POLLY EVANS' STORY PAGE FOR BOYS AND GIRLS

Why Olga Mishky was awarded the Washington Prize

"SHE CAREFULLY TENDED ONE POOR LITTLE FLOWER"

"MINE BABY SISTER IS PUT IT IN TUB"

"TEACHER! Teacher! Shamus McGonigal shoots things mit mine head!" shrilled Rachel Poleski.

"Aw, g'wan, softy tattle-tale," grumbled Shamus in her ear. Aloud he cried indignantly:

"Didn't do no such thing!"

"Shamus, don't you know it's wrong to tell stories?" asked Miss Harrison, gently. "I think you had better bring me whatever you have there."

The boy slowly delved into his pockets and brought forth a large rubber elastic, hidden the moment before. With this he had been enjoying target practice against the back of Rachel's head, using for ammunition tiny pellets rolled from copybook paper. Shamefacedly walking to the teacher's desk, he surrendered his weapon.

"Yuh ain't goin' to make me give up bein' blackboard monitor, are youse, Miss Harrison? Honest, I won't do it no more," pleaded Shamus, who had in mind a similar punishment visited upon him not many weeks ago. He was proud of his ability to sponge and dry the blackboard in half the time any other pupil would take, and thoroughly he did the work, too. "It's 'cause I got more muscle," he would explain, "an' 'cause I help me dad rub down the hosses." To bear out his words, he would modestly hold out an arm for inspection.

The teacher replied judicially, after short reflection: "No, not this time, Shamus; but you must remember your promise and not do it again."

When the offender had taken his seat and quiet was restored, Miss Harrison began:

"Which of you can tell me who George Washington was?"

THE CHERRY TREE EXPLOIT

Every arm shot upward to its full length, while the hands wiggled about eagerly. Many of the boys sharply cracked their fingers to attract her attention.

"Well, Isaac, what do you know about him?" she asked, observing that the boy was like to burst with excitement.

"He was mans who would to eat cherries of tree und cuts him down mit haxe ven cherries is them all ate und tree could not to be of some use ennymore," sang out Isaac.

Shamus loudly added, "An' George's dad was so orful s'prised at George givin' 'im the tale straight, without lyin' at all, that he didn't have stringth enough to lick 'im."

Whereupon, Miss Harrison was obliged to read again about George Washington's boyhood and something of what he did in later years for his country. With this information still fresh in the minds of her little pupils she ventured to make the following announcement:

"You have been doing so well in your drawing lessons that I am going to let you all try for a prize. It is now one week from Washington's Birthday. On the day before that holiday I will give a nice prize to the boy or the girl who hands me the best drawing. Make your drawing a picture of something Washington did."

IMPATIENT FOR THE CONTEST

"Might 've him begin on already?" was the impatient request of Ignatz Dormonsk. And teacher, seeing with what anxiety they awaited her reply, kindly gave her consent for a short drawing period immediately.

Then one by one they consulted Miss Harrison about the choice of a subject for their drawings. These conversations were always held in whispers, the pupils apparently being suspicious that others might borrow their ideas. But after it had been carefully explained to Ignatz that George Washington did not steal the cherries and peddle them around the neighborhood, and, therefore, a drawing about such an incident would be inappropriate, and when peace had been restored between the pencil monitor, Isaac Bernmier, and Shamus McGonigal, because the latter insisted upon having a new pencil, the boys and girls went busily to work—that is, all except Rachel. This little girl hesitated so long that the teacher asked the reason for her idleness.

"I is vonder vich shall I do—mine best or mine not so best—the while I do not know how good the prize could to be," was the cautious remark.

And Miss Harrison replied: "Don't worry about the prize, Rachel. It will be a nice one; good enough for your best work."

The competition was fairly begun. Excitement ran high upon this and the succeeding days, although it soon became evident to the members of the class, who could not resist comparing drawings, that Isaac Bernmier and Olga Mishky were rivals for first honors. Olga was flower monitor, however, and not even her great interest in the contest would allow her to cease giving attention to one poor little flower which she had placed on the window sill just beyond her desk. So much time did she spend in its care that finally she asked of Miss Harrison:

"Teacher, may I some drawing do to home?"

Glad to find such interest in the work, the teacher permitted all the scholars to take the drawings home with them and do work there.

At last the day arrived for the awarding of the prize. To the surprise of all, when Olga appeared there were traces of tears upon her face, the expression of which was very, very forlorn.

"Isaac Bernmier is the winner of the prize for the best drawing!" Miss Harrison announced, and Isaac stepped forward to receive the handsome portrait of George Washington.

"Und was mine better as Olga's?" asked Isaac in the glow of triumph.

"Why did you not turn in your drawing, Olga?" questioned Miss Harrison of the little girl who sat with head bent mournfully over her desk.

"Mine baby sister is put it in tub mit water in this mornin'," stammered Olga, vainly trying to stem the flood of tears.

Then the Fifth Primary School was startled as it had never been before. Isaac darted to Olga's seat, clutched the weeping girl by the arm and dragged her before Miss Harrison. Handing back the portrait to his teacher, he pointed to Olga and said firmly:

"Olga, not I, is von it, teacher. Mit mine eyes I see her drawing last night, und it was much better as mine."

"Hooray fer Ikey! Good ol' sport, Ikey!" howled Shamus in glee. And his applause was echoed by every scholar in the room, even the tiny "bambina," Carlotta Ferlini, contributing her mite of a "bravo!"

Miss Harrison justified the faith the children had in her.

"I, too, think that Olga should be rewarded," said she; "but it would not be right to take the prize from Isaac. So I shall give another prize to Olga." With these words, she produced in some mysterious manner a George Washington hatchet, made of pasteboard and filled with delectable sweets.

Olga's prize called forth more admiration than did the portrait, maybe because the former was not of candy and could not be eaten by Olga and her friends; but it was Isaac Bernmier's kindly deed that provoked the greatest comment, and that placed him on a pedestal beside Shamus McGonigal, to be worshiped by the other boys and girls of the "Fifth."

A Mighty Hunter

I'm goin' out a-huntin'! I'm goin' to have some fun!
An' there won't be any danger, even though I have a gun.
Oh, a lot of little "Dickey-birds" I'll bring home without fail,
'Cause I'll load my trusty gun wit salt
An' shoot 'em on the tail

Margaret G. Hays.

The Boy who didn't believe in Fairies

BEFORE him, on the road which wound up the steep hillside, toiled an old woman. Wrinkled was she with age and bent almost double by the heavy burden of fagots she had gathered in the forest and was now carrying home.

But it was not pity for the old woman's feebleness that moved the lad, Ormond, to quicken his pace so that he might overtake her.

"She looks like a witch, or she may be a fairy in disguise," said Ormond to himself; "and should I help her with the fagots she may reward me well."

Thereupon he stepped to the old woman's side and asked, politely:

"May I not relieve thee of thy burden for a distance?"

Gratefully the aged peasant surrendered the bundle to him.

Anxious to gain his reward, the youth strode forward quickly and soon arrived at the top of the hill, where he gave the fagots back to the woman. Then, after bowing low, he stood expectant.

"I thank thee again, young sir. God will reward thee," quavered the peasant.

"What!" the boy cried. "You are not a fairy nor a witch, and you have nothing to give me?"

In a furious rage he seized the bundle of fagots and hurled it far down the steep bank. And as he walked angrily away he cried:

"No more do I believe in fairies. I've done with such foolish fancies."

The old woman was still gazing despairingly at the fagots, wondering how she could recover them, when along came an honest lad. No sooner did he observe her trouble than he set about helping her.

Pluckily descending to where the bundle had been stopped in its downward flight by a clump of bushes, he raised the dead branches and twigs to his shoulders. Just then, what should he see but a leather bag, the contents of which chinked musically as he raised it.

With great eagerness he regained the summit of the hill. There he opened the bag, discovering that it was filled with shining golden coins of much value.

"Heaven has given it thee for thy kindness!" exclaimed the old woman.

And the lad, after generously bestowing upon her a share of the coins, took his way joyfully home to bear news of his good fortune.

"HE SAW A LEATHER BAG"

Afar off stood Ormond. He it was who had brought about this happy find, in which he himself had no benefit.

"The old woman was a fairy, after all," muttered he, in bitter disappointment; "and she has chosen this way of punishing me."

How Kuli saved the Kirmanshah

"KULI, LYING UPON THE RUG HE HAD SAVED, SLUMBERED AND DREAMED"

WITH an exclamation of impatience, Kuli stepped to the side of the roadway. An instant he paused, watching the camels and mules of an approaching caravan. Then he rested a hand upon the ruined wall and lightly vaulted into what had once been the courtyard of a grand palace.

Ordinarily Kuli, like most other Persian lads of 9, would have remained to look at the caravan. But today he yearned for solitude. A great sorrow lay heavily upon his heart and he turned hastily to the friendly forest for relief. Scrambling over huge masses of crumbling masonry, upon some of which the wonderful modelings and stucco work still bore witness of an ancient builder's art, he gained an open space wherein stood a fountain, unused for many a century. Beyond, wild flowers, shrubs and vines and grasses wove themselves together into an almost impassable barrier. Kuli made for himself a path, however, and passed thence into the open. On and on he went, through fields of wheat and barley and rice and sugar cane; among the nodding, crimson heads of poppies; by patches of ground cultivated for indigo, madder root and henna. Along irrigation ditches he traveled; along courses of torrents born amid the snows of mountains. Sometimes he passed houses, with their gardens of tangled, flowery masses, their little vegetable plots and melon patches, and orchards of plum, apricot, pear and apple trees. And so he left the city of Yezd far behind.

As he crossed a stretch of desert land, lizards, with tails a-quiver, scuttled to hiding places in the sand. But Kuli heeded them not. Straight forward he bent his steps, until he entered into the cool shade of the forest, where it starts to crawl upward over the slopes of the Kohrud mountain range.

Threading his way among cypresses and dwarf oaks, the lad finally threw himself down under a konor tree—an old friend of his. Here the thoughts he had been struggling to escape came fully upon him. Surely he could not help thinking of what he had heard his father say but a few hours ago. Even now he seemed to hear the voice speaking to his mother.

"Yes, I fear we must part with our most precious possession, our Kirmanshah. During the long time I have been ill our savings have been dwindling. Be that now, with my health recovered, I am without money to buy materials for my carvings and filigree work."

Sell the magnificent Kirmanshah rug! Kuli shuddered at the mere suggestion. How well the boy remembered the time his father had brought home this treasure! It had been purchased several years before in Kirmanshah, whither his father had journeyed to visit a friend. Arriving home, father had greeted the family joyously and then gave him (he was only a very little boy then) a handful of dates bought on the way through Bagdad. Kuli's mouth watered at the memory of those dates. His eyes kindled anew at the recollection of how father had then unpacked the rug and spread it out, in all its magnificence, for them to behold.

"Ah!" father had said; "naught but a genius could weave such a rug. It is a dream come from the loom."

Those prosperous days were gone, however, and good fortune was not yet returned. So the rug must go. Two dark, lustrous eyes brimmed with tears, and Kuli buried his little brown face in the moss.

"Squee-awk! Squee-a-a-wk!"

The boy leaped to his feet, startled. Looking quickly about him, soon he perceived whence the sound had come. To the lowest bough of a walnut tree hardby clung a falcon upon whose breast the blood showed in splotches. So badly wounded was the bird that it could scarcely cling to its perch. Dolefully now it made complaint.

Kuli stared, and his eyes opened wider. Yes, he was sure of it. Many a time he had seen the wealthy Abdul Kasr ride forth to hunt rooks and partridges, with this very falcon perched upon his wrist. The bird was hooded then, but Kuli could not mistake the peculiar bristles which covered the yellow, waxy band of skin at the base of the beak, nor the beautifully mottled colors of the plumage.

Quickly tightening the red silk cord which held his blue cotton trousers (zerejumah), the boy climbed easily up the tree. The falcon seemed to regard him as an enemy at first and pecked at him feebly once or twice. But soon it permitted Kuli to bear it tenderly to the ground. You may know that the boy lost no time carrying the falcon back to its owner.

"By the serpent god, Azhi Dahaka!" exclaimed Abdul Kasr, when the bird was brought to him. "I had grieved for my favorite hunter as utterly lost, and now he is returned! Boy, take this for thy service."

Kuli lowered his head. "I would not take the money, sir, but for—"

"But for what?" asked the surprised man, as Kuli hesitated. In a moment the kindly Abdul knew the story of the misfortune of Kuli's family.

"Bid thy father come to me, boy," said the man.

A few minutes later Kuli was bending his head reverently before his father.

"Master," said he, respectfully, as do the Persian children, "Abdul Kasr wishes to speak with you."

After a word or so of explanation, the father went upon his errand. Soon he returned. Rushing into the house, he clasped in his arms Kuli's mother, Kuli's sister and Kuli—all at once. Then he gave Kuli a hug all by himself, and finally ended by bestowing a hearty kiss upon baby.

"Our rug is saved!" cried he. "I am to have a loan of money, and the good Kuli there is to study under the tutor of Abdul's son and to be taught also by the son's governor. So the first thing we buy with our money is a new kumaskin kola (cap) and a gorgeous alka-luk (waistcoat) for the lad. Now, let us rejoice, for a bright season has come at last!"

But Kuli, overcome with weariness from his adventure, passed into slumber. And with his glossy black head resting upon mystic trees of life and symbolic octahedrons, patterned in the beautiful Kirmanshah rug saved by him, he dreamed of the time when he should be called "Effendi" (scholar), and carry in his muslin hemmerbund (belt) a pencase and roll of paper—the tools of the craft that he longed some time to follow.

GRANDMA of her COUNTRY

FOLKS call George Washington the
"Father"
Of the United States,
Though I'm quite sure that I'd be rather
"King" at any rates.

But what I want to know, is why,
If he's the country's pa,
His wife is never mentioned by
The name, "Our Country's Ma."

And if the states for which he fought
To call him "Pa" agree,
I think that George's mother ought
The country's grandma be.