

Polly Evans's Story Page for Boys and Girls

(Copyright, 1938, by The North American Company.)

Mr. Spider Goes A-Fishing

THERE was once an immense spider who lived and spun his web in the country of South America.

He was a very strong spider and a very greedy one, so that he feasted well upon the poor insects who wandered into his clutches.

But the terror of this mighty pirate spread far and near. The first warning the little gnats and flies received from their mothers was not to go near the web of the bloodthirsty spider. As time went on, Mr. Spider found the supplies in his larder were growing very small. All creatures of the earth and the air had learned to avoid him successfully.

One day Mr. Spider, now grown thin and gaunt, reasoned thus within himself:

"Since I can no longer make my living here, why should I not prey upon the fishes? They are said to be the most stupid of all creatures. I am sure that a wise old fellow like myself can easily outwit them."

Without more ado, Mr. Spider



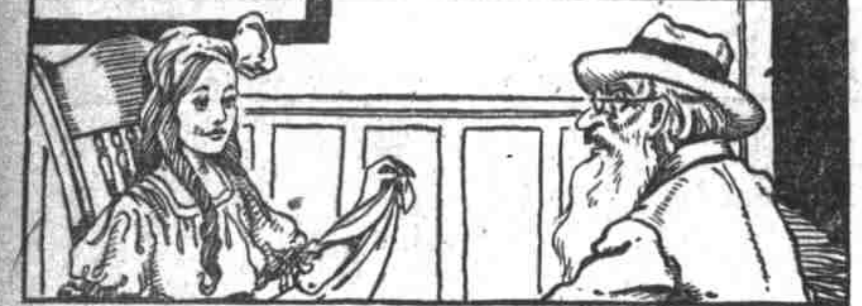
BUILT HIS WEB IN A STREAM

changed his abode. Between the banks of a very narrow stream and underneath the surface of the water he built his web. It was a clever trap-wide at the mouth and narrowing toward the other end, so that the unlucky fish who swam in was almost certain to become enmeshed in the web.

His web completed, Mr. Spider swam silently toward a little pool where great numbers of little minnows were playing. He came upon them suddenly, terrified them with his horrible appearance and drove them in a body toward his web.

Mr. Spider feasted well that day on minnows and many a day thereafter. Indeed, his descendants ever since have kept to the water, finding that living there is much more profitable and easier than on land.

LAND OF TOMORROW



"HENRIETTA WAS SURPRISED TO SEE NOTNOW"

YOU surely remember how the crooked little old man Pshaw escorted the little girl through Crooked Town, and thus taught her a lesson that was very much needed. Yes, to be sure you do.

Now, there was a friend of this little



"THE BRAVNY SMITH LAY CALMLY DOZING"

girl—indeed, a very close chum—who was also in need of a lesson, and it was a friend of Pshaw who taught her.

"Oh, dear," exclaimed this little girl one bright, sunny afternoon. "I do feel so drowsy. I don't feel at all like doing my sewing, and I certainly don't wish to look over my lessons—not now."

"Yes, miss, here I am," interrupted an

Novel Use for Carrot

IF YOU can find a carrot large enough, a cunning little hanging basket for flowers it will provide for you. Simply cut off the end of the carrot a short distance from the end. Hollow the car-



THE PROCESS ILLUSTRATED

rot thoroughly dry the remaining shell, and suspend it. The leaves of the vegetable should be permitted to remain on the bottom of the carrot.

A bit of wire, or wire twisted with twine, will serve as an appropriate handle.

UNDER THE SPELL OF A MUMMY SORCERER



"THE AIR AROUND THEM WAS FILLED WITH GIBBERING MONSTERS"

Ray eagerly nodded, but after a moment's thought, added soberly:

"But wouldn't it be horrible if one of them should chase us? It'd be bad enough if an elephant was after you, but to have one of those—" and Ray shuddered.

Ray and Raymond together made up their minds to visit the natural history museum. As a matter of fact, they did almost everything together, as twins should, so it was not strange that their thoughts should be very nearly the same. They remembered at the same instant that teacher had told them the museum contained the remains of some of these monsters; they decided at the same instant to see what those animals looked like.

The twins were somewhat disappointed at first when they explored the museum. They found a number of interesting things. It is true, and the big skeleton of the whale and skeletons of other animals were worth looking at, but they saw the remains of none of the monsters teacher had read to them about. Already the sun had begun to wane, when Ray, investigating an out-of-the-way corner, called sharply to her brother:

"Oh, Raymond, come here; I've found one of them!"

Side by side, they examined the imprint in stone of a gigantic bird who had possessed teeth. Painfully, they spelled out the inscription, "Pterodactyl."

"I believe any bird with a name like that would have a very cross temper," laughed Ray.

"We'll call him 'Ducky' for short," the other twin merrily responded.

Meanwhile the janitor of the museum had been plodding through the rooms and corridors looking out for another. He passed through the room where the twins were, but Ray and Raymond were hidden behind a huge case, and he walked by without perceiving them. Nor did the boy and girl, now thoroughly interested in their discovery, hear the retreating footsteps. Already they had found other fossils, and accordingly were in an ecstasy of delight.

"It's so dark I can hardly read this

name," said Raymond, bending over an inscription. Then, looking toward the window, he exclaimed:

"Have you any idea what time it is? I think we'd better be going, Ray; don't you?"

Indeed, it was high time the two were departing, for the sun was about to set. They made their way to the door. Raymond turned the knob briskly. The door failed to open. He pulled and tugged time and again; still it did not yield. With a worried look on his face, he hastened to the door at the other end of the room. His effort met the same result.

"We're locked in!" gasped the twins, staring blankly at each other.

CHAPTER II THE PRIEST OF SAKKARA

ECHOS from their shouts died away; but no answering response came, and the twins, in despair, perched upon the edge of a huge slab of stone. This slab contained a fossil, so that before Ray sat down, she whispered an apology for the liberty she was taking.

"Even if it is a fossil," thought she, "it isn't very polite to sit on him."

The dusk of twilight crept into the room, distorting the objects about them into weird, fantastical shapes. Ray nestled close to her brother, both finding courage and comfort in nearness. Twilight merged into night. Now the rays from the moon gave a ghostly radiance to the room and all contained therein.

Then, with a suddenness that was startling, all was pitched in darkness. Not a foot before them into the sooty blackness could the boy or girl see.

Vague uneasiness began to steal into their hearts. Raymond threw his arm around his sister protectingly, and she thrust her little hand into his rough palm.

All at once Ray started with fear. "Did you hear that noise in the next room?" she whispered.

"No," replied Raymond. "And the door's locked, anyway," he consoled.

But Ray's voice again shook, as she said: "That's where the mummies are kept, you know."

The eyes of both were fastened upon the door, so they observed together a pale, bluish light that crept upon the door. This light grew brighter, until the entire door glowed, and the room was no longer dark. Then, while they still looked, a shape from the next room passed right through the door. And there, in the pale light, with swiftness partly removed, stood a mummy!

Ray and Raymond sat stupefied at the terrifying figure turned its head in their direction. Raising its arms in a wooden, unnatural motion, the mummy waved a blazing wand. Immediately, drawn by some mysterious, powerful force, the twins rose and advanced toward it. There they stood fascinated, gazing into the face of the mummy, when the withered lips opened and the words came, in deep, hollow tones:

"Know ye that I am the Most High Priest of the Temple of Sakkara. By virtue of my all-powerful magic, protector am I of those who rest in this place. Why come ye here to disturb our sleep, O children of a race who, not content with pillaging holy temples and sacred tombs, have even brought hither the bones of man and beast, for rude eyes to gaze upon? O ye accursed, answer me!"

Then, as the boy and girl stood in trembling silence, the dread voice continued:

"But ye shall see these dead bones in a way ye had not hoped. Ye shall behold what power have the gods in whom ye do not believe—Isis and Osiris; Ptah, Sekhet and Bast, who have lent to me their magic."

Again the mummy waved his wand, in the twinkling of an eye the air about them was thronged with skeleton monsters, all gibbering in awful chorus:

"Ye Most High Priest, holder of unlimited power, send us back whence we came, we beseech thee."

"That I shall do," solemnly answered the mummy, "and with these shall go these accursed intruders."

From amid his swappings the mummy produced a tiny cornucopia filled with magic powder. He touched it with the tip of his wand. Slowly it burned, with a delightful, pungent odor, while clouds of greenish vapor wafted everywhere about the room.

Then the twins felt themselves going

The Captive Brownie

"WISH I had an Aladdin's lamp or a magic ring," muttered Roddy, discontentedly.

But I heard him say this so many times that I didn't notice the remark. Roddy was always wishing for what he didn't have. To give him something else to think about, I suggested that we take baseball gloves and a ball and go out in the yard for a "catch."

Now, we kept what we called our "sporting goods" in a great chest, which we had discovered a long time ago in the garret. Mother was only too glad to have us make use of it, inasmuch as she found baseballs and tops and shiny sticks scattered throughout the house.

Brother Roddy flung back the lid of the chest, but, instead of selecting the gloves, he stared into the chest, his eyes big with astonishment. I looked in, too, and I suppose I must have looked just as surprised. For there, on the bottom of the box, was a tiny elf.

"The mannikin winked solemnly at us and then went on examining the baseball he held in his hands."

"What do you use this for?" he piped, after a long scrutiny of the ball.

Roddy and I explained as clearly as we could the rules of baseball. All this seemed to interest the elf greatly.



"BANGED THE LID SHUT"

"I do believe," said he, "that I could show you boys how to pitch all sorts of magic curves and shoos."

Turning suddenly upon him, Roddy demanded: "Then you understand magic?"

Roddy did the elf nod his head and batted it shut, crying to me:

"Come! help me fasten it. We mustn't let this little chap get away. We can make him do magic for us."

While I thought it a shame to imprison such a friendly little elf, I thought Roddy knew more about magic than I, so I helped him lock the chest. Roddy was jubilant. He could talk of nothing but what the elf should do for us.

"We shall keep him locked up until tomorrow. By that time, I doubt, he'll be willing to do whatever we ask."

Next morning we arose bright and early. As we made our way to the chest, Roddy whispered excitedly:

"First of all, I'm going to make him learn my lessons for today."

Cautiously we unlocked the chest. Then we opened the lid just a crack. I couldn't see anything at all, so I told Roddy we'd have to open it wider. This we did, carefully, and found, to our amazement, that the elf had disappeared. And, furthermore, in place of our former baseballs and bats and gloves there were now tiny baseballs and gloves—everything had been changed to such small size that you had to look twice before you could see it. Roddy picked up a wee note in the bottom of the chest. This is what he read:

"Dear Roddy:

"I really wanted to be of service to you and your brother. But I labor only for my friends. If you will look at your baseball gloves, however, you will see that I've done some magic for you."

"I am going now—the same way by which I came. You don't suppose that an elf who can do magic for others can't do a little for himself, do you?"

"WHILLYKINS."

There wasn't anything to do but whistle—and Roddy and I did it loud and clear. I didn't care so very much, but Roddy has never ceased to regret the abuse of his one last opportunity.

Prince Johann's Pony



NY as is this handsome pony, he seems many sizes too large for his little master, Prince Johann Leopold, who is the son of the Duke of Saxo-Coburg-Gotha.

The pony is a gift from King Edward. He is already fond of little Prince Johann and takes the very best care of him.

ANOTHER JONAH

FOR days the small vessel had been followed by a whale, an immense fellow, who might easily have worked ill to the frail ship. At times it would seem that he threatened to attack, but then he apparently would change his mind and withdraw to a distance.

The captain was greatly perturbed. "I never saw a whale act this way before," said he; "I am sure the brute wants something."

From this you will see that the captain was very superstitious and believed in many signs and omens, and he became more and more impressed by the whale's conduct. At last he declared:

"This must be the very whale that swallowed Jonah—or, at least, a relation. I'm positive that he wishes to be fed with something. Well, I'm going to give him a meal."

That same afternoon the captain ordered a big box hauled up from the cargo in the hold and presented to the whale.

Now, it so happened that as the box was cast into the sea, a boy among the passengers was leaning far over the rail to watch the box strike the sea. Indeed, so far over did he lean that when the boat gave a sudden lurch he went into the sea along with the box; nor was his fall observed by the people on the ship.

Strange as it may seem, the whale was overjoyed when he saw the box thrown overboard. Rapidly he swam toward it and closed his huge jaws upon it; but not only upon the box,



"EMERGED FROM THE WHALE"

of any size at all, because the bones strainer at the rear of the mouth will not permit anything of large size to pass. But, now that his strainer was broken, this whale was different. The boy and the box went right back-

Punishment or Reward?



Makers of Famous Toys



MANY of the little wooden animals every boy or girl at some time possesses come from far away. Great numbers are made in Germany, in Nuremberg, at the edge of the Black Forest, thousands and thousands of these toys are made each year.

Not only every family, but every village in the toy-making district has its own particular toy to manufacture. The whole family works at the industry, turning out numbers of some one kind of animal. If another family should adopt the manufacture of the same style of animal, there is bound to be a dispute.

The 1600 inhabitants of Seiffen have for their specialty wooden animals in pens and Noah's arks.

"Perhaps you may be interested to know just how a toy of this kind is made. First, a large circle of white wood is cut and grooved to form the outlines of the horse or dog or elephant, as the case may be. Then from this wheel is sliced portions, just as a loaf of bread is sliced. The animal is now produced in the rough. But by carefully smoothing and finishing, and then by painting, your animal is soon completed. It may readily be seen that these toy-makers become exceedingly skillful, inasmuch as each makes no more than one kind of animal.

At regular intervals agents visit the different families and buy their manufactures. From great shipping centers they finally reach us.

However stupid your wooden donkey or piggy may seem you cannot but admit that he has seen a great deal of the world—probably much more than you have seen.