

## THE YOUNG RAILROADERS

the rest of the easily excitable foreigners had been won.

Again he moved back out of sight. Something must be done! If he could only reach the barn and free the foreman!

But of course the first thing to do was to make his own escape from the house. He rose on his elbow and glanced about.

At the far end of the loft a glimmer of light through a crack seemed to indicate a door. Cautiously Alex rose to his knees, and began creeping forward to investigate. When half way a loud creak of the boards brought him to a halt with his heart in his mouth. But the loud conversation below continued, and heartily thanking the drumming rain on the roof overhead, Alex moved on, and finally reached his goal.

As he had hoped, it was a small door. Feeling cautiously about, he found it to be secured by a hook. When he sought to raise the catch, however, it resisted. Evidently it had not been lifted for many years, and had rusted to the staple. Carefully Alex threw his weight upward against it. It still refused to move. He pushed harder, and suddenly it gave with a piercing screech.

Instantly the talking below ceased, and Alex stood rigid, scarcely breathing. Then a voice exclaimed, "Up de stair!" quick footsteps crossed the floor towards the ladder, and in a panic of fear Alex threw himself bodily against the door, in a mad endeavor to force it. But it still held, and with a thrill of despair