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AN OBJECT LESSON

CHARACTERS

FRED PRATT.

RALPH WOOD.

MR. PRATT, *Fred's father.*

MR. WOOD, *Ralph's uncle.*

Ralph—I've brought your book back. It's tip-top.

Fred—Oh, the *Banditi Revenge*? I think it's splendid. Bill, the bandit, was a *glorious* fellow, wasn't he? Wasn't it comical—the way he entrapped the stage passengers in the mountains. What jolly times the bandits had!

Ralph—Fred, it's just the sort of wild roaring life *I'd* like. I wouldn't dare say so at home, but I would; and I think Bill the bandit, and Sam the outlaw, and Phil the renegade, were every whit as good as these steady-going folks around here.

Fred—So do I. You know Bill never murdered unless it was *necessary*.

Ralph—No; and Sam always stood ready to defend any poor fellow in distress. Phil was a first-rate fellow, if he did vow vengeance on the red-skins. He never spared any, men, women or children.

Fred—I don't blame him for killing the Indians. Didn't they murder his mother and sisters?

Ralph—I don't blame him, either. They *ought* to be exterminated. I tell you, Fred, I've half made up my mind to go out on the plains, or into the mountains and try the jolly adventurous life of a road-agent myself. I don't propose to stay at home and dig potatoes, hatch corn, saw wood, and such menial tasks as those, when I might be flying over the plains in my saddle.

Fred—I'm tired of such a humdrum life myself. Going to school is just as poky as work. But I don't suppose five dollars would take us far. We might starve before we could reach the frontier.

Ralph—Starve? What did Sam the outlaw do? Helped himself, didn't he? He had some pretty rich experience, too. You remember how he took possession of a pantry once, and when the cook came in, frightened her nearly out of her wits by flinging a sheet around himself and playing the ghost. He had his fill on pies and cake

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