

shady roadside maple. Reube leaned against the fence, and took off his round straw hat.

"Now, Reube," said Will, "it's your turn. I've talked myself dry, and gabbled right along like the 'crick' at low water. Your letters, you old oyster, have told me mighty little. What have you been up to all winter?"

"Building my shad boat," answered Reube.

"Mother told me something about it. It's great, old man!" said Will. "But you don't mean to say you built her all yourself."

"Well, pretty near," replied his friend. "Old Chris Boltenhouse helped me with the frame, and set me right whenever I got in a muddle. It was hard work, but I tell you, Will, it was so interesting I could hardly take time to eat. I've thought of nothing else for months, except when I was worrying over mother's eyes, and now—"

"I heard about your mother's trouble