

POLLY EVANS' STORY PAGE FOR BOYS AND GIRLS

Br'er Possum a Captive

The roadway employes of the Philadelphia Subway and Elevated Railroad have a unique pet that came into their possession recently—a possum, an animal sufficiently rare in that part of the country. He was captured in the subway, and is on exhibition at the roadway office at the western end of the Market street bridge.

A trackwalker, patrolling his section in the early morning, saw it first, scuttling along the track beneath the deadly third rail. For there was something familiar about the little gray animal that paused, blinking in the glare of his reflector lamp; something that conjured up memories of nocturnal rambles through southern woods and swamps, with an accompaniment of baying "houn' dogs," shouting hunters and the smell of the smoking, faring pitch-



BR'ER POSSUM

pine torches, revealing the possum high up in the gum tree.

A sudden grab settled the question of "Br'er Possum's" reality, and with visions of a savory roast, with sweet faters and plenty of gravy in the pan, his captor bore him off to imprisonment in an empty room. His fate had a kinder destiny in store for the possum, and the news of the find reached headquarters and there came a demand to "bring that possum in mighty quick."

So in his barred prison, the little animal was conveyed to the division office. A cage was hastily constructed, and "Br'er Possum" was placed therein until more commodious quarters could be arranged. At first he showed a hearty desire to bite any one who ventured near, but his teeth, his lips and revealing a very capable set of man's teeth. But daily association with him have tamed his wild spirit, and on days when he sleeps in his cage, new cars above him, but he gives them no attention whatever. His sleeping quarters are a section of hollow log filled with straw. So tame, in fact, has he become that he makes no objection to being picked up and handled.

Sometimes he is brought into the office and perched on a desk, he looks his sharp, inquisitive nose about to discover what is going on, for his eyes keen enough at night, are of little use in the daylight.

While exploring the desks, he climbs down, using his long, flexible tail like a drag anchor, and crawling into a waste basket, he will curl up and contentedly go to sleep.

Captured at the time that President Taft had immortalized the possum tribe, it was deemed quite apropos to name him "Br'er Possum," though he is, Billy has not altogether conquered his timorous instinct. He is, when awakened, easily startled by any sudden movement, and the tearing of a piece of paper seems particularly to irritate him.

Unlike the traditional possum, however, he does not lie down when frightened, and feign death. On the contrary, he shows a disposition to gaze at a distance.

Billy is, apparently, full-grown, weighs about ten pounds, and is of the black-leg species—that is, while his coat is grayish black with a bluish-colored spot on the breast, his feet, legs are covered with human hands. His feet, particularly the hind ones, resemble a flexible, devoid of hairy covering, and, excepting the fifth toe, which seems to answer the purpose of a thumb, are tipped with short, strong nails.

How he ever got into the subway, or where he came from, will probably always remain as great a mystery as will the problem of how he escaped death from the third rail. Under the wheels of a train, for Billy cannot tell and no one else knows.

W. B. KENNEDY.

Cruise of the "Mousetrap"

A Shipwrecked Doll

SYNOPSIS OF PREVIOUS INSTALLMENTS

THREE boys and a dog start upon their travels in a sailing wagon over the water. The dog, named Zeke, is a very smart and cunning animal. The boys are Billy, Pete and Jim. They are on their way to the Mousetrap, a place where they hope to find a fortune.

(CONTINUED FROM LAST WEEK.)

"That thrasher looks lonely," says Billy, when he notices that the men who run it and the farmers weren't near.

Known that Billy is, 'mong other things, of meddlesome disposition, I puts in, properly sharp:

"Toud better be a-mindin' of your own business an' not go foolin' with that there thing."

"Oh, shucks an' t'ny tadpoles!" growls Billy. "Ain't I seen Uncle Jim run a engine enough to know all 'bout it myself? Look here, ol' frisky-cat; I kin run this engine an' I'm a-point to do it." Sayin' which, he climbs up in the cab, after tryin' Pretty on behind for company.

"Go ahead and get yourself into trouble, but don't come to us for to get you out," I 'sponds, pretendin' to forget about Billy an' to be interested in the road beyond. Then I cracked Zeke with the whip right smart, so as the Mousetrap with me 'n' Pete made was soon out o' Billy's sight.

But we hadn't passed very many fence posts 'fore we hears an orful scurritin' and toot-toot-toot' back where Billy was.

"I'll bet he's monkeyin' with the whistle an'll soon be gettin' the dickens," says Pete confidential-like to me.

Sure enough, after a while there comes a pattern' of feet behind and round a bend o' the road hiker Billy, lookin' desparate.

"Hide me, fellers! Hide me!" yells he, between a grunt an' a wheeze, what with the dust in 'is throat and not wantin' to make too much noise. We'd no sooner plunked Billy in the Mousetrap and piled on 'is some canned apples and some jars o' peach marmalade that he tumbled into 'is hair than a crowd o' farmers, madder'n wetted hens, flocked up.

"Have you saw a feller that been



"HE DIDN'T THINK TO WEDGE THE WHEELS, AN' WITH MUCH SUDDIN'NESS IT WENT DOWNHILL!"

makin' trouble with our engine?" shouts out.

"Yes," says Pete, while the heap o' canned peas an' marmalade jars shivered. "Yes, there was a feller what's name Billy Mumford, and we saw him in your engine, but we don't know where he went."

"No, we don't know where he skiped," I adds to 'courage Bill. "But if we should happen to see him, we'll tell yuh mighty quick." I promises.

"Cause he's a low-down, mean feller that we'd like to get a punch at our selves," there was a gurgle from underneath where the marmalade jars was leakin', but whether it was an 'count o' my truthful sayin' or the jam in Billy's hair I can't mention.

Them farmers left after lookin' at us as though they didn't much believe us. Afterwards Billy untangled hisself from the peas and jam. Then what do yuh think?—if he didn't want to fight us, 'spite o' what we did to get 'im out o' trouble!

"A low-down, mean feller am I?" squalls he, wavin' his arms an' gazin' wild. "I'll show yuh!"

We might 'a had to squelch him then an' there 'fore an' me if some perchin' yelps hadn't come from the distance.

"Gosh, I clean forgot to untie Pretty from the engine!" gasps Billy. "An' now I'll bet a all any sucker taffy that them farmers are abusin' 'im."

Howsoever, the yelps kept a-comin' in nearer and nearer until pretty soon Pretty cracked round the bend, a-makin' fierce tracks for us an' perfection.

Billy, disrememberin' his pity of a second before, grunts:

"Those farmers 'll know that the dog belongs to us if he comes on."

So he licks Zeke, which made the horse so fast as he could. Pretty couldn't catch up, but followed a-howlin' for more or less the best an' which time we decided to let him farmers scoldin' an' with much of suddintness the "Mousetrap," started rollin' downhill with Pete, Billy, an' me 'n' Zeke.

Zeke was 'most played out with the hard run. We unthrottled him on top o' a hill, which he pushed the wagon underneath an' apple tree. Then he climbed up, with Pretty, a savin' that he'd show us fellers the best an' easiest way to pick apples without workin'. But he didn't think to wedge the wagon wheels an' with much of suddintness the "Mousetrap," started rollin' downhill with Pete, Billy, an' me 'n' Zeke.

(CONTINUED NEXT WEEK)

ON A beautiful May morning seventy years ago, a tiny, dark-haired girl first opened her brown eyes. "Oh, baby, how dear lighted father will be!" were the first words her mother spoke when she beheld her little daughter. "You have his eyes and his hair and his loving smile."

The captain's baby grew as the months passed. Every morning when her mother came to dress her she would say, "Perhaps your father's ship will come today." When the day passed, as she sang baby to sleep, she would say hopefully, "Tomorrow will be the day when father first rests eyes on his little daughter."

Early in November came one of the worst storms that ever visited the New England coast. For three days and nights the northeast wind



"A LARGE, BEAUTIFUL DOLL"

blew a terrific gale. Blinding snow, sleet and hail fell during most of the time, and the sea was so cold that everything froze as soon as it struck the vessels.

On the fourth morning the clouds broke and the sun shone out clear and bright. For miles the shore was covered with wreckage, broken timbers, spars and portions of the crews of vessels.

Among the fishermen found a great sea chest, and on one of the "initials of the baby's father. When they opened it, there was a very tiny, beautiful doll, almost as large as a baby herself. Even though she was made of wood, her eyes were fixed out and put into her arms. Placed in a box, she was wrapped in a slip of paper on which they could with difficulty read the words: "For my daughter."

They thought that the captain, when he knew that his ship would probably be wrecked, had had his wife make a message, pinned it to the doll and laid her at the foot of his chest, hoping that the captain's daughter, when she was found, would find the message, and so she would know where her father was.

And so, you see, it was, after all, the baby's father who gave her her name, though it was borne to her in so strange a manner. How the mother longed to hear from her dear little daughter, and how she longed to see her again, when she came and whose hands had so carefully fashioned her quaint garments, her ruffled parasol, her homespun petticoat, her neat, dark gown, her snowy pelisse and her green blind sunbonnet.

But stranger of all was the way in which the captain learned that his little one was a girl and not a boy. No one ever knew how this knowledge came to him in those far, foreign seas, unless it was that the angel's whisper led it to him in the watches of the night as he stood in the bow of his ship listening for the voices which speak to us out of the still dark.

MARGARET WENTWORTH LIGHTON.

Princess Viola's Whims

CENTURIES ago there lived in Normandy a duke and duchess, who had a daughter named Viola. The little girl first opened her eyes in a great castle with towers and battlements and drawbridges outside. From the immense rooms, draped with wonderful tapestries and carpeted with rich carpets, trophies of the wars in the Orient, Viola could look down upon a large courtyard where equines trotted to and fro the big war-chargers.

As she grew older Viola became more and more wilful. And as her parents permitted her to have her own way and gave her everything she wanted for, she grew discontented with ordinary pastimes.

One day the duke found the little girl in tears! Nor would she be comforted. "She says she wants it to snow and the water to freeze, in order that she may try the skates sent her by the duchess of Russia," explained the duke.

"But, my dear Viola," said the duke, "ice does not come in October."

Viola only sobbed; "I d-d-d-d-d care; I want to try my skates, and I don't want to sit here until December for ice and snow."

The duke was thoughtful. Finally, he turned to the princess and said:



THE DUKE MUST PLAY WITH VIOLA'S MARIONETTES

"Very well; you shall have an opportunity this very day to try your skates." The little girl's eyes opened in wonder. How could her father bring the ice and snow? Never had he broken his promise, however, and she knew that she would have her wish.

And so she did. For, when she looked through the window a few hours later, she found the courtyard covered with what appeared to be white, glistening snow.

While Viola was enjoying herself, skating over the hard, gleaming surface, the duchess chided her husband, saying:

"You should not have used salt to cover the yard, when our retainers have barely enough to season their food. Now, for many a day they must eat their soup without salt because of the many sacks you have used to grant Viola's foolish request."

"But you know I can't refuse anything the little girl asks," replied the duke, apologetically.

No, indeed, could he. For when the princess asked him that evening to play with her, the dignified nobleman was obliged to kneel and make a jumping-jack dance up and down.

Then it was that a royal visitor was announced. And before the duke could rise there entered the king himself! You see, the king was very friendly with the duke of Normandy, and so had come without warning.

The king had not been in the castle very long before he discovered what a little tyrant of the household Viola was. He departed without saying anything, but several days later there came a summons for Viola to appear at court.

Viola hailed this call with delight. Indeed, she was not as sorry as she should have been at the thought of parting from her parents for a while.

For a time the splendor of the Parisian court dazzled this little girl, who was considered a lady-in-waiting to the queen. As the months rolled by, however, she began to long for her home in Normandy. She was much disappointed in Paris, where she was taught to obey instead of give commands.

A chilly winter day in winter, while she was driving through the streets of the city, she chanced to see a woman dressed in the garb of a Norman peasant. She straightway made the woman her acquaintance, and she said to her:

"You are of Normandy, are you not?"

The woman replied that she was, whereupon the princess asked how the duke and the duchess are well, although this time for their daughter, Princess Viola is gone, because now

Make a Trick Cage



DAN knew something was the matter as soon as he saw the tear-stained face of the bird. "What is it, Nan?" he asked.

"The canary has been captured and is in a little cage in the voice."

"How can you tell?"

"Usually do escape when the door is open," said Dan, remembering even my canary will fly out, even though I can't see it from above, and

"Your canary? I didn't know you had one," said Nan, much surprised.

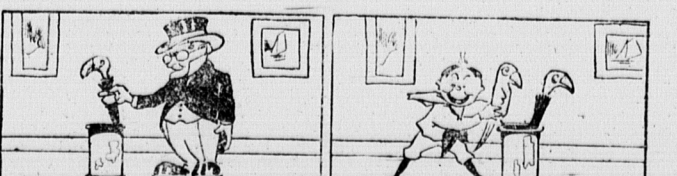
"I'll bet you see it if you wish," Dan replied, solemnly. "Yes, I have. It's in the voice."

He stepped into his workroom, presently returning with a funny little paper cage in which a canary was plainly drawn. Then he waved his handkerchief over the cage, removed the handkerchief, and the cage was empty!

"This trick was accomplished so deftly that Nan had no idea of how it was done. So Dan was obliged to draw the diagram as you see them above, and then direct her to make the apparatus herself."

This Nan did by carefully cutting out Figure 1, clipping away all the white parts from the gray bars and folding along the dotted lines. She then cut out the figure of the bird behind the black bars, sliding it into the spaces reserved for it behind the cage (Figure 2). You will find that the gray bars were exactly in front of the black ones. Dan, under cover of the handkerchief, could remove the slip of paper containing the bird.

The Wrong Umbrella



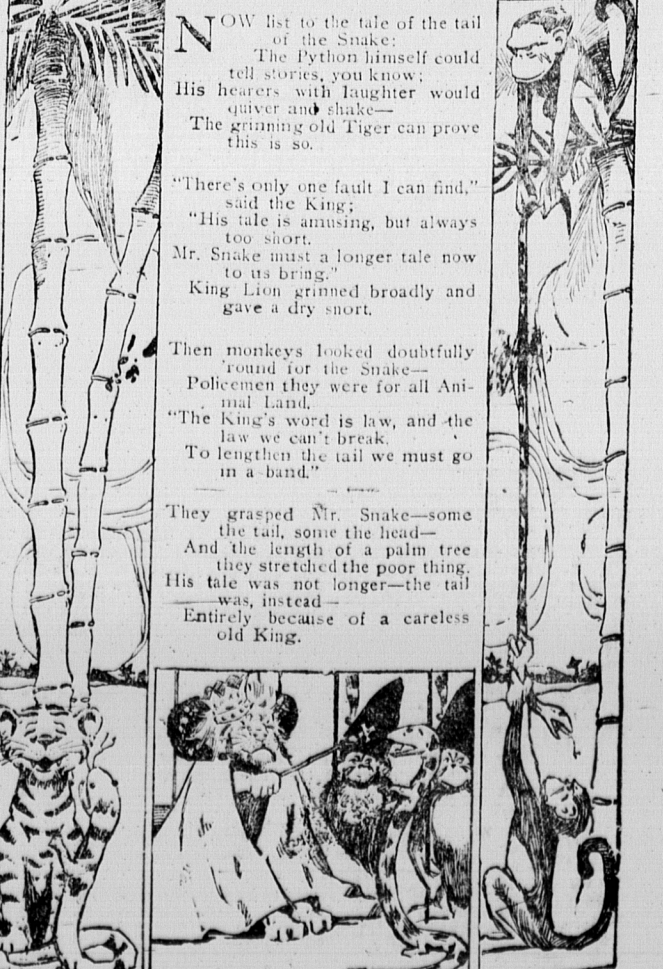
IT WAS Johnny's own fault that Polly came to an untimely end. Not that the boy wished to bring harm to the parrot; indeed, he was very fond of her. But his love for mischief it was that caused him to play the grievous trick.

Upon bidding his host good-bye, Mr. Brown reached for his umbrella. Now, he was sure that the umbrella possessed a handle carved in the shape of a parrot's head. So, when he saw a parrot's head before him, he naturally reached for it. He did not know that Johnny, remembering that the old gentleman was very near-sighted, had placed Polly in the stand, so that her head stuck out.

Johnny made his way to the door, unheedful of the squawks of the parrot carried in his hand. And then, at the door, he raised the umbrella, as he imagined, with a vigorous jerk. Ah! instead of raising an umbrella, he stretched poor Polly's neck to such a length that the poor bird died. He did his best to get Polly's neck to such a length that the poor bird died. He did his best to get Johnny could warn him of the mistake.

And now Johnny is overcome with remorse. To think it was through HIM that poor Polly was killed!

Tale of the Tail of the Snake



NOW list to the tale of the tail of the Snake:

The Python himself could tell stories, you know; His hearers with laughter would quiver and shake— The grinning old Tiger can prove this is so.

"There's only one fault I can find," said the King; "His tale is amusing, but always too short. Mr. Snake must a longer tale now to us bring."

King Lion grinned broadly and gave a dry snort.

Then monkeys looked doubtfully "round for the Snake— Policemen they were for all Animal Land.

"The King's word is law, and the law we can't break. To lengthen the tail we must go in a band."

They grasped Mr. Snake—some the tail, some the head— And the length of a palm tree they stretched the poor thing. His tale was not longer—the tail was, instead— Entirely because of a careless old King.