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CHILDREN FOR THE

HOW MAMMY POSSUM GOT HER POCKET

By Grace MacGowan Cooke

OSSUM was a favourite dish in the cabins at Broadlands plantation, though it seldom found its way to the table at the Big The three Randolph children were always intensely interested in the game which the possum hunters brought home; for more often than not these were alive, having shammed death and been picked up by the tail and carried in dangling from a stick. They are sorry little beasts, with dishonest, squinting eyes close together, and mournful, long, thin noses.
"That one looks like a widow,"

Patricia said, pointing to a possum in a slat pen at Uncle Bergen's cabin.
"I think she looks as though she

had lost her children, besides her husband," amended Pate, laughing.
"Poor old Mammy Possum!" cooed

little Isabel.

"She ain't lost none o' her chillens,"

"The purse girl. "I asserted America, the nurse girl. knows in reason dat ain't what grieve her, 'caze she got a pocket in her coat for to tote her chillen in."

When Mammy Possum had been taken from the pen and the pocket shown to the children, their questions brought the inevitable story from the devoted America.

"You see, hit come 'bout dis-hyer

a piece o' hit,' she lay dat poke down an' fergit hit. Gentermans, she plumb lost de poke, an' little Joe Possum

"De store was full o' folks doin' dey Christmas tradin', an' Mammy Possum commence to holler an' run 'round 'mongst 'em, an' ax 'em all is dey see her poke, on her little Joe Possum. She holler an' she bounce, an' she mighty nigh break up he meetin' wid her carryin' on. De storeman want dat sorter doin's stopped. He tell her an' he tell her to quiet it, an' hush her fuss. But lawsy! She ain't studyin' 'bout to quiet it, an' hush her fuss. But lawsy! She ain't studyin' 'bout quittin'—she ain't got no notion o' hushin' her fuss, Mammy Possum ain't. She jes' holler de louder, an' run 'round de faster, an' bounce de higher, like she plumb crazy. So de storeman he up an' sont for de sheriff—he did so. Mr. Porkypine was de sheriff in dem days, an' he soon step in an' take a hand.

"'Hey, you!' he holler at Mammy Possum, whar she's a-r'-arin an' bellerin' an' weavin' around 'mongst de storeman's plunder. 'You hush dat fuss. I'se 'shamed on ye. Folks can hear ye plumb to de co't-house.'

"He grab a-holt her, an' sorter lean

"He grab a-holt her, an' sorter lean de sharp ends o' his quills inter her.

"'Ouch!'she squeal. 'Yas, sir, I'll hush an' be still.'

"'Well, den,' say Mr. Porkypine, 'whar you leave dat young 'un?"

"'Oh, I had 'im in

my poke, please sir; an' de pesky string hit break, an' de poke git lost; an' now my dear little somewhars, Tosey tied up in dat poke. He cain't git out, an' I cain't find 'im; an' he 'bleege to starve to death! Oh, Josey —osey—wosey!' An' Mammy Possum des cry like her heart

plumb broke.

"'Well, set dar,'
say Sheriff Porkypine to Mammy

Possum.

"But hit didn't take Sheriff Porkypine long to find dat poke un'neath he counter; an' Josey Possum was all curled up fast asleep inside o' hit. Or meb-

be he was playin' dead, like possums

does.

"'Now, dar yo' poke an' yo' possum chile,' he tell de lady. 'An' don't let dis-hyer thing happen agin. Ef I was you I'd have me a pocket sewed fast into de inside o' my coat, for to

fast into de inside o' my coat, for to carry my chillen in.
"'Thanky sir—thanky, kindly!' say Mammy Possum. 'I'll do best like you say. You is a kind genterman—ef you is de sheriff what takes folks to jail—an' you knows a heap.'

jail—an' you knows a heap.'
"So dat's how come it dat Mammy Possum set up nights to sew a pocket an' put hit in every coat she had; an' she liked hit so well dat all Mammy Possums been doin' so eber sence."—Woman's Home Companion.

A GOOD EXCUSE

LITTLE Lawrence jealously guarded his baby brother, and when a lady visitor asked how much he thought his mother would take for him, said, "Oh, ever so much—about a hundred dollars!" "Well," she said, "I am able to give that much." He reflected a moment: then seized with reflected a moment; then, seized with a sudden inspiration, he replied, "But she wouldn't like to break the set."



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A Full Load.

way," the girl began. "'Long 'bout Christmas time, Mammy Possum go to de store for to do her tradin'. She done take Sammy an' Bob an' Joe Possum 'long wid her, 'caze she ain't got nobody for to leave 'em wid. She tote a poke on her shoulder for to put her plunder in, an' she give one hand to Sammy, an' one to Bob, for to lead 'em. An' Joe he whine an' he fuss: 'Oh, Mammy Possum, I ain't got nothin' for to hold to. I gwine git losted—I knows I is.'
"'Ketch a-holt o' Bobby's hand,'

say Mammy Possum.

"Bobby's ol' hand, hit's so scra-a-atchy,' little Joe say.

"Little Joe was de baby, an' raised

a pet; he was spi'lt—yas, law! he was a piece o' spi'lt meat, dat youngest possum. But he mammy, look like dey hain't nothin' she won't put up with, or ondertake, for to please in with, or ondertake, for to please him. So what ye reckon she done now? Why, she up an' put dat possum chile in de poke an' pack him all de way to de storehouse! Den, when she git dar, what wid de storeman sayin', 'Lemme show you some dis hyer fine calikers, an', 'Please, ma'am, Miz. Possum, taste dis hyer cheese, an' see don't you want to buy

cheese, an' see don't you want to buy

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