

next moment, when Ned, in playing, chanced to run into Charlie Lester, pushing him hard. Charlie was angry and glared at Ned.

"Beg pardon," said Ned; "I was real clumsy."

Charlie only grew redder and glared sharper.

"Lick him, Charlie!" said Tom. "He is a Sunday School boy. He can't fight, not if he wants to. Good boy!"

Emboldened by this, Charlie came nearer to Ned, and, thrusting an unwashed fist in his face, cried, "I dare you to strike me!"

"Coward added Tom, pointing at Ned.

Ned colored. He was a heavier, stronger boy than Charlie. He could easily have thrashed the boy that impudently defied him. Ned trembled in his indignation, but said, "I don't fight."

Here a shout went up from Tom and Charlie—a cry of derision.

"I knew he was a coward!" said Tom.

"No spunk!" declared Charlie.

"It's of no use waiting here for fun. I am going in bathing," said Tom. "I can swim."

"You swim?" asked Charlie. "When did you learn? I don't believe you can swim across this creek."

"I didn't say I could. That log and me, though, can go across."

He quickly undressed, and, wading into the creek, seized a log floating near the shore, and pushed off. Tom was a poor swimmer. He managed his craft, though, somehow, until he reached Deep Hole. Then his courage failed him. One of the boys whispered, "Mebbe he has a touch of the cramp."

The excitement was intense. At the mouth of the abyss, just above that awful hole, was a frightened boy whose strength was quickly leaving him. And how much longer will he cling to the log?

"Get a boat!" shrieked Charlie Lester.

Then he was pronounced by the group a "booby," for no boat was anywhere in the neighborhood.

They had all left Ned after the quarrel, and had hurried down to the water's edge to watch Tom. Now they stood helplessly staring at

him. Not one of their number could swim as far as Deep Hole. They were so absorbed in watching Tom that they did not notice Ned, until a noise of some one swiftly running made them all look to the right, and into the water Ned was springing, hatless, shoeless, stripped for the race with Death, and who would cross sooner, Ned or Death, to claim Tom as his?

Every other moment Ned was turning his eyes heavenward, and the cry of his soul was, "God help me! God help me!" He knew where Deep Hole was, and he had the old boy-idea about it and the old boy-fear. Now, though, it seemed as if the idea and the fear had passed from him, and he boldly swam toward the terrors supposed to fill Deep Hole.

"Hold on!" Don't you be afraid!"

"I am coming, Tom!" were some of the words of encouragement he launched like crafts of rescue upon the creek.

"Now, don't worry! I'll push you and the log, Tommie! Grip the log! There, there!"

Like an angel seemed Ned in the eyes of Tom. He obeyed his rescuer. He wisely gripped the log and not Ned, and somehow, out of the jaws of Death and back from Deep Hole, safe ashore, Ned took Tom. A great cheer arose from half a dozen small throats on the bank, "Hoo-ray! Hoo-ray!"

Ned and Tom went down the creek to shallow waters, and then they waded across to their mates. Tom was a small, black-eyed boy, with a long, peaked face and long, black hair, now falling close down over his small features.

"He looks a muskrat," whispered one of the boys to his neighbor.

"I hope he won't act like one toward Ned," was the reply.

No, anything but that was his course toward the boy that had saved him. He went to Sunday School with Ned the following Sunday.—*Watchman.*

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Be not overcome of evil.

But overcome evil with good.