

THEY also took with them an offering of three fat mice as a present for Old Brown, and put them down upon his door-step.

Then Tinkleberry and the other little squirrels each made a low bow, and said politely--

“Old Mr. Brown, will you favour us with permission to gather nuts upon your island?”



BUT Nutkin was excessively impertinent in his manners. He bobbed up and down like a little red *cherry*, singing--

“Riddle me, riddle me, rot-tot-tote!

A little wee man, in a red red coat!

A staff in his hand, and a stone in
his throat;

If you’ll tell me this riddle, I’ll give
you a groat.”

Now this riddle is as old as the hills; Mr. Brown paid no attention whatever to Nutkin.

He shut his eyes obstinately and went to sleep.