

four scientifically satisfactory rounds, although they came to blows over it afterwards when Mr. Smith told Mr. Brown what he thought of him for hitting with such fervor just after they had eaten a hearty meal.)

A great many mothers inspected Prince Robin with interest and confessed to a really genuine enthusiasm: something they had not experienced since one of the German princes got close enough to Newport to see it quite clearly through his marine glasses from the bridge of a battleship. The ruler of Graustark—(four-fifths of the guests asked where in the world it was!)—was the lion of the day.

Mr. Blithers was annoyed because he did not wear his crown, but was somewhat mollified by the information that he had neglected to bring it along with him in his travels. He was also considerably put out by the discovery that the Prince had left his white and gold uniform at home and had to appear in an ordinary dress suit, which, to be sure, fitted him perfectly, but did not achieve distinction. He did wear a black and silver ribbon across his shirt front, however, and a tiny gold button in the lapel of his coat; otherwise he might have been mistaken for a "regular guest," to borrow an expression from Mr. Blithers. The Prince's host maneuvered until nearly one o'clock in the morning before he succeeded in getting a close look at the little gold button, and then found that the inscription thereon was in some sort of hieroglyphics that afforded no enlightenment whatsoever.

EXERCISING a potentate's prerogative, Prince Robin left the scene of festivity somewhat earlier than was expected. As a matter of fact, he departed shortly after one. Being a prince, it did not occur to him to offer any excuse for leaving so early, but gracefully thanked his host and hostess and took himself off without the customary assertion that he had had a splendid time. Strange to say, he did not offer a single comment on the sumptuousness of the affair that had been given in his honor. Mr. Blithers couldn't get over that. He couldn't help thinking that the fellow had not been properly brought up, or was it possible that he was not accustomed to good society?

Except for one heart-rending incident, the Blitherwood ball was the most satisfying event in the lives of Mr. and Mrs. William W. Blithers. That incident, however, happened to be the hasty and well-managed flight of Maud Applegate Blithers at an hour indefinitely placed somewhere between four and seven o'clock on the morning of the great day.

Miss Blithers was not at the ball. She was in New York City serenely enjoying one of the big summer shows, accompanied by young Scoville and her one-time governess, a middle-aged gentlewoman who had seen even better days than those spent in the employ of William W. Blithers. The resolute young lady had done precisely what she said she would do, and for the first time in his life Mr. Blithers realized that his daughter was a creation and not a mere condition. He wilted like a famished water-lily and went about the place in a state of bewilderment so bleak that even his wife felt sorry for him and refrained from the "I told you so" that might have been expected under the circumstances.

Maud's telegram, which came at three o'clock in the afternoon, was meant to be reassuring, but it failed of its purpose. It said: "Have a good time and don't lose any sleep over me. I shall sleep very soundly myself at the Ritz tonight and hope you will be doing the same when I return home tomorrow afternoon, for I know you will be dreadfully tired after all the excitement. Convey my congratulations to the guest of honor, and believe me to be your devoted and obedient daughter."

The co-incidental absence of young Mr. Scoville from the ball was a cause of considerable uneasiness on the part of the agitated Mr. Blithers, who commented upon it quite expansively in the seclusion of his own bed-chamber after the last guest had sought repose. Some of the things that Mr. Blithers said about Mr. Scoville will never be for-

gotten by the four walls of that room, if as, commonly reported, they possess auricular attachments.

Any one who imagines that Mr. Blithers accepted Maud's defection as a final disposition of the cause he had set his heart upon is very much mistaken in his man. Far from receding so much as an inch from his position, he at once set about to strengthen it in such a way that Maud would have to come to the conclusion that it was useless to combat the inevitable, and ultimately would heap praises upon his devoted head for the great blessing he was determined to bestow upon her in spite of herself.

The last of the special coaches was barely moving on its jiggly way to the main line, carrying the tag end of the revelers, when he set forth in his car for a midday visit to Red Roof. Already the huge camp of Slavs and Italians was beginning to jerk up the borrowed rails and ties; the work trains were run-

Half-way to Red Roof, he espied a man walking briskly along the road ahead of him. To be perfectly accurate, he was walking in the middle of the road and his back was toward the swift-moving, almost noiseless Pierce-Arrow.

"Blow the horn for the dam' fool," said Mr. Blithers to the chauffeur. A moment later the pedestrian leaped nimbly aside and the car shot past, the dying wail of the siren dwindling away in the whirr of the wheels. "Look where you're going!" shouted Mr. Blithers from the tonneau, as if the walker had come near to running him down instead of the other way around. "Whoa! Stop 'er, Jackson!" he called to the driver. He had recognized the pedestrian.

The car came to a stop with grinding brakes, and at the same time the pedestrian halted a hundred yards away.

"Back up," commanded Mr. Blithers in some haste, for the Prince seemed to be on the point of deserting the highway for the wood that lined it. "Morning, Prince!" he shouted, waving his hat vigorously. "Want a lift?"

The car shot backward with almost the same speed that it had gone forward, and the Prince exercised prudence when he stepped quickly up the sloping bank at the roadside.

"Were you addressing me?" he demanded curtly, as the car came to a stop.

"Yes, your highness. Get in. I'm going your way," said Mr. Blithers beamingly.

"I mean a moment ago, when you shouted 'Look where you are going,'" said Robin, an angry gleam in his eye.

Mr. Blithers looked positively dumbfounded. "Good Heavens, no!" he cried. "I was speaking to the chauffeur." (Jackson's back seemed to stiffen a little.) "I've told him a thousand times to be careful about running up on people like that. Now this is the last time I'll warn you, Jackson. The next time you go. Understand? Just because you happen to be driving for me doesn't signify that you can run over people who—"

"It's all right, Mr. Blithers," interrupted Robin, with his fine smile. "No harm done. I'll walk if you don't mind. Out for a bit of exercise, you know. Thank you just the same."

"Where are you bound for?" asked Mr. Blithers.

"I don't know. I ramble where my fancy leads me."

"I guess I'll get out and stroll along with you. God knows I need more exercise than I get. Is it agreeable?" He was on the ground by this time. Without waiting for an answer he directed Jackson to run on to Red Roof and wait for him.

"I shall be charmed," said Robin, a twinkle in the tail of his eye. "An eight or ten mile jaunt will do you a world of good, I'm sure. Shall we explore this little road up the mountain and then drop down to Red Roof? I don't believe it can be more than five or six miles."

"Capital," said Mr. Blithers with enthusiasm. He happened to know that it was a "short cut" to Red Roof and less than a mile as the crow flies. True there was something of an ascent ahead of them, but there was also a corresponding descent at the other end. Besides, he was confident he could keep up with the long-legged youngster by the paradoxical process of holding back. The Prince, having suggested the route, couldn't very well be arbitrary in traversing it. Mr. Blithers regarded the suggestion as an invitation.

They struck off into the narrow woodland road, not precisely side by side, but somewhat after the fashion of a horseback rider and his groom, or, more strictly speaking, as a knight and his vassal. Robin started off so briskly that Mr. Blithers fell behind a few paces and had to exert himself considerably to keep from losing more ground as they took the first steep rise. The road was full of ruts and cross ruts and littered with boulders that had ambled down the mountain-side in the spring moving. To save his life, Mr. Blithers couldn't keep to a straight course. He went from rut to rut and from rock to rock with the fidelity of a magnetized atom, seldom putting his foot where he meant to put it, and never by any (Continued on Next Page)



AS LEANS THE TWIG

By ANTHONY EUWER.

MY DAD he says since first the earth he trod upon, Bill Bryan's been a paragon of ev'ry thing that kids should be, not even barrin' me. When he was hardly any more than just past three and goin on four, he wore a toga cross the knees, resemblin great Demosthenes. Then to the corn he'd spout and spout, because they all had ears no doubt, and bobbed their heads approvingly—he spoke so wondrous movingly. And when grape-pickin time had come, he'd orate how 'twas such a shame to massacre those grapes, by golly, to wine that made folks slip their trolley.

"But come," said they, "this juice is sweet and harmless as hamburger meat." They offered once, they offered twice—he grinned benignly on the thrice. Nay, nay," said he, "it cannot be" (p'raps he foresaw his destiny) "I will not, will not compromise with this here stuff in any wise. Though harmless now, I yet perceive all its dormant hunch for future evil, and spy beneath its sparkling level, a coming harvest for the devil! Avant, ye tempters! Back I say, ye cannot bunco William J."

Them very words, dad says, was flung from master William's silvered tongue. Of course since then, he's learnt to handle juice unfermented without scandal, but nothin singsin strong can get across his lips, you can just bet. Dad says he's right—in which event it's more than been President, and if less booze was used to fill 'em, there'd be more folks as fine as William.

bling and snorting in the meadows above Blitherwood, tottering about on the uncertain roadbed. He gave a few concise and imperative orders to obsequious superintendents and foremen, who subsequently repeated them with even greater freedom to the perspiring foreigners, and left the scene of confusion without so much as a glance behind. Wagons, carts, motor-trucks and all manner of wheeled things were scuttling about Blitherwood as he shot down the long, winding avenue toward the lodge gates, but he paid no attention to them. They were removing the remnants of a glory that had passed at five in the morning. He was not interested in the wall-plucked skeleton. It was a nuisance getting rid of it, that was all, and he wanted it to be completely out of sight when he returned from Red Roof. If a vestige of the ruins remained, some one would hear from him! That was understood, and when Maud came home on the five-fourteen she would not find him asleep—not by a long shot!