

## **Playing For Keeps**

I've watched him change from his bibs and things, from bonnets known as 'cute,'  
To little frocks, and later on I saw him don a suit;  
And though it was of calico, those knickers gave him joy,  
Until the day we all agreed 'twas time for corduroy.  
I say I've seen the changes come, it seems with bounds and leaps,  
But here's another just arrived—he's playing mibs for keeps!  
The guide posts of his life fly by. The boy that is to-day,  
To-morrow morning we may wake to find has gone away,  
And in his place will be a lad we've never known before,  
Older and wiser in his ways, and filled with new-found lore.  
Now here's another boy to-day, counting his marble heaps  
And proudly boasting to his dad he's playing mibs for keeps!  
His mother doesn't like this change. She says it is a shame—  
That since he plays with larger boys, he's bound to lose the game.  
But little do I mind his loss; I'm more concerned to know  
The way he acts the times when he must see his marbles go.  
And oh, I hope he will not be the little boy who weeps  
Too much when he has failed to win while playing mibs for keeps.  
Playing for keeps! Another step toward manhood's broad estate!  
This is what some term growing up, or destiny, or fate.  
Yet from this game with marbles, played with youngsters on the street,  
I hope will come a larger boy, too big to lie or cheat,  
And by these mibs which from his clutch another madly sweeps,  
I hope he'll learn the game of life which must be played for keeps.

**Edgar Albert Guest (1881-1959)**