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GIRLS AND BOYS

By

ANATOLE FRANCE

Illustrations

by *Boutet de Monvel*





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GIRLS AND BOYS

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Scenes from the Country and the Town

BY

ANATOLE FRANCE

Illustrated in color and in pen and ink by

BOUTET de MONVEL



NEW YORK
DUFFIELD & COMPANY
1913

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GIRLS AND BOYS

CONVALESCENCE

Poor Germaine has had a little sick turn. Nobody knows how it happened. The invisible arm that sows the seeds of fever is like the hand of the old sand



man who comes each evening and throws sand in little children's eyes to make them sleepy. But Germaine has not been sick long and she did not suffer much, and here she is getting well again, a convalescent. Getting well is really much

nicer than being all well at the beginning. You imagine all sorts of good things it would be nice to have and this hoping and longing for things when you're getting

well is much nicer really than the things themselves would be if you had them.

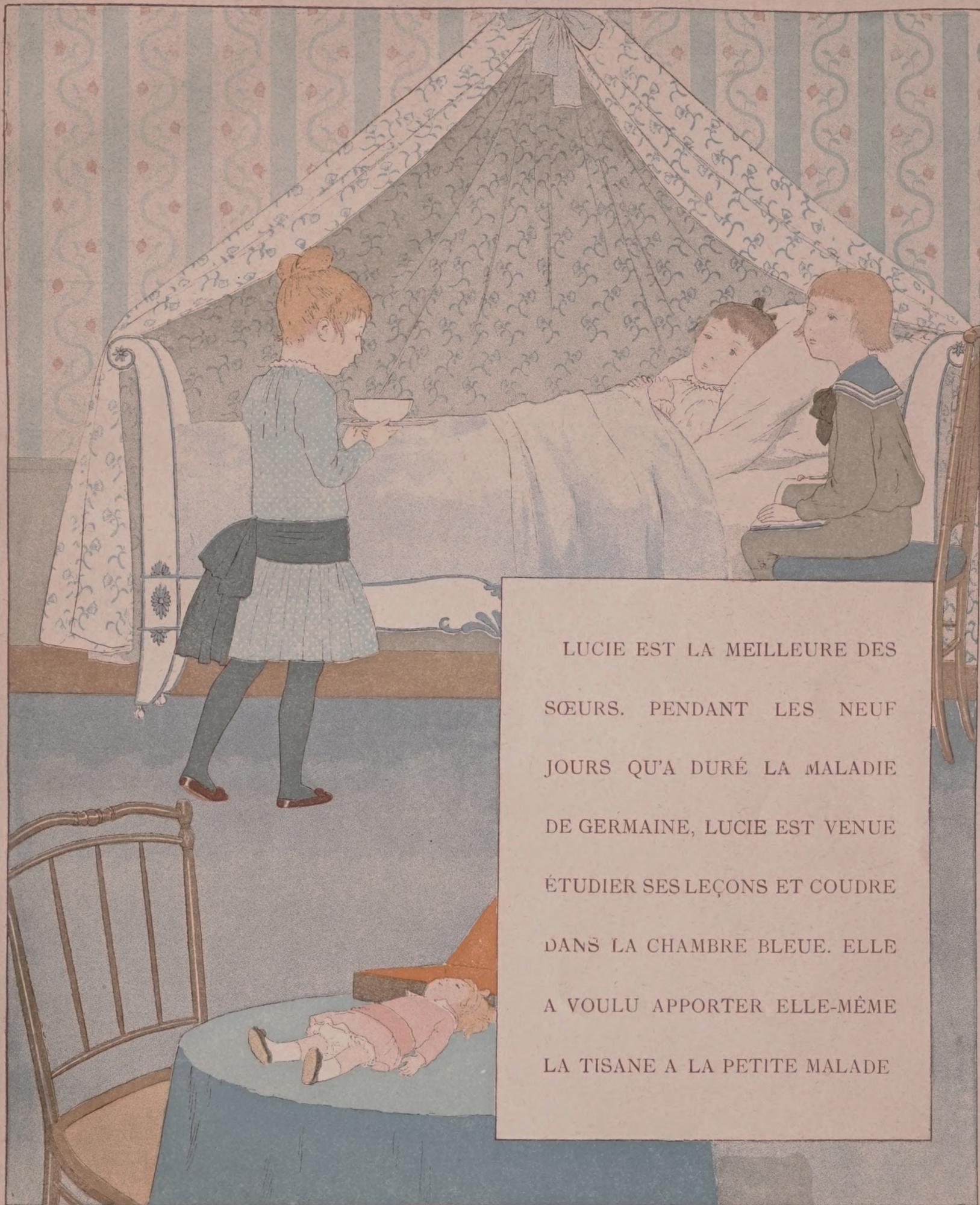
Germaine is in bed in her pretty



blue room, and her dreams are as pretty as the room. Her eyes are still a bit



tired as she looks at her dolly lying near her. There is a very deep sympathy between little girls and their dollies. Germaine's dolly has been sick at the same



LUCIE EST LA MEILLEURE DES
SŒURS. PENDANT LES NEUF
JOURS QU'A DURÉ LA MALADIE
DE GERMAINE, LUCIE EST VENUE
ÉTUDIER SES LEÇONS ET COUDRE
DANS LA CHAMBRE BLEUE. ELLE
A VOULU APPORTER ELLE-MÊME
LA TISANE A LA PETITE MALADE

time as her little mother, and now she is getting well again at the same time. She is going out for her first ride with Germaine this afternoon in the carriage.

The dolly has had a visit from her doctor too. Dr. Alfred came in style and felt her pulse. Dr. Very-Much-Worse you might almost call him, for he talked of nothing but cutting off her arms and legs. Germaine begged so hard that he consented to cure the dolly without cutting her all up, and only prescribed nice, gentle little doses for her.



There is one thing about being sick: it makes you know your friends. Germaine knows now that she can count on that nice Alfred. She knows too that her sister Lucy is the best of sisters. During all the nine days that Germaine was ill Lucy came and studied her lessons and did her sewing in the blue room. She even wanted to bring the medicines herself and give them to the little sick girl. And it wasn't a very nice dose that Alfred ordered: no indeed: it was a dreadful drink, mixed out of all sorts of smelly wild flowers' juices.

It made Lucy, when she smelled it, think of the flowery mountain paths where they played so much last summer, the kind of paths that bees and children always know about. It made even Alfred think of lovely mountain roads, and woods and springs, and goats scrambling along the edges of the precipices with their tinkling bells.

ACROSS THE FIELDS

After breakfast Catherine goes out into the meadows with her little brother Jack. When they start out the day is as young and fresh as they are. The sky is



not exactly blue: it is rather a gray, but a gray that is softer than all the blues in the world. Catherine's eyes are the very same gray, and seem made out of a piece of the morning sky.

Catherine and Jack go quite alone into the meadows. Their mother is a farmer's wife and has work to do at the farm. They have no nurse to take them out, but then they don't need one. They know the way: they know the woods and the fields and the hills equally well. Catherine can even

tell the time of day from seeing where the sun is in the sky, and she has knowledge of all kinds of nature's secrets that city children never dream of. Little Jack himself knows many things about the woods and ponds and mountains, for he has the soul of a true little country boy.

The meadows Catherine and Jack go through are full of flowers, and on the way Catherine picks a bouquet of the pretty blossoms. She gathers blue flowers



APRÈS LE DÉJEUNER, CATHERINE S'EN EST ALLÉE DANS LES PRÉS AVEC JEAN, SON PETIT FRÈRE. QUAND ILS SONT PARTIS, LE JOUR SEMBLAIT JEUNE ET FRAIS COMME EUX. LE CIEL N'ÉTAIT PAS TOUT A FAIT BLEU; IL ÉTAIT PLUTOT GRIS, MAIS D'UN GRIS PLUS DOUX QUE TOUS LES BLEUS DU MONDE.

and poppies and cowslips, as well as buttercups, or stew pans as some call them. She gathers lots of those long violet flowers, called Venus mirrors, that grow on the edge of the wheat fields. She gathers the dark spikes of the milk weed and stork's bills and lilies of the valley, whose little bells give out such a delicious odor when stirred by the least bit of wind. Catherine loves the flowers because they are beautiful. She loves them too because they make such lovely ornaments. She is only a simple little country girl, with her pretty hair hidden under a brown cap. Her cotton apron covers a plain little dress, and she wears wooden shoes. The only rich costumes she has ever seen are on the images of the Virgin and St. Cath-



erine in her parish church. But there are things which little girls know from the day they are born. Catherine knows that flowers make fine trimmings, and that lovely ladies who put bouquets in their corsages look even lovelier for doing so. So she thinks she must be very fine indeed just now because she has a bouquet as big as her head. Her ideas are as fine and airy as her flowers. There are ideas that you can't put into words: there are no words good enough for them. They require tunes and songs, lively and sweet and gay and gentle. So Catherine sings while she gathers her flowers, bits from her nursery songs: "I'm going to the woods alone," or "My heart I give to him, to him, My heart I give to him."

Little Jack is a different sort altogether. He has other ideas. He is a regu-

lar boy. He isn't out of petticoats yet, but his spirit is ahead of his years, and there's no spirit finer than that. Though he keeps a good hold on his sister's apron with one hand, for fear of falling, he lays his switch about him with the other



hand with all the strength of a sturdy boy. His father's head workman doesn't crack his whip any louder over his horses' heads when he leads them back from the river and comes across his sweetheart suddenly on the way. Little Jack is not going to spend his time in soft sleep and dreams. He doesn't care anything about wild

flowers. For his make-believes he thinks of hard work. He makes believe about carts stuck in the muddy roads and percheron horses tugging at their collars as he shouts at them and whips them up.

Catherine and Jack climb up above the fields on the slope of the hill to a little knoll where they can see all the fires of the village scattered through the foliage, and toward the horizon the steeples of six different parishes. It is a place which makes you realize how great the world is. Catherine thinks she can understand better now the stories that have been told her about the dove and the ark and the people of Israel in the promised land, and of Jesus journeying from one village to another.

"Let's sit down here," she says.

She seats herself, and, spreading her hands, scatters her flowery harvest round her. Her little body has been perfumed with them all, and in a moment the butterflies are circling round her. She picks and arranges the flowers, and makes garlands and crowns of them, and hangs little bells at her ears for earrings, till she is as ornamental as the image of the Holy Virgin. Little Jack, occupied with his imaginary horses, catches sight of her thus dressed up, and at

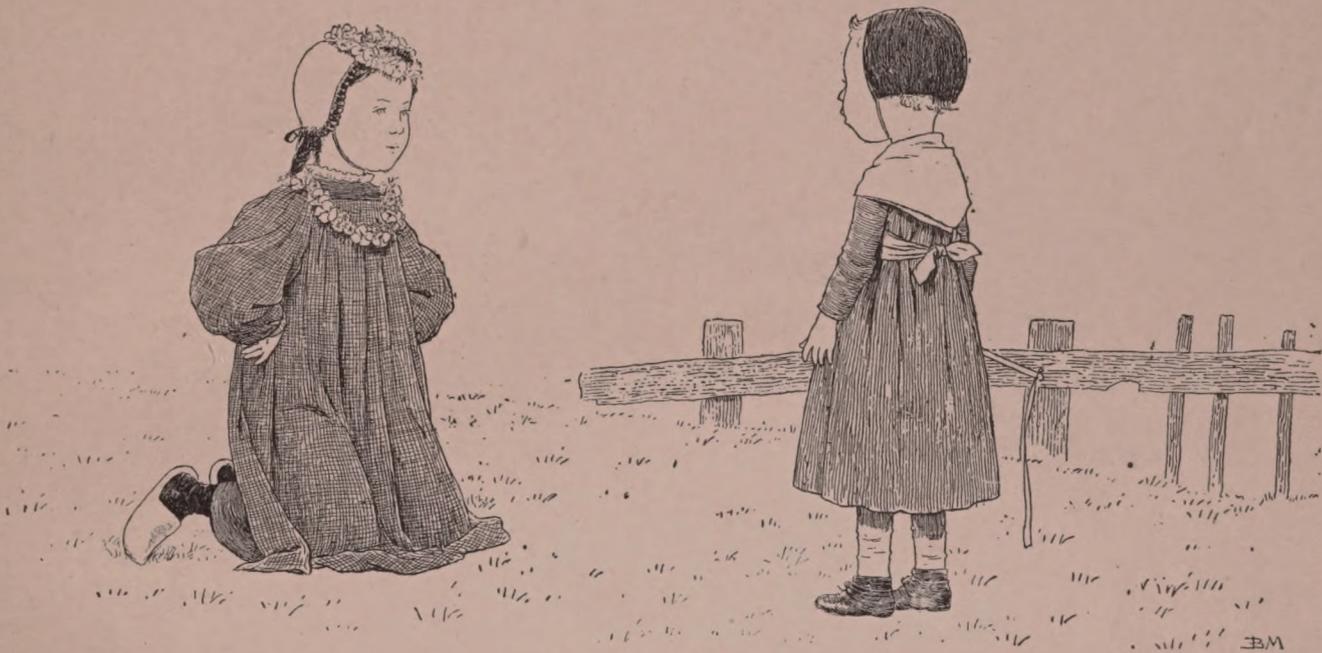


DEBOUT SUR SON SOCLE AGRESTE, LE
PETIT JEAN COMPREND QU'IL EST BEAU.
DROIT, IMMOBILE, LES YEUX TOUT RONDS,
LES LÈVRES SERRÉES, LES BRAS PEN-
DANTS, LES MAINS OUVERTES ET LES
DOIGTS ÉCARTÉS COMME LES RAYONS
D'UNE ROUE, IL GOUTE UNE JOIE PIEUSE
A SE SENTIR DEVENIR UNE IDOLE.



once is seized with admiration. A pious thought strikes his little soul. He stops, and the whip falls from his hands. He sees that she is beautiful. He would like to be beautiful too, and covered with flowers. He tries to express his wish in his pretty obscure way, and though he feels that he tries in vain, Catherine understands. Little Catherine is a big sister, and a big sister is a little mother: she looks ahead and sees things, with the mother's sacred instinct.

"Yes, deary," cries Catherine, "I'll make you a beautiful crown and you'll look like a king."



So here she is plaiting together blue and red and yellow flowers into a chaplet. She puts the crown of flowers on little Jack's head, and he turns red with joy. She puts her arms around him and lifts him off the ground and stands him, all covered with flowers, on a great stone near by. She admires him now because he is beautiful, and because it is she that has made him so.

Standing upright on his rustic pedestal little Jack understands that he is beautiful and the idea gives him a deep respect for himself. He realizes that he is sacred. Stiff, immovable, his eyes round, his lips shut tight, his arms hanging, his hands open and his fingers sticking out like the spokes of a wheel, he tastes a solemn joy in seeing that he has become an idol. The sky is over his head, the woods and the fields are at his feet. He is in the middle of the world. He is only good, only beautiful.

But suddenly Catherine begins to laugh.

"Little Jack," she cries. "You look so funny! Oh, you do look so funny!"

She jumps at him, puts her arms around him and gives him a shake. The heavy crown slips down over his nose. She cries again, "Oh, how funny you are! How funny!"



She laughs, but little Jack doesn't laugh. He's sad and surprised that everything is over and he's no longer beautiful. Well, he's a sturdy fellow, anyway. He picks up his switch and here he is once more steering his six make-believe horses out of the ruts.

Catherine still plays with her flowers. But some of them are dying, and there are others that are going to sleep. For flowers need sleep just as animals do, and here are the campanulas, gathered a few hours before, shutting their violet bells and going to sleep in the very hands of the little girl that plucked their lives out.

A light breath stirs in the air, and Catherine shivers. The evening is coming.

"I'm hungry," says little Jack.

But Catherine hasn't one bit of bread or anything to give her little brother; and so she says: "Let's go home."

And both their thoughts turn at once to the cabbage soup which by this time of day is sure to be smoking in the pot hanging from the crane in the centre of the great chimney. Catherine gathers her flowers in her arms, and taking her little brother by the hand begins to lead him home.

The sun descends slowly toward the red horizon. The swallows in their flight skim near the children with their unmoving wings. The evening has come. Catherine and Jack press closer to each other.

Catherine lets her flowers tumble one by one along the road. In the great



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ILS ÉTAIENT LAS ET ILS CRAIGNAIENT
DE NE JAMAIS ARRIVER DANS LA MAISON
OU LEUR MÈRE FAISAIT LA SOUPE POUR
TOUTE LA FAMILLE. LE PETIT JEAN N'AGITAIT
PLUS SON FOUET ET CATHERINE LAISSA GLIS-
SER DE SA MAIN FATIGUÉE SA DERNIÈRE FLEUR.
ELLE TIRAIT SON PETIT FRÈRE PAR LE BRAS ET
TOUS DEUX SE TAISAIENT.

silence the children hear the crickets rattle indefatigably. They are afraid, both of them, and sad, because the evening's sadness strikes into their little souls. Everything around them is familiar, but they don't recognize any more the things they know the best. It seems all of a sudden as if the world were too big and too old for them. They are tired and they fear they shall never get home where their mother is making soup for all the family. Little Jack doesn't ply his whip any more. Catherine lets the last flower slip from her tired hands. She takes her little brother by the arm and they are both very quiet.



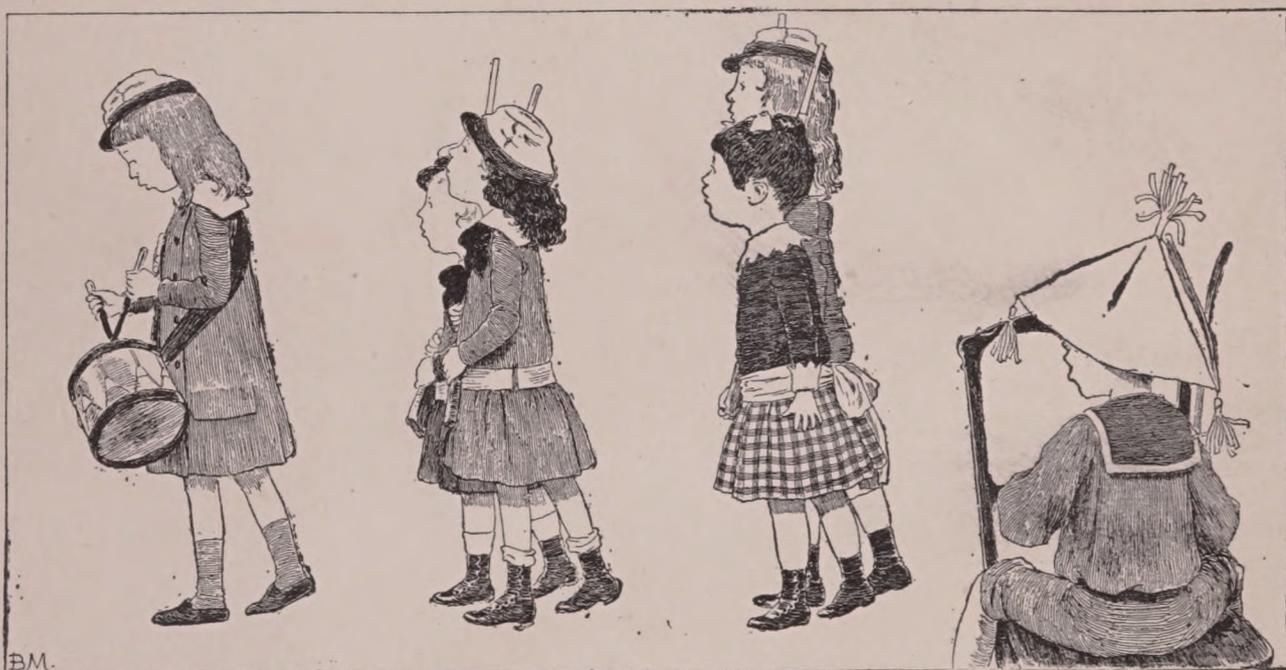
Finally they see the roof of their home, with its chimney smoking beneath the darkening sky. They stop and clap their hands, crying out joyfully. Catherine hugs her little brother, and then they both begin to run with all the strength left in their tired feet. In the villages some women returning from the fields wish them good evening. They breathe freely again. Their mother is in the doorway, in her white cap, a spoon in her hand.

"Come along, little ones, come on," she cries. And they throw themselves into her arms.

Coming into the room where the broth is steaming and sizzling Catherine shivers again. She has seen Night come down upon the earth. But Jack, sitting on his bench, his chin no higher than the table, is already eating his cabbage soup.

THE REVIEW

René, Bernard, Roger, James and Stephen think there is nothing finer in the world than being a soldier. Francine agrees with them, and wishes she were a boy so she could be a soldier too. They hold this very high opinion of soldiers because soldiers wear such beautiful uniforms and epaulettes and gold lace and glistening swords; and they know there is still another reason for putting soldiers



in the front rank of a country's heroes: soldiers give their lives for their country. There is no real greatness in the world but sacrifice, and to sacrifice one's life is the greatest sacrifice of all, since it takes in all the others. That's why the heart of the crowd beats faster when a regiment of soldiers marches by.

René is the general. He wears a double cocked hat and rides a war horse. His hat is paper and his horse is a chair. His army is composed of a drum major



RENÉ, BERNARD, ROGER, JACQUES
ET ÉTIENNE ESTIMENT QU'IL N'Y A
RIEN DE PLUS BEAU AU MONDE QUE
D'ÊTRE MILITAIRE. CATHERINE PENSE
COMME EUX, ET ELLE VOUDRAIT
ÊTRE UN GARÇON POUR DEVENIR UN
SOLDAT.

and four soldiers, one of them a girl. "Carry arms! Forward! March!" he cries, and the parade begins. Francine and Roger look exactly the same under arms. James, to be sure, holds his gun languidly in his arms, because his is a melancholy soul. There's no use reproaching him. Dreamers can be brave just as much as those who never dream. But his little brother Stephen, the smallest man in the regiment, remains quiet and thoughtful. He has ambition and wants to be general himself, at once. He studies over this problem, full of care.



"Forward! Forward!" cries René. "We'll go and attack the Chinese in the dining room." The Chinese are the chairs. When one is playing war chairs make very good Chinese. They tumble down,

and that's just the thing the Chinese do the best. When all the chairs have their heels in the air René cries: "Soldiers, now that we have vanquished the Chinese we'll go and eat something." The idea is favorably received by the whole army. Soldiers always have to eat. This time the commissariat has supplied extra healthy rations—currant cakes, lady-fingers, chocolate and coffee éclairs, gooseberry jam. The army devours everything. Only the gloomy Stephen doesn't eat. He looks with envy at the sword and cocked hat that the general has left on a chair. He edges up to them, takes possession of them and slips into the next room. There, all alone, he puts on the hat before a mirror and brandishes the sword. He is general—a general without an army, for himself alone. He tastes the full pleasure of his ambition, full though it is of vague forebodings and distant hopes.

DEAD LEAVES



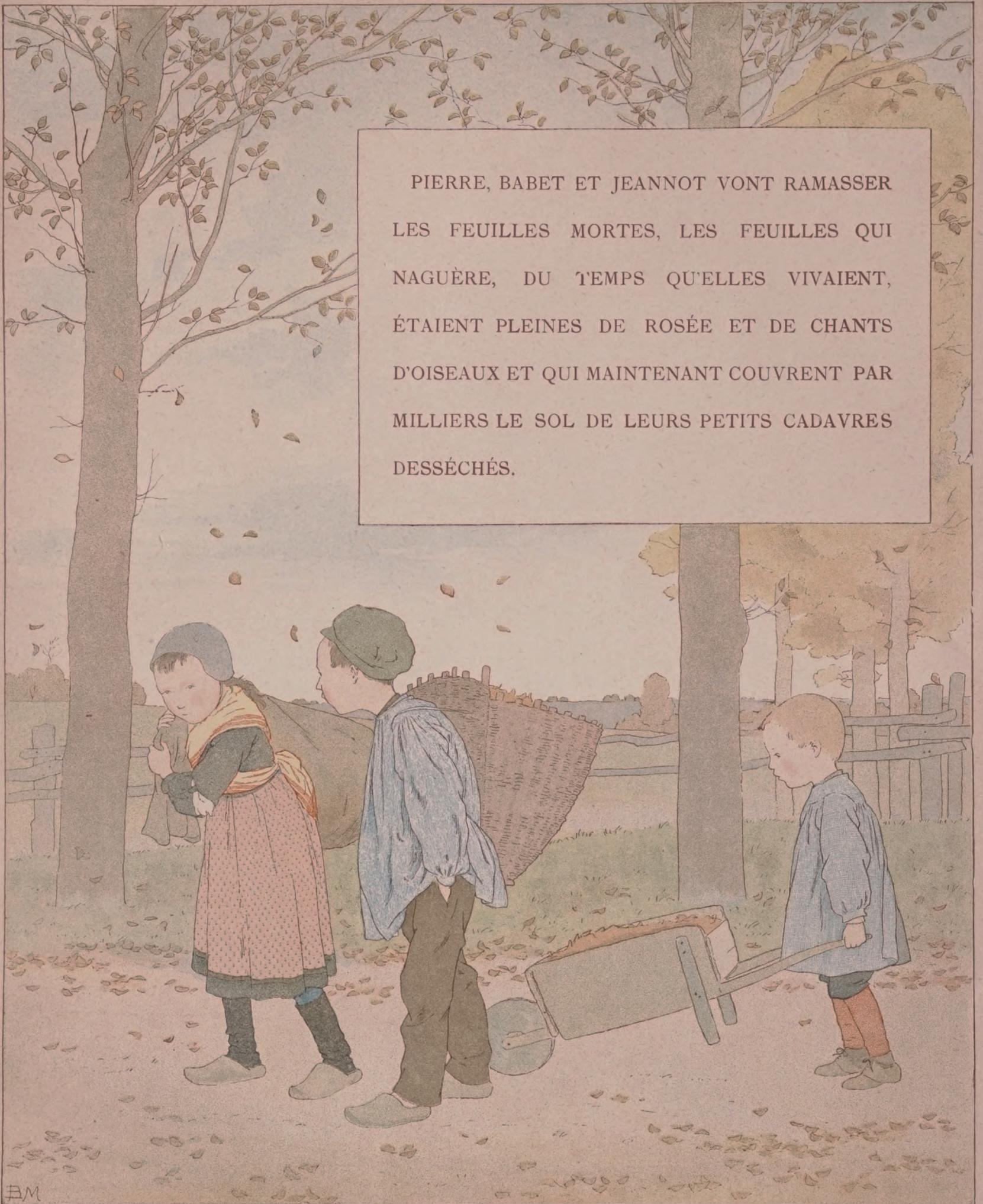
Autumn is here. The wind that whistles through the trees sets the dead leaves whirling. The chestnut trees, already stripped, rear their black skeletons in the air. All the leaves of the beeches and the horn beams or ironwoods are falling too. The birches and the aspens have turned to gold, and only one old oak still keeps its green crown.

The morning is fresh—a keen wind stirs the gray sky and reddens the children's fingers. Peter, Babette, and Jenny are going off to gather dead leaves, the leaves which only a little while ago were all alive with ruddiness and the singing of birds, but which now cover the ground with millions of their little dry bodies. But even dead they seem good. They make good litter for Riquette the goat and Rousette the cow.

Peter has brought his basket like a little man. Babette has taken a sack: she's a little woman. Jacky follows with the wheelbarrow. They go down the hill on the run. At the edge of the wood they meet other village children, too, who have come to lay in a supply of dead leaves for the winter. It isn't play: it's work.

But don't think these children are sad because they work. Work is serious, but not sad. Very often even one pretends to work in fun, and are not children's amusements, most of them, imitations of the work their elders do?

PIERRE, BABET ET JEANNOT VONT RAMASSER
LES FEUILLES MORTES, LES FEUILLES QUI
NAGUÈRE, DU TEMPS QU'ELLES VIVAIENT,
ÉTAIENT PLEINES DE ROSÉE ET DE CHANTS
D'OISEAUX ET QUI MAINTENANT COUVRENT PAR
MILLIERS LE SOL DE LEURS PETITS CADAVRES
DESSÉCHÉS.



So here are these children at work. The boys do their task in silence, because they are already little peasants and peasants don't talk much. But that isn't the way with peasant women. Our little girls' tongues wag the whole time they are filling the sacks and baskets.

In the meantime the mounting sun has made the fields warm and sweet. From the roofs of the hamlets rise little wreaths of smoke as light as breaths, telling of the good pea soup that's cooking in the kettles. One more armful of dead leaves and the little workmen seek again the road to the village. The ascent of the hill is hard. Bowing beneath their sacks and bending over the wheelbarrow they grow warm, and the sweat starts on their brows. Peter, Babette and Jacky stop to puff and catch their breath.

But the thought of that good pea soup gives them courage. Shoving and panting they arrive at last. Their mother, who waits for them at the door step, calls out to them: "Hurry, children, the soup is steaming!"

Our little friends find it very good. There is no soup so good as the kind you work for.



SUZANNE

The Louvre, in Paris, as you know, is a museum where many very old and beau-



B.M.

tiful things have been preserved—and very rightly too, for both age and beauty should be venerated. Now one of the loveliest of the antiquities of the Louvre is a piece of marble, worn and broken in many places, but still showing its subject distinctly—two young girls each holding a flower in her hand. They are two beautiful little creatures—young with the eternal youth of Greece which was the age of perfect beauty. The

sculptor who long ago made these two figures shows them in profile, each presenting to the other one of those lotus flowers which people at that time regarded as sacred, because from the blue chalice, they breathed, it was thought, forgetfulness of all the evil things of life. Our learned critics have paid a good deal of attention to these two young girls. They have consulted on the subject many

SUZANNE SONGE QUE C'EST
AUJOURD'HUI LA FÊTE DE SON
AMIE JACQUELINE, C'EST POUR-
QUOI ELLE VA CUEILLIR DES
FLEURS QU'ELLE DONNERA A
JACQUELINE AVEC DES BAISERS.



big books bound in parchment or calf, some even in pigskin; but they have never discovered just why these two little girls hold flowers in their hands.

What they have not discovered after all their labor and meditation and toil and growing pale little Miss Suzanne found out at once.

Her father took her to the Louvre, where he had some business. Little Suzanne regarded the antiques with some surprise, and seeing gods who had lost their legs and arms and heads, she said to herself: "Ah, ha, all these are the learned gentlemen's dolls, and I see that the gentlemen break their dolls just as children do." But when she came to the two little girls who held the flowers, she blew a kiss to them, because she thought them so pretty. Her father asked her

then: "Why do they each offer a flower to the other?"

"To wish each other a happy birthday," said Suzanne.

Then, thinking it over a moment, she added:



"Their birthdays are the same, they are just like each other, and they are giving each other the same flower. They're friends, and must have the same birthday."

Now Suzanne is far away from the Louvre and its ancient marbles, in the Kingdom of birds and flowers. She spends the lovely clear days of Spring in the fields at the edge of the woods. She plays in the grass and makes up the loveliest games. She pretends that it is her friend Jacqueline's birthday, and she is gathering flowers that she's going to give to Jacqueline with a kiss.

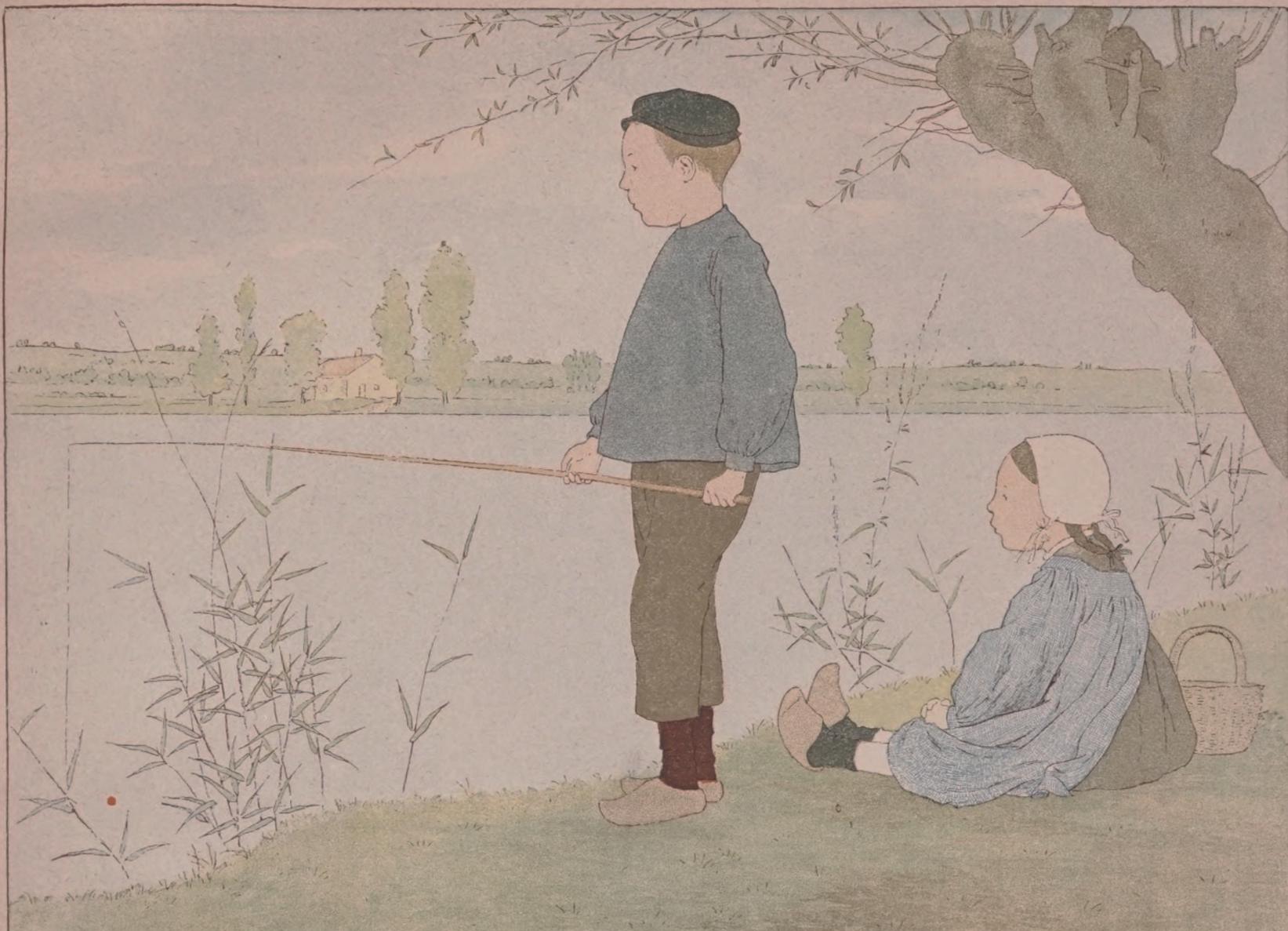
FISHING

John starts out very early in the morning with his sister Jenny, his pole on his shoulder and a basket on his arm. School is closed, and vacation time is here, which is the reason John and Jenny go every day, pole on shoulder, and basket on arm, along the river. John is a native of Touraine, and so is Jenny, and so is



the river, which flows clear beneath its silvery willows. A moist soft sky looks down on it. Morning and even-

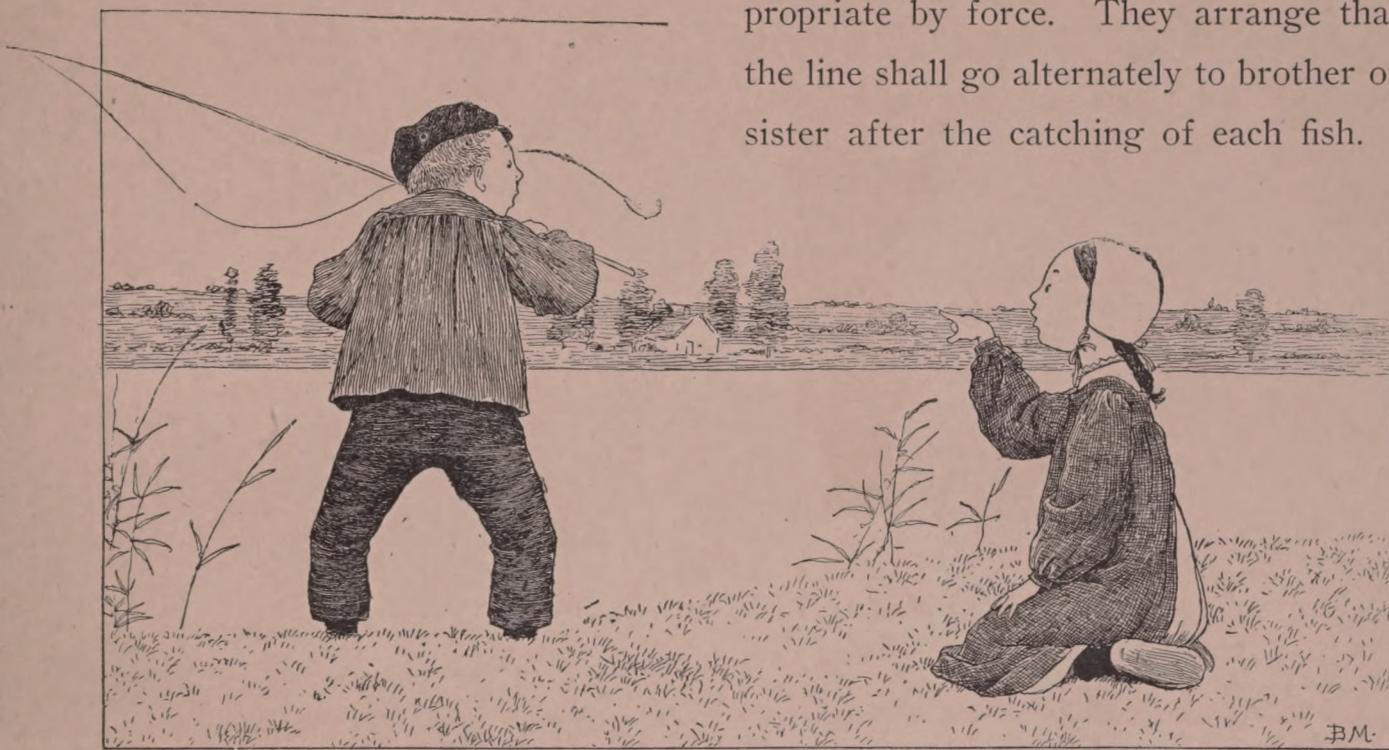
ing white vapors spread over the grass on its banks. But Jack and Jenny love the river, not for the green leaves along its borders, nor for its clear water that the sky shines in, but for the fish that are in it. They stop at the best fishing place. Jenny sits down beneath a topped off willow tree. Jack, having put his baskets on the ground, unwinds his fishing tackle. It's a very simple one: a long switch, with a long string and a bent pin on the end of it. Jack supplied the switch, Jenny the thread and pin: the line thus belongs equally both to brother



ILS S'ARRÊTENT A L'ENDROIT LE PLUS POISSONNEUX :
JEANNE S'ASSIED SOUS UN SAULE ÉTÊTÉ. AYANT POSÉ
SES PANIERS A TERRE, JEAN DÉROULE SA LIGNE. ELLE
EST SIMPLE : UNE GAULE, AVEC UN FIL ET UNE ÉPINGLE
RECOURBÉE AU BOUT DU FIL. JEAN A FOURNI LA GAULE.
JEANNE A DONNÉ LE FIL ET L'ÉPINGLE ; AUSSI LA LIGNE
EST-ELLE COMMUNE AU FRÈRE ET A LA SŒUR.

and sister. Each would like to have it all, and so the simple contrivance which need not have scared anything but a fish, has been the cause of many domestic quarrels and the giving of many thumps on the peaceful river banks. Brother and sister have struggled often for the free use of the line. Jack's arm is black and blue from being pinched, and Jenny's cheek is purple from resounding thwacks. But when they are tired of pinches and smacks Jack and Jenny consent to share

in good faith that which neither one nor the other has been able wholly to appropriate by force. They arrange that the line shall go alternately to brother or sister after the catching of each fish.



Jack has it first. There is no telling when he'll be through with it. He doesn't openly violate the treaty, but he nullifies the effect of it by a certain flagrant abuse. In order not to surrender the line to his sister he refuses to pull in the fish that offers himself, nibbling the hook and making the cork bob.

Jack is wily, Jenny is patient. For six hours she has waited often during this performance. This time, however, she seems tired of her long idleness. She yawns, stretches, lies down in the shadow of the willow and lets her eyelids close. Jack spies on her out of the corner of his eyes, and believes she has gone to sleep. The cork plunges. He pulls the string briskly, and on the end there glistens a bit of silver lightning. A silly gudgeon has caught himself on the hook.

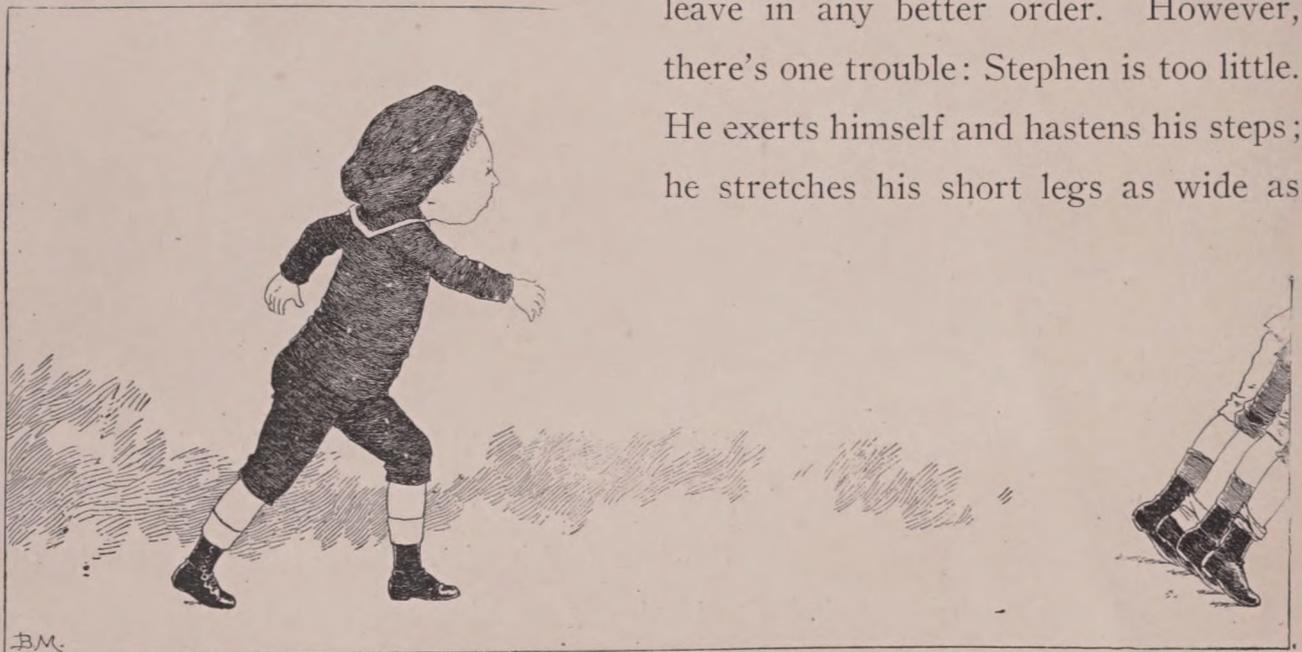
"Oh, then, it's mine now!" Jack hears a voice cry behind him. And Jenny seizes the tackle.

BIG BOY'S FAULTS

It was to see their friend Jack that Roger, Marcel, Bernard, James and Stephen one day took the great national route that unrolls itself like a yellow ribbon along the fields and meadows.

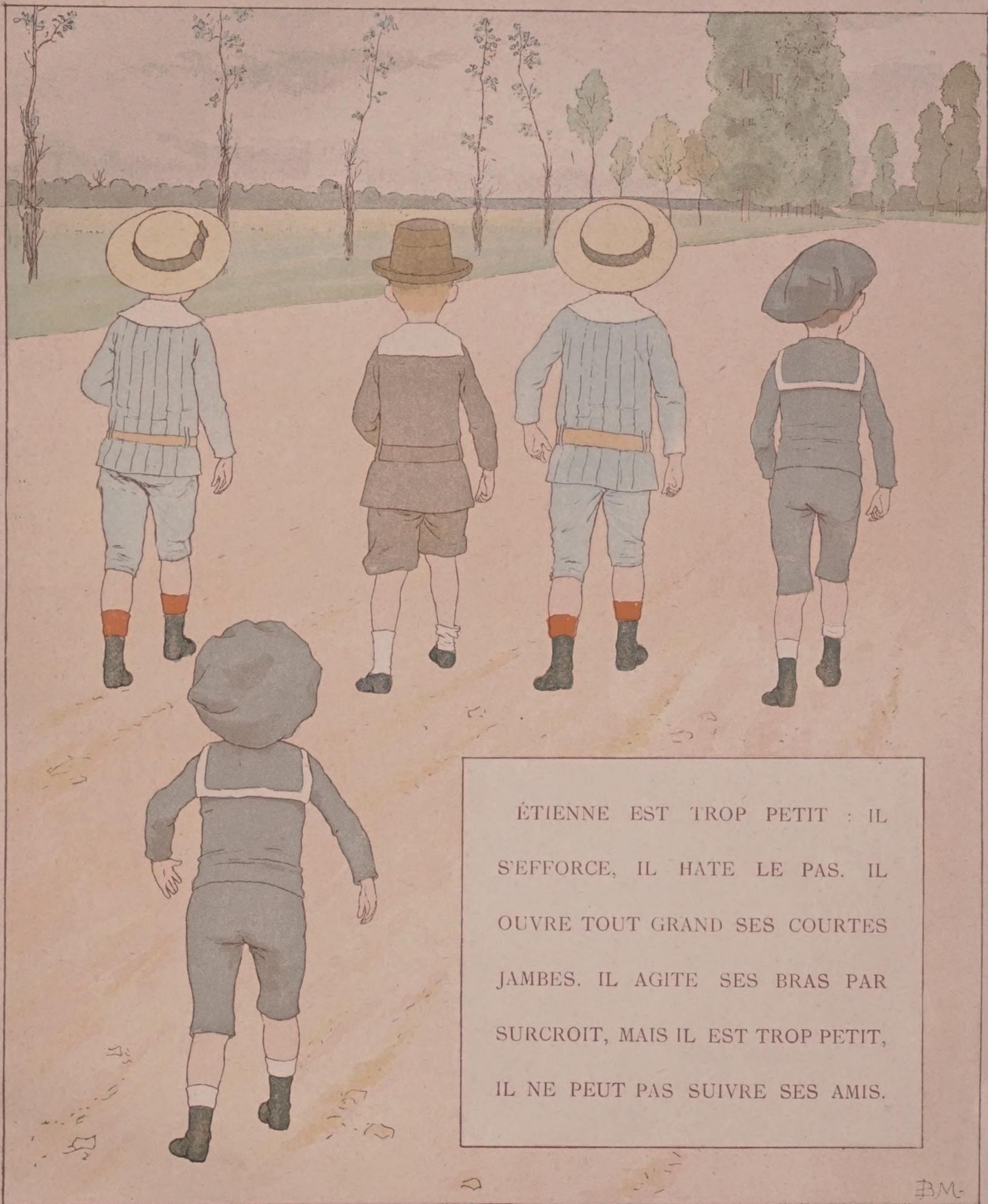
Here they are starting off. They move forward in one row. One couldn't

leave in any better order. However, there's one trouble: Stephen is too little. He exerts himself and hastens his steps; he stretches his short legs as wide as



possible; he waves his arms to make them bigger. But he is too little: he can't keep up with his friends. He falls behind because he is too little. It's fate.

The big, older boys ought to wait for him, of course, and regulate their steps by his. They ought to, but they don't. "Forward, march!" cry the strong people of the world, and leave the feeble ones behind. But listen to the end of this story. Suddenly our big boys, our four gallants, come to a stop. They have spied on the ground a little beast that jumps. The little animal jumps because it's a



ÉTIENNE EST TROP PETIT : IL
S'EFFORCE, IL HATE LE PAS. IL
OUVRE TOUT GRAND SES COURTES
JAMBES. IL AGITE SES BRAS PAR
SURCROIT, MAIS IL EST TROP PETIT,
IL NE PEUT PAS SUIVRE SES AMIS.

frog, and wants to get into the meadow that runs along the road. The meadow is its native land and very dear to it. Its home is there by a little stream. It jumps.

It is green, and looks something like a living leaf. Bernard, Roger, James and Marcel fall in pursuit at once. Here they are in the meadow: soon they feel their feet sink in the wet earth that nourishes the thick grass. A few more steps and they are stuck in the mud up to their knees. The grass hides a bog.

They extricate themselves with difficulty. Their shoes, their socks, their



calves are black. It is the nymph
put mud leggings on the four disobedient boys.

of the green meadow who has

Stephen joins them all out of breath. He doesn't know, when he sees them thus booted, whether to laugh or cry for them. He reflects, in his innocent little soul, on the catastrophes that strike the great and strong. As to the four mud-leggaged ones, they retrace their steps pathetically, for how could they go in such a get-up, if you please, to see their friend Jack? When they come home again their mothers read their fault in their legs, whereas the goodness of little Stephen shows in his clean and sturdy calves.

THE LITTLE DINNER

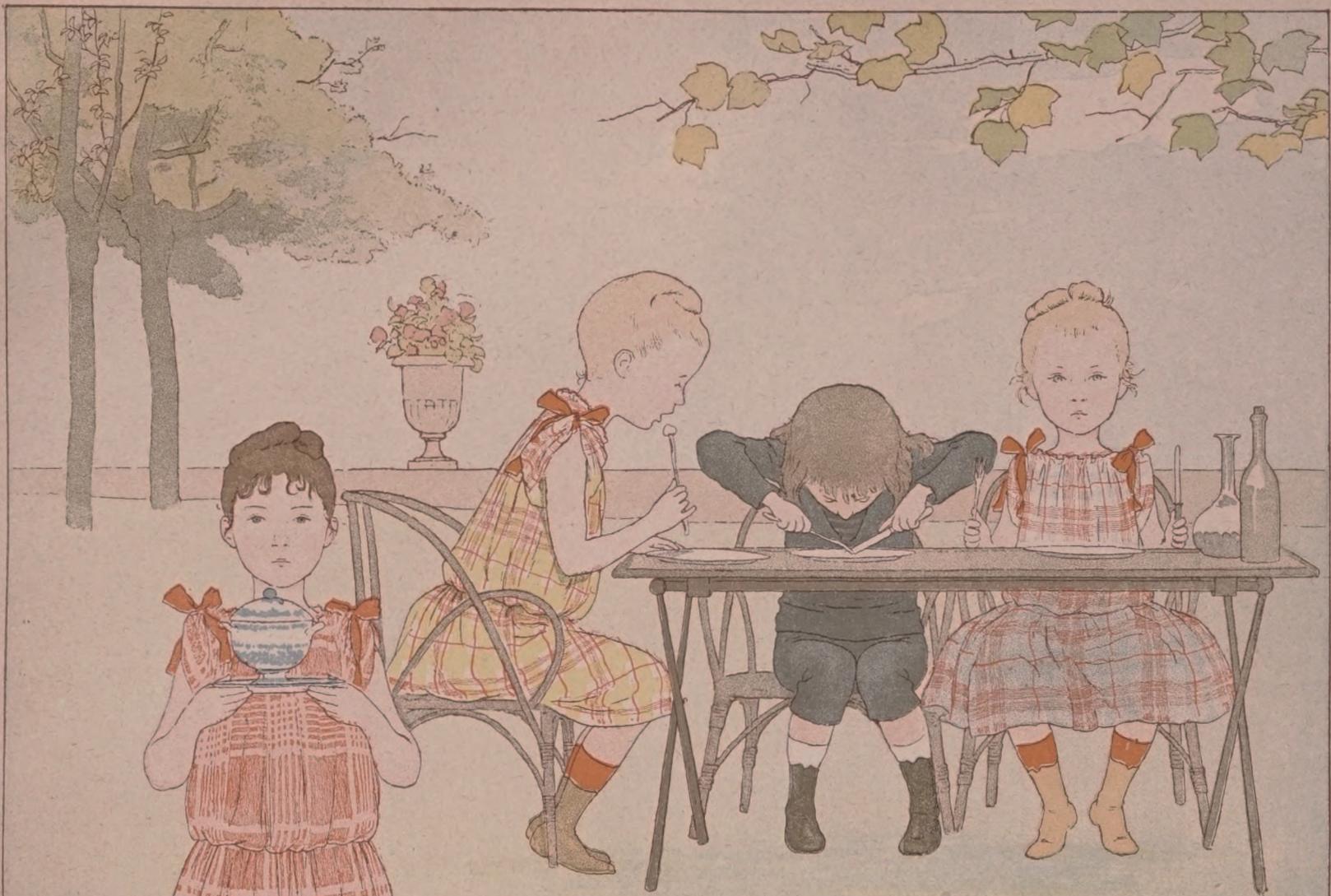
It's an awfully pretty thing, a little dinner. You can have it very simple or very complicated, as you prefer. You can have it even without anything at all. But in that case you must have imagination.

Therese and her little sister Pauline have invited Peter and Martha to a little dinner in the country. It's a quite formal dinner. They have discussed it for a long time beforehand. The mother of the two sisters has given them ad-



vice—she has contributed delicacies too. There are going to be nougats and éclairs and a chocolate cream. The table is going to be set beneath the grape arbour.

“If only it doesn't rain!” cries Therese, who is nine years old. At her age one knows that the sweetest hopes are often disappointed in this world, and that



PIERRE DÉCOUPE GALAMMENT. LE
NEZ DANS L'ASSIETTE ET LES COUDES
PAR-DESSUS LA TÊTE, IL DIVISE AVEC
EFFORT UNE CUISSE DE POULET. IL
N'Y A PAS JUSQU'A SES PIEDS QUI NE
PARTICIPENT A SON ACTION. C'EST QUE
PIERRE EST UN GAILLARD ÉNERGIQUE.

one can't always do what one would like. But little Pauline isn't troubled that way. She doesn't know how to anticipate bad weather. The weather will be all right—she wishes it; and sure enough here is the day of the dinner dawning clear and bright—not a shadow in the sky. The two guests have come. Such luck! For that was another subject of anxiety for Therese. Martha had a cold, and you couldn't help worrying for fear she wouldn't be well in time. And as for little Peter everybody knows he always misses the car. You can't reproach him for it. It's his misfortune, not his fault. His mother is just naturally un-

punctual. Everywhere, always, little Peter arrives the last: he's never seen the beginning of anything. It's all given him an air of dullness and resignation.

By an extraordinary chance he has come punctually for the invitation of the two sisters. This time his mother didn't miss the train: she made a mistake in the hour!

The table is set. All ready for the dinner! Therese is to serve. She is thoughtful and serious, the instincts of housekeeping awaking already in her heart. Peter carves gallantly. His nose in his plate, his elbows as high as his head, he divides with great effort a side bone of chicken. Every part of him, even down to

his legs, is brought into action. Peter is certainly an energetic little fellow. Miss Martha eats very elegantly, without much moving round, or any noise, like ladies. Pauline follows suit, but with less style. She eats as she can and as much as she can.

Therese, sometimes servant, sometimes guest, is very content with things, and contentment is more than joy. The little dog, Gyp, has come to eat the leavings, and Therese reflects, seeing him crunch his bones, that dogs have never discovered all the delicacies that make the feasts of men and the little dinners of children so exquisite.



THE ARTIST

Michael is the son of a painter. He has seen his father make on canvas wonderful pictures of men and animals, imitating the colors of the earth, the sea,



the sky and all nature. He has seen his father paint lovingly ladies whose gaze and lips seemed like flame and rose and who smiled at you all in white. "When I am grown up," says little Michael, "I shan't paint ladies. I shall paint horses: it's much finer."

And already he busies himself inventing the finest beasts he can imagine. But the horses that grow under his fingers have this particular thing about them—that they don't look at all like horses. They look more like four-legged ostriches. It's very hard to paint.

However, Michael makes great progress, and now when you see his drawings you guess pretty nearly what they are meant to represent. He draws every day. He has patience and love,

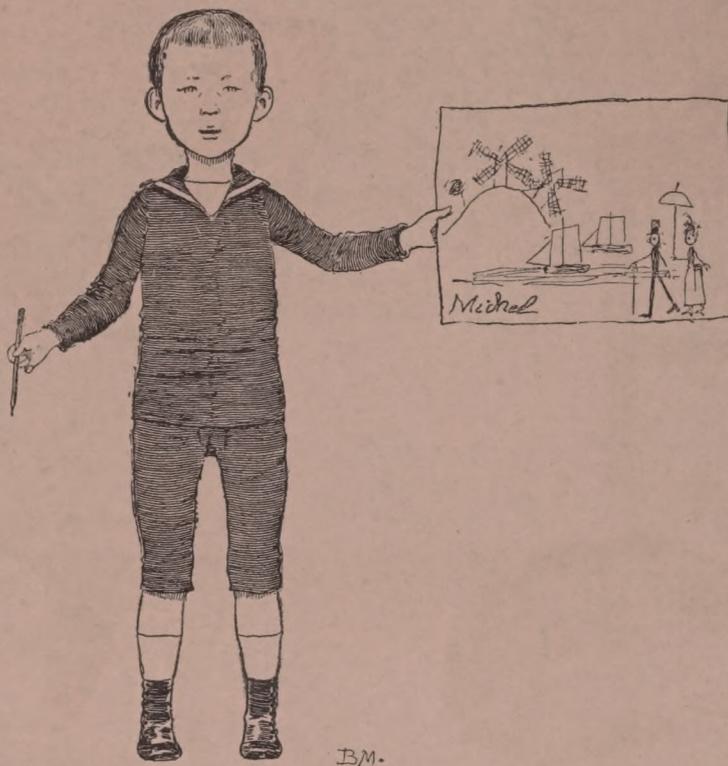
which are the two halves of genius. Time will do the rest, and perhaps Michael will become as great a painter as his father. Yesterday he covered a sheet of



MICHEL FAIT DE GRANDS PROGRÈS, ET MAINTENANT EN VOYANT SES DESSINS ON DEVINE A PEU PRÈS CE QU'ILS REPRÉSENTENT. IL DESSINE TOUS LES JOURS. IL A LA PATIENCE ET L'AMOUR, CE SONT LES DEUX MOITIÉS DU GÉNIE.

school paper with a beautiful composition. It represented a gentleman with a cane in his hand, taking a walk by the seashore. Except that his arms come out of his breast the gentleman is very well made. He has four buttons on his coat: it's really perfect. Near by is a tree, in the distance a boat. The gentleman has the air of taking the boat in his hand and of wanting to swallow the tree. It's just an error in perspective: one finds it even in the best masters.

To-day Michael achieves a still greater composition. There are men and boats and windmills in it. He has put his very best in this great work. It seems to him the boats actually float upon the sea, and the wings of the mills really turn round. He admires himself. He glorifies himself upon his work like a real artist, and enjoys creation after the manner of God.



And yet, he doesn't dream of the cat that plays at his feet with a ball of yarn. The moment Michael leaves the room, the little cat will jump on the table, and with one blow of its white paw upset the ink and spill it on his papers. Thus the masterpiece of Michael will perish. The creator of it will be very sad at first. But soon he will make a new masterpiece to repair the injury of the little cat and of destiny. Thus talent gets the best of bad fortune.

JACQUELINE AND MIRAUT

Jacqueline and Miraut are old friends. Jacqueline is a little girl and Miraut is a big dog. They are of the same world—they are both country people. That's what has made their great intimacy. How long have they known each other? They don't know: that's beyond the memory of a dog and a little girl. Besides,

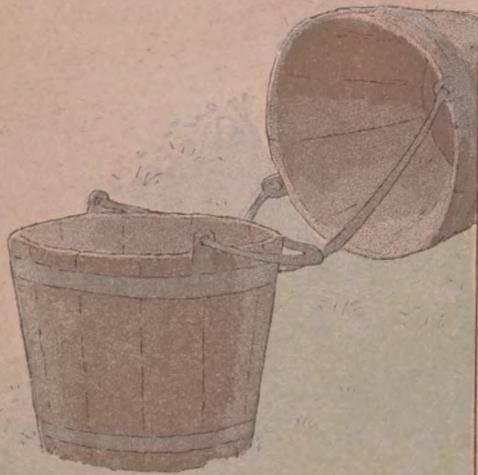


they don't need to know. They have no wish or need to know anything. Their only idea is that they have known each other a long time, since the very beginning of things, for they don't dream, either of them, that the universe has existed before them. The world, as they conceive it, is young, simple and naive, as they are themselves. Jacqueline sees Miraut and Miraut Jacqueline, all in a lovely setting here in the world.

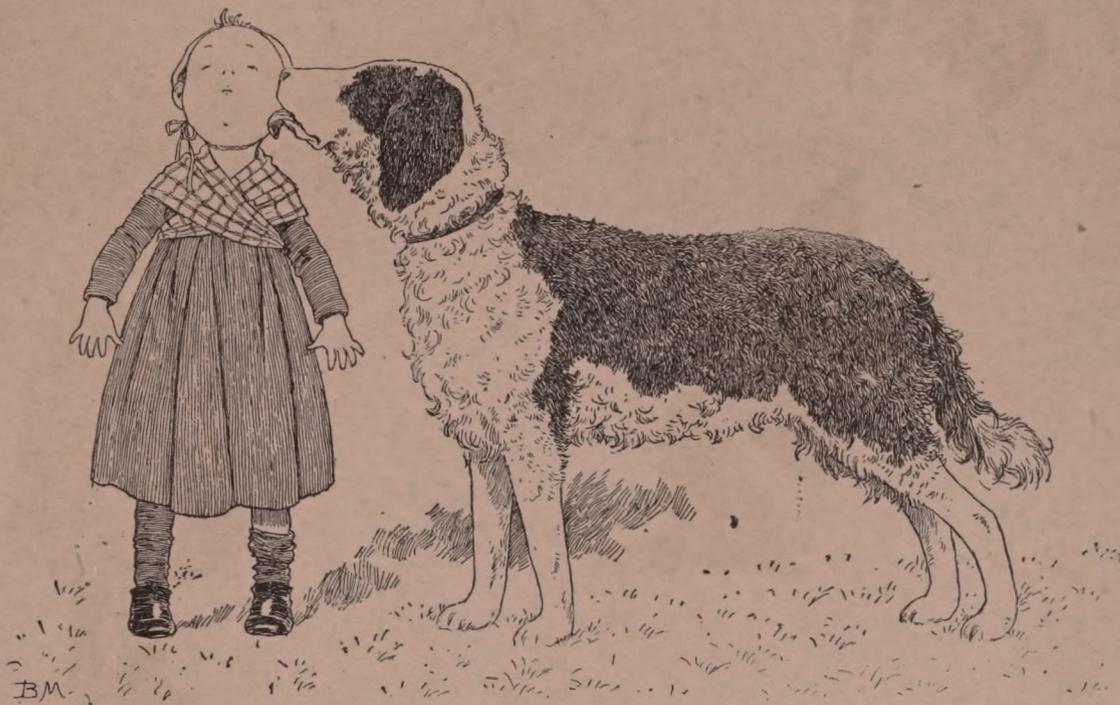
Miraut is much bigger and stronger than Jacqueline. When he puts his forepaws on the child's shoulders he towers head and breast above her. He could eat her up in three mouthfuls, if he liked. But he knows, he feels, that a certain force is in her, and that, little though she is, she is precious. He admires and loves her. He licks her face from sheer sympathy. Jacqueline loves him because he is strong and



JACQUELINE ET MIRAUT SONT DE VIEUX AMIS.
JACQUELINE EST UNE PETITE FILLE ET MIRAUT EST
UN GROS CHIEN : ILS SONT DU MÊME MONDE, ILS
SONT TOUS DEUX RUSTIQUES ; DE LA LEUR INTIMITÉ
PROFONDE. DEPUIS QUAND SE CONNAISSENT-ILS ?
ILS NE LE SAVENT PLUS ; CELA PASSE LA MÉMOIRE
D'UN CHIEN ET CELLE D'UNE PETITE FILLE.



good. She has a sentiment of great respect for him. She has discovered that he knows many secrets that she doesn't, and that the obscure genius of the earth is in him. He seems enormous, grave and sweet. She venerates him, as under another sky, in ancient times, men venerated other shaggy, rural gods.



But here she is all of a sudden surprised, astonished and disturbed. She has found her old earth genius, her shaggy God Miraut, tied by a long chain to a tree near the edge of the well. She stops, wondering, and hesitates. Miraut looks at her with his good, honest, patient eyes. Not knowing that he is an earth genius and a shaggy god he submits to his collar and chain without anger. But Jacqueline is afraid to go nearer to him. She can not understand that her divine and mysterious friend is a captive, and a vague sadness fills her little soul.

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