

NYPL RESEARCH LIBRARIES



3 3433 08236180 3

TEDDY
AND
CARROTS



JAMES OTIS



NAS
Kaler, J



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2007 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

<http://www.archive.org/details/teddycarrotstwom00otis>



TEDDY AND CARROTS LEAVE THE "TOMBS."

TEDDY AND CARROTS

TWO MERCHANTS OF NEWSPAPER ROW

BY JAMES OTIS

AUTHOR OF

“JENNY WREN'S BOARDING-HOUSE,”
“THE BOYS' REVOLT,” “JERRY'S FAMILY,”
“THE BOYS OF 1745,” ETC.

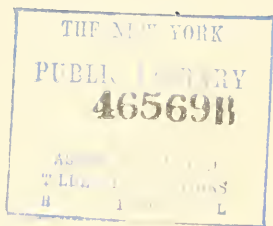
ILLUSTRATED BY

W. A. ROGERS

BOSTON

ESTES AND LAURIAT

PUBLISHERS



Copyright, 1895 and 1896
BY THE CENTURY CO.

Copyright, 1896
BY ESTES AND LAURIAT
All rights reserved

Colonial Press:
C. H. Simonds & Co., Boston, Mass., U. S. A.
Electrotyped by Geo. C. Scott & Sons

CONTENTS.



CHAPTER I.	
A NEWCOMER	PAGE 11
CHAPTER II.	
THE ASSAULT	21
CHAPTER III.	
THE ARREST	31
CHAPTER IV.	
THE PRISONER	43
CHAPTER V.	
A SUGGESTION	56
CHAPTER VI.	
THE TRIAL	67
CHAPTER VII.	
THE WARNING	80
CHAPTER VIII.	
THE PARTNERS	93

WOR 19 FEB '36

CHAPTER IX.	
THE PRODIGAL'S RETURN	PAGE 108
CHAPTER X.	
SKIP'S VENGEANCE	121
CHAPTER XI.	
A FRIENDLY ARGUMENT	135
CHAPTER XII.	
CARROTS'S CHARITY	149
CHAPTER XIII.	
A MEDICAL FRIEND	162
CHAPTER XIV.	
THE PLOT	176
CHAPTER XV.	
THE CONFLAGRATION	187
CHAPTER XVI.	
THE CHALLENGE	201
CHAPTER XVII.	
PROSPERITY	213

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

	PAGE
TEDDY AND CARROTS LEAVE THE "TOMBS"	<i>Frontispiece</i>
"'YOU'D BETTER MIND YOUR EYE, IF YOU COUNT ON STAYIN' ROUND THIS CITY VERY LONG!' SAID SKIP"	15
TEDDY IS ARRESTED, WHILE HIS ENEMIES ESCAPE	29
"'NOW, THEN, WHAT DO YOU WANT, YOUNG CHAP?' THE OFFI- CER ASKED"	33
TEENIE MASSEY'S EVENING CALL AT CARROTS'S RESIDENCE	53
"'IT WAS JUST LIKE THIS,' SAID CARROTS"	62
TEENIE BRINGS THE "COMMITTEE'S" WARNING	89
AN EXACT COPY OF THE "COMMITTEE'S" WARNING	92
"I SAID I KNEW A BOY, AN' I SHOWED HIM RIGHT UP"	105
"WHY, HE WAS ALL OVER THAT PASTURE QUICKER 'N YOU COULD WINK!"	117
CARROTS FALLS INTO THE HANDS OF THE ENEMY	127
TEDDY DEFENDS HIS PARTNER	143
IKEY BEFORE THE GROCER'S WINDOW	155
THE BOYS AT THE DOCTOR'S DOOR	171
"'HOW DID YOU KNOW CARROTS LIVED HERE?' TEDDY ASKED, STERNLY"	197
"'WHAT ARE YOU YELLIN' LIKE THAT FOR?' SAID SID"	209
"'CARROTS DISPLAYS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF MESSRS. THUR- STON AND WILLIAMS"	217
PROSPERITY	221

TEDDY AND CARROTS

TEDDY AND CARROTS.

CHAPTER I.

A NEWCOMER.

“SAY, boys, come 'round over here by the fountain, an' I'll show you something!” Skip Jellison shouted to a party of his friends who were seated on a curbstone, not far from the Newsboys' Lodging House, gravely discussing a business proposition which had been made by Sid Barker.

“What's the matter?” Reddy Jackson asked, replacing his fragment of a hat.

“Come over here; an' you must be quick about it, or the show will be ended.”

Skip was so excited that his acquaintances and friends concluded it must be something of considerable importance to cause him to move in such a lively manner, and they followed him a short distance down the street, until it was possible to have a full view of the fountain.

There the cause of Master Jellison's agitation could be seen.

Seated on the edge of the iron basin, with a newspaper parcel unrolled in front of him, was a boy, apparently about twelve years of age, who, to the newsboy spectators, looked painfully neat and clean. Skip and his friends saw that the boy was a stranger in the city.

The newcomer had taken from their newspaper wrappings a small cake of yellow soap, and a piece of cotton cloth.

Laying these on the iron edge of the fountain basin, he calmly proceeded to wash his face and hands, using a plentiful amount of soap; and then, to the intense astonishment of the spectators, applied the impromptu towel vigorously.

"Well, that feller's too good for down-town!" Skip said, in what he intended for a sarcastic tone. "He b'longs up at the Fif' Avenoo."

"Oh, he's jest got in from the country, an' is goin' to buy Brooklyn Bridge," Sid suggested.

"Look at him! Jest look at him!" Skip cried, in mingled excitement and anger that the boy should be so criminally neat.

The stranger had taken from his valise of paper a comb, which he calmly proceeded to use, the water in the basin serving as a mirror; and then, to the surprise and disdain of the spectators, he gave his clothes a vigorous brushing with a whisk-broom.

"Well, see here!" and Skip spoke in the tone of one who is uncertain whether it is best to laugh or be angry, "that feller's makin' me tired. S'pos'n' we

go over an' give him a shakin' up, jest for fun. Come on!" and Skip led the way across the street at full speed.

The stranger looked up calmly when they approached, but betrayed neither astonishment nor alarm; and Skip involuntarily halted a few paces away, as he asked, gruffly: "Say, young feller, what're you tryin' to do?"

"Can't you see?"

"I thought I did; but these chaps here made sure there must be some mistake about it."

The boy gazed critically at those who were surrounding him, and then replied:

"Well, 'cordin' to the looks of the whole crowd, I should *think* you might be s'prised to see a fellow wash his face an' comb his hair."

"Now, don't get too fresh," Sid said, threateningly, as he stepped forward to Skip's side. "We didn't come here to git the 'pinion of any country jay."

"Then why did you want er know?"

"'Cause. Say, you'd better mind your eye, young feller, if you count on stayin' 'round this city very long. There was a chap jest like you come down here last week tryin' to put on airs: an' his folks are huntin' for him now."

"Well, you need n't be worried anybody'll be lookin' for me, 'cause there's nobody wants to know where I am. So go ahead, if I've been doin' anything you pefessors don't like."

Sid apparently decided that it was hardly advisable

for him to make too many threatening gestures, because the stranger was not at all disturbed by them, and even seemed disposed to court the possibly dreadful encounter.

He finished brushing his clothes, and then packed his "valise," by rolling the different articles carefully in the newspaper. Then, instead of going away, as Skip and his friends seemed to think he should have done as soon as they arrived, he stood with his hands on his hips, as if waiting for them to take their departure. For a minute no one spoke, and the silence was really painful.

The newsboys were mentally taking the measure of this stranger who appeared ready to defy them; and the latter finally asked, impatiently: "Well, what're you fellers countin' on doin'?" I reckon I'm no great sight for you to stand lookin' at."

"Do you live here?" Skip asked.

"I'm goin' to now. Had it tough enough gettin' here, an' don't feel like leavin' till I've found out what there is in this city."

"Where did you come from?"

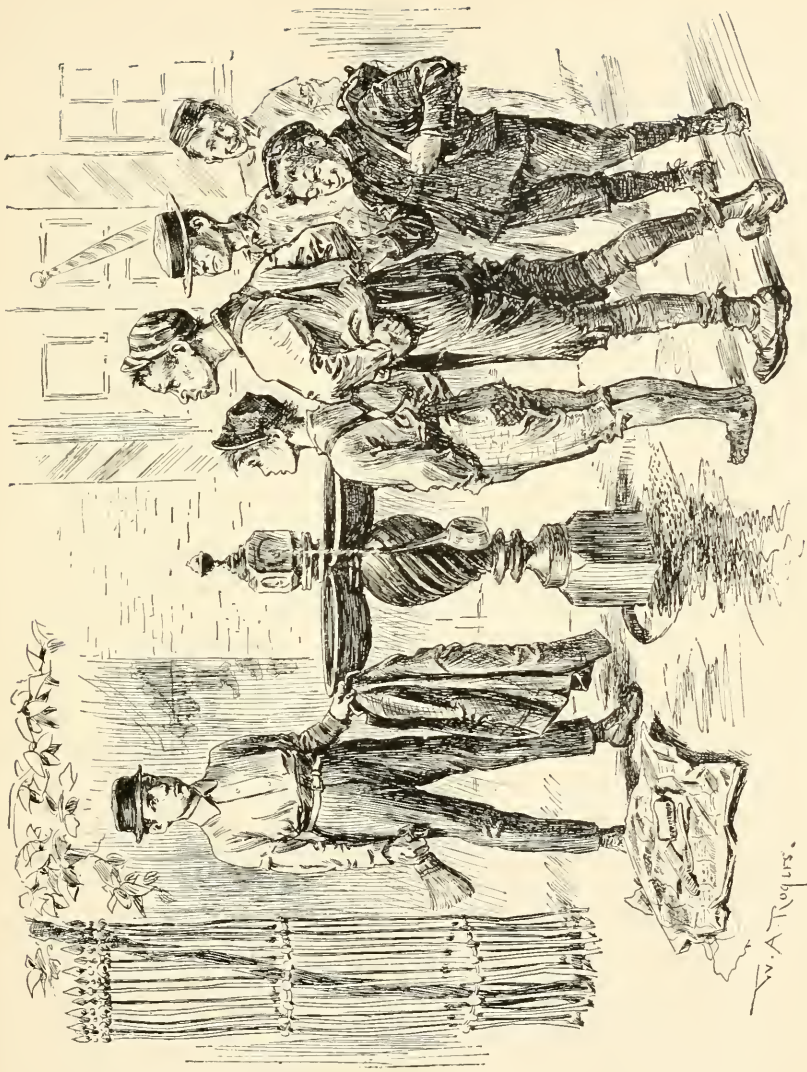
"Up Saranac way."

"Rode down in a parlor-car, I s'pose."

"Then you s'pose wrong, 'cause I walked."

"You don't look it." And once more Skip scrutinised the stranger carefully.

"I don't reckon I do. I count on keepin' myself kind er decent. It does n't cost anything for a feller to wash his face, comb his hair, or have his clothes clean,



W. A. Rogers.

“YOU’D BETTER MIND YOUR EYE, IF YOU COUNT ON STAYIN’ ROUND THIS CITY VERY LONG!”
SAID SKIP.”

an' there 's many a time when it 'll put him through in great shape."

"Goin' to live on the interest of your money, I s'pose?"

"Well, you s'pose right this time," was the quiet reply. "That's my calkerlation; but it 'll be on what I earn, not what I've got."

"Dead broke?"

"Not quite," and the boy took from his pocket a number of pennies, holding them in one hand, while he guarded himself against a possible attack. "There were twenty of 'em when I come 'cross the ferry, an' I b'lieve none of 'em have got away since."

"What are you goin' to do here?" Sid asked, begining to fancy that possibly this stranger was a boy whom it would be worth his while to cultivate; and, in order to show his friendliness, he seated himself, in a studied attitude of careless ease, on the edge of the basin, while the others immediately followed his example.

"Whatever will bring in money enough for my keep, an' a little over."

"Thinkin' of sellin' papers?" Reddy asked.

"I reckon that 'll be 'bout the first job, 'cause I've got to make money enough for my supper, or dig too big a hole in my capital."

"What 's your name?"

"Teddy Thurston."

"Do you s'pose the fellers down here, what run the newspaper business, are goin' to have you comin' in takin' the bread an' butter out er their mouths?" Sid asked, angrily.

“No, I don’t reckon they will; but you see I ’m not after that exac’ly. You fellers ’ll never find me tryin’ to get your bread an’ butter; but I’ll tell you what you can count on for a fact,” and now the stranger spoke in a very decided tone, “I’m reckonin’ on stickin’ to the newspaper business, if there’s any money in it, jest as long as I want to. I did n’t travel all the way down here to get scared the first day. You see, I figger it ’bout like this: Sam Thompson, he came to the city last summer, an’ some fellers — I don’t know whether it was you or not — made it hot for him. It was n’t more ’n a week before he was glad to walk back, although he came down in the cars. Now, I thought I’d begin right where Sam left off: I’d walk the first way, an’ then, perhaps, stand a better chance of ridin’ the other, if I had to go; but it’s got to be boys what are bigger than I am to scare me out er the plan. *I’ve* come to stay.”

“Oh, you have?” and there was no mistaking the fact that Skip was sarcastic. “We may have something to say ’bout that.”

“Then you want er talk quick, ’cause after I’m settled down, it’ll be a pretty hard job to make any trade with me.”

“Where you goin’ to begin business?”

“I don’t know yet. I’ll look ’round a while, an’ catch on before night, somewhere. I reckon there are fellers in this town that would show a green hand how to get his papers, an’ where the best places were, eh?”

“That’s jest ’cordin’ to how you start in, young fel-

ler," and Sid arose to his feet in order to make his words more expressive. "If you want to go to work, an' mind your eye, I don't know but it can be done; but you won't get along this way. You're puttin' on too many frills—that's what's the matter with you, an' they'll have to be taken off."

"Well, perhaps they will;" and Teddy turned as if to leave his new acquaintances. "You see, I'm pretty green, an' may be countin' on doin' too much. I'll try it a spell, anyhow."

"We allers 'low, when it's 'greed a new hand can go to work, that he stands treat the first thing."

"Oh, I see! Well, I don't have to do that, 'cause it ain't been 'greed yet. When I want you fellers to tell me what I can do, perhaps I may come down 'cordin' to your ideas; but jest now I've got too much business on hand;" and the stranger walked away, as if these young gentlemen, who claimed to control the newspaper business of New York City, were of no especial importance in his eyes.

"Look here, fellers," Skip said wildly, for he always contrived to work himself into a state of intense excitement over the most trifling matters, "the way he's goin' on now, he'll be the boss of Newspaper Row before mornin', 'less we take a hand in it."

"What are you goin' to do?" Sid asked in much too quiet a tone to suit his excited friend.

"Thump his head the very first time he tries to sell a paper, to start with, an' run him out er town before termorrer night."

"I don't see how you can tackle him now when he ain't doin' anything."

"Of course not; but he brags he's goin' to; an' the first time he tucks a bundle of papers under his arm, I'll give him one to remember!"

"Look out you don't git it the same's you did last week, over in Brooklyn!" Teenie Massey cried, in his shrillest tones, which hardly ever failed to excite Master Skip's anger.

"Don't you mind how I got it over in Brooklyn! I'll tend to my business; you tend to yours. If we waited for you to do anything, we'd all be bald-headed," was Skip's answer to this taunt; but Teenie was not at all abashed. It was his favourite amusement to arouse Skip's anger, and rely upon his diminutive stature to escape a whipping; for Master Jellison prided himself upon his ability to flog any fellow of his size in New York. "You fellers meet me in front of *The Times* office at noon, an' I'll show him up in great shape, 'less he comes to hisself before then, which I reckon he will, 'cause he'll never have the nerve to stand up ag'in' the whole crowd of us," said Skip.

Meanwhile the stranger was apparently giving no heed to the young tyrant who had decided it would be impossible for him to remain in the city; but continued on his way down-town, ignorant of, and, perhaps, careless regarding, the fact that he was to be debarred from earning a livelihood by selling newspapers, if Skip Jellison's power was as great as he would have others believe.

CHAPTER II.

THE ASSAULT.

THE appearance of the clean-looking boy, even though his clothes were rather shabby, attracted no particular attention among the small army of newsboys and boot-blacks to be found in the vicinity of City Hall Park; and Teddy Thurston was enabled to survey the scene around him without interruption.

During a few moments he interested himself in what, to the country lad, must have been a bewildering scene; and then, mentally "pulling himself together," he began to watch the young gentlemen who were selling papers.

Near by him were several bootblacks who appeared to be doing a flourishing business; and he said to himself, jingling the coins in his pocket, as if trying to revive his courage:

"If I had money enough to buy brushes an' a box, I b'lieve I'd black boots for a while. It seems as if there was a good deal of profit in it. One of those fellows has earned fifteen cents since I stood here, an' I'm sure the paper-sellers are n't doin' so well."

Just at that moment a small boy, with particularly red hair, and a stubby nose on which was a large smudge of blacking, finished his work of polishing a gentleman's

boots, and pocketed with an air of satisfaction the three extra pennies which had been given him.

Then, standing very near Teddy, he whistled in the most contented manner possible.

The boy from Saranac looked at him a moment, as if trying to decide whether the city fellow would be willing to give the desired information, and then asked:

“Say, what do the brushes cost?”

“I paid Ikey Cain forty cents for these two,” the stranger replied without hesitation, as he displayed the articles last mentioned. “They’re good ones. I could n’t have got ’em less ’n a dollar down on Fulton Street.”

“That settles me,” Teddy said, as if speaking to himself; and then, without particular animation, he inquired, “What’s the cost of the boxes?”

“Oh, the fellers don’t buy these; they make ’em. All you’ve got to do is ask some man in a store for one, an’, if he gives it to you, find a chunk of wood an’ whittle out this top part. It’s the blackin’ what takes the profits off. I paid twenty cents for that bottle last Monday, an’ it’s more ’n half gone already.”

Teddy ceased jingling his coins, and was about to turn away, when his new acquaintance asked: “Was you thinkin’ of shinin’?”

“Eh?”

“I mean was you goin’ inter the business?”

“No, I can’t; have n’t got money enough. I reckon I’ll have to sell papers for a while.”

“You’ll be jest as rich,” the small boy said as he added another smudge of blacking to his nose by rub-

bing it in a thoughtful manner. "You see, when it rains, the fellers can sell papers all the same; but we have to lay off 'cause nobody wants their boots shined in wet weather. Where do you live?"

"Well, about anywhere, now. You see, I jest come down from Saranac, to find out how I could earn my livin'."

"What was you doin' up there?"

"I worked for Farmer Taylor a spell, but he would n't give me more 'n my clothes; an' when a feller has to work a year on the farm for sich a rig-out as I've got here, it don't seem as if he'd get rich very soon."

"I ain't so sure," the boy with the blackened nose said, as he surveyed the stranger. "You seem to be rigged out pretty swell, an' I guess they fed you well enough — gave you all you wanted, eh?"

"Oh, yes, I got enough to eat, an' a fair place to sleep in; but it seems as though a feller like me ought er have more 'n that, if he works hard all day for it."

"Well, I s'pose he had; but you see there's a good many times when business is dull 'round here, an' if you have n't got the cash to pay right up to dots for a room, you'll have a chance to sleep where you can. I've been thinkin' of goin' on to a farm, myself; but I don't seem to get ahead fast enough to make a break."

Teddy was rather pleased with his new acquaintance. The red-haired boy was the first in the city who had treated him with the slightest degree of friendliness, and it would have been gross carelessness to neglect him.

“What’s your name?” he asked, as he moved slowly toward one of the benches, with an air which invited the bootblack to sit down.

“Well, it’s Joseph Williams; but nobody ’round here calls me that. The fellers sing out ‘Carrots’ when they want me, ’cause you see my hair is red.”

“Yes, I could tell that in the dark,” Teddy said with a smile, as he looked at Master Williams’s flame-colored head.

“I don’t care what they call me. If it does ’em any good to sing out ‘Carrots’ whenever I go by, why, let ’em do it. But that’s what makes me think ’bout goin’ to farmin’.”

“What is?”

“’Cause they yell so much ’bout carrots. I don’t know as I’d like sich things, for I never eat any; but it seems as if a feller that’s so red-headed as I am b’longs in the country.”

“I don’t know how you make that out.”

“Neither do I; but that’s the way it looks to me. Must be nice to be where there’s grass, so’s you can get up in the mornin’ an’ run ’round in the fields.”

“Yes; but that’s what you would n’t be doin’. If you was livin’ on a farm you’d have to hustle, an’ there’s enough work in the mornin’ without runnin’ ’round the fields, I tell you.”

“What did you use ter do?”

“Well, first place, I fed the cows. We did n’t keep any sheep; but I looked after the hosses an’ pigs, an’ then there was a pesky little calf that gave me lots o’

trouble. But look here," Teddy added quickly, "there 's plenty of time for me to tell you 'bout a farm. Jest now I want er do somethin' to earn my livin.' Can you show me where to get some papers?"

"Are you goin' into the business sure?"

"Only for a little while. I don't count on sellin' papers all my life. You see, I 'low to make money enough so 's I can go inter somethin' reg'lar for myself."

"Oh, you do, eh?" and Master Carrots indulged in a bit of sarcasm. "Well, I reckon it 'll be a pretty long while before you earn that much. You 'll be mighty lucky to have all you want er eat, an' a place to sleep. What have you got in your pocket?"

"Nothin' pertic'lar. That 's my baggage," and, in order to prove his friendliness toward the red-haired stranger, Teddy displayed the contents of the newspaper parcel, greatly to the surprise of his new acquaintance.

"What 's that little brush for?"

"Why, to clean my teeth, of course."

Carrots looked at his new friend in surprise which amounted almost to bewilderment.

"Well," Teddy asked, "what 's the matter?"

"Well, seems as if you was puttin' on a good deal of style for a feller that has n't got money enough to buy the outfit for the bootblack trade."

"I don't know as there 's anything so queer 'bout that; but you fellers seem to think there 's no call to keep yourselves lookin' clean."

"Well, you see, we don't claim to be swells."

"Yes, so I see," Teddy replied; then he added: "Say,

these fellers seem to be sellin' a good many papers. S'pos'n' you show me where to buy some?"

"All right; come along;" and, slinging his box over his shoulder, Carrots started across Printing House Square, threading his way in and out of the vehicles in a manner which seemed to Teddy almost criminally reckless.

More than once, before the short journey was ended, did the boy from Saranac fancy he would be trampled under the feet of the horses; but, by dint of his own exertions, aided now and then by a vigorous pull from his guide, he was soon standing in an ill-ventilated room, where half a dozen fellows were clamouring for round flat pieces of brass.

"Here—I don't want those," Teddy said, as Carrots led the way to the desk where the disks were being sold.

"But you've got to have the checks if you count on gettin' papers. Give me your money. How many do you want?"

"I'll take twenty cents' worth, anyhow, an' see what I can do with them as a starter;" and Teddy handed the pennies confidently to his new acquaintance.

Carrots laid the coins in front of the busy man at the desk, received the bits of brass, and with them went to the counter on which large numbers of newspapers were lying, where he received Teddy's first stock in trade.

"Find out what the news is, an' yell the best you know how," Carrots said, pushing the young gentleman

from Saranac toward the street-door; and five minutes later the new merchant was following his friend's advice to the letter, by crying his wares in such a manner as excited the mirth of the other dealers.

"It seems to me I ain't doin' this jest right," Teddy said to himself, and then he waited a moment, listening to the more experienced venders.

It was not long before he succeeded in imitating their cries, and had already sold four papers when Skip Jellison, who was accompanied by his friends Sid Barker and Teenie Massey, appeared in view.

"There he is!" Teenie cried in his shrillest tones. "Now let's see you go for him! He's actin' as if he owned the whole town!"

Skip prepared for battle by rolling up his coat-sleeves, and settling his dilapidated cap more firmly on his head. Then, running swiftly forward, he confronted Teddy as he was on the point of selling a paper to a gentleman through a horse-car window.

Skip did not wait to be attacked, for he believed in striking the first blow as a means of confusing the enemy; and, before Teddy recognized the boy who had threatened him, he received a severe blow in the face which caused him to reel backward.

The paper fell from his hand, the horse-car continued its way, and this important transaction in news was nipped in the bud, to the serious loss of the young merchant.

Teddy was bewildered for an instant, as Skip had expected, and he did not recover his self-possession

until Master Jellison had struck him once more, this time without serious effect, since the blow, being a hasty one, glanced from the boy's shoulder.

It sufficed, however, to throw Teddy's stock of papers into the mud of the street, thereby ruining several so that they would not sell to fastidious customers; and this, more than the injury received, aroused Teddy's ire.

The boy from Saranac may have been ignorant concerning the customs of the city, but he was thoroughly well aware that it was necessary to defend himself; and, an instant later, Skip found he had quite as much on hand as he could attend to properly.

Teddy, giving no heed to his wares, struck out with more strength than science, and forced his adversary to beat a swift retreat.

"Now you've got it!" Teenie shrieked, as if delighted that Skip had met an opponent who was a match for him.

But Skip paid no heed to Teenie, and, raising his fists as an invitation to Teddy to "come on," awaited the conclusion of the battle, confident as to who would be the victor.

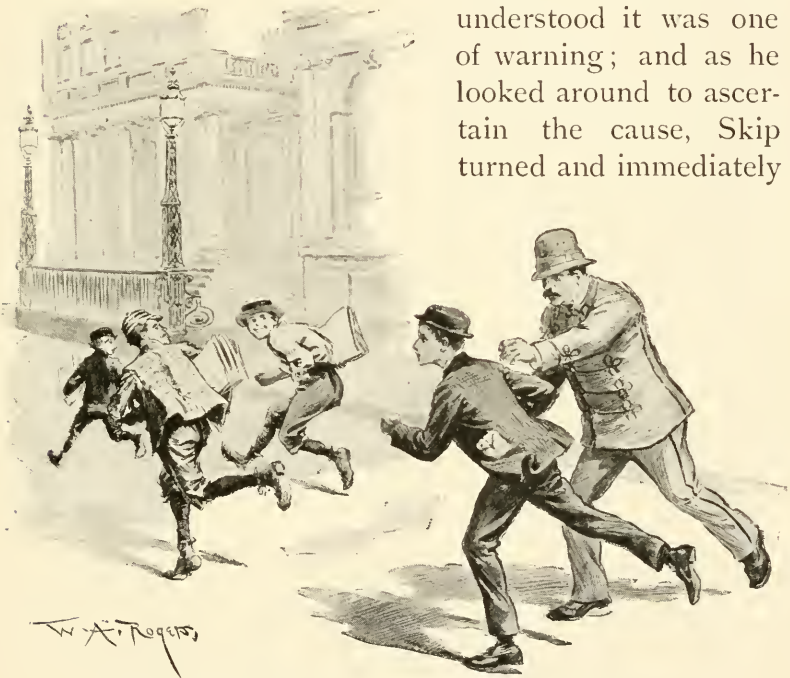
Teddy had no idea of holding back; for this attack was but the beginning of a series which was intended to drive him out of business, and it was necessary it should be repulsed if he wished to earn his livelihood by the sale of newspapers.

Therefore he advanced boldly, and aimed what was intended for a stinging blow at his antagonist's face; but it was met by Skip's arm, and, before Teddy could

raise his hand again, Teenie squeaked loudly and shrilly enough to have been heard at the post-office :

“Cops! Hi, fellers, here’s de cops!”

Teddy was wholly at a loss to know what was meant by this cry, although he understood it was one of warning; and as he looked around to ascertain the cause, Skip turned and immediately



TEDDY IS ARRESTED, WHILE HIS ENEMIES ESCAPE.

started at full speed across the park, intent only on escaping from the blue-coated guardians of the peace.

With a cry of triumph, Teddy followed in pursuit; but before he had traversed twenty yards a heavy hand

was laid upon his shoulder, and he found himself in the clutches of one of the park guards.

“I’ve made up my mind that this sort of thing’s been going on long enough,” the officer said, shaking the boy from Saranac, as he led him toward the approaching policeman. “You little ragamuffins seem to think this park’s kept for you to fight in, but now I’m going to show you what’s what.”

“Just let me get hold of the fellow who knocked my papers in the mud, and I’ll show *you* what’s what!” Teddy cried, not understanding that he had been arrested. “They aren’t goin’ to drive me away from this town, if I know myself.”

“Well, now there won’t be anybody able to do that till after you settle with the court,” the guard said, as he handed his prisoner over to the policeman; and Teddy’s face grew pale as he realized that his attempted entrance into the business community of New York City was to be checked in an ignominious manner.

CHAPTER III.

THE ARREST.

THE policeman marched Teddy along while he whistled a remarkably merry tune, which the young prisoner thought out of place.

If anybody had shown sufficient curiosity regarding him to have asked Teddy if he had any friends in the city, his reply would have been that he had none ; but he would have been wrong, as events proved.

Master Joseph Williams, otherwise known as Carrots, had witnessed the affray from a distance, but was not able to take an active part in it during the brief time it lasted, owing to the fact of his being occupied just at that moment in blacking a customer's boots. But when Teddy had been dragged less than a block on the road to his "dungeon cell" by the whistling officer, he had completed his task, and, what was more to the purpose, received therefor the amount of money which it was customary to expect.

Now this boy from Saranac had no claim upon the red-headed, blackened-nosed young bootblack ; but, despite the fact that Carrots's face was not cleanly, and that his general appearance was generally disreputable, he was ever ready to assist others.

Slinging his box over his shoulder, he ran to the

scene of the assault just in time to rescue Teddy's stock of newspapers from beneath the feet of a dray-horse, and followed with all speed after the officer and prisoner.

Teddy, plunged into a very "Slough of Despond," was suffering himself to be taken through the streets like a criminal, when he was startled by hearing a hoarse whisper directly behind him; at the same instant his hand was grasped by another.

"Say, can't you wriggle out er that cop's fist?" Carrots asked. But Teddy shook his head mournfully.

"This is what comes of bein' brought up in the country," the bootblack muttered to himself, regretfully.

"Don't lose your pluck," he said aloud. "I'm goin' to stand by you through this thing, 'cause it's all come out er that Skip Jellison's gang, an' he's forever pickin' on somebody."

"I don't know what you can do," Teddy replied, mournfully, speaking in an ordinary tone. Then, glancing around, the policeman noticed that his prisoner was holding a conversation with a seeming friend.

"Now, then, what do you want, young chap?" the officer asked.

"Nothin' at all," said Carrots. "It ain't ag'in' the law to speak to a fellow, is it, when he's walkin' through the streets?"

"Is this boy a friend of yours?"

"Bet your life he is, off'cer!" Carrots replied, earnestly. "Why, we're jest like twins. You don't s'pose I'm goin' to see him lugged away when he ain't been doin' nothin' at all, do you?"



“‘NOW, THEN, WHAT DO YOU WANT, YOUNG CHAP?’ THE OFFICER
ASKED.”

“If you boys who loaf near City Hall keep on doing this ‘nothing at all’ business, more of you will be arrested before a great while,” the officer said, grimly. “You seem to think that park’s made for you to fight in, but it won’t take long to show you you’re mistaken.”

“But this fellow was n’t fightin’,” Carrots replied in a positive tone. “I was only a little ways off when Skip Jellison come up, hit him a clip, an’ knocked his papers out er his hands. What kind of a duffer would he be if he had n’t tried to square things? The only trouble is, he didn’t have a chance to do any fightin’ before that crooked-nosed park guard got hold of him. Say, it don’t seem to me jest right that a reg’lar policeman should help that gray thing along in the way he’s actin’.”

“Why don’t you come up before the commissioners, and give them an idea of how the police force of the city ought to be run?” the officer asked, sarcastically.

“Well, I would; but you see, I ain’t got the time. When a feller’s doin’ sich a business ez I am, it keeps him right down to dots,” Carrots replied, gravely.

“It’s really a pity, the way you must be rushed,” the officer said, with a laugh; and, made bold by this apparent friendliness, Carrots ventured to make a request.

“Say, where are you goin’ to take him?”

“Down to the station-house, of course.”

“Well,” said Carrots, “it would n’t be any harm if I walked alongside of him, an’ talked over a little business, would it?”

“It’s nothing to me, so long as you don’t help him escape.”

“You need n’t be ’fraid. I would n’t raise my hand ’gainst you, ’cause you’re a pretty good kind of a man; an’ that sort is mighty scarce ’round this part of the city.”

“I suppose, now that I have won your good opinion, it won’t be long before I’m a captain, will it?” the officer asked, laughingly.

“If I had my way, you’d be a general before night; but I ain’t standin’ in with the commissioners like I ought to be,” Carrots said, with mock gravity.

Then — for they were getting dangerously near the station — he whispered to Teddy:

“Look here, old man; you want ter keep your upper lip mighty stiff jest now, an’ I’ll get you out er this scrape somehow. I s’pose there’ll have to be a reg’lar trial down to the Tombs, and I’ll bring the fellers there to swear you didn’t do anything. We’ll show up that Skip Jellison gang in great shape to-morrow mornin’, ’less I can coax you off from this cop.”

“It’s no use to try it,” Teddy replied, mournfully. “I reckon I’ll have to go to prison.”

“Now see here, that’s just the way! You fellers from the country ain’t got any sand about you, that’s what’s the matter. Don’t get down in the mouth over this thing, ’cause, as I said before, I’m goin’ to see you through.”

“But what can you do against a lot of policemen?”

“Wait and see. P’r’aps I have n’t lived in this city

a good many years, an' don't know how to fix things!" Carrots replied, as if he were positive how the matter might be arranged; yet at the same time he had not the remotest idea what it would be possible to do toward aiding this boy.

Teddy was not reassured by the remark.

Although a stranger in the city, he knew that young Carrots would not be able to do very much to help him, and felt sure his business career was ruined.

"How much money have you got?" Carrots whispered.

"Not more 'n ten cents. You see, I had jest begun to sell papers when they nabbed me. How much do you want?"

"I've got enough. I was only thinkin' 'bout you. Here, take this; it may come in handy before mornin';" and the bootblack pressed several coins into the prisoner's hand.

"I don't want it," Teddy replied, as he attempted in vain to return the money. "You must n't give your cash away like this; an' besides, what good will it do me?"

"That's jest what we don't know. It's allers better to have a little stuff in your pocket, no matter what happens. I've got your papers, an' am goin' to sell 'em, so I'll get my money back. You jest let me run this thing, an' see how quick we'll have it shipshape."

There was no opportunity for further discussion, for by this time the three had arrived at the door of the station-house, and Carrots, who had a wholesome dread of such places, made no attempt to enter.

“I’ll see you to-night if they hold on to you; but if the sergeant turns out to be an easy kind of a feller, an’ lets you go, come right up to City Hall to find me.”

“I reckon there won’t be any chance of his getting on the streets this afternoon,” the officer said, as he halted for a moment to give his prisoner’s friend a bit of kindly advice. “He’ll have to go down to the Tombs for trial in the morning, and if you boys can prove that he wasn’t really fighting, but only trying to prevent another fellow from taking his papers, he’ll stand a good show of slipping off. I’ll see that the case is n’t shoved very hard.”

“You’re a dandy! Next time you want your boots shined, come right where I am, an’ if I don’t do it for nothin’ it’ll be ’cause my blackin’ has run out!” Carrots cried, enthusiastically; and then, wheeling suddenly, he ran at full speed in the opposite direction.

“It seems to me I’m gettin’ a pretty big job on my hands,” he muttered to himself when he was at Printing House Square once more. “I’ve promised to help that boy out er this scrape, an’ don’t see how it’s goin’ to be done. The fellers won’t dare to go up and say anything against Skip Jellison, ’cause he’s sich a terrible fighter: guess he can get the best of anybody ’round here in less’n three rounds. I wish I dared to tackle him! I don’t b’lieve he can do as much as he makes out.” Then Carrots suddenly bethought himself of the papers which yet remained under his arm, and added, “Jiminy! I ’most forgot ’bout these. It’s time they

were worked off, or else they 'll be too old to sell ;” and soon he was crying the news again.

Half an hour later, the substitute newsboy was hailed by Teenie Massey, who asked :

“ What are you up to now, Carrots? Shifted business? ”

“ Say, Teenie, was you 'round here when Skip Jellison hit that feller from the country? ”

“ Yes; an' if the cops had n't come along so soon Skip would have been sorry he tackled sich a job. I b'lieve that new feller can fight.”

“ So do I; but he did n't stand any show at all, the way things were. These are his papers, an' I'm sellin' 'em for him.”

“ Where is he now? ”

“ Jailed.”

“ Well, that settles him.”

“ I ain't so sure of it. You know, an' I know, an' all the rest of the fellers know, that Skip Jellison did n't have any business to run 'round punchin' him jest 'cause he was a new hand. I'm goin' to see if there ain't some chance of gettin' him clear.”

“ What 'll you do? Break into the station-house, an' pull him out? ” Teenie asked excitedly, believing any of his friends capable of doing such a thing, because of the style of reading in which he indulged, wherein such deeds are often performed, in print, by the smallest and most feeble boys

“ Well, I don't count on doin' quite so well as that,” Carrots replied, thoughtfully rubbing his nose once

more, and thereby adding to the smudge of blacking which already nearly covered his face. "I kind er 'lowed we'd get a lot of the fellers, an' go down to court ter-morrer mornin' when he's brought up, so's to tell the story jest as it is. The judge is bound to let him off then, an' I wouldn't be s'prised if Skip Jellison found himself in a scrape."

Teenie shook his head very decidedly.

"Don't think it can be done, eh?"

"Who 're you goin' to get to tell that yarn in court? Skip would about knock the head off er the feller that did him that turn!"

"I know that. He *is* terrible! He's jest terrible!" Carrots replied, reflectively. "But I don't see why it is the fellers 'round here let Skip jump on 'em so! If three or four of us turned to, we could thump him, and do it easy; an' yet all hands lie down like lambs whenever he happens to want to wink."

"Why don't *you* give him a pounding?"

"You see, I can't do it alone. I'd be willin' to go in if anybody'd start in with me, 'cause it's got pretty nigh time somethin' was done, or else that feller'll own the whole town. Say, will you go down to court with me, an' tell what you know 'bout this thing?"

Teenie gazed at his toes several seconds before replying, and then said:

"I don't know whether I'll have time, Carrots; but I'll see you to-night, an' let you know."

Carrots muttered to himself as his acquaintance was lost to view among the crowd of busy pedestrians:

"That feller's pretty nigh scared out er his life 'bout Skip. There ain't any use thinkin' he'll help in this trouble."

Half an hour later, when Carrots had disposed of the stock of papers purchased by Teddy, and was congratulating himself, Skip Jellison approached, looking very fierce as he asked in a threatening tone:

"See here, Carrots, what is it you are up to now?"

"Me?" Carrots replied, in surprise. "Why, I'm shinin' boots same 's ever."

"Now don't try to be too smart! You know what I mean."

"Well, if I do I'm a duffer. What *are* you drivin' at, Skip, anyhow?"

"Ain't you been tellin' what you was goin' to do to help that feller from the country that I settled this forenoon?"

"Did n't strike me as if you settled him very much. If he 'd had half a chance, he 'd 'a' settled you."

"You've got to be took down a peg or two," Skip said threateningly, as he doubled his fist and brandished it before Carrots's face.

"Want ter git another feller 'rested, do you? Well, I ain't goin' to fight."

"You'd better not, if you know what's good for yourself."

"I won't scrap 'cause I don't want to git jailed; but you can't frighten me, no matter how bad you jump 'round."

"Look out for yourself, that's all I'm sayin'."

Master Jellison replied angrily. "I'm watchin' you, an' the very first time you go to meddlin' with that feller from the country, what's got to be drove out this city, I'll make you sorry for it!"

"It's very polite o' you to give me a friendly warnin'," Carrots replied, in the most innocent and pleasant tone.

Skip had nothing more to say, but walked away with a dignity befitting one who considers it his mission in life to regulate the business affairs of a large city.

CHAPTER IV.

THE PRISONER.

ALTHOUGH Carrots had pretended that Skip's threats neither frightened nor disturbed him, he was thoroughly uncomfortable in mind.

He knew by past experience what Master Jellison could and would do, with no provocation whatever, save only a desire to exercise that authority which he had assumed.

Carrots believed, however, that in case of an encounter with a boy who was ready and forced to defend himself, Skip would not prove so great a master of the "manly art of self-defense" as he claimed to be.

But such a champion had not as yet been found.

Teenie Massey had chanced to be in Brooklyn about a week before the arrival of Teddy in the city, and upon his return home he had stated that he had seen Master Jellison attack a boy not nearly so large as himself, on Pineapple Street in that city, and receive a sound beating.

"He was n't in it at all, from the time they begun," Teenie had stated to his friends; and on more than one occasion he had referred to this defeat in the presence of Skip himself.

It is but fair to say, however, that Skip Jellison

positively denied the truth of any such statement. In explanation of the blackened eye and badly swollen lip he brought from Brooklyn, he announced that he had been set upon by a crowd of young ruffians.

“Of course a feller’s goin’ to get some clips when he tackles a dozen or fifteen fellers at once,” Skip explained to an admiring audience, shortly after Master Massey’s story had been noised about the streets; “but every one of ’em got it worse’n I did, an’ it was n’t more’n five minutes before all hands were runnin’ lickertysplit up Fulton Street. I reckon they did n’t stop till they got to Prospect Park. Teenie wants to make out a good story; but it’s all a whopper, an’ he knows it.”

Now, although Carrots believed that Master Massey had told the truth in regard to what really occurred in Brooklyn, Carrots did not feel competent to take upon himself the task of cowing the bully; and he felt reasonably certain Skip would carry his threats into effect should occasion arise.

Carrots was also quite positive the occasion would arise, because he did not intend to desert Teddy.

“I’m goin’ right ahead with what I ’greed to do,” he said to himself. “If Skip wants to thump me for it, I s’pose I’ll have to let him.”

These reflections were interrupted by Reddy Jackson, who asked, as he approached and halted in front of Carrots:

“Seen Skip lately?”

“He jest went away. Been’ round, kinder reg’latin’

the town. Goin' to rest hisself, 'cause he 's most played out workin' so hard."

"Did he tell you anything?"

"Yes; thought I was rather meddlin' with his business; but I don't see how that is."

"Now look here, Carrots; I 'm a friend of yours, an' don't want ter see any trouble come out er this thing. Skip 's jest wild 'bout what you 've told the other fellers, an' I reckon he 'll do as he says if you try to help that feller what got 'rested."

"You 'lowed you was a friend of mine, did n't you, Reddy?"

"That 's what I said."

"Well, then, why don't you show it by helpin' me stand up 'gainst sich a bully as Skip Jellison is, 'stead of comin' here and tellin' me what he 's goin' to do? To hear some of you fellers talk, anybody 'd think he was a reg'lar rhinoceros huntin' 'round to eat folks. Now, it 's jest like this: I 've got to help that feller, 'cause I promised him."

"But you don't even know who he is."

"I did n't ask him to write out a history 'bout hisself, an' swear to it, so 's I could tell you fellers; but he 's like all the rest of us, got to hustle for a livin', an' has come down here to do it. Now what business is that of Skip Jellison's? He does n't own this town—ain't even got a mortgage on it—yet he makes out this feller can't stay, an' tries to lick him. Now, I s'pose you think it 's mighty smart to try an' shove that country feller down?"

“You don’t know anything ’bout it, Carrots. He put on more frills this mornin’ than you ever saw in a circus procession. We ain’t goin’ to stand that; of course not.”

“I s’pose it broke your heart ’cause his face was clean, did n’t it?” And it was apparent from Carrots’s tone that he was losing his temper.

“Oh, well, go ahead, an’ see how you ’ll come out, that’s all. I jest thought I’d tell you so’s you would n’t get into a fuss with Skip; but if this is the way you ’re goin’ on, why, let her flicker, for all I care.”

“I’m much obliged to you for bein’ so willin’; an’ when I want another favor I’ll call ’round an’ see you,” Carrots replied, as he turned on his heel, while Reddy walked rapidly away.

“It looks as if I’d got to put this thing through alone,” Carrots said to himself; “an’ if that’s so, it’ll be a good idea for me to keep away from where Skip is, ’cause if he should get a whack at me, I’m afraid I would n’t be in a condition to do much of anything for a day or two.”

Carrots visited all of his acquaintances in whom he felt he could confide, trying to enlist their sympathies in the work which he had undertaken.

Unfortunately for his purpose, however, he did not find any who were willing, simply because of the stranger, to brave the doughty Skip’s wrath; and nearly every one advised Carrots to “give it up before he got into trouble.”

Not until nearly nightfall was the well-disposed

bootblack willing to cease his efforts in this particular direction.

Then he repaired to a certain restaurant on Baxter Street, where he appeared to be well acquainted with the waiters, and called for a hearty meal of corned beef and potatoes, at the expense of fifteen cents—an unusual amount for him, as could have been told by the remark which the waiter made.

“Ain’t you spreadin’ yourself some to-night, Carrots?”

“Well, it does look a little that way; but, you see, I’ve got a lot of business on hand, and I need to be braced up a bit.”

“Bought out some other bootblack, or found a bigger line of customers?”

“Well, no; I’m buyin’ stocks now. The Wall Street men are kind er ’fraid I’ll down ’em, an’ they’re makin’ me hustle.”

“Oh!—gone into the Stock Exchange, eh?”

“Well, I have n’t been any further than the gallery yet; but that’s all right. You don’t want ter put in a piece of pie with this corned beef, an’ take the chance of a rise in Western Union for the pay, do you?”

“No, I guess not. It would be too much like speculatin’.”

“Well, I did n’t s’pose you would; but I’m comin’ ’round here in the mornin’ to give your boss some points about runnin’ his business,” Carrots replied; and, handing over his money, he walked with a majestic air into the street.

Having thus refreshed the inner man, Carrots bent his way in the direction of the station-house.

It was his intention to ask for an interview with the prisoner who had been arrested in City Hall Park, and he felt extremely doubtful whether this request would be granted, until he entered the building and recognized in the sergeant behind the desk an old customer.

His surprise at meeting a friend, when he had expected to see the stern visage of a mere servant of justice, was quite as great as it was pleasing; and he marched up to the desk and said, familiarly:

“If I ’d knowed you was here, I ’d ’a’ come before.”

“I don’t want my boots shined now. See you outside in the morning,” said the sergeant.

“But I ain’t shinin’; I ’m on business.”

“Oh, you are, eh? Well, what ’s up?”

“One of the pleecemen ’round City Hall arrested a feller this mornin’ what had jest walked down from Saranac; an’ it ’s all wrong, I tell you,—all wrong.”

“He ’s a friend of yours, I suppose?”

“Well, you can’t exactly call him that. I never spoke to him till jest before this thing happened. I want ter git him right out, on ’portant business.”

“I ’m afraid you will have to wait a little while, and explain the whole affair to the judge in the morning. I have n’t any authority to do a thing like that.”

“Could n’t you fix it with the judge?”

“No, indeed,” the officer replied, laughingly. “The best way is for you to go to the court yourself, and explain how it happened, unless he is really guilty, in

which case I suppose he will have to go to the Island. I fancy a week up there would n't do him any harm."

"But, you see, it was jest this way"—and Carrots assumed an attitude such as one takes when about to begin a long story.

"Never mind it now. I can't stop to listen; and, besides, it would n't do any good."

Carrots looked up as if surprised that an old friend should assume a dictatorial tone, and then, suddenly remembering that he had another favour to ask, added:

"Well, you can let me see him, can't you?"

"What good will that do?"

"Why, I jest want to brace him up a little. You see, he's pretty green, an' he must be feelin' awful bad by this time. I won't stay more'n five minutes, if you'll let me see him."

"All right; go down-stairs. You'll find him in one of the cells; and if the turnkey says anything, tell him I sent you."

Carrots did not wait for further instructions; but, fearful lest the permission should be withdrawn, hurried down the stairs at once, and was making a tour of the cells with the purpose of finding his friend, when the officer in charge stopped him.

"What do you want here?"

"The sergeant sent me down to see a friend of mine, that's all; an' I'm lookin' for him."

"The boy they brought in this noon?"

"That's the very one."

"He's over there; third cell from the end."

Carrots walked quickly to the place, looked in through the grated door, and saw Teddy lying on a wooden bench, which served the double purpose of a seat and a bed. The young prisoner's face was covered by his hands.

"Come, old man," Carrots said, soothingly, "you ought ter have more sand than to give up like this. Besides, ain't I here to help you?"

Teddy leaped to his feet immediately, and came to the door, through which Carrots thrust a very grimy hand as he said:

"Shake hands! Brace up, an' have some style about you! I've been 'tendin' to your business pretty nigh ever since you was gone, an' thought I'd jest run in to let you know everything will be all right; but you'll have to stay here till mornin'."

"Till mornin'?" Teddy repeated in dismay.

"Yes; that ain't sich a very long while, an' it'll take me till then to get things fixed."

"How did they happen to let you in?"

"Oh, you see, the sergeant is an old friend of mine. I've blacked his boots, on an' off, for 'most a year."

Then Carrots, with the hope of cheering his friend, began to explain what might be done toward effecting the prisoner's release; and when it was time to bring the interview to a close, he had so far succeeded that Teddy was really quite hopeful, believing there was no serious obstacle in the way of his freedom.

Bidding Teddy adieu, Carrots left the station-house.

It was now so nearly dark that Carrots turned in the

direction of his own home, for the purpose of gaining as much rest as possible before beginning what looked like a hard piece of work.

Now Carrots was a householder in his own right, or at least by right of discovery.

More than one of his acquaintances had been eager to know where he lived; but he avoided all questions on the subject, save to one person—Teenie Massey.

In addition to his being a trusted friend, Teenie lived with his parents; therefore, when Carrots revealed the secret, it was with the knowledge that Master Massey would not wish to share the dwelling with him.

To avoid interference, Carrots always approached his home in the most cautious manner, and this occasion was no exception.

He walked leisurely along in the direction of Canal Street, as if going nowhere in particular, for the purpose of misleading any friends whom he might meet; and, on arriving at an alleyway which ran between two shops, he halted for an instant to make sure the coast was clear.

He recognized no one in the immediate vicinity, and, wheeling sharply around, ran swiftly up the narrow passage, climbed over a board fence, and dropped lightly into a yard in the rear of a business establishment.

Here was an enormous collection of packing-cases, some stacked in regular order, and others lying carelessly around wherever they might have chanced to fall when taken from the shop by the employés. To Car-

rots, however, the yard was as familiar as any of the city streets.

He knew exactly where each case should be, unless, perchance, there had been some addition made to the collection since his departure from home; and, although it was dark, proceeded without difficulty until he arrived at one corner of the yard, where, by pulling out an unusually large box, he disclosed a narrow passage running along the side of the fence.

It was not possible to walk upright through this opening, owing to the lumber above; but, once Master Carrots arrived at the further end, he found as snug and comfortable a dwelling as it would be reasonable for any boy in Master Carrots's walk of life to desire.

Two cases, facing each other at an interval sufficiently wide for a small person to enter, formed an apartment four or five feet square; and, although it was impossible for Carrots even to stand erect, he could sit or lie down in a most comfortable fashion.

A small bundle of straw, taken from some of the other cases, made a bed for the bootblack; and directly opposite this impromptu couch were Carrots's household treasures.

A bottle which served as a candlestick, a cigar-box as pantry in case he chanced to lay in a stock of provisions, a well-worn brush, several empty blacking-boxes, and a miscellaneous collection of odds and ends, were packed in one corner with the utmost neatness.

On arriving at his home, Carrots lighted the candle in order to render the apartment more cheerful; and



TEENIE MASSEY'S EVENING CALL AT CARROTS'S RESIDENCE.

then he sat down with his chin in his hands, trying to decide how it would be possible to keep the promise made to Teddy.

Before he had succeeded in solving the problem, however, a shrill whistle was heard from the alleyway, and Carrots muttered to himself as he crawled through the passage out from among the boxes:

“I wonder what Teenie Massey wants? A feller that’s got so much business on his hands as I have can’t ’ford to waste a great deal of time with visitors.”

“Hi! Carrots, are you there?” Teenie asked.

“Of course I am! Where do you s’pose a feller would be at this time of night?”

“I’m comin’ over!”

“Well, come, then; an’ don’t make so much noise about it. Nobody knows who may be ’round here;” and Master Carrots retraced his steps to the packing-case dwelling.

CHAPTER V.

A SUGGESTION.

It could be understood that Teenie was a frequent visitor by the familiar manner in which he threaded his way amid the obstacles before reaching Carrots's very retired residence.

"Old man," said Teenie, "this is ever so much nicer a place to live in than a reg'lar house."

"Yes," the host replied, grimly; "'specially when the nights are cold, or it rains. I s'pose you'd rather have the water comin' in on you than not, when you're asleep, would n't you?"

"Well, I did n't mean it jest that way," Teenie replied; "but when you get in here an' have the candle lighted, it allers seems mighty fine. I got mother to let me come down an' stay all night with you."

"There! that's jest what I thought you was up to," Carrots said, in rather a cross tone.

"Why, what's the matter? Don't you want me?" Teenie asked in surprise.

"Of course I'm glad to have you come, Teenie; but I am busy to-night, an' talkin' with you is bound to up-set things."

"What are you doin'?"

"You see, I took the job of gettin' that feller from

Saranac out er the station-house; an' it's goin' to be a pretty hard one, I'm 'fraid, as things are lookin' now. If I can get him clear of the scrape, you'll see some fun one of these days, 'cause this thing ain't goin' to stop here, I'll tell you that. I only wish I knew what ought ter be done."

"How have you been tryin' to fix it?"

"Well, I've talked with some of the fellers that saw the row, to get 'em to go down to court an' tell how it happened; but they're so terribly 'fraid of Skip they don't dare to say their souls are their own."

"Well, I do," Teenie replied, bravely. "I saw the whole of the scrap, 'cause I was there before it began."

"Will you tell that when the chap's brought inter court to-morrow mornin'?"

"'Course I will, if you'll stand by me in case Skip tries to come his funny business; 'cause that's what he says he's goin' to do to anybody who helps the feller from the country."

"I'll stand by you, Teenie, if that's what you want; an' if we do get Teddy clear, there'll be three of us. Skip won't dare to tackle as big a crowd as that."

"No; but you see the feller ain't out, an' I can't figger how it's goin' to be done."

"We'll tell the judge jest what we saw."

"I don't b'lieve we'll get the chance. They would n't let you go anywhere near him, 'less you had a lawyer."

"We've *got* to fix it somehow."

"Why not get a lawyer?"

"Now you're goin' crazy, Teenie Massey. It costs

as much as a dollar to get one of them fellows to go to court. They come high!"

"Don't you s'pose you could hire one, an' let him take it out in trade?"

"By jiminy! I never thought of that. I wonder if I could n't?"

"It would n't do any harm to try. I sell papers to a man that would come an' 'tend to the whole business, I guess, if you 'd 'gree to black his boots so many times a week."

"I 'd 'gree to black him all over, if he 'd do what I want. Where does he hang out?"

"I 'll show you in the mornin'. Been to supper?"

"Yes; had a little spread up to Delmonico's. It was n't much, an' charlotte roosters an' sich things as that ain't fillin', you know."

"I kinder thought you might be hungry, so I got mother to do up a lunch." And Teenie drew from his pocket a small parcel of cold roast meat, adding to it from another pocket five boiled eggs.

"Say, we'll have a reg'lar lay-out, won't we?" Carrots said, as he surveyed the food with the keenest pleasure.

"Now I reckon you can kind er ease up on your business long enough to 'tend to this stuff, can't you?" Teenie answered.

"Well, I should say so! You 're a brick, Teenie, an' I wish you 'd come every night."

"Business would have to be pretty good if I was goin' to have such a spread as this right along. I 've been to supper, so you pitch in."

“S’pose we put it away for a while? It has n’t been so long since I ate that lot o’ quails, you know; and I can hold on a spell, an’ we’ll be hungry before we’re ready to go to sleep.”

Teenie was satisfied; and he reclined carelessly in one corner of the packing-case home, enjoying himself to the utmost.

Carrots followed his example, and soon the two were busily engaged discussing the probable outcome of Teddy’s case, as well as the possibility of engaging a lawyer upon the condition of his being willing to accept the fee “in trade.”

Not until a late hour was the lunch disposed of; and then, nestling into the straw, the two were ready for slumber.

Owing to the peculiar location of his home, and the necessity of keeping his whereabouts a profound secret, Carrots was obliged to arise at a very early hour, in order to leave the residence before any of the clerks in the shop should arrive. Therefore it was that the host and his guest were on the street shortly after sunrise.

Of course it would have been folly to look for the attorney in his office at such an hour, and the possibility of doing any business before seven or eight o’clock was so slight that Carrots, with the recklessness of a spendthrift, invited his friend to a breakfast at Mose Pearson’s, even though it involved an expenditure of fully one-fifth of his entire wealth.

“We’ll kind er need somethin’ to brace us up,” he said, in explanation of his generous invitation.

As a matter of course, Master Massey was not proof against the kind hospitality, and so he very willingly followed his friend to Mr. Pearson's establishment, which was located in the basement of a dwelling on Baxter Street.

When the boys, leisurely, and with the air of capitalists, sauntered out on the street once more, they looked thoroughly contented with the world in general, and themselves in particular.

"We'd better get up somewhere near the lawyer's office before that Skip Jellison comes 'round," Teenie said.

Carrots recognized the wisdom of this advice at once; and the two, keeping a sharp lookout lest Master Jellison should spring upon them unawares, made their way to Centre Street, where for an hour and a half they waited in the hallway of the building in which the lawyer with whom Teenie was acquainted had an office.

On his arrival it was evident the gentleman did not recognize them as two possible clients, for he passed without even a nod to the boy who claimed to be his friend, entered the office, and closed the door behind him.

"Why, he does n't even know you!" Carrots exclaimed, in a tone of reproach.

"Oh, yes, he does; but you see it's kind er dark in here, an' I s'pose he could n't see my face very well, or he did n't notice."

"What are you goin' to do 'bout it?"

“Wait till he gets settled, an’ then we’ll go up an’ call on him. You do the talkin’, while I stand back an’ ’gree to all you say.”

Now that they were where the scheme could be carried into execution, Carrots was by no means confident it would be a success, and actually felt rather timid about making the attempt; but, urged on by Teenie, he finally mustered up courage to open the door of the office. He stood on the threshold, gazing first at the attorney and then back at his friend.

“Well, what do you want?” the gentleman asked, looking inquiringly at the boy.

This question appeared to restore to Carrots a certain portion of his self-possession, and he entered the room, standing in the middle of the floor as he beckoned to his friend to follow.

“What do you want?” the lawyer asked again, impatiently.

“Well, you see — I come — we want — ”

“Out with it. What did you come for?”

Teenie nudged his friend from behind, as a sign that he should speak up promptly; and Carrots, catching his breath much as one does after a plunge in cold water, began:

“There’s a feller what walked down from Saranac, that’s goin’ to be took inter the Tombs court this mornin’ for fightin’ in City Hall Park, an’ we’ve come to see how much it would cost to hire you to git him out.”

“I might defend him, but I could n’t agree to get him out. That depends on the judge.”

"Well, you could make the talk, an' I reckon when the thing's put up right they'll have to let him go, 'cause he did n't do anything."



"“IT WAS JEST LIKE THIS,” SAID CARROTS.”

"Suppose you tell me the whole story, and I shall be better able to judge what they may be obliged to do."

"It was jest like this: You see, Skip he come up an' hit Teddy in the jaw, and Teddy tried to hit back.

Skip let out with a left-hander; Teddy warded it off. Then Skip jumped; down went the papers. Skip got frightened of a cop; he started to run, Teddy after him, an' Teddy was 'rested, and that's all there is 'bout it."

"That may be the whole of the story; but I must confess I don't understand it yet."

"Why, it's plain enough. You see, Skip he struck out, an' Teddy warded it off—"

"Now wait a moment. Tell me which boy is arrested."

"Why, Teddy, of course. You don't s'pose we'd come here if it had been Skip? I wish it *was*. He'd stay there a good while, for all *I'd* care."

"Who is this Teddy?"

"He's a feller what walked down from Saranac, an' got here yesterday mornin'; but jest as he was goin' to sell papers up jumped Skip, 'cause he thinks he owns the whole town, an' 'lowed he was goin' to clean Teddy right out. Now, I never did think Skip could fight any great deal, 'cause how was it when he was over to Brooklyn, an' that feller tackled him?"

"Try to tell me the story as I want to hear it. You say Teddy was arrested?"

"Why, it's worse 'n that! He's in the station-house!"

"Certainly; if he is arrested. On what charge was he taken?"

"Eh?"

"I mean why did the officer take him?"

"Why? 'Cause the park policeman said he was

fightin'; but he was n't. He was only beginnin'. He might uv licked Skip, too, if they 'd let him alone. I know by the way he put up his hands."

"Then it seems, according to your story, that he really was fighting."

"How could he, when he had n't even commenced? Skip hit him, an' knocked the papers out er his hands, an' then he was goin' to lick Skip, but did n't have time."

The attorney was a patient man, and, possibly, the boy's manner of telling the story amused him; therefore he continued asking questions, preventing any detailed account of previous quarrels which Skip might have had, until he was in possession of all the important facts, when he asked:

"Do you know what a lawyer usually charges for such a case as this?"

"Now you're comin' right down to dots!" Carrots said, beginning to feel more at ease since the attorney treated him in such a friendly fashion. "You see, this feller has n't got any money, an' I don't claim to be a millionaire myself. I know lawyers charge a good deal for doin' a little o' nothin'; but I thought if you'd kind er take it out in trade, we might make a bargain."

"What business are you in?"

"I shine boots; an' if you'll get this feller out er the scrape, I'll come in here an' black your boots every mornin' this year, for nothin'. You can't make a better trade 'n that if you should look 'round a good while."

"That is quite a contract you are proposing."

“ I know it; but you see I want ter make it an object for you to get Teddy out.”

“ That can be done only in the proper manner. The question is whether you have any witnesses to prove that this boy was not really fighting, and that he had sufficient provocation to excuse his trying to thrash the other one.”

“ Sufficient what? ”

“ Provocation. That is, whether what had been done was enough to warrant an attempt to whip this other boy; for, as I understand it, that is really what he did try to do.”

“ Why, of course; he had to. How 'd you like it if a feller sneaked up an' whacked you in the face when you was n't doin' anything, an' knocked your papers in the mud.”

“ It would n't be very pleasant, I'll admit; but how can you prove that such was the case? Who saw the beginning of the trouble? ”

“ I did, an' Teenie, an' lots of other fellers; but they would n't dare to tell it for fear Skip might thump 'em. He calls hissself a fighter.”

“ Then you two are willing to run the risk, and tell your story in court, are you? ”

“ Of course we are; but will you go an' get him out? ”

“ Suppose I should take this case, and spend an hour or two on it, how do I know you would come here each morning to black my boots, as you propose? ”

“ How do you know? Why, ain't Teenie here, an' don't he hear what I say? That's enough to make a trade if you've got a witness, ain't it? ”

"Yes, I suppose it is," the lawyer replied, laughingly. "I don't see any other way for me but to take the case. Go to the Tombs, and wait there until I come."

"You'll be sure to be on hand before they bring him down, eh?"

"I won't neglect it."

With this assurance the boys left the office, and, once on the outside, Carrots said to his friend, in a tone of relief:

"Well, now that's fixed, an' I guess we needn't bother any more 'bout Teddy's gettin' out; but there'll be an awful row when Skip hears what we've done, an' you an' I've got to stand right 'longside of each other if he tries any funny business. We must look out for him."

This suggestion that they would stand together against Teddy's enemy was far from displeasing to Master Massey.

In the seclusion of the packing-case home he could talk boldly about what Skip might yet be able to do; but once on the street, where it was possible to meet the bully at any moment, the matter assumed a different aspect, and he began to realize the danger in which he had thus voluntarily placed himself.

"It won't do for us to hang 'round here, 'cause he's likely to come any minute," Teenie said, in a tremulous tone. "I think we'd better go down to the Tombs, an' then we'll be on hand when the lawyer wants us."

This was a very good idea, and Carrots led the way at a rapid pace, both taking heed lest they should accidentally meet Skip.

CHAPTER VI.

THE TRIAL.

CARROTS and Teenie succeeded in reaching the Tombs without being intercepted by Skip; and once there, they were unable to determine whether the court was in session.

In the vicinity of the judge's desk a number of men were standing, apparently talking on different subjects, and in the seats reserved for the spectators a few unfortunate-looking persons lounged.

"Well, the feller ain't been brought in yet, that's certain," Carrots said, gazing around the room in a vain search for his new acquaintance.

"Do you s'pose they will put handcuffs on him?" Teenie asked, in a tone of awe. "I reckon he'd be jest about crazy if they'd send him up to the Island."

"It would start 'most anybody up to take a dose like that; but of course it won't happen now we've got the lawyer. I tell you he'll be s'prised to see how we've fixed things, won't he?"

"Indeed he will; an' Skip 'll be hoppin' mad when *he* knows. We want ter keep pretty close together while we're workin' this."

The conversation was interrupted by the entrance of the sergeant who had been seen at the station-house,

and Carrots went swiftly toward him, asking, as he halted in front of the officer:

“Did you bring that feller down yet?”

“He will come in the van with the rest of the prisoners.”

“You won’t forget that you promised to try an’ fix it?”

“I said I would see that the officer was n’t hard on him. I can’t *fix* anything. Have you got your witnesses here?”

“Yes; Teenie’s one, an’ I’m another, an’ we’ve hired a reg’lar lawyer.”

“You have? Who?”

“A man by the name of Varney.”

“Well, if he is coming I reckon you will be all right, unless you have a bad case; and from what the roundsman told me the fighting did n’t amount to much.”

“There was n’t *any* of it! You see, Skip he give Teddy one in the face, an’ then sent in a left-hander, an’ Teddy he —”

“Never mind the story. I don’t want to hear it, for I have n’t the time,” the officer said, as he started toward the judge’s bench.

Half an hour elapsed, and then the boys suddenly saw their new friend within a sort of iron cage at one end of the room.

“There he is!” Teenie whispered, excitedly. “How do you s’pose he got in without our seein’ him?”

Carrots stood erect and gazed at the prisoner a moment, as if debating whether to approach him or not.

Teddy presented a most forlorn appearance, standing

aloof from the other prisoners as far as possible, and clinging to the iron bars, his usually clean face begrimed with dirt, through which the flowing tears had plowed tiny canals until he looked not unlike a small-sized Indian in war-paint.

This picture of sorrow made a deep impression on Carrots's tender heart, and, regardless of whether he might be able to regain his seat, he marched toward the prisoners' cage.

Teddy had seen him coming, and stepped forward in the hope of speaking with this boy who had proved himself to be a real friend; but before a single word could be uttered, the officer interrupted the visitor by saying roughly:

"Get back there!"

"But I've got to talk with that feller."

"Get back there! Do you hear what I tell you?" and he made a threatening gesture which was not at all terrifying to the self-possessed Carrots.

"I've got to talk with this feller; he's a friend of mine, an' I ain't seen him since last night. He's goin' to get right out, too, 'cause he didn't do anything, an' wouldn't have been brought here if he'd had sense enough to run when they hollered 'Cops!' It was jest this way: Skip, he struck out an' hit him in the face, an' then come in with a left-hander —"

Carrots had been advancing while speaking, and at this point the officer seized him by one shoulder, spinning him around until he was heading in the direction from which he had come.

“If you make any attempt to speak to that boy, I’ll put you in with him! What are you doing here, anyhow? Are you a witness?”

“Course I am. What else do you s’pose? Why, I’ve got to tell the judge all ’bout how this thing happened. You see, I was right there, an’ when Skip come in with a left-hander, an’ Teddy he warded it off —”

Carrots did not finish the sentence, for the officer gave him a push which might have thrown him headlong but for the fact that Teenie chanced to be in the way, and thus prevented the fall.

“I guess we’d better get back to the settee,” Carrots said, looking at the officer an instant, as if to make out whether the latter was really in earnest in this last movement.

Carrots was whispering to Teenie his opinion of the officer in charge of the prisoners when the lawyer arrived; and then for the first time did Teddy’s friends learn that court had been in session all the while since they entered.

It was a positive relief to see the attorney; and, lest the latter should think those who employed him had not followed the directions given, Carrots made his presence known by going up to the gentleman in the most confidential manner, and announcing cheerfully: “We’re here.”

“Yes, I see you are. Sit down. I’ll call you when you’re wanted.”

“But are you sure you remember what I told you ’bout how it happened? You don’t want to forget that

Skip jumped in an' hit Teddy in the face, and then come in with a left — ”

“ You shall be asked to tell that story, my boy, presently; but just now I don't care to hear it, and have n't the time. Sit down until your name is called.”

“ I'm afraid that lawyer don't 'mount to much,” Carrots whispered to Teenie as he obeyed the gentleman's command. “ It seems like he's puttin' on a good many airs, an' don't want ter listen to how the thing happened. Now I don't b'lieve any man can fix it with the judge, 'less he's got the whole thing down fine.”

“ The sergeant said he was all right, an' he ought ter know; so I reckon we can 'ford to wait,” Teenie replied, contentedly.

It seemed to the impatient Carrots as if it must have been nearly noon when he heard the clerk call the name “ Theodore Thurston; ” and, an instant later, the young prisoner from Saranac was conducted to the dock.

Almost at the same moment Skip Jellison, accompanied by several of his most intimate friends, entered the room, and immediately became aware that Carrots and Teenie were in attendance.

Without hesitation, and, as if such scenes were perfectly familiar to him, Master Skip approached Teddy's friends in an easy, careless fashion, as he asked :

“ What are you two doin' here? ”

“ Came down to see how the new feller gets along. Don't s'pose you've got any 'bjections, have you? ” Carrots replied.

“ I don't know whether I have or not.”

"Well, after you find out jest give me the word, 'cause we 're bound to dust whenever you give us the tip."

It was evident to Master Jellison that Carrots was speaking sarcastically, and he took no further notice of this insolence, save to say, warningly:

"You want to mind your eye, that's all! The feller what tries to help that chump along is goin' to get inter trouble."

"Same's you did over to Brooklyn the other day, eh?" Carrots asked coolly.

"Wait till I catch you outside, an' we'll see if you've got anything more to say 'bout Brooklyn!" And with this threat Master Jellison and his friends advanced to a settee nearer the judge, where they seated themselves with a great show of what was probably intended to be dignity.

"He's come to see if we're goin' to tell anything 'bout the row," Teenie whispered; and it could plainly be seen that Master Massey was very much frightened regarding the probable outcome of thus attempting to aid the stranger.

At that moment Carrots was startled out of his self-possession — although he had come especially as a witness — by hearing his name called in a loud tone.

Three times the clerk shouted "Joseph Williams," and then Carrots exclaimed:

"By jiminy! he means me, does n't he?"

"Of course he does. Go 'long quick, or else that feller 'll be up on the Island before they know you're here," said Teenie.

It was necessary the witness should pass Skip Jellison on his way to the stand; and, in so doing, he saw Teddy's enemy scowl and shake his fist in the most threatening manner.

"Don't get excited," Carrots stopped long enough to say. "You're comin' out of it all right, even if you don't feel very good now."

Then he continued on until some one directed him which way to go; and for the first time in his life he laid his hand on a Bible, and swore to tell "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth."

If, as is extremely probable, Skip had come for the purpose of hearing what was said, he was disappointed, as are nearly all the visitors to the Tombs court, where it is an impossibility for one on the spectators' benches to distinguish any remark made either by the judge or the witness, unless the latter chances to have a particularly clear voice.

Those inside the railing, however, could understand quite distinctly all that was said; and, judging from their mirth, Carrots's examination must have been to them an amusing one.

On being asked his name, the witness replied, "Carrots;" and then the judge glowered down upon him until he realized that he previously answered to that of "Joseph Williams."

After having made the proper correction, and before it was possible for any one to ask him a question, Carrots leaned toward the magistrate in a confidential and friendly manner, as he began:

“ You see, Judge, it was jest like this: Skip he jumped in an’ hit Teddy one in the face, an’ then come back with a left-hander; but Teddy warded it off, an’ then — ”

“ Stop!” the judge cried, severely. “ When I want you to tell the story I will ask for it. Did you see this boy fighting in the park? ”

“ He was n’t fightin’ at all. He did n’t have time, for the park policeman caught him. You see, it was jest this way: Skip he jumped in an’ smashed Teddy in the face, an’ then come with a left-hander — ”

Again was the witness interrupted; and this time Mr. Varney stepped forward to where he could say in a low tone to Carrots:

“ You must simply answer the judge’s questions — not attempt to tell the story yourself.”

“ Yes, sir; but how ’ll he know what’s what if I don’t give him the whole right through? ” Carrots asked in a hoarse whisper.

“ Attend to what he says, and don’t try to tell anything else.”

“ What was this boy doing when the policeman arrested him? ” the judge asked, as he looked sternly at the witness.

“ He was n’t doin’ nothin’, ’cause he did n’t have time. You see, Skip run as soon as he hit him, an’ knocked his papers down, an’ then — ”

“ Did the prisoner go in pursuit of the boy whom you call Skip? ”

“ Course he did; ’cause, you see, Skip knocked his papers in the mud, an’ hit him once in the face; an’ he

would have come in with a left-hander, if Teddy had n't warded it off."

"What was the prisoner doing when this boy struck him?"

"He was sellin' a paper to a man in a horse-car. You see, Skip he 'lowed that Teddy could n't run the business in New York; but Teddy he walked 'way down from Saranac jest to get a livin', an' Skip don't have any right to tell fellers whether they 're to work or not."

"Had the prisoner said anything to this boy who struck him?"

"No; you see, he did n't have time. Skip jumped right in an' hit him once in the face, an' —"

"Now, don't tell that story again. Had there been any quarrel between these two?"

"No, sir; you see, Teddy did n't come in town till this mornin', an' he never knew Skip from a side of sole-leather."

"Is he a friend of yours?"

"Well, I s'pose he is," Carrots replied, hesitatingly. "You see, when he got into trouble, somebody had to help him out, an' there did n't seem to be anybody willin' but me. He ought ter be my friend if I'm goin' to black the lawyer's boots a whole year jest to pay for this racket."

"If your honor will allow me, I will tell the story as I have managed to extract it — I use the word 'extract' advisedly — from this witness and his friend," the lawyer said, as he advanced a few paces amid the smiles of all those near the bench.

"Do you wish to explain about your fee?" the judge asked, laughingly.

"Perhaps that is hardly necessary, since lawyers are seldom known to refuse anything offered in the way of payment. That was the proposition made by the witness and witnessed by his friend."

Then the attorney related what had occurred in his office, to the no slight amusement of those who could hear him; and, when he concluded, the judge turned to Carrots again, looking very much more friendly than before.

"Then you assure me on your oath that the prisoner did not fight with the other boy in City Hall Park?"

"Why, no; how could he? He didn't get the chance. You see, Skip hit him in the face, an' then come in with a left-hander; but Teddy warded it off, and then Skip run. The policeman grabbed Teddy too quick, you see. I reckon he'd have paid Skip off in great shape, 'cause I b'lieve he can do it."

"Then you admit that he would have fought if he had had the opportunity?"

"Of course he would! S'posin' a feller smashed you in the neck, an' knocked your papers in the mud, would n't you fight? I guess you would!"

"I will do the questioning, and you can confine yourself to answering," said the judge.

"That's all I was doin', sir," Carrots replied, a trifle abashed by the change which came over the judge's face at his free manner of speaking.

Then it seemed as if the witness was entirely for-

gotten. Nobody paid the slightest attention to him until fully five minutes later, when the lawyer beckoned for him to come down from the stand to where he was speaking in a low tone with Teddy.

"You can go now," the gentleman said; "and I shall be curious to learn how long you will keep the promise made in regard to blacking my boots."

"Well, what are you goin' to do with Teddy?" Carrots asked, a look of disappointment coming over his face as he fancied that the prisoner was not to be set free.

"He has been discharged. It is all right now. Go out with him, and be careful not to get into any more trouble on the street, for it might go hard with you if either came here the second time."

"He's discharged — did you say?" Carrots repeated. "Does that mean he can go anywhere he wants to?"

"Certainly."

"Well, you're a dandy! I'll live right up to the 'greement I made, an' don't you forget it!" Carrots replied enthusiastically, and then, as the lawyer turned away, presumably to attend to his own business, the amateur Good Samaritan led Teddy from the room, closely followed by Teenie, who said, when they were once more on the outside of the building:

"It won't do to loaf 'round here. Skip Jellison an' his gang were jest gettin' up when I come out. They'll be after us if we don't dust 'mighty lively."

"Let's go down by the ferry, where we can kind er straighten things, an' see what we're goin' to do," Carrots suggested.

Teddy was not disposed to run from the enemy; but his companions insisted it would be more than foolish to risk an encounter, and he allowed himself to be led away at a rapid pace.

“Why not go over to your house, Carrots?” Teenie asked. “They’ll never find us there.”

“I couldn’t get in without somebody seein’ me, an’ I don’t want to give the snap away, else the whole thing will be broke up. We can do all the chinnin’ we want ter ’round the ferry.”

“Seems to me I ought ter go to work. I can’t ’ford to fool so much time away now, after I’ve been kept still so long,” Teddy said, gravely. “I came here countin’ on makin’ money enough every day to live on, an’ began by losin’ my stock the first thing.”

“You ain’t lost it yet. I sold every one of your papers, an’ have got the money in my pocket to give you.”

“You’re a mighty good feller, Carrots; an’ if ever I can do anything to help you, I’ll be glad of the chance.”

“All I ask is that you stand ’longside of me when Skip an’ his crowd come ’round, ’cause I’ll need a friend pretty bad then.”

“He sha’n’t touch you when I’m near; but I don’t see how it’s goin’ to be stopped, if they ’rest fellers for fightin’ in the city,” Teddy replied, in a tone of perplexity; and straightway the three were plunged into a maze of bewilderment that the law should interfere by arresting a fellow when he attempted

to defend himself, and allow the beginner of the trouble to go free.

It seemed to be one of those tangles in the web woven by Justice which older heads than theirs have failed to unravel.

CHAPTER VII.

THE WARNING.

As a matter of course, business was not to be thought of on this day, and for two very good reasons.

First, there was every cause to believe Skip Jellison and his followers would do all they could to prevent the boy from Saranac from engaging in any business; and secondly, because it seemed absolutely necessary Carrots and his friends should discuss the situation.

The boys were forced to earn such food as they might need, or go hungry, and yet Skip Jellison would try to prevent their doing business on the street.

Of course they could stand up and battle for their rights, probably receiving assistance from some of those boys whom Master Jellison had disciplined by the same methods pursued with Teddy; but such a struggle would hinder their business affairs.

If it became necessary to fight every time Teddy sold a paper, not only would the money-making be sadly curtailed, but danger of arrest would be very great.

“I reckon I would n't get off as easy if I was hauled up before that judge ag'in,” Teddy said to his companion when the two had taken leave of Teenie Massey, and were walking in the direction of the water-front.

“But I don’t see how I’m goin’ to get along without fightin’, ’less I’m willin’ to lie right down an’ let Skip Jellison tread on me.”

“See here!” Carrots said, suddenly, as if believing he had a thoroughly good plan in mind. “You’ve allers lived on a farm, have n’t you?”

“Yes.”

“Well, now I have an idea it would be nice to stay in the country. S’posin’ you an’ me go right off an’ get a job on some farm. That would settle Skip in great shape, an’ we’d have a mighty good time.”

“It would settle Skip, there’s no question ’bout that,” Teddy replied. “But when it comes to havin’ a good time, you’d find you’d made a big mistake. I’ve had all the farmin’ I want. A feller never’d get ahead in the world if he worked round for nothin’ but his board an’ clothes on a farm.”

“You can’t get even that much in the city, ’less you have money to start a reg’lar stand.”

“That’s jest it! That’s jest what a feller wants to do! He ought ter make up his mind he’s goin’ to have a place, an’ buy it. After that he can ’low to have a store, an’ get one, too. All he has to do is to work hard, an’ save his money for a while.”

“I don’t know ’bout that,” Carrots replied, with a grave shake of his head. “I’ve tried as hard as any feller to get ’long, but don’t own more’n ninety cents in the world to-day.”

“Well, I’m going to try it in the city till I make up my mind it can’t be done, an’ p’rhaps then I’d be willin’

to go out on a farm; but it'll be a good while before that time comes, Carrots. Where are you goin' now?"

"Down on one of these piers, where we can talk without Skip's crowd sneakin' up on us."

By this time they were near Fulton Ferry, and Carrots had but little difficulty, familiar as he was with the locality, in finding what he sought.

A pile of merchandise near the end of a pier afforded many convenient openings in which two boys could stow themselves snugly away without fear of being seen; and, entering one, Carrots proceeded to make himself comfortable by crawling to the very farthest corner, and there lighting a cigarette.

"Say, you're an awful good feller, Carrots," Teddy began, as if he had suddenly made a very important discovery. "You've taken right hold to help me, jest the same's if we'd allers knowed each other, an' done a good deal more'n any chum of mine I ever had. Now, I don't see any way to pay you back yet awhile."

"I don't want to be paid back," Carrots replied, decidedly. "I tried to help you through this thing, 'cause it was a shame to let Skip Jellison have his way, as he allers counts on; an' what I've done is n't much."

"Indeed it is. I'd been on my way to jail now, if you had n't taken hold of this thing. We've got to straighten matters somehow. In the first place, I want to give back the money you handed me when I was 'rested."

"Better keep it. It may be two or three days before we can do any work."

"But I'd rather start square," Teddy replied, as he counted out the pennies which he had kept carefully apart from his own hoard, and literally forced them upon his companion.

"Well, if you're goin' to square up so straight, I've got a little settlement to make," and Carrots began a problem in arithmetic, using a bit of smooth board as paper, and making the figures thereon with a very short fragment of a lead-pencil. "Now, I sold them papers of yours, and here's the money," he added.

"But some of 'em was so muddy you could not have sold them," Teddy objected.

"Yes, I did; every one. You see, I wiped the mud off, an' then folded em' inside, so's it would n't show. It don't pay to let papers spoil jest 'cause there's a little dirt on 'em."

"But it isn't right I should take it," Teddy replied, gravely. "You stopped your work yesterday and today jest to help me along, an', of course, have n't earned a cent. Now, the best way will be to give me what I paid out for the papers, an' take the profit yourself, 'cause it really b'longs to you."

"I won't do anything of the kind," Carrots replied, in a tone of determination. "It ain't certain as I should have worked yesterday."

"Course you would. You'd begun when I first saw you, an' had earned some money."

"Well, then, that's jest it! I got enough yesterday to keep me, an' by night we'll have some plan to get the best of Skip Jellison."

Teddy insisted that his companion should take the profits resulting from the sale of the newspapers, and Carrots quite as strongly refused to do anything of the kind; therefore the matter necessarily remained unsettled, the boy from Saranac holding the money in trust, as it were.

“Have a cigarette?” Carrots asked, with the air of a man of leisure, as he pulled several from his pocket.

“I don’t want any, Carrots. I never smoke.”

“What?”

“I don’t smoke, and what’s more, I ain’t goin’ to. After all you’ve done for me, it seems kind er tough that I should turn ’round an’ talk to you ’bout spendin’ money; but there’s one of the very reasons why you ain’t got a stand. Instead of hustlin’ to make a nickel, you spend one buyin’ cigarettes, or else waste a good deal of time standin’ on the street smokin’. It would make a big difference if you did n’t like sich things; an’, besides, it hurts a boy to smoke ’em.”

Carrots looked at Teddy in surprise.

He failed to understand why a fellow could not amuse himself smoking cigarettes, and was thoroughly bewildered to hear an argument made as to the expense.

“Well, I’ll be jiggered! It looks to me like as if you’d come down here tryin’ to be awful too good. I wish I had money enough to buy a glass case to put you in. I reckon I could sell the lot up to the museum.”

“That’s right; laugh jest as much as you’ve a mind to, Carrots. You can’t make me mad after all you’ve

done; but what I said is true, jest the same, an' don't you forget it."

"All right," Carrots replied, placidly. "I reckon it won't cost very much till these 're gone; so s'posin' we talk 'bout how we 're going inter business? Skip's got it in for me now, an' I'll have to shin 'round as lively as you do."

"There's only one thing 'bout it. We must 'tend to work the same 's if he was n't livin'."

"But he'll jump down on us, an' then we'll get into another fight."

"I s'pose that's so. Ain't there some place in the town jest as good for paper-sellin' as 'round the City Hall?"

"Well, I don't know. You see, I've allers worked there, an' am 'quainted with the fellers, so it seems to me it's 'bout the only spot. If you should try down by South Ferry, or 'round here anywhere, everybody 'd do their best to drive you out, same 's Skip did. I *b'long* up to City Hall, so they can't shove me away from there; an' the bootblacks in any place else would raise a row if I come takin' trade away."

"It don't seem as though they'd dare to do such things," said Teddy, thoughtfully. "You've as much right on one street as another."

"That's the way I s'pose it looks to a stranger; but it ain't so, jest the same. Now if a new feller come where I was workin' I'd turn in with the others to drive him off, of course."

"Then how does a new boy like me start?"

“He has ter hustle, an’ take it rough, same’s you’re doin’. When the others find out you’re bound to stick, they’ll let you alone.”

“Then, in that case, the sooner we ’tend to business the better. If we’re goin’ to have a row, let’s get over with it as soon as we can.”

“That’s what I was countin’ on; but I’ll tell you we’d better not work to-day. It’s no use to rush, an’ by to-morrow Skip’ll be over his mad fit a little, most likely. He won’t do anything but hunt for us till night, an’ in the mornin’ he’ll need money so bad he’ll have to go to work.”

Teddy realized that Carrots’s advice must be good, since he was thoroughly acquainted with the ways of the city; yet at the same time he was impatient because of the enforced idleness when it seemed necessary he should be at work.

Then Carrots proceeded to explain to his newly-made friend some of the peculiarities of his associates, and gave him an insight into their manner of living.

“Now I’m countin’ on your takin’ half of my house,” Carrots said. “You see, you’ve got either to go to the Newsboys’ Lodging House, or else hire a room somewhere, if you want ter swell, an’ that’s dreadful expensive. When the weather ain’t too cold, boys can sleep ’round ’most anywhere.”

“How does it happen that you have a house? Do you live with your folks?”

“I ain’t got any, an’ never had; but the place where I stop is mighty swell, I can tell you, though we can’t

go home till after dark, 'cause I don't want the folks what hire the property to think I came for the rent."

Teddy was mystified by this reply; but thought it advisable not to ask for particulars.

"I suppose you get your grub anywhere?" he said, interrogatively.

"Yes, when I've got the money. When I ain't, I go without. Seein' 's how neither of us has had any breakfast, what do you say to huntin' for a place where we can git five-cent soup?"

This seemed to Teddy like a necessity, inasmuch as he had had neither supper nor breakfast, and a few moments later the boys were busily employed over two plates of soup.

When the meal was ended the two, whose only business on this day was to keep beyond the reach of Skip Jellison, walked up-town that Teddy might see as much of the city as possible during his enforced idleness, and they did not return until a late hour.

After a great many precautions, and an unusual amount of scurrying to and fro, Carrots conducted his friend to the residence in the rear of the shop, and was delighted by hearing it praised in no stinted terms.

"It's great!" Teddy said, approvingly. "A feller that's got a place like this don't need to hire any rooms. I'd rather have it than a reg'lar house, any day."

"So had I," the proud proprietor replied; "but one thing is that you can't get here in the daytime. I reckon if they knew a feller was livin' in these boxes, they'd fire him out."

Then Carrots brought forth such of the provisions as had been left over from the previous evening's feast; and before he had finished this task a shrill whistle from the alleyway caused him to leap to his feet quickly, as he exclaimed:

"Now, there 's Teenie Massey ag'in! I do wish he 'd stay away once' in a while. There won't be any room for three of us to sleep here, an' I'm goin' to tell him so."

As he ceased speaking Carrots gave vent to a prolonged whistle, and a few seconds later the sound as of some one climbing over the fence told that Master Massey was in what might be called the vestibule of Carrots's residence.

It was evident that Teenie was not wholly at ease when he made his appearance. Even one who had never seen him before would have understood there was something on his mind, and he greeted his friends in such a peculiar manner as to cause Carrots to ask:

"What 's the matter with you? Ain't any of your folks dead, is there?"

"Oh, I'm all right," Teenie replied. "What made you think there was anything wrong?"

"Why, you look 'so—kind er queer."

Teenie was silent for a few moments, as if revolving some weighty question in his mind, and then, with the air of one who is determined to have the worst over, said:

"Look here, Carrots! I've allers been a friend of yours, ain't I, even if I have stood in with Skip Jellison once in a while?"



TEENIE BRINGS THE "COMMITTEE'S" WARNING.

THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY

ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS

R - L

"Course you have, Teenie. What's troublin' you?"

"You might think I was n't actin' jest square, so I wanted to have it straight."

"Have what straight?" Carrots asked impatiently.

"'Bout how you an' I stand. Now, you see, I met Skip this afternoon—"

"Did n't tell him where I lived, did you?" Carrots asked, sternly.

"Course not. What do you take me for? But he had a good deal to say 'bout you."

"If he don't ever hurt me any worse 'n he can with his tongue, I reckon I'll get along all right."

"He says he's goin' to drive both, of you fellers out er the city, if he don't do anything else the rest of the year."

"Then he'll have a chance to get through with a good bit of loafin', for we're not goin' to get up an' dust jest to please him."

"But he's awful mad."

"That don't hurt me any. He can boil over if he wants to, for all I care."

"Well, now, Carrots, he wanted me to do somethin', an' I could n't get out er promisin'."

"What was it?" the host asked, impatiently.

"You won't get mad?"

"Course not, 'less you're givin' somethin' away ag'in me."

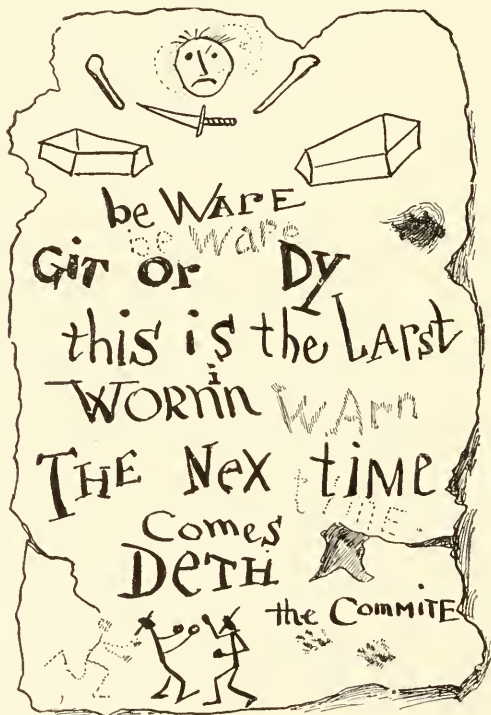
"He wanted me to bring a letter down here. You see, he kind er thinks I know where you live, an' so he told me I'd got to take it. I could n't help myself,

Carrots, 'cause he hung right on, an' jest as likely 's not he 'd have given me a thumpin' if I had n't done it."

"Oh, that 's all right. Fish up your letter."

Teenie drew from his pocket a piece of soiled paper and gave it to Carrots, who, with the candle in his hand, opened it carefully and with an air of the utmost gravity.

Fortunately, so far as the better understanding of this story is concerned, the important document was preserved by Teddy; therefore we are enabled to give an exact copy of it:



CHAPTER VIII.

THE PARTNERS.

IT was fully five minutes before Carrots succeeded in deciphering the letter brought by Teenie, and then he pretended to treat the matter as a huge joke.

“Why, Skip must have spent pretty nigh the whole day gettin’ up that thing,” he said, as he handed the missive to Teddy. “I wonder what he made the moon there for?”

“Moon?” Teenie repeated. “Why, he told me it was a skull, with a dagger underneath it and with bones on the sides, same ’s pirates have on their flags; an’ the two coffins was for you an’ the other feller.”

“Who are the two duffers down there at the bottom? A couple of pirates?”

“No; they’re the committee,” Teenie explained. “I s’pose one of ’em ’s Skip, an’ the other ’s Sid.”

“So Sid ’s taken a hand in this; *he’s* gone to drivin’ boys out er the town, has he? Well, Sid ’s a nice plum to do anything of the kind! ’T is n’t more’n a month ago since he was gettin’ right down on his knees, coaxin’ Skip to let him stay to black boots. It would be a mighty long while before I’d ask Skip Jellison to ’low me to do anything!”

“Them two are awful thick now. Kind er stand in

pardners, I reckon. Sid says he 's goin' to run Fulton Ferry on the Brooklyn side, an' Skip 's to take care of this end, as soon as they drive the feller from Saranac away."

"Oh, they are, eh? Well, p'rhaps it 'll be a good while before they finish up the job they 've got on hand, so I guess they won't hurt theirselves workin' this season. What do you think about it, Teddy?"

The young gentleman from Saranac made no reply, but folded the paper carefully and put it in his pocket, as if for future reference.

"What 're you goin' to do 'bout it?" Teenie asked, so earnestly that Carrots looked at him suspiciously.

"Do 'bout it?" the latter replied. "Why, let him go ahead. What else can we do? I've seen a good many better-lookin' pictures than he made there, an' if that 's all he does he won't hurt anybody."

"But see here, Carrots: Skip says you 'll have to leave this town if you stand in with Teddy, an' he 's goin' to make it awful hot."

"Well, I s'pose if he can do that he will; so what 's the use talkin' 'bout it? We can't help anything, as I see."

Teenie understood that his friend was not absolutely satisfied regarding his connection with the matter, and therefore refused to make any explanation as to what his future course might be. This lack of confidence troubled the messenger; for Carrots was a particular friend of his, and he did not wish anything to impair the kindly feeling existing between them.

So he was glad when Carrots said:

“I ain’t blamin’ you, Teenie; but I can tell you one thing sure: what ain’t known can’t be told. If Skip Jellison should ’low he was jest about goin’ to thump the life out er you if you didn’t repeat everything I said, why, you might have to give up. So I don’t think it’s best for us to have any talk. Of course I’m sure you won’t tell where I’m livin’.”

“I wouldn’t say a word ’bout that, Carrots, an’ you know it.”

“I b’lieve you, Teenie, I b’lieve you; but you understand how things are workin’. Teddy an’ me are in a pretty bad hole jest now, an’ we’ve got to be careful. If you could kind er tell us once in a while what Skip was thinkin’ of doin’, it might help along; but I won’t ask it in case you’re ’fraid, ’cause I don’t want ter get any other feller in a scrape.”

“I’ll do all I can, Carrots; an’ now I reckon I’d better be goin’. Mother told me I must come home to-night.”

“All right, old man. Be sure, when you get on the street, that Skip ain’t watchin’ so’s to find out where you’ve been.”

“He can’t be ’round here, ’cause I went up to supper first, an’ walked right down from the house without seein’ him.”

Then Teenie took his departure, and the victims of Master Skip’s wrath were left alone to discuss the situation, which was certainly beginning to look serious for them.

"Now what do you think 'bout it?" Carrots asked, after seeing Teenie over the fence.

"Well, I don't see as it's any different from what it was before. We knew he was bound to drive me away, an' it was n't likely he'd stop after what little he's done. Now, Carrots, there's jest this much about it: you would n't be in any fuss with him if it was n't for me, an' you can square things up this very minute by sayin' you've shook me. Why not do it?"

"'Cause I kind er like you, Teddy, an' then, ag'in, I would n't give Skip the satisfaction of knowin' he'd made me do what he wanted."

"Better than have to go out of the business."

"I sha'n't do anything of the kind. I reckon you an' I can fix things up somehow, an' I'll tell you what I'd like, Teddy. It seems as if you knew how to manage better 'n I, an' why would n't it be a good idea to go inter pardnership? I can earn as much money in pleasant weather blackin' boots as you will by sellin' papers, an' I'll 'gree not to spend a cent more 'n you. You shall take care of the cash, an' say what we'll have for grub, an' all that sort of thing."

"You want us to go inter business, eh?"

"That's jest it. 'Teddy an' Carrots.' My name don't sound very well. Might call it Joseph; but then nobody'd know who you meant."

"It ought ter be 'Thurston an' Williams,' of course. Pardners don't use their first names."

"Now you've struck it?" Carrots cried in delight. "Is it a whack?"

"It is," Teddy replied gravely, and thus was a very weighty matter settled: a business connection formed which might possibly not receive any great amount of attention from the newspaper reporters, but a solid one in the opinion of the members composing the firm.

"Then here's the money we've got on hand," and Carrots emptied his pockets immediately. "You keep the whole an' we can tell every night jest how we stand."

"But you mustn't put in all your money, Carrots. You see, I have n't got as much, an' that would n't be fair."

Then Teddy counted his wealth, which consisted, including the profits made on the newspapers, of forty-three cents.

"That's the size of it. You put in jest as much, an' we'll start fair," said Teddy.

Carrots insisted that it would be better for him to contribute the entire amount of his capital; but Teddy refused to listen to anything of the kind, and, finally, the question was settled by the cashier's putting into one particular pocket, which was to be reserved for the use of the firm, the sum of eighty-six cents.

"Now, then, when are you goin' to work?" Teddy asked, with a business-like air. "It won't do for us to spend this money for grub, 'cause we shall want some-thin' to eat to-morrow. What do you say to tryin' it 'round South Ferry?"

"If we do that, Skip will be sure he has driven us out. I think we'd better go right up to City

Hall, an' start in straight; but the first thing is, where 'll we live?"

"What 's the matter with this place?"

"I ain't so certain but Teenie 'll give the snap away. If Skip gets hold of him he can make him tell 'most anything."

"No need of movin' till we find out that Skip really knows where we are. I ain't so sure but it would be a good idea to stay right here, anyhow, an' let him do whatever he can."

"But you see, he 'd tell the folks in the store, an' they 'd drive us out."

"That might be," Teddy replied, thoughtfully. "But we've got plenty of time to think it over. Now what we want is to earn a news-stand the very first thing. Then we'll have to get a chair outside, an' you could tend shop while I was selling papers anywhere trade happened to be the best."

"Won't that be fine!" Carrots cried in a tone of enthusiasm. "How the fellers' eyes would stick out if we were runnin' a reg'lar shop!" But then he added, reflectively, "I don't see how that's goin' to be done. It's been a pretty tight squeeze for me to get enough to buy grub with, to say nothin' of swellin'; an', if that would n't be swellin', I don't know what to call it!"

"'Tend right to your work, Carrots, an' don't spend money on cigarettes, or such things as that, an' it won't take long to get what we need. I don't reckon one of them stands costs any more 'n ten dollars."

“Ten dollars!” Carrots exclaimed. “Why don’t you buy the City Hall an’ start in in great shape? Ten dollars! Why, we could n’t earn that much in a month!”

“Well, s’posin’ we could n’t? S’posin’ it took two months? Would n’t that be better’n the way you’re workin’ now?”

“Yes, I reckon it would; but I don’t b’lieve we’d ever get that much together.”

“You do as I want you to, an’ we’ll see what’ll happen. Now, look at it jest this way, Carrots: if you made twenty-three cents for me yesterday afternoon sellin’ papers, s’posin’ you put in the whole day at it, could n’t you have made more’n fifty cents?”

“I could do better’n that blackin’ boots, even when business was n’t good.”

“Well, there you are! If you earn fifty cents, an’ enough to buy grub, an’ I do the same, it would n’t take us but ten days to have the money we wanted.”

Carrots rubbed his nose reflectively, thereby adding to the smudge of blacking which now extended nearly from ear to ear; and, noticing it, Teddy asked, earnestly:

“Say, why don’t you wash your face?”

“What would be the good of that?”

“You’d look more decent, anyhow. I b’lieve folks’d rather buy things of a feller who’s clean, than of one lookin’ like an Injun.”

“But when a man has his boots shined, he does n’t care whether my face is white or red, so long’s he gets a polish.”

"You ought ter care, Carrots. Is n't there any water 'round here?"

"Yes; there's a hydrant in the other corner of the yard."

"Take this piece of soap an' my towel, an' go over there. Try it once, an' see how much better you'll feel."

As he spoke, Teddy unrolled his newspaper valise, took from it the articles mentioned, and handed them to his friend, who looked at the collection in a suspicious sort of manner, as if questioning whether it would be exactly safe for him to make the experiment suggested.

"I'll do it! By jinks! I'll do it jest once for luck!" he said; and five minutes later the operation had been completed.

Carrots, with every freckle showing on his face, his skin glowing from the unwonted use of soap and water, and a broad streak of dirt left just in front of his ears and extending under his chin, returned to the dwelling almost shamefaced.

"There! if you feel as much better as you look, you must be jest humpin' yourself," Teddy said, admiringly. "Only you did n't wash far enough back."

"What's the matter now?" Carrots asked in surprise.

"It seems to me as if you'd shoved the dirt back instead of washin' it off."

"Well, see here, Teddy: I did this thing to please you, did n't I?"

"Yes."

“Well, I’ve sworn off now. I don’t b’lieve in puttin’ on frills anyhow, an’ all this talk ’bout water makin’ you feel good is all in your eye. If we’ve got to earn ten dollars in ten days, I reckon it’ll take all my time shinin’, ’stead of tryin’ to look so mighty fine that a man’d think I would n’t dare to pull the stopper out er a blackin’-bottle for fear of smuttin’ my fingers. I s’pose if I lived on a farm, same’s you did, I’d wash when I saw the others, an’ then it would n’t come so unhandy. That’s where I wish I was now—in the country,” he added, as he clasped his hands around one knee and rocked himself to and fro on the impromptu bed.

“You would n’t wish that very long if you had one taste of it.”

“I ain’t so sure of that. I tell you, when a feller’s got a bed to get inter, an’ plenty of stuff to eat, it’s a pretty soft snap. I’d like to try it ’bout a month.”

“That would be long enough,” Teddy said; and then, by way of putting an end to ’the conversation, he nestled into the straw as if to go to sleep.

Carrots moved about very gingerly, as if his whole nature had been changed by the washing of his face.

At last he blew out the candle, snuffed the glowing end with his thumb and finger, and followed his friend’s example.

Next morning Carrots was aroused by the sun shining upon his face, and, after awakening his

friend, he explained why it was necessary for them to leave the packing-case home at such an early hour.

From the Company's funds was spent sufficient to buy two bowls of soup; and then, advised by Carrots, Teddy agreed to remain in the vicinity of South Ferry, rather than to make an attempt to do business around City Hall Park, until Master Jellison's anger should have had time to subside.

"I'll see you when you come up for the afternoon papers," Carrots said as they parted. "But you can count on my hustlin' the best I know how toward gettin' to-day's share of the ten dollars."

"Be sure you don't have any trouble with Skip," Teddy cautioned his friend, and then the two separated, each intent on swelling the Company's funds to the greatest possible extent before night.

When noon came, and it was necessary for Teddy to replenish his stock, he failed to find his partner around the newspaper offices.

This absence of Carrots did not trouble him particularly, since Teddy was quite confident the boy was attending to his own business; and he felt positive it would not be safe for him to search very long after the missing partner, lest he should encounter the enemy.

Therefore it was that he returned to his labors without consultation with his business associate; and when it was so late that there could be no danger the occupants of the store would see him entering the dwelling in the corner of the yard, he again clambered over the fence.

Master Carrots was at home, and, as could be told from his face, labouring under the most intense excitement.

"I've done it!" he cried to Teddy before the latter had time to speak. "I've done it, an' we'll have to give up the pardnership business, 'cause this is the best chance I'll get."

"Done what?" Teddy asked in surprise.

"Got a place to work on a farm."

"Are you goin' to leave the city?" Teddy asked, anxiously.

"I'll have to, of course, if I do that. You see, it happened this way: Every feller I met this mornin' told me what Skip had threatened to do, an' I reckon he means business. He says we've both got to leave this town before he goes to work ag'in, an' what's more, he an' Sid Barker would n't let me stay 'round Printin' House Square at all. I had to take a sneak, or else stand the chance of gettin' 'rested for fightin', so I went down to Vesey Street Market. Trade was n't so awful good there, an' I was kind er loafin' 'round when a farmer come up an' says, 'Hello, son. Don't know of any boy 'round here what wants to go out in the country, do you?' Well, you know, that struck me jest right. I said of course I knew a boy, an' I showed him right up, 'cause it was me, an' I had n't far to go to find myself. Well, the farmer acted as if he was tickled 'most to death, an' he said as how I was the very kind of a feller he was lookin' for; that he'd give me a good home an' make

it cheerful; besides, I'd have lots of fun runnin' in the fields."

"How much is he goin' to pay you?" Teddy asked.

"Well, you see, we ain't settled on that yet. He thought I'd better come out and try it for a while, so 's he could tell how much I was worth, an' then we'd talk 'bout wages afterward."

"An' are you willin' to go on them promises?"

"Willin'? Why, it's a reg'lar snap! I'd like to stay here an' try to buy that stand with you; but what's the use if Skip's goin' to raise sich a row? Besides, if we've got to sneak 'round all the poorest places to work, we sha'n't make enough to pay for our grub, an' out there I'll have all I can eat."

"Well, Carrots, I'm sorry to have you go jest when we've got acquainted, an' it seemed as though we'd get along well together; but if you're set on farmin', you'll have to try it, I reckon. I'll stay here an' keep on workin', so 's when you get ready to come back there'll be somethin' to eat, 'less Skip Jellison succeeds in doin' what he counts on."

"I may drop 'round in a month or two, jest to see how you're gettin' along," Carrots replied, with an air of condescension; "but of course I'm bound to stay out there a year anyhow, when I start in once."

"When are you goin'?"

"To-morrow noon."

"Come down to South Ferry before you go, an' when you get back, Carrots, I guess you'll find me at the same place, 'cause trade was pretty fair to-day."



"I SAID I KNEW A BOY, AN' I SHOWED HIM RIGHT UP."

THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY

ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS
R L

“ Oh, you ’ll be up ’round City Hall by that time.”

“ It ’ll take me longer ’n a week to get things straightened out, an’ you won’t stay there six days, ’less you ’re a different feller from what I think you are,” Teddy replied, with an air of conviction that surprised his friend.

CHAPTER IX.

THE PRODIGAL'S RETURN.

IT seemed absolutely necessary for Carrots to talk at great length about the farm, before he was willing to settle down to business as his partner wished; and then the two made a hearty supper from a Bologna sausage, some buns, and some seed-cakes, which the proprietor of the house had purchased in order to prepare a "parting feast."

"Well, now, let's come down to the business that's got to be settled, Carrots," Teddy said, gravely, as he took from his pocket a collection of coins. "You want back the forty-three cents you paid inter the concern, an' then, of course, what you made to-day all goes to yourself. I don't have any interest in it."

"That ain't the right thing to do. I took in sixty-five cents, an' half of it belongs to you."

"There's no need of dividin' it, 'cause I made fifty-two myself; so let each feller keep his profits, an' it'll be fair. Now here's the rest of your money," and Teddy pushed toward him a small pile of nickels and pennies.

"I don't want to take it," Carrots objected, mournfully. "When I'm away I'd rather think some of my money was here, an', p'rhaps, when I come back on

a vacation, I'll need a little. Then you can let me have it."

Teddy would have preferred to settle the business at once; but Carrots appeared so anxious to have a pecuniary interest in the city, that he said in conclusion:

"Well, we'll let it go your way, Carrots, an' when you come back I'll be here, 'less somethin' happens to me."

Then the two talked further of the farm, and suddenly Carrots was reminded of a very important piece of business.

"Well, I'll be jiggered! If I did n't forget all 'bout that lawyer! Now it would n't do to slip up on him, would it?"

"Of course not."

"Why could n't you go over every mornin' and fix the thing?"

"I can, Carrots, an' I will. It's no more 'n right, 'cause you made the debt on my account, an' I ought ter pay it. Say, I don't s'pose you'd care if I should use your box while you're gone, would you? I've been thinkin' perhaps by carryin' the outfit with me I might get a chance to black boots when business was dull."

"Of course you can; but you must keep your eye peeled pretty slick, 'cause the fellers don't like to see a boy try to run both kinds of work, an' they'll be apt to make a row."

"I'll risk that part of it. Now, is there anything else I can do for you?"

"No; I b'lieve that 's all. Of course you'll keep the

house? Nobody knows of it but Teenie, an' p'rhaps he won't tell."

"I must take the chances of that; but I reckon Skip Jellison 's goin' to make it mighty hot for me. I'll keep an eye out for him."

By this time the boys were sleepy; and until morning Carrots dreamed of the ideal life which he was to lead in the country.

At an early hour next day they betook themselves to the basement restaurant on Baxter Street, where Carrots, who fancied he would always have plenty of money, now he had been engaged as a farmer, insisted on paying the entire cost of both breakfasts; and then the two separated with the promise of meeting at eleven o'clock at South Ferry.

During the forenoon Teddy was not interrupted in his labors, perhaps because he did not go near the City Hall, and business was so flourishing that he felt sorry when Carrots came to say it was time they started for the market to meet the farmer.

The young gentleman who was about to take up his residence in the country unslung his blacking-box from his shoulder as he said:

"I told that lawyer you 'd be there after this, an' he said, 'All right.' I don't s'pose he cares, so long 's he gets his boots blacked, who does it."

"I'll 'tend to him in great shape, so you need n't worry."

Then the two walked briskly along the water-front until they were at the market, when Carrots pointed

toward an old wagon drawn by two mules, as he exclaimed: "That team b'longs out to the farm where I'm goin.' I tell you, I'll have them mules lookin' better 'n they do now, before next week."

"Take care they don't kick you, Carrots; they're great on showin' their heels," Teddy replied, warningly.

"I'd like to see the mule that could get away with me," Master Carrots said contemptuously; and just then the farmer came out of a neighbouring shop, looking around as if in search of some one or something.

"He's after you," Teddy said. "I reckon I'd better say good-by now. You'll find me in the packin'-case, if you come after dark."

"It'll be a good while before you see me," Carrots replied, confidently, as he shook his friend's hand warmly; and then the two parted.

During the three days following Carrots's departure, Teddy succeeded in the work beyond his most sanguine expectations.

He had been careful to remain away from the places most frequented by Skip Jellison, but was forced to change his business location several times, owing to the trouble which he had with boys who, as Carrots had predicted, were jealous because he both blacked boots and sold newspapers.

Still, he had succeeded in saving two dollars and twenty-five cents, in addition to which he had quite a store of provisions packed snugly away in a box, and, as he said in a tone of satisfaction on this third night

after counting his funds and examining the contents of the larder, "had been playin' in mighty big luck."

During all this time he had seen nothing of Teenie Massey, who, now that Carrots was away, was the only boy he knew well.

Neither had he met any of the party whom he saw on his introduction to the city, and it seemed as if they might not give him any further trouble.

"I reckon I can pick up what money I need to start the stand, by keepin' on the same way I've begun," he said to himself. "It may be business is better 'round City Hall; but it does n't stand to reason I could earn so very much more up there than I'm doin' now, an' shiftin' about so often I'll have a better chance for findin' out where a stand ought ter be put."

It can thus be seen that Master Thurston was on very good terms with himself, and feeling perfectly satisfied with his attempt to earn a livelihood in the metropolis. As Carrots had dreamed of the farm, so Teddy had often pictured to himself how he would live and conduct his business when once the stand was an assured fact; and while in the midst of these pleasing anticipations he was startled, almost frightened, by a sound as of some person making his way across the litter with which the yard was strewn.

His first act was to extinguish the candle, lest the rays of light should betray his whereabouts, for he had no doubt that the intruder was Skip Jellison, with, probably, a number of followers.

With such thoughts in his mind it cannot be won-

dered at that he was startled beyond the power of speech when he heard the familiar voice of Carrots in a cautious tone:

"It's only me! Don't get flustered!" and an instant later the would-be farmer was once more inside the packing-case dwelling.

"Good gracious! Where'd you come from?" Teddy cried, after standing like a statue for several seconds.

"From the farm; that's where I come from!" Carrots replied, in an angry tone.

"Got through so soon as this, have you?"

"You can jest bet your sweet life I have! Why, I would n't stay out there a month if they'd give me the whole place, an' all the animals there was on it! That man was a reg'lar old—old—he's an old skee-sicks, that's what he is!"

"Sit down, so's to tell me all 'bout it;" and Teddy relighted the candle in order to have a good look at the amateur farmer.

Carrots was disconsolate and discouraged, and the dust on his boots told of a long walk over country roads.

"Got anything to eat?" he asked; and even his voice sounded hungry.

Teddy opened the cigar-box refrigerator, revealing to view a plentiful supply of provisions.

The newcomer did not need an invitation to begin the meal.

He attacked the food as if he had had nothing to eat since leaving the city, and Teddy refrained

from asking any questions until his hunger should be appeased.

“Well,” Carrots said, after an enormous meal, “what do you think of me now?”

“I’d say you was hungry, an’ I guess that comes pretty nigh bein’ the truth.”

“That’s a fact; an’ I should n’t be lyin’ so very bad if I told you I had n’t had anything to eat since I left. Talk ’bout good livin’ in the country! Why, a feller’d starve to death there in a week! I never saw sich a place! ’Bout the time you go to sleep they call you to get up; an’ I do b’lieve yesterday it was n’t more’n late in the evenin’ when that farmer yelled for me to turn out an’ feed the stock. Feed the stock! Well, now, I’ll tell you what—I wanted to feed myself, but did n’t get the chance!”

“So you found out that livin’ on a farm was n’t so pleasant as you thought?” Teddy said, laughingly; for he had a very good idea of what Carrots’s experiences might have been.

“It’s a reg’lar swindle an’ humbug; that’s what it is. An’ if all farmers are like that old feller I went out with, I don’t see how they keep anybody with ’em.”

“S’posin’ you begin at the start, an’ tell me all ’bout it?”

“Well, I will.” And, arming himself with a few slices of Bologna in case his appetite should get the best of him, Carrots began the story. “That man was sweeter than pie all the time I was ridin’ home with him, an’ you’d thought he loved me ’most to death till

we got to the farm. Then I helped unharness them plaguy old mules, an' one of 'em fetched me a kick with his heels that left a black-an'-blue spot on my leg bigger 'n the whole front of the City Hall. I up with a club, an' was goin' to knock the life out er him; but the farmer caught me by the collar, an' shook me till I thought my head would fly off."

"He wanted to sort of introduce you to the place, I s'pose."

"Well, I reckon he did it pretty well. My heels knocked together like a pair of clappers, an' it seemed to me I could hear my head crack, the same way a whip does when you snap it. Well, after the old feller got through paralyzin' me, an' I was kind er steady on my feet once more, he told me to go to work an' clean out the stable. Why, Teddy, the job he set me at would have taken three men a month; an' he 'lowed I was to have it all done before night! You see, I didn't have any dinner, an' had heard so much 'bout how they lived in the country that I thought I'd kind er like to sample the cookin'. So I asked him if he didn't think it would be best to have some grub before I tackled sich a job as that. I don't know what he thought 'bout it, cause he didn't say a word; jest walked right away an' left me. Jiminy crickets! How I did sweat! But I thought to myself, I'll do my level best so he'll know he's got a mighty good man. An' I'll be blamed if when that old duffer came out he didn't act as if he thought I must have been loafin'!"

“How long did he leave you workin’?”

“From the time we got there till pretty nigh night. Then he said I was to go down to the pasture an’ bring up the cows. Well, now, I’m a dandy to bring up cows! Never saw one before. I was n’t goin’ to let on that I did n’t know the whole thing, so I walked down big as life. He told me where the pasture was, an’ I cleaned her right out. Took every blamed thing in there an’ drove ’em up. Well, you jest bet he was mad! He wanted to know why I did n’t leave the oxen behind, an’ what I was doin’ with the sheep, an’ how I ever expected to catch them two colts ag’in? I asked him to tell me how I was goin’ to sort ’em out when they was runnin’ all ’round. Said I was hungry, an’ did n’t have time for sich jobs. Why, Teddy, there was one of them sheep what had horns on; I could n’t have got rid of it if I’d stayed there a month. Knocked me down twice before I could even get the bars fixed. He acted like the goats you see up in Shantytown, an’ looked a good deal like Skip Jellison in the face. I did n’t figger on sheep bein’ ugly. I was n’t so awful scared at first, for I ’lowed he was playin’, an’ got up soon’s I could. The next thing I was down ag’in like one of them babies at a fair what you throw balls at.”

“It was an old ram, I s’pose. I should have thought you’d looked out for him.”

“You jest bet I did after that; but I had n’t time then, you see. Why, he was all over that pasture quicker’n you could wink. After a while I got ’round

by the other side of the fence, let down the bars, an' then sneaked up through the bushes till I got the whole lot of 'em inter line. Then I kept clubs flyin' so they jest had to scoot, an' afterward — an' afterward, Teddy, what do you s'pose?"

"Why, how do I know?"

"That old skinflint said I had n't any business run-



"WHY, HE WAS ALL OVER THAT PASTURE QUICKER'N YOU
COULD WINK!"

nin' cows jest before they was milked! I s'pose he thought I ought to stood there and let that ram have fun with me. Well, it took him an' me pretty nigh an hour to get 'em untangled, an' then he told me to drive 'em back to the pasture. I told him I'd go home before I'd trust myself in the lane alone with that black-faced sheep of his ag'in. Then he said I could n't

have any supper, so I started down once more, picked up plenty of rocks, an' after a while got 'em in. Then I came back to the house hungrier'n a bear. He had the nerve, after all that, to tell me he was a man of his word, an' so long as he'd promised I shouldn't have any supper, he'd stick to it. I didn't get any, either! Why, I could have eaten a brick that night, if there'd been butter on it."

"Did n't you have a thing to eat?"

"Not so much as a bite. I didn't want to come back an' say I got tired in less 'n a day, so thought I'd make the best of it, an' p'rhaps in the mornin' things would be better."

"Of course then you got your breakfast."

"Oh, yes; then I got my breakfast! Want to know what I had? Well, if Mose Pearson flashed up sich grub, an' asked me to pay five cents for it, I'd tell him to go off somewhere an' lose hisself. There was three slices of some kind er bread all full of hard lumps. It tasted bad when you got one of 'em in your mouth. I thought they was plums first, an' took four of 'em. You ought ter seen me when I found out my mistake! Then there was some fried pork,—an' jiminy crickets! was n't it salt?"

"Was that all they had?"

"There was a big dish of somethin' I called puddin'. I reckon it was made of apples smashed up, an' I guess there was *some* molasses in it, only I could n't taste any. I spread a little on the bread, an' had to eat it, of course. Then I put some on the pork, an' got sick. I

was through breakfast, an' all hands went outdoors. Why, look here, Teddy; it was n't daylight, an' I'd been up as much as three-quarters of an hour! The farmer asked me if I could feed the calf. I told him if the calf did n't get any more to eat than I had since I'd been there, I could feed him an' not half try. That made him kind er mad; but he did n't say much, an' showed me how to go to work. If I had to feed that calf for a week, I would n't have more 'n one hand left, an' not the whole of that."

"I know what it is," Teddy said, sympathetically. "Well, what else did you do?"

"Little of 'most everything, till it seemed as if my legs an' arms would drop off. Got somethin' to eat at dinner, though, an' that helped along; but when I turned in last night—say, Teddy, I allers wanted to know what a bed was like; but when you tell 'bout gettin' comfort out er a blanket stretched over a lot of ropes, why, I ain't in it at all! When I went up-stairs last night it seemed as if I was goin' all to pieces, an' I thought of you jest as snug in here as a bug, takin' your comfort countin' the money; an' I says to myself, 'The farm 's no place for me, if my name is Carrots, so I'll take a sneak. I got out of the window after the folks was asleep, an' I've walked ever since."

"How far was it?"

"A man said it was sixteen miles; but if it was n't fifty, my name 's Dennis! Now I'm here, an' I'm goin' to stay. Say, ain't it time to go to bed?"

"I reckon it is for you, Carrots; so turn in, an' I'll

keep awake a little longer. See you in the mornin', old man."

"So long," Carrots replied, sleepily; and almost before the words had been uttered his eyes were closed in slumber.

CHAPTER X.

SKIP'S VENGEANCE.

IT was necessary to shake the amateur farmer very rudely next morning before he could be awakened; and even after he had opened his eyes Teddy was obliged to repeat several times the well-known fact that they ought to get out of the yard before the shop was opened.

"Seems to me it's taken half an hour to get you awake," he said, "an' now it's time we was over the fence. I've got stuff enough for breakfast in my pocket, an' we'll eat as we go."

By this time Carrots was fully alive to the surroundings, and in a twinkling assumed his old character, which he fancied had been thrown off nevermore to be resumed.

As soon as they were in the street, and had begun breakfast while walking toward South Ferry, he asked his companion regarding business during his absence, and received a most satisfactory reply.

"I've been gettin' along first-class," Teddy said; "an' we've got a good big capital to begin on."

"But I'm dead broke," Carrots replied, mournfully. "I spent some of my money when I went out with the farmer, an' the rest of it while I was walkin' in yesterday."

"You can't be broke so long's you've still kept your

interest in the firm, an' that eighty-six cents has grown to more 'n two dollars."

"But I don't own a share of it."

"Course you do, an' we won't have any talk 'bout it either. I 'lowed you'd stay longer 'n you did, and so wanted you to take the whole of the cash; but you wouldn't, an' we're pardners jest the same 's if you'd been here all the time, 'cause your money was in town even if you was n't."

"But I did n't do any work, did I?"

"It does n't make any more difference now than it did when I was locked up in the station-house. I did n't work then, but you made me take all the profits. It seems to me it would be a good idea to buy another box and brushes. I've had such luck with this, an' earned so much more 'n I did with only the papers, that we'd better keep the two goin'."

"All right," Carrots replied, enthusiastically. "I'll get a new one, an' sell papers too."

"Do you s'pose you can buy a box ready-made?"

"I reckon so. Let me have some money, an' I'll snoop 'round City Hall, or down to Fulton Ferry. Some of the fellers will know of an outfit for sale."

Teddy handed him a dollar as he asked:

"Who'll tend to the lawyer this mornin'?"

"I guess you'd better, 'cause I might n't get my box in time, an' to-morrow I'll start in reg'lar. Where'll I see you this noon?"

"Come down to the ferry."

"I'll be there, sure."

With this promise the two parted, and Teddy, quite as cautious regarding the possibility of meeting Skip as ever, went after his morning's stock of papers.

Half an hour later he was busily at work when Teenie Massey came running towards him, evidently in the highest state of excitement.

"Say, Carrots got home last night!"

"Well, don't you s'pose I know it?"

"Yes; an' so does Skip Jellison."

"How'd you hear of it?"

"Reddy saw him down on Fulton Street, an' Skip's just wild. Says he's goin' to thump the head off er Carrots if he shows hisself 'round this town to-day. You'd better come right up to City Hall an' see if you can't help him!"

"Help who?"

"Why, Carrots, of course. Sid Barker said he told one of the fellers that he was goin' up there to work, this forenoon, an' if somebody don't stop him, there'll be trouble."

"Skip won't dare to do any fightin' after the fuss with me."

"He says he will; an' he's goin' to smash Carrots's box, so you'd better go up."

"It seems as if I'd only make the matter worse," Teddy said half to himself. "I don't b'lieve Carrots'll be fool enough to show his nose round where Skip is, an' if I go there'll be some kind of a row sure. Why can't you manage this thing, Teenie?"

"What could I do?"

“ See Carrots, an’ tell him to keep away.”

“ I ’ll try it,” Teenie said doubtfully; “ but I don’t b’lieve he ’ll listen to me. You see, after I carried him that letter he ’s got a idea I ’m standin’ in with Skip, an’ I ain’t at all.”

This reminder of “ the warning ” caused Teddy to think there was more in the threat of Master Jellison’s than he had at first believed.

The letter which Teenie brought on the day prior to Carrots’s departure for the farm had for a while escaped his mind.

Now, however, it seemed evident, and only reasonable, that after making such a threat Skip should try to carry it into effect.

He was sadly at a loss to know exactly what he ought to do, but urged Teenie to go in search of Carrots; and when that young gentleman had departed at full speed he muttered to himself:

“ It ’s too bad to knock off now, when business is so good, but I s’pose it ’s got to be done; an’ yet I ’d be in an awful scrape if I should get ’rested ag’in for more fightin’.”

While he was thus debating in his mind, the meeting which he wished to prevent was already taking place.

On leaving his friend, Carrots had visited Fulton Ferry for the purpose of calling upon an old acquaintance to inquire if he knew where a second-hand box could be found for sale.

It was during this interview that Reddy saw him, and reported the fact of his arrival to Skip.

Failing in his purpose at this point, Carrots went boldly up to the City Hall with never a thought in his mind of the peremptory order to leave town which he had received.

One by one, he greeted the acquaintances whom he met, repeating the story which he had already told Teddy relative to his experiences on the farm, and asked concerning the welfare of those friends whom he had left behind.

As a matter of course, all this required considerable time, and the forenoon was nearly half spent when he reached City Hall Park.

Business in the newspaper line was usually dull at this hour, and he found quite a party of his brother merchants in the vicinity of the park, with apparently no other idea than that of passing the time as pleasantly as possible.

Carrots approached as he would have done a week previous, and was soon in the centre of the interested throng, who were listening to his views of country life in general and his own experience in particular, when a stranger approached him and whispered:

“Did you get that box you wanted to buy?”

“No,” Carrots replied. “Have you got one to sell?”

“A feller I know of has, an’ it’s a dandy!”

“Where is it?”

“Down on Rose Street, under the bridge.”

“I’ll go there in a minute.” And Carrots turned to continue his story, when the stranger whispered:

“You’ll have to come quick, or he’ll be gone; and this is the biggest trade you ever saw.”

It is probable Carrots would not have interrupted himself in the pleasing task of describing the incidents which happened on the farm during his presence there, but for the fact that he remembered what Teddy had said regarding the necessity of being industrious; and realizing that he had already wasted more time than his partner might approve of, he hurried away with the stranger, without once thinking to inquire how the latter could have learned he was in need of a boot-black's outfit.

The messenger went rapidly toward the point designated, and Carrots followed, never thinking of possible danger.

On reaching Rose Street he saw no boy near the bridge, and was about to ask his guide if the alleged owner of the box had not gone to some other portion of the city, when he was suddenly seized from behind, and, turning his head slightly, he saw Skip's face.

"So you had the nerve to come back here, did you?" Master Jellison asked, working himself into a passion, which was not a very difficult task for him.

"Come back here? Where else could I go?" Carrots asked, frightened, and at the same time determined that the enemy should not see any signs of fear on his face.

"It does n't make any difference to me where you ought ter gone, so long 's you come here. Now I'm goin' to serve you jest as I threatened. Hold him, Sid, while I see what he 's got in his clothes."

At this instant Sid, Reddy, and another boy came out



CARROTS FALLS INTO THE HANDS OF THE ENEMY.

THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY

ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS
E L

from their hiding-places, and the transfer of the prisoner was quickly made.

Sid held Carrots by the hands in such a manner as to prevent the slightest movement save at the expense of considerable pain, and the stranger volunteered to act as sentinel during the punishment.

Skip understood that it was necessary for him to work very rapidly lest he should be interrupted by the guardians of the peace, and no pickpocket could have been more skilful than he in searching the prisoner.

"Here! don't you take that—it ain't mine!" Carrots cried as his enemy seized the dollar which Teddy had given him.

"Then, if it ain't yours, I reckon it 's mine."

"I 'll have you 'rested for stealin' if you don't put that right back!" Carrots threatened, struggling in vain to release himself from Sid's detaining grasp.

"I reckon you won't be able to do much of anything by the time I get through with you," Skip replied, with an exasperating chuckle. "This is jest about as much as I need to pay for the swell dinner we fellers want; an' when I see the owner I 'll give it back to him, if I feel like it."

Then, without further parley, he began to beat the helpless boy in the most cruel manner, and probably would have continued until Carrots had received serious injury had it not been for a warning cry from the sentinel.

Master Jellison was very careful of his own precious body. He had no idea of allowing himself to be cap-

tured, since he might be brought before the same judge to whom Carrots had told the story of his attack on Teddy; and therefore he delayed his flight only long enough to say threateningly:

“Now, if you an’ that chump from Saranac don’t get out er this part of the city before to-morrow mornin’, I’ll fix you so’s you can’t even wiggle.” And, with a blow by way of emphasis, he started at full speed toward the water-front, Sid, Reddy, and the sentinel following close at his heels.

Poor Carrots was in a sad plight. His nose was bleeding, his cheek cut, and his head buzzing like a mill-wheel from the effects of the blows.

He seated himself on the curbstone, and was giving full sway to the grief and anger of his heart, when some one touched him gently on the shoulder.

Looking up quickly, he saw Teenie Massey, who asked in surprise:

“Why, what’s the matter? Did Skip catch you?”

“Yes, he did; an’ he stole a dollar that belonged to Teddy.”

The enormity of this last offense caused Master Massey more surprise than if he had seen his friend in a much worse bodily condition. He had feared Carrots might get a whipping, but never believed Skip would be so bold as to commit downright robbery.

“How did it happen?” he asked solicitously.

Carrots told his story in the fewest possible words, and concluded by making the most dismal and blood-thirsty threats relative to what he would do to Master

Jellison when the proper time should arrive—all of which had but little effect on Teenie.

When from sheer lack of breath the victim was forced to cease speaking, Master Massey asked in a matter-of-fact tone:

“Where do you s’pose you ’ll live now?”

“Where will I live? Why, the same place I allers have, of course.”

“But you won’t dare to if Skip’s goin’ to cut up this way.”

“I’ll have him ’rested for stealin’, an’ then we’ll see how he’ll act. I guess he’ll get sick of tryin’ to run fellers out er town!”

Teenie made no reply to this threat because he did not believe it would be carried into effect, but said in what he intended should be a soothing tone:

“It ain’t likely he’ll try to do anythin’ more to-day, so you’d better brace up an’ get some of the blood off of your face. I’ve jest been down to tell Teddy what I heard Skip say he was goin’ to do, an’ you ought ter get ’round to the ferry, ’cause he’ll be huntin’ for you.”

“I’m goin’ to see that lawyer first, an’ find out what can be done with Skip.”

“Well, you want ter kind of spruce up a bit before you do that, for you don’t look very fine now, Carrots.”

“I’ll jest leave the blood all over my face till the judge sees it.”

“Then you’ll stand a good chance of bein’ ’rested for a pirate, ’cause you look like one.” And Teenie, understanding that it would be useless to argue further with

Carrots while he was in such a frame of mind, believed it his duty to notify the victim's partner that it was useless for him to neglect business, since the mischief had already been done.

Leaving the disconsolate victim of Skip's vengeance on the curbstone, Master Massey walked slowly toward the City Hall; but before he was very far from the scene of the late encounter, he met Teddy.

A few words sufficed to acquaint the latter with all that had happened.

It certainly was discouraging, to say the least, that Master Thurston should be obliged to spend so much time just at this hour, when trade was most flourishing; but he did not neglect what was manifestly his duty, even though it cost him so much in the way of prospective profits.

His first thought on approaching his partner was to attempt to soothe him; but after a few moments he realized how useless such a task would be, and proceeded at once to more heroic measures.

"Now, see here, Carrots, this won't do at all. It ain't any good for you to try to have Skip 'rested for takin' that dollar, an' the lawyer 'll be mad, jest as likely as not, if you go to him 'bout it. Course it 's pretty hard to git sich a thumpin'; but it 's over now, an' we 've got to figger how we can git the best of that villain ourselves."

"He 's worse 'n a villain—he 's a heathen!" Carrots yelled.

"Well, call it a heathen then. We 'll square up with

him before we're much older, an' that's a good deal better 'n tryin' to get somebody else to do it for us. I'll bet he has to give up that money before a week, an' we can 'ford to wait two or three days for the sake of doin' the thing right."

"I don't see how we'll ever get the best of Skip. He's always got his gang with him."

"We'll find some way before long, so you'd better fix yourself up and get to work. There's all the more need of hustlin' now we've lost a dollar."

"I did n't lose it! It was stole!"

"Well, it's gone, an' we've got to make it up. Now, be a man, an' to-night we'll talk this thing over."

Teddy spoke so sternly that Carrots was forced to obey; and, walking slowly and mournfully to City Hall Park, he washed his face in the basin of the fountain, drying it as well as he could with the sleeve of his coat, for Teddy no longer carried his newspaper valise since he had a dwelling-place in which to leave it.

As a matter of course, Carrots's friends, who chanced to be in the vicinity, insisted on knowing exactly what had happened, and, on being informed of the outrage, denounced the perpetrator of the villainy in no measured terms.

"He'll get hisself into trouble if he keeps on this way very long," one of the listeners said when the story had been told in all its details. "I've got tired seein' him tryin' to run the whole town, an' it strikes me there oughter be enough other fellers that feel the same way to set down on him."

More than one expressed the same opinion, and Teddy was made happy by hearing suggestions as to what should be done to curb Master Jellison's ambitions; but, although very much advice was given, no one volunteered anything in the way of assistance toward righting the wrong that had been done.

Vain threats and denunciations would not bring back the stolen money, and, to Teddy, this was more important than "squaring himself" with Skip. Therefore, after having waited for Carrots to talk with his friends as long as he thought absolutely necessary, he whispered:

"Now, see here, old man, I've got to go to work. We must n't fool any more time away. Let's earn what we can the rest of the day, an' to-night we'll fix up some kind of a plan."

Carrots would have been better pleased to remain with his friends; but his partner was so peremptory that he could not refuse to go to work, and, half an hour later, the business associates were industriously engaged either in selling papers or blacking boots, according to the demands of their customers.

CHAPTER XI.

A FRIENDLY ARGUMENT.

TEDDY was the first to arrive at the packing-case home on the evening of the robbery; but before he had time to get supper—that is, spread out in the most tempting array possible the provisions he had brought home—a noise near the gate told that his partner had come.

Carrots's face was sadly swollen. He entered the box, and threw himself down wearily in one corner on the pile of straw.

“Anything else gone wrong?” Teddy asked in a friendly tone, as he lighted another candle for the purpose of increasing the cheerfulness of the apartment by an extra illumination.

“Anything wrong!” Carrots repeated. “I should think when a feller could n't go 'round 'bout his business without bein' robbed, there was a good many things out er the way!”

“But, I mean, have you got inter any more trouble since then?”

“No; that was enough to last me the rest of this week, I guess.”

“Now, see here, Carrots; it does n't do any good to go fussin' 'bout that, an' the sooner you brace up,

the better it 'll be for all hands. Skip 's got the money, an' you 've got the thumpin', I know; but you can't change it by worryin' an' lookin' so glum."

"Do you count on a feller's grinnin' like a cat jest 'cause his face is swelled as big as a squash?" Carrots asked, dolefully.

"No; but I don't count on his thinkin' 'bout it all the time. We've got somethin' else to do besides botherin' with Skip Jellison. S'posin' you turn to an' give up everythin' for the next month jest to pay him back, an' then do it, what have you made? Why, nothin' at all — you 're jest where you are to-day. Now we 've got a comfortable place to live in, and money enough to feed us for the next two or three days, even if we don't do any business; an' as good a chance to earn ourselves a stand as any other fellers ever had."

"So you 've laid right down, an' are goin' to let them keep that money, are you?"

"Well, yes, jest now; for there 's nothin' else we can do. 'Cordin' to my way of thinkin', we 've got to keep on workin' an' waitin' till the chance comes. Then we 'll lay inter Skip as hard as you like; but I don't see the sense of whinin' yet awhile."

"What 's to prove he won't jump in an' do the same thing over ag'in to-morrow?"

"I 've been thinkin' most likely he 'd try the game, an' we 'd better stick together. Now, here 's my way: in the mornin' you take your box, while I tend to the papers, an' we 'll go right up to City Hall. If he comes

there we must n't fight him, 'cause we 'll be 'rested; but there 's nothin' 'll prevent our keepin' him off if he tries any funny business. I guess it would n't be a great while before some one come along as a witness on our side. If he fools 'round two or three days, tryin' to drive us off, he 'll get inter trouble, an' we 'll be clear of it."

The only way in which Carrots's reply to this remark can be described, is by saying that he snorted.

It was not a groan, neither was it a spoken word; but, rather, a general snort of disdain for the plan proposed and defiance to the boy who had wronged him.

Teddy's suggestion was so tame and so unworthy the cause that Carrots began to think he had made a mistake by going into business with one who was willing to act so cowardly a part.

Teddy understood this quite as well as if his companion had given words to the thoughts, and, without losing his temper in the slightest degree, he asked: "If you don't like that plan, what do you want to do?"

"Go out an' lambaste Skip!"

"All right; there 's nothin' to hinder. Shall I stay here, or do you want me to help?"

"Well, it looks to me as if it was as much your fight as mine."

"Very well; let 's go. I reckon that we can find him somewhere, can't we?"

"Yes; he 's 'most allers up 'round Grand Street an' the Bowery."

"Well," said Teddy, "if you 're bound to try an'

thump Skip, why, I'm with you; but you know as well as I do how it'll turn out. He counts on jest what you think of doin', an' is sure to have his gang with him all the time."

"Then will you do jest as I say?"

"Right up to the dot!"

This satisfied Carrots to such a degree that he immediately cast off the look of anger he had worn, and began to appear more cheerful.

Carrots had so far unbent that he was willing to discuss the business of the day, and on counting the profits it was found that between them they had earned eighty-one cents, despite the many interruptions and difficulties.

According to the arrangements previously made, Teddy took possession of the funds, wrapped the pennies and silver pieces carefully in a piece of brown paper, and deposited the package in a hiding-place under one of the boxes which served them as a home.

"What are you doin' that for?" Carrots asked in surprise.

"I don't want to stand any chance of losin' it."

"But it's safer in your pocket than anywhere else."

"Not if we meet Skip. In case he an' his crowd get the best of us in a row, they'll be sure to do what they did this afternoon, an' we mustn't lose all the money we've got."

Carrots made no reply.

This preparing for a flogging was not agreeable to him, and it is possible he began to think that perhaps

his scheme for getting even was hardly as wise as he had supposed it.

Teddy deposited the cash where it would not be found until after a long and careful search, and then, their supper having been finished, said: "Now I'm ready whenever you are," and he extinguished one of the candles.

"It's no use to go up there so soon," Carrots replied. "We'd better hold on till he gets his supper."

Teddy made no comment upon this delay of justice, but began speaking of the work to be done on the following day, and the probability that trouble would ensue, always prefacing his remarks with the proviso:

"If we go out at all to-morrow."

"What do you keep saying that for?" Carrots finally asked. "Of course we'll go out to-morrow!"

"I've seen the time since I struck this town that I could n't get out when I wanted to go, an' p'rhaps we shall be in the same fix to-night; but if we ain't we'll dive inter business mighty strong."

It was some time before Carrots showed the slightest disposition to venture forth for the purpose of wreaking vengeance.

Then it could have been observed that he was not nearly so eager as when he first came home.

Twice he leaped to his feet as if to propose that they start, and twice he sat down again.

One would almost have fancied he was waiting for Teddy to make the suggestion; but the latter remained silent.

Then it seemed as if it were absolutely necessary he should do something, and he said with an evident effort:

“Now, if you’re ready, I reckon we’d better go.”

“All right,” Teddy replied, cheerily, as he led the way from the packing-cases to the street.

Carrots followed at a leisurely pace, and, as the two walked toward Grand Street by way of the Bowery, one would have said it was Teddy who had insisted on the expedition.

The nearer they approached the place where it was supposed Master Jellison would be found, the slower did Carrots walk, and finally, when they were yet more than a block away, he came to a standstill.

“What is it?” Teddy asked, knowing full well the cause of the halt.

“I’ve been thinkin’ p’rhaps it would be better if we did n’t go up there to-night. Course he’s got his crowd with him, an’ they could get the best of us.”

“Yes, an’ he’ll be in the same fix for the next week.”

“Well, I s’pose,” Carrots said, hesitatingly, “we ought ter wait till he thinks we ain’t goin’ to do anything.”

“That’s jest what I proposed, old man, before we started out; but you seemed to think it ought ter be done to-night, an’ I was willin’ to give in.”

“I guess I’ll let it go as you say, ’cause it would be hard luck for both of us to get ’rested and sent up to the Island.”

Now that Carrots had decided on delaying his ven-

geance, he was in the utmost haste to get away from the dangerous locality; for there was a chance that his enemy might appear, and then, perhaps, instead of being revenged, he would receive another thrashing.

With such thoughts in his mind he walked rapidly toward his dwelling; and when they were once safely inside the fence, all his former good-nature appeared to have returned.

He was the same Carrots as before, and, so far as could be seen, the loss of the dollar had ceased to trouble him.

Teddy was not willing that very much time should be spent in idle conversation; he believed it necessary they should be at their work very early in the morning, and curled himself on the bed of straw before the neighbouring clocks proclaimed the hour of eight.

When the sun rose once more, and the two merchants were preparing for business, Carrots no longer entertained ideas of thrashing his enemy, but seemed only to fear that he might receive further injury at Skip's hands.

So excessive was his prudence that he did not allow himself to stray more than half a dozen paces from Teddy's side, no matter what business might demand.

The morning trade opened in the most prosperous fashion, and the partners had already sold eight papers and put on four shines, when Master Jellison and his companions appeared on the scene.

"Look out for 'em!" Carrots said, nervously. "They are going to make a fuss, now, sure."

“Keep right on with your work, an’ don’t pay any ’tention, no matter what they say,” Teddy replied; and the three boys who claimed the right to control business in that section of the city approached until they were offensively near those who had been warned to leave town.

“Did n’t you get enough yesterday to serve you out?” Skip asked, angrily, of Carrots.

The latter made no reply.

“I reckon you know what I said ’bout your workin’ ’roun’ here,” the bully continued, stepping yet closer, and shaking his fist in Carrots’s face.

At this point, Teddy thought best to interfere, and, taking the box from his companion’s hand, he stepped between Carrots and Skip.

“Now, I’ve got somethin’ to say in this business,” he began; “an’ I want you to remember it, jest as much as we’ll remember what you’ve said ’bout our goin’. I came down to this town to earn a livin’, an’ to leave other folks alone, same’s I told you over there by the fountain. Yesterday you pounded Carrots, an’ stole a dollar of my money from him. Now do you think I’m such a chump as to stand that?”

“Well, why don’t you do somethin’ ’bout it?” Skip asked, with a sneer, as he put himself in an attitude of defense.

“If you think I’m so much of a fool as to fight you, an’ stand the chance of gettin’ ’rested, while you’re coward enough to run away, it’s a mistake, an’ the sooner you find it out the better. This is what I want



TEDDY DEFENDS HIS PARTNER.

ter say, an' I mean every word of it. Jest as true as you touch us, or interfere in any way, I'm goin' to that judge where I was taken up before, an' have you hauled in. You know what that'll 'mount to, an' these fellers who are with you stand the chance of gettin' the same as you'll get. The judge said that instead of fightin' a boy ought to make a complaint to the police, an' they'd see he was taken care of. Now, I've come to this city to stay, and that's what I'm goin' to do. If we were out in the country I'd be glad to stand up with you, an' the feller that got the worst of it would have to leave; but we're where the policemen will 'rest us, an' I can't 'ford to take chances."

Teddy spoke in such a decided tone, and appeared so determined to insist upon his rights, that, perhaps, for the first time in his life, Master Jellison was cowed, if not absolutely frightened.

He knew only too well that the statements made were correct: that he would be punished severely by the law for having robbed Carrots, and, in the bewilderment caused by the bold stand Teddy had taken, he retired a few paces to consult his friends.

The boy from Saranac had not said all he intended to, and, thinking it would be better to continue the conversation before the bully had time to regain his courage, he continued:

"I don't want you to think you're goin' to get off with that money, even if we keep quiet now. When the time comes right, you'll pay it back to Carrots, or have trouble; an' I'll give you somewhere 'bout a week

to make up your mind, 'less you want ter kick up a row now. You 'd better sneak off before that policeman comes along, for I'll begin my end of the business by tellin' him the whole story jest as soon as he gets here."

As Teddy spoke, he motioned, involuntarily, with his head in the direction of the approaching officer, and, turning quickly, Skip saw the same guardian of the peace who had taken Teddy to the station-house.

It would be awkward for him to remain if the true story were to be told, and the bully concluded his wisest course was to leave that neighbourhood at once.

Therefore, he and his friends moved hastily away until they were on the opposite side of the street, where they could hide themselves behind the vehicles whenever it became necessary, and at the same time see all that was going on.

Teddy did not intend to recede one whit from the stand he had taken.

As soon as the policeman came up, he told all that had occurred during the previous twenty-four hours.

"So that boy is going to drive you out of town, eh?" the officer said, laughingly.

"No, he isn't goin' to do anything of the kind. That's what *he* says; but I've got something to say 'bout it. I can't thump him, 'cause you'll 'rest me; but the chances are he'll hit me whenever he can. I sha'n't stand an' take it a great while, an' that's why I want you to know jest how I'm fixed."

"If you don't provoke a quarrel, and he makes any trouble, pitch in. Then come to me, and I'll see you

through; but your best way would be to enter a complaint against him on the charge of stealing money."

"That's what I would n't like, 'less I had to," Teddy replied. "If he'll give it back, an' I reckon he will before long, that part of it will be all right. I'm a stranger in the city, an' don't want to get inter a fuss with the fellers, 'cause I've got to work 'longside of 'em; but it stands me in hand to have somebody know exactly how things are."

"Come to me if you get into any trouble, providing you keep yourself straight," the officer said, in a kindly tone, as he moved on, and from across the street Master Jellison and his party noted with no slight uneasiness the apparently friendly talk between the boy from Saranac and the policeman.

Carrots was undecided as to what might result from this bold speech of his partner's.

During all his experience in the city, he had never known a newsboy or a bootblack to appeal to the authorities for protection, and Teddy's method of taking care of himself rather startled him.

"It'll make Skip worse 'n ever, I'm afraid," he said, in a low tone, and Teddy replied:

"It won't do for him to get very fresh now, 'cause after he strikes the first blow I'm goin' to pitch in, an' if there ain't too many of his gang 'round, you'll see me lug him into the station-house. I don't b'lieve in fightin' where there are officers to 'rest you; but I wouldn't let any fellow get the best of me if I could help it, no matter who was in the way. Now we've

fixed ourselves, an' the sooner Skip Jellison begins, the better I'll like it."

Carrots gazed with admiration upon his partner.

He realized that, by thus stating his case to the policeman, Teddy had put himself in a position where it would be safe to defend himself against any attack which might be made; and this was certainly much better than Carrots's plan of the previous evening, which, fortunately, had not been carried into effect.

"Now get to work, Carrots; we mustn't let them fellers knock us out of business, for we've got to make more than a dollar to-day."

Carrots did set to work most vigorously.

His fear of Skip was quieted to a certain degree, and he darted here and there without reference to his partner's whereabouts, getting very much more trade than he would otherwise have done, because of the fact that his brother bootblacks, and many of their acquaintances in the newspaper line, were so busily engaged discussing the plan adopted by the boy from Saranac that they had no time to attend to the details of business.

For at least half an hour, Teddy and Carrots were the only boys in the immediate vicinity who attempted to do any very great amount of work, and the result was that, before the clock had struck ten, their profits amounted to nearly as much as Teddy had expected that they would earn during the entire day.

CHAPTER XII.

CARROTS'S CHARITY.

DURING the remainder of the day neither Carrots nor Teddy saw Skip.

It appeared very much as if Master Jellison had grown alarmed after seeing his intended victim conversing with the policeman.

The other merchants in the newspaper and the bootblacking business, neglecting everything else, discussed the very remarkable state of affairs brought about by the boy from Saranac, until the partners had succeeded in rolling up profits that made Carrots's eyes open wide with surprise.

Then their brother merchants began to realize that, while effecting nothing so far as the controversy between Skip and Teddy was concerned, they were losing an opportunity of earning money; and so they at once resumed their labors, and Carrots soon was aware of a depression in his department of the bootblacking industry which caused him no slight amount of sorrow.

"If Skip Jellison had hung 'round here the rest of the day, so's to give the other fellers more chance to talk, we'd have come nigh to earnin' enough to pay for the stand before night," he said, as Teddy returned from purchasing his fourth supply of papers.

“That shows how much a feller can lose unless he keeps his eyes open,” Teddy replied.

“That ’s a fact,” said Carrots. “It did n’t seem much to loaf ’round a little while; but it counts up when you come to look at it.”

“You can jest bet it does; an’ if you ’ll keep watch of yourself for another week, we ’ll be in mighty good shape to set ourselves up in business. There ’s plenty of money to be earned ’round here, an’ if a feller does n’t spend it as fast as he gets it, it won’t be long before he ’s on his feet.”

Ever since he began to follow the occupation of a bootblack, Carrots had desired to own such an outfit as was in the possession of a certain Italian on Centre Street. In his eyes it was simply magnificent. A chair, upholstered in red velvet, stood on a platform covered with sheet brass and studded plentifully with large-headed nails of the same metal. As foot-rests there were two deformed camels in bronzed iron, each bearing on its back a piece of iron fashioned in the shape of the sole of a boot. Even in his wildest dreams, however, he had never allowed himself to believe it was possible for him to become the owner of such a gorgeous establishment; for he had learned from a reliable source that the Italian’s outfit had cost not less than twenty dollars—an amount which, in Carrots’s eyes, was so large as to be within reach of only the very wealthy.

Now, however, he began to think such a thing might be possible, for he had realized what could be accomplished by industry. In his mind’s eye he saw the

firm's news-stand, in one corner of which could be placed a small stove during the cold weather, with a space under the counter sufficiently large for the two boys to sleep in, and the outside of the establishment painted a vivid green. Carrots was very particular as to the color. He had decided, as soon as the matter was broached by Teddy, that if they ever did succeed in buying a stand, it must be painted green; and this was because a friend of his in Jersey City had told him, in the strictest secrecy, that such a color was very "lucky."

How industriously he labored during the remainder of the afternoon! So eager was he to reach the packing-case home in order to count the money on hand, that he proposed to stop work for the night an hour before the demand for bootblack's services had wholly ceased.

"We'll have to wait a while longer," Teddy said decidedly. "It won't do to knock off yet, 'cause we ought to make enough to pay for our suppers between now an' dark. S'posin' you take some of these papers? You can sell 'em when there's no show for shinin'."

Carrots obeyed without a murmur, for the green news-stand and the brass-studded platform and chair still remained before his eyes; and not until eight o'clock was it decided that they could afford to "close up shop" by going home.

On gaining the packing-cases the proceeds of the day's work were thrown into one pile, and then began the very pleasing occupation of counting their earnings.

Carrots was well aware that they had done a good

business; but he was really astonished on learning that the "firm" had earned two dollars and eleven cents, or, in other words, a trifle more than one tenth the estimated cost of the stand.

"There," said Teddy, in a tone of satisfaction. "That is what I call humpin' ourselves! It won't take a great many days like this before we'll be on our feet in fine shape."

"That is, if Skip don't bother us."

"Well, this time his botherin' did us good, 'cause while the other fellers were talkin' 'bout it we were jest shovelin' the money in. Now we'll put the two dollars away, an' use the 'leven cents for supper. I reckon we can get enough Bologna an' crackers for that."

"Ain't there anything on hand?"

"Not a crumb. Will you go and get the supper, or shall I?"

"I'll go while you put the money away," and Carrots was out of the dwelling like a flash; but he did not return as soon as Teddy expected from his hurried departure.

More than once Teddy went to the gate to listen for him; and at last it seemed certain Carrots must have met with an accident.

"I ought to have gone with him," Teddy muttered to himself, "'cause the chances are that Skip has turned up, an' is thumpin' him."

After waiting ten minutes more, Teddy decided that it would be necessary to go in search of his partner, who might be hurt and unable to get home; but just

as he was about to climb the fence, the sound of hurried footsteps in the alleyway told that Carrots was returning.

"Did you think I was never comin' back?" the young gentleman asked, as he arrived.

"Well, it did begin to look that way. What kept you so long?"

"Wait till I get in the box, an' I'll tell you all about it," Carrots replied, breathlessly; and, when they were once more inside the improvised dwelling, he began his story, even before unrolling the packages he had bought.

"Say, do you know Ikey Cain, the feller I bought that box and brushes of?"

"No."

"Well, he's a little feller not much bigger 'n Teenie Massey, an' I met him out here by the grocery store. I tell you he's been in awful hard luck, an' he's all banged up."

"What's the matter with him? Some more of Skip Jellison's work?"

"No, it ain't that; but he got hurt a while ago down to Pier 10, where they was unloadin' bananas, and he was layin' for a chance to get some. Now there's a sore on his leg, so he can't hardly walk, an' he has n't been able to do any work for more 'n three weeks."

"Where does he live?" Teddy asked.

"He stayed at the Newsboys' Lodgin' House till his money gave out, an' since then he's been stoppin' anywhere. Say, Teddy, he ain't had a thing to eat to-day."

"Why did n't you give him some of that 'leven cents?"

"That 's what I wanted to do; but I was 'fraid you would n't like it."

"You ought to know better 'n that. I 've been hungry myself too many times since I left Saranac, not to understand how a feller feels."

"I 'll tell you what I was thinkin' of; but of course I don't want you to go into the plan 'less you 're willin'. It struck me as how it would n't be any bother if Ikey stayed here with us till he gets better. An' jest as soon 's he 's well he 'll be willin' to pay us back what it 'll cost for his grub. He is n't much of an eater, anyway. I could put down three times more stuff than he, an' not half try. Why, he thinks he 's filled 'way up to the chin if he gets one bowl of soup," said Carrots, scornfully.

"There was n't any need of your askin' me, Carrots, if he could come here," said Teddy, smiling. "This is your shanty."

"It 's as much yours as mine, since we went inter partnership."

"It does n't make any difference who owns it. I think we 'd better let him in, if he 's a decent kind of a boy, an' has been havin' hard luck."

"Then s'pose I go after him? He 's down by the grocery store, an' when I left was lookin' at a smoked herrin' 's if he 'd draw the backbone right out of it."

"Shall I go with you?" Teddy asked.

"No; I can get him up here alone if you 'll stand by



IKEY BEFORE THE GROCER'S WINDOW.

the gate so 's to catch him when I h'ist him over," said Carrots, "'cause he 's lame an' can't do much shinnin' himself."

Carrots, not waiting to make further explanation, ran out from the nest of boxes, clambered over the fence, and soon the sound of footsteps told that he was running down the alley.

Five minutes later an unusual noise warned Teddy that the invalid was approaching, and he took up his stand on the inside of the fence, ready to assist.

"Are you there, Teddy?" Carrots asked in a hoarse whisper.

"Yes; let him come!"

"I'll give him a boost, an you catch hold of his hands," was Carrots's reply.

By moving one of the cases nearer the gate, Teddy was able to reach sufficiently high to grasp the hand of the lame boy; and then, by the aid of Carrots's "boost," the new member of the family was soon inside.

Teddy assisted the stranger to the box which served as a home, and when Carrots had lighted both candles he had an opportunity to see the boy thus introduced to the household.

Ikey could never have been called a prepossessing lad, and his recent hardships had in no wise tended to improve his appearance.

A pair of large black eyes seemed even larger than nature had made them, by contrast with his pallid face and the closely cropped hair, which literally stood on end in every direction, giving him an expression such

as one fancies would be proper for some bloodthirsty revolutionist. But, although he looked so thoroughly ferocious, Ikey was by no means a dangerous character. As Carrots had said, he was shorter than Teenie Massey, and the pallor of his thin face was emphasized by the many streaks and spots of dirt, and the ill-fitting, ragged garments gave him the appearance of being several sizes smaller than he really was.

"Jiminy! you've got it swell here," Ikey said, in a tone of admiration, as he gazed around at the snug quarters, and especially at the bottles used as candlesticks. It seemed to him that, if they could afford double the necessary amount of light, their manner of living must certainly border on extravagance.

"Well, it *is* pretty fair," Carrots replied, with the air of one who thinks it modest to belittle his own property. "We manage to get along here somehow, an' are goin' to squeeze you in. You're so thin, Ikey, that a sardine-box would make a first-rate bed for you."

"You're awful good to help me, fellers. Jest before Carrots came along I was tryin' to make out what I was goin' to do," said Ikey.

"Well, take hold, an' fill yourself up with what we've got here. P'rhaps we'll find some way to fix you so's you can walk better'n you do now," Teddy said, as he unrolled the packages of provisions Carrots had brought; but finding there was not sufficient for three very hungry boys, he excused himself long enough to purchase a few additions to the collection.

His sympathies were thoroughly roused, and he determined Ikey should have, as he afterward explained, "one square, out-and-out feed," if no more. Three smoked herring, three seed-cakes, and a five-cent pie comprised the list of provisions Teddy brought back. That he was guilty of extravagance in purchasing these articles shows how deeply he felt for Ikey's sufferings.

"This is what you call livin' high," Carrots said, as he arranged the feast in the most favorable light. "I reckon you 'll get well if you stay here very long, Ikey."

"If I don't I ought ter be choked!" Master Cain replied emphatically, as he proceeded to devour one of the herring, first breaking off the head and stripping, with the touch of an artist, each side of the fish from the back-bone.

"There 's one bad thing 'bout it," Carrots said, as he suddenly thought of what might be an awkward predicament for himself. "You know, the folks what keep the store don't have any idea I'm livin' here, 'cause if they did I'd be fired mighty quick. Of course you can't go 'round town while you've got that thing on your leg, an' you're bound to stay till it gets well; but, you see, Ikey, it won't do to make the least little mite of a noise. Do you think you can manage it all day, with never so much as a squeak?"

"I reckon it would n't be very hard work," Master Cain replied. "I'd be thinkin' how much better this was than loafin' 'round the streets, an' then I could n't

'yip' if I wanted to, when I'd know I might lose the snap."

"And don't show your nose outside this box, 'cause that would be jest as bad as hollerin'."

"Don't you worry 'bout me! I'll get along all right, an' won't make any fuss for you," the invalid replied decidedly, as he made a pleasing combination of the dried fish and pie, by way of a finishing touch to the meal.

When their guest's hunger had been satisfied, the hosts made arrangements for the night by giving to the crippled boy the entire pile of straw on which to lie, while they slept upon the bare boards of the adjoining box.

On the following morning Carrots was awake unusually early, for he thought of the necessity of finding something in which to bring water, that Ikey might be able to satisfy his thirst during the day; and, without arousing either of his companions, he attended to this important business.

After a short absence he returned with a clean tomato-can as a drinking-vessel, and this he filled from the hydrant.

Teddy was awake when this task was finished. There were provisions enough for the invalid's meals, and the two boys set out, intending to prepare for the day by purchasing two bowls of Mose Pearson's slate-colored soup.

"You won't have anythin' to do but eat, Ikey, an' there's grub enough for that," Carrots said, as he

left the dwelling. "Take hold an' enjoy yourself. We sha'n't be back till pretty nigh dark, so don't worry 'bout us, an' be sure to keep your mouth shut."

"I'll get along all right, an' nobody shall know I'm here," Ikey replied; and an instant later the two merchants vaulted the fence.

CHAPTER XIII.

A MEDICAL FRIEND.

THIS unexpected addition to their family had a good effect on Carrots, because it made him more careful of his money, almost uncomfortably so, Teddy thought, when, having reached Mose Pearson's, the junior member of the firm questioned whether it would not be better to have no breakfast, in order to save time.

"You see now we've got Ikey on hand we'll have to be careful of the money; else we sha'n't get that stand very soon."

"We're bound to eat, Carrots. If you want to be so awful careful of your money, you might give up smokin' cigarettes," Teddy replied.

"Oh, I swore off buyin' any, yesterday. I don't smoke now 'less some feller gives me one. Of course, you can't reckon I'd refuse it; but this soup will be ten cents gone, an' we'd be jest as hungry by noon. Besides, we've got to buy somethin' for supper, 'cause we're feedin' three now, you know."

"We'll get the breakfast, an' work enough harder to pay for it," Teddy replied, as he led the way into the restaurant; and again did Carrots's new ideas of economy appear, as he swallowed the soup almost at

the risk of choking himself, in order to save a few moments.

He was the first boy on the street prepared to black boots that morning, and no fellow ever worked more industriously, until nearly twelve o'clock, when he approached his partner in a mysterious manner, beckoning him to follow where they could converse without fear of being overheard.

"Say, did you know lamb was awful good for sick people?" Carrots asked, with an air of great importance.

"No; I did n't know that. Who told you?"

"When old Miss Carter was sick, she said a little bit of lamb would do her a power of good, an' the boys chipped in an' bought some."

"But it'll come pretty high now, Carrots. You see it's kinder out of season."

"Pretty high, eh? Well, what would you say if I got a bang-up good mess of lamb for five cents?"

"Why, I'd say it either was n't lamb, or else the man what sold it did n't know what he was about."

"Well, it's lamb, an' I paid the reg'lar price for it, Teddy," Carrots said triumphantly, as he drew from his pocket a small package wrapped in brown paper, and, opening it, displayed to the astonished gaze of his companion two pickled lambs' tongues.

"There, what do you think of that? Talk 'bout lamb for sick folks! If it does any good, I'm goin' to have Ikey well as ever by to-morrow. I'll make him eat all this before he goes to bed. You see it's

jest as cheap as anythin' we can get," he added. "He could n't stuff down more 'n six in a day to save his life, an' I reckon we can spend that much."

Teddy was not positive whether lamb was good for the invalid, neither did he think the tongue Carrots had purchased would be beneficial; but, as the latter had said, it would serve as food, and certainly was not a waste of money, and therefore he replied:

"I don't know as it 'll do him any good, old man, but it 'll keep him from bein' hungry, anyhow."

"Are you goin' down there this noon?"

"No; I would n't dare to in the daytime. We shall have to wait till night. Have you seen anythin' of Skip?"

"Not a smitch. I reckon he got scared when he saw you talkin' to that policeman yesterday, an' I think he will give us a wide berth for a while."

"I don't think you're right. He has n't stopped tryin' to drive us out er town jest 'cause I told the officer; but is waitin' till he can catch us where we don't know anybody. Keep your eye peeled for him."

"I 'll be careful enough, you can be sure of that," Carrots replied. "I never 'd gone to the market for this lamb, if it had n't been that a couple of fellers I know were goin' down, an' they would n't let Skip pitch inter me."

This day's business was not so large as the previous one, owing to the fact that both in the bootblacking and news-selling departments of the concern there was active competition; but both considered they

had earned very good wages, and were in the best of humor when they started home with a sufficient addition to their larder to provide a generous meal for all three.

“I’ll tell you what I’ve been thinkin’ of, Carrots,” Teddy said, as they walked slowly along. “Ikey is in a pretty bad way, an’ it seems to me we ought ter do somethin’ more ’n jest feed him up on lamb, if he ever expects to get out.”

“Want to try the bread an’ milk?”

“No, I don’t know anythin’ ’bout that business; but this is what I was kind er figgerin’ on. It costs terrible to get a doctor, of course; but don’t you s’pose we might make the same trade with one that we did with the lawyer? If we’d ’gree to give him a paper, an’ black his boots, till the bill was paid, I don’t reckon it would take long to fix Ikey in great shape.”

“That’s a good idee!” Carrots replied, enthusiastically. “Why, I’ll bet you could get any quantity of ’em at that rate. Say, there’s one up on Rivington Street. I used to black his boots last year, when I worked ’round that way; but have n’t seen him since. He’s awful nice; ain’t so very old either, an’ a good many times give me something extra when I got though with my job.”

“Suppose we go there to-night?”

“All right; I’m with you! We’ll fill Ikey up with this lamb, get him to bed, an’ then take a sneak. We can be back in half an hour. Say, how would it do to carry him along with us?”

"I would n't like to do that, 'cause you see p'rhaps the doctor might not be willin', an' we'd have dragged the poor feller 'round for nothin'. Besides, if we should happen to meet Skip while he was along, it would be kind er hard lines to take care of a lame boy an' fight at the same time."

"I never thought of that. I reckon I'd better let you 'tend to things anyhow. You seem to know more 'n I do."

The invalid welcomed them very cordially, as might have been expected from one who had been forced not only to remain inactive, but absolutely silent, during the many hours of their absence.

In reply to Carrots's questions, he represented himself as being comparatively comfortable, and stated that, although the time had seemed long, he was more than glad to be there, rather than on the streets enduring such suffering as must necessarily be his while moving around.

The first duty of the evening was to count the money, and it was learned that they had earned one dollar and twenty-six cents, exclusive of the amount spent for food procured on their way home.

"That makes us pretty nigh five dollars," Teddy said, as he placed these profits with the others. "If nothin' happens it won't be so very long before we'll be in great shape for doin' business."

Again Carrots had visions of the green news-stand and brass-covered bootblacking outfit, and from this reverie he was awakened when Teddy prepared the

evening meal by unwrapping the papers in which the food had been brought.

This reminded Carrots of the scheme formed for the benefit of the invalid, and he handed the sheep's tongues to Ikey, as he said:

"There, old man, I want you to fill yourself right up on that, 'cause Miss Carter said they was awful good for sick people, an' I 'low they 'll straighten you out in pretty nigh less 'n no time!"

Then Carrots explained what they intended to do in regard to securing a doctor, and Ikey's eyes glistened as he thought of getting relief from his sufferings, which must have been great, judging from the expression he constantly wore.

"I'm 'fraid you can't do much," he said, with a sigh.

"It won't do any harm to try," Carrots replied, as he began to satisfy his own hunger; and when the meal was brought to a close, owing to the fact that neither of the partners could eat any more, Teddy led the way to the street again, the invalid expressing his earnest hope that the doctor might accede to their wishes.

Fortunately for their purpose, upon arriving at the doctor's office, they found him at home and not busy.

Singular as it may seem, he did not recognize Carrots until he had been told of the previous business connection, and even then appeared almost indifferent in regard to seeing his friend again.

Teddy had supposed Master Carrots was to attend to this portion of the task, owing to his acquaintance

with the physician; but instead of doing so, his young partner, after entering the office, stood first on one foot and then on the other, staring at the medical gentleman in a manner well calculated to make a nervous person uncomfortable.

“Well, what can I do for you?” the doctor asked.

Carrots looked around at Teddy as he said, in a hoarse whisper:

“You tell him, old man. You can fix things up better ’n I can.”

Master Thurston opened negotiations by proceeding at once to the heart of the matter.

“We want ter hire a doctor,” he said. “You see, Ikey Cain’s got a lame leg, an’ we have n’t done anything for it yet except to give him some lamb, which I don’t ’low is goin’ to make him better very soon. Now what we thought ’bout doin’ was to get you to look out for him, an’ let us pay in trade. I sell papers, an’ Carrots blacks boots. If you ’ll ’gree to fix Ikey up as he ought ter be, we ’ll come here every mornin’ till the bill’s paid.”

“Where is the boy?” the doctor asked, looking amused rather than grave.

“Down where we live.”

“Give me the address, and I will call there to-morrow morning.”

“Oh, you must n’t do that!” Carrots cried, in alarm. “If you should go there in broad daylight and shin over that fence, the folks in the shop would know jest where we live!”

The doctor was at a loss to understand the meaning of this remark, and Teddy explained by saying:

"You see, we've got a couple of boxes down here back of a store, an' the folks who own 'em don't know anything 'bout our livin' there. We can't go in till after dark, when the shop's shut up, an' have to come out in the mornin' before it's open."

"I understand," the gentleman replied, with a smile. "Then it will be necessary to bring the boy here."

"Could n't you fix him to-night?" Carrots asked.

"I fancy so, unless there should be a call from some patient."

"I s'pose we can get him over the fence; but it'll hurt him a good bit," Teddy said, musingly.

"We can rig that all right," Carrots replied, carelessly. "If he's goin' to have his leg done up, he's got to come out, an' we can't help it if it does hurt him;" and then turning to the doctor, he asked, eagerly, "Say, how much you goin' to charge for doin' that?"

"What should you think it would be worth, or, in other words, how many shines would you give me? We won't say anything about the newspapers, because I already have a young man who serves me with them."

"We'll try to come to your terms if we can," Carrots replied, "an' you're the one that ought ter set the figger."

"What should you think would be a good price, if you were going to pay money?"

Carrots hesitated, looked around at Teddy, then again at the doctor, and finally said:

"I reckon I'd be willin' to go as high as twenty-five cents if he was fixed up in good shape, 'cause I know he'll pay it back jest as soon as he gets to work. Course he can't do anything now."

"Very well, bring your friend here whenever you please, and when I chance to be where you are working, I will call on you for one of the shines."

Then the gentleman took up the book he had been reading, as a sign that there was no need to prolong the interview, and the boys went at full speed after the invalid.

On being told that he would receive attention from a regular doctor, Ikey announced his willingness to climb over the fence a dozen times if it should be necessary, and without delay the journey was begun.

Fortunately the physician was still at home when they returned. He examined the injured member, took something from his pocket which the others could not see at first, and, before the invalid was aware of his purpose, had passed the keen blade of the lancet through the swelling.

Ikey felt faint with pain for an instant, and then looked wonderfully relieved, as the doctor said, soothingly:

"There, my boy, you will be all right in a few days. I will bandage it, and you must be careful not to catch cold."

Carrots watched the operation intently, and when the physician intimated that his services were at an end, he drew a long breath of relief as he said:



THE BOYS AT THE DOCTOR'S DOOR.

“By jiminy! If I could earn twenty-five cents as quick as that, it would n't take Teddy an' me long to buy that stand!”

“You see, my boy, that medical men have to charge a very large amount of money for their services because it takes them so long to learn the business. Of course you would think I should get rich very rapidly if I had many such customers at twenty-five cents; but you can see that they are scarce to-night.”

“That's a fact,” Carrots replied, thoughtfully, as if this phase of the case was something which he had not previously understood, and after gravely assuring the gentleman that “his face was good for a shine any time,” Master Williams led the way out of the house.

“How do you feel, old man?” Teddy asked, when they were on the sidewalk.

“He hurt me a good bit with his knife; but jest as soon 's that was over, it seemed like as if the pain had all gone. I reckon I'll get well now, eh?”

“If you don't, there won't be any sense in puttin' out twenty-five cents ag'in on you,” Carrots said, as if he should consider a continuation of Ikey's illness as a personal affront.

The three arrived at home without having seen anything of their enemies, and in a short time were busily engaged discussing their future.

“I'll tell you what it is, Teddy, Ikey'll make an awful good clerk for us when we buy our stand, an' after we get him mended. He can sell papers or shine boots with the best of 'em, for I've seen him work.”

Teddy suggested that they might not have a sufficient amount of business to warrant their hiring a clerk; but Carrots had his own ideas on the subject, and could not easily be persuaded that an assistant would not be an absolute necessity when the green-painted establishment with its bootblacking outfit was opened.

The idea that he was to have an opportunity for working, without being forced to run around the streets, pleased Master Cain wonderfully, and this, in addition to the relief from pain, served to put him in the best possible humor.

He promised to repay the boys, not only the twenty-five cents which was to be given the doctor in the form of boot-polishing, but also for such provisions as he might eat while one of their household; and agreed, in case Teddy finally concluded it would be desirable to hire him as a clerk, to do his work faithfully and honestly.

"We'll have the stand before two weeks go by, an' I reckon you'll be right there helpin' us with it," Carrots said, enthusiastically, as he once more prepared the bed for the invalid, and saw to it that there was food enough on hand to satisfy his wants during the coming day.

It was later than their usual time for retiring when the boys finally lay down to sleep; but, despite this fact, they were awake next morning as early as on any previous occasion, and, before leaving, Carrots again cautioned Ikey against allowing his presence in the box to be known.

“You need n’t be worried,” the invalid replied. “Now my leg does n’t ache so bad, I can keep mighty still, no matter what happens. Yesterday I had to turn over pretty often to rest it, an’ was ’fraid sometimes the folks would hear me.”

Then the boys clambered over the fence once more, and another day’s work was begun.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE PLOT.

SHORTLY after the boys arrived at City Hall Park, and before the business of the day had fairly begun, Teenie Massey approached to inquire if they had lately heard anything regarding Skip.

"Have n't seen nor heard of him," Carrots replied. "What makes you ask?"

"Nothin', only I heard he was tearin' round dreadful yesterday, tellin' what he was goin' to do to you fellers."

"I guess he 'll keep under cover for a while," Carrots replied, confidently; and Teenie said, as he shook his head warningly:

"Now don't be too sure of that, old man. I guess you want to keep your eyes open all the time, an' if you get to thinkin' he can't do any harm, you 'll find him jumpin' right down on you some day."

"I 'll risk all the harm he can do," Carrots replied, with a laugh. "He's too much 'fraid the police will 'rest him for stealin', to come 'round where we are."

"Well, I happen to know, from what Reddy Jackson said, that he has n't given up hopes of drivin' you off yet."

Carrots did not think this warning worthy his atten-

tion; but yet he repeated the same to Teddy when he found an opportunity.

"I reckon Teenie 's not far wrong," Master Thurston said, greatly to the surprise of his partner. "It did n't stand to reason that we was goin' to scare Skip so quick, an' I think he 'll make one more try to git rid of us."

"I don't see what he can do," Carrots said, musingly; and Teddy chimed in:

"Neither do I, an' that 's just why we 're bound to be pretty careful. You see, if we could know what he was up to, it would be different."

There was no further opportunity to discuss the matter, owing to the sudden demand for the bootblack's services, and by noon both the partners had almost forgotten the warning given by Teenie.

This day's business brought them more money than the previous one, but not so much as on the occasion when Skip last made his threats.

On counting up the cash immediately after their return home, it showed an addition of a dollar and seventy-one cents to the fund, and when this had been ascertained, Carrots found time to inquire as to the condition of their invalid friend.

"I'm feelin' first-class," Ikey said, "an' reckon my leg 'll be all right to-morrow. Say, who do you s'pose has been sneakin' 'round here to-day?"

"It can't be Skip Jellison?" Carrots replied, quickly.

"That 's jest who it was, an' Reddy Jackson come with him. Course they did n't know I was in here, an' I lay low and I heard every word they said."

“What did they talk 'bout?”

“You see, I was thinkin' how nice it felt to be out er pain, when there was a rattlin' among the boxes, as if somebody was a-walkin' on 'em. First, I thought one of the men from the store had come out, an' I kept mighty quiet. Then two fellers began to talk, an' I knew who it was the minute they spoke; so I listened. Reddy he said to Skip, ‘Here's where them fellers live.’ Skip he 'lowed he could n't see any place, an' Reddy said he knowed it was, 'cause he followed you home last night. Then he figured out that you slept in one of the boxes, an' that satisfied Skip.”

“Did they hunt to see if they could find where we stopped?”

“No; I reckon they did n't dare, for fear somebody'd catch 'em. They was settin' up there on the fence, an' if one of the clerks had showed his nose they could have jumped over on the other side mighty quick. I tell you them fellers are up to some mischief.”

“What do you mean?” Teddy asked, quickly.

“I heard Skip say he was goin' to burn you out, an' Reddy asked if he counted on doin' it to-night. He 'lowed he would n't, 'cause he'd got to go over to Jersey City; but he's bound to, the very first evenin' he can get away without anybody's knowin' what he's up to. He says he could put a lot of papers an' shavin's in these boxes, an' you'd be scorched some before you got out.”

Carrots was on the point of laughing at this revelation of Skip's plot, much as if he questioned the latter's cour-

age to do such a thing, when he observed Teddy, who was silent and looking very grave.

“Why, you don’t b’lieve they ’d dare to burn us out?” he asked in surprise.

“I ain’t so sure ’bout that. Skip Jellison ’s a feller that dares to do ’most anything, if he ’thinks he can get through with it an’ not be caught. It would be a mighty serious scrape for us if the boxes should get on fire while we were here. If any one saw us comin’ out they ’d say sure we did it. You might talk till you were blue in the face, if they knew that we had had candles here, an’ not make ’em think we did n’t do the mischief.”

“By jiminy! you ’re right!” Carrots exclaimed, as he began to realize what their position would be under such circumstances. “Don’t you think we’d better tell the folks in the store what Skip’s countin’ on doin’?”

“That would n’t do any good. He ’d swear it was n’t so, an’ all we ’d make out of it would be our havin’ to leave.”

“It seems as if that was what we ’d got to do anyhow, if he ’s goin’ to set this place on fire.”

“Of course.”

Carrots was surprised that his partner should agree with him so readily, and asked:

“Do you really think we ought ter go away from here?”

“That’s jest the size of it. ’Cordin’ to my way of figurin’, we’re apt to get ourselves into a fuss by stayin’;

an', although it'll be hard work to find as snug a place, I reckon it's safer to go."

Carrots was instantly plunged into the lowest depths of sorrow.

Never before had the packing-case home seemed so beautiful as now, when it appeared necessary to leave it.

"I'd like to see somebody thrash that Skip! He's hardly fit to live!"

"The best way's to let him alone. He'll bring himself up with a short turn before long," Teddy replied, confidently, and then relapsed into thoughtful silence.

"Well, when are we goin' to move?" Carrots asked, after a pause, during which he gazed intently at the flame of the candle, trying very hard to see there the picture of the establishment which he fondly hoped would soon belong to the thriving young firm of Thurston and Williams.

"We'd better look 'round the first thing to-morrow. I began to think Skip was up to somethin', 'cause we did n't see him. If he had n't had an idea in his head 'bout how to serve us out, he'd been up 'round City Hall to-day."

Then it was Carrots's turn to remain silent, and not a word was spoken until Ikey timidly ventured to ask if they had decided not to eat supper on this night.

This caused them to remember that they were hungry; but neither felt disposed to linger long over the meal, and at an unusually early hour the candle was put out as the inmates of the box laid themselves down

to rest for what all three believed would be the last time in that locality.

It was Teddy who awakened the others next morning, and, as Carrots opened his eyes, he exclaimed petulantly:

“What’s the use of turnin’ a feller out now? The sun ain’t up yet.”

“But it will be pretty soon, an’ we’ve got a good deal on hand to-day,” Teddy replied. “Ikey must go with us, for he might n’t get a chance to get away in the day-time, an’ it won’t do to stay here another night.”

It was a sad-visaged party that filed out of the narrow passage leading to the street, in the growing light of the early dawn, and made its way, without special aim or purpose, toward the customary place of business.

It was decided Ikey should be left upon one of the settees in the park, while the others went on a tour of investigation for the purpose of finding new lodgings, and then the party separated with the understanding that they would meet an hour later to partake of breakfast.

Carrots was the first to keep this appointment, and he looked exceedingly low-spirited when he seated himself by the side of the invalid, who had not yet sufficiently recovered to be able to take very much exercise in the way of walking.

“Find anything?” Ikey asked.

“Not a thing! I reckon it’ll be many a long day before we’ll get another place sich as we had down there;” and then Master Carrots indulged once more in harsh words against his enemies.

His tirade was interrupted by the arrival of Teddy, who looked as joyous as his partner looked despondent, causing the latter to say, in a querulous tone:

"It does n't seem as if you cared very much 'bout what them fellers are makin' us do!"

"Well, I reckon you're right, Carrots. P'rhaps it's the best thing ever happened, that we had to clear out this mornin'."

"What do you mean?"

"What do you s'pose I've found?"

"Do you mean a place to sleep?"

"Yes."

"Ain't been buyin' the Astor House, or anything like that?"

"Comes pretty nigh it, Carrots. I've found a stand!"

"I can find dozens of 'em; but that's all the good it'll do."

"But I mean one we can buy."

"Yes, when we've got the money," Carrots replied, impatiently. "Where we goin' to stay till we earn as much as we'll need?"

"I can make a trade for this one, with what we've got, by 'greein' to come up with fifty cents every day."

"What!" and Carrots sprang to his feet, his face expressive of mingled joy and astonishment. "Do you mean to say you know of a feller that'll trust us for the money?"

"That's jest it!"

"Let's get right to him before he has time to back

out! A feller what can make sich a chump of hisself as that might get sneaked off to the 'sylum before we'd have time to finish up the trade."

"There's no need of hurryin' so awful fast, 'cause this bargain'll wait for us an hour anyhow. In the first place, old man, p'rhaps it ain't what you're countin' on. It's a good stand enough, an' seems to me is in a pretty fair neighbourhood; but the feller what it b'longs to could n't make a go out er it, so had to give it up to the man who owns the buildin'."

"Where is it?"

"On Mulberry Street, jest off er Grand. You see, some feller built it against the corner store, an' 'greed to pay a dollar a week for the trouble of havin' it there. He could n't raise the rent, an' after he'd stayed three months, the shopkeeper took it. Now, I happened to see the place, an' went in an' talked with the man. He said it cost twenty dollars, an' he'd sell it for ten if we'd 'gree to pay a dollar every week for rent, an' fifty cents a day on what we owe him."

"How much you got to put down cash?" Carrots asked, his face clouded somewhat as he learned that the establishment was not as desirable as he had hoped their future place of residence would be.

"All we can raise."

"What'll that 'mount to?"

"Pretty nigh five dollars; but one of those dollars goes for rent, you know."

"Is it big enough to sleep in?"

"Yes; we three could get under the counter without

much trouble, an' there's a stove b'longs to it, that goes in with the trade."

"But if we open up there won't be anything to sell."

"I've 'lowed that we'll keep back 'bout a dollar to buy papers with, an' then, if both of us work mighty hard, it won't be more'n three or four days before we can have a pretty good lot of stuff. You'll keep right on shinin', an' I'll do my level best with papers, while Ikey 'tends to the stand till he gets well. 'Cordin' to my way of thinkin', we can build up a good trade there if we hustle; an' that's what we've got to do wherever we go. Now, what do you say to it?"

"Let's go an' see the place," Carrots said, after a moment's pause, and Ikey slid down from the settee, as if to intimate that he intended to accompany the party.

Teddy started off at once, for it was his belief there should be no time lost, in case they concluded to make the trade, because of the fact that the hour for regular business was close at hand.

On arriving at the stand, Carrots's first impression was very favourable toward the purchase.

It was painted green, not as bright as if the colour had just been laid on, but sufficiently so to satisfy him regarding the supposed "luck," and quite as roomy inside as Teddy had stated.

The only apparent drawback was regarding the business location, for it was a short distance off the regular line of travel, and this fact Master Carrots noted at once.

"That's so," Teddy replied, when the objections were

stated; "and I thought about all that while I was comin' down to tell you. It seems to me as if we might get up a good trade 'round among these stores, by 'green' to bring the papers just as soon as they was out, an', with three of us to pitch in, we could live right up to all our promises. As I said before, we've got to work a good deal harder than we've been doin'."

"It does n't seem to me as if we could do that. I've been humpin' myself the best I knew how the last two days."

"That's so, Carrots; but you could run 'round a little more, I reckon, if by doin' it we was to own a stand right away."

"Oh, I'm willin' to go in, an' you shall be the boss."

"Then we'll buy it," Teddy said, decidedly. "I've got to rush down after the money."

"Did you leave it under the boxes?"

"Yes, I did n't want to lug it 'round all day."

"But I thought we'd 'greed not to go back."

"I 'lowed to go down the first thing after we knocked off. It's all safe enough, anyhow. You stay here till I get back."

Teddy was off like a flash, and, impatient though Carrots was to have the business arrangements completed, his partner returned before he thought there had been sufficient time for Teddy to make the journey.

The preliminaries were quickly arranged, once they were ready to pay over the money, and, leaving Ikey in charge of the empty stand, the proud proprietors went hurriedly down-town, Teddy saying, as he parted with

the clerk: "I'll come back soon's I can, with the mornin' papers, and we'll open right up."

"I'll get things fixed before then, if I can borrow a broom, 'cause the inside of the place must be cleaned up," the new clerk replied, thus showing that he was attentive to the interests of his employers.

If Carrots had done as he wished, every newsboy and bootblack in the lower portion of the city would have known that he and Teddy had gone regularly into business; but the latter was adverse to proclaiming the news so soon.

"Better hold on a day or two, an' see how it pans out," the cautious merchant advised. "You see, if it should bust up the first thing, the fellers would laugh at us. We're bound to stay a week, now the money's paid; but how long a time is that to brag 'bout? I want ter know if we're goin' to stick, before I say anything."

"When will you 'gree to tell the fellers?"

"If we can pay our bills an' have enough left to keep the stock up, by a week from to-day you shall go 'round to spread the news, an' I won't open my mouth till you've seen every feller you know."

This was satisfactory to the junior partner, and he promised to attend to his work in the lower portion of the city as if nothing out of the usual course of events had happened, even though the firm of Thurston and Williams had actually sprung into existence in a proper and a business-like manner.

CHAPTER XV.

THE CONFLAGRATION.

IT is doubtful if Carrots often had a harder task than that of remaining silent on the subject of the news-stand, when he went down-town to work immediately after it had been purchased.

He had allowed himself to dwell upon the possibility of owning an interest in a stand, with a magnificent chair attached for the benefit of customers to the boot-blackening portion of the establishment, from the moment Teddy first spoke of the scheme; and now that it was really a fact, with the exception of the chair, it seemed particularly hard that he must keep the startling and pleasing information a profound secret.

“P'rhaps it's jest as well not to flash it up on the boys till after we get the whole thing in style—boot-black's quarters an' all,” he said to himself in the hope of cheering his mind. “When she's in shape I reckon some of the fellers in this town will find out that I can do a thing or two, even if my hair *is* red!”

The fact that he was soon to become famous in the eyes of his friends, if not of the entire world, did not prevent Carrots from plunging into the vortex of business with his whole heart; for he understood how necessary it was to earn the extra money which would

be needed until the business establishment was in a proper financial condition, and he worked most industriously.

It was hard to keep his thoughts upon the cleaning of muddy boots when he knew that at that moment Ikey was presiding over the stand with a "whole dollar's worth" of stock in front of him, and more than once was he tempted to leave his business sufficiently long to take just one peep at the place.

"I could sneak up there, an' look 'round the corner without anybody's seein' me," he said to himself once when trade was dull; but, remembering what Teddy had told him regarding the necessity of "hustling," he put the temptation far from his mind.

He did, however, so far give an inkling of the change in his business prospects, as to say, when Teenie Massey spoke about the difficulty of finding customers:

"P'rhaps there 's some in this town what won't have to run 'round after trade very long; but can sit down an' wait for boots to come to them."

"What do you mean?" Teenie asked, excitedly.

"Nothin' much; but you 'll see somethin' to 'stonish you before many years."

"I reckon I will," Teenie replied with a sigh, as he thought how the time might drag if he should be forced to wait so long before seeing anything astonishing. "Heard from Skip this mornin'?"

"No, an' I 'm takin' mighty good care to keep out of his way when the three of us ain't together. I wonder if he 'll have the nerve to set them boxes afire?"

“I should n’t wonder. Where are you goin’ to sleep to-night?”

“Well, you see it’s hard to say, ’cause all the swell places might be full when we get through business. I did n’t know but I’d telephone up to the Hoffman for quarters; yet there’s a good deal of trouble in doin’ sich a thing.”

“Yes,” Teenie replied, sarcastically, “an’ it might be quite a bother to pay the bill for the message.”

“I’d be willin’ to hang it up, if I was countin’ on doin’ anything of that kind.”

“Yes, but the other folks might have somethin’ to say ’bout it. It’ll be cheaper to hunt for a cart somewhere, or go down to the Lodgin’ House.”

If Teenie had questioned him more closely, Carrots might have been tempted to tell his friend some ridiculous yarn, rather than reveal the secret of the stand; but, fortunately, there was no necessity of his doing anything of the kind, for just at that moment the bootblacking industry received a decided impetus by the arrival of three gentlemen from the country, who required the services of Carrots and his friend.

Not until nearly noon did Master Williams see his partner, and then he met him by chance on the way to the newspaper offices for a fresh stock.

“How’s trade?” Teddy asked.

“First-class. I’ve taken in eighty cents since I began; but it’s slackenin’ off a little now. How’re you gettin’ along?”

“Great! It seems as if it was n’t any trouble to sell

papers to-day. Say, at this rate we can get in a bigger stock by night."

"That's what we want," Carrots replied, gravely, looking as serious as if he had just been called upon to decide a very important question relative to some business policy. "We ought ter make as big a show as we can, 'cause folks will see the stand has been opened ag'in, an' they 'll look 'round the first thing to find out if we've got much of a stock. Of course we're goin' to keep all the weekly papers, ain't we?"

"I don't know if we ought ter put out so much money yet a while."

"'Course we ought. Pitch in an' have things fine. We can 'ford to invest what's been made to-day, and you'd better buy the stuff right away," Carrots said as he handed Teddy the money he had earned. "I'll get more between now an' night to buy the supper with, so you don't want ter tend to anything like that."

Teddy was undecided as to whether this would be a wise move, so soon after taking upon themselves the expense of paying rent; but his partner was so eager it should be done that he finally consented, and hurried away to buy the additional stock, while Carrots searched for customers.

It seemed strange to both the merchants that Skip Jellison made no effort to annoy them on this day, and they could account for it only on the supposition that he did really intend to carry out his plan of destroying the packing-case home by fire.

No one should censure Carrots for ceasing his labors

at an unusually early hour because of the fact that he was exceedingly anxious to see his place of business in full operation, with a clerk behind the counter.

In addition to this desire, he had promised himself that, if trade should be brisk, he would purchase a regular feast as a sort of house-warming, a task which would require no slight amount of time.

And business had been sufficiently good to warrant his indulging in his treat.

He did not remember ever having made so much money, in the same length of time, as on this day the stand was opened.

He had given to Teddy his entire receipts of the forenoon, and yet, an hour before sunset, he had taken in sixty cents more, which was at least twice as much as he thought would be necessary for his purpose.

So determined was he that the feast should be a perfect success that fully an hour was spent in selecting the different articles, and then he walked swiftly toward their new establishment.

It did not suit Carrots's purpose to go directly to the stand.

He wished to view it first at a distance, and from the most favorable point, therefore he came up Grand Street, and stood on the opposite corner fully ten minutes enjoying the scene, before making known his presence to the "clerk."

"Well," he said to himself, in a tone of satisfaction, as he surveyed the stand critically, "if there's a better-lookin' place in this city, I'd like to see it, that's all!

Why, it seems to be chuck full of papers! An' don't the pictures show up great? Well, I should say they did! I wish it was a *little* greener; but if business gits good we can give it a new coat of paint some night. An' I own half of all that! I'm comin' it mighty strong, 'cordin' to my way of—Jiminy!—Ikey's sellin' somethin' now!"

Carrots could not remain concealed.

Money was actually being paid into his establishment by a customer who had come there of his own free will, and the junior partner of the firm of Thurston and Williams felt it impossible to stay away from the enchanting place any longer.

Running swiftly across the street he threw his many packages on the counter with the air of a proprietor, just in time to see Ikey pass the gentleman ten cents in change.

"What did he give you?" Carrots asked, excitedly.

"A quarter."

"What—a quarter?" the young merchant exclaimed in surprise. "Do you mean to tell me he bought fifteen cents' worth all at one time?"

"Course I do," Ikey replied, as if he was accustomed to making such large sales. "Why, I had one man who got twenty cents' worth, an' he asked me if the stand was goin' to be kept open right along now."

"Did you tell him who owned it?"

"Of course; an' he said he'd buy his papers here all the time."

"Well, I'm a Dutchman if I thought business was so

big with a stand! I can't see what made the other feller give it up. How much money did you take in altogether?"

"Let 's see," and Ikey knit his brow as he called upon his memory to aid him in the account. "There was two dollars 'n' forty-two cents, an' now I 've got fifteen more; that makes—forty-two an' ten is fifty-two, an' five is fifty-seven—two dollars 'n' fifty-seven cents."

"Well, I 'll be jiggered!" and Carrots found it necessary to enter the stand for the purpose of seeing and handling the money before he could be convinced his clerk had told him no more than the truth.

"Well, 'cordin' to the looks of things we 've struck a reg'lar gold mine here; an' it won't be very long before I can git a chair that 'll knock the *Italian's* all out er sight!"

"If my leg was n't so lame I could make a good deal more; but you see I don't dare to jump on an' off the cars."

"Put those things under the counter, an' give me a pile of papers!" Carrots cried. "We 'll soon know what this kind of trade is worth."

When Teddy returned from down-town, believing business to be finished for the day, Carrots was still actively engaged; and not until nearly eight o'clock did either of the partners think it prudent to cease work.

"That 's what I call makin' things hum!" Carrots said as the two entered the stand, after "shutting up shop" by raising the shutter which served as a counter during the day. "I 've sold sixteen papers since I come

up to-night, an' might 'a' done a good deal more if the stock had n't run out. How much do you s'pose we 've made?"

"We 'll soon know, after I go for a candle," Teddy replied.

"I bought three, so 's we could have a reg'lar blow-out for the first night," Carrots said, as he produced the articles in question. "You figure up, an' I 'll get the grub together."

It was necessary Teddy should take an account of the stock on hand before the profits could be ascertained, and then, to the surprise of his partner and clerk, he announced that the amount which had been made in both branches of the business was three dollars and sixty-one cents.

"Now, if that ain't getting rich fast, I 'd like to know what you 'd call it!" Carrots exclaimed, as he ceased his labor of slicing a Bologna sausage, to verify his partner's figures. "If things keep on at this rate it won't be sich a dreadful while before we 'll have to rent a reg'lar store."

"It 's a good deal bigger 'n I expected," Teddy admitted; "an' we must n't count on doin' the same every day. Half as well will satisfy me."

"But we shall make twice as much if the hoss-cars an' stores are worked. Jest wait till I get a chair here, so 's I can keep the trade hummin' when there is n't any shinin' to be done, an' you 'll see how the money 's bound to come tumblin' in. The feller what gave up this stand must 'a' been a chump!"

"I don't s'pose he 'tended to business," Teddy said, solemnly, as he placed the stock on a shelf, and prepared to join in the feast. "This place is goin' to be mighty snug to live in; but it is n't so handy as the yard, 'cause a feller's got to hunt 'round for water when he wants to wash his face."

"If trade keeps on like this I'll 'gree not to let a drop of water come near me for a year," Carrots exclaimed.

"An' the customers would keep away too, I reckon. But say, Carrots, is n't this goin' it rather strong for supper?" Teddy asked almost sternly, as he gazed at the newspaper spread on the floor of the stand, and heaped high with such delicacies as "bolivars," Bolognas, and pickled sheep's tongues.

"I reckon it is; but you see it's the first night, an' I counted on spreadin' myself some. There's three of us, you know, so it takes a lot of grub to go 'round."

"It won't do to keep this thing up," Teddy said, as he shook his head gravely.

"Course not; but to-night does n't count. Now pitch right in, both of you, an' let's have a high old time."

Ikey had already begun to do his share, and, as the others joined him, the silence within the stand was broken only by Carrots's gasps, for he ate so eagerly that he hardly gave himself time to breathe properly.

The candle was standing in one corner, in a bottle, while under the counter was a pile of straw which Ikey had gathered to serve as beds; and these gave the

place such an air of home as, according to Carrots's ideas, it would be hard to find elsewhere.

"I sha'n't go to the Hoffman House agin'," he said in a tone of content, as he gazed around complacently after it was absolutely impossible to eat any more. "This is about the swellest place in this city, an' the fellers 'd be wild if they could see us. Mighty lucky for you, Ikey, that we got this stand jest as we did, for now you won't have to lay low while your leg 's gettin' well."

"It 's a dandy!" Ikey replied, enthusiastically, "an' I would n't ask anythin' better 'n to stay here all the time."

"If trade keeps on as it's begun, I reckon we can 'ford to hire you right along, eh, Teddy?"

Before Master Thurston could reply, the clang and rattle of a fire-engine broke upon the stillness, and all three rushed out of the stand in the shortest possible time.

"It 's down near where I used to live!" Carrots cried, as he saw the engine turning the corner. "Do you s'pose Skip has really dared to do what he threatened?"

"Ikey, you 'll have to stay here 'cause you can't run," Teddy said, hurriedly. "Keep the door locked, an' Carrots and I 'll come right back."

Then the partners started at full speed; and, although they had been warned that such might be the case, both were astonished almost beyond the power of speech, at finding that the blaze actually proceeded from the backyard where Carrots had spent so many nights.



“‘HOW DID YOU KNOW CARROTS LIVED HERE?’ TEDDY
ASKED, STERNLY.”

"He's really gone an' done it!" Master Williams exclaimed in a tone of awe, and just at that moment Reddy Jackson stepped from among the network of hose, whence he had evidently been trying to peer into the yard.

"Why, how did you come *here*?" he cried in astonishment. "I thought there was n't any other way but this, to get out from where you sleep."

"How did you know Carrots lived here?" Teddy asked, sternly.

"Why, some of the fellers told me, of course," Master Jackson replied, hesitatingly.

"They did n't; 'cause nobody knew except Teenie Massey, an' I'm sure he has n't said anything," Carrots cried. "I've heard 'bout Skip's threatenin' to burn this place, an' it was Skip that started the fire."

"What're you yellin' so for?" Reddy cried, nervously. "Do you want everybody to hear?"

"I don't care if they do," said Carrots, sturdily.

"Skip'll be after you, if he knows you're sayin' sich things. He ain't through with you an' this country jay yet."

"No; nor he won't be till he gives up that dollar he stole," Teddy said, sternly. "If he is n't 'rested for settin' this place on fire, you tell him I'll be down front of City Hall by seven o'clock to-morrow mornin', so's he can begin the drivin'. Let him git all his friends there, an' show 'em the fun."

"Oh, yes, you'll be there, o' course!" Reddy replied with a sneer.

“Don't make any mistake 'bout it. I'm comin' down to give him his chance.”

“Want ter git inter the station-house ag'in, eh? They must 'a' treated you mighty fine.”

“Don't you worry about my bein' 'rested, an' if Skip Jellison cares to see me after what he's done to-night, let him be there,” Teddy said, in a dignified tone, as he motioned for Carrots to follow him to the opposite side of the street, where they could be nearly alone.

“What kind of a row are you goin' to git inter now?” Carrots asked, his voice literally trembling with fear. “Of course Skip'll be in front of City Hall, 'cause there's where he always hangs out. You must keep clear of that place.”

“I want him to see me when there's a big crowd 'round, an' I'm goin' to get some of that money he stole, between now an' to-morrow night,” Teddy said, in such a positive tone that Carrots was plunged into bewilderment.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE CHALLENGE.

THE fireman were able to put out the fire before it had done serious damage, save to the packing-cases; and Teddy had hardly sent the challenge to Skip Jellison before, one by one, the engines were hauled away.

Reddy did not follow when they crossed to the other side of the street. He was probably afraid he might be charged with having taken some part in starting the blaze, and did not care to remain near those who had no hesitation about saying what they thought.

"We might as well go back," Teddy said, several moments after the firemen began to disperse. "We'll go round by Broadway for fear some of the fellers will find out where we're livin' now."

Then, for the first time since receiving Teddy's promise that Skip should be forced to return the money he had stolen, was it possible for Carrots to speak freely.

"If you have n't got yourself in a fine mess, then I don't know!" he exclaimed. "Jest as likely as not this'll break up the stand!"

"Don't you worry 'bout that, Carrots. I shall come out all right. It's got to be fixed right away, else there's no knowin' what Skip Jellison may do. I

did n't count on beginning so soon; but now he's shown that he dares to set fires, I'd be worried for our new place, if something was n't done."

"But what do you reckon on doin'?"

"You come with me, and you'll hear and see the whole thing. It's going to spoil our day's work; but that can't be helped, for it's time he was straightened out. We'll get the papers for Ikey, an' then have a look at this bully who's willing to risk burning us up."

Teddy evidently had a well-defined scheme in his mind; but he did not intend to confide in any one until the proper moment.

By going a long way round the boys were able to reach their new home without meeting any acquaintances; and, once there, preparations were made for the night, Carrots meanwhile explaining to Ikey what they had seen and heard.

"That Skip will try to break up this stand just as soon as he knows you've got it," the clerk said, positively.

Carrots expected Teddy would make some reply to this remark; but the boy from Saranac did not speak, and before long his companions were asleep.

It was daylight next morning when Teddy woke his partner, and, leaving their clerk still asleep, the two hurried to the newspaper offices for the day's supply.

Few other newsboys had begun work when Messrs. Thurston and Williams had the stand open, with a stock sufficient to satisfy all the customers Ikey might have.

A breakfast was made on the remainder of the previ-

ous night's feast, and then Teddy and Carrots "worked the hoss-cars," as the latter expressed it, until a quarter before seven.

"Come on; it's time to go," Teddy said, as he deposited his share of the stock on the counter. "Keep your eyes open while we're gone, Ikey, because it may be quite a while before we get back."

Carrots followed his partner in silence, and the clocks were striking seven when they arrived at the City Hall.

"Don't go over there yet," Carrots said, nervously, as he pointed toward a group of boys. "Skip has got every feller in town with him. You're certain to get the worst of it."

"He can't have too many to please me," Teddy replied, boldly; and then, to Carrots's surprise, he turned and walked directly toward the enemy.

"Here he comes! an' now we'll see what a country jay looks like when he gits ready to leave town!" was Skip's greeting; and his particular cronies thought the remark so very funny that they laughed long and loud.

"I'm not thinking about going out of the city," Teddy said, firmly; "so I'm afraid it won't be such an awful good show."

"Then what are you coming round here for?" Skip asked, as he advanced threateningly.

"In the first place I've come for that money you stole from Carrots, and when that has been given up, I'll tell you what else I want," said Teddy, quietly.

"You'll be gray-headed before you get anything out of me, 'cept a whack on the head!"

"Yes, you 're said to be a great fighter, I know," was Teddy's remark; "but you 'd better make all your fight 'round here where you know the police will stop a row before anybody has a chance to hurt you. It's safer!"

"I'll make my fight anywhere I please," Skip blustered.

"Then if you've got half the pluck you claim, show us a place where it can be done in shape," answered Teddy, sharply. "I'm here with nothing to do but settle matters. I'm going to stay in the town right along, and I can't be bothered with you all the time. If you get the best of me when we're where nobody'll interfere with us, I'll leave; an' if I get the best of you, why, then I'll get back my dollar, an' you'll have to behave yourself."

Boys like pluck, and even Skip's friends applauded this remark. Teddy's businesslike offer pleased them wonderfully, and they had no doubt the bully would agree at once. But, to the surprise of all, Skip remained silent.

"He don't dare do it!" Teenie jeered. "He's afraid of gettin' the worst of it—same's he did that day over in Brooklyn!"

"Hold your tongue!" Master Jellison answered, looking angrily around him. "Do you fellers s'pose that I'm scared of him?"

"If you ain't, why don't you do as he says?" asked Teenie.

"I've got to 'tend to my work," Skip stammered,

“that’s why I can’t; but I’ll give him a poundin’ now, an’ let that settle it.”

“If you try to touch me here where we’re sure of being arrested, I’ll have you locked up for stealin’,” Teddy said, sternly. “I could do that, anyway; but I’d rather manage my own affairs. I don’t see how you can be too busy to leave for an hour, because you have n’t done any work since you said you’d drive me out of town. I’ll go wherever you say, an’ the rest of the fellers shall promise to leave us alone till one of us says he’s had enough!”

“Of course he’s goin’ to tackle the countryman!” Reddy Jackson said in reply to some of his friends, who at this moment began to express in an undertone their belief that “Skip was scared!”

Then Reddy took Skip aside and began to talk to him very earnestly, the others, meanwhile, discussing whether the bully was afraid.

It must have been plain to Skip that, if he did not wish to be despised by all whom he had cowed so long, it was necessary to accept Teddy’s challenge; for there were at least a dozen in the throng who had some grudge against the young tyrant, and if he “showed the white feather” so publicly, there could be no question that the injured ones would try to revenge themselves, believing it could be done safely.

“I’m willin’ to go an’ thrash this feller, of course,” Skip said, suddenly, as he stepped forward once more. “I *did* count on doin’ a good day’s work, ’cause I’ve been takin’ it easy so long; but I reckon I can spare

the little time I need to settle him off. See here, now — I don't want any one in the crowd to beg off for him after I get started."

"Neither do I," added Teddy, promptly. "He says I can't stay in the town, an' I want that settled once for all; so the rest of the crowd are to hold back, never mind who's havin' the worst of the trade."

"You can count on fair play," a member of the party said, decidedly, and, as this speaker had always been believed to be one of Skip's warmest supporters, there seemed to be no question that Teddy would be treated well during the coming conflict.

"Do you s'pose you can get the best of him?" Carrots asked, in an anxious whisper, as, under the guidance of one of the party, all hands started toward a certain quiet and secluded spot, which had been suggested by Sid Barker.

"Well, I'll try mighty hard," said Teddy. "I don't take much stock in fightin', Carrots, but this is somethin' that's got to be done, or we'd never be able to run the stand."

This remark sounded to Carrots very much as if his partner had serious doubts regarding the outcome of the engagement, and, secretly, the junior partner began to indulge in the most gloomy forebodings.

Teddy had very little to say, but Skip, who walked among the leaders of the party, took pains to boast, in a very loud tone, of what he proposed to do with "the greenhorn after he'd broken him all up."

Sid conducted the throng to an untenanted stable in

the rear of some dwellings on West Broadway, and said, as he led them through a convenient opening:

“ I reckon you might fight here a month without anybody hearing you. Could you find anything better ’n this ? ”

Most of the boys were loud in their praises of the spot; but it really seemed as if Skip fancied it too retired.

“ He ’d rather be where the cops would come,” Carrots whispered to Teddy. “ I do believe he ’s afraid already; an’ I tell you, Teddy, if you can thrash Skip well, it ’ll be the biggest kind of a thing for a lot of fellers I know of in this town ! ”

“ I reckon I ’ll be all right. Don’t you even say a word, no matter what happens, and I think when our little scrap is finished, he won’t have anything more to say about our leaving the city.”

It did not require many moments to settle the terms of combat.

Half a dozen of the larger members of the party arranged the details by promising to whip any fellow who should attempt to interfere, and then the word was given.

Teddy did not immediately put himself in an attitude of defence, but, addressing the spectators, said:

“ I don’t want any feller to think I came here ’cause I ’m fond of fight. Skip Jellison has said I ’ve got to leave town, and that Carrots must, too, just because he helped me. He tried to drive me away by stealing a dollar of my money from Carrots, and then he set the

box pile on fire last night to smoke us out, or something worse. All I want of him is to give up the cash, and agree to let us alone. If he's willing to do that, there's no need of this row; but if he don't, I shall fight him the best I know how."

Skip's only reply was to rush forward angrily, and an instant later the battle was on.

It is very doubtful if even Carrots could have told much about the struggle, so suddenly was it begun and so soon ended.

Carrots told Ikey that same morning:

"It did n't seem as if Skip had a chance to put up his hands, before he was flat on his back; and every time he tried to stand up, he got another dose of the same medicine, till it was over."

In less than five minutes, Teddy was the conqueror, without a scratch, and Skip, lying at full length on the stable floor, was howling frantically for some one to "hold that Saranac jay."

"He has n't thumped you half enough!" Sid Barker said, angrily, to the prostrate bully. "What are you yellin' like that for? Teddy ain't anywhere near you! To think that we fellers have let you pretty nigh run this town for as much as a year, when you would n't fight a mouse, unless you got the first clip at him!"

After a time, Skip was made to understand that Teddy had no idea of administering more punishment, and he was about to scramble to his feet, when the boy from Saranac stopped him by saying:

"Part of what I came here for was the dollar you

stole, and as soon as you give that up the row will be over; but you don't leave this place till I get it."

"I have n't kept a cent! Reddy an' Sid got the same as I did!" Skip cried, cringing now as shamefully as he had ever bullied.



"'WHAT ARE YOU YELLIN' LIKE THAT FOR?' SAID SID."

"All I know is that you took it, an' you've got to give it up," Teddy remarked, decidedly.

"I'll let you have some to-morrow," Skip replied, with a whine.

"We've come here to settle matters," Teddy insisted,

an' this is the place to square up. I can't afford to lose another morning's work on account of you."

Skip finally found eighteen cents, and then tried to borrow the rest from those whom he had counted as friends; but not one of his late admirers would have anything to do with him. He had shown himself to be a coward as well as a bully, and now his bitterest enemies were those with whom he had seemed most popular. Teddy soon understood that Skip had told the truth, and that he could not regain the whole amount stolen. So he said, as he took the eighteen cents on account:

"This will do for now; but you've got to come up with the balance by to-morrow night, or there'll be trouble. While you were talking so loud about pounding me, it would have looked as if I was scared an' did n't dare to do anything but go to the police, if I'd had you arrested. But now that every feller knows how much your brag amounts to, I'll have you right into court if the money is n't paid at the time I said. While I'm in court, it would n't be very queer if I should have somethin' to say 'bout the fire we saw last night."

"I'll pay back every cent just as soon as I can get it," Skip wailed.

"You'll have till to-morrow night," said Teddy, firmly, "but no longer. I don't think there's any need to tell you what'll be done if you try to bother Carrots or me again."

Then, although many of Skip's friends were eager to cultivate his acquaintance, Teddy left the barn in the same quiet way he had entered; and Carrots followed

close behind, saying, when they were where the words could not be overheard:

“Well, Teddy, who’d ‘a’ thought you was such a fighter?”

“But I’m not!” Teddy replied, sharply. “I don’t believe in that sort of thing; but the way matters were going I thought it was somethin’ that had to be done.”

“And you did it in great shape!” Carrots insisted. “Even if we never get another cent of our dollar back I’ll be satisfied, ‘cause that bully Skip’s done for in this town now. He can’t scare any more fellers, an’ I reckon all Teenie Massey said about that Brooklyn fight was true.”

“Don’t let’s talk of it, Carrots. I’m goin’ to work, an’ you’d better do the same, ‘cause we’ve got a mighty big contract on our hands now, with so much rent to pay, an’ a clerk to feed.”

Carrots would have liked nothing better than to have remained there discussing all the incidents of the short battle during the next hour or two; but Teddy put an end to the talk by hurrying away for a stock of papers, and the bootblack could do no less than go in search of customers.

He had every chance to talk about Teddy’s prowess during the remainder of that day, however.

Every boy who knew Skip had something to say about the fallen bully; and, naturally, such remarks were followed by praise for Teddy, who had settled his troubles in such a businesslike fashion.

Teenie Massey was so excited because of Skip’s

downfall that it was almost impossible for him to attend to any business during the next twenty-four hours. He told the story over and over again to such of his friends as were so unlucky as not to have witnessed the great combat.

None of Carrots's friends saw Skip during the remainder of that day; he disappeared from view as completely as if the earth had opened and swallowed him, and there was no sorrow because of his absence.

CHAPTER XVII.

PROSPERITY.

IF Teddy believed that his new admirers would allow him to go on quietly with his business immediately after punishing Skip Jellison, he was mistaken.

The bully had terrorized the bootblacks and newsboys who pursued their callings in the vicinity of the City Hall, during the previous year, without having been called upon to defend himself against one of his own size and strength.

As a matter of course it had been necessary to engage in several fights for the purpose of sustaining his reputation as a "dangerous character;" but he had always been careful to attack some boy smaller than himself, or, as in the case of his first assault upon Teddy, had contented himself with striking two or three blows suddenly when the victim could be taken unawares.

Until the day when Teenie Massey brought the news from Brooklyn that Skip had been whipped by a boy not more than half his size, every fellow believed Master Jellison to be bold, and skilful in the use of his fists.

Even then, most of Skip's followers fancied Teenie had colored the story to suit his own purposes. They

were willing to give the bully the benefit of the doubt, and consequently the surprise of all was very great that Teddy had vanquished him so easily.

Since Teddy's victory, however, the opinion of every street merchant in the vicinity of Skip's usual haunts was that he "could not fight a little bit," and no one was silent on the subject.

The newspaper business was much neglected that morning in order that the details of the battle might be told to those who were not present; and more than one gentleman with muddy boots wondered what had become of the small army of bootblacks who were usually so eager for work.

Teddy's praises were warmly sung; for even Skip's most intimate friends felt a certain sense of relief now that his reign was over.

"That feller has got plenty of sand!" Sid Barker said, admiringly, after he had repeated his story of the bully's downfall for at least the twentieth time; "an' I think we ought to tell him just how we look at this thing."

"Do you s'pose he 'll get his money back?" Teenie asked, in his shrill voice.

"Not a bit of it! Skip never 'll show up 'round here again; an' if he did, how 'll he raise the cash?"

"He says you an' Reddy got a share."

"I won't say that we did n't," Sid replied, promptly; "an' I'm goin' to give Teddy back my part before noon."

"So am I," Reddy added. "I've got it now, an' am

willin' to hunt him up this minute, if you say the word."

"Come on," Sid replied, as he started in the direction of South Ferry, for it was well known by all that Teddy was doing business in that part of the city.

As a matter of course every fellow who heard this offer was eager to be present when the payment was made to Teddy, and the crowd of newsboys who marched down Broadway was so large as to attract considerable attention.

When the small army arrived at the head of Cortlandt Street, Carrots met them; and, it is needless to say, he halted in astonishment and some alarm.

His first thought was that Skip's friends had come together for the purpose of taking revenge upon the boy who had chastised the bully, and he remained motionless an instant, wondering whether it would not be the better part of valour to seek safety in flight.

A hail from Sid soon dispelled his fears.

"Come on, Carrots! We're goin' down to find your pardner, so 's to kinder square things. You'd better come, too."

"What do you mean to do?" Carrots asked, as he joined the throng.

"They're goin' to give him back part of the money Skip stole," Teenie squeaked; "an' then I reckon he'll work up round the City Hall."

A few moments previous to this meeting it had seemed to Carrots as if he desired nothing more, because he was part-owner of a stand, and Skip's

tyrannical reign had come to an end; but now, if such a thing could be possible, he was even more elated than before, and all idea of business was forgotten as he followed those who, but a short time previous, were his enemies.

It was a regular triumphal march for the amateur farmer, and the promises of friendship from every side gave him much pleasure.

"I knew you fellers would like Teddy when you got acquainted with him," he said, gleefully.

"It would n't have taken us long to find that out if he 'd started in different," Reddy Jackson replied. "Why did n't he pitch right inter Skip the first thing?"

"How could he when he got in the station-house?" said Carrots. "He would n't 'a' let Skip get away, then, if that policeman had n't been there."

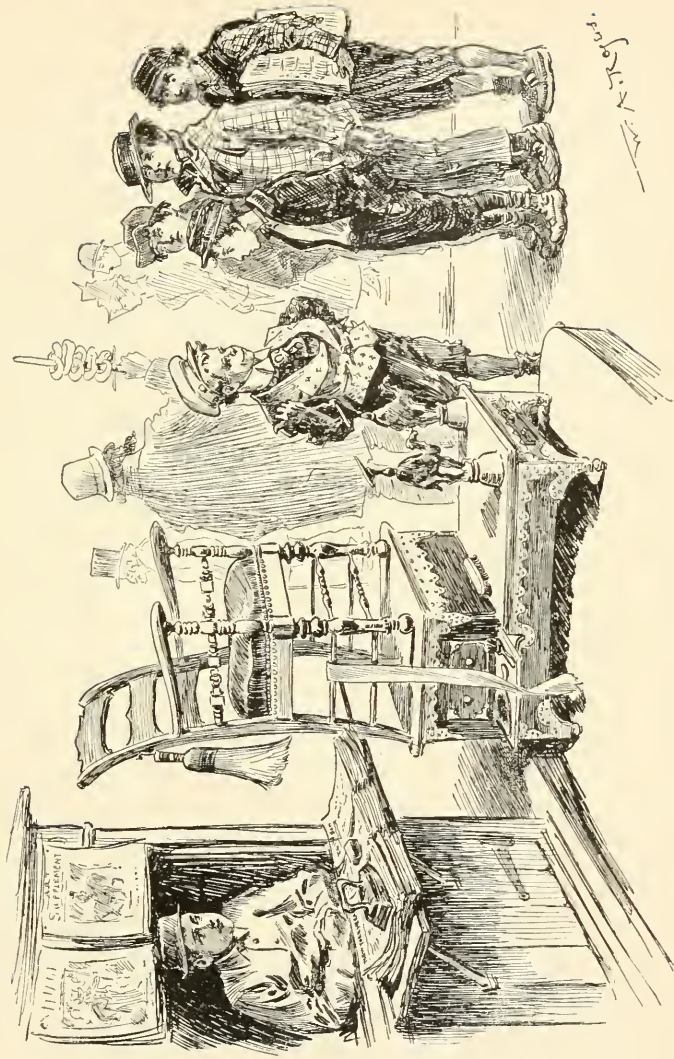
"But after he got out there was n't anything done," Sid objected.

"You could n't expect him to jump into trouble again right away. He had to wait so's to fix things, an' then he came out like a little man."

"That 's a fact; an' now he can go into any part of this town that he likes."

Carrots was strongly tempted to add to the glory of the march by telling the story of the stand; but he remembered that as yet his word was pledged to his partner, and remained silent.

When the party reached South Ferry, Teddy was found hard at work; and, like Carrots, he was at first



CARROTS DISPLAYS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF MESSRS. THURSTON AND WILLIAMS.

inclined to believe the advancing force boded evil for him. But Sid Barker said, as he handed Teddy twenty-five cents:

“What Skip Jellison told 'bout our havin' some of your money was straight; an' so we've come here to give it up. Here 's all I got, an' if I'd know'd what you really were, the money would n't 'a' been kept so long as this.”

“An' here 's my share,” Reddy added, as he slipped another coin into Teddy's hand.

“But it was Skip who stole the money,” the boy from Saranac said, with some confusion; “an' he ought to give it back.”

“I reckon you won't see him very soon,” said Reddy. “Skip has n't got the nerve to show his face round here ag'in, for he knows nearly every feller has something against him. We used the money he gave us, so it's no more 'n right we should give it back.”

“An' you 'd better work round City Hall,” Reddy added. “You 're a dandy, an' if there 's anything we can do to help you along, just say the word!”

Teddy protested that business was good enough near the ferries to warrant his remaining where he was; but his new friends would listen to nothing of the kind.

They insisted so strongly on Teddy's going with them, that he was finally forced to yield, and not until the party was marching up Broadway did Carrots get a chance to speak privately with his partner. Then he whispered:

“Why not tell them about the stand? They're all

glad 'cause you thumped Skip, an' we need n't be 'fraid any more that they 'll try to make trouble for us."

"I 'd rather have waited till we had a bigger stock, an' you 'd paid for the chair," said Teddy; "but I s'pose the best way is to give the news out now, 'cause they 're bound to see the place before long. You can tell 'em."

Carrots felt very proud when he announced the fact that he and Teddy "had gone inter business *reg'lar*;" and he concluded by inviting every member of the party up to see the stand that evening.

The one incident of this triumph which did not please Teddy, was the fact that he was forced to waste so much time, when he might have been adding to his capital; but there did not seem any way to prevent it, and he submitted with the best grace he could.

As a matter of course, every member of the party promised to visit the partners' establishment before nightfall, and after the news had been thoroughly discussed several times more, most of the young merchants went about their business.

Teddy never worked harder than during the remainder of that day, and no one can blame him for being secretly proud of the victory he had won.

To describe the informal reception held by Messrs. Thurston and Williams on this evening would be too great a task.

From five o'clock in the afternoon until late at night the stand was the centre of attraction for all Teddy's, Carrots's, or Skip's acquaintances; and Master Williams fairly outdid himself as host.



1870

PROSPERITY.

He explained what they meant to do; showed the new chair which they had bought; described how the establishment would look when the new coat of green paint was put on, and received more offers of assistance in this artistic work than he could well accept.

The partners were thoroughly tired when the last guest took his departure, and Teddy said in a tone of satisfaction as he curled himself up on his portion of the straw:

“Well, Carrots, I reckon we’re here to stay this time!”

“Yes, sir! I reckon we are; an’ now I’m beginnin’ to think it won’t be such a dreadful long while before we get a store. Say, that ’ll be great, won’t it? I can have my chair inside when it storms; an’ what a place we’ll rig up to sleep in! I’ll know what a bed feels like then, an’ it won’t be all ropes, same’s that one out to the farm.”

Teddy was too nearly asleep to be capable of making any reply, and Ikey had been snoring several moments. Therefore Master Williams, giving up his attempt at conversation, laid his red head on his arm, and joined his companions in their journey to the Land of Nod.

It seems hardly necessary to say that Skip has not been seen since his friends forsook him in the stable where his reign as a bully came to an end; and even those to whom he owes money have felt no regret because of his long absence.

It is quite likely some of the fellows whom he bullied would like a short interview for the purpose of “suar-

ing accounts"; but since Master Jellison is well aware of this fact, he will probably remain in seclusion.

It is a matter of fact that every satisfactory story ends only when the principal characters are settled in life, rich and happy; but, unfortunately, that cannot be in this case, for it is not many months since the day on which Skip was conquered, and in so short a time one could hardly expect the young merchants to have made very rapid strides toward wealth.

There is a great difference in the appearance of the stand, however. It has had at least two coats of the most vivid green paint Carrots could purchase; and at one end stands the chair—all paid for—with so much brass-work about it as to render it quite dazzling on a sunny day.

Carrots feels very positive it "lays 'way over the Italian's," and in this he is correct.

Ikey still holds his position as clerk, although his lame leg is healed, and he can run about the streets as nimbly as either of his employers.

Teddy and Carrots decided several weeks ago that it would pay them to hire a clerk regularly, since both could then go around town in search of customers when trade was dull nearer to the stand; and Ikey receives as wages his board, his lodging, and fifty cents each week, a great improvement over his former state, when he was forced to seek such locations for business as the other boys did not want.

Carrots still dreams of the "reg'lar store," and there

appears to be no reason why his hopes may not be fulfilled.

The amount of capital is larger each day, thanks to the partners' industry, and their stock is increasing, too; therefore they will be able to make quite a respectable showing when they move into more roomy quarters.

Few firms seem likely to be more prosperous than that of "TEDDY AND CARROTS."

THE END.

