

Daddy's Evening Fairy Tale

MARY GRAHAM BONNER

WINNIE'S WONDERINGS

Winnie wondered. She wondered whether it was better to be willing and eager to help or whether it was better to be clever and smart.

She remembered the time when she had run for the doctor when the little boy next door had been ill. There had been a dreadful storm and the wires were down and there was no way of getting the doctor save by going for him.

How Winnie had run! The little boy's family said Winnie had really saved his life. They had given her such a lovely bracelet as a reward—made of real gold. She hadn't known or thought of a reward. Perhaps that was why she enjoyed the reward so much!

Then she wondered whether it was more fun to read late and have all that pleasure, even though she was sleepy in the morning, or whether it was better to be fresh for games and play in the morning and go right to sleep at night.

Sometimes when the family had gone out she had sat up way beyond bedtime and had only just turned out the light before they had come in. Then the globe of the light was still warm. Even a silent thing like a light globe could be a little tale.

But of course that was reading too late. And then she was so fearfully sleepy in the morning.

She wondered whether it was more fun to climb over the great chests in the linen room and have that as a playground where she could make up all sorts of games, or whether it was more fun where all the toys were and the games were all in readiness.

She wondered, too, whether she liked the country better than the sea-shore.

At the sea-shore there was the sea and there were rocks and there was a lovely salty taste to the air.

But in the country there was a sunny warmth and lovely, lazy feeling, and there were more flowers.

In the country was the old attic, too, where she could dress up in clothes that had belonged to her great-grand-mother.

They were torn and shabby, but they had been worn to splendid reputations.

Winnie used to dress up in these on rainy days and make low bows, pretending to be the different handsome gentlemen and beautiful ladies who had been to the receptions where these had been worn.

She wondered whether she liked the winter better than the summer.

In the winter sometimes the streets got so slippery that the coasting was really thrilling, and there was skating, too.

She had even been ice-boating, which was quite the most thrilling thing in the world.

But in the summer the bathing was such fun, and to go out in a boat along the shore and pretend to throw out mail as the boat passed each little cove. That was a glorious game.

Then in the summer there were such nice games to play and one didn't have to bundle up.

In the summer the woods were so lovely and cool and the shadows danced so prettily with the sun and the trees.

But in the winter, on the other hand, there were sleigh rides and steaming hot suppers afterward.

Yes, Winnie wondered.

She couldn't make up her mind what she liked best.

And then her wonders began to grow and she was puzzled no longer.

She liked lots of things—you didn't have to decide what you liked best when you could like many things a great deal.

So she didn't waste her time wondering what she liked best or what was best or second-best.

She just enjoyed each thing in turn, and when she could be of great help to some one it was well known that Winnie was the one to be relied upon. It was so nice to have this all clear at last!

Riddles

How many peas are there in a pint? One P.

What bat flies without wings? A bricketbat.

How does the sun do when it sets? Makes a night of it.

Why is a well-trained horse like a benevolent man? Because he stops at the sound of "wa."

IN TIMBUKTU



A Musical Native of Timbuktu.

(Prepared by the National Geographic Society, Washington, D. C.) The hard facts that the world isn't civilized yet and that some men still live by preying on whom they can with sword and gun, put an end a few weeks ago to careful plans of a French millionaire to operate pleasure caravans by automobile across the Sahara desert from Algeria to that famous synonym for the remote—Timbuktu.

A string of hotels or, more properly, resting stations, had been created at intervals in the sandy and rocky wastes, and special automobiles with caterpillar drives had been constructed to make the journey. The whole elaborate plan was quashed by the French military authorities of northern Africa because they could not assure protection from the Tuaregs and other desert tribes, who for ages have looked upon any caravan passing through the Sahara as fair targets for their attacks, and to whom loot carried in the tonneau of an automobile would be equally as alluring as that strapped to the back of a camel.

The tourist lost a most interesting objective when the opening of an easy road to Timbuktu (or Tombouctou, as the native calls it) failed.

The town is situated at the southern edge of the Sahara about nine miles from the most northerly point of the River Niger. In the rainy season, it is reached by a canal from Khabara, the so-called port; in the dry season, when the river is very low, a canoe can go along as far as Korylamou, from which point a pony carries the traveler across dry marshland and sand-dunes to this mysterious city.

As the traveler approaches the city on ponyback the governor's palace first attracts attention; but other well-built offices and houses of solid stone add to the view, and he marvels how such edifices could have sprung up in the desert.

Arrived in Timbuktu one can best get a general idea of the city by ascending to the flat roof of the governor's palace. But the trip should be made early before the sun has climbed high enough to make things uncomfortable.

Wonderful View From Palace. The first thing to catch the eye is a mosque, a mud dome some 50 feet high, at the far corner of the city, its isolated position making it conspicuous amid the irregular and curiously shaped house tops.

From this point of vantage is seen a wonderful moving picture of Arabs, Moors and Tuaregs wandering along the narrow streets; camels with riders, camels with loads, and donkeys with packs; pedestrians shuffling along with their sandals clattering against their heels; and here and there the red fez cap of a French tirailleur. From the market place rise the shrill voices of women and boys calling out their wares.

Soon one must escape from the sun, preferably to the home of a French officer. These are charming places, mostly built of mud in true Arabic style, with doors and windows similar to those in Morocco, and divans and cushions much in evidence.

Toward evening one may visit the market and the famous old mosque, the site of the former slave market, and also the present-day settlement of the freed slaves. Deep sand lies everywhere and roads or paths do not exist.

Today Timbuktu has scarcely more than 8,000 inhabitants, and many of these are nomads who pass through with cattle or engage in the great salt trade from the Central Sahara. Once the city was much larger, a veritable desert metropolis.

The market place is interesting but far from pleasant. Meat, covered with flies innumerable, and all sorts of articles of food are offered for sale. Four or five languages are distinguishable at times, the guttural sounds of the Tuareg being predominant. The noon sun is blazing hot, but a sun-umbrella affords some relief.

The natives sit on mats, under the shelter of little grass shanties. All sorts of trades are represented: butcher, saddler, leather-worker, grocer, jeweler, perfumer, barber, blacksmith, tailor, and last, but not least, the fabricator.

There is a big trade in dried fish caught in the Niger, and, since the native is very fond of fish, it is readily understood how a "sun-dried fish merchant" soon sells out.

Women Are Very Shy. One finds the streets, or rather passages, full of people, either going to or returning from the market, which is a sort of African news exchange. Strangers find themselves an absorbing topic of conversation and curiosity. Arab boys and girls run past like fleet little gazelles. Men, in passing, salute by raising the hand; the women either turn and run or pass in a very bashful manner.

These women, of course, are only the servants of the wealthy Arabs and Moors; the rich native woman never leaves her house from one year's end to another, unless to travel with her man. She is then veiled completely, and it is difficult to tell whether a male or female is perched on the top of a camel.

The Tuareg women and girls do most of the household work for the richer and more educated natives. The girls are most attractive in appearance, but very dirty. They never wash, as their home is usually in the heart of the desert where the limited supply of water is reserved for drinking purposes and is kept in the water-bags slung on the backs of camels and oxen.

The Tuareg is of a light coffee hue, while Arabs are often far lighter in color than a sun-burned European. Their eyes, which are very beautiful, belie their jealous, deceitful natures.

Beggars are to be found in all African towns, but it is doubtful if a more pitiable collection can be found than those in "Tombouctou." Some are blind, some cripples, others old and feeble; but all chant some song or prayer in a monotonous, beseeching Allah and the passer-by to give them alms.

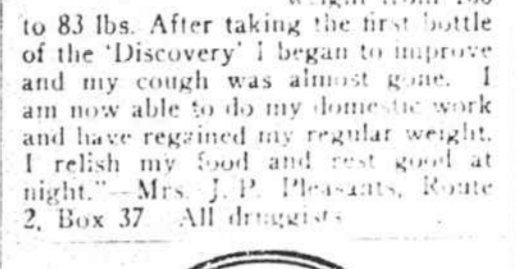
As a rule, the native is kind to beggars, but cruel to his animals; donkeys and camels receive rough handling. The usual cure for sore back or girth gall is a green leaf, with a little sand rubbed in.

Modernity Creeping In. During the rains Timbuktu has a large paddle-boat of some 200 tons; six tall masts of the wireless station can be seen from the city rooftops, and the hum of airplane engines coming up from Dakar has been heard.

The telephone and telegraph are likewise in use, the latter being employed by the merchants. Before the advent of the French, money was little known, barter and exchange serving for all transactions. Cowrie shells are even now used in the market, for silver is scarce and paper money is reluctantly accepted.

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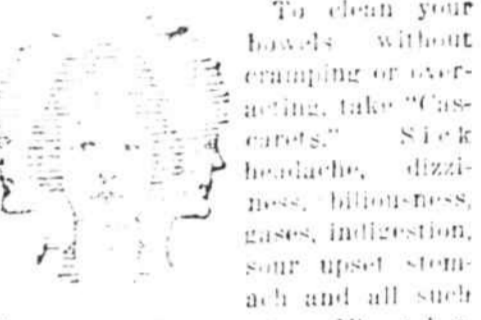
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