**Jim**

*Who ran away from his Nurse, and was eaten by a Lion*

There was a boy whose name was Jim;
      His friends were very good to him.
      They gave him tea, and cakes, and jam,
      And slices of delicious ham,
      And chocolate with pink inside
      And little tricycles to ride,
      And read him stories through and through,
      And even took him to the zoo—
      But there it was the dreadful fate
      Befell him, which I now relate.

      You know—at least you ought to know,
      For I have often told you so—
      That children never are allowed
      To leave their nurses in a crowd;
      Now this was Jim's especial foible,
      He ran away when he was able,
      And on this inauspicious day
      He slipped his hand and ran away!

      He hadn't gone a yard when—Bang!
      With open jaws, a lion sprang,
      And hungrily began to eat
      The boy: beginning at his feet.
      Now, just imagine how it feels
      When first your toes and then your heels,
      And then by gradual degrees,
      Your shins and ankles, calves and knees,
      Are slowly eaten, bit by bit.
      No wonder Jim detested it!
      No wonder that he shouted ``Hi!
      The honest keeper heard his cry,
      Though very fat he almost ran
      To help the little gentleman.
      “Ponto!”*he ordered as he came*      (For Ponto was the lion's name),
      “Ponto!*” he cried, with angry frown,*      “Let go, Sir! Down, Sir! Put it down!”      The lion made a sudden stop,
      He let the dainty morsel drop,
      And slunk reluctant to his cage,
      Snarling with disappointed rage.
      But when he bent him over Jim,
      The honest keeper's eyes were dim.
      The lion having reached his head,
      The miserable boy was dead!

      When Nurse informed his parents, they
      Were more concerned than I can say:--
      His mother, as she dried her eyes,
      Said, ``Well—it gives me no surprise,
      He would not do as he was told!      His father, who was self-controlled,
      Bade all the children round attend
      To James's miserable end,
      And always keep a-hold of nurse
      For fear of finding something worse.

*by Hilaire Belloc*