

either if I can't win and wear them as a prize fairly earned."

"The boys could not but agree to that and away they all went with Jack to have his name formally entered as a competitor in the 'boys race' at the big meeting the following Saturday."

"You may be sure there were exciting times that week as Jack's chances were again and again discussed by knots of his chums after school was out, and wasn't there a delegation of them on the grounds to back him up and cheer him, winning or losing, as only boys can cheer!"

"The boys scarcely noticed the more important events, where their elders were striving their best to win the shining cups and medals that all the city had seen exhibited in the silversmith's window for a week past, and although big Bill Malsburg had just beaten the Indian champion from Caughnawaga in the mile race (that was before the days of our present fine *amateur* distinctions) they had eyes for nothing but the 'boys race' and Jack *their* champion.

"'Here they come!' was gleefully shouted as fifteen, twenty, *twenty-five!* of them straggled out from the dressing-room and huddled around the starting point before the judges, some of whom appeared bored and others amused and interested in watching the eager looks of the motley crew at the scratch.

"Even these veterans could not fail to be interested as their eyes fell upon the chunky lad, nearly head and shoulders below any of the others; from his little moccasins, up his stockings, blanket knickerbockers, close fitting jersey and on to the tassel dangling at the end of his little *tuque*, he was a *snow-shoer*, if a small one, and not a man among them but wished that the little snow-shoes showing signs of wear might be replaced by the beautiful new pair one of them held in his hand."

"'Likely lad!' they remarked to one another, 'hope he may win, but not much show among all those big fellows'."

"At last the word '*go!*' was given, and they were off like a flock of partridges with a whirr and a rush, Jack about the middle of the bunch. About half of them stumbled or were tripped in the first scramble for the 'lead'; two or three pairs of shoes were broken, and of those left on their legs a good many were practically out of it in the first twenty yards."

"The race was one 'lap,' or a quarter of a mile, and Jack had resolved on a bold

dash for the lead and a determination to keep it if he burst in the attempt. He speedily elbowed himself to the front of the straggling file of puffing boys,—the leading files viewing this as merely the rash folly of a 'green' one who did not know any better, and chuckling to themselves as they think how they will, when he has run himself out, easily catch up and pass him on the final spurt."

"'They don't know our Jack,' grinned the delighted boys at the side of the track as they saw him increase his lead on the back-stretch and gamely swing round the last corner, well ahead; heard the clatter of his shoes and watched the tassel of his *tuque* dancing up the home-stretch far in advance of his deluded rivals, vainly struggling to recover the distance they had so confidently allowed him to gain."

And didn't they yell:

"'Bully for you, Jack!'

"'Go it, old man!'

"'Ten yards more and you have it!'

"The grand-stand caught the excitement of the boys and cheered the plucky little runner. The staid judges, even, clapped and smiled their approval, and when Jack plumped, dead-winded, all in a heap in the snow, over the finish, *a good five yards a winner*, didn't the distinguished and solemn referee himself pick him up and carry him off the track into the dressing-room, followed by the dancing mob of boys, shouting their mad delight at the success of their hero; and didn't the roof ring when the coveted snow-shoes were handed to Jack by the President of the club, and wasn't he a proud boy when the President patted him on the head and told him he had 'never seen a pluckier race,' and predicted for him a bright future on the snow-shoe track, and hoped he might have the pleasure of presenting him with many a cup and medal in years to come?"

Here the narrator paused,—like Jack at the finish,—short of breath, whereupon the audience on the hearth-rug again exchanged winks and nudges and pointed to the cups and medals on the mantel, till Rob put in, slyly:

"Uncle Jack! you say '*they*' not *we*; weren't you there with the boys?"

"Oh! yes, I was there," said their uncle, quietly.

"Oh! yes," chimed in Harold, "you were there, and you 'got there' often afterwards. Oh! we know you, Uncle Jack, you're '*there*' every time. Weren't you '*there*' when you went to the front with your regiment of those same 'boys'?"