

10 THE BEWILDERED BENEDICT

another. "Couldn't we leave them in the hedge and fetch them afterwards?" I asked, struck by a brilliant idea.

But the boys were not struck by it, and Sophonisba said,

"Oh, Edward, why fuss about money-boxes?"

"They will rattle so," I complained. "Of course you and I know it's only trouser buttons, but he won't, and it seems so frightfully suggestive." I knew that it was meant to be suggestive. The boys saw to it that their boxes rattled realistically while spending the contents as soon as procured. They both ate their cake and had it.

"We can t-t-take them when we get to the s-s-station," said Edward the Second consolingly.

"You must see they do nothin' of the sort," said Sophonisba to me.

"But mine has *All contributions thankfully received*," I sighed.

"Well, mine has *Blessed are the Liberal*," returned Sophonisba, and added, "He'll never notice in all the fuss of arrivin' an' crowds of luggage an' things."

I could only hope for the best. The irregular but distinct red letters were the work of Edward the Second, but it was Billium who had looked the spelling out in the dictionary.

And it was in this guise we went to meet Sophonisba's uncle.