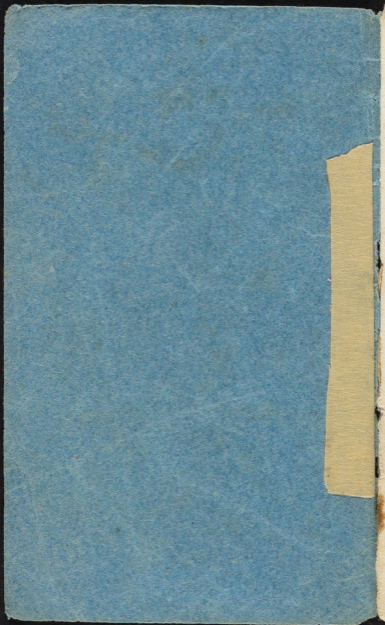


No. 8.

THE
AFFECTING HISTORY
OF THE
CHILDREN IN THE WOOD.



CONCORD:
BOYD AND WHITE
1839. •



1837

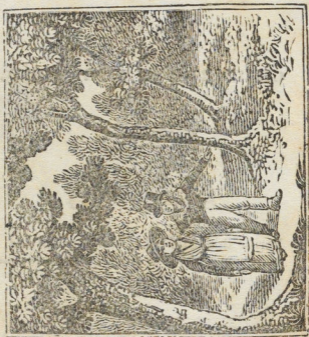
THE
AFFECTING HISTORY
OF THE
CHILDREN IN THE WOOD.



Peruse this little book, and you will find,
How much the love of gold depraves man-
kind.

Seventh Series--No. 8.

CONCORD:
PUBLISHED BY ATWOOD & BROWN.
1837.



CHILDREN IN THE WOOD.



It has always been allowed, that this is one of the most affecting stories that ever appeared for the perusal of the young reader. Indeed, it not only excites tears from the tender hearted, but likewise gives us a sad instance of the wicked disposition of those men who will execute the blackest crime for the sake of money, which, when too earnestly sought after, and not properly used is the root of all evil. Having said thus much by way of introduction, we shall now present our readers with a relation of that melancholy story.

Not many years ago a gentleman of great fortune who had been accustomed to live in a very

genteel manner, resolved to take up his residence in Norfolk. He had not long been there, before he married a lady of equal dignity and honor with himself. They lived in perfect happiness together, were very kind to the poor, and in the course of a few years, were blest with two beautiful children; the eldest was a boy, the youngest a girl, who was admired by every one for the sweetness of her temper; and in fact, her brother was not less amiable than herself. But their affectionate parents did not long enjoy this singular felicity, for they were both seized with a fever illness at the same time. In this alarming situation, the gentleman sent for his brother, and agreeably to his wife's inclination, entrusted him with the care of his dear children, leaving three hun-

dred pounds a year to his son, and six hundred pounds to be paid to his daughter on the day of her marriage, but if they chanced to die, then all was to go to their uncle. The parents strictly charged him to bring them up with care, telling him that their beloved children would have no other friend on earth, then kissed their children, and prayed God's blessing to be on them. The uncle promised that he would faithfully protect them, and that by his tenderness and attention to them, he would endeavour to become their parent. Scarce had he finished his protestation when the gentleman expired, and the lady soon followed him

(See them performing the last sad rites on the next page.)



The uncle, after attending the funerals, took the children home to his house, and behaved in every respect agreeably to the promise he had made.

But alas! too soon did the impression wear off, for scarce had

they lived one year under his roof before he began to lay schemes for their innocent lives. In order to effect this and to secure their fortune, he at length hired two ruffians to carry them to a distant wood, where he proposed that



they should be murdered: but that no suspicions of his infamous design might be discovered, he informed his family that he had received a letter from his relation in London, who had a desire to have them educated in the metropolis, and that agreeably to this kind offer he had consented to send them thither. Thus he imposed likewise on the infant children, by telling them that they should ride in a fine carriage to London.

This elevated them so highly, that their consent to leave him was readily obtained, and off they set with unsuspecting joy.

Their youthful prattle, during the journey took such strong hold of one of the ruffians, that when they arrived at the wood, he relented of the deed they were horribly bribed to execute. He ex-

postulated with his accomplice on the heinousness of their undertaking, and told him that something within staggered his resolution.— But the other, more hardened than the flinty stone, vowed to perform his charge, because he was well paid for it. The difference in their dispositions brought on a duel which ended in favor of the former; for at the first meeting, he gave the barbarian such a blow as laid him lifeless on the ground.

The conqueror, who as we have observed, was the mildest of the two, now took them by the hand, whilst tears stood in their eyes, and led them several miles into the wood. The little children now crying for bread, — “Well said he, I’ll fetch you bread when I come back again,” and then left them with the utmost speed.



The pretty children now went hand in hand, and wandered about the wood. At length they came to a blackberry bush where they picked some of its fruit, and sat themselves down to eat. They

now saw the darksome night approaching, and fearing to advance farther into the wood, they lay down together, and soon fell asleep beneath the friendly shade. The severity of the night, joined to

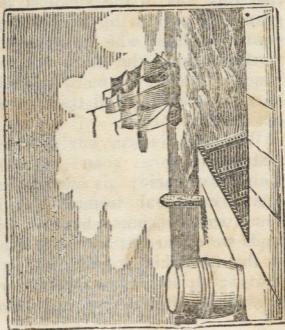


their want of food, and grief of heart, were more than their tender frames could bear, and they expired in the midst of this unfrequented wood. Their delicate bodies were exposed to the open air for several days, till at length two Robin Red-Breasts, touched as it were with human sympathy, conveyed leaves to the place where the children lay, and covered them with the tenderness of the most affectionate parents.— Thus did these two beautiful children at last obtain relief from all their distresses by the indulgent interposition of that kind Father who never fails to administer comfort to the sons and daughters of affliction. I call it comfort when the Almighty calls good children out of this world, to be infinitely more happy in another; and sure-

ly death must have been welcome to these children, who were not only deprived of their affectionate parents but had likewise lost every support which might otherwise have fallen to their lot. But still you must not presume to suppose that this was in the smallest degree contrary to the wisdom and equity of Him who governs the world, because the more you advance in years, the more you will be convinced that all things turn out for the best.

We must inform our readers, that vengeance soon overtook their base uncle; his conscience was a continual tormentor; his house was consumed by fire; his lands were barren; his cattle died in the field; his property was all mortgaged; and his two sons were so disobedient that they would not

pay the least attention to any of his commands, but were continually destroying his peace of mind by headstrong passions and wicked proceedings. At length they determined upon going to sea, and were both lost in a dreadful storm.



These great evils soon brought to light this cruel wickedness; and the great villain who undertook to destroy the little children, was afterwards executed for a murderer, and confessed himself to be the person who had committed all the acts which we have recited.

We must further beg leave to observe, that before seven years were expired, the inhuman uncle was cast into prison for debt, where he remained, and was grievously troubled in his conscience, that he could find no rest either day or night. Thus tormented, he could not refrain from considering the evil of his ways, which was the most alarming to him. "What have I done?" said he to himself. "Am I not justly plagued for my many crimes? Ah! how could I, for the sake of paltry trash, a lit-

tle glittering dust, how could I violate the laws of God and man? How could I make myself the dreadful means of depriving my brother's children of their existence? Instead of proving a father, I have become their inhuman executioner! Never can my soul know peace! I dare not indulge one hope of forgiveness, for the Almighty will surely cut me off in this place of horrible confinement."

Thus did he lament his wickedness daily, till at last he expired in all the agonies of guilt and terror.

