



*The Story of*  
**CHARLIE  
McCARTHY**  
**EDGAR BERGEN**



THE  
BIG-LITTLE  
BOOK

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**Charlie Stared Dismally at the Walls**

# THE STORY OF CHARLIE McCARTHY

## CHAPTER I

### CHARLIE'S SCHOOL DAYS

One sunny September morning Charlie McCarthy opened his eyes and stared dismally at the walls of his bedroom. He didn't jump out of bed, as he usually did, humming gaily as he dressed. Instead he

lay quietly, his auburn head buried in his pillow, and the sparkle was gone from his round, brown eyes.

This was the day which he had been dreading for weeks, the first day of school. His long, happy summer vacation was ended. Instead of playing games and swimming in the ocean, he would be cooped up in a dull school room. Instead of going to the beach and to ball games with his good friend,



**His Long, Happy Vacation Was Ended**

Edgar Bergen, he would have to study tiresome lessons.

He sighed deeply and wished that school had never been invented. He had been so happy, living with Edgar Bergen. He had almost forgotten the miserable, unhappy days, before Mr. Bergen had found him, the days when he was a homeless, little waif, selling newspapers on the street corners. Since Mr. Bergen had given him a



**Edgar Bergen Had Found Him on the Streets**



home, the entire world had changed for Charlie. Everything was perfect, until the first day of school arrived.

Suddenly the door opened and Edgar Bergen stepped into the room. Quickly Charlie closed his eyes and sighed again.

“Wake up, Charlie,” Mr. Bergen called cheerfully. “It’s time to dress for school. You mustn’t be late the very first morning.”



**“Wake up, Charlie.”**

"I don't think I can go to school today. Maybe I'll never be able to go to school at all," Charlie groaned in a weak, small voice.

"Why, Charlie, what in the world is the matter with you?" Mr. Bergen asked, walking to the bed and staring down at the boy.

"That's what I'd like to know," Charlie moaned. "What can be the matter with me? I feel funny all over. I never felt like this before."



**“I Don’t Think I Can Go to School Today.”**

“You mean that you’re suffering pain, Charlie?” Mr. Bergen asked.

“It’s worse than pain,” Charlie mumbled. “It’s agony, terrific agony. I ache all over. My bones throb. My muscles burn. My head feels like a balloon. It’s ex-ex-ex-cruciating, that’s what it is, excruciating.”

“Well, well, that’s too bad, Charlie,” Mr. Bergen said, a sudden twinkle in his eyes. “If that’s the



**“My Head Feels Like a Balloon.”**

case you'd better stay in bed and I'll call the doctor."

"Oh, don't go to that trouble, Mr. Bergen," Charlie protested quickly. "I'm afraid no doctor can do me any good. All I need is rest and quiet and maybe some breakfast. Just a little breakfast, you understand, Mr. Bergen. Just a very small plate of bacon and eggs and a tiny slice or two of toast and a glass of milk. Of course, you



**"I'll Call the Doctor," Said Mr. Bergen**



might add a little jam and some cereal, if you think I should have more nourishment. I'll try to force the food down my throat, if you think best. And then, after breakfast, if you'll bring me my airplane and adventure magazines, I'll stay in bed and rest. That will do me more good than any doctor."

"I'm sure it will, Charlie," Mr. Bergen agreed, walking toward the door. "It's too bad that you



**“All I Need Is Rest and Quiet.”**

have to be sick today of all days.”

“It surely is too bad,” Charlie echoed, closing his eyes peacefully, “but I guess the school can manage to get along without me.”

“I wasn’t thinking of the school,” Mr. Bergen said.

“What were you thinking of?” Charlie asked, opening his eyes.

“Well, I was thinking about those speedboat races that you’ve been so anxious to see. I had plan-



**Mr. Bergen Understood Perfectly**

ned to take you to the races after school this afternoon. And I had a little surprise for you, too. Speed Williams, the best of all the racers, had promised to take us for a little spin in his boat. I knew that you would enjoy that. But, since you are suffering such excruciating pain and feel that you must stay in bed, we'll have to forget about the races. I'll send up your breakfast, Charlie."



**Charlie's Pains Mysteriously Left Him**

Then he was gone, closing the door gently behind him.

For a brief moment Charlie stared at the spot where Mr. Bergen had stood. Suddenly he jumped out of bed and swiftly began to dress.

A few minutes later he sauntered into the dining room, where Mr. Bergen was eating breakfast and reading the morning newspaper.

“Hello, Mr. Bergen,” Charlie



**He Jumped out of Bed**



said gaily, "Nice day, isn't it? Have you noticed what a lovely day it is?"

"Why, Charlie, this is a surprise!" Mr. Bergen exclaimed, putting down the paper and looking at the boy. "I thought you were staying in bed. The cook is preparing your breakfast now."

"I thought I'd save her the trouble of carrying that heavy tray all the way upstairs. I don't like



**“Nice Day, Isn’t It?”**

to make extra work for anyone,” Charlie said, wriggling uneasily.

“But your throbbing bones and burning muscles—,” Mr. Bergen began.

“Oh, they’re much better,” Charlie said airily. “In fact, they’ve practically disappeared. It’s almost a miracle, Mr. Bergen, what happened to my pains. They came in a flash and left in another flash.”



**“They Came in a Flash and Left in a Flash.”**

“That’s splendid, Charlie. You’ve had really miraculous recovery.”

“I thought that you’d feel that way about it, Mr. Bergen,” Charlie said as the smiling cook placed his breakfast before him. “I decided that, pain or no pain, I must do my duty and go to school. I owe that much to you, after all you’ve done for me. If you want me to be educated, Mr. Bergen, I’ll get educated or bust.”



**"I Must Do My Duty."**

“That’s a fine spirit, Charlie. I’m proud of you. I think that you’re going to like school much better than you think you are.”

“And do you think that I’m going to like the speedboat races better than I think I will, Mr. Bergen?” Charlie asked, his round face lighted with a bright smile, his brown eyes twinkling.

“I’m sure you will,” Mr. Bergen answered him smiling, too.



**“Do You Think I’ll Like the Speedboat?”**

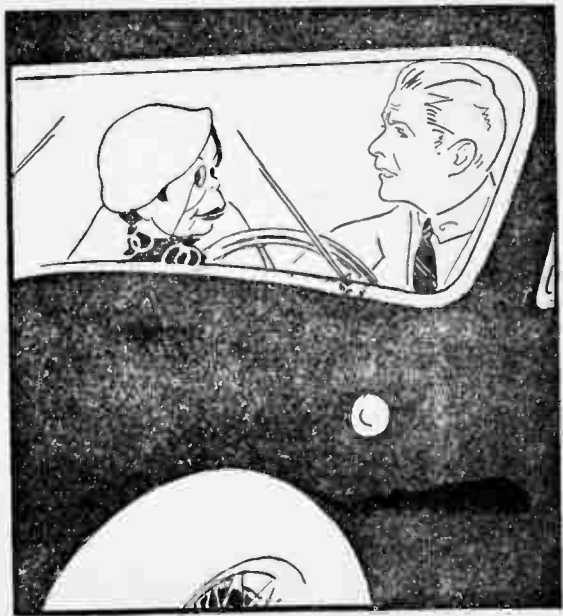


So Charlie departed merrily for his first day at school.

Later that afternoon he hurried home to meet his friend and guardian.

“How did you like school, Charlie?” Mr. Bergen asked as they drove toward the beach and the speedboat races.

“Fine! Wonderful! It was everything you said it was, Mr. Bergen. In fact, it was even better



**They Drove Toward the Beach**

than you said it was," Charlie cried enthusiastically.

Every morning Charlie walked happily to school, his books under his arm, a gay whistle on his lips. Every evening he returned to his home, bubbling over with stories about the doings of his classmates.

One afternoon, when he returned early from school, he found Mr. Bergen in the living room, waiting for him.



**A Gay Whistle on His Lips**

“Hello, Mr. Bergen,” Charlie called. “I’m as happy as a bird today.”

“I regret that I must dampen your gay spirits, Charlie,” Mr. Bergen said seriously. “There’s a little matter I wish to discuss with you. It’s the subject of your education.”

“Oh, you want to talk about book learning,” Charlie smiled as he spoke, but there was a faint cloud



**“Hello, Mr. Bergen.”**

of worry in his eyes. "You were right, Mr. Bergen. Book learning is a great thing."

"What I want to know is how you've been doing in your school work," Mr. Bergen said, looking sternly at the boy.

"Oh, very nicely, very nicely, indeed," Charlie chirruped, but his eyes fell before Mr. Bergen's steady gaze.

"That's strange," Mr. Bergen



**“How Have You Been Doing in School?”**



spoke slowly. "I have a letter here from the truant officer in this district. He writes that he has no record of your enrollment in any school. He says that he has written you twice, without receiving an answer. What have you to say to that?"

"He's written four times, to be exact," Charlie mumbled, flushing.

"Charlie McCarthy, you don't mean to tell me that you've been



**“Yes, Indeed, I Have Thought of the Future.”**

“What did you say?” Mr. Bergen asked, biting his lips to hide his smile as he looked at the solemn face of little Charlie.

“I said, ‘Charlie, my boy, what’s going to become of you?’ That’s exactly what I said.”

“And what was the answer?” Mr. Bergen inquired.

“Well, do you know, I had myself cornered. There was no answer. I didn’t know what was



**“And What Was the Answer?”**

going to become of me.”

“In these days of keen competition education is very necessary, Charlie,” Mr. Bergen said, putting his hands on the boy’s shoulders. “Remember, knowledge is the power that drives the vehicle of industry. Without education and knowledge, where do you fit?”

“I guess I’m just a trailer,” Charlie admitted sadly.

“Where will you be twenty years



**Mr. Bergen Spoke Seriously**

from now?" Mr. Bergen asked.

"I'll probably be where you are, Mr. Bergen," Charlie replied with a wistful, little smile. "But here's something else I've been thinking about. Study alone won't make you a great man. I believe that experience and travel are fine teachers, too."

"There's truth in that, Charlie."

"I wouldn't trade some of my travel experiences for anything,



**"I'll Probably Be Where You Are."**



Mr. Bergen," Charlie went on, thinking quickly. "Take, for example, last fall when I went grouse shooting in the Scottish uplands with Lord Thittersfield."

"You were grouse shooting in the Scottish uplands last fall?" Mr. Bergen asked, surprise in his voice.

"I was, indeed, and what fun it was!" Charlie sighed loudly.

"Did you have any luck in your shooting?" Mr. Bergen asked, his



**Hunting With Lord Thittersfield**

keen eyes watching Charlie's face.

"Luck!" Charlie chuckled. "I'll say I did. Why, the first day out I got three cocker spaniels. The second day I got a horse and Lord Thittersfield. I don't miss a thing. If it moves, I shoot. If anyone shoots, I move."

"I don't believe you were in Scotland. I don't believe you met Lord Thittersfield. And I don't believe you were ever grouse shooting,"



**"I Don't Miss a Thing."**

Mr. Bergen said severely.

“Oh, come now, Mr. Bergen, don’t be a doubting Thomas. I’ve tried my best to make you believe it, haven’t I? And you’ll have to admit that it was a good story to think up on the spur of the moment,” Charlie grinned.

But there was no answering smile on Mr. Bergen’s face.

“Enough of this nonsense, Charlie,” he said sternly. “Tomorrow



**“Well, It Was a Good Story.”**

morning I'm going to take you to school and make sure that you are enrolled."

"Very well, have it your own way, Mr. Bergen," Charlie sighed.

So the next morning Mr. Bergen marched Charlie to the schoolhouse and stayed until the boy was enrolled in his class and settled in his seat in the schoolroom.

A few days later Charlie came home, clutching a piece of folded



**Mr. Bergen Took Charlie to School**



paper in his hand. He found Mr. Bergen sitting at his desk in the library.

“Things are going very well at school,” Charlie said gaily. “I told one of my teachers that I knew you, Mr. Bergen, and—this may sound silly to you—she asked me to get your autograph for her.”

“My autograph?” Mr. Bergen looked up in amazement.

“Yes,” Charlie told him. “I have



**“Teacher Asked for Your Autograph.”**

the paper here. Just sign your name where the X is."

As he spoke, Charlie put the folded paper on the desk before Mr. Bergen.

"Wait a minute. What's written on this paper?" Mr. Bergen asked.

"Oh, it's nothing," Charlie spoke quickly. "Don't bother to unfold it, Mr. Bergen. Just sign your name. That's all that's necessary."

With one long questioning look



**“Sign Where the X Is.”**

at the flushed face of the boy, Mr. Bergen slowly unfolded the paper. It was covered with penciled words, written in Charlie's handwriting.

“‘My very dear Miss Principal,’ ” Mr. Bergen read in a loud clear voice, “‘Please excuse Charlie for being absent Friday afternoon and please excuse the pencil.’ ”

Mr. Bergen paused and looked accusingly at the boy.



**Mr. Bergen Read the Note**

“So that’s it,” he said slowly.

“Yes,” Charlie sighed in defeat.

“That’s that.”

“So you didn’t go to school Friday.”

Charlie shook his head and gazed at the floor.

“And, by the way, what time did you get to school Thursday morning?”

“Oh, I showed up around ten o’clock,” Charlie answered.



**Charlie Had Skipped School**



“You should have been there at eight-thirty,” Mr. Bergen told him.

“Why? What happened?” Charlie asked quickly, looking eagerly at Mr. Bergen, wondering what unknown excitement he had missed.

“Nothing happened. That’s the time school starts,” Mr. Bergen said wearily. “Where did you go Friday afternoon, Charlie?”

“A very strange thing happened, Mr. Bergen,” Charlie said after

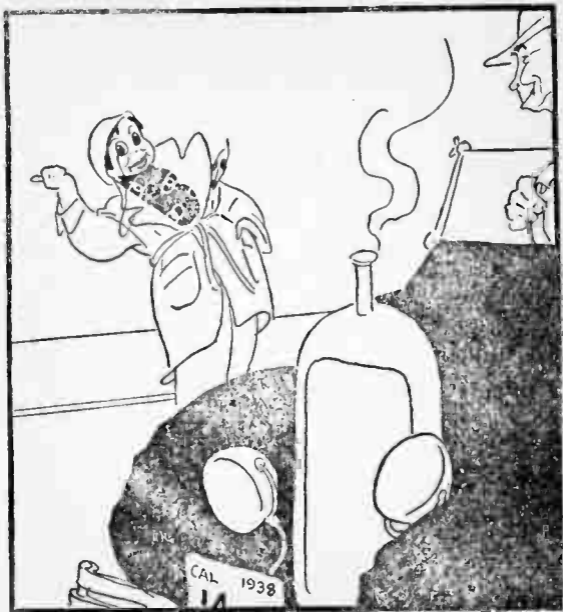


**“We Had a Fire Drill.”**

a moment's hesitation. "We had a fire drill, and I led the line, little soldier that I am. I know that it's cowardly to turn back, so on I marched. I wound up at the beach."

"But the beach is thirty miles away from the school," Mr. Bergen said quietly.

"That's right. It is. And, come to think of it, I do remember somebody saying, 'Want a lift, buddy?'"



**"Someone Said 'Want a Lift?'"**

“And what about the schoolhouse, Charlie?” Mr. Bergen asked in an ominously quiet voice. “It might have really been on fire.”

“Well, I figured this way. If it was on fire, it would be too hot for me. And, if it wasn’t, it would still be too hot for me,” Charlie answered, shifting uneasily from one foot to the other. “Besides, Mr. Bergen, there’s no use of me trying to go to school if I have to



**"Skinny Never Has the Right Answers."**

sit back of Skinny Dugan. He never has the right answers.”

“Who is this Skinny Dugan?” Mr. Bergen asked.

“You know who he is,” Charlie replied. “I told you that he’s the guy that taught English.”

“Taught English?”

There was bewilderment in Mr. Bergen’s voice.

“Yes. He t’ought English was easy,” Charlie laughed merrily.



**“Who Is This Skinny Dugan?”**



“We had a test the other day, Mr. Bergen, but I’m afraid that I didn’t have the right answers to many of the questions.”

“What questions did you answer wrong, Charlie?”

“One was, name two principal rivers in the United States. I said Old Man River and River Stay Away From My Door.”

“What about the Mississippi and the Missouri?” Mr. Bergen asked,



**"He Tought English Was Easy."**

trying to hide his smile.

“They’re good songs, too,” Charlie answered, grinning.

“What was another question, Charlie?”

“The teacher asked what month had twenty-eight days.”

“What did you answer?”

“I said all of them,” Charlie chuckled. “Skinny could only name one.”

“I’m afraid, Charlie, that you’re



**"They're Good Songs, Too."**

taking the wrong attitude toward school," Mr. Bergen said, his voice serious, his face sober. "You are making it an unpleasant duty."

"It wouldn't be an unpleasant duty, if they would let me follow my own schedule," Charlie told him. "I had a dandy. I took a double gym period, four study hours and three recesses. It was a fine way to start the day. Gym from nine to ten, then a nice cold



**"You're Taking the Wrong Attitude."**

shower, if there was any hot water, and then I was all set for recess."

"But what about studies?" Mr. Bergen interrupted.

"I think I'm going to like Zoology. We learn all about bugs and birds, and teacher said that in a couple of weeks he would let us take a frog apart. You know, Mr. Bergen, that frog business gave me an idea."

"What?"



**“Then a Nice Cold Shower.”**



“I’m going to run a frog farm and sell frogs’ legs,” Charlie told him, his eyes gleaming. “The bigger the frogs are, the more you get for their legs. So I’m going to encourage athletics among the frogs. I may teach them to jump backwards to develop their front legs. I may even cross a frog with a centipede and have the jump on everybody.”

“That’s very interesting, Char-



**"I'm Going to Run a Frog Farm."**

lie," Mr. Bergen smiled, "but I'm afraid that your frog farm will have to wait for some time. The most important consideration now is your education. What are you going to do about your school work, Charlie?"

"I'm going to turn over a new leaf, Mr. Bergen, a nice, fresh, clean, new leaf," Charlie promised. "I'm not going to copy Skinny Dugan's answers. They're wrong,



**Charlie Promised to Turn Over a New Leaf**

anyway. I'm going to think for myself?"

"That's fine, Charlie. But what about skipping school?"

"I'm all finished with that, too, Mr. Bergen. Except when there are fire drills. Then I can't promise what I'll do. You know, people act very strangely when there's excitement, bells ringing and everyone rushing around in circles. But I'll do my best to stay in the



**Which Way to Go?**

schoolyard and avoid temptation.”

“That’s the way to talk, Charlie.”

“And, if I keep my promises, will you do one little thing for me, Mr. Bergen?” Charlie asked.

“Of course. What do you want me to do?”

“Promise that you’ll do it, Mr. Bergen.”

“Very well. I promise.”

“An honorable man never goes back on his promises, does he, Mr.



**“Promise That You’ll Do It, Mr. Bergen.”**



Bergen?" Charlie asked.

"No, Charlie. Never."

"What a relief!" Charlie sighed, a merry twinkle in his eyes. "Then all I want you to do is to write two excuses to the Principal, one for Skinny Dugan and one for me, and take us both to the circus tomorrow afternoon. Remember, you promised, Mr. Bergen."

## CHAPTER II

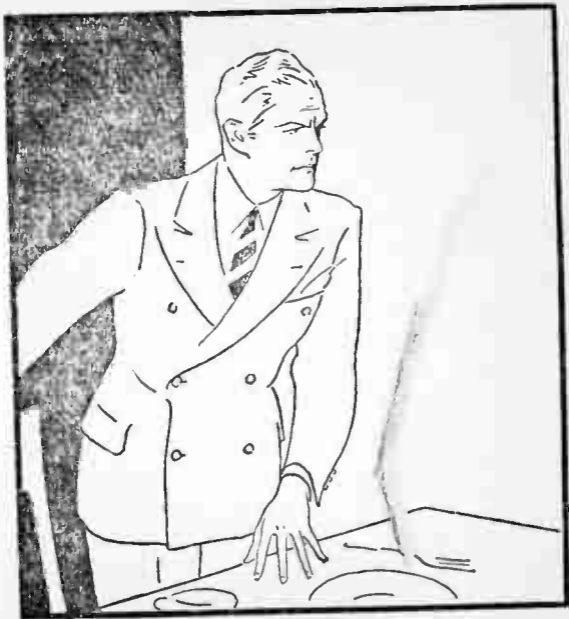
### TWO-GUN McCARTHY

One Saturday morning Charlie McCarthy disappeared. He was not in his bedroom. There was no trace of him in the house or in the garden. When he did not appear at the breakfast table, his friend and guardian, Edgar Bergen, was worried.

“Have you any idea where Charlie is?” Mr. Bergen asked the cook.

There was anxiety in his voice. Charlie was like a beloved younger brother, a mischievous, prankish but lovable, younger brother. Without him the house seemed empty and strangely quiet.

Mr. Bergen had first seen Charlie standing on a snowy, blustery street corner in New York, selling newspapers and shouting through



**Charlie Did Not Show Up**

lips which were blue with cold. There was something so gay and brave about the little boy, in spite of his ragged clothes and the bitter cold of the day, that Mr. Bergen stopped to talk to him. They liked each other immediately, the penniless little orphan and the prosperous, successful man. A short time later Mr. Bergen took Charlie into his home, fed him and clothed him and treated him like a younger



**He Sold Newspapers on the Corner**

brother. Finally the two moved to California, and with the passing of the months, their friendship grew deeper and stronger.

And now Charlie had disappeared!

"I saw Charlie early this morning," the cook answered Mr. Bergen's anxious question. "He was walking toward the garage, and he was sort of limping."

"Limping!" Mr. Bergen shouted.



**"I Saw Charlie This Morning."**



“It’s hard to describe the way he was walking,” the cook said. “He moved as if it hurt him to take every step.”

The worry deepened in Mr. Bergen’s eyes as he walked into the living room.

Suddenly a loud shout shattered the quiet room.

Mr. Bergen turned, startled.

Charlie was standing in the doorway, dressed in full cowboy re-



**A Loud Shout Shattered the Quiet**

galia, broad-brimmed hat, checkered shirt, fuzzy chaps, and boots.

“Yippee!” Charlie yelled. “Two-gun McCarthy is aridin’ the trail. I’m an old cowhide, Mr. Bergen, I mean an old cowhand.”

“Where have you been, Charlie?” Mr. Bergen asked.

“Oh, around and about,” Charlie grinned. “I didn’t feel like sitting down to eat breakfast this morning.”



**"Where Have You Been?"**

“And where did you get that cowboy outfit?” Mr. Bergen inquired, walking toward the boy.

“I bought it, Mr. Bergen,” Charlie said quickly. “It’s my reward for many weeks of hard work and saving.”

“I didn’t know you could save money, Charlie.”

“I ran into pay dirt,” the boy chuckled.

“Where did you buy this suit?”



**"I Ran into Pay Dirt."**

Mr. Bergen asked, carefully examining the outfit.

"In a department store," Charlie answered vaguely.

"You're sure you did?" Mr. Bergen insisted.

"So help me—that's where I got it," Charlie replied.

"Hasn't your friend, Skinny Dugan, a suit just like this one?" Mr. Bergen asked after a short pause.



**“So Help Me—”**



"Oh," Charlie gulped. "Did he have one?"

"Are you sure that isn't Skinny's suit, Charlie?"

"Well—you see—I was in the store," Charlie answered. "The store didn't have my size. So, see? Skinny and I are pals."

"Then it is Skinny's suit," Mr. Bergen stated firmly.

"Well-er-er-yes. He wanted me to wear it, Mr. Bergen."

“Did he say that?” Mr. Bergen demanded.

“No, not exactly,” Charlie admitted finally. “It was this way. I went over to Skinny’s house. Nobody was home and I happened to look in the basement, and I saw his cowboy suit hanging on the clothesline.”

“Yes, go on, Charlie,” Mr. Bergen prompted when Charlie hesitated.

“Well, I thought that somebody might break in and take the suit. So I broke in the window and saved it,” Charlie concluded.

“Then, in other words, you deliberately stole Skinny’s suit,” Mr. Bergen said quietly.

Charlie was silent, scuffing his boots on the rug.

“Well, I guess I did, Mr. Bergen, if you want to put it that way,” he admitted finally.



**"I Was Afraid Someone Might Take It."**

"The suit certainly looks like a stolen one," Mr. Bergen remarked. "It's about three sizes too large for you, I should say."

"The hat fits swell," Charlie told him, "but I must be in the pants too far, because the belt buckle scratches my chin."

"Have you been out riding?" Mr. Bergen asked, watching Charlie as he limped slowly across the room.

"What do you think makes me



**Charlie Was Silent**

walk this way?" Charlie grinned over his shoulder. "I went horse-back riding, and now I've got that old feeling."

"Then you're not much of a horseman, are you, Charlie?" Mr. Bergen smiled.

"Oh, yes, I am," Charlie insisted.

"Well, you certainly haven't convinced me," Mr. Bergen laughed, as Charlie started to sit down, then changed his mind and stood up

"I Went Riding."





again, leaning against a table.

“I couldn’t convince the horse, either,” Charlie confessed ruefully. “I went for a moonlight ride last night, Mr. Bergen.”

“Why did you go at night?”

“The man wants a dollar and a half an hour during the day,” the boy answered.

“How much does he ask at night?”

“He’s not there at night,” Char-

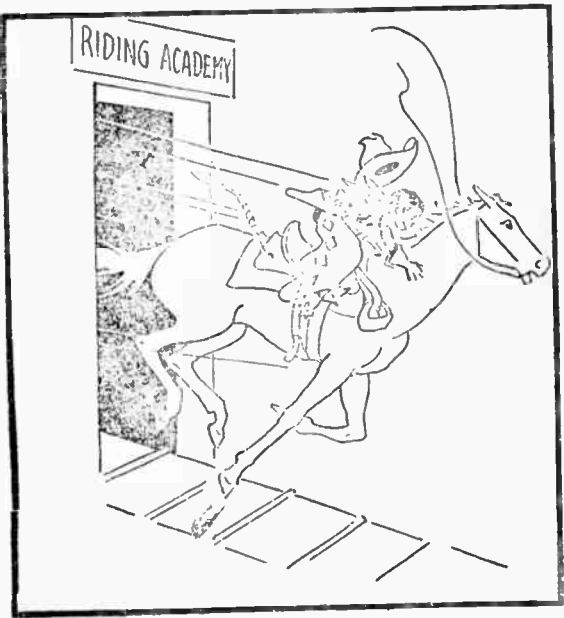


**“Why Did You Go at Night?”**

lie mumbled, a little smile twitching his lips.

“Charlie, you don’t mean that you—,” Mr. Bergen began, frowning.

“Don’t press me, Mr. Bergen. Please don’t press me,” Charlie begged. “I was just walking along, and the first thing I knew I was on a horse. Then the next thing I knew I was off the horse. But I carried on. I wasn’t going to let a



**"First Thing I Knew I Was on a Horse."**

horse make a fool of me.”

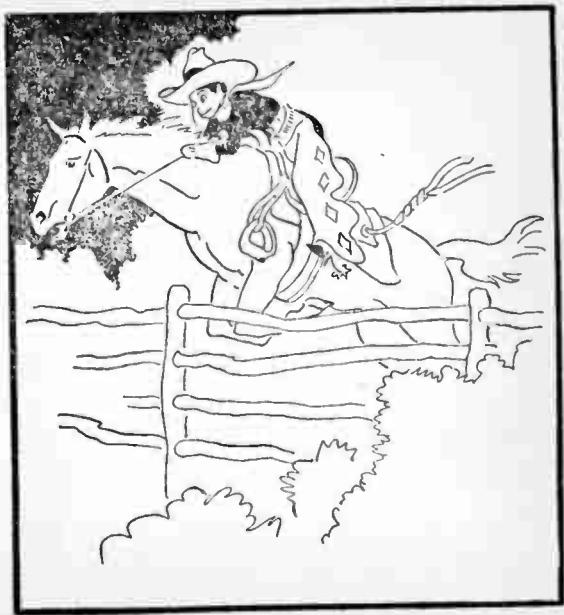
“Of course not, Charlie.”

“And then away we went, like lightning,” the boy continued.

“Suddenly we came to a fence.”

“Did you take the hurdle?” Mr. Bergen asked, his eyes shining with silent laughter.

“I did, but the horse didn’t,” Charlie answered. “That was my first experience in blind flying. I went for half a block before I miss-



**“We Came to a Fence.”**

ed him. Then I looked down and he was gone.”

“Where did he go?” Mr. Bergen laughed.

“I don’t know. He sort of slipped out from between me.”

“That couldn’t have happened to a good rider,” Mr. Bergen told him. “Any riding teacher will tell you that a good rider becomes part of a horse.”

“Which part?” Charlie asked.



**“He Slipped out From Between Me.”**



“Don’t ask silly questions, Charlie. I mean that a good rider rides with the horse. When the horse goes up, he goes up, and vice versa.”

“The trouble was that I went up, and the horse went vice versa,” Charlie giggled.

“What kind of a horse did you have, Charlie? A pacer or a trotter?”

“He was a bouncer,” Charlie replied. Then, suddenly, he laughed.



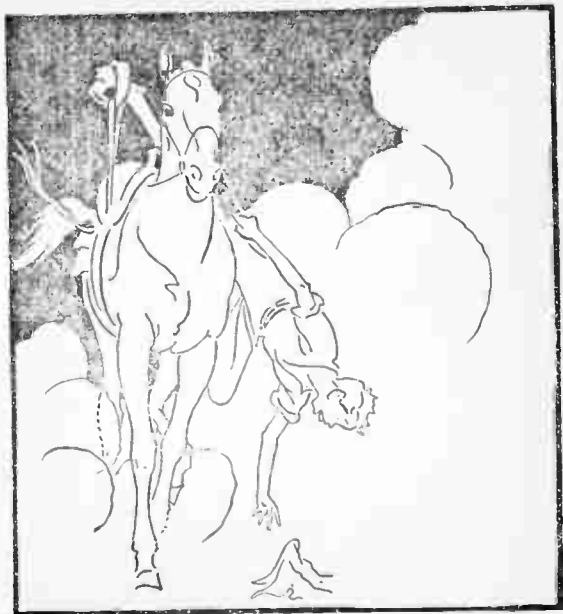
**“What Kind of Horse Did You Have?”** .

“Did I tell you about Skinny Dugan showing me how to ride one day and picking up a handkerchief with his teeth?” he asked.

“Did he do it?” Mr. Bergen smiled.

“Yes, he did,” Charlie told him. “Then he went back and picked up his teeth.”

“Riding is a wonderful sport, Charlie,” Mr. Bergen said, “and it’s not dangerous, if you’re care-



**Skinny Dugan Showed Him a Trick**

ful. There's nothing like riding swiftly over hill and dale. It makes you glad that you're alive, doesn't it?"

"Glad isn't the word," Charlie whispered, rubbing his aching body. "I'm amazed that I'm alive."

"Well, tell me more about last night, Charlie. Did you get back to the stable safely?"

"That's another story, Mr. Bergen," Charlie laughed. "We



**"I'm Amazed That I'm Alive."**

came to a fork in the road and, the horse gave me an argument. He wanted to go to the right, and I wanted to go to the left.”

“So what happened?” Mr. Bergen asked.

“He tossed me for it,” Charlie chuckled. “I went his way and he went mine.”

“I want you to stop this night riding, Charlie,” Mr. Bergen said, suddenly serious. “Are you trying



**"I Went His Way and He Went Mine."**



to be another Paul Revere?"

"Either that or one of the Four Horsemen of the Acropolis," Charlie told him.

"You're getting your words mixed up, Charlie. The Acropolis is a ruin."

"Well, so am I, after last night's ride," Charlie grinned.

"How would you like to go for a little gallop with me this afternoon?" Mr. Bergen asked sudden-



**"The Acropolis Is a Ruin."**

ly, jumping to his feet. "Two or three hours of brisk riding in the fresh air will do us both a world of good. What do you say?"

"I say nothing doing, Mr. Bergen," the boy groaned. "A couple of hours of brisk riding would put me in the hospital. I think my riding days are over. But that doesn't bother me. What's worrying me is whether my eating days are over, too. I don't think



**It Was More Comfortable Standing**

I'll ever be able to sit again."

"You can always use a mantel," Mr. Bergen laughed. "You'll grow tall, standing up while you eat."

"I'd rather be short and sit down," Charlie said. "I'm going to put Skinny's suit back on the clothesline. Two-gun McCarthy has taken his last ride."

Then, with a final "Yippee," he limped from the room toward Skinny Dugan's house.

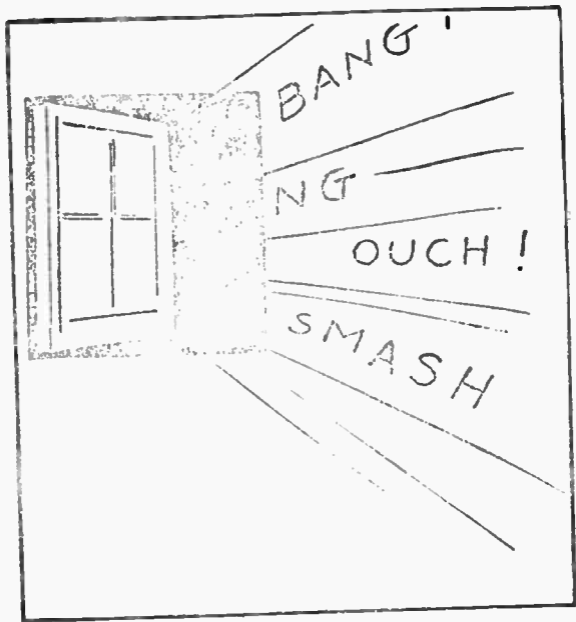
## CHAPTER III

### CHARLIE'S LIMONADE STAND

Charlie McGarity was very busy. Deep, dark mystery shrouded his activities, which were centered in the rear of the garage. No one, not even his best friend, Edger Bergen, knew what was going on behind the closed and locked doors of the garage.

Every morning as soon as he had finished breakfast and collected a large assortment of apples, oranges, and cookies, Charlie vanished into his workshop and stayed there until he was called to his meals. The sound of loud hammering echoed from the garage, punctuated by an occasional howl of pain, when the hammer struck Charlie's fingers instead of the nail.

“What in the world are you do-



Loud Noises Came From the Garage



ing, Charlie?" Mr. Bergen asked on the fourth day of the boy's mysterious activities.

"You know what happened to the cat, Mr. Bergen," Charlie said, warningly.

"What cat?"

"The cat that was curious. His curiosity killed him. You're too young for such a fate, Mr. Bergen."

"But can't you give me one little



**"What Are You Doing, Charlie?"**

hint?" Mr. Bergen laughed. "I've never known you to be so busy during a vacation."

"You'll know everything in good time. In fact, you'll know tomorrow morning, when the grand opening will be held. You'll be very proud of me tomorrow, Mr. Bergen. You have told me so often that I should be industrious and stop frittering away my time. Now I'm following your advice."



**"You'll Be Very Proud of Me."**

Mr. Bergen felt a sudden, quick twinge of worry.

"That's fine, Charlie," he said. "But I hope that no one is going to suffer from your sudden spurt of industrious energy."

"Oh, no, no one is going to suffer, except maybe the sofa," Charlie said lightly.

"What sofa?" Mr. Bergen asked, alarmed.

"That old one in the garage, the



**"Only the Sofa Is Going to Suffer."**

one that was full of worm holes and that you wouldn't let me sit on, because it fell down if you touched it," Charlie explained.

"You don't mean that valuable antique sofa!" Mr. Bergen cried.

"It's antique, all right," Charlie chuckled. "It's practically decrepit. It WAS practically decrepit, I should say."

"If you've ruined that sofa, Charlie—"



**“You Don’t Mean That Antique Sofa!”**



“Don’t worry, Mr. Bergen, please,” Charlie interrupted quickly. “And don’t make hasty judgments. You told me, when I had that last fight with Skinny Dugan, that it was very unwise to be hasty. Remember?”

“Yes. But that has nothing to do with the sofa.”

“The sofa is all right,” Charlie said, forcing a bright, reassuring smile. “In fact, it’s better than it



**"The Sofa Is All Right."**

ever was. It has been transformed, changed from nothing into something, if you get what I mean."

"I think I do know what you mean, Charlie. And, if it's what I think it is—"

"Please wait until morning, Mr. Bergen," Charlie begged. "Then you'll find that all your worry has been for nothing. I've only been trying to do my duty. You've



**"I'm Only Trying to Do My Duty."**

spent a lot of money on me. I thought that I'd put my vacation to good use and earn some money of my own to repay you. If worst comes to worst, I can buy you a new sofa, at least."

The next morning Charlie was awake with the first light of dawn. Swiftly he dressed and slipped through the quiet house toward the garage.

A short time later, when Mr.



Charlie Awoke at Dawn

Bergen awakened, he walked to the window and stared in surprise at the sight which he saw on the lawn below him.

The transformed sofa was standing at the edge of the sidewalk, facing the street. Mr. Bergen recognized the carved polished wood. But that was all that he did recognize. The sofa had been changed into a counter, mounted on wheels. Behind the counter



**Charlie and His Lemonade Stand**



stood Charlie, busily arranging a large bowl and several glasses.

Mr. Bergen dressed rapidly and walked across the lawn. Charlie greeted him with a happy smile.

“Good morning, Mr. Bergen,” he cried gaily. “Welcome to the big opening.”

“What is that thing on wheels?” Mr. Bergen asked. “It looks like a lemonade stand.”

“That’s exactly what it is,”



**"Good Morning."**

Charlie announced proudly. "I'm in business now. I'm going to sell lemonade to all passers-by."

He paused as a milk truck rattled down the street.

"Lemonade! Lemonade!" he shouted. "Eight cents a glass. Two for fifteen cents. The more you drink, the less it costs. Two for fifteen. Three for—. Well, lemonade, eight cents a glass."

But the milk truck rolled on its



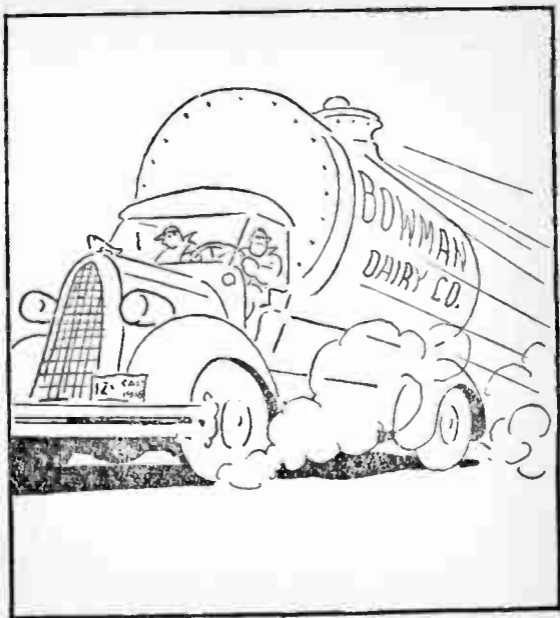
**"Lemonade! Lemonade!"**

way without stopping.

“I didn’t have much luck with my first prospective customer, did I, Mr. Bergen?” Charlie laughed. “But that isn’t going to discourage me. A bad beginning is a good ending, they say. And it’s still very early in the day.”

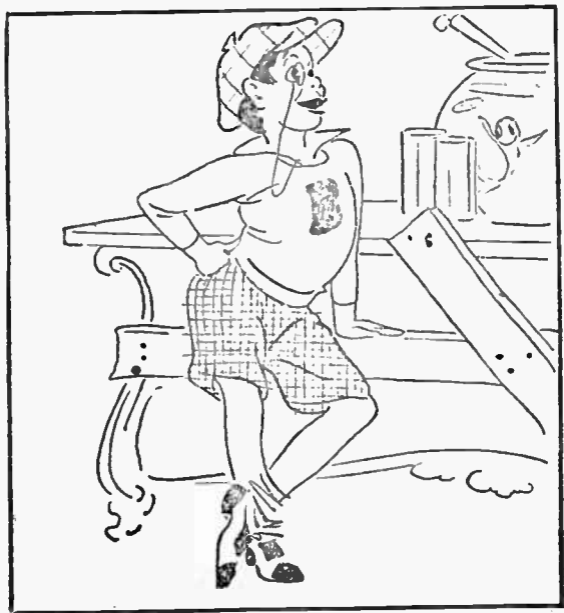
“So that’s what you did with the sofa,” Mr. Bergen muttered, staring at the once-prized antique.

“I told you that you would like



**The Milk Truck Rolled On**

the transformation when you saw it," Charlie said brightly. "It's remarkable, isn't it? Sometimes I think that I must be a genius, Mr. Bergen. Only a genius could change worthless wood into money-earning lumber. Besides, when my business outgrows this small stand, I can put the sofa back together again. It'll be just as good as it was before, which wasn't very good. You'll have to admit that,



**"Sometimes I Think I Must Be a Genius."**



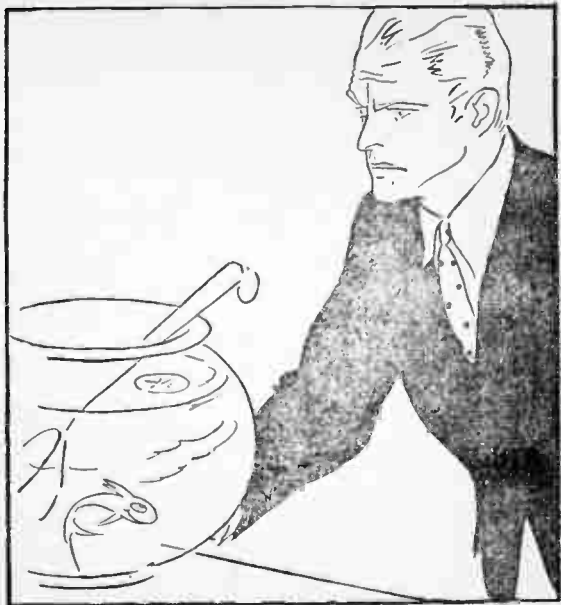
Mr. Bergen. Now why don't you buy a glass of lemonade to start the day?

"Is it sanitary?" Mr. Bergen asked, moving closer to the large bowl on the counter.

"Of course it is," Charlie answered.

"Where did you get that bowl?" Mr. Bergen asked suddenly.

"From a friend of mine," Charlie replied vaguely.



**“Where Did You Get That Bowl?”**

“It looks like my fish bowl,” Mr. Bergen exclaimed.

“Well, you’re my friend, aren’t you?” Charlie smiled.

“That looks like a gold fish in the bottom of the bowl,” Mr. Bergen went on, peering into the bowl.

“I could swear I cleaned it out,” Charlie cried. “That’s not a gold fish, Mr. Bergen. That’s a piece of orange peel.”

“It still looks like a gold fish to



**“That Looks Like a Gold Fish.”**

me,” Mr. Bergen stated flatly. “And, remember, Charlie, you must put the sofa together again and return the fish bowl, when you close the lemonade stand.”

Then Mr. Bergen walked across the lawn toward the house.

For several days Charlie stood patiently behind his lemonade stand, hailing all the people who passed, shouting his wares in a loud, lusty voice.



**He Shouted His Wares in a Lusty Voice**

Finally, one afternoon, Mr. Bergen sauntered up to the stand.

“How much are you making on your lemonade, Charlie?” he asked, his eyes twinkling.

“It’s hard to say,” Charlie answered, frowning thoughtfully. “Business fluctuates. Some days I make as high as—. Then again it will fall off a little.”

“Answer my question, Charlie. How much do you make?”

"I'm sorry, but I haven't my ledger here, Mr. Bergen," Charlie spoke in a crisp, business-like voice. "The secretary is out to lunch. In round figures it would be around three dollars a day. And that's plenty round. It's about two dollars too much."

"That's what I thought," Mr. Bergen said, shaking his head. "How much have you sold today?"

"Well," Charlie hesitated. "I've



been buzzing right along, buzzing right along.”

“Have you sold any?” Mr. Bergen interrupted.

“No,” Charlie answered briefly.

“You can’t make money unless you sell lemonade,” Mr. Bergen reminded him. “The more you sell, the more you make. The secret is quick turnover.”

“Oh, no, that’s how I lost money yesterday, on a quick turnover,”



**“Have You Sold Any?”**

Charlie told him. "The wind turned the stand over."

"The lemonade looks a little weak," Mr. Bergen observed, peering into the dusty bowl.

"It shouldn't," Charlie said quickly. "There's a lemon in it."

"Did you squeeze it?" Mr. Bergen asked, looking at the yellow lemon which was floating and bobbing in the water.

"Oh!" Charlie exclaimed in sur-



**A Quick Turnover**

prise. "Do you have to squeeze it?"

"Well," Mr. Bergen laughed, shrugging his shoulders. "I'll take a glass, Charlie. How much does it cost?"

"To the general public it's eight cents a glass. But to you, it's only three cents," Charlie answered, lowering his voice to a confidential whisper. "Just keep it under your hat though, will you?"

"You mean that I only have to



**"To the General Public It's 8 Cents."**

pay three cents?" Mr. Bergen asked.

"Yes. I don't make a penny on it at that price. It merely pays for the wear and tear on the lemon," the boy told him.

Quickly Charlie filled a small glass with the almost colorless liquid and gave it to Mr. Bergen. In return, Mr. Bergen gave the boy three pennies.

"Well," Charlie sighed, looking



**"I Don't Make a Penny on It."**



at the pennies, "this represents my profits for today. I showed a profit of five cents yesterday, but I put it back in the business. I bought good will with it."

"You bought good will with the profits?" Mr. Bergen repeated.

"Yes. I bought myself an ice cream cone," Charlie answered.

"And you call that putting the profits back in the business?" Mr. Bergen asked, bewildered.



**"I Bought Good Will With the Profits."**

“Yes, indeed,” Charlie told him, a wide grin spreading over his face. “The ice cream cone made me happy, and I can’t sell lemonade unless I’m happy.”

“Oh, I see,” Mr. Bergen laughed.

“I’m thinking of branching out a little,” Charlie said, after a short silence. “I’m going to add hot dogs to the lemonade and take in a partner.”



**"I'm Thinking of Branching Out."**

“And who is your new partner going to be?”

“Skinny Dugan. He says that he can make elegant hot dogs out of almost nothing. I thought a little variety on the menu might bring in more business,” Charlie told him, his face serious.

“It’s worth trying, at least,” Mr. Bergen agreed.

The next day Charlie and Skinny began their new business venture.



**“Skinny Can Make Elegant Hot Dogs.”**

“How much are we goin’ to charge, Charlie?” Skinny asked, looking at the four weiners, the four stale buns and the half-filled jar of mustard which were his contributions to the partnership.

“Eight cents for lemonade and ten cents for hot dogs,” Charlie decided after a moment’s thought.

“That’s too much,” Skinny objected. “I think we ought to make the hot dogs five cents.”



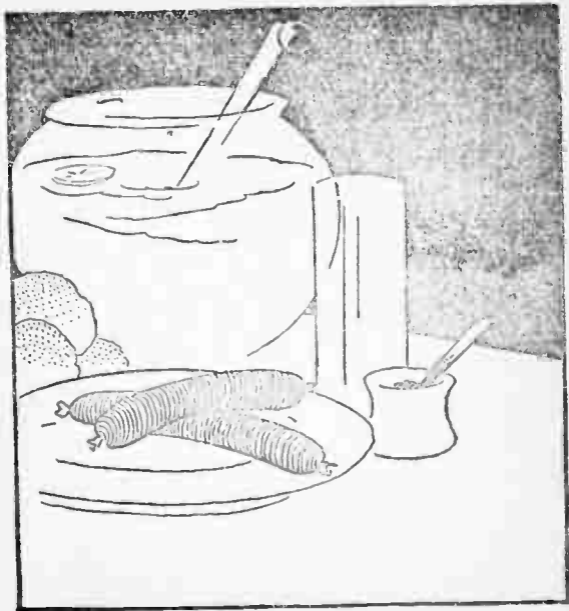
**Skinny Donated Four Weiners**



“Well, maybe you’re right, Dugan,” Charlie admitted. “But let’s compromise and sell them for a dime.”

“That’s better,” Skinny agreed.

All day the two boys watched and waited for customers. But no one answered their loud shouts. Afternoon arrived and still the unwanted weiners lay upon the counter and unbought lemonade filled the huge bowl.



**Business Was Not Very Good**

Late in the afternoon Mr. Bergen walked up to the stand.

“Hello, boys. How’s business?” he greeted them cheerfully.

“Buzzing along,” Charlie and Skinny chorused a little weakly.

“Do you mind if I taste your lemonade?” Mr. Bergen asked.

“Not at all,” Charlie said graciously, filling a glass. “I don’t even care if you buy some.”

“This lemonade doesn’t taste as



**A Customer at Last!**

good as yesterday's," Mr. Bergen said, sipping the liquid.

"I can't understand that," Charlie told him quickly. "It's the same lemonade. Maybe I squoze the lemon too hard."

"Well, I want to buy six lemonades and four hot dogs," Mr. Bergen decided, setting the glass on the counter. "How much will that be?"

"Oh, boy," Charlie cried gleeful-



**They Looked up at Mr. Bergen**

ly. "Six lemonades and four hot dogs. How much is that, Skinny?"

"Let's see," Skinny mumbled. "Six lemonades times eight and four times ten cents apiece."

Eagerly both boys counted, tapping their fingers on the counter, mumbling numbers and words, their young faces wrinkled in frowning effort.

"Are you anywhere near an answer, Skinny?" Charlie whisper-



**“Let’s See, Six Times Eight and—”**



ed after a few minutes.

“I think I passed the answer,” Skinny hissed. “How much you got?”

“No, you tell me first,” Charlie insisted.

“What’s the matter, boys?” Mr. Bergen finally interrupted their frantic figuring. “Can’t you add?”

“It’s kind of a sticker, Mr. Bergen,” Charlie confessed. “Can’t you come back a little later?”

"It's Kind of a Sticker, Mr. Bergen."



"I'm sorry, Charlie. That's impossible. I want six lemonades and four hot dogs and I want them now," Mr. Bergen said firmly.

"Are you sure you need that many all at once? You wouldn't want to buy them one at a time, would you, Mr. Bergen?" Charlie suggested hopefully.

"I want them all and I want them now. How much is it?" Mr. Bergen insisted.

"I Want Them Now."



“What are you willing to pay?”

Charlie countered, his eyes hazy with his desperate efforts at addition and multiplication.

“Whatever is right,” Mr. Bergen answered briefly.

“Well, how much were you planning on spending?” Charlie cried, his eyes brightening with the hope that Mr. Bergen might give him the right answer to the problem.

“That has nothing to do with it,



**“What Are You Willing to Pay?”**

Charlie," Mr. Bergen told him. "I asked you a simple question about the cost of your merchandise. Surely, as a successful business man, you can answer it."

"I'll have to talk to my partner," Charlie said.

Then he turned to Skinny and asked in a desperate whisper, "How much is it Skinny?"

"Eight cents and eight cents and eight cents—," Skinny began.



**"I'll Have to Talk to My Partner."**



"That's not the way to do it," Charlie muttered. "You have to multiply six lemonades times eight cents."

"But he wants four hot dogs, too," Skinny objected.

"Well, then he wants four hot dogs times six lemonades," Charlie mumbled. "I have an answer, but it can't be right."

"What is it?" Skinny asked eagerly.



**Charlie Racked His Brain for an Answer**

"It comes out thirteen hamburgers," Charlie answered hopelessly and wearily. "Maybe I forgot to carry the mustard."

"Put it down on paper," Skinny suggested. "Here's a pencil with an eraser on the end of it."

"What we need is a pencil with a brain on the end of it," Charlie groaned.

"Are you or are you not going to sell me that lemonade and those



**"It Comes out Thirteen Hamburgers."**

hot dogs?" Mr. Bergen called impatiently.

"I'll tell you what I'll do, Mr. Bergen," Charlie said, a sudden light dawning in his eyes. "I'll give you the bowl full of lemonade for a dollar. For another quarter I'll throw in Skinny."

Mr. Bergen laughed.

"Maybe I'd better come back later," he said.

"I hope we'll still be in business,"



**“For Another Quarter I’ll Throw in Skinny.”**

Charlie said mournfully.

“Are you showing any profit at all in this new venture, Charlie?”

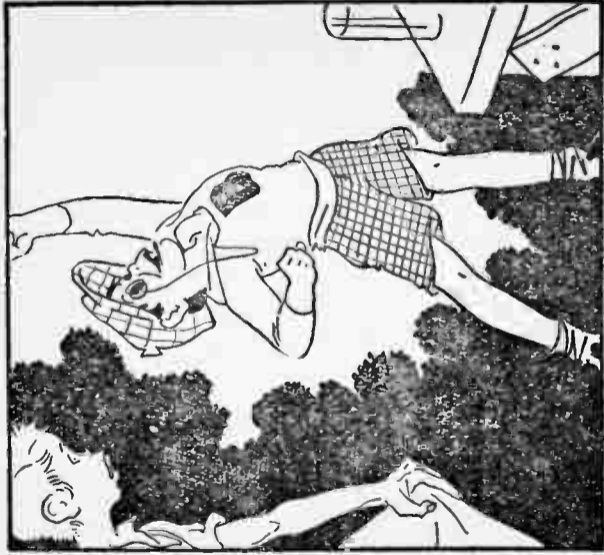
Mr. Bergen asked quietly.

“No,” Charlie admitted sadly.

“If it doesn’t pick up, I’ll starve.”

“You can always drink the lemonade,” Mr. Bergen comforted him.

“I’ll starve before I’ll drink that stuff,” Charlie cried. “Mr. Bergen, as a friend of mine, I’d like to have you as part owner of this lemonade



**"I'll Starve Before I Drink That Stuff."**



stand. Just as a friend of mine, you understand.”

“You mean you need money, Charlie?”

“Must you be so blunt, Mr. Bergen?” the boy asked with a little shudder. “The fact of the matter is that we need a backer for a new lemon. I’ll make you a preferred creditor.”

“What is the advantage of being a preferred creditor?” Mr. Bergen



**“Must You Be So Blunt, Mr. Bergen?”**

inquired, his face serious but his eyes smiling.

“The other creditors won’t know for ninety days that they won’t get their money back, but I’ll tell you right now that you won’t,” Charlie explained, a faint smile flickering across his face.

“Well, before I invest any money in the business, I must see the books,” Mr. Bergen said.

“What kind of books do you like



**"I Must See the Books."**

best, fiction or non-fiction?" Charlie asked, his smile growing brighter.

"I want to see the financial statement of this business," Mr. Bergen replied in a firm voice.

"Oh, then you want fiction," Charlie chuckled. "Here it is, Mr. Bergen, all on one page."

"But this is a blank page," Mr. Bergen cried, looking at the sheet of paper which Charlie gave him.



**“Oh, Then You Want Fiction.”**

“That shows that we are holding our own, no debits and no credits,” Charlie laughed triumphantly.

“What are your assets? Tell me the truth, Charlie?”

“Well, let me see,” the boy drawled, squinting his eyes and frowning thoughtfully. “Lemons, fifteen cents. Sugar, ten cents. Hot dogs, buns and mustard, eleven cents. Charity, thirty cents.”

“What do you mean by that thir-



**The F.E.L.S.O.**



ty cents for charity?"

"It's for a needy cause, Mr. Bergen. The F. E. L. S. O."

"And what is the F. E. L. S. O.?" Mr. Bergen asked.

"The Financially Embarrassed Lemonade Stand Owners," Charlie giggled.

"Well, I'll make you a proposition, Charlie," Mr. Bergen smiled. "I'll give you and Skinny two dollars for your assets and your good



**“It’s a Deal.”**

will, providing that you close up this business immediately, restore the sofa to the condition in which you found it, and return the fish bowl and the gold fish.”

“It’s a deal, Mr. Bergen,” Charlie cried happily. “Come on, Skinny. Let’s get busy. Here’s where we retire from public life.”

## CHAPTER IV

### CHARLIE GOES TO THE DOCTOR

Charlie McCarthy knocked timidly on the door of Edgar Bergen's study.

"May I come in, Mr. Bergen?" he called. "I'm lonesome."

"Of course, Charlie. Come in," Mr. Bergen answered, looking up from the desk, where he was work-

ing. "Have you finished your studying for this evening?"

"I guess I have," Charlie sighed, walking into the room and sitting in a deep leather chair at one end of Mr. Bergen's desk. "I ought to have finished, if I haven't. I've studied so hard that I get the blind staggers every time I look at a printed page. So I decided I'd take a little rest and talk to you."

"I'm always glad to talk to you,



**"I've Studied So Hard."**

Charlie, but I'm very busy now," Mr. Bergen said, smiling affectionately at the boy.

"May I ask what you're doing?" Charlie said curiously, looking at the books and medical instruments piled on the desk in front of Mr. Bergen.

"I'm studying optometry, Charlie. It's a very interesting subject. I even have my ophthalmoscope here with me," Mr. Bergen answer-



**“May I Ask What You’re Doing?”**



ed, pointing to one of the instruments on the desk.

“What did you say you have?” the boy asked, his round eyes growing rounder in bewilderment.

“I have my ophthalmoscope,” Mr. Bergen repeated.

“Oh, yes,” Charlie nodded. “What do you do with it, now that you have it?”

“I use it in my study of ophthalmology,” Mr. Bergen explained.



**"I Have My Ophthalmoscope."**

“Ophthalmology comes from two Greek words, ophthalmus and logia, meaning the study of the eyes.”

“I see,” Charlie nodded again, pretending to understand. “That gadget, whatever you call it, looks exactly like a strufa.”

“What’s a strufa?” Mr. Bergen asked, surprised.

“It comes from the Latin word, yaha, which means squirt without splashing, which means nothing,”



**"It Comes From the Latin Word, Yaha."**

Charlie chuckled, his brown eyes twinkling mischievously. "Are you going to be a eye doctor, Mr. Bergen?"

"Not at the present time. But I want to be able to practice, if the time ever comes when I need a new profession, Charlie. One never knows what the future holds. So, just to be safe, I'm continuing my studies. And, while we're on that subject, Charlie, I might suggest



**“You Could Do a Little More Studying.”**

that you could do a little more studying yourself.”

“But I do study, Mr. Bergen,” the boy protested. “However, you won’t ever find me wearing myself out over books, when there’s a chance to go fishing.”

“That’s very poor logic, Charlie,” Mr. Bergen reproved. “If I had thought more of fishing than of studying, where would I be today?”

“I guess you’d be fishing.”



**"But I Do Study, Mr. Bergen."**



“Charlie, you must learn the habits of study,” Mr. Bergen went on seriously. “That is very important in the development of every young person.”

“I have learned them,” the boy cried, pride ringing in his voice. “I was up until after midnight last night, studying.”

“Does it take you that long to do your homework?” Mr. Bergen asked.



**"I Was up Until After Midnight."**

“Well, yes, it does. You see, it’s always almost eleven o’clock before I get home from the movies.”

“That means that you really don’t do much studying, after all,” Mr. Bergen said slowly.

Charlie was silent for a moment, thinking. Suddenly his face brightened.

“Perhaps you’re right, Mr. Bergen,” he said, “but, as a budding eye doctor, you should know that too



**"It's Almost Eleven When I Get Home."**

much studying is very bad for the eyes.”

“I guess I’d better examine your eyes, Charlie,” Mr. Bergen decided, picking up the ophthalmoscope.

“No, no,” Charlie cried, standing up and edging quickly toward the door. “I left myself open for that. I see my mistake now. But I don’t need glasses, Mr. Bergen.”

“Sit down, Charlie, and listen to me. How many people who really



**"I Guess I'd Better Examine Your Eyes."**

need glasses are going without them? How many do you think?"

"About half as many as you're going to say," Charlie answered, returning to his chair and sitting gingerly on its edge.

"Thousands of people, tens of thousands, are wandering the streets today, not realizing that they are only half-seeing the world around them," Mr. Bergen went on, leaning across his desk and



**Charlie Sat on the Edge of the Chair**



looking at the boy. "Tell me, Charlie, do you ever see spots?"

"Of course, I do. When I look at spots," Charlie replied.

"How close do you hold your books to your eyes, when you read?" Mr. Bergen continued.

"At arm's length, the farther away, the better," Charlie chortled.

"Then you need glasses," Mr. Bergen decided.

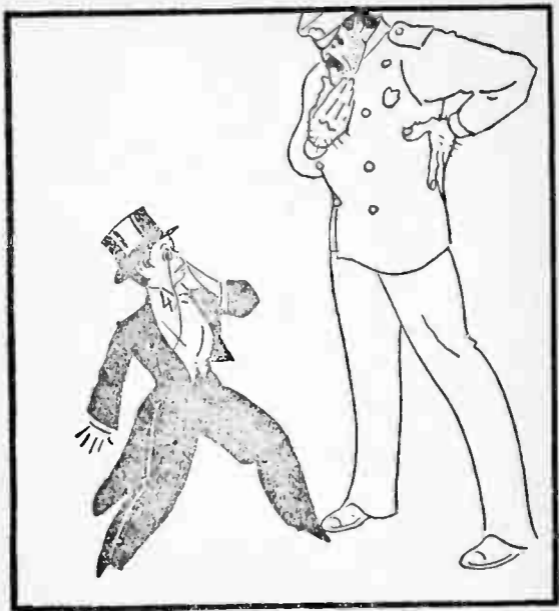


**"That's Why I Wear This Monocle."**

“Either that or a longer arm,” Charlie grinned. “I’ll admit that my right eye is a little weak. That’s why I always wear this monocle. But I can usually see the sun on a clear day.”

As Charlie spoke, he lightly touched the small round eyeglass which he wore in his right eye.

“Do you have trouble bumping into things?” Mr. Bergen persisted.



**"I Bumped into the Truant Officer."**

“The trouble starts tomorrow,” Charlie sighed.

“What trouble starts tomorrow?” Mr. Bergen echoed.

“The trouble from bumping into things,” Charlie explained. “You see, I bumped into the truant officer today when I was innocently eating an ice cream soda at the corner drug store, instead of listening to a tiresome lecture on medieval history.”

“So you’ve been skipping school again!” Mr. Bergen exclaimed in weary disgust. “Well, we’ll take that up later. At the present time, I’m more concerned with your eyesight. Let me examine your eyes, Charlie.”

“Now, please Mr. Bergen, don’t coax me. I know I have good eyes. That’s one of the few things I do know.” Again Charlie stood up and moved toward the door.

But Mr. Bergen stopped him, and taking his arm, led him back to the desk.

“An examination with the ophthalmoscope will tell us exactly how good your eyes are,” Mr. Bergen said, picking up the instrument and lifting it toward Charlie’s eyes. “Just look into this little hole, Charlie.”

“I know what you’re going to do,” the boy giggled, pulling away.



**Mr. Bergen Took His Arm**



"You're going to squirt water on me. I've seen that trick before."

"Be serious, Charlie. This is a very important matter. Please look into the little hole, as I directed."

"Right here?" Charlie asked, hesitating and pointing toward the opening in the instrument.

"Yes."

"Will I see pretty pictures?" Charlie whispered.



**"You're Going to Squirt Water on Me."**

“Don’t be silly. This is an examination. Now do as I told you.”

“Very well,” Charlie sighed resignedly. “I’ll do it, but I’ll feel like a fool.”

Slowly he stared into the hole in the ophthalmoscope.

“I can’t see a thing,” he cried in disappointment. “Do I have to put a penny in first, the way you do in those picture machines down at the beach?”



**“Very Well. I’ll Do It.”**

“Hold still, Charlie,” Mr. Bergen said firmly. “I want to study your eyes.”

Charlie obeyed, while Mr. Bergen peered into the instrument.

“Do you see anything interesting that I’m missing?” Charlie asked, after a long silence.

“Open wide,” Mr. Bergen ordered suddenly, ignoring the boy’s question.

Obediently Charlie opened his



**“Open Wide,” Mr. Bergen Ordered**

mouth and said, "Ah-h-h."

"Open your eyes, not your mouth," Mr. Bergen cried in exasperation.

"You didn't say my eyes. Why don't you say what you mean, Mr. Bergen? How can I tell what you want me to do unless you tell me?"

"Silence!" Mr. Bergen shouted.

After several moments, in which there was no noise in the room, except Charlie's loud sighs, Mr. Berg-



**“Your Eyes, Not Your Mouth.”**



en put down the instrument and looked at the boy.

“I was right,” he said slowly. “You’re going to have to wear glasses.”

“You don’t say!” Charlie exclaimed. “Imagine me with glasses! I’ll look absolutely silly.”

“No, you won’t,” Mr. Bergen reassured him. “There are so many smart, good-looking styles today that one is sure to be becom-



**“You’ll Have to Wear Glasses.”**

ing to you. What kind would you like?"

"Something I can see through," Charlie answered.

"Of course," Mr. Bergen said impatiently. "What I mean is, what style of glasses do you want? Would you like nose glasses?"

"No, eye glasses," Charlie told him, his eyes gleaming with mischief as he saw the deepening flush on Mr. Bergen's face.



**Charlie's Brown Eyes Twinkled**

"I'm sorry to say you're being very childish and silly, Charlie. Perhaps oxfords might suit you."

As he spoke, Mr. Bergen studied Charlie's round, little face through half-closed eyes.

"Oxfords?" Charlie tittered merrily. "How about a low-heeled tortoise shell, Mr. Bergen?"

"It always takes a long time to get tortoise shell rims after you've ordered them," Mr. Bergen said.

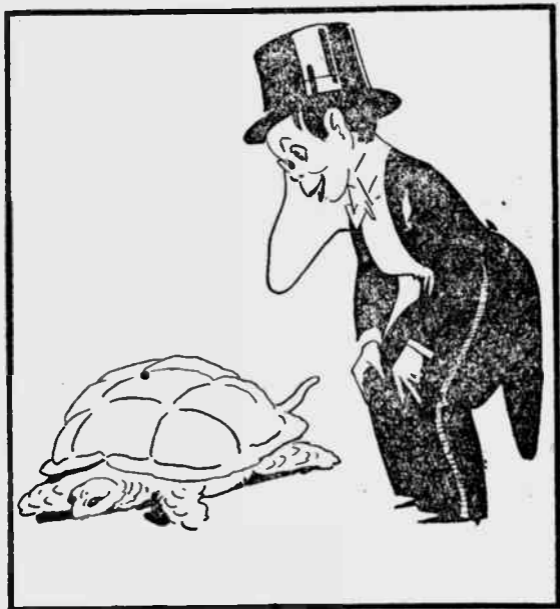


**Mr. Bergen Studied Charlie**

"Well, you know how slow tortoises are," the boy remarked. "Surely you haven't forgotten the famous race between the tortoise and the hare. Tortoises may be slow, but they always get there eventually. I'm willing to wait for ten years for my glasses, if necessary."

"This is no time for joking, Charlie."

"All right, I'll be serious then,



**"You Know How Slow Tortoises Are."**



Mr. Bergen. How much will a pair of glasses cost?"

"Various prices, Charlie, according to the style of rims you select."

"Will I get a piece of flannel free?" the boy asked eagerly.

"Yes. They'll give you the cleaning cloth free."

"You're sure that I'll get a piece of flannel for nothing with any pair of glasses I choose?" Charlie repeated.



**“Will I Get a Piece of Flannel Free?”**

"Yes, yes, of course," Mr. Bergen told him.

"I want the flannel, but how am I going to pay for the glasses?" Charlie sighed.

"Don't worry about that Charlie. I intend to give you the glasses."

"Will you give me a piece of flannel, too?" Charlie asked.

"No," Mr. Bergen declared wearily. "If I give you the glasses, that's enough."



**“How Am I Going to Pay?”**

"I knew there was a catch in it," Charlie cried.

"It's more important to get free glass than to get flee frannel," Mr. Bergen said impatiently.

"You mean free frannel. Watch your words, Mr. Bergen," Charlie grinned.

"I mean exactly which I said, flee frannel—freee frannel—"

"Oh, fribblesticks," Charlie interrupted laughing. "Give me the



**"Oh, Fribblesticks," Charlie Laughed**

flannel, Mr. Bergen, and I'll flee back to my studies."

"Sometimes I wonder what's going to become of you, Charlie," Mr. Bergen sighed, looking at the smiling boy. "I don't like to lose my patience but—"

"I know, Mr. Bergen, and I'm sorry," Charlie said contritely. "I'll wear any old glasses you give me. I'll even put on blinders, if you say so. And don't you worry about



**"I'm Sorry, Mr. Bergen."**



what's gcing to become of me. Wherever you go, I'll go. Whatever you do, I'll do. We're pals, aren't we, Mr. Bergen?"

"You bet we are, Charlie," Mr. Bergen cried heartily, standing up and holding out his hand. "Pals Forever."

Smiling happily, the small, red-headed boy with the bright eyes, and the tall serious young man clasped hands across the desk.



**"Pals Forever."**

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**BUCK JONES** and the *Two-Gun Kid*  
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**OSWALD RABBIT Plays G-Man**

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The Beasts of **TARZAN**

**KAZAN**, Story of a Great Dog (James Oliver  
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**JUNGLE JIM** and the Vampire Woman

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(World 1,000,000 Years Ago)

**INTERNATIONAL SPY: Doctor Doom** Faces  
Death at Dawn

**SMILIN' JACK** and the Stratosphere Ascent

**FLASH GORDON** in the Water World of  
Mongo

**PAT NELSON**, Ace of Test Pilots

**JARAGU** of the Jungle (Rex Beach)

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**PEGGY BROWN** and the Runaway Trailer

**MARY LEE** and the Indian Bead Mystery

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*The Story of* ★  
**CHARLIE** ★  
**MCCARTHY** ★  
*and* **EDGAR BERGEN**



THE  
BIG-LITTLE  
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