

## TRUE STORIES OF THE NEWS.

# THAT TINY GIRL ON THE TRACK.

## How Baby Winnie Vance Took Absolute Possession of the Elevated Road.

*She Was Looking for a "Yellow Dog," She Said, and Slipped Past the Gateman Without Offering to Pay Her Fare.*

A little girl stood alone on the uptown track of the west-side Elevated road at One Hundred and Thirty-fourth street and Eighth avenue Tuesday forenoon holding at a standstill the traffic of the Company. She was a very little girl, it is true, and she delayed Col. Hain's train only a few moments, yet Winnie Vance will be able to say, and to say truthfully, that she has

been the youngest of *bagmen*—or *bag-women*—on record. Winnie's name is a fair index to her disposition. From the time that Winnie gets up in the morning until she says "good-night," she is engaged in the lucrative occupation of making friends. She has a pair of big, blue, inquiring eyes and a mass of fluffy brown ringlets. Winnie is three and a half

years old and lives with her parents at No. 237 West One Hundred and Thirty-fourth street. Her father is A. S. Vance, Assistant General Manager of the Light and Power Department of the Edison General Electric Company. Of course Winnie isn't her name. She was christened Winifred, but Winnie she is called and Winnie she will remain for many a long day.

Like most very little ladies, and some larger ones, Winnie has one overpowering failing. She will "run away." Long series of admonitions have only partially convinced Winnie that the search for joy and pleasure which exists on the next block or "around the corner" is not a dignified oc-

casion for a little girl, nor a consoling one for Winnie's mother. As long as there are beautiful horses, or strange looking members of the Cherry Hill aristocracy passing by Winnie's house, so long, probably, will Winnie be disposed to follow and admire or criticize them.

On Tuesday morning Winnie was playing before the door of her home with a number of her playmates—the children of neighbors with whom the dainty lady is on terms of the closest intimacy. Winnie's mother was buried with household cares and Winnie's chubby-faced little sister, who isn't old enough to go outside and play, sat with her

little nose crushed against the window pane, watching Winnie and her friends "keep house" on the front steps. This same little sister evidently saw what was happening outside, and probably tried to warn Winnie's mother. Perhaps her failure was due to the fact that she speaks but little of our language, conversing for the most part in a tongue too abstruse for mere human use, and spoken only by girl angels too lately arrived from heaven to have learned the usages of earthly society; perhaps a spirit of pique prevented her apprising the powers that be of Winnie's departure. Who knows? Certain it is that when Mrs. Vance looked for her helress that wilful individual was not in sight. She, however, gave but trifling thought to the matter, as Winnie had been placed in the care of a little girl several years her senior, who, as Mrs. Vance afterwards discovered, left her charge for a short time, scarcely thinking that Winnie would succumb in one short minute to the allurements of a "yellow dog" with a banged tail.

But this is just what Winnie did. The dog in question was probably a resident of "de Ata Ward." It was said that he carried on his person all the signs of citizenship in that locality, and that, to judge by appearances, he was not a fit companion for Winnie. But appearances are deceitful, as events proved. The dog came up the street from the east and sat himself down on the flagging in front of Winnie, who was putting her doll to sleep. It is confidently asserted by eyewitnesses, also of very tender years, that the dog gave a sardonic grin and beckoned with his tail to Winnie to follow him, and that by other manifestations he gave token that he was a very Megastrophes of dogs. And Winnie followed him. Ever and anon did this disreputable charmer turn around and wag his tail and constantly did Winnie increase her efforts to catch him. The canine tempter took his course along One Hundred and Thirty-fourth street to Eighth

avenue, and up that thoroughfare until he was lost in Winnie's view. It is not known whether this fleeting mirage of a dog vanished in a clap of thunder and a cloud of smoke, but it is certain that to Winnie's eyes he was and he was not. But Winnie walked on. With the eye of faith she saw the yellow dog ascending the steps of the One Hundred and Thirty-fifth street uptown station, and straightway she followed the vision.

Gateman Weiss did not notice Winnie as she passed him. On after consideration he supposes that she must have gone out on the platform in the company of some older people. In fact, Gateman Weiss's business is to about "Sixth avenue train" and to intermittently pump the handle of his ticket-chopping box, and not to watch children of tender years, he says. Winnie thought she saw that dog on the uptown track. That is why she walked carefully to the end of the platform and down the steps and out to the railed walk beside the track that leads in a delightfully indecisive way downtown. She succeeded in walking about a block before any one saw her. Then she discovered that the boards were rough and there were big cracks between them, and, take it altogether, it would be better for Winnie to walk in the middle of the track. Which she did. Gateman Weiss saw the up-coming train stop, and as he looked more closely to discover the reason he saw the little vision, with the brown curls flying in the air, standing full in front of the engine.

The engineer had stopped the train. Gateman Weiss ran along the pathway at the side of the uptown track and picked little Winnie up. Very tenderly he carried her back to the platform, where she stood with wide-open eyes watching the passengers file from the waiting room, not at all enlightened as to why she should be so dealt with. Gateman Weiss sent a messenger for the

police. It happened to be Solomon Cohen, of the One Hundred and Twenty-fifth street force, and he came and took Winnie away. Winnie had no definite idea as to why she was on the platform. Her strong inclination was to allege that a yellow dog of massive proportions brought her there on his back, but on this point Winnie is still non-committal. Policeman Cohen was at his wife's end. He saw by Winnie's dress that she was not a waif, and he decided to take her to the One Hundred and Twenty-fifth street station and let the sergeant at the desk decide the perplexing question to his own satisfaction. Winnie walked down Eighth avenue merrily enough, with her chubby hand fast in a policeman's, until she met a lady she knew. It was the first time that Winnie had ever been in the custody of the law, and the lady, who is a friend of the family, was, as may be supposed, somewhat surprised at seeing her in such a position. She gave Policeman Cohen the address of Winnie's father and mother, and Policeman Cohen took his charge around to her One Hundred and Thirty-fourth street home. As soon as Winnie caught sight of the big brick gate she exclaimed cheerily, "Hi! My house," and Policeman Cohen's heart felt a great relief, because Policeman Cohen had

thought perhaps he might be obliged to take a trip to Police Headquarters with the little wanderer. Winnie was asleep yesterday when a World reporter called to interview her on her adventure, but it was confidently stated that she had declared that she was not at all sorry that the adventure had occurred. Meanwhile Gateman Weiss hopes that he will never again experience such a shock as he felt when he saw Winnie in front of the Elevated engine on Tuesday. The Elevated road employees are acting under instructions from headquarters and seem to be impressed with the opinion that any statement in the matter will immediately secure their discharge. It is probable they are afraid of being accused of gross negligence in allowing so young a child to reach the surface of the tracks. Yet it is scarcely right to claim that the occurrence was the result of negligence on the part of the gateman. It is certain that Winnie individually bears no ill-will towards any of the parties interested in her adventure, except the "yellow dog," at whose conduct she is pained. She had given him her confidence and he betrayed it, and though she would follow him to the ends of the earth, she will never forget that this rule of wickedness started with her previously untutored education. Some day she may have a reckoning with the plumed dog! Who can tell?