

Under the shadow of the screen the Boy was sitting on the quarry ; he was a boy quite capable of sitting upon anything, in point of fact. He really was lying more than sitting, however : his legs and feet were comfortably cocked up on a heap of stone, with the toes of his boots turned out aggressively higher up than his head. A lazy boy he was, apparently, and yet a very sharp-looking, audacious urchin of a boy, with a freckled face dust-powdered, and a pointed nose under a torn straw hat.

He was lying there alone, in a sort of woodland wilderness, and yet he did not seem a rustic boy at all. He looked like a towny boy—a Parisian boy,—with a good deal of the gamin of Belleville about his appearance and manner. He could hardly be an industrious boy, not a boy to enjoy even a larky kind of labour, for not an ounce of stone did he appear to have broken, though the most knowing and cunning and tempting of hammers, with a shining head and a handle of twisted withy, lay close in reach. He kept his hands in his pockets ; and he was not a well-mannered boy at all, for he did not rise, or withdraw his hands even, or utter the merest “*Bonjour, M'sieur !*” at the sight of Stewart. He was, indeed, a perky, saucy boy, short for his apparent years, but lamentably precocious. And though he lay there all alone and miles from anywhere, he did not seem the least bit lonesome or afraid.

Stewart came plodding up, and how did this boy salute him ?

“*Hello, my zebra ! you been a long time, haven't you ?*” the boy said, sticking his toes up higher. “*Why didn't you come afore ? . . . Got a match ?*”

“*Good heavens above !*” Dick Stewart paused, and stood looking down at the urchin with eyes of gravity. With a pair of keen little eyes the boy looked up at him. Stewart could see the keen little eyes through the hole between the crown of the ragged straw hat and the torn-away brim, which looped down upon the freckled nose.

“*Speak, my old zebra !*” said the boy. “*Talk ! Didn't you hear me ask if you'd got a match ?*”