

The Roosevelt Bears Play Baseball

by Seymour Eaton

The Bears were invited by Muddy Pete
To go with him to an East Side street
To visit children who never see
Either grass or field or flower or tree.
They loaded up like old Saint Nick
With bundles piled on high and thick;
Bouquets of flowers for children sick
And toys and candy for those at play,
And a hundred other things, folks say,
Who saw them on the street that day.

They went around from door to door,
Where bears had never been before;
Climbed flights of stairs and bumped their heads
To cheer up lads who were sick in beds;
Threw bouquets into windows high,
And picked nice toys and let them fly,
And candy boxes and twigs of green,
Wherever boys and girls were seen.

“TEDDY-B threw the monkey and made him yell,
And caught him every time he fell.”
But the jolliest sport of the day began
When they met an organ-grinder man
With a monkey trained to act the clown
And pick up pennies boys throw down.
TEDDY-G asked the man if he could go
With his monkey band for an hour or so;
TEDDY-B said he the troupe would join
And see that rich folks shelled out coin.

He'd give the monkey double pay:
Five cents an hour for half a day.
And the organ man may go, said they,
And join some other kind of play.
“Or if you're tired,” the two Bears said,
“Go home for the day and go to bed;
We'll use your organ and monkey clown
And pay you half a dollar down
And two dollars more when we are through
And return your band as good as new.

With help from Cribs and Muddy Pete
We'll find our way from street to street.”

This bargain made, the Bears set out
To give the children round about
And old folks too along the street
The funniest kind of music treat.

TEDDY-G took the crank and just for fun
Made marches dance and two-steps run,
And polkas gallop and waltzes race
And street-songs step at a lively pace.
While TEDDY-B climbed up on top
Of the music-box stood on its prop
And threw the monkey and made him yell
And caught him every time he fell.

A boy got a drum for Muddy Pete,
And Cribs danced round on two hind feet,
And all five laughed and cheered and sang
And made things go with slap and bang.

The crowd of children filled the square;
Five hundred boys and girls were there;
And scores of men stopped work to see
The tricks of TEDDIES-B and G
Nickels enough and quarters too
And silver dollars, not a few,

Were collected that day by the players four
To give a fresh air week down by the shore
To boys and girls a score or more
Who had never seen the sea before.

The afternoon was good and hot
And the Bears sat down in a vacant lot
To count their cash and rest their feet
And eat some lunch with Muddy Pete.

They returned to the organ-grinder man
His music-box and collection can
And his monkey clown and some money too,
Just as he bargained they should do.

They gave the monkey an extra dime
For working two hours over time,
And a box of nuts as a special treat,
The kind that monkeys like to eat.

Seven boys came over to where they sat
With bags of sand and ball and bat
And baseball gloves and masks of wire

And asked if they the Bears could hire.

“We’re going to play,” a lad spoke up,
“The Bowery nine for a silver cup,
And we’re short two men; good players they;
But they couldn’t come to the game to-day.”

“And the Bowery nine,” another said,
“Are bigger boys by half-a-head,
And good at bat and quick to run;
They beat us last time two to one.”

“They don’t play fair,” said another lad,
“They count all balls both good and bad;
They claimed a foul when I made a base
And when I objected they slapped my face.”

“The Bowery nine,” said TEDDY-B,
“Is the kind of nine I’d like to see;
We’ll join the team and run the game
And win that silver cup just the same.”

“Give me some pointers,” said TEDDY-G,
“This game you play is new to me.”
The Bears were coached in every rule
And they both caught on like boys at school.

The Bowery boys, in a little while,
Came on the lot in baseball style.
They read off rules to the other nine
And helped lay out the diamond line.

In size, they said, among themselves,
These Roosevelt Bears are number twelves;
But the Bowery captain bet his hat
That neither Bear could pitch or bat.

“This game,” he said, “is as good as won;
We’ll beat those fellows ten to one.”

A Bowery boy went to the bat
While the other eight on some lumber sat
To watch the play and wait their turn
And see the Bears their fingers burn.

TEDDY-B as catcher in mask and pad
Met every ball both good and bad
With snap and skill so sure and quick,
He seemed to know the baseball trick;

While TEDDY-G at the pitcher's box
Put balls to bat like hammer knocks

And with curves so neat and twists so new
The fielders hadn't a thing to do;
For not a boy could make a hit
And one by one the plate they quit.
Said Muddy Pete, "Their cake is dough"
As he marked the score, a great big O.
"It's our turn now," said TEDDY-B,
"We'll let those Bowery fellows see
That the team that wins this game to-day
Will make their score by honest play."
And of all the batting that was ever done
In games that lost or in games that won,
In timing hits and in making base,
And in running home in the wildest race,
This play that day of the Roosevelt Bears
Beat baseball records everywhere.

They knocked that ball so hard and high
Above the clouds up in the sky,
That while it tarried out of sight
The Bears went round with all their might

And scored so fast for that silver cup
That Muddy Pete could scarce keep up.
Nine innings each they didn't get,
For the Roosevelt Bears would be batting yet
If the Bowery boys hadn't stopped the score
At naught for them to sixty-four.

Source:

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