

# Polly Evans' Story Page

For Boys and Girls

## Bertha's Menagerie



"EVEN THE MULE LEARNED MORE READILY."

"WHAT an amusing idea," said Bertha's father, reading from his paper; "it says here that the soldiers of some of the French garrisons are being given lessons in dancing."

"Why does it seem so amusing to you?" responded the general. "Dancing is an excellent exercise, which strengthens and hardens the muscles and gives grace to the body. I myself am very fond of dancing."

And Bertha, who was very fond of the general, lost not a word of this conversation. It also gave her an idea which her father would not doubt have called "funny" too. Every morning thereafter she was never to be found for at least an hour. Far back in the garden she had opened her "dancing school," with which she hoped to surprise the general.

Three of the dogs were her first pupils. When they had learned to prance around on their hind legs in time to her singing, she next began to train her pet rabbits. Then she instructed the parrot, and after that the geese and ducks, who proved very dull, indeed.

Chickens, turkeys and pigeons were taught as well. Her pussy-cat found it most difficult of all to learn—even the goats and the mule learned more readily—but at last she had them all trained to dance to her satisfaction.

Then it was she invited the general and all the rest of her friends to witness a grand exhibition she was going to give them. The general and the other guests came, wondering greatly what the "grand exhibition" was to be.

When every one was assembled Bertha's pets were brought in by the hostlers. They were quiet for the moment, while Bertha explained to the guests what she was about to do. But instead of dancing at her command, the cat flew at the birds, a dog ran after the cat, the parrot grabbed hold of a dog's ear, and the whole company fled in the wildest disorder.

"Oh, general!" sobbed Bertha. "I thought I would surprise you, specially, by having all of them dance for you. They really do dance all right by themselves—and I thought they'd all be right together!"

The general soothed the little girl, and praised her for her patience and skill. But, although she was pacified, Bertha never forgave her "menagerie" and forthwith discontinued the "dancing school."

### "Jimuel"

SHE was the new teacher, who had just come that morning for the first time, and was now engaged in becoming "acquainted."

"What is your name, little boy?" she asked.

"Sam," was the reply.

"No," explained the teacher, "that is only a nickname. 'Samuel' is your name."

Then she questioned a bright-eyed little chap sitting beside Samuel.

"I 'spos my name's Jimuel," then, responded the boy, "although I'm always called Jim."

"Dad," began Bobby, "the world is round, isn't it?"

"So I believe, my son," replied dad.

"Well, dad," continued Bobby, "how can it be so?"

### The Queen's Pathetic Treasure.

Of the many valuable treasures in the possession of Queen Alexandra, there is none more highly valued by her than a modest milk-jug of earthenware, which she keeps in the boudoir attached to her dairy at Sandringham. It was given to her by a poor dying girl, whose later days had been soothed by the tender nursing and sympathy of the princess, Alexandra. When the queen entertains any very exalted guest at afternoon tea in her Swiss chalet, it is from this humble but priceless jug that she pours the cream.

### Not So Flattering.

Gertie (who has behaved very rudely to her aunt)—Auntie Clara, pray don't go away yet.

Aunt (flattered)—I had no idea you were so fond of me, Gertie.

Gertie—Oh, Auntie Clara, it isn't that, but mamma said I was to be whipped when you had gone.

Too Slippery.

Mother (laughing) to Tommy, who talks rather much—Tommy, you must learn to hold your tongue.

Tommy (after a faithful trial) — I can't, mother; it's too slippery.

### The Riciest Prince

THE richest prince is not always he that reigns over the most extensive and populous empire, with the largest and the most prosperous cities and the best-filled treasure-house.

Back in the middle ages there reigned a prince called Eberhard the Good, who was a grand old man, just and true, and his little principality was the envied corner of Europe. For, though he was only a grand duke, he ruled so justly and well that his subjects were happy and they all loved him as a father. There was a feast, they tell us, one day at the city of Worms, and all the German princes were sitting at the banquet table, when a dispute arose as to which of them was the richest and most prosperous ruler. Prince Ernest of Saxony, boasted of broad domains, brimming with gold and silver mines, and his great palace filled with golden treasures.

"I am richer than he," said the Elector Frederick of the Rhine. "From my grand castle at Heidelberg I can look over leagues and leagues of hillside covered with vineyards and valleys rich with golden grain fields."

King Louis of Bavaria, claimed the palm of sovereignty, "because," he said, "prosperous cities and rich old cloisters, filled with works of art, are greater treasures than gold or silver mines, vineyards or ripened grain fields."

Then all looked at the old lord of Wurtemberg, whose hair and beard were white as the snow on Alpine peaks, and whose blue eyes were shining with a smile. "I have little to boast of," he said, meekly. "There are but few cities in Wurtemberg, and no silver mines, no famous vineyards, and no great store of treasure and precious stones. But I own one rare jewel—I can wander anywhere in my dominions without fear, and lay my old head in peaceful slumber in the cot of my humblest subject."

"It is enough," they cried in chorus; "we yield the palm to thee, for there are no richer treasures than a people's love and loyalty."

FRED M. COLBY.

### His Answer Was Soft.

"Always remember, Henry, that a soft answer turneth away wrath. And when another boy insults you, or even strikes you, bear this in mind and don't lose your temper."

Henry promised, and went to school.

At lunch, when he returned home, his mother asked if he had kept his promise.

"Yes, ma," replied Henry. "Tommy Jones wanted to lick me—and I gave him a very soft answer."

His mother smiled happily. "Ah! you would not fight?"

"No, but I hit him in the eye with a rotten apple," replied the innocent Henry.

### Found Out Nothing.

A curious person of a certain town, who loved to find out everything about the new residents, espied the son of a new neighbor, one morning, in the doctor's office.

"Good morning," he said. "Little boy, what is your name?"

"Same as dad's," was the quick reply.

"Of course, I know, little boy; but what is your dad's name, dear?"

"Same as mine, sir."

Still he persisted. "I mean what do they say when they call you to breakfast?"

"They don't never call me; I allus gets there first. See?"

### The Mysterious Egg.

An egg can be shown in a bottle with a mouth too narrow for it to have passed through. How did it get there? When an egg is soaked in equal parts of strong acetic acid and water it becomes softened, and may be pressed into any form. Water will again harden it, so you might remark that you had at first thought of exhibiting the hen in that bottle, but left that trick for another occasion.

## Tired Tim Takes a Bath in Spite of Himself



### Good Advice

HE WAS a wee Scotch laddie, with a plaid muffler round his neck and a plaid cap perched on his small, round head. And this afternoon he was caddy for the bishop on a golf course in Scotland.

The bishop had never played golf before. One could see that with all his eye. But the bishop had the admirable trait of perseverance.

After making a neat tee on the ground the boy placed the ball upon it and then stepped back to await developments.

The bishop swung sturdily at the ball—and missed. Then he swung savagely at the ball—and missed a clod of earth flying through the air. Nothing daunted, he swung again, missed and sat down suddenly, but still he wasn't disheartened. He was about to make another try with his last stick, when he turned to the lad and asked:

"My boy, what would you advise me to use now?"

The caddy squinted his eye, pondered a moment, and then replied, without the shadow of a smile:

"Give it a clout with the bag, sir."

His Advice.

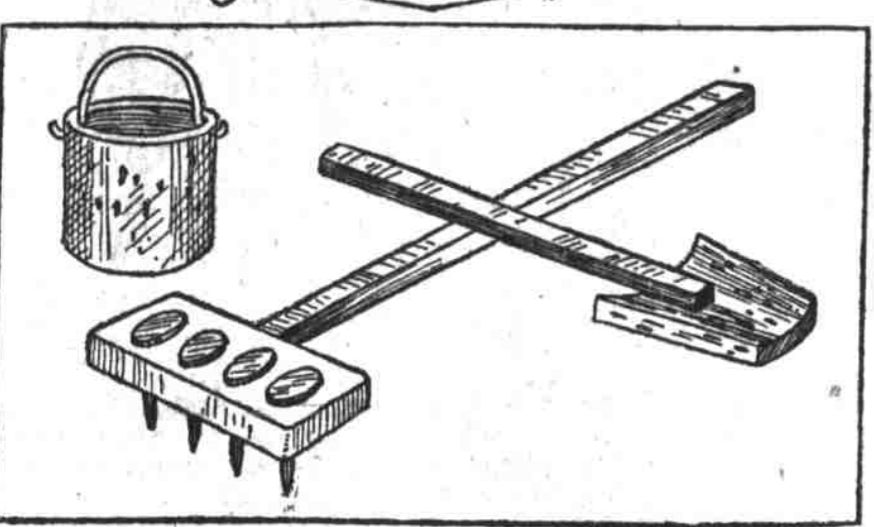
Little Nellie, aged 9, said to her father:

"Papa, I want to ask your advice."

"Well, my dear, what is it all about?"

"What do you think it will be best to give me for a birthday present?"

## Playthings from Corks



IT is astonishing how many tiny playthings may be whittled from ordinary corks. Especially is this true of garden implements in miniature.

The drawings above show you several interesting little articles constructed in this manner. But you can, no doubt, find many others quite easy to make.

### Ambition Realized

A LAD in a German village had set his heart upon presenting the town church with a fine organ. Every one in the village discouraged the attempt and laughed at him. But he was not to be turned aside from his purpose, and finally, after some years, the organ was erected.

Then came the most discouraging moment of all. When he put his feet on the pedals and his hands on the keys, he found that he couldn't play the organ. All the people mocked him anew.

It was just at this time that the great musician, Sebastian Bach, was visiting a neighboring city. In his despair, the lad went to the master and besought him to come to his aid.

Bach's heart was touched at this appeal, and consented. When it became known that this great master was to play, people flocked to the little church from far and near. The music came from the very soul of the composer, and the people listened to such sounds of glorious harmony as they had never heard before.

After all, the lad had attained the ambition of his early youth—and in such a way!

More Blessed.

"Pa," said Willie thoughtfully, "I think I know what the minister meant when he said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

"Yes," replied his pa. "Well, what did he mean?"

"Castor oil."

## General Wise Outwits the Enemy



IN VAIN THE OFFICERS URGED ON THE MEN

KING CARLOS was a good king, but he was careless. Loving peace himself, he very often forgot that many of the rulers of neighboring kingdoms were more warlike. So it was that when another king declared war, Carlos was greatly disturbed. But he was no coward, and promptly sent back acceptance to the challenge. Then he straightway forgot all about the war and settled back to enjoy himself.

He was surprised, indeed, to be informed one morning that an immense army was encamped some distance from the walls of his city. At once he sent for the general-in-chief of the army. Now, this general was really very clever—Wise was his name, and "wise" he was—but the king had always required his demands for more men and better arms, so that he was by no means prepared to go out to meet the foe and return victorious.

"I shall advance with the army, if you so wish it, sir," said he to the king, "but I tell you frankly there is

small chance of success. They are ten times as powerful as we."

The king replied emphatically: "No, that is decidedly out of the question. We must think of some other plan. I know, general, that it was I who got you into this fix, but I fear I must impose upon you still further and ask you to get rid of this annoyance."

The general went away greatly perturbed. Without question, he had a most difficult task before him. But, as the king trusted him implicitly, he vowed not to abuse the royal confidence, nor would he fall were there any possible loophole of escape.

That night a vast army of workmen was at work, directed by the general himself. The king was astonished when they told him that gigantic mirrors were being hung outside the city walls, but he had faith in General Wise's ability and decided to await developments.

Next day the enemy began to march upon the city. But when they came within a short distance of the walls and saw what seemed to be a powerful army opposing them, they were filled with dismay, for they little dreamed of such resistance. In vain the officers urged on the men. They did not care to risk what seemed like certain death; smitten with fright they broke ranks and fled in the wildest confusion.

By merely placing the mirrors General Wise had saved his country! Of course, the enemy had only seen their own reflections in the mirrors—and

were frightened at themselves! King Carlos heaped all possible honors upon General Wise and also heeded his words of advice by directing that the army be strengthened at once and well equipped with new arms.

When the neighboring king heard of how he had been duped he sent another army into the field, but by that time General Wise was fully prepared to fight and had little difficulty in coming off the victor.

## READY for a WALK



## BATTLE of POSSUM HILL

FOR the most part, there existed strict dividing lines throughout Homeville, separating the territory of the "Bloody Robbers" from that of their rivals, the "Bloody Pirates." But Possum Hill was any man's land; never was the claim to it made good by either band. Here was a favorite battling ground for the two forces during winters, when snow lay heavy and "stuck."

This year the "Bloody Pirates" stole a march upon the enemy and had erected a strong and handsome snow fort before the "Robbers" had knowledge of this stroke of enterprise. Not long were they to remain in undisputed possession, however. The customary fight began in quick order. During the whole of one Thursday afternoon every member of the two gallant bands played truant in order to continue the struggle. Truant they would, the "Robbers" were unable to oust their opponents from the position.

Right on the hill had the fort been built. Its walls were high, offering fine protection to the defenders. Inside were heaped countless numbers of snowballs, accumulated by only the greatest kind of industry. In charging this stronghold the "Robbers" were compelled to rush forward entirely in the open, exposed to the merciless fire of their adversaries. Brave as they were, the "Robbers" were at last obliged to raise the siege and repair to their homes in deep discouragement.

But that night "Shorty" came to his comrades' rescue. While all Homeville lay peacefully asleep, Shorty slid from the window of his room, dropped upon the roof of the outhouse below and quickly ran across town to Possum Hill—a jaunt of at least three miles.



WITHIN THE FORT

mouse bulldog. The last load was in his arms when he heard a patter of feet behind him. The next instant Shorty was speeding down the hill. Never did he go faster in his life. Not even did he pause to glance behind him at the savage bulldog, now swiftly gaining. It took him just a fraction of a second to shinny up the pine at the bottom of the hill—and at the end of that fraction of a second Sugar's bulldog had stationed himself at the bottom of the tree.

That dog kept guard for "keeps," too. Hours after hour passed, until Shorty was almost frozen. But he would rather freeze on his perch than risk falling into the clutches of the beast below. Somehow he managed to cling until



EXPOSED TO THE MERCILESS FIRE OF THEIR ADVERSARIES

Beyond the hill lay Sugar's homestead, and it was currently reported that during the night Sugar's big bulldog was loosed and permitted to roam over the hill and the surrounding country. Every boy in Homeville, whether "Robber" or "Pirate," had an unbounded respect for that bulldog, so no one had ever sought heretofore to ascertain the truth of this statement. Shorty's courage was put to its severest test.

Stealing silently up the hill Shorty was soon within the walls of the fort. He placed the great number of snowballs he found there. This, of course, would leave the "Pirates" helpless when next morning's assault would be made by the "Robbers." But it seemed such a shame to destroy so many nicely made balls that Shorty decided to carry them down the hill and hide them where he and his comrades would find them.

So earnestly was Shorty engaged in this task of transporting snowballs that he quite forgot his fear of the enormous

down, when Farmer Sugar, coming in search of the dog, released the shivering lad and took him to the farmhouse. The "Pirates" lived nearest to Possum Hill and so gained the fort before their enemy. Hardy were they indeed, as he modestly recounted how the "Pirates" discovered, too late, that all their snowballs were gone. The next moment there darted a figure from Farmer Sugar's house. Down the hill it ran stilly shouting: "Charge 'em, you 'Robbers! They haven't got a snowball!"

In just five minutes the fort was in possession of the "Bloody Robbers"—and remained so until the sheriff came in search of them for playing the truant that morning as well as the afternoon before. It was only then that the "Robbers" learned of Shorty's heroic deed, as he modestly recounted how the snowballs of the "Pirates" had disappeared.

Shorty "caught it" from his pa as well as from the teacher, but with words of his comrades' praise still ringing in his ears he didn't mind it at all!

## HAYDN as a Boy

THE celebrated musician Haydn had, in his youth, a very miserable time of it. Taken into the home of a charitable shoemaker, Haydn endeavored to repay the good man for his kindness by playing to him while he worked in his shop.

During all this time the concert-masters were enriching themselves through Haydn's musical compositions, and giving the lad practically nothing in return. Already celebrated throughout all Germany the young man himself was entirely ignorant of his renown.

It so happened that one day the Countess Thun, having arranged a concert, found that the pianist had fallen ill at the last moment. A lackey promised to find another musician, and presently returned with Haydn. The poorly clad youth was ushered into the magnificently appointed salon.

"Is it true, my friend," asked the countess, "that you are an expert player of the pianoforte and can read this sonata?"

What was the surprise of Haydn to



PLAYING WHILE HE WORKED

recognize in the piece of music handed him one of his own compositions!

"I can play it all the better, madam," replied he, "inasmuch as it is a sonata composed by myself."

The countess responded: "You deceive yourself, my dear sir, for the piece is by the great Haydn."

"But I am Haydn," insisted the boy, whereupon the entire brilliant company smiled.

Hardly had he begun to play, however, than all acknowledged that the music certainly could be no other than the master. Under his magic spell the instrument fairly sang, and when he had finished all murmured in respectful admiration.

The days of proof were now over for Haydn. But in the midst of all his honors and successes he still bore in mind his old friend, the shoemaker. His thought for the good old man was so hearty and often stopped to chat with old times with him.