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Adventures of Bobby Orde

STEWART EDWARD WHITE

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"ALWAYS REMEMBER THAT A TRUE SPORTSMAN IN EVERY WAY IS ABOUT THE SCARCEST THING THEY MAKE—AND THE FINEST. SO NATURALLY THE COMMON RUN OF PEOPLE DON'T LIVE UP TO IT. IF *you*—NOT THE THINKING YOU, NOR EVEN THE CONSCIENCE YOU, BUT THE WAY-DOWN-DEEP-IN-YOUR-HEART *you* THAT YOU CAN'T FOOL NOR TRICK NOR LIE TO—IF THAT *you* IS SATISFIED, IT'S ALL RIGHT."

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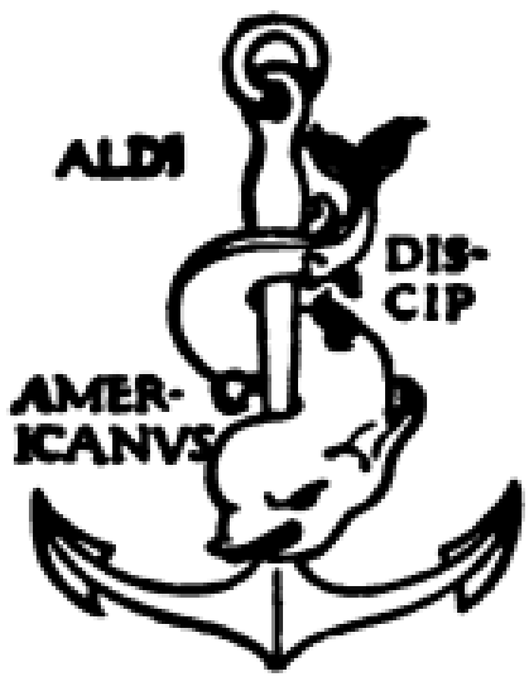
BY

STEWART EDWARD WHITE



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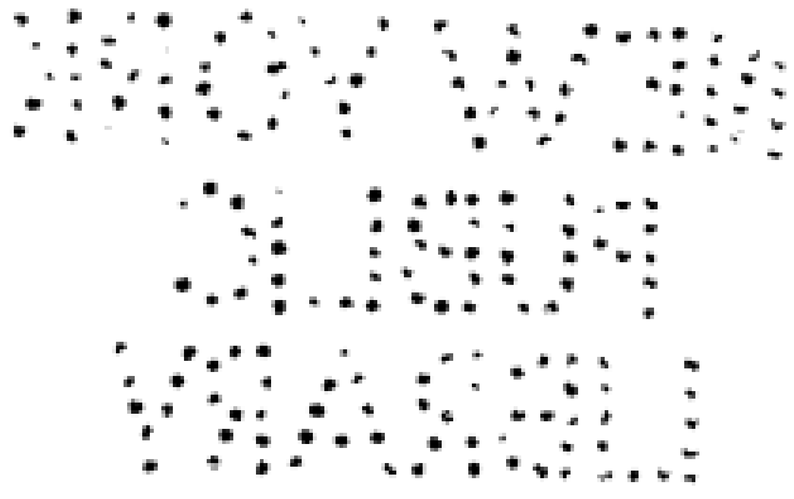

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THE ADVENTURES OF BOBBY ORDE

I

THE BOOMS

At nine o'clock one morning Bobby Orde, following an agreement with his father, walked sedately to the Proper Place, where he kept his cap and coat and other belongings. The Proper Place was a small, dark closet under the angle of the stairs. He called it the Proper Place just as he called his friend Clifford Fuller, or the saw-mill town in which he lived Monrovia—because he had always heard it called so.

At the door a beautiful black and white setter solemnly joined him.

"Hullo, Duke!" greeted Bobby.

The dog swept back and forth his magnificent feather tail, and fell in behind his young master.

Bobby knew the way perfectly. You went to the fire-engine house; and then to the left after the court-house was Mr. Proctor's; and then, all at once, the town. Father's office was in the nearest square brick block. Bobby paused,

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as he always did, to look in the first store window. In it was a weapon which he knew to be a Flobert Rifle. It was something to be dreamed of, with its beautiful blued-steel octagon barrel, its gleaming gold-plated locks and its polished stock. Bobby was just under ten years old; but he could have told you all about that Flobert Rifle — its weight, the length of its barrel, the number of grains of both powder and lead loaded in its various cartridges. Among his books he possessed a catalogue that described Flobert Rifles, and also Shotguns and Revolvers. Bobby intoxicated himself with them. Twice he had even seen his father's revolver; and he knew where it was kept — on the top shelf of the closet. The very closet door gave him a thrill.

Reluctantly he tore himself away, and turned in to the straight, broad stairway that led to the offices above. The stairway, and the hall to which it mounted were dark and smelled of old coco-matting and stale tobacco. Bobby liked this smell very much. He liked, too, the echo of his footsteps as he marched down the hall to the door of his father's offices.

Within were several long, narrow desks burdened with large ledgers and flanked by

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high stools. On each stool sat a clerk — five of them. An iron "base burner" stove occupied the middle of the room. Its pipe ran in suspension here and there through the upper air until it plunged unexpectedly into the wall. A capacious wood-box flanked it. Bobby was glad he did not have to fill that wood-box at a cent a time.

Against the walls at either end of the room and next the windows were two roll-top desks at which sat Mr. Orde and his partner. Two or three pivoted chairs completed the furnishings.

"Hullo, Bobby," called Mr. Orde, who was talking earnestly to a man; "I'll be ready in a few minutes."

Nothing pleased Bobby more than to wander about the place with its delicious "office smell." At one end of the room, nailed against the wall, were rows and rows of beautifully polished models of the firm's different tugs, barges and schooners. Bobby surveyed them with both pleasure and regret. It seemed a shame that such delightful boats should have been built only in half and nailed immovably to boards. Against another wall were maps, and a real deer's head. Everywhere hung framed photo-

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graphs of logging camps and lumbering operations. From any one of the six long windows he could see the street below, and those who passed along it. Time never hung heavy at the office.

When Mr. Orde had finished his business, he put on his hat, and the big man, the little boy and the grave, black and white setter dog walked down the long dark hall, down the steps, and around the corner to the livery stable.

Here they climbed into one of the light and graceful buggies which were at that time a source of such pride to their owners, and flashed out into the street behind Mr. Orde's celebrated team.

Duke's gravity at this juncture deserted him completely. Life now meant something besides duty. Ears back, mouth wide, body extended, he flew away. Faster and faster he ran, until he was almost out of sight; then turned with a whirl of shingle dust and came racing back. When he reached the horses he leaped vigorously from one side to the other, barking ecstatically; then set off on a long even lope along the sidewalks and across the street, investigating everything.

Mr. Orde took the slender whalebone whip from its socket.

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"Come, Dick!" said he.

The team laid back their pointed delicate ears, shook their heads from side to side, snorted and settled into a swift stride. Bobby leaned over to watch the sunlight twinkle on the wheel-spokes. The narrow tires sunk slightly in the yielding shingle fragments. *Brittle! Brittle! Brittle!* the sound said to Bobby. Above all things he loved to watch the gossamer-like wheels, apparently too light and delicate to bear the weight they must carry, flying over the springy road.

At the edge of town they ran suddenly out from beneath the maple trees to find themselves at the banks of the river. A long bridge crossed it. The team clattered over the planks so fast that hardly could Bobby get time to look at the cat-tails along the bayous before blue water was beneath him.

But here Mr. Orde had to pull up. The turn-bridge was open; and Bobby to his delight was allowed to stand up in his seat and watch the wallowing, churning little tug and the three calm ships pass through. He could not see the tug at all until it had gone beyond the bridge, only its smoke; but the masts of the ship passed stately in regular succession.

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"Three-masted schooner," said he.

Then when the last mast had scarcely cleared the opening, the ponderous turn-bridge began slowly to close. Its movement was almost imperceptible, but mighty beyond Bobby's small experience to gauge. He could make out the two bridge tenders walking around and around, pushing on the long lever that operated the mechanism. In a moment more the bridge came into alignment with a clang. The team, tossing their heads impatiently, moved forward.

On the other side of the bridge was no more town; but instead, great lumber yards, and along the river a string of mills with many smokestacks.

The road-bed at this point changed abruptly to sawdust, springy and odorous with the sweet new smell of pine that now perfumed all the air. To the left Bobby could see the shipyards and the skeleton of a vessel well under way. From it came the irregular *Block! Block! Block!* of mallets; and it swarmed with the little, black, ant-like figures of men.

Mr. Orde drove rapidly and silently between the shipyards and the rows and rows of lumber piles, arranged in streets and alleys like an untenanted city. Overhead ran tramways on

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which dwelt cars and great black and bay horses. The wild exultant shriek of the circular saw rang out. White plumes of steam shot up against the intense blue of the sky. Beyond the piles of lumber Bobby could make out the topmasts of more ships, from which floated the pointed hollow "tell-tales" affected by the lake schooners of those days as pennants. At the end of the lumber piles the road turned sharp to the right. It passed in turn the small building which Bobby knew to be another delightful office, and the huge cavernous mill with its shrieks and clangs, its blazing, winking eyes beneath and its long incline up which the dripping, sullen logs crept in unending procession to their final disposition. And then came the "booms" or pens, in which the logs floated like a patterned brown carpet. Men with pike poles were working there; and even at a distance Bobby caught the dip and rise, and the flash of white water as the rivermen ran here and there over the unstable footing.

Next were more lumber yards and more mills, for five miles or so, until at last they emerged into an open, flat country, divided by the old-fashioned snake fences; dotted with blackened stumps of the long-vanished forest; eaten by

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sloughs and bayous from the river. The sawdust ceased. Bobby leaned out to watch with fascinated interest the sand, divided by the tire, flowing back in a beautiful curved V to cover the wheel-rim.

As far as the eye could reach were marshes grown with wild rice and cat-tails. Occasionally one of these bayous would send an arm in to cross the road. Then Bobby was delighted, for that meant a float-bridge through the cracks of which the water spurted up in jets at each impact of the horses' hoofs. On either hand the bayou, but a plank's thickness below the level of the float-bridge, filmed with green weeds and the bright scum of water, not too stagnant, offered surprises to the watchful eye. One could see many mud-turtles floating lazily, feet outstretched in poise; and bullfrogs and little frogs; and, in the clear places, trim and self-sufficient mud hens. From the reeds at the edges flapped small green herons and thunder pumpers. And at last ——

"Oh, look, papa!" cried Bobby excited and awed. "There's a snap'n' turtle!"

Indeed, there he was in plain sight, the boys' monster of the marshes, fully two feet in diameter, his rough shell streaming with long green

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grasses, his wicked black eyes staring, his hooked, powerful jaws set in a grim curve. If once those jaws clamped — so said the boys — nothing could loose them but the sound of thunder, not even cutting off the head.

Ten of the twelve miles to the booms had already been passed. The horses continued to step out freely, making nothing of the light fabric they drew after them. Duke, the white of his coat soiled and muddied by frequent and grateful plunges, loped alongside, his pink tongue hanging from one corner of his mouth, and a seraphic expression on his countenance. Occasionally he rolled his eyes up at his masters in sheer enjoyment of the expedition.

"Papa," asked Bobby suddenly, "what makes you have the booms so far away? Why don't you have them down by the bridge?"

Mr. Orde glanced down at his son. The boy looked very little and very childish, with his freckled, dull red cheeks, his dot of a nose, and his wide gray eyes. The man was about to make some stop-gap reply. He checked himself.

"It's this way Bobby," he explained carefully. "The logs are cut 'way up the river — ever so far — and then they float down the river.

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Now, everybody has logs in the river — Mr. Proctor and Mr. Heinzman and Mr. Welton and lots of people, and they're all mixed up together. When they get down to the mills where they are to be sawed up into boards, the logs belonging to the different owners have to be sorted out. Papa's company is paid by all the others to do the floating down stream and the sorting out. The sorting out is done in the booms; and we put the booms up stream from the mills because it is easier to float the logs, after they have been sorted, down the stream than to haul them back up the stream."

"What do you have them so far up the stream for?" asked Bobby.

"Because there's more room — the river widens out there."

Bobby said nothing for some time, and Mr. Orde confessed within himself a strong doubt as to whether or not the explanation had been understood.

"Papa," demanded Bobby, "I don't see how you tell your logs from Mr. Proctor's or Mr. Heinzman's or any of the rest of them."

Mr. Orde turned, extending his hand heartily to his astonished son.

"You're all right, Bobby!" said he. "Why,

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you see, each log is stamped on the end with a mark. Mr. Proctor's mark is one thing; and Mr. Heinzman's is another; and all the rest have different ones."

"I see," said Bobby.

The road now led them through a small grove of willows. Emerging thence they found themselves in full sight of the booms.

For fifty feet Bobby allowed his eyes to run over a scene already familiar and always of the greatest attraction to him. Then came what he called, after his Malory, the Stumps Perilous. Between them there was but just room to drive — in fact the delicate points of the whiffle tree scratched the polished surfaces of them on either hand. Bobby loved to imagine them as the mighty guardians of the land beyond, and he always held his breath until they had been passed in safety.

Shying gently toward each other, ears pricked toward the two obstacles, the horses shot through with pace undiminished and drew up proudly before the smallest of the group of buildings. Thence emerged a tall, spare, keen-eyed man in slouch hat, flannel shirt, shortened trousers and spiked boots.

"Hullo, Jim," said Mr. Orde.

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"Hullo, Jack," said the other.

"Where's your chore boy to take the horses?"

"I'll rustle him," replied the River Boss.

Bobby drew a deep breath of pleasure, and looked about him.

From the land's edge extended a wide surface of logs. Near at hand little streaks of water lay between some of them, but at a short distance the prospect was brown and uniform, until far away a narrow flash of blue marked the open river. Here and there ran the confines of the various booms included in the monster main boom. These confines consisted of long heavy timbers floating on the water, and joined end to end by means of strong links. They were generally laid in pairs, and hewn on top, so that they constituted a network of floating sidewalks threading the expanse of saw-logs. At intervals they were anchored to bunches of piles driven deep, and bound at the top. An unbroken palisade of piles constituted the outer boundaries of the main boom. At the upper end of them perched a little house whence was operated the mechanism of the heavy swing boom, capable of closing entirely the river channel. Thus the logs, floating or driven down the river, encountered this obstruction;

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were shunted into the main booms, where they were distributed severally into the various pocket booms; and later were released at the lower end, one lot at a time, to the river again. Thence they were appropriated by the mill to which they belonged.

Bobby did not as yet understand the mechanism of all this. He saw merely the brown logs, and the distant blue water, and the hut wherein he knew dwelt machinery and a good-natured, short, dark man with a short, dark pipe, and the criss-cross floating sidewalks, and the men with long pike poles and shorter peavies moving here and there about their work. And he liked it.

But now the chore boy appeared to take charge of the horses. Mr. Orde lifted Bobby down, and immediately walked away with the River Boss, leaving with Bobby the parting injunction not to go out on the booms.

Bobby, left to himself, climbed laboriously, one steep step at a time, to the elevation of the roofless porch before the mess house. The floor he examined, as always, with the greatest interest. The sharp caulks of the rivermen's shoes had long since picked away the surface, leaving it pockmarked and uneven. Only the

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knots had resisted; and each of these now constituted a little hill above the surrounding plains. Bobby always wished that either his tin soldiers could be here or this well-ordered porch could be at home.

The sun proving hot, he peeped within the cook-house. There long tables flanked each by two benches of equal extent, stretched down the dimness. They were covered with dark oil-cloth, and at intervals on them arose irregular humps of cheese cloth. Beneath the cheese cloth, which Bobby had seen lifted, were receptacles containing the staples and condiments, such as stewed fruit, sugar, salt, pepper, catsup, molasses and the like. Innumerable tin plates and cups laid upside down were guarded by iron cutlery. It was very dark and still, and the flies buzzed.

Beyond, Bobby could hear the cook and his helpers, called cookees. He decided to visit them; but he knew better than to pass through the dining room. Until the bell rang, that was sacred from the boss himself.

Therefore he descended from the porch, one step at a time, and climbed around to the kitchen. Here he found preparations for dinner well under way.

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"'Llo, Bobby," greeted the cook, a tall white-moustached lean man with bushy eyebrows. The cookees grinned, and one of them offered him a cooky as big as a pie-plate. Bobby accepted the offering, and seated himself on a cracker box.

Food was being prepared in quantities to stagger the imagination of one used only to private kitchens. Prunes stewed away in galvanized iron buckets; meat boiled in wash-boilers; coffee was made in fifty-pound lard tins; pies were baking in ranks of ten; mashed potatoes were handled by the shovelful; a barrel of flour was used every two and a half days in this camp of hungry hard-working men. It took a good man to plan and organize; and a good man Corrigan was. His meals were never late, never scant, and never wasteful. He had the record for all the camps on the river of thirty-five cents a day per man — and the men satisfied. Consequently, in his own domain he was autocrat. The dining room was sacred, the kitchen was sacred, meal hours were sacred. Each man was fed at half-past five, at twelve, and at six. No man could get a bite even of dry bread between those hours, save occasionally a teamster in the line of duty.

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Bobby himself had once seen Corrigan chase a would-be forager out at the point of a carving knife. As for Bobby, he was an exception, and a favourite.

The place was enthralling, with its two stoves, each as big as the dining room table at home, its shelves and barrels of supplies, its rows of pies and loaves of bread, and all the crackle and bustle and aroma of its preparations. Time passed on wings. At length Corrigan glanced up at the square wooden clock and uttered some command to his two subordinates. The latter immediately began to dish into large receptacles of tin the hot food from the stove — boiled meat, mashed potatoes, pork and beans, boiled corn. These they placed at regular intervals down the long tables of the dining room. Bobby descended from his cracker box to watch them. Between the groups of hot dishes they distributed many plates of pie, of bread and of cake. Finally the two-gallon pots of tea and coffee, one for each end of each table, were brought in. The window coverings were drawn back. Corrigan appeared for final inspection.

"Want to ring the bell, Bobby?" he asked.

They proceeded together to the front of the

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house where hung the bell cord. Bobby seized this and pulled as hard as he was able. But his weight could not bring the heavy bell over. Corrigan, smiling grimly under his white moustache, gave him advice.

"Pull on her, Bobby, hang yer feet off'n the ground. Now let up entire! Now pull again! Now let up! That's the bye! You'll get her goin' yit widout the help of any man."

Sure enough the weight of the bell did give slightly under Bobby's frantic, though now rythmic, efforts. Nevertheless Corrigan took opportunity to reach out surreptitiously above the little boy's head to add a few pounds to the downward pull. At last the clapper reached the side.

Cling! it broke the stillness.

"There you got her goïn', Bobby!" cried Corrigan, "Now all you got to do is to keep at her. Now pull! Now let go. See how much easier she goes?"

The bell, started in its orbit, was now easy enough to manipulate. Bobby was delighted at the noise he was producing, and still more delighted at its results. For from the maze of his toil he could see men coming — men from the logs near at hand, men from the booms

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far away — all coming to the bell, concentrating at a common centre. By now the bell was turning entirely over. Bobby was becoming enthusiastic. He tugged and tugged. Sometimes when he did not let go the rope in time, he was lifted slightly off his feet. The sun was hot, but he had no thought of quitting. His hat fell off backward, his towsled hair wetted at the edges, clung to his forehead, his dull red cheeks grew redder behind their freckles, his eyes fairly closed in an ecstasy of enjoyment. He did not hear Corrigan laughing, nor the gleeful shouts of the men as they leaped ashore and with dripping boots advanced to the expected meal. All he knew was that wonderful *clang! clang! clang!* over him; the only thought in his little head was that he, *he*, Bobby Orde, was making all this noise himself!

How long he would have continued before giving out entirely it would be hard to say, but at this moment Mr. Orde and Jim Denning came around the corner with some haste. Both looked worried and a little angry until they caught sight of the small bell-ringer. Then they too laughed with the men.

But Mr. Orde swooped down on his son and tossed him on his shoulder.

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"That'll do," he advised, "we're all here. Lord, Corrigan! I thought you were afire at least."

"You got to show us up a reg'lar Christmas dinner to match that," said one of the men to Corrigan.

After the meal, which Bobby enjoyed thoroughly, because it was so different from what he had at home, he had a request to proffer.

"Papa," he demanded, "I want to go out on the booms."

"Haven't time to-day, Bobby," replied Mr. Orde. "You just play around."

But Jim Denning would not have this.

"Can't start 'em in too early, Jack," said he. "I bet you'd been fished out from running logs before you were half his age."

Mr. Orde laughed.

"Right you are, Jim, but we were raised different in those days."

"Well," said Denning, "work's slack. I'll let one of the men take him."

At the moment a youth of not more than fifteen years of age was passing from the cook house to the booms. He had the slenderness of his years. but was toughly knit, and already possessed in eye and mouth the steady unwaver-

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ing determination that the river life develops. In all details of equipment he was a riverman complete: the narrow-brimmed black felt hat, pushed back from a tangle of curls; the flannel shirt crossed by the broad bands of the suspenders; the kersey trousers "stagged" off a little below the knee; the heavy knit socks; and the strong shoes armed with thin half-inch, needle-sharp caulks.

"Jimmy Powers!" called the River Boss after this boy, "Come here!"

The youth approached, grinning cheerfully.

"I want you to take Bobby out on the booms," commanded Denning, "and be careful he don't fall in."

The older men moved away. Bobby and Jimmy Powers looked a little bashfully at each other, and then turned to where the first hewn logs gave access to the booms.

"Ever been out on 'em afore?" asked Jimmy Powers.

"Yes" replied Bobby; then after a pause, "I been out to the swing with Papa."

They walked out on the floating booms, which tipped and dipped ever so slightly under their weight. Bobby caught himself with a little stagger, although his footing was a good

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three feet in width. On either side of him nuzzled the great logs, like patient beasts, and between them were narrow strips of water, the colour of steel that has just cooled.

"How deep is it here?" asked Bobby.

"'Bout six feet," replied Jimmy Powers.

They passed an intersection, and came to an empty enclosure over which the water stretched like a blue sheet. Bobby looked back. Already the shore seemed far away. Through the interstices between the piles the wavelets went *lap, lap, slap, lap!* Beyond were men working the reluctant logs down toward the lower end of the booms. Some jabbed the pike poles in and then walked forward along the boom logs. Others ran quickly over the logs themselves until they had gained timbers large enough to sustain their weight, whence they were able to work with greater advantage. The supporting log rolled and dipped under the burden of the man pushing mightily against his implement; but always the riverman trod it, first one way, then the other, in entire unconsciousness of the fact that he was doing so. The dark flanks of the log heaved dripping from the river, and rolled silently back again, picked by the long sharp caulks of the riverman's boots.

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"Can you walk on the logs?" asked Bobby of his companion.

"Sure," laughed Jimmy Powers.

"Lets see you," insisted Bobby.

Jimmy Powers leaped lightly from the boom to the nearest log. It was a small one, and at once dipped below the surface. If the boy had attempted to stand on it even a second he would have fallen in. But all Jimmy Powers needed was a foothold from which to spring. Hardly had the little timber dipped before he had jumped to the next and the next after. Behind him the logs, bobbing up and down, churned the water white. Jimmy moved rapidly across the enclosure on an irregular zigzag. The smaller logs he passed over as quickly as possible; on the larger he paused appreciably. Bobby was interested to see how he left behind him a wake of motion on what had possessed the appearance of rigid immobility. The little logs bobbed furiously; the larger bowed in more stately fashion and rolled slowly in dignified protest. In a moment Jimmy was back again, grinning at Bobby's admiration.

"Look here," said he.

He took his station sideways on a log of about twenty inches diameter, and began to roll it

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beneath him by walking rapidly forward. As the timber gained its momentum, the boy increased his pace, until finally his feet were fairly twinkling beneath him, and the side of the log rising from the river was a blur of white water. Then suddenly with two quick strong stamps of his caulked feet the young riverman brought the whirling timber to a standstill.

"That's birling a log," said he to Bobby.

They walked out on the main boom still farther. The smaller partitions between the various enclosures were often nothing but single round poles chained together at their ends. On these Bobby was not allowed to venture.

"How deep is it here?" he asked again.

"'Bout thirty feet," replied Jimmy Powers.

Bobby for an instant felt a little dizzy, as though he were on a high building. All this fabric on which he moved suddenly seemed to him unreal, like a vast cobweb in suspension through a void. It was a brief sensation, and little defined in his childish mind, so it soon passed, but it constituted while it lasted a definite subjective experience which Bobby would always remember. As he looked back, the buildings of the river camp, lying low among the trees, had receded to a great distance;

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apparently at another horizon was the dark row of piling that marked the outer confines of the booms; up and down stream, as far as he could see, were the logs. Bobby suddenly felt very much alone, with the blue sky above him, and the deep black water beneath, and about him nothing but the quiet sullen monsters herded from the wilderness. He gripped very tightly Jimmy Powers's hand as they walked along.

But shortly they turned to the left; and after a brief walk, mounted the rickety steps to the floor of the hut where dwelt old man North, and the winch for operating the swinging boom. Old man North was short, dark, heavy and bearded; he smoked perpetually a small black clay pipe which he always held upside down in his mouth. His conversation was not extensive; but his black eyes twinkled at Bobby, so the little boy was not afraid of him. When he saw the two approaching, he reached over in the corner and handed out a hickory pole peeled to a beautiful white.

"The wums is yonder," said he.

Bobby put a fat worm on his hook and sat down in the opposite doorway were he could dangle his feet directly over the river. Where

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the shadow of the cabin fell, he could see far down in the water, which there became a transparent fair green. Close to the piles, on the tops of which the hut was built, were various fish. Jimmy leaned over.

"Mostly suckers," he advised. "Yan's a perch, try him."

Bobby cautiously lowered his baited hook until it dangled before the perch's nose. The latter paid absolutely no attention to it. Bobby jiggled it up and down. No results. At last he fairly plumped the worm on top of the fish's nose. The perch, with an air of annoyance, spread his gills and, with the least perceptible movement of his tail, sank slowly until he faded from sight.

"Better let down your hook and fish near bottom," suggested Jimmy Powers.

Bobby did so. The peace of warm afternoon settled upon him. He dangled his chubby legs, and tried to spit as scientifically as he could, and watched the waving green current slip silently beneath his feet. Beside him sat Jimmy Powers. The fragrant strong tobacco smoke from North's pipe passed them in wisps.

"I'd like to walk on logs," proffered Bobby at last, "It looks like lots of fun."

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"Oh, that's nothin'," said Jimmy Powers, "You ought to be on drive."

The boys fell into conversation. Jimmy told of the drive, and the log-running. Bobby listened with the envy of one whose imagination cannot conceive of himself permitted in such affairs. He was entirely absorbed. And then all at once the peace was shattered.

"Yank him, Bobby, yank him!" yelled Jimmy.

"Christmas! he's a whale!" said old North.

For, without wavering, the tip of the hickory pole had been ruthlessly jerked below the water's surface, and the butt nearly pulled from Bobby's hands.

Bobby knew the proper thing to do. In such cases you heaved strongly. The fish flew from the water, described an arc over your head, and lit somewhere behind you. He tried to accomplish this, but his utmost strength could but just lift the wriggling, jerking end of the pole from the water.

"Give her to me!" cried Jimmy Powers.

"Le' me 'lone," grunted Bobby.

He planted the butt of the pole in the pit of his stomach, and lifted as hard as ever he could with both hands. His face grew red, his ears

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rang, but, after a first immovable resistance, to his great joy the tip of the bending, wriggling pole began to give. Slowly, little by little, he pulled up the fish, until he could make out the flash of its body darting to and fro far down in the depths.

"Black bass!" murmured Jimmy Powers breathlessly.

And then just as his size and beauty were becoming clearly visible, the line came up with a sickening ease. The interested spectators caught a glimpse of white as the fish turned.

Bobby let out a howl of disappointment.

"Oh *gee*, that's hard luck!" cried Jimmy Powers,

"Bet he weighed four pounds," proffered North curtly.

But at this instant a faint clear whistle sounded from about the wooded bend of the river above.

"Boat coming," said North, "Clear out of the way, boys."

He began at once to operate the winch which drew the long slanting swing boom out of the channel, for the River was navigable water, and must not be obstructed. In a moment appeared the *Lucy Belle*, a shallow-draught,

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flimsy-looking double decker, with two slim smokestacks side by side connected by a band of fancy grill-work, a walking beam, two huge paddle boxes and much white paint. She sheered sidewise with the current around the bend, and headed down upon them accompanied by a vast beating of paddle wheels. Bobby could soon make out atop the walking-beam, the swaying iron Indian with bent bow, and the piles of slabs which constituted the *Lucy Belle*'s fuel. Almost immediately she was passing, within ten feet or so of the hut. The water boiled and eddied among the piles, rushing in and sucking back. A fat, ruddy-faced man in official cap and citizen's clothes leaned over the rail.

"Well, you made her to-day," shouted North.

"Bet ye," called the man with a grin. "Only aground once."

The *Lucy Belle* swept away with an air of pride. She made the trip to and from Redding, forty miles up the River, twice a week. Sometimes she came through in a day. Oftener she ran aground.

Now Bobby reverted to his original idea.

"I'd like to walk on the logs," said he.

"Well, come on, then," said Jimmy Powers.

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They retraced their steps along the booms until near the shore.

"You don't want to try her where she's deep," explained Jimmy Powers, "'Cause then if you should fall in, the logs would close right together over your head, and then where'd you be?"

Bobby shuddered at this idea, which in the event continued to haunt him for some days.

"There's a big one," said Jimmy Powers. "Try her."

Bobby stepped out on a big solid-looking log, which immediately proved to be not solid at all. It dipped one way, Bobby tried to tread the other. The log promptly followed his suggestion — too promptly. Bobby soon found himself about two moves behind in this strange new game. He lost his balance, and the first thing he knew, he found himself waist deep in the water.

Jimmy Powers laughed heartily; but to Bobby this was no laughing matter. The penalties attached both by nature and his mother were dire in the extreme. He foresaw sickness and spankings, both of which had been promised him in the event of wet feet merely, and here he was dripping from the waist down! In any other surroundings or with any other company he would have wept bitterly. Even in the

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presence of Jimmy Powers his lower lip quivered; and his soul filled to the very throat with dismay. Jimmy Powers could not understand his very evident perturbation. If took a great deal of explanation on Bobby's part; but finally there was conveyed to the young riverman's understanding a slight notion of the situation. To the child the day seemed lost; but Jimmy Powers was more resourceful. He surveyed his charge thoughtfully.

"You're all right, kid," he announced at last. "Your collar's all right, and your hair ain't wet. The rest'll dry out so nobody will know the diff'."

Bobby brightened.

"Won't I catch cold?" he asked doubtfully.

"This kind of weather? Naw!" said Jimmy Powers with scorn. "You rustle in to the cook shanty and get Corrigan to let you sit by the stove."

Bobby said farewell to his guide, and presented himself to the cook.

"I fell in," he announced, "can I sit by the stove?"

"Sure" said Corrigan hospitably. "Take a cracker-box and go over by the wood box. Tryin' to ride a log?"

"Yes" confessed Bobby.

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"Well, you want to look out for them," warned Corrigan a little vaguely. He produced the customary cookey. Bobby sat and steamed, and munched and told about the fish he had almost caught. He liked Corrigan because the latter talked to him sensibly, without ill-timed facetiousness, as to an equal. In a moment Duke thrust his muzzle in the door. Bobby looked hastily down. His clothes were quite dry.

"Don't tell Papa," be begged.

For answer Corrigan portentously winked one eye, and went on peeling potatoes. After a moment Mr. Orde appeared at the door.

"Bobby here?" he inquired. "Oh yes! Come on, youngster."

Bobby showed himself with considerable trepidation; but apparently Mr. Orde noticed nothing wrong, and the little boy's spirits rose. The team was waiting, and they mounted the buggy at once. Duke fell in behind them soberly. For him the freshness of the expedition was over. It was now merely a case of get back home.

"Have a good time?" asked Mr. Orde.

Bobby talked busily all the way in. He told principally of the fish, although the *Lucy Belle*

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and Jimmy Powers came in for a share. From time to time Mr. Orde said, "That's good," or, "Yes," which sufficed Bobby. Probably, however, the man heard little of his son's talk. His mind was very busy with the elements of the game he was playing, sorting and arranging them, figuring how to earn and borrow the money necessary to permit his taking advantage of a chance he thought he saw in the western timber lands. He heard little, to be sure, and yet he was in reality wholly occupied with the child prattling away at his side — with his fortune, and his business prospects of thirty years hence.

Under the maples the sun slanted low and golden and mote-laden. Bobby suddenly felt a little tired, and more than a little hungry. He descended from the buggy with alacrity. The wetting was forgotten in the home-coming. Only when washing for dinner did he remember with certain self-felicitation that even his mother had noticed nothing. For the first time it occurred to him that his parents were not omniscient:—that was the evil of the afternoon's experiences. For the first time also it occurred to him that he possessed the ability to meet an emergency without their aid:—that was the

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good of it. And the good far outweighed the evil.

That night Bobby called upon the Lord to bless those dear to him, as usual; but he offered on his own account an addendum.

"And make Bobby grow up a big man like Jimmy Powers."

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II

THE PICNIC

One Saturday, shortly after, everybody was early afoot in preparation for a picnic up the River. Bobby had on clean starched brown linen things, and his hair was parted on one side and very smoothly brushed across his forehead. His mother had been somewhat inclined to the dark green velvet suit with the lace collar, but to his great relief his father had intervened.

"Give the boy a chance," said he, "He'll want to eat peaches and go down in the engine room, and perhaps catch sunfish."

At the wharf, built along the front of the river at the foot of Main Street, they could see, when they turned the corner at the engine-house, the single sturdy stack of the *Robert O* pouring forth a cloud of gray smoke, while in front of it fluttered the white of the women's dresses.

"We're going to be late," danced Bobby.

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"I guess they'll wait for us," replied Mr. Orde easily. "They know what's in this," he smiled, patting the hamper he was carrying.

At the wharf they were greeted by a chorus of exclamations from a large group of people. Mr. and Mrs. Taylor were there, the latter sweet and dainty in one of the very latest creations in muslin; Mr. and Mrs. Fuller with Tad and Clifford; young Mr. Carlin from the bank; Mr. and Mrs. Proctor, and their young-lady daughter wearing a marvellous "waterfall"; Angus McMullen, alone, his father detained professionally; Mrs. Cathcart and Georgie; young Bradford carrying his banjo, his wonderful raiment and his air of vast leisure; Welton, the lumberman, red-faced, jolly, popular and ungrammatical. The women guarded baskets. All greeted the Ordes with various degrees of hilarity. When the noise had died down, a massive and impressive lady, heretofore unnamed, stepped forward. She held a jewelled arm straight before her, the hand drooping slightly, so that, although she was in reality of but medium stature, she gave the impression of condescending from a height.

"Good morning, Mrs. Owen," greeted Mrs. Orde, shaking the proffered hand.

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"Good morning, my dear," replied Mrs. Owen regally. She swept slowly sideways to reveal a woman and a little girl of seven or eight years, immediately behind her. "Allow me to present to you my very dear friend, Mrs. Carleton. Mrs. Carleton is from the city, staying at the Ottawa for a few weeks, and I knew you would like the chance to show her some of our beautiful River." Mrs. Carleton, a pretty, modish woman, with the ease of city manner, bowed quietly and murmured her pleasure. The little girl looked half bashfully through a wealth of natural curls at the grown-ups to whom she was presented in the off-hand method one employs with children. She was altogether a charming little girl. Her hair was of the colour of ripe wheat; her skin was of the light smooth brown peculiar to an exceptional blonde complexion tanned in the sun; her mouth was full and whimsical; and her eyes, strangely enough in one otherwise so light, were so black as to resemble spots. Her dress was very simple, very starched, very white. A big leghorn hat with red roses half hid her head. She was shy, that was easily to be seen; but shyness was relieved from the awkwardness so usual and so painful in children of her age by

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the results of what must have been a careful training. She answered when she was spoken to, directly and to the point; and yet it could not but be evident that her spirit fluttered.

The combination was charming; and Mrs. Orde fell to it at once.

"Celia, my dear," she said kindly, "come with me, we're going to have a nice day together; and I have a little boy named Bobby who will show you everything."

But now the *Robert O* gave two impatient toots. Everybody ceased greeting everybody else, and began to pile the shawls and lunch baskets aboard. The thick strong gunwale of the *Robert O* was a foot or so below the chute level from the wharf. The women were helped aboard soberly by the men. Miss Proctor, however, slipped little slips and screamed little screams, while young Mr. Carlin, Bradford and Welton, with galvanized beaming smiles, all attempted to help her. Mrs. Owen marched down the chute, waited calmly and without impatience until all the available men were at hand, and then stepped down majestically with dignity unimpaired.

Long before this, Bobby had quit the altogether uninteresting wharf. The *Robert O* he

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had seen many times from a distance, and once of twice near at hand lying at the cribs and piers, but this was his first chance to explore. Accordingly he dropped down to her deck, and, with the natural instinct to see as far ahead as possible, marched immediately to the very prow. The deck proved to slope up-hill strangely, which, in its unlikeness to any floor Bobby had ever walked on, was in itself a pleasure. The hawser around the bitt interested him; and the glimpse he had of the sparkling river slipping toward him from the yellow hills up stream. He could just rest his chin on the rail to look.

Then he turned his gaze aft; and encountered the amused scrutiny of a man leaning on a wheel in a little house. The house had big windows, and on top was an iron eagle with spread wings. Two steps led up to a door on each side; and Bobby without hesitation entered one of these doors.

The inside of the house he found different from any house he had ever been in before; and possessed of a strange fascination. There was the wheel, with projecting handles to every spoke, and above it, racks containing spy-glasses, black pipes, tobacco-tins. At hand

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projected a speaking-tube like that in the back hall at home, and two or three handles connected with wires. Behind the wheel was a broad leather seat; and clothes on nails; and a chart; and a pilot's licence, of which Bobby understood nothing, but admired the round gold seals.

"Well, Bobby, what do you think of it?" asked the man.

Bobby had not had time to look at the man. He did so now and liked him. The first thing he noticed was the man's eyes, which were steady and unwavering and as blue as the sky. Then he surveyed in turn gravely his heavy bleached, flaxen moustache; his hard brown cheeks; the round barrel of his blue-clad body; and his short sturdy legs.

"Think you'd like to run a tug?" inquired this man.

"I don't know," replied Bobby; "what is your name?"

"I'm Captain Marsh," replied the man. He glanced out the open door at the group on the wharf. "If they're going up past the bend to-day, they'll have to get a move," he remarked. "Here, Bobby, want to blow the whistle?"

He lifted the boy up in the hollow of one

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arm. "There, that's it; that handle. Pull down on it, and let go."

Bobby did so and his little heart almost stopped at the shock of the blast, so loud was it, and so near.

"Now again," commanded Captain Marsh.

Bobby recovered and obeyed. The passengers began to embark.

Captain Marsh watched until the last was safely aboard; then he set Bobby gently to the floor.

"If you want to see out, go sit on the bunk back there," he advised.

Somebody cast off the lines. Captain Marsh pulled the other handle. A sharp tinkling bell struck somewhere far in the depths of the craft. Immediately Bobby felt beneath him the upheaval and trembling of some mighty force. The wharf seemed to slip back. In another moment at a second tinkle of the bell the tug had gathered headway, and the little boy was watching with delight the sandhills and buildings on one side and the other slipping by in regular succession.

Captain Marsh stood easily staring directly ahead of him, and paying no more attention to the child. Bobby sat very straight in his

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absorption. New impressions were coming to him so fast that he had no desire to move. The slow turn of the great wheel; the throb of the engine; the swift passing of water; the orderly procession of the river banks; the feeling of smooth, resistless motion — these sufficed. How long he might have sat there if undisturbed, it would be hard to say; but at the end of a few moments Angus McMullen looked in at the door.

"What you stayin' here for, Bobby?" he inquired with contemptuous wonder. "Come on out and see the big waves we're making."

Outside Bobby found all the grown-ups gathered forward of the pilot house. The older people were seated on folding camp chairs, the equilibrium of which they found some difficulty in maintaining on the sloping deck. Bradford, Carlin, Welton and Miss Proctor, however, had established themselves in the extreme bow. Miss Proctor perched on the bitts, while the men stood or leaned near at hand. Occasionally, as the tug changed course, Miss Proctor would utter a little exclamation and thrust her arms out aimlessly, as though uncertain. All three of the men thereupon assured her balance for her. With the group Bobby saw the little girl with light hair.

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"Not up there," advised Angus. "This way." A very narrow passage ran between the thick gunwale and the deck-house. It sloped down and then gradually up toward the stern. At its lowest point it seemed to Bobby fearfully near the river; and as he descended to that point he discovered that indeed the displacement of rapid running appeared to force the water even above the level of the deck. Bits of chip, sawdust and the like shot swiftly by in the smooth, oily curve of the liquid. The wet smell of it came to Bobby's eager nostrils, the subtle cool aroma of the river.

But, from a little door level with the deck, smoking a pipe, leaned a negro who greeted them jovially. He dwelt in a narrow place down in the hull, filled with machinery and the glow of a furnace. The boys hung in the opening fascinated by the regular rise and fall of the polished rods; savouring the feel of heavy heated air and the clean smell of oil. In a moment the negro flung open an iron door whence immediately sprang glowing light and a blast of heat. Into this door he thrust two or three long slabs which he took from the deck on the other side of the tug; and shut it to with a clang.

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After gazing their fill, the boys continued their way back. The deck-house ended. They found themselves on the broad, flat, spoon-shaped after-deck occupied by the strong towing-bitts and coils of cable.

"Isn't this great?" asked Angus.

They joined the Fuller boys hanging eagerly over the stern. Here the wake boiled white and full of bubbles from the action of the powerful propeller necessary to a towing-tug. Along the edges it was light green shot with blue; and the central line of its down-section waved from side to side like a snake. On either side long, slanting waves pushed aside by the bow surged smoothly away; behind followed other round waves in regular and diminishing succession. Over them the chips and bark rode with a jolly, dancing motion.

Shortly, however, the younger people discovered the possibilities of the after-deck. Miss Proctor leaned her back against the low gunwale astern. The men disposed themselves about her. They talked with a great deal of laughter; but Bobby did not find their conversation amusing. Finally they began to entreat Mr. Bradford to play his banjo. That young gentleman became suddenly afflicted with shyness.

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"I don't play much," he objected. "Honestly I don't — just picked up a few chords by ear."

"Oh, Mr. *Bradford*," cried Miss Proctor, "I've heard you play *beautifully*. *Do* get it."

Mr. Bradford objected further; and was further cajoled by Miss Proctor. Bobby wondered why he had brought the banjo along, if he didn't want to play on it. The other men did none of the persuading. Finally Mr. Bradford procured the instrument. He took some time to tune it; and had something to say concerning damp air and the strings. Finally he played the "Spanish Fandango," to the enthusiasm of Miss Proctor and the polite attention of the other men. This he followed by a song called "Listen to the Mocking Bird," the chorus to which consisted of complicated gurgling whistling supposed to represent the song of the mocking bird, though it is to be doubted if that performer would have recognized himself in it. Miss Proctor approving of this, Bradford next played a trick piece, in the course of which he did acrobatics with his instrument, but without missing a note.

Carlin and Welton finally strolled away unnoticed. The lumberman offered the other a cigar.

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"Ain't no use buckin' the funny man with the banjo, Tommy," he observed with a rueful grin.

Mr. Bradford now put two pennies under the bridge.

"Makes it sound like a guitar," he explained; and drifted into thrillingly sentimental selections. He sang three in so low a voice that Bobby began to think it useless to listen any more; when a loud and prolonged whistle from the tug drowned all other sounds. Mr. Bradford looked savage; but the boys were delighted.

"Going to pass the drawbridge!" shrieked Angus.

They raced away to the bow in order to watch the imminence of the great structure over their heads; to see the smokestack dip back on its hinges as they passed beneath; and to gloat over the smash of their waves against the piling of the bridge's foundation. Here Bobby was captured by Mrs. Orde.

"Here, Bobby," said she, "This is Celia Carleton, and I want you to be nice to her."

With that she left them staring at each other.

"How do you do?" remarked Bobby gravely.

"How do you do?" said she.

They were no further along.

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"I got a new knife," blurted out Bobby, in desperation.

"That's nice," said Celia politely. "Let's see it."

"I haven't got it with me," confessed Bobby. He was ashamed to say that he was not yet permitted to use it.

He glanced at her sideways. Somehow he liked the fresh clean stiffness of her starched skirts, and the biscuit brown of her complexion. He desired all at once that she think well of him.

"I can jump off our high-board fence to the ground," he boasted.

Celia seemed impressed.

"My knife's nothing," said Bobby, "My father's got a razor that can cut anything. He lets me take it whenever I want it. It's awful sharp. If I had it here I could cut this boat right in two with it."

"My!" said Celia, "But I wouldn't want to cut it in two. Would you?"

"Oh, I don't know," said Bobby, his legs apart, his head on one side. He was sure now that he liked this new acquaintance; she seemed pleasantly to be awestricken. "Come on, let's go in the back part of the boat" he suggested, "and I'll show you things."

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"All right," said she.

Bobby led her past the scornful Angus to the narrow deck.

"This is the engine room," he announced out of his new knowledge.

But Celia did not care for it.

"It's awfully dirty," said she.

This was a new point of view; and Bobby marvelled. However, she was delighted with the after-deck, and the wake, and the attendant waves. Bobby showed them off to her as though they had been his private possessions. This was the first little girl he had ever known. The novelty appealed to him; the daintiness of her; the freshness and cleanness; the dependence of her on Bobby's ten years of experience — all this brought out the latent and instinctive male admiration of the child. He remained heedless of the other three boys hanging awkwardly in the middle distance. All his small store of knowledge he poured out before her — he told her everything, without reservation — of Duke, and the sand-hills, and the fort, and Sir Thomas Malory, and the booms, and the Flobert Rifle, and the "Dutchmen" on the side street. She found it all interesting. They became very good friends.

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In the meantime Mr. Bradford had long since laid aside the banjo, and was basking in Miss Proctor's unshared attention. The pleased smile never left his face; the lean of his head bespoke deep deference; the curve of his body respectful devotion. He talked in a low voice, and every moment or so Miss Proctor would giggle, or exclaim, "Oh, Mr. *Bradford!*" in a pleased and reproving voice.

In the meantime the tug was going rapidly up river; and yet, with the exception of an occasional glance from some isolated individual, and the sporadic attention of the boys, no one saw what was passing. All were absorbed by the people, the little happenings and the talk aboard the craft. So without comment they swept past the tall yellow sand-hills with their fringe of crested trees on the left; and the wide plain on the right. Only Bobby remarked the deep bayou in the bosom of the hills where dreamed in the peace and mystery of an honourable old age the hulks of a dozen vessels rotting in the sun. The shipyards and the mills the other side the drawbridge nobody saw, for at that time even Bobby was absorbed in his new acquaintance.

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But beyond that, the boy having offered and the girl received the first burst of confidence, the children turned their attention to things passing. They saw the wide marshes of rushes and cat-tails, with their bayous and channels wherein swam the white-billed mud-hens; and the long booms to the left filled with brown logs. From this level, low to the water, these things seemed to them wonderful and vast. After a little the *Robert O* whistled again. They passed the swing at the upper end of the booms. Old man North stood, in the doorway of his hut, smoking his short black pipe upside down. Bobby was astonished to see how different the hut looked from this point of view. He would hardly have recognized it were it not for the swing-tender, who waved his pipe at Bobby when the tug passed.

"I know him," said Bobby proudly to Celia.

The *Robert O* swept through, and the long slanting waves, and the round following waves sucked up and down among the piles.

"Now we're going around the Bend!" cried Bobby excitedly. "I never been around the Bend!"

But Celia suddenly arose.

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"I'm going back to mamma and the rest," she announced.

"Why?" asked Bobby astonished. "Come on; stay here and see what there is around the Bend."

Celia stood on one foot, her black eyes wide and speculative, staring past Bobby into some fair realm of feminine caprice. She shook her head, slowly, so that first a curl on one side, then on the other fell across her eyes. After a long deliberate moment she turned and went forward, followed at a distance by the grieved and puzzled Bobby. In the bow she sidled up to her mother, against whom she leaned lightly, her head on one side, her eyes dreamy, her hand slipped into one of her mother's open palms. Bobby, shut out, made his way to the prow, where he rested his chin on the rail, and rather glumly contemplated the surprises of "around the Bend."

But over the prow the little boy was the first — except for Captain Marsh — to see from afar the landing, first as a glimmering shadow under the reflection of the elms; then as a vague ill-defined form above the River's glassy surface; finally as a wide, low, T-shaped platform wharf, reaching its twenty feet from the grassy

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banks to shimmer in the heat above its own wavering reflection.

The tug sidled alongside with a great turmoil of white-and-green bubble-shot water drifting around in eddies from her labouring propeller. Captain Marsh, after one prolonged jingle of his bell emerged from his pilot-house, seized a heavy rope, and sprang ashore. The end of the rope he cast around a snubbing-pile.

But some inset of current or excess of momentum made it impossible to hold her. The rope creaked and cried as it was dragged around the smooth snubbing-pile. Finally the end was drawn so close that Captain Marsh was in danger of jamming his hands. At once, with inconceivable dexterity and quickness, he cast loose, ran forward, wrapped the line three times around another pile farther on and braced his short, sturdy legs against the post for a trial of strength. Here the heavy, slow surge of the tug was effectually checked. Captain Marsh turned his wide grin of triumph toward his passengers. Everybody laughed, and prepared to disembark.

Between the gunwale and the wharf's edge could be seen a narrow glinting strip of very black water. The *Robert O* slowly approached

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and receded from the dock; and this strip of water correspondingly widened and narrowed. Over it every one must step; and the anxieties and precautions were something tremendous. Bobby came toward the last, and was lifted bodily across, his sturdy legs curling up under like a crab's.

The wharf he found broad and square and shady, with a narrow way leading ashore. In the middle of it were piled, awaiting shipment on the *Lucy Belle*, three tiers of the old-fashioned, open-built, pail-shaped peach-baskets containing the famous Michigan fruit. Each was filled to a gentle curve above the brim, and over the top was wired pink mosquito netting. This at once protected the fruit from insects; added to the brilliancy and softness of its colouring; and lent to the rows of baskets a gay and holiday appearance. The men examined them attentively, talking of "cling stones," "free stones," "Crawfords," and other technicalities which Bobby could not understand. When the last lunch basket had been passed ashore, all crossed to the bank of the river and the grove of elms, leaving the *Robert O* and Captain Marsh and the engineer.

In the grove the boys immediately scattered

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in search of adventure. All but Bobby. He remained with the older people, wishing mightily to take Celia with him; but suddenly afraid to approach her with the direct request. So he contented himself with expressive gestures, which she, close to her mother, chose to ignore.

Two of the men disappeared up the path, one carrying an empty pail. The others went busily about collecting wood, building a fire, smoothing out a place to spread the rugs which would serve as a table. All the women fluttered about the lunch baskets examining the contents, discussing them, finally distributing them in accordance with the mysterious system considered proper in such matters. Bobby, left alone, without occupation on the one hand, nor the desire for his companions' amusements on the other, was then the only one at leisure to look about him, to observe through the alders that fringed the bank the hide-and-seek glint of the River; to gaze with wonder and a little awe on the canopy of waving light green that to his childish sense of proportion seemed as far above him as the skies themselves; to notice how the sunlight splashed through the rifts as though it had been melted and poured down from above; to feel the friendly warmth of

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summer air under trees; to savour the hot springwood-smells that wandered here and there in the careless irresponsibility of forest spirits off duty. This was Bobby's first experience with woods; and his keenest perceptions were alive to them. The tall trunks of trees rising from the graceful, fragile, half-translucence of undergrowth; little round tunnels to a distant delicate green; lights against shadows, and shadows against lights; the wing-flashes of birds hidden and mysterious; and above all the marvellous green transparence of all the shadows, which tinted the very air itself, so that to the little boy it seemed he could bathe in it as in a clear fountain — all these came to him at once. And each brought by the hand another wonder for recognition, so that at last the picnic party disappeared from his vision, the loud and laughing voices were hushed from his ears. He stood there, lips apart, eyes wide, spirit hushed, looking half upward. The light struck down across him.

The picnic party went about its business unaware of the wonderful thing transacting in their very presence. Men do not grow as plants, so many inches, so many months. The changes prepare long and in secret, without

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visible indication. Then swiftly they take place. The qualities of the soul unfold silently their splendid wings.

After a moment the boys ran whooping through the woods from one direction demanding food; the two men came shouting from the other carrying a pail of water and an open basket of magnificent peaches. Bobby shivered slightly, and looked about him, half dazed, as though he had just awakened. Then quietly he crept to a tree near the table and sat down. For perhaps a minute he remained there; then with a rush came the reaction. Bobby was wildly and reprehensibly naughty.

Once in a while, and after meals, Mrs. Orde allowed him a single piece of sponge-cake; no more. But now, Bobby, catching the eye of Celia upon him, grimaced, pantomimed to call attention, and deliberately *broke* off a big chunk of Mrs. Owen's frosted work of art and proceeded to devour it. Celia's eyes widened with horror; which to Bobby's depraved state of mind was reward enough. Then Mrs. Orde uttered a cry of astonishment; Mrs. Owen a dignified but outraged snort; and Bobby was yanked into space.

After the storm had cleared, he found himself,

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somewhat dishevelled, aboard the *Robert O*, entrusted to Captain Marsh, provided with three bread-and-butter sandwiches, and promised a hair-brush spanking for the morrow.

Mrs. Orde was not only mortified, but shocked to the very depths of her faith.

"I don't know how to explain it!" she said again and again. "Bobby is always so good about such things! I've brought him up — and *deliberately*. My dear Mrs. Owen, such a beautiful frosting, and to have it ruined like that!"

But Mrs. Fuller, fat, placid, perhaps slightly stupid, here rose to the heights of what her husband always admiringly called "horse sense,"

"Now, Carroll," she said, "stop your worrying about it. You'll get yourself all worked up and spoil your lunch and ours, all for nothing. Children will be naughty sometimes. I was naughty myself. So were you, probably. That's human nature. Just don't worry about it and spoil the good time."

Mrs. Orde thereupon fell silent, for she was a sensible woman and could see the point as to lessening the other's enjoyment. Little by little she cooled off, until at last she was able to join in the fun; although always in the background

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of her mind persisted the necessity of knowing a *reason* for such an outbreak.

The flurry over, Welton insisted that they all admire the peaches.

"Best Michigan produces," he boasted. "'Every one big as a coffee-cup; and perfect in shape, colour and flavour. Freestone, too. Nothing exceptional about them either. Millions more just like 'em. Can't match them anywhere in the world."

"Saw by the paper this spring that the peach crop was ruined by the frost," marvelled Carlin.

Taylor laughed.

"My dear fellow, the Michigan peach crop is destroyed regularly *every* spring. Seem to be enough peaches by August, however."

They fell to on the lunch. When they had eaten all they could, there still remained enough to have fed four other picnics of the same size as their own

Bobby remained not long cast down, however.

"Been at it, have you?" observed Captain Marsh after the irate parent had departed. "What was it this time?"

"I ate a piece of cake," replied Bobby.

"H'm! That doesn't sound very bad."

"It was Mrs. Owen's cake," supplemented Bobby.

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"I see," said the Captain gravely in enlightenment. "What are you going to do now?"

"I'm going to eat my lunch," Bobby informed him, showing the three bread-and-butter sandwiches.

"H'm. So 'm I," said the Captain. "Better join me."

They entered the pilot-house and established themselves facing each other on the wide leather seat. The Captain produced a tin dinner-pail with a cupola top such as Bobby had often seen men carrying, and which he had always desired to investigate. This came apart in the middle. The top proved to contain cold coffee all sugared and creamed. The bottom had a fringed red-checked napkin, two slabs of pie, two doughnuts, and four thick ham sandwiches made of coarse bread. They ate. Captain Marsh insisted on Bobby's accepting a doughnut and a piece of pie. Bobby did so, with many misgivings; but found them delicious exceedingly because they were so different from what he was used to at home.

"Now," said the Captain, brushing away the crumbs with one comprehensive gesture, "what do you want to do now? You got to stay aboard, you know?"

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"BEEN AT IT, HAVE YOU?" OBSERVED CAPTAIN MARSH

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ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS
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"Can't we fish?" suggested Bobby timidly.

The Captain looked about him with some doubt.

"Well," he decided at last, "we might try. The time of day's wrong, and the place don't look much good; but there's no harm trying."

Two long bamboo poles fitted with lines, hooks, and sinkers were slung alongside the deck-house. Captain Marsh produced worms in a can. The two sat side by side, dangling their feet over the stern, the poles slanting down toward the dark water, silent and intent. In not more than two minutes Bobby felt his pole twitch. Without much difficulty he drew to the surface a broad flat little fish that flashed as he turned in the water.

"Hi!" cried Bobby, "there *are* fish here!"

"Oh, that's a sunfish," said Captain Marsh.

Bobby looked up.

"Aren't sunfish good?" he inquired anxiously.

Captain Marsh opened his mouth to reply, caught Bobby's apprehensive and half-disappointed expression, and thought better of it.

"Why, sure!" said he. "They're a fine fish."

At the end of an hour Bobby had acquired a goodly string. Captain Marsh early drew in his line, saying he preferred to smoke. Bobby

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had an excellent time. He was very much surprised at the return of the picnic party. The period of punishment had not hung heavy.

By the time all had embarked, the steam pressure was up. The *Robert O* swung down stream for home.

But now Celia, forgetting her earlier caprice of indifference, watched Bobby constantly. After a little he became aware of it, and was flattered in his secret soul, but he attempted no more advances, nor did he vouchsafe her the smallest glance. Soon she sidled over to him shyly.

"What made you do it?" she asked in a whisper.

"Do what?" pretended Bobby.

"Break Mrs. Owen's cake."

"'Cause I wanted to."

"Didn't you know 't was very bad?"

"'Course."

Celia contemplated Bobby with a new and respectful interest. "I wouldn't dare do it," she acknowledged at last. In this lay confession of the reason for her change of whim; but Bobby could not be expected to realize that. With masculine directness he seized the root of his grievance and brought it to light.

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"Why were you so mean this noon?" he demanded.

She made wide eyes.

"I wasn't mean. How was I mean?"

"You went away; and you wouldn't look at me or talk to me."

"I didn't care whether I talked to you or not," she denied. "I wanted to be with my mamma."

So on the return trip, too, Bobby had a good time. The wharf surprised him, and the flurry of disembarkation prevented his saying formal good-bye to Celia. He waved his hand at her, however, and grinned amiably. To his astonishment she gave him the briefest possible nod over her shoulder; and walked away, her hand clasping that of her mother, even yet a dainty airy figure in her mussed white dress still flaring with starch, her slim black legs, and her wide leghorn hat with the red roses.

The hurt and puzzle of this lasted him to his home, and caused him to forget the spanking in prospect. He ate his supper in silence, quite unaware of his mother's disapproval. After supper he hunted up Duke and sat watching the sunset behind the twisted pines on the sandhills. He did much cogitating, but arrived nowhere.

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"Bobby!" called his mother. "Come to bed."

He said good night to Duke, and obeyed.

"Now, Bobby," said Mrs. Orde, "I don't like to do this, but you have been a very naughty boy to-day. Come here."

Bobby came. The hair brush did its work. Usually in such case Bobby howled before the first blow fell, but to-night he set his lips and uttered no sounds. *Slap! slap! slap! slap!* with deliberate spaces between. Bobby was released. He climbed down, his soul tense, with agony, but his face steady — and laughed!

It was not much of a laugh, to be sure, but a laugh it was. Mrs. Orde, shocked, scandalized, outraged and now thoroughly angry, yanked her son again across her knees.

"Why! I never heard of anything like it!" she cried. "You naughty, *naughty* boy! I don't see what's got into you to-day. I'll teach you to laugh at my spankings!"

Bobby did not laugh at this spanking. It was more than a stone could have borne. After the fifth well-directed and vigorous smack, he howled.

Later, when the tempest of sobs had stilled to occasional gulps, Mrs. Orde questioned him about it. They were rocking back and forth in

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the big chair, the twilight all about them. Bobby said he was sorry and his mamma had cuddled him and loved him, and all was forgiven.

"Now, Bobby, tell mamma," soothed Mrs. Orde. "Why were you such a bad little boy as to laugh at mamma when she spanked you just now?"

"I wasn't bad," protested Bobby, "I was trying to be good. You told me not to cry when I got hurt, but to jump up and laugh about it."

"Oh, my baby, my poor little man!" cried Mrs. Orde between laughter and tears.

They rocked some more.

"Now, Bobby, tell mamma," insisted Mrs. Orde gently. "Why did you break Mrs. Owen's cake? Were you as hungry as all that?"

"No ma'am," replied Bobby.

"Why did you do it, then?"

"I don't know."

Mr. Orde laughed uproariously when told of Bobby's attempt to be brave under affliction.

"The little snoozer!" he cried. "Guess I'll go up and see him."

Bobby loved to have his father lie beside him on the bed. They never said much; but the little boy lay, looking up through the dimness,

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bathed in a deep comfortable content at the man's physical presence.

To-night they lay thus in silence for at least five minutes. Then Bobby spoke.

"Papa," said he "don't you think Celia Carleton is pretty?"

"Very pretty, Bobby."

Another long silence.

"Papa," complained Bobby at last, "why does Celia be nice to me; and then not be nice to me; and change all the while?"

Mr. Orde chuckled softly to himself.

"That's the way of 'em, Bobby," said he. "There's no explaining it. All little girls are that way — and big girls, too," he added.

So long a pause ensued that Mr. Orde thought his son must be asleep, and was preparing softly to escape.

"Papa," came the little boy's voice from the darkness, "I like her just the same."

"Carroll," said Mr. Orde to his wife as blinking he entered the lighted sitting room, "you can recover your soul's equanimity. I've found out why he broke into the cake."

"Why?" asked Mrs. Orde eagerly.

"He was showing off before that little Carleton girl," replied Mr. Orde.

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III

HIDE AND COOP

Early Monday morning Bobby was afoot and on his way to the Ottawa Hotel. He ran fast until within a block of it; then unexpectedly his gait slackened to a walk, finally to a loiter. He became strangely reluctant, strangely bashful about approaching the place. This was not to be understood.

Usually when he wanted to go play with any one, he simply went and did so. Now all sorts of barriers seemed to intervene, and the worst of it was that these barriers he seemed to have spun from out his own soul. Then too a queer feeling suddenly invaded his chest, exactly like that he remembered to have experienced during the downward rush of a swing. Bobby could not comprehend these things; they just were. He was fairly to the point of deciding to go back and look at the Flobert Rifle, in the shop window, when a group of children ran out from the wide office doors to the croquet court at the side.

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Among them Bobby made out Celia, a different Celia from her of the picnic. Her curls danced as full of life and light as ever; the biscuit brown of her complexion glowed as smooth and clean; even from a distance Bobby could see the contrast of her black eyes; but on her head she wore a brown chip hat; her gown was of plain blue gingham; her slim straight legs were encased in heavy strong stockings. She looked like a healthy, lively little girl out for a good time; and the sight cheered Bobby's wavering courage as nothing else could. His vague ideas of retreat were discarded.

But he did not know how to approach. The children inside the low rail fence were placing the brilliantly-striped wooden balls in a row in order to determine by 'pinking' at the stake who should have the advantageous last shot. Bobby, irresolute, halted outside, shifting uneasily, wanting to join the group, but withheld by the unwonted bashfulness. Amid shouts and exclamations each clicked his mallet against his ball, and immediately ran forward with the greatest eagerness to see how near the stake he had come. At last the group formed close. A moment's dispute cleared. Celia had won,

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and now stood erect, her cheeks flushing, her eyes dancing with triumph. In so doing she caught sight of Bobby hesitating outside.

"Why, there's Bobby!" she cried. "Come on in, Bobby, and play!"

At the sound of her voice, all his timidity vanished. He entered boldly and joined the others.

"This is Bobby," announced Celia by way of general introduction, "and this," she continued, turning to Bobby, "is Gerald, and Morris, and Kitty and Margaret."

"Hullo," said Morris, "Grab a mallet, and come on."

Bobby liked Morris, who was a short, red-headed boy of jolly aspect. Gerald, a youth of perhaps twelve years of age, rather tall and slender, of very dark, clear, pale complexion, nodded carelessly. Bobby took an immediate distaste for him. He looked altogether too superior, and sleepy and distinguished — yes, and stylish. Bobby was very young and inexperienced; but even he could feel that Gerald's round straw hat, and norfolk-cut jacket, and neat, loose, short trousers buckled at the knee contrasted a little more than favourably with his own chip hat, blue blouse and tight breeches.

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Also he was already dusty, while Gerald was immaculate.

As to Kitty and Margaret, they were nice, neat, clean, pretty little girls — but not like Celia!

Bobby found a mallet and ball in the long wooden case, and joined the game. He was not skilful at it, and soon fell behind the others in the progress through the wickets. Indeed, when, after two strokes, he had at last gained position for the "middle arch," he met Gerald coming the other way. Gerald shot for his ball; hit it; and then, with a disdainful air, knocked Bobby away out of bounds across the lawn. This was quite within the rules, but it made Bobby angry just the same. As he trudged doggedly away after his ball, he felt himself very much alone under what he thought must be the derisive eyes of all the rest. The game ended before he had gained the turning stake.

"Skunked," remarked Morris cheerfully.

Gerald said nothing, did not even look; but Bobby liked Morris's comment better than Gerald's assumed indifference.

"Let's have another game — partners," suggested Gerald to Celia.

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But Bobby, to his own great surprise, found courage to speak up.

"Let's not play croquet any more," said he. "Let's have a game of Hi-Spy."

"It's too hot," interposed Gerald quickly.

The others said nothing, but with the child's keen instinct for the drama, had drawn aside in favour of the principal actors. Gerald stood by the stake, leaning indolently on his mallet, his long black lashes down-cast over the dark pallor of his cheeks, very handsome, very graceful. Bobby had drawn near on Celia's other side. The comparison showed all his freckles and the unformed homeliness of his rather dumpy, sturdy figure; it showed also the honest dull red of his cheeks and the clear unfaltering gray of his eyes. Celia, between them, looked down, tapping her croquet ball with the tip of her shoe.

"I don't think it's very hot," she said at last, looking up. "Let's play Hi-Spy."

A wave of glowing triumph rushed through Bobby's soul. Gerald merely shrugged his shoulders.

But unmixed joy was to be a short-lived emotion with Bobby as far as Celia was concerned. He knew lots of fine hiding-places

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about the grounds of the Ottawa, and he promised himself that he would take Celia to them. They could hide together; and that would be delightful.

Morris counted out first to be "it." He leaned his arm against a post, his head against his arm, and closed his eyes.

"Ten-ten-double-ten-forty-five-fifteen" he repeated over ten times as rapidly as possible. That was his way of counting a thousand.

The other children scurried off as fast as their legs could carry them in order to reach concealment before the end of the count. And somehow, against his will, Bobby found himself cast in the hurry of the moment with Kitty instead of with Celia. And Celia he saw disappear in Gerald's convoy.

"Coming!" roared Morris, uncovering his eyes.

"Oh dear, he's coming!" cried Kitty in distress, "and we're not hid! Where shall we go? Don't you know any good places?"

But Bobby, still confused over his disappointment, had not the wits wherewith to think in so pressing an emergency. He vacillated between pillar and post; and so was espied by the goal-keeper. Morris immediately set himself in rapid motion for the "home."

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"One, two, three for Bobby Orde!" he cried, striking the post vigorously. "One, two, three for Kitty Clark!"

The two reluctantly appeared.

"There, now, you got us caught," accused Kitty sulkily.

"Never mind," consoled Bobby, "anyway he saw me first. I'm it!"

Morris was off prowling after more prey. As he disappeared around the corner of the building a rapid flash of skirts was visible from the other. Morris caught it; and, turning, raced with all his might back to the home goal. But Margaret had too good a head start. She arrived first; and immediately began to dance around and around, her long legs twinkling, her two thick braids flying.

"In free! In free!" she shrieked over and over again.

There still remained Celia and Gerald. Morris set himself very carefully to find them, prowling into all likely places, but returning abruptly every moment or so in order to forestall or discourage attempts to get in. He proved unsuccessful; nor did his absence seem to afford the others chances to run home. The other three watched with growing impatience.

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"Oh, Morris, let them in!" begged Kitty. Bobby felt a glow of kindliness toward her for making the suggestion. He would not have proffered it himself for worlds. Morris, however, was obstinate. He continued his search for at least ten minutes. At last he had to give in.

"All sorts in free!" he called at the top of his voice.

Celia and Gerald appeared smiling and unruffled. They refused to divulge their hiding-place.

"We'll save it until next time," said Celia.

Bobby blinded his eyes and counted. He had no interest in the game, and experienced inside himself a half-sick, hollow feeling unique in his experience. Morris, Kitty and Margaret got in free, simply because his attention was too lax. Gerald and Celia had once more disappeared. After a decent interval the others became clamorous again for general amnesty.

"Blind again, Bobby," they urged, "let them in free."

But Bobby continued to search beyond the places he had already looked. His further knowledge of the hotel grounds was a negligible quantity; so he began, consistently to eliminate all possibilities. From one corner he zigzagged

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back and forth, testing every nook and cranny that might contain a human being. Thus he examined every foot of the place; but without results. He was puzzled; but he would not give up. Methodically, and to the vast disgust of the others, he began over again at the corner from which he had started. No results.

"No fair outside the grounds!" he shouted. To this of course, no answer came.

"Give it up!" urged the others.

"I won't!" insisted Bobby doggedly.

He did not know where to search next, so he looked up. The hotel was provided with a broad shady flat-roofed verandah. At the edge of this roof, projecting the least bit above, Bobby glimpsed a fold of blue. The pair were evidently lying at full length in the spacious water gutter. The blue could be nothing but the gingham of Celia's dress. Nevertheless Bobby walked to goal and calmly announced.

"One, two, three for Gerald — on the verandah roof!" And then, after a deliberate pause, "All sorts in free!"

Gerald blinded. Bobby, with determination, took Celia's hand, and breathlessly the pair sped away. The little boy's first move was to place the hotel building between himself and Gerald.

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"Can you climb a fence?" he asked hurriedly.

"If it isn't too high."

"Come on then, I know a dandy place."

Bobby attacked the board fence behind the hotel. Two packing-boxes of different heights made the problem of ascent easy. But the other side was a sheer drop; and Celia was afraid.

"I can't!" she cried. "It's too far!"

"Just drop," advised Bobby desperately. "Hurry up! He'll be around the corner!"

"I daren't!" cried poor Celia. "You go first,"

Promptly Bobby dangled; and dropped.

"See; it's easy. Come on, I'll catch you!"

Finally Celia wiggled over the edge, shut her eyes, and let go. She landed directly on Bobby, and the two went down in a heap.

"Come on!" whispered Bobby. "Scoot!"

Before them rose a whitewashed barn. Celia's hand in his, Bobby darted in at the open doorway, and more by instinct than by sight, found a rickety steep flight of stairs and ascended to the hay-mow.

"There, isn't that great?" he whispered.

They sank back on the soft fragrant hay, and breathed luxuriously after the haste of

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the last few moments. A score of mice had scurried away at their abrupt entrance; and the fairy-like echoes of these animals' tiny feet seemed to linger in the twilight. Through cracks long pencils of sunlight lay across the hay and the dim criss-cross of the rafters above. Dust motes crossed them in lazy eddies, each visible for a golden moment as it entered the glow of its brief importance, only to be blotted into invisibility as it passed.

"Is this a fair hide?" whispered Celia. "This is outside the grounds."

"It's the hotel barn," replied Bobby. "I bet he doesn't find us here."

They fell silent, because they were hiding, and in that silence they unconsciously drew nearer to each other. The delicious aroma of the hay overcame their spirits with a drowsiness. New sensations thronged on Bobby's spirit, made receptive by the narcotic influences of the tepid air, the mysterious dimness, the wands of gold, the floating brief dust-motes. He wanted to touch Celia; and he found himself diffident. He wanted to hear her voice; and he suddenly discovered in himself an embarrassment in addressing her which was causeless and foolish. He wanted to look at her; and he

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did so; but it was not frankly and openly, as he had always looked at people before. His shy side-glances delighted in the clear curve of her cheeks; the soft wheat-colour of her curls; the dense black of her half-closed eyes; the brown of her complexion; the sweet cleanliness of her. A faint warm fragrance emanated from her. Bobby's heart leaped and stood still. All at once he knew what was the matter. It is a mistake to imagine that children do not recognize love when it comes to them. Love requires no announcement, no definition, no description. Only in later years when the first fresh purity of the heart has gone, we may perhaps require of him an introduction.

At once Bobby felt swelling within his breast a great longing, a hunger which filled his throat, a yearning that made him faint. For what? Who can tell. The idea of possession was still years distant; the thought of a caress had not yet come to him; the bare notion that Celia could care for him had not as yet unfolded its dazzling wings; even the desire to tell her was not yet born. Probably at no other period of a human being's life is the passion of love so pure, so divorced from all considerations of the material, or of self, so shiningly its ethereal

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spiritual soul. Yet love it is; such love as the grown man feels for his mate; with all the great inner breathless longings of the highest passion.

The two lay curled side by side in their nests of hay. Time passed, but they did not know of it. The little boy was drowned in the depths of this new thing that had come to him. Celia filled the world to him. His reverie brimmed with her. Yet somehow also there came to him other things, unsought, and floated about him, and became more fully part of him than they had ever been before. It was an incongruous assortment; some of the knights of Sir Malory; the River above the booms, with the brown logs; a plume of white steam against the dazzling blue sky; the mellow six-o'clock church bell to which he arose every morning; the snake-fence by the sandhill as it was in winter, with the wreaths of snow; and all through everything the feel of the woods he had seen at the picnic, their canopy of green so far above, their splashes of sunlight through the rifts, the friendly summer warmth of their air, their hot, spicy wood-smells wandering to and fro; their tall trunks, their undergrowth, with the green tunnels far through them, the flashes of their birds' wings,

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their green transparent shadows. These came to him, vaguely, and their existence seemed explained. They were because Celia was. And so, in the musty loft of an ill-kept stable, Bobby entered another portion of the beautiful heritage that was some day to be his.

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IV

THE PRINTING PRESS

Next week was Bobby's birthday. He received many gifts, but as usual, saved the biggest package until the last. It had come wrapped in stout manila paper, tied with a heavy cord, and ornamented with the red sticker and seals of the Express Company. With some importance Bobby opened his new knife and cut the string. The removal of the wrapper disclosed a light wooden box. This was filled with excelsior, which in turn enclosed a paper parcel. A card read:

"For Bobby on his eleventh birthday, from Grandpa and Grandma."

Wrought to trembling eagerness by the continued delays, Bobby tore off the paper. Within was a small toy cast-iron printing press. Its ink-plate was flat and stationary. Its chase held two wooden grooves into which the type could be clamped by means of end screws. The mechanism was worked by a small square

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lever at the back. Bobby opened a red pasteboard box to discover a miniature font of Old English type; a round tin box to uncover sticky but delicious-smelling printer's ink; a package to reveal the ink-roller and a parcel to complete the outfit with a pack of cheap pasteboard cards.

"What do you think of that?" cried Mrs. Orde.

"Now you'll be able to go into business, won't you?" said his father. "You might make me twenty-five calling cards for a starter."

Immediately breakfast was finished, then Bobby took his printing press upstairs and installed it on his little table. He would have liked very much to show Celia his gifts, but this Mrs. Orde peremptorily forbade.

After some manipulation he loosened the chase and laid it on the table. Then he began to pick out the necessary type and arrange it in the upper grove to spell his father's name. The replacement of the chase was easy after his experience in taking it out. Ink he smeared on the top plate, according to directions, rolling it back and forth with the composition roller until it was evenly distributed. Nothing remained now but to adjust the guides which

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would hold the cards on the tympan. Bobby passed the inked roller evenly back and forth across the face of the type, inserted a card and bore down confidently on the lever. He contemplated this result:

ƉƆ∀Ɔ ⅁ꓷƆ∀ꓕ ꓤ∀

Besides the transpositions and inversions, the impression itself was blurred and imperfect and smeared with ink.

After the first gasp of dismay, Bobby set to work in the dogged analytical mood which difficulties already aroused in him. The remedy for the inversion was plain enough. Bobby changed the type end for end and turned the R and the E right side up, but he worked slower and slower and his brow was wrinkled. Suddenly it cleared.

"Oh, I know!" said he aloud. "It's just like the looking-glass!"

Satisfied on this point, he finished the resetting quickly and tried again. This time the name read correctly but it slanted down the card and was blurred and inky. Bobby fussed for a long time to get the line straight. Experiment seemed only to approximate. One end persisted in rising too high or sinking too low.

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The problem was absorbing and all the time Bobby was thinking busily along, to him, original lines. At last, by means of a strip of paper and a pencil he measured equidistants from top and bottom of the platen, adjusted the guides in accordance and so that problem was solved. Bobby, flushed and triumphant, addressed himself to remedying the blurring.

"Too much ink," said he.

Obviously the way to remedy too much ink was to rub some of it off and the directest means to that end was the ever-useful pocket handkerchief. The paste proved very sticky and the handkerchief was effective only at the expense of great labour. Bobby ruined three more cards before he established the principle that superfluous ink must be removed not only from the plate but from the roller and type as well.

But now further difficulties intervened before perfection. Some of the letters printed heavily and some scarcely showed at all. Here Bobby entered the realm of experiments which could not be lightly solved in the course of a half hour. He tried raising the type to a common level and locking them as tightly as possible, but always they slipped. He attempted to

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insert bits of paper under what proved to be the shorter types. This improved the results somewhat, but was nevertheless far from satisfactory. By now he had learned not to use a fresh card every time. The first half-dozen were printed back and forth, front and behind. Bobby was smeared with more ink than the printing press. Scissors, pencils, paper, used cards and type were scattered everywhere. All the time his fingers were working his brain, too, was busy, searching back from the result to the cause, seeking the requisite modification. Mr. Orde, returning at noon, burst out laughing at the sight.

"Well, youngster," said he, "how do you like being a printer?"

"Oh Bobby!" cried Mrs. Orde behind him. "You are a *sight!* Don't you know it's time to get ready for lunch?"

Bobby looked up in bewildered surprise. Lunch! Why he had hardly begun! His father was chuckling at him.

"Benzine will take it off," said Mr. Orde to his wife.

Bobby caught at the hint.

"Will benzine take off the ink?" he cried eagerly.

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"It's supposed to," replied his father; "but in your case ——"

"Can I have a little, in a bottle, and a tooth-brush?" begged Bobby. He saw in a flash the solution of the ink problem.

"We'll see," said Mrs. Orde. "Come with me, now."

They disappeared in the direction of the bathroom. Mr. Orde examined the cards with some amusement.

"Well, sonny," said he to Bobby at lunch. "The printing doesn't seem to be a howling success. What are you going to do about it?"

"I don't know," replied Bobby; "but I'll fix it all right yet."

Bobby was busy with his birthday party all that afternoon, but next morning he was afoot even before the Catholic Church bell called him. The press occupied him until breakfast time, but he made small progress. His father's morning paper filled him with envy by reason of its clear impression. After breakfast he begged a tiny bottle of benzine and an old toothbrush from his mother, and went at it again for nearly an hour. The benzine worked like a charm. The type came out bright as new and the old ink dissolved readily from the

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platen and roller. Bobby took note that he should have cleared them the day before, as a night's neglect had left them sticky. With it all he seemed to have arrived at a dead wall. All his limited mechanical ingenuity was exhausted and still the letters printed either too deep or too light. About half-past nine he cleaned up and went down to the Ottawa.

His friends there were all sitting under the trees before the hotel, resting rather vacantly after a hard romp. Celia perched high on a root, her curls against the brown bark, her hat dangling by its elastic from a forefinger, her lips parted, her eyes vacant. Gerald leaned gracefully against the trunk. Bobby sat cross-legged on the ground watching her — and him. Kitty and Margaret reclined flat on their backs, gazing up through the leaves. Morris alone showed a trace of activity. He had fished from his pockets the short, blunt stub of a pencil, a penny and a piece of tissue paper. The latter he had superimposed over the penny and by rubbing with the pencil was engaged in making a tracing of the pattern on the coin. Through his preoccupation Bobby at last became cognizant of this process. He sat and watched it with increasing interest.

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"By Jiminy!" he shouted leaping to his feet.

"What is it?" they cried, startled by the abrupt movement.

"I got to go home," said Bobby.

They expostulated vehemently, for his departure spoiled the even number for a game. But he would not listen, even to Celia's reproachful voice.

"I'll be back after lunch," he called, and departed rapidly. Duke arose from his warm corner, stretched deliberately, yawned, glanced at the children, half wagged his tail and finally trotted after.

Bobby rushed home as fast as he could; broke into the house like a whirlwind; tore upstairs and, breathless with speed and the excitement of a new idea, flung himself into the chair before his little table. He had seen the solution. To the flash of embryonic creative instinct vouchsafed him, Morris's penny had represented type, the inequalities of its design were the inequalities of alignment over which he had struggled so long and the pressure of the pencil and tissue paper paralleled the imposition of the card on the letters. But in the case of Morris's penny the type did not conform to the

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paper and the pressure, *the paper conformed to the type.*

His brain afire with eagerness, Bobby first stretched several clean sheets of paper over the platen and clamped them down; then he inked the type and pressed down the lever. Thus he gained an impression on the platen itself. At this point he hesitated. On his father's desk down stairs was mucilage, but mucilage was strictly forbidden. The hesitation was but momentary, however, for the creative spirit in full blast does not recognize ordinary restrictions. With his own round-pointed scissors he cut out little squares of paper. These he pasted on the platen over the letters whose impression had been too faint. A few moments adjusted the guides. Bobby inked the type and inserted a fresh card. The moment of test was at hand.

He paused and drew a long breath. From one point of view the matter was a small one. From another it was of the exact importance of a little boy's development, for it represented the first fruits of all the hereditary influences that had silently and through the small experiences of babyhood, led him over the edge of the dark, warm nest to this first independent trial of the wings. He pressed the lever gently and took

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out the card. It was not a very good job of printing; the ink was not quite evenly distributed, the type were so heavily impressed that they showed through the reverse of the card like stamping; *but each letter had evidently received the same amount of pressure!*

Bobby uttered a little chuckle of joy — he had not time for more — and plunged into the rectification of minor errors. And by noon the press was working steadily, though slowly, and a very neat array of *Mr. John Ordes* was spread out on the window drying.

The game was absorbing. Bobby brushed his type with the benzine and toothbrush; distributed it and set up another name — Miss Celia Carleton. He had printed nearly a dozen of these when his mother's voice behind him interrupted his labours.

"Robert," said the voice sternly, "what are you doing with that mucilage?"

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V

THE LITTLE GIRL

Bobby spent as much time with Celia as he was allowed. On Sunday he took her on his regular excursion to Auntie Kate — and Auntie Kate's cookies.

"Aren't you glad there was no Sunday School to-day?" he inquired blithely.

"I like Sunday School," stated Celia.

Bobby stopped short and looked at her.

"Do you like church too?" he demanded.

"I love it," she said.

"Do you like pollywogs?"

"Ugh, No!"

"Or stripy snakes?"

"They're *horrid!*"

"Or forts?"

"I don't know."

"Or rifles an' revolvers?"

"I am afraid of them."

"Or dogs?"

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"I love dogs. I've got one home. His name is Pancho,"

"What kind is he?" asked Bobby with a vast sigh of relief at finding a common ground. He had been brought to realize yesterday that little girls differ from boys; but for a few dreadful, floundering moments this morning he had feared they might, so to speak, belong to a different race. Afterward he realized that it would not have mattered even if she had not liked dogs. He merely wished to be near her. When he left her he immediately experienced the strongest longing to be again where he could see her, and breathe the deep, intoxicating, delicious, clean influence of her near presence. And yet with her his moments of unalloyed happiness were few and his hours of sheer misery were many. Self-consciousness had never troubled Bobby before; but now in the presence of Gerald's slim elegance and easy, languid manner, he became acutely aware of his own deficiencies. His clothes seemed coarser; his hands and feet were awkward; his body dumpier; his face rounder and more freckled. To him was born a great humility of spirit to match the great longing of it.

Nevertheless, as has been said, he and Duke

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trudged down to the Ottawa every morning, and again every afternoon, or as many of them as Mrs. Orde permitted. He was content to come under the immediate spell of the dancing, sprite-like, sunny little girl. No thought of the especial effort to please, called courtship, entered his young head. He played with the children, and kept as close to Her as possible; that was all. And one evening, trudging home dangerously near six o'clock, he ran slap against the legend chalked in huge letters on a board fence:

CELIA CARLETON and BOBBY ORDE

He stopped short, his heart jumping wildly. Often had he seen this coupling of names, other names; and he knew that it was considered a little of a shame, and somewhat of a glory. The sight confused him to the depths of his soul; and yet it also pleased him. He rubbed out the letters; but he walked on with new elation. The undesired but authoritative sanction of public recognition had been given his devotion. Gerald was not considered. Somebody had observed; so the affair must be noticeable to others. And with another tre-

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mendous leap of the heart Bobby welcomed the daring syllogism that, since the somebody of the impertinent chalk had fathomed his devotion to her, might it not be possible, oh, remotely inconceivably possible, of course, that the unknown had equally marked some slight interest on her part for him? The board fence, the maple-shaded walk, the soft brown street of pulverized shingles, all faded in the rapt glory of this vision. Bobby gasped. Literally it had not occurred to him before. Now all at once he desired it, desired it not merely with every power of his child nature, but with the full strength of the man's soul that waited but the passing of years 'to spread wide its pinions. The need of her answer to his love shook him to the depths, for it reached forward and back in his world-experience, calling into vague, drowsy, fluttering response things that would later awaken to full life, and reanimating the dim and beautiful instincts that are an heritage of that time when the soul is passing the lethe of earliest childhood and retains still a wavering iridescence of the glory from which it has come. The question rose to his lips ready for the asking. He wanted to turn track on the instant, to call for Celia, to demand of her the response to his love.

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HE RUBBED OUT THE LETTERS

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And then, after the moment of exaltation, came the reaction. He was afraid. The thought of his stubby uninteresting figure came to him; and a deep sense of his unworthiness. What could she, accustomed to brilliant creatures of the wonderful city, of whom Gerald was probably but a mild sample, find in commonplace little Bobby Orde? He walked meekly home; and took a scolding for being late.

Nevertheless the idea persisted and grew. It came to the point of rehearsal. Before he fell asleep that very night, Bobby had ready cut and dried a half-dozen different ways in which to ask the question, and twice as many methods of leading up to it. In the darkness, and by himself, he felt very bold and confident.

The next morning, however, even after he had succeeded in sequestrating Celia from her companions, he found it impossible to approach the subject. The bare thought of it threw him to the devourings of a panic terror. This new necessity tore him with fresh but delicious pains. He felt the need of finding out whether she cared for him as he had never conceived a need could exist; yet he was totally unable to satisfy it. By comparison the former misery of jealousy seemed nothing. Bobby lived con-

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stantly in this high breathless state of delight in Celia; and misery in the condition of his love for her. The Fuller boys and Angus saw him no more; the little library was neglected; the wood-box half the time forgotten; and the arithmetic, always a source of trouble, tangled itself into a hopeless snarl of which Bobby's blurred mental vision could make nothing.

All of his spare time he spent at his toy printing press, trying over and over for a perfect result — unblurred, well-registered, well aligned —in the shape of calling cards for "Miss Celia Carleton."

As soon as they were done to his satisfaction, he wrapped them in a clumsy package, and set out for the Ottawa, followed, as always, by Duke.

He found Celia alone in a rocking chair.

"Why didn't you come down this morning?" she asked him at once.

Bobby held up the package and looked mysterious.

"This," said he.

"Oh! what is it?" she cried, jumping up.

"I made it," said Bobby.

"What is it?" insisted Celia. "Show it to me."

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But Bobby thrust the package firmly into his pocket.

"Up past our house there's a fine sand-hill to slide down," said he, "and we got a fine fort over the hill, and I know where there's a place you can climb up on where you can see 'most to Redding."

"Show me what you've got!" pleaded Celia.

"I will," Bobby developed his plan, "if you'll come up and play in the fort."

"All right," agreed Celia in a breath; "I'll tell mamma I'm going. And I'll hunt up the others."

"I don't want the others to go," announced Bobby boldly.

She calmed to a great stillness, and looked at him with intent eyes.

"All right," she agreed quietly after a moment.

They walked up the street together, followed by the solemn black and white dog. The shop windows did not detain them, as ordinarily. At the fire-engine house they turned under the dense shade of the maples. But by the end of the second block said Bobby:

"We'll go this way."

He was afraid of encountering Angus, or perhaps the Fuller boys.

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The sand-hill proved toilsome to Celia, but without a single pause she struggled bravely up its sliding, cascading yellow surface to the top. Then she stood still, panting a little, her cheeks flushed, her eyes bright, the tiniest curls about her forehead wet and matted with perspiration. With a great adoration, Bobby looked upon her slender figure held straight against the blue sky. Almost — almost dared he speak. At least that is what he thought until the words rose to his lips; and then all at once he realized what a wide gulf lay between the imagined and the spoken word.

"The fort's over this way," said he gruffly.

"Show me the package first," insisted Celia.

Bobby drew out the cards, and thrust them into her hands.

"They're for you," he said hastily. "I did them on my printing press."

Celia was delighted and wanted to say so at length, but Bobby had his sex's aversion to spoken gratitude.

"Come on, see the fort," he insisted.

He showed her the elaborate works and explained their uses, and pointed out the enemy of stumps charging patiently. Celia caught fire with the idea at once.

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ALMOST—ALMOST DARED HE TO SPEAK

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"I'll make bullets the way they did in the Colonies!" she cried.

"Have you 'Old Times in the Colonies,' too?" asked Bobby eagerly.

They seated themselves and talked of their books. Celia was just beginning the Alcott series. Bobby had never heard of them, and so they had to be explained. The children had romped and played games together; but they had never exchanged such ideas as their years had developed. For once Bobby forgot the fact of his love, and its delicious pains, and its need for something which he could not place, in the unselfconscious joy of intimate communion. He drew close to Celia in spirit; and his whole being expanded to a glow that warmed him through and through. The westering sun surprised them with the lateness of the hour. At the hotel gate Celia left him.

"My, but we had a good time!" said she.

With much trepidation Bobby next day suggested in face of the whole group that he and Celia should climb the high hill from which Bobby fondly believed he could see "'most to Redding." To his surprise, and to the surprise of the others, Celia consented at once. They climbed the hill in short stages, resting formally

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every ten feet. Bobby they called the Guide; while Celia was assigned the duty of announcing the resting-places. There was a wood-road up the hill, but they preferred the steep side. Trees shaded it; and undergrowth veiled it. Little open spaces were guarded mysteriously and jealously by the thickets; little hot pockets held like cups the warmth of the sun. Birds flashed and disappeared; squirrels chattered indignantly; chipmunks scurried away. Occasionally they came to dense shade, and moss, and black shadow, and low sweet shrubs a few inches high, and the tinkle of a tiny streamlet. Once a tangle of raspberries in a little clearing fell across their way. Bobby had never happened on these. They had been well picked over by the squaws, who sold fruit in town by the pailful, but the children managed to find a few berries, and ate them, enjoying their warm, satiny feel.

Thus they climbed for a long time. The rests were frequent, the course not of the straightest. For many years their recollection of that hill was as of a mountain. Finally the top sprang at them abruptly, as though in joke.

"Come over this way, I'll show you," said Bobby.

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He led the way to a point where the scant timber had in times past suffered a windfall. Through the opening thus made they looked abroad over the countryside. They could see the snake-fences about the farms, and the white dusty road like a ribbon and the stumps like black dots, and the waving green tops of the "wood lots" and far away the flash of the River.

Thus Bobby gained another of his great desires. Celia proved strangely acquiescent to suggestions for these excursions. Gerald's dreaded attractions relaxed their power over Bobby's spirit; and in corresponding degree Bobby regained the lost captaincy of his soul. The self-confidence which he lacked seeped gradually into him; and he began, though very tentatively, to recognize and respect his own value as an individual. These are big words to employ over the small problems of a child; yet in the child alone occur those silent developments, those noiseless changes which touch closest to true abstraction. Later in life our processes are stiffened by the material into forms of greater simplicity.

They explored the country about; and what the shortness of their legs denied them in the matter of actual distance, the large-

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