

[For the 'Messenger']

Our Adventure at the Crag.

About two years ago I was spending the vacation with Harry Ainsley, at his father's farm. The country around was somewhat wild and hilly, and many a good ramble we had among the woods and rocks, after berries and birds' eggs. But on one of these occasions we met with an adventure which came so nearly proving serious that it checked our roving tendencies for a time.

I had been at Pinegrove Farm for about a fortnight, when Harry proposed to take me to see 'The Crag,' a cluster of high, rocky hills about seven miles distant. I agreed, of course, for I had never seen anything approaching a mountain, and accordingly next morning we set off, accompanied by Harry's dog, Caesar. We walked leisurely along, for the day was hot, and reached our destination sometime after noon.

I shall never forget my sensations, as I stood at the base and gazed up at 'The Crag.' A wild, rocky hill, so high that its topmost peak seemed to reach the clouds, it rose abruptly on one side and sloped rapidly down on the other, while in places the descent was broken by huge boulders or projecting ledges of rock. Here and there up the sides grew clumps of stunted pines and cedars, while tangled masses of clinging vine fell over the rocks, softening their rugged outline, and imparting to the whole scene an appearance of wild beauty such as I had never seen before.

I was roused from my rapt contemplation by Harry's voice calling me to lunch.

'Well, are you ready, Guy?' said Harry, springing up, when we had finished our pleasant repast. 'I say! where's the dog? Here, Caesar! Caesar!' but no Caesar appeared, and we were obliged to proceed without him.

For a while we contented ourselves with exploring the base of the hill, examining the curious little crevices and caves, and the queer little staircase that had been formed by the rain, which made quite a mountain torrent in the spring. But this would not long satisfy our adventurous spirits.

'Look, Guy!' said Harry, pointing to a rocky ledge far above our heads, 'what a splendid view we should get from there! Let us try it!'

So up we clambered, now quickly, now slowly, clinging to the vines and trees, till at length we stood, hot and breathless, on the ledge.

And what a beautiful scene was spread before us! Far and near stretched wide, green fields, dotted here and there with cat-

tle, while from many a cosy homestead the blue smoke curled upward in the still hot air. In the distance was the river, winding like a silver thread and far away, a church spire rose, high above its churchyard trees.

Over all arched a sky of surpassing blue, relieved by drifting clouds of white.

As I gazed upward, my eye was attracted by what appeared to be a large nest, high up on the peak above us.

'I say, Harry! look there!' I exclaimed in an excited whisper.

'An eagle's nest, as sure as I live,' said Harry, whose imagination was apt to get the better of him. 'See! we can climb up here, jump across there and reach it in no time.'

So, throwing prudence to the winds, we began our perilous ascent. Up, up, we scrambled, higher and higher, clinging to a vine here, a rock there, clutching at anything that would afford a hold, till we stood at last, triumphant, on the top.

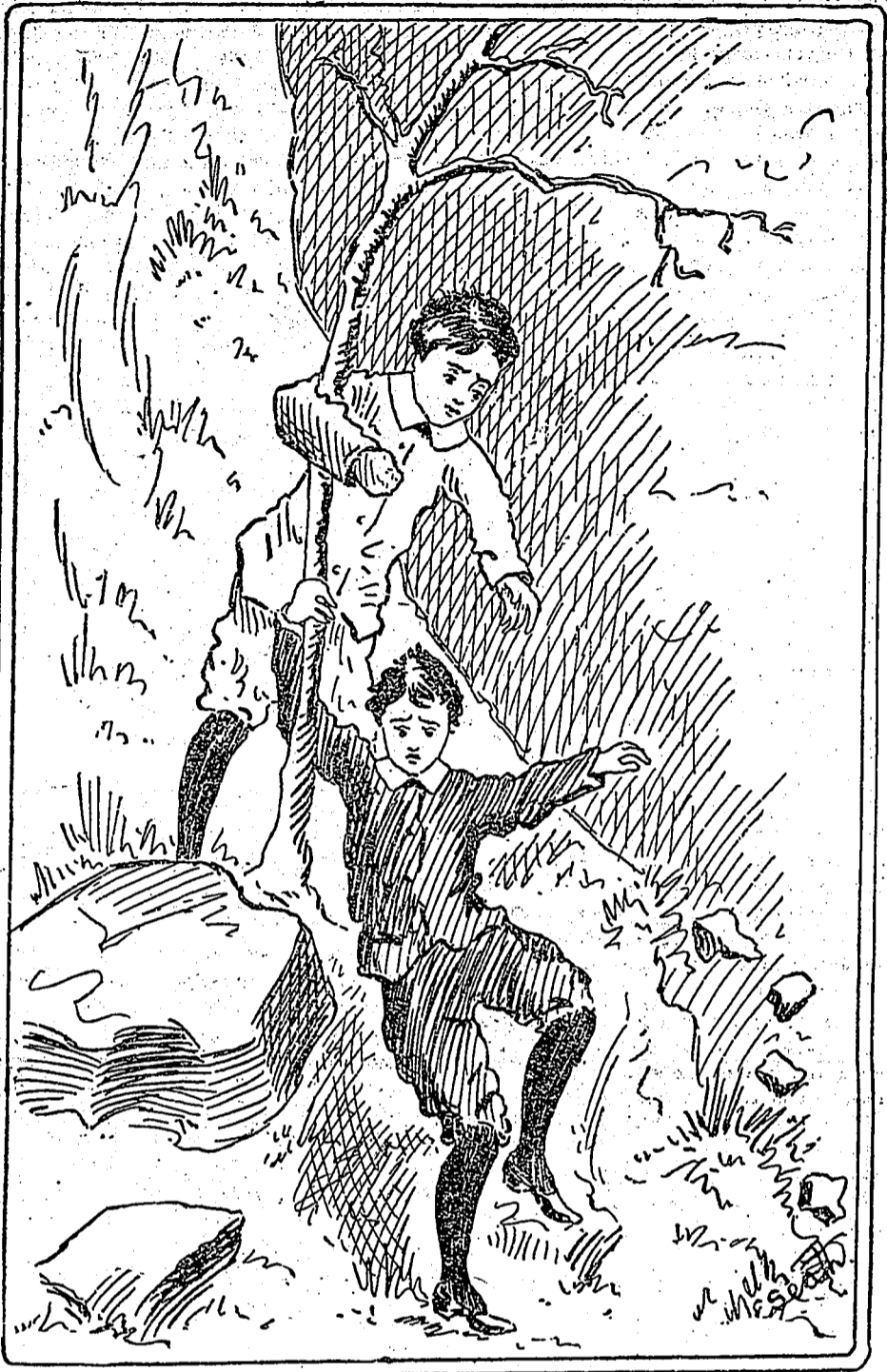
But the nest! alas! A bundle of dried weeds and twigs—blown together by the wind, met our disappointed gaze.

'Pshaw!' said Harry, in great disgust. 'How on earth—Holloa!' For scattering the offending twigs with one vigorous kick, I had overbalanced myself, slipped several feet and fallen.

I picked myself up with a happy laugh, but checked it instantly on seeing the expression on my companion's face.

'Back, Guy! quick! quick! we are on the crumbling rocks.'

But the warning came too late. With a



'GRAB THIS! QUICK! QUICK!'



'WELL, ARE YOU READY, GUY?'