

"No good now, for sure," said Joe, letting his oars trail, and producing a cigar, which he inspected with luxurious deliberation and as leisurely replaced.

"Joe's a tease, all right," said Sam feelingly, having stirred up a spinal segment at sight of the cigar. "All the girls says Joe's a tease."

"Yaas," said Joe cheerfully, as he resumed the oars. "Dere was wan gurl over on Red 'Orse las' wick I don' tease also."

"That so?" inquired Sam, with apparent interest.

"Non, sirree! I pass by on all de lak dis summer, an' see some fine gurl, me! But ba gosh! dis gurl on Red 'Orse was de bes' lookin' gurl——"

"Present comp'ny always *accepted*, Joe," said Sam correctively.

"For sure! She was de bes' lookin' gurl haxceptin' Miss Green——"

"O, never mind *me*!" interjected Miss Green pettishly, with a toss of the polychromatic hat, her mind under it being with another sex.

"Hall right. She was de bes' lookin' gurl I ever see, for sure!"

"Different style of beauty from Miss Green, maybe," suggested the diplomat in the stern.

"Yaas. She's like Miss Green, too, you know. Same kin' of 'air, wit' a leetl' rouge——"

"I don't rouge, Joe Plante!"

"For sure, Miss Green. I mean dere was some rouge—dat's red, you know—on 'er 'air."

"And my hair isn't red, either!" retorted the Bellamy Belle, with a shake of it.

"Non, for sure your 'air it is not red, Miss Green. But dis gurl on Red 'Orse 'er 'air was red, you know, lak de red on de sun, some tam. Hall de boys in de bunch on Red 'Orse say it was ver' fine 'air. De new purser 'e was not dere las' wick, you know," added Joe, in artless and heartless parenthesis, but with a hard wink at Sam. "An' 'er face was ver' 'an'some also. 'Er heye was bleu, bleu lak de sky, an' 'er cheek was all pink an' w'ite——"

Miss Green interposed a scornful little laugh that had little mirth in it. "Pink cheeks are lovely—when they're natural, Joe," she said.

"For sure," said the unperturbed Joe. "An' dis gurl 'er cheek was au naturel also. An' 'er mout' was red—au naturel. An' 'er teet' was w'ite—au naturel. Yaas, she was de mo' 'an'some gurl, presen' comp'ny haxcept, I never seen. A peach, for sure! An' *flirt*! She's flirt wit' hev'ry tall, dark, good-lookin' man on de bunch! But per'aps she's don' flirt wit' de new purser yesterday. Me, I don' know, for sure. I 'ear one of de boys say 'er man come to Red 'Orse like she was haxceptin',

den she won' flirt no more. But I don' know, for sure."

"She's a *leetle* too much of a 'peach' f'r me, I guess," remarked Sam.

"Yaas, per'aps she's not flirt wit' you, Sam," said the philosopher at the oars. "But you go hover to Red 'Orse an' see 'er all black an' bleu——"

"Guess she deserved it!" interjected Miss Green.

"Who hit her, Joe?" said Sam.

"Black an' bleu stripe," said Joe, grinning.

"Stripe *what*?" snapped Sam.

"Bathin' suit!" gurgled Joe. "Stripe, an' black stocking, an' ver' 'an'some, for sure!" and he bestowed an amiable and copious smile, but full of reminiscence and subtly invidious comparison, upon Sam's slender extremities, quite irritating to that gentleman's sensibility.

"I did hear there was one of them kind of pink and whitey city peaches stoppin' over to the Roman House," he said. "An' that Dood Potts was rushin'——" Mr Hugg, with an apologetic glance at the severely silent Miss Ivy Green, covered his break with a little cough. "The best kind of peaches," he hastened to add, as he readjusted his spine, "grows in the country, along the lake, in *my* opinion."

Their voices waxed faint to my willing but insufficient ear, as they drew near to Blood Rock; and as I rose to turn back and report progress to Jimmy, his whistle gave out a shrill and startling note.

It was our danger signal, the Morse 'D'!

CHAPTER XI.

Up Frazer's Creek.

"What is it?" I gasped, as I arrived on the jump. "What's the danger this time? What's up?"

Jimmy grinned like a large-size sausage split in the pan. "You're easy!" he managed to articulate, as he swallowed mirth and mastication at a gulp. "I thought that 'D' would fetch you. The *danger* was that you wouldn't get any Dinner if you didn't hurry up. But the danger's past, and it's your own fault if there isn't anything left."

He had been able to get only half a dozen eggs, he said, and of course having a preference for eggs when he could pick 'em up in the country strictly fresh-laid, he had naturally got away with them. There was nothing but the label to tell what had been in the canned chicken tin, and as there was a picture of a dressed fowl on the label I wondered why he hadn't eaten that and papered his interior, since he had so well furnished it. In embryo and adolescence the Great Canadian Hen had met a common fate. The coffee, too, was done, so it looked to me at first glance that it was up to me to dine with His Grace Duke