

provided by a burring sponge saturated with alcohol, and hanging on a wire which was stretched across the open mouth of the balloon. The boy who had been charged with procuring the alcohol had dishonestly spent the money for powder and shot with which to go hunting, but he had made good the deficiency by stealing his mother's bottle of cooking brandy. It burned to a charm, the balloon soared gracefully aloft amid a loud chorus of 'Ahs!' and then the boy who held the bottle and who knew the liquor by its smell, remarked that it was a pity not to put the remaining contents where they would no the most good. The motion was seconded by one or two bad boys who were not unacquainted with liquor, and the bottle was passed from mouth to mouth, Jack being the fourth who received it.

'I don't drink,' said he holding the bottle and wondering whether it would be best to empty it on the ground.

'You're afraid to,' said one of the drinkers, to whom Jack had been held up, to the extreme pitch of exasperation, as a good temperance boy.

'Of course he's afraid,' said another bad boy.

The mere smell of the brandy made Jack shudder, but this was as nothing to the trembling caused by the charge of fear. Afraid? well, he was afraid—of being laughed at, so he placed the bottle to his lips. He did not know anything about the quantity to drink, except that when he drank water out of a bottle as he frequently did when out after berries in summer, he took about a dozen swallows, so he swallowed industriously until one of the bad boys who had not drunk complained that none was being left for the others. Then it seemed to him that he had swallowed the whole of a great conflagration, that he would cough himself to death, if, indeed, he did not die of the uncontrollable trembling that agitated his frame.

During the long drawn moment in which this new misery was being experienced by Jack, most of the remaining boys had been vociferating discordantly about something, and when Jack regained some little control over himself he saw that the balloon was the cause of their agitation: it had lost its balance, perhaps from too much brandy getting to its head, and in turning sideways it caught fire and began to fall. It caused a beautiful though dissolving view, and soon there was nothing remaining but the sponge, which was coming down as brightly and apparently as swiftly as a meteor. Everybody ran to see where it fell, and although the

sponge was making considerably the best time, it had by far the greatest distance to travel, so the boys had nearly reached it when it tumbled into the well-stocked pigpen of Shantz, the butcher, where it was received with all the hubbub which the appearance of so unusual a visitor could warrant. The spectacle of a brightly-blazing sponge in a small enclosure, with a dozen hogs squealing at it, was one which commended itself to the boys by its utter novelty, but when the proprietor of the establishment opened his own back door, and descended to the yard with a club, the scene became suddenly devoid of interest, and the place which knew the boys but now, knew them no more that evening. The boys afterwards agreed, while talking the matter over, that any sensible man would first have cast the dangerous visitor from the pen. But Shantz had seen so much of juvenile mischief that whenever he saw a boy near the scene of any irregularity, he thought more of preventing future trouble than of curing that which existed, so he left the pigs to take care of the sponge, and gave chase to the boys.

Jack did his best to keep up with his companions, but he had never in his life suspected our quiet old globe of such unstable ways as she indulged in during that short run. The world tipped to one side until Jack was certain that he would roll over to his left in a moment and slide straight down hill to the Atlantic Ocean, which was five hundred miles away. Then the world tipped the other way, and Jack felt himself going, going, going, until he felt sure that in a minute or two he would be caught and impaled on some lofty peak of the rocky Mountains, more than a thousand miles to the right. Then all the stars of heaven forsook their orbits and dashed about each other in a manner which made Jack so giddy to look at them, so he looked straight before him at the steeple of the Presbyterian Church, just in time to see it dissolve itself into two steeples, which trembled awhile and then indulged in a mad strife to see which should overtop the other. The antics which Hockamine's store indulged in were very dangerous to a brick structure which had been erected by contract, as that had. Then Jack seemed to be treading on air, a league at a step, yet unable to approach any nearer to his companions.

Suddenly his collar tightened, though he could not imagine why; then the judgment-day seemed surely to come, for stars and steeples and stores all mixed themselves in utter confusion, and Jack fell backward some thousand of miles, apparently, and the last sensation he experienced was of seeing a