

A ROMANCE OF BILLY-GOAT HILL

"He *wuz* in the fight!" he cried huskily. "It was 'tween him an' the drunk. Sheeley ketched him fakin' a ace, an' he calls Sheeley a liar, an' they fit all over the floor. The big one was n't in it! He kep' tryin' to stop 'em, buttin' in with his whip."

"But how do you know all this, Chick?" cried Miss Lady almost fiercely; "did the Sheeley boy tell you?"

"Skeeter? Shucks, he don't know nothin' 'ceptin' what his paw tole him."

"But who told you?"

Chick closed his lips and shook his head: "He 'll set the cop on me."

"Who?"

"Skeeter's paw. Fer smashin' the slot machine. But I never took none of his money, Mis' Squeerington; it was mine!" His lips began to tremble.

"The cop won't get you, Chick," said Miss Lady, now on her knees beside him, coaxing out each statement, and trying to keep down her excitement. "Tell me, quick! How do you know about the shooting?"

"'Cause," said Chick fearfully, "I—I seen it!"

"Well, if that ain't the limit!" said Phineas, while Maria gathered Loreny up under the impression that Chick had lost his mind, and might become dangerous.