

BOBBY IN SEARCH OF A BIRTHDAY

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Bobby in Search of a Birthday by Lebbus Mitchell

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LEBBUS MITCHELL

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BY
LEBBEUS MITCHELL



COVER AND ILLUSTRATIONS
BY
JOSEPH PIERRE NUYTTENS



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I
Once When Bobby Wasn't Left Behind.

CHAPTER II
The Boy With Eight Birthdays.

CHAPTER III
Hunting for the Thing You Mustn't
Think About.

CHAPTER IV
The Lady Who Likes Little Boys.

CHAPTER V
The Man With the Pocketful of Quarters
Reappears.

CHAPTER VI
The Borrowed Birthday.

CHAPTER VII
"All the Perquisites Pertaining Thereto."

CHAPTER VIII
"Fathers and Mothers and Things
Like That."





BOBBY IN SEARCH OF A BIRTHDAY

CHAPTER I

ONCE WHEN BOBBY WASN'T LEFT BEHIND

Bobby North went out into the front yard by the iron gate between the two tall stone columns to watch the horses and wagons and 'mobiles traveling up and down that invitingly dusty and mysterious road that he was forbidden ever to set foot upon.

He knew he could crawl under the gate, he was so little, and raise clouds of dust by dragging his feet in the road as two small boys did who passed by and stopped to gaze in wonder at Bobby and at the big brick house set back in the yard among some trees. He wondered if the Supe'tendent would *really* send him to bed without anything to eat if he disobeyed her just this once and slipped under the gate, out into the road for as many as forty or a dozen minutes.

BOBBY IN SEARCH OF A BIRTHDAY

He was afraid she *really* might, and was standing with face pressed against the iron bars of the gate when a man drove up back of him with a buggy jammed as full as it would hold of boys and girls from the Home.

"Bobby North!" cried the sharp, irritated voice of the Supe'tendent. "How many times must I tell you to keep away from that gate!"

He turned clear around and saw on the porch the tall, thin figure of the Supe'tendent. The man in the buggy jumped out to open the gate. Bobby stepped back from the graveled road, for he knew by experience that it is always safer, if you are a small boy, to keep out of the way of grown-up folks—*then* they can't scold you for doing something you mustn't, or not doing something you should, even when you had never *thought* of doing either one.

He looked up longingly at the buggy load of boys and girls who were going to explore the mysteries of that delightfully dusty road and not coming back for maybe forty or a dozen days. Bobby was used to being left behind and stepped further away, but without taking his lonely eyes off those more fortunate children.

When the man had opened the gate, he stopped and looked at Bobby and then at the Supe'tendent on the porch. He came