A RIDE ON A BONESHAKER

BY PAUL BLAKE.

When Dick Sharland's uncle wrote to say that he was leaving Australia for good, and would be in Canada by the middle of June, Dick promptly remarked that he would ask his uncle to give him a bicycle. So, when Mr. Edwards, on his return, good-naturedly inquired one day what his nephew would like to have for a birthday present, Dick did not hesitate a moment, and his uncle found himself "let in" for a rather expensive gift.

"You shall have a bicycle when you can ride it," promised Mr. Edwards.

"I'll learn to ride in a day," replied Dick, with all the confidence of a boy of fourteen.

"Oh, there is no such hurry as all that!" laughed his uncle.

But Dick thought there was, and resolved there should be no delay on his part. Early next day he called on Rex Gardiner, a chum a year or two older, who already possessed a machine.

"I say, Rex! I'm going to have a bicycle!" was his greeting.

"Are you? How jolly! Won't we have some rattling spins! When is it coming?"

"Well, I've got to learn to ride first," said Dick.

"Oh, you'll learn in no time!"

Dick assented; he believed he would. But he found it rather difficult to suggest to Rex that he wanted to borrow his machine to learn on.

Rex looked grave. He had learned to ride himself, and he knew what it meant.

"I've got a puncture in my back wheel," he said, "and I've got no solution left, so I am afraid my machine won't be ready for a day or two. Why don't you hire one at White's?"

Dick had but a dollar in his pocket, and as he saw that Rex did not seem inclined to lend his machine, he descried poverty ahead. However, he made one more effort.

"You might lend me yours," he said. "If I'd got a bike and you wanted to learn, I'd have lent you mine."

This was a statement which it was impossible to prove, so it did not advance matters much. Rex was firm, though ready to proffer his assistance in any other way so Dick marched off to see Mr. White.

"I want to hire a bicycle for an hour or two," began Dick. "Have you got a good one?"

Mr. White eyed the youngster.

"Yes, I've got a good one; you may make your mind easy about that," he replied. "Can you ride?"

Dick was not prepared for the question and admitted that he wanted to learn.

"Then you don't learn on my machines!" said Mr. White, decidedly. "You pay me fifty cents an hour and do five dollars' worth of damage. No, no, young sir; you come to me when you can ride, and—"

But Dick did not wait to hear the end.

"How am I to learn to ride unless I have a machine to learn on?" he demanded, angrily.

"That's your business, my young friend," was the aggravating reply.

"All right, then," growled Dick, in a rage, "I'll get one somewhere else. Who wants to have your second-hand boneshaker, anyway?"

He ran back to Rex and detailed his dilemma. Surely Rex would have pity on him now and lend him his machine.

But Rex had an alternative suggestion.

"Tell you what I'll do," he said, confidentially. "I'll go to Mr. White and hire a machine, and then you can use it."

Dick beamed his thanks; that would get over the difficulty.

Rex marched boldly in.

"Got a machine fit to ride, Mr. White?"

Mr. White glared at the boy over his spectacles.

"Oh, it's you, is it?" he replied. "I thought you'd a bicycle of your own?"

"I've got a bad puncture, and I want to go out to-day," said Rex.

"You're sure you can ride?" asked the man, as he wheeled a massive, time-worn cycle into the road.

"What do you think?" cried Rex, as he vaulted into the saddle without touching the pedal.

Rex was soon home again, and in five minutes more the two boys were on their way to a secluded lane where Dick was to have his first lesson, shielded from the public gaze. He was all eagerness to mount and begin.

Rex had seldom spent so warm an hour as the following one—nor had Dick. The latter found that learning to ride was not quite so easy as it looked. The way the head would turn around unexpectedly was very disconcerting, whilst the eccentricities of the pedals were beyond foresight.

However, Dick had plenty of agility and plenty of pluck; moreover, he meant to learn as quickly as he could, so as to save paying for the hire of a machine, so Rex had no rest given him.

Dick pounded away, his chum running beside him panting directions, and every now and then pulling him from under the bicycle or the bicycle from under him, as the case might be.

"Why do you want to lean over so?" he asked, as Dick went near a ditch.

"I don't want to. I can't help it," replied Dick.

"Mind that pedal! There you go!"

So he did; there was no denying it. Dick fetched up against the hedge, falling gracefully over the handles.

"You'll smash the old rattletrap if you don't take care," said Rex; "you do go it so hard. Why can't you take it easy and pedal evenly?"

"So I try to; but the wretched thing turns every way at once, and then the pedal kicks out at me."

Dick rubbed his shin, then his elbow, and left the rest of his bruised spots for a future occasion.

"I'm very glad I didn't lend you my machine," said Rex, unfeelingly.

"If you had," retorted Dick, "I should be able to ride by now; but who could learn on a ramshackle affair like this? Why, it must weigh half a hundredweight."

"Lucky for you it is a heavy one. You'd have smashed a light one by now. Are you going to have another try?" he continued, as Dick put his foot on the pedal.

"Of course, I am; but you needn't hold on any more, if you're tired."

"Tired? Who wouldn't be, if he had to race after you and hold you on and keep out of your way all at once?"

Matters were getting a trifle strained. Both boys were hot and tired. Moreover, nothing is more trying to the temper than to be whacked on the shin by a pedal which you can't kick back. However, there was no open rupture at present, though each boy used language considerably stronger than usual.

Perseverance and pluck had their due reward, and Dick managed, at the end of his hour, to wobble along alone. His progress was serpentine; but it was progress. He could not mount with certainty, but that would come later.

He turned the machine towards home and Rex trotted by his side, glad enough that his duties were over.

"Mind how you turn that corner," he cautioned. "Don't lean over too much. Go it slow—go it slow!" he shouted.

But it was too late! Dick had lost his head for a moment. Rex tried to save him, but only succeeded in involving himself in the catastrophe. Over went both boys and bicycle in a tangle.

When they were all separate again, the boys began to inspect damages. Rex had torn his coat and barked his shin. Dick had sprained his thumb and bruised his shoulder; the bicycle had buckled its front wheel and bent its crank.

"Scissors!" exclaimed Rex. "Here's a go! We shall never get this right by ourselves."

"What's the matter with the wheel?" asked Dick, who had never seen a buckled wheel before.

"Oh, that's easily put right!" Rex grasped it with his knees, and, with an effort, twisted the rim into shape again. "It's the crank I don't like; it doesn't clear the frame."

Nothing could be more certain than that the bicycle was unridable.

"What an awful nuisance!" said Rex. "Won't old White be angry?"

"What shall you say to him?" ventured Dick.

Rex stared at him.

"The question is, what will you say to him?"

"I? What's it got to do with me? I didn't hire it."

"Do you mean to say you expect me to go and be bullied because you've damaged his machine?" cried Rex.

"How should I take it back? How can I, when I wanted to hire it and he wouldn't let me, and he knows I couldn't ride?"

"Didn't I go and get it to oblige you? And didn't you smash it?"

"Well, it was your fault. If you hadn't of shouted, I shouldn't have turned so sharp."

The two freinds were now on the high road to a quarrel. Rex couldn't contain his indignation.

"Well, of all the sneaks—"

If Dick hadn't been holding up the bicycle he would probably have planted his undamaged hand on Rex's person; but before he could lay the machine against the hedge Dick's anger had cooled. He had the sense to see that he was in the wrong—that he was to blame and that he must "face the music."

"All right. I'll take it back to Mr. White. He can't eat me," he said. "And the sooner I get there the less ther'll be to pay for hiring."

Rex was instantly disarmed.

"I'll go with you," he said.

But Dick would not hear of it, and finally he trundled the machine to White's ignominiously on its front wheel, as if it had been a wheelbarrow.

"Hello! What's this?" cried Mr. White, as he caught sight of Dick.

"I've bent the crank a little," replied Dick.

"But I don't remember your hiring a machine. I— Ah, I remember now! You're the boy who told me he couldn't ride."

"I can now," assured Dick.

"I see," remarked Mr. White, with an unpleasant smile. "So you've been using my machine on false pretences. Do you know I could have you up before the magistrate if I liked?"

Unfortunately, this particular threat was too familiar to Dick's ears to be effective. He knew from experience that nothing ever came of it.

"What's there to make a fuss about?" he asked. "My friend hired a machine and let me ride on it. He can lend it to whoever he likes, so long as it isn't damaged."

"But it is damaged."

"Yes, and a rickety old concern it must have been!" continued Dick, boldly. "Come over with General Wolfe, I expect. How—how much do you want for mending it?"

Mr. White looked severely at Dick, and then inspected the bent crank. Dick waited anxiously to know whether his pockets were to be drained or not.

Mr. White straightened his back

"I could charge you three dollars for that job," he said.

"Three dollars!" gasped Dick.

"And it would serve you right for playing such a trick on me. But, if you'll apologize, I'll make it fifty cents."

Dick never thought much of making an apology; he would have made a dozen to save two dollars and a half.

He pulled out the amount required to pay for hire and damage, and then turned to scamper home.

But he didn't scamper; he walked. In the evening he borrowed some arnica and sticking plaster. The next morning he felt as if he'd been thrashed all over. But what did he care? He could tell his uncle that he could ride. And in less than a week he had a bicycle of his own, and could bid good-bye to White's forever.

The Don Cossack choir of Russian officers gather at the Cenotaph in London to lay a wreath in token of their respect and friendship, unbroken in death.

Excelsior Pads.

Excelsior pads cut to the correct size to fit into half of an egg case are of great help in reducing the loss due to breakage when eggs are shipped in the ordinary thirty-dozen egg crate. Most of those on the market consist of a thin pad of excelsior inclosed in a paper wrapper.

There are several ways of using such pads when packing a case of eggs for shipment. The object of the pad is to hold the fillers more firmly together so that they tend to shift or slide as a whole rather than to slide singly upon each other. Furthermore, the bottom pad is an excellent cushion for all the eggs above it.

The pad must be soft enough so that the fillers above and below will press into it, giving the effect of a bulge of excelsior into each section of the filler. This has the desired effect of locking the fillers together into a more or less solid mass.

The usual recommendation is to use six pads to each case. One is placed in the bottom of the case, one between the top filler and the filler immediately below, and one over the top filler. No flats are used in these places, the pad serving both as a flat and as a cushion.

When packed in this fashion in strong, new fillers and with the cases and covers securely nailed, there is little chance for serious breakage to occur in transit.

Flowers in the Far North.

At Fort Resolution, Northwest Territories, is one of the far north Sub-Stations of the Dominion Experimental Farms System. In his most recent report the Superintendent states that travellers are agreeably surprised to find such beautiful flowers and in such quantity. A list of the flowers given with the months of blooming shows: Sweet William, baby's breath, geraniums, leveta, bloomed in June; poppy, matricaria (white), excelsior, pinks (Dianthus), daisy, sweet allisium, bloomed in July; mignonette, marigold, pansy, balsams, verbenas, sweet peas, snap dragons, little blue star, bloomed in August; morning glory, dahlia, crysanthemums (snow bells), zinnias (all colors), and carnations (Marguerite) bloomed in Semptember.

It does not pay to grow low-priced crops on high-priced land, nor vice versa.

ALFALFA GROWING IN CANADA

BY C. A. ZAVITZ.

The Field Husbandry Dept. of the Ontario Agricultural College and the Experimental Union have been working with alfalfa for over a quarter of a century. It took many years of pioneer work in conducting experiments, in giving addresses and in preparing articles and reports to convince more than a small percentage of our farmers that this crop can be grown satisfactorily in Ontario. It was ascertained some years ago that it was necessary to use the best methods of culture, to inoculate the seed and to sow nothing but the very hardy varieties, if success with this important crop is to be reached in this province.

About seventeen years ago we discovered a variegated alfalfa growing in Welland County, Ontario, which was exceptionally hardy. This was a blend of alfalfas obtained over fifty years ago from Lorraine and from Baden, the latter being the original home of the Grimm. After carefully investigating the history of this hardy alfalfa I gave it the name of "Ontario Variegated." From Welland County it spread to Lincoln, Wentworth, Haldimand, Peel, and to other counties of the province. It has had the natural selection caused by our Ontario winters for upwards of fifty years. The winter of 1917-18 was probably the severest on record, killing over fifty per cent. of the winter wheat and upwards of 45,000 acres of alfalfa. It also destroyed the tenderest plants in the fields of hardy alfalfa, leaving only the very best. We, therefore, have in Ontario, at the present time, an alfalfa the seed of which is sure to create a big demand in both Canada and the Northern States where an exceptionally hardy alfalfa is required.

The closest rival of the Onfario Variegated is undoubtedly the Grimm. In an experiment conducted at the Ontario Agricultural College extending over a period of ten years in which the alfalfa plants were carefully counted annually, the Ontario Variegated made the highest record of those hardy varieties which are grown more or less extensively in Ontario and in some of the Northern States. The exact average percentage of living plants from the ten-year period was as follows: Ontario Variegated 66.9, Grimm 66.0 and Baltic 61.9.

In each of two separate experiments, one extending over a period of ten years and another of twelve years, the Ontario Variegated gave the highest average yield of hay per acre in the early part and the Grimm in the latter part of the tests.

In an experiment started three years ago in which there are seven plots of Ontario Variegated from five different sources and also seven plots of Grimm from five different sources, the average yield of hay per acre per annum for 1923 and 1924 was 4.6 tons for the Ontario Variegated and 4.4 tons for the Grimm.

Both the Ontario Variegated and the Grimm have given satisfactory results in the co-operative experiments over Ontario while the Common variety of alfalfa has usually killed out in a very short time.

Permit me to also draw your attention to the results of the Ontario Variegated alfalfa in New York State. On January 23rd, 1920, I received the following report from that State:

"In alfalfa variety demonstrations carried on through the Farm Bureaus of New York State, the variety of alfalfa known as Ontario Variegated has consistently proven to be superior to anything which we have tried. About five years ago you assisted me in securing a supply of seed of this variety which I put out in demonstrations in many parts of New York State. The variety showed its superiority at the first and has continued to show its superiority in the tests which we still have under observation. You may be interested to know that in New York State the variegated alfalfas stand at the top, the varieties which we have under observation taking this rank: First, Ontario Variegated; second, Baltic; third, Grimm."

On May 27th, 1925, I secured another report which is as follows:

"In our experimental work, and also in many demonstrations on New York farms, the Ontario Variegated alfalfa has been showing great value. During the first two or three years after it is seeded, it yields as well as any other strains which live over well in New York State and a great deal better than many of them. Under average field conditions, it seems to be longer lived than any of the other varieties which are planted on a field scale. It is the last variety to thin out and be run out with grass and weeds."

I do not know where Ontario farmers can secure better alfalfa seed at the present time than Ontario Variegated, Grade No. 1, produced from inspected fields and sold in sealed bags.

HOW I PLAN MY SUMMER HOUSEWORK

BY NELL B. NICHOLS.

My system of housekeeping undergoes quite a change when warm weather arrives. Chickens, gardens, canning operations, cooking for crews of men, and other tasks require so much time that every farm woman's schedule of working needs to be made over.

The cleaning duties are simplified. I store away all unnecessary bric-a-brac to make dusting easier. I take down draperies, leaving the plain, washable curtains at the windows; these I tie back at the sides so they cannot whip against the screens, and so they will not obstruct the view of the countryside. The draperies do not get a chance to fade if put away and they do not have to be washed.

One of my neighbors has a little room made of wire screen fastened to a wooden frame. This she keeps out in the yard under a large shade tree. Her two small children almost live in this outdoor playhouse. It contains a cot on which they take their afternoon nap. The health of these youngsters is excellent and their mother does not worry over the whereabouts of her babies.

Vacuum cleaners are a boon to busy homemakers throughout the year; they certainly make floor care a cooler and more agreeable occupation in the summer. If electricity is not available, a vacuum cleaner which runs by hand may be obtained. I have tested a device of this nature that gives magnificent results.

Carpet sweepers are fine for removing the surface dirt. I use one as an aid to my vacuum cleaner, especially to pick up crumbs after a meal.

BAKING PROGRAM.

I plan my housework so I do not have to be in the kitchen many hours during the summer day. The early hours of morning are the coolest, so I do my baking then. I have one morning of intensive baking every week. It has been the only way I could get the larder filled. Since I use a kerosene stove the work is not disagreeable because little heat is made. Usually I bake several layers of cake, a large batch of cookies, a shortcake or fruit dumplings, bread and cinnamon rolls. If there is time, I make a pie; occasionally I bake two or three pastry shells, storing these under a crock.

I always cook large quantities of food at a time in the summer; that is, when potatoes, beans, and many other vegetables are being cooked. I prepare enough for more than one meal. These vegetables may b warmed quickly in the evening for supper. I also mix the flour, salt, and shortening for pastry in large amounts. This I keep in my refrigerator.

As I mentioned before, I bake several layers of cake at a time. I put icing on two of them, and the others I keep in a stone jar, covered tightly. The addition of a warm icing, made when a meal is cooking, freshens cake that has been baked several days. Frequently I bake as many as ten layers at a time. I make drop cookies and biscuits in the summer to eliminate the rolling of the dough.

When there is a rush of work, I buy the bread from the town bakery. If someone cannot go after it, I call the baker by telephone and ask him to send the bread by parcel post. I often buy a large roast of beef when I am at the butcher's. I make it into innumerable dishes with little work after it has been served as a roast.

I have several glass baking dishes that I like. Foods cooked in these may be served at the table in the same dishes in which they were cooked. Quite naturally, I have no objection to having fewer dishes to wash. Whenever I am rushed, I let the dishes dry themselves after scalding. We make a picnic meal of Sunday-evening suppers. We use paper dishes; in this way the dishwashing task is made easier.

As a rule, I am able to avoid intense canning campaigns. A few jars filled every week will make a good showing by the time frost comes.

LAUNDRY STUNTS.

It is almost impossible to make the washing and ironing light. But I have a few stunts that help. Some of the meals are eaten on stenciled oilcloth, and paper napkins are used. A roll of paper toweling in the kitchen is an economical way of subtracting from the pile of clothes to be laundered. I also find that small, thin Turkish towels are fine for drying dishes when you do not wish to drain them. They do not leave a lint on the china and silver, and they never require ironing.

Many city folks come to the farm to spend Sundays and holidays. If you are sharing your home with guests, I hope you will follow my rule. I give the company the dinner I had planned for my family.

FOR SUMMER DANCES AND DINNERS.

Taffeta and flowers express a quaint simplicity in the little evening frock pictured here. The tight bodice and full skirt express a type which is very popular with the younger set, and is especially pretty when the crispness of taffeta is allowed to influence the skirt to stand away at the hips. Taffeta of a soft yellow shade, with hand-tinted flowers and leaves scattered throughout, was used for this frock, the full skirt of which is softly shirred to the bodice. The short sleeves and round neck are finished with a narrow piping of the taffeta. Sizes 16, 18 and 20 years. Size 18 years requires 2⅞ yards of 36-inch or 40-inch material. Price 20 cents.

Home sewing brings nice clothes within the reach of all, and to follow the mode is delightful when it can be done so easily and economically, by following the styles pictured in our new Fashion Book. A chart accompanying each pattern shows the material as it appears when cut out. Every detail is explained, so that the inexperienced sewer can make without difficulty an attractive dress. Price of the book 10 cents the copy. Each copy includes one coupon good for five cents in the purchase of any pattern.

HOW TO ORDER PATTERNS.

Write your name and address plainly, giving number and size of such patterns as you want. Enclose 20c in stamps or coin (coin preferred; wrap it carefully) for each number, and address your order to Pattern Dept., Wilson Publishing Co., 73 West Adelaide St., Toronto. Patterns sent by return mail.

With a Pair of Scissors.

Scissors I find to be one of the most indispensable of my kitchen tools. In preparing salads, either fruit or vegetable, they will do the job with much greater speed and neatness than a knife. You will find that sections of orange, pineapple or grapefruit can be cut into small uniform pieces without loss of juice. Lettuce leaves can be quickly shredded, or whole leaves of lettuce or cabbage shaped as a bed for your salad. Your garnishes, too—beet, radish, pimiento and lemon—may be cut into decorative shapes. Scissors are useful, too, in removing the seeds from peppers and cutting the peppers into pieces.

For cleaning small fish scissors are unequaled, and a rather dreaded task is finished in a hurry. A single snip removes the head, another the tail, off come the fins, and then a clean slit from head to tail and the fish is laid open—all without laying the slippery fish on a board.

In mincing ham or bacon, cutting up fowl giblets for gravy or stuffing, and even cutting raw sliced meat into small pieces for the casserole, I find the scissors better than a knife. They are worth a trial.—S. R.

When Mother Was Little.

Children love to be told about "when mother was a little girl." During long hours of wakefulness because of an abscessed gland, I diverted my small daughter's mind from her pain by weaving tales of my own childhood. The first night I tried I could recall very little to tell her, for these childhood incidents had been given hardly a thought in years; but after that I got paper and pencil and jotted down the recollections which came crowding back when memory was turned upon them. Next time she demanded "when mother was a little girl," I was ready for her.

It helped amazingly through that illness and subsequent ones of others of the children. The best thing about telling stories to the young is that they enjoy hearing the same ones over and over. They like particularly to hear about their elders' school days, particularly if their school conditions were greatly in contrast with those of modern education.—M. P. D.

Storage of Brooder Stoves.

Before the brooder stoves are stored away till another brooding season rolls around, they should be given a coat of stove enamel, which will furnish considerable protection against rust. It is well also to check over every stove and make a list of all broken and worn parts, so that they can be ordered in plenty of time for use with next year's early-hatched chicks.