

LITTLE FOLKS

Little Playmates.

(By G. E. M. Vaughan.)

'There's a great deal of illness in the village just now,' said father, as he threw down his newspaper, and rose from the breakfast-table. 'Your little friend, Molly, children, is one of my small patients.'

'Poor Molly!' said Jessie. 'Is she very ill, father?'

'Ill enough to be in bed and to look very sorry for herself,' laughed father, going out into the hall and reaching down his hat and great coat, and putting them on,

'Why was she crying, I wonder? Because she was in bed?'

'In bed with nothing to do, and nothing to play with, either. By the way, I thought that you might send her something to amuse her, children. She hasn't half the amount of pretty things you have; though you haven't as many as I would give you if I were rich! Good-bye, darlings!'

Jessie and Marjory went back to the breakfast-room and finished their bread-and-milk. Then they went into the school-room to get ready for lessons.

'Can't you manage to think of your lessons, children?' she said, 'just for one hour?'

'Lessons are so long this morning, mother!' sighed Jessie.

'Shall I tell you why?' said mother. 'Because you are trying to do two things at once, and so you are doing both badly. Try doing one thing well.'

'I suppose lessons must be the one thing, mother!' said Jessie, looking up from her slate. She really was trying to do her sum now.

'Lessons in lesson-time,' said mother, 'play in play-time.'

'Only this isn't 'zactly play,' said Jessie, 'it's hard thinks!'

'Try how it succeeds to put the hard thinks into the lessons,' laughed mother.

Jessie tried it, and so did Marjory; and very soon the spelling was quite right, and the sum finished.

'Good children!' said mother.

When lessons were over, the two little girls had a long talk in one corner of the schoolroom. It was raining, and they couldn't go out for their walk. Mother went up to the nursery to see baby, and the children were alone in the schoolroom.

'She's not really very bad,' said Marjory, glancing at one of the dolls.

'No,' said Jessie, 'and I think I could paint her cheeks, if you would like me to, with some of the crimson lake in my paint-box.'

'Oh, yes! That would be splendid. And could you glue her head very strong, please, Jessie, because it's rather difficult to keep it on when you're dressing and undressing her. She wants a hat, too. All my hats are too small, they belong to quite the tiny babies. She's my only big dolly.'

'I have a hat that I think would fit her,' said Jessie, jumping up and going to the shelf where she kept her toys.

'Most of all,' said Marjory, 'she would so like a dolly's carriage.'

Jessie turned round; she was very scarlet in the face.

'Do you mean mine?' she said, in a deep voice.

'There is the mail-cart,' Marjory answered, almost in a whisper. 'Our dollies can ride in that, you know.'

'I don't think I could spare the



JESSIE SET TO WORK TO GLUE DOLLY'S HEAD ON.

with Jessie and Marjory to help him.

'What was she doing when you saw her, father?' asked Marjory, who was a very active little person, and could think of nothing more dreadful than being obliged to stay in bed.

'When I saw her last? Let me see. To tell you the truth, Marjory, she was crying! I had to scold her.'

'You must think, Marjory,' said Jessie. 'Think all the morning, as hard as you can!'

Mother had two rather inattentive little pupils at lessons that morning. But she guessed why it was that Marjory's spelling was all wrong, and that Jessie's eyes, instead of being on her slate, looking at her sum, were all the while straying to the doll's perambulator on the shelf.