

# A Birthday Present.



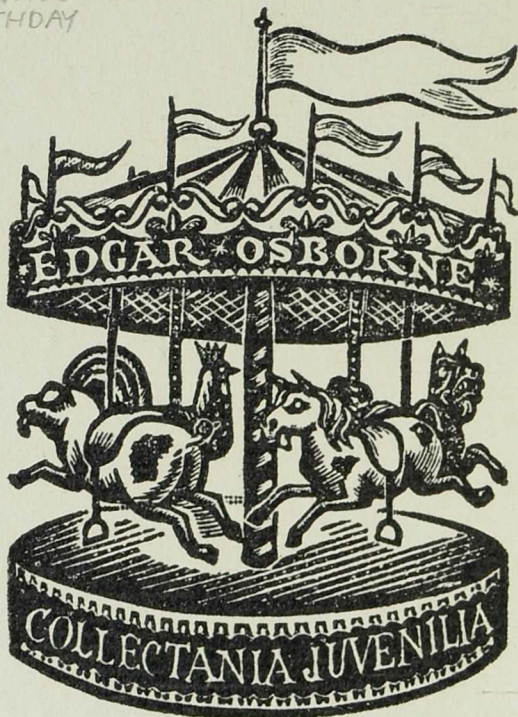
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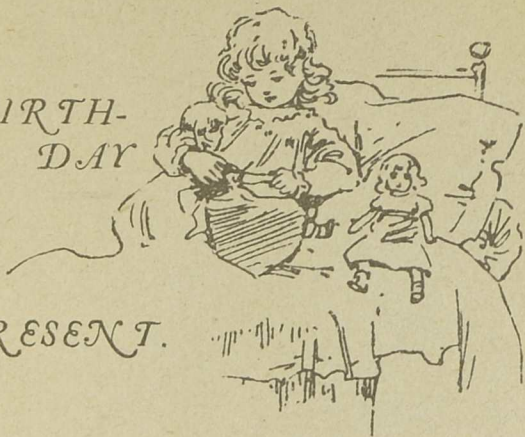
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*A  
BIRTH-  
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*PRESENT.*



**I**DA was the most generous little maiden in the world, and when she woke on her birthday morning, and found a whole family of new dolls as well as other presents by her side she was not happy till she could share the pleasure of examining them with her sisters. Two new kittens had somehow got mixed up





with the dolls, so Ida gathered them, pussies and all, into the skirt of her night-dress, and trotted into the next room, where two girls a little older than herself slept, and when nurse came to help them to dress she laughed at the heap of children, kittens, and dolls on the corner bed.

Presently Ida's mother came into the nursery with a pretty frilled white muslin hat in her hand, which she herself had made for her little girl.

"That is the best present of all, mother," said Ida with a loving hug, and then run-



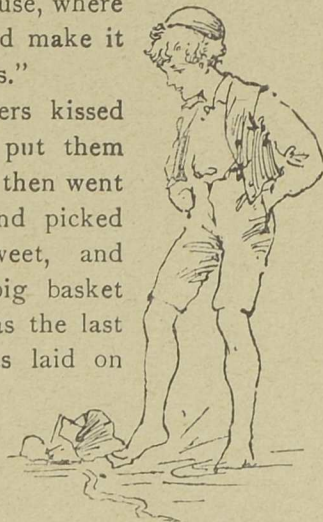




ning to the looking-glass to laugh at the reflection of her merry face under the smart frills, "Am I to wear it for my party to-day?"

"Yes, but not till the afternoon. I want you all to go out this morning and pick flowers to deck the summerhouse, where you will have tea, and make it pretty for your friends."

Ida and her sisters kissed the new dollies and put them to bed for safety, and then went out into the fields and picked bluebells, meadow-sweet, and wild roses, till the big basket was quite full. Just as the last handful of flowers was laid on the top, a sound of children's laughter and voices came from the next field,



and Mary and Ida went to the gate to see what was going on. A broad shallow brook ran under the hedge in this field, and some cottage children were playing beside it. The biggest boy had taken off his boots and stockings, and was wading along in the water splashing



over the others as he went, and a tiny girl, with her sun-bonnet hanging by one string to her neck, was shrieking with delight as the bright drops flew over her, till suddenly a little puff of wind carried her bonnet into the water.

“Oh! Dicky, pick up my bonnet,” she called to the boy. But naughty Dicky only stuck his bare toe into it, and began

kicking it along in the water, heedless of the child's cries, while the other children raced up to the bank, and followed him along the brook side in high glee at his mischievous fun, so the wee bonnetless maiden was left alone.

"Poor little thing, what a shame to tease her so!" said Mary; and opening the gate she ran into the meadow, and kneeling down beside the child, who was crying bitterly, tried to console her.

"Granny will beat Susie," sobbed the little one, "norty Dicky, drowned Susie's bonnet."

Ida stood watching them for a minute, and



then flew off to the house, and before Mary had missed her she was back again with her pretty new hat in her hand—

“There,” she said, placing it on the head of the little girl, who with her big blue eyes still full of tears was trying to explain to Mary where she lived. “There, that was a birthday present to me, and I give it to you because your bonnet is spoilt.”

Susie put her finger in her mouth and gazed at Ida in wonder, while her little fat hand grasped the dainty frills, and an old woman, having





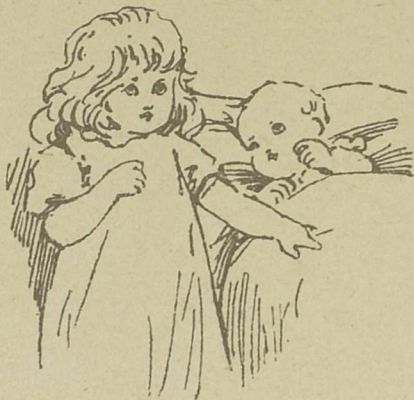


heard from the other children of the accident, came up to them, scolding Susie at the top of her voice. "Do not scold her, she could not help it," said Ida, "and I have given her my hat instead." "I'm sure it's very good of you, Missie," old dame, returned the pretty girl, "I'll not give her the time, to looking at that hat. 'Thank you.' I'll not stick this oblige you," and both said Mary, Susie and kissed little go and see her. "How could you give away your pretty new hat, Ida?" asked Mary as they walked home.



"I wanted to give her my best; one ought to give one's best, you know," returned Ida.





Neither mother nor the nurse said anything to Ida then, but when she went to say "Good-night" to baby her Mother spoke of it.

"It's not because I grudge the pretty hat to Susie," she said, "but you should let me judge for you in such matters. It was not fit for her. I like to see my little Ida kind and generous, but she must promise me not to give things away again without asking leave."

"I promise, mother dear—but I *do* love giving," said Ida with a sigh.

*Helen Marion Burnside.*









