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AUNT MAJOR'S TOY BOOKS.

THE CHILDREN IN THE WOOD



LONDON:
GEORGE ROUTLEDGE AND SONS.

THE BABES IN THE WOOD.



A very long time ago, and in a distant part of England, there lived a rich gentleman and his wife, who had two dear little children, a boy and a girl. The gentleman was taken ill, and knew that he should die, so he sent for their Uncle, and asked him to take care of them, and keep their money for them till they grew old enough to know how to use it. The gentleman died, and his wife soon after, so that the children were left without father or mother.



The uncle took them to live with him; but he was a bad cruel man, and he soon began to think that if he could get rid of these children, he might keep all their money for himself. From wishing for their death he went on thinking how he should contrive to put them out of the way, and at last he found two wicked robbers who agreed to steal the little creatures, and take them to a wood where they could kill them without anybody knowing it. These wretches pretended that they were going to take the poor little babes to London to see all the fine sights



there, and on the journey all along the country roads the children talked and laughed, and were so pleased with the men who they thought were their kind friends, that one of the robbers was sorry to think that he had promised to kill them, and wanted to take them to some place where they could be hidden from their wicked uncle and kept safely. But the other robber would not hear of this, and so by the time they reached the forest the two bad men had a great quarrel and fought together with their swords.



It was in a very lonely path leading to the forest, and the poor little babes were so afraid when they saw the men fighting, and heard their dreadful swords clash, that they stood crying and trembling in the wood. They were still more afraid when the robber who wanted to spare their lives struck down the other one and left him lying dead in the long grass, for they thought that he would kill them too, but he took them by the hands and led them away among the trees, and tried to speak kindly to them as they walked along.



Though he wished to save their lives, the robber was a bad selfish man, and he was afraid to take them with him. He had some pity for the poor little things as they walked beside him a long, long way into the silent forest, talking and asking questions, and gathering the sweet wild flowers, but he had made up his mind to leave them there in the lonely dreary wood. At last, when they had grown so tired, that they could walk no farther, and so hungry, that they began to cry for something to eat, he told them to sit down under a tree and there wait while he went to the



village to buy them some cakes. He knew very well that the village was many miles off, and that they would have no cakes that night, and when they had sat down on the soft turf and were busy with their flowers again, he left them there by themselves. The night came on and they were very much afraid, and crept closer together, and at last, cried themselves to sleep. When the morning dawned, they were so cold and hungry that they could scarcely move, but they were not so frightened when they saw the bright sunlight.



All that day they wandered about hand in hand but could not find their way out of the wood, and when the night came on again, and all was dark, they lay down on the grass and cried themselves to sleep in each others arms. They never woke again in this world. When the morning came, the birds sang their songs, and the insects hummed in the still air; and the sun sparkled in the dew, but these poor little babes were in Heaven; the robins hopped close to them, and seeing their little bodies lying so still, gently covered them over with green leaves.



Do you think that their bad and cruel uncle was happy when he got the money that he had longed for? No! All the money in the world would have been no use to him when he waked in the night and thought of the little babes who had been left to his care. Nothing ever prospered with him. His barns were burnt, his cattle died, his own children left him, and at last, poor and sick and ruined, he ended his evil life in prison with no one to care for him, and no robins to cover him with leaves, or to sing a song of mourning at his death.

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