

FAMILY CIRCLE.

The Port of Pleasant Dreams.

I sailed in the good bark Fancy
Down the still, deep river of Sleep,
From the lands of bleak December
To a port that the sunbeams keep;
While the glad winds followed after,
And sang with a happy zest,
And I heard them croon o'er the infant moon
As it lay on the night's broad breast.

And the port of the good bark Fancy,
A port that the sunbeams keep,
Is called Pleasant Dreams; like an opal it gleams
O'er the strange, dark river of Sleep.
There, flushed with the wine of laughter,
The voyager sings queer songs,
And, borne in a car of the sunset,
Rides off with the elfin throngs
Up, up through the rose cloudland,
Where the round little mist-moon stay,
To the stars afloat in the cool, soft gloom
Of gardens far away.

There are none too poor for a voyage
To this port that is centuries old;
Where hunger e'er find a banquet,
And poverty revels in gold;
Where, robed in the garb of morning,
The earth in new beauty glows,
And the anulet of the summer
Is worn on the heart of the rose.

Off from the fields of sorrow,
To the brink of the river of Sleep,
Wan toilers come, and, restful,
They sail on its water deep;
Till, clear through the gates of Sundown
The past, like a beacon, beams,
And Love, sweet mariner, anchors
In the port of Pleasant Dreams.

THE STORY.

How Seth Caught the Salmon.

BY WILLIAM MURRAY GRAYDON.

Down on the lower Susquehanna lies the little village of Marsh Run. It consists of scarcely a score of houses, all told, and a diminutive railway station, where a few of the Northern Central accommodation trains stop daily. But to the enthusiastic anglers in the big city up the river, who occasionally drop business for a day at their favorite sport, Marsh Run is a name to conjure up sweet and pleasant memories. The waters in the vicinity abound with bass and salmon, and more fish are caught here during the season than at any other point for miles along the Susquehanna. If you go down there now and ask the landlord of the quaint old Inn where you can find a guide to the best fishing localities, he will promptly put you in charge of Seth Stevens, a tall, sun-bronzed lad of eighteen, with an honest and attractive face. Seth will take you to the spots where the gamey bass and salmon do mostly congregate, and if you give him a little encouragement to talk, when the boat is pulled under the shady side of an island at the noonday hour, for lunch, he will probably tell you, in a very modest way, the story that I am about to relate.

Until two years ago only one man in the village carried on the occupation of a guide to fishing parties. This was Jake Bambery, and he had a monopoly of his profession, as he doubtless regarded it. He was about thirty years of age, and was by no means prepossessing in appearance, but his knowledge of the river was perfect, and he had a confident manner that took well with fishermen. He charged a high rate for his services, and managed to subsist in this way all the year around, though the fishing season lasted from the first of June until about Thanksgiving Day, provided wintry weather did not set in before the latter date. There were others in the village who knew the river well, and might have earned a few welcome dollars had they been so bold as to tell the truth, they were afraid of Jake Bambery. He had a quick temper and a revengeful nature, and had often threatened to "fix" anyone who set up as a rival guide.

Meanwhile, during the half dozen years that Jake was sole administrator to the wants of fishing parties, Seth Stevens, then a mere lad, was learning every rock and chafin of the river, and every hole where the biggest fish could be found. Seth was the oldest of three children. His father was foreman of a big planing-mill two miles up the river, and made fair wages. Seth went regularly to school, but during vacation time he was allowed to indulge to the full his bent for fishing and boating. Young as he was, he became a skilled adept with the rod, and frequently brought home big strings of fluky beauties. At the age of sixteen his knowledge of the river and of the fishing-grounds was fully equal to that of Jake Bambery. If not superior, indeed, as some professed to think. Just at this time, strangely enough, two events happened which dealt in a rather peculiar way with Seth's destiny. In the first place the city fishermen began to complain, quite openly, that Jake Bambery's rates were extortionate, and what was still more serious—that he was not so successful as heretofore in finding the best fishing-grounds. Then, while the villagers were commenting on this piece of news, tidings came of a different sort. Mr. Stevens was brought home from the planing-mill, crushed and aimed and of a heavy log. His injuries were not of a necessarily fatal nature, but the doctor declared that he would be confined to bed for several months, and that he would require nourishing food and careful nursing. The poor wife was in despair. Three growing children had to be clothed and fed, and what little money was in the house would soon be gone. She could earn none herself, for her sick husband would require all her care and attention. And how could she procure him the food and dainties which the doctor had prescribed?

In this time of trial and trouble it was Seth who came to the rescue. "Don't be worried, mother," he said sturdily. "I have a way to earn money. I will take fishing parties out on the river. I know as many places as Jake Bambery, and I won't charge more than half as much. This is only the end of June, and the fishing will last away into November."

Seth's parents did not quite approve of this determination; they were afraid of incurring Jake Bambery's enmity. But the lad had a staunch friend in Abram Lock, the innkeeper.

"I'll stand by you," he said, "and if Jake Bambery attempts to do you an injury he'll get more than he can attend to. I'll take the bread out of his mouth, either, for there are more parties wanting to come down here than he can attend to. He often writes and tells them to wait a day or two until he can go with them. You're sure of having plenty to do, lad. Don't worry about that, and for knowing where to find the fish, I'll back you against Bambery anytime."

This encouraged, and with the added approval of his parents, whom Abram Lock easily talked over, Seth lost no time in carrying out his plan. He was long and broad, with plenty of sitting room. He knew where to get all sorts of bait—crabs, helgamites, stone-catfish, lampreys, eels, and worms. By the innkeeper's advice he concluded to ask two dollars and a half per day for his services, whether the party included one or three. Jake Bambery's charges were just double that.

An advertisement in two of the city papers brought a ready response, and Seth found himself launched on his new career. In the first week he spent three days on the river, and earned seven dollars and a half. The weather was fine, and Abram Lock had predicted, both guides had plenty to do. Seth took his patrons to different parts of the river and thus avoided any unpleasantness that might have resulted.

At first Jake Bambery seemed stunned by this unexpected blow at his monopoly, and contented himself with scowling at Seth whenever they met. Then he began to threaten and bluster, but Seth wisely refused to enter into any discussion. Abram Lock kept his eyes and ears open, and getting wind of the situation that individual down a peg or two from his warlike attitude. The innkeeper was the only man in the village whom Bambery thoroughly feared and respected; and Seth being a protégé of still looked unutterable malice at his rival, and made sneering and disparaging remarks about him, but from open hostilities the contest narrowed down to one of skill and supremacy in locating the best fishing-grounds; and here Seth was on an equal footing with his enemy.

For a month all went well. The water remained in good condition, and parties of fishermen came almost daily to Marsh Run. Seth found himself earning an average of ten dollars a week, and the money brought comfort and happiness to his home. Bambery made even more, for he stuck doggedly to his high prices and received what he demanded from many of his old patrons. He was still regarded by some as the better guide of the two, more from his age and experience than from any personal demonstration of the fact.

But by and by when the hot, sultry days of August came, and the river sank lower in its stony bed, the fishing grew very poor indeed, and the skill of both guides was thoroughly taxed to provide their patrons with even mediocre sport. The bass and salmon seemed to have a surfeit of all kinds of bait, and nothing new would tempt them.

One morning at early dawn Seth pulled a mile down the river to a grass-bar where crabs could be taken with a scoop-net. He had an idea that these would prove the most likely bait, and he wanted some particularly, since his best patron, a banker named Jenkins, was coming down from the city in the five o'clock train.

But crabs seemed scarce on this occasion, and not meeting with his usual success, Seth jumped into the boat and pulled toward an island that lay parallel with the grass-bar at a distance of several hundred yards. In the centre of this channel was a very deep hole known as the "Blue Pool," from the peculiar tint which the rocks at the bottom gave the water. This pool was two or three hundred feet square, and even at the present low stage of the river its depth was ten or twelve feet.

While pulling across the surface, Seth happened to look over the side of the boat, and his heart thrilled with excitement when he saw a monstrous fish lying on the bottom. He could not believe his own eyes at first. He checked the boat, and looked again. Yes, the fish was a reality. It was a great salmon, the largest he had ever seen. It was lying motionless, with its nose up stream, and seemed to be fully three feet long. Seth contemplated the monster for a little while, and then he pulled swiftly up the river. He had changed his plans entirely, and no longer wanted the crabs.

"I have just enough time to dig a few lampreys-eels," he reflected. "Mr. Jenkins must have that salmon, and won't he be happy if he gets it? It's the biggest fish that was ever seen in this river. My cracky! wouldn't he make a rod bend?"

While thus absorbed in thought, Seth pulled hard at the oars, and was soon at his destination, the mouth of a small run that emptied into the river a quarter of a mile below the village. He pushed up a few yards, and taking an old spade from the hollow log in which he usually kept it, he began to dig on a patch of clay and sand. Suddenly he discovered that someone else was digging close by. He parted the bushes and met the scowling, inquisitive gaze of Jake Bambery.

"Hello! diggin' lampreys?" asked the latter, surlily.

"Yes," replied Seth, turning back to his work.

"Goin' to catch salmon?"

"Goin' to try," said Seth, briefly. An alarming idea had suddenly struck him.

"Say, have you been down about the Blue Pool this mornin'?" pursued Jake.

"Yes, I pulled across it," replied Seth, and as he resumed digging he heard Bambery gather up his spade and pail and depart.

Seth worked hard, and dug a dozen lampreys in ten minutes. "I see through it!" he muttered. "Jake Bambery knows that salmon is there, and he suspects I know it too. Well, we'll see which of us gets the fish. I don't hope he won't get down ahead of me. His boat is up at the village, anyhow."

What his rival intended to do, Seth never understood when the early train arrived. A big, fat man stepped off the car, burdened with rods and bait kettles, and was hustled off to the river by Bambery, who had been waiting for him. Mr. Jenkins was on hand, too, and Seth hurriedly and eagerly related his momentous discovery.

"Ah, that is truly a great piece of news," exclaimed the angler. "I must have that fish, my lad. Did you see the fellow whom Bambery took in tow? That was Doctor Hockman, one of the most noted fishermen in the city. I must beat him at all hazards."

"We must hurry, then!" replied Seth. "For I am sure Bambery knows the salmon is there."

They lost no time in getting to the shore, and while Mr. Jenkins prepared his tackle, Seth pulled lustily down stream. Bambery and his companion were some yards ahead, and as their boat was lighter, and Bambery was a muscular rover, they gained steadily. It was evident from the start that their destination was the Blue Pool, and so it proved. The doctor had his line already trolled twice across the hole when the other party arrived. Bambery shot a furious look at Seth, but the doctor accepted the situation more gracefully.

"So you're after that salmon too, Jenkins?" he exclaimed.

"Well, the better man of us will likely get it."

"Exactly," assented Jenkins; "we'll fight our battle peacefully."

Well, the record of that day can be briefly told. Seth and Bambery pulled their respective boats backward and forward, while the two patient anglers trailed the bottom with brightly-colored spoons, from which dangled the seductive lampreys. The water had become a little clouded, and the great fish could not be seen. About ten o'clock Jenkins had a strike, and for a moment the line was tight and the reel sung merrily. Then the triple hook flew back—empty.

Bambery smiled maliciously, and Doctor Hockman, it must be confessed, looked relieved.

Half an hour later the other side had their inning. The doctor actually hooked the fish, and struggled with it for five minutes, until his reel was nearly empty. Then the monster leaped clear out of water, twenty yards below, and wrenched itself free.

There was little chance of doing anything more that day, but both men fished patiently until sunset. They caught some smaller fish, but did not get another strike from the big fellow. By mutual consent they returned to Marsh Run, and went home on the evening train.

"I'll be back to-morrow, and the next day, and the next, until I get that fish," whispered Mr. Jenkins to Seth as he boarded the train.

Doctor Hockman must have made a somewhat similar communication to Bambery, for on the following morning the morning train, and went down to the pool with their guides. This was Tuesday, and all day they trolled backward and forward without getting a strike.

On Wednesday precisely the same programme was carried out and with no better success. The fish was still in the pool, for the anglers had a glimpse of it occasionally. All the village was excited over the matter now, and on Thursday quite a group of anglers came down from the city, where the fame of the monster salmon had spread. They were warned off the pool, however, by Jenkins and the doctor; the spot was really too small for more than two boats.

Two important issues were at stake. In the first place it was a question of supremacy between Jenkins and Dr. Hockman as to which was the most skillful angler; each claimed the title, and was justly proud of his record. On the other hand Seth and Bambery perfectly understood that whichever of them assisted in the capture of the fish would be the most patronized

and popular guide hereafter; the village shared this understanding and discussed the matter freely.

The chances of catching the fish were supposed to depend on the kind of bait used. Salmon are very capricious, and must be pampered in their tastes like children. Seth exhausted all the natural species of bait with which he was acquainted, and Bambery did likewise. Then Jenkins and the doctor tried artificial lures, but with no better success. When the sun went down on Friday evening the big fish had successfully withstood every temptation. The indications were that he would continue firm.

With indomitable courage the angler resolved to make another attempt on Saturday. But before the morning train arrived Abram Lock sent for Seth and had a brief interview with him, as a result of which the lad greeted Mr. Jenkins with unusual vivacity.

"I have a new bait for you," he said. "I won't tell you what it is now. It has often succeeded where everything else has failed, though."

Mr. Jenkins was inclined to be sceptical, but Seth's enthusiasm was contagious, and he began to feel actually hopeful as the boat brought them nearer and nearer to the pool.

Bambery and the doctor were ahead, as usual, but both men began to fish at the same time. Seth pulled to and fro across the centre of the pool, where the water was deepest. Bambery followed pretty much the same course, and more than once there was danger of entangling the lines. The two rowers exchanged black looks, but the anglers kept in good temper.

It was a hot, sultry morning, and for fully two hours the trolling was patiently kept up.

"Hello, how about that bait?" suddenly exclaimed Jenkins. "I'm about time to try it. This artificial thing I have on the hook is of no more account than the others."

Seth uttered a surprised exclamation. "I forgot all about it. Here, toss me your hook."

Mr. Jenkins partially reeled up his line, and dropped the glittering spoon on Seth's knee. He looked on curiously as the lad swiftly drew a green object from his pocket and impaled it on the triple hook.

"There you are," exclaimed Seth, tossing the spoon into the water. Then he took the oars again, while Mr. Jenkins quickly ran out his line.

Straight for the centre of the pool Seth now pulled and just then Bambery happened to head in the same direction. Naturally the boats crossed, and as the lines were performing the same operation, Jenkins' rod was almost jerked from his hand, and his reel began to whirl merrily.

"Hurrah, I've got him," he cried, springing to his feet.

"You mean I've got him," shouted Doctor Hockman from the other boat, as he tugged excitedly at his reel; his rod was curved like a willow switch.

"Your line has become tangled with mine," exclaimed Jenkins; "the fish is on my hook."

"I tell you it's on mine," persisted the doctor angrily. "If you make me lose that fish you'll repent it."

Here the war of words ceased, for the big salmon was running away with the contents of both reels at terrific speed. The rods were bending as though they would break. Seth and Bambery expressed their partisanship by scowling at one another. Involuntarily they pulled the boats closer together.

"Ah, what a monster," cried Jenkins. "My reel will soon be empty. It is impossible to check him."

Just then the strain slackened, and he thought he had lost the fish. But something quite different was the cause. The doctor's line had snapped near the tip of the rod.

"You villain, you will pay for this," he cried, shaking his fist excitedly at Jenkins. "You have stolen line, hook, and fish."

Bambery shared his patron's anger, and fiercely tugged at the oars. The result was that the two boats collided forcibly. Jenkins and Seth were thrown to one side, and before they could prevent it their craft tipped clear over. Jenkins lost his rod in the plunge, and when he came to the surface he struggled for the upturned boat and pulled himself out on the bottom.

When Seth bobbed above water his first thought was the rod, and seeing it gliding swiftly down stream he swam after it with muscular strokes. He was lightly clad, and was perfectly at home in the water.

At the lower extremity of the pool was shallow water, and a bar of ripples. Here the salmon turned and headed for deep water again. This operation took some little time, and Seth managed to get the rod at the head of the ripples. Facing up stream, and bracing himself in water waist deep, he began to draw the monster in. It was a hard task, but the line coiled around the reel, inch by inch. Jenkins, drifting slowly along on the upturned boat, cheered the lad from time to time. Bambery and the doctor held aloof, offering neither aid nor hindrance.

Breaking the surface of the water, twice it ran far out with the line, but Seth skillfully brought it back, and at last he had the exquisite pleasure of seeing the great fish roll wearily to ward his feet. No landing net was available, and when the monster was fairly within reach he made a grab for it, and lifting it out of water hugged it to his breast with both arms.

Jenkins was near the spot now, and it was the work of a moment for him to plunge into the shallow water and turn the boat right side up. As both climbed in, holding the salmon between them, Bambery and the doctor rowed alongside.

"Those hook was the fish on it," asked the latter.

"Mine," replied Jenkins. "Look, your line was caught on my spoon."

The doctor was too greatly disappointed to accept his defeat gracefully. He muttered a few inaudible words, and then made a sign to Bambery who immediately pulled the boat up stream.

"Seth, what bait was that you put on my hook?" asked Jenkins a little later, when they were rowing for shore.

Seth laughed. "It was a head of green oats," he replied.

Abram Lock told me to try it. An old fisherman once told him it was good for salmon when everything else failed."

"Well, that old fisherman was right," exclaimed Jenkins, fervently.

Of course the villagers were greatly excited over the capture of the salmon. It was indeed a monster, weighing very nearly eleven pounds. Seth was justly given much of the credit, and as a result he had more business than he could attend during the rest of the season. His father recovered and went back to work in the fall, while Seth attended school during that winter.

The following spring Jake Bambery moved to a town thirty miles down the river, and Seth had the guide business all to himself. He often spends a day or two on the water with his old friend, Jenkins, but they have never taken another eleven-pound salmon from the Blue Pool. *The Cottage Hearth.*

THE SENSIBLE COURSE.

Teacher What is the meaning of one-twenty-fifth?

Little Boy I I don't remember.

Teacher If you had twenty-five children visiting you, and only one apple for them, what would you do?

Little Boy I'd wait till they went, an' then eat it myself.

Several years ago, a London Hebrew, Abraham Solomon, painted a stirring picture, "Waiting for the Verdict," which was exhibited at the Royal Academy. The artist, not being a Royal Academician, entitled to annex R. A. to his name, had his painting "skied." All the pictures contributed by that august fraternity were, as usual, hung on the line. Thomas Landseer was in ecstasies as he beheld the thrilling scene depicted on the canvas, and exclaimed: "There is Solomon in all his glory, but not R. A. I'd like one of these!"