

among a multiplicity of shadows. I could hear the screech of the owl, the snarl and roar of the wild beast, and now and then I could see fiery eyes in the darkness. Had I been all alone I had probably been frightened, but there were so many of us that I was not lonesome, and knew nothing could harm a shadow.

"Then I came to the sea. I suppose you would be afraid to venture away out on the waters, wouldn't you, Willie?"

Willie straightened himself up with great dignity. "Not if I had a boat."

"But I had no boat," returned the shadow. "I went out over the sea with nothing at all to sustain me."

"How did you keep from sinking?" asked Willie.

"I don't know. I never thought of that," answered the shadow. "The sea was smooth and I hurried on, skimming over the waters and having a delightful time far beyond sight of land, far beyond where the birds could fly."

"Wasn't you afraid a whale would swallow you?"

"I can't say that I was. If a whale had appeared I would probably have hopped on his back and passed right over him."

Willie looked at his shadow with evident admiration. He was very proud to possess a shadow that was so brave. He was sure that if people knew it everybody would be afraid of his shadow.

"But that wasn't the best part of my adventures," resumed the shadow.

"After awhile I hopped up into the sky, for all the shadows were gathered there, and it became quite dark. Pretty soon there was a vivid flash that sent the shadows leaping and dancing every which way, and then came a terrific crash and roar and rumble that probably would have frightened you, Willie. It began raining, first great drops and then veritable sheets of water. We shadows did have great fun dodging the lightning flashes and chasing each other among the clouds."

"It's a good thing mamma didn't know you were out in the rain soiling your clothes in that way."

The shadow grinned but said nothing. Willie knew it grinned, for he saw it spreading its mouth.

"But I won't tell mamma," he added. He knew what trouble is made over such things when once told, and so resolved not to be a tattler tale.

"You are a pretty good boy," commented the shadow. "I am very long-legged this morning, and I believe I can beat you in a foot race."

Willie accepted the challenge, and away they chased. Willie felt very proud when he stopped, panting and out of breath, that he had not been beaten by this traveled and wonderful shadow. He was sure there was not a greater person in the world than he was. And the shadow thought so much of Willie he stayed very close to him ever afterwards.

Gerty's Christmas Comforter.

All the village knew about Gerty's red comforter. Everybody had seen how nice and warm and big it was, and everybody was quite sure that Gerty's father would be proud to wear it when he went out fishing with the boats.

But the red comforter seemed as though it would never be finished, and

tomorrow was Christmas.

"And that's why I can't come and play," said Gerty to Ruth, the coast-guard's little daughter.

"Let me help, then," said Ruth, in a burst of kindness for her anxious little playmate.

"Oh, no!" cried Gerty; "I want to make father's comforter my very own self—every bit. Mother wanted to help and so did grandma, but I want father to know that I did it all myself."

But although Gerty worked hard nearly all day long, by bed time her task was not over. "Come, put away work," said her mother, who was tired and sleepy.

"A few more rows," pleaded Gerty. "Just a few more," she said again, and "click, click, click," went the needles, until Gerty's mother fell fast asleep.

And now nothing was heard in the cottage but the sound of the needles and the tic-tac of grandfather's clock, and somehow Gerty thought they were talking to one another.

"Be quick! Be quick! Be quick!" cried the clock.

"Yes, yes! Quick! Quick!" clicked the needles.

Then the grandfather made a loud gurgling noise, as if he were going to strike, Gerty looked up and saw father coming in at the door.

"Twelve o'clock!" exclaimed the astonished fisherman, "and my little maid not in bed!"

"Then Christmas has begun, father" cried Gerty.

"Look, the red comforter's finished."

"Well done!" said the fisherman, as he gave Gerty a kiss.

Riddles.

There is a beast that all men fear
Lurking about most everywhere.
It has no eyes, no mouth, no nose;
Yet everywhere it swiftly goes.
It eats with awful appetite
Most everything it finds in sight.
It is a joy, and yet a dread,
And it may truthfully be said
That without it we could not live;
Yet o'er its deeds we often grieve.
Answer—Fire.

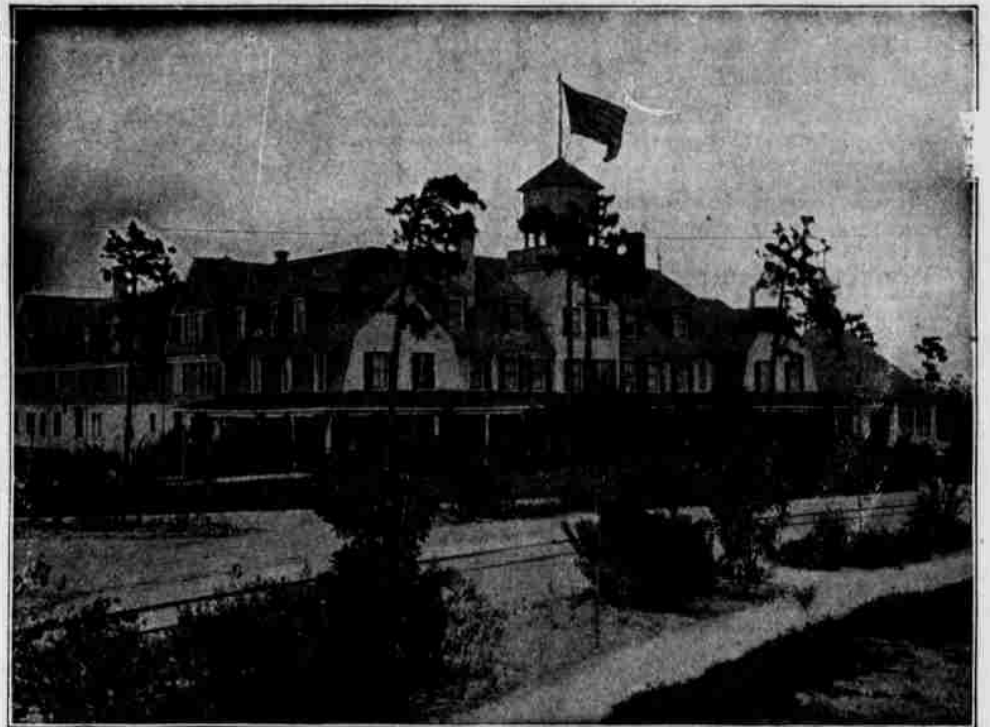
What is it that—
Has a tongue and can't talk,
Can run, but can't walk?
Answer—Wagon.



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