

Academy boys knew it. Indeed, it was surprising how little they did know about Ellis Saunders, in spite of the fact that he had many friends and was one of the most popular boys in school. They could not even have told if he were poor or well off. He dressed neatly, belonged to two or three societies, and always contributed his share to any Academy project.

On the day of the football match the train that left Millboro in the morning was crowded with very hilarious boys. Every academician who could stand on his legs went down to Sheffield, and one or two unfortunate lads who were sick and could not go thought that there was really nothing worth living for.

Ellis Saunders was, perhaps, the only one who did not enjoy himself. He was very quiet and abstracted. His chums concluded he was not feeling well and left him to himself.

When the train reached Sheffield the High School boys were down to receive the 'Invincibles' in state. The two teams greeted each other frantically and then all hurried to the football grounds, for it was almost time for the game to begin.

Sheffield was rather a small village, but there were a great many people in it, judging from the crowd that was around the grounds. Everywhere Ellis encountered faces he knew. He nodded pleasantly and sometimes stopped to speak, but his eyes roved over the scene as if seeking for something else. Presently he gave a little sigh of relief.

'She can't have come,' he thought. 'I suppose I'm a cad to feel relieved. Still—before all those fellows—and Allan Burgess and Nelson Evans, too! I'll go up and see her after the game is over, of course.'

When the match was fairly on even terms Ellis forgot everything else. The Millboro boys ranged themselves on one side and cheered and shouted themselves hoarse. The Sheffield lads did the same on the other side. The contest was long and stubborn, for the 'Invincibles' found the 'Wayfarers' foemen worthy of their steel. But in the end they vindicated their name and the game was theirs with a score of 8 to 5.

When conquerors and conquered left the grounds the excitement rapidly subsided. Ellis found himself next to Mr. Burgess, who had come down to see the game at Allan's request. He shook hands with Ellis in a friendly fashion, looking keenly at the lad from under his bushy eyebrows.

'Pretty well-played game, eh?' he said, good-humoredly.

Ellis nodded enthusiastically.

'The "Invincibles" would look out for that,' he said proudly.

'Well, I'm ravenously hungry,' interjected Nelson Evans, the son of a Millboro millionaire and the biggest swell, as the boys said, at the Academy. 'Wonder where a humble fellow like myself can get a bite. The "Invincibles" are to be lunched by their friends, the enemy, but we rag-tag and bob-tail must forage for ourselves.'

'Here comes Mother Bunch,' exclaimed Bert Macdonald with a laugh. 'She's got a big basket, and I'll warrant there's something to eat in it. Hurrah!'

Ellis looked in that direction with a face suddenly grown crimson. He knew what he would see—a little, stout old wo-

man in an old-fashioned bonnet and shawl, selling cookies to the crowd as she plodded through it.

For a minute he turned away. All his cronies were there, as well as Allan Burgess, who had come up to speak to his father. For one brief instant Ellis was almost tempted to walk swiftly away. The 'old cooky woman,' as the boys were calling her, had not yet seen him.

'I believe I'll go and invest in some of those cookies myself,' said Mr. Burgess. 'They look good—like the ones my mother used to make when I was a little shaver.'

Suddenly Ellis stepped forward and elbowed his way through the crowd. A flush of shame was on his face, but this time it was of shame at himself. His voice was clear and steady when he reached the old cooky woman's side.

'That basket is too heavy for you, mother,' he said gently. 'Here, let me take it.'

He turned and faced the boys squarely.

'Come on, boys, I'm running this thing now. Mother, you must go and sit down over there by the fountain. I'll sell your cakes for you.'

The old woman, whose tired, lined face had lighted up with love and pride, tried to protest, but Ellis put her aside with a tender smile.

'You're tired out as it is. This is my place. I won't let them cheat you,' he assured her, laughingly.

For a minute there had been an amazed silence around them. Then Neil Blair laughed aloud. Ellis heard and lifted his head a little higher. He did not see the furious look that Allan Burgess flashed at Neil Blair before he turned to him and said:

'Give me half a dozen cookies, Saunders, there's a good fellow. I'm so ravenous I can't wait until I get to the spread that the "Wayfarers" have for us. Thank you.'

As Allan moved away, munching his purchase, the other boys crowded around again and bought their cookies. Ellis passed out cakes and changed quarters with his usual easy manner. In a few minutes the basket was empty, and he turned to the little woman by the fountain.

'Come now, mother, we'll go home. I want to spend the rest of my time here with you. You'll excuse me, won't you, boys?'

'Oh, certainly,' said Neil Blair, with a faint sneer in his tones. But Nelson Evans walked up to Mrs. Saunders and held out his hand.

'I want to shake hands with the mother of the smartest boy at Millboro Academy,' he said, heartily. 'He's going to carry off all the honors, and we're proud of him for it, Mrs. Saunders. He's my especial crony, and I'm glad to meet his mother.'

Mrs. Saunders's face flushed with pride.

'Thank you,' she said. 'Ellis is a good boy, and always was. I'm glad to think he's a bit clever, too, and that his classmates like him.'

When Ellis and his mother had gone the other boys hurried off in various directions, and Mr. Burgess, who had been a spectator of the whole affair, found himself alone. He nodded his head several times in a peculiar way. Any one of his business acquaintances, seeing that, would have said:

'Burgess has made up his mind about something.'

The Millboro boys on the train that evening were even more hilarious than in the morning, if that were possible. One or two of Ellis Saunders' former friends avoided him significantly, but the others made no difference, and Ellis understood that most of his friends were worth having. For the first time since he had left the little bakery in Sheffield two years before he was rid of a vague feeling that he was sailing under false colors. He had never before been able to quite free himself of the belief, snobbish though he knew it to be, that if the Academy boys knew of that bakery and the queer, plain little woman who tended it, they would look down on him.

A week later Ellis Saunders was notified that the Steel Manufacturing Company had accepted his application for the vacant position and would expect him to begin work immediately after his graduation. Allan Burgess met him the same afternoon on the campus.

'Congratulations, Saunders. Father has informed me that they've taken you in Wallace's place. Good for you!'

'It is good for me,' said Ellis, frankly. 'But I don't understand how I came to get it. That man from Shattuck now—and Neil Blair.'

'Neil Blair's chances fizzled out finally the football day,' answered Burgess, with his characteristic shrug, 'and by the same token yours went up. Father took a fancy to you that day—said you were a man after his own heart. When he came home from Sheffield you had as good as got the place then. And look here, Ellis, will you ask your mother for her recipe for those cookies? I never tasted such delicious ones, and father says so, too. My mother never can make good cookies, bless her, but she says she'll try to learn if yours will give the recipe.'

'I can give it to you myself,' said Ellis, with a laugh, 'for I've helped mother to make them hundreds of times.'

Boys Who Win.

A former Duke of Argyle, walking in his garden, saw a copy of Newton's 'Principia' on the grass, and, supposing that it had been taken from his library, called to someone to carry it back. Edmund Stone, however, the gardener's son, claimed it. 'Yours?' asked the surprised nobleman, 'Do you understand geometry, Latin, and Newton?' 'I know a little of them,' replied Edmund. The Duke asked how he came to know these things. 'A servant taught me to read, ten years since,' answered Stone. He went on to say that since then he had learned arithmetic, geometry, Latin, and French, without any help, ending with, 'It seems to me that we may learn everything when we know the twenty-four letters of the alphabet.' Here is an example for the boys of the present day: let them follow it!

Autumn Offers.

See the special autumn offers announced in this issue. The boys and girls have the opportunity of securing a premium and at the same time extend the usefulness of the 'Messenger' by circulating it among their friends.