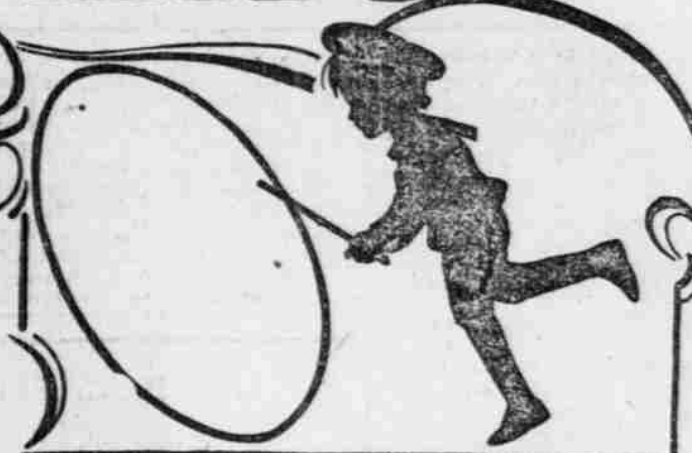
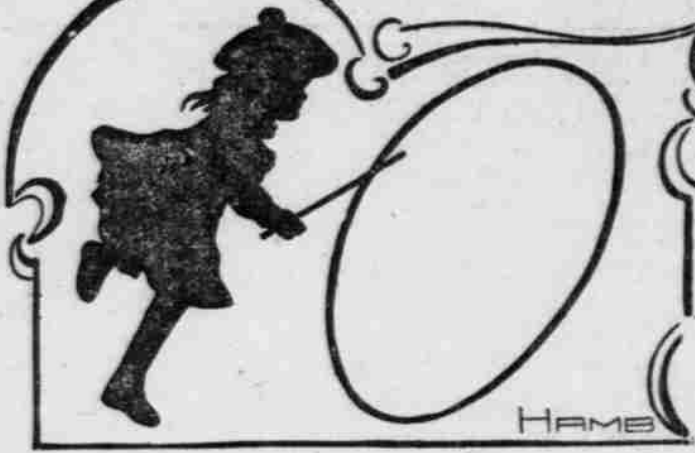


OUR YOUNG FOLKS



ANDIRON TALES BY J. K. BANGS

THE POKER CONCLUDES HIS INTERESTING STORY. RIGHTY AND LEFTY RETURN WITH THE BELLOWS.

CHAPTER VI.
"What kept you so long?" asked the Poker, as the Andiron and Bellows came up. "Was our friend Bellows out of breath, or what?"
"No, I wasn't out of breath," said the Bellows. "I never am out of breath. You might as well expect a grocery man to be out of breath. I wasn't long, either—at least, no longer than usual, which is two foot three. A longer bellows than that would be useless for our purpose. I simply didn't want to come, that's all. I was very busy writing when they interrupted me."
"It was very kind of you to come when you didn't want to," said Tom.
"No, it wasn't," said the Bellows. "I didn't want to come then, I don't want to be here now, and I wouldn't blow the cloud an inch for you if I didn't have to."
"But why do you have to?" asked Tom.
"I'm outwitted, that's all," replied the Bellows. "You see, my dear Watson."
"Dormouse," whispered the Poker.
"I mean Dormouse," said the Bellows, correcting himself. "You see, I believe in

thought he had waited long enough for the Bellows to resume.
"What on?" asked the Bellows.
"On your story about Jimmie Tompkins and the red apple," Tom answered.
"Why, I've told you that story," retorted the Bellows. "Jimmie ate the red apple and died. What more do you want? That's all there is to it."
"It isn't a very long story," suggested Tom, ruefully, for he was much disappointed.
"Well, why should it be?" demanded the Bellows. "A story doesn't have to be long to be good, and as long as it is all there."
"I know," said Tom; "but in most stories there's a lot of things put in that help to make it interesting."
"All padding!" sneered the Bellows, "and that I will never do. If a story can be told in five words, what's the use of padding it out to 500?"
"None," said Tom, "except that you can't make a book out of a story of five words."
"Oh, yes, you can," said the Bellows. "I'll tell you a story about all if you know how, and in the end you have a much more useful book than if you

"That was probably my greatest literary achievement."
"Unwritten Poems," eh? said Tom, to whom the title seemed curious.
"Yes," said the Bellows. "The book had 300 pages, all nicely bound—35 lines to a page—and each beginning with a capital letter, just as poetry should. Then, so as to be quite fair to all the letters, I began with A and went right straight through the alphabet to Z."
"But the poems?" demanded Tom.
"They were unwritten, just as the title said," returned the Bellows. "You see that left everything to the imagination, which is a great thing in poetry."
"Didn't people complain?" Tom asked.
"Everybody did," replied the Bellows, "but that was just what I wanted. I agreed to answer every complaint accompanied by 10 cents in postage stamps. Eight million complaints alone brought me in \$80,000 over and above all expenses, which were 4 cents per complaint."
"But what was your answer?" demanded Tom.
"I merely told them that my book stood upon its own merits, and that if they didn't like my unwritten poems they could write some of their own on the blank

replied Righty. "I haven't watched poetry much. You see, Lefty and I don't see much of it. People light fires nowadays more with newspapers than with poetry."
"What I've seen burns well," observed the Leftandiron, "and don't make much ashes to get into your eyes, but say, Wheezy, if you'll do your blowing about this cloud rather than about your poetry we may get somewhere."
"Very well," said the Bellows, "fasten your hats on tight and turn up your collars. I'm going to give you a regular tornado."

And he was as good as his word, for, expanding himself to the utmost limit, he gave a tremendous wheeze, which nearly blew Tom from his perch, sent his cap flying off into space and smashed the cloud into four separate pieces, one of which, bearing the Poker, floated rapidly off to the north, while the other three sped south, east and west, respectively.
"Hi, there," cried Righty, as he perceived the damage done to their decey chariot. "What are you up to? We don't want to be blown to the four corners of the earth. Pull in—pull in, for goodness sake, or we'll never get together again!"
"There's no satisfying you fellows," growled the Bellows. "First I don't blow enough, and then I blow too much."
"Stop growling and haul us back again!" cried the Poker.
The Bellows began to haul in his breath rapidly, and by a process of suction soon had the four parts of the burst cloud back together again.

"By jingo!" panted Lefty. "That was a narrow escape. Two seconds more and this party would have been a goner. Even as it is, my neck is twisted so I'll never get it back in shape again, said the Rightandiron.
"Well, I'm sorry," said the Bellows, "but it's all your own fault. You asked me to blow the cloud, and I blew it. You didn't say where you wanted it blown."
"You needn't have blown it to smithereens, just the same!" retorted the Poker. "It doesn't cost anything to ask a question now and then."
"Where, then?" demanded the Bellows.
"I'd like to find my hat," said Tom.
"Very well," said the Bellows. "I'll see it speeding off toward the moon, and we'll chase after it, but we'll never catch it if it misses the moon and falls past it into space."
The Poker rose to his full height and peered after the cap, which, even as the Bellows had said, was sailing rapidly off in the direction of the crescent moon, which lay to the west and below them.
"Hurrah!" he cried, "it's all right."
"Can you see it still?" asked Tom, anxiously, for his cap was made of seal skin, and he didn't wish to lose it.
"Yes, it's all right," said the Poker. "It's nearly missed, but not quite. If you will look through these glasses you will see it."
The Poker handed Tom a pair of strong field glasses, and the lad, gazing anxiously through them, was delighted to see his wandering cap hanging, as if on a great golden hook in the sky beneath them. And he was nothing more than the last appearance of the moon itself.

"Good!" cried the Rightandiron. "That settles the question for us of where we shall go next. There is no choice left. We'll go to the moon. Heave ahead, Wheezy!"
Whereupon the Bellows began to blow, at first gently, then stronger and stronger, and yet more strongly still, until the cloud was moving rapidly in the direction they desired.
(To be continued.)

HOW THE THURSTONS WENT TO THE CIRCUS

ONE BAD MAN HELPED SIX CHILDREN TO THEIR HEART'S DESIRE.

THE six Thurstons filed gloomily out of the house to the hayloft for a council.
"Two dreadful things couldn't have come together if they'd tried," remarked Molly, seating herself with a disconsolate sniff on a soap box. "A circus coming, mother sort of sick and no money!"
"That's three," said Polly, who was a practical soul.
"Well, no money doesn't count, for that's always in everything about us, but mother sick and the circus together are dreadful."

"I wouldn't have father know how we feel for anything; it would hurt his feelings so," said Donny, virtuously, while one of the Christmas Noah's ark had disappeared long since, leaving the navigation and management of the animals to Mrs. Noah, and this overworked lady, having lost the round pedestal on which she once stood, refused to stand at all, so Dummy Dee had agreed to trade a marble to Dummy for a new Noah.
"Is there anything we could sell?" asked Bobby, casting a speculative eye around at their much-used treasures.

"We've got about a pound of rags in the bag, and how far would that go, do you think, toward taking six of us to the circus?" he'd like to know," said Tommy. "There's too many of us, is the trouble," he concluded, gazing gloomily around at the rosy faces of the circle.
"We couldn't spare any, though," put in Dummy Dee stoutly. "If there wasn't but one of us it would be awful, so I suppose a feller'd have to holler for company."

They all cheered up a bit at this. "Yes, that's so," said Molly. "It would be better as far as shoes and crumens are concerned, but think of having to be scolded for six!"
"That was too appalling to be considered," said Donny, who was a bit of a philosopher.
"Donny's got 50 cents," huffed to take him," put in Tommy, suddenly.
"Why Donny Thurston? Where'd you get it?" they all cried at once, amazed at so much capital in their midst. It seemed like a trust.

"I—I saved it out of grandmother's Christmas money," said Donny, "I lost it right off down a hole in my room, and Tommy found it while he was poking around for a marble he'd lost." Confessed Donny blushing deeply, and he promptly relieved his feelings by tipping Tommy off from his box backward in among the theatrical draperies.
"Quit that," said Tommy, placidly lying on his back and looking at the ceiling. "You can go all right," he continued, gazing at the roof and yawning widely.
"Yes, sir, you can," said Polly excitedly. "Then you can tell us all about it; how to do things, you know. I'd love to be Seraphina, the flying angel, she's beautiful in the picture."
"You wouldn't care for a reserved seat

would you?" asked Teddy, craning forward in Donny's direction.
"None, dead," said Donny with emphasis, and eager to explain. "If you get down by the ring place, where they all come in—but with a change of tone and a comprehensive glance at the interested faces, 'I'm not thinking of going.'"
"Don't—why not?" cried Polly in a grief-stricken tone.
"With all of you, no there? Well, I guess not," and Donny arose and went

sharp corner of the safe and stunned him, else it might have gone hard with the plucky little man.

Dummy Dee sat still, breathing heavily and very much scared. It seemed to him a long time, but in reality it was only a minute or two, when the door opened and in filed the five conscience-stricken Thurstons, followed by the doctor himself.
"What's all this?" cried the doctor, pushing aside the five who were stricken speechless with astonishment at the entirely unexpected spectacle of their small

sharp corner of the safe and stunned him, else it might have gone hard with the plucky little man.
"No, Jim, you never do intend to do anything, that's the reason you fall into trouble so often," said the doctor. "Now, you can pay me the \$5 in your pocket," said the doctor.

"Yes, you have. When you were in here this morning, whining about your wife's sickness putting you so behind, and the bad crops and all that, I forgave you the debt, though I saw your father give you a \$5 bill in the postoffice this morning. You hung around here, and saw others pay their bills, and then you tried to rob me. Well, we'll turn you over to the police. Dummy, telephone one up here, quick!"

"I'll be Angelina, the snake charmer," said Molly.
"I'll be ring master," said Teddy, excitedly. "And—Don't be close, cause he'll like that," he concluded, nodding at the others. This was a delicate way of showing that they appreciated his sacrifice, and Donny grinned broadly at the landscape from the doorway.
"Dummy Dee can be trickier on the old tricycle."
"One wheel wobbles too much," objected Dummy Dee.
"All the better for tricks; it's a—ne trick, even to be able to stay on," said Polly, patting him.

"I'll be contortionist," announced Tommy, sitting up much humbled, and very dazed, and straightway he began to practice by looking through his legs, which were still on the box.
"If mother knew about the circus she'd probably think of a plan so we could go, but I wouldn't bother the dear for 50 cents," said Molly, getting up. "I'm going in now to make my snakes out of the old rubber hose, while I sit by her."
So saying, Molly slid rapidly down the stairway door, which served as a port-culisse to the hayloft, and disappeared.

"I'm glad of one thing," said Polly, getting up, preparing to follow; "it doesn't cost anything to see the procession and look at the posters anyway."
The morning of the circus day beheld the six Thurstons lined up in front of the doctor's office, blissfully gazing on the procession from the brass band, that began it, to the column in a miniature cart drawn by the smallest of ponies, that finished it.

After they were entirely sure they had seen it all, they bethought themselves of a cut-out, down another street, where they could see it again, so they all dashed off, all but Dummy Dee, who had a sudden rush of memory to the head.
They were to stop at the doctor's office for a bottle of medicine for mother, and the line of procession was leading in the other direction.
So Dummy Dee climbed the doctor's office steps and rang the bell in an absent-minded manner, wondering all the while why money should be so scarce and the desire to go to things so great in the same family.

The busy doctor, an intimate friend of the Thurstons, was out, but his door was unlocked, so Dummy Dee entered and climbed up in a certain deep window, where he and the good bachelor doctor had often sat and told each other stories. The band still sent back its alluring strains, and Dummy Dee, standing on what he called his tiptoe toes, could see a little of the highest things of the procession. He was so engrossed, however, he failed to hear the door open stealthily, and the creeping footsteps that came toward the old-fashioned safe that stood very near the window where Dummy Dee stood, quite concealed by the heavy curtains.

The careless doctor had received quite a sum of money that morning from his country patients, and, thrusting it into the safe, had banged the door not quite shut. The heavy iron door, now bumping against the curtains as it was pushed wide open, attracted Dummy Dee's attention, and he turned, fortunately without noise, and looked between the curtains on the stooping figure of a man, whose covetous hand was already full of bills.

Quick as a flash Dummy Dee hurred himself down on the man's back, like a small but sturdy cat, and the unexpected force of the blow pinioned the thief to the floor, his head struck against the

sharp corner of the safe and stunned him, else it might have gone hard with the plucky little man.
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"Donny Thurston, go home; this is my treat," the doctor said, very sternly, with a twinkling eye.
Then Tommy and Teddy came back to thank him again.
But Dummy Dee stayed through it all, because he had a special hug for dear uncle doctor, and when it was through there were happy tears in Dummy Dee's eyes, and in the doctor's, too.

Much Needed.
Weary Willie—I see yer movin' out, boss. Is dey anything you don't need 'at I might take? Subbubs—Yes, a bath.



WHILE THE THURSTONS WATCHED HIM BREATHLESSLY.



"THERE ARE TOO MANY OF US," HE CONCLUDED GLOOMILY.

everybody having a say in regard to everything. I always have everything I can put to a vote. Consequently, when Righty here came down and asked me to help blow the cloud over and I said that I wouldn't do it he called Lefty in, and we put it to a vote as to whether I'd have to or not. They voted that I must and I voted that I needn't, and, of course, that beat me; so here I am."

"Well, it's a good deal of you, just the same," said the Poker. "You aren't quite as good-natured as I am, but you come pretty near it. Most people would have left a matter of that kind entirely to themselves and then the way they felt like voting. You aren't selfish, anyhow."

"Yes, I am," said the Bellows. "I am awfully selfish."
"You're not, either," said the Poker. "Oh, goodness!" ejaculated the Bellows. "What's the use of fighting? I say I am."
"Let's have a vote on it," said Righty. "I vote he isn't!"
"So do I," said Tom.
"Me, too," said Lefty.

"Those are my sentiments likewise," put in the Poker.
"Oh, very well, then, I'm not," said the Bellows, with a deep-drawn sigh; "but I do wish you'd let me have my own way about some things. I want to be selfish, even if I'm not."
"Well, we are very sorry," said the Poker; "but we can't let you be; we need you too much to permit you to be selfish. Besides, you're too good a fellow to be selfish. I knew a boy who was selfish once, and he got into all sorts of trouble. Nobody liked him, and once when he gave a big dinner to a lot of other boys not one of them would come, and he had to eat all the dinner himself. The result was that he overate himself, ruined his digestion, and all the rest of his life had to do without pies and cake and other good things. It served him right, too. Do you think we are going to let you be like that, Mr. Bellows?"

"I suppose not," said the Bellows, "but stories about selfish boys don't frighten me. I'm a bellows, not a boy. I don't give dinners and I don't eat pie and cake. Plain air is good enough for me, and I wouldn't give a cent for all the other good eatables in the world except doughnuts. I like doughnuts because, after all, they are only bellows cakes. But come, let us hurry up with the cloud. I want to get back to my desk. I have a poem to finish before breakfast."

This statement interested Tom hugely. He had read many a book, but never before had he met a real author, and even if the Bellows had been a man, so long as he was a writer, Tom would have looked upon him with awe.
"Excuse me," he said, hesitatingly, as the Bellows began to wheeze away at the cloud. "Do you really write?"
"Well, no," said the Bellows. "No, I don't write, but I blow a story or two now and then. You see, I can't write because I haven't any hands, but I can wheeze out a tale to a stenographer once in a while which any magazine would be glad to publish if it could get hold of it. One of my stories called Sparks blew into a powder magazine once and it made a tremendous noise in the world when it came out."

"I wish you would tell me one," said Tom.
"Are you a stenographer?" asked the Bellows.
"No," said Tom, "but I like stories just the same."
"Well," said the Bellows, "I'll tell you one about Jimmie Tompkins and the red apple."
"Hurrah!" cried Tom. "I love red apples."
"So did Tommy Tompkins," said the Bellows, "and that's why he died. He ate a red apple while it was green and it killed him."
There was a pause for an instant, and the Bellows redoubled his efforts to move the cloud, which for some reason or other did not stir easily.
"Go ahead," said Tom, when he

made it a million words long. You can print the five words on the first page and leave the other 99 pages blank, so that after you get through with the volume as a story book you can use it for a blank book or diary. Most books, nowadays that when you get through with them there isn't anything else you can do with the book."
"It's a new idea," said Tom with a laugh.
"And all my own invention, too," said the Bellows proudly.
"He's the most inventive Bellows that ever was," put in the Poker, "that is, in a literary way. How many copies of your book of 'Unwritten Poems' did you sell, Wheezy?" he added.
"Eight million," returned the Bellows.

pages of the book. It was a perfectly fair proposition," the Bellows replied.
"I think I like written poetry best, though," said Tom.
"That's entirely a matter of taste," said the Bellows, "and I shan't find fault with you for that. The only thing is that Unwritten Poems are apt to have fewer faults than the written ones, and every great poet will tell you that nobody ever detected any mistakes in his poems until he had put them down on paper. If he had left them unwritten, nobody would ever have known how bad they were."
Tom scratched his head in a puzzled manner. He could not quite grasp the Bellows' meaning.
"What do you think about it, Righty?" he demanded of the Andiron.
"Oh, I don't think anything about it,"

stic little Elea was such a jewel rare
he much preed to bake a c to a fair.
And this attracted Green a self hardened miser.
girl who only es for fun" quoth he "I quite dis
my wife must sc and wash and m
And keep a well stocked I
nd never spend a cent that she
save by wor harder.

Now Elea designing cried vengeance on the er!
she married him one noon and t she cooked him a ing dinner
then urged him on to eat and eat, more than was quite thy
very night, he up and died and his wealthy
The moral of this is plain, too much will always cause you

Miser And His Fate
a new word picture puzzle

Douglas Z Doty

Douglas Z Doty