

look sharp; you had better do your washing and shaving after your mile run, and then you will be comfortable for breakfast. A jump in the river will do for the present."

Being in for it, I thought I would go through with it, and yielded myself up like a lamb. We found our six fellow-victims gathered at the Angler's Joy, and I rejoiced to see that they one and all looked surly: they were good-tempered fellows, as your brawny, strong-armed men for the most part providentially are; but to be torn out of bed in the middle of the night, and told to jump into a river, is trying to the most amiable disposition.

That somewhat dreaded plunge, however, was in reality very pleasant, and made one feel as fresh and active as a lark; sensations which were too soon obliterated.

"You need not take so much trouble to dry yourself," said Thwarts to me; "you will not take cold if you go in and have a rub down directly after your run." And he started off at a round trot, an example which, one after the other, we all followed. Some ran the whole mile, others, as it was the first day of regular training, only half that distance; while I had to stop at the end of about three hundred yards, blowing like a grampus. However, with many rests, and sitting down at frequent intervals, I managed to come in a very bad eighth, and then I retired to my lodgings, and made myself comfortable for the breakfast, for which I felt very great need.

"How stale the bread is!" cried I. "I hate stale bread."

"Of course the bread is stale!" was the reply. "New bread is the worst thing possible for the wind."

"There is no tea!"

"Tea! It is poison. You may have a pint of small-beer."

"How dreadfully underdone these chops are!"

"Not a bit; the gravy is the nutritious part."

However, extreme exhaustion enabled me to make an unpalatable meal, and then I drew forth my pipe.

"What is that?" cried Thwarts. "My dear fellow, you must not smoke at this time of day. One pipe after supper is all we allow, and even that is bad for the wind."

"But," cried I in dismay, "my allowance is half a pound of shag and a quarter of a box of cigars a week!"

"So is mine, quite that," murmured No. 2.

"And mine," said Bow.

"One pipe after breakfast could never hurt," added No. 4.

I had very nearly excited a mutiny; but Thwarts talked his crew over, consoling them with the reflection that their abstinence was only to be for six weeks, at the expiration of which time they might smoke another penny off the income tax, if they liked.

Having my pipe put not the worst part of the business. I must confess that I do like my dinner, and am accustomed to look forward to it with considerable cheerfulness, and now that I had a ravenous appetite, which I could not remember being blest with since the happy days of childhood, I was obliged to squander it upon disgusting raw beef-steaks and vulgar malt liquor, and any secret infringement of the rules laid down for our guidance, produced a sensation as if the heart was bursting when we "put it on" during the evening's spin up the river.

Well, my "wind" certainly improved, and my muscles grew more powerful; but my unfortunate hands became completely flayed, so that I had to row in gloves, and I was obliged to have my flannel trousers thickly padded, so that the joys of training did not grow upon me, as I had been assured they would after the first; on the contrary, I marked off the six weeks in my almanac, and scratched out every day as it passed with the eagerness of a school-boy watching the approach of the holidays. And oh! how I enjoyed the Sandays.

One thing fairly puzzled me, and that was the interest which Carroll the barrister suddenly took in the L. B. C. eight in general, and my unworthy self in particular. I had known him, it was true, from boyhood, but of late years

we had only seen each other occasionally, our paths of life being diverse. Why, then, did he come bustling up to Longreach and calling at my lodgings five days in the week? What made him so hostile to the inoffensive Dedwaters, that he outniced my uncle in his desire that we should humble their pride, or, as he inelegantly expressed himself, "should take the shine out of them?" To what could his anxiety lest I should "overdo it," and the cunning ointment he provided for my abrasions, be ascribed? Did he conclude that we were both unsuccessful lovers, and had he a sympathy for me, the result of our common misfortune? Did he wish to prove, by taking an interest in the success of Thwarts' boat that he had not been cut out by that lauded young man, but had merely felt a friendship for Ellen, which was in nowise affected by her engagement to another?

I observed one evening, after he had run on the bank for upwards of three miles, coaching us, that he was very disinterested.

"Not exactly," he replied. "One of the Dedwater crew offered three to one on his boat at the club a fortnight ago, and as I liked the style in which you went the day before, when I happened to see you, I took him."

"To any amount?"

"In hundreds."

This, certainly, was some slight explanation of his interest, for a hundred pounds is a nasty sum to lose, and three hundred a nice sum to win for a professional man.

At the end of three weeks' training, I had an eruption of boils, which were very painful, and exceedingly disagreeable. But when I sought for pity, I was told that it was all right, and they would do me all the good in nature. I also observed that Carroll was not welcome to my uncle and aunt, in spite of his aquatic enthusiasm, Ha! was he still to be feared? No, no; Ellen could never inflict all this misery upon a poor wretch, even if he were a cousin, without intending to recompense him. Still I was uneasy in mind; as for my body, all ease had departed from that weeks before.

The day of the match drew near, but I did not dread it, on the contrary, had it been a duel or a battle, I should have hailed the event which put an end to the preparation. I have heard that some soldiers who have been investing a town for some time are madly impatient for the assault, preferring the most forlorn-hope of not being blown up, skewered, or chopped down, to the certainty of work in the trenches; and I can easily understand it.

What puzzles me more is, that when the day actually arrived, and the hostile boat made its appearance, and the river was covered with gay barges, and the lawns on the bank with tents and ladies, I actually caught the infection which I had escaped during the whole six weeks training, and became absurdly anxious to win. I could have punched the heads of those Dedwater fellows; I rejoiced to observe that one of them had a slight cold, and that another seemed weak about the loins. More; as the time approached, I grew so excited, that I staked money, as much as I could earn in three months with this pen, on our boat! It was temporary insanity.

My uncle's preparations for celebrating the regatta were grand. Both the crews were to dine with him afterwards, and the festivities were to terminate in a ball, held in a large marquee erected on the lawn; and the trees of the garden were profusely hung with little coloured lamps, to give a fairy-like effect to the scene.

Of the race, I cannot tell you much. I can remember paddling up to the starting-place, and a man in a ten-oared waterman's boat saying: "Are you ready? Go!" But immediately after that I lost consciousness of everything except that my frame was lurching, splitting, blowing up, and coming to pieces generally; that the idea of surviving was absurd, but that it did not much matter; and that I hoped for speedy dissolution, or some other termination of the race. Just as I was perfectly convinced that I had only two seconds more to live, there was a tremendous shouting, and the cockswain (oh, how I loathed that little man!) yelled out: "Now,

then, come away! We're ahead! Six strokes more with a will, and we can't lose! Hurrah!" And I just roused myself for a final effort, which lasted, not for six strokes, but at least for twenty, and rolled backwards upon No. 4. But it did not matter; the L. B. C. had won.

I had earned any amount of praise, and as much reward as I could get, from Ellen; I had won my money; I could eat, drink, and smoke what and how much I chose. The training was over! In spite of exhaustion, that idea was delicious!

So was my uncle's dinner, heaps of good things, and nothing interdicted! Even Ellen's ingratitude could not spoil my appetite, and I put it to any one whether she was good.

"Well, Nelly," I cried, on first seeing her after the race, we have won, you see?"

"So I suppose," she replied listlessly.

"Are you not glad?"

"Glad? O yes, of course. Very nice, wasn't it?"

"I tell you what, Ellen," said I, "if you had only spoken in that tone before, you would have saved me the most unpleasant six weeks I ever spent in my life."

"Poor old Bob!" she cried, "I am really very glad; only I have a headache, and am so stupid."

"I hope you will be all right to-night," said I, as she went off.

"What do you mean, Bob?" said she, stopping short, and turning pale.

"Why, for the ball, of course."

"O yes, to be sure," she cried with a laugh, "the ball! I told you I was stupid to-day."

I repeat that I intensely enjoyed my dinner, but for the dancing afterwards I had no great mind: I was stiff, I was sore, and I had long arrears of tobacco to pull up. There was a delightful amount of freedom and ease about the party; those who liked, stopped in the tent and danced, those who preferred it wandered about the grounds; it was of little use to engage partners beforehand, and none at all to hunt for them if they were not in the marquee when the band struck up. I took advantage of this state of things, and withdrew to a quiet nook I knew of, under a willow which overhung the river, settled myself comfortably, and filled my largest meerschaum.

With lights and music at some little distance behind me, a comfortable quantum of claret inside me, and the dark-flowing river before me, time passed rapidly, and I had sat smoking and idly dreaming of past trials and future hopes, the latter all connected with my pretty cousin, for upwards of an hour, when my attention was drawn to an object on the water, which, as my eyes had become accustomed to the darkness, I soon made out to be a wherry, stealthily approaching the spot where I sat. It might be only some uninvited neighbour, enjoying the freshness of the air and the music, but it was a late hour for indulging such a fancy, and my curiosity was excited. Nor was it diminished when the boat stole quietly under the willow, and was made fast to the bank; nor when a female figure, enveloped in a voluminous shawl, and carrying a large carpet-bag, came hurriedly along the path: nor when a man leaped from the boat, and took the carpet-bag aforesaid from her hand.

A keen pang of suspicion and jealousy shot through my heart, as I rose and approached the pair, to their evident alarm.

"It is only Bob!" said the voice of Nelly presently. "O Bob, how you frightened me?"

"Are you going for a row?" I asked with desperate calmness.

"Yes. Don't say anything about it; there is a good boy."

"May I ask who with?" I could not help saying.

"With me, Carroll, to be sure!" said the voice of that hateful barrister. "Why, you must have seen how the land lay, surely, old fellow. We are sorry to have to take this step; but Mr. Martin is so determined that Ellen shall be thrown away upon that fellow Thwarts, that there is nothing else to be done. Let me take this opportunity of thanking you sincerely for falling into our plans, and going in for this race, to give me an opportunity of perpetually coming