

awaited the coming tide. She was a sixteen sail, to lower the bridge before they saw her tall

approached, bidding Bill good-bye, drifting down the river, and so they were not to be seen. There was a small hole in the side of the boat, and a shelf each put to it, one or two stretched themselves out behind.

The messenger, who was in the movement of the boat, and of viewing the magazine on one side, if he had a fish, the men opened a and produced a as no other bait, and put on the gentleman threw on which being the bottom, the Then the fisher mance of pulling ping the sinker a and, and poising it night not escape at please a lazy ad of fishing—of ing; and, when all day through kind to "taper like an old Nim-

in a whisper, as the water.

"guess," replied if asleep.

"a bite."

After waiting a minute Ike said, "Say, Sim, s'pose we give him some bites?"

"How?" asked Sim.

"I'll show you."

Suiting the action to the word, Ike reached out of the little window, took hold of the line, and gave it a gentle twitch. Up went the line, hand over hand, very rapidly, and they heard a voice say, "Twas a splendid bite."

"Bite him again, Ike, as soon as he gets his line down," said Sim, laughing at the fun of the thing.

"I'll give him a bigger one next time," said Ike.

Down went the line; and it was pulled up and down nervously for a minute, when, reaching out again, Ike gave it a smarter jerk. Again it was pulled in swiftly; and the boys were convulsed with laughter, but kept as still as they could, so that they might not be heard.

"Didn't catch him that time," said Ike.

"I never had a more positive bite," they heard the fisher say. "It must have been a tautog; they always seem to shut their jaw right down on the bait."

The skipper did not think it could be a tautog, because none had ever been caught in the river; but it might be some heavy cod which had come into the river to feed on the muscles at the old bridge farther up.

Down went the line again, and it was drawn up and down as before; but the boys waited fully five minutes before they touched it.

"Now, Ike, give him a halibut-bite," said Sim.

This time Ike gave him a more determined pull, with the same result; when, thinking they had carried the joke far enough, they crept out on deck, where they found the fisherman in a state of great excitement, trying again for a bite, and disappointed that he could not get another one, declaring that he never had finer bites in his life. The boys chuckled to themselves, but said nothing.

The old gentleman at last discontinued trying, but left his line hanging over the stern. A breeze sprang up, the tide increased, and the packet moved swiftly, the line stretching far behind.

"Sim," said Ike, in a low tone, "go down and get that old umbrella-frame we saw there."

Sim crept down, and soon returned with an umbrella, whereof little was left beside the sticks; to which, the line having been drawn in, Ike attached the hook near the ferule, that the frame might not spread, and then threw it overboard. Having done this, the boys walked

away very unconcernedly to another part of the vessel.

The line ran out to its utmost length; and then a great commotion appeared in the water, as the umbrella was dashed from side to side and over and over as if by some large fish that was struggling to free itself. No real fish could have been more active; and one of the men, glancing towards it, cried,—

"What's on the line?"

The cry immediately attracted the attention of the old gentleman, who rushed aft, and insisted on his right to pull in the fish, as he had been so tantalized by the bites. The polite waterman gave way; and, seizing the line, the gentleman began to pull it in. The excitement in the water increased with the effort he made. It was undoubtedly a bluefish, he said, because he had caught hundreds of them in Buzzard's Bay, and knew one by the pull. The line slipped from his hands, the resistance was so great; and he eagerly began to pull in again. All on board were now watching the line.

"I guess it is a whale," said Ike.

"Or a shark," said Sim.

The skipper said nothing, but he looked funny round the corners of his mouth as he glanced sideways at the boys.

Never was there greater trouble in catching a fish; even Commodore Huntress, and his halibut hooked by the rail, were beaten by this that flashed and floundered out there in the water. The sunlight was in the eyes of those looking on, so that it was no wonder they could not make out what it was. The old gentleman had nearly got it in, and giving a last effort he drew the sea monster over the stern. Surprise and anger filled the ancient fisherman as he threw down the line, and walked away, laying all the blame to the one who first gave the alarm.

Somewhat or other it leaked out before they reached Rivertown, that the boys did it, as well as what sort of fish it was that gave the bites; and, though the old gent felt vexed with them at first, he afterwards confessed to the skipper that they were "lively boys." And when he found out that one of them was Ike Partington, he asked him for his autograph!

Ike was warmly welcomed home by Mrs. Partington, who looked him over to see if he had come back whole, and then began a catalogue of questions as to what he had seen, how he had behaved, and how they had treated him.

"I hope you were a good boy," she said.

Ike assured her that his conduct had been