

Polly Evans' Story Page for Boys and Girls

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Round the Mulberry Bush

JACK and Johnny and Joe were all of the same age. And each was fond of fairy stories. Course, when one is only 4, one can't read very well. That is why these tales were always related by Jack's mother or Johnny's mother or Joe's mother. But whenever one of the little fellows heard something new, he told it to his chums.

So when Jacky was told the wonderful yarn about the mulberry bush he straightway went with the news to Johnny and Joe. They said, one and all, that they'd try the spell just as soon as ever they could.

You had to join hands and walk round a mulberry bush seven times. Then you made a wish and it'd come true. That's what the story said, and that is what Jack and Johnny and Joe did.

First of all, they hunted for the mulberry bush. They couldn't find one, but they saw a mulberry tree, and that they were sure would do just as well. Clapping hands they commenced to slowly circle the tree.

Joe did the "counting." "One time," said he; "two times three times four times five times six times—and seven!"

Then they solemnly paused and wished. But just as they did so down dropped something upon them. Not one look did they stop to give, but Jack and John and Joe took to their heels with frightened yells, nor did they stop until each had reached his home.

Meanwhile, Teddy Brown was wondering why in the world the little fellows should have been so frightened just 'cause he happened to come down from the mulberry tree, among the branches of which he had been climbing.

When the three boys met again they decided that something must have been wrong with the spell. "Either you didn't count right, Joey, or else we got the magic mixed," declared Jack solemnly, while Johnny shook his head to show he was of the same mind.

To Restore Burnt Ribbon. GET two yards of tape or ribbon, cut it in half and dampen one piece with a sponge. Roll this up so as to be concealed in the palm of the hand, between the ball of the thumb and the root of the forefinger. Let the sponge cut up and burn the duplicate. Sprinkle the ashes in your hand with water, which you assert to possess restorative powers, and gradually draw forth the secreted ribbon.

The Wonderful Cave of the Island of Eig



I
THE skirl of the bagpipe shrilled loudly and clear,
And broadsword was ready and claymore was near;
For two clans of Scotsmen stood anxious for strife,
Both vowing henceforth 'twould be war to the knife.

II
In ardor of hate did they rush to the fray,
And victory was doubtful at least for a day,
Until, with assistance from allies at hand,
One clan made advance which no foe could withstand.

III
Then, fleeing twelve miles west of Isle Arisaig,
The beaten quick made for the Island of Eig;
In the County of Inverness now it is found,
Where the isles of the Hebrides lie all around.

IV
But swift was pursuit; and they hardly did cease
The steep cliffs basaltic, the high walls of shale,
When sudden to view burst relentless the foe,

Their sharp pikes extended, their keen swords held low.

V
The refugees knew that the danger was grave,
So shelter they sought in commodious cave;
While up to its barricaded spired enemies,
Determined to stay just as long as you please.

VI
With sentinels posted, long time did they wait,
And then they all entered; but, strange to relate,
The victims they fancied were another and dead
Were utterly missing—were one and all fled.

VII
The secret, dear reader, you surely would know:
Through a hole in the floor did the canny Scots go;
Convenient to hand a rope ladder was placed—
By it they descended, without being traced.

VIII
And still do the warrior Scotsmen delight
To play with the nymphs down below, where the night
And old age never comes. Oh, the entrance we beg
To this land, through the cave of the Island of Eig!



Why Shorty Didn't

I DO wonder why it is that Mervin doesn't want to go to the picnic? Mrs. Johnson whispered to Mervin's father, "He says he doesn't feel well and would rather stay home this afternoon, but I can't see there's anything the matter with him."

"Well," replied Mr. Johnson slowly, "I wouldn't bother him if I were you. Something must be wrong with him, or he'd never miss such an occasion as a picnic."

Soon the Johnsons had gathered together their baskets and parcels and were on the way to the picnic. Then it was that Mervin's face, which had hitherto been drawn to a doleful length, brightened. Making sure that the family would not return, he stole quietly out to the woodshed. Picking up two baskets he found there, he made his way through the back yard and was soon on the road to Noble's Woods.

"Hello, Shorty!" cried Skinny and Billy Mumford as Mervin scrambled over the fence with his baskets and started toward the nearest clump of trees in the woods; "what are you up to now?"

"I done it," answered Mervin (or Shorty, as he was more commonly named), with a chuckle. "I told you I wouldn't go to the picnic with those stiff cousins of mine. The longer they've been visiting at our house the tinner I'm growin' of them."

"But, say, I played the dandiest trick! I'd made up my mind to be sick, you know. So, after tellin' Ma, I went out to the pantry to get some peppermint. And what should I see but three big picnic baskets, all packed! Gee, it took me 'bout three minutes to take out most of the grub an' hide it, and put in its place a lot of cabbage 'n things. An', just think, them confounded cousins o' mine are totin' cabbages now, 'stead of peas 'n fruit 'n preserves, like they think they are!"

Shorty rolled upon his back and kicked his heels in the air in sheer enjoyment, while the others laughed fit to split their sides. Then they sampled the goodies in the baskets. Of course, the baskets contained the "picnic things" about which Shorty had told them.

After all, the "cousins" fared better than Shorty did that day, for Shorty got a "stomach" walloping as he told Skinny, when the folks came home that night.

Is It Possible?

SIDE by side place three pieces of anything (money is most convenient), then take away the middle piece without touching it. By removing the right-hand piece to the side of the left you thus take away the center without touching it.

Toodle's Babies

ALL happened because Fuzzy had lost his ball. Fuzzy was our little Alredale terrier, you know, and the liveliest doggie ever seen. And the ball Fuzzy lost was the one he would take to the summit of the hill, which began right in front of our house, and there start it rolling. Down the slope would go the ball, and after it Fuzzy. The terrier would try his best to catch the ball in his mouth, but as it usually traveled much faster than Fuzzy he rarely caught up to it until the bottom of the hill was reached.

When Fuzzy mislaid his ball somewhere he was a sorry little doggie. Indeed, he whined and fussed all day long, until each of us vowed we'd buy him another ball without delay. But carried one puppy after another. After he'd laid them down carefully, he paused a while. Then he started to roll one of them down the hill. Course, the puppy didn't like this one bit. But Fuzzy was determined he'd have some sort of a ball. All the way down the hill rolled the puppy, whining and clawing the air. Fuzzy was having great fun, when, all of a sudden, back bounded Tooodle to her babies. "Was she angry? I should say so! Tooodle was hopping mad—and who can blame her? The way she scolded! Fuzzy was too amusing for anything."



FUZZY AND THE PUPPIES

somehow we'd forget, and that was how Fuzzy came to do the very funny thing with Tooodle's babies. Tooodle, the English setter, was quite friendly with Fuzzy. And so when Fuzzy probably whispered to Tooodle that there was a nice bone hidden in the yard, I suppose Tooodle thought it no harm to leave her three babies for a short time in order to look for that bone. And I've no doubt she thanked Fuzzy heartily, in dog language, for the kind information. Anyway, Tooodle was coaxing away from her children for a sufficient space of time to enable Fuzzy to accomplish his purpose.

And what did you think this Terrier's message was? You'd never guess. Well, at the top of the hill Fuzzy

A Figure Which Will Raise Itself. SHAPE a small figure of pitch, by sticking it with clothes by gumming on it silk floss or other light stuff, and glue on the base of it half a marble or half wooden ball. Cast down by the side. However you may knock it, the ball will always rise to its feet.

Neapolitan Legend of Macaroni



THE SORCERER CICHO

IN the year 1230, during the reign of good King Frederick II, there stood in the alley of the Cortellari a house in which the natives were much interested. It was a shabby dwelling, built tall and narrow. The windows were small, heavily leaded and very dirty; the door, low and weather-beaten, and the staircase, within, was rickety and in bad need of repair. Yet in spite of its forlorn appearance, passers-by always glanced furtively at the top story of the old house, and, as they did so, either crossed themselves or made magical signs supposed to be well understood by the evil one.

And the cause of this intense interest was the fact that the sorcerer Ciccho lived there. A great reputation for evil power had he, although apparently he had done nothing to deserve it. He looked anything but wicked, as he smiled kindly in his long, white beard, nor did he ever dress other than modestly and properly, in clothes of somber hue. But tales were rife as to his weird chamber, where ponderous tomes, bound in silver, reposed on dusty shelves; where globes of crystal, strangely marked charts and keen knives curiously shaped lay scattered about; and where it was said he labored all night, bending over crucibles containing simmering liquids and muttering charms in unknown tongues.

Ciccho was very wise, it is true, but this wisdom he supposed to use for the good of mankind. Although he kept his secrets strictly to himself, they were not ones to be ashamed of. When a young man he had possessed great riches and honorable titles, and had enjoyed pleasure to the utmost. His wealth gradually diminished, but Ciccho in the meantime had begun to delight in study, so this change of fortune annoyed him little. A very small amount of money

remained when, an old man, he came to Naples, resolved to do something which would be of lasting benefit to the world. And at last it would seem that his plans had succeeded. But he wished to make them perfect before disclosing them to the people of Naples. Now there also lived in this house a woman, named Jovanella di Canzio. She had great curiosity. Nothing disturbed her so much as the fact that she was unable to solve the "mystery," as she called it, of the sorcerer Ciccho. At last, however, her zeal in spying upon the old man was rewarded. As she peeped through the keyhole she saw him prepare a dish with flour and vegetables and lard. As it cooked a tempting odor arose. Jovanella noted carefully every little step in the making of this dish. Withdrawing silently, she tiptoed downstairs and began to prepare the same dish herself. Then she tasted it. How delicious it was! Truly, it was as good as it smelt.

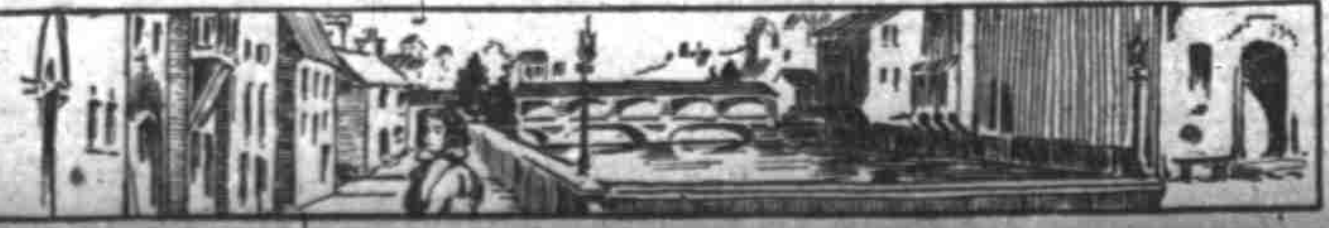
BURNED WITH EAGERNESS

She burned with eagerness to tell the secret to her husband, Giacomo, who was employed in the royal palace. "Giacomo," said she excitedly, "if you act wisely our fortune is made. If you act unwisely our fortune is made." Giacomo listened attentively, and when she had finished he agreed to do as she asked. This was to tell the head cook at the royal palace of the wonderful dish, and then try to sell the secret of its recipe at a fabulous price. Their plans worked nicely. The head cook agreed to permit Jovanella to cook the dish in the royal kitchen.

King Frederick, hearing of this, commanded that the food when prepared be brought to him by Jovanella herself. When he tasted it he rolled his tongue and smacked his lips in an ecstasy of enjoyment.

"'Tis the most delightful dish I have ever eaten! Woman, I shall give you a hundred pieces of gold for your wonderful discovery." But the gifts did not stop here. To show their appreciation every noble and dignitary gave Jovanella a goodly sum. Then the gentlemen and the merchants and the petty tradesmen made lions—and so on, down to the very laborers. Every one wished to show gratitude to the woman who had bestowed such a blessing upon mankind. At the end of six months all Naples was eating "macaroni"—for so the new food was named—and Jovanella was rich.

During this time Ciccho still occupied himself diligently in his little chamber, not knowing his secret recipe had been stolen from him. But one day, as he was out for a short stroll, he came upon a woman cooking macaroni. Upon investigation he discovered the whole truth. A day later, the sorcerer Ciccho disappeared, people declaring that the Evil One had flown away with him, and soon ceased to wonder. But although Jovanella had gained riches through her dishonesty, she did not live long to enjoy them. Her conscience reproached her continually, so that she aged rapidly, as did Giacomo. As she lay dying Jovanella confessed the misdeed and expressed repentance. So it was that, after all, the name of Ciccho has lived through the ages.



A Little Heroine

SLOWLY the mother walked to a closet in a corner of the little room. From beneath a pile of clothing she drew forth a small box. With trembling fingers she opened it. "Alas! the money is all gone!" she sighed. "I was sure of it, but somehow I hoped against hope."

For a moment she leaned wearily against the wall. Then, rousing herself, she said: "Gertrude, we must eat. I shall leave you here with the children while I go out into the fields to gather some food. If the soldiers come during my absence, reply to them courteously."

"And if you should not return, mother?" Gertrude sobbed. The mother threw her arms around the little girl and kissed her lovingly. "But I shall return," she said comfortingly. "And the good God will take care of you all."

She hastily opened the door and took her departure. When she had passed round the corner of the house she knelt and offered up a prayer for the safety of her children. Then she walked noiselessly down the long avenue arched with trees, and out into the fields.

Within the house Gertrude sat, anxiously awaiting her mother. Three little children played about the floor of the farmhouse. Gertrude dried her tears, in the determination to be very brave, although the firing of the cannon and rattle of musketry could be heard quite plainly. Still, she was already 14, and if anything

escaped, but if they find me I will be shot as a spy!" Gertrude thought quickly. There wasn't even a cranny big enough to hide any one. No, she couldn't—but, yes, she had an idea! "Quick!" she commanded. "Let me tie this cap on your head. Now climb quickly into mother's big bed. Lie there as still as you can. I shall tell the soldiers that you are my little sister, who is ill."

In spite of the danger, Gertrude could not help smiling at the strange appearance of the boy.

No sooner was the lid safe abed than there was a sharp rat-a-tap at the door. As she opened it a squad of soldiers burst into the room.

"Have you seen a man running this way?" demanded one burly fellow. "No, sir," answered Gertrude, hoping that the falsehood would be forgiven. "I'm all alone with these little children and my sick sister."

After a hurried examination of the house the soldiers departed. A short time later the lid stole from the house, after expressing his gratitude to the little girl.

Gertrude related the story to her mother, and they thanked Providence for the narrow escape. But in the stirring days which followed, when they were fortunate even to secure a little food, they forgot all about the incident. Months passed and the war was over. One day, as Gertrude sat by the window sewing and the mother was busy in the kitchen, one of the smaller children entered with an im-



"HAVE YOU SEEN A MAN RUNNING?"

SHOULD happen to mother she must do her very best to take care of the little ones of the family. Her father, you know, had died over a year ago, and with the war had come hard times to the little farmhouse at Bernheim, in Alsace-Lorraine.

There was a sudden knocking at the door. "Who is there?" asked the girl, her voice trembling. "Open! open!" called some one weakly. Gertrude cautiously unbarred the door. It tottered a lad, who could not have been more than 12. His uniform was much soiled and dabbled with blood, which flowed from a wound in his head. "Please, please!" he cried. "The Prussians found me concealed in a barn nearby and they tried to take me. I

important-looking letter, addressed to Gertrude. The lass opened it, wondering what it could mean. Then, to her astonishment, she found the writer to be the very lad she had hidden from the Prussian soldiers. Furthermore, he was the young son of the count who owned their farm and to whose agent the family paid rental. The boy went on to say that to show he and his father had not forgotten Gertrude's kindness, she would find enclosed the deed to the farm. Without stopping to read further, Gertrude flew to her mother and hugged her joyously. "Oh, mother," she cried, "just because I went into a tiny bit of danger, we see our home now!" You may know that the mother was more proud than ever of the little girl who had gained a home through heroism.