

THE DUCK AND THE SPARROWS.

Duck. Look here, Sparrows, is this fair play? Who told you you might taste my dinner?

1st Sparrow. We only took a few bits of bread and potato. See, there's a bone of beef and the head of a fish left for you, — enough for any reasonable duck.

Duck. But why did you not wait till you were invited, before eating out of my plate? Have you no manners?

2d Sparrow. Times are hard, Mr. Duck. It is a rough winter, and the ground is covered with snow. Sparrows must live, you know.

Duck. I can count nine of you on the branches there. Why don't you go to the pig-sty, and make the pig share with you, instead of robbing a poor old duck?

3d Sparrow. We prefer your society to the pig's.

Duck. Well, you are the sauciest sparrows of my acquaintance. No sooner do I get my head into the plate than down you come and put in your bills.

4th Sparrow. Try it again, old fellow.

1st Sparrow. We sparrows have a hard time of it this winter, Mr. Duck. If it weren't for a dear little girl up at the house, there, who throws crumbs out at the door for us, I don't know what we should do. Not a worm, not a bug, is to be found on the trees; and the ground is frozen stiff.

Duck. Is that any reason why you should deprive me of my dinner?

1st Sparrow. It's a reason why we should get a dinner where we can. That's good law among sparrows, anyhow.

Duck. Well, now see if you can't behave yourselves while I finish my meal.

[*The Duck begins to eat; while the Sparrows all fly down on the rim of his plate, and help themselves.*]