

ALGER

HORATIO JR.

JULIUS, THE STREET BOY

Horatio Alger
Julius, The Street Boy

«Public Domain»

Alger H.

Julius, The Street Boy / H. Alger — «Public Domain»,

Содержание

CHAPTER I.	5
CHAPTER II.	8
CHAPTER III.	12
CHAPTER IV.	15
CHAPTER V.	18
CHAPTER VI.	21
CHAPTER VII.	24
CHAPTER VIII.	27
CHAPTER IX.	30
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	32

Jr. Horatio Alger

Julius, The Street Boy / or Out West

CHAPTER I. RETIRED FROM BUSINESS

“Where are you goin’, Julius? Where’s yer blackin’ box?” asked Patrick Riley.

“I’ve retired from business,” said Julius.

“Did yer rich uncle die, and leave yer a fortune?”

“No, but he’s goin’ up the river to Sing Sing, for the benefit of his constitushun, and I’m goin’ West fer my health.”

“Goin’ West? You’re gassin’.”

“No, I ain’t, I’m goin’ in a few days, along of Mr. O’Connor, and a lot of other chaps.”

“Is it far out there?” asked Pat.

“More’n a hundred miles,” said Julius, whose ideas of geography and distances were rather vague.

“Yer don’t mean ter live out there?”

“Yes, I do, I’m goin’ on to a farm, or into a store, and grow up respectable.”

“Won’t yer miss the city, Julius?”

“Likely I will.”

“I don’t think I’d like the country,” said Pat, reflectively. “New York’s a bully place. There’s always something goin’ on. I say, did you hear of that murder in Center Street last night?”

“No; what was it?”

“A feller stabbed a cop that was trottin’ him round to the station house for bein’ tight. There’s always something to make it lively here. In the country there ain’t no murders, nor burglaries, nor nothin’,” concluded Pat, rather contemptuously.

“I hope there’s theayters,” said Julius, thoughtfully. “I like to go when there’s a good lively piece.”

“Have you been to our theayter yet, Julius?”

“Your theayter?”

“Yes, me and some of the boys have got up a theayter. We do the pieces and actin’ ourselves.”

“Where is it?” asked Julius, with lively curiosity.

“It’s No. 17 Baxter Street, down in the basement. We call it ‘The Grand Duke’s Oprea House.’ We don’t have to pay no rent. It’s Jim Campara’s place, an’ he’s treasurer, so his father don’t charge nothin’.”

“How long have you been goin’, Pat?”

“Most a month. We play every night.”

“Are you doin’ well? Do you make money?”

“Tiptop. I say, Julius, yer must come to-night. It’s my benefit.”

“Do you get all the money that’s took in?”

“No, half goes for expenses. I get the rest.”

“What do you do?”

“Oh, I play nigger parts, and dance the jigs.”

“What do you charge for a ticket?”

“Five cents admission, and eight cents reserved seats.”

“That’s cheaper’n Tony Pastor’s.”

“Yes; we can’t expect to get so much as Tony, ’cause yer know we ain’t purfessional. We’re amatoors.”

“How much do you get for your valuable services, Pat?” asked Julius, laughing.

“I’ll tell yer the way we do. Jim Campara—he’s the treasurer—keeps all the stamps till the end of the week, and then it is divided between us. Last week I got three dollars.”

“You did! Well, that’s pretty good pay.”

“Well,” said Pat, “there’s some expenses. I have to pay for my wardrobe.”

“What’s that?”

“My stage clo’es. Besides I have to practice dancin’ in the daytime. I ain’t Pat Riley on the stage.”

“What are you, then?”

“My actin’ name is ‘Miles O’Reilly.’”

“What made you change?”

“Yer see it sounds grander than Pat Riley.”

“Who acts besides you?”

“Oh, there’s Dan Conroy, Pete Connors, Teddy Sullivan, Jim McGrath, Dick Burke, Jim Gillispie and Campara.”

“If I was goin’ to stay in the city I’d like to play too,” said Julius.

“Maybe you ain’t got a genius for it,” responded the eminent negro comedian. “Lots of boys wants to come in, but we don’t take none if they can’t act. There was Billy Burke wanted to come; but we tried him, an’ he couldn’t play no more’n a stick. We want fellers that’ll draw. You come round to-night, an’ you’ll see what we can do.”

“I guess I will. What number did you say?”

“No. 17 Baxter Street. Curtain rises at eight o’clock, prompt.”

“I’ll be there. What yer goin’ to play?”

“‘Laughin’ Gas’ and ‘Dick Turpin’ is the principal pieces, but the ‘Mulligan Guards’ is the best. Yer better be on time, for it’s my benefit, and my friends will be out in crowds.”

Here’s Pat’s keen eyes detected a gentleman with soiled boots, and he called out, “Shine yer boots, mister?”

“Yes, if you’ll be quick about it.”

“I’ll shine ’em up in half a second, sir.”

“Go ahead!”

The gentleman submitted his boots to the professional efforts of Pat, unaware that the young bootblack was the celebrated Miles O’Reilly of the “Grand Duke’s Oprea House.” Probably he had never visited that famous and fashionable place of amusement, or he would have recognized the face of one of the most brilliant stars in the galaxy of talent which nightly appeared upon its humble stage.

Julius went on his way, being for a few days a gentleman of leisure. For the benefit of such readers as may not be familiar with the details of his story as told in “Slow and Sure,” it is well to record the fact that he had been brought up by Jack Morgan, a thief and burglar, who, for the last four years, had spent half of his time on Blackwell’s Island. When at liberty, Julius lived with him. When he was in seclusion, Julius looked out for himself, and, being sharp and shrewd, and accustomed to depend upon his own exertions, managed just as well without his guardian as with him. He had no particular reason to like Jack, who merely gave him the liberty of earning his own living, and frequently borrowed his scanty earnings without thinking it necessary to repay them.

Some weeks before, Jack, with a friend and confederate, Marlowe, formed a plan for entering a house on Madison Avenue, which, they had reason to believe, contained a considerable amount of plate. The owner was absent in Europe and the house was left during his absence under the care of Paul Hoffman and his mother. Paul, whose early history is recorded in “Paul, the Peddler,” was the proprietor of a street necktie stand, near the Astor House. He had on one occasion shown kindness to Julius, and the latter was grateful. Learning that Jack and Marlowe proposed to enter the house

occupied by Paul, he showed his gratitude by giving the young street merchant an intimation of their intentions. Thus, when the attempt was made, Paul was prepared, and the two burglars walked into a trap. Jack was caught on the spot, but Marlowe for the time escaped. Had he left the city at once, he might have escaped wholly. But he was inflamed with bitter anger against the boy Julius, who, as he rightly judged, had betrayed them, and he was determined to be revenged. Following the boy to Staten Island, he overtook him in a lonely place, and but for timely interference might have murdered him, in which case the present volume would never have been written.

But Julius was reserved for better things. His dangerous enemy was arrested, and being identified as having been concerned in the Madison Avenue robbery, was tried in due form, and sentenced to ten years' imprisonment in Sing Sing.

I have anticipated matters a little, as at the time the present story opens both he and Jack Morgan were temporarily confined in the Tombs, while awaiting trial.

As for Julius, he was rewarded by a gift of fifty dollars, and, by the advice of his new friends, determined to seek a home in the West, going out under the auspices of the Children's Aid Society. The company of which he was to be one was to start in a few days. Meanwhile Julius decided to enjoy a rest from his usual labors, having an ample supply of money to meet his small expenses. On the whole, he was pleased with the idea of going West. But, apart from this consideration, he felt that his life would not be safe in the city should Jack Morgan or Marlowe succeed in breaking jail, as they had done more than once before. The boy had good reason to apprehend danger, for he well knew their brutal natures, and their unscrupulousness, and that they would stop at no crime in wreaking vengeance upon him. Once out West, however, he would be out of their reach, and it was not likely that they would follow him out there.

CHAPTER II. THE “GRAND DUKE’S OPREA HOUSE.”

Some minutes before eight, Julius reached the “Grand Duke’s Oprea House.” It is very eligibly located on Baxter Street not far from the famous Five Points. Perhaps in consequence of the filthy condition of the streets in the immediate neighborhood, visitors are not expected to appear in full dress, and nothing is more common than for the young gentlemen who patronize it to dispense with coat or vest, or both. As for kid gloves, these are not tolerated at the *Oprea* House, and a fellow who indulged in them would be regarded as “puttin’ on airs,” and probably be hustled out unceremoniously, as guilty of a gross insult to the rest of the spectators.

The entrance to the Grand Duke theatre is not imposing. In fact, the visitor is obliged to descend a shaky staircase into a cellar about ten feet below the level of the sidewalk.

“It’s like goin’ down into a coal mine,” remarked Julius to Pat Riley, who was acting as his guide.

“That’s so,” said Pat; “but we have jolly fun when we get there.”

Reaching the bottom of the flight of steps, Julius found himself confronted by the ticket seller who was looking out of a square hole, over which were marked the prices of admission.

“That’s where yer pay,” said Pat. “I go in free, coz I’m one of the actors.”

“Five cents,” said the keeper of the box office.

“There it is,” said Julius, who had come provided with the right change.

The treasurer pulled a cord connecting with the door of entrance, and Julius entered.

The *Oprea* House proved to consist of a room twenty feet by thirty, and six and a half feet high. A portion of this was set apart as a stage, in front of which hung a curtain of turkey-red calico, four breadths wide. On one side was a lofty pillar with a scroll, on which was written the ambitious name of this temple of the muses, “Grand Duke’s Oprea House.” In place of the customary footlights was a kerosene lamp, which with the aid of a concave reflector illuminated the room.

“What do yer think of it, Julius?” asked Pat, with justifiable pride.

“It’s bully.”

“Ain’t it? Do yer see that?”

Pat pointed to a large broadside of brown packing paper, on which was rudely scrawled:

“BENEFIT

OF

Miles O’Reilly,

The Great Nigger Komedian

AND

Jig Dancer.”

“That’s me!” said Pat, with professional pride. “It looks big, don’t it?”

“Yes,” said Julius, admiringly.

“There’s lots of chaps would give all they could make on shines in a week, to hev their names put up there,” said Pat, confidentially.

“I’d like it myself,” said Julius.

“Ef you wos goin’ to stay in the city, I’d learn you some jigs,” said Pat, “and see what you was made of. It isn’t every feller that can make a good jig dancer.”

“How are you, Miles?” said a large boy, slapping Pat on the shoulder. “I guess you’ll have a good house.”

“I hope I will. Dave, this is a friend of mine. He ain’t been to the *Oprea* House before.”

“Glad to see yer,” said David Conroy, with dignified affability. “Hope yer’ll get yer money’s worth.”

To this Julius made a suitable reply.

“Dave is stage manager,” said Pat. “He kin do anything, kin Dave. He painted the sceneries; you’ll see ’em bimeby, and he’s the best actor we’ve got. He’s captain of the Mulligans. There ain’t nothin’ that feller can’t do,” concluded Pat, with unmistakable admiration expressed in his tone.

“Where do you get your plays from, Pat?”

“Call me Miles while we are in the *Oprea* House. That’s my name here.”

“Miles, then.”

“Dave fixes ’em up out of plays at the Theatre Comique, and some of the songs we gits from Tony Pastor’s. If there was time I’d take you behind the sceneries. But it’s most time to begin.”

“Miles O’Reilly is wanted,” was heard from behind the curtain, and the great comedian left our hero and hurried behind the scenes.

By this time the cellar was nearly full of boys, varying in age from five to twenty, who were crowded together in such near proximity as the limited size of the auditorium rendered imperatively necessary. The front row was close up to the curtain, and here Julius was fortunate enough to secure a place.

The stiffness and reserve which characterize the spectators at other theatres was dispensed with at the free and easy “Grand Duke’s *Oprea* House.” Cheerful and jocose remarks were interchanged,

spiced with genial humor, and occasionally tinged with sarcastic remarks of a personal character. But all was taken in good part. At last, however, the patrons became impatient, and calls were heard, such as, “What yer waitin’ fur?” “Hurry up de overture!” “Have yer gone ter sleep behind there?”

At last the manager responded to the flattering impatience of his patrons. The curtain arose and displayed the orchestra consisting of two musicians, a performer on an accordeon and a bone-player. The overture was made up of pieces skillfully selected by the manager to suit the tastes of the audience. Choice gems from “Norma,” “Trovatore,” and “Faust” would not have satisfied the fastidious tastes of the Grand Duke’s patrons. Instead of these, such choice airs as “Squeeze me, Joe,” and “Up in Avenue A,” afforded unmistakable pleasure, and the whole closed with “The Campbells Are Coming,” which was rendered with spirit and general acceptance.

Next came the comedy, “Laughing Gas,” in which the gas is administered to a variety of patients, who are differently affected, one laughing, another dancing, another combative, and so on. The acting was rude, but lively, and the piece was rapturously applauded. In this applause Julius bore his full part. Though he is my hero I have no desire to represent him as more refined or better educated than the majority of his companions. The classic drama or the opera, as brought out at the Academy, would have been far less attractive to him than this rude performance.

He was no less pleased with the next piece, in which two boys, representing *Tom King* and *Dick Turpin*, appear on the stage with dark lanterns, and attempt the robbery of a house, but become panic-stricken, and exhibit more alarm than the occupants of the house. This, of course, amuses the spectators.

“It ’minds me of Jack and Marlowe,” said Julius to his next neighbor, “when they was robbin’ the house on Madison Avenue.”

“Was you there?” asked the other.

“No, but I knew all about it. I lived with Jack.”

“You did!” repeated the other, with something like awe at finding his neighbor to have been intimate with so illustrious a criminal. “How did you like him?”

“Jack wa’n’t a bad sort,” said Julius, “except when he was sprung. I like him better than Marlowe.”

“They was took by the cops, wasn’t they?”

“Yes, they was took,” said Julius, shortly.

His own agency in the affair he didn’t care to mention, chiefly because in the class to which he belonged it was considered a point of honor to make common cause against the cops, that is, against the conviction of those who transgress the laws, and our hero felt that the revelation of his agency in entrapping his associates would not increase his popularity. Nor would he have taken the part he did but for the gratitude he felt to Paul, and the fear that he would suffer harm.

Later in the evening the beneficiary, the great Miles O’Reilly, appeared in a jig, which was very creditably danced. His appearance was the signal for a noisy ovation; due partly to his general popularity, and partly to his position as the beneficiary of the evening.

“Good for yer, Miles!” expressed the general appreciation of his efforts. Space will not permit us to enlarge on the other features in the programme of the evening. Evidently “The Mulligan Guards” was most popular, being received with tremendous applause. To gratify the curiosity of such of my readers as are not familiar with this celebrated local song, the first verse is here introduced:

“We crave your condescension,
We’ll tell you what we know
Of marching in the Mulligan Guard,
From Sligoward below.
Our captain’s name was Hussey,
A Tipperary man,

He carried his sword like a Russian duke,
Whenever he took command.

Chorus.

“We shouldered guns, and marched and marched away,
From Baxter Street we marched to Avenue A;
With drums and fifes how sweetly they did play,
As we marched, marched, marched in the Mulligan Guard.”

The effect of the song is heightened by the marching of the Guards, the roll of the drum, and presenting arms, which the young actors went through very creditably.

At the close, Miles was summoned before the curtain, and a speech was called for. As the recipient of the benefit the eminent actor could not very well decline. He presented himself with a low bow, and said:

“Boys, I’m glad to welcome yez here this evening. I don’t care so much for the stamps.” (“Oh, no! course yer don’t!” came in ironical accents from some one in the audience.) “That’s so, Jim Blin, and you know it. I’m glad yez like my dancin’! I won’t say no more, ’cause I ain’t used to makin’ speeches, but, with the kind permission of the manager, I’ll give yez anuther jig, and wish you good-night!”

Here the speaker bowed, the music struck up, and, to the satisfaction of all, the beneficiary repeated his performance. Then there was a rush for the door and in five minutes the “Grand Duke’s Oprea House” was silent and deserted.

CHAPTER III. ON THE RAILWAY

As the time approached for his leaving New York, Julius could not help feeling a little regret. The great city had been a harsh stepmother to him. He had suffered often from cold and hunger, during the years that he had been drifting about her streets, an unconsidered waif in the great sea of life. He had received kindness from few, harshness from many. From the age of five he had been forced to earn his own living, with no one to look out for him except a professional thief. He had seen more of the dark than the bright side of life, but he had not been without his enjoyments. Youth is hopeful and can find enjoyment under the most unpropitious circumstances.

So Julius, as he took his last walk through the streets with which he had for years been familiar, felt sorry that he was to leave them the next day, perhaps, for many years. It is true he hoped to do better at the West, but all his present associations were with Broadway, Chatham Street, and the Bowery, and City Hall Park, and his new life would seem strange at first.

But when all preparations had been made and he found himself seated in the cars, dressed in a new suit, with thirty other boys, under the general charge of Mr. O'Connor, the superintendent of the Newsboys' Lodging House, he forgot the city, and was exhilarated by the rapid motion of the cars, and the varied panorama through which he was swiftly passing.

"Ain't it bully, Teddy?" said he to one of his city acquaintances who occupied the adjoining seat.

"That's so, Julius. I never rid in the cars before."

"Didn't you?" said Julius, with complacent superiority. "I have."

"Where'd you go?"

"Well, I went to Newark, and one summer I went to Long Branch—that's a big watering place, you know. Both places are in New Jersey. I stayed a week at Long Branch."

"Did you put up at one of the big hotels?"

"Yes, I put up at the Continental Hotel."

"You're gassin'!"

"No, I ain't."

"How much did you pay?"

"I forgot to ask for the bill," said Julius.

"Where'd you sleep?"

"Oh, I slept in a bathing house, on the beach. It belonged to the hotel."

"How'd you like it?"

"Pretty good, only the tide came up so high that it poured into the bathing house, and gave me a wetting."

"Did you get anything to do?"

"I made a few stamps by blackin' boots, but the black-boots in the hotel said he'd bounce me for interferin' with his business. So I thought I'd come back to the city. I didn't mind much, for there wasn't much goin' on in the daytime."

"Do you know how long we'll be travelin'?"

"Mr. O'Connor told me it would take us two days and nights, and perhaps more. He says it's more'n a thousand miles."

"Suppose'n we don't like it, and want to come back?"

"We can't do it without money."

"I haven't got but a dollar."

"I have got forty dollars," said Julius, complacently.

"Where'd you get such a pile?" asked Teddy, who regarded forty dollars as quite a fortune.

“Speculatin’ in real estate,” answered Julius, who did not care to mention exactly how he came by the money.

“I don’t believe you’ve got so much,” said Teddy, who was under the impression that he was being sold.

“I’ll show you part of it,” said Julius.

He drew out a pocketbook, and displayed five one-dollar bills, and a small amount of fractional currency.

“That’s only five dollars.”

“Mr. O’Connor’s got the rest. He’s goin’ to give it to the man that I’m to live with to take care of for me. I’d rather he’d keep it. I might lose it, or spend it foolish.”

“Well, you’re in luck. I jist wish I had half as much.”

“Do you remember Jim Driscoll, that used to sell papers on Nassau Street?”

“Yes, I knew him; where is he?”

“He went West about two years ago. He’s doin’ well. Got fifty dollars in the savings bank, and a good home besides.”

“Who told you?”

“Mr. O’Connor. He had a letter from him.”

“Jim can’t write, nor read either. When he was sellin’ papers in Nassau Street, he used to ask what was the news. Sometimes I told him wrong. Once I told him the President was dead, and he didn’t know no better than to believe it. He sold his papers fast, but the last chap got mad and booted him.”

“Well, Jim can write now. He’s been to school since he was out there.”

“He can do more’n I can. I can read easy readin’, but I can’t write no more’n a lamp-post.”

“Nor I,” said Julius, “but I mean to learn. I can’t read much, either.”

“I say, Julius; won’t it seem odd if we made money, and come to New York and put up at a big hotel, and get our boots blacked, just like the customers we used to have?”

“That’s what I mean to do, Teddy. I’ve got tired of knockin’ round the streets, as I have ever since I was knee high to a toad.”

“So have I, Julius. But I expect we’ll have to work hard.”

“I always did have to work. I’ll be willin’ to work when I’ve got a good home, and feel that I’m gettin’ along.”

The time had come to both of these homeless boys when they had become tired of their vagrant life and Arab-like condition. They had a vague idea of what is meant by respectability, and they began to appreciate its value. They could see that the street life they had been leading must soon terminate, and that it was time to form plans for the future. In a few years they would be men, and lay aside the street employments by which they had gained a scanty and miserable living. When that time came, would they take a respectable place in the ranks of workingmen, or become social outlaws like Jack Morgan and his confederate, Marlowe? Such thoughts had come frequently to Julius of late, and his present state of mind was one of the most encouraging signs of his future good conduct. He was dissatisfied with his past life, and anxious to enter upon a better.

The thirty boys were not all in one car. Mr. O’Connor and the greater part of them were in the car behind. Julius and the others could find no room there, and had come into this car.

After his conversation with Teddy, Julius began to look out of the window. Inexperienced as a traveler, and knowing very little of the country, he saw much that excited his interest, as they sped onward at the rate of thirty miles an hour. He also, with his usual habit of observation, regarded his fellow-passengers with interest. Directly in front of him sat a stout man, plainly dressed, who had become sleepy, and occasionally indulged in a nod, his newspaper having fallen from his hands upon the floor. He was probably more used to traveling than our hero and cared less for the scenery. Julius gave him a casual look, but without much interest, till at a way station a flashily dressed young man entered, and, looking carefully about him, selected the seat beside the stout man though he had his

choice of several. Julius started when he saw him, and looked puzzled. He was sure he had seen him before, at Jack Morgan's room, but there was something unfamiliar in his appearance. Jack's friend had black hair. This man's hair was red. A closer look, however, explained this discrepancy. Underneath the edge of the red he caught sight of a few black hairs, which were not entirely concealed. It was clear that he wore a red wig.

"It is Ned Sanders," said Julius to himself, "and he's got a red wig on. What's he up to, I wonder? I'll watch him."

CHAPTER IV.

JULIUS DETECTS A PICKPOCKET

Ned Sanders settled himself into his seat, and looked about him. He did not, however, recognize Julius, for, though he had seen him in calling upon Jack Morgan, he had never taken particular notice of his features, probably regarding him as of little importance. Finally Mr. Sanders devoted special attention to the man at his side. As the latter was sleeping, he was not conscious of the close watch of his companion.

Julius noticed it, however, and, being familiar with the character of Sanders, said to himself: "I know what he's up to. He wants to pick his pocket."

From the watch pocket of the stout stranger depended a gold watch chain solid and valuable in appearance, and to it was attached a gold watch.

Sanders took out a newspaper, and held it before him. He appeared to be very much occupied with its contents, but Julius detected a stealthy glance at his companion's waistcoat.

"This is gettin' excitin'," thought Julius. "He won't wait long."

Julius was right. Ned Sanders felt that now was the favorable opportunity to carry out his unlawful purpose, while his neighbor was asleep, as when his nap was over he would more readily detect his intentions.

With his paper still before his face, his hand crept softly to the watch chain, which he gently appropriated, dropping it into his coat pocket. But he was not yet satisfied. He was preparing to relieve the other of his pocketbook also, when Julius thought it was about time to interfere. Rising in his seat, he struck the stout man forcibly on the back. The latter started, and opening his eyes said, "What! Eh, what do you want? Is it morning?"

The pickpocket started also, and looked uneasy, but retained his seat, not suspecting that he had been detected. His uneasiness arose from the fear that his neighbor, on awakening, would immediately miss his watch, which would be awkward and perhaps dangerous for him. He was vexed with Julius, whom he did not yet recognize, for this interference with his plans.

"Can't you let the gentleman alone?" he said angrily. "Why do you disturb him?"

"What's the matter?" said his victim, in his turn, a little irritated. "What do you mean by thumping my back, boy?"

"I wanted to ask you what time it is," said Julius, quietly.

"Well, that's cool," grumbled the stout man. "You wake me up out of a nap to ask me what time of day it is."

Sanders turned pale when Julius asked this question, for he saw that discovery was imminent. He half arose from his seat, but it occurred to him that that would only fasten suspicion upon him. Moreover the train was going at the rate of twenty-five miles an hour, and, though he might go into another car, he could not escape from the train. He closed his lips tightly, and tried to look calm and indifferent. He had determined to brazen it out.

Notwithstanding his grumbling rejoinder, the stout man felt for his watch. Now it was his turn to start and look dismayed.

"By jove, it's gone!" he ejaculated.

"What's the matter, sir?" asked Julius.

"My watch and chain are gone. Do you know anything about them, boy?"

"I think you had better put that question to the man you're sittin' with."

"What do you mean by that, you young rascal?" demanded Ned Sanders, pale with passion and dismay. "I think, sir, the boy behind you has taken your watch."

“I don’t see how he could do that,” said the other, regarding him suspiciously. “Can you tell me where my watch is sir?”

“What should I know of your watch? Do you mean to insult me, sir?” blustered the pickpocket.

His manner increased the suspicions of his victim, who recognized, by his appearance and flashy attire, the class to which he belonged. He turned to Julius, and asked, “What made you refer to this gentleman?”

“Because,” said Julius bluntly, “I saw him take it. He held up the paper before him, while he loosened your chain. He’s got it in his pocket now.”

“That is sufficient. Now, sir,” he said sternly, “I command you instantly to return my watch and chain.”

“I haven’t got it. The boy lies,” said Sanders, furiously.

By this time, most of the passengers in the car had gathered around the two. Just at this moment, too, the conductor entered.

“What’s the matter, gentlemen?” he asked.

“This man has stolen my watch,” said the stout man.

“It’s a – lie!” said Sanders.

“Are you willing to show us what you have in your pockets?” said the conductor.

“No, I’m not. I am a New York merchant, and I won’t submit to an impertinence.”

“Where is your place of business?”

“In Pearl Street,” answered Sanders, quite at random.

“Have you one of your business cards with you?”

“I believe so.”

He felt in his pocket, and appeared surprised at finding none.

“I believe I have none with me,” he admitted. “I generally have some.”

“What’s your business?”

“I’m in the clothing business?” said Sanders, with some hesitation.

“What is your name?”

“I won’t answer any more questions,” said the pickpocket, desperately. “You have insulted me enough, all of you. Just make way, will you? I am going to get out.”

The cars had just stopped at a way station.

Sanders attempted to arise, but his victim seized him by the arm.

“You don’t leave this car till you have surrendered my watch,” he said.

“Let go, or I’ll strike you,” said Sanders, losing his prudence in his anger.

“You can’t get out till you have been searched,” said the conductor. “Who is the boy that saw him take the watch?”

“I did,” said Julius.

“Where did he put it? Did you notice?”

“In his left breast pocket.”

“Show us what you have in that pocket.”

Sanders hesitated? and then drew out a handkerchief.

“There, I hope you are satisfied,” he said.

Meantime his neighbor, pressing his hand against the pocket on the outside, exclaimed triumphantly:

“He’s got the watch. I can feel it.”

The thief uttered a profane ejaculation, and made a desperate effort to arise, but three men threw themselves upon him, two holding him down, while the other drew out the watch and chain, and handed them to their owner.

“Now will you let me go?” demanded Sanders, doggedly. He felt that it would do no good to indulge in further protestations of innocence.

“No,” said the conductor. “Gentlemen, will you guard him till we reach the next station? Then I will place him in the hands of an officer.”

“Boy,” said Sanders, turning around, and glaring fiercely at Julius, “I shan’t forget you. Some time I’ll make you repent what you’ve done to-day.”

“Don’t mind him, my lad,” said the stout man, elated by the recovery of his property. “You’ve done exactly right. But how came you to suspect this man?”

“Because I knew him,” said Julius.

Here Sanders turned around, and scanned our hero’s face sharply.

“That’s a lie!” he said.

“It’s not a lie, Mr. Ned Sanders,” said Julius. “I’ve seen you more than once.”

Again Sanders scanned his features sharply. This time a light dawned upon him.

“I know you now,” he said; “you’re Jack Morgan’s boy.”

“I was,” said Julius.

“Have you left him?”

“Yes.”

“Where are you going?”

“Out West.”

“Where?”

“I don’t know.”

“You don’t want to tell me.”

“No, I don’t. I don’t care about receiving a visit from you.”

“I’ll hunt you up, and pay off old debts. I shouldn’t be in this scrape but for you,” said Sanders, vindictively.

He relapsed into a moody silence, and said nothing more while in the car. At the next station, which was an important place, two officers were summoned, who took him into custody. But he managed to elude their vigilance some hours later and escaped to New York.

CHAPTER V. JULIUS IS REWARDED

After the pickpocket had been removed from the car, his intended victim turned in his seat, and addressed Julius.

“Come and sit by me,” he said; “I want to speak with you.”

Julius readily accepted the invitation.

“My boy,” said the stout gentleman, “you have done me a great service.”

“I am glad of it,” said Julius.

“You must know that this watch and chain, which but for you I should have lost, were bought for me, in Switzerland, by a son who has since died. They are valuable in themselves, but they are five times as valuable to me because they were a last gift from him.”

“I am glad Ned didn’t get off with ’em,” said Julius.

“You seem to know this man,” said the other, with some curiosity.

“Oh, yes, sir, I know him like a brick.”

The common expression is “like a book”; but that would hardly have implied any close knowledge on the part of Julius, for he knew next to nothing of books. Probably the phrase he did use was suggested by the other.

“Is he a professional pickpocket?”

“Oh, yes, that’s the way he makes a livin’.”

“Then how do you come to know him?”

“Oh, he used to come and see Jack.”

“Who’s Jack?”

“Jack Morgan—the man I used to live with.”

“Jack didn’t have very respectable friends, then, I should judge.”

“Ned and he was pretty thick. They used to do business together.”

“Was Jack a pickpocket, also?”

“He didn’t do much that way; he was too clumsy. He broke into houses.”

“What! was he a burglar?”

“Yes.”

“Do you mean to say that you lived with a burglar?” asked the stout gentleman, in surprise.

“Yes,” said Julius, unconcerned.

“And did you help him, too?” demanded the other, suspiciously.

“No, I didn’t,” said Julius. “I didn’t like the business. Besides, I didn’t want to be sent over to the island. I blacked boots, and such things.”

“That is a much better way of getting a living,” said his companion, approvingly.

“So I think,” said Julius; “but it ain’t quite so easy.”

“I think you are mistaken. An honest life is the easiest in the end. Where is Jack now?”

“Oh, he’s in the Tombs. He was took up for burglary of a house in Madison Avenue. I guess he’ll be sent up for five or ten years.”

“That won’t be very easy, or pleasant.”

“No,” said Julius. “I’m glad I ain’t in Jack’s shoes.”

“I hope, my lad, you are in no danger of following the example of your evil associates.”

“No,” said Julius. “I’m goin’ to be respectable.”

“An excellent determination. How do you happen to be traveling?”

“Oh, I’m goin’ out West.”

“What made you think of that?”

“Mr. O’Connor—he’s the superintendent of the Newsboys’ Lodging House—was goin’ to take some boys out, and get ’em places; and he offered to take me.”

“Are all these boys I see in the car going out too?”

“Yes, sir, all of ’em, and there’s some more in the car behind.”

“Where in the West do you expect to go?”

“I don’t know,” said Julius. “Is the West a big place?”

“I should say it was,” said the other, with a laugh. “It’s a very large place.”

“Were you ever there?” asked Julius, desiring to hear something about his place of destination.

“I live there—in Wisconsin. Did you ever hear of Wisconsin?”

Julius shook his head.

“I don’t know much about any places, except New York and Jersey,” he added.

“I live in the city of Milwaukee, in Wisconsin. It is quite a flourishing city.”

“Is it as big as New York?”

“Oh, no; we can’t show any cities in the West as big as New York. I doubt if we ever shall, though we’ve some large cities, that are growing fast. Do you think you are likely to come to Milwaukee?”

“I don’t know,” said Julius. “Mr. O’Connor could tell you.”

“Where is he?”

“In the other car. Will I speak to him?”

“Not yet. I’ve got something more to say to you. I am under an obligation to you.”

“What’s that?” asked Julius, puzzled.

“I mean that you have done me a favor.”

“That’s all right,” said Julius. “I’m glad of it.”

“And in doing so, you have probably made an enemy,” added the other.

“You mean Ned Sanders?”

“Yes; I am afraid, if he gets a chance, he will do you an injury.”

“I’ll be out of his way.”

“He might some time see you.”

“If he does, and I’m grown up, I won’t be afraid of him.”

“You seem to be a brave young man.”

“I ain’t a coward,” said Julius, proudly.

“And yet there are some things I hope you will be afraid of.”

“What are them?” asked Julius, somewhat puzzled.

“I hope you will be afraid to lie and steal, and do wrong generally.”

“I shan’t steal,” said Julius; “I don’t know about lyin’, most boys lie sometimes.”

“I hope you will be one of the boys that do not lie at all.”

“Maybe so,” said Julius, dubiously. “A feller can’t always be good.”

“No, I suppose not. But there is no occasion for lying.”

“I’ll try not to, but I ain’t an angel.”

“Angels are scare, as far as my observation goes,” said his companion, smiling, “and you appear to have too much human nature about you to be altogether angelic. But there’s one thing you can do. You can try to do right.”

“I mean to,” said Julius, promptly. “I want to grow up respectable.”

“If you want to, you probably will. You’ll have a better chance at the West than you would in New York.”

“If I stayed there, I’d be a bootblack all my life,” said Julius. “There ain’t no chance for a boy like me to rise. I wouldn’t want to be a bootblack,” he added reflectively, “when I got to be old and gray-headed.”

“No, it wouldn’t be an agreeable business for an old man to follow. But I’ve got off the track.”

“Off the track!” repeated Julius, looking out of the window.

“Oh, I didn’t mean that. The cars are all right. But I meant to say, that I had got away from what I meant to say. I think I owe you something for your saving me from losing my watch.”

“Oh, that’s nothing,” said Julius.

“To me it is a great deal, and I want to show my sense of the favor. Is there anything in particular you would like?”

“I don’t know,” said Julius, thoughtfully. “I might like a jack-knife.”

“That isn’t enough. As I said, I have particular reason to value my watch and chain. Did you ever have a watch yourself?”

“I never got so far along. I couldn’t save enough on shins for that.”

“Well, it so happens that, in New York, I took a small silver watch and chain in the way of business from a traveler who owed me money. Here it is.”

He drew from his pocket a neat, but inexpensive silver watch, with a chain of the same metal.

“What do you think of it?” he said.

“It’s tiptop,” said Julius admiringly.

“I am glad you like it, for I am going to give it to you.”

“Goin’ to give me a watch and chain!” repeated Julius, in amazement.

“Yes. Would you like it?”

“It’ll make me feel like a swell,” said Julius, elated. “Ain’t it a beauty, Teddy?” he continued, turning in his seat, and displaying it to his comrade.

“It ain’t yours, is it?” asked Teddy, not without a slight feeling of envy.

“Yes, it is. This gentleman says so.”

And Julius proudly put the watch in his vest pocket, and attached the chain to one of the button-holes. The donor looked on with a benevolent smile, glad that he had been able to make so acceptable a gift to the boy who had done him such a service.

“Now,” he said, smiling, “it will be your turn to look out for pickpockets. They may try to carry off your watch, as they did mine.”

“I d like to see ’em do it,” said Julius, confidently. “It’ll take a smart pickpocket to hook my watch.”

“Well, my young friend,” said the other, “as the time may come when I can do you a service, I will give you my card.”

“I can’t read writin’,” admitted Julius, reluctantly, as he took the card, which was printed in script.

“My name is John Taylor, of Milwaukee. Keep the card, and you will soon be able to read it.”

Here the paper boy passed through the car, and Mr. Taylor, purchasing a copy of *Harper’s Weekly*, was soon immersed in its contents. Finding that the interview was ended, Julius returned to his former seat, and Teddy and he spent some time in admiring it.

CHAPTER VI. A NEWSBOY'S LETTER

"I say, Julius, you're in luck," said Teddy.

"I won't be in luck if Marlowe or Ned Sanders gets hold of me."

"They won't find you, away out West."

"Marlowe might. He's a tough customer, Marlowe is. I mind how he looked when he got hold of me at Staten Island. Jack ain't so bad, but Marlowe'd go a thousand miles to get hold of me."

"I wouldn't think of it, Julius."

"I shan't lose no sleep. If he don't break out of jail, I'll be a man before he can get at me."

"Look out of the window, Julius. See them cows harnessed together. What are they doin'?"

"They're ploughin', I expect," said Julius, who, like his companion, took a yoke of oxen for cows.

"They don't go very fast."

"They look as if they was lazy. They're the biggest cows I ever see."

Here Mr. O'Connor came into the car and passed down the aisle, looking to see that none of the boys were missing.

"Well, boys, how are you getting along?" he asked, pleasantly.

"Bully!" "Tiptop!" were heard from the boys on either side.

"What have you got there, Julius?" asked the superintendent, noticing the watch chain.

Julius drew out his watch.

"Where did you get it?" asked Mr. O'Connor, a little suspiciously. "You haven't spent any of your money, have you?"

"No; it was given me," said Julius.

"Given you?"

"By that gentleman."

Mr. Taylor looked up, finding himself referred to.

"Is this the gentleman who has charge of your party?" he asked, turning to Julius.

"Yes, sir. It is Mr. O'Connor."

"Mr. O'Connor, the boy's story is correct. He detected a pickpocket in the act of appropriating my gold watch and chain. As it was of great value, I asked his acceptance of the watch and chain you see."

"I hope you did not ask any reward, Julius," said the superintendent.

"It was entirely my own thought," said Mr. Taylor. "I presume the boy never thought of any compensation."

"No, I didn't," said Julius.

"I am glad you have behaved so well, Julius," said superintendent, approvingly. "I am sure you will value your present."

"It's bully," said Julius, enthusiastically.

"Where do you intend to take the boys, Mr. O'Connor?" asked Mr. Taylor.

"I have an invitation from the citizens of Brookville, in Wisconsin, to make my headquarters there. I am told that boys and girls are in demand in that town and vicinity, and that I shall probably be able to find homes for all my party in that neighborhood."

"I think you can. I know Brookville very well. I have a nephew living there. He is a prosperous farmer. By the way, I shouldn't be surprised if he would like a boy. Suppose I give you a note to my young friend here to deliver to him."

"I should be glad to have you do so."

“If Ephraim takes him into his family, he will have an excellent home.”

“That is what we desire for all our party.”

“Do you generally succeed?”

“Very generally. We seldom receive complaints from the children we have placed. They are treated kindly almost without exception.”

“How about the other parties? Do they often prefer complaints of the children?”

“Sometimes, but not often. Considering the training our children have had in the city streets, they conduct themselves remarkably well in their new homes. Removed from the temptations and privations of the city, their better natures assert themselves, and they behave as well as ordinary children. In fact, I may say that most of the complaints that come to us are of a trivial nature. People forget that our boys are no more perfect than their own, and if now and then they pelt the cows, or leave the turkeys out in the rain, that hardly indicates a depraved heart.”

Mr. Taylor smiled.

“I have heard of such things, myself,” he said. “I suspect boys are about the same now that they were fifty years ago.”

“And will be fifty years hence. Of course, they will always need restraint, and, if they do mischief, they must pay the penalty. Still, if a boy is simply mischievous, I don’t think he can be considered a hopeless case.”

“I should say not. I used to do some things myself that were not quite exemplary. Of course I was punished and in time I steadied down.”

“As you seem to take an interest in our mission,” said Mr. O’Connor, “you may feel interested to read a letter¹ which I received not long since from one of our boys in Indiana. It is characteristic, and will give a good idea of the improvement which emigration makes in their condition and circumstances.”

“I should like very much to read it,” said Mr. Taylor.

This was the letter:

“M–, Ind., Nov. 24, 1859.

“To My Friend and Benefactor: So I take my pen in hand to let you know how I am, and how I am getting along. As far as I can see, I am well satisfied with my place; but I took a general look around, and, as far as I can see, all the boys left in M– are doing well, especially myself, and I think there is as much fun as in New York, for nuts and apples are all free. I am much obliged to you, Mr. O’Connor, for the paper you sent me. I received it last night, read it last night—something about the Newsboys’ Lodging House.

“All the newsboys in New York have a bad name; but we should show ourselves, and show them, that we are no fools; that we can become as respectable as any of their countrymen; for some of you poor boys can do something for your country; for Franklin, Webster, Clay, were poor boys once, and even Commodore V. C. Perry or Math. C. Perry. But even George Law, and Vanderbilt, and Astor—some of the richest men of New York—and Math. and V. C. Perry, were nothing but printers, and in the navy on Lake Erie. And look at Winfield Scott. So now, boys, stand up, and let them see that you have got the real stuff in you. Come out here, and make respectable and honorable men, so they can say, there, that boy was once a newsboy.

¹ This letter is a genuine production. It is taken from an extremely interesting work, by Charles L. Brace, on “The Dangerous Classes of New York, and Twenty Years’ Work Among Them.”

“Now, boys, you all know I have tried everything. I have been a newsboy, and when that got slack, you know I have smashed baggage. I have sold nuts, I have peddled. I have worked on the rolling billows up the canal; I was a bootblack; and you know, when I sold papers I was at the top of the profession. I had a good stand of my own, but I found all would not do. I could not get along, but I am now going ahead. I have a first-rate home, ten dollars a month, and my board; and, I tell you, fellows, that is a great deal more than I could scrape up my best times in New York. We are all on an equality, my boys, out here, so long as we keep ourselves respectable.

“Mr. O’Connor, tell ‘Fatty,’ or F. John Pettibone, to send me a Christmas number of *Frank Leslie’s*, and *Harper’s Weekly*, a *Weekly News* or some other pictorials to read, especially the *Newsboys’ Pictorial*, if it comes out. No old papers, or else none. If they would get some other boys to get me some books. I want something to read.

“I hope this letter will find you in good health, as it leaves me, Mr. O’Connor. I expect an answer before two weeks—a letter and a paper. Write to me all about the lodging house. With this I close my letter. With much respect to all.

“I remain your truly obedient friend,
“J. K.”

“The writer of this letter is evidently a smart boy,” said Mr. Taylor, as he finished reading it. “I warrant he will make his way in the world.”

“I expected he would do well, when we sent him out,” said the superintendent. “In New York he was a leader in his set, and very successful in his street trades. But, as you see, he admits that he is doing much better out West.”

“His Western life will make a man of him. Do you often hear from those you have sent out?”

“We are in constant correspondence with them. We feel ourselves under an obligation to look after them still, and to show them that we keep up an interest in them.”

“It must have a good effect upon them.”

“We find that it does. They are ashamed to misconduct themselves, knowing that it will come to our ears.”

“Have you sent out many children, in this way?”

“Thousands of our children are located in different parts of the great West. With few exceptions, they are doing well, and bid fair to become—some have already become—respected and useful members of society.”

“What would have been their fate, had they remained in the city?”

“Many would be vagrants, many, doubtless, tenants of prison cells; very few would have turned out well.”

“It is a great work,” said Mr. Taylor warmly. “I hope you will be encouraged to persevere. I feel like helping you. Accept this contribution to the funds of your society,” and he drew two fifty-dollar bills from his pocketbook and handed to the superintendent.

“Thank you, sir,” said Mr. O’Connor, “I am sure you will not regret your gift. Every addition to our means enables us to extend our operations. This gift, for instance, will enable us to bring out six children to the West and place them in good homes.”

“Will it, indeed!” said Mr. Taylor, gratified. “That assurance alone abundantly repays me. But I must write the note of introduction which I promised to my young friend.”

CHAPTER VII. BROOKVILLE

Though there was plenty of excitement and novelty attending the journey, Julius and his companions looked forward with eager interest to the hour when they would reach their destination. Where were they to live, and what sort of homes would they obtain? These were questions which naturally arose in the minds of all.

Hour after hour the train sped onward with its living freight. The boys looked out upon the broad fields, smiling in the sunlight, and bright-looking villages scattered along the route, and wondered if their future homes would look anything like them.

At last the moment approached when their curiosity was to be gratified.

“Boys, the next town is Brookville,” said Mr. O’Connor, passing through the cars.

“Are we goin’ to stop there?” asked Teddy.

“Yes; that is where we get out of the cars.”

Soon a large village came in sight. It was quite thickly settled, and the streets were broad and regular. The boys could see various public buildings, besides a large number of dwelling houses. The place looked quite attractive, and the boys’ faces lighted up with pleasure.

“I say, Teddy,” said Julius, “Brookville’s a nice place.”

“Don’t look much like New York,” said Teddy, dubiously.

“Of course it don’t. The country ain’t like the city, stupid.”

“I guess it’s a pretty good place,” said Teddy. “I hope we’ll live near each other.”

“I hope so, too; but maybe not. You may live somewhere else.”

“Shan’t we all live here?”

“No; I heard Mr. O’Connor say we’d be scattered around among the towns, but I’m goin’ to live here.”

“How do you know you are?”

“Cause I’ve got a letter to Mr. Taylor’s nephew. He lives in Brookville.”

“P’rhaps he’ll want two boys.”

“Maybe he will.”

“What’s that?” asked Teddy, as the sound of music was heard.

“It’s a band—don’t you see it?—on the platform. What a crowd of people!”

“Boys,” said Mr. O’Connor, “that music is for you. The citizens have come out to welcome you. Now I will tell you what you must do. You will follow me out of the cars as soon as the train stops, form two by two on the platform, and then you may swing your hats, and shout, ‘Three cheers for Brookville!’ Will you do it?”

“All right, sir,” said the boys, eagerly.

They were already within a few rods of the station. Speed was already slackened, and in a moment the cars had stopped.

“Now, boys, form in line after the other passengers have left the car,” said the superintendent. “Then follow me.”

His directions were carefully followed, and in five minutes the little company were drawn up on the platform. Many curious eyes were fixed upon them by those who had come to meet them, and some were already selecting those whom they desired to adopt.

“Now, boys,” said the superintendent, when order was obtained, “what have you to say to the ladies and gentlemen who have been kind enough to come here to meet you?”

“Three cheers for Brookville!” shouted Tim Shanter, who, it had been agreed, should act as leader.

The cheers were given with a will, and with such emphasis that it was clear none of the boys as yet was troubled with weak lungs.

Then the band struck up again, and after they had concluded, one of the citizens came forward and addressed Mr. O'Connor.

"Mr. O'Connor, I presume?" he said.

"That is my name, sir. You were expecting us?"

"Yes; we received your telegram, and have made arrangements to receive you. First, however, let me introduce myself. My name is Taylor."

"Ephraim Taylor?"

"Yes," said the other, in some surprise.

"You wonder that I know your name," said Mr. O'Connor. "I met an uncle of yours while traveling in the State of New York, and he gave one of our boys a letter to you."

"Indeed!"

"It was a boy," exclaimed the superintendent, "who had an opportunity of being of service to him."

"In what way, may I ask?"

"He detected a pickpocket in the act of taking your uncle's gold watch, and warned him of it. Julius, come here!"

Julius stepped out of the ranks. Mr. Taylor looked at him earnestly.

"I hear that you fell in with my uncle," he said.

"Yes, sir. He give me a letter for you."

"Let me see it."

Julius drew the letter from his pocket and handed it to Mr. Taylor.

The letter read as follows:

"My Dear Nephew: This will be handed to you by a boy who has done me a service, the nature of which the superintendent will explain to you. I do not know how you are situated, or whether you require the services of a boy. If you do, I think you can't do better than to take this one. He is bright, sharp, and, as I have reason to believe, honest. I shall be glad if he can secure a good home.

Your uncle,

"John Taylor."

Julius had already examined critically the personal appearance of Mr. Taylor, whom he regarded as his future employer and guardian. His past life had made him a good and quick observer of character. Street boys, obliged to fight their way, and struggle for a livelihood, are by their circumstances made preternaturally sharp. They acquire a judgment and self-reliance beyond their years, however defective they may be in the knowledge to be gained from books. Engaged in reading his uncle's letter, Mr. Taylor did not notice the keen glance with which Julius regarded him. But the result was favorable.

"I guess I'll like him," said our hero to himself. "He looks like he might be kind. I hope he'll take me."

Mr. Taylor looked up with a smile.

"My uncle wants me to take you, my lad," he said.

"Will you?" asked Julius.

"What do you say, Mr. O'Connor?" said Mr. Taylor. "Will you intrust this young man to me?"

"I shall be glad to do so," said the superintendent. "I will ask you to leave him with us till tomorrow, however, as applications will not generally be accepted till then."

"I have no objection to that. Now let me tell you what arrangements we have made for your reception. How many children have you in your company?"

“Fifty-two.”

“It is as I supposed. There are more than can be lodged at our hotel, which is small. They could receive but twenty there, and the remainder can be accommodated in a hall we have in the village.”

“I should prefer that they would not be separated. I would rather have them all under my own eye for to-night,” said the superintendent.

“Very well; then perhaps it will be best for all to be accommodated in the hall. There are two halls, in fact; and bedding can be placed on the floor. It won’t be quite so comfortable as it would be at the hotel.”

“Our boys are used to roughing it,” said Mr. O’Connor. “Many a night in the city they have slept out in old wagons or alleyways. It won’t hurt them to sleep on the floor.”

“The hall is about half a mile distant. I will lead the way, and you may get settled at once.”

“Thank you, sir.”

“Tim Shanter, see that the boys walk in line,” said the superintendent. “I appoint you captain, Mr. Taylor, and I will go on ahead, and you will follow us.”

So the procession moved through the village, attracting curious glances from the inhabitants as it passed along. The boys on their side used their eyes to advantage. They were delighted with the fields of grass, the trees now in full leaf, the flower-plots in front of some of the houses, and the singing of the birds. There was not one of them who did not hope that he would find a home in Brookville.

CHAPTER VIII. JULIUS HAS AN ADVENTURE

About midway in the principal street of Brookville is the town hall. It is a neat building, of considerable size, and two stories in height.

Here the procession halted, and after a pause filed in.

The boys found themselves in a large hall, with a platform and desk at one end, the body of the hall being filled with settees.

“Looks like a schoolroom,” said Teddy.

“Only there ain’t no desks,” said Julius.

“We’re to stay here all night, boys,” said Tim Shanter.

“It’s only three o’clock. What will we do till then?” said Tom Burke.

“Boys,” said Mr. O’Connor, “would you like to see something of the village?”

“Yes!” “Yes!” was heard from all quarters.

“Then for the next two hours you may go where you please, but you must be back before six.”

“All right, sir!” shouted half a dozen, and there was a rush for the door.

“Come back,” shouted the superintendent. “You haven’t heard all I have to say.”

The boys turned back reluctantly.

“You must be careful to do no mischief, and commit no trespass upon any person’s property. I want you to show our friends here that, if you have been brought up in the streets of New York, you know how to behave yourselves.”

“We will!” “We will!” shouted the boys, and in less than a minute the hall was emptied.

They separated into groups, and walked off in different directions. Julius, Teddy and Tom formed one of the parties.

“Where will we go?” said Tom.

“Come down here,” said Julius, pointing down a side street. “There’s some nice fields off there.”

“Ain’t it jolly?” said Teddy. “It’s a big sight better than New York.”

“Ain’t that a nice field for baseball?” said Julius, pointing to a large pasture some distance ahead.

“There’s lots of fields, but no ball.”

“Look there, fellers! Do you see that little pond down there?”

“Let us go there.”

“All right.”

The boys jumped over the fence, and walked in the direction of the pond. It was a small circular sheet of water, covering about two acres. On it was a small, unpainted boat, which the boys no sooner saw than they jumped into. There was but one paddle inside, which the boys used by turns. They had never before been in a boat, and were not scientific navigators; still they managed to paddle around the little pond, greatly to their satisfaction.

“I wonder if there’s any fish in this pond,” said Julius.

“I don’t see none,” said Teddy.

“If there was, it would be good fun to catch some,” said Tom.

“We could use Teddy for bait,” suggested Julius.

“I wouldn’t advise a small fish to swallow me,” said Teddy. “I’d dance a double shuffle in his stomach, and he’d soon want ter let me go.”

The boys enjoyed floating about, and time passed quickly.

“What time is it?” asked Tom.

Julius drew out his watch with an air.

“It’s five o’clock,” he said.

“We ought ter be goin’ back; Mr. O’Connor told us we must be back in time.”

They turned the boat toward shore, when all at once Tom, who was looking toward the shore, exclaimed, “What’s that, boys?”

Following the direction in which he pointed, the boys were startled by seeing a large, clumsy animal walking deliberately down toward the place where they were about to land.

They paused in their progress, and Julius, after a careful examination of the stranger, announced, “I’ll tell you what it is, boys; it’s a bear!”

“A bear!” exclaimed Tom and Teddy, simultaneously.

“Yes; I’ve seed a picture of one in Frank Leslie’s. It’s a bear, sure.”

“What will we do?” said Teddy, alarmed. “They’ll bite, won’t they?”

“I guess they will,” said Julius. “They’d kill you just as easy as winkin’.”

“I didn’t know there was any wild animals around here,” said Teddy, nervously.

“Yes,” said Tom; “there’s bears, and wolves, and panthers. I’ve read about ’em in a dime novel called ‘Pathfinder Pete; or, The Wild Hunter of the West.’ You know we are in the West now.”

“How will we get back?” asked Teddy, rather anxiously. “He’s squattin’ down, waitin’ for us.”

The bear had come to a pause, and, squatting on its hind quarters, was steadily and seriously regarding the boys with an expression which, to their excited imaginations, seemed particularly savage and bloodthirsty.

“I wish’t I had a rifle like the one ‘Pathfinder Pete’ had,” ejaculated Tom.

“You wouldn’t dare to fire it if you had one,” said Julius.

“Yes, I would. I’d fire a bullet into his right eye and then I’d fire another right into his left eye, and then he couldn’t see to chase us.”

“That would be good enough if we had a rifle,” said Julius; “but we haven’t. S’pose we land on the other side of the pond, and run for the fence.”

“Don’t yer do it!” exclaimed Teddy, in terror. “He’d catch us before we got halfway there.”

“Do bears run fast, Tom?” asked Julius, deferring to the superior knowledge of his comrade, who had had the great privilege of reading the instructive story of “Pathfinder Pete.”

“Don’t they? They can go twenty miles an hour without hurtin’ ’em.”

“They don’t look like it,” said Julius, surveying the clumsy form of the bear. “I’ll bet that bear can’t keep up with me.”

“Maybe he don’t look it, but he can run like lightnin’. ‘Pathfinder Pete’ was chased by a bear, when his rifle wasn’t loaded, an’ the only way he got off was to hide behind a tree till he’d loaded his gun, an’ then he blazed away, and keeled him over on his back.”

“Then I wish ‘Pathfinder Pete’ would happen around this afternoon. Teddy, jist sing a bit. Maybe that’ll frighten him.”

“I don’t feel like singin’,” said Teddy. “Oh, boys, how will we get home?”

“I move,” said Julius, who was least disturbed of the three, “that we pitch out Teddy. While the bear’s eatin’ him, we’ll run away.”

“Don’t yer do it,” entreated Teddy, his teeth chattering with fright.

“We won’t jest yet. Wait an’ see if he won’t go away himself.”

“He’s goin’ to swim out to us,” screamed Teddy, in fright, as the bear arose to his feet, and put one foot in the water. But he quickly withdrew it, apparently not liking the feeling.

“Do you think we’ll have to stay here all night?” asked Tom, soberly.

“If the bear don’t get tired, and go away.”

“I wish I was back at the Lodgin’ House,” said Teddy, gloomily.

The bear arose to his feet, and walked slowly around the pond, looking from time to time at the boat and the three young navigators.

“What time is it now, Julius,” asked Tom, after a while.

“Wants five minutes ter six,” said Julius.

“What’ll Mr. O’Connor think?”

“He can’t blame us for not comin’. I say, boys, I’m gettin’ hungry,” said Tom.

“So is the bear,” said Julius, significantly.

At this suggestion, Teddy turned a shade paler.

So the boys watched and waited in vain for their unwelcome visitor to depart, keeping the little boat as near the middle of the pond as possible.

“I guess we’ll have to stay all night,” said Tom.

Just at that moment the attention of the three boys was drawn to a boy of about their own age, who was walking across the field toward the pond.

“Does he see the bear, I wonder?” said Teddy.

“The bear sees him,” said Tom. “He’s goin’ for him.”

CHAPTER IX. THE BEAR AND HIS MASTER

“Hadn’t we better holler to him to look out for the bear?” suggested Teddy.

“He sees him, and is callin’ to him,” said Julius, directly afterward.

The three boys looked on in eager excitement, to see what would come of the meeting. Teddy fully expected that the bear would appropriate the newcomer for his supper, and was very much surprised at seeing him rubbing his head against the boy’s legs, as if they were fast friends.

“Look at that,” he cried. “I don’t believe he’s a bear.”

“Yes, he is,” said Tom, confidently. “Don’t you think I know a bear when I see him?”

“I’ll ask him,” said Julius.

“Hello, there, Johnny!” he called out from the boat.

The boy looked up, and for the first time noticed the three boys.

“How did you know my name?” he asked, in surprise, for it so happened that his name was really John.

“I guessed at it,” said Julius.

“Who are you?”

“We’re New York aldermen,” said Julius, “travelin’ for our health.”

“How came you in my boat?”

“Is the boat yours?”

“Yes.”

“We thought we’d give it a little exercise, seein’ it had nothin’ to do.”

“I know who you are. You came with the agent of the Children’s Aid Society.”

“That’s so; I’m the president of the society, and these gentlemen are directors.”

“You look like it,” said the other boy, smiling.

“Is that a bear?” asked Tom, who was anxious to have the question settled.

“Yes, it is.”

“Won’t he bite?”

“Oh, no; he’s a tame bear. Ain’t you, old Bruin?”

The bear rubbed his head against his legs as before.

“Won’t he do anything to us if we come on shore?” asked Teddy, nervously.

“Oh, no; he’s as good-natured as an old dog.”

“Then we’ll land,” said Julius. “We’ve been stayin’ out here an hour, ’cause Teddy here was afraid of him.”

“You were just as much afraid as I was,” said Teddy, indignantly.

“That’s a lie. Me and Tom ain’t afraid of anything; but we wouldn’t leave you here alone.”

“Don’t you believe him,” said Teddy.

“I don’t,” said the boy on shore, laughing.

“You see,” said Julius, “that my life is valuable to my country, and I couldn’t bear to lose it. Step out, Teddy. Now tie the boat. We’d better make tracks, or Mr. O’Connor’ll scold us.”

They joined the other boy and the bear, though Teddy took care to keep as far away from the latter as he could.

“Where did you get the bear?” asked Julius. “Do they live around here?”

“No; this was taken when a cub by an uncle of mine, and when it was half-grown he gave it to me.”

“How long have you had him?”

“About five years; ever since I was nine years old.”

“Is he quite tame?”

“Oh, yes; he’s as tame as a cat.”

“Do you let him go around loose?”

“Part of the time. In the night we tie him, and keep him in the barn.”

The bear, with the desire probably of getting acquainted with different members of the party, here walked around to the further side, where Teddy was walking.

“Oh, take him away!” said the frightened boy. “He’s goin’ for me.”

“Shut up, you fool!” said Julius; “do you think he’d touch such skinny meat as you, when he could have Tom or me? He ain’t fond of pigs.”

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

Текст предоставлен ООО «ЛитРес».

Прочитайте эту книгу целиком, [купив полную легальную версию](#) на ЛитРес.

Безопасно оплатить книгу можно банковской картой Visa, MasterCard, Maestro, со счета мобильного телефона, с платежного терминала, в салоне МТС или Связной, через PayPal, WebMoney, Яндекс.Деньги, QIWI Кошелек, бонусными картами или другим удобным Вам способом.