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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE EXTRAORDINARY ADVENTURES OF POOR LITTLE BEWILDERED HENRY, WHO WAS SHUT UP IN AN OLD ABBEY FOR THREE WEEKS ***

Little Bewildered Henry

**by the Author of
*Nothing At All, &c. &c.***

Frontspiece



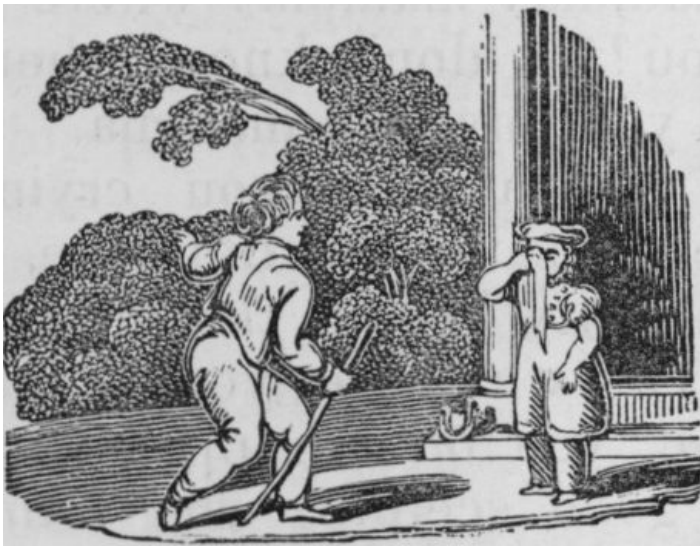
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**The Extraordinary Adventures
Of Poor Little Bewildered Henry,
Who was shut up in an old Abbey for Three Weeks.**

**A Story Founded On Fact.
by
the Author of *Nothing At All*, Etc.**

1850.

The Adventures Of *Little Bewildered Henry*



"Oh, mamma! mamma! where is you, mamma?" sobbed little Henry, a sweet child of three years old, as he stood in the lawn, opposite the door, with the wind blowing his pretty hair and clothes all about him: "Oh, mamma! mamma! where is you? I don't know where is you, my own mamma."

"What are you crying for?" said Bill Boldface, a naughty boy in the village, "eh, what are you crying for, you bold puppy? It's a good scelping you want. Don't you know what a scelping is, my boy?—a good whipping."

"No, no! me don't want a whipping, me don't want a whipping; me want mamma. Oh! where is you, my own mamma?"

"Well, she's gone into the wood there; and, if you don't make haste and run after her, a big pig that's there under the tree, all bloody, with long ears and cocked tail, will eat her. Run, my boy: that's right: run, now, run."

Poor little Henry, much more alarmed for his mamma than for himself, flew into the wood with the hope of saving her; and having run a good way without stopping, calling all the time for his dear mamma, he tripped against a tree and fell: but quickly recovering, he stood up and continued his race, till, quite exhausted, he sat down on the grass, and there continued panting and crying bitterly. At last, he turned round; and what should he see, to his great joy, but his favourite dog Fidelle. "O, Fidelle! Fidelle!" said the baby, hugging his little arms round the dog's neck, "O! where's mamma? and where's papa? and where's nurse? Where, Fidelle? cannot you tell me where?" But having received no answer, he stood up, and again commenced his journey, and Fidelle ran on before; and it was astonishing what a length of way the baby walked, till, at last, he came to the foot of a high mountain.

And now night came on, and the wind blew strong and cold; and little Henry, quite bewildered, turned into a narrow path, shaded by oak, and elm, and sycamore trees, and the baby again tripped against the root of one of them, and fell; and his little hand came against a stone, and he was much hurt, and his heart beat, and the tears streamed down one of the prettiest little faces that ever was seen, and the wind blew his pretty hair off his forehead, and it would go to your very heart to hear his little mournful cry, calling out for his mamma, his own dear mamma.



At length, the moon arose in great splendour, and little Henry saw at a distance an old abbey, all covered with ivy, and looking so dark and dismal, it would frighten any one from going in. But Henry's little heart, occupied by the idea of his mamma, and with grief that he could not find her, felt no fear; but walking in, he saw a cell in the corner that looked like a baby-house, and, with Fidelle by his side, he bent his little steps towards it, and seating himself on a stone, he leaned his pretty head against the old wall, and fell fast asleep.



Overcome with fatigue, the sweet baby slept soundly till morning; but when he awoke Fidelle was gone, and he felt very hungry. And he again set up his little cry, "Oh, mamma! mamma! where is you, mamma? Oh! I want my breakfast! I want my breakfast!" At length, he spied Fidelle cantering in with something in her mouth, and having laid it by Henry's side, she darted out of the abbey. Henry took it up: it was a large piece of white bread, which the faithful creature had met with somewhere, and brought to her little favourite.¹

¹A fact.

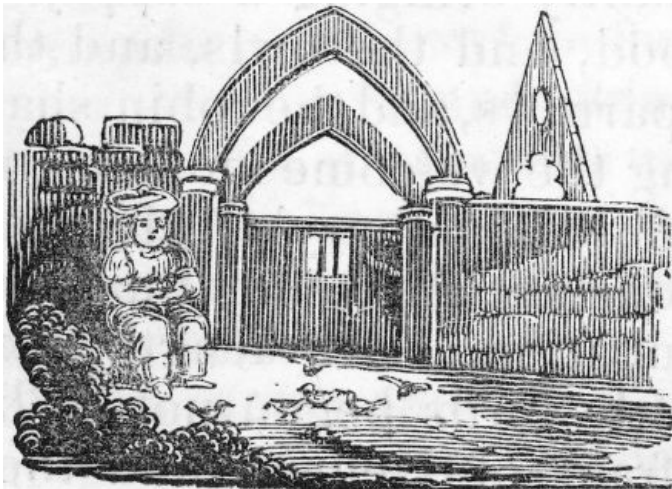
You may suppose how happy the poor child was to get it; and while he was eating it, a grey owl marched from her nest in the wall, and began picking up the crumbs. This greatly amused little Henry; and, in a few minutes after, there came a great set of sparrows, and a robin-redbreast, and two of them began to fight. And this made Henry laugh; and, on the whole, they so occupied him all day, he was less unhappy than the day before: and, when night came, he lay down near the nest of the owl and her young ones, and slept soundly.

Next day, faithful Fidelle again appeared with a piece of boiled beef in her mouth, which having left at Henry's feet, she scampered off, and Henry ate heartily, and gave some to the owls. And when he could forget his mamma, which indeed was not often, these birds used to amuse his little mind. But, towards evening, getting very thirsty, he again began to cry, and to call for mamma; and God, who watches

over little infants just the same as if they were grown men, put it into his little heart to walk outside the abbey, where was a nice stream running through the grass: and the baby, recollecting he had seen a boy, the week before, lying on the ground drinking out of a stream near papa's house, knelt down and took a hearty drink of the clear water.



And now, near a week passed over, Fidelle constantly bringing a supply of food, and the owls, and the sparrows, and the robin, sharing the welcome morsel, and affording Henry's little mind constant amusement and occupation. At length, the little birds began not to be afraid of Henry; and they would come and hop by his side, and pick up the crumbs, and almost eat from his hand. And one of them built its nest close to him, and laid two eggs, and every evening would sing such a sweet song, that really the baby began to get reconciled, and used to feel like a little king among them all. And now we must leave our mighty *monarch* for a while, and return to his disconsolate parents.



The evening Bill Boldface had met him, and sent him so cruelly into the wood, mamma was out walking, and on her return enquired for the baby.

"O," said papa, "he is safe: I saw him in nurse's arms a few minutes ago."

Mamma immediately went up to the nursery, and there heard that nurse had gone off to see her sister, who lived about two miles distant, "and, of course," said the nursery-maid, "she has taken Master Henry with her."

Impressed with this idea, mamma returned to tea; but when night came, she began to get very uneasy, for nurse did not return. "O," said papa, "you know she often remains at her sister's; and though she has done very wrong in keeping the baby out, yet she is so fond and careful of him, we need not be uneasy." But what was their distraction when morning came?—nurse returned, but no baby!

The whole country was searched, the ponds and lake were searched, every spot searched but the very place the baby was in. Advertisements were put in all the papers, and the poor father and mother were near sinking under the distraction of

their mind. Unfeeling Bill Boldface, who could have set all to rights, had sailed off to America the very morning after the sweet baby had disappeared.

At length, one morning, the distracted father perceived Fidelle jumping upon the table and seizing a large piece of bread, fly off with it to the wood. The Lord instantly put it in his heart to follow the dog, who led him into the abbey; and there, surrounded by his little subjects the birds, fast asleep, (for he had just fallen asleep on his throne,) lay the little *monarch*. His hand was placed under his little head, and the leaves of the ivy and the yew were all scattered about him. "My child! my child!" said the poor father, darting forward, and snatching him in his arms; "'tis my Henry! my cherub! my darling! O gracious God! is it indeed my child?"



The well-known voice aroused Henry, and flinging his little arms around papa's neck, he begged to be taken instantly to mamma, saying, as his happy papa carried him out of the abbey, "Good-bye, little birds, good-bye: I'll come back tomorrow, and bring you some white bread; but now I must go see mamma. Good-bye, little birds, good-bye."

Poor mamma, when she saw him, overcome by her feelings, fainted away. When she recovered, she threw herself on her knees in gratitude to God for thus so wonderfully preserving her little darling.

And now, my children, pause for a moment, and reflect on the goodness of God so powerfully displayed in this little story. You see how he directed Fidelle to bring food for the support of this little baby; you see how wonderfully he was preserved, and how, at length, he was restored to his parents. Those parents were truly religious, and *therefore* their prayers were heard—*For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.* (1 Pet. iii. 12.) O my children! love God, and make Christ your friend, and then they will watch over you as they did over little Henry; and, when you die, they will take you up to live with themselves, and you shall be surrounded by the happy angels in heaven.

Perhaps my little readers may like to hear something of poor Fidelle. Soon after her visits to the abbey, she had two little pups. One of them died, but the other Henry reared with the greatest tenderness; while its good old mother, beloved and even respected (which is not generally the case with dogs) by all the family, lived to an advanced age: and when she died, they buried her in the garden, under the spreading branches of an old sycamore tree.

Little Henry, trained in the love and fear of God, grew up one of the best of children. Every where he went, the blessing of God was with him, for Christ was his friend: and when little Henry had committed a fault, he would apply to his kind Saviour, who was then always ready to procure God's pardon for him. In the course of time, his mamma taught him the following little poem.

Thou Friend of my childhood, and Guide of my youth,

Thou Father of mercies, and Fountain of truth;—
Protect and direct me wherever I stray,
And bless little Henry each hour in the day.

When up in the morning I rise from my bed,
O, let thy kind angels be plac'd o'er my head;
And when at my tasks, at my school, or my play,
Still bless little Henry each hour in the day.

When night spreads its shade o'er the waves of the deep,
And Henry is sunk in the stillness of sleep,
O, still let thy poor child be dear in thy sight,
And bless little Henry each hour in the night.

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