

VISITING THE BEARS' DEN

When Mr. Grant came home one half holiday, he found Robbie waiting at the gate, his hair neatly brushed, clean collar and tie, and wearing his second-best suit.

"Oh, papa, may I guess the surprise you are going to give me to-day - my birthday?"

"Yes; but it won't be a surprise if you guess it."

Papa took out his watch. "We must go in to lunch now. It's nearly time to start."

Mamma stood at the door, smiling, as her husband and Robbie went down the street. She knew the secret, and how pleased her boy would be.

Robbie thought it one of the best pleasures to go trolley riding with his father; and as the car sped through the city streets, and out into the beautiful country, he was sure that this time was the "best ever."

By and by the car stopped before an arched gate over which was printed in large letters, "Washington Park."

Most of the passengers left the car. "Here we are, my boy!" said father.

A walk across a field brought them to a fenced in-closure, around which stood many children and their friends.

"Oh, oh, oh! It's the zoo, and the bears! I'm so glad! I never saw a truly live bear." And Robbie ran forward, to watch with the others the funny antics of the brown, clumsy animals. Some of the children gave them peanuts, of which bears are quite fond.

Two large logs were fastened into one side of the cage. Upon these the bears climbed, and played with each other, going over and over the logs, much to the delight of Robbie and the other children. Sometimes they seemed about to fall, but their claws held them safely.

The keeper called the big bear Ned. The smaller one was Jennie. Robbie thought it much more interesting to know their names.

If bears could laugh, he was sure Ned would, when he played a sly trick on Jennie. In the center of the cage was a large, round, shallow pool, where the bears took their daily bath. Jennie sat beside the pool, busily scratching her long nose with her big paw.

“Uh! Uh!” sniffed Ned, lumbering along, crowding hard against her.

Splash! Splash! Over went Jennie into the water. By the time she had scrambled out and sneezed the water out of her nose and mouth, naughty Ned was well out of the way; and poor Jennie, feeling much abused, dragged her dripping body to the warm cave at the other side of the cage.

“Papa, why is that row of hooks up there on the wall?”

“The bears might try to get out some day, and run away into the woods; but no sensible bear would wish to climb over those sharp points. Still, I think these bears are happy here, as they are well cared for.”

“My story book says bears sleep all winter. Do they?”

“Yes, in their wild state. When the ground is covered with snow, they can find no food; so that is the way God takes care of them. He lets them sleep in some hole or cave, snug and warm, till springtime comes again.”

“I like to know about such things. Thank you, papa - and how many things I’ve learned to tell mamma!” - Dew Drops.