

THE YOUNG RAILROADERS

his hands bound behind him, was Hennessy, their foreman.

For a moment Alex stood rooted to the spot. What did it mean? Suddenly realizing his own possible danger, he caught up his rod and fish, and sprang for the door.

On the threshold he sharply halted. In the open he would be seen at once, and pursued! He turned and cast a quick glance round the room. The ladder to the loft! He darted for it, scrambled up, and drew himself through the opening just as the excited foreigners poured in through the door below. For some moments afraid to move, Alex lay on his back, listening to the hubbub beneath him, and wondering in terror what the trackmen intended doing with their prisoner. Then, gathering courage at their continued ignorance of his presence, he cautiously moved back to the opening and peered down.

The men were gathered in the center of the room, all talking at once. But he could not see the foreman. As he leaned farther forward heavy footfalls sounded about the end of the house, and Big Tony, a huge Italian who had recently been discharged from the gang, appeared in the doorway.

"We puta him in da barn," he announced in broken English; for the rest of the gang were Poles. "Tommaso, he watcha him."

"An' now listen," continued the big trackman fiercely, as the rest gathered about him. "I did n't tell everyt'ing. Besides disa man Hennessy he say