TAN PILE JIM

S. FREEMAN ASHLEY

ILLUSTRATED

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THE PUBLISHERS.

TAN PILE JIM

OR

A YANKEE WAIF

AMONG THE BLUENOSES

BY

B. FREEMAN ASHLEY

Author of "DICK AND JACK'S ADVENTURES ON SABLE ISLAND," ETC.

ILLUSTRATED

CHICAGO
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The above cipher is placed there because a preface generally counts for nothing in the reading of a book. Yet by putting it there I hope to detain the reader long enough upon the threshold of this odd building to whisper in his ear two things before he begins to make the acquaintance of the folks who live within.

And first, to be generous; if you are a boy, the book is for you; and if you are a girl, walk in, and welcome. And if you are a man. I shall be glad of your company; and if you are a woman, why, that will be perfectly splendid!

And last, to be just, as well as generous, I must say that I had to describe the things inclosed within just as I found them. I confess at the start that there are some things which are so odd they may shock; but as I had nothing to do with the creation of the people, nor with the ordering of their affairs, I could only follow behind them and pick up what they had left upon the wayside of life.

This is all I have to say under the cipher. For the rest, both the reader and the author will have to take chances for a friendly shake of the hand when they part company at the end.

B. F. ASHLEY.

Chapter · I ·

A BUNDLE OF LIFE.

THE sun was just rising over the dark pine woods fringing the high hills bounding the eastern horizon of Liverpool, a small seaport town of southeastern Nova Scotia. Although it was the first week in June, the morning air was so crisply cold, James Payzant, the Liverpool tanner, ripely advanced in years, went out to inspect his garden, fully expecting to find its young and thrifty sprouts frost-bitten to the death. As between himself and everything he cultivated there seemed to be a common bond of sympathy, he chuckled warmly when he found that his cherished plants were only waiting for a higher sun to give them another lift toward maturity.

The Tanner's quaint, old-fashioned cottage overlooked the banks of a small river, whose waters ran rapidly toward the sea, which, only three-quarters of a mile away, incessantly thundered along a rough, rock-ribbed shore. Above the cottage stood a large tannery, surrounded with heaps of unground bark and piles of red refuse that raised their heads to eight or ten feet in height, the material

of which they were composed having served its purpose and been cast aside as of no further account.

Having satisfied himself of the safety of his garden, the Tanner moved in the direction of the tannery with the intention of opening its doors to the light and air before returning to the cottage for breakfast. In passing one of the piles of rubbish he was suddenly brought to a halt by something that appeared to be alien to the place.

Climbing to the top of one of the piles and looking down at a good-sized bundle before him, he exclaimed softly: "Bless my soul, if it isn't a boy!"

THE TANNER FINDS JIM.

Vagrants are scarce in that neighborhood, and a boy lying around loose at that time of the morning, and in such a place as that, would have been quite startling to his nerves had he been in the habit of thinking of himself as possessed of such things.

The boy was sound asleep. His cap had slipped from his head, exposing a thick shock of matted, curly, brown hair, that here and there blended with the tan dust in which it lay. His face, hands and bare feet were tanned to almost the color of his hair, showing that he was accustomed to outdoor life and that he and the sun were no strangers to each other. His clothes were soiled and ragged. He had evidently hollowed out the top of the heap with a view to his protection, and, besides, had curled himself as crookedly as he could for the sake of economizing his heat as much as possible.

Looking at him on an empty stomach, he was vexed to find such a soiled bundle of humanity marring the eminent respectability of his premises, and suspecting the lad was shamming sleep, the Tanner roughly said: "Look here, you! What are you doing there?"

A smile crossed the face of the sleeper, to be followed the next instant by

a look of grief and fright. The lad was dreaming. He was in a big house lying on a soft feather bed covered with a quilt ornamented with vivid patches of red, blue and yellow. While he was making the most of his comforts, a kind-looking old woman entered his room and told him that breakfast was waiting, and that he must hurry out of bed if he wanted to partake of it hot and nice. He was thinking to himself about mothers, grandmothers, aunts and angels, when the side of the house fell out and tumbled him into a snowbank, and the feather bed, quilt and old woman vanished in a flurry of snow. Just as he was about to pick himself up an ugly giant made his appearance and, in a voice of thunder, called to him: "Look here, you! What are you doing there?"

But this is what the Tanner saw: A boy rising from the tan and opening upon hm a pair of large, pathetic blue eyes —blue as the morning sky. His face, now that he had risen to a sitting posture, looked pinched and haggard, and he was shivering all over from the effects of cold and fright. Becoming thoroughly ashamed of his roughness, and anxious to remove the lad's fears, he said in the kindest tones he could muster: "Well, my lad! What in the world are you doing in such a place as that at this time of day?"

JIM.

The effect was magical; rubbing both fists into his eyes to remove the biting tan dust, the boy replied: "I dropped down here coz I hadn't no other place to bunk in. It's a mighty soft spot, tho' it's kinder outer doors like and sorter shivery."

There was just the faintest suggestion of a grim smile about his lips as he spoke, so that the Tanner began to think there was more under the rags and the brown skin than he at first thought. He was, in fact, so taken aback both by the words and the evident spirit of the boy, he felt as if he himself were put on the defense; and it was some seconds before he knew what to say.

"Where did you come from?" he finally managed to ask, though his voice more than half halted in his throat, as if something were trying to stop it from getting to his lips.

"Outen them woods, sir," replied the boy, pointing in the direction of the post road, which for many miles wound through a wilderness of pines and spruce. And he added, with a shrug of the shoulders: "It did seem ez ef I'd never git through 'em. An' when I struck this town it was past sundown, an' when I come up the road an' struck this ere tannery, an' seed the smoke crookin' itself above that ere house, an' heered the water talkin' to the rocks, an' seed the tan piles lookin' so red and soft-like, I says to myself, 'this isn't a bad hotel,' an' so I just up an' slumped down on it an' stowed myself away. It was kinder lonely; but I dug into the dust like a bug, an' while ther stars was a blinkin' at me I shet my eyes, an' didn't know nothin' more till you skeered me so. Ef I hadn't a got outen them woods arore night they would a skeered me most to death, an' no mistake."

Struck by his way of putting things, and quickened into a growing sympathy, the Tanner asked: "But why didn't you call at the house and ask for a lodging?"

"Coz the last place I asked to stop at, the man up an' told me they didn't take no rag-bags to board."

"The brute!" exclaimed the Tanner, explosively. And then he asked: "Where did you start from?"

"Yarmouth," said the lad, with a promptness that showed he had nothing to conceal.

"But, bless my soul! Yarmouth is more than a hundred miles from here!"

"I'd think it was about a thousand by the way the road was stretched," the boy replied, sighing as if the recollection made him feel tired.

"Do you belong in Yarmouth?"

"I reckon I doesn't sir!" and the boy shook his head vigorously, adding, after a moment's pause, "I'm a reg'ler Yankee boy."

"A Yankee! and how did you ever get to Yarmouth?"

"I runn'd frum a fishin' schooner what come frum Marblehead. I was the captin's cabin boy, an' he an' the rest uv 'em slapped an' knocked me about so much, I watched my chance, an' when it come, I just up and skipped ez fast ez I could cut when the captain took me ashore fer to help bring the grub aboard."

"So you are a runaway?"

"'Spose I be," and the lad gave a quick, anxious glance at the Tanner as if fearing the effect of the confession.

"What is your name?" and the Tanner, reading the boy's thought, modulated his tones to the utmost gentleness.

"Jim."

"Why, that's my name!" and the questioner started as if some one had given him a vigorous nudge in the side.

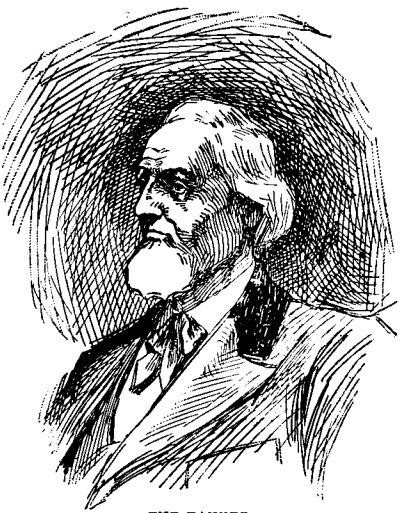
"P'raps, then, yer won't be hard on a feller," and the fear melted out of the boy's face, like snow from a bank of green grass.

"And your other name?"

"Haint got no nuther one ez I knows on."

"Don't you know your father's name?"

"Never had no father, nor no mother, ez I knows on; guess they was both dead afore I was born'd. I come'd frum the poorhouse, where they jist kick yer aroun' ez ef yer was a dog what hadn't no business to be even there." He spoke with such melancholy frankness, the Tanner instinctively refrained from questioning him further about his relatives. And he inwardly congratulated himself that his wife didn't hear his first hail to the boy as he lay asleep on the tan pile. "She would have lectured me roundly," said he, to himself.



THE TANNER.

Seeing him hesitate, the boy voluntarily said: "I come'd frum Marblehead, an' I knows I was born'd there, coz I hain't none uv yer blam'd furriners what talks all aroun' the compass afore they kin make yer unnerstan' anything."

At this, his listener made such a queer sound in his throat, Jim could only think of the rolling of an empty barrel. It was the Tanner's way of laughing when he didn't know whether to laugh or to cry.

"Where do you expect to fetch up, my lad?"

"Dunno, sir; but I'm boun' to leg it frum the schooner ez fur ez I kin. Like ernough I'll strike Marblehead agin, ef I keeps on goin' long ernough. It's awful lonesome when yer gits outen the States!"

He had risen to his feet and was busy shaking the red dust and chips from his hair and clothing, as if making ready for another day's tramp through a strange land. Seeing the kindling kindness in the Tanner's face, and not having eaten anything since noon of the day before, he said: "P'raps yer won't mind givin' a

feller a snack of sunthin' afore he goes on. 'Pears like ez ef I hadn't et nothin' for a week, an' you begins to look kinder meller an' givin' like."

"Confound it! What have I been thinking of all this time!" And the Tanner spoke with such force the boy was actually startled. "Come, Jim; I haven't breakfasted yet. Go with me, and you shall have a good, warm breakfast. I didn't know that I was stupid enough to keep on questioning you when I should have been feeding you."

TOOK HOLD OF JIM'S BEGRIMED HAND.

Mr. Payzant was not in the habit of making apologies to stragglers, but the roughness of his first words so rankled in his mind, and the boy was so sprightly and independent, he felt apologetic all the way from his head to his feet.

The thought of a warm breakfast and the tone of the Tanner's words so wrought upon the lively imagination of the boy, he smiled from ear to ear, showing rows of teeth that looked like strings of pearls stowed away in a crimson box.

Both the smile and the teeth pleased the Tanner, and he inwardly said: "Though he is so awfully ragged and dirty, I don't believe he's a bad boy; but, good or bad, he shall have his fill for once." The Tanner was accustomed to thinking of the best side of things, and where some other people would find only black pebbles he could most always manage to pick up a white one.

As if half afraid that the waif would slip away from him, and thus prevent him from making an atonement for the rough way in which he first spoke to him, he took hold of Jim's begrimed hand and led him to the cottage below the tannery.

Chapter II

AUNT WELL-WELL

"RECKON I've struck the Grand Banks this time, an' like ernough I'll git a lay what'll fill the hold plum full," thought Jim in fisherman's style.

But Payzant was taking such long, swift strides the boy found it hard work to keep up with him. Happening to glance down at the lad's face, the Tanner saw that it was looking a little queer, and thinking it might be from fear, he said: "You needn't be afraid, my boy; Ruth won't eat you up."

Who Ruth was, the lad had no means of knowing; but seeing a twinkle in the speaker's eye, he replied: "Does I look ez ef I was good ernough to eat? "Yet the words were accompanied with a short, crisp sigh, which made the Tanner think of a dry leaf rustling under an October wind.

Ruth was the Tanner's wife, who was in the kitchen frying old-fashioned pancakes, and wondering why her husband delayed his coming. She was anxiously engaged with the last pancake, which, being designed for a top blanket for all the rest, covered the bottom of the whole spider or frying pan. The blanket was the

Tanner's favorite, who liked, as he said, to have a pancake that would cover his plate at a single sitting. It was just ready to be turned, when the door opened, and in walked the two Jims, hand in hand. Ruth was so surprised, the pancake might as well have been in Jericho, so effectually was it banished from her thoughts.

"He has come to take breakfast with us," the Tanner said, by way of answer to his wife's questioning eyes, while the embarrassed boy stood twirling his greasy sailor cap uneasily, as he half hid himself behind Payzant's big, burly form. His first glance at the old lady's face made him wish that he was dressed in a new suit from top to toe, and that he was as clean as a whistle, for she looked so kind and good he was anxious she should think favorably of him.

FRYING OLD-FASHIONED PANCAKES.

In a few words, the Tanner told how he had found the boy, and what he was and how hungry he was. Ruth's face began to twitch, and her own clear, blue eyes glistened with tears. The big pancake, not sympathizing with her, grew blacker and blacker, and presently began to send up a great black cloud, as if spreading wings with which to fly away altogether.

The Tanner's wife was so much in the habit of saying "Well, well!" when she was surprised at anything, the boys and girls of the village called her Aunt Well-Well, and as she had a great liking for boys and girls, she made no fuss about the nickname, and only smiled when some of the older ones told her how generally the name was used among the young people.

"Well, well!" she exclaimed, pushing her silver-bowed spectacles up into her wavy, gray hair, and reaching down for the corner of her clean, gingham apron that she might give her eyes a bit of a brush with it.

Although the lids and the long lashes of Jim's eyes drooped low, he managed to see all that was going on, and he whispered in his heart: "Blest ef I

hain't run inter the sou'west corner o' kingdom come, an' that ol', gray-headed beauty hain't a goin' to go back on ol' Mister Jim's kalkerlashuns fer this chap's carger. She's a goin' to give me a reg'ler fill, and no mistake!"

"Well, well! There goes that blessed pancake!" Ruth suddenly exclaimed, coming to a realization of its condition, for the smoke of it had well nigh filled the room. Seizing the pan, she dashed out of the kitchen door, the two Jims hastily making room for her; nor did she stop until the blaze, fanned into life by her rapid movements, was quenched by throwing pan and contents into the little brook that babbled through the backyard.

"Ef I hadn't a come in, I might a had ernuther pancake," thought the boy, regretfully, as his eyes followed her to the final catastrophe.

"His name is Jim," said the Tanner, by way of introduction, when she returned to the kitchen, "and it wouldn't do him any harm if he took a wash before breakfast."

"Jim!" she gasped, as if trying to collect her scattered wits. "Well, well! But that is strange!"

Leading the lad to the sink, she bade him help himself to soap and water, and while he was making soapsuds at a wholesale rate and scrubbing his face and hands after a signally zealous fashion, she did a very strange thing. Entirely forgetting the vagrant character of her unexpected guest, she went to the spare chamber near by and brought out a large, linen towel and a hair brush, neither of which had ever been used. The Tanner, seeing how absent minded she had become, became so merry he shook like a bottle of quick silver.

"There," said she, putting both articles in the boy's hands, "these will sharpen your appetite if you use them rightly." She then left him to perform his toilet at leisure, the Tanner also getting out of the way to relieve the boy from embarrassment.

"May I be keel-hauled, ef I'm a gonter spile them things on this critter!" said Jim, looking first at the neatly folded, snow-white towel, and then at the spick-span, new brush.

Seeing a ragged face cloth hanging on the wall near the sink he appropriated it without compunction, after carefully depositing brush and towel upon the corner of a rough table standing near. When he had scoured his face and hands to the best of his ability, he drew from his pocket a fragment of a comb, which he began to pull through his tangled locks with great energy, notwithstanding the pain the operation caused him.

A small looking-glass hung over the sink, which he patronized liberally during

his toil. Encouraged by the improvement made in his appearance, he looked downward at his bare feet, saying: "Them's got to toe the mark, too, an' that brook out there is jist the place to shine 'em up."

He accordingly went to the brook with soap and rag, and gave his feet and legs such a scrubbing that they soon began to shine in the sun like the nether extremities of a bronze statue.

"Well, well!" exclaimed Ruth, when he returned, "you almost frighten me: you look so different."

"I didn't mean to turn myself into a skeer-crow, mum," he replied smilingly and showing his nice teeth to her for the first time, and making the same impression upon her he had already made upon the Tanner.

"MAY I BE KEEL-HAULED."

As if it were the most natural thing in the world for her to do under the circumstances, she stepped up to him and, laying her hand gently on his brow, pushed his head back softly to enable her to look down into his eyes more easily, and then, as if more than satisfied, she bent over him and kissed him upon the forehead. The touch of those lips was too much for the fortitude of the homeless lad. Beginning to gasp and strangle, he crossed his arms over his face, and suddenly turning himself to the wall, he sobbed as if he would shake himself to pieces.

The lover's kiss is not the most sacred kiss in the world. There had once been an only son under the Tanner's roof, who was named after his father. He had grown up to sturdy manhood and had become the skipper of a fishing smack. The schooner was lost on the banks of Newfoundland with all on board, and when Ruth kissed the forlorn Jim, who had made a morning visit to her home, she was thinking not only of the lad before her, but also of the boy she had mourned so long. No wonder that a sudden gust of rain swept through the morning sky, and that the Tanner and his wife dared not look each other in the face lest the old sorrow should get the upper hand again. The sight

of the third chair at the table didn't mend matters, and when they sat down and the Tanner tried to say grace, he made such a stumbling piece of work of it the boy began to think that grace was being said in a foreign language, it sounded so strangely.

Happily for all three, a big white cat that looked like a fragment of a snow bank, after looking at the boy a moment, sprang up into his lap, and even went so far as to put its fore paws upon the table, as if contemplating a still further rise in life.

"Scat, you hussy!" exclaimed Ruth, so energetically that the cat, in its hurry to descend, lost its balance and fell to the floor like a piece of lead, which was so manifestly a strange thing for a cat to do that all three broke into a laugh, and so the rainstorm disappeared and all three were ready for business.

"WELL, EF I HAIN'T A REG'LER MILLYUNEER."

Jim's eyes wandered over the table in spite of himself. Such a table as it was, to be sure! So clean and tidy; so different from the rough deck and the tin plate and cup he had been in the habit of eating from on board the schooner.

And the food! It was enough to make any sound boy believe that the chief end of boys was to eat, drink and be merry. Genuine coffee, thick cream, white sugar and a broad, white, shiny, deep plate holding a perfect sea of the nicest kind of oatmeal porridge, over which Ruth poured a thick flood of real cream. And, besides, there were fried trout and potatoes! But when Ruth, after he had picked two whole trout to the very bones, placed before him another clean plate with pancakes on it four deep, topped with a crown of golden butter, and

set the whole to swimming in torrents of amber-colored maple syrup, which no more resembled the black "lasses" he used to eat with his hardtack scouse, than honey resembles tar, Jim lost all control of himself, and before he knew what he was about, said: 'Well, ef I hain't a reg'ler millyuneer at last, layin' ernough in the locker to keep me goin' for a hull week.' "

The Tanner and his wife grew merry at this, and from laughing they passed on to such lively, homely home talk that the boy was made to feel entirely at his ease, without appearing in the least bold or out of place.

Little by little the Tanner and his wife turned the conversation in the direction of his history. It was not much they could glean from him, save that his life had been a sort of perpetual poverty blank of hardship and homelessness.

After breakfast the Tanner read a long chapter from the Bible and prayed a very long prayer, as was his wont. Indeed, the prayer was so long Jim's knees began to ache; but presently his heart began to ache worse than his knees. The Tanner was saying something about "the orphan in our midst." At first the boy didn't quite understand what was meant by the term, and was asking himself: "What is a orphin, anyway? I never heerd on 'em afore; must be some kind uv a British critter."

But when the droning voice of the Tanner grew more and more tender, and the references became more and more distinct and personal, the boy was so startled he came near exclaiming aloud: "I'm blest ef he doesn't mean me! But what's the use on't? It'll all be over in the next jiffy, an' I'll be cuttin' down the road as skeery as ever, an' it'll be a long time afore I gits into ernother sich a port!"

When he stood on his bare feet again, so that he could straighten himself up and get the kinks out of his legs, he walked right up to the Tanner, and, after fumbling among the rags of his garment for some time, to the great surprise of the Tanner and his wife, he pulled out a little, battered book which, though badly soiled, looked as if it had seen better days.

"Mr. Jim," said he, looking the Tanner squarely in the face, "mebbe you thinks I'm only a critter, coz I skipped frum the schooner; ef you'll look at that, like ernough you'll think diff'runt."

Astonished by his words, as well as by his action, Payzant placed his spectacles upon his nose, and, opening the book, discovered that it was a small Testament.

"Well, well!" said Ruth, looking through her glasses over her husband's shoulder, and giving mild expression to her strong feelings.

Testaments were no novelty in that house, nor were they scarce in the

neighborhood; but a Testament in the pocket of a boy who was dependent upon a tan pile for a bed seemed rather out of place. In the simplicity of her heart, Ruth was a bit puzzled. She as good as thought that either the book was out of place or the boy was, and so she didn't exactly know whether to blame the boy or Providence for letting him wander around in such a homeless style. If the truth must be told, in the end she came dangerously near reflecting upon the wisdom of Providence, as people will once in awhile.

RUTH WAS A BIT PUZZLED.

"Where did you get this?" the Tanner asked, softly.

"An ol' woman, what was my friend afore I went to the poorhouse, when she died guv it to me, an' reckoned it belonged to my mother. She said I was to hang onter it ez long ez I lived."

"Can you read it?" asked Ruth, feeling for the corner of her apron.

"No'm; leastwise, not much. When I gits kinder down in the mouth an' what's-a-gonter-come-uv-you-like, I scratches at it here an' there, an' spells

out some kinder nice things what makes me feel quite chipper again so that ups an' digs ez ef I felt a whiff of spring wind a blowin'."

"Well, well! I just do declare!" said Ruth, as she nervously took the book from her husband's hand and began to turn over the leaves as if they were made of beaten gold. An inscription on the fly leaf attracted her attention. In dim ink but distinct letters, written in a fair feminine hand, she read: "Mrs Mary Jane Mu———"; the rest of the last name being torn off. Below was written: "Salem, Mass," and a date which was too dim to be deciphered.

"Ruth, come here," said the Tanner, abruptly, as he turned away and motioned her to follow him into a little side room. The Testament went with them, as if they were loth to let it go out of their hands; and if it was a respectable Testament it must have been quite tickled at the course things were taking.

Left standing alone in the middle of the floor, Jim began to tremble all over, and he felt so weak, notwithstanding the hearty breakfast he had eaten, he sat down on the outer edge of a chair, from which he looked down at the floor and through the floor, and through the earth, with a far-off look in his eyes that was enough to make an angel wish for the corner of Ruth's clean apron. All the while he was listening to the low murmur of voices coming from the adjoining room. Perhaps they were waiting for him to go away. But he couldn't think of going without getting his book back again and thanking them for his breakfast.

While he sat there wondering what would happen next, the Tanner reappeared, followed by his wife. The moment the Testament, which had been carried with them in a fit of absent-mindedness, was handed back to the boy he dropped it into his pocket, and rising, made ready to go forth into the world again.

He was about to thank them for his breakfast, when the Tanner, seating himself with great deliberation, said: "Sit down, my lad."

Ruth had seated herself in a low rocking chair and was rocking, and smoothing the creases out of her apron.

Jim looked from one to the other, and thought to himself, "They jist look ez ef they was a haulin' into the wind for sunthin' what had run smack across their hawser."

Chapter III.

THE TANNER'S OFFER.

"JIM," began the Tanner, with a kindly look at the boy, while Ruth was nervously fumbling among the folds of her apron, "how would you like to board with us all the time?"

Jim's heart jumped into his throat and his eyes flamed with eagerness, and he stammered with a quick breath, "Ef you'll take me on deck with you I'll stand double watch an' never git lazy nur sleepy."

The Tanner was a man of few words, but what he said generally went straight to the mark without aid of the dictionary; and he said, as his face brightened with a smile, "It's settled then; you shall stay here."

"Does you mean it, Mr. Jim? does you mean it up an' down for sure an' no mistake?" asked the boy, standing up and facing the Tanner with several tangle marks lacing his brow.

"Yes, my boy," answered Ruth, "with all our hearts we mean it."

"Hurrah!" and quick as a flash, he turned a summersault, and when he got his flying limbs into position again, he added, "I hain't no orphin any more, ar'

yer prayers has ketched on slick at the fust throw, Mr. Jim! I'm in your mids for good, like a rock in a tater field."

Both the Tanner and his wife, staid and quiet people as they were, came near keeling over in this young and vigorous breeze, and Ruth, in spite of her habitual gravity, smiled so broadly that Jim immediately responded by grinning all over like a picture in a comic almanac.

Controlling himself as best he might, yet shaking around his waistband like the mainsail of a schooner making a tack, the Tanner went on to drop a few more words into Jim's happy ears.

"My name is James Payzant," said he, "and I have told you that her's is Ruth. You may call us father and mother if you want to. We shall call you son, and your name shall be James Mu Payzant. This is your home now, and we shall try to treat you just the same as if you were born in the house. There is something about you that makes us believe in you, and we are not going to be disappointed in you; and we hope that you will believe in us, and that we shall not disappoint you."

Jim's eyes were opening at a fearful rate, and his face was playing all sorts of antics, and to relieve himself, he said: "An' may I up an' kiss Missus Mother for myself, an' no mistake?"

"Yes, and hug me, too, answered Ruth, extending her arms by way of encouragement, for she was no halfway woman with good impulses limping along on lame legs.

Daintily kissing her on the right cheek, Jim hastily withdrew himself from her warmly enfolding arms, and, looking down at his ragged garments, pathetically said: "I hain't fit to kiss a schooner pump in this rig; but, howsumever, the orphin what Mr. Jim prayed about has gone up the spout, an' I hain't a Dick no longer."

"What do you mean by saying that you are not a Dick any longer?" asked the Tanner, hardly knowing whether to be amused or shocked.

"Why, when I was comin' through them woods yisterday I gits kinder skeer'd, an' pulls out my book an' begins to read, an' the fust place I gits onto is the story about Dick what hadn't no father an' no mother, an' says I to myself 'that's jist your fix, Jim!' An' it makes me feel ez ef I had a hull pockitful uv company when I stuck the book back into my pockit, an' I went erlong ez slick ez a codfish what runs away with a line."

"But there is no Dick in the New Testament," corrected the Tanner, mildly.

"An' there's where you is out, Mr. Jim," was the quick, frank reply. "His first name was Mel an' his next Cheeser an' his lastist name was Dick I

didn't take no stock in the fust name, but the hind end one went right to the spot, coz I has heerd it so many times an' coz he hadn't no father nur no mother. I was nigh upsot when it said he was a priest, coz I don't have no hankerin' arter priests an' them sort o' critters."

"The boy is talking about Melchisedec!" exclaimed Ruth.

"You've hit the very feller! I know'd I wasn't fur outen my lattertude, for all I hain't never been pickled in Scripter."

"HAVE YOU ANCHORED AT MR. PAYZANT'S?"

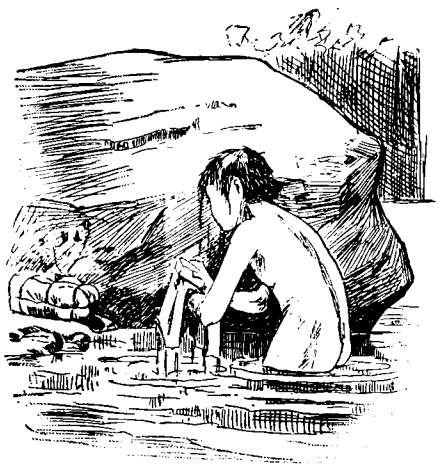
"Well, well, well!" and when Ruth used her favorite expression up into the threes and fours, it was a sure sign that she was at the end of her string as to the means of expressing astonishment. "We shall have missionary work to do here in our own house, and I shall tell the preacher so the first time he comes here for a foreign missionary contribution."

"You've struck the bull's eye, ef you means this chap, I specs I'm a sinner dyed in the wool from top to toe." A cloud flitted across the boy's face, and

the change was so pitiful the Tanner's hysterical laugh was smothered in a low gurgle in his throat.

"Is you choking, Mister Father? Ef you'll take a good grip o' your nose an' kinder sock your breath, it'll knock the choke outen you quicker'n lightnin'."

What was the Tanner to do with such a tickling machine as this? He was a merry man in his own way, though he never allowed his mirth to tear holes in his dignity, for he was a church member, and his pastor and fellow members were rather apt to wear crape as a part of their every-day life. Ruth came near giggling like a girl at Jim's mistake about her husband's throat sounds, and this time the corner of her apron went up to her mouth instead of her eyes



JIM TAKES A SCRUB.

Seeing that the Tanner was in danger of losing his gravity altogether, and, perceiving also, that if he laughed, as he did sometimes laugh, Jim would be likely to misunderstand him to his own confusion, she thought it was high time to turn the stream in another direction.

"It is time you took the boy down to the store and fitted him with something to wear," she said to her husband, removing the apron from her face and speaking in a matter of fact way, which set Jim to thinking of possibilities he had not yet included in his good fortune.

"To be sure," replied the Tanner, coming to his senses, "and what shall I get for him?"

Ruth enumerated the things while the Tanner made a note of them upon a bit of paper. Jim listened in astonishment, and this time in silence, for the number of the articles mentioned bewildered him. He remembered his dream on the tan pile, and was shivering lest the prospect of new clothes should vanish away into cold nothingness. It was not until the Tanner directed him to get his cap and follow him to the town that he could convince himself that he was living in a solid world.

Mr. Bartlett—James Bartlett—it must be so written, notwithstanding we have already written three Jims, for that *was* his given name, was a retired sea

captain, who was quick to discover that the boy brought in by his old friend, the Tanner, was a bunch of sea foam. He wondered what the Tanner was up to, yet knew it was useless for him to undertake to pry into his business, so he contented himself with looking like an interrogation point. He was stiff and rheumatic in his joints, yet managed to move about his counters with considerable quickness while waiting upon the Tanner and the boy.

When the purchases were completed, the Tanner stood a little aside figuring up the amount, while the boy stood watching the shopman do up the goods.

Unable to keep silence, the boy said: "Them things will make a reg'ler clipper uv me; but I'll be most erfraid to hist them onto me for fear I'll be a scootin' away frum myself the fust thing I knows."

"Have you anchored at Mr. Payzant's?" asked Captain Bartlett, insinuatingly. "If you have, you'll find yourself in a good harbor with lots of holding ground."

"No, sir; I'm not anchored. I have jist run plum on shore, bow on an' high up, so I can't never drift any more, an' I'm not wrecked, nuther."

Beginning to suspect the lay of the land, and appreciating the boy's way of putting things, the Captain offered to fit him to a cap at his own cost.

"NOW YOU IS A SPICK-SPAN, NEW CRITTER."

"Thank you, Captain," said the Tanner, coming up, "but I hope you won't feel hurt for declining the cap. The lad is in training now, and that is not the best way to begin with him, you know."

"I hain't a beggar no more," added Jim, catching the Tanner's cue and straightening himself up. "I'm gonter work this lay out clear to the flyin' jibboom."

"That's business!" was the Captain's hearty reply. "If you get short of work, however, come to me, and we will fix it in that way."

When the two returned to the cottage and Ruth had laid out the suit

Jim was to put on, he begged permission to make the change down among the rocks at the river side. They furnished him with towelling and soap, and he disappeared with his bundle of wealth. After stripping himself under the shelter of a great rock, he scrubbed and scrubbed himself over and over again, until he glistened like freshly polished marble, saying to himself the while: "No old boy shall git into them new duds"

Having put on the new suit, from hat to shoes, he went to the left of the rock, where the water was as smooth as a mirror, and looking at his reflection with a feeling bordering on ecstacy, said:

"Who'd a thought them duds would a turned a dogfish bummer into a codfish aristockersy? I'm copper bottomed now frum stem to starn, an' shined up frum windlass to wheel, an' I'm goshed ef I don't have to rig up a new talkin' tackle, too, for *my* folks is jist slick ounten the Testermunt; an' ef this rock only had a steeple to it I'd jine it for a church to wunst, for I feel ez ef I had more 'ligion'n I kin git erway with alone."

In the inside of his new, neat jacket he found a pocket, where he carefully deposited the companion of his hardships and wanderings. Taking his old garments, and handling them as gingerly as if he had never seen them before, he flung them far out into the stream and stood and watched them until they disappeared in the riffles below.

"Now you is a spick-span, new critter, Jim," he said, as he stood near the water's edge, uncertain what next to do with himself. "Only you musn't git to feelin' too allfired good an' stuck up. Folkses what does that is jist like a schooner what has more mast than bottom, an' the fustist things they knows on their keels is turned up for the gulls to roost on, an' their sails is turned down for the sharks to fight unner."

Chapter IV.

TRYING HIMSELF ON.

REALLY, the new clothes made a wonderful change in Jim's appearance, and his round, well-shaped face and head overtopped the rest of him to as good advantage as a handsome blossom overtops the leaves from which it springs. When he entered the cottage the Tanner and his wife were delighted with his looks, but seeing that he was a little shy in his new toggery they said nothing, and went about their usual duties as if he had lived there all his days. While he was dressing himself at the river side, they had agreed to let the boy float about a day or so before they began to apply a shaping hand to his character and destiny. The Tanner went to the tannery, and his wife went upstairs to make arrangements for Jim's sleeping quarters.

The Tanner had said to Ruth: "That boy has a good head, and where there is brain room there's a chance of getting something into it. His eyes are as quick as light, and there is little that he doesn't see. He is a genuine Yankee for spryness, and we can well afford to trust him to find out some things for himself."

Although Payzant confessed himself quite unable to fathom girls and women, he professed himself well qualified to judge men and boys.

No sooner was Jim left to himself than he began to take in the lay of the land. His first move was to get out of the house. After surveying the premises

and their surroundings, he said: "It's time for me to be tryin' myself on. These duds fit me ez the skin fits my fingers, an' I must fit this ere place jist ez they fit my carkis. But it's blamed queer that nuther uv them captains has given me any orders!"

Having been kicked about from pillar to post ever since the dawn of memory, his present liberty embarrassed him. Seeing a hatchet sticking in a stump close by and a heap of brushwood lying not far from it, he put his thoughts together, and, by dint of vigorous chopping, soon had a pile of summer wood prepared for kitchen use. Having finished this, he looked around for some new world to conquer.

MAKING HIMSELD USEFUL.

"This is the most funniest how'd-ye-do I ever got my neck into!" he exclaimed, perplexedly. "I hain't no good boy what runs hisself 'thout bein' wound up. They're jist playin' gammon with me, an' is peekin' round the corners to see what I'm up to. No, Jim; that isn't their cut, no how! You must jist keep your eyes peeled on yourself, an' ef you goes to gittin' mean round these diggin's you'll desarve to git spanked with the tail of a live whale. Sneakin' hadn't orter grow here any more'n seaweed orter grow on the bottom uv a clipper schooner."

Seeing that a shanghai rooster of enormous proportions had led his numerous flock into the vegetable garden, where he and they were doing their best to destroy a bed of young carrots, Jim went in and drove them out.

"This critter'll keep you critters outen this place anyhow, Mr. Rooster; them things wasn't planted for nothin', an' they ainter gonter be yanked up till their time comes," said he, as he set himself to repair the damage done.

He had never seen carrots growing before, though he had often eaten them in poorhouse soup, and their green plumes and red bodies excited his fancy and made him think of some English soldiers he had seen in Halifax the summer preceding. Chuckling to himself, he said: "Guess Mr. Father is raisin' reg'ler

British sodjers, but he'll have to raise a heap more'n them afore he kin lick the States."

As if in challenge of his thoughts, Shanghai flew upon the fence, where he vigorously flapped his wings and crowed as if he were a foghorn warning a fleet from shore, the while stretching his neck and opening his mouth in Jim's direction, as if he was fully minded to swallow him, new clothes and all.

Jim had never heard such a crow in all his life, and he was so startled he lost his temper and shouted back: "You derned, long-leggid, hollerin' son uv a sculpin! You is ernough to skeer the teeth outen a cross-cut saw. Ef you

JIM CLEARS THE CARROT PATCH.

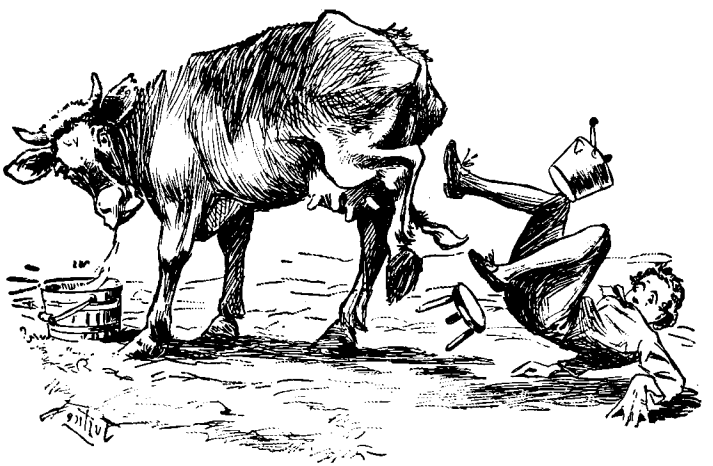
don't shut up that peekid hole o' yourn, I'll chuck a stone down your gullet an' send you arter them old briches o' mine for to kiver up your mizzerble, scabby, yaller shanks."

Ashamed that he should so soon forget himself, and remembering that the shanghai belonged to the premises, he said, after pausing to take his breath: "There, Jim *Payzant*, what kind o' lingo do you call that for a feller what's got new duds on an' has a new father an' mother what prays an' reads in the Bible? Is you nothin' but a critter arter all? Better belay your own tackle afore you tries to belay a critter what hain't nothin' but legs, holler an' feathers!"

Shanghai flapped and crowed again, but Jim made himself proof against temptation by shutting his mouth as tight as a hatchway in a gale of wind, and, turning his back upon the rooster, he devoted himself to the carrot bed until he nad repaired all damages done.

At dinner the Tanner thanked Jim for taking care of the carrot roots, and Ruth praised him for cutting up the brush in such handy shape. So far as he could recollect, he had never been thanked nor praised for anything during his entire life, and the sensation was so novel he felt as if he should outgrow his clothes before night.

Though only the night before he was, to use his own thoughts, "roosting on the top of a tan pile," he sat at that dinner table as much at home in feeling as



JIM EXPERIMENTS WITH THE COW.

if he had lived there as long as the Tanner himself. After dinner Ruth put a package of illustrated papers into his hand. Jim looked at the papers for awhile, but the outdoor pictures had more charm for him than anything the papers contained, and it was not long before he was outside revelling in his freedom again.

When, toward night, the Tanner went into his garden to weed the ground, there was not a weed to be seen among the vegetables; they had even disappeared from the corners of the fences. And sundry holes, through which Shanghai and his flock had found convenient entrance into the garden, were

effectually closed by the liberal use of slabs taken from a huge pile of slabs near by.

"Takes to industry like a beaver, to invention like a Yankee and to thoroughness like a Scotchman," remarked the Tanner, as he surveyed Jim's work critically, and approved his own judgment in trusting the boy to his own resources and promptings. While he was sitting on a rock, over which the low limbs of a plum tree spread like an umbrella, his attention was attracted to what was taking place on the other side of the fence. Jim had driven up Betty, the cow, for the evening milking, and Ruth was standing by, pail in hand. The boy was anxious to do the milking himself, but Ruth, wiser in cow nature than the lad, told him that Betty was afraid of strangers, and it would be better for him to defer his attempt in that line until she had become somewhat accustomed to his presence and ways.

Jim had been so uniformly successful in his little ventures for the day, and, withal, he was so anxious to please Ruth he pressed his request until she told him he might see what he could do with Betty. The moment he began his work the cow knew there was something wrong going on about the milk-pail, and before Jim had time to drop he found himself sprawling upon the ground and the pail clattering clinkety-clink down the sides of the little stony hill.

He picked himself up, and going after the pail handed it to Ruth, ruefully, saying: "I hain't got the hang o' them sort o' belayin' pins, an' the ol' craft knows it. But the next time I tackles her I reckon she won't lay me on my beam ends like that. I'll get onter her starboard quarter so sly-like, she won't know I'm there till she's milked ez dry ez a poorhouse preacher."

The Tanner had as much as he could do to keep from roaring and disclosing his nearness, and poor Ruth was so sorely tempted to laugh she pulled her enormous calico sunbonnet almost to pieces in trying to increase the shadows it cast upon her shining face. Some other people would have laughed their fill, but this couple made conscience of not laughing at the mistakes made by folks who were doing their best to make themselves useful.

When Ruth set herself to the work of milking, Jim watched the operation closely, and when it was over, declared: "Why, it's ez easy ez ringing water outen a wet rag."

Betty had a nervous dread of all boys, but seeing that this one stood by and behaved himself so quietly she formed a good opinion of him, which was greatly increased when Jim picked a fine bunch of clover for her at the end of the milking and allowed her to eat it from his hand without playing any tricks upon her.

The next time he tried her she submitted to his experiments with right down good will, and it was not long before they were the best of friends.

When Jim went to his room that night he found it packed with more happiness than he had known during his whole life. Ruth's, "This is your room, my son," filled his cup with such delight he almost forgot to respond to her good-night.

It was the same room that had belonged to the son who was lost at sea, and was but slightly changed from what it was when he occupied it. There were

"IT'S EZ FAT EZ A WHALE."

two windows overlooking the pretty river, and commanding a view of the wooded hills beyond. The ceiling was low, the walls covered with old-fashioned paper with designs of small vines printed in a vivid red and blue. Jim had never seen a papered room, and when he surveyed it at his leisure he felt quite sure that heaven could present nothing superior to it. The floor had a bright home-made rag carpet, with a brilliant fancy rug for a center piece, which Jim would not consent to place his feet upon for many a day, so marvelous did it appear in his eyes. An hour-glass stand made from bright calico and trimmed with a crimson fringe

nailed on with big-headed brass brads, which shone like stars in the midst of the firmament, together with a low rocking chair of ancient make and style, and two yellow wooden chairs completed the main furnishings of the room.

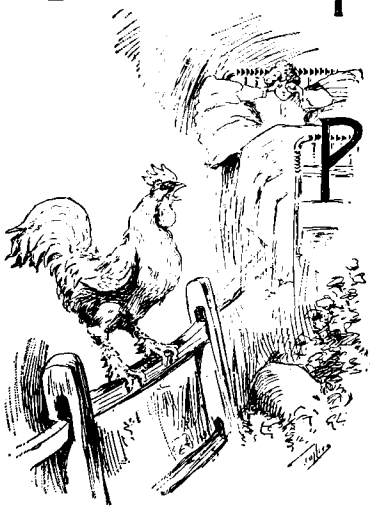
The bed was such a wonder, he hesitated to disturb it, and seriously thought of stretching himself upon the floor with his arm for a pillow. Having had but few companions during his life, he had formed the habit of talking to himself when alone. Standing by the bed with both hands in his pockets, he said: "It's ez fat ez a whale; that quilt is puttier'n the skin of a fresh mack'ril; an' them pillers is jist big ernough for to go to sea on."

When, at last, he turned down the bedding preparatory to getting in, the broad expanse of clean sheets amazed him, and he exclaimed: "I declare to goodness! ef they doesn't look ez ef they was peeled smack off'n the top uv a fair-weather cloud what has come slick frum glory! Ef I only know'd how to do it I'd say, let us pray."

When he blew out the candle and got into bed, he broke out with, "My Jiminy, Jerusalem Jackson! I guess God has dropped a piece of heaven overboard, an' Mrs. Mother has gone an' picked it up. No more tan pile taverns for me!"

It was some time before he could afford to go to sleep, and when he did, his eyelids were wet with gratitude and happiness.

Chapter V.



NEBUCHADNEZZAR GETS IT.

PILOTED by some imp of mischief, before sunrise Shanghai got directly under Jim's windows and began to crow, as if to make up for the time he had lost during the night. The first thing Jim knew he was sitting up in bed rubbing his eyes with all his might, and trying to make out where he was and what had happened. If he had been on board the schooner, and she had run ashore or been run into, he might have formed some idea of what had occurred, but that all-around-the-welkin ring of Shanghai's crow was enough to confuse anyone who wasn't used to it.

While the boy was still debating the situation with himself, the rooster let himself out again, and, as an afterclap, he was followed by one of the younger members of his family, whose ridiculously weak imitation sounded as if it had come through the small end of a pinfeather.

By this time Jim had gathered up his scattered wits enough to say: "Wall, ef there isn't that pesky, nor'east hurricane of a rooster agin! Reckon he's a crowin' for me to git outen this bed. Ef he hadn't a did it, I might a slept till

I bustid. I'm jist like a clam what's been snaked outen the flats. My, my, my, what a snooze I've had!"

And recollecting how often he had been savagely pulled out of his bunk on board of the schooner, he added: "The captain isn't here for to yank me out this time, an' I jist reckon his ol' rope's end is kinder lonsome coz it hain't no boy to lam round the deck."

The Tanner was astir, and on his way downstairs. Passing Jim's room and hearing him talking at a great rate, and remembering how he had roused him the morning before, he gently opened the door and, putting in his head with a pintful of twinkles in each eye, he said: "Here, you! What are you doing there?"

MAKING THE FIRE.

Readily taking the point of the joke, the boy replied: "I hain't boardin' on the top of a tan pile any more, Mr. Father. Is it most night agin? Seems ez ef I never had no sleep afore in all my born days, an's ef I hadn't waked up afore sundown."

"Oh, you're all right," replied the Tanner, cheerily. "I'm just out of bed myself. I heard you talking, and called in to see who you had picked up for company. I thought there were only three of us in the house."

"Wall, I reckon the rooster has been doin' his best to git into that winder; he's throw'd his crows in by the skiff load. Ef he hadn't a did it, you wouldn't a heerd me talking like a gander. But I'm on deck now!" And with this last declaration, he gave a spring that landed him in the middle of the floor.

"Why, you jump as if you were made up of crickets and grasshoppers, Jim."

"I'd ruther be a grasshopper'n a worm anytime; it's sich fun to jump when you feels like it an' when you orter."

"And so would I, though the boy in me has got such a good coating of years on his back," said the Tanner, as he turned to leave the room. He had no sooner reached the kitchen than Jim was at his heels ready to begin

another day and to penetrate still further into the new world to which he had been introduced.

"Why, lad; you must have jumped into your clothes as a frog dives into water!" exclaimed the Tanner, almost thinking that the boy must have sent his shadow on ahead of him, so swift were his movements.

"I jist hankered arter them new duds agin, an' what you hankers arter it hain't no trouble to git inter."

"That's as true as sunrise, my boy, and I hope you will never get into any-

"WHAT A SNEEZER OF A NAME."

thing worse than new clothes. The trouble begins when we get into something we can't very well get out of."

"Now you is chock-a-block, Mr. Father," responded the boy, quickly, taking the point of the Tanner's moral with a readiness that spoke well for his teachableness.

It will scarcely be believed, yet it is true, nevertheless, that, although the Tanner had lived with Ruth so many years, he always made the fire in the morning, unless there happened to be a good reason for not doing it. Jim

watched his fire-making with interest, and the upshot of it was, it was a long time before the Tanner got another opportunity to kindle the kitchen fire.

Shanghai became Jim's timepiece, and as soon as the fire was started the rooster and his flock received their morning allowance of oats and barley. Jim said Shanghai's crow was a good deal better than a rope's end, for, though it was rather noisy, there was no sting to it.

The Tanner was as regular at his morning devotions as Shanghai and the birds were at theirs, but on this second morning of Jim's arrival there was an interruption. The third chapter of Daniel, containing the story of the three Hebrew children, was read. Before beginning the reading, the Tanner said: "Jim, we are in the habit of talking about what we read, and if we want to ask questions of one another, we do it. Now, that you are one of us, you can do as we do, if you feel like it. We believe in having nice times when we read the Bible, and we want you to share in them. I'm going to read about Nebuchadnezzar, the king, and the golden image." And the Tanner adjusted his spectacles for the reading.

"What a sneezer of a name," responded Jim, promptly. "How on airth did he manage to ship it? It's big enough to sink a man-o'-war!"

Payzant took his nose between his forefinger and thumb, and, rubbing it downward, nervously asked: "What do you mean, my boy?"

"Nebber-Nebber-cud—" but the name was too much for him, and he ended by saying: "That ere feller with a name longer'n your leg. I'd jist call him Cud, an' done with it; for he's like a big chaw o' terbaccer, an' I don't like cuds, nohow you kin fix it."

Payzant hated tobacco, and he was so glad to find Jim at one with him in his dislike he was willing to accept his idea of Nebuchadnezzar, saying: "Yes, he was as bad as tobacco, which I hope you will always hate."

The reading went on until it reached the decree that all who didn't worship the golden image should be cast into the fiery furnace. Jim had never heard the story before, indeed, he was an entire stranger to the wealth of the Old Testament.

"My goodness, gracious!" he exclaimed, loudly, unable to repress his abhorrence. "Ef that feller had a been born in the States he'd a been chucked into the fire hisself afore he know'd it. We don't have no kings an' sich truck. Kings isn't no good, nohow!"

The Tanner was a loyal subject, and made a practice of praying for the queen in nearly every prayer he offered, and he saw that if the boy was to have

any respect for his sovereign he must help him to discriminate between her and Nebuchadnezzar.

"All kings are not bad, you know," he began, "and some queens are very good. Did you ever hear of the queen of Sheba?"

"No, sir," decidedly.

"Nor Queen Esther?"

"Not a mite!"

"Nor Queen Victoria?"

"Yis, I've heer'n on ol' Vic; but she couldn't come it on anybody in the States."

"Well," interrupted Ruth, mildly, "but Queen Victoria is the best queen that ever reigned, and you must learn to speak and think well of her, now that you are in her dominions."

"An' will she chuck me into the fire ef I don't?"

"Oh, no! She isn't a pagan!"

"What's a pagan? I never heerd o' none o' them things afore."

"Nebuchadnezzar was a pagan, who wanted the people to bow down to a golden image."

"Wall, I'd do it, ef you'd give me the imige for my own."

"But not if you were made to worship it instead of God," said the Tanner, who was beginning to think he had his hands full, for that morning at least.

Jim didn't like to back water where kings and queens were concerned, yet the seriousness of the Tanner and his wife perplexed him, and he contented himself with a humble, "Wall, I dunno, Mr. Father."

After reciting the First Commandment, and explaining it, the Tanner continued his reading.

Jim's flashing eyes and working face showed that he was listening with all his ears. When the Tanner read: "And he commanded the most mighty men that were in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, and to cast them into the fiery furnace," Jim could contain himself no longer.

"Avast there! you dod-rotted old pagin terbaccer cud!" he almost shouted. "Don't give us any more of him, Mr. Father! He's wuss'n devil-fish, lobsteran' sculpin all put together. Ef I hears any more erbout him, it'll make me swear in spite o' all the flap-jacks, feather-beds an' new duds you kin pile onter me!"

"James, James!" exclaimed Ruth, now greatly shocked, and all the more so because the Tanner was making heroic efforts to keep his face straight.

"No, Mrs. Mother, my name is Jim till I get through with that ol' cuss of a Cud; an' a hull prayer meetin' couldn't keep me frum gittin' riled from top to

bottom. That's the derndest ol' king you're givin' us I ever heerd on; an' ef ol' Vic is like him, I'm bound to git outen her kittle ez fast ez my legs can streak it!"

"But look here, Jim," interposed the Tanner, quietly, and with that twinkling of eyes the boy was so quick to discover, and to appreciate as well, "this thing happened hundreds and hundreds of years ago; and, besides, the boys were not burned up after all, as we shall soon see if you will keep quiet till I finish the story."

Jim hung his head for a moment, and then humbly said: "I reckon I've let go the ropes like a lan' lubber, an' ef you'll give me the rest uv it I'll ketch on an' keep my mouth shet ez tight ez ef the captain uv of the schooner was a givin' me one o' his most all-firedest lickin's."

THE TANNER'S HEARTY LAUGH.

Under this flag of truce the Tanner hastened to resume his reading, yet not without a feeling of profound pity and perplexity.

When he reached the account of the boys being taken out of the furnace, and read: "Upon whose bodies the fire had no power, nor was a hair singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed upon them," Jim was so restless, the Tanner said; "What is it Jim? speak if you want to."

"Now I knows I'm a fool for gittin' riled when that's only a fo'cas'le yarn what you've been givin' us; fo'cas'le yarns hain't no good noways, an' my feelin's has jist riz for nothin'."

The Tanner got up, laid the big Bible on the table, and went out, and kept on going until he reached the tannery, where he sat down on one of the benches and laughed loudly enough to have been heard all the way across the river. There was no family prayer that morning, an omission which had not occurred for many years in the history of that cottage.

Ruth suspected the cause of her husband's sudden departure, for she was almost hysterical herself. She was, however, determined to do her duty by the boy, being fully convinced that these sudden flashes were but proofs of the gem within.

"You are the most irrepressible boy I ever saw," was, however, what she said, by way of taking him in hand.

"What kind of press is that, Mrs. Mother? You don't mean for to say that you thinks I'm only a critter arter all," and such a shadow of regret flitted over his fine face she was almost compelled to resort to the corner of her apron.

"I only meant to say that you are a very funny boy," she replied, gently.

His face lighted instantly, and he gave expression to his relief with, "Oh, is that all! I thought you was a goin' to put me down ez a reg'ler circus bummer. But isn't Mr. Father gonter say his prayers? We can't git erlong 'thout 'em; they kinder set a feller on his pins like, an' make him feel ez ef he had new duds on unner his skin."

"MY, MY, MY! ISN'T THIS A RUM GO."

"I think you upset him, and he has gone out to get settled again," said Ruth, frankly, for she was such a transparent soul she could neither withhold nor disguise the truth when she was challenged directly.

"Wall, I didn't go for to do it; yit that fire business was jist like the yarns the sailors was allers tellin' in the fo'cas'le, an' it did seem ez ef Mr. Father had got hold uv some book what they larned their yarns frum,"

"But he read it out of the Bible, Jim, and it's a true story, every word of it."

"Ef you says it isn't a fo'cas'tle yarn, it isn't for sartin, Mrs. Mother; but that ol' Cud orter a been strung up to the masthead for the gulls to eat the flesh off'n to the bones, for puttin' them fellers into the fire, for all they didn't git scotched."

"You have been in the fiery furnace yourself, Jim; but you are going to come out of it without being burned up," and, with infinite tact, the old saint went on and gave him a lesson he never forgot. Its immediate effects were shown when he exclaimed: "I'll never git scotched, even, ef I kin help it."

"If you will let the Lord keep you, as the Fourth One in the furnace kept the boys, you will come out all right.

"And now, Jim; you mustn't call us Mr. Father and Mrs. Mother any more. Call us father and mother, for that is what we intend to be to you in everything, and we want you to be a real son to us."

"Mother and father," he gurgled, like a young bird just beginning to learn a spring song. "I'm the one that's upsot now, an' I reckon I'll have to go an' jine father. My, my, my! Isn't this a rum go for a orphin an' a critter what runn'd away to keep frum gittin' licked!"

Notwithstanding the roughness of his words, there was such a gentle, refined look upon his face Ruth called him to her side and, taking one of his hands in her own, began to caress it in such a loving way that he instinctively leaned closely against her as if to get the full benefit of the heart that was beating for his good.

"Jim," she said, looking into his eyes in the way he loved to have her, "you are such a clean looking boy now, and have such a good soul within you, in spite of your hard experiences, I want you to begin to pick your words a little. Try to speak as we do. It will come hard at first, but you take up things so easily you will soon succeed."

"I'll sink the ol' lingo, mother, jist ez soon ez I kin git the hang o' your style, though I has to skin myself to do it. But a feller what has come straight outen a tar buckit 'll have to slap on lots o' grease afore he kin git white hands."

The task he set himself was by no means an easy one, and Ruth was altogether too considerate to remind him of his numerous failures. The Tanner rather enjoyed his novel expressions, and protested that if he were pruned too closely he would be injured instead of benefitted.

Chapter VI.

SIGNED AND SEALED.

THE TANNER was a schoolmaster in his earlier days. People said he was the best master who ever taught in Liverpool; he had such a happy faculty of gaining the confidence, inspiring the ambition and securing the perseverance of the boys and girls, and making them push their way through their studies. He had not entirely forgotten his old arts, and now that he had a young, ambitious boy to deal with, who so much needed instruction, he began to put them in practice.

Somehow, Jim came to look upon him as a big boy, notwithstanding his advanced years, and as boys are apt to imitate big boys, he began to copy the Tanner with all his might.

And this was just what the Tanner liked, though it led him to say to Ruth one day: "With such a lad as that around one needs to be very careful of his conduct and influence."

He was in the habit of saying to himself: "Be what you would have others be, and you shall not long lack for company."

Although the Tanner was such a good hand to teach, he was not much of a hand to preach; yet when he did preach one didn't have to fetch an opera-glass to find the point of his sermon.

"He's like a picter book where the picters gits erhead of the readin' afore you knows it," said Jim; "an' mother's another schooner what's jist like him; an' they is lashed together ez tight ez kin be, so that they keeps me in tow ez easy ez Shanghai keeps his tail feathers in tow."

If he had been asked which of the two he liked the better, he would have answered, that one might as well ask him which end of the same stick of candy he liked best.

Ruth cultivated a little flower garden in front of the cottage, and Jim was not long in finding out that she took a deal of pleasure in it. He didn't know much about flowers, yet he knew enough to enable him to distinguish between them and weeds. Against weeds he waged an incessant warfare, so that few of them survived their first appearance above ground.

The hens were rigidly excluded from the flower garden, and if Towzer, the great Newfoundland dog, didn't take care of his footsteps and look carefully after the wag of his enormously bushy tail when he entered the sacred enclosure, Jim would shout in regulation quarterdeck style: "Down you lubber!"

As Towzer didn't like being called a lubber by so important a personage as Jim had become, he either laid down with his nose between his fore-paws, or stalked out of the garden with his tail drooping between his hind legs. But as soon as his young master made his appearance outside the enclosure the tail became as crisp and as curly, and as waggy as ever. Towzer seemed to remember that since Jim's arrival the kennel chain had been seldom used. He was a free dog just so long as he kept close to the boy and went no further in his frolics than Jim's moods permitted.

Jim thought some use ought to be made of the tan pile which had introduced him to Liverpool life. The red dust and pungent odor were not as offensive to him as they were to some people, and he liked the feel of the stuff beneath his feet. Asking permission of the Tanner and his wife, he wheeled the whole pile into the garden, where, under Ruth's direction, he made it serve as an admirable foil to the crescents, squares, triangles and circles into which the garden was divided.

One evening, while the twilight still lingered in the west, Jim was walking among the paths surveying the different parts of the little kingdom. The Tanner and Ruth sat on the doorsteps watching his movements and commenting upon his character.

"He is a perfect fit to us," remarked the Tanner, warmly. "A boy like that is not to be picked up every day. He is as handy in the tannery as he is everywhere else, and if he sticks to the trade, Liverpool

leather will lose none of its reputation, and that is saying a great deal, you know."

Ruth's wrinkled face shone brightly as she answered: "Yes, we are fortunate; for, having neither children or grandchildren, and not even a niece nor a nephew to call us kin, he fills a great vacancy. But what if we should lose him? He is such an active, restless boy, I am afraid he won't stay here very long."

"He is anchored fast enough, never fear. He has had too rough a time of it to be anxious about getting away from us right away," said the Tanner. "However, if it will be any satisfaction to you, I will take him down to the Squire's to-morrow and adopt him according to law, so as to make him as much ours as possible."

"HE IS ANCHORED FAST ENOUGH."

"I wish you would, James; it will place him on a better footing with the villagers and give us a better right to protect him. It is known that he is an American boy, and there are plenty of boys about here who would be just mean enough to persecute him on that account."

"I have already talked with Jim about that part of it, and have put him on his guard. I'll risk him; he knows enough to mind his own business, and has grit enough to compel others to mind theirs. He is neither quarrelsome nor cowardly. If anybody begins to fool with him I hope he will give them a lesson they will remember."

"James, James! What are you saying?"

"Well, the lad has been knocked about enough already, and as sure as my name is Payzant, I shall stick to him through thick and thin, and so will you, Ruth."

"Of course, of course! Yet I do not think we need to borrow trouble about him, he is so willing and pleasant."

"Trouble or not, he shall be taken care of."

The Tanner spoke with a determination that meant much. He knew that sooner or later Jim would be put on trial. He had little fear as to the result, even though he were left to his own resources, but he resolved that he should have fair play. Payzant was a great, strapping fellow, a reasonable man when treated rightly, and no less so when people attempted to tread upon his toes, for he was very prompt to make them stand on their own proper footing. He was much respected in the town, and when he hung out danger signals those who had occasion to observe them, observed them to good effect.

He took Jim down to the Squire's, as was proposed. Squire Seely was an old-fashioned, dignified lawyer, who, according to the usages established once and forever in the British Empire, bore the title of queen's counsel. He was a man of strong English prejudices, and when the Tanner made known his errand, instead of attending to his own business, he showed a disposition to interfere with the Tanner's.

"Is not this a rather hasty move, Mr. Payzant; this adopting a son and heir from the top of a tan pile, and an American at that?" he inquired, quite obtrusively.

"That is my affair," the Tanner replied, curtly,

"But you have the reputation of being possessed of some means, and it doesn't seem just the thing—it isn't exactly loyal to the people hereabout to pick up a vagrant Yankee child after this fashion, especially when you know so little about him," persisted the "queen's counsel."

Jim was in the room, and though the lawyer spoke in a subdued tone, the boy heard every word. Unable to endure the quiet contempt with which he spoke, and reddening to the roots of his hair, he burst in upon the conversation with: ' Mr. Squire, I doesn t know what you is driving at, but my father knows what *he's* erbout for sartin sure. Why does you call me a vagrunt? I doesn't do no gruntin', nohow; I leaves that for hogs an' squires."

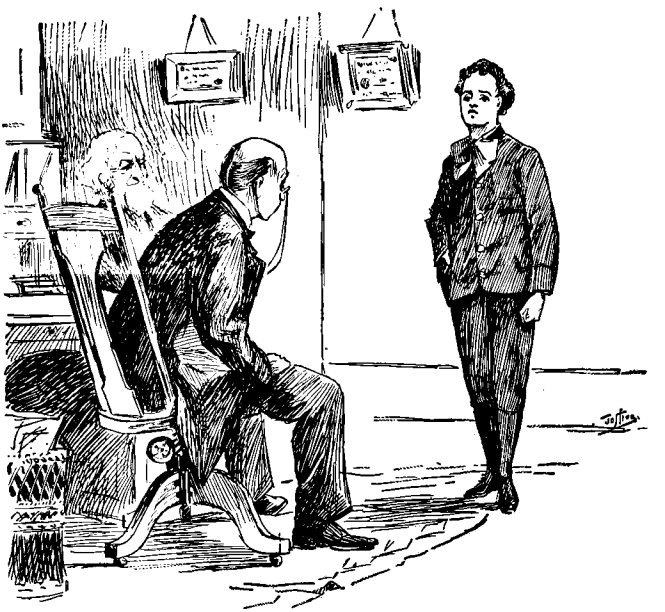
The Squire, entirely taken aback by this unexpected sally, drew himself up with a frown, peered over the tops of his glasses at the boy, and then, overcome by his sense of humor, burst into a hearty laugh, in which the Tanner was not slow to join.

" 'Pon my word!" he exclaimed, still confining his address to the Tanner, but speaking with an entire change of manner and tone, "he is a regular powder keg, and I should think you would be afraid to have him around."

"He is not apt to go off unless there is occasion for it," replied the Tanner, significantly.

"Oh, ah! Well, if you insist upon it, Mr. Payzant, nothing remains for me but to make out the necessary papers."

"I don't want no papers!" said Jim, irrepressibly. "Me an' him is stuck together anyhow, an' ol' Vic herself couldn't split us apart. He tells me to call him father, an' I'd like to see the man what kin keep me from doin' uv it." There were tears in the boy's eyes now, and he was fairly trembling with suppressed excitement. The very thought of any interference with, or even confirmation of, his relationship to the Tanner was a refined torture to him.



"I DOESN'T DO NO GRUNTIN' NOHOW."

"Oh, well," and the lawyer rose several degress in his temperature, or rather in his feeling of respect for the young stranger, "it is going to be just as Mr. Payzant wants it to be, my lad. You have evidently fallen in love with each other, and that, of course, settles it. Yet I shall have to ask you a few questions for form's sake, you know, and if you will answer them we shall soon get through with the business."

"Then you kin give her a free sheet an' let her rip," said Jim, much mollified by the lawyer's changed manner.

"Well, what is your name?" asked the Squire, after filling in the preliminary blanks of a formidable legal document.

"James Mu," giving the name as the Tanner had previously instructed him to do.

"How do you spell it? M-e-w, cat fashion, or m-oo, cow fashion?" inquired the Squire, puzzled by the name, and disposed to relax his dignity a little.

"M-u," replied the Tanner, hastily, fearing lest Jim should get loose again. "It is a short name, easily written, and makes so much the less work for you."

Seeing that the Tanner was giving him a hint not to be too inquisitive, the Squire blandly remarked, as he wrote the two letters: "Yes, such a short name as that would save a deal of writing in the course of a lifetime; but Payzant added to it will balance it up nicely, and keep the boy from feeling lop-sided. If I understood you aright, he has neither father nor mother—no next of kin to consult."

THE BIRTH MARK.

"None," replied the Tanner, looking at Jim sympathetically.

"What is your age?" addressing the lad.

Jim was sensitive to questions like these, and he hesitated for a moment, the while perspiring with embarrassment.

"Don't you know your own age?" asked the Squire forcibly.

"No, sir; but you make me feel like sixty!"

"Well, you are the oldest youngster I ever fell in with!" answered the Squire, laughing heartily, and becoming more and more interested in the boy.

"He is about twelve, I should say," suggested the Tanner, restraining his shaking sides.

"And do you freely consent to become the adopted son of James and Ruth Payzant?"

"I reckon!" was the quick and emphatic reply.

The Squire now began to write down a short personal description, remarking that it might be of use in the future. At the close he asked Jim if he had any marks on his body.

"Lot's on 'em, I reckon!"

"Well, if you have no objection to show the marks, I should like to see some of them."

Removing his jacket and clean check shirt, Jim turned a back to the Squire that was welted, seamed and scarred with the floggings he had received on board the fishing schooner from which he had run away.

"In heaven's name, where did you get those?" asked the Squire in blank amazement.

"God bless my soul!" exclaimed the Tanner at the same time, trembling with indignation, this being the first intimation he had received of the existence of the marks.

"Them's the Captain's marks. He allers laid it onto me when he got the licker in him."

By dint of hard questioning they got a glimpse of the life he had lived on shipboard.

"The confounded scoundrel! He ought to be in the penitentiary!" The Squire was waxing wrathy. "And is that the kind of stuff the Marblehead skippers are made of?"

"No, sir! He was born'd in Yarmouth, an' his folk'ses live there now. He was hired to fish the Yankee schooner."

A consultation followed between the Squire and the Tanner, the result of which was that a watch should be kept over Nova Scotian ports, so that if the brutal Captain could be seized he might be held for his treatment of the boy.

"But this is the kind of a mark we are after," said the Squire, noticing for the first time, that on Jim's right arm there was a brown birth mark, which was as perfect a picture of a cherry as was ever made—stem and all. An American eagle, with shield on breast, was tattooed so near the cherry as to represent him with the stem in his beak.

"'Pon my word, that's a specimen of nature and art combined!" said the Squire, examining it with great interest.

It was the first time the Tanner had seen it, and he asked Jim when it was done.

"One Sunday, last summer. when we was lyin' unner the lee uv the Magdalen Islan's up north."

"What possessed you to have it done in that shape?" asked the Squire.

"Why, ol' Schrinch, ez we called him, seed the cherry, an' he said ez how he'd like to figger her up; an' I let him figger all he wantid, though it made me scrinch all over when he was a doin' uv it. He said the Yankees was boun' to git erway with everything, an' seein' how the cherry made a fust rate world, he made a eagle to match."

"And marked you for a Yankee for all time," said the lawyer.

"I reckon!"

"You never can make a Bluenose nor a British subject of that boy Payzant."

"SHALL I GO FOR THE WHEEL-BARRER?"

"Reckon not!" replied Jim promptly; "leastwise, not ef I knows it."

"It doesn't matter whether he is American or English so long as he makes a man of himself," remarked the Tanner, smilingly.

"But you're the one's what's making a man uv me, and I'll never go back on you, not even if I gets to be President!" and Jim looked at the Tanner with eyes full of admiration and trust.

"That eagle will carry him over the line before he gets his wisdom teeth," persisted the Squire, reflectively.

While Jim was putting on his shirt and jacket the lawyer wrote down a description of the birth mark in the body of the adoption papers. The document completed, he read it aloud, and it was so full of legal terms and repetitions Jim felt almost as badly as if he were being tried for some crime before a full-blown court.

The Squire's wife and eldest daughter did not mend matters, for, on being called in to attest the signatures, they asked him so many questions on their own account, he perspired as if he were in dangerous proximity to "Old Cud's" furnace.

The broad tape and great, round seal of wax were at last affixed to the paper, and Jim was informed that he was now James Payzant, Jr., according to all the forms of law. But for the ladies he would have turned a somersault. As it was, in view of the size of the document, he asked the Tanner: "Shall I go for the wheelbarrer to git it home?"

"I think I can shoulder it," replied the Tanner, falling in with his humor, and glad that the business was over.

"Hurrah, mother! I'm rigged out with tops'ls an' moon scrapers frum stem to starn!" cried Jim, as he burst into the cottage with his legal papers.

Ruth took her hands from the dough she was kneading, and, after washing them carefully, she sat down and read the paper through and through with as much interest as if she were going through the births, marriages and deaths of the village paper.

Chapter VII.

A HANDY FISH MARKET.

THE big document gave Jim an increased sense of his importance and respectability.

"Your name's on paper now," said he to himself, "an' them ribbons an' that almighty big hunk o' wax is to keep you frum gittin' mean an' low. Lay yourself unner the guns uv that affidavy, an' ol' Cud won't never make no kindlin' wood uv you for his fiery furniss."

The Tanner showed him where the paper was put, and told him he was at liberty to look at it whenever he pleased. For several mornings the first thing Jim did, after starting the fire, was to take a peep at the big "dokkymunt" to assure himself that it was there in all its glory. He never touched it, however, unless his hands were clean and his hair combed.

One morning he dreamed that the round seal had turned into a great, red, jolly face, and that the paper had grown into a pair of fat legs and the two flaps of ribbon into long, red arms. And there it stood beside his bed, saying: "I'm cold and lonesome, and I'm going to get into that nice featherbed with you and warm myself The bed is big enough for us both, anyway "

Jim was so st..rtled at the idea of having such a queer bedfellow he woke up earlier than usual, and, hastily dressing himself, went quietly downstairs and peeked into the bureau to see if the paper was in its place. It was there, looking as solid and as grave as ever.

"Hain't nothin' agin its havin' a face ef it wants to," he observed, with a smile of satisfaction, "but ef it goes to gittin' legs an' all the rest uv the fixin's, it might take a notion to git lost where I couldn't find it agin."

After kindling the fire and putting the tea kettle on, he went up to the tannery. It was a foggy morning, and the river, swollen by rains which had fallen during the night, was making music along the shore and over the rocky shoals. He went around the tannery corner and looked upon the rippling waters. While thus engaged he saw the glint of the bright scales of a fish which, in its pranks, had jumped high out of the water.

FISHING WITH A BOW NET.

"There's fish there, an' a dip net in the tannery an' a feller here, an' it's time they held a meetin' erbout gittin' sunthin' for breakfast an' dinner. Ef there's a fish markit unner that stream it's time I'd run onto it." Accordingly, he armed himself with a long-handled bow net, with which he cautiously made his way over the slippery stones in the direction of the pool from which the fish had jumped.

"Tain't like droppin' a codline into salt water an' waitin' for a whopper-of-a-snipper to come along an' almost snake you overboard," he remarked, as he felt his way. "Hows'mever, there must be fun in the style ef you kin only git the fish hanked into your net. Wouldn't I like to git a hold uv sunthin' what'd make mother open them eyes o' hern an' say 'well, well!' four times runnin'?"

On reaching the edge of the pool he paused to study how he might best use the net, he never having used a bow net before. He was not long in deciding what he ought to do. Taking a firm grip of the handle he threw the bow well over the pool, where he dropped it softly into the water, edge down, and then

gave a swift, strong sweep down stream. At the same instant the pole of the net began to quiver like a bundle of life. Rapidly drawing the net toward him and lifting it from the stream, he saw that it was one-third full of a flopping, wriggling tangle of fish. How was he ever to get them ashore? Being much excited and not sufficently cautious, he stepped upon a slippery stone and fell his full length into the stream. But the water being shallow where he fell, he so managed his net as to retain his catch until he could regain his feet.

"You didn't git erway frum me that time, ef I be green at this sort o' thing," he exclaimed. "A feller what has hooked cod outen the Grand Banks ain't a goin' to be fooled on sich a tea kittle stream ez this."

The next moment he stood safely upon the bank, wet as a dish-rag, yet proud as a peacock, when, on reversing his net, he counted eleven fish of four different kinds.

Eager for another haul, he again moved toward the pool, where, after vainly dipping for awhile, he said: "To be sure! What ninnies they'd be to stay here for the fun of bein' cotched, when I've gin 'em a warnin' by scoopin' sich a big hole in their famerly party an' splashin' in the water like a millwheel in the bargin! There's ernuther hole jist like it over yonder, an' like ernough what's left uv them is a holdin' a mournin' party over there."

While he spoke, as if to emphasize his words, a big fish leaped high in air from the center of the pool and fell with a splash, which made Jim exclaim: "Gewhitticur, Jerusalem! Ef that isn't the granddaddy uv them all! Ef I gits him, an' he's good for to eat, mother'll lift up both hands an' father'll twinkle ez ef he'd stuffed his eyes full o' stars."

Carefully securing a position that would give him full command of the pool, he gave a short, sharp dip, but only to be convinced that his net had struck a sunken rock for his pains, so suddenly was it brought up all standing. He was soon undeceived as to the nature of the obstruction, for the net was nearly jerked out of his hands by something struggling within it.

"I'll be kicked ef I hain't struck a mermaid this time!" and he tightened his grip and braced his feet for the work of lifting the bow from the water.

"Bear a hand there, Jim! Roll your net over and over and double it on itself, and grab the bow in your arms and cut for the shore, or he'll break through and get away!" It was the Tanner himself, shouting his imperative directions from the shore at the top of his voice Missing the boy, he had started in search of him, and had come upon him in the act of lifting the fish from the pool.

Jim obeyed directions without comment, but, though the prize was in the net

and the net in his arms, he was by no means sure of victory. His nose was getting such a pounding from the tail of the fish the blood started in streams. Nevertheless, he reached the shore in safety and landed his catch in triumph. The Tanner gave a loud hurrah as he took the net from Jim's hand and, by a practiced turn, emptied the fish upon the green sward of the upper bank.

"What in the name o' big pertaters is it!" exclaimed the boy, panting from the effects of his labors and looking at the giant with feelings bordering on awe.

LANDING A TWENTY-POUNDER.

"It's a salmon! Belongs to the order of nobility; doesn't weigh less than twenty pounds. But he has peeled your nose from top to bottom!"

"I don't keer for no nose, ef the feller is only good to eat!"

"Bless my soul, Jim! Didn't you ever taste of a salmon?'

"Not unless it was fore I was born."

"Well, you'll have a chance now, for that fellow will keep us going for several meals to come."

"An' will *she* like it?"

"Who? Ruth? Why, she dotes on salmon, and she knows how to cook hem, too But come here and let me stop your nose bleed. There, now; hold

up your right hand as high as you can lift it, and keep it there till the bleeding stops" Jim thought it was a queer way to stop his nose from being red, but he soon discovered that it was effectual.

"But what made your clothes so wet?" asked the Tanner, for the first time noticing Jim's drenched condition.

"Water, I reckon. There's more fish on the bank below, an' while I was gittin' uv them, they up an' pulled me into the river."

"Into the river! Look here, my lad, don't you go to trifling with the river; too much water is dangerous." And the Tanner was speaking soberly enough now.

"I've seen oceans an' oceans uv it, an' it'll take more'n a little patch o' water to floor me."

"Can you swim?"

"I reckon I kin, sir. I feel fishy every time I see water. I wants to git into it so much."

"Well, a boy who is not afraid of water generally has the advantage of it," said the Tanner, who wasn't a man to encourage timidity where intelligent courage backed up by experience would answer a good deal better

Jim took the net, now that his nose had stopped bleeding, and the Tanner lifted the salmon, and the two made their way down stream to where the other catch was.

"You have made a splendid morning's work of it, Jim!" exclaimed the Tanner. as soon as he saw the fish. "Why, you must be a born fisherman, though this fog and last night's rain have favored you."

"Ef I was born for anything I'm glad uv it," was the glad reply, for kindly praise always made Jim glisten like a dew drop kissed by the morning sun. "But what kind o' craft does you call them fellers? When it comes to whales, porpusses, dogfish, codfish an' sich critters I'm on deck, but when I strikes sich little dandies ez them I'm keeled over intirely."

Separating five of the smallest fish, which were about seven inches long, round as a corn stalk and bright as silver dollars, the Tanner said: "These are smelt, and very delicate eating they are, too, when properly cooked."

"Then it's no matter ef they is little," and the boy took one of them in his hands that he might inspect it more closely. Now, when smelt are fresh from the water they smell curiously like fresh cucumbers, and, taking a strong sniff at the fish, he said: "Why, it smells ez ef it had spent the night in our cowcumber patch. Is that why they're called smelt?"

"Like enough," replied the Tanner, "for the smell of the company we keep

is apt to stick to us," and he gave Jim such a wink with one of his sharp, gray eyes, that the boy knew he was trying to poke the small end of a sermon over his way.

"Look here, my boy," added the Tanner, very suddenly, "can you say cucumber?"

"Cucumber," responded Jim promptly, seeing that he was in for one of the Tanner's corrections.

"Correct as a book. You are a great hand for driving the cows from places where they have no right to be, and I'm sure you'll keep the cow from the cucumber patch from this time on."

"Cucumber," said Jim again, imitating the Tanner so precisely, that he laughed in spite of himself.

"But you hain't told me what these is," and Jim lifted up two of the catch with which he was especially delighted, adding, "They looks ez ef they had their Sunday clothes on, or had been a gittin' themselves up for a dancin' party."

"Those are blue-blood aristocrats also; salmon trout—cousins to the big fellow, you know. They are young yet; don't weigh more than a pound and a half apiece. But out of that same pool I have caught some weighing as high as six pounds."

"And is they good to eat too? Looks is deceivin', you know."

"We'll have them for breakfast, and then you can decide for yourself. It is my opinion that there won't be much of them left by the time we get through with them."

"An' them yaller fellers over there what looks ez ef they had been rubbin' their sides agin a fire-pot; they hain't no good, I know, coz they looks ez coarse ez a bull-punkin' an' ez homely ez a barn door."

"Those are perch. We don't make much account of them where there are so many better fish; yet they are not to be despised when you can't get anything else."

"And these ——"

"Are some kin o' herrin'," said Jim quickly, taking the words from the Tanner, who was about to tell what the remainder of the fish were. "They doesn't look like reg'ler sea-going craft tho', coz they have a sorter chunk-a-bumbo look erbout their keels what makes 'em look like lan' lubbers what's erfraid o' salt water."

"Yes, they belong to the herring family, but we call them kyacks or alewives."

"That's the fust time I ever heerd o' fish bein' called wives. How did they

get marri'd? Was they marri'd by one o' them Baptist preachers what dipped the folks in the river last Sunday?"

The Tanner was a Wesleyan Methodist, but being on the best of terms with the Baptist clergyman of the place he chucklingly resolved to give him the benefit of Jim's utterance the first time he saw him, although, on general principles, he disapproved of jesting on religious subjects. Before the smile had faded from his face, Jim repeated the word alewives two or three times, for the more he thought of it, the more it puzzled him.

"It's a reg'ler double-end curiosity!" he finally exclaimed; "for there's your ale an' there's your wives. What's ale an' wives got to do with fish, anyway? I reckon you is jist trying to warm me up with one of your jokes."

"No, I am not joking, Jim; but you remind me that it is a queer mix up. I can give no clear account of the origin of the name, though I can give a guess at it. Women who keep ale houses in England are called alewives. River herring are salted and smoked, and thus prepared they used to keep them on the ale counters or bars for the free use of customers who frequent such kind of places; and as they made people thirsty they thus increased the sale of the ale, and so came to be called alewives, too."

"Orter been called hellwives!" was the emphatic answer. "My captain was allers drinkin' beer, an' when he had the most beer in him he had the most devil in him, an' I got licked the wust. I'm gonter chuck them herrin' into the river again. We don't want no hellwives erbout us; leastwise, I don't want no more lickin's."

Thinking of Jim's scarred back, and seeing how quickly and sorely he referred to the treatment he had received under his drunken captain, the Tanner responded: "Never fear, Jim; if anybody undertakes to lick you while you are with me, he'll get licked himself. But suppose we take the herring home and give them to the hogs."

"We kin do that, an' I wish we could do the same thing with all the beer an' licker in the world; it's only fit for hogs, anyway."

"I wish we could; no good ever came from intoxicating drinks. But, look here, if you don't hurry home the cold water in your clothes won't be the best thing in the world for you."

"Wall, I do begin to feel goose-fleshy all over, that's a fact; an' some warm clothes wouldn't feel bad. Many a time when I've got wet I've had to jist stan' in my clothes till they dried upon my back, an' now I've got duds ernough to rig out Queen Victoria."

Ruth was wondering what had become of her husband and the boy, when the

door opened and Jim, holding up the salmon to view, said: "Here, mother, I've been an' gone an' got a reg'ler bouncer for dinner."

"Well, well, well, well! Did you catch that yourself?" cried she, holding her hands up as high as she could get them.

"Believe I did; but ef there'd been two on 'em, I'd a been out to sea by this time, an' like ernough they'd a been kalkilatin' how I'd taste best, biled, baked or fried."

"But bless me—your nose and your clothes! What have you been doing?" and Ruth pulled her spectacles down from her hair until they enabled her to survey Jim's damages to their full extent.

"BUT BLESS ME."

"Why, you don't expect a feller to go to markit for fish an' not pay anythin' for 'em? I got 'em cheap ernough anyway."

She would not rest satisfied until she had learned the truth, and when she found that he had fallen into the river, her fears were aroused, and she lectured him quite roundly.

While he was changing his clothes the Tanner scaled the trout and smelt, and it was not many minutes before they were sizzling in the frying pan at a great rate, Ruth having put in butter enough to set them swimming again. She didn't believe in cooking such delicate fry in pork fat.

"My goodness, how you has scud them fellers up," said Jim, when he came down and saw the fish in the pan.

"Fresh from the water, fit for the platter," replied Ruth, quoting a local proverb.

"Yesterday's fish, not fit for the dish," added the Tanner, quoting another, and snuffing the odor with a keen relish.

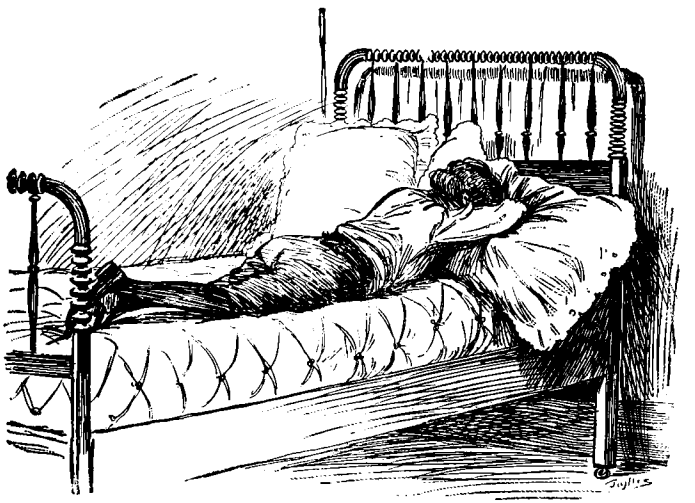
" 'Cepting when they is turned into salt junk, an' you has an appetite like a shark," suggested Jim, to the great amusement of the Tanner and his wife.

While they were eating breakfast, the Tanner asked Jim if he had ever fished with flies. He had never heard of such a thing, and became much interested in the description of the process, for the Tanner was an enthusiastic angler.

"I have a salmon rod," said he, "and a beauty it is, too, with four joints and a click reel, silk line, flies and all the rest of the outfit, and hereafter you shall have it for your own."

"A reg'ler rod with store clothes on!" the boy exclaimed, resting the butt end of his knife upon the table and leaning back in his chair and looking at the Tanner as if he had a halo of glory around his head.

"Yes, it is a dandy, and, although I have caught many a salmon with it, it is



RESULT OF RECOLLECTIONS.

as good as new from tip to butt. I'll teach you how to use it. I'm sure you will make one of the best fly fishers on the river."

Jim's fingers were already tingling for the touch of the rod. How to express his gratitude he knew not, but he finally said: "Ef I could only say one of your long prayers, I'd save you the trouble of sayin' it this blessed mornin', but seein' ez how I can't, I'll have to let you stick it through yourself."

Not being prepared for this kind of thanksgiving, the Tanner swallowed his coffee the wrong way, and made such a fuss between his laughing and coughing that Jim, seriously alarmed, repeated the advice he had given once before: "Ef

you'll jist shut your mouth ez tight ez a clam an' sock in through your nose like a hurricane you'll send the choke to Jerusalem as slick ez a slushed mast."

This only made matters worse, and Ruth's fat sides moved up and down like the waves of the sea. It was some time before the trio settled to their plates again.

There was something in the taste of the trout which stirred Jim's memory, so that he presently began to wipe his eyes with the cuff of his sleeve. Thinking that his feelings had been touched by the excess of their merriment, Ruth, looking tenderly at him, asked: "What is the matter, Jim?"

Absently the boy looked into space with that far-off, plaintive look of his, and replied: "This is the kind of breakfast you gave me that morning you took me frum the tan pile an' let me come here. This is the very kind o' fish I had then!"

The recollection was too overpowering for his quick sensibilities, and, pushing back his chair, he left the room. Running upstairs, two steps at a time, he fled into his room, where, throwing himself upon his bed face down, he became convulsed with sobs, notwithstanding his heroic attempts to control himself.

Payzant and his wife finished the meal in silence, and, as the Tanner knew that if he undertook to say prayers that morning he should have a watery time of it, he marched out of the house as stiffly as if the rheumatism had kinked every joint in his body. Ruth watched him until he disappeared, the while using the corner of her apron to staunch the tears that were streaming from her own eyes.

Chapter VIII

PUTTING HIS FOOT DOWN.

RESENTLY Jim's head came up from the pillow as suddenly as it had gone down. Leaping to the floor, he exclaimed: "This is a pretty time o' day to be a wobblin' erbout in bed an' a snufflin' ez ef you'd been soused in the sea. Ef you doesn't stop this, Jim, you'll be an everlastin' softy. Your foot has got to go down on this sort o' thing. What's the use o' cryin' every time you thinks on the tan pile an' what's come to you? It'll be time ernough to whimper when you gits too bad to stay here, an' I guess there'll be a wrastlin' time uv it 'fore that day comes."

When the Tanner reached the tannery he was surprised to find Jim hard at work scraping the hair from a hide, and looking as solid as if he had just been chipped out of a granite ledge. Not knowing what else to do under the circumstances he began to whistle, and this was such an unusual thing for him, Jim began to laugh, seeing which, the puckers around the Tanner's lips disappeared to make room for the broad smile that spread over his face.

"What a pair of boys we are, to be sure!" he exclaimed, glancing at Jim and winking as if a dozen suns were shining directly into his eyes.

"Ef you only had a young skin on an' short legs, I'd have a little brother all to myself, an' we'd have a high ol' time when we piled into that bed upstairs at night," responded Jim. Then thinking that perhaps he had gone too far, he added: "But I reckon two young Jims'd be most too much for mother, an' ef I didn't have a hull father to ballast me I might capsize bottom up entirely."

"Well, we'll call it a partnership, Jim. You shall furnish the young-head capital and I'll furnish the old-head capital, and so, between us, that part of the world which lies inside of our fences shan't suffer for want of the right kind of business. We can be young only once, my boy; but while we are young we can so live as to carry the best part of our youth into our old age. Possibly you may get to feeling too old because you are so much in my company, yet, on the other hand, I may get to feeling too frisky from being so much with you. It is a poor rule that doesn't work both ways, you know. I've seen old sheep cut up some queer shines when the lambs rollicked in the sunshine."

"Wall, so long ez there's lots an' lots o' shines in your eyes, it don t make no diff'runce ef they doesn't get ez low down ez your legs. What's in them boots o' yours is wuth more'n all the sheep an' lambs I ever seed or heern on."

Shortly afterward Jim had occasion to go out into the tannery yard, where, from sheer excess of happiness, he turned somersault after somersault among the soft, red tan piles. In the very middle of one of his double somersaults the Tanner caught sight of him through an opening in the tannery wall.

"Bless my soul!" he exclaimed, softly, "if all the Yankee boys are like him, I don't wonder at their having such lively times over there in the United States; it's enough to make any nation light headed."

"I reckon these tan piles hain't a gonter open my sluices any more," said Jim, pausing in his gambols and looking over the red piles with the eye of a general who had won a great victory. To settle the business, once for all, however, he again began to revolve like a wheel from the top of the highest pile. The first round gave him so much pleasure, he tried it again. When he stopped at the bottom he found himself sitting on the ground with his leathern apron covering his head. Throwing the apron back from his face, he saw more than he had bargained for.

There, in the public road, not more than twenty feet from where he sat, stood two bright girls who were on their way to school. One was Malvina Freeman, aged twelve, and the other Sylvia Seely, the Squire's youngest daughter aged thirteen. They had just turned the corner of the winding road, and had

come through a clump of fir trees, and seeing a tangle of arms, legs and leather apron flying down the sides of one of the tan piles, they naturally stopped to see what sort of a circus the Tanner had started in his tanyard.

When the head came from under the apron and saw that four wondering eyes were bent upon it, it gathered its legs out of the tan dust and made a bee-line for the tannery, while the girls went on their way chattering like a pair of magpies.

Having witnessed the whole affair the Tanner's face was cris-cringled in every direction when Jim returned to his scraping bench.

HAD STOPPED TO SEE THE CIRCUS.

"What made you run so?" asked the Tanner.

Seeing that the cat was out of the bag, Jim's face turned quite red, but as he was never afraid to answer any question the Tanner asked, he replied: "There was two on 'em an' only one o' me, an' I'm an awful coward when it comes to gals."

"But those were very nice girls!"

"Sweet as vi'lets; an' that's jist the reason I legged it so. One doesn't like to be seen cuttin' up when there's nice girls to see him."

"Girls cut up themselves sometimes."

"Really, now!" incredously, for Jim had had a small chance in the course of his life to learn much about girls.

"Yes, really; and why not? You would'nt have them looking like Sunday school scholars all the time, would you?"

"No; that would be the awfullest thing what could ever be!'

"Not quite so bad as that Jim; yet there is no reason why girls shouldn't be merry, as well as boys, once in a while. Vina and Vi are just the kind of girls I like; they know how to laugh without turning themselves into gigglets."

HANDS THEM OVER TO VI.

"What's a gigglet? Never heerd o' them critters erfore."

"A gigglet is a girl that laughs at nothing and takes most of her time to do it in."

"I'd ruther be a girl gigglet than a boy crylet any time, an' ef you'll forgive me I'll never break up no more mornin' prayer meetin's by cryin' erfore the cryin' place gits erlong. I've sot my foot down on that for good. A boy what runs to cry every time his heart begins to kick is wuss'n a jelly fish what hain't got no bones nur nothin' but wiggles."

Seeing that Jim reverted to his morning struggles with such keen mortification, and admiring the pluck underlying his comments, the Tanner, in order to lessen his shame without decreasing his resolution, diverted his attention to other subjects.

The conversation presently subsided into the silence of work, for fifty hides had just been taken from the vats for scraping and dressing. But though Jim was both busy and silent he couldn't help thinking about Vi Seely's eyes, and the look he got from them. As compared with this Vina Freeman's glances didn't seem worth remembering.

And there was a reason for the difference. The day the adoption papers were made out, Vi heard her father and mother talking about the boy and the marks he had on his back, and, although they were inclined to question the Tanner's wisdom in adopting the boy, her sympathies were strongly with him. And when she saw him through the fence, notwithstanding the absurdity of the appearance he made, her sympathy showed itself in her glance, and he was quick enough to see it in spite of his confusion of face.

Not long after the tan pile somersaults and leather apron revelations, Jim did a bold thing for one who was so much afraid of girls. It was just between the glow of sunset and the gathering gray of the twilight. Vi was gathering wild roses in the fence corners of the Squire's field, which adjoined the lower boundary of the Tanner's lot. Seeing her occupation, Jim gathered a cluster of

A YOUTHFUL POET.

beautiful red and white roses from Ruth's bushes, and, going down to the division fence, he handed them over to Vi, who accepted them in the prettiest manner imaginable. And what is more surprising, they stood and talked together for some little time, and might have talked longer had not the sharp, shrill voice of Vi's mother been heard peremptorily calling her back to the house.

It was enough for Jim that his roses had been accepted and that he had stood face to face with the girl of whom Ruth had so often spoken in such terms of motherly admiration. Her clear brownish eyes, round, dimpled cheeks, dark wavy hair, pretty pouting lips, shining teeth and softly modulated voice made such an impression upon him, he went back to the cottage feeling several inches taller than when he left it.

When he went to his room that night a piece of brown paper lay on his table, and as he had the stump of a lead pencil in his pocket and several queer

feelings in his heart and thoughts in his head, he sat down and began to scrawl upon the paper. And if the reader will believe it, this is what he wrote:

Ef Vi was my sister an' I had lots o' munny,
I'd bild hur a pallis an' feed hur on hunny;
An' give hur a wagun all made uv gold,
An' tan hur sum shoes what ud never grow old.
The Tanner an' Ruth shud set by her side
Whenever she wanted to go for a ride;
For uv all the sweet gals what I ever seed,
This sweet, Silvur Seele jist takes the lede.
I'd driv hur myself, dresed up like a dandy,
An' at every shop ud by hur sum candy.
Hur pokits with raisins an' dimons I'd fil
An' never driv whar thar wus eny ruff hil.

Jim went to bed and slept so soundly after writing this stupendous production that he forgot all about the paper in the morning and left it upon the table. When Ruth went to clear up his room she read it, and was so overcome with the evidence of Jim's genius that she sat down in a chair and well-welled for several seconds. Unable to keep her secret she transferred the paper to the Tanner, who, after reading it, folded it and pocketed it, saying: "How in the world did the lad make up such a jingle as that? Why, Ruth, it's enough to frighten one. What if he should turn out to be a regular Sir Walter Scott or a Longfellow?"

"The Lord's will be done!" said Ruth, piously, but rather indefinitely.

The response touched the Tanner's funny spot, and he laughed so loudly, Ruth forgot her solemnity and became as merry as he.

During the day while Jim and the Tanner were at work in the tannery, and while they were joking with each other, as they frequently did, the Tanner said: "Jim, which do you like best, girls or poetry?"

The boy was so taken aback by the question, and, withal, so mixed up between the Tanner's manner and words, he was as dumb as the wooden horse over which he was working.

"I like girls that know something about poetry," continued the Tanner, seeing that the boy was so silent; "but perhaps you like poetry that says something about girls; such as this, for instance: 'Ef Vi was my sister an' I had lots of money.' "

"I jist know'd you was fishin' for gudgeons!" exclaimed Jim, interrupting the quotation and turning very red in the face, "an' you has hooked me for this time, dead sure."

One of the beautiful characteristics of the intercourse of these two Jims was the perfect freedom and confidence existing between them. The Tanner had

no thought of shocking the boy or playing rudely with any of his private affairs; nor did the boy think there was anything to be ashamed of in the simple fact of his indulging in a "writin' fit," as he afterwards called it.

"Wall, I do wish Vi was my sister," was the frank and ingenuous admission made without any hesitation, whatever.

"And I don't blame you my boy," was the quick reply.

"But I want to say to you, Jim, I didn't find the paper. You mustn't think that I have been prowling around your room. An Englishman's house is his castle, and your room must be considered your castle. Ruth found the paper while clearing up, and she thought it so good she brought it to me. I thought it good, too, and so I put it in my pocket that I might find an opportunity to say to you that if you never write anything worse than that you will do very well, indeed. And, as for Vi, you can't write anything too good about her. And now, here is the paper, which I give back into your keeping."

The instant Jim got the paper into his hands he tore it into pieces, which he flung into one of the vats, saying: "I orter git in there an' git a tannin' for myself."

"But I have committed the words to memory, Jim, and I shall remember them as long as I live."

"Now you is making fun uv me, for certin!"

"Bless you, boy! I wouldn't make fun of you for the world." And the Tanner spoke so earnestly, Jim found he required all his resolution to keep his foot down.

"You have written rhymes before, Jim."

"Does you mean jingled words?"

"Yes, you may call it that if you wish."

"When I was at the poor farm an' had nothin' else to do, I uster git unner the trees an' sorter try it on."

"But who taught you in the first place?"

"Nobuddy never killed hisself learnin' me anything. I jist let myself rip whenever I felt like it, an' that was all there was of it."

"Do you remember any of the words you wrote at that time."

"I remember one thing I couldn't forgit nohow, coz I felt so down in the mouth when I writ it."

"What was it, Jim?"

"Does you want to git my foot up agin?"

"No, no! I want to help you keep it down like a man."

Thus encouraged, Jim lifted his head, and, looking the Tanner straight in

the face, slowly recited the following words, of which he afterward furnished the Tanner a copy in this form:

Oh, what am I here for? I'd like to know;
An' whar did I cum frum, and' how did I grow?
An' why hain't I got no father an' mother?
An' no little sister, an' likewise no brother?

Last Sunday a preacher told us uv God,
An' said sunthin' 'bout a blossomin' rod;
Ef God know'd his bizness he'd take me erway,
An' not let me stay here another long day.

The boss he is cross, an' ef God is like him,
What's gonter become uv this mizzible Jim?
An' that woman what feeds us as ef we was pigs,
Blows us all the time an' isn't wuth jiggs.

I looks like a skeer-crow what's made outen rags,
An' old hats an' shoes an' castaway bags:
I feel like a feller what's fell in the dirt,
An' wiggles eroun' becoz he is hurt.

Ef ever I gits frum this horrerble place,
I'll cut like a hoss what's runnin' a race
An' keep on a goin' till I fetches up
Whar they won't kick me roun' like a mangy pup.

During the recitation of the lines the Tanner's face worked like a pond of water in a gale of wind, notwithstanding his resolution to keep his foot down upon his own feelings. Nor did Jim help matters, when, having finished the lines, he said: "I've fetched up at last, father! There's no more poor farm for me, an' you musn't go to feelin' bad, for now I'm like a bird what has a nest all to itself."

"God bless your soul, Jim!" exclaimed the Tanner, hysterically. "But the rod is blossoming at last, and if it doesn't bring you something of beauty, sweetness and fruitfulness it sha'n't be our fault. And now I want you to promise me one thing."

"I'll promise you a hunnerd, ef it takes a year to keep 'em," said the lad, quickly, watching the Tanner's face with eager eyes.

"Whenever you feel like writing you must drop everything and write away for dear life. You need not think that you must always show it to me, yet, if you should wish to do it, so much the better. I'll get you a blank book, and, besides, that copy of Sir Walter Scott you have been reading so much lately you shall have for your own."

"To take up to my room for my own, an' dig into it ez much ez I please?"

"Yes, and as many other books as you want. But there's Ruth calling us to dinner. Won't you recite the verses to her sometime?"

"Ef she wants me to, I will, though I'd ruther keep 'em stowed down in the hold. When God's tuk keer on you, you doesn't have to keep rakin' up his disrememberin's, you know."

The Tanner felt in duty bound to correct Jim's idea of the forgetfulness of God, but when he tried to shape his thoughts to meet the case, he gave it up, and concluded that he would trust to time and Ruth to correct any mistakes the boy might be laboring under. He didn't believe in driving spikes into shingles, or cramming with meat before the teeth had come.

RACING HOME FOR DINNER.

When the two came out of the tannery door the Tanner challenged Jim to a race for dinner. The banter was promptly accepted, and, notwithstanding his years, the Tanner, thanks to a pair of long legs, reached the cottage a hundred feet in advance of Jim; but when he appeared before Ruth he was so blown he had to sit down to give his breath a chance to overtake him.

Jim entered just in time to hear Ruth say: "What will the church say to such goings on? It's perfectly scandalous!"

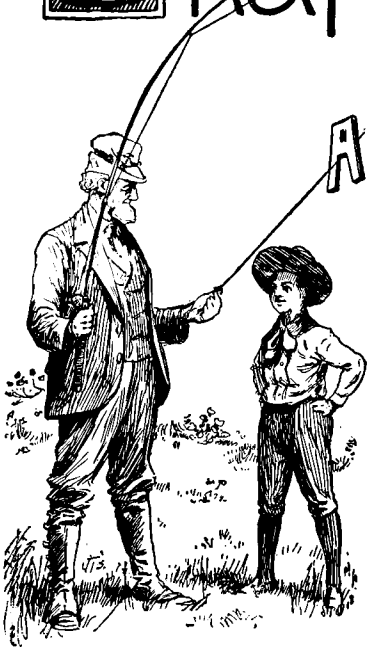
Before the Tanner could get his breath for reply, Jim said: "Ef the church doesn't believe in legs, it orter be chucked inter the river an' sprout fins like the fishes. Ef your legs wanter go, you must give 'em a show, an' run ef you kin, like the dickens."

"Poetry, Jim! It's leaking out of you like molasses from a hogshead!" gasped the Tanner.

"Must be hogshead po'try, then!"

Ruth pushed her spectacles up into her hair so that she could get a chance to look at the two boys with her naked eyes, but as she only got laughed at for her pains she turned and brought on the dinner.

Chapter IX.



A FEATHERED FISH.

FTER dinner the Tanner took Ruth aside and told her about Jim's poorhouse poem, which so excited her sympathy and curiosity, she called to the boy as he was about to leave the house, and begged of him to repeat it to her.

After assuring himself that the Tanner had left the house, Jim said: "I promised him I would ef you axed me, but I didn't think he'd tell you about it so soon. You'll only laugh to split, coz it hain't no hymn like what you sings in church."

He recited the words, but Ruth, instead of laughing, so deluged the corner of her apron it looked as if it had been a fishing in a pail of water. Indeed, she was so wrought up over it, that she abruptly left him and took refuge in her bedroom.

Jim started for the tannery, saying to himself: "What a pump-handle I am, to be sure! Next thing I knows, her apron'll be givin' me Hail Columby for gittin' it wet. I'll never say them things agin for nobuddy; leastwise, not onless he an' she fishes 'em outen me in spite o' deep water. Reckon she's gone to her bedroom to git her foot down. Hope

she'll soon git sunthin' to laugh at what'll set her up agin like a robin in a cherry tree."

Ruth did get her laugh, but it came in a strange way. When Jim reached the tannery he found the Tanner standing in the door examining the salmon rod.

"Now," said he, "we'll go down the river and take our nooning out in learning how to shake this stick over the river. Of course, there are no fish foolish enough to bite in the full eye of the day, but I'll teach you how to use a fly, and then, if the weather should be cloudy in the morning, you can try the rod for yourself. The salmon have not yet entirely stopped running, and if you are as handy with the rod as you are with the net, you may have some sport before you tackle the hides for the day's work."

While on the way down to the stream, Jim carried the rod, which was quite an expensive one, made of split bamboo, and almost as strong and as springy as the finest of steel.

"It's a Yankee rod," said the Tanner, "which was given to me by an American who came here to fish five years ago. Above Milton he struck a big salmon, but while he was playing him up stream he slipped from a rock and fell into the rapids. I was with him and managed to fish him out. I thought he would never come to life again. He did, however, and next day made up for his mishap by killing several salmon. When he went away he insisted upon making me a present of the rod and a book of flies—flies enough to last for a lifetime."

"Good for him!" exclaimed Jim, gratefully; "he was a clipper-cut Yankee, an' seein' ez how the rod is cut outen the same block, I'll take clipper keer on it. Is this the wheel what you steers her by?" And Jim caressed the handsome click-reel attached to the rod as if it were a thing of life.

"Not exactly," replied the Tanner, smiling, "but it is the reel by which you steer the fish to the shore when once you have got hold of him."

They had now reached the bank of the stream, and the Tanner, putting on a large, gorgeous salmon fly made of red and brown feathers, brightened with a slight dash of white and gold, drew the lines through the loops with such a quick movement the reel began to sing as if in anticipation of sport. After throwing the fly far out into the stream several times with the skill and precision of an old and practised angler, he placed the rod in Jim's hands and stood by to watch his experiments.

"It's touch and go," said he, "you no sooner let it touch the water than you up with it again, as if it were a swallow just taking a dip for the fun of it."

Jim's response showed that he was an apt scholar: "'Tain't like chuckin' a hunk o' clam or a herrin' into the sea with a splash like an ancher, an' lettin'

her sink till you gits tired o' playin' out cable." He was thinking of his cod-fishing experience on the Grand Banks and among the Magdalen Islands.

"No, the splashing will come when your game jumps for the fly and finds that he has caught a sore mouth for his pains," said the Tanner, grimly, and somewhat dubiously, for he never could quite rid himself of the thought of the suffering that was experienced at the other end of the line while pleasure reeled in at the butt. "When he begins to splash and makes a run you will have to let him go, and when he takes a notion to jump, or to make a turn toward you, you'll have to stir your stumps to prevent your line from getting slack. 'Slack your fish, lose your wish,' is a fisherman's proverb, you know."

Jim repeated the proverb, and added: "Reckon I kin remember that ez easy ez I kin eat."

"A taut line is one-half the battle in life as well as in fishing, Jim; it is slackness that does the mischief."

They spent nearly an hour in experimenting with different lengths of line, and it was with keen satisfaction the Tanner noticed how quickly Jim took his hints, and how deftly he handled both rod and line. The Tanner was a great sportsman, and naturally desirous that the lad should cultivate a love for everything that would serve as a healthy diversion.

Having taught Jim how to reel his line, remove his fly, disjoint his rod and sack it, the Tanner led the way to the tannery, where they worked with a will all the rest of the afternoon. When Jim went to bed that night he carried the rod to his room with him, and he fell asleep full of gratitude and great expectations. Indeed, he was as full as a Christmas stocking.

He slept so soundly he could scarcely believe his senses when he heard Shanghai's morning call and saw that it was broad daylight. Taking the rod, he hastily descended to the kitchen, where he paused long enough to set things going for Ruth's appearance, and then went out to "size up the weather."

The sky was overcast with heavy clouds, the skirts of which dragged over the hills in ragged tatters. The brisk wind blew thin veils of vapors over the stream, and everything wore that somber gray which the fastidious angler so delights to see. Jim could not, thus early in his novitiate, take in all the fine points of fishing weather, yet he remembered enough of the Tanner's description to recognize the favorable conditions of the morning. He was so eager to make his first attempt at whipping the stream he forgot to give Shanghai and his flock their accustomed supply. When he went up the stream he failed to notice that the plumed patriarch and all his tribe were following closely and sadly at his heels

Not far above the tannery there was a deep swirling eddy, on the surface of which the foam was going round and round in large flossy, yellowish white masses. The Tanner had pointed out the pool the previous day as a favorite lurking place for big fish, and had also told Jim that when the foam was most abundant upon the surface the chances for a successful throw were greatly increased. Further, he had taken many large salmon from that very pool.

"Hope I may git a whopper uv a bite what'll make me feel ez ef I was struck by a baby streak o' lightnin'," said Jim, as he completed his preparations and

"SHANG" POUNCED UPON IT.

stood on the bank ready to make his first throw among the foam flakes. Studying his position for a moment, and trembling with an eagerness which made his movements a little uncertain, he let the fly loose from between his thumb and forefinger, and instantly grasping the butt of the rod with both hands he gave a movement to the tip which carried the line on a backward swing with graceful precision. But, being more anxious for what was before him than careful of what was behind, his fly caught in a burdock on the high bank at the very instant Shanghai was looking among its leaves for something to eat. The moment the artificial fly landed on the leaf the rooster pounced upon it with all his might, and

immediately became hooked through the upper part of his bill. When Jim looked behind him to see what had befallen his fly he beheld Shanghai with wide out-stretched wings and thrumming drumsticks making in the direction of the cottage with all his speed, and his alarmed flock following hard after. Meanwhile, the rod was bending like a rainbow, the line running like lightning, and the reel singing like a mocking bird.

Undertaking to thumb his line to check the play, Jim felt that baby lightning had struck him sure enough, for the line cut his thumb almost to the bone.

"Avast there, you mizzible lan'lubber!" he shouted, oblivious of the squawking rooster's torment, and fearing only for the safety of his clipper rod and fishing tackle.

FEATHERED FISH.

"Whoa! you doggoned old goose!" he continued, as the rooster sped on his headlong way, closely escorted by his now wildly cackling harem.

"You consarned, rat-headed sculpin!" and Jim was getting red hot in both his temper and his expletives, for when he undertook to seize the handle of his reel in order to check the motions of the rooster, he received a knock which almost paralyzed his fingers.

Away went Shanghai and his flock, and away went Jim, clambering up the bank after them, and all three parties making more and stranger noises than had been heard in that neighborhood for many a day.

"Blest ef this hain't ther how'd-yer-doest fishin' what I ever heerd on!" exclaimed Jim, pantingly, while doing his utmost to keep up with his fleeing victim. Presently Shanghai began to slacken his speed and to zig-zag in his course, and, as there was now a great danger of tangling his line or snapping it in twain, Jim began to reel in, saying by way of applying the Tanner's proverb: "Slack your rooster, an' you're a gone gooster."

Feeling the additional sting of the check, Shanghai started off with a fresh

bound which made Jim begin to think that the rod had changed ends and that he was the one who was caught.

"Blamed ef the hull thing hasn't gone wrong end foremost an' cotched a reg'ler sucker."

Ruth was in the kitchen seething the oatmeal porridge for breakfast. Happening to look out of the window, which faced up the river, she caught sight of the procession bearing down upon the cottage, and, partly surmising what had happened, she called to her husband, who was in the sitting room devoutly studying the portion of Scripture he was to read that morning after breakfast.

"James, James, Jim has hooked the rooster, and knocked another prayer on the head. We shall all turn heathen! Do go out and help him as soon as ever you can go!" She was so excited and spoke so hurriedly, she was getting things decidedly mixed in her mind.

Whenever Shanghai got into any kind of trouble he always made directly for the kitchen door, and when the Tanner went out he found him lying there with bedraggled wings flapping on the ground and with his bleeding mouth venting sounds most pitiful to hear.

Jim was near, reeling up the slack with such diligent regard for the directions given to him the day before that the Tanner, notwithstanding his sympathy for the unfortunate fowl, burst into an uncontrollable fit of laughter.

Nor was it possible for Ruth to keep her grave, old face entirely straight, though, in view of her husband's boisterousness, she chidingly exclaimed: "James, James, haven't you just been reading your Bible? And do you suppose that poor rooster can take any enjoyment in this sort of thing?"

This so increased the Tanner's mirth, it was some time before he could master himself sufficiently to direct Jim to go into the house and fetch him the cut-nippers. When these were brought he cut the barb of the hook away, and, disengaging the rest of the hook from the rooster's bill, stroked him down a moment, as if in expiation of his mirth, and then allowed him to go. The poor bird walked off shaking his head with an energy which showed that at that particular moment he dissented from everything in the universe.

"Well, Jim," asked the Tanner, looking at the discomfited lad, "what sort of luck do you call that?"

"Fool's luck, I reckon," was the unexpectedly prompt reply. "I wasn't thinkin' o' hindsight when I throw'd. But I'd a thought that a blamed critter what had wor'd feathers all his born days might a know'd the diff'runce atween a feathered hook an' a green grasshopper, anyway. He gave me sich a skeer he almost draw'd the soul outen my body. How-

s'mever, I do pity his poor, old mouth; it must be feelin' almost ez bad ez ef his head was cut smack off."

"Well, no harm has come to the rod," said the Tanner, taking it from Jim and looking it over carefully.

"But it was a mighty stiff gale for a fust trip, an' I'd ez much ez I could do to steer clear o' breakers; hows'mever, she didn't git no slack on me."

"I wonder what Shanghai's opinions are about the business He must have been very hungry to tackle such a fly as that."

STOLE OUT AND SHUT THE HENHOUSE DOOR.

"There! Now I know what set the blamed critters a follerin' me ez ef they was lambs follerin' an old sheep. I forgot to feed 'em erfore I histed sails for the trip. I'll go an' do it now."

And he started off for an extra allowance for the flock. Having suffered so much for the want of food himself, the very thought of the flock's being hungry made him uneasy. Shanghai ate his full portion, and not long after mounted the wood pile and crowed as lustily as ever, although his voice, as Jim remarked, was a little hoarse.

At the breakfast table Jim gave a comical description of his experience while being dragged toward the cottage after the rooster, Ruth and the Tanner could scarcely eat for laughter. After breakfast Ruth went and got the big Bible and carried it to the Tanner, but her eyes not yet having ceased their twinklings, they so tickled her husband that he said: "Ruth, I think the Lord will excuse us this morning if we don't pray."

But Jim was always uneasy when he thought of himself as the cause of the omission of the regular order of the cottage life, and, as he went on his way to the tannery alone, he said to himself, very seriously: "Ef I don't look out I'll be one o' them upsettin' sins what father read erbout yisterday mornin', But I swan I didn't go for to do it!"

The simple fact, however, was that the Tanner was a man of a profoundly reverential character, who couldn't pray unless things were suitably dove-tailed together. That evening he made up for the morning omission by a prayer of unusual fervency and length, and both Ruth and Jim were relieved from a great burden.

"But before Jim went to bed, he stole out and shut the henhouse door, saying: "I'm a gonter try it agin in the mornin', an' I'm blest ef I'm gonter have either old Shang or myself upsettin' any more fishin' or prayin'."

SHANG TURNED TAIL AND MADE FOR THE KITCHEN DOOR.

He was at the pool early in the morning. This time he attached a smaller fly to his line and contented himself with shorter casts. He caught no salmon, but he succeeded in killing three fine trout and in getting his first taste of a sport which subsequently afforded him a great deal of pleasure.

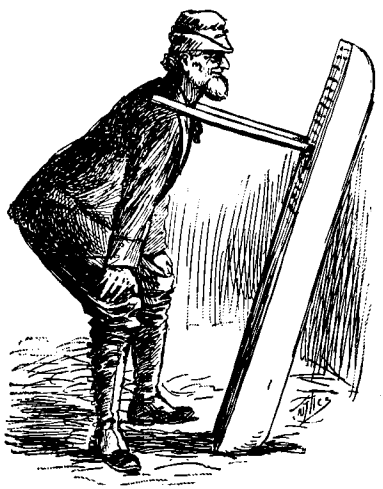
Before the season closed he caught several grilse, or young salmon, and had won the reputation of being an expert fly fisher.

What with the dip net and the rod he supplied the cottage with all the fresh fish it needed, and this, too, without interfering with his regular tanner work.

It was some time before Shang could be induced to bite at anything in the insect line again. Jim saw him studying a fat grasshopper one day, and watched his movements with a good deal of mirth. After slanting his head and cocking his eye at the grasshopper for a moment, Shang turned tail and made for the kitchen door, while a half-grown rooster, less experienced in the misfortunes of life and more hopeful of the results of proper enterprise, came along and swallowed the grasshopper without compunction or hurt.

Chapter X

JIM'S HORSE.



ONE foggy, drizzly day, Jim got leave to go up the river fishing, there being a good trouting sky and wind. Feeling lonely in his absence, the Tanner busied himself with making a general clear-up of the scraping room in the tannery. This room contained the scraping benches or horses upon which the hides were stripped of their hair after they were brought from the vats. These horses had two wooden legs at one end, the other end resting upon the floor, giving the bench an incline of about forty-five degrees. The top, or outer side, was rounded like the surface of a slab cut from the outside of a log; the inner, or under side, being flat. In bustling around the room the Tanner upset Jim's horse so that it lay with its two legs up in the air. On the smoothly planed under side he found some pencil scrawls, which he recognized as Jim's hand-writing. Getting down on his knees he began to decipher it with as much zeal as if he were a great explorer and scholar deciphering

an inscription among Egyptian or Aztec ruins. The more he deciphered, the more he chuckled, for this is what he read:

This is Jim Mu's hoss what has only two legs!
An' not a hair uv a tail for the flies;
But his hed, it is hi, an' he stands to his pegs
Like a tree what is courtin' uv the skies.

His back, it is roun', but his stummick, it is flat,
An' his sides, they is bilt like a clam;
He hasn't any eyes; an' he can't get very fat,
For he hasn't any mouth for to cram.

But his skin' he can shed it, twenty times a day,
An' never make a fuss at it nuther;
His name it is Scud, tho' he never runs away,
Nur makes for us any kind o' bother.

He's a hoss what you can trust, for he never kicks nur shies,
An' he's still ez if he allers lived in clover;
An' you'll never know he's flat till you takes him by surprise—
Or his legs, an' tip him away over.

Underneath the verses was written: "It's time for me to stop, coz the legs of these ere vusses is spreadin out so wide they'll split an' tumble over ef I don't."

It seems that Jim had been working alone one afternoon, scraping the hair from a skin placed upon the back of his wooden horse. It struck him as funny that the hair and hide of a horse should be changed so often and with so little fuss; and, seized by a sudden impulse, he turned the whole establishment over and began to scribble on the smooth under side. When he was done he put the horse on his two legs again and chuckled to himself: "I reckon no one won't pick up that po'try nohow. Scud is sich a sober hoss he'll never turn hisself up for nobuddy to see what's unner him."

When the Tanner had deciphered the lines and the note, he shouldered the horse bodily and started for the cottage. Seeing him enter the kitchen in this style, Ruth lifted up both hands in amazement, and exclaimed with unwonted force: "Well, well! James! What in the land's name are you doing with that bench here?"

But the Tanner made no reply until he had deposited his load bottom upward upon the kitchen table, to her great consternation.

"There, Ruth, is more of that boy's work. Get your specs an' read it for yourself," and the Tanner stood pointing at the penciling with the air of a man who had just discovered a comet.

Ruth did as she was bidden, and before she got through with the words she shook so much with mirth, the Tanner gave her a gentle nudge in the

side with his elbow, saying: "Ruth, Ruth! aren't you getting a little queer yourself?"

Before she could reply, hearing a commotion in front of the house, he exclaimed: "Those confounded hogs are in the flower garden again," and both started for the scene of the disturbance to drive the invaders out.

Now, anyone who has ever had anything to do with hogs will not be surprised to learn that though the Tanner was armed with a stove poker, and though Ruth

DRIVING HOGS.

shoo-shoo'd at them vigorously and flapped the corner of her apron at them with all her might it was some minutes before the enemy was dislodged.

Meanwhile Jim had returned, and having a good string of trout, he hastened to the kitchen that he might lay it before Ruth. Reaching the door and seeing the scraping horse upon the kitchen table, he dropped his trout upon the steps in dismay and entered to convince himself that he was not mistaken.

"How in the name uv Jericho did that hoss git keeled up there!" he

exclaimed. Seeing that his poetry was in full view, and dreading lest it should be seen, he shouldered the horse and hurried off to the tannery with it.

Having driven the hogs out of the garden, the Tanner and his wife returned to the kitchen by way of the front entrance, and great was their astonishment when they discovered that the horse was missing.

"Well, well! James, what do you suppose has become of it?" said Ruth, more than half inclined to think that there was something uncanny about its disappearance.

But the Tanner, suspecting the truth, made his way directly to the kitchen door, where, apparently in answer to Ruth's inquiry, he clapped his hands and shouted: "Scat! you miserable huzzy!"

IS THAT IN THE BIBLE?

"Land sakes, James! What on earth do you mean by using such language as that to your wife?" cried Ruth, indignantly.

"Good gracious, Ruth! What are you thinking of?" I was shooing the cat who is running off with Jim's fish." And without further explanation the Tanner ran after the cat, who, having seized the tail of a small trout, was doing her best to get away with the whole string. Securing the fish and placing them out of danger, and seeing no signs of Jim nor of the horse, he went up to the tannery, where he found the boy busy with a jack plane planing away the tell-tale words from the underside of the scraping bench.

"Why, Jim; that horse doesn't need making over," said he, as soberly as if he were speaking from the pulpit.

"Dunno 'bout that," Jim replied, reflecting the Tanner's assumed earnestness. "A two-leggid, wooden hoss what ups an' walks outen a place where it belongs an' goes an' lays itself bottom up on a table where it doesn't belong orter have sunthin' done to it.'

"But he is a Pegasus already."

"What kind uv a Peggy is that?"

"It's the name of a horse that made the springs of poetry burst out whenever he struck the ground with his foot."

"Is that in the Bible?" suspiciously.

"No, not exactly," and the Tanner felt as if he were digging a pit for his own feet.

"Wall, you knows I'm done with fo'cas'le yarns, an' what I most wants to know now is how this ere hoss legg'd it to the kitchen table. 'Tisn't a proper place for a tan-hoss, nohow."

Being put to the confessional, the Tanner made a clean breast of it, all the way up to the mysterious disappearance and the coming of the cat upon the scene. He told the story in such a comical way, Jim had to drop his mask of soberness, and when he heard about the "Scat you huzzy!" he almost went into convulsions.

"Wall, you orter been almost skeered to death for upsettin' Scud an' gittin' him into such a scrape," was his final sentence when he became calm enough to put his words together again.

When they went down to dinner, Jim found Ruth's face shining like the polished brass andirons of the parlor fireplace. The trout which had been fried, were not very large, but the largest and brownest one of the fry was transferred to his plate, and he was so hungry from his long tramp up the river, he found no difficulty in making away with the whole of it.

On going back to the tannery after dinner, and resuming work, the Tanner was not long in finding an opportunity to say: "Jim, that was a pretty good riddle of yours."

"What's a riddle?"

"Something you have to guess out; but I thought you must be an old hand at it, and I was going to ask you how you learned to make riddles."

"I don't call it no riddle, ef you means what I writ on the belly uv my hoss."

"What do you call it then?"

"Ef I was to call it anythin', which I don't, I'd call it a parrerble, coz it's a leetle like them parrerbles what I reads outen the New Testermunt."

"And its not a bad parable, either. We'll call it our tannery parable, for there are many things about this tannery business worth studying out, and he is the best business man who knows the most about his business and makes the most out of it. And the way to make the most out of business is not to merely turn it into dollars and cents, but to make it the means of quickening one's thoughts and finding something wise in all its parts."

It was a long sermon for the Tanner to preach, but he couldn't very well

help himself, seeing that Jim had tapped the very vein which he himself had been in the habit of working all his life. The sermon didn't seem long to Jim. There was that in the various processes of the tannery which excited his curiosity and wonder at every step. Though the business was so odorous it was far from being odious to him. It was hard work in many respects, yet never so hard as to prevent Jim from associating with it some merry or useful lessons.

The skins of calves and grown cattle came into the tannery salt and tough. After being soaked in soft water they were beaten and rubbed to make them yielding and pliable. Then, after removing all horns, they were laid away in heaps for a few days, after which they were hung over poles in a smoking room, where they were heated by a slow, mouldering fire. This was done to rot the skins sufficiently to allow of the easy removal of the hair. From the heating and drying room the hides were taken to the scraping benches, where, by the use of a large fleshing knife, the hair was removed and the hides made ready for other operations. From the scraping benches they were thrown into vats containing water and a small portion of sulphuric acid; this was called the raising process, because it swelled the fiber of the skin and made it so porous that it readily absorbed the substances that were to complete the changing of the hides into leather which would be tough and lasting. From the raising vats the hides were removed to the tanning vats at the end of forty-eight hours. In the tanning vats they were laid in layers; first a layer of skins and then a layer of ground oak bark until the vat was nearly filled. Here they remained for a month or six weeks, and then they were taken out so as to admit of the renewing of the bark. When they were returned to the vat those that had been lying uppermost were put at the bottom. This process was sometimes repeated. After being subjected to the tanning of the bark for two or three months the hides were taken from the vats and hung up in a shed. In the process of drying they were compressed with a steel tool and beaten smooth to make them firm and dense. This was necessarily a slow process. When finished they formed the tough sole leather known to commerce.

The tanning of calves' skins for upper leather was, in some respects, different; the principal difference being the currying process by which one side of the leather was blackened and smoothed to give it the handsome appearance it has in new shoes.

There are quicker ways of tanning leather now, but the hasting has only led to the wasting, for what has been gained in time has been lost in the lasting qualities of the leather.

Payzant was an old-fashioned tanner, who took pride in the quality of his

wares; he didn't believe in hurrying his processes at the expense of his material.

"Put your reputation into everything you do, so that the quality of your work won't be ashamed to walk arm-in-arm with your reputation," was one of the things he taught Jim.

The more Jim learned about tanning, the more respect he had for shoe leather and the more care he took of his shoes and the more, also, he noticed the boots and shoes of other people.

In fact, Jim's horse taught him a good many things, so that after a little he was perfectly willing to change its name from Scud to Pegasus; for many and many a rhyme did he jingle over it. There was one snatch which became a great favorite with him, because when his arms and back began to ache over some particularly tough hide, it always served to give him a fresh start:

> The wustest work kin be turned to play.,
> Ef you're up to snuff, an' knows the way;
> Jist think you're havin' a high ol' time,
> An' up with the words an' slap on the rime.
>
> Ef you can't do this, whistle awhile,
> An' see ef it don't make things like ile.
> Ef you only tries, a hoss you'll git
> What'll gallop you outen ev'ry fit.

"MAY I TAN IT ALL MYSELF?"

Among the hides Jim pulled out of the vat was one quite small and of a most peculiar shape. As he laid it on his horse and began to smooth it down, he said to the Tanner: "Seems to me that that's the teentiest calf skin I ever seed, an' sur's my name's Jim Payzant, it must a been born 'thout legs!"

"That is a sealskin," replied the Tanner, "and now is your chance to tan those shoes you wrote about. That seal was shot by the Squire, who is having the skin tanned with the intention of having two pairs of shoes made out of it for Vi."

Jim's brown face couldn't hide the blushes that mantled his cheeks at this astounding piece of information, but there was a confiding smile around his lips when he asked: "An' may I tan it all the way through, myself?" referring to the processes to which the hide was yet to be subjected.

"Certainly, Jim; but you must be very careful, the least neglect spoils the

best of skins." And then, as if to enforce his caution, he quoted: "I'd tan her some shoes what ud never grow old," winking the while in a most grotesquely significant manner.

Jim's embarrassment vanished in a moment, and he said: "Wall, you is the funniest old boy I ever heerd on! When you dies I spec' your gravestone'll snicker right out every time it thinks what a queer cove you was."

When that sealskin went to the village shoemaker it was pronounced one of the best pieces of leather that ever came out of the Payzant tannery, and that was saying a great deal. In due course of time it was made into shoes for Vi, who, however, knew nothing of Jim's connection with them until sometime afterward.

Chapter XI.

A BACHELOR ACQUAINTANCE.

'VE heerd o' hides thick an' tough, but this is the thickest an' toughest, I ever seed yit," said Jim, as he wrestled with one of the heaviest hides he had yet taken out of the vats. It was as much as he could do to get it upon Pegasus' back, and as he let the full weight of it fall upon the wooden horse it fairly made the wooden legs squeak and groan.

"It is the skin of a bull moose, one of the largest ever killed in this vicinity," said the Tanner, by way of explanation.

"An' what's a moose?" asked the lad, with eyes widely opened, he never having heard the name before, and judging from the size of the skin that he was on the track of something new.

"It's one of the wild creatures that lives in the woods up the river, and it is as large as a good-sized horse, and fully as swift in its movements. The moose from which this skin was taken had horns, or antlers, as we call them,

nearly five feet across from tip to tip—horns which looked very much like the branches of an oak."

"Mussy, alive!" How did they ketch the critter?"

"See that hole there, through the left foreshoulder?"

"Yis, sir." And Jim poked his finger through it, by way of verifying the sight of his eyes.

"Well, that is where he was shot. Sometimes, however, they are snared with a big noose made of strong rope."

"A noose for a moose; that's a jingle what helps one to remember, an' a shot for that spot is another."

"A good way to fix things in the memory; and if you are on the lookout you can find many aids of that kind."

Jim knew this by experience, for when he found anything that was more than ordinarily difficult to remember he always invented some way by which he could master the difficulty, and it was here his rhyming habit assisted him materially.

"Is you gonter make him into shoe leather?"

"Yes; that is what the skin is here for."

"It'll make soles thick ernough for the boots uv a Sampson, or that other feller what David licked." Jim had recently discovered that the Old Testament contained some thrilling stories, which interested him much more than any dime novel which he had ever read; and he had done considerable in that questionable line of literature.

"Well, there is nothing like having a good thick sole under your feet, especially in wet weather."

"But I'd hate to have soles made uv the skin of sich a critter as that."

"Why, Jim?"

"It might strike through into a feller's legs an' git to runnin' erway with him, you know."

"Isn't that a forecastle view of sole leather?"

"Mebbe; but I know'd a feller in our fo'cas'le what wored alligatur shoes, an' he had the biggest mouth on the schooner an' a appetite like a shark."

"Why, Jim, your shoes must have been made of sheepskin."

Jim looked at the Tanner a moment, but failing to get any clew to his meaning, said: "Where does your pint come in?"

"Wool grows on sheep and yarn is made out of wool and that is a pretty big yarn you are spinning."

"An' that's what I call shootin' eroun' two corners at a time. But what does these moose critters eat?"

"You have cornered me on the yarn, Jim, and I think it will be best for me to stick to the plain and simple truth, for that seldom or never gets one into crooked places. The moose lives on wild grass in the summer and on birch trees in the winter."

"Is that what makes them so wild an' their horns like trees?"

"Look here, my boy; I'll have to take you away from that skin, for it is having a bad effect upon your imagination."

"No; I reckon it was that last calfskin I scraped what has struck into me. P'raps you'd like to give me a lambskin what was brought up tame an' fed on the bottle."

"That might make you feel friskier'n ever."

During the whole of this chaffing, Jim was scraping at the mooseskin as industriously as if he were a machine, while the Tanner was none the less industriously engaged in putting the final gloss upon a very fine calfskin.

A few days later, when the mooseskin was nicely reddened and thoroughly dried, the Tanner rolled it up, and, after tying it, said: "Jim, this is quite heavy; but do you think you could shoulder it and carry it up to Tom Kenton, the man who shot the moose and is the owner of the leather?"

JIM STARTS FOR KENTON'S HOME.

"What! The man what's been courtin' uv one gal for thirty years, an' hain't got married yit? I'm jist hankerin' to git a sight uv him an' his den. You kin pile on another hide ef you'll let me go."

"Thank you, I think, however, that this will be all you can conveniently carry. But who told you about Tom?"

"Bob Buskirk. He's a reg'ler book what tells me erbout everybody an' everything in these diggin's."

"So I thought. He knows altogether too much for so young a chap as he is."

"Is he a yarner?"

"Well, no; I can't say that he is. It wouldn't do for boys to get that sort of reputation in Liverpool, you know."

"I'm mighty glad uv it, for I wants everything he's told me erbout Tom Kenton to come true."

"Tom is a queer stick, and the boys and girls all like him; yet you would better not ask him how long he has been courting. He once knocked a man down for asking him that question."

"What should I wanter ask him for, when Bob says it's so, an' you don't say it tain't so. Bob says I'm a Yankee corkscrew for asking questions, but when a bottle's already open, I knows ernough to keep my corkscrew in my pockit."

"Yes, I know that. I'm not afraid to trust you on an errand to Tom. He likes boys, for all he is such an old bachelor, and he and you will get along together without any trouble. If he asks you to stay with him awhile, you need not be in a hurry to get back. Tom is a man you cannot rub against without learning something. It might please him to have you ask him how he killed the moose."

Jim hoisted the roll of leather upon his shoulder as if it was a bag of feathers, and started off whistling "Yankee Doodle" as merrily as if he were on his way to a circus with money enough to pay for his ticket and a glass of red lemonade in the bargain.

Tom Kenton lived at Milton, a mile and a half up the river. Reaching the place and inquiring where his house was, Jim found himself directed to a little, low-walled, brown cottage almost surrounded with shrubbery, apple trees and rocks. The outer walls looked as if they had never known the touch of paint, but they were picturesquely spotted with vivid flecks of green and brown moss. The roof, made of the oldest kind of hand-split shingles, curled up on the edges as if each one was afraid of coming in too close contact with its fellow shingle, had numerous houseleeks growing in the decaying places time had wrought. The old chimney looked like a small fortification taking a peek above the ridge-pole, while the small windows and miniature lights seemed to have taken a permanent contract to prevent the sun from becoming too obtrusively intimate with the inside of the cottage.

Three tall lombardy poplars, hoary and gnarled with age, stood sentinel in the little front yard, which faced both the road and the river. The low, straggling picket fence was covered with a profusion of vines, while the ground was overrun with a tangle of bouncing besses, rose bushes, cyprus and myrtles.

When Jim picked his way up the path to the front door, which was so low it looked as if it had been built for a dwarf, he threw his load down among the

myrtle vines and gave a gentle tap. His knock was immediately answered by a small, dapper man of about fifty, who had a florid face, big, gray eyes, immense mutton-chop whiskers and a head as round as a bullet and as bald and shiny as an agate marble.

"Be you Mister Thomas Kenton?" asked Jim, as respectfully as he knew how, although he recognized the man from Bob Buskirk's description of him.

"Yes, that's my name," said Tom, in a tremendously deep, bass voice, yet smiling as if the soles of his feet stood on patent ticklers.

"Well, Mister Kenton, here's that moose you killed, done up an' tanned to a turn, with Mr. Payzant's complermunts, an' he hopes as how you'll find it all O. K."

Tom gave a low, gutteral laugh—a laugh which was so deep and rumbly that Jim thought to himself: "I reckon he must be the granddaddy uv all the snickers in creation. He beats the sound uv father's laughs all holler!"

"I'm glad he doesn't come to me in the shape in which I first met him," remarked Tom, as soon as he ceased rumbling.

"Did he give you a tussle?" asked Jim, finding that he had a splendid chance to apply his corkscrew without danger of breaking it off at the point, and all the while smiling at a great rate in spite of his attempts to look as if he were on his knees at morning prayers.

"BE YOU MISTER TOM KENTON?"

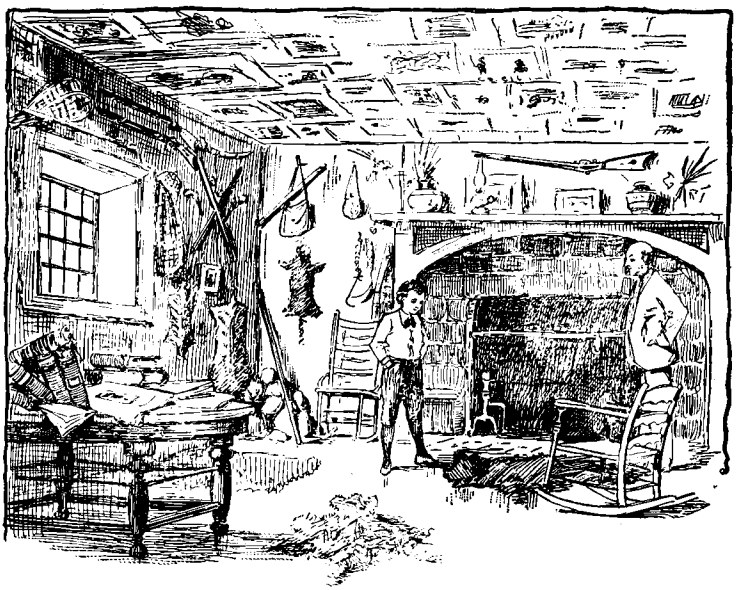
"You are the Tanner's Yankee, aren't you?" said Tom, swelling his a's until they sounded very much like o's, and for the moment ignoring Jim's insinuating question.

"I reckon!"

"Ah! I thought so. I have heard of you before. Come in, come in, and I'll tell you all about that moose," and the man was so cordial in his invita-

tion, Jim walked in as happy as a bee going headforemost into a big honey flower.

After passing through a hallway that was not much larger than a good-sized trunk set up endwise, Jim found himself in a low-walled room which had a fireplace that was almost as large as itself. There were seven old-fashioned chairs in the room, and it didn't take Jim long to discover that every chair was a rocker, and that no two of them were alike, and that each one was also painted a different



"EF IT ISN'T ERNOUGH TO GIVE ONE THE JIM-JAMS."

color. The hues were so brilliant they looked as if a rainbow had struck the house, and, going to pieces, had concluded to make the room a resting place for the fragments.

There was no carpet on the floor, but instead an immense black bearskin, with hair upwards, claws stretched out at full length, head as natural as life, with eyes shining and teeth glistening so ferociously, that Jim gave it a wide berth when he moved toward the immense rocker Tom motioned him into. The walls

were almost covered with a wilderness of rods, guns, pistols, snow-shoes, old coats and vests, birds' nests, skins, dried leaves, withered fruits, and other things too numerous to mention. The corners of the room were filled with rocks and minerals of many kinds piled up or scattered about so that each corner looked like the mouth of a mine. The ceiling was pasted over with all sorts of pictures clipped from illustrated papers and old magazines. On one side of the room there was a big mahogany table covered with a vast litter of old papers and books.

"Ef it isn't ernough to give one the jim-jams," thought Jim, after glancing around furtively and swiftly, seeing everything, and yet appearing to see nothing.

"Now about that moose," began Tom, as soon as he had dropped himself into a rocking chair that was even larger than the one Jim had lost himself in. "Do you see that rifle up there and those snow-shoes, and that birch-bark moose-call, and that coat with the holes punched through it?" pointing to the objects successively and speaking rapidly—very rapidly for one who had such a heavy voice to handle.

Jim admitted that he did.

"Well, sir, that was the hunting outfit with which I went out last winter and came near leaving in the woods, with myself to boot. I had been calling through the birch-bark call in imitation of a cow moose, when all at once a big bull moose came crashing through the timber like an elephant, and was upon me before I knew what had happened. I aimed and fired, but apparently without effect, for in an instant the moose had pushed me down and had given me such blows with his feet that all my senses were knocked clean out of me. When I came to consciousness again I was in the hands of two Micmac Indians who had picked me up for dead. It was then I found out how easy it is to be mistaken, for the moose was dead and I was alive.

"The Indians made a fire and built a rough camp on the spot, and as none of my bones were broken I was soon sitting up taking an account of what was left of me. Next morning they brought me out of the woods, and getting help went back and brought the moose after me. But I groaned for six weeks afterward, I was so badly hurt. And the scars I bear as the result of that fight, or rather moose mauling, for it was an entirely one-sided affair, are numerous enough to stock a dozen soldiers with.

"I was so used up I didn't eat much of that moose meat. I gave it away, only stipulating that, as I had escaped the moose by the skin of my teeth, the skin of the moose should be saved for me. I sent a quarter of the meat to the

Tanner, and he liked it so well he agreed to tan the hide for nothing. I saved the horns and have them in another room."

"Isn't a man a goose what tackles a moose?" asked Jim, innocently, thinking only of the danger Tom had escaped.

"Not if he knows his business," replied Tom, looking at him quizzically, and giving one of his big, fat laughs. Then seeing that the boy was somewhat embarrassed by the way he had put his foot in it, he asked him to go to another room where the antlers were.

Jim followed him to the other side of the small hall and found himself in a room of the same size as that which he had just left. Its fire place was as big as the other, but the mantel and side furnishings were much more elaborate with carvings of figures and scroll work wrought by hand in some remote past.

In this room Tom slept, and Jim thought it was the funniest bedroom he had ever heard or dreamed of.

The antlers were nailed to the wall at the head of the bed. Reefed up among its numerous prongs was an immense mass of gauzy mosquito netting which, when occasion called, was unfolded and spread like a vast cloud over the bed.

"Them is the bustingest horns I ever seed. Why, they look jist like a bone yard. It could spare crooks an' pints ernough for all the rams in the region," said Jim. "You must have been a mighty spry man to git outen that tangle o' bone timber erlive."

"Oh, almost any man can be smart in a case like that, especially when the moose dies and a pair of Indians happen along at the right time." And Tom looked at the boy in such a peculiar way that photographs of the antlers appeared among the wrinkles at the corners of his eyes. Jim didn't know which to admire the more, the horns or their owner. Upon the whole, he was finally inclined to think that Tom Kenton was the better trump of the two.

It was impossible for even a boy to remain embarrassed in the presence of such a man, and Jim's eyes began to wander over the room with as much freedom as if he were alone, and his tongue became as limber as a birch leaf.

"What a bed!" he exclaimed, surveying that article with admiration and wonder. "Looks like a white cloud what had got stuck in a timber pile."

And it did for a fact. The counterpane was as white and as clean as fine linen and soap and water could make it. The underlying material piled itself up to a height of nearly three feet. The four posts were as big and round and fat as butchers, and the timber composing the sides looked as if they were sections cut from the keel of a ship. Such a big, strong bed for so small a man was

enough to make a mosquito laugh. If Jim could have seen the under part of that bed, he would have discovered that it was corded up, after the old-fashioned style, with ropes that might have answered as hawsers for good-sized fishing schooners.

"When one gets into that bed," remarked Tom, "he can say to the moon and stars, 'Now you can tend to your business and roll around as much as you please, and I'll tend to mine and sleep like a log which has forgotten how to roll.' And when he gets out of it he can tackle the day feeling like a squirrel that starts to run up a tree."

"An' who makes it up arter you've tumbled it?"

"The man who sleeps in it."

"An' who gits the breakfast?"

"The man who eats it."

"But why doesn't you git marrid?"

"Because I'm not old enough. When I'm plump sixty I'm going to marry."

"That'll be orful late to raise a famerly."

"I don't want any family. There are families enough in the world already, and I have all the fun I want by meddling with other people's children."

"But won't you git tired o' courtin' an' give it up erfore you knows it?"

"Look here, my lad!" and Tom spoke quite sharply, and did his best to look cross and ugly as he added: "Has anybody been telling you anything about my courting affairs?"

Jim saw that his queer entertainer was only shamming a thunder storm, and didn't hesitate to say: "Ef you won't git mad I'll say yis."

"It doesn't pay to get mad, my boy; it is like putting a hornet's nest under your vest for the sake of sending a few of them after somebody else." And Tom frowned as if the very idea of getting mad was enough to make him mad. Besides there was something in this Yankee boy that warmed him like ginger tea, while it mellowed him like summer sunshine. Jim began to think that it was impossible that he should ever have knocked a man down for asking about his love affairs. Nevertheless it was true, strange as it may seem.

Without asking who Jim's informant was, Tom, twinkling clear to the bottom of his eyes, asked: "And what have they told you about my private affairs?"

"They say you knows how to make candy last."

"Ho, ho, ho!" laughed Tom, deeply. "'Pon my soul, that is a good one and I should be a fool to pick a quarrel with it!"

Tom Kenton's courting was a strange affair. No wonder people talked about it. Peggy Freeman, "his girl," was unlike Tom, in that she was tall and very

thin; but she was quite like him as regarded opinions about the family business. Perhaps this was in part owing to the fact that she had to play the aunt to about half the families in the Village of Milton, and had besides served as teacher to the children of half a generation. She was as sweet as preserved citron, and always looked as neat and clean as a clothes-pin. Every Saturday night Tom, dressed in his best, visited her, but as soon as the clock struck ten he took his departure. During the whole thirty years of his courtship he never put his arms around her or ventured upon any kindred familiarity. His utmost allowance was limited to the one kiss a week, exchanged in a business-like way at the temperate hour of parting. The whole village took an interest in the pair, though it couldn't conscientiously approve of them as an example for the public. Milton was a small place and if marrying had gone by Tom's example it would have been smaller still.

TOM'S PET RATS.

But to get back to Tom's bedroom again. On the walls were pinned bugs, butterflies, moths and millers in endless profusion. And there were not a few stuffed birds and small animals stuck around in the various corners.

Tom seemed to have had a passion for crooked sticks also, for whenever he could find one that looked like a pig's tail or had a root that resembled an ugly face or a pell-mell dream of goblins and animals he would bring it home and hang it up in his bedroom.

His queer sleeping-room had but one chair, a vast rocker made of the crookedest pieces of wood the forest could afford. It looked as if it had been screwed into shape by a whirlwind, but when one sat down in it he felt as lazy as if he never wanted to move again.

Over the old mantle, which was carved from oak grown rich with all the colors of age, was the one thing Tom prized above all others—a large, fine, old oil painting of a bevy of beauties in a palace hall receiving the homage of a number of brave gallants. That side of the room was kept clear of everything

that would in any way interfere with the pre-eminence of the picture, which was expensively framed in gilt.

Two cages of canaries hung in the room, and in the fire place, among the collection of dried mosses and foliage, there was a little grotto built of stones of every hue and shape. Tom went up to this grotto and gave a low whistle, and immediately two white rats ran out, climbed up his fat legs and mounted to his shoulders, where they presently began to play hide-and-go-seek with his ears—which were by no means small—and one another.

One of the canaries began to sing, and thereupon one of the rats pricked up its own ears, and, after listening a moment, began to sing also, but with notes far more musical and varied than any the canary made.

"I'll never say rats again to nobuddy," exclaimed Jim, in amazement, "for them is the cutest critters I ever seed!"

In the room was a seven-storied bureau, old and elaborately carved. The wood looked like congealed blood, it being made entirely of solid, gnarled mahogany. Seeing that it attracted Jim's attention, Tom told him that the next time he visited him he would show him some of the things that were in it. Just then he wanted to show him something else, because he was in the tanning business and interested in shoes.

Following Tom, Jim was led through a dark passage way and through several rooms of the low, rambling building until he reached an out-pantry situated near a great rock which nearly overtopped it. Here, instead of the shelves being filled with dishes and their usual accompaniments, they were fairly stuffed with a vast collection of old boots and shoes that had long since served their day and generation.

When Tom Kenton first came into the possession of the place he found the floor covered with heaps on heaps of old footwear, an ancient maiden sister who preceded him, who was known as Aunt Debby, having expended all her maidenly instincts in the direction of collecting old boots and shoes. Not because she was of a commercial turn of mind, but because—to her—every pair of shoes, from the worn out baby shoe to the hard old cases of the worn lumberman's castaway boots, was a story in itself.

"I took them all out," said Tom, speaking of them, "and was going to make a bonfire of them after Debby's death, but when I began to think about them my heart misgave me, and so I put them all back again. For thirty years I have steadily added to them, though I have confined my part of the collection mostly to the cast-off footwear of people who had something in them to commend them to my respect. It came to pass that when anybody died or was

married, their old shoes were brought to me for preservation. If the former owners of these boots, shoes and slippers should take a notion to suddenly step into them we should have lively times here."

"Reckon we should," said Jim, shrugging his shoulders. "An' I'd make lively tracks for home. How kin you sleep with sich a pile uv them almost unner your nose, Mister Tom?"

"Oh, they don't trouble me in the least in the night time; it's only when I come here on Sunday and begin to think that I get troubled." And Tom's face assumed quite a melancholy expression, as if the associations were too much for him.

MR. KENTON'S OLD SHOE MUSEUM.

Suddenly lighting up as with a flash, he said: "Got a pair of old shoes you'd like to have laid up with the rest of them, Jim?"

"No, sir!" was the emphatic reply. "When I'm through with my shoes I reckon you'll have hard work to find what is left of them. But don't you never hear these critters clatterin' erbout at night?"

"Never did but once."

"Jerusalem, Jonah! You don't say!" and Jim made an involuntary movement toward the door.

"Oh, there was nothing really to be afraid of. I was roused by a tremendous racket one night in this room. When I came in to see what was to pay I found that a pair of young foxes had been trying to make a selection from the old shoes for their supper. The door had been left open. When they went out they went between my naked shanks, as I stood in the doorway, and for a moment scared me almost as much as if they had been real ghosts. If the former owners of these shoes ever come back here to see how their shoes are getting along, they are so quiet about it we never know of their presence."

It was now getting time for Jim to think of returning home, and he so expressed himself.

"I hear that you are a good fisherman," said Tom. "Now, if the Tanner

will let you off Saturday afternoon, come up, and we will go to my private fishing place and have a time of it."

"He'll let me off, for sure; coz he said ez how you was jist the feller for a youngster to rub hisself aginst, an' now I knows you is for sartin."

"The Tanner is a man after my own heart, Jim, and if you will let him tan you according to his notions of tanning, you will have a splendid hide; one that will neither be too thick nor too thin, and one that won't wear out in a hurry."

Jim left Tom Kenton feeling as light hearted as if the world was a palace and his companions kings. And Tom parted from him feeling just the least bit lonesome when he disappeared down the road.

When Jim got home he was like a soda fountain, and the moment the spigot was turned by the Tanner's question as to what he thought of the Milton bachelor, he poured forth a sparkling account of his visit.

Chapter XII.

SHINIDNIQUIT POND.

EQUIPPED with rod and creel, and in high spirits, Jim presented himself at Tom Kenton's cottage early Saturday afternoon.

"Ah! Here we are!" exclaimed Tom, jovially, using one of his favorite expressions, as he opened the door, and seeing Jim's radiant face, bade him enter while he got his own traps together.

"Shall take my gun along; we may stumble upon game, you know. Two strings to a bow are sometimes better than one, and game and fish go well together when you want to sit down to a dinner that is to tighten your vest." And Tom kept on talking all the while he was putting on his canvas hunting jacket, slinging his ammunition over his shoulder and dusting his rifle from muzzle to stock.

When his rod made its appearance Jim saw that it was a beauty, and all its flies were in keeping, although made by Tom himself during his moments of leisure.

"The man who makes his own flies," said he, "can suit the tastes of his fishing acquaintances, and that, you know, is the largest part of politeness."

Jim absorbed his satire slowly, and was so overwhelmed by it he merely remarked, that Tom was sinking his lead a little too deep for him.

By special invitation of Tom, Towzer was along, and he was watching every movement of the pair with the heartiest signs of approbation. For all he was a full-blooded Newfoundlander, whose preferences ran to water, he was competently up to snuff whenever he could get a chance to go into the woods, as Tom well knew.

Cutting cross lots over Tom's by no means limited fields, they came to the edge of the woods where they struck a disused lumber road which lead them directly into the deep shadows of the forest. They had gone but a short distance in the woods when Towzer flushed a covey of partridges, bringing Tom to the front with his rifle. Down came a partridge, but the rest of the covey instead of removing themselves from danger, flew up into a fir tree, whence, according to their foolish habit, they did not budge until the greater part of them had fallen victims to Tom's marksmanship.

OFF FOR A DAY'S SPORT.

"There's four for you and Towzer and two for me and the rifle," said Tom, tallying the game, as he stuffed it into the big pockets of his hunting jacket.

Jim protested, but Tom silenced him in part by saying: "According to my arithmetic there are four of you and but one of me."

"Four uv me!" responded Jim, musingly. "Why, you must be looking at me cross-eyes, an' seein' double with both on 'em."

"But I count Towzer, the Tanner and Ruth to make the four."

"If you keeps on figgering' that way you'll never git rich," Jim replied, beginning to get a glimpse at Tom's generosity.

"Why should I care about getting rich when I have only one set of teeth to provide for, and they only two years old!"

Jim was entirely ignorant of false teeth, and he supposed that Tom's fine munchers were as genuine as his own. "Did you shed your teeth two years ago?" he asked, seriously.

Seeing how innocent he was of the mysteries of dentistry and ready for fun of any description, Tom replied: "I can shed them whenever I please." As if to illustrate his words to Jim's doubting eyes, he put his handkerchief to his mouth, and after an apparent great outlay of strength and sundry contortions of countenance, he pulled out his upper plate of teeth and exhibited them to Jim.

TALLYING THE GAME

"Good hevings, Mr. Kenton!" Jim exclaimed with distended eyes, "kin you unship your arms an' legs in that style?"

Seized with a violent fit of mirth, and not being willing to exhibit his collapsed upper lip too much, Tom clapped the teeth back and gave a chuckle which sounded like distant thunder, leaving the boy more mystified than ever.

"Would you like to see me take my head off?" and Tom put on such a long face, and otherwise exhibited such an earnestness of purpose, Jim began to think he was ready to begin operations at once

"Was you built in a doll shop, Mr. Tom?" And then thinking of the absurdity of his fears, and detecting the glimmer in Tom's eyes, he added: "Ef you wants to drop to pieces you must wait till I kin git a baskit so's to take the pieces out the woods again. But how in natur did you git them teeth out'n in so slick?"

"Really, my boy, now! Do you pretend to say that you never heard of artificial teeth?"

"I've heerd o' artichokes, but I never got onto artifish. Does you mean that your teeth is like fish teeth?" He knew not the meaning of the word artificial, and so, associated the sense with the sound.

"Artificial means manufactured; my teeth were manufactured for me by a dentist."

"An' did the dentist make the rest uv you?"

"By Jove, Jim! You'll shake me to pieces in spite of myself," but Tom's face looked as if he were more in danger of burning up than of falling to pieces.

Towzer, who was prowling around on his own account, was now barking violently at the foot of a tree, among the branches of which sat a great gray squirrel barking back at him with all his might. A shot from the rifle brought him to the ground. Not long after they secured a big rabbit; then two more squirrels and three partridges.

JIM'S FIRST SHOT.

Jim had never handled a gun, and Tom's marksmanship was a wonder to him.

"Have a shot?" asked Tom, loading up again after he had shot the last partridge.

"Don't keer ef I does; but I reckon we'll both have to keep well astarn uv the thing, ef we don't wanter git hurt. What'll I shoot at?"

"For the first mark, you can shoot at the center of that stump over yonder. If you are going to stay in these parts you must learn to shoot, for there is plenty of wild game in these woods, and shooting is our way of cheating the butcher, you know."

Jim took careful aim under Tom's instructions, and planted the ball quite near the center of the stump.

Tom praised the shot, and putting a small piece of paper upon the bole of a pine tree told him that if he struck within the line he had marked by a pencil he would ask the Tanner to buy him a gun.

Thus encouraged, Jim steadied himself to his position, took a quick, flash

aim, and, though twenty yards distant from the target, put his ball very near the center of the mark.

Tom was delighted, but to assure himself that it was not a chance success, he tried him again and found that he did even better than before.

"Capital, capital!" and Tom rubbed his hands with as much satisfaction as if the boy had shot a moose. "It is in you, Jim, and no mistake, and the Tanner will be sure to get you a gun. He is a crack shot himself, though he quit shooting long ago and gave his gun to Bellhead, one of his Indian friends. You handle a gun as if you were born to it, and already know how to be careful at the breech, as well as sure at the muzzle, and when one can take care of both ends of a gun it is safe to let one loose when there is anything worth shooting in sight. And now we will make for the pond."

They walked and walked and walked until Jim began to think that Tom had lost his way. They had travelled four miles and a half when the glint of water was seen through the trees, and a moment after they come upon the pebbly shore of a beautiful little lake, which Jim thought was the prettiest "patch" of water he had ever seen. Clear as crystal, calm as a mirror, with entrancing little coves, gem-like islands and a framework of evergreen pines and other trees, it was a place to delight the soul of an artist.

"Is it all your own?" asked Jim, enraptured by the scene, and feeling a growing sense of Tom's importance.

"It is on my timber lots, and I call it my fishing pond because no one else comes here to fish, and because I hate to go where the waters are whipped to death. It has a pretty name—Shinidniquit Pond. A Micmac chief gave it that name in honor of his squaw wife, of whom it is said he was very fond.

"But we must take a canoe before we reach the fishing place. We will leave the gun and game here, and Towzer must stay and take care of them till we return."

Giving the dog his directions, which he seemed to understand perfectly, Tom led the way to a clump of low cedar bushes, where from under a few protecting boards, he dislodged a small, birch-bark canoe, which the next instant was floating on the water as jauntily as a young duck

"Get in, Jim; go softly, my boy! There, now; down on your knees and squat as if you were in for one of the Tanner's long prayers. She's a ticklish creature, and won't stand any fooling about; yet to anyone who knows how to behave with her she is 'The Lady of the Lake.' "

"You kin trust me when it comes to water critters," said Jim. Immediately adding, however, as he took his place and discovered how lightly the

canoe sat upon the pond: "But she is the crankiest little craft what ever kissed water."

"Steady there, now! while I get in, and see if you don't soon fall in love with her."

Taking the wide, short, blade-like ashwood paddle with him, Tom got into the other end with a step as soft as that of a rabbit. The instant he kneeled into position, the canoe, as if recognizing his presence, became as steady in her

A CANOE RIDE.

poise as a pumpkin in a garden. The moment the elastic paddle struck the water she shot from the shore like a fish playing on the surface. With measured, noiseless dips Tom plied the paddle until faster and faster went the canoe and louder and louder the water sang under her bow.

The motion was new to Jim, as was the whole experience, and he was so delighted he felt as if he couldn't afford to speak. Tom saw how keenly he was enjoying it, and that he might not interrupt his pleasure held his peace and

devoted himself to making the canoe glide through the water with all the speed his paddle could coax out of her.

Along the shore, among the islands, changing the scene every moment and leaving behind widening, shimmering ripples, on they went, easily as a dream and stilly as a cloud. At length the tiny prow suddenly grated upon a narrow strip of white sand, and Tom's deep voice resounded strangely upon the silence as he said: "Here we are!"

"I don't wonder you loves her, Mister Tom!" exclaimed Jim, enthusiastically. "An' I'd love her, too, ef I could make her go like you."

"Try her, Jim; she knows when she's shipped sense, and you have sense enough to learn almost anything you put your hand to." And he gave her a push that sent her back into the lake again.

"Sit right where you are, and take the paddle; she's double ended, you know and can go either way. That's it. Steady, now. Left hand atop; firm with your right and soft with your left. Blade glancing to the water. Give her her head. There, she goes! Straighten your wake, now, by steering with each stroke you make. Bless my soul, Jim! You can paddle as well as shoot. Why, you were born for the woods."

Following the directions as quickly as they were given, and already well acquainted with the principal points requisite to the handling of anything in the boat line and stimulated by Tom's generous applause, Jim soon mastered the mysteries of canoeing.

When they at length landed again, Tom pulled the canoe up the beach and said, "Now, to business."

Having jointed and lined his rod, Jim was about to hang a small, brilliant, scarlet fly to his leader, when Tom interrupted him with: "That will do for roiled, running water, where the trout can't see very well and where they bite at the first thing that comes along, but it will never do for such a place as this, the water is so still and clear, you know. Let me see your fly book."

Jim handed him the book. Looking it over carefully, Tom said: "There is nothing here suitable for this place. Let me fit you to one of my own make —made after I had failed on every other fly I had ever tried."

The fly he fitted to Jim's line was white winged with a grayish undertint and a pale brown body.

"There you are, my hearty! And here we go. But mind your feet. Go soft as down. Keep your mouth shut, and when it comes to casting, throw your line like a shadow and let it fall upon the water as silently as a snow flake."

Taking the lead, and exemplifying his own advice, Tom turned up a minia-

ture cove into which a tiny rill of clear spring water noiselessly emptied itself. Disengaging his fly from the reel and lengthening his line by a few feet, he threw it out with an expert underhand motion. No sooner had the fly touched the water than there was a rise to it, a sudden flip, a shrill, sharp sound from the reel and a swift run by the fish. There was a short struggle, at the end of which Tom landed a two-pound trout.

Following his example, Jim was also successful. After taking seven trout weighing from one to three pounds apiece, they went to another point where they were still more successful, the sun having descended behind the trees and the shadows having brought with them a gentle breeze which favored the sport.

Jim did fairly well, although he could not compete with so old a hand as Tom. Jim's creel was two-thirds full, while Tom's was packed to the lid.

Jim would have continued till his own was full, but Tom said: "If we want daylight to get back in we must hurry away."

"You knows what's what, Mister Tom; though it does seem sich a pity to disappint them trout, seein' ez how they is so hungry. P'raps, hows'mever, when they comes to think it over an' misses their folkses they'll think it was best for us to go."

"Sometimes when I am here alone I knock up a hasty camp and stay all night, so as to take advantage of the early morning for fish and game, but I don't want the Tanner to think I have *tom*-fooled you into that sort of thing, you know."

"But I'd jist like that kind o' *tom*-foolin', an' p'raps sometime you'll let me come with you an' stay it out, ef he says I may."

"Certainly! It would be such fun to have such a chap as you to keep me company."

They were now gliding back over the lake again. As soon as Towzer heard their voices he began to bark with a loudness that made the still woods echo on every side. Pulling the canoe up into its place and dividing the spoils for convenient carriage, the pair started on the long jaunt out.

Nine o'clock came to the Tannery cottage, and Ruth was becoming restless because Jim failed to appear.

"Do you suppose anything has happened to him, James?" she asked, anxiously.

"No, Ruth; he's as safe with Tom as he would be if he were upstairs in bed this very minute. The delay in his coming is a sure sign that they have had good luck. But as he must be tired, I'll take a turn up the road to see if I can't meet him and give him a lift."

Jim had made half the distance between Tom's cottage and the Tanner's home when he sat down on a rock by the roadside to rest himself. There being no moon, it was quite dark, but being so well loaded, Jim cared nothing for that. Hearing approaching footsteps, he rose to go on, and presently heard the Tanner hailing with: "Is that you, Jim?"

"Yes, sir, an' a lot more besides."

The Tanner insisted upon relieving him of his entire burden, and the two soon stood before Ruth, who was so glad to see the boy she insisted upon kissing him as heartily as if he had been gone a week.

"Didn't I tell you he would come home loaded!" exclaimed the Tanner, displaying the fish and game Tom had piled upon Jim to the full extent of his carrying capacity.

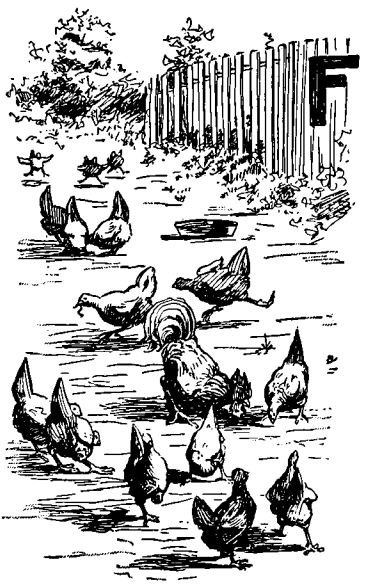
"But what are we to do with it all? It is Saturday night."

"Leave that to me. We musn't go against Scripture, which says: 'The slothful man roasteth not that which he took in hunting, but the substance of a diligent man is precious."

And while the Tanner tackled the game, Jim tackled his supper, and it was hard to tell which was the more industrious and successful.

Chapter XIII.

TROUBLES OF A CORKSCREW.



FOR a Sunday morning Shang was in a state of mind. He had been standing under Jim's window crowing with all his might for one full hour, and yet there was not a sign of a boy to be seen; and that, too, when the sun, with a face as red and as swollen as if it had been on a spree all night, had risen far above the tree-tops. Shang's flock, young and old, were clamoring around him for something to eat, and there was not so much as a worm to be found, although he had almost scratched his toes off digging for them.

Jim was awake; he heard Shang. He also heard a commotion among the flock and a low admonitory growl, which advised him of the fact that Towzer, disturbed by Shang's unseemly crowing, was after him, and that if he didn't give the cottage a wide berth he would lose some of his handsome hackles.

Nobody was in a hurry to get up Sunday morning save the preachers, who broke into a cold sweat when they thought of the congregations

they had to face, and the poor sermons they had to deliver. So Jim just lay there.

From his pillow he could see out of the window across the river and over the hill-tops to the soft, light blue of the sky far, far beyond. What a wonderful world it was, to be sure! Could it be possible that there were people in it who had no places to live in, no food to eat and nothing but rags to cover their nakedness? Jim thought he saw a great, black, ugly shadow, nothwithstanding the light shining into his room, and he shrugged his shoulders and began to wipe his eyes.

ON SUNDAY MORNING.

"Down you goes!" said he, at the same time giving his right foot such a vigorous kick that he almost knocked his great toe out of joint against the footboard. "I'm here, for sure; curled up in a bed what's ez soft ez a cloud that's hoisted her tops'ls for kingdom come. Ef this bed, an' father an' mother, an' Towzer, an' Tom, an' the lake an' canoe, an' the fish an' all them critters was only Yankee, an' had the stars an' stripes over 'em, I'd be Hail Columby an' hunkidory from stem to starn. But seein' ez how they isn't, I'm jist gonter stay in this bed an' lay it out a hull hour yit.

"That ol' Peggysis don't ketch me scrapin' any hair of'n his back this day, an that ol' tannery'll jist have to keep its skins an' horrid smells to itself all day. I reckon I knows what Sunday was made for. My, my! Wouldn't I jist like to take my rod an' skoot for that canoe an' lake, an' have a bustin' time uv it all to myself? But father has been givin' me the Ten Cummandmunts ever since I come here, an' it seems ez ef there was ernough in 'em for fifty. Reckon I'll have to keep on keepin' Sunday, an' let my hands hang down kinder loose till Monday comes agin. 'Twon't do for a feller to be too happy all the time; he might throw it up, like I did when I bust into that honey pot at the poor farm an' stuffed myself for to split."

Presently Jim's nose detected a faint odor ascending from the kitchen. Like an aroused pointer scenting game from afar, he raised himself in bed and began to snuff the air.

"Jerusalem, Jackson! Ef it hain't them fish in the fryin' pan, an' the smell uv 'em jumpin' out an' comin' up here to say: 'You lazy critter, don't you know the stove's got ahead uv you, an' it's time you was a shakin' yourself downstairs?' "

He was now on his feet slipping into his clothes with the celerity of a mouse running into its hole. The stairway led to the dining-room where, to his intense mortification, he found the table already set for breakfast. Bursting into the kitchen where Ruth, having cooked sufficient trout, was frying a squirrel for Jim's especial benefit, he said: "What in the name uv pertaties an' punkins did you go for to do that for? Didn't you know I wasn't dead, but only sorter lazy like?"

"YOU HAIN'T TO TECH THAT STOVE."

"I thought I would let you sleep, Jim; you were so tired last night," said Ruth, smiling at his earnestness, and priding herself upon getting ahead of both Jims in the matter of rising and starting things.

"But don't you know last night hain't this mornin', an' that you hain't to tech that stove till I lights her pipe? Fust thing you knows there'll be no boy gittin' up till he gits down to breakfast."

"Well, Shang made such a racket, I had to get up anyway."

"Ef Shang don't take a reef in his legs an' keep his mouth shet I'll have to put a wooden stopper in his throat. It's agin the Cummandmunts to be a roosterin' roun' Sunday mornin's like a gull over a dead shark."

"Well, well, Jim; you need not worry about my kindling a fire once in awhile, although between you two I shall have to look sharp for a chance to keep myself in practice."

"What has happened?" said the Tanner, coming in at this moment and

looking around unable to understand how things had got so far advanced toward the breakfast hour without his knowledge.

Ruth's eyes began to twinkle mildly, but before she could reply Jim interrupted with: "Don't you think, she got the breakfast to smellin' clear up into my room erfore I know'd she was up, an' there I was layin' jist like a piece uv stickin' plaster."

"And I did not know that a soul was up until I heard you two running on like a pair of politicians that had just broke loose," said the Tanner, giving a long yawn and rubbing his eyes vigorously, as if not entirely satisfied that he really was awake.

"That was because you were kept up so late last night taking care of the fish and the game," interposed Ruth, who always unrolled her charity bandage whenever there was the slightest occasion for its use. "But hadn't you both better go and wash your faces? Breakfast is waiting for you."

"To be sure!" said the Tanner, aimlessly, hurrying out to the little brook in the back yard where he preferred to do his morning washings because the water was always so soft and pure. Jim went to the sink where he could appeal to the looking-glass, for those brown, curly locks that graced his head were not to be left to the happenings of negligence. Besides, on Sunday morning, he felt himself in duty bound to give himself an extra amount of scrubbing. By the time he was through he looked as bright as a bird that had plumed itself in an April shower.

Both Jims were so lively and cheerful at the breakfast table, Ruth became infected with their good spirits and remarked: "You did not get up a bit too late; a soft bed is good medicine for tired bones. But you must get sobered down in time for church."

"I'll prepare the way by quoting from Solomon," responded the Tanner, making a great effort to look solemn: "A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance. He that is merry hath a continual feast. A merry heart doeth good like medicine."

"I am glad those texts are in the Bible," added Ruth, reflectively. "And I do not see why Christians do not think of them oftener. We are all too apt to become long faced the moment we begin to think about religion. David says: 'Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart. Rejoice in the Lord, ye righteous, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness.' "

"Aye, mother; there's the rub. If we were only more upright and more righteous we should be less sorrowful and less afraid when we remembered his

holiness," remarked the Tanner, humbly thinking of his own shortcomings and touching his own heart with a sharp point.

"I reckon there's no downrightness sneakin' around this table!" exclaimed Jim, recalling what the Tanner and his wife had been to him.

"'The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?' is what Jeremiah says," and the Tanner spoke as if he had forgotten all about Solomon's merry texts.

Jim had not yet learned who Jeremiah was, but if he had been there to say anything against either the Tanner or his wife, there would have been trouble off-hand. As it was, the boy felt uneasy; there was something in the deep undertone of the thought that appealed to his own experience and overawed him. But when it came to thinking of his benefactors as being deceitful and wicked, it was like the touch of a hot iron. For a moment he was silent and almost tearful, but at length he protested: "'Tain't no use talkin', father; your heart is jist like the heart of Jesus, an' Jeremier may say what he pleases."

"Who can know it?" repeated the Tanner, his deep sense of unworthiness affecting him so strongly that he spoke almost unconsciously. There was such a pathetic seriousness in his tone that Jim felt himself powerless to reply, though his own heart surged with a miniature rebellion. Jim had become quite a reader of the Bible. It was as fascinating to him as a mountain whose heights rose above him, or as a cave whose depths were far below him, but in the simplicity of his ignorance and the ingenuousness of his feelings, he now felt that there was something awry somewhere, and he shivered as if a cold shadow had fallen upon the breakfast table.

Ruth and the Tanner deceitful and wicked! The boy was almost in agony. The relish for the nice food before him was blunted instantly, while, for the sake of appearances, he nibbled here and there, resolute to subdue himself, and just as resolute to defend those who had become dearer to him than life.

Pity his sensitive soul could not have heard the soft, sweet whispers, which, even at that moment, were coming down from Heaven's great heart and filling all that room with Christ's tenderest uttterances: "I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Verily, I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

At prayers the Tanner read the fifty-first psalm, prefacing it with the remark that David was the author, and that it expressed his penitence for his sins and

shortcomings. Having finished the reading, he added a few comments by way of application.

Jim had gone into the careers of David and Solomon somewhat, and he astonished the Tanner and his wife by saying: "David would a done better ef he hadn't a had sich a hankerin' for wives; there's where he spiled hisself. No wonder that son o' his'n went an' got a thousan' for hisself. I wouldn't a liked to have been the son uv neither on 'em. It's ez much ez I kin do to mind one mother; a thousan' must a been jist orful. Some uv them Scripter fellers orter a done a pile uv repentin'. Guess Jeremier must a meant them when he talked about desperit, wicked an' deceitful folks. What on airth did they want to be so cussid for?"

JIM DOESN'T LIKE REV. SOLOMON MEACHAM.

Jim wondered why the Tanner made such stumbling work with his prayer that morning, while Ruth wondered how her husband managed to get through as well as he did.

When the village bells tolled the hour of worship, Jim secretly wished he could remain at home and spend the forenoon with the Tanner's big, old copy of "Captain Cook's Voyages," but he was too loyal to the Tanner's habits of church going to suggest such a thing to him, and besides, he took great satisfaction in finding the hymns and Scripture readings for Ruth as he sat by her side in the pew.

So he went to church and took his usual place. But when the minister said "Let us pray," and everybody responded by bowing the head, he was in a stubborn mood, and looking straight at the minister he began a critical study of that worthy's face and attitudes.

The Rev. Solomon Meacham was an austere looking man with a harsh, grating voice, an excitable nature and a restless manner. In prayer his countenance changed like the face of an India-rubber doll when it is well squeezed, so that the effect was not entirely pleasing. At times his body twisted all over,

and his hands doubled into unmistakable fists which shook themselves in mid-air as if menacing heaven itself. He was a visiting brother preaching on an exchange.

Jim was astonished as well as displeased. Nor did the sermon dissipate the clouds. It was a torrent of sound carrying along with it a raging flood of disconnected ideas couched in cant expressions and threadbare terms and Scripture phrases which had no more connection with the text than the text had with a Comanche war whoop.

An occasional vociferous response from some excited worshiper served but to increase the confusion and emphasize the emptiness of the preacher's words. Jim looked into Ruth's face expecting to see it filled with disgust and indignation; instead it was not only devout but illuminated, and when she let slip a sympathetic amen at one of the preacher's most boisterous sentences, his head shrank into his coat collar and his face sought the friendly shelter of his hand.

Through it all the Tanner sat heroically reverential, buried in deep thought, which, happily for him, had no connection with the turgid tide foaming from the pulpit. When brain degenerated into lungs, and Christianity was eclipsed by self-confidence, he threw himself back on hidden resources and tried to "worship God in spirit and in truth."

The Sabbath school met immediately after the service, and Jim was in attendance. He was a terror to his teacher, he asked so many unexpected questions and was so sturdily independent in his opinions. That day he was much worse than usual.

Malvina Mehitable McKensie—to give her full, real name—was a maid of wan face and many years; tall, slight, spectacled and wrinkled. But she was a good soul, with dim, gray eyes that were as big as small Chinese saucers. She, unfortunately, had no more knowledge of boys than a fish has of birds. It was her fixed opinion that all Yankee boys were heathens from the foundation of the world, and that Jim was one of the worst of his kind.

The lesson happened to be "The Call of Samuel," and Malvina dwelt long and piously upon the boy's lengthy residence in the Tabernacle.

Right in the middle of her most solemn sentence, Jim shocked her with the question, frowningly put: "Who'd wanter live in a meetin' house all the time? It's ez much ez I kin do to stan' it two hours on a stretch."

"You are a very wicked boy; not fit for anything that is good," she replied, looking at him as sourly as a vinegar bottle.

"But I'd be wickeder ef I had to be good an' stay poked up in a meetin' house all the time."

The rest of the boys in the class, seeing how confused their teacher was, laughed aloud, drawing the attention of the whole school to their corner.

At the close of the session Malvina marched straight up to the superintendent, and in severe terms demanded that "That 'Yankee nuisance' should be removed from her class forthwith."

It was then the superintendent gave Jim to understand that he would not be permitted to bring any of his Yankee tricks into that school so long as he was the superintendent. Mr. Hezekiah Lamb was a regular bell-weather superintendent, who was constantly on the tinkle for order and, consequently, he determined to make short work of the tan pile upstart.

"THAT YANKEE NUISANCE."

Jim snapped his fingers at him, or, in other words, showed some very prominent horns, for he was not a boy to be made good by threats.

In due time the Tanner was informed of Jim's misconduct, but on pushing his inquiries, as he was in the habit of doing, where the characters of others were concerned, he discovered the real burden of the offense. The result was he smiled and said nothing.

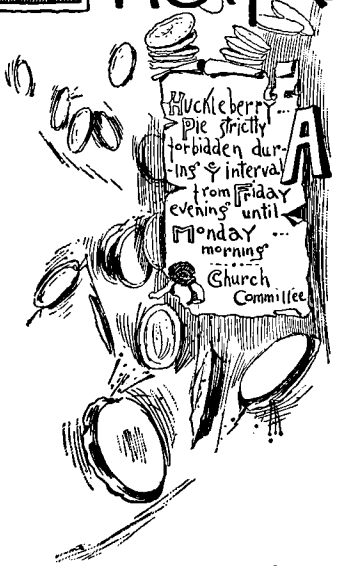
Mr. James Payzant came near being disciplined by the rest of the church after the following week-night prayer meeting for abetting disorder in the Sabbath school.

On the succeeding Sabbath Jim stayed at home. "I'll be a Sunday school all by myself," said he, "an' a Yankee one at that. I reckon God an' I kin git along together 'thout havin' any fuss."

But a shadow of the old, forsaken feeling fell over his heart, and the world lost part of its brightness, as he recalled the contemptuous manner in which Malvina and the superintendent had spoken to him that Sunday.

He went up to his room, pulled out his little, battered Testament, and while aimlessly turning over its leaves, caught sight of the words, "I go a fishing."

Chapter XIV.



A BLACK-MOUTH EPIDEMIC.

AS THE season advanced the Black-Mouth distemper made its appearance, and, in fact, became universal. There were no deaths from it; no sickness even. But the younger and more sensitive portion of the population took good care not to open their mouths too widely while the epidemic lasted lest unromantic revelations should ensue.

To explain: The blueberries were ripening, and "huckleberry" parties, pies, puddings, dumplings, "blankets" "grunts" and sauces were in order. Blue as were the outside of the berries, rivalling even the clear sky in depth of azure, and white and innocent as were their insides, they turned to a purplish black in the cooking, so that the mouth of every eater was stained tenaciously dark.

There was but one preventive, and that was to eat the berry in its native uniform of blue, but as this was too severe a form of self-denial, it was seldom or never put into practice.

So easy was it to indulge the appetite, even the preachers sometimes forgot

themselves of a Sunday morning, and thus the Black-Mouth made its appearance in the pulpit, to the no small amusement of the more mischievous and the scandal of the more serious ones of the congregation. Occasionally a whole choir succumbed to the epidemic, and then the effect during singing time was lamentable indeed. To guard against unseemly results, the vestry of the Episcopal church passed a resolution that no member of their choir should eat cooked "huckleberries" from Friday to Sunday night. And they were right, for the Black-Mouth in church, especially among those who are at all conspicuous, is entirely out of place.

Jim was delighted with the berries, and, disregarding all questions of mere looks, blacked his mouth to his heart's content. Having learned their growing grounds, he gave Ruth all she could do to take care of the supplies he brought in. The Tanner and his wife had no objection to the disease, and Jim, notwithstanding the somber hue of his teeth, lips and tongue, never took the precaution to keep his mouth shut when he had occasion to laugh, as was the habit of those who were at all particular about their appearance.

Being enterprising, he was not content with picking from the nearer barrens where the berries grew, but was constantly extending his search in new directions. One day he pierced a belt of woods and came upon an upland opening which, having been burnt over two years before, was literally blue—the bushes being short and bunchy and the berries clustering and large. In an incredibly short time he had picked ten quarts, and when he reached home Ruth went into ecstacies over them, they were so large and luscious.

"When I fust seed 'em," said Jim, "I was sure the sky had upsot itself an' poured its blue all over the ground, but when I begun to pick 'em, I felt ez ef I was a pickin' up angel's eyes, they was so blue, an' round, an' big, an' soft an' handsome." And he added, with a warmth that sent a responsive glow through Ruth's heart: "When both my baskits was plum full, they sot me to thinkin' uv your eyes, an' then I cut for home ez fast ez I could streak it."

"My eyes are getting old, Jim; but I know what you mean. And the older I grow the greater is the reason why they should look kindly upon everybody, but especially upon the dear children who are to take the places of those who are ripening for eternity. Your own eyes are almost as blue as the sky; God grant they may always be as pure and true as they are now."

Her words fell like a benediction, but the thought of ever losing her brought a great lump into his throat. Mastering himself, and brightening into a smile, he answered: "You're the kind o' huckleberry what'll never turn black, mother.'

Ruth emptied the berries—one basket into a chopping tray and the other into a great, flaring milk pan.

"They are all alike clear to the bottom," she observed, admiringly, "and so free from leaves and sticks they will hardly need picking over again. I wish I had a barrel full of them."

"Does you mean a *hull* barrel uv 'em!" he exclaimed, in astonishment, never having known her to be so covetous before.

"Why, yes! When my other Jim was alive and a boy, we put up a barrel full every year."

"How'd you do it?"

"We kept an old molasses barrel for that purpose. One head was knocked out, the barrel filled up with berries, and New Orleans molasses was then poured over them until they were covered."

"My goodness! An' didn't your other Jim git a lick at 'em wunst in awhile, kinder on the sly like?"

"Yes, but not on the sly; because he knew he was at liberty to get at them at any reasonable time."

"An' was they good?"

"Most excellent for pies and puddings, and also for drinks when taken in hot water with a little sugar mixed in. When the warm days of spring came we poured in water with what was left, and so had the best of vinegar for the rest of the year.

"An' have you got that ol' barrel anywhere?'

"Not that one, but there is another just like it," and Ruth looked as sly as a cat hunting after a mouse.

"Where is it?"

"Down cellar."

"An' don't you reckon what that Jim done, this un kin do, too?"

"Indeed I do!"

And the barrel was filled before Saturday night with berries, sweetly swimming in floods of molasses, getting ready for Christmas holidays and the nights of the long winter season.

Jim told Vi of the wonders of the new huckleberry patch, and as she couldn't keep the news to herself, the next thing he knew the boys and girls made up a big huckleberry party and appointed him to lead them to the fields of blue.

The huckleberry was a sort of festival season with the young folks, and it was a merry party that assembled at the Tanner's with baskets, pails and dinners

ready for an early morning start and a whole day on the barrens. The sky was cloudless and warm. A dreamy, yellow haze covered the woods and hills, softening the blue and purple tints of the more distant landscape into mellow indistinctness.

The rural districts have their disadvantages at which the high-nosed city snob may snuff and drivel when he airs his nothingness in feeble jokes about country people and bucolic manners, but the compensations are altogether in excess of the privations. The undimmed light, the untainted air, the crystal streams, the sweet-scented fields, the balmy woods, the glorious hills and the homely plenty and joyous liberty of the homesteads are priceless blessings, fresh and fragrant from the hand of God.

Precious are the memories of childhood days spent where God has spread the skirts of his omnipotence and lavished the charms of nature in all their purity and simplicity!

And yet we are shadowed with the thought of multitudes of children who have to spend the days of youth almost in the valley of the shadow of death. Elizabeth Browning's words haunt us like a wail from the lost, and we must beg the reader to ponder them:

Do you hear the children weeping, O my brothers,
Ere the sorrow comes with years?
They are leaning their young heads against their mothers,
And *that* cannot stop their tears.
The young lambs are bleating in the meadows;
The young birds are chirping in their nest;
The young fawns are playing with the shadows;
The young flowers are blowing toward the west—
But the young, young children, O my brothers,
They are weeping bitterly!
They are weeping in the playtime of the others
In the country of the free.

Blessing—ten thousand, thousand blessings upon the heads of promoters of fresh air benevolence, and upon the daily press for the potent aid it has rendered, and upon the country people who have opened their doors to the pale faces of the tenement house, and especially upon the multitudes of children—boys and girls—who, through their means, have had a few weeks outing in the country!

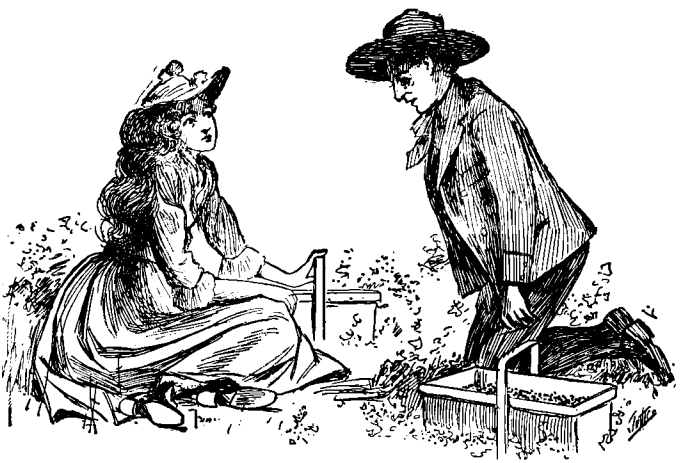
Skipping like lambs and chattering like squirrels, the huckleberry procession went over the hills and through the pine-scented woods. Reaching the great huckleberry patch, it immediately scattered over the barrens in little groups, which began to rifle the heavily laden bushes of their blue spikes and clusters.

Finding a spot under the shadow of a long, low, granite ledge, where the bushes were fairly weighted down to earth, Jim called to Vi to share in his

discovery. Nor did she hesitate to hasten to his side, though merry smiles and quips were indulged at her expense by the more mischievous of her companions.

So plentiful were the berries and so cushion-like the thick moss beneath them, they sat down and picked at their ease. Vi's dainty, little feet were in full view encased in a substantial pair of shoes that had the appearance of being almost new.

Happening to glance at them, Jim suddenly exclaimed with great energy: "Why, them's *them* shoes!"



"WHY, THEM'S THEM SHOES!"

Vi looked down at her feet with as much astonishment as if they had dropped into Cinderella's slippers without her knowledge, but seeing that nothing had happened to them, she asked: "What is there about the shoes that is so surprising?"

"They're made outen the sealskin what I tanned myself."

"You did?" with an inflection that rose and vanished like a sound that had taken wings.

"I did, for sure, an' I almost broke ol' Peggysis' back scrapin' an' rubbin that leather to make it soft an' nice."

This was the first she had heard of Pegasus, and knowing nothing of either

the mythical or the tannery steed, she took refuge in the plainer side of his words, and asked: "What did you do that for?"

"Why, didn't I know that the leather was for your shoes?"

"How did you find that out? I should think you would have enough to do to tan the leather without bothering yourself about the people who are to wear it out?"

"Father told me. Don't you know we talk together, as well as work together? I learns lots an' lots erbout the skins what comes to be tanned. That sealskin was such a funny little dodger I up an' axed all erbout it. When I found it was for you, I jist laid myself out on it."

"The shoes are so easy and soft to my feet I hardly know I have them on. I'm ever so much obliged."

"Ol' Peggysis an' me is more'n paid, seein' ez how you is satisfied."

"But who is Peggysis? I didn't know there was such a person in Liverpool."

"Oh, he's the wooden hoss what I lays the skins on when I wants to wollop an' scrape 'em!"

"What a funny idea! But why did you call a bench such a queer name?"

"Oh, father did the naming; he's allers doin' such funny things, you know."

"Mr. Payzant is a dear, blessed old man, and when he does a thing there is generally a good reason for it," and Vi spoke with a deal of warmth, for she loved the Tanner, who, when she was but a little thing, used to take her on his knees and tell her the quaintest of stories by the hour.

"An' does you love mother, too?" asked Jim, always grateful for every good word spoken about the Tanner and his wife.

"Indeed I do! What could we do without Aunt Well-Well? Everybody loves her."

"When they gits to heaven Jesus'll think so much uv 'em he'll want 'em close by him all the time. But I hain't told you how the hoss got his name." And he went on in the most comical manner telling the story of the poetry and the adventures of Peggysis in Ruth's kitchen. He so convulsed Vi that she had to stop picking berries to laugh.

Toward noon Jim said: "My shadder is gitting so short an' chunky, it must be nigh onto twelve o'clock."

"I'm so hungry, it must be dinner time. You are captain to-day; suppose you tell the pickers it is time to eat."

Instantly Jim's clear voice rang over the barrens announcing the dinner hour. In a few moments the happy boys and girls were gathered around the rock, where, the moss being abundant and soft, they seated themselves

in little groups about their lunch baskets preparatory to eating their dinners.

Jim would have been alone had not Vi, knowing that there was a tendency on the part of some to avoid too close connection with him, taken her seat by his side. "I have no one to eat with me," said she, "and if you have no objection we will eat together."

Understanding her motive, though it was so ingeniously veiled, he replied: "Ef the queen uv the huckleberry patch is gonter eat with this chap I reckon he'll have to let her steer his baskit for the dinner table."

Ruth had filled his basket with the best her pantry afforded, while Vi's mother, not believing in stuffed children, alive or dead, had been more than prudent in both the quantity and the variety of her daughter's huckleberry lunch.

As Vi spread the contents of Jim's basket upon the napery beside her own, she laughingly declared: "I have made my fortune by inviting myself to your dinner, Jim."

"And mine, too; my everlastin' huckleberry fortune!" he promptly responded with instinctive gallantry.

While they were eating and merrily conversing together, a big boy, a head taller than Jim, and the bully of the Liverpool play grounds, coarsely called: "How are you getting along, Tan Pile?"

JIM GETS HIT WITH HUCKLEBERRY PIE.

Jim flushed hotly at the cruel allusion, and a fierce flame of wrath shot through his heart, but remembering Tom Kenton's remarks about getting mad, he made no reply. Vi was so indignant her anger effectually prevented any mortification she might otherwise have experienced from the disdainful reference to Jim's first appearance in the village.

"Why don't you answer me, you Yankee, tan pile beggar?" shouted the bully, enraged at Jim's silence.

All eyes were now turned in Jim's direction, but beyond shutting his teeth together and clinching his hands involuntarily, he paid no outward attention to the brutal insult.

The next instant Bill Bryden took unerring aim and threw plump into Jim's face a piece of berry pie, which almost blinded him with its black juice, and stained his clothes badly.

Rising and wiping the stains from his face, Jim, unable to control himself any longer, his wrath being increased by the laughter of the more thoughtless boys and girls in the company, said, in a low voice: "Bill, ef you wants to git your hide tanned, an' will come erway frum the gals, I'll accommerdate you; for you is the meanest, doggondest, sneakenest Bluenose in all Liverpool!"

It needed no more! Bill rushed upon him furiously. But not for nothing had Jim been in the forecastle of a fishing schooner. He had learned boxing to perfection, and he parried Bill's blows with a skill that only served to enrage the bully. Seeing that his assailant would not take warning from his failure to make his blows effective, Jim took the aggressive and planted his blows in such swift succession upon Bill's eyes and nose that he began to stagger. Bill had a chum of his own age and size who, seeing how things were going, attempted to join in the attack on Jim.

RESULT OF FORECASTLE TRAINING.

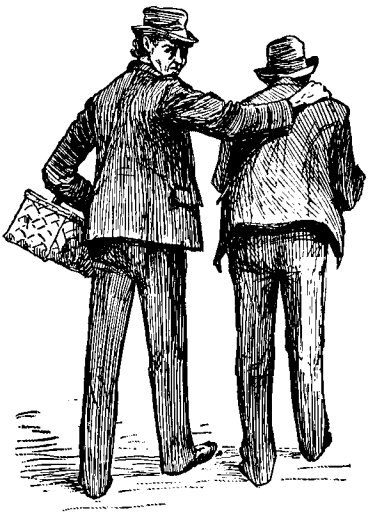
Vi sprang in between Jim and the two boys, and facing the assailants, cried: "Touch him again, if you dare, and I'll have my father arrest both of you!"

Meanwhile the other girls were crying "Shame, shame!" and the rest of the boys, determined to see fair play, crowded around Jim ready to engage in his defense. Vi's face was as white as the napkin she held in her hand, and she stood to her place as if she had been turned into marble.

Bill was conquered for once in his life, and crying with the pain of his deserved punishment, covered with blood from his nose and with both eyes fast closing, he started home accompanied by his humbled chum.

"Now we can finish our dinner," said Jim to his companions. And his manner was so composed, and he had so effectually earned the leadership, that all returned to their luncheon and after that to the completion of the filling of their baskets.

When Jim reached home he found that he had punished Bill more than he had intended. Both eyes were closed and his nose severely skinned. Bill's father had been to the Squire's to obtain a warrant for Jim's arrest. But after questioning the two boys, the Squire said Jim was the proper one to swear out a warrant, and if application should be made for one it would be granted with pleasure. If they knew when they were well off they would let the matter drop. Besides, it was time that those who had been in the habit of persecuting Jim had learned a lesson, and he was glad that the boy had given them one.



BILL AND HIS CHUM START FO HOME.

The Tanner smiled grimly at the Squire's decision, and when he met Jim and learned his side of the case and had it confirmed by those who had witnessed the whole affair, he said: "Jim, I don't want you to be a fighting boy, but whenever you are attacked in that way be sure you put in your best Yankee licks."

"James, James!" remonstrated Ruth mildly, "can you pray over that?"

"Not exactly," was the prompt reply, "but I can easily pray around it."

"Well, Well! I'm downright glad it wasn't Jim's eyes that got blacked," said Ruth, smoothing the wrinkles out of the corner of her apron, she, in her nervousness, having crumpled it into a multitude of creases.

After that the boys were careful how they meddled with the tanner boy. And as Vi was the favorite of the village, her interposition in his behalf gave him a standing with the girls he had not before possessed.

But the epithet "Tan pile beggar" pierced him so deeply he became more retiring than ever, and for several days, greatly to the distress of the Tanner and Ruth, he had an expression upon his face and a restlessness of manner which showed that he was having a big fight inside.

Chapter XV.

AN INVITATION OUT.

NOT long after the huckleberry battle the Tanner came into the tannery, where Jim was making the hair fly from Peggysis' back, and handed him a letter addressed in a full, round hand to James Mu Payzant. It was the first letter he had ever received, and for a moment he held it up and scanned the name, thinking there was some mistake about the matter. The Tanner recognized the writing from the first, and stood looking on with a quizzical smile while the boy read the contents, which were as follows:

SHOES' REST, MILTON, N. S.

MY DEAR JIM: Come up Friday afternoon; I want to have a boxing match with you. And do not fail to bring up a pair of your old shoes for my shoe museum; must have them if I have to buy you a new pair. Bring Towzer. Come to supper; we are to have a little party in your honor. Do not disappoint us. Glad you licked that fellow! Your fast friend, TOM KENTON.

Jim handed the note to the Tanner, and, though there was a smile upon his face, there was a quiver in his voice, as he said: "May I go? Mister Tom likes me if I did come from a tan pile."

Now, the Tanner had seen Tom, and if the truth must be told, had given

him a lengthy account of the huckleberry trouble. Tom was no fool at boxing, and he was pleased to learn that Jim knew enough about the art to defend himself when it became necessary so to do.

"Go!" exclaimed the Tanner, almost vehemently, touched by the boy's tone. "Why, of course! Tom is a gentleman, every inch of him, and whenever you are with him, he has another for company, and what is better still, he knows it. Tom is not only a royal good fellow; he is also a splendid boxer, and having heard of your huckleberry fuss and of the feelings of some of the boys here, he wants to give you a point or two. You must take your old shoes with you. That is a queer freak of his; queerest shoe business I ever heard of, but there is a good deal of poetry at the bottom of it."

"But these are the wustest shoes I've got," replied Jim, looking down at his feet, "an' there isn't a single leak in 'em yit."

"Yet the toes are pretty well stubbed out, the soles are getting thin and the counters don't hold themselves up as much as they ought to," and the Tanner, surveying them critically, determined that the shoes should go to "Shoes' Rest" whether they were tired or not.

"I'll have to wear my Sunday shoes common, ef I takes these to Tom."

"What of that? It's time those Sunday shoes were set to doing week's work. There's lots of leather lying around this tannery. You take those shoes to Tom, and I'll send a cutting from the best calfskin and solehide the tannery affords to Bob Buskirk's father and give him orders to fit you out with a pair of top boots made in his best style."

"My jiminy!" exclaimed Jim, succumbing to the temptation without further resistance.

"And they shall be made on a pair of Yankee lasts, and fitted to your feet like the skin to your toes."

"I reckon these shoes'll have to skip."

"Yes, to every pair of shoes there must be a last slip and a last skip; though they were made on lasts they can't last forever, you know," and the Tanner benignly smiled over his skips of the tongue, while Jim laughed responsively, as he always did, whenever the Tanner made even the faintest attempt at anything funny.

On Friday morning Jim got up extra early; got up even before Shang had descended from his roost, so that he might finish his day's work during the forenoon hours, for he made conscience of keeping his part of the tanning processes ahead of those which fell to the Tanner's share.

As he was going out of the cottage yard after dinner with his old shoes

in his hand, the manner called to him: "Stand to Tom when it comes to the boxing."

"Aye, aye, sir!" said Jim, promptly responding sailor fashion, touching his cap with a good-bye salute and leaving the gate with a strong, warm heart beating under his vest.

"How are you, Huckleberry Jim?" exclaimed Tom, when he opened his cottage door and found his young friend standing there and smiling as if no cloud of trouble had ever darkened his path.

"What does you call me that for? I've got more names now than I kin back round."

"Why, don't you know everybody is calling you Huckleberry Jim because of your huckleberry battle? Served the scamp right! Come in and tell me all about it. Brought those shoes, have you? Here, let me take them. I'm going to label them right away." And, as if he were in a great hurry, he sat down and after writing Huckleberry Jim on a label he covered the label with mucilage and affixed it to the heel of the right shoe.

"There," said he, contemplating the shoes with immense satisfaction, "that looks well, doesn't it? Now, tell me all about it—that battle, I mean—I want to get it from headquarters."

Nor would he permit Jim to omit a single detail, for where the boy hesitated through modesty, Tom pressed him with questions from which there was no escape.

At the close of the account he said, with both eyes blinking like the eyes of an owl: "I'm glad you go to Sunday school, my boy, but I am more than glad to know that you can box. The Sunday school will keep you from offending others, but the boxing won't hinder you from defending yourself when it's your solemn duty to do so. I sing Sunday school songs myself, but I want it understood that that doesn't give anybody a right to presume too much upon my temper, for, like some other steel springs, I'm apt to bounce up when I'm jostled too hard."

Jim thought of pale Malvina Mehitable McKenzie and wondered what she would say to that sort of talk, and then he looked at Tom's ruddy, open face and as good as confessed to himself that he should like to have him for his Sabbath school teacher.

"Mind you," continued Tom, "I wouldn't have you quarrelsome, nor quick tempered, even; it's your smallest cur that is the most quarrelsome and touchy, but I would have you like Towzer, who is able to take a good hold when he has to shut his teeth together upon a wild or unruly beast."

Hearing his name mentioned, Towzer got up from the bearskin, where he

had sprawled himself out, and giving himself a good shake, walked up to Tom and resting his mouth on his knees looked up into his face with such inquiring eyes that both Tom and Jim laughed outright. Not fancying this the dog turned away to the bearskin, where he took a turn or two, as if to rid himself of his hurt feelings, and laid down again.

"You see he doesn't like to be laughed at any more than the rest of us, only he is mistaken in the character of the laugh. There is a great difference, you

"HEIGH-HO, MY BOY!"

know, between the laugh of enjoyment and the laugh of contempt; the one is bubbling spring water, the other sneaking poision. But, biess me! Here I am going on like Parson McClaren, who boasts that he can preach a sermon two hours' long and not feel a bit tired, though many of his congregation get so tired they go to sleep to rest themselves.

"Now, come with me and we will try the boxing gloves; it will be sometime yet before Hannah and Peggy come."

They went out into the orchard where, putting on the gloves, they began to exercise themselves under the shadow of a great, gnarled apple tree planted by Tom's great grandfather.

Jim was fully as tall as Tom, and as they stood up to each other and touched gloves by way of salute, it was a pretty sight, for all Tom was so baldheaded and fluffy. Pretty to see youth and years facing each other ready for a bit of robust fun.

Tom thought himself a good boxer, ornamental as well as practical. He started with his ornaments, but quickly abandoned them on discovering that Jim made small account of them. At one stage Tom made at his young antagonist as if he intended to disconnect his head from his body, but Jim countered with a blow that confounded all his calculations and confused him so that he had to call a truce.

JIM TELLS HIS STORY.

"Heigh-ho, my boy!" he exclaimed, good naturedly. "What are you up to? Hasn't this thing got turned round? There is no use in my trying to teach you. No wonder you sent Bill Bryden home with tears in his eyes. Your 'forecastle boxing,' as you call it, is good enough for landlubbers any time. You give me more points than I can take care of, let alone my giving you any. Suppose we call it quits."

"But I likes to box with you, coz you is a gentleman an' sticks to the rules. In the fo'c'stle the sailors come it foul every chance they got, though I was a boy an' they was men."

"Well, Jim; your forecastle days are over, and if you will stay in Queen's County long enough we'll send you to parliament and if I do not die too early I'll canvass the county in your favor. I have done that thing for one James Payzant, and I think I could do it for another. Now let's sit down on the grass awhile and take a bite at those sweet apples, while you tell me about some of your sea experiences."

He threw his boxing gloves at the root of the tree, and, reaching up to a low branch, brought down a shower of great yellow drops that rolled about the ground like a lot of young baby pumpkins.

Little by little, Tom elicited his story, laughing and quivering at turns as he listened. Jim's description of his running away from the schooner and fetching up at the Tanner's by way of the tan pile was so vivid and pathetic Tom couldn't keep the tears back to save himself, so he had to divert himself by saying at the close: "Why, Jim; you are enough to wring water out of a stone!"

Some one was heard moving in the cottage, and Tom exclaimed: "Hello, there's the girls at last! Come in and take a look at them."

Now if there was any one thing Jim dreaded more than another it was to meet strange girls, and he began to shrink all over at the thought of going into the house. But he was too polite to express his discontent and too brave to be deterred by fear, so in he went as brave as if on his way to a picnic.

He was much relieved, though somewhat surprised, on entering to find that the two girls who constituted the "party" were women of a decidedly mature age.

"This," said Tom, pointing to the elder of the two, "is Hannah, my sister, and this," indicating the other, "is Peggy—my Saturday night friend. And this, girls, is James Payzant, junior, the boy that thrashed Bill Bryden. You may call him James if you wish, but I shall call him Jim, as usual."

The two ancient girls were so cordial and unaffected in their reception of Jim that he lost all sense of embarrassment, and immediately began to feel as much at home with them as he did with Tom himself.

Hannah was older than Tom, and was quaintness itself—dressed so oddly she looked as if she had just stepped out of "Mother Goose's Melodies." Her eyes were so dark and sharp they reminded one of the points of black pins. There never was a kinder face nor a gentler voice, however, and she moved about as softly as if she were pieced together with the stuff dreams are made of. She was an old maid, but everybody loved her, and the instant anybody's baby was taken sick she was sent for to nurse it back to health again. If it hadn't been for her sharp eyes, her thin body might have been pasted on a canvas and hung up for a picture of an old saint. She lived in her own house close by, where she took care of her aged and widowed mother.

Peggy, we have already spoken of, and need only add here that she was, in many respects, a distant echo of Hannah.

Which of them Tom thought the more of was as difficult to decide as which of them thought the more of Tom.

Hannah's keen eyes had already discovered Jim's old shoes, and as they

were resting on the mahogany table among the books and papers, she took them and looking at the label said, addressing Jim: "So these are yours."

"No, they is Mister Tom's now; he's gonter shelve them with the rest on the good-bye shoes he's got out there in his Shoes' Rest."

"Just so; well, suppose we go and give them a place."

"I hope they won't feel stuck up when they gits there."

"No danger of that; the shoes and boots that go in there are generally past all pride."

"In the shoe museum, and with the new-comers placed on an upper shelf, Hannah pointed out a pair of small shoes, which she said belonged to her when she was a girl.

HANNAH AND PEGGY.

"But here," said Tom, "are fifteen other pairs that once belonged to her, and these seventeen pairs all in a row by themselves were Peggy's. If the girls live much longer I shall have to build on an ell for the rest of their old shoes."

"Now, Tom, don't go to getting giddy; whenever I come here I feel like sitting down and having a good cry," said Hannah.

"I too," echoed Peggy, in a melancholy tone.

And really, the shoes among the shadows and cobwebs of this room, which was once the larder of a large, bread-winning family, were singularly suggestive of plaintive thoughts.

Sir Edwin Arnold once wrote of a pair of slippers taken from the feet of an unknown Egyptian mummy:

> For all you can tell is that leather will last
> When love and delights and beautiful things
> Have vanished, forgotten. Nay! Not quite that?
> I catch some light of the grace you wore
> When you finished with Life's daily pit-a-pat,
> And left your shoes at Time's bedroom door!

What would he not have written if he had stumbled upon such a treasure as Tom's Shoes' Rest?

Seeing the shoes laid away in the old shoe pantry, and listening to the quaint

talk of the queer trio, Jim felt as if he were in danger of becoming suddenly old, and he was glad when Tom said: "If we don't get out of this we shall turn into old leather ourselves."

But Towzer had gone out before them, and they found him racing around the orchard with an old boot which, unobserved, he had stolen from under Tom's very nose.

"Here, Towzer, you scoundrel; you have got one of my grandfather's boots! Bring it here, sir!" shouted Tom, as soon as his eye fell upon him.

But Towzer, being no respecter of old boots, froliced around the yard with his prey regardless of either commands or coaxings. Not until the compromise of a meaty bone was offered him did he condescend to yield, and then, alas, the old cowhide boot was in a most pitiful plight. Tom picked it up sorrowfully, and in silence restored it to its mate which stood lop-sidedly in a corner of the shoe pantry floor.

"What does make dogs so crazy after old shoes!" he exclaimed, when they got into the open air.

"P'raps it's coz there's nothin' in 'em," suggested Jim, so promply that Tom roared, Hannah laughed and Peggy smiled.

The two girls went into the house to get supper, Tom having given them that task for this special occasion. The two boys started for the Babylonian gardens.

What these were we must explain. Back of the orchard there was a high ledge of rocks which originally was as bare of soil as Tom's head was of hair. Tom was a diligent fellow with a great turn for utilizing things. Land was scarce in Milton, or, rather rocks were so abundant there was not much room left for earth. Tom was fond of potatoes, and he was determined to have a place where he could cultivate them to the best advantage. First he constructed a wheel-barrow road up the ledge and then he went and gathered all the spare earth and rubbish he could find and wheeled it to the top of the ledge. After many years of labor he had formed one of the best garden spots in southern Nova Scotia. The potatoes and other garden truck he raised there would have astonished even a Yankee cultivator of garden "sass." To prevent the rains from washing the earth away he built a solid wall of masonry around the top of the ledge. One corner he reserved for shrubs and flowers. Being of a Scriptural turn of mind and likening himself to Nebuchadnezzar, he named the place "the Babylonian Gardens," and by that name it was known throughout the county and in the press of southern Nova Scotia.

Jim surveyed the place with wonder, and Tom detailed his triumphs with zest, winding up with: "So you see, Jim, there's a bit of the Nebuchadnezzar in me."

"What! That old king what tried to roast three boys?"

This was an association of ideas Tom wasn't prepared for, and before he could pull himself together for an answer the boy energetically added: "You hain't no Old Cud, Mister Tom. You'd never hurt no boys; leastwise, not onless they was Bill Brydens what'd slapped your eyes full o' huckleberry pie."

The Tanner had told Tom of the Old Cud episode, and, indeed, the incident had gone all over both villages, and he was, therefore, now at no loss to understand Jim's allusions, though for the moment, in the pride of his achievements, he had overlooked the incident.

"No," said he, earnestly, "I don't want to be an Old Cud, even though I should live to be an hundred years old. Boys have as much right to live as anybody, and it always pleases me to think that when I am dead there'll be lots of them left above ground to keep the world lively."

Here they were interrupted by Hannah, who was at the bottom of the cliff calling: "Tom Kenton, why don't you leave that old Babylonian garment and come down to supper!" She always called it by this name because he had so effectually clothed the top of the rock.

Tom hurried down as fast as his short legs would allow, and seizing Hannah by the arm led her to the cottage at a pace that left her panting and red.

The supper was spread in the bearskin room. Hannah sat at the head of the table, but before they took their seats, she bowed her head and gently invoked a blessing, Peggy reverently echoing her amen.

Tom kept the table going with his talk, Hannah occasionally responding yes or no to his remarks, while Peggy characteristically confined herself to a nod of assent or a shake of dissent.

After tea the old bureau in Tom's room was ransacked for Jim's benefit. Instead of being filled with sheets and shirts for Tom's bed and person, it was filled with bugs, shells, Indian arrows, axes, tomahawks and other Indian relics. One drawer, however, had been reserved for a great collection of old pipes, and a tough medley of old sinners they were, too. In one corner there was a collection of beautiful crystals of various sizes and colors.

Jim was so interested he forgot himself entirely and sat till the twilight began to creep into the old-fashioned windows, and it was then he thought of his promise to be at home in the early evening.

As soon as he was well on his way home, he exclaimed: "Wall, wall, w. 'll That was the funniest gal party I ever heerd on!"

Chapter XVI.

AT SEA AGAIN.

THE month of September had come. The hill-tops were putting on their autumnal tints of scarlet and crimson, and yellow and red, as if resolved to have one more gay time before they put on their white robes and went to bed for the winter.

As the winters were long and communication with the outside world limited during their continuance, it was the custom of Liverpool people to send to Halifax in the fall for their winter supplies. They clubbed together, chartered a schooner and filling her up with such commodities as they had to exchange, sent her off to execute their commissions.

This season they had chartered the Dove, a schooner of about seventy-five tons burden. The Tanner was one of her owners.

Tom was a sharp bargainer as well as a trustworthy business man, and he was, therefore, generally chosen as supercargo for the trip.

The Dove lay at Liverpool wharf taking in dried cod, tubbed mackerel, pickled herring, smoked alewives, digby chickens—a small, smoked herring—maple syrup, maple sugar and apples, and potatoes.

Jim was a frequent visitor and an interested spectator during the loading of the schooner.

Tom was on hand as active as if he carried a dozen men inside his square, thick, beaver-cloth pea-jacket. "Wish you were going with us," said he to Jim, as the lad stood by him the second afternoon helping him load.

"That's the very thing I was wishin' myself. The Dove is a trim, little hussy, an' I'd like to be on her deck when she spreads her wings an' begins to cut up on the briny."

AND JIM WAS COOK.

"Really, now! Will you go if I get the Tanner's consent? We haven't engaged a cook yet, and they tell me you are as good as a Frenchman at pots, kettles and frying pans."

To Tom's great amazement Jim frantically turned a couple of somersaults, and then replied: "Jist you try it on, Mister Tom!"

Tom lost no time in trying it on.

"Yes," said the Tanner.

"If you will take good care of him," qualified Ruth.

"Trust me for that!" rejoined Tom, emphatically. "There won't be any danger of his running away from the Dove while I am supercargo"

"No more than there is of the compass needle running away from the magnetic pole. You make me jealous," remarked the Tanner, smiling.

"Ho, ho, ho!" laughed Tom, away down below his waistband.

It was a clear, sunny morning when the Dove left the wharf, and many people were on hand to see her off. There was a spanking breeze, and as soon as her white canvas bellied to the wind she started down the rippling harbor as if chasing on the heels of a competing racer. The British flag flew at the main-top and snapped in the air like a thousand whiplashes

"Here we are again!" exclaimed Jim, gleefully, when the Dove reached an offing and began to rise and fall with the increasing swell, and to shake the

water from her bows in glistening spray. There was a good deal of the old salt in the lad, and his nostrils fairly dilated as he snuffed the sea air once more.

"Yes, here we are again!" responded Tom, leaning against the windward taff-rail to steady himself on his feet, and referring more particularly to the companship which had been so firmly established between himself and the boy.

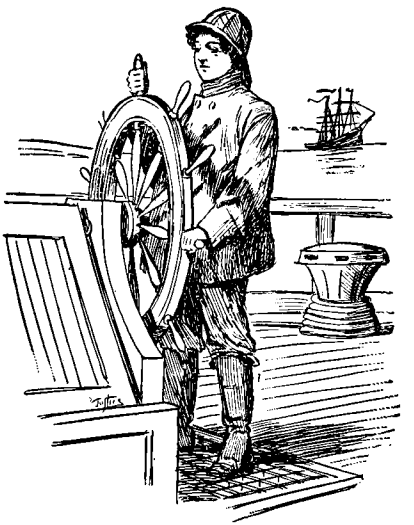
Captain Bartlett had left the clothing counter from which he fitted Jim to clothes the morning of his delivery from the tan pile, and was now in command of the Dove, of which he was one-half owner. He was going to Halifax to lay in a fresh supply of goods.

Bob Buskirk's big brother Ben—we can't help these B's humming here—was first mate, and a rousing, roystering sailor he was, too. Besides the Captain and his mate, there were four sailors—all from among Liverpool's staunchest citizens. Altogether it was a snug, little sailing party.

There was no forecastle, and the cabin served the triple purpose of parlor, bedroom and kitchen.

Tom was not much of a sailor, but could pull a rope and take his trick at the helm to good purpose when occasion required.

And Jim really was the cook. Speaking of it afterward Tom said, with great gusto, that he just laid himself out on the dinner the first day. Coffee, beefsteak, fried cod, boiled potatoes, flap-jacks and molasses scouse—soaked shipbread fried and eaten with molasses—were all brought to the table as ship-shape as if a woman had bossed the stove.



COULD STEER LIKE AN OLD SAILOR

Jim took the watch while the others were at dinner, for the Captain had discovered that he could steer like an old sailor. There he stood on deck master of all he surveyed, with not a soul nor a sail in sight! On one side the land stretched northward like a speckled-blue cloud hovering on the surface of the water, while on the other was the immeasurable ocean, blue-black, white-capped and restless.

With a free sheet and a wholesale breeze the Dove was doing her prettiest. As Jim stood to the helm, watching his compass and keeping the vessel to her course, he hummed a remembered snatch of a wild, forecastle air taught him by one of his former companions of the sea:

Bless me! This is jolly, sailing o'er the sea,
Billows bulging round us, water in the lee—
Scuppers swashing smartly, timing with the roar
Of the dashing spray clouds gathering at the fore!
Sing, ye lubbers, loudly! Get your sea-legs on;
Soon you'll see the waters mounting into mon-
Sters with foaming summits curling like the clouds,
And splashing up the spray through the straining shrouds.

Hear the maties bawling, like the very de'il!
See! the masts are bending as we dance our reel
Ing way o'er the ocean, like the flying scud
Scooting through the heavens ready for a flood.
Let the whitecaps follow, we can them outrun
Swift as Carey chickens, and I vow by thun-
Der, 'tis awful jolly rushing through the sea,
Like a living critter, "Yankee Doodle" free.

There were two more verses of it, but this, perhaps, is as much as the reader can endure. To Jim there was something in the rhythm of the words that timed with the movements of both sea and schooner, and he was so taken up with them that when he had finished singing them once he began them again.

At six o'clock of the evening of the second day they were off Sambro light, and an hour after were snugly anchored where they could look into the muzzles of the guns of the fortifications of George's Island in Halifax harbor.

Tom sold the cargo to advantage and then began laying in return stores of flour, sugar, molasses and notions, according to the various and numerous commissions intrusted to his management.

"Here, Jim," called he, coming on board from one of his purchasing rounds in the city, "here is something the Tanner told me to get for you."

The package was small but heavy, and when the boy took it he felt it over and over and for some time indulged the luxury of guessing its contents, Tom the while watching his movements with great amusement. On opening it he found a fine, full-fledged silver watch.

"Now," said he, snapping his fingers until they sounded like fire-crackers, "I kin keep the time myself when I gits home, an' the sun an' old, yaller-leggid Shang kin git up in the mornin' an' go erbout their business 'thout takin' the trouble to git under or inter my winder to give me the time o' day. My, my,

my! I'll be so reg'ler the ol' gran'father clock what's in the corner'll git jealous uv me."

On the morning of the third day after their arrival they again hoisted sails and headed for home, just deeply enough loaded to put them in good trim for strong winds and boisterous weather. By noon the sky was overcast with ugly clouds, and the Dove was running under double reefs over a wild, rough sea. When evening came, a fierce, September gale raged along the coast, and the vessel's deck was swept from stem to stern at almost every plunge she made She had no canvas out save a small storm sail on the foremast. The hatches were battened down and everything made snug for the gravest emergencies. At ten o'clock they were off the light on Coffin's Island, which lies near the mouth of Liverpool harbor. But the gale was so terrific and bore the Dove before it with such fury, it would have been madness to attempt an entrance.

THE FINE, FULL-FLEDGED SILVER WATCH.

"There is nothing for it but to let her scud," said the Captain, consulting with his mate. "How is the pump?"

"Dry as a cork, sir. She holds together as tight as a Dutchman's beer keg."

"But if this gale continues in this direction many hours longer we shall be driven straight to sea."

"Well, we have plenty of provision on board and need not starve, even though we should be driven as far south as the Equator," replied the mate, who was famous for his hopefulness as well as for his pluck and endurance when face to face with peril.

Tom was in the cabin so deathly sick and dismantled that he wished himself at the bottom of the sea, and the sea at the bottom of the universe. In addition to the terrible nausea racking him almost to pieces, the violent movements of the vessel knocked him about as if he were a foot-ball going the rounds of a college campus or the back alleys of slumdom. Jim, entirely unaffected by the turmoil, was, in a manner, chasing round after him and doing what he could to pin him down to one place and mitigate his sufferings.

While Jim was thus trying to steady him on the locker, which ended in a corner of the cabin, and doing his best to get a short turn around him with a rope that he might belay him where he would be kept from banging himself to pieces against the cooking stove, Tom for a moment ceased his retchings and groanings and actually began to speak. But his deep,

TRYING TO BELAY TOM TO SOMETHING.

round voice had assumed such a piping, shrill tone, Jim could scarcely believe his own ears.

"Jim," he wailed, "the head of the berth has pounded my skull into fragments, and the foot of it has shivered my shins into splinters; the whole cabin is doing its best to skin me alive, and the infernal sea has knocked the insides

out of me altogether. Do you think you can pick up enough of me to make Peggy believe that her Tom still exists? Will there be enough of me left to carry on shore in a tin pail?"

"Yis, indeed, Mister Tom, an' there won't be vittles ernough in Milton to keep you goin' when you gits ashore," responded Jim, who was so well acquainted with the nature of seasickness that he was not at all alarmed about Tom's condition.

"Are we almost home?"

"Left Liverpool astarn uv us more'n an hour ergo."

"What the blazes do you mean, Jim?"

"Couldn't git in coz the door was shut, an' we is scuddin' for the fust place what'll take us in."

"Good Lord! Oh dear, dear! This is awful!" And Tom became so extra limp and pitched about so frightfully, he fell sprawling to the cabin floor where, to prevent his rolling about like a ball, Jim pushed him to leeward and sitting down by him braced his back against him as a sort of wedge to keep him in place.

At midnight the gale increased, and it seemed as if the Dove must founder under the waves now piling upon her thick and fast.

It was impossible to keep a light in the cabin, and, as the companion way had been fast hooked, the air was fetid and stifling. Tom still had life enough left in him to groan dismally, while Jim, true as steel, stuck by him and tried to save him from as many bumps as possible.

The Nova Scotians are born of water, and the men on deck, thoroughly inured to all sorts of maritime dangers, had both themselves and the Dove so completely in hand they were doing all that could possibly be done to secure the safety of the vessel.

Suddenly the man on watch ahead shouted: "Light, ho! Dead ahead!"

"That is Bushen's Island light," said the Captain to his mate. "Give me the helm. Now's our chance. I'll run her in between Bushen's and Spectacle Island, where we can find a place to anchor. I know a hole there in which we can ride out the gale in safety. Take in the storms'l, and see that the anchors and chains are ready."

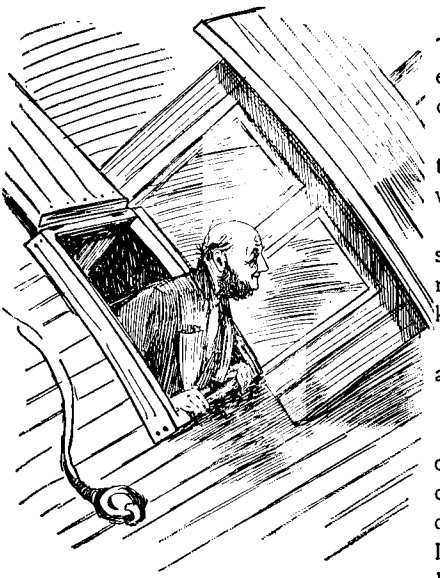
Twenty minutes after the Dove was riding at anchor, but uneasily, for the heavy swell swept the spot and the gale roared through her rigging as if in disappointment of being robbed of the bones of the little craft.

Toward morning, the wind having increased, she began to drag her anchors, and in spite of everything that could be done, she went ashore on Port Mouton

Head. Happily, however, she struck upon a sand beach. Another thing in her favor was a rapidly receding tide, which left her high and dry, though keeled over broadside on.

Jim had been so busy on deck assisting the men he could not visit Tom, but the instant he got a chance he went below to see how his friend had fared.

As the vessel keeled over Tom rolled to the lower side like a log, and the moment he knew Jim was by his side he wrathily asked, recovering a part of his stentorian tones: "What in thunder has happened?"



TOM RECOVERS.

"Why, don'tcher know, Mister Tom, that you has been slippin' erbout here like biled pork what has cut loose?"

"You don't say! But what is this infernal schooner up to, anyway?"

"Nothin', uv any consekence; she's jist keepin' still an' lookin' round, kinder, to see how she got keeled up so nicely."

"I take it that we have run ashore, then."

"Yis: kinder, sorter."

"Thank heaven! I've got sick of bobbing from one end of the cabin to the other. I wish you could get me something to eat. I'm as hollow as a stovepipe that has had even the soot knocked out of it." And Tom picked himself up in the most gingerly manner and stowed himself upon the lowermost locker, where he sat looking at Jim and making a feeble attempt at a smile.

"Ef the vittles hasn't all gone to Davy Jones, I'll git you a belly full in a jiffy, Mister Tom; it sounds so good to hear you speak unner your weskit agin."

"The cabin was in a bad state, to be sure; yet from amid the ruins Jim managed to supply Tom's immediate wants, and with such good effect that no sooner had he got something down than he wanted to go up. The storm had spent its fury, and the sun was rising big and clear.

When Tom's head appeared above the companion way the Captain sung out cheerily: "We haven't started a plank nor so much as wet a single box of cargo."

"But we have laid the whole concern on the top shelf as high and as dry as a tree top," was the discontented reply.

"We ought to be thankful we are not at the bottom of the sea. Yet the Dove is not so badly off as you suppose. She came on at half tide, and by removing the heaviest of her cargo she'll float at next flood."

"Let's to work at once, then. There are men living at the other end of the beach behind those woods; send for them so that we may be ready when the next tide comes." And Tom buttoned his reef-jacket around him and went into the work as big-voiced as ever.

Chapter XVII.

THE RETURN OF THE DOVE.

THAT September gale proved to be one of the fiercest that had swept the Nova Scotian coast for many years. The shore was strewn with wrecks, and many lives were lost. Only three miles from where the Dove went ashore a full rigged ship was wrecked on Black Point and not a soul survived to tell the tale.

Tidings of disaster were already reaching the little town of Liverpool, and the deepest concern was felt for the safety of the Dove, it having become known that she put to sea just before the storm came on.

Ruth was bowed with forebodings, and the Tanner in trying to comfort her, said: "The Dove is a staunch craft and Bartlett is a thorough seaman, as are all the men with him. The vessel may have been driven off the coast, and in that event she will not be heard from for some time. There is some comfort in knowing that they had a good supply of provisions on board."

But Ruth saw that her husband was a prey to the worst of fears and needed comforting as well as she. In fact, unable to endure his own uneasiness, the

Tanner went up to the tannery with the intention of resuming his work and waiting for tidings, if tidings should come. The sight of Jim's bench, however, was too much for him, and he returned to the cottage and took his spy-glass and went to the top of the loftiest hill that lifted its head on his side of the river. Here he had a broad view of the sea in every direction. Far away to the north he saw a schooner sailing the course the Dove would take were she bound homeward from Halifax. His heart gave a great leap. But alas for his hopes! it needed only a single glance through his glass to convince him that it was not the Dove. No other sail being in sight he went home. Ruth, knowing what his errand had been, anxiously scanned his face for some assuring sign, but seeing none, went about her domestic duties with dry and burning eyes. Jim was as dear to them both as their first son had been, and now that they were becoming so well advanced in years grief sat heavily upon them. Nor did they forget the other families of the village who were under the same dark cloud.

Presently Vi entered, and seeing how distressed Ruth was, she began to flit about doing a host of little things to assist her in her work. With girlhood's sweet assurance she instinctively felt that her presence would be of some comfort to the dear old woman.

During the earlier part of the afternoon Hannah and Peggy, looking pale and worried, dropped in, and being earnestly pressed to remain removed their wraps and sat down.

Hannah, notwithstanding her fears, was determined to talk hopefully. "I saw Captain Minard before I came away from home," said she, "and you know that he is a man of great experience when it comes to sea matters; and he says he has been studying out the question of the Dove's whereabouts. He thinks she must have scud before the gale through the greater part of the night, and would have fetched up near the entrance to Barrington harbor. And as he knew that place so well, she would have no difficulty in making a shelter under the lee of Cape Sable or in the western passage, which he says would scarcely feel the effects of the gale. He also says the wind having been so strong and contrary since it cleared up, they haven't had time to make their way back to Liverpool yet. At any rate I'll not believe that my brother Tom is lost until I see his ghost and have it from his own lips."

"From his own lips," repeated Peggy, faintly, wiping her eyes and hiding her face in her handkerchief.

The Tanner had been out calling upon the old sailors of the town, and when he returned he said that all he had talked with entertained about the same views that Captain Minard had. There was such a brightening time of it at the

cottage under these agreeing views, Ruth went about the work of preparing tea quite cheerfully. Hannah and Peggy made themselves helpfully handy, as much for their own relief as for Ruth's benefit. Hannah kept up a constant chatter of hopeful remarks, Peggy contenting herself with echoes, which, however, owing to her strong misgivings, were unusually feeble. Vi accepted an invitation to remain to tea, and when that hour arrived and all were seated, so much was said about Tom and Jim that the ears of those worthies must have been utterly burned to charcoal, had it not been that at that identical hour they were just as earnestly talking about Hannah and Peggy, and Ruth and the Tanner and Vi.

When night came, Ruth and the Tanner insisted that Hannah and Peggy should stay all night, they had been such a comfort.

"Shall we?" asked Hannah, turning to Peggy.

"We will," responded Peggy, with more determination than she had exhibited for many a day. "The Dove may come in at any moment, and when she makes her appearance we ought to be here to welcome them back."

The very idea of welcoming them back had such an effect upon the Tanner that he began to talk almost as freely and cheerfully as if Tom and Jim were there to participate in the conversation.

But to return to the Dove. She floated at the next tide, as the Captain had predicted. With the help secured from men living in the vicinity—men who never once dreamed of salvage or wreckage, but were content with the modest wages paid them—the cargo was in a few hours reloaded in almost as good shape as it was at first.

The instant the cargo was fairly on board, the flag went up to the maintop, and every inch of canvas the vessel possessed was set to catch the wind which was now blowing directly fair for Liverpool.

"Here we are again, as sassy as ever!" shouted Jim, gleefully, as he thought of soon being at the cottage again.

"I should like to know what Han and Peg are doing this blessed minute," remarked Tom, rubbing his hands in anticipation of once more hiding himself in the shadows of his own weather-beaten home under the trees. He really thought at one time during the gale that his old shoe collecting times were over, and that Peggy would be found in the dim shoe pantry mourning over his old boots, of which there were a score of pairs, more or less.

"I reckon they is givin' your old house a clearin' up all over the lot," suggested Jim, who thought that Tom's house was just the place where two old maids could work wonders in the absence of the old bachelor.

"I think not," growled Tom, frowning darkly at the very thought of such a desecration.

"It's half past ten o'clock," said Jim, looking at the face of his new watch for the time of day with considerable ostentation, and wondering what would have become of it if everybody had gone to the bottom. But he was a boy, and one thing follows another in a boy's mind like drops of water in a rainstorm, and he suddenly broke out with: "Now, for dinner, an' what does you suppose I'm gonter have, Mister Tom?"

"I'm sure I can't imagine."

"A huckleberry grunt!"

"Do!" And Tom, not satisfied with the emphasis he had thrown into the lone syllable, slapped his hands together and made a report like a pistol.

Jim had three small jugs of preserved huckleberries in reserve, and with these he went to work intending to make a "grunt" after Ruth's most approved recipe.

You place a batch of well-kneaded dough at the bottom of a kettle; over this you pour a layer of berries; then comes another layer of dough and another of berries until the kettle is two-thirds full. Over the whole you place a nice whitecap of dough and a tight cover to shut the whole thing out of sight until it sees fit to show itself. In less than half an hour after the kettle is set over a steady fire, the cover will be lifted and a black and white face will begin to show itself above the top of the kettle, wearing the cover for its crown of victory and peering outdoors, so to speak, as if to say: "Here I am; come and get me!"

How this compound—light as a snow ball and dark as an African—ever got its name, no one knows. But, certain it is, that it is a Nova Scotian classic in the Black-Mouth season. That Jim had learned to compound it to perfection, was testified to by the crew of the Dove that day, for not a vestige of it was left when the dinner was done.

And now to go back to Liverpool again. Hannah and Peggy, too anxious and restless to sleep, were in Jim's bed talking of the missing vessel. The Tanner and his wife were also tossing about and conversing in low tones in the bedroom immediately under them.

Vi, at her own home, was asleep and dreaming after a prolonged period of nervous wakefulness. The Dove had become a great ship of war, and James Payzant, Jr., was her commander, decked with a gold-bespangled uniform with a glittering sword hanging by his side. Straight into Liverpool harbor he sailed, where his great guns were booming wildly over the waters, for he had come to make her his bride and to carry her off to a palace in a distant paradise

Now, at the very moment she began to dream, a real cannon broke the stillness of the night. A sharp-eared resident near the wharf heard the sound of anchor chains rattling through the hawser-hole of a vessel which had just entered the harbor. Hastening out he recognized outlines of the Dove through the darkness. Knowing where there was plenty of powder to be had, he ran and helped himself to it and made haste to the little public square, where there was an old field piece, which, after a few moments, shouted in thunder tones from its round-mouthed, iron throat: "She's come!"

"SHE'S COME!"

And how the hills did re-echo the shout: "She's come! She's come!"

"She's come!" shouted the Tanner, leaping out of bed at a single bound, almost beside himself with joy.

"Thank God, she's come!" And Ruth almost tumbled out of bed in her haste to follow the Tanner to the floor.

"There she is!" cried Hannah, upstairs, bouncing out of Jim's bed like an India-rubber ball.

"She is!" repeated Peggy, following after with less emphasis, but almost

tearing the wall paper to flinders in her frantic attemps to ignite the point of a pencil which, in her confusion of mind, she had mistaken for a match.

"The Dove! The Dove!" cried Vi, waking from her dream in time to hear the echoes of the cannon receding among the hills.

"Safe at last!" thankfully thought the families of the men who formed the crew of the Dove, as they hastened from their anxious couches and relit the tallow candles and oil lamps of their humble homes

WELCOMING THE VOYAGERS BACK.

And all Liverpool thanked heaven gratefully, because sure that the cannon would not have been fired unless the Dove was safe.

"Cling-clang, ling-a-ling; ding-dong, ding-a-ling; clang-clang, ring-along," said the little village bell, waking up at last and shaking the steeple as if it had a good mind to shake it down for not waking it before.

Then from the vacant spot in the rear of the wharf a great, ruddy flame burst forth from the heart of an immense brush-heap, and ten thousand minia-

ture voices added their cacklings to the voices of men, women and children gathered on the wharf to welcome the voyagers back again.

"Has the folkses all gone crazy since we left, Mister Tom?" asked Jim, wonderingly, and little dreaming that all this ado was made over the return of the Dove. "Or is they gittin' up a Fourth o' July in the night time on the sly."

But Tom was too full to answer. These scenes and sounds spoke eloquently to him of the terrible suspense through which the people had passed on their

SAT TOGETHER TILL THE MORNING.

account, and his thoughts were busy about those who, perchance, would wait in vain for husbands, fathers and sons who had gone down to the sea for the last time. He was a tender-hearted fellow, who never was so taken up with himself as to forget that there were other people in the world besides himself. Now, that the storm was over he began to realize that it had brought disaster to hundreds as well as peril to thousands.

The preparations for landing were made almost in silence, for every man on board was profoundly moved at the demonstration being made on shore.

"Are you all there?" shouted the Tanner, as soon as the boat stole through the shadows into the reddening glow of the great bonfire.

"Every mother's son of us!" cried Tom, at the top of his voice.

This unlimbered the crowd on the wharf and cheer after cheer rang on the air. The echoing hills broke forth again and hurrahed until it seemed as if the generations of a hundred years had lifted their heads from their graves just long enough to let their successors know that they were fully alive to what was taking place upon this old, time-cracked globe of ours.

Ruth couldn't say a word when she folded Jim in her arms, but she kissed him again and again, and that made Vi wish that she could do the same, for Ruth's sake, of course. The Tanner took his hand and tried to put a halter around his own feelings by saying as funnily as possible: "Well, my lad, old Peggysis has been awful lonely during your absence."

AT TEN O'CLOCK PRECISELY.

"Oh, Tom!" exclaimed Hannah to that worthy, "I knew all the time that you would come back."

"Come back!" piped Peggy, falteringly, giving his hand a gentle squeeze, a thing she had never dared to do before in all their courtship.

"Come back! Why, did you suppose that we had gone on a trip to the South Pole?" replied Tom, wiping his eyes with the sleeve of his pea-jacket, thereby greatly increasing their inflammation.

The people scattered, the echoes shut their mouths, the bonfire hid its head beneath the ashes, the cannon wondered when it would get another chance to clear its throat and the bell fell into a deacon-like doze and dreamed that it was cracked from top to bottom.

But at the Tanner's house the stove was crackling at a great rate, and the table, not to be behind in its welcome, used the crockery for tongues and merrily joined in the welcoming clamor.

Tom took a place between Hannah and Peggy; Jim sat between Ruth and the Tanner, and during the feast of joy, Tom Kenton, supercargo, told the story of "How the Dove Didn't Get Wrecked."

A sickle of a moon gleamed palely through the windows and cut down the moments like swiftly falling wheat.

The Tanner and Ruth, worn out, went off to bed and sank into a sweet, dreamless slumber.

"Hello!" exclaimed Jim, when he went to his room and found it in the state in which it was left by the "girls" when they tumbled out of bed to the racket of the gun. "I reckon a hurricane has been takin' a nap in my bed!" He made it up as ceremoniously and as carefully as if he were bed-maker to the queen, for it was understood that Tom was to follow him sometime before daylight.

Hannah had been directed to occupy another chamber, and when she went to bed she gently admonished Peggy that she must not "sit up" too late.

But Tom and Peggy, now that no raging seas rolled between them to affright their loving souls, sat together till the morning!

When Ruth got up the two were setting the table for breakfast, looking as bright and as beaming as the round-faced sun that was just beginning to show itself above the hill-tops.

And now that the Saturday night spell had been broken by their sitting together on a Thursday night, and now that the ten o'clock spell had also been broken by their indulging in a later hour than ten, and now that the storm had set them to thinking of the brevity of life, they were married on the ensuing Saturday night at ten o'clock precisely.

And it became the fashion of the older residents of Liverpool and Milton to reckon events from the date of the Dove's return and the ending of the thirty years' courtship of Tom and Peggy.

Chapter XVIII.

INS AND OUTS OF WINTER.

THE November snows had come and after them thick ice upon the river. The keen air was so enlivening it made Jim feel, to use his own expression, "Ez ef he was a double Jim." He was in his element, for there was coasting on the hillsides, skating on the river, eel-spearing through the ice over the mud-flats of the harbor, and plenty of duck shooting within the inlets of the sea shore. Jim had his sled and skates, his spear and gun—provided by the Tanner's thoughtfulness—and short was the time required to make him thoroughly conversant with their uses.

There was nothing more to be done at the tannery for the winter, and Peggysis stood solemnly idle on his two legs with full permission to think as much as he pleased. As if sympathizing with his loneliness, Jim visited him occasionally, patted him on his square head and earnestly assured him that when the vats thawed out and the flowers bloomed again he should creak and shake and sweat to the full content of his wooden heart.

During the forenoons Jim and the Tanner kept school together—the one as scholar and the other as tutor. Jim had a fast growing love for books and study, and the Tanner had as much as he could do to keep him going. He intended to give him a good start in the rudiments with a view to preparing him for entrance into the best school accessible.

The afternoons were spent as Jim saw fit, the Tanner saying he could be trusted for play as well as for work. Ruth always found the wood box full, the water pail was never empty, and when she got up in the morning the rooms were all aglow with the fires and ready for the daily living.

Shang and his flock now found themselves confined to the roomy shed, where they were well looked after, and where their keeping was more than rewarded by eggs that came almost as regularly as if the hens had green fields to disport themselves in.

Such good friends had Betty and the boy become, she always mooed when she heard the sound of his footsteps crunching through the snow. When he milked her she did her level best to let down all the milk there was in her. Towzer was Jim's inseparable companion outdoors, and he was never better satisfied than when chasing after him in his headlong sled rides down the steep hills.

Notwithstanding Tom's marriage, Jim occasionally went up to see him, choosing evenings when he would find the apples roasting on the hearth, sweet cider warming in the chimney corner and the nuts with their come-crack-me-quick faces grinning at him from the blue bowl set in the center of the round, oaken table.

Hannah always "dropped in" in time to participate in the good cheer. After nut-cracking time, Tom would get his fiddle down and squeak out some lively, old-fashioned jigs, reels and strathspeys. For a general winding up Peggy would solemnly insist upon his playing "Old Lennox," while all joined in singing the verse:

> Blow ye the trumpet, blow.
> The gladly solemn sound;
> Let all the nations know
> To earth's remotest bound,
> The Year of Jubilee is come!
> Return ye ransomed sinners home.

Tom's voice was all right when it joined in the singing, but when the fiddle came to that tune it couldn't stick to the notes to save itself, and went dancing up and down the scales as if desperately intent upon getting some one off on a jig around the room. Hannah and Peggy closed their eyes while they sang and

quavered to and fro like "The Last Rose of Summer." Jim did his best to follow them, yet, however, he was always jumping the track and chasing after the runaway notes of the fiddle, while Tom would blink at him in such a way he found it almost impossible to keep his face in shape. Those were evenings to be remembered, and Jim never forgot them.

Something new seemed to come along almost every week, and whatever it was Jim had his eyes open and himself ready to make the most of things.

One afternoon Tom drove down to the Tanner's with a sled-load of hemlock bark. After the sled was unloaded the Tanner asked: "When are you going into the woods, Tom?"

SOME LIVELY OLD-FASHIONED JIGS.

"About the middle of December," was the reply.

"Well, do you know that you have filled the boy's head full of this logging camp business, and that he has been begging me to let him go with you?"

"Then, why not let him go?"

"I do not want to break up his studies, he is doing so nicely."

"But it isn't all in the books, father," said Jim; "there's lots to be learned in the woods, specially when Mister Tom's eround. He almost ekels you in gittin' a feller up hill."

"Better let him go," pleaded Tom, persuasively, "he will catch up in his studies fast enough, and the experience in the woods will do him good. I am to have a gang of good men, you know; and besides, he can earn a few pounds for spending money."

"For keepin -money, you means, Mister Tom; father keeps me in spendin' change, an' he says its cos I kept Peggysis a trottin' so reg'ler. But I jist aches to my marrer-bones to git at them big trees I've heerd you brag on so much."

"So it goes," said the Tanner, laughing. "When you two put your heads together there is no withstanding you. If Ruth says she can fit you out so that you won't freeze to death you may go."

And before the words had grown cold Jim was on his legs for the cottage to get Ruth's opinion. It was not long before he came back, deciaring with great

giee: "She kin rig me out from stem to starn, an' make me ez snug an' ez warm ez a woodchuck in his hole, or a whale in his blubber."

When the starting day came Jim carried with him his skates, his gun and a brand new axe. He had two big, fat, canvas bags; one filled to the mouth with provisions and the other stuffed almost to bursting with blankets and quilts.

While packing his clothing in a separate bundle he found a pair of bright red and blue wristlets, which Vi had knitted and requested Ruth to hide among his things. Jim had seen her knitting them, and recognizing them, immediately put them on, slyly saying to Ruth he knew "what was what."

Ten yoke of oxen, ten big sleds, two loads of hay and twenty-five men and their "traps" made the procession which went from Milton early one morning in the middle of December for Lake Rossignol. A team with four men were sent off two days in advance to make the logging camp ready for the rest. It was twenty miles to the foot of the lake, and they did not make the camp until near night, eight miles of the road being a mere wood road on which the snow lay thick and almost unbroken.

The first thing Jim noticed was a long, low building constructed of logs rooted in with loose lumber and deeply banked around with snow. On entering the narrow door he saw a big fire blazing in the center of the building, the smoke of which went out through a wide opening in the roof. The sides of the building contained bunks arranged one above another; these were already filled with fresh oat straw, and needed only the quilts of the men to transform them into comfortable sleeping places. In one end of the building, not far from the fire, stood a big, rough, board table, on which a smoking supper was laid for the tired and hungry men. The panting cattle were cared for by the men already on the ground, in a long, low, slab shed built for that purpose. The new-comers sat down at the supper table as soon as they could unload their personal property.

Being among strangers, Jim was inclined to be shy, until he discovered that the men were as gentle as they were jovial, and that they were evidently inclined to treat him as well as if he had been born among them. They were not hired men only, but good, reputable citizens of Milton, who had clubbed together in the logging business, and were accustomed to behaving themselves in the woods as well as if they were in their own homes. Sam Freeman was the only boy among them besides Jim; as the two were already on the best of terms with each other, there was little danger of either of them suffering from loneliness.

As soon as the homely but substantial supper was dispatched, the men began to disappear in their bunks, each one having a bed for himself.

Tom insisted upon making Jim's bed for him, inasmuch as it was his first

night in a lo[illegible] camp. Taking a gunny bag, he filled it with straw for a pillow; then over that and the straw of the bed he threw a heavy woolen blanket, and after bidding Jim to "pile in," he threw over him a blanket and a pair of heavy comforters. He finally tucked him in with the greatest care and left him to his thoughts. In five minutes the boy was fast asleep, and so was Tom, in the bunk next below him.

If Jim had remained awake long enough he might have listened to a logging camp serenade, given by a band consisting of a dozen sonorous pieces, more or less. Every piece was similar in shape, though distinctly different in sound.

The Proboscis Band was a permanent camp institution, yet its peculiarity was that it could never play unless it was sound asleep, and another peculiarity was the fact that its vibrant music was seldom heard, for the reason that its auditors were always sound asleep, saving always the oxen, owls and rabbits, whose opinions were never placed on record, though they must have been very definite.

Tom was the champion soloist of the band, and when he was at his best it was difficult to tell what he was most like, a regiment of tom-toms, an imitation of Niagara, or an echo of a thunderstorm among the Alps.

Peggy was fond of singing:

> Then let the hurricane roar!
> It will the sooner be o'er.

But the words never came true concerning her husband's part in the Proboscis Band, for from the time he threw himself upon his straw bed to the time he yawned his greetings to the break of dawn, his throat was like a big river with a suspension bridge thrown across it for an aeolian harp.

When Jim got up the snow was falling, thus adding to the thick, white blanket already covering the ground to the depth of nine inches. With shoes well greased with mutton tallow, and woollen leggings extending to the knees, he went to take a look at his surroundings. He watched the great flakes sifting lazily through the woods like miniature fragments of a sun-bleached cloud which had suddenly dropped to pieces. The shaggy-brown tree trunks lifted themselves in striking contrast with the prevailing white, as far as the eye could reach. Here and there a deep zig-zag line showed where the rabbits had floundered through the snow. Now and then a blue-jay or a saucy grossbeak fluttered among the branches and scolded while waiting for an opportunity to filch its breakfast from the camp; while from afar came the croaking of a rookery of ravens. Every few moments a loud noise was heard which resembled the dis-

charge of small firearms; this was caused by the cracking of ice on Rossingnol from the intensity of the cold.

Missing Jim, and fearing that his venturesomeness might lead him too far into the woods, Tom followed up his tracks until he found him.

"Well, Jim, what do you think of it?" he asked.

"Ef we only had lots of sugar to sweeten the snow, an' a plenty of cream to make it slick, an' a slice of summer to make us sweat, we might have a reg'ler ice-cream blow out all to ourselves."

"Why, that's a genuine Irish bull!"

PUTTING ON FINAL TOUCHES.

"What's that, Mister Tom?"

"It is putting things together that can't go together anyway. How can you get snow and summer time together?"

"But when a feller gits to wishin' he don't have to stick to sense, does he?" And Jim's face looked so rosy and healthy, and his eyes shone with such a bright, happy light that Tom couldn't help looking at him in admiration.

Their conversation was interrupted by a long, loud cry which so startled Jim, Tom had to explain that it was the call for breakfast blown through a trumpet made of birch bark.

"It's ernough to take all the appertite outen a pig, an' sounds wussen a dyin' seal, an' that's wussen anything else I kin think uv."

"But I think we can manage our part of the breakfast nevertheless," said Tom, who was always able to do his share of eating, excepting when he was on the sea.

The fare consisted of coffee without milk, sweetened with brown sugar; bread and butter with roasted smoked herrings and cold corned beef served up with potatoes boiled in their jackets. And for that first morning, as a special luxury, they indulged in fresh cookies and ginger bread.

These plain meals were occasionally varied by a rabbit stew, or a rasher of bacon, or a steak, or a beef stew, the men having brought with them two quarters of beef, which were hung up where they couldn't thaw.

"Now, Jim, you are in for your first log," remarked Tom, after breakfast,

"and as I am the boss of the camp, I must pick your tree for you and teach you how to bring it down. I am going to set you at the biggest, tallest and finest pine I can find. And you must remember that every log you cut while you are in here with me is to be your own."

"For sartin sure?"

"Yes, for certain sure."

"But what'll I do with 'em when I gits 'em down?"

"We will see to that when the proper time comes. Never cross a bridge till you get to it. The first thing for you to do is to see that your new axe has a good edge to it."

JIM'S FIRST TREE.

The axe only needed a whetting to put it in good shape, and as Jim had already learned the art of sharpening edged tools, Tom was saved the trouble of instructing him.

"There she is, keen ernough to shave you, Mister Tom," declared Jim, after putting the final touches to the glistening blade and running his thumb lightly along the edge to test it.

Tom took the axe and after examining it critically, handed it back, saying: "That will do first rate for a first edge on a first tree."

Jim hoisted the axe on his shoulder, but Tom said it would never do for him to carry it that way. In going through the snow he might stumble, or get a fall, and then he would be in danger of a severe cut. He must take it in his right hand edge downward, and even then, must be careful how he stepped. There was no surgeon in the woods and, therefore, a wound was not a desirable thing to have around.

After walking some distance from the camp they came to a cluster of big pines, which were singing in the wind all unmindful of the dangers threatening them.

"Here's your tree, Jim," and Tom selected the largest of the group. And

a magnificent monarch it was, too! Not less than three and a half feet through the butt, straight as a mast and not a knot nor a branch for nearly a hundred feet, and good for four as handsome logs as ever floated down stream, or were put to the teeth of a mill saw.

"Now pull off your jacket my boy, and show what a Yankee lad can do among the Bluenose pines."

Jim did as he was bidden, and taking his axe, spat on his hands and was ready for business.

"But hold on there, old fellow! We must study a little before we give her her first cut," almost shouted Tom, as Jim made a haphazard cut into the tree.

"How is she going to fall? That is a very important question. If she falls this way, she'll strike that stump over yonder and break her back and so spoil a whole log for you. If she falls that way, she'll strike that big pine and lodge and there will be dangerous work in coaxing her down."

"Ah, here we have it! Look in this direction; not a stump nor a tree to interfere! Here she will fall as prettily as a ripe plum."

"Take her now on the side opposite to that on which she is to fall, and begin your cut about two feet from the roots. Cut her straight as a square on the lower inning, and slanting as you please on the upper.

"She will soon begin to show you a nice white mouth, which you must keep opening until you reach her throat; and then you must give her another opening on the opposite side."

Jim began at the tree as if he intended to have it down in short order, but Tom called out: "Not so fast there, or you will lose your wind before you have so much as nicked her bark; slow and sure is the word here. That's it, a slow, regular swing. I'll give you just one hour to set her trembling."

The chips were now flying right and left, and, once through the thick outer covering of brown bark, Jim went into the yellowish white of the tree deeper and deeper.

While his blows were echoing through the forest, Tom said: "She is singing, 'Good-bye, good-bye old roots! Our time has come though we have stuck together a hundred years or more.' "

His pensive manner so affected Jim that he ceased chopping and answered back: "Why, Mister Tom, you makes me feel as if I was doin' sunthin' wrong."

"To be sure! What am I thinking of! That isn't what she is saying at all. Hurry up, hurry up! There are folks to be married, and children to be taken care of, and houses to be built, and I am the pine that is wanted; so hurry

the chips and down with me quick. and let me go into the world.' That is the song she is singing."

And Jim went to chopping again, thinking the while that Mr. Tom almost beat the Tanner at bossing.

When the cut passed the heart of the tree, Tom said: "Now rest your axe a little and give it time to cool, and when you begin again, tackle her on the other side."

Jim had become so much interested in his work he could not content himself to rest long, and after a few moments his blows resounded from the other side of the tree.

"Steady there, now," cautioned Tom, sharply, when Jim had cut about a foot toward the center. Surveying his work for an instant, he added: "Now give her a couple of blows at each corner of her chops, and then stand clear."

The blows were given as directed, and were immediately followed by a grinding, crackling noise among the fibers of the wood, causing the two to hasten to the other side of the trunk and to some distance away from it, Tom the while shouting: "There she goes, and now look out for splinters!"

The great tree slowly swayed, then, suddenly snapping the wood remaining uncut, increasing its downward speed until, crashing through obstructing branches, it fell to the ground with the noise of thunder, breaking its own limbs into thousands of fragments which flew about in every direction.

In that region, and at the time we write of, the lumbermen depended upon their stalwart arms for the trimming of their logs, so that by the time Jim had cut his tree into four equal lengths, scaled the bark away and marked each one, the best part of three days had vanished.

But they were such handsome logs, he was very proud of them. The biggest he named Ruth, the second he called Vi, the third Hannah, and the last, which tapered off the most, he named Peggy.

In due time the chains were hitched to them and they were drawn to the shore, where they were canthooked upon the ice and left to await the spring freshets and the log drive.

Tom held himself strictly responsible for Jim's safety, and would not permit him to attack a tree unless he was near to watch his every movement. Nor would he let him work too steadily, for log cutting was severe work for one so young.

Sam Freeman was well acquainted with the woods, and a handy fellow at snaring rabbits, and as rabbit pies and rabbit stews made a welcome change in the diet of the camp, the two boys were allowed to go rabbitting whenever they were so disposed.

During the continuance of the deep snows, the rabbits fed mainly upon the smaller branches of the birches which were bent toward the earth. The particular birch they had a partiality for was the cinnamon, whose twigs were sweet and nutritious.

The young hunters would find a place where the runs were thickest, and there form a circle of brushes forty or fifty feet in diameter, the fir and spruce fences being built to the height of twelve or fourteen inches. In the circles there were gaps left open where the wire snares were placed. They then cut down young cinnamon birches and threw them into the center of the circle. When the rabbits came out in the night to make their runs in search of food, they scented the freshly cut birch, and seeking entrance through the apparently safe openings, they found themselves caught in the deceitful loops that strangled them to death.

KEPT THE CAMP IN RABBITS.

The boys not infrequently brought in ten or fifteen rabbits from a single night's catch, and as the Nova Scotia rabbits are large, one catch was sufficient to make a mess for the whole camp.

The furs were thick and as white as driven snow, and Tom, who, as a bachelor, was handy at almost everything useful, selected several of the best pelts, and after curing them by salting, scraping and smoking them over a smudge fire, made Jim a fur cap and muffler that made his ears proof against the frost when the mercury fell to thirty degrees below zero, and the trees creaked and cracked and the bushes and low shrubbery sang resonantly at every passing breath of wind.

"When I gits these things on," declared Jim, "my ears is so warm it 'pears like ez ef they must up an' grow like sparrer-grass in summer time, an' that kfnder frightens me, for I don't want no mule's ears growin' unner my cap. They's plenty big ernough already."

"Never fear, my boy," responded Tom, "it takes a donkey head to grow

donkey's ears, and there is so little of that kind of head on your shoulders that not even Old Cud's furnace applied as a hot-house could force your ears from their present handsome proportions. But I don't want your ears to get frost-bitten; there's lots of good things to be heard in this world in the course of a life time, and you must save them for that."

"But there's sich lots o' mean an' sneakin' things slippin' eround, how is you gonter keep 'em out, Mister Tom?"

"Just open the folding doors between the ears, and what comes in at one ear let the will kick out of the other ear."

"So's it can't git no chance to go to bed in your memory an' leave its fleas there," added Jim, much to Tom's surprise and gratification.

Chapter XIX.

A PALPABLE HIT.

LAKE Rossignol lies at the head of the Liverpool River; is about twelve miles long, and in some places fully eight miles wide. The lake abounds in islands of every shape and size, from the grizzly rock, bearing, perhaps, a single stunted pine shaggy with moss, to stretches of land a mile in length, thickly wooded with maple, beech, birch and many kinds of evergreen. Deeply indented coves, picturesque piles of rocks, secluded patches of meadow, and entrancing bits of sand beaches, make it one of the prettiest spots hidden away in the Nova Scotian woods.

When Jim saw it, it was covered with a thick shield of ice, its shores were rounded under banks of snow; many of the evergreens, and much of the underbrush, were brilliant with pendent icicles, while the "bald-headed trees" — as Jim called those that had been stripped of their foliage— threw their finely spraying branches against the clear air like vagrant lines drawn in delicate purple.

Jim revelled in the winter scenery, which was so new to his observing eyes,

and as the winds kept large portions of the ice clear of snow, he delighted to buckle on his skates—old-fashioned skates strapped to the feet and ankles—and race with Sam Freeman among the islands and coves.

Returning from one of these excursions one Saturday afternoon, his face aglow with healthy exercise and heart alive with enthusiasm, he said to Tom, while he was unbuckling his skates: "I don't want no dreams shuffling around my bunk ez long ez I've got this 'ere lake to wink at with my eyes wide open."

Tom never tired of the beauties of Rossignol, and felt like patting Jim for his praise of his favorite lake.

"Wait till she wakes up, my boy!" said he. "Wait till she throws off her counterpane—winterpane, I mean—and lets her hair out of her curl papers and begins to put on her summer dress and jewelry, and gets the soft clouds in her cheeks and the blue sky in her eyes, and the water lilies, arrow-heads and wild flowers at the bottom of her skirts! When you see her with the mossy banks at her feet and the bosky groves at her back, you'll see the birds falling in love with her, and the little brooks and streams running singingly toward her from every direction, tumbling over the rocks and down the hills and crawling under the dead trees, in their hurry to get near enough to kiss her."

Jim looked at Tom in astonishment while he was rattling off this rhapsody, and as soon as he was done, he exclaimed: "My gracious pertaters, Mister Tom! You must be thinkin' erbout Peggy an' Hannah in their Sunday best!"

Tom looked so queer, and burst into such an uproarious laugh, that Jim felt in duty bound to make another guess, and so he said: "Leastwise, you've been lickin' into Sir Walter Scott, that ere book what father histed me into when he found I could write jingles. It's the greatest book for sich things ez you've jist been sayin' I ever did see. Like ernough you write po'try yourself sometimes."

But Tom only laughed the louder at the idea of his writing poetry, though he managed to say: "Why, Jim, I couldn't write poetry—no, not a line—if you were to set me on a steam boiler and tell me to write or bust. Wish I could, with all my heart, though, I'd write a poem as long as the dictionary, and all about sweet Rossignol, the blue-eyed queen that beats them all."

"Lo'd a mussy, Mister Tom! What do you call that! Don't you know the jingles is droppin' outen you this very blessed minnit like drops o' lasses outen a lasses bar'l?"

"What do you mean?" And Tom affected great innocence.

"'All about sweet Rossignol!
The blue-eyed queen that beats them all!

Now, what does you call that?" And Jim repeated the words as proudly as if he had just discovered a diamond of the first water.

Tom's face was a study as he drew near Jim and almost whispered: "Look here, my boy; don't you ever say anything about that to either Peggy or Hannah, for they have heard of your poetry, and they will say that I have been trying to imitate you, and imitations are generally poor affairs, you know."

"But you knows I can't make po'try, no more'n a shark kin play on a jews-harp, or a whale on a church organ. I feels mighty like it, though, when I goes cavortin' among these islands an' coves on my skates. What's the reason a feller can't snake his thoughts out an' make 'em ez nice outside ez they is inside?"

"Bless my soul, Jim! You'll set me crying, if you don't stop! You have got a spirit as beautiful as Rossignol itself!" And Tom so faltered in his voice and moistened in his eyes, Jim looked at him in amazement, and became the least bit shaky himself.

"When it's summer will you fetch me up here, so I kin see the lake with her eyes open an' her parlor rig on?" he next asked, looking over the lake wistfully.

"That I will!" exclaimed Tom, heartily. "And I'll fetch Namaquit with me" (referring to his pet canoe), "and we will put in a whole week here and canoe it through every nook and corner. There's lots of trout up here, if you only know where to find them."

This was enough for Jim's excitable nature, and he turned somersault after somersault, and with such rapidity, the snow flew about him as if he were a miniature cyclone playing bo-peep among the solemn trees of the forest.

"Look here, old fellow! If you keep that up much longer you won't know which end to stand on!" shouted Tom, more than half alarmed at the boy's antics.

"Right side up with keer, sir!" And Jim came to his feet with a bound and began to brush the snow from his clothes, his eyes the while twinkling like a pair of stars out of the twilight blue. The very idea of a summer trip around the shores of Rossignol in the Namaquit, with Tom and the rods, and the gun and Towzer along, was enough to make a stump jump, let alone a full-blooded Yankee boy made up of chipmunks and canaries.

"My, my, my!" he exclaimed, over and over again, "hain't I glad I fetched up on that ol' tan pile!"

The next Saturday afternoon Jim again strapped on his skates and started off intending to make a long cruise among the coves and islands.

As Tom watched him getting ready, he said: "Going alone?"

"Yis, I likes to git erlone sometimes, for then I feels ez ef I owned a hunk uv creation all to myself."

"Take good care of yourself, and don't get into any of the air-holes. Don't go too far among the islands; there are so many of them, you may lose your landmarks. And if you go into the coves, remember they are so crooked it is the easiest thing in the world to get your head turned without knowing it."

"But hasn't you told me that the trees lean toward the south, an' that the moss grows most on the south side on 'em; an' that the big rocks pint mostly to the east; an' that the snow has piled itself agin the north side o' the islands, an' what hasn't fetched up there has blowed over to the south side o' the lake?"

"I'VE SEED HIM!"

"You have got it all, like a book."

"Then how kin I lose the pints uv the compass, when all that you tells me is ez true ez 'Postle Peter?"

The wind was blowing swiftly up the lake, driving before it a flurry of fine snow. Jim spread his jacket like a sail, and, standing stiffly erect, was soon blown from Tom's sight as if he were a feather or a bit of wandering cloud.

Tom went back to camp, saying to himself: "There is some mystery connected with that boy's life. He is made of no common stuff. Tan pile, or no tan pile, a brighter, better boy never walked in shoe leather."

In less than an hour Jim unexpectedly hobbled into camp with his skates still on, and otherwise showing signs of great excitement. "I've seed him!" he exclaimed, breathlessly.

"Who?" asked Tom.

"The critter!"

"What critter?"

"A hull live moose rigged on four legs bigger'n life, and the blamed thing stood higher'n a hoss."

"Guess not," said one of the men, incredulously.

"But can't you see that my eyes is allermost pulled outen my head, he was so all-fired big," retorted Jim, indignantly, not liking to have his word questioned by anyone.

"Get your breath, and then tell us all about it," said Tom, who knew that the boy was telling the truth.

"Well, I went into one uv them coves ahind big Micmacmet Island, an' w'ile I was a flippin' eround Silver Rock a wishin' it was silver an' all belonged to mother, I heerd a brook a singin' unner the ice, like a bird unner a bed-quilt;

JIM SEES A MOOSE.

an' it sounded so pretty I skated up to it, an' crawled up by a big, overhangin' rock, an' sot down so's I could take my fill o' listenin'. An' while I sot there, ez still ez ef I was an icercle, I heerd a cracklin' in the bushes. Fust I thought it must be a bear, an' I felt kind o' creepy-like. Then I remembered you told me that bears was too lazy to git up in winter, an' that they jist snoozed all winter with their paws in their mouth. Then there was a great bustin' noise, an' when I peeked eround the rock, there was a moose ez big ez the levierthan what Job couldn't hook in the nose. He had a hull bone-yard on his head, an' he was smashin' a place through the ice to drink. He looked so funny, with his

big horns an' his little squab uv a tail, I snickered right out. With that he gave a snort, an' galloped off like a whale on four legs. He's left his tracks ahind, an' so I jist scooted back here to see ef you can't go an' ketch up with him. He'd make meat ernough for all winter, 'thout Sam an' me gittin' any more rabbits."

"Did you notice his tracks?" asked one of the men.

"Yis, an' they was jist like ox tracks; only there was a place what looked ez ef there'd been more on 'em round."

"Then we need be in no hurry," remarked Tom. "There's a moose-yard in that vicinity, and Monday we will give the day to it and have a regular moose hunt. It is thawing a little now, and if it should freeze again before Monday, we shall have a fine crust for snow-shoe work."

Sunday night, the wind that had been blowing from the south shifted round to the northwest, bringing with it a cold snap, which formed a crust on the snow that was nearly an inch thick; and on Monday, four of the men, under Tom's lead, made eager preparations for a moose hunt. Jim wanted to be of the party, but Tom doubted the propriety of taking him. "If the moose should happen to turn to bay you might get hurt," said he to Jim.

"I reckon I kin beat a moose with my snow shoes on, cos the moose'll have to slump through every time, while I kin slide erlong on top like a Jack-on-a-sled."

"Let him go," pleaded big Sam Ford; "he's livelier on those pins of his than all the rest of us put together, and his head is longer than any moose's head I ever saw."

So Jim went with the hunters, and Towzer went with Jim.

When the trail was reached, Tom pronounced it a regular run, and Sam explained to Jim that a "moose-run" was a path beaten by the moose through the snow to give them access to their drinking and feeding grounds among the high sedge or the low birches; and that a "yard" meant a place where they bunched together for warmth and self-protection during the severe weather.

Gliding rapidly over the crusted snow with their snow shoes, the hunters made such rapid progress after they struck the trail that it soon became very "hot," to use a hunter's phrase. In the course of an hour they struck the "yard," from which, however, the moose had fled, their keen scent having enabled them to detect the presence of their foes, notwithstanding the extreme precautions taken.

Each moose had struck out for itself. The hunters divided themselves into two parties. Tom and Sam Ford, together with Jim and Towzer, followed the trail for two hours. The bloody stains upon the snow showed that the sharp

edges of the crust had made bad work for the shins of the fleeing moose. Flecks of foam here and there, also showed that the game was well-nigh exhausted.

Suddenly Towzer, breaking through all restraint, dashed away, and a moment afterward was heard violently barking some distance ahead.

Tom was at the right, Jim in the middle, and Sam Ford on the left, when they came in full sight of a large bull moose which had turned to bay and stood facing the dog with lowered antlers.

It had been agreed between Tom and Ford that, inasmuch as Jim was the first to discover the presence of the game, he should have the honor of the first shot, hit or miss.

"Steady, boy! And aim midway his left shoulder," directed Tom, as Jim instinctively levelled his rifle with the precision and firmness of an old hand. But before the words were completely out of his mouth, bang went the rifle, and down went the moose to his knees.

"Magnificent!" exclaimed Tom, with delight. "But look out! There he comes!" he continued, for the moose rose again and lunged madly forward toward the hunters.

Tom and Sam Ford fired simultaneously, and the moose fell dead. Ford sprang forward, and drawing his hunter's knife across the throat of the still palpitating beast, deluged the glistening snow with a torrent of red.

AT BAY.

"Why Jim, your shot would have killed him if not another shot had been fired," cried Tom, after examining the wounds of the moose.

"But how does you know that, Mister Tom?" asked Jim, unable to think himself capable of bringing down such a pile of flesh as that which lay before him.

"Because your rifle is a new one and carries a smaller ball than our old-fashioned weapons, "'Jim Payzant. His mark!' there it is as plain as the bark upon a pine tree." And Tom pointed out the difference in the diameters of the

holes made through the skin. "That smallest one is yours, and it gave the fatal wound The others were good shots, but the moose is 'your meat,' as the saying is."

"Pertater sprouts an' onion tops!" exclaimed Jim, in great excitement. "Ef I tells that yarn to father, he'll think I've been schoolin' with Annernias or some other India-rubber feller."

"Not a bit of it! The skin is yours, and the hole tells its own story, and if that isn't enough, we'll go before Squire Seely and Vi and make affidavit to it."

At the mention of Vi's name, Jim colored to the edges of his rabbit-skin cap. But not to be diverted from the business in hand by the queer feelings he experienced under his red flannel shirt, he said: "Now, we've got him, what on airth shall we do with him?"

"Skin him before he grows cold, cut him up before he freezes and hang him up to a tree, and camp by him until we can get the big hand-sled to take him back with us."

"And I'm the feller what's to go for the sled."

"But do you think you could find your way?" asked Tom.

"I reckon. Towzer an' me kin git there ez easy ez ef we was eatin' roast beef an' plum puddin'."

"I know this ridge of land; it's only a mile from the lake, and when you get there, all you will have to do will be to strike from headland to headland until you strike camp. Ford and I will stay here and make ready for your return, for we shall have to remain all night. Bring the small teapot with you, a pair of comforters, a loaf of bread and a bit of tea and sugar, and then we can get through the night in Governor General style."

Jim had no trouble in complying with the directions, and before the sun sank behind the great pines in the west, he was at Tom's side again, saying proudly: "Here we are agin, with all the fixin's, and everything else. T'other fellers has killed their moose, an' got it into camp, coz it trotted most there afore they downed it. It's only a she thing, hows'mever, what hain't got no sign uv a horn to make it look wuth sunthin'. Glad ours didn't streak it that way, for now we kin have the fun uv stayin' out an' a haulin' uv him in."

During his absence the snow had been cleared from a space of ground, and there, before him, stood the prettiest birch bark camp he had ever seen. The outside vied with the snow in whiteness, while the inside looked as if it had been frescoed in bright red. The floor was laid with thick layers of cedar branches A big fire crackled in front, and close by, lay a great pile of dry wood which was intended to keep the fire going all night.

Ford and Tom had cut the carcass into four quarters, and rolled the skin up and hung the antlers on a tree, where Jim could see them to the best advantage, with the bark tag bearing the inscription: "Shot by Jim Payzant, on Moose Ridge."

Ford sat in front of the fire, armed with a great pronged stick, from which hung long strips of moose steak which he was cooking for supper.

After supper, Jim, raising himself to his full height and stretching himself for all he was worth, said: "A supper like that orter make a shark feel ez ef he wanted to jine the church."

STARTED FOR CAMP.

"But you ought to take a whiff at my pipe to finish off," remarked Ford, blowing great clouds of smoke from his black briar pipe.

"Ugh!" exclaimed Jim, with unaffected disgust. "I'd ez soon think uv playin' baby to father's ol' black sow, ez to think uv suckin' a thing like that. It'd make me sicker'n a codfish with a hook in his gullet."

Ford frowned ominously, but Tom smiled approvingly.

When bed time came, the fire was piled with great logs of hard, dry wood,

after which the three, with Towzer at their feet, turned under the quilts for the night.

After watching the light as it played fantastic pranks in and out of the camp, Jim said softly: "Mister Tom?"

"Well," was the sleepy and almost wandering monosyllable.

"What's the use o' makin' a fuss erbout gittin' to heaven. when you kin cuddle yourself inter a cedar bed, an' hear the fire an' the trees a singin' an' a whisperin' like angils, an' nothin' to pay for it, nuther?"

"Good Lord, Jim!" exclaimed Ford, raising himself to his elbows, and looking down into the strangely luminous face turned up to him on the other side of Tom. "You'll be the death of me, yet!"

Tom, now fully awake, and a bit startled himself, laughed at such a rate that Towzer jumped up, shook himself, and running pell-mell over the bodies of the two men, went and laid down by Jim, and began to lick his face.

"Reckon I'll have to keep still. now," remarked Jim, as he pushed the dog's nose away, and closed his own eyes, by way of invitation to sleep.

He was the first to awake in the morning. While he was quietly working out from under the coverings, Tom awoke, and saluted him with: "Hello, you young weasel! Where are you going now?"

"Goin' to see where the night has sneaked to; it's jist legged itself off 'thout givin' us a chance to git in a single snore."

"Look at your watch and see what time it is."

"Eight o'clock!"

"Never!" exclaimed Tom, jumping to his feet and looking at his own time piece. Well, by Jove! If we haven't slept twelve hours right on the stretch. That's the nearest I ever came in my life to committing the unpardonable sin."

"It's time for us to have some more moose meat, anyway," said Ford. "I've slept so soundly. I'm as hungry as a bear!" And he tumbled outdoors, and after washing his face in the snow, began to comb his great shock of hair with a small comb he managed to fish out of his baggy trousers. His example was followed by his companions, and as soon as they had breakfasted they loaded the meat on the sled and started for camp.

Jim, profiting by the lessons taught him by the Tanner, cured the moose-skin in good shape, and put it in the bottom of his bunk hairside up, thus adding materially to his comfort.

The moose weighed over nine hundred pounds. The great antlers were nailed to a cross-beam. where Jim's eyes often rested upon them with pardonable pride, though he was not one to make himself disagreeable by boasting of his doings.

Chapter XX.

CLOSING UP THE CHOPPING.

WITH the exception of a few days spent with the Tanner during the Christmas holidays, Jim passed the entire winter in the woods. Nor did he weary of the work or its surroundings. Tom was so companionable, the men so uniformly good-natured, and there was so much to learn and talk about the time passed quite swiftly.

"Living in the woods makes you ez tough ez an oak, an' ez sweet ez a birch," said Jim, one Sunday morning, as he and Tom were strolling along one of the log-roads, by the side of which the great pines lifted up their green heads in solemn dignity.

"Glad you like the woods," was the repiy. "I never tire of them; in fact, I believe I'm more than half Indian."

"Humph! Ef the Injuns was all like you, there'd never been any uv the sculpin' done what I've read uv. You is jist like a church runnin' eround on two legs."

"And you are my Sunday school, Jim."

"I don't hanker arter Sunday schools!" and he puckered his lips and shrugged

his shoulders in such a curious way, Tom suddenly stopped his walking and looked at him closely.

"Don't you like Sunday schools?"

"Not awful much—leastwise—not always—I don't—nohow," and he stumbled over his words in such a confused way, and looked so shame-faced and yet so perfectly honest, Tom began to pity him.

"Why don't you like them?" asked Tom, feeling in duty bound to do work meet for a Sunday morning.

"Cos my teacher always talks ez ef I was a gal-baby what had to be nussed all the time. Ef she'd only talk ez ef there was sunthin' inside a feller what was jist hollerin' to bust inter a man what wanted to git out an' make things dust, there'd be some fun in screwin' your face down to a meetin' house figger. Sometimes I gits so scrimped on holy baby talk I can't help lettin' my feelin's bile overboard—an' then you orter see how humped my teacher looks."

"Humped!" exclaimed Tom, involuntarily.

"Yis; jist ez ef she wished she were Gerliah, so she could take me on her knees an' spank me with the tip-end uv a hurricane."

"Aren't you stretching it a little?"

"Things has to be stretched sometimes to make 'em git where you wants 'em to git. One uv her names is Mehitable, an' I knows she'd like to be able to hit me for all she's wuth, when I'm ugly."

As it was Sunday morning, and as the men of the camp were within hearing, Tom made a violent effort to restrain his mirth; but the effort reacted on him, and the explosion was such his upper teeth flew out of his mouth and fell into the deep snow. He dropped on his knees and began scratching like a dog digging for a woodchuck, much to Jim's mystification, he not having noticed the flying teeth. When Tom found the truants he hastily replaced them, so hastily, indeed, that it was some moments before they could be made to fit, he had shovelled in so much snow with them. By the time the restoration was effected Jim began to suspect the real cause of his erratic movements.

"That's the way Malvina Mehitable'd like to set my nibblers goin' I reckon," said he, smiling so broadly that his own native pearls shone in all their beauty upon Tom's envious eyes.

"Why, Malvina wouldn't knock out the teeth of a musquito, Jim; besides, I have heard her say that you have become the best boy in all Liverpool."

"She would'nt think so ef she know'd how much I'd like to tickle her with a bumblebee when she looks so all-fired solemn. Hows'mever, ef she thinks I kin be good, I'll be good, jist to spite my pesky meanness."

"That would be tickling her to some purpose, my boy. And let me tell you, Jim, Malvina is one of the sweetest kinds of apples, though her skin is a little fly-bitten and spotted. The apples in my orchard can't begin to compare with her. You know I stick up for the Micmac Indians, and so does Malvina, and, therefore, I have put her down in my private almanac as one of the village saints. Why, bless your soul, boy! She'd kiss a Micmac pappoose just as quick as she would a white baby, and that is a good deal more than most Sunday school teachers would do."

"You don't say so, Mister Tom! Ef that's the way she lays herself out, I'll haul in my sheets an' run unner her lee quarter, an' take in all the Scripter cargo she kin afford to spare a feller."

Tom thought he had done a good morning's work in removing Jim's prejudices, and Jim proved to be so sincere in his purpose, he never after spoke disrespectfully of Miss Malvina Mehitable McKenzie.

One day, when the mild winds of approaching spring were whispering through the woods, Ford told Jim that if he would go up to Silver Rock, and take a peep around the northwest corner in a line with a big stump there was there, he would see the Nova Scotian Negauneemooncrash. Jim went and looked long and anxiously for the animal, as it was alleged to be. Seeing nothing, he returned to camp, where he was made to realize that it was the first day of April.

In the evening, when all were asleep, and the Proboscis Band was in full blast, he crept out of his bunk and took down old Queen Anne, an ancient musket that was famous for the noise she made whenever she was discharged. Finding that she was already loaded and primed, he took her with him and crept back into his bunk, where, after assuring himself that he was not observed, he pointed the muzzle through an open knot-hole, fired the gun, and then concealed her beneath the clothes.

All the men in the camp jumped to the ground, and while they were bumping against one another trying to strike a light, Jim joined them, and being the least confused among them all, was the first to find a candle and a match.

"Thank heaven!" exclaimed Ford, his teeth chattering like castanets, "we are all alive. But what in the name of goodness was it? One might think that old Queen Anne had taken a notion to go off."

"She's gone off, sure enough!" cried the owner, taking the candle and hunting for his gun. "She was on the rack when I went to bed, but she isn't there now, that's certain."

"If she'll only stay gone, I'll be thankful," said Tom, testily, "for she was the most confounded old roarer and kicker a man ever put to his shoulder.

Look and see if she hasn't gone stern foremost through the walls; she was so infernally contrary, it would be just like her."

"There's no hole there," said the owner, notwithstanding the absurdity of supposing that she had kicked herself through a foot-thick wall of solid logs. And, after continuing his examination, he added: "The strangest thing is, there isn't a sign of her having busted to pieces. It's a most unaccountable mystery."

"Your old Mary Ann has gone up to Silver Rock to court Negauneemoon-crash, an' she jist let herself out before she went to 'scuse herself for goin'.

"WHAT IN THE NAME OF GOODNESS WAS IT?"

Like ernough by the time she gits back, you'll remember it's the fust day o' April, an' that a Yankee boy kin fool folkses ez well ez a Bluenose man." And Jim drawled his words with most provoking slowness while letting his secret out.

"I hope you are satisfied with your experiments with the boy," remarked Tom, chuckling and shaking all over, and glad that Jim had paid the men back in their own coin.

Jim took the gun from beneath the bed-clothes, and restored her to the rack where she was wont to repose, in all the glory of her lengthy barrel.

"Where's Old Black Bess?" asked Ford, scratching his head with great energy, and fumbling among the cross-beams for the pipe which he had thus named.

Having found Bess, he slowly filled her up with clippings from a villainously black plug, managing the while to tip the wink to his companions, who, knowing that Jim and Tom detested the weed, filled their pipes and smoked until it looked as if the cabin roof would float away upon the wings of the blue cloud they produced.

Seeing what their object was, Tom and Jim turned into their bunks, where, placing their noses close to the wall, they drew the quilts over their heads and fell asleep.

"It's no good," said Ford, ruefully, lamenting the failure of his attempt to get his revenge, "and we may as well turn in, boys."

Suiting the action to the word, he laid Black Bess upon a cross-beam and dumped himself into his bunk, the rest being only too glad to follow his example.

With the advent of April, the sound of the axe grew less frequent, and the thunder of falling trees ceased altogether. While the snow was still upon the ground, the heavy teams were sent out of the woods in anticipation of the spring rains which would soon set in.

GREETING TOM.

With the departure of the teams, most of the men improved the opportunity to visit their homes, and to lay in a fresh supply of provisions for the work that was yet to be done. As the sledding on the public road was quite bare, most of the distance had to be made on foot. Tom and Jim were so anxious to reach home, they soon left their fellow-walkers far behind.

It was twelve o'clock when they reached Milton. Hannah and Peggy were just sitting down to dinner, and Hannah was saying: "I am so glad the logging season is most over," and Peggy was repeating in a faintly joyful way, "Most over," when in walked Tom, Jim and Towzer.

"Just in time to get some of that roast beef," exclaimed Tom, as his eye roamed over the dinner table.

"Roast beef," echoed Peggy, as she took her husband's hand and gave it a regular pump-handle, up-and-down shake, modestly forbearing to kiss him in Jim's presence.

Hannah, however, more demonstrative, kissed her brother with a loudness that was terrifying to Peggy, who always thought that kisses should be as secret and as silent as the dews of midnight, as well as like angels' visits, few and far between.

Peggy looked at the fresh cheeks of her fifty-year-old husband with pardonable pride, and then blushed crimson through her own fifty-year-old skin, to think that she was admiring him so undisguisedly in the presence of others.

Meanwhile, Hannah, bustlingly practical in every movement, had made her way to the old corner cupboard in search of extra plates and extra goodies, though Jim protested he must hurry home before he ate.

"You can't go home till you have had dinner," said Hannah, decidedly.

"Till you have had dinner," repeated Peggy, with quite a flash of warmth in her unwonted emphasis of the words.

"The 'Medes and Persians' have settled it," remarked Tom, "so I may as well settle a chair for you to settle down in."

But the moment dinner was over, Jim was so anxious to get home, he hastily excused himself and hurried away; with Towzer at his heels growing friskier and friskier as he went over the familiar ground.

Ruth was in the kitchen washing dishes, and quavering over the old-fashioned words:

> Come on, my partners in distress!
> My comrades through this wilderness,
> Who still your bodies feel;
> Awhile forget your griefs and fears,
> And look beyond this vale of tears,
> To that celestial hill.

Just as she was giving the finishing touches to the "celestial hill," in burst Jim and the dog, and the next moment the boy was kissing her on one cheek, while Towzer, not to be outdone, was standing on his hind-feet and lapping her on the other cheek with all his might.

"Well, well, well, well!" she cried, joyously, "are you my partners in distress?"

"All but the distress, mother. But has you been singin' that blessed ol' hymn ever since we went inter the wilderness?"

"No, my son; only when I have seen the celestial hill," and she spoke so simply, and there was such a sweet smile upon her gentle face, Jim put up both

hands and softly caressed her cheeks, while Towzer sat on his haunches at her feet, and watched the operation with approving wags of his great, bushy tail.

Happening to look around, Jim discovered the Tanner framed in the doorway watching him.

"And how are we to-day?" asked the Tanner, with smiling lips and brimming eyes.

"Like a trout what has jist been washin' its face in spring water," was the reply, as Jim took the big, honest hand of the Tanner between his own, and wagged it to and fro with all the strength he possessed.

"Why, boy, you have grown taller since you have been in the woods." And the Tanner looked down at the space that had widened between Jim's shoes and trousers, and then over his head and his person generally.

"Them britches has jist been hitchin' themselves up to keep clear uv the snow, though stretchin' your arms ahind an axe handle is ernough to set anybody's carkis a climbin' up Zion's Hill." And Jim colored richly at the very idea of growing up toward manhood.

"WELL, WELL, WELL WELL!"

"Well, at any rate, we shall have to go down to the Captain's store and get another pair, for these look as if they were tired of work and had been holding a prayer meeting for the rag-bag."

"James! How you do talk," murmured Ruth, reprovingly.

"Then I kin give these britches to Malvina Mehitable for the heathen, coz they kin see daylight through 'em almost anywhere," said Jim, who always sided with the Tanner's gentle irreverence.

Ruth forgot to be serious, and laughed outright at the bare idea of Jim's trousers going to Malvina for "distribution."

"They will have to stay at home and go into my new rag carpet," said she, referring to a wondrous coat of many colors she was planning for the dining-room floor.

Vi, having heard Towzer's bark, ran over to welcome the dog back, and at

this moment made her appearance at the door, where she couldn't very well prevent herself from seeing Jim. She kissed the dog, and shook hands with the boy so heartily, he wished that he had slipped into his Sunday trousers before her arrival.

While she and the dog were inquiring about each other's health, he disappeared up stairs, and when he came down again, he looked so trim and spruce, the Tanner gave a deep chuckle, which so embarrassed Jim he trod on Towzer's tail, and caused him to raise a howl which startled everyone in the room.

GREETING VI.

"Ef your tail is so tender why don't you keep it out of the way, or carry it to the butcher and sell it for tenderline steak!" exclaimed Jim quite put out by the mishap.

The old cat, aroused by the dog's cry, came from her warm quarters beneath the stove and purringly rubbed herself against Towzer, which so consoled him that he laid down upon the floor, where, taking her between his great paws, he nearly lapped her out of her skin.

Ruth, seeing that Vi and Jim were so glad to see each other that they were acting very awkwardly, slyly said: "Did you wear Vi's wristlets, Jim?"

"Wore 'em most to death, an' when I saw they were likely to give up the ghost altogether, I histed them on the topmast of the moose's horns to keep 'em out of danger. They's in my pockits up stairs now, ez safe an' sound ez a rabbit in its hole."

"And you really did kill a moose," said Vi, glad of the opportunity to change the subject.

"Mister Tom and Mister Ford fixed him, though I did make a hole through him in a tender spot."

Vi pulled out of her pocket an old-fashioned steel reticule, and, opening it, produced a newspaper clipping, which she handed over to Jim, asking him to read it.

It was a half-column from the Liverpool paper containing an account of the

moose-hunt, furnished by no less a person than Tom himself, who, in the most unmistakable terms put the honor where it belonged.

The idea of being in the paper, and of the slip being carried in Vi's pocket, together with the fact that Tom's name was at the bottom of the item, made Jim speechless.

"But where are the horns?" asked the Tanner.

"Comin' on the sled; I brought 'em erlong so that Vi could have 'em to put over the door of her summer house. You've got so many ol' heads an' horns kickin' eround the tannery, I know'd you wouldn't wanter be bothered with 'em."

Vi was so delighted with the idea of having the antlers for her summer house, she gave a wee, small scream and clapped her hands together quite loudly, which was such a manifestly irregular course of conduct on her part, Towzer sprang up and began to bark vehemently, which, in turn, so astonished the cat she darted out of the room with all the speed her white legs could muster.

"Well, well!" exclaimed Ruth, laughing, "the idea of her running from him in that way, and that, too, when she is so fond of him. It only goes to show how scared we can get of one another when we get kind of sudden, as it were," and she looked at Jim and Vi in such a comical, innocent way, they both burst out laughing, and from that moment they seemed to lose all embarrassment in each other's presence.

"Mister Tom has a bearskin on the floor of his best room," said Jim, "and my skin is for mother's parlor."

"Your skin!" and Ruth held up both hands in mock horror.

"Why, mother, you has grown ez young ez a kitten—I'm talking erbout the mooseskin."

The sled soon came along, fetching the mooseskin and horns, and the villagers, hearing of the arrival, came in by dozens to see them, as they were displayed on Peggysis' back, and in such a way as to enable the Tanner to point out the hole made by Jim's fortunate shot.

Chapter XXI.

RUNNING OF THE LOGS.

WHEN Jim went back to the woods, to be present at the log drive, he found that everything was changed. The spring rains had come; every vestige of ice had disappeared; the river was bank full, and the loose logs were running out by thousands. The different logging gangs had combined their forces for the drive, or run, and every one was on the alert to see that his part of the work was done to the best of his ability.

As will be remembered, Jim had named the four logs he cut from his first tree, Ruth, Vi, Hannah and Peggy, and the names were cut into the logs in deep letters by Jim himself, under the direction of Tom, who cut a letter with an axe almost as handily as he wrote one with a pen.

When the drive first started from the still water of the lake, the four logs floated side by side, placid and dignified, as became logs that thought of the years it had taken to grow them, the houses they were to help form, and the heads they were to shelter, when changed into boards and fitted to their places by the carpenter. But the moment they drifted into the riffles, and plunged into

the foaming rapids, they began to act in the most scandalous manner. The most astonishing thing about it was, Peggy started ahead, though in a timid, sideways sort of manner, and before she knew what she was about, she was caught by the middle across a rock, where she began to dance a horn-pipe, dipping first one way and then another, as if inviting all the trees on the river bank to witness her capers.

"What in the land's name will she do next!" exclaimed Jim, as he watched her movements.

Ruth plunged down stream head on, and made a bee-line for Peggy's center, as if with the intention of delivering her a blow which would dislodge her from the rock and send her about her business. But missing her direction, she hit a rock with such force that her nose was sadly battered, after which she ran her head over Peggy's middle, where she lay high and dry the greater part of her length.

When Jim saw Ruth start, he said: "That's right, mother; give it to her! She's no business stoppin' up the gangway, ez ef she owned all creation." But when he saw that she was also hard and fast, he said: "Shiver my timbers! Ef she hasn't gone fast asleep right in the middle of the river."

Hannah and Vi, side by side, followed after, also in a direct line for Peggy, and, plunging forward, struck her such a decisive blow, she was dislodged, as was also Ruth. All four then began a headlong race down the river, leaving Jim to shout: "Hurrah for Han and Vi! There hain't no pancake batter erbout them; they jist batters like goats what has locomotives atween their horns. Now, go it, gals, an' don't stop to cut up any more shines."

The whole drive was now pounding and thundering through the first rapids, and Jim could no longer keep his queer quartet in sight.

After the rapids came a still-water, through which the logs had to be coaxed by the men, who were now running over the drive, pikes in hand, with as much fearlessness as if they were promenading on dry land.

Tom gave Jim explicit directions to confine his operations to the shore, from which he was to push the logs whenever they were in danger of grounding. But tiring of this tame task, which did not keep him fully engaged, he began to skip about on the floating logs with an agility and fleetness worthy of an old logger.

Getting a sight of him while thus engaged, Tom gave him a severe reprimand.

"But a feller what has shinned up a slushed topm'st in a gale o' wind at sea, hain't no need o' bein' feared o' logs what is a layin' flat on their lazy backs," said he, in self-defense. "An' what is more, I must hunt up mother an' Vi, an' Hannah an' Peggy, an' see that they sticks to business, for I wants them to git

inter port with the very fustest ones uv this chunky-headed fleet o' fresh-water craft."

Finding it useless to remonstrate further, Tom went off laughing, fully believing that Jim wasn't born to be drowned; an opinion in which he was confirmed when, on looking around at him several times, he saw that he balanced himself on the logs and handled, or rather footed, them as well as if he had served a regular apprenticeship among them.

Jim couldn't find his pet logs, and, to tell the truth, he didn't waste much time in looking after them, for the moving hundreds around him required too much of his immediate attention to admit of his showing partiality for favorites.

LIKE AN OLD LOGGER.

The rain was pouring down in sheets; this, however, was of small moment to the loggers, who were so accustomed to the wet during driving time, that dry clothes were accounted a dishonor.

The main body of the drive began its run at daylight, and at night it was eleven miles from the start, the stream being in such good stage that the work was comparatively easy.

It was still raining when the men turned to the shore and made preparations for food and rest.

Looking after his own gang, Tom immediately managed to find some dry punk, and forthwith there was a big, blazing fire underway, which was kept brightly going, notwithstanding the constant drizzle.

After improvising a rough supper, the tired loggers threw themselves down before the fire, and fell as soundly asleep as if they were lying on down, beneath a silken canopy in a sky-blue, sweetly scented chamber; the logs, meanwhile, being allowed to look after themselves.

Tom was the first to rise and unlimber his stiffened joints in the morning. The moment he looked at the river his practised eye showed him that there was trouble ahead.

"Turn out, boys!" he shouted, "there's mischief to pay, below."

Every man sprang to his feet, and instinctively directed his glance to the stream.

"Well," said Ford, coolly, after he had removed his cap, and wrung the accumulated water out of it, "'tisn't the first time we have had to fight a jam. Let's get breakfast before we tackle it; we can't do anything while we are as empty as hollow logs."

The breakfast consisted solely of soaked hard tack and broiled smoked herring, washed down with strong coffee, tempered with molasses only. Nor would Ford and the smokers budge an inch until they had put themselves in trim with a short pull at their pipes.

This ceremony over, the whole gang moved down the river in the direction of the jam, where the logs, caught by obstructions, had piled themselves upon one another between two high banks, to the height of fifteen feet, causing a backwater of over twelve feet. This was a serious matter. The rise was carrying floating logs into the woods in all directions, and this meant that when the jam was broken they would be left high and dry, involving a delay of a year or more before they could be hauled to the stream and again started on their way to the booms. Many of them would have to be abandoned altogether.

Every hour's delay increased the tangle, and the difficulty of breaking the jam. The first thing necessary was to find the key log of the jam. This was a perilous business, and only the most experienced men were allowed to prosecute the search.

These were at work on the lower part of the jam, while the others were engaged above trying to keep the floating logs from running into the woods. Tom was the head of the lower gang; Jim worked above.

"Here she is!" exclaimed Tom, after a prolonged search, "and I'll be blamed if isn't old Ruth herself! A pretty pickle she has made for us!"

One of the picked men, armed with a canthook, began to test the log by nipping on to it and throwing his strength on the levering handle.

"Have a care there, man!" shouted Tom, excitedly, for he saw that the log was not as firmly wedged in as was at first supposed. But the key had already started out of place, and with it the whole mass, grinding and crushing under the piled up floods, started with a thundering noise that could have been heard a mile away. The men fled for their lives over the rapidly crumbling pile, well aware that there would be short shrift for anyone who should lose his footing in that chaos of flood and timber.

The instant Tom reached the bank he looked up stream to see what had become of Jim.

Jim, all unconscious of what was going on below, was standing on a log that was firmly wedged into the upper edge of the jam. The noise below drowned Tom's frantic cry of warning, and suddenly Jim felt the mass give way beneath his feet with a sullen roar. He dropped his pike and fled toward the shore, thoroughly alarmed. But, quick as he was, he started too late. Stepping on the end of a rapidly moving log, which made a downward plunge the instant his foot touched it, he found himself drawn down into the deadly swirl

"My God, men!" shouted Tom, in an agony of distress, "he's gone!"

Instantly every man in the vicinity began a perilous race for the spot where Jim had disappeared. Their hearts misgave them while they ran over the logs searching for him in vain.

Fifty feet below where Jim had gone down, three logs had formed a triangle around a black, foaming swirl of open water. Through the foam curling over the surface of the lowest log, Ford caught sight of a pair of hands clinging to the logs with a desperate grip. With a loud cry, he sped to the spot, closely followed by Tom, and the next instant, aided by a dozen hands, they were bearing the boy to the shore, over the surface of the flying mass of timber. It was a terrible race against death; the logs moving with a velocity greatly increased by the giving away of the whole jam, and the great pressure of the accumulated waters above.

JIM'S NARROW ESCAPE.

When Jim was laid upon a bank of moss, he was unconscious, but still breathing. Skilled for such emergencies, Tom and Ford worked most intelligently for his restoration.

Presently Jim opened his eyes, and looking up into Tom's face, faintly smiled. Tom turned away and cried like a child.

"How do you feel?" asked Ford, wiping his own eyes upon the sleeve of his rough, woolen shirt, and doing his best to control himself.

"Mighty gone like!" was the feeble answer.

"Hurrah!" shouted the owner of old Queen Anne. "He's all right!"

"Can you move your legs?" asked one of the men, fearing that some of his bones were broken.

Jim mustered the little strength he had left, and for answer, snook his legs, adding: "I reckon there's lots uv kicks left in 'em yit."

"And your arms—are they whole?" asked Ford, thinking it impossible for the lad to have come out of the jam unharmed.

To everybody's surprise, Jim rose to a sitting posture without assistance, and, after flinging his arms about in various directions, said: "Them arms is jist ez good ez they ever was. But when I went unner them logs, an' felt my head bumpin' agin 'em in the dark, says I to myself, 'O Lord! I guess you've got me this time, for sure!' An' then I tried to think. 'Now I lay me.' Jist then my head popped out o' water like a corked bottle, an' erfore I went down agin I grabbed onter the fust log I come to; an' the next thing I know'd, some one had snaked me out like a trout at the end uv a rod. An' I was that thankful, I jist went to sleep an' dreamed I was layin' on mother's bosom."

TIMELY ADVICE.

"We didn't know whether you were dead or alive, when we pulled you ashore," said Ford, whose voice quavered in spite of himself. "But, upon my soul! I believe you have come out of that deadly whirlpool of logs and water without a scratch."

The other men were so deeply moved, they were as silent as stones. Meanwhile, Tom was rushing here and there, in search of material for a fire, for at the mention of his experience in the water, he had noticed that Jim perceptibly shivered; this Tom mistook for a chill, when it was due entirely to his emotion.

Divining his purpose, Jim assured Tom that he was as warm as a piece of toast, and ready to go to work again.

"To work again!" exclaimed Ford, in amazement, and unable to say more.

To verify his words, Jim rose to his feet, and after standing a little unsteadily for a moment, turned a feeble somersault, which so excited the men, they cheered till the woods rang.

"If I catch you on those logs again to-day," said Tom, vehemently, "I'll lambast you till you won't have a whole spot to sit down on! If anything should

happen to you, Ruth and the Tanner, and Peggy and Hannah, would choke me to death with a red bandanna."

"Jerusalem, Mister Tom! Ef you goes to jingling that way, I'll have to git a hymn book, so's to keep up with you."

"Speaking of hymn books, let me tell you, that if Malvina Mehitable hears of this business, she'll deluge you with all the texts she's committed to memory since the day she was born."

"Ef she goes to chippin' in her solemncholy on me, I'll have to turn bad agin, an' then she'll look at me like a settin' hen what is havin' the eggs punched from unner her. Hows'mever, I kin take lots from her, I reckon, seeing ez how she is one uv your sweet apple saints, an' ez how my head is still above water. Now, I comes to think on't she shall talk to me a hull hour arter Sunday school, ef she wants to."

NINETY-THREE DOLLARS!

When he learned that the Ruth log was the one that began the jam, he became very sober, and made Tom promise that Ruth should not be told of it. "Ef she knows that her name has been cuttin' up sich shines, her apun corners won't git dry for a week."

The men now scattered to the drive again. The great body of logs, as if to make up for lost time, was floating down the constantly widening river in fine style.

At the moment Jim was talking about the Ruth log, she was sweeping placidly along under the overhanging branches of cedar that skirts the river bank. Vi, floating alone, had run her nose into the current of an incoming brook, and resenting its attempt to scrape an acquaintance, had sheered off to the other side of the stream. Hannah, with a huge night-cap of white foam on her head, floated in the middle of the stream, escorted by two immense logs, which were doing their best to make love to her, as she floated between them. Peggy dreamily drifted by the shore of a beautiful little island which, ever and anon, she gently caressed with a chaste passing touch.

Hundreds of the drive were left high and dry in the woods by the sudden fall of the backwater, just as many a one gets left by allowing himself to drift in waters that forsake their legitimate channels.

In two days from the time of the jam the drive reached the dam at Milton, where the logs were sorted into the different booms belonging to the different logging gangs.

In making up the Kenton and Payzant boom, Jim managed to get Ruth and Hannah, and Peggy and Vi together again; and to distinguish them as his first logs he tore off one of the flaps of his red flannel shirt, and, dividing it into four small flags, affixed them to miniature flag-staffs. which he drove into the logs, thereby so attracting the attention of the villagers, they gave the logs the title of "The Yankee Red Flannel Fleet." The flags remained undisturbed until the logs were turned into lumber. The last Jim heard of his Hannah and Peggy, and Ruth and Vi boards, they were being loaded on the Payzant and Kenton bark, Lady Campbell, for Bermuda and a market.

In spite of all precautions Ruth heard all the particulars about her namesake log, and Jim's narrow escape, but instead of dampening the corner of her apron over it, she grew palely resolute, and made Jim solemnly promise that he would never take part in another log drive.

Jim netted ninety-three dollars from his winter's work. When the money was pulled out of Tom's buckskin coin bag, and, in the presence of the Tanner and Ruth, shoved over the table to Jim, who was sitting on the other side, he was confounded by the magnitude of the pile, and said: "I reckon I'll have to take half on it an' buy Nova Scotia for Uncle Sam, an' the other half I'll take to buy four white hosses an' a yaller bus, so mother an' Vi kin travel erbout ez big ez Queen Vic."

He finally requested the Tanner to take charge of it, and so it was placed in the bank, as an interest drawing deposit, subject to the boy's own check.

The first time Malvina saw Jim after his return from the drive, she went up to him, and, instead of quoting scripture at him, kissed him plumply upon the lips, saying: "I would much rather kiss a live boy than a dead one, and I'm sure that if you had been brought home dead, I should have kissed you more than once."

Jim looked at her a moment, and then replied, warmly: "Miss Malvina Mehitable, that kiss was better'n a peppermint lozenge; an' if ever I make any more trouble in your class, you may say I'm a sculpin."

And this so pleased Miss McKenzie, she went home to her room and thanked the Lord.

Chapter XXII.

CANOEING ON LAKE ROSSIGNOL.

'LL Tom's promises were made to keep. He promised Jim a summer trip on Lake Rossignol, and in July summoned him to make ready for the outing.

Namaquit was brought over from the little lake, where Jim first made her acquaintance, and when he saw her again, she was nosing the river bank at the landing in front of Tom's house.

Having loaded their little cargo, and seen that Towzer was duly installed amidships, Tom handed Jim a newly-made paddle, that was so nicely shaped, so flexible and light, he named it his Spanker Boom. Under the combined action of the two paddles, Namaquit darted up the stream like a swallow.

Hannah stood on the bank waving her handkerchief after them, with Peggy at her side imitating her movements.

Vi had walked with Jim from Liverpool to Milton, her mother having given a willing consent, and she, too, stood by vigorously waving a dainty bit of embroidered linen.

"I wish we were going with them!" said Hannah, longingly, as the canoe disappeared behind an intercepting point.

"I don't!" exclaimed Peggy, with such an energy of dissent, Hannah was almost surprised out of her propriety.

"Oh, if we *were* only going, too!" cried Vi, with enthusiasm.

"We should be drowned in less than twenty-four hours," interrupted Peggy, solemnly.

"Not with them," rejoined Vi, promptly. "Tom would save you, Towzer would save Hannah, and Jim would—" but she suddenly paused, and ended with a blush.

"Would save you," finished Peggy, with a faint smile, that was an extraordinary manifestation of levity for her. "It's a nice little romance you are figuring out, to be sure; but three more in that crazy bit of birch bark would make us appear ridiculous, indeed! *They* are tempting Providence, as it is."

"Mercy, Peggy! You are enough to make an icicle shiver!" exclaimed Hannah, sharply. "You ought to know that when Tom and Jim get into anything in the shape of a craft, they are as much at home as they are in their own skins. Why didn't we think of it, and borrow Sam Ford's canoe and join in the trip? Vi can paddle a canoe like a squaw, and swim like an otter. If we were to upset, there wouldn't be enough of me to drown, and as for you, you are so tall and thin, you could wade ashore anywhere."

"You and I can no more paddle a canoe than we can sail on a broomstick, and we should be as much at home in it as a bird would be in a fish skin. Fancy our tumbling into the water! We could swim about as well as two kegs of shot, we are so bony."

Hannah was so much impressed by the truth of Peggy's remarks, as well as by the temerity of her manner and the extraordinary independence of her opinions, she was powerless to reply. So she did the next best thing; threw her arm around Vi and started off in the direction of the cottage.

Peggy followed timidly, feeling as if she had suddenly become possessed of a devil in daring to dispute anything Hannah said.

"Hannah!" she presently called out, in a woe-begone tone, "are you angry with me?"

"Bless your soul, Peggy! What has got into you? As if I could ever get mad with Tom's wife, and she such an innocent darling, too! Do come along! Are you jealous because I am hugging Vi?"

"Jealous of Vi? That would be funny, indeed!" And Peggy hastened forward and took hold of Vi's left hand.

"You are spoiling me," laughed Vi.

"Love never spoils anything!" exclaimed Hannah, giving Vi a violent hug to emphasize her remark.

Spoils nobody," assented Peggy, with her usual submissiveness, which so pleased Hannah, she was willing to serve her slightest wish or whim.

The trio disappeared in Tom's cottage, where Hannah left Peggy to entertain Vi, while she prepared the dinner. When they sat down to eat, Hannah and Peggy were so lively and entertaining for awhile, Vi forgot that she was a young girl sitting with two women who were comfortably old.

But Hannah, toward the close, got to talking about Tom's account of Jim's adventures in the log jam. So absorbed did she become, she did not notice the effect produced upon Vi, who, until that moment, had never heard the particulars of the incident. Nor was she brought to her senses until Vi gave a sigh that bordered dangerously near upon a sob.

"Merciful me! What am I doing?" she exclaimed, as she lifted her eyes to Vi's white face.

"What *are* you doing? Do you want to frighten the child to death?" And Peggy's reproving glance almost withered Hannah, as she added: "What is the use of telling the story over again?"

"Because women are such fools they never can rest unless they are dishing up the horrors of life," replied Hannah, stabbing the reputation of the whole sex for the sake of punishing herself.

"But you didn't mean anything," said Vi, generously.

"Didn't mean anything!" repeated Peggy, severely. "'We should never send our words to sea until they are properly ballasted,' that is what your brother Tom is in the habit of saying. Jim is alive, and so what is the use of crying over him as if he were buried."

At this Hannah laughed so suddenly, she swallowed her tea the wrong way, and Peggy went to her, and pounded her on the back so vigorously, Hannah's spectacles dropped from her eyes and landed in her teacup, which appeared so irresistibly ludicrous to Vi, she came near choking, too.

Meanwhile, Tom and Jim, having made their way above the lower portages of the river, were at the very spot where Jim came so near losing his life. The stream was low, and everything looked so peaceful and beautiful, it was difficult to realize that dangers had ever lurked around the spot.

"She doesn't look so hungry for a Jonah as she did that day she tried to take me in," said Jim, pausing in his paddling, and looking around pensively.

"No," replied Tom, "but she is a deceitful thing, and at this very spot several good men have been lost during the spring drives. How you ever got out from that jam of logs alive, is a mystery to me, Jim." And it made the perspiration start on Tom's face, as he thought of it.

Jim was too sober to reply, and nothing was heard but the measured dip of their paddles, the rippling of the water under the bow, and the murmurous tinkling of a small brook falling into the stream at their feet.

At three o'clock in the afternoon they entered the lower part of Lake Rossignol, the whole surface of which was as smooth as a mirror, there being not a breath of wind to disturb the stillness.

"Her summer duds has come!" exclaimed Jim, in admiration. "She's dressed herself ez ef she was gonter have a party for the birds, an' the brooks, an' the clouds to come an' look at her, 'thout money an' 'thout price. I tell you what it is, Mister Tom, the ol' sea, what is forever frownin' itself into wrinkles, an' tearin' itself inter rags, can't never git itself inter no sich rig ez that. My, my! She makes me feel ez ef I was a paddlin' right inter glory an' no one at the gate to stick me for a ticket."

ENJOYING THE SCENERY.

He laid his paddle across the gunwales of the canoe, and, leaning on his elbows, looked about him as if he could not feast his eyes enough.

Seeing his mood, Tom left him to his thoughts, and devoted himself to swinging on his bending paddle, with a movement that was the perfection of grace and skill. Straight as an arrow, the canoe sped forward, throwing ripples from her bow, that glistened in the slanting light like little waves of liquid silver. So clearly was the sky reflected in the water, it seemed as if they were paddling through space, and so plainly were the shores reflected along the edges of the lake, bottom upward, Jim began to think that he too, must be sitting on his head.

Here and there, the water was rippled into circles caused by fish leaping into the air after the insects hovering over the surface. Swallows dipped themselves in the limpid floods, and sped away, shaking diamonds from their wings. Overhead, a great gray eagle poised himself like a single punctuation point in the sky, whence he suddenly descended, with the rapidity of a stone, until, striking upon

the water, he shattered the mirror into multitudes of fragments. Emerging from the lake, with a big fish in his talons, he slowly moved toward the shore, where he was soon hidden in the woods.

It was all as beautiful as a dream to Jim, and, now impelled by a sudden inspiration which bore him irresistibly on, he swung his paddle, measuring his strength and timing his stroke with Tom's swift, gliding motions.

Presently Tom broke into the following song:

If you want to win your way,
  Strike a line that's straight and true;
Watch your way-marks every day,
  And paddle your own canoe.
    Paddle your own canoe,
    Paddle your own canoe;
Watch your way-marks every day,
  And paddle your own canoe.

Let the air be warm or chill,
  Or the sky look black or blue,
Swing your paddle with a will,
  And paddle your own canoe.
    Paddle your own canoe,
    Paddle your own canoe;
Swing your paddle with a will,
  And paddle your own canoe.

He who whines, or fumes and frets,
  Or waits for the world to woo,
Never to the landing gets,
  Nor paddles his own canoe,
    Paddles his own canoe,
    Paddles his own canoe;
Never to the landing gets,
  Nor paddles his own canoe.

God helps him who paddles well,
  Paddles and makes no ado;
Then dip, dip, for dips will tell.
  In paddling your own canoe.
    Paddling your own canoe,
    Paddling your own canoe;
Then dip, dip, for dips will tell,
  In paddling your own canoe.

Listening to Tom's strong and not unmusical voice, and catching the inspiration of his words, Jim plied his paddle as if the canoe were a soul which he was propelling over the lake of life. And the canoe, responding to the now rivalling strokes of the two, flung the water from her prow in spurts, and left a foaming wake behind, whose tiny bubbles glistened with all the colors of the rainbow.

"Did you git that outen a song-book, or did you jist open your mouth an' let her out?" asked Jim, as soon as Tom ceased singing.

"Ossian McPherson, who once lived at the head of this lake, and spent a large portion of his time canoeing, fishing and hunting here, wrote that song, Jim."

"And did he paddle *his* own canoe?"

"Yes; nobly! Though one of his arms was a mere sprig of flesh and bones, pieced out with an iron hook; and, though he had only one eye, he made his own living, and, besides, managed to do a good deal of good. When he was confined to his house by winter, he used to amuse himself stringing rhymes together. But it took deep fishing to get any of his rhymes together. He chipped his own grave-stone out of a piece of granite, and cut into it these words:

'McPherson dwells not 'neath this sod;
His soul has gone to meet its God.
He tried to live an honest life,
Although he never had a wife.
Pass on, poor pilgrim, shed no tear,
For only dust is buried here.'"

"Does you have to try hard to be honest, when you hain't got no wife, Mister Tom?" Jim wonderingly asked, thinking of what a tough time his friend must have had of it, during his long bachelorship, if there was any truth in the backwoods poet's intimation.

"No; not if you are thinking of getting one all the while you haven't any," was the quick, but cautious, reply.

And, while speaking, he turned Namaquit toward a small sand beach, that glittered in the light like frosted silver, and when her prow touched the shore, he exclaimed: "Here we are, at Padnosquat Point, the prettiest spot on Rossignol!"

Glad to be delivered from his narrow quarters, Towzer leaped ashore and ran about the beach, loudly barking his joy.

As soon as the canoe was emptied of its contents, she was carried to the bush-line, and carefully turned bottom-up, under the bushes. With no other material than that furnished by saplings and the bark of the birch, they soon made a roomy, lean-to shelter, in which they stowed their trappings, after laying down a luxurious carpet of soft cedar boughs.

When evening came, a big fire was kindled in front of the camp, before which the two sat down to supper, which they ate from their tin plates and cups with a relish that left nothing to be desired in the way of sauce. Their knees

formed their table, and the nearest earth their sideboard; Towzer looking on wistfully, occasionally skillfully catching the morsels thrown to him in answer to his mute prayers.

"He looks ez ef his soul was ez big ez anybody's," said Jim, eyeing him reflectively. "An' when father read right out t'other mornin' that there wasn't no dogs in heaven, I jist thought somebody had made a big mistake."

IN CAMP.

"But didn't the Tanner explain?" asked Tom, sympathizing with his young companion's interest in good dogs.

"Not till Towzer licked it outen him."

"Explain *yourself,* if you please, my boy."

"Well, father made an orful long prayer that mornin', an' while he was a goin' on like the river, or ez ef he'd got stuck ahind a pulpit, Towzer went slap up to him an' run out that bed blanket uv a tongue o' his'n, an' licked him fore an' aft his hull face. Father said 'amen' in a hurry, but ez soon ez he got his eyes open, he wiped his face on his coat-tail an' ripped out, 'Confound it, Towzer!

What do you mean?' An' with that, that 'ere dog looked so pizon mean an' shamed, father begun to pat him on the head like he was a baby, an' that set his stern post a waggin' at sich a rate, father he up an' says to him: 'That verse about dogs didn't mean you, Towzer.' An' when he seed I was lookin' at him sort o' peekid-like, he says to me ez how the words, 'an' without is dogs,' meant that when two-leggid folkses begun to try to git inter the New Jerusalem, none uv them what was pesky would have any show at all.'

"The Tanner is a sound theologian."

"What sort uv a critter is that, Mister Tom?"

"H'm! It's a sort of a teacher who gives the preachers points to work out." And Tom felt as if he were getting into deep waters.

"Then father is one uv them fellers, for he kin give preachers more pints than they kin box."

"He is a great friend of preachers," after a long pause.

"Yis; he allers was a friend o' publerkins an' sinners."

Jim couldn't understand why Tom laughed at his well-intended admission, and as no explanation was offered, he went to work on his rod and gun, to see that they were in shape for service, Tom following his example.

When Jim laid himself down upon his fragrant cedar bed, with the glowing fire sending out its flickering and fantastic lights into the deep darkness of the woods, he got quite a fright, after Tom fell asleep and began to play his lumber camp tunes. The queerest creature he ever saw in his life, stood about fifty feet away, looking directly in upon him. It was over twenty feet high, with a body two feet through; a big, bulging head on top, covered with a thick, waving bunch of hair. There were two monstrous, black eyes, and the two arms, with long, scraggly fingers attached, were lifted up as if the creature were trying either to get at him, or to pronounce a benediction over something.

Just as Jim was about to rouse Tom, he discovered that it was only an old, stripped, stunted, gnarled cedar tree which was making a desperate attempt to live. The two eyes were two holes made by woodpeckers for nests, while, just below, were the irregularities, which, under the lights and shadows of the fire, answered very well for nose and mouth. In the clear light of day, it had not been noticed, but in the stillness of the night, it looked decidedly preternatural.

Having found out what it was, and named it Malvina Padnosquat, and mentally charged it to take care of him and Tom till morning, he fell asleep.

When he awoke, at daylight, the vapors hung over the woods and waters so thickly, and hovered around Miss Padnosquat so strangely, it looked as if she were trying to put on a grey gown before the boys got out of bed.

"And now for something fresh for breakfast!" exclaimed Tom, tumbling out of camp in a headlong way. In twenty minutes they reached the banks of a foaming brook which emptied into the lake. The trout were plentiful as long as the vapors continued, and the fishers soon had an ample supply for both breakfast and dinner.

While Tom and Jim were skinning the trout on a piece of drift board, and making them ready for the frying pan, the sun rose over the tops of the trees, and the vapors rolled away from the surface of the lake in pretty little clouds and sheets.

"She's puttin' off her night-gown an' fixin' up for her parlor show agin," said Jim, pausing in his work, and watching the rapid unveiling of the islands and shores.

"Yes," was the reply. "It reminds me of the resurrection morn, when the fogs and vapors shall be rolled away from us, and Christ shall shine upon us, and make us beautiful and pure in his own shining."

"HEAVENS! DON'T SKEER ME!"

"Why, you sounds jist like father, Mister Tom," said Jim, reverently, recalling some of the Tanner's sweet and wholesome morning lessons, and thinking of home and Ruth with a grateful heart.

"You mustn't mention me in the same breath with the Tanner," said Tom, quickly. "He is a good man, and I am a sinner."

"Pertaters an' raisins, Mister Tom! Ef you've got any sin stowed away among your bones, it never gits a chance to stick its horns out; leastwise, I never seed any. Hows'mever, every feller knows his own self best. I kin give my affidavy to that, for I feels orful streaky and nubbly myself sometimes."

Breakfast over, they spent most of the day in fishing and hunting, for besides the trout in the streams, there were ducks in the coves, snipe on the beaches, partridges in the woods, and here and there a rabbit or a fox squirrel to keep their guns in practice.

When night found them they had canoed ten miles above their morning start, and were stopping at, what Jim called, "the Peggysis Hotel," that consisted of the shore side of a granite cliff, chiseled into all sorts of shapes by the tremendous forces of Nature.

When, after supper, they lay flat on their backs upon the thick, grey moss,

the stars blinked at them in such a near, cris-crinkly manner, Jim declared that they were trying to scrape an acquaintance.

"What be they, anyway, Mister Tom? I've watched 'em, an' watched 'em, time an' agin, when I've been a layin' on a pile uv rope on deck at sea, an' I could never make no more head nor tail on 'em, than I could uv the firelights, what one sees shootin' through salt water in the night. Yit they'd keep a blinkin' and a winkin' at me ez ef they'd say lots o' things, ef they only know'd how to talk."

"They are worlds!"

"Heavens! Don't skeer me! But you means leetle, teenty worlds?"

"No; most of them could swallow dozens and dozens of ours, and never have the stomach ache, either."

"An' live critters in them?"

"More than likely, Jim."

"But I've seen some uv them stars tumble through the sky like rockits, an' ef they was worlds bigger'n ours, why didn't they smash ours to smithereens?"

"Those were meteors, Jim; baby worlds, as it were, that died in the borning."

"Mister Tom, you is talking too big for me, but ef you kin stan' it to think uv sich things, I reckon I kin stan' it to hear you go on about 'em."

"Oh, I don't let such things frighten me. I love the stars as much as I do the woods. Some time we may go canoeing among them, just as we have been canoeing among the beautiful islands of Rossignol."

"But we'll have to git dead fust!"

"Yes; just as we had to get born first, before we could circulate around in this world."

"Well, I'd not mind that, if mother and father, an' Peggy an' you, an' Hannah an' Vi, an' this chap, too, could bunch together in the same canoe."

"Why, Jim; you are jingling again, like a hat full of gold shiners."

"How kin I help it, when you have a feller eround, what is allers shoving the shiners inter the hat, ez thick ez the stars are in the sky."

At this moment Towzer began to growl, and presently sprang into the woods, barking like mad.

"Get your gun, quick!" said Tom, springing for his own. "Towzer is not making all that fuss for nothing. He has probably treed a wildcat. Whatever it is, we may get a chance at it, in spite of the darkness."

Cautiously advancing, they discovered that the dog was worrying something that was bigger than himself.

"By Jove!" exclaimed Tom, in a low voice. "That's a bear, as sure as I am alive! He ought to have had more sense than to come prowling around where there are two guns and two Nimrods, and a Towzer to boot. Now, have a care there, Jim; go slow, and keep your eyes peeled like a cat. Don't fire till I give the word, or we may get into trouble. I'll keep ahead."

The bear retreated, and climbed into the forks of a crooked tree. Tom fired, and the bear fell. As he did not stir after the fall, Tom struck a match, and, lighting a strip of birch bark, slowly advanced toward him.

"Dead as mutton pie!" shouted Jim, rushing by Tom in the direction of the bear.

"Hold on there, boy, or he may make mutton pie of you; he may not be as dead as he looks."

Jim obeyed, but Towzer, already satisfied that the bear would never disturb another camp, was barking at a great rate over the carcass.

"Dead, and no mistake," said Tom, giving the body a kick. "But it was the merest random shot I gave him, and we shall have to put him down as 'killed by accident.' He came here hunting for our game, and has got taken in himself."

TREEING A BEAR.

They skinned him where he was, and, after cutting a few steaks from his hindquarters, delivered him over to Towzer.

Jim couldn't go to bed without first assuring himself that bear's meat was good eating, and the smell of the broiling steak he held over the fire was so appetizing, Tom fell into temptation likewise.

When the three fell asleep, they straightway dreamed the woods were full of bears. Tom got treed by one of them, the biggest of the lot, who kindly invited him to descend, by saying: "You are my meat, Mister Tom!"

Chapter XXIII

A SUDDEN CALL.

N THE fourth evening of their outing, Tom and Jim brought up at Hermit's Point, a spur of land belonging to an island heavily covered with timber and deeply indented with numerous scollop-like coves.

McPherson's Island was named after the one-eyed, one-handed hero of obscure life, who has already been spoken of, and the point got its name from being the spot where the rustic angler and hunter spent his summers, enjoying the robust freedom and pleasures of the wilderness. Straggling American anglers, tired of the more frequented resorts, occasionally found their way to Rossignol, and to the hospitality and companionship of the "Poet of the Woods."

A part of his curious, low, rambling shanty still remained on the Point, and into this Tom and Jim bundled themselves with bag and baggage, in the hope, as Tom said: "Of getting at least a whiff of the ghost of the man who could say:

'He tried to live an honest life,
Although he never had a wife.'"

Intending to use the shanty mainly to avail themselves of the sleeping bunks with which it was fitted, they kindled their usual evening fire outside, and at a little distance away, where they could enjoy the softness of the thick moss, the tremulous movements of the foliage, the telegraphy of the stars, and the ripples of the water, singing among the pebbles along the shore.

While they were stretched out with feet to the fire, and Tom, by his descriptions, was filling the woods with all sorts of curious creatures and things, and Jim was listening with his imagination all aglow, Towzer leaped to his feet, and ran down to a little strip of white sand not far away. By the time Tom and Jim reached the beach, a canoe, pushed through the water by a single figure, shot over the moonlit waters, and landed where they stood.

"Why, is that you, Bellhead?" exclaimed Tom, as soon as the "How-do" of the visitor, uttered in bell-like tones, enabled him to recognize the Micmac Indian, who went by that expressive nick-name.

"B'lieve um is," replied the Indian, as he stepped out of his canoe, and pulled it upon the beach with a final grunt of satisfaction.

"What in the world has brought you out upon the lake this time of night?" asked Tom.

"Come a huntin' man an' boy."

Tom's apprehensions were aroused, for the Indian's manner was serious, and he anxiously asked: "What has happened, Bellhead?"

"Tanner, him berry sick—wantee boy so much, berry quick!"

"Father!" exclaimed Jim, excitedly. "Father! Has anything happened to him? He never gets sick—what is the matter with him?"

"Heap sick this time. See Missus Hannah dis mornin'—she send me. Say—tell um, come berry quick."

This was all he knew about it, but the fact of Hannah's sending such a message was enough, and preparations were made for an immediate departure.

"Don't worry too much," said Tom to Jim, seeing how cast down he was. "Nothing can keep the Tanner upon his back very long."

And then, by way of diverting his attention, as well as satisfying his own curiosity, he asked: "How did you manage to find us, Bellhead?"

"Know you stick to north shore; fish keep there. Me keep paddlin', eye out doors for smoke. Bime-by see um fire, like red spirit lift umself in trees with white smoke-cap on, and spittin' sparks at the dark, an' then I know you was layin' at-um feet to warm while-um smile. No fool-um Injun, gittin' in haystack."

Towzer and a portion of the camp dunnage, were put in the Indian's canoe, by his own direction, as a means of equalizing the carriage, he insisting that in

paddling he was equal to two white men. He intended to take the lead in the night voyage down the lake, and he wished to have them follow him closely.

There was a full moon, and not a breath of wind, and when Bellhead shot out from the point with his canoe, he sped so swiftly over the still water, Tom and Jim had all they could do to keep up with him.

Jim was too much depressed to utter a word, and the stillness, and the solemn, dream-like scenery of the lake at night, but added to his depression, though Tom made repeated attempts to engage him in conversation.

HOMEWARD BOUND.

That the Tanner was sick enough to make it necessary to send for him, filled him with an indefinable terror, and there were moments when his eyes rained tears at the bare thought of anything serious happening to the man who had been such a rock to his feet, and such sunlight to his life. In the agony of his anxiety, he bent to his paddle with increasing vigor, impatient of every moment and every mile that separated him from home.

Tom, as if divining his thoughts, put extra force into his own strokes, and Bellhead, seeing how well they were following, was put to greater exertion to keep himself well ahead.

In an hour and a half they were at the bottom of the lake, and entered the rippling waters, which formed the outlet, past the place, known in the local traditions and provincial histories, as "The Indian Gardens."

The course down stream was more difficult to follow, as, in some places, the water was shallow, and the overhanging trees, cutting off the light of the moon, cast a dense gloom upon the stream. With the exception of a few rough scrapings against the rocks here and there, and an occasional touching of the bottom in some places, they made their way down without accident; floating along like silent spirits clothed upon with shadows. Just as the sun began to rise over the hills, they completed their last portage.

A wavering column of thin, white smoke rose from the big chimney of the Kenton cottage. Hannah was at the kitchen stove preparing breakfast, and Peggy was at the kitchen stand, trying to wash the sleep out of her eyes, by applications of cool water, freshly drawn from the old-fashioned well, whose great well-pole lifted itself just back of Shoes' Rest.

AN INDIAN'S GRATITUDE.

Towzer, having left his place in the canoe the instant it touched the bank, pushed open the cottage door, and sprang in with a bark that made the house ring.

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed Hannah, with delight. 'Bellhead has found them!"

"Found them!" repeated Peggy, hastening to dry the water from her thin face, and to push back the mild blonde hair from her high, narrow, blue-veined forehead. The landing being but a few rods from the cottage, the two immediately started for the river bank.

"How is the Tanner?" asked Tom, as soon as they were within hail.

"Poorly, Tom!" replied Hannah, softly.

"He um'll git well an' make the hair fly from heaps o' hides, yet," grunted Bellhead, sympathizing with Jim's anxiety, and trying, in his rough way, to bolster up his spirits.

Jim would have started for home immediately, but for Tom's remonstrance: "You must rest a little, and take breakfast. Jim, and then I'll harness up Uncle Sim's old, white mare, and drive you down myself to make up for lost time.

"What shall I pay you, Bellhead, for coming after us?" he continued, turning to the Indian.

"Pay um!" grunted the Indian, disdainfully. "Tanner my friend; send me an' my squaw bread, when I was sick last winter. Mebbe I git sick agin, an' want more bread; pay um then."

Tom tried to make him take three dollars, but he was inflexible. The luxury of showing his gratitude, was something he could not afford to forego. Hannah made him go in to breakfast with them, though he protested he had "heaps o' rye bread an' smoked herrings" in his cabin, which was not far away.

"FATHER, FATHER!"

When the old, white mare got into the shafts of the ancient, two-wheeled shay, and Tom gave her the word and the rein, she went down the grade to the lower town with a speed astonishing for a pile of twenty-year-old bones. But fast as she was, Towzer kept far in advance.

Ruth met Jim at the door. Her face was wan and haggard, and her eyes dim and inflamed with weeping. She pressed him to her bosom, but could not utter a word, so dry was her throat and uncertain her command of herself. The

change in her appearance appalled the boy. Gently releasing himself, he silently hurried to the room where he knew he should find the Tanner. The Doctor was there, and so was Vi, but he took scant notice of either.

The Tanner lay on the bed, motionless; his eyes closed, his face distorted, and the greater part of him dead with a hopeless paralysis.

"Father, father!" was all Jim could say, as he threw an arm over him, and nestled his head close to the dear, old face.

The Tanner opened his eyes, as if with difficulty; a light shone through their vacancy, and, after a prolonged effort, he uttered the single word, "Jim!"

Vi beginning to sob, and the Doctor, unable to conceal his own emotion, took her by the hand, and led her into another room. Ruth came in, and, kneeling beside the bed, hid her face in the coverings.

Jim reached beneath the bedclothes, for a touch of the hands that had been so full of warmth and strength, but they were cold and nerveless now, and although he pressed them passionately, they gave back no sign of response.

"Oh, my father!" he cried, filled with terror and grief. His head fell upon the pillows, and his sobs shook him sorely. The Tanner moved his head slightly, laid his face against Jim's wet cheek caressingly, and tried to speak, but this time his tongue refused its office entirely.

Tom came quietly in. The Tanner, aware of his presence, fixed a long and wistful gaze upon him, and then slowly tried to turn his eyes to Jim, who was watching every sign of consciousness with hungry eagerness.

"Yes," said Tom, falteringly, rightly interpreting the Tanner's look, "I'll look after Jim."

The Doctor returning, glanced at the sick man, and whispered to Tom that the end was not far away. An hour later the patient rallied, and fixing his eyes on Jim, moved his lips as if making a desperate effort to speak. Jim held his ear down, but all he could hear was: "The black cat—crow and—mink—they; you—must—."

It was his last effort. He was dead, and the words on being repeated to Tom were taken as the final flickerings of a mind making backward flights to some childhood day and association.

The Tanner was dead and in his grave clothes—and Jim lay face down upon a flat rock by the river side, sobbing his heart away, while the river rippled softly by. Thinking of the morning when the Tanner took him from the tan pile, he had gone to the spot where he took off his old clothes and cast them into the stream. It was from that very stone he watched the old garments float away.

It was the day appointed for the funeral, and the hour for the last rites was

rapidly approaching. Tom missed Jim, and, searching for him anxiously, found him face downward upon the stone. The sturdy fellow sat down by him, but it was moments before he could control himself enough to speak. Well he knew what Jim was going through.

"Come, my boy," he said, at last, laying his hand tenderly upon his head. "Ruth wants you; she is left to you. Go to her and be strong. She needs all the help you can give to her. She is in your care now."

JIM'S GRIEF.

Jim rose, wiped his streaming eyes; but, after an ineffectual effort to subdue his grief, he exclaimed: "Oh, Mister Tom—how can I live without him; I'm not half made yet!"

It was a great concourse that gathered at the Tanner's cottage to do honor to the memory of the man whose blameless life, manly ways, generous deeds, and tender heart, had won all classes far and near. The preacher's words were true enough, and tender enough, but they could add nothing to the name that had a brightness all its own.

While the clods were falling upon the casket, Jim bravely supported Ruth, and afterward led her back to the cottage, where he held back his own sorrow, and tried to comfort her. The Tanner and his wife were the last of their line, and there were no relatives to be present at the baked meats of the funeral meal. Tom and Peggy, and Hannah, together with the Squire and his family were the only ones present.

It was little that Jim could eat. It seemed to him as if he had returned perilously near to the black world of friendlessness from which the Tanner had plucked him.

Chapter XXIV.

A CLOUD BURST.

THE TANNER'S will was of recent date. It was drawn by the Squire, after husband and wife had counselled together long and secretly, as to the best disposition of their property, in the absence of natural heirs, and in view of Jim's relation to them. The tannery and the timber lands were willed to Jim direct. The mill, vessel and cottage property were assigned to Ruth, with reversal provisions which gave it to the new heir, in case he survived the widow. There were numerous conditions and guards covering several contingencies, which it is unnecessary to speak of here.

There was also a reference to "monies on hand," which fell to Ruth, to be used as her best judgment dictated, and, it was said, that an account of these was for the time being deferred, for sufficient reason. Tom was appointed administrator, without bonds or liability, with the Squire to assist in inventorying the whole estate, in case he survived the Tanner.

"Now," said the Squire, after reading the will to Ruth and Tom, "as the general items of the property are well known to us, it only remains for us to ascertain what 'monies' were referred to, then we can make out the whole schedule without further delay. Of course, Mr. Payzant has left behind him

papers showing the amount and whereabouts of this portion of the property. Mrs. Payzant doubtless can tell us all about this part of the business."

To their great surprise, Ruth informed them that her husband had not mentioned the "monies" in their private conference, nor had he subsequently alluded to it.

"In that case, you will, beyond question, find all the necessary information among his private papers or vouchers," said the lawyer.

MOST UNACCOUNTABLE.

Yet when the papers were brought, nothing was found that bore the slightest relation to the matter.

"But there must be a strong box somewhere," persisted the Squire, becoming more and more perplexed. "Your husband was known to have the handling of a good deal of money, and to be quite forehanded. There must be money in the house, or certificates of deposit."

"I know of no strong box, nor of any certificates," said Ruth, simply, to their increasing astonishment. "But we can search the house; for it was one of my husband's peculiarities, that while he always supplied me with all the money I needed, I was never aware of where he kept it. He used to say to me, in jest, as I always thought, if I knew where he kept his cash, some straggler might come in some time and frighten me into telling him where it was."

"And it was another of his peculiarities," remarked Tom, "that he had little or no faith in banking institutions. He was like my father in that respect, who, as you well know, would never deposit a dollar with a bank. And when he died, we found doubleloons scattered around in all sorts of corners, but on the general principle that where they were most exposed they would be the least likely to be looked for by any one who was disposed to play the robber."

The house was thoroughly searched after this conversation, but without avail, for not enough money was found to meet even the expenses of the funeral.

"Well, this is most unaccountable!" said the old lawyer, scratching his pate in the most vigorous manner. "But surely we shall find an account at the bank which will explain the mystery, though, as one of the directors, I never knew him to deposit money there, excepting to meet his ordinary business transactions. The bank is closed for to-day. To-morrow I will look into this affair thoroughly."

Tom visited the Squire on the succeeding day, and the two went to the bank together, but only to find an insignificant sum on deposit, which had been placed there to meet a business obligation.

The bank officials were as much puzzled as were Tom and the Squire, and suggested that the Tanner had made his deposits in Yarmouth or Halifax. But, in any event, they ought to be able to find the evidence of it somewhere among the Tanner's effects.

Another search was instituted at the cottage, this time extending to all the pockets of the Tanner's clothes, and the ticking of his bed, yet without success. Tom and the Squire separated in silence, after prosecuting their search through the most likely places of the tannery itself to no purpose.

"NOT ANOTHER SYLLABLE, SIR!"

Two days afterward the Squire drove up to Milton to consult with Tom, for the more he considered the more he was perplexed.

"It is very extraordinary, Mr. Kenton," said he, "and there is something wrong somewhere. Are you perfectly sure that that Yankee boy is all right? May it not be possible that the Tanner and his wife have been deceived in him, and that he has something to do with this mystery. He is a very sharp boy, you know, and I——"

But he was not allowed to finish the sentence. Tom's face was on fire, as he cried: "Not another syllable, sir, in that direction. The idea is not only monstrously absurd, it is brutally cruel, as well. If you value your peace of mind, you will take good care never to whisper such a thought to another living soul."

"Well, I have given you a hint, and if you don't keep your eyes open, it won't be my fault, you know. You are sworn to administer the estate to the best of your ability, and I begin to think the Tanner made a great mistake in not putting you under bonds to that end."

Tom was furious at this, but. angry as he was, the thought of himself gave way to his jealously of Jim's reputation, and he asked, excitedly: "Have you said anything about this matter to your family?"

"I am not in the habit of discussing the private business of other people with my family, sir, as you ought to know." And now it was the Squire's turn to get red in the face.

"Well, sir, if you ever do, I'll turn the whole of Queen's County on your track," threatened Tom, fiercely, disregarding the Squire's lofty manner.

The old lawyer was a member of parliament from his district, very ambitious of public honors, and much indebted to Tom's influence for his position and prospects in that direction. He therefore got away from the tempest he had raised as soon as possible, fully determined to be cautious, yet so angry that he drove his old rickety horse and vehicle with a vehemence that threatened to scatter them in fragments along the road.

"Confound his infernal impudence!" Tom exclaimed, as soon as he had seen the Squire well out of the house.

"Impudence," repeated Peggy, coming to his side in time to hear what, to her, was an awful explosion. "Whose impudence, Tom? Why are you so red in the face? What has put you in such a state of mind?"

"Oh, the devil!" was the startling ejaculation; and given with such emphasis, Peggy, who had never heard him use such language, started back in affright.

"The ——," but the word was too terrible for her to repeat, and she retreated in dismay, more than half disposed to run for the minister to come and labor and pray with him.

At the dinner table, Tom was as sullen as a bear, and he bit into his food like one.

"What has the Squire been doing to upset you so?" asked Hannah, who ate half her meals at the cottage, and never hesitated to probe Tom to the full bent of her mind, when there seemed to be any occasion for probing.

"The Squire be hanged! He can't upset me on anything; but you will, Han, if you don't have the goodness to mind your own business! Can't a fellow feel a bit off without having a thousand women hobbling around after him with gallons of herb tea?"

The dinner was finished in silence, Peggy viewing her irate husband with meek amazement, and Hannah watching her brother with undisguised amusement, which was, however, saturated through and through with a curiosity she knew would be gratified in due time.

Some days after the visit of the Squire, Jim met his old enemy of the

hucklebe. y barrens on the street, by whom he was openly hailed with: "Say; do you know what they are saying about you?"

"No," was the unsuspicious reply.

"They say you are a mighty sly fellow—a regular Yankee; and that you have been stealing the Tanner's money."

Dazed by the unexpected insult, which had been all the more confidently offered because Bill Bryden had heard that the Squire was responsible for the rumor, Jim stood for a moment as if he had been turned into stone. Coming to his senses, and to a partial apprehension of the meaning of Bryden's words, he sprang toward him like an enraged tiger, but suddenly checked himself, and turned away, followed by the taunting laughter of his enemy.

A TAUNT FROM HIS OLD ENEMY.

He remembered the Tanner's last morning lesson on "He that ruleth his own spirit is greater than he that taketh a city." It was this that checked his fury and made him turn from his enemy. And it was well that he was thus restrained, for his first impulse was to kill Bill Bryden on the spot.

It was now he began to realize that he had of late been shunned by some of the villagers, who formerly were on intimate terms with him, and he was left in no doubt as to the cause of it.

Overwhelmed with this new sorrow he went to Ruth, and, hiding his head in her lap, yielded to the shame and grief which came to him more keenly than anything he had ever suffered in his most friendless days.

It was a long time before Ruth could make him tell his trouble. She had received no intimation of the rumors, and speedily disposed of them by assuring him that it was only the talk of an idle, good for nothing, who, knowing that his chief defender was no more, was only seeking his revenge.

Meanwhile, the rumors had reached Tom's ears, and he had written the Squire a scathing letter, accusing him of breaking his implied promise, and declaring that if matters were not set right he would go to Halifax forthwith and engage the best lawyer in the province to prosecute him for slander.

The old Squire was so thunderstruck, he hitched up his horse and posted to Milton at the top of his speed, to avert the gathering storm. He well knew that Kenton was a resolute fellow, and that once he got started on a thing, nothing short of death would stop him.

When the Squire returned to Liverpool, before untackling his horse, he drove down to Bryden's, and from thence to half a dozen other places in the vain hope of turning back the stream of evil rumor which seemed to be gathering additional head with every day. The farther he went, and the more he learned, the more evident it became that he himself was directly responsible for what had gotten out, in that he had incautiously given expression to his suspicions to one of his fellow bank directors, who immediately, on going home to dinner, made free with the whole affair in the presence of his family; and when things are told in the family, they soon get engraved upon the sun.

"YOU DOESN'T THINK I'M A THIEF?"

For several days Jim stuck closely to the house, and his misery was increased by the fact that Tom didn't come near him. Could it be possible that he, too, shared in the suspicions to which Bryden had referred? Ruth, seeing how much he was cast down, sent him on an errand to Peggy and Hannah, in the hope that he would find Tom at home, and get from him the comfort he so much needed.

For a moment he stood at the Kenton cottage gate, and while he hesitated, Tom drove up with the old, white mare, and with his surveying implements in the shay, for, being a surveyor, he had been away on a three days' surveying trip, from which he had at that very moment returned.

"Bless your soul, my boy!" almost shouted the big-hearted fellow. "I was just going in to unload my traps, and say a word to the old girls, and then I was going straight down to see you. Seems an age since I met you."

With this he jumped to the ground, and walked toward Jim with extended hand, but the boy, instead of taking his hand, laid his own hands on Tom's shoulders, and, looking him pleadingly in the face, said: "Then you doesn't think I'm a thief, Mister Tom?"

Tom knew by this, as well as by the haggard look upon his young friend's

face, that the shaft of slander had reached him, and for a moment his indignation was so great, he bit his lips to assist him in regaining control of himself.

"Look here, Jim," said he, slowly, "I'm in the Tanner's place now, and I want to ask you, what you think he would say to a question like that? If I were to hear anybody use that word in connection with your name, I should be tempted to pummel him into a jelly And, by Jove! I have more than half a notion to pound you for asking me such a question, for all you are such a famous boxer."

This was enough for the boy, and the cloud passed from his face instantly, as he turned to greet Peggy, who had just come out.

Hannah followed close after, and as she had not seen Jim since the funeral, and as Tom had told her all about the Squire's interview, and the rumors, and the letter he had written him, she gave Jim a smacking kiss, and led him off into the cottage, where she deluged him with questions about Ruth and their family affairs.

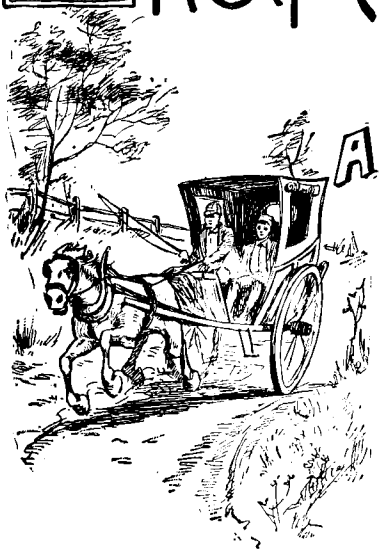
"We intended to have been down to see you," said she, at the end of one of her onsets, "but that Tom of ours has been off for three days, and as we wanted him with us, we have been waiting for him to get back."

She little knew what a load she lifted from Jim when she thus casually alluded to Tom's absence from home.

Tom worked off his surplus wrath while grooming down Uncle Sim's old mare, and the worst part of it expired when he poured a peck of oats before the patient beast, and exclaimed: "There, old nag; stick your nose into them, and thank your stars you are not a human being."

When he got into the cottage, he began to give Jim such a comical account of a man who thought he was going to run away with part of his land, because he was surveying near it, that Jim almost forgot his troubles.

Chapter XXV.



THE THREE BLACKS.

AS SOON as the dinner was over Tom led the way to the Babylonian Gardens, which Jim had no sooner reached than he began to think of Old Cud and the fiery furnace.

"I see it! I see it!" he suddenly exclaimed, as he sat down on the wall overhanging the cliff.

"See what?" asked Tom, looking into his eyes, but only to discover that far off look which sometimes turned the boy's eyes into fathomless pools; and it was a look which made Tom's heart ache.

"What the big furniss means; an' I reckons I've got to sweat in it for a spell."

"But you'll come out of it without so much as the smell of fire upon your garments, never fear, my good fellow. And now I want you to tell me what you meant by asking me that strange question."

And so Jim told him what Bill Bryden had said.

"But why didn't you let Malvina and the Sunday school go to the dogs, and give the brute another huckleberry licking?"

Then Jim told him of the Tanner's last lesson, and the reason why he did not.

"Yes," said Tom, almost whimperingly, "the Tanner was a whole Sunday school every time he opened his mouth, and a thousand times fitter to teach you the right than I shall ever be. And you have become such a good scholar, I think I shall have to get you to come up here on Sundays and give me a few private lessons. You were right in taking no notice of that dog of a Bryden. You need not trouble yourself about your reputation. I'll take care of that; I'm your guardian, you know; and I'm bound to look after your character as the best part of your property; although, if it were left entirely in your own keeping it would be like the path of the just, which shines more and more unto the perfect day."

And Tom Kenton had so exceeded his usually slow rate of speaking, he had to stop to give his breath a chance to catch up with him. When the two had got together once more, he began to assure Jim that he need give himself no anxiety about money matters on Ruth's account; there were quite a number of outstanding credits, which could be easily collected; and, besides, the shares in the mill and the "Lady Campbell" were so valuable they could be sold for ready cash at almost any moment.

"But what did father do with all his money? He used to take in lots of it from the tannery, and he always carried it into the house, too. I don't see what could have become of it, unless he stuck it in the wall somewhere," said Jim, after a long pause, in which he seemed to be in deep study. The bare imputation of suspicion had made him keenly alive to possibilities, and he began to wonder if there was not some place in the house which the Tanner had used as a secret depository.

Suddenly his brow began to knit as if with a new and perplexing idea.

"What is it, Jim?" asked Tom, solicitously, fearing that the cloud had chilled him again.

"Oh, Mister Tom! d'ye 'suppose it's possible?" was the almost breathless response, and the knot cleared away from his forehead as if fair Hope had touched it with her beautiful hand.

"You will have to tell me what you are thinking about, before I can answer," replied Tom, eagerly surmising that the boy was about to give some tangible clew.

"Why, I was agoing up stairs one day, an' father stood at the head of the stairs, an' right before him there was a big black hole I'd never seen erfore, an' it frightened me so I run back agin ez fast ez I could cut."

"Did you ever look for the hole again, or ask the Tanner anything about it?" and Tom's eyes were glistening like live coals.

"No, *sir!* I don't never go pokin' into other folkses business, onless they sets me at it. Besides, I never go by that place 'thout feelin' a crawlin' down the hull o' my back bone."

Seized by a sudden inspiration, Tom exclaimed: "Come with me, my boy; I'm going after that hole. I don't know what you are thinking about, but I can guess well enough. In some respects the Tanner was a queer man; and if you saw him by the side of a hole in the wall, it is time we were standing by it too."

DISCOVERING HIDDEN WEALTH.

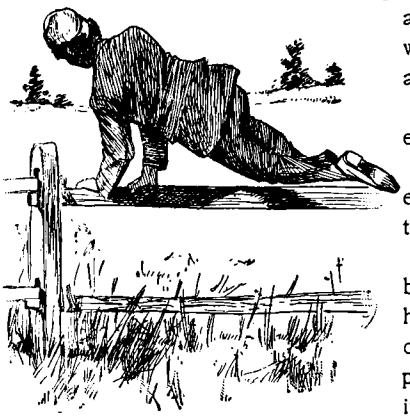
And the old white mare went down the road at a gallop for the whole distance, and Ruth opened her eyes widely when the two entered and told her what they were after. She was incredulous, for she assured them that she knew every nook and corner of the cottage in which she had lived over fifty years. But she had no objection to Tom's hunting the whole house over again, if he deemed it worth while.

"Now show me that place," said Tom to Jim.

In the center of the house was a big, old-fashioned chimney; one that con-

tained almost brick enough to build a small, modern house. This chimney formed one of the boundaries of the hallway at the top of the stairs. The front was encased in elaborate, old style panel-work. In this hallway stood the three, while Jim pointed out the position in which he saw the Tanner when he stood before the hole in the wall.

Tom tapped on the spot and became greatly excited when he found it hollow. But there was no sign of an opening, until after working on the center panel for a while, he discovered that it could be moved upward. Yet when the panel was moved up to its utmost limit, they were disappointed, though startled, to find that the dim recess had nothing in it but a stuffed black cat, a crow, and a black mink; all three, however, so well mounted that they looked almost as natural as life.



GOING FOR THE SQUIRE.

"By Jove!" exclaimed Tom, "that's enough to frighten one out of his wits."

"That's what father tried to tell me erbout when he was dying," cried Jim, trembling with suppressed excitement.

"He did," said Tom, in an undertone, as he suddenly reached forth his hand and gave a pull at the cat. The cat proving unexpectedly heavy, he applied more strength and gave a jerk at it, when lo! the skin fell to pieces, and a stream of gold and silver poured from the intestines, and spread itself in a shining shower upon the hall carpet; some of the larger pieces rolling down the stairway to the lower floor.

"Run for the Squire, Jim, as fast as your legs can go," cried Tom, almost beside himself with joy; "but don't bring anybody else with you, nor let anyone else know what is going on here."

The Squire was in his office. He had seen Tom and Jim drive up to the cottage at a "John Gilpin" rate, and naturally inferred that he would soon receive a stormy visit from them. He felt quite relieved at the delay; but was roughly upset, when, on looking out of his window, he saw Jim running toward his office and leaping the fences as if they were but straws.

Nor were his fears allayed, when, bursting into the office, and evidently under great excitement, he said: "Mr. Squire, you must come over quick."

Jim didn't wait to see whether his call was obeyed or not, but hastened

back as rapidly as he came, leaving the Squire to think that the house must be on fire.

When the old lawyer reached the kitchen door, into which Jim had disappeared, he met Tom, who almost pulled him through the door; and as if this were not sufficiently startling, he deliberately turned and locked it.

"Follow me," was all the greeting he received.

Dazed and puffing, and not knowing but what he was going to be murdered outright, he followed at Tom's heels until he stood at the head of the stairs in full view of the dismembered cat and treasures of gold and of silver.

"What do you call that, Squire?" asked Tom, triumphantly. "You miserable, old sinner! What do you think of Jim, now?" And he slapped the Squire on the back with such gleeful strength, he almost knocked the breath out of him.

"God save the Queen!" gasped the old lawyer, using his superlative exclamation. "Where, in the name of her majesty, did you find that? Did it come out of that hole?"

Tom had tested the weight of the crow and the mink, and found that they, too, were stuffed to the brim, so to speak. "Have the goodness," said he, grimly, "to lift those other animals out of the hole."

Shaking from head to feet, the Squire attempted to do as he was directed, but the weight baffled his feeble hands, and Tom, affecting great impatience, performed the task himself, and, placing the crow and mink upon the floor, took his knife and ripped the skins from end to end, revealing contents similar to those which had filled the marvelous cat.

"Hurrah!" exclaimed Jim, dancing a jig, with his hands upon his hips. "That lets me out of Old Cud's furniss, an' no one won't never call me a thief no more."

"God bless you, my dear boy!" said Ruth, drawing upon the end of her apron for strength to control herself, "no honest person has ever dared to mention your name in any dishonorable connection."

The Squire winced under the unintentional blow, but he was as honest and frank as the day, and when convinced of error, was always prompt to make the best reparation in his power. He made a clean breast of his mistakes to Jim, then and there, and contritely begged forgiveness for the injustice he had done him.

"But did you tell Vi what you'd been a thinkin' erbout me?" asked Jim, anxiously, almost indifferent to the Squire's apologies, as he thought of the possibilities involved in his confession. "*Did* you, Mister Squire? Is that why you wouldn't let her come over here any more?"

"No; I didn't tell her, but she knew all about the rumors."

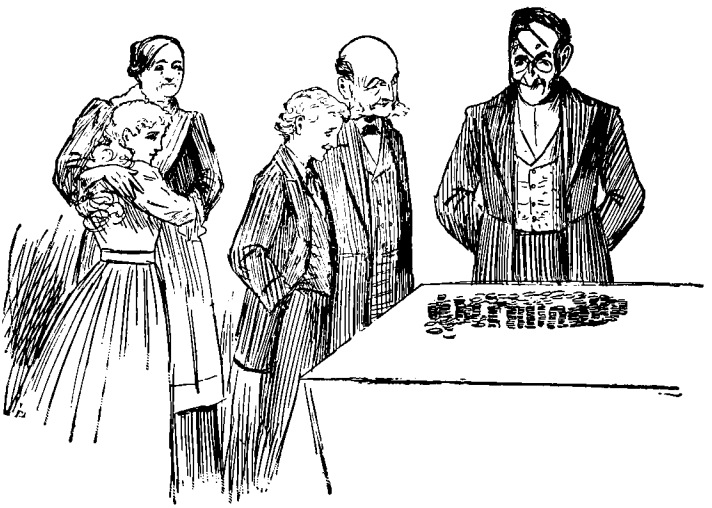
"An' did she believe them?" gasped the boy, in great distress.

"Not one word; and when I forbade her being any longer intimate with you, she almost cried her eyes out."

"May I go an' ask her to come over here now?" And Jim faced the Squire with a dignity and firmness that really seemed to add to both his stature and his years.

"Yes; go! But don't bring any of the rest of them. We must count this money and take care of it, before we indulge in any more sentiment."

Jim went off like a flash, and Vi was much astonished to find herself summoned to the cottage by her father, through Jim as the messenger. When she



CONTENTS OF THE CROW, THE MINK, AND THE CAT.

ascended the stairs, and took in the full meaning of the scene before her, she threw both arms around Ruth, and kissed her most fervently, saying: "I knew Jim would die before he would so much as touch a dishonest penny. But oh, it was just awful, to see how suspicious people had become!"

With the aid of Ruth's apron, and Vi's gown, and Jim's cap, and Tom's hat, and the Squire's trembling hands, the money was carried into Jim's room, and poured in a shining heap into the middle of his bed, preparatory to counting it. As they counted it, it was put in thousand dollar piles on Jim's table.

"*Seventeen thousand, five hundred and sixty-three dollars and fifty cents!*"

read Tom, from the tally he held in his hands. "That is a little more like it! All's well that ends well!"

Charity veered around in the direction of the Squire, and Jim declared that he didn't wonder at his suspecting that something was wrong, knowing the Tanner's business affairs as well as he did.

"But it was jist killin' me," he added, wiping the perspiration from his brow, the moisture having made a sudden start at the bare thought of being really suspected for a thief.

"It's the queerest bank I ever heard of," said Tom. "A cat, a crow, and a mink, and all of them as black as coal. Black's Bank, we shall have to call it. How did the Tanner ever come to happen upon such an idea? That's the mystery of it all."

Ruth said, that twenty years before, they had a black cat which was a favorite with her husband. It died at the advanced age of ten, and he took it to the tannery, saying he was going to preserve the skin, and that was the last she heard of it, until she recognized its skin in the black hole. They also had a tame crow, which always perched on the Tanner's chair at breakfast, and while he performed his morning devotions. He had taught it to talk, and it always said "amen" at the close of his prayers with the gravity of a preacher. Indeed, it had almost frightened a minister out of his senses once by saying "amen" at the close of a long grace which he had said at table, he being unaware of the crow's accomplishment's and piety. Jack, as he was called, died of a fish bone in his throat. He also was taken to the tannery to be skinned, and thenceforth was heard no more of. Ruth remembered that the Tanner once shot a black mink he had caught scampering off with one of their pet game fowls. This she saw him skin, but that was the end of her knowledge of it. She couldn't understand how he had managed to arrange the hole in the wall without her knowledge, nor why he had chosen such extraordinary repositories for his money, nor how he had managed to keep the place so secret for so many years, and that, too, when she was about the house the most of the time.

On examining the skins more closely it was found that they had been most carefully prepared for the use they were to serve. In their backs there were narrow slits concealed by the fur and feathers, and it was through these slits that the creatures were fed to the full with silver and gold.

On making a further examination of the hole in the wall, they discovered, in a chink of the bricks, a little, yellow pass book filled with figures, which, on being footed up, tallied exactly with the money they had counted. From the

way in which the deposits ran, it was evident that monies once deposited were never withdrawn.

"And look here, will you!" exclaimed Tom. "I named it rightly." And from the outside of the pass book, he read: "James Payzant, in account with Black Brothers, Bankers, Liverpool, Queen's County, Nova Scotia."

THE BANK OFFICIALS WERE SURPRISED.

The Squire drew up an account of the finding of the money, and the bank book, and this was signed by himself and Tom, to be published in the town paper, as a public vindication of Jim.

Getting a pair of strong buckets, Tom and the Squire surprised the officials of the town bank by bringing in specie deposits by the pail full, and it was

some time before they could be made to believe the evidences of their own senses.

Of course, Jim's vindication was complete, and, as was natural, he became the hero of both town and county.

The whole affair got into all the Nova Scotia papers, and from thence was paragraphed around the world.

For awhile there was a great ransacking of all sorts of out of the way places in old houses throughout the province, and every old, stuffed animal that was found in garret and other remote portions of dwellings, was torn in pieces in search of money. And the strangest feature of the whole case was the fact, that the Tanner was not alone in his eccentricity. Several well authenticated instahces came to light of similar oddities on the part of others.

At Herring Cove, not far from Liverpool, a black, stuffed cat, which for years had stood undisturbed upon the top of an old buffet in the corner of a cottage dining-room, was pulled to pieces—after hearing of the Black Brothers' Bank—and discovered to be more than two-thirds full of sovereigns and doubleloons.

One boy, in Barrington, Nova Scotia, hearing of the Liverpool case, had a somewhat singular experience. His father, a clergyman, with a large family, lived in a big, old-fashioned, gable-roof house, that was once owned by a smuggler. One Sunday, the boy managed to escape from going to church, and when the family returned, they were surprised to find scattered about the floors of the chambers, an odd assortment of chests of tea, rat-eaten bales of silks and dry goods, and rusty hardware of every description. The boy had discovered a concealed chamber, into which the goods had been piled by the former owner. Unfortunately for the discoverer, and the rest of the family, the goods, though originally worth hundreds of dollars, were worthless. Even the tea, though sealed in original packages, was as stale as if it had been steeped a thousand times.

When the heir of the former owner made his appearance and claimed the goods, he was allowed to take them away without opposition. He tried hard to doctor the teas into shape again, but only had his labor for his pains.

Chapter XXVI.

STRIKING THE HIGHWAY.

A NEW world opening to the hero of our simple story, and his desire for an education developing rapidly, he entered Dartmouth Academy, where he remained for three years. Being eager to learn, indomitably persevering in all he undertook, and as honest and genuine under the new as he was under the old conditions of life, he won the good will of all with whom he was brought in contact, and came out of the three years' course at the head of his class.

When he returned home from his last quarter he was so changed in everything but his native sturdiness and honesty of character, that there was little in him to remind one of the heap of rags and humanity the Tanner picked up from the tan pile.

The precept, "Be strong and show thyself a man," had so often been called to Jim's attention by the Tanner, it became his chief ambition to be a *man* in the true sense of the term. And constant thinking and conduct in this direction did much to make him what he was.

He and Vi were still intimate; nor was the old Squire at all unwilling. Vi

had become as handsome as she was good. She, too, had graduated from a seminary, so that the romping, pretty little miss had developed into a well-balanced young woman.

We have refrained from using the somewhat dubious terms, young gentleman and young lady, because we think the terms young MAN and young WOMAN are so much more expressive, and the characters described in them so much more desirable. As ordinarily used, "young gentleman" describes a shilly-shallying specimen addicted to canes, collars and cuffs; and "young lady" pictures a dilly-dallying specimen given to kids, feathers, jewelry, juicelessness and uselessness.

MISS VI SEELY.

Young man! Young woman! These are terms that need no gilding.

One morning, shortly after Jim's return, he had just finished reading a short chapter from the Tanner's big Bible, and risen from a short, comprehensive morning prayer, when the Squire and Vi entered with a Halifax paper, and showing traces of excitement. The Squire handed the paper to Jim, and directed his attention to the following advertisement:

> WANTED—INFORMATION OF ONE JAMES Mulock, who ran away from the fishing schooner Three Bells, of Marblehead, Captain Jacob Barberry, while in Yarmouth, N. S., June 12, 18—. He had a brown birth-mark on his right arm, in the shape of a large, well-formed cherry, just above the elbow. If alive, he will hear of something to his advantage by communicating with JONAS WILLIAMS. Attorney, Salem, Mass.

Having read it aloud, he was no sooner done than Ruth exclaimed: "God bless me, James! that means you! Am I to lose my boy?" And she hid her face in her apron.

"No, mother; not as long as I am alive! This surprises me, and I must go up and see old Tom. It means me beyond question; but what advantage can come from taking notice of it is more than I can conjecture."

The Squire approved his intentions, and assured him on his knowledge as a lawyer of wide experience, that the advertisement could not have found its way into the papers unless there was something important behind it.

Jim found Tom, Hannah and Peggy mending a salmon net in the old sitting room, where the four had spent so many cheery hours together. Tom put on his spectacles and read the advertisement aloud.

"Bless my heart, Jim!" exclaimed Hannah, "we can't afford to have you leave us and Nova Scotia."

"Leave us and Nova Scotia," repeated Peggy, with more energy than she had shown for many a day.

"If he has rights in the United States, they are to be defended as well as those in Nova Scotia," remarked Tom, in his matter of fact way. "This should be attended to at once."

Uncle Sim's old white mare, still alive, though slightly stiff in the bones, was immediately hitched up, and shortly after stood in front of the Squire's office, where the two had gone to take such steps as would place Jim in possession of the meaning of the advertisement.

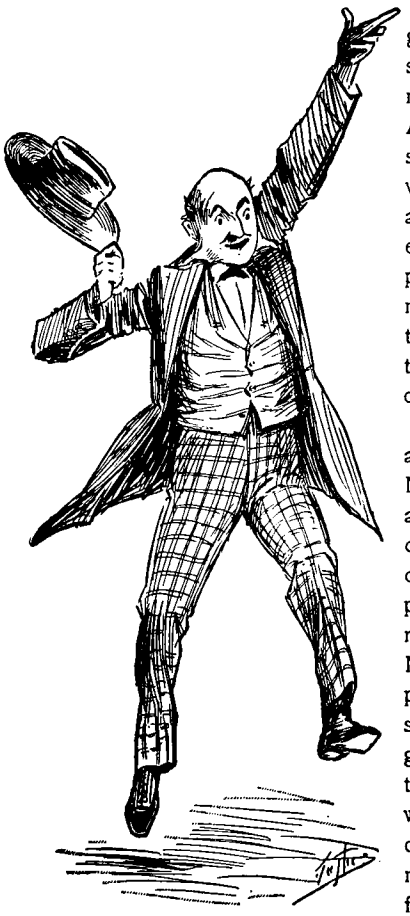
The Squire drew up a sort of affidavit, which, after being signed by Jim, Ruth, Tom and the Squire, was sent off by the next mail.

JONAS WILLIAMS, LAWYER.

At the expiration of two weeks a middle-aged man alighted from the Yarmouth stage and inquired for the office of Squire Seely. Finding that venerable worthy in, he introduced himself as Jonas Williams, of Salem, and he had travelled all the way to Liverpool to make personal inquiry into the identity of the alleged James Mulock.

"I think you will find there is no mistake in the case," said the Squire, after a few moments of conversation with the American.

"Probably not; I should not have been at the pains to come all the way here, had I not been confident that I was on the right scent," replied the lawyer, who proved as genial as he was intelligent.



TOM IS JOYFUL.

Jim was up at Tom's, and a messenger being sent for them both, they were soon in the presence of the stranger. It needed but a short time for the alert American to demonstrate to his own satisfaction that Jim was the person he was in quest of; and this being settled, all that remained was the putting of his evidence in written form, with the appropriate signatures. When the local witnesses were dismissed, Mr. Williams, in the presence of Jim, Tom, Ruth and the Squire, made the following formal declaration:

"It gives me the greatest pleasure to acknowledge this young man as the James Mulock for whom we have been seeking, and I take all the greater pleasure, because of what I have learned of his character and standing among the people with whom he has been dwelling. It now becomes my duty to say to you Mr. Mulock, that you are heir to a large property consisting of real estate, bank stock, bank funds, and a flourishing dry goods business, amounting to upwards of three hundred thousand dollars, all of which awaits your appearance in the city of Salem, Massachusetts, There are no contestants and the title is without a flaw.

"To make everything clear, it is necessary for me to make you acquainted with the outlines of the case.

"Your mother was the only child of a rich merchant in Salem, whose name was James Marchand. Your mother having married a clerk against her father's

wishes, and his prejudices being as persistent as they were unreasonable, she was disinherited. His wife having died before him, and he having heard of the death of his daughter's husband, and of her having had a son as the issue of that marriage; and, besides, being taken with a mortal disease, he made a will leaving everything to that issue. It was by him I was commissioned to make every possible effort to discover your whereabouts, he having learned that your mother died when you were but two years old. I ascertained that a poor woman, who nursed your mother in her last sickness, took you into her care and that she did the best she could for you so long as she was well. Being stricken with inflammatory rheumatism, and having no means, she was sent to the almshouse, taking you with her. There she died, leaving you a public charge until the authorities apprenticed you to one Captain Barberry, from whom I learned the particulars which led to the advertisement.

EVERY BODY WAS AGOG WITH EXCITEMENT.

"It is true that the estate was devised to you upon certain conditions, but happily your standing and character are such that the conditions are fully answered, and I therefore have no hesitation in presenting you with the transcripts of the more important documents bearing upon your immediate rights."

And the lawyer opened his satchel and producing the voluminous papers placed them in Jim's possession, who received them mid the congratulations and tears of Ruth, Tom and the Squire.

"It will greatly facilitate our proceedings," continued the lawyer, "if Mrs. Payzant and Mr. Kenton, and Mr. Seely will accompany you and myself to Salem to act as witnesses in the final proceedings."

This at first presented a formidable difficulty, which, however, after a little consideration, was easily overcome.

Pending preparations for departure, the lawyer became Jim's guest at the Tanner's cottage, where he was soon much interested in the story of the finding of the Tanner's money, and in the black hole at the head of the stairs, which was shown to him, as were also the shrunken fragments of the black cat, crow and mink.

When Tom went home, he burst into the house with a hurrah for Mr Mulock, the rich man of Salem.

"The rich man of Salem!" exclaimed Peggy, throwing up her hands, and begging her husband to remember that he was quite too old to be addicted to such young manners. "Cool yourself down, and tell us what you mean," she added.

And Tom sat down and told the whole story, accompanied with such a shower of exclamations from Hannah, and such a succession of echoes from Peggy, he had to advise them to behave themselves with the coolness becoming their age.

"And I am to go to Salem with him to see him settled down; and, furthermore, Ruth and the Squire are going, too.

"Why you upset me," cried Hannah.

"Upset me," repeated Peggy, overwhelmed at the thought of Tom's being obliged to trust himself in such a wild place as the United States for even a limited space of time.

But Tom got up and began to whistle "Yankee Doodle" with such a piercing vehemence, Peggy, finding herself unable to repeat him, put her hand to her ears to shut out the awful tune, while Hannah sat by and laughed till she cried.

When his whistling fever had expended itself, the trio joined in a solemn parliament over the whole affair, and, while rejoicing in Jim's good fortune, lamented that the Tanner was not alive, and that the Tan Pile Waif was to disappear from the circle to which he had so greatly endeared himself.

The news of the advertisement, and of the lawyer's arrival, had already spread through Milton, as well as Liverpool, and everybody was agog with excitement.

Knowing that Tom was acquainted with all the particulars, the Milton people besieged him with inquiries, and in the evening they kindled an immense bonfire in front of his place in honor of Jim's good fortune.

Chapter XXVII.

"GOOD-BYE, JIM!

THE Liverpool and Yarmouth stage stood at the gate of the Tannery Cottage; Ruth, and the Squire, and the lawyer, were already inside. There, too, were Vi and Malvina Mehitable; the former going as a companion for her father, and the latter as a sort of waiting maid to Ruth.

The lawyer, having rapidly grown into the good graces of all, by his cordial, yet gentle, manners, sat between the two maidens, and smiled as benignly and conversed as freely as if he had been acquainted with Bluenoses from his birth.

A large number of townspeople stood around to see them off, and when Tom and Jim swung themselves to the top of the stage, and gave the whip word that all was ready, they were followed by a rousing cheer.

"What shall we do now?" asked Hannah, tearfully, as the stage disappeared among the pines of the queen's highway.

"Go home as fast as we can go!" exclaimed Peggy, and with such startling originality, no alternative was left Hannah but to obey.

The coach was traveling on the very road over which Jim, years before, had traveled, a friendless, barefooted boy.

"It seems like a dream, Tom," said Jim, "and as if I must wake up and find that it has vanished away like that nice house, and that nice, old woman I dreamed of, that morning I slept on the tan pile." His memory was acute, and his heart full.

"But it is all real enough, Jim," was the feeling reply. "And what is the best part of it, you deserve every bit of it."

"If father could only have lived to share in the pleasure of it, my cup would be full to overflowing." And his voice grew husky as he referred to the man whose memory was as green as on the day he was laid away.

"But he knows all about it," responded Tom, sturdily. "And doubtless, is clapping his hands in heaven, in joy over the figures we are making on the road this day. He doesn't know less in heaven than he knew on earth, depend upon it." And Tom spoke with such downright conviction and earnestness, Jim caught his spirit and became quite lively.

During the journey he pointed out the places where he slept on his long, boyhood tramp from Yarmouth to Liverpool. There were three places where he had been treated with great kindness. Tom, being well acquainted with the road, and with many living on it, was able to give him the names of the people, and to convince him that they were still residents of the old homesteads, he said: "The families living hereabouts are not like sand-dunes—here to-day, and in a heap somewhere else to-morrow." Jim pulled out his note book, and made a memorandum of the names, saying that he couldn't afford to forget any of his old friends.

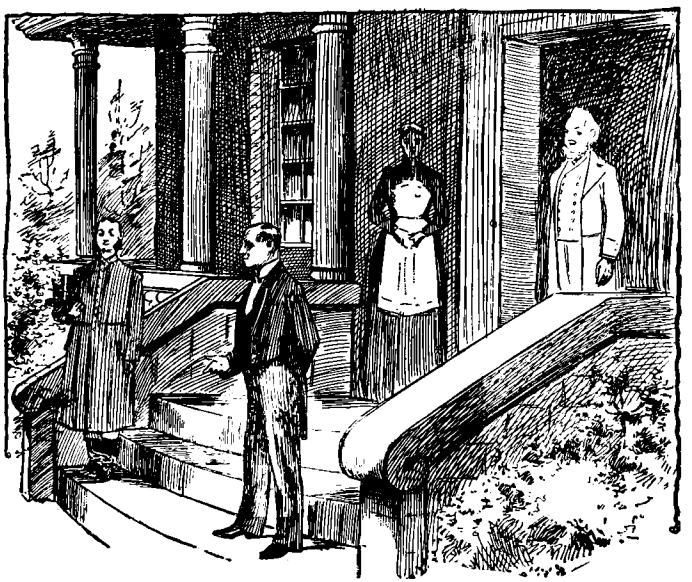
When they arrived at Yarmouth, they immediately boarded the steamer Dominion for Boston, where they arrived the next day, none the worse for the short trip across the Bay of Fundy.

On reaching Salem, the lawyer, before going to his own friends, had them driven to a handsome, brick residence, situated in the outskirts of the city, in spacious grounds laid out in the highest style of landscape gardening.

Two servants, a gardener and a coachman met them at the door, and Jim was introduced to them as the young master of the house.

On entering, the lawyer, hat in hand, said: "Mr. Mulock, while standing in this broad hallway, and before leaving you, I wish to welcome you to your own house, and to express the hope that you may live many years to enjoy it. I have taken the liberty to telegraph the old servants, who have been in your grandfather's employ, and whom I have retained to take care of the place

to have it in readiness for immediate occupation. You will find the house in good condition, with a fine stable attached, which, doubtless, you will know how to use for your own pleasure, and the pleasure of the guests you have brought with you. As I am the sole administrator of the estate, I have felt free to put you in full possession in advance of the formalities we have yet to comply with. I have been so anxious to see you at home in your own house, I have felt it my duty to accompany you here before paying my respects to my own family."



TWO SERVANTS, A GARDENER, AND A COACHMAN MET THEM AT THE DOOR.

Warmly thanking the lawyer for his consideration, and making an appointment for a near date for the completion of what remained to be done, Jim took possession, and his legal adviser departed.

After consulting with the servant who had had the oversight of the house, Ruth was conducted to the best chamber the premises afforded. This was a room tinted in delicate shades of cream yellow, with just enough of rich coloring

in the furniture and fittings to relieve the general brightness. Malvina had a pleasant room adjoining, where she could be within easy call of the woman whom she had come to love as her own mother.

Vi had a room fitted in blue, which, with its outlook, she declared the perfection of loveliness. Next to Vi's room was one finished in dark red, to which her father was introduced as his dormitory while he sojourned in the "States."

Above these, in the third story, commanding a superb outlook, Jim and Tom found a study filled with books and paintings, and bits of fine sculpture. Leading out from opposite sides of this study there were two beautiful chambers, which the two took possession of, declaring they were good enough for the President or the Royal household.

The furnishings and equipment of the whole house gave ample proof of both the wealth and taste which had inspired all the arrangements. And this also held true of the grounds and all the outbuildings.

Jim would have made an immediate tour of the premises, had not Tom, with native sagacity, cautioned him against any undue haste or curiosity, as tending to lower him in the eyes of the servants.

"Take it easy, my boy," said he, winking at him suggestively, "and go at it slowly, just as if you had lived in a palace all your days. Pin feathers, you know, must have a little time to grow before they can become fine feathers. See out of the corners of your eyes all you can, but don't let anybody catch you staring at anything. Take your cue from Vi, who seems to slip into this sort of thing as if she were born with a silver spoon in her mouth. Put Malvina on her guard, for, although she has been so good at kissing Micmac pappooses, those big grey eyes of hers open as if she were in danger of losing her brains through her eye-sockets. As for Ruth, she is such a royal old jewel, she'll fit here just as well as she will fit into heaven. The Squire acts a little dazed, but I think he will live to get back to his cottage by the river, notwithstanding this overwhelming state of affairs. As for myself, I feel as green mid these surroundings as a young cucumber fresh from the shelter of its yellow blossom; yet, I intend to act as if I were as ripe as a full-grown watermelon, and the first thing I want you to do in the morning is to turn out that splendid black span of horses, black coachman, livery and all, and give me a drive about town. It will be my only chance of making a splurge in America, and I know from their looks that they will make the dust fly.

"God bless you, old fellow!" said Jim, patting him gently on the shoulder, "you are as wise as Solomon, and shall be driven about to your heart's content; but you will have no objection to Vi's taking an airihg with us, I suppose."

"Not the least, my good fellow, providing you will leave the rest behind for another time."

Jim laughed heartily at this, saying: "I see what you mean; you wouldn't have us appear as if we were a brood of chickens just out of the shell. That's all very well my dear old boy; but on the other hand, you musn't think that I am going into the starch business because my fortunes have changed, or that I am ambitious of peacocks' tails because Providence has given me wings. Not for nothing have I lived among you Nova Scotians and enjoyed the liberties and tasted the sweets of your old-fashioned, genuine life."

And Tom was so well pleased with Jim's reply, he dipped his hands deeply

TOM ENJOYS A DRIVE.

into his pockets, and in a slightly cracked voice sang a snatch of the old canoe song of Lake Rossignol:

If you want to win your way,
Strike a line that's straight and true;
Watch your way-marks every day,
And paddle your own canoe.

And Jim, scarcely able to keep back the tears, joined in the chorus:

Paddle your own canoe,
Paddle your own canoe;
Watch your way-marks every day,
And paddle your own canoe.

And then they shook hands and began to clatter about the canoe Namaquit, and about Lakes Quidnaquit and Rossignol.

The next morning Tom had his coveted ride behind the high-spirited black span, driven by the black coachman in livery. He sat by Vi's side, saying that he wanted to imagine himself in company with Peggy. Jim faced him, and listened to his running comments and sage remarks with his usual interest and amusement.

The Tanner having taught Tom Jim's composition about Vi, the quaint, old fellow sank back upon the cushions and unctuously repeated the words which we give in their original form:

For uv all the sweet gals what I ever seed,
This sweet Silvur Seele jist takes the lead,
I'd driv hur myself, dressed up like a dandy,
An' at every shop ud by hur sum candy;
Hur pokits with raisins an' dimons I'd fill,
An' never driv whar thar was eny ruff hill.

Vi blushed scarlet, for the Tanner had quoted the lines to her so often, she knew them by heart. While Jim laughed, he looked into her partly averted face with an admiration that had suffered nothing by the passage of time.

When they got back from their dashing ride, the lawyer was waiting to conduct the claimant and his witnesses to chambers for the completion of the formal processes which were to place him in full possession of his inheritance.

Then Mr. Williams drove Jim to his tenants for introduction, and to the bank officials, with whom he was to be brought in contact, and finally, to his large, five-storied dry goods establishment—one of the largest and most prosperous in the city—and formally presented him to the managers and employees, who were assembled on the lower floor for that purpose.

He bore the severe ordeal so well, the lawyer was pleased as well as surprised. He, however, forebore complimenting him, deeming it bad taste to do anything that would seem to savor of patronage. Whatever he did, he was governed by a similar delicacy and considerateness. In fact, the lawyer was strictly scrupulous, and held that a man of his profession is just as much called to his work as the minister to preach the gospel. "Every man," he was wont to say, "who pursues his calling in an honorable, upright way, is a minister to the needs of his fellow-being.

He had become much pleased with the straightforward and unaffected manners of his Nova Scotian acquaintances, and the next morning drove over with his own carriage and his youngest daughter, and invited Ruth, Vi and the

Squire to accompany him to Boston, where he nearly exhausted them with sight-seeing.

Jim and Tom were confined to the library most of the day, transacting important business.

It was arranged that Ruth and Malvina were to remain as permanent members of the new household.

At the suggestion of Ruth, Jim had also decided that all the timber lands he had inherited from the Tanner's estate should be deeded to Tom for the consideration of one dollar. Tom protested that he was already comfortably fixed, but Jim was inflexible. The tannery, together with the Tanner's cottage, were made over to the Squire, and the papers were turned over to Tom, with directions not to give them into the Squire's hands until his return home.

"It's all right for people to feel thankful, but it's decidedly embarrassing to have people deluge you with thanks when you know you are only getting rid of that which is of no particular use to you. Ruth gives the cottage, and I the tannery. What else could we do, when we know that the property can only be useful to those who live in the vicinity?"

Jim had already given directions to his lawyer to have the remains of his own father and mother disinterred from the separate burial grounds where they rested, and buried side by side in the Salem cemetery. It was the least he could do in memory of the parents he had never known. In the same lot was to be buried the remains of the woman who had watched over his mother's dying bed and taken care of him as best she could till the end came.

And now he settled the details with Tom for the removal of the Tanner's remains to the same place. "It will make mother feel more contented," he remarked, "and I shall be the better and stronger from knowing that his dust sleeps near. His power over me is so strong, to even this day, that I sometimes feel as if his great and noble spirit were keeping me in hail wherever I go."

"Stick to that text, my boy!" cried Tom, heartily, "and you will be as sound as a nut in all the rest of your theology."

"And now about those people whose names you gave," suddenly, said Jim.

"What people?" asked Tom in surprise.

"Those people on the road to Liverpool, who gave me food and drink when I was in such sore need. I have laid out three of the best silk patterns I could find in all my store; and I want you to deliver them to the addresses on them on your way back. Inside I have placed letters of acknowledgement and explanation."

"That is right, my boy!" exclaimed Tom, choking in his throat; "and I shall

do it with the greatest pleasure; all the greater, becaue I shall feel myself at liberty to tell them a bit of your history. It will become a tradition along the whole line, and will serve to make people think twice before they become unkind to the unfortunate."

"Now, there is another little matter I have to get rid of, while I am about it." and Jim opened the lid of his handsome desk and took out three small cases, adding: "There, old fellow, is a gold watch for yourself, and one for Peggy and one for Hannah, with chains to match."

"But God bless my soul, Jim! your extravagance will turn you inside out; and the sooner you belay this kind of business the better!"

"Oh, you are getting foolish in your old age! The watches go only where they belong, and are all three properly engraved, as you can see for yourself. If you feel uneasy on the score of extravagance I can set you wholly at your ease, for this is the end of it. What do you suppose I intend to do?"

"The Lord only knows what you will do next?"

"I am going into that store of mine to begin at the lowest counter, so that I can work my way up from counter to counter until I am competent to take the management of the business in my own hand. That is one lesson the Tanner was always teaching me. And, furthermore, I intend, God helping me, to put his honesty and straightforwardness into every thread and shred that comes into the store, and into every item of business transacted there."

"Here we are again!" exclaimed Tom, rising and extending his arms as if he would like to embrace the universe; "and, by Jove, sir, we are as straight as that first pine we chopped down in the woods of dear old Rossignol."

"And when I have completed my apprenticeship, and have grown ripe enough to marry, I shall return to Liverpool and bring Vi here for good."

"To be sure—to be sure! What else can we do? A nobler girl never wore shoe leather in this or any other country. If we were to think of doing otherwise the Tanner's bones would come tumbling about our ears like thunderbolts."

"I have adored Vi ever since the day of the huckleberry battle, when she faced Bill Bryden and threatened him with arrest; and all the more intensely, because she loved me when I had nothing behind me but the tan pile and the poor house, and nothing before me but a life of obscurity. Though I was never very loyal to Queen Victoria, I was always loyal to Queen Sylvia."

"God Save the Queen!" and Tom spoke in such a diplomatic, double-ended manner, and blinked and winked so mischievously, Jim laughed almost boisterously.

The Squire and Tom, and Vi remained in Salem five weeks, and Williams, the lawyer, advised his young client not to touch his business while they remained, saying he would find his hands full when once he began, and that he ought to make as much as possible of the old friends who had been so true to him.

On the way back, Tom, faithful to his charge, delivered the packages to the dwellers by the wayside, and almost exhausted the patience of the stage driver by the the time he took to tell the surprised recipients of the whys and wherefores of the gifts.

The old Squire was in due time placed in possession of the papers conveying to him the tannery and the tannery cottage, and a very nice thing he made out of them, too. The tannery was carried on at a good profit, and Peggysis was kept at work until he fell to pieces from sheer exhaustion. The cottage was given to his oldest daughter as a marriage present.

Poor Towzer, after Jim's departure, so missed his young master, it was all in vain that Hannah and Peggy tried to solace him by frequent visits. One morning he was found curled up under Jim's chamber window dead.

Hannah wore her watch with pride, and so did Peggy, her own, scrupulously imitating Hannah in the style of the wearing.

HERE MALVINA MEHITABLE M'KENZIE WAS FOUND EVERY SUNDAY.

The Tanner's remains were forwarded to Salem, as agreed upon, and upon the granite monument which marks the spot where they repose, are these words: "I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger and ye took me in. Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto Me."

Jim's plans concerning his business were carried out with a perseverance

which won the admiration of all, and as the lawyer had not been reticent about his antecedents, he became one of Salem's most popular and prosperous business men.

He put up a large and attractive building for Sabbath work among the poor and friendless, where, as superintendent, he gathered around him a band of faithful workers, who were in full sympathy with his spirit and aims. Here Malvina Mehitable McKenzie was to be found every Sunday, prim as ever, but ripe and

gentle as if she had caught an angel and tucked it away in the biggest corner of her heart.

At the end of three years Jim steamed into Liverpool in the handsome steam yacht Namaquit, all his own, and when Vi heard the gun which he fired to announce his arrival, she remembered the dream she had when the "Dove" returned from the gale. Her heart was all a flutter as she looked upon the handsome craft, decked from stem to stern with gay streamers.

The old cannon which welcomed the "Dove" back, opened its throat in

booming welcome; the bell on the old church rang loudly, and the hills echoed back the tidings: "He's come!"

The marriage took place on the awning-covered decks of the Namaquit, under a soft moon-lit June sky, Ruth sitting by as happy as if she had received a foretouch of the dawning glory of heaven, and Malvina at her side gently reflecting the radiance of her venerated and beloved mistress.

Tom declared to Peggy that if it were not for his Babylonian Gardens he would emigrate to the States for the sake of having his bones laid near the Tanner's.

Hannah and Peggy, and Tom were at the wharf to see the pair embark for their final departure.

"God bless you forever, my boy!" said Tom, quiveringly.

"Good-bye, Jim!" sobbed Hannah, who declared that she should call him Jim to the end of her days.

Peggy, who was almost overawed by this splendid young fellow, whom she persisted in calling Mr. Mulock, so far forgot herself as to repeat Hannah's parting word's, though not without great hesitation.

"Good-bye—Jim!"

THE END.