

LITTLE FOLKS



An Umbrella Party.

By M. L. Branch, in the 'Youth's Companion.'

It was an umbrella party,
And it met down in the street,
I saw it from our top window,
And all the umbrellas had feet!
The biggest umbrella was bobbing,
And the little ones all bobbed, too,
As if saying, 'Happy to meet you!'
As if saying, 'How do you do?'
The smallest umbrella had trouble,

And dropped book and slate in
a pool,
By which I knew the umbrellas
Were making their way to the
school.
But the biggest of all and the
tallest
Soon strode off in haste down
the street,

He perhaps was a truant umbrella,
Whom the little ones happened
to meet.
Then the little umbrellas went
running
And hurrying out of the rain
Through the door of the little brick
schoolhouse,
And I did not see them again.

Bessie's Buttons.

Bessie was learning to sew on buttons. Her mother had marked the places where they were to go and Bessie was sitting beside the open window, sewing them on her new dress. They were pretty, white pearl, with little stars cut on every one. Bessie just loved to look at them as they lay arranged in a row on the window sill, shining in the sunshine.

'I've sewed on three,' said Bessie, and she reached out her hand for the fourth, when in some way she knocked six of them out of the window.

'Dear me!' she said, 'now I shall have to go out and pick them up. I hope I'll find them all.' So she took off her thimble, laid the dress across a chair, and ran out into the yard.

Somebody was there before her, and had picked them up, every one. Mr. Toots, the big, snow-white rooster; was standing under the window, and the last button was disappearing within his beak when Bessie came around the corner.

Now Bessie was very fond of Mr. Toots. He was quite tame, and whenever she caught him, she would lay her cheek against his smooth neck and hug him. Wherever he saw her he would

come up on the doorstep, 'on purpose to be hugged,' Bessie said. She fed him every morning, saving the nicest crumbs for his breakfast, and he loved to walk about the garden with her.

But now, when Bessie saw what he had done, she turned and ran into the house as fast as she could. She was almost crying. 'O mamma, mamma,' she cried, 'Mr. Toots has eaten six of my buttons, and he will die!'

Mamma looked surprised; then she smiled. 'Oh, no, Mr. Toots won't die,' she said. 'Buttons are just the sort of things Mr. Toots needs to chew his food with.'

Bessie opened her eyes wide at that, and her mother laughed. 'You know Mr. Toots hasn't any teeth,' she explained, 'so he has to grind his food in a little, tough bag inside of him, which is called his gizzard. But there needs to be something hard, like gravel stones or bits of crockery, to mix with the food and help grind it fine as the gizzard squeezes and squeezes it. Your buttons, with their fine edges, will be nice for that purpose.'

And just at that moment Mr. Toots answered for himself in a hearty voice, looking in at the door. 'Cock-a-doodle-doo!' he said; which meant, 'Nonsense, don't worry about me!'—'Home Herald.'

How the Parrot Went Upstairs.

Molly was sick. She had not been downstairs for two days. 'I'm so lonesome!' she sighed. Then more brightly: 'I wish you'd let Ellen bring Cuba up to see me. Her cage could hang here by the window, and we'd be lots of company for each other. I dare say she's lonesome, too.'

The mother promised that the parrot should be brought upstairs; but directly afterward something else claimed her attention, and she forgot Molly's request. Hours passed. Molly wondered why Ellen and Cuba didn't come. Finally she fell asleep. She was awakened by a familiar voice saying softly, 'Hello!'

'Why Cuba, my darling!' she cried, for there was the bird perched on the foot of the bed, surveying her solemnly. 'Come right here!' she called; and the parrot obeyed, cuddling contentedly against her mistress's cheek.

'Poor mother!' crooned Cuba. 'Too bad! too bad! Kiss Cuba,' putting her bill up to Molly's mouth with a peculiar sound.

'Why don't you invite a fellow in?' came from the doorway.

'Why, Tom!' said Molly, looking up to see her brother peeping