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PRESENTS CHEAP

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Pettikins

By VIRGINIA WOODWARD CLOUD

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"I SUPPOSE that it is right to leave Pettikins home with Mary Doolin," said Marabel, pinning her hat on before the glass. "There is not room for her, of course. But to leave children with servants is not, as a rule, judicious."

"What's judicious?" cried Pettikins, drawing her curly head in the window. "Why isn't there room this evenin' for me to drive too? Why can't I go?"

"Gracious, I forgot she was there!" said Marabel.

"There are occasions when absence of mind is precious," remarked Miss Reed.

Pettikins eyed her sister's friend speculatively. She adored Miss Reed because it appeared to Pettikins that the young lady talked as people do in books.

"Now, listen to me," broke in Marabel. "We are going to the station to meet Uncle George. You must stay right here with Mary Doolin. Only be sure to put your best white dress on."

Marabel ran downstairs, and Pettikins, following, heard Miss Reed say: "You might as well, Marabel, or she'll find it out herself after one of her fits of silence. I never came across so inquiring a maid. She's an embryo Columbus."

"Embrolumbus," repeated Pettikins as the door closed. "Embrolumbus," she said soberly on the way to the kitchen to find Mary Doolin. But Mary Doolin was sitting on a bench outside paring peaches.

"Mary, what's a embrolumbus?" said Pettikins.

"Don't come askin' me no more av thim haythen names!" said Mary Doolin.

"I'm wishin' somethin' might happen," said Pettikins soberly, "a bear or soldiers maybe with red coats and brass horns and muffs on their heads, and all fightin' right here in the yard. Then before they shot at us, Mary Doolin, I'd run out and holler, 'Don't shoot!' and they'd stop."

"Did ye ever?" said Mary admiringly as Pettikins' thin little figure and tiny hands struck an attitude. "Oh, the military is just grand! An' wouldn't ye be feared av the firin', Pettikins?"

Pettikins shook her head, standing absorbed in thought.

"Things don't happen 'cept to grown young ladies, do they, Mary?"

The shade of wistfulness did not escape the shrewd Irish eyes upon her.

"Niver mind. Ye'll soon be a beautiful lady drivin' off to mate yer swate-heart!"

"Uncle George," corrected Pettikins. "Av course, yer Uncle George. An' ye naden't be wantin' things to happen the like av the 'currence I could tell ye this mornin'."

"What's a 'currence, Mary Doolin? Please tell me what's a 'currence."

"Niver a bit will I, thin! 'Twas all in the mornin' paper about a woman down to the Branch. Miss McCree she was, pore sowl! All through her tender heart she loses her last rid cent."

"Go on, go on, Mary Doolin! Please tell me how she lost her cent through her heart."

"Not I, indeed! She, thin, kin' him a book agint, an' he, wid his little black bag all innocentlike an' knowin' she was alone by herself!"

"An' what was he, Mary Doolin—what was he?" demanded Pettikins, jumping up and down in her excitement.

"A burglar man, sure—a burglar man as burgled ivery cent av her hard earnin'!"

"What's a burglar?"

"In's, an' Miss McCree that scared she didn't kape the head av a fish worm on her, but lay there kickin' an' squallin' while he fills his little black bag wid her vallybles an' bows as polite as ye please!"

Pettikins stood absorbed in the details of Miss McCree's tragic occurrence. This, indeed, was having something happen with a vengeance. But Pettikins was certain that she would have possessed more power of resist-

ance than Mary Doolin's traditional fish worm. She strolled to the side porch, mentally rehearsing the scene, and sat upon the step under the trumpet vine. Mary Doolin's stout form returned to the kitchen, and Pettikins dreamily watched a big bee darting in and out of a scarlet flower that climbed outside Marabel's summer pantry. The door of this pantry opened on the porch and was ajar, and through the cool gloom of the interior could be seen Marabel's rows of preserve jars. "I wonder what Marabel's going to tell me—or I'll find out for myself," said Pettikins presently, and then her heart stood still, for before her was a man. He was a man with a smiling countenance and, shade of the unfortunate Mrs. McCree, with a black bag! He surveyed Pettikins and smiled, fanning with his hat.

"Well, little lady, so you're alone?"

"Thus had the burglar discovered the solitude of Mrs. McCree. Pettikins



"WHICH WAY?" HE SAID.

opened her lips to scream, but they were dry. Her quick, logical mind and vivid imagination jumped to the uttermost conclusion. This, then, was a burglar—nay, no doubt the very burglar who had reduced the heroine of Mary Doolin's story to the semblance of a fish worm. Here was the innocent aspect, the polite subservience, actually the black bag containing the tools of his nefarious craft!

And Mary Doolin, singing in the kitchen, was a hundred miles away.

"I fancy that your sister has driven to the station," said the burglar and waited, but Pettikins did not speak.

"And suppose you ask me in," he continued, "or, as I am tired and warm, I shall have to go in without an invitation."

He smiled and actually stepped upon the porch. Pettikins sprang to her feet. "Which way," he said—"this?"

"Yes," breathed Pettikins, with a swift illumination of thought as the burglar stepped within the darkness of the summer pantry. In a second she had slammed and locked the door upon him, drawing from its lock the great key which stayed outside. And then her feet flew to the kitchen.

"Mary Doolin," cried Pettikins, seizing Mary's skirt. "I've got a burglar man! Yes, I have, Mary! He's the one that burgled Miss McCree of her red cent, for he's got his black bag along and his knives and things in it!"

"Is it off yer head ye are, Pettikins?" cried Mary Doolin.

But Pettikins' eyes were great and impressive. "Mary Doolin, I've locked him in the pantry before he could burgle us like he did Miss McCree, and here's the key, and he's makin' a awful noise!"

"Mother av Moses!" exclaimed Mary Doolin, seizing the key. "If it's the truth ye're tellin' me, what'll become av the pair av us, wid niver a man to hand 'cept one, an' him a thafe an' a robber? Come along, Pettikins, till I listen to him. Sure, I'd rather be out av the house than in it this mornin' before he creeps out the pantry chimney! It's the brave child ye are, Pettikins, to arrest a thafe, but the saints come down an' help us if he gets out av there!"

Mary Doolin cautiously approached the summer pantry armed with a shovel. Strange sounds were issuing therefrom. Calls, expostulations and raps followed in quick succession, while Mary crouched upon the grass, muttering to the saints, and Pettikins stood by, thrilled with the solemn enjoyment of such excitement.

When the yellow cart rolled in the gate, with Marabel driving and Miss Reed chatting to Uncle George, their consternation may be imagined. A volley of expostulations met them, accentuated by the shovel, which Mary Doolin waved alternately from Pettikins to the pantry. Pettikins meanwhile stood by drinking in the elaborated details with grave delight.

"An' the dirty thafe, wid his pistols in his bag, ready to burgle us out av the house, a-bowin' an' scrapin' an' thinkin' to take her in! Not she, indeed! Seem' I'd tould her about pore Miss McCree, she says, 'Walk in, sir, swate as honey, says she, an' in he walks to Miss Marrybel's pantry, an' she up an' slams the door on him, an' there he is now a-burglin' Miss Marrybel's preserves, the owdacious thafe!"

"And my head wasn't like a fish worm's, was it, Mary Doolin?" said Pettikins softly with her eyes on Mary's face.

Marabel and Miss Reed looked at each other in bewilderment, and Uncle

George said: "I'm afraid she's crazy. She's talking about fish worms."

"Hear him, thin, for yourself!" cried Mary Doolin dramatically as there was a sudden outburst from the pantry, accompanied by violent raps.

"Say, let me out of here, can't you? Mr. Bumstead, Miss Marabel! Unlock the door!"

"Hear to his impudence!" cried Mary Doolin, while Pettikins stood first on one foot and then on the other in her silent and ecstatic enjoyment of the excitement.

But Marabel sprang forward and shook Pettikins by the shoulder.

"Elinor Lee Bumstead, you dreadful child! Give me that key, quick!"

Mary Doolin tremblingly produced it, saying, "Sure, Miss Marrybel, ye wouldn't be turnin' him loose on us now?"

"Burglar, indeed!" exclaimed Marabel, with a very red face. She threw the pantry door wide, and the burglar stepped forth, fanning himself with his hat.

"How d'ye do?" he said. "It's warm in there."

"Chenoweth!" exclaimed Uncle George, with a shout of laughter.

"How perfectly shameful!" cried Marabel. "But it was Pettikins. You know, I warned you!"

"Mother av Moses!" exclaimed Mary Doolin, rushing to the kitchen, with her apron over her face.

"I thought you weren't coming," murmured Marabel to the burglar.

"I took the wrong train and had to walk from the junction," said the burglar to Marabel. And then they all looked for Pettikins, but she had disappeared.

"The child is so sensitive that I am afraid she will cry herself sick over the mistake," said Miss Reed. So Uncle George went in search, prepared to dry Pettikins' floods of mortified tears. He found her sitting behind a haystack, gazing speculatively into space.

"Never mind, girlie," began Uncle George. "Accidents will happen in the best regulated"—

"Uncle George," said Pettikins, turning upon him an absorbed gaze, "what would he have done if he'd been a really burglar man? Please tell me, Uncle George."

"Young lady," said her uncle, "are you aware that the gentleman whom you locked up for an hour in that pantry is your sister's fiancé?"

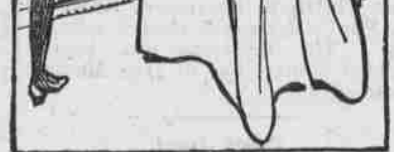
"What's fiancé?" said Pettikins.

"The man your sister's going to marry."

"Oh!" There was silence for a second, then, "Uncle George"—she twisted a button of his coat around abstractedly—"do you know what he's got in his black bag?"

"Clothes most likely. Why?"

Pettikins gave a sigh of genuine disappointment. "The one who burgled Miss McCree had a black bag with knives in it," she said wistfully. Uncle George leaned backward in the hay and laughed long and loud, while Pet-



"GIVE ME THAT KEY, QUICK!"

tikins watched him uncomprehendingly. Then he arose and took Pettikins to be presented to her future brother-in-law in spite of the fact that Marabel looked disapprovingly at the calico dress and straw decorated hair.

"This is Miss Elinor Lee Bumstead," announced Uncle George, while Pettikins shook hands with the burglar.

"I have heard that Pettikins is a unique character, and I can vouch for her prompt action in emergency," said the burglar. In a moment Pettikins' small feet had flown to the kitchen, where Mary Doolin was taking a pan of biscuits from the oven.

"Mary Doolin, Mary Doolin! What's a neck caracker? Tell me, please, Mary!"

But Mary Doolin exclaimed wrathfully: "Go long way wid ye for a bad child, Pettikins, wid yer stories about thaves an' robbers an' lockin' up a foiner gentleman in the pantry, an' him yer sister's beau! I'm that ashamed I could walk a mile wid peas in me shoes!"

So Pettikins slipped around the side of the house and sat upon the porch steps in the early twilight, and presently Miss Reed's voice could be heard saying, "The child is so imaginative that she really performed a heroic action."

And then a little figure crept out to where Uncle George sat smoking upon the grass, and two intense dark eyes looked through the dusk.

"Uncle George," she whispered, "just tell me one thing. What's a 'roic action?"

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In order to accommodate the many people who wish to make a winter trip to Yaquina Bay, the Southern Pacific Company will sell, on Wednesdays, and Saturdays of each week, until March 31, 1905, round trip tickets at low rates, to Yaquina and return, limited to 60 days from date of sale. Those who desire to take advantage of this rate should apply to nearest Southern Pacific agents for tickets.

Beautiful Columbia River Folder.

The passenger department of the Oregon Railroad & Navigation Company has just issued a beautiful and costly panoramic folder entitled "The Columbia River, through the Cascade Mountains, to the Pacific Ocean." From Arlington to Portland, and from Portland to the Pacific Ocean, every curve of the river and every point of interest are shown, while Mt. Hood, Mt. Adams and Mt. St. Helens, perpetually covered with snow, stand out in all their beauty. On the back of the map is an interesting story in detail of the trip from Huntington to Portland, and from Portland to the ocean, not overlooking the beaches and the San Francisco trip by ocean. A copy of this folder may be secured by sending four cents in stamps (to pay postage) to A. L. Craig, General Passenger Agent of the Oregon Railroad & Navigation Company, Portland, Oregon. By sending the address of some friend in the East, and four cents in postage, the folder will be promptly mailed.

LOST—Three heifers—one mule, black and white; one red brindie, top of one ear missing; one black and some white; all with under cut on each ear. W. B. Thompson, Oregon City, R. F. D. No. 1.