

awake until the cook returned from enjoying her "night out," soon after she had gone upstairs to her bed-room, he thought he smelled smoke. He sniffed the air. Yes, it was smoke. He sprang from the bed, with his heart plunging and rearing within him. He instinctively felt of the walls. Two of them were very hot. The house was on fire! Just then there was a crackle; then with a sullen roar a pillar of flames shot up to the ceiling in the corner behind the bureau.

"Fire! Fire!" he shouted; then, still calling that terrible cry, he rushed to the window and slammed it shut, then turned and ran out of the room, banging the door shut behind him in order to stop the flames from reaching the rest of the house.

In a moment the house and the street were in an uproar. Neighbors hurried in to carry out everything they could; while the alarm bells clanged wildly maddening the fire-horses to make a marvellous run to the scene of destruction. Here and there throughout the rooms darted Richard, helping greatly the saving of the most important of the household goods. Without the aid of him who knew so well what his parents prized many unimportant things would have been carried out and many valuable things left to burn. The boy seemed like unto the man possessed with a legion of demons as he nimbly sprang upon tables and chairs and pulled down pictures from the walls or when, with the strength of only a child, he lifted and carried down-stairs a heavy book-case of one shelf crammed full of valuable books. It was very wonderful how many things were carried out to safety from among the flames themselves. Yet, what seems kind of pitiful, all Richard could save of his own "treasures" was an old horse-ship that he—but this is hurrying past my story.

Now the firemen saw that they could not confine the fire to the right side of the house, as they had hoped to do; and the work of saving was necessarily stopped. Just then a cry arose in the crowd outside, "The cook!

The cook! Where is she? She is not here! She's in the attic!" All the people were filled with horror. She would be burned to death! At once, putting the hesitating men to shame, two boys sprang forward to the piazza steps. They were the boy from the nearest house and Richard. Richard was clad only in his pajamas, his shoes, and a great wagon-robe cast around him; but these were too much to let him run freely up three flights of stairs. So what did he do, but throw off the heavy robe, hurl it over the other lad's head and knock his half smothered victim down the steps into the arms of the nearest spectators. This was his revenge and his means of vanquishing a competitor. Then, heedless of the cry that immediately broke forth from the startled people, he ran up the stairs, two steps at a bound. There sat the cook on the third-story landing, shivering with fear and crying with terror, as she swayed to and fro with her hands clasped over her eyes. "Come, Mary! You fool! Go down stairs!" "Oh! Oh!" she wailed and could not move. "Coward!" Richard sneered unconsciously imitating the tone the girls had used when they jeered at him. How glad he was to be able to cast back this epithet at the very person whose gossipous tongue had caused him most of his sorrows. But his wish to avenge himself on the cook did not at all prevent him from planning with lightning-like rapidity how he might save her, who, plainly could not even walk down stairs to keep herself from death. He ran into the attic play room and seized an old horse-ship that lay on the floor among the toys. And this is what he did. He lashed the woman until she ran down stairs howling from pain. Down through a hall fast filling with smoke and flames, past firemen with lengths of spouting hose, through puddles and streams of water, amid showers of falling plaster, and down the main stairway, Richard drove the servant into the hands of rescuers. Just as he was halfway down the last flight of steps, the nozzle of a hose suddenly broke from the tired hands of a fireman and with its resistless