

PROGRESS, SATURDAY, APRIL 28, 1894.

Progress' Short Stories.

Sketches of Personal Adventure Submitted in Competition for a Prize of Five Dollars.

FROM SHORE TO SHORE.

I am going to relate a little adventure that happened to us some three or four years ago. I say "little", because no great ones ever happen to girls, and we were all girls who were spending our school vacation at Gull Lake that summer.

It was the last day of our stay, or perhaps we would not have ventured on the water in no better conveyance than that heavy sail and half row boat at our disposal. But there were two of us, and we had heard such glowing descriptions of Gull Island, that we were more than ready to undertake the journey of four miles and back, even in such a craft and with no better prospects as to the weather. A terrible storm had been threatening for several days, but had delayed its breaking until the signs had ceased to trouble us. This day a dead calm reigned over everything; the western sky was darkened with thunder clouds, but toward the east the sun shone with a brilliancy which was very promising, and it suited our mood and desires to keep the prospects held out by that eastern sky before us, as we pushed our boat from off the little, shabby wooden pier and steered for the head of the lake.

Sue read the "Hardy Norseman." She was curled up in the stern of the boat with her right hand pretending to guide the rudder rope. I lazily rowed and watched the varying half wild country by which we were slowly passing, carefully to keep well out in the middle, as I knew the danger of rowing near the shore, which is covered for some distance with high sharp rocks making a landing almost impossible.

And so without any exertion on our part, an hour and a half or two hours went by. Now and again a loon appeared in our wake, disappearing as suddenly, with its almost human cry; but beyond that and the occasional cry of a gull in the distance nothing disturbed our unusual quiet until we arrived at our destination, and then the sight was so beautiful that Sue was compelled to place her book face downward on the seat ahead, and we both gave ourselves up to the beauties around.

To fully picture what we saw would be beyond my description. As an artist I am but an amateur and even an attempt on canvas is beyond me. But on my mind it is pictured too indelibly to be ever forgotten. The wild woods country is there and so is every rock of that lush covered island, over which hundreds I might say thousands of white sea gulls hovered, while they filled the air with the noise of their rushing wings and hoarse frightened cries.

I don't know whether we stayed there minutes or hours. I had no way of telling then nor afterwards, but when we did turn our boat toward home, a great change had taken place around us, not so forcibly noticed, however, until we rounded a birch crowned peak which hid Gull Island from the open view of the Lake. Then we realized our rash undertaking.

The dead calm of the morning had given place to a perfect hurricane, which increased in violence every moment. The trees on the shore groaned and creaked until the whole woods seemed alive with uncanny noises, while the water was lashed almost to a sea by a westerly gale, threatening every moment to blow our boat directly on the rocks.

The wind was not cold, but blew with a warm heavy feeling similar to the feeling one has trailing a hand swiftly through warm water; a wind that oppresses rather than refreshes one. At last the thunder muttered and growled and then died away, while the Lake seemed alive with loons uttering their mocking laugh.

After the first exchange of words of apprehension neither Sue nor I spoke; both realized our dangerous position and both of us bent our mind and energies to thwarting our peril. Our main object must be to keep off the rocks, for a mere shell lay between us and the water and neither of us could swim a stroke.

But a more serious danger soon threatened us. Progress was impossible, but with unnatural strength, which I knew could not last, I had managed to keep the boat well out from the rocky shore. But this uneven rowing caused it to tip and sway, so that the water was fast flowing in the cracks of its sun-dried sides above the usual water mark.

Quitting her almost useless task at the rudder, Sue opened the hold and seizing the old tin pail began with frantic haste to fill, empty and refill it again. The work was that of three to one but she never ceased for a moment.

I fixed my eyes on a certain landmark and with desperate efforts plied my oars; we must go onward somehow, and that somehow must be by my own efforts, for a change of works was impossible, implying

as it did a change of positions. But what a long time it was before that one mark slowly moved backwards and another took its place, and that only a rod or two, and we had miles before us.

Miles! at the thought the impossibility of the thing came before me. You cannot realize our position nor I describe it. We were three miles from home and had had nothing but a light lunch since eight o'clock, and it must have been then about two. My arms were almost paralyzed and a numb aching feeling was beginning to creep over me. We had made a little of the distance from shore to shore, but so little compared with what remained. I glanced then at Sue. Her position must have been even worse than mine. Tired wet and bedraggled, she still continued mechanically lifting and emptying the rusty old tin pail. But notwithstanding her untiring efforts, the water was flowing in a great deal faster than it was going out. We looked at each other and the hopelessness of our task must have been plainly written on our faces. We knew that we must rouse our energy, but how?

"Flo" said Sue, at last, and I noticed how strangely her voice sounded, as if even that were tired too, "we must not give up. Couldn't we sing?"

I did not answer, but after a moment struck up a College song; a gay rollicking thing, ill in keeping with the occasion. Our voices must have sounded queer, I remember now, they did. They were but whispers compared with the sounds around us; but they answered the purpose. We kept time with our work. Stroke after stroke began to tell and with advancement came hope and strength for both of us. The water in the boat began to lower, as my rowing became more regular.

One song followed another; we never stopped to choose, but sang on and on till the objects around grew more familiar. At last from afar off we could see the little wooden figures and could faintly discern moving figures on the shore. Trees, shore and lake seemed to whirl and dance, but that little wooden landing remained stationary whenever I turned towards it. At last we drew so near that we could distinguish the anxious voices of the different girls, nearer still and then we felt the sand grate under her keel and we knew that we were safe. Then it seemed as if a black cloud settled all around and as if from afar off the voices of the girls came to me asking questions we were too tired to answer, but through all the blank I realized we were safe.

There is one thing that always brings that days adventure to my mind, and that is an old water-soaked volume of the "Hardy Norseman", which lies on my little bookshelf at home. Its title page and preface may be found in some out-of-the-way creek of Gull Lake. I have never read it, but to me it always contains on its pages the written account of that fourteenth day of August.

AN ACADEMY STUDENT.

THE DROWNING OF PAUL JONES.

Before giving the public the following story, which I have entitled "The Drowning of Paul Jones," perhaps it would be as well to state briefly the circumstances under which I heard it, so that my readers may form their own judgment, as to the amount of credence to which it is entitled.

It was one evening, in the latter part of August 1880; that, as Fenimore Cooper has it, a party of four might have been seen sitting around a camp fire, on the shores of that paradise of summer camping parties, Grand Lake.

Conversation had in some way drifted to the subject of drowning, and the sensations experienced by drowning people, when Paul, one of the party, who had up to this time taken no part in the conversation, suddenly broke in with, "Well, boys, I can't tell what other people may have felt like when drowning, but I will, if you like, tell you how I felt the night I was drowned in the Kennebecasis,--oh, you may laugh, he continued, but I was drowned all right enough, and this is how it happened."

It was on the night of the 1st. of July 1880 as I have such good cause to remember, that I went through an experience that will stay with me as long as I live, and I earnestly trust that when I come to die for good and all, it may be after a somewhat easier fashion.

I dare say some of you remember that summer I was the proud owner of the small yacht "Sea Breeze." Well, to understand what follows, I must give you a short description of her. She was twenty feet over all, sloop rigged, and all decked in except a cockpit, of about four feet square. Access to the hull was obtained by shoving back a hatch, which fitted tightly by means

of a groove, in a hatchery in the deck, just forward of the cockpit. This hatch when closed was fastened by an L shaped hasp, which came down over the after end of it, and fitted over a staple driven into the woodwork of the cockpit.

I used to keep her anchored in Rethesay Cove, and run out whenever I could get away from business, on the train, have an afternoon sailing, sleep on board, and come in on the nine train next morning.

Well the first of July being a holiday, I had varied the programme by going out on an early morning train and taking two or three of the boys with me. We had a pretty lively day of it, and as luck would have it rowed too near the shore, in crossing the bay at the mouth of the cove, and gave her a pretty bad shake up. However I did not think much of this at the time, and although she was making a little water determined to sleep on board as usual.

The rest of the party returned to town by the 7.30 express, and after seeing them off I went back to the boat and taking a lantern on the deck smoked, and read, till about ten, when the weather, which had been threatening all day, suddenly decided on rain; and I was forced below.

Of course keeping a lamp going in so confined a place is out of the question, on a July night, especially, as I had to close the hatch to keep out the rain which was soon coming down in torrents. I had some difficulty in getting the hatch too, as the woodwork had quickly swelled with the rain, and I remembered afterward that it went to with a jerk, and that I thought I heard the hasp drop. However I thought little of it at the time, and having partaken of a good night cap to keep out the damp, turned in and was soon "sound as a trout."

I must have slept about two hours, when I seemed to be awakened by a loud peel of thunder, and horrified to find the cabin-floor, covered with about six inches of water.

Jumping on my feet I nearly stove in my skull against the deck, but not stopping even to rub it I made frantically for the hatch. After some little groping, I got hold of it, gave it a wild jerk, nearly tore my finger nails out and landed on the flat of my back in the water. I was soon up again and a little more cautiously this time tackled the hatch, but only to find that, try as I might I could not budge it an inch; then it was that the click of that falling hasp came back to me, and I realized that it must have fallen over the staple, and that I was as securely locked in as though the padlock were in place.

Well boys, as you may suppose, I was by this time pretty well scared, and it was with a pretty shaky hand, that I found and lit the lantern. The light only served to make things look blacker than they were before, for I soon found that the water was coming in much more rapidly than I had supposed, and that unless I could break out, or get help inside the next half hour, I would be carried to the bottom like a rat in a trap, to a dead certainty.

The first thing I did after hanging my lantern to the roof, was to tear up a board from the floor and get out a piece of iron from amongst the ballast, weighing about twenty pounds; it was an awkward tool, and the position was cramped, but I was desperate, and for ten minutes I battered with all my strength, working as I had never worked before, but, pound as I would, I did not seem to make the least impression, on either the hatch or the deck, and my efforts only seemed to make her fill the faster. At last worn out and panting I was forced to give it up, and then it suddenly occurred to me that by tearing away the stove pipe, I might possibly be able by shouting through the hole, to attract the attention of someone in the village, which was not more than four or five hundred yards away. To think was to act, and the next minute I had wrenched away the pipe, and was giving vent to yells that would have done credit to a Comanche Indian, for I don't mind owning that by this time I was in the bluest kind of a funk; but for any answer I got my yelling seemed to produce no more result than my furious efforts.

People may say what they like about drowning being a pleasant death, but taken as I got it, it was horrible, horrible. To feel the water creeping slowly but surely up, to know that you could do absolutely nothing, and to have the certainty that unless something very like a miracle happened, you would, inside the next five minutes, be gasping and choking for breath; well as I said before, it was horrible. I think after all, the waiting was the worst, and I almost longed to feel her take the final plunge, and yet contradictory as it may seem I kept on yelling although by this time the thunder was so continuous that I could hardly hear myself. Presently the lantern went out, with a splutter, and the water rose above my ears, and my face was forced as though by some giant hand, into the pipe by the escaping air. About this time I think I must have lost consciousness, I had a sort of dim

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sense of the water rushing in on my face and then after a short struggle, of feeling a sudden jar which I took to be the lost boat striking the bottom.

The next thing I recollect, was heavy blows and kicks, and the sound of many voices, and then I felt myself roughly seized, and jerked up through the hatchway, and heard a voice asking me, "what in thunder" (or something to that effect,) I meant by bringing the whole village out of their beds in the middle of the night with my unearthly howling, and what in--something else, was the matter with me anyway?

And, would you believe it, wound up Paul sorrowfully, some of them won't believe to this day that I am subject to nightmare, and for months my life was made a burden to me by people trying to persuade me to take the pledge.

HIRAM CALEB.

My name is Hiram Caleb. I am rector of St. Clement's. It does not matter what my previous history has been any more than that before I came to New Brunswick my duties never required me to drive or handle a horse. But when I came to St. Clements I found that there were long drives over a rugged country, and so one of my parishioners volunteered to let me have his own favorite grey mare, Betsey by name, until I should get used to a horse and find one that suited me. Betsey and I have not parted to this day. My worthy parishioner saw that a friendship had sprung up between the beast and myself and so he gave her up to me.

St. Clements is in a mountainous country and borders on the sea. The road along the bay is varied by abrupt hills alternating with level stretches, and once in a while a place where you skirt the ocean for a mile or two. One of these latter places is at Broad Bank, nearly ten miles from the parsonage of St. Clements.

In October 1880, on a Saturday evening about ten o'clock, I was driving through Broad Bank on my way home. The night was quite clear and just cool enough for comfort. Betsey, as I discovered soon after making her acquaintance, will drive herself. That is why she suits me. I had not generally done much driving in the night and this was the first time I had passed through Broad Bank in the evening. I do not remember anything for a mile or two before coming to Broad Bank, I must have been asleep. When I awoke with a kind of a sudden start, the sea was before me, the moon was giving a sort of fitful light and struggling with clouds which in some places seemed to hang down almost upon the water, while the white houses of Broad Bank were far more conspicuous than I had ever seen them before. Betsey was jogging along at the rate of four or five miles an hour on the hard gravel when as we came to the turn for the last mile of the open road she deliberately stopped and turned the wheel of the carriage as though to permit some one to enter. I have a fashion of picking up people on the road and she understands it. I don't know but I think I must have been fully awake by this time.

I had not noticed anybody before this but now there was a woman standing by the carriage. I threw back the rugs which were over my lap and motioned her to get in. The moment the stranger was seated Betsey started off at her old jog. I could not see much of my companion. She seemed to be enveloped in a cloak of some black material and a thick veil covered her face. A strange exhalation began to seize me and I tried to speak but my lips were strangely closed. I sat staring but could not utter a word till we came to the foot of the hill which ends Broad Bank where the road leaves the sea. Suddenly Betsey stopped. Again the wheel turned and the stranger rising descended from the carriage and started toward the bay where now sea and land were completely blended in the low-hanging clouds. There was a rustle for the cloak had caught in the cover of the buggy. The veil moved and for a second I got a glimpse of golden red hair escaping from its confinement. I saw

the figure moving out on the beach when Betsey started, and the next I remember was a mile farther on. I had fainted.

I, Hiram Caleb, am a strong man and am not given to swooning; but the sight of that golden-red hair in the light of the moon had brought rushing back the memories of ten years before and I had not been myself. I turned the horse and drove back to the foot of the hill. The mist was lifting again from the water and the whole village slept before me with scarcely a light burning. I examined carefully the soft earth and sand at the side of the road where my strange companion had alighted but there was no trace of any footstep. The surface of the beach was smooth and unbroken. I turned and drove home.

That night, Betsey housed, I opened my desk and from its resting place I took a tiny lock of golden-red hair. I, Hiram Caleb, am a strong man but with the memories of a grave of ten years before overpowering me, I wept.

I do not know. The spirits of the departed may come back to visit earth for the sake of those whom they have loved when living. I do not know but I shall know some day. My housekeeper and the gossip of the parish of St. Clements wonder why it is that I have never married. When I leave them they shall know, not before. The people of Broad Bank wondered why it was that on a certain week in October 1880 I came down there and visited every house and talked with everybody so much and so long, leaving my other work to stay here for several days. The people of eastern St. Clements have long known it as my custom to leave there for home every Saturday night for the last thirteen years. I have been moved to do this by no mere idle curiosity. I, Hiram Caleb, am a strong man and not moved by the whim of a moment.

The vision has never come to me again. In 1880 I was thirty-six years old. Now I am forty-nine. St. Clements is a large parish and with its many stations and long drives the work is not easy. I have not spared myself and the Master has, I trust, prospered the diligence of His servant. Now I am going to leave the work and go back to my old home far from the moaning of the sea. There in the quiet of my eventide I shall write the history of my life before I pass to know more fully the things eternal.

HIRAM CALEB.

DICK'S MISCHIEF IS DONE.

Some of the Eccentricities of the Renowned Soldier Bear at Fredericton.

Dick, the soldiers' bear is dead. He trolicked in the barracks' yard at Fredericton for the past ten years, amusing the privates of the Infantry school, and occasionally chewing one or two of them to break the monotony.

His taking off was sudden and sad, but was only what he might have expected had he known enough to realize that the army could not stand idly by and see one of its brightest specimens mutilated, perhaps murdered.

Dick had been taught to wrestle and box and lately did not appear to have a just appreciation of the superabundance of his strength and a guilty, compound with those of the ordinary militia man. And so someone was continually getting hurt. In fact it got to be self evident that a separate register would have to be kept in the hospital to all or for the entry of the casualties attributed to Dick.

Since he has passed away, the soldiers have decided that he hurt them out of pure love, or out of the intensity of his affection for the pride and majesty of the army. Owing to the peculiar shape of his head and neck which of course was beyond his control, his collar could not be kept on and then he was always impelled by some mysterious impulse to roam around the yard and to generally overturn things. On one of these occasions he strolled upstairs into the room of one of the officers and had a jolly time. In fact when found he seriously objected to removing, apparently satisfied that the room was a superior place to the



How easy it is to tell a thing that's bran new—Clothes, for instance?

Here's part of a conversation overheard the other day: "Hello, Jones, another New Suit?" Jones—"No, one I just had dyed at Ungar's."

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post and kennel; of his general lot. He was sitting on a easy chair with a helmet on and was licking the pipe clay from a belt.

Another of his escapades happened last year on his return from the brigade camp at Sussex. He was in a box car, tied with a small rope. As soon as the car started he began to examine the rope and found that it was rope, not chain, and at once bit it in two. Then he went to the car door and jumped out. The train was going about forty miles an hour. It is said that when he struck he rolled over and over, so much so that the engineer thinking it was the special from St. Martins running wild, side tracked his engine and telegraphed for orders. In the meantime the soldiers got off and captured Dick.

Then Dick figured in a bull fight that equalled in style, if not in gaudy display, the days of the coliseum. True there were no trumpet blasts, but there were no need of them, the bull and the bear did the trumpeting. Dick was quietly ruminating on the vicissitudes of beardom, evidently, when a bull, that had been worried by the butchers' boys and dogs till it was frantic, rushed through the drill shed and seeing the bear on the other side of the yard, with a bellow of defiance and head lowered to a fighting attitude charged upon him.

But Dick did not flinch. Calmly, and with an evident knowledge of the case with which he could baffle his antagonist, he waited the course of events with his head turned away from the threatened assault, but one eye carefully looking around the corner. Just as the bull thought he had Dick on his horns, something dropped—it was the bull. Dick gave him a cuff with his enormous paw, and the bull had to be shot to end his misery. He wasn't in it with the bear any longer. His race was short and sudden.

His escapades and escapes became so numerous and aggravating that a few days since, when Dick was on the war-path and the soldiers were trying to lasso him, Major Gordon ordered him shot. There had been no court-martial, no formal charge of desertion had been made against him; he was condemned by lynch law and executed, to the relief of the city, and the sorrow of the private soldiers who used to steal his ration of hop beer.

He Had the Bottles.

A "diner-out" knocked at the door of his house in the small hours of the morning. His wife called out from the window—

"As a punishment for your disorderly conduct, you shall stay there all night!" "Come, do open the door; I have brought two bottles of wine."

On hearing that, the wife ran to open the door.

"Where are the two bottles?"

"Here," replied the delinquent, placing his hands on his paunch.

Not Troubled That Way.

She—Are you fond of corn on the ear?

He—I never had one there.