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Read, Brooks & Co's New Series of Toy and Story Books, Printed in Oil Colors.

THE STORY OF  
THE  
**THREE BEARS**  
ILLUSTRATED BY  
CRUIKSHANK.



THE THREE BEARS PREPARING FOR A MORNING WALK.

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# THE STORY

OF

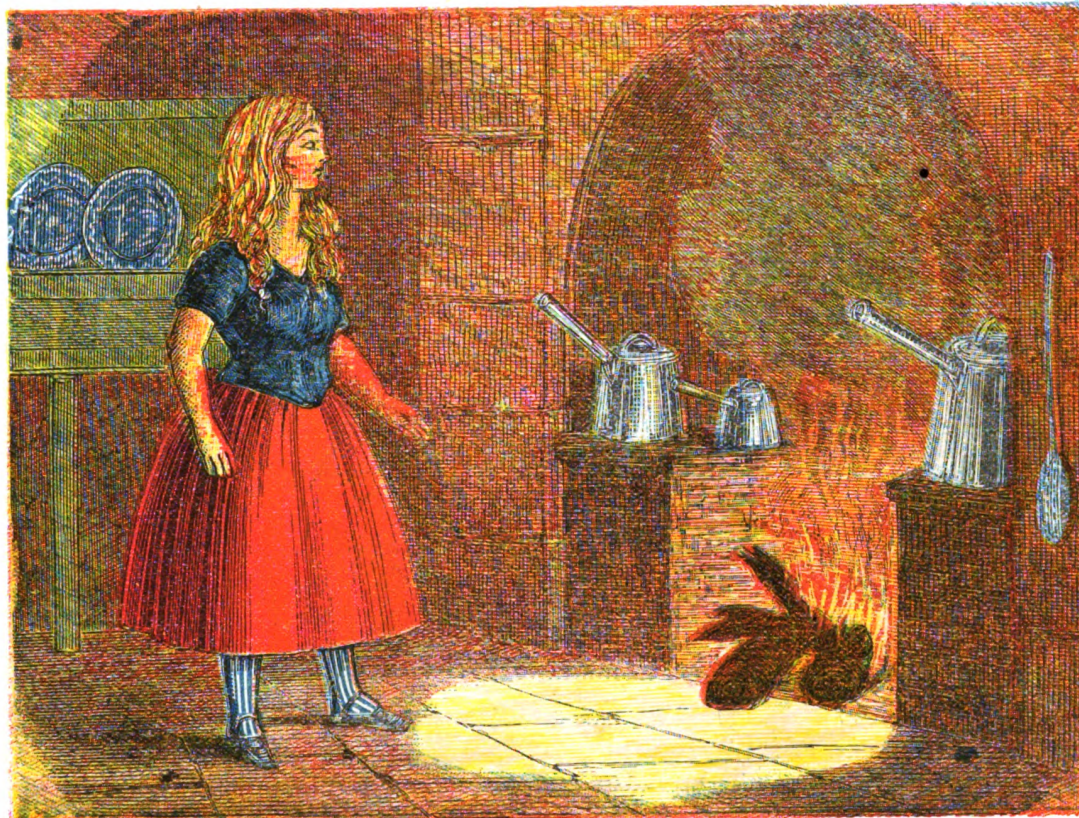
# THE THREE BEARS.

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ONCE upon a time, before bears, wolves, and such wild animals were destroyed in this country, there lived in a pretty little village in the West of England, a lady and gentleman who had an only daughter, named Mary, who had beautiful curling locks, and was so bright, pretty, and good tempered, that the villagers nicknamed her "Silverlocks." She often strolled about the neighbourhood, and everybody was so fond of her that her parents had no fear. One day she had wandered close to a large wood, much farther from home than she usually went, and being amused with gathering the blue-bells and wild violets which grew on the hillocks about the great trees, never thought how far she had wandered. At last, she caught sight of a funny-looking little house, and, drawing near to it, soon observed that the door was open. Being very tired and hungry she tapped at the door, feeling assured if anyone was at home they would give her a draught of milk and let her rest awhile. Having tapped several times and no one answering, she made free to walk in. On entering the room, the arrangement of the furniture appeared very curious: there was a large old-fashioned chair on one side of the fireplace, and a somewhat smaller one on the other; then between the two, was a little tiny one; there were three different sized plates, knives and forks, basins, and saucepans—in fact, everything was of three different sizes.

For some time she stared about, not knowing what to make of it, for no one could she see. The fire was burning nice and bright, the saucepans on the side went bubble, bubble, emitting a white steam, which, to her fancy, being very hungry, smelt particularly nice. Having waited for some time and no one coming, she thought she might just as well taste what was in the saucepans, so she opened the lid of the largest, and, with a wooden spoon that lay on the table, helped herself to a little of its contents, which being very hot, and she not over cautious, burnt her mouth; and attempting to put the lid on again, she let it fall on the floor. She then tried the next, which she found to be a kind of hasty pudding, but so cold and tasteless that she dropped the spoon into it and went on

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SILVERLOCKS ENTERS THE BEARS' HOUSE.

to the next. This saucepan was a neat-looking little thing, quite bright and clean; so she took the little spoon that lay on the table, and began to taste; this was so sweet and nice that she never left off until she had eaten it all up. Having made a hearty meal, she thought she would sit down and rest awhile; so she threw herself into the big arm-chair, but it was so hard that she soon jumped up again and tried the next; this she found softer, but as her feet would not reach the ground, she jumped up again; and the little chair being close by, popped herself down in it, and finding it just the thing that suited her, she began rocking herself backwards and forwards, thinking all the time what a funny house it was, and wondering who could inhabit such a queer, old-fashioned place. At last, having overbalanced herself, down she went, and out went the bottom of the chair, the arms and the legs at the same time breaking all to pieces; not being hurt herself, she thought very little of the damage she had done; so having gathered up some of the wild flowers she had thrown down when she first came in, and cutting a few capers round the room,



**WHO'S BEEN TO MY PORRIDGE AND ATE IT ALL UP?**

she thought she should like to see what sort of a bed-room the funny people who inhabited the house had ; so up the queer-looking stairs she went, and, opening a rough door that stood at the stair-head, peeped into the room. Seeing no one there, she advanced boldly into the apartment.

On one side of the room was a large bed with high curtains, a quilt made of rushes, and a great big pillow that looked more like the trunk of a tree than anything else she had ever seen ; on the other side was a smaller bed, with a patchwork quilt, dimity hangings, and a pillow not quite so big, but apparently made of a very coarse material ; between the two beds was a more modern-looking little bed, with pretty curtains and a neat fringe all round, the coverlid neat and white, and, altogether it looked very comfortable.

Having stood some time looking about her, and still wondering what kind of people they could be who used this room, she thought she would lie down, and being full of fun and mischief, jumped into the big bed, but the pillow was so hard that she as quickly jumped out again. Trying



**"WHO'S BEEN SITTING IN MY CHAIR, AND BROKEN IT ALL TO PIECES?"**

the next large bed, she found that as uncomfortable, for the sheets were so coarse, and the lumps in the mattress so hard, that she could not find a spot to lie at ease on. Then she tried the little bed, which was near an open window, through which peeped the honeysuckle and rose, and found it as soft and comfortable as she could desire; so she laid her head down on the soft pillow, and very soon fell asleep.

Now, my little reader must know that the house pretty Silverlocks had entered was the residence of three very respectable Bears in their way, who, having got their breakfast things ready, had gone out for a walk in the wood, so as to refresh their appetites by a little exercise.

Pretty Silverlocks had not been long asleep when the three Bears returned. There was the old papa Bear, the mamma Bear, and the little boy Bear. Having entered the room, the big Bear, being very hungry, went direct to his saucepan on the fire-side, when, to his great surprise, he found it uncovered, and the lid lying on the floor. "Mercy on me!" he cried "what is the meaning of this? Who has been to my porridge?"



**"SOMEBODY'S BEEN IN MY BED, AND HERE THEY LIE STILL!"**

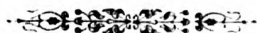
"Good gracious!" cried the mamma Bear, "who has been to my porridge, and left in it my silver spoon?" "Oh dear, oh dear!" cried the little Bear, "who has been to my porridge, and ate it all up?" Then the big Bear cried in a voice like thunder, "Who has been in my chair, and put it out of place?" "Who has been in my chair," cried the mamma Bear, "and thrown down my best cushion?" "Who has been in my chair," said the little Bear, (who was crying at the loss of his porridge), "and broken it all to pieces?"

Having looked in a very sagacious way at each other for some time they at last came to the conclusion that some stranger had got into the house, and had been acting with much greater freedom than welcome. "Let us go up stairs," said the big Bear; "and if we find out who it is, I will punish them in such a way that they will never forget it—I'll not have my house thus made free with!" So up stairs they stumped, one after the other; and the big Bear was no sooner in the bed-room than he cried, or rather roared out, "Somebody has been in bed, and pushed

my pillow aside!" "Deary me," cried the mamma Bear, "somebody has been in my bed, and torn my patchwork quilt!" "Somebody has been in my bed," cried the little Bear, "and here they lie still!"

Little Silverlocks, who had woke up on the first entrance of the Bears into the room, was perfectly terrified when she discovered to whom the house belonged. At first she was unable to move a limb; but when she saw the three Bears approach nearer to the bed she was in, with their mouths open, and anger displayed in every feature, she made one bold jump, and, clearing the window which was open, alighted on the green sward outside, without much hurt. She soon regained her feet, and without stopping to consider, ran home as fast as she could. The Bears were so astounded at her fearful jump, that they stood staring for some time, thereby giving poor Silverlocks time to make her escape.

When she told her parents where she had been, and the narrow escape she had, they were very angry with her; and it is to be hoped that Silverlocks' adventure will be a caution to little girls not to go into places where they have no business, or touch things that do not belong to them.

















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