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世界名著阅读丛书

Ragged Dick

流浪儿成绅士

[美] 霍瑞修·爱尔杰 著
蔡红昌 等编译



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RAGGED DICK OR, STREET LIFE IN NEW YORK WITH THE BOOT-BLACKS

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第一章 衣衫破烂的迪克

Chapter 1 Ragged Dick Is Introduced to the Reader

导 读

早晨七点，睡在大街旁木头箱子里的迪克被一个车夫叫醒。由于前一天晚上迪克玩到半夜，所以被叫醒之后依然迷迷糊糊的。车夫怀疑迪克的钱来路不明，但迪克表示自己是坚决不会偷东西的，这让车夫松了口气；在他的催促下，迪克很快从箱子里跳了出来，没有洗漱，穿着比他本人大大两号的破烂衣服，开始了一天的擦鞋工作。

很快，一位赶往办公室上班的先生停在了迪克面前，迪克一边擦着鞋，一边和客人聊天。迪克调皮地告诉客人自己身上的衣服可是华盛顿将军穿过的，裤子是拿破仑的，逗得客人哈哈大笑。当客人准备付 10 美分的擦鞋钱时，发现身上没有零钱；于是给了他 25 美分，由于赶着上班，那位先生告诉了迪克地址，希望迪克把找回的零钱送给他，但他自己也没有抱什么希望。其实主人公迪克虽然有时候会故意整人，挣的钱再多也从来不会留到第二天，生活有时候很奢侈，而且还抽烟赌博；但他也有很多优点：比

如说他从不骗人，从不偷东西，为人坦率大方，这些是很多流浪的孩子做不到的。



迪克被叫醒后还是迷迷糊糊的

"Wake up there, youngster," said a rough voice.

Ragged Dick opened his eyes slowly, and stared stupidly in the face of the speaker, but did not offer to get up.

"Wake up, you young vagabond!" said the man a little impatiently; "I suppose you'd lay there all day, if I hadn't called you."

"What time is it?" asked Dick.

"Seven o'clock."

"Seven o'clock! I oughter've been up an hour ago. I know what 'twas made me so precious sleepy. I went to the Old Bowery last night, and didn't turn in till past twelve."

"You went to the Old Bowery? Where'd you get your money?" asked the man, who was a porter in the employ of a firm doing business on Spruce Street. "Made it by shines, in course. My guardian don't allow me no money for theatres, so I have to earn it."

"Some boys get it easier than that," said the porter significantly.

"You don't catch me stealin', if that's what you mean," said Dick.

"Don't you ever steal, then?"

"No, and I wouldn't. Lots of boys does it, but I wouldn't."

"Well, I'm glad to hear you say that. I believe there's some good in you, Dick, after all."

"Oh, I'm a rough customer!" said Dick. "But I wouldn't steal. It's mean."

"I'm glad you think so, Dick," and the rough voice sounded gentler than at first. "Have you got any money to buy your breakfast?"

"No, but I'll soon get some."

While this conversation had been going on, Dick had got up. His bedchamber had been a wooden box half full of straw, on which the

young boot-black had reposed his weary limbs, and slept as soundly as if it had been a bed of down. He dumped down into the straw without taking the trouble of undressing.

Getting up too was an equally short process. He jumped out of the box, shook himself, picked out one or two straws that had found their way into rents in his clothes, and, drawing a well-worn cap over his uncombed locks, he was all ready for the business of the day.

Dick's appearance as he stood beside the box was rather peculiar. His pants were torn in several places, and had apparently belonged in the first instance to a boy two sizes larger than himself. He wore a vest, all the buttons of which were gone except two, out of which peeped a shirt which looked as if it had been worn a month. To complete his costume he wore a coat too long for him, dating back, if one might judge from its general appearance, to a remote antiquity.

Washing the face and hands is usually considered proper in commencing the day, but Dick was above such refinement. He had no particular dislike to dirt, and did not think it necessary to remove several dark streaks on his face and hands. But in spite of his dirt and rags there was something about Dick that was attractive. It was easy to see that if he had been clean and well dressed he would have been decidedly good-looking. Some of his companions were sly, and their faces inspired distrust; but Dick had a frank, straight-forward manner that made him a favorite.

Dick's business hours had commenced. He had no office to open. His little blacking-box was ready for use, and he looked sharply in the faces of all who passed, addressing each with, "Shine yer boots, sir?"

"How much?" asked a gentleman on his way to his office.

"Ten cents," said Dick, dropping his box, and sinking upon his knees on the sidewalk, flourishing his brush with the air of one skilled in his profession.

"Ten cents! Isn't that a little steep?"

"Well, you know 'taint all clear profit," said Dick, who had already set to work. "There's the *blacking* costs something, and I have to get a new brush pretty often."

"And you have a large rent too," said the gentleman quizzically, with a glance at a large hole in Dick's coat.

"Yes, sir," said Dick, always ready to joke; "I have to pay such a big rent for my manshun up on Fifth Avenoo, that I can't afford to take less than ten cents a shine. I'll give you a bully shine, sir."

"Be quick about it, for I am in a hurry. So your house is on Fifth Avenue, is it?"

"It isn't anywhere else," said Dick, and Dick spoke the truth there.

"What tailor do you patronize?" asked the gentleman, surveying Dick's attire.

"Would you like to go to the same one?" asked Dick, shrewdly.

"Well, no; it strikes me that he didn't give you a very good fit."

"This coat once belonged to General Washington," said Dick, comically. "He wore it all through the Revolution, and it got torn some, 'cause he fit so hard. When he died he told his widdler to give it to some smart young feller that hadn't got none of his own; so she gave it to me. But if you'd like it, sir, to remember General Washington by, I'll let you have it reasonable."

"Thank you, but I wouldn't want to deprive you of it. And did your

pants come from General Washington too?"

"No, they was a gift from Lewis Napoleon. Lewis had outgrown 'em and sent 'em to me,—he's bigger than me, and that's why they don't fit."

"It seems you have distinguished friends. Now, my lad, I suppose you would like your money."

"I shouldn't have any objection," said Dick.

"I believe," said the gentleman, examining his pocket-book, "I haven't got anything short of twenty-five cents. Have you got any change?"

"Not a cent," said Dick. "All my money's invested in the Erie Railroad."

"That's unfortunate."

"Shall I get the money changed, sir?"

"I can't wait; I've got to meet an appointment immediately. I'll hand you twenty-five cents, and you can leave the change at my office any time during the day."

"All right, sir. Where is it?"

"No. 125 Fulton Street. Shall you remember?"

"Yes, sir. What name?"

"Greyson,—office on second floor."

"All right, sir; I'll bring it."

"I wonder whether the little scamp will prove honest," said Mr. Greyson to himself, as he walked away. "If he does, I'll give him my custom regularly. If he don't as is most likely, I shan't mind the loss of fifteen cents."

Mr. Greyson didn't understand Dick. Our ragged hero wasn't a model boy in all respects. I am afraid he swore sometimes, and now and then he played tricks upon unsophisticated boys from the country, or gave a

wrong direction to honest old gentlemen unused to the city. A clergyman in search of the Cooper Institute he once directed to the Tombs Prison, and, following him unobserved, was highly delighted when the unsuspecting stranger walked up the front steps of the great stone building on Centre Street, and tried to obtain admission.

"I guess he wouldn't want to stay long if he did get in," thought Ragged Dick, hitching up his pants. "Leastways I shouldn't. They're so precious glad to see you that they won't let you go, but board you gratuitous, and never send in no bills."

Another of Dick's faults was his extravagance. Being always wide-awake and ready for business, he earned enough to have supported him comfortably and respectably. There were not a few young clerks who employed Dick from time to time in his professional capacity, who scarcely earned as much as he, greatly as their style and dress exceeded his. But Dick was careless of his earnings. Where they went he could hardly have told himself. However much he managed to earn during the day, all was generally spent before morning. He was fond of going to the Old Bowery Theatre, and to Tony Pastor's, and if he had any money left afterwards, he would invite some of his friends in somewhere to have an oyster-stew; so it seldom happened that he commenced the day with a penny.

Then I am sorry to add that Dick had formed the habit of smoking. This cost him considerable, for Dick was rather fastidious about his cigars, and wouldn't smoke the cheapest. Besides, having a liberal nature, he was generally ready to treat his companions. But of course the expense was the smallest objection. No boy of fourteen can smoke without being affected injuriously. Men are frequently injured by smoking, and

boys always. But large numbers of the newsboys and boot-blacks form the habit. Exposed to the cold and wet they find that it warms them up, and the self-indulgence grows upon them. It is not uncommon to see a little boy, too young to be out of his mother's sight, smoking with all the apparent satisfaction of a veteran smoker.

There was another way in which Dick sometimes lost money. There was a noted gambling-house on Baxter Street, which in the evening was sometimes crowded with these juvenile gamblers, who staked their hard earnings, generally losing of course, and refreshing themselves from time to time with a vile mixture of liquor at two cents a glass. Sometimes Dick strayed in here, and played with the rest.

I have mentioned Dick's faults and defects, because I want it understood, to begin with, that I don't consider him a model boy. But there were some good points about him nevertheless. He was above doing anything mean or dishonorable. He would not steal, or cheat, or impose upon younger boys, but was frank and straight-forward, manly and self-reliant. His nature was a noble one, and had saved him from all mean faults. I hope my young readers will like him as I do, without being blind to his faults. Perhaps, although he was only a boot-black, they may find something in him to imitate.

And now, having fairly introduced Ragged Dick to my young readers, I must refer them to the next chapter for his further adventures.

第二章 约翰尼·诺兰

Chapter 2 Johnny Nolan

导 读

在第一个客人走了之后，又有三个顾客光顾了迪克的擦鞋摊。迪克已有足够的钱吃早饭了，他走到一家餐馆点了咖啡、牛排和面包。正当他准备吃早餐的时候，看到同样是擦鞋匠的约翰尼·诺兰眼巴巴地看着餐馆里面。迪克询问后得知约翰尼没有钱吃早饭，于是慷慨大方地请他吃了早饭，还鼓励他不要偷懒，要积极地寻找新客户。就在两人吃完早饭走出餐厅时，约翰尼突然受到惊吓似地躲到一边。他看到一个穿棕色大衣的男人，那是以前带他去农场工作的人，可后来约翰尼因生活太孤独而逃跑了，他担心那人会再次抓他回去。约翰尼之所以会来纽约，是因为他父亲在这边；可是他的父亲是一个酒鬼，不仅把钱全花在喝酒上，而且在醉酒时甚至会发疯似地企图危害约翰尼的生命。约翰尼逃离了家，开始了擦鞋匠的生活；但他工作不努力，生活都成问题，迪克已经帮助过他很多次了。

两人分开之后，迪克又开始寻找客户，不久便有了工作。那位先生口袋里没有零钱，让迪克拿着两美元的钞票去兑换零钱。谁知道那位商店的

售货员一口咬定是假钞，还威胁迪克说要报警。



迪克开始了擦鞋的工作

After Dick had finished polishing Mr. Greyson's boots he was fortunate enough to secure three other customers, two of them reporters in the Tribune establishment, which occupies the corner of Spruce Street and Printing House Square.

When Dick had got through with his last customer the City Hall clock indicated eight o'clock. He had been up an hour, and hard at work, and naturally began to think of breakfast. He went up to the head of Spruce Street, and turned into Nassau. Two blocks further, and he reached Ann Street. On this street was a small, cheap restaurant, where for five cents Dick could get a cup of coffee, and for ten cents more, a plate of beefsteak with a plate of bread thrown in. These Dick ordered, and sat down at a table.

It was a small apartment with a few plain tables unprovided with cloths, for the class of customers who patronized it were not very particular. Our hero's breakfast was soon before him. Neither the coffee nor the steak were as good as can be bought at Delmonico's; but then it is very doubtful whether, in the present state of his wardrobe, Dick would have been received at that aristocratic restaurant, even if his means had admitted of paying the high prices there charged.

Dick had scarcely been served when he espied a boy about his own size standing at the door, looking wistfully into the restaurant. This was Johnny Nolan, a boy of fourteen, who was engaged in the same profession as Ragged Dick. His wardrobe was in very much the same condition as Dick's.

"Had your breakfast, Johnny?" inquired Dick, cutting off a piece of steak.

"No."

“Come in, then. Here’s room for you.”

“I aint got no money,” said Johnny, looking a little enviously at his more fortunate friend.

“Haven’t you had any shines?”

“Yes, I had one, but I shan’t get any pay till to-morrow.”

“Are you hungry?”

“Try me, and see.”

“Come in. I’ll stand treat this morning.”

Johnny Nolan was nowise slow to accept this invitation, and was soon seated beside Dick.

“What’ll you have, Johnny?”

“Same as you.”

“Cup o’ coffee and beefsteak,” ordered Dick.

These were promptly brought, and Johnny attacked them vigorously.

Now, in the boot-blackening business, as well as in higher avocations, the same rule prevails, that energy and industry are rewarded, and indolence suffers. Dick was energetic and on the alert for business, but Johnny the reverse. The consequence was that Dick earned probably three times as much as the other.

“How do you like it?” asked Dick, surveying Johnny’s attacks upon the steak with evident complacency.

“It’s hunky.”

I don’t believe “hunky” is to be found in either Webster’s or Worcester’s big dictionary; but boys will readily understand what it means.

“Do you come here often?” asked Johnny.