

The Blow That Recoiled.

By CHARLES A. JOHNSON, Copyright, 1905, by E. S. McClure.

There was small margin of difference between the two men, so far as eyes could see, as they threw off their coats and sprang each to his own canoe. Their paddles flashed into and out of the water, sending the frail crafts over the smooth surface of the lake at remarkable speed. Neither one gained appreciably on the other, though they were racing with intense rivalry.

As they had sat in front of their tent awaiting the arrival of the merry launching party from across the lake, they had witnessed an accident which, even without the added incentive of rivalry, made each man strain his every nerve to reach the goal. The launch had struck on a rock beside the narrow channel and, careening suddenly on her side, had filled and gone down.

Harry Morton and Jim Carruthers were not men who could see women drown without drowning with them. But, as they paddled, each man's heart grew chill with the awful thought that the woman he loved was one of the struggling group, and they loved the same woman.

This love was born, as love sometimes is, in the idle time of a summer holiday. They had gone to the lake for rest, each man fancy free. Sworn comrades, they had even laughed at love and planned to live as they were, fond of the same things and looking for no deeper interest than they found in each other and in mutual pleasures.

But before the first week in camp was over Morton had developed a habit of undiscovered fondness for walking, and for hours at a time he was absent from camp. Carruthers had about the same time found himself to be devoted to canoeing, but neither of the men said much to the other about his newly discovered pastime. In truth, Morton sought a dandy whom he had seen in the woods as he paddled along the shore one morning; Carruthers pur-

after outlining the plan. "If we laugh about it we may keep them from too great a panic." And again Carruthers nodded.

The two athletes plunged into the water with a merry whoop. When they reached the frightened women they were paddling feebly while they screamed, helping one another as best they could. None of them had disappeared, but they were perilously near sinking.

It was the work of a few moments to help four girls to the sides of the two canoes. Morton took Mrs. Starleigh in charge, while Carruthers started for the shore with Miss Campbell.

Morton was a little in the lead, and when he had landed his charge he turned for the return swim, but was horrified to see Carruthers on his back, struggling violently and clinging to Miss Campbell as if she were a life buoy.

He understood it immediately. Carruthers had been seized with a cramp and had lost his head.

"Loosen your hold or you'll both sink!" he shouted as he swam toward them, but Carruthers was past reasoning with.

There was only one thing to do. When he came within reach he struck Carruthers such a blow on the point of the jaw the latter was stunned and let go.

Then a few strokes carried Miss Campbell to land, and Morton turned back for his friend. Diving, he found him near the bottom and brought him also to shore. He put him in charge of the two women, who were unharmed and already recovering from their fright.

The rescue of the others was accomplished quickly, and the whole party, water soaked, but safe, were soon congratulating themselves and showering thanks on their rescuers.

Morton got his lion's share of the praise, but he noticed with a pang that Miss Campbell was constrained and almost formal in what she said.

And when some weeks later he ventured to propose to her she said, with evident distress: "I am more sorry than I know how to say that you have asked me this question. I never can forget what you did for us all, but the horror of that blow you struck—neither can I forget that. It seemed like a murder."

So Morton knew his fate. That night, while they were smoking their last pipe he said to Carruthers: "Goodby, Jim. I'm off in the morning. You may never see me again, and if you don't, teach her to forgive me even if she can't forget the blow I struck my best friend to save the woman I loved."

An old boatman at a fashionable resort on the east coast of England was engaged by a party of ladies to row them to a local cave known as the Smugglers' Retreat.

After pulling away in silence for twenty minutes or so the old man suddenly ceased rowing at a spot not fifty yards from the cave.

"Now, ladies," he remarked calmly, "we've reached Consideration point."

"Consideration point?" echoed the spokeswoman of the party. "What a peculiar name! Why Consideration point?"

"Well, it's just this way, mum," explained the cunning old fellow. "Theer," pointing to the cave, "is the cave; here's the boat. Between the cave and the boat there's a lot of nasty sunken rocks, and this is Consideration point, 'cos parties allus stops here to consider whether they'll go the long an' safe way round for 18 pence or trust to luck an' them their rocks for a shillin'!"

The ladies didn't know that "them their rocks" were purely imaginary, and 18 pence was the fare agreed upon.—London Quen.

His Detailed Report.

When it was first arranged to have postmasters send in quarterly reports many queer documents were received. One, which is still on file in the post-office department, came from the little town of Waterford, Ill., and is as follows:

July the 9 1856. Muster James Buchanan, president of United States—Dear Sir: I am required by the instructions of the post-office to report quarterly. I now fulfill that plain duty by reporting as follows. The Harvettin has been going on pretty well and most of the nabors have got their cuttin about dun, wheat is hardly an average crop, on rollin lams corn is yellowish and went out more than ten or fifteen bushels to the akir and the health of the comitile is only tolerably meeslis and colery hav broke out in about 2 and a half miles of hear thair are a powerful awaken on the subles of religin in the potts naburhood and more souls are bean made to know thur sins forgin miss nancy Smith a neer nabur had twins day before yesterday and one of them is a poor scraggy thing and wont live half its days this is about all I know and have to report this quarter give my respects to Mrs. Buchanan and subscrib myself your Truly, Abagail Jenkins.

A Fearful Fate.

It is a fearful fate to have to endure the terrible torture of Piles. "I can truthfully say," writes Harry Colson, of Masonville, Ia., "that for Blind, Bleeding, Itching and Protruding Piles, Bucklen's Arnica Salve, is the best cure made." Also best for cuts, burns and injuries. 25c at Charles Rogers, druggist.

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sued a vision of loveliness that had flashed past him in a canoe while he lay on the bank smoking his pipe.

Their quest continued for days, each man thinking to achieve an encounter by seeking his enchantress where he had seen her once. But they did not find her until together they met her at an informal hop at the big hotel on the hill.

From that moment they were rivals, and each one knew it instinctively, though not a word was spoken. The old comradeship was as if it never had been. A woman had come between them, and neither man realized how bitter his jealousy was till they had leaped into their canoes to paddle to the rescue of that woman.

Mrs. Starleigh did not care which one should win Irene Campbell when she had undertaken to chaperon that young woman for the summer. She had vowed secretly, however, being a born match-maker, to see her fair charge matrimonially disposed of before the season should end. Either one of the young men seemed desirable in her eyes, and she was willing to encourage both in the hope that one would succeed.

When, therefore, both men entreated her to bring a party of girls over to their camp for a picnic she understood and made the engagement readily.

The day had proved to be a perfect one, and the party started in the highest spirits. They were already waving salutes to their hosts when the crash came.

As the two men approached the spot Morton said: "We have our work cut out for us, Jim. The skipper seems to be able to take care of himself, though he's too frightened to help much. There are six women. You take the three to the right. I'll take the others. Better help them to the canoe and swim ashore with them separately. It isn't much of a swim if we can get to them in time. That point of land reaches out on the left within 200 yards." He indicated the narrow neck not far off.

Carruthers nodded with a satisfied look in his eyes. He had noted that Miss Campbell was among those on the right. Morton had seen it, too, but as his own canoe was on Carruthers' left he would not risk the few moments it would have taken to make a different arrangement.

"Make a jest of it," was all he said

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C. N. HUGGINS, Secretary.

Astoria, Oregon, December 16, 1905.

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