

**BILLY WHISKERS
OUT FOR FUN**

BY

**FRANCES TREGO
MONTGOMERY**

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**BILLY RAN BETWEEN THE SHORT, FAT LEGS
OF THE COOK AND UPSET HIM.**

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BY

FRANCES TREGO MONTGOMERY

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TRIC ELEPHANT," ETC., ETC.



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Billy Whiskers Out for Fun

CHAPTER I

BILLY WHISKERS, NANNIE, STUBBY AND BUTTON START ON A PLEASURE TRIP

MY dear Nannie, what do you say to our seeking the sunny South for the winter? I am getting too old to enjoy huddling up to the lee side of a strawstack to keep warm or sleeping in a drafty barn. Here it is the first of September and by traveling slowly and taking our time, we could reach southern California by the first of November.”

“California! Did I hear you say California?”

“Yes. Why not?”

“I thought you meant Florida or Mississippi or some of those states when you said *South*, for I always think of California as West and cold, not warm.”

“Oh, no! I don’t like Florida and those Gulf of Mexico States as well as the warm climate of California. They have too many crocodiles and snakes to suit me.”

“But, Billy, think what a hard trip it would be to travel all those thousands of miles.”

“Not at all, my dear! We would travel only when we felt like it. At other times we could find some nice farm on which to live or a small town to stay in and we would enjoy the change of scenery as we traveled along from day to day. I have been on the move so much that I feel it would be positively impossible for me to stay

here on this old farm away up in Wisconsin where nothing happens from one month's end to the other all winter."

"I know, dear, you have the wanderlust in your blood, and rather than have you stay here and be unhappy, I will go with you."

"That is said like a darling little wife, and I know you will never regret the trip. It will do you good and liven you up."

"We will ask Stubby and Button if they don't want to go with us."

"No use asking them if they want to go for you know perfectly well that nothing would keep them from going unless you positively forbade them and then I doubt not that they would follow you at a close distance."

All this conversation had taken place beside a strawstack on the farm where Billy Whiskers had been born. As he and Nannie stood beside it chewing the full wheat heads that had escaped the threshing machine, Billy had thought out the plan of crossing the continent on foot just to be doing something.

"Hi, there, Stub, you and Button come over here a minute! I have something to tell you."

"From the way Nannie's eyes are sparkling, I bet it is something exciting," said Stubby.

"If so, hurry and tell us and relieve our feelings," implored Button. "I hope to goodness it has action in it, for I can't stand this monotonous life much longer with nothing to do but eat our three good meals a day."



“You will find that what I have to propose to you has action in it. It has nothing *but* action. It is to take a short walk of three thousand nine hundred miles or so from here to where the Pacific Ocean laps the shores of Southern California.”

On hearing this, Stubby began to run round after his tail for joy.

“Hurrah for you!” exclaimed Button. “I am with you!” and he started to chase the chickens around the barnyard.

After they had run off some of their excitement, the two quieted down and Stubby came back and wanted to know when Billy proposed starting.

“This very night,” replied Billy. “There is no time like the present. Besides, the roads are in excellent condition for traveling as we have just had a rain that has laid the dust. It is full moon, too. We will wait until the family have all gone to bed, then we will give a hasty good-by to all our friends on the farm and start. And I think we better go across the field and down through the woods at the back of the farm buildings than along the road, as we would surely meet some farmer who would know us and tell Mr. Windlass in which direction he had seen us going.”

“There is only one drawback to our going and that is leaving behind Billy Junior, my son, and his wife and darling twin grandchildren. I hate so to say good-by that whenever I go I feel like sneaking off and not letting anyone know I am leaving. It does no good to say good-by and only makes me feel sad. But Nannie thinks differently. Wild horses could not pull her away if she did not get a chance to say farewell. There she goes now to say good-by to the chickens that have been shut in that coop to fatten for market, but they don’t know that and they just stuff themselves with the food that is given them and quarrel over it, entirely oblivious of the fact that every mouthful they take puts on more fat and brings them that much nearer the day of their death.”

Five hours after this conversation when all good-bys had been said, had you looked you would have seen two splotches of white weaving along in the high grass of the meadow, followed by a yellow splotch and a black splotch. For the long journey to California had begun.

They soon crossed the meadow and came out on the railroad track that led to Chicago by way of Milwaukee, Racine and Sheboygan. They followed this track as it was good walking between the rails and they were in no danger of being seen by farmers. Consequently they made good time and stopped to rest just before daylight on the outskirts of a small town. It was just light enough to see the smoke from the chimneys of the houses when the four friends awoke and sat up on their haunches and held a consultation as to whether they should go through the town or around it.

“I need a shave,” said Billy. “Let’s go through it.”

“You don’t mean to tell me,” said Nannie, “that you would be willing to go through the experience you once had when you were tied in a barber’s chair and the barber shaved off your beard, would you?”

“Oh! I had forgotten about that. But you fail to mention how I stood around the place and waited for him to go to dinner, and how I butted him over a grocer’s wagon that was standing in front of his shop, and when he landed, it was in the middle of a mud puddle,” and at the memory of it Billy laughed until his sides shook.

“I too say we go through the town,” said Stubby, “for I haven’t had a piece of butcher’s meat for ages and I should like to feel the blood trickling down my throat when my teeth sink into it and listen to the sound of my teeth grinding the bones. Yes, I say we go through.”

“That juicy meat sounds pretty good to me,” said Button. “I would not mind a steak myself even should it happen to be a tough one.”

“Well, Nannie, what have you to say to our plans? Should we be unlucky enough to be shut up, we are to baa, bark, and meow three times in quick succession and repeat three minutes apart. This is to be a guide to Nannie should she come back looking for us. If you hear a goat baaing, you are to listen and see if he baas naturally or baas as the signal says, three times every three minutes. The same way if you hear a dog or cat, you are to make sure whether it is Stubby or Button or some strange dog or cat.”

“That is all right for us, but what are we to do if we come to *our* trysting-place and find no Nannie?” said Stubby.

“If I am hiding somewhere, I too will baa every three minutes. But if you don’t hear me, you are all to begin hunting for me. For who knows but what a farmer with a big dog might come along and carry me off in his wagon so you could not follow my trail, or his dog chase me into some yard where I might be shut in?”

“Never you fear, Nannie,” said Stubby. “With my nose to scent you out and Billy’s horns to butt both the dog and farmer into next week, we can’t lose you. No, dearie; don’t be afraid! Your dear husband isn’t too old yet to rescue his little wife from dozens of farmers and their dogs.”

“Oh, she will be for going around,” spoke up Billy. “*Safety First* with her.”

“You are right, Billy. I should prefer avoiding all danger where it is possible. Besides, it will take up much more time to go through the town than around it.”

“Yes! But the fun and excitement we may miss!” replied Billy. “We are out for fun and adventures as much as to get to California.”

“I have an idea!” exclaimed Button. “You go around the town, Nannie, while we go through it and we will meet you the other side, two miles from the limits, on the main road that runs due south. For there must be a road running in that direction to Chicago where we make our first turn to the West.”

“An excellent idea, Button,” declared Billy. “What say you, little wifey?”

“Yes, I think it a good plan, for I hate excitement and crowds and hubbub. All of which you three adore and would rather be in than not.”

And so it was decided that Billy, Stubby and Button should go through the town and Nannie around it, meeting them the next day at noon. But should they not appear by the day after she was either to wait for them another day or come back and find what had happened to them. So they all rubbed noses together, their way of kissing, and baaing, barking and meowing good-bys and wishing good luck to each other, they separated, Nannie going to the west to circle the town and Billy, Stubby and Button following the railroad that led through the center of the town.

Had they known what was in store for them, they would not have kissed good-bys so cheerfully, I'm thinking.

CHAPTER II

BILLY WHISKERS, STUBBY AND BUTTON VISIT THE COUNTY FAIR

JUST as Billy, Stubby and Button were about to continue down the railroad track, Billy chanced to glance to the east and there he saw a cluster of long buildings that looked like barns and great open grandstands roofed over like baseball and football grounds and all enclosed with a high board fence. But what attracted him most was the number of flags, banners and pennants he saw waving from hundreds of flag-poles.

“Gee, fellows! That looks interesting to me, for those flags tell me there must be a County Fair going on over there, as this is the time of year they always have a big Fair. And I can well remember the one I went to when I was quite young. I never had such an enjoyable, exciting time in my life. What say you that we postpone going into the town and go over to the Fair instead?”

“Fine, just fine! I would like it above everything, for I haven’t been to one for years. I, like you, remember the time I was there, only I was such a little puppy that I was under everybody’s feet and was nearly run over several times, until at last my little master took me up in his arms and carried me. But I have always thought I should like to go back and see what it was like when I was old enough to take care of myself.”

“As for me,” replied Button, “I am ready for anything, just so I get something to eat pretty soon, for I am as hungry as a hedgehog.”

“That settles it!” said Billy. “And I can promise you the best things to eat and plenty of them. The country women bring all their good things to the Fair to contest for prizes, from the best roast chickens, cured hams all roasted and garnished with cloves stuck in them to make them tasty, to pickles and jellies of all sorts. As for pies, they would just melt in your mouth. But I forget you don’t care for jelly and spices. Very well then, there is a dairy exhibit where you can bathe in cream, there is so much of it.”

“Come along, come along! The very sound of cream makes my mouth water.”

The Chums soon arrived at the fairgrounds and it being so early, the only ones going in were the owners of exhibits and the men to feed and water the live stock, chickens, geese and ducks that were on exhibition. They watched their chance and slipped in when no one was looking, Billy walking in under a load of hay while Button rode in on a pole sticking out from the hay load and Stubby trotted in fearlessly as if he belonged to a man driving a wagon full of milk cans.



**BILLY AND NANNIE WERE ON EITHER SIDE OF THE
BULL,
STICKING THEIR LONG HORNS INTO HIM.**

Once in, they hid under the seats of the grandstand until they laid their plans—what they would do, where they would go and where they would meet.

“There is no use of our trying to keep together,” said Billy, “for if we do we will be stoned and clubbed and have no fun, so I say we separate and each amuse himself in the way he likes best, but that

we all meet the other side of the town where we are to join Nannie.”

“The plan suits me to a tee,” said Button.

“And me too,” said Stubby.

“I think the first thing I will do will be to look up that dairy you were speaking of,” said Button.

“As for me,” replied Stubby, “I shall smell out those roast chickens and ducks. Where do you plan to go first?”

“I was just thinking I would go over to the fat stock show and while I looked around for old friends I would incidentally eat up some of the corn and oats that had been given to them. There is sure to be plenty left as their owners will be stuffing them to keep them fat.”

“Gee! Look at the crowd pouring in. And it is so early. We better get started before the crowd is so great we can’t get near anything. *Au revoir*, fellows, until we meet again! And be sure you turn up at the trysting-place!” And with a whirl of his tail Billy was off, running under the seats toward the fat stock exhibit.



Button followed him for a way, then he spied the dairy building to his left and made a bee line for it. When he reached the door, he found two dairy maids standing in the open door talking, and they were so excited over what they were saying that he sneaked in right beside them and was lapping the cream first from one pan and then from another. All of a sudden one of them turned round and seeing Button, she gave such an outlandish scream that it startled him and he fell headlong into the pan. In a minute he came out dripping, cream streaming into his eyes so he could not see. In his endeavor to get away, he fell into another as there were several pans cooling in a vat of ice-water. One of the maids grabbed up a broom and came for him. He jumped straight toward her and as she dodged him she slipped and fell into the vat of cold, cold water, upsetting every pan in the vat. Button landed on the floor and the jar shook the thick cream from his eyes so he could see. And you just better believe it did not take him long to escape. He had his fill of cream for once.

On his way to the fat cattle, Billy chanced to pass a pastry show and the delicious odor of hot molasses cakes floated to his nostrils through the open door.

“Oh my! Don’t those cookies smell good? I shall just have to have some for I haven’t had any old-fashioned molasses cookies for ages and I adore them. I also smell pumpkin pie which I like just as well. Guess I’ll just tarry here a while and eat some. Think they would taste better than corn or oats at this particular time. How I wish Nannie was not so timid! Then she would be here so she could get some, for I know she adores molasses cookies. If that big fat cook doesn’t stop standing in that doorway wasting his time, I shall have to butt him out while I go in and eat what I want. There, he is moving, and I smell something burning. Serves him right

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