

The younger one is tall and fair,
His bright eyes black as jet,
And tight he draws his ragged coat
To shield him from the wet.

The other boy is taller still,
He may be twelve years old;
And, better clad, his well-worn suit
Defies the rain and cold.

"Come, John I hope you are inclined
To do a job to-night;
The weather serves us to a 'T';
Nay, lad, don't look so white!

"You can't expect that 'Jolly Bob'
Will keep us both in food,
Unless we take him something home,
As thieves in honour should.

"He's taught us all the tricks we know;
You're quite as quick as me;
And why you fear to make a snap,
I really cannot see."

"Come, here's a court will hide us both,
Should yonder gent suspect
We have an eye upon his purse,
And all our schemes detect,

"There's not a 'Peeler' now in sight,
So, Jack, let me go first;
And if I'm caught, then you run home
And tell old Bob the worst."

"Nay, Harry, stop!" exclaimed the lad
"Just list to what I say,
Oh, cannot we give up this trade,—
Pay Bob another way?"

The other laugh'd and saunter'd on;
A man that moment pass'd,
So quick he walk'd that not a glance
Upon the boys he cast.

But not so quick that Harry's trick
Was then perform'd in vain;
No! swift as thought the purse was caught
And carried up the lane.

"Now stop!" cried Harry, when he found
That they were not pursued;
"Let's see how Fortune's favoured us,
I hope 'tis something good."

"Look, John, a golden sovereign!
Two shillings, and a note!
Bravo! this welcome sum will serve
To keep us both afloat.

"And oh, what jolly fun we'll have,
A supper fit for kings;
And won't old Bob's eyes glisten bright
To see the tempting things."

With hasty feet and whisp'ing tongues,
The hapless orphans ran
And thought how cleverly they'd robbed
That unsuspecting man.

But we must turn to earlier times,
When John was two years old;
And tell how soon his father died,
And slumber'd 'neath the mould.

How when a helpless orphan left,
The woman beat him sore;
And he was forc'd, at her command,
To beg from door to door.

Until, by chance, he meets old Bob,
A trainer of young thieves;
And gladly at this man's request,
His stepmother he leaves.

Five years have pass'd and now, inured
To cheat, and swear, and lie,
He goes with Harry to the streets,
His dreadful skill to try.

But o'er the little outcast's path
A guardian angel flies;
The form of her he never knew
Comes to him from the skies.

Oh! hath she pray'd in vain for him?
Shall sin assert its power?
Ah, no! she feels he will be saved,
Though storm and tempest lower.

'Tis night once more, and John goes forth
Into the streets alone;
For Harry still is revelling
In riches not his own.

The stars look down upon the boy,
An angel form is nigh,
He dreams not that his mother sees
Her darling from on high.

A gentleman with hurried step
Advanced to John, and said:—
"Pray, do you know some tidy house
Where I can get a bed?"

"I'm weary now with travelling,
And want a quiet home;
Speak! can you show me what I want?
Or must I further roam?"