

Boys & Girls Page

Edited by David H. Walker...



How the Boys Got Them Easter Aigs

By MARY MORRIS LLOYD

EAR up the side of a beautiful Berkeley hill dwell two little girls named Alice and Helen Davers—little twin sisters, 8 years old, who love each other dearly. I think they must have been born on Wednesday, for they were always merry and glad.

But three days before Easter Monday they had a very sad experience, and I shall have to take you back to the beginning of Lent to make you understand how it all happened, and also tell you a little bit about their home life.

They lived in such a pretty home, completely covered with roses, but they were very poor; so poor that the father and mother worked hard to keep the little girls comfortable and happy.

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Such chickens, and such a funny little pig, and last, but not least, the little dog Spot, who did such wonderful tricks.

In this beautiful world of ours the fact is sad but true that no matter how manifold our blessings, there is always something more to be desired, and so it was with our little heroines. They thought themselves very happy little girls indeed until one day, very near the beginning of Lent, they were invited to a party—a party with plenty of ice cream and candy and everything dear to the heart of a child. If they only might go to a party every day, how nice it would be.

Going home that afternoon the little girls eagerly talked the matter over.

"Of course, we can't go to a party every day," said Helen, "but if we beg mother very hard she might let us give one at our home."

"But, Helen," said Alice, "do you think we could have ice cream and candy?"

"I don't know," answered Helen, doubtfully, but after a minute's meditation she continued: "I have noticed, sister, that when we want things very badly mother always finds a way, so I think we will just speak to her about their very night."

After dinner, when the dishes were all washed and put away and the weary mother had settled herself for the rest she so much needed, the little girls made their request in a very simple way.

It was hard, indeed, to refuse those eager little faces, but how could she say yes, when the necessities of life were so hard to obtain? So she told the little girls to arrange them pretty in a basket and always have them ready to tell you.

terly disappointed.

It happened the next day that Mrs. Davers had to go to San Francisco to do some shopping.

Many times during the day she was haunted by the sad faces of her little daughters; and she did wish with all her loving heart she might give them what they desired. She made all her small purchases and toward the close of the afternoon stood near the Lotta Fountain waiting for the car to take her to the ferry.

The air was sweet with the fragrance of wild flowers; poor, half-starved looking men and boys with well-filled baskets offered their nosegays to the passing crowd.

She noted with surprise how rapidly the wild flowers sold and what good prices they brought.

A small, ragged little boy, noticing her interest, stepped quickly to her side with a large bunch of poppies, and offering it, said: "Only two bits, lady." She smilingly shook her head—thinking of the many growing on her own hillside. Just then her car came in sight; at the same moment a most wonderful plan popped into her head.

The "plan" was so absorbing she almost forgot to leave the car on reaching the ferry. The "plan" traveled with her on the boat and in the train, and when her station was reached everything was settled to the smallest detail.

Briskly she climbed the hill to her little home. As she came in sight the children ran to meet her, with Spot running at their heels.

"Why, mother, how happy you look!" cried little Helen, as she gave her a kiss. Mother smiled and patted the little girl's cheek. "Mother is very tired," she said, "and my little girls must be very helpful to-night, and after dinner is over I have something very nice to tell you."

Oh! how excited they were, and how they did wish they might do without dinner just for that one night. But they bravely did their best and were really very helpful.

After the dinner was eaten and the work all finished for the night Mrs. Davers called the children to her. She told them of her trip to town that day, and how, when standing near the Lotta Fountain watching the sale of the wild flowers, it had occurred to her all in a minute that her own little daughters might turn their pleasure into profit.

If they would gather fresh flowers each day, and arrange them pretty in a basket and always have them ready

for father's early train she knew Mr. Davers could dispose of them at some of the flower stands in the city and they might earn quite a little money.

"But what are we to do with the money, mother?" asked Alice.

"Why, my dear little girl, you are to give a party with it. If you are faithful to the plan during the forty days of Lent by Easter Monday you will certainly have enough to give the party."

Oh! how they did caper and jump about. They kissed their mother and each other a dozen times, for they were too happy for words.

Then they ran out to find their father, to see if he really would help them. He promised very readily on the condition that they must never keep him waiting for even one minute. The very next morning they were up bright and early and the basket was well filled when Mr. Davers started for town. The plan worked beautifully. How proud they felt each night as their father handed them the money—not a very large

sum, but the little hoard steadily grew. A week before Easter they counted their savings and found they had four dollars and twenty cents. Success was certain and they could wait no longer to deliver the invitations.

So with mother's permission they invited all their little friends to come on Easter Monday, not forgetting to tell each child there was to be plenty of ice cream and candy.

The week passed all too slowly. Thursday morning the little girls sat on the doorstep, telling Spot of the party and the glories to come.

"He has never seen our money," said Helen. "We will show it to him."

Quickly they ran for the littered purse and disclosed to him all its wealth; then closing it with a snap, Helen tossed it into the air for Spot to catch.

Spot caught it, and holding it in his teeth instantly turned and ran off with it over the hill. The little girls gave instant chase, never dreaming of

the trouble in store for them. They ran till their little legs gave out and then sat down and called him. At last he came, barking and running toward them, but the little red purse was gone.

Up they jumped and searched the hillside over, piteously calling on Spot to help them out of their trouble, but all of no avail.

Oh! how they cried, for they had to tell mother. She tried to comfort them, saying father should go next morning early and make a thorough search, and he would be sure to find it, but they could not be comforted.

Next morning as soon as it was light found them all out on the hillside, eagerly searching every inch of the ground. It was a long and weary search, but it met with no success, and at last even Mr. Davers gave up and said he was afraid it was gone forever more.

"Oh, mother, what are we to do?" cried the poor little sisters.

"You will have to bear this sorrow patiently, my darlings, and perhaps, if you are very patient, the dear Savior, who loves little children, may reward you some other way."

"But we have asked all the children to come," they sobbed.

"The children shall all come, just the same," said mother, "and we will give them a happy day. Only we cannot have ice cream and candy, but nice cake and lemonade."

It was a bitter disappointment to the poor little things, but they bravely did their best to be cheerful and forgive Spot, which was the hardest part of all.

Friday and Saturday passed away. Easter morning the little girls waked up early. Oh, what a beautiful day it was! They never meant to be unhappy any more. Quickly they dressed themselves and ran out on the hillside to hunt for eggs, for the old brown hens had their nests all through the tall green grass. It was great fun, and after they had hunted for half an hour their basket was nearly filled, and feeling tired they sat down under a spreading oak tree to rest a few minutes before going home to breakfast.

They had not sat there five minutes before Alice exclaimed, "Helen, do you hear that little peep-peep? I am sure there must be some little new baby chickens very near."

Up they jumped to search, and sure enough just a short distance from their resting place they found an old hen with eight cunning little yellow chickens.

The old hen did not like to be disturbed, but they pushed her off the nest to count the little chicks a second time. As they did so Helen spied something small and red lying in the nest. With her little heart wildly beating she quickly picked it up, and what do you think it was? THE LITTLE RED PRINCE! Oh, what a happy moment for the little girls!

Entirely forgetting the basket of eggs, down the hill they ran, so eager were they to impart the good news to father.

Mrs. Davers had just placed the breakfast on the table, feeling a little uneasy at the children's long absence, when in they rushed, waving the little red prince in the air and shouting, "It is found, it is found; and we can have ice cream and candy for the party!"

It took some time to get a clear and collected account of where and how it had been found. But great was the joy and such a happy family sat down to eat their Easter breakfast. Spot was fed so bountifully that he refused to do any of his tricks until some hours later.

At Sunday-school that morning two thankful little girls said their prayers very earnestly and joined in the beautiful Easter carols with all their happy hearts.

Easter Monday at last. Will they ever forget that happy day?

The children all came early; not in the first attire you little city girls wear when going to a party, but wearing bright little gingham frocks and sun-bonnets made to play in.

And oh! the games they played out among the poppies and daisies that long, happy day! How hungry they were when called to the good supper spread under the big oak tree, and how they did eat. The ice cream was delicious and the candy was happy. Helen had a cunning little basket of sugared Easter eggs to carry home. The day is drawing to its close. Down behind the Golden Gate the sun is sinking to rest, and, weary, happy children say their good-night to Alice and Helen. The party is over, but in the hearts of those little children the memory of that happy day will linger for many years.

"HOW THE BOYS GOT THEM EASTER AIGS."

HE-ah! yo' young niggaahs! Watcher doin' yo' doan go 'long 'n' fo'ch in them aigs? I don' 'n' tote 'em, yo' g'otter set 'em in yer inkerbatter terget. G'long, I say," and old Aunt Chloe stamped her foot at the retreating forms of the two young darkeys as they disappeared in the direction of the chicken house.

Aunt Chloe re-entered the kitchen and busied herself getting supper ready, but her thoughts were busy reckoning the possible advantage of setting two hundred eggs at a time. It was hard, indeed, to refuse those eager little faces, but how could she say yes, when the necessities of life were so hard to obtain? So she told the little girls to arrange them pretty in a basket and always have them ready to tell you.

was not their reputation at stake. Possibly had she known of their plans and how the fulfilling of that mandate would reflect discredit on the two small personages before her she would have hesitated ere deciding entirely against them. And the boys had no thought of accomplishing what they had undertaken, namely to contribute largely toward an Easter feast, by taking her into their confidence. But they had something to do and they would do it. They had given their word and they must not break it, but how were they to keep it?

The two woolly black heads were very close together while "chores" were being done that evening, and there was much low talk, while furtive glances were thrown toward the house lest they be surprised and all be lost.

"If mammy cotch us, an' fin' out we's gwine ter fine a way ter make 'em perimize on thet aig kesthun, I ges 't 'ud end in us'ns gittin' narry a aig, 'n' us'ns 'ud be 'n' hickry," said Richmond Pearson Hobson, rolling his eyes up to his brother's face.

"But we haint gwine ter git 'n' hickry this time, an' we's gwine ter hev more'n two aigs a-piece a Yeaster, an' mammy'll gin 'em to us'ns 'too," replied George Dewey, with all the assurance of one whose word was law.

thing about Aunt Chloe's place was working to her entire satisfaction, with one single exception—the hens had been growing more careless and indolent as the days passed. The incubator had evidently cast a bad spell over the hens, for the very next day only twenty-two

the eggs in the incubator.

"We'ns 'll hev all the aigs we want now, fer mammy's a gittin' mighty anshus 'bout not havin' 'n' aigs saved up ter put in ther inkerbatter soon's these'ns gits hatched," said George Dewey on their way downtown.

They returned "jest in time," Aunt Chloe said, and after watching the hens devour a liberal quantity of the food, she remarked:

"Gess the'll fix 'em. We'ns 'll hev plenty uv aigs now," and with a grunt of satisfaction she waddled off up to the house, while the boys rolled their eyes knowingly at each other.

A Chance for You to Learn the Names of Six California Trees.



Then there was more rolling of eyes, shaking of heads and hushed laughter while their allotted work dragged slowly along.

"He-ah! yo-us'ns! is yer gwine ter be all night gittin' in the wood 'n' kilnins'?" Water doin' anyway?" and as Aunt Chloe came slowly down the path the two boys gathered up an armful of wood and hurried to the house.

Nearly two weeks had passed since the arrival of the incubator and every-

eggs were to be found, when there should have been twenty-eight; and now at the end of twelve days there was only six. Something must be done at once.

"He'uh, yo', Rich! Yo'ns kin go ter 'n' store 'n' git sum uv that stuff ter make hens lay. 'N' yo' hurry right straight back so's ter feed 'em ter-night, 'n' mayby they'll lay more aigs to-morry," and Aunt Chloe went out to look at the thermometer and turn

After a time she has scalded the steep peak and the flowers are hers—hers if she will grasp them. But she pauses for, far and wide, is outspread a wonderful landscape of the whole world—so much more beautiful than anything she has imagined—lakes, valleys and rugged mountains crowned with snow—that she stands still in rapture. But, excepting the flowers for which she has toiled so hard there are no blossoms in her sight.

She looks down and sees far below her a weary crowd o' people, old and young, who plod along with glances downward, never seeing the flowers. Into her mind comes pity for them. One moment of selfishness rules her. The next minute she has picked the flowers and has called alo' l. From her hands the posies are thrown freely to all who look upward now, are surprised to see how much beauty

When the eggs were gathered the next day and there were only six to be found in the nests, Aunt Chloe held up her hands in despair.

"Tee gwine ter look out in ther grass 'n' brush ter-morry," said George Dewey, "fer it 'pears 't me um hens must a bin stealin' uv ther nests out so um kin set on ther own aigs. Gess um hens is onter ther inkerbatter, and the namesake of the hero of Manila coolly contemplated his mammy's face, had been passed by unheeded.

All the flowers but one she has tossed to the passers by. The travelers nod and smile happily. The one flower she has saved for herself is a mountain pansy—the heartsease. A poor, bent old woman comes along the rugged road. She does not look upward to the cheery call. Her face is set and her eyes are sad and tear-filled. Down goes the dear little girl with her one gift, places a friendly hand on the old woman's shoulder and hands her shyly the heartsease.

"Where did you get that, dearie?" asks the old woman.

"Up there," answers the child, pointing up.

"Up so high—up toward heaven!"—said the old woman breathlessly. "Ah, thank you, dear, so kindly. I have long forgotten to look up. Forgotten—when all true heartsease comes from above."

D. H. W.

DEAR little girl was taken sick, and for a long time she was in her bed, an invalid. She could not run about any more as other children do and the games of merry childhood were not for her. But do not imagine that Hope and Joy were not hers. As she lay in her bed she had the merriest companions, who made her laugh gaily.

When the little companions, that for her own Tears glistened in her eyes for poor little "Paul Dombey" and true-hearted "Florence." But more often she was gay. To her "Ali Baba" and his fierce companions were actual beings, who came upon the stage, bowed to her and then repeated the deeds told of in the "Arabian Nights." So with "Jack the Giant Killer," "The Old Man of the Sea," "Sinbad" and "Aladdin." From the "Book of Books" her

pure spirit harvested the "peace that surpasseth understanding."

And now it was Easter Sunday eve. Sleep had fallen like a soft mantle upon our young friend. She was smiling. No wonder, for she had a kindly vision. As truly she had a vision as those inspired ones whose wondering eyes a vista of Heaven has been opened.

Upon a mountain side dear little girl like herself toiled painfully upward over jagged stones to reach the lovely flowers that grew far above her. Many times she slipped backward, many times the fell—but she never despaired. The flowers breathed out fragrance that still drew her on, while upon their graceful forms and beautiful coloring her eyes feasted. The sun beat down pitilessly upon her head. Her hands were torn by falling upon the sharp stones.

After a time she has scalded the steep peak and the flowers are hers—hers if she will grasp them. But she pauses for, far and wide, is outspread a wonderful landscape of the whole world—so much more beautiful than anything she has imagined—lakes, valleys and rugged mountains crowned with snow—that she stands still in rapture. But, excepting the flowers for which she has toiled so hard there are no blossoms in her sight.

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