"YOU'RE ME, AND I'M YOU." A SMALL TALK WITH VERY DEAR SMALL PEOPLE

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649738311

"You're Me, and I'm You." A Small Talk with Very Dear Small People by Samuel Gillespie Prout

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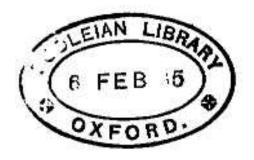
BY

SAMUEL GILLESPIE PROUT,
AUTHOR OF "NEVER BAT DIE," "WHOSE LOCK!" "HURBAR!" MTC.

LONDON: JAMES NISBET & CO., 21 BERNERS STREET.

1884.

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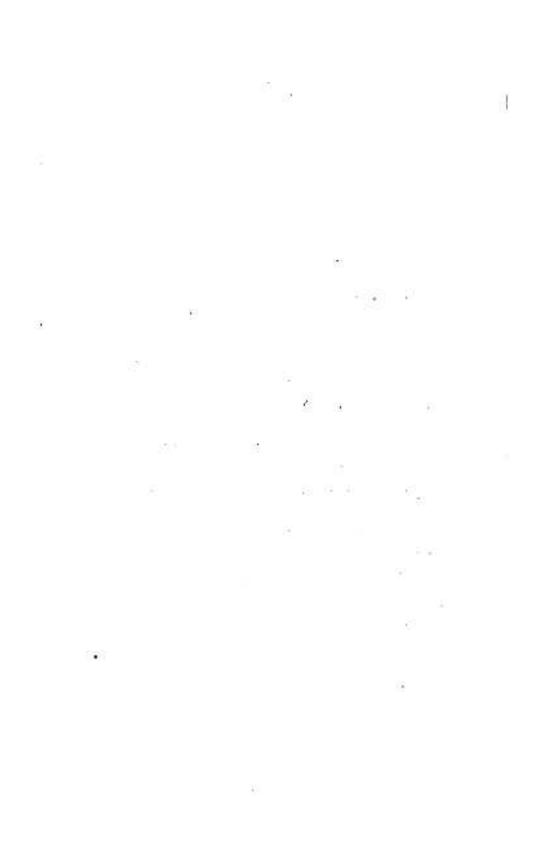


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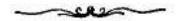
PRINTED BY LORIMER AND GILLIES, 31 ST. ANDREW SQUARE,

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"Pou're Me, and K'm Bon."



CHAPTER I.

MINNIE'S HUG.

YES, I know: that's not quite grammar—it won't parse; I'm afraid it wouldn't do for the schoolroom—but there's such a lot of love in it. Minnie really didn't care the least bit about the pronouns; neither did I. The dear little thing just wanted me to feel that she was—oh, so fond of her old friend; and a whole string of loving words ("old darling" among them) wouldn't empty out the little warm heart's fulness of love; and so, at last, with a half-despairing, half-triumphant effort—a sigh and a laugh in one—she came out with, "Oh, dear!—You're me, and I'm you;" which I felt like a hug in words, instead of the dear little clinging arms.

Now then, Dears, I'm going to let you into the secret of this "small talk" of ours, before I get seated among you, and go fairly in for There's a race of "Peculiar People," who are found, very many of them, in a long, narrow, twisty street in the City of London; and other people, who write little books like this, stand rather in awe of them. Many of them, though, are really nice; and one of the nice ones asked me last year, to write something for you dear children, which rather frightened me; because, you see, you small people are so dreadfully sharp with those little eyes and brains of yours, that it wants some one a deal cleverer than I am, to write for you. However, I'll tell you what you must do: you mustn't think or care one tiny bit about cleverness; but must just let love make up for the want of it. My love? Well, that's what I meant as the words came; for though I can have seen, and may see, but few of those whom I am getting into a talk with, I'm sure I do love you all :- I only wish we were having a real talk-hearing through it, bird-voices and insect-whisperings, and smelling the lilac and sweet-briar, as we sat together. But it's other love I want to talk about-such sweet, deep, strong love ! -and in the thought of it, I seem to see all

your dear listening faces really gathered round me-Mand, and Katie, and Frank, and wee Lily, and gossamer Effie, and ever so many more buds and birdies. And now, I shall get on famously with you, and we'll have a grand talk-all so cosy; it won't feel like writing a book at all. Stop a bit: we will begin, I think, by reading a few lines; I'm not sure about singing them, as, to tell you the truth, I don't know a "Sankey" or any other tune they would go to. I do wish someone would make up a tune for us, that the dear little shy, ragged things hiding away, down in cellars, and in alleys, who havn't the least idea what being loved means,-who never were cuddled in all their lives, might hear. We should so like them, shouldn't we. dearies, to know all about this grand, wonderful Love? Well, I suppose you must be little missionaries, and go and tell them of it; and we must now just read our bit of rhyme, anyhow: we'll call it

SOMEBODY KNOWS.

"OH, this cruel, hard, old lesson!
They don't know what it is to me:
Over and over, round and round,
Beating my head with a senseless sound: