

# THE THREE BEARS & THE BABES IN THE WOOD



(F.T.) (AT) (P. 13)  
MORD, W.  
BABES IN THE WOOD



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at the *Wilton Rd*

School *July 31<sup>st</sup>* 19 *12*

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JNO. ARTHUR PALMER,

Secretary of Education.

# BABES IN THE WOOD AND THE THREE BEARS

BY  
W. MORD

ILLUSTRATED BY  
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She peeped in at the window.

## The Three Bears.

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There were Three Bears who lived together in the middle of a beautiful wood. They were very jolly bears on the whole, and, considering that they *were* bears, they were really very well behaved.

Perhaps they were rather prejudiced against human beings, but then, you see there are certain habits of human beings that can hardly be expected to meet with the approval of a self-respecting bear.

For instance, to be dragged from



one's forest home, have a ring put through your nose, and be compelled to caper about on your hind legs on hard, stony roads, is not a thing that you would care for if you

were a bear. You would much prefer the lovely forest to wander about in, as you liked, and when you liked.

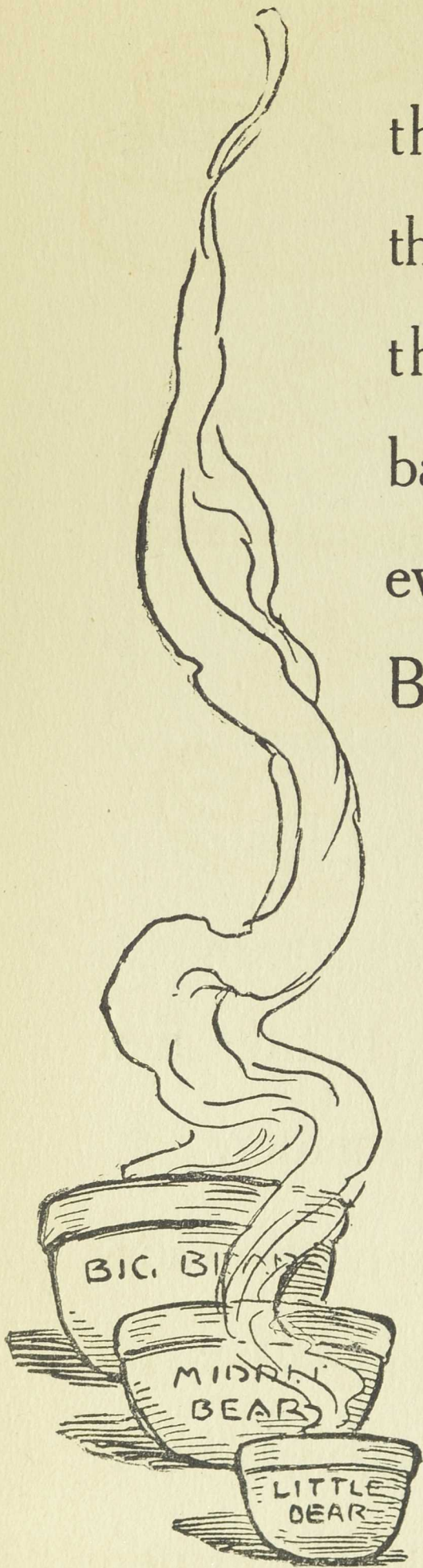
Anyway that was what the Three Bears felt, and so they always said that



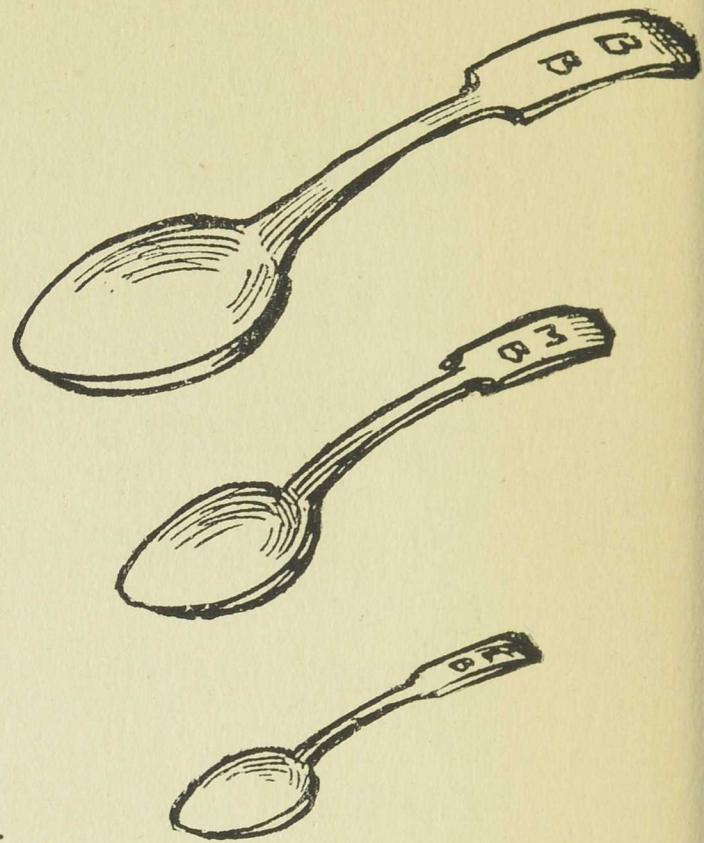
if ever they came across a human being they would make short work of him or her, whether man, woman or child.

But generally speaking the Three Bears were very good tempered. Of course the Big Bear grumbled a bit at times, and the Middle Bear sulked now and then if he could not have his own way, while the Little Bear was certainly inclined to be rather greedy, but on the whole they got on very well together.

One reason for this was that they each had the things they used made to fit them, so there was no chance of them taking each other's possessions. And

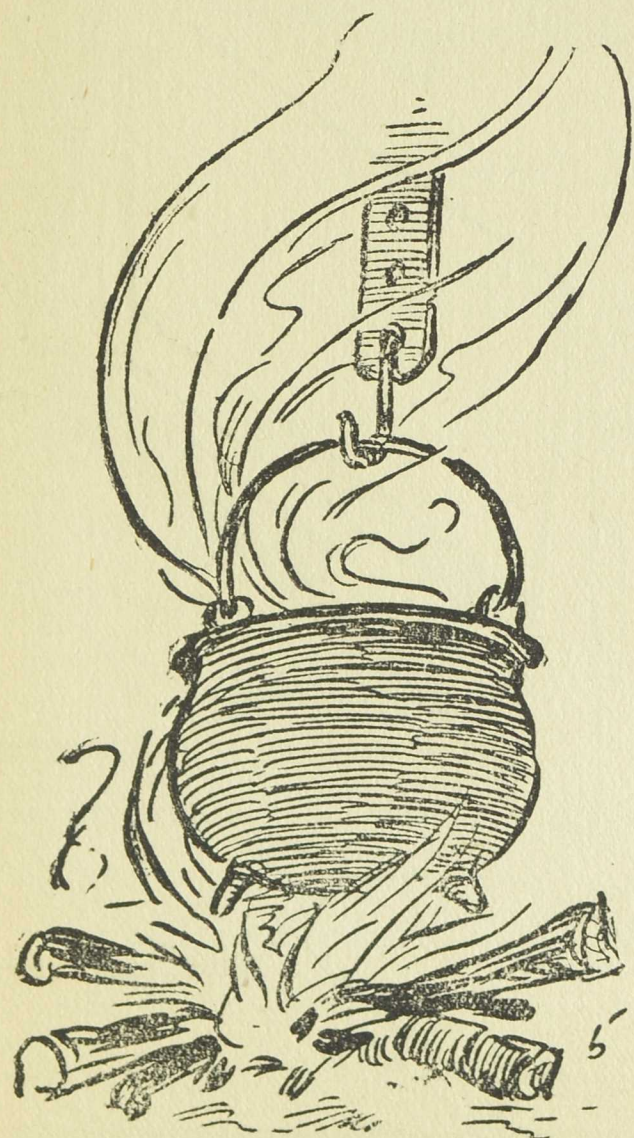
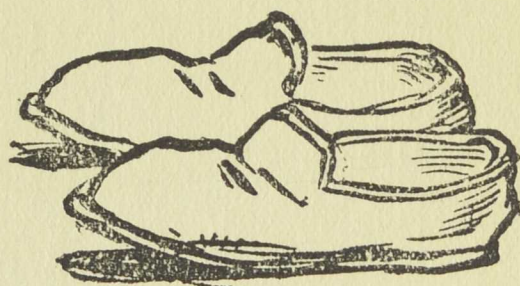


they all had their names on their porridge basins, so that even the Little Bear could only



take his own little bowl, and not hurry in to meals for the purpose of getting the biggest share, as he would rather have liked to do ; for if there was one thing he loved, it was porridge !

One day they had made their porridge all ready for tea—for they had it to every meal—and had



poured it into their three basins to cool.

Then they decided to go out for a short walk until it was ready for them



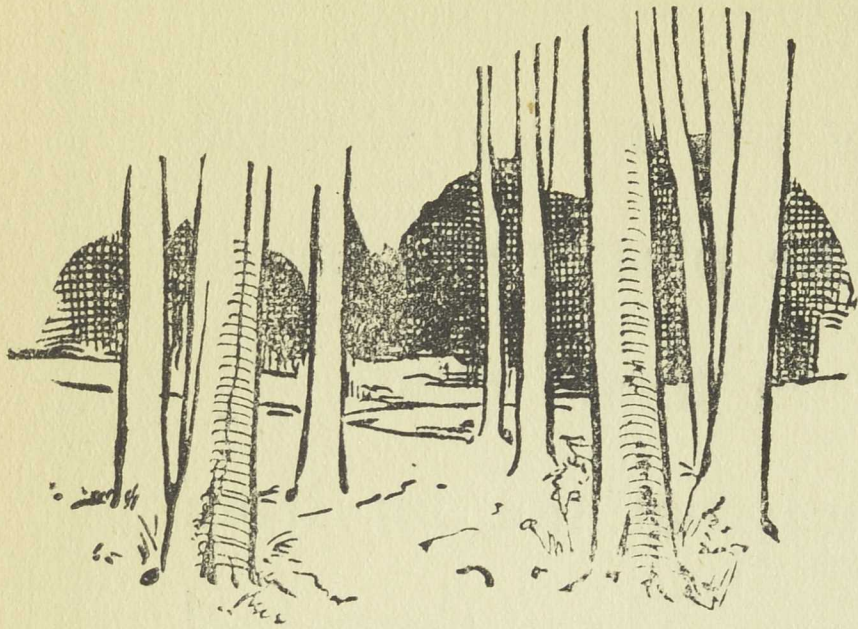
And had poured it into their three basins to cool.

to eat. So off they set, arm in arm, all looking forward to the pleasure of eating the lovely porridge on their return.

Now it happened that not far from the wood in which these Three Bears had their home, there was a house covered with climbing roses. In this house lived a little girl whose hair was so long and of such a beautiful colour that she was called by all who knew her, "Little Golden Locks."

Golden Locks loved the great forest with the big, green trees; though, of course, she never

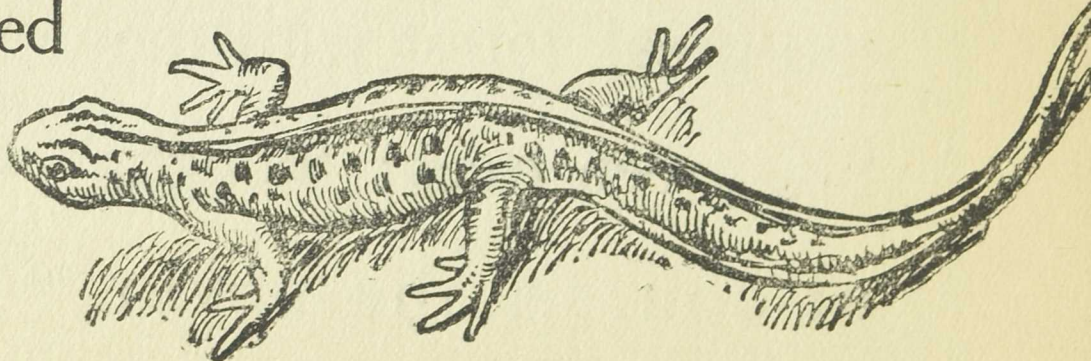




went very far  
into it, unless  
she was with  
her nurse or  
her big, brave

brother. But close to her home, just within the green shadows of the beech trees, there was a pond, and all sorts of interesting things were to be found in it.

There were reeds and flowering weeds, tadpoles and newts, and queer caddis flies. Golden Locks used to be quite contented to play by

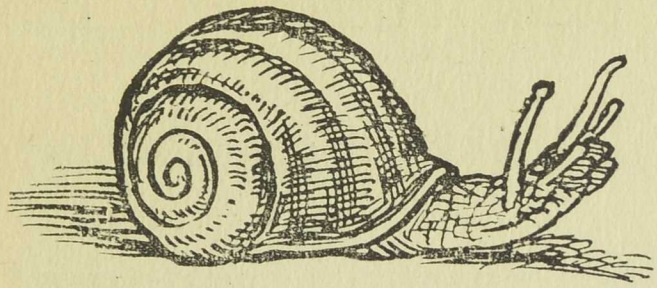






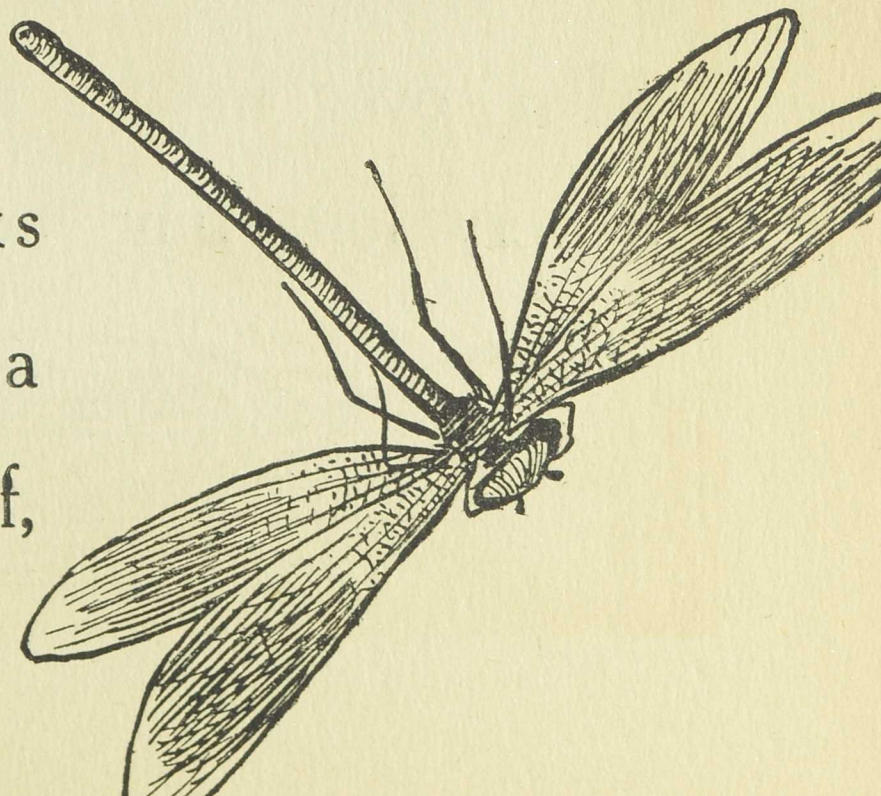
Golden Locks saw writing on the basins.





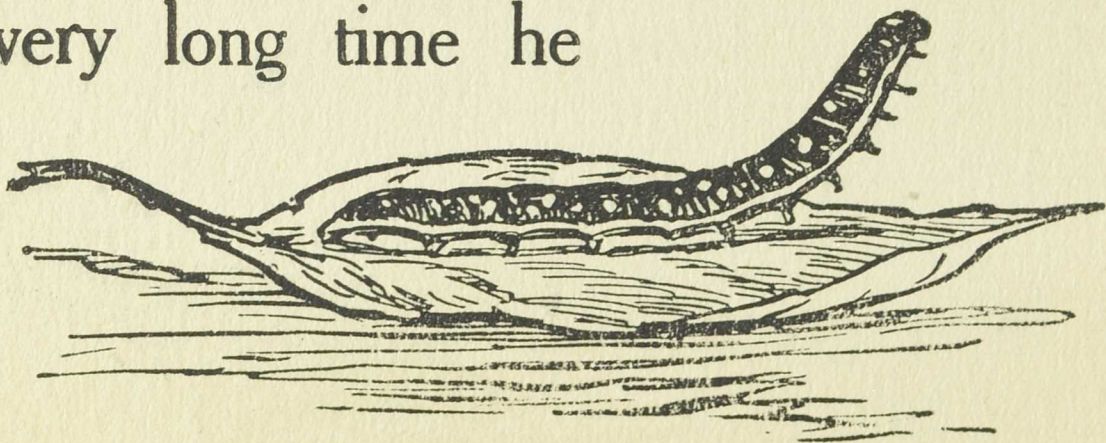
this wonderful pond and watch all these things. She thought it very funny when the tiny legs of baby frogs could be seen in the tadpoles' side as they swam about, and laughed at all the bits of weeds and sticks that the caddis fly carried on its case or shell. It was not half so pretty as the shell which the snail carried on its back.

Golden Locks would often make a hole in a green leaf,



and, pushing the stalk through the hole, set it afloat on the pond. Sometimes a baby breeze, playing amongst the bracken, would come to see what she was doing, and when he saw the little green boat he would blow very gently and carry it across to the other side of the pond. This always delighted Golden Locks.

One day she sent a green caterpillar over in the leafy boat, and for a very long time he



boasted to all the other insects about his wonderful travels across the Forest Ocean; but once when he was talking, a water beetle overheard him, and made such fun of him that after that he grew more careful about the people he boasted before.



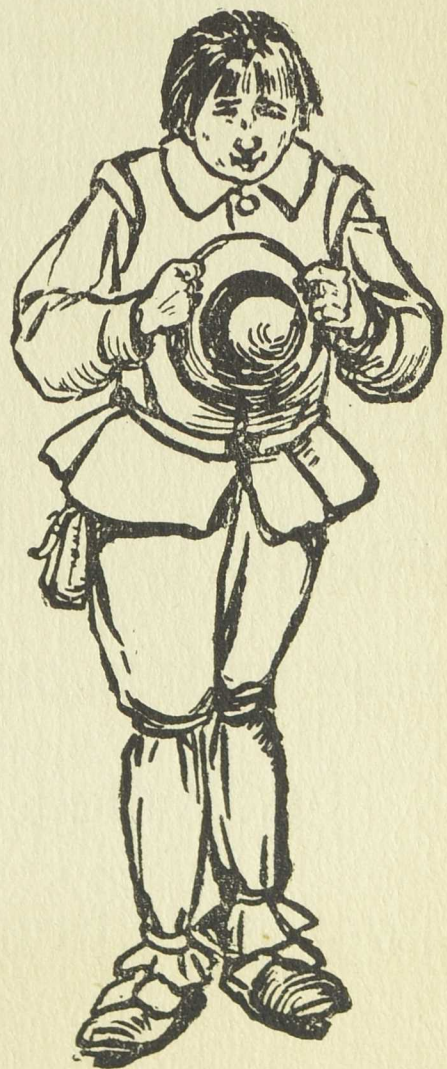


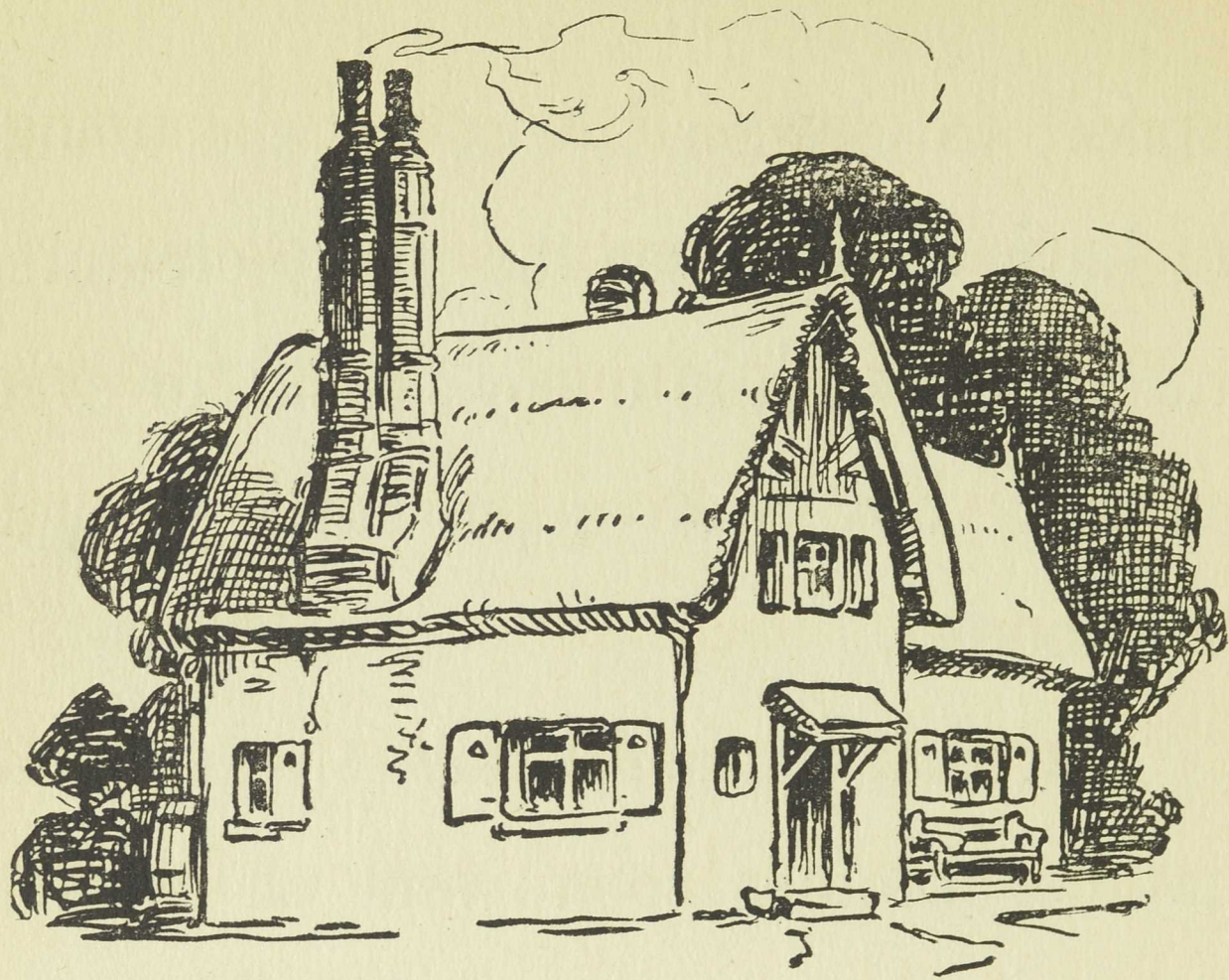
One day (in fact the very day the Three Bears went for a walk) it was very hot indeed. Golden Locks had walked along the hot, white dusty road to the village with nurse in the morning; in the afternoon her big brother had taken her what he called "Butterfly Catching," across the great wide field, where there was no shade from the fiercely shining sun.

They never caught any butterflies on these expeditions, which was a great

comfort to Golden Locks, for she would not have liked to see the pretty creatures crushed to death in a boy's hand, or even put in a box, with a pin stuck through their bodies.

But that particular day it was so hot that her brother soon went off with a friend for a swim in the river; and so about four o'clock, finding herself alone, Golden Locks gladly trotted off into the forest where it was so beautifully cool.





And because it was so cool and quiet, Golden Locks walked on, and on, until she had gone much farther into the wood than she had ever been before, even with nurse or her big brother.

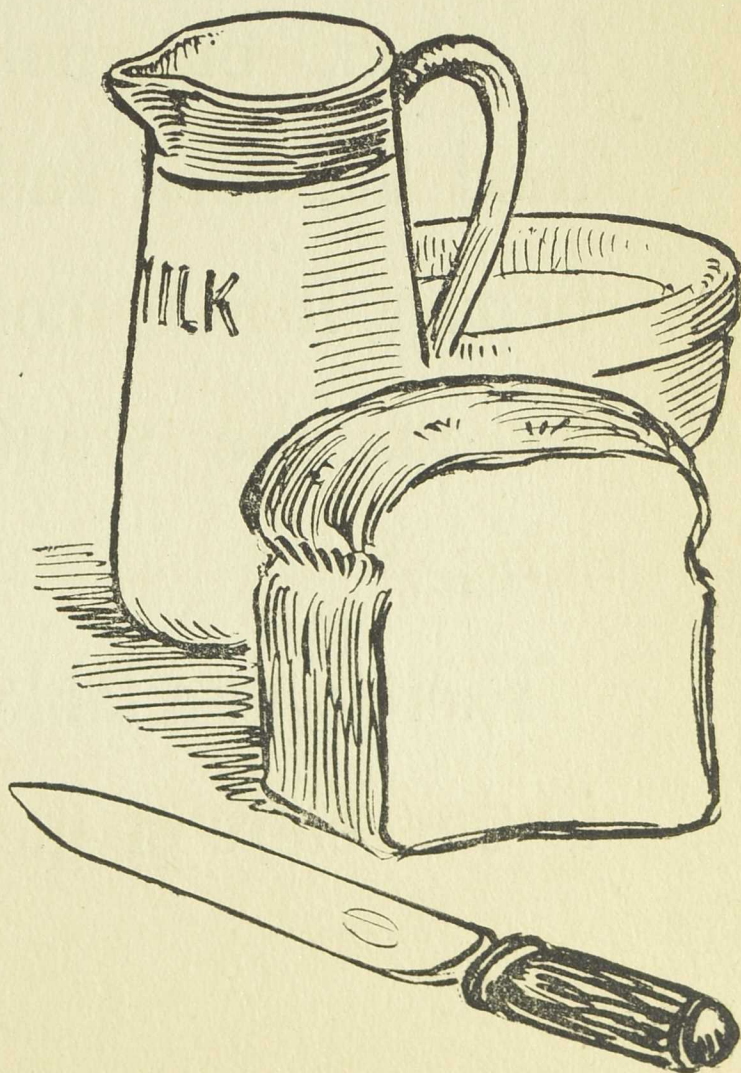
Just when she was beginning to think it was quite time to turn back, to her great

surprise she saw a little cottage standing all by itself in the centre of the wood.

“Why how funny,” said Golden Locks, “whoever lives here, such a long way from the villages and the farms?”

There was no garden, and no railing or wall round the house; nothing but just the little building standing by itself.

Golden Locks stood looking at it for some time, expecting that somebody would be sure to come out, and she hoped when they did that if she

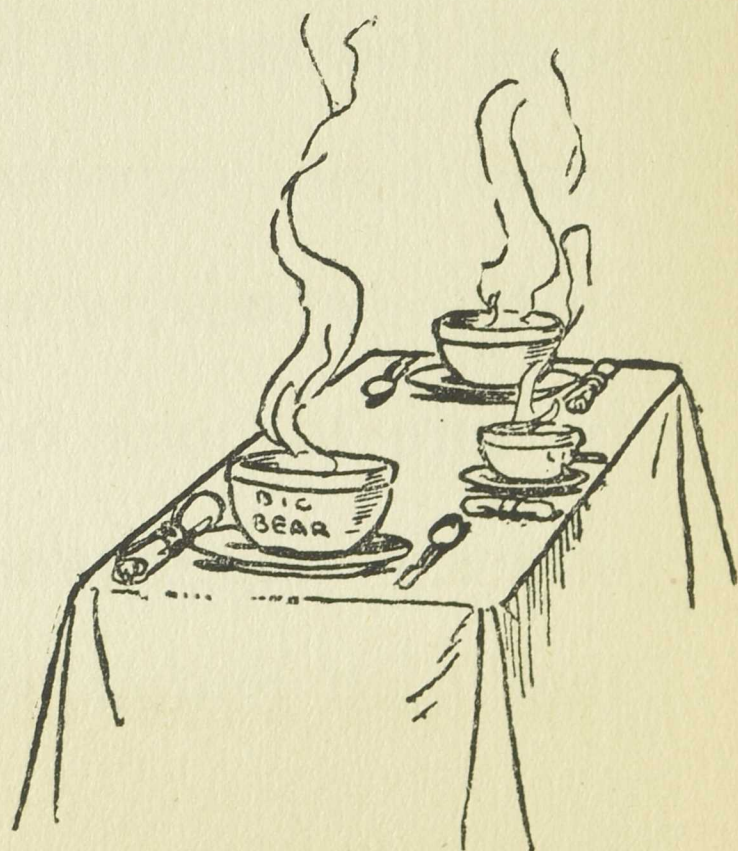


asked nicely they would give her some milk, and a piece of bread and butter, for she was feeling dreadfully hungry.

However, as she saw no one, she went and peeped in at the window. It looked very nice and cosy inside, so she decided to knock at the door.

She knocked, and knocked, and knocked, but nobody came; so she tried the door, and finding it was not locked, she went inside.

There was a table in the centre of the



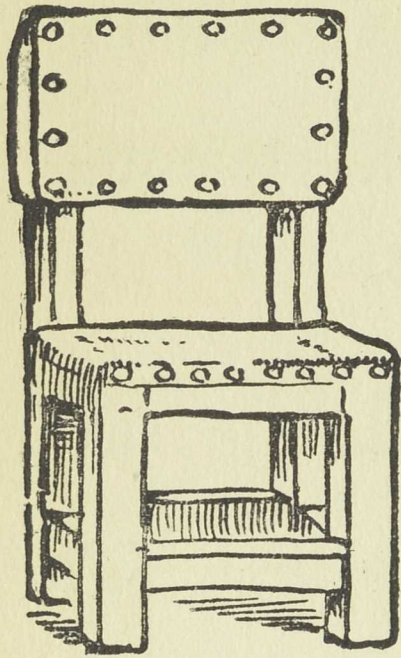


room with a clean white cloth spread upon it, and three porridge basins differing in size, filled with lovely, hot, steaming porridge:

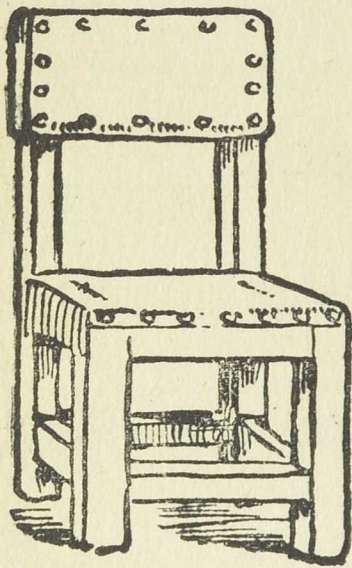
As Golden Locks looked, she saw some writing on each of the basins. On the first and largest was written "Big Bear," on the second was "Middle Bear," and on the third and smallest was "Little Bear," and round the table were placed three different sized chairs.

"Well, this is funny," said Golden Locks, "but oh, I'm *so* hungry, I must just have a taste of porridge."

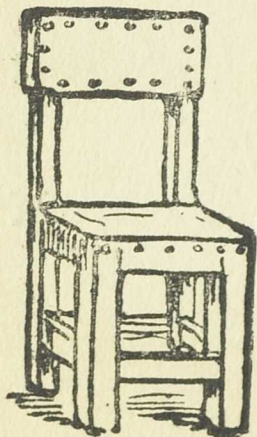
So she had a few spoonfuls out of the



largest basin, and it tasted very good. Then she tried the second, and that tasted even better. But when

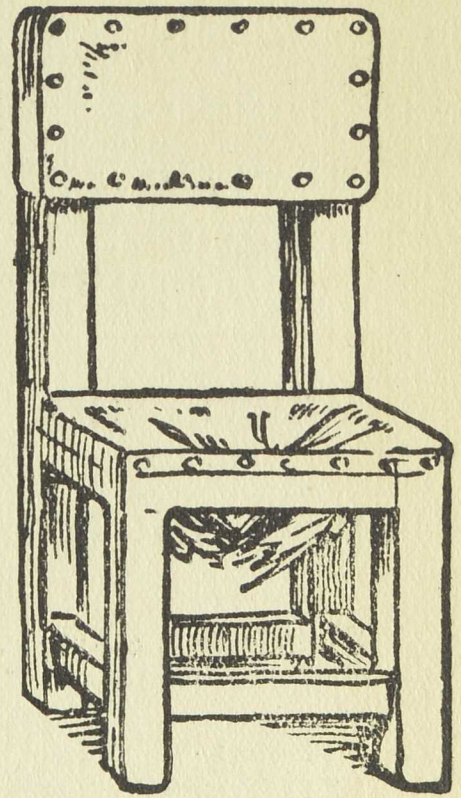


she tasted the porridge in the smallest basin, it was so delicious, and she was so hungry, that she ate it all up!



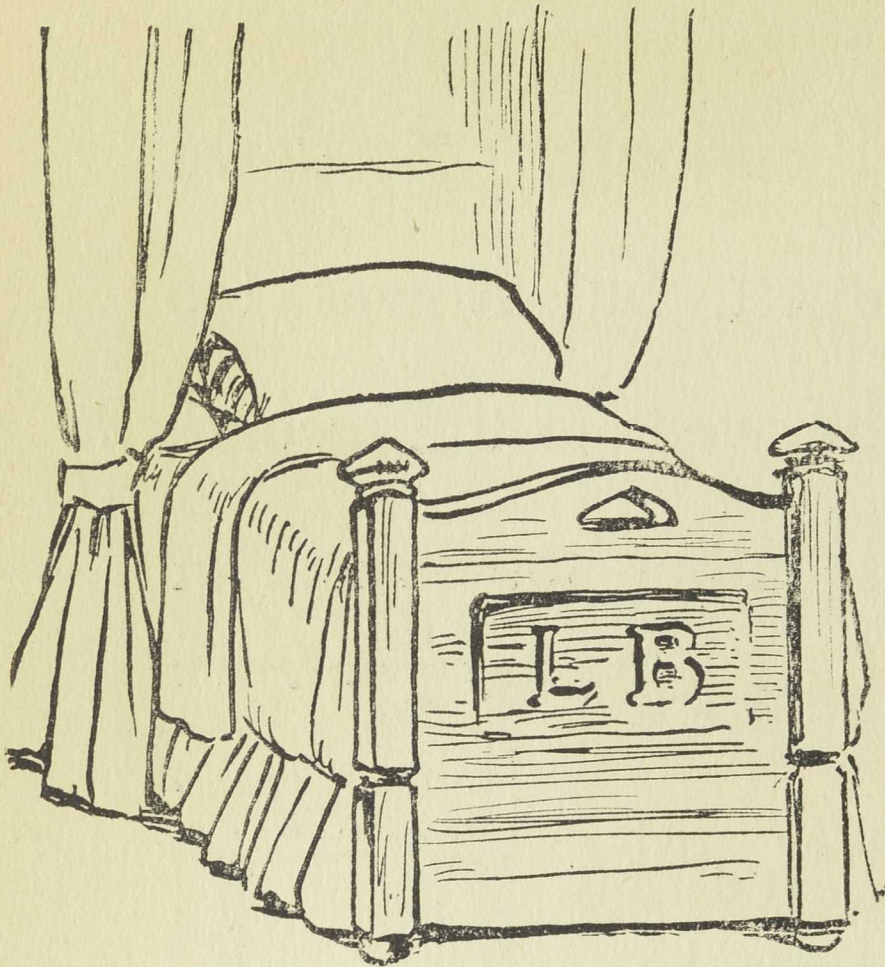
After that she felt she must see what the chairs were like, for, truth to tell, Golden Locks had more

than a fair share of curiosity. So down she sat in the largest, but it was too big for her. So she went to the second, but even that was rather too wide for comfort, so then she tried the third, and it was just right for her, but alas! she sat in it so long that it broke.



“Dear! dear!” said Golden Locks, “and I am not half rested yet; however, I will just peep into the next room and see what that is like.”

She found it was a delightfully pretty

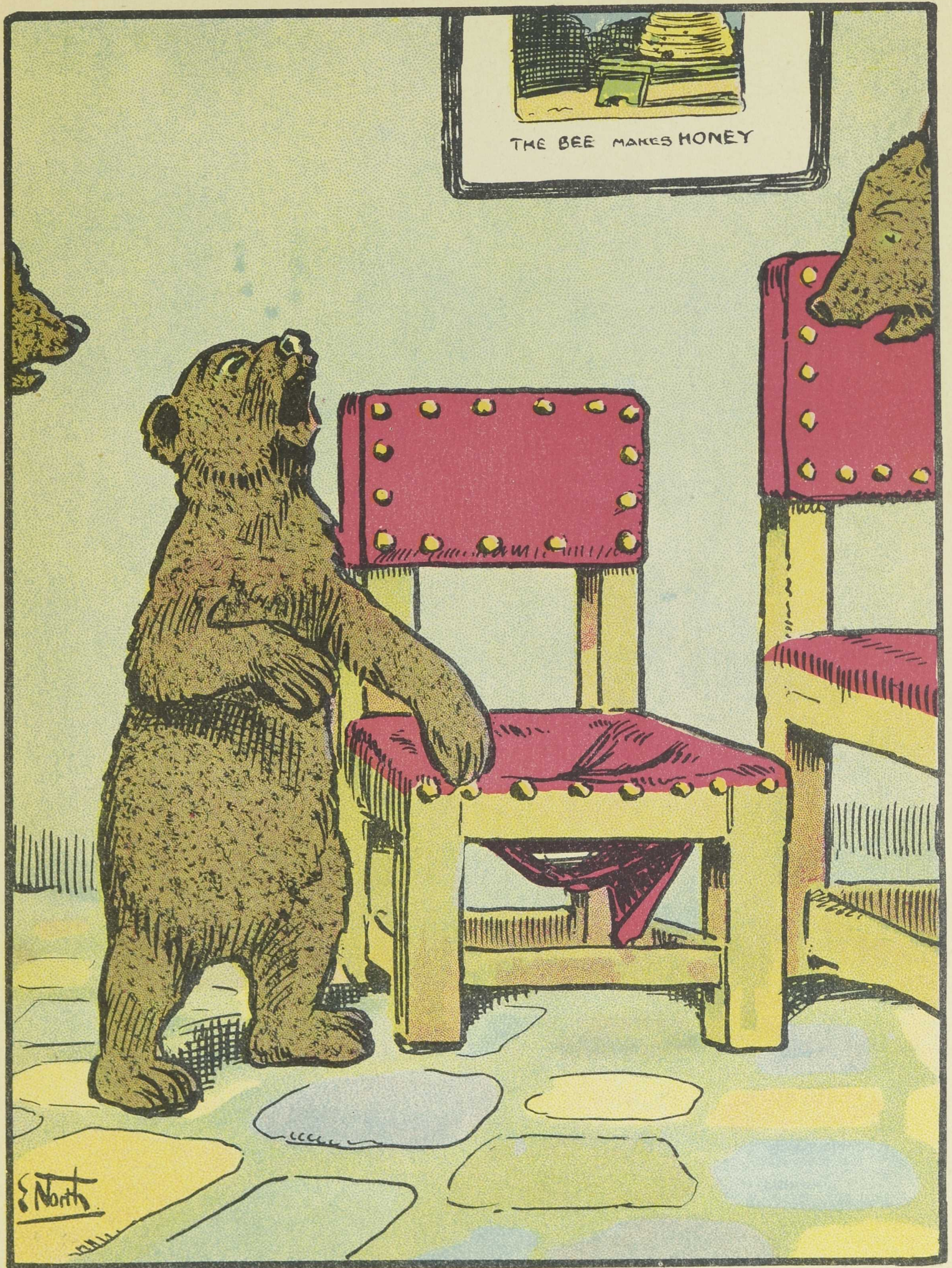


bedroom with three little beds, which, like the porridge basins and the chairs, differed in size, and, of course,

when she saw them side by side, she had to try them all.

And when she lay down upon the smallest bed it was so deliciously soft and comfortable that she fell fast asleep. And while she slept, the Three Bears came back from their walk !

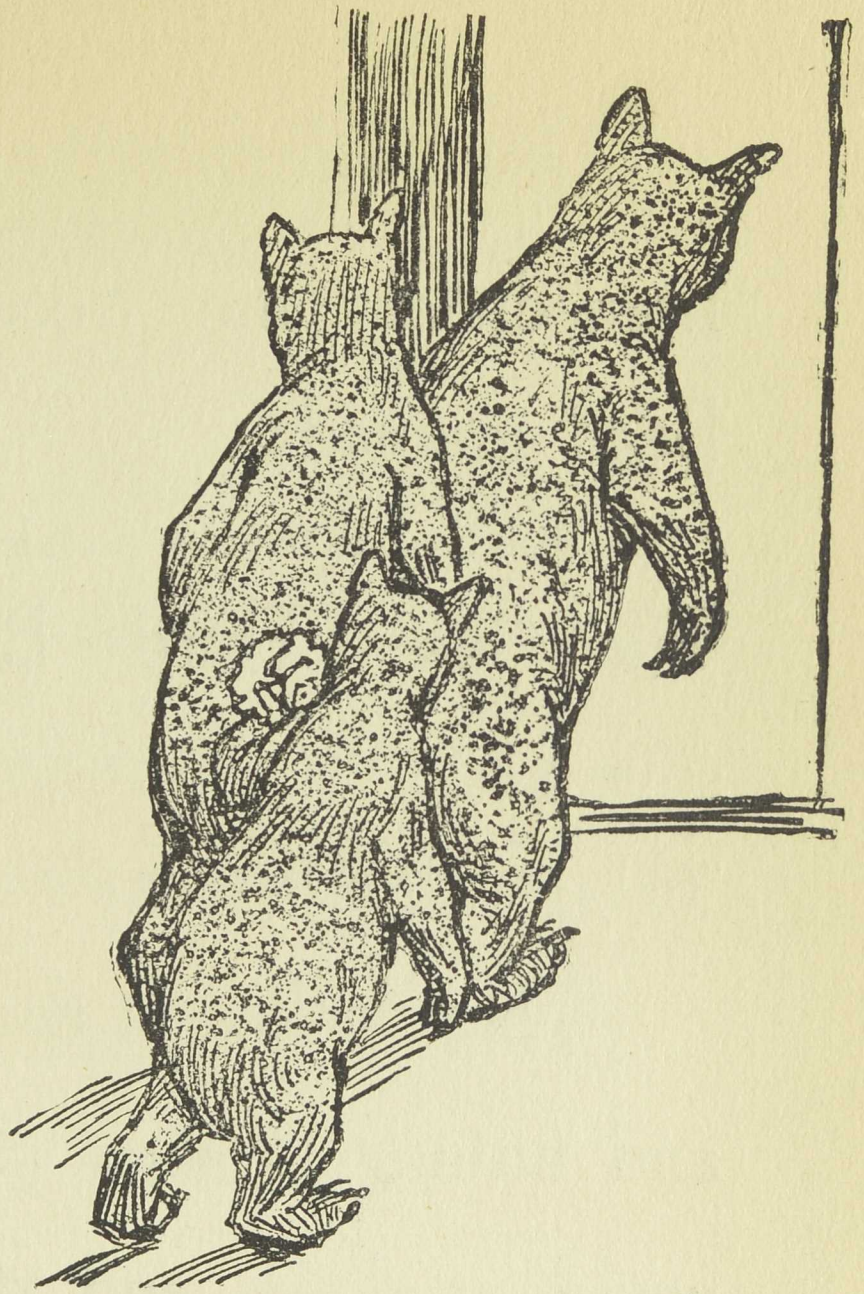
Of course, the house Golden Locks



The Little Bear burst into tears.



was in was their house, and as their walk had made them very hungry, they went straight to the table, and as soon as the Big



Bear saw the spoon in his basin, he

growled in a very gruff voice :



“Who has been tasting my porridge ?”

Immediately the Second Bear grunted:

“Who has been tasting my porridge?”

Then the Third Bear squeaked:

“Oh! who has been tasting *my* porridge and eating it all up?”



They looked at each other in dismay, and turning to their chairs, so that they could sit down and discuss the matter, the Big Bear at once noticed they were not in their usual position. At once he growled:

“Who has been sitting in my chair?”

Then the Middle Bear grunted:

“And who has been sitting in my chair?”

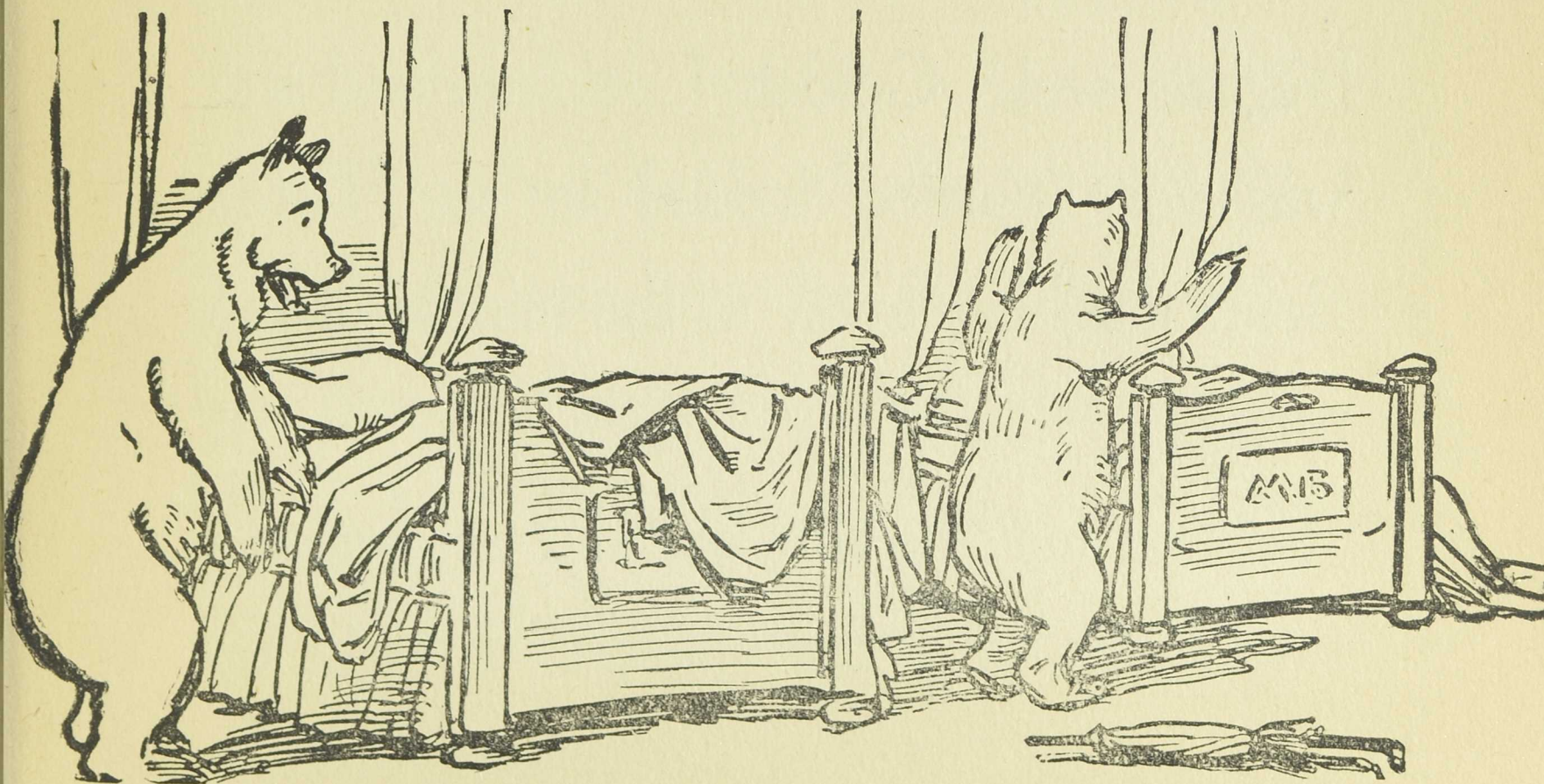


Whereupon the Little Bear burst into tears and cried :

“ And who has been sitting in *my* chair and broken it to pieces ? ”

After that they thought it was time they explored the house, so they all three marched into the next room. Immediately he saw his bed the Big Bear growled :

“ Who has been sleeping in my bed ? ”



And the Middle Bear grunted :

“Who has been sleeping in my bed?”

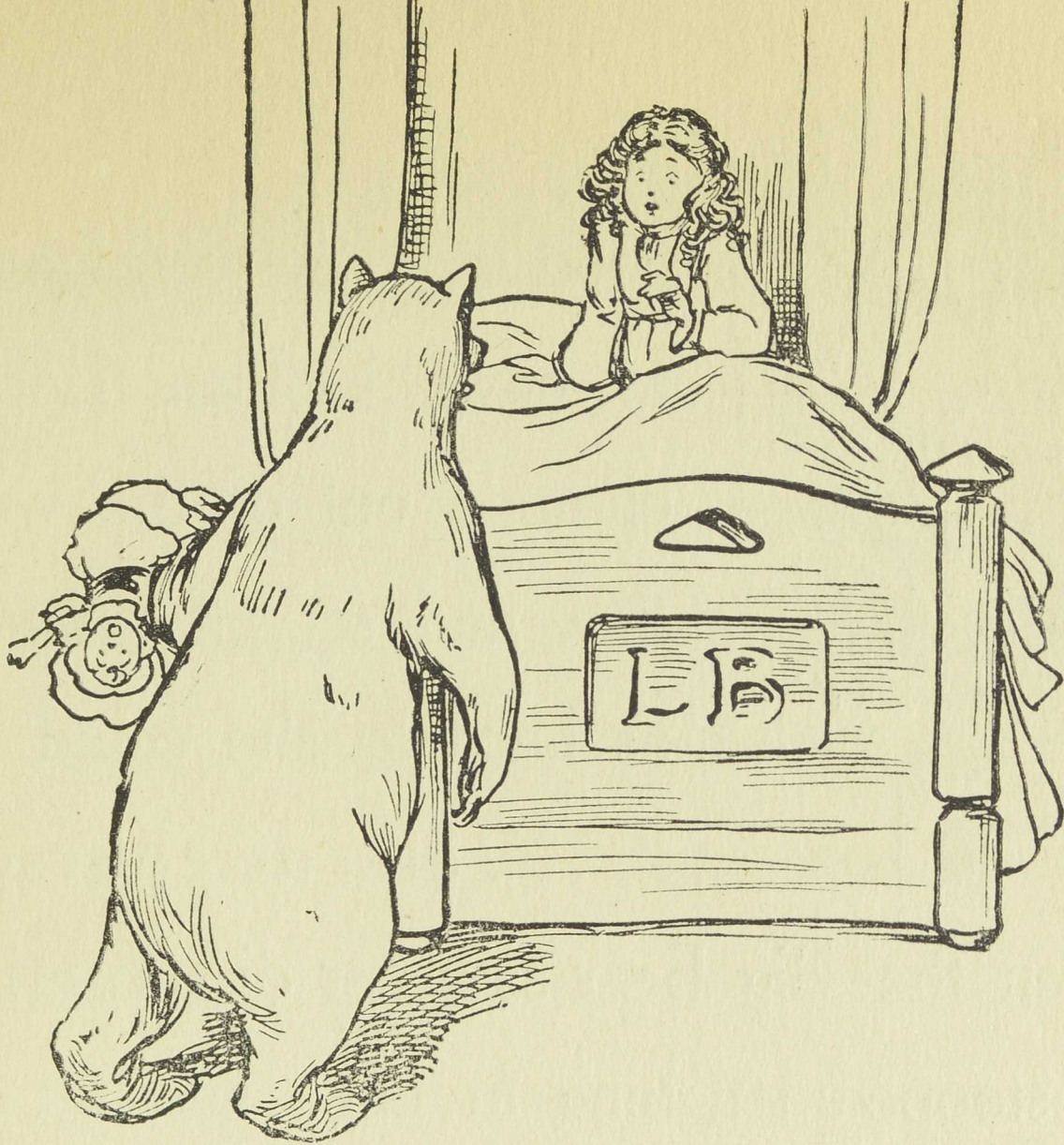
Then the Little Bear cried :

“Oh! who has been sleeping in *my* bed, and is sleeping there now?”

At this they all laughed aloud, thinking of the fun they would have when they sat down to tea with Golden Locks to eat instead of porridge!

But the sound of the Three Bears' laughter woke Golden Locks up and she was very startled indeed to see Three Bears laughing away in the middle of the room.

You may be sure she did not waste a single minute. She jumped straight up



out of bed, much quicker than she ever jumped out of bed in a morning when Nurse called her, and she ran straight to the open window, for she could not get to the door without passing the Bears!

And whilst those Three Silly Bears stood there laughing at the thought of the



good tea they were going to have, Golden Locks climbed out of the window and set off running as hard as she could.

Well, of course, when the Big Bear saw her disappearing he stopped laughing at once and set off after her, but he was so very fat he stuck in the window and could not move either in or out. And this prevented the Middle Bear and the Little Bear from getting out either, and they were so cross with the Big Bear for blocking their way, they forgot all about trying the door.

Little Golden Locks ran through the wood without waiting to look back, and down the steep hill towards the village. She ran so quickly that she lost her hat, but you may be sure she did not wait to pick it up! And she ran so quickly that she never looked where she was running to, but that made no difference because of course she ran straight home!

But I don't think she has ever been into the wood by herself since that day, and I know she



*never* goes into other people's houses now without being invited.

As for the Big Bear, I really do not know what happened to him. For all I have ever heard, he may still be stuck fast in the window!

Suppose you go and look for yourselves one of these days?





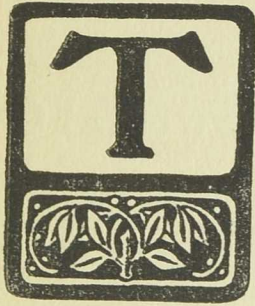
She ran so quickly she lost her hat.





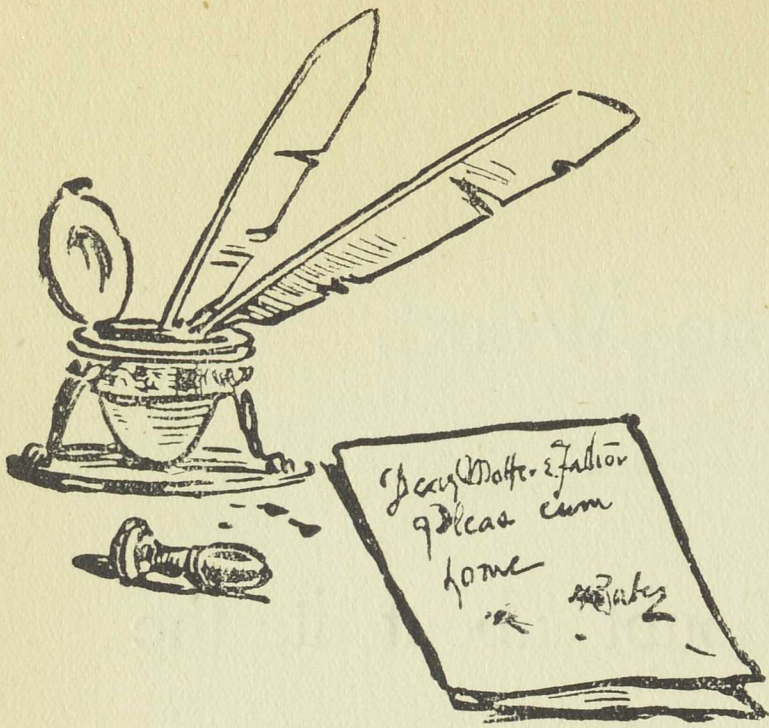
## Babes in the Wood.

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There is no doubt about it, the Babes were having rather a bad time. You see it was this way, their father and mother were in Ever-So-Far-Away, and, as everybody knows, it is never very nice when both father and mother are not at home.





“It would be all right if we could write and say we wanted them home, but uncle won’t let us,” said Boy.

“It would be all right if we could say uncle was cross, but we daren’t,” said Girl.

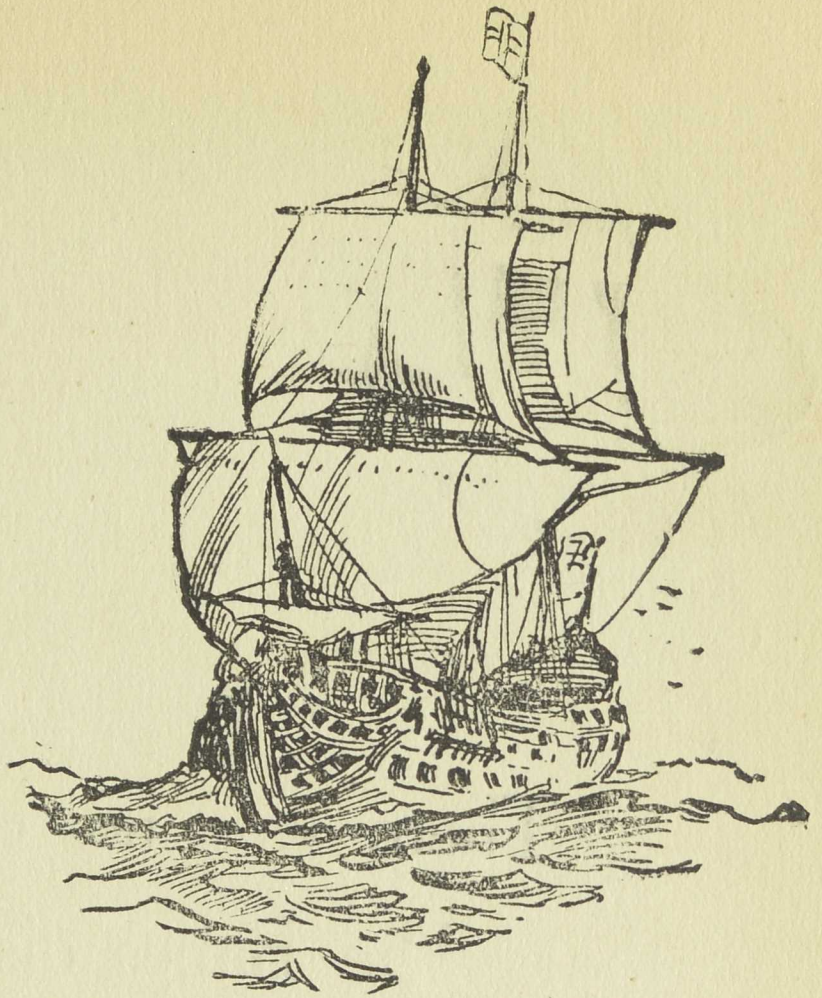
And then the Babes sighed, and felt very sorrowful.

Everybody called them the Babes when they did not say Boy or Girl, and

it seemed as though they had no other names.

When their parents went away in a big ship, they left Boy and Girl

in charge of their uncle, the Baron Wantall.



The Babes' father left a great deal of money, so that his children could have all they required during his absence.

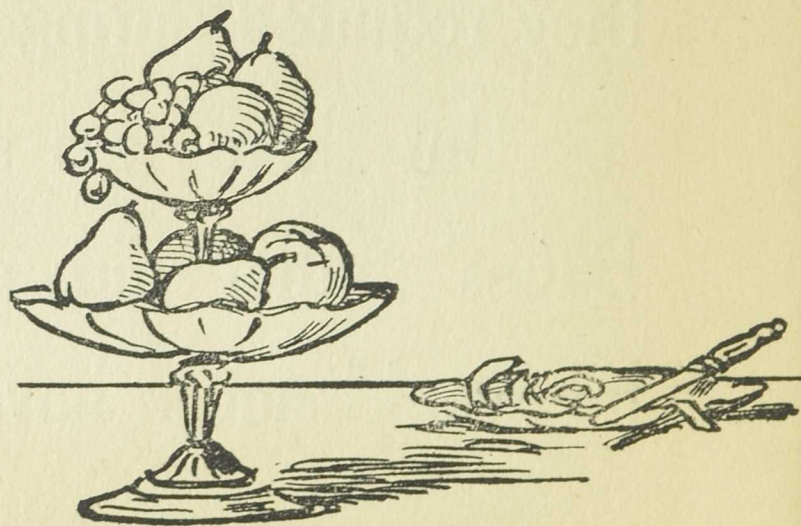
But there was something which the Babes' father did not know about, or he would never have left Baron Wantall

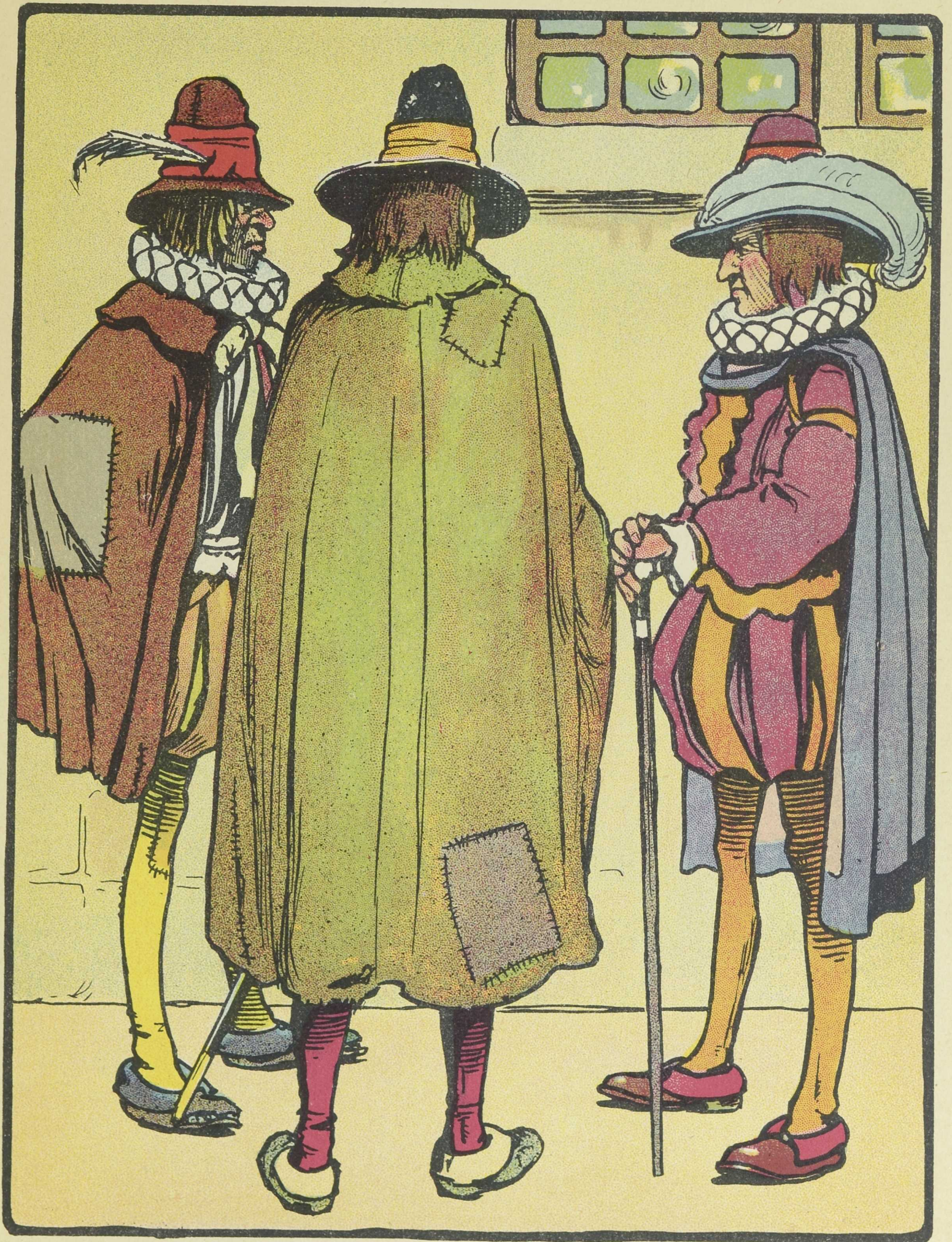


to look after his children, and that was, that the Baron was a wicked uncle!

There was no doubt at all about that. The Babes discovered it at once. *He didn't love children!* It was simply awful!

After he had finished his dinner, and dessert was placed upon the table, he went on eating all the fruit by himself, and never sent for the Babes to come





They had long cloaks with patches on them.

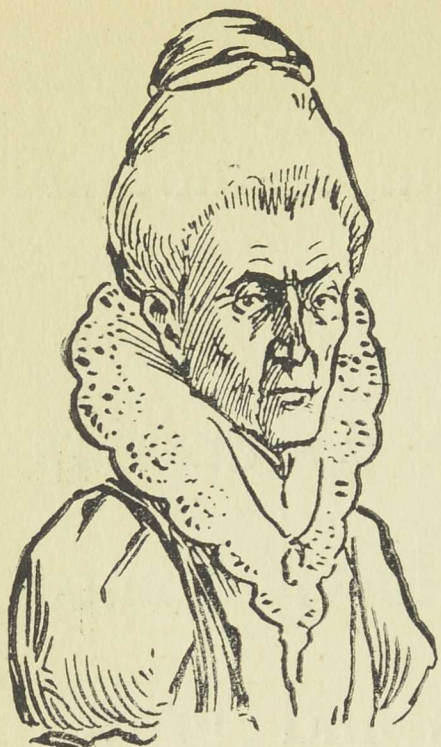


down and have some with him, as mother always did.

And never once did he go upstairs into the nursery, and have lovely romps with them, or play at bears and growl, like their own dear Daddy.

No one took them on their knees now and told them fairy tales, or cuddled them up in their arms and kissed them. Every morning, as soon as they





had finished their breakfast of bread and milk, Miss Crosspatch, their governess, came. She had been engaged by Baron Wantall to teach the children all the horrid lessons they did not want to learn! When mother taught them she made it ever so easy, and nearly like a game, but Miss Crosspatch never made anything nice.

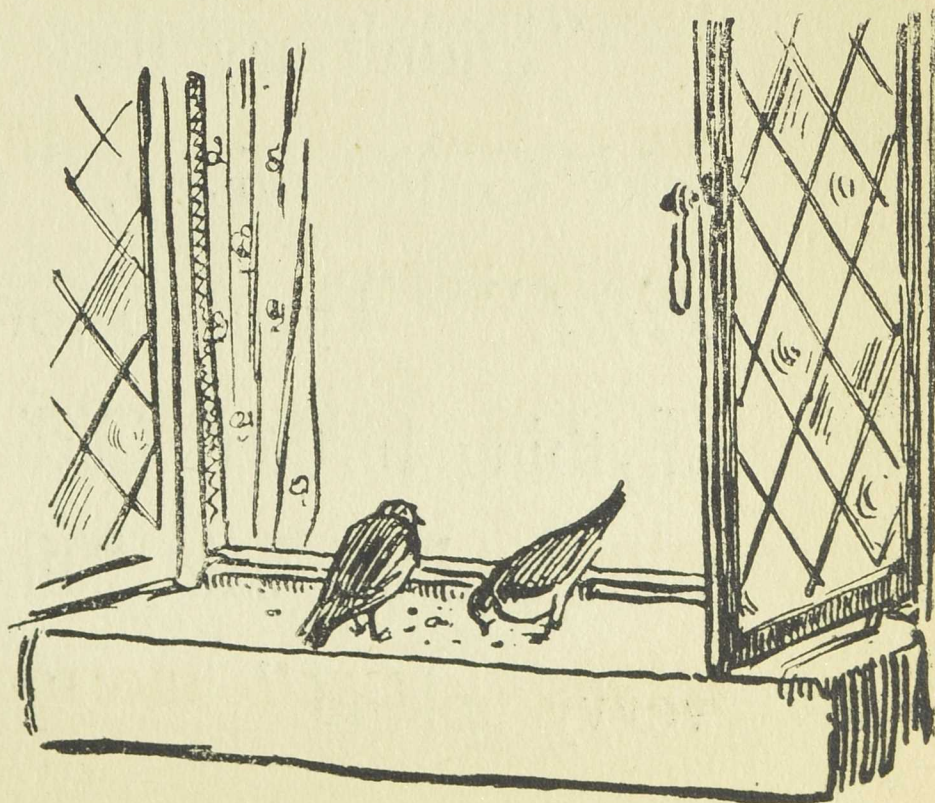
The Babes would really have been rather lonely if it had not been for the robins. Each morning after breakfast,



just before Miss Crosspatch arrived, and each evening after tea, when she went away, the Babes used to stand at the nursery window and put some bread-crumbs on the window-sill for two dear little robins.

How jolly they looked, hopping about on their slim little legs, in their smart red waist-coats.

And what a friendly way they had of putting their heads on



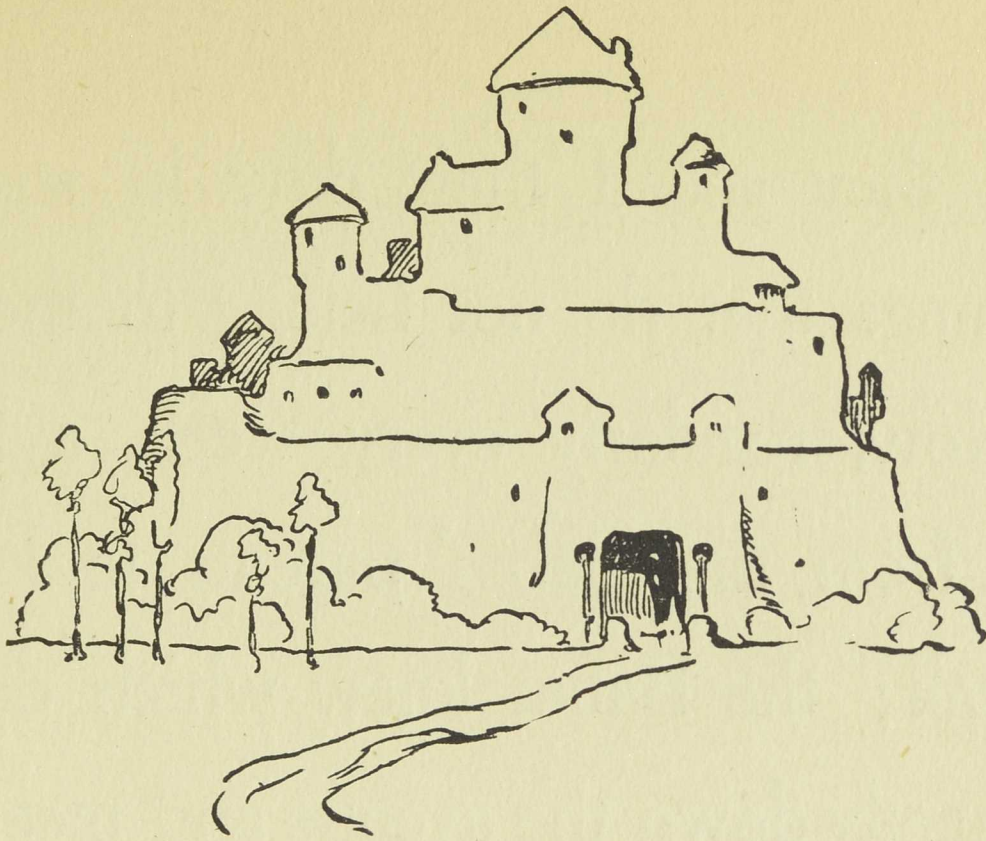
one side and gazing up at the Babes with their bright, merry eyes.

“I am sure they know us and love us,” said Boy.

“Me loves the robins,” said Girl, “’cos they is always kind to us.”

Boy laughed. “You funny little Girlie,” he said, “robins wouldn’t be unkind to people, they are too little.”

“Didn’t say they could be *unkind*,” said Girlie wisely, “me said they was *kind*.” Then, before Boy could say anything further, Girlie’s eyes filled with tears and she said, “uncles can be unkind, vevvy unkind.”



And that was only too true, for the wicked Baron was growing worse and worse. You see it was this way, he sat all by himself letting wicked thoughts come into his heart, so he grew just dreadful. He began by wishing the castle and the money belonged to him, and this was very foolish, for no one can be happy



when they spend their days in wishing for things that do not belong to them.

Now, regularly every week, a letter came from the Babes' parents to Baron Wantall; the Babes knew which day to slip quietly down the avenue and meet the postman and cry out :

“Is it there, dear Mr. Postman?”

And he would nod cheerily and hold out the letter with the queer stamp on it for the Babes to kiss, and then they would thank him and trot solemnly back to the nursery.

And when Miss Crosspatch arrived she would say stiffly :





They rode off in dismal silence.

“Baron Wantall bids me to say that your parents send their love.”

At last there came a sorrowful time when no letters arrived and the wicked uncle was quite pleased, and made up his mind that the Babes' parents were never coming back any more.

“Now,” said he to himself, “I will get rid of these children and have lands, castle and money for my own.”

So one night, when it was dark, he sent for two robbers to come and see him. Everyone would have known that they were robbers if they had come in the daylight, because they had large hats and long



coats with patches on them, and oh, they were very ugly and bad-looking. Their cloaks were torn because they always quarrelled over the things they stole, they both wanted the largest and best share.

Baron Wantall said :—

“I will give you a large sum of money if you will take the Babes into the wood and kill them.”

The robbers thought about it for a



little while and asked how much the wicked uncle would give them. When he told them, they at once agreed to do this very dreadful thing.

Next evening, just as the Babes were feeding the robins, they were told that





their uncle wished to speak to them. So, feeling very surprised, they went down-stairs hand in hand.

“Perhaps,” said Boy, “he is going to give us a pear, like Daddy.”

“Perhaps,” said Girl, “he is going to tell us a bedtime-story, like Mother.”

They were both astonished to see two queer looking men with their uncle, wearing very shabby clothes and looking very cross.

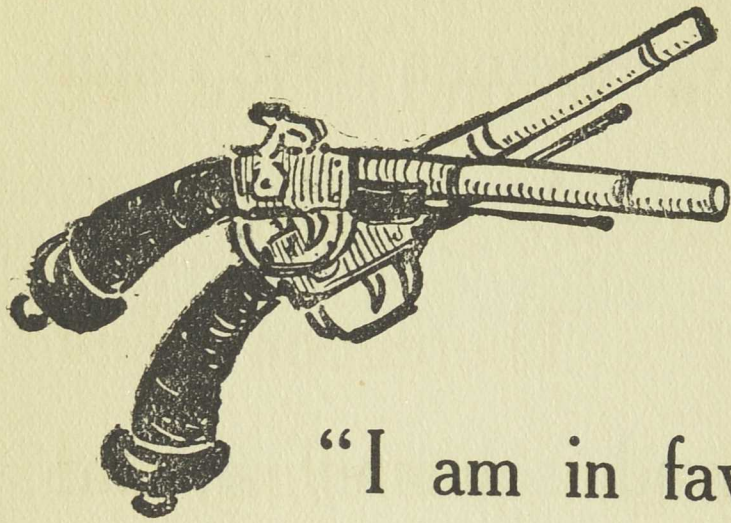
They were still more surprised to hear their uncle say :—

“These—er—um—gentlemen have come to take you a ride into the woods to—er—to—pluck flowers.”

The Babes stared solemnly at the robbers, thinking they did not look at all like people who took children for a ride in the woods.

However, they put on their hats, and then each robber set one of the Babes on his horse before him, and they rode off in most dismal silence towards the forest.





Suddenly one  
of the robbers  
said:

“I am in favour of shooting!”

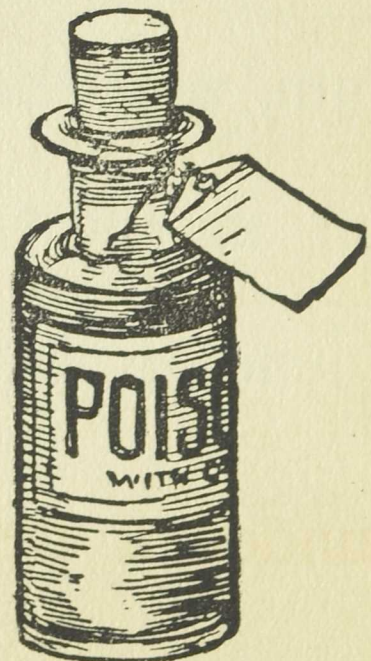
“Nonsense,” growled the second,  
“shooting is too noisy.”

“Then,” said the first, “I shall decide  
upon drowning!”

“Bah!” replied the second, “ponds  
are too wet.”

“Ah,” cried the first,  
“we will administer  
poison!”

“We wont,” snarled



the second, “’cos we haven’t got any!”

Thereupon they began quarrelling, and in a few minutes they dismounted from



their horses and the poor Babes stood together, very frightened, under a tree,



and saw them having a terrible fight.

Whilst they were fighting, the first robber was so cross he just whirled his sword about anywhere, so the other robber ran his into him, and he fell down unconscious.

Then the second robber took the Babes and both the horses and set off further into the forest. After a while he mounted one horse, gave a whip to the other which set off through the wood at a quick gallop, and waving his hand to the Babes he rode away leaving them alone in the dark forest.

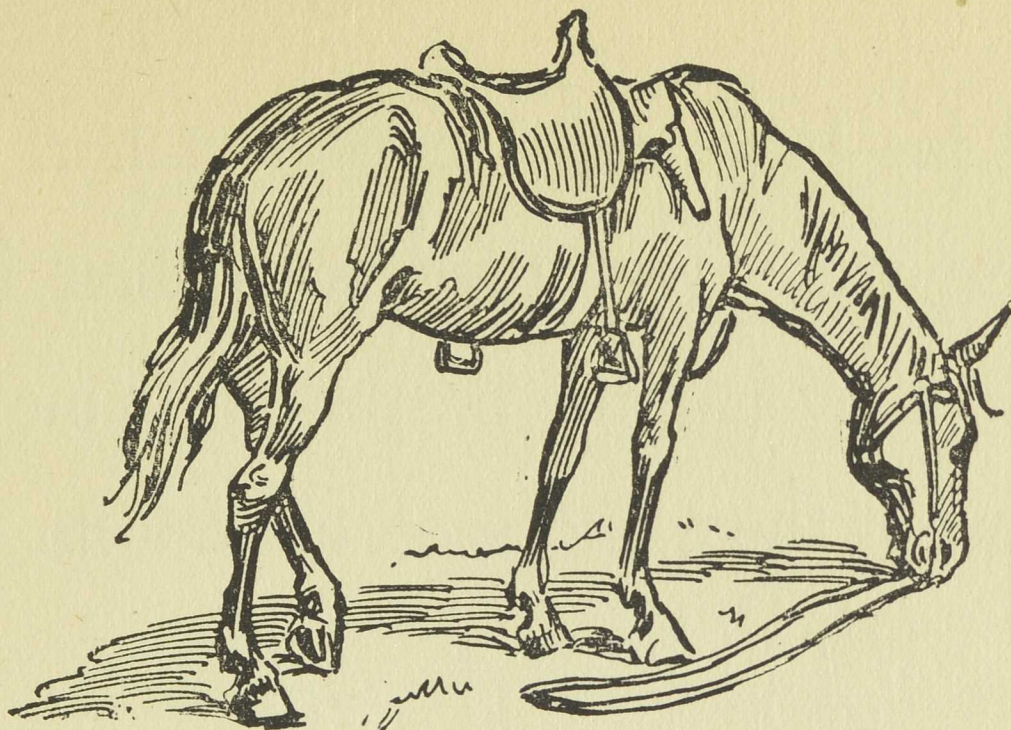
It was long past the Babes' bedtime,



The Babes stood together under a tree.







and the sun was hidden behind his cloud-curtain, so they felt very lonely all by themselves.

As it was very cold as well, they lay down under a tree and cuddled close together to keep warm.

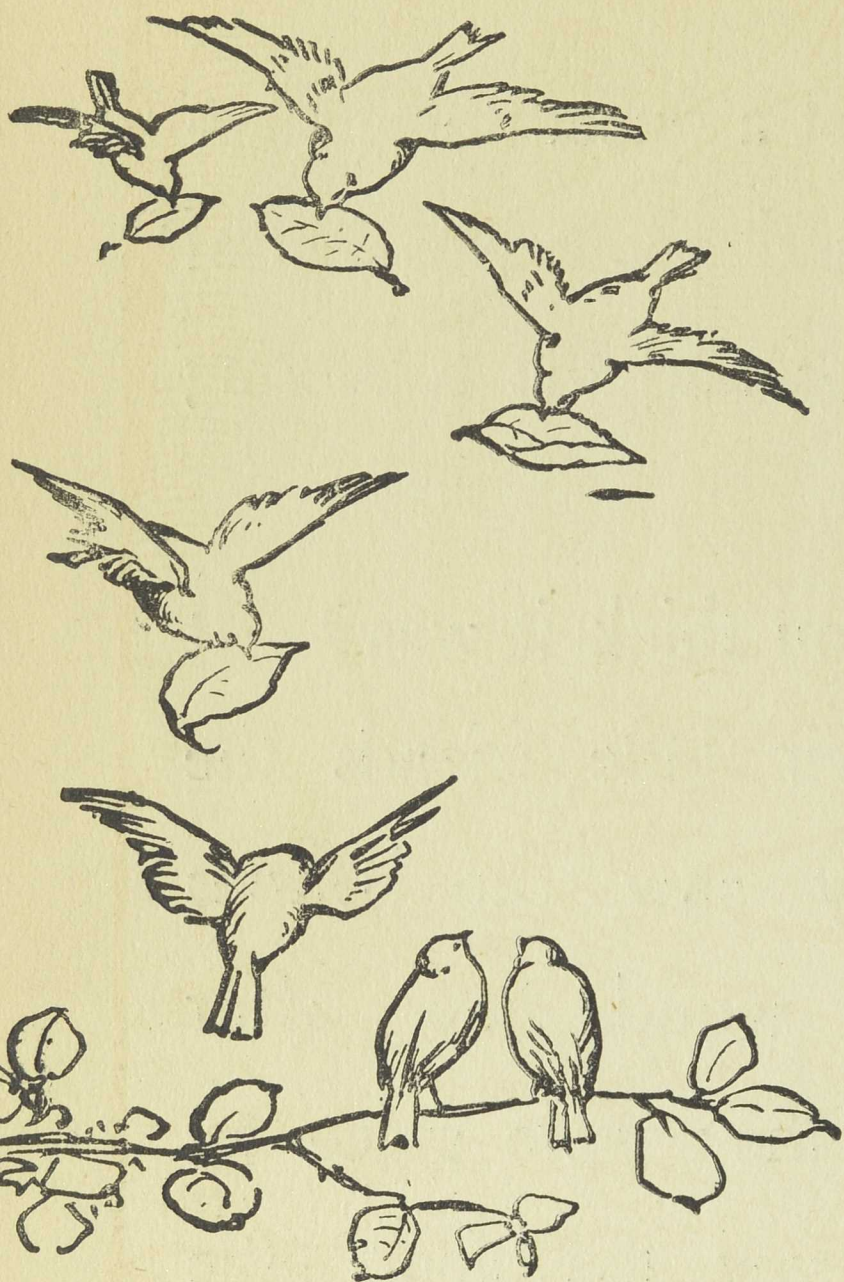
Poor Girlie was frightened, so Boy had to pretend to be very brave, though he did not feel it, but he put his arm

round his little sister to protect her, and as they were very tired with their long journey, they said the prayers their mother had taught them and soon fell asleep.



And as they slept a queer thing happened. The air round about was full of the fluttering of wings and the twittering of birds.

And what do you think it was? It was just this. Their little friends the robins, when they saw the Babes riding off into the wood, flew after them to see where they were going to. And when they saw the poor little children lying down in the cold, they fetched all the other robins they knew and they brought leaves in their beaks and dropped them down upon the two Babes to keep them nice and warm.



Early next morning the parents of the Babes, who had returned, after many adventures and shipwrecks, from Ever-So-Far-Away, came riding through the wood.

They were so surprised to see two little curly heads under a heap of leaves, and still more surprised as they discovered that they were their own dear Babes!

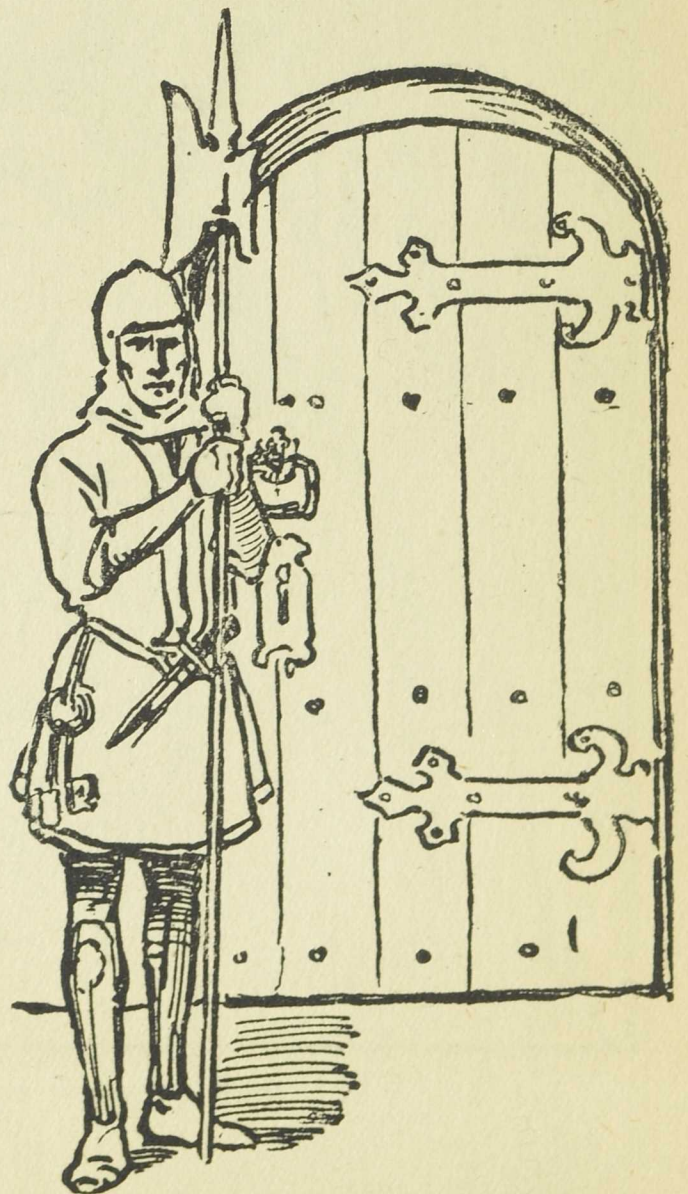


They were surprised to see two little curly heads under a heap of leaves.

They put their arms around them, and kissed them such lots and lots. Then they lifted them upon their horses, and rode home to their beautiful castle.

It was a terrible thing for the wicked uncle when he saw the parents ride up the avenue with the Babes!

He was shut up by the Babes' father in a prison, which had only one little window, high up, and one very hard and uncomfortable stool to sit upon.







He was shut up in prison.





And there Baron Wantall was left all alone, with only dry bread and water to eat and drink, until he was sorry for

what he had done.

But the Babes and their parents had lovely times together. There never were such games played as their Daddy played, nor such wonderful tales of adventure as Mother told.

They heard about the things that happened in Ever-so-Far-Away, and of the terrible shipwreck that prevented their

parents from sending the letters the Babes used to look out for so eagerly. And when Mother told about the howling wind, the flashing lightning, and the roar of thunder, the Babes used to cuddle close to her with queer creepy feelings that made them tingle to the very ends of their hair !

And as for dessert, why, they had it every day ! And father made such wonderful things out of bananas and orange peel, which a queer old sailor had taught him to make ; so that the Babes had such lovely times they forgot all about the unkindness of Baron Wantall.

and the robbers who left them alone in the woods, and they lived happily ever afterwards in their beautiful castle!

And there was one thing they never forgot: every morning and evening they and their father and mother used to feed the robins with all sorts of dainties. Wasn't that lovely?

