicked. His amusements even were barbarous : he was very fond of cock-fighting, and such inhuman diversions. Eating and drinking merely for the indulgence of appetite, was his great delight ; and he would pass half his days in playing at cards. Though he possessed a great deal of money, he was so extravagant, and ordered so many more things than he had money to pay for, that he felt constantly the distress of poverty, and was unjust, because he did not pay his debts.

And here, my young friends, I have with sorrow placed before you the character of a very wicked man, and shown you what conduct it was that led him to the horrid crime of *intended murder* ! You will, I am sure, turn from the picture with aversion ; yet I wish you to dwell upon it sufficiently to avoid similar faults yourselves.

Edgar and Jane, though very good children, still, like other very young persons, required from time to time, admonition from some wise friend. They had lost those tender parents that would have guided them to all good, and their uncle never heeded them ; whether they did well or ill, he regarded it not. So Jane would sometimes work, and sometimes would Edgar read to her out of the pretty little books his father had formerly given them ; but very often would they throw aside their work and books, and

waik in the fields to behold the beauties of nature. But these poor little children had no one to remind them that it was wrong to be idle, so they were not so much to blame as those who act ill, notwithstanding they receive good counsel.



Their uncle's estate, from his negligence and extravagance, was going quite to ruin. His land was no longer fruitful as formerly, because it wanted proper culture; and, in consequence of all this, his income was considerably lessened. He often meditated on some way by which he could get money; and from his wicked deeds, having lost the favour of the Almighty, and being no longer under the

guidance of his grace, what wicked thought do you think was permitted to enter his head? The shocking one of murdering the pretty little children, of whom he was the guardian, that he might possess their fortune. Now, instead of instantly repressing this horrid thought, he indulged it, paused upon it, revolved it in his mind, and at length determined to put in execution the barbarous suggestion of this dark moment. How bad, how wicked may man become, if forsaken by an offended God! Mark this example of moral depravity. He was at first idle, extravagant, and now he is ready to commit murder. He resolves to do it; but to conceal his cruelty, he told his wife and all his acquaintances that he would send his little nephew and niece to a relation of his in London, that they might be there educated.



The children were very happy in the expectation of this journey, for their uncle said they should go on horseback; and at the sight of the horses they rejoiced exceedingly. But this cruel man had hired two ruffians to exe-

cute the barbarous deed which he had planned. With these two frightful men, then did little Edgar and Jane set out. All the way they were very merry, and their innocent prattle and gentle behaviour began to soften the hearts of these two ruffians, named Ned and Dick, and they repented that they had engaged to murder them.—Yet Dick said that he would do it, as he had been largely paid by their uncle. Ned had likewise received as much money but he declared that he could not do this wicked deed.



Now they had travelled all day, and it was sun set when they entered a thick wood. They left the horses at the entrance of the wood, and they walked some distance through several narrow winding paths, Ned and Dick quarrelling all the way, because that one would, and the other would not murder these poor children. At last they fought, and Ned being the strongest, killed his adversary. Trembling with fright, little Edgar and Jane beheld the



shocking battle. The contest ended, the ruffian who had with furious blows murdered his companion, turned to the children, and bade them cry no more. Taking Edgar by the hand, and carrying little Jane in his arms, two long miles he led them on. Poor babes! The ruffian now resolved to leave them in the dismal forest to perish with cold and hunger. They often asked him for food: at length he said he would fetch them some. So he left them, telling them to wait for his return; but it was not his intention to return. In vain did little Edgar and Jane wander up and down the thick wood to look for Ned. At one time they sat down and repeated some verses which they had learnt, and then arising from their mossy seat, they walked again in search of Ned, but, alas! he was not to be seen. In vain did they call upon him to come and bring them food: Cruel creature! he was quite gone from the poor helpless babes. Hand in hand they wandered in the dismal forest, picking black-berries from many a bush to



satisfy keen hunger, till dark night drew on, and they sunk exhausted on the cold ground.

They had not lain many minutes, when an old woman happened to pass that way. She was very poor, and had been spinning all day to get a few hard earned pence, and had come out in the dusk of evening to collect some sticks to make her fire. She saw these children. "What merciless wretch," she exclaimed, "has left these little innocents thus to perish! Whoever it is, their wicked purpose shall be defeated, for I will take them home, I will warm them by my fire, I will feed them with my supper."

Ye rich and ye affluent, who sometimes neglect to do good, take an example from this poor woman: see, though so poor, she can show pity, and perform a deed of charity.

As the old woman was passing along with the children, Ned, the ruffian, passed them. He was returning into the wood to seek these babes; for though he intended to let them remain to perish, he had not resolution to do so: but when he saw they had found protection, he passed



silently on, and the children being senseless, no one knew him. He determined, however, to stay for two or three days in the neighbouring village, that he might see what became of these little orphans, which he accordingly did. Now the good woman took them to her little cot; there she cherished them, warmed them, fed them, and being too poor to support them wholly herself, she got admittance for them in the School of Industry, which was in the village near her. This school was supported by the bounty of all the wealthy families in the parish. Here little Edgar and Jane were taken good care of; were well instructed, and taught to be very good and very industrious. They were considered as very poor children, and so really they were now. Jane learned to read, to write, to work, to knit, and to spin: and Edgar was taught to read, to write, and to be a gardener. One Sunday, a charity sermon was preached for the benefit of this school, and they all joined in singing an appropriate hymn.

The children at this school were taught to be very good, and the masters and instructors took so much care of them, that they were very happy.—Little Edgar and Jane remained here quite concealed from all their former friends ; and, as they were supposed to be no longer inhabitants of this world, their wicked uncle became the possessor of all their fortune ; but as he acquired his riches unjustly and cruelly, he could not enjoy them, for his guilty conscience always tormented him. If his friends came to visit him, he was not cheerful enough to amuse them ; and at night, when he retired to rest, he was afraid to close his eyes, for then frightful dreams presented themselves to his imagination. In his sleep, he thought he saw the ruffians stabbing the two infants which had been left under his care, while they, poor children, clung to him for protection, which he inhumanly refused. Sometimes he dreamed that the wrath of God punished him for wickedness, by depriving him of his wealth, his house, his lands, and his money, so that he was brought to extreme indigence, and even implored his daily subsistence of the passing crowd : and that his children did not exist to succour him in this wretched situation. At present, this was only a dream ; but soon, very soon, he suffered in reality what his guilty conscience had so often terrified him with in sleep ; and though he now felt the displeasure of Almighty God, he neither repented, nor ever prayed for forgiveness. He possessed a great deal of land that produced plentiful crops of corn and hay. Harvest was just now over, and his barns entirely filled, for the season was remarkably fine and hot. One night, during this sultry weather, the sky darkened, and a dreadful storm arose. Incessantly the lightning flashed, and the

thunder rolled. As he could not sleep, he was walking about his room, very much agitated, when he beheld, with terror and amazement, the fire from heaven fall on the thatched roofs of his barns, and consume in a few hours the vast store he had collected with so much anxiety.



Winter approached and brought a severe frost, and as all his out-houses, his corn, and his hay, were burned by the lightning, his cattle were now exposed, without food or shelter, to the inclemency of the season : so they all perished in the fields.

Having lost so much of his fortune, he was obliged to send his sons from home. A merchant in Portugal promised to employ them, and they set sail with the hope of being his clerks ; but the vessel had not yet left the coast of England, when it struck on a fatal rock, and these unfortunate boys perished on the wreck amidst the dashing waves.—When their wicked parent received the news of their death, he gave himself up to despair, and instead of being resigned to the punishment inflicted by heaven, and exerting himself as an honest and prudent man would have done, to retrieve his fortune, he extravagantly spent the remainder of his money. His guilt, together with the

misfortunes that had befallen him, as a punishment for his wickedness, prevented his settling in any business ; so continued idleness soon brought him to the extreme of poverty. He mortgaged his land, and when he had expended this sum for his daily subsistence, he pawned his watch, and some of the fine clothes he had worn when he was a rich man. Now, that he had nothing more to support himself, he contracted still larger debts, which he could never discharge ; so his creditors put him in prison, and here he ended his days miserably, without a friend to comfort him or relieve his distress. Thus it pleased Almighty God that he should suffer ! Wickedness even in this world, seldom goes unpunished, though goodness does not always meet with its reward on earth.

The ruffian Ned, who had left poor little Edgar and Jane in the forest, had generally lived by plunder. He had robbed many a traveller of his money, and pursued this course of life for a long time undiscovered ; but at length he was brought to justice, and condemned to die for the last robbery he had committed. Soon after his sentence was pronounced, he confessed how wicked he had been, and that he had been hired to murder poor little Edgar and Jane. He then related the circumstances of their journey, and that he had left them alone in a forest to perish ; but that some old woman had found them, and placed them in a parish school. This account very much affected the judge, and all who were present.

The ruffian, as he went to the gallows, appeared very penitent for all the bad actions of his past life. He exhorted his companions, whom he was leaving in prison, to avoid in future, if they were acquitted, those crimes for which he acknowledged that he was receiving a

justly merited punishment. After praying earnestly to be forgiven all his sins, he ascended the scaffold, and soon entered on an endless eternity.



The wicked uncle, who we before said was imprisoned for debt, and who died in his confinement, having left no child to heir his encumbered estate, Edgar and Jane, whom the ruffian Ned had publicly, and with his dying breath, declared were put into a parish school, were enquired for, found, brought forth into the world, and put in possession of *Bashaw Park*, which soon changed its name for that of *Happy Dell*. Here they long lived in uninterrupted peace. The rich loved them for their goodness and courteousness, the poor blessed them for their charity and kindness; and the poor old woman who had formerly placed them in the School of Industry, they took home, and repaid the service she had done them, by shewing her unremitted kind attentions to the last day of her life.

THE
CHILDREN IN THE WOOD.



A favourite Ballad.

NOW ponder well, you parents dear,
The words which I shall write ;
A doleful story you shall hear,
Which time brought forth to light ;
A gentleman of good account,
In Norfolk liv'd of late,
Whose wealth and riches did surmount
Most men of his estate.

Sore sick he was, and like to die,
No help his life could save ;
His wife by him as sick did lie,
And both possess'd one grave.
No love between these two was lost,
Each was to other kind ;
In love they liv'd, in love they dy'd,
And left two babes behind.

The one a fine and pretty boy,
Not passing five years old ;
T'other a girl more young than he,
And made in beauty's mould.
The father left his little son,
As plainly doth appear,
When he to perfect age should come,
Three hundred pounds a year.

And to his little daughter Jane
Five hundred pounds in gold,
To be paid down on marriage day,
Which might not be controul'd ;

But if the children chanc'd to die,
Ere they to age should come,
Their uncle should possess their wealth
For so the will did run.

"Now, brother," said the dying man,
'Look to my children dear,
Be good unto my boy and girl,
No friends else have I here ;
To God and you I do commend
My children night and day ;
But little while besure we have
Within this world to stay.

"You must be father and mother both,
And uncle, all in one,
God knows what will become of them,
When I am dead and gone."
With that bespoke their mother dear,
"O, brother kind !" quoth she,
"You are the man must bring our babes
To wealth or misery.

"And if you keep them carefully,
Then God will you reward,
If otherwise you seem to deal,
God will your deeds regard."
With lips as cold as any stone,
She kiss'd her children small,
"God bless you both, my children dear,
With that the tears did fall.

These speeches then the brother spoke
To this sick couple there,

"The keeping of your children dear,
Sweet sister do not fear ;
God never prosper me nor mine,
Nor ought else that I have,
If I do wrong your children dear,
When you're laid in the grave."

Their parents being dead and gone,
The children home he takes,
And seem'd to soften all their moan,
So much of them he makes.
He had not kept these pretty babes
A twelvemonth and a day,

Children in the Wood.

When for their wealth he did devise
To take their lives away.

He bargain'd with two ruffians rude,
Which were of furious mood,
That they should take these children young,
And slay them in a wood.
He told his wife and all he had,
He did the children send,
To be brought up in fair London,
With one that was their friend.

Away then went these pretty babes,
Rejoicing at that time,
Rejoicing with a merry mind,
While they on horseback ride :
They prate and prattle pleasantly
As they rode on the way,
To those that should their butchers be,
And work their lives' decay.

So that the pretty speech they said,
Made th' murd'ers' hearts relent,
For tho' they undertook the deed,
Full sore they did repent.
Yet one of them more hard of heart,
Did vow to do his charge,
Because the wretch that hired him,
Had paid him very large.

The other would not agree thereto
So here they fell to strife,
With one another they did fight
About the children's life ;
And he that was of mildest mood
Did slay the other there,
Within an unfrequented wood,
While babes did quake with fear.

He took the children by the hand
While tears stood in their eye,
And bade them go along with him,
And told them not to cry ;
And two long miles he led them on,
While they for food complain'd ;
" Stay here " quoth he, " I'll bring you bread,
When I do come again "

These pretty babes, with hand in hand,
Went wand'ring up and down,
But never more they saw the man
Approaching from the town.
Their pretty lips with blackberries
Were all besmear'd and dy'd,
And when they saw the darksome night,
They sat them down and cry'd.

And now the heavy wrath of God
Upon their uncle fell ;
Yea, fearful fiends did haunt his house,
His conscience felt a hell.
His barns were fir'd, his goods consum'd,
His lands were barren made ;
His cattle died within the field,
And nothing with him staid.

And in a voyage to Portugal,
Two of his sons did die,
And to conclude, himself was brought
To extreme misery ;
He pawn'd and mortgag'd all his land,
Ere seven years came about,
And now at length this wicked act,
Did by this means come out.

The fellow that did take in hand,
These children for to kill,
Was for a robbery adjudg'd to die,
As was God's blessed will ;
He did confess the very truth,
The which is here express'd :
Their uncle died, while he, for debt
In prison long did rest.

All you that be executors made,
And overseers eke,
Of children that be fatherless,
And infants mild and meek ;
Take you example by this thing,
And yield to each his right,
Lest God with such like misery,
Your wicked deeds requite.

ORATORIO



TO AID IN
REBUILDING ZION
CHURCH.