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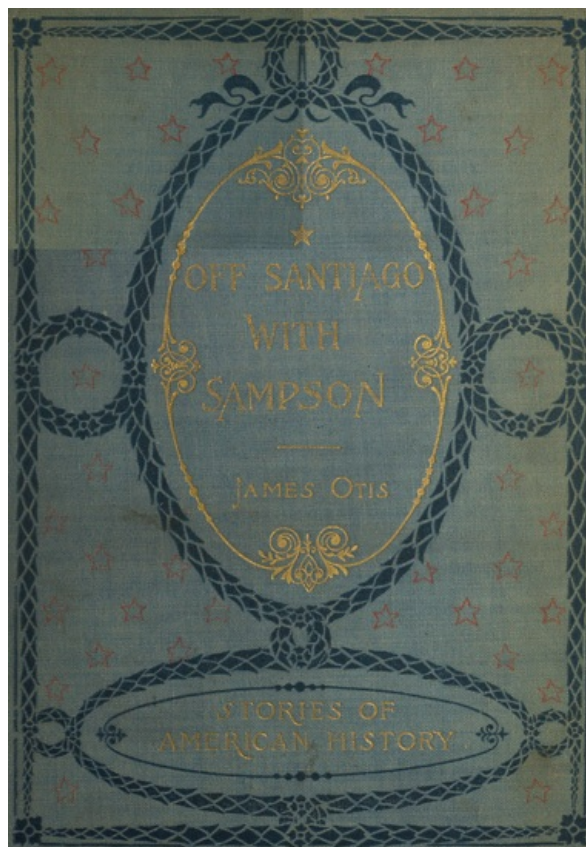
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OFF SANTIAGO WITH SAMPSON

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OFF SANTIAGO WITH SAMPSON

BY
JAMES OTIS

AUTHOR OF "JENNY WREN'S BOARDING-HOUSE,"
"JERRY'S FAMILY," "THE BOYS' REVOLT,"
"THE BOYS OF 1745," ETC.



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OFF SANTIAGO WITH SAMPSON.

CHAPTER I.

"KEEP OUT."

It was a small but by no means feeble-looking boy who stood in front of a driveway disclosed by the opening of huge gates which, until they had been swung inward, appeared to have been a portion of the high fence of boards.

There was seemingly no inducement for a boy to linger in this vicinity, unless, indeed, it might have been the sign posted either side the gate, on which was painted in letters rendered conspicuous because of the vivid colouring, the forbidding words, "Keep Out."

"I'll not keep out 'less I'm minded to, an' him as can hold me this side the fence needs to be spry on his feet," the small boy said, half to himself, and with a gesture of defiance which told he had not been accustomed to obeying commands that might be evaded.

Through the gateway nothing could be seen save enormous heaps of coal, some enclosed in pens formed of planks as if to prevent them from mingling with the others, and between all a path or road of no more than sufficient width to permit the passage of a cart. In the distance, a rough building abruptly closed the view, and beyond it the puffing of steam and rattle of iron implements told of life and activity.

12



Outside the fence, it was as if this certain portion of the city had been temporarily deserted; but one could hear the rumble of wheels over the pavements on either hand, giving token that the coalyard was situated just beyond the line of city traffic.

The boy gazed into the uninviting-looking place as if fascinated, only glancing up now and then at the signs which mutely forbade his entrance, and, as if unconscious of his movements, stole slowly nearer and nearer the gateway until he stood directly on the line that separated the yard from the sidewalk.

"If I wanted to go in, it's more'n a couple of signs that could keep me out," he muttered, threateningly, and then, with one backward glance to assure himself that no unfriendly policeman was watching from the distance, the boy darted forward, taking refuge behind the nearest heap of coal, lest an enemy should be lurking near at hand.

13

Save for the hum of labour everywhere around, he heard nothing. No guardian of the smutty premises appeared to forbid his entrance, and after waiting a full minute to make certain it was safe to advance yet farther, he left one place of partial concealment for the next in his proposed line of march.

So far as he could see, there was no other guardian of the yard save the two signs at the entrance, and the only purpose they served was to challenge him.

Grown bolder as the moments passed without bringing to light an enemy, the lad advanced more rapidly until he stood, partially concealed by one of the pens, where it was possible to have a full view of all that was being done in this place to which the public were not supposed to be admitted.

If the intruder had braved the unknown dangers of the yard simply in order to gratify his curiosity, then had he paid a higher price than the view warranted.

The building, which from the street appeared to mark the end of the enclosure, was a structure wherein puffing engines, grimy men, long lengths of moving chains, and enormous iron cars or boxes were sheltered from the sun or rain. In front of it a wooden wall extended down into the water,—a pier perhaps it might be called,—and at this pier, held fast by hemp and iron cables, lay a gigantic steamer built of iron.

14

The intruder gave no heed to the busy men and machinery within the building. The vessel, so powerful, but lying there apparently helpless, enchained his attention until he had made mental note of every spar, or boat, or cable within his range of vision.

Then, suddenly, from somewhere amid the chains, and cars, and puffing steam, came the shrill blast of a whistle, and as if by magic all activity ceased.

The engines no longer breathed with a heavy clank; cars and chains came to a standstill, and men moved quietly away here or there as if having no more interest in the hurly-burly.

One of the weary labourers, his face begrimed with coal-dust until it was not possible to distinguish the colour of his skin, took from its near-by hiding-place a dinner-pail, and came directly toward where the small boy was overlooking the scene.

Within two yards of the lad the dusty man sat down, brushed the ends of his fingers on his trousers, rather from force of habit than with any idea of cleansing them, and without further delay began to eat his dinner.

The boy eyed him hungrily, looked around quickly to make certain that there were no others dangerously near, and stepped out from behind his screen of coal.

"You'd better keep an eye out for the watchman," the man said, speaking indistinctly because of the bread in his mouth, and the boy replied, defiantly:

15

"I'd like to see the watchman 'round here that I'm 'fraid of, an' besides, he couldn't catch me."

"What'er you doin' here?"

"Nothin'."

"A boy of your size has got no business to be loafin' 'round doin' nothin'."

"I might be eatin' if I had a chance; but there hasn't been much of an openin' for me in that line this quite a spell."

"Hungry?"

"Give me a piece of that bread an' I'll show yer."

"Don't you do anything for a livin'?" the man asked passing the lad a generous slice from the loaf.

"Course I do."

"What?"

"Anything that pays. I've sold papers some since the Spaniards got so funny; but it ain't any great snap, only once in awhile when the news is humpin' itself. A feller gets stuck mighty often, an' I'm thinkin' of tryin' somethin' else."

"Where's your folks?"

"I ain't got any to speak of now, since my father got giddy an' went off to war."

"Out for a soldier, eh?"

"Not a bit of it! He shovels coal aboard one of them big steamers that's down smashin' the life out'er Cuby, that's what he does, an' he's nobody's slouch, dad ain't!"

"What's your name?"

"Teddy Dunlap."

16

"Want more bread?"

The boy leaned over in order to look into the dinner-pail, and then said, promptly:

"I've had enough."

"Don't think you're robbin' me, 'cause you ain't. I believe in feedin' well, an' this is only my first pail. There's another over there that I'll tackle later."

Teddy glanced in the direction pointed out by his new acquaintance, and, seeing a pail half concealed by some loose boards, at once stretched out his hand, as he said:

"If you've got plenty, I don't care if I do have another piece of that bread."

"Can't you earn enough to keep you in food?" and the man gave to the boy a most appetising sandwich.

"Say, that's a dandy! It's half meat, too! Them you get down-town don't have more'n the shadow of a ham bone inside the bread! Course I make enough to buy food; but you don't think I'm blowin' it all in jest for a spread, eh?"

"Runnin' a bank?"

"Well, it's kind'er like that; I'm puttin' it all away, so's to go down to Cuby an' look after the old man. He allers did need me, an' I can't see how he's been gettin' along alone."

"Where's your mother?"

"Died when I was a kid. Dad an' me boomed things in great shape till he got set on goin' to war, an' that broke it all up."

"Did he leave you behind to run wild?"

19



"Not much he didn't, 'cause he knows I can take care of myself; but he allowed to make money enough so's we could buy a place out in the country, where we'd have an imitation farm, an' live high. Oh, I'm all right, an' every time I catch a sucker like you there's jest so much more saved toward goin' down to Cuby. You see I never did take much stock in dad's kitin' 'round fightin' Spaniards, an' since he left it seems as if I was mighty foolish to let him go, so I'm bound to be where he is, when things come my way."

"Look here, Teddy," and the dust-begrimed man spoke in a more kindly tone to the boy, "If your father is a coal-passer in the navy, an' that's what he seems to be, 'cordin' to your story, you couldn't see very much of him, even though you was on board his vessel all the time."

"Don't yer s'pose I know that? I ain't sich a baby that I count on bein' right under his nose; but I'm goin' to be somewhere near the old man in case he needs me."

"It seems as if you might get down to Cuba easier than earnin' the money to pay your passage."

"How?" and Teddy ceased eating for the instant to look at this new friend who had made a suggestion which interested him more than anything else could have done.

"Why don't you try to work your passage? Now, here's this 'ere steamer, loadin' with coal for the navy—perhaps goin' to the very ship your father is on. If you could jolly the captain into takin' you to do odd jobs, it would be a snap, alongside of payin' for a ticket an' trustin' to luck after gettin' there." 20

"Well, say! That would be a great racket if it could be worked! Is it a dead sure thing that the steamer's bound for our war-vessels?"

"That's what, though it ain't to be said that she'll be goin' to the very craft your father's on. All I know is Uncle Sam has bought this coal, an' it's bein' taken out to our navy somewhere 'round Cuba."

"I don't reckon any but them what enlists can go aboard the steamer, an' the snap can't be worked, for I've tried four times to get taken on as a sailor."

"But bless your heart, this 'ere craft is only a chartered collier."

"A what?"

"I mean she's only a freighter that Uncle Sam has hired to carry coal. You won't find enlisted men aboard of her."

"An' do you really think there's a chance for me?"

"I can't say as to that, lad; but I'd make a try for a berth aboard if my mind was set on goin' into that part of the world, which it ain't. The captain went below not ten minutes before the noon-whistle sounded, an' he's likely there this minute."

Teddy gazed inquiringly at this new acquaintance for an instant, as if suspicious that the man might be making sport of him, and then marched resolutely toward the end of the pier, with the half-eaten sandwich almost forgotten in his hand.

After perhaps five minutes had passed, he returned, looking disappointed, but not disheartened, and seating himself by the side of the owner of the two dinner-pails, resumed operations upon the sandwich.

"See the captain?"

"Yep."

"Didn't want a boy, eh?"

"Guess not; he said he'd give me two minutes to get out of the cabin, an' I thought perhaps I'd better go."

"Quite natural, lad, quite natural; I'd done the same thing myself. There couldn't have been any very great harm worked, though, in askin' the question."

"It stirred him up considerable; but I guess he'll get over it without any very bad spell," Teddy said, grimly, and after a brief pause, added, reflectively, "It seems as though some men hated boys; I've seen them as would take a good deal of trouble to kick a feller if he stood the least little bit in the way, an' I never could understand it."

"Perhaps there's more'n you in the same box; a brute's a brute whether he be old or young, an' age always makes 'em worse. It's a pity, though, that you didn't strike one of the right kind, because if you're set on gettin' down where the fightin' is goin' on, this 'ere steamer would have been the safest way."

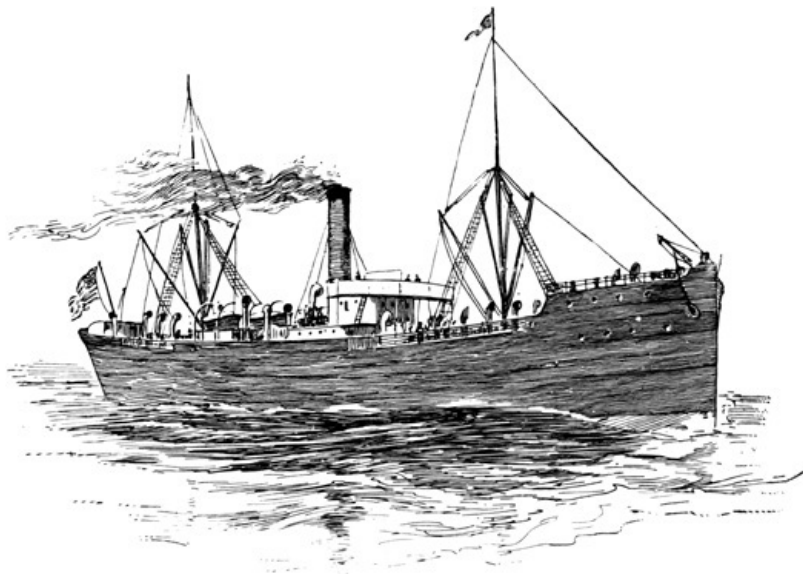
"Do you know when she's likely to leave?" Teddy asked, after a long pause, during which he had been gazing intently at the gilt letters, *Merrimac*, on the vessel's rail.

"Some time to-night, I reckon. We've been workin' night an' day at the loadin', an' it's said that she'll leave the dock within an hour after the last scoopful has been put aboard."

22

"How long will it take her to get there?"

"I can't say, lad, seein's I don't rightly know where she's bound; but it shouldn't be a long voyage at the worst, for such as her."



Again Teddy gazed at the gilt letters on the rail, as if in them he saw something strange or wonderful, and when the owner of the dinner-pails had come to an end of his meal, the boy said, abruptly:

"Do you know the watchman here?"

"Watchman! I haven't seen any yet, though I reckon likely there is one around somewhere; but he ain't agitatin' himself with doin' much watchin'."

"Is the yard open all the time?"

"I haven't seen the gates closed yet; but most likely that's because the work has been pushed on so fast, there hasn't been time to shut 'em. Look here, lad!" and now the man sat bolt upright, staring as intently at the boy as the latter had at the gilt letters, "Is it in your head to stow away on that steamer?"

23

"Sim Donovan did it aboard a English steamer, an' I've heard it said he had a great time."

"Yes, I reckon he did, if the captain was the usual sort," the dust-begrimed man replied, grimly.

"I could keep out of sight a whole week, if it was for the sake of comin' across dad," the boy added, half to himself.

"That's what you think now, lad; but it ain't the easy work you're countin' on. As a general rule,

stowaways get it mighty tough, an' I'd sooner take my chances of swimmin', than to try any such plan."

"If a feller kept under cover he couldn't get into much trouble."

"But you can't stay in hidin' any great length of time, lad. You'd have to come out for food or water after a spell."

"Not if I took plenty with me," Teddy replied, in the tone of one who has already arrived at a conclusion.

"It looks easy enough while you're outside; but once shut in between decks, or cooped up in some small hole, an' you'd sing a different tune."

"I wouldn't if it was a case of seein' dad when we got there."

24

"But that's the trouble, my boy. You don't know where the steamer is bound. She might be runnin' straight away from him, an' then what would you do?"

"You said she was goin' to carry the coal to our vessels, didn't you?"

"Yes; but that don't mean she'll strike the very one your father is workin' on."

"I'll take the chances," and now Teddy spoke very decidedly.

For an instant it was as if the owner of the two dinner-pails would attempt to dissuade him from the hastily formed determination, and then the man checked himself suddenly.

"I like to see a boy show that he's got some backbone to him, an' it may be you'll pull out all right. It'll be an experience you'll never forget, though, an' perhaps it won't do any harm."

"How can it?" Teddy asked, sharply.

"Them as have tried it might be able to explain more'n I can; there's no call for me to spend wind tryin' to tell what you won't listen to, so I'll hold my tongue. I'm bound to say this much, though, which is that you're certain to catch it rough when the time comes for showin' yourself."

"That'll be all right; I can stand a good deal for the sake of seein' the old man once more."

Having said this, Teddy turned his head away as if no longer inclined for conversation, whereupon the owner of the two dinner-pails surveyed him admiringly.

25

"I wouldn't wonder if you had considerable sand in you, Teddy Dunlap," he said, musingly. "An' even though it seems a queer thing for a grown man to do, I'm minded to give you a lift along what's goin' to prove a mighty hard road."

"Meanin' that you're willin' to help me?" the lad asked, his face brightening wonderfully.

"It's little I can do, an' while I ought'er turn you over to the police in order to prevent your makin' a fool of yourself, I'll see the game out so far as I can. What have you got by way of an outfit?"

"I don't need any."

"You must have food and water."

"I ain't broke, an' it won't be any great job to buy as much grub as will keep me goin' for a spell."

"That's the same as all stowaways figger, an' the consequence is that they have to show themselves mighty soon after the ship sails. I ain't advisin' you to try the game; but if you're set on it, I says, says I, take all you'll need for a week, an' then perhaps there'll be a turn in affairs that'll help you out of a bad hole. Here are my pails; they're yours an' welcome. Fill 'em both with water, or perhaps cold tea would be best; buy whatever will be most fillin', an' walk aboard as bold as a lion within the next hour. Them as see you are bound to think you're waitin' upon some of the workmen, an' not a word will be said. The hidin' of yourself is easy enough; it's the comin' out that'll be rough."

"Say, you're what I call a dandy!" and Teddy laid his hand on the man's knee approvingly. "I was mighty lucky to come across one of your kind."

26

"I ain't so certain about that. Before twenty-four hours have gone by you may be wishin' you'd never seen me."

"I'll risk that part of it, an' if you really mean for me to have the pails, you'll see me go aboard the steamer mighty soon."

"They're yours, my boy, an' I only hope you'll come out of the scrape all right."

"Don't worry 'bout that; it'll be a terrible spry captain that can make me cry baby when I'm headin' toward where dad is. Be good to yourself!"

Teddy took up the pails, and as he turned to go out of the yard his new acquaintance asked, solicitously:

"Got money enough to buy what'll be needed? If you haven't there's some odd change about my clothes that—"

"I'm well fixed, an' that's a fact. Ever since the idea came to me of huntin' dad up, I've kept myself in shape to leave town on a hustle. You're mighty good, just the same."

"I'm makin' an old fool of myself, that's what I'm doin'," the man replied, angrily, and then turned resolutely away, muttering to himself, "It's little less than sheer cruelty to let a lad like him stow away on a collier. There ain't one chance in a thousand of his findin' the father he's after, an' the odds are in favour of his havin' a precious hard time before gettin' back to this town."



Then a whistle sounded as a warning that the labourers must return to their tasks, and a moment later the building was alive once more with the hum and whirl of machinery, the clanking of great chains, and the voices of men.

29

One of the steamer's hatches was already on and battened down. A second was being fastened in place, and the final preparations being made told that the enormous hold had been nearly filled with the black fuel needed by the war-ships.

Every man, whether a member of the vessel's crew, or one of the labourers employed for the lading, was intent only on his own business, and among all that throng it is probable that but one gave any heed to a small boy who came rapidly down through the yard carrying two tin pails in his hands, and a large paper parcel under his arm.

That single workman, who was giving heed to other than his own special work, nodded in the most friendly fashion as the lad passed near where he was standing, and whispered, gruffly:

"God love you, lad!"

The boy winked gravely, and then, setting his face seaward, marched boldly up on the steamer's deck, glancing neither to the right nor the left, lest it should be observed that he was not familiar with his surroundings.

The man, who a few moments previous had been the possessor of two dinner-pails, watched carefully as the small lad walked rapidly forward, and only when the latter was lost to view did he give heed to his own work, saying half to himself as he took up the task once more:

"I've half a mind to blow on the boy even now, for it's a cruel shame to let him take the chances of stowin' away with but little hope of ever findin' his father."

30

As if in pursuance of this thought he took a step forward, and then checked himself, adding, thoughtfully:

"It would be more cruel to stop the little shaver just when he believes he's workin' his plan so smooth. Better let him go his own course, an' trust that them he comes across will remember the time when they were lads."

31

CHAPTER II.

Teddy Dunlap's father was formerly a coal-passer on a steam-tug, and many times had the lad, while spending the day with his parent, seen an ocean-going steamer at close range, while the small craft went alongside the larger one for business purposes.

At such times the boy seldom lost an opportunity of boarding the big vessel, and thus it was that he had a general idea of where he might the most readily find a hiding-place this day when he was venturing so much in the hope of meeting his only relative.

The dinner-pails and the parcel under his arm would have done much toward warding off suspicion as to his purpose, had any one observed him; but every person on deck, whether member of the crew or temporarily employed to make the ship ready for sea, was so intent on his duties as to have no thought for a lad who appeared to be attending strictly to his own business.

Even if any one aboard had observed Teddy particularly, the natural thought would have been that he had come to deliver the parcel and pails to one of the workmen, and so long as the boy had been permitted to come over the rail, it was reasonable to suppose he had due authority for being there. 32

Teddy knew full well that his chances for successfully stowing away in the vicinity of the main cabin, the engine-room, or the deck-houses, were exceedingly slight, for such places were visited by many; but down in the very eyes of the ship, where were located the quarters for the seamen, was more than one dark, out-of-the-way hole into which he could creep with but little fear of being discovered.

Turning his head neither to the right nor the left, and moving rapidly as if it was his desire to be ashore again as soon as possible, the boy went into the forecabin—the sailors' parlour.

The dark, ill-ventilated place, filled with noisome odours, had at that moment no living occupants save the rats who had grown bold through long tenancy. The crew were all on deck, for at this time, when quick despatch was necessary, no skulking would be allowed, and had Teddy's friend with the dinner-pails attended to the arrangements, the boy could not have had a better opportunity.

He might be even boisterously noisy, and there was little likelihood any would come to learn the cause of the uproar until after the steamer had left the coal-sheds to begin her long voyage straight toward the enemy's islands.

Being in a certain degree aware of this last fact, Teddy set about making his arrangements for the ticketless voyage in a methodical fashion, there being no reason why he should allow himself to be hurried.

The crew on board the good steamer *Merrimac* had neither better nor worse quarters than those to be found on any other craft of her class; but to a lad whose experiences of seafaring life had been confined to short excursions around the harbour, this "sea parlour" was by no means inviting, and save for the incentive which urged him forward, Teddy Dunlap might have allowed himself to become disheartened even before it had been proven that he could take passage secretly. 33

"It ain't so *awful* tough," he said to himself, "an' daddy will be all the more glad to see me after knowin' I've had a hard time gettin' to him."

This last thought was sufficient to strengthen his failing courage, and straightway he set about searching for a hiding-place where he might remain concealed until the steamer should come alongside Commodore Schley's flag-ship, the *Brooklyn*, whereon was his father.

Then—but there would be time enough to form plans for showing himself when he had nothing better with which to occupy his attention.

The forecabin was well filled with sea-chests, bedding, which as yet had not been put in place, and such like goods as seamen would naturally bring with them on a reasonably long voyage, therefore Teddy found it difficult to judge as to what might be the general arrangements for stowage after the steamer should be under way; but he had good reason to believe it was necessary to find some place so small that it could not well be utilised by the men.

When, after some search, he came upon a narrow, dark, doorless closet, partially filled with coils of rope, bolts of canvas, and what appeared to be a general assortment of odds and ends, it seemed as if he had indeed found that for which he was looking. 34

There was little chance this small den would be required for other than what it was then used, and he had only to fear that some of the articles it contained might suddenly be needed, when he must of a necessity be discovered by whosoever should be sent to overhaul the goods.

"I'll have to take the chances," Teddy said to himself, having considered well this possibility of discovery. "It ain't likely they'll want anything out of here till after the steamer is at sea, an' then it'll be too late to send me ashore."

Once having decided that this was to be his abiding-place during the time he could remain in hiding on board the *Merrimac*, Teddy set about



making such bestowal of the goods as would best serve to his comfort, arguing with himself that he might not have another opportunity for putting the new quarters into decent shape.

35

Understanding that once the steamer was at sea she would be tossed about by the waves until it might be difficult for him to remain in whatever place he pleased, the boy's first care was to make of the rope and canvas a barricade to hold the remainder of the goods in proper position, and, this done, there was little else possible, save to unroll a bolt of the sail-cloth that it should serve as a bed.

"It's a good deal snugger than I expected, an' the dark part of it don't count," he said to himself, contentedly, as he wedged the two tin pails filled with water, and his store of provisions, inside the largest coil of rope. "When there ain't too much noise I can hear the crew talkin', and that'll help out big if a feller happens to get lonesome. Them signs on the coal-yard said 'keep out,' an' I come in; now I ought'er put up one that says 'keep in,'

an' perhaps I'll go out quicker'n I'm countin' on. Anyhow it's a case of keepin' in mighty snug, 'less I want to run up against that captain once more, an' I'm thinkin' he'd be an ugly customer."

Teddy Dunlap was well content. He believed his store of provisions and water was sufficient to keep both hunger and thirst at a distance during such time as it might be necessary for him to remain there in hiding, and when the short term of imprisonment should come to an end, he would be with his father.

What more could any twelve-year-old boy ask for?

36

It was while counting up his reasons for being thankful that the stowaway fell asleep, the heat, the darkness, and the comparative quiet all contributing to make his eyelids heavy, and he was yet unconscious when two noisy, bustling little tugs, one either side of the big vessel, towed her down the harbour.

The voyage had begun, and, apparently, there was no suspicion in the minds of the officers that the *Merrimac* had on board other than her regularly shipped crew.

When Teddy awakened he felt comfortable both in mind and body; the steamer was rising and falling on the ocean swell, but not to such a degree as inconvenienced him in the slightest, and the many odours with which his nostrils were assailed passed almost entirely unnoticed.

He believed, because of the pounding of the waves, that the *Merrimac* was rushing through the waters at a sharp pace, and this supposed fact was in itself sufficient to counterbalance any defects he may have discovered in his hiding-place, for the greater the speed the sooner he might see his father.

Not until after he had been awake several moments was it possible to distinguish, amid the varied noises, the sound of human voices; but he was finally able to do so, and became greatly cheered thereby.

"Now, this ain't goin' to be so bad," he said to himself, contentedly. "I'll know everything that's goin' on, 'cause it won't be a big job to crawl out far enough to hear the men talk, an' a feller couldn't be better fixed, not if he'd paid two prices for a ticket."

37

Then the idea came to Teddy Dunlap that he was hungry, and he laughed gently at the thought that it was only necessary to stretch out his hand in order to satisfy the desire.

"Talk 'bout your palace-cars! They ain't a marker 'longside this way of travellin'. I don't have to wait for any tousled-headed nigger to bring my order, 'cause here it is!"

Straightway the boy began to satisfy his hunger, doing it in an economical fashion, for he was not minded to exhaust his supply on the first day of leaving port.

He drank sparingly of the water, but yet taking sufficient to quench his thirst, and when the meal was come to an end lay back on the canvas bed luxuriously, congratulating himself again and again, upon his determination to go in search of his father.

The motion of the steamer grew more violent; but Teddy was proof against such rolling as the *Merrimac* was indulging in then.

There remained the same buffeting of the waves which told of progress; told that the distance between himself and his father was rapidly being lessened, and this was sufficient for the stowaway.

The plunging of the steamer was to Teddy Dunlap no more than the violent rocking of a cradle would be to an infant; it prevented him from remaining quiet as would have been pleasant, but

did not drive slumber from his eyelids.

In less than ten minutes after having partaken of the meal he was again wrapped in slumber, and during a full twenty-four hours he alternately slept and ate; but at the end of that time was more than ready for a change of programme. 38

Then it was that his eyes refused to close; the folds of canvas, which at first had seemed as soft as any fellow could have asked for, became hard as iron, and he suddenly discovered that he was sore and lame from having been flung about when the vessel rolled.

The hardships of a stowaway's life suddenly became a reality, and instead of congratulating himself upon being on board the *Merrimac*, he began to speculate upon the probable length of the voyage.

He hungered to hear the voices of the men more distinctly, and spent full two hours gently moving the dunnage around so that he might crawl out near the entrance to this seeming cave.

When he had gotten so far into the forecandle that no more than two coils of rope hid him from view of the watch below, and understood it would be dangerous to advance any farther, he learned that it was impossible to hear any more than such words as were spoken in the loudest tone. There was little hope of being able to realise what might be going on around him by such means.

Then came a most dismal twenty-four hours, when the *Merrimac*, met full in the teeth by a gale of wind, staggered, plunged, and rolled her way along, every wave striking the iron hull with a force that caused Teddy to wince, and then came that deathly sickness which those who sail upon the sea are sometimes forced to endure. 39

There were many hours when the stowaway believed the steamer was about to go to the bottom, and he fancied death was the only relief from his agony. He even ceased to think of his father, and considered no person save himself, wondering why he had been so foolish as to believe it might be wise to search for Commodore Schley's flag-ship.

More than once while the malady had a firm hold upon him, did he decide to throw himself upon the mercy of whosoever might chance to be in view when he emerged from the hiding-place, and perhaps if the sickness had been less severe, his adventures would have ended as do the greater number of such exploits.

Once having recovered, however, his heart became braver, even though he learned that nearly all the water had been spilled while the steamer was tossing about so wildly, and his store of provisions, which had seemed so large when he came on board, was nearly exhausted.

After this the hours passed more slowly, and each moment the imprisonment seemed more irksome.

It was only with difficulty he could force himself to remain screened from view, and more than once did he venture dangerously near the entrance to his floating cave in the hope of seeing a human face, but yet he kept his secret forty-eight hours longer, when the provisions, as well as the water, had come to an end.

He had ceased to speculate upon the meeting with his father, but thought only of how long he could endure the pangs of hunger and thirst, and even the fear of the commander's possible brutality faded away as he dwelt upon the pleasure of having sufficient to eat and drink. 40

And finally, as might have been expected, the moment arrived when he could no longer hold his courage against the suffering, and he made preparations to discover himself.

How long he had been cooped up in that narrow place it was impossible for him to so much as guess; he did not try to compute the number of hours that had elapsed since he last tasted food or water; there was only in his mind an intense desire to receive the punishment for having stowed away, in order that he might the sooner satisfy the cravings of his stomach.

"It's no use to hold on any longer; the voyage ain't comin' to an end for weeks an' weeks, an' I'll be dead in another day if I don't have somethin' to eat. I'll go out this minute, an' take whatever they give me in the way of a floggin', for waitin' won't make things any better."

Having arrived at this decision, Teddy Dunlap began to attack the cordage which screened the entrance to his retreat as if each strand of rope was a deadly enemy to be overcome without loss of time, and when he had thrown down the last obstacle he stood blinking and winking in the not overly strong light of the forecandle, confronted by a short, round-faced sailor, who surveyed him in mingled fear and astonishment.

"Where—who—what—oh, a stowaway, eh?" the little man cried, after having expressed on his glistening face, in rapid succession, fear, astonishment, and bewilderment. "Well, I'll eat my hat if I ever heard of a lad stowin' away on a collier what's out on an errand like ours!" 43



"Yes, I'm a stowaway, an' I don't care who knows it!" Teddy cried, in a tone of desperation. "I held in just as long as any feller could, an' it seems as if I was next door to bein' dead, I'm so thirsty an' hungry!"

"You won't count triflin' things like that after you've come face to face with the captain, lad," and the little man appeared as truly sorrowful as any one of a like jolly countenance ever can, however saddening the situation.

"Will he let in to me pretty tough?"

"I'm thinkin' that anything else you've had in that line will seem a good deal like a joke, alongside of what he'll deal out, an' that ain't the worst of it."

"What else can he do?" and Teddy looked up timidly, absolutely frightened out of his hunger.

"This 'ere is the next thing to a government steamer, seein's we're on naval service, an' the captain is like to turn you over to the first cruiser we meet, for extra punishment. I don't know how Uncle Sam treats them as stows away on his vessels, but I'll go bail it ain't with any very tender hand."

Teddy Dunlap looked around the forecabin, searching for some one to whom he could appeal, for he believed this jolly-looking little sailor was trying to play upon his fears; but the sea-parlour was empty.

44

If he had waited forty-eight hours for an opportune time in which to make his appearance, he could not have come at a better moment.

"What's the use tryin' to scare a feller almost to death?" he asked, piteously. "I've got to take the dose, of course; but there's no need of your rubbin' it in."

"I ain't comin' any game on you, lad, an' that's the solemn truth. While I never saw the captain of this 'ere steamer till I came aboard, I'll eat my hat if he ain't a tartar when you rub his fur the wrong way, an' I'm tryin' to think if there ain't some way of gettin' you out of the scrape."

"I'd go back into my hole if I had somethin' to eat an' drink."

"Where'd you come from?"

Teddy pointed to his late place of concealment, and the jolly little man said, quite cheerfully:

"That's the very thing for you to do, my son. I don't want to see you abused, an' it'll be hard lines if between us you can't be got off this bloomin' steamer without everybody's knowin' that you've cheated Uncle Sam out of a passage."

"Can you get me somethin' to eat?" Teddy asked, imploringly.

"I will if it takes every cent that's comin' to me in the way of wages, to square the cook. Tell me what brought you here, sonny? You can stand jest behind this dunnage, an' we'll be able to talk quite comfortable."

That the little man would be a real friend there could be no doubt, and without hesitation Teddy

45

told him the whole story, neither adding to nor taking therefrom, and saying, by way of conclusion:

"Of course it'll be all right when I come across daddy, for there ain't no captain of a coal-steamer who'd dare give it to me very rough while he was around."

"An' your father is aboard the *Brooklyn*, eh?"

"Yes; he shipped as coal-passer."

"Well, I don't rightly know what he'll be able to do for you in case we come across him, which is doubtful; but from what I've seen of skippers since this war begun, I'm thinkin' our captain will swing a pretty heavy hand, unless he meets some other feller who holds a bigger commission."

"You talk as if I couldn't find daddy," Teddy interrupted. "He's aboard the flag-ship."

"That's what I heard you say; but it ain't any proof we'll come across him. This 'ere cargo of coal is goin' where it's most needed, an' we may never find any of Schley's fleet."

"But we're goin' right where the war-vessels are."

"See here, my son, Commodore Schley's fleet ain't the only squadron in this war by a long chalk, an' we might work at coalin' the navy from now till we're gray-headed without comin' across him. I'm afraid the chances of findin' your father are slim; but I'm bound to help you out'er the snarl that bloomin' longshoreman got you into, if it so be I can. Get back into the hole, an' I'll see what can be found in the way of grub."

46

Teddy, more disheartened because of the doubt expressed as to the possibility of finding his father, obeyed the little man's order without remonstrance, and once alone again, gave himself up to the most disagreeable thoughts, absolutely forgetting for the moment that he had supposed himself on the verge of starvation a short time previous.

As yet he had not absolutely divulged his secret, save to the little sailor who had promised to be his friend, and it might be possible that at some port he could slip on shore without the knowledge of any save this one man.

But all such counted for nothing at the moment, in view of the possibility that he had, perhaps, made the venture in vain.

There was another and yet more alarming view to be taken of the situation. He might be forced to go ashore in a strange harbour, for it was hardly within the range of probability that he could return in the *Merrimac* to the home port, and then there was the ugly chance that possibly there would be great difficulty in finding his way back.

"I've made the biggest kind of a fool of myself!" he wailed, very softly; "but I won't let anybody know that I'm willin' to agree to it. When a feller gets into a muss he's bound to crawl out of it an' keep his upper lip stiff, else folks will have the laugh on him. It ain't so certain but I'd better go straight on deck an' take my dose; the captain won't be likely to kill me, an' the sooner it's over the easier I'll feel."

47

It is not certain but that Teddy Dunlap might have put this new proposition into execution at once, had it not been for the coming of the little sailor, who said, in a cheery tone:

"Here you are, my hearty, salt horse an' tea! I reckon you can worry along on that for a spell, an' meanwhile I'll keep my weather eye liftin' for you. Things may not be more'n half as bad as they look, an' even that'll be tough enough."

"I've been thinkin' I'd better have it out with the captain now, an' then I wouldn't be dreadin' it."

"What's the sense of picklin' a rod for your own back when you may run away from it? Hold on here for a spell, an' I'll get the lay of the land before anything foolish is done."

"You're mighty good to me," Teddy murmured, softly, as he took the hook-pot of tea and strip of cold meat from the sailor's hands. "What's your name?"

"Bill Jones—Snippey, some of the hands call me when they want to be funny. I reckon we'd best not do any more chinnin', for the port watch will be in here precious soon, an' there's more'n one man who'd make life hot for you if he had the chance. I know what sailors are, lad, seein's I've been one myself, man an' boy, these thirty years, an' their foolin' is pretty tough play for one like you. Lay low till I give the word, an' if there don't seem to be any way out of this snarl within the week, then it'll be time enough to let the old man have a whack at your hide."

48

CHAPTER III.

OFF SANTIAGO.

It was really wonderful how changed everything appeared to Teddy Dunlap after his interview

with Bill Jones.

As a matter of course there had been no enlargement of his hiding-place, and yet it seemed as if he could move about more freely than before. He was forced to remain in quite as cramped a position, but it no longer seemed painful.

Although the sailor had given him no encouragement that he might succeed in the task he had set himself, but, on the contrary, appeared to think it a hopeless one, Teddy felt positive that the moment was very near at hand when he would be clasped once more in his father's arms.

He had come out from his hiding-place weak and despairing, choosing the most severe punishment that could be inflicted rather than longer endure the misery which had been his constant companion during so many days, and now, even before partaking of the meat and tea, all was forgotten in the belief that he would soon be with his father.

49

It was as if some other boy had taken Teddy Dunlap's place, and this second lad was strong where the other had been weak.

He made a hearty meal, rearranged his bed so that he might be nearer the entrance to the hiding-place in case the sailor found it necessary to communicate with him hurriedly, and then indulged in more refreshing sleep than had visited his eyelids during the past forty-eight hours.

When Teddy awakened, however, much of this new courage had vanished, and again he allowed himself to look forward into the future, searching for trouble.

He had no means of knowing whether it was day or night, for the sunlight never came into this hole; but, because of the silence in the forecabin, it seemed probable the crew were on deck.

The steamer rode on an even keel, save for a sluggish roll which told she was sailing over calm seas, and the air had suddenly grown stifling hot.

Creeping so near the entrance that there was great danger of being discovered by such of the men as might come that way, Teddy waited with feverish impatience for some word from Bill Jones, and it seemed as if a full day must have passed before the voice of the jolly little sailor was heard.

"Well, my hearty, you're in great luck, an' no mistake. I wouldn't have believed things could have gone so nearly your way, if I hadn't seen 'em with my own eyes."

Before the sailor ceased speaking, Teddy had come out from his hiding-place regardless of possible discovery, and appeared to be on the point of rushing up the narrow companionway.

50

"Hold on, you young rascal! Do you count on jumpin' right into the captain's arms?" and Bill Jones seized the lad by the shirt collar, pulling him backward with no gentle force. "Where was you headin' for?"

"Ain't it time for me to go on deck?" Teddy asked, speaking with difficulty because of the sailor's firm clutch.

"Time? I reckon not, unless you're achin' for a taste of the rope's end. Our skipper ain't any very mild tempered man at the best of times, an' this is one of his worst days, for everything has been goin' wrong end foremost jest when he wants to see the ship in apple-pie order."

"I thought you said somethin' about my bein' in luck, an' the only thing of the kind that could come to me, would be to know father was on deck."

"I don't reckon you'll see him aboard the *Merrimac* for some time to come, though you're nearer to him this minute than I ever allowed you'd be in this part of the world."

"What do you mean?" and Teddy literally trembled with the impatience of anticipation.

"Sampson's fleet is dead ahead. His vessels are the very ones we've come to coal, an' if that ain't luck enough for a stowaway, I'd like to know what you could call it?"

51

"Is the *Brooklyn* anywhere near?" and Teddy did his best to speak calmly.

"Dead ahead, I tell you."

"Will we run right alongside of her?"

"I don't allow you've any claim to count on luck like that; but we're hard by Sampson's fleet, and it'll be strange if we can't find a chance of lettin' your father know where you are."

"Find a chance? Why, I'll go right on deck an' yell to him. He's bound to come out when he hears me."



There was in this remark something which struck Bill Jones as being so comical that he burst into a hearty laugh, and then, realising that his messmates on deck might come down to learn the cause of such unusual mirth, he partially checked himself, gurgling and choking in the efforts to suppress his merriment, until it appeared that he was on the point of being strangled.

"Go on deck an' yell to him," he muttered in the intervals between what appeared to be spasms. "Say, lad, it's precious lucky the weather is so hot that the crew have been driven out, else we'd had 'em all down on us, for I can't hold in, no matter how hard I try. So you think it's only a case of goin' on deck an' yellin', to bring your father right over the rail!"

52

"He'd come if he heard me," Teddy replied, sharply.

"I ain't so certain 'bout that, for coal-passers don't have the choice of promenading a battle-ship's deck. The officers generally have somethin' to say about capers of that kind. Besides, you might yell yourself black in the face, even if the *Merrimac* was layin' close alongside the *Brooklyn*, an' he'd never be any the wiser. You seem to have the idee that one of Uncle Sam's vessels is built something after the pattern of a tugboat."

"But I've got to get at him somehow," Teddy said, in perplexity, the new and great joy which had sprung up in his heart dying away very suddenly.

"True for you, lad; but it ain't to be done in the way you're figgerin' on, an', besides, havin' come along so smooth this far, I'm not countin' on lettin' you run your nose against such a thistle as the captain is like to be. It ought'er be enough that we've struck into the very fleet you wanted to find, an' a boy what can't wait a spell after all the good fortune you've had, ain't fit to be scurryin' 'round here huntin' for his father."

"I'll go right back into the hole, an' wait till you tell me to come out," Teddy said, meekly, understanding full well what his plight would be should this friendly sailor turn against him.

"Now you're talkin' sense," Bill Jones said, approvingly. "I was countin' on cheerin' you up a bit, by tellin' of where the *Merrimac* had fetched up, an' didn't allow to set you off like a wild Injun. Hot down here, eh?"

53

"It's kind'er warm, an' that's a fact."

"So much the better, because the crew will stay on deck, an' you'll have more of a chance to move around. It's only a case of layin' low for three or four days, an' then we'll see what your father can do toward gettin' you out."

"How will you let him know where I am?"

"There'll be plenty of show for that if we come alongside the *Brooklyn*; I can manage to send him word, I reckon."

The conversation was brought to an abrupt close by the appearance of a sailor's feet as he descended from the deck, and Bill Jones turned quickly away, pretending to be overhauling his sea-chest, while Teddy made all haste to regain his "hole."

Now it was that the stowaway had every reason to congratulate himself upon the fair prospects which were his, when it had seemed positive that much trouble would come before the venture was ended, and yet the moments passed more slowly than at any time since he had voluntarily become a prisoner.

With each hour his impatience increased, until it was with difficulty he could force himself to remain in hiding.

While he believed his father was very far away, there appeared good reason for remaining hidden; but now, with the *Brooklyn* close at hand, it seemed as if he must make his whereabouts known without loss of time.

54

Fear as to what terrible punishment the captain of the *Merrimac* might inflict, however, kept him in his proper place, and before many hours passed Bill Jones brought him further intelligence.

"The *New York* is to take on the first of the coal," he said, leaning over the barricade of rope, and whispering to the impatient prisoner. "I'm thinkin' we'll get around to the *Brooklyn* before all the cargo is gone, an' then this game of hide will come to an end—if your father is a smarter man than the average of us."

The jolly little sailor had no time to say more, for one of the petty officers interrupted the stolen interview by calling loudly for "Bill Jones," and while obeying the summons the sailor muttered to himself, "I wish the boy was well clear of this steamer; it seems as if he was under my wing, so to speak, an' I can't make out how any man, lower in rank than a full-fledged captain, can take him aboard one of Uncle Sam's ships."

Fortunately Teddy had no misgivings as to the future, after his father had been made aware of his whereabouts.

He believed it would be the most natural thing in the world for him to step on board the *Brooklyn* as a guest, and the possibility that a coal-passer might not be allowed to invite his friends to visit him never entered the lad's mind.

Bill Jones, however, was seriously troubled as to the outcome of the affair, as has been seen.

He had promised to aid the stowaway, as he would have promised to aid any other lad in trouble, for the jolly little sailor was one ever ready to relieve the distress of others, no matter how great might be the cost to himself; and now, having taken the case in hand, his anxiety of mind was great, because he was by no means as certain of his ability to carry it through successfully as he would have Teddy believe. 55

Within four hours after the sailor reported that the *Merrimac* would speedily begin to take out her cargo, the prisoner in the forecabin became aware that the steamer was at a standstill.

For the first time since leaving port the screw was motionless, and the absence of that pounding which marked the revolutions of the shaft caused a silence that for a few moments seemed almost painful.

Shortly afterward, when Bill Jones came to bring a fresh supply of provisions and water, he reported that the *New York* was taking on coal.

"The other ships are certain to need a supply, an' we're bound to come alongside the *Brooklyn* sooner or later," he said, cheerily, and Teddy replied, with a sigh:

"It seems like a terribly long while to wait; but I s'pose I can stand it."

"I reckon it's a case of havin' to, lad, unless you're willin' to take the captain's medicine, an' that's what I wouldn't like to tackle."

"It's as if I'd been here a full month, an' accordin' to what you say I'm mighty lucky if I have to stay only two or three days more." 56

"You're lucky if you get out in a week, so don't go to countin' the minutes, or time will be long in passin'."

Twice during the next twenty-four hours did Teddy have an opportunity of speaking with his friend, and then he knew that the *Merrimac* was alongside the *Massachusetts*.

"You see we're goin' the rounds of the fleet, an' it's only a question of the coal holdin' out, to finally bring us to the *Brooklyn*," Bill Jones said, hurriedly, for there was no opportunity of lengthy conversations while the crew were engaged in transferring the fuel.

Another long time of waiting, and Bill Jones appeared at the entrance to the hiding-place in a state of the greatest excitement.

"Somethin's got to be done right away, lad, an' I'm clean beat as to how we'll figger it out. This 'ere steamer is goin' to be sunk!"

"Sunk!" Teddy cried in alarm, clutching Bill frantically by the arm, as if believing the *Merrimac* was even then on the point of going down.

"That's jest it, an' we're to be shifted to the other vessels, gettin' a berth wherever one can be found."

"What will make her sink?"

"She's to be blowed up! Wrecked in the harbour of Santiago de Cuba, so the Spaniards who are inside can't get out!"

Teddy looked around him in bewilderment and alarm, understanding not one word of the brief explanation.



"You see the Spanish fleet is inside the harbour, and the mouth of it ain't more'n three hundred feet wide. This steamer will be blowed up right across the channel, an' there the Spaniards are, bottled up tight till our fleet gets ready to knock 'em into splinters."

59

"But what'll become of me? I'll have to face the captain after all!"

"I reckon there's no help for it, lad, because it don't stand to reason that you want to go down with the ship."

"How long before you'll sink her?"

"We sha'n't have anything to do with it, lad. It's what you might call a precious fine job, an' 'cordin' to the way everybody looks at it, them who do the work ain't likely to come back again."

"Why not?"

"Look here, lad, if you was goin' on deck an' set off three or four torpedoes under your very feet, what do you think would be the show of gettin' ashore alive?"

Teddy made no effort to weigh the chances; his own affairs were in such a precarious condition that there was no room in his mind for anything else.

"I'd better have gone to the captain when I first made up my mind that it had to be done, an' it would be over by this time," he said, with a long-drawn sigh.

"It wouldn't have been over till you got ashore, because pretty nigh every sailor thinks it his bounden duty to make things lively for a stowaway. You've saved yourself from bein' kicked an' thumped jest so many days as I've been coddlin' you up, an' there's a good deal in that."

"Are we anywhere near the *Brooklyn*?"

60

"She was five or six miles away when I saw her last—"

"Five or six miles!"

"Yes; did you allow she laid within hail?"

"I thought from what you said that we was right among the fleet."

"So we are, lad; but these big ships don't huddle very close together, an' ten miles off is called bein' mighty near at hand. I can't stop here chinnin' much longer, so listen sharp. When the time comes, an' it's precious near at hand now, you'll have walk up to the medicine-box like a little man, so kind'er be bracin' yourself for what's sure to happen. I'll watch till the captain appears to be in good humour, an' out you pop."

Teddy nodded his head; there was too much sorrow and disappointment in his heart to permit of speech, and Bill Jones was so pressed for time that he failed to give due heed to the boy's mental condition.

"Be ready when I come back next time!" the sailor whispered, warningly, and then ran on deck, leaving the stowaway in a most unenviable frame of mind.

When Teddy's mouth was parched with thirst, and his stomach craving for food, he had brought himself to believe that he could submit without a murmur to whatever punishment the captain might see fit to inflict; but now it seemed different. During a very long time he had been cheering himself with the belief that before the close of this hour or the next he would be with his father, and such a sudden and startling change in affairs caused him deepest despair.

61

Crawling into the narrow hiding-place, he gave full sway to the grief which had come upon him like a torrent, for once Captain Miller knew of his having stowed away, so he argued to himself, there would no longer be any hope of communicating with his father.

To his mind he had not only failed in the purpose set himself, but would be more widely separated from his father than ever before, and it is little wonder, with such belief in his heart, that the boy ceased longer to battle against his sorrow.

He was lying face downward upon the canvas when Bill Jones came to announce that the moment had arrived when he should brave the ordeal of facing Captain Miller, and the sailor was forced to speak several times in a loud tone before the lad realised that his friend was near at hand.

"Come, Teddy," the little sailor said, soothingly, "it'll be over after awhile, an' perhaps won't be so bad as we've figgered, for the old man ain't tearin' 'round dreadful mad. Let's get on deck in a hurry, so's not to think about it too long, an' I'll stand right by your side till matters are settled one way or the other."

"I might as well stay right here, an' be sunk when the steamer goes down," the boy wailed.

"Nonsense, lad; after havin' the pluck to come thus far in search of your father, you mustn't lose heart now. Be a man, Teddy, an' count on me for a friend so long as the trouble lasts."

It was not possible for Bill Jones to arouse the boy to a proper show of courage until after fully half an hour had passed, and then the two came out into the sunlight, both looking much as if having just been detected in the most heinous of crimes.

62

The dazzling sunlight nearly blinded the boy, who had been shrouded in darkness so many days, and forced him to cover his eyes; therefore he failed to see the look of surprise and bewilderment on Bill Jones's face immediately they came on deck.

During several moments he was in such a daze as to be virtually unconscious, and then he heard his companion ask:

"Where is the *Merrimac's* crew?"

"They've been set aboard the *New York* for a spell, seein's how this ain't likely to be a very pleasant craft to sail in after we get through with her," a strange voice replied, and Teddy opened his eyes.

The deck of the collier appeared to be thronged with sailors in naval costume, all of whom were apparently bent on doing the greatest amount of destruction in the shortest possible space of time.

Not far away to windward was a huge war-vessel, looking more like some submarine monster than anything built by man, and in the distance others of the same kind, cruising to and fro, or lying quietly upon the ocean, rising and falling with the heavy swell.

All this picture Teddy took in with a single glance, and then his attention was diverted by Bill Jones, who said to the sailor with whom he had first spoken:

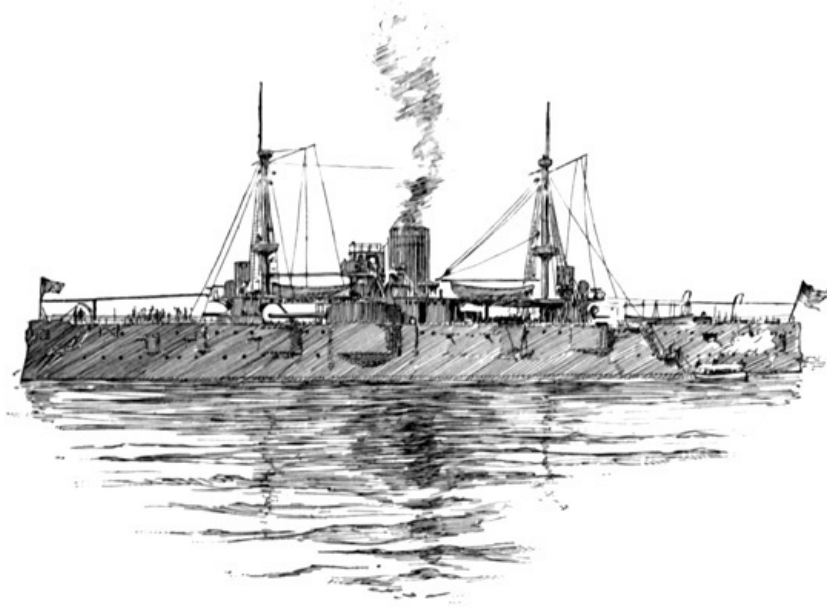
63

"Ain't we to take our dunnage out?"

"I reckon that'll be done after a spell; but just now it's a case of hurry, an' what a few old shellbacks like you may consider dunnage, ain't taken into account."

"Where is Captain Miller?"

"I saw him goin' toward the flag-ship. It seems he's got the biggest kind of a bee in his bonnet because Lieutenant Hobson is to be given the chance of killin' himself an' his crew, when he claims the right because of havin' been in command of this 'ere collier."



Teddy was wholly at a loss to understand the meaning of the conversation, and he looked at the little sailor, who now appeared perplexed rather than jolly, until the latter said, speaking slowly, as if in a maze of bewilderment and doubt:

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"I'm all at sea, lad, about this 'ere business; but it begins to look as if you wouldn't have any very hard time with the old man to-day. He's got somethin' else on his mind that's of more importance than a worthless little stowaway like you."

"He'll come back, won't he?" Teddy asked, yet unable to gather any clear idea of the situation.

"Unless he comes soon, there won't be anything left of the *Merrimac*, an' that's a fact," Bill Jones replied, pointing here and there to where a hundred men or more were busily at work, seemingly trying to make a wreck of the collier. "I s'pose they're bent on gettin' out of the old hooker all that's of any value, before sinkin' her, an' it looks as if they'd finish the job in a jiffy."

"Where's the *Brooklyn*?"

"See here, my son, we've no time to bother our heads about her just now. It's enough for you that we can't get speech with your father, an' unless I'm way off my reckonin', here's the chance to pull out of what promised to be a bad scrape for you."

Teddy remained silent, for the very good reason that he was at a loss for words, and after a short pause, Bill Jones exclaimed, as if a happy thought had at that instant come into his mind:

"Hark you, lad, our men have gone over to the *New York*, an' so long as we don't follow them it'll be plain sailin'. We'll watch our chance, go aboard the nearest ship, so it ain't the admiral's flag-ship, as bold as lions, an' it'll be believed that you belong to our crew. Unless Captain Miller shows himself, you'll be livin' on the fat of the land."

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"But when he comes?"

"We won't bother our heads about anything of the kind. It's enough for us to know you've slipped out of the smallest kind of a hole without a scratch, and we'll take all the enjoyment that comes our way, at Uncle Sam's expense."

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CHAPTER IV.

THE MERRIMAC.

There was no good reason why, as Bill Jones had suggested, Teddy could not successfully pose as one of the *Merrimac's* crew.

The undertaking in hand was so important, with such great advantages to be derived from its accomplishment, that for the time being it was as if every officer and man in the American squadron had no thought save concerning the work upon the steamer to be sunk.

That the situation may be made more plain, as it was to Teddy before he had been on board the *Texas* two hours, the following description of the daring venture is quoted from an article written the very day Bill Jones and his protégé sought shelter on the battle-ship:^[1]

"The mines in the narrow, tortuous channel, and the elevation of the forts and batteries, which must increase the effectiveness of the enemy's fire, and at the same time decrease that of our own, reinforced by the guns of the Spanish fleet inside, make the harbour, as it now appears,

almost impregnable. Unless the entrance is countermined it would be folly to attempt to force its passage with our ships.

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"But the Spanish fleet is bottled up, and a plan is being considered to drive in the cork. If that is done, the next news may be a thrilling story of closing the harbour. It would release a part of our fleet, and leave the Spaniards to starve and rot until they were ready to hoist the white flag.

"'To drive in the cork,' was the subject nearest Rear-Admiral Sampson's heart, and he at once went into consultation with his officers as to how it could best be done. One plan after another was discussed and rejected, and then Assistant Naval Constructor Richmond Pearson Hobson proposed that the big collier *Merrimac*, which then had on board about six hundred tons of coal, be sunk across the channel in such a manner as to completely block it.

"The plan was a good one; but yet it seemed certain death for those who should attempt to carry it out as proposed. Lieutenant Hobson, however, claimed that, if the scheme was accepted, he should by right be allowed to take command of the enterprise.

"The end to be attained was so great that Admiral Sampson decided that the lives of six or seven men could not be allowed to outweigh the advantage to be gained, and Lieutenant Hobson was notified that his services were accepted; the big steamer was at his disposal to do with as he saw fit."

This was the work which had been begun when Bill Jones brought Teddy Dunlap on deck that he might confess to being a stowaway, and it is little wonder that matters on board the collier were in seeming confusion.

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On the night previous Lieutenant Hobson had received the notification that his services were accepted, and at an early hour next morning the work of making the *Merrimac* ready for destruction had begun.

A dozen boys would have attracted no attention just then, and the lad, who had mentally nerved himself to meet the captain of the steamer, failed in finding any one to hear his confession.

Bill Jones, however, was quick to see the possible advantage to be gained, and Teddy had not fully recovered from his bewilderment before the little sailor was forcing him over the rail into one of the *Texas's* boats, which had just come alongside.



"Turned out of house an' home, eh?" one of the sailors asked, with a laugh, and there was no question but that the boy, as well as the man, had a right to be taken aboard the battle-ship.

The officers had all left the boat, therefore the two were not subjected to any searching examination, and once on board the big vessel, it was supposed, as a matter of course, that they had been regularly detailed to that ship.

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Strange as it may seem, these two who had but just come from the *Merrimac* knew less regarding her proposed ending than any other,

and, therefore, were most deeply interested in such information as was to be picked up from the crew.

Before having been on board an hour they knew as much as has been set down at the beginning of this chapter, and, for the time being at least, they, like all around them, had little thought save for the daring adventure which was to be made by Lieutenant Hobson and six men.

"It's a mighty brave thing to do," Bill Jones said confidentially to Teddy as the two were on the gun-deck, having concluded a most satisfactory repast; "but I wouldn't want a hand in it."

"Why not?" Teddy asked, in surprise, for he had been turning the matter over in his mind until having come almost to envy those who were to brave death in the service of their country.

"Because I ain't what might rightly be called a fightin' man; owin' to my bein' undersized, most likely. I take real pride in the deeds of others, but can't seem to get my own courage where it belongs. I'm only what you might call a plain, every-day sailor, with no fightin' timber in me, else I'd been in the navy long before this."

"Do you think they will live to sink the *Merrimac*?" Teddy asked, thoughtfully.

"There's no doubt in my mind but that they'll hold on to life long enough to do the work, but it's afterward that the trouble will begin. Every Spanish gun within range will open fire on 'em, an' what chance have they got of comin' out alive?"

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"When will they start?"

"It'll be quite a spell before they get the steamer ready to make the dive, 'cordin' to my way of thinkin'. In the first place, as I'm told, there are to be plenty of torpedoes put in position inside the old hooker, an' it'll take some time to made them ready. Anyway, you're snug as a bug in a rug now—"

"Until Captain Miller comes aboard," Teddy interrupted.

"Have no fear of him," the little sailor said, as if the subject was not worthy of consideration. "When he comes, if he ever does, it isn't to this part of the ship that he'll pay a visit. Officers spend their time aft, an' small blame to 'em. It may be, Teddy Dunlap, that he'll see you; but the chances are dead against it, so take all the comfort you can—"

"I ought to be huntin' for daddy."

"Well, you can't, leastways, not while we're aboard this craft, but you can count on comin' across him before this little scrimmage is ended off Santiago, an' then I warrant there'll be all the chance you need."

"But what am I to do on board here?" Teddy asked, anxiously. "It don't stand to reason that we'll be allowed to loaf around as if we owned the whole vessel."

"That's the way you look at it; but my idee's are different. Uncle Sam will keep us for a spell, that's certain, an' until he gets tired of the job we needn't worry our heads. You might live to be a thousand years old without strikin' another job as soft as the one we've got on our hands this blessed minute, so I say, make the most of it." 71

"It's different with you; but I'm only a stowaway, an' stand a good show of gettin' into a heap of trouble when the officers of this ship find out that I've no business to be here."

"I don't figger that way," Bill Jones replied, with a light and airy manner. "It doesn't stand to reason you should have been left aboard to go down with the steamer, eh?"

"They might have set me ashore."

"An' had a precious good job doin' it. Look ye, Teddy Dunlap, are you countin' yourself of so much importance that a battle-ship is to leave her station for no other reason than to put you ashore?"

"I didn't mean it that way. You see they ought to do somethin' with me—"

"Then wait till they get ready, an' don't borrow trouble. This crossin' of bridges before you come to 'em is likely to make life mighty hard for a young chap like yourself, an' considerin' all you've told me, I wonder at it."

Teddy could say nothing more. It surely seemed reasonable Bill Jones knew what it was proper he should do, and from that moment he resolved to "take things easy," as his friend advised, rather than fret over what couldn't be mended.

Therefore it was he ceased to worry, although at the same time keeping a sharp watch over the *Brooklyn*, and by such a course saw very much of what happened off Santiago during those months of June and July, in the year one thousand eight hundred and ninety-eight. 72

Surely the stowaway had no cause to complain of his treatment by the crew of the *Texas*.

Every man did his best to make these waifs from the doomed steamer feel perfectly at home, and when Bill Jones brought his sea-chest aboard, as he did the day following their abandonment of the *Merrimac*, there was not a man on the battle-ship who did not suppose Teddy's dunnage was in the same capacious receptacle.

Rations were served to the stowaway the same as to any member of the crew, and then he and Bill Jones were called upon for some trifling duty, but as the latter said, there was no more work than was good for them by way of exercise.

In the most pleasant fashion possible the time passed until the *Merrimac* was made ready for her doom, and these two comrades, for it can well be supposed they were become fast friends, saw all the preparations without being obliged to do any of the disagreeable work.

There was hardly an hour during these days of labour when the two did not hear Lieutenant Hobson's plans discussed, and they knew to the slightest detail all he proposed to do.



"Here is the way he'll sink our craft, 'cordin' to all I've heard," Bill Jones said to Teddy when the two were alone for a short time on the afternoon after it had been reported on board the *Texas* that everything was ready for the desperate venture. "He'll run at about ten-knot speed until four hundred yards or less past the Estrella battery, or, in other words, till he's in the narrowest part of the channel. Then he'll put the helm hard aport, stop the engines, drop the anchors, open the sea connections, touch off the torpedoes, an' leave the old hooker blockin' up the entrance to Santiago Harbour."

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"He can't do all that alone," Teddy suggested.

"Of course he can't, else why is he takin' a crew with him? I'm told that this is the exact way he counts on workin' it. There'll be four men on deck besides himself, an' two in the engine-room; all of 'em will be stripped down to their underclothes, an' with revolvers an' ammunition strapped in water-tight packin' to their waists. One will be forward with an axe to cut the lashings of the anchor when the word is given. Of course Hobson signals the engineers to stop the engines, then the fellow forward cuts the anchor loose; some one below smashes the sea connections with a sledge-hammer when the machinery stops, and all hands jump overboard, countin' on swimmin' to the boat that's bein' towed astern. The lieutenant himself touches the button that explodes the torpedoes, an' then over he goes; it's a case of every man for himself once the work is begun. The steamer is bound to go down athwart the channel, an' there you have the entrance to Santiago Bay shut up as tight as Admiral Sampson can wish."

Teddy did not venture any criticism. He had heard the subject discussed so often that there was nothing new he could suggest, and it seemed wisest to hold his tongue.

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On the close of this day word was passed among the crew of the *Texas* that the venture would be made during the coming night, and the two visitors from the *Merrimac* were on deck from sunset until sunrise.

The work of preparing the big collier was continued throughout the entire night, and just at daybreak she got under way, as if to begin the voyage which it seemed certain could end only with the death of all; but before the men on the battle-ship had time to give her a parting cheer, she put back to her station, because, as some of the men declared, the admiral had given positive orders for her to wait until another night.

Twenty-four hours of additional preparation; as many of speculation and discussion among those who were refused an opportunity to offer their lives as a sacrifice, and then came the moment when Teddy was awakened from his sleep by Bill Jones, who said, as he shook the lad roughly:

"Get on deck, my hearty, get on deck! This time there'll be no mistake as to the sailin', an' if you want to see the last of the *Merrimac*, now's your chance!"

The stowaway did not wait for a second invitation, and a moment later he formed a small portion of the human fringe which overhung the *Texas's* rail, peering out across the waters where, by the pale light of the moon, could be seen the doomed steamer.

It was even possible to distinguish the forms of her crew as they stood well forward, much as though taking a last look at the fleet, and, near at hand, the tiny launch from the *New York*,

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which was to follow the collier in with the hope of picking up some of her brave crew when they leaped into the water.

Among all that throng of men on the *Texas* hardly a word was spoken as the *Merrimac* slowly got under way. Every one remained silent as if under the spell cast by the bravery of those who were literally taking their lives in their hands that the starry flag might wave triumphant.

Boldly the collier steamed in toward the coast, being lost to view immediately she got under the shadow of the high hills at the entrance of the bay, and a mile or more astern the tiny launch puffed her way along as if conscious that this morning's work was of extreme importance.

Then both craft were swallowed up by the gloom, and yet that throng of men overhanging the *Texas's* rail remained motionless, waiting with an anxiety that was most intense for some sign which would give token of their shipmates' fate.

During half an hour every man waited in keenest suspense, never one venturing to so much as speak, and then from the heights at the entrance of the harbour the flash of a gun streamed out.

It came almost in the nature of a relief, for every one knew that the *Merrimac* was nearing her destination at last.

The suspense was at an end, whatever might be the result, and even Teddy Dunlap believed he could predict the close of that most desperate venture.

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Within ten seconds after the first flash, another was seen, then a third, and a fourth, until it was no longer possible to count them.

The heights guarding the channel appeared to be ablaze; but yet not a sound could be heard.

The blockading squadron were so far away that the reports were lost in the distance.

Then the eager men found tongue, and it was as if each spoke at the same instant, giving no heed as to whether his neighbour replied.

During full twenty minutes these silent flashes could be seen in the distance, and then they died away just as the gray light of the coming dawn appeared in the eastern sky.

"It's all over!" Bill Jones said, as he laid his hand on Teddy's shoulder. "I reckon the old *Merrimac* is layin' in the channel to keep the Spaniards from sneakin' out; but them as carried her in so bravely are past all troubles of this world's makin'. It's great to be a hero; but the glory of it is soon over!"

"Do you suppose they've all been killed?" Teddy asked in a whisper, for it was much like speaking in the presence of the dead.

"There's little doubt of it, lad. Think you a craft like the *Merrimac* could stand the storm of shot and shell that was poured on her from the time we saw the first flash? Just bear in mind that every puff of flame betokened a chunk of iron large enough to sink this 'ere battle-ship, if it struck her fairly, an' you can have a fair idee of how much chance those poor fellows stood."

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Among all the crew there was hardly one who did not share this opinion with Bill Jones. To them, the heroes who went smilingly to their death had left this world for ever, and yet the men continued to overhang the rail, awaiting the return of the launch, with the idea that when she arrived they might hear something of importance.

Not until three hours later did the little craft show herself, and then she came out from under the shadow of the land followed by a shower of missiles from the big guns ashore.

The men on the *Texas* were forced to wait some time before learning what information she brought, for the launch went directly to the *New York*, as a matter of course, and several hours elapsed before the crew heard all that could then be told.

This was to the effect that the tiny boat followed the collier until fire was opened upon the doomed steamer, and she was so enshrouded by smoke as to be lost from view. Then the launch was headed in under the batteries, where she remained until daylight on the lookout for a swimmer.

At five o'clock in the morning no sign of life had been seen, and the little craft made for the fleet, followed by a rain of shot from the shore batteries.

While crossing the harbour entrance one spar of the *Merrimac* was seen sticking out of the water, and thus it was known that the little band of braves had done their work faithfully, at whatever cost to themselves.

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There was neither jest nor careless word among the crew of the battle-ship during this forenoon; even Bill Jones remained almost absolutely silent. It seemed that they stood in the presence of death, and more than one acted as if believing he was taking part in the funeral services of those who had so lately been among them.

Teddy had seen every man who went to make up that devoted crew, and to him it was as if his personal friends had met their death; but in such a brave fashion that it would have been almost a crime to mourn their taking off.

Then, like a flash of lightning from a clear sky, came the joyful news that every man among that band who had devoted themselves to death, was yet among the living, and comparatively uninjured.

It was almost incredible information, and yet, because of its source, no one could doubt it.

At two hours past noon, while the men of the *Texas* were sheltering themselves from the burning rays of the sun and discussing for the hundredth time the last probable moments of their shipmates, a steam-launch, carrying a white flag, put out from the harbour, making directly for the flag-ship *New York*.

At the time no one fancied for a single moment that the coming of this craft could have any connection with those who had left the station to wreck the *Merrimac*, but there were some who suggested that the Spaniards were ready to surrender, and, in support of this theory, cited the fact that the royal squadron was bottled up so tightly it could never be used against the United States.

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Others declared that the Spanish admiral was about to make an offer of compromise, and not a few believed the flag of truce had to do with the capitulation of the city of Santiago de Cuba.

Not a man was prepared for the news which floated from ship to ship, no one could say exactly how; but in less than an hour from the time the launch made fast alongside the *New York*, it was known that she brought a message from Admiral Cervera, commander of the Spanish fleet, to the effect that the crew of the *Merrimac* had been captured, and were held as prisoners of war.



Lieutenant Hobson was uninjured, and only two of the party had been wounded slightly.

It seemed too good to be true, but when the men realised that this information must be correct, that it had been sent by a generous enemy, they spent a good five minutes cheering alternately for those who had escaped after having gone down into the very jaws of death, and for that gallant Spaniard who, recognising bravery even in his foe,

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had taken the trouble to announce the safety of those who were battling against him.

"It's what I call a mighty fine thing for the old admiral to do," Bill Jones said, as he held forth to a gun's crew with whom he and Teddy messed. "It ain't every officer as would go out of his way to send such news as that, an' if Admiral Cervera should ever fall into my hands as a prisoner of war, he can count on bein' treated like a white man."

There was a roar from Bill's auditors at the intimation that the commander of the Spanish fleet might ever be captured by that sailor, for by this time all had come to know him as a "plain,

every-day sailor, with not a fightin' timber in him;" but not a man within sound of his voice cared to contradict him.

On that night, after the subject of the venture and its sequel had been discussed until worn threadbare, the little sailor said to Teddy, as if telling him some important truth:

"You'll see great doin's now, lad, an' it wouldn't give me such a terrible surprise to know that the war was ended within the next twenty-four hours, for them bloomin' Spaniards in Santiago must understand by this time that the sooner they give in whipped, the less of a lickin' they're like to get."

And Teddy, thinking more of his own condition than the glory of the country, asked, with no slight distress of mind:

"If it should come to a stop as soon as that, how could I ever get word to father? Of course the *Brooklyn* would go right home, an' I'd be left here."

"I'll take care of that, lad," Bill Jones replied, in a tone of assurance. "Never you have a fear but that I'll see she don't leave this station till you've had a chance to go on board long enough to sort out the coal-passers."

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CHAPTER V.

THE CHASE.

Bill Jones found time to change his opinion as to the speedy termination of the war after the *Merrimac* had been sunk at the entrance of Santiago Bay.

Instead of displaying any anxiety to surrender, the Spaniards on the island appeared to be making every preparation for a stubborn defence, and the fleet of war-vessels had little opportunity to do much more than blockade duty.

Teddy Dunlap, looked upon by the crew of the *Texas* as a lad who had every right to be among them, might have enjoyed this cruising to and fro, keeping watch over the entrance to the harbour, now and then overhauling a suspicious-looking vessel that ventured too near, and at times throwing shells ashore from the big guns, but for the fact that he burned with impatience to be with his father.

The *Brooklyn* remained in view nearly all the time, now so close at hand that it seemed as if the two ships must immediately come within hailing distance, and again so far away that she appeared only as a tiny speck against the white sky, yet the stowaway was as completely separated from his father as if they were thousands of miles apart.

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"If only the captains couldn't talk with those little flags, it might be that the ships would come side by side!" he said, with a long-drawn sigh, to Bill Jones. "There'll never be any need for them to sail nearer than within sight, an' I won't get a chance to speak to father,—perhaps not this year."

"The prospect don't look very encouragin' just at the present time, an' that's a fact," Bill said, thoughtfully, filling his pipe with unusual care. "Two or three days ago it seemed as if the war was mighty nigh at an end; but now there 'pears to be a good deal of fight left in the Dagoes."

"An' while we're loafin' 'round here, Captain Miller will come aboard some fine day. Then where'll I be?"

"Right here, my lad, an' there's no use lookin' ahead. He won't come the sooner, or stay away any longer, no matter how much you fuss, so why not save the wear an' tear of thinkin'?"

"See here," and Teddy leaned forward to look the little sailor full in the eyes, "do you believe I'll ever have a chance of lettin' daddy know where I am?"

"It stands to reason there must be a show for it in course of time."

"When?"

"Now you're askin' me a question I ain't in condition to answer. It may be two or three weeks, or, then again, the show might come sudden, within an hour. At sea you can't ever tell what's goin' to happen, Teddy Dunlap, an' there's nothin' for it but to keep your ears an' eyes open all the time, ready to jump on the first promisin' chance that comes your way."

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There is no good reason why such a conversation as this should be set down, save that it is similar to a hundred others which were held between the two comrades during the weeks which followed the sinking of the *Merrimac*, when Teddy Dunlap, without effort on his part, was transformed from a stowaway to a lad apparently in the employ of Uncle Sam.

Never for a single moment did he lose sight of the possible fact that either the *Brooklyn* or the *Texas* might be ordered away from this particular station, in which case it was reasonable to

suppose that many months must elapse before he could inform his father of his whereabouts.

There was grave danger the two might be separated so widely that months, perhaps years, would elapse before they could meet again, and Teddy was never comfortable in mind, but, despite all the good advice given by Bill Jones, continued to look out into the future, searching for trouble.

Meanwhile both he and the little sailor were kept at work on board the *Texas* exactly as if they had been regularly enlisted; but the duties were so light among such a large number, that he who complained of the work must indeed have been an indolent fellow.

And while Teddy worried over his own seeming troubles, the two nations continued at war, killing and wounding men at every opportunity, and ever striving to strike some decisive blow. 89

As a matter of course Teddy and Bill Jones took their small part in the bombardment of the batteries at the entrance to Santiago Harbour two days after the *Merrimac* had been sunk.

The *Texas* was the third vessel in the first column, headed by the *Brooklyn*, when, shortly after sunrise, the fleet steamed inshore and opened fire with the heavy guns.

It was to the boy as if he went into action almost by the side of his father, and he worked with a will at whatsoever was set him to do, although at times the terrific roar literally stunned him, while the heat was so great that it seemed as if he was on the verge of suffocation during every moment of the four hours the bombardment continued.

Then the squadron steamed back to its blockading station, and at no time had the *Brooklyn* and *Texas* been so near each other as to have rendered it possible for Teddy to see his father, even though the latter had stood on the battle-ship's deck every moment.

Again and again, as the days passed, did the *Texas* go into action, and at no time were the little stowaway and his small comrade remiss in their duties.

They did their full share of the work, despite Bill Jones's assertion that he was only a "plain, every-day sailor with no fightin' timber about him," and as the weeks wore on these two became more and more closely identified with the battle-ship to which chance had sent them. 90

When the ship was sent to bombard the works at Matamoras, and a Spanish shell struck near the stern on the port side, passing through the hull three feet below the main-deck line, and exploding on the berth-deck, killing one man and wounding eight, Teddy's search for his father nearly came to an end.

A fragment of the shell passed within ten inches of the boy's head, striking down a sailor just beyond him, and Teddy won the admiration of every man on board by springing to the relief of the poor fellow whose leg had been shattered, instead of taking flight, as might quite naturally have been expected.



Later, when the *Texas* had withdrawn from the action, man after man congratulated the lad upon his behaviour, predicting that he would in time prove himself worthy of serving under such a commander as Captain Philip, and otherwise bestowing so much praise that at the first opportunity he said confidentially to Bill Jones:

"It makes me ashamed to have them say so much about how I acted. It wasn't different from what any other feller would have done, because I forgot all about the danger when Baker fell." 91

"I'm thinkin' you're out of your reckonin' there, lad, for accordin' to my idee, there ain't a boy in a thousand who'd handled himself as well as you did. Now I'm no fightin' man, as I've said before, but your keepin' such a stiff upper lip, when

there was precious good chance of bein' killed, did me solid good. I knew you had sand, from the first minute of settin' eyes on you, but never suspected there was so much of it."

"You're talkin' worse than the others, even when I'm tellin' the truth about not knowin' there was any danger. I only saw poor Baker, an' thought I might help him."

"It ain't what you thought, lad, but what you did, that counts, an' now if Captain Miller comes aboard I'm willin' to guarantee he won't be allowed to kick up any row because of your stowin' away on the *Merrimac*. The crew wouldn't allow any funny business with you, after this day's work. Don't you see how much nearer your father we are than we were this mornin'?"

"What do you mean?"

"Just what I say, lad. You've made for yourself a standin' on board this ship, an' now when the time comes right I'm goin' to tell your story to one of the petty officers, askin' him to see it reaches Captain Philip's ears. Once that's been done, Teddy Dunlap, we'll be hailin' the *Brooklyn* with signals flyin' to tell the coal-passers that one of 'em has got a son on board this craft." 92

"Do you suppose any such plan might work?" Teddy asked, breathlessly.

"There ain't a shadow of doubt about it in my mind."

"Why don't you do it now? I've given up hopin' this war is pretty near at an end, an' am hungry to see daddy."

"Better wait awhile longer, my boy. It's a little too soon to show ourselves very big, 'cause it ain't no ways certain the captain has had time to hear of what you did. We'll hold off a spell, an' then, when the signs come right, you'll see me put this business along in great shape."

Because of this promise, and also owing to the many words of praise which were showered upon him by the men, Teddy Dunlap believed, as he had several times before, that the hour was very near at hand when he would be with his father once more; but, as in the past, he was doomed to disappointment during more days than he cared to count.

The "signs" never came so nearly right as to give Bill Jones courage to take the responsibility of telling Teddy's story to those who would repeat it to Captain Philip, and these two refugees from the *Merrimac* remained aboard the *Texas*, much to the satisfaction of the crew.

It was known to them, as to every one on the warships, that hot fighting was going on ashore in the vicinity of Santiago, and at frequent intervals the big vessels steamed toward the land, in this direction or that, to shell the Spanish camps; but they were at such a distance from the scene of action that such work had little the appearance of warfare.

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In fact, the air of plain, every-day business about the operations rendered it difficult to believe the huge shot and shell which were hurled landward carried in their wake death and destruction to many.

When one of the *Texas's* big guns was discharged, Teddy could hear the roar, and feel the concussion, as a matter of course; he could also see the missile as it sped through the air; but he had no means of knowing where it struck, neither did he have a view of the desolation and ruin it caused, therefore, like many another man aboard the battle-ship, he came to look upon this work of war as nothing more than harmless practice.

The day was near at hand, however, when the stowaway and his little comrade were to have all too good a view of the butchery and inhumanity of war.

It was on Sunday morning, the third day of July.

The crew of the *Texas* had been mustered for religious services, and while Bill Jones and Teddy waited in their proper places for the coming of the chaplain, the sailor whispered:

"To-morrow mornin' I'm goin' to start in on your business, lad. So far as I can see, the fleet is likely to be here a year or more before the Spaniards are ready to surrender Santiago, and if I don't bring you to the captain's notice soon, all your good behaviour when the shot came aboard will have been forgotten."

"I'm afraid we've waited too long already," the lad replied, with a sigh, for the hope had been so long deferred that his "heart was sick" indeed for a sight of his father.

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"I reckon not, Teddy; but if I've made a mistake in holdin' off, it was done through fear I might speak too soon."

"Don't think I'm blamin' you," the boy replied, quickly, pressing his comrade's arm in a friendly fashion. "If you never did anything more, I'd feel as if you'd been mighty good to me, for I couldn't have run across many sailors who'd lay themselves out to help a stowaway."

"That part of it is—"

Bill Jones was interrupted by a shout,—Teddy will never know who uttered it, or what the words were,—and instantly, without the slightest apparent cause, all was seeming confusion on board the ship.

It was to the lad as if the very air bristled with excitement; he saw men darting here and there, heard sharp, quick words of command, and as if at the very same instant, the *Texas* seemed to leap forward with a bound, huge clouds of black smoke suddenly pouring out of her stacks.

"The Spaniards! The Spaniards!" Bill Jones yelled in the lad's ear, at the same time pointing toward the entrance to the harbour, from out of which could be seen the dark hull of an enemy's ship.

It was as if in that small fraction of time very much took place.

Teddy saw long lines of signal-flags run up to the *Brooklyn's* masthead; he heard the roar of a 6-pounder as the *Iowa* fired the first shot at the foe, and understood, rather than saw, that every vessel in the squadron was under a full head of steam almost immediately.

95

At one instant the blockading squadron lay motionless and apparently lifeless off the harbour, rocking lazily on the long swell, and then, before one could speak, as it were, every listless hull was a war machine, quivering with life, and pouring forth deadly shot and shell.

The transformation was so sudden and complete that it is little wonder Teddy and Bill Jones stood transfixed with astonishment until the chase was well under way.

One after another of the Spanish cruisers came at full speed out of the harbour which it had been believed was closed by the hull of the *Merrimac*, and as each ship rounded the point her guns were discharged at the Yankee squadron. The dense smoke pouring out of their stacks; the clouds of spray from their bows, glistening like diamonds in the sunlight of that Sabbath morning as it was thrown aft by the fierce impetus of the huge vessels to mingle with the smoke that came from every gun; the roar and thunder of the discharges; the shrieking of the missiles, and the spouting of water as the metal fell short, made up a scene of war in its most terrific phase.

On the other side, three battle-ships and an armoured cruiser dashing forward at the full speed of their engines; the heavy reverberations of guns; black clouds and white of smoke from coal and from burning powder; men stripped to the waist and working at the pieces with a fury, haste, and energy that could not have been increased had each individual member of the crew been fighting against a personal foe, and words of command, encouragement, or hope, which were heard on every hand, thrilled the boy who had trembled before the supposed wrath of a collier's captain, until each nerve was tingling with excitement,—each pulse bounding with the hot blood that leaped in feverish throbs from artery to artery.

96

Teddy Dunlap was in the very midst of what but few had ever seen,—a sea-battle with the mightiest ships in the world as combatants.

It was while the lad and his elderly comrade stood like statues, gazing at the wondrous, terrible sight around them, that the former saw a huge shell leave the turret of the *Iowa*, rise on the arc of a circle in the air, cleaving its way directly toward the *Teresa*, the foremost of the fleeing ships.

Teddy was still following the missile with his eyes when it struck the Spaniard's hull, cutting its way through as if no resistance was offered, and it seemed that the huge mass had but just disappeared when great volumes of smoke and flame burst from the aperture made by the shell, telling that the first of the enemy's fleet was already vanquished.

Then came a mighty yell from every man aboard the *Texas* as well as the *Iowa*, for the gun had been aimed with a precision worthy a Yankee gunner whose forefathers, perhaps, had been forced to shoot accurately in order to save their scalps from the lurking Indian.

This cry of satisfaction had not yet died away when the *Maria Teresa* was headed for the beach, with smoke and flame enveloping all her after part,—a wreck before she had more than cleared the harbour's mouth.

97

"There's one of 'em done for, an' in short order!" Bill Jones screamed, dancing to and fro like a crazy person, and if he made any further remark Teddy failed to hear it, because of the cheers of triumph which came from every vessel in the American fleet.

The enemy had counted on cutting his way through the blockading squadron, but the first of his vessels had come to grief before the chase was fairly begun.

As the *Teresa* swung round in order to gain shoal water before the fire should completely envelop her, Teddy saw two small, swift, low-lying steamers come out from behind her with a speed which seemed like that of the wind, and the little sailor cried, in tones nearly resembling fear:

"There are the destroyers! The *Pluton* and *Furor*! Our ships are not speedy enough to keep out of their way! Now is the Spaniard's chance to pay for the loss of the *Teresa*!"

Teddy had heard of these torpedo-boats, and knew what it was possible for them to do unless, perchance, they might be checked at long range, and yet the commanders of the Yankee battle-ships apparently gave no heed to the dangerous enemies which had been designed for the sole purpose of destroying such as they.

Straight toward the *Brooklyn* these formidable craft were headed, and the stowaway involuntarily cried aloud in terror, for was not his father on board that vessel which appeared to be in such peril?

Then, coming up swiftly, as a hawk darts out upon its prey, the lad saw the little yacht *Gloucester* swim directly inshore to meet these mighty engines of destruction, when one well-directed shot from their guns would have sent her to the bottom, crushed out of all semblance of a vessel.

98

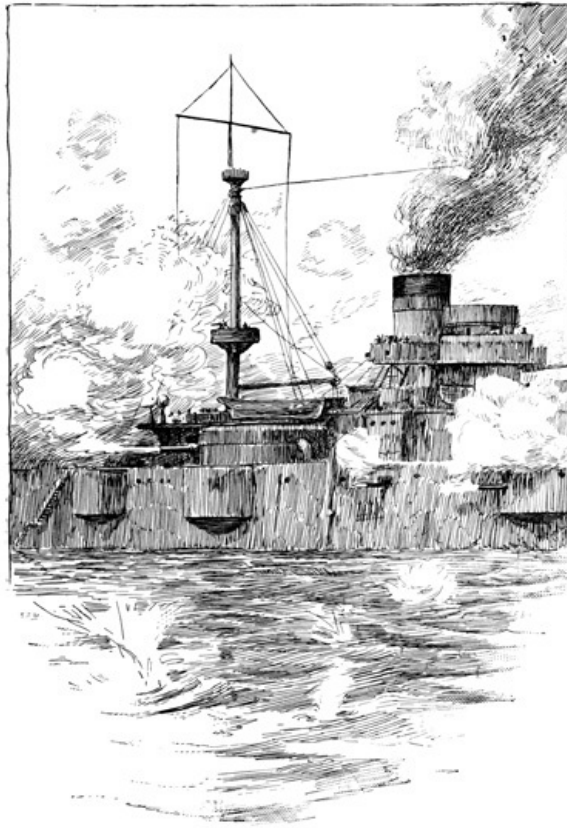
At that moment Teddy and Bill Jones saw what much resembled the attack of a fly upon two huge spiders.

The tiny *Gloucester* steamed straight down upon the destroyers, cutting them off from their intended prey, and pelting them with shells from her small 6-pounders, but doing the work with such accuracy and precision of aim that it seemed as if the battle was no more than begun before these two mighty machines turned toward the shore to follow the *Teresa*, but sinking even while one could say they were beaten.

"Hurrah for Wainwright! Bully little *Gloucester*!"

Two hundred voices rose high with shouts of triumph and exultation that the Yankee gunners had not only done their work well, but with bravery such as could not be excelled, and meanwhile the big ships went tearing madly on lest the *Vizcaya*, the *Cristobal Colon*, and the *Almirante Oquendo*, all that were left of the Spanish fleet, should escape them.

The *Iowa* and the *Texas* had selected the *Vizcaya* as their prey, and while the remainder of the fleet stretched away in pursuit of the other ships, these two cut off the big Spaniard, forcing her to fight whether she liked or not.



Teddy and Bill Jones stood on the port side of the *Texas*, all unconscious that they were exposed to any chance shot the Spaniard might send aboard, and realising nothing save the fever of battle. The odour of burning powder was in their nostrils, and life or death, danger or safety were alike the same.

101

The *Texas* literally reeled under their feet as her big guns were discharged full at the *Vizcaya*, which ship was hurling shot and shell with reckless rapidity and inaccuracy of aim.

The roar of the pieces was like the crashing of thunder; the vibrations of the air smote one like veritable blows, and enormous smoke clouds rolled here and there, now shutting off all view, and again lifting to reveal the enemy in his desperate but ill-directed flight.

"Can we sink her?" Teddy asked once, when the two comrades were so closely enveloped by the pungent vapour that it was impossible to distinguish objects five feet away, and the little sailor cried, in a delirium of excitement:

"Sink her, lad? That's what we're bound to do!"

"She is workin' her guns for all they are worth, an' I've heard it said that even a ship like this would go down if a big shell struck fairly."

"Ay, lad, an' so she would, I reckon; but we'll have yonder Spaniard under the water before her gunners can get the range. Every shot of ours is hittin' its mark, an' they're not comin' within half a mile of us! Sink her! We'll—"

Even as Bill Jones spoke, the 12-inch gun in the *Texas's* forward turret was discharged. The smoke rolled aside at the same instant, and the two watchers saw a huge shell dart forth, speeding directly toward the ship that had so lately been a friendly visitor in the harbour of New York.

102

It struck its mark fairly, crashed through the iron plating as if through paper, and then Teddy saw the mighty vessel reel under her death-stroke when the shell exploded.

Another howl of triumph; half naked men danced to and fro in their excitement; the gunners rushed out from the turrets gasping for breath, but yelling with savage joy, and the *Vizcaya's* bow was headed toward the shore!

The fourth vessel of the enemy's fleet had been disabled, and there only remained the two mighty ships in the distance, from the smoke-stacks of which poured forth long rolls of black smoke, flecked with sparks and burning brands, that told of the desperate efforts being made to escape.

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CHAPTER VI.

TEDDY'S DADDY.

The *Maria Teresa* and the *Vizcaya* were in flames, heading for shoal water that they might not carry down with their blackened hulks the men who had defended them, although feebly, and there was no longer any reason why the *Texas* should remain in that vicinity.

The *Iowa* swung inshore to make certain the ruin was as complete as it appeared from the distance, and when the royal ensign was hauled down that a white flag might be hoisted on the *Vizcaya*, Captain Philip gave the word which sent the *Texas* ahead in chase after the survivors of what had, less than half an hour previous, been a mighty fleet.

As one who witnessed the battle has already written concerning this particular time and the wonderfully one-sided engagement, his words had best be quoted:

"Huge volumes of black smoke, edged with red flame, rolled from every port and shot-hole of the *Vizcaya*, as from the *Teresa*. They were both furnaces of glowing fire. Though they had come from the harbour to certain battle, not a wooden bulkhead, not a partition in the quarters either of officers or men had been taken out, nor had trunks and chests been sent ashore. Neither had the wooden decks or any other wooden fixtures been prepared to resist fire. Apparently the crew had not even wet down the decks."

104

It was the experience of a full lifetime, to witness the destruction of these four fighting-machines, and yet Teddy Dunlap and his little comrade almost forgot what they had seen in the excitement of the race, as their ship leaped forward in that mad chase which was to end only with the wrecking of all those vessels that had sailed out of the harbour to make their way past the Yankee fleet.

The two comrades were conscious of nothing save the throbbing and quivering of their own ship, as, under press of every ounce of steam that could be raised, the *Texas* dashed onward, overhauling first this Yankee vessel and then that, flinging the spray in showers over her deck, and rolling from side to side in the heavy swell as she tore onward at a rate of speed that probably she had never before equalled.

It was a race to the death; now and then the hatches were opened that some one of the engineer's crew, exhausted by almost superhuman efforts and the excessive heat, might be brought up from those fiery depths below, while others took the place of him who had fallen at the post of duty, and the speed was never slackened.

On, on, over the long swell, every man aboard in the highest possible state of excitement, eager that the *Texas* should be in at the death, and ahead, straining every nerve as it were, fled the Spaniards, knowing full well that there could be but one ending to such a race.

105

"It's Yankee grit an' Yankee skill that's winnin' this fight!" Bill Jones cried, excitedly, forgetting that he was only a "plain, every-day sailor, with no fightin' timber about him," and at every onward leap of the ship his body swayed forward as if he was eager for a fray.

But neither Bill Jones nor any man aboard the *Texas*, save those brave souls in the very bowels of the gallant ship, had any opportunity to display personal bravery.

The fight ended when the chase did, for then nothing was left of those mighty Spanish ships save blackened hulks.

The *Oregon* was sending 13-inch projectiles after the *Oquendo* at every fair opportunity, and the *Texas*, more than holding her own with the other vessels, was coming up astern with a speed that threatened to bring the long race to a speedy conclusion.

Then, suddenly, although all had been expecting it, the *Almirante Oquendo's* bow was headed toward the shore,—she saw the uselessness of further flight,—and all the pursuers, save the *Texas*, hauled off in pursuit of the *Cristobal Colon*.

Standing with a group of *Texas* men, Teddy and Bill Jones saw the Spaniard near the line of surf, and as their vessel's speed was checked there came a roar mightier than when the battle was first opened; the doomed ship rocked to and fro as if she had struck a sunken reef, there was an uprending of the iron decks, and then came a shower of fragments that told of the tremendous explosion within the hull of the *Oquendo*.

106

Now it was the Yankee crew burst once more into shouts of triumph; but before the first cheer arose on the morning air Captain Philip cried:

"Don't cheer; the poor devils are dying!"

Then it was that every man realised what had, until this moment, been absolutely forgotten: the game in which they were such decided victors was one of death! While they were triumphantly happy, scores upon scores of the enemy were dying,—mangled, scalded, drowning,—and on the instant, like a flash of light, came the terrible fact that while they rejoiced, others were suffering a last agony.

"Don't cheer; the poor devils are dying!"

At that instant Teddy Dunlap understood what might be the horror of war, and forgetting the joy and exultation which had been his an instant previous, the lad covered his eyes with his hand,—sick at heart that he should have taken even a passive part in that game which could be ended only by suffering and death.

Later, after the men were sufficiently calm to be able to discuss intelligently the doings of that day when the full Spanish fleet was destroyed by Yankee vessels who throughout all the action and chase sustained no injury whatsoever, it was learned that more than six hundred human beings had been sent out of the world in less than four hours, and nearly eighteen hundred men were taken prisoners by the American vessels.

107

Teddy Dunlap was like one in a daze from the instant he realised what all this thrilling excitement meant, until Bill Jones, who had been ordered to some duty below, came to his side in the greatest excitement.

"What do you think of that, lad?" he cried, shaking the boy vigorously as he pointed seaward, and Teddy, looking in the direction indicated by his outstretched finger, but without seeing anything, asked, hesitatingly:

"Is it the *Cristobal Colon*?"

"Of course it isn't, my lad! That vessel is a wreck off Tarquino Point, so we heard half an hour ago. Don't you see the ship here almost alongside?"

"Oh, yes, I see her," Teddy replied, with a sigh of relief. "There's been so much that is terrible goin' on around us that it's like as if I was dazed."

"An' that's what you must be, lad, not to see that here's the *Brooklyn* nearer alongside than she's like to come again for a year or more."

"The *Brooklyn*!" Teddy cried, now aroused from the stupefaction of horror which had come upon him with the knowledge of all the suffering caused that day. "The *Brooklyn*!"

"Ay, lad, an' her launch is alongside makin' ready to transfer some of the prisoners. Now's our chance, when such as we don't amount to a straw in view of the great things that have been done this day, to slip over on a little visit to your daddy!"

108

Probably at no other time could such a thing have been done by two members of the crew; but just now, when every man and officer was overwhelmed by the fever of victory, little heed was given to the movements of any particular person.

Therefore it was that Teddy Dunlap and the little sailor had no difficulty in gaining the *Brooklyn's* deck without question or check, and the first person they saw on clambering aboard was a coal-passer, stripped to the waist and grimy with dust and perspiration, who stared with bulging eyes at the boy who followed close behind Bill Jones.

"Teddy!"

"Daddy!"

"I reckon this is no place for me," Bill Jones muttered as he made his way forward, and if the "plain, every-day sailor with no fightin' timber about him" had sufficient delicacy to leave father and son alone at such a time, surely we should show ourselves equally considerate.

It is enough to say that Teddy's troubles were at an end after a short visit with his father, and that he did not leave the *Texas* immediately.

Captain Philip came to hear the boy's story, and an opportunity was given him to enlist for so long a term as his father was bound to the *Brooklyn*.

Since the purpose of this little story was only to tell how the stowaway found his father, there is no excuse for continuing an account of Teddy's experience off Santiago with Sampson; but at some future time, if the reader so chooses, all that befell him before returning home shall be set down with careful fidelity to every detail.

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THE END.

FOOTNOTE

[1] "The Boys of '98."

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