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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
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Goethe Elisabeth von Österreich London
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Trackl Stevenson Lenz Hambrecht Doyle Gjellerup
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Chamberlain Tersteegen Gilm Grillparzer Georgy
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Strachwitz Bellamy Schilling Raabe Gibbon Tschchow
Katharina II. von Rußland Gerstäcker Raabe Gibbon Tschchow
Löns Hesse Hoffmann Gogol Wilde Gleim Vulpius
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The Young Oarsmen of Lakeview

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Contents

CHAPTER

- I. Jerry, Harry, and Blumpo.
- II. Mrs. Fleming's Runaway Horse.
- III. Jerry's Bravery.
- IV. Saving The Sloop.
- V. Harry Is Rescued.
- VI. The Single Shell Race.
- VII. Who Won the Shell Race.
- VIII. A Prisoner of the Enemy.
- IX. Tar And Feathers.
- X. What Towser Did.
- XI. Off for Hermit Island.
- XII. An Attack in the Dark.
- XIII. Jerry's Shot.
- XIV. The Hermit of the Island.
- XV. The Hermit's Secret.
- XVI. An Exciting Chase.
- XVII. Harry's New Yacht.
- XVIII. The Robbery of the Rockpoint Hotel.
- XIX. The Red Valise.
- XX. The Mishap to the Yacht.
- XXI. Words and Blows.
- XXII. Another Boat Race.
- XXIII. Jerry Starts on a Journey.
- XXIV. The Work of a Real Hero.
- XXV. A Fruitless Search.
- XXVI. Alexander Slocum is Astonished.
- XXVII. Jerry's Clever Escape.

- XXVIII. Something About a Tramp.
XXIX. Mr. Wakefield Smith Again.
XXX. An Unlooked for Adventure.
XXXI. Nellie Ardell's Troubles.
XXXII. A Crazy Man's Doings.
XXXIII. The Little Nobody.
XXXIV. Alexander Slocum Shows His Hand.
XXXV. A Strange Disappearance
XXXVI. Jerry Hears an Astonishing Statement.
XXXVII. A Joyous Meeting.
XXXVIII. Alexander Slocum is Brought to Book.
XXXIX. Harry to the Rescue.
XL. A Struggle in the Dark.
XLI. A Last Race – Good-Bye to the Rival Oarsmen.

THE
YOUNG OARSMEN OF LAKEVIEW.

CHAPTER I.

JERRY, HARRY, AND BLUMPO.

"I'll race you."

"Done! Are you ready?"

"I am."

"Then off we go."

Quicker than it can be related, four oars fell into the water and four sturdy arms bent to the task of sending two beautiful single-shell craft skimming over the smooth surface of the lake.

It was a spirited scene, and attracted not a little attention, for both of the contestants were well known.

"Go it, Jerry! You can beat him if you try!"

"Don't let him get ahead, Harry. Keep closer to the shore!"

"How far is the race to be?"

"Up to the big pine tree and back."

"That's a full mile and more. I'll bet on Jerry Upton." 6

"And I'll bet on Harry Parker. He has more skill than Jerry."

"But Jerry has the muscle."

"There they go, side by side!"

And thus the talking and shouting went on along the lake front. Most of the boys present were members of the Lakeview Boat Club, but there were others of the town there, too, as enthusiastic as the rest.

It was a clear, warm day in June. The summer holidays at the various institutes of learning in the vicinity had just begun, so many of the lads had nothing to do but to enjoy themselves.

There were not a few craft out besides the two shells to which we have drawn attention. But they drew out of the way to give the racers a free field.

On and on went Jerry and Harry until the big pine was reached. Then came the turn, and they started on the home stretch side by side, neither one foot ahead of the other.

"It's going to be a tie race."

"Pull, Harry! Let yourself out!"

"Show him what you can do, Jerry!"

Encouraged by the shouts of their friends, both boys increase their speed. But the increase on both sides was equal, and still the boats kept bow and bow as they neared the boathouse.

"It's going to be a tie, sure enough." 7

"Spurt a bit, Jerry!"

"Go it for all you're worth, Harry!"

Again the two contestants put forth additional muscle, each to out-distant his opponent, and again the two row-boats leaped forward, still side by side.

As old Jack Broxton, the keeper of the boathouse, said afterward: "It would have taken twelve judges, sitting twelve days, to have told which had the advantage."

The finishing point was now less than five hundred feet distant, and in a few seconds more the race would be over. The crowd began to stop shouting, almost breathless with pent-up interest. It was surely the prettiest race that had ever been rowed on Otasco Lake.

Splash!

The splash was followed by a splutter, and then a frantic cry for help. A portion of the high float in front of the boathouse had unexpectedly given way, and a short, stocky, reddish-black youth had gone floundering over board.

"Blumpo Brown has gone under."

"It serves him right for standing away out on the edge of the float."

"Help! Help!" cried the youth in the water. "Hold on, Harry! Jerry, don't run into me!"

Alarmed by the cries, the two racers turned around, easing up on their oars as they did so. 8 A single glance showed them that the unfortunate one was directly in their path.

"We must stop!" cried Jerry Upton to his friend.

"All right; call it off," responded Harry Parker. "It was a tie."

As he finished, both shells drew up, one on either side of Blumpo Brown. Each of the rowers offered the struggling youth a helping hand.

Blumpo was soon clinging to Jerry's shell. He was dripping from head to foot, and not being at all a handsomely-formed or good-looking youth, he presented a most comical appearance.

"It's too bad I spoiled the race," mumbled Blumpo. "But that's just me—always putting my foot into it."

"I guess you put more than your foot into it this time," was Harry's good-natured comment, as he ran close up alongside.

"Where shall I land you, Blumpo?" questioned Jerry Upton.

"Anywhere but near the boathouse," returned Blumpo, with a shiver that was not brought on entirely by his involuntary bath. "If you land me there the fellows won't give me a chance to get out of sight."

"I'll take you up the lake shore if you wish," said Jerry. "I intended to go up anyway in a row-boat." 9

"All right, Jerry, do that and I'll be much obliged to you," returned Blumpo Brown.

"You are going along, aren't you, Harry?" continued Jerry, turning to his late rival.

"Yes, I want to stop at Mrs. Fleming's cottage," replied Harry Parker.

In a moment more Harry had turned his shell over to old Jack Broxton and had leaped into a row-boat.

"Ain't you fellows going to try it over again?" asked several on the shore, anxiously.

"Not now," returned Jerry. Then he went on to Harry, in a lower tone: "I didn't expect to make a public exhibition of our little trial at speed, did you?"

"No; not at all. It was a tie, and let it remain so."

Jerry soon left his shell; and then four oars soon took the row-boat far away from the vicinity of the shore; and while the three boys are on their way up the lake, let us learn a little more concerning them, especially as they are to form the all-important characters of this tale of midsummer adventures.

Jerry Upton was the only son of a well-to-do farmer, whose farm of one hundred acres lay just beyond the outskirts of Lakeview, and close to the lake shore. Jerry was a scholar at the Lakeview Academy, and did but little on the farm, although 10 among the pupils he was often designated as Cornfield.

Harry Parker was the oldest boy in the Parker family, which numbered two boys and four girls. Harry's father was a shoe manufacturer, whose large factory was situated in Lakeview, and at which nearly a fourth of the working population of the town found employment.

It had been a singular incident which had brought the two boys together and made them firm friends. Both had been out skating on the lake the winter before, when Harry had lost his skate and gone down headlong directly in the track of a large ice-boat, which was coming on with the speed of a breeze that was almost a hurricane.

To the onlookers it seemed certain that Harry must be struck and killed by the sharp prow of the somewhat clumsy craft. But in that time of extreme peril Jerry had whipped up like a flash on his skates, caught Harry by the collar, and literally flung himself and the boy, who was then almost a stranger to him, out of harm's way.

This gallant deed of courage had been warmly applauded by those who saw it. It also came to Mr. Parker's ears, and from that time on the rich shoe manufacturer took an interest in the farmer boy. He persuaded Mr. Upton to allow Jerry to attend the academy, and promised that the boy 11 should have a good position in the office of the factory, should he wish it, when his school days were over.

Harry was already a pupil at the academy, and it was here that the two boys became warm friends. It was nothing to Harry that Jerry was a farmer's boy and that he was sometimes called Cornfield. He knew and appreciated Jerry for his true worth.

And now what of Blumpo Brown, you ask? There is little to tell at this point of our story concerning that semi-colored individual. He was alone in the world, and had lived in Lakeview some ten years. Previous to that time his history was a mystery. Where he had come from no one knew, and if the truth was to be made known, no one but Blumpo himself cared. He was a very peculiar youth, often given to making the most ridiculous remarks, and many persons around Lakeview fancied he had considerable Indian blood in him. He lived in half a dozen places, according to the condition of his finances, and picked up his precarious existence by working for any one who would employ him. He might have had a steady situation more than once, but it was not in Blumpo's composition to stick at one thing for any great length of time. We will learn much more concerning him as our story proceeds.

CHAPTER II.

MRS. FLEMING'S RUNAWAY HORSE.

"Well, now that the midsummer holidays have really commenced, what do you intend to do with yourself, Jerry?" asked Harry, as they took it easy for a bit after leaving the vicinity of the town.

"I expect I'll have to help on the farm—at least, I think I ought to help," was the reply. "You know this is the busy season."

Harry's face fell a little at this reply. Evidently something was on his mind, and this answer did not harmonize with it.

"I'll tell you what I would like mighty well," put in Blumpo. "I would like to leave town and take to the woods."

"Why, Blumpo, you must have been reading my thoughts!" cried Harry. "I was thinking exactly the same thing."

"Take to the woods?" repeated Jerry. "What do you mean? Clear out from home entirely?"

"No, no," laughed Harry. "I mean to go off for a while—say, two or three weeks or a month. Sail up the lake and camp out, you know." 13 "Oh!" Jerry's face took on a pleased look. "I would like that myself, especially if we could go fishing and swimming whenever we wanted to."

"I've had it in my mind for several days," Harry continued, slowly. "I was going to speak of it yesterday, but I didn't get the chance."

"You mean you want me to go with you?" asked Jerry.

"Yes. Don't you think your folks would let you?"

"They might. Who else would go along, do you think?"

"I haven't thought of any one else. We might ask—" and Harry hesitated in thought.

"What's the matter with asking me?" put in Blumpo, with a serenity that took away the lack of politeness in his remark. "I'm just as tired of Lakeview as anybody."

Harry burst out laughing. The idea of asking Blumpo had never once entered his mind.

"It ain't nothing to laugh at," went on Blumpo, half angrily.

"Excuse me, Blumpo," said Harry, stopping short. "I—that is—I wasn't thinking of you when I made the remark."

"I'm not rich, nor eddicated, as you call it, and all that, but I can hunt and fish, and so on, as good as the next feller, can't I?"

"You certainly can," put in Jerry, who had for 14 a long time had a strange liking for the homeless youth.

"And I am as willing as the next one to do my full share of camp work—washing dishes and the like," went on Blumpo. "You ain't cut out for that," he added, turning to the son of the rich shoe manufacturer.

"Maybe not, but I reckon I can do my full share of work," laughed Harry. "I was not brought up with kid gloves on, you know."

"One thing is certain," mused Jerry. "I wouldn't want to leave until I had rowed that race with Si Peters from Rockpoint."

The race to which Jerry referred was one to take place on the following Saturday. Silas Peters was considered the best single-shell oarsman on the lower side of the lake, and he had challenged Jerry as a representative from the Lakeview Academy.

"You'll win that race, suah," put in Blumpo. "I'll bet my hat on it."

As Blumpo's hat was of straw and full of holes, this made both Jerry and his friend burst into a fit of laughter.

"I don't mean this hat. I mean my Sunday-go-to-meetin' one," said the homeless youth, hastily.

"Blumpo, on your honor, did you ever own two hats at once?" asked Harry gravely.

"Well, since you buckle me down, no," was the low reply. "What's the use? Can't wear but one at a time." 15 "That's as true as you live," returned Jerry.

The three boys talked over the subject of an outing for some time. All thought it a glorious idea, and Jerry said he would go if he possibly could.

All this time Jerry and Harry were rowing up the lake at a moderate rate of speed. Jerry loved the water, and spent nearly all of his spare time in the vicinity of the lake.

Presently Harry grew tired and Blumpo took his place at the oars.

"Here comes the Cutwater!" cried Harry, a few minutes later.

The Cutwater was a large sloop owned by one of the gentlemen living in Lakeview. As she came past, those in the row-boat noticed several young ladies on board, who were sailing the boat under directions of a young man named Clarence Conant.

Clarence had but little idea how a boat should be managed, and as the sloop went by Harry's face grew troubled.

"Jerry, what do you think of that?"

Jerry stopped rowing for a moment to look at the sloop.

"A good lot of sail up, especially if it should blow up stronger," he said.

"Just what I think."

"That Clarence Conant don't know nuffin' about sailing," snorted Blumpo Brown. "The 16 ladies better beware how they go out with him."

"I agree with you, Blumpo," said Jerry, gravely.

The sloop now disappeared from sight around a turn in the lake at which several islands were situated.

A few minutes later the row-boat drew up to a small dock at the end of a well-kept garden.

This was Mrs. Fleming's place, where Harry intended to stop on an errand for his mother and father.

He sprang on the dock and hurried toward the house, saying he would not be gone more than five minutes.

The two boys waited for him to return, and during the interval Jerry caught sight of the Cutwater up the lake and watched her progress with interest. The wind was getting stronger and the sloop carried more sail than was good for her. Soon she again disappeared, and Jerry turned toward the house, wondering what kept Harry so long.

"Must have been invited to lunch," was Blumpo's comment. "Pity he didn't ask us in, too."

"No, he wouldn't stay and leave us here," replied Jerry, "Most likely – hullo!"

Jerry sprang up in the row-boat in amazement. Down the garden path leading from the front of the house to the dock came a beautiful black horse on a gallop. On the animal's back sat a little girl not more than eight years of age. The horse was running away with her, and she was clinging tightly to his mane.

"Oh, John, stop him!" she screamed.

"Whoa, Banker, whoa!" shouted a man who came running after the animal.

But the horse, a nervous creature, was frightened over something and would not stop.

He clattered on the dock, and the next instant went over into the lake with a loud splash, carrying the little girl with him.

