

Polly Evans' Story Page for Boys and Girls

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Mystic Basket

“NOW, hurry home, Alice, for your mother will be expecting you,” said grandma, as she kissed the little girl and thrust a bagful of cookies into her hand.

Alice placed upon her arm the basket which grandma was sending to mother, and with a good-bye to her Grandmother trudged down the lane.

But walking in the crisp autumn air soon put a keen edge on her appetite. She decided that she would rest awhile on the bank nearby and eat some of grandma's delicious cookies.

Just then she espied coming down the road toward her a favorite playmate, Bessie Brown.

“Bessie! Bessie!” cried she, “you should see what tempting cookies I have!”

And Bessie did see, as well as taste them, as she sat with Alice a few minutes later on a knoll sloping from the roadside.

So good were the cakes, and so busy were the two little girls exchanging confidences that they did not observe a lean, hungry-looking cat approach the basket and eagerly smell at the contents. Nor did they see pussy pry open the lid with her paw and silently crawl



CREPT INSIDE

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PUSSY LEAPED OUT.

Inside the basket. The lid closed again, and the cat made not the least noise. Their cookies eaten, Alice took up her basket again and continued on her way toward the village, while Bessie went in the opposite direction.

Alice wondered that the basket should seem so heavy now, but she thought she must have imagined this. And she did not know otherwise until she brought the basket into the presence of her mother, saying:

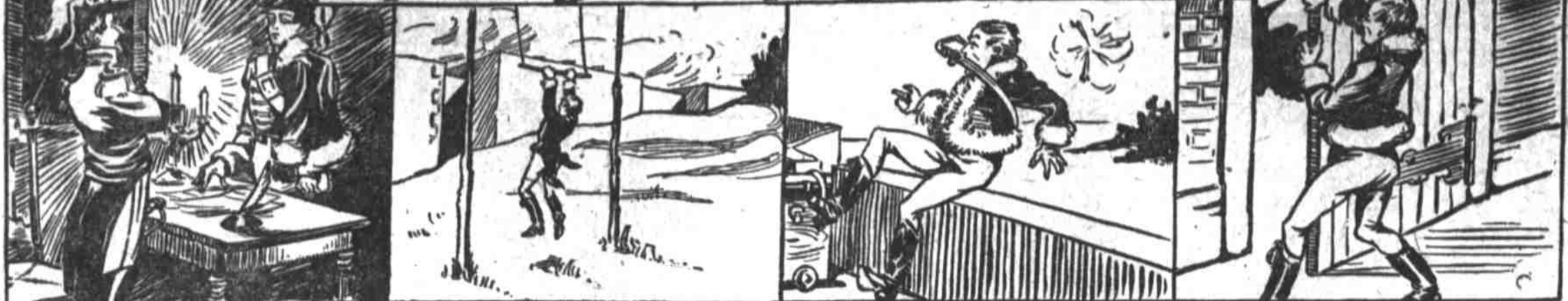
“I had a splendid time at grandma's, mumsey, dear, and I've brought a nice chicken home for you.”

No sooner had she raised the lid, however, than the cat leaped out and darted swiftly through the open door. Alice dropped the basket in dismay, and her mother raised her hands in astonishment. They were even more surprised when they looked inside the basket and discovered nothing but a few bones.

Alice is still of the belief that the cat must have entered the basket through magic. She has resolved, however, to watch her burdens more carefully hereafter when she lays them down.

Thrilling Adventures of a Boy Soldier

Capturing an Impregnable Fort



TELLS THE MARSHAL HIS PLAN

DURING the Austrian campaign Emperor Napoleon instructed one of his marshals to capture a certain fort. Now, this fort was so strongly fortified as to be deemed almost impregnable. Naturally, therefore, it would be supposed that the marshal would be provided with all the engines of war in order that he might lay siege and take the fort. But for some reason Napoleon neglected to supply such equipment.

You may know that, consequently, the marshal was much embarrassed. Summoning the officers of his staff, he discussed the matter with them. None could suggest a way out of the difficulty.

One of the escort of the marshal was a young officer named Francois, who had gained rapid promotion through gallant service, though he was but a

SWUNG ON THE TRAPEZE

boy. Francois was absent from the council of the marshal's staff, but upon his return he learned of the problem which confronted his general.

“Marshal,” said Francois, the following day, “I have a splendid scheme whereby the fort may be captured.”

Whereupon the two conversed in low tones for half an hour. At the end of that time the marshal said:

“I give you full power to carry out your plan. May you be successful!”

LANDED ON THE PARAPET

Francois immediately caused to be erected just outside the walls of the fort two high posts, between which he suspended a trapeze. Then he had several of the soldiers exercise upon it in order that all suspicions of the enemy

THREW OPEN THE GATES

would be allayed.

That night, however, he set out under cover of the mantle of darkness. First clenching his sword between his teeth, he climbed upon the trapeze and then suspended himself by his hands.

Once, twice, thrice he swung. Gaining impetus with each turn, finally he described in his course almost three-quarters of a circle.

Then, on the last forward swing, he released his hold on the bar. Hurling through the air he went. A moment and he landed on the parapet of the fort.

With an exclamation of triumph he crept silently forward. Leaping upon the sentry, he made a deadly sword thrust before the soldier could make outcry. Another guard he finished in the same way. Francois now rushed to the gates, threw them open and shouted for a company of his soldiers who were waiting outside. Without a second's hesitation the French soldiers swarmed into the fort. So surprised was the garrison that it could offer but little resistance. Soon the fort was in the hands of the enemy.

You may be sure that the gallant Francois was rewarded with another promotion. But, at his request, he was still on the staff of the marshal.

Nor was it long before he engaged in another dangerous and thrilling exploit. This Polly Evans will describe next week.

Legend of the Kind Mermaid

IT WAS many years ago that little Jacques first put to sea in his father's fishing boat. The lad's father had just died, and although Jacques' mother pleaded with him not to undertake such a heavy and dangerous task, he said: “I am already 12, mother, and I must work so that we may live.”

With these courageous words he kissed his mother good-bye. She stood a long time watching the boat as it danced away on the waves that wash the coast of Breton.

But soon a wind arose which filled the sails and sent the boat scudding over



the water, now crested with foam. Jacques found himself unable to manage both the boat and the nets. Not for many minutes did he despair, for he was determined to bring some fish home. At last, however, when he saw that his labor was in vain, he found that he must give up the struggle.



As he was about to draw in the nets he was surprised to see a beautiful lady walking toward him upon the sea. It was a fairy—the Fairy of the Brave Little Folk. She said to Jacques: “You take the tiller while I fish for you.”

And how she did fish! Gleaming masses



of silvery bass and mullets were soon lying in the boat, together with dorados, which sparkled and glistened as they reflected the sunlight. When the craft could hold no more fish the good fairy kissed Jacques and murmured, as she prepared to take her flight:

“Now sail away home with your cargo



of fish and tell your mother how a fairy rewarded a little boy for his bravery.”

The curious townfolk who had amusedly observed the boy sail forth with his boat now clustered on the beach to witness his return. They were overcome with amazement when they saw the great load of fish, the best catch ever made on the coast. And in their admiration, they hastened to buy from the lad.

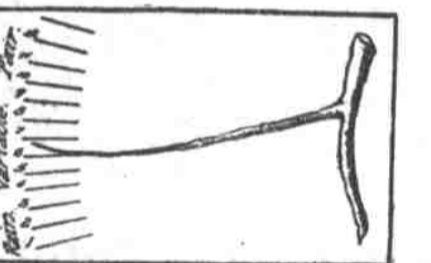
“It was a good fairy, mother,” Jacques explained, as he threw his arms about her and gave her the money which was to bring comfort into the little hut that had been so cheerless but a short time before.

A Twig Barometer

ANY girl or boy can make, absolutely without expense, a real barometer which will foretell the weather accurately.

Take a little tree branch, with a twig extending from it, and nail this to a board. Be sure to leave the twig entirely free. Then hang your barometer in the open air, keeping it protected from sun and rain.

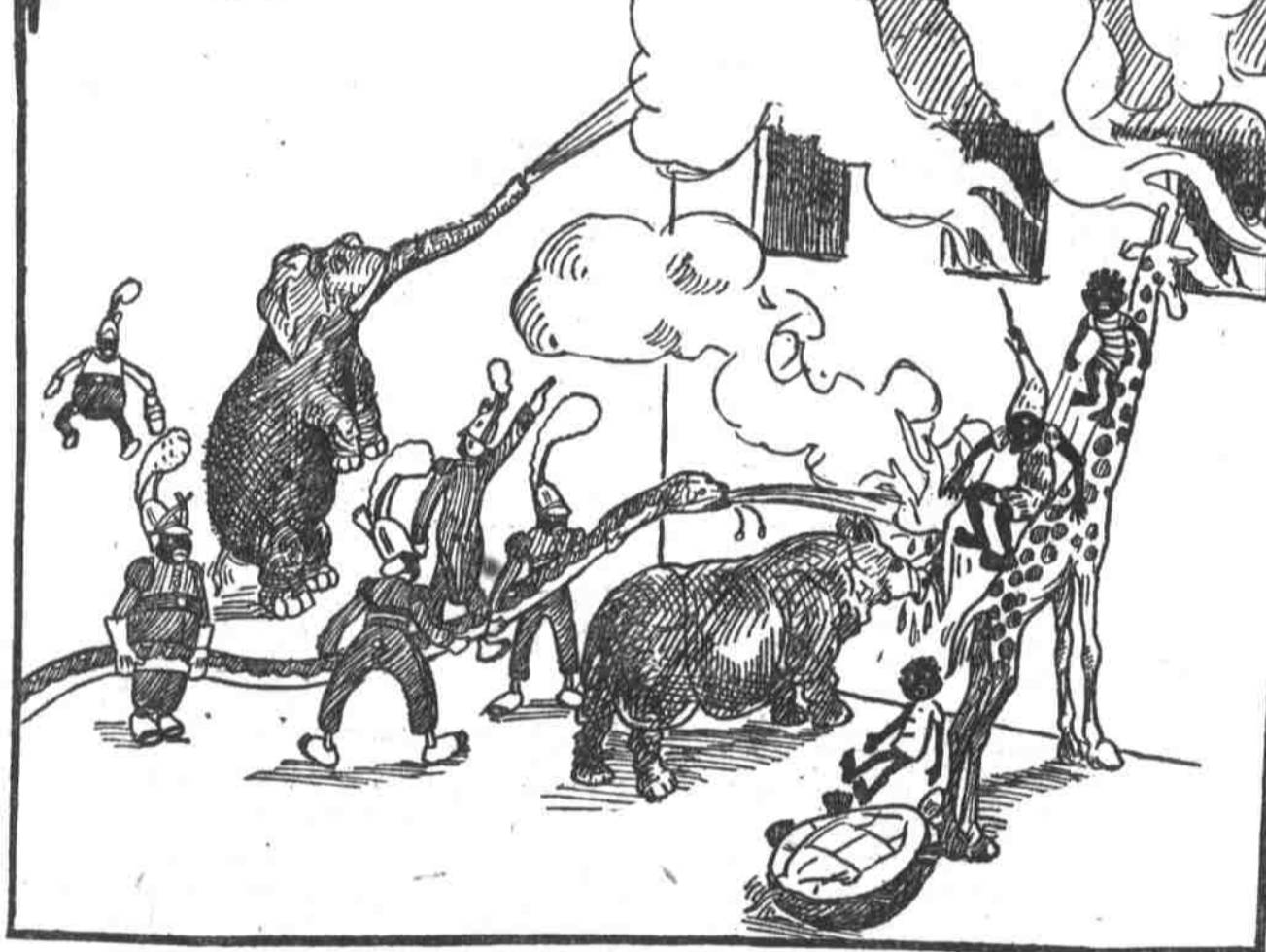
Wood is so sensitive to the weather,



that you will find that the kind of weather which causes an ordinary barometer to fall will also depress the point of the twig, and the opposite kind of weather will cause the twig to move upward. After testing the movements for awhile, you will be able to mark a scale on the board.

Of course, the twig must be readjusted from time to time, and a new one substituted occasionally.

Jungleville's Fire Brigade



ORANG-OUTANG beat violently upon his hairy breast: Resounding through the forest boomed the warning to the rest.

Of Forest People native 'neath the trees; Then Monarch Lion thund'rously joined in the wild alarm, To which all creatures listened as they wondered what new harm

Themselves did menace, and their families.

Again the cry resounded, and the animals quick knew The meaning of this signal, as together they now flew To lend assistance with a ready hand; Screech-Owl reported fire amongst the huts not far away, And since with Men the beasts were friendly at this early day

They rushed to give what aid lay at command.

The Jungleville fire lads' brigade sped rapidly to where Thatched cottages were burning; then each one did freely dare Most perilous of rescues, deeds most bold— Rhinoceros ripped huts apart with his tusk fire-axe keen, Long Python and the Elephant sent water cracks between— Good hoses they both made, so I've been told.

And Monkeys grabbed up natives with their paws and tails, And so A-down the back of tall Giraffe they slid and dropped below Upon the upturned shell of Turtleboy; Until, at last, all Men were safely resting on the ground, When to the brave fire lads' brigade the Human People found Much need for words of gratitude and joy.

Making them Even

GRANDPA says we may feed the chickens all by ourselves. Roger! Won't it be fun!” shrieked little Margaret, running so fast into the room that her pudgy toes caught in the rug and she sprawled right into the arms of her brother.

“Deed it will,” said Roger, when he again found the breath which a blow from Margaret's elbow had made him lose.

And they really did find it great fun. For of all the pets of grandpa's big farm the “chickies” pleased them most. There were so many of them, too, that you had any number of nice ones to choose from.

“There, I've just counted two times two handfuls of whitties!” exclaimed Margaret in triumph. You see, she was

The Land above the Pine Tree

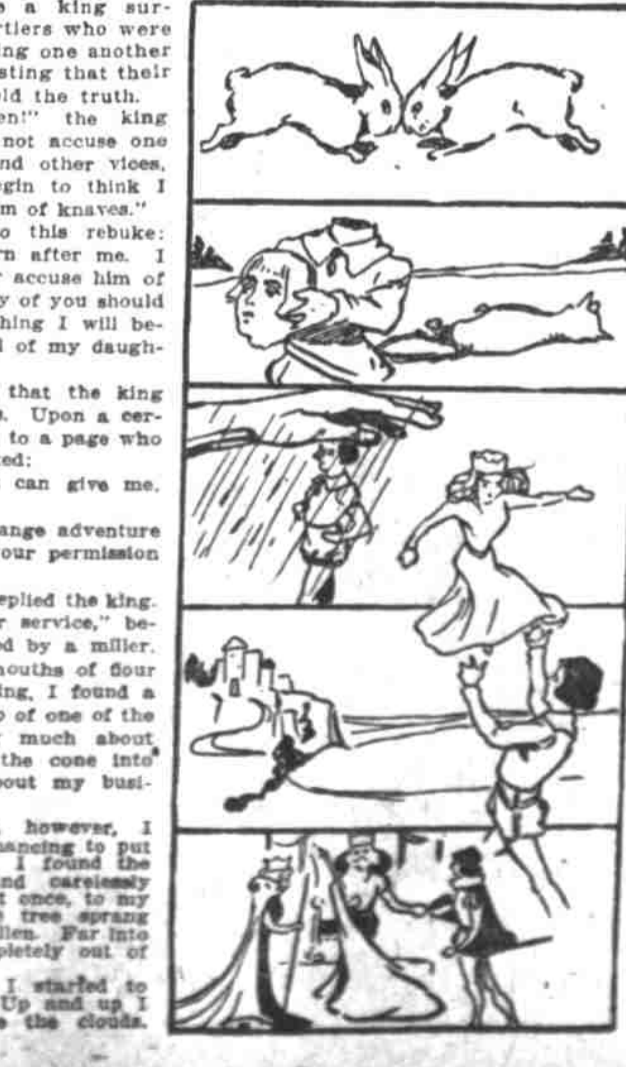
AMONG THE CHICKENS

fondest of the white chickens, and since the tiny maid hadn't yet learned to count with numbers she had to count them off on her fingers.

Roger looked searchingly over the flock, but at last he was forced to reply, somewhat ruefully, “I haven't got nearly as many black ones.”

Now, Margaret was such an unselfish little girl that she would gladly have given Roger some of her white chickens, but she knew he much preferred the black ones for pets. So she made up her mind about this time of some other plan of making their parities even in number.

The next day, as grandpa was walking toward the chicken yard, he was surprised to see a white chicken dashed with black rust squawking from the yard. A moment later another followed, and he heard more angry squawking and tapping of wings as he drew near. He hastened his steps. Soon what should he see but Margaret, sitting on the ground and holding frantically to a



Though it may sound strange, sire, I finally reached the moon. And you would hardly believe the wonderful things I saw there. Hares charged one another in the same manner as do our goats and stags. When they met, so terrific was the force of the impact that they folded up like telescopes.

“While there, too, I slew a wolf. In the struggle, however, the beast tore off my head, so that I had considerable trouble in putting it on again. And no sooner did I accomplish this feat than it began to rain in torrents. While I was wandering around seeking shelter, a band of kindly elves suddenly appeared before me, and with their immense hands formed a shelter for me.

“I had an opportunity to marry the king's daughter, there, also. She was very fond of sports, you know. And once she leaped so high in the air that she would surely have hurt herself when she landed on the ground. I sprang forward, however, and caught her as she descended. The king then offered me the hand of the princess, but I refused.”

Here the king, who had been growing angrier each moment at the thought that the daring youth was making sport of him, cried out:

“Boy, thou'rt a rool and a liar!”

“I have won your daughter, sire,” returned the youth, coolly.

“How now! What is this new insolence?” demanded the king, in great wrath.

Whereupon the boy reminded his royal master of the wager made a few days ago, when the princess was offered to any one who heard the king insult a person.

“The king, being a man of honor, kept his word, and in due time the clever youth was married to the beautiful princess.

Growth of a Crab

THERE was once a boy who saw a crab. It was a big crab, but not a very big crab. The boy however, had never seen any but very little crabs, so he was much frightened. And he ran away to his father, crying:

“Oh, father, I saw a crab on the beach that's as big as a toad!”

Of course, the father, who was a sailor, wished to see the crab. So he made his way toward the ocean. While going down the street he saw the village policeman, to whom he said:

“There's a giant crab down on the beach that's as big as a dog!”

And the policeman, hastening after, shouted to the butcher, who was toiling within his shop:

“When the party came in sight of the giant crab that's as big as a deer.”

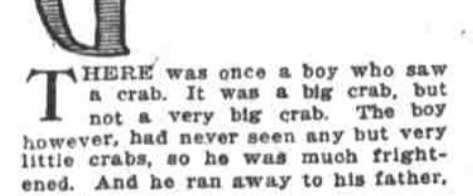
Immediately the butcher hurried from the shop, without pausing to remove his apron. As he darted across the street after the others he called to a hunter passing by:

“Don't miss seeing a giant crab that's down on the beach. It's as big as an ox.”

The hunter, very much excited, joined the butcher, and they hurried forward to overtake the others.

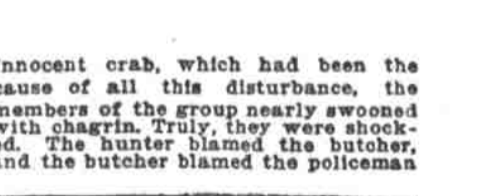
When the party came in sight of the beach the policeman pulled out his revolver, the sailor brandished a huge knife, the butcher swung a great meat cleaver in his hand, while the hunter cocked his rifle. No doubt, this savage crab was dangerous, and it were best to be well prepared to meet danger.

Then, when the boy pointed out the



JESSIE COLLECTED MONEY

of Our Dumb Friends' League, who labor to help animals, the noble ladies were sure Jessie would assist them. And so Jessie did; for she went about the assembled guests, collecting money in behalf of the fund. She gathered ever so much in this way, mostly because every one liked Jessie so well.



HE SAW A BIG CRAB

innocent crab, which had been the cause of all this disturbance, the members of the group nearly swooned with chagrin. Truly, they were shocked. The hunter blamed the butcher, and the butcher blamed the policeman, and the policeman blamed the sailor, and the sailor spanked the boy, insisting that he alone was to blame. As a matter of fact, each was to blame—except the hunter, and he probably would have done as did the others had he met any one whom he might have told of the giant crab. You see, it is much better to stick to the plain truth, even though a few ornaments might make the tale ever so much more fascinating.

