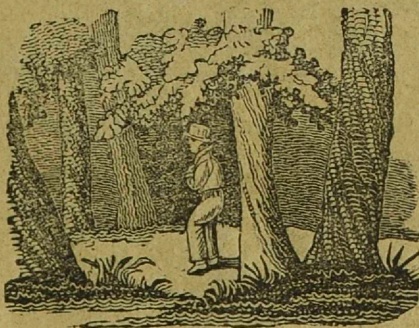
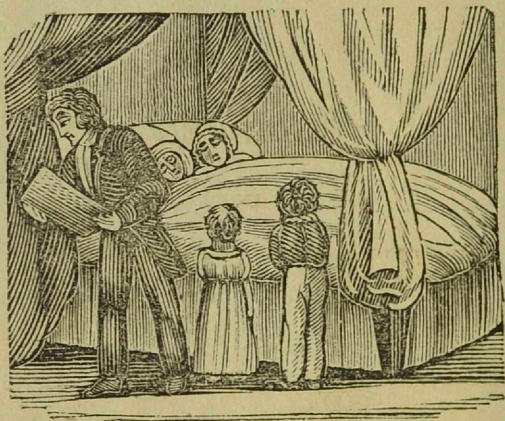


THE
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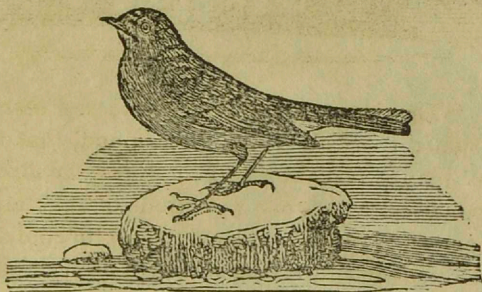
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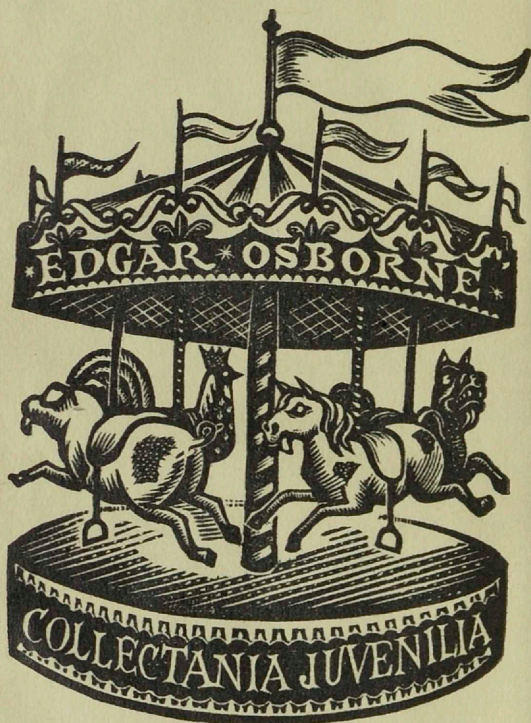
“The uncle, after shedding a few tears, opened the will, in which he found, that to William was bequeathed three hundred pounds a-year, when he became of age; and to little Jane, five hundred pounds in gold on her marriage day. But if the children should chance to die before their coming of age, then all their wealth was to be enjoyed by their uncle. The will of the unfortunate gentleman next desired, that he and his beloved wife should be buried side by side in the same grave.”

See Page 10.

THE
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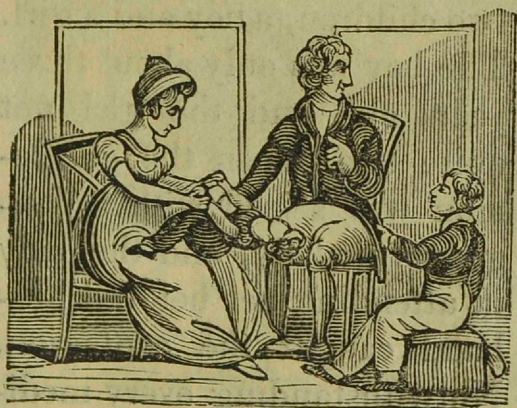


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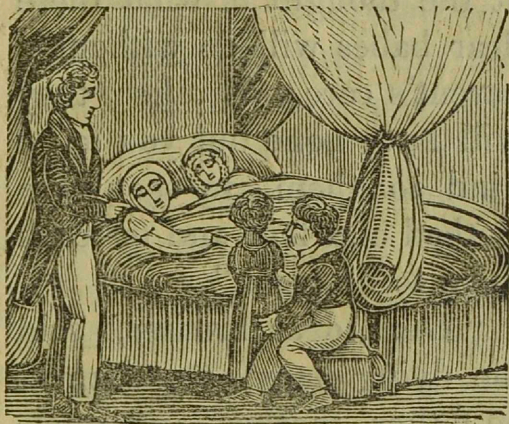
THE
CHILDREN
IN
THE WOOD.



A GREAT many years ago, there lived in the county of Norfolk a gentleman and his lady. The gentleman was brave, generous, and honour-

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able; and the lady, gentle, beautiful, and virtuous: they were beloved by all who knew them, and were blessed with two children, a boy and a girl. The boy was only about three years old, and the girl not quite two, when the gentleman was seized with a dangerous malady, and the lady in attending her beloved husband caught the contagion. Notwithstanding every medical assistance, their disorder daily increased, and as they expected to be soon snatched away from their little babes, they sent for the gentleman's



brother, and gave their darlings into his care.

“Ah! brother,” said the dying man, “you see I have but a short time to live; yet neither death nor pain can pierce my heart with half so much anguish, as what I feel

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at the thought of what these dear babes will do without a parent's care. Brother, they will have none but you to be kind to them, to see them clothed and fed, and to teach them to be good."

"Dear, dear brother," said the dying lady, "you must be father, mother, and uncle too, to these dear innocent 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 the gentle usage she will need;

and take her fondly on your knee, brother, and she and William too will pay your care with love."

"How does it grieve my heart to see you, my dearest relatives, in this mournful condition!" replied the uncle. "But be comforted, there may yet be hopes of your well-doing; but should we have the misfortune to lose you, I will do all you can desire for your darling children. In me they shall find father, mother, and uncle; but, dear brother, you have said nothing of your wealth." "H-e-r-e, h-e-r-e,

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brother," replied he, "is my will, in which I have provided for my dear babes."

The gentleman and his lady then kissed their children, and a short time after they both died.

The uncle, after shedding a few tears, opened the will, in which he found, that to William was bequeathed three hundred pounds a-year, when he became of age; and to little Jane, five hundred pounds in gold on her marriage day. But if the children should chance to die before their coming of age, then all their

wealth was to be enjoyed by their uncle. The will of the unfortunate gentleman next desired, that he and his beloved wife should be buried side by side in the same grave.

The two little innocents were now taken to the house of their uncle, who, for some time recollecting what their parents said so sorrowfully upon their death-bed, behaved to them with great kindness. But when he had kept them about a twelvemonth, he by degrees forgot to think both how their parents looked when they gave their children to his

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care, and the promises he made 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 he should then have all their wealth for himself; and when he had begun to think this, he went on till he could think scarcely of any thing else; and at last, says he to himself, "It will not be very difficult for me to kill them, so as nobody knows any thing of the matter, and then their gold is mine."

When the barbarous uncle had once brought his mind to kill the helpless little creatures, he was not long in finding a way to execute his cruel purpose. He hired two sturdy ruffians, who had already killed many travellers in a dark thick wood, at some distance, and then robbed them of their money. These two wicked creatures agreed, for a large reward, to do the blackest deed that ever yet was heard of; and the uncle began to prepare every thing accordingly.

He told an artful story to



his wife, of what good it would be to put the children forward in their learning; how he had a relation in London, who would take the greatest care of them. He then said to the innocent children, “Should you not 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, shall have pretty dolls and pincushions, and a nice gilded coach shall be got to take you there."

"O, yes, I will go, uncle!" said William: O, yes, I will go, uncle!" said Jane; and the uncle, with a heart of stone, soon got them ready for the journey.

The unsuspecting little creatures were a few days af-

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ter put into a fine coach, and with them the two inhuman butchers, who were soon to end their joyful prattle, and turn their smiles to tears. One of them served as coachman, and the other sat between little William and little Jane.

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



on them, and began to consult about what they had to do.

“In good truth,” says the one who had been sitting all the way between the children, “now I have seen their cherub faces, and heard their pretty speech, I have no heart

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to do the bloody deed: let us fling away the ugly knife, and send the children back to their uncle." "That I will not," says the other: "what signifies their pretty speech to us? and who will pay us for being so chicken-hearted?"

At last the ruffians fell into so great a passion about butchering the innocent little creatures, that he who wished to spare their lives suddenly opened the great knife he had brought to kill them, and stabbed the other to the heart, so that he fell down dead.

The one who had killed



him was now greatly 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. He was not however long in determining, that he must leave them in the wood, to the chance of some traveller pass-

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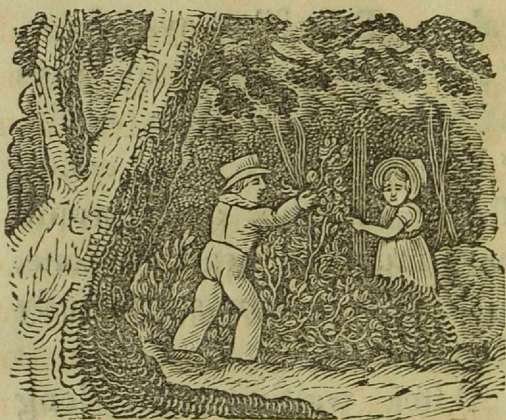
ing by. "Look ye, my pretty ones," said he, "you must each take hold and come along with me." The poor children each took a hand and went on, the tears bursting from their eyes, and their little limbs trembling with fear.

Thus did he lead them for about two miles further on in the wood, and then told them to wait there till he came back with some cakes.

William took his sister Jane by the hand, and they wandered fearfully up and down the wood. "Will the strange man come with some

cakes, Billy?" says Jane. "Presently, dear Jane," says William. And soon again, "I wish I had some cakes, Billy," said she: and it would have melted a heart of stone, to have seen how sorrowfully they looked.

After waiting very long they tried to satisfy their hunger with blackberries, but they soon devoured all that were within their reach; and night too coming on, William, who had tried all he could to comfort his little sister, now wanted comfort himself; so when Jane said once more,



“How hungry I am, Billy, I b-e-l-i-e-v-e—I cannot help crying.”—William burst out crying too; and down they lay upon the cold earth, and putting their arms round each other’s neck, there they starved, and there they died.

Thus were these pretty lit-

the innocents murdered ; and as no one knew of their death, so no one sought to give them burial.

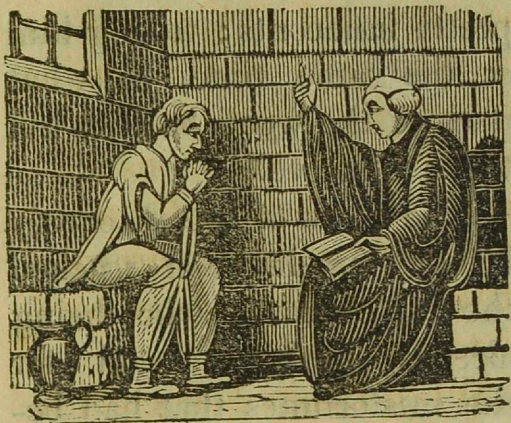
The wicked uncle, supposing they had been killed as he desired, told all who asked after them an artful tale, of their having died in London of the small-pox ; and accordingly took possession openly of their fortune.

But all this did him very little service, for soon after his wife died ; and being very unhappy, and always thinking too, that he saw the bleeding innocents before his eyes,

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he neglected all his business, so that instead of growing richer, he every day grew poorer. His two sons also, who had embarked for a foreign land, were both drowned at sea, and he became completely miserable.

When things had gone on in this manner for years, the ruffian who took pity on the children, committed another robbery in the wood, and being pursued by some men, he was laid hold of, and brought to prison, and soon after, was tried at the assizes, and found guilty — so that he was con-



demned to be hanged for the crime.

As soon as he found what his unhappy end must be, he sent for the chaplain of the prison, and confessed to him all the crimes he had been guilty of in his whole life, and thus declared the story of the

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pretty innocents; telling him at the same time, in what part of the wood he had left them to starve.

The news of the discovery he had made soon reached the uncle's ears; who, being already broken-hearted for the misfortunes that had befallen him, and unable to bear the load of public shame that could not but await him, lay down upon his bed and died that very day.

No sooner were the tidings of the fate of the two children made public, than proper persons went to search the

wood; when, after many fruitless endeavours, the pretty babes were at length found stretched in each other's arms, with William's arm round the neck of Jane, his face turned close to hers, and his jacket pulled over her body. They were covered all over with leaves, which in all that time never withered; and on a bush near this cold grave, a robin redbreast watched and chirped; so that many gentle hearts still think, that that pretty bird did bring the leaves which made their grave.

V

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