

# The Wreck of the "Winsome Winny"—J. Olivier Curwood

**W**URS was a lateen-rigged sail, with an even four hundred feet of canvas. We were both proud of her as she ran her bowsprit out over the ice for the first time. I suppose I took an inglorious pride in the thought that it was I who had given her the name of the "Winsome Winny." We had both planned her, and in her building I had helped as much as any uncle could have expected of a boy who wasn't over fond of saws and hammers. It wasn't our first boat, but it was the only one in which I had ever had the slightest interest, so far as ownership was concerned.

"Looks like an ugly day," remarked Uncle Ben.

We were looking straight out over Lake Erie from a little to the south of where the Detroit river emptied into it. I had never seen the ice so smooth. For three winters the lake had been so rough when the freezing nights came that ice-boating had been confined almost entirely to the rivers and bays on account of the roughness of the "open sea," as we called it. But this year it was different.

Uncle Ben stood with his hands in his pockets, staring across the lake. It seemed only a short distance out that the sombre gray of the sky shut in the ice-field. There was almost no wind, but the pall of gloom grew steadily blacker as we looked. Over the Canadian shore, which shone out in a dim snow-line, the gray had parted and let through a chilly light, which fell on the tumbled masses of ice broken up by the swift current of the river half a mile away. I glanced from these things to Uncle Ben. His face was partly turned, but I could see that it wore a doubtful look.

"I believe that if it wasn't for disappointing the folks over in Sandusky I'd postpone the trip," he said, finally.

"There's a light breaking through, and there's no wind," I argued, knowing as well as he that the light portended more evil things than the purple sky.

Uncle was a man who did not say much. One had to read his face. He made no answer, but gave the "Winsome Winny" a shove that sent her out from the headland, where she caught the breeze in her rigging. "Might as well stand by to hoist the sheet, Harry," he called.

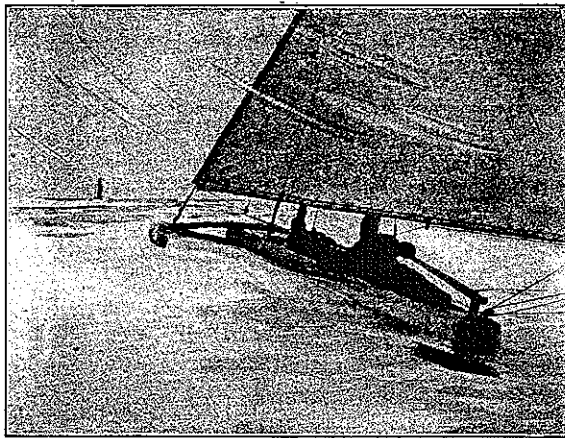
In a trice I had the sheet partly up, and the "Winsome Winny" walked out beautifully with the wind. I was about to loosen the full mainsail—I always abbreviated my "sail" because it sounded more nautical—when Uncle Ben interrupted me, and called me back to the cockpit. There I doubled up my feet and scrutinized the darkening sky and Uncle Ben's face by turns. So far as I could see there was no reason why we shouldn't cut straight across to Sandusky without any loss of time. So long as Uncle Ben was at the tiller I had no fear of getting lost in the worst blizzard that ever blew. But evidently I had more confidence in him than he had in himself. Each minute the sky seemed drawing nearer, like a great curtain, enveloping more and more of the frosted ice-field. From behind, where the steely light broke through, the wind grew fresher. Now and then a sudden puff would set the wire rigging to humming, and each time this happened Uncle Ben would glance back over his shoulder.

"It's six to one and half a dozen to the other, Harry," he said. "If we run back we'll have to leave our boat on shore and hunt up a farmhouse, and if we go on it's likely we'll weather it all right. We'll chance it, anyway. Skip out an' loose the sail."

We had been going dead with the wind, in a sort of uncertain way, but now as the three hundred feet of canvas in the mainsail filled out with the breeze Uncle Ben's cogitations ended, and he brought the "Winsome Winny" about with the wind on our beam in a way that sent her scuttling off like a shot. With "wind abeam" the breeze was striking us at right-angles, from the side instead of the rear, which places an iceboat at her best. This had always puzzled me. I had tried to figure it out again and again. I could see how a boat might go twenty miles an hour before a twenty-mile wind, but how she could make twice that much running almost against the wind had always been a conundrum to me.

"Harry!" My uncle's shout was followed by a quick wave of his arm from the cockpit.

"Hustle up!" When Uncle Ben used that sort of language something was up. Straddling the beam leading out to the runner-plank, I wormed my way toward the cockpit. A fierce gust set the wires humming dimly above my head, and I could feel the jar of the windward skate as it lifted slightly off the ice. The singing of the wires continued. Perhaps Uncle Ben wanted to get me in the cockpit before the blizzard struck us.



"Slips along like a ghost — — —"

"What do you see out there, Harry—your eyes are sharper than mine!" he shouted as he pulled me over among the rugs.

I put my hands telescope-like to my eyes in an effort to pierce the gray gloom on our lee. The sky seemed farther away, but to offset it the air began to fill with a fine, driving snow. For a few moments it seemed as though all was dark, elusive vacancy, then I fancied I caught a glimpse of something that was neither the gray sky nor the ice. I shouted to Uncle Ben, but it had disappeared in an instant.

"Slips along like a ghost—," He said something else, but I couldn't catch it. The fierce gusts of wind had given way to a steadily increasing gale, and with it whistling in our ears and the wires overhead cutting it with shrill wailings a shout was almost unintelligible. Then I caught sight of it again. It was parallel with us, perhaps three-quarters of a mile away.

"It's an iceboat!" I shouted the fact close up to Uncle Ben's face, and he nudged me, grinning. He replied with something that sounded like "comp'ny," and I suppose he meant we would join the stranger craft, for we changed our course just enough to cross her bow. She loomed up rapidly, for under the edge of the gale the "Winsome Winny" was kicking up her heels, as we called it, at no less than forty miles an hour. I could make her out lateen-rigged, with a bigger sweep of canvas than I had ever before seen on an iceboat. I believe we had crept up to within a quarter of a mile of her before she noticed us. Until then only two figures were visible, one at the rudder and the other sitting amidships, or halfway between the stern and the mast. But immediately on discovering us two others popped up, and disappeared again as suddenly, evidently hugging close to the deck. Hardly an instant elapsed before she heeled over with the wind, and stood out with the gale directly behind her.

"—mighty queer craft!" I caught from Uncle Ben's lips. Above the howling of the wind and the wires I could hear the deep-cut scraping of the rudder skate under the cockpit, and the "Winsome Winny" swung about as gracefully as a bird. A race! I grinned my delight into Uncle Ben's face. He returned it with a stare that seemed unnatural.

The stranger was running splendidly! There was only one figure visible on her now, and that soon began to fade away in the distance. I felt my heart go thump—thump—inside of me as I realized we were being beaten. Uncle Ben seemed to have forgotten I was beside him. He stared straight ahead with a hard, fixed gaze, and more than once during the next five minutes I found myself wondering why a race should affect him so. With the gale straight behind us the wires had stopped singing above, and when Uncle Ben spoke to me it was in his natural voice, though I fancied I caught a peculiar ring in it.

"I'm afraid we're on the wrong tack, Harry. I'm going to put her hard to lee, an' chance cutting 'em off!" By putting her "hard to lee" Uncle Ben meant he was about to fetch the "Winsome Winny" around so that the wind would strike us on the side again.

It was beautiful to see the way we caught the ice! I gave a hurrah as the ringing skates fairly danced across it. It was now blowing a blizzard, and it seemed that half of the time our windward skate was in the air. The big lateen sail ahead began to show up again. Each second added to the whiteness and the bligness of her canvas. Then, like magic, all four figures appeared on her. We could see there was excited talking, and with his free arm the helmsman was gesticulating wildly. The distance be-

tween us was so short that we could see he was talking to a man in the bow, who sat facing us, with his arms up as though he was holding a gun to his shoulder. Then there came a sudden snap, so sharp that we could hear it almost as plainly as though we had been aboard the stranger. The huge lateen sail swept around with a sound like the cracking of a whip.

"She's going over!" shouted Uncle Ben. For a moment it looked that way. I would have staked my life she had capsized. What magnificent control! She was up and off like a bird in an instant! In that hazardous second she had changed her course as completely as though she had taken an hour to do it in. Now she was playing almost dead against the wind, while Uncle Ben, too surprised to act, gave her a hand-some start.

"Stand by—duck!" he fairly shrieked. I heard the swish of the "Winsome Winny's" sail as I flattened myself in the cockpit. We were after the stranger again! Once more she was just a mist against the gray sky. The "Winsome Winny" had shown her mettle. I knew it by the grim smile that had settled on Uncle Ben's face.

But why were Uncle Ben and the stranger playing this game of tag all over Lake Erie while every minute a blizzard was coming up blacker and thicker all around us?

There was something mysterious about it all. I began to realize now that it was more than a race. If I had not suspected it before, the next move of the stranger craft would have settled all doubts in my mind. She was hovering in the wind like a great gull an eighth of a mile ahead, almost motionless, for she was taking the fierce blast of the blizzard full on her bow, with her sail swinging out behind like a pennant. Then she suddenly swerved, and as she went off like a shot at right-angles to us I saw something topple off her deck upon the ice.

"Man overboard!" I cried. The grim smile on Uncle Ben's face never changed. With one big swoop to leeward the "Winsome Winny" came about with the wind abeam again, and as we dashed away in pursuit of the stranger we passed within a few feet of the object. It was the carcass of a sheep, freshly cleaned.

"Just as I thought!" shouted Uncle Ben in my ear. His face lit up with an added excitement. I was more mystified than ever, and howled back a lusty inquiry:

"What is it?" "Mutton—they're smuggling mutton!" he replied. Smugglers! I felt a cold chill creep up my back that was not exactly caused by the wind. If they were smugglers, why in the world was Uncle Ben chasing them! According to my idea it would have been a much wiser policy to have turned in another direction, and in the next few seconds I made up my mind that if anything did happen it wouldn't be the fault of the smugglers, for Uncle Ben was hounding them like grim death.

The stranger had now tried every trick known to experienced ice-boaters in order to escape the "Winsome Winny." We had beaten her with the wind, we had beaten her against it, we had outpointed her with it abeam, and now as it caught us on the side again we were overtaking her rapidly. Everything seemed plain to me now. I had often read in the papers that sheep could be bought much cheaper on the Canadian side than in the United States, and that there was a big profit in smuggling them. The daring men ahead had taken advantage of the smooth winter on Lake Erie to run them across, and were probably taking them to some point on the shore between the river and Toledo. That they were taking us for revenue men who had got wind of their operations was probable. In no other way could they account for our pursuit. But what in the world did Uncle Ben intend to do? They outnumbered us two to one, and we, at least, were unarmed. I felt that my question would soon be answered, for we were drawing so near that the two men flattened on the deck could be plainly discerned. The figure amidships was facing us again. Suddenly a puff of white smoke clouded it for an instant.

The report of a gun rolled across to us! The lurch that followed sent such a thrill through me as I never hope to feel again! It seemed that I could see death written in Uncle Ben's face as he uttered a sharp cry and lurched against me with a force that drove the breath out of my body.

"Look out!" he shrieked. He doubled me up under him, with my face turned skyward, and in that instant I saw the "Winsome Winny's" big spar toppling down through space, with a loud rending and tearing of canvas. Before I could fairly realize what had happened the "Winsome Winny" seemed standing on end. The fallen

crunched into the ice ahead of the forward skates, and as the rear skate swung with the jar the rudder-stick caught Uncle Ben a turn in the side that sent him headlong from the cockpit. One moment more and the "Winsome Winny" was a hopeless wreck. Clinging in a dazed fashion to her sides, I saw the wardward skate wrenched off and sent whirling across the ice. From the grinding under me, as we still went on, I knew the rudder-skate was smashed. Then we stopped, a mess of sails, and spars, and snow.

Uncle Ben came limping up across the ice. Without saying a word, he clambered over to the ice-boat's mast, and pulling down one of the ropes he brought it back and shoved it under my eyes, swearing very softly.

"There wasn't one chance in five hundred million that a bullet'd hit that, Harry—'n' yet it did!"

I had read splendid books of the pursuit of richly laden merchantmen by pirate ships, and of their narrow escapes by shooting away the enemy's rigging, but I believe that if any one had told me the "Winsome Winny" could have been put out of business by a single rifle bullet cutting her halcyon I would have laughed until I was red in the face.

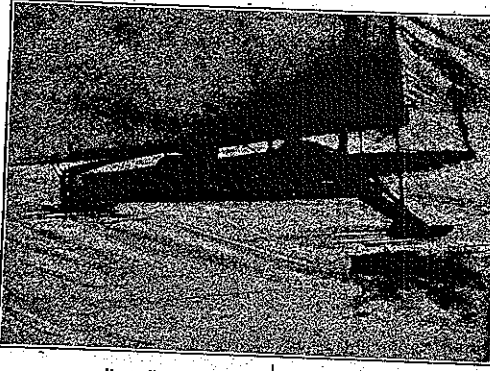
Now I looked my amazement. "And there's only one thing left for us to do," continued Uncle, after he had investigated the extent of the "Winsome Winny's" injuries. "Every skate on her is ruined. We'd freeze to death if we tried to go back through this blizzard, so we'll have to brave it out on the Middle Sister."

He pointed across the ice, and I could just make out the shore of the island perhaps half a mile ahead.

"You run ahead and build a fire," he said, briskly, "as I'll go back after the sheep!"

Running half the distance to get a little warmth in my chilled limbs, I soon came up to the rocky shore of the island. It was thickly wooded on our side, down to the very edge of the ice, and picking out a place protected from the wind and snow I scraped together a big pile of dry twigs and broken limbs, and soon had a merry fire going. A few minutes later Uncle Ben came up, carrying the sheep's carcass across his shoulder.

"This won't be a bad place to camp in for a few days, especially after we get our tent up!" he cried cheerily. "There's enough mutton here to feed us for a week at least. Like mutton, Harry?" "Love it!" I replied. Things began to look cheery. By the time we got back with the "Winsome Winny's" sail we were as warm as toast, and Uncle began to sing like a boy. I thought he enjoyed our adventure, though I learned afterward that he was more nervous than he acted. After we had built our tent he leaned back and smoked his pipe, while I tended fire and broiled mutton over the coals with sticks.



It was the carcass of a sheep freshly cleaned.

Our first meal was a regular picnic, attended as it was by our ravenous appetites, and for that matter we spent a comfortable night, sleeping but little, and telling stories nearly all the hours through. But when the next day dawned, black, gloomy, and with the blizzard still raging, even I, who thus far had thoroughly enjoyed being "cast away" on an uninhabited island, began to experience an uneasy feeling that was the next thing to fear. As this day lengthened, and we banked up great piles of wood in front of our tent, I could see that Uncle Ben was disguising his real feelings, so I came out blunty

and asked him to tell me just how we were situated, and to conceal nothing from me, for I had already guessed pretty near the truth.

"I'd rather be wrecked here in the summer," said Uncle Ben, puffing his pipe. "If it was summer we could build big fires on the shore and attract the attention of passing vessels. But now there's no body near us for miles and miles."

"And we couldn't walk ashore in the summer," I said. "Why can't we hoof it over to the mainland? I can make twenty miles in a day easy."

"If we got out into that once, Harry," said Uncle, pointing where the blizzard hung white over the lake, "we couldn't tell which way from which! A few hours' wandering about and we'd freeze to death. All we can do is to stay here, and—I've been hoping!"

What Uncle Ben's hopes were I did not just then inquire. I felt that he would tell me as soon as he had them straightened out in his own mind, and after I had added fresh brushwood to the fire and came back beside him I found that I was right.

"I telegraphed Ed"—Ed was Uncle Ben's brother—"that we were just about to start for his place across the ice, and we were due there last night," explained Uncle. "Seeing that we didn't show up, the folks will telegraph over to Detroit, and between them they will discover that we are somewhere out on the lake, perhaps dead. Of course they'll search."

Uncle Ben never finished his sentence. With a whoop he tore through our tent door, jumped clean over the fire, and when I had recovered enough from my surprise to follow I found him surrounded by three men dressed in heavy fur coats, all of them shaking his hands by turns with the finest friendship imaginable.

When they had all greeted me, and trooped into our tent, Uncle Ben drew me slightly aside, and putting his mouth close down to my ear whispered:

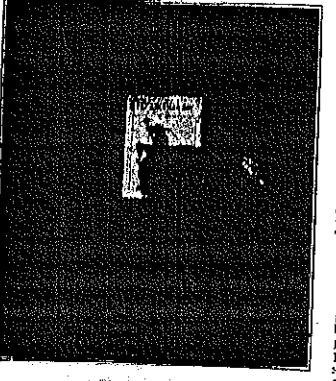
"Harry, as long as you live, don't you slip a word about the smugglers! They're gentlemen, every one of them. They no sooner made a safe landing near Toledo than they sent word to an iceboat club there that we were wrecked near the Middle Sister. They saved our lives—mind you—never slip a word about the smugglers!"

And I have kept it all a secret until now.

# THE BOY PHOTOGRAPHER

THE AMERICAN BOY offers twelve prizes of two dollars each for the best Amateur Photographs received during the twelve months in the month of one dollar for the next best photograph. The prize will be based upon the quality of the subject and the perfection of the photograph. The contest is open to amateur photographers. Photographs will be returned if stamped in the contest and not in the album. All photographs sent back to our office will be held for each month in one month to be our own, without further payment than the payment of the prize. Write on the back of the photograph its title, with a description of the subject, and the full name and address of the contestant, who is every one named by the artist who took the picture.

Inch wide and an inch and a half long. If this is not handy, use a piece of paper. Stick the fuse in the powder, letting the end hang out. Then set the camera on the top of the camera. Now arrange the group, shutting out all artificial light. Open the shutter of the camera, draw the slide and everything is ready. Light the top of the fuse and stand out of the way. The powder will flash up with a dazzling light, after which immediately close the shutter and replace the slide to the plate holder. No shadows will be seen, as they are behind the objects. An ounce of powder will make 20 or 30 of such exposures in a room 10x16.



A FROUD READER.

## Taking Flashlight Pictures.

Harry C. Hallingworth sends the following directions for taking a flashlight picture, with the advice that it will be found satisfactory and economical. He says: Get a good powder. Montgomery Ward sells a good magnesium flashlight powder for five cents an ounce. Take a long, and bore in it a hole two hole half an inch deep. Put this in the lid of a bakelite powder can and fill the hole in the wood with powder. For a time, use a strip of celluloid about an eighth of an

**Fogging Plates.**  
During the past summer the writer has industriously watched amateur photographers manipulating their cameras, and he noticed one blunder that was made by the majority. After making an exposure they were apt to replace the slide, that covers the plate, corner foremost. The effect of this was to allow a ray of light to enter the plate holder when the corner of the slide lifted the "trapdoor" that protects the plate when the slide is out. This "trapdoor" is called the plate valve, and it should only be disturbed by inserting the plate holder squarely, so as to exclude all light. Another thing: The focusing cloth should be thrown over the camera when withdrawing or inserting the slide. That is the great secret of clear plates.

**Prizes.**  
The prizes for the two best photographs this month are awarded as follows: First prize, Paul Neal, Keota, Ia. picture entitled "The Overflow"; second prize, Lloyd McKinney, 1036 Grove street, Jacksonville, Ill., photograph entitled "Moonlight on Lake Michigan."

**Reduction.**  
Prof. Lainer gives the following formula by which a very slowly proceeding reduction of the negative is obtained without loss of the delicate half-tones: Fixing soda solution 14.....100 c.cm. Iodide potassium.....100 c.cm. After about an hour the reduction is perceptible; after eight to ten hours' action, even a dense fog will disappear. The gelatine film is not attacked thereby; on the contrary, it is hardened somewhat.

## The Manipulation of Kloro Paper.

The manipulation of kloro paper is simply itself. Print a shade deeper than several changes of water until all the free silver is removed, which can be told by the non-milky appearance of the water; drain of water 50 ounces, chloride of gold 2 grains, and neutralize with a saturated solution composed of acetate soda and borax, equal parts; prints should tone in five minutes; then place them in a fixing bath composed of 40 ounces of water to 2 ounces of hyppo, and they should be thoroughly fixed in twenty minutes; wash in running water half an hour.

## Hurrying Negatives to Dry.

A photographer says he has been able to hurry the drying process with negatives by wiping them gently with a Turkish towel, grasp the mass of the towel in the hand, he says, "making sort of a pad, and draw it lightly several times across the face of the negative until the surface moisture has all been removed. This has the effect of removing chance particles of hair, grit, etc., which often adhere to the negative. It insures quick drying, while with such treatment it is usually ready to print in an hour's time." The experimenter is warned to be very careful when trying this way, as some negatives are much softer than others, and will hardly stand what looks to be rather rough treatment, even if it is done with a Turkish towel.

## Improving Poor Negatives.

It is not far out of the way to say that most of the negatives at first turned out by amateur photographers are flat or fogged. How they become so is another question, but the probability is that they are under-developed or over-exposed. Yet these very negatives may comprise subjects of both artistic and commercial value. Prof. H. Kessler, who is an authority on photographic matters, advises the following process with such negatives: The dry negative is bleached with bichloride of mercury, washed fifteen minutes, and then blackened with a solution of fifty gr. sulphite of soda and five gr. metol in 500 ccm. of water until the blackening has penetrated to the glass side. Then wash again and reduce with a solution of fixing soda and red prussiate of potash until the picture has become clear. Finally wash again. It is not well for beginners to "monkey" with these chemicals, but it will be all right for those who have had some experience in mixing chemicals, and who desire to save fogged plates.

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