POLLY EVANS' STORY PAGE FOR BOYS AND GIRLS

How the Geese Outwit a Thief

DUCKS and geese and chickens and horses and cows were the chums of Elise, because there were no other playmates for her. The little farm where Elise lived with her father and mother was far distant from other farmhouses or towns where boys and girls dwelt. There was not even a schoolhouse near, so that mademoiselle must needs be instructed by her parents.

Elise was a very friendly little girl,

"THE GEESE RUSHED FORWARD"

and she soon had many chums among the animals of the farm. Strange to say, her best friends were the geese. They became quite fond of her. While the geese would hiss at other people and bite them, Elise could stroke them and they would be pleased.

The animals were taught many clever tricks by their little mistress, who could make any one of them do almost everything she wished. Elise was proudest, however, of her goose team. She made cunning little bridles for several of the geese, with reins attached. In this way she could drive them about the farmyard, guiding them as she willed.

One afternoon, while Elise and her father and mother were away from the farm on a visit to their nearest neighbor, a thief came. His eye fell upon the plump geese, and he became joyful.

"Ah," chuckled he, "here is much fine eating!"

Unheeding the birds' cries, this bold fellow tied the legs of the geese with ropes.

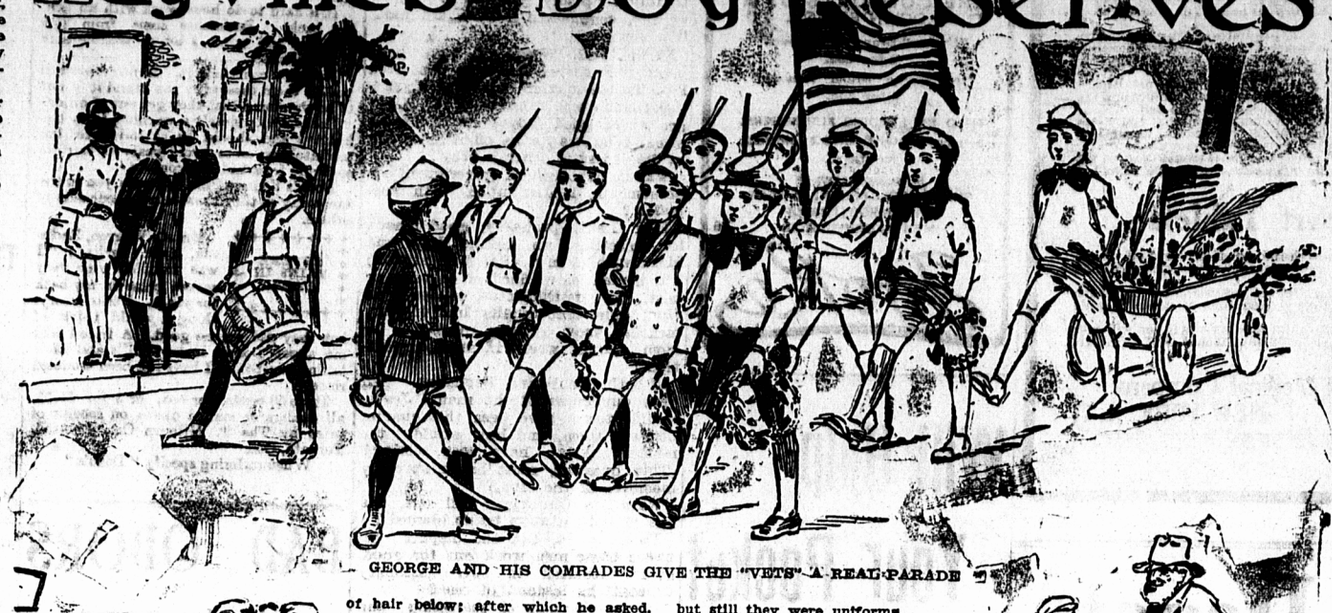
Suddenly the geese rushed forward, and with one accord rose in the air. They were great, strong birds, were these four. The thief was swept from his feet, and, before he realized what had happened, was soaring through the air at the ends of the ropes.

Steadily the geese flew on. Of course, the thief couldn't release his hold, now that he was so far above ground. In this fashion the party traveled toward the nearest village, where a policeman, imagining something was wrong, impressed into service a balloon, which, fortunately, was near at hand.

No sooner was the balloon put on the trail of the geese than the clever birds turned and flew direct to the balloon. The thief was grabbed and arrested by the policeman while in midair. Afterward the geese were returned to their owner, and Elise is now prouder of them than before.

"GRABBED AND ARRESTED BY THE POLICEMAN IN MIDAIR"

Kayville's Boy Reserves



GEORGE AND HIS COMRADES GIVE THE "VETS" A REAL PARADE

"WON THE HEART OF THE BANKER"

ALTOGETHER deserted seemed the shop. A first curious peek showed this much. Then George stepped over the threshold and looked into every corner of a room littered with harness, saddles and all other accouterments for horse and horseman.

The lad turned at a creaking from without, but the sound was produced merely by a swaying signboard adorned with the lettering: "Jerry Whittle, Maker of Fine Harness and Saddles." Jerry himself did not appear.

The gust of wind that disturbed the sign opened ever so slightly the door of a little, box-like room at the rear of the shop. And there, laboriously polishing the plate of an old belt, sat the harnessmaker.

"Oh, I say, Jerry, our baseball team's got to practice this afternoon, an' we've split the covers of our ball. Cut us out a new pair of covers, won't you please, Jerry?"

Jerry seemed not to hear, and the boy was about to repeat the request, when something in the old man's face compelled silence. It was a kindly face, though seamed and wrinkled with years. And it now bore a sad, thoughtful expression in place of the merry one that the boys of Kayville knew so well.

Aroused from reverie by the lad's presence, the harnessmaker gravely scratched first the bald spot on the top of his head and then the gray fringe of hair below; after which he asked, with his usual smile:

"Well, what can I do for you, sonny?"

George told him. Immediately Jerry deftly clipped out the covers and obligingly proceeded to place the necessary holes for the sewing.

"So this is where you keep your army uniform," commented George while his friend was using the awl.

Jerry nodded. "Kind o' like to have it near me when I work. Foolish, I guess; but it reminds me of ol' friends. Ain't many left now that are not just mem'ries. Thought I'd shine up the belt a little, 'cause I might take a walk down to the Hill Cemetery. We decided, last meetin' of the 'boys,' you know, that we're too old to march in a parade any more; but Memorial Day wouldn't seem appropriate, somehow, if I didn't wear the old uniform. Here are your covers, sonny. Hope you lick them Frackville fellers when you play tomorrow."

GEORGE DISCUSSES THE "VETS"

Thanking him, and promising that the team would beat Frackville all to hollow, George started toward the ballfield. He could not shake off a serious mood. The picture of Jerry's unhappiness was constantly before him, so that when he reached the "field" he at once began a discussion of the subject that was in his mind.

There was no baseball practice that afternoon. George had heatedly declared: "I think it's a confounded shame that the old vets can't celebrate like they ought to. People don't care much about them any more, anyhow. Why, Decoration Day's nothing but a time for picnics an' a holiday."

That began it. Right away the boys decided that Kayville should have a parade, after all, and that there would be a real celebration. Scouts were dispatched everywhere about the town to summon all the boy population of Kayville to a meeting. Thus there came to be formed the "Kayville Boy Reserves."

It lacked but a week to Memorial Day. But within that time the Reserves managed to find uniforms. They varied greatly in color and fashion, it is true; but still they were uniforms.

Besides, another splendid plan had met with success. The inspiration came to George, who, by the way, had been elected captain of the Reserves. In great excitement he whispered to Billy Glennon one day in school:

"Billy, can't we get up a banquet for the vets, somehow? Not a common, home-made affair, but a real, tony one."

"Mebbe," dubiously replied Billy; "but it'd take an all-fired lot o' money."

George was persistent, however. Whenever money was needed for any charitable purpose, the folk of Kayville always paid a visit to the Honorable Mr. Simmons, their wealthiest citizen. Audacious in the extreme was George's proposition. Indeed, it was nothing less than that a deputation of the Reserves lay the matter of the banquet before the rich man and request that he cover the expense of the undertaking.

Several of the boys finally agreed to accompany George, their spokesman. Reckless as the lads were in most things, they would have refused were it not from a fear that the other fellows would taunt them.

Perhaps it was the very daring of the boys that won the heart of the Honorable Mr. Simmons. After a manly, straightforward explanation from George, the pompous banker became as sympathetic as it was possible for him to be. And he finally agreed to make all arrangements for a banquet in the town armory, provided the boys summoned the guests.

Almost beside themselves with joy, the "committee" hastened to the other members of the Reserves, who were waiting impatiently around the nearest corner, and told the good news. Cheer after cheer went up to startle Kayville out of its customary quiet. Afterward the boys went on with their drill with redoubled vigor. For tomorrow was "Decoration Day."

THE "RESERVES" RISE EARLY

A perfect day it proved. You may be sure that every member of the Reserves was up with the sun. Uniforms were quickly donned, and the boys hastened to the meeting place agreed upon.

And then, when the time for marching—9 o'clock—arrived it brought with it a surprise. Something of the boys' plans had become known throughout the town, and the mothers started planning, in turn. So that, when the Reserves were forming, Tommy Todd drove up with his delivery wagon, inside which was heaped a great pile of floral wreaths—the gift of mothers to the boys.

Kayville turned out to witness the Reserves' parade. Truly, the town had a real celebration, as the boys had promised. The youthful marchers were cheered repeatedly all the way to the old Hill Cemetery, where they decorated the graves of the old soldiers with the flowers so thoughtfully provided.

But the banquet had been kept a close secret. You may know, therefore, how astonished the old soldiers were when the boys searched every nook and corner of Kayville and brought to the armory every soldier who was able to walk or ride. The banquet was a glorious success, as every one expected it to be. George courageously began a speech, and he was cheered all the more because he could only remember half of it. In fact, he did even better than Jerry, who broke down completely and had to use his handkerchief in a most suspicious manner. But just before he sat down he paid this tribute to the Kayville Reserves:

"We members of the post thank the Honorable Mr. Simmons for his generosity; but, most of all, do we thank our boys of Kayville, who have shown their friendship to us in a way we always shall remember."

"Three cheers for Jerry!" was responded to with such hearty goodwill by the boys that one could see how pleased the boy soldiers were over having proved that Kayville had not forgotten its old veterans.

THEY DRAG JERRY TO THE FEAST

(This is a story of how Decoration Day is observed in the United States.)

Wasn't Born Princess

QUEEN VICTORIA had quite a number of boys and girls of her own, and her eldest girl was known as the princess royal of England. She was awfully proud to have that title, and I do believe she thought herself the most important little girl in the world.

Like all her brothers and sisters, she had a little garden of her own, and one day she was putting in some plants when her mother, the queen, came to watch her.

Now, what do you think? If the little princess royal had not on a pair of quite new kid gloves to protect her hands from the dirt!

Her mother did not like that, of course, so she said: "When I was a little girl I always did my gardening in old gloves."

"Yes, mother," replied the little girl, tossing her head proudly, "but you weren't born princess royal of England."

Some Sugar Magic

CAN you put a lump of sugar at the bottom of a bowl filled with water without wetting the sugar?

Of course you can—that is, provided you know how. Here's the way to go about it:

Fill a large bowl about half full of water.

Take a goblet and cut a piece of cardboard into circular shape, so that it will fit closely into the top of the goblet.

Place a lump of sugar on the piece of cardboard. Then force the cardboard

PLACE A GOBLET OVER THE SUGAR

into the glass. Lower the glass, in a vertical position, into the bowl of water.

The lump of sugar now reposes upon the piece of cardboard at the bottom of the bowl. Still it is dry, for the air in the upturned goblet keeps the water from entering.

Just Like Other Girls

THE lady who is now the queen of Holland became a queen when she was quite a little girl. I rather believe this must have made her think a lot of herself, for sometimes she even thought she could disobey her mother.

One day the little queen wished to speak to her mother, so she went up to the door of the room in which her mother was talking to some friends, and there she knocked very loudly.

"Who's there?" asked mother.

"It is the queen of Holland!" replied the little girl, in very stately tones.

"Then," called the mother, "she must not come in."

On hearing this the little queen altered her voice, and in a very gentle tone said: "Mamma, it's your own little daughter that loves you, and would like to kiss you!"

Whereupon mother, who just like other little girls' mothers, though her daughter was a real queen, called out: "You may come in, then."

You see, even a little queen has to obey her mother, for mother always knows what is best for her daughter.

Where Apples Went

BRIDGET, who had been cook for the Morse household for many years, was sometimes torn between her devotion to her mistress and loyalty to the small son of the house.

"Bridget," said Mrs. Morse in a tone of wonder, after an inspection of the pantry, "where have those splendid red apples gone that the man brought yesterday?"

"Well, now, ma'am," said poor Bridget, "I couldn't rightly say; but I'm thinking if you was to find where my loaf o' hot gingerbread is, likely thim four red apples would be lyin' right on top of it. An' I'm only hopin' his little stummick can stand the sthrain."

Bally Grows Thin

EVERYBODY in Toyland made fun of Bally because he was such a roly-poly sort of creature. But that wasn't Bally's fault. He couldn't help it. If some workman had made YOU of leadbeater's skin in the form of a man, and then blown you up until you looked more like a ball than anything else, you wouldn't be able to help it, either, would you? Of course not.

In the first place, Bally never could forgive Toyland for giving him such a name. It was short for "Balloon," you see. Now, Bally wasn't a balloon—that is, not quite—so he didn't think he ought to have been called one. Do you?

Then the creatures would begin to play all manner of tricks upon him. Why, during Toyland's playtime—which, you know, is after nightfall, when ordinary boys and girls have gone away to comfy beds—even the clumsy elephant from the Noah's ark would calmly knock Bally over and jump upon him. Bally was such a springy thing, the animals said, that one liked to jump up and down upon him. Even that Bally might have stood; but he wouldn't have the toy pig use him for a jumping-board. No, sir-ee! And that is what started Bally's rebellion.

Once he had decided to fight every one in Toyland, and to show them that he would allow himself to be abused no longer, Bally hid himself behind the box of Jack, who owned a little house from which he would pop when a boy or girl pressed the spring. But the spring hadn't been touched for ever so long, and now Jack stood 'way back in the playroom closet.

Of course, all Toyland searched for Bally. They were so accustomed to making sport of him that they missed him very much, indeed. But the missing fellow remained missing.

"Now, I'm going to show 'em!" fiercely whispered Bally when the search was given up.

Forth, then, he crept to the bathroom, which opened directly into the nursery. There he found a great bath sponge. This he soaked in water. Back he sped to the nursery, where he industriously proceeded to wipe off all the paint from the Noah's ark. This done to his satisfaction, he began to break all the toy trees he could find.

It was at this stage that Bally's misdeeds were discovered. After the poor fellow started the toy soldiers.

"Capture this traitor to Toyland!" was the cry.

Meanwhile Bally had regained his hiding place in the rear of Jack's box. But when the soldiers approached he grew excited, jumped from his place of concealment and started to run for the nursery door, which was still open.

"FELL HEADLONG UPON THE SHARP POINT"

All at once he tripped, lost his balance and fell headlong upon the sharp point of a tiny tree of Toyland. There was a sharp explosion. Bally collapsed, and what was once a funny, roly-poly fellow became a mass of flabbiness that no one could recognize.

"Bally has grown thin!" cried the astonished people of Toyland.

But in growing thin Bally had lost his life. The next morning he was gathered up by the maid and cast into the waste basket. All too late, Toyland began to feel sorry for having persecuted poor Bally.

New Use for Books

A YOUNG girl once asked Mark Twain if he liked books for Christmas gifts.

"Well, that depends," drawled the great humorist. "If a book has a leather cover, it is really valuable as a razor strop. If it is a brief, concise work, such as the French write, it is useful to put under the short leg of a wobbly table. An old-fashioned book with a clasp can't be beat as a missile to hurl at a dog; and a large book, like a geography, is as good as a piece of tin to nail over a broken pane of glass."

By Firebug Candlelight

SAID a little Red Rosebud,
At closing of day,
"I'm so tired of nodding,
I'm so tired of play—

"My nightcap of green now
I'll put on my head,
And fold all my petals
And climb in my bed."

The little Red Rosebud
Had scarce closed her eyes,
When the wind sang her softly
Some sweet lullabies.

And the Firebugs whispered,
"We'll guard her tonight—"
And that's why they hastened
Their candles to light!

ELSIE PARRISH.

His Lunch Caught For Him

The Meal of Knight Valiant

TIMES were hard with the good Knight Valiant and his charming wife. The wars were over, and to a brave soldier who was accustomed to gain fortune only through fighting, this meant starvation. Long ago the pair had sold off the greater part of the estate. They were fond of good food and all the comforts at home that money could buy, so now they were in sore straits, indeed.

But the knight's wit was as great as his bravery. Therefore, one day, when his wife announced that there was no longer anything to eat in the house, the knight comforted her, saying:

"Wait thee here a little while, and I shall return with good things to eat."

Then, to the astonishment of the wife, Knight Valiant donned a complete suit of armor. He mounted his war charger, after which he gaily waved farewell and rode toward the village.

Straight round the market place he journeyed. Arriving in the large square, where men and women were selling their farm produce, he tilted madly into the groups of haggling market women and customers.

Booths were swept aside, stalls were demolished, fruit and vegetables rolled about on the cobblestones. Having crossed the square, the brave knight wheeled his charger and dashed once more into the peasants.

Now there rose from all sides shouts of wrath. Peasants seized whatever vegetables lay closest to hand and hurled them at the offender.

The knight laughed in joy. It had happened just as he had wished. Upon the end of his long sword he dexterously caught as many vegetables as possible. Spikes on his armor intercepted other fruit and vegetables, so that very shortly the knight was almost hidden by the produce which stuck to his person.

KNIGHT VALIANT OVERTURNS BASKETS AND TRAYS

Away he rode again, back to his castle. The surprise of his wife at his departure was nothing when compared to her astonishment at this return.

Not many moments were wasted in explanation, however. Speedily the vegetables were placed in pots, and a delightful meal soon made its appearance on the table.

On many succeeding days the knight found meals in the same fashion. Each time the peasants grew more furious. This, of course, only made them throw more vegetables, and the knight was therefore more grateful at his larger share of booty.