

# Polly Evans' Story Page for Boys and Girls

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## Pastimes of Nan and Dan

"I DON'T believe you care one little bit, Dan, as to how my Halloween party will turn out," exclaimed Nan, half petulantly, half smilingly. "Cause you haven't offered a teeny, weeny idea for making it altogether different—and you know that's the only party I care to give."

"Oh, yes, I have, Nan," Dan replied; "and I have a scheme that I think you'll find rather attractive."

Here Dan went to his workbox and



AN ACORN TEA SET

draw forth a little tray, upon which were several tiny articles.

"A tea set, as I live! And everything, teapot, cups, saucers and all, made from acorns! Dan, you're positively wonderful. But what has this to do with my party?"

Nan's big brother smiled. "Don't you see?" responded he. "I'm going to get you a number of acorns that are still soft, and you'll have an adora party. Your guests will be provided with keen knives, and then they must make all the little fancy articles they possibly can



COLLAR, WITH PENDANT

from the acorns. The one who does the very best will receive this tea set for a prize.

"That will just be lovely!" cried Nan, jumping up and down in her glee.

It really was a good idea for a party. The girls and boys whom Nan invited enjoyed themselves hugely, and they had no end of fun. Some of the articles were so crude and looked too funny for anything; while others were made very, very skilfully. Baskets, necklaces,



OTHER ACORN MANUFACTURES

cradles, watch charms, earrings, pendants, rings, bracelets—most everything they made.

And when, at the close of the evening, the first prize was awarded, and lots of other acorn souvenirs which showed Dan's clever workmanship were distributed, the girls and boys voted it the most entertaining Halloween party they had ever attended.

**Following Custom.**

Edith (playing "house")—"I'll be mamma, and Willie papa, while little Sue and Charlie will be the babies."

While (a moment later)—"It's about time to whip the children, ain't it?"

## Mystic Circles, Signs and Omens The Witches Gift



Out to the barn Scotch lads would go, not long before this time.

Pretending there to winnow corn; three swings they'd make before

They'd see the face they wished to see—or else they'd try once more.

And English boys and girls disport themselves in merry style;

They apples pare and roses twine, 'thout disbelief or gulle;

At midnight, 'round the walnut tree three times they slowly pace.

And then, up in the branches, seek they for the loved one's face.

In Irish farmhouse skewers swing, suspended from the ceiling;

But 'tis the apple, not the candle,

that boys go a-stealin';

Full wondrous are the tales they tell of women dressed in white

'Bout warriors in armor black and terrifying guise;

While those belated travelers once used to whistle shrill,

Or sing a song right lustily to keep the goblins still;

Nor must we'er forget the cake—"dumb-cake," I think, 'tis known—

Which colleens of the Emerald Isle make carefully alone,

So that at night they'll dream of "him"—and then the wedding bell.

And on and on I might keep talking, but I could not tell

You half about All Halloween, its customs and its signs,

Its magic most uncanny—all within these few short lines.

WHEN heathen folk in ages past great friendliness did show

With spirits dwelling far above, and some who lived below,

A festival they always gave, at harvest time each year,

Inviting goblin, witch and elf to share in the good cheer;

And to this time, though spirits now all hidden are from sight,

A night we give to Shadow Folk, as surely 'tis but right.

In masks grotesque and costumes weird, we dance the hours away,

Or practice quaint old customs, with a laugh and manner gay;

The mystic circle round the earth does bind us all together—

A superstitious girdle covering each clime, each weather.

Among the Scots, the lads and lassies Halloween do spend

A-cracking nuts—'tis "Nut-crack



WHEN THE OLD WOMAN CAME HOME

Ike laughed. "We'll miss her lots, too," said he. "Member how she came out and scolded us last year when we threw corn at her windows? But I say, it's really a shame to treat the old woman like we do. She's as poor as a mouse, you know, an' has an awful hard time to get along; and I guess that's what makes her so cross and crabby."

"Why can't we do something to help the old soul?" was Billy's query.

They were rapt in thought for several moments. Suddenly Billy leaped to his feet, and, followed by Ike, dashed from the corner, shouting:

"I've got it! I know of a dandy thing to do!"

Mother Jones' home was a tumble-down cottage which stood not far from a railroad siding, where there was a great deal of shifting of freight and coal cars. To this place Billy and his chum repaired. When he satisfied himself that the old woman had gone he nailed an old rusty saucepan to the side of the cottage. Then he and Ike climbed up the bank to the railroad tracks, where they picked up pieces of coal and proceeded to use the saucepan as a target.

When the old woman came home the next day she could hardly believe her eyes. She had hoped against hope that "those wicked imps of youngsters" would not do a great deal of harm. And here they had done her a really great service! Tears stood in her eyes as she inspected the gifts made her, and ever afterward no member of the "Bloody Robbers" passed by without receiving a cordial greeting from her.

Of course, the boys were greatly pleased, although they pretended to think it a matter of little consequence. Just to hide his real feelings, Ike remarked:

"We're makin' so many friends among our old enemies that after while we'll have nobody at all to plague an' tease."

But he didn't mean it, any more than did the others who apparently agreed with him.

**Had a Cowcatcher.**

While at the park Dot had been given a ride on the elephant.

"Oh, mother!" she exclaimed upon her return home. "I rode on the animal that has a cowcatcher on its front."

**Still Warm.**

After watching a turkey gobbler for some minutes, Tommy exclaimed:

"Look, mamma! The old gobbler has had his fan up for half an hour, and his face looks just as red as ever!"

## Thrilling Adventures of a Boy Soldier

these men you must rescue the city. Carry a large quantity of provisions, for Aury is in dire need of them."

That night Francois mustered his rearguard and started for the city of Aury. By forced marches he arrived within a short distance of the allies' outposts late in the afternoon of the following day.

Meantime he was cudgeling his brains for some plan whereby he could effect a rescue. With the small force at his command it was clearly impossible to make a direct attack, and since the enemy were already aware of his approach, there was little hope of surprising them. Mounting his horse and accompanied only by an orderly, he rode about the camp. As he neared the line he heard a sentry challenge a peasant. Drawing closer, he observed the countryman ask permission to sell a fat porker which he had with him. All at once an idea came to Francois. Putting

the spurs to his horse, he galloped to where the man stood.

"Do you think you can provide us with 500 pigs immediately? I will pay you well for them."

The peasant stared, and then promised to do his best for the officer.

Not more than a few hours had passed before droves of pigs began to pour into the camp. Francois rubbed his hands together gleefully.

"Tonight is Halloween—just the right time to give the enemy a scare."

When nightfall had long since descended upon the camp, Francois ordered that each of five soldiers should pull the ears of a sturdy hog. The poor animals squealed and grunted piteously. And the other pigs, having been freed of their bonds, no sooner heard these agonized yells than they rushed frantically from the camp, guided by the French soldiers in the direction Francois wished the animals to go.

Right into the camp of the English and their allies rushed the frightened porkers, throwing down tents, scattering small arms and creating the wildest disorder.

"Witches have changed the pigs of Frenchmen into real hogs!" cried the English in dismay.

Taking advantage of the confusion, immediately after the pigs followed Francois and his soldiers, hewing a way directly through the camp of the enemy. Relentlessly they pushed on, up to the very gates of Aury, where they and the pigs were welcomed with greatest joy.

Francois had saved Aury with a drove of hogs.



## A Colony's Halloween Prank

"GENTLEMEN," said Sir Edmund Andros, haughtily, "it is by the king's command that I ask your charter."

In vain the colonists argued for their rights. Andros could not be moved from his demands. The faces of the men about him grew set and tense in expression, and their eyes gleamed sternly. Significant glances passed from one to another.

Suddenly the lights, which had been flickering unsteadily, blew out. Only a moment were the occupants of the room in darkness, for quickly the candles were relighted, but in that single moment the attitude of the colonists had changed. Now they looked triumphantly, scornfully into the face of the man whom Charles II had appointed Governor of New England, as he demanded, abruptly:

"I must have the charter."

"Very well," calmly replied the colonists.

But the precious Connecticut charter was not to be found! Surely some elf must have spirited it away upon this eerie Halloween.

The elf, however, must have been well known to the colonists, as well as the document's hiding place, for two years later (in the year 1689) when Andros



**HID THE CHARTER**

drogs was seized at Boston and sent back to England, the charter was taken from a hollow oak tree in which it had lain concealed. And the charter so accommodatingly saved by the self-same elf remained in force until 1818.

## Astonishing Kindness of a Very Little Hobgoblin

AND tonight would be Halloween, when spirits would walk and witches and elves and goblins would disport themselves in mischievous fashion. Gordie wondered if goblins ever did kindly things. There were so many nice deeds they could do, you know, if they only would. For instance, there was the poor plaster bust on the mantel which lacked arms and a body and didn't have one single bit of clothes. Then the portrait of his uncle showed a hand missing and the poor fellow hadn't a hair on his head; while Fido, the lachhund, certainly ought to have

longer legs—there was no doubt about it. The more Gordie thought of these little kindnesses the goblins could do the more he became convinced that they wouldn't do them; for hadn't Nurse told him goblins were good for nothing but foolish pranks? Now if he were only some sort of a hobgoblin, he'd be only too glad to do everything he could for people without a moment's hesitation.

Perhaps he could do something right now. He decided to try, anyway. So upstairs Gordie tramped. Presently he returned with his father's silk hat, a pair of trousers and slippers, together with his mother's long gloves. The hat he placed jauntily upon the head of the poor bust. Then he stuffed the trousers and attached them to the bottom of the bust, while he fastened the bottoms of the trousers in the slippers. After this he hung the long gloves to the poor figure. Arranging the clothing very carefully he stepped back to note the effect. Certainly the bust looked much more comfortable and pleased with himself.

Now for Fido. Two pairs of stout boots were at hand. These the kind-hearted boy tied to doggie's feet, so that Fido was raised to the height nature really

should have made him. But Fido was so puzzled that he couldn't imagine what it was all about. He stood quite patiently while Gordie fastened a cord to his collar and placed the end in the hand of Mr. Hus.

Wasn't there something else he could do? Ah, yes! Uncle Frederick should have a new head of hair and a hand as well. To the bald scalp he gusted long black wisps taken from a brush he found in the closet; and black paint enabled him to make the hair nice and thick. Afterward it was an easy matter to tack a glove to the canvas in the place where the hand should have been.

Thoroughly satisfied with himself and his work, Gordie now summoned the rest of the family, bidding them come and see what the Halloween goblins had done.

The family came. And truly they were astonished at the kindness of the goblins. Indeed, they were more astonished than pleased. Father was very angry—so angry that one little hobgoblin he knew of received a sound spanking. This is probably the only goblin that ever received a spanking, though I s'pose lots of them deserve it. But Gordie really didn't believe he deserved it.

