

Marie The Gentle and Charlie The Bold

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Two little children, five years old,
Marie the gentle and Charlie the bold.
Sweet and bright, and quaintly wise,
Angels both, in their mother's eyes.

But you, if you follow my verse, will see,
That they were as human as human can be,
And hadn't yet learned the maturer art
Of hiding the *self* of the finite heart.

One day they found, in their romp and play,
Two little rabbits, soft and gray.
Soft and gray, and just of a size,
As like each other as your two eyes.

All day long the children made love
To the dear little rabbits, their treasure trove.
They kissed and hugged them until the night
Brought to the coneys a glad respite.

But too much fondling doesn't agree
With a rabbit's nature, as we shall see.
For ere the light of another day
Had chased the shadows of night away,

One little pet had gone to the Shades,
Or, let us hope, to perennial glades,
Brighter and softer than any below,
A heaven where good little rabbits go.

The living and dead lay side by side,
And still as alike as before one died.
And it chanced that the children came singly to view
The pets they had dreamed of all the night through.

First came Charlie, and with sad surprise,
Beheld the dead with streaming eyes.
Howe'er, consolingly, he said,
"Poor Marie! Her rabbit's dead!"

Then came Marie, and stood aghast,
And kissed and caressed it, but at last
Found voice to say, while her young heart bled
"I'm sorry for Charlie. His rabbit's dead!"