

M'DOUGALL'S GOOD STORIES FOR CHILDREN



Mr. Willis Sprinkles the Witch Hazel.

The Battle of the Wizards

HOW A GOOD GENIE TRIUMPHED OVER A BAD ONE WHO WANTED TO BLIGHT A BABY BOY'S LIFE.

THERE is a story, old as the hills, which has been printed in many a school book, about a prince against whose parents a sorcerer had a deadly spite. When the child was born the magician predicted that a ray of sunshine would slay him, and from that day he was carefully secluded in an underground palace into which never a gleam of sunlight entered.

His story was not a bit more strange than that of Morgan Willis; and, in fact, I consider that Morgan's is far more remarkable, because, instead of happening in that faraway past when wizards, fairies and magicians were as plentiful as blackberries, all that occurred took place in this modern age, when it is rare to discover a man or woman who believes in such things, to say nothing of finding real sorcerers.

On the evening of the day that Morgan was born a tremendous snowstorm hit, loosing its fury, and while the wind howled about the house and the snow grated across the window panes with a sound like that of a saw going through a log, there came a loud knocking at the door.

Morgan's father opened the door, and almost hidden in a cloud of whirling snow, there entered a strange-looking man, dressed in a long robe of flaming red and wearing a tall, pointed hat such as had never been seen before in Gallaburg. His beard, as black as coal and as shining, almost swept the floor, and his eyes glittered beneath bushy brows like stars. He was trembling with the cold, and he hurried to the red-hot stove, where he stood spreading his hands to the heat and smiling softly as he looked upon the baby lying beside his mother in the bed against the wall. Then he spoke:

"I thank you, my friends," said he, "for this shelter, for I was almost overcome. 'Tis an awful night to be abroad in, and I am no longer as sturdy as I once was."

"You must have traveled far," replied Mr. Willis, "for there isn't a house within three miles."

"Ha! I must have missed it, then!" exclaimed the stranger. "I saw no house these 30 miles!"

"Gracious! Have you traveled 30 miles today?" cried Mr. Willis, in amazement.

"I have traveled 3,000," replied the man in red. "I might have gone twice or three around the world looking for your house had not my magic flying rug lost its power. It is calculated to go on for 100,000 miles, or, at least, that is what was claimed for it by its maker, but I suppose he swindled you. You can depend upon nothing these days. Everything is a fraud."

"A magic flying rug?" cried Mr. Willis. "Then you must be an enchanter!"

"You are a wise man," said the stranger. "You have guessed it the very first time. Here is my card."

Mr. Willis took the card and read the following:

El Hadji Mousad, A.L.D.X.L.J., G. E. C.I.B. W.V.Z., Etc., Sorcerer and Necromancer. Practical and Theoretical SEER.

Magician-Extraordinary to SOLOMON I. Chief Exalted Pundit to the College of Wizards at Gazabura, Arabia, 109 Gazelle Street, Babylon.

Mr. Willis read these words with a

feeling of awe stealing over him. Then he reflected that perhaps the man was imposing upon him, and he asked:

"How happens it that you, a mighty wizard, are left thus helpless in such a storm?"

"Froze up! That's all!" responded El Hadji, smiling. "I am from a hot country, and when the thermometer gets down into its tube so that you can't see it I lie away as far from it as possible. Nothing but necessity drives me to this stern clime, I assure you."

"What necessity can compel a real, genuine, necromancer, with all these initials to his name?" asked Morgan's father.

"I am ordered to your house to avert an impending disaster. Far away, in the realms of the genii, it has been learned that you have a son born who has on his skin the mystic mark of the Blist!"

The man went to the bed, turned down the coverlet, and showed on the pink arm of baby Morgan a small red mark resembling a horseshoe.

"When a child is thus marked," said he, "it means that he is to be the plaything of the devil and the sorcerer. Soon there will appear in this house one whom I am to battle with a mean and venomous scamp named Almonzer, from the far north, who is hastening hither to put all manner of evil spells upon the baby!"

Mrs. Willis turned paler, covered the baby up hastily and then began to cry.

"Don't fret," said the magician, as he went back to the stove and sat down. "I am more powerful, and because I got here first I have every advantage. We will make Almonzer look like three counterfeit dimes before he leaves. You trust El Hadji?"

"Perhaps he may not come, after all," suggested Morgan's father. "This is an awful storm, you know. I've never seen anything like it since I was born."

"Oh, he'll come, all right," responded the magician, hugging the stove closer. "He comes from Suabia, the land of almost eternal snow, and a storm such as this will seem to him merely a little flurry, I suppose. I can detect his approach, however, and long before he knocks at your door I will tell you. Still, it's best to be careful; and now that I feel a bit thawed out I will make sure."

"He went to the bed and placed a string of curious beads around the baby's neck, and then said:

"There! That will guard him against any personal harm. All the charms that Almonzer knows can't affect him. He can't be changed into anything else or deformed or maimed, deaf or silly. That's assured, at any rate."

Mr. Willis began to ooze as much alarm as was his wife. Every time a blast of wind shook the house he trembled and looked around anxiously, seeing which El Hadji remarked:

"You must not be afraid. I assure you that it will be merely sport for me to circumvent all of Almonzer's tricks. Now, had it been Scorpio-Aricanus it would have been different, for he was a mighty powerful magician and knew a heap. One had to hustle to keep up with Scorpio!"

"Suppose it should happen to be that very one?" cried Mrs. Willis, in a weak voice.

"Pooh! He's done for two thousand years ago. He was a little too smart for his own good," replied the magician, laughing.

"He had learned all there was to be learned on earth, you see, and then he determined to visit the other planets. After much study he managed to discover a way to release himself from the attraction of the earth and soar into the blue sky, and then one day away he shot. We all envied him then, but as time passed by and he did not return we felt that he was to be pitied, for it became quite certain that he must have neglected to learn how to come back."

"He's been gone for nine hundred years, and, for all I know, may be pining away on some distant star or scotting round like a bubble in space or battling across the surface of the moon, perhaps! At any rate, he has never been seen by anybody since he departed with so much pride and enough luncheon in his bag to provide ten days' food!"

"Did you ever have to compete with him?" asked Mr. Willis.

"Oh, lots of times!" responded El Hadji. "You see, all the old kings dabbled in magic—a good deal and employed the good wizards to teach them simple charms; but, of course, when it came to tough, hard jobs, they were no good at all. Whenever a prince was born one of us had to hurry to protect him from the evil charms of bad sorcerers, and there were plenty of them in those days, because it's far easier to be a bad wizard than to be a good and benign one."

"I suppose he used electricity, or something," suggested Mr. Willis.

"No. That hadn't been invented then," replied the magician. "We knew something about lightning, but it was far too risky to handle. I was acquainted with a great Moorish wizard who was totally consumed, in the twinkling of an eye, when he was trying to entice the lightning down to cord the evil charms of bad sorcerers, and there was nothing left of him but his shoes."

"Franklin did that, and nothing happened to him," said Mr. Willis.

"So I have heard," replied the wizard. "I suppose he had a better charm than the Moorish sorcerer had."

"But you did great things," asserted Mr. Willis.

"Pooh! Nothing at all compared with what we do now, and yet scarcely anybody believes in us today. Why, if I had owned a music box, or a piano, or an electric flashlight, or a telephone, or an automobile, or even a cheap bicycle, a thousand years ago, I would have had all the world, from kings to peasants, sitting up! They would have thought me a genuine genie! I would have been IT!"

"Yes, I guess that's right, after all," sighed Mr. Willis.

"Of course it's right! A little box of parlor matches and a skyrocket in those days would have made me the boss necromancer of the world! But I think I hear Almonzer approaching."

A moment later there came three loud knocks upon the door, which made the hearts of the man and his wife leap in their bosoms. El Hadji rose and, opening the door, bowed very politely to one who entered. This was a very tall, red-faced man, whose beard and hair were ever redder, and whose eyes, redder still, glared with a tiger's ferocity at sight of El Hadji's smiling face.

"Huh!" he grunted, as he strode into the room. "You have beaten me by a space! But that won't help you, nor the baby! I am too strong for you!"

"You're pretty strong," retorted El Hadji. "I noticed that as soon as you came in."

"You have fooled me, but I still am a wizard of might!"

"Oh, a very small might!" retorted El Hadji, waving his hands. "You might as well keep cool. It's healthier. Even in a storm like this you might get a bad fever, you know."

Almonzer turned to Mr. Willis and said:

"Do you know that I am Almonzer"

or be happy; he shall weep continually, his mind shall be a blank, so that he shall never know good from bad; waking or sleeping, he shall be in pain from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head; all misfortunes shall follow him, day and night; never shall he be loved, and he shall go in fear all his days!"

El Hadji secretly trembled, for all this was awful, and he was not perfectly sure that his spells would prevail; but he never showed his fear, and at last, when Almonzer cried: "And when he marries he shall be henneped to death!" he shouted: "Hence, vain croaker! Your words fall harmless here!"

At this moment it occurred to Mr. Willis that long ago he had read in one of his stories that all witches and wizards fear witch hazel beyond all things, and he instantly arose, and, running to the closet, produced a bottle nearly full of the dreaded fluid. When he had uncorked it the pungent aroma filled the room and caused the northern wizard to look around. He turned pale and rose up. Mr. Willis began to sprinkle the witch hazel on the floor, and before he drops had fallen the bad wizard shrieked:

"Stop it! I can't bear it! You are raining me to death!"

"The ship out!" quick!" cried El Hadji. "You know what it will do to you if you linger longer!"

They saw Almonzer for another instant, as he fled, and then he was gone, as if his black robes had vanished as if he had shot up the chimney! On the floor where he had stood was a small black spot, as if fire had scorched the boards.

"Now that he is gone, let us be joyful of his black robes he vanished as if he had shot up the chimney! On the floor where he had stood was a small black spot, as if fire had scorched the boards."

"I do not believe that he has really harmed the baby at all!" declared Mrs. Willis. "All the time he was saying those dreadful things Morgan kept his fingers crossed!"

"You don't say so?" tried El Hadji, in great delight. "Who would have thought such a tiny bit of humanity would ever have sense enough for that! It's truly wonderful!"

"He's a smart baby," said Mr. Willis. "He's indeed!" echoed the mother, and El Hadji agreed with both.

"But he certainly put a spell on the house!" added Mr. Willis. "I am sure that there's an immense snow drift against it, for the window is covered!"

"Well, I will offset all that by other charms, for, although we can't prevent what has happened, it is possible to adapt ourselves to circumstances. If there's a perpetual snow drift, we will have a furnace that never goes out; if he has placed worms in the flour barrel, we will have such a flock of chickens to feed upon them that you will be glad! All that he does we will counteract in some pleasing manner."

"How about these never being more than one pipeful of tobacco in the house?" demanded Mr. Willis, very dubiously.

"That's all right. There on the table you will find a pipe so big that you couldn't empty it in five days, and you will have tobacco to sell!"

"And the dull saw and the water pail full of frogs?" cried Mrs. Willis.

"I'll give you an axe that will cut iron, and you can raise frogs and sell their legs!"

"And he mentioned the oil can," added Mr. Willis.

"Ah, so he did. Well, if it leaks always, then there must always be oil in it to leak; and, therefore, all we have to do is to provide barrels to catch it and then you'll have oil to sell, also. This is easy!" said El Hadji.

"But, oh, that bad man said baby will be henneped when he marries!" groaned the poor mother. "Booh! We will fix that. I promise you that he will never marry. Almonzer never thought of that," said El Hadji. "Besides, if the baby had his fingers crossed, nothing will happen to him, so don't worry. I think he is safe now, and I would like to go to bed."

Next morning when they awoke the wizard had gone, leaving on the table a pipe so big that it startled Mr. Willis, for it held 10 pounds of tobacco! Outdoors a snowbank 20 feet high was piled against the house, the water pail was full of frogs and the meal barrel of worms, but a furnace glowed like the sun in the center of the room, and beneath the oil can a row of barrels stood that would hold enough oil to start a store with.

The baby Morgan grew to be a fine big boy, and all the years the snowbank stood there, summer and winter, making the whole neighborhood damp and chilly, but the house was warm enough.

When Morgan was 10 he began to show how smart he was, and he now managed to turn all the magician's spells to great advantage. For he collected the oil and masted it each week, sold frogs' legs far and wide, as well as tobacco; raised more than a thousand chickens at a time, and, finally, he evolved a scheme to utilize the snowbank when he was about 13. He built over it a great shed and converted the whole place into an immense cold storage plant, where he preserved his poultry and eggs. Frogs' legs and other produce besides, caring for that of other farmers round about, and in the course of time so vast was his income, without the least expense to himself for either ice or coal, he finally became so wealthy that he actually couldn't count his money at all.

Every girl in all the region made sheep's eyes at him, and many even proposed to him, but the charm of El Hadji prevailed, and to this day he has never married, but takes care of his mother instead.

El Hadji never again appeared; therefore, it was concluded that the felt his charms had worked properly; but as once in a while a stranger wandered to this out of the way village to inspect Morgan's immense storehouse, but, after all, seemed to be most interested in the boy himself. I imagine that the old wizard really kept posted and knows exactly how things are going. At any rate, none of the evils evoked by Almonzer ever befell the boy, and, as he is happy from morn until night, although he knows that if he marries he may be henneped to death, I guess the northern magician's wiles never will come to anything at all.

WALT M'DOUGALL.



The Girls Made Sheep's Eyes at Him.

Dinkelspiel on Bridge Whist

By GEORGE V. HOBART.

MANY times in der mail I got such peculiar letters, run of vich is dese as following, vich I am quoting more from memory den from nature, dese:

Dear Dinky—I haf never met you face alongside of face, but I read you in der papers egghastided.

Main Heber Dinky, could you pardon der liberty I took in grabbing a 2-cent stamp and chumping at a perfect stranger?

Friend Dinky, you see it on efery hand der signs dof spring is coming and soon vill der hoarse cry of der summer resort beckon us to dot burn from vich no traveler returns mitout getting his pocketbook pinched.

Nice Dinky, could you please visher to me how to play bridge vish so ven I go to der seashore I vill be armed for defraying expensess?

Good Dinky, I feel sure dof if I could play bridge vish loud enough to vin four dollars efery vunce in a yile I could spend a large bunch of summer at der seaside.

Most noble Dinky, could you instruction a luffing but perfect stranger how to play der game mitoutd having to zar a mask?

Honored Dinky, I played a cubble of games recently mit a vide-faced young man who grew very playful and threw der parlor furniture at me because I trumpeted his ace. I fancy I must haf drit wrong. Der fifth time I trumpeted his ace der young man arose, put on

his gum shoes und skeedickled out dof der house. Is it not considered a breach of etiquet to put on gum shoes in der presence of a lady? If you please, dear Dinky, gif me some reason how to play vish. Yours fondly,

GLADYS BUDWEINER.

P. S.—Der furniture vich he threw was not his property to dispose of.

Vell, Gladys, I doan'd know much about bridge vish, but if you see anything dof I do know, you can reach ofer und pick it out.

Bridge vish is played mit cards, just like pinocle, mit der egagception of der beer. Not enough cards is a misdeed; too many cards is annuder, und cards up der sleeve is a shap on der front piazza if day catch you at it.

You should not get up und dance der snake-dance efery time you took a trick. It looks more chenteel to dit der dance du venture.

Ven your oppositioner has not fol-

lowed der suit it is not vish to pick up a loud tons of voice und tell him should it. Reach und der table und kick him on der shins. If it hurts him he is a cheater; if it doan'd hurt him always remember dot you vas a lady.

Doan'd inquisition vot is trumps more in eighteen times during van hunt. Der limit used to be twenty-five times, but since der Equitable has been playing Hyde und seek der best bridge vish authorities haf put der limit down to eighteen.

It is not vish to haf a conniption fit efery time ven you lose a trick. Nudging looks so vorse as a conniption fit ven Rey doan'd match der complexion, und chenterally dey delay der game.

Ven der game is close doan'd get an excitement und climb up on der table. It shows such a vant of refinery, eggsspecially if you vas a quick climber.

Nefer vishle vishle vishle for some vish to play, vishleing is not in goot

taste. Go und bite outd a cubble of tunes on der piano.

Ven your oppositioner trumpets your ace doan'd make hit him covelously across der forehead mit der brickle brace. Always remember ven you vas in chenteel society dot bricks brace is egagception.

Doan'd lead der deuce of clubs in mistaken identity for der ace of trumps, und den get mad und chump sefentees feet in der air because der refusal to let you pull it back.

In order to chump sefentees feets you would haf to go through der room upstairs und how do you know whos room it is?

I dink you can play der game of bridge vish mitoutd pudding a bruise on der Monroe doctrine.

P. S.—Ven you play for money always bite der suffer to see if it means as much as it looks.

BECKOLITH A NEW MINERAL.

Dr. Morawlewicz, professor of mineralogy at the University of Krakow, announced at the general meeting of the Mineralogical society of Vienna that he has discovered a new mineral, to which he has given the name of Beckolith, in honor of the Vienna mineralogist, Professor Frederick Beck. He asserts that it does not correspond to any of the mineral combinations so far known, but resembles mostly combinations of garnet, having similar regular crystals, and contains many rare earths, which form 75 per cent of its volume. The chief components are ceria, lanthano, and didymo oxides, and it may be of use for the manufacture of chemical products, especially for the light industry. The discovery was made during a scientific exploration in southern Russia. The rock in which it was found is called marialolith.