

THE ADVENTURES OF BESSIE BUSYBODY



"That was a close shave, but I was so tired I couldn't get a wink of sleep. I was glad when I heard the iron gate rattle and saw the Genie coming to get me, even if I did feel sure he was a whopper!"



"He took me into a room of the castle, where a funny-looking old jar stood on the table. 'What's that jar for?' says I. 'I'll tell you!' says he, swelling up and looking important: 'that's the jar I was shut up in for over a thousand years!' Then I remembered the story of the Genie and the bottle."



"You must be an awful powerful Genie," I says. "Powerful? Humph! Well, I'm the most powerful Genie that ever lived. Why, I can do anything!" And then he swallowed up two more nothings. An idea struck me to put a stop to his awful lies, and just see if he could do anything wonderful. "I know what you can't do; you can't turn me into a cat!"



"Phoh! pooh! Entire thing in the world. ABDULLAH NULLAH AK-SAR-BEN! And in half a jiffy, I found myself rubbing my furry back against the table leg and meowing and purring. There I was, a fuzzy-looking tiger cat, feeling, as if, I would jee, give anything for a nice, fat rat to eat."



"Say, I'd bet anything you can't turn yourself into a big rat, about so big!" says I. Well, he may have been a Genie, but he didn't have much sense, for he jee says: "ABDULLAH NULLAH AK-SAR-BEN!" and on the spot where he vanished there stood as fine a rat as ever tickled the palate of any pussy cat."



"Mebbe I didn't ask through the air, and, with one spring, was about to land on Mr. Rat and put the Genie out of business, but the Genie was quicker. 'Abdullah Nullah Ak-sar-ben!' he squealed, and, instead of poncing down on the rat, I landed on the Genie's back, for he had become himself again."



"Aha!" he laughed. "I was too quick for you, eh, pussy?" says he, as he turned the back into Bessie Busybody again. "Now, I guess I'm ready to put you in the oven to bake for my dinner!" says he.



"My time was come!" I looked everywhere for some chance of escape, but there was none. Then I spied the jar. "Won't you do one more trick for me? Please, Mr. Genie, jee one? I could be happy if you could prove that you could make yourself small enough to crawl inside that bottle."



"Well, yes, to oblige you," says the Genie, and he waved the wand and began to grow smaller and smaller, until, finally, he was tiny enough to drop right down inside the queer jar, with jee, his head sticking out. Quick as a flash, I punched him on the head, and, with a howl, he dropped down to the bottom; and mebbe I didn't clap that cork over him in a jiffy! He howled for merry and promised me anything and everything if I would only let him out. Mebbe I did, and mebbe I didn't. You'll see next week."