ANDIRON TALES

John Kendrick Bangs

Illustrated by G. Verbeek

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AS I STATED at the end of the last chapter, the travelers Tom and his companions encountered upon the trolley cloud were a wonderful lot. In the first place, the whole situation was strange. Here was, in fact, a perfect car, made of what at a distance looked to be nothing but a fiery bit of vapor. It had seats and signs—indeed, the advertising signs alone were enough to occupy the mind of any person seeing them for the first time to the exclusion of all else, what with the big painted placard at the end, saying:

FOR POLAR BEARS GO
TO ARCTICS
Fifty-seven Varieties. No Home
Complete Without Them.

And another showing a picture of Potted Town, in which all the inhabitants lived on canned food and things that came in jars, reading:

This is the famous Potted Town,
Where everything is done up
brown,
We live on lobsters tinned, and
beans,
And freshly caught and oiled sardines;
On ham and eggs done up in jars,
And caramels that come in bars.
Come, buy a lot in Potted Town,
And join the throngs we do up
brown.
A corner lot for fifty cents—
A bargain that is just immense.
An inner lot for forty-nine,
For residence is just divine.
If in a year you do not find
That we are suited to your mind
We'll give you fifteen cents in gold,
And take back all the lots we've
sold,
If, when in other lands you go
You'll recommend Scapolio.

"Who on earth wants a Polar Bear at home?" ejaculated Tom, as he read the first.

"I do," growled a deep bass voice at his side, and the little traveler, turning to see who it was that had spoken, was surprised and really startled to find himself seated next to a shaggy-coated beast of that precise kind. "I do," repeated the Polar Bear, "and if anybody says I don't I'll chew him up," and then he opened his mouth and glared at Tom as if to warn the young man from pursuing the subject further.

"So would I," put in Righty. "So would I if all Polar Bears were like you."

The Bear was apparently pleased by the compliment, and, with a satisfied wink at Righty, folded his forelegs over his chest and went to sleep.

"I think I'll buy one of those lots in Potted Town," said a Kangaroo who sat opposite to Tom.

"You couldn't raise the money," growled a Flamingo who sat at the far end of the car. "Thirty cents is your measure."

"Let him alone, Flammy," said an Ostrich who was crowded uncomfortably in between the Kangaroo and an old gentleman with one eye and a green beard, who, Tom learned later, was a leading citizen of Saturn. "He can't help it if he's poor."

"Thank you, Mr. Ostrich," said the Kangaroo, with a sob. "I was very much hurt by the Flamingo's remark. I have 19,627 children, and it keeps me jumping all the time to support them."

"I apologize," said the Flamingo. "My observations were most unjust. You do not look like 20 cents at all, as I perceive at second glance. As I look at you more closely you look like a $1 39 marked down to 72. But why don't you get up and give the lady your seat?"

"Is there a lady on the car who wants it?" asked the Kangaroo, standing up, and peering anxiously about him.

"No, of course not," said the Flamingo, "but what difference does that make? A true gentleman is polite whether there are ladies present or not."

The Polar Bear opened his eyes and leaning forward glared at the Flamingo.

"You don't seem to be over-anxious about yourself," he growled. "Why don't you give up your seat to the imaginary lady?"

"Because, Mr. Bear," the Flamingo returned, "it would not be polite. The seat I occupy is extremely uncomfortable, thanks to the crowding of the Hippopotamus on my left and the indulgence in peanuts of the Monkey on my right. By sitting down where I am I am making a personal sacrifice."

"There'll be a free fight in a minute," said the Poker anxiously. "I think we'd better get out."

"You won't do anything of the sort," said the Conductor. "Nobody leaves this car until we get there."

"Get where?" demanded the Poker.

"Anywhere," returned the Conductor. "Fares, please."

"But we've all paid," said the Flamingo.

"Somebody hasn't," replied the Conductor. "There are 22 on this car and I've collected only 21 fares. I don't know who is the deadhead. Therefore, you must all pay. It is better that there should be 21 lawsuits for a total damage of $1 25 than that this company should lose a nickel. Juries disagree. Fares, please."

"I decline to pay a second time," cried the Monkey.

"And I—and I," came from all parts of the car, from Lefty and Righty, from Tom, the Flamingo, the Hippopotamus and the Polar Bear.

"Very well," said the conductor, calmly. "I don't care. It isn't my money that's lost, but I'll tell you one thing, this car doesn't stop until you've all paid up!"

"What!" cried the Polar Bear. "I want to get off at the toboggan slide."

"So do I—so do I," cried everybody.

"No doubt," said the Conductor; "but that's your business, not mine. Double your speed, Moty," he added, calling forward to the Motorman. "These people want to get off. Of course, gentlemen and fellow beasts," he continued, "I can't keep you from getting off, but this car is traveling at the rate of four miles a minute and if you try it you do so at your own risk. Fares, please."

"It's an outrage!" said the Flamingo.

"I'm going to jump," said the Kangaroo.

"I think we'd better sit still, Tom," whispered Righty. "It would be smithereens if we tried to get off the car going at this rate."

"Don't mind me," said Tom. "I'm having a bully time. This is quite as good fun as oscillating, I guess."

"Excuse me sir," said the Conductor, in reply to the Kangaroo, "but I must ask your name and address. I cannot prevent you from jumping, but I'm required by the rules of the company to find out all about you before letting you commit suicide. We need the information in case your heirs sue the company. Married?"

"Yes," said the Kangaroo. "Sixteen times."

"Any children?" queried the Conductor.

"I have already said so," sobbed the Kangaroo; "19,627 of them."

"Boys or girls?" asked the Conductor kindly.

"Neither," replied the Kangaroo.

"What?" cried the Conductor.

"Kangeroos, every one of 'em," sobbed the unhappy passenger.

"O! I see," said the Conductor. "What is your business?"

"Jumping," replied the Kangaroo.

"Business address?" demanded the Conductor.

"Number 28 Australia," was the reply.

"Home address?" questioned the Conductor.

"Number 37 Melbourne," said the Kangaroo. "Melbourne, is in Australia, you know," he added.

"Made your will?" put in the Conductor, suddenly.

"What has that got to do with it?" cried the Kangaroo, angrily, but with a nervous start.

"We cannot permit you to jump unless you've made a will," said the Conductor, politely. "You see, when you jump you leave the car, and we don't know whom you leave the car to until we have read your will. You might leave it to Tom or to Righty, or to the poetic Poker—or to old Shaggy over there"—pointing to the Polar Bear. "Inasmuch as it's our car we have a right to know to whom your leave it."

"I guess I'll stay where I am," said the Kangaree meekly, very much overcome by the Conductor's logic.

"That's the answer," returned the Conducter. "You seem to be a very sensible sort of a Kangaroo. Fare, please!" And the Kangaroo diving down into his pocket produced a 5-cent piece which he handed over to the Conductor without further comment.

"Anybody else think of jumping off?" asked the Conductor pleasantly, turning about and glancing over the other occupants of the car.

"I might," said the Monkey, placidly.

"O, indeed," said the Conductor, walking along the car to where the Monkey sat. "You might think of jumping off, eh?"

"Yes," said the Monkey.

"Do you know where you would land?"

"Yes," said the Monkey.

"Where?" demanded the Conductor.

"On my feet," said the Monkey. "Where else?"

The Conductor was apparently much put out.

"You're pretty smart, aren't you?" he said.

"No," said the Monkey. "I'm only plain smart. I'm not pretty."

"Everybody's talking about you, I presume," sneered the Conductor.

"Not yet, but they will be," returned the Monkey, with a grin.

"When?" demanded the Conductor.

"When my tail is published," retorted the monkey, with a grin.

"Humph!" jeered the Conductor. "Great tail that."

"No," said the Monkey, "not very great, but it has a swing about it—"

"Say," interrupted the Hippopotamus, "I've got an idea. Somebody hasn't paid his fare, eh?"

"That's the point," said the Conductor.

"And unless he owns up we've all got to go on in this car forever?"

"You have," replied the Conductor, firmly.

"Well, let's be sensible about it," said the Hippopotamus. "We're all honest—at least I am—and I've paid once, and I admit I'm riding cheap, considering my weight. But who hasn't paid? Tom, did you pay?"

"I paid for our whole party," put in Righty.

"Good," said the Hippopotamus. "Did you pay, Monk?"

"Yes, I did," said the Monkey. "I paid for me and old Polar Bear."

"Good," said the Hippopotamus. "Has the Flamingo paid?"

"I gave him a promissory note for my fare," said the Flamingo.

"Good," said the Hippopotamus. "And now for the main question. Conductor, have you paid your fare?"

"I?" cried the Conductor.

"Yes, you," roared the Hippopotamus. "Have you paid your fare?"

"But"—the Conductor began.

"I won't but," returned the Hippo. "I'm a Hippopotamus, I am. Not a goat. Have you paid your fare?"

"Of course I haven't," returned the Conductor, "because—"

"That's it!" returned the Hippopotamus. "That's the whole point. He's the one that's shy, and because we won't consent to pay his fare out of our own pockets he's going to hold us up. I move we squash him."

"But I say," roared the Conductor.

"Oh, pay your fare and shut up," growled the Polar Bear. "You began the row. What's the use—"

"Hear 'em quoting my poem," whispered the Poker to Tom.

"I've taken his number," said the Flamingo. "It's eight billion and seven. He's trying to beat his way."

"Pay up, pay up," came from all parts of the car, and before he knew it Tom found himself in the midst of an angry group surrounding the Conductor, insisting that he should pay his fare.

"Who are you that you should ride free?" demanded the Flamingo. "The idea of servants of the company having greater privileges than the patrons of the road!"

"If you don't pay up right away," roared the Polar Bear, "I'll squeeze you to death."

"And I'll sit on you," put in the Hippopotamus.

"I haven't the money," cried the Conductor, now thoroughly frightened.

"Borrow it from the company," said the Polar Bear, "and ring it up."

This the Conductor did, and a moment later, having reached the station, rang the bell, and the car stopped.

"All out!" he cried, and the whole party descended.

"Who paid his fare, anyhow?" asked the Flamingo.

"I didn't," said the Monkey.

"No more did I," said the Hippopotamus. "The Kangaroo did, though. Didn't you, Kangy?"

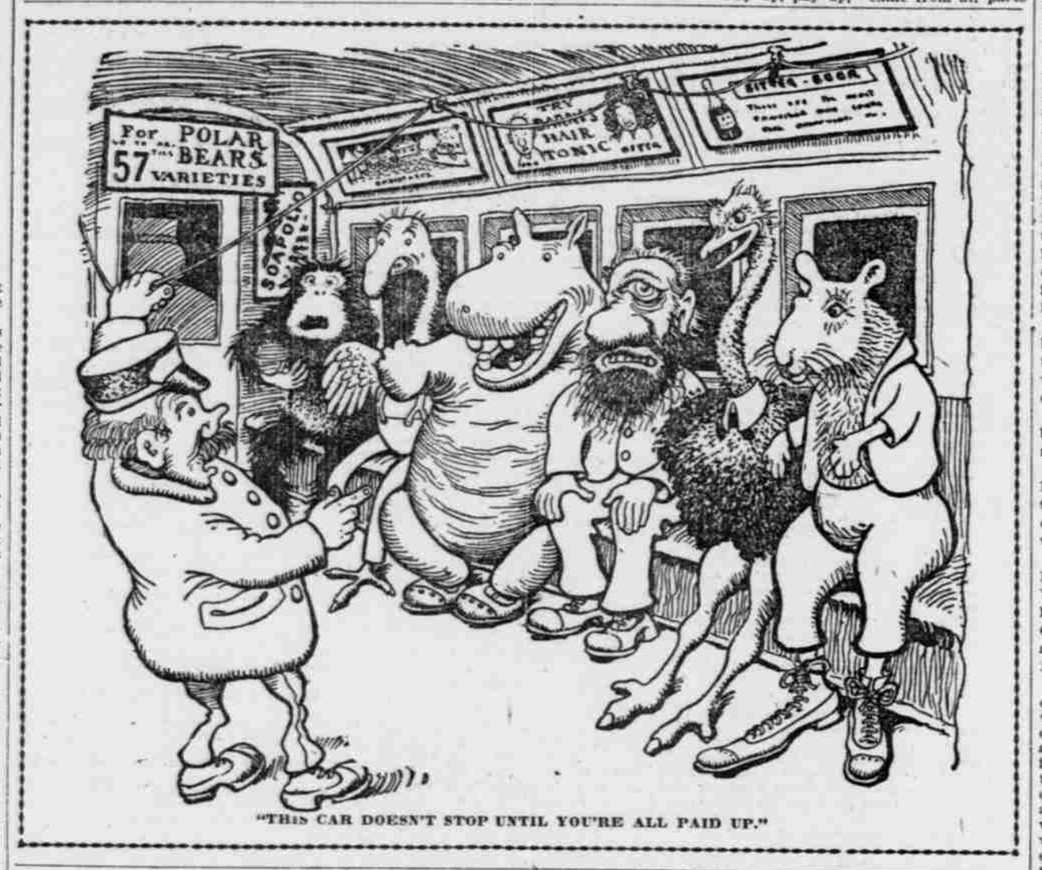
"Only once," said the Kangaroo, "and that was the second time."

"Let's get away from this crowd," said the Bellows. "They're not honest."

"Right you are," said the Polar Bear. "They're a very bad lot. Come along; let's get aboard this toboggan, and leave 'em behind."

Whereupon Tom and his companions, accompanied by the Polar Bear, stepped aboard the waiting Oscycle, and were soon speeding down the upper incline of the Crescent Moon.

(To be continued.)



"THIS CAR DOESN'T STOP UNTIL YOU'RE ALL PAID UP."

GRIP'S JOYOUS EASTER ANTHEM

TRINITY STORY OF HOW A RUNAWAY DOG FOUND A RUNAWAY BOY. BY MABEL EATON.

"MOTHER, couldn't you go tell Mr. Rollins that I just can't sing today? He ought not to expect a boy to sing that has had his dog stolen. I know he's been stolen, for he never missed coming to his breakfast before, and I've been all over the place hunting for him."

In spite of her sympathy mother smiled. "I don't think Mr. Rollins would excuse you," she said. "You know this is Easter Sunday, and everybody will be out to church. You have been rehearsing the music for months, and the voice of even the smallest choir boy will be needed."

"Well, I know I can't even remember the words. All I can think of is 'Grip is stolen! Grip is stolen!' And I shall want to be out hunting for him every minute."

"Come now," interposed father "brace up and get ready for church quick. If Grip doesn't put in an appearance before night I'll advertise for him tomorrow, and then if he isn't returned I'll get you a new dog."

"A new dog!" cried Ralph; "do you suppose I want a new dog? It's just because he's Grip that I want him. Why, he's all the brother I've had since—Oh, mother, I didn't mean—"

Ralph had had a big brother a year ago. Grip had belonged to Ralph and Rob together. But Rob had quarreled with father about spending money, had called father a stingy old thing, and had said that he was most a man and would earn his own money, and never take another cent from father; then he had run away in the night. They had not heard from him since.

Mother laughed to hide the sorrow in her eyes and said: "You might as well talk of getting Ralph a new mother if I were stolen, as to talk of getting a new dog in Grip's place. Mightn't he Ralph?"

"Well, I could stand a new dog a little better than I could a new mother," Ralph replied seriously.

It all ended in Ralph's going to church. It was the largest Episcopal church in the little suburban city, and today it was crowded. Even the aisles had to be filled with chairs to accommodate all who came.

Ralph was a very sober little choir boy. He could not forget Grip for an instant. When the choir rose to render the anthem he felt like shouting out: "If I only knew Grip was safe! Oh, Grip, Grip, Grip!" instead of the joyful, ringing words of the Easter music.

As they sang Ralph did not notice a queer convulsive ripple among the people who sat in the center aisle. Men reached down as if to grasp something and then straightened up again with very red faces. Suddenly Ralph caught a glimpse of something that made him stop in the middle of a word, transfixed with mingled horror and delight. There, right in front of him, was Grip, rascally little terrier that he was, looking up at Ralph with an irreverent grin. He had wriggled through under the chairs in the center and emerged triumphant and panting ready to join in the service.

The music seemed to fascinate the wicked little dog. Before any one could stir, he pricked up one ear and joined in the chorus. "Bow, woo, wow, o-o-ooo, wow, bow, wow, oo ow!" he sang cheerfully making fearful discord in the glorious Easter anthem.

Three men on the front seat stooped at the same time to pick him up, and in doing so bumped their heads together with great emphasis, and missed the slippery little dog, who vanished behind Ralph's skirt, where he remained perfectly still and hidden, with his hid pressed close against his little master's knee.

"Quiet, Grip," whispered Ralph, and the horrified congregation settled back with a sigh of relief, while the ruffled choir went on with the anthem. Ralph joined in with new spirit, for, in spite of Grip's disgraceful performance, his precious little playfellow was safely snuggled up against him.

"I can't sing today" said Ralph.

Through the rest of the service Grip took a nap under the seat, and his snores were only audible to the anxious little choir boy to whom he belonged, and who sat with flushed face, very attentive to the Easter sermon.

Grip and Rob.

Even the recessional did not waken Grip, but just as Ralph was disappearing in the very rear of the singing procession he rushed after him with a short, sharp bark that somewhat spoiled the effect of the re-echoing music, and quite scandalized the kneeling people.

Grip could hardly wait for Ralph to remove his vestments. He danced about him, pulling at his cotta vigorously. Ralph gave him a ferocious hug and then was forced to turn and apologize to the fuming and irate choirmaster.

"He doesn't know any better, indeed he doesn't. I couldn't help it, sir; he's only a dog," was all Ralph could say to the little man, who thought the boy and dog had conspired to spoil his music.

"Where have you been all the morning, Grip?" Ralph, asked, when they were finally outdoors.

"Wow, wow; I'll show you!" barked Grip, scampering off behind the church.

"Here, come back here, sir, we're going home!" called Ralph. He whistled and scolded, but no Grip appeared, though he could hear him barking lustily just around the corner of the church. Ralph went after him, and there, sitting on a step, with his head in his hands, and Grip's forelegs almost around his neck, sat Rob!

"Oh, Rob, Rob!" cried Ralph, flinging himself on his big brother, while Grip danced around them both, kissing them and barking a queer, little, laughing bark.

"Well, Kidger," said Rob at length, "didn't want to see me, did you?"

For answer Ralph only hugged him harder. They had been such chums until Rob went away.

"You'd better be getting home to dinner, kid," said Rob, hoarsely. "Mother never liked to have any one keep Sunday dinner waiting."

"She won't scold when she sees you!" and Grip barked. "No, no, of course not!" and kissed Rob affectionately across the nose.

Bob laughed shamefacedly. "I'm not coming home today, Kid, and you'd better not say anything about me there. Look at here," and he stretched out his arm. Same old suit I wore away. But I've got a steady place now, and when I get a new suit I'm coming home to call. I just sort of had to come in today to see if you were all alive and kicking."

"Well, I guess you're not going back without coming home to dinner. We're going to have broiled chicken and ice cream all different colors and—where did you stay last night?" he asked suddenly.

"Out in the shed with Grip. He caught me looking in our window at you all, and I had to muffle him to keep him quiet. We went off early in the morning and he's been tagging me around all the time, until we went past the church; there he scooted in before I had a chance to stop him."

Ralph had been thinking hard. "Say," he asked, "is your job in New York?"

"Yes."

"Well, then, why don't you board at home and go in and out every day, like John Rogers?"

Bob's face suddenly lighted up. "Do you think dad would like it? If—if I told him I was sorry?"

"Like it?" said Ralph. "You just come home and see!"

"Yep, yep!" barked Grip, joyously.

Father and mother were looking out of the window when they saw the three coming down the street. The joyful little dog, the little boy with the shining face and the big boy with the white face and the halting step. Mother screamed and rushed to the door, but father took long strides past her, and went out to meet his big boy, whom he folded in his arms. Then mother had her turn. And Grip was the only hero among them, for all the rest were crying.

"I know now," said Ralph, as they sat at dinner, "what Grip sang in church this morning. It was his Easter anthem, and it went like this: 'Bow, wow, wow; I've found him! Bow, wow, wow; I've found him!' That was it, wasn't it Grip?"

Grip winked solemnly, looking very wise and modestly scratched his right ear.

SUNSHINE AND YANKEES

STORY OF CIVIL WAR SHOWING UNCLE GEORGE'S WIT.

"This is just such a day as alwayr reminds me of 'sunshine and Yankees'," said Mrs. Lee, an old-time Southern woman. "It was during the war—I mean the Civil War—our little town lay peaceful and quiet on the banks of the Potomac. It was a cloudy, murky morning. One of my neighbors stepped from her door, and, casting her eyes over the place, said, prophetically, 'Lady, we will have sunshine and Yankees both by dinner time.'

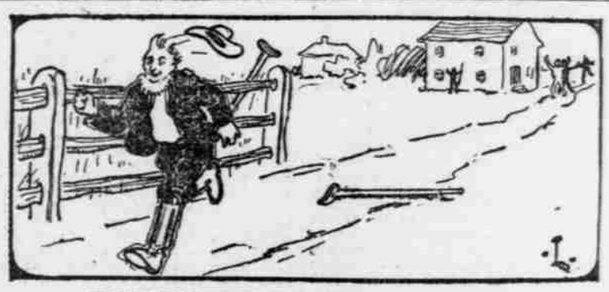
"'You are mistaken,' cried another neighbor. 'We'll not be likely to see either this day.' But before the sun had reached the meridian the sun was shining bright and the Yankee cavalry was in possession of the town, but they remained a short time only, and followed the pike toward Winchester, where they met the rebels, who drove them back in a hurry, but not before the Yankees took some prisoners early in the day. One of them was a man whom everybody in town was wont to call 'Uncle George.' If you only knew 'Uncle George' you would enjoy a good lot of fun, for he was funny.

"'Uncle George' got badly crippled during the skirmish. They brought him to town and every soldier of the camp did everything he could for the old man's comfort. In the afternoon he said if he only had a pair of crutches he might be able to help himself a little. So the good-natured Yanks who were guarding him gave him some boards and tools, and down he set and worked away making crutches. They all watched him, and helped him, and pitied him. Then when they were finished they helped him along on them. Now one, then another walked by him for fear he might fall. In the evening he said if they would let him hobble to a friend's, who lived only a block away, he could get a good supper. They told him he might go if he thought he could get along by himself. He could hardly move one foot before the other, but finally he reached the corner of the block, and then called back:

"'All right, boys; I can make it in a jiffy.' And, sure enough, there was a wheat field just a square away from the house, where the guards were with the other prisoners. Once near the wheat field the old man threw the crutches in the wheat, and the way he made tracks was a caution. And to this day they have not seen him.

"The poor Yankees were deeply hurt at the way 'Uncle George' treated them, they had had so much confidence in him, and sympathy, too. But, goodness, they were greenhorns beside 'Uncle George.' He would fool anyone, for to look at him he was just like a child; but he would get the better of anyone, and then laugh at them.

"So we had 'sunshine and Yankees' that day, after all."



UNCLE GEORGE THREW AWAY HIS CRUTCHES.

HUMAN AID TO ANIMALS.

Shoes for Geese and Whistles for Carrier Pigeons.

In some European countries, where it is necessary to drive geese a long way to market, it is the custom to fit shoes to their feet to keep them from getting bruised from stones. To do this sand and tar are mixed together, and then the geese are made to walk over it several times until a hard coating covers their feet, and they can travel without becoming footsore.

Carrier pigeons in China are provided with whistles to frighten away birds of prey. An ingenious little apparatus, consisting of thin bamboo tubes is fastened to the birds' bodies with thread passed beneath their wings. As the pigeons fly along, the action of the air passing through the tubes produces a shrill whistling sound, which keeps birds of prey at a distance.

Manicuring a lion or a tiger is not the easiest task in the world, requiring as it does the undivided attention of half a dozen or more operators and attendants. A lioness at the Central Park menagerie had several ingrowing nails, which caused the beast so much suffering that it was necessary to resort to the manicure's or chiropodist's art to bring relief. A noose fastened around her body kept her tied down firmly, and each paw was also caught in a noose; then the operation of cutting about an inch from the nails was undertaken. As it hurt her, she made a great fuss, but when it was all over she showed many signs of satisfaction at the absence of the painful splinters or claws that had been torturing her for a long time. In performing operations upon animals ether or cocaine are often used. Before removing a cataract from a lion it took about half an hour to get it under the influence of an anesthetic.

A tiger with a glass eye is one of the curiosities of a menagerie in Germany, and a ram with a set of artificial teeth is owned by a New South Wales farmer. He had a valuable ram, which found great difficulty in masticating its food, owing to loss of teeth. Artificial ones were inserted, and the animal has since vigorously attacked its fodder. It is nothing out of the common for pet dogs to have their teeth filled or extracted. One intelligent French poodle that has several dollars' worth of gold in his mouth has been taught to grin in a way that displays the fillings to good advantage.

BIRDS' EGGS AND WISHBONES

HOW TO MAKE A LAYOUT FOR A YOUNG COLLECTOR.

Every boy at some time or other of his life has probably collected birds' eggs, but a collection of wishbones, or "merry thoughts," is unique.

Did our young readers ever see such a collection, or think of it, or that there is a connection between birds' eggs and the wishbones or the skulls of the birds that laid the eggs, and that it is interesting to study the two together—one learns then a good deal about elementary anatomy. In many museums collections of birds' skeletons lie beside the eggs.

It is always possible for a trifling sum to get a taxidermist to do the necessary work; he will make the bones as white as ivory and as clean as the traditional pin.

A deal box, varnished, and about 15x18 inches and 6 inches deep, is a very suitable size, and will hold at least 100 eggs and as many wishbones. It must be fitted with a glass, sloping downward from the back, so as to give greater depth for the larger eggs. The eggs may be arranged in rows, marked out by wooden partitions, with trays one above the other. If the collection grows to any size, a mahogany cabinet may be provided; and if such a case, with its ivory-white wishbones or skulls and eggs, systematically and neatly arranged, each with its appertaining eggs, were sent to the county fair, it would certainly carry off a premium.

British School Boy Blunders.

The historical and other "facts" here given were collected for the St. James Gazette from the examination papers of English school boys:

Of whom was it said "He never smiled again?" William Rufus did this after he was shot by the arrow.

My favorite character in English history is Henry VIII, because he had eight wives and killed them all.

Edward III would have been King of France if his mother had been a man.

What followed the murder of Becket? Henry II received whacks with a birch.

The principal products of Kent are Archbishops of Canterbury.

The chief clause in Magna Charta was that no free man should be put to death or imprisoned without his own consent.

Where were the Kings of England crowned? On their heads.

What were the three most important feudal dues? Friendship, courtship, marriage.

What do you know of Dryden and Buckingham? Dryden and Buckingham were at first friends, but soon became contemporaries.

What is Milton's chief work? Milton wrote a sensible poem called the "Canterbury Tails."

Give the names of five Shakespearean plays. "Macbeth," "Mikado," "Quo Vadis?", "San Toy," "Sign of the Cross."

A man who looks on the bright side of things is called an optionist, and the one who looks on the dull side is called a pianist.

Fathers in Home Economy.

It was after a "mother's meeting" at a seaside resort that an old Scotch gentleman told a little story about a laddie who was instructed by the doctor to give him medicine at regular intervals. "Johnnie refused to take it; and his mother, after vainly trying to persuade him, sat down and cried, wringing her hands, and sobbing, 'Oh, my boy will die, my boy will die; and he will not take the stuff that would save him.' 'Don't cry, mither,' presently piped up a voice from the bed. 'Feyther'll be hame sune, and he'll gar me take it.' You see," said the old gentleman, smiling, "there's some use for fathers as well as for mothers in the home economy."

THE HORSES AND THE APPLE

GRANDMA TELLS MILDRED A SWEET LITTLE STORY.

"GRANDMA," said Mildred, from the rug before the beechwood fire," "what does those words mean on the leaf of mama's calendar that is turned today?"

"I don't know, dearie," replied her grandmother, "what are they?"

The little girl ran over to the desk, above which the calendar hung, and read out the words:

The best portions of a good man's life—
The little nameless unremembered acts of
kindness and of love.

The calendar had been Mildred's Christmas gift to her mother. She had chosen it because of the beautiful yellow daffodils all about its margin, and every morning she tore off the old leaf and read the verse for the new day.

"Well," said her grandmama, "perhaps I can answer you best by telling you a story."

Mildred was delighted at this, for more than anything else she loved to hear stories, so she settled herself on the rug at her grandmama's feet.

"One snowy, blowy day, not long ago, when the streets were half covered with ice, and the wind from the river cut sharply as one faced eastward, the driver of an express wagon drew up his team in front of a big office building in Twenty-second street. While his assistant ran in with some packages, he jumped down from his seat, and after swinging his arms about to warm himself a little, took a big, red apple from his pocket and breaking it in two gave half to each of his horses. The moment they had seen the apple they had begun to prick up their ears, and whicker and rub their noses against the man's shoulder. Evidently they were in the habit of having little lunches like this. A young girl who was passing stopped to question the man. It made such a pretty picture—the bright, rosy-cheeked apple, the glossy brown coats of the horses, and the soft white snow falling all about them.

"'Yes,' the man said, 'they're right fond of me, those horses, and I think most as much of them as if they were my own. I've been driving them nearly a year now—wouldn't have time to blanket them before the boy's out again, but they need a bit of cheer a cold day like this, same's we all do, so I've taken to carrying an apple or two in my pockets for them,' and he stroked their sleek noses with his mittened hand.

The girl smiled and passed on, but somehow the gloomy day seemed brighter, and the work before her not so hard. She belonged in the big office building before which the expressman had stopped, and something very unpleasant had happened in her office the day before. A man had grown vexed and been very rude to her, and she dreaded seeing him again that morning. But the thought of the kind expressman put everything out of her mind for a while and her face was very bright and happy when she entered the office. The man had good reason to think she would look just the reverse, and he was more than ever sorry and humiliated when he saw her. "If she can be so forgiving," he thought, "I'm going to do my share by being as pleasant as I possibly can to everybody in this office today." And then, somehow, the thought of the little errand boy came into his mind. Twice in the last few weeks the boy had reminded him of his promise to give him an extra half dollar on his salary after the beginning of the month, and both times he had let it slip out of his mind. "I'll do it today," he said aloud, "right now!" and then he called the cashier and told him to make the increase, and also gave him an extra $2 that night, which was Saturday, to make up for the four weeks he had forgotten it. What a happy home-coming it was of the office boy's that day! How much that $2 would buy! He badly needed shoes, and his poor, old mother needed medicine.

"I don't know what could have made Mr. B. so nice today," he said to her, "but he was as pleasant as he could be to everybody the whole day long!"

"And, you see, even Mr. B. didn't know, himself, for it really was just a reflection after all of the expressman's simple little act of kindness. It's the little things in our lives that often have the widest influence—the things we think nobody knows about."

"Is that a true story?" asked Mildred, as her grandmama paused.

"Yes, and I've often wished that man might know of the wide-reaching good his one small action accomplished. He thought he was being kind to his horses only, but really that apple's influence may still be working for good, still carrying a ray of sunshine into somebody's life. It is just such little things that we forget the moment after—things that just overflow out of loving hearts, as the sunshine brims over the mountain-top in the morning, that lighten and brighten and gladden the world all about us. Now," said grandmama, "can my little girl guess what the calendar verse means?"

"Yes," said, Mildred, thoughtfully, "and I don't believe I'll ever forget it."

HE GAVE THE HORSE AN APPLE.

Some Interesting Facts.

A wedding without a ring seems incongruous, but in Cadiz, Spain, no ring is used. After the ceremony the bridegroom moves the flower in his bride's hair from left to right, for in various parts of Spain to wear a rose above your right ear is to proclaim yourself a wife.

Boy bridegrooms are growing in number in London. There are four under 21 in every 100 bridegrooms. About 16 girls under 21 per 100 get married.

The following advice to smokers is given by the Royal Academy of Belgium: "Do not use moist tobacco, since nicotine then escapes with the vapor and is not decomposed. Do not smoke either while fasting or a short time before meals. Do not smoke a pipe which has a short stem. Of all methods of smoking the cigarette is the least offensive."

Grasshoppers are so great a plague at Hay, N. S. W., that they obscure all the street lamps at night, leaving the town in total darkness.

In some of the farming districts of China pigs are harnessed to small wagons and made to draw them.

A church in London still possesses an income originally given to it for the purpose of buying fagots for burning heretics.

It may not be generally known that there is cruelty in keeping of gold fish. Half of such captives die from sheer want of rest. As fish have eyes so formed that they cannot endure the light, in a glass vessel they are in an entirely wrong place, as is evident from the way in which they dash about and go round and round until fairly worn out.

Cabbage is an old cure for drunkenness. The Egyptians ate it boiled before other food if they intended to drink wine after dinner, and some of the remedies sold as a preventive of intoxication on the Continent are said to contain cabbage seed.

The average duration of marriage in England is 28 years. Russia, with 30 years, is the only country to beat her. In France and Germany 26 years is the average duration.