

**THE YOUNG
MOOSE-HUNTERS; A
BLACKWOOD'S STORY**

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The young moose-hunters; a blackwood's story by C. A. Stephens

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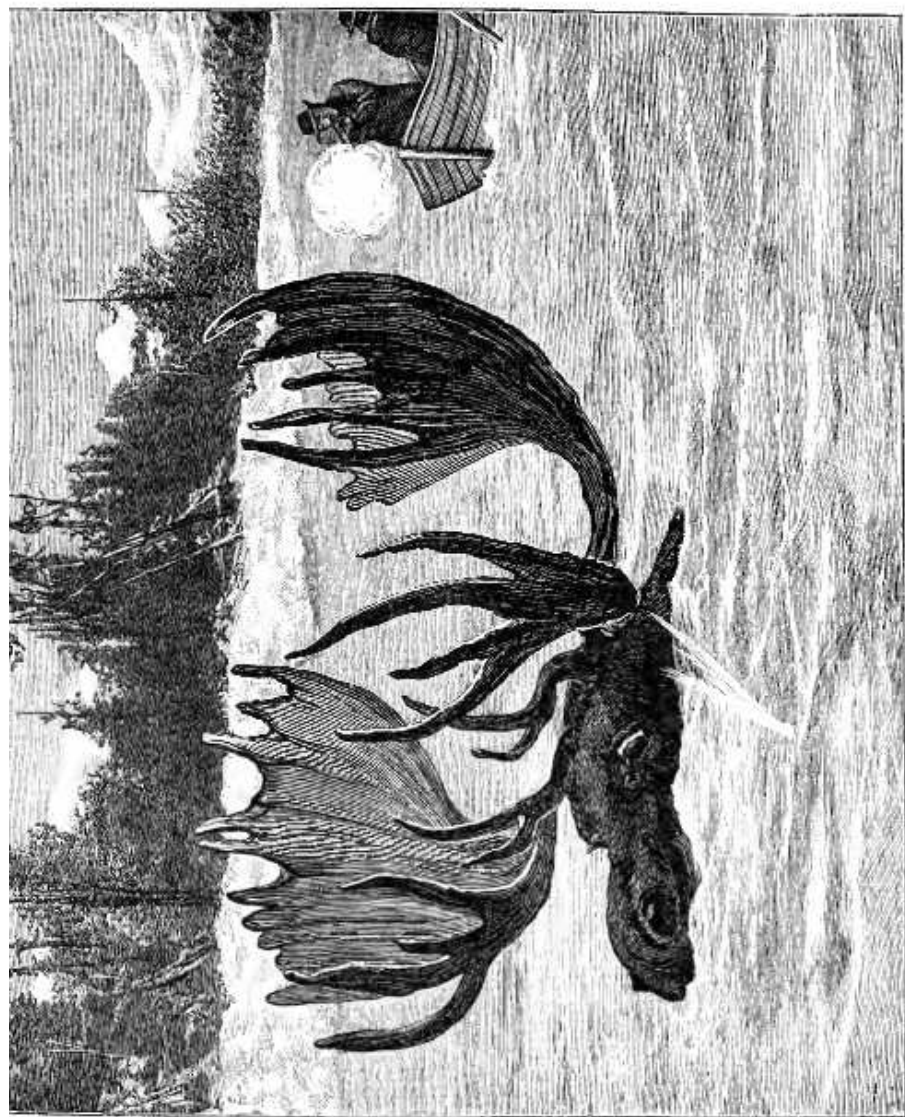
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C. A. STEPHENS

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MOOSE-HUNTERS; A
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FRED AIMED AT THE BACK OF THE MOOSE'S HEAD. — PAGE 216

THE YOUNG MOOSE-HUNTERS

A BACKWOOD'S STORY

BY

C. A. STEPHENS

AUTHOR OF "THE KNOCKABOUT CLUB IN THE WOODS," "THE KNOCKABOUT CLUB ALONG SHORE," "CAMPING-OUT STORIES," ETC.

FULLY ILLUSTRATED

BOSTON

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THE YOUNG MOOSE-HUNTERS.

CHAPTER I.

PREPARATION.

MY chum took out three greasy, tattered ten-cent "scrips." "My whole pile!" said he, smoothing them out on the bare table-leaf,— "all I've got in the world; and this I owe you, old fellow." And the writer of this narrative, dejectedly watching him from the other side of the table, was not in a condition to deny the debt.

"No matter about it this morning, Scott," I said, with a sense of magnanimity. "I've got twenty-five cents left yet. Besides, the Lexicon is mine, you know."

"Yes," said Scott, brightening a little; "that's good for two dollars, any day."

Then we mused.

A glance at us there, in our forlorn little room, would have told the reader what we were,—a couple of impoverished youngsters, students for the time being at the village academy, working every way to wrest an education from Poverty's grim hands.

Ah! those impecunious, starveling school-days of ours! Thanks to Providence, and the steady revolution of the earth, they are gone,— forever, I hope. For one, I have no desire to get them back.

America, meaning the United States, is a great country for self-made men, so called. Our people rather dote on that sort of man. It is a nice topic to fire the juvenile mind with, — this being a self-made man. When the average poor boy comes to try for it, he is apt to find it a stern task.

To fight his way against everything, even hunger itself, is doubtless an indication of pluck, yet is it anything save a pleasant pastime for the luckless youth who gives the indication.

That little upstairs room, with its one window, bare floor, and rusty stove; its two crippled chairs and starved little cupboard, that rarely could show more than half a dry loaf of wheat bread and a pint jug of molasses; its unpainted, uncovered table, on which lay half-a-dozen second-hand text-books of Virgil, Cæsar, Xenophon, all intimately associated with a certain void within the waistband, — well, it is not quite an enjoyable recollection, though a very vivid one. Those were times that tried not only our souls, but our stomachs as well. And with youngsters of fifteen or thereabouts, the stomach pleads strongly.

To offset all these mortifications of the flesh, we had before us the grand design of fitting for college, beyond which lay the great glowing future shining with professional honors and the bright aureole of fame.

How many young Americans does ambition thus spur to a long and sometimes fruitless struggle for higher and better things! Every college in the land is strongly represented by those who could have well understood our case that morning; though I honestly hope there are few who were ever quite so badly off.

Presently the academy bell rang, and we hurried off to recite our sixty lines of Virgil.

But the grave and pressing questions of finance that had obtruded themselves so imperatively upon our attention soon recurred; they were not to be put off. Rather they had been put off till the last moment already.