

THE BABES IN THE WOOD



McLOUGHLIN
BROS
N.Y.

MAY
BELLS
SERIES

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Babes in the Wood, by Anonymous

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Title: The Babes in the Wood
May Bells Series

Author: Anonymous

Release Date: October 10, 2011 [EBook
#37690]

Language: English

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THE BABES **In the WOOD**

**MAY
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**THE
CHILDREN IN THE
WOOD.**

A gentleman of good account
In Norfolk dwelt of late,
Who did in honor far surmount
Most men of his estate.

Sore sick he was, and like to die,
No help his life could save;
His wife by him as sick did lie,
And both possessed one grave.

No love between these two was
lost,
Each was to other kind;
In love they lived, 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 beauty's mould.

The father left his little son,
As plainly doth appear,
When he to perfect age should
come,
Three hundred pounds a year.

And to his little daughter Jane,
Five hundred pounds in gold,
To be paid down on her marriage-
day,
Which might not be controlled:

But if the children chanced 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:"

And up bespake their mother dear,
"O, brother kind," quoth she,
"You are the man must bring our
babes
To wealth or misery."

These speeches then their brother
spake
To this sick couple there:
"The keeping of your little ones,
Sweet sister, do not fear.





THE PARENTS' DEATH.





THE RUFFIANS' FIGHT.

"God never prosper me nor mine,
Nor aught 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 unto his
house,
Where much of them he makes.

He had not kept these pretty babes
A twelvemonth and a day,
But, for their wealth, he did devise
To make them both away.

He bargained with two ruffians
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 those pretty babes,
Rejoicing at that tide,
Rejoicing with a merry mind,

They should on cock-horse ride.

They prate and prattle pleasantly,
As they rode on the way,
To those that should their butchers
be,
And work their lives' decay.

So that the pretty speech they had,
Made murder's heart relent:
And they that undertook the deed,
Full sore did now repent.

Yet 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 won't agree thereto,

So here they fall to strife;
With one another they did fight
About the children's life.

And he that was of mildest mood,
Did slay the other there,
Within an unfrequented wood:
The 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;





THE CHILDREN DEAD.





THE UNCLE PUNISHED.

And two long miles he led them on,
While they for food complain:
"Stay here," quoth he, "I'll bring you
bread,
When I come back again."

These pretty babes, with hand in
hand
Went wandering up and down;
But never more could see the man
Approaching from the town.

Thus wandered these poor innocents
Till death did end their grief,
In one another's arms they died,
As wanting due relief:

No burial this pretty pair
Of any man receives,
Till Robin Redbreast 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 goods
consumed,
His lands were barren made,
His cattle died within the field,

And nothing with him stayed.

And in the voyage to Portugal
Two of his sons did die;
And to conclude, himself was
brought
To want and misery.

He pawned and mortgaged all his
land
Ere seven years came about,
And now at length this wicked act
Did by this means come out:

The fellow that did take in hand
These children for to kill,
Was for a robbery judged to die,
Such was God's blessed will.

Who did confess the very truth,

As here hath been displayed:
Their uncle having died in jail,
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 wicked minds requite.







Transcriber's Note

- Obvious

punctuation
and spelling
errors
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