

came opposite the office door, some fifteen feet were between him and his arch enemy.

Mr. Bolton awoke from his lethargy with surprising suddenness.

"You young rascal," he shouted, "what you been doing to my girl? I'll teach you to make girls cry, you little speckled-face runt, you!"

He made a dash for Speckles, but by the time he had recovered his balance and saved himself from toppling over the edge of the platform to the tracks, Speckles had reached the safe retreat of the freight-shed door. And as the irate parent, after shaking his fist impotently, walked back and disappeared within his domain, Speckles indulged in a series of pantomimes in which his fingers and his nose played an intimate and comprehensive part.

Perched once more on the cracker-box, Speckles again resolved himself into a committee on ways and means. His little skirmish with Madge's father had exhilarated him to such an extent that his heavy and oppressing sense of despondency had vanished, and in its place came a renewed determination to resume, somehow or other, the railroad career that Healy had so emphatically interrupted.

He turned over in his mind the feasibility of applying to Regan, the master mechanic, for a job in the shops, but dismissed the idea almost immediately on the ground that shop men were not, strictly speaking, railroaders.

He might start in switching and braking, and work up to conductor. That, at least, was railroading—not