

"Grow used to it?" said Orlando; "why, do you mean to keep him a prisoner in this box all his life?"

"Not a prisoner," said Rosamond; but I should like to keep him in this box; I'd call it his house, and I would feed him, not with my laburnums, but with anything else that he likes; and I would make him the happiest little rabbit in the world, if mamma likes it."



"You had better consider how the rabbit would like it, first," said her mother.

"But I mean to do everything for his good," said Rosamond.

"I have heard my father say, have I not, father?" said Orlando, "that it is contrary to the laws of England to do anybody good against his will."

"But this rabbit is not everybody," interrupted Godfrey.

"It may not be against the laws of England, then," resumed

the grave Orlando, "to keep him in this box; but I think it would be cruel."

"Cruel!" cried Rosamond, "I would not be cruel; I tell you, I mean to make him as happy as the day is long."

"But he'll never be happy; you can't make him happy, Rosamond, in this box," said Orlando; "you don't consider that rabbits like to run about; and he can feed himself better than you can feed him."

"Ay, with my laburnums," said Rosamond, changing her tone; "am I to let him loose again to eat my poor laburnums?—that is to say, laburnum—for I have only one left."

At the recollection of the mischief he had done, Rosamond, notwithstanding the rabbit's pretty white ears and feet, looked at him with dislike; and Orlando seemed at a loss what to advise. He leaned his elbows upon the top of the box, and began to meditate.

After some minutes' silence, he exclaimed, "I never clearly understood what was right to be done about animals; what is cruelty to animals, for if animals hurt us, or hurt our property——"

"Yes, our laburnums, for instance," interrupted Rosamond.

"We must defend them, and we must defend ourselves," continued Godfrey.

"And," resumed Orlando, "how comes it that we think so compassionately about this one rabbit, under my elbows," at the same time knocking his elbow upon the box, which made the rabbit within start, "yet we eat rabbits very often at dinner, without thinking at all about the matter?"

"That's very extraordinary," said Rosamond; "but then the rabbits that we eat at dinner are dead, and cannot feel; so we are not cruel in eating them."

"But," said Godfrey, "they are killed on purpose for us to eat."

"Then the people who kill them are cruel."

"But those people would not kill them if we did not want to eat them."

"I don't want to eat rabbits," said Rosamond; "so I hope nobody will ever kill any for me."

"But you want to eat beef and mutton," said Orlando; "and then sheep and oxen are killed instead of rabbits."

"The best way, then," said Rosamond, "would be to leave off eating meat."

"Yes," said Godfrey, "let us begin to-day."

"Stay," said Orlando. "Consider; how should we manage if all sorts of animals became so numerous that there would not be food for them and for us? There would never be wild vegetables enough; and the animals would grow bold with hunger, and eat the vegetables in our gardens."

"Ay," said Rosamond; "and would not it be very unjust indeed that we should work for them all day?"

"And perhaps, at last," continued Orlando, "if we did not eat animals, they might eat us."

"I think we had better go on eating meat," said Rosamond; "but I am glad I am not a butcher."

"Sheep and oxen do not eat men; but if they increased so much as to eat all the vegetables, they would in the end destroy men as effectually by starving them as if they ate them," said her father.

"I don't think we have gone to the bottom of the business yet," said Orlando; "we have wandered a great way from him."

"Poor fellow!" said Rosamond, looking into his prison, "you little think we are talking about you. Orlando, I wish we could carry him to some place at a great distance from our gardens, where he might live happily, and eat what he liked, without doing us any mischief. Papa, could this be done?"

"My dear," said her father, "there is a place, about six miles from hence, called a rabbit-warren, where great numbers of rabbits live."

"Oh, father! could you be so good," said Rosamond, "as to have him carried there, and set at liberty?"

"My dear little girl," said her father, "I am glad to see that you are so humane to this animal, who has done you mischief. It is very reasonable that we should endeavour to prevent him from doing any further injury, and I think what you propose is sensible. I know Farmer Early, who lives near us, goes to-morrow morning, with his covered cart, to market; he passes by the rabbit-warren, and perhaps he will take charge of Orlando's box, and carry your rabbit, and set him at liberty in the warren. We will walk to Mr. Early's house, Rosamond, and ask him to do so, if you please."

This proposal was received with joy by the whole assembly; and as soon as Orlando had eaten something they proceeded to the farmer's.

Mr. Early was out in the fields with his labourers when they arrived at his house; they were shown into a neat little room, where a woman, who looked pale and ill, was sitting at work. A little girl sat beside her, holding her pin-cushion and scissors. The woman folded up her work, and was going out of the room; but Rosamond's mother begged that she would stay, and that she would not disturb herself. Orlando put his box upon the table. The rabbit had been very restless during his journey; he had nibbled incessantly at his prison-walls, and his operations engrossed the attention of Rosamond and her brothers till farmer Early's arrival. It had been agreed that Godfrey should, upon this occasion, be the speaker; and as soon as Farmer Early came into the room, he began his speech:

"Sir, you are very hot. I am afraid you have hurried