

# THE GO AHEAD BOYS AND THE RACING MOTOR-BOAT



## Chapter 15: An Upset

---

The Black Growler, carried forward by the current of the mighty river as well as by her own power, brought the party on board to their destination late in the afternoon.

It was the first time that Fred's friends had seen the spot. The clear running water of the great river, the skies without a cloud, the sight of the numberless camps and cottages, as well as of the many yachts and motor-boats that were to be seen on the river, all combined to increase the interest of the Go Ahead boys.

When at last they arrived at the island owned by Fred's grandfather their enthusiasm became still greater. A beautiful cottage, which really was a house with twenty rooms, was located in a grove of high trees. The boathouse, ample and attractive in every way, and the sight of several skiffs that had been made fast to the dock caused George to exclaim in his impulsive manner, "There isn't a place like it in all the world! I never saw such a spot before in all my life!"

"But you're young yet," suggested Grant soberly.

"But I have seen some things, even if I am young," retorted George. "I thought Mackinac Island was beautiful, but this has some things you can't find up there."

"Spoken like a philosopher," again retorted John. The expression on his face was serious as he hastily made inquiries concerning Grant's missing bag. "The poor chap," he explained, "is in trouble. He can't wear any clothes that fit the rest of us and unless he gets help soon we shall have to lock him in the boathouse for he won't be presentable anywhere."

To Grant's delight his bag already was in his room awaiting his coming. The mistake had occurred at Albany which had caused as much trouble to the owner of the other bag as Grant himself had suffered.

As soon as the boys were ready they all went down to the broad piazza which adjoined the house on three sides and there were greeted cordially by Fred's grandfather and grandmother.

"We're always glad to see Freddie," said Mrs. Button, beaming affectionately upon her grandson, as she spoke, "and you may be sure that his friends are all as welcome as he is."

"Thank you, Mrs. Button," said George promptly. "If you knew how glad we are to be here you might feel almost as if you were doing missionary work in inviting us."

"She will think she's doing missionary work, I'm afraid," spoke up Grant. "I want to warn you, Mrs. Button, that when George gets into the dining room you'll have to drive him out. It's the only way we can get him to stop."

Mrs. Button smiled as she said, "That's just the kind of a guest I like."

Meanwhile Fred had not been with his companions when they had gone to their rooms, for he had remained behind to talk with his grandfather concerning the uninvited passenger who had arrived with them.

“Yes,” Fred explained, “he was with some other men, canal-men we thought they were, that boarded us between Utica and Rome and we couldn’t get rid of them. I thought at first they were going to try to take the Black Growler away from us, but they didn’t do that and when Mr. Stevens came along in the Caledonia and stopped to help us they all ran away. We didn’t think that we would ever see any of them again, but up here at Cape Vincent who should show up but this man.”

“What did he come for?” inquired Mr. Button. “We couldn’t understand it at first,” replied Fred, “but, Grandfather, we found under a cushion a bond for five thousand dollars.”

“You did WHAT?”

“We found a bond for five thousand dollars.”

“What kind of a bond was it?”

“I don’t know,” said Fred somewhat foolishly. “I know it was a railroad bond.”

“What did you do with it?”

“We took it to the bank in Cape Vincent. We left it there with the man who is in charge.”

“Did you get a receipt for it?”

“Yes, sir.”

“That’s right. That’s right,” said Mr. Button, nodding his head approvingly. “Go on.”

“Well, when we came back from the bank whom should we find on board our motor-boat but this same man, that we had seen on the Erie Canal. He demanded that we should give up the bond.”

“So he knew about the bond, did he?”

“So it seemed. But we told him we didn’t have it. Then he wanted to know what we had done with it and we wouldn’t tell him. When we wanted him to go ashore he wouldn’t do it, and just stayed on board and said he was coming with us. I thought it was better to let him come—”

“That was kind of you,” broke in his grandfather, with a smile.

“I thought it was better to let him come and turn him over to you to deal with than it was for us to have any trouble up there at Cape Vincent.”

“That’s all right, Fred,” said his grandfather. “I’ll go right down there and talk with him.”

Fred watched his grandfather as he started toward the dock and then he quickly entered the house and went to his room.

A half-hour later when he returned to the piazza and joined his friends who already were seated there, his grandfather, bidding him follow him to the library, said as soon as the door was closed behind them, "What about that bond?"

"I told you all I know."

"You say it was a five thousand dollar bond?"

"Yes, sir."

"And a railroad bond?"

"Yes, sir."

"Do you remember which road?"

"Yes, sir. It was the New York Central."

"But you don't know what kind of a bond?"

"No, sir. I didn't know there was more than one kind."

"Perhaps you'll know more about that later," replied Mr. Button dryly.

"Did this man that came with us know anything more than we did about it?"

Ignoring the question Mr. Button said, "Your friend has gone."

"Who? The man we brought with us?"

"Yes. I had Tom take him over to Alexandria Bay in the Jessie."

"And where is he going?" inquired Fred astounded by the statement of his grandfather.

"He will go to Syracuse. Whether he will stay there or not I do not know."

"But what did he say?" asked Fred somewhat impatiently. "Do you think he stole the bond?"

"There are a good many things that are somewhat strange connected with this affair. I am quite inclined to think your bond is good. About this man, there are some matters that must be cleared up before I can make any explanations to you." Rising as he spoke Mr. Button led the way back to the piazza and Fred was convinced that it was useless for him to talk any more, for the present at least, about the man or the bond.

The following morning the four Go Ahead boys set forth in the Black Growler on a voyage on the river. Fred was eager to show the wonders of the great St. Lawrence to his friends and equally desirous of trying out the motor-boat.

In the time which was to intervene before the race was held he was eager to make himself familiar with every feature of the marvelous little craft. All things were novel and interesting to his companions, both in the scenery through which they were passing and the detailed parts of the Black Growler.

"My grandfather says," exclaimed Fred, "that if we want to we can send over to Henderson Harbor and perhaps can get Sam Hodge to come here. He will be a good man

to have on board when we are in that race. I never saw any one that knew more about machinery than he did.”

“I’m telling you that you’re still youthful,” remarked Grant. “Your experience is very limited.”

“That may be so,” acknowledged Fred with a laugh, “but it’s something I’ll get over.”

“Look yonder!” broke in John. “There’s the Varmint II ahead of us. I wonder if you can catch up with her!” As he spoke, John turned and winked slowly at George who at once advanced to Fred’s side.

“Of course I can catch her if I want to,” declared Fred.

“Which means that if you don’t want to you can’t catch her,” laughed John derisively. “I don’t believe there’s anything you want more than to catch up with her.”

“I can do it,” said Fred.

“That’s easy to say.”

Irritated by the laughter of his companions, who were eager to test the swiftness of their boat, Fred at once turned on more power and the Black Growler instantly responded.

The boat seemed almost to sink a foot or more into the water as she plowed her way up the river.

In a brief time the crew of the Varmint II were aware of the swiftly approaching boat, but instead of entering into the contest they did not increase their speed. In a few minutes the Black Growler swiftly passed the Varmint II and as they did so George said mockingly, “Splendid! Splendid, Fred. All you need is to have the other boat stand still and you can win out every time.”

“I gave her every chance,” retorted Fred.

“May be you did,” answered George, “but she didn’t think it was worth while to take up your challenge.”

“She didn’t dare to,” spoke up John, who was loyal to his friend.

“That all may be so,” laughed George derisively. There was nothing he enjoyed more than teasing Fred and as this was a comparatively easy matter it is not surprising that he frequently engaged in the task.

Meanwhile the Black Growler swept onward in her course, at last starting on her return voyage. Not far from the island owned by Fred’s grandfather was another island which the boys already had been informed had been rented by Mr. Stevens for the summer.

When Fred pointed out the spot his companions were at once interested and suggested that he should stop at the dock, which almost seemed to invite their coming.

“There’s Susie Stevens now,” called John, pointing as he spoke to a nearby canoe in which two young girls were seated. One of them was paddling, while her companion was

seated in the opposite end of the frail little craft.

At the moment of John's discovery apparently Miss Susie also became aware of the approach of the Black Growler. As she lifted her paddle to salute the Go Ahead boys, her companion, who doubtless was unfamiliar with canoes, reached forward to pick up a sweater to wave at the motor-boat; she suddenly destroyed the balance of the little canoe. Instantly it was overturned and both girls were thrown into the St. Lawrence.