

"No, it don't," said Frost, tasting the water. "It's fresh."

This lake was four or five miles wide. They could see mountains on the farther, or western, shore; and as they got off from the hither shore, they could plainly discern the lofty heights to eastward, through a pass which they had traversed the previous night.

They stood outward to the middle of the lake and bore southward, the wind being fair, that is, northerly. For an hour or two it was a pleasant voyage; they probably made ten or twelve miles. At this distance the lake had narrowed, and a mile or two ahead, seemed to contract to a narrow strait, between high, rocky shores, which in some places were sheer precipices.

"I don't like the looks of that water," said Clum; "it appears like a rocky river. The wind's too fresh to run in there."

They had passed several small islands, and coming too, in the lee of one of these, landed. From having been up all the previous night, they were considerably fatigued, despite their nap, and finally concluded to stop here for a part of the night. Rummy, however, was in favor of going on; at length he agreed to stop till the moon rose, which would not be far from midnight. They ate some cherries and a little more of their veal, then lay down for another nap, using the sail for a coverlet. They had seen neither canoes nor Indians about the lake thus far.

As soon as the moon looked up, Rummy waked the others; but Frost was very sick and in great pain.

"It's this raw meat," he complained.

"I don't believe that," Clum said.

"Then it must be the cherries," said Rummy. "Say, Pleem, did you swallow them cherry-stones?"

"Yes, I always do," replied Frost. "They say if you don't want cherries to hurt you, you must swallow the stones."

"Wal, I knew a boy up in Middlesex County that died of eatin' cherry-stones," said Rummy, "and I'll be bound that's what ails you. They killed Al Green, anyway; doctor said so,—said there was pizen in the stones, and it came out and killed him. He was awful sick three or four days."

Frost was doubled up in dreadful pain; he could not move, and they remained there all the rest of the night.

There was wind, quite fresh, in the morning, from the north-west. Rummy and Clum determined to go on, though Frost was no better. They were obliged to assist him upon the raft, and the wind was so stiff that they shipped a great heap of stones on the deck of their novel craft, to hold her steady. She bowled away as soon as the sail filled. They stood down towards the narrow strait, thinking to lower the sail and paddle into it,—if there proved to be a passage through.

Close under their lee were two or three more small islands. Rummy was holding the sheet and they were running past, when Clum exclaimed, "See the canoes!" and immediately they saw not only three canoes, but a camp of twelve or fifteen natives with a fire on shore. The Indians discovered the raft at the same moment, and evinced a hostile disposition by threatening shouts and gestures. Several ran to launch the canoes, but the catamaran, under full sail, left them in the distance.

ENTRAPPED.

"If we only had clear water, we could snap our thumbs at those fellows," said Rummy. But immediately they had to let fall the sail to clear large black rocks in the water, for they had run down to the entrance of the narrows. With the paddles they headed in and let the waves bear them forward, for there was quite a sea from the open lake to northward. Once fairly inside the strait, however, they had smooth water; for it was a singular channel, with crags fifty to a hundred feet high on both sides. It varied in width from a quarter of a mile down to no more than a hundred feet in some places; and this sort of passage continued for from three to four miles.

The Indians had pulled out from the island as if in pursuit; but they had seen nothing of them since entering the strait.

"I calculate they soon got tired of the chase," said Clum. But from this comfortable opinion they were speedily roused by a shower of stones thrown from the top of a crag, beneath which they were paddling. The stones fell all about the raft and on it. Frost, who lay well-nigh helpless, was hit very hard on his right leg and cried out dolefully.

Looking up, the boys saw a large party of natives, who had till this moment remained quiet in ambush. But now a tremendous outcry burst forth, and volley after volley of stones was hurled at the raft, which presented a fair target for all these athletic marksmen.

Dodging these rude missiles as best they could, the young sailors paddled out of reach as quickly as possible towards the opposite side of the channel. But as many as six of the Patagonians at once swam across, a little way in the rear, and came along on that side, as well. Fortunately, they had no weapons save stones; but these they threw with surprising force; pebbles as large as one's fist were launched out a hundred yards from the crags, and fell about the raft, like small cannon-shot.

After a time the Indians stopped throwing stones and ran on in advance of the raft. Rummy argued danger from this.

"They're running ahead to get to some narrer place," said he.

"They don't get me into any narrer place than this, if I can help it!" exclaimed Clum.

They now looked to Frost; he had raised himself up a little, and was nursing his leg. The pain of that and the excitement of the attack had checked his other ailment somewhat.

"Don't get into a tight place," he advised the other boys. "Keep back where it's wide. We can stay here on the raft as long as they can stand up there on the rocks."

"I don't know about that, Pleem," said Rummy.

They soon came to where they saw what the running ahead meant. There was a passage not a hundred feet wide, with almost perpendicular rocks, at least fifty feet high on both sides! They could see Indians, lurking in the ambush, on either hand.

"What a tunnel!" exclaimed Clum.

"They'll get us foul there," said Rummy.

"If we're fools enough to run into it," said Frost.

The raft drifted against one of the high rocks and halted there.

Clum had jumped upon the rock and climbed to the top of it.

"What do ye see, Clum," Frost cried.

"More'n forty Injins," said Clum. "There's nothin' we can do, Runc, except stay here," he continued, sliding down to the raft again. "Perhaps we might get ashore and hide in the woods, as Pleem says, at least when it comes night, if it's dark enough."

"They may attack us here," said Frost.

"Wal, then, we've got to fight," said Rummy.

"What with?" exclaimed Frost.

"There's the old gun-barrel, and there's all them stones we put on the raft."

"Yes, there's the stones!" cried Clum. "I'd like to see one of 'em try to swim out to this rock!"

Just then they saw two of the Patagonians running back past them along the top of the cliffs on the west side, going up towards the lake again.

"What s'pose they're after in such a hurry?" said Clum.

"After more Indians," said Frost.

"Maybe; but I guess they've got some trick planned," remarked Rummy.

"It's their canoes they've gone after!" exclaimed Clum. "And what'll we do here when they come down on us with a lot o' canoes?"

They began to grow more alarmed at this prospect.

"Wal, now we've got to fight for it anyway," said the stout-hearted Rummy, after a time. "An' we'd better be gittin' in trim, too."

Clum and he fell to work to pass the stones from the catamaran up to the top of the rock, which, at the highest place, was nine or ten feet out of the water.

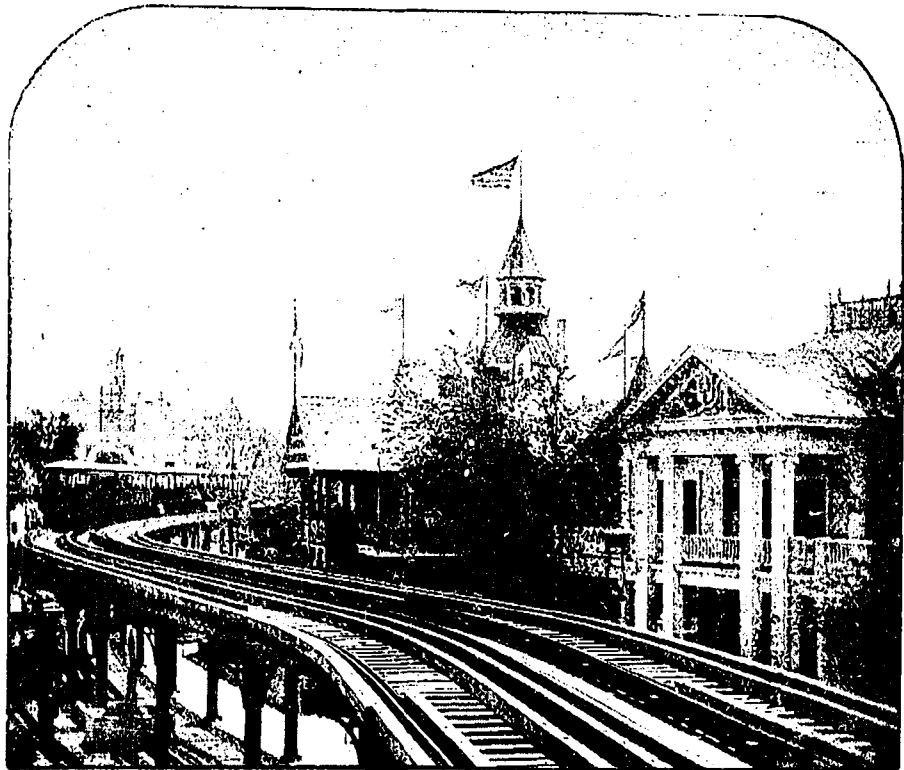
"We'll make an awful good mark for 'em all to throw at, up here on the top of these rocks!" Rummy exclaimed.

"What if we pass up some of that drift-stuff there and build a little 'callyboo' like, to get behind?" Clum said.

They not only got up the drift which was lying against the side of the reef, but towed down three or four stranded stumps from some rocks a little way above. This occupied but a few minutes, not more than a quarter of an hour, at most; and then they pulled the deck off the catamaran and hauled up the two logs, putting these on top of the other stuff.

"We can make quite a good fight from here, Rume!" exclaimed Clum, wiping the sweat off his forehead. "At any rate we can dodge down out of the reach of stones."

(To be continued.)



INTRAMURAL ELEVATED ELECTRIC RAILWAY--WORLD'S FAIR GROUNDS. SEE NEXT PAGE.