

# ••LITTLE FOLKS••

## The Children's Picnic.

It was a beautiful day in the leafy mouth of June, and little Jack Gervase and his cousins, to the number of ten, were to have a picnic. Jack had never been at a picnic before, and was full of the grandest anticipations. He capered and danced round his mother in the height of his joy as she packed the basket with provisions.

It was a merry group that filled

pet of clean straw, and the stuffed sacks along each side, as soft as a drawing-room sofa.

'Oh, how lovely!' cried Jack. 'Mother, how I wish you had been coming too!'

'So do I, darling,' said his mother; 'but Mary will go just now to look after everything, and Daddy and I will follow by and by.'

Their destination was a beautiful spot at the side of a clear river,

ran by their side supplied the nectar, only it was ever so much better.

Then they climbed the trees and played at being monkeys among the branches, and at being explorers prospecting the country, and being surprised and surrounded by wild animals. By and by they took to running races, and found that Mary had been provided by Mrs. Gervase with prizes for the victors. You should have seen how delighted they were—one with a knife, another with a ball, and several with beautiful books. But poor little Jack, strive as he might, always came in behind the rest. At last, in a fit of distress, he ran to Mary, and burying his face in her lap, sobbed aloud.

'Poor little fellow,' she said, 'your legs are not so long as other people's; but never mind, here is a consolation prize for you.' And she put her hand into her pocket and brought out some bright little confections. When Jack saw these he got wonderfully calm, and pronounced them uncommonly good.

But perhaps the best entertainment of all was when John brought forward his horse, which had been grazing near, to give them all a ride. How they did enjoy these rides! Sometimes there was one on the horse's back, sometimes two, and they shrieked with delight. When Jack got up, he forgot all about his disappointment at the races. But he had not ridden far when he cried out, 'Oh, John, hold me, how the horse is running round!' Mary was at hand, and, astonished to see him sway forward, was no more than in time to catch him as he fell. Just at that moment Mr. and Mrs. Gervase, who had followed in a pony-carriage, drove up.



THE CHILDREN'S PICNIC.

the cart when it was fairly under weigh.

John, the carter, had quite risen to the occasion, and ornamented his horse with large bright-coloured rosettes, while the harness glistened in the sun, every buckle shining like a looking-glass. As for the cart itself, nothing could have been more luxurious, with its thick cap-

with a number of trees dotted about here and there, affording a delightful shade from the sun. Under one of these trees they encamped, and Mary, as her mistress had directed, unpacked the baskets and spread a banquet, which one of the boys who had just begun to learn Latin declared was 'fit for the gods,' while the stream that

'My boy, what's wrong?' said Mrs. Gervase, as she saw Jack's flushed face and heard his hurried breathing. And indeed his condition became so alarming that his father and mother, determined to take him at once to a doctor who lived near. On examination, it was found that the poor little fellow had been poisoned. But the ques-