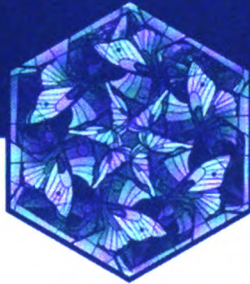


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To Margurite from Aunt Klara
Christmas 1918

The LIVE DOLLS'
PLAY DAYS



The LIVE DOLLS' PLAY DAYS

By
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Author of
THE STORY OF LIVE DOLLS
MORE ABOUT LIVE DOLLS
THE STORY OF THE LOST DOLL
THE STORY OF THE THREE DOLLS
THE LIVE DOLLS' HOUSE PARTY
LITTLE RED WHITE AND BLUE
THE LIVE DOLLS' BUSY DAYS

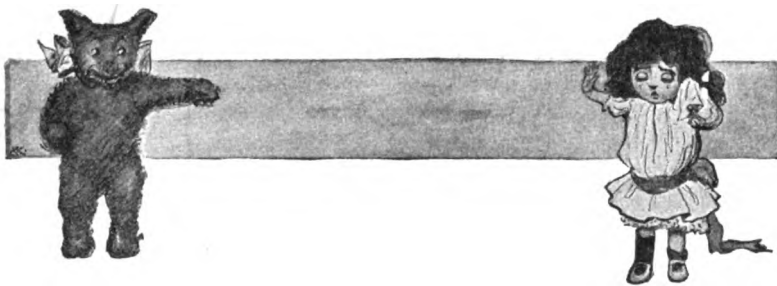
Illustrated by
VIRGINIA KEEP

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Publishers Chicago

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SEPTEMBER

The LIVE DOLLS'
PLAY DAYS



CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A GLIMPSE OF CLOVERDALE

Imagine my delight at being ordered to Cloverdale! As I told you at the close of *The Live Dolls' Busy Days*, I found I was to live in that enchanting village where the dear dolls had had so many exciting adventures.

THE LIVE DOLLS'

When the good news came, I fairly hugged myself with delight as I quickly packed up my belongings.

I took an early train that I might reach Cloverdale at an hour when the inhabitants would be soundly sleeping.

Walking through the quiet streets, I recalled the day when the Queen went whirling along in her coach, tossing out the bills which announced the fact that the dolls of the village were soon to be alive.

I looked at the various windows, hoping to catch a glimpse of one of these magic creations, but in vain.

Presently I saw what I judged must be Janie's home, as there was a tiny house just back of it,

PLAY DAYS

where I supposed that Dinah and the other dolls lived.

Eager to see the interior of this miniature dwelling, I went through the yard, and peeped in at one of the windows. There I saw Dinah's orderly kitchen, and through the open door of the pantry, on a shelf, a small slice of ham and a pan of tiny eggs, ready, I supposed, for the morning meal. How I longed to stay and watch her prepare it!

At another window I gazed into the large room where the picture children on the walls were still skipping rope and rolling hoops. There, too, was the fireplace, in front of which Janie and Rosabell had their visit with Santa Claus.

This was where the children of the village had

THE LIVE DOLLS'

such joyous times. What bliss to know that now I could have a part in the fun!

As I turned away, I noticed a vine-covered cottage next door that seemed to be vacant.

On the front was a sign:

FURNISHED ROOMS FOR RENT

KEY IS UNDER THE MAT

Must be honest people in this town!

In an instant I had the key in the lock, and was inside the house.

As I found it just suited to my needs, I decided at once to take it. What could I ask better than to live so near Janie, in the midst of all the jolly happenings?

I ate my breakfast from my lunch-box, then sat down to think.

PLAY DAYS

Here was I, a stranger in Cloverdale, longing to come in touch with the children and their Live Dolls.

How was I to do it?

As I pondered, behold, the village was awake!

I heard passers-by, also voices next door. I sprang to the window, and there saw Dinah shaking a rug and sweeping the porch of the doll-house. To my surprise she appeared very cross, and seemed to be muttering to herself.

Then I saw a large doll — of course it was Rosabell — in the yard. She, too, seemed down-cast, and appeared to be going to Dinah for comfort.

Presently I noticed that the street was full of dolls, all going to the doll-house.

THE LIVE DOLLS'

They were welcomed by Dinah's mistress and her family, but they all continued to be so sad that I became alarmed for fear something dreadful had happened.

Had I appeared on the scene just in time to witness some great sorrow instead of the jolly time I had hoped for?

These midgets seated themselves on the floor of the porch, and at once were in grave council.

Some tiny kerchiefs were wiping away tears, and I must confess that my own eyes filled in sympathy for them.

What could be the trouble? Was Janie very ill, or had the Queen met with some great misfortune?

Nothing was wrong with Janie, for now she ap-

PLAY DAYS

peared on the scene, skipping about in the greatest glee.

Something was about to happen, and I watched proceedings with breathless interest. Janie placed a small table under the trees, and arranged it very carefully for a tea-party.

The dolls were peeping through the vines on the porch of the doll-house, but apparently no joy was in store for them, as tears still sparkled on their cheeks.

When Janie had arranged all to her satisfaction, she vanished, and shortly the mystery was solved. It makes my heart ache to tell it, but soon she appeared carrying tenderly in her arms—what do you think? A Teddy Bear!

As she ran to greet her little friends, who now

THE LIVE DOLLS'

came dancing up the street, each hugging a bear, my outraged soul wept with the dolls!

After this followed what I suppose was a Teddy Bear tea-party, but on account of the thickness of the foliage I could not see just what they did, or what they had to eat.

I sympathized so deeply with the dolls that I longed to go to the group on the porch and fold them in my arms. No wonder they wept! To think of Teddy Bears taking their place in the hearts of their little mothers!

Now that I looked closely at the dolls, I saw that they had been sadly neglected, for they appeared like the beggars that came to town, some in rags, and some in tags, while the bears were gaily clothed in sweaters of all colors of the rainbow,



PLAY DAYS

and strung with silver bells which jingled merrily at every turn.

I moved away from the window to shut out the sight, and at once decided on my course of action. It was plain to be seen that, for the sake of all concerned, those dolls must be brought to their own once more.

I drew down my veil, left the house, and proceeded to find the owner, with whom I intended to make arrangements for an early return.

It was soon settled that the house was to be mine for as long as I desired, and I took the first train home, revolving in my mind how best to go to work at the important problem which stared me in the face.

Many plans whirled through my head, and I

THE LIVE DOLLS'

finally chose the one that appealed to me as being the most attractive.

I would form a Club and invite all the dolls to join. We would have suits, badges, meetings, and all those things dear to the hearts of little girls.

We would have such glorious times in that backyard, in full sight and hearing of the girls, that I felt sure it would not be long before those Teddy Bears would either go scampering to the woods, or to the arms of little boys, where they belonged!

Arriving at home I made some purchases, from which I fashioned an odd costume for myself, also one for a certain small girl, whom I hoped to borrow if the Teddy Bear had not yet gained complete possession of her heart.

PLAY DAYS

Of this I was assured when, in response to my peal of the bell at her home, she appeared, tenderly cuddling her dolly to her bosom.

“Hullo, Patty,” I cried, “where’s your ‘Teddy Bear?’”

“Why, Auntie,” she replied reproachfully, “I love my dolly.”

“Well said! But what’s the trouble? Do I see a little red nose and eyes that seem to have been in a bit of a shower?”

“Yes, you do,” and her lip quivered piteously. “Mama had to go away on the train, Auntie May has a new baby, and perhaps I’ll be alone a long time with only the maid.”

“Why didn’t mama lend you to me? I am just wanting a little girl of about your size.”

THE LIVE DOLLS'

"She spoke of it, but she thought you were going away."

"So I am, that's why I want you. We'll have the mostest fun!"

"Can I take all my dolls?"

"Indeed, yes, the more the merrier."

"How lovely!" exclaimed Patty. "Where are we going?"

"To Cloverdale."

Patty stood transfixed for a moment, then cried: "The Live Dolls' Town?"

"You have guessed it."

"And will my dollies be alive, too?"

"Will they? Don't you know the Queen ordered that every doll there was to be alive? Your dolls won't be there one second before you

PLAY DAYS

will hear them teasing for a cookie," I replied, as I tumbled her belongings into a trunk, while she stood by, fairly trembling at the thought of all that was now in store for her; for Patty knew Cloverdale by heart.

When all was ready I took Patty and her brood of dolls to my home.

The child was wild with excitement when she saw the odd gowns we were to wear, especially when I fashioned one for the particular doll that was always in her arms.

I, too, became somewhat excited when we were "all bridled, all saddled, all ready for the trip," for I am sure we looked very quaint seated in the carriage on our way to the station. Patty gazed with delight at her seventeen dolls piled on the seat

PLAY DAYS

before her—new dolls, old dolls, baby dolls, lady dolls, pretty dolls, ugly dolls, dolls in all stages of dilapidation and dolls in every style of costume—but all were eager for the magic moment when they would be quivering with life.



CHAPTER II

THE HAPPY HEARTS CLUB

Once more the village of Cloverdale was agog with excitement. A most unusual thing had happened. Two carriages and a wagon piled high with trunks dashed through the streets and stopped at the cottage next door to Janie's house.

THE LIVE DOLLS'

Janie, eager to catch a glimpse of her new neighbors, saw first a dear little lady, clad all in scarlet from top to toe. Such an odd gown it was, gleaming here and there with bits of gold cord! About her waist was bound a silken sash, the ends of which were drawn up and finished with a gold tassel.

On her head perched a high peaked hat, from the point of which dangled another gold tassel.

Behind her tripped a small girl about Janie's age, holding by the hand a beautiful doll; and both the little girl and the doll were arrayed in the same peculiar manner.

The child was in a gale of laughter as her dolls tumbled over one another in their efforts to reach the cottage first.



PLAY DAYS

As the door closed behind the jolly group, Janie ran to tell mama what she had seen.

“They are all so dear, Mama! The little girl is so pretty, and she has just bushels of dolls. Such beauties, too! They wear the queerest clothes, and have piles of trunks. Who do you suppose they are?”

“I am sure I do not know, but I am glad they are so near, for they will certainly be interesting.”

This proved so true that Janie and the village children at once established themselves at the post of observation, which was on the shed roof in the back yard.

The branches of the trees formed a fine screen, so that they could see and not be seen. This doesn't sound very honest, but really they did not

THE LIVE DOLLS'

mean to spy, and they did not wish to be rude. They regarded this as one would any free outdoor entertainment.

So there they sat the day after the arrival of the new neighbors, with their Teddy Bears clasped tightly in their arms, while Rosabell, with the other dolls, stood by the fence, peeping through the knot-holes.

They, too, scented something unusual. Since the Teddy Bear craze had taken the town by storm there really wasn't a single happy doll to be found. So Rosabell was most anxious to become acquainted with these new dolls, who, it was quite plain to be seen, still reigned supreme in their mother's heart.

"Here they come," whispered Janie to her com-

PLAY DAYS

panions. "They look like Mother Gooses, or perhaps they are somebody's fairy godmothers."

"What *are* they doing?"

The lady and the little girl and the doll seated themselves, and each drew from a red work-bag, suspended from her belt, bits of red material at which she began to sew.

Presently it became evident that the three were making dolls' gowns of all sizes.

As they worked, the girls examined them curiously.

"They have badges," whispered Janie. "They seem to be small gold letters dangling from chains fastened to a pin. The pin looks like a gold key."

Presently the garments received the finishing touches. Then the small girl drew from her

THE LIVE DOLLS'

pocket a silver bugle, upon which she blew a shrill blast.

In a moment out scampered her family of dolls, and such a twitter as they were in when they saw the cunning garments! They could hardly wait to get into them, and when they were finally dressed, with the badges pinned on, they paraded about among the trees, as proud as peacocks.

Patty, too, was much elated, and exclaimed: "How dear they look! And what fun it is to have them alive, Auntie!"

"Yes, indeed!" said Auntie emphatically. "Nothing in the world could possibly be nicer! Now, let's put up our sign."

Shortly, after much hammering, the girls read these words painted on a long board:

PLAY DAYS

HOME OF THE H. H. CLUB. ALL
NOT INTERESTED IN TEDDY BEARS
INVITED TO JOIN. FOR PARTICU-
LARS INQUIRE OF THE DOLL'S
FRIEND.

(SIGNED) THE DOLL LADY.

This sign, nailed up to a tree in a conspicuous position, caused a ripple of excitement to sweep over the unseen audience.

The dolls were especially aroused to action, and Rosabell exclaimed, "Come on; let's go!"

She led the way, and they all filed out into that fascinating yard next door, while the eyes of their little mothers wistfully followed all their movements.

The Doll Lady welcomed them with open arms. Patty also clung to them, petting and caressing

THE LIVE DOLLS'

them as their own mothers had once been accustomed to do.

"My!" said Rosabell, sighing heavily. "It seems good to be snuggled again!"

The other dolls echoed the cry in such a pathetic manner, that the girls on the roof felt conscience-stricken.

"Why," asked Patty, "don't your mamas ever pet you?"

"Not now," said Rosabell, who seemed to be spokesman for the crowd. "We were very happy when the Queen went away and until Christmas. Then,—oh, dear! I can't bear to think of it! Toyman Penniman's shelves were just full of these funny animals. We didn't know what they were, and didn't think much about them.

PLAY DAYS

“One day some of us were in the store calling on some of the new dolls on the shelves, and we noticed they seemed very sad. I asked them if they were homesick, and told them what fun they would have here with us after Christmas. They only pointed out the Teddy Bears, and couldn’t speak at first.

“After a while they told us about them. They said that in the city where they came from the little girls were playing with the Teddy Bears all the time and wouldn’t look even at their old dolls, let alone a new one.

“I said I knew very well that could not happen in Cloverdale. I was sure the Teddy Bears would be left on the shelves, for our mamas never cared for anything but dolls. They shook their heads

THE LIVE DOLLS'

so sadly. Then I said, 'Well, of course, they won't want you if you look so mournful.' Just then in came a lot of the girls, and I whispered, 'Smile! Smile as hard as you can!'

"What do you think those girls did? They never even glanced at the dolls, but rushed to the bears, saying: 'Oh, see the darling things! I want this white one, isn't it dear?'

"Each chose a bear and then they glanced over at the dolls. I whispered to them once more to smile and they did. They dimpled all over, looking as pretty as any doll could, and the girls just walked out without a word.

"Every girl got a bear on Christmas Day, and we felt so sorry for those dolls left in the store. Santa Claus wouldn't even buy them, as he often

PLAY DAYS

did; he said, 'Dolls are out and bears are in.' Mr. Penniman at last had to send them all to some place where Teddy Bears were unheard of."

A long-drawn sigh was now heard from the midgets, and Rosabell continued:

"Since then *everything* has been for them. *We* are in rags, and nothing is nice any more. Sometimes I wish we could go back and be dead. We could be as well as not!"

"How?" asked Patty, and the Doll Lady listened breathlessly for the reply.

Rosabell tiptoed up close, and whispered: "I have the wand that could make us all dead!"

"How did you get it?" asked Patty in surprise.

"When the Queen went abroad she gave it to Janie. I found it in the yard where Janie left it,

THE LIVE DOLLS'

and I have it fastened to a chain that is about my neck. Janie thinks it is lost, and perhaps I should have told her, but since these animals came we have all been thinking that maybe we would ask some one to wave it over us, for really we would rather not be alive any more!"

Here Rosabell hid her tear-wet face on Patty's shoulder, and all the other dolls' faces were hidden in their little hands, while nothing but sobs was heard.

The girls on the roof stirred uneasily and looked inquiringly at one another.

"Could you hear what Rosabell said?" asked Janie of her companions.

"No," said Lucile, tossing her head. "What babies they are, anyhow! I s'pose they are crying

PLAY DAYS

because we play with the Teddy Bears 'stead of them."

"I can't help it. Teddy Bears are so hugable I just love to squeeze mine!" And she embraced it so hard it would certainly have cried for mercy had it been alive.

"Hark!" whispered Janie as the Doll Lady said cheerily:

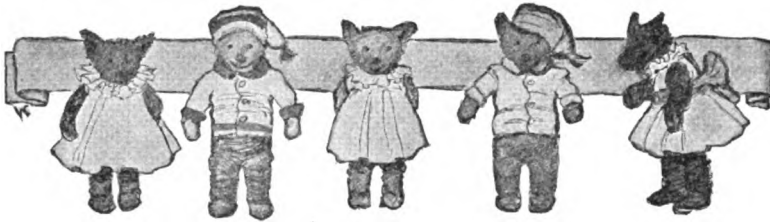
"Come! come! This won't do. Wipe away your tears. Since you are here I think you must want to join our Club. If you do, there is no room in it for tears or sadness.

"We are all so delighted that we have the privilege of being here with you, and we want to have happy times together. Try not to think of the Teddy Bears. All will come out right some day.

PLAY DAYS

Come into the house and be initiated. It is great fun!"

The Doll Lady led the way; Patty and all the dolls followed and the door closed behind them.



CHAPTER III

THE COPY CATS' CLUB

“Well, of all things!” cried Janie, as the girls looked at one another in blank amazement.

“A Club!” exclaimed Lucile. “And we are ‘shut-outers’ because we love our Teddy Bears.”

“Nothing the matter with *our* having a Club,

THE LIVE DOLLS'

and *we* can have badges, too. I wonder what those letters mean, and how they initiate!"

"Rosabell will tell me," said Janie.

"Indeed, not!" declared Lucile; "they always have those things a secret in clubs."

"Let us form a Club right now, and make suits for the Teddy Bears of red crape paper. We have loads of it in the attic."

"They will call us copy cats, I s'pose."

"That's just what we will be, and do every thing they do. Hurrah for the C. C's! Come on, get the paper, Janie, and we'll make suits and badges right away!"

At once this back yard presented a very interesting picture.

PLAY DAYS

Janie produced the paper, and after much cutting and pasting the girls and bears were gowned somewhat after the manner of their rivals, and very funny they looked.

They then cut out a number of large C's from cardboard, covered them with gold paper, and strung them about their necks.

"Now we are ready!" cried Janie.

"Oh, we forgot to make a sign!" And in a twinkling these words were printed on a board and dangling from a tree:

HOME OF THE C. C. CLUB. ONLY
THOSE INTERESTED IN TEDDY BEARS
INVITED TO JOIN. FOR PARTICULARS
INQUIRE OF THE
TEDDY BEARS' FRIENDS.

THE LIVE DOLLS'

"Now the C. C's will be initiated. We don't know how the H. H's are doing it, so we can't copy them exactly, but, of course, as it must be something funny, let's roll down the cellar door."

Then followed a rollicking time, but this sport proved rather disastrous to the paper gowns, and after it was over they were obliged to visit the glue-pot for repairs.

Just as they were pasted up and ready for the next move, the Doll Lady's voice was once more heard, and in an instant blue eyes and brown were peeping through the various knot-holes, at a very attractive picture.

Patty and the dollies were seated in a circle on the grass, each working away at one of the odd doll-gowns.

PLAY DAYS

The Doll Lady was helping here and there, and talking in clear bell-like tones, which easily reached the ears of these listeners on the other side of the fence.

“Make your gowns as carefully as you can, dearies, we expect to wear them much of the time.

“While we work I want to tell you about this Club. We are the Happy Hearts, and we try our best to live up to the title.

“This little pin is in the form of a key. You see it is also a perfect letter L, which stands for Love. You know, of course, that is the key-note to happiness. We have only love in our hearts for everything and everybody. We never think about unhappy things. So we can't possibly be anything but glad all the time.

THE LIVE DOLLS'

"You have already proved the truth of this, for in a twinkling you have jumped from tears to laughter, just because you have ceased to think of the cause of your misery.

"Try this and see how quickly things work around right. We want to make your little world a big round sunbeam, which will frighten away all the little goblins that try to make you miserable.

"Now that the gowns are finished you can put them on, and I will pin on your badges."

Such a flutter as they were in! The girls looking on grew quite excited, especially when, after the dolls were ready, they were given tiny silver triangles, on which they played as they marched about the yard.

They had a glorious time, for the Doll Lady



PLAY DAYS

taught them a fancy march, and as they drilled they made quite an imposing spectacle, with all Patty's dolls and those of the village a mass of glowing color, the tassels on the caps nodding with every move, and their slippered feet keeping perfect time to the joyous music of the silver instruments. A charming picture they made as they formed stars, wheels, squares, crosses, and all sorts of figures.

When they finally vanished, Janie disappeared for a moment and returned carrying combs and tissue paper, shouting:

“Copy Cats, form in line! Salute! Mark time! Ready! March!”

Away they went round and round the yard, hugging their bears and blowing through the paper

THE LIVE DOLLS'

on the combs, till their lips tickled so they simply had to stop. They bubbled over with laughter as they threw themselves on the grass.

"Now what next?" queried Janie, as they cast wistful glances next door.

"I wish we were H. H's instead of C. C's. They are going to have so much fun."

"Let's shoot the Teddy Bears and then have a funeral and bury them. Then maybe they will take us into the Club."

"Anyhow, we have never had quite so much fun with them as with the dolls. We have made sweaters and caps and played all sorts of things, but I for one am getting tired of them."

A long pause followed this outburst as each girl studied her pet.

PLAY DAYS

“Seems kind of mean to throw them over,” said one.

“Not half so mean as to throw over our Live Dolls, which are so dear. Even when they weren’t alive they were more fun than these grinning things,” added another, with a spiteful kick which sent her bear spinning across the yard.

“Seems to me we aren’t Copy Cats any more,” said Janie gently.

“We are getting awfully cross. If we are going to live up to our title and do as the H. H’s do, we must keep glad. Stop thinking of what made us unhappy.

“We started out to have a beautiful time. We’d better shoot these little goblins that are trying to make us cross before we shoot our poor

THE LIVE DOLLS'

Teddy Bears. They are like Tommy Green's Pussy Cat, who never did any harm but kill the mice in his father's barn."

"Yes, they did!" declared Lucile. "They tried to kill our love for the dolls, but that is our fault, and not theirs.

"The dinner-bell is ringing; let's go home and then decide what the Unhappy Hearts had better do next."

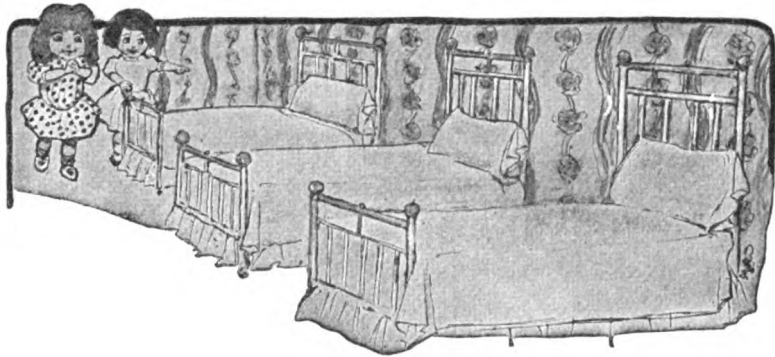
The Doll Lady, glancing from her window, smiled shrewdly at the picture of the girls, who, with drooped heads, and dragging their bears by one leg, passed slowly down the street.

She nodded knowingly, and merrily cried to the dollies:

"If I'm not mistaken, this year Mr. Penniman

PLAY DAYS

will have to order an extra supply of dolls, and it will be the Teddy Bears who are packed away. Just be patient, dearies; I am sure you will soon be restored to your rightful places in your little mothers' hearts."



CHAPTER IV

THE LITTLE MOTHERS MAKE A CALL

After dinner the girls watched eagerly, but in vain, for further developments of the Happy Hearts Club.

Not a sign of anything happened, that they could see.

PLAY DAYS

They wandered about disconsolately, trying to invent something new, but all that now seemed worth while was taking place in the vine-covered cottage.

Supper-time came, but no dolls. The girls hoped for a glimpse of the doings when the lamps were lighted, but were doomed to disappointment, for with the first gleam of light the shades were closely drawn.

The occasional shouts of laughter that could be heard was maddening to the "shut-outers."

"I'll tell you what," cried Janie suddenly, "let's go and call on them! It's our turn, for they are our new neighbors."

And away she went, followed by her companions, each closely hugging her bear.

THE LIVE DOLLS'

"Aren't you almost afraid to ring the bell?" asked Lucile.

"Indeed I'm not," replied Janie, as she gave the bell a jerk which almost pulled it from its socket.

In spite of her bold front her little heart went pitapat while they waited. It seemed rather a bold thing for them to come bringing their bears, under the circumstances.

Just as they began to wish themselves miles away the door opened, disclosing the Doll Lady, Patty and all the dolls.

"How do you do?" said Janie politely. "I live next door. My name is Janie, and these are my friends. We thought we would call on your little girl."

"I'm glad to see you," said the Doll Lady cor-



PLAY DAYS

dially. "Patty isn't mine except by proxy, and in the same way I am only her pretend Auntie. We love each other very much, and we are overjoyed to be here in Cloverdale. We are getting acquainted with your Live Dolls and think you very fortunate, indeed, to have had such a beautiful thing as Live Dolls come to you.

"We are just about to have a backwards party. Wouldn't you like to join us, or," with an inquiring glance at the bears, "perhaps you'd rather not play with dolls?"

"Oh, yes, we would," cried Janie eagerly. "And maybe your little proxy girl would like our bears a while, they are so dear!"

"Oh, no," said Patty hurriedly, "I wouldn't care to, if you please."

THE LIVE DOLLS'

"Come and watch us, won't you, or would you like to play, too?"

"What is a backwards party?" asked Janie. "I never heard of such a thing."

"Oh," said the Doll Lady, "it's fine to play. You dress backwards, comb your hair over your face, put one of these cloth faces on the back of your head, then when you get used to doing everything backwards you are ready for the party."

"Put your bears in that room in the corner, and let them be our audience."

In a twinkling the animals were taken in, two by two, seated in a row on the floor, and left to watch this funny performance.

Dresses were turned around and buttoned in front; hair was arranged to form a veil over each

PLAY DAYS

little face, and the cloth mask was tied over the back of each head.

“Now, we are ready!” shouted the Doll Lady, looking very odd in her backwards costume. “Choose partners, bow, backwards, of course!” And away they went, zigzagging around the room, giggling so hard they could scarcely stand up.

Dinah convulsed them all by exclaiming: “My! for once I wish my foots was turned backwards like dey was when I first camed alive. Den I could play a joke on you-alls and walk better’n anybody. I’d draw a prize, sure!”

Great sport they had, marching and dancing till they were startled by the curfew bell, which, in all well-regulated villages, rings the bedtime hour for the children.

THE LIVE DOLLS'

"We must go," said Janie. "Thank you for letting us play. It was lovely."

"Wait one moment, dears," said the Doll Lady, "I have a favor to ask of you. We have a Club which the dollies have joined. We would like to keep them here for a while. I have planned to have a sort of house-party. Come up-stairs and see how fine we have arranged for it."

Much surprised the girls followed their hostess, and found the whole upper part of the house, which was one long room, filled with tiny dolls' beds, and looking very inviting.

"Please, may we stay?" begged Rosabell, and all the other dolls echoed the cry.

"Of course," said the Doll Lady. "Your mothers will certainly not object, now that they

PLAY DAYS

are so fond of the Teddy Bears." Then turning to the little girls she said: "You will not miss the dolls, and for the same reason you will be glad to give them this pleasure, since they are so lonely."

"Oh, yes," sighed Janie, "they may stay, of course. I want to ask a favor of you, too, please. Do you care if we peep over the fence and listen to your funny times?"

"We did do it, because we thought maybe we could learn something new, and we could hardly help hearing you, anyhow."

"Bless you, no! 'Listen and learn' is a good motto, though, of course, listening, as a rule, is not honest. There are exceptions to every rule, however, and this is one."

Good nights were now exchanged, and before

PLAY DAYS

separating the group halted for a moment at the gates.

“I do wish they would let us join their Club,” said Janie.

“Ho,” said Lucile, “the C. C’s can have a Bears’ house-party in the big room.”

“No, they can’t. Bears don’t sleep in rooms. They sleep in the woods,” said Janie.

“Have it in the woods, then. In the morning we can plan something fine to do. Now let’s go to bed; maybe we’ll dream of something new.”

Away they went to their homes, each girl almost wishing that her pet would come to life and swallow up all the others, then they could join the H. H’s without any trouble.



CHAPTER V

THE DOLL LADY ORDERS SOME BABIES

The next morning the girls climbed to the shed roof at an early hour, determined not to miss any of the happenings.

As they peered through the leaves of the trees, they saw the dolls, eager with excitement, already

THE LIVE DOLLS'

seated in a row, watching the Doll Lady open a large box.

All seemed much excited when the lid was finally taken off. And what do you think they saw?

Dozens of the weentiest doll babies, all lying in a row, like so many peas in a pod!

"See!" cried the Doll Lady. "Aren't they dear? We are going to have a baby party to-day.

"I heard that a new kind of doll baby had appeared in the city, and I decided at once to send for some so each of you could have one. Do see them just coming to life!"

As the girls watched, they could see the little things yawning, stretching and dimpling all over, and turning their little heads this way and that.

PLAY DAYS

It seemed almost as though a beautiful rainbow had burst like a bubble, and the bits of brightness were strewed over these little faces, so radiant were they.

“Come, Patty, help me pass the babies.”

“How funny it sounds!” said Patty. “Just like refreshments, only it’s lots nicer.”

As they went down the line, the Doll Lady in a spirit of mischief cried:

“Have a baby, won’t you? Every one seems as pretty as every other, so it makes no difference which one you take. Good dispositions warranted, colicky babies not exchanged after ten days!”

The dolls were very proud to have a baby all their own, and a merry time was now the order of

THE LIVE DOLLS'

the day. The back yard was at once converted into a nursery on a large scale, with the Doll Lady for the head nurse and adviser.

“The purpose of this baby party is to teach you some things about them. I want to give you a few lessons on the care of a baby to-day,” she began. “Let’s pretend that I am the Old Woman who lived in a Shoe, and have so many children I don’t know what to do. But I won’t spank them all soundly and send them to bed, that is sure. I’ll just call in some helpers. Here are some nurses’ caps and aprons we will wear to make it more real.”

In a moment, behold! the little dolls were all veritable nurses, and very sweet they looked, I assure you.

PLAY DAYS

“I always did adore babies,” she went on; “and at home when I exclaim, ‘What is sweeter than a baby?’ the answer comes like a flash, ‘Two of them.’ ”

The Doll Lady went about, helping the dolls in their care-taking.

“True it is, in all the world nothing is sweeter than these bits of humanity,” she continued. “Peter Pan tells us when the first baby laughed for the first time, that his laugh broke into a million pieces, and went skipping all about: that was the beginning of fairies. Isn’t that sweet? Only I shouldn’t say ‘his,’ I should say ‘its,’ for ‘his’ sounds as though girl babies weren’t included, and we know better. Girl babies are every bit as sweet, I am sure.”

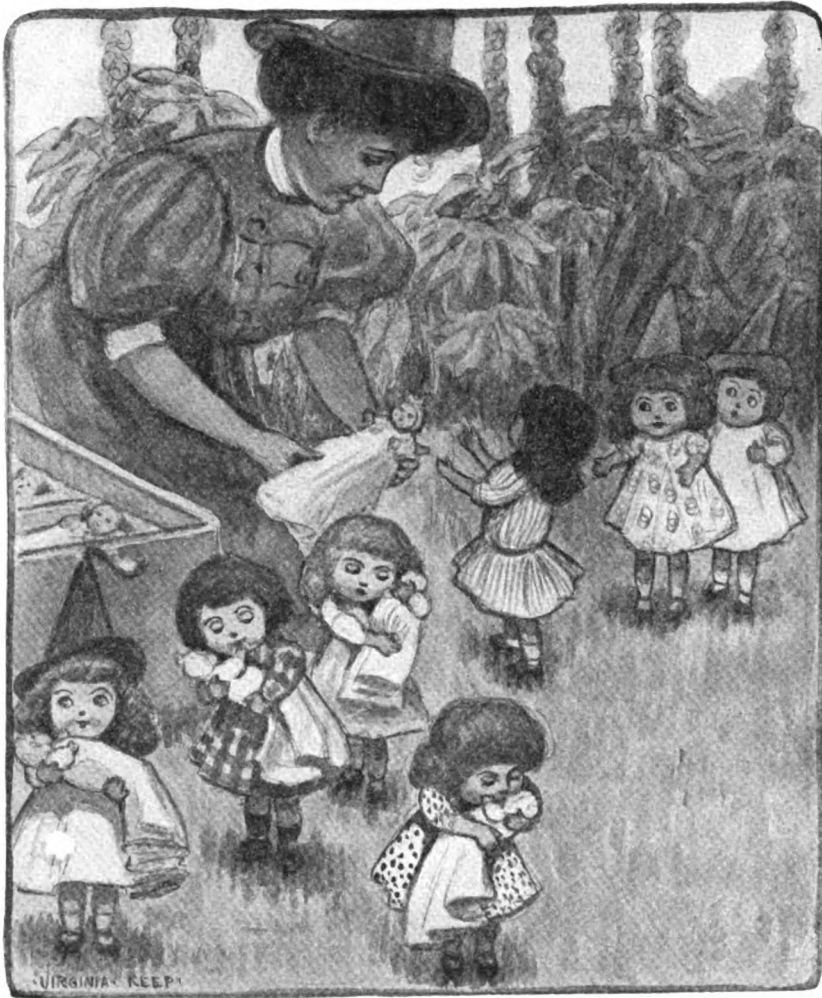
THE LIVE DOLLS'

The Doll Lady stopped to tuck a darling baby into its crib.

“Well, if that was the beginning of fairies, I wonder if this wasn't the beginning of babies: perhaps when the first sunbeam burst forth from the big round sun, it broke into a million pieces, scattering its tiny beams far and wide, and behold, every speck was a baby! It must be so, for every baby is like a ray of sunshine in the home.

“Do you know the verses about Baby's Skies? Listen!

“ ‘Baby's skies are mama's eyes;
Mama's eyes and smile together
Make the baby's pleasant weather.
Mama keep your eyes from tears;
Keep your heart from foolish fears;
Keep your lips from dull complaining,
Lest the baby think it's raining!’



PLAY DAYS

“I hope my Happy Hearts do not need to learn these lines, but I wish every mother in the whole world would sing them in her heart all the day.

“It may seem strange, but it is very true, that babies quickly catch the mood of those about them, and it is very sad to think there are mothers who sometimes grow impatient with these bits of sunshine.

“Suppose you had planned a candy-pull or something equally nice, and when I called you in to help me, perhaps you wouldn’t take up the baby as gently as you might.

“Some little mother might take it up in this way—wait one moment—Rosabell, dear, come here, please, and touch this mite with the wand. I don’t even want her to feel what many babies have to.

THE LIVE DOLLS'

It would stab me to the heart to see the look of grieved surprise in her dear eyes."

At the magic touch the little thing became lifeless, just a plain every-day doll, and the lesson went on.

"Some little mothers would take the baby this way." Jerking the doll from its nest on the pillow, the Doll Lady placed it on her knee, trotted it vigorously up and down, striking her heel hard each time it struck the ground.

"That heel jars the poor little head, and makes the baby very uncomfortable, but it can't let you know that, except by being uneasy, or maybe, crying, and then it is jolted still harder, and the mother thinks it is cross.

"If you want to trot it, and the baby does love

PLAY DAYS

to be trotted, don't strike your heel. The baby will feel as if it were on a velvet spring that dances at the lightest touch. It will kick its little feet, laugh and crow, and you will have quite a frolic, forgetting that you didn't exactly want to help take care of it. If you do remember, you will wonder how you could possibly have felt cross about it.

“Another thing I want to impress upon you. Did you ever know that sometimes when babies cry all they want is a drink of water?”

“One time a lady came to my home with her baby. It was a very warm day, and the baby was peevish and fretful. She scolded it, and I finally said, ‘Perhaps it wants a drink,’ and gave it a few drops from a teaspoon. I wish you had seen the

THE LIVE DOLLS'

expression of joy and gratitude that swept over its little face.

“The mother watched it in surprise, and what do you think she said? That it never had had a drink of water—she had never thought to give it one!

“Think of that! A poor little baby thirsty, and didn't know how to say so except by crying, and then its mother thought it was cross!

“It did my heart good to hear it gurgle and coo after that drink.

“The Golden Rule is a good one to follow with babies as with everything; and besides that, one has to try to imagine just how the baby feels. Now come over to that shed and see what we shall find.”

PLAY DAYS

The dolls with their babies pattered after her and shortly reappeared, each wheeling the cunningest of doll carriages.

“You will notice that these are not go-carts, as they are not nearly so comfortable for babies. I want to show you how to wheel a baby. You think you know, and perhaps you do; but many do not. This is how I have seen it done.” She started down the path in a great hurry, first jolting over a large stone, then allowing the carriage to drop with a thud over a curb.

“I just wish I could take some mothers and children out in a buggy, and let them see what the poor lambs have to suffer from their heedlessness.

“You should go around the stone, and raise and drop the wheels carefully over the curb. It can

THE LIVE DOLLS'

be done with scarcely a jolt. One thing more—
be sure not to let the sun shine in baby's eyes.

"Follow these directions and you will surely
have a happy baby.

"Now I will bring mine to life, and we will take
them all for an airing."

As they disappeared, Janie merrily cried:

"A Bear party is now in order. Young ladies,
I have sent for a large shipment of Teddy Bears,
which are just now very popular in the city.
Come down in the yard and I will introduce you."

She ran for a basket, tumbled them all in, cry-
ing:

"Who wants to pass the Bears? Have one,
won't you? One's just as homely as another, so
don't be too particular in choosing. Now I want

PLAY DAYS

to give you a short lesson in the care of them. What's sweeter than a Teddy Bear? Not two, I'll tell you that!

"As for those verses, if I had to have one of these creatures for a baby, I'm afraid it would think the worst kind of a thunder storm was brewing, if my eyes were its skies.

"If I had so many I didn't know what to do, I'd dump them all in the creek. They wouldn't have to cry for a drink then.

"Let's put them in my doll carriage, and take them to ride. Peel off some of their fur if they are too warm. Jolt them as hard as you can, it's good for their livers, I've heard.

"Hurry up, let's go find the Happy Hearts and learn some more."

PLAY DAYS

Away they went, racing and giggling up the street, till they found the dollies and their charges in the park, where they were being told to turn the babies over as they, like big people, grow tired of lying on one side.

As the dolls passed out of hearing, Janie said gravely:

“You can’t imagine what a relief it is to the bears to have a turn-over occasionally. One, two, three, are you ready—ready—turn!” And over went the bears, each one standing on its head for the remainder of the ride.



CHAPTER VI

JANIE CALLS OUT THE FIRE DEPARTMENT

The day after the baby party the Doll Lady was obliged to go to the city and leave her charges to amuse themselves.

“You might invite the girls and their Teddy Bears over to-day. Have your dinner in the yard.

THE LIVE DOLLS'

Your mamas haven't played with you for so long I think it would be a real treat for them."

Patty and the dolls were glad indeed to send these invitations, which were promptly accepted.

The girls were overjoyed to get back to their dollies, and especially to cuddle the new babies, which they at once appropriated.

Janie darted after her own dear baby, covering its face with kisses, assuring it the while that she would never neglect it again if it would only come back to her.

The bears, lying in a heap on the grass where they had been thrown, looked jealously on; but as they weren't alive, their feelings weren't very badly hurt.

Never did babies have so much attention! Af-

PLAY DAYS

ter much petting and feeding, Patty announced that it was their nap-time, and led the way upstairs, where they found by each little bed a crib, so tiny you could almost hold it in your hand. Into these the tots were placed, and after a bit of a lullaby, crooned in hushed tones, the dainty things were soon in dreamland.

When the children were again in the yard Patty suggested that they play hide-and-seek.

“It will be great!” she said. “We will choose sides, and half of us hide while the others blind.”

A merry game they had, which included two odd catastrophies.

In the first place, Topsy spied such a very safe hiding-place she almost never got found.

You couldn't possibly guess where it was, so

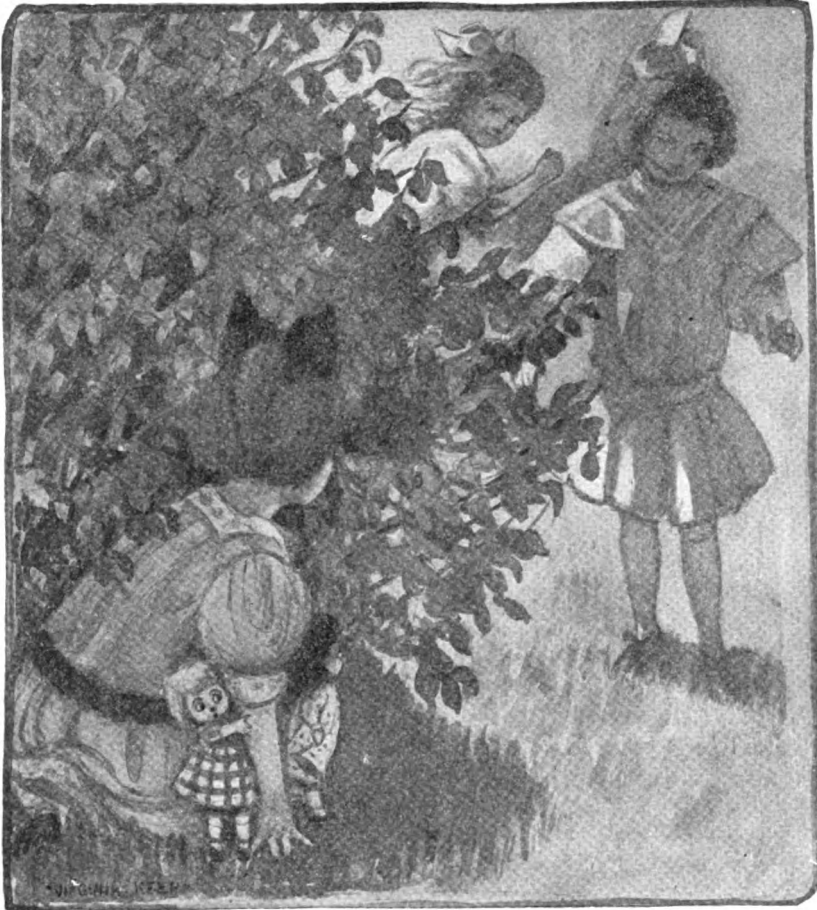
THE LIVE DOLLS'

I will tell you: in the handle of an old dust-pan which had been carelessly left in the yard. She was so small she could get into almost any place; so when she found this little hollow, in she crawled, head first.

She waited and waited to be found, hearing the shouts of laughter as one after another called. "In free!"

At last all but Topsy were in. Where, oh where, was she? They looked and looked, and finally even her own side joined in the search, but in vain.

At first she chuckled over it, but when she didn't get found, and they were all tired of seeking she tried to crawl out. But she found to her horror she could not budge! Her dress was caught



PLAY DAYS

in the tin somehow, and there she was, seemingly for good.

She tried to cry, "Here I am!" but she was too frightened to make a sound.

What if she should die in there and never be found! At this awful thought she renewed her efforts, wriggling and squirming, till she found she was actually able to get her two feet into view, and you should have seen them fly up and down, kicking the dust in all directions.

The girls suddenly saw this strange sight, and watched as though fascinated, wondering what it was.

In a moment Patty cried, "I see two feet! Can they be Topsy's?"

One grand rush to the spot, and the mystery

THE LIVE DOLLS'

was solved. They *were* feet, and Topsy was attached to them.

"Come out, we have found you!" they cried.

"I can't," came in smothered tones.

Janie then took one foot, Lucile another, while Patty pulled the dust-pan, and out popped Topsy, pale with fright.

"I tell you what," said Dinah, "dat's the nearest you'll ever come to bein' white. Yo' own mother wudden't a-knowed you!"

When Topsy was herself again, the game went merrily on, until Mirandy Alviry Wiggins, wishing to do something unusual, decided to climb a tree.

It would be great fun to watch them from her perch, high up, and at last, when they gave up, she

PLAY DAYS

would cry, "Coo!" and how surprised they would be!

Up she scrambled as swiftly as a squirrel, higher, higher, till she was in the very tiptop. Then she nimbly walked out on a branch, and as it swung to and fro, she found herself very near the eaves of the house.

Then a sudden thought struck her. She would jump and catch hold of the projecting edge. Perhaps she could sit there and swing her feet; and, after frightening the girls a while, and having fun with the people passing by, she would go down the same way she came up.

She carried out this program to the letter, except that she miscalculated. When she jumped, the branch, relieved of her weight, flew back to its

THE LIVE DOLLS'

place, and the poor little dolly was left clinging to the eaves.

This was worse than Topsy's predicament, for no one could possibly rescue her. She waited till her poor little hands ached from clinging to the sharp tin. Her playmates seemed to have disappeared. Finally, feeling that she could hold on no longer, she closed her eyes, wondering how it would feel to drop so many miles. She let go, but what was the matter? Why didn't she drop? Opening her eyes she found that her sleeve had caught on a nail, and she was still swinging to and fro with the breeze. Now she heard the girls cry, "All in but Mirandy; where is she?" and a voice called weakly, "Here, here!"

In amazement they looked up, and indeed they

PLAY DAYS

were surprised to see the poor thing dangling from the housetop.

How could they ever get her down?

Janie, quick to think, cried: "Now I can turn in the fire alarm. I always wanted to."

"But there isn't any fire!" wailed the girls.

"No, but a life is in danger, and the firemen are as much life-savers as fire-put-outers. I'm going to turn it in, so there!" And in a flash Janie had turned the tiny key in the box at the corner.

Soon great excitement prevailed, as up the street came the fire engine, hook and ladder, chief, barking dogs, and all the usual accompaniments.

They halted in front of the cottage, the chief hoarsely shouting orders to his men. Then to the children, "Where's the fire, quick!"

THE LIVE DOLLS'

The children, frightened at the uproar, were speechless.

Again he cried impatiently: "Where's the fire, I say?"

Then Janie bravely went forward and replied: "Please, sir, we are sorry to disappoint you, but there isn't any fire. One of our dolls is caught on that roof, and I thought you'd be glad to come and get her down with one of your nice long ladders."

The chief turned away to smile, then cried gruffly to his men: "Raise that ladder there carefully."

In less time than it takes to tell it, the chief was up and down again with Mirandy's little head sticking out of his coat pocket.

He placed her on the ground, while the chil-

PLAY DAYS

dren and dolls gathered around him to thank him, Janie earnestly assuring him that she would let him know if it ever happened again.

“I trust it never will,” the chief said grimly, and ordered his men back to their post, while the Happy Hearts and Copy Cats sat down once more to rest after all this excitement.

“My!” exclaimed Janie. “What a game we have had, but I can’t tell you how good it seems to get back to Live Dolls again! See the poor little bears, all in a heap. We have not played with them or cared for them to-day. Why haven’t you a bear, Patty?”

“Oh,” said Patty, “I never could want one. In the city they are everywhere. I got so tired of seeing them!”

THE LIVE DOLLS'

"Dolls are everywhere, too. Why don't you get tired of them?"

"That's different. People don't get tired of their children, you know. The more they have, the better they love them. I never could see how ladies who are mamas could have the bears for pets, though lots of them do."

"Not many would—mine wouldn't," declared Janie.

"Oh, it's only the dog ladies," sighed Patty.

"What are dog ladies?" inquired the girls.

"Oh, ladies who just keep dogs instead of children to play with. Their dogs have beautiful coats, caps, and weenty beds. They wear jeweled collars, have their teeth filled, and I even heard a lady say her doggie couldn't go in the

PLAY DAYS

mud cause it had lost its rubbers. They are the kind who play with Teddy Bears for a change. I've seen them out driving with great big ones on the seat beside them."

"They surely hadn't any children, or they couldn't have done it;" said Lucile emphatically.

"Do you think so?" said Patty slyly, with a mischievous glance at the dolls and bears.

The girls pretended not to notice this fine shot, and Patty continued:

"Well, I hope not. I heard that the Teddy Bears had made a great change in children. They wouldn't sew for their dolls, and many had given up their dolls entirely. All they wanted to do was to knit sweaters and caps for those creatures!"

"Well," said Janie stoutly, "I think that's a

THE LIVE DOLLS'

good thing, they might never know how to knit if it wasn't for the bears."

"You don't have to own bears to learn how to knit. I can knit darling things for doll babies, and I'm going to for these babies. I can knit cunning bootees, mittens, sacks and bonnets. It is such lovely work with the soft wool and all the pretty colors."

"My mother used to know how to knit when she was a little girl," piped up Mirandy. "She's Janie's grandmother, you know. She did a funny thing once. It was during war-time. The girls met at our house to knit stockings for the soldiers. My mother hated it, and only knit one, while the others knitted two. So what do you think she did? The day came to send them, and she put

PLAY DAYS

hers in a package with a card, saying, 'For a one-legged man.' ”

A shout of laughter from the children and dolls followed this funny story.

“Tell us some more, Mirandy,” begged Janie. “You must know lots of interesting things.”

“S'pose I do, if I could think of 'em. I remember her brother always had his nose in a book, and they called him a regular readin' snake.”

“Ho,” laughed Janie scornfully, “you mean a book-worm.”

“Same thing,” continued Mirandy. “He was always wonderin' how they killed the rebels, and he asked his father what he did when he caught one—if he sat on him and sawed him in two, or cut his head off.

THE LIVE DOLLS'

"My mother and that readin' worm had quite an excitin' time once, and I was in it, too.

"We all went out in the big box sled one day to the weavers, with a large basket of carpet rags.

"On the way home my mother got into the empty basket, with me on her lap. Her father was driving, and all at once that angle-worm readin' boy cut the horse with the whip, and the horse jumped so hard the box part of the sled slid off into the road.

"The horse ran on with the runners, with her father hanging to the lines. Now what do you think happened to the basket with us in it?

"We were at the top of a hill, and at the bottom was a pond. The basket toppled over and rolled down the hill. The handle kept us in,

PLAY DAYS

and it must have looked funny to Willie. We rolled down the hill, over and over, out on to the ice of the pond. My, but we were scared! The ice was kind of breaking up. Willie tried to save us, but broke through, and if he hadn't come up just at the right time he would have been drowned.

"His father came back just in time to save us all. I tell you I never forgot that. I thought of it, together with a great many other things, when I was swingin' from that housetop.

"I remember, too, when my mother learned to play the Dead March on the melodeon.

"She was a clipper at that melodeon, played by ear. Whenever she heard the band play a tune, she would scoot home tight as she could

THE LIVE DOLLS'

go, humming the tune all the way, and then she'd play it on the melodeon.

"She learned the whole Dead March that way, bits at a time, but it took so long 'cause the soldiers didn't die very often, and the band only played it at the funerals.

"She was so tickled when she found another soldier was dead. She was the first one on hand when the procession started, and she'd follow 'em all the way. Then she would race home and play as much of it as she could remember.

"We were good and glad when she knew it all! We hated it, so mournful as it was!

"She looked real peart-like sittin' up on the stool. Her hair was short and her head looked like an easter egg with a ribbon tied round it.

PLAY DAYS

“Another thing I remember about that readin’ snake. One time they was goin’ to be some doin’s for the soldiers. We had loads of lemons and sugar for lemonade, an’ what do you think that worm boy did?

“In our yard was a water box where the cows and horses drank. It was always full, and he took those lemons out there, and bushels of sugar. When his mother found him, he had every lemon cut up in the water and was just stirring in the last of the sugar. He said he didn’t see why the horses and cows couldn’t have lemonade as well as the soldiers.

“He went to bed straight, I can tell you!

“I can only remember one more thing, that was when my mother’s people came West. They sold

PLAY DAYS

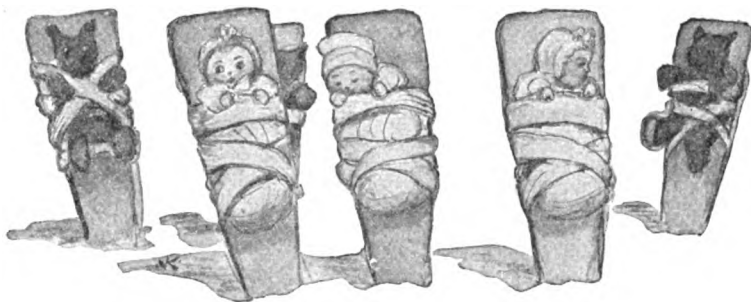
the farm, and were paid in gold pieces. They were very anxious for fear robbers would steal the money, for they had to drive in the stage for weeks before they would reach their new home.

“Where do you think they hid them? They made a petticoat quilted in shape of diamonds, and put a gold piece in every one.

“Well, I remember the day they ripped it up to get 'em out. That's all I have to tell, but after dinner I can teach you how to play some of the old-fashioned games, if you wish.”

These they were glad to learn, and a jolly time they had till the hour came for them to go home.

With a sigh the girls gathered up the neglected bears and went their way, longing for something to happen that would leave them with the H. H's for ever and ever.



CHAPTER VII

THE TEDDY BEARS COME TO LIFE

“Now, my Happy Hearts, we are going to play an odd game to-day.”

This sounded very interesting to the C. C's, clustered together on the other side of the fence, and they were careful to listen to every word.

THE LIVE DOLLS'

"I have to do some shopping," continued the Doll Lady, "and I think it would be fun for us all to go and do as the Indians used to when they went to do their tradin', as they called it.

"They fastened their papooses to a board, one end of which was pointed. When they reached the store each board was thrust into the ground, and there the babies stayed for hours, patiently blinking their beady eyes till their mothers returned.

"We won't stay long, and it will give the babies a nice outing. Wrap them in these blankets. It makes it more real, and the day is a bit cool."

The babies seemed much surprised as they were being fastened to the boards, but as they were

PLAY DAYS

tenderly handled they made no objections, and soon the little mothers were started on a "dog trot" to the store.

Of course the C. C's decided at once to "play too," at this novel game, and in a twinkling their odd procession was in the rear of the other.

As all halted at the public square, Janie went forward to speak to the Doll Lady.

"It sounded so nice and funny when we heard you tell it, we wanted to play it. Do you care if we do?"

"Indeed, we are glad to have you join us at any time you care to. It will be great sport with bear babies and doll babies, too. Now we will all stick the boards into the ground and leave them for a few moments."

THE LIVE DOLLS'

The dolls now firmly planted their baby boards in the form of a circle, and just outside of it the girls placed their bear boards.

A very odd picture it made, the babies twisting their little heads to see all that was going on.

"Aren't they darling!" said the girls wistfully, as they went from one to another, tenderly patting the little faces, and planting kisses on the rosebud mouths.

"Come, let's go and get some candy, then come back and cuddle them some more."

"Wouldn't it be fun if the bears were alive? How mad they would be at being tied so tight!"

When every one had disappeared, and no sound was to be heard but coos and gurgles as the babies sucked their thumbs, Rosabell came tip-

PLAY DAYS

toeing along, followed closely by Mirandy, who seemed much distressed.

“Please don’t do it! I’m afraid!” she wailed.

“Please don’t!”

“I will!” emphatically said Rosabell. “It will serve them right.” With that she pulled from her neck the chain, detached the wand, and with a fiendish whoop, muttered:

“I’m Big Elk. I don’t scalp and kill. I bring dead to life!” Flourishing her wand wildly in the air, she darted around the circle, touching each bear with impish glee.

At the magic touch the bears came to life at once, snarling and roaring furiously, as they tried in vain to free themselves.

Rosabell was wild with fright, and Mirandy

THE LIVE DOLLS'

ran away weeping, and sobbing over and over, "They will eat the babies up! They will eat the babies up!"

Rosabell, more alarmed every moment at the result of her prank, watching carefully that they did not free themselves, felt much relieved to see the Doll Lady and all the little mothers returning.

As they neared the scene excitement ran high, and Janie cried frantically:

"How did it happen? What shall we do?"

Rosabell confessed and sobbed:

"You can touch them with the wand and that will make them dead. I'm afraid."

"Where is it? Give it to me quick!" cried the Doll Lady.

PLAY DAYS

Rosabell pulled the chain from her neck, but, to her horror, the wand was gone. She must have dropped it in her terror. At once everybody in the party began to search for the lost treasure, but in vain.

“Well,” said the Doll Lady, “there is only one thing I can think of to do, that is to have some cages made.

“Rosabell, you may go over to the carpenter’s shop and ask him if he can make them at once. If so, we will wait for them. It should not take long.”

Poor little Rosabell, feeling much disgraced, trotted away. She found the carpenter pounding away at his work, and stood quietly by till he glanced up and said in surprise:

THE LIVE DOLLS'

"Well, well, a Live Doll come to call! Do you want me to build you a house?"

"No, sir, I want you to make some cages," replied Rosabell timidly.

"Cages! What kind of cages?"

"For bears. I want a whole lot right away."

"A whole lot of cages right away for bears!" he cried in amazement. "What can a tot like you want of a whole lot of cages for bears? Are you about to start a menagerie?"

"No, oh, no!" sobbed Rosabell. "You see, our Teddy Bears were out here and I waved the Queen's wand over them and they came to life. They are getting quite wild, and we are afraid they will eat our babies up. Couldn't you make some cages?"

PLAY DAYS

The carpenter stepped to the door, and, seeing the commotion, ran across the square to investigate. He counted the bears, said he would gladly do the work, called in all his help, and in a very short time appeared with a cart-load of cages.

“How can we get the bears off the boards?” asked Janie in great alarm, now that the critical moment had arrived.

“What have you in those sacks?” asked the carpenter.

“Candy,” chorused the girls.

“Well, don’t you know how bears love sweets? Just let me show you.” As he popped a bit into one of the open mouths, the snarling stopped. The bear seemed to be actually grinning as he

THE LIVE DOLLS'

licked his chops, smacked his lips, and seemingly begged for more.

“Run over to the store and get some molasses candy. We shall soon have them all so they can't bite a flea.”

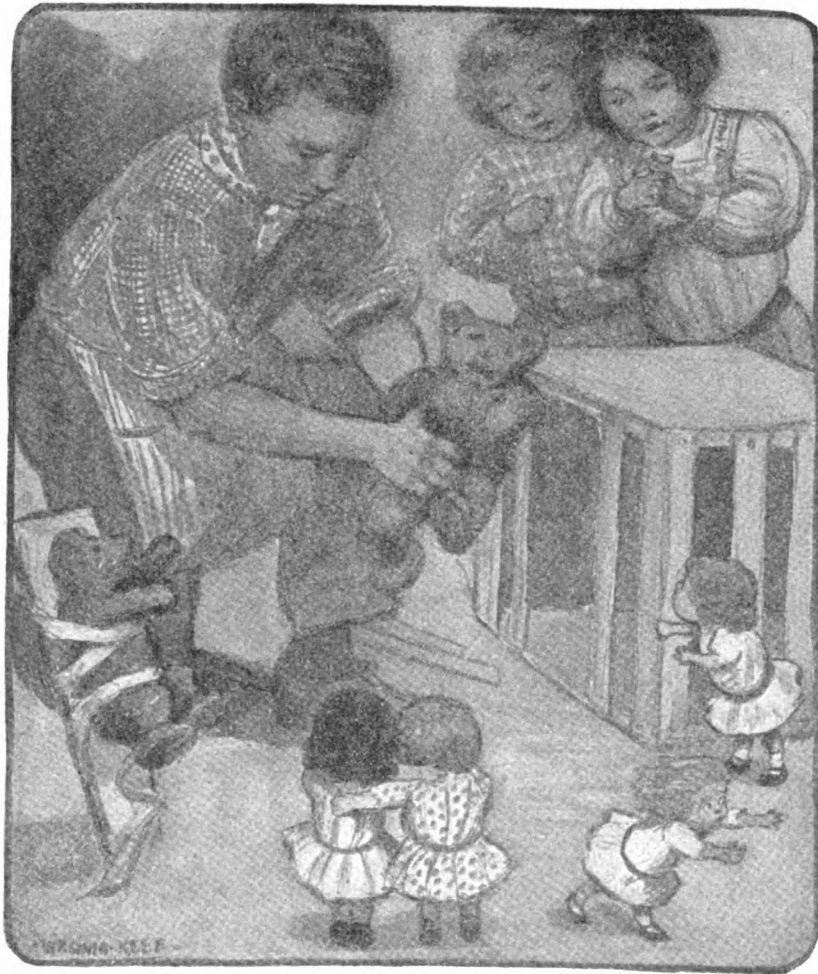
When the candy came, a portion was given to each bear.

“Now watch,” said the carpenter, “and see what happens!”

The funny little animals pounced upon the candy greedily, and soon each bear had his teeth stuck together so tight he couldn't open his mouth.

It was an easy matter then to untie and put them in the cages. When all were secure the procession started for home.

Reaching home the girls deposited the cages in



PLAY DAYS

the yard, and sat down to talk over the new situation.

“I believe it is more fun to have them alive,” said Janie. “Of course, we can never hug them again, and if they should get loose I don’t know what would happen.”

“They can’t get out,” said Lucile; “we can feed them and give them water. We can play circus, I s’pose, but I do wish they had got loose and run away to the woods.”

“They would have eaten every speck of those babies before they went. Horrid things!” cried Marie in disgust.

“Poor little bears!” sighed Janie. “They don’t know any better. That’s their nature. We can give them things they like and they won’t

PLAY DAYS

do any harm if we keep them good-natured, but I do wish we knew how to get rid of them. I want to play with the dolls. Those babies are too funny for anything, and I want my own darling baby. Rosabell kept her, and I s'pose she's a Happy Heart, too, by this time."

"I wish we were," said Lucile wistfully.

"We are, if they are," declared Janie. "Don't you see how? If we are true Copy Cats, then we can't be any thing but Happy Hearts, 'cause we are copying them. Let's go see the Doll Lady. Maybe she will tell us what to do with the Teddy Bears."

This suggestion was promptly carried out, and another moment found them waiting next door for the response to the door-bell.



CHAPTER VIII

THE BALLOON PARTY

When the Doll Lady opened the door, she was greeted with this mournful speech from Janie:

“Dear Mrs. Doll Lady, we don’t want our bears any more. Now that they are alive we have to keep them in their cages, and they make

THE LIVE DOLLS'

so much trouble. They scratch and snarl, and we are afraid of them. Can't you tell us what to do?"

The Doll Lady laughed merrily at the pathetic picture before her, as each girl stood with clasped hands and eager wistful eyes, waiting anxiously for her reply.

"Well," she said cheerily, "I have been expecting this, and have devised a plan by which you will be made happy, I think. In the morning you will have a missive, telling you all about it.

"Good-by, and trust me for this. I am sure you will enjoy the funny party I shall have for you. Every Teddy Bear, every doll, and every doll mother is invited."

The girls, much mystified over this news, could

PLAY DAYS

scarcely wait for the morning to come, and sure enough, with it came the invitations. Such odd ones, each shaped like a balloon!

When Janie opened hers, out popped a strip of paper, on which were these words:

ADMIT ONE TO THE BALLOON PARTY,
ON THE MORNING OF THE 4TH, ON
GREEN HILL.

“Why, that’s to-day!” cried Janie, and she ran to meet the girls now seen hastening up the street.

“Isn’t it a queer party?” said one.

“I never heard of such a thing, did you?”

“No,” replied another, “but the Doll Lady seems to know lots of new things. I’m glad she

THE LIVE DOLLS'

came here, and when we get rid of the bears, I think she will give us lots of good times."

"Let's give the bears some molasses candy, so we can put on their best sweaters and caps," suggested Janie. "I don't understand it. We told her we were tired of them, and she asks us all to a party. I s'pose we'll find out though, but we won't dare scrub the bears, will we?"

"Indeed not, unless we tie their mouths shut, and I'm afraid even then."

So the pets were pacified with sweets while they were being arrayed for the party, and promptly at the appointed hour all were on hand.

They found the H. H's, with Patty and the Doll Lady, waiting. The first thing that attracted their attention was a great number of bal-

PLAY DAYS

loons floating about, trying in vain to break away from the fence to which they were attached. They looked so pretty, in all colors, and all sizes.

“Come along,” cried the Doll Lady, “and see what’s going to happen. These large red balloons are for the bears. They are different from ours, for a special purpose, and before we send ours up we will watch them start away. But first tell me, are you sure you are tired of your pets? Shall you feel one bit sorry to give them up?”

“Indeed not!” chorused the girls.

“Well, then, bid them good-by, for they are going on a journey.”

For the last time the bears were dosed with molasses candy, then the strings attached to the balloons were tied firmly about their bodies. Fas-

THE LIVE DOLLS'

tening them all together so they could not become separated, the Doll Lady next cut the string that held them. The balloons started up, pulling the bears with them. Slowly but surely they rose higher and higher, now this way, now that, looking like mere specks against the sky, till they passed out of sight.

A long-drawn sigh was heard from the girls as their pets disappeared.

"Poor little bears!" sighed tender-hearted Janie. "Will anything bad happen to them?"

"Bad? Mercy no! Nothing bad can possibly happen to them," said the Doll Lady consolingly. "They will drop in clover by and by. The man who invented those balloons told me exactly what would take place. The air will

PLAY DAYS

gradually leave them, and after a while they will begin to sink, and if it comes out as I expect, a certain village some miles away will soon have a surprise party. The children there are mostly boys, who never had Teddy Bears, and who have few pleasures. So they will have a treat, you may be sure, when this cloud-burst strikes them.

“Now come, let’s fly our balloons. They are more fun than kites, and we have yards of twine. Help yourselves.”

“’Deed not,” exclaimed Dinah and Topsy in one breath; “you don’t ketch me sailin’ away like dem bears. Cloverdale is plenty good enough for me!”

“Why, bless you! You won’t sail away,” laughed the Doll Lady. “These balloons aren’t

THE LIVE DOLLS'

that kind. Come, let's see whose balloon will go the highest."

Each took a string, Topsy, Dinah, and Mirandy timidly holding to the fence till they were satisfied they would not follow the bears.

They had great sport, till suddenly they saw coming toward them a beautiful yellow coach and four shiny black horses.

"Here comes our coach and four. Wind up your twine. They can fly low as we drive along. Hop in!" cried the hostess.

In great surprise they scrambled in, and when all were settled with the balloons darting here and there from all sides of the coach, and the children merrily chattering inside, the horses went clattering down the street.

PLAY DAYS

“Where are we going?” asked the girls with breathless interest.

“Not very far. But the Queen gave a special promise to keep the dolls alive, even though they should leave Cloverdale for a short time. And so we are going to see what happens to the bears when they come down.”

“Oh, what fun!” cried Janie. “How can you tell how long it takes?”

“That has been experimented on. We ought to reach that village just in time to see your pets fall from the clouds.”

This news created much excitement, and the children could hardly wait to see what they decided would be the greatest show on earth.

As they neared the village, they saw that the

THE LIVE DOLLS'

inhabitants were in the street, collected in small groups, all gazing heavenward.

The coach passed slowly along, and finally halted where the passengers could watch what the children knew to be a cloud of bears, apparently falling from the heavens.

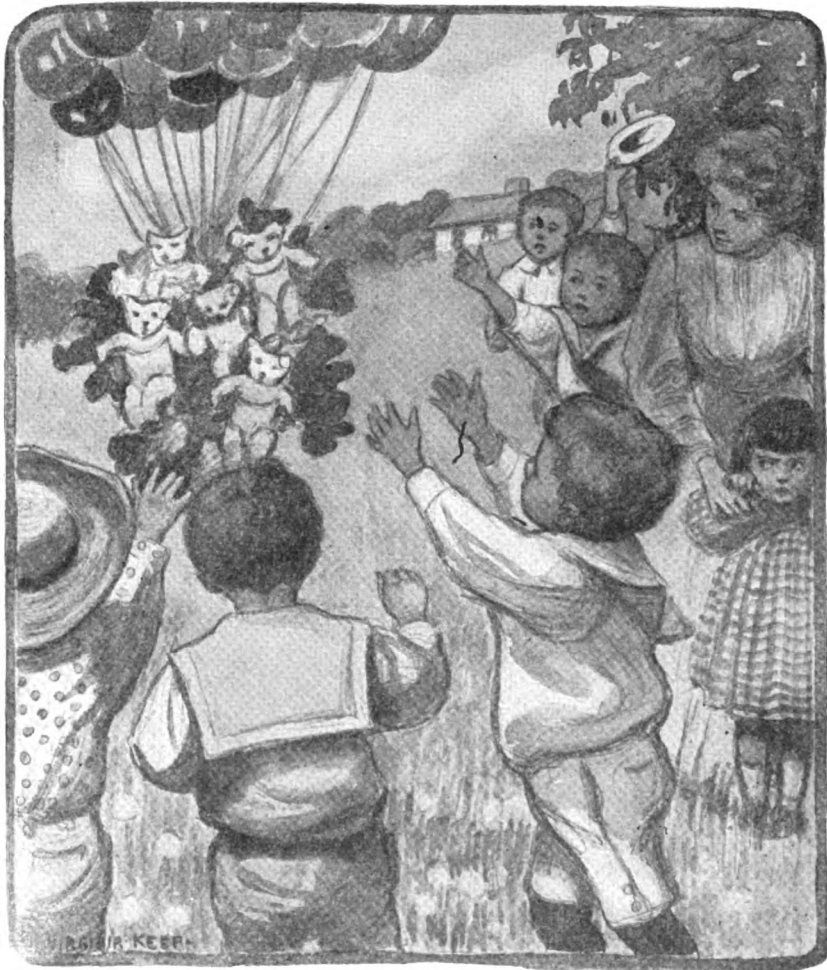
At first it appeared to be a mass of flies.

Some of the boys shouted: "Look! it's a plague of insects comin'!"

"No, 'tain't, it's too big for insects, it's locusts!" shouted others.

"Too large for locusts," said some of the mothers.

Then, as they came nearer, "It's animals!" cried some one in great alarm. "Mercy! Mercy! The world must be comin' to an end!"



PLAY DAYS

The children began to weep, holding fast to their mothers' hands as they waited for they knew not what.

They watched with frightened eyes as the bears came nearer and nearer, and at last it was plainly to be seen what they were.

"It's Teddy Bears!" shouted one boy who had been to the city. "I've seen 'em! They can't hurt us, but how did they ever come here that way?"

As the balloons collapsed, the bears dropped at their feet, alive no more, of course, since they were away from Cloverdale, and the Queen's promise did not apply to them.

The boys were keenly interested in the strange pets and examined them curiously.

THE LIVE DOLLS'

"They must have been sent up in airships. Let's cut them apart and each have one."

In great glee the little fellows possessed themselves of the pets.

One ran to his mother, hugging Janie's bear tight to his breast, crying: "See, Mama, mine has a red sweater and cap, and just hear its bells jingle!"

"How funny to find them this way, and all dressed so fine!" said the mother.

"I wonder what makes them so sticky. Maybe they came from a sugar camp," said the little chap. "Come on, boys, let's take 'em to the pond and scrub 'em, then we can have fun with 'em!"

Away they went, proud and happy over the strange find, while the children went their way,

PLAY DAYS

singing merrily, well pleased with the reception given their pets. Although they didn't want them, they were glad to know that they were owned now by those who did.

"Now," said their benefactress, "we are going over to that woods, where we shall have a picnic. After that, home. Then what next? Do you girls want to join our Club?"

The girls nodded, with shining eyes, as they cried in pleading tones:

"Oh, may we? We want to so much!"

"Yes, indeed, we all hoped you would want to. We will make your suits, and then you shall be initiated. It is great fun. Now, let's eat, for I'm starved. Help yourselves to a basket."

Here was another surprise, in the shape of beau-

'THE LIVE DOLLS'

tiful baskets packed with the daintiest lunch one could imagine.

And they did justice to it, I can assure you, for they were hungry after the long drive and interesting experiences.

So they reveled in the good things to the accompaniment of the running brook, chattering squirrels, and caroling birds.

And there we will leave them. But I have something to propose: Wouldn't it be fun for us to join the Happy Hearts Club?

I think so, and really we do not need badges. True Happy Hearts always have beaming faces, and what better badges could we have?

But we must be careful what we do, on account of any C. C's who may be watching us. So,—

PLAY DAYS

here's to my Happy Hearts, wherever you may be, and may you always be known by your badges, while we wait to see what happens next in the dear little village of Cloverdale!

THE END

JPN .Gate7 14

Gates, Josephine Scribner.
1859-1930.

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