

THE BEAUTIFUL OLD SONG OF

The

B A B E S

IN THE WOOD.

Written by Rob. Yarrington, 1601.



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THE CHILDREN IN THE WOOD.

Now ponder well ye parents dear,
the words which I shall write,
A dismal story you shall hear,
brought forth in time to light.
A merchant of no small account,
in England dwelt of late,
Who did in riches far surmount
most men of his estate.

Yet sickness came, and he must die,
no help his life could save.
His wife by him as sick did ly,
and both possess one grave.
No love between these two was lost
each was to other kind,
In love they liv'd, in love they died,
and left two babes behind:

The one a fine and pretty boy,
not passing three years old:
The other a girl more young than he,
and framed in beautys mould.
The father left his little son,
as plainly doth appear,
When he to perfect age should come,
three thousand pounds a year.

and to his little daughter Jean
 five hundred pounds in gold,
 to be paid down on marriage-day,
 which might not be controll'd:
 but if the children chance to die,
 ere they to age should come,
 their uncle should possess their wealth;
 for so the will did run.

Now brother said the dying man,
 look to my children dear;
 be good unto my boy and girl,
 no friends else have they here:
 to God and you I recommend,
 my children dear this day;
 but little while be sure we have
 within this world to stay.

You must be father and mother both,
 and uncle all in one;
 God knows what will become of them,
 when I am dead and gone.
 With that bespake their mother dear,
 O brother kind quoth shee,
 You are the man must bring my babes
 to wealth or misery.

And if yoe keep them carefully
 than God will you reward;
 But if you otherwise should deal,
 God will your deeds regard.
 With lips as cold as any stone,
 they kist their children small:
 God bless you both my children dear!
 with that the tears did fall.

These speeches than their brother spake
 to this sad couple there,
 The keeping of your little ones
 sweet sister do not fear;
 God never prosper me nor mine,
 nor ought else that I have,
 If I do wrong your children dear,
 when you are laid in grave.

The parents being dead and gone,
 the children home he takes,
 And brings them straight nnto his house,
 where nuch of them he makes.
 He had not kept these pretty babes
 a twelmonth and a day,
 But for their wealth he did devise
 To make them both away.

He bargained with twa russians strong,
 which were of furious mood,
 That they should take these children young
 and slay them in a wood:
 He told his wife an artful tale,
 he would the children send
 To be brought up in fair London,
 with one that was his friend.

Away then went these pretty babes,
 rejoicing at that tide,
 Rejoicing with a merry mind,
 they should on horse-back ride.
 They prate and prattle pleasantly,
 as they rode on the way,
 To those who should there butchers be,
 and work their lives decay.

So that the pretty speech they had,
 made murderers heart relent;
 And they that undertook the deed,
 full fore now do repent.
 Let one of them more hard of heart,
 did vow to do his charge,
 Because the wretch that hired him,
 had paid him very large.

The other wont agree thereto,
 so here they fall to strife,
 With one another they did fight,
 about the childrens life:
 And he that was of mildest mood,
 did slay the other there,
 Within an unfrequented wood,
 while babes did quake for fear.

He took the children by the hand,
 tears standing in their eye,
 And bade them straightway follow him,
 and look they did not cry:
 And two long miles he led them on,
 while they for food complain,
 Stay here quoth he I'll bring you bread,
 when I return again.

These pretty babes with hand in hand,
 went wandering up and down,
 But never more could see the man
 approaching from the town:
 Their pretty lips with black-berries,
 were all besmeared and dyed,
 And when they saw the darksome night,
 they sat them down and cried.

Thus wandered these poor innocents,
 till death did end their grief,
 In one anothers arms they died,
 as wanting due relief:
 No burial this pretty pair
 of any man receives,
 Till Robin-red-breast piously
 did cover them with leaves.

And now the heavy wrath of God
 upon their uncle fell,
 Yea fearful fiends did haunt his house,
 his conscience felt an hell.
 His barns were fired, his house consumed,
 his lands were barran made,
 His cattle died within the house,
 and nothing with him staid.

And in a voyage to Portugal
 two of his sons did die;
 And to conclude himself was brought
 to want and misery.
 He pawn'd and mortgaged all his land
 ere seven years came about.
 And now at length this wicked act
 of murder it came out.

The fellow that did take in hand
 these children for to kill,
 Was for a robbery judged to die,
 such was Gods blessed will.
 Who did confess the very truth,
 as here hath been displayed:
 Their uncle having died in goal,
 where he for debt was laid.

You that executors be made,
 and overseers eke
 Of children that be fatherless,
 and infants mild and meek;
 Take you example by this thing,
 and yield to each his right,
 lest God with such like misery,
 your wickeds mind requite.

FINIS.



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