

THE
YOUNG OARSMEN OF LAKEVIEW

BY
CAPT. RALPH BONEHILL
(EDWARD STRATEMEYER)

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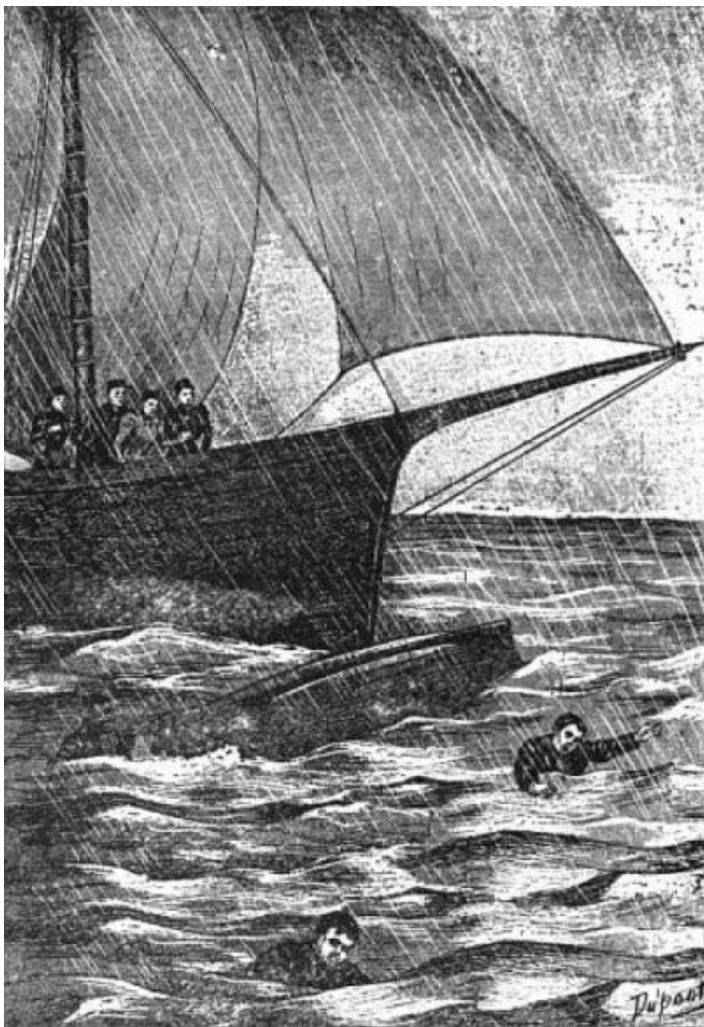
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THE YACHT WAS BEARING DOWN UPON THEM.

THE YOUNG OARSMEN OF LAKEVIEW.

BY

CAPT. RALPH BONEHILL.

Author of
"Rival Bicyclists," "Leo, the Circus Boy," Etc.



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CHAPTER I.

JERRY, HARRY, AND BLUMPO.

"I'll race you."

"Done! Are you ready?"

"I am."

"Then off we go."

Quicker than it can be related, four oars fell into the water and four sturdy arms bent to the task of sending two beautiful single-shell craft skimming over the smooth surface of the lake.

It was a spirited scene, and attracted not a little attention, for both of the contestants were well known.

"Go it, Jerry! You can beat him if you try!"

"Don't let him get ahead, Harry. Keep closer to the shore!"

"How far is the race to be?"

"Up to the big pine tree and back."

"That's a full mile and more. I'll bet on Jerry Upton."

"And I'll bet on Harry Parker. He has more skill than Jerry."

"But Jerry has the muscle."

"There they go, side by side!"

And thus the talking and shouting went on along the lake front. Most of the boys present were members of the Lakeview Boat Club, but there were others of the town there, too, as enthusiastic as the rest.

It was a clear, warm day in June. The summer holidays at the various institutes of learning in the vicinity had just begun, so many of the lads had nothing to do but to enjoy themselves.

There were not a few craft out besides the two shells to which we have drawn attention. But they drew out of the way to give the racers a free field.

On and on went Jerry and Harry until the big pine was reached. Then came the turn, and they started on the home stretch side by side, neither one foot ahead of the other.

"It's going to be a tie race."

"Pull, Harry! Let yourself out!"

"Show him what you can do, Jerry!"

Encouraged by the shouts of their friends, both boys increase their speed. But

the increase on both sides was equal, and still the boats kept bow and bow as they neared the boathouse.

“It’s going to be a tie, sure enough.”

“Spurt a bit, Jerry!”

“Go it for all you’re worth, Harry!”

Again the two contestants put forth additional muscle, each to out-distance his opponent, and again the two row-boats leaped forward, still side by side.

As old Jack Broxton, the keeper of the boathouse, said afterward: “It would have taken twelve judges, sitting twelve days, to have told which had the advantage.”

The finishing point was now less than five hundred feet distant, and in a few seconds more the race would be over. The crowd began to stop shouting, almost breathless with pent-up interest. It was surely the prettiest race that had ever been rowed on Otasco Lake.

Splash!

The splash was followed by a splutter, and then a frantic cry for help. A portion of the high float in front of the boathouse had unexpectedly given way, and a short, stocky, reddish-black youth had gone floundering over board.

“Blumpo Brown has gone under.”

“It serves him right for standing away out on the edge of the float.”

“Help! Help!” cried the youth in the water.

“Hold on, Harry! Jerry, don’t run into me!”

Alarmed by the cries, the two racers turned around, easing up on their oars as they did so. A single glance showed them that the unfortunate one was directly in their path.

“We must stop!” cried Jerry Upton to his friend.

“All right; call it off,” responded Harry Parker. “It was a tie.”

As he finished, both shells drew up, one on either side of Blumpo Brown. Each of the rowers offered the struggling youth a helping hand.

Blumpo was soon clinging to Jerry’s shell. He was dripping from head to foot, and not being at all a handsomely-formed or good-looking youth, he presented a most comical appearance.

“It’s too bad I spoiled the race,” mumbled Blumpo. “But that’s just me—always putting my foot into it.”

“I guess you put more than your foot into it this time,” was Harry’s good-natured comment, as he ran close up alongside.

“Where shall I land you, Blumpo?” questioned Jerry Upton.

"Anywhere but near the boathouse," returned Blumpo, with a shiver that was not brought on entirely by his involuntary bath. "If you land me there the fellows won't give me a chance to get out of sight."

"I'll take you up the lake shore if you wish," said Jerry. "I intended to go up anyway in a row-boat."

"All right, Jerry, do that and I'll be much obliged to you," returned Blumpo Brown.

"You are going along, aren't you, Harry?" continued Jerry, turning to his late rival.

"Yes, I want to stop at Mrs. Fleming's cottage," replied Harry Parker.

In a moment more Harry had turned his shell over to old Jack Broxton and had leaped into a row-boat.

"Ain't you fellows going to try it over again?" asked several on the shore, anxiously.

"Not now," returned Jerry. Then he went on to Harry, in a lower tone: "I didn't expect to make a public exhibition of our little trial at speed, did you?"

"No; not at all. It was a tie, and let it remain so."

Jerry soon left his shell; and then four oars soon took the row-boat far away from the vicinity of the shore; and while the three boys are on their way up the lake, let us learn a little more concerning them, especially as they are to form the all-important characters of this tale of midsummer adventures.

Jerry Upton was the only son of a well-to-do farmer, whose farm of one hundred acres lay just beyond the outskirts of Lakeview, and close to the lake shore. Jerry was a scholar at the Lakeview Academy, and did but little on the farm, although among the pupils he was often designated as Cornfield.

Harry Parker was the oldest boy in the Parker family, which numbered two boys and four girls. Harry's father was a shoe manufacturer, whose large factory was situated in Lakeview, and at which nearly a fourth of the working population of the town found employment.

It had been a singular incident which had brought the two boys together and made them firm friends. Both had been out skating on the lake the winter before, when Harry had lost his skate and gone down headlong directly in the track of a large ice-boat, which was coming on with the speed of a breeze that was almost a hurricane.

To the onlookers it seemed certain that Harry must be struck and killed by the sharp prow of the somewhat clumsy craft. But in that time of extreme peril Jerry had whipped up like a flash on his skates, caught Harry by the collar, and literally flung

himself and the boy, who was then almost a stranger to him, out of harm's way.

This gallant deed of courage had been warmly applauded by those who saw it. It also came to Mr. Parker's ears, and from that time on the rich shoe manufacturer took an interest in the farmer boy. He persuaded Mr. Upton to allow Jerry to attend the academy, and promised that the boy should have a good position in the office of the factory, should he wish it, when his school days were over.

Harry was already a pupil at the academy, and it was here that the two boys became warm friends. It was nothing to Harry that Jerry was a farmer's boy and that he was sometimes called Cornfield. He knew and appreciated Jerry for his true worth.

And now what of Blumpo Brown, you ask? There is little to tell at this point of our story concerning that semi-colored individual. He was alone in the world, and had lived in Lakeview some ten years. Previous to that time his history was a mystery. Where he had come from no one knew, and if the truth was to be made known, no one but Blumpo himself cared. He was a very peculiar youth, often given to making the most ridiculous remarks, and many persons around Lakeview fancied he had considerable Indian blood in him. He lived in half a dozen places, according to the condition of his finances, and picked up his precarious existence by working for anyone who would employ him. He might have had a steady situation more than once, but it was not in Blumpo's composition to stick at one thing for any great length of time. We will learn much more concerning him as our story proceeds.



CHAPTER II.

MRS. FLEMING'S RUNAWAY HORSE.

"Well, now that the midsummer holidays have really commenced, what do you intend to do with yourself, Jerry?" asked Harry, as they took it easy for a bit after leaving the vicinity of the town.

"I expect I'll have to help on the farm—at least, I think I ought to help," was the reply. "You know this is the busy season."

Harry's face fell a little at this reply. Evidently something was on his mind, and this answer did not harmonize with it.

"I'll tell you what I would like mighty well," put in Blumpo. "I would like to leave town and take to the woods."

"Why, Blumpo, you must have been reading my thoughts!" cried Harry. "I was thinking exactly the same thing."

"Take to the woods?" repeated Jerry. "What do you mean? Clear out from home entirely?"

"No, no," laughed Harry. "I mean to go off for awhile—say, two or three weeks or a month. Sail up the lake and camp out, you know."

"Oh!" Jerry's face took on a pleased look. "I would like that myself, especially if we could go fishing and swimming whenever we wanted to."

"I've had it in my mind for several days," Harry continued, slowly. "I was going to speak of it yesterday, but I didn't get the chance."

"You mean you want me to go with you?" asked Jerry.

"Yes. Don't you think your folks would let you?"

"They might. Who else would go along, do you think?"

"I haven't thought of anyone else. We might ask—" and Harry hesitated in thought.

"What's the matter with asking me?" put in Blumpo, with a serenity that took away the lack of politeness in his remark. "I'm just as tired of Lakeview as anybody."

Harry burst out laughing. The idea of asking Blumpo had never once entered his mind.

"It ain't nothing to laugh at," went on Blumpo, half angrily.

"Excuse me, Blumpo," said Harry, stopping short. "I—that is—I wasn't thinking of you when I made the remark."

"I'm not rich, nor eddicated, as you call it, and all that, but I can hunt and fish, and so on, as good as the next feller, can't I?"

"You certainly can," put in Jerry, who had for a long time had a strange liking for the homeless youth.

"And I am as willing as the next one to do my full share of camp work—washing dishes and the like," went on Blumpo. "You ain't cut out for that," he added, turning to the son of the rich shoe manufacturer.

"Maybe not, but I reckon I can do my full share of work," laughed Harry. "I was not brought up with kid gloves on, you know."

"One thing is certain," mused Jerry. "I wouldn't want to leave until I had rowed that race with Si Peters from Rockpoint."

The race to which Jerry referred was one to take place on the following Saturday. Silas Peters was considered the best single-shell oarsman on the lower side of the lake, and he had challenged Jerry as a representative from the Lakeview Academy.

"You'll win that race, suah," put in Blumpo. "I'll bet my hat on it."

As Blumpo's hat was of straw and full of holes, this made both Jerry and his friend burst into a fit of laughter.

"I don't mean this hat. I mean my Sunday-go-to-meetin' one," said the homeless youth, hastily.

"Blumpo, on your honor, did you ever own two hats at once?" asked Harry gravely.

"Well, since you buckle me down, no," was the low reply. "What's the use? Can't wear but one at a time."

"That's as true as you live," returned Jerry.

The three boys talked over the subject of an outing for some time. All thought it a glorious idea, and Jerry said he would go if he possibly could.

All this time Jerry and Harry were rowing up the lake at a moderate rate of speed. Jerry loved the water, and spent nearly all of his spare time in the vicinity of the lake.

Presently Harry grew tired and Blumpo took his place at the oars.

"Here comes the Cutwater!" cried Harry, a few minutes later.

The Cutwater was a large sloop owned by one of the gentlemen living in Lakeview. As she came past, those in the row-boat noticed several young ladies on board, who were sailing the boat under directions of a young man named Clarence Conant.

Clarence had but little idea how a boat should be managed, and as the sloop

went by Harry's face grew troubled.

"Jerry, what do you think of that?"

Jerry stopped rowing for a moment to look at the sloop.

"A good lot of sail up, especially if it should blow up stronger," he said.

"Just what I think."

"That Clarence Conant don't know nuffin' about sailing," snorted Blumpo Brown. "The ladies better beware how they go out with him."

"I agree with you, Blumpo," said Jerry, gravely.

The sloop now disappeared from sight around a turn in the lake at which several islands were situated.

A few minutes later the row-boat drew up to a small dock at the end of a well-kept garden.

This was Mrs. Fleming's place, where Harry intended to stop on an errand for his mother and father.

He sprang on the dock and hurried toward the house, saying he would not be gone more than five minutes.

The two boys waited for him to return, and during the interval Jerry caught sight of the Cutwater up the lake and watched her progress with interest. The wind was getting stronger and the sloop carried more sail than was good for her. Soon she again disappeared, and Jerry turned toward the house, wondering what kept Harry so long.

"Must have been invited to lunch," was Blumpo's comment. "Pity he didn't ask us in, too."

"No, he wouldn't stay and leave us here," replied Jerry, "Most likely—hullo!"

Jerry sprang up in the row-boat in amazement. Down the garden path leading from the front of the house to the dock came a beautiful black horse on a gallop. On the animal's back sat a little girl not more than eight years of age. The horse was running away with her, and she was clinging tightly to his mane.

"Oh, John, stop him!" she screamed.

"Whoa, Banker, whoa!" shouted a man who came running after the animal.

But the horse, a nervous creature, was frightened over something and would not stop.

He clattered on the dock, and the next instant went over into the lake with a loud splash, carrying the little girl with him.



CHAPTER III.

JERRY'S BRAVERY.

Blumpo was so scared by the accident that he uttered a short yell.

"Fo' the lan' sake," he moaned, in a shaking voice.

The horse disappeared from sight for a brief space of time and then came up and began to churn the water madly in an endeavor to save himself from drowning.

The little girl was nowhere to be seen.

"She'll be drowned," thought Jerry, with rising horror.

At that moment a lady rushed from the house, followed by Harry. It was Mrs. Fleming.

"My child! my child!" she shrieked. "Save my Cora!"

Jerry waited to hear no more. At that moment the head of the little girl appeared directly by the horse's side, and he made a clever dive from the row-boat and came up close to the child.

The girl was so bewildered that she simply beat the water in a helpless fashion, and this frightened the horse still more.

Swimming up behind the little one, Jerry caught her under the arms. It was a perilous thing to do, for Jerry was in great danger of having his brains dashed out by one of the horse's hoofs.

"Good for you, Jerry!" shouted Harry.

"Look out for the hoss!" shouted the man. "He'll kick you if he can!"

As rapidly as he could, Jerry swam out of the mad animal's reach. It was difficult with the struggling girl in his arms, but at last he accomplished it, and willing hands helped him to the dock.

"My Cora! my Cora! is she dead?" cried Mrs. Fleming.

"No, she is more frightened than hurt," returned Jerry. "Let us take her to the house."

But before he could go a step, Mrs. Fleming clasped her girl in her arms and led the way.

Anxious to be of assistance, Jerry followed the lady, while Harry, Blumpo, and the hired man tried to rescue the horse, who was very valuable despite his nervousness.

A noose was made at the end of a rope, and this was thrown over the animal's neck. Then the horse got one foot through the noose, and in this fashion they towed

him to a spot where it was easy for him to wade out without assistance.

The hired man was very much put out, for it was his fault that the horse had run away. He led the animal around to the barn and gave him a good rubbing down.

Harry started for the house and met Jerry coming out.

"How is Cora?"

"She's all right. Come on," and Jerry brushed on toward the row-boat.

"Why, what's your hurry, Jerry?"

The young oarsman blushed.

"Oh, I hate to stand around and receive thanks," he said. "Mrs. Fleming wants to make a first-class hero of me and I——"

"And that's just what you are," cried Harry.

"Indeed he is," added Blumpo.

"Nonsense!" Jerry brushed them to one side.

"Come on!" and he made a run for the row-boat, and the others were compelled to follow.

"But your clothing is all wet," insisted Harry, when they were seated in the craft.

"So is Blumpo's," returned Jerry.

"I'se most dry, the sun is that warm," remarked the homeless youth.

"I don't mind the wetting a bit," said Jerry. "Rowing will keep me warm and the sun will dry me off quick enough."

"You're a regular water dog, anyway," laughed Harry. He could not help but admire Jerry's modesty in running away from Mrs. Fleming as soon as it was ascertained that little Cora was all right.

On and on up the lake the boys went. Inside of half an hour they came to a sheltered nook on one of the numerous islands.

"I move we take a swim," said Harry.

"Second de emotion," said Blumpo, and before Jerry could say a word the homeless youth was running about as if in the savage wilds.

It did not take Jerry and Harry long to disrobe. The plunge into the water was very pleasant, and they remained in bathing until Jerry's clothing, spread out on the top of a number of bushes, was thoroughly dry.

In the meanwhile Jerry and Harry raced to another island and back. Jerry came out first, with Harry four yards behind.

The swim over, they dressed, and, after picking several handfuls of berries, which grew on the island in profusion, they once more embarked in the row-boat.

"Time to get back, boys," said Jerry. "I promised to be home before dark."

"So did I," said Harry, "and we have several miles to go."

"It don't make no difference to me when I git back," remarked Blumpo, dolefully.

"Don't worry, Blumpo. Think of the good time we are going to have when we go camping," said Jerry.

"And I must ask father for a regular situation for you when we come back from our outing," added Harry.

"Will you?" and the homeless boy's face brightened.

The wind had been increasing steadily, and now it blew so strongly that the whitecaps were to be seen in every direction.

"We're going to have no easy time getting back," said Jerry, with an anxious look on his manly face. "Maybe we may be caught in a hurricane."

"It's hot enough," returned Harry. "Such oppressive heat generally means something."

A mile was covered, and then the wind began to send the flying spray in every direction and filled the row-boat's bottom with water.

"Wet again!" laughed Jerry, grimly. "Never mind."

"Blumpo, you had better bail out the boat," said Harry. He was as wet as the rest, but did not grumble.

While the homeless youth bailed out the water with a dipper they had brought along, Jerry and Harry pulled at the oars with all their remaining strength. Another mile was passed. But now it was blowing a regular hurricane and no mistake.

"We'll go to the bottom, suah!" groaned Blumpo dismally.

"Not much!" shouted Jerry. "Keep on bailing."

"Look! look!" yelled Harry at that moment, and pointed over to the centre of the lake.

There, beating up in the teeth of the wind in the most hap-hazard manner, was the Cutwater. Evidently Clarence Conant was nearly paralyzed with fear, for he had almost lost control of the craft.

"Those ladies on board are worse off than we," went on Harry.

"That's so," replied Jerry.

But the words were hardly out of his mouth when there came an extra puff of wind. It sent the Cutwater almost over on her side, and threw a monstrous wave into the row-boat.

The smaller craft could not stand the wind and waves, and with a lurch, she sank down and went over, dumping all three of the youths into the angry lake.



CHAPTER IV.

SAVING THE SLOOP.

It was no pleasant position to be in. The three lads had been cast so suddenly into the angry waters that for the moment they could not comprehend the situation.

Then Blumpo let out a yell of terror.

“Save me! De boat has gone down!”

He was wrong, however, for a second later the row-boat bobbed up, less than four yards off.

“This way!” shouted Harry to his companions, but the wind fairly drowned his voice. He swam toward the upturned craft, and Blumpo and Jerry were not slow in following it.

Hardly had they reached it when a new peril confronted them. The Cutwater was bearing directly down upon them. With every sail set, she was in the very act of cutting them to pieces!

“Look! look!” yelled Harry. “We are doomed!”

“My gracious!” moaned Blumpo.

On and on came the sloop, with gigantic bounds over the whitecaps. Clarence Conant seemed utterly powerless to stay her course, or steer her to the right or left.

The young ladies on board with him huddled in a heap near the tiny cabin, their faces white with terror.

It was truly a thrilling moment.

Of the entire crowd Jerry was the only one to keep perfectly cool.

He was astride the row-boat, directly in the centre of the bottom, and it seemed as if the prow of the Cutwater must strike him in a second more.

“Every one dive under!” he called out, and went overboard like a flash.

For a wonder Harry and Blumpo promptly followed suit.

Crash!

The row-boat was struck and stove in completely.

The Cutwater was quite a good-sized craft, and though the force of the collision did not damage her to any extent, it checked her progress considerably.

Jerry went down and down. He made a long dive, and when he came up it was within a yard of the sloop’s rudder.

Before another boy would have had time to think, the boy who so loved the water made up his mind what to do. He made a mighty leap and caught hold of the

rudder end ere the Cutwater could get beyond his reach.

It was hard work to hang on, as the sloop bobbed up and down with every wave, and the rudder, being beyond control, swayed from side to side.

But Jerry was both plucky and full of grit. He clung fast, and, watching his chance, climbed up to the stern and leaped on the deck.

A brief glance showed him the cause of the present trouble. Clarence Conant was actually too much frightened to lower the sails. He had started to act and got a rope twisted, and then, overcome with fear, had allowed the matter to go while he clung to the bow in despair.

"You confounded coward!" cried the young oarsman. "You ought to have known better than to go out on anything bigger than a duck pond."

He sprang to the halyards, and soon the main-sail came down with a bang. The jib followed. There was no time to attend to the sails more than this.

Jerry looked around anxiously for Harry and Blumpo, but for a long while could see nothing of them.

"Look here," demanded Clarence Conant, recovering his composure, now the greatest of the danger was over. "What—ah—do you mean by talking to me in this fashion?"

"I mean just what I say," retorted Jerry. "You had no right to take these young ladies out and expose them to such peril."

"The—ah—hurricane took me by surprise," was the dude's lame excuse.

"I am very thankful to you, Jerry Upton," cried Dora Vincent, the oldest and prettiest of the girls on board.

"And so am I."

"And I."

"Thank you," replied the boy, blushing. "But now is no time to talk. Which of you will take the tiller, if I tell you exactly what to do?"

"I can—ah—take the tiller," interposed Conant, haughtily.

"You won't touch it!" cried the young oarsman, sternly.

"Why, boy, what do you mean? Do you—ah—"

"Sit down! If you dare to stir I'll pitch you overboard!"

Overcome with a new terror, the dude collapsed. He was hatless, the curl was out of his mustache and hair, and altogether he looked very much "washed out."

He sank down near the bow, and it was well that he did so, for just then came an extra heavy blast of the gale.

"Hold hard, every one!" yelled Jerry. "Perhaps you ladies had better go into the cabin," he added.

"I am to take the tiller, you know," said Dora Vincent.

"Well, then, let the others go. We can work along better with a clear deck."

So while Dora went aft, the others crawled into the cabin, or cuddy. Under pretense of seeing after their comfort, Conant crawled after them.

"Now I will tell you just how to move the tiller," said Jerry to Dora Vincent.

"All right, I am ready," responded the brave girl.

Now that she had Jerry with her, and knowing he was well acquainted with boats, she felt that she was safe, no matter how bad the storm might prove itself.

After giving the girl some instructions Jerry hoisted the main-sail a few feet only. The sloop then swung around and moved in a beating way against the storm.

Jerry wished to learn what had become of his companions. He was fearful that they had been drowned.

It took quite some time to reach the vicinity where the accident had occurred, and even then but little was to be seen through the driving rain.

"Hullo, Harry! Blumpo!" he called out.

No answer came back and he repeated the cry a dozen times. Then he fancied he heard a response directly ahead. The sloop was moved cautiously in the direction, and presently they saw Blumpo clinging to part of the shattered row-boat.

"Sabe me! sabe me!" yelled the youth. "Don't let me drown, Jerry."

"Catch the rope, Blumpo!" cried Jerry in return, and threw forward the end of a coil.

Blumpo clutched the rope eagerly, and then it was comparatively easy to haul him on board.

"Praise de Lawd!" he muttered fervently as he came on deck. "I t'ought I was a goner, suah!"

"Where is Harry?"

"I can't tell you, Jerry."

"You haven't seen him since we jumped from the row-boat?"

"No."

The young oarsman's face grew sober. What if their chum had really gone to the bottom of Lake Otasco? It would be awful to tell Harry's parents that their son was no more.

"We must find him, dead or alive, Blumpo. Take the tiller from Miss Vincent, and we'll cruise around, with our eyes and ears wide open," said Jerry, with determination.



CHAPTER V.

HARRY IS RESCUED.

"I can stay on deck, can't I?" asked Dora, as she turned the tiller over to the homeless youth.

"If you wish. But be very careful when the sloop swings around," replied Jerry. "You did very well," he added.

Dora smiled at this. Then she went forward and settled down, in spite of the rain, to help look for Harry Parker, whose folks she knew fairly well.

The Cutwater was put on a different track, and they began to move across the lake, it being Jerry's idea to cross and recross at a distance of every six or seven hundred feet.

Twice did they come close to each shore without seeing anything of Harry.

"Gone down, suah's you're born!" said Blumpo, and the tears started out of his big, honest eyes.

"I am afraid so," returned Jerry, "and yet—hark!"

He put up his hand and all were instantly on the alert. The wind had gone down somewhat, and from a distance came a low cry.

"It's Harry's!" said Jerry. "Hullo, Harry!" he yelled, with all the power of his lungs.

He waited, and an answering cry came back from toward the center of the lake. It was very weak, showing that Harry was almost exhausted.

The course of the sloop was instantly changed, and they strove to reach the spot before the boy should go down.

Jerry was the first to see the form floating about amid the whitecaps.

"Keep up, Harry!" he called encouragingly. "We will soon have you on board."

"I can't keep up any longer," gasped his chum. "I am played out." And throwing up his arms, Harry disappeared.

Tying the end of a long rope about his waist, Jerry leaped overboard. He struck the spot where Harry had gone down and felt in every direction for his chum.

His hand touched an arm, and then he held Harry fast and brought him to the surface. The poor boy was too weak to make the first movement.

"Haul in on the rope, Blumpo!" called Jerry.

Turning the tiller over to Dora Vincent, the homeless youth did as directed.

Jerry, with his burden, was soon brought alongside.

It was no easy matter to hoist Harry on deck in the storm, but at last it was accomplished, and Jerry followed his charge.

Harry was unconscious, and he was taken to the cabin, where Dora and the other girls did all in their power for him; and then the Cutwater was headed for Lakeview, two miles distant.

The hurricane, or whatever it might be called, had by this time spent itself. The rain ceased and before the lake town came into view the sun shone once more as brightly as ever.

Clarence Conant came on deck looking very much annoyed. He felt that he had played the part of a coward, and knew he would have no easy time of it to right himself in the eyes of the young ladies.

"The—ah—truth is, I was very sick," he explained to Jerry. "I got a—ah—spasm of the—ah—heart."

"Sure it wasn't a spasm in your great toe?" said Jerry, with a grin.

But Clarence never smiled. It would not have been good form, you know.

As soon as the dock was reached, Jerry left Blumpo to tie up and went to Harry. He found his chum able to sit up. He was very weak, but that was all.

"It was a close call for me, Jerry," said Harry, with a shudder. "I owe you my life."

"It was a close call all around," replied our hero. "We can be thankful that we are here safe and sound."

Harry felt too weak to walk, so a carriage was called to take him home. Jerry went with him, while Blumpo went over to the grocery store to tell of all that had happened.

Clarence Conant was utterly left. He tried to excuse himself to Dora Vincent and the other young ladies, but they would have nothing to do with him.

"The next time I go out it will be with somebody who can manage a boat, and who is brave enough to do it, even in a storm," said Dora, and walked away with her lady friends.

"Beastly bad job, beastly!" muttered Clarence to himself. "And my best sailor suit utterly ruined, too! Oh, why did that storm have to come up on us?"

But this was not the end of the matter for the dude.

The row-boat that had been smashed was a valuable one belonging to the Lakeview Boat Club. They did not care to lose the cost of it, and so called on Conant to pay for the same.

At first he refused, but when they threatened arrest he weakened. It took nearly three weeks of his salary to square accounts, and then the young man was utterly

crushed. He never went sailing again.

It did not take Harry long to recover from the effects of his outing on the lake. Inside of a week he was as well as ever.

Blumpo took good care to tell every one of all that had happened, and on every side Jerry was praised for his daring work in saving the Cutwater and his chum.

We have spoken of the match to take place between Jerry and Si Peters of Rockpoint. This was postponed for two weeks on Si's account.

Si Peters was a tall overgrown youth of eighteen, and was generally considered to be the best oarsman on the lake.

Consequently, when a match was arranged by the clubs to which they belonged between the pair it was thought, even by many Lakeview people, that Si Peters would win.

Si had one great advantage over Jerry. His father was rich, while Jerry's father was poor. Consequently, while Jerry had to help on the farm during idle hours Si Peters could go out and practice, and thus get himself in perfect condition.

It was this fact that made Si think he was going to have an easy time defeating Jerry.

But, unknown to him, Jerry got more time than he thought. Harry was anxious to have his chum win, and spoke to his father about it.

Now, Mr. Parker and Si Peters' father were not on good terms, and the former readily agreed to a plan Harry proposed.

"Mr. Upton," he said one evening, when he met Jerry's father down in the town, "I would like to hire Jerry to work for me every afternoon for a couple of weeks."

"All right, Mr. Parker," said Jerry's father, promptly. "When do you want him to come?"

"To-morrow, if he can. I'll pay you five dollars a week."

"Very well. You can pay Jerry."

So it was settled, and every afternoon the young oarsman went over to the Parker place, which bordered on the lake.

Here Jerry would practice in secret in a little cove seldom visited by any boats.

As the time grew close for the race between Jerry and Si Peters the boat clubs began to bet on their favorites.

So sure were the Rockpointers that they would win, that they gave the Lakeview people heavy odds.

Together the two clubs put up as a trophy a silver cup, which later on would be engraved with the name of the winner.

Of course, Jerry's father soon found out what his son was doing.

But he would not break his bargain with Mr. Parker, and so let Jerry practice every afternoon, feeling sure that Jerry would not take the money the rich manufacturer had offered.

“You will win,” said Harry, confidently.

“I shall try my best,” returned Jerry.

Si Peters and his friends smiled broadly whenever they came over to Lakeview.

“Jerry Upton won’t be in it after the first quarter,” said they.

The race was to be a mile, half a mile each way, the turning point being a well-known rocky island scarcely fifty feet in diameter.

Jerry kept at his practice steadily until the great day for the race arrived.



CHAPTER VI.

THE SINGLE SHELL RACE.

The race had been spoken of so much that Lakeview presented a holiday appearance.

All those who could, crossed over from Rockpoint, and many came from other places.

The lake was crowded with craft of all sorts, and even standing room along the shore was at a premium.

Even Farmer Upton grew interested.

"You must win that race, son," he said. "Not only for your own sake, but for the sake of the whole Lakeview district."

And this made Jerry more determined to win than ever.

The race was not to come off until three o'clock in the afternoon. In the meanwhile there were half a dozen other contests, in which, however, the masses took but small interest.

While one of these contests was going on, and Jerry was in the dressing room of the boathouse putting on his rowing rig, Harry came in excitedly.

"Jerry, you want to be on your guard," he said in a low tone, so that those standing about might not hear.

"On guard? How?"

"Against Si Peters."

"I don't understand."

"From what I have overheard, I imagine there is a plot on foot to make you lose the race."

"What sort of a plot?"

"I can't say."

The young oarsman gazed at his chum in perplexity.

"What have you heard? I don't know what to make of this."

"You know Wash Crosby?"

"Yes. He is Si Peters' toady."

"Well, I heard him tell Browling that it was a dead sure thing Si would win."

"That might have been mere blowing."

"No. Browling thought so, too, but then Crosby whispered in his ear. At once Browling's face took on a look of cunning.

“Can you do it?” he asked, and Crosby said he could.

“Then Browling said he would put out his money on Si, if he could find anyone to bet. You know the whole crowd is rich.”

“Yes, and I know another thing!” exclaimed Jerry suddenly. “I fancy I can see through their plan.”

“What?”

“Crosby owns a steam launch, you know.”

“I do.”

“What is to prevent him from running the launch so that I shall get all the swash? It would make me lose a quarter minute or more, and perhaps upset me.”

“Jiminy crickets! I believe you are right!” whispered Harry.

“Did they mention the steam launch?”

“They did. Browling said he would go and take a look at her.”

“Then that is what the plot is, you may be sure of it. You ought to be able to stop them, Harry. You are going to be on your uncle’s naptha launch.”

“I will! If they get too close to you I’ll boathook them and pull them off!” cried Harry.

“Good for you.”

“But beware, Jerry, the plot may not be that after all.”

“I’ll keep my eyes open,” replied the young oarsman.

A minute after this Harry went off.

Then Jerry, having donned his rowing outfit, was surrounded by the other members of the club. His shell was inspected and found in perfect condition. It had been guarded carefully, and now the club members did not dare to let their eyes off of it.

“Bring me my blades, please,” said Jerry, and they were at once brought from the locker.

He began to examine them from end to end. Suddenly he uttered a cry.

“Boys, look here!”

“What’s up, Jerry?”

“This one has been strained and cracked. An extra hard pull on it, and it would give out.”

A murmur arose.

“Who did this?”

“Some enemy wants Jerry to lose, sure!”

How the blade had got into that condition was a mystery.

But now was no time to speculate on the affair. A new set of blades must be

procured at once.

Luckily there was a pair belonging to a private party to be had. They were just the same size and weight.

"I would rather have my own, but I'll make these do, and beat them in spite of all," said Jerry.

At a given signal six of the boat club boys marched down the float carrying Jerry's shell, which had been polished and oiled until it shone like a mirror.

With a faint splash the shell dropped into the water. Then Jerry ran down and stepped in. His feet were "locked," and the oars were handed over.

"Hurrah for Jerry Upton!"

"He's the boy to win!"

"Hurrah for Si Peters!"

"Jerry won't be in it with Si!"

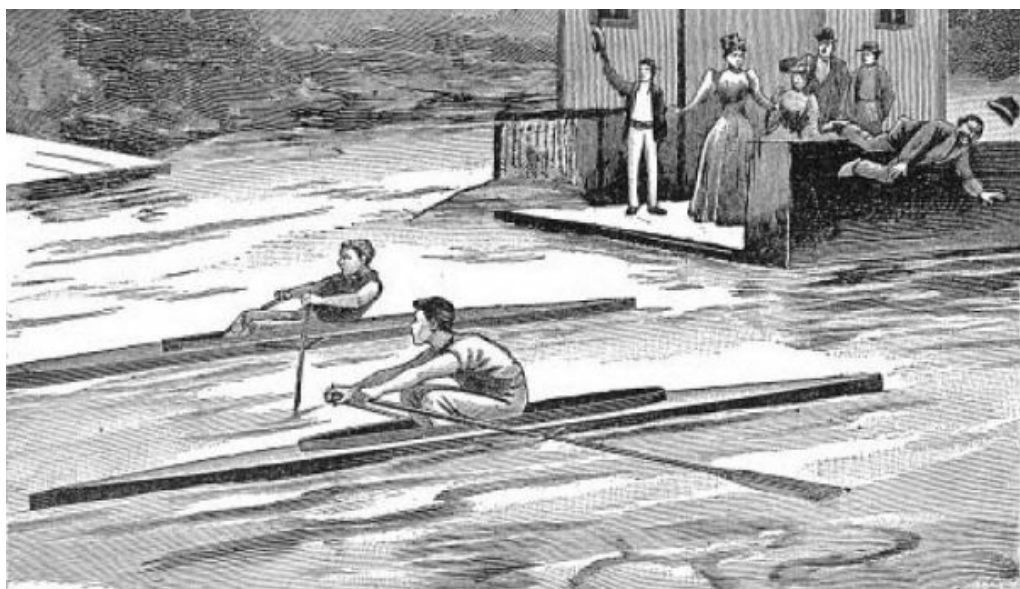
"He will!"

"Never!"

And so the talking and the shouting ran on.

Meanwhile Si Peters had emerged from the landing at a private boathouse some distance up the lake shore.

He received a hearty shout as he moved slowly over to the starting point.



THE SINGLE SHELL RACE.

Si Peters won the choice of positions, and, of course, took the inside.

The race should have been a mile straightway, but the original challenge which led to the race had been for a half mile going and the same coming.

Soon the two boys were in position.

“Ready?”

There was a dead silence.

Bang!

They were off! Both boys caught the water at the same instant. Each pulled a long but quick stroke. Ten yards were covered, and they remained side by side.

“Pull, Si!”

“Go it, Jerry!”

Like two clocks, so far as regularity went, the two contestants bent their backs and pulled with might and main.

One thing was certain, unless something happened, it would be a close race.

But now the Lakeview boys were getting wild.

“See Jerry! He is gaining.”

“Jerry is five feet and more in the lead!”

It was true. Slowly but surely our hero was forging ahead. Should he be able to keep this up he would cross Si Peters’ course at the turning point.

But now Wash Crosby showed his hand. Without so much as a toot of the whistle, his steam launch kept drawing closer and closer to Jerry’s side.

Then it gradually went ahead, until Jerry was caught in the swash of the tiny waves it produced.

Under ordinary circumstances these waves would not have been noticed, but in a shell, and especially during a race, even such apparent trifles count heavily.

“Keep off!” shouted the young oarsman.

“Mind your business!” shouted Wash Crosby in return, but so lowly that no one but Jerry could hear him. “This is Si Peters’ race!”



CHAPTER VII.

WHO WON THE SHELL RACE.

Jerry saw at once that he had been right in imagining that this was the plot against him. Wash Crosby intended to keep just close enough to cause him trouble without actually fouling him.

Already the swash from the steam launch was telling on Jerry's lead. Si Peters kept up at his best and soon was once more abreast of our hero.

"Hurrah!" came from the shore.

"Si Peters leads!"

"I said he would win!"

"That steam launch is too close to Jerry Upton."

"Nonsense! Don't croak because you are going to lose the race," shouted Browling.

The Lakeview boys began to look glum.

But now something happened that Wash Crosby had not calculated upon.

Straight from across the lake came the naptha launch belonging to Harry Parker's uncle. In the bow stood Harry, boathook in hand.

When the launch was within three yards of the Crosby craft she came to a halt. Wash Crosby was so interested in watching the race that he did not notice what was going on.

Harry threw the boathook and it caught fast in the steam launch's stern. Then the naptha launch was moved back, and away she went, carrying the steam launch with her.

She could do this because Crosby did not have on a full head of steam.

Astonished at the turn of affairs, Wash Crosby looked around to see what was the matter.

"Hi! what are you doing?" he bellowed to Harry.

"Hauling you off," returned Jerry's chum. "I know your plot, Wash Crosby; but it is not going to work."

"Let go there!"

"Not much! You'll keep your distance from Jerry Upton's shell."

"I would like to know who made you my master!" stormed Crosby, in a perfect rage.

"If you don't come away I'll report you and get the town to lynch you," retorted

Harry, valiantly. "Don't you dare to touch that boathook."

However, Wash Crosby did dare. But as long as the line attached was taut he could not loosen it. Then he tried new tactics. He put on a full head of steam.

It was a tug of war between the steam and the naptha launches, and for the moment it was hard to tell which would come off victorious.

But Harry's craft was more powerful than Crosby's, and soon the steam launch was carried far away from the racing shells.

Wash Crosby was furious and would have eaten Harry up could he have gotten at the lad.

"I'll fix you for this!" he cried and threw a heavy chunk of coal at Harry's head, which the boy dodged.

"Don't try that again, Wash Crosby, or I'll retaliate in a way you least expect."

"You had no right to haul me off."

"You had no right to interfere with Jerry Upton."

Wash Crosby grumbled but could do nothing. Harry calmly proceeded to hold him back until the race was almost over.

In the meanwhile, how was Jerry faring?

With long, quick strokes, he swept on, side by side with Si Peters.

It was going to be a close contest, and the spectators along the lake front went wild with enthusiasm.

"Don't let up, Si!"

"Show the Rockpointers what you can do, Jerry!"

"A dollar that Si wins by a length!"

"A dollar that Jerry wins by two lengths!"

At last the two reached Rocky Island, which formed the turning point.

They were still side by side, but Si had the inner turn all to himself, while Jerry had to move about in a much larger area.

This brought Jerry a good length behind Si Peters when the return was begun.

Si Peters saw this and grinned to himself.

"You ain't in it a little bit, Jerry Upton!" he called out, but Jerry did not reply. He was not foolish enough to waste breath just then in talking.

Over the smooth water swept the two long shells, each boy working with quick and long strokes.

Now the finishing stake was in view. Si Peters still kept his lead.

"It's Si's race, no doubt of it!"

"Didn't I say Jerry Upton wouldn't be in it?"

"What does Cornfield know about rowing, anyhow?"

But scarcely had the last remark been made when Jerry began to increase his stroke.

Slowly but surely his shell began to overlap that of Si Peters. Now he was half-way up, now three-quarters, now they were even!

“See him gaining!”

“Look! look! Jerry is ahead!”

“He can’t keep that stroke! It’s enough to kill him!”

“Can’t he? Look, he is actually walking away from Si.”

Jerry was now “letting himself out.”

Like a flash he swept past Si Peters and reached the finish two and a half lengths ahead.

A rousing cheer from the Lakeview boys greeted him, while the Rockpointers were as mum as oysters.

Si Peters looked decidedly crestfallen. For several minutes he had nothing to say. Then some of his friends whispered into his ear.

“You must do it, Si,” said one of the number.

“All right, I will,” replied Peters doggedly, and hurried to the judges’ boat.

“I claim a foul!” he cried out loudly.

Every one was astonished, and none more so than Jerry.

“Where were you fouled?” asked one of the judges.

“Up at the turning point.”

“That is a falsehood!” cried Jerry indignantly. “I never came anywhere near you.”

“I’m telling the truth,” said Si Peters. “If he hadn’t fouled me I would have beaten with ease.”



CHAPTER VIII.

A PRISONER OF THE ENEMY.

At once a loud murmur arose. Some sided with Jerry, while others took Si Peters' part.

From hot words the boys of the rival towns almost came to blows.

In the midst of the quarrel a row-boat came down the lake carrying two elderly and well-known gentlemen, both residents of Rockpoint. Curious to know the cause of the trouble, the gentlemen came up to the judges' craft, now moored along shore.

"Peters claims a foul up at the turning point," said some one of the gentlemen.

"You mean up at the island?"

"Yes."

"There was no foul there. Was there, Greenley?"

"None at all," replied the second gentleman.

These assertions attracted attention. On inquiry it was learned that the two gentlemen had been up at the island fishing. They had watched the race in the meanwhile, and they were willing to make affidavit that Jerry had not interfered in the slightest degree with Si Peters.

"He took the outside, and he really gave Peters more room than was necessary."

The two gentlemen were too well known to be doubted in what they said, and at once the judges refused to accept Si Peters' plea.

"The race goes to Jerry Upton, who won it fairly."

Then how Jerry's friends did yell with delight! The lad was pounced upon and raised up on his friends' shoulders, and away went the boat club boys around the town, Blumpo in advance of them blowing a big fish-horn.

"You is de boy!" said the homeless youth. "You is de best oarsman on de lake!"

Harry was in the crowd, and when he told how he had outwitted Wash Crosby every one roared.

The race, however, made lots of ill-feeling. The Rockpoint boys could not stand defeat, and that evening half a dozen rows started in as many different places.

Sticks and stones were freely used, and many boys went home with their arms and heads tied up.

Jerry became involved in one of the worst of the fights in rather a peculiar manner. He was on his way home rather late, thinking all was over and that the Rockpointers had departed, when he heard a hoarse cry for help from down a side

street.

He recognized the voice as that of Blumpo Brown, and at once hurried to the spot, there to find the youth at the mercy of four of the Rockpoint boys, including Wash Crosby, Si Peters, and two others named Banner and Graves. The quartet had poor Blumpo down on his back and were kicking him as hard as they could.

"You cowards!" shouted Jerry as he rushed up, "to kick a fellow when he's down!"

"This is none of your affair," shouted Si Peters. "He insulted us, and we won't take an insult from anybody, much less an Indian coon."

"Da jess pitched inter me!" howled Blumpo. "Sabe me!"

"Let up, I say!" went on Jerry, and, clutching Si Peters by the shoulder, he flung the big Rockpointer flat on his back several feet away. Then Jerry pitched into the others of the crowd.

This gave Blumpo a chance to rise. He scrambled up and let out a long and loud yell for help. Luckily, some other boys were not far away. They heard the cry and arrived on a run.

"We must skip now!" cried Wash Crosby to Si Peters. "We'll have the whole town on us in another minute."

"Hang the luck!" howled Peters. "But just wait, Jerry Upton, I'll get square with you yet."

He turned away with his friends, and the quartet scooted for the lake, with Jerry, Blumpo, and half a dozen others at their heels.

Wash Crosby's launch was tied up at a dock, and into this they tumbled. The line was cut, and off they steamed, amid a perfect shower of stones, lumps of dirt, old bottles, and anything that came handy to the Lakeview boys' reach.

"There, I fancy that's the end of them," said Jerry. "I thought they had gone long ago."

"Da laid for me!" groaned Blumpo. "Wish I dun had a hoss pistol, I would shoot 'em all full of holes!"

Soon the steam launch faded away in the darkness, and a little later found Jerry again on his way home. Of course his folks were proud to think he had won the race.

"My boy, Jerry!" was all Mrs. Upton said, but the way she said it meant a good deal.

It was a week later that the boat club gave a reception, at which Jerry was the lion. He was presented with the silver trophy, and made a neat little speech. There were refreshments and music, and altogether the affair was the most brilliant

Lakeview had seen for some time.

Matters moved along slowly for a week after the racing and the reception were over. Jerry worked on the farm, and never was there a more industrious youth.

In the meanwhile Harry Parker made several arrangements for the outing up the lake, in which Jerry and Blumpo were to accompany him.

One day Mr. Upton received a letter from Rockpoint. It was from a friend, and asked if the farmer could send him over at once a load of hay.

"I can't go very well," said Mr. Upton. "Supposing you take it over to Mr. Dike, Jerry?"

"I will, sir," replied Jerry, promptly.

The young oarsman had not been over to Rockpoint since the races, but he thought he could go over and come back without encountering trouble.

The hay was soon loaded on the rick, and then Jerry started off for the other shore. He was compelled to drive nearly to the lower end of the lake to cross on the bridge, consequently it was well on toward the middle of the afternoon when Rockpoint was reached.

He and Mr. Dike put the load in the barn, and after being paid, and partaking of a glass of cold milk and a piece of home-made pie, Jerry, at just six o'clock, started on the return.

It had been a gloomy day, and, consequently, it was already growing dark, although it was midsummer.

But Jerry knew the way well, so he did not mind the darkness. He let the team go their own gait, and took it easy in the rick on a couple of horse blankets.

He was in a sort of day dream, when suddenly, his team was stopped by a couple of boys, who sprang from behind a clump of trees.

The boys wore masks over their faces, and when they spoke, they did their best to disguise their voices.

Jerry sprang up in alarm. At the same time four more boys, also masked, surrounded the hay-rick.

"What's the meaning of this?" demanded Jerry. "Let go of those horses."

Instead of replying, the two boys continued to hold the team. The other four leaped into the hay-rick and fell on Jerry. Taken so suddenly, he was at a disadvantage. Hardly could he make a move before one of the boys struck him on the head with a club, dazing him.

Then a rope was brought forth, and Jerry's hands were tied behind him and he was thrown on the ground.

The boys sent the team on their way, trusting to luck that the horses would find

their way home.

“What are you going to do with me?” asked Jerry, when he found himself bound and helpless.

“You’ll soon see, Jerry Upton,” came from the leader, in such a muffled voice that our hero tried in vain to recognize the speaker.

“Make him march!” said another.

“All right, march!”

Into the woods the masked gang hurried Jerry. When he attempted to turn back, they hit him with their sticks and tripped him up.

Finally, when he would go no further, four of the boys picked him up and carried him.

Nearly a quarter of an hour was spent in this manner, and the party reached a little clearing. On three sides were tall trees, and on the fourth a wall of rocks.

“This is the spot,” cried the leader. “Now tie him to a tree and get the stuff out of the cave.”

At once the young oarsman was bound to a tree on the edge of the clearing.

Then two of the boys entered a cave between the rocks.

Soon they came forth with a pot filled with a thick, black liquid and two big pillows.

At once Jerry realized what his captors meant to do. They were going to tar and feather him!



CHAPTER IX.

TAR AND FEATHERS.

The prospect was far from pleasant to our hero. In spite of his bravery, he shivered as he saw the gang of masked boys start up a fire over which to heat the tar.

“So you intend to tar and feather me,” he said to the leader.

“You’ve struck it, Jerry Upton.”

“All right, Si Peters, do it, and you shall go to prison, mark my words.”

Jerry had only guessed at the identity of the leader, but he had hit upon the truth.

“Who told you I was”—began Peters, and broke off short. “You’re mistaken,” he went on in his assumed voice.

“I am not mistaken, Si Peters. I know you, and you had best remember what I say.”

“Oh, you’re too fresh, Upton, and we’re going to teach you a lesson,” put in another of the crowd.

“A good coat of tar and feathers is just what your system needs.”

“We’ll paint you up so artistically that, even your own mother won’t know you.”

“Not if I can help it,” muttered Jerry, under his breath.

A great mass of wood had been collected, and this gave a roaring fire and also afforded a good light for the workers.

On each side of the fire a notched stick was driven into the ground. A third stick was laid across the top, just beyond the flames. From this upper stick the pot of tar was suspended by an iron chain.

The heat soon began to tell on the tar. As it softened it could be smelled a long distance off.

“How do you like that smell?” asked Peters of Jerry.

“Oh, it’s a good enough smell,” replied our hero, as coolly as he could.

“Never had a dose of tar before, did you?”

“I haven’t had this dose yet.”

“That’s so, but you soon will have.”

“Maybe not.”

“Oh, you can’t escape us.”

“Not much, he can’t,” put in another, and now Jerry felt sure that the speaker was Wash Crosby.

“We’ll talk about that later, Crosby.”

The masked boy started back and denied his identity. But it was plain to see he was much put out.

“I know you, Peters, Crosby, Banner and Graves,” went on Jerry. “And I’ll discover who you other two fellows are before I leave here, too.”

“Fiddlesticks!” shouted one of the boys by the fire who was stirring the tar.

“Is it getting soft?” asked Crosby.

“Yes.”

“Where is the brush?”

“I’ve got it,” spoke up another, and he held up the stump of an old whitewash brush.

“That’s all right.”

At a signal from Peters the crowd of masked boys withdrew to the side of the fire.

Here a long talk followed. It was so low that Jerry could not hear a word.

Peters was making the crowd solemnly promise that they would not inform upon each other, no matter what happened.

“If we stick together, Upton can prove nothing,” he said. “He has no witnesses.”

“Right you are, Si.”

“We want to get square, and this is the chance of our lives to do it.”

“We can give him the tar and feathers and then leave him tied up in such a fashion that he can get free, but not before we have had a chance to make good our escape and get home and to bed.”

“That’s the way to fix it.”

“It will teach Lakeporters a good lesson,” put in one of the unknowns. “My! but ain’t I down on every one of ’em.”

“And so am I!”

“And I!”

“And I!”

In the meanwhile the young oarsman was trying his best to work himself free of his bonds. He felt that unless he escaped he would surely be tarred and feathered.

He tugged at the ropes around his body, and after a hard struggle he managed to free his left arm.

His right arm followed, although this cost him a bad cut on the wrist, from which the blood flowed freely.

But he gave the wound no thought, and in haste began to work at the rope at his waist.

Now that was loosened, only the one around his knees remained.

He looked anxiously toward the fire. The masked boys were still in deep discussion, and not a single eye was directed toward the prisoner.

Oh, for three minutes more time!

He worked with feverish haste.

And now he was practically free!

Si Peters turned and beheld him as he took a step behind the tree, out of the glare of the fire.

“He has got away, fellows!” he shouted. “After him, quick!”

A yell went up, and the crowd rushed forward.

“He mustn’t escape us!”

“We worked too hard to capture him!”

“See, he is limping! The rope is still fastened to one of his legs!”

Like a pack of wolves after a rabbit they came after Jerry.

Our hero did his best to out-distance them, and he would have succeeded had it not been for the rope around one knee, which caught in a tree root and threw him down flat on his face. In another moment the crowd was on top of him.

They showed him no mercy. Si Peters was particularly brutal and kicked Jerry heavily in the side half a dozen times.

“I’ll teach you to crawl away, you sneak!” he cried. “You can’t fool us in this fashion.”

The kicks stunned Jerry and deprived him of his wind. He fought as best he could, but he was no match for six strong boys.

Again he was overpowered. Then the gang dragged him to the side of the roaring camp fire and threw off their masks.

“Now we’ll strip him,” said Wash Crosby. “The tar is all ready and so are the feathers.”

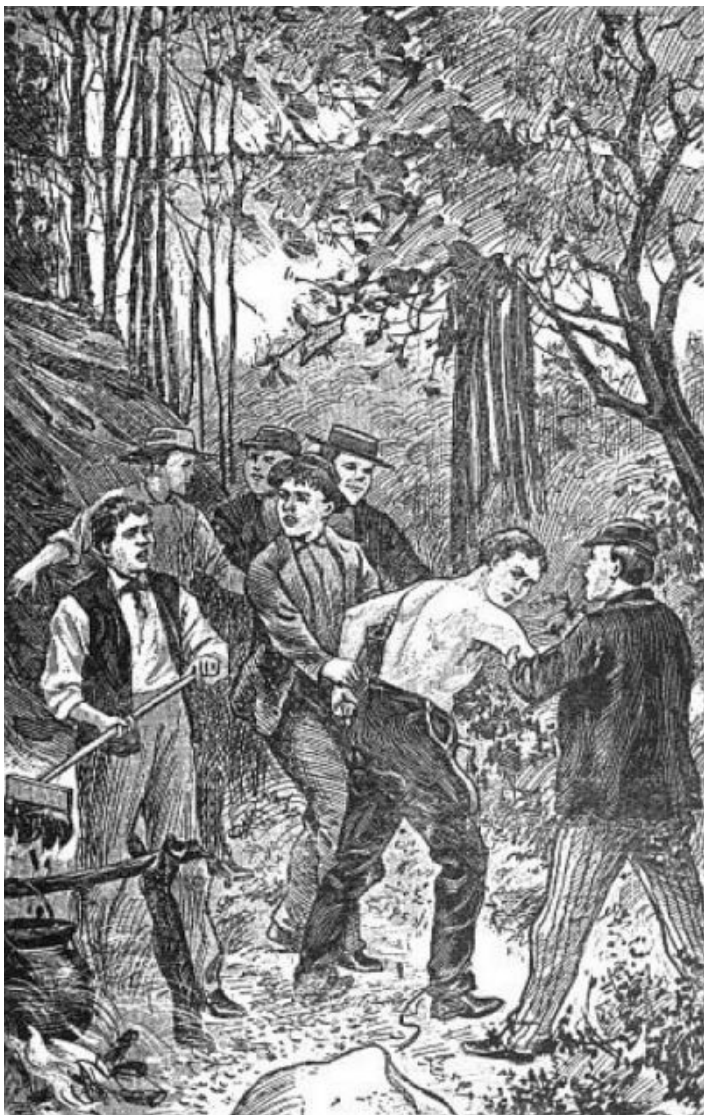
Jerry’s struggles availed him nothing. His coat and vest were literally ripped from his body, and his shirt followed.

“Give me the brush. I want to give him the first dose,” sang out Si Peters.

The old whitewash brush was handed to the leader. Si dipped it deeply into the pot of hot tar, and approached the young oarsman.

“Now, Jerry Upton, we’ll tar and feather you in spite of your threats,” he said.





THE TAR WAS READY FOR USE.

CHAPTER X.

WHAT TOWSER DID.

“Well, by creation? what does this mean?”

The speaker was Mr. Upton, Jerry’s father. He was gazing at the hay-rick, which was coming down the road to the barn at a lively gait.

As the boys who had captured Jerry had thought, the horses had found their way home alone.

Anxiously, Mr. Upton looked around for Jerry, and then he stopped the team and put them up in the barn.

Running into the house he told his wife of the state of affairs. Instantly Mrs. Upton grew alarmed.

“Perhaps they ran away and threw Jerry out!” she cried.

“It ain’t likely they could get away with Jerry,” replied Mr. Upton. “But I allow it is curious.”

A half hour went by, and the farmer determined to start on a hunt for his son. He went off on horseback, and took with him Towser, the farm dog.

Towser was an old and faithful animal, a prime favorite with Jerry, and he trotted along beside the horse as if he knew something was wrong.

“We want to find Jerry, Towser,” said Mr. Upton. “Jerry, Towser, Jerry!”

And the dog wagged his tail as if to say that he understood perfectly.

It was now quite dark. The farmer had brought along a lantern, and this he lit and swung around first on one side of the road and then on the other. As he journeyed along he remembered Jerry’s troubles with the Rockpoint boys.

“Maybe he has had another fight,” he thought. “It was foolish to let him go over there.”

Inside of an hour the other side of the lake was reached, and they struck the lonely road leading into Rockpoint.

As the farmer went on he became more and more sober in mind. He seemed to feel in his mind that something was wrong.

Towser let out a mournful howl.

“Jerry, Towser, Jerry!”

Again the dog howled. Then he came to an unexpected halt and although Farmer Upton went on, the dog refused to budge.

“What is it, Towser?”

For reply the dog started into the bushes, and this at first made the old farmer angry, for he did not understand the dog.

“Come, Towser!” he cried. “We are not after game just now!”

But the dog would not come. He wanted to enter the brush.

At last Mr. Upton went to catch him by the collar, but just as he did so the dog gave a short bark and picked up something from among the bushes.

“Hullo!”

No wonder the old farmer was surprised. The article Towser had discovered was a sling-shot Jerry often carried with him.

“Must have come in here,” mused Farmer Upton.

Then of a sudden he began to examine the ground. It was soft in spots and plainly showed the footmarks of Jerry and the Si Peters crowd.

“He’s in trouble!” said the old farmer to himself. “Maybe some tramps have carried him off and robbed him.”

Urging on the faithful dog, Mr. Upton hurried along the path through the woods, leaving the horse tied to a tree.

It was an uneven way, and he stumbled many times. But he did not mind—his one thought was to reach his son and find out the boy’s condition.

Towser ran ahead, howling dismally at every few yards. But the faithful dog did not lose the scent.

Presently, through the bushes, Farmer Upton caught sight of a distant camp fire.

“Hist!” he called to Towser. “Go slow, now! Down!”

And the dog obeyed and howled no longer.

A hundred yards more were passed, when a loud cry rent the air.

“Help! help!”

It was Jerry’s voice. Si Peters was in the act of applying the first brushful of tar to his back. Utterly helpless, there was nothing left for Jerry to do but to use his lungs.

“Shut up!” cried Si Peters. “Yell again and I’ll hit you in the mouth with the tar.”

“You are an overgrown coward!” retorted Jerry. “Give me a fair show, and I’ll knock you out in short order.”

And again he called for help.

In a rage, Si Peters started to plaster Jerry’s mouth with the hot tar. But ere the brush could descend, Mr. Upton and Towser burst upon the scene.

“Stop, you young scamps!” roared the old farmer. “At ’em, Towser! Chew ’em up!”

Startled at the unexpected interruption, the rowdies fell back. Then Towser

leaped forward and caught Si Peters by his trowsers.

“Save me!” yelled Si, in terror. “The dog is going to chew me up!”

“Good, Towser!” returned Jerry. “Hold him fast!”

And Towser did as bidden.

In the meantime Mr. Upton ran after the boys who had been holding Jerry. He caught two of them, and before they knew it, knocked their heads together so forcibly that they saw stars.

Jerry, delighted at the unexpected turn of affairs, turned upon Wash Crosby. Si Peters had dropped the tar brush, and this Jerry secured.

Bang! whack! Crosby received a blow over the head, and one in the ear, which left a big black streak of tar.

“Oh, don’t! please don’t!” he screamed. “Let up, Jerry! It was only a joke! We weren’t really going to tar and feather you!”

Then the fellow ran for his very life.

During this time Si Peters was trying his best to get away from Towser, who held on with a deathlike grip.

Around and around the camp fire the two circled, until Jerry came up.

The youth called off the dog and went at Si in about the same manner as he had treated Wash Crosby.

Si wanted to run for it, and in his hurry rushed through the fire, knocking over the kettle of tar.

The sticky mess emptied itself over his clothing. Then the young oarsman tripped him up, and over he rolled among the loose feathers.

“Now you can see how you like it!” cried Jerry.

And growling and panting for breath, Si Peters ran away after the others.

The Rockpoint rowdies were thoroughly demoralized.



CHAPTER XI.

OFF FOR HERMIT ISLAND.

It took Jerry and his father some little time to get back their breath sufficiently to leave the woods and make their way to the road.

"You came in the nick of time, father," said the lad. "In another five minutes I would have been tarred and feathered."

"Tell me about the whole affair, son," said the old farmer; and Jerry did so.

"The good-for-nothing rascals!" cried the old farmer. "If they touch you again I'll have 'em all up before the squire."

"That won't help us, father," replied Jerry. "They are rich, you know. They would get off somehow."

"Then I'll take it out of their hides."

Mr. Upton told how Towser had led the way into the woods. Jerry had always loved the farm dog, but now he thought more of him than ever.

"Good boy," he said. "You shall go with us when we take our outing—that is, if father will let you go."

"Yes, Jerry, take him along. He may help you out of some more trouble," replied Mr. Upton.

It was rather late when they arrived home. Mrs. Upton was shocked to learn of what had occurred, but glad to learn that Jerry had escaped his enemies.

The next day the young oarsman told Harry Parker and the other boys of his adventure. Harry was very indignant.

"Those Rockpoint boys ought to be driven out of the state."

"I dun racken I'll carry my hoss pistol after dis," said Blumpo. "Da don't cotch dis chile for to tar and feather him!"

A week later Jerry, Harry, and Blumpo started up the lake on a ten days' outing.

They were in Harry's largest row-boat, the one that had a sail, and carried with them a tent and a good stock of ammunition. Jerry and Harry were armed with guns, and Blumpo carried his "hoss pistol" and a rusty spear.

They were bound for Hermit Island, a wild but beautiful patch of land situated almost at the end of Otasco Lake. The island was so called because it was said by some that the place was inhabited by an old hermit who lived in a cave and never showed himself to visitors.

Some did not believe this story, for try as hard as they could, they had never

been able to locate the strange creature, who was said to have a white beard to his waist, and white hair equally long.

The day that the trio started away was a fine one, and the boys were in excellent spirits.

"I trust we have no more squalls," remarked Harry, as they glided along, the sail set and the oars out.

"No storm to-day," returned Jerry. "We are going to have at least three or four days of fine weather."

"Say, I wondah if I could shoot a bar wid dis yere gun," put in Blumpo, as he held up his pistol.

"You might if you threw the pistol at the bear when you pulled the trigger," laughed Jerry. "Sure as you are born, Blumpo, that pistol will go to pieces if you try to fire it."

"Den I'll fire it dis way," replied the homeless youth, and swung the weapon as if to heave it away.

An hour passed, during which the boys laid their plans for a camp and talked over what they would do.

"I hope we have good hunting and fishing," said Jerry.

"So do I," returned Harry. "And I likewise hope we find the hermit, if there really is such a creature."

"Maybe he won't want us on his island," put in Blumpo. "He may be an ugly feller."

"We'll risk it, Blumpo."

"I ain't in fer stirrin' up no hornets' nest," went on the homeless youth. "I jess like ter lay around an' take it easy under de trees—a-listening to—"

"The tumble bugs tumbling around," as the song says," laughed Jerry. "Blumpo, you must get more ambition in you. Come, row up lively. It's a good long distance to the island, and we must make it before sundown."

All three braced up, and the big boat went forward at an increased rate of speed.

"Hullo!" cried Harry, presently. "Jerry, doesn't that look like Si Peters' yacht?"

And Harry pointed over to the west shore of the lake, where a craft had just emerged from behind a small headland.

"It is the Peters yacht, sure enough," replied Jerry, after studying the craft.

"If she cums dis way, we'll hab lively times," remarked Blumpo.

"That's true, Blumpo. Come, maybe we can get away from her."

The boys kept steadily on their course, and for a long time those on the yacht

seemed to pay no attention to them.

But after awhile the big boat put on another tack, and fifteen minutes later it was within hailing distance. Then they saw that Si Peters and Crosby were in possession. They had with them five other Rockpoint lads, including Banner and Graves.

"Hi, you fellows, stop rowing!" yelled Peters at the top of his voice.

"Mind your own business, Si Peters," retorted Harry.

"You won't stop?"

"No. Leave us alone."

"We want you to give up Jerry Upton."

"Give him up?"

"Exactly. Come up alongside and let him jump on board of the yacht."

"That's as cool as a cake of ice!" cried Jerry. "You want everything, don't you?"

"We are going to get square with you, Jerry Upton!" put in Wash Crosby.

"Let us pull away as fast as we can," whispered Harry. "Those chaps mean trouble."

"Dat's de talk," said Blumpo, who was the worst scared of the three.

They bent to their oars, and soon moved off a hundred feet or more.

Then Si Peters ran out to the jib of the yacht. "Stop!" he commanded. "Pull another yard and you'll be sorry for it."

"We'll risk it," replied Jerry.

"We'll run you down!"

"You won't dare!" yelled Harry, in alarm.

"Won't we? Just see if we won't!"

At once Si Peters gave some directions to Wash Crosby, who was at the wheel. The course of the yacht was slightly changed, and now the craft was headed directly for the boat containing our friends.

"Anudder smash-up, shuah as you're born!" groaned Blumpo, and he prepared to leap into the lake.

"Stay where you are!" ordered Jerry. "I'll check their little game."

Reaching into a locker, the young oarsman brought out his gun. Leaping on one of the seats, he pointed the weapon at Si Peters' head.

"Sheer off!" he cried. "Sheer off, or I'll fire on you!"



CHAPTER XII.

AN ATTACK IN THE DARK.

Si Peters was nearly dumbfounded at the unexpected turn affairs had taken. The bully at once gave the necessary directions, and the yacht passed to windward of the other boat.

“A good idea, Jerry!” exclaimed Harry. “That will make them steer clear of us for good, I reckon.”

“If they haven’t got guns of their own, Harry.”

The boys on the yacht were evidently much crestfallen. They had hoped to get Jerry in their power, but that plan was defeated. They dropped behind several hiding places, and again headed for the big row-boat.

But once more Jerry outwitted them. Calling to Blumpo to steady the temporary mast, he climbed to the top, his gun slung over his shoulder.

From this elevated point he was able to sweep the yacht’s deck from stem to stern.

“Now turn about, or I’ll fire on you, as sure as fate!” he ordered.

“You think you are smart, don’t you,” sneered Wash Crosby.

“I’m too smart for your crowd,” retorted Jerry.

“We can fire as well as you,” put in Graves.

“If you had a gun, which you haven’t,” retorted Jerry.

The boys on the yacht growled among themselves, but could do nothing. Wash Crosby tried to throw a piece of iron on the row-boat, but it fell short. Then Harry retaliated by shooting through the yacht’s main-sail.

Seeing the boys on the big row-boat meant business, Si Peters and his crowd withdrew from the encounter.

As soon as they were gone, Jerry came down from his perch, and off they started once more for the island.

The yacht sailed so far off they thought they were no longer observed.

But in this they were mistaken for Si Peters had a field glass with him.

This glass was now brought into play, and Peters’ crowd kept track of Jerry and the others until the vicinity of Hermit Island was reached.

“Going to camp there,” said Wash Crosby.

“It ought to give us a fine chance to get square,” replied Si Peters, and the crowd began to plot against our hero and his friends.

But in the meantime the big row-boat disappeared behind the bushes which fringed a narrow inlet, and, try their best, those on the yacht could not locate it again.

“Never mind, we’ll come up some other day,” said Si Peters. “It’s getting too late to do anything now.”

And the yacht returned to Rockpoint.

It was Harry who selected a landing place on Hermit’s Island. He found a smooth, sandy beach, and here the row-boat was drawn up well out of the water.

Back of the beach was a little clearing. On one side were tall rocks, and on the other the woods.

“As good a place as any to pitch the tent,” said Jerry. “Come, Blumpo, stir yourself.”

The tent was brought out and put up, and a camp fire was lit. While Blumpo gathered brush to put into the tent to sleep on, Jerry and Harry tried their hands at fishing.

Soon Harry had a bite, and brought in a perch weighing a little over a half a pound.

“Good for you, Harry, you take first prize!” cried Jerry.

Hardly had he spoken when he felt a jerk. There was a lively struggle for fully a minute, and then Jerry landed his catch—a rock bass, all of a pound in weight.

“Second, but best,” laughed Harry. “I guess that is all we want for to-night.”

The pan was over the fire getting hot. Blumpo cleaned the fish and put them on. In the meantime, Jerry made a pot of coffee.

Never had a meal tasted better to the boys. They lingered over the scraps for a long while, talking over the events of the day. Blumpo also gave them a song. It was a happy time.

“Somebody ought to stand guard all night, I suppose,” said Jerry, when it came time to turn in.

“Oh, nonsense!” cried Harry. “Who is going to hurt us in this out of the way spot?”

“We don’t know what may be around.”

“I’s too tired to watch,” put in Blumpo.

“Never knew the time you weren’t tired,” laughed Jerry. “But let it go, if you wish.”

Quarter of an hour later all of the boys had turned in. Blumpo picked out a corner of the tent nearest the rear. Harry slept in the middle, while Jerry took up a place not far from the front flaps.

As it was rather warm, they left one of the flaps open to admit the air. Jerry lay in

such a position that he could look out on the smoldering camp fire.

Jerry was as tired as the rest, and it did not take him long to drop off into a sound sleep.

How long he slept he did not know. A low noise outside aroused him. He opened his eyes with a start, wondering what it was.

Then came another growl or grunt, he could not tell which. He sat up and looked outside.

A sight met his gaze that nearly caused his heart to stop beating. The camp fire was almost out, but beyond its fitful glare he beheld a pair of large eyes bent directly upon the tent opening.

The eyes belonged to some savage beast which was about to attack the camp.



CHAPTER XIII.

JERRY'S SHOT.

Jerry realized that he and his friends were in great peril. What the savage beast outside was he could not tell, but it looked large and powerful in the gloom beyond the camp fire.

There was no time to lose if anything was to be done.

Luckily, before lying down, the young oarsman had loaded his gun and hung it up on the front pole of the tent, within easy reach.

Sitting up, he now took the weapon and pulled back the trigger.

The click reached the ears of the animal outside, and once again it let out that peculiar sound, neither grunt nor growl.

Then Jerry put the gun to his shoulder, and, taking aim at one of the shining eyes, fired.

Bang!

The report of the firearm caused Harry and Blumpo to spring up in wild alarm.

"What's the matter?"

"Heaben sabe us!" moaned Blumpo.

"A wild animal outside," cried Jerry. "Get your gun, quick!"

Harry leaped for his weapon.

"What is it?"

"I can't make out."

Reloading as rapidly as he could, our hero dashed into the open. A howl of pain told he had hit his mark. The beast had turned and was crashing through the brush close to the rocks.

"Let us find out what it was!" cried Harry.

"Doan go!" moaned Blumpo. "You will git chewed up!"

And then he dove back into the tent for his "hoss" pistol and his rusty spear.

Catching up a blazing brand, Jerry threw it into the brush. By the light they saw the creature crouching on a rock.

Bang! bang!

The two guns spoke simultaneously. Harry hit the beast in the shoulder. Jerry's shot was more effective for it struck in the neck, and with a snarl the creature leaped into the air and fell—dead.

"You've settled him!" cried Harry. "Come on and inspect him."

“Wait and load your gun first,” cautioned our hero. “He may have some fight in him still.”

The weapons were put in order, and then, with firebrands to light the way, they moved forward to inspect their victim.

It was a large and heavy boar.

“A wild hog!” shouted Jerry. “My, what a big fellow he is!”

“I thought it was a bear,” said Harry. He was somewhat disappointed.

“He was savage enough, at all events,” replied Jerry. “These wild hogs put up a terrible fight, father says.”

“Oh, I know that. Wasn’t Dick Harben’s uncle killed by one? Well, he’s dead enough and we have meat to last a month.”

“Pretty strong eating,” smiled Jerry.

They called Blumpo. The homeless youth was delighted over the dead animal.

““Ham’s de best ob meat,”” he sang. “I’ll soon fix him up, see if I don’t.”

The boys were glad that it was getting toward morning, for the excitement had taken all the sleep out of them. They replenished the fire, and sat around waiting for daybreak.

As soon as the sun rose, Blumpo prepared breakfast, while Jerry and Harry took a plunge into the lake. It was great sport, and they remained in the water until Blumpo called them.

That day the boys tramped nearly two miles around the island. They took their guns with them and came back with their game bags full of birds. Returning, they were thoroughly tired out, but nevertheless resolved to set a watch.

“Four hours each,” said Harry, and this was agreed to.

But nothing happened to disturb them, and on the following night the watch was abandoned.

The boys put in nearly a week in hunting, fishing, swimming, and lying around, and they enjoyed every minute of the time.

Nothing had been seen or heard of the hermit who was supposed to inhabit the island, and they began to think that no such person existed.

Neither had they heard anything more of Si Peters and his crowd, and they fancied they were safe from molestation.

Sunday passed quietly, and on Monday morning Jerry proposed they take along a game bag full of provisions and climb to the top of the rocky hill in the centre of the island.

“We must go to the very top before we leave,” he said.

The game bag was filled with eatables, and cups, plates, etc., and then they tied

up the tent flaps and drew the boat still higher up out of the water.

The first quarter of a mile of the journey was easy enough, but after that they struck the rocks, and climbing became more and more difficult with every step.

“Phew! but dis am work!” puffed Blumpo. “Dis boy’s most tucked out!”

“We’ll take a good long rest at noon, Blumpo,” said Harry.

Up and up they went until Jerry, who was in advance, came to a sudden halt. A deep split in the rocks barred his further progress.

“Will we have to go back?” asked Harry, anxiously.

“It looks like it.”

“Can’t we leap over?”

“We might try. I can, if you are willing to follow.”

“I kin jump dat easy enough,” put in Blumpo.

Jerry stepped back, and running a few feet, made the leap in safety. Harry followed, and then both boys waited for Blumpo Brown to join them.

The homeless youth measured the distance with his eye and came on like a steam engine.

But just before he reached the edge of the split he slipped and went headlong. Unable to stop himself, he crashed down into the opening head first.

In going over the rocks he twisted himself partly around.

With one hand he caught hold of a frail bush growing among the rocks.

His left foot caught in a crevice, and there he hung, unable to help himself, and with death staring him in the face!



CHAPTER XIV.

THE HERMIT OF THE ISLAND.

"He'll be killed!" yelled Harry.

His face was deadly white.

"Help me!" came faintly from Blumpo.

Before the others could realize it, Jerry had leaped back to the other side of the opening. Catching hold of a jutting rock with one hand, he grasped Blumpo's wrist with the other.

"Now let go below and I'll haul you up, Blumpo," he said.

The frightened youth did as requested, and slowly but surely Jerry dragged him up to a safe spot.

"Good for you, Jerry!" shouted Harry.

"By golly! but dat was a close call!" shuddered the homeless youth.

Then, with tears in his big, honest eyes, he wrung our hero's hand.

"You dun sabel my life, Jerry!" he declared solemnly. "I won't forgit dat, neber!"

The nervous boy was averse to attempting a second jump, and so the party walked along the opening until a much narrower spot was reached.

Once over, the upward climb was again begun. By noon they reckoned that they were within half a mile of the top. But all were exhausted, and glad enough to rest and take a bite to eat.

A fine spring was found, and here they washed up and quenched their thirst before resuming the journey.

They found a large quantity of huckleberries growing on the hillside, and these made very acceptable eating.

"A fellow could put in a month here," remarked Jerry. "But, heigho! the vacation will soon be ended, and then for school again."

The rest over, they went up and up again.

"Beat you to the summit!" cried Jerry, and started up the last stretch on a rush. Harry followed, and Blumpo was not far behind.

What a splendid panorama was spread before them! They could see clear to either end of the lake and off to the hills east and west.

"I see the church steeple!" cried Jerry.

"Look! look!" exclaimed Harry, suddenly.

He pointed down the lake to where a yacht was bowling along before the breeze.

“Si Peters’ boat!”

“I wonder if Peters knows we are still on the island?” mused Jerry.

“I reckon he does.”

“It’s a wonder he and his crowd never came up to make more trouble for us.”

“Perhaps he dun got scared at dis hoss pistol ob mine,” put in Blumpo.

To him that “hoss” pistol was a mighty weapon, greatly to be feared.

A little back of the summit of rocks was a grassy plateau, and here the boys decided to camp for the night.

“What a beautiful place for a picnic!” said Harry.

“Rather hard to get to, though,” returned Jerry. “I wonder if there is a spring handy?”

“A spring away up heah!” exclaimed Blumpo. “Yo’ expect watah to run up hill? Ha, ha!”

“Yes, Blumpo; strange as it may seem, the finest springs are found at the very tops of mountains. Come on and look for one.”

The homeless youth showed his surprise, but he readily joined in the hunt, and so did Harry. There was a patch of brush behind the plateau, and this they skirted. Ere long Jerry found a tiny rivulet flowing in a well-worn hollow.

“The head of this rill of water will bring us to the spring,” he said.

They began to follow the watercourse. It led around half a dozen big rocks.

“Halt!”

All three of the boys sprang back in amazement. From whence had that unexpected command proceeded?

“Halt, I say!”

They stopped short.

“Who are you?” asked Jerry quickly.

“I am the Lonely Man. Leave me!”

“The Lonely Man,” repeated Jerry.

“Yes. Depart, my boys, at once.”

“Are you the man they call the hermit of the island?” asked Harry.

“I presume so. Now leave me. I have not spoken to other men for years.”

“We would like to get a little water first, if you please,” said Jerry. “Surely so good an old man as you will not refuse us that.”

This way of talking evidently struck the hermit’s fancy, for there was a rustle of bushes, and the hermit of the island stepped into view.

All of the boys stared at him in blank amazement. He was a reddish-black individual, with snow white hair and long flowing beard.

Blumpo grew so frightened that he immediately fell on his knees.

“De voodoo doctor, suah!” he muttered.

Like many other ignorant people, he was very superstitious and believed in charms and voodooism.

“We are sorry to have disturbed you in your lonely retreat,” began Harry. “But we—”

“Say no more, my boy. Get the water you need and depart.”

“We will.”

Harry and Jerry turned toward the spring and quietly filled up the big tin can they had brought along.

The old hermit watched them curiously.

“You look like good boys,” he said. “I want to ask a favor of you.”

“What?” asked both boys in a breath.

“I wish to end my days here undisturbed. Will you promise not to reveal my dwelling place to your friends?”

“I am willing to say nothing,” said Jerry, promptly.

“So am I,” returned Harry.

The old man looked much relieved.

“And how is it with you?” he went on, turning and walking to where Blumpo had his head bent low on the ground.

“Please, sah, don’t charm me, sah! don’t cast no spell ober me!” howled Blumpo. “I ain’t dun nuffin’ ’deed I ain’t. I’s de best boy in Lakeview! Ain’t I, Harry? Ain’t dat de truf, Jerry?”

“I will not harm you, so do not be afraid,” said the hermit with a faint smile on his reddish-black face.

“I won’t tell a t’ing! not a word, sah, hope ter die if I do!” went on Blumpo, still keeping his face down.

He was afraid that if he looked at the hermit he would be bewitched.

“Blumpo, get up!” said Harry, sharply. “Don’t make a fool of yourself. This gentleman is not going to hurt you. Stand up and be a man.”

Thus spoken to, the homeless boy arose slowly to his feet. His knees were still trembling, and he needed but little incentive to take to his heels.

“I have not seen a colored or an Indian boy in years,” went on the old hermit. “If you are an honest boy let me take your hand.”

He advanced, and with his knees knocking together Blumpo put out his hand

and looked the old man in the face.

The next instant the hermit gave a leap back in profound astonishment.

“Abraham! As sure as the sun shines! And I thought he was dead!”



CHAPTER XV.

THE HERMIT'S SECRET.

All three of the boys were much mystified by the old hermit's words.

"He must be a little off in his head," thought Harry.

"Who is Abraham?" asked Jerry.

"This is Abraham!" cried the hermit. "Are you not Abraham?" he went on to Blumpo.

"I reckon not, sah. I'se jess plain Blumpo Brown."

"Blumpo Brown! Ha! how well I remember that name! You are indeed Abraham, and I am your father!"

And the hermit caught Blumpo in his arms. It is needless to say the youth was frightened and bewildered.

"Come to my cave and I will tell you all," went on the hermit, and he dragged Blumpo along.

Jerry and Harry willingly followed. They found that the old man had quite a comfortable place among the rocks. It was elaborately furnished, showing that the hermit was well-to-do.

They all took seats on some skins thrown over rude couches. The hermit made Blumpo sit close to him.

"My name is Daniel Brown," he began. "And you, Blumpo, are my only son. Your full name is Blum-pou-la-hau,—the Indian for boy-of-the-laughing-face,—for, you know, you have much Indian blood in your veins."

"Dat's what folks said I had," said Blumpo.

"I thought you were dead—that you had been drowned. It was this drove me to make a hermit of myself."

Then the old hermit went into many particulars, to which all listened with great interest.

Blumpo could scarcely believe his ears. His face began to expand, and a smile broke out on it, the like of which had never before been seen. He was a homeless waif no longer. He had found a father.

Jerry and Harry talked to the old hermit for an hour and more. They found him peculiar in his ideas, but with a warm heart.

Before they retired for the night Daniel Brown came to the conclusion to give up his dwelling on the top of the mountain.

He said he would build a cabin down by the lakeside and there he and Blumpo could live like ordinary people.

"I have several thousand dollars saved up," he said, "so we will not want for anything. I will buy a boat, and Blumpo can make a living by letting her out to pleasure parties."

"Dat will suit me exactly," cried Blumpo.

"But you must also go to school in the winter," went on Daniel Brown. "And you must drop that dialect, and not say dat for that."

"Golly! but won't I be eddicate!" murmured Blumpo. "Say, Pop maybe I kin hab—I mean have—a new suit, eh?"

"Two of them, Abraham," said the hermit; and then all hands laughed.

It was well for the boys that they were housed in the hermit's dwelling, for that night a terrible thunder storm came up. The wind howled and shrieked around the mountain top, and continued until dawn.

"If we had been on the plateau we would have been blown off into the lake," said Harry, at breakfast.

By nine o'clock it cleared off and at twelve the mountain was as dry as ever. They packed up, and, accompanied by the hermit, set off, for the old camp.

Daniel Brown knew every inch of the mountain and under his guidance they reached the bottom much quicker than they would otherwise have done.

As they were trailing through the woods toward the camp, Harry suddenly put up his hand.

"Listen! Don't you hear some persons talking?" he asked.

"Where can it be?" asked Jerry.

"Down by the camp," said Blumpo.

"Si Peters' crowd, I'll bet a new hat!" cried Jerry. "Come on, all of you!"

The young oarsman broke into a run, and Harry and Blumpo came after, with the hermit lagging on behind. A turn in the brush brought them in sight of the camp.

There were Si Peters, Wash Crosby, and four others in the act of shoving Harry's craft into the water.

"They intended to run off with our boat!" yelled Jerry. "Stop, there, you thieves!"

"Stop, or we'll fire on you!" added Harry.

The Peters crowd were surprised and alarmed. They hesitated for a moment.

"Go ahead, don't mind them!" howled Si Peters. "Quick, fellows, shove out to the yacht!"

Before Jerry and the others could reach the spot the big row-boat was afloat. The Peters crowd leaped on board and quickly shipped the oars.

“Stop, or we’ll fire on you!” sang out Harry again.

“Fire and be blowed!” howled Wash Crosby.

Bang! went Harry’s gun, and the shot rattled all around the row-boat.

But now a turn of a headland took the craft out of range.

“Follow me!” said Jerry, as he leaped across the camp to where they could again catch sight of the craft.

Over the rock and through the brush they stumbled, a distance of two hundred feet. Then the shore of the lake was again reached.

But, alas! before they could do anything the Peters crowd was entirely out of range. They saw the big row-boat taken over to where the yacht lay at anchor. Harry’s craft was tied fast to the stern and the Rockpointers clambered aboard their own vessel.

“Good-bye and good luck to you!” cried Si Peters, mockingly. “Hope you fellows enjoy playing Robinson Crusoe. We’ll come back for you some time next year.”

And then the yacht sailed away, leaving those on the island to their fate.



CHAPTER XVI.

AN EXCITING CHASE.

For the moment the boys did not know what to do. Si Peters and his crowd had run off with their row-boat, and how to get to the mainland was a serious question.

To swim the distance would be a dangerous undertaking, and there was no telling how long it would be before another craft should come along to take them off.

But the hermit solved the problem.

"If you want to follow those boys you can take my boat," he said.

"Have you a boat?" asked Jerry, quickly.

"Certainly, although I use it but sparingly, and then only at night."

The hermit led the way to the lower end of the island. Here in a water-cave rested a long, round-bottomed row-boat, containing two pairs of oars.

"Just the thing!" cried Jerry. "Come on, Harry!"

He and his chum leaped in. Blumpo looked at his newly found father.

"I will go along if you wish," said the hermit.

In five seconds more all four were in the boat, which was then shoved out into the lake.

With Jerry and Harry at the oars, they made good progress in the direction of Si Peters' yacht.

All were armed, and Blumpo occupied the time in seeing that every weapon was ready for use.

"The wind is dying out," said Harry. "That is in our favor."

"They have not more than half a mile start," rejoined Jerry. "We ought to catch up in half an hour."

It was evident that those on the yacht did not anticipate pursuit, for it was not until the distance between the two craft had been considerably lessened that they showed signs of alarm.

"They see us!" cried Blumpo. "Shall I give 'em a shot?"

"No; wait," replied Jerry.

The wind had now gone down almost entirely, and the yacht's sails were flapping idly.

Si Peters and Wash Crosby were evidently alarmed at the turn affairs had taken, and they called their chums around them for consultation.

"We can't do anything while the wind is down," said Crosby.

“Let’s get out and row,” suggested Graves, who was one of the number.

“Can we tow the yacht?”

“We can try.”

This was decided on, and all of the crowd leaped into Harry’s boat. They brought the craft around to the yacht’s bow, and then every one took an oar.

“See, they are hauling off the yacht!” cried Harry. “They mean to get away somehow.”

“We’ll race them,” replied Jerry.

They bent to their oars and made the old hermit’s boat fairly fly through the water. Slowly they crept nearer and nearer. It was an exciting chase.

“Take my place, Blumpo!” cried Jerry, at last, and the boy willingly obeyed.

Jerry leaped into the bow, and taking up his gun pointed it at Si Peters’ head.

“Si Peters!” he called out, “do you see this gun? Unless you stop rowing I’ll fire at you, no matter what the consequences are.”

Si Peters turned deadly white, for he was in reality a big coward.

“Do you hear me?” went on Jerry. “One—two—th——”

“Stop! don’t shoot!” yelled the Rockpoint bully, and he held up his oar.

“Now, Wash Crosby, you stop rowing, too!” went on Jerry.

“Think you are boss, eh?” sneered Crosby.

“I am. Up with the oar!”

Crosby hesitated, and then his oar went up beside Si’s. The others became badly frightened and also stopped rowing. In a moment more the hermit’s craft was beside the big row-boat.

The Rockpointers gazed at the white-haired man in astonishment. They wanted to know who he was, but just then had other matters to attend to.

“You think you own the earth when you have a gun!” howled Si Peters to Jerry.

“We’re on top, that is certain,” responded our hero. “Say, Harry, supposing we get on the yacht and make them row us back to the island?”

“Not much!” growled Wash Crosby.

“Just the thing!” cried Harry.

Still keeping the Peters crowd under guard, Jerry and his friends boarded the yacht.

Then, much against their will, they made the others turn about and drag them back to where they had started from, towing the hermit’s craft behind.

Peters and Crosby were in a perfect rage, but could do nothing, as Jerry pretended to be very savage and itching to shoot them.

The island reached, Jerry made the Peters crowd beach the boat and clean her.

“Now take your yacht and begone!” he commanded, and the crowd hurried off in double-quick order. As the yacht drifted away the hermit laughed heartily.

“Cleverly done!” he said. “Jerry Upton, you are a smart lad.”

The boys spent one more day on the island and then left for home. The hermit went along, and created some surprise when he appeared on the streets of Lakeview with Blumpo, his son.

All the boys were glad that the homeless youth had found a father, who would endeavor to make something out of the good-natured and honest lad.

There was also a surprise for our hero and Harry.

Si Peters and his gang had been arrested for burning down a barn belonging to Harry’s father.

The Rockpoint lads tried to beg off, but the authorities took the matter in hand, and every one of them was sent to the reformatory.

This ended the rivalry for the time being between Lakeview and Rockpoint and, as a consequence, the autumn and winter which followed were comparatively quiet. But stirring events were on the way, as the chapters which follow will testify.



CHAPTER XVII.

HARRY'S NEW YACHT.

"Luff up a bit, Harry!"

"All right, Jerry. Do you think we will make that point?"

"If the wind holds out. We are behind the rocks now, and that cuts most of the breeze off."

"Blumpo, coil up some of that rope, will you?"

"To be suah," returned the youth addressed.

The scene was the deck of a handsome yacht named the Whistler. She was as clean cut as a craft could be, and carried a spread of snowy white sails which would have gladdened the heart of any sea-dog to behold.

Three boys and an old man were sailing this craft. The three boys were Jerry, Harry and Blumpo. The man was Jack Broxton, the boathouse keeper.

The yacht was a new one, recently purchased by Harry Parker's father for the use of his son and Jerry.

"Do you remember what a row we had up around this island last summer with Si Peters, Wash Crosby and the rest of the Rockpoint crowd?" mused Jerry, as the yacht swung around the north point of Hermit Island, that spot where Blumpo had so strangely found his father.

"Don't I, though!" cried Harry. "I wonder if they are out of the reformatory yet for setting fire to the barn?"

"I heard da was," put in Blumpo, who now attended school regularly. "Si Peters got out las' month, an' Wash Crosby got out six weeks ago."

"Well, I hope they turn out better boys now," said Harry, seriously. "I don't see why they want to get into such trouble. A fellow can have lots of sport without doing wrong."

"By the way, Harry, the great yacht race comes off in Long Lake in a few weeks," said Jerry. "Why can't we take our yacht down through the river and be on deck to see it?"

"By golly, dat would be most splendidferous!" yelled Blumpo. "De best t'ing I've dun heard of dis Summah!"

"I've thought of it," returned Harry. He turned to the old tar. "Jack, could we take the Whistler down through Poplar River to Long Lake?"

"I reckon we could," was the slow answer, as Jack Broxton rolled his quid from

one cheek to the other. "The water is running putty high now."

"It would be a fine trip in itself," went on Jerry. "I've never sailed down the Poplar beyond Carlville."

"Nor I," returned Harry. "But never mind that just now. Here we are at the landing."

"An' heah am my father's house," said Blumpo.

The former hermit, now, however, a hermit no longer, came out to greet his son. In the meantime all hands lowered sail and tied up.

It was a beautiful day, and the young oarsman and Harry had come over to the island to see what they could shoot. They left Jack in charge of the yacht and Blumpo with his father, and started off with guns and game bags for the interior.

"There can't be much game at this season of the year," said Harry. "But we may have a little sport, and tramping in the woods does a fellow lots of good."

"Indeed I know that," was the quick response. "Hullo, here's a nasty bit of bog to cross."

"We'll go around by yonder big tree."

The two boys went on in a semi-circle. When the big tree mentioned was reached Jerry stepped on what he supposed was one of the twisted roots.

A second later he let out a yell which was heard down to the landing.

He sprang back so suddenly that he bumped into Harry, who was close behind, and both rolled over in the wet grass.

Ere they could rise they heard an angry hiss, and a snake darted from the tree and settled directly upon Jerry's body!

For a moment Jerry was too paralyzed with fear to move or speak. Then as he recovered he threw off the snake and rolled away, over Harry and close to the boggy spot. Harry also turned away, but came up against a heavy mass of brush.

The snake hissed angrily. The pressure of Jerry's foot on its head had just been sufficient to arouse its anger. It meant to strike if it could.

"Hit it with your gun!" shouted Harry.

"You hit it!" cried our hero. "Oh!"

The snake was again coming on, its long, green body quivering in the spots of sunlight which shot under the trees. There was no doubt but what it intended to fight the intruders. More than likely it had a nest of young near.

Bang!

The shot was a square one, and when the smoke from the gun cleared away it was found that the reptile's head was completely severed from the body, which latter continued to twist about until it fell into the water of the bog hole. Jerry kicked the

head in after it, out of sight.

“Let us get out of here,” he said, with a shudder. “Who knows but what we have dropped into a regular nest of snakes.”

That he was right in his surmise was soon evident, for low hissings could be heard on several sides. Without delay they sprang across the bog swamp and took to the higher ground, where they could see every foot of the way before them.

“I’ve had snakes enough to last me the rest of the summer,” soliloquized Jerry. “I hate them worse than anything else in the world. Look!”

He pointed on ahead, to where there was a tree almost loaded with game birds. At a sign from Jerry both raised their guns and fired.

There was a flutter and a whirr, and then came a number of shrill cries from the birds which were wounded. These the boys at once proceeded to put out of their misery.

“Four birds,” said Harry, as he counted the lot. “That wasn’t bad, eh?”

“You’re right, Harry. We won’t get another such shot if we tramp all day.”

“I move we get back to the yacht. We have come a good distance, and it will be more than dinner time before we can make it.”

“I am with you. We can go out hunting again this afternoon, or try our hand at fishing.”

With the birds in their bags, Jerry and Harry set out on the return to the landing.

On the way they talked over the great yacht races soon to come off, and also of the proposed trip through the Poplar River to the large lake beyond.

“It will be a dandy trip,” said Jerry, and then he added, with much spirit: “How I would like to sail on one of the yachts and help win.”

“So would I,” rejoined Harry. “It would be great sport, not to say anything of the honor.”

When the chums arrived at the boat-landing they found Blumpo and the others waiting for them. A camp fire was burning a short distance away from the log house, and over this the birds were done to a turn by the youth, while the others prepared some potatoes and coffee brought from the yacht.

Blumpo’s father considered it a great holiday to have his son with him for the time being. He asked Blumpo how he was getting along with his studies, and was pleased to learn that the youth was making fairly good progress.

After dinner it was decided to sail around to the lower end of the island and try bass fishing, for which the lake was famous.

“And then we’ll come back here and stay all night,” said Jerry to the old man.

The lines were soon cast off and the main-sail and jib set, and as soon as they

caught the breeze they swung around and down the lake at a speed of several knots an hour.

"Somebody else out besides ourselves," observed Jack Broxton, as he pointed to half a dozen sail-boats cruising around. "This year everybody has the yachting craze."

"It's great sport," returned Harry. "By the way," he went on, pointing to a large yacht coming up the lake on a long tack. "What boat is that?"

"She is called the Arrow, I don't know who owns her," was the old boatkeeper's reply.

"She is coming over this way. Let us stand out a little and see who is on board."

"Just as you say, sir."

"Yes; I'm curious about that yacht, too," put in Jerry.

The course of the Whistler was altered several points, and they left the vicinity of the island shore. As they drew closer to the big yacht Jerry uttered a cry of astonishment.

"By Jinks! It can't be possible!"

"What's up?" asked Harry, coming to his side.

"There are Si Peters and Wash Crosby on the deck of that yacht. I can see them as plain as day."

"Our old enemies!" murmured Harry.

"Da didn't lose no time in gittin togedder after da got out of de 'formatory, did da," laughed Blumpo. "Da say de bad ones allers do stick like glue."

"Oh, maybe they'll be first-class chaps now," said Jerry, who was willing to let the past be forgotten.

"Don't you be too sure on that p'int, lads," put in Jack Broxton. "It's mighty hard to make anything out of a bad egg, and Si Peters and Wash Crosby are bad eggs if ever there were any."

"Dat's so, fo' suah," murmured Blumpo.

"Well, we won't have any words with them," said Jerry. "We'll let bygones be bygones."

"I would like to know where they got that yacht," said Harry. "It can't be possible Mr. Peters bought it for Si. When Si went to the reformatory he told father he intended to send his son to a military school and cut off his allowance."

"Maybe Si has promised to reform. Hullo! they are coming this way!"

Jerry sprang up in alarm, for the big yacht had suddenly veered around several points and was now coming head on toward them.

"We'll be run down!" shrieked Blumpo, in terror.

“The young fools!” muttered Jack Broxton. “Don’t they know anything about steering?”

“The big yacht is evidently one too many for them. See, there is no one aboard but Si and Wash. Two hands are not enough for such a craft.”

Nearer and nearer the two yachts came to each other.

Jack Broxton did his best to steer clear of the Arrow, but he was at a disadvantage. Soon the big yacht took away all the wind of the Whistler and she lay helpless.

“Keep off!” yelled Jerry, but the cry was unheeded.

Bang! Crash! The Arrow struck the Whistler on the bow, the long bowsprit ripping a hole in the main-sail.

Then came a smashing of woodwork and the Whistler began to sink.



CHAPTER XVIII.

THE ROBBERY OF THE ROCKPOINT HOTEL.

"We are lost!"

"Heaben sabe us!"

"Cling fast for your lives!"

A dozen other cries rang out, for the force of the collision was terrible.

But all clung fast and no one was thrown into the water, to be struck and perhaps instantly killed.

"What do you mean, Si Peters?" yelled Jerry. "You ran into us on purpose!"

There was no time to reply nor to say more. After the crash the two yachts drifted apart, and with a somewhat damaged bowsprit the Arrow went on her way.

As she slid by, Harry caught a glimpse of Wash Crosby holding fast to a big red valise, which had come near bounding overboard. He thought no more of it at the time, but had good reason to remember it later.

"What shall we do?" asked Jack Broxton. "We've got a neat little hole in the side."

"Can we beach her on the island?" asked Harry. "I don't want the Whistler to go to the bottom of the lake."

"I reckon I can manage it. Just hold that bit of canvas over the hole."

Harry and our hero jumped to do as bidden, while Jack Broxton and Blumpo undertook to steer the yacht toward shore. The craft was becoming so water-logged that she acted clumsily, and they had their hands full.

"We is gwine down, suah!" groaned Blumpo, but as he spoke the keel grated on the sand, and a moment later she swung around hard and fast, and the danger of sinking was past.

While Jack and Blumpo lowered the sails, Harry and Jerry carried several lines ashore and tied them to the trees in such a fashion that the yacht could not pound herself, even if the wind came up.

After the sails were lowered old Jack inspected the damage done.

"I can patch the main-sail in an hour," he said. "But that hole at the bow will take three, and I ought to have more tools than I've got aboard."

"Can't we patch things up sufficiently to take her back into Lakeview?" asked Harry.

"Maybe we can. But it would be better on account of the wind to steer for

Rockpoint. She couldn't stand the chop sea on the other course."

"All right; we'll steer for Rockpoint, and take her over to Dan Mason's boatyard."

Blumpo ran down the shore of the island to tell his father of what had happened. While he was gone the others patched up the break at the bow with some thin wood and a square of canvas, tacked on, and gave all a coating of pitch.

Half an hour later found the Whistler bound for Rockpoint. They had to sail along with great care, for fear of breaking open the patched place. Had this occurred they would all have gone to the bottom.

It was growing dusk when the harbor at Rockpoint was reached. At the dock they saw that something unusual had happened. A crowd of men were gathered about talking earnestly, and pointing up the lake.

"Whoever they were, they took a boat, I'm sure of that," said one man.

"That's so," said another.

"But who were they, and where did they go?" asked a third.

"Ah, that's for the police to find out."

Wondering what was up, Jack Broxton and the three boys brought the Whistler around to the boatyard and turned her over to Dan Mason. The old fellow, who was a first-class man at repairing boats of all kinds, promised to have the craft in good trim by noon of the next day.

"Did you hear the news?" he asked, after their business talk was at an end.

"What news?" asked Jerry.

"About the hotel being robbed."

"Robbed!"

"Exactly. A couple of thieves got into the safe and took a box of jewelry and four hundred dollars in cash."

"By George! dat am a loss!" ejaculated Blumpo.

"The jewelry is said to be worth nearly one thousand dollars."

"Have they any idea who the thieves were?"

"No, they wore handkerchiefs over their faces, with holes cut in 'em for to see. Some thinks as how they got away in one o' the boats lying up shore."

"How did they do the job?" questioned Jerry, with much interest.

"I didn't hear any of the particklers, boys."

"Come on up to the hotel and find out," said Harry. "We haven't got to hurry home this evening."

Side by side Harry and the young oarsman walked to the Rockpoint Hotel, a large place, now filled to overflowing with Summer boarders.

They found every one around the resort talking over the case. Presently Harry heard somebody say that the stolen money and box of jewels had been placed by the robbers into a large red valise belonging to the proprietor of the hotel. At once he called Jerry aside.

“I know who committed this robbery,” he said.

“Who?”

“Si Peters and Wash Crosby.”



CHAPTER XIX.

THE RED VALISE.

Of course Jerry was astonished at his chum's declaration.

"How do you know this?"

"They had that red valise. I saw it."

"Let us make a few more inquiries before we say anything," replied Jerry, slowly. "It's pretty bad to accuse anybody of such a crime as this."

They asked a number of people about the robbery, but could gain no information which would directly implicate Si Peters and his crony.

"We had better keep mum for the present, Harry."

"What, and let the robbers escape?"

"Oh, I don't want that to happen."

The two talked it over for awhile, and when they returned home they were much troubled. But that night word came from New York City which mystified them greatly.

A detective telegraphed he had captured two tramps who confessed to a hotel robbery on Lake Otasco.

"That settles it," said Harry. "We were all wrong, and I am glad we said nothing."

On the following day they rowed over to Rockpoint for the Whistler. They heard no more about the hotel robbery, and the matter almost slipped their minds. But they were destined ere long to remember the occurrence full well.

Jerry and Harry talked matters over with their parents and made plans to sail down the Poplar River to Long Lake, and go to the yacht races at once.

Jack Broxton was to accompany them. Unfortunately for Blumpo, his father was taken sick and the youth had to remain behind to attend him.

Bright and early the next day the trip was commenced.

It lasted two days and three nights, and then they found themselves out on Long Lake, a large and beautiful sheet of water.

Harry and Jerry had studied up all the newspaper reports concerning the race between the Defender, a splendid yacht from the Poplar River, and the Spray, a craft from up the lake, and they knew exactly where to go in order to see the race to the best advantage.

"I know the captain of the Defender well," said Harry. "He and father are old

friends.”

“Maybe he’ll let you on his yacht then,” said Jerry. “My, but wouldn’t that be jolly!”

“I won’t go without you,” said Harry.

“I would like to be on that yacht myself,” said old Jack Broxton, as they presently came in sight of the Defender, anchored a short distance from the starting point of the race.

“We’ll run up and I’ll hail the captain,” said Harry.

This suited everybody, and it was done. The captain of the Defender was on deck seeing to it that everything was in order for the race. He greeted Harry with a pleasant wave of his hand.

“Can we come on board and take a look around?” asked Harry.

“Yes, but you won’t have time to waste,” was the captain’s reply. “We’ve got to get down to the starting point soon.”

The Whistler was run up alongside, and Harry and Jerry leaped on board of the Defender. They shook hands with the captain, and also with Frank Lee, the captain’s nephew, a bright boy of their own age.

They were much interested in the magnificent yacht and all of her appointments, and laughed greatly when Frank Lee snatched off their caps and placed caps on them with the name of the Defender above the peaks.

“Now you fellows belong to the crew!” cried Frank Lee.

“All right, we’ll help you beat the Spray,” returned Jerry, quickly.

The captain overheard the remark and turned to Harry:

“Would you really like to remain on board during the race?”

“Indeed we would!” said Harry. “And we’ll do duty, too, same as the rest of the crew, if you’ll only keep us. You know both of us understand all about a regular yacht.”

“Well, you can stay. I am short one man, and two boys ought to more than make up for him.”

Perhaps Jerry and Harry were not delighted? They sent word to Jack Broxton, and then made themselves familiar with the great yacht, the pride of all on board.

Soon it was time to up anchor and make for the starting point. Jerry and Harry worked manfully at the ropes, and so did Frank Lee. No one is allowed to remain idle on a racing yacht. The least one can do is to rush to this side or that and thus make “ballast.”

“All ready!” came the word, and the signal was given to start, and the Defender and the Spray were off.

Presently Jerry came over to the captain, who was at the wheel.

“Can we pass the Spray?” he asked, anxiously.

“We can try, Upton,” was the reply. “Can you take the wheel for a minute. I must have a drink of water.”

“Aye, aye, sir,” said Jerry.

How proudly he took hold of the wheel! He was for the time being in absolute command of the Defender.

An extra breeze sprang up. They were sailing almost side by side with the Spray. Suddenly the Defender shot ahead. Our hero stuck to the wheel, while Harry and Frank Lee did their full share of work with the rest of the crew.

The Defender was ahead, but the race was not yet over.



CHAPTER XX.

THE MISHAP TO THE YACHT.

The young oarsman was not allowed to remain at the wheel long. Soon the captain of the Defender came up again and took charge.

"I see we have passed the Spray," he said. "That's a good one for you, Upton. Now we must keep ahead."

After turning the wheel over to the captain, Jerry moved forward to where Harry and Frank Lee were standing.

In the meanwhile the gallant yacht was cutting the water like a razor. The breeze was stiff, and they were running free before it. Soon the Spray was almost out of sight behind them.

"This Defender is a great boat," said Harry.

With the wind on the starboard quarter the Defender and the Spray reached along for over a mile at a six knots an hour gait.

Then the wind fell off to almost a calm.

"This is no good," observed Jerry.

"Fortunes of racing," laughed Harry.

"I would like to see another stiff breeze."

"We may catch more than enough before we have finished," put in Frank Lee.

The further on the two yachts went the lighter became the wind, and each in turn ran into "soft" spots, when balloon top-sails hung up and down idly.

But no matter how the wind came the Defender got along, leaving the Spray steadily behind.

It was a triangular course, of three miles to each side, and soon the first side was sailed.

The yachts wore around the first mark float, leaving it on the port hand.

Baby jib top-sails had been sent down before the rounding, and spinnaker poles were now ready for the balloon sail.

With booms well off to port, the Defender led the way to the second stretch.

Sharp work was done in handling the spinnaker, for just one minute after rounding this big balloon was set and pulling.

This was clever work, but the Spray sailors did fully as well, for they had their spinnaker on just as fast.

"Great Caesar!" ejaculated our hero, suddenly, "Look!"

Ashore the sky grew black and ominous, foreboding a coming squall. The weather certainly looked bad, and it turned out worse than it looked. Instead of wind, rain came on, and soon all on board the yachts were soaked. "What do you think of that, Jerry?" asked Harry.

"We're going to catch it and no mistake," replied the young oarsman.

All hands on board saw the coming squall and looked at the captain for orders, but none came.

The yachts, favored by a strengthening breeze, were pushed on to meet that which was sure to come, and half-way over on the third stretch it came on hard and struck the Defender.

Bang! slash! went the sails and the gallant yacht swept well over on her side.

Again all looked to the captain, but he shook his head.

"Reckon he wants to see what she can stand," whispered Jerry.

He was right. The captain, at the wheel, held the yacht up to it, and held her true.

On and on they went, the sky growing blacker and blacker as they proceeded.

Suddenly Jerry heard a crack like a pistol shot, and looking forward saw that the standing part of the bridle to the jib had parted. The seizing pulled out and away went the sheets.

The sail snapped and cracked loudly, and in a second more it carried away the club on the clew of the jib.

"There she goes!" yelled somebody.

Hardly had he uttered these words when the big sail split in half and hung flapping in the wind.

It was now utterly useless to the racing yacht.

A new sail must be set at once, but in that high wind who would bring the old sail in?

"I'll volunteer!" cried Jerry, as he sprang forward, and Harry and Frank Lee came close on his heels.

The crew hung back for a moment, and in that time Jerry reached the flying sail.

He caught one end just as an extra heavy puff of wind came on, and in a twinkling he was dragged half overboard.

But now Harry and Frank Lee sprang to the rescue, and then the regular crew came forward. All worked like beavers, and soon the torn sail was taken off.

Six minutes later a new sail was in place, and on went the gallant Defender as speedily as before.

She carried herself well, and nothing was lost in that blow but the jib.

In the meanwhile the Spray could not stand the strain and ran on behind with all

sails reefed.

"A great yacht," said those on the other boats. And the Defender stock went away up.

The captain praised Jerry for the quickness with which he had taken hold of the torn sail and steadied it.

"A loose sail on board a racing craft is a dangerous thing," he said, "for there is no telling how much damage it will do."

The squall was of short duration, not lasting over seven minutes, if as long. It gathered strength as it worked off shore, and some of the pleasure boats received the full benefit of it.

As the Defender got within two miles of the finishing line the breeze fell off.

Still the gallant craft held her own.

"The finish is in sight!" cried Jerry, presently.

He was right. A mile more and the race would be over.

Those on board of the Spray did their best to haul up to the Defender.

The effort did not avail them, for the Defender gained steadily.

At last the line was crossed.

The Defender had won the race by a lead of over half a mile, and she received a rousing reception.

Steam whistles blew their mightiest, flags waved, and the crowd on the other boats shouted themselves hoarse.

It was a great day, and one never to be forgotten.

"That settles it," said Harry. "The Defender is the champion yacht of the club."

It was not long after this that the Whistler ran up and took Jerry and Harry on board. Old Jack Broxton had seen the race and was greatly pleased.

The boys resolved to anchor the Whistler off the upper shore of Long Lake that night.

"We'll leave Jack in charge and take a trip down to Harmony Beach," suggested Harry.

This suited Jerry, and by half past six the two boys were on board the open cars on their way to the great Summer resort. They enjoyed the ride very much, especially Jerry who had never been to the beach before. They visited the hotels and had supper, and then listened to a band concert.

It was after eleven o'clock before they were ready to return to the Whistler.

As they were making their way back to the cars Jerry caught Harry by the arm.

"Look! Look!"

Harry looked, and in a crowd of people saw Wash Crosby. Not far away stood

Si Peters.

Both were swaggering around as if they had plenty of money and wanted everybody to know it.

“What shall we do?” asked Harry.

“I hardly know,” replied Jerry. “I feel certain in my mind that they robbed the Rockpoint Hotel in spite of what the detectives think.”

“So do I. But we can’t prove it.”

The two boys resolved to watch Peters and Crosby and try to overhear any private talk they might have.

Peters and Crosby entered a large music hall and sat down at one of the tables.

Motioning to Harry, our hero led the way to the side of the building.

A board was off, and by standing near the opening they could hear everything Si Peters and Wash Crosby said.



CHAPTER XXI.

WORDS AND BLOWS.

The very first words spoken by Si Peters confirmed the young oarsman's suspicions.

"What did you do with the valise, Wash?" he asked.

"Left it on the yacht at the cove," replied Wash Crosby.

"That's where you made a big mistake."

"How so?" growled the toady.

"They might take it into their heads to search the yacht."

"Oh, I guess not."

"We don't want to run any chances of being found out."

"We're all right; don't worry."

"Perhaps we are and perhaps we are not."

"Oh, keep still, and let us enjoy the music," growled Crosby, for an orchestra was now playing.

A waiter came up and Si Peters gave an order. Jerry was quite sure he had ordered something stronger than what he was in the habit of drinking at home. It was evident that the bully of Rockpoint had turned out even worse than before.

"What shall we do?" whispered Harry.

"We ought to inform the police."

"Just my idea of it."

"I don't know if there are any officers around here."

"Oh, there must be."

They looked around, but in the darkness no policeman could be seen.

"You stay here and I'll go hunt up somebody," said Jerry.

Scarcely had he spoken, however, when their attention was attracted to a row that was taking place in the concert hall. Two men were fighting, and presently a chair flew through the air.

At once those sitting around tried to retire.

Peters and Crosby rushed out in the crowd, and not to lose sight of the pair Jerry and Harry went after them.

Fifty feet from the concert hall the four came face to face. Si Peters started back, and Wash Crosby wanted to run for it.

"Who—what?" stammered Peters.

"We have caught you," said Jerry, boldly. "You may as well give in."

"What do you mean?"

"We know that you robbed the Rockpoint Hotel," said Harry.

"It's not so," cried Crosby.

"Shut up!" hissed Si Peters.

Without warning he hit Jerry a sharp blow in the face. Then he rushed at Harry and tripped him up.

"Come on!" he yelled to Crosby. "We must get away!"

Like a deer he ran off, behind a large roller coaster where all was dark.

Jerry stopped Peters, but only for a moment. Heavy blows were exchanged and then Peters followed his chum.

"They are gone, sure enough!" cried Harry, in dismay.

And gone they were, swallowed up in the crowd which surged on all sides of them.

Jerry and Harry searched in vain for the two evil-doers and then hunted up the police and told their story.

A watch was set, but Si Peters and Wash Crosby managed to escape from the beach resort without being detected.

Jerry and Harry returned to Lakeview with the Whistler, and the report spread that Si Peters and Wash Crosby had robbed the hotel.

At first Mr. Peters refused to believe it. He came over to Jerry's home, and threatened Mr. Upton with a lawsuit.

But the farmer quickly silenced him.

"Don't say a word to me, Mr. Peters," he said. "A boy that will try to tar and feather another boy, and then set fire to a barn and burn up cattle, isn't none too good to rob a hotel."

"My son is as good as yours!" growled Mr. Peters, and went off in a perfect rage. But he bothered the Uptons no more, nor did he go near the Parkers.

The lake was searched, and the yacht found up at the cove Si Peters had mentioned. On board was found the valise taken from the hotel.

After this detectives were sent out to find the two young rascals. But Si Peters and Wash Crosby kept out of sight.

Yet the day of reckoning was not far off, as we shall soon see.

About a week after this Harry invited Jerry to a drive along the west shore of Lake Otasco.

As they bowled along they talked over all sorts of matters, and presently Harry mentioned Si Peters and Wash Crosby.

"I wonder if they are still hanging around Harmony Beach?" he said.

"Oh, I don't think they would dare," replied Jerry. "They must know by the newspapers that the detectives are on their track."

"I wish we could bring them to justice. It would be a feather in our cap."

"So it would, Harry. But I would rather have the law do the work. I never want to have anymore to do with either of them."

It did not take the two boys long to drive to the lower end of the lake. Here the team was put up at a livery stable, and the chums hired bathing suits and houses, and spread themselves for a fine dip in the lake.

The water was just right, and they enjoyed every second of the half hour they allowed themselves.

It was eight o'clock in the evening before they went to get their team again.

The moon was just coming up over the rim of the lake and this promised them a splendid drive back to Lakeview.

As Harry and our hero entered the turnout two figures stole up from the back of the barn.

The pair were Si Peters and Wash Crosby.

They ran on ahead, and as the boys waited to settle with the livery stable keeper they soon disappeared.

Harry drove, and the young oarsman leaned back and took it easy.

A mile was covered, and they were just passing a clump of bushes when whizz! a stone came flying into the carriage. It struck Jerry on the arm, causing him to cry with pain.

"Who threw that?" he exclaimed.

Whizz! came another stone. It struck Harry in the cheek, drawing blood.

"Whoa!" yelled Jerry, and while the horses were still in motion, he leaped to the road.

He had noted the direction from which the missiles came, and bound off, but behind the bushes all was dark.

"Look out for yourself!" cried Harry.

He was busy with the horses, who were shying first to one side and then to the other.

At first Jerry could see nothing, but soon he discovered two forms in the semi-darkness.

He rushed over and found himself face to face with Si Peters and Wash Crosby.

"Peters!" he ejaculated.

Scarcely had he spoken when a club was raised. Jerry tried to avoid the

descending blow, but was only partly successful.

The club landed over his shoulder and neck and he was more than half stunned.

“Come!” he heard Peters whisper to Crosby, and then all became a confused whirl and he pitched forward in the grass.

The two rascals ran out into the road.

“That for you, Harry Parker!” yelled Si Peters, and struck Harry in the knee with the club.

In the meantime Wash Crosby sprang half into the carriage.

He made a grab at Harry’s gold watch chain.

The chain broke from the buttonhole and along with it came Harry’s beautiful timepiece.

“I’ll keep this to remember you by!” cried Wash Crosby in derision, and away he sped across the highway and down a side road, with Si Peters at his heels.



CHAPTER XXII.

ANOTHER BOAT RACE.

The horses now demanded all of Harry's attention. One of them was bound to run away, and the youth had all he could do to hold the animal in check. But the lad knew what he was doing and presently held them under complete control.

Then our hero staggered out of the bushes with his hand on his neck, where a big lump was rising.

"Where are they?"

"Gone! Did they rob you, Jerry?"

"No."

"Then you are in luck."

"What do you mean, Harry?"

"Crosby took my gold watch and chain."

"Never!"

"He did. Jerry, those two chaps have turned nothing but common thieves," went on Harry, bitterly.

"It certainly looks so, Harry. What shall we do now?"

"Jump in and we'll go after them."

Jerry was soon beside Harry, and they turned up the side road taken by the fugitives. The moon was out full, making the way as light as day, yet nothing was to be seen of the rascally pair.

This was not to be wondered at, for after running along the road but a few hundred feet, Si Peters and Wash Crosby had taken to an open field. Crossing this, they came out upon a railroad track. A freight train was coming along slowly, around the bend of the lake, and they had small trouble in boarding this. Inside of an hour they were many miles away from the vicinity.

Jerry and Harry searched for the pair until midnight, and then gave up the hunt and returned to Lakeview. Once again the authorities were notified, and the detectives started on a fresh hunt for the evil-doers. Yet it was destined to be a long time before Si Peters and Wash Crosby were heard of again.

About this time the Lakeview boat club was organizing another series of rowing races, and both Harry and Jerry were easily persuaded to enter a contest, which was to take place between a number of local oarsmen.

A prize of a fine bicycle had been put up, also several other articles of more or

less value, and Jerry and Harry immediately went into training, with a firm determination to win.

There were seven entries, all by young fellows of Jerry's age, and as the youth looked at his opponents he felt that the race would be no easy one.

Saturday afternoon, the time appointed for the contest, came, bright and clear, and it found the lake front crowded to its utmost capacity. Many came over from Rockpoint, but it was noticed that those who had belonged to Si Peters' crowd were absent.

The race was to be two miles long, up the lake and back again. The boats were all drawn up in a line, and everything was made ready for a start. Jerry was at one end of the line, with Harry at the other, and the remaining five contestants between them.

Bang! went the gun on the judges' boat, and away shot the seven rowers like one man; and the race was begun.

For over half a mile the seven contestants kept almost side by side. Then three of them were seen to drop behind.

"Gravling is ahead!"

"Harry Parker is second."

"Phil Raymond is a close third!"

"Jerry Upton is crawling up!"

So the shouting went on, as the four leaders swept past. When the turning point was reached, Harry led, Raymond came second, Gravling third, and Jerry fourth. The remaining three felt they were out of the race, and rowed back to the boathouse.

"Good for you, Harry!"

"What's the matter, Jerry? You're not doing as good as the day you beat Si Peters!"

"Hurry up, Gravling!"

"Pull for all you know how, Raymond!"

On and on came the four, their long blades flashing brightly in the sunshine. They were making fast time, and, no matter who won, the lake record was likely to be broken.

Half way down the homestretch, Harry still led, with Gravling but half a length behind him. A length further back came Raymond and Jerry, side by side.

But the terrific speed was now beginning to tell upon Raymond, and slowly but surely he fell behind, despite the urgings of his friends. Then Jerry set to work to overtake Gravling.

"See Jerry Upton crawling up!"

"Oh, but isn't that a beautiful stroke!"

"Gravling can't shake him off!"

"They are a tie!"

The last cry was true. When still a dozen lengths from the finish Jerry had overtaken Gravling. But they did not remain tied long. Half a dozen strokes and Jerry shot ahead and the bow of his craft overlapped Harry's stern.

"Jerry Upton is second!"

"He's going to shake up Harry Parker for first place!"

On came the two friends, but now it was noticed that Jerry, although he still rowed his best, seemed to be losing his interest in the race.

"It will be no fun to beat Harry," was the thought which ran through his head; and then, with a yell from three thousand throats, Harry crossed the line a winner, with our hero not quite half a boat length behind.

"Hurrah for Harry Parker!"

"Hurrah for Jerry Upton!"

Cheer after cheer rent the air, and both lads were immediately surrounded by their friends. Jerry was one of the first to shake his chum's hand.

"You won it fairly, Harry," he said. "What kind of time did we make?"

He was greatly pleased to learn that the lake record for two miles had been lowered by forty-three seconds, and that he had helped lower it by forty-two seconds.

That evening the club held a meeting, and Harry was presented with the bicycle, something he had been wishing for for some time. Jerry's prize was a silver watch and chain.

"This just suits me," he said. "Now, when I'm away from home, I'll be able to tell what time it is."

The celebration was at its height, when a message came for Jerry from his home, stating that his father had been kicked by one of the horses and was badly injured.

This news shocked the youth a good deal, and bidding his friends a hasty good-night, the young oarsman set off for the farm on a run.

He found his father lying on a couch in the dining-room. A doctor had just arrived, and he was doing all that he could for the sufferer.

"Where did the horse kick him, mother?" he questioned, hurriedly.

"In the side, right under the heart," replied Mrs. Upton. "Oh, I do trust it is not serious!"

"So do I. What can I do?"

"I don't know. We must see what the doctor says."

The medical man, after a long examination, declared that several ribs had been fractured, and that Mr. Upton was suffering from shock. Some medicine was administered, and the patient was carefully carried upstairs and placed upon a bed.

No one in the farmhouse slept that night. Mrs. Upton sat by her husband's side, and Jerry came and went, ready to do anything that might be asked of him.

Two days later the doctor pronounced the wounded man out of danger. But his injuries were severe, and it would be a long while before Mr. Upton would be able to go around as before.

His enforced idleness made the farmer fret a good deal. It was true that the harvest work on the farm was over, but he had wished to do much more.

"And I reckon that trip to New York is now out of the question," Jerry heard him say to Mrs. Upton.

"Why, father, were you going to New York?" asked the boy, in much curiosity.

"I had an idea that way, son," returned Mr. Upton, slowly. "I was going on business," he added, after a pause.

At this Jerry was more curious than ever. New York was over two hundred miles from Lakeview, and he had never heard of his parent having business in the metropolis.

"You see it's this way, Jerry," said Mr. Upton, noticing his look. "When your uncle Charley died he left all his property to me. Some time ago I was cleaning out one of his old trunks and I ran across some deeds to property in California. From what I can make out the land must be nigh to the city of Sacramento."

"And the property belongs to you?" cried Jerry.

"No, I can't say that exactly. As near as I can figure it, your uncle Charley owned an interest in it. The property was in the hands of a land boomer named Alexander Slocum, and there was a letter in the trunk from this Alexander Slocum which was dated from New York. I think this boomer holds other papers relating to the land, and I was thinking of making a trip to New York and hunting him up, if he is still there."

"Why not let me go to New York in your place," suggested Jerry, quickly. It had always been the ambition of his life to pay a visit to the great metropolis.

"Well, I was kind of thinking of that, son," returned the sick man, slowly. "I'll see about it in a day or two."



CHAPTER XXIII.

JERRY STARTS ON A JOURNEY.

Now that the matter had once been talked over, the young oarsman was very anxious to know all about the property in California, and his mother brought forth the deeds and other papers found in the old trunk.

The boy studied the documents with care. He knew but little of the law, yet he felt that if the land mentioned in the papers was valuable his father's share, as heir to his uncle, must be considerable.

"I would like to ask Mr. Parker about this," he said to his folks, but Mr. Upton shook his head. He was a very retired man and never brought his affairs to the ears of any outsider.

"The whole thing might prove worthless," he said, "and then we would be laughed at by our neighbors."

"I'd risk it," said Jerry, but his father only shook his head again.

Nevertheless Mr. Upton appeared to be favorably impressed with the idea of Jerry's going to New York to hunt up Alexander Slocum.

"It won't do any harm," he said to his wife. "I have money for the fare in the house, and it will give Jerry a chance to see a bit of the world."

Mrs. Upton was doubtful, but when Jerry begged to go she finally consented. Long talks about the western land and Alexander Slocum followed, and the youth prevailed upon his folks to let him take the deeds and papers with him, promising that he would take the best of care of them.

"And while I'm in New York I'm going to look around for a situation, and earn a little money," said Jerry. "Who knows but what I may strike even a better opening than that Mr. Parker has promised me at his shoe factory."

"It's not likely a lad off the farm can strike much," smiled his mother, yet she was pleased at Jerry's earnestness.

Three days later Jerry was off, valise in hand. He had bid good-bye to Harry and Blumpo, telling them he was going to New York on some private business for his father. His mother saw him to the train and kissed him affectionately.

"Take good care of yourself, Jerry," she said. "And remember, New York is an entirely different place from Lakeview or Rockpoint, and you must have your eyes and ears open to avoid trouble."

"I'll take care of myself, don't worry mother," and two minutes later the train

came along and he was off.

Yet it must be confessed that our hero felt just a bit strange as he settled back in the cushioned seat, with his valise beside him. He was going over two hundred miles from home and among total strangers.

"I suppose it will be different from knocking around Lakeview, Rockpoint or even Long Lake," he mused. "I'll have to brace up and watch myself, or they'll take me for a regular greeny."

As the train moved on, Jerry revolved the situation in his mind. He knew he would arrive in the metropolis late in the afternoon, and determined to seek a boarding-house first of all, knowing it would be useless to hunt for any trace of Alexander Slocum after office hours.

At last the run through green fields and small towns and cities came to an end, and the train ran into the Grand Central Depot at Forty-second Street, and Jerry alighted in a crowd and made his way to the street.

"Cab! coupe! This way for the Central Hotel! Evening paper! Sun or World!"

A hundred cries seemed to start up all in an instant, making Jerry's ears ring. The rattle of the carts and trucks on the pavement was also new, and for the moment, the Lakeview boy did not know which way to turn.

"Carry yer baggage?" queried a bare-foot boy, and almost caught his valise from his hand. But the young oarsman pulled it back and shook his head, and got out of the crowd as quickly as he could, starting eastward, for he had heard that the cheaper boarding houses lay in that direction.

It was not long before the boy came to several places which displayed the sign, Boarding. But the first two were too elegant, and Jerry passed them without stopping. Then came a third, and ascending the steps Jerry rang the bell.

An elderly lady answered the summons, a sharp-faced woman with powdered hair.

"You take boarders here?" queried Jerry.

"We do, young man," she answered, in a voice that made our hero far from comfortable.

"I expect to stay in New York a week or two, and I—"

"We don't take transients," she snapped. "Only regular boarders with first-class references," and she shut the door in Jerry's face.

He was glad enough to escape to the pavement, feeling satisfied that he would not have cared to have boarded there, even had she been willing to take him in.

A block further on was another place, a modest brick residence, set back behind a small plot of green. Thinking this looked inviting, and not reasoning that the

spot of green was as valuable as a brown-stone building would have been, Jerry entered the garden and made known his wants to the servant who was dusting the piazza chairs.

She called the lady of the house, who on hearing what Jerry had to say, smiled in a motherly way.

"I hardly think I can take you in, my boy," she said. "Do you know how much I charge a week?"

"No, ma'am."

"Twelve to fifteen dollars for a single room and not less than ten otherwise."

Jerry almost gasped for breath.

"That is twice what I can afford to pay," he returned. "Gracious! I had no idea rates were so high."

"That is not high, here in New York. But perhaps I can direct you to a place that will suit. I have a friend three blocks over. Here is her card," and she handed it over.

Thanking her, the young oarsman got out without delay. He was glad she had directed him, for now he was certain he would at least strike a place that would fit his pocket-book.

Jerry went on until he came to an avenue down which the elevated cars were running. They were a great novelty and he paused on the corner to watch several of the trains rattle along overhead.

As Jerry was about to move on, he heard a wild cry of alarm from the second story window of a house opposite. Looking in the direction, he saw a girl pointing up the street to where a baby-carriage had rolled from the pavement to the gutter, overturning itself and spilling a little child into the street.

The youth ran in the direction with the idea of picking the child up. As he did this an ice-wagon came along at a furious speed, the driver on the seat trying in vain to stop his horse.

The ice-wagon was heading directly for the child and unless something was done the little one would be run over and most likely killed. With his heart in his throat our hero threw down his valise and leaped to the rescue. In another instant the runaway horse was fairly on top of the lad.



CHAPTER XXIV.

THE WORK OF A REAL HERO.

Jerry's heart was in his throat when he sprang to the rescue of the little child in the street. He saw that the horse attached to the ice-wagon could not be stopped and realized only too well what it meant should he be struck down.

Yet the sight of that innocent face nerved him on, and in less time than it takes to write it he had the child in his arms. Clinging to the little one, he flung himself backward, and like a flash the horse sprang past, dragging the ice-wagon so close that the wheels scraped his leg.

A shout went up from the crowd, but Jerry did not hear what was said. Staggering up, he ran back to the sidewalk, leaving the baby-carriage a wreck behind him.

In another moment the girl who had given the first cry of alarm was at Jerry's side.

"Is he hurt? Is little Tommy hurt?" she cried, as she snatched the youngster from Jerry's arms.

"Me fell in the dirt," lisped the little one. "Me ain't hurt, but me awful dirty."

"Never mind the dirt, dear," cried the girl. "I am thankful you escaped. Mary, why didn't you take better care of him?"

The last words were addressed to an Irish girl who had just sauntered up.

"I went to get a hoky-poky at the corner," replied the girl. "I don't care to mind yer brother any more anyway," she added, and darted out of sight into the crowd.

Seeing the little boy was uninjured, the crowd moved on, and presently the young oarsman found himself alone with the girl, who appeared to be several years older than himself.

"You are a brave boy," she said, warmly. "I would like to reward you, but I am poor."

"I don't want any reward," replied Jerry, stoutly. "It was a close shave, though."

"You look like a stranger around here."

"I am—I just arrived in New York and I am looking for a boarding-house. Can you tell me where this one is?" and Jerry showed her the card the lady had given him.

"Oh, yes; it is one block over to your left—a real nice house, too. May I ask your name?"

“Jerry Upton.”

“Mine is Nellie Ardell, and this is my brother Tommy. We are alone here.”

“Haven’t you any folks?”

“No. Mother was with us up to last winter, but she had consumption and died.”

The tears stood in Nellie Ardell’s eyes as she spoke. Jerry saw at once that she had had a hard struggle of it.

“What do you do for a living?” he ventured to ask.

“I do sewing and mending for my neighbors—principally mending for the girls who work in the stores.”

“And can you make much that way?”

“Not a great deal. But I try to make enough to pay the rent and store bills. May I ask what you are going to do in New York?”

“I came to find a real estate dealer named Alexander Slocum. I want to see him about some property left by my uncle to my father. Have you ever heard of him?”

“Heard of him?” she cried in surprise. “He is my landlord.”

Jerry was dumbfounded by this unexpected bit of information.

“You are certain?”

“Why, of course I am. He was around to see me only day before yesterday about the rent. I am a bit behind, and I had to put him off.”

“And what kind of a man is he?”

“I think he is very hard-hearted. But then, that may be because I am behind in my payment. He threatened to put me out of my rooms if I didn’t pay when he called again.”

“How many rooms have you?”

“Only two, and I pay six dollars a month for them.”

“And how far behind are you?”

“I only owe for the month.”

“And he won’t trust you even that long? He certainly must be mean,” Jerry rejoined warmly.

“You said something about property belonging to your father,” said Nellie Ardell. “Has Mr. Slocum an interest in it?”

“He has and he hasn’t,” the boy replied, and he told his story in a few words as they walked along to the entrance of the house in which she lived.

“Well, I trust you get your right, Jerry Upton,” said the girl. “Come and see me some time.”

“I will,” and after Jerry had procured Alexander Slocum’s office address from her, the pair separated.

Jerry was very thoughtful as he proceeded on his way. By a turn of fortune he had gotten on Slocum's track much quicker than expected. The question was, how should he best approach the man?

"I'll settle that after I have procured a boarding place," he thought, and hurried to the address given him.

Mrs. Price, the landlady, was a very nice old person. She had a top room in the back she said she would let with board, for five dollars a week, and Jerry closed with her without delay, paying for one week in advance.

This finished, our hero found he was hungry, and after a washing-up, ate supper with a relish. He could not help but notice that the vegetables and milk served were not as fresh as those at home, but remembered he was now in the city and not on a farm, and did not complain.

Mrs. Price had taken in another new boarder that day, a tall, slim man, possibly thirty years of age. He was introduced as Mr. Wakefield Smith, and he did all he could to make himself popular. Jerry felt that a good bit of his pleasantry was forced, but as there was no use in finding fault, he became quite friendly with the man.

"Supposing we take a walk out together this evening?" Wakefield Smith suggested. "No doubt you would like to see the sights."

"I'll go out for an hour or so," answered the young oarsman, and they started while it was yet light.

Mr. Wakefield Smith knew the metropolis from end to end, and as the pair covered block after block, he pointed out various buildings. He smoked constantly, and several times invited Jerry to have a cigar, but the youth declined.

"Supposing we have a drink, then?" he urged.

Again Jerry declined, which made the man frown. He insisted Jerry should at least have some soda water with him, and at last the boy accepted, and they entered rather a modest looking drug store on a side street.

"Hullo! what's that crowd on the street?" exclaimed Mr. Wakefield Smith, as the glasses were set out, and as Jerry looked out of the doorway he fancied the man shoved up close to where his glass was standing and made a movement as if to throw something into it.

Jerry saw nothing unusual in the street, and the man's manner made him suspicious, so that he hesitated about drinking the soda. He swallowed a small portion of it and threw the remainder in a corner.

"What's the matter, don't you like it?" demanded Wakefield Smith, almost roughly.

"No, it's bitter."

“Humph!” He growled something under his breath. “I’ll not treat you again,” he went on, as they came out on the street.

What Jerry had taken of the soda had made his head ache, and this caused the young oarsman to grow more suspicious than ever. He had read in a daily paper about folks being drugged by friendly strangers, and resolved to be on guard.

The pair passed on the distance of a block, and then Jerry announced his intention of returning home to the boarding-house.

“Oh, don’t go yet,” urged Mr. Wakefield Smith. “Come on across the way. There are some beautiful pictures in an art store window I want to show you. One of the pictures is worth ten thousand dollars.”

He caught our hero by the arm and hurried him over the way and into the crowd. Jerry was jostled to the right and left, and it was fully a minute before he squeezed himself out to a clear spot. Then he looked around for Mr. Wakefield Smith, but the man was gone.

Like a flash Jerry felt something had gone wrong. He put his hand in his pocket. His money was missing!



CHAPTER XXV.

A FRUITLESS SEARCH.

“Less than half a day in New York and robbed! Oh, what a greeny I have been!”

Thus Jerry groaned to himself as he searched first one pocket and then another. It was all to no purpose, the money was gone and he was left absolutely penniless.

The young oarsman was certain that Mr. Wakefield Smith had robbed him. He had been wary of the man from the start, and now blamed himself greatly for having given the rascal the chance to take the pocket-book.

Without loss of time Jerry darted into the crowd again, looking in every direction for the thief. He was so eager, he ran plump into an old gentleman, knocking his silk hat to the pavement.

“Hi! hi! stop, you young rascal!” puffed the man, as Jerry stooped and restored the tile to him. “What do you mean by running into me in this fashion?”

“Excuse me, but I have been robbed! I want to catch the thief.”

“Robbed?”

“Yes, sir.”

The gentleman nervously felt to see if his money and watch were safe. Several others heard the words, and they gathered around Jerry.

“Who robbed you?”

“How much did you have?”

“Why didn’t you hold the thief?”

Before Jerry could answer any of the questions a policeman came forward and touched him on the shoulder.

“Are you the boy said he was robbed?”

“Yes, sir.”

“What were you robbed of?”

“A pocket-book containing nearly thirty dollars.”

“Did you see the thief?”

“I believe it was a man I was walking with. He called himself Wakefield Smith.”

The policeman questioned Jerry closely, and then took a good look around for the individual. Later on, boy and officer walked to Mrs. Price’s boarding-house.

Here it was learned that Mr. Wakefield Smith had not paid any board money, giving as an excuse that he had nothing less than a one-hundred-dollar bill and that

he would pay in the morning. It also came to light that he had walked out with Mrs. Price's silver-handled umbrella, worth eight dollars.

"The villain!" she cried. "I hope the police catch him!"

"You don't wish it more than I do," returned the young oarsman, dolefully. "He took my last dollar."

Acting on the policeman's advice, Jerry walked around to the nearest precinct station and made a complaint, giving the best description of Mr. Wakefield Smith he could.

"We will do our best to capture him," said the captain in charge, and with this promise the youth had to be content.

My readers can imagine our hero did not spend a restful night. He lay awake for several hours speculating on the turn affairs had taken. His board was paid for a week, but that was all. He did not even have money to pay car fare back to Lakeview.

"I wonder what mother and father would say if they knew?" he thought. "I won't let them know until there's nothing else to do."

Jerry arose early the next day and got breakfast before any of the other boarders.

"I must find something to do without delay," he explained to Mrs. Price. "A fellow without a dollar in his pocket can't afford to remain idle."

"You have a week's board coming to you," she said, with a faint smile.

"Yes, but I haven't even the price of a car fare in my pocket."

"Well, Mr. Upton, I like your looks, and if you'll accept it I'll loan you a couple of dollars. I suppose it was partly my fault that Smith robbed you. But don't blame me, I've suffered, too."

"I will accept the loan gladly, Mrs. Price. I don't like to go around without a cent. I will pay you back as soon as I can."

"I know you will. I may have been deceived in that Smith, but I am certain I am not in you," added the landlady.

With the two dollars tucked away in a safe place, Jerry left the house. He knew it would be useless to go to Alexander Slocum's office at such an early hour, and determined to look around in the hope of striking something whereby he might earn at least enough money to last him while stopping in New York.

"I won't write home unless I have to," he muttered to himself. "My time is my own and I'll make the most of it while I'm here."

Getting one of the dollar bills changed, Jerry bought a morning paper and looked over the Help Wanted—Males—column, and noted several addresses.

"I'll try them and lose no time," he thought, and hurried to the nearest store where a boy was wanted.

He was surprised to find a dozen applicants ahead of him. Worse than that, a boy had already been hired; so all of the others were forced to leave.

Jerry next tried a florist's establishment. But here a boy was wanted who understood the city thoroughly, and he was quickly told he would not do.

Jerry walked from one place to another for three hours without success. Somewhat disheartened, he strolled into a park close to Broadway and sat down.

The situation was certainly a serious one, and the young oarsman was decidedly sober in mind as he sat there, staring vacantly at the hurrying throng.

"Well, young man, how did you make out last night?"

The question came from a bench just behind Jerry. Looking around, he saw sitting there the gentleman he had run into while trying to find Wakefield Smith.

"I didn't make out at all, sir."

"Couldn't find him, eh?"

"No, sir."

"Those pickpockets are slick chaps, and no mistake," went on the gentleman.

"Did you lose much?"

"All I had—nearly thirty dollars."

"Phew! that is too bad. Well, I wouldn't sit down to mope about it. You might as well get to work and earn the amount over again."

"The trouble is, I can't find any work," answered the boy, earnestly. "I would work fast enough if I could only find it to do."

"You are out of a situation?"

"Yes, sir."

"Since when?"

"Since I came to New York," answered Jerry.

"You are about as bad off as I was some forty years ago," said the man, with a broad smile. "At that time I found myself in this city, with just twenty-five cents in my pocket. But I struck employment, and rose from one place to another until now I am my own master, with a book-binding-shop where I employ nearly fifty hands."

As he spoke he gazed at Jerry curiously.

"You were going to ask me for a job, weren't you?" he went on, and Jerry nodded. "What can you do?"

"I'm not used to any such work, sir. But you'll find me willing and strong—and honest. I would like to earn a little before I went back to my home."

"Well, those three qualities you mention are sure to win, my boy. Perhaps I can

find an opening for you. Here comes a friend I have been waiting for. I am going out of town with him. Call at my shop to-morrow morning, if you don't strike anything in the meantime."

And, handing out his card, Mr. Islen walked rapidly away.

Fifteen minutes later found Jerry on the way to Alexander Slocum's office. In an inner pocket he carried the papers his father had unearthed from the trunk in the garret at home.



CHAPTER XXVI.

ALEXANDER SLOCUM IS ASTONISHED.

Jerry felt that his mission to the real estate man was a delicate one. What would he have to say when he learned who the youth was and what he had come for?

The boy resolved to be on guard. He might be from the country and green, but no one should catch him napping, as had Mr. Wakefield Smith.

The distance to the address furnished by Nellie Ardell was nearly a dozen blocks, but Jerry was used to walking and made the journey on foot.

The young oarsman found Alexander Slocum's set of offices located on the top floor of an old-fashioned four-story office building. There was an elevator, however, and this Jerry used and soon found himself in front of a ground-glass door, which bore the sign:

ALEXANDER SLOCUM,
Real Estate and Fire Insurance.
Loans Negotiated.

There was a hum of voices from within, but the hum ceased as Jerry knocked.

"Come in," was the short invitation, and the boy entered, to find a large apartment, comfortably furnished with desks, stuffed chairs and other things which went to show that the man he had come to interview was doing well.

Near an open window sat two gentlemen dressed in black. One was much older than the other, and Jerry rightfully guessed that he was an office assistant.

The other man was well preserved, with a waxed mustache and piercing black eyes. He held a silk hat in his hand, as if he had been on the point of leaving.

"Well, young man, what can I do for you?" questioned the office assistant, as he regarded Jerry indifferently.

"I came to see Mr. Alexander Slocum," replied our hero.

"I am Mr. Slocum," put in the other man. "What is it you want?"

"I came to see you on a bit of private business, sir."

"Yes. Well, Mr. Casey here knows all about my affairs; so you need have no hesitation in speaking in front of him," laughed the real estate man somewhat harshly.

"I am Jerry Upton, and I came from Lakeview. My uncle, Charles Upton, who is now dead, was once interested in a colonization land scheme that you started."

Jerry watched Mr. Slocum narrowly as he spoke, and saw that the man was

greatly astonished. He started back, and for an instant the assuring look his face wore faded.

“Jerry Upton from Lakeview,” he murmured slowly. Then he cleared his throat. “I—I did not expect to see you.”

“I suppose not, sir.”

“What is it you want?”

“I want to find out how matters stand in regard to the land in California. My father heard you had gone to Europe.”

“I did go to Europe, but not to escape inquiry,” added Slocum, hastily. “You see, that scheme failed utterly,” he went on slowly. “Why, I lost nearly every dollar I possessed in it. What your uncle lost was nothing in comparison.”

“It was to him, Mr. Slocum. To whom does the land belong?”

“Why, it—er—it reverted to its original owners, some mine speculators of Denver.”

“Where is the land located?”

“Not far from the city of Sacramento.”

“Can’t you give me the precise location?”

At this Alexander Slocum glared at our hero savagely.

“It would do you no good to spend money on hunting the matter up,” he answered. “That affair was settled long ago. The money was lost, and that is all there is to it.”

“Not if I know it, Mr. Slocum. I intend to sift the matter to the bottom. I am convinced that all was not carried out as it should have been.”

“You appear to be a very foolish boy.”

“That may be your opinion, but it won’t alter my intention. I have my uncle’s papers with me, and, unless you will give me some particulars of how the scheme fell through, I shall place the matter in the hands of a lawyer.”

Alexander Slocum winced at this, and Jerry fancied he was hard struck. He made a movement as if to clutch the youth by the arm, then drew back.

“You have your uncle’s papers?” he asked cautiously.

“Yes. My father is his sole heir.”

“I should like to see them. Perhaps I spoke hastily; but really you are mistaken in thinking it can be of any use to bring that old deal up again. The money was lost, and there is no chance of getting it back again.”

“But, either you are responsible for the amount, or else my uncle’s interest in the land still holds good,” said Jerry.

“Let me see the papers.”

Mr. Slocum made a movement as if to take them. But Jerry drew back and shook his head.

“I prefer not to let them go out of my possession.”

“Do you mean to say you won’t trust me?”

“You can put it that way, if you wish, Mr. Slocum.”

The real estate man bit his lip. Then he made a movement to his assistant, who at once slid behind Jerry, towards the door.

“What are you going to do?” the young oarsman asked, in alarm.

Without replying, the assistant locked the door and slipped the key into his pocket.

“Don’t grow excited,” said Alexander Slocum, coldly. “I want to see those papers, that’s all. Show them to me at once!”

Like a flash Jerry realized he was trapped by the enemy.



CHAPTER XXVII.

JERRY'S CLEVER ESCAPE.

Jerry saw at once that things were growing warm. From the look on his face it was plain to see that Alexander Slocum was in deadly earnest when he said he wanted to see those papers.

His manner made our hero feel that the papers would not be safe in his hands. If he gave them up he might never see them again, and without the documents the claim on the land in California would fall flat.

"Did you hear what I said, Upton? I want you to let me see those papers," Slocum went on, after a second of intense silence.

"What do you mean by locking that door?" Jerry demanded of the elderly assistant, without paying any attention to the real estate dealer's words.

Casey made no response. Instead, he took his stand by his employer's side, as if awaiting further orders.

"You act as if you were afraid of me," sneered Slocum. "I won't hurt you."

"You won't—not if I can help it," answered Jerry. "But I want you to unlock that door. I am not to be treated as a prisoner."

"I only wanted to secure us against interruption. So many agents come up here, and they are a regular nuisance."

Slocum advanced and held out his hand, as if expecting Jerry would drop the precious papers into it. Instead, the boy retreated and took up a position behind a flat-top desk in the centre of the office.

At this the real estate dealer grew furious behind his well-waxed mustache. He had expected to intimidate our hero easily, and now he was nonplused.

"Are you going to let me see those papers?" he fumed.

"No; at least not now."

"Why not?"

"I prefer not to answer that question."

"You think you have a case against me—that you can place me in a tight hole."

"Well, if all is straight you have nothing to fear."

"Don't preach to me, boy. All is straight. I lost my money as well as the others did."

"This doesn't look as if you had lost much," ventured Jerry, as he glanced about the elegant apartment.

“Oh, I have made money since, in a lucky real estate deal in Brooklyn. I won’t keep your papers.”

“I want that door unlocked.”

Slocum muttered something under his breath, and his face grew suddenly red. Like a flash he placed his hands on the flat desk and leaped over it.

“I’ll bring you to terms, you young country fool!” he cried, and made a clutch for Jerry’s collar.

Had our hero not turned like a flash he would have had the lad. But Jerry was on guard and fled to the office door. Raising his foot he gave the barrier a kick that caused it to crack heavily.

“Stop that!”

“I won’t. Let me out, or I’ll kick the door down.”

“Casey, catch the young rascal!” cried Slocum. “I’m going to teach him a thing or two.”

Anxious to obey the command of the man who held him completely under his thumb, Casey ran forward. Seeing him coming, Jerry fled behind a large screen. Here rested a heavy cane, and he picked it up and brandished it over his head.

“Keep back! Advance at your peril.”

“I’m afraid to go near the young fool,” said Casey.

“I’ll fix him. Stand aside. I never yet saw the boy that could get the best of me,” muttered Alexander Slocum.

“He may kill you, Mr. Slocum.”

“I’ll risk it.”

Running around the desk, the real estate dealer came for the young oarsman. As he approached, the boy pushed the screen against him and he went down, with the heavy object on top of him.

“You—you villain!” he spluttered.

To this Jerry made no answer. Taking advantage of the time afforded him, he looked around for some means of escaping his enemies. To remain a moment longer in the office he felt would be perilous in the extreme.

Near the corner to which Jerry had retreated was an open window. Glancing out of it he saw that the roof of the next building was but six or eight feet below the window sill.

Without stopping to think twice, our hero leaped out of the window and on to the roof below.

“Stop! stop!”

Both Slocum and his assistant called after Jerry, but he paid no attention.

Leaving the vicinity of the window, he ran along the roof to the rear. Here there was an addition to a tin-shop underneath, and he dropped down and found himself within twelve feet of a narrow alleyway.

"Are you coming back?" bawled Alexander Slocum; and then, as Jerry let himself down over the edge of the roof, he suddenly disappeared from the window.

Guessing he was coming down to head him off, the youth lost no time in dropping to the ground.

Once down, it was an easy matter to gain the street. As he came out on the pavement, Slocum came running up all out of breath.

"You're a fine boy!" he cried. "Come back to the office, and let us talk matters over."

"Not to-day," answered Jerry. "I've had enough of a dose for the present."

"You are making a mistake."

"I don't intend to put my head into the lion's mouth."

While the two were speaking Casey came up, and, as the two appeared as if they wanted to drag Jerry back into the building just left, the youth retreated.

Alexander Slocum followed for a block, and then gave up the chase. Seeing this, Jerry walked on more leisurely.

Our hero's visit to the real estate dealer had set him to thinking deeply. The man's anxiety concerning the papers made the boy feel sure there was more at the bottom of the land speculation than either his parents or he had suspected.

Perhaps the land was still held by this man and was of great value. If this was so how was he to go to work to establish his father's claim?

Pondering over the affair, the young oarsman thought of Mr. Randolph Islen and of his kindness. He resolved to tell that gentleman his story and see what he would have to say.

This conclusion reached, Jerry felt in his inner pocket to see if the precious papers were still safe. To his horror they were gone.



CHAPTER XXVIII.

SOMETHING ABOUT A TRAMP.

“Gone!”

The cry burst involuntarily from Jerry’s lips, and for the moment his heart seemed to stop beating. The precious papers were missing.

What had become of them? With great haste he hunted all of his pockets, not once but a dozen times. Then he felt in the linings, and in fact in all places where the packet might have become concealed.

It was useless; they were gone; that was all there was to it.

Had he dropped them in Slocum’s office, or during his hasty flight to the alleyway?

Our hero retraced his steps, with eyes bent to the ground, in hopes that they would be found lying on the walk. In doing this he ran into half a dozen folks, many of whom did not take kindly to the collision.

“Look where you are going, boy.”

“Hunting for a pin or gold dollars?”

Jerry paid no attention to the remarks. Reaching the alleyway, he turned into it and continued the search, but without success.

“Say, wot yer doin’ in here?”

The question was asked by a youth in the tin-shop. He was red-headed and had a freckled face, but not an unpleasant one.

“I was looking for something I lost,” said the young oarsman. “Have you seen anything in here of a flat, white package with a black shoestring tied around it?”

“Why, yes, I did,” he answered.

“And where is it?”

“A tramp had it. I saw him walk out of der alley wid it not five minutes ago.”

“A tramp? What kind of a looking man?”

“Tall and thin, with a grizzly beard. Oh, he was a regular bum.”

“Where did he go?”

“Up the street, I think. Was the bundle valuable?”

“Indeed it was, to me,” replied Jerry, and hurried off.

He could see nothing of any tramp, and, after dodging around among the trucks for several minutes, returned to the youth.

“Please describe that tramp to me, will you?” asked Jerry, and the tinner’s boy

did so, as well as he was able.

"I think da call him Crazy Jim," he concluded. "He don't come down here very often. He belongs uptown somewhere."

"Well, if you ever see him again, please let me know. My name is Jerry Upton, and here is my address," and our hero handed it over.

"All right, I will. My name is Jerry Martin. Wot was in de package?"

"Some papers belonging to my father."

The boy wanted to question Jerry for further particulars, but the young oarsman did not care to say too much, and hurried off, to seek the tramp again.

That evening found our hero at Mrs. Price's, footsore and downhearted. He had seen nothing of Crazy Jim, and it looked as if the precious packet was gone for good.

Jerry could not help but wonder what Alexander Slocum's next move would be. Would the man endeavor to hunt him out or would he write to his father?

The next morning, on his way to Mr. Randolph Islen's place of business, Jerry met Nellie Ardell.

"Did you find Mr. Slocum's?" she asked.

"I did; and had a very disagreeable visit," returned our hero.

"I knew you would have," she went on. "I wish he was not my landlord."

Jerry asked her how Tommy was, and then they parted, and five minutes more brought our hero to the book-bindery.

Mr. Islen was not yet in, but he soon arrived, and smiled as Jerry presented himself.

"On hand, I see, my young friend. Well, how did you make out? Did you obtain a position?"

"No, sir."

"It's rather hard. Mr. Grice!" he called out.

The foreman of the book-bindery came in and Jerry was introduced to him. Quite a chat followed, at the end of which Jerry was hired to work in the stock department at a salary of six dollars a week.

The salary was not large, but it would pay his expenses, and that was all he wished for at present.

"I won't have to write home for money," he thought.

Mr. Grice wanted Jerry to come to work immediately, but our hero begged to speak to Mr. Islen in private for a moment, and when they were left alone told his story from beginning to end.

The rich book-binder listened with interest, and tapped meditatively upon his

desk when Jerry had finished.

"This is rather a strange story, Upton," he said. "What would you like me to do?"

"I would like you to give me some advice, sir. What had I best do?"

"You can do a number of things. What would be the best I cannot say. You might hire a lawyer to look into the case, and again you might have this Slocum arrested for locking you in the office. The loss of the packet complicates matters. Did it have your name on?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then you had better wait, and in the meantime advertise for the packet, offering a reward. That tramp may be watching for such an advertisement."

This was sound advice; but Jerry had no money, and said so.

"I will pay for the advertisement and take it out of your pay," said Mr. Islen; and the notice was written out without delay and sent off by the office boy.

The young oarsman now felt a trifle lighter in heart. He reasoned that the packet would be of no value to the tramp and that he would be glad to surrender it in hope of a reward. He did not remember at the time that he had written Alexander Slocum's name and address on the outside wrapper; yet such was a fact.

When Jerry entered the bindery he found several pairs of curious eyes bent upon him from boys of about his own age. Without delay Mr. Grice set our hero to work.

"What is your name?" asked one of the boys, as soon as he had a chance.

"Jerry Upton. What is yours?"

"Dick Lenning. Say, do you know you have got the job Grice was going to give my brother?"

"No, I don't."

"It's so. Jack was coming to work to-morrow. It ain't fair to take the bread out of a fellow's mouth like that," growled Dick Lenning.

"I fancy Mr. Islen gave me my position—" Jerry ventured.

"Oh! So it was the boss put you in. Well, it ain't fair anyway. Where do you come from—Brooklyn?"

"No, Lakeview."

"Never heard of it. Must be some country village. You look like a hayseed."

As Dick Lenning spoke he gazed around to see if Mr. Grice had gone. Then he added in a whisper:

"You have to set up the drinks for the crowd before you can work here, see?"

"Drinks," repeated our hero.

"Sure; all the new hands do that."

"I—I rather think I won't."

"You are too mean."

"It's not that; I don't drink."

"You are a country jay, and no mistake."

Dick Lenning leaned forward and shoved Jerry with his elbow, at the same time putting one foot behind the youth. He wanted to trip our hero up, but Jerry was on guard, and, resisting him, the young oarsman caused him to slip down against a bench upon which rested a pot of book-binders' glue.

The glue tipped over and part of it went down Lenning's leg, causing him to yell like a wild Indian.



CHAPTER XXIX.

MR. WAKEFIELD SMITH AGAIN.

"I'll hammer you for that!"

"What did he do, Dick?"

"Knocked the glue over me. You country jay, you!" howled Dick Lenning, and, leaping up, he bore down on Jerry.

Lenning was a good deal of a bully. He was tall and strong, and evidently he thought he could make our hero submit to his will easily.

"Take that!" he fairly hissed, and aimed a blow at Jerry's ear. The youth dodged it and caught his arm.

"Hold on!" Jerry ejaculated. "I don't want to fight. You will only make trouble."

"Let go!"

"Not until you promise to keep quiet."

"I'll promise nothing," stormed Lenning, and began to struggle more excitedly than ever.

But he soon wore himself out, when Jerry got behind him and clasped hands over his breast. The bully was about to call on his friends to assist him, when a cry went up.

"Cheese it! Grice is coming this way."

As if by magic the boys who had gathered around ran off to their work, leaving the bully and Jerry alone. Our hero released his opponent, and, turning around, Lenning glared at him vindictively.

"I'll get even with you for this, see if I don't," he muttered in a hoarse whisper.

Then he followed his friends; and Mr. Grice came up and took Jerry to another part of the shop.

"I have changed my mind about letting you work here," he said. "I want you to get used to the place before I put you among those other boys."

Evening found our hero a good deal worn out, not so much by the work as by the close confinement of the bindery. How different life in the great metropolis was to life in the green fields of the country!

After supper Jerry determined to take a walk uptown, to get the outdoor exercise and also in hope of seeing something of the tramp who had taken the packet. He knew that looking for the tramp in the metropolis was a good deal like looking for a pin in a haystack, but imagined that even that pin could be found if one

looked long and sharp enough for it.

The young oarsman sauntered forth toward Broadway, and thence past the Forty-second Street depot and up to Central Park. It was a long walk, but he did not mind it; in fact, it seemed to do him good, for it rested his mind.

The window displays interested Jerry not a little, and he took in everything that came along. So the time flew quickly, until, coming to a jeweler's window, he saw it was after ten o'clock.

"I'll have to be getting back," he said to himself, and was on the point of returning when he saw that which surprised him greatly. A cab whirled past the corner upon which he was standing, and on the back seat he recognized Mr. Wakefield Smith.

The pickpocket was alone, and ere Jerry could stop him the cab rolled down the side street out of hearing.

Our hero did not stop long to consider what was best to do, but took to his heels and followed the cab as best he could.

The cab gained a distance of nearly two blocks, and Jerry was almost on the point of giving up, when it came to a halt in front of what looked like a private clubhouse. Wakefield Smith alighted and paid the cabman, who went about his business without delay.

"Stop there!" cried Jerry to the pickpocket, as the man mounted the steps of the house. But whether the man heard our hero or not, he paid no attention. When Jerry reached the spot he was standing on a low porch.

"Did you hear me?" went on Jerry, and, to prevent Smith from entering the place, our hero caught him by the button of his coat.

To Jerry's surprise, the rascal offered no resistance. Instead, he came down the steps backward, and fell on his back on the sidewalk, his hat rolling toward the gutter.

"Shay, waz you do that fer?" he hiccuped.

Jerry gazed at the pickpocket in wonder. Then the truth flashed over our hero. The man who had robbed him was beastly intoxicated.



CHAPTER XXX.

AN UNLOOKED FOR ADVENTURE.

It would be hard to express Jerry's feelings when he found Mr. Wakefield Smith was suffering heavily from intoxication. For the moment he could do nothing but stare at the man as he lay helpless on the pavement.

"Waz you mean, boy?" went on Smith, and he tried in vain to get up. "Waz you knock me down for, I demand to know?"

"Do you recognize me?" said our hero sharply, as he looked the pickpocket squarely in the face.

"No—don't know you from Adam, 'pon my word."

"I am Jerry Upton, the boy you robbed the other night."

At the words Smith straightened up for a moment and a look of alarm crossed his face.

"Jerry Upton," he repeated, slowly.

"Yes. What have you done with my money?"

"Ain't got a dollar of your money."

"If you haven't, you've drank it up," Jerry ejaculated. "You ought to be ashamed of yourself."

"Zat's all right, m'boy, all right, I assure you. Come on and have a good time with me."

With great difficulty Wakefield Smith arose to his feet and staggered towards the house he had been on the point of entering. Jerry pulled him back and held him. As our hero did this he saw Smith drop a ten-dollar bill. Jerry picked it up.

"You are not going in there—you are going with me."

"Where to?"

"To the nearest station-house."

The pickpocket gave a hiccough and a cry of alarm that was very much like a whine.

"To the station-house?"

"Yes; come on."

"Never."

Smith struggled feebly to get away, but the boy held him with ease. Overcome, the man finally sat down on the curbstone and refused to budge.

"Shay, let us compromise," he mumbled. "It was all a mistake."

“It was no mistake.”

“If I give you ten dollars, will you call it off?”

“No.”

“Then you don’t git a cent, see?”

And with great deliberation the pickpocket closed one bleared eye and glared at Jerry.

“We’ll see about that later,” cried our hero, hotly, and catching the rascal by the collar the youth yanked him to a standing position. “Now come on, and no nonsense.”

Seeing that the youth was not to be fooled with, Wakefield Smith tried to dicker again, getting himself badly twisted in his plea that he would make everything all right. Jerry would not trust him and forced him to walk along until the nearest corner was reached. Here he suddenly made a clutch at an electric-light pole and held fast.

“Help! help! help!” he cried out at the top of his lungs. “Police!”

The young oarsman did not know what to make of this appeal for assistance, for it seemed to him that the authorities were the very people Mr. Wakefield Smith wished to avoid. He was destined, however to soon learn a trick that was brand new to him.

The pickpocket had hardly uttered his cry when a bluecoat put into appearance and came running to the spot.

“What’s the trouble here?” he demanded.

“Shay, officer, make that young fellow go away,” hiccoughed Mr. Wakefield Smith.

“What is he up to?”

“Trying to rob me, officer; reg’lar slick Aleck.”

At this cool assertion Jerry was dumbfounded.

“So you’re trying to rob this gent, eh?” said the bluecoat, turning to our hero and catching his arm. “I reckon I came just in time.”

“It’s a falsehood; he is the pickpocket,” rejoined Jerry as soon as he could speak.

“He looks like it,” said the officer, sarcastically.

“He didn’t rob me now, he robbed several nights ago. I just ran across him.”

“He’s a slick Aleck,” went on Mr. Wakefield Smith. “Don’t let him take my watch, officer!”

“No fear of that. Come along with me, young man.”

“If I have to go I want him to go, too.”

At these words Mr. Wakefield Smith’s face changed color.

"I can't go, officer; have an important engagement at the—er—club."

"He is a pickpocket and I'll prove it at the station house," said Jerry, warningly. "It is your duty to make him go along. I'll help you carry him if it's necessary."

"And you'll skip out, too, if you get the chance," remarked the policeman, grimly.

"If you think that, handcuff me to this fellow."

"Do you mean that?"

"I do, sir."

"Hang me if I don't think you are honest, after all."

"He's a big thief!" bawled Mr. Wakefield Smith.

"Keep quiet and come along. They can straighten matters out at the precinct."

The officer took Mr. Wakefield Smith by the arm and started to walk the prisoner away. With a dexterous twist the intoxicated man cleared himself and plunged down the street.

The bluecoat and Jerry made after him as quickly as they could, but a drawing school in the neighborhood had just let out, and they were detained by the crowd. Mr. Wakefield Smith stumbled across the street and down a side thoroughfare that was very dark. The officer and our hero went after him, but at the end of the second block he was no longer to be seen.

"Now you've let him escape," said Jerry to the policeman. "I have a good mind to report you."

"Go on with you!" howled the officer in return. "I reckon it was a put up job all around. Clear about your business or I'll run you in for disorderly conduct!"

And he made such a savage dash at the young oarsman with his long club that our hero was glad to retreat.

He continued the hunt for the pickpocket alone, but without avail, and, much disheartened, finally returned to his boarding-house. He was afraid he had seen the last of Mr. Wakefield Smith, and was glad he had gotten at least ten dollars from the pickpocket.



CHAPTER XXXI.

NELLIE ARDELL'S TROUBLES.

On the following morning Jerry went to work at the bindery as if nothing had happened. When he went in, Dick Lenning glared at our hero and stopped as if to speak, but changed his mind and walked off without saying a word.

During the day the young oarsman became much better acquainted with his work and began to like it.

That night, on leaving the bindery by the side entrance, which opened on a narrow lane, our hero saw Dick Lenning and several of his friends waiting for him.

He attempted to pass but Lenning put out his foot, and had Jerry not stopped he would have been tripped up.

"Let me pass," said he, sharply, but instead of complying, Lenning took a stand in front of him and hit the youth on the shoulder.

"I said I'd git square," he hissed, savagely. "If yer ain't afraid, stand up and fight."

"I'm not afraid," replied Jerry, and pushed him up against the wall.

Without delay a rough-and-tumble fight ensued.

"Give it to him, Dick!"

"Do the hayseed up!"

"Knock him into the middle of next week!"

These and a dozen other cries arose on the air, and the crowd kept increasing until fully a hundred spectators surrounded the pair.

Dick Lenning had caught Jerry unfairly, but the youth soon managed to shake him off, and, hauling back, gave him a clean blow on the end of his unusually long nose, which caused the blood to spurt from that organ in a stream.

"He's tapped Dick's nose!"

"My! wasn't that a blow, though!"

"The country lad is game!"

Wild with rage, Dick Lenning endeavored to close in again. Jerry stopped the movement this time by a blow on the chest which sent him staggering back several feet into the crowd.

"What's the matter, Dick?"

"Don't let him use you like that."

"I'll fix him!" howled the bully, and rushed at our hero a third time.

Again he hit Jerry, this time in the chin. But our hero's blood was now up, and, calculating well, he struck a square blow in the left eye that knocked the bully flat.

"Dick is knocked out!"

"That country jay is a corker!"

"Git up, Dick. Yer eye is turnin' all black!"

"Better let him go, he's too much for you!"

Dick Lenning was slow in coming to the front. The eye was not only black, but it was closing rapidly.

"He's got a stone in his fist—he don't fight fair," he growled to his friends.

"I have nothing in my fist," retorted Jerry. "If he wants any more, I fancy I can accommodate him, although I don't care to fight."

Dick Lenning was uneasy. He glanced toward his friends and passed a signal to one of his cronies.

"Police! skip!" cried the crony. "Come on, Dick, you don't want to git caught!"

And he dragged Dick Lenning away, while the crowd scattered like magic. No policeman was in sight, nor did any appear. It was only a ruse to retire without acknowledging defeat.

But that fight taught Dick Lenning a severe lesson. He still remained down upon the young oarsman, but in the future he fought shy of our hero, knowing that Jerry would not stand his bullying manner.

On Saturday the shop closed down early, and, having nothing else to do, Jerry walked down to the newspaper office in hope of receiving some answer to the advertisement for the missing papers.

But no answer was forthcoming, and, disappointed, he retraced his steps and sauntered in the direction in which Nellie Ardell and her little brother Tommy lived.

"I'll call on them and see how she made out about her rent," he said to himself, and mounted the stairs to her apartment.

There was a murmur of voices in the kitchen. The door was partly open and Jerry saw the girl and her little brother standing there, confronted by a burly man.

"That rent has got to be paid, that's all there is to it," the man was saying.

"I cannot pay to-day," replied Nellie Ardell. "I will try to pay Monday."

"It won't do. I've given you notice, and if you can't pay, you have got to leave."

At this the girl burst into tears.

"Would you put me on the street?" she wailed.

"I'll have to—it's orders," replied the burly man doggedly.

"Whose order?"

"Mr. Slocum."

"Mr. Slocum is a very hard-hearted man," cried the girl, indignantly.

"That's so," Jerry put in as he entered.

"Oh, Jerry Upton!" Nellie Ardell cried, when she saw our hero. "This man wants to put me out of my rooms."

"It's a shame."

"Who are you?" demanded the burly man. "Do you live here?"

"No. I am this young lady's friend, however. Did Mr. Slocum say to put her out?"

"Yes."

"What shall I do if they put me on the street?" wailed Nellie Ardell.

"I'm sure I don't know. But Slocum sha'n't put you on the street if I can help it," went on Jerry, suddenly.

"What will you do?"

"How much do you owe him?"

"Twelve dollars. I have four, but he won't take it. He wants the entire amount."

"I will let you have ten dollars," said our hero, and brought out the bill Wakefield Smith had dropped.

"Oh, won't that be robbing you?" cried Nellie Ardell, but her eyes glistened with pleasure.

"Never mind; take it and pay this man off."

Nellie Ardell accepted the amount without further words.

"Now," she said, as she paid the man, "I am going to move."

"Move! What for?"

"I can get better rooms for less money just across the way."

The burly man's face fell. He was Alexander Slocum's agent, and he knew that to get tenants for the rooms Nellie Ardell occupied would be difficult.

"It ain't right to move now—in the middle of the summer."

"You intended to put me out—if I couldn't pay the rent."

"That is different."

"I have paid up promptly for many months. Mr. Slocum could have been a bit easier for once."

"He is more than mean," put in Jerry. "I would advise you to move by all means."

"You seem to know a great deal about him," sneered the agent.

"I do—and I'll know more some day."

The agent began to growl, but, seeing he could do nothing, he went off to inform Alexander Slocum that Nellie Ardell intended to move.



CHAPTER XXXII.

A CRAZY MAN'S DOINGS.

"You are more than kind to me, Jerry Upton," exclaimed Nellie Ardell, when they and her little brother were left alone.

"I didn't want to see you thrown out of your home," said Jerry, soberly.

"I shall pay you back that money as soon as I possibly can," she went on. "I expect to get about twenty dollars for sewing next week. One of the ladies I work for is out of town, but is coming back on Wednesday."

"All right—take your time. When will you move? Maybe I can help carry some things for you."

"I've a good mind to move this afternoon. Those other rooms are all ready."

"Then do it, and I'll pitch right in," and in fun the young oarsman picked up several chairs.

"I will. Will you be kind enough to stay with Tommy a few minutes?"

"Certainly."

Nellie Ardell went off at once, and was back in ten minutes. When she returned she had rented three small rooms for less money than she now paid.

She had not many articles of furniture and it did not seem the least bit like working to our hero to assist her in transferring them across the way. The two worked together, and as they labored they talked, Jerry telling her a good deal about his mission to New York and the girl relating her own experiences in keeping the wolf from the door.

"We were not always poor," said Nellie Ardell. "When father was alive we lived in our own home in Brooklyn. But he grew interested in a Western land scheme and it took all of his money."

"That was our trouble. I came to New York to see what I could do toward making Alexander Slocum give an accounting of the money he put in a California land scheme for my uncle."

"Why, my father was in Slocum's land scheme!" she ejaculated.

"Perhaps it was the same. This land scheme I speak of was called the Judge Martin—why, I don't know."

"It is the same. It was so called because the land once belonged to a Judge Martin of Colorado."

Of course, Jerry was deeply interested, and, the moving finished, he and she sat

down to talk the matter over.

From what our hero learned of Nellie Ardell he came to the conclusion that Alexander Slocum was every inch the villain he had taken him to be.

The real estate dealer had hoodwinked the girl completely, and she had surrendered to him all the documents her parent had left behind at the time of his death.

"It's too bad," said Jerry. "We must work together against him. But nothing can be done until my missing papers are recovered."

Before he left, another matter was discussed and settled. In her new quarters Nellie Ardell had a small room she did not really need, and she offered to board Jerry at three dollars and a half a week. As this would be an acceptable saving just at present, our hero accepted the offer and agreed to make the change on the following Monday.

Sunday passed quietly. Jerry spent part of the day in writing a long letter home, telling the folks just how matters stood and urging them not to worry, as he felt certain all would come out right in the end, and that he was quite content to remain in New York and support himself until he had settled matters with Alexander Slocum. The letter was finished late in the afternoon, and after taking supper he went out to post it.

The novelty of life in the city had not yet passed, and, the letter put into a corner box, the young oarsman sauntered on and on, taking in the many strange sights.

He had gone a distance of half a dozen blocks when he came to a church. The doors were wide open, and as the congregation were singing, he stopped to listen to the music.

When the music stopped, our hero passed on down the street, which seemed to grow poorer as he advanced. The new houses gave place to those that were very old, and on all sides Jerry could see the effects of grinding poverty.

"It's a great city," he thought. "And it is true that one half doesn't know how the other half lives."

"Please, mister, will you give me five cents?"

Jerry stopped in his walk and looked down to see who had addressed him. It was a little girl, and she was crying bitterly.

"Five cents?" he repeated.

"Yes, mister; please don't say no. I've asked so many for the money already and they won't give me a cent."

"What are you going to do with five cents?"

"I've got to bring it home to daddy."

"To daddy—you mean your father?"

"He's a sort of a father, but he's not my real papa," sobbed the little girl. "He took me when papa died."

"What does your—your daddy want with the five cents?"

At this question the little girl's face flushed.

"I—I daren't tell you—daddy would whip me," she whimpered.

"Does he drink?"

"I daren't tell you."

"Does he send you out very often to beg?"

"He sends me out when he's—when he's—but I daren't tell you. He would whip me most to death."

"Where do you live?"

"Over there."

And the little girl pointed to a long row of rear tenements, the very worst-looking in the neighborhood.

"And what is daddy's name?"

"His real name is James MacHenry, but the folks around here all call him Crazy Jim," she answered.

Jerry started back in surprise. Crazy Jim was the tramp who had been seen walking off with his packet of documents!

"So you live with Crazy Jim?" said our hero, to the little girl, slowly.

"Yes, sir."

"How long have you lived with him?"

"Oh, a long while, sir."

"Take me to him."

At this request she drew back in horror.

"Oh, I can't do that, indeed I can't," she faltered.

"Why not?"

"I took a man to him once—a charity officer—and daddy—whip—whipped me for it."

"Then show me where he lives," went on Jerry after a pause. "You needn't let him see you. I must have a talk with him. Perhaps I'll give him some money."

The little girl still hesitated, but finally led the way up the street into a horrible-looking alley and pointed to a dingy tenement-house.

"Daddy is up there on the top floor in the back."

"And is that where you live?" asked Jerry, with a shudder he could not repress.

"Yes, of course."

“It’s not a nice place.”

“Oh, no,” and something like a tear glistened in the girl’s eye.

“Here is ten cents for you,” added Jerry. “You had better keep it for yourself. Are you hungry?”

“A little. I only had some bread to-day for dinner and supper.”

“Then go down to the restaurant on the corner and get something to eat for the money. You need it.”

The little girl ran off to do as bidden, and our hero entered the dilapidated tenement. Four dirty men and women sat on the stoop smoking and drinking from a tin pail.

“Who are ye lookin’ fer?” asked one of the men, roughly.

“Crazy Jim,” answered Jerry, briefly, and brushed past him.

The hallway was dark, and it was with difficulty that the young oarsman found the rickety stairs, every step of which creaked as he trod upon it.

Arriving at the top floor, the youth noticed a shaft of light streaming from beneath a door in the rear. He knocked loudly.

There was a movement within, the door was flung back, and Jerry found himself confronted by a tall, round-shouldered individual, with long, unkempt hair and a wild look in his small black eyes.



CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE LITTLE NOBODY.

"Well!" demanded the man laconically.

"Is this James MacHenry?"

"That's me, boy."

"I would like to see you on business," Jerry went on, as he brushed past and entered one of the barest living apartments he had ever seen.

"On business?"

"Yes, a few days ago you picked up a packet downtown belonging to me—a packet containing some documents and letters."

"Who said they belonged to you?"

"I say so. My name is Jerry Upton, and I dropped the packet in the alleyway where you found it."

The man stared at our hero.

"Say, is this a game?" he demanded, harshly.

"What do you mean?"

"Are you trying to get me into trouble?"

"No, I am trying to keep you out of trouble," replied the young oarsman, warmly.

"You say that packet belonged to you?"

"Yes."

"It didn't have your name on it."

"No, it—" Our hero stopped short. "It had Alexander Slocum's name on it!" he burst out.

"Exactly."

"You don't mean to say you delivered that packet to him?" gasped the youth.

"I did—not an hour ago."

Jerry fell back into a chair and breathed heavily. The packet was gone—into the hands of the enemy!

"The man said it was his package," said Crazy Jim. "He gave me a reward of five dollars for returning it to him."

"It was mine. He wanted to steal it—and now he's done it," cried Jerry. "You let him have it but an hour ago?"

"Yes."

“Where did he go?”

“I don’t know.”

“Did you open the packet?”

“Yes, but I couldn’t make nothing out of it—’cos I ain’t eddicated. I read his name on it and got another fellow to write a postal card yesterday afternoon. He came here, examined the papers, and seemed much pleased.”

“No doubt he was pleased,” groaned the young oarsman.

“Was the thing worth much?”

“It was worth a good deal. I would have given five dollars to get it back.”

“What does he want with it?”

“Wants to do my father out of some property,” answered our hero. “By the way, who is that little girl who lives with you?”

At this question Crazy Jim’s face darkened.

“That ain’t none of your business,” he growled.

“You shouldn’t send her out on the street to beg.”

“Wot! has she been blabbin’ again? I’ll break every bone in her body!” and off the man started out of the room and down the narrow stairs.

Jerry had noticed that his breath smelt strongly of liquor. He was not only a drinking man, but also one who was not quite right in his head.

“Don’t hurt her, you brute!” called out the boy, and followed him out of the alleyway into the street. At the nearest corner stood the little girl, and Crazy Jim rushed up to her fiercely.

“You good-fer-nothin’!” he bawled. “I’ll teach ye a lesson! Didn’t I tell ye ter keep yer clapper still about me? Take that! and that!”

He raised his heavy hand and struck her a cruel blow on the side of the head. She staggered back, and he was about to repeat his unjust action, when Jerry thought it about time to interfere. Catching him by the arm, our hero hurled him backward with such force that he fell flat in the gutter.

At once a shout went up from those who saw Jerry’s action.

“What are yer doin’?”

“Who is that boy?”

With a fearful exclamation, Crazy Jim arose to his feet.

“I’ll fix ye fer that!” he hissed, and sprang forward. “You ain’t got no right ter interfere between me an’ the gal.”

“You are a brute!” burst out our hero. “This little girl has done nothing to deserve such punishment.”

“Who set you over me?” howled the infuriated man. “I’ll fix ye!”

He tried his best to hit Jerry with his fist, but the young oarsman dodged him and took a stand in front of the little girl.

"You had better run away," Jerry whispered to her. "He is in a terrible mood just now."

"Where shall I go?" whimpered the girl.

"Anywhere? Up two blocks. I will join you soon."

Without delay the little girl ran off. Crazy Jim tried to follow her, but Jerry headed him off.

Seeing he could do nothing with his hands, the savage man looked around for some weapon. A heavy stone was lying handy, and he picked it up. The next moment it was launched at our hero's head.

Luckily, Jerry was quick at dodging, or he might have been seriously wounded. The missile went sailing over the lad's head and flew with a crash through the front window of a neighboring store.

The smashing of the pane of glass was followed by a shout of alarm from the storekeeper, who sat in a chair on the pavement.

"Here, vot's dot?" he yelled. "Vot you means py preaking mine vinder, hey, you Crazy Gim? I vos got you locked up. Ain't it? Bolice! bolice!"

The German storekeeper continued to yell so loudly that it was not long before an officer appeared. Seeing this, Jerry backed out of the crowd and hurried off. He saw the policeman catch Crazy Jim by the arm, and a wordy war followed. A minute later the fellow was being marched off to the station-house. No doubt the policeman would have liked it had he found Jerry, but our hero kept at a safe distance.

It was now quite dark, and it was with some difficulty that Jerry again found the little girl. She stood by a hitching post, sobbing bitterly.

"Where is he?" she asked, choking back her sobs.

"The policeman took him off. Don't cry any more," Jerry added, soothingly.

"But where shall I go?" she asked. "I can't go back."

"Have you no friends?"

"No. Crazy Jim and I came to New York alone when papa died."

"Where did you come from?"

The little girl shook her head at this. She had been too young to remember.

"What is your name?"

"Dottie."

"Dottie what?"

"Nothing, only Dottie."

Jerry was in a quandary. To a certain degree he felt responsible for her present

forlorn condition. Suddenly an idea struck him.

"If you will come with me, I'll see to it that you have a good bed to-night, and breakfast in the morning," he said. "And after that I'll see what I can do for you, Dottie."

"Who are you?"

"My name is Jerry Upton."

"You look like a nice boy and I'll go with you," and she placed her hand confidently in that of the young oarsman.

Jerry took the little one to Nellie Ardell's apartments. Of course she was much surprised, and, sitting down, our hero had to explain everything as far as he was able. Nellie Ardell agreed instantly to take the little girl in.

"You can stay here until we can do something for you," she said. "I know how it would feel to have little Tommy on the streets homeless."

And soon after that Dottie was put to bed, very well content. Her hard life with Crazy Jim had made her used to ups and downs that no ordinary little girl could have endured.

The reader can well imagine that Jerry did not sleep much that night. He could not forget that Alexander Slocum had the precious packet of papers. Bitterly he regretted not having taken better care of the documents.

"I will call on Slocum, and come to some sort of an understanding," Jerry said to himself. "Perhaps when I tell him that both Nellie Ardell and myself are ready to proceed against him he will be willing to come to terms."

The next day was a busy one at the book-bindery, and our hero got no chance to call on Slocum. During that time he learned that Crazy Jim had been locked up for resisting the officer and had been sentenced to thirty days on Blackwell's Island.

The young oarsman did not know what to do about little Dottie, but Nellie Ardell solved this question.

"I have received a whole lot of new work," she said. "So for the present we can keep her to mind Tommy while I am dressmaking."

So the little girl stayed on. Jerry never dreamed of how much she had to do with his future life.

On Thursday Mr. Islen's brother died and the bindery was closed for several days. Jerry took the opportunity to walk down to Alexander Slocum's offices.

The real estate man was alone, and greeted our hero with a sinister smile.

"So you have seen fit to call again, young man," were his first words.

"Mr. Slocum, let us come to business," Jerry replied firmly. "What are you going to do about my father's claim?"

Alexander Slocum laughed harshly.

“Your father’s claim?” he repeated. “I don’t recognize the fact that your father has any claim against me.”



CHAPTER XXXIV.

ALEXANDER SLOCUM SHOWS HIS HAND.

Alexander Slocum's statement was no more than Jerry had expected, so he was not taken back by the words. He looked the man steadily in the eyes.

"So that is the position you are going to take now—since you received my packet from James MacHenry," said Jerry, deliberately.

Slocum started and winced, and the young oarsman saw that Crazy Jim had spoken the truth.

"I haven't anything belonging to you, Upton."

"It is useless for you to deny it, Mr. Slocum. He found the packet and delivered it to you for a reward of five dollars."

"The packet he delivered to me was my own. It contained some legal documents belonging to this office."

"You may make others believe that, Mr. Slocum, but—"

"But what, boy? Remember, I want none of your insolence here. I will listen to you, but you mustn't grow impertinent."

"I'm only speaking the truth. You virtually robbed me, just as you robbed my father and Mr. Bryant Ardell."

"Ha!" Slocum leaped to his feet. "Who—where did you hear of Bryant Ardell?" he asked, excitedly.

"I have met Nellie Ardell several times—in fact, I am boarding with her."

"Did she set you to hounding me?"

"No; we met by accident after I had come to New York almost on purpose to see you."

"She is an impudent young woman."

"She told me that you had her land papers, just as you now have mine."

"It's a falsehood!"

"If both of us go to court with our story, we may prove that it is not a falsehood."

"Ha! are you going to combine to ruin my reputation?" cried the real estate dealer, growing pale.

"We are going to try to obtain our rights."

"You'll gain nothing. I'll—I'll have you locked up on a charge of black-mail!" Alexander Slocum began to pace his office nervously. "See here, Upton how much

do you want to go off and leave me alone?" he questioned, suddenly.

"I want what is due my father."

"You'll not get it!" he whispered, hoarsely, throwing his mask aside. "Do you think I have plotted and worked all these years for nothing? Not much! All that property is mine, do you hear? Nobody else shall ever own a foot of it. Now, I'll tell you what I am willing to do. I'll give you a hundred dollars in cash and we'll call it square. Mind you, I don't admit your claim. I only want to avoid trouble."

Jerry looked at the man and drew a long breath. He could see through Slocum's words as clearly as he could see through the window. His father's claim was worth a fortune!

"Come, what do you say?" demanded Slocum as Jerry did not answer him.

"I say this, Mr. Slocum," rejoined our hero. "I won't accept your proposition, and before I am done with you I'll have our rights and you'll be in state's prison."

With a snarl very much like that made by a fretful tiger, the man leaped toward the boy as if to grab him by the throat.

"You fool! I'll make you come to terms!"

His hand touched Jerry's collar, but the young oarsman evaded him and placed the flat-top desk between them. When the man ran around the desk, Jerry picked up a heavy brass-bound ruler.

"Stop, or I'll crack you with this!" cried our hero, and, seeing the weapon, Slocum halted.

"Don't be a fool, boy!"

"I don't intend to be."

"You can do nothing against me."

"That remains to be seen."

"Who will take your word against mine? Nobody. You are a mere country lad, while I am a well-known New York citizen."

"Mr. Ardell was also well known in his day."

Again Alexander Slocum's face grew pale.

"Nellie Ardell has no doubt urged you to attack me," he growled. "I must see her. Why didn't she come with you?"

"She is busy."

"I will explain matters to her in detail. Really, the claim is not worth anything, but I wish to avoid trouble, and—"

"You might as well stop, Mr. Slocum, for it's too late to say that now. I am positive our claims are of great value. Since you won't do the right thing, I shall advise my father to bring action in court to compel you to come to terms."

While speaking, Jerry had walked to the door, and now placed his hand on the knob.

“Stop! stop!”

“No, I have had enough for the present.”

“You villain!”

Slocum ran toward Jerry, who opened the door to step out, but found the way blockaded by Casey, his book-keeper.

“Here, what’s up?” cried the man, in wonder.

“Don’t let him get away, Casey!” cried Alexander Slocum. “He is going to make trouble, sure!”

“Let me go!” burst out our hero as the book-keeper caught hold of him. “Let go, or I’ll——”

Jerry never finished that sentence. Alexander Slocum had picked up the ruler the youth had dropped, and leaped to the front. Down came the weapon on the young oarsman’s head; he felt a sharp stinging pain—and then he knew no more.

When Jerry came to his senses all was dark around him. He was lying on a damp, cement floor, evidently that of a cellar.

His head ached greatly, and for several minutes he could not remember what had happened.

Then came back that scene in Slocum’s office. He staggered to his feet.

Where was he and how long had he been there?

The first question was readily answered. Stepping forward, Jerry stumbled over some loose coal. He was in a coal-cellar. Around and above were brick walls. The door was of sheet-iron, and it was tightly closed and barred. How had he come to that place? Probably his enemies had carried him hither, although how they could do it without being seen was a question.

As soon as our hero felt strong enough he looked about for some means of escaping from his prison. With great care he examined the walls and tried the door.

Finding no outlet on any side, he turned his attention to the pavements above. From one spot there came a faint glimmer of light, in a circle, and he rightfully guessed that the coal-hole was located there.

How to reach the hole was a problem. It was several feet above our hero’s head, and there was nothing in the coal-vault to stand upon.

Jerry considered the situation for a minute, and then, standing directly under the cover of the hole, leaped upward, sending his hand over his head as he did so.

The cover was loose, and the force of the blow caused it to fly upward. Another blow and it fell away entirely, and in a second more the young oarsman was

clambering out of the opening.

It was drawing towards evening, and the street was full of people, some of which eyed the boy curiously. Restoring the cover to its place, he left the spot.

The question now was, should he return to Slocum's office or seek outside assistance? He decided upon the latter course. To attempt to bring the rascally real estate agent to terms alone would be foolhardy.

Jerry's head ached so much he could think only with difficulty, and he decided to return to Nellie Ardell's apartments. It was a hard walk, and he was glad when the place was reached and he could sit down.

"What's the matter—are you hurt?" cried the young woman.

"I was knocked out," replied the youth, with a sorry little laugh. "I've got a pretty big lump on the top of my head."

Sitting down, he told his story, to which Nellie Ardell listened with breathless attention.

"The wicked man! He should be locked up!" she burst out, when Jerry had finished. "It's a wonder he didn't kill you."

"That's true. As it was, the blow was awfully hard."

"What will you do now?"

"I really don't know."

"Won't that Mr. Islen whom you work for, help you?"

"Perhaps he will," returned the youth, struck with the idea. "The trouble is his brother is dead, and that has upset him."

"One thing is certain, Jerry, the property is valuable."

"Yes, and another thing is certain," added our hero. "We want our shares of it."

"It would be a great help to me to get some money out of it," said Nellie Ardell, with a sigh. "This sewing constantly day in and day out is wearing on me."

The two talked for over an hour, and then Jerry felt compelled to lie down. It was nearly morning before his head stopped aching and he got some rest.



CHAPTER XXXV.

A STRANGE DISAPPEARANCE

On the next day the bindery was opened as usual, but Mr. Islen did not appear, having gone to Philadelphia. Jerry worked throughout the day, wondering what Alexander Slocum had thought and done after he had discovered the escape. Little did the young oarsman dream of what the real estate dealer was then doing.

Our hero was proving himself to be skillful at the work assigned to him and the foreman often praised him.

"You'll be worth a raise in wages," he said. "I never saw a boy take hold as you do."

Jerry never delayed after the day's work was over. He washed up, put on his coat, and hurried forth to his boarding place.

When Jerry reached the house he found little Dottie on the stoop, with Tommy in her arms. Tommy was crying for something to eat, and the little girl was having her hands full with him.

"Where is Miss Nellie?" asked our hero in some surprise.

"I don't know," returned the girl. "She sent me out with Tommy after dinner, and when I tried to get in after awhile the door was locked and she was gone."

"And you have been sitting here ever since?"

"Yes."

"Come up. I'll open the door."

Jerry led the way, and with a night key opened the door to the kitchen.

A cry of surprise burst from his lips. Everywhere were the signs of a desperate struggle. Two of the chairs were overturned, the table-cloth hung half off the table, and Nellie Ardell's sewing was strewn in all directions.

"This is Slocum's work!"

Those were the words which arose to the youth's lips as he surveyed the situation in the kitchen.

Alexander Slocum had tried to get him out of the way, and now he had tried the same plan upon Nellie Ardell.

There had been a fierce struggle, of that there was not the slightest doubt.

But the girl had been overpowered in the end and taken off.

To where?

That was the all-important question.

While our hero was gazing around the room, little Tommy was crying at the top of his lungs.

To quiet him, Jerry gave him his bowl of bread and milk, and also gave Dottie her supper.

Then Jerry began a minute examination of the rooms.

There was mud on the oil-cloth—the tracks of four boots.

“Slocum and Casey, his book-keeper,” he said to himself.

Going below he interviewed Mrs. Flannigan, a good-natured Irish woman who lived on the next floor.

“Did you see Miss Ardell this afternoon?”

“Sure, an’ Oi did not Oi was out,” she replied.

He next tried the janitress, who lived in the basement. She was a peppery old woman who seldom had a pleasant word for anybody.

“Did I see her? Yes, she went out with two men about two hours ago,” she said.

“What sort of looking men?”

“I can’t say—I’m not taking notice of everybody who comes and goes.”

“But this is important, Mrs. Foley. I am afraid something has happened to Miss Ardell.”

“They were tall men, and I guess both had big black mustaches and beards.”

“Where did she go with them?”

“Into a carriage. All of ’em seemed to be in a big hurry.”

“Which way did the carriage go?”

“Down towards the Brooklyn ferry.”

In a thoughtful mood, the young oarsman walked back upstairs. He met Mrs. Flannigan outside of the door.

“What’s wrong, Mr. Upton?”

“That is what I am trying to find out. Miss Ardell is missing. If I go out, will you look after the children?”

“Sure, Oi will, bless the dears,” she said. Her heart was as large as her ruddy, full-blown face.

Without waiting longer, Jerry ran down into the street and endeavored to trace the carriage down to the ferry. In this he was successful, and learned that the turnout containing two men and a young lady, who appeared to be ill, had crossed to Brooklyn.

By this time night had set in, and all efforts to follow the carriage proved unsuccessful. Yet unwilling to give up, Jerry spent over two hours in Brooklyn, hunting in every direction for a clew.

Our hero had never been across the East River before, and in hunting around it was but natural that he should get lost. At the end of the search he found himself a good distance from the river, in a neighborhood that looked anything but respectable.

"It's time I got back," thought the youth, and started to make inquiries.

"You're a dozen blocks out of your way," said a man. "Go down that way three blocks, and turn to your left."

As Jerry walked along a somewhat gloomy street, he noticed three men walking ahead of him. One was a tall, finely built man, wearing a large round hat, of the western type.

The other men were short fellows, each with a red mustache. They carried heavy canes and walked on either side of the tall individual.

"Aren't we almost there?" Jerry heard the tall man ask, as he drew closer to the trio.

"Yes, it ain't but a step further," was the reply from one of the short men.

"You are certain this Crazy Jim is the man I am after?"

"Oh, yes."

The mentioning of Crazy Jim's name interested Jerry. Crazy Jim was still up on Blackwell's Island. It was possible, however, that they referred to some other individual.

To hear what further they might have to say the young oarsman kept close to the party.

"It's been a long hunt for me, gentlemen," said the tall man, and by his speech Jerry felt sure he was a westerner. "But if I am on the right trail, things will soon come out right."

"What do you want to find Crazy Jim for?" asked one of the short men.

"I'm not saying anything about that just now," was the cool response.

"Oh, excuse me, of course not." The short fellow looked around, but failed to catch sight of our hero. "Jack, how about a smoke?" he said to the other short fellow.

"Strike a light," was the answer.

The words were evidently a secret signal, for hardly were they spoken when one of the short men caught the westerner from behind and held his arms.

"Here, what's the meaning of this?" cried the man, in alarm.

"Keep still, old man, and we won't hurt you. Raise a row and you'll get knocked out. Quick, Pete, with his diamond pin and that roll of bills in his left pocket!"

At this command the man in front rushed in and caught hold of the man's pin. Out it came in his hand, a beautiful affair, worth at least a hundred dollars.

"Stop! stop!" yelled the westerner. "Police! police!"

"Shut up!" hissed the man who held him. "Pete, crack him over the head. We can't afford to take any chances here."

Thus ordered, the man who held the diamond pin slipped it into his pocket. Then he raised his heavy cane and started to do as bidden when Jerry rushed at him.

"Stop! Don't hit that man!"

The rascal was surprised.

"Who are you? Oh, it's only a boy. Clear out of here!"

"I won't! You let that man alone."

"Don't leave me," pleaded the victim. "They want to rob me. He has my diamond pin!"

"Shut up!" howled the man in the rear. "Crack him, Pete, and crack the boy, too."

Once more the heavy cane was raised. Our hero caught it in the center, and by a dexterous twist wrenched it from the rascal's hand.

With a howl of baffled rage the rascal turned and caught Jerry by the throat.

"Give me that stick, boy, or I'll choke the life out of you!" he hissed into the youth's ear.



CHAPTER XXXVI.

JERRY HEARS AN ASTONISHING STATEMENT.

When the footpad, for the fellow was nothing less, attacked Jerry, our hero felt that he had a tough struggle before him.

The rascal's grasp on the young oarsman's throat was light, however, and Jerry quickly shook it off.

In the meantime the westerner began to struggle and shout at the top of his voice: "Help! Police! police!"

In vain the fellow who held him tried to stop his cries. They grew louder, and soon footsteps were heard approaching.

Jerry received a savage blow on the chest and struck out in return, hitting the footpad in the chin. Then the two clinched, and both rolled to the pavement.

Jerry's assailant was a strong man and he was slowly but surely getting the best of the youth when three men put in an appearance. They were heavy-set individuals and were followed by a policeman.

"What's up here?"

"Don't kill that boy!"

"He is a thief!" cried Jerry. "He has that man's diamond pin."

"That's right," put in the westerner, who had managed to turn and catch hold of his assailant. "This fellow is his mate. They just tackled me when the boy came to my help."

"It is a falsehood," roared the footpad who had attacked our hero.

Saying this, he arose and tried to sneak away. But Jerry tripped him up, sending him headlong, and before he could rise the policeman had him handcuffed.

While this was going on the westerner and two of the new arrivals managed to make a prisoner of the other footpad. He used some terrible language, but this did not avail him.

"I know them," said the policeman, after the capture was effected. "They are Hungry Pete and Jack the Slick. They are wanted for a burglary at Sheepshead Bay. How did you happen to fall in with them?"

"I met them up at Rumford's Hotel. They said they knew a man I was looking for."

"Will you come along and make a charge against them?"

"Certainly. He has my diamond pin."

The pin was brought to light and handed over to its owner, and then our hero was asked to go along.

Anxious to know what the westerner might want of Crazy Jim, Jerry agreed, and a minute later found the whole crowd bound for the nearest station-house.

Here the westerner gave his name as Colonel Albert Dartwell. He said he was from Denver and had come east on private business.

"I have been sick for two months," he said. "I am still weak. That is the reason I did not put up a better fight when those two men tackled me." Jerry told his story, and the upshot of the matter was that the two footpads were held for another hearing before the judge in the morning.

"My boy, I owe you something for your services to me," said the westerner, as he and our hero came out on the street. "You did well for a boy."

"I did the best I could," replied the young oarsman. "But I want to ask you a question. I heard you mention Crazy Jim. What do you want to see him for?"

A look of pain crossed Colonel Dartwell's face at my words.

"It's a long story, Upton. I am from the West and came many miles to see him. Do you know the man?"

"I know one fellow called Crazy Jim, sir."

"His right name is James MacHenry."

"That's the man."

"Ah! And where can he be found?"

"Most likely on Blackwell's Island."

"He is in prison?"

"Yes."

"What for?"

"For breaking the glass in a store window and creating a row."

Colonel Dartwell drew a long breath.

"Those footpads told me he was in a hotel in the neighborhood. You are sure you are right?"

"Yes, sir. To be truthful, I was mixed up in the scrape that took Crazy Jim to prison."

"Indeed. Would you mind telling me about it? You don't look like a boy that would do wrong."

"It wasn't my fault. Crazy Jim had a packet belonging to me—a packet containing some valuable documents. I called for them and found he had given them up to an enemy of mine."

"And that led to the row."

“Not exactly. He is a bad man, and there was a little girl living with him, and he —”

As Jerry spoke Colonel Dartwell grasped him by the arm.

“Stop! What did you say about a little girl?” he demanded, eagerly.

“I said there was a little girl living with him. He used to send her out to beg. He got it into his head that she had set me against him, and he started to beat her. I told her to run away, and then he attacked me and got arrested.”

“And what became of the little girl? Tell me, quickly!” And Colonel Dartwell’s voice was husky as he spoke.

“I met her afterward and took her to where I was boarding, and she is still stopping there.”

“Describe her to me.”

Seeing there was something behind the inquiry, Jerry gave him the best description he could. The colonel listened with fixed attention.

“It must be her!” he murmured. “My poor, lost Dottie.”

“Dottie! That’s her name!” cried our hero. “And she is—”

“She is my daughter,” was his answer.

“Your daughter!” ejaculated Jerry, in amazement.

“Yes, my daughter. Take me to her at once.”

“I will, sir; but this is the strangest thing I ever heard.”

“I have no doubt of it.”

“Was she stolen from you?”

“Yes. It’s a long story. I will tell it to you while we are on the way. She is well?”

“Yes, sir. But she has been misused, so you mustn’t expect to see her looking real good. She is very thin.”

“I have not seen her for four years, not since she was a mite of a toddler.”

The pair started for the ferry without delay, and as they proceeded, the colonel related his story.

He was a mine-owner and had lived in the West for fifteen years. His wife had died when Dottie was born, and the child had been turned over to the care of a colored nurse.

At that time James MacHenry had been a prospector in the region and he had opened a mine close to that located by the colonel.

All went well until the MacHenry mine petered out, as it is called, and then the man’s mind became deranged. He accused the colonel of having cheated him out of a slice of the richest land and a bitter quarrel resulted.

Two weeks later MacHenry disappeared, and shortly after that baby Dottie was

missing. A long search was made for the child, but without avail.

Curiously enough, the colonel did not connect the disappearance of his child with that of Crazy Jim. He started to hunt for the little one among the Indians and the outlaws in the mountains.

Two years passed, and then one night a good-for-nothing miner named Duffy was shot in a quarrel over a game of cards. On his dying bed Duffy confessed that he had once been intimate with Crazy Jim and that the latter had acknowledged stealing Dottie.

A hunt was at once made for the abductor. It was said he had gone to San Francisco, and later on he was traced to Chicago, but there the trail was lost until long after, when a tramp turned up who spoke of having seen Crazy Jim around New York.

Without delay Colonel Dartwell had come East and scoured the metropolis. While here he had fallen in with footpads who had sought to rob him.



CHAPTER XXXVII.

A JOYOUS MEETING.

By the time Colonel Dartwell's story was told he and Jerry had landed in the metropolis, and a hurried walk of a few minutes brought them to Nellie Ardell's apartment. Mrs. Flannigan was waiting for our hero, having put both of the children to bed.

"An' did ye find Miss Ardell?" she asked, quickly.

"No, Mrs. Flannigan. But I have found somebody else—the father of little Dottie."

"Indade, now! An' ain't that noice," she exclaimed, glancing at Colonel Dartwell's well-dressed figure. "Well, the poor dear needs somebody, not but what she got good care here," she added, hastily.

Tears stood in the colonel's eyes as he stepped up beside the bed upon which Dottie lay. He took the white-robed figure up in his arms and kissed her face.

"It is she," he said, in a choking voice. "The living picture of her dead mother!"

Dottie awoke with a start and was inclined to cry out. But Jerry and the colonel quickly soothed her.

"I am your papa, Dottie; don't you remember papa and big Ruth that used to be with you?"

The little girl looked puzzled. Then she gave a cry.

"Papa! papa! I know you! I knew you would come to me! Oh, papa, don't go away again! Crazy Jim said you were dead! Oh, papa!"

And she clung to him convulsively. It was such an affecting scene Jerry had to turn away, while Mrs. Flannigan, standing in the partly open doorway, shed copious tears.

An hour later the children had again retired, and the colonel and the young oarsman sat in the little kitchen talking.

"And you say you think Miss Ardell was abducted?" he said.

"I felt sure of it, sir. This Alexander Slocum wants to get her out of the way on account of some property he is holding back from her. I am interested in the same property."

And Jerry told him the particulars of affairs so far as they concerned Slocum.

"If the land in question is near Sacramento it ought to be of great value," said the colonel. "Property in that section is booming."

"I want to find Nellie Ardell, sir. I am afraid he will do her bodily harm. He might even kill her to get her out of the way."

"I will help you all I can, Upton. You have done me a great service, and I certainly owe the young lady much for taking my child in and caring for her."

Our hero and the colonel went over the matter carefully for fully an hour and decided to start on a hunt as soon as it grew light. The colonel offered to employ a detective and this offer Jerry readily accepted.

Jerry passed several hours trying to sleep, and at the first sign of dawn was up and dressed. The colonel had rested in an arm-chair, not caring to separate himself from his child by going to a hotel.

Mrs. Flannigan was again called upon and readily agreed to take charge of Tommy and Dottie once more. She took them to her own rooms and was cautioned about letting strangers in.

"Don't fear, they'll not take 'em from me," she said, and in such a determined way that Jerry was compelled to laugh.

The call at a detective's office was soon over, and it was not as satisfactory as our hero had anticipated.

"You mustn't expect too much," laughed the colonel. "In spite of the thrilling detective stories published, detectives are only ordinary men, and cannot do the impossible. Mr. Gray will no doubt go to work in his own way and do the best he can."

Their next movement was to cross to Brooklyn. Here the pair started on the hunt for the carriage that had carried Nellie Ardell off.

An hour was spent in a fruitless search. They were about to give it up, when they saw a carriage coming down to the ferry that was covered with dust and mud.

"That looks as if it had been out in the country a good distance," observed Colonel Dartwell. "I'll stop the driver and see what he has to say. It can do no harm."

Walking up in front of the team he motioned for the driver to halt.

"Want a carriage, boss?"

"No, I want to know where you have been?" demanded the westerner.

At this question the driver seemed plainly disconcerted. He looked around, and, seeing a clear space to his left, whipped up his animals and sped off.

"He's our man!" cried the colonel. "Come on, he must not escape us!"

He set off with all speed and Jerry followed. The driver drove as far as the first corner and then had to halt because of a blockade in the street.

"Come down here!" commanded Colonel Dartwell.

"I ain't done nothin'," growled the fellow. "You let me alone."

"I asked you where you had been."

"Up to the park."

"Who did you have for a fare?"

"An old man."

"That's not true—you had two men and a girl."

The carriage driver muttered something under his breath.

"I—I—who said I had the men and a girl?" he asked, surlily.

"I say so. Where did you take the young lady?"

At first the driver beat about the bush. But the colonel threatened him with arrest, and this brought him around.

"Don't arrest me, boss. I wasn't in the game. The men hired me to take 'em out—that was all. They said the girl was light-headed and the place was a private asylum."

"Probably," rejoined Colonel Dartwell, sarcastically. "Take us to that place without delay. But stop—drive to police headquarters first."

Very unwillingly the fellow complied. At the headquarters help was procured in the shape of two ward detectives. All four of the party entered the carriage and were driven off to effect Nellie Ardell's rescue.

It was with deep interest that Jerry accompanied Colonel Dartwell and the officers of the law in the search for the missing young lady.

On through the crowded streets of Brooklyn drove the carriage, the driver now apparently as willing to help the law as he had before wished to evade it.

The carriage was turning into one of the fine thoroughfares when Jerry caught sight of a figure which instantly arrested his attention. The figure was that of Mr. Wakefield Smith.

"Stop!" cried the young oarsman to the driver of the carriage.

"What's up?" demanded the colonel.

"Do you see that man over there by the paper stand?"

"Yes."

"That is Wakefield Smith, the pickpocket."

"Indeed! He ought to be arrested."

"You know him to be a pickpocket?" questioned one of the detectives.

"I do. He robbed me of over twenty dollars. I got back ten dollars. He's a very smooth and slick worker."

"I think I know that chap," returned the detective. "Don't he look like Charley the Dude?" he asked of his companion.

“By Jove! that’s our man!” ejaculated the second detective. “I would know him anywhere by that peculiar walk. He has grown a heavy mustache since I saw him last.”

“Will you stop and arrest him?” asked Jerry. “He ought to be locked up.”

“We can get the policeman on the beat to attend to him. There is an officer on the next corner. Just call him, Harrity.”

The carriage was brought up to the curb and our hero and the officers alighted, the Colonel remaining behind to keep an eye on the driver.

Mr. Wakefield Smith was strolling down the street in a lordly way when Jerry tapped him on the shoulder.

“So I’ve met you again,” he said.

The pickpocket turned and his face fell. But only for a moment; then he gazed at the youth brazenly.

“I don’t know you, me boy,” he drawled in an assumed voice.

“But I know you, Mr. Smith,” rejoined Jerry. “I want the balance of my money. I got ten dollars the night you were intoxicated, but that is not enough.”

“Boy, you are talking riddles. I never saw you before.”

“I can easily prove it, I fancy.”

“It’s no use, Charley,” broke in the detective, who had followed him. “We know you well enough.”

“And who are you?” asked the pickpocket, much disconcerted.

“I am a detective. You are the rogue known as Charley the Dude. You may consider yourself under arrest.”

“This is an outrage!”

“Hardly.”

By this time the second detective had arrived with a policeman. At sight of the bluecoat the pickpocket became nervous. Turning, he suddenly started to run.

But the others ran for him, and soon he was handcuffed. Explanations to the policeman followed, and the officer took him off, and Jerry and the detectives continued on their way.

It may be well to state here that the pickpocket, whose real name was Charles Heulig, was later on convicted of several crimes and sent to state prison for a term of years. Jerry never received a cent of the balance of the money due, but other events that followed made this loss seem a trivial one.



CHAPTER XXXVIII.

ALEXANDER SLOCUM IS BROUGHT TO BOOK.

In half an hour after the arrest of the pickpocket the young oarsman and his companions found themselves on the outskirts of Brooklyn and bowling along a smooth country road which the detectives said they knew well.

On and on they went, until Colonel Dartwell asked the driver how much further they had to go.

"About half a mile, sir," was the answer.

His words proved correct. Turning into a side road, the carriage came to the entrance to a large grounds, surrounded by a high board fence.

Over the gateway was the sign:

DR. HALCONE'S PRIVATE SANITARIUM.

"A private lunatic asylum," murmured Colonel Dartwell.

"Yes, sir," said the driver. "You know I told you they said the young lady was a bit off."

"What shall we do?" was the question put by the westerner to the detectives. "Shall we go in boldly and order them to produce the girl?"

"Will they do it?" asked Jerry. "They may be in Slocum's pay, and hide her away."

"The young man is right," said one of the detectives. "We'll drive on a way and then sneak back and size the place up."

This was done, and five minutes later found the colonel and our hero walking along a hedge which separated the grounds on one side from a woods.

"Look there!" Jerry cried suddenly, and pointed to an upper window of the brick building beyond.

He had seen Nellie Ardell's face as the young lady walked about the apartment. As the others gazed upward Alexander Slocum appeared. He held a sheet of paper and a pen in his hands.

"He wants her to sign something," cried our hero in a low voice. "See! see! he is going to force her."

"Leave me be, Mr. Slocum," those below heard Nellie Ardell exclaim. "I will not sign off my interest in that property. Leave me be! Oh, that somebody was at hand to help me!"

"Come on—there is no time to waste!" cried Colonel Dartwell, and pushed through the hedge.

Jerry followed, and both ran for a side door of the building, which stood open.

Here they found themselves confronted by a burly man of advanced age, evidently the proprietor of the sanitarium.

"Here, what do you want here?" he demanded, roughly.

"We want that young lady upstairs!" cried Jerry.

"You can't have her."

"We'll see about that," put in Colonel Dartwell. "You have no authority to detain her here."

"She is insane, and——"

"Help! help!" came from upstairs, and rushing past the burly doctor, Jerry skipped up the stairs, three steps at a time.

The colonel came behind. The doctor was about to remonstrate when he found himself confronted by the two detectives.

Our hero and the colonel soon found the proper door. It was locked, but putting his shoulder to it the young oarsman soon burst it open.

Alexander Slocum stood at the table in the center of the room. He had Nellie Ardell by the wrist, and was endeavoring to force her to sign the paper before them.

"Leave her alone, you villain!" cried Jerry, and dragged him backward.

"Jerry Upton!" exclaimed the young woman, and her tone was full of joy. "Oh, how thankful I am that you have come!"

"What—what is the meaning of this?" asked Slocum, turning deadly pale.

"It means that you have been found out, Alexander Slocum," replied our hero. "We have learned——"

"Darnley the boomer!" burst out Colonel Dartwell at this point. "So this is where you drifted to after the swindle at Silver Run."

"Do you know him?" queried Jerry.

"Only too well. He was in Colorado for several years under the name of Chester Darnley. He is a boomer and all-around swindler."

"It's a—a falsehood," burst from Alexander Slocum's lips, but his voice trembled as he spoke.

"I can prove all I say," said the colonel. "There are witnesses enough against you at Silver Run."

Slocum was all but overcome. He sank in a chair, and a moment later one of the detectives came up and slipped a pair of handcuffs on his wrists.

The proprietor of the so-called sanitarium was also arrested, and both prisoners

were driven down to the Brooklyn police station. A hearing was had, and the prisoners were held for trial.

From Brooklyn the colonel, Nellie, and Jerry returned to New York. Nellie left the party to go home, and Jerry and the colonel continued on to Slocum's office with an officer.

The book-keeper, Casey, was found and arrested, and the office was placed in care of the authorities. The next day Jerry recovered his father's papers and also those belonging to Nellie Ardell.

The young oarsman lost no time in sending word home how matters had turned, stating that the claim was probably worth a good deal of money. He added that if his father was not well enough to come to the metropolis, Colonel Dartwell stood ready to take entire charge of the case and see that they got their rights.

An answer soon came back, written by Mrs. Upton. Mr. Upton was well enough to sit up, but that was all, and he would be glad enough to do as his son had suggested. So the necessary papers were made out, and a suit instituted against Alexander Slocum.

In the meantime, Mr. Islen sold out his bindery, and by this turn of affairs our hero found himself out of employment. But he had had enough of the great metropolis for the present, and was glad enough to go back to Lakeview while awaiting the time when Slocum should be brought to trial.

The news of what he had accomplished had leaked out, and when he arrived he found Harry and Blumpo awaiting him at the depot.

"You're a clever one, Jerry!" cried Harry, shaking his hand warmly. "To run off on the quiet and come back with a fortune for your family."

"We haven't got the fortune yet," laughed the young oarsman. "But we hope to have it before long."

"I always said Jerry was de greatest boy dat eber was born," ejaculated Blumpo, with his face on a broad grin.

"How is your father Blumpo?" asked Jerry, to change the subject.

"He's very well again."

"You must tell us your whole story," went on Harry. "I am dying to hear it."

"I will—but I must get home first," answered the young oarsman.

He was soon on his way to the farm, where his parents received him with open arms. A splendid dinner was awaiting him—such a repast as he had not had since leaving—but none of the food was touched until his tale was told from end to end, with all of its details as they have been presented to my readers.

"You did well, son," was Mr. Upton's comment. "I don't believe anybody could

have done better.”

Mrs. Upton smiled fondly and put her arms about the boy.

“He’s our Jerry, father,” was all she said, but the simple words meant a good deal.

His own story told, and the dinner finished, Jerry wanted to know the news around Lakeview, but his parents had little to tell.

“I have not been out since your father was taken down,” said Mrs. Upton. “You’ll have to ask Harry Parker and your other friends.”

“Have Si Peters and Wash Crosby been caught yet?”

“No, and I doubt if they ever do catch them,” responded Mrs. Upton.



CHAPTER XXXIX.

HARRY TO THE RESCUE.

Early on the following morning Harry came over to take Jerry for a sail on the lake in the Whistler.

"We can sail and talk at the same time," he explained. "I know you must be longing for a whiff of the water."

"You are right there, Harry," returned the young oarsman. "Lake Otasco is better than the hot pavements of New York City a hundred times over."

The two boys soon set off. Harry had expected Blumpo to accompany them, but that youth was out in his own boat with a party that had hired the craft for several days.

"Blumpo is making money," said Harry, "and I am glad of it."

"So am I," replied our hero. "He is an odd sort of chap, but his heart is of gold."

The Whistler was soon on her way up the lake with old Jack Broxton at the tiller, and as the breeze was steady the boys had little to do but talk. Once again our hero related his story, and Harry proved a most attentive listener.

"That Alexander Slocum ought to go to prison for life," he said, at the conclusion. "The idea of daring to make out that Nellie Ardell was insane."

"It was a bold scheme, Harry."

"It seems to me the world is full of bad people, Jerry. Look at such men as that Slocum and his tools, and then at such boys as Si Peters and Wash Crosby."

"Where do you suppose Crosby and Peters are?"

"The authorities don't know. But Blumpo told me a few days ago he was almost certain he had seen them on the north shore of the lake. He said they took to their heels in the bushes just about the time he spotted them."

"They are bound to be brought to justice sooner or later."

"I don't know. But I do know one thing; I would like to get back my gold watch."

Thus the talk ran on, until Hermit Island was reached. Here they ran in for a few minutes, to pass a word with Blumpo's father, who greeted them cordially. After this, they continued up along the south side of the lake.

As they skirted the beautiful shore they gradually crept up to a large excursion boat.

"Hullo, what's that boat doing here?" cried Jerry.

"It's a Sunday school excursion from Cedar Falls," replied his chum.

The steamboat was not a large one and she seemed to have more than her regular allowance of passengers aboard. Every deck was full of grown folks and children, dressed in their best.

A band was playing a merry air, and some of the children were singing.

"Let's give them a cheer," suggested the young oarsman, as they drew closer.

"All right," replied Harry, pulling out his handkerchief. "One, two, three. Hurrah! hur—"

Harry stopped short, as a cry of horror arose on board of the excursion boat.

A young girl had been standing close to the rail on a camp stool at the bow of the boat.

As the steamboat swung around the girl lost her balance.

She tried to save herself, and, failing, pitched headlong into the water.

Harry saw her go under the greenish waves.

"She'll be struck by the paddle wheel," he yelled, and then, splash! he was overboard himself.

Bravely he struck out to save the maiden.

The order was given to back the steamboat.

The wheels churned up the water into a white foam, but still the momentum carried the large craft on. In the meantime Harry came up and struck out valiantly for the girl, who was now going down for a second time.

"Save her! Save her!" shrieked the mother of the girl, in an agony of fear.

Half a dozen life preservers were thrown overboard, but none came to where the girl could reach them.

The mother of the girl wanted to join her daughter in the water but strong hands held her back.

"The young fellow will save her, madam!"

"He's a true hero!"

Life lines were thrown over, but even these did no good.

The steamboat swung around, but the run of the water washed the girl closer and closer to the paddle wheel.

She now came up a second time. Should she sink again all would be over.

Harry was swimming with all the strength and skill at his command.

At last he was within a yard of the struggling girl.

The maiden threw up her hands and went under.

As quick as a flash Harry dove down.

A second passed. Then up came the youth with the girl clinging to his shoulder.

But now the current was apparently too strong for both of them.

They were hurled up against the paddle wheel of the steamboat, and then disappeared entirely from view.

Jack Broxton gave a groan.

“Harry is lost!”

Jerry shuddered.

“It looks like it,” he replied.

The captain of the steamboat did not dare to move his craft for fear he would do more harm than good.

The mother of the girl continued to struggle to free herself.

But now a cry was heard. It came from the stern of the steamboat.

“There they are!”

“The girl is safe and so is that brave young man.”

Jerry and Jack Broxton heard the cry, and immediately put about in their yacht.

Harry was swimming along on his side. The girl was too weak to support herself, and he was holding her up well out of the water.

It took the Whistler but a moment to run up alongside of the pair. Jerry reached over and caught hold of the girl and placed her on deck.

In the meantime Harry secured a rope thrown by Jack Broxton and pulled himself up.

A cheer arose from those on the excursion boat.

“She is safe now, sure!”

The girl was too exhausted to move, and both boys rubbed her hands and did what they could for her.

Jack Broxton ran up alongside of the steamboat and a little later the girl was placed on board.

The mother clasped her child to her breast.

“Go ahead, Jack,” said Harry in a low voice. “I don’t want the crowd to stare at me.”

“But the mother wants to thank you,” began Jerry.

But Harry would not listen. He was too modest, and made Jack Broxton actually run away from the excursion boat.

But five hundred people cheered Harry and waved their handkerchiefs.

“How did you escape the steamboat?” asked Jerry, when the excitement was over.

“We went under part of her,” was the reply. “I swam for all I knew how, but it was a close call.”

After this Harry retired to the cabin and changed his clothing. He drank several cups of hot coffee, and half an hour later declared that he felt as well as ever.

The remainder of the run down the lake was uneventful. They dropped anchor near the mouth of the Poplar River and started in to fish.

They had all the necessary tackle on board, and procured bait at a boathouse near by.

The yacht was anchored at a well-known spot, and then the sport began.

"I've a bite!" cried Harry.

And sure enough he had something. He began to reel in with great rapidity.

"First fish," said Jerry.

Scarcely had Harry landed his haul than click, click, click went Jerry's reel. The line went off like a flash.

Jerry began to reel in. That something big was on his hook was certain.

The fish darted in every direction and Jerry had his hands full playing him.

"You'll lose him!" cried Harry, excitedly.

"I'll do my best with him," responded Jerry, quietly.

After playing the fish for nearly five minutes he reeled him in rapidly.

"Get the landing net, Jack," he said, and the old tar stood ready the moment the fish came into view.

"A bass! A three-pounder!" cried Harry. "By jinks! but that's a haul worth making!"

It was indeed a beautiful catch, and Jerry was justly proud of it.

After this nothing was caught for twenty minutes. Then Harry landed a fine fat perch weighing a pound. Jack was not fishing, but smoked and looked on contentedly.

Evening found them with a fine mess of bass and perch.

"Not a bad haul," said Jerry, as he surveyed the lot.

"I reckon it's about time to be gitting back," observed Jack Broxton. "We want to make Lakeview afore dark."

So the anchor was hoisted and away they went before a nine-knot breeze.

The return was made along the north shore. Here there were numerous little islands, separated from the mainland by a series of channels, some shallow and others deep enough to admit of the passage of a good-sized yacht.

The Whistler was just passing one of these channels, and Jerry and Harry were at the side, cleaning their fish, when suddenly old Jack Broxton uttered a cry.

"What is it, Jack?" asked the young oarsman, quickly, while Harry also raised up.

“There’s a boat over yonder, back of that island, and I’m certain I saw Si Peters and Wash Crosby on board,” was the old boatman’s interesting answer.



CHAPTER XL.

A STRUGGLE IN THE DARK.

"You are sure?" demanded Jerry and Harry, in a breath.

"Yes. The boat had the name Redeye painted on the stern. If I remember rightly, she belongs to a tough crowd of fishermen from Long Lake."

"Where is she now?" demanded Harry.

"Back there, somewhere."

"We must follow that boat; eh, Jerry?"

"I am willing," replied the young oarsman.

"You may have lively times with that crowd," put in Jack Broxton with a grave shake of his head.

"We'll risk it," answered Harry. He was thinking of his missing gold watch.

The course of the Whistler was changed, and soon they rounded the shore of the island Jack Broxton had pointed out.

Sure enough, there was the Redeye, with all sails set, making up the lake.

Near the stern stood Si Peters, Wash Crosby and several rascally looking men.

"They have discovered that we are after them," cried Jerry, a few minutes later. "See, they are crowding on all sail!"

The young oarsman was right. Leaving the vicinity of the islands, the other craft stood out boldly into the lake, and cut the water like a knife.

"She's a good one," observed Jack Broxton.

The Whistler already had all sails out; and thus the craft went on, neither gaining nor losing for half an hour.

Then darkness settled over the lake, and the wind fell flat.

"We've lost them now," said Harry, dismally.

"It's a good thing the wind has fallen," replied Jerry.

"How so?"

"As soon as it is dark enough we can take the row-boat and follow in that."

"That's an idea."

Soon night had settled over Lake Otasco. Then our hero and Harry lost no time in entering the tender of the Whistler.

"Make as little noise as possible," cautioned Jerry.

He was in the bow peering ahead, while Harry was at the oars.

So they went on a distance of a quarter of a mile.

“See anything?” whispered Harry.

“Not yet. Pull in a little closer to shore. I have an idea Peters and Crosby may land somewhere around here.”

“Like as not that is their game.”

On they went, the darkness growing more intense as they proceeded. There was no moon, and the stars shone but faintly in the blue vault overhead.

Suddenly Jerry held up his hand as a sign to Harry to stop rowing. Instantly his chum raised the oars.

“What do you see?” he whispered.

“Something ahead—I can’t make out just what yet.”

Several minutes of breathless silence followed. Then Jerry bent back.

“The Redeye is just ahead, but I believe Si Peters and Wash Crosby have already left her.”

A second later a low but clear cry rang out: “You left that bundle behind, Crosby!”

“Never mind, I don’t want the old suit,” was the reply, coming from some distance in toward shore.

“That settles it,” whispered Jerry. “Crosby and Peters are in a row-boat pulling for shore, beyond a doubt.”

“That’s all right,” replied Harry. “I would rather tackle them than all those on the Redeye.”

“So would I.”

The row-boat was headed for the west.

How far off the shore was they did not know. They had located the voice of Crosby and now steered in the direction.

Jerry at the bow continued to keep his ears on the alert.

“A little to the right, now,” he said. “That’s it. If you don’t make too much noise we’ll surprise them completely.”

“I think the best thing we can do is to follow them after they land, until they reach some place where we can have them locked up, Jerry.”

“That is certainly a good plan. It will save us the trouble of dragging them off to jail, if we are fortunate enough to capture them.”

Harry’s plan was accepted, and on they went.

“Look!” cried Jerry, presently, and pointed down the shore.

“I don’t see anything, Jerry.”

“Don’t you see the lights coming toward us?”

Harry strained his eyes.

"I see them now."

"It's a steamer coming this way."

"My gracious, we'll have to get out of the way or we'll be run down!"

"She is close in shore," went on Jerry. "I believe she'll pass between the other row-boat and ours."

"Let us hold up a minute and see what she intends to do," said Harry.

He rested on his oars. Soon the craft came closer. It was the excursion boat on her return.

"She is not coming near us," said Jerry. "Pull on."

Harry had just taken to the oars again, when a wild cry rang out. It came from the row-boat which held Peters and Crosby.

"Stop! Don't run us down!"

"The steamboat is onto them!" ejaculated Jerry.

Scarcely had he spoken when there came another cry, followed by a crash.

"They've been struck!" yelled Harry.

"Pull ahead!" cried Jerry. "Like as not they have either been killed or are drowning!"

He sprang to Harry's side, and with an oar each they sped on to the assistance of the unfortunate ones.

In the meanwhile the steamboat stopped.

"What's the trouble?" called a voice.

No answer was vouchsafed, and a moment later the steamboat went on.

"Like as not, Si Peters and Wash Crosby are dead," observed Harry, as he bent to his oar.

"We'll soon know the truth," replied the young oarsman.

Both boys pulled a swift stroke, and were soon on the spot where the catastrophe had occurred.

In the meanwhile the steamboat was fast disappearing in the distance. Soon the last light faded from sight.

In the darkness of the night Jerry and Harry could see but little.

"There is an oar," cried Harry, pointing it out.

"And there is part of the row-boat's bottom," said Jerry. "It looks as if the row-boat was actually ground to pieces."

"Then it isn't likely that Si Peters and Wash Crosby escaped."

"Well, we'll take a good look around."

The two continued to row about, but for a long while saw nothing but bits of wreckage.

Then our hero beheld a form floating just to their right.

“Take both oars, Harry,” he said, “and be careful, for that is Wash Crosby’s body.”

Harry took the oars and began to row slowly.

As he moved on, Jerry stood in the bow.

At that instant a strange thing happened. Si Peters came up under the boat, giving it such a shove that Jerry was hurled overboard.

Then, with a swiftness that was really surprising, Si Peters clambered into the row-boat.

In his hand he held part of a broken oar.

“Jump out after Jerry Upton!” he growled as he advanced upon Harry.

Without replying, Harry leaped up to defend himself. As he did this he saw that Jerry and Wash Crosby were fighting in the water.

Neither Crosby nor Peters had been hurt by the collision, both having left their craft before the steamboat struck it.

Their one thought now was to get the good row-boat away from our two heroes.

Jerry, thinking Wash Crosby seriously hurt, was taken completely by surprise.

Crosby caught him by the shoulder and forced him far under the water, and then did his best to hold him there.

Crosby was a powerful fellow, and he well understood what defeat and capture meant—a term in prison.

But, as we know, Jerry’s muscles were like iron, and his first surprise over, he went for Crosby tooth and nail.

With a powerful twist he freed himself from the rascal’s grasp and swam some distance away.

Then coming up behind Crosby, the young oarsman let out with his right fist.

The blow took the Rockpoint bully behind the ear, and Crosby let out a wild yell of pain, broken by a gasp for air, as he went under the bosom of the ocean.

As he went down, our hero gave him an extra shove and then swam with all speed for the row-boat, which had drifted several yards away.

He saw Harry and Si Peters standing up in the boat. Peters had just struck at his chum, and Harry had partly dodged the vicious blow.

But the broken oar landed on Harry’s arm, causing him to cry out from pain.

“Drop that, Si Peters.”

The command, coming so unexpectedly, startled Peters. He turned, to find Jerry at the gunwale directly behind him.

“Oh, Jerry, help!” cried Harry.

Si Peters gave a low yell of rage.

Again Harry sprang away, and now armed himself with an oar.

“You can’t frighten me, you fool!” shouted Peters. “Don’t you dare to put your hand on the boat!”

And as Jerry grasped the gunwale, Peters raised his heavy foot as if to crush our hero’s fingers.

But Jerry was too quick for him.

He dropped off. Then whizz! something dark flew through the air.

It was part of the broken oar, thrown by Jerry, and it took Si Peters in the neck.

“Whack him one, Harry, while you have the chance!”

Harry needed no advice on the subject. He sprang in, and a second later a resounding crack laid Si Peters flat on his back.

“That was a good one,” cried Jerry, as he clambered over the side. “Now bind him before he comes to.”

“Haven’t a blessed thing,” replied Harry.

“Here is some cord. Tie his hands together.”

While Harry was doing this, Jerry began to look around for Wash Crosby.

“This way! We are in trouble!” yelled Crosby.

“Pshaw!” exclaimed Jerry. “He’ll have that yacht down on us in another minute.”

But for once the young oarsman was mistaken. The men on the Redeye had no desire, after befriending Si Peters and Wash Crosby, to fall into the hands of the law, and instead of coming up they allowed their craft to float off in an opposite direction.

“There is Crosby!” shouted Jerry, a moment later, as he beheld the youth floundering around in the water. “And look, here comes the Whistler.”

He was right. A slight breeze had sprung up and Jack Broxton had nursed the yacht along with all of the skill at his command.

The coming of the old sailor ended the battle, so far as the bad boys from Rockpoint were concerned. Both Si Peters and Wash Crosby were hauled on board, and here they were tightly bound, to prevent their making further trouble.

It was after midnight when Lakeview was reached and the prisoners were handed over to the local police. Then Harry and Jerry separated, to go home and tell of their fresh adventures.

The following morning Si Peters and Wash Crosby were taken to Rockpoint and an examination was held. The bad boys confessed robbing the hotel and the larger part of the money taken was recovered, as was also Harry’s gold watch, which Si Peters had been bold enough to wear. Some time later the evil-doers were tried and

sent to jail, and that was the last our heroes heard of them.



CHAPTER XLI.

A LAST RACE—GOOD-BYE TO THE RIVAL OARSMEN.

“Hurrah, here they come!”

“It’s going to be a dandy race, Harry.”

“Indeed it is, Dick.”

“There comes Hosmer!”

“Here comes Pinkney!”

“What’s the matter with Villelet?”

“He’s all right!”

The conversation took place on the bank of the Hudson River, not far from Poughkeepsie.

It was the day of the great intercollegiate boat races.

The single-shell race had just been ordered.

Among the number to compete in this race was Jerry Upton.

Our hero was rich now—that is, his folks were, which amounted to the same thing.

On trial it had been proven what a villain Alexander Slocum was. All of his masquerading in the west under the name of Darnley was exposed, as well as his fraudulent land schemes in the east. The real-estate manipulator was sent to prison for a term of years, and the property in California was divided up between Jerry’s father, Nellie Ardell and several others who held an interest in it.

The land was found to be within the city limits of Sacramento, and the Upton share was computed to be worth forty-five thousand dollars.

Mr. Upton was offered forty thousand dollars for it, but by the advice of Colonel Dartwell, who became his intimate friend, he concluded to keep it.

“The investment is bringing in good interest,” he said, “and as it was Jerry who did the work in getting it, the lad shall have it just as it stands when I and my wife die.”

Immediately after these matters were settled up, Jerry began to study for college, and Harry did also, and both made the entrance examination with ease.

Jerry was a fine scholar and he was also one of the best oarsmen in his class. Harry likewise rowed a good deal, although not near as much as formerly.

It was a perfect day and the river was, filled with pleasure boats, loaded down to the rails with sightseers. The banks of the stream were likewise lined with the

crowds which had poured in to see the various college oarsmen compete for the supremacy in aquatic sports.

In the crowd on shore was our old friend Blumpo Brown. Blumpo was now in business at Lakeview, letting out pleasure boats, of which he owned several, and he was unusually prosperous. Just at present he was wearing the colors of Jerry's college and "whooping her up" for our hero whenever the chance presented itself.

At the given signal the single shells took their places at the starting point.

The participants were the pick of the single-shell men, and Jerry realized that he would have a struggle to win.

A puff of smoke, the report of a gun, and they were off!

"A fine start!"

"Hosmer leads!"

"He will lead to the finish!"

"Pinkney is a close second!"

"Jerry Upton is third!"

"My! but they are cutting the water!"

"Two to one that Hosmer wins!"

"Three to one that the record is broken!"

"Foah to one dat Jerry Upton wins dis race!" cried Blumpo Brown, waving a big college flag over his head. "Dat boy don't know what it is to lose!"

"Hear that chap talk!"

"Pitch him overboard to cool him off!"

"Dat's all right, it's Jerry Upton's muscle dat's talkin', not me!" growled Blumpo.

Down the straight course came the single-shell oarsmen, each back bending to a long and powerful stroke.

The quarter stretch was past with Hosmer still in the lead.

Behind him came Pinkney and Jerry, side by side.

Then came the half stretch. The leaders still held the same positions.

"Told you Hosmer would win!"

"Jerry Upton is falling behind!"

It was true. Pinkney had increased his stroke and was crawling up slowly but surely to the leader.

"Pull, Jerry, pull," yelled Harry.

"You dun got to win dat race, suah!" screamed Blumpo.

Jerry heard them, but paid no heed. He was rowing the race of the year—the race that would make his college chums shout with joy or look glum for the balance of the season.

And now the three-quarter mark was past. A quarter of a mile more and the race would be over.

“See! Pinkney is drawing up to Hosmer!”

“Pinkney leads! Hosmer has dropped away behind!”

“Pinkney first and Jerry Upton second!”

“Villelet is crawling up!”

“He has passed Pinkney!”

And so the shouting went on. The end of the course was in sight. How the oarsmen were pulling! But now look at Jerry.

How like a flash his back bends! How powerful is that broad stroke! How quick his recovery!

In vain Pinkney tried to hold his lead. Jerry means to win and nothing can hold him back.

He fairly flies past Pinkney and comes in a winner by a length and a half. His friends go wild.

“Hurrah for Jerry Upton!” shouts Harry.

And the cheers echo and re-echo along the water and back to the distant hills.

Blumpo dances a breakdown for joy.

“I told you he could do it,” he cries. “Da can’t beat our Jerry nohow!”

“That’s right, they can’t!” adds Harry. “Hurrah! hurrah! hurrah!”

Jerry leaves his shell, and is hoisted up upon the shoulders of his friends and marched around the town.

That night he is given a big reception by his fellow students. It is the happiest moment of his life.

And here we will leave him and Harry and Blumpo, and all of the rest, shouting as do our hero’s many friends:

“Hurrah for the Young Oarsman of Lakeview!”

THE END

TRANSCRIBER NOTES

Misspelled words and printer errors have been corrected. Where differences occur, the majority occurrence prevails, example: Dick Lanning to Dick Lenning.

Inconsistencies in punctuation have been maintained.

Some illustrations were moved to facilitate page layout.

A cover was created for this eBook.

[The end of *The Young Oarsmen of Lakeview* by Capt. Ralph Bonehill
(Edward Stratemeyer)]