



**THE EASTER EGG PARTY.**

"Nora said so," said Dolly. She—"Oh," broke in Teddy loftily "nurse doesn't know. Rabbits can't talk." Just then Dolly's little pet rabbit "Bunnikins" came out from under the porch, where the children sat talking and sat up on his hind legs.

"Gracious, Teddy, look at Bunnikins; he's winking at me! I do believe he heard us talking about his people."

"Suppose it's after six o'clock and he could talk," and Teddy rushed into the house to see the time and came flying out again quicker than you could say "Jack Robinson." "Yes, it's after. Won't it be fun if nurse is right?" Bunnikins still sat there winking, and now he unmistakably beckoned to the children to follow him.

They tiptoed after him across the lawn, where he came to a stop, and placing his forepaw up to his nose said:

"Sh! We don't want any one to hear us talking."

"Oh, so you can talk, Bunnikins?"

"Yes, indeed, we all can from six o'clock till midnight, on the night before Easter Sunday. Now as you two



children have been jolly good playmates and comrades for me all this year, I want to entertain you."

"Oh—h—h!" exclaimed Dolly, as she danced and down in glee, "we want a lot of lovely colored Easter eggs. Can you have an Easter egg party and vite me and Teddy?"

"Yes, that's the very thing I can do. Now," continued Bunnikins, "you both sit down under this tree and watch the fun, and see if you can recognize any of our crowd."

Then Bunnikins called "Molly Cottontail, Molly Cottontail," and rabbits came trooping in from every direction.

Teddy whispered "Dolly, there's the whole Belgian hare family from farmer Perkins' Yes, and there's pretty Silver, and look at the crowd of wild rabbits!" The biggest Molly Cottontail seemed to have command, and she called the meeting to order.

"Now, be quiet and stop crowding so," she said to the excited throng of rabbits.

"But," screamed one excited young thing, "where are the hens?" Teddy recognized her as belonging to farmer Smith on the next farm.

"The hens my dear Pink Nose, are in the hen house, with their heads under their wings, sound asleep, and even the rooster sleeps also. Now will you get into line and quietly give me a visit."

Every rabbit, big and little, whisked into line, and they all went hop, hop, down the hill. Several minutes passed and then the children saw them coming back up the hill. This time they were not in line and each one carried an egg, and in their care lest it fall they laboriously rolled them up hill. Little Pink Nose thought she could walk on her hind legs, and carry her eggs in her fore paws, but she nearly toppled over and one of the Belgian hare sisters came to her assistance just in time. It was slow work, however, this rolling and pushing up hill, but soon the eggs were all laid together in a heap. Instead of going egg hunting with the others, Mr. Jack Rabbit had remained in the orchard and made up a fire. Over it he arranged sticks, gipsy fashion, on which he hung an old iron kettle he found and filled with water down by the brook. The water was beginning to bubble, and the eggs were dropped in carefully by the tallest bunnies.

They encountered their first difficulty when the eggs were boiled sufficiently. How were they to get them out? How were they to get them out?

"Oh," spoke up Teddie, "let me do that, so you won't get your soft little paws scalded." He lifted the kettle off its crane and took it down to the brook, poured off the hot water and refilled it with cold.

"And now we have to paint the eggs," said Molly Cottontail.

"I'm afraid we can't have any red eggs," said Brownie. "It is too early in the season."

How would tulips do?" asked a little rabbit, whose coat of gray fur looked sadly neglected, in fact quite shabby, as if she was not well cared for.

"Oh," said Sir Brownie, "is that you, little Silver Tip? It's a shame your old curmudgeon of a master is not more kind to you. Now it will just serve him right if we take all his highly prized tulips."

These were soon gathered, and in other directions nimble little forepaws plucked up dandelions, violets, and arbutus, arranging each kind of flower in a pile. When Silver Tip had laid down the last tulip, Sir Brownie slyly told him to go over and speak to the children, while the others were painting the eggs.

"Oh, Silver Tip, I know you," called out Dolly, as he came hopping over to them.

"Tell us, does Mr. Stearn treat you badly?" asked Teddie.

"Well, I should say so! He just keeps me locked up in a little pen all the time. All I have to eat is some stale bread; never any delicious green, juicy dainties."

"How did you get here tonight, then?"

"Molly Cottontail came and unlocked my door."

"Say, Silver Tail, do you think your master would sell you?"

"Yes, I'm sure he would, for he thinks I'm a nuisance; says I eat up every green thing I can find."

"Well, you come home with Bunnikins and us tonight, and I warrant you that your coat will look as sleek as Bunnikins' does in less than a week."

Little Silver Tip's nose and lips quivered joyfully as she hopped back to tell her friends.

By this time the eggs were painted and they lay piled up in brilliant rows—yellow, pink, violet, red, blue and green, and one painted to look like a little fat man was stood up on a spool. Again Molly Cottontail arranged the rabbits in line to descend the hill. Some started walking on their hind feet, but that would not do going down hill. After that they all rolled their eggs down, and scampered off gleefully. Only Bunnikins and little Silver Tip remained.

"Yes, we meant it," said Teddy, "you come right on home with us, Silver Tip, and sleep with Bunnikins tonight."

Then the children picked up the eggs, Dolly filling her skirt, Teddy using his hat. They jumped into bed without being seen and went to sleep.

Ellen was in very bad humor at breakfast time the next morning. "Ye'll be gettin' nary an egg for yer breakfur this mornin'. Not wan yur thim blessed hins does be layin' an egg!" And wise little Bunnikins, by Dolly's chair, cocked his little ears and winked slyly at the children.

**Easter Function Favors.**

Charming conceits which the jewelers, the great department stores, the china and book shops, the florists and confectioners are teeming show that the exchange of dainty gifts and the use of favors at Easter time are almost as universal as on Christmas Day.

"Indeed," said one of the managers of a large wholesale novelty house, "our Easter trade in favors and decorations is the most extensive of any of the holidays. While we depend on Germany and Japan for the most of our novelties there are an increasing number made in this country. Any one who can get hold of a new idea in this line is sure of abundant patronage from shops."

"One of the staple attractions for women, however, at Easter are the real little yellow ducklings and chickens stuffed. There has been a growing fad for these ever since they were first introduced a few years ago from Japan. It seems cruel, doesn't it?" and she poised one of the fluffy little things on her finger—but you would be surprised at the number of women who are using these for powder puffs. They come high, usually about seventy-five cents apiece, but they are so delightfully soft and fluffy that it is a luxury to use them."

Handsome rabbit sets packed away in cases made to imitate a big pineapple cheese are in special favor, for anything connected with "B'rer Rabbit" plays a prominent part in all Easter lore. Looking in at the show cases of the big confectioners like Huyler's one is tempted to believe that Mollie Cottontail, Master Jack Rabbit and Baby Bunting have taken possession of the land. Cunningly made up by the clever Japs, some in real fur and some in close imitation, so close as to deceive the very elect, they serve as chauffeurs for automobiles in which plump chickens take an airing, munch carrots in a most realistic way or tote baskets of eggs out of which little babies are just chipping their way to the light. Best of all for the youngsters and their elders, they all carry stored away in "the fair sepulchers" of their interiors a pound or more of "the best" chocolates, nougats and Parisienne glaces.

Other Easter favors, useful as well as ornamental, are egg cups of fragile china, with dainty hand painted decorations; Easter bunnets of raffa, made to hang beside a dressing bureau and hold hatpins; Easter salt cellars, some in the form of lilies, and others of rabbits; while a cunning silver novelty consists of a tiny wheelbarrow, holding part of the broken shell of an egg, which a small silver bunny pushes along to its destination.

Many of the Easter gifts come with special reference to the service of eggs in various ways. There are silver and silver plated boilers, steamers, servers and spoons. These are quaint little three minute egg timers, set in frames of tartan plaid, betraying their Scottish origin, and scissors for deftly nipping off the top of the shell, English fashion.

Eggs are the great Easter dish and they are cooked in all ways, but according to Pasch lore, a plain boiled egg must break the fast of Easter morning.

Johnny's Excuse.

Teacher—"Why are you late again, Johnny?"

Johnny—"I was follerin' de rabbit what lays de Easter eggs yesterday, an' I got lost."

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