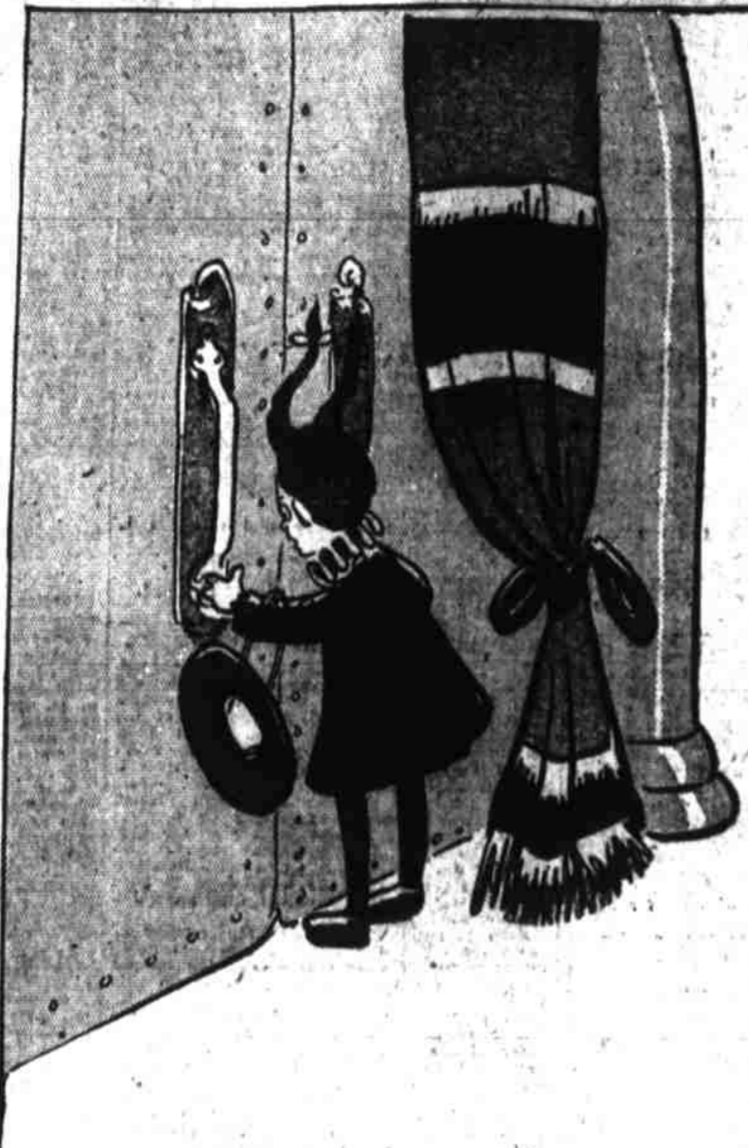


THE ADVENTURES OF BESSY BUSYBODY



1—YOU SEE, I HEARD so much about that Wonderful Magician, Blackheart. I jes' thought I'd drop in at his castle and get him to teach me some magic tricks. I knocked, but no one answered, so I jes' walked right in.



2—AFTER NOSING around through some big halls and rooms, I heard voices at last, and peeking through a door I saw the Wicked Wizard and the Grand Duke, the Queen's Uncle, talking very excitedly about the Queen.



3—SO I SNEAKED into the room and slid behind a curtain jes' for fun, and Great Goodness I heard 'em plotting to kill the Queen by a Magic Sleeping Potion the Magician had invented.



4—WHEN THE GRAND DUKE wanted proof that the stuff was deadly, the Wis jes' held a sponge with this stuff on it under the little dog's nose and the poor pup keeled over dead. "I guess that'll do the work, and I'll be King tomorrow, for the Queen has no other heirs!" said he.



5—WELL, MEBBE I didn't sneak out of that castle and run down the pike for the Queen's Palace! The Queen was to be chloroformed that night, and I alone could save her! The guard at the gate tried to stop me, but I jes' slid under his arm and ran up the palace steps and right into the Beautiful Queen's private apartments.



6—I FOUND THE QUEEN and told her the whole story at once. She refused to believe that her dear Uncle, the Grand Duke, would be guilty of such a plot, so I showed her how to prove it.



7—"JES' KEEP QUIET about it," I said, "and put some kind of a dummy in your place in bed. Then we can hide near by and see the whole show and capture the Wicked Murderers." And that is what we did. Late that night we hid in the Royal Bedchamber and waited. O, it was terribly exciting!



8—IT SEEMED TEN years' before we heard the door creak and saw two figures glide into the room and over to the bed. The Wicked Wizard listened a moment to be sure Her Majesty was sound asleep. Then he gently held the sponge with the Magic Potion under her nose—er—well, that is, the dummy's nose. Then he slid out and escaped.



9—THE QUEEN WANTED to call the guards and capture the would-be assassinations, or whatever you call 'em, but I had a safer plan. So I persuaded her to go to sleep and wait until morning. Then I asked her to write a note to the Grand Duke saying the Queen was dead, and that he must come at once to the Royal Palace to be crowned. Then I sent the Queen's Herald with the note.



10—WHEN THE GRAND DUKE read it he was crazy with joy and shouted to the Magician: "Come, Blackheart, we must hasten to the Palace. I am King, for the Queen is dead!" "The Queen is dead, long live the King!" exclaimed the Wizard, and they set out at once.



11—THE QUEEN HAD assembled all her nobles and courtiers and told them what had happened, and that they must allow the Grand Duke to ascend the throne. So when the Grand Duke arrived they all shouted, "Long live the King!" and he sat on the throne and appointed the Magician his Prime Minister. Then the Queen entered and the Grand Duke fell all in a heap.



12—THE QUEEN DENOUNCED the Wicked Grand Duke and the Magician and ordered them benched unless they should get out of the kingdom at once and be exiled forever. So they scooted! Then the Queen told right out before everybody that I had saved her life, and gee! they all nearly buried me with flowers and gold and jewels and all kinds of things like that.