



SUNSHINE
SERIES

The Silly HARE.

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THE SILLY HARE.

THE name of the silly hare was Bunny Long-ears, and he came of a very respectable family. His parents were well off in the world; and wishing that Bunny should start out in life with every advantage that they could give him, they sent him to a nice private school, kept by Dr. Owl, a very learned and skillful, although somewhat pompous teacher.

The school was small, but of very high standing, and was patronized by the best animal families of the neighborhood; as you will know when I mention that at the time Bunny attended, it numbered among its pupils young Chacem Curly-tail, little Bowwow Barkwell, and Piggery Hogson, Jr., the parents of each of whom were well known for their wealth and high social position.

If Bunny had not been a *very* silly hare, he would have known what a lucky fellow he was to have such a chance to get a good education, and would have tried hard that Dr. Owl's careful efforts to instruct him should not be wasted. But unfortunately, as is sometimes the case even with little boys and girls, he was exceedingly silly. He studied just as little as he possibly could, and let his mind run altogether to sport and play. He played truant frequently, running off to the woods and fields, and getting into all sorts of bad company.

After a while, such amusements as nutting, bird's-nesting, and fruit-stealing began to seem too tame to him, and he made up his mind that he must have some "real sport;" by which he meant going off to shoot with his father's gun. He knew, of course, that it would be of no use to ask leave to take the gun, for he was altogether too young to be trusted with anything so dangerous; so he planned to take it without leave.

He managed one evening to get out of the house with it, and hid



DR. OWL'S SCHOOL.



OFF FOR A DAY'S SPORT.



FALLING IN BAD COMPANY.

The Silly Hare.

it near the school. The next morning, instead of going into school he shouldered the gun, and scampered out of sight with it, as fast as his legs could carry him.

He had nearly reached a piece of woods in which he fancied he would find something to shoot at, when he met a fox named Tuffy Slydodge, a very bad fellow, whose company he had often been warned to avoid. Tuffy stopped and asked him where he had got the gun, and when Bunny told, with some little pride, of the cute way he had stolen off with it, he slapped him on the back, and declared that he was a smart fellow, and ought to join the "Bravoes," which he explained, was the name of a band of "lively" fellows mostly foxes, that he belonged to.

Bunny felt flattered by Tuffy's compliments, and consented to go with him to the meeting-place of the Bravoes, a cave in the woods, to which Tuffy led him by a round-about path. Tuffy's real purpose was to get the gun away from Bunny, for he had said to himself, as soon as he saw it, that it was just what he wanted.

When they reached the cave, Bunny saw there a number of young foxes, very hard-looking fellows, who were drinking and smoking like old toppers. Getting a wink from Tuffy, they received Bunny very graciously, and made him sit down and drink with them.

Bunny not being accustomed to strong drink, it took only a few rounds to make him helplessly drunk. This was what Tuffy had looked for, and he intended, after securing the gun, to have Bunny carried in his drunken condition to a distance from the cave, and left there till he awoke. But something happened just in the nick of time to prevent this part of the plan from being carried out.

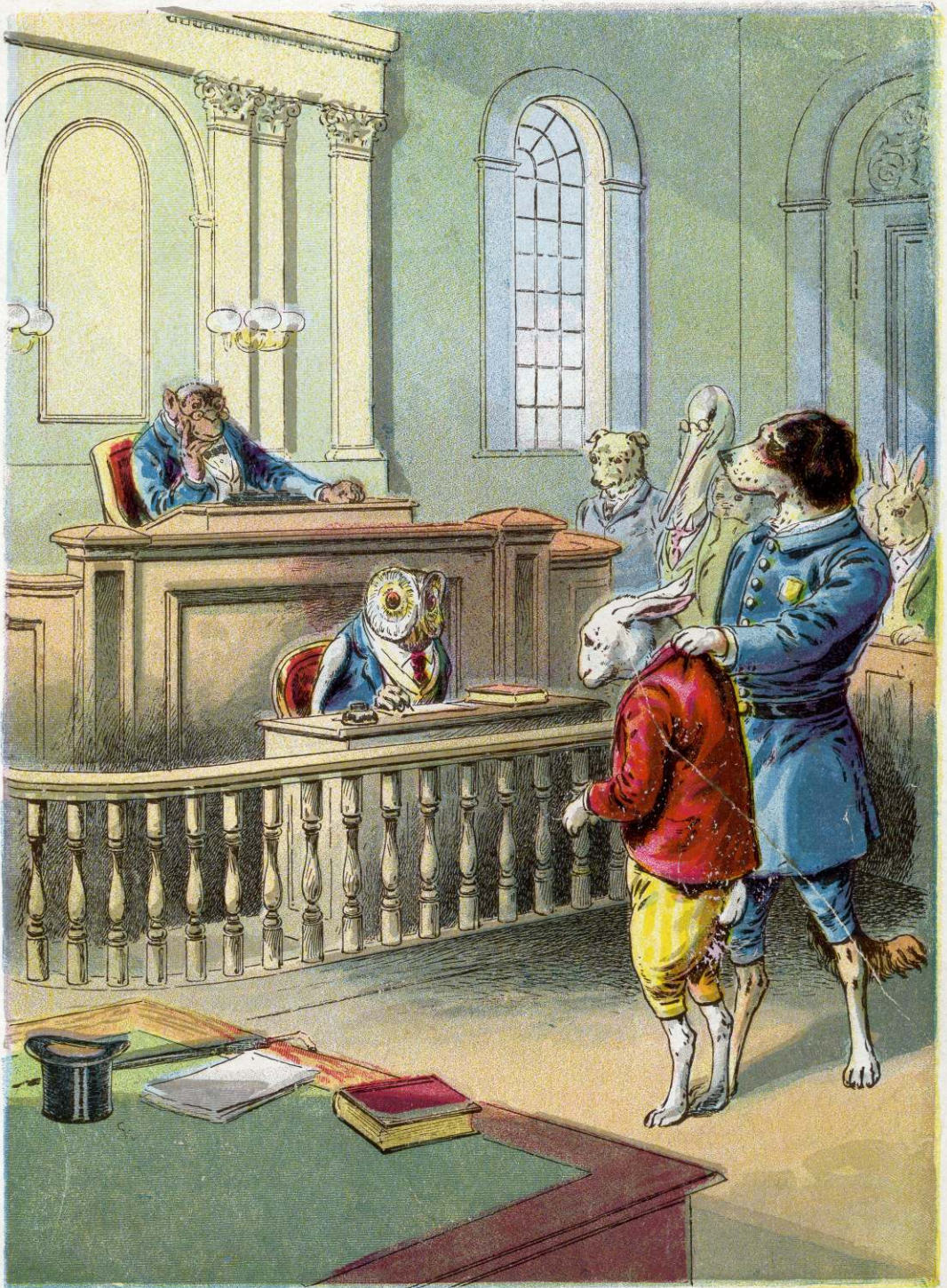
The Bravoes were really a lot of young thieves and robbers of the worst kind, and they had lately been carrying on a series of burglaries on a big scale. At the last house they had broken into, they had added murder to their other crimes, having killed Mrs. Goose, the rich old lady who lived there. They had hitherto been very successful in escaping detection, but this murder had roused



BUNNY IS INTRODUCED TO THE BRAVOES.



FOUND IN THE FOXES' CAVE.



BUNNY'S TRIAL.

The Silly Hare.

the police, who were all dogs, to extra effort, and they had at last got a clew to the guilty ones, and the whereabouts of their headquarters. At the very moment the foxes were plying Bunny with drink, a squad of police were on their way to the place.

But the foxes were wary, and, when in the cave, always kept a sentry to watch for any one coming near. The sentry now rushed in and told of the approaching police, and the Bravoes at once made off by a secret path they had very ingeniously contrived from the back of the cave. For the time being they got away in safety.

But not so Bunny. The police, entering, found him lying in a drunken sleep. They found hidden in the cave goods of all sorts, including some of the things that had been stolen from Mrs. Goose. Bunny, of course, was seized, and taken to jail.

The animals were very severe in their laws, and allowed no delay in carrying them out, so Bunny's trial soon took place. He was brought to court before Judge Jocko Hardpate, who was noted for the scant mercy he showed criminals.

Public feeling was so much excited by the crimes that had been committed by the Bravo gang that no one against whom there was the slightest proof of guilt could hope to escape. So, although Bunny declared his innocence, and begged pitifully for mercy, the jury that tried him thought that the fact of his having been found in the place where the plunder was stored, showed that he must have had some share in the robberies, and they brought in a verdict of guilty. The judge then sentenced him to be hanged, which was the penalty the laws of the animals imposed, and in a few days the sentence was carried out.

This, then, was the terrible result of poor Bunny's craze for "sport." In spite of his idleness and disobedience he hardly deserved so awful a fate. But a similar misfortune may happen to any one who trifles with evil, and seeks the society of the wicked. All must expect to be judged by their company, and, if they associate with wrong-doers, to share their punishment when found out.