

THE
CHILDREN

IN THE
WOOD:

A TALE FOR THE NURSERY.

WITH SEVERAL COPPER-PLATES.

LONDON:

WILLIAM DARTON, 58, HOLBORN H'LL.

1821.

Price Sixpence.

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p: 68



— and, after a great deal of trouble, the pretty babes were at last found stretched in each other's arms; with WILLIAM'S arm round the neck of JANE, his face turned close to hers, and his frock pulled over her body.

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THE
CHILDREN IN THE WOOD.



A great many years ago there lived in the county of Norfolk a gentleman and his lady. The gentleman was brave, kind, and of a noble spirit; and the lady was gentle, beautiful, and virtuous. They were very much loved by all who knew them; for they

were

were always trying to do service to every body who came near them, or who had any thing at all to do with them.

This lady and gentleman lived together very happily for many years, for they loved each other most tenderly. They had two children, who were as yet very young; for the eldest, who was a boy, was but three years old, and the youngest, who was a girl, not quite two years old. The boy was very much like his
tather,

father, and the girl was like her mother.

By the end of this time the gentleman fell sick, and day after day he grew worse. His lady, as I have just said, loved him with the greatest fondness; and she was so much grieved by his illness that she fell sick too. No physic, nor any thing else, was of the least use to them, for their illness got worse and worse; and they saw that they should soon be taken away from their two
little

little babes, and be forced to leave them in the world without a father or mother.

They bore this cruel thought as well as they could ; and trusted, that after they were dead, their children would find some kind friend or another to bring them up. They talked to one another tenderly about them, and at last agreed to send for the gentleman's brother, and give their darlings into his care.

As soon as ever the gentleman's

man's brother heard this news, he made all the haste he could to the bed-side where the father and mother were lying sick.

“Ah! brother,” said the dying man, “you see how short a time I can expect to live; yet neither death, nor pain, can give me half so much grief as I feel at the thought of what these dear babes will do without a parent's care. Brother, brother,” said the gentleman, putting out his hand as well as he could, and pointing

pointing to the children, "they will have none but you to be kind to them; none but you to see them clothed and fed, and teach them to be good and happy."

"Dear, dear brother," said the dying lady, "you must be father, mother, and uncle too, to these lovely little lambs. First let William be taught to read; and then he should be told how good his father was. And little Jane,---Oh! brother, it wrings my heart to talk of her: think
of

of the gentle usage she will stand in need of, and take her fondly on your knee, brother, and she and William too will repay your care with love."

The uncle then answered, "Oh! how it grieves my heart to see you, my dearest brother and sister, in this sad state! but take comfort, there may still be hope of your getting well: yet if we should happen to lose you, I will do all you can desire for your darling children. In me
they

they shall find a father, mother, and uncle. William shall learn to read; and shall be often told how good his father was, that he may turn out as good himself when he grows up to be a man. Jane shall be used with the most tender care, and shall be kindly fondled on my knee. But, dear brother, you have said nothing of the riches you must leave behind. I am sure you know my heart too well to think that I speak of this for any other reason

son



"HERE, here brother, is my will; You will see how I have done the best I could for my babes."

see page 11.

son than your dear children's good, and that I may be able to make use of all your money only for their sake."

"Pray, brother," said the dying man, "do not grieve me with talking of any such thing; for how could you, who will be their father, mother, and uncle too, once think of wronging them? Here, here, brother, is my will, You will see how I have done the best I could for my babes."

A few

A few moments after the gentleman had said these words, he pressed his cold lips to the children; the lady did the same, and in a short time they both died.

The uncle shed a few tears at this sad sight, and then broke open the will; in which he found that his brother had left the little boy, William, the sum of three hundred pounds a year, when he should be twenty-one years old, and to Jane, the girl, the sum of five hundred pounds in gold, to
be

be paid her the day of her being married. But if the children should happen to die before coming of age, then all the money was to belong to their uncle. The will of the gentleman next ordered that he and his dear wife should be buried side by side in the same grave.

The two little children were now taken home to the house of their uncle ; who, for some time, did just as their parents had so lately told him upon their death-bed ;

bed ; and so he used them with great kindness. But when he had kept them about a year, he forgot by degrees to think how their father and mother looked when they gave their children to his care, and how he himself had made a promise to be their father, mother, and uncle, all in one.

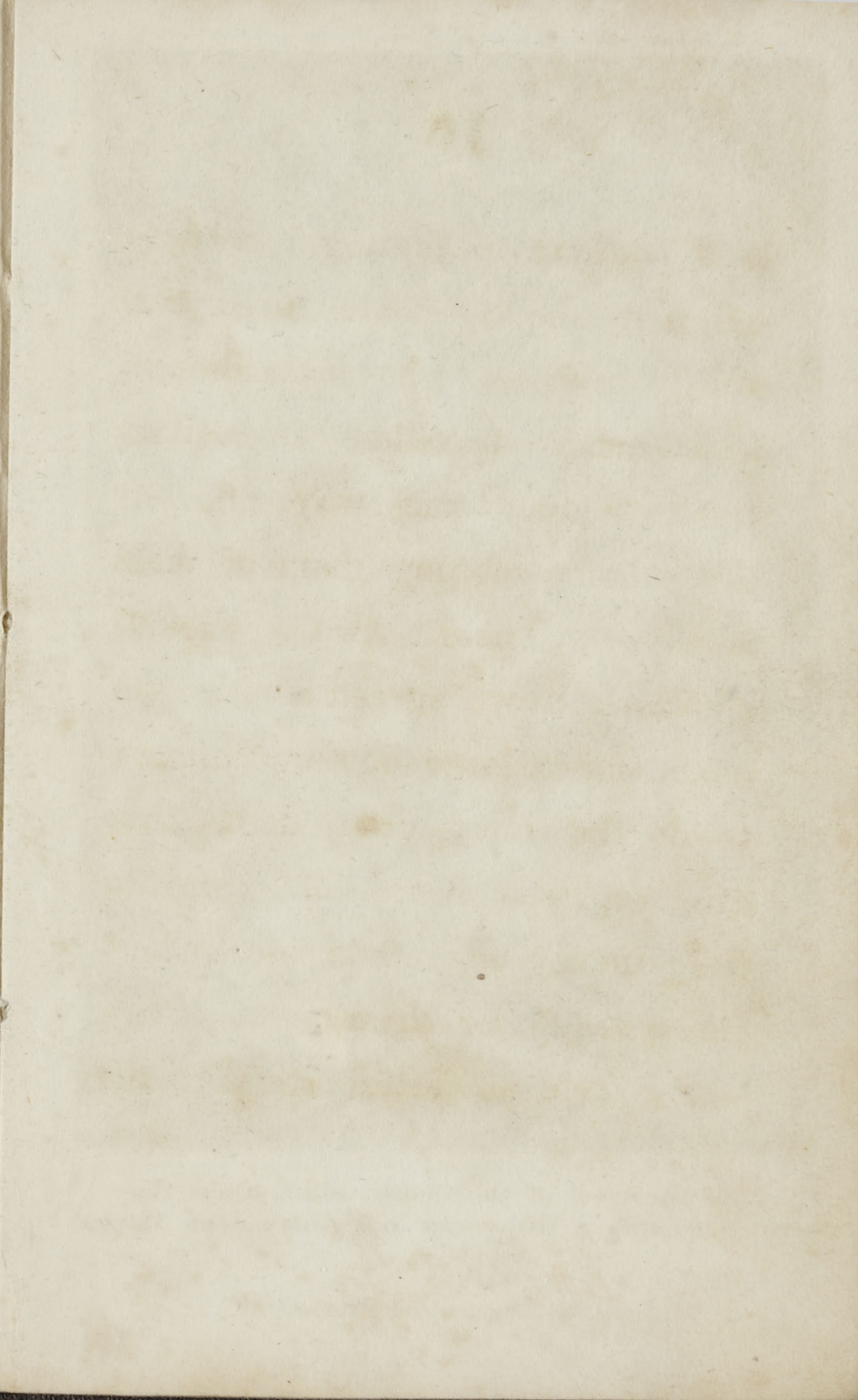
After a little more time had passed ; the uncle could not help thinking that he wished the little boy and girl would die, for
then

then he should have all their money for himself; and when he had once begun to think this, he went on till he could hardly think of any thing else. At last he said to himself: "It would not be very hard for me to kill them so as for nobody to know any thing at all about the matter, and then the money will be mine at once."

When the cruel uncle had once brought his mind to kill the helpless little creatures, he
was

was not long in finding a way to bring it about. He hired two sturdy ruffians, who had already killed many travellers in a dark thick wood, some way off, for the sake of robbing them of their money. These two wicked creatures now agreed with the uncle, for a large sum of money to do the most cruel deed that ever yet was heard of; and so the uncle began to get every thing ready for them.

He told an artful story to his
wife,





— took them out of the Coach, telling them they might now walk a little way and gather some flowers.

see page 19.

wife, of what good it would do to the children to put them forward in their learning; and how he had a friend in London who would take great care of them. He then said to the poor little things: "Should not you like, my pretty ones, to see the famous town of London; where you, William, can buy a fine wooden horse to ride upon all day long, and a whip to make him gallop, and a fine sword to wear by your side? And you, Jane,

Jane,

Jane, shall have pretty frocks, and pretty dolls, and many other pretty play things; and a nice gilded coach shall be got to take you there."

"Oh yes, I will go, uncle," said William: "Oh yes, I will go, uncle," said Jane: and the uncle, with a heart as hard as stone, soon got them ready for the journey.

The harmless little creatures were put into a fine coach a few days after; and along with them
the

the two cruel wretches, who were soon to put an end to their merry prattle, and turn their smiles into tears. One of them drove the coach, and the other sat inside between little William and little Jane.

When they had reached the entrance of the dark thick wood, the two ruffians took them out of the coach, telling them they might now walk a little way and gather some flowers; and while the children were skipping about
like

like lambs, the ruffians turned their backs to them, and began to talk about what they had to do.

“In good truth,” said the one who had been sitting between the children all the way, “now I have seen their sweet faces, and heard that pretty talk, I have no heart to do the cruel deed: let us fling away the ugly knife, and send the children back to their uncle.” “But indeed I will not,” said the other: “what



The two ruffians fell into such a great passion about killing the poor babes, that the one who wished to spare their lives took out a great knife and stabbed the other, so that he fell down dead.

see page 22.

London, William Darton, 58 Holborn Hill.

“what is their pretty talk to us? and who will pay us for being so tender hearted?” “think of your own children at home,” answered the first. “Yes, but I shall get nothing to take back to them if I turn coward as you would have me to do,” replied the other.

At last the two ruffians fell into such a great passion about killing the poor babes, that the one who wished to spare their lives took out the great knife he had

had brought to murder them, and stabbed the other to the heart, so that he fell down dead at his feet.

The one who had killed him was now at a loss what to do with the children; for he wanted to get away as fast as he could for fear of being found in the wood. At last he thought the only thing he could do was, to leave them in the wood by themselves, and trust them to the kindness of any body that might

might happen to pass by and find them there.

“Come here, my pretty ones,” said he, “you must take hold of my hands and go a little way along with me.” The poor children took each a hand, and went on; but the tears burst from their eyes, and their little limbs shook with fear all the while.

In this way he led them for about two miles further on in the wood; and then told them to wait there till he came back
from

from the next town, where he would go and get them some food.

William took his sister Jane by the hand, and they walked in fear up and down the wood. "Will the strange man come with some cakes, Billy?" said little Jane. "By and by, dear Jane," said William: And soon after, "I wish I had some cakes, Billy," said she. They then looked about with their little eyes to every part of the wood; and

and it would have melted a heart as hard as stone, to see how sad they looked, and how they listened to every sound of wind in the trees.

After they had waited a very long time, they tried to fill their bellies with blackberries: but they soon ate all that were within their reach. Night was now coming on; and William, who had tried all he could to comfort his little sister, at last wanted comfort himself: so when
Jane

Jane said once more, "How hungry I am, Billy, I b-e-l-ieve ---I cannot help crying—" William burst out a-crying too; and down they lay upon the cold earth; and putting their arms round each others neck, there they starved, and there they died.

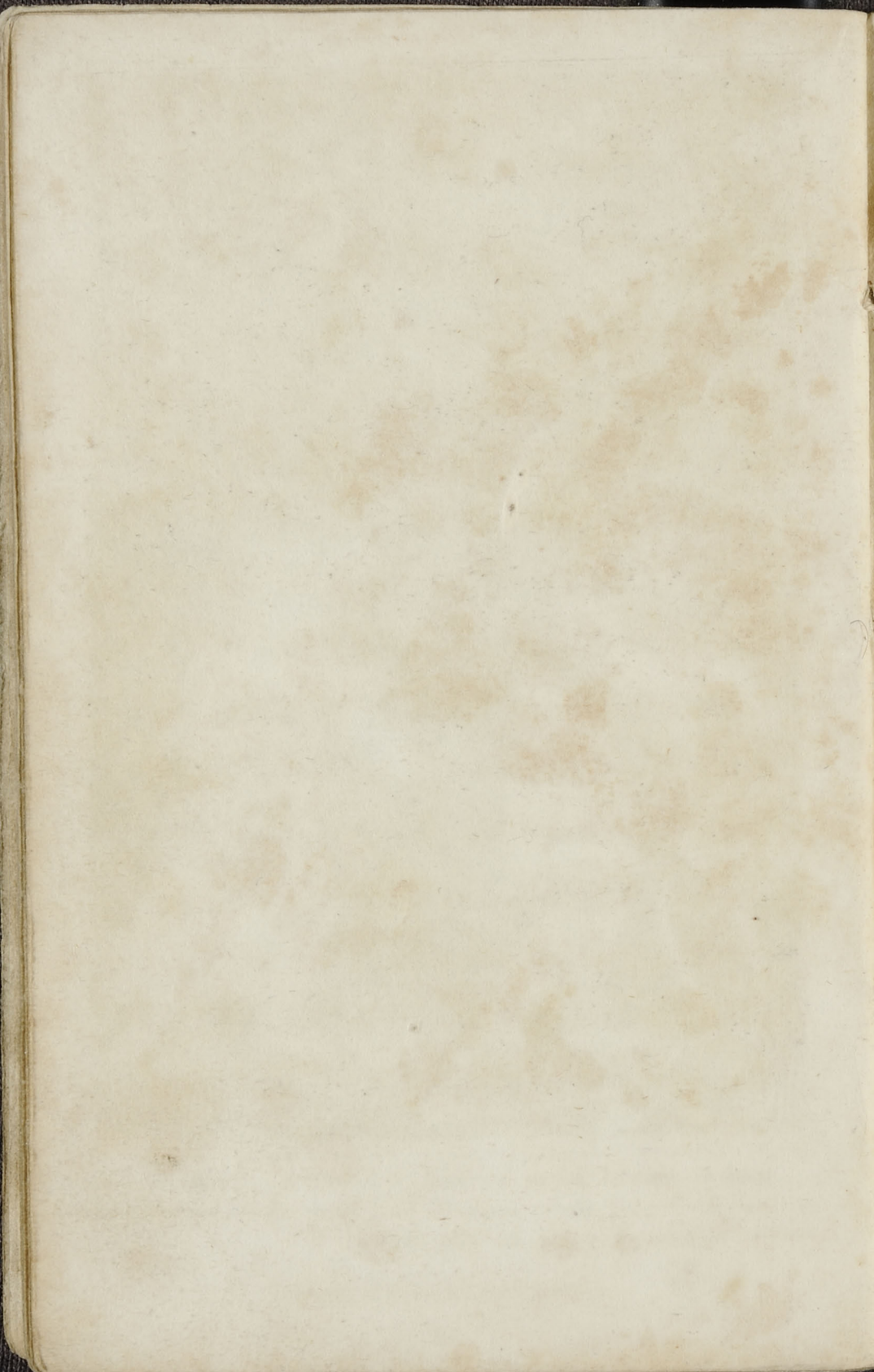
Thus were these two pretty harmless babes murdered; and as no one knew of their death, so there was no one to dig a grave and bury them.

In



— and it would have melted a heart as hard as stone, to see how sad they looked, and how they listened to every sound of wind in the trees!

see page 25.



In the mean time the wicked uncle thought they had been killed as he ordered, so he told all the folks who asked him about them, an artful tale of their having died in London of the small-pox; and he then took all their fortune to himself, and lived upon it as if it had been his own by good right.

But all this did him very little service; for soon after his wife died; and as he could not help being very unhappy, and and was
always

always thinking too that he saw the bleeding children before his eyes, he did not attend at all to his affairs; so that, instead of growing richer, he grew poorer every day. Besides this his two sons had gone on board a ship to try their fortune abroad, but they both were drowned at sea, and he became quite wretched, so that his life was a burden to him.

When things had gone on in this manner for some years, the
ruffian,

ruffian, who took pity on the children and would not kill them, robbed some person in that very wood ; and being pursued, he was laid hold of and brought to prison, and soon after was tried before a judge and was found guilty : so that he was condemned to be hanged for the crime.

As soon as he found that his death must be, he sent for the keeper of the prison, and owned to him all the crimes he had
been

been guilty of in his whole life. Thus he made known the story of the two children; and, at the same time, told that part of the wood he had left them to starve in.

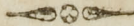
The news of this matter soon reached the wicked uncle's ears; who was already broken-hearted for the many ills that had happened to himself, and could not bear the load of public shame that he knew must now fall upon him, so he lay down
upon

tipon his bed, and died that very day.

As soon as ever the tidings of the death of the two children were made public, proper persons were sent to search the wood for them ; and, after a great deal of trouble, the pretty babes were at last found stretched in each other's arms ; with William's arm round the neck of Jane, his face turned close to hers, and his frock pulled over her body. They were

were quite covered over with leaves, which in all that time had never withered; and on a bush near this cold grave, there sat a robin red-breast watching and chirping; so that many gentle hearts still think it was this kind bird that did bring the leaves and cover the little babes over with them,

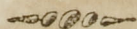
THE END.



WILLIAM DARTON, JUN.

58 HOLBORN HILL.

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