

"Hallo!" cried the captain from the top of the bank, "what have you got there?"

"The sea-serpent, I guess," said Ike, as the captain came down to where he stood.

"Rayther guest not; that ain't no sea-serpent; for, let me tell you, if it was one, he'd be outside of you in about two shakes of a sheep's tail."

"Well, what is it?"

"'Tis a curious critter, that's plain enough. —Now walk out here, old chap, and let us see what you look like."

As he spoke, the captain was feeling around with his boat-hook, where he supposed the creature's mouth was; and as he found it he said, "Now bend on, boys, and we'll soon see what he is."

They took hold with him; and, giving a pull, they drew out the ugliest looking monster that they or anybody else had ever seen. It was an immense fish, at least five feet long, formed something like a sculpin, its body looking rough like the bark of a tree. Its mouth was large enough to take in the head of a boy, and its eyes looked terrible out of the water.

"That's a monkfish," said Captain Bob: "seen lots of 'em down to Chaleur, but never saw one round here afore."

The fish jumped and struggled, but at last yielded to its fate; and when it was dead Captain Bob and the boys hauled it up into the field near the old cellar. The captain, having performed his duty as a man and a mariner, went home, leaving to the boys the disposal of their prize.

"Now what's to be done with it?" said Si.

"Let's throw it among the frogs," suggested Joe.

"No; I'll tell you what," said Ike: "we'll make an exhibition of it."

"Agreed," cried the others.

The boys took four stakes from a neighbouring fence, and drove them into the ground in a quadrangular form, about the fish; and then Ike went home to procure something to make a tent of. He rummaged high and low, throwing out an old patch-work quilt, a bed-sack, and a tablecloth which had out-served its usefulness.

"What possesses you now?" cried Mrs. Partington, amazed at his conduct: "what are you doing?"

"Going to make a tent," replied Ike.

"For what purpose?"

"'Tain't a porpoise: 'tis a monkey-fish, so Captain Bob says."

"Why, what do you mean by that, Isaac?"

"We've caught a big fish, and are going to exhibit him."

"Where?"

"Out there where the boys are."

The old dame, without her bonnet, went out to see the big fish; and Ike followed, bearing the materials for the tent, which he promised Mrs. Partington he would be very careful of, and said he would give her a season ticket to the show for the use of them. The quilt, the bed-sack, and the tablecloth answered the purpose capitally, forming a serviceable tent large enough, stretched about the poles, to completely hide the fish; and then, getting the cover of Mrs. Partington's shawl box, they painted a sign, with wheel grease, which read,—

### "BIG SEA MONSTER."

EXHIBISHUN.

BOYS 1 CENT. GROAN FOLKS 3 CENTS."

"There," said Ike, "that'll bring 'em." "Barnum couldn't ha' done no better," said Captain Bob, as he inspected the work; "and let me tell you that he never had a curiouseer thing than that, only 'tisn't so big as some of 'em I've seen."

"Do they grow very big?" asked Ike.

"Bless you! yes; so big 'twould take more than ten yoke of oxen to get one up here. It isn't a very handsome beast, but it has a better look when it smiles."

The exhibition was held during off-school hours, in the mornings and afternoons; and the pennies came in pretty freely. The editor of "The Squash" came, and wrote an article about the wonder, which attracted much attention. After a few days, however, people began to be attracted away from it as far as they could get; and the exhibition closed with more than two dollars in the treasury to be divided,—Ike taking an extra share for supplying the tent and sign,—which, the boys thought, was a good deal better than "hooking" old iron to sell for the appropriate celebration of the "Glorious Fourth." They gave the fish to Captain Bob to bury at the roots of his grapevine, to improve, as he said, the "flavour" of his grapes.

"Will that reprove the taste?" asked Mrs. Partington.

"Certainly, ma'am," replied Captain Bob. "That vine, out there now, was once a Concord. I planted three dead cats at the root of it, and, if you will believe me, it is now a Cat-awba."

"A singular thing, sir; but, in profligating flowers, can their fragrance be infected by such means?"

"I dare say; for I emptied my shaving-cup several times out at the window on a