

# S O F F R O N A

AND HER

## CAT MUFF.



By Mrs. Sherwood,

*Author of "Little Henry and his Bearer," &c. &c.*



WELLINGTON, SALOP:

PRINTED BY AND FOR HOULSTON AND SON.

And sold at their Warehouse, 65, Paternoster-  
Row, London.

Price Two-pencē.

[Entered at Stationers' Hall.]

150

# FRONTISPIECE.

---



---

See Page 11.

350 J. Purvis  
#

# SOFFRONA

AND HER

## CAT MUFF.



BY MRS. SHERWOOD,

Author of

“LITTLE HENRY & HIS BEARER,”

&c. &c.



Wellington, Salop:

PRINTED BY AND FOR HOULSTON AND SON.

And sold at their Warehouse, 65, Paternoster-Row, London.

1828.

[Entered at Stationers' Hall.]

SOTTORNA

AND THE

CONSTITUTION

BY MISS

"LITTLE BROWN AND WHITE"

—

—

—

—

—

1855

[Faint text at the bottom]

# SOFFRONA

AND HER

CAT MUFF.



LITTLE Soffrona lived with a lady who loved her very much. She was not the lady's own child, but she was as dear to that lady as if she had been so, and the child always called her mamma. The lady had a little girl of her own called Sophia. Sophia was one year older than Soffrona; and Sophia and Soffrona learned lessons together, and played together, and were very happy in each

other's company. When you saw Soffrona, you might be sure Sophia was not very far off; and when you saw Sophia, it was very certain that Soffrona was at no great distance.

How delightful it is for little children to live in love and peace one with another! Hear what David says on this subject—*Behold, how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!* (Psalm cxxxiii. 1.)

Soffrona and Sophia lived in a very lovely house, surrounded with woods. Wherever you looked from the windows of that house, you might see trees growing thickly together, forming beautiful arbours, and pleasant shades, with little paths

winding about among those trees; and here and there, near the trees, were fountains of water springing from the hills, and running down into the valleys: for there were hills there, and the tops of some of them were covered all through the winter with snow, though in summer they appeared green or blue, according to the time of the year, and wore a very pleasant aspect.

Soffrona and Sophia were allowed to play in these woods, and they had learned to run and skip upon the hills like young fawns. It was very pleasing to see them, and they found many treasures in those wild places which children who have never been in woods have no idea of. They found

snail-shells, and painting-stones, and wild strawberries, and bilberries, and walnuts, and hazel nuts, and beautiful moss, and many kinds of flowers; and there they heard birds sing—cuckoos, and linnets, and blackbirds, and thrushes; and saw beautiful butterflies with gold and purple plumes, and dragon-flies, whose wings look like fine silk net.

One morning in the month of May, Soffrona and Sophia had leave given to them to play in the woods, after they had finished their lessons, and they took a basket with them, to bring home any treasures which they might find. And they went a long way through the woods,—I dare say as much as half a mile,—till they came



to a place where an old tree had been blown down by the side of a brook; and there they sat down, and each of them took a little penny book to read out of their basket: and while they were reading, they heard a noise of boys shouting and laughing, and they jumped up and hid themselves behind some bushes.



So the boys came nearer, and went down close to the water's side; and the little girls heard them say one to another, "Let us put it in the deepest place, where it cannot scramble out." And they saw the boys stoop over the water and put something into it, and at the same time they heard a very young kitten cry; and the two little girls could not stop themselves from screaming out, quite loud, from the midst of the bushes, saying, "Wicked, cruel boys! what are you doing?"

Now the boys heard the cries of the little girls; and, as the Bible says, *The wicked flee when no man pursueth*; (Prov. xxviii. 1.) so they all took to their heels, and ran away

as fast as they could, leaving the poor little kitten in the water.

Soffrona and Sophia did not lose one moment after the boys were gone, but ran to the brook, and found the little kitten almost dead. However, they got it out, though they wet themselves up to the knees in so doing, and they returned to the tree, and Soffrona sat down, and laid it upon her lap, while Sophia wiped it dry; and as she rubbed it, she found warmth returning to its little body, and presently it opened its eyes and began to mew. “O my dear little Puss!” said Soffrona, “how very glad I am that you are not dead! You shall be my Puss, and I will call you Muff. Will you

let her be mine, Sophia? Will you give me your share of her?"

Sophia did not say a word against this request, for it was the same to her whether the little kitten was called hers or Soffrona's, and she liked to oblige Soffrona: besides, Sophia was a year older than Soffrona, and it might be expected that she would be more moderate in her desires, and think less of herself. Sophia had lived twelve months longer than Soffrona in the world; and how much may a person learn, with the blessing of God, in twelve months!

So it was agreed that the kitten should belong to Soffrona, and be called Muff; and when the little girls had dried it as well as they could,



they put it into the basket upon some soft moss, and ran home with it.

The lady was not angry with them for having wetted themselves in the brook to save a poor little animal's life, but she hastened to change their clothes; and then they took the kitten out of the basket, and procured some milk to feed it with.

When the fur of the little cat was

quite dry, it was seen that she was very beautifully marked. Her legs, and face, and breast, were quite white, and her back was streaked with yellow and black; so that she appeared like a fine polished tortoise-shell. But she was only nine or ten days old, and was not able to lap milk; and this was a great grief to



Soffrona and Sophia, for they feared that although she had been saved from the water, she would surely die of hunger. The little girls tried to force milk down her throat with a spoon; but the milk ran down the outside of her mouth, instead of the inside of her throat, and the little creature's sides became quite hollow for want of nourishment.

Soffrona was thinking of nothing but Muff all the evening, and she kept her on her lap while she was reading and while she was eating her supper. She was, indeed, so much occupied by her little kitten, that, when the lady asked her to help to make a flannel petticoat for a poor old woman who lived in a cottage

among the hills, not very far off, she took the needle in her hand, it is true, but I do not think that she took twenty stitches; for she was looking down every minute upon the kitten on her lap: and the petticoat would not have been done that night, if Sophia had not been doubly diligent.

Now it was much to be wished that the petticoat should be done that night; for it was intended for a good old woman who lived in the woods, a very poor woman indeed, and the March winds had given her great pain in her limbs, and she was in much need of a warm petticoat; and, more than that, the lady had promised the little girls the pleasure of taking the petticoat, with some tea and sugar,



the next morning, after they had repeated their lessons, to the cottage. But, as I before said, Soffrona's heart was with her kitten, and she could think of nothing else, and of no other creature. She had no pity left for the old woman, so much was she thinking of little Muff. We ought to be kind to animals; but our first affections should be given to our Maker, our second to our fellow-creatures, and our third to any poor animals which may be in our power.

The last thing Soffrona did in the evening, was to try to put some milk down Muff's throat, and this was the first thing she did in the morning: and so far she did right, for the poor little thing depended on her. But

when she had done all she could for Muff, she should have given her mind to her other duties; but she could not command herself to attend to any thing else all that morning, and learned her lessons so ill, that, if the lady had not been very indulgent, she would have deprived her of the pleasure of walking with Sophia to see the old woman, and to carry the petticoat.

There was a neat little maid-servant, called Jane, who used to walk out with Sophia and Soffrona when they had a long way to go; and Jane was ready waiting for the little girls by the time the lessons were done.

Sophia had asked leave to carry the basket with the petticoat and the tea and sugar; and Soffrona took an-

other basket, and put a bit of flannel at the bottom of it, and laid Muff in it, and tied the cover over it; and when Sophia took up her basket to carry, Soffrona also put her arm under the handle of Muff's basket, and went down stairs with it.

When they were got out of the house, Jane said, "What, have you two baskets, young ladies, full of good things, to carry to old Martha? Well, I am very glad; for she is a good and pious old woman."

Soffrona coloured, but did not answer; and Sophia smiled, and said, "She has not got any thing for the old woman in her basket: she has only got Muff, wrapped in flannel, in it."

“O, Miss!” said Jane, “how can you think of doing such a thing? What a trouble it will be to you to carry the kitten all the way! and we have two miles to walk, and most of it up hill. Please to let me carry the kitten back to the house.”

“No, no, Jane,” said Soffrona, “no, you shall not.”

“*Shall* not, Miss!” said Jane: “is that a pretty word?”

Soffrona looked very cross, and Jane was turning back to complain to the lady: but Sophia entreated her not to do it; and Soffrona submitted to ask her pardon for being rude, and promised to behave better, if she would permit her to carry the kitten where she was going. So that

matter was settled, and Jane and the little girls proceeded.

I could tell you much about the pretty places through which they passed in going to poor Martha's cottage, which were quite new to the little girls. They first went through some dark woods, where the trees met over their heads like the



arches in a church; and then they came to a dingle, where water was running at the bottom, and they crossed the water by a wooden bridge; then they had to climb up such a steep, such a very steep hill, covered with bushes; then they came to a high field surrounded with trees, and in a corner of that field was old Martha's thatched cottage. It was a poor place: the walls were black-and-white, and there were two windows, one of which was in the thatch, and one below, and a door, half of which was open; for it was such a door as you see in cottages, the lower part of which can be shut while the other is open. There was a little smoke coming out of the chim-

ney, for Martha was cooking her potatoes for her dinner.

“Do you think Martha has any milk in her house?” said Soffrona; “for poor Muff must be very hungry by this time.”

“I fear not,” replied Jane: “but come, young ladies, we have been a long time getting up this hill, and we must be at home by three o’clock.”

So they went on, and came close to the door, and stood there a little while, looking in. They saw within the cottage a very small kitchen; but it was neat, and there was nothing out of its place. There was a wide chimney in the kitchen; and in the chimney a fire of sticks, over which hung a little kettle. Old Martha



was sitting on a stool within the chimney. She was dressed in a blue petticoat and jacket, and had a high crowned, old-fashioned felt hat on her head, and a coarse clean check handkerchief on her neck. Before her was a spinning-wheel, which she was turning very diligently, for she could not see to do any work besides



spinning; and by the fire, on the hob, sat a fine tortoise-shell cat, which was the old woman's only companion. "O!" cried little Soffrona, "there is a cat! I see a cat!"

"Dear, Miss," said Jane, "you can think of nothing but cats."

"Well, Jane," answered Sophia, "and if she is fond of cats, is there any harm in it?"

Jane could make no answer, for by this time old Martha had seen them, and came halting on her crutch to meet them, and to offer them all the seats in her house; and these were only a three-legged stool and two old chairs.

Sophia then presented the old woman with what she had brought from

her mamma, and Jane gave her a bottle of medicine from her pocket: and the old woman spoke of the goodness of Almighty God, who had put it into the lady's heart to provide her with what she needed most in this world.

Now, while Sophia and Jane and Martha were looking over the things which the lady had sent, the old cat had left the hob, and had come to Soffrona, and was staring wildly, and mewling in a strange way round the basket; and at the same time the kitten within began to mew. "Puss! Puss! pretty Puss!" said Soffrona, for she was half afraid of this large cat, and yet at the same time very well inclined to form a friendship with her.



At length, those that were with her in the cottage saw what was passing; and Martha said, "Don't be afraid, Miss; Tibby won't hurt you. Poor thing! she is in great trouble, and has been so ever since yesterday."

"What trouble?" said Soffrona.

"Some rude boys came in yesterday, and stole her kitten," replied

Martha. “I was in the wood, picking a few sticks, and left the door open; and the boys came in, and ran away with the kitten; and the poor cat has been moaning and grieving like a human being,—poor dumb thing,—ever since. The cruel lads! I saw them go down the hill!”

“O!” said Soffrona, “and I do believe”——

“And I am sure,” said Sophia.

“And I am so glad!” said Soffrona.

“And how happy she will be!” said Sophia.

And Soffrona immediately set down her basket and opened it, and put the little kitten on the floor, for the kitten was indeed poor Tibby's kitten.

It was a pretty sight, an agreeable and pleasant sight, to behold the joy of the old cat when she saw her kitten. The poor creature seemed as if she would have talked. Martha took up the kitten, and laid it on a little bit of a mat in the corner of the chimney, where it used to be; and the old cat ran to it, and lay down by it, and gave it milk, and licked it, and talked to it in her way, (that is, in the way that cats use to their kittens,) and purred so loud, that you might have heard her to the very end of the cottage. It was a pleasant sight, as I said before, for it is a pleasure to see any thing happy; and Soffrona jumped and capered about the house, and knew not how sufficiently to express

her joy: and as for little Sophia, her eyes were filled with tears; and poor old Martha was not the least happy of the party.

And now, when it was time to go, Soffrona took up her empty basket, and giving the kitten a kiss, "Little Puss," she said, "I will rejoice in your happiness, though it will be a loss to me, for I must part with my little darling. But I will not be selfish: mamma says that I can never make myself happy by making other things miserable. Good-bye, little Puss: if God will help me, I will try never to be selfish." And she walked out of the cottage, wiping away her tears.

"But you will let her have Muff,

won't you, Martha," said Sophia, "when her mother has brought her up, and can part with her?"

"To be sure I will, dear Miss," replied Martha; "for I was delighted to hear her say that she knew she never could make herself happy by making others miserable."

When Muff was a quarter old, she was brought to Soffrona, and became her cat, and lived in her service till her yellow and black hairs were mingled with grey.

—  
*FINIS.*  
—

~~~~~  
*Houlstons, Printers, Wellington, Salop.*

3377256

*By the same Author.*

---

- The ORPHAN BOY. Price 6d.  
A PRIMER. Price 6d.  
The INFIRMARY. Price 4d.  
The ERRAND-BOY. Price 4d.  
The TWO SISTERS. Price 4d.  
The MAY-BEE. Price 4d.  
EDWARD MANSFIELD. Price 4d.  
JULIAN PERCIVAL. Price 4d.  
GEORGE and his PENNY. Price 2d.  
EMILY and her BROTHERS. Price 2d.  
The ROSE. Price 2d.  
The BUSY BEE. Price 2d.  
The WISHING-CAP. Price 2d.  
EASY QUESTIONS. Price 2d.  
ROBERT and the OWL. Price 2d.  
The TWO DOLLS. Price 2d.  
The SUNDAY-SCHOOL CHILD'S REWARD. Price 1d.  
LITTLE ARTHUR. Price 1d.  
POOR BURRUFF. Price 1d.  
The DRY GROUND. Price 1d.  
The LADY in the ARBOUR. Price 1d.  
The FAWNS. Price 1d.  
HOME. Price 1d.