

THE HIGH POINT SCOUT

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TOM AND THE COUNTERFEITERS

(By Nady Cates.)

CHAPTER III.

Peter Baily.

"What you doin' down there— makin' movin' pictures? Wall, if you are, I'm jist in time for the first reel."

It was not the voice of 'Cal' this time that spoke, but it was that of a silly-looking country boy, who was apparently nearing the age of eighteen. He was standing near the top of the stairway, looking down admiringly at the happenings that were taking place.

"Say, boy, what are you doin' here? We don't allow loafers around this place," said 'Cal,' in a surprised tone.

"I ain't no loafer," laughed the country boy; "cause I was out kinda perousing around to fin' old Daisy. She done got aloose agin and me Paw kim around and shook me out o' bed and told me ter hunt the ol' milker. I guess you know me Paw—he's—"

"Cut out yer consarned gibbling," broke in 'Cal,' "and git out o' here."

"Say, Mister," replied the boy, and then he went on, "Ain't you a little bossy? My Paw owns this here property, so I reckon as how I'll come in an' take a rest with you a while." With these words he descended the stairway.

Tom was somewhat glad to have a companion and he was more than satisfied to hear 'Cal' mumble, "I guess the little simp ain't got sense enough to do any harm or even suspect."

'Cal' still held his revolver on Tom, while the silly country boy stumbled around the room looking at different objects of interest. 'Cal' kept his head out the window or rather hole in the wall in order to watch Tom and Peter Baily, for this was the name that that individual gave 'Cal' as an introduction. He could not draw the stairway back to the ceiling; because if he left his

post long enough to enter the room through the door, likely as not Tom would escape. Yet, if he let the stairway remain like it was, some night-prowler might discover it. Anyhow, he resolved to give all of his attention to these two boys until Groggs or Bill would come.

Owing to the fact that Tom had not slept any all night, he soon grew weary of standing and with the permission of 'Cal,' he drew up a chair and sat down.

Peter, on the other hand, seemed to be as fresh as a morning glory and he was soon standing at the opening in the wall talking nonsense to 'Cal'; but that villain seemed to enjoy his company and never for one minute noticed that he had a piece of a chair in the hand that was behind his back.

Tom, however, saw the intentions of Peter and he felt that he ought to help him in his good work, for he felt sure that the country boy was there on a mission. So he began acting as though he was going to escape that he might attract the attention of 'Cal.'

His plan worked, for 'Cal' pushed Peter to one side, pointed his revolver straight at Tom's head and bade him keep quiet and not pull off any of his fishy business.

Tom saw Peter step back, raise his club and the next minute everything was in confusion.

Bang! bang! bang! It was the report of 'Cal's' revolver ringing over Tom's head. Immediately afterward the room was half-filled with a chemical odor which was far from pleasing. But Tom didn't wait to get a full definition of it. He fairly flew up the stairs and never stopped until he was a good distance down the road—far enough not to smell the chemicals and yet see a dusty mist issuing from the underground room.

He was standing there waiting for Peter when he felt a slight tap on the back. He turned around and,

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