

Polly Evans' Story Page for Boys and Girls

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CONSPIRATORS



"THE CONSPIRATORS"

IT ISN'T that I begrudge Tim Watson his honor of being president of our school class, but I do think he might have gotten it honestly, and not by mean trickery.

You see, teacher told us how the big boys and girls have their presidents and other "important positions" in school; so we thought we'd have a president, too.

Tim Watson is the biggest boy. He had no trouble frightenin' all the little chaps to vote for him; but most of the girls were for me. Election was to be next morning 'fore school time.

"Course, I was mighty anxious, an' I schemed out I knew how. I got a pretty good plan, too; an' if somebody who pretended to be my friend hadn't tattled to him, I'd 'a' been president now. I'd like to catch that fellow!

We had to walk 'most a mile to school. It'd been snowing and there was lots on the ground. My idea was to hide our fellows in the bushes, and when the little fellows came along, to make them prisoners. Then one of us was to watch 'em while the rest of the fellows ran to the schoolhouse and voted for me. In that way I'd have what teacher calls the "majority."

Well, sir, we hid among those bushes 'till we were almost frozen. After a while Tim an' some of his big friends passed as well as lots of the girls.

Indeed, so many girls went by that Bill thinks whispers to me:

"Gee! I never know there was so many girls. Funny, I don't seem to know all of them, neither."

But it was so cold that all were muf-

fed up, so we 'spected nothing. That is, until the school bell rang, and we had to hustle to school or be late.

Then we found that Tim had already been 'lected president! And that he had made the little fellows put on their sisters' dresses and coats, so that we had been fooled at our own game!

Now, I, for one, don't think Tim Watson did right. Do you? An' I think I've got a better right to be president.

A Speedy Trip

"SEE here, James," said Mr. Blank, calling his office boy, "if Mr. Burns should happen to call while I'm out, be sure to tell him that I've sailed for England."

Hardly had the employer disappeared when Mr. Burns entered.

"Mr. Blank has gone to England, sir," volunteered the office boy, when he had assured himself of the identity of his visitor. "Sailed this morning, sir," he added.

"When will he return?" impatiently queried Mr. Burns.

James looked reflectively at the opposite wall and dug his hands into his trousers pockets for inspiration. At last came the highly intelligent response: "Don't think he'll be back till after lunch."

Possibly Will Be.

A schoolboy essay read like this: "America is a foreign country. America has much coal oeds. When it is all used we shall have to use our brains for fuel, and it will be scarce."

SHE BURTONS' HOLIDAY IN SWITZERLAND

"HURRAH, it's come! I can see it in mummy's face!" shouted Sid.

"Hurrah! Hurrah!" echoed Bess and Marian and Billieboy.

Mother smiled at this enthusiasm. "Yes, it's come," said she, producing the letter just received from daddy, "and he wishes us to join him just as soon as possible."

"Goin' to see daddy!" piped Billieboy, while the rest all laughed joyously.

You see, the Burtons had decided to build a home in Switzerland in which they planned to spend the greater part of each year. But it is no easy matter to purchase the right sort of ground, so Daddy Burton had been spending some time in Switzerland during his negotiations. Then, too, he wished to personally superintend the building of their little chalet, for, although the builders knew perfectly well how to lay out the house to best advantage in order that certain parts would receive the sunlight and others the cooling breezes in summer—there were certain modifications especially desired. Now, however, the dwelling was completed, and he wished his family to take possession at the earliest possible moment.

The reunion was a happy one. There was no one like daddy, you know, and they had missed him sadly during his



THE PROCESSION STARTS

even dreamed of having it in such a glorious place. Why, looking up through your big dormer window that great mountain seems as though it were about to fall on us. How much snow it carries on its summit!

"Big mountain has white cap," gurgled Billieboy, more excited than any one else.

At luncheon Sid told of his rather discouraging experience in attempting to make the natives understand him.

"I tried both French and German at the village, but they didn't seem to know either language. However, I came to the conclusion that it wasn't altogether their fault when I spoke what I thought was pretty good French to a Frenchman at the hotel. He listened to me for a while as though puzzled, and then asked me if I wouldn't mind using French, as that was the only language he understood."

When the laughs had died away, Sid went off to tell of a celebration which was to be held at the village on the morrow.

"Yes, it's what they call the Chalandra Marz, a celebration held always on the first day of March to welcome the return of spring," explained Mr. Burton.

Shortly before daybreak next morning they were awakened by the musical tinkling of bells in the distance.

"In a little while," said he, "they will gather about the fountain in the public square, after which they will have their procession."

"Oh, can't we go and see it?" pleaded Marian.

"Yes, I mean to take you," replied Mr. Burton.

Breakfast was disposed of hastily, and soon they were in the village. The procession was an interesting one. It represented the return of the cattle to the summer grazing grounds. First came one of the largest of the boys, who was dressed in black knee-breeches, white stockings, old-fashioned wooden shoes and a long nightcap. He carried a milk pail on his arm, and was supposed to be the owner of the herd. The others followed in single file, each personating a cow. At the end of the line another large boy, dressed in rough clothing and wearing a broad-brimmed hat. In his hand he carried a staff. This boy is the herdsman, whose duty it is to see that none of the cows drop out of line (the cows always march in single file) or stray from their accustomed pastures.

Singing a "yodde-song," this procession



"WITH BELLS HUNG ROUND THEIR NECKS"

absence. So you may imagine how delighted they were to see him again and to inspect their quaint little home.

"Looks just like the Swiss cottage we've commented on the toys in America," commented Bess, after a thorough examination of the chalet.

"Yes," replied Marian, "but I never

wended its way from house to house, where gifts of fruit and nuts were collected. Mr. Burton informed the others that with these gifts the boys would give a feast that afternoon to all the villagers and that the day would end in music and song.

A few days later Billieboy burst into the house, clutching in each chubby fist a bunch of scarlet poppies.

"Oh, mummy," cried he, announcing an important discovery, "there's nothing but grass."

"You're an observing little Billieboy," laughed mother; "but, as a matter of fact, that's all they do raise here. They have no grains of any kind, or even timothy. Grass and clover they have, and that is all."

Sid visited the neighboring town quite



DECKING THEIR HEADS WITH WREATHS

frequently now, and had already made quite a number of friends. Today he asked his father if he could not attend the national athletic carnival, which he had heard would take place within the next few months.

Mr. Burton promised to go with him, and there gave a very interesting talk on athletics and sports in Switzerland. Besides shooting, the Swiss have very few of the sports with which we are acquainted. But nearly every Swiss, man and boy, engage in gymnastics—wrestling, running and the like. The instruction is almost entirely under the control of the government, and there are branch clubs of gymnasts in nearly every town. There are a great many contests and reunions which are more or less local, and once a year a great national assemblage, when winners in special events are presented gifts by the "crowned maidens."

Tabby Jones

SHE was only a mite of a kitten when she first came to us—a cunning little ball of fur, which no one would ever have taken, at first glance, for a real, live pussy cat.

But Tabby had come to stay, and soon, by her mischievous pranks, she proved that she was, indeed, a real pussy—and a lively one, too.

Polly and Tabby were enemies from the very beginning of their acquaintance. Undoubtedly it was mostly jealousy on part of the parrot; for Polly, who for a long time had been the only pet of the household, did not take kindly to the idea of sharing our favors with Tabby. But if Polly showed her ill will by teasing the cat, Tabby was not a whit behind in taking every opportunity to pay the parrot back in the same coin.

One morning the two were quite peaceable. This in itself was remarkable,



TABBY IS ASHAMED

and a warning that something especially annoying would soon happen.

Sure enough, early in the afternoon we were started to hear from the direction of the pantry a succession of shrieks from Polly, and then the words, many times repeated:

"Tabby Jones, stop that! Tabby Jones, stop that! The scene of disturbance, we were surprised to find Tabby in the act of pilfering from the pantry, while Polly sat on the window ledge scolding at the top of her voice.

It was hard to tell if puss were more ashamed of being caught than she was angry at Polly's betrayal.

Needless to say, each became still more distrustful of the other after that day.

Net Ball

THIS is one of the very newest games. A popularity greater even than that of "diabolo" is predicted for it.

Net ball resembles in some slight degree both diabolo and tennis. Each player (there are usually two in a game) is provided with a little net fastened between two sticks. When the sticks are held wide apart the net is extended, and presents a surface similar to that of a lawn-tennis racket. When the net is held loose it forms a pocket in which the ball may be deftly caught.

Two balls (a lawn-tennis ball may well be used) are continually kept in motion, being tossed between the two players. Whenever a player fails to "return" with proper bounds, or misses a ball thrown to him, it counts a point for his adversary.

While it is easy to catch the ball in



TOSSING THE BALL

the net it is rather difficult to make the right sort of "return." This latter is done by tossing the net forward and at the same time jerking the sticks as far apart as possible. When you become very skilful you may use your net just as a tennis racket is used, not employing the "pocket" at all. This, of course, gives you a great advantage over an adversary who has to catch it each time in the pocket before returning.

Net ball was born in England, and is already becoming quite the vogue in France.

Only One for Him

AS the train stopped at a small station, the traveler leaped out of the window and called to a small boy standing on the platform:

"My boy, won't you please buy a bun from the shop yonder, and while you're about it you might as well get one for yourself for my trouble."

Very soon the lad reappeared munching a bun. Handing the traveler his change he said:

"Very sorry, sir, but there was only one left."

A Pertinent Question

A little boy went to the dentist's to have some of his "first" teeth extracted. After they were out the little fellow felt very unhappy about his loss, when the dentist, to comfort him, said:

"Oh, never mind about that; they'll come in again."

"In time for dinner?" asked the little boy, his face clearing.

Full of Glory

William Dean Howells, the popular writer, says that when his talented daughter, Mildred, was a child she looked up suddenly from her breakfast one bright morning, and said:

"Father, I am full of glory."

"What do you mean?" asked her father.

"Why," said the little girl, "a sunbeam just got on my spoon, and I have swallowed it!"

Fitting Punishment

Toby—Boohoo! Boohoo! I got whipped for doing nothing!

Tony—Honest, what did you do, Toby?

Toby—Nothing. I tell you, I've just got the whooping cough an' when I asked pa to buy me a flute and let me take lessons he looked more 'noyed than he did when I used to cough, an' sailed right into me.

Funny Pierre

HE COULDN'T help being funny—Pierre couldn't—and if I was as funny as Pierre I'd run off to a circus and be a clown, too.

But that wasn't the first time Pierre ran away. Once he told Jimmy and me all about how he followed his uncle on board ship, 'fore the vessel sailed from France, and how Pierre's uncle decided at last to keep him. Pierre's uncle, you know, is chef at our hotel, so that's how we came to know them both.

Jimmy and I knew—oh, a long while—now very funny Pierre was, 'cause one time when we gave a little entertainment he came dressed in a clown's suit and danced queer dances and sang all sorts of funny songs. So we weren't surprised a bit when Pierre ran away. He'd always said he was tired of helpin' his uncle in the kitchen—that's what Pierre did, you know—and soon he was going away somewhere.

It did surprise us a whole lot, though, when in the very next circus we went to see whom we should find but Pierre! He came over to the ropes and actually spoke to Jimmy and me. Yesser, he did! Jimmy and I felt prouder than anything.

Soon as Jimmy and I got to be as big as Pierre—an' he's almost a man—we're goin' to join a circus, too, without waitin' to grow as funny as Pierre. Most likely we'd have to wait a hundred years to be that funny.



PIERRE

The Kingdom of Sunshine

MILICENT was a little girl who always looked on the dark side of things. She was constantly on the lookout for trouble, and expected the most disagreeable things to happen. It seemed to afford her a melancholy pleasure to be able to say "I told you so" when her worst fears were realized, and the weather proved stormy, or the baby refused to sleep when every well-behaved baby should, or the dinner burned to a crisp, or some such catastrophe occurred. Even when the sun shone and things were running smoothly, she hovered round with dismal forebodings, furnishing more than the necessary shadows to the brightness of the day. For some shadow is needed to teach us to appreciate the sun.

"Dear, dear," sighed her mother; "Millicent, I wish you would pay a visit to the Kingdom of Sunshine, and come back with a whole bundle of sunbeams to make up for the shadows you carry with you always."

"Is there such a person?" asked Millicent, eagerly.

"Certainly there is! But I cannot tell you how to reach his kingdom. Those who do find it are ever after the happiest of mortals."

Millicent pondered over her mother's words all day. When evening came and she lay down to sleep she fixed her eyes upon the moon, sailing through an unclouded sky, and her last waking thought was a wish that she might find the kingdom of sunshine.

The next thing she was conscious of was being lifted upon a moon-ray, and carried up, up, up, until she was laid on a cloud, luminous with moonlight.

"You wish to find the Sunshine Kingdom?" whispered a tiny star to her. (Millicent had heard of singing stars, but never before of a talkative one.)

"Follow me!"

She was carried in the wake of the

twinkler, quite out of the land of moonshine—into a land of purple night—the realm of shadows, through which many must pass before they can reach the sun.

"We are traveling toward the east," twinkled her guide. "We will soon be greeted by Dawn. You will know her by her rosy draperies."

So, on and on, until a crimson light



THE SUN GOD IN HIS BLAZING CHARIOT

glowed through the gray and kissed Millicent's cheek.

"I will stop here," said the star. "I am the morning star and must go on duty at once."

Conducted by Dawn, the little girl passed on to the region of the sun. So glowing and gorgeous it was that she was dazzled. The Sun King sat in a golden chariot drawn by fiery steeds. He reined them in at her approach.

"What would you with me, child?" he asked in golden accents. "Speak quickly! The hours are such feet-footed daisies that they will soon outrun me. I am in continual chase of them!"

"If you please, O Sun King, I would like a bundle of sunbeams to keep with me always, so as to be able to drive away the shadows!"

"And is your heart large enough to contain them? It is only there that they

will consent to remain. The child that cannot carry sunshine in her heart will never be able to drive away the shadows. It is not necessary to come to the Sunshine Kingdom for them. They play about the earth many days of the year. Children should catch them and store them up for use on cloudy days. They who look on the bright side of things and make the best of every hardship are able to spread more real sunshine than I have ever done. Go home, my child, and see that your heart is so filled with cheerfulness that it will overflow and spread to those around you. This is the kind of sunshine that knows no shade."

It may have been all a dream, but Millicent profited so well by the lesson the Sun King taught her that today she is known both far and near by the name of "Little Sunbeam."

AMY SMITH.

Singing Kettles.

The Japanese, who know so well how to add little unexpected attractions to everyday life, manufacture, in a great variety of forms, iron tea-kettles which break into song when the water boils. The song may not be a very perfect melody, but it is perhaps as agreeable as the notes produced by some of the insects which the Japanese also treasure for their music.

The harmonious sounds of the tea-kettles are produced by steam bubbles escaping from beneath thin sheets of iron fastened close together at the bottom of the kettles. To produce the best effects some skill is required in regulating the fire, the character of the sounds varies with the form of the kettle. These singing kettles have been used for many centuries.

Apprenticeship.

"Yes," said Mr. Pater, with ill-concealed pride, "my youngest boy makes some smart remarks at times. Only recently he asked me what it meant to be an apprentice. I told him that it meant the binding of one person to another by agreement, and that one person so bound had to teach the other all he could of his trade or profession, while the other had to watch and learn how things were done, and had to make himself useful in every way possible."

"What did he say to that?" asked one of the audience.

"Why, after a few minutes the young rascal looked up at me and said: 'Then I suppose you're apprenticed to mother, aren't you, dad?'"

A 3-Year-Old Colonel.

It is a wonder that the poor little grand duke who is the heir to the dignity of czar is not already overwhelmed by his titles. He is nearly 3½ years old. He is hetman of all the Cossacks, chief of the regiment of the Guard of Finland, colonel of the Fifty-first Regiment of Infantry of Zittovsk, of the Twelfth Regiment of Infantry of eastern Siberia, of the Corps of Cadets of Tashkent, and captain of the Fourth Battery of Horse Artillery. Notwithstanding these dignities, it is said that his greatest joy in life is a gollywog dressed in blue and red, for possession of which he occasionally fights with his youngest sister, Princess Anastasia, who is 6 years old.

Mother—I am sorry to hear that Tommy Smith tied a kettle to a poor dog's tail. You wouldn't do such a thing, would you?

Bobby—No, indeed, mother.

Mother—Why didn't you stop him, Bobby?

Bobby—I couldn't; mother; I was holding the dog.

My Window Seat



THE dearest of all the dear places to me

Is my little window seat;

Though comely and bright is the gay nursery.

Just heaped up with toys, nice as you'll ever see.

I'm sure that most cheerless and dismal 'twould be

Without any window seat.

Great tales about fairies I carry to read

In my little window seat;

This window to Fairyland seems straight to lead.

And, seeking for 'princesses,' one does not need

Look far from my window seat.

A tiny brown cottage I see, through the glass,

From my little window seat;

Sometimes I pretend 'tis a witch who lives there.

Of whom all good lassies and lads should beware.

Or the home of the big, middle-sized and wee bear;

But I'm safe in my window seat.

The nicest of all the nice places to dream

Is my little window seat;

For there, in the light of the straving sunbeam,

A monarch I am, and my kingdom a dream

My own-inged, own window seat.

DICK'S NEW HORSE



HE'S just the horse for little Dick; They say he hasn't got a trick.

Very nicely broken in.

Why, when an auto whizzes by, He doesn't even blink an eye.

He'd never run away, of course— He's just a wooden rocking-horse.

—Elsie Parrish.