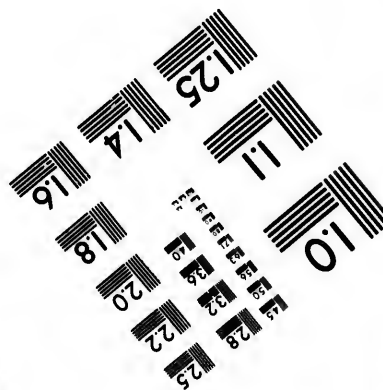
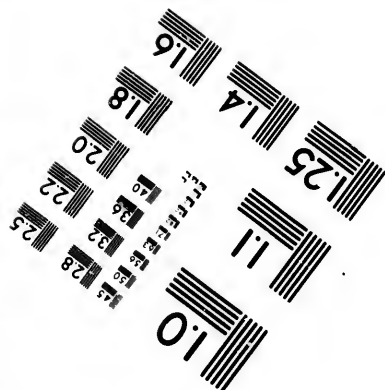
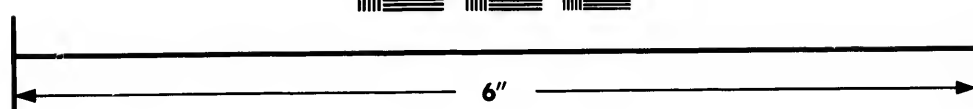
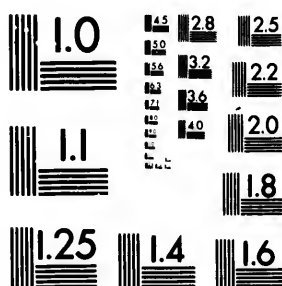


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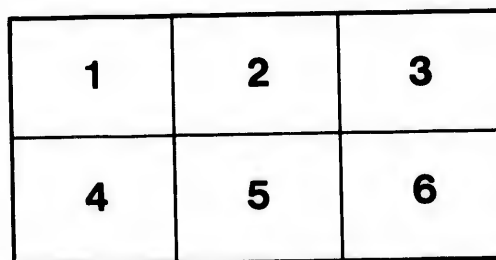
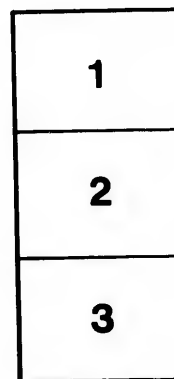
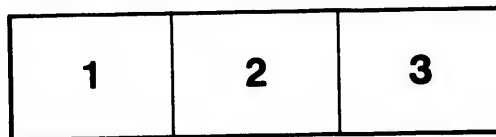
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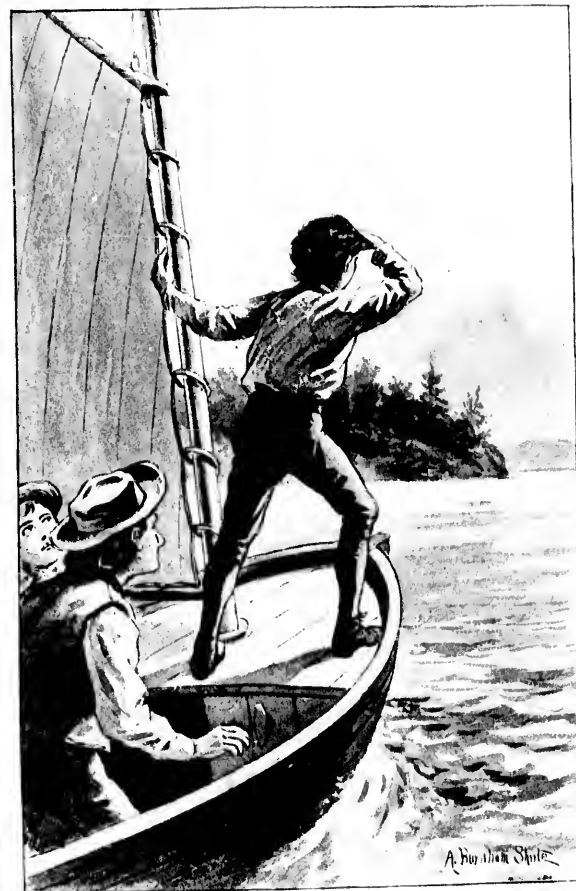
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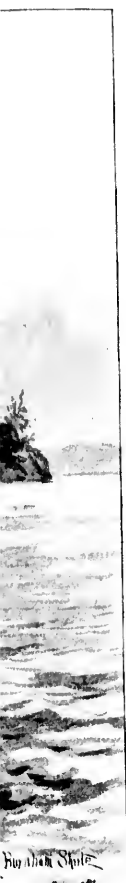
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WAR OF 1812 SERIES

THE

SEARCH FOR ANDREW FIELD

A STORY OF THE TIMES OF 1812

BY

EVERETT T. TOMLINSON



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LEE AND SHEPARD PUBLISHERS
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BOSTON

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Search for Andrew Field

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PREFACE

THE War of 1812 is a field which has received comparatively slight attention from modern story writers. The romance of the Revolution and that of the Civil War has been more marked because the issues of those wars were more apparent.

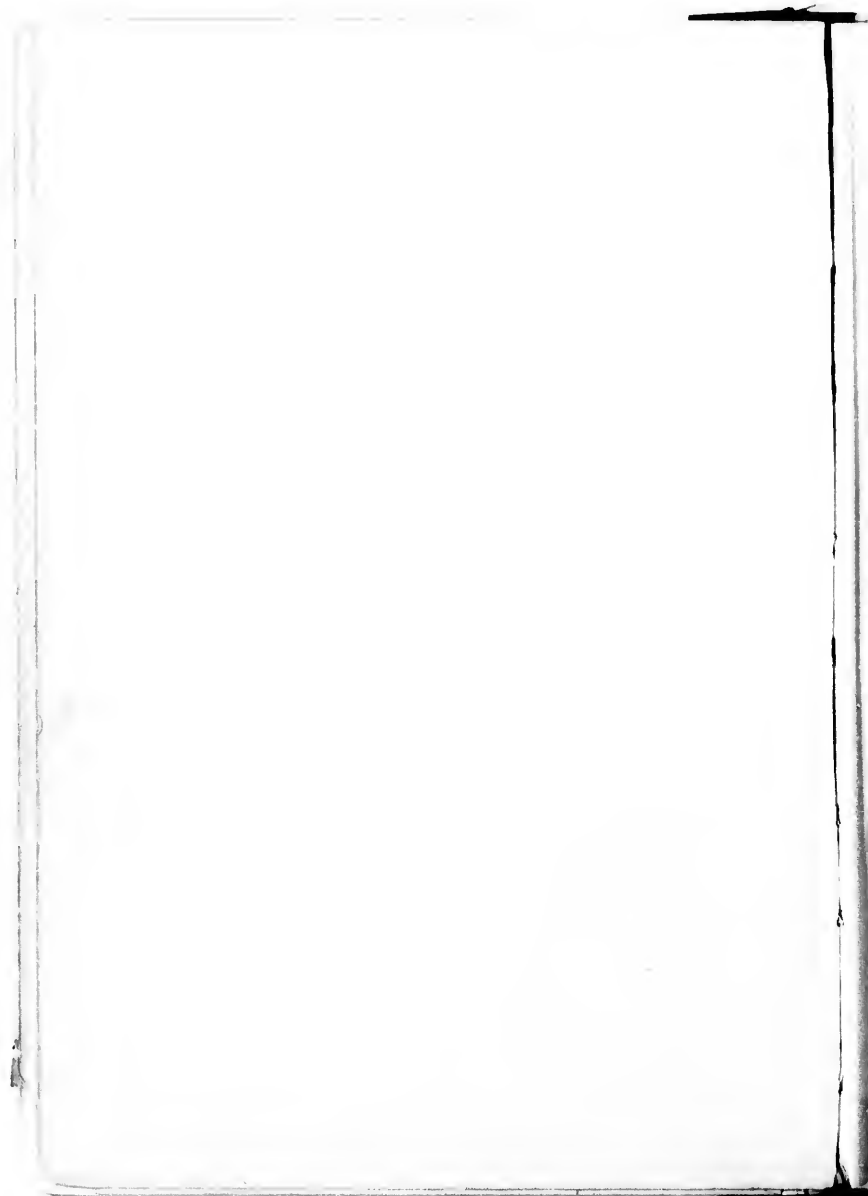
And yet while the causes and results of the war of 1812 were not so manifest as those of the other wars, they were no less real. It was a time for the development of internal, national qualities, and the confidence and self-respect acquired were not the least of the results of the struggle.

This story and those that are to follow it were born of a desire to give our younger people an insight into the conditions of the times of 1812, a history of that war, and a glimpse at its results.

It is hoped that this book will create a desire to follow the fortunes of our heroes through the various battles on land and sea, and that the lessons of manliness which the times demanded of the boys as well as of the men may not be wholly lost.

EVERETT T. TOMLINSON

JUNE, 1894



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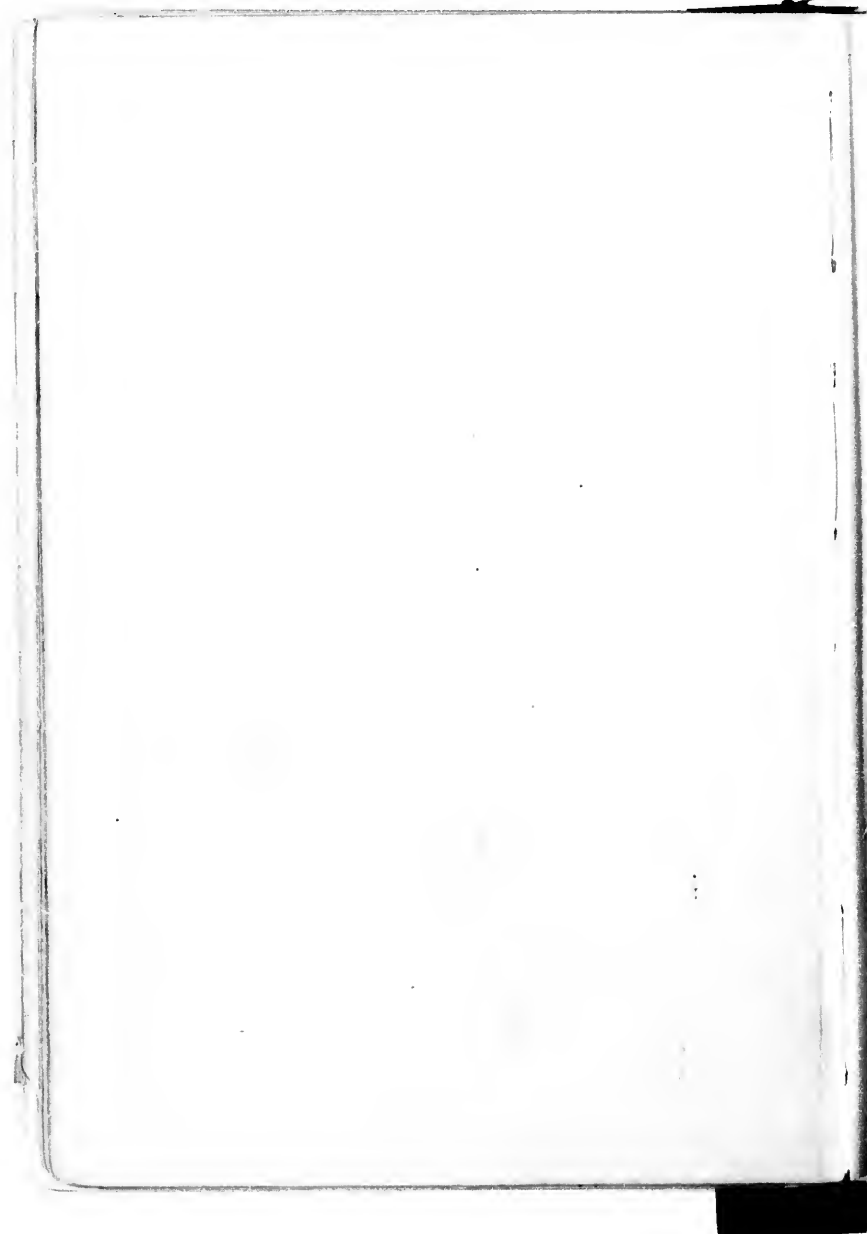
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THE
SEARCH FOR ANDREW FIELD

CHAPTER I

"PRESSED"

IT was a warm, bright day near the close of May, 1812. On the blue waters of Lake Ontario, near the eastern shore, there was a little boat in which sat two young men. The elder of these was Andrew Field, and in the bow of the little skiff sat David, his younger brother. All through the morning these two had been there fishing. In the bottom of the boat lay some of the bass with which the lake then abounded.

It was not often in these days that a holiday could be had. But Andrew's father had well known how hard he had been working all the spring in felling the trees, and turning up the sod of this newly settled country. For their father only ten years before had left his New England home, where misfortunes had multiplied, to seek a new home in this wilderness

"out West." It is true that now they had neighbors, and good neighbors too, but the pioneer life was hard, and a day free from toil was almost unknown. David's work had been largely that of burning the trees which his father and brother cut, in making pearlash and potash; and the last sale had been one that made these farmer boys feel rich, and the holiday was the reward at home.

But a lull had just come in their sport. The bass seemed satisfied, or else had sought other grounds; and Andrew and David had waited, but the fish were no longer biting. A change of bait brought no better results.

"I don't believe we shall get any more fish here," said Andrew. "Let's go down the shore farther and try trolling."

"All right," responded David. "Where shall we go?"

"O, we'll go down along 'The Rocks.' Elijah Spicer told me he made a great catch there the other day."

David made no objection, though with his eyes he questioned his brother. "The Rocks," or "Smugglers' Rocks" as they were called, were well known by both the boys, and some strange stories were told of the deeds which had been done there within the past few months.

"O, you need n't be afraid," said Andrew. "I

don't half believe these stories about the smugglers; and even if they are true, the men wont touch us."

"Well," said David, "you know we promised mother we would be home in time to help father with the milking. We shall have to get home before dark."

"We 'll get home long before dark," said Andrew. "But I want to take home as many bass as the Spicer boys had; they did bring in some beauties the other day. We can get them if they can."

David caught a little of his brother's eagerness, and his scruples and fears were soon forgotten. They pulled in their lines and then decided to eat their luncheon before they started, and so left the anchor as it was. The morning's sport had kindled their appetites, and the brown bread and doughnuts, which made up their lunch, began rapidly to disappear.

"Andrew," said David, "what was that 'Embargo Act' I heard you and father talking about last night? I have heard of it a good many times, but I never knew just what it was."

"Why, don't you know?" said Andrew. "You must have heard about all this trouble we are having with England and France. You know how England has been taking our men and claiming they belonged to them; they have seized a lot of our sailors and made them serve on the British ships."

"Yes, I know about that," said David; "they call that 'pressing.' But what is this Embargo? That can't have anything to do with the men."

"No," replied Andrew. "But the British have almost ruined our commerce; they made us pay a tax when our vessels even stopped at their ports. Things became so bad that Congress would n't let any of our ships leave for a foreign port at all."

"I should n't think that would have hurt England any," said David.

"It did n't," replied his brother. "England was glad of it; it gave her the chance to do all the trading herself. Besides, she did n't stop taking our men either."

"But I heard you say last night it was not in force now."

"It is n't. Congress passed an act which they called the Non-intercourse Act after that."

"What was that?"

"O, that allowed trade with other nations, but stopped it with Great Britain and France. But that has come to an end now."

"Does England still press our men then?" asked David.

"O yes, worse than ever. Don't you remember how Ethan Greene, who was at our house last winter and who used to be a sailor in the Chesapeake, told how the Leopard stopped them off Chesapeake

Bay and took four sailors off the Chesapeake with her? Well, that's what's going on now; only its worse if anything, for the Englishmen don't always stop to wait for ships. Sometimes they take men who are not sailors."

"What do they let them do it for?" said David angrily. "I wouldn't if I commanded a frigate like the Chesapeake."

"O, well, father says," replied Andrew, "that England has the strongest navy in the world. Most of our men are only farmers. What could we do if we did try to stop it? They'd soon stop us."

"I'd try to stop it any way," was David's answer, as, having finished his lunch, he turned to pull in the anchor.

"I'll row first," said Andrew, "and you can troll going over. You can row coming back if you want to."

Soon the little skiff was headed for "The Rocks." David was silent as he held the trolling line, evidently thinking seriously of what his brother had just told him. But a tug just then came at his line that drove all thoughts of the Embargo Act and the "press-gang" out of his mind.

"I've got a strike," he called excitedly to his brother. "It's a good one, too."

Andrew dropped his oars and waited for his brother.

"Don't pull in too fast. Let him have some of the line," he said, cautioning his impulsive younger brother.

But the bass was in earnest; he was fighting for his life. The line sent the water into their faces as the fish darted away. Again and again David brought him nearer the boat, but each time the bass was away again. Andrew smiled as he watched his excited brother. He would have offered to help, but he knew that David wanted to get the fish, and get him alone. But the struggles of the frantic fish became feebler; there was less and less resistance, and finally, with one strong, sudden pull, the fish was brought out of the water and safely secured in the boat.

"Isn't he a beauty?" said the excited boy. "He'll weigh more than any Elijah Spicer had; I know he will. He'll weigh five pounds, won't he, Andrew?"

"I should think he would," said Andrew. "He's a good one, anyway."

But they had found the proper grounds. The fish were hungry and the boys were busy. The hours passed on, but they forgot to think of time; they were thinking only of the large catch they would take home.

"We'll send over for the Spicers to come and see some fish when we get home," said David. "Guess

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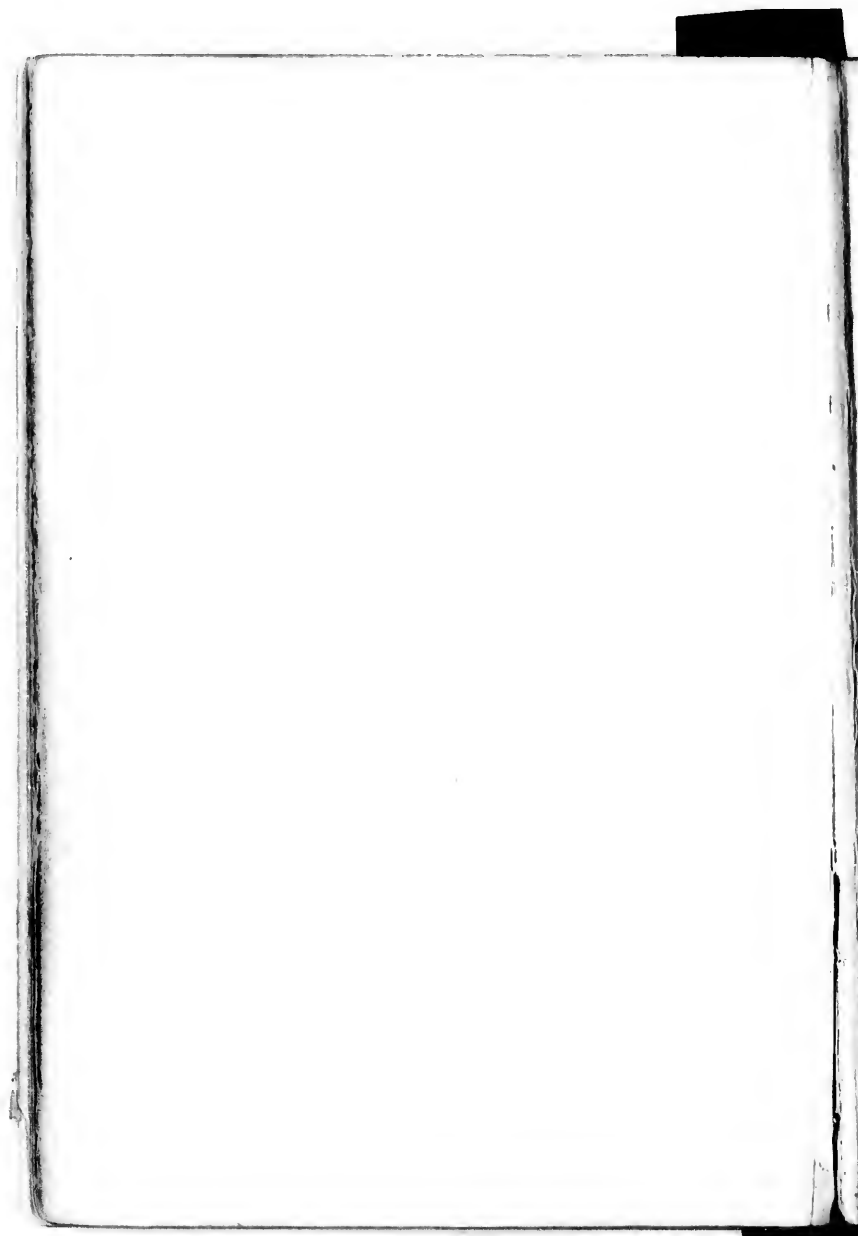
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"ONLY A LITTLE DISTANCE FROM THEM WAS A SHIP." Page 15.



we'll have to send over to them one of these big fellows."

David raised his eyes to look at his brother, and then uttered a sharp exclamation.

"What's that?" said he, pointing out toward the lake. Only a little distance from them was a ship. So busily had the boys worked that all unnoticed had the ship come up, and now was almost within hailing distance. Andrew turned quickly to see what it was his brother had just pointed out; the ship was there, and evidently was going to anchor. They could hear the rattle as the sails were lowered, and the voices of the men could be heard distinctly across the water.

"What is it, Andrew?" said David, in a voice suppressed with excitement.

"I don't know. It looks like a ship," said Andrew, smiling. "A ship has three masts, hasn't it?"

David did not laugh; he was troubled and afraid. "Let's get out of this anyway."

"There's no use in running away," replied Andrew; "if they want us they could soon catch us anyway. The best thing for us to do is to go on with our fishing. If we mind our business, I guess they will theirs."

But Andrew was not as calm as his words were. The boys were silent and watched a yawl as it was

lowered from the ship's side. They saw eight men descend and take their places, six of them at the oars.

"Do you think they are smugglers?" asked David, earnestly.

"I should n't wonder if they were," was Andrew's reply. "But at any rate the best thing we can do is to go on with our fishing and not mind them."

Andrew and David both knew it was long since the time when they should have started for home; but they were now afraid that, if they started, the men in the yawl would think they were running away, and then would follow them anyway. And what chance would they have in their little flat-bottomed skiff, against six trained men in the yawl?

David felt a jerk at his line; but he had no inclination now to pull it in, even to see what he had.

"You'd better pull in your line," said Andrew, as he began to row again. "They'll know we are fishing, and I don't think they'll trouble us."

But the boat from the ship was nearly ashore now; they had gone two hundred yards from the boys' skiff, and had not even hailed them. They saw them row in near the shore, and one man spring lightly ashore and disappear among the trees that lined the bank. The yawl then put about, and started back, as if for the ship.

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"Andrew, they're coming here," and David, in a low tone, greatly excited.

"Perhaps they want to get some of our fish," said Andrew. "We won't charge them much, will we, David?" said he with a smile, which only partly concealed his real anxiety.

Meanwhile the yawl came on; it was evidently coming where the boys were. But there was nothing for them to do but to wait. As the boat came alongside the skiff, the men rested upon their oars, and the boatswain began the conversation. Evidently he was suspicious of the presence of the boys there, and at that time.

"What are you doing here?" was his first question.

"Fishing," answered Andrew. "Can't you see?" and he held up to view one of the largest bass they had taken.

"Sure you ain't out here to see what men come ashore?" asked the boatswain.

"We only saw one man go ashore," replied Andrew.

There was a conversation low and earnest for a moment in the yawl.

"Where do you live?" was the next question put to the boys.

"O, round the point there," said Andrew, pointing towards Sackett's Harbor.

"Well, you have n't much of a Yankee drawl about you," said the boatswain. "I believe you are an Englishman. You ought to be on board ship in such times as these. We're going to have trouble, and that soon."

David saw his brother become pale, but his voice was firm as he told the boatswain that he had lived for ten years on this shore and was born in New England.

"Well, 'New' England or 'Old,' we want you, and you'll have to come aboard," said the boatswain.

Another earnest and low conversation took place on board the yawl. Andrew's face had burned during the day upon the water, but the redness could not hide the pallor that crept over his cheeks.

Finally the boatswain spoke again:—

"We don't want the little fellow, but we have need of you. So just come aboard, will ye, and be quick about it."

What could Andrew do? Here were seven men, all strong and armed, and he had not even the old flint lock he thought of bringing in the morning. To fight was hopeless; he must obey. A hurried message to David for his father and mother, and then Andrew stepped on board the British boat.

David was left alone. He sat for a moment stunned. There were tears in his eyes, but they could not hide the sight of his brother as he sat

beside the boatswain in the yawl that was now near the ship. A little wave of the hand was all that came to David. He saw the men appear on deck and Andrew led below.

He must go back. Almost powerless, David picked up his oars and began to row for home.

CHAPTER II

THE NEWS AT HOME

THE bitterness in David's heart lent strength to his arms; he was bitter against his country. If she had strength enough to make herself independent of England, why had she not strength enough to protect her men after the country was freed from British rule? Why should he have been left to carry the sad news home? And yet, in spite of the hardness in his heart, David rested for a minute upon his oars. He now noticed, as he looked toward the ship riding at anchor so near him, that she was a man of war. He could see the portholes and the muzzles of the guns. He could not help admiring her beauty as she rested so gracefully upon the water. What was her name? And David eagerly looked to see, for he knew he should have need of that. He saw on the long streamer the word "Osprey," and he recalled then how often he had heard of this ship, the terror of the lake.

Even while David was looking, he saw the yawl start forth again from the ship. What was it

coming for? Had the sailors repented of their work, and were they going to bring back his brother? His heart gave a bound as the thought came to him, but in a moment he saw how vain was that idea, for the yawl was pulled rapidly toward the same spot on the shore where he had seen the man landed only a little time before. He saw the man come out of the woods and step quickly on board, and the boat start back for the ship. And even while he was looking he saw a little puff of smoke rise from the stern of the yawl, and he heard the whistling of a bullet as it passed over his head. Inexperienced as he was, David did not think these men would shoot him, but the hint which was given for him to move on, he was not slow in accepting.

Bending sturdily to his oars, David rowed toward home. Yet, busy as he was, he could see the ship weigh anchor and the wind fill out the sails. Her course seemed to be in a direction opposite to that which he was taking, and soon the curve in the shore hid her from David's eyes.

Darkness had come before he arrived at the place where Andrew and he kept their skiff. Tired as he was, he leaped quickly on shore, and, leaving behind him the fish which he had caught that day, he started on the run for his father's house. It was only two miles from the shore of the lake, and yet to him the distance had never seemed so great. But

at last, out of the darkness he could see the outlines of his home. How could he tell his father and mother? And yet they must know; and he must be the one to tell them.

David entered the yard, and Rex, his shepherd dog, heard and recognized his footstep. He had only a word for the dog, which leaped upon him in the warmth of his affection. He had other work to do, and David, though he was only sixteen years of age, was not the boy to draw back from a task, merely because it was difficult.

But there were many lights in the house. What was the meaning of that? Had they heard the news? But at once he knew how impossible that was. He stopped a moment, and even as he stopped the words of a hymn came to him from the house, which he recognized as a favorite one with his mother.

"On the other side of Jordan, in the sweet fields of Eden,
Where the tree of life is blooming, there is rest for you."

David felt a lump in his throat as he thought of his mother, and then he remembered that religious services had been appointed to be held that night in his father's house. David had never been specially interested in these meetings, which a travelling preacher held there from time to time; but his

parents were devout people, and had brought with them the memories of their New England church.

In a moment, however, David was glad these people were there; he thought of a word his mother often quoted to him, "that in a multitude of counsellors there was safety."

David stepped inside the kitchen door; it was just as the hymn closed, and his father came out to meet him. There was a sternness in his father's look as he started to speak to him, but something in David's manner checked him and the reproof was not given.

"Where is your brother Andrew?" asked his father.

And David, all tired and heartsick, broke down and cried. All the word that he could utter was, "Pressed."

"'Pressed'! what do you mean?"

And then David told the story. The day's fishing, the trolling by the rocks, and the seizure of his brother, all were strangely mixed and told, but at last his father knew it all. David started back as he saw how pale his father was and how near to falling, and his heart smote him, for his mother had often told him of late of his father's illness and her fears for him. In a moment, however, he had recovered his courage, and taken upon himself the

responsibility of informing the company of his adventure.

"I'll tell mother. You stay here," he said to his father; and, stepping to the door, he looked within and saw his mother sitting near. A beckoning with the hand brought her quickly and quietly to him, and then, without a tremor, he told his mother all that his father had just heard. There was no time for tears now. Whatever was to be done must be done at once.

"Let us go in and talk it over with our friends," said his mother; and the adventure of the boys was soon known by all who were present.

The moment of surprise was followed by an outburst of anger.

"God only knows what will be the end of all this," said the old preacher. "It's not the first time they have done this thing, and I'm afraid its not the last. If I were ten years younger I'd shoulder a gun and help to drive these sinners from our shore. Even the Good Book says, 'Be ye angry, and sin not.'"

"But it is n't anger, it's what we can do we must think of now," said David's mother.

"We can't pursue them; and even if we could we should be driven back," said his father, with a groan.

David saw Elijah Spicer over in the corner of the room looking at him with sympathetic eyes. David

had no thought of telling Elijah how many bass he had caught that day; but Elijah whispered to him, "I was at the garrison to-day, and sold some fish to Colonel Bettinger. He asked me about you."

"Colonel Bettinger!" David knew him well; he had been often at his father's house. Colonel Bettinger was the very one to help them now. And so he quickly went to the place where his mother was sitting and whispered something in her ear, for the boys were not allowed to speak much in those days in the presence of their elders.

"The very thing!" exclaimed his mother. And then aloud she said, "David thinks it would be well to go and see Colonel Bettinger."

"And so it would, and at once," said the old preacher. "He knows these men and their ways."

David could not prevail upon his father to remain at home, and so together, upon horseback, they started at once through the darkness for Sackett's Harbor. It was only a short ride, and in less than an hour they were in the Colonel's quarters and had told him all the story.

The Colonel shook his head. "It's a sad piece of work. The end is coming soon, for we sha'n't stand this much longer. We are bound to have another war with England, and this thing will be settled. But that does n't give you back your boy," said he.

"What did you say the name of the ship was?" he inquired of David.

"The Osprey," replied David. "And I'm sure its a man of war."

"Yes, I know," said the Colonel smiling; "but that does n't help it any. I know some of the Osprey's men. I've met the Captain a number of times. But he would either deny all this, or not give up your son," said he, turning to Mr. Field, "even if he knew; for they know the war is coming, and they are getting ready for it, which is more than we are doing. I don't know why Congress can't see what is before us, and that it must be met."

"Have you any idea as to where the Osprey was bound?" said he after a minute's silence, turning again to David.

"No, only she seemed to be going from me."

"I have heard she was coming down the lake, and I do not think she was going back to Oswego. It must be there was some smuggling going on."

"I'm sure there was," said David, "for they landed a man right there by Smugglers' Rocks, and in a little while came for him again. There was something wrong, and I'm sure its smuggling."

"It's more than likely," responded the Colonel. "And if that's so they must have headed for Kingston. I think your best plan will be to go to

Kingston and see what you can do. I will give you a letter to the commander of the Osprey, and if he is the man I think he is, he may give you back your boy. There's a party going to start from here in the morning for Kingston, and I'm sure you could get carried over there with them."

Not strong in hope, and yet not knowing of anything better, the little party withdrew from the Colonel's quarters and went down the village street to make arrangements for their passage to Kingston. This was very easily done after their story had been told, and then David and his father started for home.

It was only then that David began to realize how tired he was. But he knew how much depended upon him, and how little his father could do, so bravely he bent to his task.

Some of the friends were still at his home when David returned, and when the visit to Colonel Bettinger had been related, and the approval of all had been given to their proposed journey to Kingston, David took his tallow candle and went up the ladder to his room in the attic.

He could hear the low and earnest tones of his father and mother as they talked, while his mother prepared the lunch for their journey. But silence soon came over all, and David, after tossing in his bed and thinking of the stirring scenes of the

morrow, and wondering where and how Andrew then was, at last fell into a deep sleep, from which he was only aroused by the voice of his mother calling him in the morning.

"Come, David, its time you and your father were off."

CHAPTER III

A TRIP TO KINGSTON

THE three men who were to be the companions of David and his father were waiting when they arrived at the shore.

"This is a spanking breeze, and we must be off at once," said the one who was to act as skipper. And in a short time the little sailboat was rapidly skimming the water. The men looked compassionately at David and his father, for they knew the story, and appreciated their disinclination to talk, and after a few questions, and some hopeful words, confined their conversation to themselves. They were going over to Kingston to see about some cattle. Their conversation had little of interest for David and his father, and they were soon left to themselves.

The long day passed on. The wind was fresh, and the boat flew like a bird over the water. They swept round Pillar Point, and David recalled the day, a year before, when he and his brother had fished along the shore, and had carried home a boat-load of fish and pond lilies, and some of the lilies he could see now, growing in the same place.

"We shall make Kingston by four o'clock," said the skipper. "It is n't often we can get a breeze like this."

"The sooner the better," said David.

"Well, what are you going to do when you get over there?" asked the skipper.

David turned to his father for a reply. He had not any clear idea in his own mind.

"I have a letter from Colonel Bettinger to the commander of the Fort, and one to the captain of the Osprey. We hope she will put in there, and perhaps we can bring Andrew back with us."

The men said nothing, but the look they gave one another showed how hopeless they considered the task to be.

But the Canadian shore was now clearly to be seen. The walls of the fort and the stone houses of the town began to rise out of the water.

The little boat was run in alongside the dock, and in a few minutes David and his father were on their way up the hill toward the fort.

"We're going back in the morning, and if ye want to go ye can," called out the skipper.

"We'll see you again anyway," said David, and he turned to catch up with his father.

"What a lot of ship-building they do here," said David, as he saw along the shore the shipyards that seemed to him so new and strange.

"Yes, Kingston is a great place for ships. The Osprey was built here, and I'm afraid there'll be a lot more like her soon," said his father, gloomily.

"They've got a good fort here anyway."

"Yes, Governor General Frontenac built a fort here almost a hundred and fifty years ago. There isn't a stronger place along the lake or the St. Lawrence than Kingston, except Quebec. It's a centre now. That's why I have come here."

"Do you see," said David, "what a lot of soldiers they have here?" as he pointed to long lines of straggling redcoats, who were on their way to the fort.

"Yes. They're going up to dress parade now."

"Shall we see it?" said David, forgetting for a moment the purpose of their journey.

"We won't stop for that if we can help it," replied his father; and David felt ashamed as he thought of Andrew. Where was he now?

"I shouldn't think they'd need so many men here," said he.

"They don't. It is no good omen that there are so many either. I tell you these British mean fight, and we on the other side are doing nothing. It'll be a hard fight when it comes, and they'll be ready for it, and we won't."

But they were near the fort now. The sentinel halted them. They gave the letter from Colonel Bettinger to him, and he gave it to a comrade near.

"Here, take this to the Colonel. You stay here." said the sentinel to David and his father, "and wait till word comes."

In a few minutes they received word that they were to go to the Colonel's quarters, and passed within the grounds.

David had never seen anything like the solid masonry of the fort, and his eyes were open to every sight.

But in a few minutes they were ushered into the Colonel's presence. He was a stout man, with a red face and a pompous manner. His attitude boded no good for his visitors.

"Well, sir, what do you want of me?" said he.

"I thought Colonel Bettinger's note would explain," said Mr. Field. "My son has been taken against his will on board the Osprey, and I thought you would help me get him back."

"I know nothing about it, sir. Probably the Captain knew what he was about. We want men, and when we find one that belongs to us we don't care where he came from. You were born in England, I presume?"

"No, sir," said Mr. Field indignantly. "I was born in Vermont. My father was born in England, but I belong in America."

"O, well, 'Once a Briton always a Briton.' We planted the Colonies with our men; they really

belong to us now. And when we find a good man he is ours still."

"Then you 'll not help me get back my boy," said Mr. Field slowly.

"I don't know your boy; besides, the Osprey isn't here and won't be for two weeks yet. And I think Captain Snaith knows his work. I let him run the Osprey, and I run Kingston. Good day, sir." And the Colonel turned to his desk, from which he had not risen, and began to write. David and his father withdrew, and hope seemed to have gone.

Once outside the garrison David had to take the lead. His father, dazed and helpless, seemed ready to give up all hope.

"David, what can we do? The Colonel won't help us, and the Osprey won't be here for a fortnight. Shall we go home?"

"We 'll get a place to sleep in first. Let's go to the tavern where the men are."

A few inquiries and a short walk brought them to a little place called a tavern by courtesy. Upon entering, they found their three companions talking earnestly with a stranger; he was evidently a sailor, and wore the uniform of the King's navy.

"We've been holding this fellow till you came," said their skipper. "We thought you might like to talk with him."

"Yes?" said Mr. Field. "Does he know anything that'll help us?"

"Well, he ought to. He's from the Osprey."

A man from the Osprey! David was all attention.

"Yes," continued the skipper, "he's just in. Ye see, his time was up yesterday, and he thought he wouldn't wait for the Osprey to come to Kingston. He just got some friends to sail him over."

"Do you know anything about my son?" said Mr. Field turning to the stranger.

"Yer right," replied the sailor. "If he's the younker that come aboard the Osprey yesterday, I know som'at."

"Where is he now?" eagerly asked Mr. Field.

"Aboard the Osprey I guess," said the sailor with a laugh.

"Are they going to keep him?"

"That's the Cap'n's plan. He's a likely ycunker, and they need men."

"He'll get off and run away," said David interrupting.

"O, no, I guess not. The Cap'n gin him a couple o' whacks that'll teach him. He won't go ashore very often either."

"Did he strike him? What for?" asked Mr. Field.

"O, well, ye see, his sails was pretty full o' wind."

He had a lot to say about his being a American citizen, and the Cap'n had to show him who was boss. But he gin in, all quiet like, and I guess he won't be troubled any more."

"Where 's the Osprey bound?" said Mr. Field, quietly, after a silence.

"O, I don' know. They 've got some business along shore first. By and by they 're comin' here; but not just yit."

The sailor turned to go. The evening was far gone now. There was nothing more that could be done. So David and his father took a candle and started for their room.

"Guess you 'd better go long home with us in the mornin'," called out the skipper kindly.

"I think so too," said Mr. Field, and he turned wearily away.

The early morning found the party started on their homeward journey. Mr. Field was hopeless, and David's heart sank as he saw how pale and weak he was. What a return it would be, to go home and add to his mother's sorrow when no message from Andrew was given, and his father sick and helpless!

But David was thinking. Must he now give up and leave Andrew to get away from the Osprey as best he could? He knew Andrew would never have left him in that way, and yet what could he, a boy only sixteen years old, do? But he would do some-

thing; and in silence he was working over the problem throughout their homeward journey.

The wind was not so favorable as they had had going over; the calm came. David took his turn at the oars with the men, but his father was down below stretched upon a rough couch made for him of coats and blankets.

It was late at night when they arrived at Sackett's Harbor. The houses loomed up in the darkness as if they were twice their natural size. How should he get his father home? David already felt the responsibility growing upon him.

But the boat had hardly been made fast to the dock when he heard a voice calling to him that he knew right well. Quickly he sprang ashore, and in a moment his voice could be heard in eager conversation with some one upon the dock. His father called, but David did not hear. And when he climbed upon the dock, and looked around and called again, no voice replied, and David had disappeared.

CHAPTER IV

DAVID FORMS A PLAN

ELIJAH SPICER and his brother Henry were deeply interested in the visit of David and his father to Kingston. The boys had been friends for ten years, and at many a husking bee and picnic they had been leaders together. Over on Stony Island they had often been camping, and now there was on that island a shanty they had built, and which had formed for them a shelter many a night in the fall, when they had gone fishing and gunning there.

When Elijah had returned from the meeting at David's house, and had excitedly told his father of the seizure of Andrew, the family had talked over the affair until late into the night. And when they had learned of David's departure for Kingston, they all had hoped for good things.

Mr. Spicer, however, was doubtful of any good which was to come from the visit; and Elijah had great respect for his father's opinion.

"Mark my words," said Mr. Spicer. "No good will come of that visit. The Britishers won't let the

boy go, and besides I don't believe the Osprey has gone to Kingston. She has too much to do along shore yet."

"Do you think she smuggles, father?" asked Elijah.

"Think! No, I don't think, I know. How do you suppose some neighbors of ours have so much when they don't work half as hard as we do?"

"Well, but when do you think David and his father will come back from Kingston? Do you think they'll stay there and wait?"

"No; Mr. Field is a sick man. I've been afraid this shock would be too much for him anyway," said Mr. Spicer.

"We can do something to help them, can't we?" asked Elijah.

"I don't know as there's much you can do to help," replied his father. "If they come back late at night, you and Henry might be there at the dock with the horses. That'll bring them home easier and earlier if they should come back in the night-time."

It was in accord with this suggestion that Elijah had acted, and, when darkness came on, and he had heard from David's mother that the party had not returned, he had taken his horse and led two others to Sackett's Harbor. He had been waiting by the dock for some time, and, although he always denied that he had fallen asleep there, it was strange

that he did not hear the boat when it first came to the dock.

It was his voice David had heard, and together the boys had started on the run for the tavern sheds where the horses were tied.

It was but a few minutes before they were at the dock again with the horses. Mr. Field, now that he was so near home, thought he could endure the ride, and insisted upon going to his own house.

Slowly the little party started for home. Elijah and David were on either side of Mr. Field to be ready in case any accident befell him, but all came safely at last into the farm-yard and found a warm reception within. Disappointment was keenly felt by all who were there, but no strong hopes had been cherished of success at Kingston.

The old preacher was present too, and as he listened to David's story of his reception at Kingston, and as he told of the number of redcoats he had seen, he shook his head and said: —

"The war's coming; it surely is. But we are not getting ready for it. I wish I could tell some one at Washington of these last few days on the lake. If it's so bad here, it's surely worse on the seas."

When David that night crept into his bed, which he shared with Elijah, for a long time he tossed and rolled, until at last Elijah called out to him, "David, why in the world don't you go to sleep?"

"I can't. I'm thinking of Andrew. I wonder what he's doing now. I'm glad I didn't tell mother how the captain of the Osprey knocked him down."

"Well, David, what are you going to do about it?"

"That's just it," replied David. "Here's father, he's sick, and I don't much believe he's going to be any better, at least very soon; and all the time there's Andrew probably being pounded and set at all sorts of dirty work by the Osprey's men, and he a wondering why we don't come and get him."

"Why don't you go, then, and get him?" asked Elijah.

"Do you think I could?" said David, thoughtfully. "I wish I could."

"I'll tell you what," said Elijah. "Leave your father here, and let the preacher stay here too. He'll be glad to help, and he can do the milking and look after the chores. Then Henry and you and I can start out in our boat and cruise along shore, and perhaps we can do something to help Andrew. If we can't, we sha'n't lose much; and they won't take us, you know. They'd a taken you when they pressed Andrew if they'd wanted boys."

"I believe we can do that," replied David, thoughtfully. "I don't know whether my father would let me go. Do you think yours would?"

"Yes, I do," said Elijah. "We haven't done

much but talk about what we could do to help you since this thing happened."

"Well, I think it's a good thing, and we'll talk with the folks about it in the morning." And the boys rolled over in bed and were soon asleep.

Early in the morning their plan was laid before their parents. Mr. Field was worse than he had been the night before, and no help could be expected from him; but David's eagerness seemed to inspire the others.

"How shall we get along here at home if you go?" said his mother. "There'll be no one to milk and help about the place."

"I did n't know but Mr. Dodd might be willing to stay here awhile."

"Surely I will," said the preacher. "I favor the boy's plan."

"But I've lost one son, and I don't want to lose you too," said his mother.

David saw her eyes fill and her chin quiver, and going quickly up to her he said:—

"But they won't take me. If they'd wanted me, they'd taken me with Andrew. We'll just cruise along shore and see. We may have a chance to let Andrew know we are around. If he hears my 'call,' he'll know I'm near."

"Your 'call'?" What's that?" said his mother.

David made three caws like a crow's. "That's

it," said he. "I know if Andrew has been near shore and heard any crows he's listened sharp."

"Well, if Mr. Spicer is willing for his boys to go in this busy time of the year, I'll not object to your going; only do be careful."

"All right, mother," said David, already outside the door, as he and Elijah started toward Mr. Spicer's place.

Mr. Spicer willingly gave his consent as he said: "The hay can wait better than Andrew can. How long do you think you will be gone?" And before David could reply, he said, "Not less than six weeks in my opinion, and may be longer. So you had better make your plans for a long journey."

All through the day the boys were busy getting their supplies for their voyage. Their boat was hardly large enough for them to use at night to sleep in except in case of storms, so an old tent that belonged to Mr. Field was taken on board. Salt pork and meal formed their chief supplies, and their guns and fish lines were to help in securing provisions. The boys were so busy in arranging for their trip that they at times almost forgot the object of it all; but the sad face of his mother, as she watched the boys and helped them get ready for their cruise, called David back to himself.

"Remember we're going to get Andrew," he would say; and his brave words would cheer his

mother, though David, if he had had half as much confidence in the success of their undertaking as his words seemed to imply, would have been glad. But whenever he felt his heart sink, he worked the harder, and the day was gone almost before he realized it.

"David," said the old preacher to him as he came from the boat the last time, "I want you to take the horse and go over and see Colonel Bettinger before you start. You'd better get a note from him, for it may be of some use to you if you should get into trouble."

"I'll go and see him," answered David; "but notes from American colonels don't seem to count for much on my journeys. I don't see why our country can't stand up for its own men just as well as England can."

"You know, David," said the old man, smiling, "that our nation is young yet. We have had so many things to settle among ourselves that we haven't been able to do much outside. But I lived in the time of the Revolution. I saw what men could do then, and they can do the same now, if the occasion demands it," and the old man's voice became stronger, and his eyes flashed a little as he spoke.

"But I don't believe this country will ever fight. I wish it would."

"You will soon see enough to make you sad, and

yet proud of your country, my boy," said the old man gently. "I was with General Greene all through his Southern campaigns, and I don't believe there was a nobler man in the world, unless it was Washington; and I know we haven't degenerated any during the last thirty-five years."

"Some time I'm going to ask you to tell me about General Greene," said David, as he sprang upon his horse's back and was soon lost to sight.

Colonel Bettinger was not hopeful of the issue of the boys' journey; indeed, he feared trouble for them, and said so. But when David told him all their plans, and how the boat was provisioned, and that their parents had given their consent, he wrote for him two letters. One was to the commander at Oswego, and the other was a general note, stating that he knew David Field, and asked all who could, to aid him in his search for his brother.

David thanked the Colonel, and started for home. He let his horse come from his swinging gallop to a trot, and from a trot to a walk. He was thinking of the morrow, and what it would bring forth. Suppose he should be taken? Was it not a great risk he ran in going on such a journey? And his heart sank within him for the time. And then he thought of Andrew. He could see him now as he was in the yawl with his face turned toward him, and waving his hand in farewell.

"He's the best brother in the world, and I'll do anything I can for him," said he to himself, as his spirits rose again, and he started the horse into a run.

He found the family all waiting for him, and the pale face of his father startled him as he came into the room. The old preacher read a chapter, and all kneeled down to pray. David thought the old man was not one to be afraid of now; and he followed his words, and felt his own heart grow soft, as the sweet-voiced old man prayed for his young brother, and that the God of battles would go before him with the pillar of cloud and fire.

David thought of many things that night in his little attic room. When would he sleep there again? Would he ever come back? And the "cloud and pillar" of the preacher's prayer came back to him, and he was soon asleep.

CHAPTER V

A NIGHT ADVENTURE

DAVID was up in the morning before the sun. Yet, early as he was, he had hardly time to go out to the barns before he heard Elijah and Henry calling to him. A hurried breakfast and a hastily spoken farewell, and the boys were off.

"David, remember your promise to keep near the shore, and to come ashore whenever a squall comes up," was the last word he heard.

"All right," he replied, as he lagged a little behind the other boys, and turned for a parting look at the little group on the doorstep, waving their hands to him in farewell.

Their little cat-rigged boat was all ready when they came to the shore, and the provisions and cooking utensils and tent were as they had left them. In a few minutes they had put off, and the little Pilot (for that was the name of their boat) was soon in motion, and their journey had begun.

"Father said he thought we should have to look out for a storm to-day," said Elijah, as he turned his

eyes toward the clouds he saw out over the lake. "I don't believe he would have let us come if we had n't taken that tent, and promised to sleep every night on shore."

"Sometimes we can go to a farmhouse," remarked David; "though I think there is more fun in sleeping in a tent and cooking your own meals."

"So do I," replied Elijah; "and we can catch fish, for I have brought our bass-lines along," and he took out his box of fishing tackle. "You know we always had great luck out here fishing," and he looked half laughingly at David.

"You could n't beat the catch Andrew and I had that day he was pressed. But we shall have time enough to see who can catch the most before we get home. I don't think we shall be back right away."

"I don't either," said Elijah, "and if it were n't for Andrew, I don't know that I should care. This is more fun than haying. We should have to begin that pretty soon, and father wants us to get back in time if we can."

The boat sped on. The wind was rising, and the air became chilly.

"We're going down along the Rocks first, to see if we can find out anything about the Osprey. If she's gone across the lake, we'll go right back home, so as to be there to help the men," said David.

"We sha'n't get very far to-day," said Elijah, as

the spray began to dash over the boat. "I don't much like the looks of things. We are going to have some squalls, I know from the way the clouds look."

The boat began to roll, and the air became darker every minute.

"I guess we'll put up under the lee of that island and wait a while," said David, who held the tiller in his hand.

"That's the best thing to do," said Henry. "I know a man who came over here fishing, and he got driven under the lee of this island, and he had to stay here three days before he could get ashore again."

"That's a cheerful prospect," said David. "But we can stand it. We can crawl into the boat if it rains too hard for the tent, and we've got enough to eat if we can get a fire," said he, laughing.

The rain came with the wind. All through the day the boys remained there, not more than five miles from home, and yet afraid to venture forth. But later in the afternoon the storm abated, and the wind died down.

"We'll go on over beyond the Rocks and get a place to stay to-night," said David.

"Are you going to a house or to camp out?" asked Henry.

"O, we'll try the house first and see. The Smiths live over there somewhere. I don't know them very well, but they'll keep us over night I think."

"I've heard some queer stories about the Smiths and the smugglers," said Elijah; "but I don't believe half I hear."

As they came nearer shore the wind began to rise again and the rain to fall. The boys were silent, but they were working and watchful. The dull afternoon grew darker all the time.

"It must be after sunset," said Henry. "Do you know where the Smiths live? I don't."

"Yes, I know," said David, "and it won't take us long to get there."

By the time the boys had run the little Pilot into a cove, and anchored her fast, and covered everything of value in her to keep the rain out, it was dark, and the rain was coming down harder than before. It was with great difficulty the boys could find their way, as they slowly pushed on along the rough country road.

It was late in the evening when they came to the Smiths' house, but there was a light in the kitchen that showed they were at home and awake.

The sharp knock upon the door which the boys gave brought a hurrying of footsteps inside, and a moving of the lights. They heard the bolt slip in the door, but no word of welcome came to them.

Another spell of knocking caused a window in the chamber overhead to be raised, and a shrill voice called out, "Who's there?"

"Some boys caught in the storm," replied David.

"What boys?" was the question that came down to them.

"The Field and Spicer boys from over by Sackett's," was the reply.

There was a moment's hesitation, a whispered conversation, and then the bolt was drawn, the door was opened, and the boys entered.

They saw three women, or rather one woman and two tall girls, evidently her daughters, who stood back and looked shyly, and yet with great interest, at their belated and wet guests.

"We were caught in the storm," said David, "and we should like it very much if you would give us shelter for the night. We'll pay you for all the trouble we make," added he, after a moment.

"It is n't the money I'm thinking of," said the woman. "I don't see how I can let ye in to-night. And yet I hate to turn you out in this rain," she added, as there came a heavier dash against the windows. "Well, if you'll sleep on the floor in the attic, I guess ye can stay," she finally said.

The boys were glad of this welcome, ungracious as it seemed to be. And as they sat by the fireplace drying themselves before they went to bed, they told the story of Andrew's seizure, and of the object of their journey.

"The Osprey, did ye say?" said the woman,

sharply; and a quick glance passed from the daughters to their mother. "Why, that's a man o' war, and you boys couldn't do anything if you did find her. If my man was home, he'd tell you so too. He'll be here pretty quick."

But the boys were all dry and warm now, and asked to be shown up stairs.

The girls took a couple of candles and led the way to the unfinished attic room. David was impressed by the number of strong chests that lined the room, each locked with a heavy padlock. He thought of what Elijah had said about the Smiths being connected with the smugglers; but the girls had gone now, and the boys silently were getting ready for bed. David examined the door, and found it could be locked only from the outside. "I don't just like the looks of things," said he to Elijah; "but we'll get out of this early in the morning."

But just then they heard a heavy tramping down stairs, and they knew some men had entered.

"It's Mr. Smith and Elihu come home, I guess," whispered Henry to Elijah.

"There's more than two of 'em. Hark! what's that?" said David quickly.

The boys listened, but could hear only the voices of the persons below as they engaged in earnest conversation.

"I tell you I know that voice," whispered David,

excitedly. "That's the boatswain of the Osprey; I know it is. I could tell those tones if I heard them in China. We're in a box, boys. I'm going down to see what's going on," said he. "You stay here and wait." And in his bare feet David crept out of the room, and waited and listened upon the stairs.

The woman was telling of the coming of the boys; and as David listened he could hear her tell of their journey and its object.

"I don't know what you let them in for, anyway," growled her husband. "Here's the Osprey close by, and no one knows what they may see and hear. Besides, those chests upstairs are not empty either."

"Well," said the boatswain, "I don't care for the boys. We've got this Andrew they're after. It may get you into trouble if they suspect anything. We're going to have trouble with the United States anyway pretty soon, and I don't care if we begin now. These boys don't come alone; there's more than a party of youngers in this."

"But you don't think we're going to have a war, do you?" inquired Smith.

"Well, it looks that way. You see in the other war Great Britain was having too much trouble with France just then to bother about the Colonies. But she didn't like to be whipped by a lot of backwoodsmen. She had just as soon have another bout as

not. But these boys can't make any trouble. We've got this fellow, Andrew, at work, and we've found out he can work too. We'll be off in the morning before they're up, and they won't suspect anybody's been here. Whew, how it rains!"

"I don't like their being here at all. They'll get me into trouble," said Smith. "I guess the safest thing for me to do will be to look after them a little myself," and he started for a candle, with the evident intention of paying the boys a visit in their room.

David hurriedly and quietly ran back to the boys. "They're coming up here," he excitedly whispered to his companions. "The door opens this way; let's hold it if we can." And the boys braced themselves against the door. It was so dark they could not see one another's faces, but David was sure the other boys could hear his heart beat. It sounded to him like the rapid strokes of a sledge-hammer. "Hark! he's coming," whispered he. "If he finds the door is fast, I don't believe he will try to get in."

The stealthy footsteps drew nearer, the boards creaked, and their visitor stopped. The light from his candle came in through the cracks.

"He's coming; he's right here," whispered David; "now hold on."

The man was by the door, and he was evidently listening; but no sound came from within. David

gave Elijah a nudge with his elbow to show the time of action had come; but there was no pressure against the door. They heard the bolt steadily and quietly slipped into its place from the outside, and the retreating footsteps of the man as he went down stairs with stealthy tread. The door was locked, and the boys were trapped.

CHAPTER VI

AN ESCAPE

THE boys faced a dilemma. They had no light, and nothing with which to make one; they could not see one another's faces. A little light came in through the window.

"Come over by the window, boys," said David. "We can see whether we can get out of this or not."

They groped their way toward the window, stepping softly, and listening to the sound of the voices that came up from below. They were soon together, and looked out at the night. They could now dimly see; the storm was abating; the clouds hurrying across the sky afforded occasional glimpses of the rising moon.

"I think the best thing we can do is to get out of this," said Elijah. "They think they've got us sure; but they'll find we are not so easily caught."

"Suppose some of them should shoot," said Henry.

"We're bound to have trouble if we stay here," David replied, "and I think the best thing we can do

is to make a break. It isn't over ten feet to the ground, and I'm not afraid to try that. We can let ourselves out of the window, and make for the boat."

"You go first," said Elijah to David. So, carefully crawling through the window, David let himself fall to the ground. Henry followed, and then came Elijah; but as he was getting ready to let himself down, a sound from within the house startled him, and letting go, he came to the ground in such a manner that his shoes scraped the sides of the house, and the noise he made was heard within. There was a rush for the door, but Elijah had made for the road with the others, and now they could not be seen. Secure in the darkness, they waited a moment for all three to come together, and to see what was likely to take place in the house.

Even as they were waiting, they heard the voice of Smith calling from the window of the room they had left: "They're gone. Get after them, for if they get away I'm a ruined man. They must have left their boat down by the cove, and we'll cut across and get them yet, and stop their talking."

The boys waited for no further hint. Together they started, unmindful of the mud and water that splashed upon them from the puddles through which they ran. They never stopped to take breath until they came all panting to the little Pilot, which lay just where they had anchored her. It was short

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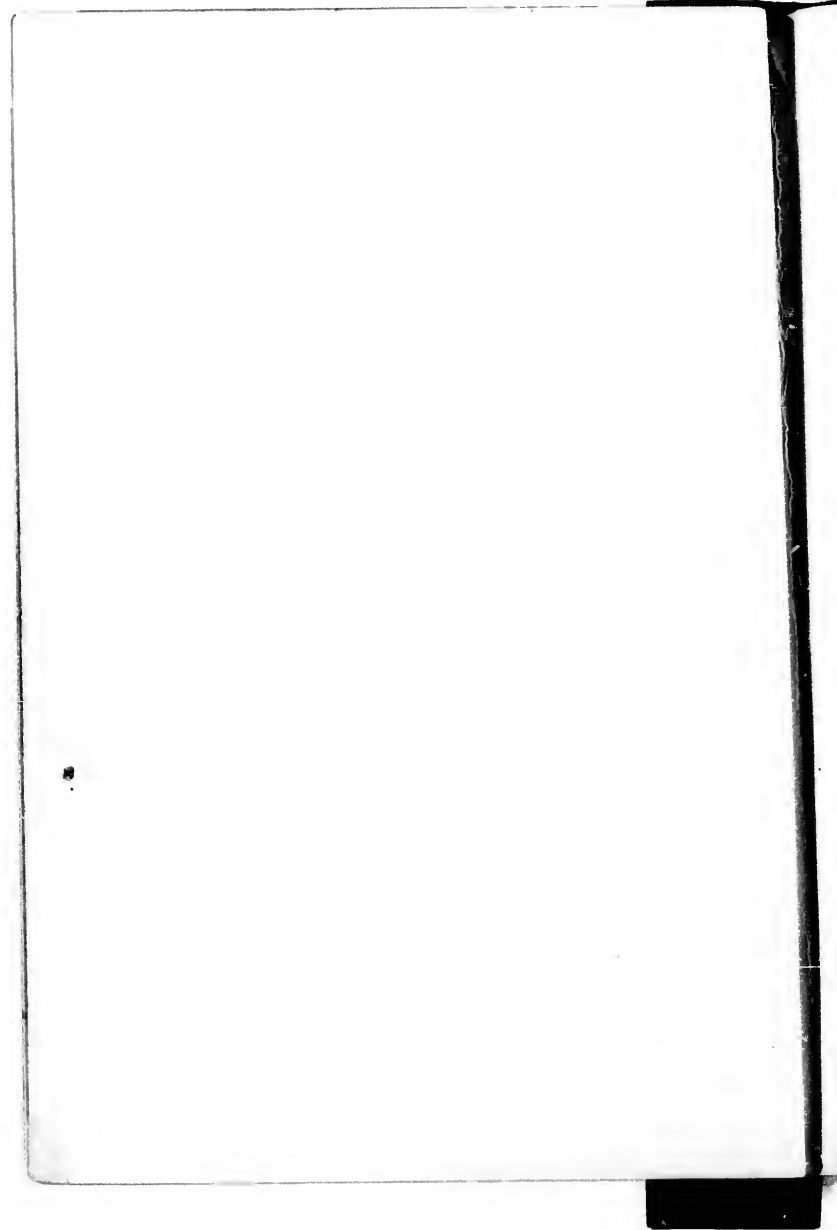
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"CRAWLING THROU' THE WINDOW, DAVID TOLD HIMSELF LATE."



work to pull up the anchor and take the oars for a pull together. They did not stop to raise the sails, as their only purpose now was to put all the distance they could between themselves and their pursuers. They heard the voices of the men as they came down to the shore, and they rested for a little upon their oars, so that the noise they made would not attract attention.

"I don't believe they came into the cove at all," they heard the boatswain say. "We must have got here sooner than they, for we cut across lots. They must be somewhere else."

"If they are, they are gone from here before this," answered Smith. "We might as well go home and get some of this mud off. They must have heard what we were saying down stairs," he added, gloomily, "and they'll report it at Sackett's the first thing. I don't believe a word of that story about their being after their brother. I know their folks are not such fools as to let a parcel of youngers go off alone like that. But that does n't help me any. I wish I never had touched your stuff."

"But you've made some money, have n't you?" said the boatswain. "I don't see what you are growling at."

"Yes, but see what all the folks around here think of me. I feel as if I was a cousin of Benedict Arnold."

"You're in fer it, anyhow," replied his companion. "I'm going back to the Osprey; don't you want to go, too? There are some fellows at Oswego who are coming aboard. We'll take care of you now."

"No, I'm going home. I don't know what I'll do next. I'm in a scrape sure, and perhaps I will join you after a little," he added.

"Well, I'm off for the Osprey. We sha'n't be here again in a good while now. We've got other work on hand. Good by," he added, as he turned to go.

There was silence soon upon the shore, and the boys turned again to their oars. "We'll go down the shore a little way, and anchor. Some one of us will have to keep guard, but two can go to sleep, and we'll all take turns," said David.

An hour's row brought them to the mouth of a large creek that emptied into the lake. "Here's a good place to anchor," said David. "You two turn in, and I'll stay on guard till I get tired, and then I'll call one of you."

The long hours of the night passed on, and David shared his duty with Elijah. The morning light brought to them a clear day, and they looked out over the lake to see if they could see anything of the Osprey.

But the lake was all quiet, and not a sail was to

be seen. "We'll cook our breakfast on shore, I guess," said David.

"Hold on a minute, David," said Elijah; "I've been fishing here before this, and I know this ground. Let's try for some bass; they'd be good for breakfast."

"You fish, then, and let Henry and me go ashore and get a fire started, if we can find any wood dry enough."

So Elijah set the two boys on shore, and then pushed out to try his luck with the fish.

"This is a fine place to camp in," said Henry. "I'd like to stay here a week. We could pitch our tent under those rocks and have a good time."

"Yes, and the Osprey could see it all if she came along, and then what could we do for Andrew? I want to find some one to help us get him out of his scrape if I can."

The boys found some wood that was dry enough to burn, and started back toward the shore. The wild strawberries grew profusely there, and Henry stopped to fill his hat; and when he came back to the shore David had the fire started, and Elijah was with him cleaning a large bass. Four others, hardly yet dead, were upon the grass by his side.

"I thought I'd save 'em; they might come handy during the day," he said.

The boys made a hearty breakfast. They had been

in the woods so often that camping out was an old experience. The fish they fried with salt pork, and the berries made a good dessert. Elijah was an expert with corn meal, and it was but a little time before the boys, refreshed and rested, were ready to resume their journey.

"You heard what the boatswain said, did n't you?" inquired David. "I have a letter to the commander at Oswego, and the boatswain said they were going to take on some men there. I think the best thing we can do is to push on toward Oswego. Perhaps it won't be too late after we get there, for it can't be that the Osprey has gone ahead of us. She is n't anywhere in sight now, and the sooner we start out the better."

To this the other boys agreed, and the Pilot was soon headed up the lake, the boys keeping well in near shore.

"The boatswain said last night there would be war soon between the United States and England," said David. "I'm glad of it, and I hope it'll come. If England can come in here and take any of our men right off our own boats, I don't see where the freedom is. They say we live in the land of the free."

"Don't you remember last winter up in the checkered schoolhouse how we parsed the Declaration of Independence? Well, that said all men were created

free and equal. It seems to me, the English are a little more free than equal," said Elijah.

"Yes, that's so. But that does n't bring back Andrew," replied David. "Do you know, I don't think father and mother have any idea that we can get him, and yet I think if we come back without him they will be disappointed too."

So the boys sailed on. The wind was light, and what there was, was almost dead against them. But they gained no sight of the Osprey. At night they went ashore, and placed their tent just a little within the trees that came almost down to the water's edge. With the axe they had brought with them they cut some fallen trees into lengths suitable for a camp fire. The fish Elijah had caught they threw away, as Henry, wishing to take his turn at the fishing, had caught some fresh ones. The berries they found in as great abundance as ever, and after a hearty supper they were ready for bed.

"Shall we keep a guard to-night?" said Elijah.

"No," said David. "If anybody sees a fire they will think it's some one burning logs to make potash. There's lots of 'em keep at it all night, this time of the year. We'll get up two or three times in the night and put some fresh logs on the fire."

With a roaring fire before their camp, the boys wrapped themselves in their heavy blankets, and upon the hemlock boughs which they had cut for a

bed, and piled high up in their tent, they slept as only boys know how when they are camping in the woods. Once Elijah rose and placed some fresh logs upon the smouldering fire, and once David did the same. He looked out over the water in the moonlight to see if he could see anything upon the lake. But nothing was in sight, and the only sound he could hear was an owl out among the trees, and the lapping of the little waves of the lake, as they fell upon the pebbly beach at his feet.

In the early morning, after another breakfast upon fish caught for the occasion by Henry, the boys set sail. The day was calm and beautiful,—too calm for sailing, the boys thought. Another night came, and again the boys camped upon the shore, and repeated their experiences of the previous night.

"We can't be very far from Oswego now," said David. "It was n't much over fifty miles from home, anyway. We must be pretty near there now."

"Yes, I think so, too," answered Elijah, and they were not mistaken. In the early part of the next forenoon they came in sight of the fort.

"What a big place it is," said Elijah, who had never been from home before, except to the neighboring settlements. They sailed within the harbor and admired the place, which to them seemed so large, situated on either side of the river.

"What a lot of boats there are here!" said Elijah,

but David did not reply. Elijah turned to see why he was silent.

David stood with open mouth, staring at a ship that lay alongside the dock they were passing. Elijah followed David's gaze, and saw the long streamer floating, on which was the word "Osprey." On the dock was a man, to whom David pointed, and excitedly said, "There 's the boatswain."

CHAPTER VII

ANDREW'S EXPERIENCE ON THE OSPREY

WHEN Andrew Field had stepped on board the yawl, he knew that any resistance on his part would be useless, and might bring serious trouble not only upon himself but upon David. Not a word was spoken by any one as the yawl was pulled back to the Osprey. Andrew stepped on deck with the boatswain, who touched his hat and spoke to a man in uniform who stood watching their return.

"I've brought a new man," said the boatswain.

The lieutenant smiled, for it was the lieutenant to whom he spake, and said: "I hope he came willingly. The King has a good place for able-bodied young men."

"No sir, I did n't come willingly," replied Andrew. "I live in the United States, and the King of England has no right to claim my services. I want to see the captain."

"You want to see the captain, do you?" said the lieutenant with a laugh. "Come with me, and I think you'll see him soon enough." And he led the way to the captain's quarters. He left Andrew out-

side, and stepped within. In a few minutes he opened the door and called to Andrew to enter.

The captain was a large, full-faced man, and when he looked at him, Andrew's heart sank. What could he hope from a man who looked as savagely at him as did the captain of the Osprey?

"Then you want to ship aboard the Osprey, do you?" said the captain, in a voice that made Andrew think of their roaring bull at home.

"No, sir, I don't," he replied, quietly. "I was fishing with my brother out here by the Rocks, and your men made me come on board. I want to go home, and I hope you'll set me ashore and let me go."

"I'll let you go," growled the captain, and, raising his great fist, he struck Andrew two heavy blows on either side of his head.

Andrew was almost stunned by the blows, and could say nothing.

"Take him down to the cook," ordered the captain, and tell him to keep him there. "Too much daylight won't be good for him just yet."

And the lieutenant led Andrew away. As he passed along the deck, almost stunned as he was, he yet could not help wondering at the great guns and the number of men he saw. "What do they want to take me for when they have so many men already?" thought Andrew bitterly, as he followed

his leader. They descended into the galley, and the lieutenant, after a few words to the cook spoken so low that Andrew could not hear them, left him and returned to the deck.

Andrew looked up at the cook as the lieutenant left. He was a short thick-set man, but the expression on his face showed him to be kind-hearted, and the look he now cast on Andrew was full of sympathy. He had time to notice that he had lost one leg at the knee, and a wooden stump had taken its place, which sounded strangely as the cook moved about the galley.

The cook was the first to break the silence. "I know, I know all about it. Ye need n't tell me a word," said he. "It's queer business, but don't ye give up. You just pitch in and do all ye can, and wait. The cap'n would n't thank me for sayin' this to ye, but I'm goin' to, just the same. I know, I know all about it. Ye need n't say a word to me." And he rattled his dishes and made a great show of being busy.

"Now you just take hold here and help me a little, and you'll feel better," he added, as he saw how downcast and despondent Andrew appeared.

Andrew did as he was told, and in a little while the cook had drawn from him his entire story. He only interrupted by an occasional grunt, and then rattled his dishes the more. "Bless me! Bless me!

Yes, yes, I know, I know all about it," he interjected from time to time.

Andrew did not see just how the cook could know all about it, but his kindly sympathy was so evident, that he felt at once that he had found a friend.

"I suppose you'll be trying to get ashore pretty soon?" asked the cook. "Yes, yes, I know, I know all about it," he said, when Andrew replied by a decided nod of the head.

"We had a young fellow come aboard out by Niagara, something like you," he added, after a moment's silence. "He thought he'd go ashore one night. He started, but I don't think he got there; leastwise, I never heard he did."

"Why not?" inquired Andrew.

"Shot," was the reply of the cook.

Andrew started to make another inquiry, but the cook broke in upon him: "Yes, yes, I know, I know all about it. But I want to give ye a little advice. Don't ye do it. They'll watch ye sharp, for a time anyway; and my orders is for ye not to leave the galley. But don't give up," he added quietly, as he saw Andrew's face fall. "Help'll come, only ye must wait a spell. I guess your folks won't entirely forgit ye."

The reference to his father made Andrew's heart again sink. He knew how ill he was, and how little he could expect from David.

"I sha'n't forgit to help ye," he added, "when the right time comes. I don't waste any love on these Britishers, though I do cook for the Osprey."

"What are you doing here, then?" asked Andrew in surprise.

"My story 's a long one. Some time I'll tell it to you, but not now." And they turned to their work, the cook directing Andrew by an occasional word. Andrew could hear him muttering to himself at times, "Yes, yes, I know, I know all about it," and often he felt his kindly glance resting upon him.

Andrew was glad to have found a friend; and he could see that this simple-hearted man, stumping about the galley, and busy with his dishes, would be a helper to him. And the more he thought about it the more was he convinced that the cook was right. Andrew was very certain that he wanted to get away, but he was just as certain that he did not want to be shot. He knew orders had been given to watch him, and that for a time he must appear at least to give in to the life he would be compelled to lead on ship-board.

Towards night the lieutenant made his appearance again, to make inquiry as to how the new man was getting on.

"We 'll give you something to do on deck by and by," he said as he departed, pleased with the report the cook gave him of Andrew's readiness.

"He's to bunk with you, and you are to look after him," he called out in a suggestive way to the cook as he disappeared.

Andrew, not hopeless, but because he saw that anything else was useless, appeared to give in to his surroundings. The days were monotonous, and yet he found his greatest relief in keeping busy. Sometimes he knew there were storms, but he never appeared on deck. He would not have been allowed to go there if he had wanted to, and quietly he tried to make the best of it. He knew the ship was in motion, but of her destination and plans he was in entire ignorance.

Several days passed in this way, and the cook and he each day became warmer friends. Andrew made himself useful, and his services were appreciated by his friend. He was a peculiar man, with a nasal drawl to his words that was often amusing.

"I think you must have lived Down East some time," Andrew said to him one day.

"Now what makes you think that?" asked the cook.

"You talk like a Yankee. Some of 'em settled near us."

"Yes, yes, I know, I know all about it," replied his friend. "I've heard they talk through their noses. Is that it?"

"I guess it's because they don't talk through their noses," replied Andrew, laughing.

"Well, I did live Down East; I did n't think you 'd a known it, though. Ye see I was raised in Rhode Island, right near to Newport. I tell ye, Little Rhody's the place for ye."

"What made you leave there?" said Andrew, with a smile.

"Well, I was always on the water, ye see. I used to carry fish and oysters to Providence. The first money I ever made was with lobsters. Then there came a time when I shipped on a coaster. Them was great days," he added, with a sigh. "I used to be home every two months, but I ain't got any home now. My father thought he 'd have to go with General Greene when he went South. Ye see he used to run a blacksmith shop right near us. But he never came back."

"Why not?" asked Andrew quietly.

"Guilford Court House," was the short reply. There was silence for a minute, and then he went on: "My mother did n't live long after that, and now everybody's gone. Then I knocked around for a while, and shipped in '97 on the Constellation. She could fight, I tell ye," he added, with a look of pride; "she could just rattle those frog-eating Frenchmen every time."

"The Frenchmen! Why, I thought they were our friends," said Andrew.

"O, they were in '77; but ye see after that things

got worse. There was a few mean men got the grip on the French government, and they was out with pretty much the whole world. They'd fight everybody, unless they'd pay 'em to stop fighting."

"I did n't know they bothered us."

"O, yes," laughed the cook. "They set their ships on to take our cargoes and sometimes our men. They passed a lot o' laws so we could n't trade much with 'em, and then they turned our Minister out o' their old country."

"Why, I never heard of that," said Andrew. "What did we do about it?"

"Well, the President sent some special ministers over there, and they did n't scare very easy. The Frenchers thought they would pay 'em a lot of money for them to quit bothering us, but our ministers said they'd 'spend millions for defence, not one cent for tribute.'"

"I've heard of that, but I did n't know when it was said," remarked Andrew.

"Well, that's when; and for a few months we really had a war with France. Congress gave up all the treaties we had with her, and commenced to get together an army, and put Washington at its head; and they give out orders fer to take any French vessels we could."

"When was all this?" asked Andrew.

"In '98," replied the cook. "The biggest fight

was when the Constellation whipped the L'Insurgente off St. Kitt's, in the West Indies. That's where I left my leg," added the cook, pointing with a smile to his wooden stump.

"Did you take her?" asked Andrew.

"Take her! Wall, I guess we did. It was just at that time that 'Hail Columbia!' came out, and ye ought to have heard us sing it," and the cook forgot where he was. "Did ye ever hear it?" he asked Andrew; and, without waiting for his reply, he began to sing as loudly as he could the old battle hymn. "We'd had some more times there, only the next year Bonaparte stepped up and offered good terms of peace and we took 'em. But where are we now?" And the cook disappeared for a minute, and said, when he returned, "We're at Oswego. Ever been here?"

"No," replied Andrew. He knew they were at the dock now. He stepped to the scuttle hole and looked out; he started back with a sharp exclamation. Out on the river he saw a little cat-rigged boat sailing by, and in it were David his brother, and Elijah and Henry Spicer.

CHAPTER VIII

BAFFLED AGAIN

SCARCELY had David uttered his exclamation of surprise at seeing the Osprey already at Oswego, when there rose from the ship the call of a crow. Three times it was given, and David could not tell just where it came from.

"That's Andrew," he said, excitedly, and from the little Pilot there arose the response. But no further call came from the Osprey.

"I know that was Andrew," said David; "that's our call, surely. But we can't go aboard the Osprey and take him off. What's the best thing to do now?"

"I should say take your letter and go straight to the fort. You want to act while the Osprey is here; and the sooner we can get to the fort the better," said Elijah.

"That's so," said David; "and we'll keep right on a little farther up the river. I don't want the Osprey's boatswain to see me."

"Henry and I'll go up to the fort, and you stay here," said David to Elijah.

"All right," replied Elijah. "I don't want you gone long, though."

"We sha'n't be any longer than we can help, you may be sure of that," replied David, as he changed his course and drew in towards shore at a quiet spot beyond the docks.

David and Henry started on the run towards the fort. But here a great disappointment came to them; when they arrived there they found the commander could not be seen. Just how long they would have to wait they could not learn, but wait they must; so, with the best grace possible, they wandered about the grounds and down the street outside.

"That funny old fellow over there seems to be watching us," said Henry, pointing to the other side of the street, where a queer-looking little fat man with a wooden leg was stumping along.

"That's so. I wonder what he wants," said David, as the stranger beckoned for them to wait for him as he crossed over to where they were.

"Come, boys, take in sail," he said, as he came near.

Both boys waited in silence for him to approach, wondering what he could want of them. "He looks and talks like a sailor," said Henry to David.

"And so I am, or was, rather," said the stranger as he stopped, "before I lost this leg and was afore

the mast. Now I'm only a cook, and on a British boat at that. What do ye think o' that?" he asked.

Both boys were all attention now, and listening.

"I think one o' ye's named Field," said the sailor, quizzically.

"Yes, my name's Field, — David Field," replied the owner of that name.

"Yes, yes, I know, I know all about it," said the cook.

"Know all about what?" asked David, eagerly.

"Not so fast, my hearty. Take a reef; bare poles is enough now. But I guess ye know Andrew Field, then, if your name's David."

"Yes, I do. He's my brother, and he's on the Osprey now. Been pressed; and I've followed her here and have got a letter to the fort to see if I can't get him back again. Do you know him? Are you from the Osprey?"

And the questions came so rapidly from David that the cook laughed and said: "Not so fast, not so fast. Andrew thought he saw ye, and he give those caws, and if I hadn't clapped my hand over his mouth I guess he'd a had the whole crew after him. But as it was, no damage was done."

"Well, how is he? Is he all right?" asked David, impatiently.

"O, he's all right. He's willing enough, but I

don't think he'll ever make much of a cook; he does n't seem to take to it."

"Is he cook, then?" asked David.

"Cook! Well, I guess not. I'm the cook; Andrew is first lieutenant."

"First lieutenant? What do you mean?"

"First lieutenant to the cook," replied the stranger.

"Well, we want to get him off if we can. I've got a letter from Colonel Bettinger at Sackett's Harbor for the commander of the fort here, and one to Captain Snaith."

"The one to Cap'n Snaith won't do ye any good; and I don't much believe the other will either. Howsomever, you'd better try it. But if it does n't work, I should n't wonder but, if to-night was a dark night, ye might get a passenger, if he know'd where to find ye."

"Will you help him off?" said David eagerly.

"We are down here below the dock, and we'll wait all night there."

"Pretty risky for me; but I know, I know all about it," said the cook. "You'd better try yer letter to the fort first, and then, if that don't go, why, *mebbe* — mind, I say *mebbe* — I can help him off to-night; and if you should find him, I presume you'd take him home, would n't ye?"

"Take him home! Well, I should think we would.

That's what we came for. Thank you; thank you for your help, Mr. —?"

"Cook. I'm the cook."

"Thank you, Mr. Cook," said David.

The cook chuckled and said: "Cook's as good as anything, I guess. Well, I must go back on board. Andrew's probably gettin' lonesome-like by this time."

"Tell him we're here, and going to help him," said David. "Wasn't he surprised to see us?"

"Surprised? Why, he would n't believe his eyes. Howsomever, don't stop to talk any more. You go up to the fort. But if you don't get what you want, you'd better not sleep too hard in yer boat to-night."

The cook started down the street, his wooden leg striking the ground with a double emphasis as he walked. The boys turned to wave their hands before they started back for the fort.

"Yes, yes, I know, I know all about it," he called out, as he disappeared around the corner.

The boys returned to the fort and learned that they could secure an audience now with the commander.

They found him a silent man, grave and courteous. "What can I do for you, boys?" he said, kindly, as they were brought before him.

"I've a letter for you," replied David, handing to him the note which Colonel Bettinger had written for him.

The commander took the letter, and, breaking the seal, began to read. He read it through the second time before he made any reply; then, looking up at the boys, he held the letter thoughtfully in his hand and said: —

"This is the third case like this that has come to my notice within the past week. The trouble is that these English war vessels won't allow any search; and they always deny any knowledge of the facts. They always say they have only British subjects. 'Once a Briton always a Briton,' you know, is their motto."

"Yes, that's what they said at Kingston," answered David.

"Have you been to Kingston about this?" asked the commander.

"Yes, we went there first, for we thought the Osprey was bound there."

"She's here now," said the commander. "But do you know surely that your brother is on board of her? He may have escaped."

"No, he's there," said David, and he related what had occurred since they came to Oswego.

"It's bad work. I'm not at all sure I can help you any; but I can give you or send a letter to Captain Snaith."

"I have one for him from Colonel Bettinger, too," said David.

"I'm afraid neither will be of any great service to you," said the commander, smiling. "If he denies any knowledge of it, why there's nothing we can do more."

David was prompted to a bold stroke. Boys were always to be careful in those days when they addressed their elders; and, besides, he stood in great awe of the kind-looking commander, who sat before him. He twirled his hat in his hand a moment, and then said, with a flush of his face, "If they are strong enough to take our men away from us when they don't want to go, I don't see why we ain't strong enough to take them back again. You have lots of soldiers here."

"You don't understand, my boy," said the commander, smiling kindly at David, abashed now at his own boldness. "We did make a brave stand for our liberty; but the English name is still a terror with many, and their navy, you know, is the best in the world. I don't know that we could take our men by force back again; and yet you may live to see the time when you and others will be given a chance to try."

"I'm trying now," said David.

"Yes, I know you are; but it looks as if we must try titles with England again. These outrages are increasing, and are growing worse because we have as yet done nothing. But I'll give you a note to

the Captain. Or, stay, I'll give it to one of our men and he can take it; it may be better for you not to go aboard the Osprey."

He wrote a letter and sent for one of his men. The boys thanked the commander, and, bowing low, left his presence with the man he had detailed. When they were outside the fort the sun was setting. David turned to the soldier, and said, "We'll go with you down to pretty near the dock, if you don't object, and we'll wait for you there. We may get a peep at Andrew." Then he said to Henry, "Perhaps you'd better go back to the Pilot. We've been gone so long Elijah won't know where we are, and he may be wondering what has become of us. I'll be there pretty soon."

"All right," replied Henry, and he started on the run toward the place where Elijah and the Pilot were.

David kept on with the soldier down the quaint streets of the old town. On almost any other occasion he would have been glad to stop and examine the storehouses and great lumber-yards he saw; but now other things were in his mind, and night was coming on. Silently they passed along the streets till they came to the river, and then they followed the docks along the river side.

"You know where the Osprey is, don't you?" said the soldier.

"She was right here this morning," said David;
"but she is n't here now."

They stopped to inquire of a man who was working upon the docks.

"The Osprey?" said he. "O yes, she sailed from here about two hours ago."

CHAPTER IX

ANOTHER VOYAGE BEGUN

DAVID slowly walked back to the place where the boys and the Pilot were waiting for him. But few words were spoken, for David was so keenly disappointed that he had little inclination to talk. He found the boys waiting and wondering what had become of him.

It took but a few minutes for him to relate all that had befallen since they had left Elijah.

"It's all the harder to get so close to Andrew, and then lose him," said David.

"Never mind, we'll get him yet," said Elijah, encouragingly. "But we must decide what we will do now."

"I think we'd better find out to-night, if we can, where the Osprey is going. It may not be of any use to follow her now."

"Well, you wait here," said Elijah. "I want to take a little run. I'll feel better for it. And I think I can find out about it, too."

So Elijah left the boys, and started out alone. He was gone only about an hour, and returned to find

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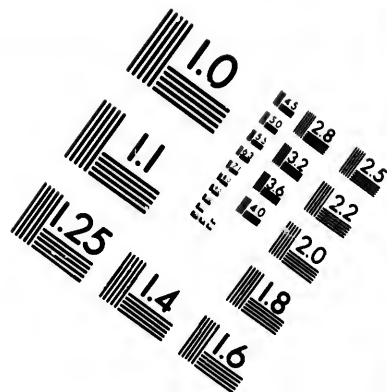
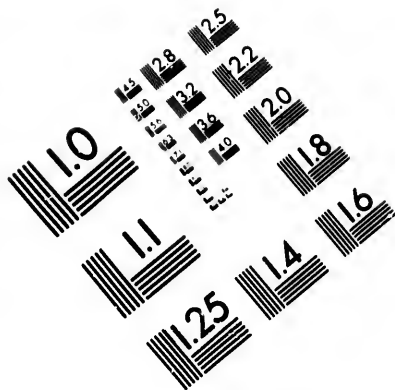
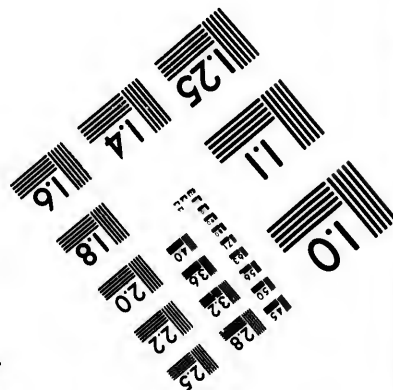
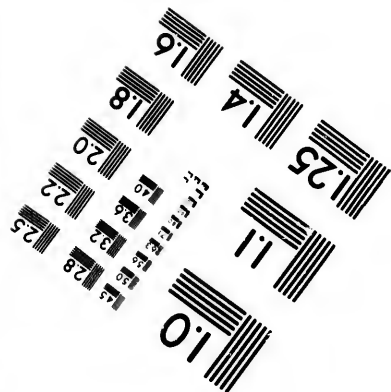
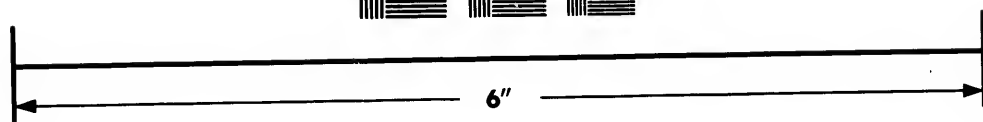
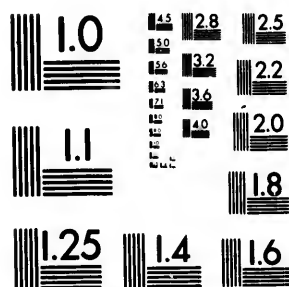


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them sitting silently in the Pilot, surprised to have him back so soon.

"What did you hear, Elijah?" asked Henry.

"They told me down by the dock that the Osprey was going down among the islands, and then after a time would probably go to Kingston. Nobody seemed to know much about her, anyway; but two men told me this, and I'm afraid it's true."

"Well, we'll all sleep in the cabin to-night. It's close quarters, but it's the best we can do, I guess. We sha'n't have to have any guard to-night. Here in Oswego nobody'll touch us."

"No, but I think we'd better drop out a little from the shore and anchor," said Elijah. "It's a clear night, and no one will run into us."

The boys approved the suggestion, and in a few minutes the Pilot was safely anchored about twenty feet from the shore, and the boys had wrapped themselves in their heavy blankets, and were soon fast asleep. So long and soundly did they sleep that it was late when they awoke in the morning.

Some of David's despondency was gone with the morning light, and yet he was far from cheerful. "What a report to take home!" said he. "It's worse than Kingston," he added. "You see, we've seen Andrew, and yet did n't get him."

"Yes, but you know where he is, and that he's all right," replied Elijah.

"That's so," said David, brightening. "That'll be some comfort; but I guess we'd better start for home."

"We can stop there, but I'm for going on further. Andrew knows we are following him, and if we get a good dark night, he can get away, I'm sure," said Elijah.

"It's time we started," said David, after they had finished their breakfast.

Henry had secured some milk and bread while David and Elijah had been talking, and this had given an added relish to the food they had brought, which was somewhat dry by this time.

They raised their anchor, and with a strong favoring wind were soon out on the lake. They watched for the Osprey, but not a sight of her could they secure. At night they repeated their former experience of camping. The wind was with them all the way, and at the close of the second day they were once more in sight of home.

"I think we'd better leave everything in the boat," said Elijah. "Henry and I'll go right up to our house, and you go to yours. We'll be over pretty soon, and I think we'd better go on again. I guess father won't object. We've had pretty good luck on this trip, even if we did n't get Andrew away," he added.

The surprise that met David as he entered his

father's house was on the faces of all. His father, wrapped in a light blanket, was sitting by the window, and near him was the old minister. His mother was busy in the kitchen.

"David's here," said his mother, as she brought him in to his father.

His father turned to greet him, but the question that was in his heart to ask, his quivering lips would not permit him to utter.

"We found Andrew," said David. "At least we heard him, and heard more of him," and he then told the story of their travels. He talked far into the evening. The morrow was Sunday, and these pioneer people began their observances of the day on the evening before.

Services were to be held at David's house the next day, and preparations were to be made on this evening. David helped his mother, and then went up into his little room in the attic.

"It seems good to sleep in one's own bed again," thought David; "though I rather liked that camping out on the shore." He did not take much time for thinking, however, and was soon fast asleep.

All the Spicers and the other neighbors were present at the services on the following day, but no discussion of the trip of the boys was then held. The day was a serious one to these descendants of the Puritans, and even David and Elijah found no opportunity for conversation.

But Monday morning brought a conference. Elijah and Henry, with their father, were early at the house of the Fields, and the plans of the boys were talked over.

"I think the boys have done well," said the old preacher. "They've found out that Andrew is unharmed, and that's a great deal. Oswego must be a great place," added he. "I've never been there."

"O, it is," said Elijah, enthusiastically. "Such a lot of boats and men I never saw before."

"It was quite a centre of action during the war of the Revolution," said Mr. Dodd. "I remember hearing how General Burgoyne sent Colonel St. Leger with a large body of men from Montreal up the St. Lawrence and the lake to Oswego. Their plan was to attack Fort Schuyler."

"That's a good ways from the lake, isn't it?" said David.

"Yes, about seventy-five miles. It used to be called Fort Stanwix in the French and Indian war. But their plan was to take their cannon and supplies by water up the Oswego River, and through Oneida Lake, and that would bring them almost to the fort. When they had captured that, they were going to drag the boats over to the Mohawk, and go down by water to Albany."

"Did n't Colonel St. Leger have some good men with him?"

"Yes, he was joined by some brave men, and some who were very cruel. There was a Sir John Johnson, who lived down in the Mohawk Valley. He had fled to Canada, and he had raised a regiment of Canadians and Tories, who had gone over there too. They were called 'Johnson Greens,' because they wore coats trimmed with green. Then there was a Colonel John Butler, who also lived in the Mohawk Valley, and he raised a regiment of Tories too."

"I thought he had some Indians," added Elijah.

"Yes, he did have some," replied the preacher. "There was an Indian whose name was Thayendanegea. That meant 'Bundle of Sticks,' in English," he added, with a laugh, as he saw a puzzled look on the boys' faces. "He had been taught by a Rev. Mr. Wheelock, at Lebanon, Connecticut. He was the man who started Dartmouth College. Bundle of Sticks could speak English, and he had been over to England. He was the interpreter for Mr. Kirkland, who was a missionary to the Indians. He and some other chiefs brought a large number of warriors."

"I should n't have thought he would have fought the Americans," said David.

"The English prejudiced him. They told him how the 'Boston men,' which was the name by which our colonists were known by the Indians hereabouts,

were trying to take their country away from them. In one sense of the word, Bundle of Sticks was a patriot."

"Well, Colonel St. Leger didn't do much, I have heard," said David.

"No; the Indians became frightened, and after the battle of Oriskany he found he had but a small force left."

But David's mother was impatient. She wanted to talk over the plan David had proposed of going down among the Thousand Islands, and see if they could not assist Andrew there in getting away from the Osprey.

"The boys have done so well on this trip," said Mr. Spicer, who had been waiting, not wishing to interrupt Mr. Dodd, "that I think it would be well for them to take a trip down there. It's a good time of the year; there will be no severe storms, and while we need them at home, we need Andrew more."

"That's the border line now, along the St. Lawrence, and there will be more danger from the smugglers and the Canadians than anywhere else," said Mr. Field, who up to this time had taken no part in the conversation.

"Yes, I know," said Mr. Spicer, "but the Osprey will land at several places surely. There's Cape Vincent, and Clayton, and Gananoque, and perhaps she'll go down to Brockville. The boys can keep

near the American shore, and I think the trip will help to make men of them. We shall need men soon."

"But if we lose our boys we sha'n't have any men," said David's mother.

"It's to get our boys back we are working," said Mr. Spicer, gently.

It was decided that the boys should start again. Mr. Spicer, who had often been down the St. Lawrence, even as far as Montreal, gave them minute instructions. He had friends who had settled along the St. Lawrence at the same time that he had chosen his home by Lake Ontario, and he told the boys where they were, and how they were to find them.

All day they were busy getting the boys ready for this, — a longer journey. David's mother was preparing a large quantity of food, which they could take with them. The boys were getting their old flint-locks ready, and helping some around David's home before they started. Mr. Dodd had consented to remain and look after the chores until the boys should return, and the day was a busy one.

But the next morning, with the little Pilot well fitted out, and with provisions and guns and axes on board, and fishing tackle and tents ready, they thought her equipped for a cruise that might last weeks.

The experience the boys had already had, and the

hope of now helping Andrew to escape from the Osprey, filled them with eagerness, and they could hardly wait for the time of starting to come.

But at last all things were ready, the good by was said, the little boat was cast off from the dock, and, the sails filling, they started on their new voyage, now going in a direction opposite to the one they had taken before.

CHAPTER X

VISITING

THE boys had a beautiful day, and with favoring winds they met with no obstacles. At noon they ate their lunch, but the Pilot steadily kept on her course.

"What are you going to do for the night?" asked Elijah. "Do you think we had better camp out or put up at a farmhouse? We haven't had very good luck, so far, stopping at farmhouses."

"That's so," replied David; "but my father has friends not far from here and I think we'd better try to see them any way. That's as far as I ever have been down the lake, and I should like to ask some questions about the way. I don't think we can get lost; still, I'd like to find out some things."

"Well, I hope we shall get there before dark, then," said Elijah. "I'd rather stay in the Pilot than take any chances."

David looked at the sun. It was already getting low, and he did not enjoy the prospect of any more night adventures.

"We must be nearly there," he said, after the silence that followed. "Yes, I know now where we are. We'll put in by that large rock you see yonder," and he pointed to a great stone that was lying on the shore. "They call that the Obelisk. They tell me that it's just in the shape of the monuments the Egyptians made and called by that name. That's the place where father and Andrew and I landed the last time we came."

In a little time the boys had the Pilot securely anchored, and they were on their way towards the little wood-colored farmhouse they could see in the distance. Here a warm welcome awaited them. Many were the questions asked by these people, friends of his father. Mr. Potter, the head of the house, had been a neighbor of Mr. Field's in Vermont, and they had made the journey to New York State together.

A warm supper was soon ready for them, and the boys did ample justice to it; and sitting in front of the great fireplace, on which a small log was burning, for although it was now summer time the cold winds from the lake made a little fire most agreeable, they popped corn and told the story of the loss of Andrew, and of their previous trips to attempt his rescue, and their failure. David felt not a little abashed as the bright eyes of Mr. Potter's daughter were on him, but his story was very simply told, and

it drew forth strong comments from his hearers as he went on.

"Then you are going down the St. Lawrence after Andrew now, are you?" asked Mr. Potter, thoughtfully.

"Yes; not very far down though," replied David. "We shall not go very far from Kingston anyway, for we heard at Oswego that the Osprey was going to put in there in the course of a few weeks."

"Have you ever been down the river?" inquired Mr. Potter.

"No," answered David; "but I don't think we'll be likely to lose our way in a river."

"You won't hardly know whether you are on the lake or the river, the river is so large; and then where you are going there's a lot of islands. 'The Thousand Islands' is what they are called."

"I've heard of them, but I don't suppose there really are a thousand of them."

"I don't know just how many there are, but there's a lot. I've been down there a good many times, and it's an easy place to lose your way in."

"We're going to stop near Clayton with some friends; they'll tell us the way I guess," responded David, cheerfully.

"That's good. It's a great place anyway. It's worth a trip just to see the river and the islands, if you had nothing else on hand."

"Who was the first man to find that river?" asked David.

"You know the St. Lawrence empties into a gulf, don't you? Well, away back in 1506, a Frenchman named Denys discovered the Gulf of St. Lawrence. You see the Frenchmen, even then, were coming over here after codfish; they found lots of them off Newfoundland."

"Did Denys sail up the river?" asked David.

"No; it was not till 1534 that that was done. Cartier was the man who discovered the river. It was a great find for the French, too."

"Did they settle along the river then?"

"No; Champlain made a settlement at Quebec in 1608; then they settled along the river and held that ground till 1763. But they speak of their descendants as French Canadians still."

"Did the French do much?" asked David.

"Yes, they were very active. Why, in 1673 one of them named Marquette, and a trader named Joliet, entered what is now the United States. The Indians had told them of a great river beyond, and they were trying to find it."

"Did they find it?"

"Yes; it was the Mississippi. They sailed down that river to about the place where De Soto had crossed it. Then, in 1682, La Salle sailed down the Mississippi to its mouth. He named the whole region Louisiana."

"What became of him?" inquired David.

"O, he brought over a colony from France, and tried to make a settlement at the mouth of the Mississippi; but he could n't find the river then. He sailed on to Texas, and was murdered there."

"And the other people too?"

"No; they were broken down by sickness and starvation, and the most of them died. But a good many French missionaries, called Jesuits, came up the river and along the lakes; they were very brave and suffered greatly at the hands of the Indians. My grandfather told me about a man who met one of them in the woods who was a sight. The Indians had cut off his ears, and slit his nose, and had stuck splinters into his body and set them on fire."

"He did n't go back again, I guess," interrupted Elijah.

"Yes, he did; he was on his way back when this man saw him."

"He was a brave man, then. If those men could do such things I don't see why we can't be brave enough to try and help Andrew out of his scrape," said David, as Mr. Potter rose and lighted a candle, to show the boys where they were to sleep that night.

The next morning Mr. Potter gave the boys some friendly advice and directions; he cautioned them especially not to tell any one of their purpose, and to pass as a party of boys fishing, if they met others.

The girls went down to the shore to see the boys start, and brought a sack full of doughnuts and three chickens they had prepared. It seemed that, after the boys were in bed the night before, the girls had been busy, and the result of their labors was this addition to the stores of the Pilot. They were urged to stop again on their return, and with best wishes for a successful voyage the Pilot was headed down the lake; and so long as they could be seen, the girls remained upon the shore waving their hands in token of farewell.

"If we get Andrew, I guess he'll want to stop on our way back," said David. "He always thought that Potter girl with those black eyes was about right."

"I don't suppose you'll want to stop, though, shall you, David?" asked Elijah.

David flushed a little and laughed. "We've got too much to do now to be talking about girls," he said.

The day was much like the preceding one. At noon the boys landed, and, while David and Elijah were preparing a fire, Henry tried his luck with the bass again.

"I think this lake must be full of bass," said he, when he came ashore with half a dozen beauties. "The chicken's all right, but it'll keep. We can eat some chicken and some fish, too, I guess."

The boys were more cheerful than when they had started for Oswego; experience had given them confidence, and they laughed and sang as they gathered about the fire, and ate as only hungry boys camping out know how. But they wasted no time, and the Pilot was soon under sail again.

"I've been thinking about what Mr. Potter said about those Jesuits," said Elijah. "They must have been brave men."

"So have I; but I tell you," said David thoughtfully, "I think it takes just about as much pluck to do right anywhere. Ever since Elder Dodd has been talking to me I've thought a good deal about it. It's just about as hard to live and do the square thing, as it is to run off and go into the woods and not cry when the Indians get after you."

"Well, I don't know about that," said Elijah. "But it's getting most sunset now. We must be in the river, I think."

"Yes, I guess we are," replied David. "That settlement over there must be Cape Vincent, and we can see some land on the other side. Yes, we must be on the river now. I don't believe we'd better try to make for a house."

"No, let's stop on this island. It's a good night, and we can make a little fire, and in the morning it'll be all clear sailing. No more night attacks for me," he added, laughing.

Accordingly the boys landed and pitched their tent. Some stunted hemlocks were growing on the island, which they could see was a large one. The branches of the trees they proceeded to cut made a good bed, as they were spread on the ground in the tent, and the trunks made good logs for the fire.

The boys ate a hearty supper, and slept soundly all through the night. Some fish were added to their breakfast, which Henry had caught before the other boys were awake, and they were soon ready to depart.

"We must go over to the Reeses'. They can't be far from here, and we will get some directions from them. Perhaps they'll know something about the Osprey. Father wanted us to stop there anyway, and we'll have to get some directions from somebody."

The boys sent Henry down to the Pilot to get everything in readiness to depart, while they were busy taking down their tent and gathering their cooking utensils. While they were busily at work Henry came running to the camp, and excitedly exclaimed, "There's a boat a coming, and it's coming here!"

The boys rushed down to the shore and saw coming rapidly towards them a boat pulled by six men, and one sat in the stern steering.

"What shall we do?" asked Elijah.

"Stay here, and get ready to put off," said David.

But while they were talking the strange boat came nearer. Suddenly David grasped Elijah by the arm, and in a low tone said: "Elijah, do you see who that is steering? It's Smith, the man who tried to trap us that night down by the Rocks."

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CHAPTER XI

AN EXCHANGE OF BOATS

ELIJAH did not know Smith, and he was in great hopes that none of the boys would be recognized by him. He looked at David, and saw there was little ground for his hopes, however, and events soon proved the correctness of his surmise. The boat had scarcely touched the shore, and the men glanced suspiciously and angrily at the boys, before the face of Smith, who had been steering, lighted up, and he exclaimed:—

“Blamed ef I don’t know these boys. You’re young Field, Thomas Field’s son, from over by Sackett’s. These two young fellers with ye, who be they? O, yes; you’re that party that stayed at my house not long ago, and left without stoppin’ to say good by or how are ye. How could ye be so onpolite?”

David made no reply, chiefly because there was none to be made. The boys were abashed, and could find no words to say.

“What ye doin’ down here?” continued Smith,

while his companions sullenly stood by and listened. "I s'pose them Sackett's men sent ye down here to spend 'nother night with me, did n't they?"

"No, sir," replied David. "I have n't said anything about you to any one. We came down here on a different purpose entirely."

"What did ye come fer, then?" asked Smith. "Come, I want to know."

"I told you we did n't come to see or spy upon your smuggling, Mr. Smith," replied David.

"Smugglin'! Who 's a smugglin'?" and the faces of all the men grew dark. One or two of them whispered something in Smith's ear, who appeared as if he were undecided.

He hesitated a moment, and then said to one of the men, "O, I don't care much now. I'm going to leave pretty quick. If this trip 's a good one, I'm 'bout done. Then I don't care how much the youngsters squeal."

"But for a few days they might bother us," said the other.

"That 's so," replied Smith. And, turning again toward the boys, he said to them, "I don't s'pose ye came down the St. Lawrence to ship aboard the Osprey, did ye? I hearn tell how yer brother Andrew shipped, and I thought mebbe you had come too. They had a likely story to tell on ye at my house, about yer followin' the Osprey tryin' to git Andrew

off. I knew your folks was n't quite fools. But what are ye doin' here, anyway?"

David made no reply. To tell of his errand would only excite the anger and ridicule of the party, and besides he preferred to have them think some other project than the rescue of Andrew had brought them.

"Can't ye talk?" continued Smith; and, as David still made no reply, he turned to the men, and held a conversation for a few minutes in low and earnest tones with them.

David and Elijah tried to appear indifferent, and yet they were listening sharply, trying to catch some word that would give some clew as to what was likely to be done with them, and what was best for them to do. But listen as they would, not a word could they catch, and the angry looks the men kept casting towards them were not reassuring.

Finally Smith, who continued to be the spokesman, turned towards the boys, and said, "I guess ye're waitin' for the Osprey. Like enough they'll take ye on board when they come back. She went by here two or three days ago. I hope ye've somethin' to eat in yer boat."

"Yes, sir," said David. "We've enough to last some time."

"Wall, that's lucky. It's likely ye'll have ter stay here some time," he said; and, taking a heavy

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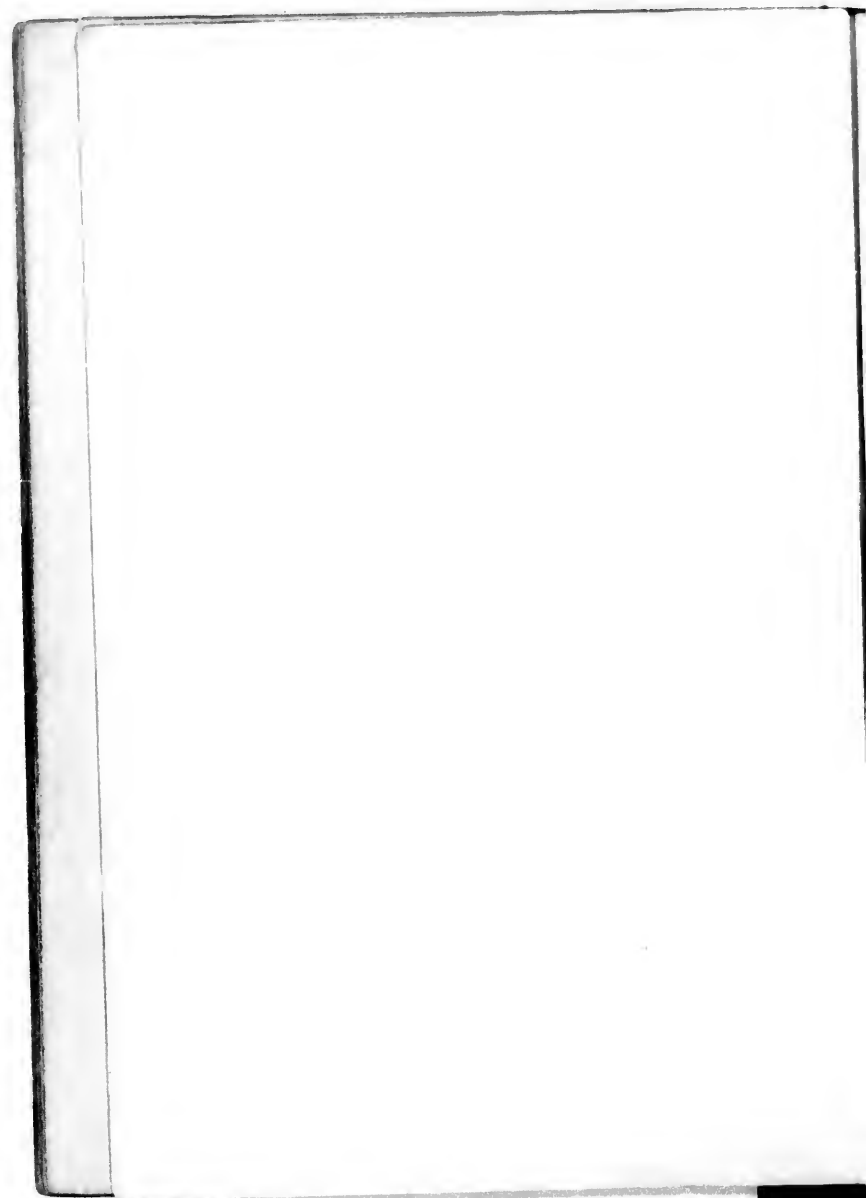
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““ HERE, WHAT ARE YOU DOING?” CALLED DAVID.” Page 103.



axe from one of the men, he went down to the shore, and, stepping on board the Pilot, deliberately raised it, and struck three or four sharp blows directly on the bottom of the boat.

"Here, what are you doing?" called David, excitedly, as he ran down to the shore. "Stop, stop!" he called. "O Mr. Smith, don't,—don't spoil the Pilot! How 'll we ever get home?"

"You won't need to go home right away. Ye can patch her up, and by the time ye get her ready, ye can't peach on us."

He turned to follow the men, who were laughing and walking towards the interior of the island. They stopped within sight of the shore, and Smith soon joined them. They seated themselves upon the ground, and seemed utterly to ignore the presence of the boys.

Meanwhile the boys disconsolately seated themselves on the shore, and gloomily watched the Pilot, as she settled lower and lower. The water was shallow, and she could not sink, but they heard her bottom grate upon the stones. They sat in silence for a minute, and then roused themselves, as David said: "Come, boys, let's haul her up on shore. If a storm comes up, she'll be broken to pieces where she is. Besides, we can see if we can't do something to set her right."

"That's so," said Elijah, eagerly, and they all

took hold to pull together; but their combined strength only served to pull the Pilot partly out of the water.

"Let's take the things out of her, and she'll be lighter," said Elijah, and the boys removed the tent and food, and in fact everything that was in the boat. The Pilot yielded to their pull more readily then, but still they could not haul her out upon the bank.

"I wish I had some rollers," said Elijah. "We could run her up easily then."

"We can take the oars out of the other boat," replied David, "and run her up on them. I wish we dared to get in their boat and pull off."

"So do I," said Henry. "But they'll shoot."

"Yes; it won't do to try it. Some of us would get hurt."

But they now had the Pilot out of the water, and up on the bank. They carefully examined her, and found two holes cut clear through her bottom. They looked at each other with rueful faces.

"Well, we're in a pickle sure now," said David. "I'm awfully sorry it was your boat, too, Elijah."

"Well, never mind that part of it," responded Elijah, cheerfully. "Let's see what can be done."

"We can't fix that boat; we have n't the tools. We're in for it; we're like Robinson Crusoe. Did you ever read that book?" said David.

"No," replied Elijah, "but it was about a fellow camping out, wasn't it?"

"O, yes; he camped out pretty much all his life. There was only one of him too, except Friday. He made another."

"What's that?" said Elijah, as a loud laugh rose from the men. They had seemingly ignored the boys completely.

"They're drinking," said David. "It'll be a pretty go for us if they all get drunk. We ain't more than half a mile from shore. What do you say to swimming?"

"Henry couldn't stand it, and I don't believe any of us could."

"Well, we'll wait awhile before we try it," replied David. "We've got enough to eat for a time, and some boat may come along and pick us up."

"Yes, the Osprey," said Elijah, with a laugh.

Another hoarse yell came from the men. The words of a song came to them, as they shouted and sang.

"Do you suppose they'll touch us?" inquired Henry, nervously.

"I don't know," said David. "I don't like the looks of things at all. You stay here. I'm going round through the woods and will come up on the other side there near them. I want to find out what they are doing."

And David crept along the shore under the bank until he had reached the woods, which covered the other part of the island. The boys saw him disappear among the trees, and they waited anxiously till something would show that he was safe. But the sounds of revelry from the men came faster and louder. Their voices were becoming thick and hoarse.

"If they're all drinking, and only drink enough, we can get out of this," said Elijah to Henry. But all they could do was to wait and watch.

A half-hour passed, and there were no signs of David. The songs and shouts from the men had been more irregular, and not quite so loud for the past few minutes.

"There's David," said Henry quickly, pointing out to the woods by the shore.

"That's so," said Elijah, as he saw David crouching low, and running at the top of his speed along the shore now. In a few minutes he had reached them, and out of breath began his story.

"Boys, they're drunk as lords, every one of 'em," he said. "We want to get out of this right away."

"Didn't they leave any one on guard?" asked Elijah. "Are you sure every one of 'em's drunk?"

"Yes, I waited till I was sure of every one. Now we want to pile all our traps into their boat and get out of this."

"Their boat? Shall we take their boat?"

"Yes," said David, half angrily. "This is no time to stop and talk over such things. We'll leave 'em the Pilot, and she's worth two of their old tub. We can set a sail in their boat, and that's about all you can say for it, anyway."

The boys rapidly and silently went to work, and transferred all their possessions into the other boat. They had no place to store their provisions in it, so they covered them with their sail. In a few minutes they were ready to start.

"You don't suppose they'll follow us, do you?" asked Henry, a little timidly, as he saw one of the men try to stagger to his feet, but he quickly fell back, and seemed to be as quiet as the rest.

"We'll give 'em a chance, anyway," said David. "Jump aboard; we will only use the oars first till we get behind the island. I guess we'll try the other side behind the trees, and go down the river that way."

The boys pulled rapidly around to the other side of the island, but had only started down stream when out from behind the island, in front of them, shot another boat, coming directly towards them.

CHAPTER XII

OUTWITTED

THE boys could not turn back. To go ahead was dangerous, and yet as the lesser evil of the two they kept on. The boats came nearer together, and as they passed they could see that the other was like their own. In it were four men rowing, and a fifth was steering. But the other boat passed by without a word, and soon was around the bend and out of sight.

"Do you suppose they were part of the same gang? Maybe they were going to meet those other men on that island, and that's what they were waiting for," said Elijah.

"Like enough," responded David. "But I think we'd better put in on one of these islands pretty soon, and not try to get over to the mainland now. We'll have to keep watch, and see what we can see."

"We're having more trouble with smugglers than with the Osprey," said Henry. "We have n't seen her but once."

The boys kept on their way past the first island, and headed for the second about a mile away. They did not use their sail, but depended upon their oars. They rowed rapidly, and yet talked of the smugglers.

"You see this is a kind of border line along the St. Lawrence," said David, "and I suppose there's lots o' chances to dodge the customs."

"Well, I think," said Elijah, "that these fellows work harder to get a living by smuggling than an honest man does by steady work."

"So do I," replied David. "I think it's most always so. Don't you remember Abe Coons at the checkered schoolhouse last winter? You know he would copy his sums, and cheat in the class, and I always said if he had spent half the time in learning them that he spent in trying to get rid of learning them, or in cheating in the class, he would have got along better, and with a good deal less work. Besides, everybody knew he was a cheat."

"Look, David! look, Elijah!" called out Henry. "That boat's coming back, and they're after us sure."

"I believe they are after us," said David, quietly. "They've seen us, and the only thing we can do is to pull as hard as we can for the other island, and see if we can't hide somewhere."

The boys had a long lead, but strength and numbers were in the other boat. The boys were near

the second island, and soon turned a point which hid them from their pursuers.

"Here's a good place," said Elijah. "Let's run the boat in among those rushes, and we can climb up on shore. Perhaps they'll pass by and not see us. If they do, maybe we can get away."

So their boat was sent quickly in among the weeds that rose several feet higher than the boys' heads on either side of them.

"Shall we stay here and wait till they go by?" asked Elijah.

"No," said David. "I'm afraid they'll see where we come in here. We'll leave the boat and go up behind those trees. I don't know whether this is an island or the mainland. It looks big enough to be the shore."

Quickly the boys anchored the boat, and leaped ashore, and were at once among the great trees that came almost down to the water. They did not go very far from the shore, but taking their stand behind some of the great trunks, they waited for the boat to pass.

In a few minutes it came around the point, rapidly sweeping on. In the stern sat the ever present Smith.

"He seems to have recovered from his spree," whispered David.

"Yes," replied Elijah. "He's always on deck."

But the boat swept on, and disappeared around the other point.

"They're gone, thank goodness!" said Henry, stepping forth from behind his tree.

"Wait a little, Henry," called David. "They may come back; don't be in a hurry."

And the boys waited for a little time, and it was well they did. For in a few minutes they heard the other boat coming back, and the voices of the men in conversation.

"I don't see what you want of the youngsters, Smith, anyway," said one of the men. "What can three boys do against us, to say nothing of the Osprey?"

"I don't want them, except for a few days. As soon as the Osprey takes me aboard, I shall feel safe. But these boys can stir up a great hornet's nest by rousing the people long shore now."

"You don't want that, I know," said one of them, with a laugh.

"No, I don't; my neck is better to me than to any one else, and my Yankee cousins have been looking for me for a good while."

"Those boys must be in here somewhere," added he, as he motioned for the boat to stop. "Let's go in for a time. We went out around the point, and they were not in sight, so I think they're in here."

"Well, we'll go ashore and see." And they changed their course and landed.

David had taken the precaution to grab some of their eatables as he had come from the boat, and now the boys took to their heels and ran into the woods, where the sight and sound of the men could not reach them. They kept on for an hour till they came to the river again.

"This is an island, you see," said Elijah.

"Yes," said David. "I guess Mr. Potter was about right when he said there were a thousand islands here. Just look at them," and he pointed off to the east, where many little islands could be seen.

The boys sat down in a quiet spot, and ate their lunch in silence. All three were perplexed, and a good deal cast down. They had lost their boat, and without the Pilot what could they hope to do? Here they were on an island, practically prisoners of a party of smugglers, who evidently wanted them out of the way.

"Towards night we'll go back and see if they have n't gone," said David.

"If they have n't found our boat, and if they've gone, we'll wait till morning, and then try to get over to Clayton, where that man lives father wants us to see."

So they waited till, as nearly as they could judge,

it was four o'clock, and then they started to return. They walked quietly through the woods, and as they came near to the place where the smugglers had landed, they walked with greater caution. In a little time they came in sight of the river, and then of the place where they had landed.

"Look there, Elijah!" said David.

Elijah looked as David directed, and saw side by side upon the shore the two boats, — one in which the smugglers had come, and the other the one they themselves had used.

"They've found our boat, as sure as you live," whispered Elijah.

"Yes, they have," said David. "Now, what's to be done. We have n't anything more to eat, and not even our tent to sleep in, though I don't mind that."

So the boys sat down and deliberated. They talked in low tones, for they did not know where their pursuers were.

They could see one man on guard, and as he yawned and occasionally stepped a little out of his path, peering off down the shore, it became evident to the boys, who were watching him, that he was alone, and that he was impatiently awaiting the return of the others.

"I tell you what," said David, "I believe we can get away if there's only one man there. We're stronger than he is."

"But not stronger than his gun," said Elijah.

"Well, why can't we trap him?"

"How?"

"Why, I'll call him, and he'll come out into the woods. He'll follow surely if I call. I can lead him round a circle, and I know I can run faster than he can. While he's gone, you fellows can rush down to the shore, and get the boat, and bring it around the point, and I'll be there and get aboard."

"S'pose the other fellow's there, too," said Elijah.

"Shall we take him, too?"

"No; if he follows me at all I can lead him out into the woods, and I'll leave him there, and I'll run round to the shore; let's try it, anyway."

"All right," responded the boys. "We'll wait here, and if you get him off, we'll make a break for the boats."

David disappeared, and the boys kept their eyes fixed upon the guard. In a few minutes they saw him start and listen. He said something they could not hear, and then started off towards the woods. He hesitated for a moment, as he turned and looked towards the boat, but only for a moment, for he quickly passed out of sight among the trees.

Elijah and Henry made a break, and started along the shore for the boats. Not a man was in sight. They arrived safely at the place where they were, and, hastily throwing some oars into the

one they had come over in, they were about to start off.

"Hold on a minute; turn about's fair play," said Elijah, as he seized a hatchet, and striking three hard, quick blows upon the bottom of the other boat; they saw it rapidly begin to fill.

They took the oars and began as hard as they could to pull the heavy yawl around the point. In a few minutes they had reached it, and were resting on their oars, waiting. In a short time David came out of the woods, almost breathless, running at the top of his speed. He jumped into the boat, and the boys began to row. He took the sail and let it out, and then holding the sheet with his teeth, he took his place at the oars with the others. The boys did not seem to heed the direction in which they were going, if only they could get away from the island. Just then they saw standing on the shore the figure of a man, wildly gesticulating, and waving his hands for them to come back.

"Guess not," said Elijah.

"But they'll be after us," said David, resting for a moment, and taking the sheet from between his teeth.

"I fixed their boat. It won't sail very well, I guess," said Elijah. "'I did it; I did it with my little hatchet,' as the reading-book said of George Washington."

"How did you fix that guard?" he asked David.

"O, I called to him to come there where I was and get a drink of whiskey. He didn't much want to, but the whiskey was too much. Poor fellow! I suppose he'll catch it when the others come back."

"They won't know anything about it," said Henry.

"Won't they?" said Elijah. "Just wait till they try to get in their boat."

The boys rowed on without further conversation. The wind helped them, and rapidly they sailed away. Finally Elijah, looking round, said: "David, I don't know where we are, nor where we're going. This river is all full of islands. I don't know where the shore is; do you?"

"No," replied David. "I'm all turned round."

The boys looked at each other blankly for a minute. The sun was out of sight, and darkness was fast coming on.

CHAPTER XIII

A DISCOVERY

THE boys tried one direction after another, but whatever the way they turned, they found nothing but islands. Darkness was fast coming on, and the air was becoming chilly.

"David, you are lost," said Elijah, finally.

"Yes, either I'm lost, or the way is, I don't know which. I'm here, but where the right course to the shore is, I don't know. And I wish I did," responded David, as some drops of rain began to fall.

"Well, let's go ashore," said Elijah. "We can't sleep in the boat, but we have the tent and the blankets. I guess they'll keep us dry till morning. Let's land here," he added, as they came near shore.

"We'd better, I think," said David, and they ran their boat ashore and after securely anchoring it, they found the rain coming down faster, and the darkness increasing.

"I don't see what we're going to do," interposed Henry. "I can't see much now. And think of the Pilot, all stove in!"

David replied cheerfully. He was not at all in a cheerful mood, but he must do something to keep up the spirits of the others.

"It looked to me as if there were some rocks along the shore here. Let's get a light and see if we can't find some sheltered spot we can crawl into for the night."

They had almost nothing to serve as a torch, but they did manage to get a little light. Carrying the tent and their blankets, they stumbled on, along what seemed to be something like a pathway.

Suddenly, David, who was in advance, with a cry disappeared from view.

"Where are you, David? Are you hurt?" called out the boys.

"No, I'm only bruised. Hold a light over the edge so that I can answer your question, and see where I am."

Holding the light over him, they saw that he had fallen into what appeared to be an opening of a gorge. He was unhurt, but he could not reach the edge of the rocks on which they stood.

"Why don't we stay where you are all night?" asked Elijah. "It's out of the wet."

"I don't know where it leads to, this gorge," responded David, dubiously. "There may be bears or panthers down there."

"Well, let's chance it any way," said Elijah, throw-

ing down the tent and blankets before him, and then letting himself down, an example that Henry followed.

The boys found themselves in a circular spot, something like a well, but with an opening on one side that led they could not see whither. The ground was covered with old leaves, and the refuse that had blown in there for years.

"Let's see what's here, anyway," said Elijah, and he held his light, and carefully examined the entire place into which they had fallen.

"Something or somebody's in the habit of being here often," he said after a little. "I don't know whether it's bears or men. We'll just stretch that tent right across this opening, and we'll know if anything comes from that side I guess. We might as well turn in anyway. Somebody'll have to stay on guard. I'll do it first, and we'll take turns."

The other boys were soon asleep, wrapped in their blankets. Elijah sat down and listened. He could hear the rain as it steadily fell outside the rocks. There was not much wind, but the little waves of the St. Lawrence he could hear as they lapped the shore. He thought of home, and half wished he were there, as the lonesome sounds of the rain and wind came to him. Then he thought of Andrew Field and how lonesome he must be.

"We surely ain't in any bed of roses. We've lost our way and here we are on this stormy night asleep

in this cave. After all we're better off than Andrew, and I guess we'll get out of this scrape somehow together."

Thus he was communing with himself, and the sound of the rain kept on. Elijah began to nod. Several times he roused himself, and resolutely tried to keep guard, but somehow his head would fall forward, and before he knew it he was fast asleep.

It was nearly light when he awoke with a start. He shook himself, and, half ashamed, looked round at the other boys. They still slept on. "Guess we won't need any guard now," thought Elijah. "I'll go back to the boat, and see what can be done for breakfast." But when he tried to climb the sides he found no place for a foothold. He turned about to rouse the boys, when his eye fell on the opening that was in their bedchamber.

"I might as well do a little exploring on my own account," said he to himself. "I'll be back before the boys wake up."

So Elijah started on his way through the opening. It was light enough now for him to see his way clearly. It evidently was a path he was walking in, and, stooping down, he could plainly see the prints of feet on the gravel. He walked more slowly, and peered carefully ahead of him. He didn't know but men were somewhere there now, and if they were, it boded little good for him. But as he had started, he decided to

keep on his way until he should find something that would explain matters somewhat.

He walked for about twenty minutes on through the gorge. He could see the sky above him all the time, and the increasing light made things plainer. It was evidently a pathway he was walking in, and it led him sometimes high over the rocks below, and then again came down to what had once evidently been the bed of a stream.

His progress was slow, and during the twenty minutes he had not gone far. But he then came to a place where the path divided. One part of it led up over the side of the gorge, and disappeared among the trees which he saw over the banks. The other turned to his left, and led he knew not where.

He decided to take the one to the left. He had taken but a few steps when he came to what seemed the end. There appeared to be nothing but the smooth side of the banks. Elijah was puzzled, and was about to turn back, when he thought he saw something behind the bushes that grew all along the sides of the gorge, and peering carefully he saw that the path continued. He pushed aside the bushes, and found the pathway had not ended, but led into a cave. Should he go on? Carefully, stealthily, Elijah crept on. Only a few steps brought him into a large cave, and in this the little sunlight that came at first only dazzled his eyes.

No one beside himself was there. That was evident, and of that he soon satisfied himself. Then he saw that the cave seemed to be filled with chests and boxes. Kegs were in one corner, and he saw many casks on one side. He stepped inside, and his eyes, now accustomed to the dimness, could plainly see the great amount of something that was there. What was it? He began to examine. Casks of brandy, kegs of powder, and guns he saw. Then there were axes and hatchets. Evidently he had found the headquarters of the smugglers, and these things, which the hardy settlers needed, they were smuggling.

As Elijah looked about him he half expected to see the men coming back, and finding him there. He knew he would receive but little mercy at their hands. And he trembled as he thought of the appearance Smith's face would assume if he should discover him there.

Elijah retreated. As rapidly as he could, he made his way back to the place where he had left the other boys asleep. His excited mind saw smugglers all along the way, but he came safely and soon into the place where the boys were.

They were awake now, and looked greatly surprised as he stepped forth into the open space before them.

"We thought you had cleared out and left us, or else some bear had eaten you up. Where in the world

have you been?" asked David, as he looked at Elijah, whose face had lost none of its excited look.

"I've seen something that makes me want to get out of this. I've found the headquarters of the smugglers."

"Headquarters of the smugglers? What do you mean?" asked David. And rapidly Elijah recounted the story of his morning's walk.

"I tell you, we want to get away from this island right off," said Elijah. "If those men come back here, as they will soon, and find us here, they'll make short work of us."

"That's so," said David. "We'll leave, and cook our breakfast on some other island," and with Elijah's help he was soon up on the rocks. The boys threw up to him the tents and blankets, and David, lending them his aid, soon brought them up out of the pit.

"I suppose Elder Dodd would have something to say about being taken out of a horrible pit," said Elijah.

"I don't think he'd say very much if he were here. He'd put for the boat and leave this region. I wish, though, we could take some of those smugglers' things away with us," said David.

"Do you think we'd have any right to?" asked Henry.

"Well, I don't know," answered David dubiously. "They don't belong to those men by rights. But then I don't know as they do to us either."

The boys had now reached the place where their boat was. They found everything as they had left it, and in a very short time they had pushed the boat out into the current, and were being carried on down stream at quite a rapid rate.

"Guess we'll land over there," said David, pointing to an island. "I think I could find this island of the smugglers again if I wanted to, don't you, Elijah?"

"Yes, I could find it from here. I remember just how the trees were placed on the shore where we landed."

"Well, we'll go ashore here and get our breakfast. I'm hungry enough to eat almost anything; and I did n't stay awake all night either to keep guard," and he looked laughingly at Elijah.

"I'm afraid I did n't stay awake either," replied Elijah, ruefully.

Breakfast was soon ready, and the boys were thoroughly ready for it. In silence they sat near the fire, eating and thinking. Each one was afraid to express his thoughts, so full of fear and perplexity was he.

Suddenly the boys heard a voice of some one saying, "Hello, boys!" They looked up, and sprang every one to his feet.

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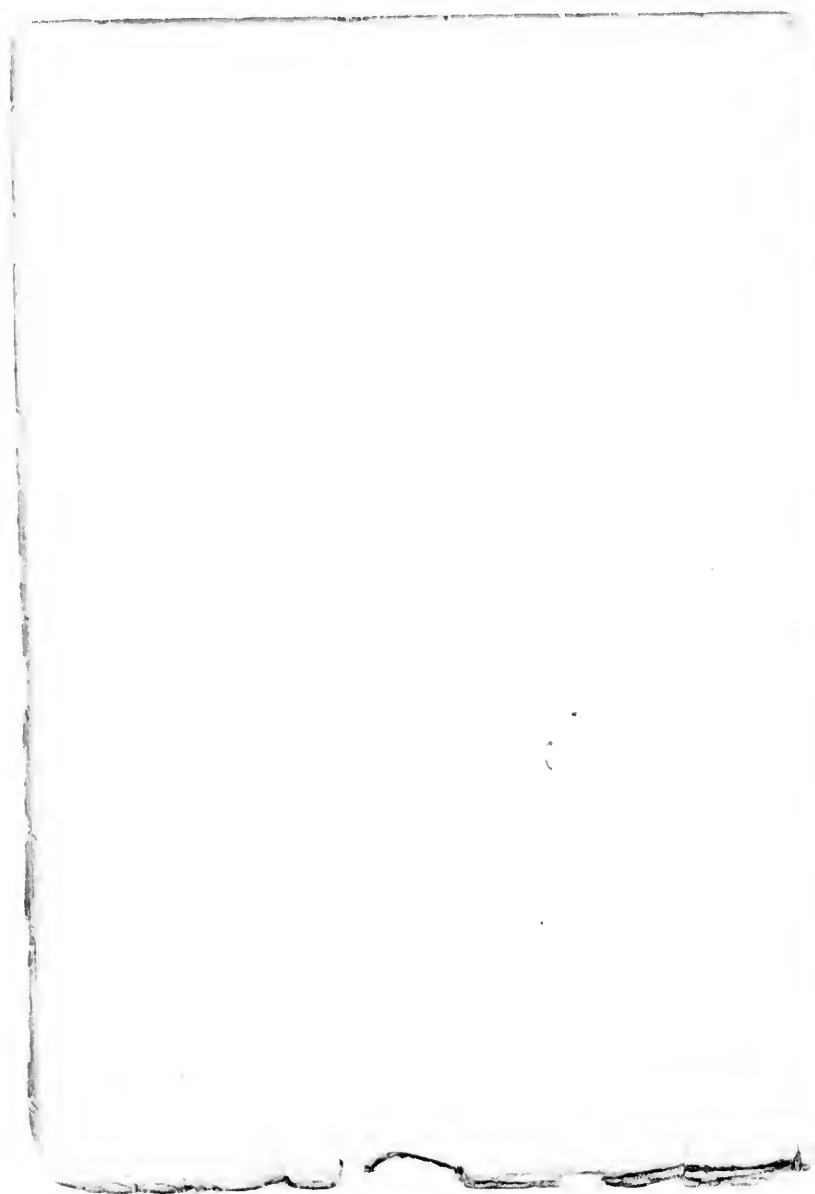
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"THEY WAITED FOR THE STRANGER TO APPROACH." Page 125



CHAPTER XIV

AN ADDITION

IN silence they waited for the stranger to approach. When they saw that he was alone, their fears subsided a little, for at first they thought the smugglers were coming.

The appearance of the man was decidedly peculiar. Although it was midsummer, he wore a cap made of skins. His other garments were coarse, and showed many signs of hard usage. Over one shoulder was slung a gun, and his bullet pouch and powder flask hung from the other. In his belt were a hatchet and knife, and in his hand he carried a fishing-rod.

The peaceful object of his visit became apparent when they saw the rod, and as he evidently was a man the boys had never seen before, they became calm and waited for his approach.

Without any further words he came to the place where they were standing, and seated himself upon the ground. Not a word had he uttered after his salutation when he first saw them.

They waited for him to speak. But for a minute he was silent, scanning their provisions and posses-

sions, and his eyes turned then towards them with a kindly expression.

"Fishin', boys?" he at last said.

"Not just now. We have been," said David, cautiously.

"I don't see any fish. Guess ye did n't have much luck. Where ye from?"

"O, we came from over by Sackett's Harbor," said David.

"Sackett's Harbor! Why, that's a long ways from here. Ye must be lost, I guess," and he laughed quietly.

"We are a little mixed just now," said David. "We'd like to get to Clayton, if we only knew the direction. Perhaps you can help us."

"I can. It's about twelve miles from here."

"Then we're a long way out of our course," said Elijah.

"What's yer course?" asked the stranger.

"That's it," said David. "We want to go there and see a Mr. Reese."

"O, ye want to see him, do ye?" and the stranger looked pleased. "He's a likely man, fair and square too. No smuggling, no Tory about him."

"There is n't about us, either," said David, encouraged by his words.

"Well, I guess that's so," said the stranger. "I did n't know when I first see ye but ye were some of

those pesky smugglers. These islands are just full of them."

David looked at Elijah inquiringly. Should he tell the stranger of their experiences? They hardly knew what to do. But they began again at their breakfast, in which they invited the stranger to join. As he already had eaten, he only took a little, and continued his talk with the boys. His kindly ways and evident dislike of the smugglers so encouraged the boys, that they decided to tell him a part of their story. The stranger listened with evident interest.

"I've lived in these parts nigh on to thirty year. I know these islands as well as anybody can, I guess. Help ye? well I rather guess I will."

"Where do you live?" inquired Elijah.

"O, over there," said the man, pointing with his thumb over his shoulder.

"I should think your family would get lonesome here," said David.

The stranger's face became clouded, and a dark scowl came over it. "I have n't any family," he said finally. "If you were to speak to Mr. Reese of the Hermit, I think he'd know who was meant," and he smiled, sadly it seemed to David.

"Do you live here all alone?" inquired Henry.

"Mostly. Except when some young fellows like you come to see me. My story 's worse than yours," he said in a low tone. "Perhaps I'll tell ye about it

by and by. Did you see anything o' smugglers as ye come down? But you would n't know 'em if you did see 'em," he added, after a minute's pause.

"We do know 'em, and we did see 'em," said David. And then he told him all about their journey and the experiences they had had, not omitting their visit to the smuggler's cave.

He listened with close attention to all that was told him and then said: "I've known some places where they kept things, but I never knew of this one before. Is it far from here?"

"No," said Elijah, "it's right over there," and he pointed to the island they had left.

"Where'd ye leave those men, did ye say?" he asked.

"O, it was way back yonder," and David pointed away to the northwest. "It must be as much as seven or eight miles from here."

"Well, they'll be here to-day, I guess," said the stranger. "Probably it was a meet they were goin' to have on that island, where ye first landed. Well, boys, I think ye better go home with me to-day. Perhaps I can help ye with the findin' o' the Osprey. But I guess we'd better take a look at that place o' the smugglers before we go home."

The boys gladly responded, and, going down to their boat, they were soon joined by their new acquaintance in his light little skiff, that sat upon the water, the perfection of beauty and grace.

They soon reached the island where they had passed the night, and stationing Henry as guard, who was to whistle if he saw any signs of approaching boats, they entered the gorge, and, led by Elijah, soon came to the place where he had found the smugglers' stores.

The stranger looked at everything attentively, and then said: "These things have n't been here long. Ye see they bring 'em over from the other side, or else land 'em here from the Osprey and such craft, and then these fishermen from Clayton and Cape Vincent come out and take 'em back and dispose of 'em. Mighty queer catches those fishermen get sometimes."

And he chuckled, as he added: "They may find it a little difficult to land this catch. Mebbe it wa'n't hooked as it ought to have been. But we'll leave everything here just as we found it, and go to my house for a spell. Ye can't do anything to-day, unless ye want to go and see Mr. Reese," and he looked inquiringly at David.

"I guess we won't go there to-day, anyhow," said David. "You know all about the river, and that was all we wanted to learn from Mr. Reese."

"Well, come on then. Let's be goin'," said the stranger, and he led the way back to where the boats were. Henry had not seen any sign of the smugglers, and there was nothing save their own voices and the cries of some birds to break the silence of the great river.

The stranger led the way, and they were soon sweeping on with the current down the stream. The boys put up their sail, and yet with that to help their oars they found it difficult to keep up with the little skiff, so powerful were the strokes of the stranger as he led the way.

"I wonder who he can be," said Elijah in a low tone. "I hope he's all right. I don't just like the idea of spending a day in a stranger's house, especially here among these smugglers," he added, after a minute's silence.

"Well, we've got to trust somebody, and he certainly does n't love these smugglers. That's in his favor," replied David.

"That's all good, and he looks besides as if he had had trouble himself. Did you notice his face when we were telling how they took Andrew?"

"Yes, but all that's in his favor."

But the boys were working too hard to keep up with the stranger now, to waste any breath in conversation. He had now changed his course and seemed to be going eastward, as well as they could judge. The islands were so numerous here, and the current in many places swept them so swiftly on, that they had not the slightest idea where they were.

In a little time, the stranger turned towards one of a little group of islands, all nearly of the same size and appearance. They all seemed to be thickly covered

with trees and there was nothing to indicate that any human being dwelt on any of them. The burning sun, which was now high in the air, the swiftness of the current, the unbroken silence over all, combined to render the boys silent and thoughtful. They did not speak, but grounded their boat near the other, and stepped upon the shore.

The kindly voice of their guide, and the pleasing way in which he spoke of their rowing on that hot summer day, served to reassure the boys, and with lighter hearts they followed him as he started toward the interior of the island.

"I don't believe you boys could find my house if you tried all day," said he, as they walked along together.

"I don't see any signs of it now, anyway," said David.

"And yet its right here before your eyes."

"Where?" said the boys together.

And leading the way within the brush, they saw, entirely concealed from the view of any one who might be passing, a small house built of logs.

The four posts of the house were trees left standing as they had grown, and with their branches only cut away to make room for the building. The logs that made the sides, were covered over with branches of fir, and branches of the same tree also served to conceal the roof, which was thatched.

The stranger led the way around to one side, and through a door only large enough to admit of their entrance they stepped inside the house.

A large dog leaped up to meet his master, and looked with suspicious eyes towards the strangers. A couple of kittens, asleep before their master's return by the fireplace, rose, and stretched, and yawned, as they came in. A little fire was still on the hearth, evidently the remains of that by which the stranger had cooked his breakfast.

Rude chairs and tables were in the room, and a ladder which led to the chamber above. A little rude cradle was in one corner, covered with quaint little quilts, evidently the work of patient hands. The boys looked at this, and then smiled at one another, but said nothing. The stranger saw their glances following the sight of the cradle, and his face became grave at once, but he made no remark.

He patted the dog's head and spoke some quiet words to the kittens, and then, turning, said pleasantly to the boys: —

"Well, we're home at last. I did n't do the fishin' I intended to, but I guess I can do more'n that if I help you. And I guess I can," he added cheerfully. "Now let's sit down and we'll get somethin' to eat, and then we'll talk about your trip. What do you propose to do first?"

CHAPTER XV

THE HERMIT'S STORY

DAVID recalled the warning Mr. Potter had given him, that he should tell of his plans no more than he should find necessary, and that he should be especially careful with strangers. He looked at the old man, who sat silently stroking his long white beard, and occasionally running his hand through his hair, as long and white as his beard.

The face he saw reassured him somewhat, and yet he could not tell very much, for he had no very definite plans formed. They had been so busy in getting out of the clutches of the smugglers, and had lost their way so completely, that he felt he was in a quandary.

"We'd like to get over to Clayton. We have no very definite plans, only we want to help Andrew off from the Osprey; we know she is bound for Kingston, but she won't go there for some time yet. We thought we'd cruise around here for a few days, and if we didn't get any chance to help him, we'd go over to Kingston and wait. If you can direct us to Clayton, we shall be very glad," said David.

The hermit smiled, and was silent and thoughtful for a few minutes. Then, turning again to David, he said pleasantly, "I s'pose you boys are a little wary of a stranger. You don't even know my name," he added. He smiled again, as he saw the boys slightly confused, and showing in their faces the truth of his surmise.

"Wall, I don't blame ye. But, boys, I've a mind to help ye. I believe ye can get your brother out of the clutches of those fellows."

David's face brightened. His confidence had been restored by the stranger's evident sympathy, and, lost as they were, he knew they must be helped by some one. "We surely have no cause to be suspicious of you," replied David. "You've been very kind to us, and we shall be only too glad of your help."

"I never saw your brother, but I've had some experience with the British myself." His face became grave and his eyes grew hard as he spoke.

"Is that so?" said David. "What was it? Would you mind telling us?"

"No; though it's something I don't talk much about. But then," he added, with his quaint smile again appearing, "I don't have many neighbors round here to talk to."

They all became silent, and after a short pause the hermit began his story.

"My people settled near Albany down on the Hud-

son. That's a great river, but it is n't so beautiful as this St. Lawrence. We had come from New Hampshire when I was a baby, and I don't remember the journey at all."

"My father came from Vermont," said David, "but only ten years ago."

"Well, we settled near Albany. It was a hard life, and my father broke down. He had chills, and fever, and rheumatism; sometimes he was n't out of bed for weeks. I was the only boy, and as I grew up the work fell more and more on me. When the war of the Revolution broke out my father was a strong Whig. I was then only eighteen years old, but my father wanted me to enlist, and I wanted to, too."

"Why did n't you, then?" asked Elijah.

"I could n't leave home very well. What with father sick and no one but women in the house, it was n't safe; but I still did a little," he added. "I'd go for a month and serve in the army, and then come home. There was a lot of men who did that."

"I don't see how they could depend on the army, if the men were likely to have to go home every month," said David.

"They could n't very much; but when we were there, we worked hard enough to make up for it. Well, things worked on till by and by General Burgoyne came along with his army. You know

his plan was to take an army and come from Canada, and another army was to come up the Hudson from New York to Albany and meet him, and between them they were to sweep the field clean."

"Yes, I've heard of that," said David. "But it didn't work."

"No, but some things did. Well, while the fighting was going on around Stillwater and Saratoga I was in the army most of the time. Burgoyne had a lot of Indians, — that's what he called 'em, — I called 'em fiends. Whenever they had a fight, these Indians would go to scalping the dead. Boys, I can't tell ye all," and the hermit, with his face strangely working, was silent for a time.

After a brief pause he began again: "When I was at Bennington I heard them tell how a beautiful girl over by Fort Edward, named Jane M'Crea, had been killed and scalped; it made my blood boil, I tell you. My time was up then, and I started fer home through the woods, nervous like fer my folks as they were all alone."

Again he was silent for a few minutes, and the boys looked sympathizingly from him to one another.

"Well," resumed the hermit, "when I got home I found that on the very day the Indians had killed and scalped Jane M'Crea some others had been killed and scalped too."

"Who were they?" asked Elijah, softly.

"My father and mother and two little sisters. O boys, I never can tell you about that day! My mother was the best woman in all this world, and they had n't spared even her, and the two little sisters I had. I went back to where my home was, and there was nothing but a black spot of ashes and charcoal. Some friends had come and buried the dead, so that when I got there I had almost nothing in the world."

"What awful devils those Indians were," said David.

"Well, do you know, I did n't find it in my heart, sad as I was, to blame the Indians so much. They did n't know any better; that was the way they always did in war. But I did blame the British; that they, who were of the same stock that we were, should let loose on their own brothers such incarnate fiends as those Indians, seemed to me to be a good deal worse than the ignorant savages ever could be."

"That's so," said David. "Whenever I have heard about it, I never could understand how they could have done it. Since Andrew has been taken, I know a little more, though. What did you do?"

"I could n't do much of anything; I was dazed, and almost crazy. I did go to General Gates and asked him what he would do; but he was such a pompous little weakling—why I'd as soon go to my dog here as to him!"

"But did n't he do anything or say anything at all?"

"Yes, he wrote a letter. You see so many others had suffered, that the feeling was getting mighty strong. O yes, General Gates, the little dandy, sat down and wrote a letter to General Burgoyne."

"What did he say?"

"O, he told how more than a hundred men, women, and children had been killed by the ruffians Burgoyne had hired."

"What did Burgoyne do?"

"Nothin'. Over in England there was a man named Burke who called the Indians 'gentle hyenas.' I never saw any hyenas; but if they're worse'n Indians, I don't care to. But Burgoyne could n't keep 'em in a bit; it was Indian natur', ye see."

All sat silently for a little while. Then David said, "Well, you have as good cause — better too than I — not to love these British."

"O, but I have n't told ye all yet. There's something worse yet."

"Worse yet?" asked David, in a tone of surprise.

"Yes, a good deal worse. I stayed round Saratoga for a time and fought in the army. But I had another sister; she and I was all there was left of our family. She had married a Presbyterian minister down in New Jersey. She wanted me to come down there, and after a time I went. Her husband could

fight as well as preach; he was brave as a lion, and one of the strongest men I ever knew. Well, you know, perhaps, the British were pretty thick around there. It was near New York, and there were lots of Continental troops in New Jersey too. Washington had his quarters at Morristown, and used to do all he could to protect the people. One time the British thought he was goin' to make a move; so they sent a lot of Hessians up to check him."

"Hessians? What were they?" inquired Henry.

"O, they were some men King George and his henchmen hired to commit murder over here. They were so busy making war with other countries, and were so angry at the Colonies for bothering them at such a time, that they got a lot of men from Hesse, in Germany, to come over here and fight for them. They were a beastly lot. They could n't speak a word of English, and for cruelty they could beat the Indians themselves. I think the Americans hated the Hessians a good deal worse than they did the Indians, for they were white.

"Well, one day a body of these Hessians were marching to meet Washington, and they halted in the village where my sister lived. She was standing in the doorway with her baby in her arms —" Here the hermit halted in his story and again was silent.

When he resumed, he pointed to the cradle the boys had seen when they first entered his house,

and said: "That cradle over there was her baby's. I made it myself, and it was thought to be a great piece of work. Many a time I've rocked her little tot to sleep in it when the mother was at work. Well, that day she stood in the doorway holding her baby in her arms. One of those rascally Hessians raised his gun, — and what do you suppose he did?"

The boys were silent; they knew what was coming.

"He shot her, — shot her and her baby, too. O what times those were!" groaned the hermit. "Men were not men, they were beasts. The people, I tell you, were stirred up as the Hessians marched on. My sister's husband, he just roused them, and led the men on; they had no wadding, and he just ran into the church and brought out an armful of tune-books. 'Give 'em Watts, boys! give 'em Watts!' said he. You see Watts was the man's name that wrote those tunes. Well, my brother in law, he was shot a few months later, — shot by a sentinel. They all hated him, did those Britishers; and while they said it was a mistake of their picket, I believe they did it on purpose.

"I was more crazy than ever then. I went into the army, and did n't stay for a month this time, but I stayed till it was through. And boys," he added, "when I was at Yorktown, when Cornwallis surrendered, if you'd been alive then, I think you could have heard my yell of delight way up here. I stood

it all right till the war was over, and then I did n't know what to do with myself. I just felt as if I'd nothing worth livin' for. So I came away up here after a little, and I've been here ever since."

"I suppose you hate the British worse'n ever, now," said Elijah.

"No. I had hard feelin's for a time, but I reckon there's One will judge 'em right. I can't do it. However," he said, after a moment's pause, "I guess it does n't go agin the grain any for me to help ye get your brother out of their clutches; and I don't believe ye'll be afeard to trust me a little now, will ye? A little bit," he added, with the quaint smile again appearing on his face.

"We were n't much afraid any time," said David, as the hermit rose and left the house.

CHAPTER XVI

ANOTHER BOAT

THE boys in silence looked at one another. The hermit's story had touched their hearts, and now that he had gone out and left them alone, they had little desire for conversation.

"What fools we were to feel afraid of him!" said David, rising and going to the window. He looked down the long sweep of the St. Lawrence. He could see eddies here and there in the swift current, and wherever he turned his gaze, he beheld islands, some bare and rocky, and some green and fertile.

He was thinking of the hermit's story as he stood by the window. "Poor man," thought he, "he has had a sad experience. I don't wonder that he wanted to run away from it all, and get down here where everything is so quiet. It does n't look much like smugglers or British here. I wonder where Andrew is, and if father is no worse, and how mother is getting on."

And with a sigh David turned as he saw the hermit coming up from the shore. The sun was just setting, and in the evening glow, as he saw the bare white

head of the old man, and his long white beard, and the evidences of sorrow so plain upon him, his heart softened. "He must look like some of these old patriarchs Elder Dodd was telling me about. I guess Abraham and Moses must have looked something like that. O, well, I hope he'll be able to help us, anyway," he added, as the old man entered the house.

"We'll have some supper now, boys," said the hermit cheerfully. "I think that'll be better than adding my sad story to yours."

In a little while the boys drew up their low stools around the rude table, and the evening meal was soon eaten.

"I know these smugglers. I've known 'em for years. They look upon me as out of the world, I guess. They never bother me, and I never bother them," said the hermit.

"Did you ever know where they hid their goods before?" asked Elijah.

"I've rather suspected I knew. But I did n't often bother about 'em. I had a good reason for going in this place you found."

"What was it?" asked David.

"I'll tell ye by and by. Guess we better go to bed now, and talk over our plans in the mornin'. Our heads 'll be clearer then, and we can see some things that don't look very plain now." And he led the way up the ladder to the room above.

He had no candle, and in the dim light the boys at first could make little of the room itself. The hermit remained only for a few minutes, though he stopped to talk a little before he went below.

"I think I'll sleep below. I most always do, and to-night, with the dog, it'll do no harm to be on guard a little. You can see now, can't ye?" he added.

"Yes, I can see some now," replied David. "Where shall we sleep? On the floor? I don't see any beds."

The hermit turned to the side of the room, and let down something like a shelf. "These go all round the room. A lot could sleep here. My brother in law had been in Palestine once (that's the Holy Land, ye know), and he said some of the houses there were on that plan. So I thought beds on the side of the house would be all right on the St. Lawrence River if they were in Palestine." And he gave each boy a heavy blanket and went down stairs.

Early in the morning, the boys were awakened by the sound of voices below. They all came near the ladder, and listened eagerly.

"Ye are out pretty early, neighbor Heath," said the hermit. "What's up now?"

"O, nothin' much. I just stopped on my way up the river. Ye hain't seen some boys round anywhere, have ye?"

The boys overhead looked at one another, and listened sharply. The reply of the hermit would now

tell the story of his friendship or opposition. They waited breathlessly.

"Boys! I don't have boys, — I wish sometimes I had," they heard the hermit reply. "What your boys been doin'?"

"They ain't my boys. They're some spyin' mischief-makers. They stove in a boat up on Wells Island. I guess they were sent down here by somebody to see what they could see."

"Most everybody likes to see these islands. I think they're wonderful."

"O, you need n't talk like that. You know what I mean. I ain't afeard o' your peachin', but them boys we want to detain a few weeks. Jest detain, that's all, — detain 'em, you know."

"What for?" said the hermit.

"O, so they could n't spile everything. Ye see the Osprey might come along in a week or so, and then there'll be no trouble. But if they should stir up the officers before that time, I don't know what'll be to pay."

"Where's the Osprey now?" asked the hermit innocently.

"O, she's over on the other shore. But she's a comin' back inside o' two or three weeks I don't mind tellin' ye. I never see sech a man as you. You don't care a tuppence about money. Well, ye hain't seen the boys, ye say?" He waited for the hermit to reply,

and the boys overhead almost stopped breathing. As he said nothing that they could hear, they felt relieved when the loud voice of the stranger called out as he stood in the door: "If ye see anything on 'em, ye might come over and tell us. It won't hurt you any." He closed the door, and went out. The boys watched him from the upper room as he went down to his boat, and, stepping quickly into it, was soon out of sight among the islands.

Then the boys came down the ladder, and warmly greeted their host. The same quaint smile was on his face as he spoke to them they had seen the day before, and it deepened as he saw the friendly feeling the boys had for him so plainly shown upon their faces.

"Had some mornin' callers before ye were up," said he.

"Yes, we heard you talking," said David. "Why did n't he see our boat? We left it right on the shore by yours. If he'd seen it, we'd been goners."

"O, I took pains last night to take it round on the other side of the island. I've a good boathouse there too."

After breakfast the hermit drew the boys around him, and inquired as to their further plans. After listening to what David had to say about going over to Clayton, he shook his head, and said, —

"Clayton's a good twelve mile from here. Ye don't know the way, and besides I don't believe Mr. Reese could tell ye any more 'n I know."

"I think that's so," said David; "but what do you advise?"

"Well, it seems to me," said he slowly, "that the best plan's to stay right here quiet like for a while. You heard what my neighbor Heath had to say about the Osprey. Well, I don't believe he knew just where she is now. But you're as apt to find her near here as anywhere. Ye see right over there," and he pointed to the east, "is what's called the Lost Channel. But I tell you the Osprey knows how to find it, and I can almost always tell when she or any other boat's coming."

"How?" asked David.

"Why, there's the most wonderful echo you ever heard right over there. If a man speaks in a whisper, you can hear it forty rods, I guess; and I hear 'em when they go through there."

"Do you think we'd better stay right here? I thought," said David, "if we went to Clayton, perhaps we could get another boat. We never can go to Kingston in this tub we have."

"So you can't," replied the hermit. "But what would you say if I brought out a new boat, cat-rigged, new sail, and just built?"

"Say," said David. "Why, I'd say you were the best man in the world — almost," he added, with a laugh.

"Well, come on then, and see for yourselves," and

the hermit, rising, led the way around to the other side of the island. There, covered by trees and branches, was a boathouse built of logs, very similar to the house he lived in, only smaller.

In it the boys saw a new cat-rigged boat, larger by considerable than the Pilot. She was new, and, while a little rough, was evidently a stanch and strong craft, and built with an eye to speed.

"She's a good one," said Elijah, enthusiastically. "But you would n't want to let us boys take her, and go over to Kingston, or cruise round among the islands. We might get caught, and your boat get taken."

"That's so," said the hermit. "She might get caught and I don't think I care to lend her to a parcel of youngsters."

The boys' faces fell. They had had their hopes raised only to be the more cast down when they seemed to be blasted.

"No," said the hermit, with a smile, "I don't believe I want to lend her, but I rather think I'd like to sail her."

"Sail her? what do you mean? Of course you'd like to sail her," said David.

"Yes, I'd like to sail her. I have n't been out in her but a few times, and I think I'd like to sail her some more. I think I'd like to sail her to Kingston and take you boys along for a crew," and he smiled as he watched their faces.

The boys were not slow to express their enthusiasm. The old man watched them quietly, as they ran around the boat, praising her good points, and talking of their proposed trip.

Finally they became quiet enough for the hermit to say, "I've been thinking a good deal about this business o' yours. I've about made up my mind that we'd better stay here for a few days and stock up the boat, and get ready for a cruise. The Osprey won't be goin' to Kingston for some time yet, and if we start in a few days, and go careful like, we can get there before she does, and have time to prepare a welcome for her. We'll want to sail mostly mornin's and nights, and stop off in the middle of the day, so's not to call attention to us. And by not goin' very fast we can get there in time, and yet learn what we can on the way. It may be Andrew has got away before this."

"I don't think so," said David. "But I think your plan's fine. It's just the thing, and I don't know what we can do to show you our thanks."

"O, you need n't do anything. I'm glad to have a chance to help you in such a work as this. Come and see my farm, boys. We'll have time to see to that before we go."

CHAPTER XVII

ANOTHER VOYAGE BEGUN

THE hermit led the way to the shore, and, bidding the boys jump into his skiff, quickly pulled over to the nearest island. Here he landed, and with the boys started inland.

They soon saw that the thick evergreens were only around the edge of the island, which was about the size of the one on which he made his home. All the interior had been cleared, and laid out as a garden. Beds and rows of vegetables were there, and some rose bushes grew in one corner.

"I brought those roses from New Jersey. There was only one little root, but it lived; my sister had lots of them; they grew all over one side of her house."

The hermit was silent and thoughtful, and the boys did not care to break in upon his sadness. They examined the garden, and were enough of farmer boys to appreciate its treasures.

"I never saw such cucumbers and summer squashes, did you Elijah?" said David.

"No," replied Elijah; "nor such strawberries; but it needs weeding."

"That's so, boys, it does," said the hermit, who had caught the last word. "And that's just what we came here for. I don't want to go away and leave my garden like this; but it won't take very long, and if you'll help, we can start the sooner for Kingston."

The boys turned to the work with a will. And as they worked the hermit talked.

"Ye see these five islands here? Well, this clump belongs to me. Nobody seemed to want it, and I just put in a claim and got it. Saves me the trouble of fences on my farm," he said, with a laugh, "this having every lot separate. I kept a cow one spell over here, but I gave that up. Then over on that island to the left I used to keep hens; but the foxes was too much for me."

"Foxes? Where did they come from?" asked Elijah.

"In the winter time they'd come over on the ice. The bigger islands have lots of 'em. Why, this river is a great sight in the winter. You can drive right across from one side to the other with a horse and sleigh. And then the bears and wolves are not wantin', either. I used to trap them and foxes, but I don't any more."

"We do over by Sackett's Harbor," said David;

"but we don't get so many as you do here. I s'pose your fish are bigger too."

"Well, we do get some pretty big ones. I caught a muscallonge last summer that weighed by the steel-yards when I got him home just forty-seven pounds."

"I never saw such a big one as that," said David.

"No?" said the hermit. "When I got him in the boat I just had to jump right a-straddle on him and hammer his head with a hickory club. I didn't know but he'd smash the boat all to pieces."

"I wish we could get some now," said Elijah; but catching the look upon David's face, he added, "We sha'n't have time, of course."

"No," replied the hermit. "I don't believe we will have time, and besides it's a little early for 'em. After we start for Kingston, we might try it when we're creeping along."

The boys worked on busily through the day. It was a relief to find something to do on shore. The hermit talked more and more freely with them, and gave them many a story and fact from the war of the Revolution.

On the third day the hermit took the boys over to his garden, and they began to pick some of the vegetables.

"Some o' these I started under glass," said he, as he found some unusually large. "We'll take 'em over and store 'em in the boat."

"What for?" asked David.

"O, I'll tell ye a little later. We want to get ready to-day, and we'll stock up the boat, and I want to put on board some of these garden things that'll keep for a while."

The vegetables were soon added to the stores that were placed that day on board the little sloop. Everything about the place was looked after, and the dog, it was decided, should go with them on the following day, for that was the time chosen for their departure.

The hermit's little skiff was to be taken in tow also. Blankets were placed in the little cabin, and everything was ready for a voyage.

"What shall we do with this boat we brought with us?" asked Elijah.

"It is n't our boat only by a fair exchange," said David. "We'll leave that here. If we come back we'll need it, and if we don't come we'll get along without it."

After an early breakfast on the next day, the little party set sail. The wind was good, but it was only because the hermit knew where the currents ran that they could make much headway.

They sailed by the island where the smugglers' cave was, and looked carefully to see if there were any signs of men, but it was as quiet and peaceful a summer day as that on which they had landed there.

"O, they won't come much around this island," said the hermit. "They may leave somebody on guard; but it's some other island where we'll be likely to see 'em if we see 'em at all. They ain't much afeard o' bein' caught, but they probably think it's a little safer to meet on some other spot, and only come here when they want to bring somethin' or take it away."

As it came on towards noon, the hermit turned to the boys, and said, "I guess we'll land and rest awhile. I don't much want to meet them men, and if we stop awhile in the middle of the day, I think we won't be so likely to see 'em."

So they landed, anchoring the boat about twenty feet from the shore, and landing by the aid of the little skiff.

"If any o' you boys is good at fishin' ye might try yer luck around here. Off by those weeds is good fishin' ground," said the hermit.

"Henry's the fisherman of the party," said David.

"Well, you and Henry go out and try your luck. Elijah and I'll try to get some dinner ready, and we'll cook your fish. Some would go pretty good now."

So, while the hermit, with Elijah's aid, was making a fire and preparing some potatoes and corn bread for dinner, David and Henry went over to the place he had indicated and began to fish. They

found them hungry, and bass after bass came into the boat.

"This beats 'The Rocks' all to pieces," said Henry. "I never saw such a place," he added, as his line began again to cut the water. "This is the biggest one yet," he exclaimed, as he rose and dropped his rod and began to pull in the fish by the line. "I don't s'pose this is the best way to catch 'em, but I want the fish mostly just now," as with a sudden pull he lifted the great bass into the boat.

"'Sh, Henry," said David. "Look over there to your right. Do you see anything there by the rocks at the end of the island?"

Henry stood for a moment and looked carefully where David had indicated; but he could see nothing unusual.

"I could almost swear I saw a man run from one of those rocks to the other. I feel almost sure of it," said David.

Henry looked all about. He could see and hear nothing unusual.

"I guess we'd better go back to camp," continued David. "It must be 'bout dinner time. Yes, it is," he added, as a faint shout came from the camp.

The boys reeled in their lines, and started to take up their anchor.

"Henry, there is somebody there, right behind that big rock. I just saw him dodge down. He does n't want to be seen, that's sure."

"Who is it, do you suppose?"

"I don't know any more than you do. But I'm sure he's been watching us for a good while. I'm most afraid it's for no good purpose either. It may be he's one of the smugglers."

But bending to their oars, in a few minutes they were back at the camp. The others were highly pleased at the catch they brought in, and they all were soon seated beneath the trees a little back from the shore, as they ate their dinner and talked over their plans.

The hermit looked grave when David told him he had seen a man, and was sure he had been watching them.

"It may have been only a bird you saw."

"It was n't a bird, it was a man," said Henry stoutly.

"Well, all we can do is to do nothing just now," said the hermit. "We won't put out till towards night, and we'll keep quiet till then."

In the afternoon he told them more of his plan. It was to go on towards Kingston, and to keep from being seen much on the way. When they arrived there, if the Osprey was not in, all they could do was to wait. They could sleep on the boat, and wait for events.

The hermit proposed that, when the Osprey did come, he should take the part of an old farmer, and

try to go on board, or see the cook or steward, and sell some of the vegetables he had brought. He was so positive that they would be much larger than any that could be had in Kingston that he was sure he could make a sale.

His greatest desire was to get on board the Osprey, and into the cook's galley if possible. Then he could see Andrew and get in a few words of conversation.

"I think I'll take one of you boys with me if I do get on board the Osprey," he said. "Henry, you could pass for my boy, could n't you?"

"Sure pop!" said Henry, with a laugh.

"Boys, there comes a little sailboat around that island over there!" exclaimed Elijah, suddenly pointing to the north.

They all at once arose, and stood watching the stranger as she came rapidly on, evidently headed for the island where they were.

"Boys, that's the Pilot," said David, in a low tone.

They all looked carefully, and Elijah responded, "It is the Pilot, sure's you are born." And with the others he started after David, and ran to the shore.

CHAPTER XVIII

AT KINGSTON

ELIJAH was not mistaken. They could plainly see on the bow of the approaching boat the name "Pilot," which he himself had painted there, though he would have known the boat anywhere, even if the name were gone.

The hermit and the boys waited upon the shore for the Pilot to approach. Two men were in her, one upon the bow, and the other steering, whose face was hidden by the sail.

The boat came about when nearer the shore, and the face of the man who was steering could then be seen. "It's Smith," called out David and Elijah together.

The call produced a marked effect upon the sailor, for he at once changed the course of the boat, and without a word started off down the river. "Here! here! you've got our boat," called out Elijah; but the only response was a laugh from Smith, who kept the Pilot off from the island.

Elijah and David had almost started into the river

in their excitement, but the voice of the hermit called them back.

"Hold on, boys, ye can't swim after her," said he quietly. All that the boys could do was to watch the Pilot under full sail, disappearing as rapidly and as suddenly as she had come into sight.

"What a shame! She's our boat, and we could have got her," Elijah said, and he shook his fist at Smith, who turned and waved his hand derisively at them as he went out of sight behind the nearest island.

"I think we'd better be starting, boys," said the hermit. "They may come back, and we don't want to receive callers just yet."

"Maybe he'd bring back the Pilot," said Henry.

The hermit laughed. "They might, that's true; but I fear they'd bring her back full o' men. They might take some passengers away with 'em, too. We could n't do much against 'em. No, boys. I'm sorry, but we must not stay here, and the sooner we get out the better." And the old man began to arrange things on board for their departure.

"She's a pretty boat," said he. "If she don't leak," and he laughed a little, "she'd sail most as fast as mine, though I have n't any name for mine."

In a few minutes they started. The boys were in no mood for conversation, and for miles they sailed on in silence.

When the sun had set, they came in near shore and

anchored for the night. The air was still, and the night was mild, so they at once fell in with the hermit's suggestion that they should stay on board till morning.

"My opinion is," said he, "that we'd better keep a watch to-night. I guess I'm a little more used to being up nights than you are, so I'll stay awake to-night. If I get tired, I'll call one o' ye to come and spell me."

"Elijah makes a good guard," said David laughingly, as he saw him color a little at the recalling of his night at the smugglers' cave.

"Well, I'll call him then if I want to sleep," said the hermit.

But they were not molested that night. And on the following day they saw no one. They anchored again the next night, and Elijah insisted upon standing guard. No one accused him of having been asleep on duty, for no one waked up to see.

"We'll get into Kingston to-day," said the hermit, "if we have no bad luck. It's been some time since I've been there, but I feel pretty sure o' my bearings."

In the afternoon they came in sight of the Canadian town. They talked over their plans for the immediate future, and decided that they would not approach through the harbor, but would enter at one side, and then make some inquiries as to the whereabouts of the Osprey.

Accordingly they passed the open harbor and kept on till the place lay behind them. They carefully scanned the vessels lying at the docks as they passed by, but could see none that answered the description of the Osprey. Near sundown, they made fast to a remote little dock, after having obtained permission from its owner, who dwelt in a little house near by.

"You boys stay here," said the hermit, after they had eaten their supper, "and I'll go up and find out what I can."

The boys consented, and sat by the dock while he was gone. In about two hours he returned, bringing some packages he had obtained at the stores.

"The coast's all clear, boys. The Osprey is n't in yet, but they expect her every day now. All we can do is to wait."

"I'd rather work in your garden than wait here," said Henry. "Why didn't we stay over on your island, instead of waiting here?"

"Well, my boy," said the hermit, "you know we did n't have very good mail service over there. The coach does n't come every week, as it does over at your place, and the Osprey's men did n't send me a letter telling me about their plans. If they had, we might have waited there. But we had to find out about the boat first of all."

Henry looked abashed, and started to apologize.

"O, never mind," said the old man gently. "I have n't forgotten how I used to feel when I was a boy. Every time my father would start for Albany, at least when I was to go, why I used to count the hours for a week before. But then Albany was a great town in them days," and the old man sighed.

"Everybody in Albany's a Dutchman is n't he?" asked Elijah. "I think I've heard so."

"It was settled by the Dutch," said the old man, his quaint smile appearing on his face again. "They called it Fort Orange."

"Where'd you like to live best? Down near Albany, or in New Jersey?" asked David.

"Well, I had hard times and good times in both places," replied the hermit. "They're different. I don't know's I could say which was better to me."

"Do you know where they got that name New Jersey?" asked Elijah.

"Yes. It was given as a compliment to Lord Carteret, who once had been a governor of the island of Jersey in the English Channel."

"They settled there pretty early, did n't they?" asked David.

"Yes. There were some Puritans that came over from Long Island and settled at Elizabethtown in 1664, I've heard my brother in law say. Then, two years after that, some Connecticut people came and settled at Newark. They used to think that Perth

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Amboy, which was one of the capitals of the Colony in the early days, (Burlington was the other,) would be a bigger city than New York."

"I'd like to see New York. It must be a big place," remarked David.

"Yes it is," said the hermit. "It had most forty thousand people in '78, and it must have as many's a hundred thousand living there now."

"Whew!" said Elijah. "I mean to see it some day."

The next day the Osprey did not appear. Day followed day and still she did not come. A week had gone, and still there were no signs of her. The boys began to grow impatient. The old man tried to quiet them as best he could, but waiting was the most difficult work these active boys could do.

One day the hermit returned and said, "I've made up my mind to change our quarters. We'll go round in the harbor, and I've found a place that will be a good one for us. The man that owns the dock will let us stay there."

When their boat was under sail again, the exhilaration of the motion so stirred the boys, after their tiresome waiting, that they ran for miles out into the lake. But when they did return, it was to their new quarters within the harbor.

The main reliance the boys had for passing the time was to draw from their companion some of

the many incidents and stories with which he was familiar. They learned in this way more of the struggle for independence by the Colonies than much reading would have given. When they heard of the bravery and struggles of the men, and the sufferings and privations of the women, their eyes would flash.

"I most wish I had lived then. I'd have had a hand in those doings," said Henry, one day after he had been listening to the stories of Sergeant Jasper and Francis Marion.

"You may have a chance yet to test the British, my boy," said the old man quietly. "But war is a dreadful thing, and the amount of suffering and misery it causes cannot be told."

"Yes, but sometimes it stops suffering and misery too," remarked David eagerly. "Now here we are trying to find my brother Andrew. They just stole him. There's no other word for it except stole. And I don't know but it'll kill my father and mother," he added gloomily.

"You must cheer up, David," said the old man kindly. "Here we are to help him off, and I believe it can be done. But if we are to do anything, we must keep brave hearts, you know. I've had to think of these things lots o' times down on my island, when I've been shut in durin' the winter, and have n't seen the face of a man, woman, or child for three months at a time."

"That's so," said David, "so I'll try to be brave about it."

"But it's getting dark now and we'd better turn in, I guess," said the hermit. The boys responded, and, after seeing that everything was secure, they turned in for the night. No guard was kept here, for it was not considered necessary.

David was the first one awake in the morning, and as he dressed and was about to go on deck he heard voices on the dock. "Yes, yes, I know. I know all about it," said one in a voice that sounded strangely familiar.

Elijah was awake and staring at David. "Come, Lige, come. That's the cook of the Osprey or my name 's Jonah," said David.

CHAPTER XIX

A TRIP TO THE OSPREY

IN a moment, David and Elijah were peering over the hatchway. Walking along the dock just a little in front of them were two men, evidently sailors. One of them had a wooden leg, which struck the pavement with an emphatic thump at every step its owner took.

"It's the cook of the Osprey. It is, as sure's you're born, Elijah Spicer," whispered David.

Just then there came an emphatic nod from the man with the wooden leg as he talked with his companion; and they could hear the words, "Yes, yes, I know, I know all about it."

Elijah looked at David and smiled. "Yes, you're right," said he. "It is the cook. Shall we hail him?"

David hesitated. His first thought was to call out to him and make himself known. If the cook had been alone he would surely have done so. But the sight of the sailor with him caused him to hesitate.

"No. Let's go down in the cabin again and we'll talk it over," he replied.

Upon the return of the boys, they found the hermit and Henry already astir, who listened eagerly to what the boys had to say.

"You did well not to hail the cook, boys," said the hermit. "You might have spoiled everything. Now I'll leave you boys to get some breakfast, and I'll follow the cook. I may be able to learn something. Don't leave the boat and don't show yourselves very much on deck," he added, as taking his skin cap he departed.

The boys were too excited to care much for eating, but they managed to get something ready and sat down to their breakfast.

"I think the Osprey's here somewhere," said David, "though I could n't see her anywhere. I looked all over the harbor."

"I don't believe the cook stumped it ashore," said Elijah. "He might use his wooden leg as we boys used to use a log when we were learning to swim. But I guess he did n't swim across the lake."

"I'm going to look again," said David, as he started up the hatchway once more, disregarding the call of the boys to be careful. But in a moment he returned to announce that not a sight of the Osprey could be had. They put away the few dishes that composed this part of the outfit of the hermit's boat, and sat down to wait. Occasionally some one of them peered over the hatchway, and out over the harbor and

along the docks, but nothing of the British ship or the hermit could be seen.

The hours passed on. The sun climbed high. They felt the heat of the summer sun upon the water, but still the hermit did not appear.

"It's time for dinner, boys. Let's get it ready so that when the hermit comes he'll find something hot, for he'll be hungry, as he went away without any breakfast," said Elijah, wishing to do something to rouse David from the state of discouragement into which he had fallen.

David responded mechanically, and helped to peel some potatoes and to cut some of the dry corn bread. But just as the boys had all things ready, the hermit appeared on board, his face all wet with perspiration, and his skin cap in his hand.

"Tell you what it is, boys, Canada's said to be a pretty cold place, but a coon skin's cap's better down among the islands than here."

He drew his sleeve across his forehead, took off his coat, and looked around at the boys. David had not said a word, but his eager look, which never left the hermit's face, told all that was in his mind.

The old man smiled and said gently, "I s'pose you want to know what I found out, don't ye?" and without waiting for a reply, or the emphatic nods which the boys gave him, he said at once, "Well, I've found out that the Osprey's here."

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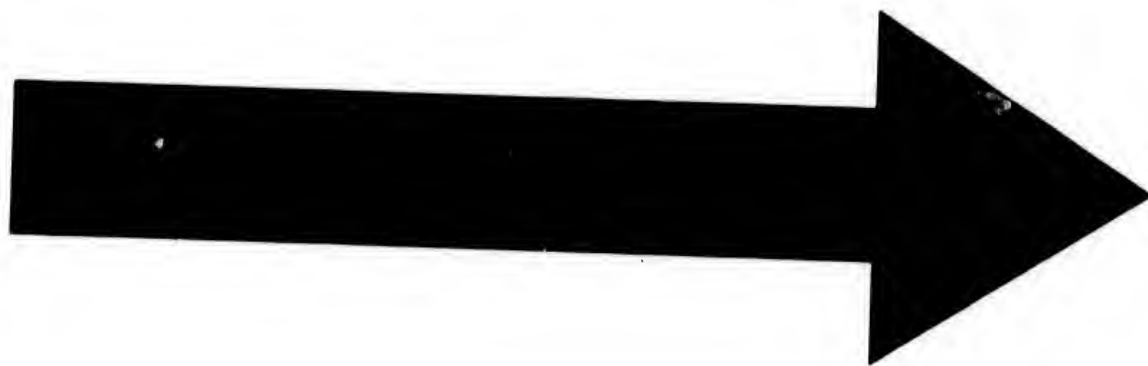
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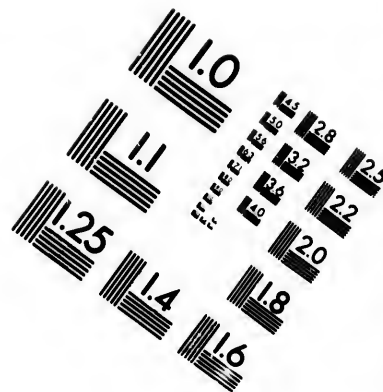
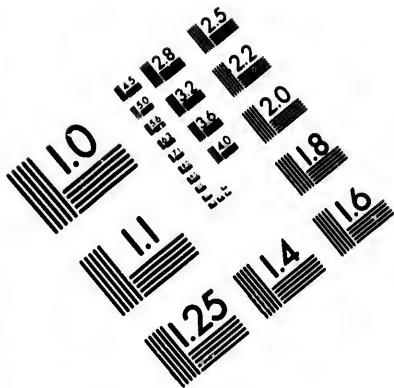
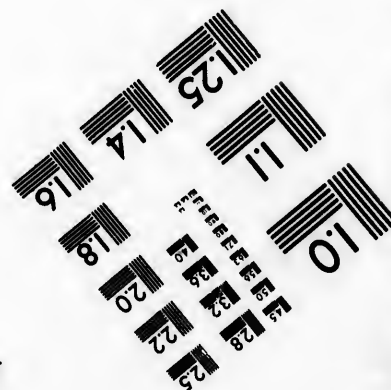
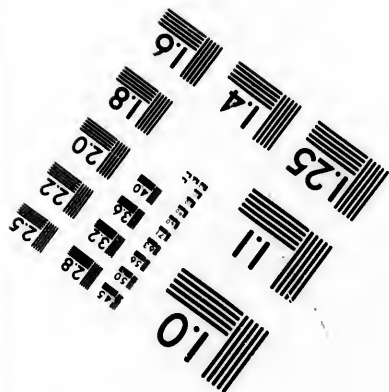
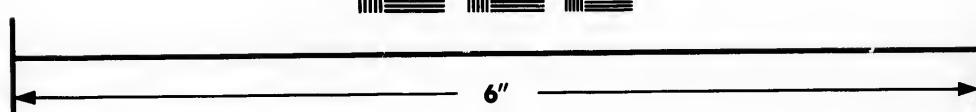
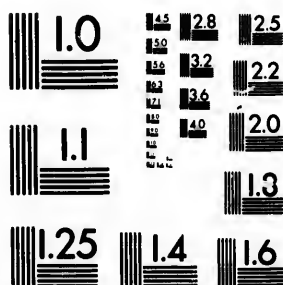


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"Where is she?" asked David eagerly. "I could n't see her anywhere in the harbor, and I looked all over too."

"Well, I guess the reason you could n't see her in the harbor was because she was n't there. She's out around the point and is a good half a mile from the shore. I could n't find out whether she was coming in or not."

And the hermit told the story of his morning's adventures. When he stepped out upon the dock, the cook was not to be seen, but he had followed in the direction indicated by the boys. For two hours he had searched, but not a sign of the cook could he find, and he had begun to doubt the correctness of the boys' discovery.

But at last he had left the streets, and came down along the docks; and as he had turned the corner, he saw riding gracefully at anchor, about a half-mile out from the shore, a great ship which he at once took for the Osprey. An inquiry made at the dock proved the correctness of his conclusion, but he could find no one who seemed to know anything of her destination or plans.

"I passed for a farmer, at least I tried to and I guess I did," he said, his quaint smile appearing for a moment. "And I am a farmer down among the islands, only I don't just fence in my lots as most other farmers do."

"We'll talk over now what's the best thing to do," he said, as he seated himself at the little table with the others. "I think my plan's about the best one, the plan I told you of coming over."

"About your going on board the Osprey?" asked David.

"Yes," replied the hermit; "only I don't want to go alone. You see I don't know your brother when I see him, and I don't even know the cook, though I don't feel so sure of him anyway as you boys do."

"Which one of us do you want to go with you?" inquired Elijah.

"Wall, I think Henry's the best one. He's the youngest, and the one they'll be least likely to suspect. He knows Andrew, and he knows enough to keep his tongue inside his mouth. I call that a good education, don't you? Some men never learn enough to keep theirs there."

"Elder Dodd told me that was the reason why Caesar was such a success, that he knew what he could n't do and did n't try to do it," said David. "I wonder if we knew before we came here," he added quietly.

"Yes," said Elijah, "and I heard Elder Dodd say that that was just the reason Napoleon made such a mess of it at last, because he did n't know what he could n't do."

"Well we know what we can do, and we're going

to do it too," said the hermit cheerfully, and the faces of the boys grew brighter at his words.

"If we only can get Andrew," said David eagerly.

"You must n't lose heart now that you've got to the pinch," said the hermit. "All you've been doin' has been just for this. Now you must be a man, and I know you will."

"Yes, sir; I'm ashamed of myself," said David. "But when I think of what may happen to us all, I tell you I am a little fearful."

"We must get to work then, at once. The Osprey may not be goin' to make a very long stop, and we mustn't get the dumps. Now, Henry, you're my boy, you know. I'm a farmer, and I'm goin' to take some of these here big new potatoes, such as won't come to light in Canada in a month yet, and I'm goin' over to the Osprey and see if I can't sell some. It may give me a chance to see Andrew, and it may not. You must go with me, and we'll have to leave some things to Providence. But we must be off at once."

And he led the way to the little skiff, into which he put some of the largest and best potatoes and other vegetables, "Just as samples, you know," he said to the boys, and in a few minutes he and Henry were on their way.

They pulled around the point, and there lay the Osprey at anchor, less than half a mile away. They neither of them said anything, though the hermit

noticed the white face of Henry, and smiled as he saw the look of determination about his mouth. "He'll do," he said to himself, as he saw they were now within hailing distance of the Osprey.

In a few minutes they were alongside the ship, and were hailing the men on deck.

"I want to see the steward," called out the hermit. "I've got some new potatoes and green stuff here I want to sell."

"Don't think ye can sell anything here," called out one of the sailors. "There's been too many o' you Kanuck farmers here already."

"You tell the steward I've some new potatoes here. I think the Cap'n'd like some, and I know no other farmer's had any to sell."

The man disappeared for a moment, and then returned to the ship's side with two officers. Just what they were Henry could not tell. He was afraid of the boatswain, from what the boys had said; but he could not tell whether one of these was he or not.

One of the officers called out to the hermit and said, "The steward isn't here. He's gone ashore. What have you got?" he asked.

"New potatoes, and big ones, too," said the hermit, tossing two or three on deck.

"They look good," he heard one say to the other. "I'm tired of the old dried up things we've had for months. We might call the cook. Perhaps he'd know."

"I'm not going to bother about it. I don't run the duffle," said the other, and he turned upon his heel and walked away. The heart of the hermit sank for a moment, but the other officer stopped for a minute, and said, "You can come aboard if you want to see the cook. I don't think he'll mind getting some of those things. You take this man into the galley," he said to a sailor standing near, and then he too turned and walked away.

The hermit and Henry made the skiff fast to the Osprey, and the old man said to Henry in a low tone, "You come too. Keep your eyes open and your mouth shut. Now's our chance." And he clambered up on deck, an example which Henry speedily followed.

The sailor led the way to the galley. As he entered, he said to the cook, "Here's a farmer's got some new potatoes. The second officer told me to bring 'em to you. The steward's ashore, and you do as you want to," and turning back he left them there.

The hermit and Henry entered the galley. Directly opposite, on a low stool, sat Andrew Field. He turned as the two came in, and a look of intense surprise swept over his face as he saw Henry Spicer, his old neighbor and friend. But he was silent as he saw the warning look in Henry's eye. The cook had been looking for a moment sharply at his visitors, especially at Henry, and then he said, "O, yes, yes, I know, I know all about it."

CHAPTER XX

AN ESCAPE FROM THE OSPREY

THE hermit turned to the cook with a look of surprise: "Know all about it? Know all about what? What do you mean?" He was more anxious than he cared to show. Andrew meanwhile went on with his work, though, if one had looked carefully, he would have seen that his hands were trembling, and that his face was paler than usual.

The cook only chuckled by way of reply, and said, "You wanted to ship some taters aboard the Osprey, did ye?"

"I have some new potatoes, and I thought I might sell enough for a few messes for the officers," replied the hermit.

"Where was they raised?" asked the cook, thumping with his wooden leg, as he busied himself about the galley. "I know; O, yes, I know, I know all about it. They was raised down near Oswego was n't they?" he asked, stopping and looking sharply at Henry.

Henry was abashed; he could find no words to say, as the cook went on: "I thought very likely

they was raised near there, as the last time I see ye, ye were busy in that town. Did ye keep the 'pintment ye made there?" and he gave a hearty laugh.

"O Mr. Cook," said Henry, "you promised to help us at Oswego; I know you won't go back on us now. We want to get Andrew off this boat. You know it as well as I do, and he will have to get off if his father and mother are to live. It's most killed them."

"Who said I would n't help? I'm agoin' to, and my time's 'bout up in this blasted Britisher too. Guess mebbe I'll go long too. But we hain't long to talk about it; got to make plans lively. Ye see I got paid off yesterday, and it's a good time fer me to leave."

"What do you think 's the best thing to do now?" asked the hermit.

"Well, I've been thinkin' o' this matter for some time," he replied. "I just thought these boys would n't give up, even if they did find the Osprey had gone, and had n't waited fer 'em to pay us a visit. Are the other boys here, too? Have ye got a boat handy, or anything?"

"Yes," replied the hermit. "The other boys are near here, and we've got a little cat-rigged boat that we know 'll sail as fast as any on the lake."

"Well, then, it strikes me 't would be a good thing fer yer boat to drop out near us some dark

night pretty quick. The Osprey's goin' to stay here fer about a week, so I heard one of the officers a sayin'."

"I think that's a good plan," said the hermit; "but how 'll we know?"

"Well, I tell ye," said the good-natured cook, "ye want a dark night. If ye could come out near here some dark night, we'd be on the lookout, and Andrew here could fall overboard accidental like; and you perhaps could pick him up, who knows? You can swim can't ye, Andrew?" said he, turning to him.

Andrew smiled and nodded assent. "I think," said he, "if you could get a little skiff and come out some dark stormy night, why David could give his call, and I'd know you were here. Then if I jumped overboard, you can pick me up."

"Suppose, then," said the hermit, "we leave it this way. The first rainy night we have we'll come out between ten and twelve o'clock. If we ain't here by twelve, you'll know we're not coming. If we come, we'll lay by near you, and David will give his call. You must be sure and answer it," said he to Andrew, "when you jump into the water. In case you don't find us, you are not so far out but you can swim ashore. How does that plan strike you?"

"That's good," said Andrew, "and I wish it could be done to-night."

"I don't believe to-night 'll be dark enough,"

replied the hermit. "But what will you do if you want to get off?" said he to the cook. "You can't swim much with a wooden leg."

"I know, I know all about it," said the cook, stamping his wooden leg upon the stove. "The first day we get when it's stormy, or shows the night's goin' to be dark, I'll go ashore and I won't come back. But where'll I meet you?" he added.

The hermit told him what kind of a boat they had, and where she was. The cook then told them they had better go ashore, as some one might suspect something if they talked any longer; and even while he spoke a sailor came to the galley and called out, "What are you doing down there? Waiting for this countryman to grow some potatoes?"

"No, I don't want any of his taters," said the cook. "They're no good, and the sooner you get 'em ashore the better, if you want anything to eat yourselves to-night."

The hermit and Henry went quickly to the ship's side, and in a few minutes were in their skiff pulling rapidly for the shore.

"I call that a pretty good day's work," said the old man, "if the cook does as he agrees."

"Don't you think he will?" asked Henry, anxiously.

"Yes, I do," replied the hermit. "Leastwise, he seems all fair and square."

They reported the results of their visit to David and Elijah upon their return. David was all enthusiasm, and wanted to start that very night. The hermit calmed him with his quiet words, and assured him that the night would be so clear that they could do nothing in it.

It proved as he predicted. The stars were shining, and over the water they could see, as if it were only twilight.

The following night was no better, and the next was the same. David chafed and fumed, while the others waited patiently. But when they awoke on the following morning the clouds were heavy, and by ten o'clock a fine, misty rain set in. It continued steadily all the afternoon, and just at night who should come aboard but the cook; his face was all aglow, and his wooden leg thumped as if it shared in his pleasure.

"Most 's good as the Constellation," he said, looking around upon the cabin. "Why, this is only a picnic," he added.

"You would n't call it a picnic, I guess, if you'd waited here as we have," said David, gloomily.

"Yes, yes, I know, I know all about it," said the cook. "Why, you've been waiting for this very night. I guess it was just made fer ye."

They waited until about ten o'clock, when a heavy fog had set in. The rain had ceased to fall, but the

air was heavy and damp. Not a star could be seen; and if they looked ahead, they could see but a few feet. The hermit and David stepped into the skiff, leaving the others in the boat to await their return.

Now that the time of action had come, David was cool and collected. The hermit, who knew the way, gave the directions, and the skiff went slowly on.

"Do you suppose he can find us in such a night as this?" asked David in a whisper, of his companion.

"O, I guess so," said the hermit, cheerfully. "But I don't think we'd better talk much; the stiller we keep, the better. Now go ahead."

In a little time the hermit called in a whisper to David to stop rowing. Rising in his place, he peered through the darkness. David could see nothing himself, and he wondered at the confidence of his companion. They had stopped rowing, and the hermit silently was using one oar as a paddle, and in stillness was sending the little skiff onward.

Suddenly David saw looming right up before them a great bulky body, which he knew must be the ship; he almost gave a cry in his surprise and excitement, but a whisper from the hermit silenced him. He still continued to use his paddle, and changed his position till he knew he was near the cook's galley. Then, resting a minute, he whispered to David to give his call.

The cawing of a crow rose on the still air, and

then everything was silent. David waited as it seemed to him an hour, and no response came; he could hear some one moving about on the ship, and that was all.

"Give it again, David," said the hermit, "and a little louder." And the cawing rose again in the darkness. But this time there was a sharp answer on the ship; a single caw arose, and there was a splash in the water, not far from them. The hermit, with two or three rapid strokes, sent his skiff in the direction whence the sound came. In less than a minute they saw the form of a man struggling in the water, and they both grasped him and lifted him into the boat. It was Andrew, wet, and panting more from the excitement than from his exertions. The hermit gave three or four strong strokes, and sent the skiff a number of yards away.

"Hush, boys! Keep perfectly quiet. They can't see us, but they may hear something; we must stay where we are for a little."

In the mean time there was confusion on board the ship; there were shouts and shots, but none came near them. Soon they heard a boat lowered and sent out from the ship.

It was an anxious time for David and Andrew. They could not see each other's faces, nor that of the hermit, but they could hear the oars of the boat that was evidently near them.

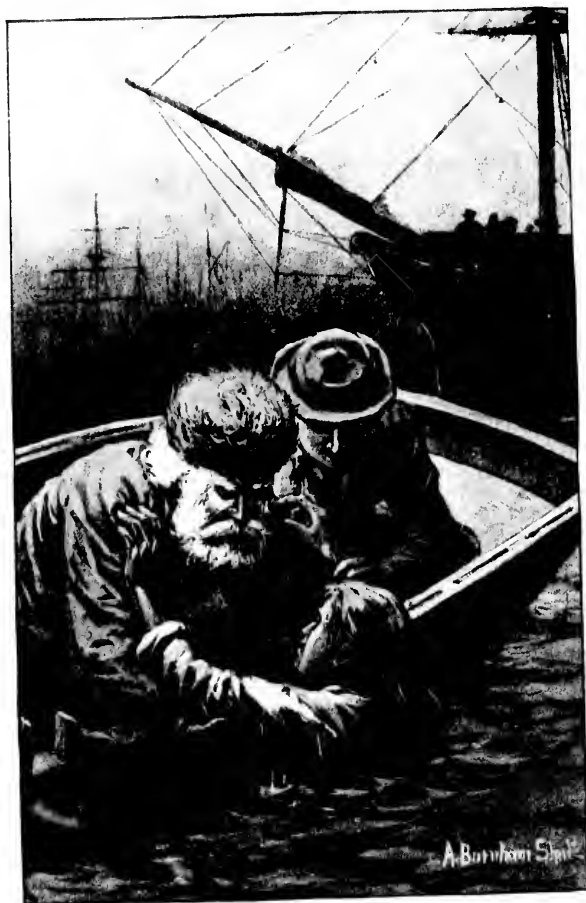
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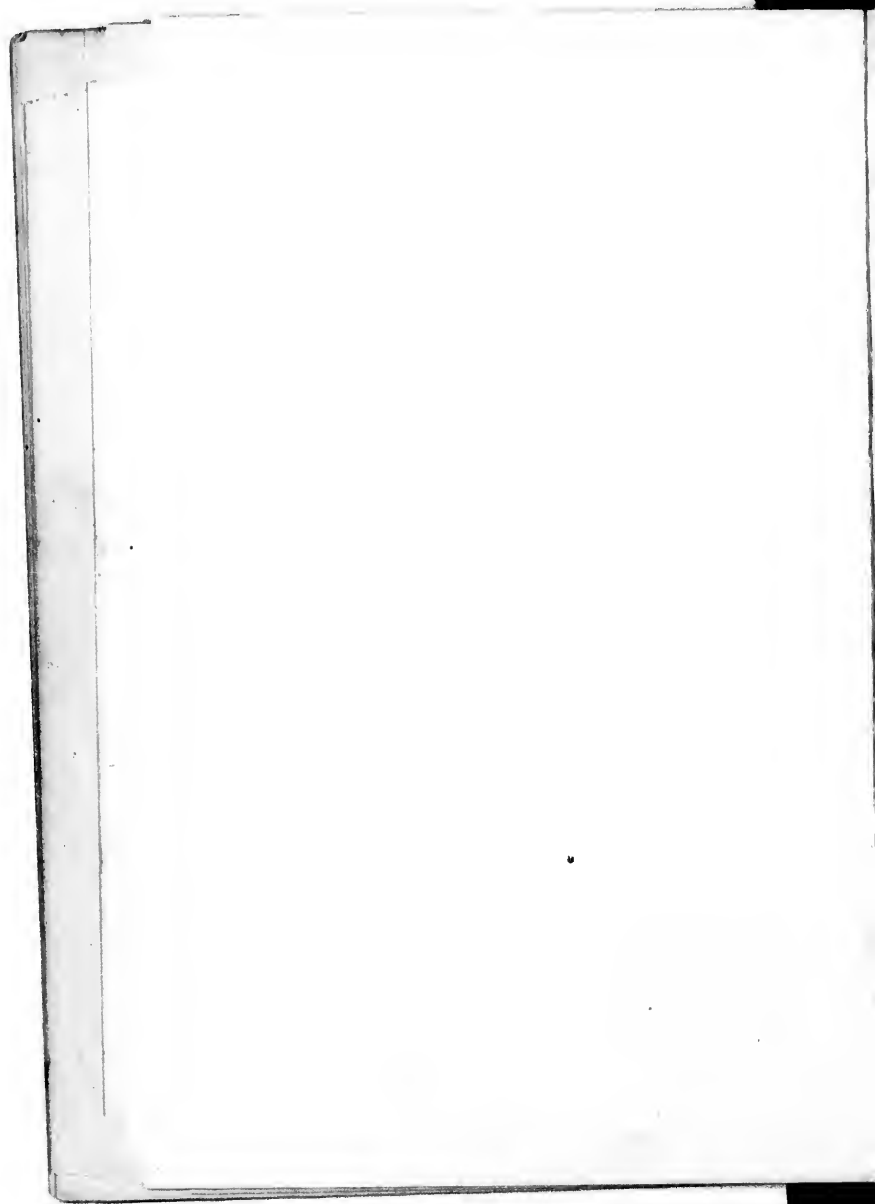
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"It's that fellow we took over by Sackett's Harbor," they heard one say. "I guess he'll never get pressed again. What a fool to try to escape on a night like this! Why, he could n't tell which way was shore." The boys felt their own boat in motion, but David was sure it was not going back. They could see the ship again now, so close were they to it; but the skiff kept on around the ship, and only stopped when it was on the farther — the lake side. Then all was again silent, and not even the sounds of the boat that was searching for them could be heard. They dared not speak, and could only wait. It seemed to David that they remained there, scarcely daring to breathe, for hours.

But at length the skiff began to move again. David had lost all idea of locality; he could not tell even the direction in which they were to go. But the skiff kept on quietly and steadily, leaving the ship behind.

It seemed to David a long time before the hermit spoke, but at last he did, telling the boys to take their oars and row as he directed. They kept on, David no longer trying to keep any idea of time; and he was greatly surprised when they found themselves alongside the hermit's boat, to receive an enthusiastic welcome from the watchers there.

"Yes, I knew you'd come," said the cook. "I knew, I knew all about it."

"We must leave here at once," the hermit said. "There's no wind, and we can't sail. We'll have to use the long oars and row; I can find my way if it is dark. But go we must, and at once."

The boat was at once pushed off, and headed for the lake through the blackness and fog.

CHAPTER XXI

A SURPRISE AT THE HERMIT'S HOME

NOT a word was spoken by any one except by the hermit, as he gave directions, for hours. The boat was sent onward steadily and quietly. There were only four of the long oars on board, so the boys relieved one another, the hermit and the cook refusing to stop rowing even to rest.

At last the morning came, but the fog remained. The quiet confidence of the hermit inspired the others, although not one of them had the least idea of where they were. The sun had been up for two hours before it had burned the fog away, and then all stopped to rest and eat.

There was nothing except water and a dim outline of the shore to be seen. Not a boat was in sight, and the feeling of loneliness seemed to be upon every one. But the breakfast brought renewed life and cheer, and the wind, which now began to rise, increased their hopefulness.

"I know, I know all about it," said the cook to the hermit; "but I hope you've got your bearings. I don't know where we are."

"I do," said the hermit, with a smile. "But we haven't thought a bit of where we're goin', nor what we'd best do now. What do you think, boys?"

"I don't know," said David. "If we had the Pilot, I should want to start for home right away. We've been gone a long time now. Why, it must be past the Fourth of July. I've hardly kept track of the days."

"Yes, July's got a good big hole eaten into it," replied the hermit. "I think we'd better all go back to my island. Perhaps you could rig up the boat you borrowed from the smugglers. If you can't, you might strike out by land, and go cross-cut along shore, though that's uncertain, as you don't know the way. We'd better go right back to my place now."

Andrew looked at David, questioning him with a glance. David nodded his head emphatically, and then said aloud, "I'm sure that's the best thing to be done now. We can talk over our plans on the way."

The boat was now rapidly sailing towards home. The relief from rowing was a pleasure to all, as they sat near the hermit, and watched him direct the course. David and Andrew lived in a very undemonstrative age, and any show of affection was regarded as akin to weakness; and yet the hermit often smiled as he saw them sitting close by each other, and talk-

ing in low tones. David was telling his brother of all his experiences in trying to rescue him. Andrew's face showed his interest, and a grave look came over it as he heard of his father's illness.

"Andrew," said the hermit, "you must have had a tough time of it. Did they keep you shut up in that stuffy little cook's galley all the time?"

Here the cook broke in, and said, "It was n't a stuffy galley at all. It was the best galley on the lake. O, I know, I know, all about it."

All the party laughed, and Andrew said, "I did have a hard time of it. They kept me shut up pretty well. This is only the second time I've seen the open sky since I was pressed."

"What was the other time?" inquired David.

"O, they brought me up on deck one day, when we'd been out about three weeks, I guess, and asked me if I would n't like to serve before the mast now. I told 'em, 'No.' I did n't want to serve at all, and that they had no right to make me. I guess I made a mistake, as they gave me a dreadful flogging, and sent me back to the galley to stay till I thought I'd like to serve. My back has n't got well yet. I can hardly lie on it now."

"How'd you get away last night?" asked the hermit.

"O, I waited till I heard David's call. I tell you my heart came right up in my throat. I was all

ready to make a break, but I waited till I heard it the second time, and then I made a rush from the galley, and gave the call, and just jumped over the rail. If you had n't picked me up, I guess I would n't have served on the Osprey or anywhere else again," he said, with a laugh. "I can laugh now, but I could n't then."

"You don't want to laugh too loud yit, though," said the hermit. "You remember about the man who crowed before he was out of the woods, don't ye? Well, we're not in the woods yet, to say nothin' o' bein' out."

"They can't get us now," said Elijah. "We've as good a boat as there is on the lake, and the Osprey never 'll follow us down here."

"Mebbe not," replied the hermit; "but there's some smugglers round here."

This reference to the smugglers brought out the story of their meeting with them, to which Andrew listened with keen interest. In this way most of the day was consumed, and as night drew on they found themselves near the river. They kept on their course for a little ways, when the hermit turned and said, "What shall we do for the night? I'm most sure I could find my way even in the dark; but I'm a little fearful it might not be just the thing. We might strike a snag."

"Let's anchor near the shore, and stay aboard all night then," said the cook.

This plan was approved by all. The anchor was cast, and the watch so arranged that no one had more than two hours of standing on guard. As all were tired from the previous night's exertion, this made the duty fall lightly on all.

Early on the following morning they were astir, and were soon on their way down the river. The wind kept fair, and the bracing air of the summer morning upon the water, and the escape of Andrew, kindled the spirits of the entire party. The cook again and again was sure that "he knew all about it," and the boys were almost certain that he did, as he prepared their meals for them now, — a duty he had at once taken upon himself.

"Is n't that a boat, Andrew?" said David, pointing down the river near the shore to a little speck moving over the water.

"Yes," said Andrew, after a minute's careful search. "Yes, it's a skiff, and has one man in it. He acts as if he were coming out into the river."

As the sailboat swept on, the other boat became plainer. They could see now that the man in it was as interested in them as they were in him. In a little while they were within hailing distance, and the man in the skiff called to them to stop.

The hermit brought his boat around, and as the sail flapped in the wind, and the motion ceased, the skiff came alongside.

"Mornin', Mr. Ogden," said the newcomer to the hermit. "You've quite a party aboard. I didn't know as you ever had visitors."

The hermit smiled, as he saw the boys look up at the mention of his name, and then he replied to the newcomer, "Good mornin', Mr. Reese. I don't have many callers, that's true, but these boys were talkin' some of comin' over to see you. They're from over by Sackett's Harbor." And in a few minutes the story was told. Mr. Reese urged the boys to go home with him; but now that Andrew had been rescued, they had no object in view in going to his home, and besides they were anxious to get away soon.

"I s'pose you've heard the news," said Mr. Reese to the hermit.

"What news do you mean?" asked he.

"Why, the war?" replied Mr. Reese.

"War? Has war been declared?" asked all together.

"Yes," said Mr. Reese. "A man came along on horseback yesterday on his way to Cape Vincent, and he told all about it. Ye see the 'submission men,' who wanted to have no war, were defeated in the last election, and the 'war men' had it their own way. So on June eighteenth Congress declared war. At least that's what the messenger said."

"Well, we're in for it," said the hermit. "We're

bound to catch it along the river. But tell me, are we in any shape for a war with England?"

"O, the British have about a thousand vessels, and some of them are the most powerful boats afloat. In our navy we have about a dozen, and none of them are of large size. We've got some miserable, cheap little affairs, called gunboats, besides, but they don't amount to much."

"I'm glad it's come," said Andrew. "I've had enough to show me that we'd better fight. We beat 'em once, and if pluck'll do it we can again. I believe in spelling America with a great big A. If the British take our men, we ought to try to get 'em back, anyway."

The little party was all excitement now. They said good by to Mr. Reese, and were soon off down the river.

"This makes matters worse," said the cook. "I haven't got any home to go to, but I don't know when I'll get there now. If it was n't for this leg," and he brought his stump emphatically down, "I know where I'd be. Yes, yes, I know all about it," and he looked ruefully at his wooden leg. "I've been in the navy before, and I'd like to be there again."

"Mr. Ogden," said Andrew, turning to the hermit, "do you think we'd better go to your house now? Had n't we better land and start for home?"

The old man smiled. "You'd have as much trouble on land as you would on the lake. These boys have been with me a good while now, and they did n't even know my name. I guess you'd better follow my advice now, and go down to my place, and fit out that boat before you start. This war, you see," he added, thoughtfully, "changes my plans. Then here's the cook," he added. "If he's goin' with you, he could n't stump it through the woods."

"Of course he's going with us," said Andrew. "He's no home, and we'll keep him. One good turn deserves another. He's had a tough time in life."

"Yes, yes, I know, I know all about it," murmured the cook, greatly touched by the sincerity in Andrew's words.

"You just go 'long with me to-night," said the hermit, "and to-morrow we'll see what's best to be done. I'm sure that's the best thing to do."

The boys assented. They were watchful now, and more silent, as they came among the islands. They pointed out the places where they had been to Andrew as they passed, and he looked upon the beautiful scenes with keen interest.

"That's the island over there where the smugglers' cave is, is n't it?" asked Elijah, as the hermit changed his course and steered to the east. Andrew looked up quickly to where Elijah pointed, and the story of the cave was told for his benefit.

"Yes, that's the spot," said the hermit; "but I don't think we'll stop there, leastwise not to-day," he added, thoughtfully.

An hour brought them in sight of the hermit's island.

"He has the neatest little house in there you ever saw," said David to Andrew. "It's right among the trees, and you never could see it from one side of the island if you looked a week."

But they were ready for a landing now, and as soon as the boat was made fast, they all started for the hermit's house. Henry was in advance, and disappeared among the trees. In a minute he came back with a blank look upon his face. "Why, the house's all burned up," he said. They all started upon the run, and found his words too true. Only a heap of ashes stood where once the house had been. "Go down to the boat-house, boys," said the hermit. In a few minutes they returned upon the run, with the news that not a boat was there, and that the boat-house itself was only a mass of charred ruins.

CHAPTER XXII

THE HERMIT'S DISCOVERY

THE hermit said not a word. He carefully examined the premises, to see if any trace of the marauders could be found. Motioning to David to follow him, he left the party by the ruins of his home, and taking the skiff rowed over to his "farm." Here another scene of wanton waste was spread out before them. His garden was in ruins. Even the rose bushes had been broken down, and his beds of vegetables destroyed.

His face only grew the harder, as he saw the ruins before him, and, without saying a word, he led the way back to the place where the others were waiting. On his way up from the shore, he stopped a minute, as he saw the dead bodies of his kittens, which had evidently had their brains dashed out against a tree.

The others were awaiting their return, seated on the ground near where the hermit's home for thirty years had been.

"We'll all turn in now and help you build another house," said Andrew. "I'm afraid all this has happened to you because you've been a friend to us."

"Well, I think very likely it was the party that passed us on our way to Kingston that paid me a visit," said the hermit. "They evidently didn't thank me for interfering with their plans."

"That's just the reason why we want to do you a good turn now."

The hermit smiled, and was silent a moment. "No, boys," said he, "it's all changed now. You see war's been declared, and that changes everything. I don't think 't would be a very good place to live in down here now. They can't get my islands away from me, but they'd burn every house I built."

"Yes, yes, I know, I know all about it," interposed the cook.

"No, I won't stay here, for a while anyway," continued the hermit. "You hain't any boat at all now, and I guess I'll sail away and take ye all home the first thing I do. There's nothing here to keep me any longer. They didn't leave me even the cradle. Not as I needed it, though. No, I'll go along with ye. Leastwise if it's agreeable to you, I will," he added.

The boys' eyes sparkled. "That's the very thing," said David. "If the war's come we'll need your help, and you'll need a home. I know my father and mother would be glad to have you stay at our house just as long as you wanted to. You and the cook too."

"That 's so," said Andrew, emphatically.

"I think one of 'em might go over to our house and stay," said Elijah.

The hermit smiled and said, "We 'll see about it; but the first thing we 've got to do now is to see how we 're going to get to your house. But I 've a new plan to suggest. I don't love these smugglers any. They 've never been friends o' mine, though I never had any trouble with 'em afore. But now, ye see, war 's been declared. All that truck o' theirs over in the cave is fair spoils now. I would n't mind making a little prize money on our way out, would you?" and he looked around upon the company.

"Do you think we could do it?" said Andrew, quickly.

"I rather think we could. I had a little experience in that line, though it was some time ago," replied the hermit. "But we can't do anything to-day.

"By and by I 'll take a run over to the island, and see how the land lies."

As the afternoon passed on, the hermit took his skiff, and with the cook he started for the island where the cave was, leaving the boys on his island, with a caution to keep themselves out of sight, and to wait patiently for their return.

It was evening when they came back. The boys had meanwhile pitched their tent in a clump of hemlocks, out of the sight of all passers by. They

had some supper ready when the exploring party returned, and they had long been waiting for them. Elijah had stood as a lookout, and reported that no boat had come in sight.

Seated on the ground in front of the tent, the fire covered as soon as the supper had been prepared to prevent the smoke from being seen, they were ready to listen to the report of the hermit's expedition.

"We did n't see anything or anybody on our way over. The cook here thought we had n't better land where we had before, but go round to the other side of the island, so I followed his advice, and I guess 't was well I did."

"Why, did you see any one?" inquired David.

"Just wait a minute and I'll tell ye," replied the hermit. "We went round to the west side, and run the skiff in behind some rocks out o' sight. I did n't think the cook could walk very well with that wooden leg o' his, so I left him to watch the skiff, and told him to whistle if he saw any one."

"Yes, yes, I know, I know all about it," murmured the individual referred to.

"Well, I crep' in through the trees pretty still like, till I got round where I was in among the trees, and yet could see the beginnin' o' the gorge. Well, what do you s'pose I see when I got in sight o' the place?"

"Whut did you?" asked Henry excitedly. "A man?"

"Yes, that's just it. There sat a man on the ground, cross-legged like a turkey."

"Like a what?" asked Andrew.

"O, my brother in law said that was the way those fellows over in Turkey sat, with their legs crossed like a willer chair. Well, that's the way this feller was. He wa'n't right in front o' the gorge, but a little to one side, and kind o' hid in some bushes. If we'd come up as we first thought, — as I thought," he added, "as the cook gave a grunt, — why, he could have seen us, and we could n't have seen him at all. 'T was lucky we did follow the cook's plan."

The hermit hastened to resume his story as a "Yes, yes, I know," began to come forth from the cook's lips.

"Well, ye see, I was puzzled like fer a little. I did n't know whether anybody was inside. I rather suspected there was. But while I was a waitin' and puzzlin' my head, I see the guard take his gun, and stand up and listen like. He seemed to hear some one, though I could n't hear anybody where I was. Pretty quick he crept out to the edge o' the bushes, and pecked out across the river. 'T was plain he see somethin', fer he looked and listened a long time. Just then there came a whistle, and he jumped up and stood there waitin'."

"What did he do then?" asked Henry.

"Pretty quick I heard two boats a comin', so I peeked out from where I was. One of 'em was the boat you left here, and t' other was a bigger one."

"Then they did steal our boats," said Andrew. "I just knew 't was those smugglers that did the damage round here."

"Like enough," responded the hermit. "Indeed, I have n't much doubt of it. Well, pretty quick the boats landed, and I heard another whistle. This time the guard answered it, and ran down to the shore. 'T was n't long before I saw 'em a tuggin' and pullin', bringin' the biggest lot o' guns and pistols up to the gorge ye ever saw. They went back—there was five on 'em—again, and made as many as a dozen trips, I guess."

"Did they bring guns and pistols every time?" asked David.

"I was a goin' to tell ye. They brought up guns enough to supply a regiment, I guess. They left the guns all there by the openin' o' the gorge, and one of 'em stayed with the guard, and four of 'em went down to the boat and brought up a chest. 'T was heavy, I guess, from the way they tugged at it."

"What was in it?" asked Henry.

"Not looking in it, I can't say," said the hermit, smiling. "The four who brought the chest carried it in out of sight. They were gone about an hour, I guess, and then they came out. Then they all sat down on the ground and began to talk."

"I could n't just hear what they was a sayin' where I was, so I crept round a little nearer. Then I see that one of 'em was that feller that was steerin' that boat o' yours, — the Pilot I think you said was the name of her, though I don't name my boats."

"Then 't was Smith," said David, excitedly.

"What Smith?" asked Andrew, and they stopped to tell of their adventures with that individual before the hermit resumed his story.

"I could hear every word they said where I was, and I tell you I was mighty interested in what they did say. It seems they knew of the war's bein' declared, and they were scared. I found out that they had three other places where they kept things. They had been bringin' everything to this place for the past few days, and clearin' out the others. They did n't feel very safe like over them, but I heard Smith say, 'Nobody on earth would think o' lookin' here,' and 'This was the safest one of 'em all.' They did n't know they had such a good audience, I guess," said the hermit, chuckling. "Well," he resumed, "it seems they're afraid of the Canadian officers now as much as they are of ours, for the war puts an end to all kinds o' tradin', and they like prize money over there as well as we do."

"How long did the men stay there?" asked David.

"O, they talked on for an hour, I guess," said the hermit. "It seems they had brought most all they

were goin' to. Two more trips, I heard 'em say, was all there was to make, and they 're goin' to make 'em to-night. Then they 're goin' to get a boat to come and take 'em all away."

"When is the boat coming? Is it the Osprey?" asked Andrew.

"I don't know. Very likely it 's the Osprey, but I did n't hear. Now if we do anything, we 'll have to do it to-morrow or next day. They 'll be takin' the things away pretty quick, and our prize money 'll all be gone. But I think we 'd better turn in now."

The boys had prepared a bed of the branches they had cut, but it was not thought wise to have any fire. The air was cool, but, accustomed as they were to an outdoor life, they little minded that.

A guard, it was decided, was necessary, and the cook insisted that upon himself should devolve that duty. "I know, I know all about it. Besides, I can't do the trampin' some o' ye can, so I want to do what I can." And with the cook seated on the ground, with his back against a tree, and yet in a position where he could command a view of the camp and river both, the rest of the party entered the tent. They were soon asleep, and silence reigned over all.

The night was only partly gone, when Andrew thought he heard some one calling. He roused himself, and listened sharply.

"Mr. Ogden! Mr. Ogden!" he could hear it plainly now, and quickly rising, without disturbing the other sleepers, he stepped forth out of the tent. The cook was there, and whispered to him to come quickly with him. Andrew followed to the place where the cook had been on guard, when his companion suddenly pulled his arm, and asked him to stop and listen.

Andrew obeyed. He listened, and then, turning quickly, listened again. Above the rippling of the waters on the shore he heard something that startled him. It was the sound of oars falling regularly into the water.

CHAPTER XXIII

A PRISONER

THERE was a boat evidently approaching; there was no attempt made to muffle the oars. As the sound of them became plainer, Andrew could hear voices in conversation. He crept nearer the water and took his stand behind a tree on a bank, high over the river beneath. He was completely hidden from the view of any one upon the river, and yet he could see, though somewhat dimly, what was occurring there. There was no moon, but the stars could be seen, and his eyes were accustomed now to the dimness.

As the boat came under the bluff on which Andrew stood, he perceived that two men were in it, and that they rested on their oars there. He could distinguish their words now, as they conversed, and he listened closely.

"Don't you think, Smith," said one, "that we'd better land and look over the hermit's island a little? Maybe he's been back."

"No, he has n't," replied Smith, for it was this omnipresent smuggler in the boat. "Those boys

were trying as hard as ever they could to get out o' this river. Don't you remember how they called to us when they see us a sailin' by in their boat? Wall, this here hermit were with 'em, and they was tryin' to get away."

"Well, if you thought they was tryin' to get away, what did ye want to set his stuff afire here the other day, for?"

"O, he'll come back; but not jest yet. I hardly think we'd better stop now. He is n't here, and if he was he could n't bother us. The boys is gone now, and we've got all our stuff together; and it won't be but a day or two afore we git it off, and then good by to the whole crowd, I say."

Their voices dropped a little, and Andrew could only catch the word "chest." It was repeated several times, but in what connection he could not learn. But after a brief pause their voices rose again.

"Wall, Smith, we'll do as you say; only I thought, seein' as we was right here, it would n't do any harm to take a little look at things and see."

"No use," replied Smith, and Andrew heard the oars dipped in the water again, and then the sounds became fainter and soon ceased to be heard. Andrew hesitated. Should he return to the camp and rouse the sleepers? They could do nothing now, for the boat had gone, and evidently was not coming back soon. On the other hand, when he thought of what

Smith had said about everything being there in the cave now, and that soon all would be taken away, he hardly knew what to do. But he soon decided that he would rouse the party, and that a consultation would be the best.

Accordingly, he returned to the camp. In a moment all were awake and gathered together in front of the tent, listening to Andrew's story. All were silent for a time, waiting for the hermit to speak; but as he remained silent and thoughtful, Andrew said, "Did I do right to rouse you out to-night, Mr. Ogden? I didn't know whether to do it or not."

"Yes, Andrew, it was just right," replied the hermit slowly. "But I've been thinkin' what's best to be done. Ye see, whatever we do, we've got to be in a hurry about. Ye didn't hear 'em say what day they was comin' back to the cave, did ye?"

"No," said Andrew. "This man, Smith, said in a day or two. That's all I heard."

"My opinion is that we'd better start early in the mornin' and go to the cave, and then git out just as lively as we can."

"What, this morning?" asked Andrew.

"Yes, this mornin'," replied the hermit, a little sharply. "We'll have to start afore sunrise. Now the rest on ye, ye go to sleep, and I'll go down and get the boat ready. I guess we've got pretty nigh

enough to eat, and it's lucky we have, fer we won't get much on this island. I'll call ye in the mornin', and now all of ye turn in. I'll be all the guard we need, and I'll fix the boat in shape."

He refused all offers of aid, and started for the shore. The rest of the party waited a few minutes, and then decided to follow the hermit's suggestion, and were all soon asleep in the tent.

It was still dark when the low voice of the hermit aroused them. They were quickly with him, and in silence they all started for the boat, the hermit in advance and the cook acting as rear guard.

The sail was raised, and the tent put on board. The few eatables that could be secured from the ruins of the garden were taken, and soon the party was slowly moving on over the river. The wind was light and the progress accordingly was slow; and it was broad daylight before they came in sight of the island on which the cave was.

"I think," said the hermit, "that we'd better follow the course the cook and I took. We'll go round to the other side of the island first, and come at the cave that way. Then, if the way's all clear, we'll bring the boat around."

"Do you think we'll find any one there?" asked Elijah.

"Wall, I rather suspect we shall," replied the hermit.

"What 'll we do if there's two or three of 'em?" inquired David.

"If there's too many, why we'll pull out and leave, for it won't do to tarry in this region very long. But I don't like to leave them things here without tryin' to get 'em. However, I think I'd rather lose 'em than to leave any o' you boys here and have to take only part o' ye home. What'd your father and mother say to that?"

The boys were silent again. They had great confidence in their leader, but the glances they cast at one another occasionally showed that they all were a little afraid, and all alike afraid to confess it.

The boat was soon landed on the spot the hermit and cook had found on their previous journey, and the little party leaped ashore. Each carried a gun, for although they did not expect to use them, they knew they might be thrown upon the defensive. The cook was left to guard the boat, and all the rest of the party, except Andrew, the hermit soon sent back to the boat, preferring to have only one with him as he went to see what was before them.

In what seemed to the boys a very short time, Andrew came back to the boat on the run. To the boys' eager questions he only replied that they were to stay where they were until they were summoned, and that all he knew was that the hermit had left him when they were about a hundred yards from the

cave, and had gone on alone, and that he had soon returned to Andrew and told him to run for the boat, as fast as he could, and bring to him a coil of rope, which he said was in the cabin.

This rope Andrew quickly took, and was soon out of sight again among the trees. The boys were all impatience now, and it was only with the greatest difficulty that the cook could prevent their following the course which Andrew had taken.

In about an hour Andrew returned and told them that they all, including the cook, were to follow him as rapidly as they could, and he started off through the trees again toward the cave. The cook was soon left far behind; but he could see where the boys had been, and as he puffed along he occasionally found time to stop for a moment and wipe his forehead and ejaculate, "Yes, yes, I know, I know all about it."

It was a strange sight he saw, when finally he came up to the boys and found them with the hermit near the entrance to the cave. Fast bound to a tree was a man, a stranger to the cook; his arms were clasped about a tree, and his hands tied on the other side. The prisoner could not see the party without turning his head, and as this was impossible, except to a slight degree, he could not see the cook as he came up.

"I was just a tellin' the boys," said the hermit,

"about this fellow as you came up. You see, when I crept on through the woods, and by and by came in sight of the gorge, I could n't see any guard. I thought that was mighty funny, and did n't know but he was inside. I was just a goin' to creep up and peek in, when what should I see but this here guard," and he pointed to the stranger, "a sittin' under one of the trees fast asleep. The sun was a shinin' right into his face, and his gun had fallen over on the ground. I noticed his head had kind o' fallen over on one side, and I thought I might just catch him with a rope jest same as I snare sturgeon sometimes; so I sent Andrew on the run back to the boat for a rope I knew was there. I was mortal 'fraid the fellow'd wake up afore Andrew could get back again, but thank fortune he did n't, fer all the sun was a shinin' right plump inter his facee."

"I'd been awake all night," called out the prisoner. "I guess you'd be tired out if you'd been a liftin' and pullin' all night long. I don't know 's I care much if I did get asleep. Smith might have stay'd himself; he's always shovin' the mean part off on me."

"Just say good by for us, will you, to Mr. Smith?" said David. "I understand he thought we left him the other night without being as polite as we ought to. Tell him, if he'll bring back the Pilot, we'll say good morning too."

"Well," continued the hermit, "I made a noose in the rope, and crept up still's I could. I kep' a stoppin' behind most every tree, fearin' he'd wake up and I'd have to try another plan to quiet him. But I got up there within a yard o' him afore he stirred, and then, just as he was beginnin' to move, I elapped the noose right over his head, and I had him like a sucker."

"What'd he do?" asked David, laughing.

"Why, I don't jest know. He acted like as if he was goin' to say somethin', but he kind o' grabbed at his neck, and I drew the rope so tight he could n't even squeal. I did n't give him any time either, for I just called Andrew, and before he knew it, we had him a huggin' that tree, just as ye see him now. But we must be at work," he continued. "Henry, you stay on guard here, and see that this man does n't get away; and if ye see any signs o' any one comin', jest shout or whistle as loud as ye can." And, leading the way, he dropped over into the entrance to the gorge, an example which the others quickly followed, and soon were out of sight on their way to the cave.

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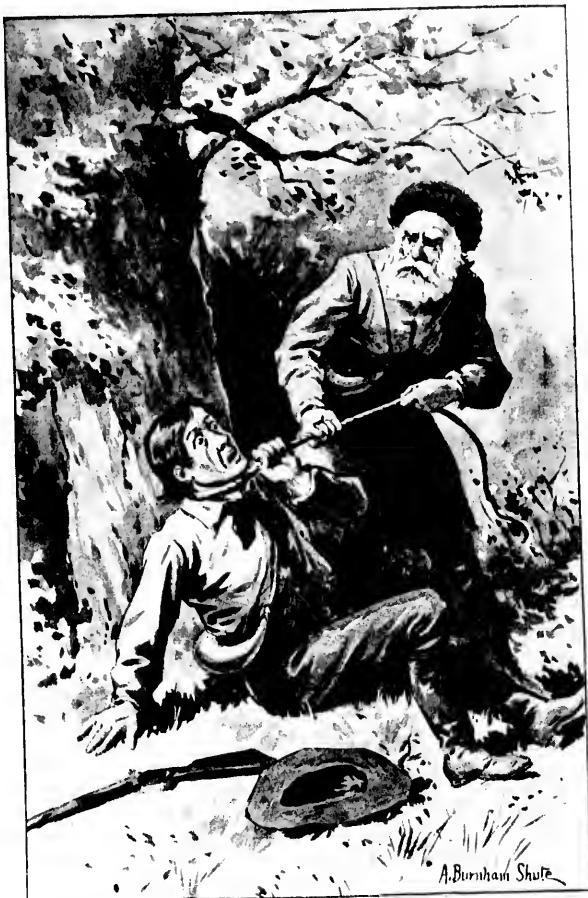
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"I CLAPPED THE NOOSE RIGHT OVER HIS HEAD." Page 208.



CHAPTER XXIV

A CARGO FOR THE BOAT

THE little party soon found its way to the cave. As they approached, the hermit increased his caution, being a little fearful of guards or men being there. But they were not molested, and soon stood within the cave.

"What a lot there is here now," said David. "There's twice as much as there was when we were here before, isn't there Elijah?"

"Yes," said Elijah, "I guess there's more'n that."

But the hermit, who took entire control, soon made an investigation.

"It's mostly guns and powder. They're either goin' into the war themselves, or else they're goin' to make some money out of it. O, no," he added in a moment, "here's some other stuff. I don't just know what. It's cloth, though, of some kind. To make women's dresses of," he said, after an examination. "My! but its fine."

Each one of the party was soon loaded with all that he could carry, and they commenced their return. There was some difficulty in getting that which they

carried up out of the entrance of the gorge upon the ground. But this was done after a time, and the results of their journey made quite an imposing pile, when heaped together.

"Now I propose that the cook go round and bring the boat here. It won't take very long, and while he's doin' that, we'll go in after some more. I suspect that path we see in there's a shorter cut, but I don't believe we'd better make any new investigations. We've got the hardest day's work before us we ever had," said the hermit, as the cook set out through the woods, and the hermit, after examining the rope that bound their prisoner, led the way into the gorge again.

Two more trips were made before the cook had brought their boat. He was now left to guard the prisoner, and to keep a watch for interruptions from without. After two more trips had been completed, the hermit proposed that they should load what they had on board their boat. "In case we have to hurry away," he said.

When this work had been done, and they were returning for another trip to the cave, Andrew suddenly stopped and exclaimed: —

"Do n't you remember how, last night, I said I heard Smith speak of a chest? You know they talked lower when they were speaking of it, but maybe it's something in the cave."

"That's so," said Elijah. "Let's look again and see if we can't find it."

So the party searched diligently when they came to the cave, but no trace of a chest could be found. A search outside proved to be equally fruitless, and at last each made his load of that which he found, and together they returned to the shore.

The hermit had said nothing when Andrew had spoken of a chest, though he had entered diligently into the search for it. But when they had deposited their loads on the boat and come back to the gorge, he turned to their prisoner and said, "Where's that chest Smith brought here?"

"Don't you wish you knew?" said the prisoner.

"I think we shall know, but if we don't, I think the exchange of so good a man as you, if we take you over to Sackett's Harbor, will be worth about as much as what was in that chest. Come, now," he added, "you tell us where it is, and like enough, when we get through here, you might get away. Who knows?"

The prisoner hesitated. Finally he said, "Who are ye, anyway?"

"O, these boys live over by Sackett's Harbor. We're all going there too."

"Then you ain't custom officers?" asked the prisoner eagerly.

"No sir!" said David with emphasis.

"Well, I don't know," said the man slowly. "I don't owe Smith any love. He never did deal squarely with me, and he got me into it agin' my will. He said we'd make a pile o' money, and then clear out. I haven't had a shillin' yet. He's always a goin' to get me some. But I don't know what's in the chest anyway," he added. "I don't know as it's any good. What'll ye do, if I tell ye where it is?"

"O, we'll go away and leave you here. We ought to take ye 'long with us, and shut ye up as a prisoner of war. But if ye tell us pretty quick now, I guess we'll let ye off."

"O, but I don't want ter stay here now. Smith'll kill me sure. But I don't want to go with you either."

"Well, I'll tell you what we'll do," said the hermit. "We'll take you off'n this island, and land you on another, and you can then shift for yourself."

"But I would n't have any boat, and what could I do?"

The hermit perceived that the fellow was a little simple-minded, so he changed his tactics.

"We've got a skiff here and we'll put you into it, and you can go where you choose, just as soon as you tell us where that chest is hid."

"Well, then, it's right in the side o' the rock in this openin' to the gorge. I don't know's there's anything in it, and they did n't tell me, but I see 'em put it there. There's a rock comes out

right there on the left, and it's in there. Now let me go."

"Not yet, we'll wait and see what's this you've been tellin' us," said the hermit, as he started for the spot indicated by the prisoner.

"Strango if they did put anything of value right here," said Andrew.

"O, I don't know," said the hermit. "Sometimes the most open spot's the best to hide things in. They don't think o' lookin' there. They most always will go a peekin' about the other places, and just step right over and never think o' lookin' in such places as this." And as he gave an added pull, the rock fell out, and disclosed a small iron-bound chest that nearly filled the space into which it had been placed.

"I don't believe I can get it out alone," said he after two or three strong pulls. "Take hold here with me, Andrew."

They pulled hard together and the chest started. "How'll we ever get it out of this and up on the ground? I wish we could open it and take what's in and leave the old chest behind. But it's fast, and I don't believe we can get it open at all," he added, "at least without tools."

The hermit went back to the prisoner. "Now," said he, "If we untie you and let you go, what'll you do?"

"I'll take that skiff and leave," he replied.

"I don't much like the idea o' lettin' you go. No one knows where you'll go. But I don't think you can hurt us any, as we're going to leave, too." And he untied the ropes and let the man go free.

They stopped for a few minutes to watch him as he tried to run for the shore. Just before he came to the skiff Andrew called out, "Hold on a minute." And running down to the boat he took one of the oars away, saying, "We did n't agree to give you two oars. One will paddle you off as fast as you ought to go."

The man stood up in the skiff, and used his paddle so vigorously that he was soon hidden from view by an intervening island.

"I'm more 'n half afraid we made a mistake in lettin' him go. He did n't know much, and I think we could have found out about the chest from him. But, however, he's gone, and we must finish our work. The boat's got a good cargo now, and I don't dare load her much more, for we may want to make time, perhaps, in leaving these islands."

"But we want this chest," he added, as, taking the rope which had bound their prisoner, he made it double, as he wrapped it around the chest, and at the other end, inserting a long oar, he arranged for all of them to pull together.

The chest responded to their united efforts, and

soon they had it out upon the ground. It did not take long to get it on board the boat, but a careful examination showed them how hopeless was the task of opening it without the proper tools.

Most of the party were now eager to depart. The boat was well, though not heavily loaded, and they began to fear that they might be interrupted in their labors. They did not know the exact condition of affairs along the river, and they were afraid of trouble.

But the cook insisted upon another visit to the cave. "I know, I know all about it. You did the best ye could, but after all you know you are only lubbers, — just landlubbers or sailors on this 'ere fresh-water pond. I know I could find something else in the cave. Sure, but I'd like to try it. Come on, and make one more trip, and then we'll start."

The boys all looked at the hermit. What should they do? They all felt there was an added risk in remaining longer, and yet the possibility of anything of value being left in the cave troubled them. They had caught a little of the fever of winning prize money, and a trip to the cave would only take a few minutes.

Finally the hermit nodded his head, and said they would go, only he preferred that Andrew should be left to guard the boat. He winked at Andrew as he said, "Henry has n't been into the cave much."

He's got pretty sharp eyes, and it's only fair that he should go in part of the time."

Andrew very readily consented, and took his station as guard as the party entered the gorge, and soon disappeared from view. They wasted no time in conversation but almost ran in their eagerness to reach the cave, and give it the final investigation, preparatory to their departure. Henry, who had made fewer trips than the others, was the most eager of all, and kept a little in advance of the rest.

They very soon reached their destination and were just preparing to enter, when the hermit suddenly stopped, and exclaimed, "What's that?" They all stopped to listen.

The echoes of a gun-shot were sounding through the gorge. As they looked at one another in consternation, suddenly the shrill sound of a whistle three times repeated came to their ears.

"That's Andrew," said David. "He's shot the gun, and run in after us a little ways to give us the whistle. He must have seen something. That's his warning."

The hermit had already started on the run to go back, and he called out, "Come on, boys, we've no time to lose," and the entire party, as fast as they could, followed him.

CHAPTER XXV

A NIGHT SAIL AMONG THE ISLANDS

WHEN Andrew had been left to guard the boat, he at first had taken a seat upon the bank near by. He was extremely anxious, and had not favored this last visit to the cave. But his friendship for the cook, and his remembrance of the kindness he had received at his hands, had caused him to keep silence. But now that the boat was well loaded, and the chest had been placed on board safely, he wanted to set sail at once.

He had been but a minute upon the bank, when he rose and began to walk back and forth along the beach. Not a sight or sound out of the usual course came to him, but he was still very nervous.

"Why could n't they be satisfied to let well enough alone? We've got a good load now, and more than enough to keep us from sailing very fast. I wish we had started, for it's getting late." He glanced at the sun, which was now low in the west. "It'll be dark before we know it," he added, impatiently.

He turned and walked up the little knoll on which their prisoner had been standing when he was taken. "Perhaps there's a better view up there," he said to

himself. It was but a little climb, and when he stood there he felt amply repaid for his change of location. The islands lay thick around him, and yet there was a long view of the river as he looked down the stream. "I believe I can see five miles straight down stream," he said. "What a grand river it is. There's a pretty strong current down there I guess from the looks of things. But I wish I was at home. I'd like to know how father is," and his impatience redoubled.

Suddenly he stopped as he was looking away down the river. "What's that little white spot? Does it move? I believe upon my life it's a sail," and he scanned the whole scene with the utmost care.

It certainly moved. He waited for a minute to confirm his impression, and to be sure that he was right, then he seized his gun, and, rushing into the gorge, discharged it. Not quite satisfied with this, he ran in for a short distance, and whistled shrilly through his fingers.

His summons as we know was heard by the exploring party, and in a very short time they were, with the exception of the cook, standing by Andrew's side, and gazing earnestly in the direction he pointed.

One glance was enough for the hermit, who called out, "It's a sailboat, sure. I don't know as it's any one to bother us, but we must n't wait to see. You stay here and help the cook out," he said to Elijah, "and the rest of us will go down and get the boat ready to start right away."

Elijah remained to help the cook, who soon came, puffing and very red in the face, up to where he stood. A hearty pull placed him on the ground.

"What's in the wind?" said he, wiping his streaming forehead.

"O, there's a boat coming, that's all," replied Elijah dryly. "We sha'n't stay to celebrate the declaration of war. Come on," he called out, as he ran for the shore. The cook followed as rapidly as he was able, and the party, which had been impatiently awaiting their arrival, at once set sail.

The hermit soon steered the boat among the islands, so that no view down the river was to be had. But it was more heavily laden than they had supposed, and their progress was slow. The boys were so nervous and excited, that the hermit felt called upon to try and calm them.

"We sha'n't cast overboard any of our cargo just yet," he said quietly. "I don't believe that boat was after us anyway. They can't see us now, and we'll keep on. I'm not sure but we'd better go over to Clayton and dispose of our cargo. What do you think, Andrew?"

"How far is it to Clayton?" Andrew inquired.

"Well, it's a good ten mile, and out of our course. Still, I'd think that was the best plan if it was n't getting so late," he said, as he glanced at the sun.

"I don't like to put in there. I'd like to keep

right on home. We can get rid of our stuff at Sackett's Harbor, and I don't like to stop. We sha'n't have any trouble along the lake shore, I guess, any way," said Andrew.

"I'm not so sure of that," replied the hermit. "But still I'm perfectly willin' to keep right on. I want to sail in the night too, as well as in the day. You can't sleep in the cabin, 'cause there is n't room with all the stuff we've got here. I'm goin' in a new course, and I don't want to stop much if I can help it. At least for this night," he added.

"We don't want to stop either. I'm afraid of that boat we saw. I don't believe 't was on any good errand," said Andrew.

"Well, I'm hungry now, and I know there's somethin' to eat aboard. If the cook 'll just see to that part of it, I'll mind the tiller, for I don't like to trust her much to any one in the dark, and in this new channel too."

"Yes, yes, I know, I know all about it," said the cook, as he responded to the hermit's suggestion and disappeared below.

But he soon returned with something the boys could eat, and soon they were in better spirits. The boat kept steadily on, and while the progress was not rapid, still, as the wind held good, they drew away from the familiar sights at a fair rate of speed.

"We've never been this way, have we?" asked

David. "It's a little dark, but it looks like a new course to me."

"No, we've never been this way," replied the hermit. "It's a little longer, and not quite so safe, for there's some rocks pretty near the channel here."

The boys were silent for a time, and no sound came to their ears but the lap of the river against the sides of the boat as they sailed on.

"I don't quite understand this war, anyway," said Henry after a time. "Is it all just about pressing men, as Andr w here was?"

"I have n't been where I could follow it very close," said the hermit; "but I guess that's the prime thing, though. You know that, while England acknowledged the independence of the United States after the other war, she never felt just like giving up all her claim on us. Besides, that war did cost a heap, and the taxes in Great Britain were fearful. Why, their debt had increased from \$3,300,000 in 1689 to \$700,000,000 in 1763. And the spark that set fire to the powder magazine was because they tried to let up on their own taxes by layin' it on to the Colonies. Then when they had all the expense o' the war, and had to give up the taxes and Colonies too, why, it made a bad matter worse."

"What did the war of the Revolution cost? Do you know?" asked Andrew.

"Not exactly," replied the hermit. "I guess no-

body does. But I heard 'em say how it cost us about \$135,000,000 in specie."

"Do you know what it cost the British?" asked David.

"They said (some o' our men, I mean) it cost the Britishers a heap more 'n that. Leastwise their debt was increased durin' the war about \$600,000,000."

"How many soldiers were there in the British army?" inquired Elijah.

"They probably never had more than forty thousand at any one time."

"Did we have more 'n that?" asked David.

"No, we never had more 'n that in the regular army. We had some minute-men, who served as I did at Saratoga and Stillwater, and then they'd go home. They did n't often count for much. Our regulars were just about the same as the British forces."

"How'd they wind up that war, anyway?" asked Andrew. "Did the British just clear out after Cornwallis surrendered, or what did they do?"

"O my! no," replied the hermit. "They cleared out of Savannah in July, 1782. They did n't leave Charleston till the next December, and they never left New York till the twenty-fifth day of November, 1783."

"Was New York the last place they left?" said Andrew.

"It was the last on the coast, but they held on to the forts north of the Ohio River about a dozen years longer. Well, ye see," continued the hermit, "they could n't quite give up all the grip they had all at once. And they 've kept a pesterin' us ever since. I don't know so very much about that part, for I've lived mostly alone down here on this river; but I've heard 'em talkin' about these things when I have met people."

"I wonder whatever became of the Tories after the war closed," said David.

"O, some on 'em settled down and tried to make the best of it. But there was a lot that left with the British troops. Some up North went over to Canada and Nova Scotia, and some down South went to the West Indies."

"Yes, yes, I know," interrupted the cook. "I were there myself."

"Yes," said the hermit, "a good many came back after a while, and a good many did n't. But I wish none on 'em had come. I tell you, boys, don't you ever go back on your own country. Maybe you'll have to fight in this war. If you do, jest remember you 're finishin' the other, — kind o' clinehin' the nail like. They 've bothered our ships and stole our men. I tell you, after such an experience as Andrew's had, a man, if he does have to fight, will want to fight hard, and end the whole thing. I'm afraid we'll

have a tough time, though. Ye see, it's like openin' an old sore, and it's been sore all the time. I don't believe much in fightin' unless yo have to. But if yo do have to, why you want to pitch in and fight so you won't have to do it again for a long time."

Andrew and the boys became silent and thoughtful. They were thinking of their homes, and the prospect that some of them might have to fight in a long and bloody war made them serious. They were hardy boys, and no cowards, but they had had enough experience to know that war was a terrible evil.

"I'll never forget my experience off St. Kitt's in the West Indies when the Constellation took the French frigate L'Insurgente. Yes, yes, I know," said the cook.

"We don't. Tell us about it," said the boys; and the kind-hearted cook repeated the story he had already told Andrew, of his former naval experiences, interjecting many a "Yes, yes, I know," among his words.

But the night wore on. One by one the boys dropped off to sleep, each making a pillow of his arm, or half reclining on the rude seat.

Only the hermit, the cook, and Andrew remained awake, for they were too anxious to sleep, thoroughly tired though they were.

"It'll be light pretty quick, I guess," said the hermit at last, who had not left the tiller during the

night. "I don't just know where we are, but we'll soon be out of the islands. When it's light, I'll know just where I am."

He had hardly uttered the words, when, with a sharp sound the boat, running in near shore, struck. The shock awakened every one, and in a moment they were over the side trying to shove her off, for she was in shallow water. But their united efforts failed to move her.

"What'll we do?" said Andrew. "She's fast aground. I'm afraid we'll have to take some of her cargo out before we get her off."

"Guess we won't have time," said the hermit, quietly, as he pointed over toward the east, where they saw a boat about the size of theirs coming toward them under full sail.

CHAPTER XXVI

AN INTERMISSION

THE hermit, in a low voice, gave directions that everything in the boat should be covered, and then that they were to wait for the other boat to come nearer, and no one was to speak, save himself, unless he was directly spoken to.

The men in the other boat had sighted them, and changed their course so as to come nearer. When they had run close in, it was seen that they were a party of seven men; but, as they wore no uniforms, it was impossible to determine to which side of the river they belonged.

"Hello, boys! got aground?" one of them called out, as they came up.

"Yes," said the hermit. "We're fast aground on a rock."

"You ought not to have been out sailing so early in the morning. Could n't see to steer your course," laughed one of the men.

"Well, you seem to have had better luck than we did, if you don't believe in sailing so early in the morning," said the hermit, in reply.

The man laughed again, and then said, "Where'd ye come from?"

"O, from down the river. I had bad luck; somebody set fire to my house, and I've had to move. These boys were with me."

"Well, did ye see any other men down below?" inquired the speaker.

"Yes," said the hermit quickly, "there were a lot of 'em down on one of the islands. Guess they'd got something there they were afraid would get away. I think they were the ones that set my house afire. They didn't want any nigh neighbors, I guess," said the hermit.

The men spoke quickly together, and then the one who before had been the spokesman, eagerly inquired, "In what direction from here are they? Can you show us the way?"

The hermit indicated with his head the direction in which the others were, and then said, as the party was preparing to leave, "I wish you'd take hold and help us off here. Give us a tow before you go."

The men laughed good-naturedly and said, "We'll throw you a rope; we'll haul, as you push. But be quick about it, for we must be off."

The combined efforts seemed to be enough, and they drew the boat back from the rock on which she had struck. Fortunately, the wind had been light

at the time, so that the hard pull was all that was needed to get her off. As soon as she was free the other party, with a hastily spoken farewell, set sail, and were soon lost to view.

"That's what I call a close shave," said the hermit. "I think those men were Canadian officers. They're after the smugglers, and when they saw we did n't fit the description of 'em they had, they never thought of making investigations here. I hope the smugglers'll think it's our party when they meet 'em. I would n't mind bein' there to see that meet."

"That's just about the way Mad Anthony Wayne did at Stony Point," said the cook. "He crept up and took the fort with his men in the night, and the British gunboats did n't know anything about it till morning came, and he turned those guns right on to the boats in the river. I tell you there was a scur-ryin' there then. I guess they thought the people up in the fort had gone mad, seein' as they did n't know anything about the fort's bein' taken. So these smugglers'll think it's a funny piece of business if they're chasing us and find a boat coming right from our direction after them. I guess they'll be surprised."

"Well, I hope they'll have a good time at the surprise party," said Elijah, with a laugh. "I'd like to go to one first rate. Do you remember that one we

had at your house last spring, David? Those Potter girls were there, was n't they, Andrew?"

"I guess so," said Andrew. "But the question is, where are we? We may get another surprise party down here before we know it. What's to be done now?" said he, turning to the hermit.

"I think we'd better run in among these islands somewhere, and lay by for a while. Not just here. Ye see we don't want to be seen much, and we need a little rest. So I think we'll stop for a little anyway, and towards night we'll start on again. When we get out into the lake, then we'll go day and night till we get you and our cargo safely landed. But we've got to be careful."

The plan was approved by all, and, going directly out of their course about half a mile, they landed. The first thing they did was to give the boat's keel a very careful examination. No damage had been done, they found, as the rock on which she had struck was fortunately a flat one.

They were in a little cove that gave sufficient depth of water for the boat, and yet was sheltered from the sight of any who might be passing. There was a little debate at first as to whether any fire should be kindled or not, for fear the smoke would reveal them, but it was decided to have a small fire, and then to put it out as soon as the breakfast was cooked.

The hermit had placed on board his entire supply of pork in a barrel of brine before they had started on their previous trip for Kingston. Some of this was still left, and of it, with some corn bread and fish which Henry caught, and some berries that David and Elijah picked, they made their breakfast. They were all in fairly good spirits, and in high hopes that they would be able to continue their journey without further interruptions.

It was decided that a guard should be kept, and Andrew was chosen to stand first. All the rest of the party spread their blankets on the ground, and, stretching themselves upon them, were soon asleep.

Andrew, in spite of his weariness, was very watchful. He was not satisfied to remain awake merely, but he went out on the points alternately and scanned the river carefully in every direction.

The sun climbed high, and noon arrived. This was the time agreed upon when he was to call the others, and after they had had their dinner he was to be relieved, and he was then to turn in for his nap.

Before he roused the others, however, he kindled a fire and made all things ready for dinner. It was only when this had been done that he roused the sleepers, and they all came at his call.

Andrew was thoroughly worn out, and after he had eaten a little, he took his blanket, and, going off

by himself, was soon asleep. The hermit had insisted upon standing guard himself during the afternoon, but the exciting scenes through which they had lately passed, and the rest which they had had in the morning, caused the boys to remain for a time after they had finished their meal.

"I guess we're in about as tight a box as lots of the men were in the war you were telling about," said David to the hermit.

The hermit smiled and said, "There were some pretty tight squeezes for our men in those days. I saw a man who was at New London when Arnold, the old traitor, went there with his British fleet."

"How was that?" asked David.

"Well, you see, the New London people for a long time were afraid they were goin' to be attacked. I guess maybe they got a little careless after a while. Ye see, there was two forts at New London, one on each side o' the harbor; one of 'em was Fort Griswold and the other Fort Trumbull. Well, one mornin' when the New London folks waked up, there was a great fleet just bearin' right down upon the town. It had been agreed that Fort Griswold should fire two guns whenever there was an alarm. Well, when they saw the fleet they fired the two guns, as they had agreed to do, and then right away the British boats fired three, which was the signal the Americans arranged when a victory had been gained.

Ye see some one had told 'em the signals that had been fixed upon. The country folks did n't know what to make of such firin' as that. Well, the New London folks was scared to see a great fleet right in upon 'em before breakfast. The women and children was runnin' cryin' through the streets, and out into the country. 'T was a good thing they did, for the British jest set fire to the town, and burned it all pretty much."

"Was that the tight place you meant?" said Elijah.

"Not exactly," replied the hermit. "Ye see Fort Trumbull was n't much of a fort; 't was just a battery facin' the water on three sides, and open behind. Cap'n Shapley had just twenty-three men and eight guns, and two o' the guns was no good. Well, when Cap'n Shapley saw the Britishers a comin', he just loaded the cannon, six on 'em, with grape, and told his men to be ready to spike the guns. He let 'em have the grape, and then yelled, 'Drive in the spikes,' and then they all ran down to their boats and started to row across the river to Fort Griswold."

"Did they get over there?" asked Elijah, excitedly.

"Well, seven on 'em did n't; they was wounded and taken."

"Did Arnold make any attack on Fort Griswold?" asked David.

"Yes; and the worst of it was that wick the

British there was a battalion of Tories, from New Jersey, too. The British Colonel's name was Eyre, and he sent a white flag up to the fort and told 'em to surrender. The American Colonel's name was Ledyard, — there 's lots of folks by that name there yet, — and he talked it over with his captains, and they said they 'd stay by the fort. Well, they had an awful fight. There was lots more of the British than of the Americans. They made lots o' rushes, and could n't get in for a long time; but there was so many of 'em they just could keep supplyin' men for them that was shot down, ye sec. And after a while they forced their way in. Colonel Ledyard saw the end was comin', and he ordered his men to stop firin'. But the British just took a nine-pounder and shot grape into that little huddle o' men that was left after they had surrendered. Colonel Eyre and one major had been killed, and then Major Bromfield was in command o' the British. He see they had stopped firin', and he rushes in and yells, 'Who 's in command o' this fort?' 'I was, but you are now,' said Colonel Ledyard, handing him his sword. Well, that rascally Britisher drew back that sword right there and then, and run it into Ledyard's body up to the hilt."

The boys' eyes flashed. "What did the men do then?" they asked.

"Why, nothin'. They had surrendered, and before

they knew it the British and the Tories were firin' right into 'em there in the fort."

"What, after they 'dsurrendered?" asked Elijah.

"Yes, after they 'd surrendered. Hardly any escaped. A few jumped over the walls, and managed to get away."

"What did they do with that major?" asked David.

"Promoted him, on Sir Henry Clinton's recommendation," replied the hermit, rising and walking towards the shore. The boys thoughtfully took their blankets and went to join Andrew, who lay fast asleep under the trees.

CHAPTER XXVII

A CHANGE IN THE COURSE

THE hermit let the entire party sleep until the middle of the afternoon. But about three o'clock he roused them all, and called a council. The boys declared themselves to be thoroughly rested, and ready for any work that might be before them.

"I've been a thinkin' of our boat," said the hermit. "Ye see she's pretty well loaded. It keeps her from sailin' very fast, specially when there's six of us besides the load."

"What do you think can be done?" said Andrew. "We don't want to throw overboard any of our cargo unless we have to. We've worked so hard to get it, we don't want to lose it now if we can help it."

"No more do I want to lose it," said the hermit. "I don't care so much about the prize money as you youngsters do, I suppose, but I don't want those rascally smugglers to get it again either. Ye see," he added, "I suppose we're all in the Canada waters yet, though I'm not sure o' that. But I suspect those men we saw were Canadians."

"Well, what can we do, then?" inquired Andrew.

"I don't see any way out of it, except to take our chances. Maybe we sha'n't meet any more men. Who knows?"

"But I want the boat to sail right whether we meet 'em or not," replied the hermit. "I don't want 'em to catch us if we do meet 'em. Now I think it'd be a mighty good plan to fix that load so that we can throw out the ballast. I believe if we could take out those rocks, and there's a lot of 'em we've got in there for ballast, we could fix our cargo so that we could sail a good deal faster than we can now."

"That's the very thing!" exclaimed Andrew, and he led the way to the boat, and they all began at once to rearrange the cargo.

It was no light task the boys had before them. The cook was placed on guard, and the remainder of the party worked hard under the direction of the hermit.

"I don't think the cook ought to be singing, do you?" asked Andrew of the hermit, as the words of a sailor's song came to them from the guard. "I suppose he's happy, but other men may stop to hear the music."

"No, you'd better go up and tell him to stop it," replied the hermit.

Andrew went to where the cook was stumping back and forth along the shore, and singing at the top of his voice.

"Yes, yes, I know, I know all about it," replied the cook, when Andrew cautioned him to be silent.

Andrew returned to the boat, and the singing ceased. "We sha'n't get this done before five o'clock," said he, as he began to work again.

"That's as early as we ought to start," said the hermit. "But when we do start, I think we'll find a big difference in the time we make."

"Where do you think this war's likely to be fought? Down around New York, I presume, is n't it?" inquired David.

"I don't think so," said the hermit. "I think a good deal of it will be along this Canadian line. Then I think there's likely to be a good many sea fights, too."

"But we have n't any navy," said David. "Did n't Mr. Reese say we only had a dozen boats in the whole country?"

"Yes, but you'll see how soon they'll be made, though. I reckon you'll see some of it around Sackett's Harbor. Probably Dearborn will have command o' this end."

"Well, if we can only get home, I don't care if we do see some of it," said Elijah.

The hermit only smiled. "Out in Michigan Territory there's a place they call Detroit. That's a kind of a key, you know. I guess they'll see a little blood spilled out there. Probably Hull will have

command at that end. If I was n't so old, I think I'd have a hand in it, somewheres. But then I ain't so old but I can beat you boys now in lifting," he said, as he gave the heavy chest a pull, and put it into position.

By five o'clock they were ready to start. They returned to the camp. Henry relieved the cook, and the latter began at once to prepare something for them to eat before they sailed.

"Ye see," he said, "we may be so busy after we weigh anchor that we won't think o' eatin'. O, I know, I know all about it."

His plan was approved, and in a short time he had their meal ready for them.

"What 'll we do if we find somebody after us when we start?" asked David. "I hope we sha'n't see anybody, Canadians or smugglers either."

"We'll do the best we can. Our skins are worth more to us than this stuff here, — yes, more 'n the boat too," replied the hermit. "It may be that we'll have to leave that and take our chances on land."

"We won't till we have to," said Andrew, decidedly. "We have n't come as far as this, and done all this work, to give it up without a fight."

"I don't much want to fight, specially with these boys aboard," said the hermit. "But we won't cross any bridges afore we come to 'em."

In about a half-hour they set sail. The wind threatened to die down as sunset drew near, but they made some progress, though it was slow. The boys grew impatient, and Elijah finally said, as he saw the sail flapping a little, and how slow their progress was, "Don't you think we'd better row, some of us?"

"No," replied the hermit. "It'll make a noise, and besides I want to save our strength. We may have to row hard by and by."

The breeze soon freshened a little, but the boat still made very slow headway. They had not covered more than two miles since they had left their last camping-ground, and two hours had almost gone. Andrew and the cook were in the bow, keeping a very careful lookout ahead, and the hermit, though he was steering the boat, kept a lookout on every side. The party was silent and anxious.

"Andrew," called the hermit, "what's that white spot ahead there up beyond that island on your right?"

Andrew and the cook looked where the hermit indicated, and called out in a moment, "It looks like a sail. Yes, I believe it is a boat," Andrew added, after a careful scrutiny.

At once there was excitement on board. The faces of the younger boys became pale, but none of them uttered a word.

The silence was broken by the hermit. "There's no help for it, boys. We've got to go back. I'll run behind the island, and then I'll go back a mile or so and cross over farther to the west. I guess we'll have to put in there for a while. That boat ahead may be all right, but I'm too bashful to meet strangers right here."

Accordingly, the hermit changed the boat's course, and as the wind threatened to die out entirely, he called out to the boys, "I guess ye can take those oars now. There's four on 'em, and a little rowin' may help us on. I know where I'll go."

The boys took the oars, and the added impetus they gave, and the fact that now the current was with them, sent them on at a more rapid rate. The island soon hid the sail from their view.

"I wish we could have cut around by some of those other islands," said Andrew. "I don't like a bit to go backwards."

The hermit smiled as he said, "When you've had a little more experience you'll be glad to do most anything to keep from meetin' a boat full o' men. That boat may be all right, but I don't want to take any chances."

The party continued silent, and for an hour the hermit kept on, the boat being headed due west. The boys rowed steadily, and yet their progress was slow, too slow to suit their impatience.

It was almost dark when the hermit finally said, "I guess we've gone far enough now. I know this island, and right ahead there 's a cove, somethin' like the one we was in this mornin'. There 's high trees right down by the banks, and if we run her in there, and take down the sail, and can keep quiet, I don't think any boat in Christendom could find us. It is n't more 'n twenty feet from the river either, and so we can keep a good lookout. O, I know ye feel disappointed like, but you 'll have to take an old man's word that it 's all right."

They soon had the boat made fast in the cove, which extended into the island parallel with the river, and distant from it only about twenty feet. The night was now upon them, although it was not so dark but they could easily see and distinguish the objects along the shore.

"Boys, we 'll have to stay here for a day or two. It 's a good place to hide in, and the only thing we can do is to hide for a while, and throw those fellows off our track. I half suspect they 've gone up ahead of us, anyway, and are keepin' a pretty sharp lookout for us when we come out o' the river into the lake," said the hermit.

"Then you think that boat we saw up ahead of us was the one that hailed us when we were fast aground on that rock?" said Andrew.

"Yes, I do," said the hermit. "Course, I don't

know, but if they met those smugglers behind us they had a chance to learn some things."

"Then we 'd have done better," said Andrew, "not to have put in when we did at all, but to have kept on our way."

"Not at all," replied the hermit. "They 'd a caught us sure, then. Ye see, our boat could n't sail then as it can now, since we cast overboard the ballast. We 're all right. Besides, to-morrow 's Sunday, and we don't want to sail on that day if we can help it."

"My folks always begin to keep Sunday on Saturday night," said Elijah. "They say that 's the way all the folks do in Massachusetts."

"Hush!" said the hermit. "What 's that?" and the entire party stopped to listen. The sound of voices in conversation came to them clearly.

"It 's a boat on the river, there. It 's coming too," added the hermit. "We 'll go down near the shore, and keep inside the shadow o' the trees, and see what it is if we can."

They all stepped carefully and crept to the shore. Out in the dim light upon the river they could see a sail, and it was coming towards them.

CHAPTER XXVIII

WATCHING THEIR NEIGHBORS

THE boys could hear the voices of the men on the boat, but they could not distinguish the words. They could see that there were three men on board, but their features or faces they could not discern.

The boat ran into the narrow channel between the island on which the boys were, and the one which was opposite to them, distant not more than a hundred yards.

"They're going to land over there as sure's you're born, Andrew," whispered David to his brother.

"I believe they are," whispered Andrew in reply.

The three men were evidently preparing to do just what David had suggested. They ran the boat up to the shore, and, jumping out, hauled her up on the beach. They were talking the most of the time, but their words could not be heard on the island where the boys were, and so they could learn nothing of their plans.

The boys in the dim light could see that the men were making preparations for the night, and, leaving

the cook to watch them and to report their movements if they made any, the rest silently withdrew, and came back to their camp. Here they conversed in low tones, and talked over the situation.

"We'll have to keep some one on the lookout all the time now," said the hermit. "I don't know, of course, but it's my firm opinion that that boat over on the other island has something to do with us. If it has, we've got to make it our business to find out theirs."

"How I wish we had our row-boat that we gave that fellow we took prisoner down on the smugglers' island. That must be more'n fifty miles from here, and he's gone with it too," said Elijah.

"He's gone, that's sure," said the hermit, "but that island is n't more than five or six miles from here. Ye see, when you're sailin' in a light wind and agin' the current, ye don't go very fast."

"Well, I guess I'd better stay on guard to-night," said Andrew. "The cook's a good man, but he'll be telling the other party pretty quick that he knows all about it."

"That's the very thing," said the hermit. "You stay for one part of the night, and I'll stay for the other. Yes, I know," he said, as the other boys volunteered their services, "but I guess it'll be Andrew and myself that'll have to watch those fellows, for a while anyway."

In a few minutes, Andrew went down to the place where the cook was standing, and sending him back to the camp, seated himself in the shadow of a tree, and with his back braced against it, commenced his vigil.

The long hours passed on, but not a sound came from the other island. When he thought that half the night had gone, as nearly as he could judge, he went back to the camp, and roused the hermit, who then took his place as watchman, and Andrew turned in for such sleep as he could get.

It was broad daylight when the hermit came back to the camp to find every one astir. He reported that no movement had been made in the other camp, and that if it were not for the presence of their boat it would never be suspected that any one was there at all.

"Some of the boys can go on duty now," said the hermit. "But I don't believe they'd better take their stand where Andrew and I did. It's a little too open there. Just a little further down stream there's a clump of hazel bushes growin' up on the shore, and they'll hide anybody, if he'll lie down flat on the bank behind 'em."

David was chosen as the new watchman. He followed the hermit's instructions, and, going around through the trees, crept up behind the hazel bushes, where, lying flat on his stomach, he could peer out

through the bushes at the opposite island, without the possibility of being seen himself.

For two full hours he lay there, before there was a movement made on the other island. Then he saw the three men come out from among the trees, and proceed to cook their breakfast upon the shore. One of them fished as the others prepared their breakfast, and David became almost as much interested in watching his success as he would have been if the sport were his own.

The men ate their breakfast, and then sat down upon the bank and smoked. One of them seemed to be protesting against the others, but what the question was that they were discussing David could not ascertain. Finally, they all three arose, and together they pushed the sailboat off from the bank, and down into the water.

David started to rise and to run for the camp to report their movements, but he hesitated a moment, and then decided to remain a little longer, and see what they would do. If they hoisted their sail, he should run back to the camp. If they did not, he should remain and watch.

David watched as they swung the boat around, to take it along the shore. As they did so, a low exclamation burst from his lips, and he watched more eagerly than before.

They drew the boat along the shore for about fifty

feet, two pulling on shore, and one standing on board to keep her off with an oar. When they had brought her to the place they sought, they anchored her about ten feet from shore, and the man who was on board took the little skiff which was in tow and pushed ashore.

David watched now with intense eagerness. But the men soon disappeared among the trees, taking something which they carried in a bag with them.

In the course of an hour David was joined by Elijah, who stretched himself on the grass by David's side.

"Elijah, do you see that boat over there?" whispered David.

"It's the Pilot, as I'm alive," whispered Elijah excitedly in reply. "And yes," he added, "that's the hermit's skiff they've got there too."

"I believe you're right," said David, after another look. "Now, Lige, you go back to camp, and tell 'em what we've found out. The hermit said, you know, that he felt sure that party over there had something to do with ours, and he was right. Hurry up," he added as Elijah seemed to hesitate. "They ought to know about it."

His companion withdrew, but he was soon joined by Andrew and the hermit, who came creeping to his side.

"The boys were right," said Andrew in a whisper

"Yes, they were," said the hermit, "and Elijah

spoke the truth when he said they had my skiff. I'd know it anywhere."

"Where do you suppose they got it?" asked David.

"Well, we know who had it anyway," said the hermit. "They've either caught him, or else he's joined 'em. Probably that's what he's done."

"O, look there, quick," said David in an excited whisper. "Look up in that tree over beyond the boat. There's a man up there. What's he doing? He's got a glass in his hand. Look at him, quick!"

The others looked as they were directed. There, high up in a tall pine tree, sat a man on one of the highest branches. With a spy-glass he seemed to be sweeping the river.

"Do you suppose he can see us from up there where he is?" asked Andrew.

"I guess not," replied the hermit, "though we'd better go right back and take the mast out o' the boat. That might attract his attention among the trees from up there where he is. I'll stay here and you go and ship it. Do it as quietly and quickly as ye can. Hold on a minute though," he added, as the man they had been watching put up his glass, and prepared to descend. "Hold on, and we'll see what's going to be done next."

They watched the man as he slid down the tree and was lost to sight among the branches. But in a moment he appeared with his companions upon the

bank, and they seemed to be holding an earnest conversation, although none of the words reached the listeners.

Soon they all three stepped into the skiff, and, rowing rapidly away, disappeared from sight behind the island.

"That's funny," said Andrew. "What do you suppose they're up to now?"

"Gone to the meetin'-house, maybe," said David with a laugh. "It's Sunday, you know."

"They've gone over to one of the other islands, to make some more observations, I think," said the hermit quietly. "Now's your time to go back and see to that mast. Ye better go right off."

Andrew and David ran back to the camp, and, telling their companions of their experience, they were all soon at work, and in a little while the mast was lying upon the ground.

Leaving their companions in the camp, Andrew and David rejoined the hermit behind the hazel bushes. He reported that nothing had occurred during their absence, and no signs of the men were now to be seen. The Pilot lay at anchor where they had left her, and not a sound came over the water.

"They've been gone an hour at least, have n't they?" inquired Andrew.

"Yes, I should say so; as much as that anyway," replied the hermit.

"It's a shame they've got the Pilot," continued Andrew. "Many's the good turn she's done us; and there she is now so close by."

A thought struck Andrew. "Why can't we get her?" said he. "We couldn't sail away in her yet, but if I could get her, and bring her into the cove beside your boat, we could leave her, or we could maybe take her away with us when we went. We sha'n't start for a day or two yet."

"There's a big risk in it," said the hermit. "These men are likely to return at any minute now, for I think they only went away to try and get a better view on some other island. If they should come back while you were there, I should be afraid of trouble."

"Well, I believe it's worth trying for anyhow," replied Andrew. "I could swim over to where she is and bring her over here into the cove inside of fifteen minutes."

"Well," said the hermit, dubiously, "I don't know but it's worth trying; I don't suppose they'd ever think o' lookin' in this cove for her. Your only trouble would be if they come back while you're tryin' to get her. But if you want to try, we'll keep watch while you go."

But Andrew was already throwing off his clothes, and, diving into the river, in a moment he was on his way, swimming towards the Pilot.

CHAPTER XXIX

AN ADDITION TO THE FLEET

ANDREW was a strong swimmer, and in a short time he had crossed the channel and reached the Pilot. The hermit and David had watched him with intense interest, dividing their attention between Andrew and the points of the island, around one of which they had feared every moment to see the other boat returning. They knew that Andrew's life might pay the forfeit of his daring, if the men returned and discovered his purpose.

Andrew drew himself out of the water, and stood on the Pilot's deck. He looked around, but he could find no oars.

"There are no oars here," he called out to his companions. "What had I better do?"

"Get a branch up there on the shore, and perhaps you can pole her across," replied the hermit. "We'll keep watch; but be quick."

Andrew at once followed the hermit's suggestion, and, taking a dead branch from the shore, he drew up the Pilot's anchor and pushed her out into the river. He sent her easily from the shore, but soon

found the water was so deep that his pole was useless. He at once jumped overboard, and, taking hold of the stern, began to churn the water, and to push from behind. The little boat began to move again, but her progress seemed very slow. Still Andrew kept on, and steadily she neared the shore.

David meanwhile was in a fever of excitement. Coming out from behind the bushes, he ran up and down the shore, watching for the other boat to appear around either point of the island.

But all things have an end, and after a time Andrew had pushed the Pilot across the channel and regained the shore. His companions eagerly seized the painter, and starting on the run, drew the boat along the shore, and soon had her around the point and within the cove, and made her fast beside the hermit's boat. The mast was taken out and placed on the ground along with the other. Meanwhile, Andrew had dressed in all haste, and now joined them just as they had finished their work.

"That's what I call a pretty good day's work," said the hermit, looking at the two boats, lying side by side, with evident satisfaction.

"Yes, that's so," responded Andrew, a little dubiously. "Only I don't just like this kind of work on Sunday. Why, my mother does n't even cook on that day, but does it all on the day before."

"No more do I like it," replied the hermit; "but

war times change most everything. Some of the greatest battles have been fought on that day. But there's one thing I'm pretty sure of, and that is that those men, when they come back and find their boat gone, won't stop for Sunday or anything else if they get any suspicion of where she is."

"I know that," said Andrew, "and I suppose we'd better go right back there where we were, and keep an eye on them when they do come back. My, but won't it be a sight to see 'em! I only hope they won't see us."

"We'll have to divide our cargo now," said the hermit, "and put part of it aboard the Pilot. Some of us'll sail in her, too. That'll make it a good deal easier, and I think we can make a heap better time leaving this country with two boats than we could with one. I suppose the others'll want to know 'bout this, for if any on 'em should go down where we were, and find us gone, they'd be likely to do something. David, you go back to the camp and tell 'em what we've been a doin', and Andrew and I'll go back to where we were, and keep a lookout."

As they started at once David left them and went back to the camp. When he had told his story they were all eager to go down on the bank and watch for the return of the other men, but the cook "knew, yes, he knew all about it," that that would be the very thing they ought not to do. "Ye see," said he,

"they 'll look mighty sharp when they get back, for that boat, and every extra one there on guard will increase the chances o' some one bein' seen."

The boys acknowledged the force of his words, and each did his best to curb his curiosity. After a little while, so restless had they become, that the cook turned to Elijah and said, "If ye think ye can crawl down there without bein' seen, it might do no harm fer ye to go and find out what's goin' on. Then ye can come back and tell us."

Elijah needed no second bidding, and starting off through the woods, soon disappeared from sight.

"I think this is about the tightest squeeze we 've had yet," said David. "If they begin to look round much when they come back, I'm afraid we're goners."

"Can't we fight?" said Henry. "We 've got twice as many 's they have."

"We don't want to fight at all, if we can help it. I'd rather give up both boats, and all the stuff we took, than to take you boys into a fracas now. Some on ye might not go home, and home's better 'n all the prize money in the world. At least, I guess the hermit 'd agree with me, fer neither one of us has got such a place on this earth," said the cook, rising and looking about to see what arrangements he could make for providing something to eat. "Some o' ye might find some berries on this side o' the island."

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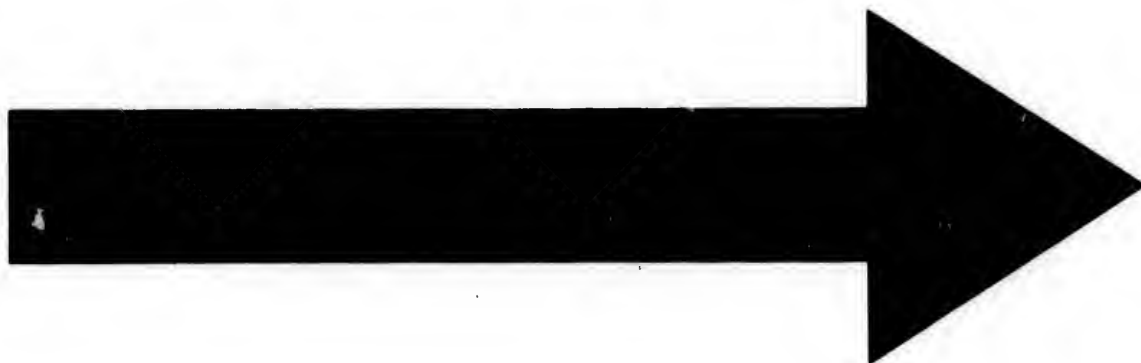
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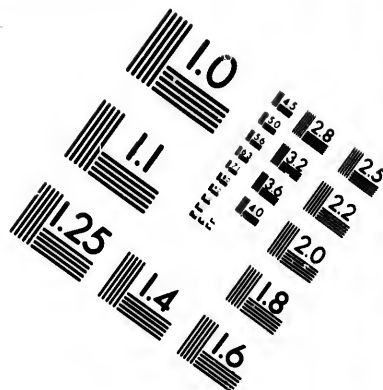
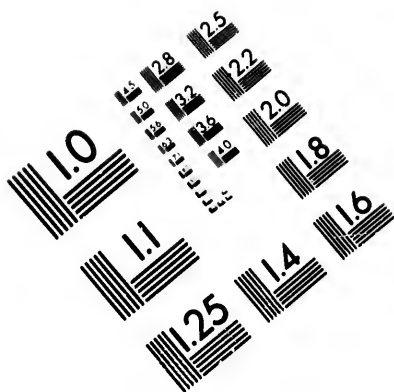
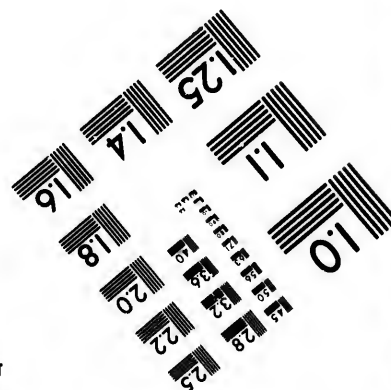
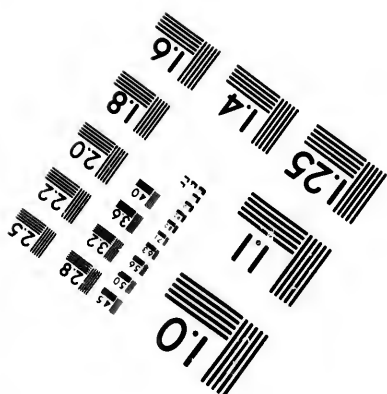
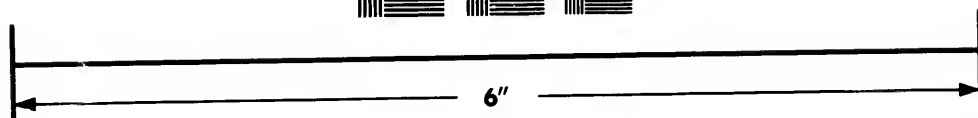
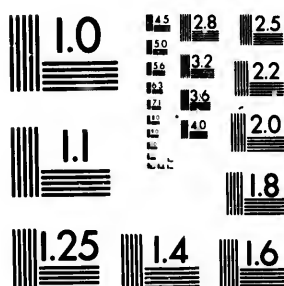


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S'pose ye look and see. You 'd be out o' sight o' the other men, and it 'd kind o' serve to keep ye busy," he added, as the boys started to follow his suggestion.

Elijah, when he left the camp, had taken the regular route to the hazel bushes. He found the hermit and Andrew lying flat upon the ground, one watching one point of the island, and the other the other. Not a sound had been heard as yet to indicate that the three men they had seen were now in existence. But Elijah had hardly stretched himself on the ground beside the others, when the quick ear of the hermit detected a sound that caused him to start. "'Sh, boys," said he. "I think there's somethin' a comin' round the point on the left over there."

"They went around the other point when they left," whispered Andrew.

"Yes, but it does n't follow," said the hermit, "that they're obliged to come back the same way they went, does it? They've been explorin' all round. But hush! here they come. Now we'll see what they'll do."

The skiff with the three men in it came slowly around the island, one man rowing, and the other two seated in the stern; they were engaged in earnest conversation, and evidently were not pleased at the results of their investigation. They came on, apparently taking no thought of their sailboat until

they were within fifty feet of the place where she had been anchored, and were not much more than that distance from where our watchers were hidden.

Suddenly one of the men started, and pointed excitedly to the spot where the Pilot had been anchored. The oarsman stopped pulling, and both the men who were seated in the stern stood up and looked anxiously around.

Elijah laughed as he saw their consternation; but a quick glance from the hermit silenced him, and all three waited to see what the party would now do. Their tones became louder, and their words were clearly heard by those who were behind the hazel bushes.

"I don't believe you've got the right island," said one in the stern. "The boat is n't here, and I don't think you can find your way among these pesky islands. I'd as soon look for a needle in a haystack as try to find my way round here."

"Know the way," replied the oarsman. "I could find my way here in the dark."

"Well, then," replied the other, "where's the boat gone, I'd like to know?"

The third man, who had taken no part in the conversation, here interrupted them, and calling their attention to a spot on the shore, said: "It is the right place. See, there's where we made a fire when we cooked our breakfast."

"That's so," muttered the other. "But what's become o' the boat?"

"Mebbe she's dragged her anchor and got into the current," said the other.

The oarsman, acting upon the suggestion, pulled rapidly around the point, saying, "Well, if she's got loose, she's gone with the current, and we'll go down stream, and see if we can find her."

"They've gone," said Elijah, as they disappeared around the point. "Thank goodness! I was afraid they'd come over here."

"They'll come back again pretty quick," said the hermit. "We'll just lay low here, and wait for developments; they'll come, if we wait."

It was a good hour before the watchers heard the sound of the returning oars. The men were silent as they came back, until they reached the place where the Pilot had been anchored.

"I tell you," said one, "she never got adrift. Do ye s'pose she could drag her anchor and get so far away from here that we could n't find her after a good hour's searching? I know better."

"Well, where is she, then?" responded the oarsman.

"I don't know where she is, but I tell ye some one's took her. It's some o' them fellers we're lookin' fer. I knew they could n't get out o' the river with all we've got on the lookout. They're

down here somewheres among these islands. It 's fool-work we 've been a doin'."

"Let 's go ashore and see if we can see any signs o' anybody havin' been here," said the oarsman. Acting at once upon this suggestion, they landed and began to search all along the shore for any traces of visitors having been there. But the most careful search failed to reveal any evidence of any one having been on shore. They resumed their places in the skiff and continued their deliberations.

"Ye see, there is n't even the mark of a boot-heel on the shore there," said one. "They come along here in a boat, and just took her in tow. Mebbe they 've hid her somewhere among the islands here."

The little party behind the bushes glanced nervously at each other at these words, and their nervousness was not lessened any when they saw the oarsman pick up his oars as if he were preparing to act upon this suggestion. But he hesitated a minute, as he said, "Well, I don't know. If they 're hid, it can't be very far away, for we have n't been gone long, and there is n't much wind. Mebbe we 'd better take a turn round here, though," and he glanced towards the island on which our party lay hidden.

"O, pshaw!" said the third man, "they have n't tried to hide her; they 'll try to get out jest as soon as they can. You know Tom said that they said they was goin' to Sackett's Harbor. I tell ye they 've

started. They can't get by our men; and yet my 'pinion is that we'd better start out at once and go up where they are. If they should see the Pilot they'd think 't was us, and let her get by without a shot. We'd better pull as lively 's we can, and tell 'em about this. They'll never git by us and them too."

The suggestion struck the others forcibly, and the oarsman, picking up his oars again, began to pull as rapidly as he could up the river. They soon were out of sight, and the three watchers behind the hazel bushes rose and started for the camp.

CHAPTER XXX

THE VOYAGE RESUMED

THE story of the watchers was eagerly listened to by all. And when the hermit told of the eager haste with which the three men had started to go to their friends, the enthusiasm of Henry broke forth.

"Hurrah!" said he, "now we're the same as home. They've cleared out for good, and we can start any time. I wish we could go right away."

"Not so fast," said the hermit. "I think we have the most serious business of the whole trip yet before us."

"Why, how's that?" inquired Henry, looking somewhat crestfallen.

"Well, they've got a line o' pickets up near the lake, I guess," replied the hermit. "It's goin' to be a tough job gettin' through 'em; but I guess we can do it. Leastwise we'll hope so, and we won't give up till we have to."

"But when can we start?" persisted Henry. "Can't we go right off?"

"No, I think we'd better stay here for a while. If they don't see anything of us for a few days, they

may conclude that we've run the blockade, and give up some o' their sharp lookouts. They'll look mighty sharp for a while now, 'specially when these men go back with their story."

"Did you know any of these men?" inquired the cook of the hermit.

"No, I guess not; though one of 'em made me think he was in that boat that helped us off when we struck that rock up yonder."

"So he did me," said Andrew. "I was sure I'd seen him before. But I think Mr. Ogden's just right about this starting out for home. I'm just as anxious as any of you to get home, and I think I've as good a right to feel so," he added, as a shadow crossed his face at the thought of his father. "But if we wait awhile, I think we'll stand a better chance of getting by them than if we start right off."

This proposal of the hermit was concurred in, and the party set about doing the best they could to pass the time. On the following day they carefully examined the Pilot, and found that the holes which their former acquaintance Smith had cut in her bottom had all been thoroughly repaired, and that she did not leak a drop. A part of the cargo was transferred to her, and it was agreed that Andrew should sail her when they started again, and that David and the cook should form his crew. They were to keep as closely as they could in the wake of the hermit's boat.

But the time hung heavily on the boys' hands. Do what they would, the hours were slow in passing, and they all declared that they would rather take their chances in passing their enemies than to remain there in enforced idleness. Henry took his lines, and fished with his accustomed success off the rocks on one side of the island, for the hermit was not willing for him to venture out in the stream, where he could be seen by any passing boat.

They kindled no fire, except such as was absolutely necessary in cooking their meals. And their favorite occupation was listening to the stories which the hermit and the cook would tell them about the struggles of the Revolutionary times.

"One o' the hardest things," said the hermit one time, as they were all seated on the ground after eating their dinner, "was the life of a poor man after the last war was finished. It took a good while for the Colonies to get together, even after they were all free from Great Britain. One wanted one thing, and another did n't, 'specially if the other wanted it pretty bad. That made a bad weakness, ye see, for there was n't many laws, and what there was was n't very good. It's something like the weakness the United States has had in not protecting her sailors from the English press-gangs. Well, as I was a sayin'," he continued, "a poor man had a pretty hard time of it. What with breakin' the ground, and

clearin' the trees, and the long ways to take what little stuff he could raise to market, he was kept pretty well ground down. They'd take a man, if they wanted to, and throw him into prison for debt. It did n't make any difference how poor he was, or how many babies he had at home, or if his wife was sick abed. If he could n't pay up, they could put him in jail, and just leave his family to take care o' themselves or starve, just as they saw fit."

"Was this after the war, or before?" asked Elijah.

"O, after it," replied the hermit. "It was while we was a gettin' together into one country. We had lots o' country, but mighty few good laws, till all the Colonies had agreed to the Constitution. Then they had a good basis to build on, ye see, and things after a while got better."

"I should have thought the people would have rebelled?" said David.

"O, they did, some," said the hermit, "leastwise they tried to. I've heard 'em tell about some farmers round Worcester and Springfield (they're in Massachusetts, ye know) that was gettin' poorer and poorer every year. Nobody could collect any debts, and there was only a little business done. Finally things got so bad, with the courts tryin' to collect the debts, that they did have a little rebellion. There was a man there named Shays, Dan'l Shays, he led 'em on. It did n't amount to much, but it

scared the other Colonies some, 'cause none on 'em knew which one would be the next to catch it. I guess it helped things on though."

"When was this Shays Rebellion?" asked David.

"O, 't was in 1787," said the hermit, rising and going down to the shore. The others followed him, and the boys, seating themselves on the sides of the boats, swung their feet, and looked the picture of impatience.

"When do you think we can start?" said Andrew finally. "We 've waited three days now, and it seems to me it 'll be safe to go pretty soon."

"Well," replied the hermit, "I was a thinkin' we could maybe start to-morrow. We want to put out before it's fairly light, and then hide somewhere durin' the day, and go on again at night. I'd go in the night all the time if I only was sure o' the channel here. I don't want to get aground again, 'specially if these fellows are on the watch yet."

"No more do I," replied Andrew. "But when they 've been waiting three days, and have n't seen a sign of us, it seems to me it's safe to think of going. I don't want to do anything rash," he added, "but when I think of father sick at home and mother a worrying, why it seems to me I'd be willing to take some chances."

"So we will," said the hermit, "and I think it 'll

be safe to try it in the mornin'. We'll be gettin' everything all ready now."

A careful inspection of the boats was had, the masts were set up, and the sails made ready, so that as soon as they came aboard in the morning an immediate start could be made.

The boys were so excited that they could eat but little of the supper that night which the cook prepared. They were talking of their journey, and the possibility of running the blockade, and when they would reach home.

Wrapped in their blankets, it was a long time before sleep came to them, and it seemed to David that he had only just fallen asleep when the hermit roused them, and they came forth from the tent.

"It's about three o'clock, as near as I can judge," said he, "and we've a fine mornin' to make a start. 'It's rainin' some, and going to be dark and cloudy."

The boys found a gentle rain falling when they were awake, and the darkness gave no sign of the morning's approach.

"It does n't seem to me it's midnight yet," said Elijah, "but I suppose it is, for Mr. Ogden knows. But I'm ready to start if it is n't nine o'clock."

They placed the tent on board, and their blankets, and all the cooking utensils they had used, and in a short time they were out on the river started for

home. The hermit had cautioned them all to be silent, and so, if any words were spoken, they were in low or whispered tones.

"It's strange," said he, "how we never can get a breeze when we want it. There's hardly any air stirrin' this mornin'," as he glanced at the river, noting how slow was the progress they were making.

"Don't you want us to row?" asked Elijah. "That'll help some."

"No," replied the hermit. "It'll make too much noise, and we must keep near together. I can hardly see the Pilot now."

They kept on, in spite of their slow progress, for some time after the sun had risen, as the rain continued to fall, and the clouds shut out some of the light. But about nine o'clock, as the rain ceased, the hermit began to look about among the islands for a place to land. He soon found an island that suited him, and he ran the boat in under the shelter of some overhanging trees. The Pilot followed his example, and soon both boats were made fast, and the boys all leaped ashore.

They were in a little bay that indented the island, which appeared to be much larger than the one on which they had last landed, and, while it furnished a somewhat retired shelter, was still open to the view of any one approaching from the east.

"There's no use in taking the masts out here,"

said the hermit, as he lowered the sail. "The boat can be seen so plain that a bare mast won't call anybody's attention to it. I reckon we haven't made more than five miles."

"We must have sailed more 'n that," said the cook.

"I mean in a straight course," replied the hermit. "Ye see, we've had to back and fill so much, and dodge in and out among the islands, and all that, with the current, keeps us from goin' ahead very fast. When we once get out o' the river, we'll let her fly. Then we'll make some time."

The party were soon eating the breakfast which the cook prepared on shore, and then they all turned to the hermit for instructions for the day.

"We'll have to hang round here all day," said he. "By and by, when we've got rested up, and had our dinner, we'll make a little tour. Perhaps, if we go out on the other side o' the island, we may be able to see something."

Time hung heavily on the boys' hands till early in the afternoon, after they had eaten their dinner, when, leaving the cook in camp to stand on guard, and giving him instructions to fire his gun if anything alarming occurred, they started out to make a tour of the island.

They walked to the farther side, and there obtained a full view of the river stretching away before them.

"This is a great river, is n't it, Andrew?" said David, enthusiastically.

"Yes," replied Andrew. "Most too great just now. I wish we were out of it."

But whichever way they looked, not a sign of boat or man was to be seen, and, as the hour was growing late, they started to return to their camp.

"It looks like clear sailing now, boys," said the hermit, "and we'll put out." But hardly had he uttered the words, when the report of the cook's gun was heard. As they were almost in camp now, they started on the run, and as they reached it they saw a man near shore, sitting in a little skiff, who, looking curiously at them, quickly began to row, and was soon out of sight.

"That was our prisoner," said the boys together.

"Yes, I think it was," said the hermit, soberly, "and his visit does n't promise any good for us either, I'm afraid."

CHAPTER XXXI

THE PRISONER'S EXPERIENCE

WHEN our party had released their prisoner on the island where the smugglers' cave was, he had used the one oar which Andrew had left him as a paddle, and had soon put several islands between him and his captors. When he was well out of sight, he seated himself, and though he continued quietly to paddle on, he was in great perplexity as to what course he should pursue. He had spoken truly when he told the hermit that he had no love for Smith, and that he had received nothing as his share yet for the work he had been engaged in for the past six weeks. Besides, he had had no vicious tendencies, and had been drawn into the enterprise more from weakness of character than from any other cause. The smugglers, some of whom had known him long, and were well acquainted with his generous heart and weak will, had drawn him with them, regarding him as one who could be used with profit by them, and as not likely ever to make trouble for them or among them.

But the man was troubled now. He was thinking, as much as his dull brain was capable, of what was the best course for him to pursue. Should he go home? But others were suspicious of him there now, and, as the war had broken out, he was afraid of what the consequences might be to him. Should he look up the smugglers? In his mind he could see the savage face of Smith, as he told him how he had been taken prisoner, and that his captors had taken all they could carry away of the valuables stored in the cave. At this last thought he fairly shuddered, and quickly glanced about him as if expecting the brutal smuggler to appear immediately.

But the problem was soon settled for him, for the current had been carrying him rapidly down the stream during his meditations, and he had been all the time half unconsciously paddling with his oar, and so adding to the impetus of the stream. It was not long before he came in sight of the sailboat which our party soon after saw from the island. Seeing that escape was now impossible for him, if he were inclined to try to flee, he made a virtue of necessity, and changed his course so as to meet the sailboat as she came on. As soon as he had started, a sudden thought seemed to strike him, and using his paddle with all his strength, he made the skiff fairly fly as she went on to meet the boat. He had caught sight of the man at the tiller, and had

recognized him at once as the man he feared to meet,— the brutal leader of the smugglers, Smith himself.

The latter looked up in great surprise as the skiff came alongside the boat, and his face grew black as he recognized the stranger. "Why, Tom," said he, "what ye doin' here? We left you to guard the cave. Ye know what I told ye if anything happened there," and he clinched his fist and scowled, as he looked threateningly at Tom.

The latter was badly frightened, but, putting on as bold a face as he could, and trying to stop his heart from beating so rapidly, he finally managed to say, "I was a comin' down here to meet ye, jest as fast 's I could. There 's a gang o' men at the cave, and they took me prisoner, but I managed to get off, though I had to paddle with one oar."

"A gang o' men at the cave!" gasped Smith. "Who was they? D' ye know?"

"No, only some on 'em was boys. Yes, I did hear 'em say somethin' about Sackett's Harbor. They either come from there, or are goin' there."

Smith's face grew blacker still. "Was there an old man in the party? One what wore a skin cap, and had long white hair and whiskers?" he added.

"I should say there was," said Tom, feeling at his throat at the reference to the hermit. "There was another feller too with a wooden leg."

"I don't know him," said Smith, turning to his companions in the boat. "But them other fellers I know. It's the Field boys. I wish we'd never bothered with 'em. I thought they'd cleared out a long time ago. But we must git after 'em. If they've got our stuff, we can catch 'em sure." And taking the skiff in tow, he called to Tom to come aboard the Pilot (for it was the Pilot he was sailing), and at once began to give his attention to his work, and the little boat went rapidly ahead.

He turned from time to time to his companions, of whom there were now four, including the escaped prisoner, and savagely growled out his complaints. "I went and took my wife and three gals off my place over beyond Sackett's, and jest had to abandon that farm. They're in Canady now, and will have ter stay there. If I lose my share in this deal now, why I'm out of my place over there too, fer I did n't have time to trade it afore the war broke out, and now I'm half 'fraid they'll jest confiscate it; fer I'd about laid my plans ter git inter some o' these Canadian regiments."

His companions made no reply, for they all were afraid of him, and, now that trouble was ahead for them all, they were silent and morose.

"Yes," continued Smith, "ef them boys gets away, I'm a goner. I tell ye," he added savagely, "we've got ter get 'em. Then there's them fellers

we was ter meet to-day. Seven on 'em, ye know. What 'll they say if they find our stuff gone? They 'll say we lied to 'em, and did n't have it at all, and like enough they 'll think we jest got 'em here to catch 'em in a trap. We 'll git both sides agin us," and he gave the tiller a savage jerk as he brought the boat about. "Tom, I b'lieve ye 've lied to me."

"I wish I had," answered Tom. "But it's gospel truth. They most killed me," and he called their attention to the marks upon his neck.

"What'd they do? Try ter hang ye?" asked Smith.

"Yes," said Tom. "They choked me to make me tell where you was. But I did n't let on anything I knew, and they most killed me too," he added.

"Well, ever sence we give up the Oswego end o' this business, and the Osprey finished her deal, we haven't had luck enough to float a chip. But it is n't too late yet," and Smith glanced at the sun to see the time of day.

The party sailed on up the river, but saw no trace of the fugitives. They visited the cave, and the discovery they made there only added to Smith's fury. As they came out of the gorge he thought of the chest, and, rushing eagerly to the spot, he made the crowning discovery of the day. His rage knew no bounds. He swore great oaths, and kicked poor Tom so savagely that he could not have made any

reply if he would. But in a little while he became calmer, and the party resumed their journey.

It was not long before they met the seven men who had assisted in getting the hermit's boat off the rock on which it had struck. These were not officers, as the hermit had thought, but men who had made an appointment to meet with the smugglers, and arrange a deal whereby the guns and ammunition should be taken off their hands.

When they had related their story, Smith looked at them for a minute contemptuously, and said, "You're a fine lot, you are. Why, those men you helped off that rock had on board most all the stuff you was intendin' to get of us. You're a pretty shrewd lot, you are."

The surprise of the strangers at this report was equal only to their chagrin. Coming as they had, expecting to drive a sharp bargain, and to have an opportunity of helping on their own cause at the same time, to be thus outwitted by a lot of Yankee boys was more than they could endure.

"Well, I'll tell you what," said one of them. "They have n't got very far, and they can't go very fast with all that load on board. We'll all turn in and help catch 'em. Why they were on the Canada side when we saw 'em too. We can get them yet. Just start right on, and we'll go along too."

The pursuit was at once begun. They sailed by

the place where the hermit's boat had been fast aground, but, as we know, not a vestige of their party was to be seen. They were securely hidden from the view of all passers-by.

"I know they can't get away. They must be farther up the river. We don't want to try and follow them, but to get ahead of 'em and catch 'em as they go by. We can make a pretty good lookout," said one of the men.

"That's the idea," said Smith, confidence beginning to return once more. "There's eight o' our men right straight ahead, jest waitin' fer us to come. Now we'll just use 'em all, and if we don't find the other boat, why, I know we can outsail her with all that load and get by her. Why, there's six or seven o' them besides all their freight."

"Yes, there was six o' the men and boys," said the other, "for the most of 'em looked like boys. That's what makes me so mad."

"Well, that old fellow that wore a coon's cap has got a coon's head under his cap. I know somethin' about him. I don't believe he'll be any such fool as to run right into a trap set for him. He won't try to make for Sackett's right off. He'll more likely hide fer a time, and try to sneak out nights. But we'll set a watch fer him, and I tell ye if he can git by it, he's most welcome to."

When they met the friends of Smith at their

appointed place, they were as eager as he to join in the pursuit of those who had taken their possessions, and were confident that the others could not have gone by them, and they at once went to work to arrange a line of watchers, and, as they now had fifteen men, this was easily done.

At intervals, among the islands, a man was stationed, and at the approach of any boat, day or night, he was to give the signal agreed upon with his gun. Eight of the men were placed on duty at a time, and the others were to relieve them at intervals. As this gave a good reserve, and the day was divided into six parts, the burden did not fall heavily on any one. Smith himself was busy day and night and seemed tireless in his energy. Tom, the ex-prisoner, had been kept to carry communications from one point to another, and was a kind of nautical errand boy for Smith.

As the time passed, and the hermit's party did not make their appearance, grave fears began to be expressed by the watchers that they had escaped them, and even Smith was not without serious apprehensions lest this might be true. A party of three joined them, and at their own suggestion they took the Pilot and the little skiff, and started on a tour through the islands, while the others continued on guard.

The result of their expedition we know already,

but the report which they brought when at last they had rowed back to their companions, at once renewed the hopes of Smith and his friends.

"Ye see, they have n't got away. Now we 'll get 'em sure, and both boats too," said he, exultingly, and the courage of all was strengthened.

But when three more days had passed, and still there were no signs of the party, their hopes again began to fall. On the morning of the fourth day, the one on which our friends had set sail, Smith had sent Tom to call some of the watchers to him to consult as to whether they should make another tour of the islands or not. It was on this errand Tom had gone when he was seen by the cook.

CHAPTER XXXII

THE VOYAGE CONTINUED

THE sight of their former prisoner greatly disturbed the members of our party; they looked at one another in blank dismay, and only the hermit seemed to have presence of mind enough for action. Just before the prisoner passed out of sight around the point, he had called out to him, "Here, here! hold on a minute; we want to speak to you. We've got a good word for ye, hold on a bit." But his words produced no effect upon the fugitive, except to make him redouble his efforts to get out of sight. He had not even turned his head towards them when he had been spoken to, and it was but a very brief time before he disappeared from sight.

The hermit had grasped his gun, and seemed half inclined to try the effect of a shot; but as he did not wish to injure the man, and besides was fearful of the effect of the sound of a gun-shot upon others, whom he feared might be near by, he had restrained himself, and laid down the gun.

"That man means mischief, I believe," said Andrew. "He said he did n't waste any love on

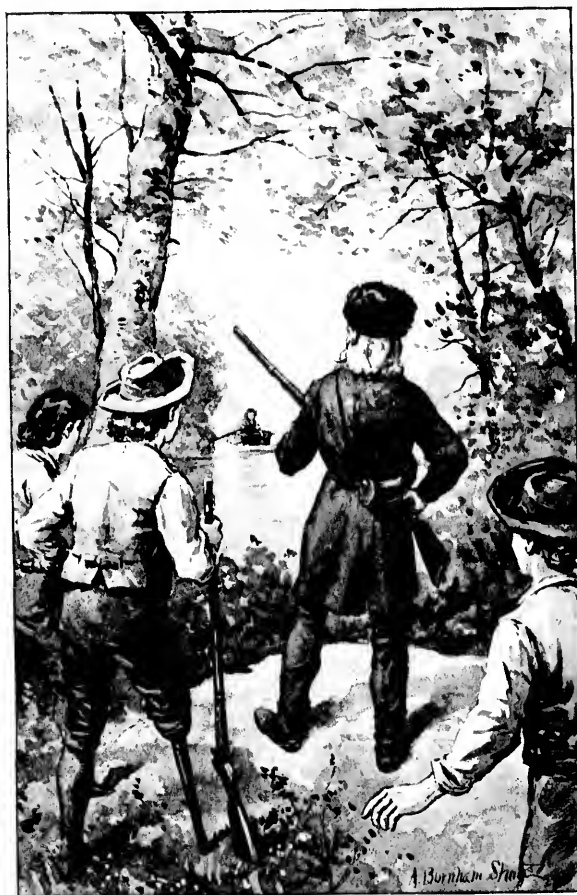
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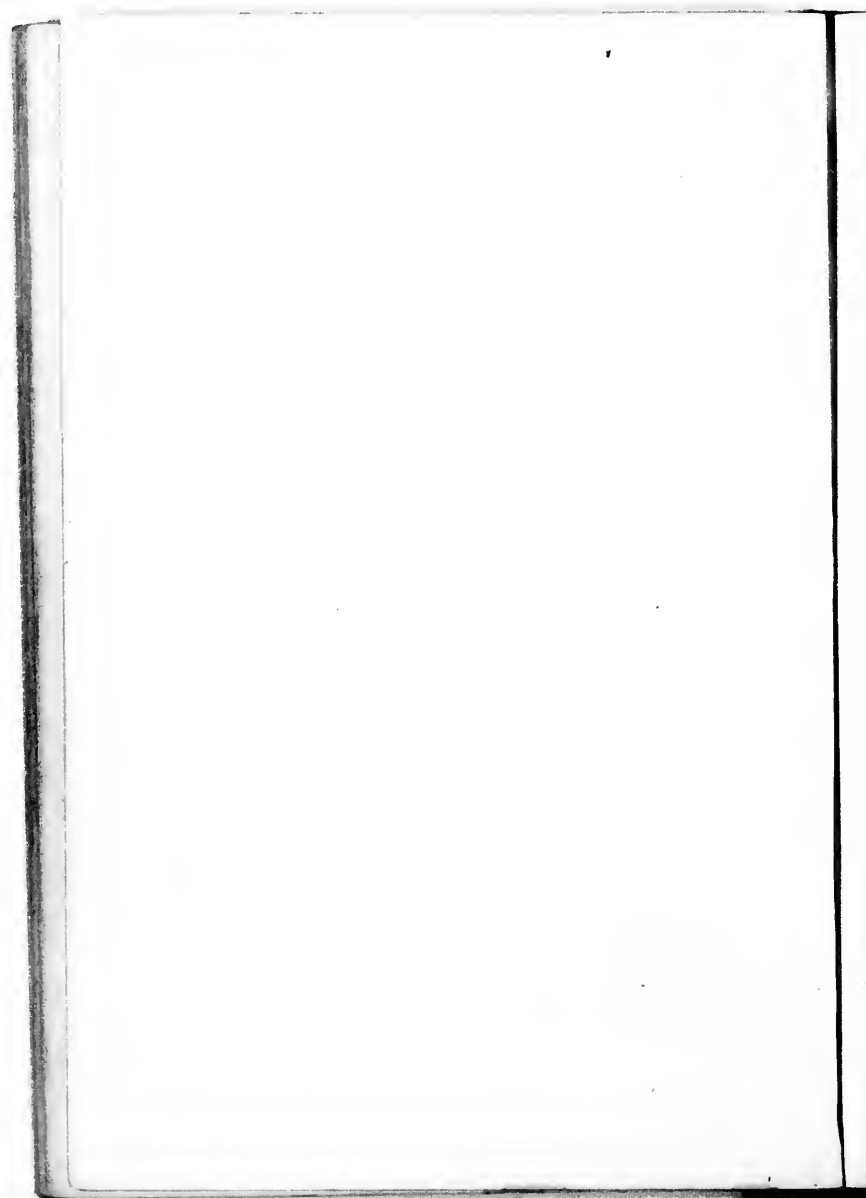
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"THE HERMIT HAD GRASPED HIS GUN." Page 278.



Smith. Maybe he does n't, but he has n't any to spare for us either. I don't like the looks of things at all."

"No more do I," replied the hermit. "And furthermore, we must n't stop to 'view the landscape o'er,' as the tune-book says. We'll start right off."

The boys responded to the hermit's call, and in a few minutes they were ready to start, the party being divided the same as before, — the hermit in charge of his boat, and Andrew at the tiller of the Pilot. The boats were in excellent sailing form now, and with the ballast thrown overboard from each, and the load divided, there was no reason why they could not make rapid progress. They were all silent for a time, however, and Andrew's aim was to keep his boat as near the other as it was possible for him to do.

They all were anxious, and a sharp lookout was kept by each boat. They were expecting every minute to see an armed party set forth in pursuit, or else hear a sharp summons to surrender; but they had sailed steadily on for twenty minutes, and not a sound to disturb them had been heard, and not a sight of man or boat had been seen.

It was then that the hermit stopped for a few minutes, and waited for Andrew to come alongside. When the Pilot had approached, the hermit took an

axe, and, standing up, cut two places in the rail about six inches deep, forward and on either side; he then took two pieces of rope and tied them to the tiller. When he had finished this work, he threw the axe aboard the Pilot, and called to Andrew to do as he had done.

"What for?" asked Andrew. "What did you cut those places for?"

"Well, ye see," replied the hermit, "we're likely to come to close quarters, and I don't want any one to be seen. They're a kind of port-holes like, and we can peek out o' them and see our way ahead without exposing ourselves. Then, too, when I get my bearings, ye see, I can lie right on the bottom o' the boat, and yet I can manage the tiller after a fashion, too."

Andrew thought the advice was good, and though it was a trial to him to strike the Pilot with an axe, he, too, soon had his boat fixed as the other was. He threw the axe back to the hermit when he had cut the places in his own boat, and prepared to start on again.

"Wait a minute," said the hermit. "We did n't make any plans afore we started, and we have n't much time to now; but we haven't seen anybody yet, and I hope we sha'n't. That fellow was in a row-boat, and with a fair wind we ought to get away ahead of any o' them. But I think we'd better keep

together, as near 's we can, and not stop when night comes, either."

"There 's a moon to-night, is n't there?" inquired Andrew.

"Yes," said the hermit. "That is, some, but it is n't full. But I guess it'll be light enough to see our way, if we can only get out into the lake before it gets dark. Then we 'll have a clear course and a square race."

"What 's that over yonder?" interrupted Henry, pointing to a white spot over towards the east. They all started at his words, and looked in the direction in which he had pointed.

"It looks like a sail," said the hermit, after a careful scrutiny. "It does n't seem to move any. It may be only a rock, but it looks very much like a sail. It may be it 's only a rock," he repeated, after another careful look; "I can't jest tell. It is n't a movin' any, but I guess we 'd better be." And at his word Andrew cast off the painter of the Pilot, and both the boats were soon under way again. The white spot in the distance did n't appear to move, and it was not long before it was out of sight, as the boats passed behind another island.

As they sailed on, and no interruptions occurred, the confidence of the boys began to return; they knew the hardest task was yet before them, and that the time of trial would be when they came out from

among the islands and started for the open lake. There, if anywhere, their enemies would meet them.

But as none had yet appeared, and as the wind held fair, their hopes rose. Henry patted the head of the hermit's dog, which was with them in their boat, and began to ask questions as he saw the hermit's face assume a look of increased satisfaction as they sailed on.

"I just wish," said Henry, "we had a flag up there at the masthead; it would look pretty good to those fellows when we pass by. I wonder which was the first boat that ever carried the stars and stripes, anyway?"

It was a small war vessel named the *Reprisal*," said the hermit; and at Henry's look of interrogation, after carefully looking in every direction, he continued: "Ye see, durin' the Revolution, we were poorer than we are now, though that's poor enough; so Congress commissioned a lot of private persons to fit out privateers. Sometimes Congress did this, and sometimes it was one o' the States. In '75, Congress ordered fourteen war vessels to be built; they were not very big, but they and the privateers did a heap o' damage to the commerce of Great Britain."

"Was the *Reprisal* a privateer?" asked Henry.

"No, she was one o' the fourteen; but she was a good one. Why, in '77 she and another one they

named the *Revenge* went over and took a cruise right among the British Islands. Why, they almost put a stop to commerce for a little while, but they quit pretty soon. It was that *Reprisal* that first flew the stars and stripes at her masthead."

"Didn't they go over there again after that?" asked Elijah.

"Yes. In '78 there was a cap'n named John Paul Jones; he had a man o' war called the *Ranger*. Why, he did almost as much agin damage as the *Reprisal* and *Revenge* did. Sometimes he was n't satisfied to fight on shipboard, but he just landed and went for the towns. He was a Scotchman, too; but he was more American than Scotch, so he never stopped for that. He landed on the coast of Scotland as much or more 'n he did on the coast of England."

"How many vessels did we capture from the British in that war?" asked Elijah. "It must have been a lot."

"It was," replied the hermit. "I don't s'pose any one knows exactly, but I've heard we took about seven hundred."

"Whew!" said Henry, "I guess they had a lot of prize money. What did this John Paul Jones you were telling about do after that? Did he fight any more?"

"O yes," replied the hermit. "Ye see, our navy

was n't very well managed; there was no head to the government much then, anyway. We built some boats, but the bigger and heavier British ones could take 'em or burn 'em. Franklin, after we got help from France, bought some boats of them. Well," continued he, "in '79 he fitted out a fleet of five, and gave this Paul Jones the command of it. Only one of 'em was of any size, and that was so old it was fairly rotten; they named her the 'Bonhomme Richard.' Ye see, Franklin used to be a printer in Philadelphia, and he'd got up an almanac which he called 'Poor Richard's Almanac.' So they took that name for this boat, 'Goodman Richard.'"

"Where did this Paul Jones go to fight?" asked Henry.

"O, he went over to the east coast of Scotland and England again. He had lots o' trouble with his men, and more with his captains. They was n't any o' them used to doin' anything they didn't want to. Well, he cruised round there for a month or two, and then, in September, '79, his fleet fell in with two British frigates. One on 'em was called the *Scrapis*, and she carried forty guns, and the other was named the *Countess of Scarborough*, and had twenty-two guns. It was off Flamborough Head they met, and they had one of the toughest sea fights that ever was heard of, I s'pose."

"How 'd it come out?" asked Henry.

"O, Jones, after a little while, got the Bonhomme Richard and Serapis tied together. They fought for two hours, and I s'pose the slaughter was something fearful. Both boats got on fire a number of times, but at last the Serapis surrendered. But the Richard was so used up, that next morning she sank."

"What became of the other boat?" said Elijah. "I think you said her name was the Countess of Scarborough."

"O, well, ye see, the rest o' Jones's fleet did n't help him much; he had to fight the Serapis all single-handed like. But the other vessels finally did pitch into the Countess of Scarborough, and at last they took her."

"That was a great fight," said Henry, excitedly. "What ever became of this John Paul Jones?"

"O, afterwards he entered the Russian navy. I never heard much of him after that, except that he died in poverty and neglect."

"What a shame!" said Elijah. "But then that's not the meanest thing our country ever did; they'd fight to get free, but they did n't take care of their men after they were free. Just look at this scrape of Andrew's."

"That's what's goin' to be settled in this war. We've got to learn to hold up our own heads; we always was afraid o' big foreign names. Just look

at the French. Why, all they did pretty much was to set us on in our war with England. They did n't like England, and was glad of anything that would give her trouble. De Grasse did give us a good deal o' help when we took Cornwallis, but that's 'bout all they did."

"That's the island and the place where we lost the Pilot," said Henry, pointing to the shore by which they were passing. "I'd like to have some of 'em see us now,— just *see* us, that's all, as we go sailing by."

"I'm afraid you'll have a chance to be seen, then," said the hermit, as he pointed to a sailboat just putting out from a little cove. He had hardly uttered the word, before there was a puff of smoke seen where the boat was, and a sharp report rang out. In a moment this was followed by another, and another, till they counted eight shots. "We're in for it now," said the hermit, pointing to two more sailboats that now came in sight,— one from the east, and one from the west. "If the wind holds good, I'm not much afraid. Give Andrew and his crew a cheer," and a shout rose from the hermit's boat, which was quickly answered from the Pilot.

CHAPTER XXXIII

AN EXCITING RACE

THE sight of three sailboats in hot pursuit produced a keen excitement among our friends, who were trying to escape. The hermit was cool and collected, but the white face of Henry, and his trembling voice, showed how frightened he was. Elijah however had nothing to say, and stood ready to follow out the slightest suggestion the hermit might make.

For a few minutes they sailed on in silence, but the tears that were in Henry's eyes finally led the hermit to say, "Now, Henry, we have come to the real tug. You must try to show yourself a man. It does n't take much courage to keep a stout heart when everything goes smoothly, but it's when the real test comes that a man shows himself."

"I know it," said Henry, "and I'll try to be as brave as I can."

"That's right," responded the hermit. "Now I want you all to keep your heads below the rail. They ain't more than four hundred yards away, and I'm afraid, if they don't overhaul us pretty quick,

they'll try a shot, and we'd better be where they can't see much o' us." And calling out to Andrew to have his party follow his example, the hermit himself dropped out of sight, and all the others did as he directed.

Through the holes he had cut, Elijah and Henry kept a sharp lookout ahead, and the hermit steered his boat by means of the ropes he had tied to the tiller. In this way they sailed on for half an hour, without a word being spoken by any one.

The hermit then raised himself a little to get a good look at their pursuers. The sight he saw did not reassure him, for he turned to his companions and said, "They're gaining on us. They're at least a hundred yards nearer than they were before. If the wind holds good, and we can only get out into the lake before they can overhaul us, I think we stand a pretty fair chance o' leavin' 'em behind."

A shout here arose from their pursuers, but as the hermit quickly cautioned the others to remain concealed, no reply was given. But when the smugglers perceived that their calls received no response, they fired three shots at the flying boats. "Look at that," said the hermit quickly, pointing to two holes the bullets had cut in their sail. "I don't believe we want to stand on deck very much. How I wish it would get dark, and we could only get out into the lake!"

The hermit's dog, which had been a very quiet and docile member of the party up to this time, and had obeyed every word of his master, here suddenly leaped out on deck, and began to bark furiously at the pursuing boats. Before the hermit could speak sharply to him, and order him back by his side, another shot came from the boat nearest them, and it was answered by a sharp yelp from the dog.

"He's hit hard," said the hermit, as the dog crawled towards him. "Take your knife," said he to Elijah, "and put him out o' his misery."

Elijah did as he was directed, and in a moment threw the body overboard. "Poor Bony!" said the hermit. "Ye see, he was named for Napoleon Bonaparte. I always called him Bony for short. He's been a good dog, but he's found out what it means to be careless like, and not obey orders when he's runnin' a blockade."

He here took another look at their enemies, but the mere showing of his head brought a shot from them, which buried itself in the boat's side. "I guess they're a little perticular about bein' watched," said he, with a smile. "But they're gainin' on us. The most I fear is from that boat over to the west. Ye see, we've got to turn that way when we get into the lake, and they're steerin' straight ahead. That means they're a goin' to try and cut us off afore we can get out into the open water.—What's that

they 're a sayin'?" said he, sharply, as a shout arose from the boat directly behind them.

"They 're callin' out to us to lay by, and give 'em the cargo, and they 'll let us go on without touchin' us," said Henry.

The hermit smiled, and said, "I guess not. I don't take kindly to any sech offers from them. We 'll stand jest as good a chance to keep right on, 'specially as I believe, 'pon my soul, the wind 's a comin' up," he added, as a fresh gust struck their sail. "I guess I 'll take another peep at that boat over to the west. That 's the one I 'm most afeard of."

The sight he saw evidently interested him, for he kept his head above the rail so long that a shot from the boat directly behind only served at last to make him take his place again. "Thank ye," he said. "Ye 've some good shots, but two inches 's as good 's a whole lake here. That boat over there has broken something. I could n't jest make out what. They 've dropped away behind, and all the men are in the stern a lookin' at something. It 's way back of the whole fleet now, and the other boats have n't been gainin' any on us for the last twenty minutes."

"Did you get a good look at the Pilot?" asked Henry. "I wonder how they 're a making out in her."

"O, the Pilot 's gained on 'em. She 's right up

with us now. You could almost talk with Andrew if you wanted to."

Henry acted upon the suggestion at once, and called out to the boys. A "Hurrah!" and "All right!" came back to him. "They're all right," said Henry, more cheerfully, "and if one boat's given out, and the others ain't gainin' any, I don't see why we can't get away from 'em."

"If this wind keeps up, we're all right," responded the hermit, "and from the looks o' things, I think we're goin' to get some rain. That's what we want. I don't care if it blows great guns, for with our boats and the load we've got we can stand a heavy sea first rate."

Conversation then ceased for a time, and the boats flew on. From time to time the hermit raised his head, and took a look at their enemies, and reported slight gains, or else that they were about the same as they had been. Elijah, from his lookout, reported that he was sure he could see the waters of the open lake not more than two miles ahead.

The wind was now rising, and the sun had almost set. There was a look of confidence and determination in the hermit's face that served to reassure Henry, and they all began to pluck up courage.

"There comes your rain," said Elijah, as a few spatters fell upon his face. "That's what you've been a-wishing and praying for."

"That's what I want," said the hermit, as he rose to take another survey of the river. A shout and shot from behind greeted his appearance, and as he dodged back he said, "In a few minutes, Mr. Smug-gler, ye can't tell my head from the water. The Pilot's gone ahead o' us. She's a good sailer. But I'm afeard those fellows straight behind are gainin' a little. My boat's a good one in a rough sea,—better 'n theirs, I suspect,—and if we only can keep 'em off till we get into the lake, I'll land ye safe and sound at Sackett's Harbor pretty quick."

But the race continued. The wind was now blowing much harder, and they could see the white caps up ahead in the waters of the open lake. The few drops of rain had increased, and now there was a steady downpour. They all wrapped themselves in blankets, and sat in silence waiting for the issue of the exciting chase. The darkness was fast coming on, and the night gave promise of being a stormy one.

"It's just the kind of a night to do what we're trying to. I wish that pesky boat behind us would break somethin'. Whoever's a sailin' her understands his business. I guess they're gettin' a little desperate like," he added, as more shouts arose, and several shots were fired. "But we're most out in the lake now. It can't be more'n a quarter of a mile away, can it?" he asked Elijah.

"'O, I know, I know all about it,' as the cook says," responded Elijah, gleefully. "We're right there. At least we will be in ten minutes. If they catch us, they'll have to hurry up about it. Leastwise they will if you feel as sure o' yourself in the open water as you say you do."

"I know we'll sail better than they can in such a night as this on the lake. I've looked their boats over, and I'm sure o' that, though I'm not quite so certain about the Pilot as I'm o' this boat we're in."

The hermit took another look, and reported that, in the darkness which now was fast settling down, he could see the Pilot a little in advance of them, but he could also see that their pursuers were as near as ever behind them.

"Keep a sharp lookout on the Pilot," said the hermit to the boys. "I don't believe they could hear us in this rain, and I don't just know what's best to be done. I'm inclined to think we'd better keep right out towards the open water for a good ways. Mebbe we can throw these fellows off a little in that rough water."

"No, the Pilot's headed westward," said Elijah, as they reached the lake. "I guess Andrew's homesick, or mebbe he thinks those fellows would sail right on towards Sackett's Harbor, and wait there for us."

"Well, I guess it's all right," responded the hermit, as he glanced at the boat behind, which he could still dimly see in the darkness. "But they're a sailin' a good deal better 'n I thought they could in such water 's this."

The wind was now blowing hard. The water was rough, and frequently the waves dashed over the boat. With great difficulty they took a reef in the sail, but they dared not try to go ashore, as none of them was acquainted with the locality, and besides they preferred to trust their chances on the water. Another reef was taken, and it was almost under bare poles that they sped onwards. But the wind was with them, and drove them on swifter and faster. They could see nothing of the pursuing boats, and not a sign of the Pilot appeared.

It was past midnight before the storm abated, and then a thick, damp fog set in. There was little wind to aid them, and the water continued rough and boisterous. Elijah and Henry took turns at rowing, each keeping a sharp lookout for rocks or islands ahead, when not so engaged.

But no accident befell them during the night, and they worked steadily on, eagerly waiting for the morning. With the first faint streaks of light they looked out over the lake for friends and foes. But not a trace of the smugglers' boats or of the Pilot could be seen.

"I'm afraid somethin' 's happened to the Pilot," said Elijah, gravely.

The hermit made no reply, except to give his careful attention to the boat. They were about three miles from shore, and the morning breeze now swept them on. The fog was gone, and the waters soon became calmer. It was nearly noon before they sighted Sackett's Harbor. "We had n't better put in to the Harbor," said Henry. "We'll go about two miles this side, and land where we keep the Pilot. I wish I knew where she was. But Andrew Field 's as good a sailor as there is on the lake, and I guess she 's all right."

In less than an hour they came in sight of their landing place, and the first thing they beheld was the Pilot alongside the little dock, and the cook waving his hat, and beckoning to them from her deck.

CHAPTER XXXIV

A SAD HOME-COMING

THE hermit's boat soon took her place along with the Pilot and her crew were listening with interest to the cook's story. It seems that, soon after darkness had come on the preceding night, Andrew's party had lost all sight of the hermit's boat, and also of their pursuers; but being reasonably sure of their course, they had kept on. They had taken reefs in their sail, and had been in great fear lest the Pilot should spring a leak in the strain she was having, for they knew she had been only patched up since Smith had cut the holes in her bottom.

But they had come on safely, and had arrived at the dock only about half an hour before the hermit came. "We saw a sail out here," said Henry, "and we hoped it was you, but we were not certain. But it's all right now."

"Andrew and David just cleared out as soon 's we got here," said the cook, "they were so anxious to get home. I told 'em to go on, and I'd stay here on

guard till you came, for we knew you when you were away back yonder."

"Now you boys just all go home and see yer folks," said the hermit. "The cook and I'll stand guard here; and by and by you come back, and we'll decide what's best to be done. Come, clear out now! Off with ye!"

The boys needed no second bidding, but started on the run. It was less than two miles to the home of Andrew and David, and they must pass by that to go to their own. As they approached they saw a gathering of people in a lot not far from the house.

"Henry, there's somebody being buried there," said Elijah, excitedly.

"It does look so," said Henry. "I wonder who it can be?"

But by this time they had come near enough to see the sad procession turning to leave the lot in which they had been standing.

It was a sad picture which the boys saw. In advance was the old minister, his head bared, and the few long gray locks he had left were blowing in the warm wind of the summer's day. Beside him walked David, whose grief seemed uncontrolled. Behind them walked Andrew and his mother, — Andrew quiet and calm, and trying hard to support her in her sorrow. The few friends and neighbors which the sparsely settled country gave

were there, all walking behind the members of the family. Among the first of these Elijah recognized his own father and mother, but the customs of the day forbade more than a smile of recognition, and a slight motion with the hand to indicate to the boys that they were to follow in the rear of the little procession, as it turned towards Andrew's home. The boys quietly took their places behind the others, and walked with slow and solemn steps towards the home which no more should know the kind-hearted and suffering man whose body they had just laid to rest in the little field, set off from the others by a new fence.

When all had entered the house, the aged minister, after he had read a chapter from the Bible, called upon all to kneel, and then he closed the sad services by a prayer that was both long and fervent.

When they rose from their kneeling position, the women went at once to the kitchen to prepare the meal which always at that time followed the service for the dead. The men and boys were left alone.

Elijah and Henry hardly knew what to say or do. Their hearts went out to their friends in their grief, but they could find no words, and for some time there was an awkward silence.

Finally Henry, moving quietly, came to where David was sitting, and drew his hand within his own. David was the first to speak.

"It's a pretty sad home-coming after all, Henry," said he. "We had n't but just got to the top of the hill when we saw them a coming. I didn't know just what it was, till I heard Andrew cry right out loud, and then I knew. We ran as fast as we could, and met them just as they were going into the burying-ground. But I'm glad you got home all safe."

"Yes, do you know, and father kissed me," said Henry. "Why, I never knew him to do such a thing as that before in my life."

"But I'm glad you've got a father," replied David. "Mine's gone. And to think how we only got home to be just in time to help put him in the ground. They were just starting out for the burying-ground as we came in sight of the house. But I'm glad we could help mother. Poor mother!" And at the words the tears came again into David's eyes, and he covered his face with his hands.

Henry could think of nothing more to say to comfort his friend, and so he sat in silence by his side. It was a sad and still company. The old minister was the only one who spoke at all, and he only at intervals.

They were all summoned to the other room in a few minutes, and the meal was eaten in silence. No one felt like talking, and the loving glances the mother of Elijah and Henry cast from time to time upon her boys, were all the language used. When

the meal was finished, they all came back into the living-room, and the good old preacher took the Bible and again read a long chapter and made a fervent prayer. The hymn which David had heard as he approached his home on the day of Andrew's seizure was sung:

"On the other side of Jordan, in the sweet fields of Eden,
Where the tree of life is blooming, there is rest for you."

The hymn was the last of the sad services of the day, and the company prepared to depart. Andrew took his weeping mother to her room, and there stayed with her, while Elijah and Henry, with their father and mother, were all who remained to help in the duties of the household.

Seated in the room together, there was silence for a time, until David said, "Elder Dodd, I wish you'd tell me about father."

"There is n't very much to tell," said the old man. "He seemed to become weaker and weaker every day. He did n't talk very much, but when he did it was about his boys. He thought he never should see Andrew again, and he was in fear all the time that you would get into the enemy's clutches. I suppose you know that war's been declared since you went away?"

"Yes," replied David. "We heard of it down the river."

"Well," resumed the preacher, "about a week ago a fever set in with your father; he was out of his head, and his face looked as if it was on fire. The doctor came and bled him. Yes, he bled him three times, but it did n't seem to do any good. He kept getting weaker and weaker; and three days ago he just went to sleep, and did n't wake up again. We did n't want to have the funeral till you came home if we could help it, so we waited just as long as we could. Finally, we could n't wait any longer; and then, as you know, we had just started for the burying-ground when you came. I think your coming has done your mother great good, for I don't know what would have become of her if you boys had not got back home pretty soon after her other trouble.

"But you must have had some strange experiences," continued he. "You have been gone so long. We were all afraid you would n't come back at all. Elijah, can't you tell us something about your trip?" he said, as David arose and left the room to go to his mother.

Elijah, thus addressed, began an account of their journey. His story lost nothing in its interest, as the boy, excited at the memory of what he had been through, graphically told of all their adventures.

"Then these two men — Mr. Ogden and the other man — what did you say his name was?" asked Mr. Spicer, waiting for a reply.

"We never knew his name," said Elijah. "We always called him the cook. But he's an old sailor, and used to live down in Rhode Island."

"Did you say," continued Mr. Spicer, "that these men are down by the dock now, and have all this stuff you brought with you in the boats there?"

"Yes," said Elijah. "They were going to wait for us to come back. I guess they'll think we've kept them waiting a good while."

"Well, we'd better go right down there, then, now," said Mr. Spicer. "Elder Dodd can look after things here a little; and Henry, I guess you can do the chores to-night over at our house, and Elijah and I'll go down to the dock, and see what's best to do with your boats and the men."

His suggestion was at once acted upon, and while Henry started for home, Elijah and his father set out on horseback for the dock. They found the men waiting there, and becoming somewhat impatient at the long delay. But after Elijah had introduced his father to them, he told briefly the experience that Andrew and David had had since their return. The hermit was full of sympathy at once, and the cook began to murmur, "Yes, yes, I know, I know all about it."

"We never can thank you enough, I am sure," said Mr. Spicer, "for keeping our boys out of this terrible trouble."

"O, we were glad to do what we could," said the hermit. "They're likely youngsters, and you've a right to be proud of them. They've got good stuff in 'em, and we was glad to do what we did. Besides, they've got us out of trouble, too," and he briefly told of the burning of his home, and the danger there was along the border line.

"But you must n't stay here; it'll be dark pretty quick," said Mr. Spicer. Now my idea is, that you two men, with Elijah to help you, had better sail around to Sackett's at once. I'll go by land, and see Colonel Bettinger, and arrange for the care of your cargo, and then you can come right back to our house."

His scheme was agreed to, and in a few minutes both boats were under sail on their way to Sackett's Harbor, which was distant by water about three miles. Mr. Spicer went by land, riding one horse and leading the other; and as he had only two miles to go, he arrived long before the boats.

It was a strange story he had to tell Colonel Bettinger when he was ushered into his presence; but he found a willing listener, and was often interrupted in his account by the Colonel's exclamations.

When his story was finished the Colonel said: "They're great boys. They've done a great piece of work, and something must be done for them. I'll detail a squad of men to look after this prize stuff

of theirs, and to-morrow you can come over and we'll see what's to be done."

Accordingly, when the two boats arrived, they found a squad of soldiers awaiting them. The cook was a little abashed at the sight at first, but when he understood their errand, he was sure he knew all about it.

It was finally decided that the cargo should be unloaded at once and carried to the garrison. This took some time, and it was dark when, at last, after Mr. Spicer had obtained two more horses, the little party of four set out at a rapid pace for the home of Andrew and David. The house was all dark, and silence was over all, when they rode up before the door and called to Andrew for admittance.

CHAPTER XXXV

CONCLUSION

IT was a warm welcome the travellers received, when Andrew came to the door with a candle in his hand. Mr. Spicer and Elijah insisted upon going on to their own home, as they knew that Henry was there alone; but the hermit and the cook were cared for by Andrew.

The hermit was as gentle as a woman, and only grasped the hand of Andrew, and whispered, "Keep up your heart, my boy. Your mother 'll need you more than ever now." Andrew responded only by a pressure of the hand, and as soon as his guests had eaten, he led them to the room above and left them for the night.

It was a sad household the visitors found on the following morning. Mrs. Field was warm in her thanks, and declared that the one bright spot in her life now was that her boys had both come safely home. She listened with pleasure to the stories the hermit told of the courage of the boys, and often a smile would steal over her sad face as his words became specially warm.

About nine o'clock the Spicer boys rode up to the house and dismounted. It was soon decided that they and the hermit should go over to Sackett's Harbor to consult with Colonel Bettinger about their property, and that Mr. Spicer should soon follow. The cook declined to go, declaring that his wooden leg so bothered the horse he rode on the previous evening, that he was in constant danger of being thrown.

The little party set forth at once, and met with a warm greeting from the Colonel. He insisted upon hearing their story in full, and often turned from the hermit, who was the spokesman, to the boys, to whom he gave words of praise in full measure.

"I think you boys have shown yourselves men enough to have a place in the army. I think we shall have need soon of all the men we can get. But about your prize money," he continued, "I suppose you want to know about that. Well, I've had your guns and stuff stored, and it'll take a little time before we can just say what your shares will be. But the chest I've had brought in here; it's heavy enough to have something good in it. There's no law about it, if it does. But we'll soon see what is in it," he added, rising; and, going to the door, he sent a message for a carpenter to come and bring some tools.

It was a difficult job to open the heavy chest, and

while the work was going on the boys stood by in silence, watching the work with intense eagerness. At last the fastenings were cut loose, and the cover was raised.

"Ho!" said the Colonel, "it looks as if it was all lead," and he took bar after bar of solid lead out of the chest, and laid them on the floor. "It's likely they wanted some bullets. That's what they were going to do, — run this lead into bullets. Perhaps we won't disappoint them much, for it may get into bullets after all."

The boys were disappointed, as they had hoped that something more valuable than lead was in the chest. They said nothing, however, but silently watched the process of taking out the lead bars.

They came to the bottom, and lead was all they found. "That's all there is, boys. It's good stuff, and will bring you something, but not so much as I had hoped," said the colonel, "and not so much as you had hoped either, I fear." And he looked around upon the faces that showed only too clearly their disappointment.

The hermit had been silent all the while, and had been carefully watching the work. It was only when the Colonel had finished speaking that he said, "Do you see, Colonel, how much thicker one end o' that chest is than the other? Mebbe there's some- thin' in there."

A careful examination convinced the carpenter that there was some kind of a receptacle in the heavy end of the chest, and he at once began to cut there. It was slow work, and seemed to the onlookers needlessly so, as they watched his work. After a time the carpenter broke through the wall, and, inserting his hand, drew forth a heavy leather bag. The boys' eyes sparkled, and the Colonel himself was greatly excited.

"You open it, Colonel," said the hermit, quietly.

The Colonel did as the hermit suggested, and drew out several pieces of gold. "It's English money," he said. "They're crowns." Another bag was also found inside, and then they counted their possessions.

"It is n't so very much, after all," said the Colonel. "I suppose it's about three hundred dollars in our money."

"Three hundred dollars!" said Henry to his father, who just then came in. "Why, we never can spend it in a lifetime."

The Colonel only smiled as he replaced the money in the bag, and turned to the hermit and Mr. Spicer for instructions.

"I think we'd better leave everything here with you till we know about the other stuff, too," said the hermit; and it was finally decided that that should be done.

"Come over again in a few days, perhaps in about a week from now," said the Colonel, "and we'll settle everything up."

They bade him good by, and set out for home. The boys were greatly excited, and could talk of nothing but the prize money and what they would do with their share. They had spent the money, in their mind, in three or four ways, before they drew up at Andrew's door.

During the week which must elapse before they went to Sackett's Harbor again, the hermit and the cook remained at Andrew's, and were made to feel at once they were members of the family. There were many things about the place that needed their careful attention. The hermit busied himself about the barn, making some repairs that were sadly needed, while the cook insisted upon relieving Mrs. Field of many of her duties in the house. Henry and Elijah were back and forth every day between the places, and a part of the time the visitors spent at their home. The rugged times left little opportunity for grief, and Andrew's mother roused herself to do the work which she knew must be done. But hours of sorrow came to her, and the boys became her consolation many a time. "I must live for my boys," she would say, and resolutely busy herself in their behalf.

After the division had been made by Colonel

Bettinger, each member of the party found himself in possession of a sum which, while small in itself, made the possessor feel rich. And in the purchasing power of his money he was so.

The hermit and the cook remained for some time with them, at the urgent request of Andrew and his mother. But they became more restless every day. The boys would find the hermit in the yard seated under one of the great maple trees. When asked for the cause of his sadness, he would at first make no reply, but would admit finally that he was thinking how homeless he was. When told that he would always find a home with them, he would smile and assure them that he appreciated their kindness, but that he must soon decide what he should do. His home among the islands had been burned, and indeed it was not safe for him to attempt to live there in such times anyway.

One day, when a month had passed by, and he and Andrew were talking in this way, they saw far down the road a man or boy coming on horseback towards them. When finally he drew rein near them, holding forth a letter, he asked if either of them was Mr. Ogden.

The hermit rose, and taking the missive, broke the seal and read. Andrew watched his face as he read, but he could make nothing of the impression the contents made upon the reader.

When he had finished the second reading, he handed the letter, without a word, to Andrew, who read the following note.

THE BARRACKS, SACKETT'S HARBOR, NEW YORK,
August 20, 1812.

MR. JAMES OGDEN, ESQ. — Dear Sir: It has come to my positive knowledge that Edward Smith, the smuggler, whom you met in several encounters, has proved to be a traitor to his country. He has been enrolled in the British navy at Kingston, and by his traitorous act his property becomes confiscated. It has occurred to me that the farm he owned a few miles beyond the Spicers', now that by confiscation it is no longer the property of Smith, you yourself might desire to secure. If so, I think I could aid you. I understand that it has a good log house on it and a small barn. Kindly let me know your wishes. Your obedient servant,

EDWARD BETTINGER.

Andrew looked at the hermit. "Mebbe, mebbe," he said, slowly, in reply to Andrew's glance, "that's what I've been a waitin' for. We'll go over there and take a look at the place anyway."

Accordingly, they rode over there on the following morning. The place was deserted, but the hermit was delighted. There was a long view of the lake from the house, which especially pleased him, and he at once decided that if he could make suitable arrangements, he would take the place. These were

easily settled after a visit to the Colonel, and the hermit and the cook soon took up their abode in Smith's former home.

Here they lived until the war was ended, when they went back to the islands on which the hermit had formerly made his home; but every winter they came back to the farm which once had belonged to Smith.

As for Smith himself, occasional reports came of his deeds, but he never returned to disturb the new possessor of his old home. Occasional rumors also came of a man who was Smith's constant companion, and the boys had no difficulty in recognizing him as the prisoner they had taken at the cave of the smugglers among the Thousand Islands.

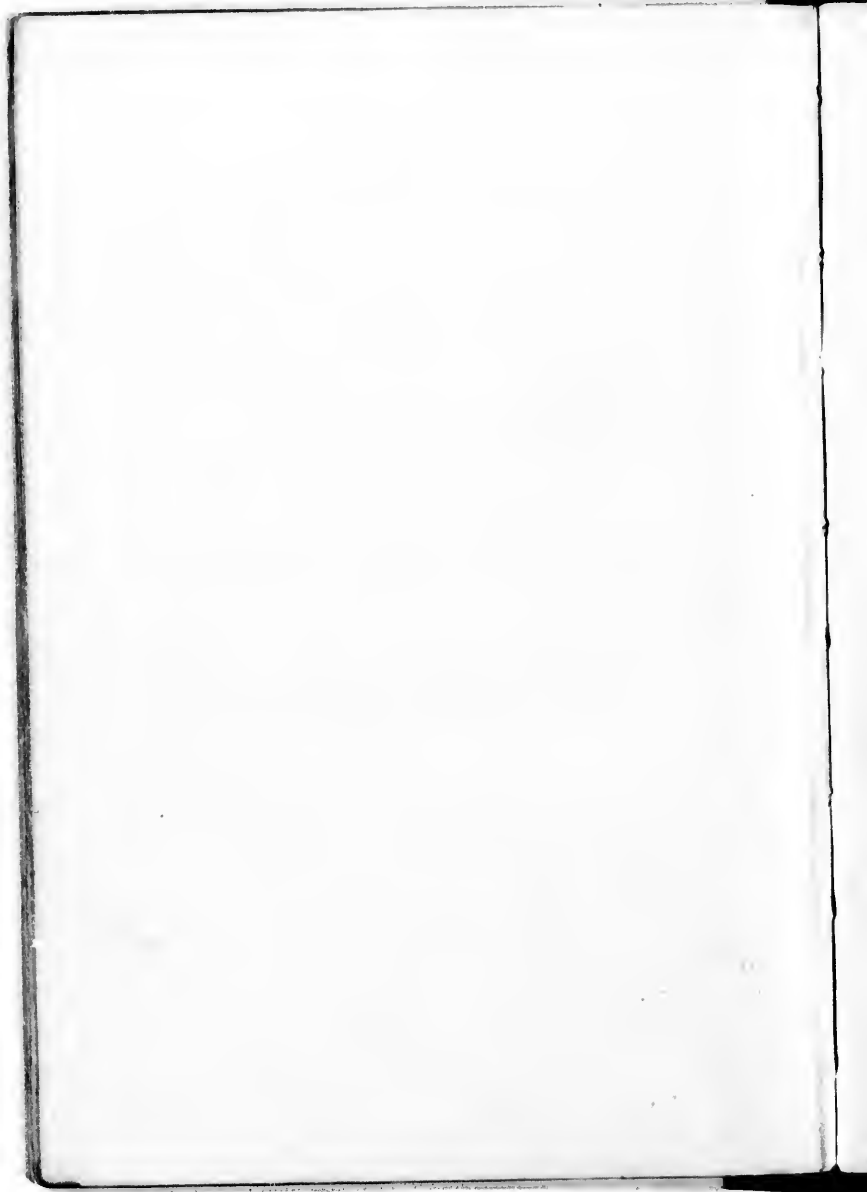
It was not long before Andrew began to make visits to Mr. Potter's, where the boys had stopped over night on their journey in search of their brother. The visits only ceased when the black-eyed Potter girl, of whom David had spoken to Elijah, came to Andrew's home to stay.

The times became harder and harder; the war began to make its sufferings and demands upon all. After Colonel Bettinger had made several visits, it was finally decided that the boys should enlist. Andrew and David went into the navy, and Elijah and Henry entered the army. The old preacher remained at home with Andrew's wife and mother,

and the hermit and the cook were frequent visitors there, and were of great assistance during the absence of the boys.

What befell our heroes we must leave for another story, to be called "The Boy Soldiers of 1812." How and where they met Smith again, how they took a prisoner and how one of the boys himself was captured, how they conducted themselves in some of the great battles, how the hermit dealt with a deserter, and many other experiences they had, we shall there relate; but that they acquitted themselves in all ways like men, every one must know who has followed them in these pages in their search for Andrew Field.

THE END



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