

ELLIS JAMES

TANDY

SHAWN OF SKARROW

James Ellis

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James Tandy Ellis

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CHAPTER I

"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 lightning-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 armchair, 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 medicine 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 leggings 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-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 john-boat 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 obliged. 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 Hisson. 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 Hirus, 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 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 mussel, 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 keefer-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."

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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