POLLY EVANS' STORY PAGE FOR BOYS AND GIRLS

Cruise of the "Mousetrap"

PETE DANGLES PRETTY OVER THE BULLDOG'S HEAD

SYNOPSIS OF PREVIOUS INSTALMENT.

THREE boys and a dog start upon their travels in a spring wagon over the top of which hoops covered with canvas have been fastened. This "prairie schooner" is named the "Mousetrap," and its "cruise" is described by the boy who keeps the "log."

All goes well until a creek is reached, and Pete undertakes to go boating in an old scow. The craft founders, so that Pete and Pretty, the dog, have to swim for land. While Pete is endeavoring to revenge himself upon his comrades for their laughter at his expense, the owner of the scow appears.

(CONTINUED FROM LAST WEEK.)

I LOOKED round, cautious-like, just to see if there was any way to scoot in case 'twas best. There wasn't.

Them cowards, Billy an' Pete, had already skipped, though Pete said afterward he was only huntin' dry clothes in the Mousetrap, an' Billy made believe he was lookin' after Zeke. But clean clothes weren't hidden way up the road (that's where Pete ran), nor was Zeke croppin' grass more'n half a mile t'other side o' the wagon. So, seein' as how I was the only brave man, I up and says:

"Mr. Farmer, our dog, that's named Pretty, and the hind leg of which's been hurt for severial years (I says this so's to make 'im sorry for Pretty), went and pushed the scow out in the creek with 'is nose, an' Pete swam after it to bring it back, only it filled 'fore he could do that. Ain't that right, Pete?"

But Pete, bein' afraid, had went upon his way, as Deacon Perkins, our Sunday school superintendent, would say. An' what did that measly dog do but show hisself jus' then!

"That dog, you say, pushed my boat off'n the bank?" sputters the farmer, a-pointin' to Pretty, who ain't 'zactly of the biggest size that dogs come in.

"His nose is orful strong, sir," 'splains I.

"That snip of a dog!" the farmer goes on, with his eyes a-shinin'. An' then he laughs so hard that the trees wabble. After a while he calms considerable.

"Afore you young fellers does other damage, I'd ruther yuh'd git," orders he, sayin' which he turns and starts down the road, a-causin' of Billy to dodge from the bushes where he was hid and scamper toward the Mousetrap.

"You're pretty fellers!" announces I, scornful. The two of them didn't say nothin', 'cept that Billy did 'sinuate the only reason I didn't run was because I couldn't. The idear!

We looked bitter at each other for five minutes' worth o' time. Then, Billy commoonicates:

"Hadn't we better go?"

"I ain't afraid o' farmers, even if you fellers are," reports I, with dignerty; "but I'm tired o' this place, anyhow, so let's go on."

A couple of hours from then our eafin's give out. We was just goin' to get some corn to roast, from a field alongside, when Pete sings out:

"S'posen we tackle this orchard afore anything else?"

Billy an' I bein' of a willin' nature, we all hopped the fence an' started 'amining trees for nicest apples.

All of a suddint there came a rush from behind. Billy 'n' I shinned up a tree quick. So did Pete, though havin' Pretty's rope tied to his arm, he had more trouble gettin' up, pullin' Pretty after him.

It was a orful fierce bulldog as cornered us. We saw that when he first come dashin' up. An' there he set, not wantin' to leave an' not bein' able to climb up to us—for which we was truly thankful.

We'd stuck in our diff'rent trees for 'most an hour, when Pete calls:

"I'm goin' to attract of his attention, so's you fellers can skin down an' get somethin' to drive the brute away."

Then Pete showed he had some sense, after all—which I'd never thought. He dangles Pretty, a-swingin' him in the air just out of the bulldog's reach. Say the old dog wasn't mad, snarlin' and clawin' with 'is paws like he was crazy! An' say Pretty wasn't scared! You might 'a' thought he was goin' to be a deader, which he would 'a' been, sure 'nough, if that rope had broke. But it didn't, and soon I saw that Billy or me had a chanst to get away.

"Billy," says I, "you go and fetch somethin'. I'll stay and help Pete if 'e needs it."

I'm sure this was real nobleness in me. But that mean Billy had to 'sclaim:

"Who's the coward now?"

I told 'im HE was. To show he wasn't, the next minute, while Pretty was howlin' louder'n thunder, Billy skipped down and sneaked off.

'Twasn't long, though, 'fore he come back, which, I must say, 'stonished me. He had a rope with 'im, too. Now, Billy's a dandy lasso'er. Whenever we play circus he's always the cowboy which lassoes.

An' from the tree where he now perched he threw the noose right over the bulldog's head. You ought to uv seen 'that dog chase 'round the tree Pete was on, tryin' to undo hisself. But he only tangled hisself worser.

Then we made tracks to the Mousetrap. Bein' int'rested in the bulldog had made us forget 'bout apples somehow. Also we thought the scenery was nicer lookin' further on from the orchard. I was sure Zeke needed exercise, so I drove 'im pretty fast down the road 'til we came to a steam thresher that stood empty by a farm.

(CONTINUED NEXT WEEK.)

How the Toodles Spent May Day

MISS MARY had promised the boys and girls of Eighth Street Primary School a real Maypole and a splendid May-Day frolic. All would have come to pass, for Miss Mary was always as good as her word; but, unfortunately, sickness came first, and brought a substitute teacher to the primary school. As Miss Griscom had no especial interest in a May-Day celebration, the boys and girls realized, with keen disappointment, that no observance would be made of that day.

Now, Tillie Toodles had looked forward to this occasion with such delight that the unexpected turn matters had taken was to her doubly painful. When she was able to think about it with some degree of calmness, an idea came.

"I'm going to give a May-Day party," said she, resolutely. "It may not be the right sort of party for a May Day, but it will be a party, anyhow."

The rest of the Toodles were interviewed, and when they learned that there would surely be SOMETHING to eat, they one and all consented to help Tillie make the party a success. Sarah Brown, Tillie's especial chum, promised to be there, and, with Rosie Ivins, Susie Brown, Martha Jones, Bertha Smith and Mary White as guests, the number was complete.

Tommy Toodles balked at the suggestion of arraying himself in his best clothes. After much coaxing, however, and the bribe of a penny from Tillie, he became more reasonable. Of course, all were dressed in their finest togs.

As the guests were neighbors, they arrived in plenty of time. Rosie was the last to be greeted by Tillie. Hardly had she come than Johnny Toodles, aged 4, piped:

"Do we eat now, Tillie?"

Most of the guests brightened at this suggestion, and their faces fell when Tillie replied, firmly:

"Certainly not; we're going to have games first—and then refreshments."

So they began with the plays Tillie had arranged. They were all old games, played by the boys and girls many times before. But the thought that the party was a May-Day celebration lent new zest to all the plays.

"London Bridge," "Follow Your Leader," "Ring Around the Rosy," "Tug of War," "Blindman's Buff" and other games were more exciting than ever before. Even Snip joined in, and barked as loudly as the others laughed.

Then came refreshments. There was a "brick" of ice cream for each guest, together with lots and lots of cake and lemonade. And wasn't it good! You could have thought so had you seen the gusto with which the eatables were devoured.

Soon Tommy Toodles, who was "over 10," declared he heard a whistle outside.

"That's Willie Green. I'll be back in a minute, Sis," he said, as he sprang to his feet and dashed around the corner. But he forgot to return, and accompanied Willie on a fishing jaunt down to the wharf.

Then 3-year-old Teddy Toodles grew hungry again. Without being observed he slipped away to the baker's shop—"so's to det more tate," as he afterward informed Willie. Mary White's hunger began to grow again, also. Remembering a penny she had at home, she quietly left the party, with the determination to get the coin and find a hoky-poky man.

An organ-grinder attracted Susie Brown, who followed the Italian and his monkey down the street, while the twins, Judy and Julie, whispered to each other that they would use the tickets they had in their pockets for the Zoo. At the same time, Bertha Smith and Martha Jones, both tomboys, ran after an ice wagon to beg for ice. Johnny Toodles started off to sail his new boat in the park lake. Then a great commotion of barking around the corner drew away Rosie Ivins, who wished to see whether Snip was in a fight.

So, when Tillie and Sarah paused a moment in their description of the new dresses both were to have within the next few weeks, they found that all the other guests had vanished.

"Well, if that isn't too mean!" cried both, in the same breath.

But when the "guests" returned late that afternoon, and saw Tillie, each explained the reason for having to leave and insisted that Tillie's May-Day party was the very nicest party they had ever attended. All had enjoyed themselves greatly, although, as Tillie said, they probably spent the BEST part of their time AWAY from the party.

The Wise Rag Puppy

ARABELLA wept. She wept great sawdust tears, for, indeed, what else could a rag doll stuffed with sawdust weep? All alone in a corner she was dumped; one leg was twisted under her head; one arm was painfully doubled behind her back. She had been in this uncomfortable position for days, and it was all on account of that new, double-jointed bisque doll! Hadn't Arabella seen her mistress, Betty, hugging and kissing that new doll—dressing it every morning and putting it to bed every night? It even went calling with her, Arabella felt certain; mind you, went calling, a thing that Arabella had always done, until now! Everybody knew that Betty had always liked best to take her rag doll when she went calling with her mamma. "Oh," cried Arabella, "if only I wasn't rag; if only I had double-joints; if only I had soft yellow hair, instead of just two painted plaits!"

It was the Rag Puppy who just then softly barked something in her ear. Whatever it was, it seemed to comfort her, for she picked up her tears, and even smiled (as much as she could with only a red line for a mouth)! "You see," concluded the Rag Puppy, barking aloud now, "I have lived here longer than you, and I know a thing or two!"

"ARABELLA WEPT"

When the new double-jointed doll came in (she had been out calling), Arabella did not "speak her mind," as she had intended to do. She only raised one eyebrow (as much as she could raise just a painted line). The new doll was holding one arm behind her back, but when she turned around, Arabella and the Rag Puppy both caught sight of what had happened. The new doll's right hand was gone! At this the Rag Puppy winked at Arabella (as much as he could with just a painted eye), but Arabella did not wink back—she couldn't help feeling sorry for the new doll. She had thought she would feel very glad when the Rag Puppy's words came true, but the next day, when the new doll came in quite headless, she wept, instead, great sawdust tears. The Rag Puppy tried to wink again, but even he couldn't help sniffling.

It did seem sad. The new doll had been quite the finest thing in the nursery only two days before. The next day, when her joints fell suddenly all apart, she was thrown into the waste-basket—think of it—not even worth while being sent to the Dolls' Hospital! But then, a hospital can hardly be of much use to one when one's joints are all apart and one's head is entirely gone.

COMFORTING NEWS FROM THE RAG PUPPY

And this was the day that Betty remembered Arabella. She picked her up from her uncomfortable position and smothered her with hugs and kisses. "I love you best, Arabella!" she cried; "you don't break when I drop you! I'm always going to take you calling after this!" And Arabella came near to crying a great many sawdust tears for pure joy, because she loved Betty so much and was never really happy unless in her arms. But Arabella's heart was soft and tender (of course, being made of sawdust), so Arabella felt sorry as well as glad. She felt glad now because she was made of rag, which meant health and a good long life, and glad because Betty loved her once more, but sorry for the poor double-jointed doll, who had lived such a short life and died such a tragic death.

But the wise Rag Puppy knew all along that it would be so.

ELSIE PARRISH.

My Thoughtful Brother

I HAVE the kindest brother—oh, the very kindest one!
He lets me help in all his games and share in all his fun.
We often play at "driving,"—I always am the "horse";—
I'd rather far be "driver," but I'm glad to play, of course.
And when I buy some candy, I'm pretty sure to find
That he is ever willing—he's so very, very kind—
To taste a little, just to see if it is good for me;
He eats a lot, but all this shows unselfishness, you see.
Somehow he knows of all the cakes and jam cook puts away;
Although it spoils his pleasure, he will come to me and say:
"I want the honor to be yours; YOU go and get them all;"
And afterward he helps me eat them, or I'd have to crawl
To bed and have the doctor come and take bad medicine;
And if I'm caught he'd never think to share with me the sin—
"I'm giving you this chance," he'd say, "to show you're brave and true"—
'Spite of his wishing for the chance to show that HE is, too.
He has a little pony—it's made of wood, you know;
He'll even let me watch him as he draws it to and fro!
I must own up that sometimes I have asked to play with it;—
Of course, he gets a little mad and scolds a little bit;
He's welcome to MY playthings; but that is only right—
I shouldn't think of trying to rob him of a delight.
And, anyway, when he is through and tired of playing this,
He'll give the pony up to me, and say, "I'm ready, Sis,
For you to tell me that you're sorry 'count o' what you did."
And so we kiss, and I make up, exactly as I'm bid;
I couldn't well be cross with him, for long—because, you see,
He's such a thoughtful brother, and so very kind to me.

Chris goes Leopard Hunting

"FEARLESS, will you help me bag a leopard?" asked Chris.

But Fearless was a dog who was always very much afraid. A low whine was his only answer.

Chris regarded this as equivalent to a refusal. "You won't, eh?" cried he. "I say you shall!" And he dragged away the luckless doggie, who protested with mournful, sobbing barks.

For if Fearless was afraid of leopards, Chris wasn't. And he vowed that he would shoot one before his visit in Africa ended.

Armed with rifle and a gamebag, which he expected to fill with smaller quarry, he tramped to the jungle, where, by common report, leopards lurked and playfully leaped upon and gobbled up prey in abundance.

Every now and then the lad would turn to the pup dragging along behind at the end of a strong cord and exclaim:

"Come on, now! Don't be a coward!"

But still the dog exhibited no signs of bravery. He would have felt even more unhappy could he have foreseen the dangerous part he presently was to play.

Chris soon became tired of crouching in a hiding-place with no other occupation than that of scolding Fearless.

"However, I'm not going to give up!" determinedly uttered he. "If the creature is too bashful to introduce itself to me, I'll set a trap for it.

"That's what I'll do," he concluded. Rising, with quick decision, he swiftly made his way back to the fort of which his uncle was commandant. The boy returned with a small cannon, a huge cover for a kettle and a joint of raw meat. These two last mentioned articles were borrowed from the cook of the officers' mess.

He also brought Fearless. It was very important that the dog should be there, in order that Chris might carry out a certain plan he had in mind.

Fearless was greatly interested as he watched his master tie the meat to one end of a rope and fasten the other end to the handle of the copper lid. But when Chris fastened the dog's cord to the lanyard of the loaded cannon, the poor animal grew alarmed. The louder Fearless howled, however, the greater was the youthful hunter's satisfaction, and as he popped the unfortunate doggie under the huge cover he triumphantly cried:

"All this noise certainly ought to bring that tantalizing leopard within a very few moments."

Stowing himself behind a boulder, he awaited developments. Nor was it long before a head with eagerly blazing eyes appeared from amidst the shrubbery on the far side of the little open space. Attracted by the smell of the meat, the ferocious beast glided warily forward, like a great cat.

For a moment the leopard seemed to puzzle over the fact that a piece of delicious meat should make such outcry. But the bait seemed innocent enough, and at last, giving way to temptation, the beast sprang upon the choice morsel.

In an instant the copper lid was jerked from its position on the ground and Fearless was released. Only one glance was necessary to the dog. Then, with yelps of terror, he scuttled toward safety, naturally choosing a direction opposite to that in which the leopard lay feasting.

Past the cannon shot the frightened Fearless. The lanyard became taut. At once followed a deafening boom, and the leopard was stretched lifeless on the grass.

"Not everybody can shoot a leopard with a cannon," proudly cried the lad as he began to skin his victim. His triumph was lessened only by the fact that there was little of the tawny, black-striped coat undamaged by the ball used in the cannon.

It cannot be said that Fearless thought much of the glory of the achievement. His chief desire was to get home as quickly as possible. All of which leads us to question the fitness of this doggie's name.

Pets of a Little Jap Girl

DAYS passed swiftly for little Tina-San — days spent in a dream world where only the charming garden and her pets, the birds and fishes, were real. And as days make years, the years sped, too, so that before she was hardly aware of it, the little Tina-San had become quite a big girl.

A great deal of time had she in the garden. For there were not many lessons to learn indoors. She was taught to listen obediently to her parents and how to arrange her hair nicely. Then she learned how to care for persons injured and to cure certain diseases. Strange studies for a little girl, were they not?

Strangest of all was the fact that most of these ailments never came to people of her time, but were diseases contracted by her ancestors! Indeed, the ancestors were entitled to much respect and consideration. In her home was a room reserved altogether for the worship of ancestors, and here no stranger was ever admitted. It contained splendidly decorated vases and handsome candelabra, before which incense was burned in honor of the dead.

But Tina-San liked best to be in the garden, playing with the pretty goldfish and stroking the brilliant plumage of her birds. She preferred this to adoration in the "ancestors' room," or even to worshiping in the little gilded kiosk, to reach which she had to travel through narrow, winding alleys.

It seemed a big place, did the garden. Like most Japanese gardens, it was planned so as to give the idea of great distance. It really wasn't very large, but there was plenty of room for the huge cage in which her feathered pets flitted about; for the tiny lake where her goldfish swam; and even for stretches of winding walks hedged with shubbery clipped into curious shapes. Between the tortuous lanes small trees reared themselves—trees with branches pruned also into queer forms.

PLAYED WITH THE BIRDS

Yes, Tina-San liked to be here. She would feed her pets, chatting confidentially to them the while. She would imagine that the birds chirped little messages and stories into her ears as they hopped forward, a-twittering, to daintily pick crumbs from her palms. Of course, it was SHE herself who invented the tales about spirits of wind, thunder and fire, and gods who dwelt in foxes and rats—but it was easy, and much nicer, to pretend otherwise.

"Pretty darling," murmured Tina-San to one of her pets this morning, "I heard my gracious mother speaking of an illustrious gentleman who is to take me for his wife. Is it true, little birdie?"

The tiny bird chirped coyly; whereupon the girl said, with a sigh, "You say 'yes,' little bird? I feared as much."

She silently extended the choicest morsels of food to her pets, because it is always the custom of Japanese folk to begin a meal with dessert—and why should not the birds of Japan do the same?

After a while she spoke, still softly. "I think it will be soon. Watch now, birdies. I shall throw this piece of cake to the furthest corner of your cage. If you birdie with back splotched with green captures the prize, I shall know I am to be married within the month."

She tossed the fragment of cake into the air. There was a quick fluttering of wings, and eagerly the tidbit was snatched by him of the green feathers.

Tina-San shook her head in a way that means "no" with us, but "yes" for Japanese girls.

"It is so," she whispered to herself. Sadly, then, she returned to the house.

Truth was foretold. Soon the girl was borne away a bride to the home of the husband who had purchased her. Once she stepped into the sedan chair her old home was lost to her forever. And the beautiful garden—the center of her Dream-World—was become nothing but a memory.