

**JACK, DICK AND BOB, THE
THREE JACKDAWS, FROM
HURSTMONCEAUX. A TRUE
STORY FOR CHILDREN**

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Jack, Dick and Bob, the three Jackdaws, from Hurstmonceaux. A true story for children by E. G.

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E. G.

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JACK AND DICK GIVING A LECTURE.

JACK, DICK AND BOB,
THE
THREE JACKDAWS,

FROM HURSTMONCEAUX.

A True Story for Children.

SECOND EDITION.

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INTRODUCTION.

DEAR CHILDREN,

When I was a little child, I remember I was as fond of hearing a story related to me as you are, and generally the first question I asked was, "Is it quite true?" In after years, I often stayed with other little children, some of whom are now the Papas and Mammias of some of you; and when I told them a story, the first question they generally asked was, "Is it quite true?" So I think all children like best the stories which are quite true; and now I have written this story for you, and if you ask me "Is it true?" I shall answer, "Yes, it is quite true," and I hope you will be amused in reading something of the history of my three birds.

Your affectionate friend,

E. G.

Nov., 1865.

TO THE DEAR CHILDREN AT LONGLANDS,
CECIL LODGE, AND ABBERTON HOUSE,
AS ALSO TO ALL LITTLE PEOPLE WHO LOVE A STORY,
AND, THOUGH LAST NOT LEAST, TO
LITTLE ISABEL,
THIS STORY IS INSCRIBED BY
THE AUTHOR.

THE THREE JACKDAWS.

IN the county of Sussex, not many miles from the sea, stand the remains of an ancient castle or stronghold, called Hurstmonceaux. It is a beautiful old ruin now, but once it was the dwelling-place of great and rich people. Those people have all passed away long ago, and nobody lives there now, except an old man who goes in the summer with two great tea-kettles, and some cups and saucers, on purpose to make tea for parties of people, who go there to amuse themselves by running about among the ruins. But there are some more inhabitants of the old castle that I am going to tell you about presently; a great many inhabitants, and they make such a noise that when you stand near them, you can hardly hear any other sounds—and these are jackdaws.

Very likely many of you never saw one of these birds. They are not very commonly seen near populous places, but they like to build their nests very high, in the tops of old chimneys, in holes in

high walls, or in the white cliffs of our native land—and they especially delight in old ruins. They are very pretty birds, perfectly black, with a tinge of purple over the edge of their feathers, at least it appears so in a bright light, or it may be only the extreme blackness which causes that appearance. On the top of the head there is a round spot about the size of half-a-crown, blacker than all the rest, and down the back of the head and throat it becomes a few shades lighter again, with a tint of grey. Their bodies are about the size of a pigeon, but much more slim, and their legs are very long, so that they can run very fast. Their legs look like polished ebony, so black and shining; and they make a noise something like a ruck, only I think they vary their tones more.

One day last spring, I went to visit this old ruined castle, and I was walking about on the grass, examining the old walls, and creeping under broken arches, accompanied by a little girl of four years old, named Lizzie, till we came to a great round tower; and all this time the jackdaws were making such a noise over our heads, flying about, feeding their young ones, and settling their affairs in their own way.

When I came to the entrance of the round tower, I found there was a very large deep hole where the floor ought to have been, which was partly filled up with rubbish, and there I heard a

great noise of cawing down in the hole, instead of up in the nests, and I thought some poor little bird must have fallen down and hurt itself. So I called a man to come and look, and after some trouble, he managed to get down into the hole, and there he found—not one, but two poor little young jackdaws, lying close together, and calling for their mothers, looking very frightened and very hungry. They were only partly fledged, and they could neither run nor fly; but they felt very fat and warm, when they were handed up to me, so I do not think they could have been there long. While I was looking at them, and consulting with little Lizzie what was best to do with them, another was brought to me out of a different hole, and this one was not nearly so big as the others. It was much younger, and had scarcely any feathers, and it opened its mouth so wide, and appeared very hungry. Then the old man who stays in the castle, went and fetched me some sopped bread, with which I fed them all, and the poor little things seemed very glad of it, though it was not their natural food. I don't know whether the two biggest belonged to the same nest—they may have done so, or they may have fallen out of different ones; for there must have been a great many nests high up over head, to judge by the noise and bustle and cawing I heard. I conclude that these three young ones must have been playing on the edge of