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John Pryor Cowan**

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\*\*\* START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK SOMETUB'S CRUISE ON THE C. & O. CANAL \*\*\*

**Transcriber's Note:** As this is a narrative, all spelling errors were retained as printed.

[1]

**SOMETUB'S  
CRUISE  
ON THE C. & O.  
CANAL**



*The Narrative of a Motorboat  
Vacation in the Heart  
of Maryland*



BY  
JOHN P. COWAN  
1916

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200 Copies of Which This*

[2]



THIS is a story of the initial cruise of "Sometub"—a narrative of the voyage of the newest type boat on America's oldest improved waterway. We exalted 30 cent gasoline and eased our conscience by following in the patriotic footsteps of George Washington.

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Amid nature's most magnificent scenery we linked the romance of yesterday with the humdrum of the workaday present. We established a new maxim, namely: To avoid the beaten path take the towpath!

We enjoyed to the superlative degree the rare privilege of "Seeing America First," because we saw it as the first American saw it.

J. P. C.

Pittsburgh, Pa.,  
December 7th, 1916.

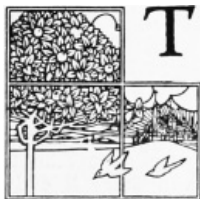


[4]

**Sunlight Vista on the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal**

## I.

[5]



THE cruise of the "Sometub" began at Oakmont on the Allegheny river in Pennsylvania and ended in Rock Creek in the shadow of the national capitol in the District of Columbia. In a total distance of 347 miles the little craft traversed six navigable waterways. Of course, there was a portage of 150 miles, but this was accomplished without inconvenience and provided a seasonable period to re-provision the boat. Moreover, the 150-mile trip overland demonstrated the advantage of a portable cruiser—of which "Sometub" has the distinction of being the first in its class.

"Sometub" narrowly escaped being christened "Kitchen Maid." It is literally a kitchen-made craft, that is, it was put together in the kitchen after its knockdown frame was received from a Michigan boatbuilder. When culinary activities in the aforesaid kitchen were partially suspended it afforded an ideal boyard, but the fact that a kitchen would be put to such extraordinary use there was attracted thither a constant line of spectators, the majority of whom had as little nautical knowledge as the builders. Propped up on a stepladder the bony frame of the future boat looked like one of those uncanny paleontological specimens in the Carnegie museum, and drew

from the visitors a flow of remarks entirely irrelevant to boatbuilding. Nearly everyone doubted that the thing would be made to float, but a few who were too polite to express their views went to the opposite extreme and indulged in a line of flattery that was more irritating than the skepticism of the doubting Thomases.

"Well, that's some tub!" The oft repeated phrase trickled away somewhere into the damaged wall paper of the kitchen or into the big paint spot that ruined the linoleum, and when the time came to name the boat the words came back sufficiently anglicized and properly compounded—"Som tub." And it stuck!

"Som tub" has been laughed at by hundreds of persons who will never know how it received its name. It looks less tub-like than the majority of motorboats. The Brooks Manufacturing Company up in Saginaw, from whom I bought the knockdown frame, doubtless would object to the innuendo suggesting tubbiness because they boast of it as one of their latest and most graceful models—a semi-V bottom shape which is especially noted both for speed and seaworthiness. And it is all they claim for it, and more, too!

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"Som tub" is 15 feet long by 43 inches on the beam. We took liberties with the Brooks plan by constructing a bulkhead which enclosed five feet of the bow. This left a 10-foot cockpit, over which was erected a portable canopy top. Curtains that hung on the sides of the canopy made a snug cabin 10 × 3½ feet. For motive power we use an Evinrude motor. By the way, it is one of those coffee mill affairs that you screw on the stern of a skiff or rowboat. "Som tub" was designed for this very sort of equipment and the theory worked out beautifully—until the motor went wrong. And there lies the key to all the villainy that will be divulged in this plain tale of the cruise of "Som tub" from Oakmont to Washington.

On account of the 150-mile portage from Pittsburgh to Cumberland, Md., it is advisable to allow seven days from the time of your departure on the Allegheny until your expected sailing from the other terminal of the portage. In these seven days you will make the run down to the Pittsburgh Baltimore & Ohio freight station at Water street, pack your engine and duffle, bail out the boat, cart it to the Cumberland local freight car, see it stowed away and spend four days hoping that it will arrive in Cumberland before you and your cargo. Of course, your hopes will be blasted, but to hope is human. Anyhow, you might as well realize at the outset that cross-country cruising is to be an intensely human experience.

There was no ceremony when we backed out of a stall at the Oakmont Boat Club in the late afternoon of the 9th of last July and picked our way between the bathers, canoes and rowboats that clustered there. Even if there had been occasion for ceremony, the thought that we had to reach the Aspinwall lock before 6 o'clock or wait another hour, "on the hour," caused us to lay a course straight for Nine-mile Island. With its balky Evinrude five miles an hour is "Som tub's" best speed. Past colonies of summer camps on the O'Hara township bank of the Allegheny we continued our way hearing a giggle now and then as a maid in a canoe or on shore caught sight of the aluminum letters on our bow and spelled out "S-o-m-e-t-u-b." The tables were turned when we passed the "Ye Gauds" camp. Phonetic spelling is epidemic among river campers. Their's is not simplified, but rather perplexified spelling.

For a mile above Aspinwall dam the Allegheny in breezy weather has all the choppiness of a landlocked lake and affords the exhilaration of boating that is enjoyed on a much larger body of water. Here we witnessed a scene that was in strange contrast with the gayety farther up the river. Below the mouth of Squaw Run a group of terrified children stood on the bank intently watching a skiff which was being rowed slowly down stream. At the oars was a youth vainly trying to look brave while at the stern a grizzled riverman dragged a grappling iron. It was the sequel to an old story. They were searching for the body of a boy who had been drowned an hour before while trying to exchange seats in a canoe.

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To make the Aspinwall lock on schedule time is always cause for joy by the humble owner of a motorboat. If he is not there "on the hour" he must wait until another 60 minutes have elapsed before the opening of the gates, unless a towboat should happen along. The same rule is in force at Lock No. 1 at Herr's Island. Here we arrived "in between times," but the gates were open and we started in. A lock tender caught sight of "Som tub" and waved frantically for us to get out and tie up alongside a barge which lay near the shore. Astern was the towboat Crucible making her way into the lock with a steel boat in tow. We followed the locktender's directions, but when the big craft approached and the pilot had sized us up, he stepped out on the hurricane deck and pointed a place for us to tie in the lock. When our motor began to sputter and he saw the name of the boat he laughed heartily and seemed to share our delight in getting into the lock chamber ahead of the Crucible. We soon chugged out and 15 minutes later rounded the Point, anointing "Som tub" for the first time with the waters of the Ohio. Running up the Monongahela in the twilight we moored at the motorboat landing at the foot of Smithfield street. Here the boat was taken from the water and shipped to Cumberland.

I have said that we eased our conscience by following the patriotic footsteps of George Washington. We struck the sacred trail in the first hour of our cruise when, running down the Allegheny we scudded under the decrepit Forty-third street bridge and past the historic point that once was separated from the mainland and was known as Wainwright's Island. From this point until the end of the journey we were constantly on ground intimately associated with the life of Washington.

Indeed if it had not been for the enterprise of Washington the cruise never would have been

possible; if it had not been for Washington the Chesapeake and Ohio canal would not have been projected, and without this pioneer waterway the valley of the upper Potomac would be a solitary wilderness. The Baltimore and Ohio railroad only followed its aquatic pacemaker and was pushed westward over the identical route Washington had laid out for his canal to connect the waters of the Potomac with those of the tributaries of the Ohio, the eastern link of the intercontinental route which he dreamed would some day connect the Atlantic seaboard with the great lakes, and the Mississippi valley. The Lake Erie and Ohio river ship canal is but a revival of Washington's gigantic project. "The Father of His Country" was a century and a half ahead of the times in his comprehension of the transportation problem.

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The history of the construction of this canal is a commercial romance replete with many a fascinating chapter involving personal peril, adventures, triumphs, failures and political intrigue; for four bloody years during the Civil war its right of way was held alternately by the Union and the Confederate armies, and many a grim tragedy was enacted there; today it is one of the few places in the country where the oldtime canal boat is to be seen in practical operation.

But the story of the canal will come further along. It is essential in the narrative of the initial cruise of "Somtub" because its towpath, worn by 20 successive progenies of mules, is the path that paradoxically leads far, far away from the beaten path of modern travel.

On Saturday evening, July 15th, we reached Cumberland. Rain was falling but this did not deter us from launching "Somtub" in the waters of the canal. We had made up our minds that rain must be disregarded—and subsequent experience proved that this step toward resignation to the elements was well taken. Before the voyage was three days old we realized that Jupiter Pluvius was a stowaway with us. For 100 miles we were the harbingers of showers, the advance agents of thunder, lightning, rain and cloudbursts.

We had hoped to leave Cumberland before sunset and tie up for the night far from the noise of the city, but the best we could do between showers was to put everything in shipshape and wait for the dawn. Rain pattered down all night long and came in repeated gusts during the day. In the meantime we sat on the hospitable porch of a retired canal boat skipper and listened to his reminiscences of the "good old days." Our delay just now was due to our failure to procure our waybill, a document which gave us the right of way through the locks from Cumberland to Georgetown. In this document "Somtub" was put down as a motor-propelled craft of one ton net register and stipulated that it should proceed at a speed not exceeding four miles an hour. The waybill cost \$5.10.

Late in the afternoon we were informed that a deputy collector of the port, who lived "down the canal beyond the bridge," would hand us our waybill as we passed. Simultaneously with this good news the rain ceased and the sun came out in radiant glory. In two minutes we were away and broke the speed limit with the impunity of a motor driver who knows that if he does not exceed the legal speed his machine will stop altogether. We made a dash for the waybill. "Pshaw!" exclaimed the collector. "It's too bad I didn't know the name of your boat. I just wrote 'launch.' If I had known it had a name like that I would have put it down, sure."

[9]

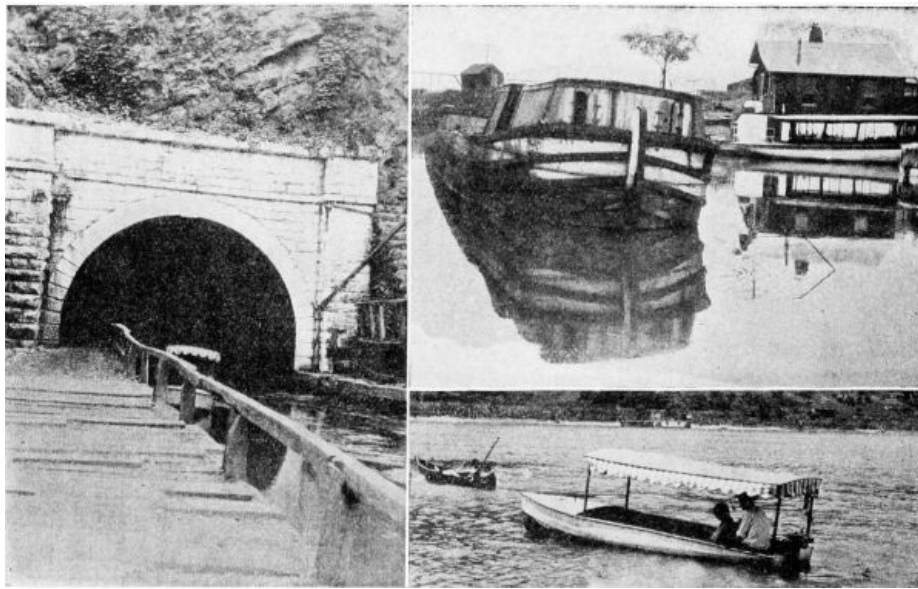
"What are the rules?" we asked him.

"Keep to the left—always—that's all. Tie up on the berm side (to the left) and don't let yourself get dragged into the flume by the current at the locks." We thanked him and started again. We rounded the big bend of the Potomac, turning to the eastward where the blue horizon of the mountains melted into the blue-gray mists and clouds of the weeping sky. In what seemed an incredibly short time we had left the city behind and glided along the vine-fringed, ribbon-like pool that wound its way into sequestered solitudes among the towering hills. Here and there a farmhouse was visible in the distance on the uplands and occasionally a lonely cabin squatted among the willows and dank weeds that grew in the marshy places, but for the greater part of our run on this level we hugged close to the hillside or proceeded through courses of broad meadows.

It was the first time an outboard motor cruiser had been seen on the canal, and for that matter in the Potomac valley, and "Somtub" attracted much attention among the country folk and the crews of the boats. We passed our first canal boat beyond South Cumberland at a point where the channel was scarcely 30 feet wide and narrowly escaped rasping off our propeller on a ledge of rocks that formed the berm bank, our danger being due to the provokingly deliberate action of the steersman on the big mule-drawn hulk. After that we waited for sufficient leeway before attempting to pass canal boats in narrow channels.

At sunset a whitewashed log house came into view and as we approached we recognized the huge arms of the lock gates. Beyond the locktender's cabin we saw the roofs of the houses in the little village of North Branch, Md. Here was our first lock, the first of the 75 in 184 miles on the canal between Cumberland and Georgetown. We were curious to know how "Somtub" would behave in an old-fashioned lock with leaky gates and were anxious to push on to the tunnel some 30 miles east of Cumberland where the canal for nearly a mile of its course passes underneath one of the lofty ridges of the Alleghanies. Ominous clouds in the west hastened the approaching night. The proximity of a shelter in case of a heavy rainstorm caused us to accept the locktender's hospitality to tie up for the night alongside the flume at the head of the lock.

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**Left—"Somertub" Emerging from Mile-Long Tunnel Under Alleghany Mountains.**

**Above—Head of Navigation of Chesapeake and Ohio Canal at Cumberland, Md.**

**Below—"Somertub" Leaving Oakmont on Allegheny River.**

Making the boat fast to the lockhouse we lighted our oil lantern, dropped the side curtains and disregarded the returning rain while we prepared dinner on two small stoves formed by a pair of tripod rings containing cans of solid alcohol. Motor boating creates a genuine appetite and we had all the facilities for preparing a good dinner in the smallest possible space. The deck of "Somertub" provided a dry place for the storing of bedding, dishes and supplies and there was no crowding at mealtime. After dinner we wrote up the log, spread a mattress in the bottom of the boat, fastened down the curtains and retired early.

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The night was inky dark. The lights in the locktender's dwelling were extinguished before 9 o'clock and the denizens of the village of North Branch, several hundred yards away, seemed to seek repose at the same hour. The solitude of the place grew oppressive. About midnight we were aroused by a shriek that pierced the night air and echoed back from the mountains across the river. Parting the curtains, we saw two sheeted forms on the towpath, their ghostly outlines standing out against the cloudy sky, while the waters of the canal reflected a pair of shimmering specters which at first glance were calculated to make the average stranger wish that he made this trip in a Pullman car.

Again the shrieking broke forth and the sheeted forms began to move. We were undergoing our initiation in night traveling on the canal, but we didn't realize it at the time.

## II.

[12]

OF THOSE ghosts that are simply ghosts I have no fear. Some persons whistle when they pass country graveyards after dark in order, they say, to keep up courage; for the same reason I sometimes whistle on Broadway. Specters are harmless if they do not assume material form. The apparitions on the Chesapeake and Ohio canal towpath soon lost their ethereal quality in our vision and the unearthly noise that accompanied their manifestation translated itself into "you black-hearted, ornery, low-lived beggar—geddap!"

There was a familiar rattle of harness. The specters moved again, but more quickly this time. Against the black infiniteness of the mountains across the river were the shadowy forms of a pair of gray mules hitched in tandem. Warily they plodded off, and moving slowly, tediously, silently behind them a canal boat followed along at the end of an invisible towline.

A canal boat at night is a great hulk of hush. Its silence is positively uncanny. A few ripples momentarily disturb the placid surface of the water but as they swirl around the craft they seem to beckon a state of funereal quietude. You can hardly blame the midnight driver of the canal boat for his profane vociferousness in addressing his mules. His voice alone breaks the death-like stillness. After the lock has been passed and the patient animals take up their gait, even he is overcome by the environment and relapses into drowsy silence.

At intervals through the night other specters appeared over there on the towpath and their advent invariably was heralded by the same hair-raising shouts. The noise of cussing the poor mules followed as certainly as the agonizing "low music" during tense moments in a melodrama.

Tardy dawn ushered in a gloomy day. We placed our "canned heat" range on a lumber pile beside the North Branch lockhouse and had our coffee and bacon progressing satisfactorily toward the proper elements of an al fresco breakfast when rain began to fall. We retreated to the

boat. The rain continued unabated and we breakfasted on board. Inasmuch as we were obliged to keep the curtains down and tuck the baggage under a poncho, it was impracticable—we thought—to proceed on our journey.

The locktender's office at North Branch has seen service for more than half a century. We can testify to this because after we had sought its shelter and read all the magazines bought on the beginning of the trip we turned to a perusal of the lockmaster's records. These books date back to the 60's and it was fascinating to read on the faded pages the entries for the boats and cargoes of a by-gone era. The boats now operating are distinguished by numbers from 1 to 100, but in the old days they bore names, suggestive, no doubt, of their architecture and other characteristics, or of the ambition of their owners.

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Noon brought no cessation of the rain. We ate luncheon in the office. "Star boarders" could not have reported more promptly at meal time. Good appetites were the most encouraging features of this portion of the trip. At 2 o'clock in the afternoon the skies cleared slightly and in a few minutes we resumed our voyage. The three locks at North Branch, Nos. 75, 74 and 73, respectively, were negotiated in less than 15 minutes and we found ourselves on "Oldtown level."

In the language of the boatmen and the denizens of the canal country all geographical distinctions are made strictly "on the level." A "level," we learned, is that stretch of the canal between two given locks. From Cumberland to Georgetown (Washington) there are 75 locks, and consequently the same number of levels, plus one.

There is an ancient and honorable superstition to the effect that the person who sets out on a journey and turns back is certain to meet with disappointment. Ten minutes after we departed from North Branch we remembered that we had left our maps behind in the lockmaster's office. The maps, United States Geological Survey quadrangles, were indispensable and we turned back. Prompt and speedy came our disappointment.

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**O**LDTOWN LEVEL is about 10 miles long. We estimated that we could reach Oldtown village in about two hours. While the idle hours had dragged along in the sleepy hamlet of North Branch we looked forward longingly to Oldtown. The name sounded enchanting and moreover we were told that we could procure gasoline, groceries and our favorite brands of confectionery there. After running merrily about seven miles our motor stopped cold. No amount of coaxing would make it run. Gathering clouds betokened a resumption of the rain. No human habitation was in sight.

The motor's affliction was difficult of diagnosis, but its trouble appeared to be serious. I had just made up my mind that the boat would have to be paddled or towed to the end of the level when Canal Boat No. 14 eased along. The skipper inquired we were "in trouble." It was mere charity and politeness of him to ask, because the expression on our faces must have told him that we regarded our condition as one of dire distress.

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"His en-jine's done busted," shouted the little ragged muleteer as he passed us on his plodding animals.

"Ketch the line," advised the skipper, while we grasped the piece of rope he tossed toward us. Making his rope fast to a cleat on the bow we saw "Sometub" humiliated by being towed at the stern of a slow-moving freight boat towed in turn by two decrepit mules. "Sometub" felt the disgrace keenly and jerked about like an unbroken colt that feels a rein for the first time. Only strenuous use of the paddle as a steering oar kept the proud little boat in the channel. In this way we moved stupidly into Oldtown. An hour and a half was required to go less than three miles.

On reaching the lock at Oldtown it was apparent that there would not be room between the gates to accommodate both the canal boat and "Sometub," and the skipper cast us off in a fashion so unceremonious that we floated in his wake feeling like unbidden guests at a feast. The big freight boat glided away, leaving us on the wrong side of the gate. You know how sometimes you turn and drive away the homeless dog that sheepishly follows you down the street? Well, we felt placed in the situation of the homeless dog.

It was the first time in my life that I experienced a sincere desire to embrace the teachings of anarchy. After the canal boat had started on its way Mr. Carter, the lockmaster, returned to inquire into our wants.

"What are you going to do with us?" I asked him.

"Lock you through," he answered. "Give me your line and I'll tow you in. Then you can tie up over there and stop at my house all night. My wife will have a nice hot supper for you. The gentleman who runs the store up on the hill has an automobile and knows a lot about gas engines. I know he'll be delighted to fix up your machine."

It was hard to believe that he meant what he said. He had enunciated that kind of hospitality which I had thought no longer existed except in books that sell at \$1.08. My wife, however, did not share my skepticism. Here was good old-fashioned southern hospitality and she emphasized the fact with some pride that we were now well over the Mason & Dixon line and might expect cordiality to be something more than a meaningless phrase. She rushed across the towpath to chat with the lockmaster's wife and daughters while Mr. Carter towed "Sometub" through the

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**O**LDTOWN, I believe, was called Oldtown even in its younger days. I believe also that now in its boast of municipal veneration it looks younger than it did in its youth. The wrinkled visage of great age is in strange contrast with its modern affectations. Personify it and you would have the picture of a centenarian doing a fox trot. Oldtown is one of the oldest settlements in western Maryland and it dwelt on in a kind of proud senility until West Virginia went "dry." Being on the border Oldtown possessed a situation of peculiar strategic value. It afforded the opportunity for the establishment of an exceedingly "wet" outpost, and the opportunity did not go begging. In consequence the chief enterprise of Oldtown is slaking the thirsts of West Virginians from many miles up and down the Potomac. The structures that domicile these establishments form a cluster of new buildings that gives Oldtown something of the appearance of a boom town in the west. A sincere opponent of the liquor traffic would be justified in saying that Oldtown is in its second childhood.

With many thanks we declined the hospitality of the whole-souled lockmaster and his family and cooked our dinner in a drizzling rain and "tinkered" on the motor until after midnight. The knowledge that we were among friends enabled us to make ourselves comfortable for the night regardless of the weather.

In the morning we were awakened by a call from Mr. Carter. He came to give me "a lift" with the motor. As a last forlorn hope I gave the flywheel a twirl—and it went! We made all haste to depart and before the sun had reached the mountain tops we were under way. With good behavior on the part of the motor "Sometub" is the spryest young boat you ever saw, and on this Tuesday, July 18th, we made our record run. The sky was cloudless and out in the meadows we watched farmers and harvest hands sweltering in the broiling sun, but in the shade of the stately trees that form an arch over the canal in this region we enjoyed a delightful atmosphere. Steep cliffs enclose the north bank of the canal and over these in luxuriant profusion were seemingly endless brambles of blackberry vines burdened with luscious ripe fruit. For luncheon we skirted the cliffs and picked a dish of berries which with crackers and tea enabled us to have a unique and delicious repast without tying up the boat.

Our logbook for this day contains nevertheless many entries of enforced stops. Wild grass growing up in the bottom of the canal checked us frequently and necessitated removing long coils that choked the propeller. Shortly after noon we reached the tunnel which carries the waters of the canal for seven-eighths of a mile under one of the lofty ridges of the Alleghanias. The channel is barely wide enough to allow the passage of a single craft and we knew that we must hold the right of way or back out in case we should meet a canal boat. The tunnel has no lights and when you get into its depths it is a veritable black hole in the ground.

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Fixing our red and green running lights we started bravely in, but after going a dozen yards we struck windrows of grass and weeds which made it impossible for our propeller to turn. There was but one thing to do, and I climbed out on the narrow shelf of a towpath and took the end of the line while my better, and on this occasion, less nervous half, caught up the paddle and steered. The towpath in the tunnel is intended only for mules. In many places are mountain springs whose icy waters trickle down through the old brick walls and transform the towpath into soft mire that is knee deep. It was the longest seven furlongs I ever trod and I came out of the tunnel with a feeling of profound respect for the canal boat mule.

Our cruise during the remainder of the afternoon was delightful. Here is the wildest scenery in the upper Potomac valley and there are few settlements. The locktenders were the only persons we saw for hours at a time and the locks were few. Likewise on this part of our run we passed no boats. We felt real neighborly toward the train crews on the Baltimore and Ohio and Western Maryland railroads when they condescended to look at us as they sped past. For miles, however, no railroad was in sight.

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**A**COUNTRY store keeper at Little Orleans, who dealt in everything from women's "fashionable gowns" to fresh fish and from "near beer" to gasoline, enabled us to continue our voyage without delay. From him we purchased a supply of gasoline, oil and tobacco—three important items for the "engine room." When the motor is out of order the consumption of tobacco is particularly heavy.

In the twilight we passed the village of Pearre and at dark drew up alongside the dock of the Woodmont Hunting and Fishing Club. Dinner was late this night but the weather was perfect and no fashionable restaurant could have offered more inviting surroundings for the diner with an appetite whetted by a day of toil in the great outdoors. We sat in the boat and used the dock for a table. And we would not have exchanged the privilege for the finest mahogany ever turned out!

We were in Dixie now, sure enough. On the clubhouse porch up on the hill a party of young people were holding a dance which was enlivened by singing oldtime songs that recalled our presence in the beloved Southland. As two tired voyagers dropped off to slumber they heard the sweet strains of an inspiring melody that floated on the still night air far across the Potomac hills

[17]

*For life and death, for woe and weal,  
Thy peerless chivalry reveal,  
And gird thy beauteous limbs with steel,  
Maryland, my Maryland!*

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### III.

[18]

"THE HEART OF MARYLAND" is quite as elusive, geographically, as the phrase is trite. After being lulled to sleep at Woodmont by the old wartime song and awakened on a sunny morning by the carols of thrush and mockingbird, we felt that the enchanted land of romance in the old Cavalier commonwealth must indeed be near at hand.

We made no haste to leave the hospitable dock at Woodmont. The day was ideal and our camera was chaffing under long idleness. I had passed this point a score of times on daylight trains of the Baltimore and Ohio railroad and longed for an opportunity to tarry here. On our voyage in "Sometub" we realized the oft-repeated wish and made the most of it.

A heartless motor, however, robbed the "heart of Maryland" of much of its heartsomeness—for us. Leaving Woodmont about the middle of the forenoon on Wednesday, July 19, we ran past the ancient settlement of Sir John's Run, proceeded on under the shadow of Round Mountain, in Maryland, and picturesque Lover's Leap, in West Virginia, and glided into the prosperous looking town of Hancock shortly after 2 o'clock. Hancock gained fame in the winter of 1861-62 when Stonewall Jackson, from the hills south of the Potomac, deigned to throw a few shells into this Maryland village. It was not a sanguinary battle, but at that early period in the war it was considered a bold thing for the Confederate leader to do, and for the time being disturbed the "alls-quiet-along-the-Potomac" that had become stereotyped in the reports of the military situation farther down the stream. At Hancock a short spur of the Baltimore and Ohio runs up to Berkley Springs, a watering place that boasts of patronage by Virginia aristocrats back in George Washington's time.

Resolved that we would forego the luxury of luncheon on board, we tied up under the highway bridge, left "Sometub" in charge of the toll-keeper and strolled into town. At the hotel we were too late for dinner and were told that the dining room would not be open for the service of supper until 6 o'clock. In desperation we sought a restaurant—and in two minutes regretted that we had not prepared our own luncheon on the boat.



[19]

**Picturesque Water Mill Beside the Potomac**

Isn't it peculiar how the smallest trifles will alter the most elaborate plans? A trifling ham sandwich in a two by four restaurant caused us to evacuate Hancock forthwith. We had intended to remain here a day or longer, run over to Berkley Springs and perhaps go fishing. Instead we left town so precipitately that we forgot to stop at the postoffice and ask if our mail had been forwarded.

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A FEW miles east of Hancock is a wide-water a mile long in the canal known as Little Pool, the channel being about the width of the Monongahela river at the Smithfield street bridge. From Hancock to this point we were obliged to stop frequently on account of grass that clogged the



propeller, and on entering Little Pool the obstruction was so great that it was necessary to get out and tow several hundred yards. When clear water was regained the motor began to show signs of balking, and after a heart-rending effort to repair it on the towpath, we threw the thing into the boat and paddled our way through the rural hamlet of Millstone where housewives, milking their cows on the bank of the canal, stared at us pityingly as we labored by. Cow stables and pig stys on the berm bank offered no mooring place in the town, and we plied the paddle until we reached a secluded stretch of woodland where we could be alone in our chagrin over the obstinacy of the motor.

When we lighted our lantern we were annoyed for the first time by a swarm of mosquitoes. We had been warned before the trip that these insects on the canal were related to the Jersey "man-eaters" and would make life miserable on our cruise. We were prepared for their ravages, but fortunately a little breeze sprang up after nightfall and they gave us no more trouble. They were the only militant mosquitoes that we saw between Cumberland and Georgetown.

As if gloating over our discomfiture in having lost our motive power, a double-bass bullfrog started in to make the night hideous. His favorite singing dias was in the pool right under the bow of the boat. When a stone was thrown in his direction he retreated into deep water, but invariably returned. Late in the night I hit upon the expedient of pouring a pint of 30-cent gasoline on the water. The croaker croaked no more.

In the morning a little tinkering was rewarded by the motor showing signs of renewing operations and we started in high hopes, but after a few hundred rods it was apparent that we were making little speed and we limped into the tiny hamlet of Ernestville where we stopped for supplies and fresh water. Ernestville is a poor shopping center and fresh water and kerosene were about all we could obtain.

Along this stretch of the canal it is paralleled for a considerable distance by the old National Pike, which on this particular morning was thronged by automobile tourists. As they sped by we knew that they would be in Hagerstown in an hour. We wondered if we would reach there in a day. It was apparent now that we must take our crippled motor to a garage and Hagerstown was the nearest point where we could obtain the services of a mechanic skilled in repairing marine engines. To reach Hagerstown from the canal we decided to stop at Williamsport and this was now our goal.

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**B**IG POOL is a widewater where the canal broadens into a beautiful lake nearly a mile wide and more than a mile long. Our balky motor pushed us into this big sheet of water and then stopped with a derisive screech. It was the ultimatum of a dry bearing and it was inexorable. While we were floundering in the breeze and trying to paddle ashore, a motorboat came alongside and its occupants inspected our equipment. "Sometub" they liked immensely, but the engine perplexed them. We were looking for neither advice nor sympathy and the stranger who acted very superior and said, "I have a Koban," didn't improve his favor in our eyes.

Then into our lives came a heroic figure. Just at that moment he appeared the greatest man in the world—philanthropist, navigator, philosopher! He was the skipper of Canal Boat No. 18 which swept majestically down the pool. His boat appeared as big and formidable as the new superdreadnaught Pennsylvania. Dexterous work with the paddle enabled us to get in its lee. Up there on his quarterdeck stood the skipper. I since believe that he must have resembled Noah, but to we two—we felt like castaways—he was indeed a mighty admiral. But he was the admiral of a friendly power and amid all his dignity there was a benign expression also of stern consideration for a brother mariner in distress. We gazed at him and his noble craft in mute appeal.

"Ketch the line!"

Like spent swimmers grasping for a straw, we seized the line and made it fast. For the second time "Sometub" was humiliated by being towed by a prosaic freight boat.



**Above—Upper Level at Four Locks  
Below—Old-Time Mill**

Two miles an hour is top speed for a laden canal boat and No. 18's tired mules kept well inside this limit. At the end of the towline we nosed along in perfect complacency. We chatted with the skipper, admired the scenery, examined our maps of the route, chaffed the villagers, ate our luncheon, jogged the motor, read a little, took short naps and made ourselves absolutely comfortable. Our only effort was to keep on the shady side of the boat, for the weather was the hottest we had endured. As a remedy for tired nerves I can testify to the curative qualities of canalboating.

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The skipper was a man of parts. He had run the canal for more than 20 years. He had walked every inch of the towpath from Cumberland to Washington every hour of the day and night and he declared that he could pace those 184 miles with his eyes blindfolded. He recognized every hill and house and tree and could tell their history. He knew all the neighborhood gossip, and all the neighbors knew him.

Toward the end of the drowsy afternoon we floated into the little village of Four Locks which takes its name from the fact that a chain of four locks are here. No. 18 cast us off and we prepared to paddle through. To our surprise the motor condescended to run. At the time I was ready to believe that it heard the mule driver's sublime cussing and was frightened into obedience.

With the motor running again we soon passed No. 18 and snorted off around a sharp bend, through Two Locks where we were lowered into the waters of the Potomac. I say "snorted" advisedly. "Sometub" exhibited colt-like behavior when unleashed from the slow-moving canal craft. The towpath follows the northern bank of the river and the boats hug the shore closely, but we careened far out into the stream. "Sometub" had found a nautical playground more spacious than it had ever enjoyed before.

After a two-mile run on the river we entered another lock and once more were confined to the comparatively narrow channel of the canal. We found all conditions favorable and at sunset we crossed the great stone aqueduct over the winding Conococheague and a few minutes later tied

up at the Williamsport lock.

I was now on familiar ground. Eleven years before I had visited historic Williamsport in quest of newspaper "feature stories," and a decade had witnessed but little change in the place. In the early days of the Federal government Williamsport was a pretentious bidder as the seat for the national capital. In the Civil War it was a sort of Pryzmyl, having been taken and retaken by the armies of both the north and the south, but the town itself was of no importance except as the key to strategic positions beyond. Here in June, 1863, the vanguard of Lee's conquering legions crossed the Potomac when they swept down the Shenandoah and crossed triumphantly into Pennsylvania, and here less than a month later their ragged columns made a bold stand against Meade's victorious forces while the retreating Confederates waited for the flood to subside so that they could withdraw into Virginia. Along the street that leads down to the river are many of the old houses whose walls resounded with the tread of those valiant armies—Union and Confederate. In those houses, too, many a soldier suffered the agony of wounds received in the desperate charges at Gettysburg. Of those southern heroes who raced with death from that immortal field, scores gave up their lives here in sight of their native Virginia hills.

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Williamsport today is another of those outposts for supplying alcoholic drinks to bleary-eyed pilgrims from West Virginia and in consequence does not afford hotel accommodations for the ordinary traveler. After trying in vain to get dinner, we boarded a trolley car and 40 minutes later reached Hagerstown where we stopped for the night, enjoying the solid luxury of a "room with bath connecting."

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**A**MONG Hagerstown's well known business men is Mr. Walter E. Pattison, a former Pittsburgher. We sent him a grape-vine telegram of our advent in town and on coming down from breakfast in the morning he hailed us with a motorcar and an invitation for a drive through Greater Hagerstown. We accepted with alacrity, remembering the tedious hours of the previous day, and made no objection when the chauffeur cut up didoes with the Maryland speed limit.

Mr. Pattison accompanied us to Williamsport in the afternoon to see "Sometub" and to join a little reunion with Col. George W. McCardell, the veteran editor of the Williamsport *Leader*. Editor McCardell had been looking for me for eleven years and we were somewhat in doubt as to the outcome of the interview. The reason for his desire to lay hands on me was, as nearly as I can remember, the following paragraph which was printed over my name in the Pittsburgh *Gazette* in the summer of 1905:

The Williamsport Leader is more than a journalistic enterprise—it is a well founded institution. It is the oracle of rockribbed Democracy, the unflinching champion of pure Jeffersonism and unfaltering Andyjacksonism.... The editor will take two pairs of Maryland frying-size chickens on subscription, but of his Virginia subscribers he requires three pairs in advance because, he says, the Maryland pullets are better and more tender.

I resolved to meet the editor and finish the argument. Mr. Pattison led the way to a new and prosperously attractive sanctum. It was publication day—Friday—and Col. McCardell, after a strenuous week, stood with folded arms beside an imposing stone with type still wet from the day's "run." My wife, who embodies the traditions of five generations of the editor's brand of politics but who stood ready to defend the quality of Virginia chicken against the world, was the first to enter the den of the journalistic lion. It was a clever ruse on Mr. Pattison's part, for first of all Col. McCardell is a chivalrous southern gentleman. Why, of course, Virginia fried chicken is the finest in the land. And Virginia women compose the very flower of American womanhood. Their presence here is welcomed like the May-time sunshine. The Potomac ripples softly when they cross the river and in the trees on the Maryland shore the summer zephyrs sing sweet benisons to the fair daughters of the Old Dominion.

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And when I entered the feud of eleven years had vanished. I could only blush and bow my acknowledgements.

With fond good-byes to Col. McCardell and Mr. Pattison we departed in the mid-afternoon bound for Mercerville by twilight in the hope that we would have the following day to spend on Antietam battlefield. But we had not reckoned with the elements. Four miles below Williamsport a terrific storm burst upon us. So sudden was the tempest that we were obliged to tie to the towpath bank to prevent the furious gales of wind from capsizing the boat. For a few minutes it seemed that our canopy would be torn to tatters. Our lines gave way and I climbed out to steady the heaving craft. Then it rained in such torrents that it momentarily took away my breath. Vivid flashes of lightning and deafening thunder followed in instant succession. The wind wrenched big sycamores from their roots and they crashed across the miry towpath like jackstraws thrown by an angry giant. The storm lasted more than an hour but a steady patter of rain followed. Our supplies stored under the deck and protected by the poncho were dry, but our clothes were dripping and the temperature had turned chill and raw. Darkness was coming on and we prepared to tie up for the night. How bright and warm looked the blue flame from the canned alcohol while we boiled our coffee!

It was a gloomy outlook, but southern hospitality which proved the silver lining to every dark cloud on our cruise, once more intervened. A farmer rode down the towpath and invited us to go

to his house for the night. Our good Samaritan was Mr. J. H. Wine, whose home nestles snugly under the mountain beside the canal. We accepted with haste that we hoped would indicate our extreme gratitude and soon had our dripping duds spread out on the backs of chairs before the range in the spacious kitchen. Mr. and Mrs. Wine tendered us the guest room and we sought slumber early. Only the outdoor enthusiast would have been worthy of the frugal breakfast in the morning. We thanked our good hosts and prepared to depart. The question of remuneration for favors invariably was spurned by the hospitable people on the canal.

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The sun came out gloriously and we hoped to reach Mercerville by noon. We did, but there the motor balked again and we spent two hours trying to fix it. We gave up the thought of visiting Antietam and about the time the shadows began to lengthen, started solemnly toward Shepherdstown, five honest miles down the canal. We paddled and towed alternately, making even slower progress than in the wake of No. 18. Darkness came on and we were still on the lonely path. About 9 o'clock we reached a lock and were told that Shepherdstown was still a mile beyond. A storm was gathering and the lockmaster invited us to tie up and spend the night in his house notwithstanding that it would place several members of his large family at an inconvenience. We agreed to leave the boat, but insisted on going to Shepherdstown where we could find a hotel and a garage mechanic.

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**A** GAINST the protests of the lockmaster and his wife we lighted our lantern and started down the lonely towpath. Black clouds obscured the sky and we stumbled along at times having difficulty in keeping on the path. Flashes of lightning and rumbling thunder betokened a storm that would rival the one on the previous night. Our lantern's flickering light only intensified the darkness but the lightning frequently assisted us when its glare illuminated the entire landscape.

In our race with the storm we were the first under the wire. Fleeing across the bridge over the Potomac we breathlessly climbed the hill and along a dark street to the center of the town whither we had been directed to the hotel. Suddenly we rounded a corner into an electric-lighted thoroughfare and stood before the entrance of the Rumsey House. Our clothes were wrinkled and we were splashed with mud from head to foot. We still carried our lighted lantern and the crowd at the hotel gazed at us with expressions twixt curiosity and amazement. The proprietor was moved to commiseration.

"Come in here, you-all, right away," he said.

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#### IV.

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**T**HE hallowed notes of church chimes awakened us on our first morning in Shepherdstown and before the day was an hour older we felt grateful to the motor for compelling our stop-over in this quaint community. Geographically Shepherdstown is in West Virginia, but politically, socially and traditionally it leans toward the Old Dominion. It lies in Jefferson county at the foot of the beautiful Shenandoah valley and is essentially southern. Its whole atmosphere and the sympathy of its people belong distinctly to Piedmont Virginia. It is the Alsace-Lorraine of America.

Next to Alexandria, Shepherdstown is perhaps the oldest important settlement in the Potomac valley. It is one of the few old towns in the country that has not been defaced by too much present day progress. Shepherdstown has always been a substantial prosperous place and does not affect the gewgaws of the new rich municipality. In some respects it resembles Concord, Massachusetts. Its streets have many features in common with the thoroughfares of the old-time New England towns. In many of the residences are preserved some of the most striking characteristics of chaste colonial architecture.

It was a restful place to spend Sunday and in the evening we joined the villagers in a stroll through the shady streets and out on the bluff overlooking the Potomac. Here on the edge of the cliffs on a natural base of limestone rock is an imposing shaft lately erected to the memory of James Rumsey, Shepherdstown pioneer and inventor of the steamboat. Rumsey, you know, was the Langley of steam navigation. While Prof. Langley originated the idea of the heavier than air system of aeronautic transportation, his aeroplane, upon which experiments were made on this same Potomac river, was not perfected to the point of standing the practical test. Two bicycle mechanics in Dayton, Ohio, were destined to make a crowning achievement where the scientist had failed. Posterity will demand that the Wright brothers share their fame with Langley.



**Antietam Battlefield at Dunker Church (right) and Cornfield (left) Across Hagerstown Pike**

Although Robert Fulton is popularly credited with the invention of the steamboat, he only perfected the work which was started by Rumsey in the waters of the Potomac at Shepherdstown in September, 1784. In the presence of George Washington a boat which ascended the stream by mechanical appliances was exhibited by Rumsey 23 years before Fulton's Clermont made its memorable voyage on the Hudson.

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The house in which Rumsey lived is one of the historic landmarks of Shepherdstown. The inventor went to Europe and built a new boat which made a successful trip on the Thames in December, 1792. A few weeks later sudden death in the very prime of life cut short Rumsey's career.

In the Civil War Shepherdstown endured the agony but shared little of the glory of battle. It is about eight miles north of Harper's Ferry and less than four miles west of Antietam. Skirmishes took place here early in the war and in September, 1862, it saw Stonewall Jackson's famous foot cavalry sprint through this corner of Jefferson county in his encircling movement for the capture of Harper's Ferry. A week later echoes of the guns engaged in the bloody work at Antietam reverberated against the hills around Shepherdstown and on the afternoon of that 17th day of September hundreds of mutilated men were carried into the village and committed to the care of the townspeople.

The wounded were Confederate soldiers and from the majority of homes in Shepherdstown had gone fathers, sons, brothers to fight under Lee or Jackson. Marie Blunt, one of the heroic women who assisted caring for the wounded, in describing that melancholy day, said:

"We went about our work with pale faces and trembling hands, yet trying to appear composed for the sake of our patients, who were much excited. We could hear the incessant explosions of artillery, the shrieking whistling of the shells, and the sharper, deadlier, more thrilling roll of musketry: while every now and then the echo of some charging cheer would come, borne by the wind, and as the human voice pierced that demoniacal clangor we would catch our breath and listen, and try not to sob, and turn back to forlorn hospitals, to the suffering at our feet and before our eyes, while imagination fainted at the thought of those other scenes hidden from us beyond the Potomac.

"On our side of the river there were noise, confusion, dust; throngs of stragglers; horsemen galloping about; wagons blocking each other, and teamsters wrangling; and a continued din of shouting, swearing and rumbling, in the midst of which men were dying, fresh wounded arriving, surgeons amputating limbs and dressing wounds, women going in and out with bandages, lint, medicines, food. An everpresent sense of anguish, dread, pity, and, I fear, hatred—these are my recollections of Antietam."

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**L**EAVING our invalid motor in care of a garage mechanic we boarded a Norfolk & Western train Monday morning to visit Antietam battlefield. It is a ride of less than 10 minutes from Shepherdstown to the station of Antietam which is adjacent to the village of Sharpsburg. The half a century that has passed since the war has witnessed but slight change here. Nearly all the houses are of the antebellum type. The woods have been cleared at various places over the field, but otherwise the landscape has changed but little when compared with wartime photographs and sketches of the battle.

A walk through the town and the national cemetery brought us to the Hagerstown pike which parallels the battle lines on the northern half of the field. Threatening weather called for haste

and I was obliged to forego the pleasure of a ramble to familiar scenes around the picturesque Burnside bridge which I had photographed 11 years before. We were interested in two parts of the field—the line of Anderson's Confederate division and the position occupied by Hooker on the Union right. In locating the former we soon found ourselves in Piper's lane and walked down to the gray stone barn which stands as solid today as on that Wednesday afternoon when Hill and Sumner struggled for the mastery of this blood-drenched farmstead.

Less than a mile beyond is the little whitewashed Dunker church which marks the key to Stonewall Jackson's position. It stands in the woods at the west side of the Hagerstown pike at the intersection of the Smoketown road. On the east side of the pike was the famous cornfield where the Union soldiers under Hooker and Mansfield engaged in deadly combat with Jackson's men. In an area covering a few acres the losses on both sides in less than four hours' fighting on the morning of September 17th probably exceeded 5,000 killed and wounded.

All the important positions occupied by the troops on both sides have been marked by tablets erected by the Federal government and many memorials have been placed by the various states. One of the most interesting monuments is that of the State of Maryland to her sons—Union and Confederate—who perished at Antietam. It stands on a knoll a short distance east of the pike opposite the Dunker church.

At 11 o'clock on Tuesday morning, July 25, our motor having been pronounced "cured," we slipped "Sometub's" moorings and after adieus to hospitable friends in Shepherdstown, started on the second half of our journey. A mile and a half below the town we passed the ford over which Lee's army retreated from Antietam and saw the cliff where the Corn Exchange regiment came to grief in its pursuit of the Confederates. A little farther on we noted what we supposed was the site of Camp McAuley where the One Hundred and Fifty-fifth Pennsylvania regiment from Pittsburgh spent many a chilly bivouac in the autumn of 1862.

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The scenery on the canal between Shepherdstown and Harper's Ferry is not rivaled anywhere in the country for its variety, abounding in pastoral beauty, historic interest and sublime grandeur. Our motor, being on its good behavior, the trip was uneventful. Across the river among the trees we descried the little hamlet of Falling Waters where occurred one of the first conflicts of the Civil War. We glided over Antietam creek through a picturesque aqueduct and continued for miles on through the trees at the base of the lofty cliffs of Maryland Heights.

After several stops to catch the pictures that presented themselves at every turn, we reached the lock opposite Harper's Ferry about 4 o'clock in the afternoon. We threw "Sometub's" line to a picket fence beside the canal and hastened across to the town to call at the postoffice to receive an accumulation of 10 days' mail that had been forwarded from point to point all the way from Hancock.

This is a late day to describe Harper's Ferry. Thomas Jefferson more than 100 years ago wrote a description of the place and stole the thunder from his successors for all time to come. In October, 1859, old John Brown in a different manner gave fresh fame to the locality, and on a gallows over the hills at Charles Town paid the penalty with his life. Harper's Ferry got into the headlines soon after Fort Sumter was fired upon and kept in the limelight till the very close of the war. Since that time the Baltimore and Ohio railroad has appropriated the old town, mountains, rivers, scenery, historic associations and all and has overlooked no opportunity to exploit its beauty and its traditions.

We had expected to have a veritable field day here with our camera, but when we came from the postoffice clouds rolled down from the mountains like great avalanches of snowy feathers, the village grew misty and rain began to fall. With no immediate prospect of clear weather we decided to continue our voyage. It would be heresy, however, not to present a picture of Harper's Ferry, and we are indebted to Mr. J. Hampton Baumgartner, of the Baltimore and Ohio railroad, for the one presented here. The railroad has acted the pious antiquarian in preserving this historic shrine and the fame of the sacred spot is perpetuated largely through the services of this corporation. Railroads more frequently are ruthless vandals in their treatment of historic landmarks, but not so with the Baltimore and Ohio. This portion of the railroad is itself a talisman of history worthy of every patriotic American's interest and study.

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**Harper's Ferry, from Maryland Heights**

Rain was falling in torrents when we unleashed "Sometub" from the picket fence and started through the lock. By the time the one-armed locktender had opened the gates and we chugged out under the Baltimore and Ohio bridge at the entrance of the Maryland Heights tunnel the storm had grown to the proportions of a cloudburst. We found ourselves in a canyon of concrete with a sharp curve ahead. It was a perilous place to meet a canal boat and we continued on through the blinding storm. At the end of the canyon we moored to the towpath bank for a time, but with darkness approaching and the rain continuing unabated, we resolved to resume the voyage.

At dusk we reached Brunswick. Everything above board on the boat, including ourselves was drenched. Scrambling out on the towpath I waded through the mud to inquire of the locktender for a place to tie up. Despite the rain, we had decided to spend the night on "Sometub." We had become so attached to the little craft by this time that it seemed like ingratitude to go to a comfortable hotel and leave it out there in the storm and the night.

But this was not to be.

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## V.

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THERE must have been something about the appearance of our outfit or ourselves, or both, on the arrival of the bedraggled "Sometub" at Brunswick calculated to awaken the deepest sympathy of the kind-hearted folk who watched us approach through the chilly rain. When I asked the lockmaster for a suitable place to tie up for the night he pointed to a dilapidated dock on the berm bank adjacent to an ancient and densely populated pig pen.

"It would be very fine, except for the neighbors," I told him. "Pigs have a habit of getting up too early in the morning to suit us." This was not quite the reason for our objection to mooring beside a pig pen, but I aimed to be diplomatic. Perhaps they might be his pigs. "Crackey!" exclaimed the lockmaster, "You-all don't intend to spend the night in that boat, do you?"

"Yes," I answered. "We have the most comfortable cabin you ever saw."

Before the lockmaster could answer another man, who hastened over from the railroad yards, at once assumed the role of superintendent of the harbor, collector of the port, quarantine officer or whatever you would choose to call him. He spoke with the air of a person clothed with absolute authority.

"Yes, yes; tie up over there and I'll—" he began.

"I have just told the lockmaster that I'll not tie up over there," I interposed. But our new friend disregarded me entirely and continued:

"—I'll have an automobile here in five minutes to take you and the missus up to the hotel. Your boat will be safe till morning. Come from Pittsburgh, eh? How in Sam Hill did you get into the canal? I used to work in Pittsburgh, but that was a good while ago. Pretty big place now, I suppose—"

He was true to his word. An automobile oozed through the mud and the chauffeur announced that he was ready to take "the lady and gentleman to the hotel." In the presence of such an example of prompt service we reconsidered our resolution to spend the night in the boat and taking our baggage, we went to the hotel in our khakis. The people in the lobby must have thought that unkempt members of a band of gypsies had invaded the place when we rushed through to our room. However, the opinions of bystanders as to the appearance of our traveling duds gave us little concern. We put on dry clothes and in a few minutes it was announced that the dining room had been opened for our especial benefit. The young wife of the proprietor cooked and served a bountiful repast. She must have felt repaid for the effort by the manner in

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which we dispatched all the good things she had prepared.

The rain lasted through the night but Wednesday, July 26th, dawned with clear skies. We prepared to depart early, but first stocked "Sometub" with provisions and fuel, Brunswick being the last large town on the canal on the way to Washington. Before us for a distance of nearly 50 miles lay a stretch of sparsely settled country. From Brunswick to Point of Rocks the Baltimore and Ohio railroad runs close beside the towpath and in the early morning, "Sometub" was greeted several times by passengers on the observation cars of the Royal Blue express trains which dashed by at a mile-a-minute speed. We wondered if the people who were fluttering handkerchiefs and waving hats envied us. It was while riding on the observation car several years ago on this same route that we had planned our voyage. In its realization we regretted that more vacation tourists could not share the pleasure of our trip over the mountains—by water. We did not stop to consider that the majority of summer travelers desire speed, luxury and the least discomfort and would balk at the petty annoyances we endured through an obstinate motor and the omniscience of Jupiter Pluvius.

Under the shadow of old Catocin mountain we passed the Point of Rocks, famous in the Civil War as the place where Lee's army crossed for the invasion of Maryland in the Antietam campaign. A few miles beyond the course of the river turns from southeast to southwest and we sheered off sharply from the railroad. We crossed on the famous stone aqueduct over the Monocacy river. The character of the scenery changed quite as perceptibly as the direction of the stream. Through the drooping branches of the trees we saw on the north the rugged outlines of old Sugar Loaf peak and across the Potomac the undulating ridge of the southern spur of Catocin, and when heights faded in the blue haze of a midsummer day, we bade farewell to the mountains. Henceforth our way ran through the lowlands down to the sea, the hills and river bluffs reaching an altitude of only a few hundred feet.

At Edwards Ferry we saw the wooded face of Ball's Bluff which gave name to a Civil War conflict which was second only to Bull Run in causing discomfiture to the people of the North. In this little fight the country lost a notable figure in the person of General Edward D. Baker, first United States senator from Oregon.

For miles along this portion of our route we ran without seeing a human habitation. A dense strip of woodland concealed the river from view and bluffs or marshy thickets interposed between the canal and the country to the north. Occasionally through the trees we caught a fleeting glimpse of beautiful meadows and cornfields of the Maryland farmlands, but these vistas were rare.

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At White's Ferry, where on September 5th, 1862, Stonewall Jackson's army forded the Potomac, and while singing "My Maryland," marched gallantly on toward Frederick, we stopped under the highway bridge that spans the canal to replenish our supply of gasoline. Leaning over the rail of the bridge stood a native whose face was obscured by the shadow of a straw hat of immense brim. Over his shoulder was a fishing-pole of a length of thirty feet or more. He ignored our salutation when we approached, but after we had drifted under the bridge he crossed to the rail on the other side and inquired:

"Stranger, whar did you put that tub in this ditch?"

"Cumberland."

"By crackey!" And he sauntered down the road.

The history of this "ditch" is a commercial romance closely linked with the political developments of the last one hundred and fifty years. During the period immediately preceding the Revolutionary War Washington devoted his chief attention toward the opening of the west to colonization and for a cheap transportation route foresaw that navigation on the waters of the upper Potomac would offer a direct outlet for the products of the agricultural regions of the western country to the Atlantic seaboard. The alarm from Lexington in 1775, of course, put an end to all immediate plans for the internal improvement among the colonies, but after Burgoyne had been cut off at Saratoga and Cornwallis had been bagged at Yorktown, Gen Washington again turned his attention to the transportation problem. Before peace was restored he left the camp of the patriot army at Newburg and inspected the future route of the Erie canal through the Mohawk valley.

Washington shrewdly divined that a canal between Lake Erie near Niagara, connecting it with the Mohawk and the Hudson would open up a route that would be a dangerous competitor to the southern colonies in their trade with the west. Soon after he was relieved from his military duties he made a tour of exploration with a view of locating a route connecting the Potomac with the Ohio and the Great Lakes. His journal sets forth clearly his wonderful farsightedness and broad comprehension of the situation. Here is Washington's report of his transportation line from Detroit to Alexandria, Va.: (The spelling is Washington's).

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To Cuyahoga River	125 Miles
Up same to Portage	60 Miles
Portage to Bever Ck	8 Miles
Down Bever Ck to the Ohio	85 Miles
Up the Ohio to Fort Pitt	25 Miles
Mouth of Yohiogany	15 Miles



Falls to Ditto	50 Miles
Portage	1 Mile
Three Forks or Turkey foot	8 Miles
Ft. Cumberland or Wills Creek	30 Miles
Alexandria	<u>200 Miles</u>
Total	607 Miles

Bear in mind that the "mouth of the Yohiogany" is now McKeesport, that the "falls to ditto" indicates Ohio Pyle and that "Three Forks" means the present locality of Confluence, and compare the distances with present day surveys. They will not vary a mile on the entire stretch. Ask the eminent engineers of the Lake Erie & Ohio River Canal if they can add much to Washington's ideas. Their answer will give you added reasons for celebrating on the 22nd of next February.

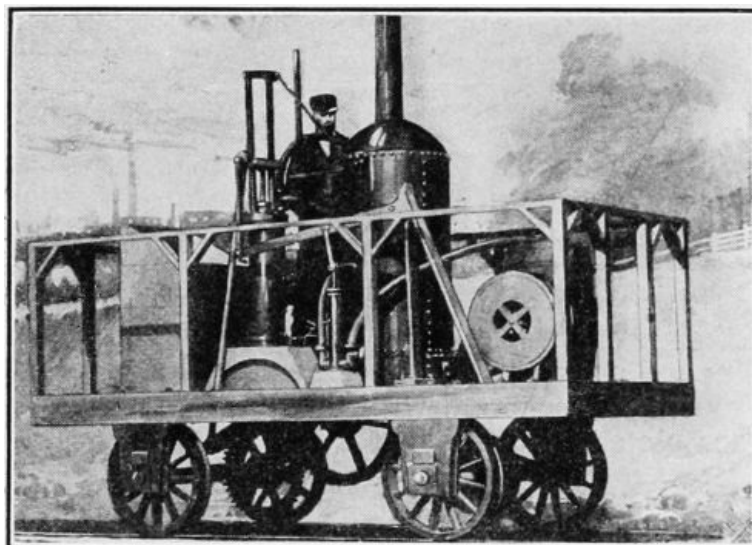
In February, 1785, the laws were passed by the legislatures of Maryland and Virginia authorizing the formation of a company for the improvement of the Potomac river and books for the subscription of stock were opened at once. The total shares were 403 and the capital of the new Potomac Company was 40,300 pounds. Washington was elected its president and James Rumsey, the inventor, whose monument we saw at Shepherdstown, was general manager. In the summer of 1785 the work of blasting rock and other obstructions was begun between Great Falls and Harper's Ferry.

The work was prosecuted with vigor, but during the winter of 1786-87 there came a hint of labor troubles. Common laborers were paid 32 shillings (about \$8.00) a month "with the usual ration except spirits, and with such reasonable allowance of spirits as the manager may from time to time think proper." The question of spirits seems to have been the chief cause of the trouble, for it is recorded that the company contracted for the supply of rum at "two shillings per gallon." It must have been the same kind of stuff that is peddled across the river to "dry" Virginians today.

In 1787 Washington withdrew from active work in the company to accept the presidency of the Republic. His retirement sealed the fate of the corporation. Its affairs languished for years and in 1823 was declared defunct.

In the same year—1823 a date since famous for the promulgation of the Monroe doctrine—the navigation project was again revived in the Maryland legislature. It was estimated that the proposed work of cutting a canal from tide-water (Washington, D. C.) up the Potomac, across the mountains to a branch of the Ohio, and down the same, at \$1,500,000, of which Virginia, Maryland and the District of Columbia were each to subscribe one-third. The Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Company was incorporated by the Maryland legislature in 1825 with a capital stock of \$6,000,000, Congress having previously made an appropriation of \$30,000 for preliminary surveys. The route selected for the canal alarmed the citizens of Baltimore. They saw that it would divert trade from their city. About this time Philip E. Thomas, a Baltimore banker, and George Brown, an enterprising resident of that city, took earnest counsel between themselves to save the traffic for their town. On the 19th of February, 1827, they held a meeting with their townsmen which was destined to become memorable in the whole history of transportation.

[37]



**Tom Thumb—B. & O. 1830**

Up in Quincy, Mass., and in Maunch Chaunk, Pa., for a year or two wagons had been operated on rails, and Mr. Thomas inquired of his confreres why a "rail road" would not be practicable from Baltimore to the Ohio. The whole world knows the answer: On February 28, 1828, a charter was granted to the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company, Mr. Thomas resigned the presidency of the Mechanics' Bank in Baltimore to become the head of the first American railway system.

[38]

THEN began a memorable commercial race between canal and railroad. Their prospective routes were parallel and both sought the same destination—the Ohio river at Pittsburgh. Early in 1826 both companies were in the field surveying for their respective highways. On the fourth of July succeeding celebrations were planned by the rival corporations. In Washington on that day President John Quincy Adams, the members of his cabinet, foreign ambassadors, survivors of the Revolutionary War and a great throng of citizens proceeded up the Potomac to Great Falls where the first spadeful of earth in the construction of the canal was turned by the President of the United States.

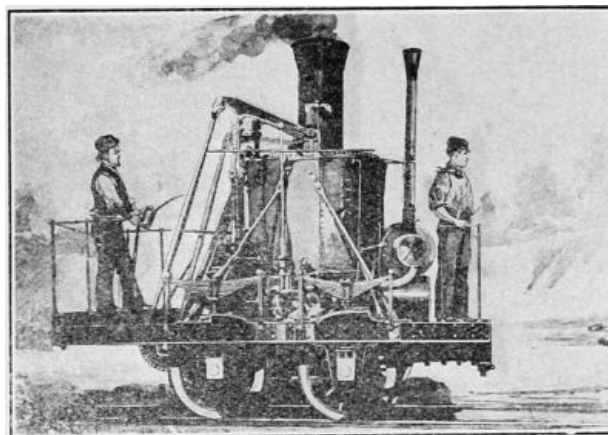
Over in Baltimore at the same hour the venerable Charles Carroll of Carrollton, the only surviving signer of the Declaration of Independence lifted a spadeful of earth in placing the foundation stone to commemorate the commencement of the building of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. The railroad was completed to the Maryland shore opposite Harper's Ferry in 1834 and was opened to operation December 1, the work on the canal at that time having proceeded more rapidly, despite injunctions, financial embarrassments and a multitude of obstacles that interfered with the work. The canal finally was completed to Cumberland February 17, 1851.

In the meantime the railroad had struggled to success in spite of similar obstacles. The Baltimore and Ohio was opened to the public May 22, 1830, and was received with approbation of the public. At this time the line extended from Baltimore to Ellicott's Mills, a distance of 12 miles. It was advertised that "brigades of cars left Baltimore at 6 and 10 a. m. and 3 and 4 p. m." These "brigades" of cars first were hauled by horses and mules and later a brother of President Thomas invented a car which moved by sails. The superintendent of motive power, nevertheless, was enterprising and steam was soon applied. As early as 1831 the company offered a prize of \$4,000 for the best locomotive offered for trial on the road. It is a curious fact that a watchmaker of York, Pa., built the first practicable models.

One of these, the "Atlantic," on August 25, 1835, drew the first train into Washington amid the applause of President Andrew Jackson and a distinguished assemblage. This "grasshopper" locomotive was in use a generation later when it hauled the vanguard of Union soldiers to save the national capital in 1861. It developed a speed of 30 miles an hour which was regarded as suicidal in the early days of railroading. Although superannuated, the "Atlantic" is still in a good state of preservation and can be operated under its own power.

The canal and railroad are no longer competitors. The bonds of the former company are held by the railroad. The canal is in operation during the season of navigation and more than 100 boats are engaged in providing low-priced transportation for coal from Cumberland to the seaboard. On the railroad "brigades of cars" are seen at intervals of a few minutes dashing along behind locomotives that weight more than twenty times that of the little old "Atlantic."

[39]



"Atlantic" Engine—B. & O. 1832

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## VI.

[40]

THROUGH the sultry afternoon of Wednesday, July 25th, "Somatub" ran for hours under the willows that fringe the Maryland meadows in Montgomery county. Across the river the Virginia shore presented an endless panorama of wooded hills that grew less rugged in their outlines as we proceeded down the stream. At sunset we were running through a marshy region and decided to keep on rather than invite malaria by spending the night on the border of a swamp. We were happy when, in the receding twilight, we espied the hills of Seneca creek and knew by consulting our topographical maps that we would have a more healthy mooring place. At Seneca a widewater covers about ten acres and under a big sycamore tree beside the little lake we tied "Somatub," preparing dinner on our "canned heat" range and serving it on our poncho which was spread on the soft, green turf.

The dying embers of a campfire were visible across an arm of the lake and after dinner we went to pay a neighborly call. Beside the fire was a tiny "pup" tent supported by two canoe paddles. On our approach three young men greeted us. A week before, they told us, they had started out from their homes in Washington on a fishing trip up the river. In the Potomac the bass

were not biting but the mosquitoes were and betwixt hope and desperation they had turned into the canal. Now they were having fairly good luck and were comfortable.

Our new friends punctiliously returned the call. One of the youths was the son of a naval officer and expressed much interest in "Sometub," and its unique cabin arrangement. We sat in the lantern light till midnight swapping motorboat experiences for fish stories. In this we had the better of the deal.

Thursday dawned clear and hot. Our neighbors, the fishermen, were out before sunrise and had breakfasted on their catch of perch, catfish and "sunnies" before we were stirring. Old Sol drank up the dew within a few minutes after his appearance over the Virginia hills and we made an excursion into a blackberry thicket where we picked a dish of luscious fruit for breakfast. It was our last berry feast of the season. After reciprocating photographs of our respective "camps," we headed for Seneca lock and were lowered through it by members of a troop of Washington Boy Scouts who volunteered their assistance to the lockmaster.

[41]

At noon we reached Great Falls. Here are 13 locks in a series of two, seven chambers in the first and six in the second. The actual time in making the descent was considerably less than two hours. We stopped at the first lock, and upon payment of a small fee to the lockmaster, were admitted to the private park surrounding the Great Falls of the Potomac. Crossing a swinging bridge to an island in the river we obtained a magnificent view of the cataract. The stream was at flood stage and the scene rivaled the rapids of the lower Niagara.

In the late summer and autumn of 1861 the Union and Confederate pickets frequently exchanged compliments at short range from behind the rocks and boulders along this stretch of the Potomac. If you have any friends among the survivors of the Pennsylvania Reserves, ask them to tell you of their experiences during the open season for snipers in those exciting days.

In the middle of the afternoon we passed Cabin John bridge and moored "Sometub" at the lock at the foot of Glen Echo park. In the shade of the trees everything looked cool and refreshing and we decided to spend the evening with friends in Washington, but a few minutes after we stepped off the boat we realized that it was the hottest day of the summer. The lockmaster's wife invited us to go into her house and assigned us "spare rooms" to change our clothes. Going to Washington by trolley, we found the heat in the city almost intolerable after our fortnight in the open air of the mountains. After dinner in town against the protests of friends we returned to the boat and were lulled to slumber by the music in the dancing pavilion of the park.

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JUPITER PLUVIUS had been on hand at the beginning of the voyage and now at its close he was in evidence again. Rain interrupted us at breakfast and continued through the forenoon. Disregarding the showers we started on the last lap of our cruise and at 11 o'clock reached Lock No. 1, or, according to our count, No. 75 from Cumberland. We surrendered our waybill with the request that the canal company would return it to us to keep as a souvenir. After a pleasant chat to the lockmaster during which time we took refuge from a particularly annoying shower, "Sometub" was lowered to the Georgetown level. A few minutes later the lofty towers supporting the arials of the naval radio station at Arlington were visible and rounding a majestic curve to the eastward, we beheld the fantastic skyline of the National Capital.

[42]



"BACK HOME"

Threading our way between a fleet of canal boats, tugs, skiffs and nondescript craft we reached the coal wharf in Georgetown and ran "Sometub" into the mud at the ancient lock which connects the canal with Rock creek, its outlet into the waters of the Potomac. The waterfront at Georgetown is no prepossessing place and the attitude of the bystanders was not calculated to lead the boatman to leave his property unguarded. Asking the obliging lockmaster to "keep an eye" on "Sometub" I went up a side street to the office of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Company to report our arrival and to meet in person Mr. A. Sahli, the secretary, with whom I had had an interesting telephone conversation last winter when in Washington arranging for the voyage.

[43]

Mr. Sahli had been most obliging and we felt grateful for his advice. He told me that a short distance below the lock at the railroad yards I could take the boat from the water and ship it back to Pittsburgh. It seemed that every possible convenience was provided for the skipper directing a "portable cruise."

I cannot describe my feelings when I returned to the wharf. We refused to realize that our voyage was at an end. It seemed that to take down the canopy, pack our stores and utensils and lift "Sometub" from the water would leave us absolutely homeless. It was still raining. For a long time we sat in the boat debating what to do. It was Friday and we had three days remaining on our hands. The little boat never looked more friendly, cozy and hospitable than just now. We had been companions on a most interesting journey and to leave it to pursue our own pleasure was like parting with a faithful partner in adversity.

We compromised by exploring new waters. Giving the signal to the lockmaster, we were lowered into Rock creek and started up that winding stream toward Rock Creek park where we hoped to find a quiet place to tie up. We ran under the arched bridge of Pennsylvania avenue and under the trees to a point at the foot of the hill below DuPont circle but here shoal water checked our progress. Reluctantly we turned back and ran out to the dam where the creek empties into the Potomac. Here our cruise came near terminating in a tragedy. We were within 30 yards of the dam before we saw that water to a depth of a foot or more was pouring over its crest into the swirling river 15 feet below. The motor refused to reverse. We were caught in the current and drifted broadside toward the dam.

Then we learned that a spruce canoe paddle is the most reliable of all motors for a small boat in moments of emergency. It was impossible to stem the current, but we succeeded in edging off from the middle of the stream and when almost at the edge of the dam caught some wisps of willows and held "Sometub" until a line was thrown ashore.

[44]

After extricating ourselves from this predicament we ran back to the entrance of the canal and met a great, whole-souled man in the person of Mr. Michael O'Leary, night watchman in a machine shop on the river front and the owner of a houseboat in Rock Creek. True to all the virtues of his nationality, Mr. O'Leary possesses a generous heart and bountiful hospitality. Shure, it would be all right to tie up to his boat and he would be plased to keep an eye on the wee

tub.

Honesty was written all over his face and we left "Sometub" in his care, going downtown to spend another evening with friends but returned at night to our cabin. Saturday morning we were confronted by the inevitable necessity of "taking down" the superstructure of the boat and packing our baggage. Mr. O'Leary was on hand with a group of longshoremen who lifted "Sometub" from the water and carried it to a freight car as if it were a toy. We felt homeless now indeed. Only the refreshing good humor of Michael O'Leary mellowed our regret that our voyage was at an end.

"Sometub" in its freight car berth started that night on its return to Pittsburgh for many subsequent weekend excursions on the Allegheny, but we tarried a day longer. On Sunday morning we crossed over to Virginia and went to old Christ Church in Alexandria. There in that historic temple of worship, with its sacred memories of George Washington, we rounded our fortnight's journey. From first to last we had followed in the footsteps of the greatest American.



\*\*\* END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK SOMETUB'S CRUISE ON THE C. & O. CANAL  
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