

LITTLE FOLKS

What Laura's Dolls Did.

(By Margret Holmes Bates,
in SS. 'Times.')

'I'm tired of these old things. I'm going to take them to the basement, and let Nora put them in the range for kindling,' and Laura gave a disdainful little kick at a collection of toys that had cost many dollars.

True, they were very much the worse for wear. There were dolls that lacked an arm, or a leg, or a wig. There were dolls' clothes, soiled and torn; there were pieces of china, remnants of pretty 'full sets,' tiny spoons, knives and forks, as well as kitchen, parlor, and bedroom furniture, all in a heap on the nursery floor.

Laura's brother was not a year old. These things were of no use to him. He was being dressed in a sunny window while the mother listened to Miss Dayton telling about a school she was forming for crippled children who were very poor.

Laura heard Miss Dayton say:

'You see, these little unfortunates are not able to go to the public schools for many reasons. So I'm having them come to my house from nine in the morning till four in the afternoon.'

'Isn't that a long session?' Mrs. Hale asked.

'It's not all study. I've had six children come, every day in the week, for the last month. I can take as many more as soon as I get the chairs. You know, I'm a kindergarten. The little ones have exercise in the motion songs. I have a substantial luncheon for them between twelve and one o'clock. Then lessons again, and after that I try to teach them to play with each other. They've never had playthings like more fortunate children,' and Miss Dayton glanced at Laura standing with hands clasped behind her as she looked discontentedly at the heap of damaged toys.

Laura's attention had become divided. What Miss Dayton was saying sounded like a story. She walked slowly toward her, and Miss Dayton drew her close, and held her in her arm, as she said:



BIRDIES, COME! YOUR BREAKFAST TAKE.

'I wonder if Laura wouldn't like to come, some day, and see these little folks of mine.'

'Oh, yes!' Laura answered eagerly. 'Can't they walk at all?'

'Yes, all of them can walk, and all have the use of at least one hand. If mama will bring you some day, I'm sure they'll be glad to see you; and don't send your broken toys to be burned until after you've seen these little people of mine.'

It was a clear, frosty morning when Mrs. Hale took Laura to Miss Dayton's school of crippled children. There were ten, and Miss Dayton was giving them the exercise of a bird song. Laura knew it well, and tears came into her eyes when she saw one little boy going about with a crutch, one little girl with a big hump on her back, another with

a poor, lifeless-looking arm that hung by her side; a boy with one leg that was like a straight stick, it was so small, and seemed so weak that it looked as if he might fall at any instant. Every one was crippled in some way. But their faces, though pale and pinched, possibly by the pain they had suffered and were still enduring, were happy and bright.

When the song was finished, the children had a reading-lesson, then some practice in counting. After that, Miss Dayton said:

'I must show our visitors the toys we have for our amusement when lessons are over. The children stay with me until nearly dark.'

She brought forward a basket—not a big one—and Laura caught her breath short and set her teeth