

W. B. EERDMAN
1900

COUSIN
WILLY'S
HOLIDAYS

W. B. EERDMAN
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Mr. Lawrence

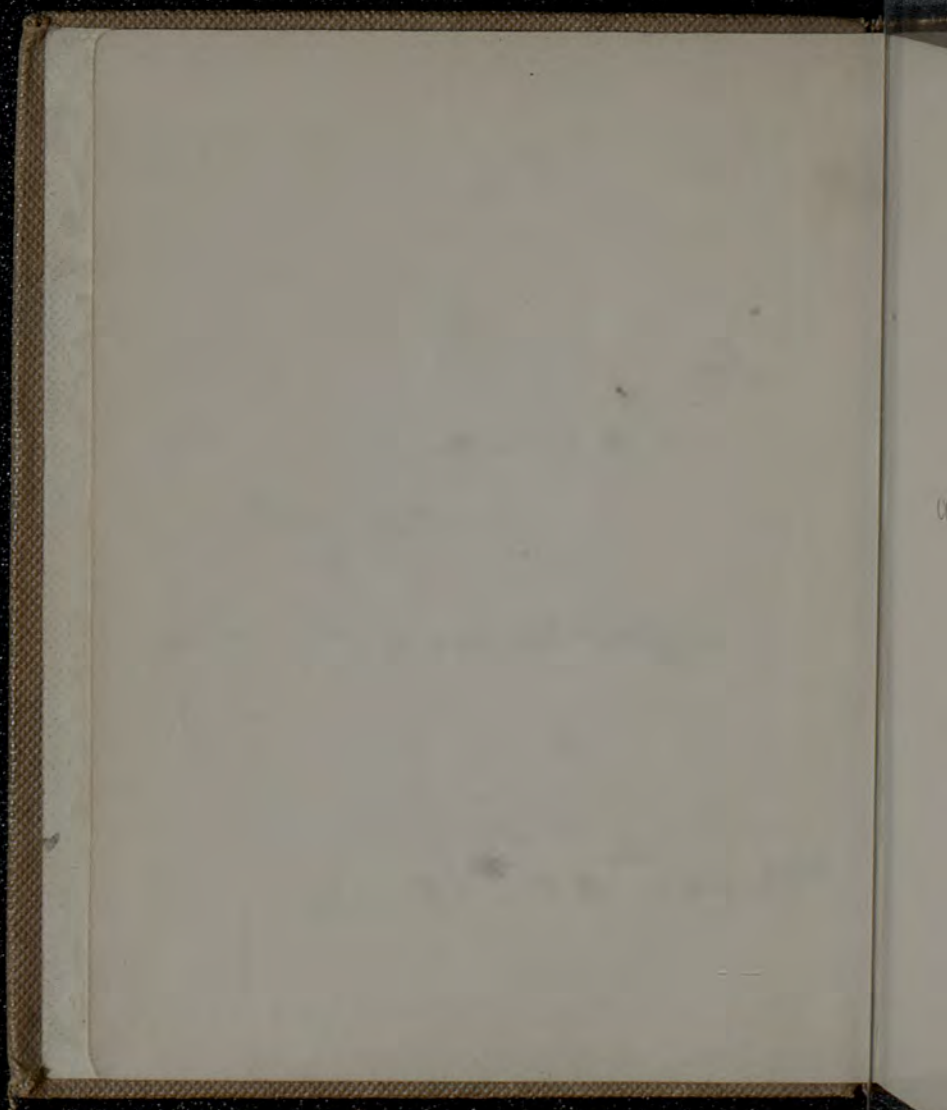
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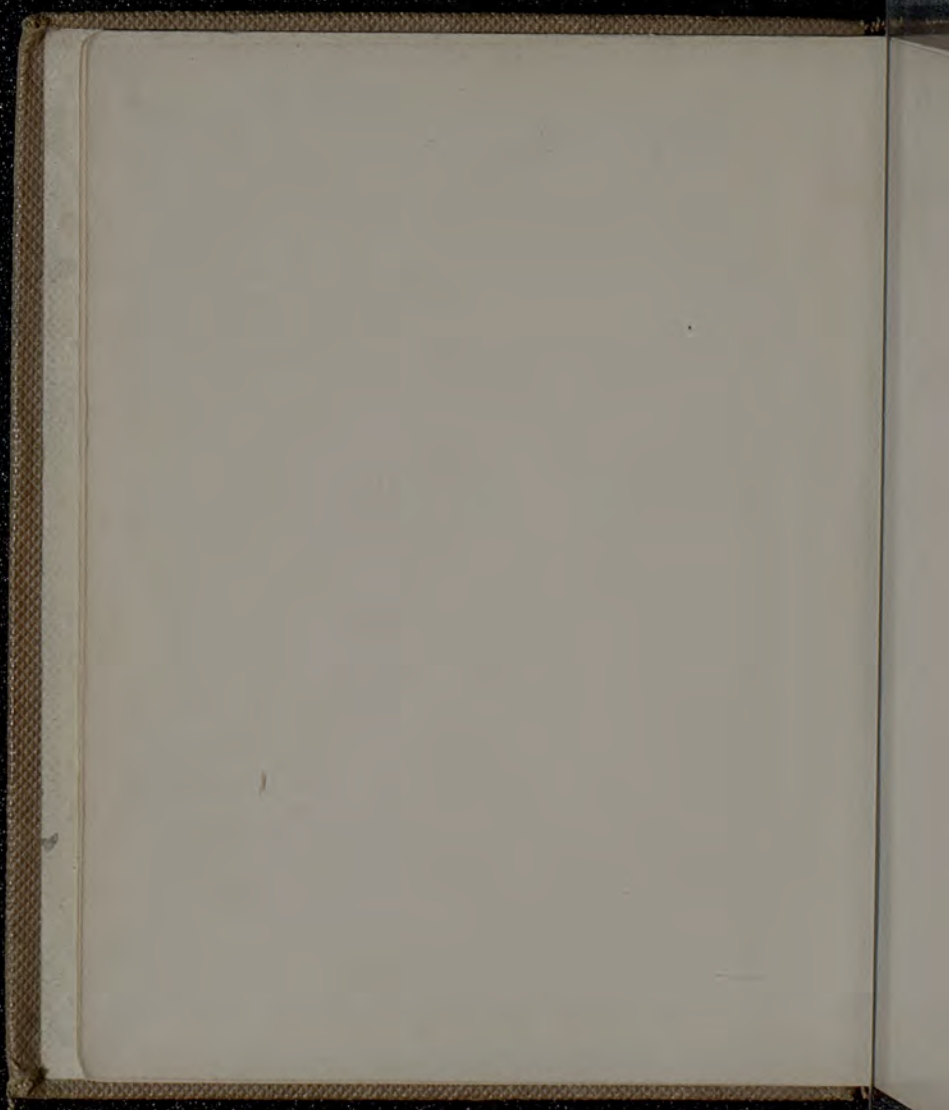
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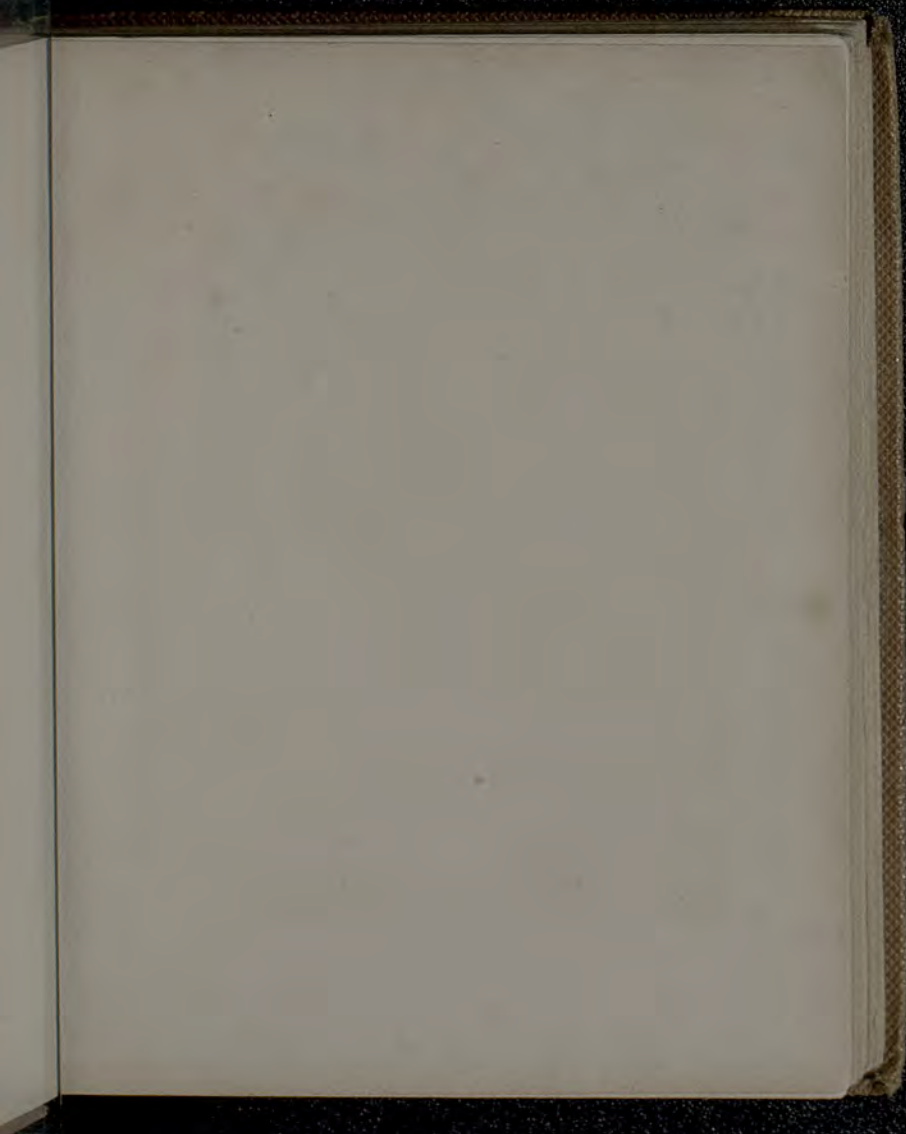
Mr. Lawrence.

Dec. 25th 1844.



COUSIN WILLY'S HOLIDAYS.







JACKS ADVENTURES

COUSIN WILLY'S HOLIDAYS.

EMBELLISHED WITH SIXTEEN ENGRAVINGS ON
STEEL AND WOOD.

LONDON:
TILT AND BOGUE, FLEET STREET.

MDCCCLXI.

LONDON:
BRADBURY AND EVANS, PRINTERS, WHITEFRIARS.

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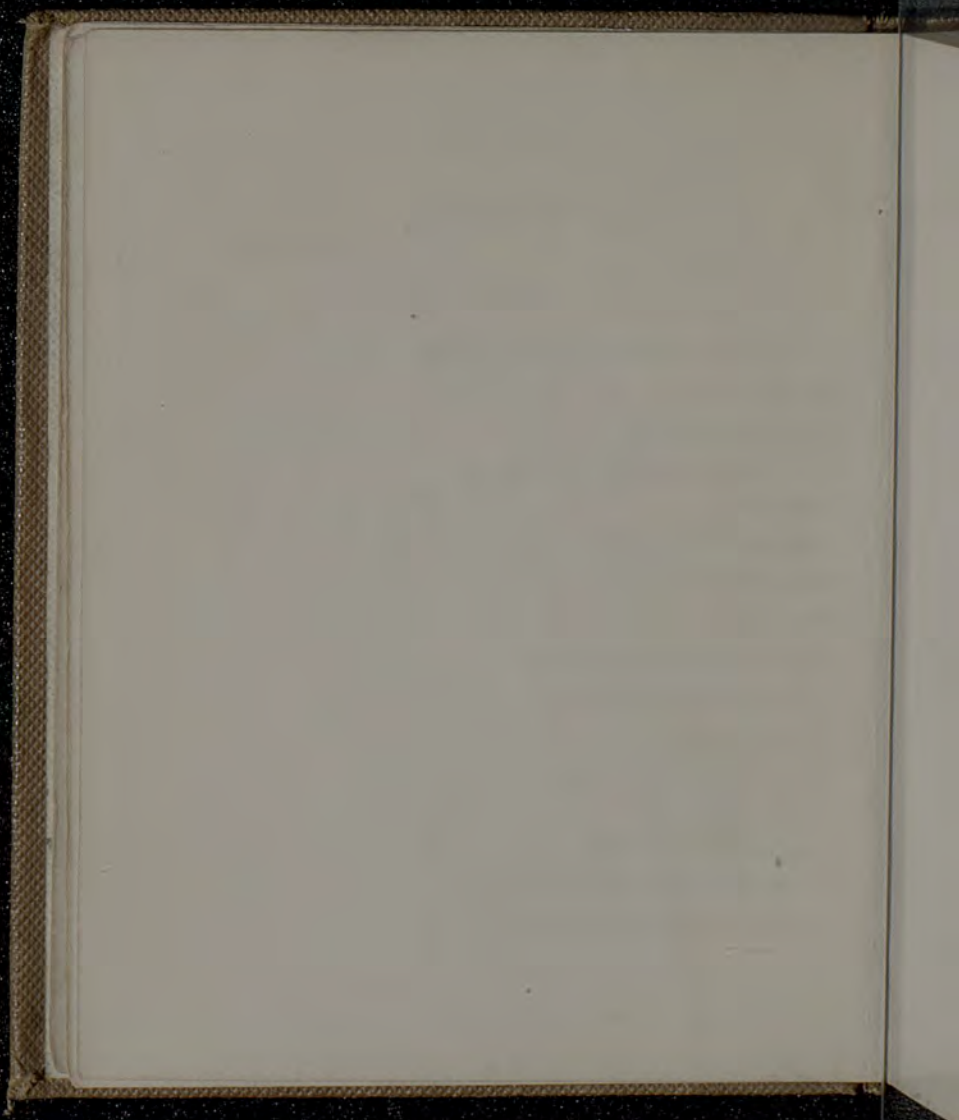
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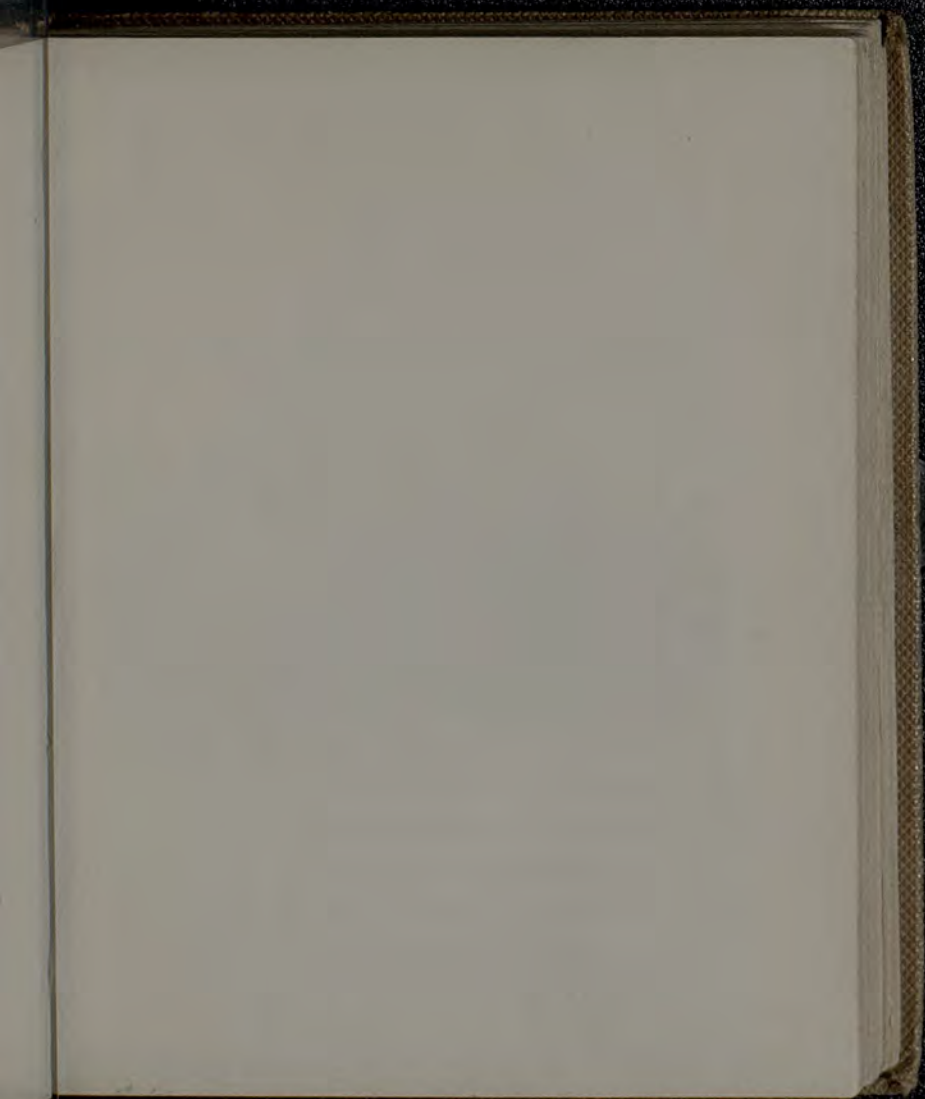
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GREENWOOD PARK.

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COUSIN WILLY'S HOLIDAYS.

CHAPTER I.

A VISIT TO GREENWOOD PARK.

THE sun never seems to shine half so brightly as it does on holidays!—so at least thought Willy, as he dressed himself on the bright summer morning which had at last arrived, when he was to bid adieu to school for a season, and to pay a long-promised visit to grandmama, at Greenwood Park. Sister Mary was to meet him there, and his two little cousins were also expected to

be of the party; though their presence was rather uncertain, because cousin Tommy, a little boy about his own age, had been ill; and though grandmama was one of the kindest of nurses, it was feared he was hardly sufficiently recovered to venture from home.

The days, which Willy had for some time been counting with most commendable exactness and perseverance, at length dwindled away, though to him it seemed with unusual slowness, and the long-looked-for morning at last arrived. He bade adieu to school, and to such of his school-fellows as still remained, with a feeling partaking more of indifference than was quite proper; and mounting the little pony which grandmama had sent to convey him to Green-

wood, he trotted along by the side of the staid old gardener to whose care he had been confided, every little while trying to seduce him into a gallop, a movement which old Jacob thought it his duty to restrain.

Greenwood, as grandmama's house was called, is delightfully situated among some fine old trees, in one of the least frequented suburbs of London. It is surrounded by a park of considerable extent, and through one part of the grounds flows a little river, which, in the summer time, imparts a delightful coolness to the atmosphere, and renders it one of the most charming retreats that can be conceived.

The school at which Willy had been placed was but a few miles distant, so that

little more than an hour's riding brought him and his attendant to the end of their journey—much sooner than Willy wished; he longed for an opportunity to try the mettle of his tiny steed unrestrained by the guiding-rein of old Jacob, and it was with almost a feeling of regret that he entered the avenue of trees which forms the approach to Greenwood Park, although at the end of it he could see grandmama and sister Mary waiting his arrival.

As he approached the house, however, this feeling was forgotten; and alighting from his pony, he flew into grandmama's arms, and kissing the dear old lady, was welcomed by her to Greenwood Park.

Willy had scarcely answered half of grandmama's kind inquiries, when sister

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Mary entered upon a minute description of Greenwood, and of the delights of the garden and the park, and begged him to come with her, and she would show him so many curiosities; dwelling with peculiar emphasis on the beauty of the little pond in which were so many gold-fish, and on the wonders of the rooks' nest which she had discovered at the foot of the garden and from which she could see the young rooks peering down at her, when she shouted below the tree; or, perhaps, they might be so fortunate—if he would go with her immediately—to see them hop along the branch to meet their mother, as she flew to them with food. Then there was the old watchdog, so gentle and so docile—Willy must first of all come and be introduced to him,

as she had told him this morning that Willy would arrive, and he would expect to see him—and off she ran, taking Willy along with her, to undergo the ceremony of introduction to old Towzer.

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M. G. B. & C.

THE LITTLE SAVOYARD

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CHAPTER II.

THE LITTLE SAVOYARD.

ON the walls of the dining-room at Greenwood hung a picture which soon attracted the attention of Willy, as it had already done that of his sister. It represented a little Savoyard boy, resting on the ground in an attitude and with an expression of the deepest distress, gazing on the lifeless body of his monkey, which lay stretched on the snow before him. At his side stood a box, which it was evident had been used as the creature's habitation, until overcome by the cold blasts of winter it had breathed its

last. Seeing them so deeply interested, grandmama said, that after tea, when they had sufficiently amused themselves for the day, she would tell them the history of the picture—which she did in these words:—

“It is now a good many years since the event, which the painter has so ably represented, took place. It was during one of the severe winters with which we are occasionally visited, when the snow lies long in the streets, and everything seems numbed with cold. Notwithstanding the severity of the weather, I had ventured out, and was returning homeward, a little before dusk, when at the corner of one of the streets, a loud sob attracted my attention. I stopped to see what was the matter, and found that it

proceeded from a little Savoyard boy, who was crouching among the snow. His eyes were filled with tears, and his heart heaved as if it would break. His hat had fallen off as he sat exposed to all the influence of the weather. I approached, and asked him what was the matter.

“ ‘Ah! madame,’ he said, in broken English, and in most mournful accents, ‘Jacko is dead!’ and again sobbed aloud.

“ I now perceived the cause of his distress. His monkey, the companion of his wanderings, had perished. I stooped down and placed my hand on its side. It was cold as ice.

“ ‘Yes, madame, it is quite dead!’ he again sobbed. ‘I nursed him in my bosom, but he would die! Poor Jacko!’

—and covering his face with his hands, the little Savoyard burst into tears.

“ I tried to calm him, and after a few minutes he became somewhat more composed. I gave him a small piece of money, and telling him to go home, desired him to come to me in the morning.

“ He came at the time appointed, his eyes still red with weeping for his poor companion, and ready, at the merest allusion to its fate, to burst into tears. Finding him intelligent beyond his age, I took him into my service, in which he remained for some years. At length I one day accidentally discovered some sketches, in which, though evidently the production of a mere youth, I thought I could perceive the traces of talent. Learning that they

were the productions of Pietro, I made further inquiry about them, and found that nearly all his spare time was occupied in drawing. I showed some of his sketches to a friend, and finding that he estimated the boy's talents very highly, I determined to do all in my power to assist him. I procured for him a situation in the house of an eminent artist. His new master soon found him so useful that he employed him entirely in his studio or painting-room, and by degrees Pietro, the little Savoyard boy, by his talent, intelligence, and modest behaviour, raised up kind friends and patrons, who were both able and willing to assist him. Two winters ago he went to Rome, to study the works of the great painters of former times ; and to show that

he did not forget his first patron, he last summer sent me this fine picture, in which he has so prettily represented the death of his monkey."

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CHAPTER III.

A FRESH ARRIVAL.

EARLY next morning, almost immediately after breakfast, a coach drove up to the door, and out stepped cousin Tommy, and his sister Jane. This was delightful. Tommy, who, as has been already said, had been ill, was still pale; but the activity of his movements, and the brightness of his little black eyes, showed that he had quite recovered.

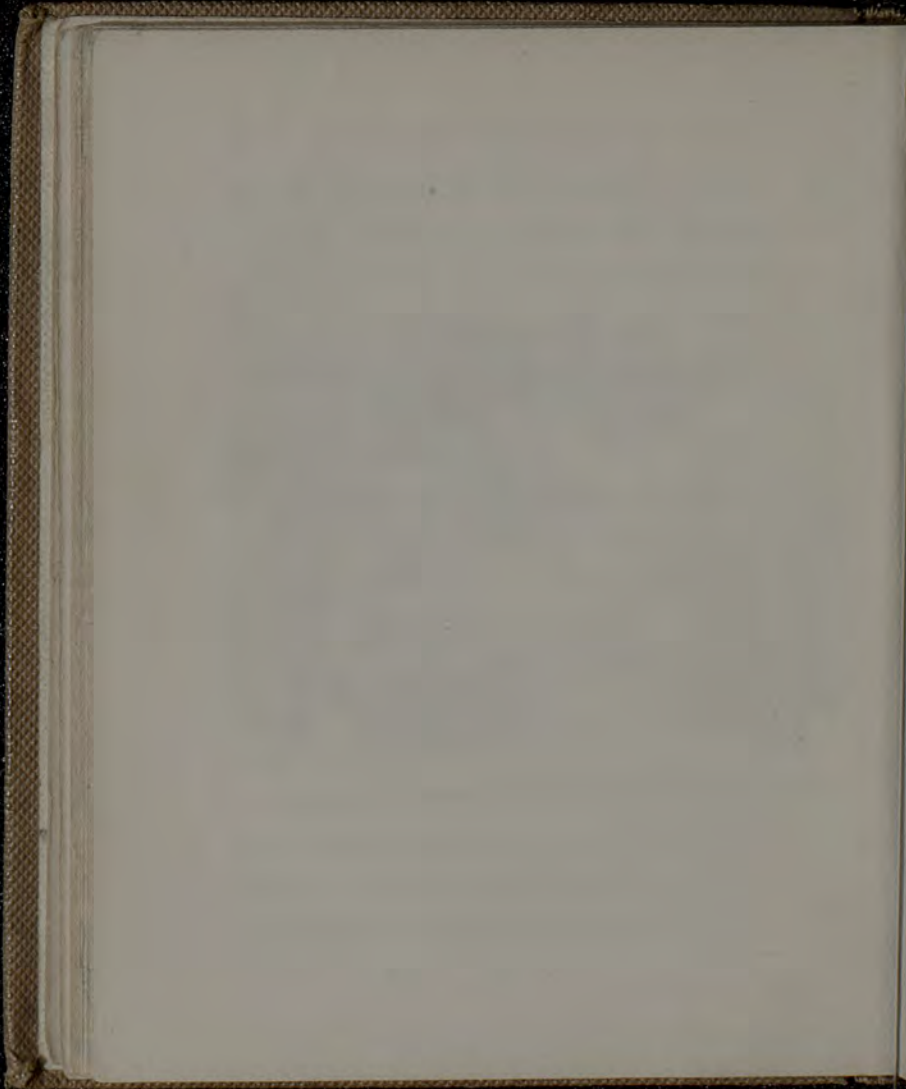
Surely not even amid the ten thousand homes of the city of London, were there four happier hearts than this morning met

in the parlour at Greenwood. Mary was no less anxious to show the delights of Greenwood to the new comers, than she had been to Willy; and away they ran, first to the garden, to see the gold-fish and the rooks' nest, and then to old Towzer to be formally introduced to the faithful old watch-dog. Much to the chagrin of the whole party, however, they found on their arrival at the foot of the garden, that the rooks' nest was gone. A wicked boy had, during the night, climbed into the tree and carried it off, so that not a vestige of it now remained.

As they approached Towzer's kennel the well-known voice of sister Mary roused him from a nap, in which he was in the habit of indulging in the forenoon, so as to make



THE ROBBERY OF THE ROOKS' NEST.



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up for his watchfulness during the night. He rose up hastily ; and whether it was that he was rather annoyed to have his slumbers thus early broken in upon, or it was altogether Tommy's timidity, at the sight of such a big dog, and the noise of the chain, as he drew it after him out of the kennel, the little boy was too much frightened to go near him, and retreated to a safe distance, hardly daring to look behind him, till he had almost reached grandmama's door.

" Oh here comes an old friend of yours, Tommy !" said Jane, as they saw an aged beggar advancing up the avenue. " You will now have an opportunity to give him something."

" It is old Samuel," remarked Mary ;

and in the same breath inquired, "Have you seen him before?"

"Oh yes," said Jane, "as we crossed the common, this morning, we saw a little boy, with a basket under his arm, relieve him, and heard him utter so many blessings on the little boy's head, that I suppose Tommy was desirous to secure some too, for he wished that all his pocket-money had not been locked up, that he might have given him something also."

"Tommy will have many opportunities," said Mary, "for old Samuel is a pensioner of grandmama's, and calls regularly once a week at Greenwood."

By this time the old man had approached. He was clothed with a loose sort of great-coat, which was secured round his waist

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by a leathern belt, and here and there bore evidence of the poverty of the wearer. His hair and beard were white with age, and he advanced slowly and feebly, leaning on a staff. As he approached he doffed his hat, and respectfully saluted the little party. Tommy in the mean time having procured his pocket-money, dropped a small piece into old Samuel's hat.

"Thankee, my master!" said the old man, as he seated himself on a rude seat, which stood before the door of Greenwood, to wait the convenience of his benefactress. The little party drew round him, while he tried to amuse them by his conversation.

"What is that which hangs round your neck, Samuel?" asked Willy, as after a few minutes' conversation, their chat became

more and more familiar — pointing to a badge which the old man wore, and which was all but concealed by the folds of his coat, “It looks like a medal, such as we wear at school.”

“Ah, master!” said Samuel, “I got that in a severe school, in which I learned lessons that I shall never forget!”

“What school was it?” asked cousin Willy.

“I will tell you, master! Did you ever hear of the battle of Corunna, in which the gallant and brave Sir John Moore lost his life?”

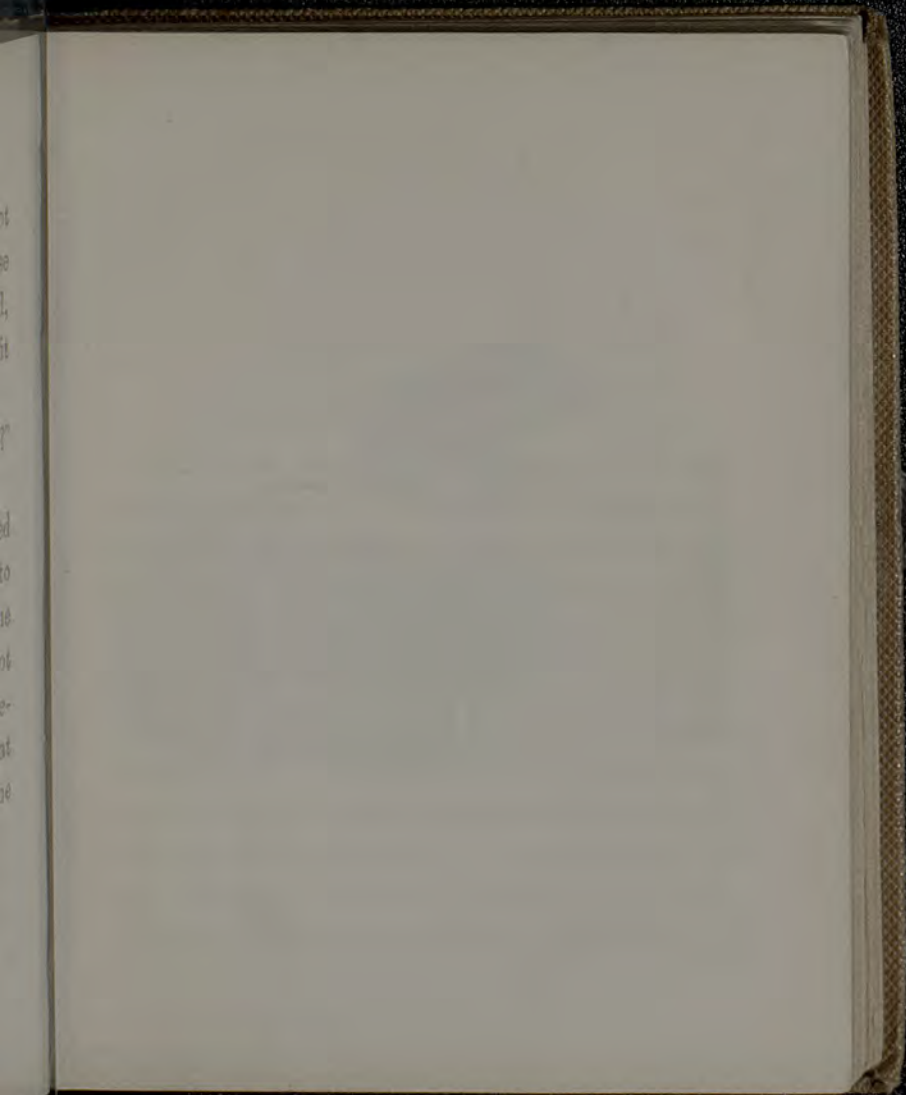
“Yes,” said Willy, “I have. It was during the Peninsular war, was it not? I have read of it in the History of England.”

“Yes, master, it was,” said Samuel. Well, then, I suppose you know all about the sufferings our brave soldiers endured in the dreadful retreat. Our regiment formed the rear-guard; and for several days, during the hottest of the pursuit, was continually exposed to the attacks of our assailants. We kept them at arms’ length, however, and allowed the rest of the army to retreat undisturbed. But it was hot work; never a day passed but we had half-a-dozen skirmishes, and as for sleep, we had no time to think of it. So well pleased was our gallant commander, that when the campaign was over, he ordered a medal to be struck, and distributed to each of his regiment. Poor fellows! many of them soon lost them and

their lives too on the battle-field. I kept mine, however, and would not like to lose it now. Look at it, master," he continued, taking it from his breast, and putting it into Willy's hands.

"How long were you a soldier, Samuel?" asked Tommy.

"Twenty long years, master," replied Samuel.—"And them were the times to try a man." Samuel would have gone on in this way for a whole day, had not the servant appeared with his usual benefaction, and told the young folks that grandmama desired their presence in the parlour.





THE WOODLAND RAMBLE.

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CHAPTER IV.

A WOODLAND RAMBLE.

ONE fine day grandmama, much to the delight of cousin Willy and his companions, proposed to accompany them in a morning's walk, which they had planned, along the banks of a river, at no great distance from Greenwood Park. They were all in the highest spirits—now listening to the remarks and explanations of grandmama, as one object after another attracted their attention, or afforded her the opportunity of imparting to them interesting or useful information; and now one or other of them

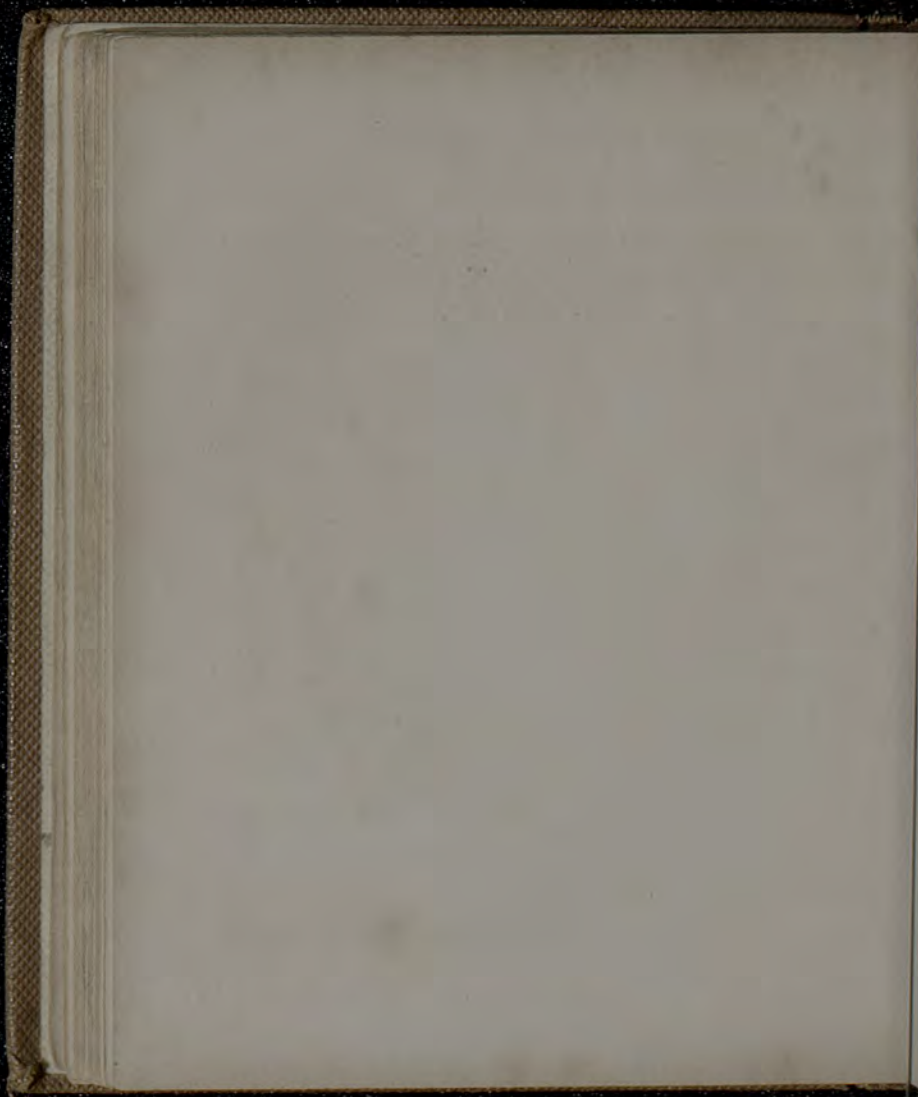
darting off in pursuit of some gilded butterfly, as it fluttered from flower to flower, which were spread profusely over their path.

Just as they arrived at the limits of their ramble, a sudden turning of the river brought them into the presence of a couple of young fishermen, who, seated beneath some overhanging trees, were with most praiseworthy assiduity attempting to induce the little fishes—which they could from time to time see dart with the swiftness of an arrow from one part of the river to another—to lay hold of a piece of bread fixed on the point of a bent pin, and thus to allow themselves to be drawn out of the water. The party stopped for a few minutes to observe the proceedings of the little anglers, but



M. C. C. & Co.

THE YOUNG FISHERMEN



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whether it was that the presence of so many persons frightened away the fish, or that they were uncommonly shy, they had no success while the little party looked on, and seemed very much relieved, when, at grandmama's request, they again began to move homeward.

“Is it gold-fish, such as there is in the pond at Greenwood Park, that are caught in the river, grandmama?” asked Tommy.

“No, love,” said grandmama; “the gold-fish is not a native of our English rivers, and is only to be found in ponds in which they have been placed, and even there they soon die, unless tended with care. The gold-fish is, I believe, a native of China.”

“It is probably minnows,” remarked

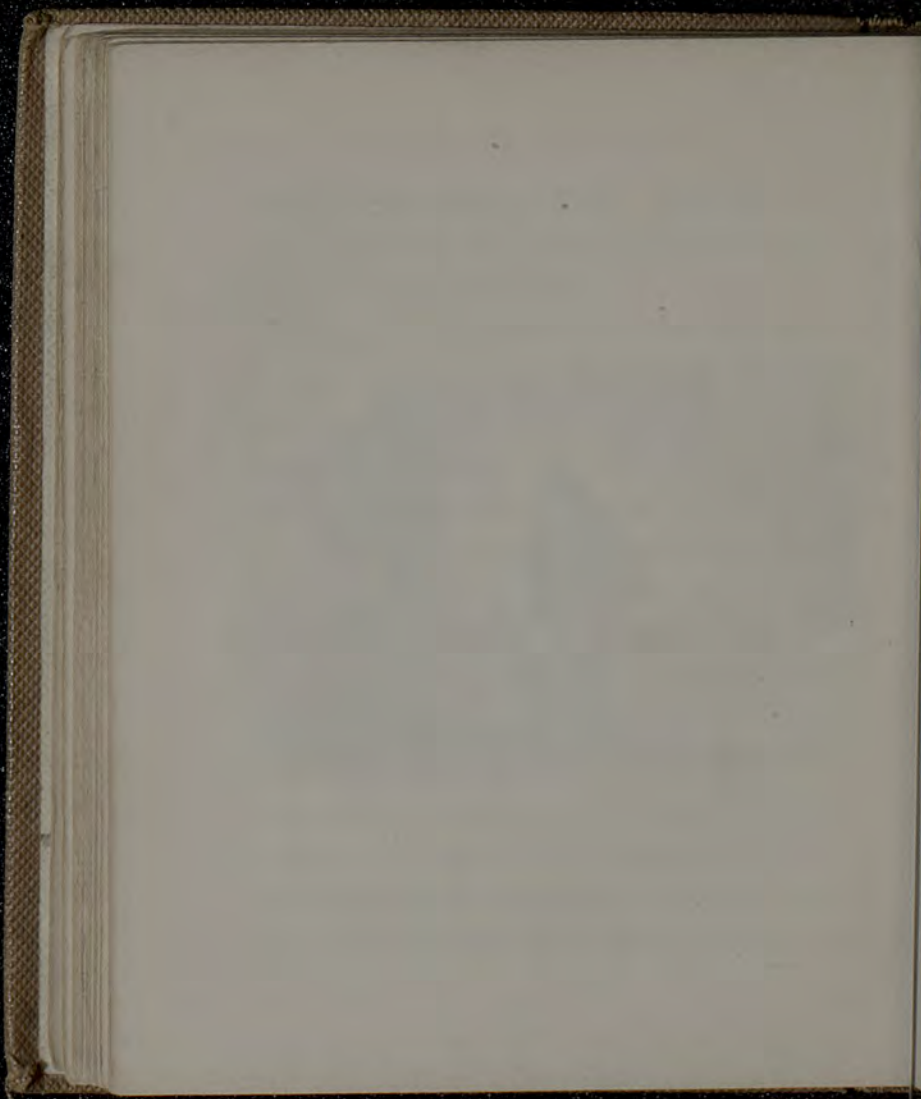
Willy, "or perhaps dace. It is these, at any rate, that the boys at school catch, when they go a fishing."

Another turn of the river brought them in sight of an experienced angler, and they were fortunate enough to see him catch a fine trout. Willy and Tommy were delighted; but they could not at first understand how it was that the man could stand so long in the cold water, till grandmama pointed out to them, that he wore large boots, which being water-proof, enabled him to remain in the river as long as he pleased, without being wetted.

Mary in the mean time had lagged behind, picking up such wild-flowers as attracted her notice, by the brightness of their blossoms; and she and Jane came running up



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with quite a handful of pretty flowers. Grandmama was delighted to see amongst them a quantity of one of her greatest favourites—the bee-flower. Seating herself on a verdant bank, she pointed out its beauties to her grand-children, and showed them the striking resemblance which the flower has to the bee, from which it takes its name; and repeated to them the following lines, addressed to the flower :—

“ Bright insect-seeming flower ! Thou art indeed
Of thy gay family a curious child ;
When first I met with thee, up-springing wild,
Hard by the path where did my footsteps lead,
How caught with admiration did I stop,
And cull thee from amidst the grassy spires !
One might have thought thou wert some vagrant bee,
Erst mark'd by Flora, settled on a stem,

Who sportively, the quaint device to see,
Transform'd the insect to a floral gem ;
Still springing fresh through all succeeding years,
Gay as thy sister flowers—bright as thy wing'd com-
peers !”

There was not a flower in the whole collection that was not an old acquaintance : the names of many of them Willy knew, and sister Mary could tell those of a few—among others the buttercup, a solitary blossom of which she had discovered lingering even so late, close under a hedge row. Grandmama was astonished to see one so late in the season, as they generally burst into bloom almost ere the first mild breathings of spring. She reminded Mary of some pretty lines which Miss Strickland had taught her, and asked her to repeat them :—

“ Welcome, little buttercups,
 Oh, the pretty flowers !
Coming ere the spring-time
 To tell of sunny hours.
While the trees are leafless,
 While the fields are bare ;
Golden glossy buttercups,
 Spring up here and there.

Welcome, little buttercups,
 Welcome, daisies white ;
Ye are in my spirit
 Vision'd a delight.
Coming ere the spring-time,
 Of sunny hours to tell ;
Speaking in our hearts of Him
 Who doeth all things well ! ”

By this time the bouquet was completely exhausted ; and the little party resumed their walk homewards.

CHAPTER V.

A DISAPPOINTMENT, AND ITS ANTIDOTE.

THE young folks had been so much delighted with their woodland ramble, that grandmama determined to take them in the following week to Elmwood, a little forest, a few miles distant, where they were sure to meet with a profusion of wild flowers, and where the boys would have plenty of amusement. It was intended to carry provisions with them, and to dine gipsy-fashion on the green sward in the forest.

For two or three days before the event-

ful morning, little was talked of but the projected excursion. It was, therefore, with feelings of the greatest disappointment that, the day before it was to take place, a change of weather occurred, and instead of the warm sunshiny weather which they had experienced for some weeks, a cold east wind, accompanied by frequent showers, set in. To go to Elmwood in such weather was of course impossible, and all sorts of in-door amusements were pretty well exhausted after the first day or two, and a feeling of lassitude was stealing over the whole party, when grandmama fortunately bethought her of a delightful little book of stories, which had been presented to her several years before, by an eccentric old gentleman, uncle Timothy Tomkins, as

he was called, which she recollected had afforded great amusement to the young people who then listened to them. After a little search she discovered the volume, and pulling it forth from its concealment, in which it had lain so long, gave it to sister Mary to read aloud for the benefit of her young friends. Though the book was in manuscript, the handwriting of the old gentleman was so clear and distinct, that she could make it out nearly as well as print.—It was entitled,

FIRESIDE EVENING TALES;

And ran as follows :—

In a small market town in the south of England, there formerly lived an elderly widow lady, who, since the death of her

husband, had taken a great liking to animals. She was possessed of a cat, a monkey, a mouse, and a rabbit, which she had tamed to such a degree that they lived together in great harmony. Each of them had a small house proportioned to its size, in which they spent the night, though they amused themselves in the parlour in the day-time. They were all very fond of their mistress, and frisked about her continually.

One cold winter evening, as they were sitting round a cheerful fire, while their mistress was engaged in reading, the mouse, whom we shall call Frisky, addressed the other three to the following purpose.

“It has often occurred to me,” said he, “that we should try to amuse ourselves

in some way, and not sit idle by the fire, in these long tedious evenings."

Mrs. Puss, who had listened very attentively to this speech, was the first to reply. "I think, Frisky," she said, "your plan is a very good one; but what shall we do? Suppose we play at hide and seek, as I have seen children do; one hides and the rest go to seek him."

"Nay," interrupted the monkey, whose name was Jack, "that would never do, it would not be fair; why, here is our little friend Frisky, who is so much smaller than any of us; he could hide himself in a corner, where he might lie for hours without our finding him. It would never do!"

"It would do very well, Mr. Jack,"

said Puss, a little angry, "I am sure Frisky would consent to seek only, and not hide at all."

"I would do no such thing," said Frisky, angry in his turn; "what enjoyment would it be to me always to seek, and never to have the pleasure of hiding? We must have a game in which we can all fairly take a part."

"Right, quite right, my dear Frisky," said Jack, "Puss's plan won't do."

"No, it won't," answered Frisky.

Puss was now very angry, and setting up her back in defiance, she exclaimed, "I thought you had loved me better than to behave in that manner; it was very cruel of you, don't you think so, Mrs. Mopsy?"

"For my part," said the Rabbit, "I

think it is very foolish to quarrel so. I propose that we should each give an account of our adventures. I have had some very curious ones."

They all agreed that this was a most excellent plan, and were just going to commence, when, as it began to grow late, their mistress sent them to their boxes for the night.

Next evening they again met on the hearth-rug, and Mrs. Mopsy, as she had proposed the plan, was the first to tell her story :—

MOPSY'S STORY.

"It is needless, my friends, to tell all that happened to me, when I was unable to provide for myself. I will only say that

I had the tenderest of mothers, and was one of seven young ones. When we were beginning to run about, three of my brothers, and two of my sisters, died of a distemper, which was then raging among young rabbits, and my brother Lightfoot and myself were left in a very weak condition.

“Our nest was at the extremity of a warren, close by a clover field, to which we betook ourselves, as soon as we were strong enough, and feasted most deliciously. One evening, when Lightfoot and I were enjoying our supper, he thus addressed me : ‘O ! my dear White-ear, what a dreadful thing I heard this morning, when you were visiting our sick neighbour ! I was sitting at the mouth of our hole, when two

men approached. "Does your honour know," said one, "when Lord Shot is to be here?" "No, Bob," said the other, "but I expect him next week." "O! your honour," said Bob, "what a capital shot he is! I wish he would kill half our rabbits, we have far too many, they eat up everything, your honour." "You're quite right, Bob," said the gentleman; "How many ferrets have you?" "I've a dozen capital ones, Sir." "Very well, get Tom and Joe to help you, and meet me here at sunrise to-morrow morning."

"'And now, my dear sister,' said Light-foot, 'what shall we do? We must go from this place. What *can* we do?'"

"'Why, brother,' said I, 'we must go to Sleekskin, our old friend, and ask her

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MOPSY'S ESCAPE.

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what to do. If she advises us to depart, let us go off at sunset.'

"Upon this we set off to Sleekskin's, but we were not destined to reach her hole without interruption. When we were very near it, a huge dog sprang from behind a furze bush, and, horrible to tell! seized my beloved brother, and tore him in pieces before my eyes. I ran off at full speed, and soon reached Sleekskin's. The moment I entered her abode, I fell down faint and exhausted. I recovered in a few minutes, and proceeded to the furthest part of the hole, where I found Sleekskin surrounded by nine young ones. I immediately informed her of all, and intreated her advice. She expressed much grief at my brother's death, and told me to go and

tell my friends of the dangers which surrounded us, and then to come back to her.

"I left her, but ere I had proceeded far, I fell into a trap, which caught me by the leg; it did not wound me, but squeezed me terribly. I continued there all night. 'Alas,' thought I, 'what will become of me? I shall either be torn in pieces by a dog, or put to death in some other cruel way: what shall I do? O dear!'

"I continued in this miserable state all night. About sunrise I heard voices, and in a few minutes two boys came up.

"'Here's one caught, Bobby,' said the first, 'and a capital fellow too,' he continued, taking me by the ears, and loosening the trap. 'I'll take her home, and tame her for sister Jane.'

“ ‘Tame it, man!’ said Bob, ‘who would tame it? not I, I am sure. You should let it off in the yard, and set Jowler after it.’

“ ‘No, I won’t,’ said the other, ‘unless I find a better one in the other trap: in that case, I will hunt this one.’

“ I was put into a basket, trembling for my fate, and carried a considerable way to the other trap, in which, to my great horror, I saw my dear Sleekskin. She was by no means pretty, so I knew her fate. But just as they were putting her into the basket, she made a sudden effort, and escaped.

“ ‘She’s off, she’s off,’ cried Tom; ‘Oh if we had Jowler here!’

“ ‘Never mind Jowler,’ said Bob; ‘see,

she's behind that bush, we'll get her yet!

"They ran off, without fastening the basket. My heart leaped for joy. I sprang out, and darted into the nearest hole. I listened very attentively for their return. In a few minutes they came back. 'What a pity,' said Tom, 'that the rabbit has got off!'

" 'A great pity, indeed,' answered Bob, 'but — Oh! Tom, the other's away too!'

" 'Away!' cried Tommy, 'how stupid to forget to fasten the lid; but it's of no use seeking her, she's *holed* by this time. We must return home, or our tutor will be in a fume.'

"They went off, to my great relief.

As soon as they were fairly gone, I hurried to Sleekskin's, and found her safe.

" 'O, Sleekskin,' I said, 'how glad I am at your escape!'

" 'And how glad I am at yours!' said she; 'I went out to seek for you—— but the ferrets will be here presently!'

" At these words my heart sank. I replied, 'My dear friend, I will never leave you; let us go and look about us.'

" We left her hole, and being very hungry, we proceeded to the clover field, and after satisfying our appetite, returned to her den. But how can I express my friend's dismay, when we perceived the men with the ferrets, at the mouth of her hole! At the same moment they caught sight of us, and sent two of their fleetest

terriers after us. We ran as fast as we could, but ere we had gone far, the swiftest dog seized Sleekskin. I heard her dying scream, and redoubling my speed, soon left my pursuers far behind me. After running a long time, I at length took refuge in a field of corn, which fortunately offered a safe retreat.

“I now began to consider what I was to do, and the best plan which suggested itself, was to take up my residence in a small plantation, close by. I went to it, and soon found a comfortable place in the midst of a huge evergreen bush, where I commenced digging a hole, which, as the ground was soft, I soon accomplished.”

Here Mopsy's tale was stopped by their mistress ringing the bell, and sending them off to bed.

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MOPSY'S ESCAPE FROM THE FOX.

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CHAPTER VI.

MOPSY'S STORY CONTINUED.

NEXT evening the Rabbit went on with her story.

“ I continued in this delightful retreat for more than a month, quite undisturbed, and living on clover and corn. During all that time I had only one adventure. One day I had sallied forth as usual, unmindful of danger, and after dining sumptuously, was returning homeward, when all at once I discovered that I was within a couple of yards of a hungry Fox ! Fortunately for me, he was so much engaged in watching

the movements of a crow, perched on a tree, with some tender morsel in its beak, that I darted aside, and escaped to my hole undiscovered. I was so alarmed that I feared to venture out for a day or two, but it soon wore off, and I went about as usual. At last I began to tire of having no companions, so I determined to leave my retreat as soon as possible.

“Night was fast approaching, the moon was rising over the trees, and the stars were beginning to twinkle, when I left my peaceful home. I had travelled about a mile when I was stopped by a high wall, by the side of which I went for a considerable way, till I reached a gate. I squeezed myself through the bars, and found that I was in a very extensive

garden, stocked with choice flowers. All was still, so I was 'free to roam' over the whole premises. I came to a bed of carnations, on which I had a delightful feast. But just as I was leaving it, I fell into a trap, which, like the former, squeezed me very much. I struggled, but in vain. At length, tired with my fruitless efforts, I left off all attempts to escape.

"Morning came, and with it came the gardener. He walked straight to the carnations, and there beheld me his prisoner.

" 'O, such a beauty!' he exclaimed, as he released me gently; 'this will do nicely for Master Tommy.'

" 'Tommy!' thought I, 'can it be the same Tommy who caught me before?'

"The gardener carried me to the house

door, and put me into a box which was lying there, and went away, after fastening the lid. In a short time he returned with a boy, who, opening the box, showed to my wondering eyes the identical Tommy. He recognised me too, for he immediately called out to the gardener, 'Oh! Andrew, how strange! I once had this very rabbit in a basket. I know her by the white mark on her ear. But she got off. She shan't get off now, though. I'll give her to my aunt.'

"After he had spoken thus, he lifted the box and carried me off, bidding Andrew bring some meat for me. He took me into a room, and, shutting the door, he opened the lid and let me out. I ran about the room, trying to find some hole through

which I might escape, but none was to be seen. The gardener brought in some cabbage leaves, which he gave to Tommy, who offered me one, but I refused to eat.

“‘O ho!’ said he, ‘you’re saucy, are you—you’ll get nothing else.’ He then left the room, locking the door carefully after him. I went round and round the room for some time after he left me, vainly hoping to find some means of escape, but I could not. As I now began to get hungry, I made a hearty meal on the cabbage leaves. Just as I was finished, Master Tommy came, and seizing me by the ears, put me into a box, and fastened me in. He then took it up, and carried me off. In a few minutes he put me into a carriage, beside a

gentleman, whom he charged to keep me safe. I felt myself moving along very smoothly for some time. At length we stopped; I was taken out, and presented to a lady, who, my dear friends, was our present kind mistress. You received me kindly, and I can assure you, that the happiest hours I ever spent were in your society."

They all thanked Mopsy most warmly; but now a new difficulty arose, namely, who should be the next to tell his story. Each declared for himself; and so anxious was each to begin, that high words ensued.

"I should be first," said Jack, "for I've travelled furthest."

"No," said Puss, "I should, for you're a foreigner, Mr. Jack."

"Neither one nor other should be first, for quarrelling so," said Frisky; "I should be first."

"No, *you* sha'n't," said Puss.

"Oh!" exclaimed the Rabbit; "why quarrel so? I propose that he should be first who sits longest silent."

To this plan they all agreed, and had sat quiet for some time, when Jack happened to touch Puss's tail. She called out, "Oh! Jack."

"So, ho! Puss," said Mopsy, "you're out, you're last!"

"That's for talking, Puss," said Jack.

“And Jack’s out too,” cried Mopsy ;
“so, my dear little Frisky, you had better
go on with your tale.”

It was too late, however, to commence
a new story, so the next night Frisky
began.

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CHAPTER VII.

FRISKY'S STORY.

“ I WAS introduced into this world, my friends,” said Frisky, “ in a heap of shavings in a coal-cellar. There were nine of us altogether. When we began to run about, our mother took us into the pantry, and told us to eat whatever we pleased. My brother Quick and I fell upon a bit of cheese, of which we ate most heartily. Suddenly a noise was heard. My mother called to us to run to our hole, which we did, in a great hurry. We had scarcely hid ourselves, when a tall fat woman entered,

who immediately perceived what we had been about, and exclaimed, 'The little wretches, to attack my good Stilton, of all things!' Having thus vented her spleen, she put the cheese under a glass cover, and went away. 'Come out again,' cried our mother, and we obeyed her call very readily. My brother Quick, with my sister Playful and myself, ran to the other end of the pantry, where we saw a little box, wired at one end, and with a hole at the other. Through the wires we saw a very tempting bit of cheese. 'I am hungry yet,' said Playful; 'I'll go in at the other end and taste it.' 'So will I,' said Quick. 'I don't feel at all inclined for any,' said I, 'so I'll stay at this end, and look at you through the wires.'

“ There were two little divisions in the box, in one of which was the cheese, and at the end of the other was the entrance. In the partition there was a hole barely large enough for a mouse to pass through, up the centre of which ran a thread. Playful was first at the inner hole. She bit the thread. I heard a noise at the other end, and ran to it. No entrance was there, something had fallen and shut it up. ‘ We can’t get out,’ cried Playful. I was very much alarmed. I ran round and round, but could see no hole. We began to gnaw at the wires, but could make no impression on them. We next attacked the wood, and had bit away a good deal, when the door opened, and in marched our enemy, the woman. I hid myself behind a plate.

She came straight to the box, and looking in, saw my poor sister and brother. 'Come, Mr. Owl,' said she to a large white bird, which I had not observed before; 'Come along, here's two mice for you!' She opened the door of the trap, out jumped Playful. The bird darted at her, and swallowed her in a moment. Quick also came out, and he shared the same fate. I lay still, dreading to move, lest she should see me; but she went off directly, taking the box with her. The moment she was gone, I ran to our mother, and told her the dismal tale. She was very much shocked; but, after a few minutes, she thus addressed her remaining children:—

" 'My dear young ones, you have already seen one of the evils to which our race is

liable. The box in which your poor brother and sister were caught is called a trap. There are various kinds of them; so beware of eating in anything that is not open on every side. You are now of an age to provide for yourselves, and I will soon have another family to take care of. Beware of cats, (Puss looked rather grim as Frisky said this, but did not speak,) and of dogs, owls, and all manner of traps. Farewell.'

"Having thus spoken, she ran off, and left us to our fate. We sat silent for some time; at last I said, 'Let us leave this house, where our poor brother and sister have met with their deaths.'

"To this they all agreed, and not aware of the danger, we set off in broad day-

light. Before we had travelled far, we met a party of boys, who immediately perceived us, and sent showers of stones after us. Five of us were killed, so only my sister Lively and myself were left. I did not escape uninjured, one of my legs was dreadfully cut; we crawled into a hedge, where we lay for a considerable time, in great pain. A shrew-mouse approached, and perceiving us, came and asked what was the matter. When she was told, she very kindly offered to take us to her hole, and tend us till we were better; we were very glad of this invitation, and accepted it most willingly. We crawled to her abode as well as we could, and found it a very large one, as she had just dismissed her young family.

“When we had been about a week with her, we went to the mouth of her hole, to get a little fresh air. Suddenly a huge animal appeared, and seized poor Lively. Our host and I retreated as quickly as possible, and lay in great terror for some time, but hearing no noise, she peeped out at the mouth of the hole, and told me that the animal was gone. I was greatly shocked at the dreadful end of my poor sister, and sat silent. After some time, I said, ‘You will probably know the name of the cruel animal that killed my dear Lively?’

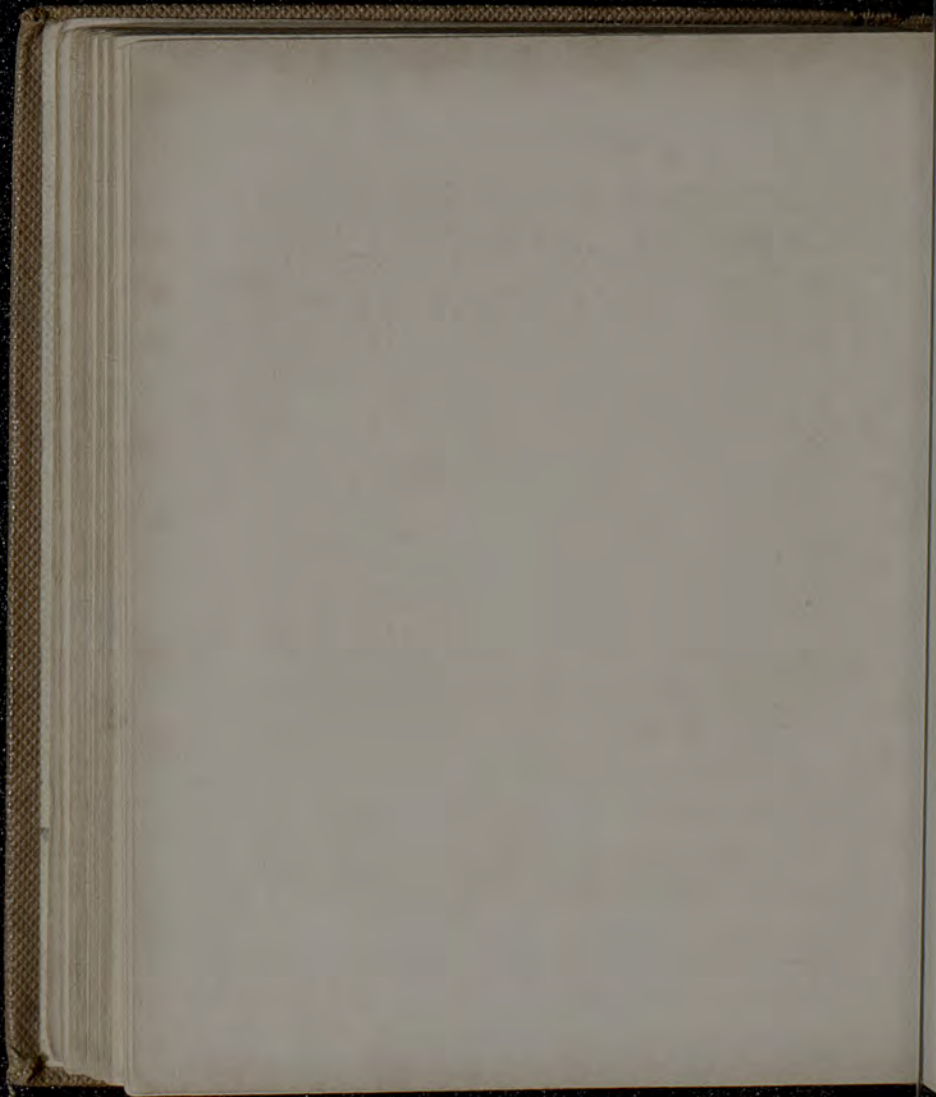
“‘That animal,’ said my friend, ‘is called a dog; they are brought up with a hatred to our race, and consequently murder us, whenever they can.’

“ I continued with my kind friend about a week more. I was now quite well, and determined to resume my journey. I told her of my intention, she was very sorry, and anxious for me to stay, but I would not listen to her. So after thanking her warmly for all her kindness, I set off in moonlight.

“ When I had travelled a considerable way, I came to a house, into which I entered by a crevice at the bottom of the door. I saw several huge four-legged animals, standing in separate divisions, and eating hay. I advanced cautiously up to one of them; suddenly he gave a stamp with his foot, which frightened me into a corner. I soon came out again, and began to look about me. I saw a little corn



FISBY'S STORY.



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lying on the floor, and being very hungry, ate a good deal of it. Just then, I was alarmed by something moving in the straw. I looked round, and to my great joy found that it was one of my own species. I ran up to her, and asked her where I was.

“ ‘ You seem a young mouse,’ said she, ‘ and unaccustomed to the world, so I shall give you my best advice. You are now in a stable, and these huge creatures are horses. This place is rather dangerous to us, as there are both a dog and a cat kept here. I have just been thinking of changing my place of abode. There is a large house near this, in which are great numbers of our race. Most of the apartments are lined with wood, so we have

plenty room to run about. Will you come with me ?'

" 'Most willingly,' said I; 'but hark, what noise is that ?'

" 'Follow me, follow me!' she exclaimed, running off as fast as she could. We soon came to her hole, and when we got in, she told me it was the dog barking, and that I would soon hear the door open. It did so, and in came a man with a little dog. 'Oh!' said he, 'they've been among the corn that was scattered! Come, Pepper, and smell them out.' The dog put his nose among the corn, and immediately got on our track; it came straight to the hole, and began scraping. 'We are safe, we are safe,' cried my friend, 'but if we had been a minute longer, we should both have been

murdered. I've seen the wretch kill ten at a time. But come along, we'll get out by another road.' We soon got clear of the stable, and arrived at the large house. We easily got in, and found great numbers of mice, running about in all directions. My friend, Longtail, ran up to one with which she was acquainted, and desired him to show us the way to the larder. 'Come along, then,' said he, 'I have just been there, there are some nice little bits of Stilton lying about. You'll have a feast.'

"We got in behind the wooden lining of the room, which I found to be at some distance from the wall. We ran along amid hundreds of mice, and soon reached the pantry, into which we easily entered. We soon found the Stilton, and ate very heartily

of it. 'Now,' said he, 'come and I'll show you the house, there are some very fine rooms in it. There is company to-night, we'll see them too.'

"He led the way, and we followed up and down for a good while. He suddenly disappeared through a hole, telling us to wait for him, but he came back as quickly, quite out of breath. 'I have had such a chase!' he said, 'a cat sprang at me when I was in the middle of the room, and almost caught me. If you look, you will see it watching the hole.' I advanced cautiously forward, and saw Puss glaring with her fearful eyes, and paw stretched to seize whatever appeared. I was greatly frightened at her aspect, and did not take a second look. 'Come along,' said Nimble,

(for that was the name of our new friend,) 'come along, we'll go to another room.' We recommenced our journey, and soon came to a second hole. 'The company is here,' said Nimble, 'come in softly.'

"We soon got through, and saw a great number of ladies and gentlemen, sitting round a large table. Nimble ran behind a box, and we followed him. We lay there a good while, I asked Nimble if we were in no danger. 'No, no,' said he, 'the master of this house is very fond of mice, and won't allow one to be killed. He often lays down crumbs and other things for us. I can't understand how the cat was in the other room, it must be a stranger.'

"At this moment a boy came into the

room, carrying the cat by the neck. 'O papa,' said he, 'I found this cat in the library. It was just eating a mouse.'

" 'The wretch!' said his papa, 'take it to Bob the stable boy, and tell him to drown it in the horse-pond.' 'Or hunt it with Pepper,' said the boy. 'Fie, fie,' said a lady, 'aren't you ashamed of yourself for saying such a thing? Would *you* like to be hunted by a dog? Did you like when Keeper bit you? O, fie.' The boy hung down his head, and said, 'Well, I'll give it to Bob.' He then left the room. The lady then addressed another gentleman in the following manner. 'Would you believe it, my lord, my husband won't allow a mouse to be killed! There are hundreds, I may say thousands, running about. Just listen

to them in the walls! They eat more than all the people in the house.' 'Well, my dear,' said her husband, 'and why not, when I like the little creatures. I would never have ordered the cat to be killed, if it had not murdered a harmless mouse.'

'Hear how kind he is,' whispered Nimble to Longtail.

"I now began to feel tired, as I had travelled a considerable way, and asked Nimble if he would show me a place where I could rest in quiet. 'Come to my hole,' said he, 'it's the largest in the house, I'll warrant. There's plenty of room for Longtail as well as you.' 'So much the better,' said I, following him. We soon reached his apartment, which was about a foot square, between two rafters. After he had

shown us all its merits, he left us, saying, that he was going to pay a visit to a sick neighbour. I soon fell asleep, but was awoken by his coming back about an hour after. 'Oh!' said he, 'I've got very bad news. As I was passing through the supper room, one of the ladies said to the master of the house, 'My dear sir, will you be so good as to get me a live mouse, I wish very much to tame one, to keep company with an ape and a tortoiseshell cat which I have. I can assure you neither of them will injure it, as I had a tame mouse living with them for several months, but the poor thing died of some disease. Do you think you can allow me to get one?' 'Most willingly, madam, I am sure you will treat it well. Tom,' said he to the

servant behind him, 'go to the larder and catch one. You'll have no difficulty, I think.'

" 'Thus ended the discourse,' continued Nimble, 'and I hastened to tell you. But come to the dairy, and get a little cheese, or something good.' 'Oh!' said I, 'I am afraid of the man.' 'Don't be afraid,' said he, 'the man is gone to the larder, not to the dairy, come along!' We ran off, and got to the dairy just as the door was shut by somebody going out. 'Stop here, Frisky,' said Nimble, 'while I and Long-tail go to the larder, and see if the man is there. Take a look about you, and eat whatever comes in your way. No traps here!' When he had thus spoken, they both ran off. I never saw them more. I

went to the other end of the dairy, and saw there a bowl, turned upside down, upon a piece of wood. The edge of the basin at one side was supported by a knife. A bit of cheese was near the centre of the bowl. As I was creeping in, I touched the bowl gently with my back. The knife slipped out, and down fell the basin. 'Oh!' exclaimed I, 'can this be a trap? And am I to be a prisoner all my life?' I ran to all sides, pushing against the bowl, but it was too heavy, I could not move it. At this moment the door opened. 'There's one caught,' said a rough voice. I was lifted up, and carried away. Presently my bearer set me down, and opened a space for me to escape. I ran out, and found myself in a little box, wired at one end. I flew back

to the entrance, but it was closed up. 'This is a young fellow,' said the man, looking in, 'he will be the easier tamed.' He lifted me up again, and took me to the supper room. The lady was delighted, and put a little bit of cheese between the wires, but I would not touch it. I nibbled away at the wires, but could make no impression on them.

" 'Poor little mousey,' said the lady; 'I'm sure you will be kindly treated. But I must be off. Thomas, please to order my carriage. Good night, ladies and gentlemen.' So saying, she took up the cage in which I was confined, and left the room.

"I had to be kept in the box for several weeks, but at last her kindness so won upon my heart, that I became as tame as you now see me."

So saying, little Frisky ran and climbed up his mistress' gown, and leaped about in her lap, for a few minutes; he then returned to the rug, where they all thanked him for his story, and expressed their delight. They then separated.

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CHAPTER VIII.

JACK'S ADVENTURES.

NEXT afternoon there was a party, so no stories could be told. But on the following day they met about half-an-hour earlier, being very anxious to hear Jack's tale. As everything had been settled about who should speak next, Jack took his seat in the centre, and commenced his history.

“ I saw the light first in an extensive wood in Africa. I was the only young one. My mother used to carry me about on her back. From my earliest days I was taught to torment mankind. Whenever an

unfortunate man, woman, or child, entered our dominions, then began the work of pelting. Pieces of wood, birds' eggs, and everything that we could lay hands on, were hurled on the poor creatures, and the consequence was, that people often went out of the wood a good deal bruised. But, by the by, I may tell you the people there are quite a different colour from the inhabitants of this part of the world. They are called negroes, and have black woolly hair, with little round noses, and large lips—a great deal uglier than myself.—Well, one morning a man came into the wood, and began washing his hands in a basin. He then set down a huge wooden bowl, filled with something black, which I have since learned was pitch, and departed.

Hundreds of us descended from the trees, and ran to the spot. Four or five instantly poked their hands into the bowl, but what was their astonishment when they found that they could not get them out again! They pulled and strained, but all to no purpose. They stuck fast, in spite of their utmost exertions. The man now came back, and we all took to our heels, leaving our poor companions in the lurch. As I was too young to run, my mother carried me. The man came to the bowl, and being satisfied that the poor prisoners were all safe, he pointed something at us. A great noise was heard, and smoke issued from it. My mother dropped to the ground, being shot through the head. The man seized me, I held fast by my mother, but

he tore me from her, and put me into a box, and carried me off.

“ When he opened the lid, I found myself in a house. A well-dressed white man said to the person who had caught me, ‘ Well, Mungo, what do you expect for this little creature ? ’ ‘ One half-dollar, massa ; him be very cheap, him no dear, massa.’ ‘ Well, Mungo,’ said he, paying him the money, ‘ I will send for it in the afternoon ; give it a little milk in the mean time.’ He went away ; the black brought some soft dry straw, and set me on it, and offered me some milk, in a jug. I would not open my mouth, so he rubbed some on my lips, which I very naturally began to lick ; but I did not like it, it was so cold. He offered me the jug, but I would not taste it again.

“ ‘Bring de goat here,’ said he, ‘him like de goat’s milk.’ They brought the animal, which I no sooner saw than I ran back to the wall in the greatest alarm. Mungo came and seized me, and gently carried me towards it. I soon saw that it was a quiet inoffensive creature, and, when my alarm was over, he showed me the way to obtain its milk, which I found very nice. When I had finished my meal, I got on the goat’s back, as I used to mount on my mother’s. It did not relish the joke, however, and plunged about very much. I held fast by its horns, and kept my seat, Mungo and his wife laughing very heartily all the time. A messenger now came to remove me to my new master’s. I was again put into the box, whether I would or

not. He carried me to his master's house, where a little girl was waiting eagerly for my arrival. When the lid was opened, she put out her hand for the purpose of stroking me. No sooner did she touch me, than I leaped on her arm. She was terribly frightened, and ran screaming to her mama. Her mother took me off very gently. 'Poor little creature!' said she; 'It could not hurt you, Jamima, do not be afraid; take it in your arms, my dear.' My little mistress did so, not without some hesitation.

"Some time after my arrival a lady came to pay a visit, and took a great fancy to me. I was now able to run about, and play a number of tricks. Jamima one day squeezed me so hard that I bit her finger.

She ran off, crying; and presently her mother came and whipped me very severely. After this my young mistress took a dislike to me, and neglected me. I was very seldom fed, so I helped myself, whenever I could. The lady perceiving how I was used, said to my little mistress, 'I see, my dear, you don't like Jack; and, if you are tired of him, I will take him off your hands.' 'You may take him, if you like,' said Jamima, 'I don't love him since he bit my finger, the nasty creature.' 'Well, Jamima, I will take him home to-morrow.' 'You may take him when you like,' said the young lady, pettishly, 'I don't care if you should kill him.'

"Thus ended the conversation, and next day I went home with my new mistress.

I lived very happily with her for about a year, having but few quarrels with a parrot and a lap-dog, which were my companions. But misfortunes will happen, and a very great one befell me in the loss of my kind mistress, who was found dead in her bed one morning. As she had no heirs in the country, all her property was exposed to sale, and the dog, parrot, and myself, were sold to the highest bidder. We were bought by a French lady, who was just on the eve of departure to her own country. We were soon on ship-board, where I amused myself by working all sorts of mischief. One day I afforded great amusement, by shaving the captain's favourite cat, using an old piece of iron hoop for a razor, after having spread her face well

over with tar, instead of soap. Whenever puss stirred, I gave her a pat with my hand. I was found in this situation by a sailor, who immediately informed the captain, and he came running to see me, with the whole ship's company at his heels. When I thought Puss's beard sufficiently scraped, I set her down, and to the great amusement of the lookers-on, began carefully to wipe and polish the razor, as I had seen the sailors do after shaving.

“ In tricks of this kind I excelled, and performed many more during the voyage, which it would be tedious for me to relate.

“ We were no sooner arrived in France, than my mistress began to dispose of us. She gave the lap-dog to an old dowager

duchess; she sent poor Poll to a young lady, with whose mama she wished to become acquainted; and she committed me to a nobleman, from whom she meant to ask a situation for her nephew, and who, not choosing to send me back to Madame, sent his servant with a crown and myself to a boy who was playing on a guitar in the street. The boy was quite delighted with the present, and went off to a tailor's to get me arrayed in uniform. Next day I was clothed in the dress of a soldier, with a stick for a musket. He taught me (not without a few blows) to march up and down; to shoulder arms; to halt at the word of command; to flourish about my stick; and a hundred other tricks. I travelled over all the north of France with

him, getting him much money by my amusing ways. In the course of our travels, we came to Calais, where he took it into his head to go to England. He accordingly set sail in a small vessel, and we soon arrived in this country, where he joined company with another youth, who was travelling with the same equipments. The other monkey and I lived in a very friendly manner. We were very well fed, as the children supplied us well with bread, nuts, apples, and oranges. Each of us had a large dog to ride on.

“Tom, my companion, related to me the curious way in which he had been caught. A man came into the wood where he lived, and split one of the lower branches of a tree, which grew close

to the ground, about half way down. He then put in a wedge, and pulled it out. This he repeated several times, taking care that he was observed by the monkeys in the trees, and then went away. As soon as he was gone, a great many descended from their hiding places, and pulled out the wedge, as they had seen the man do; but unfortunately they did not take sufficient care of their fingers, the stick closed upon them, and held them fast. Seeing several thus secured, and among the rest poor Tom, the man returned and carried them off.

“ Another of Tom’s stories amused me very much. At no great distance from the wood in which he lived, there was a fine house attached to a rich plantation, in

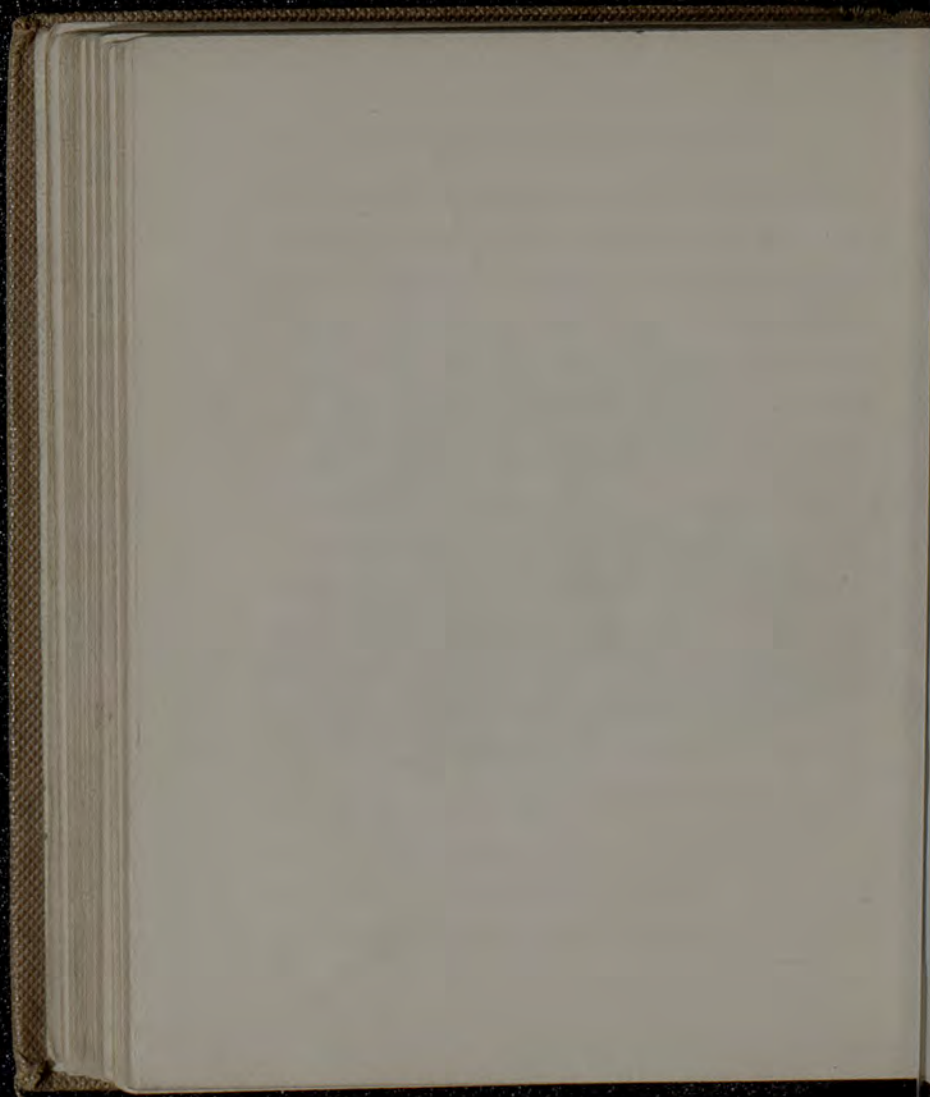
which there lived a young gentleman, who being fond of fun, used to amuse himself with a monkey, which he had trained to perform many amusing feats. He had a fine dress made for it, with a cocked hat, and a curled wig, in which it used to strut about, as proud as a peacock. Anxious to strike astonishment and admiration into the hearts of his late companions, master Dicky watched an opportunity, and fully equipped, escaped into the woods.

“He soon reached the spot where he formerly lived, but alarmed at his unusual appearance, and fearing an enemy, such of his former friends as remained at first shunned him. He contrived, however, to inspire one or two with confidence, and a crowd soon gathered round him. They

laughed at his grimaces, and his proud strut, but at first they did so only behind his back. At length, becoming more familiar, one pulled the tail of his coat. This master Dicky deemed an affront, and lifting his cane struck the impertinent monkey a smart blow. Seeing him thus angry, another pinched his arm and jumped out of his reach, before he could apply his cane in that quarter; the fun fairly began, there was no stopping, one pulling here, and the other pinching there. At length, Dick lost all patience, and laid about him right and left. A general fight ensued, one seized his hat, another tore off his wig, and poor Dick was in a fair way to be killed in the affray, and stripped of his plumes, when the messengers who had been despatched in



MASTER DICKY IN FULL DRESS.



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search of him, attracted by the noise came up. Unable to escape, Dick was forthwith secured, and carried back to his captivity.

“But I must return to my own adventures. Everywhere that we went, our masters made us fence, mounted on the tiny steeds with which they had furnished us. This, though no doubt very amusing to them and the spectators, was not remarkably so to us. We longed therefore for an opportunity to make our escape. One day as we were passing through a wood, Tom and I ran off, and hid ourselves in a ditch full of long grass. Our masters set the dogs after us, but they could not discover us, as we lay very quiet. After several hours' fruitless search, they left the wood.

We lived here for some time very comfortably, as it was then autumn, and the wood afforded us plenty of nuts.

“When we first escaped, the nuts were not quite ripe. But they soon became so, and many persons came daily to gather them. Here was a new danger: Tom and I were in continual fear of being caught. We escaped for some time, till one unhappy day, when I was discovered asleep. I was immediately seized, and after being securely tied, was put into the arms of a servant, who carried me off.

“When we arrived at our destination, a fine house, with a splendid lawn before it, a collar was put about my waist, with a light chain, and in this manner I was led before the lady of the mansion. I made a

low bow at the door, which quite delighted her. After looking at me for some time, she sat down at her desk, and wrote a note, which she read aloud to her maid.

“THE NOTE.

‘My dear Sister,

‘As you are making a collection of pets, I send you a monkey, which has just been caught in my wood. It is quite tame, so it will give you no trouble. I will come over in my carriage and see you to-morrow, and bring you back to dinner, if you are not better engaged. Mr. Rawson will be happy to see you.

‘Your affectionate sister,

‘JANE RAWSON.’

“I was accordingly committed to the servant, who brought me to this happy house, where you, Mrs. Puss, welcomed me most hospitably. So I have done

my duty, and, Mrs. Puss, commence your labours."

But just at that moment they were ordered off to bed.

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CHAPTER IX.

PUSS'S STORY.

NEXT evening they again met, when Frisky thus addressed Jack. "Thank you, master Jack, for your story. Your adventures have delighted me very much, especially when you turned barber, and shaved poor Puss. I pity her chin, however, under your rough razor."

"If you don't hold your impudent little tongue," said Jack, playfully, "I'll do the same to you."

"Catch me if you can," said Frisky, running behind the window-curtain. They

all ran after him, but could not so much as see him. When they returned to the rug, there was Frisky sitting very composedly.

"How did you get there, Frisky?" said Puss. "I am sure I never saw you, and I have good eyes."

"Aha!" said Frisky, "that's a secret! Do you think I would tell you that? It may serve me another time, to some purpose, when you are disappointed of your dinner, and want to eat me, Mrs. Puss."

"You needn't be afraid of that," said Puss. "But it is now time to tell my story. So, if you please, my friends, come let us sit down."

They all came to their places, and Puss commenced her history in the following words.

“ I was born, my friends, in a stable-loft, among some straw. I suppose you know that all our race are born blind, and are not able to open their eyes for a week or ten days. But alas! few see the end of the first week, as my six brothers and sisters knew to their cost. For on the second day of our existence, when our mother was absent, some people came in, and began consulting which of us to keep. ‘ This is far the prettiest,’ said one, taking me up roughly, ‘ it should be kept.’

“ ‘ Rather this black one,’ said somebody else; ‘ black ones are said to be the best hunters.’ ‘ But we don’t care for hunters in this case,’ said the first, ‘ it’s to be kept for little Miss Mary.’ ‘ O!’ said the second, ‘ keep it then. We’ll take the others and drown them.’

“Such, my friends, was the fate of my poor brothers and sisters, who never saw the light. My mother came home in a very short time, and set up a most melancholy caterwauling, when she saw none but myself. I told her all that I had heard; she ran away to seek them, but soon returned. She snatched me up in her mouth, and ran off with me. She carried me to a haystack in a field, at a considerable distance, and deposited me in the innermost part of a hole in it. There she left me, and did not come back for some time after. I was very hungry, and mewed piteously, but was comforted by her return.

“I grew very fast, and became fat and plump. In a short time I could get out of our hole, and into it again, without any

difficulty. My mother thought it was now time to introduce me to her master and mistress, so one fine morning we set off to the house. We got into the kitchen through a broken pane, and went up stairs. My mother led the way into the dining-room, where her master was sitting. She ran up to him, and leaped on his knee. 'Oho! puss,' said he, stroking her head, 'you're come back! and you've brought a fine little kitten with you.' He put down his hand to caress me, but I did not like the liberties he took, and began to hiss and scratch most heroically. He seized me, however, and put me on his knee. I crept close up to my mother, and looked at him with great apprehension. But I soon got reconciled to him, and began to play with my mother's

tail. I was very kindly used during my stay here, being fed with cream night and morning.

“A few weeks after my introduction, my master one day seized me by the neck, popped me into a bag, and carried me off. I mewed and scratched, but all to no purpose. We travelled thus for several miles, I thought he never would stop; at last he set me down, but my hopes of release were quickly over, he soon resumed his load, and walked on as before. I grew more impatient at every step, and scratched so hard, that at last I got my paw through the bag.

“‘So, so, little puss,’ said he, ‘you want out, do you? Well, well, you won’t be long now, for here’s little Molly coming to welcome you.’

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PUSS & HER FIRST MISTRESS

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“ Here was the secret, this was the meaning of the discourse that I had heard in the stable—but I was interrupted in my meditations by a voice, saying, ‘ Oh ! uncle, have you got my kitten ? There’s its paw ! let me see it if you please ! ’

“ ‘ Here it is, my little Molly, and a pretty little creature it is too, as you may see.’ She seized me so rudely, that I mewed in pain.—‘ Don’t hurt it,’ he continued, ‘ go and give it some milk, but don’t let Bob touch it.’

“ ‘ Bob shall never come near it,’ said she ; ‘ if he dare, I’ll pull his ears for him.’

“ She then put me into her pinafore, and ran into the house, where she had a saucer of cream standing ready for me. You may

be sure I left very little at the bottom. 'O sweet little Puss,' said she, 'how I love you; Bob shall never touch you, or he shall get a sound whipping.' At this moment a strange animal entered, (ay, Mr. Jack, you may stare, but you're as odd-looking as he was, every bit, if not a little uglier,) and before my little mistress could prevent him, he seized me by the tail, and ran off with me. I mewed most piteously, he chattered, and Molly ran after us, screaming as loud as she could. But Bob was too nimble for her, and climbed up to the top of an old elm-tree, swinging me by the tail. When he reached the top, he took me in his arms, and began to hug me very kindly. Molly looked at us for a long time, and at last went away, in despair. Bob took the

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PUSS'S ADVENTURE IN THE KITCHEN.

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opportunity of her absence, and descending the tree, ran with me to a little rivulet that passed through the garden, and threw me into it.

“ One of the servants fortunately noticed him, and rescued me from drowning. She carried me to my little mistress, who was sitting weeping for my loss. Bob came no more near me that day, but on the following he watched an opportunity, and taking me by the ears, he carried me to the kitchen, where some soup was simmering on the fire. He snatched up a spoon, and filling it with the boiling soup, he opened my mouth, and poured the scalding stuff down my throat, in spite of all my efforts. The pain was very great, and I howled most lustily. He was just about

to repeat the dose, when the cook entered, and, the moment he spied her, he dropped me, and ran off as fast as his legs could carry him; but before he got to the door, the cook's ready hand had bestowed on him a blow which he did not seem at all to relish. My mouth was so scalded, that I was ill for a long time after. As I had no rest for the disagreeable creature, I was very glad to find him, one morning, lying dead at the foot of a tree, in the garden. His head was very much cut. It was never discovered who killed him, but it was suspected that some wicked boys had thrown stones at him, over the wall. Be this as it may, I rejoiced very much at his death, and enjoyed myself much better after it.

“When I grew a little older, I became an expert mouser, and even ventured to attack a large rat, which I found one morning stealing my breakfast. Being quite ignorant of the fierce nature, I seized him by one of his hind-legs, whereupon he wheeled about and bit my nose. I let go my hold; but it was only to seize him by the back of the neck, which I never quitted while life remained in him. When he was quite dead, I left him, and went in triumph to my bowl of milk, which I supped with a feeling of great satisfaction.”

“Bravo, Puss!” said Jack. “That was a most glorious action. How old were you when you performed it?”

“About ten weeks, Jack, I think,” said

Puss, "but I shall get no more told to-night, for here comes 'Becca, to take us away."

"Thank you, Puss," said her companions, "we are very much delighted with your story, and hope it is not nearly finished."

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CHAPTER X.

PUSS'S STORY CONTINUED.

NEXT evening, just after they had met, to the great astonishment of the rest, Puss snatched up Frisky in her mouth, and ran off. Jack instantly looked round, and beheld a strange cat advancing to the fire-place. He seized its tail, and gave it such a squeeze as it did not seem at all to relish. His mistress observing this, rang the bell, and desired the servant to take the cat away. The moment the stranger was gone, Puss came back with Frisky, who was in a great fright, poor little fel-

low.—As soon as all was composed, Puss recommenced her story,

“I had just finished my bowl,” said Puss, “when I perceived another rat creeping slyly along by the side of the wall. I flew at him, and seized him by the neck. He struggled hard, but it would not do; I was too strong and too determined for him. He soon lay dead beside his friend. The cook came in and rubbed my nose with a little oil. I don’t know whether it was that which cured my wounds, but next day they were quite better.

“I was now in high favour with everybody, and soon became such a foe to the rats, that I fairly drove them from the house. But a great change took place

in my situation at this time. One day as I was walking about in a field near the house, I was caught unawares by a ragged boy, who put me into a bag, and ran off with me. He soon met another lad, and I found by their conversation, that they intended either to sell me alive, or kill me to make a cap of my skin.

“When I had been carried a considerable distance, I heard some one say to the boy,

“‘What have you got in that bag?’

“‘A cat, ma’am,’ said the boy.

“‘And what do you intend to do with it?’ asked the lady.

“‘We’ll either kill it, or sell it,’ answered he.

“‘Bring the poor creature to my

house,' said she, 'and you shall have half-a-crown.'

" 'Very well, ma'am.'

" I cannot express my joy when I found I was not to be barbarously murdered, and I formed the most favourable opinion of the lady who had been so kind as to rescue me from death. I arrived safely at her abode, and soon became quite reconciled to the change. My new mistress was a maiden lady, very charitable, and very fond of cats, and she became the more attached to me when she found that I was very like a favourite which had just died.

" After I had lived in my new dwelling for some time, I became the mother of four fine kittens, to my mistress's great

joy. But I soon lost part of my little family; one morning when I had left them for a short time, the groom drowned two. For some time I was very sorrowful, but my remaining young ones soon drew my attention from my loss. One of those that were left to me was jet black, the other tortoiseshell like myself. But I must not spend so much time in relating particular events; I must hasten to the end of my tale. When my kittens were grown up, they were given away, and I was left alone. About this time my poor mistress became ill, and before many days were passed she breathed her last. A few hours before her death she bequeathed me to her house-keeper, who had pretended to be very fond of me during her mistress' lifetime;

but no sooner was the poor lady gone than the wicked woman ordered the groom to drown me. The fellow carried me to a bridge, tied a stone to my neck, and threw me over. By the greatest good luck the string was not tight enough, so in my fall it slipped off, and I came to the water quite unincumbered with anything. At first I felt stunned, but the moment I recovered, I swam to the shore as fast as I could. When I reached the bank, I was quite benumbed, and could hardly creep out of the water. But after lying some time in the sun, I soon became quite comfortable, and left the river-side. I lived for some weeks in the woods, during which time I killed many birds and several rabbits. Had you come in my way then,

Mrs. Mopsy, I would not have answered for the consequences. I was now become almost a wild cat, so much so, indeed, that whenever I saw a human being approaching, I ran off in a contrary direction. I might have lived in that manner to this day, if a boy had not thrown a stone at me unawares, which broke my leg. Another boy who was with him, took me up very gently, and began to reprove the other for hurting me. 'I am sorry I hurt it,' he answered, 'I am sure I never thought I should hit it.' 'Ah Jack, Jack,' said the other, 'you are always in mischief of some kind or other. But the poor thing's leg is broken, we must get papa to set it, and we'll take good care of it.' So saying, he took me in his arms, and carried me

home. His father was a surgeon, who had left off practice on becoming heir to a handsome property.

“When we reached the house, my deliverer’s father set my leg, for which I rewarded him by scratching his hands most severely during the operation. I had, however, the great satisfaction of hearing Master Jack reprimanded for his cruelty, and ordered not to appear in the dining-room all that day. In the mean time I was lying very comfortably on a nice soft rug, and enjoying a saucer of cream. But Jack in the end behaved very kindly to me, nursing me during my recovery, and there was no one in the house of whom I was fonder.

“When I got better, I proved very

useful in killing rats, which abounded in the house. There was not a room that was not stained with their blood and mine, for my nose and mouth got many a hard bite. I shall relate a battle that I had with three rats, which Master Jack put into a large cage beside me. At first they tried to escape, but finding no means of getting away, they fairly attacked me. The first one that I seized did not long survive, but in the mean time the other two had caught hold of me; one had me by the nose, and the other bit a piece out of my ear, of which you may see the mark to this day.

Jack and Mopsy came forward to look at it, while Frisky, who was too little to see it from the floor, leaped upon Puss's

back, and thus got a good view of it. When they had satisfied their curiosity, they returned to their places, and Puss continued her narrative.

“No sooner had the wretch bit my ear than I seized him by the back of the neck, and despite of the one hanging at my nose, soon laid him dead beside his comrade. I had now only one foe to contend with, but he was a terrible fellow, a huge male rat with teeth as sharp as a needle. I had often remarked him before, but he had always escaped me: now was my time. With a tremendous toss I shook him from his hold, and seized him by the back. He turned his head round, and caught me by the cheek, but I knew better than to quit him. I held on, tight-

ening my grasp, till after some fearful struggles he let me go, and fell dead at my feet. O what a victory it was! Jack hugged me with delight, and rubbed my wounds with some ointment. He then went to the dairy, and brought me a large saucerful of cream, which I despatched very speedily. He next carried me to his father, who praised my courage, but advised Jack never to do the like again. 'If one of the rats had got her by the throat,' said he, 'poor Puss would never have survived.'

"I now became a greater enemy than ever to the rats, and in a short time fairly drove them from the house. All their holes were stopped up, and the cook found that her butter, milk, and cheese, lasted much longer than they used to do. Besides,

every body slept quietly at night, undisturbed by the noise of the creatures running about the room. Tom the stable-boy was especially glad, for one of them had the impudence to bite his big toe, which awoke him from a most agreeable dream. After this he seldom ventured to bed without having me along with him.

“But my tale draws near its close, for my master's eldest daughter being very delicate, he removed to the Continent with all his family, and sent me to this happy house, where I have such agreeable companions.”

“Thank you, thank you, Puss,” said Mopsy, “your story has been most delightful. I only wish it had been longer.”

Frisky and Jack joined in the compliment, and declared that Puss's tale had been much more amusing than any of theirs.

CHAPTER XI.

THE RETURN TO SCHOOL.

ALTHOUGH uncle Timothy's amusing series of tales have been related continuously in the preceding pages ; and although the reader has got through the whole in the course of a few hours ; they served to amuse and interest the little circle at Greenwood Park for several days. At the conclusion of each tale, there was so much discussion as to which of them was the most amusing, and which of the animals related its adventures best ; that much time was thus occupied, and not

unpleasantly. Grandmama also took care that the whole budget should not be exhausted at once, and contrived to give their amusements as much variety as possible; one day when the weather was unusually fine, taking them to Elmwood, as had been originally intended, when uncle Timothy was first introduced; and another to a fancy fair, where they saw as many fine things as kept them talking about for the rest of the day.

It was not without a sigh, that one day it occurred to cousin Willy that his holidays were now drawing to a close; in fact, that he had entered on the last week of his residence at Greenwood Park, and that in five days more he must return to school. In spite of all his carefulness

however the time passed on, much that he had intended to do was left unfinished, and some of it even unattempted. Sister Mary's garden which grandmama had pointed out, and to which Willy intended to have done so much, remained with only the outline marked out. Willy was quite resolved to do something to it before he left, and for this purpose determined to get up very early in the morning of the last day of his stay at Greenwood. When he awoke, however, he was deterred, by the rain falling almost in torrents, thus effectually preventing all attempts at gardening.

After breakfast, however, the weather cleared up, the sun shone forth from behind the clouds by which it had been obscured,

and it turned out a delightful day. Willy was once more consigned to the care of old Jacob the gardener, and bidding adieu to grandmama, sister Mary, and his little cousins, he found his way back to school, thinking how delightfully he had spent his holidays.

The rest of the little party remained at Greenwood for some time longer. Sister Mary was to spend the winter with grandmama, but Jane and her brother Tommy returned home. Mary and her cousin found ample amusement in attending to their little garden and in nursing their dolls; but master Tommy, deprived of his companion, was restless and ill at ease. To serve to amuse him, grandmama bought him a drum, with the discordant tones of

which every corner of the house resounded for some time ; at length, wondering what it was inside that caused all the noise, Tommy took into his head to cut open one of the ends. He was not a little surprised at the discovery which he had made ; namely, that he had spoilt his drum, and gained nothing by the experiment.



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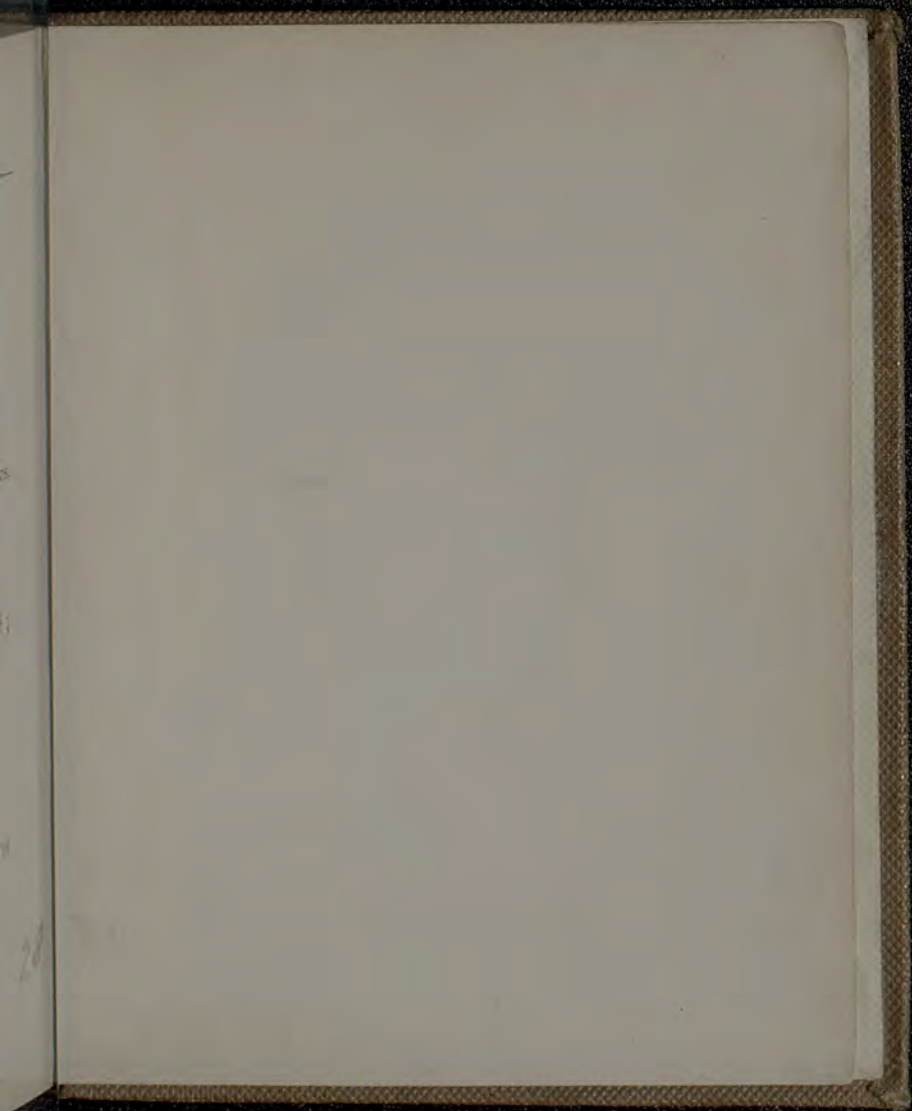
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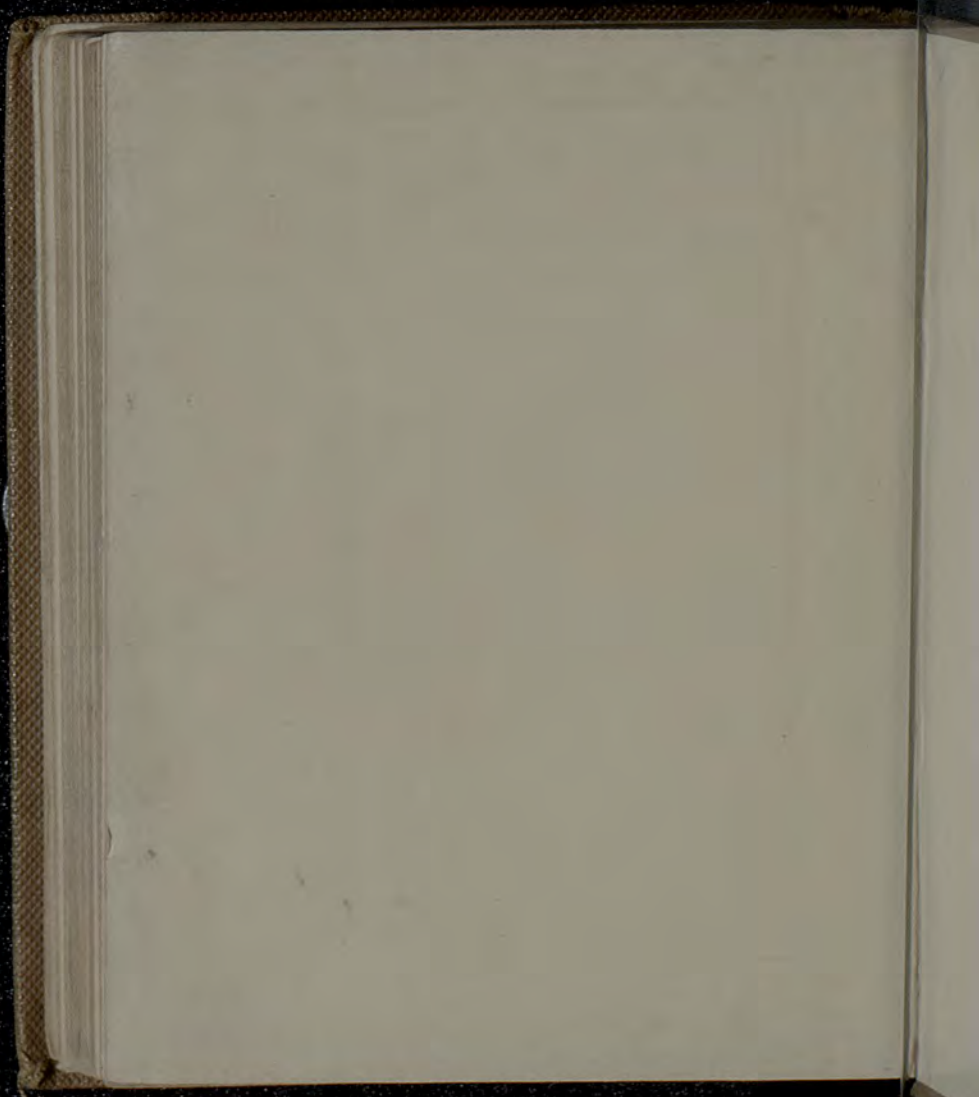
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