

# DOWN BY THE SEA



FLORENCE WALTON TAYLOR





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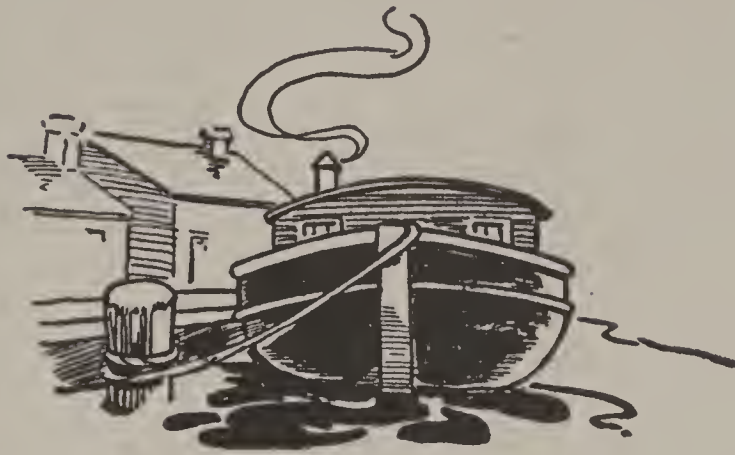








# TOWPATH ANDY





YOUNG AMERICA BOOKS

When Washington Was Young  
Puckered Moccasins  
The Topaz Seal

The Magic Canoe  
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With Fife and Drum  
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The Traveling Gallery

Down the Ohio  
Towpath Andy  
Abigail

Little Sally Dutcher  
Oft Told Tales of Lincoln  
The Man Without a Country









*Andy raced along the planked run*



# TOWPATH ANDY

*By*

FLORANCE WALTON TAYLOR

*Author of*

*With Fife and Drum, Vermilion Clay, etc.*



*Pictures by*

LILLIAN WUERFEL

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*Then he followed the strong-looking woman*



## I

### THE MUSK MILL

**C**OME, Andy. Give me a hand with the buckets. Soon it grows dark and the stock is not fed."

"All right, Mrs. Musk," replied a tall blue-eyed boy, who was seated on a stump, surrounded by four younger children. He was oiling some harness and entertaining the Musk children with a story. He dropped the harness at the base of the stump and picked up two buckets of corn. Then he followed



the strong-looking woman, who swung fearlessly along over the foot log which spanned Sugar Creek just below the Musk Mill.

“Children, mind you stay right there ’til we get back, and Andy, don’t spill the corn into the water,” cautioned Maria Musk as she stepped upon the opposite bank of the creek.

“Yes, ma’am.” Andy Burke gripped the log firmly with his bare toes, and balancing the weight of the heavy buckets in his hands, soon deposited them by the trough, where Mrs. Musk was emptying her load of corn.

She brushed her hand wearily across her eyes. “So much work, Andy. What with the stock, the mill and the store, we’re never through. Tomorrow always comes too soon. I don’t know how we ever got along without you.”

“Shucks, ma’am, I’m glad to help, for you and Mr. Musk have given me a good home this last year. Are we going to make the trip to the canal tomorrow?”

“Yes, we’ll start whenever we get the wagon loaded. I want to get there as early as we can, before all of the boats are loaded.”

When they had fed and watered the live stock, Mrs. Musk and Andy returned across the foot log to the mill. The four little Musk children were waiting impatiently at the edge of the creek, for even nine-year-old Willie was not permitted to cross the foot log alone.

“Come on, Andy, and tell us another story,” cried Mary Musk.

“No, Mary. Andy’s no time for stories now,” put in her mother. “I want him to start loading the wagon.” She walked toward the house, which was a part of the long mill building, and then turned again to the children. “Willie, you and Mary can help Andy. And mind you keep out of the way, Annie and Bertie. Andy, there’s a sight of grist and salt pork in the storage room, but you load what you can and we’ll finish in the morning.”

“What we goin’ to have for supper, Ma?” asked five-year-old Annie, who was very fond of food.

“I’m goin’ to make a sugar pie for your father. You know what a hand he is for sugar pie, and I don’t think it hurts his rheumatiz none.”

“Sugar pie!” squealed Annie in delight. “Oh, hurry, Ma, for I’m starved now.”

As soon as Mrs. Musk disappeared into the house to get supper, Andy and the two older children started to load the wagon. They made trip after trip to the storeroom for the sacks of grist and pork. Some of the sacks were very heavy, but Andy was accustomed to hard work and now, at fourteen, he could do as much as many men. Willie and his sister struggled nobly with the cumbersome sacks.

Andy Burke had become the handy boy about the Musk Mill, working anywhere that he was needed. Sometimes he operated the grist mill, grinding the grain for the farmers who brought their produce there; sometimes he sorted the mail in the post office which was also located at the mill, or he waited on the trade at the store.

During the long winter, when trade was slack, Andy had kept a school for the Musk children, teaching the three older ones to read and write. There had been no subscription school near enough for them to attend. He told them interesting stories of the wanderings of Odysseus, the seige of Troy, and of the old Testament heroes, Joseph, David, and Moses. A fine teacher the lad made, although he had never attended school himself.



Andy had appeared at the mill one dark, stormy night in late September of the year before. When Mrs. Musk had opened the door she had found a thinly clad, starving boy, with tragic blue eyes, slumped down in a wet heap on the door step. She had wisely asked him no questions, but had taken him into her home, fed and warmed him, and after a few days had been rewarded by his full confidence.

He told her that he had been hiding in the backwoods of Indiana almost a month, eating roots and berries, and keeping away from the public roads, for fear he would be found and sent to the workhouse. When she assured him he could stay at the mill and need have no fear of being sent to the workhouse, he told her the rest of his pitiful story.

He had come into eastern Indiana early in the spring of 1849 with his mother and father. His father was a horse trader, dealing in thoroughbred race horses, and for as long as Andy could remember, had traveled through the country with a string of fine horses. When they arrived in Indiana, his father had six horses, which he was to deliver at St. Louis to be sent to New Orleans for the racing season.

Andy's mother was a frail, intellectual, little woman, the daughter of a horse fancier in Virginia. She had been a teacher, keeping a private school for the children of the neighboring planters, and she had met Matthew Burke when he came to her father's home to deliver some racing horses. As she laughingly explained to Andy, it had been love at first sight, and soon she married the handsome young Irishman, whereupon her father refused to recognize her as his daughter.

After a couple of years of wandering about the country by the Burkes, Andy was born, and he had known no permanent home. Although Andy had never been to a real school, his mother had taught him to read remarkably well, for he had finished the fifth reader, and most of the old legends and hero tales. He could do all of the simple forms of arithmetic, add, subtract, recite the times tables and do simple division.

Often Matthew Burke would leave them in a neighborhood for two or three months at a time, while he went on his long trips to deliver or buy horses. As Andy grew older, his mother begged her husband to buy a farm and settle down to raising

horses. When they had arrived in Indiana, Matthew promised her that he would stop trading horses as soon as his St. Louis delivery was made. He had an opportunity to pick up a good stock farm amazingly cheap, so he paid the sum stipulated to hold the contract. He left his wife a goodly amount of cash, and set out for St. Louis, expecting to return within the month.

Three months passed by, but Matthew Burke had not returned. His wife began to worry, fearing that some misfortune had befallen him. She was not only worried, but she was ill, for she had contracted malaria shortly after coming into the state. Weeks passed by and still no news came of his father; and suddenly Andy's brave, loving mother was dead. Neighbors came over to the farm and helped Andy give his mother a decent burial.

Now the money which his father had left them was exhausted. The time had passed for taking up the contract for the farm, and the people in the community began to talk about what to do with the boy, Andy. No one of them wanted to take the responsibility of the boy, whose father they thought had skipped the country, and the only solution which



they offered was to send Andy to the workhouse. Andy was terrified, for he had heard dark tales of the workhouse from the children, and he refused to leave the farm. He knew his father would soon return.

Many times Matthew Burke had left Andy and his mother for several weeks, and Andy knew that he would return as soon as he could. When at last the owner of the farm came over to tell Andy that a new tenant would take over the place the following week, and he would have to enter the workhouse, Andy resolved to solve his own problem.

He waited until night and then started out to find his father. He knew that St. Louis lay somewhere toward the west, and with only the stars to guide him, he started on his journey. He dared not risk traveling on the main roads by day, for he was afraid he might be picked up and sent to that dreadful place where orphans and poverty-stricken folk were kept, the workhouse. He hid in the woods by day, sleeping and eating as best he could, and he walked as far as he could at night. But the nights soon grew colder and the autumn rains set in early, so at last he was driven to find shelter and food. Luckily for him, he sought help at the Musk Mill.



*He started on his journey*





The Musks had scoffed at the idea of sending such an intelligent lad to the workhouse, and although they already had four young mouths to feed, they offered him a home with them. Sometimes he grew lonely and longed for his mother and father, but on the whole he was happy working with the Musks.

The Musk Mill on Sugar Creek was one of the largest mills of its kind in that part of Indiana. The millrace was about fifty feet long and eight feet wide, with a depth the same as the width. It was cut through solid sandstone. The race and foundation cuts had been chiseled through the rock by hand. The timber crib dam was a hundred feet long, filled with stone and decked with heavy planking as a protection against ice and driftwood. The mill building was a story and a half, and besides being the home of the Musks, it housed the mill, with additions for the store and postoffice.

John Musk was a powerfully built man, capable of doing the work of three ordinary men. He had built his mill on Sugar Creek more than fifteen years before. He had been ill the past several months with rheumatism and was not able to leave his bed. While he lay helpless in the great bed upstairs, the task of

operating the triple business, the mill, the postoffice, and the store, fell upon his wife's shoulders, but she had found a willing helper in the brave, smiling Andy Burke.

When it grew too dark for Andy and the Musk children to finish loading the wagon for the next day's journey, they trooped into the kitchen to wash their hands and faces for supper. How good the spicy sugar pie, which Mrs. Musk was just taking from the oven, did smell!

"You children sit down now and eat your supper," said Mrs. Musk briskly, as she heaped the food upon their plates. "Andy, before you begin, please carry these victuals up to John. I'll bring the sugar pie along in a few minutes. It's to be a surprise, you know."

Andy carried the plate of food very carefully up the stairs to John Musk.

"Howdy, Mr. Musk?" asked Andy cheerfully, as he entered the low-raftered bedroom.

John Musk smiled as he caught sight of the boy's eager young face. "Better son, better I believe today. Have you been loading the wagon?"

"Yes, sir. I got all the grist laid by, but the potatoes

and salt pork will have to wait until morning. Willie and Mary helped me but it got too dark on us. I'll get up early though, for Mrs. Musk says we must start as soon as we can."

"Yep, you ought to get down to the canal before the boats are all loaded. You air a fine lad, Andy, not mean and rambunctious like so many boys your age. I hope Willie makes as fine a lad as you. Maria'd been hard put this spring without you, for I haven't been a mite o' good to anybody, but it's a shame you air not gettin' some more book learnin'. I listened to you last winter, when you wuz teachin' the childern, and you've too fine a start to stop now, my boy. This country needs educated men."

Andy laughed. "That's what my mother always said, Mr. Musk, whenever I got tired of my lessons. Maybe that will come, sir, but I've learned a lot here with you. I can hardly wait for tomorrow, for I've heard there's big doings on the canal."

"That there is, Andy. You ain't never seen the Wabash and Erie Canal, hev you?"

"No, sir, and I want to, very much. I've heard so much about it from the folks who come to the mill."

"It air a fine sight, Andy, when it's filled with



boats. There's folks collected from everywhere on that canal. I think runnin' a boat would be a fine life and if I wuz young and footloose again, I'd like to have a fling at one of them boats myself. Always seein' something different. I'd be a great hand for change, if it weren't for Maria and the children, and this tarnation rheumatiz."

"Have you traveled very much, Mr. Musk?" asked Andy, hoping to be entertained with some of Mr. Musk's rare stories.

The man in the bed turned with great effort and began to eat his supper. He had had a fairly good day, so was in better spirits than usual.

"Not much, Andy, not much. I allus honed to go places though, and once when I wuzn't much older than you, I went with my pa on a flatboat to New Orleans. That wuz a long trip and a dangerous one, but lawsy, I enjoyed it." John Musk chuckled at the memories which crossed his mind, and then sighed as he glanced at his helpless body. "My advice is to see the world while you're young, laddie buck. See the world before you settle down. I never been north of Logansport, nor east of the state line, but if I wuz just young again, I'd certainly go."

Just then Mrs. Musk entered the room with the dish of sugar pie in her hand. "Better tonight, John?" she asked brightly. "Look what I brought you."

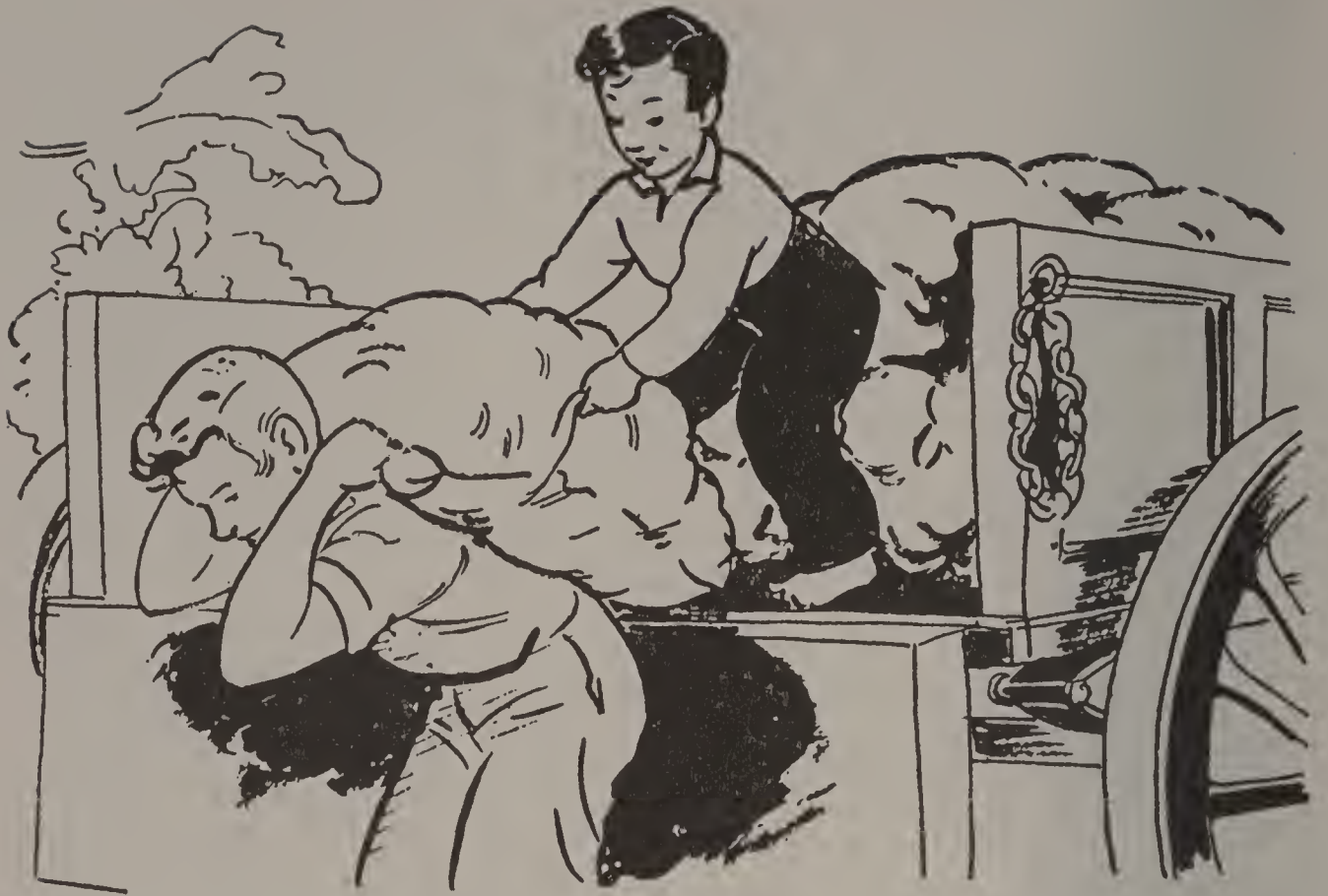
John Musk patted his wife's work-worn hands affectionately, while he sniffed the fragrant air. "Sugar pie! Why Maria, you ain't had time to fool with sugar pie today, I hope."

"That I have, John, knowing it's your favorite, and I don't think it'll hurt your rheumatiz a mite." She turned to Andy. "Goodness, child, run down stairs and eat your supper. It must be getting cold. Then you better hop in bed, for we have to be on our way early, remember, if I'm to get any space on one of the boats hauling north."

"We wuz just talkin' about the canal, Maria. Andy's never seen it. I wuz just sayin' he ought to get out and see the world."

Maria Musk frowned. "Now, John, don't be putting such ideas in the boy's head. He's only a lad yet, and he's plenty of time to see the world when he's some older."

"Well, that's right, I guess, Andy. Run along now, for you must be hungry after liftin' so many sacks of grist."



## II

### ANDY MEETS CAPTAIN JIM

Almost as soon as the sun peeped over the rim of the horizon the next morning, Andy climbed out of his hard, wooden bed. He shared it with Willie Musk in the little cubbyhole behind the kitchen fireplace, just off from the kitchen. It had been used for wood and cob storage for the large kitchen fireplace, but with the advent of Andy into the Musk household, Mr. Musk had built a bed in it for the two boys. There was scarcely room to turn around between the



logs and the bed, but the cubbyhole had the one advantage of being warm in winter and not unbearably hot in summer.

Andy dressed as quietly as he could and hoped to be at work before any of the household was awake, but when he came into the kitchen, Mrs. Musk was already getting breakfast.

“Good morning, Andy. You’re up early, but there’s a heap to do yet. Is Willie getting up?”

“No, ma’am. I didn’t call him, for I thought I’d get in an hour’s work before any of you were awake. But there’s no getting ahead of you.”

“Call Willie, so’s he can help you. The girls can do the dishes while I’m getting dressed. I’ve packed a lunch to take with us, but I want to fix a snack for John before I go.”

As soon as the boys finished their breakfast, they started packing the potatoes. They worked for almost two hours and then were ready to hitch the horses to the wagon. Andy rubbed the team down and threw the harness across the horses’ broad backs, talking to them all the while. The animals knew that he liked them and responded by nuzzling him whenever he came near their heads. At last they

were all ready. The little girls were stowed in the wagon bed among the grist and potato sacks, while Andy and Willie sat on the seat with Mrs. Musk.

She grasped the reins firmly, clucked to the horses and drove carefully across the covered bridge which spanned Sugar Creek about a quarter of a mile below the mill. Then she went through the woods to the big road which led to Lodi. It was about twenty miles to the canal by the big road, but Mrs. Musk dared not push the horses, for the wagon was heavily loaded; so it was almost noon before they came in sight of the town. The hitching racks were filled with teams, for it seemed as if everyone had come into town to do trading today.

“Let’s go down to the store and get some bananas, Ma,” said Willie. “You know you promised we’d get some the next time we came to Lodi.”

“Yes, Willie, I’ll get some later on, if there’s been any brought up from New Orleans, but I think we’d better go straight to the Wabash and Erie Canal now.”

Mrs. Musk was eager to find a boat to take her wagonload of produce, so she turned down the narrow road which led to the warehouses bordering

on the canal. In a few minutes they arrived at the edge of the water, where a planked run, wide enough to accommodate a wagon, paralleled the canal. From the sides of the warehouses, stubby quays jutted out into the water. The canal was swarming with boats of many kinds and colors, from keelboats and barges to broadhorns and packets.

“Geems! Look at all the boats, Andy,” cried Willie. “There’s more here than last year.”

“Jeru!” Andy whistled in amazement, for he had not known there were so many boats in the world.

Mrs. Musk stopped the horses and called to a man who was standing by the boat nearest them. “Hey there, sir, can you take my load of crops on your boat?”

The man dropped the towline which he had been winding and walked over to the Musk wagon. “Sorry ma’am, but I’m loaded. Couldn’t take another pound. Got more than I ought to carry now. Bound north or south?”

“North. Do you know if any of these boats hereabouts can take my grist, pork, and potatoes?”

“None of ’em right along here, ma’am. They’re all set to go, but let me see.” The man peered down



the canal toward the elevator some several hundred yards away. "There was a young fellow here a while ago, who said he had a leetle more room. He's got a freighter, an old boat painted red, and he's got a load of ashes for somewheres north. He was tied up near the elevator. Name's Captain Jim Pride, a trustworthy sort. Might hunt him, ma'am."

"Thank you, sir."

Mrs. Musk slapped the reins on the horses' backs, making them amble slowly past the warehouses toward the elevator. The children stared curiously at the boats which were tied up at the quays. There were a few pirogues, log canoes with square sterns rigged up with square sails, two line packets with shiny curtained windows, some broadhorns, and shanty boats. One man was painting his boat a brilliant pink, and farther on, a woman sat on deck mending a torn sail.

When they arrived at the elevator, there lay the freighter, weather-beaten and worn, but boasting a fresh coat of gay red paint. It was tied with the stern end toward the run, and although the tiller shaft cut the name of the boat in two, Andy could make out the letters, the RED BIRD.

“That must be the boat, Andy. Run over and see if you can find the man who owns it. His name was Cap’n Pride, wasn’t it?”

“Let me go too, Ma,” cried Willie, starting to follow Andy, who was already out of the wagon.

“No, you sit still, son. Andy can do it.”

Andy raced along the planked run and up the gang-plank to the deck of the RED BIRD. “Hello!” he called. “Captain Pride.” He stood uncertainly on the deck, but in a moment a young stocky man appeared at the cabin door.

“Hello, son. What can I do for you?”

Andy was warmed immediately by the man’s bright blue eyes and his kindly smile. “Mrs. Musk,” he waved in the direction of the wagon, “has a load of grist, pork and potatoes, which she wants to ship north, sir. Can you take it?”

The captain walked along the deck to the gang-plank. “Come on, lad. Mebbe I can, for I’ve some room in the hold.” They went over to the wagon. “How do you do, ma’am? The boy says you have a load to be shipped north. How much is there to go?”

Mrs. Musk nodded toward the wagon bed. “There it is. It’s a larger load than I sent last year.”

Captain Pride sized up the sacks in the wagon. The three little girls, sitting among the sacks giggled nervously.

“Leetle gals to be shipped, too?” asked Captain Pride, as he pinched Bertie’s round, pink cheek.

“Not this time,” smiled Mrs. Musk. “They’re goin’ to do some tradin’ with me in town. What’ll the freight be?”

“Yes, I think I can take all you have. I can tell you the freight when I get it loaded, but I usually take out the amount from the sale of produce. Where’s it to go?”

Mrs. Musk began searching through her reticule for a piece of paper. “It goes to Defiance, Ohio. I hev the name of the man I sold to last year. It’s written down on my paper.” She rummaged a little more and brought out a wrinkled, folded piece of paper. “Here ’tis. He took all of my crops last year.”

Captain Pride looked at the address on the paper. “Suits me fine, for I have to make a stop at Defiance anyway, and I’m goin’ through to Toledo with this load of ashes, so it’ll be right on my way. I better start loadin’ now, for I want to get away this afternoon.”



“Very well. The boys can stay and help with the loadin’, while the girls and I do our trading in town.” Mrs. Musk and the three little girls climbed down from the wagon.

“Ma, you won’t forget the bananas, will you?” asked Willie, who wanted very much to go with his mother, but who was too much of a man to express such a wish.

“Yes, Willie, I’ll get the bananas, if they’s any in town. You and Andy step lively and help Captain Pride while I’m gone.”

Mrs. Musk and the girls threaded their way past the elevators and warehouses, and soon disappeared from the plank run.

“Come on, boys. You put the sacks on the run and I’ll load them on the boat. That-a-way it won’t take us long,” ordered the captain.

Andy set to work eagerly, for this new task appealed to him and he wanted to look around the boat, but Willie cast many backward glances toward town, for he wanted to be with his mother to make sure she bought the promised bananas. Captain Jim helped the boys with the heaviest sacks and stacked them alongside the freighter, preparatory to putting

them on his boat. Then he turned around to Andy.

“What’s your name, lad?”

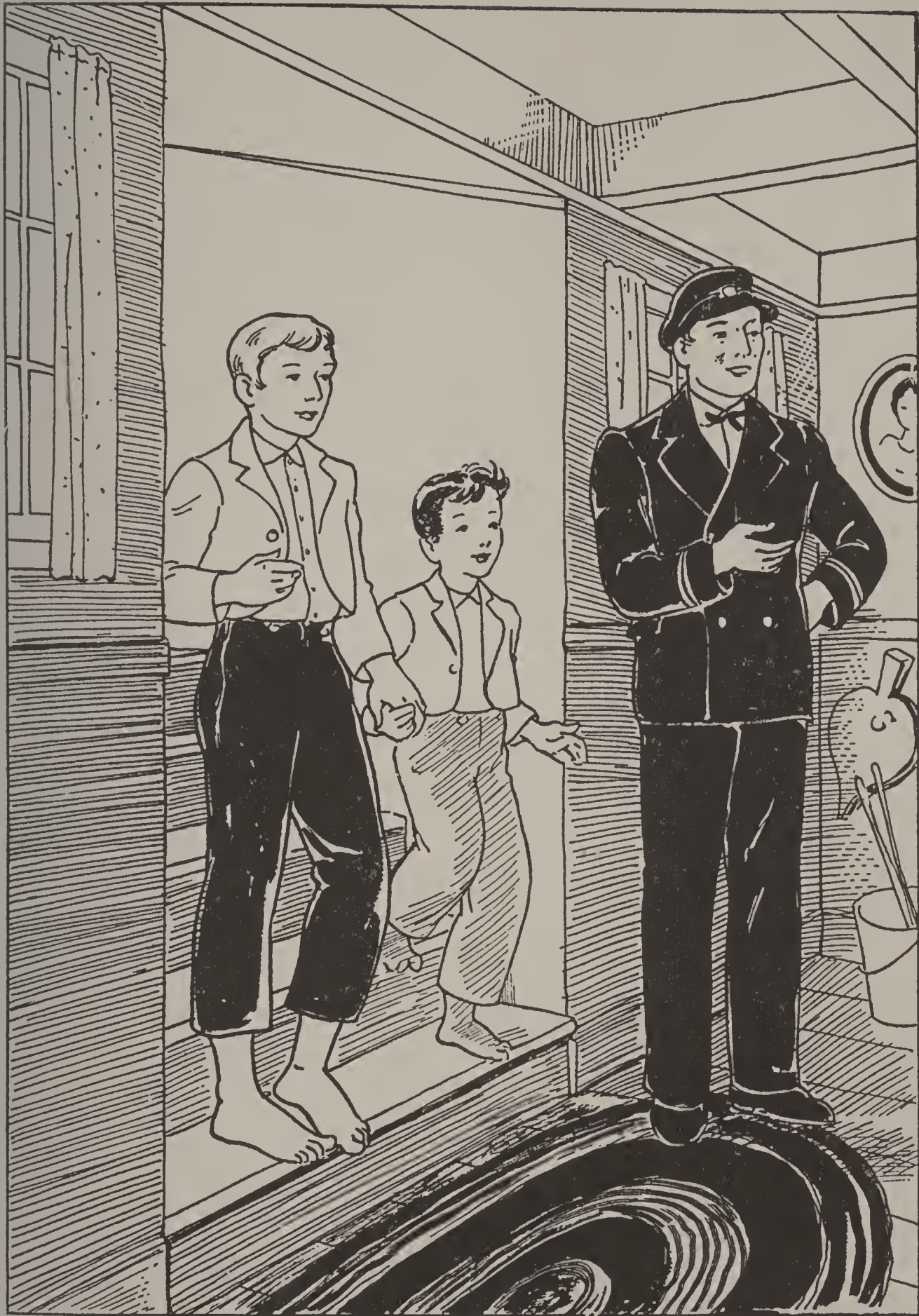
“Andy, sir. Andy Burke. And he’s Willie,” explained Andy as he set a sack of potatoes on the run.

At last the wagon was emptied and Captain Jim began stowing the sacks in the hold of the boat.

“Could we, could we look around the boat a bit?” asked Andy when the last sack of grist was on the freighter.

“Sure thing, lad.” Captain Jim Pride led the way along the deck to the stern of the boat. “Here’s my home,” he explained as he started down the steep cabin steps.

From the stairs they entered a fair-sized room. In the center of it was a table on which rested an oil lamp. Directly in front of the door on the opposite wall, a long shelf was fastened, which held a comb, wash basin and bar of soap. Just above it was a small mirror, flanked by two small windows and some pegs for clothes. On the wall at right angles to the shelf were two wooden bunks, built one above the other. Opposite the bunks and filling most of the other wall was a brick fireplace, a crane and a few cooking utensils.



*"Here's my home," he explained*





“Isn’t this a fine place?” Andy looked around the room admiringly.

“It’s not very big,” murmured Willie.

“Bigger’n our cubbyhole at the mill,” laughed Andy.

“Can’t have much room for men, sonny, on a freighter, ’cause it’s the load that’s important. You get used to cramped quarters after a while. Come out on deck and I’ll show you how I steer the boat.”

Captain Jim showed them the tiller shaft which rose stubbily above the roof of the cabin to the sweep. He picked up a long pole. “This pole’s to get us in or out of the locks. I always carry one with me.”

“What are locks, Cap’n Jim?”

“Ain’t you never seen a lock, Andy boy? They’re lots of them on the old Wabash and Erie. Well, they are enclosures in the canal, made with wooden gates, which raise or lower the boats to different levels of water, when a boat needs to go to a higher or lower position in the canal.”

“I’ve never seen the canal before, but I think I’d like to travel on it.” Andy looked eagerly up the expanse of water. “How soon are you going to leave Lodi?”

“Just as soon now as I get a driver for my horses. The boy who was going to haul north with me disappointed me at the last minute and now I have to find another one. I’d like to get going this evening, now the boat’s loaded.”

“A boy! Did you say a boy, sir?” asked Andy eagerly.

“Yes. He wuz about as old as you. Have lots of boy drivers on this here old canal.”

Andy hesitated a moment and then inquired, “Do you suppose I would do, sir?”

“You?” Captain Pride looked at Andy with new interest. Here was a likely-looking, strong lad. He seemed intelligent, too. “Why, I don’t know, son, but I don’t suppose your ma would let you go. It’s not an easy life, haulin’ ain’t.”

“She’s not my ma, sir, Mrs. Musk isn’t. I — I just been staying with her. I—” Andy stopped, “I’m an orphan, Cap’n.”

“That so? Well, now, how old are you?”

“Going on fifteen, sir. And I’m used to hard work.”

Andy was eager to go now, for he wanted more than anything else to haul with this kindly man. He had been with him only a short time, but he knew



he was going to like him. The boat wasn't going in the direction of St. Louis, to be sure. But there was just a chance that he might learn some news of his father from someone on the canal. Besides, Andy longed for new sights and new faces, for he had been accustomed to traveling from place to place with his father and mother.

"Do you know anything about horses?" Captain Pride looked at Andy doubtfully.

Andy smiled confidently, for horses were his very life. "Yes, sir, I know a lot about horses, as much as your other boy, I'm sure. I can show you if you'll only give me the chance."

"Well, come with me now and we'll take a look at the stalls and my teams. I always carry two teams with me. You see while one team is on the tow path, the other is riding on the boat. That-a-way I always have a fresh team and I don't have to depend on the stables along the canal to get fresh ones."

Captain Pride took the boys along to the pit, where two large black horses and two smaller bays were nosing the hay in the mangers. The horses fidgeted a little at the presence of strangers, but Andy spoke quietly to them and began brushing down

one of the blacks. The horses became still immediately and twitched their skins in enjoyment of the brush.

“Say, Cap’n Pride, how much do you grain ’em?”

Captain Pride concealed his surprise at the action of the horses, as he replied, “Guess you are good with horses. Say, that off horse never let any of my drivers rub him down that easily on first acquaintance.”

Andy was embarrassed, but a little proud at the captain’s words.

“I give each one of ’em a measure level full.” Captain Pride consulted his watch and turned to Willie, who was standing outside of the stalls. “You boys must be hungry. It’s ’way after noon and I forgot all about eating.”

“I am hungry, awfully hungry,” replied Willie, who was thinking again of the longed-for bananas.

“I guess I’m hungry, too,” laughed Andy, who had been so interested in the possibilities of hauling with the RED BIRD that he had forgotten all about food, “Mrs. Musk put our lunch in the wagon, sir.”

“Never mind looking for it now. The lunch is on me today, boys,” put in Captain Pride. “We’ll go over to the Blue Swan for dinner. Come on, let’s get along.”

The boys followed the captain down the gangplank and around the elevator to the Blue Swan, a small, cramped tavern, sandwiched in between the elevator and a warehouse. The tavern was empty, save for a few stragglers at the bar, who were loitering over their liquor.

“Got anything for three hungry boys?” called Captain Pride, as they sat down at the first table.

A round-faced frowsy woman appeared from a back room. “Oh, howdy, Cap’n Pride. That I have. Got some pork chops and fried potatoes left and I think an apple pie.”

“Bring it on then, sister, for we’re hungry.”

While the boys ate their dinner Captain Pride studied Andy Burke. He saw that he was strong and well-formed, with a keen, honest face and a friendly Irish smile.

“Might be just the boy,” murmured Cap’n Jim.

“Did you speak, sir?” asked Andy, looking up from his empty plate.

“H’m,” replied Captain Pride, consulting his watch again. “Reckon your ma will soon be back now. If I jest had a boy, I’d be ready to start north myself.”

When they came in sight of the wagon on the



planked run, they saw Mrs. Musk and the little girls waiting for them.

“Here you are,” cried Mrs. Musk in relief. “I couldn’t imagine where you’d gone.”

“Cap’n Pride bought our lunch at the Blue Swan,” explained Andy.

“Did you get the bananas?” put in Willie, who, although he could not eat another bite, was still interested in the purchase.

“Yes, Willie, I got some.” She turned to Captain Pride. “I been inquiring about you in town, Cap’n. I always like to know something about the man who takes my load. Everyone said a good word for you, and seems to think you’re the most trustworthy man on the canal.”

“Well, now that’s real nice of them, Mrs. Musk. I always treat folks square, same as I like to be treated. I can tell you about what the freight charges will be, but if you don’t mind, I’ll take it out of the proceeds when we return with the money for you.”

“That’ll be agreeable with me. Now children, we’d best be startin’ home. It’s gettin’ late and we’ll have to hurry to reach Sugar Creek before dark.”

The children began climbing into the wagon, save

Andy, who stood hesitating on the planked run.

“Mrs. Musk—Mrs. Musk,” he began, “I have a chance to haul with Cap’n Pride. To drive the horses on the towpath, I mean. Is it all right if I take the job?”

“To haul? To walk the towpath, you mean?” Mrs. Musk was more than surprised.

“Yes, ma’am. He needs a boy. I thought if it’s all the same to you, I’d like to go, ma’am.”

For just a moment Mrs. Musk’s eyes showed sparks of anger. She turned to the captain. “You aren’t trying to take Andy away from us?”

“Well, ma’am,” explained Captain Pride, “he asked to go with me, after I mentioned I wuz lookin’ for a new driver. Says he knows a lot about horses, and I believe he does.”

“Mrs. Musk, you know I can take care of the horses. I’ve had lots of experience. Please, ma’am, I do want to haul with Cap’n Jim.”

When Mrs. Musk saw the eager expression in Andy’s eyes, her anger died as suddenly as it had come. “Well, Andy, we can’t keep you at the mill, if you really want to go. But canalling is a hard life at best and we’ll miss you at home.”

"I'll watch out for him, ma'am," put in the captain. "I can't pay much wages, but he's worth ten dollars a month and his keep. I'll see that no harm comes to him. And Jim Pride's word is good the hull length of the Wabash and Erie."

Ten dollars! Andy's face flushed with pleasure at the thought of so much money. He had never had ten dollars in his life.

"I—I'll hate to leave you, Mrs. Musk, but I want to be movin' on again. Besides I might hear some word of my—"

"Yes, son, you might." Mrs. Musk sensed that Andy needed a change, and that he had stayed at the Musk Mill longer than any other place he had lived. "All right, Andy. If Cap'n Jim Pride will look out for you, I reckon I'll let you go, but we'll miss you a lot. You've been a big help to us."

"Don't go, Andy," put in Willie, who was sitting on the wagon seat. "We won't have any more school if you go."

"Yes, Cap'n Pride, if you have any chance, you ought to let Andy go to school. He's a right smart boy in book learnin' as well as with horses. My husband said it was a shame the boy couldn't be in school,



but we haven't one within miles of this mill."

"Well, we might find a school somewheres when we tie up for the winter, ma'am. You see we don't expect to haul much after the middle of November, for the canal freezes solid in these parts. I promise to do well by him."

"Very well. Be careful, Andy, and be a good boy."

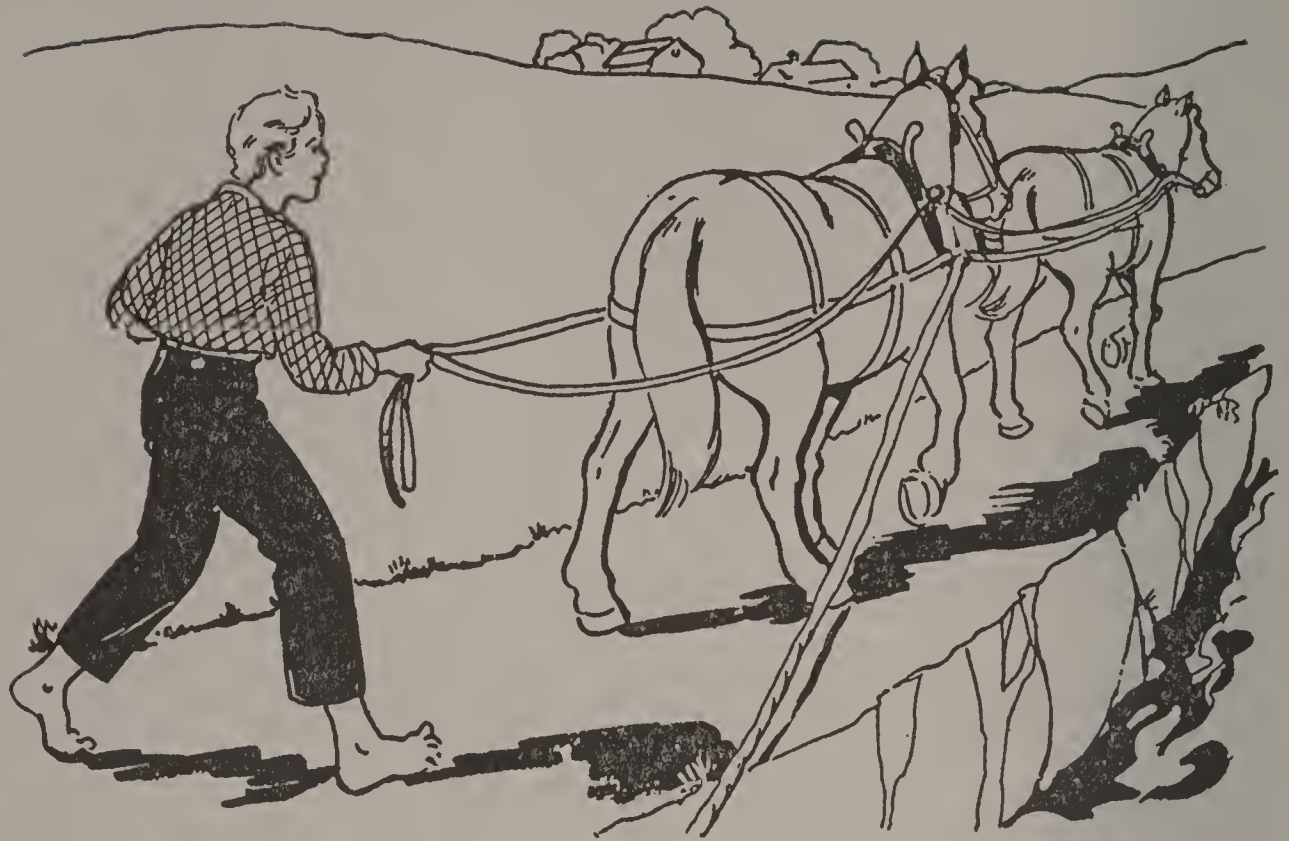
Mrs. Musk took the boy in her arms and kissed him goodbye, her eyes brimming with tears. "And if I hear any good news I'll try to let you know some way."

Mrs. Musk climbed into the wagon, picked up the reins and drove slowly along the planked run.

"Good-bye, Andy," called Willie.

"Good-bye," cried the three little girls, waving frantically as the wagon rounded the corner of the last warehouse.





### III

## THE TOWPATH

“Come on, Andy. We better be movin’ now,” ordered Captain Jim. “I’ll show you how to get out the towrope.”

With Andy’s assistance, Captain Pride ran the rope out to the end of the run and hooked it to the evener. Then he untied the bay team of horses and drove them out of their stalls to a point a little in advance of the boat.

“All right, Andy. Tell Queen and Bess to get along.”

The captain ran back to the sweep and nosed the boat out into the center of the canal, swinging it in line with the towpath just ahead. Andy seized the reins, clucked to the horses, which started slowly forward.

The towpath! A new life and an adventurous one stretched before Andy, just as the towpath beckoned to him, winding its way along to the northward. He trudged behind the horses and hummed a little tune. On the move again to new sights and sounds. Andy looked back at the boat and saw Captain Pride standing behind the cabin, grasping the rudder sweep with both hands. His lips were parted in a slight smile, and his blue eyes were fixed on the water ahead, as if he, too, were looking forward to this haul to the north.

The canal now wound through timber country and the towpath, bordered by great oaks, elms, and occasional beeches, was hard and firm beneath his feet. Now and then the overhanging vines touched Andy's cheek lightly, as he marched along. As he walked behind the horses he studied the bay team, sizing it up as his father had taught him to do, when he had accompanied him on a buying trip.



Andy noticed that the horses were not well-matched, a bad fault in any team, and that Queen was a windsucker. He could tell it by the grunting sound which she made as she sucked in the air through her mouth, and by the bloated appearance of her abdomen. Her neck was set too low on her shoulders, which made her a poor horse for hauling. Bess was the better animal, he decided, but her hind legs were rather far apart, giving her a sprawling, awkward gait. His father would not have purchased such a team and Andy hoped that Captain Jim had not paid much for them.

When he had been walking the towpath almost an hour, Andy suddenly saw a packet boat rounding the bend of the canal, coming toward them. He was not certain what to do with his horses and the towline.

“Cap’n Jim,” he called, turning back to the RED BIRD, “what do I do with the towline when we meet the packet yonder?”

“Upstream boats always have the right of way, Andy. Just hold our team steady. The other driver will get out of your way.”

Even as Andy turned and glanced toward the ap-

proaching team, the oncoming driver had guided his horses to the outside of the towpath, and was stopping the horses. The RED BIRD passed between the packet and its team, the horses stepping over the towline and the boat passing over it in the water.

“Hi, there, Cap’n Pride!” called the captain of the packet. “Got a full load? What you haulin’?”

Captain Pride returned the packet’s salute. “Right smart of a load. Haulin’ ashes for Toledo delivery and some grist and pork. How’s business?”

“Tolerable good. Lots of new settlers comin’ in.”

The passengers were clustered on the deck of the packet and they all waved gaily to the RED BIRD. As they passed each other, the packet driver cracked his bull whip loudly, urging his horses southward.

“That air was well done, Andy,” commended Captain Jim, when the line boat had disappeared from view. “If a boat wants to pass you, and some of ’em will, for the packets travel faster than us freighters, you do the stoppin’ and let ’em have the right of way.”

Andy glowed with pride at this praise of his management of the horses and gave his attention again to the towpath.

In a little while Captain Jim called to him, "We're comin' to a lock now, son, so take it slow."

Andy saw a small, square house beside the towpath and the white beams of the lock gates, gleaming in the late afternoon sun. Captain Pride produced a horn and blew a shrill blast upon it.

"That's to let the lock tender know we're comin'."

An old man came out of the house and moved over to the sluice levers, opening the gates to allow the RED BIRD to enter the lock. Captain Jim was steering the boat with his long pole, so he would not damage the lock walls with his craft. In a short while they had passed safely through the lock.

Andy was happy to have passed through his first lock in safety, but the horses had performed their task without so much as a word from him. When it was almost dusk they came into a town.

"That's Covington, son."

As they passed along the planked run and the warehouses, they saw several boats tied up for the night. The few loiterers on the run had a friendly word of greeting for the captain of the RED BIRD. Andy was very tired, though he would never have admitted it, for he had been working since the dawn.



Captain Jim must have noticed that the boy's feet were dragging, for just as they came to the last quay in Covington, he called out,

"We're tying up here, Andy. Pull in your rope and tie up the horses. We'll grain 'em here and have a snack of supper ourselves."

Andy pulled in the rope and coiled it. Then he made sure that the bay team was securely tied and walked back to the stalls on the boat to get the grain for the horses.

"Well, how goes it, Andy?" asked Captain Jim a little later as he and Andy rested in the cabin after their supper.

"I like it, Cap'n Jim. Tomorrow I'll do better along the towpath."

Supper over, they climbed into their bunks and the last sound that Andy heard was the lapping of the water against the sides of the boat.

The next morning he was awakened by the clattering of the horses' feet upon the deck of the RED BIRD. He scrambled into his clothes and up the cabin hatchway, to find Captain Jim just driving the big, black team off of the boat to change places with Queen and Bess. It was very damp and cool and

a thick mist hung over the canal and muddy towpath.

It was a typical foggy morning of late September and as they moved out into the country, they heard the early twittering of flocks of birds, and now and then the plop of a muskrat as it dived into the canal. Andy stamped his feet on the hard path. His legs were stiff and sore, as he was not used to such continuous walking.

Slowly, as the mist cleared and the sun broke through the clouds, Andy could make out the occasional farmhouses which bordered the canal. By this time they had passed through the little village of Portland, but very few residents were astir at this early hour. The boy had to set a faster pace this morning, for the big blacks kept up a brisk trot. King and Duke were a much better team and they were beautifully matched. His father would have been proud to own such horses. After a while Andy saw they were approaching a town.

“That’s Williamsport down there,” called Captain Pride. “We’ll go through several towns today.”

Andy replied that he would enjoy that, but his voice was broken by the morning wind. At noon they tied up at Independence for a little while, and

changed horses, putting the blacks again in the stalls on the boat.

As they were eating their dinner, Captain Jim looked down at Andy's bare feet. "You'll have to have a pair of boots, lad. You can't walk the towpath barefooted, or you'll have very sore feet."

"I had a pair of shoes at the Mill, but I didn't think to wear them yesterday."

"I'll buy you a pair in Lafayette, if we arrive there in time this afternoon. There aren't many locks to take our time until we get into Wabash County, and I'll take my turn on the towpath this afternoon. You can try my job at the sweep."

After dinner they began the haul again, and the bays, refreshed by their morning ride in the stalls, made better time on the path than they had the preceding afternoon. From his place behind the stalls, Andy could get a view of the Indiana countryside. Small, neat houses dotted the landscape on either side of the water.

The canallers passed two feeders of the canal, which gleamed and sparkled as they wound westward. A gaily painted packet with a black and red underbody passed them, bound for Toledo. It had



a white upper cabin which boasted many little windows decorated with flaming red curtains and green shutters. Andy could hear singing and laughter from within the packet, and the passengers sitting on the deck called out to him in friendly greeting.

Now and then they met freighters coming down the canal, and here and there were shanty boats tied up, their mules cropping the grass lazily. On one of these boats Andy saw some children playing about, while their mother was bent over a tub, doing the weekly wash. What fun, he thought, to be living on the canal!

“Listen, Andy!” called Captain Pride late in the afternoon. “Hear the horns? They’re blowin’ in the basin at Lafayette.”

As they rounded a bend in the canal, they entered the basin which was lined with warehouses and docks. As far as Andy could see there were boats of every kind and color, some of them moving and shrieking their horns, while others rode at their moorings along the quay.

“She’s quite a town, Lafayette is. Most ten thousand people here. Just look yonder at that hitch yard, Andy. Not a single space left to hitch a horse



*A packet passed them, bound for Toledo*





and it's getting late in the day, too. There's been a sight of business ever since the canal was dug."

Andy did not reply but his eyes were round with excitement. He had never seen such a crowd of people in all his life.

"We'll try to find a place to tie up for the night, Andy. I want to get your boots, you know."

As they nosed their way slowly along between the boats, it looked as if they would have to go on through the town, but at the end of the long row of warehouses they found a space at the last quay.

"Unhitch the bays, Andy. I want to take them to be shod. There's a good blacksmith here and Queen'll be lame, if I let her walk another day without shoes. Same as you, son."

Andy looked at his swollen, aching feet and wondered if he would be able to pull boots over them. He drew in the towline and unhitched the bay team. With the horses picking their way between piles of freight on the planked run, Andy and Captain Pride made slow progress back to town to the blacksmith shop. They left Queen and Bess to be shod and on a street a few blocks removed from the canal they found a cobbler's shop.

The shop was empty, but as they entered a bell attached to the door tinkled loudly, bringing the cobbler from the back of his shop.

“What can I do for you today?” asked the little old German cobbler.

“Boots for the boy,” replied Captain Jim.

“Boots? Yes, I have the very thing for him. He walks the towpath, *ja*? He will need stout ones.” The cobbler took a pair of cowhide boots from a high shelf above the cobbler’s bench. “I think these will suit, *ja*.”

Andy gazed in mute admiration at the handsome boots which laced up the side and shone so that he could see his face in them.

“Try them on, Andy,” suggested Captain Jim.

Andy pulled and tugged and finally succeeded in getting his swollen feet into them. “They fit fine, Cap’n.”

Captain Pride turned to the cobbler. “How much are they?”

“Five dollars. And cheap, too, for such material and I made them myself.”

Five dollars! Andy gasped. Half a month’s wages for a pair of boots.

“Very well. I’ll take them.” Captain Pride counted out the money from his wallet. “Do you want to wear them, Andy?”

Andy hesitated, for pride of possession almost overcame the aching of his feet, but finally he said, “I—I’d rather not, sir.”

“Well, we’ll wrap them up then. You go back to the blacksmith’s forge and get the horses when they’re ready. Take ’em to the boat and I’ll be along presently. I want to go to the barber shop.”

The blacksmith was just beginning to shoe Bess when Andy arrived at his shop. Queen stood stiffly on her new shoes just as Andy had done in the cobbler’s shop.

“New on the canal, ain’t you, boy?” asked the blacksmith.

“Yes, sir.”

“Like it?”

“Oh yes, sir, I do.”

“Well, Cap’n Pride’s a powerful fine fellow to haul with. Thar ain’t no better man on the hull canal. You’re lucky to fall in with him.”

Andy hoped the man would tell him more about Captain Pride, but just then another customer en-



gaged his attention and the conversation was ended.

It was almost dark when Andy drove the team along the planked run toward the RED BIRD. Flickering lights gleamed at intervals from the lanterns set in posts along the run. Andy noticed that most of the boats had gone from the quay where Captain Pride's craft was moored. Just as he passed the last elevator, three ragged boys came around from behind it. Andy paid no attention to them until the largest boy called out to him in a taunting voice.

"Where'd you pick up the flea-bitten nags?"

Andy did not reply, but continued walking behind the horses. The boys fell in step with him and one of them said, "Ain't never seen you before. Must be new on the towpath. Who'd you haul with?"

"Cap'n Pride." Andy approached the RED BIRD and started to pick up the harness.

"Huh! So that's your old tub. I'll bet it leaks. Well, if your cap'n ain't more of a man than his pile of driftwood is a boat, he ain't much."

Andy could feel the blood rushing to his neck and face, for he wanted to hit this insolent taunting boy full in the face.

"Cap'n Pride's a fine man, the finest on the canal."

Andy then tied the horses and started to walk up the plank to the deck to wait for Captain Jim.

The smallest of the boys tripped him and threw him headlong back on the run. The other boys laughed uproariously.

“Awkward, ain’t you? Kind-a match your old tub. What you haulin’?”

Andy picked himself up, but he was very angry and if the boys could have seen his face clearly, they would have seen a grim twist to his mouth as he replied, “Ashes.”

“Humph! You better mind out or somebody’ll cut up your old ashbin for kindling. Them horses look like they belonged to some thievin’ horse trader.”

If the boys had been baiting Andy for a fight, they accomplished their purpose, for suddenly he drove his fist straight into the tallest boy’s face. Taken by surprise, the boy sprawled to the ground, but as quickly, the other two attacked Andy, and in a jiffy he was the center of a three-cornered attack. He fought valiantly, delivering telling punches, whenever he could swing an arm free from the *melée* of bodies. He was no match, though, for the three boys as large as himself, and suddenly receiving a crushing blow

on his jaw, he fell headlong into the shallow canal.

The three urchins did not get off easily either, for there was a sound of pain as the three of them hurried away in the darkness.

Andy pulled himself out of the water. He was very cold and his jaw hurt terribly. Suddenly he remembered his precious new boots. He began searching for them, fearing they had dropped into the canal, but after a little while he found them unharmed on the gangplank. He went down into the cabin, dreading to meet Captain Jim, but the captain had not yet returned. He took off his wet clothes and hung them in front of the fire. Then he wrapped himself in a blanket and crept into his bunk.

It was there that Captain Pride found him half an hour later.

“Hello, Andy. Why, what’s the matter?” Captain Pride poked up the fire and turned to the boy. “What happened?”

“I got wet.”

Captain Jim laughed. “Was it so dark that you fell off of the gangplank into the canal?”

“Well, kind of—”

“Andy, your eye, Andy. It’s swollen shut and



your mouth's bleeding badly. Did someone slug you?"

"Yeah, but I slugged 'em first."

"You were in a fight then?" queried Captain Jim as he began to prepare their supper.

"Yes, sir, and I'd 'a' won, too, but there were three of them." Then Andy related his experience. "But Cap'n Jim, they said your boat was an old tub, and that you—you couldn't be much either."

Captain Pride did not reply at once but went on frying the chops which he had purchased in town. "Well, Andy," he began at last, "the boat is an old tub. The boys were right. But fighting isn't always the best way to settle an argument. You're new to the canal. There's a deal of fighting on it for one reason or another. The boys probably baited you for the fun of it."

"But the RED BIRD is a fine boat and nobody is going to say such things about you to me."

"I'm right proud of your defense, lad, but try laughing it off the next time instead of fighting. I guess it was your Irish blood which got the best of you. The boat isn't much and I hope to get another one some day."

"They said Queen and Bess were old nags. Of

course I knew they weren't A-1 horses, but—they said you'd gotten them from some thieving horse trader, and nobody's goin' to tell me that horse traders are thieves."

"I'm afraid you're wrong there, Andy. Horse traders are usually a thieving class."

Andy flushed even above the swelling of his injured eye. "But, sir, they aren't. My—my father is a horse trader."

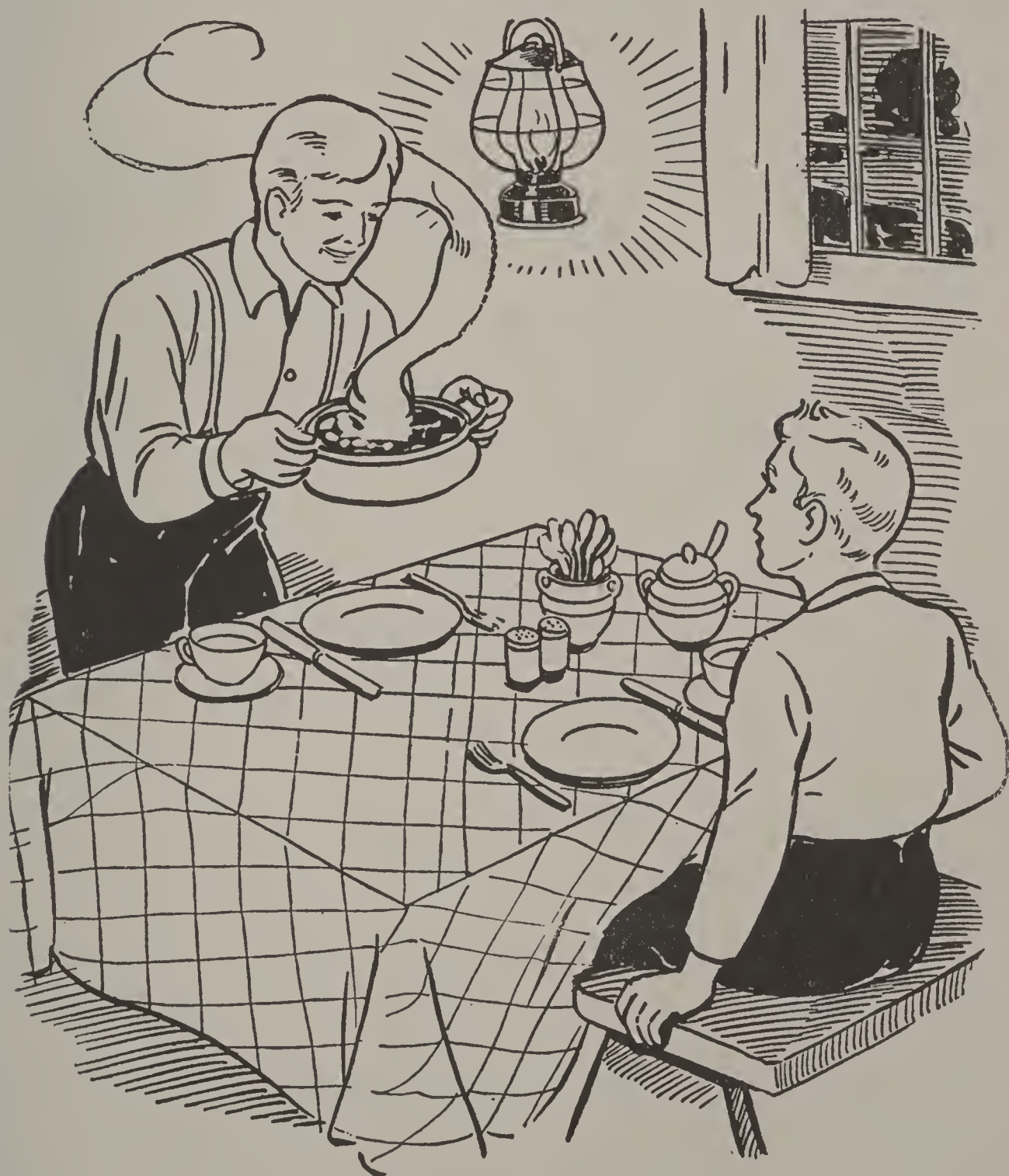
"Your father! Why I thought he was—you said you were an orphan."

"I am an orphan, Cap'n, in a way. You see my father didn't come back."

Then Andy told Captain Pride of his life touring the country with his parents, of his fear of the workhouse and the Musk's kindness to him. "But my father is no thief. He's upright and honorable."

Captain Jim laid the supper on the table. "Come and eat, lad. A little victuals under your belt will fix you up in no time. I don't doubt your word, but horse traders as a general rule don't have a good reputation. I believe your father was honest and maybe he's run amuck of some thievin' gang. I don't believe a common trader could have a boy like you.

We'll keep our eyes open and our ears to the ground and perhaps we'll get some news of him along the canal. Meanwhile you have to eat and then to bed."







#### IV

### THE STRANGE PASSENGER

Andy was awakened the next morning by Captain Jim's hand upon his shoulder.

"Hustle out, Andy. We've lots of hauling today. How is your eye?"

Andy sat up sleepily on the side of his bunk, while Captain Pride inspected his eye.

"H'm. Looks better, lad. Remember to save the fists after this and keep your temper. Not but what

a fight's the only thing sometimes, but take a right smart first, boy. Drive out King and Duke this morning, for I want to make time today."

Andy picked up his clothes which were now thoroughly dry. In a few minutes he was out on deck and hurrying to the stalls to feed the horses. It didn't take long to rub them down so that their black coats shone in the early morning sun. The horses stepped briskly off the gangplank and started pulling their load with great energy.

In rounding the first bend of the canal, Andy met a swaggering driver in a slouch hat and very high topboots. Andy was proud of his own new boots and hoped that the man would notice them, but he had no time to exhibit them properly, for he had to watch the towropes and pass over the other towline in safety.

"We'll be comin' to a weighlock shortly, Andy," called Captain Jim, when the downstream freighter had disappeared. "There's about six locks to go through in this county, so we may not make as good time as yistiddy. You see it's two hundred and forty-two miles from Lafayette to Toledo. The record run is two days and eight hours. Of course that's for a

packet boat that makes about ninety miles a day. We got to make at least fifty today.”

When they arrived at the weighlock they had to wait for a few minutes, as there were two boats ahead of them. The boat in the weighlock lay in an empty trough, on a ribbed rack. Suddenly the lock tender slammed a lever, the water came sucking in, and the boat being weighed rose to the canal level, the gates opened, the horses took up the slack and the boat slid through into the other side of the canal.

“Next,” shouted the lock tender.

The boat in front of the RED BIRD entered the trough. Captain Pride seized his pole and made ready to swing his boat into the lock.

“Next.”

The RED BIRD eased carefully into the lock.

“Boat number and cargo?” called the tender.

“Fifty-six. RED BIRD. Toledo. Ashes for Toledo. Grist, pork and potatoes for Defiance delivery,” called Captain Pride as he jumped from the boat to enter the lock office to pay the toll charges.

“Scads of produce!” snorted the lock tender. “Mind out you don’t hit them lock walls,” he cautioned as Andy urged the horses forward.



With the weighlock behind them the horses picked up speed and started at a brisk trot. In his new shoes, Andy was pushed to keep up with them. The traffic grew heavier as they traveled northward.

“Look, Andy, yonder,” called Captain Jim, pointing up the canal. “Here comes the most popular boat on the Wabash and Erie. It’s the SILVER BELL.”

Andy gazed eagerly at the packet which was approaching them. It was drawn by three large, gray mules, each wearing a tinkling silver bell.

“Gosh!” muttered Andy.

“Look at that harness, lad. It’s real silver-mounted. And that boat’s the fastest on the line. There’s five men in the crew on that boat.”

“Five!” ejaculated Andy. “What do they do?”

“You see the boat runs day and night, so they hev two drivers, two steersmen and a cook. Sometimes they’s as many as sixty people on that boat.”

“I’ll bet it costs a lot of money to ride on that boat.”

“No, Andy, not any more than on the other packets, but you have to be there early in order to get a ticket. That boat’s sort of a pet of the line.”

The deck of the SILVER BELL was crowded with

passengers. Most of them were in gay spirits, laughing or singing, and Andy could hear the strains of a harmonica. They were all dressed in the height of fashion, or so it seemed to Andy, and they represented the rich trade of the canal. One man among the passengers on deck attracted Andy's attention above all the rest. He was standing near the edge of the deck, gesturing toward the RED BIRD with a half-smoked black cigar.

The stranger wore a very tall beaver hat, which Andy figured must have cost a small fortune. His trousers were very tight and cut in the latest European style. Although the weather was still mild, he wore a stylish, long-skirted topcoat, over the top of which flowed a beautiful green silk cravat. Andy was much taken with this costume, for he had not seen such a dandy since the time his father had taken him to some harness shows in Virginia. But as his glance shifted to the man's face, he was disappointed, for his close-set eyes looked evil and his thick jowls and puffy eyelids indicated dissipation.

Andy wondered if Captain Pride had noticed this man among the passengers, but as he looked back, he saw that his captain was too engrossed in conversa-

tion with the captain of the SILVER BELL to notice any deck passengers.

During the rest of the morning they met nothing unusual, but by noon they had nosed in and out of the basin at Delphi.

“We’re making good time, Andy,” said Captain Jim, when they changed horses at noon. “I’d kind-a like to make Logansport tonight, but we’ll have to keep pushin’ right along. You take the sweep now, ’cause I reckon your feet are a bit tired in the new boots.”

Andy looked at his boots with great pride.

“Oh they’re all right, Captain. I could walk all afternoon if you’d say the word.” But as Andy took his place on the boat he eased his feet out of them and set them on the cabin roof. His feet were tired after all.

Along toward dusk they tied up the boat at the first quay in Logansport, next to one of the stables which kept the horses for the changes of the fast packet lines. It wasn’t a very favorable place to spend the night, but neither Andy nor his captain were bothered by the odor of the stable, for they were tired and glad to crawl into their bunks.



The next morning they were threading their way through the crowded basin of the town before any of the other boatmen were astir. The canal wound through the center of the settlement, but it was deserted, for it was too early for business to be under way.

“We want to make Fort Wayne today, lad, so step old Queen and Bess as lively as you can,” ordered Captain Pride.

Andy obediently urged on the horses and the bays stepped out at a lively trot. As they came even with the last warehouse, a man ran around the corner of it, waving and calling to them.

“Hey there, Captain. RED BIRD. Wait a minute.”

He bore quickly down upon them and Andy noticed, with surprise, that it was the same stylishly dressed man whom he had noticed on the deck of the SILVER BELL. His trousers were very dusty and he was quite breathless from running. Unconsciously Andy slackened the team, as Captain Pride called back:

“What do you want?”

“Take me with you. I missed the last packet.”

The man's cravat was awry and he mopped his perspiring face vigorously.

Obediently Andy brought the horses to a standstill, but he noticed that Captain Jim made no move to take the man on board.

"I've no room for passengers. This here's a freighter. Another packet'll be along directly."

"Not for two hours anyway. I've got to make Fort Wayne today. Take me on and I'll make it worth your while." The man produced a roll of bills and offered one to Captain Jim. "Come, now, take me on, that's a good fellow."

Grumblingly Captain Pride threw down the gangplank and the stranger climbed quickly to the deck.

"Thank you, Cap'n. Now, if your driver will lay on those horses, I'll be much obliged."

Andy resumed his driving and they started forth into the open country. From time to time Andy glanced back at the man who was standing by Captain Jim at the back of the cabin. He wondered what had brought the man back to Logansport and why he was so anxious to get to Fort Wayne that he could not wait for more comfortable quarters on the packet.

At noon they tied up for dinner and Andy changed teams, bringing out the blacks to the towpath. At the table the stranger became more talkative.

“ ’Spose I kind-a surprised you being about so early, but I couldn't sleep in that tavern back there. It was noisy and filthy, too. I just missed the COMET before daybreak and there hadn't been a packet along since.”

Captain Jim did not reply, but Andy noticed that he was eyeing his guest curiously.

“That's a splendid pair of blacks the boy just brought out, Captain. We ought to make better time after lunch with them hauling, oughtn't we?”

“Yes, they are better than my bays,” admitted the captain.

“I noticed that smaller mare was a windsucker. That's bad for hauling. I know where you can get a better team in Logansport, cheap, too. The fellow who owns them wants to sell pretty bad. Needs the money, so he'll let the team go cheap. Would you be interested?”

“No,” returned Captain Pride.

When the captain took his turn on the towpath the man began talking to Andy.





*The man began talking to Andy*



“I see you know a lot about horses, boy. You managed that team well this morning.”

Andy glowed with pride. “Thank you, sir. I like horses.”

“You—you wouldn’t be looking for a better job, would you?”

“What do you mean?”

“Not a haulin’ job, but work with horses. I need a smart boy like you. I—well, I’m a buyer along the canal, deal in horses, and I could use a boy that knows horses.”

For some unaccountable reason Andy resented this offer, resented its being made behind Captain Jim’s back, but he tried not to show it.

“I, I don’t think so, sir. You see I hired out to Captain Pride for the rest of the season and want to keep my word. Are you a horse trader?”

“Well, not exactly. I buy horses, but I’m not a common trader. My business is bigger than that. Well, what’s your word to the captain of this tub, if you can better yourself? How much do you get for drivin’? Not more than ten dollars, I’ll warrant.”

“Ten dollars and my keep. But I’m satisfied.”

“How would twenty dollars sound to you?”



Andy whistled softly. Twenty dollars! It was an amazing amount. He glanced toward Captain Jim who was plodding along ahead of the boat, urging the horses to their topmost speed. Then he turned to his strange companion.

“No, I don’t want the job. Cap’n Jim needs me here.”

“Well boy, you’ll learn you have to look out for yourself in this world. It’s an opportunity. Better think it over.”

“I’m content,” returned Andy. “You say you deal in horses, have you ever met Matthew Burke?”

“Matthew Burke? Why he—no, I’ve never met him. Must not have been much of a trader,” snapped the man.

“Oh, but he was, sir. He traded in fine horses, thoroughbred race horses, I mean.”

The stranger glanced quickly at Andy and spoke in a sharp tone, “Look here, boy, where did you know Matthew Burke?”

Something in the man’s voice made Andy feel cautious. “Well, it was somewhere in Indiana. I don’t know exactly.”

The man started chewing on one of his long black

cigars and stared at the landscape. "Say, do you know where we are along this canal? Anywhere near Fort Wayne?"

"I don't know, sir. I'll ask Cap'n Jim."

"No, don't bother."

In the late afternoon they changed horses and tasks after passing through Huntington. Andy was glad to take his place on the towpath, for since mentioning his father, he noticed the stranger maintained a grumpy silence, and had retired to the cabin.

"I don't believe we can make Fort Wayne tonight, Andy," said Captain Jim as he stepped upon the deck of the RED BIRD.

"What's that?" called their guest, as he thrust his head out of the cabin door. "Not make Fort Wayne tonight?"

"I'm afraid not. I've pushed the horses hard all afternoon, but we freighters can't fly, you know."

"But I paid you to get me to Fort Wayne. I've got to make it."

"Yes sir, you did, but I told you to wait for a packet. They change horses oftener and they're built for more speed. We'll get you as close as we can, but I'm not going to take this boat in the aqueduct

down there after night. It ain't safe without lights."

The man uttered a string of oaths the like of which Andy had never heard. "I might as well walk as ride on this tub," he said.

"You're welcome to walk, sir," replied Captain Pride good-naturedly. "Just follow the towpath and you can't miss it."

Andy covered his mouth to hide a smile at Captain Jim's buffoonery.

The horse dealer did not reply but turned sourly and retreated into the cabin.

"Andy, lay on the horses and we'll haul until after dark and then tie up some place this side of Fort Wayne."

"All right, Cap'n Jim."

Andy walked along deep in thought while he urged the team to greater speed. He felt more comfortable out on the towpath with the horses than on the boat with the cross stranger. Why had this man offered him such an unheard of sum as twenty dollars? Why didn't he ride in a packet as he had done yesterday? And what did he know about Matthew Burke? Andy was convinced that he did know about his father, for he had started to talk about him and



then suddenly changed his mind. Could his father have suffered some misfortune because of this man? Andy hadn't liked the stranger's appearance for all his fine clothes, and now the boy was definitely committed against him.

It grew very dark and Andy could scarcely see the towpath ahead. Unconsciously he slackened the speed of the horses. Still Captain Jim did not give the order to tie up for the night. The boy was very tired and his feet ached in his new boots. How far was Fort Wayne? He was hungry too, when he realized he had eaten no supper. After a while the moon rose and its beams filtering through the trees, lighted the towpath a little.

"Andy, we're tying up here," called Captain Jim after they had rounded a small bend in the canal.

Andy quickly tied the horses to some projecting roots and drew in the tow line. Then he made his way to the stalls, and with the aid of a flickering lantern, measured out enough grain for the teams. This done, he went to the cabin where Captain Pride was already laying out their supper. The stranger was sitting on a chair with his head drooped forward in his hands.

“How far are we from Fort Wayne, now?” he asked.

“Not so far,” replied Captain Jim cheerfully. “We’ll be there early in the morning.”

“But how far?” insisted the man.

“Well as near as I can figure, it must be about ten miles.”

“Why didn’t you say so? This is where I’ll get off.” The man bounded up from the chair and started up the cabin steps.

“Better stay the night with us. We can put you up. You may get lost trying to make it tonight and besides you paid me to get you to Fort Wayne. Andy can sleep in the stalls, can’t you, Andy?”

“Yes sir.”

“I told you I had to make the town tonight,” replied the horse dealer. “I’m off and I’ll make it all right. I know the country around here fairly well.” The stranger was on the deck and running down the gang plank before Captain Pride could reply.

Andy followed him and saw him disappearing on the towpath toward Fort Wayne.

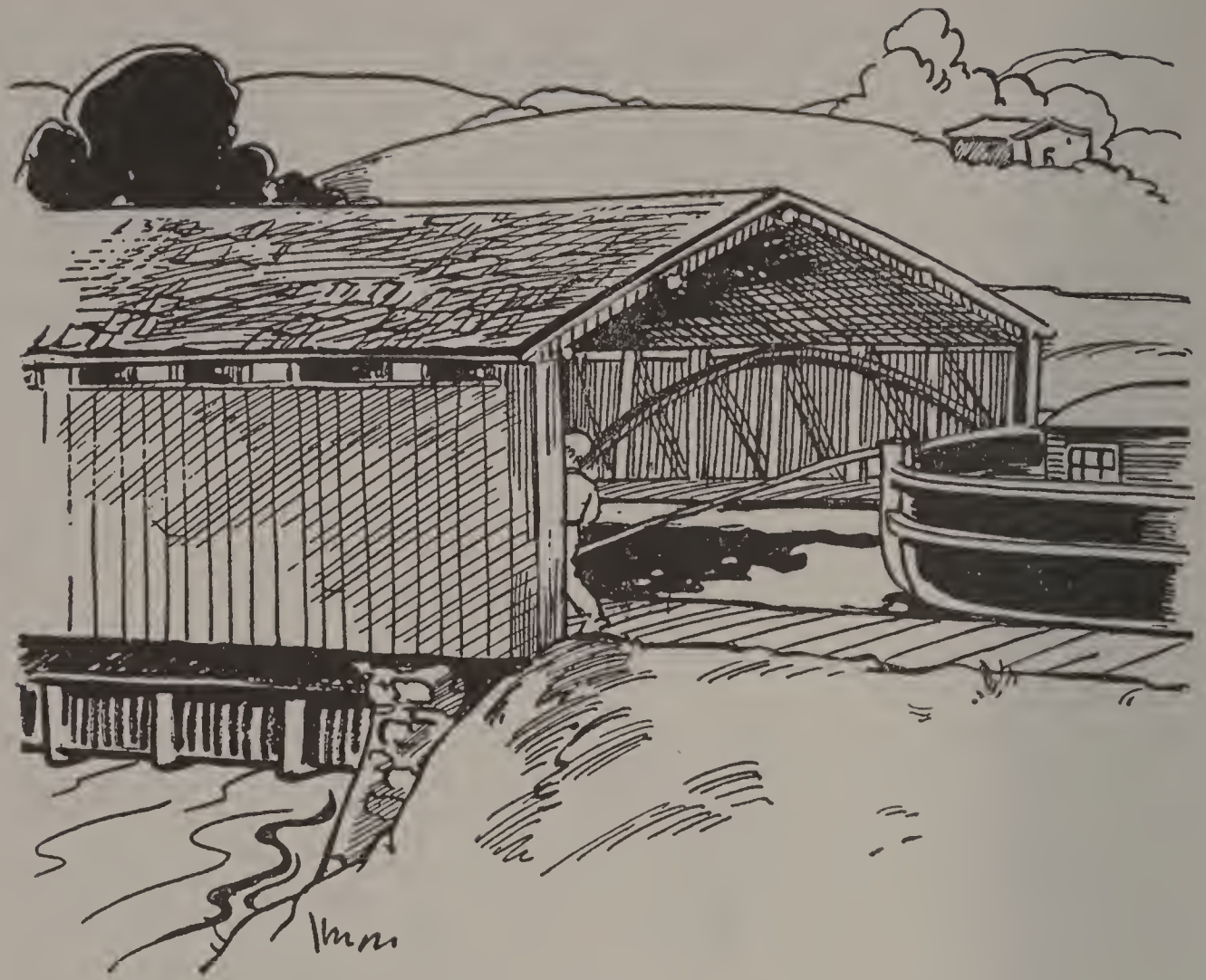
“What do you make of him, Cap’n Jim?” asked Andy when he returned to the cabin.

“I don’t know, son, but he’s up to no good. He’s had the jumpin’ jitters for the last hour in here. Kept comin’ up the steps and askin’ where we wuz. I had a notion to tell him on the Wabash and Erie Canal. I don’t like his looks nor his kind.”

“I don’t either,” said Andy, but he did not mention the man’s offer of work nor his peculiar actions when Matthew Burke was mentioned.







V

## TOLEDO HAUL

“Andy, we have an aqueduct to cross this morning, but you won’t have no trouble at all with it. Take Duke and King out to the towpath. They never shy at anything.”

“What is an aqueduct, Captain Jim?”

“Well there’s one built across the St. Mary’s River at Fort Wayne. It looks like a covered bridge, only instead of having a floor in the center, the canal runs through it, or rather it’s a part of the river. The

towpath is built of wood on the side and looks like a wide sidewalk. There's no danger in crossing it, unless the horses get frightened by the wooden siding and plunge into the water. Sometimes the wooden floor rots out pretty fast and horses have been known to plunge through the wooden towpath. This aqueduct is safe though, 'cause I wuz over it not three weeks ago."

"Do we pay a toll for it?"

"Not for this one across St. Mary's, but it costs the company a powerful sight to keep the aqueducts in repair. Repairin' the canal, the bridges and such, purty nigh eats up all the profits. There'll be several bridges to dodge too, but you just have to duck if you are standin' behind the cabin."

After about two hours of walking along the wooded towpath, they came in sight of Fort Wayne. Andy saw what must be the aqueduct, for it looked like the covered bridge which he had crossed with Mrs. Musk on the way to Lodi. He tightened his hold on the reins and went bravely forward to take the horses safely through the aqueduct.

"There ain't no boys swimmin' today," said Captain Jim as they came to the entrance. "Last time I

come through, you could hardly get along for dodgin' the swimmers. The towpath makes a fine diving platform. Careful, son. The horses know what to do."

The horses stepped firmly upon the raised wooden towpath and trotted along peaceably enough, but Andy walked a bit fearfully, for he did not want to fail in this new test of his ability to haul with Captain Pride. The captain was steering the boat expertly, so it would not bump the wooden siding of the aqueduct.

In a few minutes they were safely across St. Mary's River and rounded the bend in the canal, approaching the west end of the town. With the Empire Mill behind them they found themselves in the midst of many boats.

In the large space between the canal and the buildings which fronted on Columbia Street was a large area which Captain Jim called the "Dock." Here the boats were discharging freight and taking on new loads. Andy saw that Fort Wayne was even larger than Lafayette and the streets were as crowded as the dock.

They made their way along between the boats which were already tied up and those which were



searching for a place to unload. The odor of sizzling bacon and hot bread, mixed with the appetizing flavor of coffee coming from the eating houses on the other side of the canal, made Andy's mouth water, even though he had eaten his breakfast only about two hours previously.

"We'll tie up along here, Andy, and get ourselves a real breakfast. I'm kind-a tired eatin' my own cooking. It doesn't smell as savory as the food does here."

They found a vacant place near the east end of the town and then made their way to a tavern on the first street back from the planked run. The tavern was crowded and Andy looked closely at the men there to see if he could see their strange passenger of the day before, but he was not in the crowd gathered there.

After a breakfast of potatoes, eggs, fresh bread, and coffee, they started back to the RED BIRD, but before they reached it, they saw a gaily painted craft nosing its way into town.

"Look, Captain Jim. Look at that boat."

"Why Andy, that's the LAUGHING LOU. She's the circus boat, and I'll warrant there's going to be a performance here this afternoon."

“A circus boat! Do they have circuses on the canal?”

“Yes indeed, boy. There isn’t much of anything that the old Wabash and Erie doesn’t support. Haven’t you ever seen a circus?”

“Yes, I have. One time I went with my father and mother, but I don’t remember much about it, for I was just a little boy.”

“Well haul or no haul, we’ll have to stay over and see the show. I kind-a like a circus myself.”

Then Captain Pride and Andy joined the throng which was now swarming down on the run to welcome the LAUGHING LOU. This circus boat belonged to Dr. Quackenbush, who was known the length of the Wabash and Erie for his famous medicine, the “Quackenbush Elixir,” a cure-all for every ailment; and his equally famous circus troupe which gave performances of great daring all along the canal.

As soon as the boat was tied up, Dr. Quackenbush, wearing a long frock coat and a bushy beard, appeared from his cabin carrying a large satchel and a small table. He was followed by a circus clown who delighted the crowd with acrobatic stunts, while the doctor set up his table on the planked run and ar-

ranged the bottles of his famous Elixir for display. After the clown had turned cartwheels and somersaults and had given candy to the children, Dr. Quackenbush began selling his medicine and disposed of a goodly number of bottles.

The first performance of the circus troupe was scheduled for eleven o'clock, but long before that hour, the LAUGHING LOU was crowded with spectators, all hungry to see the sword swallower, the bearded lady and the wonderful trick horse. Captain Pride and Andy were fortunate enough to secure a front seat for the show.

The first act was offered by an acrobatic troupe, led by the clown, who did wonderful feats on ladders and tight ropes. The sword swallower was a mystery to Andy, for he couldn't quite figure how this man was able to swallow such a long sword. The crowning act of the entire show was the amazing performance of the equestrian and his educated horse. After Andy had watched the man balance himself on his head while the horse trotted in a circle and jumped through a burning hoop, he turned to Captain Jim.

"Captain Jim, I know that horse. I am sure he is the Ted that father had for a few weeks, two years



ago. The horse knows a lot of tricks, too, for I remember how much fun my father used to have putting him through his paces.”

“Are you sure he’s the same horse, lad?”

Andy stared at the horse again, as it was leaving the ring.

“Yes sir, I’m sure of it.”

“Then we’ll stay for a few minutes after the show and talk to Dr. Quackenbush.”

When the performance was concluded and the crowd had dispersed after buying more of the medicine, Captain Pride and Andy loitered on the deck.

“What can I do for you, my man?” asked Dr. Quackenbush. “Wouldn’t you like a bottle of my famous Elixir, only a dollar for the large size?”

“No, Doctor, I wanted to know about your trick horse Ted. Where did you buy him?”

“There isn’t another horse in the country like him and he isn’t for sale. I purchased him in the East.”

“Possibly from Matthew Burke?”

The doctor seemed surprised. “Well yes, I did, but how did you know?”

Captain Pride turned toward Andy. “This is his boy, Andy Burke. The lad recognized the horse.”

“Well, well. To tell the truth I’m a bit disappointed in the horse. Burke guaranteed the animal to be well-trained, but we haven’t been able to do much with him.”

“But he is, sir. Father used to make him do a great many tricks?”

“What’s that you say? Do you know how to put him through his paces?”

“I—I think I can. I’ll be glad to try.”

“You shall have the opportunity, my boy. I’ve been wanting to meet up with Matthew Burke. I didn’t think he’d misrepresent the animal, for I’ve always found him honest in his dealings. I’ll have the horse brought up from his stall.”

When the horse was again in the ring, Andy walked over to him and patted him gently for a few minutes. Then he swung lightly to his back, and touched him on the forelegs. The horse jumped and reared in a nervous fashion, but Andy kept on patting him and touched his forelegs again.

“Say your prayers, Ted, old boy,” coaxed Andy.

The horse then dropped to his knees and remained in this position until Andy touched him with the whip.

“Now Ted, you’ll do your dance, won’t you?”

Andy began to flick the whip very lightly across the horse’s back and Ted started a slow waltz.

“Bravo! Bravo!” cried Dr. Quackenbush, clapping his hands heartily. “It’s funny, lad, for I tried to make him do those tricks, but he wouldn’t move.”

Captain Pride did not say a word, but he gazed at the horse and its rider with great satisfaction. Andy Burke was a true son of a man who knew horses thoroughly.

Andy jumped lightly from Ted’s back, still holding the bridle. He walked up to his head and as he touched him lightly behind his ears, he coaxed, “Now Ted, lie down and go to sleep.”

The great horse immediately rolled over twice and then lay very still with his eyes closed, nor did he move until Andy gave him the signal.

When Andy had finished putting Ted through his act, Dr. Quackenbush smiled broadly.

“Boy, that was a great performance and now I can really advertise the animal as an educated horse. I can see that you know a great deal about horses. As a special gift from me I am going to present you with a bottle of my famous Elixir.”





*The horse jumped and reared*



“Thank you, sir. I’m glad I could help you.”

By mid-afternoon they were again on the towpath bound for Defiance where Mrs. Musk’s produce was to be delivered. Andy noticed that the canal widened considerably after leaving Fort Wayne. He judged that it was deeper too. As he trudged along the hard path he realized that this was no easy job, really much harder work than he had done at the Musk Mill, but more interesting too, for there was a constant change of scene and new people to be met along the way.

For two days they traveled as rapidly as possible, stopping only to change horses and to snatch hasty meals, but on the third morning they arrived in Defiance.

“Andy, you’ve a business deal on today,” said Captain Jim when they had breakfasted and grained the horses. “Mrs. Musk gave me charge of her produce, but you’re going to manage the delivery.”

“Do you think I can do it, sir?”

“Sure thing. I’ll find out how good you are in arithmetic,” chuckled Captain Pride. “First we’ll have to locate Mr. Best.” The captain fumbled in an old wallet for the paper which Mrs. Musk had



given him at Lodi. "Here it is. John Best, 18 Rumsey Street. That ought to be about three streets over from the run."

Andy was not long in finding Mr. Best.

"Yes sir, Mrs. Musk shipped me her crops last year," said Mr. Best, when Andy asked him about delivering his load. "Where's your boat, lad?"

"She's tied up at post number seventeen."

"Seventeen, you say? I'll send a team and wagon down and you can load it. It'll be there in a few minutes."

Andy hurried back to the RED BIRD and with Captain Pride's help began carrying the sacks of grist and pork from the hold to the run. Before they had finished, Mr. Best appeared with his wagon.

"How much do I owe you?" asked Mr. Best when the last sack was deposited in his wagon.

Andy figured for a few minutes and then handed Mr. Best the bill. The merchant checked it carefully, then took out his pocket book and counted out the money very slowly into Andy's hand.

"That's exactly what I make it, lad. You're right smart at figures. Wish I had a boy like you to help around my place."



Andy sat down on the run and worked over the price of the haul according to its weight. Finally he said, "Here's your share, sir." As he counted it out, he looked inquiringly at the captain. "Is that what you make it?"

"Just exactly. You air good at figures. From now on you can take care of the figurin' end of this haulin', for I never wuz good at arithmetic."

When Andy had stowed his wallet safely away he took up the reins and went trudging along the towpath again. The horses set a better pace, for their load was lightened considerably.

At last about noon of the next day they reached Toledo, the goal of their long haul. It did not take Captain Pride long to dispose of his forty barrels of ashes, but he was forced to spend some time looking for a return load.

"What do you want to haul, Captain Jim?" asked Andy as he walked along the main street at the captain's side.

"Anything I can get, lad. Can't be choosy when you have an old tub like mine."

They spent the better part of two days trying to find a load for the RED BIRD. Everyone along the



dock seemed to know Captain Pride, and favorably too, but all the loads seemed to have been contracted for at each warehouse. Finally when it looked as if they would have to make the return trip with an empty hold, Captain Pride found a load of stoves which he could haul.

Early the next morning Andy grained and watered the horses, choosing the blacks for the beginning of the return trip. He inspected the towline carefully for possible breaks. After he had satisfied himself that there were no weak places in the line, he drove the horses along the run to the warehouse where the stoves were waiting. It took the rest of the morning to load them, so it was noontime before they were ready to begin the long trudge back to Indiana.

“We’ll try to make a record trip, Andy, for it won’t be long now until bad weather sets in, and we’ll have to hole in for the winter,” said Captain Jim as he steered the boat away from the quay out into the canal.

“I’ll do my best, sir. The blacks pull as if the load’s heavy.”

As they passed the last warehouse and neared the end of the run, two women ran out from one of the

restaurants, waving and calling to them. At first Captain Pride paid them no heed, but the older woman waved her umbrella frantically at them.

“Captain. Captain Pride. RED BIRD. Stop, please. Take us with you.”

“Now how do they know me?” muttered Captain Jim. “I never laid eyes on them before.”

Andy didn't know whether it was the threatening umbrella or the pretty, anxious face of the young girl who trailed behind the older woman, which caused Captain Jim to signal him to stop the horses. As they drew up alongside, Andy saw that the younger was a very pretty girl, not many years older than he. The other woman was tall, angular and much older, and reminded him somehow of Mrs. Musk.

Captain Jim doffed his hat politely. “You were calling Captain Pride, ma'am?”

“Yes sir. You see we're in a terrible predicament. We missed the packet. You're going to Indiana, aren't you?”

“Yes ma'am, as far south as Lodi.”

“That's beyond Logansport, isn't it?”

“Yes ma'am.”

“I'm Miss Mattie Henderson and this young lady

is Molly Bradley. I'm to teach in Logansport and Miss Bradley is to take a school near there. Can't you take us with you? You see if we don't get started today, we'll be late for the opening of school."

Schoolmarms! Captain Pride scratched his head thoughtfully. "I'd like to accommodate you, ma'am, but you see this is a freight boat and I don't carry passengers."

"I know that," interrupted Miss Henderson impatiently, "but yours is the only boat we've seen today hauling west. I inquired about you and the restaurant keeper said you were an upstanding trustworthy man. He said we could depend on you."

Captain Jim blushed at her praise and the young lady flashed him a shy little smile. "But I have no place for ladies, ma'am."

"We can stay any place, sir. We won't be particular," put in Miss Henderson.

"Well, if you're willing to take what we have, I guess I can take you."

"Thank you so much. I knew you'd help us, for we can't stay here on the run. I'm glad to pay you the regular packet fare. Let's see, it's eight dollars to Logansport, isn't it?"



“No, it’s six dollars, but I can’t charge regular packet fare for a freight boat.”

“It’s a favor to us, so we’ll be glad to pay it, won’t we, Molly?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Wait just a minute, please. We left our carpet bags in the restaurant.” The two women hurried back to get their luggage.

Captain Pride put down the gangplank, muttering to himself all the while. “We’ll not make any time now, with two females on board. Andy, tie up the horses and get our belongings out of the cabin. It’s the stalls for us as far as Logansport.”





## VI

### ON TO LOGANSPORT

When Captain Jim led the ladies down the steep steps to the cabin, Miss Henderson looked about in pleased surprise.

“Why Captain Pride, this is a much better cabin than we had on the lake boat. You see it was so crowded that we had to sleep in the ladies’ salon with ten other women. We couldn’t step without falling over some one.” She put her carpet bag under

the lower bunk and turned to Miss Bradley. "Isn't it nice here, Molly?"

"Yes indeed, but we're crowding Captain Pride, I'm afraid."

"Not at all, ma'am. Andy and I'll bunk with the horses."

"The horses! Then we are taking your places."

"It's all right, ma'am. I've slept in worse beds and with worse companions. You just get settled and we'll be shoving off now."

Captain Jim returned to his position on the deck and ordered Andy to let out the tow line and start their trek toward Indiana. It was a beautiful day, and as they came into the timbered country, Andy was surprised to see how much the leaves had turned just in the two days they had spent in Toledo. The beautiful red oak and yellow maple branches stretched out in glorious colors in front of him. Now and then a few leaves drifted quietly down into the canal, making a variegated carpet just ahead of the boat.

Andy whistled merrily as he trudged along thinking of their strange new freight. He turned to the boat now and then and after a while saw that the



young lady had come up on deck and was talking to Captain Jim. A school teacher. Such a one his mother had probably been. He wondered if his mother had looked as young when she taught her first school. Toward evening as the wind began to blow chill, the young lady disappeared into the cabin, and Andy noticed that Captain Jim was singing softly as his gaze swept the horizon in front of him.

Finally he called to Andy to tie up for the night. Just as Andy drove the horses on to the boat, Miss Henderson came up on deck.

“Aren’t you two hungry? We have supper waiting and it’s getting late.”

Indeed the appetizing odor of chops and coffee came to them from the open door.

“That we are, ma’am,” replied Captain Jim, sniffing hungrily. “It’s a rare treat for us to have a taste of women’s cooking on our boat and it won’t go amiss.”

When Andy fed the horses, he drove Queen and Bess out of the stalls to the towpath, where he tied them up for the night, for there was not room for four horses and two men in the stalls.

Upon entering the cabin Andy found that he too

was very hungry, for something which Miss Molly was taking from a steaming kettle smelled exceedingly good.

"Sit here, boy," said Miss Henderson, pointing to one of the bunks. She and Captain Pride were occupying the only chairs which the cabin boasted. "By the way, what is your name?"

"Andy, ma'am. Andy Burke."

"Andrew. That's a good name for a boy. It tells me that you are Irish too, but I guessed as much from your blue eyes and pleasant smile."

"Apple dumplings!" cried Andy, as Miss Molly placed a big one in front of him. "I haven't tasted dumplings for a long time. My mother used to make such good ones."

"Yes, Andy, apple dumplings," smiled Molly Bradley. "You see we had a bag of apples and I hunted around and found some sugar and flour among your staples. I hope you like them."

"You'll find this cooking better than mine, Andy," laughed Captain Jim, as he took a second helping of fried potatoes. "You know I'm glad the ladies missed their packet. It's good to eat victuals that some one else has cooked."

“Perhaps we won’t inconvenience you so much then,” suggested Molly.

“Not at all, ma’am.”

“How soon do we reach Logansport?”

“Well let’s see, Miss Henderson. It’s about two days and a half to Fort Wayne and a day and a half from there to Logansport. You’ll be here nigh on to four days.”

“We’ll be in plenty of time, Molly.” Miss Henderson sighed happily. “And we’re much more comfortable here than in any packet.”

Their supper finished, Captain Jim and Andy went together to the stalls and curling up in the hay alongside of the black team, fell asleep.

The next morning Captain Pride took his turn on the towpath and Andy stood behind the cabin at the evener. The women tidied up the cabin after breakfast and then came up on deck to sit.

“Where do you live when the hauling stops, Andy?” asked Miss Henderson.

“Well, I—that is—I don’t know, ma’am. Last year I lived at the Musk Mill on Sugar Creek, but Captain Jim will decide what I’ll do this year.”

“When does the hauling stop, Andy?”



"I don't know, Miss Bradley. It all depends on the weather. When a heavy freeze comes, all hauling stops."

Andy felt panic-stricken for a moment. Where would he spend the winter? What if Captain Pride would not need him? He had not thought of the time when hauling would cease. Rather he had lived each day in contentment, for he had learned to adore and trust Captain Jim. But he still hoped for good news concerning his father.

"You'll be entering school late then," put in Miss Henderson.

"School? Oh ma'am, I've never been to school."

"Never been to school!" ejaculated Miss Henderson. "Then you can neither read nor write? What a pity?"

"Oh, yes, Miss, I can read. I've read several books. I can write and figure some."

"But how, where did you learn?"

"Why, my mother taught me. You see she used to be a teacher before she was married." Before Andy realized it, he had poured out the story of his parents to his sympathetic listeners.

"Andy, would you like to see some of my books?"

“Yes, Miss Molly, I would. Last year I kept a sort of school for the little Musk children.”

The women stayed on deck until nearly noon and when Andy took his turn on the towpath they went down into the cabin. As Andy trudged along, he decided he liked their passengers, especially Miss Molly. But he stood a little in awe of forbidding Miss Henderson.

Thus the four days of travel to Logansport passed all too quickly for Andy and Captain Jim. As they made their way slowly along the basin at Logansport, the two ladies stood on deck, anxiously scanning the crowd on the run.

“Uncle Mark Bradley was to meet me here,” explained Molly as she looked all along the dock for him. “He lives about ten miles from town.”

“We’ll find him if he’s here,” promised Captain Jim as he put out the gangplank at a quay near the center of the town. “Andy, tie up the horses and then you can look around a bit while I help Miss Bradley find her uncle.”

The two women preceded Captain Pride down the gangplank to the run and entered the first warehouse to inquire after Mark Bradley. Andy tied up the

horses and started to stroll along the run to the main street to have a look at the shops. He made his way carefully past the barrels and boxes which were piled on the run. When he reached the first street, he stopped to look in at a furniture shop. On one side of the store were rows of bureaus, chairs and bedsteads, and on the other was a cobbler's bench. An old man was bent low over his work, holding a boot in his hand.

As Andy walked on he saw a general store which had a fine display of cutlery in the window. He was particularly attracted to some knives there and wished that he had the price of one of them. Just as he started to turn back toward the RED BIRD, he saw a wooden Indian in front of a tobacconist's shop. It was a very lifelike Indian, so Andy walked over to examine it. He turned it around and saw that it was fastened to a post with a long rope.

"Hey there, boy! You let my Indian alone," cried the small Jewish proprietor, as he ran to the door of his shop.

"I was just looking at it, sir," replied Andy, startled by the harsh voice.

"All you boys think you have to throw my Indian







into the canal. It's a fine joke, bah! That's why I have it tied to my post with the rope."

Another man, evidently a customer, now strolled to the door of the shop.

"Why good morning, boy."

Andy glanced at this newcomer and recognized him as the strange passenger whom they had hauled toward Fort Wayne.

"Oh! How do you do, sir?"

"This boy won't bother your Indian, Levi," explained the stranger. "He's a driver for the RED BIRD. You are still in the hauling business, aren't you, lad?"

"Yes, sir. I must be going back too, for Captain Jim will be looking for me."

Andy started to walk in the direction of the boat, when the stranger fell in step beside him. He smiled affably as he said,

"You mustn't mind Levi, son. He's mighty fond of that Indian, for he brought it from New York when he set up his shop, and all the boys hereabouts like to tease him by throwing it into the canal."

"Thank you, sir, for speaking up for me. I didn't know why he was angry."



They were approaching the RED BIRD now and Andy saw that Captain Pride and Miss Molly were standing on the deck.

“I see you still have that handsome black team.” The man gestured toward the horses. “Mighty fine animals, those. Would your captain care to sell them?”

“I don’t know sir, but I don’t believe he would. He sets a great store by that team. I’ll run on deck and ask him though, if you like.”

“Don’t bother. They’re well kept and they ought to bring a good price in any market. You aren’t looking for another job are you? Say that place I offered you.”

“No sir, I’m not. I’m satisfied with the boat and Captain Jim.”

“What are you going to do this winter? Hauling will soon stop on the Wabash and Erie, you know.”

“I’m not sure, sir, but Captain Jim hasn’t said he won’t need me.”

“H’mn. Well I made you a good offer and a fellow has to look out for himself in this world,” said the man as he moved down the run and mingled with the crowd.

Although the stranger had spoken in his behalf, Andy again experienced the same feeling of antipathy and distrust for this man that he had felt on the former hauling trip. He hurried up to the deck of the RED BIRD where Captain Jim stood waiting.

“Oh, here you are, Andy. We must be off now.”

“Yes sir,” replied Andy, wondering why Miss Bradley was still with them.

“We couldn’t find Mark Bradley, but I found out where he lives. His farm borders the canal, about eight or nine miles south of here. When he didn’t find his niece on the packet, he went home. We’re taking her on to his place. Untie the horses and stretch out your tow rope.”

The horses took up the slack of the line and once again the RED BIRD started southwestward with its haul. It was getting along in the afternoon so Andy pushed the horses as fast as he dared. The wind was rising and the air carried a promise of rain. Finally when it was nearly dark, Captain Pride called to him.

“Whoa up, Andy! It ought to be along here somewhere. Is there a dock along the path?”

Andy peered along the towpath in front of him.

A few yards ahead he thought he saw a quay jutting out into the canal.

“Yes, Cap’n, I think there is just ahead.”

“Get along and find out. If it’s there, tie up while I investigate a little.”

Andy drove the horses carefully along to the dock. He tied them up and glancing off to the right, saw a light on a knoll which rose gently from the level of the canal. Captain Jim swung off of the RED BIRD and up to his side.

“I’m going up to that house to see if it’s the place, Andy. You stay on the boat with Miss Bradley.”

“Andy,” said Miss Bradley, as they watched Captain Jim walking up the hill, “you and Captain Jim have been so kind to me, I never shall forget you.”

“Aw, we didn’t do anything. I guess Captain Jim would help anybody in trouble.”

“What are you going to do this winter, Andy?”

“I don’t know, Miss. Whatever Captain Jim says. You see I haven’t any home unless I find my father. I hoped to hear something this haul, but no luck.”

“I think you should be in school this winter, Andy. I’ve been talking to Captain Pride about it. I wish you could come to my school. I’m to teach



near here, for my uncle got this school for me.”

“I’d like to, Miss Bradley, but I don’t know whether I’d fit in a school or not, for you see I ain’t never been.”

“Haven’t been, Andy, not ain’t. Captain Pride seemed to like the idea, so perhaps you may be able to attend my school. I hope so and I trust you hear some good news from your father.”

It grew dark, but after a while they heard a whistle and knew that Captain Jim was coming back to the boat. When he appeared there was some one with him.

“This is the right place, Miss Bradley, and here’s your uncle to fetch you to the farm.”

As he swung on to the boat he was followed by a large powerfully built man.

“Uncle Mark!” cried Molly Bradley as the big man seized her in a bear hug.

“Molly girl, you’re here at last. I sort of give you up ’til tomorrow, when you weren’t on the packet.”

“Captain Pride was kind enough to take us on at Toledo and he has been so helpful to us. It was much more comfortable here than on the lake boat.”

“Well, Captain Pride is known the hull length of

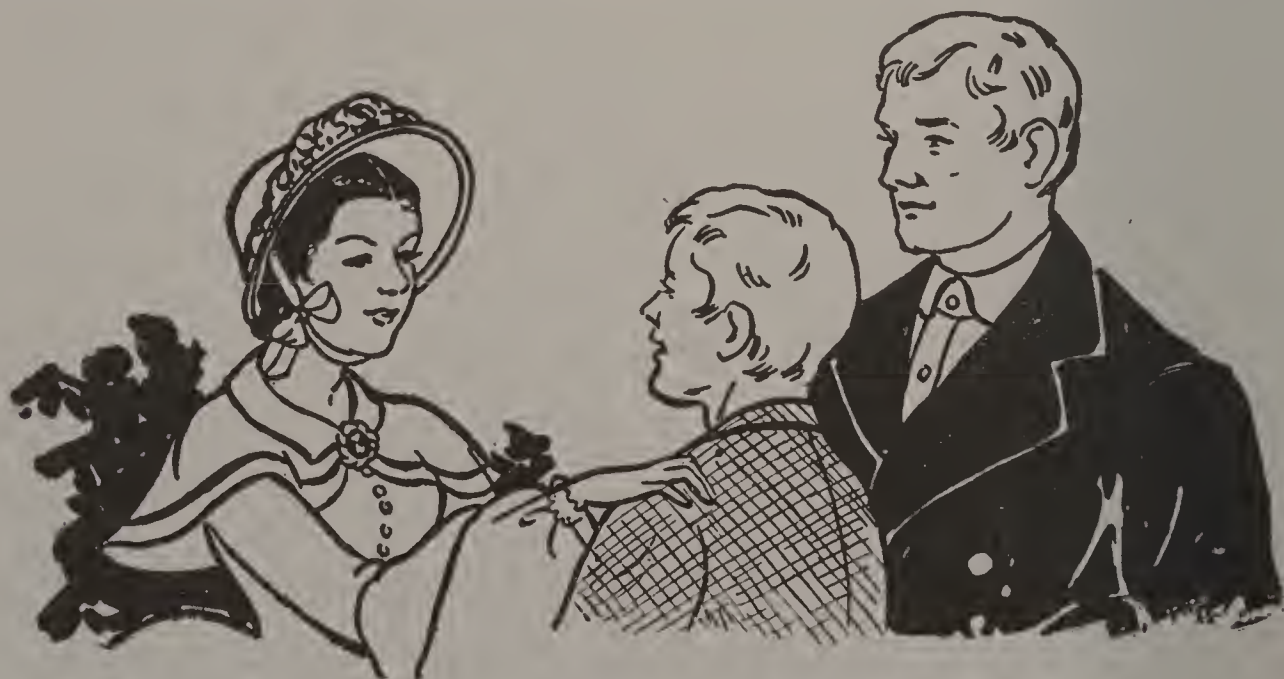
the canal as an upright man. You couldn't have chosen a better captain, Molly girl." He turned to Captain Jim. "Won't you come up and spend the night with us, Cap'n?"

"No thanks, sir, but if you don't mind, we'll stay tied up here at your dock until morning."

Molly Bradley extended her hand to him. "Thank you, Captain Pride, for all you have done. I hope to be seeing you soon again."

Captain Pride blushed through his heavy coat of tan, as he muttered awkwardly, "It was nothing, ma'am. I'll be hauling this way shortly and I'll hope to see you then. Good night."

Molly Bradley turned to Andy and put her hand upon his shoulder. "Don't forget about school, Andy, and see what Captain Jim thinks of the idea."





## VII

### A BIT OF NEWS

The next morning a cold autumn rain set in early. Andy went out on the towpath, walking with his head bent low in an effort to ward off the rain, as he plowed along southward behind Queen and Bess. It was very rough going, for the towpath soon became slippery and both he and the horses kept their footing with difficulty. The day was so dark and gray it was hard to see where the canal left off and



the sky began. The trees were losing their leaves rapidly now and many of them were quite bare.

After he had slipped along for about three hours he heard a halloo from Captain Jim.

“Halloo, Andy! Tie up the horses at the first tree or stump that’s suitable and come aboard.”

“Very well, sir.” Andy began to look about for a place to tie Queen and Bess.

There had been little or no traffic on the way and Andy had noticed that the boats which they had passed were all lying at their moorings. In his three hours’ walk he had not covered more than seven miles, but it seemed he had been walking all day, for he was very tired. The horses, too, walked with drooping heads and weary bodies.

After Andy tied up the horses, he hurried back to the deck of the RED BIRD, but Captain Jim had already disappeared inside the cabin.

“No more trudging today, Andy boy,” said Captain Jim, as he entered the cabin. “It’s no use, for we aren’t making any headway. We’ll just stay here until the rain let’s up a little. It may be three or four days, but that’s part of the game.”

“I couldn’t seem to get going, sir,” explained Andy

apologetically. "The towpath is so slippery that even Queen and Bess couldn't make it."

"So I noticed, lad."

"Hadn't I better bring them into the stalls? That rain is cold."

"Yes, I guess you'd better, for it's overnight here for us at least. I'll be getting our dinner while you're gone."

Andy struggled out to the slippery towpath again and drove the weary horses into their stalls. Then he rubbed them down and put out some fresh hay for both teams. When he returned to the cabin Captain Jim was flopping pancakes dexterously in an iron skillet.

"It's going to be flapjacks today, Andy, and they won't go amiss on such a morning. Take off your wet clothes and spread them in front of the fire."

Andy huddled in a blanket at the table after he had arranged his wet clothes to dry. "I am hungry, Cap'n, and I believe I did get cold and soaked."

They ate the cakes with great relish, covering them generously with sorghum molasses, which Captain Pride had among their staple groceries.

"Now Andy, I've sort of a notion what we'll do

this winter and I want to know what you think of my plan.”

“Yes, sir,” replied Andy eagerly, for he had been thinking all during the morning about the idea which Miss Molly had suggested to him.

“I doubt if we hear any news from your father, but you never can tell. If he’s alive, we’ll learn of it along this Wabash and Erie, for all news has a way of drifting along this waterway. Of course if he should show up, I reckon you’d want to go with him.” Captain Jim looked at the boy quizzically.

“Yes. Yes, Captain Jim, I would. You’ve been as kind as a father to me, but if my father is alive, I want to be with him.”

“Naturally and it’s only right son, that you should feel this way. But I’d miss you heaps. I’ve taken a kind of hankerin’ to you, and it’s been lonesome haulin’ with first this boy and that one. Well, the first job for you is to take Mrs. Musk her money directly we reach Lodi. I’ve the stoves to deliver. You can ride old Queen or Bess over to the Musk Mill while I’m huntin’ for a new load to take north. I’d like to get another haul or so before we tie up for the winter. The canal usually freezes over by



the first of December and sometimes even earlier.”

“Yes sir, and fall seems to be settin’ in early this year.”

“I hev seen this canal frozen hard by Thanksgiving, and that would mean no more hauls before the last of March or later. Other winters I’ve always tied up near some big town and I been lucky enough to get some odd jobs to tide me over the slack season. But I hev something else on my mind this year.”

“What is it, Captain Jim?”

“Miss Molly wuz talkin’ to me about your goin’ to her school and you remember Mrs. Musk was anxious for you to get some more schoolin’ too. Miss Molly’ll be a powerful fine teacher. I think you’d like her school better than Miss Henderson’s at Logansport, don’t you?”

“Oh, yes, I know I would.”

“Well on our last Toledo haul I’m figurin’ on layin’ in a supply of staple groceries and comin’ back close to the Bradley farm to tie up the RED BIRD. Then I thought I’d open a grocery store for the community, for I believe it would be a good place. While I tend the store you can go to school.”

“Captain Jim, that’s a whopping bully idea. I’d like to go to school to Miss Molly.”

“Then that’s what we’ll plan to do. You’ll have to be a little late gettin’ started, but I can count on you to make up the work with Miss Molly’s help.”

After they had eaten their fill of cakes, Captain Jim showed Andy how to carve whistles from the wood which they had stored for the fireplace. Early in the evening they climbed into their bunks and fell asleep to the sound of the rain beating upon the deck.

They remained tied up for two days, venturing out only to grain and water the horses. Finally on the third day Andy drove the blacks out to the tow-path. Although it was cold and damp, it had stopped raining, so that they could take up the haul again. In a couple of days they reached Attica where some of the stoves were to be delivered to the Adams warehouse.

Captain Jim and Andy worked all morning with a couple of dock men unloading the stoves, which were needed now that it was getting so much colder. In the afternoon they started southward at a faster pace, since their boat was more than half empty.

Upon arriving in Lodi, Andy saddled Queen and with Mrs. Musk's profits safely tucked away in his new wallet, rode gaily over to the big road which led to the Musk Mill. The Musk children were the first to welcome him, for they were playing down by the covered bridge.

"Andy! Andy!" screamed Willie rushing toward him. "You're back. Did you come to stay with us?"

Andy dismounted and immediately all of the Musk children were scrambling upon him, each asking questions as fast as possible.

"Where's your mother, Willie?"

"In the store, Andy. My, we've missed you and we haven't had any lessons at all."

With the four children hanging on to him, Andy entered the storeroom of the mill, where Mrs. Musk was busy with a customer.

"Andy!" cried Mrs. Musk. She seized him in her arms and gave him a hearty kiss. "You're just like my own boy come home."

Andy was a bit embarrassed by Mrs. Musk's effusive greeting, but his heart was warmed by her genuine welcome. As soon as the customer had gone, Mrs. Musk led the way up to the bedroom where



John Musk still lay helpless in the great wooden bed.

“Well, Andy lad, home from foreign parts!” cried Mr. Musk, his face lighting up in welcome. “I’m sure glad to see you, for we’ve missed you more than you will ever know.”

After Andy had recovered from his welcome and the children could be silenced for a moment, he drew out his wallet from its hiding place in his belt.

“I have the money from the man in Defiance, Mrs. Musk.”

Andy counted it into Mrs. Musk’s hand very carefully, not failing to explain just how much Captain Pride had kept out for the freight charges.

“It’s more than I expected, Andy, and I’m indebted to you for its safekeeping.” She handed the boy a dollar. “Here is your share, lad.”

“No, Mrs. Musk. I haven’t earned anything. Captain Jim wanted me to take care of it. He lent me Queen to ride to bring it to you.”

“Well, it’s yours, Andy, and you’ve certainly earned it. How did you like the captain? I felt a bit uneasy lettin’ you go off with a stranger.”

“There’s no man better, Mrs. Musk. He’s the finest man on the canal.”



*John Musk still lay helpless*





“Don’t you want to spend the winter with us?”

“Well now you see, ma’am, Captain Jim sort of thinks I should go to school.”

Then Andy told them of hauling the teachers from Toledo to Logansport and of Captain Pride’s intention to tie up near Miss Bradley’s school.

“You should be in school, Andy,” put in John Musk. “You’ve a good mind, my boy, but it’ll get rusty if you don’t put it to work. That’ll be a fine opportunity for you and much as we’d like to have you with us, I think Captain Pride has the right idea.”

“Have you, have you heard any news of my father?” asked Andy hopefully, turning to Mrs. Musk.

“No, son, we haven’t, although I’ve asked every one who has come to the mill.”

Andy seemed disappointed. “Of course I’ll be glad to stay with Captain Jim, but I did hope there would be some news of my father. I just can’t think he’s —”

“No, of course he isn’t,” put in Mrs. Musk quickly. “And you know Andy, I’ve had powerful hunches lately. My hunches are usually right. I’ve kept feelin’ for the last few days that you would hear

something from him. Keep a stout heart, Andy, for I'm sure there will be good news soon."

"Yep, she's been sayin' every day she had a notion and my wife's notions are usually right. We'll keep askin' and if any one should come through with any news, we'll be sure to tell him that you're with Captain Pride and the RED BIRD on the Wabash and Erie."

Andy rose to go. "I better be startin' now. Captain Jim's waitin' in Lodi for me. He had the rest of the stoves to deliver, and then he wants another load, so's we can make a haul or two before the canal freezes over."

"You can't go until you've eaten some of my cooking. We have a dish of hominy and side meat, Andy, and I just happen to have a sugar pie."

"Well—" Andy smiled at the mention of the pie. "Sugar pie's my favorite, same as it's Mr. Musk's, so I guess Captain Jim will have to wait until I eat some victuals."

After Andy had eaten as much sugar pie as any boy could hold, he set out with old Queen across the covered bridge to the big road which led to Lodi. The Musk children walked as far as the road and

stood waving at him until he disappeared on the horizon.

When Andy arrived at the RED BIRD it was almost dark, but Captain Jim was walking up and down the planked run waiting for him.

“Hurry and put Queen in the stalls, Andy, and we’ll go over to the Blue Swan for supper.”

“I’m not hungry, Captain Jim, for I ate so much of Mrs. Musk’s sugar pie, I don’t want to eat for at least a week.”

“Whoever heard of a boy not being hungry? Besides you’ve jolted the pie out of the way on the long ride from the mill. You can eat something, I’m sure.”

When they entered the Blue Swan not many customers were there, so Andy and the captain sat on some high stools at the bar.

“Hello, Captain Pride? What’ll you have tonight? How about a little drink to warm you up?” asked the waiter as he wiped off the bar with a greasy cloth.

“No thanks. I’m hungry.”

“Don’t believe you ever took a drink in your life, did you, Captain?” asked the man. “We have some



chicken and noodles tonight. How would that go?"

"You're right. I have yet to take my first drink. Give us two orders of chicken and noodles and some apple pie, if there's any left."

When the steaming plate of noodles was placed in front of him, Andy found that he had indeed jolted down the sugar pie, and had plenty of room for the noodles, for they did smell good.

"Pretty good, hey Andy?" asked Captain Jim.

"Is your name Andy?" asked the waiter.

"Yes, sir."

"Andy how much?"

"Andy Burke."

"Well I'll be switched. Captain Pride, I didn't know who was drivin' for you this fall." He turned to Andy. "Would you be any relation to Matthew Burke?"

"Why, yes," cried Andy in great excitement. "He's my father. Has he been here looking for me?"

"Well no, son, he ain't. But there wuz a man eat-  
ing here about a week ago now, who was askin' after  
a boy named Andy Burke. He said the boy had  
been left in Indiana, and that he had a message for  
him, if he could locate him."

“For me? What did he say? Was it about my father?”

The man scratched his head as if trying to recall just what the conversation had been. “Well now, he said he wuz from down south. Just up from Mississippi and that Matthew Burke had asked him to look around for his son Andy.”

“Then my father is alive,” cried Andy.

“What else did he say?” interrupted Captain Pride. “Come, come, man, you must remember it.”

“He didn’t give me no message when I said I hain’t laid eyes on no such lad, but he wuz to tell Andy Burke that his father was well and comin’ back to Indiana just as soon as he could.”

“Where was this Matthew Burke?” put in Captain Jim.

“Can’t say that either, Cap’n, but it seems he wuz detained by some sort of business, a sort of a matter of jail.”

“Jail? What would my father be doing in jail?”

“Sort of a little matter of horse stealin’, as I recall.”

“But my father never stole any horses.”

“Look here, is this all you know about Matthew Burke?” asked Captain Jim sternly.

“That’s all, so help me. I’ve told you the hull thing. A man come in one evenin’ like I said and asked about Andy Burke while he was eatin’ his supper, settin’ right where you air. I never saw him again.”

“All right, I believe you, but get this and get it straight. If any one asks after Andy, you tell him that the boy’s with Captain Jim Pride of the RED BIRD. And if it’s past haulin’ time, the RED BIRD will be tied up south of Logansport for the winter. Do you understand?”

“Yes sir, Captain Pride, I do. And if anyone comes through lookin’ for Andy, I’ll sure tell him what you said.”







## VIII

### A PLACE FOR THE WINTER

Captain Pride and Andy tarried in the vicinity of Lodi for almost a week, partly because the captain was hard put to find a full load to haul northward; and partly because he was hoping for some definite news of Andy's father. He inquired of every boatman who docked along the canal and every newcomer in the eating houses, but never a word could any one give of Matthew Burke. No one seemed to have heard of him.

Andy was very disappointed. But he was relieved to learn that his father was still alive and would be returning to him. He was positive that his father was above horse stealing and knew that when he returned to Indiana he would be able to explain why he had been absent for so long.

Captain Jim wanted to believe in the trustworthiness of Andy's father and although he said nothing to the boy, he was afraid Matthew Burke had met with foul play in the southland. When he had exhausted every avenue of information and had obtained a load of salt pork for Toledo delivery, he gave Andy the signal to let out the tow rope to begin the long haul northward.

It was much colder now and the wind whipped and tugged at Andy as he toiled along the towpath behind the plodding horses. Traffic was getting lighter on the Wabash and Erie. The shanty boats had tied up for the winter and the petty merchants had removed their jewelry and notions from the canal boats and sought warmer quarters in the towns for the winter. The packet boats were still keeping their schedule, but many freighters had tied up or were drifting at their moorings with empty holds.

Whenever they met a freighter its captain would call out,

“Hi there, RED BIRD! Captain Pride. Where you bound for?”

“Toledo. Salt pork,” Captain Pride would return.

Now and then they saw flocks of belated birds resting on the stake and rider fences which sometimes ran parallel to the canal. And for several nights Captain Jim and Andy were kept awake by the honking of the wild geese which were among the last of the birds to wing their way southward for the winter.

With all of the hardships of the haul, Andy liked the towpath. He, too, was becoming familiar with the freighters and their captains, and he would sing out a lusty greeting to the packets which they met. There were no longer many idlers along the planked runs in the towns, and when they reached Lafayette the great hitchyard was almost empty.

The RED BIRD kept a fast pace, for at Andy's repeated urging the horses were making all possible speed. He walked them even into the night, trying to keep ahead of the threatening weather and covering sometimes as much as fifty miles in a day.



As they neared the Bradley farm Captain Pride blew three long blasts upon his horn and told Andy to slacken his pace. Just as they came alongside the Bradley place, a young girl came running down the hill toward them.

“Why it’s Miss Molly!” cried Andy. “I wonder how she knew that we’d be along now.”

Captain Jim was already off the boat and halfway up the hill to meet her. Andy tied up the horses and turned to greet her as she came on to the boat.

“Hello, Andy! It’s so good to see you.”

“It’s fine to see you, ma’am.”

“Come down into the cabin, Miss Molly. It’s too cold to stand talking out here,” said Captain Jim, as he helped her down the steep steps.

“I received your letter, Captain Jim, and I dismissed school early so that I could come down to see you and Andy. I thought you would make it last night, but the captain of the freighter who brought your letter said you’d probably not arrive until today. Uncle Mark and I hoped you’d be in time for supper yesterday.”

“I wish we had, for I certainly enjoy your cooking.”



*A young girl came running down the hill*





“So do I, especially the apple dumplings,” put in Andy. “You say school has begun?”

“Yes indeed, Andy. And a fine school I have too. I’m still hoping that you’ll be a pupil. What does Captain Jim say about it?” She glanced hopefully at Captain Pride.

“He says maybe I can come. Why don’t you tell her about the plan, Captain Jim?” urged Andy.

“Well I had sort of an idea, if it meets with your approval and your uncle is willing. We have this load of salt pork for Toledo. I thought I’d sell Queen and Bess at the market there and lay in a supply of staple groceries. We could bring ’em back here and tie up somewheres hereabouts for the winter. Then while Andy goes to your school, I’d keep store and sell groceries to the people in these parts.”

“Captain Jim, what a fine idea! I’m sure Uncle Mark will be glad to have you near us, and there ought to be a good market for your groceries.”

“Well I’ve known some of the captains to do that during the winter. The captain of the HARRIET did right well one winter with groceries. There’s no harm in tryin’, for Andy ought to be in school, that’s sure.”

Andy's face was alight with pleasure at the thought of going to Miss Molly's school.

"How soon will you be back, Captain?"

"Well now, Miss Molly, I can't say for sure. If we have luck and it don't freeze on us, we ought to be back inside of two weeks. It all depends on how soon I sell the horses and on the weather. I guess we better be gettin' along now, so's we kin get back."

Molly jumped up from the chair by the fireplace. "Come up and talk to Uncle Mark about it now. Maybe he may have an idea which will help you. You can stay for dinner, can't you?"

"Oh, we don't want to put you to so much trouble," hesitated the captain.

"It's no bother at all, so come on." Molly Bradley bounded up the cabin steps and down the gangplank, followed by Captain Jim and Andy.

When they unfolded their plan to Mr. Bradley he thought it a very good one and told them they could tie up the RED BIRD at his dock if they liked. But he suggested it might be a better idea to stop a little nearer Logansport, for there were more families living two or three miles from his place. After they had eaten as much as possible of Miss Molly's cook-

ing, Captain Jim and Andy took leave of the Bradleys and started again up the canal.

They pushed rapidly along, rising before dawn and walking well into the night to cover the long distance which lay before them. They made it through the locks in better time than on the first trip, for the boats were fewer and fewer along the way. They spent no time idling in the towns through which they passed and in a few days they had arrived in Toledo.

When they had delivered their load of salt pork they made ready to attend the market.

“Andy, groom Queen and Bess, as well as you can, for I want to get a good price for them.”

“Are you really going to sell them, Captain Jim?”

“Yes, Andy. You know you said they weren’t good horses, and maybe in the spring we can buy a better team.”

“Yes, I know I did, but I sort of hate to part with them.”

“Never hate to give up a poor horse for a better one, lad. Now selling the blacks would be a different matter. There’s no money good enough to buy King and Duke, for they’re as fine a matched team as you’ll find anywhere on the canal.”



“But Queen and Bess won’t bring as much as they will in the spring, Captain Jim. You see the man who buys will have to grain ’em for the winter.”

“You’re a smart lad to think of that, Andy. But we’ll have no use for them and they’ll just take up room in the stalls and they won’t be exercised much with us. It’ll be a slower trip back to Logansport, for we’ll have to rest King and Duke on the way, but I’ll get a better price here than back in Indiana.”

“Very well, sir.”

Andy disappeared into the stalls and started to groom the horses. He rubbed them down until their coats shone and he grained them well to fill out the hollows in their bodies. When he drove them out to the run even Captain Pride was surprised at their appearance.

“Good work, Andy. I believe you’ve added twenty-five dollars to the purchase price by your effort.”

The market was a large oblong space enclosed by a fence. At one end of it was a long shed in which several horses were tied to a hitching rail. The animals were rather fidgety, swishing their tails and pawing the ground. There were only a few people

at the market, but a sign announced an auction to be held later in the day.

“Wantin’ to trade in horses?” asked the dealer, a bluff, hearty-looking man, as Captain Jim walked up.

“Well in a way,” returned Captain Jim. “I want to sell my team, but I don’t want to buy any horses just now.”

“H’m. Well, let’s see ’em. Horses are selling down just now.”

The dealer shifted his tobacco quid to his other cheek and walked with the captain to where Andy was standing with the team.

“Well, they ain’t a very good match.”

“They’re fair enough,” returned Captain Pride. “And gentle and quiet as lambs.”

The dealer looked at the horses critically and finally pointed to Bess. “Wouldn’t care to sell that one without the other? She’s the better horse.”

“Bess is a little the favorite, but I won’t sell her without Queen.”

“That other one’s a windsucker and bad for haulin’. Well, walk ’em about a bit.”

Andy clucked to the team and walked them around the hitchyard.

“H’m. Fair. Now separate them and trot ’em for me.”

Andy jerked the rope and trotted first Queen and then Bess in a circle.

“Nice stride,” put in Captain Jim.

“That air one sprawls. Well, if you care to sell ’em separately I’ll give you ninety dollars for Bess. I can’t use the other horse.”

“No,” replied Captain Pride. “Both of ’em or none.” He turned to Andy. “Might as well drive ’em back, Andy. No sale today.”

“Wait a minute.” The dealer ran his hands down the horses’ legs to determine their soundness. “I’m afraid I’ll be stuck with them, but I’ll give you a hundred and thirty-five dollars for the team.”

“No. No sale. Come on, Andy.”

“How much will you take?”

“A hundred and seventy-five.”

“Impossible. Hundred and thirty-five is a good price, and then I’ll probably have to grain ’em all winter.”

“They’re good haulers and I can afford to keep ’em till the spring market.”

“I’ll raise you to one hundred and fifty. I think



I know a fellow who can use them. But not a cent more.”

Andy looked at Captain Jim inquiringly. He thought for the season, the price offered was as good as they could get. His father would never have dealt in such horses.

Captain Jim hesitated for a moment. “Very well. They’re yours, sir. Can you make out the sale papers now?”

“Yes, I can. Lad, tie up the team to that hitch rack.”

The dealer led the way to a little shed which served as an office. When they had closed the bargain, Captain Pride asked rather casually, “By the way, do you know Matthew Burke?”

“Matthew Burke! The fellow who deals in race horses?”

“Yes, sir,” put in Andy, who had been standing quietly at the side of Captain Pride.

“Indeed, I do. But you never bought that team off’n Matthew Burke. Haven’t seen him for a long time. Friend of yours?”

“Yes, he is. If you happen to meet him this winter, tell him that Captain Pride of the RED BIRD

was asking for him, for he has a boy named Andy on his boat, and that we'll be tied up south of Logansport for the winter."

"All right, sir, I'll do that, but I don't think he'll be up in these parts this winter."

The horses disposed of, Captain Pride and Andy went back to town to buy the winter provisions which they wanted to carry back in the hold of the RED BIRD. They stocked up with coffee and a few coffee grinders, tea, flour, sugar, spices, some various kinds of hard candy, a few bananas, and some notions such as thread, needles, and shoe laces. Then Captain Pride bought some lumber, saying that he probably would have need of it before winter was over.

It was very slow going on the return trip with only one team, for the blacks had to be rested every few hours, so it was almost three weeks before they tied up between Logansport and the Bradley farm.





## IX

### ANDY GOES TO SCHOOL

The next morning when Andy awakened he did not hear the familiar lapping of the water against the sides of the RED BIRD and he wondered what had happened. He dressed hurriedly and went at once to grain the horses. When he reached the deck Captain Jim was standing there looking down into the canal. Andy looked at it too, and saw that they were indeed tied up for the winter, for the boat had frozen in during the night.



“Well, winter is here, lad,” said Captain Pride. “We didn’t arrive a day too soon. This afternoon we have a big job before us.”

“What’s that, Captain Jim?”

“We’re going to make some sled runners, and it’s particular work.”

“Sled runners? What for, Captain Jim?”

“Might want to do some haulin’ this winter, lad, and I’ll have to have a sled to travel on the canal or the towpath. Have to get the horses wintershod, too.”

It began snowing during the morning and snowed all afternoon, but they were too busy to notice that the snow was making a new world for them, covering the canal so that it was level with its banks.

Captain Jim took out the lumber which he had bought in Toledo and smoothed the long runners as slick as he could, so they would run over the snowy paths easily. Then he put three stout crosspieces across the long runners in the center and at each end. By evening they had completed the long sled.

On the following Monday Andy started across the snowy hillsides to Miss Molly’s school. It was held in a new one-room clapboard schoolhouse, built on

the south forty of the Bradley place. He had to walk about three miles, wading drifts that were sometimes piled higher than his head. He stamped his feet and beat his arms against his chest to keep warm, but by the time he reached the school house, his breath had made little frozen crystals on his muffler, his cheeks were apple red and his nose had a whitish cast, which spoke ominously of frostbite.

He walked into the room where about a dozen boys and girls were already gathered. Some of them were huddled around the new shiny stove in the center of the room. Stoves were a luxury for this country and many of the children had never seen one before. Mr. Bradley was one of the first farmers to purchase a stove from the shipment which had but lately been brought from Toledo down the canal.

The older girls were helping Miss Molly to unwrap the little children, who were almost frozen from their long walk to school.

“Good morning, Andy,” called Miss Bradley from her place by the stove. She was sitting on a bench with one of the little girls on her lap. “Hang your wraps on a peg at the back of the room and put your lunch on the shelf.”

“Good morning, Miss Molly.” Andy took his coat to the peg and put his lunch bucket carefully on the shelf which was built on the wall in the rear corner. He rubbed his hands and nose a bit, for they were beginning to tingle. Then he looked around the room. It was the first time he had ever been in a school house.

The teacher’s desk stood at the front of the room directly in line with the stove and in front of it were two long benches, which were to be used for the class recitations. Long rough benches with smoothly-hewn tables in front of them for desks were ranged in rows across the room, with a wide aisle in the center.

When it came nine o’clock and several more children had straggled into the schoolhouse, Miss Molly took a little bell from her desk and walking to the door at the back of the room, rang it several times to signify that school had begun.

The girls sat on one side of the room and the boys on the other, with the little children in front and the oldest boys in the rear. There were three other boys as old and as large as Andy Burke.

Miss Molly stood by her desk. “Attention, chil-



dren, please. Today we shall spend most of our time arranging the classes, but first we shall sing an opening song. What shall it be?"

"*Hold the Fort,*" called one of the girls.

"All right. Now everyone sing, but please keep the tune."

Miss Molly sounded the pitch with her tuning fork and immediately every child was singing lustily, *Hold the Fort For I Am Coming.*

After the singing the teacher called the A B C class up to the front benches. She asked one of the older girls to help her with this class so that she could work with the children in the first reader. As soon as she had tried each pupil in reading, she sent them to their seats and called the next reading class, the second. When she had heard the classes up to the fifth, she spoke to Andy.

"Andy, you will please join the fifth reading class."

Andy came slowly forward to the front of the room with the older boys and girls. There were six in this group and they sat down on the first bench in front of the teacher.

Miss Molly chose an easy selection and one of the girls read it very haltingly. Then she tried one of the

older boys. Finally it came Andy's turn to read. He hesitated a moment and then read the paragraph easily. Miss Molly looked a bit surprised, but made no comment. When each one had been given an opportunity to read, she dismissed this class, all save Andy.

"I want to see what you can do with the sixth reader," and Miss Molly chose a page in the center of the book. "Try this, please, Andy."

Andy looked at the page and then began:

*The Crusader and the Saracen*

As the Knight of the Leopard fixed his eyes attentively on the distant cluster of palm trees which arose beside the well, he thought he saw a long shadow.

Andy looked inquiringly at Miss Molly.

"Read on."

Andy read all of the selection which was two pages in length. Then the teacher turned to the "*New Year's Night of an Unhappy Man.*" Andy read that to her.

When he had finished she said, "Andy, your mother certainly taught you to read well. We shall have to find a more difficult book for you, perhaps a copy of Shakespeare's works. Thank you. You

have given an excellent exhibition for the pupils. You may take your seat."

Andy flushed at her praise and walked toward the back of the room. He had almost reached his seat when one of the girls thrust her foot out slyly and tripped him. He stumbled and fell awkwardly into his seat, blushing furiously when the entire school laughed at him. When order was restored, Miss Molly announced that the time for recess had come.

It seemed that all of the children tried to get out-of-doors at the same time. The younger children made a snow man and the older boys and girls had a lively game of snow ball.

After recess the children tried their skill in arithmetic and spelling. Again Andy distinguished himself, showing that he could work fraction problems with ease and could spell most of the words which were given to him. At noon the older boys shoveled snow paths around the building and brought in more wood for the stove. Andy became acquainted with the boys, listening to their tales of husking prowess. He told them about his travels along the Wabash and Erie Canal.

In the afternoon Miss Molly called the geography



classes, while some of the children worked with writing in their copy books. Alas, when Andy listened to the geography class he discovered that he knew nothing about continents or hemispheres, for his mother had not had time to teach him much about the world in which he lived.

When the children went home, Miss Molly asked Andy to remain after school to help her with some work. "Andy, I was well pleased with your work this morning," she said as he put on his coat to go home. "You may begin with the class in square root, and your reading is well in advance of any pupil in school, but you will have to be with the younger children in the geography class."

Andy tried not to look disappointed as he replied, "I just don't know anything about geography, Miss Molly. Mother didn't teach me anything about it."

"It won't take long for you to catch up with the other children, Andy, for you read well. You've traveled quite a bit and you know some of the practical geography of your own country. That counts for something. We didn't have time to have any grammar classes today. Have you studied grammar?"

"Grammar? What is it, Miss Molly?"



*"I was well pleased with your work this morning"*





“I guess you haven’t made its acquaintance or you wouldn’t ask,” laughed Miss Molly. “It is the study of words and sentences, of cases of nouns, of verbs and parts of speech.”

“No, I’m afraid I don’t know much about it either. I guess I have a lot to learn.”

“Never mind, for I’ll help you and you will soon be as good as the best of the pupils. By the way, what is Captain Jim doing these days?”

“He’s been busy making some sled runners, and today he took the blacks to Logansport to be winter-shod. He thought perhaps he might get some hauling to do along with keeping the grocery store. I can keep store on Saturday, you know.”

“You haven’t had any word from your father, have you?”

“No ma’am. not direct, but I know that he is alive and will come back for me when he can.” Then Andy told her what the man had said at the Blue Swan.

“Then he will be returning for you, Andy. Rest assured of that. Meanwhile, we must work as hard as we can so that we can surprise him with what you have learned.”

In the days that followed, Andy worked diligently, trying to catch up with the older children in the subjects in which he was deficient. He struggled with the grammar, and found it difficult to parse a sentence. Sometimes he became disgusted, but since he was a determined boy, he resolved not to let that subject get the best of him, and by Christmas time he was ready to go into the advanced grammar class. He had more difficulty with geography, for he found it hard to understand the imaginary lines of the equator and the meridians, and he was always getting confused with the seven seas.

He enjoyed the Friday afternoon spelling bees when the pupils would choose up sides and try to outspell each other. Some of the parents came to visit. Often Uncle Mark Bradley dropped in to see how his niece's school was progressing. Captain Jim found time almost every Friday to come over to the school, for he was very much interested in Andy's work, or could he be interested in some one else at the school? Andy was beginning to wonder.

On the day before Christmas, the Bradley school held open house for all the parents and pupils. By one o'clock the little schoolhouse was filled to over-

flowing with fathers and mothers and friends of the school. Outside the clearing around the school building was filled with teams hitched to sleds.

Several of the older pupils gave declamations and the little children sang songs. The spelling bee was the high point of the afternoon, for it was a battle of wits between the boys and the girls. The boys stood in a line at one side of the room and the girls on the other. Whenever a pupil missed a word, he was forced to take his seat and finally only Andy remained standing for the boys, while three girls held their line against him.

Excitement was running high even among the parents over the outcome of the match. Miss Molly pronounced the words and she smiled as she gave out the word "incomprehensibility."

"I-n in, c-o-m com, p—" Mary Adams began valiantly, then giggled nervously and amidst loud clapping by the boys, took her seat, leaving two girls against Andy.

"I-n in, c-o-m com, p-r-e pre, h-e-n hen, s-i si, b-i-l bil, i-t-y ity, incomprehensibility," spelled Andy very carefully.

"Good. Inadvertently."



A second girl was forced to sit down, while Andy spelled the word correctly. Finally Andy Burke was declared the champion when he spelled animosity correctly.

Captain Jim could not have beamed more proudly if Andy had been his own boy. He helped Miss Molly to distribute the treat to the children, for he had brought bananas and stick candy from his own store, while she had made each pupil a big popcorn ball. When Miss Molly passed Andy's desk, she stopped long enough to tell him to wait a few minutes after the rest had gone.

He and Captain Jim lingered until every sled had gone from the schoolyard, save theirs, and Miss Molly said, "Andy, I asked you to wait so that I could ask you and Captain Jim to come to our house for Christmas dinner. Will you come? Uncle Mark is counting on it."

Andy looked expectantly at Captain Jim. "What about it, Cap'n?"

"Now that's real nice of you, Miss Molly, to ask two old bachelors out to dinner on Christmas Day. Yes, indeed, we'll be glad to come."

"Come over about noon then. Miss Henderson is

coming out from Logansport. I want to talk to her about Andy's schooling, for it won't be long before Andy will be ahead of my teaching."

As they drove back to the canal Andy glowed with happiness at Miss Molly's praise and his part of the afternoon performance, but he said nothing. He was thinking of how kind she and Captain Pride had been to him. How could he ever repay them?

When they reached the RED BIRD, a strange horse was tied up to the boat.

"I wonder whose horse that is," said Captain Jim. "Haven't seen it around here before."

"Perhaps some one wants something for his Christmas dinner," suggested Andy.

"Go ahead, lad, and I'll put the horses in their stalls."

Andy gave one leap up to the deck of the RED BIRD and dashed down the cabin steps. He opened the door and saw a man sitting by the fire, warming his hands. The man turned as the door opened, and as Andy recognized him he cried, "Father! Father! I knew you'd come."



X

## CHRISTMAS AT THE BRADLEYS

Andy threw himself upon his father, hugging him as if he could not let him go. Meanwhile Captain Pride had come down to the cabin, and he stood silently in the doorway, watching the reunion. He saw a tall spare man, very like Andy grown older, but a man who looked very pale and worn and very thin.

When Andy could recover from his happy surprise, he turned to Captain Jim. "Captain Pride, this



is my father, Matthew Burke. He's come at last."

The tall thin man rose and extended his hand to the captain.

"I can never thank you sir, for looking after my boy. I've heard all along the canal of how kind you have been to him. Treated him like your own, so everyone tells me."

"I'm glad to shake hands with Andy's father," replied Captain Pride. "Andy's been a godsend to me this season."

"Tell me, Father," put in Andy, "where you've been and what kept you so long."

Matthew Burke heaved a long sigh. "It's a long story, son, and it's not finished yet," said his father, his face darkening, "but at last I've found you. Your mother—" his voice stopped and his face twisted oddly.

Andy, too, looked sad at the mention of his mother, but Captain Jim said hurriedly, "You've been ill, haven't you, Matthew Burke?"

"Not sick exactly, Cap'n. Jail gave this pallor to me and I was nearly starved, too."

"Jail? What happened, Father?"

"A lot, my boy, and it isn't over yet. Well, after

I left you and your mother in Indiana, I made for St. Louis with my string of horses. I was to deliver 'em you know, to the New Orleans racing stables."

"Yes. You had six horses didn't you, Father?"

"Yes, six besides my own saddle horse and six thoroughbreds, too, if I do say it. I stabled 'em in St. Louis and I didn't trust leavin' them alone, so I slept in the stables with them. I had to wait several days to get a place on a boat and the night before I was to ship 'em, I was slugged while I was sleeping. The next thing I knew I was gagged and bound, riding on a freighter bound for New Orleans. My horses and my ownership papers were gone."

"Someone stole your thoroughbreds?"

"Yes, Andy, cleaned me out. I was taken off the boat at night and thrown into jail like a common horse thief. I tried to get the jailer to send for Colonel Brooks there in New Orleans, but he wouldn't do it. He said hanging was too good for horse thieves. And a hanging I might have had too, son, if it hadn't been for a lad about your age. He came peering in at the door one day and I begged him to go to Colonel Brooks for me."

"Did he go, Father?"

“Yes, he went to the colonel with my story and in a day or two Colonel Brooks appeared. He was very angry with me, for he hadn’t received the horses and they had been sold to a rival stable. He thought I had doublecrossed him. I told him what had happened and he believed my story, for I had sold horses to him in the past. He tried to get me released, but he couldn’t. If it hadn’t been for him I know I would have been hanged right off, and he did promise to send word to your mother about me.”

“We never received any word, Father. And then I had to run away, for I was afraid of the workhouse after Mother—after—”

“Yes, son, I heard all about that. You see I traced you to the Musk Mill and Mrs. Musk told me all about your winter with her. You’ve had a bad time, Andy.”

“How did you get your release?” put in Captain Jim.

“There was another string of valuable horses stolen from the colonel’s stables, and he was determined to catch the thief. He had track of him, but the fellow got away and came up north. Really it is a band of thieves. One man is the brains of the



gang, but he doesn't do the actual stealing. I'll know him if I ever see him though, for he was looking at my horses just before they were stolen in St. Louis and if I ever find him—"

"But how did you get out?" persisted Andy.

"When Colonel Brooks was convinced that a band was working all through the South, he used his influence to have me freed. Then he took me home with him for a few weeks, for I was too weak to travel and I had almost died of starvation. Then I took some kind of fever and had to stay with him for several months. As soon as I was able I started north. The horse outside belongs to the colonel. He let me have him for the trip."

"Better bring him on to the RED BIRD," suggested Captain Pride. "I've plenty of room to stable him."

"No, I'd better be moving on, Cap'n. Get ready, Andy, and we'll be going."

"All right, Father." Andy's face fell when he thought of Miss Molly's invitation. "But tomorrow's Christmas."

"You can't leave now, man," put in Captain Jim. "You must stay and have Christmas dinner with us—"

that is, the teacher asked us for dinner. But you'll be a welcome guest, I'm sure."

"Yes, Father," put in Andy quickly. "I've been going to school and I want you to meet Miss Molly. I know she won't care if you come with us."

After much persuasion Matthew Burke consented to stay over Christmas and have dinner with the Bradleys. When he brought his horse on to the RED BIRD, he was much taken with Captain Jim's handsome team of blacks.

"I don't know when I've seen a better matched team, Cap'n. They ought to bring top price in any market."

"I'm kind-a proud of King and Duke and I hope I never have to sell them."

After supper Captain Jim insisted that Andy and his father sleep in the cabin and he made his bed in the stalls with the horses. Andy and his father talked long into the night of all the things which had happened since Matthew Burke left Indiana. His father told Andy that he planned to go to Toledo, where he hoped to get started with the horsetrading business again. It was going to be hard, for he had to make a new beginning and he had very little money

to buy a string of horses now. When Andy finally dropped to sleep he had restless dreams of his father being abducted again.

Christmas Day dawned cold and clear. The snow was deep, but it was packed hard and the horses had no difficulty in carrying the men to the Bradley farm. When Miss Molly opened the door to greet them, she found three guests instead of two, but she could tell, not so much by the resemblance between two of them, as by Andy's shining countenance that her unexpected guest was Andy's father.

"This must be Matthew Burke," she cried gaily, extending her hand to him in welcome.

"Miss Molly, he came. He came in time for Christmas," cried Andy. "I knew you wouldn't care if he came with us for dinner."

"Care!" interrupted Miss Bradley. "Why he's the very nicest present we could have. And you, Captain Jim, it wouldn't be Christmas without you."

She led them into the sitting room where her Uncle Mark and Miss Henderson were waiting. After she had introduced Andy's father to them, she went to the kitchen to attend to the dinner. While she was gone Matthew Burke told his experiences





*"This must be Matthew Burke," she cried gaily*



again for the benefit of Mr. Bradley and Miss Henderson.

After a little while Miss Molly called them to dinner. And such a dinner! Andy's eyes fairly popped when he saw three wild turkeys on the table, along with cranberries, potatoes, hominy, baked apples, pumpkin and mince pies. When everyone had eaten more than he should, but as much as possible, they began talking about the future. Molly Bradley was anxious to unfold a plan which Miss Henderson had suggested for Andy.

"I don't know what your father will think of our planning your future for you, Andy," began Miss Molly, "and perhaps he will want you to go with him. But Miss Henderson and I have been talking and we think you should go to school."

"But I do go to school, ma'am. And I like your school, too."

"To be sure, Andy, but you're almost beyond what I can teach you, and it would be a shame for you to stop now." She turned to Andy's father. "He has the foundation for making a bright man, Mr. Burke."

"That's what his mother always wanted. And I



promised to settle down so the boy could go to school, but I never got around to it," finished Matthew Burke sadly.

"His mother gave him an excellent start, sir."

"She was always teaching him to read or to figure or spell. I never saw the beat of it, for I think she spent most of her waking hours teaching Andy. She wanted to make a lawyer of him."

"Why that's right in line with Miss Henderson's idea. Mattie, tell them your plan."

"Molly has been telling me about Andy's work in school," began Miss Henderson. "She thinks he has great possibilities and should go far with the proper training. I think he should prepare for some college."

"College!" exclaimed Andy. "Are there any colleges in this part of the country?"

Miss Henderson smiled. "Yes, Andy, there are several good colleges out here in the Middle West and very well-trained teachers manage them. There is a particularly fine college for boys not very far from here. It is Wabash College at Crawfordsville."

"I've heard about that school," put in Captain Pride.

"I know Professor Hovey and his wife very well,

and if we wrote to him, I believe he would help us.”

“But colleges are expensive, Miss Henderson.” Matthew Burke was interested, but looked doubtful about the idea.

“This one isn’t exorbitant, Mr. Burke, and many of the boys work at least a part of their way. I should think—I’m guessing now—that Andy could attend for a year with a hundred dollars.”

“A hundred dollars!” The amount was staggering to Andy, who had just earned a little more than ten dollars trudging the towpath.

“Not even the price of a good horse,” murmured Matthew Burke.

“You’re right, sir, and this opportunity would mean much more than a horse to Andy. Of course he is not prepared now to take the entrance examinations, for I’m sure some Latin and Greek is required, and Molly tells me he needs more work in grammar and geography.”

“Yes, but Andy is coming along nicely in those subjects.”

Andy flashed a smile to Miss Molly. She was the most understanding person he had ever known outside of his own mother.

“Well,” Captain Jim had been listening intently, “if Andy’s father is willing, I think it would be a good idea for Miss Henderson to write to her friends to find out more about this notion. The towpath isn’t the life for Andy Burke.”

“No, nor horse trading either,” muttered his father.

“But I like the towpath and I love horses.”

“That I know, Andy, but the time is coming, and soon too, when the canal will no longer be attractive. I can see it coming closer every day, for the railroads are going to take the place of the canal.”

“But that will be years, Captain.”

“Not so long, Mr. Bradley, for we’re already beginning to feel the effect of the rails. There hasn’t been as much traffic on the Wabash and Erie these last two years. It costs too much to keep this waterway in repair. What with the rotting aqueducts, and the crawfish boring through in the spring, I’m told the tolls don’t cover the upkeep expense.”

“As I see it,” said Matthew Burke slowly, “the country needs educated men. There are too many of my stripe in it now, with no education and no trade.”

“But Father, you know everything about horses. And that’s important.”

“Not everything, son, and I got my early training in a Virginia stable. But it’s a dangerous life and an unsettled one. You enjoy going to school, don’t you, Andy?”

“Oh, yes, Father. If the teachers are all like Miss Molly, I’d like nothing better than going to school.”

Captain Jim laughed. “They won’t all be like Miss Molly, Andy. She’s one in a thousand.”

Miss Molly blushed furiously and hoped that the others did not notice. But Andy saw it and wondered again just why he and Captain Jim happened to tie up near the Bradley farm.

They talked at length of Miss Henderson’s plan and finally when the shadows began to grow long and the short winter afternoon to draw to a close, Captain Pride said it was time to be getting back to the RED BIRD. The horses would need graining again.

Andy rode along happily in the sled between his father and Captain Jim, wondering about his father’s plans and his own future.





## XI

### CAPTAIN JIM MEETS WITH DISASTER

Immediately after Christmas extremely cold weather set in along the Wabash and Erie. It was so cold that school did not open for more than three weeks after the holidays. Captain Pride's grocery venture had not proven very profitable, and although the residents of the RED BIRD had plenty to eat, Captain Jim began to think of getting other work to help out for the rest of the winter.

Matthew Burke wanted to go East to find some of his friends who would help him get into business again. He knew several men who would probably help him to buy a new string of horses, but he was forced to wait for several weeks, for traveling in this sub-zero weather was out of the question.

When the weather moderated ever so little, Captain Pride drove his sled along the canal to Logansport in hopes of finding some hauling to do. Everything was very dull in town however, and it seemed that the inhabitants had holed in for the winter. He did get the promise of some hauling for the railway, bringing logs from their lumber camp to Logansport, as soon as the weather opened up enough for him to make daily trips with his sled.

Finally near the end of January Andy started back to school, resolved to work his best, for the school session would not be more than six or eight weeks longer. As soon as the weather permitted, the older children would begin their work on the farms, and the subscription school guarantee had been only for a five months' school. Captain Jim started hauling logs from some of the timber land which the company had leased, and a little later, Matthew Burke

in company with Mr. Mark Bradley set out for Toledo. It was decided that Andy should remain with Captain Pride on the RED BIRD until his father should return for him.

After Captain Pride began hauling logs, Andy assumed the task of cooking their evening meal, for he could hurry home from school and have supper ready by the time Captain Jim returned.

One Friday evening he ran all the way from school to the RED BIRD, for he had some news for the captain about Wabash College. Miss Henderson had written to Professor Hovey as she had promised, and Andy was now carrying the letter which she had received to Captain Pride.

He whistled merrily as he set the table for their supper, and he hoped that Captain Jim would come home just a little early this evening. He wanted to know what news the letter contained, but he refrained from reading it until the captain could share it with him.

Captain Jim usually returned about dusk, but his coming depended upon the number of logs felled for hauling each day. The place where the loggers were felling trees was about six miles from the RED BIRD,



but it was on the opposite side of the canal and almost directly eastward. From there, they hauled logs over the frozen canal to Logansport, where they were stored by the railway company to be used as soon as work began in the spring.

Darkness soon covered the canal, but Captain Pride did not come. Andy was disappointed, for he had fried their chops and they were beginning to get cold. Every few minutes he would run up on deck and peer out into the snowy country to see if he could see him coming. Then he would give a loud halloo, but no answer came to him. Finally Andy began to grow anxious, for Captain Jim had never been so late before. When he could stand it no longer, he resolved to go in search of him. He had never been to the woods where they worked, but it was not hard to find, for the horses' tracks and those of the sled runners were plainly visible.

Andy walked and ran, calling out every little while, but he met with no answering cry. After a very long time he arrived at the woods, but there was no one there. Only a pile of logs ready for tomorrow's hauling, greeted him. Where could Captain Jim be?



By the faint moonlight he found the path which the haulers took toward the canal and Logansport. He was very cold now and had no notion where Captain Jim could be, yet intuition or some sense of disaster forced him to keep on the path. Then he heard a man groaning. As he came nearer he saw an overturned sled, with logs scattered about on the snow, and by its side lay Captain Jim.

“Captain Jim! What happened?”

“Andy, boy, you’ve come at last! I thought I was going to freeze to death here. Could you manage to help me get up? My leg. I can’t seem to move it.”

With Andy’s assistance Captain Pride managed to rise, but he sank down immediately with a groan.

“My leg, Andy. I think it’s broken.”

“I can get you on the sled and we’ll drive home.” He looked around. “Where are the horses?”

“Gone. I don’t know what happened. I thought I heard a pistol shot, but something frightened the horses and they bolted. I hung on to the reins and something struck my head. Then the horses broke loose and galloped off into the woods. The sled overturned and fell on me. I managed to crawl out, and that’s all I could do.”

Suddenly Andy had the sickening realization that he could not carry Captain Jim back to the RED BIRD and there were no horses to pull the sled. He must get help and soon, too, for there was grave danger of Captain Jim's freezing. He would run back to the Bradley place and Miss Molly would help him.

"I'll get help, Captain Jim. It won't take long."

"Andy, could you make a fire first? And maybe you could turn the sled toward the north beside me, to keep the wind out a bit."

"Yes, sir, I can." Andy pulled and tugged at the sled until he succeeded in pulling it around on the north side of the captain. Then he made a fire as close as he dared to keep him from freezing.

"That will be all right, Andy."

Andy sped away as fast as he could over to the canal and back to the Bradley farm. It seemed that he was forever reaching it, but considering the snow and the cold, he arrived in an incredibly short time. He knocked loudly at the kitchen door.

"Miss Molly! Miss Molly! It's Andy."

"Why Andy, what's the matter?" cried Molly Bradley when she saw his anxious face.

"It's Captain Jim, ma'am. He was hurt over by the

log works. The horses have run away and he's not able to walk."

"Don't stand out there in the cold. Come in. We'll have to go after him?"

"Yes, ma'am. What do you want me to do?"

"Let's see." Molly was already getting her coat. "You hitch the horse to the cutter and I'll get some blankets and meet you outside."

Andy went out to the barn and soon had the cutter ready. Then he and Miss Molly drove with all speed back to where Captain Jim was lying.

"Jim. Jim, you're hurt," cried Miss Molly, as she lifted Captain Pride in her arms.

"It's my leg, Molly," explained the captain, trying not to wince with pain.

"We'll get you into the cutter and have you home in a jiffy. Andy, help me put Captain Jim in the sleigh."

As gently as they could Andy and Molly lifted Captain Jim into the Bradley cutter. Molly tucked the blankets around him and soon they were on their way to the RED BIRD. It was with great difficulty that they managed to carry him on to the boat and down into the cabin.





*“Andy, help me put Captain Jim in the sleigh”*



“Now Andy, I’ll make some coffee, for you must have your supper.”

“I’m afraid the chops are cold,” mourned Andy, as he gazed ruefully at the cold food set out on the table.

Together they managed to remove Captain Jim’s wet boots and make him as comfortable as possible in his bunk. Miss Molly soon had some coffee and scrambled eggs ready and Andy found that he was very hungry after all.

“Now Andy, can you drive to Logansport for the doctor? I don’t think Captain Jim’s leg can wait until morning for attention.”

“Yes ma’am, right away.”

Andy set out again in the Bradley cutter for Logansport. It was much easier going now than it had been on foot. He had some difficulty arousing the doctor, but soon they came trotting back to the RED BIRD.

All during the night, Molly Bradley was kept busy helping the doctor and straightening out the confusion in the cabin. When dawn came at last and Captain Jim had fallen asleep, she told Andy that he could drive her back to the Bradley farm. It had



been snowing during the night and the ground was covered with the freshly fallen snow.

“Miss Molly, may I take one of your teams to go after the sled? I’ll try to locate the black team, too.”

“Yes, Andy, that’s a good idea. Take Ned and Bill. You’d better ride Bill, for he takes a rider better than Ned. Don’t worry about Captain Jim, for after I’ve rested a little I’ll go back to get his breakfast.”

“I don’t know what I’d have done without your help, Miss Molly. Captain Jim might have frozen there if I’d had to go to Logansport for help.”

Molly Bradley’s face clouded at the thought. “I’d do anything for Captain Jim, Andy.”

“So would I, ma’am.”

Andy did not stop at the RED BIRD, but went directly to the woods where the logs were waiting for the haulers. It was very early and none of the workers had arrived. He righted the sled and hitched it to the Bradley team. Then he looked about to see which way the blacks had gone when they bolted with Captain Jim. But the snow had completely covered any trace of the runaway horses.

“I’ll have to find them,” muttered Andy. “They can’t have gone far.” He drove the team in a wide

circle, trying to pick up the tracks of the blacks, but finally had to give it up and return to their boat.

Captain Jim was awake and did not seem to be in much pain. "Where have you been, Andy?"

"I took Miss Molly home and then I went after your sled."

"Miss Molly! Was she here all night? I sort of lost out on what went on, after we reached the RED BIRD."

"Yes, sir, and she was plenty worried, too, sir. She's coming back soon to get you some breakfast."

Something in Captain Jim's expression made Andy think that they had not tied up near the Bradley farm just to have him go to school.

"She's a fine lady, Captain."

"The best there is, Andy. Have the blacks come home?"

"No sir, they haven't."

"That's strange. I thought when they got over their fright, they'd return to the boat. That's the first time they ever ran away."

"I tried to find the trace of them when I went after the sled, but it has been snowing and there wasn't a single track to guide me."

“Snowing? Well, they must be some place in the neighborhood, for they know every inch of this countryside. You know my head feels queer this morning.” Captain Jim rubbed the sore spot on the back of his head.

“Yes sir, you had some kind of a blow on the head, the doctor said.”

“I remember a noise, like a shot, and then it did seem that something hit me on the back of my head, just before King and Duke bolted and started running so wildly. I can’t remember exactly though.”

“I’ll take Mr. Bradley’s horse and ride back along the canal to see if I can find any trace of ’em.”

“Not now, Andy. They won’t go far in this weather and they’re smart enough to find some shelter. Perhaps someone will take them up for me. You look tuckered out, lad, and you must get some sleep before you make any more journeys.”

“Don’t you want some breakfast, sir?”

“I believe I prefer Miss Molly’s cooking, Andy,” smiled the captain. “You tumble into bed and don’t worry about breakfast.”

Andy climbed into his bunk and slept so soundly that he did not hear Miss Molly when she arrived



a little later. He must have slept the day through, for the lamp was lighted in the cabin when he awakened. Miss Molly was sitting by the fire knitting and Captain Jim was lying quietly watching her fingers fly back and forth with the yarn.

“Are you rested, Andy?”

Andy looked stupidly around the cabin. “What time is it? I must have overslept. I’ll have to go now to hunt King and Duke.”

“Not tonight, Andy,” laughed Molly. “You’ve slept all day, but you needed it. Aren’t you hungry?”

“Yes, I—I guess I am,” replied Andy, now thoroughly awake. “I didn’t mean to sleep all day.”

“It’s a good thing you did, lad, for you and Molly had a long night of work. You can go in search of our team in the morning.”





## XII

### ANDY MAKES A DISCOVERY

Perched high upon the broad back of old Bill, the Bradley horse, Andy set out early the next day in search of Captain Jim's runaway blacks. He had no idea where to look for them, but he decided to follow the towpath and ask at every house along the way to Logansport, if any one had seen King and Duke. Then if he was not successful he would ask the residents of the town. Surely some one would have taken them up by this time.

It was not nearly as cold now and the bright February sun was melting the snow a little, so that it was rather slushy going. The bluejays and sparrows were darting hither and thither, hunting for stray crumbs and dried up berries which might still be clinging to the bushes. Andy thought he could hear the water gurgling underneath the canal and this would mean that hauling could not be many weeks away.

But there would be no hauling for him along the Wabash and Erie unless he found Captain Pride's horses. He wished that his father and Mr. Bradley would come back from Toledo, for he knew they would help him and soon find the wandering team.

When he reached the first house he tied up his horse to the post and walked around to the kitchen door. The farmer was at home mending some harness. No, he had not seen a black team, but he knew the horses and if they came this way he would surely take them up for the captain. At the farmer's insistence Andy warmed himself a little, then mounted his horse and rode on to the next house. He stopped at every home along the canal, but no one had seen King and Duke.



Arrived in town he sought out the doctor to report that Captain Jim's condition was satisfactory. The old doctor advised him to go to the sheriff, for surely he would know some news about the black team, as people always notified him when they took up stray animals. But the sheriff said no horses had been taken up all winter. Several horses had strayed away though and he made a memorandum of Captain Pride's loss and promised to send word if he heard any good news.

By this time Andy was quite hungry. So he stopped in the restaurant of the Logansport House for a cup of coffee.

"Have you seen a runaway team of black horses?" asked Andy as the woman set his food on the counter.

"Horses, sonny? No, I haven't. It's queer though, for you're the third fellow inquiring about lost horses this winter. Whose team was it?"

"Captain Jim Pride's, ma'am. Captain of the RED BIRD on the Wabash and Erie. They were mighty fine animals, too."

"It's always the finest that wanders off, seems to me. La! Captain Pride's. That's a shame, for he's one of the finest boaters on the whole canal. If I

hear any news I'll be sure to let you know quick."

Andy didn't know where to go in his search, but as it was rather early in the afternoon, he decided to ride beyond Logansport a little way in hopes of finding some trace of their horses. It was queer, though, that no one had seen them. In this weather they couldn't have gone far. Andy now began to fear that the horses had become confused and wandered a long distance. Perhaps they had been frozen, for it was very cold the night they ran away.

He rode on and on, stopping all along the way, but with no success. He had almost decided to turn back when he noticed a large house quite a distance from the canal. He would make one more stop and then if he heard nothing, he would have to go back to the RED BIRD. He hated to return, however, without at least some hopeful news for Captain Jim. King and Duke were the captain's most prized possessions, and they had cost a large sum of money, of that Andy was certain.

When he arrived at the large house he knocked and waited a little while, but no one came to the door. He peered in at the front window and saw a large, barely furnished room. It looked almost as if

no one lived there, but he could see a fire burning in the fireplace.

Perhaps the owner was at the barn. Andy would go to see. Leaving his horse tied at the front gate, he made his way back to the barn which was not far from the house. As he neared it he heard voices, angry voices, high-pitched and excited.

“I tell you, you must take them away before the end of the week. I can't have these horses here.”

“Yes, sir, but this is no weather to take a team east. Can't we grain 'em for a couple of weeks or so?”

Andy thought he had heard that first voice before, so he went on to the barn door. Two men were standing at the end of a row of stalls, and the light from an open door at the other end of the barn shone full upon them. As Andy peered in at them he recognized the larger man as the strange passenger whom they had carried on the RED BIRD almost to Fort Wayne. He was on the point of calling out to them, for they were not aware that any one else was near, when the stranger spoke again.

“Captain Pride's going to be out looking for these blacks soon, and I must have them far from here. It would ruin me if they were found on my place.”



“Not much he won’t, for I give him a good klop on the head. When he fell he twisted his leg and couldn’t get up. I think he’s goin’ to set still for a while, for he’s not able to go around hunting the team.”

Andy drew back against the side of the barn, for now he realized he was hearing some news which might be dangerous for him to know. As his eyes grew accustomed to the half light of the stalls, to his great surprise he saw one of Captain Jim’s blacks in the first stall next to him. He dared not speak to the horse, for it was already pawing around excitedly in its place.

Thieves! This man, dressed in the height of fashion that day last autumn was a horse thief. Was this their hideout? Andy could make out the forms of several other horses in the nearby stalls. He must get away before the men in the barn discovered him. He turned quickly and ran back to old Bill. He mounted the horse and then carefully placing the house and the surrounding landscape in his mind, he rode rapidly away, hoping he had not been seen by the men.

Twilight was closing down upon him, but he noticed every landmark which would help him to return

unerringly to this place where Captain Jim's precious blacks were being kept. The stranger had said something about taking them away, so whatever Andy did, would have to be done very quickly. He decided the first thing for him was to go back to the RED BIRD and tell Captain Jim what he had seen and heard.

He pushed old Bill as fast as possible, but it was well after dark when he arrived at the boat. He took Bill on deck and forward to the now empty stalls. After graining him and rubbing him down a very little, he dashed back to the cabin.

"Hello, Andy. You've been gone all day. What news?"

"Oh, sir, I found 'em. I saw them and they're all right."

"Well, why didn't you bring them home? Where were they?"

"They were in a barn on the other side of Logansport. Well, you see I couldn't bring them with me. They had been stolen."

"Couldn't you prove they were our horses? Certainly King and Duke knew you."

"Yes, sir, I believe they did, although they didn't



*He took Bill on deck*





see me, but one of them pawed the stall terribly.”

“What was the matter, Andy?”

Then Andy told him the whole story, how he had wandered from house to house along the canal, inquired from the sheriff and at the hotel at Logansport, but had found no trace of the horses. Then he told him how he happened to ride farther and what he had overheard at the barn.

“And he was the same man, Captain Jim, the one we saw on the deck of the SILVER BELL, who rode with us almost to Fort Wayne. He’s just a common horse thief after all. No wonder I didn’t trust him.”

“I wonder if you haven’t made an important discovery, Andy. You know I didn’t like that man from the moment he set foot on my boat.”

“Nor I, Captain Jim. I saw him at Logansport, while you were with Miss Henderson and Miss Molly, hunting Mr. Mark Bradley.”

“You did? Where, Andy?”

“He was just coming out of a tobacco store as I walked along the run. He joined up with me and came almost to the RED BIRD. He asked me if you wanted to sell King and Duke.”

“So! He’s had his eye on them for a long time.

But he had a lot of gall to steal them from me. You know I thought I'd been hit on the head, but I couldn't be sure. It all seems so hazy."

Captain Jim lay quietly on his bunk for a few minutes, while Andy watched his face anxiously.

"This blasted leg. I wish I could get to Logansport. I wish your father would come back. I think I could use him."

"Captain Jim, you don't think my father had any hand in stealing the blacks, do you?"

"No, lad, most certainly not, but I wonder about a lot of things. I wish Matthew Burke wuz here. I need him."

"I'll do anything you want me to do, sir."

"That I know, Andy, and you've done a big thing today. You handled the business well. The first thing in the morning I want you to ride over and find the sheriff. No matter how busy he is, bring him to the RED BIRD to talk with me."

The sun shone brightly the next day and as soon as Miss Molly arrived to care for Captain Jim, Andy set out on old Bill for Logansport. It took him a little while to locate the sheriff, but Andy soon persuaded him to go back to the RED BIRD to see Captain



Pride. He did not tell the sheriff that he had located the horses, but only that the captain needed help.

“Well, sheriff,” began the captain as soon as the man had seated himself by the bunk in the cabin, “I found the team of blacks.”

“I’m glad to hear it, Captain. Did some one take them up for you? I hope the horses weren’t any the worse for their little run. It has been cold weather for wandering horses.”

“No, sir, they weren’t exactly taken up for me and I don’t have them on my boat yet. That’s why I sent for you. I think Andy here has made a big discovery for you. Something mighty important’s in the wind. I want you to get them back for me.”

“Me to get them back! I’ll be glad to, Captain Pride. Where are they?”

“On the other side of Logansport. Andy, tell the sheriff where and how you found them.”

Andy repeated his experience of the day before.

“Do you mean the Grimes place?” asked the sheriff.

“I don’t know whose place it is, sir, but I know the house when I see it.” Andy described the house and its location in detail.

“There must be some mistake, Captain Pride,” said the sheriff when Andy had finished his story. “You see the Grimes place has been deserted for a long time. It’s been for sale to settle an estate. I’ve met the man who leased it this fall. Name’s Clayton, Jonathan Clayton. He’s a horse dealer and a big one, I think, but he’s no thief. Why, he even helped me recover some stolen horses last summer.”

Captain Jim spoke up: “I had the pleasure of meeting him earlier this last fall, too, but I think he is the brains of a great horse-thieving ring. He’s been smart enough not to get caught, and he’s probably been getting on the right side of you, just in case he got into some difficulty. Will you take Andy and go after my team today?”

The sheriff hesitated. “Well, I can’t go today, Captain, for I got some other work laid out to do, but I’ll go the first of the week. Meanwhile, I’ll look up the fellow’s actions. You can’t brand a man a thief until you have some evidence against him.”

“Isn’t my team evidence enough, sheriff?”

“Next week will be too late,” put in Andy. “He said the team would have to be moved before the end of this week.”

“The boy’s right. He’s too smart to keep those blacks in these parts, for he knows they might be recognized and that I’ll be hunting them,” added Captain Pride.

“You can’t move horses in this weather, Captain Pride. I’ll look into it though, right away. I would hate to accuse an honest man of horse stealin’. Why that’s a serious offense. Most likely he’s just taken ’em up for you and the boy here misunderstood the conversation. I’ll be gettin’ back to town now and I’ll let you know right off what I hear.”

The sheriff picked up his hat and went out of the cabin.

“Well of all the— He didn’t believe me!” exploded Andy, as he heard the sheriff’s step on the deck of the RED BIRD.

Captain Jim’s face was a thundercloud. “This Clayton’s hoodwinked the sheriff, too. By crimony! I’ll go myself, Andy. I’ll be able tomorrow. That team’s not going to get away from me, not if my name’s Jim Pride.”

“But your leg, Captain Jim,” cried Andy. “You can’t go. Why you can’t make it off of the RED BIRD.”



“Oh, yes I can, Andy. You borrow the Bradley’s cutter and you can drive me to Logansport tomorrow.”





### XIII

#### MATTHEW BURKE CLEARS MATTERS

Andy was torn between the desire of bringing the stolen team back to the RED BIRD and the fear that Captain Jim would injure his broken leg further in his effort to travel to Logansport. When Molly Bradley returned to the boat in the evening to get their supper, he told her of the captain's resolve to go after the blacks.

"But he can't go, Andy," cried Molly Bradley. "I'll be glad to lend you the cutter, but Captain Jim must not risk traveling in his condition. Doesn't he realize he has a broken leg? Why it might kill him to make the trip."

"I don't know, ma'am, but if we don't go right off, the team will be taken away and we can never recover them. I wish my father would come home. He would know what to do."

"Yes, and Uncle Mark, too. They should be returning any day now. We certainly can't let Captain Jim go."

"Oh, but I'm going, Molly," put in Captain Jim, who had been lying quietly on his bunk with his eyes closed.

"Jim! We thought you were asleep. But it's madness for you to think of going. The blacks aren't worth the risk to your leg."

"Yes they are, Molly, and neither Jonathan Clayton nor any other man is going to put this kind of a deal over on me. Andy's to get the cutter the first thing in the morning."

Andy and Miss Molly did not argue the point further, for they could see that it was useless to talk



with Captain Pride now. They both hoped that some way would present itself to keep him from carrying out his plan the next day.

Andy was scarcely awake the following morning before Captain Pride began calling him to bring his boots and clothes to the bunk so that he could get dressed.

“But you must have some breakfast first, sir,” said Andy, trying to delay the Captain until Miss Molly arrived. Perhaps she could persuade him not to go.

“Well, make some coffee then and be quick about it. Every minute we delay may cost us the horses.” Captain Jim was struggling with his boots.

When Andy had prepared breakfast and could think of no other excuse for remaining on the boat, he set out reluctantly for the Bradley place to get the cutter. Arrived at the barn he met Molly as she was saddling her horse to come over to the RED BIRD.

“I can’t put him off any longer, Miss Molly. He made me help him with his boots and he’s dressed to go with me. He was tuckered out time he was dressed, though.”

“We can’t let him go, Andy. Can’t you think of something?”

“No, ma’am. I’ve been trying to all morning. If you say so, I’ll go alone, Miss Molly, without stopping at the boat. We have to get those horses soon.”

“You can’t do it by yourself, Andy. I have an idea. You hitch up the cutter and I’ll go with you to Logansport. Perhaps I can convince the sheriff that he must go with us today.”

With lifted spirits Andy drew the cutter out from its place in the shed. Perhaps Miss Molly could do something, for she had a persuasive way about her. They could at least try it.

They drove along briskly and had almost reached the RED BIRD when two horsemen appeared coming along the slushy towpath. One of the men was leading a horse at his side.

“I do believe that’s Uncle Mark,” cried Molly Bradley, shading her eyes from the morning sun to see more clearly.

“And Father! Oh, it is, it is!” shouted Andy, as the horses drew nearer to them.

“Hello!” called Matthew Burke. “Hello, Andy boy.”

“We’re so glad you’ve come, Father. We’ve been needing you.”

“Yes, Uncle Mark, we have to have your help.”

“What’s up, Molly? No bad news, I hope.”

“Yes, but you’ve come just in time.”

As they tied up their horses and hurried on to the RED BIRD and into the cabin, Molly and Andy tried to tell all of their troubles without drawing a breath. With Captain Jim’s help they poured out the whole story.

Matthew Burke looked critically at the captain’s injured leg. “That’s a bad leg you have, and you’re to lie quietly and not try to use it. We’ll go right off after the team and the sheriff will go with us. I wonder—” he muttered to himself, “I wonder if I’m going to end my long search today.”

“Yes,” put in Mark Bradley, “the three of us will go to Logansport and we’ll have no difficulty persuading the sheriff to accompany us.”

“You’re great friends, boys, all of you and I appreciate your kindness,” said Captain Pride as he lay back exhausted on his bunk.

Molly went up on deck with them and watched the three stalwart men, for Andy was as large as his father, ride toward Logansport. They left the cutter for her to drive back to the Bradley place.



Arrived in town, Mark Bradley soon convinced the sheriff that his most urgent business at the moment was going with him to the Grimes place, and soon the four rode forth north and east of Logansport, Andy leading the way.

“Father, did you get any one to help you?” asked Andy as they rode together a little in advance of the others.

“Yes, son, I did. This is my horse and I’ve credit for a new string of racing horses. I’m to get them as soon as the weather opens up a little. I want to return the one I borrowed from Colonel Brooks, and I think I’ll have good news for him before this day is over. Something tells me that I shall. Are we near the place, Andy?”

Andy studied his surroundings. “Yes, I think that is the house yonder.” He pointed to a white house on the next hill some little distance from the canal. Then he turned to the other men who were following close behind.

“I think that is the place, Mr. Bradley.”

“That’s the Grimes place, all right,” nodded the sheriff.

As they rode up to the house a man was just com-

ing from the barn, driving a handsome black team.

“There they are, Father. That’s King and Duke.”

“Are you sure, Andy?”

“Yes, Father. The horses will know me, too.”

When the man in the barnyard saw the four horsemen, he started to turn back to the barn.

“Stop! Stop, I say in the name of the law!” cried the sheriff, aroused at last.

Andy dismounted and ran quickly over to the horses. He began patting them quietly. “Duke. King, old boy, where have you been?”

Duke whinnied and nuzzled his head against Andy’s shoulder, while King stretched his neck in the endeavor to reach the boy.

“They know the lad all right,” said Mark Bradley.

“Where are you going with that team?” asked the sheriff.

“It’s Jonathan Clayton’s team, sir. I’m taking them up to town this morning.”

“Oh, no, you’re not. You’re under arrest for possession of stolen horses, for that team belongs to Captain Jim Pride of the RED BIRD. I think we’ll just have a look around the barn, too.”

“Ought to be arrested for assault,” muttered Mark

Bradley, "for I believe he's the fellow who hit Captain Pride on the head. Is this the man you saw in the barn, Andy?"

"I can't be sure, sir, for I couldn't see him as well as I saw Jonathan Clayton."

"You can't do that, sir," put in the man who was still holding the reins of the black team. "Mr. Clayton's not at home and I can't take you through the barn without his leave."

"Oh, you can't? That's too bad. We'll just have a little look around alone. Might see something else interesting in the stables. Come on, boys."

"There ain't any more horses there, sheriff. Mr. Clayton doesn't do much trading in this weather."

"Just a little stealing now and then," sneered Matthew Burke, as he started toward the barn.

At this moment they heard a halloo from the front of the house and a man came riding toward them.

"Well I'll be blowed—he's riding my own horse, my Dandy," cried Matthew Burke.

Jonathan Clayton stopped for a moment when he saw the group of men in the barnyard, but came forward affably enough when he recognized the sheriff.





*"He's riding my own horse, my Dandy"*



“Good morning, sheriff. What can I do for you today?”

“Quite a bit, Clayton, I should say. These your horses?” The sheriff nodded toward King and Duke, whom Andy was still patting.

“Why, yes. I bought them only a few days ago. Quite a matched team, aren’t they?”

As Jonathan Clayton looked from one of the men to the other, he suddenly recognized Andy as the driver for the RED BIRD, and his face lost its expression of affability. Then as he gazed into the searching eyes of Matthew Burke, his face blanched, but he assumed an air of bravado.

“You mean you stole them from Captain Pride,” sneered Matthew Burke. “Stole them as he was leaving the lumber camp for the day. It’s been a long time, Jonathan Clayton, but I think you and I have an old score to settle. A little matter of a string of fine race horses, stolen last year in St. Louis.”

Jonathan Clayton attempted to stand his ground. “You must have made a mistake, sir, for I don’t recall ever having seen you before.”

“Tax your memory then, Clayton. Perhaps you can tell me why my string of horses was sold to a



rival stable in New Orleans instead of being delivered to Colonel Brooks, the real buyer. Can you explain why I was bound, gagged and stuffed into a boat bound down the Mississippi? And how do you happen to be riding my horse, Dandy?"

"I thought that horse looked like Dandy, Father."

At the sound of the word Dandy, the lively horse which Mr. Clayton was holding, reared up in air and whinnied loudly.

"I see he remembers his name. Dandy, old boy, have you missed me?" asked Matthew Burke, as he stroked the horse's mane.

"This man is your thief, sheriff, and a clever one at that," said Mr. Clayton. "He stole the black team and sold it to me, but I give you my word I didn't know they were stolen. As for this being his horse, that's rubbish. I bought this little animal at the market in New Orleans."

"Your story doesn't hold water, Clayton," said Mark Bradley. "It just happens that he was on a trip with me in the East when these horses were stolen. Sheriff, we're wasting time. Arrest these men and hold them for a while."

"I have plenty on you, Jonathan Clayton," re-

marked Matthew Burke quietly. "You're wanted in several places down South and it won't take me long to get the evidence to put you where you belong."

"If that's your horse, Burke, can you prove it?" asked the sheriff.

"I think I can, sir, for I spent a long time training that animal." At a signal from Matthew Burke, the horse lay down and rolled over. Then he did a few dancing steps. At a whistle from his master he trotted briskly away and at a second whistle, he returned to drop on his knees at Burke's feet.

"Looks like proof enough to me." The sheriff turned to Clayton and his companion. "You two are under arrest and you're going to Logansport with me to stay until we can get certain evidence against you. If you're wanted in the South, we'll be glad to deliver you over to the authorities there. Pretty clever fellow you are, Clayton. Had me fooled, I'll admit, but this Burke is no slouch either."

"Andy, you ride back to the RED BIRD and take the blacks with you," said Mark Bradley, "for Captain Pride will be anxious to hear from us. Your father and I will ride with the sheriff to take these

men to town. Tell Captain Jim he can put the extra horses in my stable, for we'll be bringing Dandy back with us."

Andy watched the men as they rode along the canal with their two prisoners between them. Then he turned to King and Duke.

"Old fellows, we'll be going back home now. It pays to trust to your hunches. The first time I saw Jonathan Clayton, I knew he meant bad luck for us. Come on, King. Get up, Duke. At last my father is cleared of any part in this horse stealing."

Late in the evening Matthew Burke and Mark Bradley returned to the RED BIRD, happy to relate that Jonathan Clayton and his companion were safely lodged in the Logansport jail to await prosecution at the hands of the men in the South, who had been searching for them. Andy's father was glad to recover his favorite horse, but he was far happier to have the evidence which would clear him of any implication in the horse thieving ring. Andy, too, was gratified to have had a part in proving to his friends that his father was innocent, and he told Captain Jim everything that had happened at the farm.

Captain Pride lay quietly on his bunk, propped up



by some pillows so he could enjoy his visitors. His heart sang with joy in the knowledge that his precious team of blacks was now resting in the forward stalls.

“What are you going to do now, Father?” asked Andy, as they sat comfortably in the cabin, enjoying the hearth fire after supper.

“He’s coming over to stay a spell with Molly and me,” put in Mark Bradley before Matthew Burke could reply.

“I must return Colonel Brooks’ horse as soon as I can and get word to him that we’ve caught up with Jonathan Clayton. But Andy, son, what about you? Do you want to go with me?”

“I’d sort of counted on having him haul with me this spring,” said Captain Jim from the depths of his pillows. “I’ll need him bad till my leg gets well.”

“Why Jim, you mustn’t think of hauling for a while. You aren’t able,” said Molly Bradley quickly.

“Well, not yet, Molly girl, but as soon as the weather permits, we’ll have to go. Cash is getting sort of low.”

“I hoped to finish the term of school,” suggested Andy.

“School! Why of course, son, by the way, have you heard anything more about the college? You know the one Miss Henderson was talking of at Christmas time.”

“Yes we did, Mr. Burke. Andy, what did you do with the letter I gave you? The one Miss Henderson received from Professor Hovey?”

“Why Miss Molly—I—let’s see. I had it the evening Captain Jim was hurt. It must still be in my coat.” Andy jumped up and took his coat from its peg. “Here it is.” He brought the letter forth from his pocket where it had been lying.

“Read it, Molly, and tell us what it says,” suggested Captain Jim.

Miss Molly read the letter carefully and smiled as she explained it to her eager listeners.

“Professor Hovey says he will be glad to help any boy recommended by Miss Henderson. It will take about a hundred dollars for the year. Let’s see.” Molly Bradley consulted the letter again. “The tuition is \$21 for the year. Board is \$1.50 a week. Room rent exclusive of wood and light is \$9.00 a year. Books can be rented from the school. There are entrance examinations in certain branches.

They're listed here and he says if a boy is deficient in any of the subjects, that he can take it in their preparatory department."

"Do you want to go to this college, Andy?" asked his father.

Andy hesitated for a few minutes. "Yes, Father, I should like to try it, if Miss Molly thinks I can pass the examinations. As Captain Jim says, I can't walk the towpath all my life."

"I'll help you, Andy. We can study for the examinations. I don't know about Latin and Greek. They're listed here, but I can tutor you in all the rest of these subjects."

"Then it's settled, lad," put in Matthew Burke. "If Captain Jim needs you this spring, you're to haul with him. Study all you can and next fall you can enter Wabash College. I'll have the money ready."

When it was decided that Andy should haul with Captain Pride for another season, Matthew Burke tarried for a couple of days with the Bradleys and then set out for the South with his horses. He promised to look out for a team to take the place of Queen and Bess on the towpath, and to send them to Captain Pride as soon as possible.





#### XIV

### SPRING COMES TO THE WABASH AND ERIE

It was not long until the ice began breaking up in the canal. The water gurgled and sang as it broke through the ice-bound channel. The crayfish were busy making holes in the canal bed, which meant extensive repairs for the canallers later on; while the spring freshets were filling the feeders almost to overflowing. Along the banks the pussy willow buds swelled to the bursting point and soon they made a

gray silky haze all along the waterway. The robins, the first heralds of the spring, were already flying overhead and Andy was certain that he had heard a meadow lark.

Before the ice had entirely disappeared, a few freighters came nosing along the big ditch that was the Wabash and Erie, hoping to get the first of the spring hauling. Captain Jim's leg was improving, but he could not use it well yet, although he became impatient to start hauling as soon as he saw the first freighter. In other years he had been among the first of the daring captains to brave the spring thaws. He said nothing to Andy, though, for he had decided to wait until his school term was over.

On the last day of school, Captain Pride announced he was about ready to begin the spring haul.

"But Captain Jim, do you think you're able to go? Of course I can do all the walking on the tow-path, but you shouldn't stand on your leg all day at the sweep."

Captain Pride laughed. "Andy, you and Molly will make an old woman out of me, coddling me all this while. My leg needs exercise and I intend to use it, lad."

“How soon do you plan to leave, Captain? I’m ready whenever you are.”

“Well, in a few days now, perhaps a week. The RED BIRD needs overhauling, a few repairs here and there, and perhaps a coat of paint. After that’s done, our going depends on Molly.”

“What do you mean, sir?”

“I’ve persuaded Molly that I need to be taken care of and that you need a tutor on the towpath.”

“She’s going with us?”

“She is, Andy, and she’s going to be Mrs. Jim Pride, when the RED BIRD starts hauling this spring.”

“You’re going to be married?” Andy smiled broadly. “Well, you know I thought this boat was tied up here for some other reason than just my going to school.”

“You’re a smart lad, Andy. I’ve said so all along, but it’s taken me all winter to persuade Molly to haul with me on the RED BIRD. We’ll have to get busy now, for I want the boat caulked and painted. The horses need to be shod, the harness wants going over, and I think I’d better buy a new tow rope.”

For the next few days after Captain Jim had



caulked it thoroughly, Andy was absorbed in painting the boat. When he had finished he was quite proud of his work and the RED BIRD did look very gay and fresh in its new coat of paint.

Then he went over the harness, inspecting every part for possible weak spots, and oiling it well. He thought the tug seemed rather worn and told Captain Jim about it, but the captain said they would have to use it until they could get another.

While they were repairing the outside of the boat, Molly Bradley renovated the cabin. Now that her school term was finished, she spent most of her time scouring and scrubbing every nook and cranny of the cabin. She aired the blankets and their clothes, and finally hung gay red checked curtains at the tiny cabin windows. Even Andy and Captain Jim had to admit that the boat was improved.

While Captain Pride was in Logansport getting the black team shod, Andy cleaned the stalls under Miss Molly's direction. In town the captain learned that he could get a load of ashes at Montezuma to haul northward. He bought a new towrope and much to Andy's surprise, purchased a new suit for his wedding.

Molly decided to have a home wedding at her Uncle Mark Bradley's house, and invited all of the children of her school and their parents. It was a gala day and everyone came looking his best for this important occasion. Molly Bradley was lovely in her white wedding dress which Miss Henderson helped her to make, and Andy scarcely recognized his own Captain Jim in his new suit, for it was the first time he had ever seen the captain in any clothes besides his hauling outfit.

Captain Jim and Miss Molly were married at noon on the first day of April. Uncle Mark had done his best to make it a long remembered day and served a bountiful dinner to all of his guests. When every one had eaten as much as possible and had congratulated Captain Jim on winning such a pretty bride, the guests accompanied the bridal pair to the RED BIRD. As they stood on the bank waving their farewells, Andy let out the towline, urged on the horses and began the first spring haul to Montezuma.

It was very pleasant having Miss Molly, or rather Mrs. Jim Pride on the boat with them and Andy had to admit her cooking surpassed that of his beloved Captain Jim. Andy was very happy and whistled





*Molly Bradley was lovely in her white wedding dress*





merrily as he walked the towpath and glanced back every now and then at the captain and Molly standing at the sweep. As he gazed ahead he noticed that the canal was at a higher level than usual and water stood in all of the fields, for the spring rains had deluged the surrounding country.

Two days later as Andy passed a feeder of the canal, he saw the water was almost at the top of the wooden gate which kept the swirling water from pouring into the canal. The swishing noise frightened the blacks, making them plunge and rear, but Andy held the reins firmly and managed to get them safely along the path. He was a bit uneasy, however, as he looked at the menacing water.

“Captain Jim!” he called, turning back toward the RED BIRD. “Shall I try to go on?”

“Yes, Andy, keep a firm grip on the reins and I believe King and Duke will make it all right. They’re a bit frisky after their winter of laziness and the water’s higher than I’ve ever seen it.”

Captain Pride seized the long pole which he kept on deck for emergencies and tried to keep the boat true to its course. Molly was standing at the sweep with him, and she, too, was worried by the angry

water. Andy turned again to his task of keeping the horses in hand, and saw that the other drivers were having difficulty with their teams on the towpath.

As they neared the town of Covington, they had to pass a large mill located at the junction of a feeder and the canal. It was larger than the Musk Mill and had a longer wooden dam. As they came even with it, Andy noticed that the water was almost even with its top. Then he heard a peculiar crackling noise and before he could stop the horses, the dam had broken in the center and the swirling heavy waters came tumbling over the levee. In a moment the RED BIRD was caught in the seething mass of water which came pouring down upon them.

King and Duke lunged and bolted. With a snap the worn tug gave way, leaving the towrope and the boat at the mercy of the water. Andy grasped the reins tightly, but the horses were running madly now, and in another moment he was thrown headlong into the canal. He floundered about, gasping and choking, but still hung on to the reins.

The blacks, now wild with fright, dragged him mercilessly through the water as he strove to gain a footing. Andy heard a horrible cracking sound and



tried to look around for the boat. He saw it caught in the seething whirlpool which was now the canal, saw it rise on its stern and then plunge underneath the dark heavy waters. The horses plunged on, pulling him through bushes and mud until at last they were forced to stop, for they had become tangled in the harness.

Andy was thrown face downward in a muddy field. When he could get his breath he stood up and looked about. The horses were exhausted and trembling with fright. He looked back at the canal for the boat, but it was nowhere to be seen. A crowd was gathering on the bank near where he had last seen the RED BIRD, but he could not see Captain Jim nor Molly. He waded through the muddy field as fast as possible toward the crowd to find out what had happened.

In the center of the group of people he found Captain Jim carrying his exhausted wife in his arms.

"Captain Jim! The RED BIRD! What happened?" gasped Andy.

"Andy, you're safe! Thank God! The boat's gone, broken to smithereens."

"Miss Molly! Is she all right?"

"I think so, but I must get her out of this."

In some fashion the three of them were taken to the mill, where dry clothing was found for all. Miss Molly was placed in a warm bed to recuperate from the terrible experience. It seemed that every one in Covington had witnessed the disaster and was anxious to help the survivors of the RED BIRD.

"King and Duke! Where are they?" asked Captain Jim when he was sure that Molly was going to be all right.

"I hung on to 'em, Captain, just as you said. I left them tangled in their harness in a field down the way."

"Your horses are safe in my stable," put in the owner of the mill. "One of the men drove them here for you. They're pretty skittish, but they'll quiet down after a while."

For the next few days, the residents of the ill-fated RED BIRD remained at the Covington Mill, recovering from their struggle with the water. While there had been other boats near the scene of the disaster, Captain Jim's craft was the only one which was caught by the seething waters of the broken mill dam. Nothing was saved from the wreckage, but

they felt extremely fortunate to have escaped with their lives. After a few days rest, Molly Pride was her usual sunny self and tried to comfort the captain in his loss.

Overnight the news of the accident spread along the canal and the canallers to a man were anxious to help Captain Pride secure another boat. One of the merchants in Covington gave him lumber to build a new boat, and several of the canallers immediately volunteered to help build the new craft. In a very short time they had built a new boat, much larger and more commodious than the old RED BIRD. It had much greater freight capacity and triple the cabin space, so that a few passengers might be carried along with the freight.

As each freighter arrived at the mill, its captain brought some piece of equipment for Captain Jim's new boat. Some gave chairs and tables for the cabin, others brought brick for the fireplaces and kitchen utensils for Molly. One man brought two new tow-lines.

But the crowning gift was from Matthew Burke. He was in Kentucky when news came to him of the RED BIRD'S catastrophe and he came with all



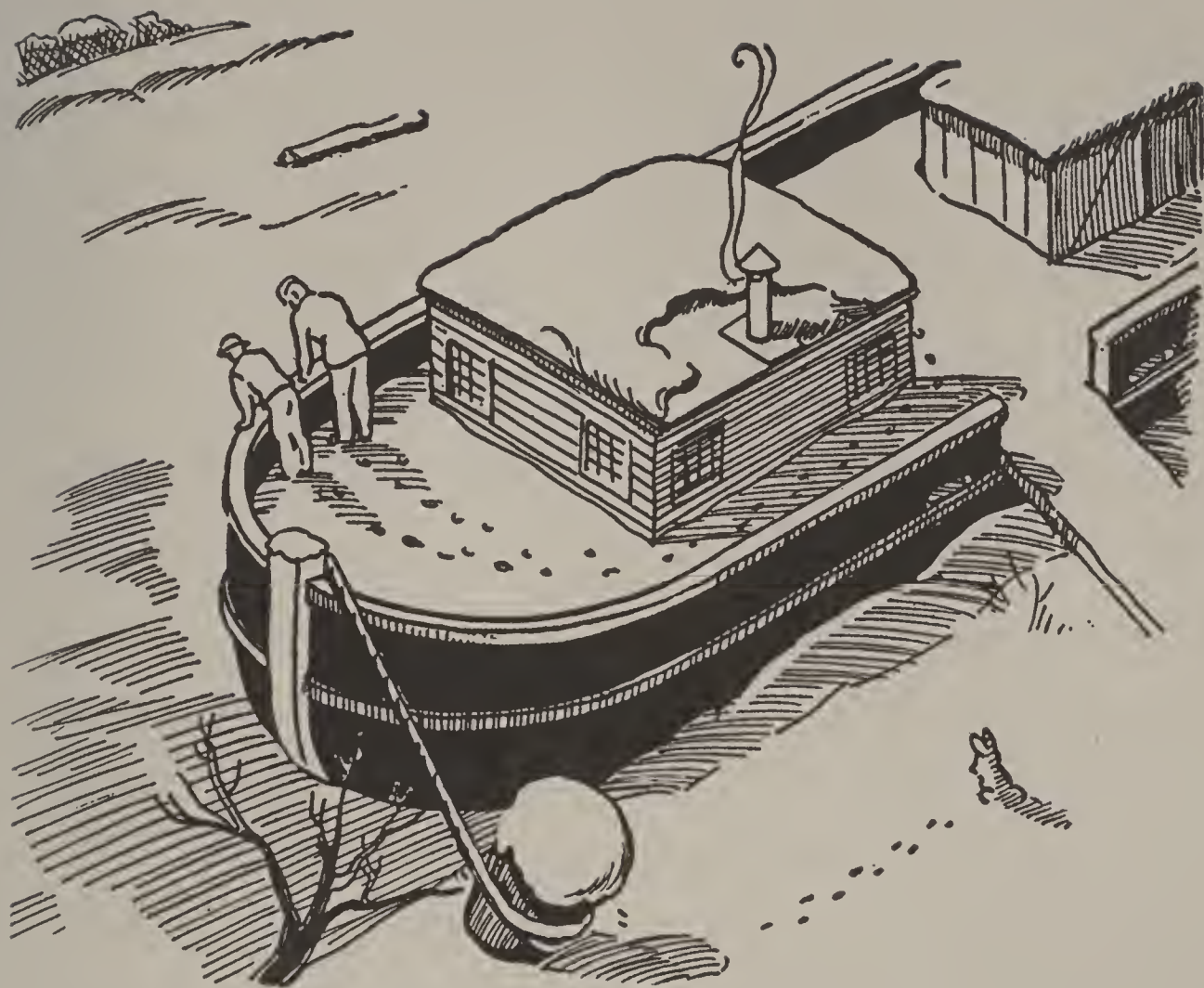
speed, bringing a fine team of horses with him. The animals were not as well-matched as King and Duke, but they were good haulers and could take their place on the towpath while the blacks were resting from the haul.

Matthew Burke would accept no money from the captain for the team, saying that it was his small contribution in return for Captain Jim's kindness to his boy. He was doing well with his string of horses and had several thoroughbreds to deliver in the South for the racing season.

After several weeks Captain Jim was ready to begin hauling with his new boat, which he had christened MOLLY'S PRIDE.

"You know," said Andy, as he gazed with ill-concealed admiration at their new craft, "I'm almost glad we lost the RED BIRD, for this one is so much better."

"Well, it's an ill wind you know," replied Captain Jim, "and I agree with you. It's going to be much more comfortable for Molly."



## XV

### ANDY BURKE FINDS A NEW TOWPATH

By the first of May Captain Pride was hauling again on the Wabash and Erie. With his new boat and second team, he was able to make much better time and haul much heavier loads. From early morning until late at night, Andy and Captain Jim took turns walking the towpath, helped materially by Molly's cheery presence and excellent cooking.

On their return trips from Toledo they carried

a great many immigrants, hardy German folk who were seeking new homes in the West. The immigrants all had large families and even with the increased cabin space, Captain Pride was hard put to find room for the hordes of people who wanted to ship westward on his boat. Some of them came to Fort Wayne and changed to trains or stages there, but many made the full trip to Terre Haute.

Even on their busiest days, Andy found a little time to study his lesson with Molly Pride. Whenever he took his turn at the sweep, she came up on deck, book in hand to help him with his work. Over and over they parsed every sentence in the grammar book, and recited page after page from the geography book, until Andy knew both books backwards and forwards.

“Andy, I’m sure you’ll pass the examinations,” said Molly one day late in summer when they were resting between hauls.

“I surely hope so, ma’am. If I don’t, it won’t be because you haven’t done your best.”

“We haven’t touched the Latin and Greek, but I’m sure if you pass the other subjects, they will let you enroll in the preparatory department for the



languages. I could help you a little in Latin, but I don't know anything about Greek."

"I'll be lucky if I pass the other part, Miss Molly. It won't be long now until I try it. I wonder when my father will be coming this way. I've saved some money, but not nearly enough for my expenses at Wabash."

"You'll need some new clothes too, Andy, a new suit at least, for you can't go to college in that canal outfit."

"A new suit! Why ma'am, I've never had a suit bought from a store. Some one in Covington gave me this one I'm wearing."

"It's high time you had some store clothes then," laughed Molly Pride. "We'll look about for one the next time we're in Toledo."

Thus the hauling continued. Lessons, towpath, immigrants, sweep, and lessons again, until the first week in September arrived. It was then that Matthew Burke appeared again on the canal in search of the MOLLY'S PRIDE. He caught up with the boat at Lafayette.

"Think I wasn't coming, Andy boy?" laughed his father, when he saw the boy's relieved expression.

"I hadn't given you up yet. I was getting worried though, for I've spent almost all the money I earned this summer."

"That's bad news. What did you buy?"

"Well, Miss Molly thought I should have a new suit, a store suit, and it cost an awful lot."

"That's all right, lad. It's time you had a new suit. I think I can take care of your schooling. I've brought you a horse, too."

"A horse! Gee, Father! For my very own?"

"Yes, she's yours. It would be a long walk from the canal to Crawfordsville, I'm thinking. If you get hard up at school, you can sell the horse. When does school begin?"

"The examinations are the tenth of September."

"I'm just in time then. Got some more news, son."

"What, Father?"

"Well, I been gettin' tired knocking about the country and I've about decided to settle down. Through the Musks I heard of a farm in southern Indiana which was going to be sold at auction. I kind-a thought I'd take in that sale just for fun. It was last week and would you believe it? I own that farm now."



*"A horse! For my very own?"*





“Geems! A farm in Indiana!”

“Yep, near Evansville. I’m going to raise thoroughbreds just as your mother always wanted. Then I wanted you to have a home to come to during vacations.” Matthew Burke turned to Captain Pride.

“What you plannin’ to do come next winter?”

“Ask the boss!” replied Captain Jim, pointing to his wife.

“We’re going to tie up for the winter with Uncle Mark. I’m to have my school again, and Jim will get some hauling, I hope.”

“Then we won’t be so far apart,” put in Andy.

“We’re counting on you and your father spending Christmas with us, Andy. Jim and I won’t take no for an answer.”

“How about it?” asked Andy hopefully.

“Mebbe we can make it. And thank you kindly.”

A few days later Andy took leave of the boat at Lafayette and started to Crawfordsville and Wabash College. Riding the horse which his father had given him, he set out on the toll road, his belongings safely stowed in two saddle bags. He was a bit self-conscious in his store suit and sat rather awkwardly on the horse.

But after he had ridden for some time, he forgot himself and rode gaily along thinking of his first meeting with Captain Jim just a year before. How much had happened in this one short year! He had learned many things on the towpath. What would his new life hold for him?

Late in the afternoon he arrived at the dusty little village of Crawfordsville, nestling among beautiful forest trees. He stopped at the Ristine Tavern to inquire the way to Wabash College. The tavern keeper obligingly walked out to the hitch rack with him and pointed down the road.

"It's about a quarter of a mile from here, young man. New student, aren't you?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, you can't miss the campus, for it's fenced in and has two buildings, big brick ones. Fine college, too. You won't be makin' any mistake comin' here."

Andy thanked him and mounted his horse. After a few minutes' ride he arrived at the campus. He hitched his horse to one of the racks and walked up to the first building, saddle bags in hand. He did not see any students about, but in the hall he met one of the college tutors.



“How do you do, young man?” asked the tutor affably.

“How do you do, sir? I am Andy Burke, a new student. Is Professor Hovey here?”

“Andy Burke. Oh, yes, we’re expecting you. Professor Hovey is away from the campus at present. He’s in the East working on an endowment campaign for us. He left a message for you, though. You’re to live in this building, Foster Hall. The entrance examinations which you are to take will be held in the morning. There’s a notice on the bulletin board about them.”

“I have a horse hitched outside. Where can I stable her?”

“There are any number of places near the campus, Andy, where you can keep your horse. I’ll show you to your room now, for you probably want to get rid of those heavy saddle bags.”

The tutor took him upstairs to the room assigned to him.

“Some of the boys will be dropping in soon, Burke. We’re to have a big celebration tonight. The Calliopean Society is having a torchlight parade with a program afterward. Get your belongings stowed

away and your horse taken care of and I'll see you at dinner tonight. I'll introduce you to a lot of them."

The tutor went downstairs to take care of more new students. Andy looked around his room. Wabash College at last! He took out his few possessions and began arranging them in the room. He would work hard here to justify the faith which his friends had in him. Captain Pride and Miss Molly were expecting great things from the towpath boy. The Musks, too, had wanted him to go to school. His father had made it possible for him to come to college and he must not disappoint him. His mother had always talked of education.

Suddenly he heard the sound of running feet, coming along the hall toward his room.

"Burke! Say, Andy Burke! Are you there?"

"Yes," called Andy, opening the door of his room.

There were four young men of about his own age waiting for him.

"Come on out, Burke. You're just in time for the Calliopean celebration. Come along. We're rounding up all the new students."

"All right." Andy seized his cap and hurried out

with the boys, hurried out to a new towpath, the shining towpath of knowledge of which his mother had always dreamed.









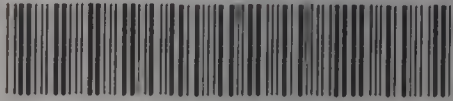








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