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FEATURES
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The St. John Standard,

NEW BRUNSWICK, CANADA.

FEATURES
Society—Fiction
Children's Corner

THE FRESH GUY

By CHARLES E. VAN LOAN

His own mother could not have de-
 sired it. Vivian Potts was fresh. He
 was so fresh that he was almost raw.
 Competent judges who knew him be-
 fore he became famous admit that he
 was the freshest young thing that a
 big-league curricular ever hauled out
 of the baseball business.

From the very moment of his ar-
 rival at the spring training camp, a
 glimmer from nowhere without regard
 for standing in the world of base-
 ball, J. Vivian Potts acted as if he
 believed he was doing the Panthers an
 honor by joining them. "Ball" Ken-
 nedy, one of the Big Chief's scouts,
 had seen Potts perform with a semi-
 professional team. Being an enthu-
 siast, Ball had advanced the young man
 out of his own pocket and in-
 stituted him to report at Asheville,
 holding out no ropes.

Now the Panthers were, and still
 are, an exclusive lot. The world
 thinks well of them, and they think
 well of themselves. It is their habit
 to frown upon any stranger who is
 not an acquaintance, and the beginner
 with that team must learn to show a
 proper and befitting reverence.

Into this cool and select circle,
 young Potts introduced himself with
 the easy familiarity of a stray goat.
 He arrived late at night, and the Pan-
 thers had their first glimpse of him
 the next morning while at breakfast.
 The players were all sitting around
 the long table when a robust torso
 burst upon their ears.

"Good morning, men!"
 The Panthers looked up in amaze-
 ment. A slender youth, neatly posed
 in the doorway, was regarding them
 with a cheerful grin. He wore the
 sort of clothes which the young men
 of Cherry Corners fondly imagine are
 worn at Harvard or Yale. A scream-
 ing red silk handkerchief bursting
 from a breast pocket out on an angle
 and decorated with a dozen tiny bat-
 tles furnished a kind index; the bot-
 toms of the young man's trousers
 were turned up over the soiled gray
 uppers of his patent-leather shoes,
 and he twirled a light bamboo cane.

"Huh!" grunted the Big Chief. "The
 wind must be blowing some outside.
 Look what blew in when the door
 was open!"
 Then, from the head of the table to
 the foot, the Panthers took a long,
 comprehensive look at the entity who
 had withered another individual. This
 done, they returned to their ham and
 eggs.

"J. Vivian Potts was not an ordi-
 nary individual. He strutted over to
 the head of the table.
 "Shake the hand of a ballplayer,"
 Chief, he said, extending his fingers.
 "Knew you right away by the pic-
 tures, even if they do flatter you. My
 name is Potts. Kennedy told me to
 report to you. Said your outfield was
 a little weak this season and you
 needed some class. Where do I sit?"

Every outfielder at the table glar-
 ed savagely, but young Mr. Potts,
 wringing the limp and unresisting fist
 of the Chief, did not allow the hostile
 sentiment to embarrass him. "Greet-
 ings, bunch!" said Potts, as he
 drew up a chair and planted him-
 self between the Big Chief and "Smil-
 ing" Kelly, the star pitcher. "Greet-
 ings and salutations! Clarice, a little
 food here!"

For a half minute there was a long,
 quivering silence.
 Catten, center fielder, was first to
 recover his power of speech.
 "Yes," said he, addressing the Big
 Chief in general, "I always did say Ken-
 nedy was the greatest lemon picker
 in the country. Beats me where he gets
 'em all!"

Potts laughed loudly.
 "All right, young feller," he said.
 "I've got your number. All I hope is
 that you're an outfielder, because if
 you are, I'm going to get your job.
 You'll be carrying my bat around
 before the end of the season, boy."

"Is that so?" sneered Catten male-
 volently. It struck him afterward
 that at the time he could think of noth-
 ing better.
 "And listen, Charlie!" said Potts.
 "Regular cool cream with this coffee.
 Give this skim milk to one of the
 hired men here. Me, cream. Under-
 stand!"

"Fresh thing!" sniffed the waitress,
 as she whisked into the kitchen.
 "Young man," said the Big Chief
 quietly, "whole families have been
 killed for less than you have done
 here this morning. A little silence
 from you, now!"
 Potts was just as fresh on the ball
 field. Before noon, he had been in
 seventeen arguments, had offered to
 fight with Halsey, and had all the
 ordinary nervous and exasperated.
 His crowning feat was the total rout
 of Catten.

Just before the squad returned to
 the hotel for lunch, Potts remarked:
 "I've got ten bucks in my poor old
 clothes which says I can run away and
 hide from any man here at one hun-
 dred yards. Anybody got nerve
 enough to bet?"
 Then he looked straight at Catten,
 who, as the entire country knew, was
 the fastest man on the team.
 "I guess I might as well see the
 horns of this goat now as any time,"
 remarked Catten to the tone of a man
 willing to sacrifice personal inclina-
 tion to the public good.
 They ran the one hundred yards,
 and Potts won by a clear six feet,
 seemingly without effort.
 "You ain't so awful bad for an old
 feller," said Potts, nastily applying the
 verbal vinegar to the raw surface.
 "Of course you've been in the game
 a long time and your all stove up.
 You're awful slow getting off the mark.
 You start like a horse car. I'll give
 you some lessons."

That evening, the players lounged
 in front of the hotel and watched
 young Mr. Potts strolling up and
 down the trees with the girl who
 worked in the candy store. She was
 a very pretty girl, and some of the
 unmarried men on the team had tried
 their big city manners on her without
 result.



"And there in front of him was the Big Chief, jogging along and laughing over his shoulder."

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"Out!" barked the umpire.
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The Chief met Potts as he walked
 in to the bench, rubbing the dirt from
 his clothes.
 "I haven't got time to talk to you
 now," said the manager quietly, "but
 if I had another hitter left, I wouldn't
 let you go. You know how to get
 out that grandstand business, and
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 have tossed off this game."

"The other players added their tri-
 butes of censure, and it was a crush-
 ed young man who paced around
 among the bats looking for his favor-
 ite stick. For the first time in his
 young life, Potts was tamed; he had
 nothing to say. He was a yellow dog;
 everybody had told him so. Worse
 than that, he realized it himself. Once
 he opened his mouth,
 "I thought I could make that catch,"
 he said weakly.
 "You thought!" snarled Kelly vis-
 ciously. "Didn't you know James was
 the next man up? He hasn't had a
 hit off me all season!"

Potts is Redeemed.
 Before Potts knew what was hap-
 pening, the wave caught him, too. He
 was seized and swung up on the shoul-
 ders of two half-crazed fans, who
 bore him through a sea of shouting
 faces. Men leaped up and thrust
 money into his hands. Mechanically,
 he removed his cap, and held it in
 front of him. Through the swirl of
 hats and canes, he saw his team mates
 scudding for the clubhouse. He was
 beginning to enjoy the demonstration,
 when he was seized by the arm, who
 of the rim of a derby hat left in his
 hand, hoarsely suggested three cheers
 for "Potsey," and ten thousand wild
 men chimed in, winding up with a
 tiger and a shower of hats which boomed
 through the air like birds.

"Take me to the clubhouse, boys!"
 gasped the hero.
 They took him to the clubhouse at
 the head of a great procession of
 leaping, howling, whirling dervishes.
 They set him down on the steps with
 one last terrific cheer, and J. Vivian
 Potts, big leaguer and pennant win-
 ner, opened the door and stepped in-
 side the dressing room.

For a few seconds he stood per-
 fectly still, his chest thrust out in
 front of him, his assurance regained
 with heavy labor.
 "Welcome to our city!" he said at
 last. "Am't anybody here going to
 tell me how good I am?"
 Then for the first time he became
 aware that the place was very still.
 He seemed to have interrupted a ser-
 vious conference of some sort. Smiling
 Kelly, one stooping half off, was look-
 ing up at him from under heavily cor-
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