POLLY EVANS' STORY PAGE FOR BOYS AND GIRLS

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BWANA HUMPTO in AFRICA

"INQUISITIVE ZEBRAS, NOT COWS, OBSTRUCT THE RAILS IN THE AFRICAN WILDS."

ARRIVAL OF THE HUNTING PARTY AT THE STATION OF KAPETI PLAINS.

"WILL they come?" repeated Lion for the seventy times seventh time.

The Cheetah thought they would. But as a cheater's word never counts for much, the Animal Council turned to the Elephant for an opinion.

"Yes," said the Elephant, solemnly, "I believe they will. I feel in my bones the approach of the great Elephant Hunter. As my bones are very large, you can realize what an immense feeling it must be."

Hyena plaintively whimpered that he always knew the Elephant had great feeling.

Paying no heed to this beastly interruption, the Elephant continued:

"Friends and Hyena, I am sure the Hunter comes not alone."

"Unalone! Unalone! Not not alone! 'Un' means 'not'!" corrected the scholarly Owl.

"I should never call you an un-fool," retorted the Elephant, fast losing patience.

Then raising his voice, he shouted that what he wished to say, what he positively intended to say, was that a mighty band of huntsmen had come with his dangerous enemy, the Hunter, who had killed more than a hundred kindred elephants. Something told him so, and the something was neither Hyena nor Owl, both of whom, when added together, he said, gave a sum total of 0.

"Cease squabbling! Only squabs squabble!" commanded the Lion with dignity. And he spoke as follows:

"Let us look carefully into these reports which come to our ears. It is said that Bwana Humpto, the idol of a nation 'cross seas, has arrived with his son, Photo Humpto, Doctor Pillo, Bosso Trappo and Taxidermo. Bosso is to direct the party, and Elephant Hunter will show the visitors how best to find us in our African home. It is to be a hunt in which we are to be the hunted. Bwana Humpto will shoot us. Photo Humpto will snapshoot us. Trappo will trap us. Taxidermo will preserve, not our lives, but our dead bodies; for he is no life preserver. Let us only hope, if this news be true, that we may provide Doctor Pillo with plenty of work among his companions."

"I know it is painful to be trapped or shot, but I wonder how it feels to be snapshot," Hippo mused.

"Oh, I should much rather be camphored or bottled by Taxidermo," wistfully sighed the Prongbuck, "in order that the world might gaze upon me for many, many years!"

Whereupon the Poet Owl seized the quill of the Secretary Bird and industriously penned this epitaph:

Here's preserved your pretty Prongo,
Who ranged roguishly the Congo;
Not content with plain ping-ponging,
Pretty Prong possessed a longing
Which was wrongful, very wrongful.

Prongo pleaded to be bottled,
Showing thus his soft skin, mottled;
But he's pickled now in camphor,
For the bottle was too damp for
Pretty Prongful—poor, proud Prongful!

"Owl, you're an ass," sneered the Antelope, who was first cousin to the Prongbuck.

The Wild Ass, grievously insulted, brayed indignantly: "No, he isn't. I'm the Ass; and I'm proud of it, Antelope. I wouldn't talk if I were as near to being a cantaloupe as you are."

The Council was rapidly becoming disorderly. Chacma Baboon tried to steal tail feathers from the Ostrich, while a playful Vulture pecked at the eyes of Rhinoceros.

Just as King Lion rose to call for adjournment, there galloped tempestuously into the jungle clearing a herd of zebras. With grunts long drawn out and shrill whistles, they announced:

"They've come! They've come on the Smoking Horse!"

Thereupon the Lion, the Leopard and the Crocodile, who are not protected from hunters by the Game Law of Man, gathered together for a three-part weeping. So deep a pool did the Crocodile weep that Lion and Leopard had to swim to reach land.

"Hold!" cried the Elephant, so that his trumpet blast was heard above the din; "let us stand loyally by one another in this hour of stress."

"Poo-oo-f! Poo-oo-f! Poo-oof!"

Immediately every creature assumed an attitude of strained attention; then each forgot about the loyal stand, and dashed, plunged, crawled, waddled or flew as speedily as possible into the jungle. All vanished—except the foolish Hyena, who stood stockstill and grinned at the approaching Iron Horse.

* * * * *

The tale of a rifle—a camera, too;
The havoc they wrought in an unfenced zoo;
The story of Humpto and others—and you
Now have in a nutshell a yarn truly true.
—Bwana Humpto's Diary.

Photo Humpto took a snapshot.

"It is nice," said he, "to ride upon the cowcatcher of a locomotive and to see all these Noah's Ark and Zoo animals turned loose and running wild.

"It is nice," said he, "to watch the thousands of creatures which my good father, Bwana Humpto, tells me are lions, rhinoceri, hippopotami, hartebeests, zebras, giraffes and whatnot. I do hope that soon I may photograph a whatnot."

"Whatnots are sometimes photographed, my son," observed Bwana Humpto, with a laugh which showed all his teeth. "But, speaking of cowcatchers, you must remember, my boy, that this is a zebracatcher. Inquisitive zebras, not cows, obstruct the rails in the African wilds."

Photo leaned against the pilot of the engine and pondered, as the train sped over plateaus covered with crinkly grass and among rocks and sparsely wooded hills. Then Photo Humpto took a snapshot.

"Is there not a troop of zebras ahead of us?" asked Doctor Pillo, unslinging his rifle.

Bwana Humpto leveled his field glass, and said there was.

The lad cried, excitedly: "Oh, Doctor, please kill one!"

"Bloodthirsty boy!" reproached Doctor Pillo, "we must slay animals only for food or to preserve their skins. Here is a good verse for you to memorize:

"Shoot not at the little zebra,
As he gayly wags his tail;
Shoot not at the playful zebra—
Or some day you'll land in jail."

"Just shoot their stripes off!" begged Photo.

But the Doctor said the stripes were put on with indelible ink and they would not come off. So Photo Humpto took a snapshot.

"I, also, know a little poem," volunteered Photo. "It was written by Mother Goose with a goose quill, and it begins:

"Goosey, goosey gander, whither shall I wander?"

"I don't remember the answer, but the verse reminds me very much of this Ugander Railway, which winds in and out like the crooked lanes in the crooked town that you reached by the crooked stile."

"The name is Uganda," said Gwana Humpto, severely, "and it does arrive somewhere, which is more than can be said of you in your rambling speech. Yonder lies the station of Kapeti Plains."

Photo confided to the Doctor that when at Messina Italians had kissed the hands of his father and himself, and that he still suspected his fingers had been somewhat grimy. "Ever since," whispered the boy, "I've desired to wash my hands before entering a town."

However, the Doctor advised him not to bother. Even should the natives kiss his hand, they would like a flavor, Doctor Pillo said.

As the train drew up to the station a number of porters, lined along the edge of the platform, saluted Bwana Humpto and cheered him lustily. Photo thought he knew the chap on the end of the line. This porter resembled Sam Johnson, with whom Photo was acquainted at home. But Doctor Pillo said that more likely it was a woman, because the natives deem it an honor to permit their wives to do the work.

"Sam thinks the same," reflected Photo, "so I guess it's Mrs. Johnson." Then Photo Humpto took a snapshot.

The Titled Englishman met the party when Bwana Humpto, Doctor Pillo and Photo slid from the zebracatcher and Elephant Hunter, Bosso Trappo and the other members disembarked. He shook hands cordially with each newcomer. Afterward, he invited them to a luncheon of wildebeest sandwiches and goats' milk.

"Is a wildebeest really a wild beast?" innocently inquired Photo. The Titled Englishman stared, but said very politely that he thought it was.

Photo was discouraged; therefore, he went and hobnobbed with the headman of the porters. This native was a genuine chieftain, who wore a top hat and several other things not worth mentioning. He himself said that he was a cannibal chief. Altogether, he was a much bigger personage than Sam Johnson, whom Photo had always admired. The greatest feat Sam had ever done was to swallow a pie in two bites. Gooboo, as the chieftain called himself, could do much better than that even in pie-eating, Photo was sure.

"Soon 'sadari'—camp out—an' go with porters and beaters," Gooboo informed the youth.

Photo nodded. He thought the natives looked very much like carpet beaters, and was pleased to find his opinion verified.

The carriers now busied themselves with luggage and provisions, preparatory to marching toward the camping place, a short distance from the railroad. A queer, monotonous song they started. Trappo consented to translate the song for Photo. He said it was merely the African dialect words for—

I've been working on the railroad all the livelong day;
Rising early in the morning to while the hours away.

"That may be the correct translation," murmured the lad, "but I'd wager my kodak that none of these fellows would work just to while the hours away."

Gooboo smiled so very pleasantly at hearing this that Photo unthinkingly reached into his pocket and handed the chieftain a coin. In a moment he thought the cannibal chief would be offended; but the headman of the porters accepted the money exactly as Sam would have done. Indeed, Gooboo resembled Sam in many ways.

"'Pon muh word," shouted the Titled Englishman, rushing toward Photo and clapping the boy violently upon the back; "you ah a clevah young chap—wondahfully clevah, don't yuh know!"

"I beg your pardon!" gasped Photo.

"My deah fellow, I want to say again that you ah wondahfully clevah. I've just thought of the bright little joke you told me—the one about the untamed beast, you know!" was the enthusiastic explanation, as the Titled Englishman proceeded once more to pummel the youth's spine.

"Do you mind standing while I photograph you now?" eagerly asked Photo. "It's quite an unusual laugh, to be sure."

The Titled Englishman didn't. So Photo Humpto took a snapshot.

Then Photo Humpto discovered that he had been using the same roll of kodak films twice.

(The Second Bwana Humpto Story Will Appear Next Week.)

The Happy Mishap

PHILOMENA awoke slowly from her midday nap, stretched forth her tiny fists and yawned a great, big, sleepy yawn. The sun filtered through vines which almost curtained the open window, and spots of sunlight and shadow rested upon the face of the little bambina.

Two black eyes blinked; two chubby hands rubbed them vigorously. Then Philomena looked about her for the playmate that had nestled in her arms when first she slumbered.

"Carlo! Carlo! I want thee!" she shrilled.

But Carlo did not come. Instead, Philomena's mother appeared and said, very sadly, that the puppy had been sold to a rich American lady, who lived in a villa nearby.

The little girl listened unbelievingly. Her darling puppy sold! How could such a thing be possible? In a daze she passed from the hut. Along the dusty highway she plodded, scarcely knowing what she did.

At last, however, she understood just what her loss meant. No Carlo to love; no Carlo to cuddle and kiss and croon over! Tears welled in the great, round eyes, and sob after sob racked the body of the little one.

[illegible]

"KEEP CARLO FOR ME."

Carlo!" cried Philomena determinedly. Hastily wiping away the tears, she trudged forward resolutely. She was going to find Carlo and bring him home.

It was a long way, and the road ran steeply from the Italian town of Avellino, upon the outskirts of which the little girl dwelt. Past the ruins of the ancient town of Abellium she went. She saw barefooted pilgrims ascending the mountain to reach the convent of Vergine. But she gazed without interest, for her only thought was to find her Carlo.

Finally, the little girl felt sure that her precious doggie was not to be found along the main highway. Into a lane she turned, and followed its windings through beautiful chestnut groves and chestnut copses, until she came to a tall, neatly trimmed hedge.

Philomena was not tall enough to peer over the hedge, and it was too thick to afford her a peep through it. On she stumbled, toward the gateway. In a moment she would have a view of the grounds, in the midst of which stood a handsome villa.

Philomena shaded her eyes and looked, and then—

Madly rushing across the lawn to the gates came a cunning little puppy, excitedly barking with all his little might. Yes, it was Carlo. It HAD to be, else the mishap that fell upon this Italian bambina when she lost her pet might not have ended in happiness.

How Philomena caressed and fondled the doggie through the iron rods of the gate! And how appealingly Carlo besought his mistress to rescue him, as he licked her hands and wagged his stumpy tail!

Then the rich American lady walked across the lawn. Philomena was sure she would not like her. How could she like anybody who had taken her dear Carlo away? But when the lady heard Philomena's story, and not only gave Carlo back to her for keeping, but also presented the little girl with several shining coins and good things to eat, Philomena knew that the lady had not intended to be cruel.

"I want you to keep Carlo for me," the lady said, as she directed the coachman to drive Philomena home in the pony cart. Philomena promised; but the lady never asked for Carlo, and doggie still owns the same mistress.

CHURCH

WHEN Muvver, dear, takes me to Church, I 'joy so much to go
An' watch the pretty candles perch, all twinklin', in a row.
The minister's dwessed up in w'ite, wif' lots o' lace an' bands.
He looks so queer an' clean an' p'lite, wif' ruffles roun' his hands.
Sometimes a lot o' ladies sings some awful drony airs—
'Don't know edzackly what it is, but 'fink 'ey're singin' "Prayers";
An' I yawn an' feel SO s'eepy, an' ask, "Can I go home?"
En' Muvver frowns an' looks so good, an' I feel ALL ALONE.
Some mens come roun' wif' baskets FULL wif' MONEY. Why do we
Have to give 'em our five-centses, when 'ey've plenty? Do you see?
But when at last we're goin' home, I 'mos' could dance a jig,
I guess 'at folks don't get so tired IN CHURCH when they are big.

MARGARET G. HAYS.

Moving On

SYNOPSIS OF PREVIOUS INSTALMENTS.

TO CONRAD BURGESS, a member of a boys' secret society which at each weekly meeting appoints to one of its members some task, falls the duty of making a journey to and from San Francisco within six months. Refusal to act or failure to perform means expulsion from the circle as a coward. Taking the sentence seriously, the lad steals away at midnight, spends the night in a wood and sets out at daylight in company with Bugs, a tramp, whom he meets and who shares his food. They cross a river on a raft, and after a day's tramping obtain a good meal and night's lodging from a kind farmer. After breakfast the two board a freight. Bugs is able to give valuable advice on the best methods of freight riding. When their destination is reached, they elude the trainmen and make for a nearby house. This, Bugs explains, is a haven provided especially for hobos. Inside are gathered a number of men, who, after a hearty supper, spend the evening in exchanging stories of tramp life. Conrad passed a sleepless night, but in the morning is ready to start again for the railroad. A glance at the engineer of a freight locomotive strangely excites Bugs, who mutters of vengeance for some previous wrong, and then springs into the cab, shouting to Conrad to follow. Another moment and they are speeding away from the wondering engineer.

(CONTINUED FROM LAST WEEK.)

CHAPTER IV

DODGING THE POLICE

ON THE locomotive rumbled, as Bugs opened the throttle wider and wider. The tramp was enjoying himself greatly, and Conrad's eyes glowed with feverish excitement. It was rare sport, they thought.

"We'll hop off afore we reach the next station! They'll wire ahead to ketch us, mebbe!" shouted Bugs.

Then, catching the boy's look of amazement at the ease with which he ran the engine, the tramp explained that at one time he had been a fireman. "Been most everything!" said he; and Conrad found afterward that the hobo had spoken the truth.

With eyes glued to the rails in front, the two adventurers did not think of looking behind until there came an ominous rumble from the rear. Bugs gave one look in that direction and yelled:

"What rotten luck! They've got a fast passenger loco on our trail!"

He quickly reversed the throttle. Before the engine came to a standstill the companions had leaped from the cab and were running helter-skelter for cover in a wood that lay beyond.

They were none too soon, for within a minute's time the passenger locomotive also slowed down, and several men jumped from it and followed in pursuit of the fugitives.

Suddenly Bugs and Conrad stumbled from the woods. A broad lake stretched before them. Bugs gave a shout of joy as he perceived a number of rowboats drawn up close to the bank. Without hesitation he sped toward a boat.

"Cast them other boats adrift!" he cried to Conrad, while he himself searched for oars among the craft. He was agreeably surprised by the discovery of a pair. Then the man and boy flung themselves into a boat, and had pushed a distance from shore by the time their pursuers came into view.

"Stop, or we'll shoot!" was the command.

"They're railroad detectives," muttered Bugs. He added, "Don't pay any 'tention, but dodge when yuh see them ready to fire."

It was a great risk. But the pair were too much excited for reason. Fortunately the shots were wild, and the distance was too great for accurate shooting. At last they arrived at the opposite bank, when they lost no time in plunging far into the woods.

Almost a mile was traversed in this headlong fashion. Bugs then paused, announcing, between pants for breath:

"I know this here country. There's a picnic park not far in front. I guess we're safe now. An' as I'm all-fired tired, let's hunt a soft spot among the bushes and snatch forty winks."

"WORK FOR YOUR MEAL."

Conrad was surprised that Bugs should take the matter so coolly. He knew that he could not sleep, but he sat down beside the tramp, who almost immediately was snoring deeply.

To the lad it seemed many hours before his comrade awoke. In reality, only sixty minutes had passed when the tramp lazily stretched himself, and suggested that the journey be continued.

Further into the woods they penetrated. After a while, a large, partly cleared space lay before them, and they stepped out upon the [illegible] picnic ground.

A few rods distant there stood a long, shed-like structure, which Bugs correctly guessed contained a bowling alley. Inquisitive as ever, he pried open the door.

"Ah! Here's several balls and pins!" he announced after a search in a remote corner. Thereupon he gravely placed the pins in position and commenced to bowl, inviting the lad to join him.

While in the midst of their sport, the door opened and they heard a voice shout:

"Hey, Jack! Seen any pesky tramps around here?"

Quick as a flash, Bugs seized a ball and hurled it toward the figure which appeared in the doorway. The man fell, stunned. Bugs pounced upon him, and producing a stout cord in the same mysterious way Conrad had observed him employ before, tied the man hand and foot. Conrad saw for the first time that the man was their enemy, the detective.

Another footfall was heard outside. Bugs motioned for silence, and when another detective stepped into the shed to investigate the disappearance of his comrade, Bugs threw himself upon the man, and after a struggle overcame him. The fellow was bound in the same manner as was the other sleuth.

Bugs now paused for a moment to consider. The spirit of mischief was reflected in his eyes.

"Help me carry 'em!" said he, briefly. Noticing how frightened the boy looked, he remarked:

"These chaps 'll come too. They've been hit a little hard, but it won't hurt 'em."

The detectives were carried to a carrousel, where Bugs, with grim humor, bound them fast to the grinning lions of wood. As soon as this was done the tramp and his comrade strode toward the railroad.

A handcar approaching at this moment, they accosted the section hands riding upon it, and requested the privilege of a ride.

"Come on!" said the men cheerily.

Naturally, the invitation was accepted. The fugitives rode until a town was sighted, when Bugs remarked casually that "they'd better get off here."

So, after thanking the railroad men, Bugs and Conrad climbed a fence and squatted under a tree.

"Detectives 'll be on the lookout at that town. That's why I didn't want to get too close," he explained.

"Now," observed he, taking a false beard and mustache from his pocket, "I'm going to fix myself up so no body 'll ever reckernize me. I learned makin' up while travelin' with a circus wunst."

In a moment the transformation was complete. Conrad himself would not have recognized Bugs. Afterward the tramp applied a stain to the boy's face and hands.

"Yo[illegible] like a Eyetalian, an' they won't know you, nuther; or pertend [illegible] deef an' dumb if yuh wanter," he [illegible].

As both were exceedingly hungry, they made for the town. On the outskirts they parted, having agreed to meet later at the tree.

"Would you please give me something to eat, lady?" asked Conrad, at the first house he came to.

The woman to whom he had appealed looked severely on the youth. Beckoning for him to follow, she led the way to a huge woodpile. She pointed to the towering woodpile and remarked tersely:

"There's a saw and axe. Work for your meal."

(CONTINUED NEXT WEEK.)