

FOR EVERY BOY AND GIRL

HOW A WOMAN SAVED A NARMY By H. A. Ogden

It was in the winter of 1777-78, during the occupation of Philadelphia by the British troops, that a patriot woman inside of the enemy's lines performed an act of great service to her country. Not far away, at Whitemarsh, General Washington's army was encamped. It had recently suffered defeat in the battles of Brandywine and Germantown, and the outlook was most discouraging. In Philadelphia the British soldiers, commanded by General Howe, were quartered in comfortable barracks, while their officers had selected the most commodious and elegant houses in which to enjoy the winter. In one of these houses lived a Quaker gentleman named Darrah, his wife Lydia, and their younger children; their oldest son was an officer in the patriot army. With them General Howe's adjutant-general took up his quarters, and secured a back room in which private councils could be held.

Lydia suspected that some expedition against the patriot army was to be arranged. She sent all the family to bed, and, taking off her shoes, crept softly back and listened at the door. By this piece of eavesdropping, which the zealous woman no doubt felt was entirely justified as a war expedient, she learned it was decided to issue an order that all the British troops should march out, late on the fourth of December, to surprise General Washington and his army. Having learned this important decision, Mrs. Darrah retired to her room, and, lying down, feigned to be asleep. When one of the officers knocked at the door, she did not reply until the summons had been several times repeated. After the departure of the officers she hardly knew what to do, in order to get word of the intended surprise to Washington. She knew it lay in her power



THE BRITISH OFFICERS IN COUNCIL.

servant, or to take a companion, but Lydia insisted on going alone.

As the mill was some distance from the city, a pass through the British lines must be obtained; and Lydia's first step was to procure the document from General Howe. Having secured the pass, she made her way over the snowy roads, and reached the mill. Leaving her flour-bag to be filled, she hurried on in the direction of the American camp, and before long met a party of patriot cavaliers commanded by an officer whom she knew. He inquired where she was going. Mrs. Darrah said she was going to see her son, one of his comrades; at the same time she begged him to dismount and walk with her. Ordering his troops to remain within sight, he did so. She then told her important secret, after his promise not to betray his source of information, lest her life might be forfeited thereby. Conducting her to a house near at hand, and seeing that she had some refreshment, the American officer galloped off to headquarters, where General Washington was at once informed of the intended attack. The necessary preparations were of course made for receiving and repelling the enemy's "surprise."

Returning home with her flour, Lydia sat up alone, to watch the intended movement of the British. The regular tramp of feet passed the door, then all was silence; nor was her anxiety to know the result at an end until the officers' return, a day or two later. Although she did not dare to ask a question, imagine her alarm when the adjutant-general told her that he wished to ask her some questions; she felt sure that she either had been betrayed or was suspected. He inquired very particularly whether her husband or any of the children were up on the night they had held their last consultation. Lydia replied: "The family all retired at seven o'clock, as you requested." He then remarked: "I know you were asleep; for I knocked on your door at least three times before you answered me. We are entirely at a loss to understand who could have given Washington information of our proposed attack, unless these walls could speak. When we arrived near their encampment we found all their cannon in position, and their troops ready for us; and not being prepared for a regular battle with the Americans, we marched back—like a parcel of fools!"

"It will be such fun to have no one to trouble us. I had my mouse all the time. Now it is yours, and I will have the brown one."

The shepherd boy touched the delicate thing—it was a gift of her fairy godmother to the Grand Duchess—and he thought he had never seen anything so beautiful and so much to be desired.

The Duchess showed him its wonderful wings. They shut neatly down against its sides like closed fans. When they were spread out the mouse looked as if it were a large white flower.

He took it tenderly, and pressed it lovingly to his tanned cheek, while he handed her the little field-mouse.

As they played, the shepherd boy told her he lived with his stepmother in a small cottage near the edge of the town. He kept the sheep of any of the neighboring farmers who would hire him. He dared not let his stepmother see his new treasure for she was a cruel witch woman. So they arranged to make a little nest for it, warm and cozy with mosses, among the tree roots, where a stone was to fit in the opening and keep it safely. They were so busy they did not notice the sound of footsteps approaching; but they looked up when a shadow fell across them, expecting to see the nurse.

The shepherd boy turned pale. Fingers like claws pressed his shoulder, and he exclaimed, "Stepmother!"

She snatched the white mouse from him, thrust it inside the bosom of her dress, seized a wrist of the Grand Duchess and of the boy, and dragged them away through the wood.

Then the Grand Duchess screamed and bitterly repented of her deceit, but it was too late.

On and on they went. The Duchess cried until she had no more tears left, and by night-time the party reached a curious hut deep in the forest.

The hut was round like a beehive. It had one room on the ground and two above. The stepmother drove the boy and the Grand Duchess up the ladder, and locked each into a tiny loft.

Down below, after lighting a small lamp, the woman took out the Mouse with Wings. The little black eyes looked up at her. She chuckled to it and stroked it with a horny finger. Then she fetched some seed, which she scattered around the mouse.

It was hungry and took up the grain in wee white paws. The woman watched it greedily.

She knew what the Grand Duchess had not thought of mentioning. This fairy mouse ate only golden grain, and every seed it touched turned into purest gold.

She let it eat as long as it would, then she spread grain before it while it ran about the table. She had tied a string round its body so that it could not open its wings.

Until the mouse grew sleepy she strewed the seed; when it would run no longer she put it into a strong box, which had a secret fastening, and she placed the box upon a high shelf.

Next she picked over every grain upon the wooden table, sorting out the ones the mouse's little feet had pressed. These she dropped into a bag, and the bag she covered up in a hollow place she had scraped by the hearth.

Not until then did she cook her supper.

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"WE MARCHED BACK LIKE A PARCEL OF FOOLS!" SAID THE ADJUTANT-GENERAL.

Just before one of these councils, in the early part of December, Lydia Darrah was told to retire early with her family, as the British officers would require the room at seven o'clock, and would remain late. The adjutant-general added that the officers would send for her to let them out and to extinguish the fire and candles. Now, as the officer was so particu-

lar, Lydia suspected that some expedition against the patriot army was to be arranged. She dared not consult even her husband. She decided to go herself and convey the information. The Darrah's stock of flour being almost out, and it being customary in those days for people to send or go to the mills themselves, Lydia told her husband that she would go for more. He wanted his wife to send their

A MOUSE WITH WINGS

A Fairy Tale by M. Bowley.

THE Grand Duchess walked in the palace gardens. By her side was the stately head nurse; for the Grand Duchess was young. Behind her were two pages, who held up her train of cloth of gold. The Grand Duchess kicked up the stones now and then with the toe of a daintily pointed shoe, and presently she sighed a very big sigh.

"I am so tired of the same walk every day and every day," she said. "I mean to go this minute right out into the fields and pick flowers, dear little common flowers, on the hill over the stream."

"Impossible, your Royal Highness!" cried the old nurse, quite shocked.

"By no means," replied the Duchess, wilfully. "Give me my train," said she, turning to the boys. "I will carry it. You may go."

Then she ran to the great gates. With some difficulty she pushed one open and passed out. The nurse, panting and groaning, followed her.

The Duchess scampered about joyfully. She was inconvenienced by her train, it was so heavy; but she gathered the daisies and put them in her hair, she sang songs and called to the birds, and talked to the sheep cropping the grass.

The Duchess crossed the stream by the plank. The danger, so new, delighted her. She laughed and clapped her hands as the board creaked under the weight of the old nurse.

"I'll rest right here in the shade," said the Grand Duchess, presently. Going toward a clump of trees, she was resting herself on a large stone, when something ran from underneath it across her foot.

"Oh, the sweet brown mouse!" she cried. She fell upon her knees to catch it, but at the same moment a hand as brown as the mouse came from beside a tree, and the mouse ran into the hand.

The face of a shepherd boy peeped over. "That's my mouse," he said.

The Grand Duchess sat up on the ground, and looked back at him.

"I want it to be mine," she answered.

"Give it to her Royal Highness immediately," commanded the nurse. "You are honored that she should care to have it."

But the shepherd boy only repeated, "It's my mouse."

The eyes of the Grand Duchess opened very widely. They were very blue eyes, and her parted lips were as rosy as the wild cherries above her head.

"I like you, you funny shepherd boy," she said, after a long pause. "But I want that dear brown mouse. I will give you my white mouse for it. Mine has wings."

It was the turn of the shepherd boy to open his eyes.

"Go back and look for my mouse," said the Grand Duchess to the nurse. "I shall stay here and play with this nice boy."

"But, your Royal Highness," protested the nurse, "you surely will not give the Winged Mouse to a country lad! Besides, I cannot leave you here."

"I will take care of her," said the shepherd boy, with a lordly air. He was about a year older than the Duchess.

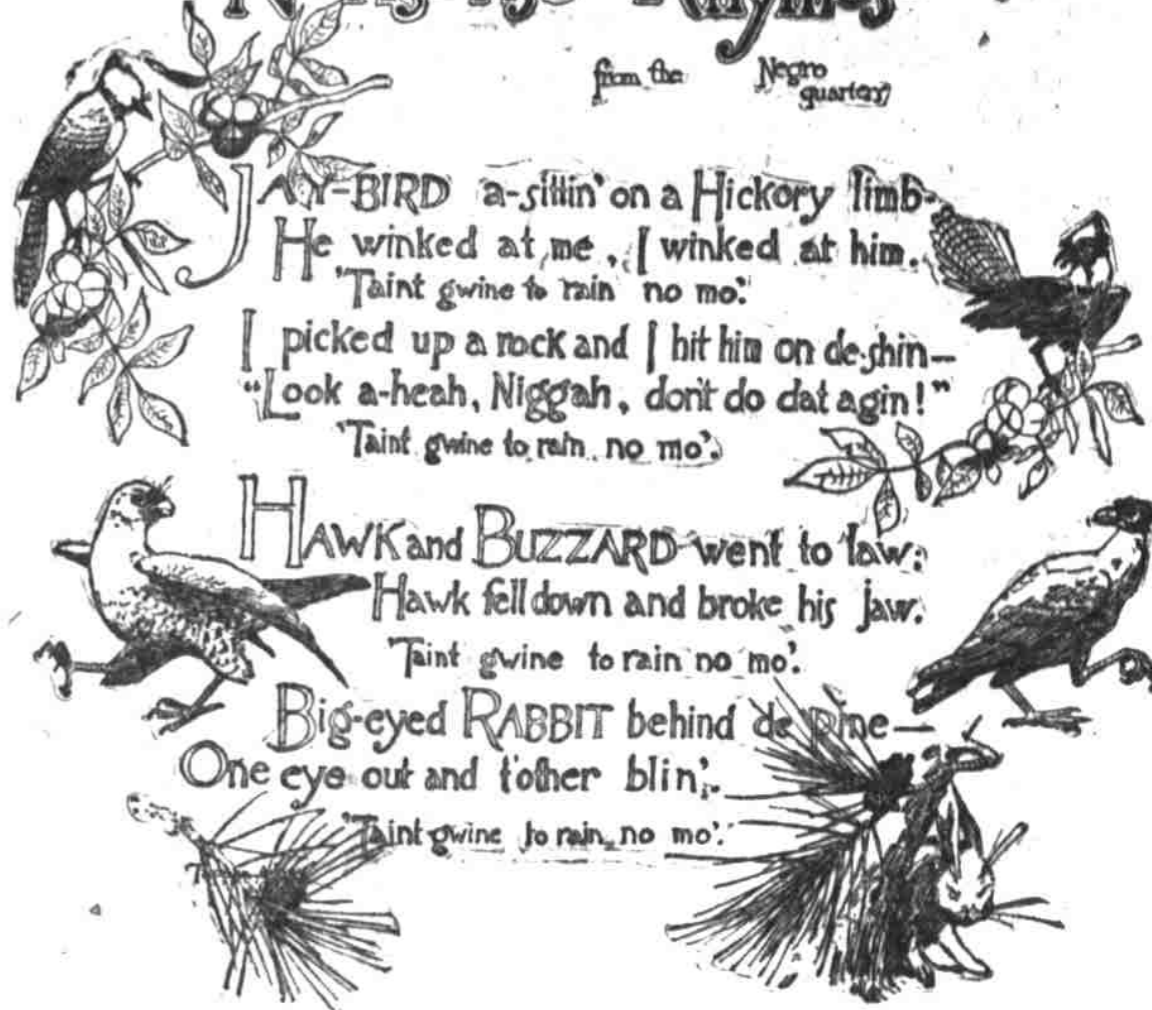
"Go this minute!" said she, getting up to stamp her foot imperiously.

The nurse turned away grumbling and muttering. Little did the Duchess think how long it would be before she saw her nurse again.

She watched her out of sight. She had a naughty smile in her blue eyes, and the simple shepherd boy stared as he reached for the embroidered pocket that hung by her side, and took from it a snow-white mouse, which she held out to him in the pink palm of her hand.

Nonsense Rhymes

from the Negro quarters



JAY-BIRD 'a-sittin' on a Hickory limb—
He winked at me, [winked at him,
'Taint gwine to rain, no mo'—
[picked up a rock and hit him on de shin—
'Look a-heah, Niggah, don't do dat agin!'
'Taint gwine to rain, no mo'—

HAWK and BUZZARD went to law;
Hawk fell down and broke his jaw.
'Taint gwine to rain, no mo'.

Big-eyed RABBIT behind de pine—
One eye out and t'other blin'—
'Taint gwine to rain, no mo'.

The smell of it went up through the rafters into the rooms above, and the Grand Duchess began to cry afresh, from hunger. The shepherd boy did not cry—he was accustomed to being hungry.

When the morning came, the Grand Duchess found that her troubles were only beginning.

The shepherd boy was used to work as well as to hunger, but the Grand Duchess wept again and again over all the hard tasks set for her by the cruel stepmother. She dared not disobey. In this way weeks passed by. The Grand Duchess scrubbed the stone floor and did nearly all the work of the house. The shepherd boy was sent out to gather sticks for the fire and berries for cooking. The Duchess learned to make these into pies, while all the time the Witch Woman sat by the fire with the train she had cut from the Duchess's frock over her shoulders for a shawl. She did nothing but feed the white mouse every day, and collect the golden grain.

Since she was always there, the Grand Duchess and the shepherd boy rarely met alone. But now and then, when the Duchess went to the pond to fill her pail with water, she would meet him with his bundles of sticks. Then her chin would go up, and she never failed to say contemptuously:

"You—who promised to take care of me!"

And the shepherd boy would creep to his own heap of hay at night, and think and think until morning dawned.

He dared not leave her alone in the clutches of his stepmother while he ran away to tell what had become of her, for his absence would soon be discovered. Before he or her friends could return, she and the Witch Woman would have disappeared. He must not risk losing sight of her, for then the harm would be worse than ever.

All this time no rumor came to them of the commotion caused by the loss of the Grand Duchess.

The stepmother was aware of it, and of the great reward offered to any one who should bring back the missing child.

But she cared nothing for that. Had she not the fairy mouse, and many a bag of golden treasure hidden by the hearth? Plainly it was not to her interest, for many reasons, to let any one know what had happened.

One afternoon, when the summer was nearly over, she ordered them into their lofts. The shepherd boy, in the front loft, watched eagerly from the small window when he heard the door below shut and that also locked. He saw his stepmother, muffled in her cloak, with a bag in her hand, starting off in the direction of the distant town, and he guessed she was going to enjoy herself and to buy provisions of which they were in need.

"This is the chance I have waited for," whispered he.

In a moment he had lifted the trap-door, for the screws had been already loosened. He called softly to the Grand Duchess, and, with a broken knife which he succeeded in pushing through to her, under his directions she finished getting out the screws of her door, which were also loose. Then he forced it open and helped her down the ladder.

"I cannot leave my mouse," said he.

But to get the mouse proved a much more difficult matter than escaping from the loft.

For greater safety, and so that it might not be idle while she was away, the stepmother had shut the Winged Mouse into the cupboard, with plenty of seed about it. The lock was strong, she had taken the key with her, and there were no screws visible.

Then the Grand Duchess thought of a plan. They still had the field-mouse. About that the Witch Woman had never troubled herself.

The brown mouse should gnaw a hole!

They put it to the corner of the cupboard, where it could hear the white mouse running about inside.

It listened, then called in little squeaks.

The fairy mouse answered, and each began to nibble, one inside and one outside.

Their tiny teeth made terribly slow progress. The shepherd boy helped with his broken knife, but the darkness was coming on by the time a small white nose appeared. The brown mouse squeaked more loudly and worked harder. But alas; they had waited too long.

The cottage door behind them opened suddenly. The Witch Woman had returned sooner than they had expected. She sprang forward with a cry of rage when she saw them.

The Grand Duchess screamed and slipped by her out through the doorway, the shepherd boy following. He caught her hand, and they ran like hares—not before they had seen, though, that the Winged Mouse had flown out in front of them. The string round its body had been scraped off as it passed through the hole, and, frightened by the confusion, it had spread its wings to escape.

The Witch Woman saw it, too—saw it go through the open door. Wildly she strained her eyes seeking it. And in the darkness near the hut something white glimmered. So it came about in this way that the Witch Woman met her end; for right into the pond she fell, and there was drowned, with a white water-lily clutched in her hand. She had mis-taken it for the mouse.

The fugitives pressed on, not knowing what had happened.

Then, in the faint light of the sunrise, like a great white flower on a tree, the Winged Mouse sat before them.

The shepherd boy whistled, and the Grand Duchess called coaxingly to it; but it kept out of their reach every time they came near flying always a little farther.

And so they followed, trying to catch it all the day and part of the next. And then the shepherd boy looked round about, and turning suddenly to the Grand Duchess.

She was looking, too.

There, across the fields, rose the towers of her palace.

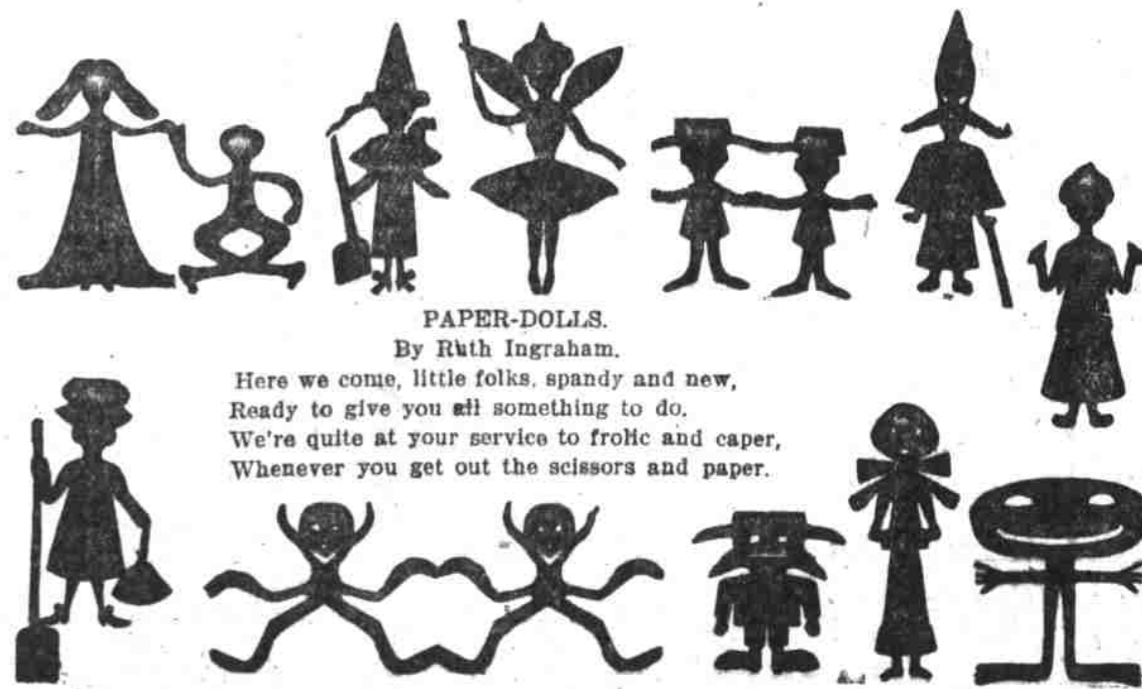
The Winged Mouse had brought them straight home. And the brown mouse had followed, for in front of them it sat on a stone—the very stone under which it had been on the day when the Grand Duchess first met the shepherd boy. There, too, was the stream, with the plank across it, and the daisies spackled the grass just as they had done so many months ago.

The Grand Duchess and the shepherd boy ran again, as fast as when the Witch Woman was behind them. At the gates stood the old head nurse, quite thin and pale now, shading her eyes with her hand while she gazed over the fields towards the hills where the wild flowers grew.

The Grand Duchess forgot all her dignity. She rushed into her nurse's arms.

In ten minutes all the bells in the city rang out, so that no one could hear himself speak for the noise, and in ten minutes more every house had a flag waving from its roof and bright draperies flung out of the windows.

The Grand Duchess and the shepherd boy were never tired of talking over their adventures. The often met by the golden cage where the two mice lived. He was made Keeper of the Royal Flocks. Not that there was any need for him to work harder than he wished, for he was well known to be a special favorite and playfellow of the Grand Duchess and, besides that, to him belonged that pet of the palace, the Mouse with Wings.



PAPER-DOLLS.

By Ruth Ingraham.

Here we come, little folks, spandy and new,
Ready to give you all something to do.
We're quite at your service to frolic and caper,
Whenever you get out the scissors and paper.