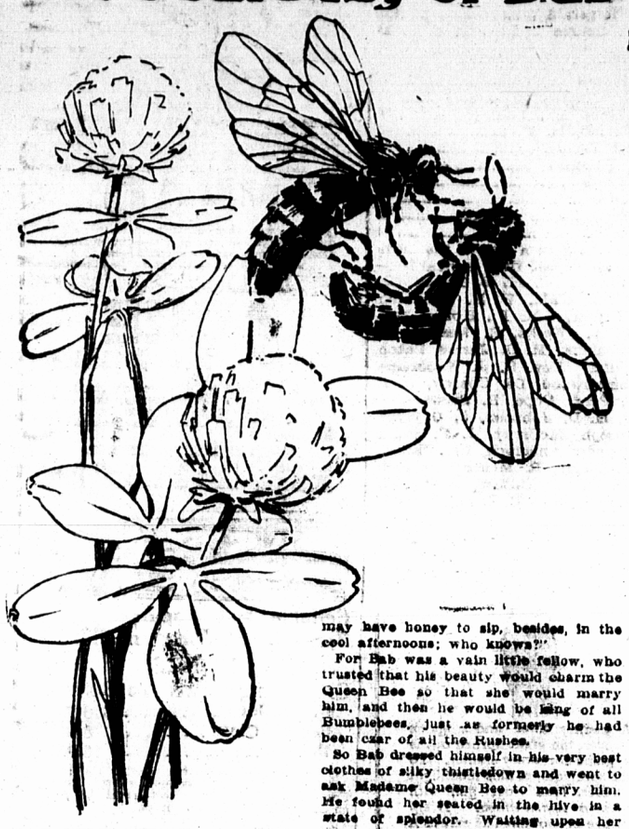
POLLY EVANS' STORY PAGE FOR BOYS AND GIRLS

The Jealousy of Bab



"THE WILD BEES HAVE COME"

UNDER a certain cluster of wild carrot stalks that I know of there lives a tiny elf named Bab. In the summer, when the carrot blossom unfolds itself, he climbs to its top and permits the wind to sway his little body to and fro, while the lacy-petaled flower partly shields him from the ardent rays of the sun.

One day, when Bab was disporting himself in this fashion upon his dizzy perch, he heard himself called by a little friend of his own kind, named Spry, who seemed much frightened and in great trouble.

"Oh, Bab!" he said, "I have dreadful news for you!"

"Dear me," said Bab, "how can that be? There is nothing dreadful; the world is calm and sweet."

For, you see, this little sprite, like Bab, only lives for a summer week, and if the days are clear, life is very sweet; but if the raindrops pour down into his little nook amid the roots of the wild carrot, for three long days his life is very unhappy, indeed.

"But, Bab," continued Spry, "it really is horrid; because a big swarm of wild bees have built a hive in the hedge, and we may be stung to death when they discover us!"

In a moment Bab was greatly disturbed. But, as he was a very wise little elf, he soon set about finding a plan to protect himself from the invaders. He did not want to abandon his little reed bungalow under the wild carrot.

"Never fear, Spry," said he; "although these noisy intruders are many and fearsome, they will not molest us if I can visit her majesty, the Queen Bee, who rules over the hordes. And perhaps we may have honey to sip, besides, in the cool afternoons; who knows?"

For Bab was a vain little fellow, who trusted that his beauty would charm the Queen Bee so that she would marry him, and then he would be king of all Bumblebees, just as formerly he had been czar of all the Rushes.

So Bab dressed himself in his very best clothes of silky thistledown and went to ask Madame Queen Bee to marry him. He found her seated in the hive in a state of splendor. Waiting upon her were twelve beautiful maids, who, strangely enough, were also acting as men-at-arms, inasmuch as they carried long spears with which to defend their queen.

Bab presented his petition, but the Queen Bee was not so ready to marry him as the vain fellow imagined she would be. She merely laughed at him, and the maids-in-waiting led him over the well-waxed floor into the sunlight.

Bab wondered if the queen would order his little home destroyed and the wild carrot bloom to be robbed of the pollen that had made it smell so sweet. This thought passed through his mind as he waited outside the hive with his ears very wide open.

All at once he saw his friend Spry descend in a fairy aeroplane and enter the hive. The queen welcomed him very cordially, indeed—so cordially that Bab became very jealous of Spry. Although he listened very intently, he could hear nothing of what they said. Only a low buzzing came to his ears.

Soon Spry came out of the hive and Bab followed him for a mile, which, in Fairyland, is about the width of your back yard.

"Hello!" called Bab; "I think you have stolen my sweetheart!"

"I?" said Spry. "Oh, no! I am to be the King of the Bees. It was all arranged at sunset years ago."

All Bab could say was:

"You are a very wicked, sly, little selfish, selfish sprite!"

"Don't let us be angry," said Spry; "but let us return, and the queen herself shall decide who shall be lord over the bees, so that our fairy brothers may be safe from their sharp stings."

"Very well," replied Bab; "it is agreed."

So off they sped until they came again to the hive. But the strangest sight was there! Not a single bee remained near the shade of the wild carrot. For the queen had married a handsome bee, and all her new-born sons and daughters had flown off with her toward the horizon, where the sun was setting.

Rajah Borrows a Baby

"GENTLY LIFTED THE BABY FROM THE COACH"

THOSE two green tickets which Evelyn flourished meant great temptation to Marjory.

"You saw the parade, didn't you?" Evelyn was saying. "Well, Bobby Myers says the show is even better than the parade, and my brother Roy tells me that there's everything that's on the posters. Daddy was going to take me this afternoon, but he couldn't, so I want you to use this ticket."

Marjory was tempted. She didn't have the chance to go to the circus every day. She could go readily, too, were it not that mother was away and she must take care of Baby Ellen.

"What can I do with the baby?" asked Marjory, hesitatingly.

Evelyn's toe beat an impatient tattoo on the floor. "If you can't leave her here alone, suppose you wheel her out in the coach. Perhaps we'll see some of the girls, who won't mind tending her for a little while."

"That's just what I'll do!" exclaimed Marjory. "I often take baby out for an airing, you know."

So the two sallied forth in the direction of the circus. But, look ever so closely, neither could see any friend who might be willing to undertake the care of Baby Ellen. Finally they reached the entrance to the tents.

"What shall we do?" cried Marjory, in vexation.

"We've got to decide in a hurry," was the reply of her friend. Evelyn cast a hurried glance about her, then she motioned toward an open space between two of the tents.

"If I were you, I'd wheel the coach in there. No one will notice it—and, besides, who wants a baby? When we come out we'll find Ellen safe and sound."

Marjory quickly made up her mind to follow this suggestion. Close together were the tents, so that there was barely space for the coach between the two rows of pegs. Baby Ellen seemed happy enough to find her coach in this strange place, where it was invisible from the eyes of all but the most curious.

Giving the baby a final kiss, Marjory and Evelyn hastily ran toward the entrance of the circus, presented their tickets, and elbowed their way through the crowd to the high tiers of seats.

FORGOT ABOUT ELLEN

Once or twice during the performance Marjory thought of the baby, and was somewhat worried about possible harm that might befall Ellen. But these thoughts soon vanished, and as the show progressed from the "grand parade" to the chariot races, the feats of acrobats and trapeze performers, the wonderful tricks of trained elephants and ponies and dogs, the funny pranks of the clowns, on to the lady who rode down a steep incline in an automobile which turned a somersault, Marjory entirely forgot Ellen.

Then there was the wonderful menagerie to view. The two little girls spent a great deal of time in this tent, so that when they finally made their exit the afternoon was near its close.

"I hope the baby is all right," anxiously murmured Marjory, as she remembered the baby.

"Of course she'll be all right," insisted the other; and then she cried: "Why, I see the coach now; nobody has disturbed it."

Marjory was greatly relieved, for she was beginning to question whether she had done right in leaving Ellen in such a fashion. She ran to the coach, and then—

"Evelyn! Evelyn!" she screamed; "the baby is gone!"

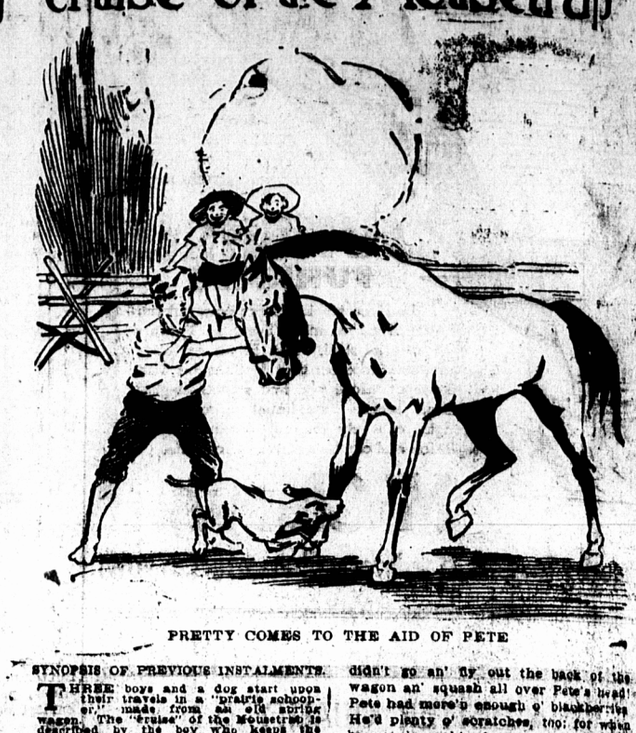
Almost beside herself with terror, Marjory rushed toward a big, friendly looking policeman standing near the entrance. To him she explained her trouble.

"Well! well! I'll see what I can do. The toddler couldn't have strayed very far," said he comfortingly.

Just then there came a volume of shouts from the menagerie inside. The policeman quickly pushed his way through the mass of people. Once inside the menagerie tent, a curious sight was presented. Perched upon the back of Rajah, the biggest elephant in the circus, was a little baby girl, looking the picture of contentment. It was Ellen, as you will have guessed. You see, the elephant had reached his trunk through the open flap of the tent, upon the other side of which stood the coach, and had gently lifted the baby through the opening and then up to his back.

Marjory and Evelyn were glad, indeed, to learn that the baby was found. Rajah seemed quite sorry to give up the baby he had borrowed, while Ellen cried lustily when taken away from her huge friend.

Cruise of the "Mousetrap"



PRETTY COMES TO THE AID OF PETE

SYNOPSIS OF PREVIOUS INSTALMENTS.

THREE boys and a dog start upon their travels in a "prairie schooner," made from an old sprint wagon. The "cruise" of the Mousetrap is described by the boy who keeps the "log." Camp is first made upon the side of a creek. Pete undertakes to go boating in an old scow, which foundered. Its owner appears, and not being satisfied with the boys' explanation, orders them off the premises.

Further on, they endeavor to steal apples, but are treed by a savage bulldog. They tame the dog, however, and make their escape. While journeying along, Billy chances to see an idle steam thresher. He meddles with the machinery, thereby getting into trouble. His companions have to conceal him in the Mousetrap. Zeke is unharnessed and Pete pushes the wagon under an apple tree. He crawls on top, with the dog, intending to pick apples. But the Mousetrap suddenly rolls down hill.

(CONTINUED FROM LAST WEEK.)

"AIN'T it funny?" says Billy, as we chased after that Mousetrap that was rumblin' backward down grade like a lightnin' express. Pete and Pretty was still holdin' for dear life to the top o' the runaway wagon, each tryin' to look scareder than the other.

"Ask Pete about it," I returns, while we sprint hard to ketch up to the Mousetrap; an' then we both laugh. But I think o' somethin' that makes me sort o' gasp out:

"Billy, what if that wagon gets smashed?"

This worries Billy, so he lets out a yell to Pete:

"Jam the brake hard an' stop 'er!"

There wasn't no use of sayin' that, 'cause Pete couldn't reach the brake from where he was stickin'. He was too busy grabbin' the canvas top to think o' climbin' down, which he couldn't of done, nohow.

Well, sir, that there Mousetrap went all the way to the bottom of the hill afore she stopped. Then she came to a standstill only because the road turned, so she had to run into a ditch.

She stopped suddint—so suddint that Pete flew off the wagon an' over a fence into some wild blackberry bushes. An' if another jar o' blackberry jam didn't go an' fly out the back of the wagon an' squash all over Pete's head! Pete had more'n enough o' blackberries. He'd plenty o' scratches, too; for when he got loose his face 'n' hands looked like some one'd been runnin' a pitchfork up 'n' down 'im. Pretty has landed in burdock bushes, so's it took most a hour to pick all the burrs off'n him.

"Now look what you've done to the Mousetrap!" grumbles Billy, as he 'n' I 'samined where Pete'd tore some of the hoops out of place that held up the canvas cover.

Pete was just then a-gettin' his last scratches from the blackberry bushes, so he didn't 'spond none too sweet:

"Afore yuh talk about the Mousetrap, jus' look what the old rat-trap has done to me. You fellers ain't got no sense o' decency to care whether me or Pretty gets killed 'r not."

Then I demands: "Well, you didn't get killed, did yuh? There ain't no good worryin' about what didn't happen. I'm thinkin' more about the trouble we're goin' to have to get the old thing out o' the ditch."

We had a awful time to haul the Mousetrap back on the road. But we 'complished it. Pete said 'e was willin' to bring Zeke, seein' as how he was the feller who started the mischief.

When the horse was harnessed, he had to pull up the steep ol' hill a second time, while me 'n' Billy had to walk along beside the wagon an' gather up the articles that had fell out on the runnin' away.

Zeke begins to get kind o' tired with all this haulin'. An' when Pete spies a lot o' horses eatin' grass 'n' things in a field, he speechifies:

"Them horses ought to be doin' some o' poor ol' Zeke's work."

"Why don't you buy one?" says I, sarcastic.

"Maybe you think you're fresh, which same yuh are," answers Pete; "but I'm goin' to show you that I kin get use from a horse without buyin' it. I'm goin' to catch one, hitch 'im up, and after he's pulled us awhile set 'im loose. Course, he'll go back home. They always do. And the man who owns him'll think he jumped the fence 'r something, not imaginin' we borrowed 'im."

THE "BORROWING" PLAN FAILS

"Sounds jimdandy," put in Billy, dry-like, "but you've got to catch your horse first."

"That's easy," pipes Pete, swellin' of his chest.

But 'twasn't so easy. He picks out a horse that looks nice an' tame. Every time Pete comes near it, though, it kicks up its heels and scoots. Pete tries 'bout every horse there, 'til 'e gets mad an' shouts:

"Why don't you lazy galoots help?"

"It's too easy," says Billy an' me together.

Just then something happened. Pete manages to grab a horse's mane an' wrastles with the animal, when out leaps Pretty. The dog made a sort o' bark, which I s'pose us meant to sound horrible, an' then wades into the scrimmage as nice as yuh please. He snaps at the horse's foreleg an' finally holds on.

"Hurrah! Pretty ain't no coward any longer!" whoops Billy, while I 'splains:

"It must be 'count o' the care Pete tried to take o' him when the Mousetrap run away."

But, spite o' Pretty's help, Pete didn't get a horse, though he did get his shins kicked good 'n' hard.

An' as a man comes runnin' cross the field we drive away mighty fast, makin' Zeke work harder 'n ever.

"If yuh want to be kind to Zeke, why don't yuh get out 'n' run," I suggests.

"Do it yourself," politely says Pete; "anyhow, there's other ways o' lightenin' the wagon—such as puttin' out Pretty an' eatin' all the victuals."

"You ought to feel ashamed for wantin' to make a poor little dog run an' as for the victuals there ain't much left, now that you 'n' Billy 've taken to usin' blackberry jam 'n such things for hair grease," declares I.

[illegible] interrupts, sayin': "Quiet! the ratbird is [illegible] has rolled out!"

[illegible] everything an' [illegible] board," cries I, seein' [illegible] Pete's schemin'.

(CONTINUED NEXT WEEK.)

A May Time Jingle

THE boys and girls of Funnytown
A meeting held one day,
And heads did nod and faces frown
When Tim arose to say:

"We'd like to do a thing or two;
We're tired of grown folks' 'noes.'
And of 'you mays' we want a few;
We hope each 'may not' goes."

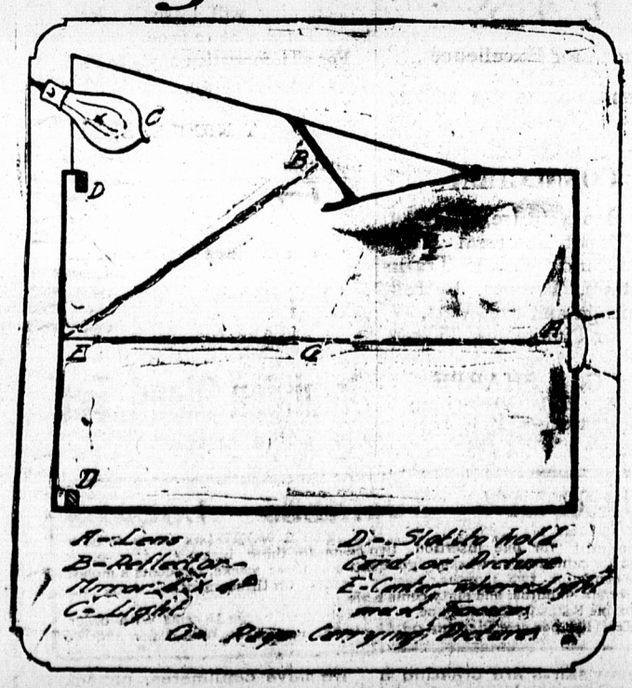
The grown-ups promised boy and girl
To say naught but "you may";
And children's heads with joy did whirl,
Expecting pleasures gay.

When little girls now bothered cook,
No one could say a thing;
But dishes did not tempting look—
For fun would bad food bring.

And though the boys could go to swin
And climb trees as they chose,
Great dangers came to life and limb—
From accidents came woes.

Until, at last, when all grew ill
By eating tons of sweets,
They found that "you may" often
Disguise the worst of treats.

Dan's Home-made Magic Lantern



A—Lens
B—Reflector
C—Light
D—Slide to hold Card or Picture
E—Candle or electric light
F—Lens
G—Carrying Picture

"THOSE tiresome Courtney girls are coming for a visit this morning. And all they ever want to do is to look at postcards. I've a nice collection, but you grow so weary of doing only this one thing."

"Cheer up! cheer up!" cried Dan. "I didn't know my sister Nan could be so peevish."

"What I've said is true—every word of it," Nan stoutly declared.

Whereupon Dan suggested: "Why not vary your entertainment? If the Misses Courtney absolutely insist upon gazing at postcards I think I can arrange for you to enjoy the pastime also. How would you like to reflect your pictures in colors upon a screen, as though they were marvelous views?"

"That would be too nice for anything!" exclaimed Nan.

Dan constructed his magic lantern according to this diagram. A bright light (lighting had to be used) was [illegible]. A [illegible] of opera glasses, for instance; B shows mirror reflector; C, the light (either 32-candlepower electric lamp or oil lamp); D, slot to hold card of picture; E, center where light must focus; G, course of rays carrying picture."

When all oil lamp is used, Dan explained, the side of the lantern where the lamp is placed must naturally be made larger in proportion.

Nan had great fun showing postcard views upon the canvas with her magic lantern. She was as delighted with the novel entertainment, as were the Courtneys.

Legend of Tea

IT was in the fifth century A. D. that the son of a powerful Indian rajah stepped from his skiff upon the coast of China. Radma, for so the young man was called, had determined to flee from mankind and dwell in the forests, there to meditate in solitude. Nuts were to be his food and the cooling water of the stream his drink.

Radma had vowed never to close his eyelids. When he awoke his sorrow was great. To punish himself for having broken the vow, he cut off his eyelids and threw them to the ground.

The next day, as he passed by this spot, he was surprised to find that where the eyelids had been cast there had arisen a bush theretofore unknown. Radma tasted of the leaves, finding them deliciously fragrant. Then, to his joy, he discovered that by chewing the leaves he could readily banish sleep. For the plant was that of tea, which has ever since been an enemy to sleep.

Stupid Mammas

THE mother of a small pupil in a public school had struggled through the problems assigned for her child's next lesson, and had finally obtained what appeared to be satisfactory results. The next day when the little girl returned from school the mother inquired with some curiosity:

"Were your problems correct, dear?"

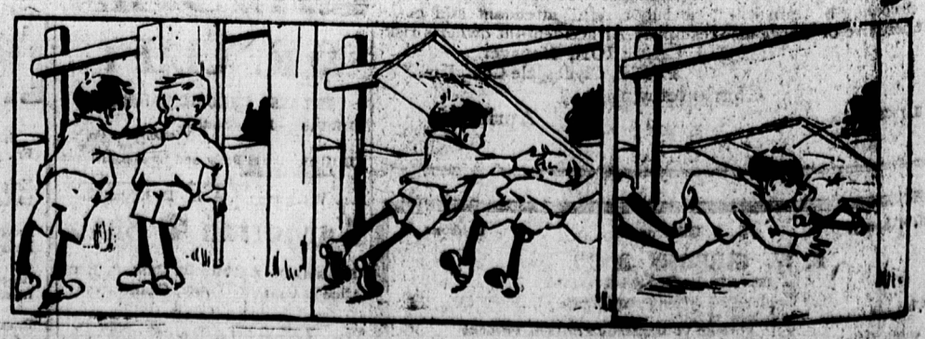
"No, mamma," replied the child. "They were all wrong."

"All wrong?" repeated the amazed parent. "Oh, I'm so sorry."

"Well, mamma, you don't need to be sorry," was the reply. "All the other mammas had them wrong, too."

A Cruel Hen.

A kind-hearted little city girl observed during her first day in the country a mother hen about to gather her little brood of chicks under her wings. The little girl rushed up to the hen, shouting:

"Shoo, you ugly thing! How dare you sit down on those beautiful little birds?"

Mischief Doesn't Pay