

Tucholsky Wagner Zola Scott
Turgenev Wallace Fonatne Sydon Freud Schlegel
Twain Walther von der Vogelweide Fouqué Friedrich II. von Preußen
Weber Freiligrath Frey
Fechner Fichte Weiße Rose von Fallersleben Kant Ernst Richthofen Frommel
Engels Fielding Hölderlin Eichendorff Tacitus Dumas
Fehrs Faber Flaubert Eliasberg Eliot Zweig Ebner Eschenbach
Feuerbach Maximilian I. von Habsburg Fock Ewald Vergil
Goethe Elisabeth von Österreich London
Mendelssohn Balzac Shakespeare Rathenau Dostojewski Ganghofer
Trackl Stevenson Lichtenberg Doyle Gjellerup
Mommsen Thoma Tolstoi Lenz Hambruch Droste-Hülshoff
Dach Thoma von Arnim Hägele Hanrieder Hauptmann Humboldt
Karrillon Reuter Verne Rousseau Hagen Hauff Baudelaire Gautier
Garschin Defoe Hebbel Hegel Kussmaul Herder
Damaschke Descartes Schopenhauer Bebel Proust
Wolfram von Eschenbach Darwin Dickens Grimm Jerome Rilke George
Bronner Campe Horváth Aristoteles Voltaire Federer Herodot
Bismarck Vigny Gengenbach Barlach Heine Grillparzer Georgy
Storm Casanova Lessing Langbein Gilm Gryphius
Chamberlain Schiller Lafontaine Iffland Sokrates
Brentano Strachwitz Katharina II. von Rußland Bellamy Schilling Kralik Gibbon Tschchow
Löns Hesse Hoffmann Gogol Wilde Gleim Vulpius
Luther Heym Hofmannsthal Klee Hölty Morgenstern Goedicke
Roth Heyse Klopstock Puschkin Homer Kleist Mörike Musil
Luxemburg La Roche Horaz Kraus
Machiavelli Kierkegaard Kraft Kraus
Navarra Aurel Musset Lamprecht Kind Kirchhoff Hugo Moltke
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Nietzsche Nansen Lassalle Gorki Klett Leibniz Ringelntz
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The Outdoor Chums at Cabin Point or The Golden Cup Mystery

Quincy Allen

Imprint

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CONTENTS

CHAPTER

I	On the Way to Camp
II	A Cool Customer
III	Taking Possession
IV	As Busy as Beavers
V	A Call for Help
VI	The Home of the Osprey
VII	The Chained Door
VIII	When the Flashlight Trap Worked
IX	The Foraging Party
X	Trespassers
XI	In the Big Timber
XII	Caught in the Storm
XIII	Taking a Bee-Line for Camp
XIV	The Return of the Voyagers
XV	Days of Real Sport
XVI	Showing Bluff and Jerry
XVII	The Warning
XVIII	The Accusation
XIX	Repaying His Debt
XX	Groping in the Dark
XXI	An Unexpected Appeal
XXII	First Aid to the Injured
XXIII	A Light in the Window
XXIV	The Mystery Solved
XXV	Conclusion

THE OUTDOOR CHUMS AT CABIN POINT

[1]

CHAPTER I

ON THE WAY TO CAMP

"We're going into the woods light this time, it seems, boys."

"Remember, Bluff, we sent along most of our stuff, such as blankets and grub, as also the cooking outfit, in charge of old Anthony, the stage driver."

"That's a fact, Will, and he was to leave it at the abandoned mine shaft, from which point we expect to make pack horses of ourselves."

"True for you, Jerry! And unless Frank here has made a mistake in his reckoning we're due to reach that hole in the ground before another hour."

"How about that, Frank?"

"We'll fetch up there in less time than that I reckon, fellows. To tell you the truth, it can't be more than a mile away from here." [2]

"Bully for that! And after we get over the peak of this rocky ridge we ought to be on the down-grade most of the way."

When Jerry Wallington gave expression to his gratitude after this fashion, two of his companions waved their hats as though he voiced their sentiments. One of these boys was Will Milton, and while he did not seem to be quite as vigorous as his chums, still his active life during the last two years had done much to build up his strength. As for Bluff Masters, any one could see from his looks that he had a constitution of iron, while his face told of determination bordering on obstinacy. The fourth member of the little party tramping along this road leading over the ridge was Frank Lang-

don. He was a boy of many parts, able to take the lead in most matters, and looked up to by his comrades.

All of them lived in the town of Centerville, where, on account of their love for the open and for camp life, they had become known as the "Outdoor Chums." Fortune had indeed been kind to these four boys, and allowed them to enjoy opportunities for real sport that come the way of few lads.

They had first called themselves the "Rod, Gun and Camera Club," because their activities [3] in the woods partook of the nature of these several branches of sport. Will was an ardent photographer, and his work had received high praise. Indeed, it was only recently that he had captured a cash prize offered by a prominent newspaper for the best collection of flashlight pictures of wild animals in their native haunts.

This had been accomplished only after the most persistent and laborious efforts. It was carried out during a delightful trip, taken by the boys to the Maine country, where they met with some exceedingly interesting adventures, all of which were set down in the seventh volume of this series, under the title of "The Outdoor Chums in the Big Woods; Or, The Rival Hunters of Lumber Run."

Those readers who have followed the fortunes of Frank and his three wide-awake comrades in previous stories have of course come to look on them as old friends, and need no further introduction. As there may be some, however, who are now making their acquaintance for the first time it may be well to mention a few things connected with their past, as well as to explain why they were now bound for a new camping ground in a region they had never before visited.

Naturally, they knew every foot of country [4] for many miles around Centerville. They had roamed over Oak Ridge and the Sunset Mountains, camped on Wildcat Island, situated in Camelot Lake, and scoured the region roundabout.

More than this, wonderful opportunities had come to these boys to visit distant parts of the States. On one occasion they had taken a trip South, going to the Gulf of Mexico. Another time it had been a visit to the Rocky Mountains where they hunted big game. Then, on

a houseboat belonging to an eccentric uncle of Will's, they voyaged down the great Mississippi River to New Orleans, meeting with numerous adventures on the way.

When they returned home after their first year at college, of course the regular question came up immediately: "Where shall we go for the next outing? because we must get into the woods somehow, and live close to Nature for a spell, to fish, and take pictures, and just forget all our troubles."

Many ideas were suggested, but it remained for Bluff Masters to bring up the most catching plan. By some means he had heard of a place a good many miles away from their home town where the big lake lay for many miles between the hills. [5]

Here he had been told by one who knew that they would be apt to find the seclusion they sought, since few people lived in that section of country. Small game was plentiful enough to give Will all the fun he wanted in laying his traps, in order that raccoons and opossums and foxes might be coaxed to snap off their own pictures.

Fishing ought to be good in the waters of the inland sea, and all of them professed to be ardent disciples of the hook and line. In fact, Bluff laid out such an alluring programme that he actually carried the others by storm.

Accordingly, preparations were made to go to the distant lake. Frank, as was his habit, did everything in his power to pick up information concerning the lay of the land. He even made up a sort of map, based on what he was able to learn, although frankly admitting that it might prove faulty in many places. It was going to be one of his personal tasks to rectify these mistakes, and bring back an accurate chart of the whole district.

Besides being an ardent photographer, Will had taken up the study of medicine, as he anticipated some day being a physician. The boys were in the habit of calling him "Doctor Will" at times; and whenever there arose an occasion that [6] called for his aid he was only too willing to apply his knowledge of the healing art.

Bluff Masters had perhaps been well named by his boy friends for he was not only a frank sort of boy, but there were many times

when just out of a desire to tease he would try to "bluff" those with whom he chanced to be arguing.

At the same time Bluff was a hearty boy, with plenty of good nature, and was a favorite with his companions. He and Jerry were both apt to be a little boisterous, and to express their dislikes rather forcibly, but the others knew their little failings and paid small attention to them as a rule.

As they mentioned in their chatter while they tramped along the rough up-hill road, they had found a chance to send most of their camp outfit ahead of them by the stage. It was to be left at the shaft of the old abandoned mine, which they had heard so much about, though of course had never seen.

After reaching that point they expected to leave the road and plunge directly into the woods, taking a short-cut for the big lake. Here they had planned to search for an old cabin situated on a point that stretched out into the beautiful bay, and which Frank believed might serve them in lieu of a tent; indeed, trusting to the information they had received, they had not bothered to carry any canvas along with them on the trip.

"What if that old cabin proves to be a myth after all, Frank?" Bluff was asking as they toiled along, with a wall of rock on one hand and a dizzy precipice close on the other side.

"Perhaps we'll be sorry about leaving out that fine waterproof tent of ours," suggested Will, who did not like to "rough it" quite so much as did the others.

"Shucks!" ejaculated Jerry, with fine scorn, "what's the matter with our building a shelter of logs, bark and driftwood on the shore of the lake, if the worst strikes us? It wouldn't be the first time we'd done such a thing either, eh, Frank?"

"I reckon we could do it without straining a point," the other observed quietly. "But don't borrow trouble, Bluff. Time enough to cross your bridges when you get to them. That old cabin stood there last summer, I was told, and likely to hold out for a good many more seasons unless some one should deliberately burn it down."

"Who would be apt to do such a silly thing as that, tell me?" demanded Bluff.

"I don't think any one would," Frank hastened to reply; "but I've been told there's a [8] peculiar old hermit living on an estate not a great way distant from Cabin Point. He is said to be a rich man, but seems to want to keep away from his fellows, and has built a house up here on his property."

"You mean Aaron Dennison, of course, Frank," said Will. "I was interested in what we were told about him. He seems to be a regular bear, and refuses to make friends with anybody drifting up here."

"The loggers over at Edmundson Cove tell queer yarns of the things he has done," Frank continued, with a faint smile; "and to own up to the truth, I'm rather hoping we run across old Aaron. He must be quite a character from all we've heard, and somehow I've grown curious about him."

"And if I get half a chance," observed Will, whose mind usually ran in the one channel, which of course covered his hobby, "I mean to snap off a picture of him. I've got a lot of freaks in my collection, but nary a hermit nor a crank."

"All I hope for," said Jerry, "is that he doesn't try to make it unpleasant for us up here. For one, I expect to give him a wide berth. These hermits are not much to my fancy. You never know what to expect from the lot. But, Frank, after all, we're not the only fellows traveling [9] along this mountain road. Look up ahead and you'll see a chap hurrying this way."

"He's not much older than any of us, it seems," remarked Bluff, as all of them immediately focussed their gaze on the figure that had turned a bend in the rough road, and was hurriedly advancing in a somewhat careless fashion.

"He's carrying a bag just like my new one," remarked Will, patting the article in question affectionately, as though it contained something which he valued very much.

"I shouldn't be surprised if he were heading for that railroad station we struck a mile back," suggested Frank. "It was only a flag station, but trains stop there on signal most likely."

"But where on earth could that natty young fellow come from, do you think?" Will asked. "I hope there isn't a camp of city boys up here anywhere, because if that turned out to be the case there'd be small chance for me to get the pictures of game I'm hoping to strike."

"He sees us now," remarked Jerry, "but is coming along faster than ever. Perhaps he's running away from something, for he looked back just then over his shoulder."

"Yes, and came near taking a nasty fall in the bargain," commented Will, who had started with sudden fear; "it strikes me he's a pretty careless [10] sort of fellow. On a dangerous road like this it pays to watch your step, as a fall might mean a broken leg, or even worse. Oh! look there, boys, he's stumbled again, and gone over the edge of the precipice!"

All of them stared in awe, for what Will called out was only too true. The advancing figure was no longer in sight, for upon making that false step he had fallen to his knees, made a violent effort to keep from slipping over the edge, and then disappeared.

[11]

CHAPTER II

A COOL CUSTOMER

"Come on everybody!" shouted Jerry, starting to run up the grade in his customary impetuous way.

The other three were close at his heels. All were inspired by an eager desire to find out whether the stranger had actually fallen all the way down the face of that steep declivity, or had managed to catch hold of some friendly projection.

If the chums had felt tired before that thrilling moment they quite forgot the circumstance in their wild anxiety to learn what had happened to the strange boy. Fortunately the spot where they had last seen the other vanish was not far away, and they soon came to the place.

Jerry was already flat on his stomach and peering over the edge when the other boys arrived. Even before they could see for themselves his shout announced that he had made an important discovery. [12]

"He's hanging to a point of rock down there, as sure as anything, Frank! Oh! how are we going to get to him before his arms give way? See how he's throwing his feet up, trying to ease the strain, but there's nothing doing. Shall I go down there after him, Frank?"

"Don't you think of it, Jerry!" cried the alarmed Will; "let Frank make up a plan. You'd only tumble yourself, don't you know?"

Frank Langdon had an exceedingly active mind. He seemed to be able to grasp a situation instantly, and to decide quickly the best thing to do in an emergency.

Even while running to the spot he had used his eyes to advantage.

"Wait for me!" was what he snapped as he flung himself around.

Bluff, twisting his head backwards, saw that Frank was making for a tree that had been blown down at some previous time. It chanced to be close at hand, and in a dozen seconds the running boy had gained the spot.

Then Bluff gave a cry of mingled delight and admiration.

"It certainly takes Frank to hatch up a clever scheme on the spur of the moment! He's dragging that old wild grave-vine out from the wreck of the tree!" was what Bluff exclaimed in an [13] ecstasy of satisfaction. "Oh! why didn't he tell me to go along with him? What if he can't manage it alone?"

Bluff was in the act of clambering to his feet when Jerry halted him.

"It's all right, Bluff, for he's got it loose now, and is whooping it up this way like everything. If only that fellow can hold on a little longer we'll pull him up O. K. Hey, down there, take a fresh grip and stick fast! We've got a vine rope coming on the jump! Steady now, old chap; we're standing by you!"

"Hurry!" they heard the other gasp. Undoubtedly after all his exertions he must have been short of breath, though the face he turned up toward them did not appear to be stamped with any great degree of fright.

Just then Frank arrived on the spot, and instantly started to lower the section of wild grape-vine he had secured from the fallen tree. It was at least a dozen or fifteen feet in length, and any one acquainted with the amazing strength of such a parasite did not need to be assured that it would easily bear the weight of several persons the weight of one who was in such peril on the rock below.

"Can you change your hold to the vine?" called Frank, when presently he could see that [14] the lower end of his substitute rope dangled close alongside the other.

It required more or less agility and reserve strength to carry such a proceeding through successfully. The stranger, however, appeared to possess these necessary qualifications, Frank was pleased to see.

Will felt as though his heart was up in his throat as he watched the other hang on to the spur of rock with one hand, and seize the dangling object with the other. Frank had lowered the larger end of the vine. He had also sent it below the jutting rock, so that the one they meant to rescue could clasp his legs about it, and thus secure a much better grip.

When they saw he had really accomplished the difficult feat of transferring his weight to the vine the boys, whose heads projected beyond the ledge above, uttered encouraging shouts.

"Well done, old top!" called out Bluff, carried away by his enthusiasm, and acting as though he had known the other a long time. "Now just give us a little time and we'll run you up here in great shape. Here you come, then! Heave-oh, boys!"

It required their united strength to raise the boy who dangled at the end of the grape-vine. This was on account of the fact that their make [15] -believe rope refused to bend very well, thus making its hauling up a clumsy business.

Still every foot helped, and all the while some of them kept calling out encouragingly to the boy below. In the end his head appeared in view, upon which he was seized by the arms by Frank and Bluff, and dragged over the edge.

Somewhat to the surprise of the boys, he immediately started to brushing himself off, as though the dust on his clothes bothered him more than any slight bruises he may have received in his ugly fall. Frank made up his mind when he saw this that the other was certainly nonchalant, or, as Frank himself expressed it, "a cool customer."

"I hope you're not hurt by your tumble?" Frank asked, at which the other shook his head, and continued dusting his coat as he replied:

"Don't think I got even a scratch, which is about my ordinary luck. But only for your coming I'd have dropped the rest of the way down to the bottom of the hole, and that might have changed things some. Thank you very much for helping. And that scheme of the wild grave-vine was a corker, too. I'd never have thought of such a thing, I'm positive."

"Oh! trust Frank for hitting the right nail on the head every time," boasted Will, who never [16] lost a chance to magnify the deeds of the one he admired above any among all his friends.

The other now took occasion to look them over curiously, as though he had begun to wonder who they were, and what brought four boys up into this region. Frank guessed this much, for he immediately introduced himself and his chums.

"We're from Centerville, a town that's a good way off from here. My name's Frank Langdon, this is Will Milton, the one next to him is Bluff Masters, and the other fellow, Jerry Wallington. We have always been mighty fond of camping, and just now mean to put in a few weeks on the shore of the big lake at a place called Cabin Point. Our stuff has gone ahead of us on the stage that came along here yesterday."

Somehow Frank thought the other started a little and looked keenly at him when this announcement was made. He could not understand, though, why it should interest any one to know that

they intended to camp at any particular spot on the lake shore, since there were many miles to choose from.

"Oh! my name is Gilbert Dennison. I've been at college, and mean to spend my vacation playing golf. You see they do say I'm runner-up among the amateurs on the green links. Sent my clubs and luggage off yesterday, and was on the way [17] to the train to-day when the horse smashed a wheel of the rig. I had to put out afoot, for, you see, I wouldn't miss making that train for a good deal, because of the match."

He took out his watch and held it in a hand that hardly trembled in the least, which Frank thought rather remarkable, seeing what a strain had been upon him lately. Altogether, Frank considered him the coolest person he had ever met. If he could control his nerves in this fashion when playing in a match it was no wonder he was looked upon as a coming wonder on the golf links, where such a gift counts heavily.

"You must excuse me for rushing off in such a beastly hurry, fellows!" Gilbert exclaimed, as he looked around for his bag, which, fortunately, had not fallen over the precipice at the time he stumbled; "some other time perhaps I'll run in on you at your camp, and be able to thank you in a more decent way for giving me a lift. I think I can make that train in half an hour."

Bluff and Jerry had not a word to say. They stood and stared at the other, astonished beyond measure. Really in all their experiences far and wide they had never met with such a self-possessed young person as this.

He picked up his bag, waved them a flippant good-bye, and then actually started to run down [18] the slope. Bluff scratched his head and grinned, while Jerry exclaimed in disgust.

"Gee whiz! if that wasn't the queerest thing ever! You'd think he'd just stubbed his toe, and we happened along in time to help him rub the same. He sure is a cool customer, believe me, fellows!"

"Such base ingratitude I never ran across," ventured Will, indignantly. "Why, only for Frank's fetching that grape-vine along, and our pulling him up so neatly, he'd have had to let go his hold before

now. And say, it was all of thirty feet down to the bottom of the hole from the rock he held on to; an ugly fall, I'd call it."

"Oh! well," observed Frank, more amused than otherwise by the singular circumstance, "when a fellow pursues any fad as he does golf he seems to chase it just as we've all done one of those jack-o'-lanterns in the marsh. When the fever is on him he can't think of anything else. That match on the links is, in his mind, the greatest event under the sun. We've all been there, boys, remember."

"But where did he come from, do you think?" asked Will.

"There's a village, I recollect, over the hills that way," Frank explained; "and it's just barely possible his folks live there. Being off the rail [19] road, you see they have to make a little journey of some miles every time they want to go to the city. We may run on to the broken-down buggy further on."

"He's still running right along," remarked Jerry.

"And hasn't bothered to look back once," added Will, as though he could not understand why the other should so easily forget about the service they had done him.

"Well, looking back caused him his other stumble, and it's taught him a lesson, I reckon," laughed Frank, always ready to offer excuses for others' failings, but never for his own.

"We might as well be going on our way then, boys," suggested Bluff, as he gave his knapsack a fling that caused it to land squarely on his back.

The others picked up their scanty possessions for, as has been said before, the main part of their belongings had been sent on in advance by the stage.

"For one," observed Will with a little sigh, "I own up I'll be glad when we get to the lake. Seems to me this bag keeps on growing heavier all the time; and yet when I started out this morning I thought it as light as a feather."

"It's always that way," he was told by Frank, consolingly; "even your feet often begin to drag [20] as though weighted down with lead, when once you find yourself growing tired. But, Will, say the word and I'll tote your bag for you."

"Not much you will, Frank! though it's certainly kind of you to offer to do it. I'd be a nice Outdoor Chum, wouldn't I now, if I let some other fellow shoulder my burdens? If I were sick or lame it might be a different thing; but that doesn't happen to fit the case now. I'll get along all right, so don't worry."

Accordingly they pushed on up the road, and presently arrived at the crest of the ridge. The trees prevented an extended view, however, much to the disappointment of Will, who wanted to make use of his camera.

They saw no signs of the wrecked vehicle mentioned by the young college chap who had given them his name as Gilbert Denison, and hence concluded it must be further along the road.

A short time afterwards Frank announced that they were near the abandoned mine, which his informants had told him lay close to the border of the road they had followed over the rocky ridge.

[21]

CHAPTER III

TAKING POSSESSION

Frank had learned that many years back there had been a company organized to mine the iron that was known to exist in certain sections of the hills in that region.

Considerable work had been done, and some ore even shipped away, when, for some reason or other, the scheme had been given up after a shaft had been sunk for fifty feet or more, and workings started.

The entrance to the abandoned mine had been visited by curious people coming to that locality. It was even marked on the old map which Frank had used in making the outlines of his own little chart.

"Here it is, boys!" cried Jerry, who had pushed to the front; "Frank was correct when he said he could see where the wheels of the stage had run in off the road just back there. I hope our stuff is all right."

"So do I!" echoed Will, anxiously, "because [22] I've got most of my new rolls of films, as well as my flashlight apparatus, in my big pack. I'm only carrying a lot of precious developed films in this bag, with other things I need. You see I'm meaning to put in quite a bunch of time while up here experimenting and that's why I carried them along."

They had their fears quickly relieved, for their property lay just inside the old shaft leading into the abandoned iron mine.

"It all seems to be here, and in decent shape," remarked Frank. "That stage driver kept his word when he said he'd take good care of our stuff. And now to divide it up so every one has a share."

"No funny business, Frank," Bluff reminded him; "every one of us expects to get an equal tote load."

"That's what I say, too," echoed Will, who suspected he might be treated too generously by his chums, and given less than his proper proportion to carry, for Will was over-sensitive concerning his lack of physical strength.

In the end they managed to distribute the blankets, food, and other things in a fashion that was fairly equitable, and then resumed their journey. At this point they expected to leave the road, and follow a trail that if stuck to would take them [23] to the shore of the big lake around Cabin Point, their intended destination.

"Our course should be almost due northwest from here on," the guide informed his three companions as they set forth. "I'm telling you that for a purpose, you understand."

"You mean in case we lose the pesky trail that seems so faint, we can keep going in the right direction all the same; is that it, Frank?" asked Jerry.

"You've struck the right nail on the head, Jerry, for that was what I meant. But by keeping our eyes on the trail we ought to have little trouble following this old path."

"It strikes me the trail hasn't been worked much for some time," Bluff observed.

"That's true enough," said the pilot of the expedition, "but once a trail has been well worn you can find it years and years afterward if

you look the right way. It's easy to notice heaps of signs that tell the story, where the earth was worn away by passing feet. When you're in doubt just push back the grass and there it lies as plain as day."

Frank always prided himself more or less on his ability to follow tracks where others might give up the task in despair. Nothing pleased him half so much as to run across a puzzle along these [24] lines that required his best work in order to find the answer.

After they had gone on for some time a rest was called.

"That's a good idea, Frank," Jerry declared when he heard the order given to drop their burdens and lie around for ten minutes or so. "Not that I'm feeling played out you understand; but I've always been told it was poor policy to whip a willing nag."

"It's certainly a pretty rough path, all right!" Will admitted.

"But we must be about half-way across by now," added Bluff.

"How about that, Frank? Let's take a look at your map again," said Jerry.

Upon examination it was found to be about as Bluff had thought; the shore of the big water could not be more than half a mile further on. Cheered by this information, even Will expressed himself as willing to start again.

"When you've got anything unpleasant to do," he told them, "I believe in getting it over with as soon as you can, and off your mind."

"Huh! that pleases me a heap to hear you say so, Will," chuckled Bluff; "because you know there's that dicker I wanted to make with you for that new hunting knife I took such a fancy [25] to. I offered you my old one and something to boot in the bargain. Now I understood from the way you acted the deal wasn't pleasant to you; so please get it over with as soon as possible."

"I'll see you in Guinea, Bluff, before I trade that splendid blade," retorted the other, "but I told you where I got it, and any time you feel like it you can send for one just like mine. Let it go at that then."

There came another hard pull. Sometimes the way was so rough that all of them panted more or less. Will showed real grit by keeping up with the others, though he had to shut his teeth hard together.