SHAWN OF SKARROW

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SHAWN OF SKARROW

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ILLUSTRATIONS

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Shawn and Coaly.

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SHAWN OF SKARROW

CHAPTER 1

"OH SHAWN!"

It was a shrill voice calling from the bank above the river.

"You can holler till dark, but I ain't goin' to answer you while a blue-channel cat is nibblin' at this line."

Through the short and chubby fingers a stout sea-grass line was running out to the accumulated driftwood in the eddy below the wharf-boat. Suddenly there came a spasmodic jerk of the line.

"He bluffed that time."

The front finger tapped the line, as an expert telegraph operator taps his key.

"He's coming back for that crawfish tail now." The line went taut. The freckled arms executed a series of light-

ning-like movements and the catfish lay on the shore, a five-pounder, beating the sands with his flashing tail.

"Oh Shawn!"

"I'm a-comin' now; come on, Coaly." The little brown dog wagged his tail and got up from his resting place in the sand. They went up the hill toward the little frame building on the bank.

The boy's mother met him at the door. She was a frail-looking woman, upon whose face was a sorrowful and melancholy expression.

"Shawn, Mrs. Alden has sent for you, and wants you to come up to the big house; get on your cottonade pants and wash your face and comb your hair, and when you go up there, don't scratch your shins together, and don't forget to say *yes mam.*"

It was a matter of but a few moments for Shawn to array himself in his best clothes. As he turned to go, his mother wearily took his face between her hands and kissed him on the lips. The black eyes beamed tenderly upon her, and over

the sun-tanned features flashed a smile of cheerfulness and love.

"Take that fish to Mrs. Alden, Shawn."

"It's for you, mammy."

"No, take it to her."

Shawn climbed the hill and went up through the alley, going around to the side entrance of the Alden home. There was something about the great house which always filled him with a spirit of awe, and as he glanced over toward the long garden and orchard, there came into his heart a yearning such as he had never known before.

A servant opened the door, and Shawn held up his fish: "This is for Mrs. Alden; she sent for me." The servant took the fish and said, "You will find Mrs. Alden in the next room. Leave your dog outside." Shawn walked into the room. A woman with a sweet spiritual face sat in an invalid's rolling-chair.

Extending her thin white hand to Shawn, she bestowed upon him a smile of tenderness.

"I am glad you came, Shawn; take

that chair." Shawn was striving hard to remember his mother's parting injunction in regard to his shins.

"How old are you, Shawn?"

"Yes, mam, fourteen past in March."

"How long have you attended school?" The black eyelashes fell and the smile vanished. "I went to old 'fesser Barker up to Christmas twice."

"Why did you stop?"

"I put red pepper on his plug tobacker!"

"Did you go to any other school?"

"Yes, mam, I went to Miss Julie Bean six months."

"Did you quit that school?"

"Yes, mam, I put cuckle burrs in her bonnet."

"Weren't you sorry for it?"

"Yes, mam, but too late."

"You spend a good part of your time fishing, don't you?"

"Yes, mam, but I catches them."

"Isn't there anything you would rather do than fish?" A long silence followed, then the eyes suddenly brightened:

"Yes, mam."

"What is it?"

"I'd rather blow up hog bladders with a quill and bust 'em!"

"Shawn, have you ever thought of what you would like to do in life; what you would like to make of yourself as you grow to manhood?"

"Yes, mam, I'm goin' to be a doctor!"

"Indeed!"

"Yes, mam, indeed, I help doctor Hissong roll pills now, and he helps me in my books more than I learned at school."

"Shawn, I am going to ask you to begin with the term of school which opens soon. I will furnish you with books and tuition and will help you in every way."

"Will it help me to be a doctor?"

"It will help you in everything."

"Could I take Coaly with me?"

"I hardly think so."

Shawn gazed out of the window. The fleecy clouds were moving majestically above the river, along the old haunts he loved so well, but something in the kind blue eyes of the good woman sitting

there with folded hands, touched his innermost being, and he arose and turning squarely to face his benefactress, said: "I'll do it, Mrs. Alden."

"I thank you, Shawn."

"Yes, mam, but I did not ketch that fish I brought you for niggers to eat; they never told you I brought it."

Mrs. Alden rolled her chair near him, and placing her hand on his shoulder, said, "I appreciate your bringing it very much and will remember it."

As Shawn left the porch he turned to his little dog and said, "Oh, Lord, Coaly, we're goin' to school!"

CHAPTER II

DOCTOR HISSONG'S OFFICE

"So YOU are going to school, Shawn?"

"Yes, sir, I promised Mrs. Alden."

"That's the best promise you ever made, and to the best woman that God ever made."

Old Doctor Hissong sat in his big arm-chair, his spectacles tilted high on his nose as he looked at Shawn, who was leaning against the mantel-board. Old Brad, a negro who had been the doctor's servant for many years, sat in a hickory chair near the back door. Brad, aside from taking care of the doctor's office, gave some of his time to preaching, although it was a matter of some speculation as to whether his general habits warranted his ministerial fulfillments.

The old office was dingy with its medi-

cine bottles ranging along the shelves, and cobwebs and dust were in evidence all about them. Over in the corner was a pair of saddlebags, and a pair of jean leggins hung over a chair. In another corner was a tall book-case, the glass front broken out, and the books scattered about on the shelves. On the top of the book-case was an object which had long been a source of discomfort to Shawn and Brad—a grinning skull.

A doctor's office, in the old days, without a skull peering out from some hidden recess, was not considered complete—it contributed a kind of mysterious power to the man of medicine, and lent the impression that he had dipped deeply into the science of healing.

"Look at the slate, Shawn."

Shawn went out and took down the slate which hung by the office door. "Old man Stivers has been writing on the slate," said Shawn.

"Huh," said Brad, "I reckun he 'cided to cum an' git you to cum out an' see his wife, now dat he done rin up a bill wid

ole doc' Poleen, an' carn't git him to cum no mo'."

"Yes, Brad, it's strange—the man who loses sleep and health to save others has a hard time getting his pay. They look to the doctor mighty anxiously in the hour of trouble, and in the hour of suffering and death the doctor is a power of comfort."

"I see dat Bill Hugers scratchin' on de slate las' night," said Brad, "yo' hain' gwine to see him no mo', is yo', wid him owin' yo' a big bill?"

"Bill was one of my best friends when I made the race for the Legislature," said the doctor.

Brad scratched his head. He recalled the time when the doctor went to Frankfort as the representative of his county, and he remembered the scuffling he had to do during the doctor's absence—the yearning for many comforts which did not come. He recalled how the doctors picked up old Hissong's practice while he was away, and he had not forgotten the mean things they had said about him

when he returned to be nursed through a spell of "too much liquor."

"Yo' hain' never gwine run no mo', is yo', doc?"

"I can't say, Brad."

"Brad, didn't you hear somebody holler outside? Go out and see who it is." Brad opened the door.

"Is the doc in thar?"

"Yes, sah, cum in."

A tall, double-jointed farm-hand came blustering into the room, his face covered with a yarn comforter. He slowly unwound the rag and brought to view the side of his face, swollen to a frightful size.

"Done busted me wide open; kin you pull her, doc?"

The old doctor examined the tooth and said, "You've got a tooth like a hoss—fix the chair in the back room, Brad."

Brad brought a washpan and placed it beside the chair. Doctor Hissong opened a drawer and brought forth an instrument that resembled a cant-hook, one of those tools used in overturning logs. This tooth extractor had a handle about six

inches long, and a sort of steel hook on the end, and it would draw the tooth, if the jawbone did not break.

The suffering patient looked on with an expression on his face anything but pleasant.

"Looks like fixin' fer hog-killin', doc!"

"Well, I've known 'em to die under it," complacently said the old doctor as he shuffled about. "Give him a drink, Brad, and put him in the chair."

The patient stretched his long legs and rested his feet on a soap box.

"Fifty cents," said the doctor, as he approached with his instrument in his hand.

"Hafter have it beforehand, doc?"

"Yes, sir, that's my rule, for nine cases out of ten are so mad when I get through that they won't pay."

The money paid, the doctor carefully leaned over and fitted the hook over the tooth.

"Clinch him, Shawn!"

"O-r-r-r-r-r-wow! leggo! leggo!"

"Choke him, Brad!"

All four of them were on the floor, the farm-hand had smashed the wash-stand with his feet, and the water pitcher had gone with the ruins.

"Hold his feet, Shawn!"

Shawn jumped straddle-ways on the legs, and the old doctor made another pull.

"H-l-l-u-p! H-e-l-l-l-u-p!"

Rising with the strength of a desperate man, the farmer dragged all of them into the front room, but the old doctor did not lose his hold on the tooth. The last remaining glass in the bookcase was smashed and the lower sash of the front window caved in.

"Throw him, Brad!"

The tooth-key slipped off and the farmer let out a yell and tried to get out of the door.

"Nail him, Brad!"

"I don't want that tooth pulled, doc."

"Yes, you do, and you had just as well make up your mind to get back in that chair."

"By Gosh, you had better get a mule to kick it out!"

Brad and Shawn got him in the chair again and the doctor tried for another hold on the tooth. The back of the chair gave way with a crash.

"What's that?" said the doctor.

"I think it wuz my backbone come uncoupled," said the farmer. Brad grabbed him by the left leg and the struggling group went down in a heap, but the doctor came up with a gleam of triumph on his face, and holding aloft the terrible molar. Brad was panting, over by the door.

As the farmer turned to leave, he walked over to doctor Hissong and said, "Doc, if you air as good at doctorin' other diseases as you air at pullin' teeth, thar hain't much prospect of this community enlargin' her population."

Doctor Hissong glanced over toward the bookcase where Shawn was standing:

"Shawn, do you still want to be a doctor?"

"Not a tooth doctor," said Shawn.

CHAPTER III

IN SCHOOL

THE VARYING routine of school was a trying ordeal to Shawn. The spelling classes, the reading and the terrible arithmetic were as a nightmare to his mind which yearned for the freedom of the river and the woods. Afar off yonder was the stream, where the white gulls were soaring lazily above the channel. Through the windows he could see the tall sycamores and the white-graveled beach, where he and Coaly had spent so many happy hours. In his fancy he could see the cool crystal water oozing out from the spring which he had dug in the sand, and which he had lined with white boulders. Oh, to be down there, breathing the sweet air as he paddled his johnboat about the stream. He turned from

the enrapturing view—turned to the hateful books. The children around him were bending over their studies, happiness reflected from their faces, but gloom sat on the countenance of Shawn. Oh, for Coaly and freedom. All might have gone well had it not been for Coaly. To leave Coaly chained up at home through the long hours; to be separated from this companion, who yelped and begged so hard to be taken along, was becoming more unbearable each day, and there came a day when the pleading eyes brought his release, and together they marched into the school.

The story of "Mary's Little Lamb" was not associated with Coaly in Shawn's mind. Shawn put his books on his desk, and Coaly lay down, as peacefully accepting the new turn of affairs. Mrs. Wingate, the teacher, came over to Shawn's desk and quietly said: "Shawn, you must put your dog outside."

"Can't he stay if he keeps quiet?"

"No, we cannot have any dogs in the school-room."

Shawn gazed out upon the river and then down at Coaly.

"Come on, Coaly," he said as he started to the door. He passed out into the hallway, Coaly following. Just as Coaly started through the doorway, a boy gave him a vicious kick, which set him to howling. Shawn sprang into the room.

"Who kicked my dog?"

A little girl said, "Henry Freeman did it!"

Good resolutions and books were forgotten. Farewell to every ambition. Freeman tried to free himself from the enraged boy by climbing over the desks and calling to the teacher. The little girls were screaming and books and slates were scattered all about the room. Mrs. Wingate finally succeeded in getting her hands on Shawn and drew him away as he planted a parting blow on Freeman's nose. Shawn turned and facing the school, tragically exclaimed, "Where I go, Coaly goes. Where Coaly goes, I go!"

Henry Freeman followed Shawn to the

door. Shawn turned for battle again, but Freeman used a more malicious weapon by saying, "Who's your daddy? Who's your daddy?"

And then Shawn burst into tears.

The next morning a servant found on Mrs. Alden's porch a bundle containing the books and clothes which she had given Shawn. Pinned to the bundle was a note. In a scrawling hand was written, "I am much abliged. I tride to keep my promise. I am going away. I have kept the little testament.

Shawn."

CHAPTER IV

'Oh sing your praise of the bounding craft;
And the merry sloops afloat,
But for easy space, both fore and aft,
I'll bunk on the shanty-boat."

"JUMP OUT there, Shawn, and take a hitch around that cottonwood with that line—we're at the mouth of Salt River, an' no better fishin' on the Ohio."

John Burney was standing on the bow of his shanty-boat, with a long steering-oar in his hand.

"Jump, Shawn!" Shawn leaped to the shore and made the line fast to the tree.

"Haul out that aft gang-plank and stake her deep on the shore, there, steady, boy; she lays good and snug an' weather-shape—now git to your breakfast."

Inside of the boat a wood fire was burning in the stove. The fragrant aroma of coffee and fried fish came over the

morning air. Shawn took off one of the stove-lids, and over the burning coals toasted two or three slices of bread. The first primrose bloom of the glowing day came over the hills. The sunbeams rioting on the water lent an enchantment to the autumn scene.

Further back from the river, on the hills, were the claret hues of young oaks, and the scarlet of young maples. The morning rays sifting through the little windows of the boat revealed the arrangement of this river habitation. The two sleeping bunks were near the rear end of the boat; two chairs, the stove and a rough table were in the forward end. Near the door hung great coils of fishing line and tackle, and in the corner was a dip-net and gig.

As Shawn sat eating his breakfast, his thoughts wandered back to Skarrow and his mother in the little frame house on the river bank—to Mrs. Alden and doctor Hissong. He thought of the many kindnesses shown him by these friends, and, perhaps, wondered how his mother might

have missed him since the night he stole away with old John Burney, who made these shanty-boat trips every autumn. It had been the dream of his life to go down the river with Burney, for how often had he sat on the wharf-boat at Skarrow listening to Burney's tales of shanty-boat life on the lower Ohio. And here he was at last; he and Coaly!

"Shawn," said Burney, "I want to drop a fish-basket just below that willer. The channel is fine up here, and I might walk up town and see if I can get a ham-hock and some beef lights, while you look over the hooks on the jugs—there ain't no bait like a ham-hock for juggin', fer a channel-cat wants a meat that won't turn white in water."

In the early days of "jugging" on the Ohio, the outfit was a matter of considerable expense, as half-gallon stone jugs were used, but as time went on, some ingenious fisherman substituted blocks of wood, painted in white or conspicuous colors. A stout line, some six or seven feet long, is stapled to the block of wood,

and with a good, heavy hook at the end of the line, the outfit is complete. The jugs, some twenty or thirty, are put out at the head of the channel, and are followed by the fishermen in a skiff or john-boat. When a channel-cat takes the bait, the jug stands on end and begins to scud through the water. The fisherman pursues in his boat, and coming up, pushes his dip-net under the fish as he draws him to the surface. It is the most exciting and fascinating method known in river fishing.

Burney came from town with the bait. Shawn had the jugs ready and together they rowed to the head of the channel. Shawn placed the jugs in the water, and they floated away in a line, ranging some four or five feet apart, Burney and Shawn lingering behind with silent oars. Suddenly a jug stood upon end.

"Down atter him, Shawn!"

Shawn skilfully sent the boat toward the bobbing jug.

"He's heading for shoal water!" yelled Burney, "Slack your right oar—now

come ahead—hold her—ease her up to him—look at that jug!" The jug was racing for deep water again, and disappeared from the surface for at least half a minute.

"He's a whopper, Shawn! Yonder he goes, thirty yards away! Give me the oars and take the dip-net. Great Hirum, boy! yonder is another jug that's hung!"

Burney sent the boat with a bound after the whirling jug. Shawn stood in the bow of the boat with the dip-net ready to swing. They went to the lower side of the jug, and just as Shawn reached out for the line, Burney, unintentionally, brought the boat to a sudden stop, and Shawn, losing his balance, went over board, dip-net and all. Burney sprang to the stern of the boat, and as Shawn came up he held out an oar to him, and Shawn grasped the side of the boat. Burney took the dip-net and paddled the boat toward the jug, and catching the line, raised the fish to the top of the water. Shawn swam around to the other side as Burney raised the fish. "For land sake!

Look at him, boy! He's the biggest one I ever hooked—I can't get him in this boat—we'll have to tow him ashore!"

They fastened a stout line through the gills of the big fish and towed him to the shore and pulled him out on the beach—a blue channel-cat of forty pounds. "Go and get some dry clothes, while I go after the jugs," said Burney. Shawn went down to the boat and rummaged around for a change of clothes. He found a suit of Burney's heavy underclothing, and rolling them up to suit his size, got into them; then came Burney's old corduroy trousers, and Shawn buckled them up until they hung directly under his armpits. Building a fire in the stove and hanging his wet clothes before it, he left the boat and ran back to the spot where they had left the big fish. Burney returned with the jugs and threw out another smaller fish which he had taken off. "We'll eat this one, Shawn, and sell the other one and divide the money," and as Shawn stood before him in the loose-fitting clothes, old Burney laughed

and said, "Well, if he ain't growed to a man since that ketch!"

They hung the big fish to the side of the boat. "I'll show you how to skin a channel-cat," said Burney as he drew forth his steel pincers. "We'll peddle him out this evening." It was a joyous pair that climbed the hill leading to the little town, the big fish swinging on a pole between them. There were plenty of buyers, and as they returned to the boat, Burney said to Shawn, "You'll be a great fisherman some day, Shawn," and Shawn said, "I'm goin' to be a doctor."

"What kind of a doctor, Shawn? steam or hoss doctor?"

"Neither one. I'm goin' to be a reg'ler doctor, like Doctor Hissong."

"Shawn, this doctorin' business is a good deal like hoss tradin'; you've got to take your chance on a short hoss and blemishes, and some of the doctors look like they interfere powerfully with themselves—you know how a hoss *interferes*. I calkerlate that a good doctor is mighty

"You'll be a great fisherman, some day, Shawn"

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rare, and after all, it's a good deal more in his encouraging talk than his medicine. You never knowed old Doc' Felix Simpson—he was away before your time and practiced in the country four miles above Skarrow. Doc' Simpson would have his joke, and to hear him laugh would cure 'most any case of ailment. Lawse! how I used to love to hear him tell about old P'silly Orton and the time she played dead. Doc' Simpson said that aunt P'silly took a notion that she wanted her old man to raise her some money to take a trip down to the city, and as the money wa'nt raisable, P'silly took on and 'lowed that she was goin' to die, and she kept on havin' sinkin' spells and such, and bye and bye she lays on the bed and wauls up her eyes and breathes her last, to all appearances. Uncle Buck gits skeered and digs out for Doc' Simpson, and when Doc' Simpson gits thar, thar was the old neighbor wimmen tryin' to comfort uncle Buck and sayin', Ba'r your burden, Buck; the Lord has give and the Lord has tuck away.' Doc' Simpson goes up to

P'silly, who was layin' with folded hands, and feels her pulse, and says, 'Yes, she is dead, pore soul'; and they all bust out cryin' and the hounds begin to howl, and Doc' comes up to the bed and says, 'Bein' she is dead, I'll pour a little of this nitric acid in her yeer to make shore.' And as he took the stopper out of the bottle, P'silly opens one eye an' says, 'Doc' Simpson, if you pour that in my yeer, you'll never straddle that hoss of yourn again.'

"There's another sort of doctor, Shawn, the magic-healers, the sort as cures by the layin' on of hands and rubbin'. Pelican Smith was one of this sort. He practiced up on the Kentucky river and made a sort of circuit down in our country. Sometimes thar would come a report of somebody gittin' well, but when anybody died, Pelican always said, 'The Lord loved him best.' You never knowed Pelican. He was all sorts of a character —got his nickname from his nose—they weren't no other one like it, and him and that nose made history in the river

country. His first marriage was to Addie Stringer, up at Ball's Landing, and it was all right as fer as it went. They started on their honeymoon from Ball's Landing on the steamer Little Tiger. They was goin' down to Wide Awake, some thirty miles. The boat caught fire, Pelican swum out on a crackerbox, and when they found the body of his wife next day, Pelican thumped the side of his nose with his thumb and said, 'Hit's a dam pity she couldn't swim'.

"It wasn't long before he got into business by starting a 'blind tiger', and he worked up several war dances in the community, but one night thar was started a mild argument as to whether the Methodists or the Baptists was the chosen of the Lord. The argument was in Pelican's place, and he had to close up the joint, for nearly all of his best customers passed out with the close of the argument. Pelican told me afterward that over three hundred shots was fired, and said to me, 'I reckon the only reason I was saved was that I didn't belong to

either denomination, as I am a Campbellite.'

"Pelican moved down on the Ohio after this, and it was there I met him. There is always considerable interest, Shawn, in a stranger when he moves into a community, especially if there is some mystery about him. Pelican didn't have much to say—he had no desire to mention his past. He was wise. It was rumored that he had left a good farm at Ball's Landing and had moved down on the Ohio for asthma trouble that bothered him. About the only disease he ever had was the whiskey habit, but he did not dispute any of the statements made by an interested community. His stock went up with the talk about the farm. He was invited to take supper with Bill Bristow. Bill owned twenty acres of hill land, with a small house and a mortgage on it. Old Bill's daughter, Lettie, set next to Pelican at the table, and old Bill looked on with satisfaction at the headway they was making. Old Bristow was thinking of the farm up at Ball's

Landing; Pelican was thinking of the one he was on. After a time, Pelican and Lettie was married. Bristow give a dance and ice cream supper and charged fifty cents admission. There was dancing, singing and a cuttin' scrape and the couple felt that the occasion had been one of success. Pelican certainly married into old Bristow's family for he never made any move toward looking for another home, and it wasn't long before Bristow begin to screw up his face.

"Time passed and then come the twins, a boy and a girl, and Pelican was proud of the boy, for he had the Pelican nose, but old Bristow rose up in his wrath and said that they would have to go, and so Pelican and his wife come down into my neighborhood to live in a shanty-boat on the river, but they didn't git along, and fit and cussed from mornin' till night. Bristow come down to patch up matters. Pelican knocked him off the boat with an oar, and as he floundered out to the shore and wrung the water out of his whiskers he said, 'Fix yer own

troubles—far'well.' Two weeks after the fight Mrs. Pelican Smith went back to live with her father and Pelican went into the fishin' and 'blind tiger' business. I had two new nets and a set of trot lines, and we bunched into a sort of partnership. I couldn't git him to say anything about his family or whether he wanted to see them again. But one night we set together on the shore. We had run out of bait and was tryin' to make plans to git some, as the lines was dry upon the shore and the fish would be runnin' with the gentle rise comin' in the river. We set on an old sycamore log together. The moon had just swung over the hill and I could see the white rim of it above the edge of Pelican's nose.

"'Pelican,' I said, 'why don't you go back to your wife and children and try to live happy with them?' He made no answer and I pressed on him, 'Pelican, them two little twins air dependent on you, and if you had a little home to yourself, where the vines could run over your doorway and the birds sing in your

own trees, with your wife and children beside you, your life would be happy—think of them, Pelican, your wife and children.' "

"Pelican rose up, his face turned to the river. Ah, I had him at last thinking of his dear ones.

"'What are you thinkin' of, Pelican?'

"'I was thinkin' wher'n the hell we'd git that bait' said he."

CHAPTER V

"DID YOU ever eat a mussel, Shawn?"

"No, sir, I didn't think they were good to eat."

"Well, lots of things are made good to eat by the way you cook 'em. I want you to bale out the boat and we'll go up to the head of the bar and drop the grab-hooks along in shoal water and after we get a good dozen, small broilin' size, I'm goin' to show you how to cook 'em. A mussell, my boy, is a sort of lefthanded cousin to an oyster, only he lacks the salt water and a good many of the finer points; a right smart like a good many men, and I want to tell you another thing —one of the finest pearls that sold in a jewelry store in Cincinnati for fifteen hundred dollars, was taken from a mussel that come out of the Ohio river."

"Luke Walters found it at Craig's bar," said Shawn.

"The same," said Burney.

"We might boil a bushel or two down and run a chance of finding somethin'; there's no tellin'. Git one of them lemons out of the box and the wire broiler and a stew-pan."

Shawn came around with the boat, Burney came out with the drag-hooks. Shawn sat at the oars and they started up the stream. The white pebbles on the shore gleamed in the rosy sunlight. A kingfisher perched on a rock by the stream, tilted his head to the side in a quizzical way and watched the boat approach. The leaves from the tall sycamores and cottonwoods came tumbling down to the edge of the water as if seeking to embark upon a journey southward. A little creek came pouring its crystal waters into the great river. Just above the mouth of the creek, some boy had built a miniature mill-race, and the water coursing over the little wheel murmured tenderly and soothingly upon the ear.

"Shawn, there's many a boy in the city would like to have a plaything like that. Did you notice how nice and keerful-like he has made that dam and the shoot? I'll tell you, a country boy knows how to look out for his fun. You'll see the day when the old water-mill will be a thing of the past; steam will run 'em out, as it has run out the flat-boat. In the old days I used to make the flat-boat trip to New Orleans and walk all the way back and help *cordelle* the boat, they brought back their flat-boats in them days—think of doing that now. But I hate to see the water-mills go. There's one out on Eagle that has been run by five generations, and they can't make flour by steam as good as Amos Kirby's flour. Amos' father had the process down, it seems, better than any of them. The old man was knowed all over that country, not only for his good flour, but for his good deeds and his kindness to the poor, and that's a mighty good name to leave behind. He always had a houseful of company, and always got drunk fust, so

that the rest of his company would feel at home. I et dinner thar once, and they wound up with some cake they called egg-kisses. You didn't have to chaw 'em—you just throwed 'em up in the roof of your mouth and let 'em melt—pull over thar to the head of the bar."

Shawn took off his shoes, and barefooted, with trousers rolled to his knees, began the hunt for mussels around the bar, as Burney threw out the drag-hooks in deeper water. Burney was drifting slowly down the stream and Shawn could see him bringing up the hooks and putting the mussels inside the boat. Shawn found them plentiful around the edge of the bar, and when Burney came back they had the boat well filled.

"Now, Shawn, we're goin' over to the shore and I am goin' to give you a feast." Burney made a wood fire, and after taking the mussels from the shell, put them in the stew-pan and let them boil for a short time, then putting them on the broiler, he held them over the live wood coals. "Squeeze a little of that lemon

juice over them, Shawn, and season 'em up—now try one." Shawn took one of them and nibbled it gingerly around the edges.

"What do you think of 'em?"

"Did you ever drink out of a cow-track, Mr. Burney?"

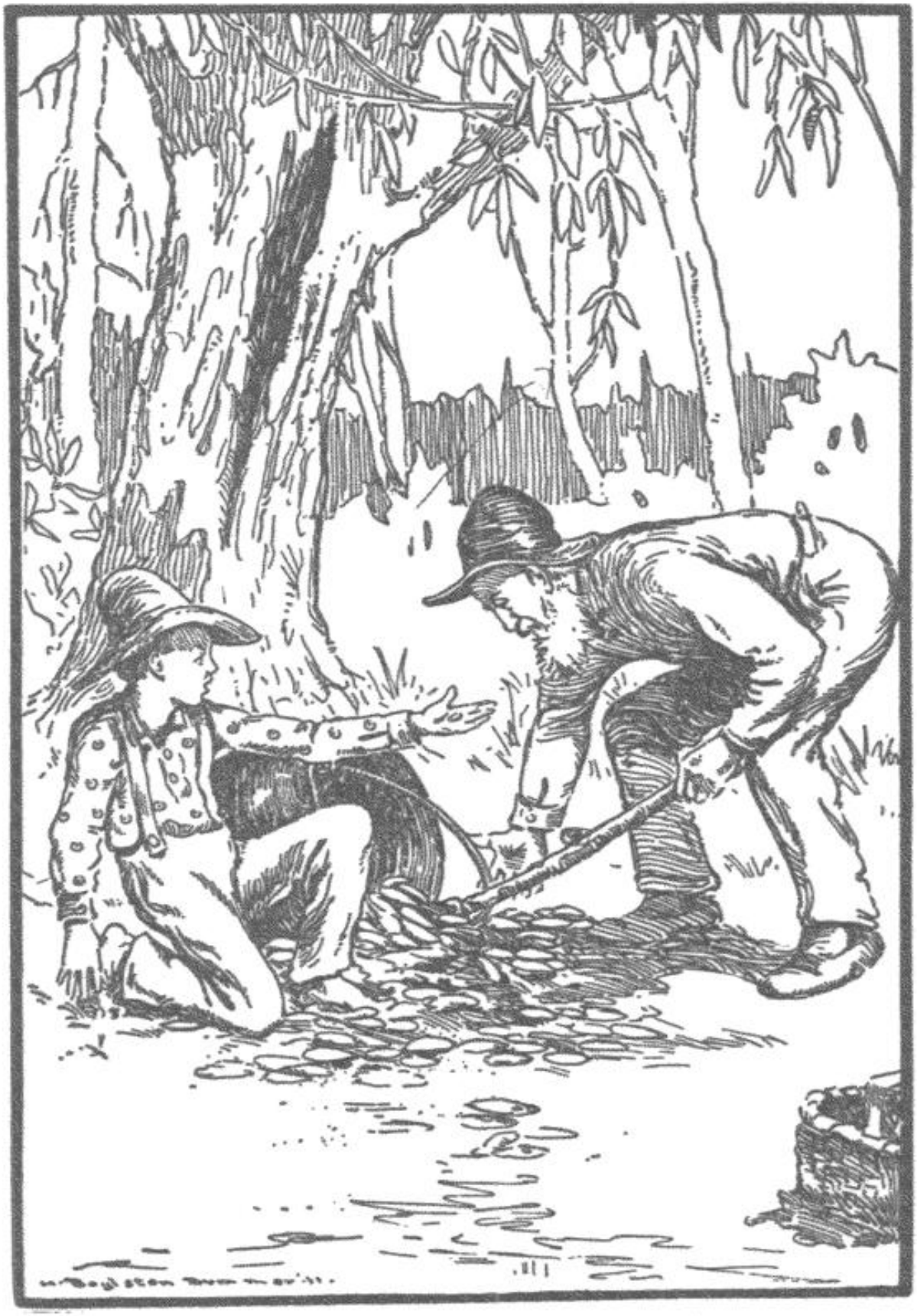
"No. Why?"

"Well, you never missed much," said Shawn.

They rowed down to the shanty-boat and Burney built a big fire on the shore. He got out his big kettle and said, "We're goin' to boil these out and look for a pearl."

Under the roaring fire the kettle began to sing. Shawn watched Burney as he filled the big pot with mussels. "You've got to boil them until the meat comes away from the shell and is boiled all to smithereens, before you've a chance to git a pearl."

It was late afternoon before the kettle was taken off. Burney began to drain off the water and take out the shells. All of the substance in the bottom of the



Burney began to take out the shells.

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kettle was subjected to a careful inspection as he drew it forth.

Suddenly Burney held his hand up toward the sun and exclaimed, "Come here, quick, Shawn, I've found one—I don't know how good, but it's a pearl!" He rubbed it between his hands and wiped it off carefully on his sleeve. "That tiny pink spot on the side of it is a blemish that will never come out, but I think it is a pearl of some value. I'm goin' to give it to you; maybe you can sell it or give it to some girl some day—leastwise, Shawn, we'll put in the spare time boilin' down a few more of 'em."

Shawn took the pearl, his cheeks were aglow under the stress of the find. "Oh, Mr. Burney, I'll keep it always for a luck stone."

CHAPTER VI

SHAWN WAS clearing away the supper dishes. Burney tilted his hickory chair against the wall and puffed at his short pipe. Coaly was asleep in the corner. "Shawn, when you git through I want you to read me some more out of your Testament—I'm gittin' to like it."

Shawn carefully wiped his hands before taking up the little book. Seating himself by the table, and drawing the lamp nearer, he opened the book at random. The chapter was Revelation, XIII.

Shawn began reading in a halting and uncertain voice: "And I stood upon the sands of the sea and saw a beast rise out of the sea having seven heads and ten horns."

"Hold on there, Shawn," said Burney, "Is that in the Bible?"

"Yes, sir, you can see for yourself."

"I can't read to no account," said Burney, "but air you certain that's in the Bible?"

"Yes, sir."

Burney scratched his head and crossed his legs. "Well, all I've got to say is, that there must a been a leak some'ers around a distillery when that feller got to writin'. I don't read much, but I read in the Bible once about an old feller by the name of Job, who comes up to a feller by the name of Amasa, and Job pertendin' to be his friend, took him by the whiskers, like he was going to kiss him, and Job said, 'How's your health, brother Amasa?' and before Amasa could answer, Job cut him in the fifth rib with a corn-knife or sunthin'. Maybe times have changed since them days, but it still pays to watch a man who comes up to you with his hand behind him, and there ain't no man goin' to take me by the whiskers when he says *howdy*—I've larn't that much from the Bible—but you stick to that Book, Shawn, even if some of the stories do

make you set up and take notice, it's a good Book to live by and a better one to die by. Stick to it, Shawn—I'm goin' to bed."

Shawn went out and sat on the bow of the boat. The night was beautiful. Along the shore the willows were rustling as the south wind kissed their foliage. The moon was coming over the hill, a full, round, voluptuous moon. The tiny reflections of the stars quivered in the depths of the stream. From the head of the bend came the long and deepened breathing of a coal boat. A bell clangs in the engine-room, the great wheel stops as welcoming rest, the bell clangs again and the boat swings on, standing for the channel. Afar up the river, Shawn saw a lurid light against the sky. The heightened colors came and went in flashes and spurts. That light could not come from the headlight of a steamer. Shawn went quietly to the door and called Burney. Burney came to the door of the boat, rubbing his eyes. "Must be a house burning, from the looks of it." They

stood on the shanty-boat until the light began to diminish and then went to bed. Burney was unable to sleep. Presently he got up and turned up the wick of the lamp. Coaly went over and nestled by his feet. Suddenly Burney heard the sound of approaching footsteps. Coaly began to growl and moved nearer the door. Shawn was peering out of his bunk. Burney opened the door as two men came up the gang-plank. They were breathing hard and looked as though they had been running. One of them was untying the chain of the john-boat, and said, "We want your boat to get across the river; we're in a hurry."

"Let go of that chain," said Burney, as he raised a musket to his shoulder. "You can't have that boat, and I want you to get off of this boat at once."

The men drew back, they were desperate looking characters, but they heard the determined tone of Burney's voice and they stepped ashore and made off down the beach. Burney turned to Shawn and said, "Somethin' is wrong;

them fellers have done somethin'. What's that?" They could hear the deep baying of a hound. "My God, they's bloodhounds!"

There is something strangely weird in the sound of a bloodhound's voice coming across the night—something that seems to tell of death. The trail was fresh and the dogs were coming under full yelp.

"Put on your shoes and come out front, Shawn," said Burney. Eight or ten men came down through the willows, one man in front and holding the hounds by a leash. Each man was armed with a shotgun. The dogs came to the gangplank, and stopped at the water, and lapped it with their long, yellow tongues.

"Whose boat is this, and who's here?" asked one of the men. Old John answered in a clear and unshaken voice, "I am John Burney, and this is my boat." One of the men came forward and extending his hand, said, "I know John Burney; there's nothing wrong with him, but Burney, can you throw any light on these tracks leading

here?" Burney told them of the two men, of their wanting his boat to cross the river. "They went down the shore," said Burney, "about twenty minutes ago; your dogs oughtn't to have much trouble in locating the track, but tell me what's wrong?" The man holding the dogs answered, "Casper Daniel's country store was robbed and burned just after he had gone to bed, and Daniels was either murdered or lost in the fire."

Shawn shuddered and crept back into the boat. The men put the dogs on the trail. Shawn heard them baying as they went down through the deep cottonwood grove. "No sleep for me to-night," said Burney. The voices of the hounds came in faint baying. Burney restlessly paced the shore until the first streaks of dawn. About five o'clock he heard the men coming back. They came down to the boat. Handcuffed together were the two criminals, their haggard faces bore the look of despair. They were sullen and silent, and as Shawn stood gazing at them, he could not repress a feeling of

pity, although their hands were stained with human blood. They were taken up the road to the little town and placed in the jail. Shawn and Burney followed the men. Around the jail was a crowd of excited men and loud voices were heard on every side. Men were coming out of the saloon on the corner just beyond the jail. They stood around in groups and angry mutterings were heard. Suddenly there seemed to be a concerted move in front of the jail. A young lawyer sprang upon a box and pleaded with the crowd to let the law take its course.

"Law!" exclaimed a black-whiskered man, "we've never had any law that money couldn't buy!"

"Hang 'em! Hang 'em!" yelled the crowd. A rush was made for the jail. The jailor was making a feeble pretense of protecting his prisoners. A heavy sledge crashed against the door, the jailor was knocked down and the keys taken from him.

"There they are! Bring 'em out!"

The poor wretches were dragged out, moaning piteously and begging for their lives. Shawn turned away, sick at heart, but something seemed to hold him to the spot.

"Don't kill us, men, for God's sake don't kill us!" pleaded one of the criminals but his voice was drowned in the uproar of the maddened crowd.

"That lower limb will do, boys, everybody pull!"

A cloud afar off in the sky seemed to float across the sun. They cut the two rigid bodies down at noon. Shawn and Burney returned to the boat. A raincrow was calling softly from a willow tree, and the ripples murmured sorrowfully on the shore. Shawn touched Burney on the arm as they stood by the boat: "Mr. Burney, there's a Memphis packet due up here to-night. I don't like to leave you, but I'm goin' home—I've just got to go."

CHAPTER VII

It was after midnight when the boat upon which Shawn took passage reached Skarrow. As they climbed the hill, Coaly instinctively turned toward Shawn's home, but Shawn had determined to first visit old Brad and make inquiry as to the kind of welcome he might expect from his mother. He knocked gently on the door of old Brad's cabin.

"Who dar?" called Brad.

"It's Shawn, uncle Brad; I've come home."

"Great Lawd!" exclaimed the old darkey, "Wait er minnit tell I strack a light—come in hyar, boy." Shawn went in as Brad threw a chunk of wood on the fire. "Set down thar, boy, and lemme put dis coffee-pot on de coals an' brile yo' a piece uv bacon. Lawse, chile!

some say yo' done drown, an' some say yo' rin away wid race-hoss men, en yo' mammy jes'' stracted an' axin' me ef I heerd frum yo' ev'ry day. Is yo' seen yo' mammy yet?"

"No," said Shawn, "I felt like—"

"Out wid it," said old Brad, "Dat's right, an' say dat yo' felt like yo' wuz ershamed uv yo'self en had done wrong, but yo' go down thar jes' as soon ez yo' kin an' see yo' mammy. Yo' hain' no wicked boy, Shawn, but des kinder ramshackel an' loose-jinted in yo' constitushun, but yo' hain' wicked. I know what wickedness is, but even de wicked hez got de chance to tu'n frum de errer uv dey ways befo' hit is too late. De wickedes' man I ever knowed, honey, wuz Captain Monbridge, down in Louisiana. He wuz de wickedes' an' han'sumest man en de richest man in dat secshun, en when he got drunk an' got on his big black hoss, he would shoot de fust nigger whut crossed his path, en when he wuz drunk, de niggers wuz mi'ty skase eround. He fell off'n his

hoss one night an' wuz kilt, en de folks all say dat he went straight ter hell, but de naix spring after he wuz daid, a strange flower cum peepin' outer his grave, en hit wuz de mos' curios flower dat wuz ever seen 'roun' dar—a kine uv red dat nobody ever see befo', en hit kep' a-comin' an' a-comin', en purty soon de people all cum to see dat flower on Captain Monbridge's grave. Byme bye de flower grow to a big stalk, en down in de center uv de stalk wuz a leaf, en when dey tuck out dat leaf, dar wuz writ on hit dese words:

'Betwix de stirrup an' de groun'
He mercy axed an' mercy foun.'

"Yassir, he wuz saved." Uncle Brad took the coffee-pot from the glowing coals and poured a steaming cup of coffee for Shawn. "Shawn, I'm gwine tuh preach at de chutch Sunday mawnin' an' I want yo' to heah me. I'm gwine preach on de Prodegale Son, an' hit's gwine tuh be a sarmon."

"I'll be there," said Shawn.

Shawn and Coaly went down the hill. Coaly gave a yelp of delight and stood barking before the door. Shawn's mother sprang from bed, opened the door and clasped her son to her breast. "Oh, Shawn, bless God, you've come!" And Shawn's home had never looked so inviting before.

"Mammy, I'll never leave you again."

He went to sleep in his little room overlooking the river, and he heard again the night wind crooning through the trees and the night owl's tones echoing through the distant wood. His heart was warm again in the glow of sweet memories. He was in his old home.

The next day found Shawn enjoying the surprising event of being cordially welcomed by the inhabitants of the town. The worst sort of straggler is often astonished at the kindly interest accorded him upon returning to his old home. Old Doctor Hissong greeted him by saying, "Hello, been seeing the world, have you?" When he went up to the Alden

home, he found the same good friend there; the same sweet smile and the kind words, and Mrs. Alden still anxious to help him and guide him to better pathways, urging upon him the great need of an education, and Shawn promised to return to school.

"Don't fergit about dat sarmon," said old Brad, "I'm gwine tuh look fer yo' at de chutch termorrer."

CHAPTER VIII

DE PRODEGALE SON

SHAWN FOUND a seat on one of the benches reserved for the white people. Uncle Brad was in the pulpit. He arose, in all of the dignity of the occasion. The little church was well filled with colored people. After a song and prayer, uncle Brad came forward and began reading, to all appearances, from the last half of the fifteenth chapter of Luke. Closing the Bible, he began, "I have read fo' yo' heahin' de story uv de Prodegale Son. Dis hyar boy, han'sum an' smart, bergin to git tired uv de fawm—he heer'd de boys frum de city tellin' erbout de great doin's down dar, en de mo' he look eroun' de mo' de ole place los' hit's chawm, en fine'ly he goes to hi' daddy en says, says he, 'Pap, I dun git to de age

when I waun' see sum uv de wurl, en' ef yo' gwine do ennything fo' me, do hit now.' Yessir, he lit a seegar en blow de smoke thru hi' nose en say, 'Do hit now!'

"De boy dun fergit how his daddy fotch him up an' feed him an' clothe him, but dat doan' count wid chillun. Dey kine er reason hit dis way: 'Yo' 'sponsibul fo' my bein' heah, en yo' bleeged to teck keer uv me'. De ole man kiner swole up, but he drawed his check on de bank—de Bible doan' say how much, but hit mus' ter been a pile, fer de Bible doan' fool wid little things. De boy wen' 'roun' to tell 'em all good-bye, an' his mammy jes' fell on his neck an' wep'. He wuz de black sheep, an' hit seem dat de mammies allus love dese black sheep de best. When he cum to tell his brother good-bye, de brother kiner put hi' han' to hi' mouf en say, 'Doan' yo' write back to me when yo' git busted,' en de Prodegale Son he say, 'Pooh, pooh, yo' clod-hopper.'

"Dar wuz de ole folks sottin' on de poach as he wen' down de road. Dey could see him ergin crowin' in de craddle;

"De Prodegale Son."

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dey could see him larnin' how to teck his fust step, en back in de years, dey could heah de fust word he ever said—de fust one mos' uv us says, *mammy*.

"He rech de city, en dere wuz frens waitin' him by de score, en dey say, 'Whut a fine genermun! Whut a spote! All wool en a yahd wide!' Yassir! An he smile an' swole up an' say, 'Le's have sunthin!' Dey go inter de bar, en de barkeeper smile en say, 'Whut's yourn, gents?' Some say ole fashun toddy, some say gin, en' so on. De young man res' hi' foot on de railin' uv de bar, en look at hi'sel' in de glass, en he see de dimun rings on his fingers jes' glis'nin', an' when de licker gits to workin' inside him, he look in de glass ergin, en 'lows to hi'sel', 'I reckon I'se jes' about de wahmest thing in dis hyar town,'—an' he wuz! He foots all de bills. Lawse! how he meck frens. He tell er story, en dey all jes' laff fit ter bust, an' say, 'Hain' he great!' De ladies uv de town, some uv 'em, dey roll dey black eyes at him an' say, 'Hain' he sweet!' He done fergot

de little girl wid de blue eyes an' de gold ha'r blowin' in de win'. De gamblers tuck a crack at him, too—dey kin tell a sucker three miles off. Dey showed him how to handle de kyards an' roll de bones, en he rar'd back in a sof' cheer wid a black seegar in hi' mouf an' see his money slip erway. Lawse! yo' oreter see his room whar he stay. He slep' in a feather-tick nine foot deep, an' show-nuff goose feathers, mine yo'; a red lam' wool blanket, en lookin'-glasses all over de wall, so ez he could see hi'sel' whichever way he tu'n. Nobody to scole him erbout gittin' up in de mawnin' en he had his breakfas' fotch up on a silver waiter by a shiny nigger, but somehow, de vittels got so dey didn't tase ez good ez dey did down on de ole fawm. City grub looks mi'ty temp'in at fust, but after while when yo' git down ter kinder pickin' ovah hit, yo'll find dat hit's lackin' in de juice er sunthin', en yo' long to lay yo' gums on de things jes' whar dey grow.

"Byme-bye—hit allus comes, he see

dat he's gittin' low in cash, en 'fore long yo' see him slippin' 'roun' to de pawn shop. De ole pawn-shop man he scowl at him an' fix ter bleed him good en strong. His dimun shirt-stud wen' fust, en one by one de rings on hi' fingers, tell dey look ez bare ez a bean-pole in de wintah time.

"He move his bo'din' house, en purty soon he move ergin, tell he fine'ly cum ter a house whar dey didn't have much mo' den liver hash. Oh, Lord! Liver hash! Whar wuz his frens? Ef enny uv yo' hez ever been dar, good an' busted, yo' know whar dey wuz. Dey tu'n erway frum him lack he wuz a polecat.

"One mawnin' when ever'thing wuz gone, he started frum de city. Whut a change! One shurt wuz all he had, en dat hadn' seen de wash fer two weeks. He wuz seedy en his heart wuz sore; he wuz down an' out, en clean out, en didn't even have chawin' terbacker. He look lack a turkey buzzard ez had lost his wing-feathers. He wundered on; he stop by de bridge whar de water wuz tricklin'

down below—he see de picture uv hi'sel' in de water, en' hit meck de cole chills run up hi' back. 'Shamed er himsel'? He dun got so ershamed dat he look lack he cum out'n a hole in de groun'. Bymebye he cum to a fawm house, en ast fer a job. Yo' know he mus' er been awful hongry to think erbout wuk, but he dun got so hongry dat he et yarbs en sapplin' bark er ennything. De fawmer look at him en say, 'I cudden' hev yo' erbout de house; de wimmen wouldn' stan' fer hit, but I got some hawgs up de holler yo' kin feed, but yo'll hev to stay erway frum hyar, ez I doan' wan' my chillun skeered.'

"He wen' up de holler. De win' sigh en groan thru de poppaw bushes, en he wuz sad, en de dark drap down en hit wuz so lonesome; nobody but de katydids en de screech-owl en dem hawgs. Doan' yo' feel sorry fer him, frens? I do—I feel sorry fer ennybody in dat sort er fix, but feelin' sorry hain' gwine ter holp much when yo' git yo'se'f tied up in sech a box. He fed dem hawgs, he et what dem hawgs et, he slep' close to dem hawgs, he wuz

suttenly *on de hawg*, but dey wuz better company en dem gamblers en some dem wimmen in de city—yes, dey wuz.

"Byme-bye, one night, ez he see de moon comin' over de hill, en de stars winkin en blinkin' in de sky, he got ter thinkin' uv de ole home, uv de chitlins en de spare ribs, de fat biskits en de sweet milk, de persarves en de yaller butter—he jes' cudden' stand hit. He walk down to de hawg-pen en throw over some cawn en say, 'Far'well, my frens, I'se done de bes' I kin fer yo', but I'm gwine home!'

"He struck out, fust in a kine er fox-trot, but de mo' he thought er home, de faster he got. Erlong time hit seem, over dat lonesome road. De little chillun cum out ter look at him, but fly back inter de house, he look so awdashus, en ef he meet a hawg in de road, he cudden' look him in de face. He could smell de ham and hominy fryin' in de skillet at de houses whar he pass, en' hit meck hi' mouf water lack a hoss wid de slobbers.

"Fine'ly he see erway down yondah, de ole place frum de top uv de hill—de

ole house sottin' back in de cool shade. He tuck a hitch on his rotten britches an' hit de grit.

"Ez he cum up to de yahd gate, his dawg bark at him, an' his daddy cum down de yahd wid his big gold-headed cane, en he never knowed hi' son whatsomever, tell de boy kiner drag up en say, 'Pap, fo' Gawd sake, gimme sunthin' ter eat!'

"Ole Miss, his mammy, sot by de big winder, lookin' kinder sad-like, doin' fancy wuk wid her needle, en singin' sorter sof' 'In De Sweet Bye en' Bye,' en' presen'ly she hear her boy's voice—a mammy kin hear de voice uv her boy a long way—en' she jump up en' thode her sewin' erway en' cried out ez de tears stream down her cheek, 'Praise Gawd, my boy done cum back!'

"De ole genermun knowed de black sheep dun cum home, en he holler out en say, 'Bring de bes' robe en put hit on him, but wash him in de pon' fust!' Den he say, 'Bring de fattes' calf, de one fed on de bran' mash!' Dey wuz merry,

en his mammy wep' on his neck, arfter hit wuz washed, en when he sot down to de table, en she give him de veal cutlets en de light rolls, he des hook his laig 'roun' a cheer 'roun' an' lay to, en he des kin er roll frum side ter side, layin' in de grub, en licken' his fingers, en passin' up hi' plate—en dey think he's thru, en gwine set back, but he jes' teck a fresh holt en square hi'se'f erway en des roam eroun' in glory, en he smile, en de grease jes' a-shinin' on hi' chin.

"But de brother wuz mad. He 'low dat he stay at home, en ack a puffeck genermun, en dis hyar skalawag jes' play de devil ginerally, en den cum back lack er skunk en dey tu'n de ole house upside down fer him. He chaw de rag monstrous fer a spell, but de ole man fine'ly tell him ef he doan' lack hit, he better go out en try de wurl hi'se'f, en de brother look at de Prodegale, en kiner shiver en simmer down.

"Dat night when de Prodegale got inter de feather-bed, whar he done hid a ham-bone under de piller, en hi' mammy

tucked him in en kiss him good night, he strotch hi'se'f en say, 'When I goes erway frum heah ergin, I goes erway daid!' En he drap to sleep—de sweetes' sleep fo' many er long time, en dream uv de little gal wid de blue eyes, who wuz still er waitin' fer him.

"Young men, all I wan' ter say tuh yo' by de way uv windin' up is dis—Ef yo' got a good home, er enny sort uv home, stay dar!"

And Shawn, sitting by the window, clasped his little Testament and fervently said, "Amen!"

CHAPTER IX

SHAWN HAD been at home for several days. One night when the waves were rolling high on the stream, he sat in the office of the hotel, which stood on the bank of the river. A cheerful log fire glowed in the old fireplace. Pence Oiler, the ferryman, sat in the corner puffing at a cob pipe. Suddenly, came the loud cry of "Hello!" When the door was opened, a young man and woman came into the office. They had hurriedly gotten out of a buggy and both seemed very much agitated, and the young man quickly informed them that they were eloping from a neighboring county and were being hotly pursued by an angry father and brother. Shawn's gaze was fixed on the young woman, for never before had he seen such a beautiful face,

such lustrous, dark eyes, lit up by the flame of love, seemed to shed a glow upon the dingy walls of the old room.

"Where can I find the ferryman?" asked the young man.

"I am the ferryman," said old Pence, "but you can't cross the river to-night; the wind is too high."

"But I must cross," said the young man, as a wild glance shot from his eye. "I'll give you ten dollars to set us over!"

"I'm feer'd to resk it," said Pence, but the beautiful girl went up to him, and with a smile which seemed to melt into the very soul, softly said, "I am not afraid. Won't you take us?"

Old Pence hesitated for a moment and then turned and asked, "Who will go with me?"

"Let me go, Mr. Oiler," said Shawn, never thinking of danger connected with the river.

"Can you hold the rudder?" asked old Pence as he turned to Shawn.

"I'll hold it, Mr. Oiler," said Shawn. Down to the shore they went, the sweet

"I'll give you ten dollars to set us over."

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woman calm and undisturbed, while the young man at her side was trembling and uneasy. The wind was blowing a gale, and the waves were beating angrily upon the shore.

After several attempts, Shawn and Oiler succeeded in launching the boat and getting up sail. The spray and water came drenching the young woman, but she quietly took her seat.

"Hold her dead on Ogman's hill!" yelled Oiler to Shawn. The wind bellowed into the stout sail and they shot into the foam, Shawn leaning back with a firm grasp on the tiller, and his eye fixed on Oiler.

"Keep her quartered, with stern to the wind, and don't give her a chance to sheer!" shouted Oiler.

"Is there much danger?" asked the bridegroom, as his teeth chattered. Oiler did not answer him but yelled to Shawn, "Hold her steady and fast!"

"I'm trying to," said the groom, clutching his fair companion.

"I wasn't talking to you," said Oiler.

They were nearing the Indiana shore. Oiler shouted to Shawn, "Turn her down a few points, then lift her out on the shore!" and beautifully did they mount high on the pebbled beach. Oiler turned to Shawn and said, "We'll not go back to-night." They went to the hotel. The proprietor found the county clerk and a minister, and there in the little hotel parlor, Shawn saw their passengers take the marriage vows.

"Wasn't he scared comin' over?" said Shawn to Oiler as they went to bed.

"Yes," said Oiler, "but wimmen always has the best grit when it comes to a showdown, and when a woman makes up her mind to do a thing, 'spesh'ly to git married, thar ain't no river or anything else can stop her. I've seed a good many couples cross this stream—some of 'em, I reckon, wish they had never made the trip. I fetched old Joe Davis over here with his third wife. He run away with old Dodger Spillman's girl. Old Dodger killed a plug hoss tryin' to beat them to the river. We was about forty yards

from shore when old Dodger run down and hollered for me to come back, but his girl stood up in the skiff and hollered to him, 'Go back, pap and cool off—hit's my last chance!'

"I started across with a young couple once, but the girl's daddy beat 'em to the river, and drawed down on the young man with a hoss-pistol. The young man didn't flinch, but folded his arms and looked that old galoot in the eye as cool as ever I see. The father ordered his girl to come back with him, but she ketched holt of her lover's arm and said, 'If you are goin' to shoot, I bid for the fust fire—I'm goin' to have this man!' Her old daddy swelled up and bust out cryin' and begged them to go back home and git married, but they wouldn't do it, and he went across with us, and after he got four or five drinks, he like to bought out the town for them. Don't never run off to git married, Shawn. As for myself, they ain't no sort of weddin' to my likin'. I never got sot on but one girl, but I got sot on her for all time to

come, and dad-scat her, she run away with another feller just about a week before we was to be hitched. Wimmen is curious. Some say as how we couldn't git along without 'em, and it looks like it's mighty hard for some to git along with 'em, an' seems as after some people gits the ones they's after, that somethin' comes along to take away their happiness before it has begun. There was Ann Coffee. Her and Eli Travis must a courted nigh onto ten year. It was away back yonder in '52, but I can see 'em now settin' out thar on the bank, holdin' hands. They went down to Madison and was married at last. They took the Redstone for Cincinnati. The boat was full of people; it was in the spring, and a happy crowd was aboard, with music and dancin', and people come out all along the shore to see the boat pass. Just four miles below here, on the Kentucky side, the Redstone landed to take a young preacher aboard. His name was Perry Scott, and he come up the swingin'-stage wavin' his han'kerchief to his father and mother on the shore. Sud-

denly, there comes a mighty roar on the air. The steamer was hid from view as the explosion shook the earth and splashed water everywhere. The b'ilers of the Redstone had bust, and all around you could hear the groans of the dyin'. The young preacher was never heard of again, and nothin' but his white han'kerchief, hangin' in a tree, was ever found. There was over seventeen people killed outright. Eli Travis went down to death, and strange to say, Ann, his wife, who was standin' by his side, was saved. She was blowed high up in the air, but come down close to shore. Her hair turned white after that, Shawn, and she used to set out thar on the bank, where they had set so often, lookin' away down to the bend of the stream whar Eli had been took away from her."

The next morning when Oiler and Shawn started to the river, Oiler slipped a five dollar gold piece in Shawn's hand. "He give me two of 'em, and one of them belongs to you. What are you goin' to do with yours, Shawn?"

"Give it to my mammy," said Shawn.

CHAPTER X

Doctor Hissong sat by the fireplace in his office. Brad was blacking a pair of shoes. "Shawn," said the old doctor, "I'm going up to Old Meadows this afternoon to hunt quail, and I want you to go along. Go down and get ready while Brad hitches up the buggy."

The first snow of the season was gently sifting from the November skies as Doctor Hissong and Shawn drove along the river road. Scattered flocks of wild-geese and ducks were flying above the cottonwoods and sycamores. The *honk, honk* of the geese as they circled above the stream, their white wings flashing in the veiled sunlight, lent a delicious touch to the winter scene. Shawn was watching the curling smoke from a tall chimney at the bend of the river. As

they drew nearer, he saw the old house nestling behind the tall pine trees, the white columns of the broad porch standing out in stately grandeur. Doctor Hissong drove through the orchard, coming up to the lower entrance to the house. Major LeCroix came down the yard, his long, silvery hair waving beneath his broad-brimmed hat, his ruddy countenance beaming a cordial welcome. Just behind him, his hat in his hand, was Horton, a colored gentleman of the old school, brought up in the LeCroix service, and staunch in his devotion to the family. Major LeCroix led the way to the house. The guineas began calling a chorus of *pot-racs* and ran fluttering through the drifting snow. "They are giving us a song of welcome," said Doctor Hissong. Horton showed his gleaming teeth and said, "No, sah, it's a song uv sorrow, for my ole woman, Mary, hez got two uv 'em in de yuven, bakin' fo' yo' suppah."

As Shawn passed the old stone kitchen, he caught the fragrance of the good things in Aunt Mary's oven, and Aunt

Mary, in her white cap and apron, was bending over the stove.

Major LeCroix and Doctor Hissong were standing on the porch. Shawn paused for a moment to gaze fondly to where the stream wended its way among the tall hills. The Major opened the low colonial door, and stood aside as his guests entered the beautiful old family room. A back-log blazed cheerfully in the open fireplace.

Over the fireplace was the mantel, with its rich hand-carving of the French coat of arms. On the walls of the room were family portraits, some of them brought from the provinces of old France. Doctor Hissong stood before one portrait, a face sweet in its Madonna-like innocence and purity. A tear-drop stole down the Major's cheek.

Leading Doctor Hissong over to the window, he pointed to the family burying-ground, and said, "The dear wife sleeps under that tallest pine." The snow had covered the mound, but again the Major could see April days out there,

and the heavy bloom of the orchard—the redbird and the catbird were pouring out symphonies of melody; the silver-winged pigeons were bending through the golden skies, and again he could hear a mother's voice calling in happiest tones to her children.

"Horton, call Lallite," said Major LeCroix.

Shawn turned suddenly to see a young girl come into the room. She came up coyly, greeting Doctor Hissong, and when she came over toward Shawn, he felt a hot flush coming to his cheek. He had seen this young girl before, with her father in town, but now as she came before him, with her merry, flashing eyes and radiant color, he stood with downcast eyes, and the old desire to run off to the woods came over him again. She gave him her soft hand as her musical voice said, "I am so glad you came with the doctor." He stood as one entranced before this girl of such sweet and simple beauty, and unconsciously, he was lead into an

easy attitude and relieved from his painful embarrassment.

Horton came into the room, bearing a tray and glasses. He turned to the Major and asked, "De white er de red, Major?"

"Both, Horton."

Horton took the keys which hung at the end of the mantel. Returning, he placed two bottles of grape wine on the tray. He filled the glasses, but the Major observed that Shawn did not take his glass.

"Do you want the wine, boy?"

"No, sir, I thank you," said Shawn, hesitatingly.

"It's all right, Major," said Doctor Hissong, "Mrs. Alden is looking after him, you know."

Raising his glass, Major LeCroix said, "Welcome to Old Meadows, and a health to pleasant memories. You find things sadly changed—my dear companion gone; my boy a soldier in a distant land, Louise long married and never returning until she comes with the children to spend the summer—but I have Lallite with her

dear, happy heart, and I have Mary and Horton."

The winter day was fast drawing to its close. Horton again appearing, quietly said: "Supper is sarved."

The old dining-room with its mahogany side-board and dining-table, the heavy brass candle-sticks, the tall clock in the corner, were all familiar objects, and the presence of Aunt Mary and Horton, standing behind the chairs, was a picture of a happier time, with the background of many glad faces to be filled only with memory.

Shawn sat beside Lallite at the table, and deep down in his heart, he felt that it was good to be there, and that life was opening to something dearer than the general happenings of his narrow sphere had ever given hope for.

With bowed head the Major asked the table blessing. Aunt Mary brought in the delicious baked apples and poured over them the rich cream. The Major was carving the guineas. "Lallite, help Shawn to one of those corn-pones; I'll

venture that you'll never get them any better in town. The last time I was in the city, they brought me something they said was cornbread, but it was mixed up with molasses, baking-powder and other things. There are different kinds of cornbread, as you know. There is a bread called egg-bread, made with meal, buttermilk, lard, soda and eggs, and there is a mush-bread, made by scalding the meal—some call it spoon-bread; but the only corn-bread is the pone, and the only way to make them is to get white flint corn, have it ground at a watermill, if you can, where they do not bolt the life out of it, scald your meal with hot water, adding salt, then drain off the water thoroughly and mix your meal with good, rich, sweet milk, then shove 'em in a hot oven, and you'll have cornbread that is cornbread. Take one and butter it while it is hot—don't cut it, break it. There you are. Let me help you to this guinea breast. Did you ever know anyone who could get the crisp turn that Mary gets on them?"

"Never, sir," said Doctor Hissong, "I never knew but one woman who could come anyways near Mary's cooking, and that was Joel Hobson's wife, Lucy. They used to say that her cooking was her only redeeming feature, for she had a temper like a wildcat, and vented it upon poor Joel and made life so miserable for him that he finally took to drink. One night, so the boys tell it, Joel got too much and was lying out under the big elm tree, afraid to go home. One of the boys rigged himself out in a white sheet and came up to Joel, tapping him on the shoulder. 'Who are you?' said Joel 'I am the devil,' answered the deep voice. 'Come right over and give me your hand; we're kinfolks. I married your sister.'

"I suppose you remember Lucy's mother, Major? Her name was Sahra Turner; she was a good woman but powerful curious. She had married off all of her girls but Mary Ellen, and Tip Jennings was paying court to her. It seems that Sahra had kept close track of

the courtship and the headway of all her girls, and one night when Tip was in the parlor with Mary Ellen, Sahra had a small kitchen table set by the parlor door and was standing on it, looking over the transom to see how Tip was coming on. Tip had gotten down on his knees and was making his declaration to Mary Ellen. They were somewhat out of Sahra's range of vision. The crucial moment had come, and Sahra leaned over to see the climax, but she leaned too far, and one of the table-legs broke. Well, they got her up with two ribs broke and laid up in bed for a long spell. Tip never came back, and Mary Ellen married some fellow, who took her out to Kansas."

They sat long at the table, the Major rising again into the spirit of old days, Shawn laughing at the quaint jokes and stories. Lallite's sweet laughter rang out, bringing the glow into the Major's eyes. She had heard the stories so often, but they never grew dull with the years, and they seemed to mellow as

beautifully as did the sunset of the Major's life.

Shawn listened again as he sat by the blazing fire to tales of the war—of charges, victories and defeats. Above the piano hung the Major's sword, presented to him by his soldiers after the battle of Stone River.

"Major," said Doctor Hissong, "I want to hear some music before we retire."

"What do you say, Lally?" said the Major.

Lallite went to the piano and gently touched the yellow keys. Major LeCroix drew forth his beloved clarionet. As he took the instrument from its case, he said, "I'm getting rusty nowadays, but Lally keeps me from getting entirely out of tune. We'll try 'Sounds From Home'."

Lallite played the introduction and the Major joined in, the clarionet breathing forth a deep rich melody. The Major seemed to throw his very soul into the music, and Lallite followed him with a

tender accompaniment. The blaze from the fireplace flickered and threw changing shadows over the old room. The Major and his daughter played on. They were living again in the past, and the strains were bringing memories sacred and sweet. Shawn sat as one transported to a heavenly sphere, his eyes fixed on the delicately graceful figure swaying to and fro under the changing cadences of the melody. It was the sweetest music that had ever floated into the portals of Shawn's heart, awakening a thrill of tenderness and love.

The tall clock in the dining-hall pealed forth the hour of ten. Horton came with a lighted candle, and Shawn followed him to the south room overlooking the river. A cozy fire burned in the grate, the moon swinging above the stream touched the hills and valley to silvery softness. He stood near the window and gazed long upon the water, the stream running through every association of his life. On the table was a daguerrotype; it was Lallite's

face, and the eyes seemed smiling just for him.

Doctor Hissong and Major LeCroix sat long into the night. "Major," said the old doctor, "I'm going to make the race for the Legislature again. John Freeman wants it, but I want to represent the county just once more. Can you hold this end of the county for me?"

"I think I can," said the Major.

"Then I'll announce. Freeman is a bitter man to go against, but I'm not afraid to try him out. I'm getting worn out in the practice of medicine, and will probably retire whether elected or not. I have my affairs in good shape; a bachelor doesn't require much. I want to put Shawn into the practice some day, God bless him." A tear-drop glistened on the old doctor's cheek, and Major LeCroix knew the secret of this emotion.

CHAPTER XI

WHO DOES not recall the joyous thrill that comes with the preparation for a hunt—the powder-horns and shot pouches scattered here and there—the cleaning of guns, the glances at the sky to determine whether wind and weather are propitious, the barking of the dogs as their eyes gleam in anticipation of the day's sport.

Major LeCroix critically examined Dr. Hissong's gun: "Too much choke in the barrel for quail. Shawn, don't you load that rusty piece of yours too heavily." Reaching above the doorway, he brought down his muzzle-loading gun, with its silver mounted hammers and lock shields, and as he caressingly drew his coat-sleeve along the barrels, he said, "They don't know how to make them like this nowadays."

They went forth into the frosty, bracing air. They walked leisurely along the bank of the little creek, where a crust of ice fringed the shore. "Major," said Horton, "de las' time I see dat big flock uv birds, wuz in de stubble de uther side de orchid." The Major worked the dogs toward the stubble-field. Sam, the old English setter, began to trail, halting occasionally to sniff the breeze.

"I think we will locate them in the sorghum patch," said the Major. Sam was creeping cautiously through the sage grass just above the sorghum field. Presently he came up erect and rigid, Bess, the trim little Irish setter, behind him at back-stand. "Steady, there! Ho, steady! Can you beat that, doctor?" cried the Major. "Get to the lower side of them, Shawn, so we can drive them to the orchard—flush, Sam!" The old setter sprang forward and the birds arose from the ground with an exciting flutter. The guns roared and two birds fell. Doctor Hissong was reloading, ramming the charge home with a long hickory

ramrod. With trembling hand, Major LeCroix drew the cork from his powder-horn, and endeavored to pour the powder into the barrel.

"Let me load for you," said Shawn.

"No, indeed, I'm not too old to load my gun." He stood for a moment looking at the shot-pouch. "Here, boy, maybe you had better load for me." A tinge of sadness crept over his features, but gave way to an expression of joy when Shawn said, "You and the doctor got your birds that time, I missed." Horton gave Shawn a grateful glance. They got into the scattered birds, the Major and Doctor Hissong thoroughly enjoying the sport. As each bird came from cover, Shawn held his fire, and followed closely after the shots of doctor Hissong and Major LeCroix, and as each bird fell, he would shout, "Good shot, Major!" or "Good shot, doctor!" They got into the lower bottoms, and by noon Horton showed a fine bag of game. Shawn modestly refused to claim but a few of the birds, but Horton knew of his

"You and the doctor got your birds."

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unerring marksmanship, and wondered at his unselfishness. Major LeCroix and Doctor Hissong were in jubilant spirits as they turned homeward. Old Sam, the setter, limped painfully behind the doctor.

"What crippled Sam?" asked the Major.

"I loaned him to a young fellow from Ohio last winter," said the doctor, "I reckon about the greenest young man that ever went into the field. He told Brad that he didn't know when nor how to shoot at the birds, and the old black rascal said, 'Jes' shoot whar de dawg sets,' and unfortunately Sam got tired and sat down, and got a load of bird-shot in his hind-legs."

As they put their guns away that afternoon, Major LeCroix again examined Shawn's cheap gun. Then came the supper of broiled birds, cooked as only Mary could cook them, and at the table-board they went over the field again, the work of the dogs, the Major meanwhile waxing eloquent over the trueness of his gun.

Shawn lay again in the old Empire bed, watching the dying embers in the fireplace. Softly the door opened—the Major entered, a lighted candle in one hand, and his beloved muzzle-loader in the other. "Shawn, I have been thinking it all over; I will hunt no more, but there are many days for you in the field, but you *must* have a gun, and I am giving you mine." He paused at the door, held the candle aloft, the soft light falling on his silvery hair, "Good night and pleasant dreams."

And the night was filled with pleasant dreams for Shawn, for that afternoon as he and Lallite stood upon the porch, gazing upon the wintry stream, she drew near him and said, "It will be so lonesome tomorrow when you are gone," and something in the tone of the voice echoed the same words in his heart.

CHAPTER XII

It was midwinter, and the river was frozen over. The boats had not been running for many days, and the happiest time of all the happy days for the young people of the river towns had come. The ponds and creeks were forgotten in the great event of skating on the river, and for miles the smooth surface was a speedway over which the skaters made merry excursions. In front of Skarrow the ice was firm, and with that buoyancy so dear to the lovers of this sport. In the afternoons the young people from the town of Skarrow and Vincent on the opposite side, all met on the river. All classes were there—the darkey with his big crook-runner skates, and the young beau, with his latest style polished runners. The two races volun-

tarily divided the skating grounds, the white people above, and the colored folks below.

The merry jingle of sleigh-bells could be heard amid this happy throng, and glad voices rising in a splendid chorus, echoed throughout the valley, and many a love dream had its first awakening and sweet realization in this joyous time. How the crisp, frosty air brought the glow of health and beauty to the cheek; how sweet the music of maiden voices rising upon the wintry air, and the tumbling of glossy curls underneath the hoods and sealskin caps as they sped through the delightful hours. Tullie Wasson was out there with his string band—Tullie with his old black fiddle, and Jim Grey with his cornet, and his son with his wondrous bass violin, and Tullie knew all the good old tunes, and a few fancy waltzes and polkas, but he was at his best in the Virginia Reel, and it was a pretty sight to see the joyous couples ranging off to their positions for the ice dance, and what great bursts of

laughter and cries of happiness swelled up when Tullie shouted, "Git yer pardners fer a Reel!" The movements of the dance were executed with a grace that would have done credit to the ball-room, Jimmy Dunla, the master of ceremonies, occasionally leaving the lines to give an exhibition of fancy skating and cutting his name on the ice.

Then came the races. The towns of Vincent and Skarrow gave a cup each skating year for the winner of the Ice Race. The race was for one thousand yards, the starting point was at the big hay barn, and a red flag marked the post at the end of the course. Four young men from each side of the river were entered in this race, the event of the season. Indiana held the cup. It had been three years since the last race. Among those entered by the Kentucky boys was Shawn. He had been practicing for many days, and somehow, the hopes of Kentucky were centered in him. The winner of the last race was also entered again. He was one of the most

popular boys of the Indiana town, and the betting was strongly in his favor. He was of magnificent build, with a long, graceful stroke, and came skating out before the crowd with the easy confidence of one who felt that the race was won. He closely watched the Kentucky boys as they circled about the crowd preparatory to starting for the head of the course. His eyes were fixed on Shawn. Turning to a friend, he said, "If I am beaten to-day, there's the young fellow who will get the cup." He skated over toward Shawn, and extending his hand, with the utmost good will, he said, "I'm afraid that I will have to beat my old record to win out to-day." Shawn smilingly took his hand and answered, "We are going to do our best, but if Indiana keeps the cup, I know of no one who would deserve it more than you, Danner."

The starter announced the race, and ordered the contestants to the head of the course. As they gracefully swung away, Lallite waved her hand toward

Shawn, and the tender glance from her blue eyes sent a thrill into his bosom.

They were forming for the start, sixty yards beyond the flag which marked the line of starting. All was excitement in the crowd gathered on each side near the finishing line. It seemed that every voice was hushed as they saw the red flag at the head of the course suddenly fall, and heard the cry, "Go!" They could see the flash of steel against the ice as the skaters bent every effort toward the goal. After the first hundred yards, Danner and Shawn were seen to be in the lead, Danner almost erect and coming like a whirlwind. Shawn was bending over, but close on Danner's heels, and with a shorter but much faster stroke. *Swish, swish, swish*—they could hear the sound of the skates on the ice.

The Indiana crowd set up a mighty shout. "Come on, Danner! Look at Danner!"

"Come, Shawn," yelled the Kentucky boys. Old Brad ran out and threw up his hat and shouted, "Down to it, my

Shawn—bust yo'se'f wide open, honey!"

Shawn was just behind Danner. They were nearing the last hundred yard flag. Danner threw all his energy and power into the last effort; every nerve and muscle was strained to its utmost.

"Danner wins!" went up the cry, but suddenly like a rush of wind, Shawn shot past him and the flag went down with Shawn a good five yards in the lead.

And such a mighty shout that went up on that frozen stream was never heard before. Old Brad was rubbing Shawn's face and chest. Shawn heard the loud huzzas and heard Danner's voice praising his wonderful race, but best of all, Lallite came up, and with her own hand, presented him the cup. On the shoulders the boys of Skarrow he was carried in triumph. It was a proud day for Shawn. He had brought the cup back to Kentucky.

They were nearing the last hundred yard flag.

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CHAPTER XIII

THE WINTER had passed away. Shawn had been working hard in school, and under the encouragement of Mrs. Alden, was making fair progress, but Sunday afternoons found him in his row-boat, wandering about the stream and generally pulling his boat out on the beach at Old Meadows, for Lallite was there to greet him, and already they had told each other of their love. What a dream of happiness, to wander together along the pebbled beach, or through the upland woods, to tell each other the little incidents of their daily life, and to pledge eternal fidelity. Oh dearest days, when the rose of love first blooms in youthful hearts, when lips breathe the tenderest promises, fraught with such transports of delight; when each lingering word

grows sweeter under the spell of love-lit eyes. Oh, blissful elysium of love's young dream!

They stood together in the deepening twilight, when the sun's last bars of gold were reflected in the stream.

"Oh, Shawn, it was a glad day when you first came with Doctor Hissong to hunt."

"Yes," said Shawn, as he took her hand, "it was a hunt where I came upon unexpected game, but how could you ever feel any love for a poor river-rat?"

"I don't know," said Lallite, "but maybe, it is that kind that some girls want to fall in love with, especially if they have beautiful teeth, and black eyes and hair, and can be unselfish enough to kill a bag of game for two old men, and let them think that they did the shooting."

"Lally, when they have love plays on the show-boats, they have all sorts of quarrels and they lie and cuss and tear up things generally."

"Well, Shawn, there's all sorts of love,

I suppose, but mine is not the show-boat kind."

"Thank the Lord," said Shawn.

He drew out a little paste-board box. Nestling in a wad of cotton, was the pearl given to him by Burney.

"Lally, this is the only thing I have ever owned in the way of jewelry, and it's not much, but will you take it and wear it for my sake?"

"It will always be a perfect pearl to me," said the blushing girl.

CHAPTER XIV

Doctor Hissong was announced as a candidate for the Legislature. John Freeman, his opponent, was making a vigorous canvass for the nomination before the democratic primary. Freeman, unfortunately, saw fit to inject personalities into the campaign, and sought to throw the old doctor into a violent passion, possibly leading him to his old weakness of resorting to liquor, but Doctor Hissong made his canvass upon a high plane, appealing to the voters from a standpoint of the duties and responsibilities involving this honor, and ignoring the petty thrusts of his opponent.

Major LeCroix gave a burgoo at his locust grove on the river, to which all the candidates were invited. It was

an occasion which brought out an immense crowd of farmers and town-people. "Turkle" Thompkins had been engaged to make the burgoo, and the river country could not boast of another such burgoo maker as "Turkle", for the making of burgoo soup requires an experience born of long practice and care. Thompkins always selected the best meats, of beef, mutton, chickens and squirrels, and vegetables of corn, tomatoes, onions, cabbage and potatoes. The boiling of this delicious soup was begun the night before. Darkies were stirring the great kettles as "Turkle" went quietly around, adding some new ingredient here and there. Others could make burgoo—a certain kind, but not the Thompkins kind, for there was a lusciousness about his burgoo that filled you with a satisfaction never known before—a something that soothed your aching pangs—something that seemed to put your heart at rest with all the world, and recall the words, "Fate cannot harm me; I have dined to-day."

Above the smoke of the kettles, the sky was blue and dreamy; the river was winding like a thread of silver through the quiet valley. The long table of rough boards, with the row of tin cups and great stacks of bread, was an inviting spectacle. The farmers stood around in groups, discussing political questions and cropping prospects until "Turkle" Thompkins announced dinner. Then came a merry clattering of tin cups as "Turkle" came by with buckets of burgoo dipping it out with a long ladle. What an appetite each individual seemed to develop for this open-air repast. After the dinner, preparations were made for the speaking. The spot selected for the speaking was below the grove, where an elm stump answered for a platform.

The candidates for the county offices were called for, and each one made a short talk, asking the support of the voters. Doctor Hissong's name was shouted. Unbuttoning his long blue coat, he drew forth a large red silk handkerchief and wiped the gathering beads

of perspiration from his forehead. Pulling down his black velvet vest, he made a courtly bow, took a drink of water from a gourd and began:

"Gentlemen and fellow citizens—It gives me transcendent happiness and unalloyed pleasure to lend my humble presence to this sublime and significant occasion, and I cannot permit this occasion to pass without availing myself of the opportunity that this magnificent and intelligent audience affords of presenting myself to you as the candidate for the democratic nomination for the office of representative in the Kentucky Legislature. It has been the pride of my life to proclaim myself as a patriot; that I am a descendent of one who helped to make this country free—'decori decus addit avoto,' and I have felt that the realization of this patriotism and its dream that has clung to me through life, would be in getting a system of locks and dams on the Kentucky river—that river that winds through an enchantment of rocky cliffs and hanging

foliage; by mountains, cedar-tipped and mossy-green; by rolling meadows, where the velvet softness of the blue-grass enriches this idyllic picture—this stream that is famed in song and story, a perfect Switzerland of enrapturing and delicious beauty. Here a thundering waterfall and fragile foliage bending over the foam. Here cool and shady ravines leading up to tranquil Edens, the voluptuous bends through an enchantment of bloom and wildwood, losing themselves among the rock-ribbed hills. This stream, bathed in the effulgence of the dropping sun—the mingling afterglow of sunset and the primrose bloom of the first stars, unfolds then with its majestic splendors to the enraptured gaze. We are held spell-bound, my friends, as we see the bright moon riding the hilltops and shining overhead,

"'"The bright moon shining overhead,
The stream beneath the breeze's touch,
Are pure and perfect joys indeed,
But few are they who think them such.'"

The rough and rocky points are softened under the magic and seem to lean lovingly toward the stream. Ah, to keep all of this loveliness stored from human eye—I mean to lock and dam this stream for all humanity who wish to journey thence and revel amid these splendors. 'Sic passem; semper idem.' Not one measly lock and dam, but a system of locks by which navigation could be advanced from the mountains to the Ohio, developing the great resources of that wonderous possibility, wherein the bema procliamus of nature we might find another Arch of Hadrian, or the Tower of the Winds; where mountain peaks may rise like unto the temple of Olympian Zeus, or the far away monument of Philopappos. Yes, gentlemen, I stand for locking and damming the Kentucky river! 'Civis Romanus Sum' was the proud utterance of the noble Roman, and the proudest of that proud and conquering race never proclaimed himself such with greater delight than I, that I am an American and a Democrat. With my feeling of

patriotism runs my devotion to the democratic party. But, gentlemen, in saying that I am a Democrat, brings forward the great existing issues between the two leading parties of the country. I might go into a long discussion of the principles of those two parties, but in a nutshell I can define the differences of such vital import to the voters of this land. The principles of the Democratic party represent—er, well, they represent the principles which that great party stands for, and the principles of the Republican party, ahem! Yes, sir, gentlemen, the principles of the Republican party represent the principles for which the Democratic party won't stand! So there you have it, and I defy any man to dispute this argument. I will not go into discussion of its principles here. I have sought public preferment at the hands of my party, but 'Ego, spembat pretio nionemonio,' sometimes that preferment was accorded, at least, upon one occasion. No man has a right to complain when, under any form of government, the

people withhold their indorsement, but every citizen has a right to complain if the downfall of an aspirant is accomplished by foul and unfair means," (this last statement was made while looking toward Freeman). "I have passed practically all of my life in your midst. A man should be honest, with a courage to face the great truths opening to him."

Freeman interrupted him at this point, "A man should be courageous enough to own his own children!"

"You sneaking hypocrite!" shouted Doctor Hissong, "You let one of your own sisters die in poverty and distress!"

"You are a damned liar!" said Freeman.

Doctor Hissong leaped from the stand, a derringer in his hand. The crowd fell back. Freeman fired point-blank at Hissong, but missed, then turned to run. Doctor Hissong brought up his derringer and pulled the trigger. Old Brad shouted, "You got him in de laig, doctah, but he runnin' yit!" Freeman's son, Henry, the one who kicked Coaly that

day in school, caught up his father's pistol which had fallen to the ground, but as he turned toward Doctor Hissong, Shawn sprang forward, knocking the revolver from his hand.

The older men separated the younger combatants, and the crowd broke up and turned homeward.

CHAPTER XV

THE TOWN marshall of Skarrow was a very busy man the next morning after the burgoo, serving warrants on Doctor Hissong and Freeman, summoning witnesses and a jury, and getting men to serve on a jury in a small town, where two of its foremost citizens are to stand trial, is a matter of considerable difficulty. Freeman had only received a slight flesh wound, and was not confined to his home.

Court was held in the office of Judge Budlong, who acted as prosecuting attorney, magistrate, writer of wills and general collector of accounts and rents. An occasional runaway couple, seeking the marriage bond, added a few dollars to his bank account, for the Judge had a happy-go-lucky ceremony which did not impress nor detain a restless lover too

seriously with the sanctity of the occasion. There were a few law books on the table, a heavy tool-chest, where the Judge kept a jug of white corn whiskey under lock and key. The police Judge, a sort of hanger-on about town, put a coal of fire in his pipe and said, "Gentlemen, air you ready to try this case?"

Budlong arose and balanced his ponderous form against the table, holding a law-book in his hand. The tuft of whiskers on his chin seemed to quiver into an accompaniment to his words. He began reading in a deep voice: "Gentlemen of the jury, to enlighten you as to the nature of this case, I shall read to you under Subdivision V, Section 1165, Kentucky Statutes: 'If any person shall by fighting, or otherwise unlawfully pull or put out an eye, cut or bite off the tongue, nose, ear or lip, or cut or bite off any other limb or member of another person, he shall be confined in the penetentiary for not less than one, or more than five years'."

"That law don't seem to apply to this case," said the police-Judge.

"Shut up," said Budlong, "I ain't through. What do you know about law, anyhow?"

"I ain't very strong on tecknickelties," said the police-Judge, "duly elected by the voters of this town, I am the Court, and as such I perpose to perside, and I demand, sah, your respectful recognition of that fact."

"Duly elected," said Budlong, "because nobody else would have it. But, gentlemen of the jury, I shall read you Section 1166, which is as follows, 'If any person shall draw and present a pistol, loaded with lead or other substance, or shoot at and wound another with the intention to kill him, so that he does not die thereby, he shall be confined in the penetentiary not less than one, or more than five years. There's your law, gentlemen. Call the first witness!"

"Bill Shonts!" called the marshall. Bill came to the chair.

"What's your name?"

"W'y, Jedge, you know my name."

"Answer my question. What's your name?"

"Bill Shonts."

"Where do you live?"

"Sho, Jedge, you've knowed me all my life!"

"That ain't the question. You answer accordin' to the custom of the court."

"I want you to state what you know about this case."

"Directly, or indirectly, Jedge?"

"Where was you when this difficulty started?"

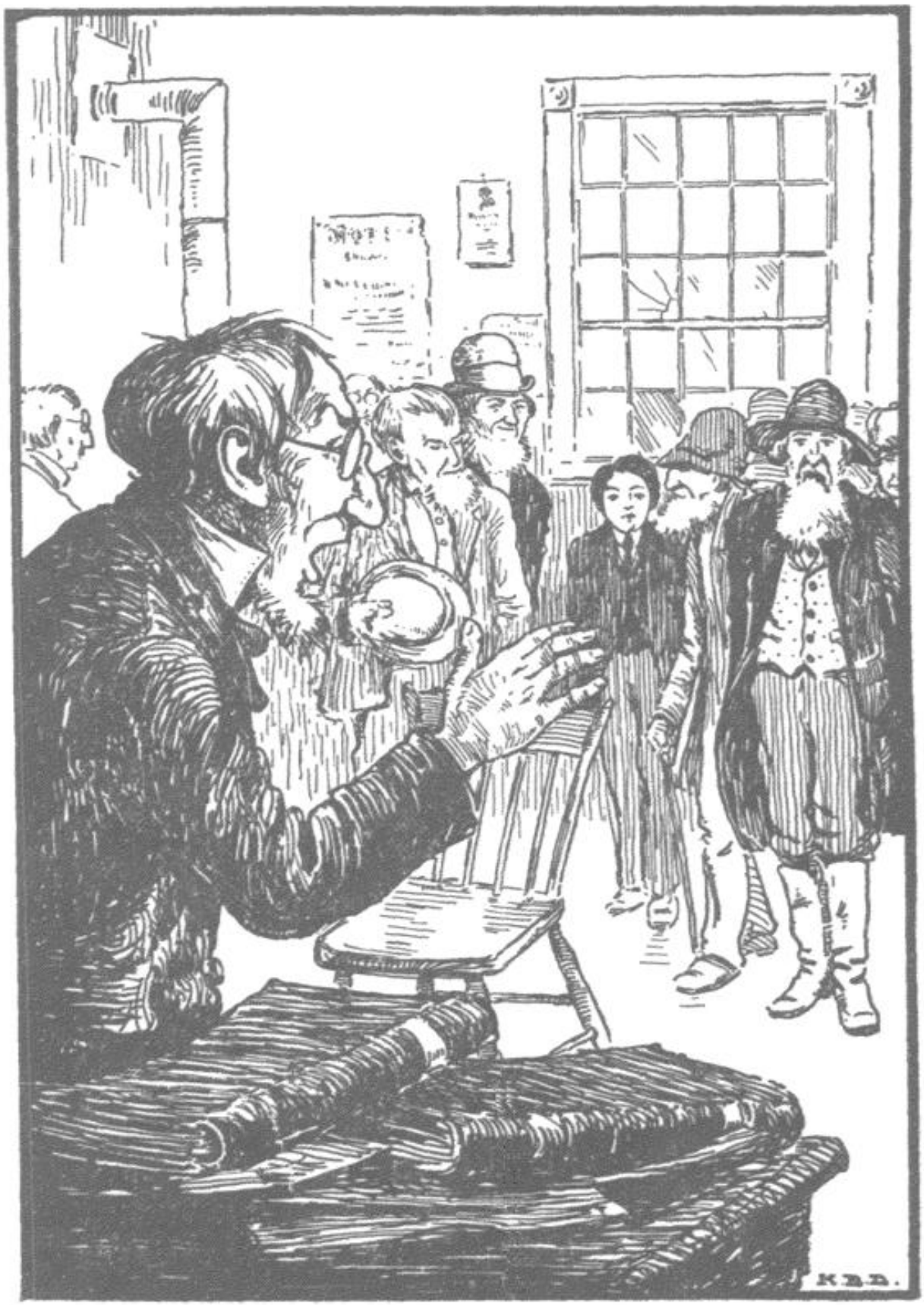
"Well, sir, I was not in any one certain spot, directly, but indirectly, I was jest beginnin' to—"

"State where you was at!" thundered Budlong.

"Well, sir, jest at the time of this difficulty, I was jest beginning to take a nap—"

"Do you mean to say that you was asleep?"

"Not directly, Jedge, but—"



"W'y, Jedge, you know my name."

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"Where was you when the damn lie passed?"

"Jest beginning to move."

"Did you see Doctor Hissong draw a pistol?"

"No, sir, not directly."

"Did you hear a shot?"

"Yes, sir."

"Where was you then?"

"Ramblin' away, sir."

"What do you mean by *ramblin' away*?"

"Runnin', flyin', hittin' the dust."

"Then you don't know who fired first?"

"No, sir, not directly."

"Call Jerry McManus," said Budlong. A red-faced, jovial-looking Irishman took the chair.

"Where were you when this trouble started, Jerry?"

"Under a sycamore tree, asleep."

"Had you been drinkin'?"

"Yis, sor, thot is to say, accordin' to the liberties av a mon injoyin' the soshabilities av good company."

"Did you hear the *dam lie* pass?"

"No, sor, I heard no footsteps av iny sort."

"Did you hear a shot from where you lay?"

"There wor no shot from where I lay. If there wor iny shot from where I lay, thin I wor already half-shot."

"Wasn't you in a state of intoxication?'

"I wor in the state of Kintucky."

"Stand aside," said Budlong, "Call the next witness." One by one the witnesses gave their testimony, varying according to the friendly feeling for the men on trial. At last, Budlong said, "Call Brad Jackson." Old Brad got in the witness chair and gazed listlessly at the ceiling.

"Brad, was you present when this difficulty started?"

"No, sah."

"Where was you?"

"In de grove, eatin' soup."

"Where was you when the lie passed?"

"On my way to Doctor Hissong."

"State to the jury what you know about this case."

"Yassir, genelmun, hit remine me uv de time when Kernel Poindexter an' Mistah Fontaine had a quarrel ovah a fox-chase down in Baton-Rouge—"

"Confine yourself to the case," said Budlong.

"Yassir, thankee, Jedge, en Kernel Poindexter he 'low dat his dawg, Watercress wuz in de lead, full yelp at de crossin' 'buv de bayou—"

"I don't care nothin' about that fox-chase," shouted Budlong, "You tell the court what you know about this case."

"Yassir, I'm tryin' to, Marse Jim—en Mistah Brandon Fontaine, you know, he want one er de ole quality in dat naberhood, he sorter drap in dar, en pick up a lot er money by sorter tradin' en watchin' 'roun' de edges, en a kine uv cotton swapper, en wo' fine duds en' de bigges' watch-chain yo' ever see—"

"Judge, will you pull that old nigger back to this case?" said Budlong.

"In due time, sah, in due time," said the police-Judge, who wanted to hear the outcome of Brad's story.

"Yassir, en Mistah Brandon Fontaine en Kernel Poindexter, dey met in front uv de post-office, en Mistah Brandon Fontaine he smokin' a long, black seegar, en one foot crossed on tuther, en when Kernel Poindexter come up, Mistah Fontaine say, 'Yo' dawg cut thru en got in de lead,' en Kernel Poindexter, he look jes ez cool ez a cabbage-leaf, en he say, 'Hit's a scan'lous lie, frum low trash!' Kernel Poindexter done turned white en his eye wuz all glitter—"

"I told you, for the last time, to tell what you know about this case!"

"Yassir, easy, Marse Jim. Gimme a chanst. En Mr. Brandon Fontaine kinder thode hi han' behine him, en' Kernel Poindexter crac' erway at him en bust a bottle uv whiskey inside his pocket en dis hyar Mistah Fontaine, he showed de *yaller* jes' lak Mr. Freeman did yestiddy, en he rin so fas' dat yo' could play checkers on his coat-tail!"

"Stand aside," roared Budlong.

The case went to the jury. That august body retired to deliberate. The

stragglers near the window heard hot words and wrangling in the jury-room. In the course of an hour, the door opened and the jury filed in.

"Have you reached a verdict, gentlemen?"

"We have," said the foreman.

"What is it?"

"We don't find no evidence to convict nobody."

"So help me, Caesar!" said Budlong.

CHAPTER XVI

JOHN BURNEY was clearing away the wreck of a coal-barge that had drifted under the lower edge of the wharfboat. The water had fallen, leaving part of the barge on shore. Burney had used every known method in trying to remove the wreckage. Old Pence Oiler came by and walked up to the heavy mass of timbers and called to Burney, "John, she's too wet to burn, and there ain't but one way to git her off, an' that's to lay a stick of dynamite under the front end, give her a slow fuse and blow her out."

Burney called to Shawn, who was on the bank, and asked him to go down to Bennett's mill and get a stick of dynamite, and Shawn, desirous of seeing the blast, hastened on the errand.

"Be careful how you handle that

goods," said Bennett, "I knowed a feller once who left some of it layin' around, and a hog et it, and the man kicked the hog and lost a leg!"

Shawn helped Burney to place the stick, unmindful of one of Coaly's never-failing traits. Shawn had taught him, as a young dog, to carry things from the boat in his mouth, and faithful Coaly could be sent back for his glove or any small article left behind. The little dog stood watching Shawn and Burney as they placed the stick and touched the fire to the fuse.

"Run, Shawn!" yelled Burney.

Old man Oiler backed his boat out into the stream, and Shawn and Burney ran up the shore.

Horror of horrors! When Burney turned to look back toward the wreckage, he saw Coaly coming after them with the dynamite stick in his mouth, the fire slowly creeping up the fuse.

"Go back, Coaly! Go back!" yelled Burney. He threw a boulder at the little dog, but he came on. Burney ran

for the willows under the bank as Coaly quickened his pace. Shawn had taken refuge in an old saw-mill and peered out, wringing his hands in an agony of suspense. Burney was breaking down the dry willows and yelling, "Go back, Coaly!"

Suddenly, there was a loud report that shook the earth. The ground was torn up and bark and driftwood were scattered everywhere. Shawn and Burney ran up, but there were no signs of Coaly, not even a trace of bone, hide nor hair. Coaly had returned to the original atoms of atmoshpere and nothingness.

Shawn sat upon a log and wept. Pence Oiler came up, cut a piece of tobacco from his plug and said, "There's nothin' to bury—not even a tooth."

CHAPTER XVII

THE STATES AND THE AMERICA

THE WINTER days had come again, and the year was fast drawing to its close. Doctor Hissong had been elected to the Legislature, and was making arrangements to leave for Frankfort the first of January. Shawn was in school, growing into a handsome and athletic young man of eighteen years, with the light of health glowing in his eyes, and with an honest purpose in his heart.

One morning Mrs. Alden sent word to him to call at her home after the school hour. Shawn went up there in the afternoon. The good woman greeted him with a smile and bade him be seated by the library fire.

"Shawn, I have sent for you, purposely, to ask a great favor."

The black eyes beamed the sincere impulse of his heart, as he turned to her and said, "Mrs. Alden, it would make me happy to do something for you."

"I am going to Cincinnati on the boat to-night, Shawn. I am going there to see a great specialist, and I would like very much for you to go with me."

"It will give me pleasure to go," said Shawn.

Shawn met Mrs. Alden's carriage at the wharfboat, and exerted himself to make her as comfortable as possible until the arrival of the up-stream boat. At 8.30 o'clock the wharfmaster came into the little waiting-room and said, "The America will soon be here."

In a short time the great steamer drew up to the wharf, and Shawn, supporting Mrs. Alden's frail form with his strong arms, went up the steps and into the cabin. The chambermaid placed Mrs. Alden's chair in the ladies' cabin, and Shawn went off to select a convenient and comfortable stateroom.

The cabin presented a scene of merri-

ment. Under the gleaming lights were a hundred happy couples, dancing away the gladsome hours. The strains of music swelled and floated far out into the night, and the joyous voices mingled with the changing melodies.

Shawn sat near Mrs. Alden, and together they gazed upon the gay throng and enjoyed the inspiriting music. Far below, in the engine-room, the lights glimmered over the polished machinery. The engineer glanced occasionally at his steam-gauge and water-cocks. The negro firemen were singing a plantation melody as they heaved shovels of coal into the glaring furnace under the boilers. Roustabouts and deck-hands were catching short rounds of sleep in their bunks back of the engine-room. Sitting on either side of the boiler, were "deck passengers," those too poor to engage passage in the cabin, and here and there, tired children lay asleep across their mothers' knees.

In the pilot-house, Napolean Jenkins, the head pilot, stood with his hand on the

spokes of the wheel, gazing with the eyes of a night-bird on the outlines of shore and hill. Mann Turpin, his steersman, stood at the right of the wheel. Jenkins knocked the ashes from his cigar, and the glow from the deep red circle of tobacco fire momentarily radiated the gloom of the pilot-house. The night was serene and clear, the full moon shining and shedding her dreamy light over the sleeping, snow-clad valley, and the silvery rays filtered through the clustering branches of the towering trees. As the great boat swung along past a farm-house, Jenkins heard the shrill, alarming cry of a peacock. Strains of music came floating upward from the cabin. The grim, black smoke-stacks were breathing heavily, and the timbers of the Texas trembled as the boat came up under the high pressure of steam.

The lights of Wansaw were just around the bend. Jenkins blew a long blast for the little town. The sound echoed and re-echoed among the wooded hills. The farmer in his bed on the silent shore

turned on his pillow as the deep, sonorous sound fell upon his ear—the sweet, weird music of the stream.

Jenkins made the landing, and heading his boat for the middle of the river, made a long crossing for the Indiana shore.

"It's a fine night," said Turpin.

"Beautiful," said Jenkins.

He turned and gazed toward the stern of his boat as she swung into the clear and squared herself for the point of the bend. The moonbeams glittered and danced on the waves in the wake of the steamer, and the rays touched the snow on the hills with diamond sparks. The tall sycamores on either side stood clearly outlined against the wintry sky, and the white corn-shocks on the distant ridge were silhouetted like Indian wigwams. Here and there a light glimmered from some cabin window, and a dog barked defiance at the boat as it sped up stream.

"The States ought to be about due," said Turpin.

"I think I hear her now," said Jenkins.

When they got up to the point of the

bend where they could see up the river, they saw the States coming down. From her forward smoke-stacks were the signal lights of emerald green and ruby red, trembling in delicate brilliancy against the background of silvery sky. The splash of her ponderous wheels as they churned the water, seemed to vibrate into a song of gathering power. When the two boats were about eight hundred yards apart, Jenkins turned to Turpin and said, "Blow two blasts; I'll take the left side." Turpin sounded the blasts, and Jenkins headed for the Indiana shore. Jacob Remlin, the pilot on the States, blew one blast of his whistle just as Turpin sounded the first signal on the America. Jenkins on the America, did not hear Remlin's one signal, because it sounded at the same time of the first signal from the America. Remlin on the States, heard the last one of the signals from the America, taking it for an answer to his own signal, and he also headed his boat for the Indiana shore. Both men violated the rules of signals. Remlin

should not have blown any signal until he heard from the up-stream boat, and Jenkins, not hearing any signal from the States, should have stopped his boat. Jenkins was standing on the starboard side, that placing him behind the chimney, and he did not see the States until she came out across his bow.

"My God!" shouted Turpin, as he saw the States bearing down upon them like some ferocious monster, "We're lost!"

The boats came together with a fearful crash. The smoke-stacks groaned and hissed, and great clouds of smoke rolled over the scene. The first shock of the collision brought a sudden check to the dancing on the America, throwing many to the floor and mixing up the whole assembly into a confused mass. Heads were peering through the transoms of the staterooms and voices excitedly calling, "What's the matter?" John Briscoe, the watchman, came hurriedly through the cabin and said, "The States and the America have run into each other!"

The strains of music had ceased giving

way to anxious inquiries on every side. The officers of the boat were running to and fro, giving orders, the negro cabin-boys adding to the chaos of the scene by loud and far-reaching cries.

On the roof, the Captain was giving orders to Jenkins: "Come ahead, outside!" Jenkins pulled the bell-rope and the brave engineer responded to the order. The boats had swung a short distance apart, the States rapidly sinking. Jenkins put the America up between the States and the shore. The States was carrying, as freight, a lot of barrels of coal-oil and gasoline, and in the collision these were smashed and the gasoline caught fire and in a few moments the sinking boat was all ablaze forward.

Jenkins groaned as he saw the fire, for the flames had already swept over upon the America, and he saw that his boat was also doomed. The bow of the America was almost touching the gravel, and believing that he had his boat safely on shore, Jenkins hurriedly left the pilot-house. Charles Ditman, the other head

pilot of the America, off watch, ran up into the pilot-house and catching the wheel, rang for reversed engines, and backed the boat out into the river, away from the States, but his action was miscalculated, for fire had broken out on the America, and great sheets of flame were leaping from her forward decks and guards. Had the boat held the position in which Jenkins had placed her, all the passengers might have escaped. Officers and crew were cutting away timbers with axes and dashing water upon the fire, but the great crackling tongue of flame licked up everything in its pathway. The heavens shone like a great, golden mirror under the spreading blaze. The burning oil flowed out over the water and flamed up across every avenue of escape. From out the black clouds of smoke, great sheets of flame burst through, rolled heavenward, and leaped down again like some devouring demon.

In such a transformation from pleasure to horror, who can discern the turning impulses within the human breast—of

fear, of hope or of heroic self-control? To some, such a moment brings hopeless despair, or frantic terror, which will crush women and children and crowd them from places of safety, and oftimes in such an hour there comes to those of otherwise timid dispositions, a grandeur of heroism never evidencing itself before; some latent, slumbering power of soul that can only be awakened by some fearful test of human tragedy.

From the burning boats came wild cries, shrieks and screams. Some were kneeling in prayer, others cursing and bemoaning their plight. Dr. Fannastock, a millionaire manufacturer from Philadelphia, clasped his beautiful daughter in his arms and cried, "I will give one hundred thousand dollars to the one who saves my child!" Both were lost. Ole Bull, the famous violinist, who had taken passage at Louisville, stood quietly holding his violin case, calmly endeavoring to reassure the frightened women and children. The fire was fast approaching the rear cabin.

Shawn stood by Mrs. Alden's side, buckling a life-preserver around her body. "I'm trusting in God, Shawn," said the good woman, as a ghastly pallor overspread her face.

"Put a little of that trust in me," said Shawn as he bore her in his arms to the aft guards. Hurriedly passing down the back stairs, he went through the engine-room to the rear end of the boat. They were lowering the trailing-yawl, which swung on a level with the floor of the lower cabin. As the yawl touched the water, a score of roustabouts started to leap into it.

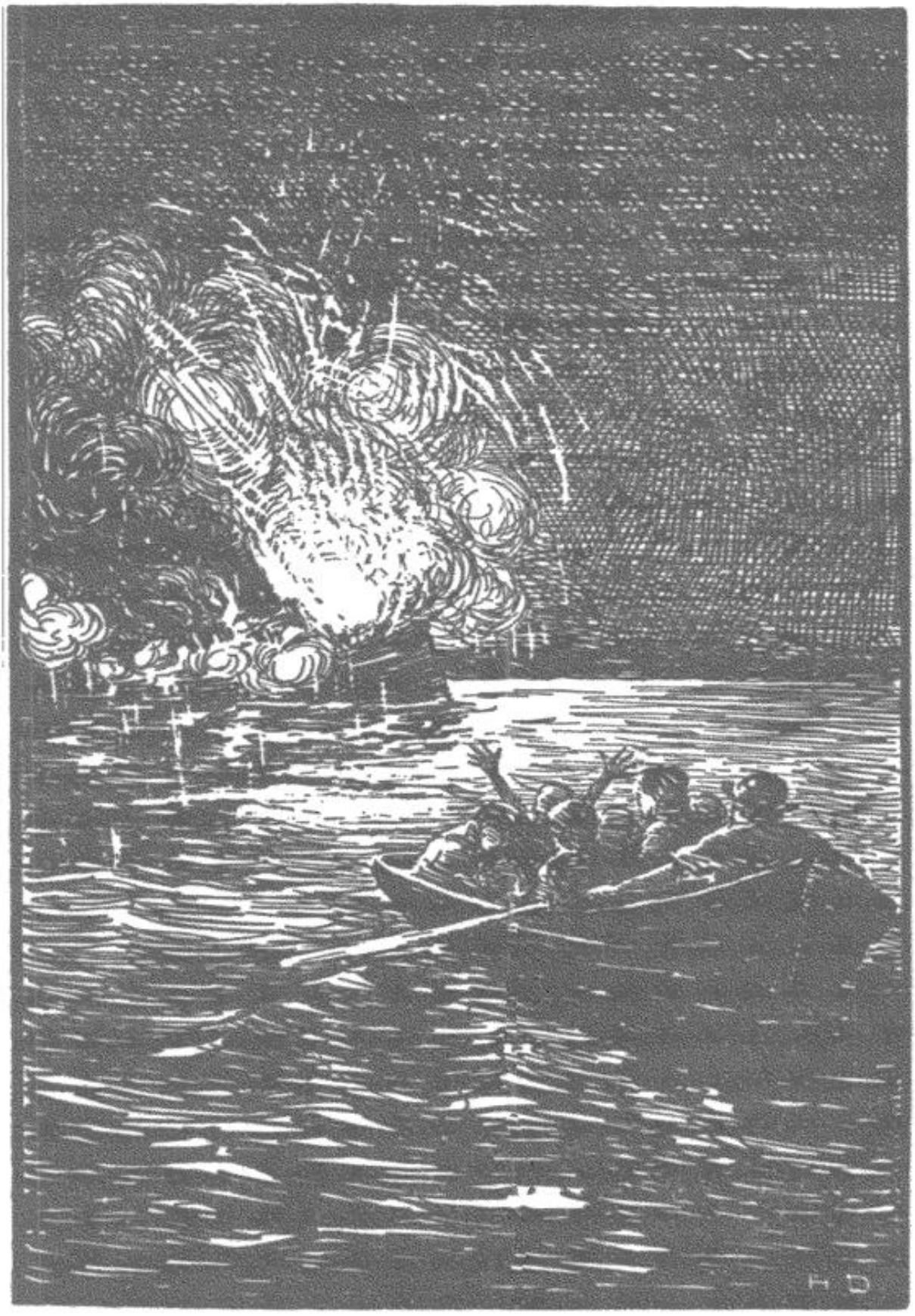
"Stand back there!" shouted Shawn. "These women and children must go first."

Shawn lowered himself into the yawl, and catching Mrs. Alden with both hands, placed her on a seat in the stern of the boat. The fire was gaining headway and black volumes of smoke were rolling from the engine-room. Ole Bull, with a countenance pale, but noble in its expression of high courage, tenderly low-

ered the women and children into the boat. Shawn took each one and placed them as closely as possible on the seats.

"Get aboard," he said to the musician. Shawn pushed the yawl away from the burning boat, and seating himself with the oars, began the fight for the shore. Great sparks from the burning timbers fell about them. The cabin of the America toppled and fell with a crash, and as the burning portions struck the water the waves seemed to hiss as if seeking some struggling soul. The clamor had become deafening; men were leaping into the water and hoarse cries rang out above the flames.

Shawn was bending to the oars, his long boating practice now standing him in good stead. The fumes from the burning oil were almost unbearable, threatening to suffocate the occupants of the yawl. Thirty yards away was the shore. The muscles in Shawn's arms were straining to their utmost. The heavily laden boat was almost dipping water.



The Cabin of the American fell with a crash.

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"Sit steady, everybody!" cried Shawn. He turned and gazed toward the shore, and then put all his strength into the oars and ran the boat upon the shore. The occupants leaped out, giving joyful expressions for their safety. Shawn wrapped Mrs. Alden in his coat and carried her from the boat. On the bank was a log-cabin, from which a light shone. Hastening thither, he found the door open and a wood-fire burning in the fireplace, the family having gone to the scene of the disaster. Shawn placed Mrs. Alden in a chair and said, "Try to make the best of it until I return; I'm going back to save all I can."

"May God watch over you," sobbed Mrs. Alden.

Shawn sprang into the yawl and pushed out into the stream, and the work he did that night in saving struggling beings, is still talked about along that river. The boats were burning to the water's edge, and along the shore were sobs and groans from those who had reached land; cries of anguish from those who

had lost their loved ones. Oh, the suffering of that winter night! Children with blistered limbs, crying for mothers whose voices were hushed beneath the stream; old men writhing in cruel pain, moaning in piteous tones; young men with folded arms hearing again the last sad cries of sweethearts as they were torn from them.

Shawn went back to the log-house and found Mrs. Alden in tears.

"Oh, my dear boy, if I were only strong enough to go among those suffering ones. God has been kind to give me strength to pass through this ordeal, but I am helpless to aid others."

Shawn stood by her chair; the frost had coated his dark hair, his cheeks seemed aflame from the exertion through which he had passed.

The news of the disaster traveled fast.

The Alice Lee, coming up from Madison, stopped at all of the villages and took aboard doctors and those volunteering to help. At midnight they arrived at the scene of the terrible catas-

trophe. One of the first passengers to step ashore was Doctor Hissong, Brad Jackson just behind him. The old doctor had his saddle-bags and instrument case, and Brad carried a roll of bandages.

"I wonder if they're still alive, Brad?" said Doctor Hissong. Old Brad's heart was heavy with forebodings, but suddenly he gave vent to a yell that nearly upset the nerves of Doctor Hissong: "Fo' Gawd, doctah, yondah's Shawn!"

Shawn came up, and the old doctor threw his arms around him and cried for joy. "Is Mrs. Alden alive, Shawn?"

"All right," said Shawn, as he pointed toward the cabin. Doctor Hissong hastened to the cabin, and when he came up to Mrs. Alden he bent over her hand and kissed it with a beautiful reverence.

"Thank God for saving you," he said.

"And Shawn," gently added Mrs. Alden.

The survivors went aboard the Alice Lee and the injured and the dead were also taken on board. Doctor Hissong

and the other doctors gave all their time toward alleviating the sufferings of the unfortunate ones.

When the boat reached Skarrow, it found Mrs. Alden's carriage at the wharf. Shawn and Brad carried her to it. She turned to Doctor Hissong and said, "Bring as many of the injured as you can to my home, and those in need of clothes or assistance in any way."

CHAPTER XVIII

THE PASSING of five years over a country village generally brings but little change in the existing conditions, but even in this prosaic atmosphere of easy going methods and action, the calendar marks some days and events of more than passing notice.

Doctor Hissong had served his term in the Legislature, and proudly pointed to his record in passing the bill for the construction of extra locks and dams on the Kentucky river.

Shawn was attending lectures at the Medical College in Louisville, Doctor Hissong acting as his preceptor and paying all the expenses necessary to his medical education, and now that the had been two years in school and was nearing the end of the course, Shawn felt that life

held out a hope for him far beyond the dreams of his earlier years, and his breast swelled with gratitude to those who had shown him such friendship and confidence; to the kind old doctor, who trusted him to his every word and deed, and to Mrs. Alden, who wrote him such beautiful and touching letters, reminding him of his duty to God and his fellowmen, and as he laid each one of her letters aside, it seemed that a newer strength and some higher motive filled his heart.

And there were other letters whose coming he anxiously awaited. The small, round handwriting on the envelope sent the glow of happiness into his eyes; the dear, sweet letters from Lallite, with marginal notes in every conceivable nook and corner of the page; the dainty tidbits of love. When these letters came, Shawn took them and wandered down to the stream he loved so well. Lallite seemed associated with the murmuring ripples, the tiny pebbles of the beach, and the shimmering bosom of the river.

As he sat near the drowsy rumbling falls with her letter in his hand, it seemed that the river flowing past breathed some tender message from the village above and linked his heart into a closer and fonder memory of sweeter hours. And these letters laden with love's tender offerings, with here and there some whisperings of loneliness, some unlooked-for digression embracing the gossip of the neighborhood, or some delicious speculation as to his fidelity and love.

One day, just about three weeks before his graduation, as he sat at the dinner table, a servant came in and placed a telegram beside his plate. Shawn opened the envelope and read, "Come home at once. Dave Budlong."

Something seemed to almost paralyze his heart-strings; some terrible apprehension took possession of him. His mother? Mrs. Alden? Lallite?

Through the long, dragging hours which followed until the evening mail-boat started up the river, he wandered in an agony of suspense.

The river had lost its charm, and the strains of music from the orchestra on the boat, fell on his ears in saddened tones. He walked the hurricane deck, and bent his gaze upon the distant river bends, as counting the dragging miles. At midnight the boat reached Skarrow. Dave Budlong, the old lawyer, was there to meet Shawn. Shawn grasped his hand and eagerly asked, "Tell me what is the matter!"

"Doc' Hissong is very low and has been calling for you ever since last night," said Budlong.

They went up the hill to the office. Old Brad met them at the door, "Praise Gawd, you've come, Shawn—he gwine mi'ty fas'—he nearin' de Valley uv de Shadder." Shawn went in, and as he saw the old doctor's white head on the pillow, the tears gushed from his eyes. He went to the bedside and took the old physician's hand.

"Doctor, it's Shawn; I've come."

A glad beam came into the fast-closing eyes, and the feeble voice struggled into

a fitful tone, "Shawn, my boy, God has forgiven me—I don't know how it may be—I've tried to think it out, but somehow I feel that in the long journey I must now take alone, that God will let the light burn for me—I've remembered you, Shawn."

The head sank back upon the pillow. Old Brad was sobbing in the corner. From the hill came the weird tones of a whip-poor-will, and from the far-away bend of the river, the echoes of a steamer's wheel. The moon shot a beam of light through the window and the rays seemed to rest tenderly upon the calm and gentle face. Doctor Hissong's spirit had flown.

"Clear the room," said Budlong, "I want to speak in private with Shawn."

Taking a paper from his pocket he said, "Shawn, Doctor Hissong told me to read you this, his will. I am here to do it. I drew it up."

The old lawyer stood by the mantlepiece, and by the flickering lamplight read:

"In the name of God, Amen. Realizing the uncertainty of life and the certainty of death, I, Radford J. Hissong, being of sound and disposing mind and memory, do hereby publish this to be my last will and testament, hereby revoking all former wills and codicils.

1st—I give to the old negro Brad Jackson the sum of $500.00 and intrust him to the care of the young man known as Shawn Collins.

2d—I desire that $1,000.00 of my estate be distributed among the poor of Skarrow.

3rd.—I give, devise and bequeath to the young man, known as Shawn Collins, but whom I hereby acknowledge to be my son, my river-bottom farm, consisting of 387 acres. I bequeath to him my hill farm, consisting of 187 acres. I bequeath to him my town property, consisting of two dwellings and one store-room, my office, bank stock and all other properties found, outside of the first two clauses of this will. This property to belong to the said Shawn,

to be used or disposed of according to his pleasure. I desire a modest stone above my grave, and ask that I be buried in the cemetery on the hill, overlooking the river.

In witness whereof I have hereby set my hand, this 18th day of Sept. 186–

Radford J. Hissong.

Witness: Dave Budlong,
John Burney,
Victor LeCroix.

CHAPTER XIX

AFTER THE funeral, Shawn appeared as one upon whom had fallen a great and strange sorrow. He felt as though some dark curtain had suddenly been lowered between him and all prospects of future happiness. There now seemed a lingering consciousness which separated him from his old individuality; something that awakened a flame of anguish within his heart and sent a tingling rush of blood to his cheek, but Mrs. Alden came, with her gracious and charitable heart and sought to soothe the troubled spirit, and her words fell as a blessed benediction into his soul.

"I'm going to Old Meadows, Mrs. Alden, and there bid farewell to every hope and joy that I have in this world."

He rode his horse slowly through the

Lallite ran up to Shawn, giving him both her hands.

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old orchard again, where he and Doctor Hissong had driven that winter morning, but what a change had now come into his heart. He heard the guineas call again, but every sound was teeming with sadness.

Horton took his horse at the gate, and Major LeCroix met him at the porch, and his voice had the old-time ring of welcome. "Horton, call Lally; Shawn has come."

Shawn went into the old family room, Doctor Hissong's will in his hand. Lallite came down the stairs and ran up to Shawn, giving him both her hands. Her eyes were beaming the joy of his return, but Shawn stood with downcast gaze and trembling limbs.

"Lally, here is Doctor Hissong's will. It is fair and just that you read it, and afterward, I am willing to release you from any obligation."

With a frightened glance, the beautiful girl began to read the will. Shawn leaned against the old piano and buried his face in his hands. Presently he felt two soft

arms steal about his neck and a gentle voice saying, "Shawn, would it be the nobler course of a love that should change or turn against one, who was in no way responsible for the conditions of birth; to turn against one who has raised himself above every stigma by his high principle and courage, by tenderness and unselfishness? No, Shawn, some better spirit guides me, and no matter what the world may say, I can face it as the woman who loves you, and that love shall shed its light in such radiance that all the shadows will flee away."

"Oh, Lally," said Shawn, as he caught her in his arms, "Through all of this darkness you have been my guiding star. I will start in at the old office next month." And above the softened glow of the mussel-pearl in the pin on her breast, two pairs of eyes beamed with the love which never grows dim with advancing years.

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