

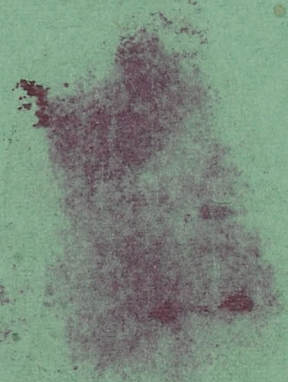
THE
INTERESTING STORY
OF THE
CHILDREN IN **THE WOOD**



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INTERESTING STORY

CHILDREN'S WORLD



LOUISIANA
THE GREAT STATE
OF THE SOUTH

THE
CHILDREN IN THE WOOD.



Many years since, there lived, in the county of Norfolk, a gentleman of family and fortune, who had married a lady of equal rank and property. Having a particular regard for each other, they enjoyed that true happiness which is the result of a mutual attachment. But they were not satisfied with merely being happy themselves, it was their wish that others should share in the blessings which had been so liberally bestowed upon them.

Providence had also blessed them with two lovely children, who were the pride and boast of their affectionate parents, though they were at present very young, the eldest, a boy being but five years old; and the youngest, a girl, not quite three years of age. The name of the boy was Edgar, and that of the girl Jane.



Things were in a prosperous state, when it pleased God to afflict the gentleman with a disorder, which confined him to his bed; and notwithstanding the best advice that could be procured, he became so much worse as to render his lady very uneasy.

But this confinement and anxiety had soon a very serious effect upon her own health; for she was seized with a fever, which rendered her as much an object of compassion as her afflicted husband.

In this melancholy state they both continued for some time. Every effort to restore them seemed ineffectual. They daily grew worse and worse, and at length became so dangerously ill, that the gentleman expressed a wish to have his only brother sent for, that he might commit unto him the care and education of his two dear little children. It was not long before his brother came; who, on his arrival, appeared overwhelmed with grief at seeing the dangerous con-



dition to which the gentleman and his lady were now reduced. Having expressed their thanks for his kind attention, the children were requested to be brought into the sick-room.

“My dear children,” said the father, with a faltering voice, “I sent for you to receive my last blessing, as it is the will of the Almighty that I should shortly leave you. He is the giver of all good; pray to him, therefore, night and morning. Such, my dears, I have often told you to do, but I now tell you for the last time.” Then turning to their uncle, who stood by, their father thus resumed what he wished to impart,—“My dear brother,” said he, “death will soon separate me from every thing precious on earth; and all hope of the recovery of my beloved wife is at an end. Our peace is made with Heaven; but what still afflict us, is the idea of leaving our helpless offspring to their fate, exposed to the snares and corruptions of the world. Look then, dear brother, with com-



passion on our poor children. Train them up in the paths of religion and virtue.

"My dearest brother and sister," replied the uncle, seemingly effected, "let not your last moments be perplexed on account of your dear little ones; I will take charge of them.

His feeble voice was now nearly exhausted; but, after another pause he added, turning to his infants. "When I am in my grave, your uncle will take you to his own house, you must then obey him as you obeyed me; and I hope you will always be good and happy." Scarcely had their father uttered these words and embracing them, when he closed his eyes on this world.

Shedding an abundance of tears, it was now that the dying mother tried to bid Edgar and Jane farewell. Claspings them in her arms, she reclined her head on her pillow, repeatedly exclaiming at times, God bless you, my dear children!" After this she was never heard to speak again.



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, Edgar, the sum of three hundred pounds a-year, when he was twenty-one years of age ; and to Jane, the girl, the sum of five hundred pounds in gold, to be paid her on the day of her marriage. But if the children should die before they came of age, then all the money was to belong to their uncle.

Having buried the gentleman in the same grave with his dear wife, according to his own directions the two children were then taken home to their uncle's house. They remembered their father's dying admonition to them, which charged them to obey their uncle in his place.

The coach drove fast ; yet it was quite evening when they reached an elegant and spacious mansion, situated in an extensive park. Wearing with travelling, the two orphans Edgar and Jane, soon asked permission of their uncle to go



to bed. The next morning they rose with the accustomed familiarity of childhood. They descended hand in hand, walked about, and looked with astonishment at the spacious halls, lofty rooms, and extensive gardens around them.

"How different is all this," exclaimed Edgar, from our father's little house, his nice orchard and pretty corn-fields."

"So it is Edgar," replied Jane, "but I liked home better because poor papa and mamma was along with us then."

After some time elapsed, he wished that the children would die, for then he should have all their money.

He accordingly hired two ruffians, named Ned and Dick, who had killed and robbed many travellers. He told an artful story to his wife, of what good it would do 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 dears, to see the famous City of London; where you, Edgar, can buy a fine horse to ride upon all day long, and a whip to make him gallop? And you, Jane, shall have fine frocks and pretty dolls, and a nice gilded coach shall be brought to take you there." The children eagerly consented, and they were prepared for their journey. The harmless little children were put into a fine coach a few days after, and along with them the two cruel wretches who were soon to put an end to their innocent prattle, and turn their smiles into tears. When they had reached the wood, the two ruffians took them out of the coach, telling them they might walk a little way and gather flowers; and while the children were at play, the ruffians began to consult.

"In good truth," said Ned, "now I have seen their sweet faces, and heard their pretty talk, I have no heart to do the cruel deed; let us send the children back to their uncle."

"Indeed I will not," replied Dick, "What is their pretty talk to us? and who will pay us for being so tender hearted?"

"Think of your own children at home," said Ned.

"Yes, but I shall get nothing to take back to them, if I turn coward as you do," replied Dick.

At length the ruffians fell into a passion and began fighting, which greatly terrified the children. After fighting some time, Ned made a desperate thrust at Dick that laid him dead at his feet; and he buried his body in a deep pit in the wood.

Ned was now quite at a loss what to do with the children, since he wanted to escape, for fear of being discovered. He at length resolved to leave them in the wood, trusting to the kindness of any traveller that might pass by.

"Come here pretty ones," said he, "you must take hold of my hands, and go a little way with me." In this manner he led them further into the wood; and told them to wait there till he came back from the next town, where he would go for food.

They wandered about from one thick copse to another, crying bitterly, till their tender limbs became weary, and the two innocent lambs lay down and slept to wake no more for God in pity, took them to himself.

The wicked uncle, supposing the children had been killed



as he desired, gave out that they had died, and took possession of their fortune. But the vengeance of God fell upon him for in a short time his wife died ; day and night his conscience was so haunted, that the two murdered innocents were ever before his eyes ; he neglected his business, and every day grew poorer. His corn was blighted, his cattle died in the fields, and his two sons who had embarked for a foreign land, were both drowned at sea. Soon after, the ruffian who would not kill the children, committed a robbery, and was condemned to be hung. While in prison, he made a full confession which so terrified the wicked uncle, that he took to his bed and died raving mad.

The two poor babes were found enclosed in each other's arms covered with leaves ; for the Robin Red-breasts had brought the leaves that covered them.

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