

# PERIOD BY BOOTH TARKINGTON

## The Greatest Stories Ever Written of a Real Boy and His Escapades

### 3—AN OVERWHELMING SATURDAY

THE "Worst Boy in Town" (population 135,000) emerged hastily from the kitchen door of his father's house one morning in apple-blossom time. His pockets bulged abnormally; so did his cheeks, and he swallowed with difficulty.

A threatening mop, wielded by a cook-like arm in a checkered sleeve, looked him through the doorway, and he was preceded by a small, hurried, and wistful dog with a wailing wail in his mouth. The kitchen door slammed shut, enclosing the sore voice of the cook, whereupon Penrod Schofield and Duke seated themselves upon the pleasant sward and immediately consumed the spoils of their raid.

From the cross street which formed the side boundary of the Schofield's ample yard came a single of harness and the cadenced clatter of a pair of trotting horses and Penrod, looking up, beheld the passing of a fat acquaintance, torpid amid the conservative splendors of a rather old-fashioned victoria.

This was Roderick Magworth Bitts, Jr., a fellow of the Friday Afternoon Dancing Class, but otherwise not often a companion; a home-sheltered lad, tutored privately and preserved against the coarsening influences of rude comradeship and miscellaneous information. Heavily overgrown in all physical dimensions, virtuous and placid, this clustered mutton was wholly uninteresting to Penrod Schofield. Nevertheless, Roderick Magworth Bitts, Jr., was a personage on account of the importance of the Magworth Bitts family; and it was Penrod's destiny to increase Roderick's celebrity far beyond his present aristocratic limitations.

The Magworth Bittses were important because they were impressive; there was no other reason. And they were impressive because they believed themselves important. The adults of the family were impressively formal; they dressed with reticent elegance and wore as an air the same expression—an expression which indicated that they knew something exquisite and sacred which other people could never know. Other people, in their presence, were apt to feel mysteriously ignoble and to become secretly uneasy about their own clothes and their own manners.

In fact, this painful, uninteresting, though the community had never realized that it was terrified, and invariably spoke of the family as the "most charming circle in town." By common consent, Mrs. Roderick Magworth Bitts was well known as the supreme model of a woman as critic-in-chief of official deportment for all the unlucky people prosperous enough to be elevated to her acquaintance.

Magworth was the important part of the name. Mrs. Roderick Magworth Bitts was a Magworth born, herself, and the Magworth crest, a griffin with a crown, was on the family coat of arms. Magworth decorated the family note paper, but was on the chimney-pieces, on the table linen, on the chintz, on the opaque glass of the front door, on the victoria and on the harness, though omitted from the garden hose and the lawn mower.

Naturally no sensible person dreamed of connecting with the illustrious and notorious Renna Magworth, whose name had grown week by week into larger and larger type upon the front pages of newspapers, owing to the gradually increasing public and official belief that she had poisoned a family of eight.

Penrod never missed a murder, a hanging or an electrocution in the newspapers; he knew almost as much about Renna Magworth as the jurymen who sat at a court room 200 miles away and he had it in mind—so frank he was—to ask Roderick Magworth Bitts, Jr., if the murderess happened to be a relative.

The present encounter, being merely one of apathetic greeting, did not afford the opportunity. Penrod took off his cap, Roderick, in his grown-up sister's mother and one of his grown-up sisters, nodded slightly, but neither Mrs. Magworth Bitts nor her daughter acknowledged the salutation of the boy in the yard. They disapproved of him as a person of little consequence and that little bad. Snubbed, Penrod thoughtfully restored his cap to his thoughtful, and he cut an effectual head. A boy cast his cap as effectually as a man.

The resilient spirits of youth, however, presently revived. Della, the cook, depositing upon the back porch a large rat trap from the cellar, the prison of four live rats, awaiting execution, retiring to the empty stable, where he installed the rats in a small wooden box with a sheet of broken window-glass—held down by a brickbat—over the top. Thus the symptoms of their agitation, when the box was shaken or hammered upon, could be studied at leisure. Saturday was starting splendidly.

After a time the student's attention was drawn by a peculiar smell, which proved to be an emanation leaking into the stable from the alley. He opened the back door.

Across the alley was a cottage which a thrifty neighbor had built on the rear line of his lot and rented to negroes, and the fact that a negro family was now in process of "moving in" was manifested by the presence of a thin mule and a ramshackle wagon, the latter laden with the semblance of a stove and a few other unpretentious household articles.

A very small darky boy stood near the mule. In his hand was a rusty chain and at the end of the chain the delighted Penrod perceived the source of the special smell he was tracing—a large raccoon.

"What's that 'coon's name?" asked Penrod, intending no discourtesy.

"Aim gomme name," said the small darky.

"What?"

"The small darky looked annoyed. 'Aim gomme name, I tell you,' he said indignantly. Penrod conceived that insult was intended. 'What's the matter of you?' he demanded, advancing. 'You get fresh with me and I'll—'

"Hyuh, white boy!" A colored youth of Penrod's own age appeared in the doorway of the cottage. 'You let 'at brothin mine alone. He ain't do nothin' to you.'

"Well, why can't he answer?"

"He can't. He can't talk no better'n what he was talkin'. He tongue-tie."

"Oh," said Penrod, mollified. Then he turned to the afflicted one.

"Talk some more," he begged eagerly.

"I hoe you acoom aim gomme name," was the prompt response.

"What's he mean?" asked Penrod, enchanted.

"He says he tote you 'at 'coon ain' got no name."

"What's your name?"

"I'm name Herman."

"What's his name?" Penrod pointed to the tongue-tied boy.

"Verman."

"What?"

"Verman. Was three us boys in ow family. O'nest name Sherman. 'N' come me; I'm Herman. 'N' come him; he Verman. Sherman dead. Verman, he do little' one."

"You goin' to live here?"

"Umhuh. Done move in 'm way outen on a fahm."

He pointed to the north with his right hand, and Penrod's eyes opened wide as they followed the feature. Herman had no forefinger on that hand.

"Look there!" exclaimed Penrod. "You haven't got any finger!"

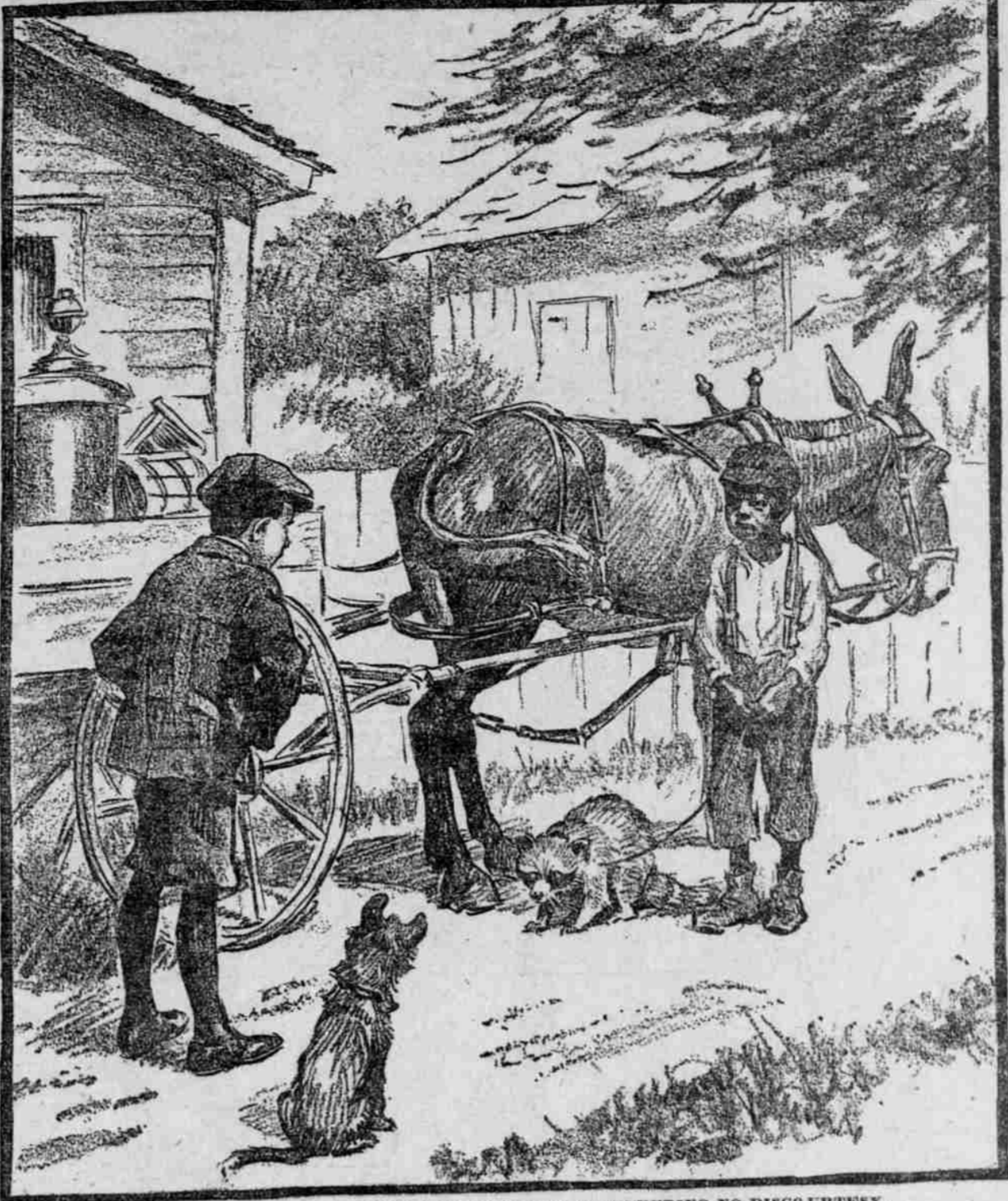
"I mum map," said Herman, with egotistic pride.

"He done 'at," interrupted Herman, chuckling. 'Yesuh; done chop 'er sprang off, long 'er go. He's a playin' wif a ax 'er I lay my finguh on de do'—all 'er I say, 'Verman, chop 'er off.' So Verman he chop 'er right sprang off up to de roots! Yesuh.'

"What for?"

"'Jes' fo' nothin'."

"He hoe me hoe," remarked Verman. 'Yesuh; done chop 'er sprang off, long 'er go. He's a playin' wif a ax 'er I lay my finguh on de do'—all 'er I say, 'Verman, chop 'er off.' So Verman he chop 'er right sprang off up to de roots! Yesuh.'



"WHAT'S THAT 'COON'S NAME?" ASKED PENROD, INTENDING NO DISCOURTESY.

brought up; finally the rafters, corncrib and hay-chute were ornamented with flags and strips of bunting from Sam Williams' attic. Sam, returning from the excursion accompanied (on account of a rope) by a fine dachshund encountered on the highway, and the entire party went forth to add an enlivening note to the poster.

They found a group of seven, including two adults, already gathered in the street to read and admire this work.

SCHOFFIELD & WILLIAMS  
BIG SHOW  
ADMISSION 1 CENT OR 20 PINS  
Now GOING ON

SHERMAN HERMAN & VERMAN  
THEIR FATHER IN JAIL STABBED A MAN WITH A PITCHFORK

SHERMAN THE WILD ANIMAL  
CAPTURED IN AFRICA

HERMAN THE ONE FINGERED TATTOOED WILD MAN VERMAN THE SAVAGE TATTOOED WILD BOY TALKS ONLY IN HIS NATIVE LANGUAGE. DO NOT FAIL TO SEE DUKE THE INDIAN DOG ALSO THE MICHIGAN TRAINED KATS.

Penrod, with pardonable self-importance—in the presence of an audience now increased to nine—slowly painted the words inspired by the dachshund: IMPUDENT DO NOT MISS THE SOUTH AMERICAN DOG PART ALLIGATOR.

After which Sam, Penrod, Herman and Verman withdrew in considerable state from non-paying view, and, repairing to the hay-loft, declared the exhibition open to the public. Oral proclamation was made by Sam, and then the loitering multitude wassented by the seductive strains of a band; the two partners performing upon combs and paper, Herman and Verman upon tin pans with sticks.

The effect was immediate. Visitors appeared upon the stairway and sought admission. Herman and Verman took positions among the exhibits, near the wall.

Sam stood at the entrance, officiating as barker and ticket-seller; while Penrod, with debonaire superiority, acted as curator, manager of ceremonies, and lecturer. He greeted the first to enter with a courtly bow. They consisted of Miss Rensdale, aged 8, and her nursery governess, and they paid spot cash for their admission.

Miss Rensdale and governess were followed by Mr. George Basset and sister (George being an almost perfect character) and six or seven other neighborhood children—a most satisfactory audience.

"Gen-till-mun and lay-deeze," shouted Penrod, "I will first call your attention to our genuine South American dog, part alligator!" He pointed to the dachshund, and added, in his ordinary tone, "That's him."

Straitly reassuming the character of showman, he bellowed: "Next you see Duke, the genuine, full-blooded Indian dog from the Far Western plains and Rocky Mountains. Next, the trained Michigan rat, captured way up there, and trained to jump and run all around the box at the—at the—at the slightest pretext.

"At the slightest pretext," he repeated, and continued, cutting the action to the word: "I will now hammer upon the box and each will all may see these genuine full-blooded Michigan rats perform at the slightest pretext. There! (That's all they do now, but I and Sam are goin' to train them lots more before this afternoon.)

"Gen-till-mun and lay-deeze. I will kindly now call your attention to Sherman, the wild animal from Africa, costing the lives of the wild trapper and many of his companions. Next let me kindly interroduce Herman and Verman. Their father got mad and stuck his pitchfork right inside of another man, exactly as promised upon the advertisements outside the big tent, and got put in jail. Look at them well, gen-till-mun and lay-deeze, there is no

whom by a presence of something vast and magnificent. "Ruddy, are you any relation of Renna Magworth?"

Roderick had never heard of Renna Magworth, although a concentration of the sentence yesterday pronounced upon her had burned, black and horrible, upon the face of every newspaper in the country. He was not allowed to read the journals of the day, and his family's indignation over the sacrilegious colonization of the name had not been expressed in his presence. But he saw that it was an awesome name to Penrod Schofield and Samuel Williams. Even Herman and Verman were informed on the subject of Renna Magworth through hearsay, and they joined in the portentous silence.

"Ruddy," repeated Penrod, "honest, is Renna Magworth some relation of yours?"

There is no obsession more dangerous to its victims than a conviction—especially an inherited one—of superiority.

From his earliest years Roderick Magworth Bitts, Junior, had been trained to believe in the importance of the Magworth family. At every meal he absorbed a sense of Magworth greatness. And yet, in his infrequent meetings with persons of his own age and sex, he was treated as negligible. Now, dimly, he perceived that there was a Magworth claim of some sort which was impressive, even to boys.

"Ruddy," said Penrod, again, with solemnity, "is Renna Magworth some relation of yours?"

"Is she, Ruddy?" asked Sam, almost hoarsely.

"She's my aunt!" shouted Ruddy.

Silence followed. Sam and Penrod, spellbound, gazed upon Roderick Magworth Bitts, Junior. So did Herman and Verman. Ruddy's staggering eyes had changed the face of things utterly.

"Ruddy," said Penrod, in a voice tremulous with hope, "Ruddy, will you join our show?" Ruddy joined.

Even he could see that the offer implied his being starrd as the paramount attraction of a new order of things. It was obvious to him that he had swelled out suddenly in the estimation of the other boys, to that importance which he had been taught to believe his native gift and natural right.

The sensation was pleasant. He had often been treated with effusion by grown-up callers and by acquaintances of his mother and sisters, and these girls had sometimes shown him deference, but until this moment no boy had ever allowed him, for one moment, to presume even to equality. Now, in a trice, he was not only admitted to comradeship, but patently valued as something rare and sacred, to be acclaimed and pedestaled. In fact, he was very first thing that Sam Schofield and Williams did was to find a box and a chair for him to sit on.

The minglings stirred in Roderick's bosom by the subsequent activities of the firm were not bothersome enough to make him forego his prominence as Exhibit A. He was long (and much) before he was thoroughly comprehended the causes of his new celebrity. He had a shadowy feeling that if the affair were heard of at home it might not be liked, but, inside of the public character, he made rounds a public character, he made no protest. On the contrary, he entered cheerfully into the preparations for the new show. Assuming, with Sam's assistance, a blue mustache and "sideburns," he helped in the painting of a new poster, which, supplanting the old one on the wall of the stable, screamed bloodily at the passers by that rather popular thoroughfare.

SCHOFFIELD & WILLIAMS  
NEW BIG SHOW  
RODERICK MAGSWORTH BITTS JR  
ONLY LIVING NEPHEW  
OF  
RENA MAGSWORTH  
THE FAMOUS  
MURDERESS GOING TO BE  
HUNG  
NEXT JULY KILED EIGHT PEOPLE  
PUTS ARSINECK IN THEIR MILK  
ALSO SHERMAN HERMAN AND VERMAN THE MICHIGAN RATS DOG,  
PART ALLIGATOR DUKE THE GREAT  
UNE INDIAN DOG. ADMISSION 1 CENT  
OR 20 PINS SAME AS BEFORE DO NOT  
MISS THIS CHANCE TO SEE RODE-  
RICK

Prosperity smiled again. The very first audience after the acquisition of Roderick was larger than the largest of the morning. Mr. Bitts—the only one placed upon a box—was a supercilious. All eyes fastened upon him and remained, hungrily feasting, throughout Penrod's luminous oration.

The second audience contained a cash-paying adult, a spectacled lawyer, whose poignant attention after the flattering. He remained after the very young man went away without having stated the object of his interrogations, but it became quite plain, later in the day. This same object caused the appreciative young man to make several brief but unsatisfactory calls directly after leaving the Schofield house, Mr. Schofield mounted to the top of the sawdust box. He looked within, and discerned the dim outlines of two quiet figures.

They rose, upon command, descended the ladder after Mr. Schofield, and stood before the authors of their being, who bent upon them sinister and threatening brows. With hanging heads and dependent countenances each still ornamented with a mustache and an imperial, Penrod and Sam awaited sentence.

"Mr. Williams took his sun by the ear. 'You march home,' he commanded. Sam marched, not looking back, and his father followed the small figure implacably.

"You goin' to whip me?" quavered Penrod, alone with Justice.

"Wash your face at that hydrant," said his father sternly.

About 15 minutes later, Penrod, hurriedly entering the corner drugstore two blocks distant, was astonished to perceive a familiar form at the soda counter.

"Yay, Penrod," said Sam Williams. "Want some soda? Come on. He didn't lick me. He didn't do anything to me as all. He gave me a quarter."

"Sod mine," said Penrod.

(Copyright, 1914, by the Wheeler Syndicate, Inc.)

He stood by the open mouth of the haychute which went through the door to the manger below. Penrod also went through the door. He propelled himself into the chute and shot down, but not quite to the manger, for Mr. Samuel Williams had thoughtfully stepped into the chute in advance of his partner. Penrod lit upon Sam.

Catastrophic noises resounded in the loft; volcanoes seemed to romp upon the stairway.

Then there ensued a period when only a shrill keening marked the wake of Roderick as he was borne to the tumbler—and then all was silence.

Sunset, striking through a western window, rouged the walls of the Schofield's library, where gathered a joint family council and court martial of four: Mrs. Schofield, Mr. Schofield and Mr. and Mrs. Williams, parents of Samuel of that ilk. Mr. Williams read aloud a conspicuous passage from the last edition of the evening paper.

"Prominent people here believed close relations of woman sentenced to hang, angry denial by Mrs. R. Magworth Bitts. Relationship admitted by younger members of family. His statement confirmed by boy-friends—"

"Don't!" said Mrs. Williams, addressing her husband vehemently. "We've all read it a dozen times. We've got plenty of trouble on our hands without hearing that again!"

"Singularly enough," Mrs. Williams did not look troubled as if she were trying to look troubled. She did Mr. Schofield, so did Mr. Williams.

"What did she say when she called you up?" Mrs. Schofield inquired breathlessly of Mrs. Williams.

"She could hardly get a word at first, and then when she did talk, she talked so fast I couldn't understand most of it, and—"

"Della says there were just streams going in and out all day," said Mrs. Schofield. "Of course it wouldn't have happened, but the day I spend every month in the country with Aunt Sarah, and I didn't dream—"

"She said that the most awful thing about it," Mrs. Williams went on, "was that, though she's going to prosecute the newspapers, many people would always believe the story, and—"

"Yes, I understand," said Mrs. Schofield musingly. "Of course you and I and everybody who really knows the Bitts and Magworth families understand the perfect absurdity of it; but I suppose there are ever so many who'll believe it, no matter what the Bittses and Magworths say."

"Hundred and hundreds," said Mrs. Williams. "I'm afraid it will be a great come-down for them."

"I'm afraid so," said Mrs. Schofield gently. "A very great one—yes, a very, very great one."

"Well," observed Mrs. Williams, after a thoughtful pause, "there's only one thing to be done, and I suppose it had better be done right away."

She glanced toward the two gentlemen.

"Certainly," Mr. Schofield agreed. "But where are they?"

"Have you looked in the stable?" asked his wife. "They're probably started for the Far West."

"Did you look in the sawdust box?"

"No, I didn't."

"Then that's where they are."

"Thus, in the early twilight the new family stable was approached by two fathers charged to do the only thing to be done.

They entered the store room, in the corner of which stood the sawdust box, a structure eight feet high and open at the top.

"Penrod!" said Mr. Schofield.

"Sam!" said Mr. Williams.

Nothing disturbed the twilight hush. But by means of a ladder, brought from the carriage-house, Mr. Schofield mounted to the top of the sawdust box. He looked within, and discerned the dim outlines of two quiet figures.

They rose, upon command, descended the ladder after Mr. Schofield, and stood before the authors of their being, who bent upon them sinister and threatening brows. With hanging heads and dependent countenances each still ornamented with a mustache and an imperial, Penrod and Sam awaited sentence.

"Mr. Williams took his sun by the ear. 'You march home,' he commanded. Sam marched, not looking back, and his father followed the small figure implacably.

"You goin' to whip me?" quavered Penrod, alone with Justice.

"Wash your face at that hydrant," said his father sternly.

About 15 minutes later, Penrod, hurriedly entering the corner drugstore two blocks distant, was astonished to perceive a familiar form at the soda counter.

"Yay, Penrod," said Sam Williams. "Want some soda? Come on. He didn't lick me. He didn't do anything to me as all. He gave me a quarter."

"Sod mine," said Penrod.

(Copyright, 1914, by the Wheeler Syndicate, Inc.)

And then Verman spoke—and Penrod was forgotten. Marjorie's eye rested upon him no more.

A heavily equipped chauffeur ascended the stairway, bearing the message that Mrs. Levy awaited her son and Miss Jones. Thereupon, having devoured the last sound permitted (by the maintenance of issues from Verman, Mr. Levy and Miss Jones departed to a real matinee at a real theater, the limpid eyes of Marjorie looking back softly over her shoulder—but only at the tattooed wild boy.

After this, perhaps because of sated curiosity, perhaps on account of a pin famine, the attendance began to languish. Then followed an interval when the band played in vain.

About 3 o'clock Schofield and Williams were gloomily discussing various unpromising devices for starting the public into a renewal of interest, when another patron unexpectedly appeared and paid a cent for his admission. News of the Big Show and Museum of Curiosities had at last penetrated the far, cold spaces of interstellar niceness; for this new patron consisted of no less than Roderick Magworth Bitts, Junior, from the Manor during a period of severe maternal and tutorial preoccupation.

He seated himself without parley, and the performance was offered for his entertainment with admirable conscientiousness. True to the Lady Clara caste and training, Roderick's pale, fat face expressed nothing except an impervious superiority and, as he sat, cold and unimpressed, upon the front bench like a large, white lump, it must be said that he made a discouraging audience "to play to."

He was not, however, unresponsive—far from it. He offered comments very chilling to the warm grandiloquence of the orator.

"That's my uncle Ethelbert's dachshund," he remarked, at the beginning of the lecture. "You better take him back if you don't want to get arrested."

"My papa would buy me a lota better 'coon than that," was the information volunteered a little later. "Only I wouldn't want the right of thing."

Verman, confident in his own singular powers, chattered openly at the failure of the other attractions to charm the pious visitor, and, when his turn came, poured forth a torrent of conversation which was straightway dammed.

"Rotten," said Mr. Bitts languidly. "I could get up a better show than this with my left hand."

"Well, what would you have in your old show?" asked Penrod, condescending to language.

"That's all right, what I'd have. I'd have enough."

"Well, what would you have?" insisted Penrod derisively. "You'd have to have something; you think you could be a show all by yourself?" demanded Penrod.

"How do you know I couldn't?"

"Two white boys and two black boys shrieked their scorn of the boaster.

"I could, too!" Roderick raised his voice to a sudden howl, obtaining a hearing.

"Well, then, how'd you be a show?" Penrod demanded. "We got a show here, even if Herman didn't point or Verman didn't talk. Their father stabbed a man with a pitchfork. I guess, didn't he?"

"How do I know?"

"Well, I guess he's in jail, ain't he?"

"Well, I guess if his father is in jail?"

"I didn't say he wasn't?"

"Well, your father ain't in jail, is he?"

"Well, I never said he was, did I?"

"Well, then," continued Penrod, "how could you be a—"

He stopped abruptly, staring at Roderick. He had suddenly remembered his intention to ask Roderick Magworth Bitts, Junior, about Renna Magworth, and this recollection collided in his mind with the irritation produced by Roderick's claims some mysterious attainment which would warrant his getting up as a show in his single person. Penrod's whole manner changed instantly.

"Ruddy," he asked, almost over-

whelmed by a presence of something vast and magnificent. "Ruddy, are you any relation of Renna Magworth?"

Roderick had never heard of Renna Magworth, although a concentration of the sentence yesterday pronounced upon her had burned, black and horrible, upon the face of every newspaper in the country. He was not allowed to read the journals of the day, and his family's indignation over the sacrilegious colonization of the name had not been expressed in his presence. But he saw that it was an awesome name to Penrod Schofield and Samuel Williams. Even Herman and Verman were informed on the subject of Renna Magworth through hearsay, and they joined in the portentous silence.

"Ruddy," repeated Penrod, "honest, is Renna Magworth some relation of yours?"

There is no obsession more dangerous to its victims than a conviction—especially an inherited one—of superiority.

From his earliest years Roderick Magworth Bitts, Junior, had been trained to believe in the importance of the Magworth family. At every meal he absorbed a sense of Magworth greatness. And yet, in his infrequent meetings with persons of his own age and sex, he was treated as negligible. Now, dimly, he perceived that there was a Magworth claim of some sort which was impressive, even to boys.

"Ruddy," said Penrod, again, with solemnity, "is Renna Magworth some relation of yours?"

"Is she, Ruddy?" asked Sam, almost hoarsely.

"She's my aunt!" shouted Ruddy.

Silence followed. Sam and Penrod, spellbound, gazed upon Roderick Magworth Bitts, Junior. So did Herman and Verman. Ruddy's staggering eyes had changed the face of things utterly.

"Ruddy," said Penrod, in a voice tremulous with hope, "Ruddy, will you join our show?" Ruddy joined.

Even he could see that the offer implied his being starrd as the paramount attraction of a new order of things. It was obvious to him that he had swelled out suddenly in the estimation of the other boys, to that importance which he had been taught to believe his native gift and natural right.

The sensation was pleasant. He had often been treated with effusion by grown-up callers and by acquaintances of his mother and sisters, and these girls had sometimes shown him deference, but until this moment no boy had ever allowed him, for one moment, to presume even to equality. Now, in a trice, he was not only admitted to comradeship, but patently valued as something rare and sacred, to be acclaimed and pedestaled. In fact, he was very first thing that Sam Schofield and Williams did was to find a box and a chair for him to sit on.

The minglings stirred in Roderick's bosom by the subsequent activities of the firm were not bothersome enough to make him forego his prominence as Exhibit A. He was long (and much) before he was thoroughly comprehended the causes of his new celebrity. He had a shadowy feeling that if the affair were heard of at home it might not be liked, but, inside of the public character, he made rounds a public character, he made no protest. On the contrary, he entered cheerfully into the preparations for the new show. Assuming, with Sam's assistance, a blue mustache and "sideburns," he helped in the painting of a new poster, which, supplanting the old one on the wall of the stable, screamed bloodily at the passers by that rather popular thoroughfare.

SCHOFFIELD & WILLIAMS  
NEW BIG SHOW  
RODERICK MAGSWORTH BITTS JR  
ONLY LIVING NEPHEW  
OF  
RENA MAGSWORTH  
THE FAMOUS  
MURDERESS GOING TO BE  
HUNG  
NEXT JULY KILED EIGHT PEOPLE  
PUTS ARSINECK IN THEIR MILK  
ALSO SHERMAN HERMAN AND VERMAN THE MICHIGAN RATS DOG,  
PART ALLIGATOR DUKE THE GREAT  
UNE INDIAN DOG. ADMISSION 1 CENT  
OR 20 PINS SAME AS BEFORE DO NOT  
MISS THIS CHANCE TO SEE RODE-  
RICK

Prosperity smiled again. The very first audience after the acquisition of Roderick was larger than the largest of the morning. Mr. Bitts—the only one placed upon a box—was a supercilious. All eyes fastened upon him and remained, hungrily feasting, throughout Penrod's luminous oration.

The second audience contained a cash-paying adult, a spectacled lawyer, whose poignant attention after the flattering. He remained after the very young man went away without having stated the object of his interrogations, but it became quite plain, later in the day. This same object caused the appreciative young man to make several brief but unsatisfactory calls directly after leaving the Schofield house, Mr. Schofield mounted to the top of the sawdust box. He looked within, and discerned the dim outlines of two quiet figures.

They rose, upon command, descended the ladder after Mr. Schofield, and stood before the authors of their being, who bent upon them sinister and threatening brows. With hanging heads and dependent countenances each still ornamented with a mustache and an imperial, Penrod and Sam awaited sentence.

"Mr. Williams took his sun by the ear. 'You march home,' he commanded. Sam marched, not looking back, and his father followed the small figure implacably.

"You goin' to whip me?" quavered Penrod, alone with Justice.

"Wash your face at that hydrant," said his father sternly.

About 15 minutes later, Penrod, hurriedly entering the corner drugstore two blocks distant, was astonished to perceive a familiar form at the soda counter.

"Yay, Penrod," said Sam Williams. "Want some soda? Come on. He didn't lick me. He didn't do anything to me as all. He gave me a quarter."

"Sod mine," said Penrod.

(Copyright, 1914, by the Wheeler Syndicate, Inc.)

And then Verman spoke—and Penrod was forgotten. Marjorie's eye rested upon him no more.

A heavily equipped chauffeur ascended the stairway, bearing the message that Mrs. Levy awaited her son and Miss Jones. Thereupon, having devoured the last sound permitted (by the maintenance of issues from Verman, Mr. Levy and Miss Jones departed to a real matinee at a real theater, the limpid eyes of Marjorie looking back softly over her shoulder—but only at the tattooed wild boy.

After this, perhaps because of sated curiosity, perhaps on account of a pin famine, the attendance began to languish. Then followed an interval when the band played in vain.

About 3 o'clock Schofield and Williams were gloomily discussing various unpromising devices for starting the public into a renewal of interest, when another patron unexpectedly appeared and paid a cent for his admission. News of the Big Show and Museum of Curiosities had at last penetrated the far, cold spaces of interstellar niceness; for this new patron consisted of no less than Roderick Magworth Bitts, Junior, from the Manor during a period of severe maternal and tutorial preoccupation.

He seated himself without parley, and the performance was offered for his entertainment with admirable conscientiousness. True to the Lady Clara caste and training, Roderick's pale, fat face expressed nothing except an impervious superiority and, as he sat, cold and unimpressed, upon the front bench like a large, white lump, it must be said that he made a discouraging audience "to play to."

He was not, however, unresponsive—far from it. He offered comments very chilling to the warm grandiloquence of the orator.

"That's my uncle Ethelbert's dachshund," he remarked, at the beginning of the lecture. "You better take him back if you don't want to get arrested."

"My papa would buy me a lota better 'coon than that," was the information volunteered a little later. "Only I wouldn't want the right of thing."

Verman, confident in his own singular powers, chattered openly at the failure of the other attractions to charm the pious visitor, and, when his turn came, poured forth a torrent of conversation which was straightway dammed.

"Rotten," said Mr. Bitts languidly. "I could get up a better show than this with my left hand."

"Well, what would you have in your old show?" asked Penrod, condescending to language.

"That's all right, what I'd have. I'd have enough."

"Well, what would you have?" insisted Penrod derisively. "You'd have to have something; you think you could be a show all by yourself?" demanded Penrod.

"How do you know I couldn't?"

"Two white boys and two black boys shrieked their scorn of the boaster.

"I could, too!" Roderick raised his voice to a sudden howl, obtaining a hearing.

"Well, then, how'd you be a show?" Penrod demanded. "We got a show here, even if Herman didn't point or Verman didn't talk. Their father stabbed a man with a pitchfork. I guess, didn't he?"

"How do I know?"

"Well, I guess he's in jail, ain't he?"

"Well, I guess if his father is in jail?"

"I didn't say he wasn't?"

"Well, your father ain't in jail, is he?"

"Well, I never said he was, did I?"

"Well, then," continued Penrod, "how could you be a—"

He stopped abruptly, staring at Roderick. He had suddenly remembered his intention to ask Roderick Magworth Bitts, Junior, about Renna Magworth, and this recollection collided in his mind with the irritation produced by Roderick's claims some mysterious attainment which would warrant his getting up as a show in his single person. Penrod's whole manner changed instantly.

"Ruddy," he asked, almost over-

whelmed by a presence of something vast and magnificent. "Ruddy, are you any relation of Renna Magworth?"

Roderick had never heard of Renna Magworth, although a concentration of the sentence yesterday pronounced upon her had burned, black and horrible, upon the face of every newspaper in the country. He was not allowed to read the journals of the day, and his family's indignation over the sacrilegious colonization of the name had not been expressed in his presence. But he saw that it was an awesome name to Penrod Schofield and Samuel Williams. Even Herman and Verman were informed on the subject of Renna Magworth through hearsay, and they joined in the portentous silence.

"Ruddy," repeated Penrod, "honest, is Renna Magworth some relation of yours?"

There is no obsession more dangerous to its victims than a conviction—especially an inherited one—of superiority.

From his earliest years Roderick Magworth Bitts, Junior, had been trained to believe in the importance of the Magworth family. At every meal he absorbed a sense of Magworth greatness. And yet, in his infrequent meetings with persons of his own age and sex, he was treated as negligible. Now, dimly, he perceived that there was a Magworth claim of some sort which was impressive, even to boys.

"Ruddy," said Penrod, again, with solemnity, "is Renna Magworth some relation of yours?"

"Is she, Ruddy?" asked Sam, almost hoarsely.

"She's my aunt!" shouted Ruddy.

Silence followed. Sam and Penrod, spellbound, gazed upon Roderick Magworth Bitts, Junior. So did Herman and Verman. Ruddy's staggering eyes had changed the face of things utterly.

"Ruddy," said Penrod, in a voice tremulous with hope, "Ruddy, will you join our show?" Ruddy joined.

Even he could see that the offer implied his being starrd as the paramount attraction of a new order of things. It was obvious to him that he had swelled out suddenly in the estimation of the other boys, to that importance which he had been taught to believe his native gift and natural right.

The sensation was pleasant. He had often been treated with effusion by grown-up callers and by acquaintances of his mother and sisters, and these girls had sometimes shown him deference, but until this moment no boy had ever allowed him, for one moment, to presume even to equality. Now, in a trice, he was not only admitted to comradeship, but patently valued as something rare and sacred, to be acclaimed and pedestaled. In fact, he was very first thing that Sam Schofield and Williams did was to find a box and a chair for him to sit on.

The minglings stirred in Roderick's bosom by the subsequent activities of the firm were not bothersome enough to make him forego his prominence as Exhibit A. He was long (and much) before he was thoroughly comprehended the causes of his new celebrity. He had a shadowy feeling that if the affair were heard of at home it might not be liked, but, inside of the public character, he made rounds a public character, he made no protest. On the contrary, he entered cheerfully into the preparations for the new show. Assuming, with Sam's assistance, a blue mustache and "sideburns," he helped in the painting of a new poster, which, supplanting the old one on the wall of the stable, screamed bloodily at the passers by that rather popular thoroughfare.

SCHOFFIELD & WILLIAMS  
NEW BIG SHOW  
RODERICK MAGSWORTH BITTS JR  
ONLY LIVING NEPHEW  
OF  
RENA MAGSWORTH  
THE FAMOUS  
MURDERESS GOING TO BE  
HUNG  
NEXT JULY KILED EIGHT PEOPLE  
PUTS ARSINECK IN THEIR MILK  
ALSO SHERMAN HERMAN AND VERMAN THE MICHIGAN RATS DOG,  
PART ALLIGATOR DUKE THE GREAT  
UNE INDIAN DOG. ADMISSION 1 CENT  
OR 20 PINS SAME AS BEFORE DO NOT  
MISS THIS CHANCE TO SEE RODE-  
RICK

Prosperity smiled again. The very first audience after the acquisition of Roderick was larger than the largest of the morning. Mr. Bitts—the only one placed upon a box—was a supercilious. All eyes fastened upon him and remained, hungrily feasting, throughout Penrod's luminous oration.

The second audience contained a cash-paying adult, a spectacled lawyer, whose poignant attention after the flattering. He remained after the very young man went away without having stated the object of his interrogations, but it became quite plain, later in the day. This same object caused the appreciative young man to make several brief but unsatisfactory calls directly after leaving the Schofield house, Mr. Schofield mounted to the top of the sawdust box. He looked within, and discerned the dim outlines of two quiet figures.

They rose, upon command, descended the ladder after Mr. Schofield, and stood before the authors of their being, who bent upon them sinister and threatening brows. With hanging heads and dependent countenances each still ornamented with a mustache and an imperial, Penrod and Sam awaited sentence.

"Mr. Williams took his sun by the ear. 'You march home,' he commanded. Sam marched, not looking back, and his father followed the small figure implacably.

"You goin' to whip me?" quavered Penrod, alone with Justice.

"Wash your face at that hydrant," said his father sternly.

About 15 minutes later, Penrod, hurriedly entering the corner drugstore two blocks distant, was astonished to perceive a familiar form at the soda counter.

"Yay, Penrod," said Sam Williams. "Want some soda? Come on. He didn't lick me. He didn't do anything to me as all. He gave me a quarter."

"Sod mine," said Penrod.

(Copyright, 1914, by the Wheeler Syndicate, Inc.)

And then Verman spoke—and Penrod was forgotten. Marjorie's eye rested upon him no more.

A heavily equipped chauffeur ascended the stairway, bearing the message that Mrs. Levy awaited her son and Miss Jones. Thereupon, having devoured the last sound permitted (by the maintenance of issues from Verman, Mr. Levy and Miss Jones departed to a real matinee at a real theater, the limpid eyes of Marjorie looking back softly over her shoulder—but only at the tattooed wild boy.

After this, perhaps because of sated curiosity, perhaps on account of a pin famine, the attendance began to languish. Then followed an interval when the band played in vain.

About 3 o'clock Schofield and Williams were gloomily discussing various unpromising devices for starting the public into a renewal of interest, when another patron unexpectedly appeared and paid a cent for his admission. News of the Big Show and Museum of Curiosities had at last penetrated the far, cold spaces of interstellar niceness; for this new patron consisted of no less than Roderick Magworth Bitts, Junior, from the Manor during a period of severe maternal and tutorial preoccupation.

He seated himself without parley, and the performance was offered for his entertainment with admirable conscientiousness. True to the Lady Clara caste and training, Roderick's pale, fat face expressed nothing except an impervious superiority and, as he sat, cold and unimpressed, upon the front bench like a large, white lump, it must be said that he made a discouraging audience "to play to."

He was not, however, unresponsive—far from it. He offered comments very chilling to the warm grandiloquence of the orator.

"That's my uncle Ethelbert's dachshund," he remarked, at the beginning of the lecture. "You better take him back if you don't want to get arrested."

"My papa would buy me a lota better 'coon than that," was the information volunteered a little later. "Only I wouldn't want the right of thing."

Verman, confident in his own singular powers, chattered openly at the failure of the other attractions to charm the pious visitor, and, when his turn came, poured forth a torrent of conversation which was straightway dammed.

"Rotten," said Mr. Bitts languidly. "I could get up a better show than this with my left hand."

"Well, what would you have in your old show?" asked Penrod, condescending to language.

"That's all right, what I'd have. I'd have enough."

"Well, what would you have?" insisted Penrod derisively. "You'd have to have something; you think you could be a show all by yourself?" demanded Penrod.

"How do you know I couldn't?"

"Two white boys and two black boys shrieked their scorn of the boaster.

"I could, too!" Roderick raised his voice to a sudden howl, obtaining a hearing.

"Well, then, how'd you be a show?" Penrod demanded. "We got a show here, even if Herman didn't point or Verman didn't talk. Their father stabbed a man with a pitchfork. I guess, didn't he?"

"How do I know?"

"Well, I guess he's in jail, ain't he?"

"Well, I guess if his father is in jail?"

"I didn't say he wasn't?"

"Well, your father ain't in jail, is he?"

"Well, I never said he was, did I?"

"Well, then," continued Penrod, "how could you be a—"

He stopped abruptly, staring at Roderick. He had suddenly remembered his intention to ask Roderick Magworth Bitts, Junior, about Renna Magworth, and this recollection collided in his mind with the irritation produced by Roderick's claims some mysterious attainment which would warrant his getting up as a show in his single person. Penrod's whole manner changed instantly.

"Ruddy," he asked, almost over-

whelmed by a presence of something vast and magnificent. "