The Little Captain of Vercheres.

The True Story of a French-Canadian Girl.

BY FRANCES R. STERRETT.

My father was commandant of the fort and seignior of Vercheres and the manor ran by the river for miles. But the cottages and farm buildings were deserted; men, women and children crowded to the fort and city for protection against the Iroquois, the blood-thirsty Indians, who came every spring as soon as the frost was out of the ground, and swarmed over Canada, fire and death in their hands.

It makes my blood boil when I think of the troop after troop of Christian soldiers which had been sent against them only to be beaten back by the unbaptized heathen!

How we all dreaded the coming of summer—that is, father and maman and the old folks. I loved it, for I was too young to have much fear of the Indians, and I liked to be out in the fields better than sitting by the chimney corner with my needle work.

I was just fourteen when my father, who was an officer in the Carignan regiment, went to Quebec on duty, leaving maman in charge of the fort and the people. He had been away but twelve days when a message came from grandmere in Montreal; he was ill and wanted maman. Poor maman! I helped her pack her clothes and told her not to mind and that I would take her place.

She smiled and said with a sigh: "I fear me you will have to, Madelon." And she gave me a hundred directions as to what I should do if this and so happened. I could not begin to remember them all, so I forgot them.

Maman went about noon. She took the baby and little Barbe, leaving Alexander and Louis with me. We all cried when the boat was pulled out into the river and then waved our handkerchiefs until they dried and the canoe was out of sight. I danced with joy; I was my own mistress and the mistress of the boys.

"Come," I said, suddenly, "we will put on our Sunday clothes."

"I will not," cried Alexander, who was making a cartwheel in the dust. "They are too tight and I had rather catch rats with Antoine. There are a million rats in the provision room."

At any other time I would have gone with him, but I had taken a fancy to wear my best dress. Who ever heard of the lady of a manor in a gray homespun with a darn in every seam? I went back to the fort alone and crept up the stairs very softly so as not to disturb Bonne Jeanne, who has ears like a cat, and I fastened the door while I took out my fete dress of blue velvet trimmed with silk that had been part of maman's trousseau. We of Vercheres are not rich, and my father gives so much to the poor that we have less than we might.

I brushed my hair until it fell around me like a cloud and turned down the neck of my bodice with a bit of lace as I wore it to Claire Launay's fete, and then went downstairs to borrow the blue fan which maman always carries when she goes to the Chateau. Bonne Jeanne was asleep by the window and I stepped softly by her, but when I opened the drawer it fell out, and though I caught it on my foot, it made a great noise. I held my breath. Bonne Jeanne opened her eyes sleeply and said: "Scat!"

She thought I was the cat!

Then I went out on the terrace and walked up and down flirting my fan as I had seen the grande dames do at the Chateau before Governor Frontenac. I had not been there five minutes when Lavonette came around the corner with a net on his shoulder. He gave a shrill whistle when he saw me.

"Why, mam'selle," he said, "I was about to ask you to come and catch eels, but such a grande dame will not care for so humble a sport."

And the stupid would have gone on, but I ran after him. "Wait, Lavolette," I cried.

"Not in that dress." He stopped and spoke sternly. "Madame, your mother would be angry if anything should spoil its prettiness.

"It is pretty," I said, conceitedly; "and I have worn it but twice. See how white it makes my skin? I put it on today because I am mistress and can do as I please. Come, Lavolette, please, before Bonne Jeanne sees us."

He had caught but one eel when I heard gunshots in the direction of the south field, where the habitants were seeding wheat.

"What is that?" I asked.

Lavolette caught me roughly by the arm. "Run, mam'selle!" he cried. "Run as you never ran before. The Iroquois are here!"

I thought he was making sport of me, and pushed him aside to look. Never will I forget the painted naked savages who were creeping out of the woods, a pistol shot away! There was one in front who wore a scarlet coat with gold lace over his deerskin leggings and a long feathered bonnet on his head. It was such a contrast I had to laugh. Lavolette caught me by the shoulder, and in his haste knocked the fan from my hand, and I was such a coward I did not stop for it.

Just then the Indians saw us and broke into a run, yelling and screaming, but I could race like a deer. They soon saw they could not capture us alive, and began to shoot. The bullets whizzed about our ears, and one carried away my blue cap.

When we reached the gate I had just strength to help Lavolette fasten it and then tumble down on a pile of boards when I happened to think madam never lets me sit down in my best dress—it naps the velvet.

Then I thought and thought what I could do to save the fort and the people. The palisade was only a foot thick and not more than nine feet high, but it had a square bastion at every corner. The buildings were all of stone, with wooden gables and heavy doors, behind which we could find refuge if the palisade was taken. On the other hand, here were fifty Indians, trained warriors, against half a dozen old men and as many women. Lavolette was on his knees praying. I touched his shoulder.

"What can we do?" I whispered.

"Nothing," he murmured stupidly. "The Iroquois always win."

"Are you a coward," I cried in disgust. "You know I will die before I let them take this fort, which my mother left in my care. Will you do as I say?"

He caught fire at once. "To the death, mam'selle!" he said. His fear had been more for me and the others than for himself.

Together we went around to inspect the palisade, and I ordered the gaps in it to be mended and helped carry the heavy logs myself, until Lavolette pushed me away.

"You will soil your dress, mam'selle. This is no work for you."

I began to wish I had on my old homespun as I went back to the yard. The people were all there with pale faces and trembling limbs. Guns were stacked in a corner, and I seized one and gave Alexander and Louis each one.

"Let us fight to the death," I cried. "We are fighting for our country. Remember that our father has taught us that gentlemen are born to shed their blood for the service of God and the king!"

I felt like Joan of Arc.

Every little while one of the Indians would jump out of the underbrush, wave his arms defiantly and yell his horrid war cry. Lavolette said the one in the red coat was Killeur Rouge, a half-breed, who had taken twenty scalps with his own hand along the Richelieu last summer. His red coat was given by the English in New York. I set my teeth and vowed he should not have our scalps, and if he was a friend of the English that was another reason for fighting him.

As I looked away over the river I saw a boat coming toward our landing. I strained my eyes and made out a man, a woman and three little children. A groan burst from the men. The Iroquois were so near and we were powerless to help. As the boat swung around I recognized Pierre Fontaine, who has a small farm to the south of the seignory wheat fields. "I must do something," I thought, for the little girl was maman's god-child.

Lavolette read my mind and threw himself before me.

"Only over my dead body, mam'selle," he cried.

I laughed, and slipping around him had the gate open before he could stop me and ran down to help Fontaine with the children. His wife was quite helpless with fear. I knew the savages would think it was a ruse to draw them within range of our guns, and I carried maman's god-child to the gate, quieting her cries with the old game:

Who passes by the road so late?
Compagnon de la Marjolaine,
Who passes by the road so late?
Always gay.

It was the only thing I could think of, and my voice was not quite steady, for I could not but think how easy it would be for the savages to capture us. When we reached the gate Lavolotte snatched the little one from my arms and gave me a shake.

"You will never die in your bed, mam'selle," he said.

At sunset it began to storm, and I was afraid the Indians would attempt to climb into the fort under cover of the darkness, so I summoned the forces for council. It seemed absurd for a girl of fourteen to command those old soldiers, but, as I said, they were worse than women, and some one had to do something. So I called them together and said as solemnly as I could:

"God has saved us today from the hands of our enemy, but we must take care and not fall into any snares tonight. As for me, you all know I am not afraid. I will take care of the fort with Lavolotte and my brothers to help me, and you, Fontaine, can go to the block house with the women and children. If I am taken don't surrender, even if I am cut to pieces and burned before your eyes. They cannot hurt you in the block house if you show the least bit of fight."

So I put Alexander on one of the bastions, little Louis on another, telling them not to be afraid, that God would care for them. Lavolotte took the third and I the fourth. All night, in spite of snow and hail, the cry of "All's well!" rang from the fort to the block house. You would have thought both were full of soldiers. The Indians thought so and were afraid to attack us.

I think that was quite the longest night I ever knew. When morning came we were all encouraged, save Fontaine's wife, who was town bred and wanted her husband to take her away.

He shook his head. "I will never abandon the fort while Mam'selle Madelon stays," he cried.

"I will never abandon it," I said, and we shook hands. I would have died rather than surrender. If the Indians took Vercheres they would think they could capture other forts, and then alas for Canada!

We were a week in constant fear, fighting now at the block house and now at the fort. Only one of our men was wounded. On the seventh night the Indians attacked the northwest bastion and were climbing over the palisade when Lovolotte gave the alarm. It was hot work. Three times we beat them back, three times the grinning face of Killeur Rouge looked over the palisade. The dull thud of falling bullets sent a shudder through my heart. Would it never end?

A sound came from the river, the dip, dip as of oars. We listened like dogs. The Indians heard it and melted away. Below in the water I could see half a dozen canoes filled with shadows.

"Who are you?" I called, and in spite of myself my voice would tremble.

"We are Frenchmen. It is La Monnerie who comes to your help."

A loud hurrah greeted the announcement. I ordered the gate opened and drew my troops up before it, old Beaucire, Lavolotte, Alexander and Louis, and beside them was a small, slim girl, in a tattered skirt of blue velvet, who stepped forward with a military salute and said:

"Monsieur, I surrender my arms to you."

He was astonished. "Keep them, my little captain," he said. "They are in good hands."

I blushed with pleasure. He inspected the fort and found it in good order and a sentry on every bastion.

"It is time to relieve them, monsieur," I said politely. "We have not been off of our bastions for a week."

"Oh, mademoiselle!" he cried, "you are a brave girl. The women of Canada shame the men. You have saved your country. The savages have gone back to their villages. Had you let this fort fall into their hands Canada would have been in ashes. I envy your father his daughter."

And the governor said the same when in response to his command my father took me to the chateau. My heart beat fast as my father led me into the great salon filled with grand dames and gentlemen. I felt ashamed and tried to hide behind my father, but he led me forward until we stood before a tall, majestic man in a scarlet coat faced with gold. The hawk-like features peered from under his grizzled hair with an expression I shall never forget. I thought I should have died when he lifted me to the dais beside him and said:

"And this is the savior of Canada."

Then the ladies all waved their lace handkerchiefs and the gentlemen cried "Vive," and I was so shame-faced I turned and hid my flushed face against his coat. He did not speak for a moment, and then he said, oh, so softly:

"Child, you do not know what you have done. There is not a family in Canada but is saying, 'God bless Madelon Vercheres.' You shame us all when a mere girl can be so brave."

"It was nothing," I stammered, rudely interrupting him. Oh, dear, I shall never be a well-bred demoiselle, but I could not bear to hear him make so much of such a little thing, and before father. "There was nothing else to do."

"Nothing else to do," he repeated, with a queer little smile. "You hear, mesdames and messieurs. This child with two old men and two boys held a fort against fifty Iroquois for a week, just because there was nothing else to do. The world will hear of you, little Madelon, and see, I want you to wear this to remember that Count Frontenac said you were the bravest one he ever knew."

He held out a gold chain with a great locket set with brilliants. I gasped with joy and wonder. I had never seen anything so beautiful, and to have it for my own! I looked at father. He nodded, and bending over the hand that held mine, I touched it with my lips and said:

"I will gladly take it, your excellency, to remind me of the noblest man I ever saw."

Then everybody laughed and clapped and the governor himself smiled and said: "The child is a courtier as well as a soldier."

I almost forgot to say that maman did not scold me for losing her fan. When I told her she only hugged me closer and kissed me, murmuring: "My precious Madelon. My brave little daughter."

And after that I did not care so much about the fan or my blue velvet dress, although it was quite spoiled. Bonne Jeanne says it can never be made fit to be seen.

ONE-THIRD OFF.

Playing Cards.

Cards were invented as an amusement for a king, who had lost his mind. This king was Charles VI. "Hearts" represent courage and bravery in war; "Diamonds" represent pike-heads for halberd ends, weapons shot from ardalists, weapons of attack; "Clubs" represent prudence, the trefoil leaf suggests forage. Each suit has its king, named after men of renown in ancient history, David, Alexander, Caesar and Charlemange. Four squires are given to the four kings, Lancelot, Olgier, Renaud and Hector. Each king has his favorite dame. These dames indicate that the wife is nothing in herself, but derives her force and splendor from her husband. The "ace" is above all and beyond all. It represents bodies of troops of various strength.

At the Big House.

The Woman Who Married an Owl.

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When the children got home from the nutting expedition and had eaten supper they sat around discontentedly, wishing every few minutes that their mother had returned.

"I wish mamma would come back," said Ned. "I never know what to do in the evening when she isn't home."

"I 'low 'bout de bes' you-all kin do is ter lemme putt you ter bud," said Aunt 'Phrony.

"Don't want to go to bed," "I'm not sleepy," "Want to stay up," came in chorus from three pairs of lips.

"You chillen is wusser dan night owls," said the old woman. "Ef you keeps on wid dis settin'-up-all-night bizness, I boun' some er you gwine turn inter one'r dese yer big, fussy owls wid yaller eyes styarin', jes' de way li'l Mars Kit doin' dis ve'y minnit, tryin' ter keep hisse'f awake. An' dat 'mines me uv a owl whar turnt hisse'f inter a man, an' ef a owl kin do dat, w'at's ter hinner one'r you-all turnin' inter a owl, I lak ter know? So you bes' come 'long up ter bald, an' ef you is right spry gettin' raidy mebbe I'll whu'l in an' tell you 'bout dat owl."

The little procession moved upstairs, Coonie, the house boy, bringing up the rear with an armful of sticks and some fat splinters of lightwood, which were soon blazing with an oily sputter. Coonie scented a story, and his bullet pate was bent over the fire an unnecessarily long time, as he blew valiant puffs upon the flames which no longer needed his assistance, and arranged and rearranged his skillfully plied sticks.

"Quit dat foolishness, nigger," said 'Phrony at last, "an' set down on de ha'th an' 'have yo'se'f. Ef you wanter stay, whyn't you sesso, stidder blowin' yo'se'f black in de face? Now, den, ef y'all raidy, I gwine begin.

"Dish yer w'at I gwine tell happen at de time er de 'ear w'en de Injuns wuz havin' der green-cawn darnse, an' I reckon you-all 'bout ter ax me w'at dat is, so I s'pose I mought ez well tell you. 'Long in Augus' w'en de Injuns stopped wu'kkin de cawn, w'at we call 'layin' by de crap,' den dey cu'd mos' times tell ef 'twuz gwine-ter be a good crap, so dey 'mence ter git raidy fer de darnse nigh a month befo'han'. Dey went ter de medincin' man an' axed him fer ter 'pint de day. Den medincin' man he sont out runners ter tell ev'b'dy, an' de runners dey kyar'd 'memb'ance-strings wid knots tied all 'long 'em, an' give 'em ter de people fer ter he'p 'em member. De folks dey'd cut off a knot f'um de string each day, an' w'en de las' one done cut off, den dey know de day for de darnse wuz come. An' de medincin' man he sont out hunters, too, fer ter git game, an' mo' runners fer ter kyar' hit ter de people so's't dey mought cook hit an' bring hit in.

"W'en de time come, de people ga'rred toge'rr an' de medincin' man he tucken some er de new cawn an' some uv all de craps an' burnt hit, befo' de people wuz 'lowed ter eat any. After de burnin', den he tucken a year er cawn in one han' an' ax fer blessin's an' good craps wid dat han', w'ile he raise up tu'rr han' ter de storm an' de win' an' de hail an' baig 'em not ter bring evil 'pun de people. Atter dat dey all made der br'ekfus' offen roas'in'-years er de new cawn an' den de darnse begun an' lasted fo' days an' fo' nights; de men dress' up in der bes' an' de gals wearin' gre't rattles tied on der knees, dat shuk an' rattled wid ev'y step.

"De gal whar I gwine tell 'bout wuz on her way home on de fo'th night, an' she wuz pow'ful tired, 'kase dem rattles is monst'ous haivy, an' she bin keepin' hit up fo' nights han' runnin'. She wuz gwine thu a dark place in de woods w'en suddintly she seed a young man all wrop up in a sof' gray blankit an' leanin' 'gins' a tree. His eyes wuz big an' roun' an' bright, an' dey seemed ter bu'n lak fire. Dem eyes drord de gal an' drord de gal 'twel she wan't 'feard no mo', an' she come nearer, an' las' he putt out his arms wrop up in de gray blanket an' drord her clost 'twel she lean erg'in him, an' she look up in de big, bright eyes an' she say, 'Whar is you, whar is you?' An' he say, 'Oo-goo-coo, Oo-goo-coo.' Dat wuz de Churrykee name fer 'owl,' but de gal ain' pay no 'tention ter dat, for mos' er de Injun men wuz name' atter bu'ds an' beas'eses an' sech ez dat. Atter dat she useter go out ter de woods ev'y night ter see de young man, an' she alluz sing out ter him, 'Whar is you, whar is you?' An' he'd arnser, 'Oo-goo-coo, Oo-goo-coo.' Dat wuz the on'les wu'd he uver say, but de gal thought 'twuz all right, fer she done mek up her min' dat he 'longed ter nu'rr tribe er Injuns whar spoke diff'nt f'um her own people. Sidesen dat, she love' him, an' w'en gals is in love dey think ev'ything de man do is jes' 'bout right, an' dese yer co'tin-couples is no gr't han's fer talkin', nohow.

"De gal's daddy wuz dald an' her an' her mammy live all 'lone, so las' she mek up her min' dat it be heap mo' handy ter have a man roun' de house, so she up an' tell her mammy dat she done got ma'led. Her mammy say, 'You is, is you? Well, who de man?' De gal say 'Oo-goo-coo.' 'Well, den,' sez her mammy, 'I reckon you bes' bring home dish yer Oo-goo-coo an' see ef we kain't mek him useful. A li'l good game, now an' den, 'ud suit my mouf right well. We ain' have nair' pusson ter do no huntin' fer us sence yo' daddy died.'

"'Mammy,' sez de gal, 'I'se 'bleeged ter tell you dat my husban' kain't speak ow' langwidge.'

"'All de better,' sez her mammy, sez she. 'Dar ain' gwine be no trouble 'bout dat, 'kase I kin do talkin' 'nuff fer two, an' I ain' want one dese yer back-talkin' son-in-laws, nohow.'

"So de nex' night de gal went off an' comed back late wid de young man. Her mammy ax him in an' gin him a seat by de fire, an' dar he sot all wrop up in his blankit, wid his haid turnt 'way f'um de light, not sayin' nuttin' ter nob'dy. An de fire died down an' de wind blewed mo'nful outside, an' dar he sot on an' on, an' w'en de wimmins went ter sleep, dar he wuz settin', still. But in de mawnin' w'en dey woked up he wuz gone, an' dey ain' see hya'r ner hide um 'im all day.

"De nex' night he come erg'in and bringed a lot er game wid 'im, an' he putt dat down at de do' an' set hisse'f down by de fire an' stay dar, same ez befo', not sayin' nair' wud. Dat kind er aggervex de gal's mammy at las,' 'kase she wuz one'r dese yer wimmins whar no sooner gits w'at dey ax fer dan dey ain' kyare 'bout hit no mo'. She want son-in-law whar kain't talk, she git him, an' den she want one whar kan arnser back. She gittin' kind er jubous 'bout him, but she 'feared ter say anything fer fear he quit an' she git no mo' game.

"Thu'd night he come onct mo' wid a passel er game, an' she mighty cur'ous 'bout him by dat time. She say ter husse'f 'Well! ef I ain' got de curisomest son-in-law in dese diggins, den I miss de queschin. I wunner w'at mek him set wid his face turnt f'um de fire an' blinkin' his eyes all de time? I wunner w'y he ain' nuver onloose dat blankit, an' w'y he g'longs off 'fo' de daylight an' nueer comes back 'twel de dark.'

"'Oh, mammy,' sez de gal, sez she, 'ain' I tol' you he kain't speak ow' langwidge, an' I 'spec' he done come f'um dat wo'm kyountry whar we year tell 'bout, 'way off yonner, an' dat huccome he hatter keep his blankit roun' him. I reckon he git so tired huntin' all day, no wunner he hatter blink his eyes ter keep 'em open.'

"'But her mammy wan't sassified, 'kase hit mighty hard ter haid off one'r dese yer pryin' wimmins, so she go outside an' ga'rr up some lightwood splinters an' th'ow 'em on de fire, dis-away, all uv a suddint.' Here the old woman rose and threw on a handful of lightwood, which blazed up with a great sputtering, and in the strong light she stood before the fire enacting the part of the scared owl for the delighted yet half-startled children.

"An' w'en she th'owed hit on," Aunt 'Phrony proceeded, "de fire blaze an' spit an' sputter jes' lak dis do, an' de ooman she fotched a yell an' cried out, she did, 'Lan' er de mussiful! W'at cur'ous sort er wood is dish yer dat ac' lak dis?' De owl he wuz startle' an' he look roun' suddint, dis-a-way, over his shoulder, an' de wimmins dey let out a turr'ble screech, 'kase dey seed 'twan't nuttin' but a big owl settin' dar blinkin'.

"Owl seed he wuz foun' out, an' he riz up an' give his gre't, wide wings a big flap, lak dis, an' swoop out de do' cryin' 'Oo-goo-coo! Oo-goocoo!' ez he flewed off inter de darkness." Here Aunt 'Phrony spread her arms like wings and made a swoop half-way across the room to the bedside of the startled children. "An," she continued, "de wind howl mo'nful all night long, an' seem ter de gal an' her mammy lak 'twuz de voice of po' Oo-goo-coo mo'nin' fer de gal he love.'

"And didn't he ever come back?" said Ned.

"Naw, suh, dat he didn'. He wuz too 'shame' ter come back, an' he bin so 'shame' er de trick uver sence dat he hide hisse'f way in de daytime an' nuver come out 'twel de dusk, and' den he go sweepin' an' swoopin' 'long on dem gre't big sof' wings, so quiet dat he ain' mek de ghos' uv a soun', jes' looks lak a big shadder flittin' roun' in de dusk. He teck dat time, too, 'kase he know dat 'bout den de li'l fiel' mouses an' sech ez dat comes out an' 'mences ter run roun', an' woe be unter 'em ef dey meets up wid Mistah Owl; deys a-goner, sho'."

"But how could they think an owl was a man?" asked Janey.

"Well, honey, de tale ain' tell dat, but I done study hit out dis-a-way, dat mo'n likely de gal bin turnin' up her nose at some young Injun man, an' outer spite he done gone an' got some witch ter putt a spell on her so's't de Owl 'ud look lak a man an' she 'ud go an' th'ow husse'f away on a ol' no-kyount bu'd. Yas, I reckon dat wuz 'bout de way. An' now y'all better shet up dem peepers er you'll be gittin' lak de owls, no good in de daytime, an' wantin' ter be up an' prowlin' all night."

Battledore and Shuttlecock in Japan.

Most of the girls in Japan like the game battledore and shuttlecock. Years ago the dainty little shuttlecocks used to be made in the shape of dragon flies, and then it was believed that this game was a spell

against mosquitoes, for dragon flies feed on these insects. But little Japanese girls have found to their regret that mosquitoes bite in every game, the same as they bite little Americans.

The Game of Hand Ball.

Hand ball is the oldest game known. Millions of boys and girls play it the world over, yet never give a grateful thought to its inventor. Most of them will be surprised to learn that so simple a thing needed "inventing" at all. Herodotus and Homer, two famous Greek writers, have preserved the inventor's name, and it is a feminine one. Yes, a woman made the first toy ball, and her name was Anagalla. She was a noble lady of Corcyra, and she gave it when finished to the little daughter of the King of Alcinous.

No other toy has furnished so much amusement, nor is there another so necessary in many games, as is this simple article. It is strange, too, that so few of these games are for girls. Do not forget that the ball was invented by a woman for girls, although boys may be grateful for all the fun they have with it.

SOME NEW NURSERY RHYMES.

BY HARRIET NUTTY.

O, WILLIE BOY.

Willie Boy is only three,
And doesn't know his A B C;
But when he comes to read and spell
He'll learn his letters very well.

?

The cat is a grown-up kitten,
And a grown-up pup is a dog;
But when is an ape a monkey,
And when is a pig a hog?

A LITTLE BOY'S STORY.

Little boy, don't tease the cook.
But come and I'll show you a picture book.
I'll tell you a tale of a very black crow,
But my story is over, and now you may go.

HEAVE HO.

Row me, row me, Captain Man!
Row me as fast as you possibly can.
But don't row too fast, or the boat will upset,
And we'll fall in the water and surely get wet.

SUPPER TIME.

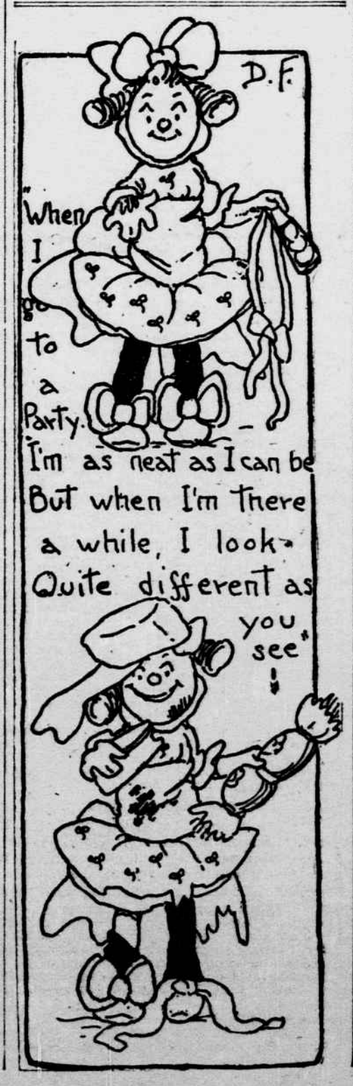
Come to your supper
And eat a nice bun,
And when supper's over
We'll all have some fun.

SCHOOL TIME.

I go to school
Most every day.
I like to learn,
But I'd rather play.

MISERY MUM.

Misery, misery, mum,
The bees can do nothing but hum,
The butter and cheese
Are beginning to freeze,
Misery, misery, mum.



One of Little Billie's Adventures.

BY LENORA F. CHANNON.

Little Billie was a pig who lived in a very nice pen in the barnyard.

Now Little Billie had one very bad habit, and that was not heeding the advice of his mother. One day Little Billie's mama said to him: "Now, Billie, I want you to stay in the pen with me today, and not do as you did yesterday, crawl out under the slats, for one of these fine days you will wander away and get lost, and then I won't have my little piggie wiggle any more." As Little Billie was the last of her nine babies, his mother was extremely fond of him.

Now Little Billie listened very solemnly to what his mother said, but he really had no intention of obeying her, for he was a very perverse little pig. Along about noon, after old Farmer Brown had given them their dinner and Mother Hog was taking her after dinner nap in the shady corner of the pen, Little Billie felt lonesome. When his eight brothers and sisters had been there he was content to stay at home and play hide and seek in the mud, but, alas, they had disappeared one or two at a time. Farmer Brown had come to the pen with a big bag, accompanied by strange men who pointed their fingers at the little pigs, and each little pig had been taken and thrust into the bag, despite much vigorous kicking and squealing on his part.

Little Billie crept slyly over the corner by the big barn, where he had dug a hole under the fence, just large enough to admit his fat little body. He crept under the boards ever so softly, for fear Mother Hog would hear the scrape of his body against the boards as he crawled through and would call him back. After he was safely on the other side he stopped and listened—he heard only the grunts of his mother as she lay deep in the cool mud. He had made up his mind to go a little farther away from the pen today than he had gone yesterday, and his mother's talk of the morning had only decided the matter in this naughty little pig's mind.

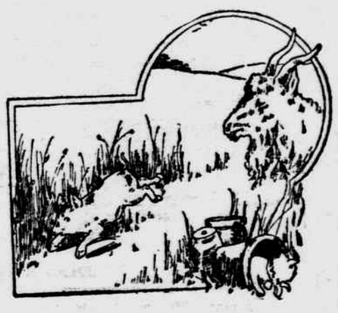
On he went—on either side of him rose high trees, fully twice as high as Little Billie—and the path was just wide enough for him to run along in nicely. What if he should meet a wild beast! He had heard his mother tell of strange animals of which she had heard before she came to live in Farmer Brown's pen. Wild, fierce animals, too, some of them had been, and the thought of meeting any like them made the bristles stand up straight on Little Billie's back, and his little heart went pit-a-pat in his breast. Still he did not turn back, partly because the path did not seem to be wide enough to admit of his turning, and partly because he really wanted a little adventure all his own.

All at once, his worst fears were realized—he came face to face with a strange, wide-looking animal. It was large—as large as his mother, but it had a beard like Farmer Brown's—a long, white beard, which it shook angrily from side to side as it saw Little Billie. It had two tails which stuck straight up on the top of it's head, between its fierce eyes—curled tails, like his own little twisted tail.

What should he do? The path was so narrow and the trees so close together that turning was almost an impossibility. He remained motionless for a moment while the wild blast approached him with head lowered, glaring at him from under two bushy eyebrows. All at once it rose on its hind legs, until it was nearly as tall as Farmer Brown, at the same time making a noise which sounded to Billie like:

"Ba—ba—ba—ck!" "Ba—ba—ba—ck!"

With his heart in his mouth, Little Billie turned, almost with a somersault, and giving vent to loud squeals, did as the creature had bade it, and went back—back to the pen and mother. Flattening himself out, pancake fashion, he just managed to squeeze himself through under the pen before the wild beast, which he feared was close on his track, could catch him. Mother Hog had heard the anguished cry of her baby and was waiting for him—her two front feet on the top bar of the pen.



"Oh, mother, dear," cried Little Billie, "I went just a teeny weeny little way up the path and I met a great wild beast, such as I have heard you tell about. It was as tall as Farmer Brown, with a long white beard like his, and two tails over his eyes, and it roared at me to go back. Oh, mother, there it is over there in the path, glaring at me. Do you think it can get in our pen?"

"You foolish pig," cried his mother. "That is only the billy goat who lives up near the great house."

But Little Billie was so scared that he didn't venture away from the familiar sounds and smells of his native land for many a day after that—in fact, until the next time.

A Hive of Bees.

I'd rather be a humble toad and sit upon a stool,
Or even a pollywogey wriggling in a pool;
I'd rather be a tongue-tied cat, or dog without a tail;
I'd rather be a weather vane a-whirling in the gale;
I'd rather be a comic cow and stand upon my head,
Or even be a hobby horse and pull a trundle bed;
I'd rather be a shipwrecked tar and eat my hat and boots,
Or be a soldier with a gun and live on little shoots;
I'd rather be a graven image standing in the rain,
A statue wet (a statuette—the pun is poor and plain);
A tambourine, a soup tureen, a piece of toasted cheese,
A toy balloon, a last year's moon, or anything you please;
A honey bee, a humming bee, a humble, bumble bee
A sewing or a quilting, husking or a spelling bee—
Indeed, there's not among the bees, though he be great or small,
A bee I would not rather be than not to be at all.

A Much-Traveled Cat.

Many stories have been written about dogs who travel on railways, pay no fares, and are cared for by train men as carefully as if they were railroad presidents. Such dogs have found a rival—a handsome maltese cat.

Six years ago, this pussy was almost the sole survivor of the wreck of an Ohio steamer. In some mysterious way, she appeared at the Union station in Cincinnati and appealed to the sympathies of the employes.

As she showed a desire to travel, they furnished her with a collar, on which her name was inscribed, together with a few words recommending her to the care of railroad men everywhere. Pussy is known to have survived a disastrous railroad accident, and to have crossed the Atlantic on a coal steamer. Her friends in Cincinnati did not hear from her for many months, and supposed she had come to the end of her nine lives. She finally reappeared on a Ward liner coming from Brazil to the United States. A note was fastened to her collar, which showed that the cat had sailed first to England, then to Rio Janeiro. She landed from a train at Buffalo recently, and after a brief reception from her railroad friends in the station, departed on a train for Vancouver. For the present, Pussy is lost to history.

The Rag Man.

Mother knew, because she was smiling to herself, though she turned away to hide it, but I did not guess a bit. I was feeling very sorrowful, because I had been in bed a whole week with a bad cold, and I felt sure that I was well enough to have John and Philly come in from the nursery to play with me. Mother said, "We shall see," and just then there came a great knocking at the door.

"Who can it be?" said mother.

"The rag man, ma'am," somebody answered in such a great, deep voice that I felt a little frightened.

"Dear me!" said mother. Will you come in, please? I should like to see what rags you have today."

The rag man was very tall—as tall as father—only all bent over, and he came quite near my bed, which frightened me a little. He had an old hat on, which covered all his face, and he carried a great big bag on his shoulder, which, it seemed to me, moved a little; and I was frightened still more.

"Perhaps you have some rags to sell me, ma'am," he said, in the same great big growling voice. "Only first I should like to show this little gentleman what I have inside my bag."

And then I said, "Oh!" quickly, in a loud squeak; I could not help it, for he had come close up to me. And what do you think! It was really father himself, and in the bag were John and Philly, and they tumbled out, and everybody laughed. They all had supper around my bed, father and mother, too, and we had such fun! And the black bag was only mother's shawl!

To Make a Pencil Write by Itself.

Take a round box with flat surfaces (such a box as druggists put pills in.) Through the center of both lid and box pierce a hole, through which a well-sharpened pencil is allowed to pass. Put a bit of sealing wax around the pencil to hold it firmly in place. Twirl the pencil as one would spin a top, and a number of strange designs will be found traced upon the paper placed beneath.

Paste this paper on a piece of cardboard, and if this be held firmly with one hand and tilted from side to side with the other, many extraordinary designs will be made.

A True Daughter of Erin.

A new stove was invented and presented to one O'Shaunnessy, by a gentleman soliciting orders. Norah O'Shaunnessy was present at the conversation. The man said the stove would save one-half the quantity of fuel now used.

"Do you mean to say," inquired O'Shaunnessy," that I won't have to buy but half as much coal as I did before?"

"Most decidedly," said the gentleman, "I will answer for it."

Then up spoke Norah, small, but sound in argument. "I'll tell you what I'd do, pop, I'd buy two stoves and save it all."

The Biggest Building in the World.

The biggest building the world is ever likely to see is the Great Pyramid of Cheops, near Cairo. This took 100,000 men thirty years to build. It is 451 feet high, and covers thirteen acres of ground. Every brick of it is a block of stone, three feet in height.

Against this, the smallest inhabited human-dwelling on earth is a reed-cutter's hut in the Fens, near Cambridge, England. It is of wood, four feet square, with a bed on the floor. How the old occupant manages to curl himself up upon it is a marvel. But he seems quite happy there, and gladly pays a shilling a year rent.

By Another Name.

Edna had been in the house for several days with a cold. She refused to eat anything, much to the worry of her mother, who feared she would become very weak.

Edna insisted she was as strong as ever, but later aptly described her condition by saying:

"Mother, I don't feel one bit weak, but my legs feel a little bow-legged-y."

A Taste of Winter.

Today the snowbirds circle down
Among the rustling weeds;
They peer along the ridges brown
In search of scattered seeds.

At early night across the hills
The Winter blows his blast;
His icy breath the valley fills,
The flakes fall thick and fast.

When, cold and clear, the day comes back
To trace its shortened round,
We hear, hard down the rabbit's track,
The baying of the hound.

DIAMOND.

1. A consonant in "never." 2. To scour. 3. Destroys. 4. Pertaining to Russia. 5. That which exists. 6. To bend under pressure. 7. A consonant in "never."

BEHEADINGS.

Behead:
1. To make a short, sharp sound and leave to lap.
2. To strike and leave anything very small.
3. To come together and leave deprived of.
4. Boundary and leave regulation.
5. To stop and leave repose.
6. A store and leave to skip.

JUMBLED FRUIT.

1. Celnqu. 2. Grenao. 3. Ritocap. 4. Notrlo. 5. Pleap. 6. Tinerraecn.

DIAGONAL.

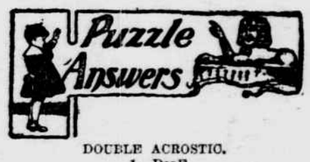
The diagonal letters of the words defined below spell a race of people much spoken of at present.
1. A month. 2. A writing implement. 3. A precious stone. 4. Large. 5. Vigorous. 6. Respect. 7. Large guns. 8. Not disciplined.

WORD SQUARE.

1. A fruit. 2. To invest. 3. To worship. 4. Healed. 5. Attends.

RHYMING ENIGMA.

My first is in cherry, but never in apple;
My second's in preaching, but never in chapel;
My third is in people, but never in crowd;
My fourth is in raindrop, but never in cloud;
My fifth is in holly, but never in tree;
My sixth is in pepper, but never in tea;
My seventh's in ocean, but never in sea;
My eighth is in hornet, but never in bee;
My ninth is in reason, but never in sense;
My tenth is in mansion, but never in fence;
My eleventh's in rustle, but never in walk;
My twelfth is in speaking, but never in talk;
My whole is an animal fond of the sea,
And I'm sure from these words you can guess it with me.



DOUBLE ACROSTIC.

1. DeaF
2. AveR
3. NinE
4. Grin
5. ErIO
6. RicH

DANGER. FRENCH.

CONCEALED BIRDS.

1. Dove. 2. Swan. 3. Eagle. 4. Thrush.

CHARADE.

Mattress (Mat—tress).

NUMERICAL ENIGMA.

George Washington.

DIAGONAL.

1. Flame
2. tAble
3. fAMble
4. honOr
5. condUct
6. canvaS

FAMOUS.

WORD PUZZLE.

1. Fate—fete. 2. Pour—pore. 3. Tracked—track. 5. Alter—altar.

FIJETTA

BY GELETT BURGESS.

Fijetta never Disobeyed,
She never Quarrelled when she Played;
She never Scowled, or Shook her Head,
When it was Time to Go to Bed.
But *How* she Fidgetted, while Dressing!
Her Mother found it *Most* Distressing.

(This Goop is called Fijetta because she fidgets so while her mother is dressing her.)