

THE YOUNG RAILROADERS

"Hurrah!" and turning his whole attention to the lamp, that the signals might be perfect, began flashing across the night his thrilling message of warning:

"THE FOREIGN TRACK HANDS —"

From a short distance down the spur came a shout. Startled, Alex hesitated. Again came a cry, then the sound of swiftly running feet.

He had been discovered! In a panic Alex turned and began to scramble down the ladder. But sharply he pulled up. No! That would be playing the coward! He must complete the message! And bravely choking down his terror, he climbed back onto the platform, and while the running feet and threatening cries came nearer every moment, continued his message:

"HANDS ARE —"

"Stop dat! Queek! I shoot! I shoot!" cried the voice of Big Tony, immediately below him. Again for a moment Alex quailed, then again went bravely on, while the old semaphore rocked and swayed as the enraged Italian threw himself at it and scrambled up toward him.

"GOING TO RUN —"

With a plunge the big trackman reached up and caught him by the ankle, wrenched him back from the lantern, and clambered up beside him. Catching the light off the semaphore arm, he thrust it into the boy's face. "O ho!" he exclaimed. "So it you, da station-man boy, eh? An' you da one whata help Hennessy get away, eh?"