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TOM AND THE COUNTERFEITERS.

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CHAPTER II.

"Hands Up!"

When Tom came to, Bill was standing over him sprinkling cold water over his face. As he gave a gasp and sat up, Bill stepped back and gave a sigh of relief.

"Say, Kid!" he exclaimed, "I was just 'bout ready to calc'late on yer sleeping all night."

Tom was weak and dazed and could hardly distinguish the appearance of the place that he was in. But finally his eyes grew accustomed to the place and he began looking around at what seemed to be his new home.

He saw that he was lying, or rather sitting, on a small cot in one corner of a square room, scantily provided with domestic needs and comforts. The floor was covered with sacks, old pieces of carpet, and other remnants of a waste basket. In one corner was a number of small machines and around these on shelves were stacks of colored paper about the size of a paper bill.

Tom tried to recognize this room, for he was familiar with the only cabin in these woods, if these were the woods that he had been knocked unconscious in; but he could not, try as he might. He was just on the point of asking Bill where he was, when that worthy individual arose from the chair in which he had been sitting and put on his half dilapidated hat.

"Now, I want yer to keep yerself out o' mischief while I'm gone," he muttered. "And mebbe—just mebbe and that's all, old Groggs 'll let yer go with half o' yer hide, at least."

Tom made no reply, but he was thinking on some way to make good his escape.

Bill turned and strided toward one end of the room and to Tom's surprise he pulled back a canvass colored a dark tan, that could hardly be distinguished from the walls. He produced a key from his pocket, inserted it in the lock of a secret door just on the opposite side of the canvass and with a last piercing look at Tom he disappeared through the door and slammed it shut as the canvass fell

back into its original position.

It was Tom's first impulse to run to the canvass exit, but when he heard the lock click, he sat down in the chair that Bill had previously occupied, buried his face in his hands and began to think deeply about his mother.

"If I do escape," thought Tom, "I'll make it hot for these rascals."

As Tom sat thinking over the critical position that he was in, his mind returned to the conversation between Groggs and these two villains. He remembered those striking words, "and the bank won't be as rich as it has been." The purpose of these men then dawned upon him. They were robbers!

Even as Tom sat there, he suddenly became determined to find out just where he was and what the purpose of this place was.

He at once began examining the walls. They were as cold and slimy as a frog's back. This was an artificially made cave; but what was its purpose? Tom soon found an answer to this last question.

He went over to the corner where the machinery was located and began examining those green slips that were packed up in small stacks.

This solved the whole of the puzzle. It was counterfeit money and he was with the makers of it. These men were going to rob the bank, leave a pile of false greenbacks in the safes, and apt as not leave him to bear the blame. It made Tom's head swim. He, an honorable Scout, mixed up in a thing like this!

Tom had been successful in finding the purpose of these counterfeiters and perhaps he could be successful in escaping. At least it would do no harm to try; so his first movement was toward the exit that Bill had only a quarter of an hour before passed through.

But Tom did not reach this passage-way. As he got half way across the room his foot caught in a piece of carpet and he fell sprawling upon the dirty combination of rags and sacks that covered the floor. As it was, he was walking very swiftly and the fall nearly stunned him; but he soon regained his feet.

He went back to the place where he
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