

Polly Evans' Story Page for Boys and Girls

(Copyright, 1908, by The North American Company.)

How the Poodle Got Away

"WILL you provide me with dinner and lodging for the night?" The landlord of the Black Poodle Inn looked doubtfully at the speaker, imagining, from the shabby appearance of the traveler, that he was without money, and therefore was



"SHALL I PAINT A CHAIN?"

asking charity. But the sharp innkeeper also observed that the stranger carried a palette and artist's materials; so he made answer in this wise:

"That I will do, but in return you must paint a new black poodle on my sign."

For a moment the artist seemed about to laugh. He struggled to compose his features, however, and gravely nodded his willingness to carry out his part of the agreement. Ascending a ladder, the artist was soon busy with his brush. An hour later he leaned back to critically survey the completed painting. Then an idea came to him.

"Ho, landlord," he called, "I shall paint your dog a chain, too, if you will give me breakfast tomorrow morning."

But the avaricious man did not care to lose the price of another meal and he was quite satisfied with the handsome picture which now appeared on the sign. He shook his head surlily.

A modest meal was placed before the artist and a very modest room was given him for the night.

Next morning the innkeeper went to the door with his guest, not so much to wish the stranger good-bye and a pleasant journey as to proudly examine his new sign in the light of morning.

Sooner did he lift his eyes than he staggered back a pace, and then stammered:

"Wh-a-t has become of the poodle?"

"You would not have me paint a chain," calmly replied the artist; "I fear your dog has escaped!"

As you will probably surmise, the artist had quietly arisen during the night, stolen outdoors, and painted the sign black. So, through meanness, the innkeeper lost a most valuable painting, for the stranger was the best-known and wealthiest artist of the time.

A LUCKY FIND



"THEY PLAYED SEE-SAW"

"I ONLY wish we had as much money as those rich Americans," sighed Carmina, casting envious eyes at the handsome villa owned by the Americans.

Brother Pietro said nothing as he raised great clouds of dust with his bare feet, but his wistful look gave assurance that he shared the sentiment.

They were right in front of the villa when suddenly Pietro darted forward to pick up something he had kicked. It proved to be a big silver coin, which, the lad was sure, had come from America.

Pietro was sorely tempted to keep the coin, but as both his conscience and his sister advised otherwise, he strode toward the house of the Americans.

The beautiful American lady seemed greatly surprised when Pietro stated his errand. Without hesitation she bade him keep the coin. And then, as though seized with an afterthought, she asked him his name, of which she made careful note in a little book.

No sooner did he reach home than Pietro dutifully gave the coin to his mother. She made no comment, but when the father came home that afternoon the two had a long talk together, at the end of which Pietro's father said: "Children, there is a holiday in the city tomorrow. You have been a good little



"WONDERFUL ESCAPE OF SAILOR JACK"

boy, Pietro; you have been a good little

MICHAEL'S WISH: A STORY OF ST. PATRICK'S DAY

"A N," as I was sayin', darlint, when the blessed St. Patrick druv the snakes from the Emerald Isle, he sez to himself that he would hev to sind away the ghosts and the goblins and the banshees, bekaise for Christians to be poethered by sich wouldn't do at all. Accordinly, most of the ghosts an' the goblins an' the good banshees took to their heels at wunst; but minny a bad banshee paid no notice o' what the saint hod ordered, but stayed an' brought minny a body to their death.

"Sure, I mustn't be a-tellin' to you sich things, that's not for the likes o' you to hear. But, faith, me head's full of thim, since tomorrow's St. Patrick's Day." Here Bridget closed her lips resolutely, nor could she be beguiled into parting with more of her wonderful stock of folk-lore.

However, Michael had heard enough to put his head in a whirl. Material he had gained enough for a dozen day-dreams. Dreaming, you know, occupied a large part of the lad's time. In fact, when your father's a captain in the army, and you live at a lonely army post out on the plains, there frequently isn't very much else to do.

There were no other little boys to play with. Michael would have been forlorn, indeed, had there been no Bridget to spin fanciful tales for him.

So full was his head with banshees and fairies that Michael was unable to sleep that night. So you can see, can't you, that what happened him surely must have been "real"? Michael would have told you that, as he lay upon his little cot, he slept not one wink.

A SPLENDID BANSHEE

The banshee came just after the prolonged cry of "All's well!" from the guard on Number One post. It was a splendid banshee—not at all like the shiveled, old hag which Bridget had told him were the wicked ones. No, indeed, this was a good banshee, like a beautiful fairy princess. Quite trustingly he put his hand in hers when she sweetly bade him prepare for their journey. Then together they flew over hill and dale, streams and rivers, until at last they crossed the broad ocean.

Speeding swiftly above Ireland, the two finally alighted in a wild mountain glen. Although it was quite dark, Michael found that he could see very well. He, therefore, had ample opportunity to admire the marvelous scenery round about him.

The boy was led by the banshee up the mountain slope into an immense cavern. Here was assembled a great company of banshees.

"Welcome!" they cried, one and all, upon beholding the lad.

Michael's guide whispered to him that once a year the banshees were permitted to return to the earth, and that upon such occasions they always met in this place. What astonished the lad most was to find among the gathering several little banshee boys.

He quickly made their acquaintance, and with one in particular he became quite chummy.

So pleased was Michael with his new friend that when the banshee fairy came to him and told him that soon she must take him home he pleaded with her to let the little banshee boy come with him.

"No one but St. Patrick himself could grant such permission," said the fairy, shaking her head regretfully.

At this very moment who should enter the cavern but St. Patrick himself! At first one could see nothing but a

brought in order to give him a little enjoyment for the evening. She went on to tell of the lad's request that the little banshee be allowed to accompany him home as a playfellow.

"Well," said the saint, reflectively; "I am of a mind to grant this request. But, remember, my little friend; when daylight comes you'll see nothing of your playmate but a shadow; and when the sun doesn't shine you'll see him not at all."

Michael was overjoyed. He gratefully murmured his thanks, whereupon St. Patrick mysteriously disappeared



WONDERFUL TALES ABOUT BANSHEES

bright light, so brilliant was the halo about the good saint, but after a while one could distinguish a kind, smiling face that made you wish to worship him all the more.

The banshees bowed humbly before the saint. He asked them different questions, and hoped they were passing the evening pleasantly. Turning to Michael, he asked:

"How came this mortal among you?"

"The good banshee fairy promptly told St. Patrick how lonely Michael had been, and that he had been

and so did the cavern, and the banshees—and Ireland. Michael found himself in his little cot at home.

But somehow he felt that his friend, the banshee boy, was with him. He spoke, and, yea! there came a soft reply. He didn't have to speak out loud, you know. He merely "thought" it; always there was a whispered answer.

From that day Michael played and played with his shadow companion. Every one about the fort wondered why the boy suddenly should have

become so contented and happy. Once—and once only—he told his secret. But Sergeant Kelley laughed at him and declared he was playing with his own shadow. Michael knew better, however, though he never breathed his secret again, not even to Bridget.

Thereafter whenever Bridget talked about St. Patrick or banshees, Michael looked at her in the wise way which only those have who know all about such things. Of course, he had a perfect right to assume such an air; for who knew better than he?

Michael was overjoyed. He gratefully murmured his thanks, whereupon St. Patrick mysteriously disappeared

What They Want to Become

NOT long ago a class of boys was requested to write essays on the interesting subject, "What I should like to be when I am a man, and why."

One boy wrote that he would like to be on a newspaper, his chief reason being that "I would be in the office most of the time and could keep warm." He adds: "What is required is some paper and a pen."

Another wished to be a policeman. "A policeman gets plenty of air," wrote he, "and he must be brave and strong. When people don't behave he is allowed to 'whack' them."

A boy is desirous of being a teacher "because they have plenty of holidays. It is easy work. The things required are blackboard, chalk, maps and books."

One youngster intends to be a coachman so he can wear top boots, a top hat and big coat; and another a baker, in order that he may always have lots to eat.

Only one wishes to be a barber and use scissors and a razor, and wear a white jacket and apron.

Many desire to be soldiers and sailors, for various reasons.

Couldn't Fool Him. "William," asked the teacher, "if seven sheep are on one side of the fence, and one jumps over it, how many will there be left?"

"None," was William's prompt reply. "Why not?"

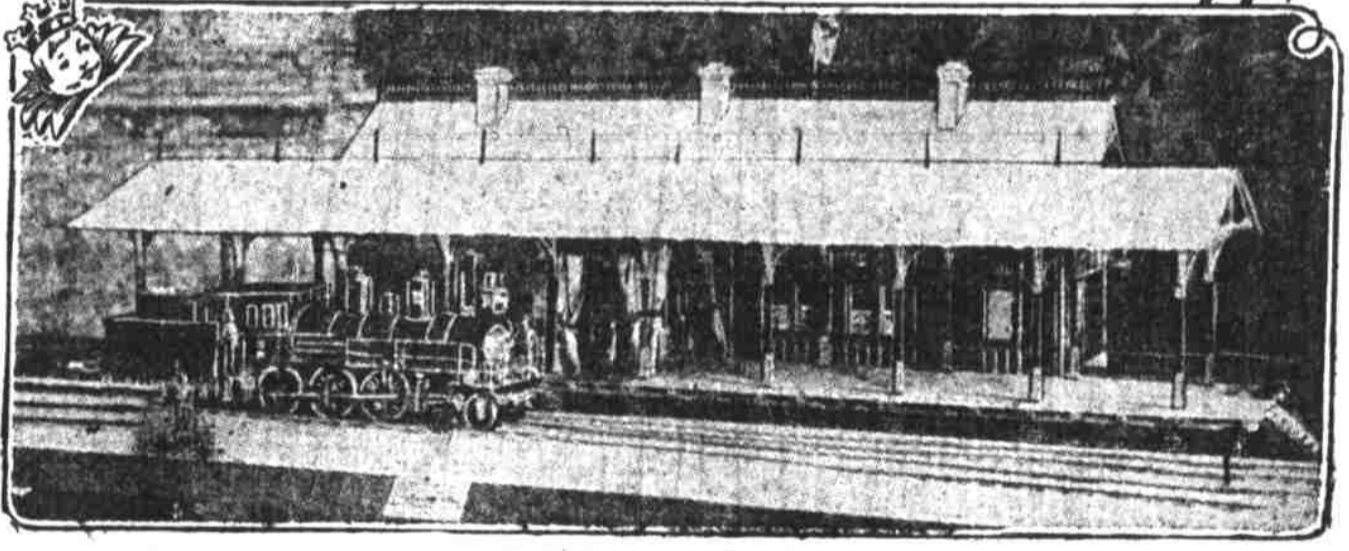
"There wouldn't be none left," confidently repeated William; "cause if one bolted all the rest would follow."

Later in the lesson William again distinguished himself by defining a "buttnose" as a "nanny-goat." The teacher's good opinion of Willie's cleverness seems to be justified.

Highly Probable. School Director (reading):—"She threw herself into the river. Her husband, horror-stricken, rushed to the bank. Now, can any boy tell me what the husband rushed to the bank for?"

Bright Boy (in rear of room)—"To get the insurance money, sir."

Gift To Make the Baby Tsarevitch Happy



ISN'T this a splendid toy? But it really isn't a toy. Though just the right size for the little son of the tsar of Russia, the locomotive is as real and complete as the biggest engine ever made. The little station you see is an exact model of the Imperial Railway Station at Tsarskoe Selo, built by the First Railway Battalion. It is completely furnished and fitted, and lighted by electricity. All of six months was required for the construction of the locomotive, the value of which exceeds \$3000. Miniature guards are stationed round about the station, lending to the air of reality.

This present came from the tsar several months ago. You wouldn't mind being the tsarevitch for a time, would you, if you would receive such handsome gifts as these? Think of all the fun you could have, running your engine round and round the circle of gleaming tracks!

Discovered It Wouldn't Keep. Harold—Mother, I bought sister's birthday gift today. Mother—What did you buy? Harold—A cream puff. Mother—A cream puff? Why, the birthday won't be here until next week.

Harold—Yea'm; I found that the cream puff wouldn't keep all that time, so I had to eat it myself. But sister'll prelate it just the same, won't she, mother?

A Difficult Feat. "Ask two persons to kneel, and have each of them hold up his right foot by means of his right hand. This will necessitate careful balancing on the left knee."

Then have one hold in his left hand a goblet filled with water, and have the other hold in his left hand an empty glass. Tell them to face each other and to pour the water from one glass into the other. Simple as this may sound, they will find it a feat exceedingly difficult of accomplishment.

Unexcusable Carelessness. Teacher—Remember, Isaac, I started with one dollar. I spent 15 cents for fruit and 10 cents for candy. How much had I left? Isaac (in disgust)—Well, why didn't you count your change, teacher?

Desired Information. William (aged 7)—Father, what did the Dead sea die of?

Tommy's Opinion of Girls Mary's Opinion of Boys



WHAT queer and puzzling sorts of things These girls are, anyway; I seem to hurt their feelings. In all I do and say.

They're never happy or content unless they're playing games. That put their valor to the test, and only failure tames.

Then at our peaceful play with dolls They love to jest and sneer; In fact they always ridicule. The things we hold most dear.

I asked my grown-up sister why The boys are fashioned so. "You'll find the men are still more queer." She smiled, "as old you grow!"



WHAT rough and silly animals These boys all seem to be! Why they should so delight to tease, I really cannot see!

They're never happy or content unless they're playing games. That put their valor to the test, and only failure tames.

Then at our peaceful play with dolls They love to jest and sneer; In fact they always ridicule. The things we hold most dear.

I asked my grown-up sister why The boys are fashioned so. "You'll find the men are still more queer." She smiled, "as old you grow!"

The CHIMNEY SWEEP



"CHIMNEYS I'll clean! Chimneys I'll sweep!" You hear shouted from surrise till stars 'gin to peep; London has smoke; London has fog— (If you doubt it, just look at the chimney sweep's "togs")— All good chimneys this fog and smoke "mixture" despise, And it seems much to trouble the youngster who cries: "Your chimney, your chimney I'll sweep!"

"Chimneys I'll sweep! Chimneys I'll clean!" Tells the tale of a life that is humble and mean; "Chimneys with soot, chimneys with grime— Yet more black are the "sweeps" than the chimneys they climb; But though hungry, though soiled, though unkempt he may be, Rings the song of the "sweep" ever gaily and free: "Your chimney, your chimney I'll clean!"

GRANDMA'S GOWN

NATURALLY, Mildred was greatly disappointed. But she really didn't see how she possibly could have done otherwise. You see, all the girls—Nina, Sarah, Alice and herself—had been invited to the party given by Rose Gordon. And as the Gordons lived five miles away, a rather long drive was necessary. It was indeed a shame that the buggy would hold only three of the girls. However, since one must be left, Mildred at once chose to be that one, for she knew how very badly Nina or Sarah or Alice would feel to be denied such a pleasure.

Yes, she did feel lonely when all had departed and she remained alone in the big house. She certainly must do something in order to try to "forget"; so she climbed up the broad stairway, and then up two other flights of steps, until she reached the tiny attic, right under the gable of the roof. She always went there, you know, when she wished to forget her troubles.

There she was alone with her secret. It was a delightful secret, too. Delving in the great "hair" trunk, she would bring forth the old garments of her grandmother. Then such fun she had donning this treasured finery and bowing to herself in the huge antique mirror whose frame was festooned with cobwebs!

Was that the doorbell ringing? Breathlessly she tiptoed to the bottom of the attic stairs. Yes, there was the sound again. Forgetting entirely her costume, she ran down to the door and flung it open.

It was a very nice-looking man who stood on the steps, but why did he stare at her so? Oh, now she remembered! Growing painfully red she half turned, as though to flee in her confusion.

"Won't you PLEASE stay just as you are!" eagerly begged the man. "I'd be ever so much obliged."

Taking a pen and pencil from his pocket he rapidly began to sketch, chatting briskly to her the while. He was an artist, he said, and had come merely to ask permission to sketch within the grounds.

"Charming! charming study!" he remarked when he had finished, and had carefully tucked the completed sketch away in his capacious pockets. Then he talked so nicely to Mildred that before she realized what she was doing he had learned all about her troubles.

And THEN what did the kind artist do but take her on a good, long automobile ride! You see, he had left the car right outside the gate. Enjoy herself? Why, she had one of the best times of her life. And you may be sure that she didn't regret in the least her absence from the party.



FLUNG THE DOOR OPEN

BALANCING TRICK

CAN you balance a plate on the point of a needle? Very likely you will think not; but you will be able to perform this trick—after you've learned the right way. There may be a number of wrong ways, but usually there's only one right way. So it is in this case.

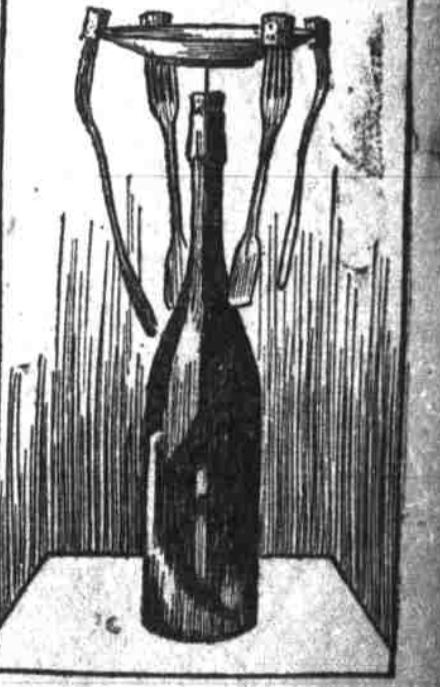
Stick a needle through a stout cork, lengthwise, allowing the point to protrude a little above the top of the cork. That part of the needle which protrudes at the base of the cork cut off with a pair of sharp pinners, on a level with the cork. Insert the cork firmly in the neck of a good-sized bottle.

Split two other corks in half, along their length. Run a needle through each half cork, having it enter on the long, freshly made surface and almost at right angles to it. By this arrangement you can fasten the four half corks to the rim of a plate, making sure there is an equal distance of rim between each. Insert the prongs of a table fork in the bottom of each half cork.

You will now be able to balance your plate on the point of the needle, as a trial will prove to your satisfaction.

His First Thought. The following question was put to Jimmy:—"What were the thoughts that passed through Sir Isaac Newton's mind when the apple fell upon his head?" Jimmy replied in this wise:—"Sir Isaac Newton 'imagined he was lucky it wasn't a brick that dropped!"

A New Method. "Well, this IS funny!" exclaimed Tommy, when he saw his first trolley car. "I've seen wagons pulled by horses and I've seen 'em go by steam, but I never seen 'em run by a clothes prop before!"



ADJUSTMENT OF APPARATUS

Amusing Answers. Teddy Jones was always being relied upon to give the most unexpected answers in school. The other day he defined a piece of blotting paper as "something you have to hunt all over the house for while the ink is getting dry." When asked to name the highest form of animal life, he responded:—"Please, a giraffe is the highest form of animal life."

Is This Your Answer? Teacher—Samuel, what is an excuse? Samuel—Something you can never think of when you want to.

WONDERFUL ESCAPE OF SAILOR JACK



WONDERFUL ESCAPE OF SAILOR JACK