

ARUNDEL LOUIS

MOTOR BOAT BOYS ON
THE GREAT LAKES; OR,
EXPLORING THE MYSTIC
ISLE OF MACKINAC

Louis Arundel

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Great Lakes; or, Exploring
the Mystic Isle of Mackinac**

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CHAPTER I UP A TREE

“What a funny cow that is, Josh! Look at the silly thing poking her bally old horns in the ground, and throwing the dirt up. Say, did you ever see anything like that? Why, the poor beast must be sick, Josh!”

“Cow? Great Jupiter! Buster, you silly, don’t you know a bull when you see one?”

“Oh, dear! and just think of me having the nerve to put on my nice red sweater this morning, because this Michigan air was so nippy. I don’t believe bulls like red things, do they, Josh?”

“They sure don’t. And then we had to cut across this field here, to save a few steps. He’s looking at us right now; we’ll have to run for it, Buster!”

The fat boy, who seemed to fully merit this name, set down the bucket of fresh milk he had been carrying, and groaned dismally.

“I just can’t run – never was built for a sprinter, and you know it, Josh Purdue!” he exclaimed. “If he comes after us, I’ve got to climb up this lone tree, and wait till he gets tired.”

“Then start shinning up right away, Buster; for there he comes – and here I go!”

With these words long-legged Josh started off at a tremendous pace, aiming for the nearest fence. Buster, left to himself, immediately commenced to try to get up the tree. He was so nervous with the trampling of the bull, together with the hoarse bellow that reached his ears, that in all probability he might have been caught before gaining a point of safety, only that the animal stopped once or twice to throw up some more soil, and thus give vent to his anger at the intrusion on his preserves.

Josh got over the ground at an amazing rate, and reaching the fence proceeded to climb over the topmost rails; never once relinquishing his grip on the package of fresh eggs that had just been purchased from the farmhouse, to make a delicious omelette for a camp dinner.

Meanwhile, after a tremendous amount of puffing, and frantic climbing, the fat boy had succeeded in getting a hold upon the lower limb, and pulled himself out of the danger zone just as the bull collided with the trunk of the tree.

“Gosh!” exclaimed Buster, as he hugged his limb desperately; “what an awful smash that was! And hang the luck, he’s just put his foot in our pail of milk too. There goes the shiny tin bucket the farmer loaned me, flying over the top of the tree, I guess.”

He presently managed to swing himself around so that he could sit upon the limb and look down at his tormentor. The bull was further amusing himself by tearing up a whole lot more of the turf, and bellowing furiously.

“Mad just because you didn’t get me, ain’t you, mister?” mocked Buster; whose name was really Nick Longfellow, strange to say, considering how short and stout nature had made him.

The bull did not bother answering, so after watching his antics for a minute, and wondering if he, too, would have been tossed over the tree had he been caught, Nick remembered that he had had a companion in misery.

Upon looking across the field he saw Josh perched on the rail fence, surveying the situation, craning his long neck to better observe the movements of the animal, and ready to promptly drop to the ground at the first sign of danger.

“Hey, Josh! ain’t you goin’ to help a feller?” shouted the prisoner of the lone tree in the pasture.

“Course I’d like to, Buster; but tell me, what can I do?” answered the other. “Perhaps now you’d like to have me step inside, and let the old thing chase me around, while you scuttled for the fence. What d’ye take me for, a Spanish bull-baiter? Well, I ain’t quite so green as I look, let me tell you.”

“That’s right, Josh,” replied the fat boy with emphasis; “and it’s lucky you ain’t, ’cause the cows’d grabbed you long ago for a bunch of juicy grass. But why don’t you do something to help a feller out of a hole?”

“Tell me what I can do, and I’ll think about it, Buster,” answered the other; as though not wholly relishing the remark of his comrade, and half tempted to go on his way, leaving the luckless one to his fate.

“If you only had my red sweater now, Josh, you might toll the old feller to the fence, and keep him running up and down while I slipped away.”

“Well, send it over to me then,” replied the tall boy, with a wide grin.

“You just know I can’t,” declared the prisoner. “Don’t I wish I had wings right now; or somebody’d drop down in an aeroplane, and snatch me out of this pickle? But I suppose I’ll have to get up a way of escape myself. Don’t I want to kick myself now for not thinking about a packet of red pepper when I was at that country store down near Pinconning yesterday. Never going to be without it after this, you hear, Josh?”

Only recently Nick had read an account of how a boy, on being hard pressed by a pack of several hungry wolves, somewhere in the north, had shown remarkable presence of mind in taking to a tree, and then scattering cayenne pepper in the noses and eyes of the fierce brutes as they jumped up at his dangling feet.

In that case the brutes had gone nearly crazy with the pain, and the boy easily made his way home. The story had impressed Buster greatly, and that was why he now lamented the fact that he had no such splendid ammunition to use on the bull.

“Say, suppose you toss down that red sweater to him,” suggested Josh, making a speaking trumpet of both his hands.

“What good would that do?” demanded the captive, plaintively; for he was unusually fond of the garment in question, and gloried in wearing it; though after this experience he would be careful about how he donned it again while ashore.

“Oh! he might take to tossing it around, and perhaps run to the other side of the field. Then you could sneak for the fence,” called the one who was safe.

“Yes, and have him come tearing after me before I was half way there,” cried Nick. “I guess not. Think of something easier. Can’t you coax him over there, Josh? Oh! please do. I half believe you’re as much afraid of him as I am.”

“Who says I am?” retorted the other, at once boldly jumping down inside the fence; upon which the bull started on a gallop for that quarter, and it was ludicrous to see how the valiant boaster went up over that barricade again, sprawling flat as he jumped to the ground.

Nick laughed aloud.

“He near got you that time, Josh!” he cried. “Ain’t he the terror though? Look at him smash at that fence. Better keep an eye out for a tree, I tell you, if he breaks through. And Josh, for goodness sake save the eggs. Our milk is gone, the tin pail is ruined; but we don’t want to lose the precious eggs.”

A few seconds later Nick broke out into a loud wail.

“Hold on, Josh,” he called; “I was only fooling when I said that about you being afraid. Of course you ain’t; only it stands to reason nobody wants to let that old bull get a chance to lift him with those horns. Don’t go away and leave your best chum this way, Josh.”

“Chuck it, Buster,” called back the other. “I’m not going to desert you. But somebody’s got to go after the farmer, and get him to come and coax the bull to be good. You can’t go, so I’m the only one left to do the job. Hold on tight, and don’t talk the bull to death while I’m gone.”

“Oh! bless you, Josh!” called the captive of the tree. “I always knew you had a big heart. But don’t be too long, will you; because if he keeps banging the trunk of this rotten old tree all the time and chipping off pieces, I’m afraid he’ll get it down yet. Hurry, now, Josh! Tell the farmer what a mess I’m in; and that he’s just got to bring out some feed, and coax his mountain of beef to be good. Hurry, please, Josh, hurry!”

He watched the tall boy making his way leisurely along, and groaned because Josh seemed determined to let him have quite a siege of it there.

The bull had come back, and was nipping the grass almost under the tree. Now and then he would move off a little distance, and deliberately turn his back on Nick, as though he had forgotten that such a thing as a boy existed. But the captive was not so easily deceived.

“No you don’t Mr. Bull!” he called, derisively. “I can just see you looking this way out of the corner of your eye. Like me to slip down, and try to make that old fence, wouldn’t you? Guess I’d sail over the rails with ten feet to spare. But think what an awful splash there’d be when I landed. I can wait a while, till Josh takes a notion to tell what he came back for.”

Minutes passed, and he grew more and more nervous. Long ago had his tall chum passed out of sight behind the clump of trees that shut off all view of the farmhouse. Nick half suspected that Josh was lying down somewhere, resting, perhaps in a place where he could watch what went on in the pasture.

“Oh! don’t I wish I had wings now?” he kept mumbling, as he shook his head angrily, and watched the movements of the bull. “I’d fly away, and let Josh think the ugly old beast had swallowed me, that’s what. He’d be sorry then he loafed, when I sent him for help. But is that him coming over yonder?”

He thought he had detected something moving; but it was at a point far removed from the place where he expected Josh and assistance to show up.

“Well, I declare, if it ain’t George!” he exclaimed presently. “He must have begun to believe we were having too good a time at the farmhouse; and is on his way over to get his share. George is always looking for a pretty girl. I’ve got half a notion to let him get part way across the field, and then holler at him. When a feller is in a scrape it makes him feel better to see somebody else getting it in the neck too. There he comes across, sure enough!”

The bull had evidently seen George, too; but as he happened to be standing half concealed by the trunk of the tree just then, the boy who so lightly started to cut across the pasture, meaning to head for the house among the trees, failed to discover the bull.

“Oh! my, won’t he be surprised though!” muttered Nick, craning his fat neck in order to see the better; for he did not want his friend to get so far along that, in a pressure, he could not gain the fence before the coming of the wild bull.

Now the beast had started to paw the ground. George stopped short as he caught the sound, and looked around him. Just then the bull tore up some more turf, and tossed it in the air. That meant he was primed to start on a furious rush to overtake the newcomer.

“Run, George!” shrieked the boy in the tree, at the top of his high-pitched voice. “Run for the fence! He’s got his eye on you! The bull’s coming like hot cakes! Go it for all you’re worth, George. Oh! my! did I ever see such a great lot of sprinting! George can run pretty near as good as Josh did, and that’s saying a heap.”

It was. George seemed to be making remarkably fine time as he shot for that friendly fence. Evidently George knew something about bulls; enough at least not to want to stay in an enclosure with an angry one, and interview him.

For a very brief period of time it seemed nip and tuck as to whether George would be allowed to get over that barrier unassisted, or be helped by the willing bull. But apparently, after one look over his shoulder at the approaching cyclone, George was influenced to let out another link, for his

speed increased; and he just managed to scramble over the rails when the bull came up short against the fence, to look through with his red eyes, and shake his head savagely.

“Hey! where are you, Buster?” shouted George, after he had succeeded in getting his breath again.

“Here, in this bally old tree, George. He chased us, and I had to hustle up here, while Josh went for help. He knocked my milkpail to flinders; but thank goodness Josh saved the eggs!” cried Nick; whose greatest failing was a tremendous appetite, that kept him almost constantly thinking of something to eat.

“Say, you’re a nice one,” called the other. “Why didn’t you warn me sooner?”

“I’m real sorry now I didn’t, George,” replied Nick, as if penitent; though at the time he was shaking with laughter, just as a bowl of jelly quivers on being moved; “but I was in hopes you’d scare him off. When I saw him getting mad, I knew he had it in for you; and then I yelled. But George, please think of some way to coax the old rascal off, won’t you. It’s awful hard on me sitting up here on this limb, and he means to stay till I just starve to death. Have pity on me George and get up some plan to rescue your best chum.”

CHAPTER II

THE CAMP IN THE COVE

“Hey, Buster,” cried the one on the other side of the fence, “where did you say Josh was?”

“He went for help, over to the farmhouse where we got the milk and eggs,” answered the boy in the tree.

“Well,” George went on, after looking all around. “I don’t see him coming any too fast; and I wouldn’t put it past that joker to take a snooze on the way, so as to make you worry a lot more.”

“Yes, I was just thinking that same thing myself, George. Josh has got it in for me, you know, every time. But please think up some way to toll this angry gentleman cow away, George.”

“If I only had that red sweater now, I believe it could be done,” said George, presently.

“Why, that was what Josh said too,” lamented the prisoner; “but don’t you see I can’t get it over to you at all?”

“Course not; but hold on there!” called George.

“Oh! now I know you’ve thought of an idea. Good for you, George! You’re the best friend a fellow ever had, when he was in trouble. Are you going to sneak in the pasture, and tempt the bull away?”

“I am not,” promptly responded George. “I’ve got too much use for my legs, to take the chances of being crippled. But wait and see what I’m going to do. Trust your Dutch uncle to fool that old cyclone. Look at him tossing the dirt up again. Oh! ain’t he anxious to get at me, though?”

“What’s that you’re shaking at him now?” demanded Nick. “It looks like my sweater, only I know yours is gray. Why, it must be a bandanna handkerchief; yes, I remember now, you often tie one around your neck, cowboy fashion. I can see that you’re going to get me out of this nasty fix, George. It takes a lawyer sometimes to beat a bull at his own game.”

“It *is* a bandanna, Buster,” replied the other, “and watch me coax the old fellow along the fence, down to the other end of the field. How he shakes his head every time I wave the red flag, and tries to get at me. It’s working fine, Buster. You get ready to drop down and run when I tell you.”

“But George, even if you coax him to the end of the pasture you know I’m so slow I never could make the fence before he caught up with me?” cried the still worried prisoner of the tree.

“Yes, you are like an ice wagon, Buster; but never mind. I’ve got all that fixed. Just look down yonder and you’ll see a nice little trap ready for Mr. Bull. It’s a small enclosure, with three long rails to slide across, once he’s inside. Then he’s caught fast, and can’t get out. That is meant for just such a purpose. See?”

“Bully! bully!” shouted the delighted Nick, waving his hat in the air. “Oh! I tell you it takes a smart fellow to get on to these dodges. Why, Josh must have been blind not to see that same thing. Look at the bull following you every time you take a step. Then he turns his old head to peek back at me, as if just daring me to try and make the fence. But I know better. I can wait. Why, George, talk to me about your Spanish bull fights, this sure takes the cake!”

“Don’t crow too soon,” answered the other boy. “Now comes the ticklish part of the game. Will he go in that enclosure, or balk?”

“Wave it harder, George! Make out that you’re going to climb over. That’s the way to hold him. My! but wouldn’t he like to pitch you higher’n a kite. Look at that piece of old fence rail go flying, would you? Now he’s inside, George! Oh! if you can only get the bars across!”

George proved equal to the emergency. He fastened his red handkerchief to the fence, so that the wind kept it stirring constantly, with the bull snorting just on the other side, and smelling of the flaming object. Then George slyly slipped back, took hold of the upper bar, and quickly shot it in place through the opposite groove.

A second immediately followed; and by the time Mr. Bull awakened to the fact that he had again fallen into the old trap, he found himself neatly caged.

Nick was wild with delight. Still talking aloud, partly to himself and also addressing fulsome remarks to his chum, he started to slide down the body of the tree, landing with a heavy thump on the ground.

Then he went off at a pretty good pace, for one so stout, heading for the nearest part of the friendly fence.

Just about this moment, when Nick was half way across the intervening space, who should appear but Josh, followed by a farmer bearing a measure of corn as a lure intended to entrap the fighting animal.

All Josh saw was his friend trotting over the field; and filled with sudden alarm lest poor Nick be overtaken by the wily bull, whom he supposed to be on the other side of the tree, he immediately broke out into a shrill shout.

“Run faster, Buster! He’ll sure get you! Put on another speed! Hurry, hurry!”

When the fat boy heard these wild cries he became visibly excited. It was all very well to tell him to gallop along at a livelier clip; but Nature had never intended Nick Longfellow for a sprinter. When in his new alarm he attempted to increase his speed, the consequence was that his stout legs seemed to get twisted, or in each other’s way; at any rate he took a header, and ploughed up the earth with his stubby nose.

It gave him a chance to roll over several times, as if avoiding a vicious lunge from the wicked horns of the bull, which animal he imagined must be closing in on him.

Struggling to his feet, he again put for the now near fence; and George nearly took a fit laughing to see the remarkable manner in which the fat boy managed to clamber over the rails, heedless of whether he landed on his feet or his head, so long as he avoided punishment.

When Josh came running down, accompanied by George, Nick was brushing himself off, and wheezing heavily.

“Give you my word, Buster,” said the long-legged boy, penitently, “I never saw that the old duffer was caught in that trap when I yelled. Thought he was only hiding behind the tree, and giving you a fair start before he galloped after. George, did you do that smart trick? Well, it never came to me, I give you my word. Everybody can’t have these bright ideas, you know. And Nick, I was bringing the farmer, with a measure of corn, to get the bull to the barn. Hope you don’t hold it against me because I yelled. I sure was scared when I saw you trotting along so easy like.”

Nick was of a forgiving nature, and could not hold resentment long.

“Oh! that’s all right, Josh,” he said. “No great harm done, even if I have torn a big hole in my trouser knee. But you stayed away a mighty long while. Seemed like a whole hour to me.”

“Oh!” replied Josh, with a twinkle in his eye, “not near as long as that. Course it seemed like it to you, because a feller in a tree is worried. I had some trouble finding the farmer, you know. But let’s go back and get some more milk. Here’s my eggs all sound. Never broke one, even when I piled over this fence in such a hurry.”

The rest were of the same mind; so, accompanied by the amused Michigan farmer, they walked back to the house, where another purchase was made. Not only did they get milk, and another pail; but George thought to ask about butter, and secured a supply for camp use.

This time they avoided all short-cuts as tending to breed danger.

“I’ve heard said that ‘the longest way around is the shortest way to the fire,’” laughed George, as they passed the trapped bull; “but I never knew it applied to cow pastures as well. Just remember that, will you, Buster?”

“Just as if I could ever forget those wicked looking horns,” answered the fat boy promptly. “I guess I’ll dream about that bull often. If you hear me whooping out in the middle of the night, boys, you can understand that he’s been chasing me in my sleep. Ugh! forget him – never!”

In about ten minutes they came out of a grove of trees, and before them lay the great lake called Huron. Although it was something of a cove in which a campfire was burning, beyond, as far as the eye could reach, stretched a vast expanse of water, glittering in the westering sun, for it was late in the afternoon at the time.

Three natty little motor boats were anchored in the broad cove, back of a jutting tongue of land that would afford them shelter should a blow spring up during the night from the northeast, something hardly probable during early August.

Near the fire a trio of other lads were taking things comfortably. One of these was Jack Stormways, the skipper of the *Tramp*; another Jimmie Brannagan, an Irish lad who lived in the Stormways home on the Upper Mississippi, as a ward of Jack's father, and who was as humorous and droll as any red-haired and freckled face boy on earth; while the third fellow was Herbert Dickson, whose broad-beamed boat was called the *Comfort*, and well named at that.

George Rollins commanded the slender and cranky speed boat which rejoiced in the name of *Wireless*, and Josh acted as his assistant and cook; while Nick played the same part, as well as his fat build would allow, in the big launch.

They had spent a month cruising about the Thousand Islands, where fortune had thrown them in the way of many interesting experiences that have been related in a previous volume. Just now they were making a tour of the Great Lakes, intending to pass up through the famous Soo canal, reach Lake Superior, knock around for a few weeks, and then head for Milwaukee; where the boats would be shipped by railroad across the country to their home town on the great river.

As soon as the three wanderers arrived, laden with good things, Josh, who was the boss cook of the crowd, began to start operations looking to a jolly supper on the shore.

There were a few cottages on the other side of the little bay; but just around them it was given over to woods, so that they need not fear interruption during their evening meal, and the singing feast that generally followed.

Out in the bay a large power boat was anchored, a beautiful craft, which the boys had been admiring through their marine glasses. Possibly the flutter of girls' white dresses and colored ribbons may have had something to do with their interest in the costly vessel, though neither Herb nor Jack would have confessed as much had they been accused.

The name of the millionaire's boat was *Mermaid*, and she was about as fine a specimen of the American boatbuilder's art as any of these amateur sailors had ever looked upon.

"Me for a swim before we have supper," said Nick; who felt rather dusty after tumbling around so many times during his exciting experience with the bull.

"I'm with you there, Buster," laughed Jack. "You know I've got an interest in your work, since I taught you how to swim while we were making that Mississippi cruise."

On the previous Fall, the high school in their home town was closed until New Year's by order of the Board of Health, on account of a dreadful contagious disease breaking forth. These six lads, having the three staunch motor boats, had secured permission from their parents or guardians to make a voyage down the Mississippi to New Orleans. Jack really had to be in the Crescent City on December 1st, to carry out the provisions of the will of an eccentric uncle, who had left him considerable property. The other chums had gone along for the fun of the thing. And it was this trip Jack referred to when speaking of Nick's swimming.

Presently both boys were sporting in the water, having donned their bathing suits. While thus engaged Jack noticed out of the corner of his eye that a boat had put out from the big vessel, and also that the two girls were passengers.

Perhaps they were going ashore to take dinner with friends at one of the cottages just beyond the end of the woods; although Jack fancied that the men rowing were heading a little out of a straight course, so as to come closer to the three little motor boats, and possibly give the fair passengers a better view of the fleet.

There was now a stiff wind blowing, something unusual at an hour so near sunset. The waves came into the bay from the south, it being somewhat open toward the lower end, and slapped up on the beach with a merry chorus, that made swimming a bit strenuous for the fat boy; though Jack, being a duck in the water, never minded it a particle.

Intent on chasing Buster, whom he had allowed to gain a good lead, Jack was suddenly thrilled to hear a scream in a girlish voice, coming from the boat which he knew was now close by.

His first thought was that one of the girls had leaned too far over the side, and fallen into the water, which at that point was very deep. And it was with his heart in his mouth, so to speak, that Jack dashed his hand across his eyes to clear his vision, and turned his attention toward the big power boat's tender.

CHAPTER III

THE BOAT IN THE FACE OF THE MOON

A single look told Jack another story, for after all it was no human life in peril that had given rise to that girlish shriek.

Upon the dancing waves he saw a pretty hat, which had evidently been snatched by the wind from the head of the golden-haired maid, who was half standing up in the boat, with her hands outstretched toward her floating headgear.

The men had started to change their stroke, and try and turn the boat; but with the wind blowing so hard this was no easy matter. The chances seemed to be that possibly the hat might sink before they could get to it.

Jack never hesitated an instant. No sooner did he ascertain how things lay than he was off like a shot, headed straight for the drifting hat. It chanced that the wind and waves carried it toward him at the same time; so that almost before the two men in the boat had turned the head of the craft properly, Jack was reaching out an eager hand, and capturing the prize.

“Hooray!” came in a chorus from the boys ashore near the fire. Even Buster tried to wave his hands, forgetting that he had full need of them in the effort to remain afloat, with the result that he temporarily vanished from view under a wave.

Jack smiled to see the two girls in the boat clapping their hands as they bore down upon him. He noticed now, that while the one who had lost her hat was slender and a very pretty little witch, her companion was almost as heavy in her way as Buster himself, and with the rosiest cheeks possible.

“Oh! thank you,” cried the maiden whose headgear had been rescued from a watery grave. “It was nice of you to do that. And it was my pet hat, too. Whatever would I have done if it had sunk, with poor me so far away from our Chicago home. Is one of those dear little boats yours?”

“Yes, the one with the burgee floating at the bow,” returned Jack, as he kept treading water, after delivering up the gay hat. “We’re taking our vacation by making a trip from the Thousand Islands all through the Great Lakes. My name is Jack Stormways.”

“And mine is Rita Andrews. My father owns that big power boat there; and we live in Oak Park near Chicago. This is my cousin, Sallie Bliss. I’m sorry to say that we’re going to leave here early in the morning; or I’d ask you to come aboard and meet my father.”

Nick meanwhile was approaching, making desperate efforts to hurry along before the boat passed on. For Nick had discovered that the rosy-cheeked girl was just the match for him, and he wanted to be introduced the worst kind.

Unfortunately the cruel men took to rowing again, and though Nick swam after, puffing and blowing like a porpoise, he was left in the lurch. But he succeeded in waving his hand to the departing ones, and laughed joyously when he saw that Miss Sallie actually returned his salute.

So the boat with its fair occupants passed away. Jack wondered whither the millionaire, whose name he remembered having heard before, was bound; and if a kind fate would ever allow him to see that charming face of Rita Andrews again. Little did he dream of the startling conditions that would surround their next meeting.

“Hi! there, you fellows, come ashore and get some duds on!” called George, who had been an interested observer of this little play.

“Yes,” supplemented Josh, waving a big spoon as though that might be the emblem of his authority as “chief cook and bottle-washer,” “supper’s about ready, and my omelette eats best when taken right off the pan. Get a move on you, fellows.”

It was amusing to see the scramble Nick made for the shore. The jangle of a spoon on a kettle always stirred his fighting spirit; he felt the “call of the wild” as George said, and could hardly wait until the rest sat down.

So the two swimmers went ashore, and hastily dressed. Nick was forever talking about the lovely roses in the cheeks of Miss Sallie.

“You didn’t play fair, Jack,” he complained. “When you saw how anxious I was to get up, why didn’t you pretend to have a cramp, or something, to detain the boat. I didn’t even get introduced. She don’t know what my name is. It’s mean, that’s what I think.”

Jack knew that Buster would never be happy unless he had some cause for grumbling. It was usually all put on, though, for naturally the fat boy was a good-natured, easy-going fellow, ready to accommodate any one of his chums to the utmost.

While they ate the fine supper which Josh spread before them, George entertained the party with a droll account of the adventure two of their number had had with a bull. He had purposely kept silent up to now, and bound Josh to secrecy, so that he could spring the story while they sat around.

Loud was the laughter as George went on in his clever way of telling things. But Nick laughed with the rest. Viewed from the standpoint of safety things really looked humorous now; whereas at one time they had seemed terrifying indeed.

“Catch me wearing that blessed red sweater again when I go for milk or eggs,” he declared. “Once is enough for me. Oh! if I’d only had a camera along to snap Josh as he went climbing over that fence, with the bull so close behind. I’d get that picture out every time I felt blue, and laugh myself sick.”

Josh assumed an injured air, as he spoke up, saying:

“Now would you listen to that, fellows? Just as if I looked a quarter as funny as Nick did, trying to scramble up that tree, nearly scared to death, because he thought Johnny Bull wanted to help him rise in the world. Oh! my land! but he was a sight. When I went off to get help I wanted to laugh so bad I just fell over in the grass, where he couldn’t see me, and just had it out. Couldn’t help it.”

“That’s what kept you so long, was it?” demanded Nick, reproachfully. “All right, the very next time you get in a pickle, and yell out for help, I’m going to get a crick in my leg when I try to run, see if I don’t.”

“All the same I noticed that you could swim to beat the band when you tried to join Jack, before the sweet girlies got away,” put in George, maliciously.

“Nick was afraid the boat was going to upset, and he saw a chance to save that red-cheeked little dumpling from a watery grave,” Herb remarked, with a grin.

“Suppose something *had* happened, Jack couldn’t have rescued them both. But you can laugh all you want to, smarties, she waved her hand to me all the same, didn’t she, Jack?” appealed the fat boy, stubbornly.

“I saw her wave to somebody, so I suppose it was meant for you,” replied Jack.

“Birds of a feather flock together,” chanted Josh.

“That’ll do for you,” Nick declared sternly. “She was a fine and dandy little lady, and I hope some time in the future I’ll see Sallie Bliss again.”

“Bliss! Oh! what d’ye think of that, fellows?” roared George.

“Leave Buster alone, can’t you?” Jack said, in pretended indignation. “He’s all right, and honest as the day is long. None of your Crafty Clarence in his makeup, you know, fellows.”

Clarence Macklin was a boy who came from the same town as those around the camp fire. He was the son of a very rich man, who supplied him with almost unlimited spending money. Consequently Clarence was able to carry out any folly that chanced to crop up in his scheming mind.

Learning through trickery of the intention of the motor boat boys to cruise among the Thousand Islands, he had shipped his fast speed boat, called the *Flash* thither, and succeeded in giving them

more or less annoyance. He was accompanied by his pet crony, a fellow called Bully Joe Brinker, who usually did the dirty work Clarence allowed himself to think up.

“Say, speaking of that fellow, wonder what’s become of him?” George remarked; for there was a standing rivalry between his boat and that of the other, both being built solely for speed, and not comfort or safety.

“Didn’t he hint something about coming up in this region later on?” said Jack.

“I understood it that way,” observed Herb. “And more than a few times, while we cruised along the southern shore of Ontario and Erie, I thought we’d see his pirate boat bob up.”

“I hope we don’t run across that crowd again,” observed Nick. “For they’re sore on us, and bound to do us a bad turn if they find the chance.”

“Well, we can keep our eyes open,” remonstrated George. “You know Clarence believes that *Flash* can make circles around my bully boat, and I’m wanting to give him a chance to prove it.”

“Chuck that, George,” said Josh. “You know you beat him out once handsomely.”

“Yes, but he said he hadn’t tried to do his level best. Anyhow, if the chance comes again I’m ready to race him.”

“How long would we be gettin’ up till the Soo now, Jack, darlint?” asked Jimmie; who being second “high notch” in the line of eaters in the crowd, had been too busy up to now to do any great amount of talking.

“That depends pretty much on the weather,” replied the leader of the expedition, who studied his charts faithfully, and was always ready to give what information he picked up, to his chums. “We are now something like one hundred and fifty miles sou’-east-by-south from Mackinac Island, where we expect to stop over a few days. If we pick out a good morning we ought to navigate the head of Huron and the crooked St. Mary’s river to the Soo in one day. The steamers do, and we can make about as fast time.”

“Of course we have to hold up for the *Comfort* pretty much all the way,” said George; “not that I’m complaining, fellows, for I understand that it takes all sorts of people to make a world, and lots of different kinds of boats to please everybody. And in bad weather Herb and Josh fare better than the rest of us. Well, suppose we leave here tomorrow morning, if the weather lets us, Jack?”

“We will try and make Mackinac with just one more stop,” Jack replied. “That will be easy enough; though if the wind gets around and the waves increase, we’ll have to run for some snug harbor, George, because your boat and mine are hardly storm craft on these big lakes.”

“It’s been a foine trip so far, I say,” observed Jimmie, reaching for another baked potato, which Josh had cooked to a turn in the ashes of the fire, somehow keeping them from blackening, as is usually the case in camp.

“You’re right there, Jimmie,” replied Herb. “And with no serious accidents to come, we’ll make a record to be proud of. Just imagine us sitting around the fire in our cozy club house that is right now building, while Jack reads the stirring log of our experiences up here. It will make us live over the whole trip again.”

“Yes,” chimed in George, “and think of the *bliss* that must bring.”

Nick colored a little, as he felt every eye on him.

“Look at the moon just peeping up over yonder, fellows,” he observed, meaning to distract their attention.

“Just about full too,” remarked Jack. “Going to be a great night for a camp.”

“Makes me think of that moonlight race we had with the *Flash*,” George went on, his heart always set on the matter of speed and victories.

Night was just closing in, and the grand full moon was rising from the watery depths, so it seemed.

“There comes a motor boat down yonder,” remarked Herb. “See what a fine searchlight she has. No need of that, though, as soon as the moon gets fairly up.”

“Say, she’s just humping along to beat the band, I tell you!” declared Josh, as all eyes were turned to where the shadowy form of the advancing craft could be seen, growing plainer with every passing second.

“Oh! I don’t know,” instantly remarked George, who was unable to see much good in any small craft when his pet *Wireless* was around. “I should say she was doing just fairly, you know; but then she doesn’t have to hold back for any elephant.”

“That’s a mean hit, George,” said Herb, though he never changed his mind about his comfortable boat because of any slurs cast by his mates, who might come to envy him in bad weather.

“Look at her cut through the water, would you?” Josh went on. “The fellows aboard don’t intend to turn in here to stop over. Must be in a hurry to get somewhere, I guess.”

“There, she’s just passing the rising moon. Why, I declare, fellows, seems to me she looks kind of familiar like!” Nick exclaimed.

Jack jumped up, and secured a pair of marine glasses. They were guaranteed for night work, and through them he could see the passing motor boat splendidly.

“Is it, Jack?” asked George, eagerly; and the other nodded.

“That’s the same old *Flash*, all right,” he said, looking around the circle.

“Gosh!” exploded Nick, “Crafty Clarence is on the trail once more, bent on revenge for the beat George gave his pirate motor boat. I see warm times looming up ahead of us, shipmates all. And ain’t I glad I know how to swim now!”

CHAPTER IV

CAUGHT BY THE STORM

“I wonder if they know we are camping in this place right now?” Josh ventured.

“The chances are, they do,” replied Jack. “Both of those chaps possess eyes as sharp as they make them. And there’s another reason why I think that way.”

“Then let’s hear it, old fellow,” begged Nick.

“This is a nice, attractive place to haul in, and spend the night, when cruising along in a small motor boat. As evening has come, not one in ten would think of passing the cove by; and you know it, boys,” Jack went on, with emphasis.

“But they deliberately did that same thing,” ventured Herb. “Yes, I get on to what you mean, Jack. They’d rather boom along, and take chances of being caught out on the open lake in the night, even with a storm in prospect, to stopping over near the camp of the motor boat club. Is that it?”

“Just what I meant, Herb,” nodded the other.

“And I guess you struck it, all right,” commented Josh.

“But if they didn’t want to say us agin, what in the dickens did they iver kim up this way for, I doan’t know?” remarked Jimmie, helplessly.

At that George laughed out loud.

“Wake up, Jimmie!” he exclaimed. “You’re asleep, you know. Why, don’t you understand that Clarence Macklin never yet took a beat like a fair and square man? He won’t rest easy till he’s tried it again with the *Wireless*. I happen to know that he hurried his poor old boat to a builder, and had him work on the engine, hoping to stir it up a peg or two. And now he’s going to sneak around till he gets the chance to challenge me again.”

“And,” went on Nick, following up the idea, “he didn’t want to drop in here with us, because in the first place he hates us like fun; and then he was afraid George might ask questions about his bally old boat.”

“He wants to spring a surprise!” declared Josh. “That’s his play all the time. When we had snowball battles, Clarence was forever hiding with a bunch of his men, and jumping out suddenly at us. That’s where he got his name of Sneaky Clarence.”

“Well,” remarked Jack, “I hope George gets a chance to show him up again for the fraud that he is; but at the same time I don’t want Clarence and Bully Joe bothering us right along. We didn’t come up here just to chase around after them.”

“Or have the gossoons chasing around afther us, by the same token,” laughed the Irish lad.

They sat around the fire, and carried on in their usual jolly way, telling stories, laughing, and singing many of the dear old school songs. Six voices, and some of them wonderfully good ones too, made a volume of sound that must have carried far across the bay to the cottages, where the summer residents were doubtless sitting out in the beautiful moonlight.

The boys began to think of retiring about ten or after. A couple of tents had been purchased after coming to the St. Lawrence river country; for somehow all of them became tired of sleeping aboard the boats, since there was little of comfort about it.

These tents had been erected under the supervision of Jack, who knew all about how a camp should be constructed, so that in case of wind or rain no damage was likely to result.

They made a pretty sight now, with the moonlight falling upon them, and the flickering fire adding to the picture.

Jack had wandered down to the edge of the water. The three motor boats were all anchored close by, and everything had been made snug; but of course it was not the intention of the boys to leave things unguarded. The chances of trouble were too positive to think of such foolishness.

“Too bad, Jack, that the wind has gone down,” said a voice at his elbow; and turning Jack saw the grinning countenance of George.

“Oh! I don’t know,” remarked the other, slowly and cautiously, as if wondering whether George could read his secret thoughts, and know that he was just then thinking of the pretty little girl whose hat he had rescued from the hungry maw of the lake that afternoon.

“Why, I think I hear voices over yonder where they landed, and girls at that,” George continued, wickedly. “No doubt the little darlings are about embarking on the return trip to the *Mermaid*. Now, if the wind would only suddenly swoop along, perhaps a boat might be upset. But Jack, with your clothes on, you’d have a tough time swimming out there and saving Rita’s life, like you did her bonnet.”

“Oh! let up on that, will you?” laughed Jack, good naturedly; for he was used to such joking and joshing on the part of his mates, and ready to take it in the same spirit of fun that it was meant. “I was thinking about our boats here. Seems to me that whoever is on guard should take up a position where he can keep an eye on the whole outfit. At the first sign of danger he must wake up the bunch of us. Isn’t that right, George?”

“Sure it is; but see here, you don’t really think anything *will* happen, do you?” the other demanded, uneasily. “Because if I had any idea that way, I’d feel like going aboard, and sleeping there, uncomfortable as a narrow speed boat is. Why, it’d nearly break my heart if anything knocked my *Wireless* just now, and spoiled the rest of my vacation.”

“Oh! I guess there’s no real danger,” said Jack, quickly; “but you know my way of being cautious. An ounce of prevention, they say, George, is better than a pound of cure. We insure our boats against explosion and loss; why not do the same about our chances for a jolly good time?”

“Right you are, Jack. That’s a long head you carry on your shoulders,” admitted the skipper of the speed craft. “But there they come. I can see the boat, and the white dresses of the girls. She is a little angel, Jack, and seriously I don’t blame you for wanting to see more of Miss Rita Andrews; but the chances are against you, old fellow.”

“Well, girls were the last thing we had in mind when we started on this trip,” remarked Jack. “We left lots of pretty ones at home, you know; and we’re getting letters from some of them right along. There, they’ve made the big power boat all right, and are getting aboard.”

“And you can go to sleep with an easy mind,” laughed George, “because the young lady wasn’t wrecked in port. But perhaps we might happen to catch up with ’em at the Soo, Jack. No doubt you had thought of that?”

“We expect to be at Mackinac first, and people generally stop off there a day or two,” remarked the pilot of the *Tramp*, falling into the little trap shrewd lawyer George had set for him; whereat the other gave him a dig in the ribs, and ran off to the camp to get his blankets ready for his first nap.

But nothing out of the way did happen that night, though the motor boat boys kept faithful watch and ward, one of them being on duty an hour or more at a time up to dawn.

With the coming of the sun over the water all were awake, and preparations for breakfast underway. Jack, Nick and Josh concluded to take a morning dip, while the rest were looking after the cooking of a heap of delicious flapjacks done to a brown turn as only the wonderful Josh could coax them.

Smoke rising slowly from the big power boat’s cook’s galley pipe announced that preparations were underway there for an early start.

Indeed, the vessel started to leave the harbor even while Jack and his mates were still sitting around the fire, disposing of the appetizing mess that had been so skillfully prepared for the crowd.

“Jack, it’s all right!” laughed George.

“Yes,” chimed in Nick, innocently, with a sigh of relief, “they’re heading north, sure as anything.”

“Oh! we forgot there was a pair of ’em, sighing like furnaces,” jeered Josh.

But Jack and the fat boy only laughed.

“Rank jealousy, Nick; don’t you bother your head about such cruel remarks,” said the former, winking to the stout youth.

“Well, everybody get busy now,” said George, jumping to his feet. “It looks like we might have a fairly decent day, if that blessed old wind keeps away. My boat rolls like fun when in a wash, and I don’t like it a bit. Hope we’ll have the air out of the southwest today, so we’ll be shielded by the shore.”

He hurried off to get aboard. The others were not far behind, for tents had been taken down, and blankets stowed, while breakfast was being cooked; so that there was not a great deal to do now.

Then, after a last survey of the late camp had been taken by cautious Jack, in order to make sure that nothing was forgotten and the fire dead, he too stepped into his little dinky, paddled out to where Jimmie awaited him aboard the *Tramp*; and five minutes later the little flotilla started, amid a tremendous popping of motors, and much calling back and forth on the part of skippers and crews.

Once outside the protecting cape they headed due nor’-east by north, and kept just a certain distance away from the shore.

It was a lovely morning, and gave promise of a fine day; but these cruisers had learned through bitter experience never to wholly trust such signs. In summer at any rate, storms can develop with suddenness on the big lakes, and a squall start to blowing without warning. Hence they had adopted as a motto, the slogan of the Boy Scouts: “Be Prepared!”

George called out to the skipper of the *Tramp*, and pointed ahead, where, several miles to the north could be seen the dim shape of the big power boat, rapidly covering the distance that intervened between the cove and charming Mackinac Island.

“They’ll be at Mackinac tonight, all right, Jack!” shouted George, who led the little procession in his speed boat.

Jack made no attempt at a reply; but Jimmie took up the cudgels at once.

“Sure we’ll make it by tomorry night, if all goes well,” he said; “and begorra, not wan of our boats is in the same class wid the big wan. Take the three together and they’d be only a bite for the *Mermaid*. So we bate thim aisy now.”

So they chugged along as time passed. In an hour all signs of the larger craft had passed from their sight. At noon they opened up Thunder Bay; and thinking to make the dangerous crossing of its broad mouth before having lunch, they kept on.

It was rather rough traveling, especially for the narrow *Wireless*; and acting upon Jack’s suggestion George hovered close to the others, so as to have help in case of trouble, and be partly sheltered from the rollers by keeping in their lee.

But the passage was made in safety; and after that their course changed to some extent. The shore turned more toward the northwest, so that they headed into the wind, which was creating some sea, in which the small craft wallowed considerably.

An hour later Jack began to cast anxious glances toward the shore, hoping to discover an opening of some sort, in which the fleet might take refuge. For the sky was darkening by degrees, and he fancied he caught the muttering of thunder in the distance.

On their starboard quarter nothing could be seen but a vast heaving expanse of water; for Lake Huron at this point stretches more than fifty miles, before Grand Manitoulin Island is reached to the northeast.

It would be a bad place for such small craft to be caught in a storm. Still, the shore looked strangely devoid of any indentation, and Jack’s fears increased as the minutes passed without any change for the better cropping up. But he did not express these aloud, and even his boatmate Jimmie, although often casting a look of anxious inquiry at the face of his skipper, could not tell what was passing in his mind.

And then, without any warning, there suddenly came a vivid flash of lightning over in the west, almost immediately followed by an ominous clap of thunder that seemed to make the very air quiver.

“Say, that looks bad!” called out Josh; who was in the cranky speed boat, and had more reason to be alarmed than most of his comrades.

“What shall we do, Jack?” asked Herb, whose *Comfort* was keeping close on the port side of the boat Jack had charge of.

“Push on for all we’re worth,” answered the other. “I think I see a harbor, if only we can make it before the storm breaks. George, you leave us, and drive ahead; for the danger is greater with you than the rest. But don’t worry fellows; it’s all right, we’ve just got to make that bay where the point sticks out, and we’re going to do it too.”

CHAPTER V

A STRANGE SOUND

George recognized the wisdom of such a move as his chum suggested. If the wind kept on increasing as it seemed bound to do, and the storm broke upon them in all its mid-summer violence, the cranky speed boat would be apt to feel the effect more than either of the other craft.

It was therefore of great importance that he and Josh seek the promised shelter with all haste. Much as he disliked leaving the balance of the fleet, necessity seemed to compel such a move.

Accordingly, he threw on all the motive power his engine was capable of developing, and began to leave the others quickly in the lurch.

Jack could easily have gone ahead of the heavy *Comfort*, but he did not mean to do so. Better that they stick together, so as to be able to render assistance if it were badly needed.

Talking across the narrow abyss of water separating the two boats was altogether out of the question, unless one shouted. There was no time for an exchange of opinions, since all of them needed to keep their wits on the alert, in order to meet the dangers that impended.

Already had the waves grown in size. They were getting heavier with every passing minute; and the little motor boats began to actually wallow, unless headed directly into the washing seas.

It was a critical time for all concerned, and Nick could be seen with his cork life-preserver carefully fastened about his stout body under the arms, as if prepared for the very worst that could happen.

It was about this time that Jimmie gave a shrill whoop.

“They done it!” he yelled, regardless of the rules of grammar, such was his delight. “The ould *Wireless* is safe beyant the p’int!”

Jack saw that what he said seemed to be so. The speed boat had evidently managed to reach a spot where the jutting tongue of land helped to shield her from the oncoming waves. She no longer plunged up and down like a cork on the water, though continuing her onward progress.

The sight spurred the others on to renewed zeal. If George could do it, then the same measure of success should come their way.

Five minutes later Jack noticed that there was an apparent abatement of the wild fury with which the heaving billows were beating against the bow of his little craft. A look ahead told him the comforting news that already was the extreme point standing between the two boats and the sweep of the seas.

“We do be safe!” shouted Jimmie; who, in his excitable way seemed ready to try and dance a jig then and there, an operation that would have been attended with considerable danger to the safety of the *Tramp’s* human cargo.

“And not a minute too soon!” said Jack, as a sudden gust of wind tore past, that might have been fatal to his boat had it been wallowing in one of those seas just then.

As it was, they had about all they could do to push on against the fierce gale, protected as they were by the cape of land. The spray was flying furiously over that point, as the waves dashed against its further side. But the boys knew they were safe from harm, and could stand a wetting with some degree of patience.

George was waiting for them, his anchor down, at a point he considered the best they could make for the present. He had managed to pull on his oilskins, and was looking just like a seasoned old tar as the other boats drew in.

Jimmie and Nick were ready with the mudhooks, under the directions of their respective skippers. Hardly had these found a temporary resting-place at the bottom, than all four lads seized upon their rainproof suits, and presently they were as well provided against the downpour as George.

And the rain certainly did descend in a deluge for a short time. They had all they could do to prevent the boats from being half swamped, such was the tremendous violence with which the torrent was hurled against them by the howling wind.

But after all, it was only a summer squall. In less than half an hour the sun peeped out, as if smiling over the deluge of tears. The wind had gone down before, but of course the waves were still rolling very heavily outside.

“That settles our going on today!” declared George, as he pointed at the outer terminus of the cape, past which they could see the rollers chasing one another, as if in a great game of tag.

“It’s pretty late in the afternoon anyhow,” declared Josh, who was secretly worried for fear lest his rather reckless skipper might want to put forth again.

“Yes, and we might look a long way ahead without finding a chance to drop into a harbor as good as this,” remarked Herb.

“You’re all right,” laughed Jack; “and we’d be sillies to even dream of leaving this bully nook now. Besides, if tomorrow is decent, we can make an extra early start in the morning, and get to Mackinac before dark.”

“That suits me all right,” Nick observed, as he complacently started to remove his oilskins, so that he could pay attention to the bulky cork life preserver, which he did not mean to wear all night.

They found that it was possible to make a point much closer to the shore, and it was decided to do so, especially after sharp-eyed Jimmie had discovered signs of a farm near by, possibly belonging to a grower of apples, since a vast orchard seemed to cover many acres.

“I hope that big power boat wasn’t caught in that stiff blow,” Jack remarked, as they were getting ready to go ashore in order to stretch their legs a bit and look around.

“Oh! I guess they must have made Mackinac,” said George. “She was a hurry-boat, all right, and the wind would not bother her like it did our small fry.”

“Thank you, George, for that comforting remark. I was really getting worried myself about the *Mermaid*,” observed Nick.

“Listen to Buster, would you, fellows?” cried Josh. “I never thought he’d go back on the girls we left behind us, and particularly Rosie!”

But Nick only grinned as they joined in the laugh.

“I’m a privileged character now,” he asserted, stoutly. “A sailor is said to have a best girl in every port, you know, fellows. And every one of you will agree with me that Sallie Bliss is as pretty as a peach.”

“And just your size too, Buster,” declared Herb.

“Look out for an engagement with some dime museum company as the fat” – started Josh; when he had to dodge something thrown at him by the object of this persecution, and the sentence was never completed.

The ground being sandy close to the water, they concluded to start a fire, so as to cook supper ashore, since it was so much more “homey” as Nick said, for them to be together at mealtimes. But all were of the opinion that it would be advisable to sleep on board.

“Another hot squall might spring up during the night,” observed George, “and just fancy our tents going sailing off to sea. Of course I don’t hanker about putting in a night in such cramped quarters as my narrow boat affords; but it can’t come anywhere near what I went through with when Buster was my shipmate, down on the Mississippi.”

“And then somebody ought to go after milk and eggs,” suggested Herb.

“Here, don’t everybody look at me,” Nick bridled up. “I guess it’s the turn of another bunch this time. Josh and myself have served our country as haulers of the necessities.”

“But every farmer doesn’t own a bull, Buster,” remarked George.

“Well, I object to bulldogs just as much. Little fellows are all right, likewise pussy cats; but deliver me from the kind that hold on to all they grab. Nixey. You and Jack try it this time, George.”

“That’s only fair,” spoke up the latter, immediately.

“Well,” said George, “if we’re going, the sooner we start the better; because you see the old sun is hanging right over the horizon.”

“And I’m nearly caved in for want of proper nourishment,” grumbled Nick.

No one paid any particular attention to his remark; because that condition was a regular part of his lamentations several times a day. The only time Nick seemed to be in a state of absolute contentment was the half hour following a gorging bee; and then he beamed satisfaction.

Accordingly the pair started forth, armed with a tin bucket for the milk. George had no great love for biting dogs himself, and as they approached the vicinity of the farm buildings he suggested to his companion that they arm themselves with stout canes, with which they might defend themselves in case of an emergency.

“Looks like a prosperous place, all right,” Jack observed as they saw the buildings and the neat appearance of things in general.

“But seems to me it’s awful lonely here,” remarked George. “Where can the people all be? Don’t see any children about, or women folks. Plenty of cows and chickens, but sure they can’t take care of themselves.”

“Well, hardly,” laughed Jack. “We’ll run across somebody soon. Let’s head for the barn first. Generally at this time you’ll find the men busy there, taking care of the horses, and the pigs.”

“I hear hogs grunting,” remarked George.

“Well, I got the same sound myself; but do you know it struck me more like a groan!” Jack said, in a voice somewhat awed.

“A groan! Gee; what do you mean, Jack?” exclaimed the other, turning toward his chum with a white face.

“Just what I said,” Jack replied. “And listen, there it is again. Now I know it was no swine you heard, George. That sound was from the barn. Come on. I’m afraid somebody’s in trouble here!”

CHAPTER VI

“CARRY THE NEWS TO ANDY!”

“Nobody here, Jack!” announced George, in a relieved tone, as the two entered the stable, and looked around.

A number of horses stood in stalls, munching their oats, which in itself told the observing Jack that some one must have been there a short time before, since the animals had been recently fed.

Before he could make any reply to his companion’s remark, once more that thrilling sound came to their ears. And this time even George realized that it was unmistakably a human groan.

“It came from over here!” exclaimed Jack, as without the slightest hesitation he sprang across the floor of the place.

George following close upon his heels, saw him bending over the figure of a man, who was lying upon the floor in a doubled-up position.

“What has happened? Did one of the horses kick him?” gasped George, always a bundle of nerves.

“No, I don’t think so,” replied Jack. “I can find no sign of an injury about him. It’s more likely a fit of some kind he’s just recovering from. Lots of people are subject to such things, you know.”

“Say, that’s just what;” declared George. “I had an uncle who used to drop like a rock right in the street or anywhere.”

“What did they do with him at such times?” demanded Jack, anxiously.

“Well, nobody seemed able to do much,” replied the other. “I saw my father loosen the collar of his shirt, and lay him out on his back. A little water on his face might help; but in most fits it takes some time to recover. But I thought I saw his eyelids twitch right then, Jack.”

“Yes, he’s going to come out of it,” replied Jack, as he managed to get the old man into what seemed like a more comfortable position.

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