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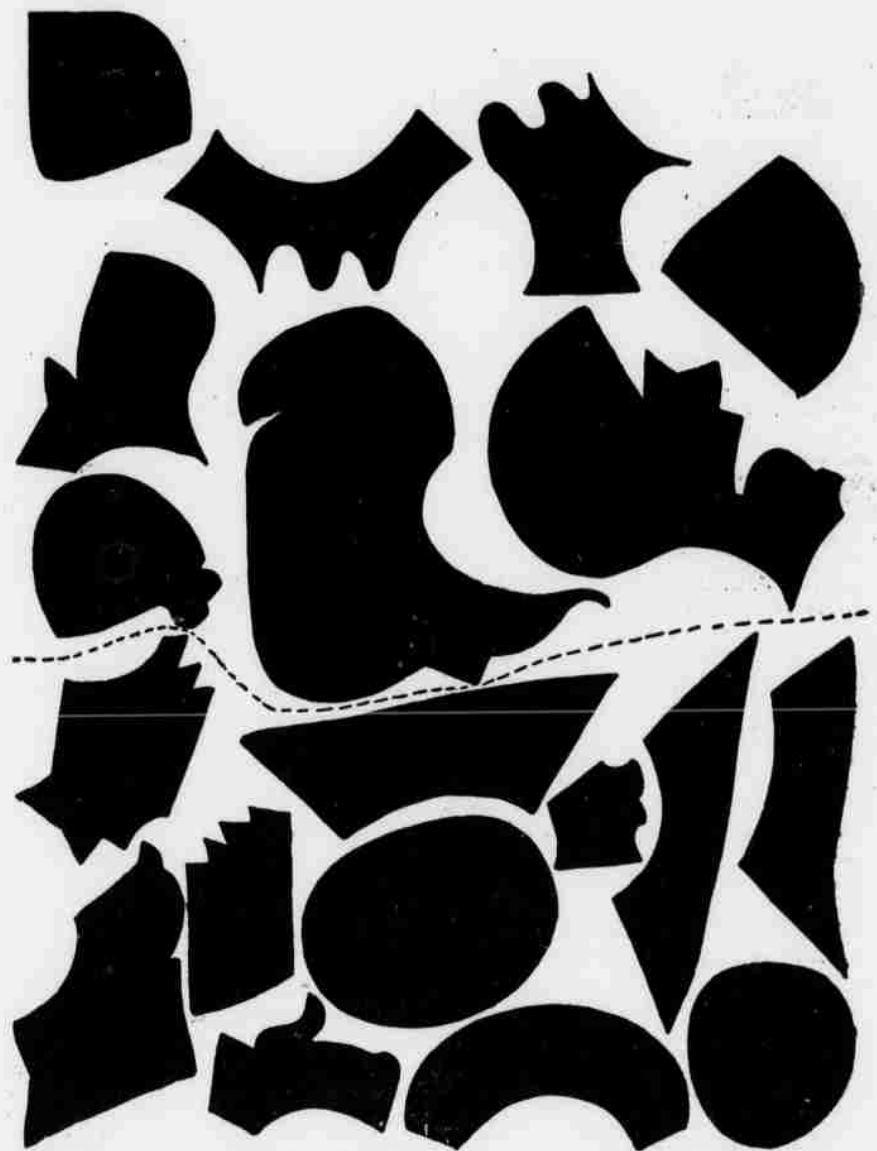
SEEN the folks who've moved into Nobles' house on the hill!" mysteriously remarked Skinny.

"No, what are they like?" came in chorus from the rest of the "Bloody Robbers."

Thus far the meeting in the loft of the corner shop of Billy Mumford's uncle had been rather uninteresting. Since the memorable celebration on Halloween very little had happened to occupy the attention of the band. But Skinny's question had thoroughly aroused their curiosity.

by the long ride, with his face streaked with coal dust and eyes full of cinders, he had been meekly led forth to the bus by his energetic aunt. But "Shorty," as he had always been called, had been a person of great importance in his hometown. And Homeville was soon to learn that he was not to be despised. As for being "scared," those who came to know Miss Johnson grew more afraid of her than ever Mervin had been.

A few weeks passed, and then at another meeting of the "Bloody Robbers" the problem of the "new chap" came up again.



WHAT IT IS?—ANSWER NEXT WEEK.

Skinny leisurely kicked his heels against the sides of the barrel upon which he was perched, and remained silent for several moments.

"Well, can't say that they look like much," he murmured at last, when every one had become desperate to learn the news.

"There's an old lady and there's a boy," he went on. "The lady's as fierce looking as Aunt Abbie Harn, and the fellow's a bow-legged little chap, who looks as though he'd scare at a mouse. Was waitin' for my papers that come on the evenin' train, and before I started to serve on my route I waited at the station for a while. So I saw the lady and the fellow come from the train, get in the bus and drive for Red Hill."

In truth, Mervin Jonson's entry into Homeville had by no means been of a triumphant nature. Thoroughly tired

Skinny, as usual, introduced the subject that was uppermost in all their minds. "Say," he began, "that fellow Mervin Johnson doesn't seem such a very bad sort. You know he's got a dandy pony cart, an' while I was comin' from the spring the other day he came along in back of me, an' I'll be jiggered if he didn't ask me to drive the rest of the way with him. He's got lots o' nice things, besides—things that'd come in pretty good for the 'Bloody Robbers' if he was a member."

"Naw, we don't want 'im," growled Billy; "he's too blamed stuck up."

"There's where you're not givin' him a chance," returned Skinny, quickly. "He's treated you cool-like because you've been mighty chilly to him. I tell you it's pretty hard to get into a strange town, where you ain't got no friends, and nobody wants to be friends with you."