

## The Rockwood Review

to-morrow," he said; "you can wait till then."

"That's the only dime we've got," muttered Jim.

Billy knew what was the matter, and sighed impatiently. They went on in silence till a good fruit store was reached.

"Just look at the bananas!" said Billy in a tone that thrilled. "Fourteen for a dime—there'd be a dime left."

Jimmie gave one eager, loving glance at their yellow beauty.

"Go on," said Billy's gentle voice; "where's the harm? It isn't like telling a real cram."

Jimmie was red with shame at his own scruples. He kicked savagely at a bit of orange peel and walked on. "There's such a blessed lot of skin on bananas," he said; it's half waste."

Again Billy sighed and walked after him moodily. At the barber's, where at lunch-time they were due, they stopped as usual to admire the rustic cottage that was built up of tobacco, and for chimneys and ornamentations had pipes.

"Jimmie," said Billy again after a deep silence, and this time the emotion of a sudden brilliant idea made his voice quite unsteady, "I'll tell you."

Jimmie looked at him yearningly, yet with suspicion. "What?" he said.

Billy moved up close and spoke in an impressive whisper.

"Let's cut our own hair—it's as easy as snuff. You cut mine and I'll cut yours. That wouldn't hurt anybody. Then they'll ask if we got our hair cut, and of course we can say 'Yes.' It 'ud be a lie to say

'No,' Jimmie—can't you see it would?"

Jimmie's face was brightening like dulled tin beneath a housemaid's leather.

"What could we cut it with?" he said. "We haven't got any scissors."

But Billy was equal to anything now that he had this amount of encouragement. "I'll get the scissors," he said; "you leave it to me. What'll we buy, Jim? Let's go back for that cake," said Billy, wise enough to strike at his iron instantly.

"Won't we be late?" said Jimmie.

"We can easily run," said Billy pushing back and plunging into the shop of delights.

There remained eight cents in each horny young palm when they emerged.

"Peanuts?" said Jimmy; "a cent's worth of peanuts and a cent's worth of cocoanut between us?"

"Um," said Billy, and they entered the fruit store.

"Haven't you got any bananas cheaper than fourteen for a dime?" Jimmie said anxiously to the boy who served them with their nuts.

The boy shook his head. "They're prime," he said, "and only just in. But what about apples?"

"How much are those?" Billy said, indicating a rosy, shining mountain on the counter.

"Them's expensive—quarter a dozen," the boy said; "but if you want something real cheap, now, I've some others, not so red, but good." He opened a case in a corner and displayed untempting rows of hard green apples.