

somebody who would set heavier on a horse, eat more an' be enough sight less gritty, honest an' willing than you."

Praise was something that Rodney Merton had known but little of; and these words from so important a personage as "Two-cent Tranquility" made the boys cheeks burn. This commendation gave him courage to ask:

"Would you be willing to go down, this morning, if it wouldn't be too much trouble, and see him about it."

"'Course, I'll go!" the cobbler almost snapped, as though the request contained an implied insult. "Didn't your father an' I summer and winter together for years when this country was new; an' didn't we always share up on anything an' everything that we had when the other was short?"

As soon as he finished tipping the waxed-end with a bristle, he hung it over a nail, took off his leather apron and said:

"Well, come on."

They walked on towards the fort in silence, Rodney being too much elated to trust himself to talk, until they approached the entrance of the palisade, when he ventured to ask:

"Will you do—do the talking, Mr. Tranquillite?"

"Yes," laughed the shoemaker. "I always do that—too much of it, I'm afraid."

"Can we see the newspaper man, who wants to engage a private scout?" boldly demanded "Two-cent" of the guard.