

**THE BOYS AND I: A
CHILD'S STORY
FOR CHILDREN**

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The boys and I: a child's story for children by Mrs. Molesworth

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MRS. MOLESWORTH

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FOR CHILDREN**



"Oh, young man, this house is to be sold, I hear?"

PAGE 32.

Molesworth, Mary Louisa
...
(Stewart)

The Boys and I

A Child's Story
for
Children

by
Mrs Molesworth



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CHAPTER I.

OUR FIRST SORROW.

"O, it is trouble very bad,
Which causes us to weep;
All last night long we were so sad,
Not one of us could sleep."

SOMETIMES they called us all three just "the boys." But I don't think that was fair. I may have been rather a *tomboy*, but I wasn't quite so bad as to be called a "boy." I was nine then—I mean I was nine at the beginning of the time I am going to tell you about, and now I am fourteen. Afterwards, I will tell you what put it into my head to write it down. If I told you now you wouldn't understand—at least not without my telling you things all out of their places—ends at the beginning, and middles at

the end; and mother says it's an awfully bad habit to do things that way. It makes her quite vexed to see any one read the end of a book before they have really got to it. There aren't many things that make her really vexed, but that's one, and another is saying "awfully," and I've just said it, or at least written it. And I can't score it through—I've promised not to score through anything, and just to leave it as it came into my head to write it all down.

I was nine that year, and Tom was seven, and little Racey six. I remember it quite well, for that year a lot of things happened. Tom and I had the measles, and how it was Racey didn't have them too I don't know, but he didn't. And just when we were getting better, the first very big thing that we had ever known about, happened. Papa was ordered to go to China! (I dare say it seems funny to you that we call him "papa" and mother "mother." I can't tell you how it was, but we always did it, and Tom and I used to like to hear Racey say "papa." He said it in such a sweet way, more like the way little French children say it.)

Papa wasn't a soldier, or a sailor, as you might think. He was something very clever, with letters after his name, and he had to go to China partly

because of that. Now that I am big I understand about it, but I need not say exactly, because then you might find out who he was, and that wouldn't be nice. It would be like as if I thought we were cleverer or nicer than other people, and I don't think that—at least not in a stuck-up way, and *of course*, not at all about myself. It isn't any harm to think it a little about one's father or mother, I don't think, but of course not about one's-self.

I shall never forget the day I heard about papa's going away. I keep saying "papa's going away," because you see it had to do with him, but it was even worse than his going, though that would have been bad enough. It was just as we were getting better of the measles, and we had been very happy all day, for mother had been telling us stories, and we had had quite a "feast" tea—sponge-cakes and ladies' bread and butter; and I had poured out the tea, for mother had put a little table on purpose close to my bed, and Racey had been the footman to wait upon Tom and give him all he wanted, as the table wasn't so near his bed as mine. Tom had fallen asleep—poor Tom, he had had the measles worse than I. I am so awfully strong, even though I'm only a girl, and boys always think themselves stronger.