

**THE ADVENTURES
OF A BEAR, AND A
GREAT BEAR TOO**

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The Adventures of a Bear, and a Great Bear Too by Alfred Elwes

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ALFRED ELWES

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BEARS AND BROTHERS.

THE
ADVENTURES OF A BEAR
AND
A GREAT BEAR TOO

By ALFRED ELWES

WITH NINE ILLUSTRATIONS BY HARRISON WEIR.



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AT HOME.

YES, it is an "at home" to which I am going to introduce you; but not the at-home that many of you—I hope *all* of you—have learnt to love, but the at-home of a bear. No carpeted rooms, no warm curtains, no glowing fireside, no pictures, no sofas, no tables, no chairs; no music, no books; no agreeable, cosy chat; no anything half so pleasant: but soft moss or snow, spreading trees, skies with ever-changing, tinted clouds, some fun, some rough romps, a good deal of growling, and now and then a fight. With these points of difference, you may believe the *at-home* of a bear is not quite so agreeable a matter as the at-home of a young gentleman or lady; yet I have no doubt Master Bruin is much more at his ease in it than he would find himself if he were compelled to conform to the usages of human society, and behave as a gentleman ought to do.

But there is a quality that is quite as necessary to adorn one home as the other, without which the most delightful

mansion and the warmest cavern can never be happy, and with which the simplest cottage and the meanest den may be truly blest; and that one quality is, good temper. Of what avail are comforts, or even luxuries, when there is no seasoning of good temper to enjoy them with? How many deficiencies can there not be overlooked, when good temper is present to cover them with a veil? Perhaps you have not yet learnt what a valuable treasure this good temper is; when you have read the history of my bear, you will be better able to form an opinion.

I cannot tell you when this bear was born, nor am I quite sure where; bears are born in so many parts of the world now, that it becomes very difficult to determine what country heard their first growl, and they never think to preserve a memorandum of the circumstance. Let it suffice that our bear was born, that he had a mamma and papa, and some brothers and sisters; that he lived in a cavern surrounded by trees and bushes; that he was always a big lump of a bear, invariably wore a brown coat, and was often out of temper, or rather, was always *in* temper, only that temper was a very bad one.

No doubt his parents would have been very willing to cure this terrible defect, if they had known how; but the fact is, they seemed always too much absorbed in their own thoughts to attend much to their family. Old Mr. Bruin would sit in

his corner by the hour together sucking his paw; and his partner, Mrs. Bruin, would sit in her corner sucking her paw; whilst the little ones, or big ones, for they were growing up fast, would make themselves into balls and roll about the ground, or bite one another's ears by way of a joke, or climb up the neighbouring trees to admire the prospect, and then slip down again, to the imminent destruction of their clothes; not that a rent or two would have grieved their mother very much, for she was a great deal too old, and too ignorant besides, to think of mending them. In all these sports Master Bruin, the eldest, was ever the foremost; but as certain as he joined in the romps, so surely were uproar and fighting the consequence. The reason was clear enough; his temper was so disagreeable, that although he was quite ready to play off his jokes on others, he could never bear to receive them in return; and being, besides, very fierce and strong, he came at length to be considered as the most unbearable bear that the forest had known for many generations, and in his own family was looked on as quite a bug-bear.

Now I privately think, that if a good oaken stick had been applied to his shoulders, or any other sensitive part of his body, whenever he displayed these fits of spleen, the exercise would have had a very beneficial effect on his disposition; but his father, on such occasions, only uttered his opinion in so low a growl that it was impossible to make out what he said,