

**CHIT-CHAT,**  
OR  
**SHORT TALES IN SHORT WORDS.**

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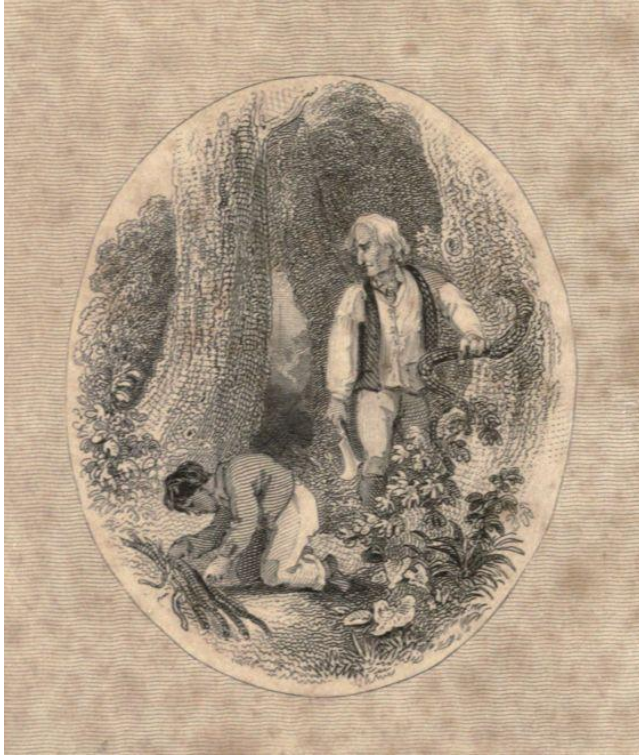
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*The Old Woodcutter*  
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**CHIT-CHAT,**  
**OR**  
**SHORT TALES IN SHORT WORDS.**

WITH SIXTEEN ENGRAVINGS.

Our life is like a summer's day,  
It seems so quickly past;  
Youth is the morning bright and gay,  
And if 'tis spent in wisdom's way,  
We meet old age without dismay,  
And death is sweet at last.

HYMNS FOR INFANT MINDS.

AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED  
TO  
THE DEAR LITTLE PARTY  
AT  
THE RECTORY.

*London, 1825.*

**CHIT-CHAT.**



# PART I.

## THE CHAISE BRINGS A FRIEND.

Kate dwelt with her Aunt in a lone cot, in one of the most sweet dells of Wales.—Cliffs rose in rude grace round their home, and the sea, with its smooth beach, was to be seen in front,—a wild wood stood on one side, and a heath spread out not far off; on the edge of which a church, with its grey spire, and a few rude huts were seen; a cot here and there was to be found in the wood, by the side of a rough path.

The Aunt of Kate was not rich, but she had a kind heart; and when she heard of the death of a dear friend, she sent for the child of that friend, and gave her a home in her lone cot. How glad was Kate, when she saw the chaise that brought poor Blanche. It drove to the door in a cloud of dust, and the noise of its wheels brought out Kate and her Aunt, and their maid, to the gate.

The Aunt held the poor child to her heart, and gave her a fond kiss. Kate caught her in her arms, and, with smiles, told her how glad she was to see her. Blanche shed tears of joy and love, and the three friends were soon gay and dear each to each.

The next day, Kate led Blanche through the lane and fields, down to the beach. The sea was bright with the sun, and the smooth sand shone as glass. They found shells, and weeds, and bits of red, blue, and green stones, that in their eyes were rich gems. The gull, a sea-bird, with its large white wings, was seen

to fly as if on the waves, and the tide as it rose on the beach, brought to the feet of the girls, amid the light foam, some fine plants just torn from the rocks hid in the waters.

These plants were not like the plants that grow on the earth, for they were made to thrive in the salt sea, and were strong and firm, though the sprays of some were as fine as threads, and the leaves of some as tough as skin. The friends took home a large hoard of all they could find.

### **THE GIRLS AT HOME.**

The Aunt was at her desk when they went home, and she told them how to dry the weeds, and clean the shells; she told them how to fix the weeds to boards with gum, and thus to make a kind of group of trees and shrubs. She taught them how to bore holes in the shells, and then form them to neat shapes to deck the room, and to join them in the form of a box to hold pins, and such small things. Then she bade them write down the names of those she knew, and thus, when in the house, they were gay with what they had found in their walks. So when they went out, they took care to use their eyes: for each bud and blade of grass might hide something that would pay their search; a small worm, or a snail in its snug shell, or a grub in its folds: with the help of a glass, these small things would look so large that each part could be seen—The legs and all their joints and hairs, the small bright eyes, the trunk drawn up in a coil, or spread out at full length; what to the eye was dust on a moth's wing, through the glass, was found to be fine plumes, and the clear gauze of the fly's wing was quite a treat to look on; so thin, so light, so rich.

In a bud, they found a small white worm; an egg had been laid there by some kind of fly, and from this egg, the worm came out. It had fed on the heart of the bud, for the fly knew what food its young would like, and laid the egg where this food could be found. Strange that so small a thing should know so well what was best to be done! The girls would think as well as talk of what they saw; hence their minds, in time, were full of thoughts, which could serve to please them when they were at home, and sat at work and did not talk. To think is one of our best joys, so we must hoard up, as fast as we can, good and wise and gay thoughts.

### **TEARS OF JOY.**

At noon as they sat at their plain meal, for in Wales they do not keep such late hours as we do in town, the three would talk of all they had seen, or heard, or felt. They did not care much what they ate—they thought more of their hearts and minds. Kate one day sat down with red eyes, and grave looks; her Aunt saw her state, and was in grief for her.

"Dear Aunt, do not be sad for me," said Kate, "my tears were not tears of grief: as I stood at our gate, I saw a poor lamb in pain; it was in the ditch, and could not get out, so I ran to help it, and took it out and saw it run in the field, so gay! Old dame Madge saw all this, it was her lamb, and she was full of thanks, 'and Miss,' says she, 'what shall I do to please you?' Now you know, Aunt, dame Madge is quite rich, and old Grace quite poor, so I said, 'Madge, if you would please me, pray give that fine jug of new milk, which you have on your head, to poor old Grace.' Well, do you know, she was all smiles at my words, and she

said, 'Come then, dear, go with me to Grace's hut, and I will do as you ask;' so with a jump, and a hop, and a spring, I ran to the hut, and I found the poor old soul in bed, not sick but sad, and she had no food, nor fire; so judge how glad she was of the nice warm new milk! And I was as glad as she was when I saw her drink it; and I came out and left Madge with her; for I thought a few kind words and some chat would do her as much good as the milk."

"And as I came home, I found my eyes wet, and tears on my cheeks; but I am sure, I do not know why they came there, for I was all joy, and felt my heart so gay and so warm! I am sure I did not cry, for I was glad then, and though grave as you say, I am glad now."

## **THE POOR GAY.**

"There are tears of joy as well as of grief," said the kind Aunt, "such as I now shed; can you tell why?"—"I can tell," said Blanche, "I know why you weep, you are so glad to find Kate's heart so good."—"Yes, I love her that she did not think of self; and I love you, my Blanche, for your warm praise of her."

"So now let us run to the heath, to see the young men and maids dance," said Kate, and they set off for the heath. The old man was there, with a stone for his seat, and there were the lads, each with his lass, so blythe and gay. The turf was smooth for their feet, and the sweet herbs sent forth a mild scent. The air was calm and still, and the sun, as it set on the sea, gave a rich light to the scene. "I love to see the poor made glad!" said the Aunt, "they toil so much, it is right they should have a few hours of mirth."—"If I were rich," said Kate, "I would think as

much of the sports of my poor as of their toils; the song, and the dance on the fresh sod, in the cool air, can do no harm: nor is that all—the breast that glows with pure joy, when a sky like this, with stars as gems, and a moon as a lamp, form the roof and the lights; when the smell of plants and shrubs is the scent, and the sight of woods and heaths, and all the works of God are the charms and graces of the spot; the breast that glows in such scenes must glow with good thoughts."

The Aunt spoke no more, but her looks said all she felt. The girls were as gay as those they saw dance, and they gave a few pence to the old man, and they sent milk and bread, and fruit to the young men and maids.

"Oh! we will help the poor to be gay when we can; why should they not be so, as well as the rich?" These were the words of Kate, as she heard the sounds of the songs and the dance, of the blythe group they had just left. Ruth brought back the warm thanks of the poor she had been sent to cheer; joy is good for the heart, it is said so in the first and best of books: grief may help to cure faults, but mirth tends to nurse good thoughts, and to cheer good hearts.

## **LOVE, THE SOURCE OF JOY.**

The two girls were good friends, and it was rare for them to frown or scold: one day, to be sure, they had a few harsh words, and Kate gave Blanche a blow on the face. The blow hurt Kate's heart more than it did the cheek of Blanche, for she was sad all the rest of the day, and so was her poor friend; both had been to blame, for Blanche had been in a great rage, and had said some harsh things to vex and fret: so good bye to all peace and

joy! They took a walk, but in vain the sun shone and the birds sang; they saw not the beam, they heard not the strain. They ate some fine fruit, but its rich sweet taste was lost on them, dry bread would have done as well.

The Aunt saw something was wrong, and soon found out the cause of all their grave sad looks; she told them to come to her, and then she took a hand of each, and with mild words strove to bring them back to love.

"Blanche, you were wrong the first; rude words are as bad as harsh blows, for our words are as blows on the hearts of our friends; and what can be worse than to wound a friend's heart? Kate, you too have been much to blame; you ought to rule your mind, and curb it, when it is prone to fly out in rough acts: you know you can rule your thoughts as well as your limbs; you would not strike me, were I to fret you more than Blanche did. Come, ask your friend to kiss you; she must cease to think of your blow, and you must cease to think of her words."

Blanche flew to Kate's arms, and Kate caught her to her heart with joy: both gave more than one kiss to their best friend. At once what a change took place in all things to them: how bright the sun! how sweet the birds! how good their lunch of brown bread!

"Dear girls," said the Aunt, "such is the charm of love! It is the source of our best joys, the balm of our worst woes; she who is blest with one true friend, has a sure shield to guard her from harm, and a sure spring of joy!"

## **HOW TRUTH IS LOST.**

"Oh Aunt," said Kate one day, "do tell Blanche that droll tale, with which you made me laugh so much, when she was not here." "Yes, pray do," said Blanche, and she took a chair by her friend, whilst Kate stood by full of smiles and winks. The Aunt was on a seat by the glass door, and soon did as she was bid in these words:—

### THE THREE CROWS.

There was once on a time a poor man, who was sick, and the poor folks who dwelt near him knew he was ill, and would talk much of his sad state. One night, strange news were heard of him; a man said, he had been sick and had thrown up *three* crows, for so his wife told him. When they spoke to the wife, "yes," said she, "three *black* crows; it is all true, quite true."—"Did you see the crows, wife?"—"No, my dear, but Joan at the mill told me *she* did."—Some one went to the mill to beg Joan to shew the crows. "I have not seen them," said she, "nor did I say three crows; I said two, and I am sure that is right, for Sue, at the shop, has them, so do not laugh all of you, but go ask Sue."

They went to Sue, she had no crows to shew, and was cross, and said, "Who dares to tell me of two crows? I did but say one; one I did name, and that was all, on my word."—"Then who spoke of two?"—"Not I, good folks, trust me, I am too fond of the truth—the mere truth."—"But there was one crow?"—"Yes, yes, that is sure, the man's wife's old aunt told me so." They ran to the man's wife's old aunt; she swore her niece had told her of one black crow; that the poor man had thrown up: "Go to the cot," said she, "and see it." The folks flew to the cot and told

their tale; the sick man could not but smile when he heard them, and he was fain to laugh, when his wife set all to rights and said, "Good folks, there are no crows at all in the case; I did but say that my poor man had been sick all night, and had thrown up some stuff, as *black as a crow*."

## **A KISS AND GOOD NIGHT.**

By the time the tale was done, and the laugh was done, it was the hour to go to bed, and the maid came with a light for the young girls. They each gave a kiss and a kind good night to their dear friend, and ran off to their own snug room. The cot had but three small rooms on the ground floor, and three small rooms on the first floor, and that was the whole of the house.

There was a nice piece of ground round it: part was a lawn to play and run on, and part was a court for fowls and ducks, with a small pond in it, and nests for the hens to lay their eggs in; and part was full of fruits and flowers, and beans, and peas, and greens of all sorts, and each girl had a plot of her own, for pinks and such plants, and each had a rose-bush full of buds. Then there were pears, and plums, and nuts, and a vine full of grapes that hung on the walls, and the roof of the low cot; and a clear stream, with its soft turf bank, ran by the side of the lawn, and a hedge with wreaths of hops bound the end of the lawn. The boughs of trees hung on a seat made of roots, which in the hot months was a cool nook to work and read in, and drink tea in, and, more than that, to *think* in. For who could be there, and see the sun rise or sink with mild beams, but felt their thoughts rise to the great God who made the sun? Who could feel the soft breeze waft health and strength, and not bless Him who



gave the pure gale? Who could taste the juice of fruits, and smell the scent of buds, and not send up their hearts to Him who made fruits and buds? Then would the mind pause and think, "All things are made for the good of all: these for me, and I for them; they serve me, and I must serve them; I must be of use, as well as they; so let me make the best of life, and use my mind and my limbs, whilst I am young and strong, and can do good. By and by I shall be old, and weak, and not fit to work: then it will be too late to mourn the loss of time. This, this is the hour when I must toil with head, and hands, and heart; and think, and work, and feel."

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