"Oh, I suppose so," answered Peters, irresolutely.

"Yes, indeedy!—I mean surely. One of the nicest books I ever read was Father Faber's 'Tales of the Angels.' Did you ever read it?"

"No," said Peters, more and more confounded.

"Oh, you must. I've got it with me in my trunk, and I'll lend it to you. The stories are so sweet. Would you like to read it? It's much better than reading about ghosts. Mamma told me never to think of ugly or disagreeable things after my night prayers, but always of God or the angels. Don't you think that's a splendid idea?"

"Yes, I guess so," Peters made answer as he shambled off.

Poor Peters! the pretty thoughts which Percy had just communicated to him were very absurd from his point of view. The idea of talking about angels! He departed convinced that Percy was little more than a simpleton. Yet, do not suppose, my dear reader, that Percy's words were utterly thrown away. Peters departed knowing more of angels, knowing more of beauty, than he had ever known before. These pretty words of Percy's may again awake in Peters' heart, these pretty words may do much towards raising his soul from foulness and sin to the All-beautiful God.

Good words from pure, innocent hearts are never lost; they are seeds of rare flowers whose blossom we shall behold beyond the grave.



## CHAPTER V.

*IN WHICH PERCY GOES A-FISHING.*

IT was Thursday morning, a full recreation-day. Percy had quite recovered from his stiffness, and, according to agreement, was about to start for the "lakes" on a day's fishing excursion.

Promptly after breakfast, John Donnel, George Keenan, who was John's inseparable friend and classmate, Harry, Tom, Percy, Willie, and Joe briskly issued from the college grounds, and set forward westward along the railroad-track.

"Oh, what a glorious morning!" cried Keenan, taking in a full breath; "it makes one feel poetical."

Now George was a member of the Poetry class.

"Yes, indeedy!—I mean Oh yes," chimed in Percy.

> "'Full many a glorious morning have I seen
> Flatter the mountain-top with sovereign eye.'"

"See here, you young prodigy," said Donnel, where's your mountain-top?"

"Oh, nowhere in particular. This Kansas country is all little hills. But the lines came to my head when George said 'glorious morning,' and I couldn't help saying them. Anyhow, just look at the village-roofs dancing in the light of the sun."

"As Tennyson says in his famous lyric on St. Maure's at Sunrise," George gravely remarked,

"'The splendor falls on college walls,
And village roof-tops new in story;
The long light shakes across our lakes
And the gay college lad leaps in glory.
Blow, Kansas, blow, set the high cloudlets flying:
Blow, cyclones; answer, breezes, sighing, sighing, sighing.'"

"Are you sure, George, that Tennyson wrote that?" asked Percy, gravely.

"Well, to tell the truth," said George, laughing, "it's a joint composition. Tennyson and I did it together. He furnished the general outline, and I introduced a few details."

"Oh, I see now," said Percy, brightening. "It's a parody."

"Just so," said Keenan.

"But isn't it a beautiful morning?" continued Percy. "So calm and bright. I like the sunshine and the pure air. Don't you, Tom?"

"Well, I reckon I do," answered Tom, who was still puzzling over Percy's Shakespearian quotation. Tom was by no means an introspective youth. He took the air and the sunshine for granted. He *did* enjoy them, but was not in the habit of asking himself why.

"By the way," Percy resumed, "how far are these lakes from the college?"

"Four miles by the railroad," Harry made answer.

"Oh la!" almost screamed Percy, "I must go back."

"Why?" "Why?" "What's the matter?" cried everybody.

"It would kill me to walk four miles. I never walked more than a mile in my life. Oh dear! I'm



so sorry, because I counted on having such a nice time."

Percy deliberately sat down.

"Nonsense!" said sturdy Tom. "You don't know what you can do till you try."

"Oh, it's quite out of the question," said Percy, shaking his golden locks with decision. "I really couldn't think of such a thing."

"See here, you wretched little sloth, you crab-fish, you turtle," said John Donnel in good-humored indignation, "do you know what I'll think of you if you don't get up and come on?"

"Nothing bad, I hope," said Percy, anxiously.

"I'll think you're a goose."

"Will you?" said poor Percy in dismay.

"I certainly will."

"I wouldn't like you to think me a goose, John."

"I'll think you one, too," said Keenan.

"And I." "And I." "And I," volleyed the others.

"But I'd rather be a goose with two sound legs than a cripple," said Percy, argumentatively.

"Oh, come on," said Tom. "If you get tired out, John and George will brace you up. They're strong enough to carry you two miles without stopping."

"Well, I—I'll go. But you mustn't get vexed with me if I give out."

All protested that the event of his losing power of locomotion would give no offence—none in the least; and so Percy, taking heart, arose and moved forward.

Presently Tom remarked:

"Percy, you're going to break your record now."

"How's that, Tom?"

"See that milestone? You've already walked a mile, and are now beginning your second."

"You dont' say!" cried Percy in great delight. "And really, I'm not tired one bit."

When they had gained the next mile-stone, in deference to Percy a halt was declared. But that young enthusiast protested that he felt able to walk forever, and it was only after some discussion, clinched by physical violence from Master Tom, that he could be induced to sit down.

"You were right, John," said Percy. "I *was* a goose. I am beginning to think that I'm dreadfully silly."

"Oh, you're learning fast enough," said John, encouragingly.

"Tell us another story, Percy," suggested Harry.

"I would if we intended to stay more than a few minutes."

"Well, then, sing us a song," Tom put in.

"Hear, hear!" cried the two poets.

Percy smiled, threw back his hair, hummed for a moment to himself, then in a clear, sweet voice sang—

"Oh, I'll sing to-night of a beautiful land
In the lap of the ocean set," etc.

As he began, all listened in wonder and admiration. It was not so much that his voice was rich, sweet, and clear; not so much that the wording of the poem was beautiful in itself, and the melody extremely pathetic. What gave it a nameless charm was the wondrous feeling with which he



sang. The sadness of the exile breathed in every strain; the tears of the patriot gazing upon his country's ruins trembled in every note. Music and feeling and love and innocence had joined hands. To all present, the song was a revelation. Among the young singers of St. Maure's many had rich, many had sweet voices, but none of them enjoyed that rare gift of wedding feeling to music. They sang like the little birds—blithely, gayly. But here was a child who could quicken a strain with a beautiful, sensitive soul.

When he had finished, Keenan, whose eyes were suspiciously dimmed, grasped his hand.

"I'm of German descent myself," he said, "and I believe there's a little English in me too. But there's not a greater Irishman on the globe to-day than I am."

"Percy," said Tom, "I'd give up all I know about base-ball to be able to do that."

"Sister Jane taught me," said Percy, modestly. "I'm very glad you all liked it so much. I know lots of songs, and whenever you like it I'll be delighted to sing."

Percy was, in truth, gratified; his greatest pleasure—a noble trait—was to give pleasure to others.

When the boys resumed their way, nearly all of them were thinking of a beautiful land with beautiful rivers, but devastated by the cruel hand of pitiless, grasping tyranny. Action and reaction were taking their course. Percy developed them from within, they developed him from without. Percy was enlarging his muscles; they, their feelings. Under cover of his dainty, effeminate ways, he had since his arrival been unconsciously com-

municating new and noble thoughts to his kind playfellows, while they consciously and visibly had given him practical knowledge of true boyhood. To know him, Tom might have said, using the well-known saying, was a liberal education.

In the course of an hour the lake was gained. A snug spot where the trees threw their shade far into the water was selected and occupied as the party's fishing-grounds; forthwith Tom presented Percy with a fishing-line all complete, and produced a worm from the common bait-can.

Percy took the wriggling creature charily enough, held it for a moment, and then with a shriek let it fall from his hand.

"Oh dear! oh dear! what'll I do?"

"You might pick it up," said the unsympathetic Tom. "It won't hurt you; it doesn't bite."

Percy, after many unsuccessful efforts, at length recovered his wriggling worm, and, repressing a desire to shiver, endeavored to impale it upon his hook. But the more he tried, the more the "conqueror worm" wriggled.

"Lie quiet, you nasty thing!" he ejaculated.

But Tom here came to his relief.

"It's easy enough to stop his squirming. I'll show you another trick, Percy."

Taking the obstinate worm in one hand, he gave it a vigorous slap with the other. The worm no longer wriggled, and Percy, naturally skilful of finger, easily baited his hook.

"Now," said Tom, "there's two kinds of fish here—small fish, such as perch and sunfish, and large fish, which are all mostly mudcat. The mudcats are harder to manage; they've got



mouths like stable-doors, and get the hook way down near their tail and seem to think it good eating."

"Yes," Quip chimed in, "and they're awfully insulted when you try to get it out."

"And if they get a chance, they'll stick you with their fins," said Whyte.

"Oh, gracious! I don't want to catch catfish," said Percy.

"You needn't try," said Tom; "and likely you won't. They keep out in the deep water; so to begin with, I'd advise you to throw in near shore, and you'll catch a perch. Try by that log over there, just sticking out of the water."

Percy followed these directions accurately. Hardly had his cork come to a firm stand on the face of the water when it began to jerk about in a most unsteady way.

Tom was entirely intent on arranging his own line.

"Oh, look at my cork, Tom! What's the matter with it?"

"It's drunk," said that worthy without looking up.

"Don't be ridiculous, Tom, but please look."

"You've got a nibble, Percy."

"A what?"

"A nibble. There's a fish holding an inquest on your worm." And Tom with a vigorous cast sent his line thirty feet or more into the water.

"Say, Tom!"

"Well, go on and say it."

"I—I think my cork is lost. I can't see it at all."

"Pull in!" Tom exclaimed with all the excite-

ment of an enthusiast. "Always pull in when your cork goes under; there's a fish on it, sure."

Perhaps Percy had a vague impression that it was a whale or some huge monster of the deep; perhaps he was merely in a high state of excitement. At any rate he communicated a violent jerk to his line. Up flew his hook, with a tiny and much-surprised fish on it; up, up into the branches of the tree under which they were stationed.

The poor little fish floundered helplessly, and with each struggle entangled himself the worse. It was a question which was more perplexed, Percy or the tiny perch.

"Come down, little fishy," said Percy, coaxingly, "oh, do!"

Probably 'little fishy' was as anxious to "come down" as was his captor.

"Put some salt on 'little fishy's' tail," said Quip in a tone of concern.

"Are you in earnest?" asked Percy, doubtfully.

"He's talking nonsense," said Donnel, straining every muscle to keep a straight face. "I'll tell you what you might do, Percy. Go to the nearest farm-house and borrow an axe. You can cut the tree down, and then you've got your fish."

"Oh dear!" said Percy, "I never used an axe in all my life."

"You ought to learn, then," Keenan put in. "Gladstone spends a great deal of his time felling trees."

"Oh, what shall I do?" cried the young fisherman. "Do you think he will come down, John?"

"I'm sure he'd like to, if he only knew how. But he doesn't. Are you good at handling tangles?"



"I think so," was Percy's modest answer. "I used to help sister Kate with her cotton-balls and skeins."

"Well, up you go, then," said the stout John. He caught Percy from the ground in his arms, then securing a sure hold on his high shoes, raised him into the air.

Two days before, Percy would have screamed with dismay. Now, however, the leap-frog experience stood him in good stead, and so, with scarcely a tremor, he caught the branch and very deftly extricated the entangled line and the struggling fish.

"Oh, John," he said as the good-natured poet lowered him to the ground, "you're a perfect Hercules. Thank you ever so much. But how do you get this fish off?"

"See!" said John. "You catch him firmly round the head this way—now he can't slip. Then you push the hook smartly back, and pull it out so." John accompanied these lucid directions with practical example.

"Sh!" whispered Tom, suddenly, "I've a splendid bite. Just look at my cork, will you?"

His float was indeed acting strangely. Instead of bobbing up and down, or giving a series of queer little jerks, or sinking altogether, as a float generally does when under the influence of a fish-bite, it was moving steadily along the face of the water out from the land. Tom's pole was adorned with a reel: to afford the innocent victim more play, he gave out ten or twelve feet of line, and in great excitement dashed his hat to the ground. Still moved the cork steadily on—no

jerking, no passing disappearance; it was as slow and regular in its phlegmatic onward movement as a policeman.

All the boys, forgetting their proper lines, were gazing with breathless attention.

"It's the funniest bite I ever saw," said Keenan.

"It's not a catfish, sure," added Donnel, positively.

"What'll I do?" whispered Tom, giving out more line. "Why on earth doesn't the fish take it or leave it? It's the worst fool of a fish I know of. I'll bet that fish hasn't sense enough to come in out of the rain. Will that cork ever stop moving out?"

"Look, look!" cried Ruthers in an excited whisper. "The cork is beginning to move in a circle."

As a matter of fact, the bobbin had changed its direction. For a moment its course had an air of hesitancy, then, of a sudden, it proceeded to come straight in towards the land.

"That fish is a lunatic!" said Quip, severely.

"Maybe it's no fish at all," suggested Whyte, taking a larger view of the matter.

"Perhaps it's a horrid snake," volunteered Percy, who looked as though he were prepared to take to his heels.

"Steady, Tom; bring in all the line you don't need," advised Keenan. "If you give too much of a slack, your game may smash the whole thing with a running jerk."

"Boys," said Tom, after reeling in his line some twenty feet, "I'm going to pull in. If that fish hasn't got sense enough to act like any ordinary



decent fish and take a good square bite, I can't afford to lose my time fooling with it."

Tom gave his rod a strong and rapid upward jerk. Neither fish nor line came flying from the water. His rod simply bent almost double, and indeed threatened to break.

"I knew it," said Tom, sighing and releasing the strain on it. "I'm caught fast on a log."

"No, you're not!" bawled Keenan, forgetting the orthodox fisherman's whisper in his extreme excitement. "For goodness' sake, just look at your cork now!"

There never was a bobbin known to act so curiously. It was again moving straight out, but so swiftly that to Tom's excited imagination it seemed to be making a good forty miles an hour. Even in the moment of watching, his reel gave an impatient movement as if it desired to be free. Tom let it go, and off flew the line headed by the cork, which seemed to be gaining in liveliness every instant.

"The *cork* is crazy," said Whyte.

"It's bewitched, maybe," cried Ruthers.

"Catch the cork, Tom, and put some salt on its tail." This exquisite advice came from none other than Percy. The little lad was so frightened, and at the same time so excited, that, in the exhilaration produced by the blending of these feelings, he made the absurdest and most unlooked-for remark we have yet recorded as coming from him.

Suddenly the float came to a rest. Everybody held his breath. Then it stood up straight in the water, and began slowly, slowly to go down.

"He's getting there," said Quip, parenthetically,

and referring, of course, not to Tom, but to the fish.

The last trace of the float was concealed by the water.

"Now pull!" cried John.

Tom steadily and sturdily set about following this advice, but the something at the other end was pulling too. For a moment the contest seemed equal. Then a shout of exultation broke from Tom as the line began slowly to yield.

"It's a whale or a shark," he muttered earnestly.

"Perhaps it's the ghost of a water-logged Indian canoe," volunteered Keenan, who, like many boys under the first glad influence of poetic study, was seeking to develop his imagination at the expense of his friends.

"You might as well say it's the ghost of a shoe-factory," answered matter-of-fact Tom, indignantly.

Nearer and nearer came the end of the line. The water-hidden object of these speculations was acting very curiously indeed. No jerking, no running away with the line, no leaping three or four feet out of the water after the manner of a game fish, no "sulking"—simply a strong, steady resistance.

"My opinion is, it's a mule," said Quip, solemnly.

"It must be a big log," said Keenan. "No game fish, not even a pumpkin-seed, would conduct himself in that shabby manner. But keep on."

Tom needed no encouragement. Presently the cork appeared for a moment, but only to disappear again. The captive was now getting into shallow water.

"I see it!" shouted Ruthers.



"Can you see its ears?" asked Quip, consistent to his theory.

"It isn't a mule at all. It looks like a log."

"I see it too!" cried Whyte a moment later. "It's round like a shield."

"My goodness, Tom!" continued Ruthers, "I believe it's a turtle. But I never saw one so large before."

The last surmise was correct. An ugly, black head, with wide-open mouth, appeared above the water, followed soon after by a huge back fully eighteen inches in diameter.

"It's a snapping-turtle," said Donnel, "and the biggest one I ever saw."

The creature was now in very shallow water, and, with his feet more strongly braced, made prodigious efforts to escape. Donnel lent Tom a hand, and the King of the Lakes (we thank Keenan for this epithet) was soon landed.

But the struggle was not yet over. No sooner did he touch solid earth than he seemed to regain all his energies. He opened and shut his jaws with a vicious snap, accompanied this action with an angry hissing sound, and vainly tugged with his ugly forepaws at the hook fastened in his mouth. Tom, keeping the line taut, drew near him: the turtle faced his captor boldly.

"Take care, Tom, he looks vicious," said Keenan. "Better kill him before you get too near him."

"Yes; but that's easier said than done."

"Look out, boys; clear the track," said Donnel, approaching with Tom's gun.

He took his stand over the turtle, and sent a

charge into the creature which put an end to his ineffectual struggles.

"It weighs, I should judge, nearly fifty pounds," said Donnel.

"It's a great catch," added Keenan. "But snapping-turtles are no use for eating."

"Where's Percy?" cried Tom, looking around as he rose with the freed hook.

Percy was nowhere to be seen.



## CHAPTER VI.

*IN WHICH PERCY TAKES HIS FIRST LESSONS IN SWIMMING AND ROWING.*

"PERCY! Percy!" cried all.

"Here I am, boys," came a tremulous voice from above.

On raising their eyes, they were startled to discover Master Percy full fifteen feet from the ground, straddling the branch of a tree.

"How in the world did you get up there?" cried Harry.

"Really, I don't know; I wasn't aware I could climb a tree at all. But the fact is, when that horrid turtle touched land—the nasty thing!—I found I could do almost anything."

The boys, who had been thus far gazing in astonishment upon Percy, now broke into a round, hearty laugh. Percy's confession was charmingly candid.

"It's all very well to laugh," said Percy, quite gravely, "but really my position is not at all comic. How am I going to get down? Oh, if my mamma were to see me, she'd faint!"

"One way would be to climb down," suggested Tom, dryly, and with the air of imparting valuable information.