PENROD

by

Booth Tarkington

Part 1

Booth Tarkington

Booth Tarkington (1869-1946), American playwright and author, won the Pulitzer Prize in 1919 for his novel *The Magnificent Ambersons* (1918) and again in 1922 for *Alice Adams* (1921), later adapted to the screen starring Katherine Hepburn.

Exploring the realms of middle-class, middle-America, romantic illusions and the power and corruption of wealth, Tarkington became a leading voice of his times through his memorable characters and social commentary in his novels and plays. Praised by the father of American realism William Dean Howells, Tarkington's Growth Trilogy, based on America's Industrial Expansionism started with *The Turmoil* (1915), then *The Magnificent Ambersons*, followed by *The Midlander* (1924). Dozens of his works were adapted to the stage and screen during his lifetime and as recently as 2002.

Newton Booth Tarkington was born 29 July 1869 in Indianapolis, Indiana, the son of Elizabeth and John Stevenson Tarkington, a lawyer and judge. He first attended Purdue University in Lafayette, Indiana, then Princeton in New Jersey where he was editor of the *Nassau Literary Magazine*. Ever the raconteur, he was immensely popular at school, and later earned an honorary Doctor of Letters in 1918. After having started writing at a very early age short stories and plays, he always knew he wanted to be a writer

and upon finishing school put pen to paper in earnest.

Not disheartened by numerous rejections, Tarkington's persistence would soon pay off. His first novel *The Gentleman from Indiana* was published in 1899, followed by his historical romance *Monsieur Beaucaire* in 1900, which would later be adapted to the screen starring Rudolph Valentino. In 1902 he married Laurel Fletcher, but they divorced in 1911. The next year he married Susanah Kiefer Robinson, and though they would have no children, Tarkington was the ever doting uncle to his nephews. Their antics combined with his own fond boyhood memories, and his sharp wit and imagination resulted in his *Penrod* series; quintessential all-American boy tales. In a similar vein to Mark Twain's Tom Sawyer, *Penrod* (1914), *Penrod and Sam* (1916) and *Penrod Jashber* (1929) are similarly clever and comical adventures of mischievous youth constantly challenging the authority and perceived oppression of their elders. *"..for Penrod had come into his twelfth year wearing an expression carefully trained to be inscrutable. Since the world was sure to misunderstand everything, mere defensive instinct prompted him to give it as little as possible to lay hold upon."--Penrod*, Ch. 1

First serialized in the *Saturday Evening Post*, *The Flirt* (1913) was followed by *Seventeen* (1916), another of his many works to be adapted to the stage and screen. In 1922 *Literary Digest* named Tarkington *"America's greatest living writer"*. With the success of his best-selling novels in North America and Europe, where he also

travelled often, the Tarkingtons spent the summers at their estate in Kennebunkport, Maine, which inspired his *Mirthful Haven* (1930) and *Marv's Neck* (1932). Although he suffered from eye problems for a while, he continued to produce novels, dictated to his secretary. Other titles published during this period were *Women* (1925), *The Plutocrat* (1927), and his collection of autobiographical essays *The World Does Move* (1928). He also developed a keen interest in 17th and 18th century art of which he wrote about in *Some Old Portraits* (1939) and *Rumbin Galleries* (1934).

Writing still in the decade before his death, titles include *Little Orvie* (1934), *Presenting Lily Mars* (1933), *Mister Antonio; a Play in Four Acts* (1935), *The Lorenzo Bunch* (1936), *The Fighting Littles* (1941), *The Heritage of Hatcher Ide* (1941), *Kate Fennigate* (1943), *Image of Josephine* (1945), and *The Show Piece* (1947). Booth Tarkington died on 19 May 1946 and lies buried in the Crown Hill Cemetery of Marion County, Indianapolis, Indiana.

The Development of Modern Indiana

The issue of reconstruction for the southern states largely dominated the decade following the Civil War. Reconstruction concerned the whole country and how a nation was going to deal with a new united country.

Reconstruction referred to the plans of the national government to help rebuild the South, and Indiana's leaders played an important role to form such policies. The main issue in reconstruction was the question of how to deal with a large population of freed Blacks and whether or not Blacks should have the right to vote. Some leaders thought that the freed Blacks should have the right to vote. Still others thought that they should have the right to vote immediately and that the administrators of the former Confederate Government should be punished, and even executed. This group became known as the radical Republicans and included such Hoosiers as Schuyler Colfax (South Bend), Speaker of the House of Representatives and George W. Julian, a staunch abolitionist and a representative of eastern Indiana.

On the conservative side were those who favored a gradual change for the South and opposed the ideas of the radicals. Daniel W. Voorhees, from Terre Haute and Senator Thomas A. Hendricks from Indianapolis were the leading Hoosiers in Congress who favored a less violent attitude towards the defeated Confederacy.

However, the radicals, and the radical point of view, was a view held by a majority of representatives and their policies went into effect. One of their main accomplishments was the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment.

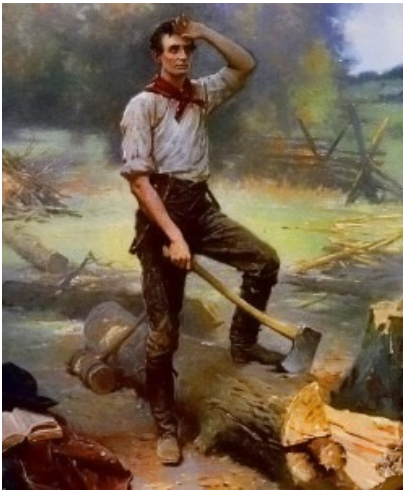
The Fifteenth Amendment

Indiana's General Assembly had already ratified the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Amendments that gave Blacks their freedom and rights of citizenship. There had been great difficulty among the states in getting the 13th Amendment passed, however the 14th passed with little or no discussion.[1]

However, in 1869, when the 15th Amendment (that gave Blacks the right to vote) was due for ratification, there were many heated debates in the Indiana General Assembly. The Republicans controlled the legislative body, but some Democrats were necessary in order to actually be able to vote on the issue of the 15th Amendment. In protest many Democrats began to resign from the General Assembly and the process of ratification within Indiana came to a grinding halt. A special state election was held and all of those members who had resigned were again reelected to their posts. When the amendment was again brought up for ratification, members of the General Assembly again began to resign in protest. However, the members that were left went ahead and held a vote. The General Assembly still had two-thirds of its members and was legally able to hold the vote. The 15th Amendment was ratified with a majority vote. Later, when the

Democrats gained control of the General Assembly they attempted to recall the passage of the amendment but met with no success.[2]

The Reconstruction Era



The reconstruction policy that the radical Republicans of Congress put into effect for the treatment of the defeated southern states is looked upon today as one of the shameful periods of our collective history—the tragic carpet bagging days. Some of Indiana's representatives in Congress, like Schuyler Colfax and Oliver P. Morton, were among those radical Republicans. Not all Republicans favored the policies enacted by the radicals. The outstanding Republican opponent of such policies was a man who spent 14 years-from the age of 7 to 21-in our state of Indiana. That man was Abraham Lincoln, the 16th President of the United States. President Lincoln had already instituted a just and humane

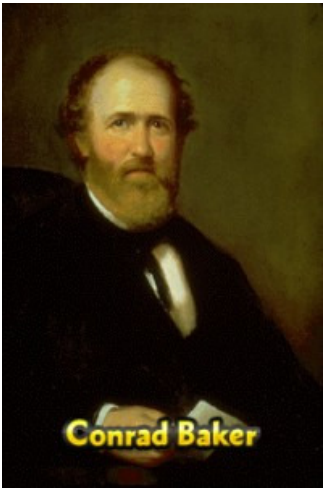
policy for the treatment of the defeated southern states when his assassination closed his career, and his wishes.

Andrew Johnson, the Vice-President, was a staunch supporter of Lincoln's policy and tried to carry it out. He was bitterly opposed by radicals in Congress, who finally brought impeachment proceedings to remove him from office. The impeachment failed and Johnson remained President, but he was helpless to prevent the policies of the radical Republicans from going into effect. His vetoes of bills were simply overridden by the radical Republicans who controlled Congress for 12 years following the Civil War.

The ratification of the 15th Amendment by Indiana was not followed by an immediate change in the Indiana Constitution. Blacks were still excluded from voting in the state and, in addition, free Blacks were not allowed to enter the state. During the next two decades, Blacks were gradually granted the standing of full citizen. The laws made to restrict Blacks within Indiana were eventually eliminated and they were allowed to take part in the making of contracts. In education there was to be a fair distribution of public funds between white and colored schools. In 1881, Blacks gained full equality in voting and the only remaining discrimination in the Indiana constitution at the time was the clause that prevented Blacks from taking part in the state militia.[3]

Reconstruction Governors of Indiana

There were two governors during the period of the

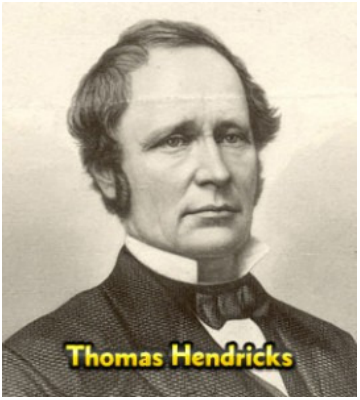


Reconstruction, Conrad Baker and Thomas A. Hendricks. Baker was lieutenant governor under Oliver P. Morton and gained the governor's office when Morton resigned to become a U.S. Senator. Baker's home was in Evansville. He ran for the office of governor against Thomas Hendricks in the election of 1868. Humane and public oriented, Baker was known as a good man with a high intellect. He was especially concerned with the social welfare of his fellow Hoosiers. He actively secured reforms in the prisons and other state institutions. Governor Baker was a believer in eliminating the state's debt as soon as possible and began making arrangements for paying it off. When he left office the state's debt was significantly reduced. He died in 1885.

Also during Governor Baker's term in office a Hoosier was elected Vice-President of the United States. In 1868 South Bend native, Schuyler Colfax, was on the Republican ticket that elected General Ulysses S. Grant to the presidency of the United States.

Governor Thomas Hendricks

Governor Hendricks took office as Indiana's governor in 1873. He had served in the state legislature, in the constitutional convention of 1850, as a United States Senator and previously ran for office of governor twice (both times being defeated).

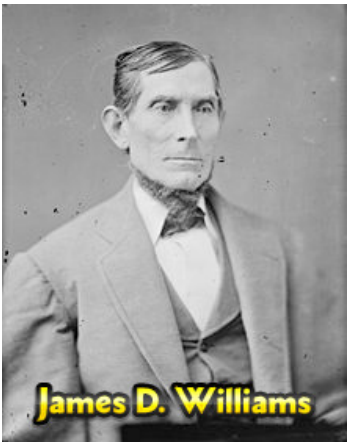


His first Indiana home was in Shelbyville, but had moved to Indianapolis. In what became known as the "Disputed Election of 1876," Hendricks ran for the office of Vice-President of the United States with Samuel J. Tilden, but never won the national election of that year.[4] He gave 35 years to public service in this state and finally died in the office of Vice-President in 1885.

The Panic of 1873

A national depression hit the United States in the first year of Hendricks' term as governor. This depression did not affect the expansion and prosperity throughout Indiana after the Civil War; but the industrial and commercial areas of the economy within the state suffered. There were conflicts between laborers and employers, often followed by strikes. In the coal industry around Knightstown and Brazil, rioting was quieted only after the involvement of the state militia. At Logansport, employees of the Pennsylvania Railroad, who had recently gone on strike, were causing severe problems for the local sheriff, who had contacted the governor for help. Detachments of troops were sent to Logansport to disperse the crowds of disgruntled workers. There were several other incidents, but none led to any serious violence.

Governor James D. "Bluejeans" Williams



Governor James D. Williams was elected to office during the first centennial of American Independence (1876). The 100 years from the signing of the Declaration of Independence had been a century of progress for the state of Indiana. Governor Williams will long be remembered in history as the "farmer governor of Indiana." He became the 17th Hoosier governor and was the first farmer by occupation to make it to that office.

In his early youth his parents moved from Ohio to Knox County, Indiana, where he resided until he went to the state capital to assume the duties as governor. Williams' early education was a one-room schoolhouse and to this he added a good general knowledge of current events. When he was 20 years old his father died making Jim the sole support for his family. He soon established a good reputation within his community and was known for his honesty, hard work and common sense. Williams became the wealthiest man in his Knox County community through his excellent farming techniques.

Williams' first taste of public service was as a justice of the peace. Four years later, in 1843, he was elected to the General Assembly where he served until 1874, when he was elected to Congress. In

his campaigns for governor he wore his usual homespun clothing, or blue jeans. His opponents called him "Blue Jeans" and made fun of him, regarding him as an ignorant hick. This was a huge mistake on his opponent's part, knowing that Indiana is a highly agricultural state and Williams' appeal to the Hoosier farmer. When the campaign ended, the election returns showed that the old farmer from Knox County had beaten his opponent, General Benjamin Harrison, by over 5,000 votes![5]

Williams' administration is marked by some very important events. Several amendments to the state constitution were proposed at this time and pushed forward to final adoption in 1881. The most important events included the holding of elections on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November (instead of the former October elections), limiting of debts by local communities and elimination of the restrictions against Black voters. Governor Williams died November 20, 1880, and lieutenant governor Isaac Gray served out the remaining 7 weeks of his term.

During Governor Williams' term Oliver P. Morton died and Benjamin Harrison completed his mansion in Indianapolis.

To visit Benjamin Harrison's Indianapolis home click here

1. Lockridge, Ross F. The Story of Indiana. Harlow Publishing. Oklahoma City: 1957.
2. Ibid. 3. Ibid. 4. Ibid. 5. Ibid.

Chapter 1

A Boy and His Dog

Penrod sat morosely upon the back fence and gazed with envy at Duke, his wistful dog.

A bitter soul dominated the various curved and angular surfaces known by a careless world as the face of Penrod Schofield. Except in solitude, that face was almost always cryptic and emotionless; for Penrod had come into his twelfth year wearing an expression carefully trained to be inscrutable. Since the world was sure to misunderstand everything, mere defensive instinct prompted him to give it as little as possible to lay hold upon. Nothing is more impenetrable than the face of a boy who has learned this, and Penrod's was habitually as fathomless as the depth of his hatred

this morning for the literary activities of Mrs. Lora Rewbush–an almost universally respected fellow citizen, a lady of charitable and poetic inclinations, and one of his own mother's most intimate friends.

Mrs. Lora Rewbush had written something which she called "The Children's Pageant of the Table Round," and it was to be performed in public that very afternoon at the Women's Arts and Guild Hall for the benefit of the Coloured Infants' Betterment Society. And if any flavour of sweetness remained in the nature of Penrod Schofield after the dismal trials of the school-week just past, that problematic, infinitesimal remnant was made pungent acid by the imminence of his destiny to form a prominent feature of the spectacle, and to d-eclaim the loathsome sentiments of a character named upon the programme the Child Sir Lancelot.

After each rehearsal he had plotted escape, and only ten days earlier there had been a glimmer of light: Mrs. Lora Rewbush caught a very bad cold, and it was hoped it might develop into pneumonia; but she recovered so quickly that not even a rehearsal of the Children's Pageant was postponed. Darkness closed in. Penrod had rather vaguely debated plans for a self-mutilation such as would make his appearance as the Child Sir Lancelot inexpedient on public grounds; it was a heroic and attractive thought, but the results of some extremely sketchy preliminary experiments caused him to abandon it.

There was no escape; and at last his hour was hard upon him. Therefore he brooded on the fence and gazed with envy at his wistful Duke.

The dog's name was undescriptive of his person, which was obviously the result of a singular series of mesalliances. He wore a grizzled moustache and indefinite whiskers; he was small and shabby, and looked like an old postman. Penrod envied Duke because he was sure Duke would never be compelled to be a Child Sir Lancelot. He thought [he would like to be a dog free and unshackled to go or come as the wind listeth.

There was a long soliloquy upon the fence, a plaintive monologue without words: the boy's thoughts were adjectives, but they were expressed by a running film of pictures in his mind's eye, morbidly prophetic of the hideosities before him. Finally he spoke aloud, with such spleen that Duke rose from his haunches and lifted one ear in keen anxiety.

"'I hight Sir Lancelot du Lake, the Child, Gentul-hearted, meek, and mild. What though I'm *but* a littul child, Gentul-hearted, meek, and—-' *oof*!"

All of this except "oof" was a quotation from the Child Sir Lancelot, as conceived by Mrs. Lora Rewbush. Choking upon it, Penrod slid down from the fence, and with slow and thoughtful steps entered a one-storied wing of the stable, consisting of a

single apartment, floored with cement and used as a storeroom for broken bric-a-brac, old paint-buckets, decayed garden-hose, worn-out carpets, dead furniture, and other condemned odds and ends not yet considered hopeless enough to be given away. In one corner stood a large box, a part of the building itself: it was eight feet high and open at the top, and it had been constructed as a sawdust magazine from which was drawn material for the horse's bed in a stall on the other side of the partition. The big box, so high and towerlike, so commodious, so suggestive, had ceased to fulfil its legitimate function; though, providentially, it had been at least half full of sawdust when the horse died. Two years had gone by since that passing; an interregnum in transportation during which Penrod's father was "thinking" (he explained sometimes) of an automobile. Meanwhile, the gifted and generous sawdust-box had served brilliantly in war and peace: it was Penrod's stronghold.

There was a partially defaced sign upon the front wall of the box; the donjon-keep had known mercantile impulses:
The O. K. RaBiT Co. PENROD ScHoFiELD AND CO. iNQuiRE FOR PricEs

This was a venture of the preceding vacation, and had netted, at one time, an accrued and owed profit of $1.38. Prospects had been brightest on the very eve of cataclysm. The storeroom was locked and guarded, but twenty-seven rabbits and Belgian hares, old and young, had perished here on a single night–through no human

agency, but in a foray of cats, the besiegers treacherously tunnelling up through the sawdust from the small aperture which opened into the stall beyond the partition. Commerce has its martyrs.

Penrod climbed upon a barrel, stood on tiptoe, grasped the rim of the box; then, using a knot-hole as a stirrup, threw one leg over the top, drew himself up, and dropped within. Standing upon the packed sawdust, he was just tall enough to see over the top.

Duke had not followed him into the storeroom, but remained near the open doorway in a concave and pessimistic attitude. Penrod felt in a dark corner of the box and laid hands upon a simple apparatus consisting of an old bushel-basket with a few yards of clothes-line tied to each of its handles. He passed the ends of the lines over a big spool, which revolved upon an axle of wire suspended from a beam overhead, and, with the aid of this improvised pulley, lowered the empty basket until it came to rest in an upright position upon the floor of the storeroom at the foot of the sawdust-box.

“Eleva-ter!” shouted Penrod. “Ting-ting!”

Duke, old and intelligently apprehensive, approached slowly, in a semicircular manner, deprecatingly, but with courtesy. He pawed the basket delicately; then, as if that were all his master had expected of him, uttered one bright bark, sat down, and looked up

triumphantly. His hypocrisy was shallow: many a horrible quarter of an hour had taught him his duty in this matter.

"El-e-*vay*-ter!" shouted Penrod sternly. "You want me to come down there to you?"

Duke looked suddenly haggard. He pawed the basket feebly again and, upon another outburst from on high, prostrated himself flat. Again threatened, he gave a superb impersonation of a worm. "You get in that el-e-*vay*-ter!"

Reckless with despair, Duke jumped into the basket, landing in a dishevelled posture, which he did not alter until he had been drawn up and poured out upon the floor of sawdust with the box. There, shuddering, he lay in doughnut shape and presently slumbered.

It was dark in the box, a condition that might have been remedied by sliding back a small wooden panel on runners, which would have let in ample light from the alley; but Penrod Schofield had more interesting means of illumination. He knelt, and from a former soap-box, in a corner, took a lantern, without a chimney, and a large oil-can, the leak in the latter being so nearly imperceptible that its banishment from household use had seemed to Penrod as inexplicable as it was providential.

He shook the lantern near his ear: nothing splashed; there was no

sound but a dry clinking. But there was plenty of kerosene in the can; and he filled the lantern, striking a match to illumine the operation. Then he lit the lantern and hung it upon a nail against the wall. The sawdust floor was slightly impregnated with oil, and the open flame quivered in suggestive proximity to the side of the box; however, some rather deep charrings of the plank against which the lantern hung offered evidence that the arrangement was by no means a new one, and indicated at least a possibility of no fatality occurring this time.

Next, Penrod turned up the surface of the sawdust in another corner of the floor, and drew forth a cigar-box in which were half a dozen cigarettes, made of hayseed and thick brown wrapping paper, a lead-pencil, an eraser, and a small note-book, the cover of which was labelled in his own handwriting:

"English Grammar. Penrod Schofield. Room 6, Ward School Nomber Seventh."

The first page of this book was purely academic; but the study of English undefiled terminated with a slight jar at the top of the second: "Nor must an adverb be used to modif——"

Immediately followed: "HARoLD RAMoREZ THE RoADAGENT OR WiLD LiFE AMoNG THE ROCKY MTS."

And the subsequent entries in the book appeared to have little concern with Room 6, Ward School Nomber Seventh.

Chapter 2: Romance

The author of “Harold Ramorez,” etc., lit one of the hayseed cigarettes, seated himself comfortably, with his back against the wall and his right shoulder just under the lantern, elevated his knees to support the note-book, turned to a blank page, and wrote, slowly and earnestly: “CHAPITER THE SIXTH”

He took a knife from his pocket, and, broodingly, his eyes upon the inward embryos of vision, sharpened his pencil. After that, he extended a foot and meditatively rubbed Duke’s back with the side of his shoe. Creation, with Penrod, did not leap, full-armed, from the brain; but finally he began to produce. He wrote very slowly at first, and then with increasing rapidity; faster and faster, gathering momentum and growing more and more fevered as he sped, till at last the true fire came, without which no lamp of real literature may be made to burn.

Mr. Wilson reched for his gun but our hero had him covred and soon said Well I guess you don't come any of that on me my freind.

Well what makes you so sure about it sneered the other bitting his lip so savageley that the blood ran. You are nothing but a common Roadagent any way and I do not propose to be bafled by such, Ramorez laughed at this and kep Mr. Wilson covred by his ottomatick.

Soon the two men were struggling together in the death-roes but soon Mr Wilson got him bound and gaged his mouth and went away for awhile leavin our hero, it was dark and he writhd at his bonds writhing on the floor wile the rats came out of their holes and bit him and vernim got all over him from the floor of that helish spot but soon he managed to push the gag out of his mouth with the end of his toungeu and got all his bonds off.

Soon Mr Wilson came back to tant him with his helpless condition flowed by his gang of detectives and they said Oh look at Ramorez sneering at his plight and tanted him with his helpless condition because Ramorez had put the bonds back sos he would look the same but could throw them off him when he wanted to Just look at him now sneered they. To hear him talk you would thought he was hot stuff and they said Look at him now, him that was going to do so much, Oh I would not like to be in his fix.

Soon Harold got mad at this and jumped up with blasing eyes throwin off his bonds like they were air Ha Ha sneered he I guess you better not talk so much next time. Soon there flowed another awful struggle and siezin his ottomatick back from Mr Wilson he shot two of the detectives through the heart Bing Bing went the ottomatick and two more went to meet their Maker only two detectives left now and so he stabbed one and the scondrel went to meet his Maker for now our hero was fighting for his very life. It was dark in there now for night had falen and a terrible view met the eye Blood was just all over everything and the rats were eatin the dead men.

Soon our hero manged to get his back to the wall for he was fighting for his very life now and shot Mr Wilson through the abodmen Oh said Mr Wilson you—- —- —- (The dashes are Penrod's.)

Mr Wilson stagerd back vile oaths soilin his lips for he was in pain Why you—- —-you sneered he I will get you yet—- —-you Harold Ramorez.

The remainin scondrel had an ax which he came near our heros head with but missed him and ramand stuck in the wall Our heros amunition was exhaused what was he to do, the remanin scondrel would soon get his ax lose so our hero sprung forward and bit him till his teeth met in the flech for now our hero was fighting for his very life. At this the remanin scondrel also cursed and swore vile

oaths. Oh sneered he—- —- —-you Harold Ramorez what did you bite me for Yes sneered Mr Wilson also and he has shot me in the abdomen too the—-

Soon they were both cursin and reviln him together Why you—- —- —- —- —-sneered they what did you want to injure us for—-you Harold Ramorez you have not got any sence and you think you are so much but you are no better than anybody else and you are a—- —- —- —- —- —-

Soon our hero could stand this no longer. If you could learn to act like gentlmen said he I would not do any more to you now and your low vile exppresions have not got any effect on me only to injure your own self when you go to meet your Maker Oh I guess you have had enogh for one day and I think you have learned a lesson and will not soon atemp to beard Harold Ramorez again so with a tantig laugh he cooly lit a cigarrete and takin the keys of the cell from Mr Wilson poket went on out.

Soon Mr Wilson and the wonded detective manged to bind up their wonds and got up off the floor—- —-it I will have that dasstads life now sneered they if we have to swing for it—- —- —- —-him he shall not eccape us again the low down—- —- —- —- —- Chapiter seventh.

A mule train of heavily laden burros laden with gold from the mines was to be seen wondering among the highest clifts and

gorgs of the Rocky Mts and a tall man with a long silken mustash and a cartigde belt could be heard cursin vile oaths because he well knew this was the lair of Harold Ramorez Why—- —- —- you you—- —- —- —- mules you sneered he because the poor mules were not able to go any quicker —- you I will show you Why—- —- —- —- —- —-it sneered he his oaths growing viler and viler I will whip you—- —- —- —- —- —- —-you sos you will not be able to walk for a week—- —-you you mean old—- —- —- —- —- —- —- —- —-mules you
Scarcly had the vile words left his lips when—-
“Penrod!”

It was his mother’s voice, calling from the back porch.

Simultaneously, the noon whistles began to blow, far and near; and the romancer in the sawdust-box, summoned prosaically from steep mountain passes above the clouds, paused with stubby pencil halfway from lip to knee. His eyes were shining: there was a rapt sweetness in his gaze. As he wrote, his burden had grown lighter; thoughts of Mrs. Lora Rewbush had almost left him; and in particular as he recounted (even by the chaste dash) the annoyed expressions of Mr. Wilson, the wounded detective, and the silken moustached mule-driver, he had felt mysteriously relieved concerning the Child Sir Lancelot. Altogether he looked a better and a brighter boy.

“Pen-rod!”

The rapt look faded slowly. He sighed, but moved not.

“Penrod! We’re having lunch early just on your account, so you’ll have plenty of time to be dressed for the pageant. Hurry!”
There was silence in Penrod’s aerie.

“Pen-rod!”

Mrs. Schofields voice sounded nearer, indicating a threatened approach. Penrod bestirred himself: he blew out the lantern, and shouted plaintively:
“Well, ain’t I coming fast’s I can?”

“Do hurry,” returned the voice, withdrawing; and the kitchen door could be heard to close.

Languidly, Penrod proceeded to set his house in order.

Replacing his manuscript and pencil in the cigar-box, he carefully buried the box in the sawdust, put the lantern and oil-can back in the soap-box, adjusted the elevator for the reception of Duke, and, in no uncertain tone, invited the devoted animal to enter.

Duke stretched himself amiably, affecting not to hear; and when this pretence became so obvious that even a dog could keep it up no longer, sat down in a corner, facing it, his back to his master, and his head perpendicular, nose upward, supported by the

convergence of the two walls. This, from a dog, is the last word, the comble of the immutable. Penrod commanded, stormed, tried gentleness; persuaded with honeyed words and pictured rewards. Duke's eyes looked backward; otherwise he moved not. Time elapsed. Penrod stooped to flattery, finally to insincere caresses; then, losing patience spouted sudden threats.

Duke remained immovable, frozen fast to his great gesture of implacable despair.

A footstep sounded on the threshold of the store-room.

"Penrod, come down from that box this instant!"

"Ma'am?"

"Are you up in that sawdust-box again?" As Mrs. Schofield had just heard her son's voice issue from the box, and also, as she knew he was there anyhow, her question must have been put for oratorical purposes only. "Because if you are," she continued promptly, "I'm going to ask your papa not to let you play there any—-"

Penrod's forehead, his eyes, the tops of his ears, and most of his hair, became visible to her at the top of the box. "I ain't playing!'" he said indignantly.

“Well, what are you doing?”

“Just coming down,” he replied, in a grieved but patient tone.

“Then why don’t you come?”

“I got Duke here. I got to get him down, haven’t I? You don’t suppose I want to leave a poor dog in here to starve, do you?”

“Well, hand him down over the side to me. Let me—-”

“I’ll get him down all right,” said Penrod. “I got him up here, and I guess I can get him down!”

“Well then, do it!”

“I will if you’ll let me alone. If you’ll go on back to the house I promise to be there inside of two minutes. Honest!”

He put extreme urgency into this, and his mother turned toward the house. “If you’re not there in two minutes—-”

“I will be!”

After her departure, Penrod expended some finalities of eloquence upon Duke, then disgustedly gathered him up in his arms, dumped him into the basket and, shouting sternly, “All in for the

ground floor–step back there, madam–all ready, Jim!" lowered dog and basket to the floor of the storeroom. Duke sprang out in tumultuous relief, and bestowed frantic affection upon his master as the latter slid down from the box.

Penrod dusted himself sketchily, experiencing a sense of satisfaction, dulled by the overhanging afternoon, perhaps, but perceptible: he had the feeling of one who has been true to a cause. The operation of the elevator was unsinful and, save for the shock to Duke's nervous system, it was harmless; but Penrod could not possibly have brought himself to exhibit it in the presence of his mother or any other grown person in the world. The reasons for secrecy were undefined; at least, Penrod did not define them.

Chapter 3: The Costume

After lunch his mother and his sister Margaret, a pretty girl of nineteen, dressed him for the sacrifice. They stood him near his mother's bedroom window and did what they would to him.

During the earlier anguishes of the process he was mute, exceeding the pathos of the stricken calf in the shambles; but a student of eyes might have perceived in his soul the premonitory symptoms of a sinister uprising. At a rehearsal (in citizens' clothes) attended by mothers and grown-up sisters, Mrs. Lora Rewbush had announced that she wished the costuming to be "as medieval and artistic as possible." Otherwise, and as to details, she said, she would leave the costumes entirely to the good taste of the children's parents. Mrs. Schofield and Margaret were no archeologists, but they knew that their taste was as good as that of other mothers and sisters concerned; so with perfect

confidence they had planned and executed a costume for Penrod; and the only misgiving they felt was connected with the tractability of the Child Sir Lancelot himself.

Stripped to his underwear, he had been made to wash himself vehemently; then they began by shrouding his legs in a pair of silk stockings, once blue but now mostly whitish. Upon Penrod they visibly surpassed mere ampleness; but they were long, and it required only a rather loose imagination to assume that they were tights.

The upper part of his body was next concealed from view by a garment so peculiar that its description becomes difficult. In 1886, Mrs. Schofield, then unmarried, had worn at her "coming-out party" a dress of vivid salmon silk which had been remodelled after her marriage to accord with various epochs of fashion until a final, unskilful campaign at a dye-house had left it in a condition certain to attract much attention to the wearer. Mrs. Schofield had considered giving it to Della, the cook; but had decided not to do so, because you never could tell how Della was going to take things, and cooks were scarce.

It may have been the word "medieval" (in Mrs. Lora Rewbush's rich phrase) which had inspired the idea for a last conspicuous usefulness; at all events, the bodice of that once salmon dress, somewhat modified and moderated, now took a position, for its farewell appearance in society, upon the back, breast, and arms of

the Child Sir Lancelot.

The area thus costumed ceased at the waist, leaving a Jaeger-like and unmedieval gap thence to the tops of the stockings. The inventive genius of woman triumphantly bridged it, but in a manner which imposes upon history almost insuperable delicacies of narration. Penrod's father was an old-fashioned man: the twentieth century had failed to shake his faith in red flannel for cold weather; and it was while Mrs. Schofield was putting away her husband's winter underwear that she perceived how hopelessly one of the elder specimens had dwindled; and simultaneously she received the inspiration which resulted in a pair of trunks for the Child Sir Lancelot, and added an earnest bit of colour, as well as a genuine touch of the Middle Ages, to his costume. Reversed, fore to aft, with the greater part of the legs cut off, and strips of silver braid covering the seams, this garment, she felt, was not traceable to its original source.

When it had been placed upon Penrod, the stockings were attached to it by a system of safety-pins, not very perceptible at a distance. Next, after being severely warned against stooping, Penrod got his feet into the slippers he wore to dancing-school– "patent-leather pumps" now decorated with large pink rosettes.

"If I can't stoop," he began, smolderingly, "I'd like to know how'm I goin' to kneel in the pag—-"

“You must manage!” This, uttered through pins, was evidently thought to be sufficient.

They fastened some ruching about his slender neck, pinned ribbons at random all over him, and then Margaret thickly powdered his hair.

“Oh, yes, that’s all right,” she said, replying to a question put by her mother. “They always powdered their hair in Colonial times.” “It doesn’t seem right to me–exactly,” objected Mrs. Schofield, gently. “Sir Lancelot must have been ever so long before Colonial times.”

“Oh, that’s all right,” said Margaret. “They always powdered their hair in Colonial times”

“That doesn’t matter,” Margaret reassured her. “Nobody’ll know the difference–Mrs. Lora Rewbush least of all. I don’t think she

knows a thing about it, though, of course, she does write splendidly and the words of the pageant are just beautiful. Stand still, Penrod!" (The author of "Harold Ramorez" had moved convulsively.) "Besides, powdered hair's always becoming. Look at him. You'd hardly know it was Penrod!"

The pride and admiration with which she pronounced this undeniable truth might have been thought tactless, but Penrod, not analytical, found his spirits somewhat elevated. No mirror was in his range of vision and, though he had submitted to cursory measurements of his person a week earlier, he had no previous acquaintance with the costume. He began to form a not unpleasing mental picture of his appearance, something somewhere between the portraits of George Washington and a vivid memory of Miss Julia Marlowe at a matinee of "Twelfth Night."

He was additionally cheered by a sword which had been borrowed from a neighbor, who was a Knight of Pythias. Finally there was a mantle, an old golf cape of Margaret's. Fluffy polka-dots of white cotton had been sewed to it generously; also it was ornamented with a large cross of red flannel, suggested by the picture of a Crusader in a newspaper advertisement. The mantle was fastened to Penrod's shoulder (that is, to the shoulder of Mrs. Schofield's ex-bodice) by means of large safety- pins, and arranged to hang down behind him, touching his heels, but obscuring nowise the glory of his facade. Then, at last, he was allowed to step before a

mirror.

It was a full-length glass, and the worst immediately happened. It might have been a little less violent, perhaps, if Penrod's expectations had not been so richly and poetically idealized; but as things were, the revolt was volcanic.

Victor Hugo's account of the fight with the devil-fish, in "Toilers of the Sea," encourages a belief that, had Hugo lived and increased in power, he might have been equal to a proper recital of the half hour which followed Penrod's first sight of himself as the Child Sir Lancelot. But Mr. Wilson himself, dastard but eloquent foe of Harold Ramorez, could not have expressed, with all the vile dashes at his command, the sentiments which animated Penrod's bosom when the instantaneous and unalterable conviction descended upon him that he was intended by his loved ones to make a public spectacle of himself in his sister's stockings and part of an old dress of his mother's.

To him these familiar things were not disguised at all; there seemed no possibility that the whole world would not know them at a glance. The stockings were worse than the bodice. He had been assured that these could not be recognized, but, seeing them in the mirror, he was sure that no human eye could fail at first glance to detect the difference between himself and the former purposes of these stockings. Fold, wrinkle, and void shrieked their history with a hundred tongues, invoking earthquake, eclipse, and

blue ruin. The frantic youth's final submission was obtained only after a painful telephonic conversation between himself and his father, the latter having been called up and upon, by the exhausted Mrs. Schofield, to subjugate his offspring by wire.
The two ladies made all possible haste, after this, to deliver Penrod into the hands of Mrs. Lora Rewbush; nevertheless, they found opportunity to exchange earnest congratulations upon his not having recognized the humble but serviceable paternal garment now brilliant about the Lancelotish middle. Altogether, they felt that the costume was a success. Penrod looked like nothing ever remotely imagined by Sir Thomas Malory or Alfred Tennyson;—for that matter, he looked like nothing ever before seen on earth; but as Mrs. Schofield and Margaret took their places in the audience at the Women's Arts and Guild Hall, the anxiety they felt concerning Penrod's elocutionary and gesticular powers, so soon to be put to public test, was pleasantly tempered by their satisfaction that, owing to their efforts, his outward appearance would be a credit to the family.

Chapter 4: Desperation

The Child Sir Lancelot found himself in a large anteroom behind the stage–a room crowded with excited children, all about equally medieval and artistic. Penrod was less conspicuous than he thought himself, but he was so preoccupied with his own shame, steeling his nerves to meet the first inevitable taunting reference to his sister's stockings, that he failed to perceive there were others present in much of his own unmanned condition. Retiring to a corner, immediately upon his entrance, he managed to unfasten the mantle at the shoulders, and, drawing it round him, pinned it again at his throat so that it concealed the rest of his costume. This permitted a temporary relief, but increased his horror of the moment when, in pursuance of the action of the "pageant," the sheltering garment must be cast aside.

Some of the other child knights were also keeping their mantles

close about them. A few of the envied opulent swung brilliant fabrics from their shoulders, airily, showing off hired splendours from a professional costumer's stock, while one or two were insulting examples of parental indulgence, particularly little Maurice Levy, the Child Sir Galahad. This shrinking person went clamorously about, making it known everywhere that the best tailor in town had been dazzled by a great sum into constructing his costume. It consisted of blue velvet knickerbockers, a white satin waistcoat, and a beautifully cut little swallow-tailed coat with pearl buttons. The medieval and artistic triumph was completed by a mantle of yellow velvet, and little white boots, sporting gold tassels.

All this radiance paused in a brilliant career and addressed the Child Sir Lancelot, gathering an immediately formed semicircular audience of little girls. Woman was ever the trailer of magnificence.

"What you got on?" inquired Mr. Levy, after dispensing information. "What you got on under that ole golf cape?"

Penrod looked upon him coldly. At other times his questioner would have approached him with deference, even with apprehension. But to-day the Child Sir Galahad was somewhat intoxicated with the power of his own beauty.

"What you got on?" he repeated.

“Oh, nothin’,” said Penrod, with an indifference assumed at great cost to his nervous system.

The elate Maurice was inspired to set up as a wit. “Then you’re nakid!” he shouted exultantly. “Penrod Schofield says he hasn’t got nothin’ on under that ole golf cape! He’s nakid! He’s nakid.” The indelicate little girls giggled delightedly, and a javelin pierced the inwards of Penrod when he saw that the Child Elaine, amber-curled and beautiful Marjorie Jones, lifted golden laughter to the horrid jest.

Other boys and girls came flocking to the uproar. “He’s nakid, he’s nakid!” shrieked the Child Sir Galahad. “Penrod Schofield’s nakid! He’s na-a-a-kid!”

“Hush, hush!” said Mrs. Lora Rewbush, pushing her way into the group. “Remember, we are all little knights and ladies to-day. Little knights and ladies of the Table Round would not make so much noise. Now children, we must begin to take our places on the stage. Is everybody here?”

Penrod made his escape under cover of this diversion: he slid behind Mrs. Lora Rewbush, and being near a door, opened it unnoticed and went out quickly, closing it behind him. He found himself in a narrow and vacant hallway which led to a door marked “Janitor’s Room.”

Burning with outrage, heart-sick at the sweet, cold-blooded laughter of Marjorie Jones, Penrod rested his elbows upon a window-sill and speculated upon the effects of a leap from the second story. One of the reasons he gave it up was his desire to live on Maurice Levy's account: already he was forming educational plans for the Child Sir Galahad.

A stout man in blue overalls passed through the hallway muttering to himself petulantly. "I reckon they'll find that hall hot enough now!" he said, conveying to Penrod an impression that some too feminine women had sent him upon an unreasonable errand to the furnace. He went into the Janitor's Room and, emerging a moment later, minus the overalls, passed Penrod again with a bass rumble–"Dern 'em!" it seemed he said–and made a gloomy exit by the door at the upper end of the hallway.

The conglomerate and delicate rustle of a large, mannerly audience was heard as the janitor opened and closed the door; and stage-fright seized the boy. The orchestra began an overture, and, at that, Penrod, trembling violently, tiptoed down the hall into the Janitor's Room. It was a cul-de-sac: There was no outlet save by the way he had come.

Despairingly he doffed his mantle and looked down upon himself for a last sickening assurance that the stockings were as obviously and disgracefully Margaret's as they had seemed in the mirror at

home. For a moment he was encouraged: perhaps he was no worse than some of the other boys. Then he noticed that a safety-pin had opened; one of those connecting the stockings with his trunks. He sat down to fasten it and his eye fell for the first time with particular attention upon the trunks. Until this instant he had been preoccupied with the stockings.

Slowly recognition dawned in his eyes.

The Schofields' house stood on a corner at the intersection of two main-travelled streets; the fence was low, and the publicity obtained by the washable portion of the family apparel, on Mondays, had often been painful to Penrod; for boys have a peculiar sensitiveness in these matters. A plain, matter-of-fact washerwoman' employed by Mrs. Schofield, never left anything to the imagination of the passer-by; and of all her calm display the scarlet flaunting of his father's winter wear had most abashed Penrod. One day Marjorie Jones, all gold and starch, had passed when the dreadful things were on the line: Penrod had hidden himself, shuddering. The whole town, he was convinced, knew these garments intimately and derisively.

And now, as he sat in the janitor's chair, the horrible and paralyzing recognition came. He had not an instant's doubt that every fellow actor, as well as every soul in the audience, would recognize what his mother and sister had put upon him. For as the awful truth became plain to himself it seemed blazoned to the

world; and far, far louder than the stockings, the trunks did fairly bellow the grisly secret: whose they were and what they were!

Most people have suffered in a dream the experience of finding themselves very inadequately clad in the midst of a crowd of well-dressed people, and such dreamers' sensations are comparable to Penrod's, though faintly, because Penrod was awake and in much too full possession of the most active capacities for anguish.

A human male whose dress has been damaged, or reveals some vital lack, suffers from a hideous and shameful loneliness which makes every second absolutely unbearable until he is again as others of his sex and species; and there is no act or sin whatever too desperate for him in his struggle to attain that condition. Also, there is absolutely no embarrassment possible to a woman which is comparable to that of a man under corresponding circumstances and in this a boy is a man. Gazing upon the ghastly trunks, the stricken Penrod felt that he was a degree worse then nude; and a great horror of himself filled his soul.

"Penrod Schofield!"

The door into the hallway opened, and a voice demanded him. He could not be seen from the hallway, but the hue and the cry was up; and he knew he must be taken. It was only a question of seconds. He huddled in his chair.

“Penrod Schofield!” cried Mrs. Lora Rewbush angrily.
The distracted boy rose and, as he did so, a long pin sank deep into his back. He extracted it frenziedly, which brought to his ears a protracted and sonorous ripping, too easily located by a final gesture of horror.

“Penrod Schofield!” Mrs. Lora Rewbush had come out into the hallway.

And now, in this extremity, when all seemed lost indeed, particularly including honour, the dilating eye of the outlaw fell upon the blue overalls which the janitor had left hanging upon a peg.

Inspiration and action were almost simultaneouss.

Chapter 5. The Pageant of the Table Round

“Penrod!” Mrs. Lora Rewbush stood in the doorway, indignantly gazing upon a Child Sir Lancelot mantled to the heels. “Do you know that you have kept an audience of five hundred people waiting for ten minutes?” She, also, detained the five hundred while she spake further.

“Well,” said Penrod contentedly, as he followed her toward the buzzing stage, “I was just sitting there thinking.”

Two minutes later the curtain rose on a medieval castle hall richly done in the new stage-craft made in Germany and consisting of pink and blue cheesecloth. The Child King Arthur and the Child Queen Guinevere were disclosed upon thrones, with the Child Elaine and many other celebrities in attendance; while about fifteen Child Knights were seated at a dining-room table round, which was covered with a large Oriental rug, and displayed (for

the knights' refreshment) a banquet service of silver loving-cups and trophies, borrowed from the Country Club and some local automobile manufacturers.

In addition to this splendour, potted plants and palms have seldom been more lavishly used in any castle on the stage or off. The footlights were aided by a "spot-light" from the rear of the hall; and the children were revealed in a blaze of glory.

A hushed, multitudinous "O-oh" of admiration came from the decorous and delighted audience. Then the children sang feebly: "Chuldrun of the Tabul Round, Lit-tul knights and ladies we. Let our voy-siz all resound Faith and hope and charitee!"

The Child King Arthur rose, extended his sceptre with the decisive gesture of a semaphore, and spake:

"Each littul knight and lady born Has noble deeds to perform In thee child-world of shivullree, No matter how small his share may be. Let each advance and tell in turn What claim has each to knighthood earn."

The Child Sir Mordred, the villain of this piece, rose in his place at the table round, and piped the only lines ever written by Mrs. Lora Rewbush which Penrod Schofield could have pronounced without loathing. Georgie Bassett, a really angelic boy, had been selected for the role of Mordred. His perfect conduct had earned for him

the sardonic sobriquet, “The Little Gentleman,” among his boy acquaintances. (Naturally he had no friends.) Hence the other boys supposed that he had been selected for the wicked Mordred as a reward of virtue. He declaimed serenely:

“I hight Sir Mordred the Child, and I teach Lessons of selfishest evil, and reach Out into darkness. Thoughtless, unkind, And ruthless is Mordred, and unrefined.”

The Child Mordred was properly rebuked and denied the accolade, though, like the others, he seemed to have assumed the title already. He made a plotter’s exit. Whereupon Maurice Levy rose, bowed, announced that he highted the Child Sir Galahad, and continued with perfect sang-froid:

“I am the purest of the pure. I have but kindest thoughts each day. I give my riches to the poor, And follow in the Master’s way.” This elicited tokens of approval from the Child King Arthur, and he bade Maurice “stand forth” and come near the throne, a command obeyed with the easy grace of conscious merit.

It was Penrod’s turn. He stepped back from his chair, the table between him and the audience, and began in a high, breathless monotone:

“I hight Sir Lancelot du Lake, the Child, Gentul-hearted, meek, and mild. What though I’m but a littul child, Gentul-heartud, meek, and mild, I do my share though but–though but—-”

Penrod paused and gulped. The voice of Mrs. Lora Rewbush was heard from the wings, prompting irritably, and the Child Sir Lancelot repeated:

“I do my share though but–though but a tot, I pray you knight Sir Lancelot!”

This also met the royal favour, and Penrod was bidden to join Sir Galahad at the throne. As he crossed the stage, Mrs. Schofield whispered to Margaret:
“That boy! He’s unpinned his mantle and fixed it to cover his whole costume. After we worked so hard to make it becoming!”

“Never mind; he’ll have to take the cape off in a minute,” returned Margaret. She leaned forward suddenly, narrowing her eyes to see better. “What is that thing hanging about his left ankle?” she whispered uneasily. “How queer! He must have got tangled in something.”

“Where?” asked Mrs. Schofield, in alarm.

“His left foot. It makes him stumble. Don’t you see? It looks–it looks like an elephant’s foot!”

The Child Sir Lancelot and the Child Sir Galahad clasped hands before their Child King. Penrod was conscious of a great uplift; in a moment he would have to throw aside his mantle, but even so he was protected and sheltered in the human garment of a man. His stage-fright had passed, for the audience was but an indistinguishable blur of darkness beyond the dazzling lights. His most repulsive speech (that in which he proclaimed himself a "tot") was over and done with; and now at last the small, moist hand of the Child Sir Galahad lay within his own. Craftily his brown fingers stole from Maurice's palm to the wrist. The two boys declaimed in concert:

"We are two chuldrun of the Tabul Round Strewing kindness all a-round. With love and good deeds striving ever for the best, May our littul efforts e'er be blest. Two littul hearts we offer. See United in love, faith, hope, and char–ow!"

The conclusion of the duet was marred. The Child Sir Galahad suddenly stiffened, and, uttering an irrepressible shriek of anguish, gave a brief exhibition of the contortionist's art. ("He's twistin' my wrist! Dern you, leggo!")

The voice of Mrs. Lora Rewbush was again heard from the wings; it sounded bloodthirsty. Penrod released his victim; and the Child King Arthur, somewhat disconcerted, extended his sceptre and, with the assistance of the enraged prompter, said:

“Sweet child-friends of the Tabul Round, In brotherly love and kindness abound, Sir Lancelot, you have spoken well, Sir Galahad, too, as clear as bell. So now pray doff your mantles gay. You shall be knighted this very day.”

And Penrod doffed his mantle.

Simultaneously, a thick and vasty gasp came from the audience, as from five hundred bathers in a wholly unexpected surf. This gasp was punctuated irregularly, over the auditorium, by imperfectly subdued screams both of dismay and incredulous joy, and by two dismal shrieks. Altogether it was an extraordinary sound, a sound never to be forgotten by any one who heard it. It was almost as unforgettable as the sight which caused it; the word “sight” being here used in its vernacular sense, for Penrod, standing unmantled and revealed in all the medieval and artistic glory of the janitor’s blue overalls, falls within its meaning.

The janitor was a heavy man, and his overalls, upon Penrod, were merely oceanic. The boy was at once swaddled and lost within their blue gulfs and vast saggings; and the left leg, too hastily rolled up, had descended with a distinctively elephantine effect, as Margaret had observed. Certainly, the Child Sir Lancelot was at least a sight.

It is probable that a great many in that hall must have had, even then, a consciousness that they were looking on at History in the

Making. A supreme act is recognizable at sight: it bears the birthmark of immortality. But Penrod, that marvellous boy, had begun to declaim, even with the gesture of flinging off his mantle for the accolade:

"I first, the Child Sir Lancelot du Lake, Will volunteer to knighthood take, And kneeling here before your throne I vow to—_"

He finished his speech unheard. The audience had recovered breath, but had lost self-control, and there ensued something later described by a participant as a sort of cultured riot.

The actors in the "pageant" were not so dumfounded by Penrod's costume as might have been expected. A few precocious geniuses perceived that the overalls were the Child Lancelot's own comment on maternal intentions; and these were profoundly impressed: they regarded him with the grisly admiration of young and ambitious criminals for a jail-mate about to be distinguished by hanging. But most of the children simply took it to be the case (a little strange, but not startling) that Penrod's mother had dressed him like that–which is pathetic. They tried to go on with the "pageant."

They made a brief, manful effort. But the irrepressible outbursts from the audience bewildered them; every time Sir Lancelot du Lake the Child opened his mouth, the great, shadowy house fell

into an uproar, and the children into confusion. Strong women and brave girls in the audience went out into the lobby, shrieking and clinging to one another. Others remained, rocking in their seats, helpless and spent. The neighbourhood of Mrs. Schofield and Margaret became, tactfully, a desert. Friends of the author went behind the scenes and encountered a hitherto unknown phase of Mrs. Lora Rewbush; they said, afterward, that she hardly seemed to know what she was doing. She begged to be left alone somewhere with Penrod Schofield, for just a little while.

They led her away.

Chapter 6: Evening

The sun was setting behind the back fence (though at a considerable distance) as Penrod Schofield approached that fence and looked thoughtfully up at the top of it, apparently having in mind some purpose to climb up and sit there. Debating this, he passed his fingers gently up and down the backs of his legs; and then something seemed to decide him not to sit anywhere. He leaned against the fence, sighed profoundly, and gazed at Duke, his wistful dog.

The sigh was reminiscent: episodes of simple pathos were passing before his inward eye. About the most painful was the vision of lovely Marjorie Jones, weeping with rage as the Child Sir Lancelot was dragged, insatiate, from the prostrate and howling Child Sir Galahad, after an onslaught delivered the precise instant the curtain began to fall upon the demoralized “pageant.” And then–oh, pangs! oh, woman!–she slapped at the ruffian’s cheek, as he

was led past her by a resentful janitor; and turning, flung her arms round the Child Sir Galahad's neck.

"Penrod Schofield, don't you dare ever speak to me again as long as you live!" Maurice's little white boots and gold tassels had done their work.

At home the late Child Sir Lancelot was consigned to a locked clothes-closet pending the arrival of his father. Mr. Schofield came and, shortly after, there was put into practice an old patriarchal custom. It is a custom of inconceivable antiquity: probably primordial, certainly prehistoric, but still in vogue in some remaining citadels of the ancient simplicities of the Republic.

And now, therefore, in the dusk, Penrod leaned against the fence and sighed.

His case is comparable to that of an adult who could have survived a similar experience. Looking back to the sawdust-box, fancy pictures this comparable adult a serious and inventive writer engaged in congenial literary activities in a private retreat. We see this period marked by the creation of some of the most virile passages of a Work dealing exclusively in red corpuscles and huge primal impulses. We see this thoughtful man dragged from his calm seclusion to a horrifying publicity; forced to adopt the stage and, himself a writer, compelled to exploit the repulsive

sentiments of an author not only personally distasteful to him but whose whole method and school in belles lettres he despises.

We see him reduced by desperation and modesty to stealing a pair of overalls. We conceive him to have ruined, then, his own reputation, and to have utterly disgraced his family; next, to have engaged in the duello and to have been spurned by his lady-love, thus lost to him (according to her own declaration) forever. Finally, we must behold: imprisonment by the authorities; the third degree and flagellation.

We conceive our man decided that his career had been perhaps too eventful. Yet Penrod had condensed all of it into eight hours. It appears that he had at least some shadowy perception of a recent fulness of life, for, as he leaned against the fence, gazing upon his wistful Duke, he sighed again and murmured aloud: "Well, hasn't this been a day!"

But in a little while a star came out, freshly lighted, from the highest part of the sky, and Penrod, looking up, noticed it casually and a little drowsily. He yawned. Then he sighed once more, but not reminiscently: evening had come; the day was over. It was a sigh of pure ennui.

Chapter 7: Evils of Drink

Next day, Penrod acquired a dime by a simple and antique process which was without doubt sometimes practised by the boys of Babylon. When the teacher of his class in Sunday-school requested the weekly contribution, Penrod, fumbling honestly (at first) in the wrong pockets, managed to look so embarrassed that the gentle lady told him not to mind, and said she was often forgetful herself. She was so sweet about it that, looking into the future, Penrod began to feel confident of a small but regular income.

At the close of the afternoon services he did not go home, but proceeded to squander the funds just withheld from China upon an orgy of the most pungently forbidden description. In a Drug

Emporium, near the church, he purchased a five-cent sack of candy consisting for the most part of the heavily flavoured hoofs of horned cattle, but undeniably substantial, and so generously capable of resisting solution that the purchaser must needs be avaricious beyond reason who did not realize his money's worth.

Equipped with this collation, Penrod contributed his remaining nickel to a picture show, countenanced upon the seventh day by the legal but not the moral authorities. Here, in cozy darkness, he placidly insulted his liver with jaw-breaker upon jaw-breaker from the paper sack, and in a surfeit of content watched the silent actors on the screen.

One film made a lasting impression upon him. It depicted with relentless pathos the drunkard's progress; beginning with his conversion to beer in the company of loose travelling men; pursuing him through an inexplicable lapse into evening clothes and the society of some remarkably painful ladies, next, exhibiting the effects of alcohol on the victim's domestic disposition, the unfortunate man was seen in the act of striking his wife and, subsequently, his pleading baby daughter with an abnormally heavy walking-stick. Their flight—through the snow—to seek the protection of a relative was shown, and finally, the drunkard's picturesque behaviour at the portals of a madhouse.

So fascinated was Penrod that he postponed his departure until this film came round again, by which time he had finished his

unnatural repast and almost, but not quite, decided against following the profession of a drunkard when he grew up. Emerging, satiated, from the theatre, a public timepiece before a jeweller's shop confronted him with an unexpected dial and imminent perplexities. How was he to explain at home these hours of dalliance? There was a steadfast rule that he return direct from Sunday-school; and Sunday rules were important, because on that day there was his father, always at home and at hand, perilously ready for action. One of the hardest conditions of boyhood is the almost continuous strain put upon the powers of invention by the constant and harassing necessity for explanations of every natural act.

Proceeding homeward through the deepening twilight as rapidly as possible, at a gait half skip and half canter, Penrod made up his mind in what manner he would account for his long delay, and, as he drew nearer, rehearsed in words the opening passage of his defence.

"Now see here," he determined to begin; "I do not wished to be blamed for things I couldn't help, nor any other boy. I was going along the street by a cottage and a lady put her head out of the window and said her husband was drunk and whipping her and her little girl, and she asked me wouldn't I come in and help hold him. So I went in and tried to get hold of this drunken lady's husband where he was whipping their baby daughter, but he wouldn't pay any attention, and I told her I ought to be getting

home, but she kep' on askin' me to stay—-"

At this point he reached the corner of his own yard, where a coincidence not only checked the rehearsal of his eloquence but happily obviated all occasion for it. A cab from the station drew up in front of the gate, and there descended a troubled lady in black and a fragile little girl about three. Mrs. Schofield rushed from the house and enfolded both in hospitable arms.

They were Penrod's Aunt Clara and cousin, also Clara, from Dayton, Illinois, and in the flurry of their arrival everybody forgot to put Penrod to the question. It is doubtful, however, if he felt any relief; there may have been even a slight, unconscious disappointment not altogether dissimilar to that of an actor deprived of a good part.

In the course of some really necessary preparations for dinner he stepped from the bathroom into the pink-and-white bedchamber of his sister, and addressed her rather thickly through a towel. "When'd mamma find out Aunt Clara and Cousin Clara were coming?"

"Not till she saw them from the window. She just happened to look out as they drove up. Aunt Clara telegraphed this morning, but it wasn't delivered."

"How long they goin' to stay?"

“I don’t know.”

Penrod ceased to rub his shining face, and thoughtfully tossed the towel through the bathroom door. “Uncle John won’t try to make ’em come back home, I guess, will he?” (Uncle John was Aunt Clara’s husband, a successful manufacturer of stoves, and his lifelong regret was that he had not entered the Baptist ministry.) “He’ll let ’em stay here quietly, won’t he?”

“What are you talking about?” demanded Margaret, turning from her mirror. “Uncle John sent them here. Why shouldn’t he let them stay?”

Penrod looked crestfallen. “Then he hasn’t taken to drink?” “Certainly not!” She emphasized the denial with a pretty peal of soprano laughter.

“Then why,” asked her brother gloomily, “why did Aunt Clara look so worried when she got here?”

“Good gracious! Don’t people worry about anything except somebody’s drinking? Where did you get such an idea?” “Well,” he persisted, “you don’t know it ain’t that.”

She laughed again, wholeheartedly. “Poor Uncle John! He won’t even allow grape juice or ginger ale in his house. They came because they were afraid little Clara might catch the measles.

She's very delicate, and there's such an epidemic of measles among the children over in Dayton the schools had to be closed. Uncle John got so worried that last night he dreamed about it; and this morning he couldn't stand it any longer and packed them off over here, though he thinks its wicked to travel on Sunday. And Aunt Clara was worried when she got here because they'd forgotten to check her trunk and it will have to be sent by express. Now what in the name of the common sense put it into your head that Uncle John had taken to——"

"Oh, nothing." He turned lifelessly away and went downstairs, a new-born hope dying in his bosom. Life seems so needlessly dull sometimes.

Chapter 8: School

Next morning, when he had once more resumed the dreadful burden of education, it seemed infinitely duller. And yet what pleasanter sight is there than a schoolroom well filled with children of those sprouting years just before the ‘teens? The casual visitor, gazing from the teacher’s platform upon these busy little heads, needs only a blunted memory to experience the most agreeable and exhilarating sensations. Still, for the greater part, the children are unconscious of the happiness of their condition; for nothing is more pathetically true than that we “never know when we are well off.” The boys in a public school are less aware of their happy state than are the girls; and of all the boys in his room, probably Penrod himself had the least appreciation of his felicity.

He sat staring at an open page of a textbook, but not studying; not even reading; not even thinking. Nor was he lost in a reverie: his mind's eye was shut, as his physical eye might well have been, for the optic nerve, flaccid with ennui, conveyed nothing whatever of the printed page upon which the orb of vision was partially focused. Penrod was doing something very unusual and rare, something almost never accomplished except by coloured people or by a boy in school on a spring day: he was doing really nothing at all. He was merely a state of being.

From the street a sound stole in through the open window, and abhorring Nature began to fill the vacuum called Penrod Schofield; for the sound was the spring song of a mouth-organ, coming down the sidewalk. The windows were intentionally above the level of the eyes of the seated pupils; but the picture of the musician was plain to Penrod, painted for him by a quality in the runs and trills, partaking of the oboe, of the calliope, and of cats in anguish; an excruciating sweetness obtained only by the wallowing, walloping yellow-pink palm of a hand whose back was Congo black and shiny. The music came down the street and passed beneath the window, accompanied by the care-free shuffling of a pair of old shoes scuffing syncopations on the cement sidewalk. It passed into the distance; became faint and blurred; was gone. Emotion stirred in Penrod a great and poignant desire, but (perhaps fortunately) no fairy godmother made her appearance.

Otherwise Penrod would have gone down the street in a black skin, playing the mouth-organ, and an unprepared coloured youth would have found himself enjoying educational advantages for which he had no ambition whatever.

Roused from perfect apathy, the boy cast about the schoolroom an eye wearied to nausea by the perpetual vision of the neat teacher upon the platform, the backs of the heads of the pupils in front of him, and the monotonous stretches of blackboard threateningly defaced by arithmetical formulae and other insignia of torture. Above the blackboard, the walls of the high room were of white plaster—white with the qualified whiteness of old snow in a soft coal town. This dismal expanse was broken by four lithographic portraits, votive offerings of a thoughtful publisher. The portraits were of good and great men, kind men; men who loved children. Their faces were noble and benevolent. But the lithographs offered the only rest for the eyes of children fatigued by the everlasting sameness of the schoolroom. Long day after long day, interminable week in and interminable week out, vast month on vast month, the pupils sat with those four portraits beaming kindness down upon them. The faces became permanent in the consciousness of the children; they became an obsession—in and out of school the children were never free of them. The four faces haunted the minds of children falling asleep; they hung upon the minds of children waking at night; they rose forebodingly in the minds of children waking in the morning; they became monstrously alive in the minds of children lying sick of fever.

Never, while the children of that schoolroom lived, would they be able to forget one detail of the four lithographs: the hand of Longfellow was fixed, for them, forever, in his beard. And by a simple and unconscious association of ideas, Penrod Schofield was accumulating an antipathy for the gentle Longfellow and for James Russell Lowell and for Oliver Wendell Holmes and for John Greenleaf Whittier, which would never permit him to peruse a work of one of those great New Englanders without a feeling of personal resentment.

His eyes fell slowly and inimically from the brow of Whittier to the braid of reddish hair belonging to Victorine Riordan, the little octoroon girl who sat directly in front of him. Victorine's back was as familiar to Penrod as the necktie of Oliver Wendell Holmes. So was her gayly coloured plaid waist. He hated the waist as he hated Victorine herself, without knowing why. Enforced companionship in large quantities and on an equal basis between the sexes appears to sterilize the affections, and schoolroom romances are few.

Victorine's hair was thick, and the brickish glints in it were beautiful, but Penrod was very tired of it. A tiny knot of green ribbon finished off the braid and kept it from unravelling; and beneath the ribbon there was a final wisp of hair which was just long enough to repose upon Penrod's desk when Victorine leaned back in her seat. It was there now. Thoughtfully, he took the braid between thumb and forefinger, and, without disturbing Victorine,

dipped the end of it and the green ribbon into the inkwell of his desk. He brought hair and ribbon forth dripping purple ink, and partially dried them on a blotter, though, a moment later when Victorine leaned forward, they were still able to add a few picturesque touches to the plaid waist.

Rudolph Krauss, across the aisle from Penrod, watched the operation with protuberant eyes, fascinated. Inspired to imitation, he took a piece of chalk from his pocket and wrote “RATS” across the shoulder-blades of the boy in front of him, then looked across appealingly to Penrod for tokens of congratulation. Penrod yawned. It may not be denied that at times he appeared to be a very self-centred boy.

Chapter 9: Soaring

Half the members of the class passed out to a recitation-room, the empurpled Victorine among them, and Miss Spence started the remaining half through the ordeal of trial by mathematics. Several boys and girls were sent to the blackboard, and Penrod, spared for the moment, followed their operations a little while with his eyes, but not with his mind; then, sinking deeper in his seat, limply abandoned the effort. His eyes remained open, but saw nothing; the routine of the arithmetic lesson reached his ears in familiar, meaningless sounds, but he heard nothing; and yet, this time, he was profoundly occupied. He had drifted away from the painful land of facts, and floated now in a new sea of fancy which he had just discovered.

Maturity forgets the marvellous realness of a boy's day-dreams, how colourful they glow, rosy and living, and how opaque the curtain closing down between the dreamer and the actual world. That curtain is almost sound-proof, too, and causes more throat-trouble among parents than is suspected.

The nervous monotony of the schoolroom inspires a sometimes unbearable longing for something astonishing to happen, and as every boy's fundamental desire is to do something astonishing himself, so as to be the centre of all human interest and awe, it was natural that Penrod should discover in fancy the delightful secret of self-levitation. He found, in this curious series of imaginings, during the lesson in arithmetic, that the atmosphere may be navigated as by a swimmer under water, but with infinitely greater ease and with perfect comfort in breathing. In his mind he extended his arms gracefully, at a level with his shoulders, and delicately paddled the air with his hands, which at once caused him to be drawn up out of his seat and elevated gently to a position about midway between the floor and the ceiling, where he came to an equilibrium and floated; a sensation not the less exquisite because of the screams of his fellow pupils, appalled by the miracle. Miss Spence herself was amazed and frightened, but he only smiled down carelessly upon her when she commanded him to return to earth; and then, when she climbed upon a desk to pull him down, he quietly paddled himself a little higher, leaving his toes just out of her reach. Next, he swam through a few slow somersaults to show his mastery of the new

art, and, with the shouting of the dumfounded scholars ringing in his ears, turned on his side and floated swiftly out of the window, immediately rising above the housetops, while people in the street below him shrieked, and a trolley car stopped dead in wonder.

With almost no exertion he paddled himself, many yards at a stroke, to the girls' private school where Marjorie Jones was a pupil–Marjorie Jones of the amber curls and the golden voice! Long before the "Pageant of the Table Round," she had offered Penrod a hundred proofs that she considered him wholly undesirable and ineligible. At the Friday Afternoon Dancing Class she consistently incited and led the laughter at him whenever Professor Bartet singled him out for admonition in matters of feet and decorum. And but yesterday she had chid him for his slavish lack of memory in daring to offer her a greeting on the way to Sunday-school. "Well! I expect you must forgot I told you never to speak to me again! If I was a boy, I'd be too proud to come hanging around people that don't speak to me, even if I was the Worst Boy in Town!" So she flouted him. But now, as he floated in through the window of her classroom and swam gently along the ceiling like an escaped toy balloon, she fell upon her knees beside her little desk, and, lifting up her arms toward him, cried with love and admiration:

"Oh, Penrod!"

He negligently kicked a globe from the high chandelier, and,

smiling coldly, floated out through the hall to the front steps of the school, while Marjorie followed, imploring him to grant her one kind look.

In the street an enormous crowd had gathered, headed by Miss Spence and a brass band; and a cheer from a hundred thousand throats shook the very ground as Penrod swam overhead. Marjorie knelt upon the steps and watched adoringly while Penrod took the drum-major's baton and, performing sinuous evolutions above the crowd, led the band. Then he threw the baton so high that it disappeared from sight; but he went swiftly after it, a double delight, for he had not only the delicious sensation of rocketing safely up and up into the blue sky, but also that of standing in the crowd below, watching and admiring himself as he dwindled to a speck, disappeared and then, emerging from a cloud, came speeding down, with the baton in his hand, to the level of the treetops, where he beat time for the band and the vast throng and Marjorie Jones, who all united in the "Star-spangled Banner" in honour of his aerial achievements. It was a great moment.

It was a great moment, but something seemed to threaten it. The face of Miss Spence looking up from the crowd grew too vivid–unpleasantly vivid. She was beckoning him and shouting, "Come down, Penrod Schofield! Penrod Schofield, come down here!" He could hear her above the band and the singing of the multitude; she seemed intent on spoiling everything. Marjorie Jones was weeping to show how sorry she was that she had

formerly slighted him, and throwing kisses to prove that she loved him; but Miss Spence kept jumping between him and Marjorie, incessantly calling his name.

He grew more and more irritated with her; he was the most important person in the world and was engaged in proving it to Marjorie Jones and the whole city, and yet Miss Spence seemed to feel she still had the right to order him about as she did in the old days when he was an ordinary schoolboy. He was furious; he was sure she wanted him to do something disagreeable. It seemed to him that she had screamed "Penrod Schofield!" thousands of times.

From the beginning of his aerial experiments in his own schoolroom, he had not opened his lips, knowing somehow that one of the requirements for air floating is perfect silence on the part of the floater; but, finally, irritated beyond measure by Miss Spence's clamorous insistence, he was unable to restrain an indignant rebuke and immediately came to earth with a frightful bump.

Miss Spence–in the flesh–had directed toward the physical body of the absent Penrod an inquiry as to the fractional consequences of dividing seventeen apples, fairly, among three boys, and she was surprised and displeased to receive no answer although to the best of her knowledge and belief, he was looking fixedly at her. She repeated her question crisply, without visible effect; then

summoned him by name with increasing asperity. Twice she called him, while all his fellow pupils turned to stare at the gazing boy. She advanced a step from the platform.

“Penrod Schofield!”

“Oh, my goodness!” he shouted suddenly. “Can’t you keep still a minute?”

Chapter `10: Uncle John

Miss Spence gasped. So did the pupils.

The whole room filled with a swelling conglomerate “O-O-O-O-H!”

As for Penrod himself, the walls reeled with the shock. He sat with his mouth open, a mere lump of stupefaction. For the appalling words that he had hurled at the teacher were as inexplicable to him as to any other who heard them.

Nothing is more treacherous than the human mind; nothing else so loves to play the Iscariot. Even when patiently bullied into a semblance of order and training, it may prove but a base and shifty servant. And Penrod’s mind was not his servant; it was a master, with the April wind’s whims; and it had just played him a

diabolical trick. The very jolt with which he came back to the schoolroom in the midst of his fancied flight jarred his day-dream utterly out of him; and he sat, open-mouthed in horror at what he had said.

The unanimous gasp of awe was protracted. Miss Spence, however, finally recovered her breath, and, returning deliberately to the platform, faced the school. "And then for a little while," as pathetic stories sometimes recount, "everything was very still." It was so still, in fact, that Penrod's newborn notoriety could almost be heard growing. This grisly silence was at last broken by the teacher.

"Penrod Schofield, stand up!"

The miserable child obeyed.

"What did you mean by speaking to me in that way?"

He hung his head, raked the floor with the side of his shoe, swayed, swallowed, looked suddenly at his hands with the air of never having seen them before, then clasped them behind him. The school shivered in ecstatic horror, every fascinated eye upon him; yet there was not a soul in the room but was profoundly grateful to him for the sensation–including the offended teacher herself. Unhappily, all this gratitude was unconscious and altogether different from the kind which, results in testimonials

and loving-cups. On the contrary!

“Penrod Schofield!”

He gulped.

“Answer me at once! Why did you speak to me like that?”

“I was——” He choked, unable to continue.

“Speak out!”

“I was just–thinking,” he managed to stammer.

“That will not do,” she returned sharply. “I wish to know immediately why you spoke as you did.”

The stricken Penrod answered helplessly:

“Because I was just thinking.”

Upon the very rack he could have offered no ampler truthful explanation. It was all he knew about it.

“Thinking what?”

“Just thinking.”

Miss Spence's expression gave evidence that her power of self-restraint was undergoing a remarkable test. However, after taking counsel with herself, she commanded:

"Come here!"

He shuffled forward, and she placed a chair upon the platform near her own.

"Sit there!"

Then (but not at all as if nothing had happened), she continued the lesson in arithmetic. Spiritually the children may have learned a lesson in very small fractions indeed as they gazed at the fragment of sin before them on the stool of penitence. They all stared at him attentively with hard and passionately interested eyes, in which there was never one trace of pity. It cannot be said with precision that he writhed; his movement was more a slow, continuous squirm, effected with a ghastly assumption of languid indifference; while his gaze, in the effort to escape the marble-hearted glare of his schoolmates, affixed itself with apparent permanence to the waistcoat button of James Russell Lowell just above the "U" in "Russell."

Classes came and classes went, grilling him with eyes. Newcomers received the story of the crime in darkling whispers; and the outcast sat and sat and sat, and squirmed and squirmed and

squirmed. (He did one or two things with his spine which a professional contortionist would have observed with real interest.) And all this while of freezing suspense was but the criminal's detention awaiting trial. A known punishment may be anticipated with some measure of equanimity; at least, the prisoner may prepare himself to undergo it; but the unknown looms more monstrous for every attempt to guess it. Penrod's crime was unique; there were no rules to aid him in estimating the vengeance to fall upon him for it. What seemed most probable was that he would be expelled from the schools in the presence of his family, the mayor, and council, and afterward whipped by his father upon the State House steps, with the entire city as audience by invitation of the authorities.

The outcast sat, and sat and sat, and squirmed, and squirmed and squirmed

Noon came. The rows of children filed out, every head turning for a last unpleasingly speculative look at the outlaw. Then Miss Spence closed the door into the cloakroom and that into the big hall, and came and sat at her desk, near Penrod. The tramping of feet outside, the shrill calls and shouting and the changing voices of the older boys ceased to be heard–and there was silence.

Penrod, still affecting to be occupied with Lowell, was conscious that Miss Spence looked at him intently.

“Penrod,” she said gravely, “what excuse have you to offer before I report your case to the principal?”

The word “principal” struck him to the vitals. Grand Inquisitor, Grand Khan, Sultan, Emperor, Tsar, Caesar Augustus–these are comparable. He stopped squirming instantly, and sat rigid.

“I want an answer. Why did you shout those words at me?”

“Well,” he murmured, “I was just–thinking.”

“Thinking what?” she asked sharply.

“I don’t know.”

“That won’t do!”

He took his left ankle in his right hand and regarded it helplessly. “That won’t do, Penrod Schofield,” she repeated severely. “If that is all the excuse you have to offer I shall report your case this instant!”

And she rose with fatal intent.

But Penrod was one of those whom the precipice inspires. “Well, I have got an excuse.”

“Well”–she paused impatiently–“what is it?”

He had not an idea, but he felt one coming, and replied automatically, in a plaintive tone:

“I guess anybody that had been through what I had to go through, last night, would think they had an excuse.”

Miss Spence resumed her seat, though with the air of being ready to leap from it instantly.

“What has last night to do with your insolence to me this morning?”

“Well, I guess you’d see,” he returned, emphasizing the plaintive note, “if you knew what I know.”

“Now, Penrod,” she said, in a kinder voice, “I have a high regard for your mother and father, and it would hurt me to distress them, but you must either tell me what was the matter with you or I’ll have to take you to Mrs. Houston.”

“Well, ain’t I going to?” he cried, spurred by the dread name. “It’s because I didn’t sleep last night.”

“Were you ill?” The question was put with some dryness.

He felt the dryness. “No’m; I wasn’t.”

“Then if someone in your family was so ill that even you were kept up all night, how does it happen they let you come to school this morning?”

“It wasn’t illness,” he returned, shaking his head mournfully. “It was lots worse’n anybody’s being sick. It was–it was–well, it was jest awful.”

“What was?” He remarked with anxiety the incredulity in her tone.

“It was about Aunt Clara,” he said.

“Your Aunt Clara!” she repeated. “Do you mean your mother’s sister who married Mr. Farry of Dayton, Illinois?”

“Yes–Uncle John,” returned Penrod sorrowfully. “The trouble was about him.”

Miss Spence frowned a frown which he rightly interpreted as one of continued suspicion. “She and I were in school together,” she said. “I used to know her very well, and I’ve always heard her married life was entirely happy. I don’t—-”

“Yes, it was,” he interrupted, “until last year when Uncle John took to running with travelling men——”

“What?”

“Yes’m.” He nodded solemnly. “That was what started it. At first he was a good, kind husband, but these travelling men would coax him into a saloon on his way home from work, and they got him to drinking beer and then ales, wines, liquors, and cigars——”

“Penrod!”

“Ma’am?”

“I’m not inquiring into your Aunt Clara’s private affairs; I’m asking you if you have anything to say which would palliate——”

“That’s what I’m tryin’ to tell you about, Miss Spence,” he pleaded,–“if you’d jest only let me. When Aunt Clara and her little baby daughter got to our house last night——”

“You say Mrs. Farry is visiting your mother?”

“Yes’m–not just visiting–you see, she had to come. Well of course, little baby Clara, she was so bruised up and mauled, where he’d been hittin’ her with his cane——”

“You mean that your uncle had done such a thing as that!” exclaimed Miss Spence, suddenly disarmed by this scandal.

“Yes’m, and mamma and Margaret had to sit up all night nursin’ little Clara–and Aunt Clara was in such a state somebody had to keep talkin’ to her, and there wasn’t anybody but me to do it, so I—-”

“But where was your father?” she cried.

“Ma’am?”

“Where was your father while—-”

“Oh–papa?” Penrod paused, reflected; then brightened. “Why, he was down at the train, waitin’ to see if Uncle John would try to follow ’em and make ’em come home so’s he could persecute ’em some more. I wanted to do that, but they said if he did come I mightn’t be strong enough to hold him and—-” The brave lad paused again, modestly. Miss Spence’s expression was encouraging. Her eyes were wide with astonishment, and there may have been in them, also, the mingled beginnings of admiration and self-reproach. Penrod, warming to his work, felt safer every moment.

“And so,” he continued, “I had to sit up with Aunt Clara. She had some pretty big bruises, too, and I had to—-”

“But why didn’t they send for a doctor?” However, this question was only a flicker of dying incredulity.

“Oh, they didn’t want any doctor,” exclaimed the inspired realist promptly. “They don’t want anybody to hear about it because Uncle John might reform–and then where’d he be if everybody knew he’d been a drunkard and whipped his wife and baby daughter?”

“Oh!” said Miss Spence.

“You see, he used to be upright as anybody,” he went on explanatively. “It all begun—-”

“Began, Penrod.”

“Yes’m. It all commenced from the first day he let those travelling men coax him into the saloon.” Penrod narrated the downfall of his Uncle John at length. In detail he was nothing short of plethoric; and incident followed incident, sketched with such vividness, such abundance of colour, and such verisimilitude to a drunkard’s life as a drunkard’s life should be, that had Miss Spence possessed the rather chilling attributes of William J. Burns himself, the last trace of skepticism must have vanished from her mind. Besides, there are two things that will be believed of any man whatsoever, and one of them is that he has taken to drink.

And in every sense it was a moving picture which, with simple but eloquent words, the virtuous Penrod set before his teacher.

His eloquence increased with what it fed on; and as with the eloquence so with self-reproach in the gentle bosom of the teacher. She cleared her throat with difficulty once or twice, during his description of his ministering night with Aunt Clara. "And I said to her, 'Why, Aunt Clara, what's the use of takin' on so about it?' And I said, 'Now, Aunt Clara, all the crying in the world can't make things any better.' And then she'd just keep catchin' hold of me, and sob and kind of holler, and I'd say, 'Don't cry, Aunt Clara—please don't cry.'"'

Then, under the influence of some fragmentary survivals of the respectable portion of his Sunday adventures, his theme became more exalted; and, only partially misquoting a phrase from a psalm, he related how he had made it of comfort to Aunt Clara, and how he had besought her to seek Higher guidance in her trouble.

The surprising thing about a structure such as Penrod was erecting is that the taller it becomes the more ornamentation it will stand. Gifted boys have this faculty of building magnificence upon cobwebs—and Penrod was gifted. Under the spell of his really great performance, Miss Spence gazed more and more sweetly upon the prodigy of spiritual beauty and goodness before

her, until at last, when Penrod came to the explanation of his "just thinking," she was forced to turn her head away.

"You mean, dear," she said gently, "that you were all worn out and hardly knew what you were saying?"

"Yes'm."

"And you were thinking about all those dreadful things so hard that you forgot where you were?"

"I was thinking," he said simply, "how to save Uncle John." And the end of it for this mighty boy was that the teacher kissed him!

Chapter 11: Fidelity of a Little Dog

The returning students, that afternoon, observed that Penrod's desk was vacant–and nothing could have been more impressive than that sinister mere emptiness. The accepted theory was that Penrod had been arrested. How breathtaking, then, the sensation when, at the beginning of the second hour, he strolled–in with inimitable carelessness and, rubbing his eyes, somewhat noticeably in the manner of one who has snatched an hour of much needed sleep, took his place as if nothing in particular had happened. This, at first supposed to be a superhuman exhibition of sheer audacity, became but the more dumfounding when Miss Spence–looking up from her desk–greeted him with a pleasant little nod. Even after school, Penrod gave numerous maddened investigators no relief. All he would consent to say was:

“Oh, I just talked to her.”

A mystification not entirely unconnected with the one thus produced was manifested at his own family. dinner-table the following evening. Aunt Clara had been out rather late, and came to the table after the rest were seated. She wore a puzzled expression.

“Do you ever see Mary Spence nowadays?” she inquired, as she unfolded her napkin, addressing Mrs. Schofield. Penrod abruptly set down his soup-spoon and gazed at his aunt with flattering attention.

“Yes; sometimes,” said Mrs. Schofield. “She’s Penrod’s teacher.”
“Is she?” said Mrs. Farry. “Do you–” She paused. “Do people think her a little–queer, these days?”

“Why, no,” returned her sister. “What makes you say that?”

“She has acquired a very odd manner,” said Mrs. Farry decidedly.

“At least, she seemed odd to me. I met her at the corner just before I got to the house, a few minutes ago, and after we’d said howdy-do to each other, she kept hold of my hand and looked as though she was going to cry. She seemed to be trying to say something, and choking—-”

“But I don’t think that’s so very queer, Clara. She knew you in school, didn’t she?”

“Yes, but—-”

“And she hadn’t seen you for so many years, I think it’s perfectly natural she—-”

“Wait! She stood there squeezing my hand, and struggling to get her voice–and I got really embarrassed–and then finally she said, in a kind of tearful whisper, ‘Be of good cheer–this trial will pass!'”

“How queer!” exclaimed Margaret.

Penrod sighed, and returned somewhat absently to his soup.
“Well, I don’t know,” said Mrs. Schofield thoughtfully. “Of course she’s heard about the outbreak of measles in Dayton, since they had to close the schools, and she knows you live there—-”

“But doesn’t it seem a very exaggerated way,” suggested Margaret, “to talk about measles?”

“Wait!” begged Aunt Clara. “After she said that, she said something even queerer, and then put her handkerchief to her eyes and hurried away.”

Penrod laid down his spoon again and moved his chair slightly back from the table. A spirit of prophecy was upon him: he knew that someone was going to ask a question which he felt might better remain unspoken.

“What was the other thing she said?” Mr. Schofield inquired, thus immediately fulfilling his son’s premonition.

“She said,” returned Mrs. Farry slowly, looking about the table, “she said, ‘I know that Penrod is a great, great comfort to you!'” There was a general exclamation of surprise. It was a singular thing, and in no manner may it be considered complimentary to Penrod, that this speech of Miss Spence’s should have immediately confirmed Mrs. Farry’s doubts about her in the minds of all his family.

Mr. Schofield shook his head pityingly.

“I’m afraid she’s a goner,” he went so far as to say.

“Of all the weird ideas!” cried Margaret.

“I never heard anything like it in my life!” Mrs. Schofield exclaimed. “Was that all she said?”

“Every word!”

Penrod again resumed attention to his soup. His mother looked at him curiously, and then, struck by a sudden thought, gathered the glances of the adults of the table by a significant movement of the head, and, by another, conveyed an admonition to drop the subject until later. Miss Spence was Penrod's teacher: it was better, for many reasons, not to discuss the subject of her queerness before him. This was Mrs. Schofield's thought at the time. Later she had another, and it kept her awake.

The next afternoon, Mr. Schofield, returning at five o'clock from the cares of the day, found the house deserted, and sat down to read his evening paper in what appeared to be an uninhabited apartment known to its own world as the "drawing-room." A sneeze, unexpected both to him and the owner, informed him of the presence of another person.

"Where are you, Penrod?" the parent asked, looking about.
"Here," said Penrod meekly.

Stooping, Mr. Schofield discovered his son squatting under the piano, near an open window–his wistful Duke lying beside him.
"What are you doing there?"

"Me?"

"Why under the piano?"

“Well,” the boy returned, with grave sweetness, “I was just kind of sitting here–thinking.”

“All right.” Mr. Schofield, rather touched, returned to the digestion of a murder, his back once more to the piano; and Penrod silently drew from beneath his jacket (where he had slipped it simultaneously with the sneeze) a paper-backed volume entitled: “Slimsy, the Sioux City Squealer, or, ‘Not Guilty, Your Honor.'”

In this manner the reading-club continued in peace, absorbed, contented, the world well forgot–until a sudden, violently irritated slam-bang of the front door startled the members; and Mrs. Schofield burst into the room and threw herself into a chair, moaning.

“What’s the matter, mamma?” asked her husband laying aside his paper.

“Henry Passloe Schofield,” returned the lady, “I don’t know what is to be done with that boy; I do not!”

“You mean Penrod?”

“Who else could I mean?” She sat up, exasperated, to stare at him. “Henry Passloe Schofield, you’ve got to take this matter in your hands–it’s beyond me!”

“Well, what has he——”

“Last night I got to thinking,” she began rapidly, “about what Clara told us–thank Heaven she and Margaret and little Clara have gone to tea at Cousin Charlotte’s!–but they’ll be home soon–about what she said about Miss Spence——”

“You mean about Penrod’s being a comfort?”

“Yes, and I kept thinking and thinking and thinking about it till I couldn’t stand it any——”

“By george!” shouted Mr. Schofield startlingly, stooping to look under the piano. A statement that he had suddenly remembered his son’s presence would be lacking in accuracy, for the highly sensitized Penrod was, in fact, no longer present. No more was Duke, his faithful dog.

“What’s the matter?”

“Nothing,” he returned, striding to the open window and looking out. “Go on.”

“Oh,” she moaned, “it must be kept from Clara–and I’ll never hold up my head again if John Farry ever hears of it!”

“Hears of what?”

“Well, I just couldn’t stand it, I got so curious; and I thought of course if Miss Spence had become a little unbalanced it was my duty to know it, as Penrod’s mother and she his teacher; so I thought I would just call on her at her apartment after school and have a chat and see and I did and–oh–”

“Well?”

“I’ve just come from there, and she told me–she told me! Oh, I’ve never known anything like this!”

“What did she tell you?”

Mrs. Schofield, making a great effort, managed to assume a temporary appearance of calm. “Henry,” she said solemnly, “bear this in mind: whatever you do to Penrod, it must be done in some place when Clara won’t hear it. But the first thing to do is to find him.”

Within view of the window from which Mr. Schofield was gazing was the closed door of the storeroom in the stable, and just outside this door Duke was performing a most engaging trick. His young master had taught Duke to “sit up and beg” when he wanted anything, and if that didn’t get it, to “speak.” Duke was facing the closed door and sitting up and begging, and now he also spoke–in a loud, clear bark.

There was an open transom over the door, and from this descended–hurled by an unseen agency–a can half filled with old paint.

It caught the small besieger of the door on his thoroughly surprised right ear, encouraged him to some remarkable acrobatics, and turned large portions of him a dull blue. Allowing only a moment to perplexity, and deciding, after a single and evidently unappetizing experiment, not to cleanse himself of paint, the loyal animal resumed his quaint, upright posture. Mr. Schofield seated himself on the window-sill, whence he could keep in view that pathetic picture of unrequited love.

"Go on with your story, mamma," he said. "I think I can find Penrod when we want him."

And a few minutes later he added, "And I think I know the place to do it in."

Again the faithful voice of Duke was heard, pleading outside the bolted door.

Chapter 12: Miss Rennsdale Accepts

“One-two-three; one-two-three–glide!” said Professor Bartet, emphasizing his instructions by a brisk collision of his palms at “glide.” “One-two-three; one-two-three–glide!”

The school week was over, at last, but Penrod’s troubles were not. Round and round the ballroom went the seventeen struggling little couples of the Friday Afternoon Dancing Class. Round and round went their reflections with them, swimming rhythmically in the polished, dark floor–white and blue and pink for the girls; black, with dabs of white, for the white-collared, white-gloved boys; and sparks and slivers of high light everywhere as the glistening pumps flickered along the surface like a school of flying fish. Every small pink face–with one exception–was painstaking and set for duty. It was a conscientious little merry-

go-round.

“One-two-three; one-two-three–glide! One-two-three; one-two-three–glide! One-two-th–Ha! Mister Penrod Schofield, you lose the step. Your left foot! No, no! This is the left! See–like me! Now again! One-two-three; one-two-three–glide! Better! Much better! Again! One-two-three; one-two-three–gl–Stop! Mr. Penrod Schofield, this dancing class is provided by the kind parents of the pupilses as much to learn the mannerss of good societies as to dance. You think you shall ever see a gentleman in good societies to tickle his partner in the dance till she say Ouch? Never! I assure you it is not done. Again! Now then! Piano, please! One-two-three; one-two-three–glide! Mr. Penrod Schofield, your right foot–your right foot! No, no! Stop!”

The merry-go-round came to a standstill.

“Mr. Penrod Schofield and partner”–Professor Bartet wiped his brow–“will you kindly observe me? One-two-three–glide! So! Now then–no; you will please keep your places, ladies and gentlemen. Mr. Penrod Schofield, I would puttickly like your attention, this is for you!”

“Pickin’ on me again!” murmured the smouldering Penrod to his small, unsympathetic partner. “Can’t let me alone a minute!”

“Mister Georgie Bassett, please step to the centre,” said the professor.

Mr. Bassett complied with modest alacrity.

“Teacher’s pet!” whispered Penrod hoarsely. He had nothing but contempt for Georgie Bassett. The parents, guardians, aunts, uncles, cousins, governesses, housemaids, cooks, chauffeurs and coachmen, appertaining to the members of the dancing class, all dwelt in the same part of town and shared certain communal theories; and among the most firmly established was that which maintained Georgie Bassett to be the Best Boy in Town.

Contrariwise, the unfortunate Penrod, largely because of his recent dazzling but disastrous attempts to control forces far beyond him, had been given a clear title as the Worst Boy in Town. (Population, 135,000.) To precisely what degree his reputation was the product of his own energies cannot be calculated. It was Marjorie Jones who first applied the description, in its definite simplicity, the day after the “pageant,” and, possibly, her frequent and effusive repetitions of it, even upon wholly irrelevant occasions, had something to do with its prompt and quite perfect acceptance by the community.

“Miss Rennsdale will please do me the fafer to be Mr. Georgie Bassett’s partner for one moment,” said Professor Bartet. “Mr. Penrod Schofield will please give his attention. Miss Rennsdale

and Mister Bassett, obliche me, if you please. Others please watch. Piano, please! Now then!"

Miss Rennsdale, aged eight–the youngest lady in the class– and Mr. Georgie Bassett one-two-three–glided with consummate technique for the better education of Penrod Schofield. It is possible that amber-curled, beautiful Marjorie felt that she, rather than Miss Rennsdale, might have been selected as the example of perfection–or perhaps her remark was only woman. "Stopping everybody for that boy!" said Marjorie.

Penrod, across the circle from her, heard distinctly–nay, he was obviously intended to hear; but over a scorched heart he preserved a stoic front. Whereupon Marjorie whispered derisively in the ear of her partner, Maurice Levy, who wore a pearl pin in his tie. "Again, please, everybody–ladies and gentlemen!" cried Professor Bartet. "Mister Penrod Schofield, if you please, pay puttickly attention! Piano, please! Now then!"

The lesson proceeded. At the close of the hour Professor Bartet stepped to the centre of the room and clapped his hands for attention.

"Ladies and gentlemen, if you please to seat yourselves quietly," he said; "I speak to you now about to-morrow. As you all know– Mister Penrod Schofield, I am not sticking up in a tree outside that window! If you do me the fafer to examine I am here, insides

of the room. Now then! Piano, pl–no, I do not wish the piano! As you all know, this is the last lesson of the season until next October. Tomorrow is our special afternoon; beginning three o'clock, we dance the cotillon. But this afternoon comes the test of mannerss. You must see if each know how to make a little formal call like a grown-up people in good societies. You have had good, perfect instruction; let us see if we know how to perform like societies ladies and gentlemen twenty-six years of age.

"Now, when you're dismissed each lady will go to her home and prepare to receive a call. The gentlemen will allow the ladies time to reach their houses and to prepare to receive callers; then each gentleman will call upon a lady and beg the pleasure to engage her for a partner in the cotillon to-morrow. You all know the correct, proper form for these calls, because didn't I work teaching you last lesson till I thought I would drop dead? Yes! Now each gentleman, if he reach a lady's house behind some-other gentleman, then he must go somewhere else to a lady's house, and keep calling until he secures a partner; so, as there are the same number of both, everybody shall have a partner.

"Now please all remember that if in case–Mister Penrod Schofield, when you make your call on a lady I beg you to please remember that gentlemen in good societies do not scratch the back in societies as you appear to attempt; so please allow the hands to rest carelessly in the lap. Now please all remember that if in case–Mister Penrod Schofield, if you please! Gentlemen in

societies do not scratch the back by causing frictions between it and the back of your chair, either! Nobody else is itching here! I do not itch! I cannot talk if you must itch! In the name of Heaven, why must you always itch? What was I saying? Where ah! the cotillon–yes! For the cotillon it is important nobody shall fail to be here tomorrow; but if any one should be so very ill he cannot possible come he must write a very polite note of regrets in the form of good societies to his engaged partner to excuse himself–and he must give the reason.

"I do not think anybody is going to be that sick to-morrow–no; and I will find out and report to parents if anybody would try it and not be. But it is important for the cotillon that we have an even number of so many couples, and if it should happen that someone comes and her partner has sent her a polite note that he has genuine reasons why he cannot come, the note must be handed at once to me, so that I arrange some other partner. Is all understood? Yes. The gentlemen will remember now to allow the ladies plenty of time to reach their houses and prepare to receive calls. Ladies and gentlemen, I thank you for your polite attention."

It was nine blocks to the house of Marjorie Jones; but Penrod did it in less than seven minutes from a flying start–such was his haste to lay himself and his hand for the cotillon at the feet of one who had so recently spoken unamiably of him in public. He had not yet learned that the only safe male rebuke to a scornful female

is to stay away from her–especially if that is what she desires. However, he did not wish to rebuke her; simply and ardently he wished to dance the cotillon with her. Resentment was swallowed up in hope.

The fact that Miss Jones' feeling for him bore a striking resemblance to that of Simon Legree for Uncle Tom, deterred him not at all. Naturally, he was not wholly unconscious that when he should lay his hand for the cotillon at her feet it would be her inward desire to step on it; but he believed that if he were first in the field Marjorie would have to accept. These things are governed by law.

It was his fond intention to reach her house even in advance of herself, and with grave misgiving he beheld a large automobile at rest before the sainted gate. Forthwith, a sinking feeling became a portent inside him as little Maurice Levy emerged from the front door of the house.

"'Lo, Penrod!" said Maurice airily.

"What you doin' in there?" inquired Penrod.

"In where?"

"In Marjorie's."

“Well, what shouldn’t I be doin’ in Marjorie’s?” Mr. Levy returned indignantly. “I was inviting her for my partner in the cotillon–what you s’pose?”

“You haven’t got any right to!” Penrod protested hotly. “You can’t do it yet.”

“I did do it yet!” said Maurice.

“You can’t!” insisted Penrod. “You got to allow them time first. He said the ladies had to be allowed time to prepare.”

“Well, ain’t she had time to prepare?”

“When?” Penrod demanded, stepping close to his rival threateningly. “I’d like to know when—-”

“When?” echoed the other with shrill triumph. “When? Why, in mamma’s sixty-horse powder limousine automobile, what Marjorie came home with me in! I guess that’s when!”

An impulse in the direction of violence became visible upon the countenance of Penrod.

“I expect you need some wiping down,” he began dangerously. “I’ll give you sumpthing to remem—-”

“Oh, you will!” Maurice cried with astonishing truculence, contorting himself into what he may have considered a posture of defense. “Let’s see you try it, you–you itcher!”

For the moment, defiance from such a source was dumfounding. Then, luckily, Penrod recollected something and glanced at the automobile.

Perceiving therein not only the alert chauffeur but the magnificent outlines of Mrs. Levy, his enemy’s mother, he manoeuvred his lifted hand so that it seemed he had but meant to scratch his ear.

“Well, I guess I better be goin’,” he said casually. “See you tomorrow!”

Maurice mounted to the lap of luxury, and Penrod strolled away with an assumption of careless ease which was put to a severe strain when, from the rear window of the car, a sudden protuberance in the nature of a small, dark, curly head shrieked scornfully:

“Go on–you big stiff!”

The cotillon loomed dismally before Penrod now; but it was his duty to secure a partner and he set about it with a dreary heart. The delay occasioned by his fruitless attempt on Marjorie and the

altercation with his enemy at her gate had allowed other ladies ample time to prepare for callers—and to receive them. Sadly he went from house to house, finding that he had been preceded in one after the other. Altogether his hand for the cotillon was declined eleven times that afternoon on the legitimate ground of previous engagement. This, with Marjorie, scored off all except five of the seventeen possible partners; and four of the five were also sealed away from him, as he learned in chance encounters with other boys upon the street.

One lady alone remained; he bowed to the inevitable and entered this lorn damsel's gate at twilight with an air of great discouragement. The lorn damsel was Miss Rennsdale, aged eight. We are apt to forget that there are actually times of life when too much youth is a handicap. Miss Rennsdale was beautiful; she danced like a premiere; she had every charm but age. On that account alone had she been allowed so much time to prepare to receive callers that it was only by the most manful efforts she could keep her lip from trembling.

A decorous maid conducted the long-belated applicant to her where she sat upon a sofa beside a nursery governess. The decorous maid announced him composedly as he made his entrance.

"Mr. Penrod Schofield!"

Miss Rennsdale suddenly burst into loud sobs.

“Oh!” she wailed. “I just knew it would be him!”

The decorous maid’s composure vanished at once—likewise her decorum. She clapped her hand over her mouth and fled, uttering sounds. The governess, however, set herself to comfort her heartbroken charge, and presently succeeded in restoring Miss Rennsdale to a semblance of that poise with which a lady receives callers and accepts invitations to dance cotillons. But she continued to sob at intervals.

Feeling himself at perhaps a disadvantage, Penrod made offer of his hand for the morrow with a little embarrassment. Following the form prescribed by Professor Bartet, he advanced several paces toward the stricken lady and bowed formally.

“I hope,” he said by rote, “you’re well, and your parents also in good health. May I have the pleasure of dancing the cotillon as your partner t’-morrow afternoon?”

The wet eyes of Miss Rennsdale searched his countenance without pleasure, and a shudder wrung her small shoulders; but the governess whispered to her instructively, and she made a great effort.

“I thu-thank you fu-for your polite invu-invu-invutation; and I ac—-” Thus far she progressed when emotion overcame her again. She beat frantically upon the sofa with fists and heels. “Oh, I did want it to be Georgie Bassett!”

“No, no, no!” said the governess, and whispered urgently, whereupon Miss Rennsdale was able to complete her acceptance.

“And I ac-accept wu-with pu-pleasure!” she moaned, and immediately, uttering a loud yell, flung herself face downward upon the sofa, clutching her governess convulsively.

Somewhat disconcerted, Penrod bowed again.

“I thank you for your polite acceptance,” he murmured hurriedly; “and I trust–I trust–I forget. Oh, yes–I trust we shall have a most enjoyable occasion. Pray present my compliments to your parents; and I must now wish you a very good afternoon.”

Concluding these courtly demonstrations with another bow he withdrew in fair order, though thrown into partial confusion in the hall by a final wail from his crushed hostess:
“Oh! Why couldn’t it be anybody but him!”

Chapter 13: The Smallpox Medicine

Next morning Penrod woke in profound depression of spirit, the cotillon ominous before him. He pictured Marjorie Jones and Maurice, graceful and light-hearted, flitting by him fairylike, loosing silvery laughter upon him as he engaged in the struggle to keep step with a partner about four years and two feet his junior. It was hard enough for Penrod to keep step with a girl of his size. The foreboding vision remained with him, increasing in vividness, throughout the forenoon. He found himself unable to fix his mind upon anything else, and, having bent his gloomy footsteps toward the sawdust-box, after breakfast, presently descended therefrom, abandoning Harold Ramorez where he had left him the preceding Saturday. Then, as he sat communing silently with wistful Duke, in the storeroom, coquettish fortune looked his way.

It was the habit of Penrod's mother not to throw away anything whatsoever until years of storage conclusively proved there would never be a use for it; but a recent house-cleaning had ejected upon the back porch a great quantity of bottles and other

paraphernalia of medicine, left over from illnesses in the family during a period of several years. This debris Della, the cook, had collected in a large market basket, adding to it some bottles of flavouring extracts that had proved unpopular in the household; also, old catsup bottles; a jar or two of preserves gone bad; various rejected dental liquids—and other things. And she carried the basket out to the storeroom in the stable.

Penrod was at first unaware of what lay before him. Chin on palms, he sat upon the iron rim of a former aquarium and stared morbidly through the open door at the checkered departing back of Della. It was another who saw treasure in the basket she had left.

Mr. Samuel Williams, aged eleven, and congenial to Penrod in years, sex, and disposition, appeared in the doorway, shaking into foam a black liquid within a pint bottle, stoppered by a thumb. "Yay, Penrod!" the visitor gave greeting.

"Yay," said Penrod with slight enthusiasm. "What you got?"

"Lickrish water."

"Drinkin's!" demanded Penrod promptly. This is equivalent to the cry of "Biters" when an apple is shown, and establishes unquestionable title.

“Down to there!” stipulated Sam, removing his thumb to affix it firmly as a mark upon the side of the bottle a check upon gormandizing that remained carefully in place while Penrod drank.

This rite concluded, the visitor’s eye fell upon the basket deposited by Della. He emitted tokens of pleasure.

“Looky! Looky! Looky there! That ain’t any good pile o’ stuff–oh, no!”

“What for?”

“Drug store!” shouted Sam. “We’ll be partners—-”

“Or else,” Penrod suggested, “I’ll run the drug store and you be a customer—-”

“No! Partners!” insisted Sam with such conviction that his host yielded; and within ten minutes the drug store was doing a heavy business with imaginary patrons. Improvising counters with boards and boxes, and setting forth a very druggish-looking stock from the basket, each of the partners found occupation to his taste–Penrod as salesman and Sam as prescription clerk.

“Here you are, madam!” said Penrod briskly, offering a vial of Sam’s mixing to an invisible matron. “This will cure your

husband in a few minutes. Here's the camphor, mister. Call again! Fifty cents' worth of pills? Yes, madam. There you are! Hurry up with that dose for the nigger lady, Bill!"

"I'll 'tend to it soon's I get time, Jim," replied the prescription clerk. "I'm busy fixin' the smallpox medicine for the sick policeman downtown."

Penrod stopped sales to watch this operation. Sam had found an empty pint bottle and, with the pursed lips and measuring eye of a great chemist, was engaged in filling it from other bottles.

First, he poured into it some of the syrup from the condemned preserves; and a quantity of extinct hair oil; next the remaining contents of a dozen small vials cryptically labelled with physicians' prescriptions; then some remnants of catsup and essence of beef and what was left in several bottles of mouthwash; after that a quantity of rejected flavouring extract–topping off by shaking into the mouth of the bottle various powders from small pink papers, relics of Mr. Schofield's influenza of the preceding winter.

Penrod stopped sales to watch this operation

Sam examined the combination with concern, appearing unsatisfied. "We

got to make that smallpox medicine good and strong!" he remarked; and, his artistic sense growing more powerful than his appetite, he poured about a quarter of the licorice water into the smallpox medicine.

"What you doin'?" protested Penrod. "What you want to waste that lickrish water for? We ought to keep it to drink when we're tired."

"I guess I got a right to use my own lickrish water any way I want to," replied the prescription clerk. "I tell you, you can't get smallpox medicine too strong. Look at her now!" He held the bottle up admiringly. "She's as black as lickrish. I bet you she's strong all right!"

"I wonder how she tastes?" said Penrod thoughtfully.

"Don't smell so awful much," observed Sam, sniffing the bottle– "a good deal, though!"

"I wonder if it'd make us sick to drink it?" said Penrod.

Sam looked at the bottle thoughtfully; then his eye, wandering, fell upon Duke, placidly curled up near the door, and lighted with the advent of an idea new to him, but old, old in the world–older than Egypt!

“Let’s give Duke some!” he cried.

That was the spark. They acted immediately; and a minute later Duke, released from custody with a competent potion of the smallpox medicine inside him, settled conclusively their doubts concerning its effect. The patient animal, accustomed to expect the worst at all times, walked out of the door, shaking his head with an air of considerable annoyance, opening and closing his mouth with singular energy–and so repeatedly that they began to count the number of times he did it. Sam thought it was thirty-nine times, but Penrod had counted forty-one before other and more striking symptoms appeared.

All things come from Mother Earth and must return–Duke restored much at this time. Afterward, he ate heartily of grass; and then, over his shoulder, he bent upon his master one inscrutable look and departed feebly to the front yard.

The two boys had watched the process with warm interest. “I told you she was strong!” said Mr. Williams proudly.

“Yes, sir–she is!” Penrod was generous enough to admit. “I expect she’s strong enough——” He paused in thought, and added:

“We haven’t got a horse any more.”

“I bet you she’d fix him if you had!” said Sam. And it may be that this was no idle boast.

The pharmaceutical game was not resumed; the experiment upon Duke had made the drug store commonplace and stimulated the appetite for stronger meat. Lounging in the doorway, the near-vivisectionists sipped licorice water alternately and conversed.

“I bet some of our smallpox medicine would fix ole P’fessor Bartet all right!” quoth Penrod. “I wish he’d come along and ask us for some.”

“We could tell him it was lickrish water,” added Sam, liking the idea. “The two bottles look almost the same.”

“Then we wouldn’t have to go to his ole cotillon this afternoon,” Penrod sighed. “There wouldn’t be any!”

“Who’s your partner, Pen?”

“Who’s yours?”

“Who’s yours? I just ast you.”

“Oh, she’s all right!” And Penrod smiled boastfully.

“I bet you wanted to dance with Marjorie!” said his friend.

“Me? I wouldn’t dance with that girl if she begged me to! I wouldn’t dance with her to save her from drowning! I wouldn’t da—-”

“Oh, no–you wouldn’t!” interrupted Mr. Williams skeptically. Penrod changed his tone and became persuasive.

“Looky here, Sam,” he said confidentially. “I’ve got ‘a mighty nice partner, but my mother don’t like her mother; and so I’ve been thinking I better not dance with her. I’ll tell you what I’ll do; I’ve got a mighty good sling in the house, and I’ll give it to you if you’ll change partners.”

“You want to change and you don’t even know who mine is!” said Sam, and he made the simple though precocious deduction: “Yours must be a lala! Well, I invited Mabel Rorebeck, and she wouldn’t let me change if I wanted to. Mabel Rorebeck’d rather dance with me,” he continued serenely, “than anybody; and she said she was awful afraid you’d ast her. But I ain’t goin’ to dance with Mabel after all, because this morning she sent me a note about her uncle died last night–and P’fessor Bartet’ll have to find me a partner after I get there. Anyway I bet you haven’t got any sling–and I bet your partner’s Baby Rennsdale!”

“What if she is?” said Penrod. “She’s good enough for me!” This speech held not so much modesty in solution as intended praise of

the lady. Taken literally, however, it was an understatement of the facts and wholly insincere.

"Yay!" jeered Mr. Williams, upon whom his friend's hypocrisy was quite wasted. "How can your mother not like her mother? Baby Rennsdale hasn't got any mother! You and her'll be a sight!" That was Penrod's own conviction; and with this corroboration of it he grew so spiritless that he could offer no retort. He slid to a despondent sitting posture upon the door sill and gazed wretchedly upon the ground, while his companion went to replenish the licorice water at the hydrant–enfeebling the potency of the liquor no doubt, but making up for that in quantity.

"Your mother goin' with you to the cotillon?" asked Sam when he returned.

"No. She's goin' to meet me there. She's goin' somewhere first."

"So's mine," said Sam. "I'll come by for you."

"All right."

"I better go before long. Noon whistles been blowin'."

"All right," Penrod repeated dully.

Sam turned to go, but paused. A new straw hat was peregrinating along the fence near the two boys. This hat belonged to someone passing upon the sidewalk of the cross- street; and the someone was Maurice Levy. Even as they stared, he halted and regarded them over the fence with two small, dark eyes.

Fate had brought about this moment and this confrontation.

Chapter 14:. Maurice Levy's Constitution

"Lo, Sam!" said Maurice cautiously. "What you doin'?"

Penrod at that instant had a singular experience–an intellectual shock like a flash of fire in the brain. Sitting in darkness, a great light flooded him with wild brilliance. He gasped!

"What you doin'?" repeated Mr. Levy.

Penrod sprang to his feet, seized the licorice bottle, shook it with stoppering thumb, and took a long drink with histrionic unction.

"What you doin'?" asked Maurice for the third time, Sam Williams not having decided upon a reply.

It was Penrod who answered.

“Drinkin’ lickrish water,” he said simply, and wiped his mouth with such delicious enjoyment that Sam’s jaded thirst was instantly stimulated. He took the bottle eagerly from Penrod.

“A-a-h!” exclaimed Penrod, smacking his lips. “That was a good un!”

The eyes above the fence glistened.

“Ask him if he don’t want some,” Penrod whispered urgently. “Quit drinkin’ it! It’s no good any more. Ask him!”

“What for?” demanded the practical Sam.

“Go on and ask him!” whispered Penrod fiercely.

“Say, M’rice!” Sam called, waving the bottle. “Want some?”

“Bring it here!” Mr. Levy requested.

“Come on over and get some,” returned Sam, being prompted.

“I can’t. Penrod Schofield’s after me.”

“No, I’m not,” said Penrod reassuringly. “I won’t touch you, M’rice. I made up with you yesterday afternoon—don’t you remember? You’re all right with me, M’rice.”

Maurice looked undecided. But Penrod had the delectable bottle again, and tilting it above his lips, affected to let the cool liquid purl enrichingly into him, while with his right hand he stroked his middle facade ineffably. Maurice's mouth watered.

"Here!" cried Sam, stirred again by the superb manifestations of his friend. "Gimme that!"

Penrod brought the bottle down, surprisingly full after so much gusto, but withheld it from Sam; and the two scuffled for its possession. Nothing in the world could have so worked upon the desire of the yearning observer beyond the fence.

"Honest, Penrod–you ain't goin' to touch me if I come in your yard?" he called. "Honest?"

"Cross my heart!" answered Penrod, holding the bottle away from Sam. "And we'll let you drink all you want."

Maurice hastily climbed the fence, and while he was thus occupied Mr. Samuel Williams received a great enlightenment. With startling rapidity Penrod, standing just outside the storeroom door, extended his arm within the room, deposited the licorice water upon the counter of the drug store, seized in its stead the bottle of smallpox medicine, and extended it cordially toward the advancing Maurice.

Genius is like that–great, simple, broad strokes!

Dazzled, Mr. Samuel Williams leaned against the wall. He had the sensations of one who comes suddenly into the presence of a chef-d'oeuvre. Perhaps his first coherent thought was that almost universal one on such huge occasions: "Why couldn't I have done that!"

Sam might have been even more dazzled had he guessed that he figured not altogether as a spectator in the sweeping and magnificent conception of the new Talleyrand. Sam had no partner for the cotillon. If Maurice was to be absent from that festivity–as it began to seem he might be–Penrod needed a male friend to take care of Miss Rennsdale and he believed he saw his way to compel Mr. Williams to be that male friend. For this he relied largely upon the prospective conduct of Miss Rennsdale when he should get the matter before her–he was inclined to believe she would favour the exchange. As for Talleyrand Penrod himself, he was going to dance that cotillon with Marjorie Jones!

"You can have all you can drink at one pull, M'rice," said Penrod kindly.

"You said I could have all I want!" protested Maurice, reaching for the bottle.

"No, I didn't," returned Penrod quickly, holding it away from the

eager hand.

“He did, too! Didn’t he, Sam?”

Sam could not reply; his eyes, fixed upon the bottle, protruded strangely.

“You heard him–didn’t you, Sam?”

“Well, if I did say it I didn’t mean it!” said Penrod hastily, quoting from one of the authorities. “Looky here, M’rice,” he continued, assuming a more placative and reasoning tone, “that wouldn’t be fair to us. I guess we want some of our own lickrish water, don’t we? The bottle ain’t much over two-thirds full anyway. What I meant was, you can have all you can drink at one pull.”

“How do you mean?”

“Why, this way: you can gulp all you want, so long as you keep swallering; but you can’t take the bottle out of your mouth and commence again. Soon’s you quit swallering it’s Sam’s turn.”

“No; you can have next, Penrod,” said Sam.

“Well, anyway, I mean M’rice has to give the bottle up the minute he stops swallering.”

Craft appeared upon the face of Maurice, like a poster pasted on a wall.

“I can drink so long I don’t stop swallering?”

“Yes; that’s it.”

“All right!” he cried. “Gimme the bottle!”

And Penrod placed it in his hand.

“You promise to let me drink until I quit swallering?” Maurice insisted.

“Yes!” said both boys together.

With that, Maurice placed the bottle to his lips and began to drink. Penrod and Sam leaned forward in breathless excitement. They had feared Maurice might smell the contents of the bottle; but that danger was past–this was the crucial moment. Their fondest hope was that he would make his first swallow a voracious one–it was impossible to imagine a second. They expected one big, gulping swallow and then an explosion, with fountain effects. Little they knew the mettle of their man! Maurice swallowed once; he swallowed twice–and thrice–and he continued to swallow! No Adam’s apple was sculptured on that juvenile throat, but the internal progress of the liquid was not a whit the less visible. His

eyes gleamed with cunning and malicious triumph, sidewise, at the stunned conspirators; he was fulfilling the conditions of the draught, not once breaking the thread of that marvelous swallering.

His audience stood petrified. Already Maurice had swallowed more than they had given Duke and still the liquor receded in the uplifted bottle! And now the clear glass gleamed above the dark contents full half the vessel's length–and Maurice went on drinking! Slowly the clear glass increased in its dimensions–slowly the dark diminished.

Sam Williams made a horrified movement to check him–but Maurice protested passionately with his disengaged arm, and made vehement vocal noises remindful of the contract; whereupon Sam desisted and watched the continuing performance in a state of grisly fascination.

Maurice drank it all! He drained the last drop and threw the bottle in the air, uttering loud ejaculations of triumph and satisfaction. "Hah!" he cried, blowing out his cheeks, inflating his chest, squaring his shoulders, patting his stomach, and wiping his mouth contentedly. "Hah! Aha! Waha! Wafwah! But that was good!"

The two boys stood looking at him in stupor.

“Well, I gotta say this,” said Maurice graciously: “You stuck to your bargain all right and treated me fair.”

Stricken with a sudden horrible suspicion, Penrod entered the storeroom in one stride and lifted the bottle of licorice water to his nose–then to his lips. It was weak, but good; he had made no mistake. And Maurice had really drained–to the dregs–the bottle of old hair tonics, dead catsups, syrups of undesirable preserves, condemned extracts of vanilla and lemon, decayed chocolate, ex-essence of beef, mixed dental preparations, aromatic spirits of ammonia, spirits of nitre, alcohol, arnica, quinine, ipecac, sal volatile, nux vomica and licorice water–with traces of arsenic, belladonna and strychnine.

Penrod put the licorice water out of sight and turned to face the others. Maurice was seating himself on a box just outside the door and had taken a package of cigarettes from his pocket.

“Nobody can see me from here, can they?” he said, striking a match. “You fellers smoke?”

“No,” said Sam, staring at him haggardly.

“No,” said Penrod in a whisper.

Maurice lit his cigarette and puffed showily.

“Well, sir,” he remarked, “you fellers are certainly square–I gotta say that much. Honest, Penrod, I thought you was after me! I did think so,” he added sunnily; “but now I guess you like me, or else you wouldn’t of stuck to it about lettin’ me drink it all if I kept on swallering.”

He chatted on with complete geniality, smoking his cigarette in content. And as he ran from one topic to another his hearers stared at him in a kind of torpor. Never once did they exchange a glance with each other; their eyes were frozen to Maurice. The cheerful conversationalist made it evident that he was not without gratitude.

“Well,” he said as he finished his cigarette and rose to go, “you fellers have treated me nice and some day you come over to my yard; I’d like to run with you fellers. You’re the kind of fellers I like.”

Penrod’s jaw fell; Sam’s mouth had been open all the time. Neither spoke.

“I gotta go,” observed Maurice, consulting a handsome watch. “Gotta get dressed for the cotillon right after lunch. Come on, Sam. Don’t you have to go, too?”

Sam nodded dazedly.

“Well, good-bye, Penrod,” said Maurice cordially. “I’m glad you like me all right. Come on, Sam.”

Penrod leaned against the doorpost and with fixed and glazing eyes watched the departure of his two visitors. Maurice was talking volubly, with much gesticulation, as they went; but Sam walked mechanically and in silence, staring at his brisk companion and keeping at a little distance from him.

They passed from sight, Maurice still conversing gayly—and Penrod slowly betook himself into the house, his head bowed upon his chest.

Some three hours later, Mr. Samuel Williams, waxen clean and in sweet raiment, made his reappearance in Penrod’s yard, yodelling a code-signal to summon forth his friend. He yodelled loud, long, and frequently, finally securing a faint response from the upper air.

“Where are you?” shouted Mr. Williams, his roving glance searching ambient heights. Another low-spirited yodel reaching his ear, he perceived the head and shoulders of his friend projecting above the roofridge of the stable. The rest of Penrod’s body was concealed from view, reposing upon the opposite slant of the gable and precariously secured by the crooking of his elbows over the ridge.

“Yay! What you doin’ up there?”

“Nothin’.”

“You better be careful!” Sam called. “You’ll slide off and fall down in the alley if you don’t look out. I come pert’ near it last time we was up there. Come on down! Ain’t you goin’ to the cotillon?” Penrod made no reply. Sam came nearer.

“Say,” he called up in a guarded voice, “I went to our telephone a while ago and ast him how he was feelin’, and he said he felt fine!”

“So did I,” said Penrod. “He told me he felt bully!”

Sam thrust his hands in his pockets and brooded. The opening of the kitchen door caused a diversion. It was Della.

“Mister Penrod,” she bellowed forthwith, “come ahn down fr’m up there! Y’r mamma’s at the dancin’ class waitin’ fer ye, an’ she’s telephoned me they’re goin’ to begin—an’ what’s the matter with ye? Come ahn down fr’m up there!”

“Come on!” urged Sam. “We’ll be late. There go Maurice and Marjorie now.”

A glittering car spun by, disclosing briefly a genre picture of Marjorie Jones in pink, supporting a monstrous sheaf of American Beauty roses. Maurice, sitting shining and joyous beside her, saw both boys and waved them a hearty greeting as the car turned the corner.

Penrod uttered some muffled words and then waved both arms–either in response or as an expression of his condition of mind; it may have been a gesture of despair. How much intention there was in this act–obviously so rash, considering the position he occupied–it is impossible to say. Undeniably there must remain a suspicion of deliberate purpose.

Della screamed and Sam shouted. Penrod had disappeared from view.

The delayed dance was about to begin a most uneven cotillon when Samuel Williams arrived.

Mrs. Schofield hurriedly left the ballroom; while Miss Rennsdale, flushing with sudden happiness, curtsied profoundly to Professor Bartet and obtained his attention.

“I have telled you fifty times,” he informed her passionately ere she spoke, “I cannot make no such changes. If your partner comes you have to dance with him. You are going to drive me crazy, sure! What is it? What now? What you want?”

The damsel curtsied again and handed him the following communication, addressed to herself:

“Dear madam Please excuse me from dancing the cotilon with you this afternoon as I have fell off the barn.

“Sincerly yours,

“Penrod Schofield”

Chapter 15: The Two Families

Penrod entered the schoolroom, Monday picturesquely leaning upon a man's cane shortened to support a cripple approaching the age of twelve. He arrived about twenty minutes late, limping deeply, his brave young mouth drawn with pain, and the sensation he created must have been a solace to him; the only possible criticism of this entrance being that it was just a shade too heroic. Perhaps for that reason it failed to stagger Miss Spence, a woman so saturated with suspicion that she penalized Penrod for tardiness as promptly and as coldly as if he had been a mere, ordinary, unmutilated boy. Nor would she entertain any discussion of the justice of her ruling. It seemed, almost, that she feared to argue with him.

However, the distinction of cane and limp remained to him, consolations which he protracted far into the week–until Thursday evening, in fact, when Mr. Schofield, observing from a window his son's pursuit of Duke round and round the backyard, confiscated the cane, with the promise that it should not remain idle if he saw Penrod limping again. Thus, succeeding a depressing Friday, another Saturday brought the necessity for new inventions.

It was a scented morning in apple-blossom time. At about ten of the clock Penrod emerged hastily from the kitchen door. His pockets bulged abnormally; so did his checks, and he swallowed with difficulty. A threatening mop, wielded by a cooklike arm in a checkered sleeve, followed him through the doorway, and he was preceded by a small, hurried, wistful dog with a warm doughnut in his mouth. The kitchen door slammed petulantly, enclosing the sore voice of Della, whereupon Penrod and Duke seated themselves upon the pleasant sward and immediately consumed the spoils of their raid.

From the cross-street which formed the side boundary of the Schofields' ample yard came a jingle of harness and the cadenced clatter of a pair of trotting horses, and Penrod, looking up, beheld

the passing of a fat acquaintance, torpid amid the conservative splendours of a rather old-fashioned victoria. This was Roderick Magsworth Bitts, Junior, a fellow sufferer at the Friday Afternoon Dancing Class, but otherwise not often a companion: a home-sheltered lad, tutored privately and preserved against the coarsening influences of rude comradeship and miscellaneous information. Heavily overgrown in all physical dimensions, virtuous, and placid, this cloistered mutton was wholly uninteresting to Penrod Schofield. Nevertheless, Roderick Magsworth Bitts, Junior, was a personage on account of the importance of the Magsworth Bitts family; and it was Penrod's destiny to increase Roderick's celebrity far, far beyond its present aristocratic limitations.

The Magsworth Bittses were important because they were impressive; there was no other reason. And they were impressive because they believed themselves important. The adults of the family were impregnably formal; they dressed with reticent elegance, and wore the same nose and the same expression—an expression which indicated that they knew something exquisite and sacred which other people could never know. Other people, in their presence, were apt to feel mysteriously ignoble and to become secretly uneasy about ancestors, gloves, and pronunciation. The Magsworth Bitts manner was withholding and reserved, though sometimes gracious, granting small smiles as great favours and giving off a chilling kind of preciousness. Naturally, when any citizen of the community did anything

unconventional or improper, or made a mistake, or had a relative who went wrong, that citizen's first and worst fear was that the Magsworth Bittses would hear of it. In fact, this painful family had for years terrorized the community, though the community had never realized that it was terrorized, and invariably spoke of the family as the "most charming circle in town." By common consent, Mrs. Roderick Magsworth Bitts officiated as the supreme model as well as critic-in-chief of morals and deportment for all the unlucky people prosperous enough to be elevated to her acquaintance.

Magsworth was the important part of the name. Mrs. Roderick Magsworth Bitts was a Magsworth born, herself, and the Magsworth crest decorated not only Mrs. Magsworth Bitts' note-paper but was on the china, on the table linen, on the chimney-pieces, on the opaque glass of the front door, on the victoria, and on the harness, though omitted from the garden-hose and the lawn-mower.

Naturally, no sensible person dreamed of connecting that illustrious crest with the unfortunate and notorious Rena Magsworth whose name had grown week by week into larger and larger type upon the front pages of newspapers, owing to the gradually increasing public and official belief that she had poisoned a family of eight. However, the statement that no sensible person could have connected the Magsworth Bitts family with the arsenical Rena takes no account of Penrod Schofield.

Penrod never missed a murder, a hanging or an electrocution in the newspapers; he knew almost as much about Rena Magsworth as her jurymen did, though they sat in a court-room two hundred miles away, and he had it in mind–so frank he was–to ask Roderick Magsworth Bitts, Junior, if the murderess happened to be a relative.

The present encounter, being merely one of apathetic greeting, did not afford the opportunity. Penrod took off his cap, and Roderick, seated between his mother and one of his grown-up sisters, nodded sluggishly, but neither Mrs. Magsworth Bitts nor her daughter acknowledged the salutation of the boy in the yard.

They disapproved of him as a person of little consequence, and that little, bad. Snubbed, Penrod thoughtfully restored his cap to his head. A boy can be cut as effectually as a man, and this one was chilled to a low temperature. He wondered if they despised him because they had seen a last fragment of doughnut in his hand; then he thought that perhaps it was Duke who had disgraced him. Duke was certainly no fashionable looking dog. The resilient spirits of youth, however, presently revived, and discovering a spider upon one knee and a beetle simultaneously upon the other, Penrod forgot Mrs. Roderick Magsworth Bitts in the course of some experiments infringing upon the domain of Doctor Carrel. Penrod's efforts–with the aid of a pin–to effect a transference of living organism were unsuccessful; but he convinced himself forever that a spider cannot walk with a

beetle's legs. Della then enhanced zoological interest by depositing upon the back porch a large rat-trap from the cellar, the prison of four live rats awaiting execution.

Penrod at once took possession, retiring to the empty stable, where he installed the rats in a small wooden box with a sheet of broken window-glass–held down by a brickbat–over the top. Thus the symptoms of their agitation, when the box was shaken or hammered upon, could be studied at leisure. Altogether this Saturday was starting splendidly.

After a time, the student's attention was withdrawn from his specimens by a peculiar smell, which, being followed up by a system of selective sniffing, proved to be an emanation leaking into the stable from the alley. He opened the back door.

Across the alley was a cottage which a thrifty neighbour had built on the rear line of his lot and rented to negroes; and the fact that a negro family was now in process of "moving in" was manifested by the presence of a thin mule and a ramshackle wagon, the latter laden with the semblance of a stove and a few other unpretentious household articles.

A very small darky boy stood near the mule. In his hand was a rusty chain, and at the end of the chain the delighted Penrod perceived the source of the special smell he was tracing–a large raccoon. Duke, who had shown not the slightest interest in the

rats, set up a frantic barking and simulated a ravening assault upon the strange animal. It was only a bit of acting, however, for Duke was an old dog, had suffered much, and desired no unnecessary sorrow, wherefore he confined his demonstrations to alarums and excursions, and presently sat down at a distance and expressed himself by intermittent threatenings in a quavering falsetto.

"What's that 'coon's name?" asked Penrod, intending no discourtesy.

"Aim gommo mame," said the small darky.

"What?"

"Aim gommo mame."

"What?"

The small darky looked annoyed.

"Aim gommo mame, I hell you," he said impatiently.

Penrod conceived that insult was intended.

"What's the matter of you?" he demanded advancing. "You get fresh with me, and I'll——"

“Hyuh, white boy!” A coloured youth of Penrod’s own age appeared in the doorway of the cottage. “You let ‘at brothuh mine alone. He ain’ do nothin’ to you.”

“Well, why can’t he answer?”

“He can’t. He can’t talk no better’n what he was talkin’. He tongue-tie’.”

“Oh,” said Penrod, mollified. Then, obeying an impulse so universally aroused in the human breast under like circumstances that it has become a quip, he turned to the afflicted one.

“Talk some more,” he begged eagerly.

“I hoe you ackoom aim gommo mame,” was the prompt response, in which a slight ostentation was manifest.

Unmistakable tokens of vanity had appeared upon the small, swart countenance.

“What’s he mean?” asked Penrod, enchanted.

“He say he tole you ‘at ‘coon ain’ got no name.”

“What’s your name?”

“I’m name Herman.”

“What’s his name?” Penrod pointed to the tongue-tied boy.

“Verman.”

“What!”

“Verman. Was three us boys in ow fam’ly. Ol’est one name Sherman. ‘N’en come me; I’m Herman. ‘N’en come him; he Verman. Sherman dead. Verman, he de littles’ one.”

“You goin’ to live here?”

“Umhuh. Done move in f’m way outen on a fahm.”

He pointed to the north with his right hand, and Penrod’s eyes opened wide as they followed the gesture. Herman had no forefinger on that hand.

“Look there!” exclaimed Penrod. “You haven’t got any finger!”

“I mum map,” said Verman, with egregious pride.

“He done ‘at,” interpreted Herman, chuckling. “Yessuh; done chop ‘er spang off, long ‘go. He’s a playin’ wif a ax an’ I lay my

finguh on de do'-sill an' I say, 'Verman, chop 'er off!' So Verman he chop 'er right spang off up to de roots! Yessuh."

"What for?"

"Jes' fo' nothin'."

"He hoe me hoo," remarked Verman.

"Yessuh, I tole him to," said Herman, "an' he chop 'er off, an' ey ain't airy oth' one evuh grown on wheres de ole one use to grow. Nosuh!"

"But what'd you tell him to do it for?"

"Nothin'. I 'es' said it 'at way–an' he jes' chop er off!"

Both brothers looked pleased and proud. Penrod's profound interest was flatteringly visible, a tribute to their unusualness. "Hem bow goy," suggested Verman eagerly.

"Aw ri'," said Herman. "Ow sistuh Queenie, she a growed-up woman; she got a goituh."

"Got a what?"

"Goituh. Swellin' on her neck–grea' big swellin'. She heppin'

mammy move in now. You look in de front-room winduh wheres she sweepin'; you kin see it on her."

Penrod looked in the window and was rewarded by a fine view of Queenie's goitre. He had never before seen one, and only the lure of further conversation on the part of Verman brought him from the window.

"Verman say tell you 'bout pappy," explained Herman. "Mammy an' Queenie move in town an' go git de house all fix up befo' pappy git out."

"Out of where?"

"Jail. Pappy cut a man, an' de police done kep' him in jail evuh sense Chris'mus-time; but dey goin' tuhn him loose ag'in nex' week."

"What'd he cut the other man with?"

"Wif a pitchfawk."

Penrod began to feel that a lifetime spent with this fascinating family were all too short. The brothers, glowing with amiability, were as enraptured as he. For the first time in their lives they moved in the rich glamour of sensationalism. Herman was prodigal of gesture with his right hand; and Verman, chuckling

with delight, talked fluently, though somewhat consciously. They cheerfully agreed to keep the raccoon–already beginning to be mentioned as "our 'coon" by Penrod–in Mr. Schofield's empty stable, and, when the animal had been chained to the wall near the box of rats and supplied with a pan of fair water, they assented to their new friend's suggestion (inspired by a fine sense of the artistic harmonies) that the heretofore nameless pet be christened Sherman, in honour of their deceased relative.
At this juncture was heard from the front yard the sound of that yodelling which is the peculiar accomplishment of those whose voices have not "changed." Penrod yodelled a response; and Mr. Samuel Williams appeared, a large bundle under his arm.

"Yay, Penrod!" was his greeting, casual enough from without; but, having entered, he stopped short and emitted a prodigious whistle. "Ya-a-ay!" he then shouted. "Look at the 'coon!"

"I guess you better say, 'Look at the 'coon!'" Penrod returned proudly. "They's a good deal more'n him to look at, too. Talk some, Verman." Verman complied.

Sam was warmly interested. "What'd you say his name was?" he asked.

"Verman."

"How d'you spell it?"

“V-e-r-m-a-n,” replied Penrod, having previously received this information from Herman.

“Oh!” said Sam.

“Point to sumpthing, Herman,” Penrod commanded, and Sam’s excitement, when Herman pointed was sufficient to the occasion. Penrod, the discoverer, continued his exploitation of the manifold wonders of the Sherman, Herman, and Verman collection. With the air of a proprietor he escorted Sam into the alley for a good look at Queenie (who seemed not to care for her increasing celebrity) and proceeded to a dramatic climax–the recital of the episode of the pitchfork and its consequences.

The cumulative effect was enormous, and could have but one possible result. The normal boy is always at least one half Barnum.

“Let’s get up a show!”

Penrod and Sam both claimed to have said it first, a question left unsettled in the ecstasies of hurried preparation. The bundle under Sam’s arm, brought with no definite purpose, proved to have been an inspiration. It consisted of broad sheets of light yellow wrapping-paper, discarded by Sam’s mother in her spring house-cleaning. There were half-filled cans and buckets of paint in the storeroom adjoining the carriage-house, and presently the

side wall of the stable flamed information upon the passer-by from a great and spreading poster.

"Publicity," primal requisite of all theatrical and amphitheatrical enterprise thus provided, subsequent arrangements proceeded with a fury of energy which transformed the empty hay- loft. True, it is impossible to say just what the hay-loft was transformed into, but history warrantably clings to the statement that it was transformed. Duke and Sherman were secured to the rear wall at a considerable distance from each other, after an exhibition of reluctance on the part of Duke, during which he displayed a nervous energy and agility almost miraculous in so small and middle-aged a dog. Benches were improvised for spectators; the rats were brought up; finally the rafters, corn-crib, and hay-chute were ornamented with flags and strips of bunting from Sam Williams' attic, Sam returning from the excursion wearing an old silk hat, and accompanied (on account of a rope) by a fine dachshund encountered on the highway. In the matter of personal decoration paint was generously used: an interpretation of the spiral, inclining to whites and greens, becoming brilliantly effective upon the dark facial backgrounds of Herman and Verman; while the countenances of Sam and Penrod were each supplied with the black moustache and imperial, lacking which, no professional showman can be esteemed conscientious.

It was regretfully decided, in council, that no attempt be made to add Queenie to the list of exhibits, her brothers warmly declining to act as ambassadors in that cause. They were certain Queenie would not like the idea, they said, and Herman picturesquely described her activity on occasions when she had been annoyed by too much attention to her appearance. However, Penrod's disappointment was alleviated by an inspiration which came to him in a moment of pondering upon the dachshund, and the entire party went forth to add an enriching line to the poster. They found a group of seven, including two adults, already gathered in the street to read and admire this work.

SCHoFiELD & WiLLiAMS BiG SHOW ADMiSSioN 1 CENT oR 20 PiNS MUSUEM oF CURioSiTES Now GoiNG oN SHERMAN HERMAN & VERMAN THiER FATHERS iN JAiL STABED A MAN WiTH A PiTCHFORK SHERMAN THE WiLD ANIMAL CAPTURED iN AFRiCA HERMAN THE ONE FiNGERED TATOOD WILD MAN VERMAN THE SAVAGE TATOOD WILD BoY TALKS ONLY iN HiS NAiTiVE LANGUAGS. Do NoT FAIL TO SEE DUKE THE INDiAN DOG ALSO THE MiCHiGAN TRAiNED RATS

A heated argument took place between Sam and Penrod, the point at issue being settled, finally, by the drawing of straws; whereupon Penrod, with pardonable self-importance—in the presence of an audience now increased to nine—slowly painted the words inspired by the dachshund:

IMPoRTENT Do NoT MISS THE SoUTH AMERiCAN DoG PART ALLIGATOR

Chapter 16: The New Star

Sam, Penrod, Herman, and Verman withdrew in considerable state from non-paying view, and, repairing to the hay-loft, declared the exhibition open to the public. Oral proclamation was made by Sam, and then the loitering multitude was enticed by the seductive strains of a band; the two partners performing upon combs and paper, Herman and Verman upon tin pans with sticks. The effect was immediate. Visitors appeared upon the stairway and sought admission. Herman and Verman took position among the exhibits, near the wall; Sam stood at the entrance, officiating as barker and ticket-seller; while Penrod, with debonair suavity, acted as curator, master of ceremonies, and lecturer. He greeted the first to enter with a courtly bow. They consisted of Miss Rennsdale and her nursery governess, and they paid spot cash for their admission.

“Walk in, lay-deeze, walk right in–pray do not obstruck the passageway,” said Penrod, in a remarkable voice. “Pray be seated; there is room for each and all.”

Miss Rennsdale and governess were followed by Mr. Georgie Bassett and baby sister (which proves the perfection of Georgie’s character) and six or seven other neighbourhood children–a most satisfactory audience, although, subsequent to Miss Rennsdale and governess, admission was wholly by pin.

“Gen-til-mun and lay-deeze,” shouted Penrod, “I will first call your at-tain-shon to our genuine South American dog, part alligator!” He pointed to the dachshund, and added, in his ordinary tone, “That’s him.” Straightway reassuming the character of showman, he bellowed: “Next, you see Duke, the genuine, full-blooded Indian dog from the far Western Plains and Rocky Mountains. Next, the trained Michigan rats, captured way up there, and trained to jump and run all around the box at the–at the–at the slightest pre-text!” He paused, partly to take breath and partly to enjoy his own surprised discovery that this phrase was in his vocabulary.

“At the slightest pre-text!” he repeated, and continued, suiting the action to the word: “I will now hammer upon the box and each and all may see these genuine full-blooded Michigan rats perform at the slightest pre-text! There! (That’s all they do now, but I and Sam are goin’ to train ’em lots more before this

afternoon.) gen-til-mun and lay-deeze I will kindly now call your at-tain-shon to Sherman, the wild animal from Africa, costing the lives of the wild trapper and many of his companions. Next, let me kindly interodoos Herman and Verman. Their father got mad and stuck his pitchfork right inside of another man, exactly as promised upon the advertisements outside the big tent, and got put in jail. Look at them well, gen-til-mun and lay-deeze, there is no extra charge, and re-mem-bur you are each and all now looking at two wild, tattooed men which the father of is in jail. Point, Herman. Each and all will have a chance to see. Point to sumpthing else, Herman. This is the only genuine one-fingered tattooed wild man. Last on the programme, gen-til-mun and lay-deeze, we have Verman, the savage tattooed wild boy, that can't speak only his native foreign languages. Talk some, Verman."

Verman obliged and made an instantaneous hit. He was encored rapturously, again and again; and, thrilling with the unique pleasure of being appreciated and misunderstood at the same time, would have talked all day but too gladly. Sam Williams, however, with a true showman's foresight, whispered to Penrod, who rang down on the monologue.

"Gen-til-mun and lay-deeze, this closes our pufformance. Pray pass out quietly and with as little jostling as possible. As soon as you are all out there's goin' to be a new pufformance, and each and all are welcome at the same and simple price of admission. Pray pass out quietly and with as little jostling as possible. Re-

mem-bur the price is only one cent, the tenth part of a dime, or twenty pins, no bent ones taken. Pray pass out quietly and with as little jostling as possible. The Schofield and Williams Military Band will play before each pufformance, and each and all are welcome for the same and simple price of admission. Pray pass out quietly and with as little jostling as possible."

Forthwith, the Schofield and Williams Military Band began a second overture, in which something vaguely like a tune was at times distinguishable; and all of the first audience returned, most of them having occupied the interval in hasty excursions for more pins; Miss Rennsdale and governess, however, again paying coin of the Republic and receiving deference and the best seats accordingly. And when a third performance found all of the same inveterate patrons once more crowding the auditorium, and seven recruits added, the pleasurable excitement of the partners in their venture will be understood by any one who has seen a metropolitan manager strolling about the foyer of his theatre some evening during the earlier stages of an assured "phenomenal run."

From the first, there was no question which feature of the entertainment was the attraction extraordinary: Verman–Verman, the savage tattooed wild boy, speaking only his native foreign languages–Verman was a triumph! Beaming, wreathed in smiles, melodious, incredibly fluent, he had but to open his lips and a dead hush fell upon the audience. Breathless, they leaned forward,

hanging upon his every semi-syllable, and, when Penrod checked the flow, burst into thunders of applause, which Verman received with happy laughter.

Alas! he delayed not o'er long to display all the egregiousness of a new star; but for a time there was no caprice of his too eccentric to be forgiven. During Penrod's lecture upon the other curios, the tattooed wild boy continually stamped his foot, grinned, and gesticulated, tapping his tiny chest, and pointing to himself as it were to say: "Wait for Me! I am the Big Show." So soon they learn; so soon they learn! And (again alas!) this spoiled darling of public favour, like many another, was fated to know, in good time, the fickleness of that favour.

But during all the morning performances he was the idol of his audience and looked it! The climax of his popularity came during the fifth overture of the Schofield and Williams Military Band, when the music was quite drowned in the agitated clamours of Miss Rennsdale, who was endeavouring to ascend the stairs in spite of the physical dissuasion of her governess.

"I won't go home to lunch!" screamed Miss Rennsdale, her voice accompanied by a sound of ripping. "I will hear the tattooed wild boy talk some more! It's lovely–I will hear him talk! I will! I will! I want to listen to Verman– I want to–I want to—-"

Wailing, she was borne away–of her sex not the first to be

fascinated by obscurity, nor the last to champion its eloquence. Verman was almost unendurable after this, but, like many, many other managers, Schofield and Williams restrained their choler, and even laughed fulsomely when their principal attraction essayed the role of a comedian in private, and capered and squawked in sheer, fatuous vanity.

The first performance of the afternoon rivalled the successes of the morning, and although Miss Rennsdale was detained at home, thus drying up the single source of cash income developed before lunch, Maurice Levy appeared, escorting Marjorie Jones, and paid coin for two admissions, dropping the money into Sam's hand with a careless–nay, a contemptuous–gesture. At sight of Marjorie, Penrod Schofield flushed under his new moustache (repainted since noon) and lectured as he had never lectured before. A new grace invested his every gesture; a new sonorousness rang in his voice; a simple and manly pomposity marked his very walk as he passed from curio to curio. And when he fearlessly handled the box of rats and hammered upon it with cool insouciance, he beheld–for the first time in his life–a purl of admiration eddying in Marjorie's lovely eye, a certain softening of that eye. And then Verman spake and Penrod was forgotten. Marjorie's eye rested upon him no more.

A heavily equipped chauffeur ascended the stairway, bearing the message that Mrs. Levy awaited her son and his lady. Thereupon, having devoured the last sound permitted (by the managers) to

issue from Verman, Mr. Levy and Miss Jones departed to a real matinee at a real theatre, the limpid eyes of Marjorie looking back softly over her shoulder–but only at the tattooed wild boy. Nearly always it is woman who puts the irony into life.

After this, perhaps because of sated curiosity, perhaps on account of a pin famine, the attendance began to languish. Only four responded to the next call of the band; the four dwindled to three; finally the entertainment was given for one blase auditor, and Schofield and Williams looked depressed. Then followed an interval when the band played in vain.

About three o'clock Schofield and Williams were gloomily discussing various unpromising devices for startling the public into a renewal of interest, when another patron unexpectedly appeared and paid a cent for his admission. News of the Big Show and Museum of Curiosities had at last penetrated the far, cold spaces of interstellar niceness, for this new patron consisted of no less than Roderick Magsworth Bitts, Junior, escaped in a white "sailor suit" from the Manor during a period of severe maternal and tutorial preoccupation.

He seated himself without parley, and the pufformance was offered for his entertainment with admirable conscientiousness. True to the Lady Clara caste and training, Roderick's pale, fat face expressed nothing except an impervious superiority and, as he sat, cold and unimpressed upon the front bench, like a large,

white lump, it must be said that he made a discouraging audience "to play to." He was not, however, unresponsive–far from it. He offered comment very chilling to the warm grandiloquence of the orator.

"That's my uncle Ethelbert's dachshund," he remarked, at the beginning of the lecture. "You better take him back if you don't want to get arrested." And when Penrod, rather uneasily ignoring the interruption, proceeded to the exploitation of the genuine, full-blooded Indian dog, Duke, "Why don't you try to give that old dog away?" asked Roderick. "You couldn't sell him."

"My papa would buy me a lots better 'coon than that," was the information volunteered a little later, "only I wouldn't want the nasty old thing."

Herman of the missing finger obtained no greater indulgence.

"Pooh!" said Roderick. "We have two fox-terriers in our stables that took prizes at the kennel show, and their tails were bit off. There's a man that always bites fox-terriers' tails off."

"Oh, my gosh, what a lie!" exclaimed Sam Williams ignorantly. "Go on with the show whether he likes it or not, Penrod. He's paid his money."

Verman, confident in his own singular powers, chuckled openly at

the failure of the other attractions to charm the frosty visitor, and, when his turn came, poured forth a torrent of conversation which was straightway damned.

“Rotten,” said Mr. Bitts languidly. “Anybody could talk like that. I could do it if I wanted to.”

Verman paused suddenly.

“Yes, you could!” exclaimed Penrod, stung. “Let’s hear you do it, then.”

“Yessir!” the other partner shouted. “Let’s just hear you do it!”
“I said I could if I wanted to,” responded Roderick. “I didn’t say I would.”

“Yay! Knows he can’t!” sneered Sam.

“I can, too, if I try.”

“Well, let’s hear you try!”

So challenged, the visitor did try, but, in the absence of an impartial jury, his effort was considered so pronounced a failure that he was howled down, derided, and mocked with great clamours.

“Anyway,” said Roderick, when things had quieted down, “if I couldn’t get up a better show than this I’d sell out and leave town.”

Not having enough presence of mind to inquire what he would sell out, his adversaries replied with mere formless yells of scorn. “I could get up a better show than this with my left hand,” Roderick asserted.

“Well, what would you have in your ole show?” asked Penrod, condescending to language.

“That’s all right, what I’d have. I’d have enough!”

“You couldn’t get Herman and Verman in your ole show.”

“No, and I wouldn’t want ’em, either!”

“Well, what would you have?” insisted Penrod derisively. “You’d have to have sumpthing–you couldn’t be a show yourself!”

“How do you know?” This was but meandering while waiting for ideas, and evoked another yell.

“You think you could be a show all by yourself?” demanded Penrod.

“How do you know I couldn’t?”

Two white boys and two black boys shrieked their scorn of the boaster.

“I could, too!” Roderick raised his voice to a sudden howl, obtaining a hearing.

“Well, why don’t you tell us how?”

“Well, I know how, all right,” said Roderick. “If anybody asks you, you can just tell him I know how, all right.”

“Why, you can’t do anything,” Sam began argumentatively. “You talk about being a show all by yourself; what could you try to do? Show us sumpthing you can do.”

“I didn’t say I was going to do anything,” returned the badgered one, still evading.

“Well, then, how’d you be a show?” Penrod demanded. “We got a show here, even if Herman didn’t point or Verman didn’t talk. Their father stabbed a man with a pitchfork, I guess, didn’t he?”

“How do I know?”

“Well, I guess he’s in jail, ain’t he?”

“Well, what if their father is in jail? I didn’t say he wasn’t, did I?”

“Well, your father ain’t in jail, is he?”

“Well, I never said he was, did I?”

“Well, then,” continued Penrod, “how could you be a—-” He stopped abruptly, staring at Roderick, the birth of an idea plainly visible in his altered expression. He had suddenly remembered his intention to ask Roderick Magsworth Bitts, Junior, about Rena Magsworth, and this recollection collided in his mind with the irritation produced by Roderick’s claiming some mysterious attainment which would warrant his setting up as a show in his single person. Penrod’s whole manner changed instantly. “Roddy,” he asked, almost overwhelmed by a prescience of something vast and magnificent, “Roddy, are you any relation of Rena Magsworth?”

Roderick had never heard of Rena Magsworth, although a concentration of the sentence yesterday pronounced upon her had burned, black and horrific, upon the face of every newspaper in the country. He was not allowed to read the journals of the day and his family’s indignation over the sacrilegious coincidence of the name had not been expressed in his presence. But he saw that it was an awesome name to Penrod Schofield and Samuel Williams. Even Herman and Verman, though lacking many educational advantages on account of a long residence in the

country, were informed on the subject of Rena Magsworth through hearsay, and they joined in the portentous silence. "Roddy," repeated Penrod, "honest, is Rena Magsworth some relation of yours?"

There is no obsession more dangerous to its victims than a conviction especially an inherited one–of superiority: this world is so full of Missourians. And from his earliest years Roderick Magsworth Bitts, Junior, had been trained to believe in the importance of the Magsworth family. At every meal he absorbed a sense of Magsworth greatness, and yet, in his infrequent meetings with persons of his own age and sex, he was treated as negligible. Now, dimly, he perceived that there was a Magsworth claim of some sort which was impressive, even to boys.

Magsworth blood was the essential of all true distinction in the world, he knew. Consequently, having been driven into a cul-de-sac, as a result of flagrant and unfounded boasting, he was ready to take advantage of what appeared to be a triumphal way out. "Roddy," said Penrod again, with solemnity, "is Rena Magsworth some relation of yours?"

"Is she, Roddy?" asked Sam, almost hoarsely.

"She's my aunt!" shouted Roddy.

Silence followed. Sam and Penrod, spellbound, gazed upon

Roderick Magsworth Bitts, Junior. So did Herman and Verman.

Roddy's staggering lie had changed the face of things utterly. No one questioned it; no one realized that it was much too good to be true.

"Roddy," said Penrod, in a voice tremulous with hope, "Roddy, will you join our show?"

Roddy joined.

Even he could see that the offer implied his being starred as the paramount attraction of a new order of things. It was obvious that he had swelled out suddenly, in the estimation of the other boys, to that importance which he had been taught to believe his native gift and natural right. The sensation was pleasant. He had often been treated with effusion by grown- up callers and by acquaintances of his mothers and sisters; he had heard ladies speak of him as "charming" and "that delightful child," and little girls had sometimes shown him deference, but until this moment no boy had ever allowed him, for one moment, to presume even to equality. Now, in a trice, he was not only admitted to comradeship, but patently valued as something rare and sacred to be acclaimed and pedestalled. In fact, the very first thing that Schofield and Williams did was to find a box for him to stand upon.

The misgivings roused in Roderick's bosom by the subsequent activities of the firm were not bothersome enough to make him forego his prominence as Exhibit A. He was not a "quick-minded" boy, and it was long (and much happened) before he thoroughly comprehended the causes of his new celebrity. He had a shadowy feeling that if the affair came to be heard of at home it might not be liked, but, intoxicated by the glamour and bustle which surround a public character, he made no protest. On the contrary, he entered whole-heartedly into the preparations for the new show. Assuming, with Sam's assistance, a blue moustache and "side-burns," he helped in the painting of a new poster, which, supplanting the old one on the wall of the stable facing the cross-street, screamed bloody murder at the passers in that rather populous thoroughfare.

SCHoFiELD & WiLLiAMS
NEW BIG SHoW
RoDERiCK MAGSWoRTH BiTTS JR
ONLY LiViNG NEPHEW
oF
RENA MAGSWORTH
THE FAMOS
MUDERESS GoiNG To BE HUNG
NEXT JULY KiLED EiGHT PEOPLE
PUT ARSiNECK iN THiER MiLK ALSO
SHERMAN HERMAN AND VERMAN
THE MiCHiGAN RATS DOG PART

ALLiGATOR DUKE THE GENUiNE
InDiAN DoG ADMISSioN 1 CENT oR
20 PINS SAME AS BEFORE Do NoT
MISS THIS CHANSE TO SEE RoDERICK
ONLY LiViNG NEPHEW oF RENA
MAGSWORTH THE GREAT FAMOS
MUDERESS
GoiNG To BE
HUNG