

*"Penrod!"*

It was his mother's voice, calling from the back porch.

Simultaneously, the noon whistles began to blow, far and near; and the romancer in the sawdust-box, summoned prosaically from steep mountain passes above the clouds, paused with stubby pencil half-way from lip to knee. His eyes were shining: there was a rapt sweetness in his gaze. As he wrote, his burden had grown lighter; thoughts of Mrs. Lora Rewbush had almost left him; and in particular as he recounted (even by the chaste dash) the annoyed expressions of Mr. Wilson, the wounded detective, and the silken moustached mule-driver, he had felt mysteriously relieved concerning the Child Sir Lancelot. Altogether he looked a better and a brighter boy.

*"Pen-rod!"*

The rapt look faded slowly. He sighed, but moved not.

"Penrod! We're having lunch early just on your account, so you'll have plenty of time to be dressed for the pageant. Hurry!"

There was silence in Penrod's aerie.

*"Pen-rod!"*