

The Project Gutenberg eBook of Tom Fairfield at Sea; or, The Wreck of the Silver Star, by Allen Chapman

This ebook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this ebook or online at www.gutenberg.org. If you are not located in the United States, you'll have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

Title: Tom Fairfield at Sea; or, The Wreck of the Silver Star

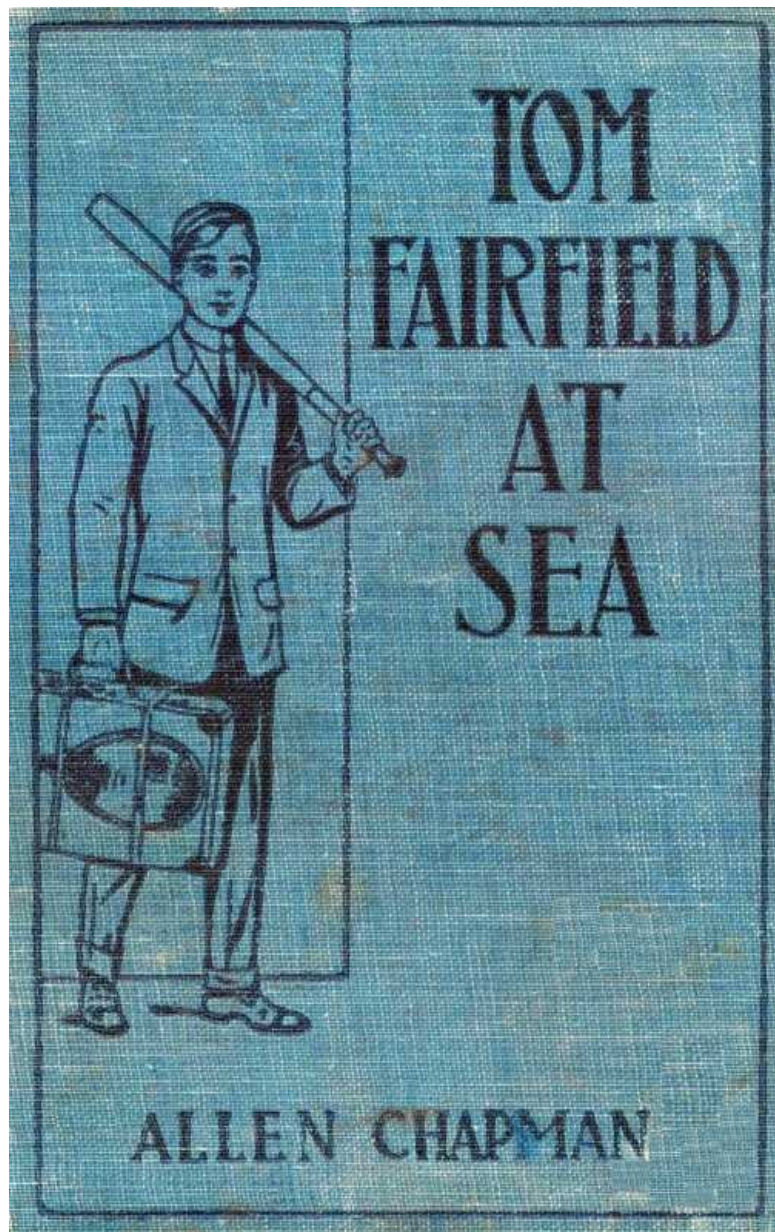
Author: Allen Chapman

Release date: October 22, 2013 [EBook #44013]

Language: English

Credits: Produced by Donald Cummings and the Online Distributed Proofreading Team at <http://www.pgdp.net>

*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK TOM FAIRFIELD AT SEA; OR, THE WRECK OF THE SILVER STAR ***





HE WAS THE LAST ONE IN, AND ARRANGED TO CUT
A SINGLE ROPE THAT HELD THE BOAT FAST.

Tom Fairfield at Sea

Or

The Wreck of the *Silver Star*

BY

ALLEN CHAPMAN

AUTHOR OF "TOM FAIRFIELD'S SCHOOLDAYS," "TOM FAIRFIELD IN
CAMP," "THE DAREWELL CHUMS SERIES," "THE
BOYS OF PLUCK SERIES," ETC.

ILLUSTRATED

NEW YORK
CUPPLES & LEON COMPANY
PUBLISHERS

BOOKS FOR BOYS
BY ALLEN CHAPMAN

TOM FAIRFIELD SERIES

12mo. Cloth. Illustrated.

TOM FAIRFIELD'S SCHOOLDAYS
Or, The Chums of Elmwood Hall

TOM FAIRFIELD AT SEA
Or, The Wreck of the *Silver Star*

TOM FAIRFIELD IN CAMP
Or, The Secret of the Old Mill

TOM FAIRFIELD'S PLUCK AND LUCK
Or, Working to Clear His Name

THE DAREWELL CHUMS SERIES

12mo. Cloth. Illustrated.

THE DAREWELL CHUMS
THE DAREWELL CHUMS IN THE CITY
THE DAREWELL CHUMS IN THE WOODS
THE DAREWELL CHUMS ON A CRUISE
THE DAREWELL CHUMS IN A WINTER CAMP

BOYS OF PLUCK SERIES

12mo. Cloth. Illustrated.

THE YOUNG EXPRESS AGENT
TWO BOY PUBLISHERS
MAIL ORDER FRANK
A BUSINESS BOY'S PLUCK
THE YOUNG LAND AGENT

CUPPLES & LEON CO. PUBLISHERS, NEW YORK

Copyrighted 1913, by
CUPPLES & LEON COMPANY

TOM FAIRFIELD'S SCHOOLDAYS

Printed in U. S. A.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. STARTLING NEWS	1
II. TOM TO THE RESCUE	12
III. A MYSTERIOUS PASSENGER	20
IV. A PUZZLED CAPTAIN	28
V. THE WATERSPOUT	37
VI. SEEN IN THE GLASS	46
VII. THE STORM	52
VIII. A BLOW IN THE DARK	61
IX. TOM GOES OVERBOARD	69
X. THE DERELICT	76
XI. ANOTHER PASSENGER	86
XII. A MUTUAL SURPRISE	95
XIII. UNDER SAIL	105
XIV. DREARY DAYS	111
XV. MAKING A BOAT	120
XVI. WIND AND WAVE TOSSED	129
XVII. A HAND IN THE NIGHT	137
XVIII. TREACHERY	144
XIX. OFF IN THE BOAT	152
XX. DAYS OF SUFFERING	162
XXI. "SAIL HO!"	171
XXII. NEWS OF THE MISSING	179

TOM FAIRFIELD AT SEA

[1]

CHAPTER I STARTLING NEWS

"Where to now, Jack?"

"Oh, I just thought I'd run into town and see what's going on, Tom. Want to come along?"

"I'd like to—but this Latin—"

"Oh, bother the Latin!" and Jack Fitch, the chum and roommate of Tom Fairfield, snatched the book from the scarcely resisting grasp of his friend. "Come along. You're up well enough. Besides, we haven't that old tyrant Skeel to deal with now in the classics."

"That's so. Guess I will go. Think it'll be safe?"

"As safe as running the guard ever is, Tommy my boy," and Jack assumed a wise air. "Probably there'll be some of the proctor's scouts out, but if we can't fool 'em, after we've put in nearly a year at Elmwood Hall, I wouldn't give much for our ability."

"Right you are, Jack! Shall we tip off some of the others? Bert Wilson would like to come along, I know."

"All right, I'll give him the high sign. Shall we take the human question box?"

[2]

"Who, Georgie Abbot? Might as well. He isn't as bad as he used to be, though he's bad enough. Four will be just about right. Got anything special on, the reason you want to go to town?"

"No. But there's a good musical comedy there, I hear."

"How's the weather? Is it raining yet?"

"Clear as a bell," reported Jack, as he poked his head out of the window of their room. "Now I'll take a look to see if the coast is clear, and get Bert and George while you put your collar on," for Tom, to be at more ease while he was studying, had adopted a sort of negligee costume.

Gliding out into the hall, Jack knocked cautiously at the door of the adjoining room, giving a certain signal.

"Well?" whispered a voice at the keyhole.

"Come on into town, Bert," whispered Jack in return, for caution was necessary, since it was past the hour for the Freshmen to go about as they pleased, to each other's rooms, and long past the time when they might leave their dormitory without permission.

"What's up?" asked Bert, as he opened his door a crack.

"Tom Fairfield and I are going to take in a show. I'll get George, and we'll have some fun. Cut down through the basement when you're ready, and we'll meet just outside the boiler room. Our studious janitor won't give us away."

[3]

"No, old Demy Miller will be so busy over his Latin or Greek, trying to be the king pin among studious janitors, that he won't even see us. Go get 'Why.' I'll be on hand in a minute."

Jack glided to a room on the other side of his own and his chum's, and repeated the tapping signal.

"Well?" queried George Abbot, otherwise 'Why.'

"Come on to town?"

"What for? Who's going? What are we going to do? Is it safe?"

"Say, if you fire any more questions at me," whispered Jack hoarsely, "I know one lad who *won't* be going, and that's you, Why! Now hush up and come along. Tom, Bert and I are going to cut in."

"All right, I'll be with you directly."

Jack glided back into his own apartment, and only just in time to escape the keen eyes of a patrolling monitor. But he did get inside safely, and breathlessly.

"What's up?" asked Tom.

"Denton-is-out-there. But I-guess he won't stay-long."

Cautious observations through the keyhole proclaimed this for a fact a little later, and soon Tom and Jack were tiptoeing down to the basement. There they met George and Bert, and the four were soon on their way to town, cutting across the campus in such a direction as to conceal

[4]

their movements.

It was rather a cool evening toward the close of March, and there had been a drizzling rain all day. Now it had cleared, coming off cold, and Jack, realizing this had felt a restlessness that could not be satisfied unless he was doing something—something forbidden, by all preference.

Tom, Jack, and a number of their intimate friends were approaching the close of their Freshman year at Elmwood Hall. They had gone through the sports of the fall—football and the like, the Christmas vacation had come and gone, and now the Easter holiday was approaching.

When that was over the spring term would open—the closing term at the school—and Tom would soon be in line as a Sophomore. But much was to happen before he could count himself a second-year student.

“Think anyone will catch us?” asked George Abbot, who never could seem to stop asking questions.

“What if they do, you old interrogation point?” inquired Tom.

“Nothing, only I don’t want to be expelled just when the Freshman year is so nearly over.”

“Don’t worry. Just trust to me,” spoke Jack. “I’m running this outfit, and we’re not going to be caught.”

“There’s someone now—just ahead of us!” suddenly exclaimed Bert, drawing back. The others instinctively paused.

“No danger!” called Tom, who was a little in advance of his chums. “It’s our friend Bennington.”

“Hello, Tom Fairfield!” greeted a voice out of the darkness. “Whither away?”

“Into town on a lark. Want to come along?”

“Thanks, no. Remember I’m a grave and reverend Senior, and not a giddy Freshman like yourself. I have a reputation to maintain, and I can’t afford to take any chances with my graduation in prospect. I’d like to though. I’ll see that you get in safely, however, in case there’s any danger.”

“Thanks,” called our hero, Tom, as he and his chums passed on, while Bruce Bennington, a Senior whom Tom had aided in a peculiar way during the former term, headed toward Elmwood Hall.

“He’s a great chap,” commented Bert.

“He sure is,” agreed Jack. “And he’s a heap sight different than he was before Tom found the forged note that Skeel held over him.”

“I’m glad I was able to help him,” said Tom. “Come on, now, fellows, sprint for it. I think I hear a car coming.”

They broke into a run, and a little later had boarded an electric vehicle that ran near the preparatory school, and into the town of Elmwood proper.

“Look who’s here,” spoke Jack to Tom in a low voice, as they took their seats, and he nodded toward the far corner of the car.

“Who?” asked Tom, and then he added: “Oh, Sam Heller.”

“And Nick Johnson is with him,” went on Jack.

“Well, I guess they won’t make any trouble for us,” said Tom, for the two lads had been, and still were, his enemies.

“Unless they squeal on us,” suggested Bert Wilson.

“They’re just as much in the fire as we are,” protested Jack.

“They may have gotten permission to go to town,” came from George Abbot.

“Not much!” asserted Tom. “They cut for it the same as we did, and they won’t say anything.”

Sam Heller and his crony glanced over at our friends, but said nothing, and the car continued on its way. Soon it was in town, and Tom and his chums hurried to a theatre that the school boys patronized. They were a little late to see the start of the performance, but they did not mind that.

“Say, this is great!” exclaimed Bert as one “turn” after another was gone through with behind the footlights.

“Here comes a sleight-of-hand performer,” remarked Jack. “I always like to see them, even though I know they fake every trick.”

“Say! did you see that!” exclaimed George, as the man apparently picked cards out of mere air. “How does he do it?”

“Foolish question number eight hundred and forty-seven!” exclaimed Tom in a whisper. “If you ask three more you’ve reached your limit, and out you go!”

George subsided, and with the others watched the play, which was a sort of musical comedy, with vaudeville interspersed. The performance was over all too soon, and the boys started back toward school, after a round of sodas in a drug store.

“Well, we’ll soon be going home for the Easter vacation, and then the baseball season will

[5]

[6]

[7]

open, when we get back," spoke Jack. "Say, Tom, are you going to keep your promise, and spend Easter week with me?"

"Well, I don't know, Jack. You see dad and mother wrote to me to go down in the country, and visit an old aunt of mine whom I haven't seen for ages. I don't see how I can make it to go to your place, much as I'd like it."

"Are your folks still in Australia?" asked Bert.

"No, they've left there," explained Tom. "They went there to look up some property a relative left to my father. They've been gone a long while now—at least it seems so to me, though the time has passed quickly enough while I've been here at Elmwood Hall.

"But I got a letter the other day, from dad, saying that the property matter was all settled satisfactorily, and that they had started for home."

"Are they coming by way of Europe, as they planned?" asked Jack. "Cracky! Wouldn't I like to see Europe, though!"

"No, they've changed their ideas," replied Tom. "Dad and mother both thought they'd like a long voyage, so they took a large sailing vessel in the Australian trade that is to land them at San Francisco. Maybe I'll go meet them if I can arrange it."

"Coming on a sailing vessel; eh?" remarked Bert. "There aren't many deep sea sailing ships any more."

"No, and that's one reason why dad wrote that he was taking the trip this way. He always has been fond of sailing and he thought he might not get another chance. So he and mother are on board the *Kangaroo*, somewhere out on the vasty deep at this moment—and I wish I was with them!"

Tom's voice was a trifle husky, for he was a bit homesick for his parents, in spite of the good times he had had at Elmwood Hall.

Jack Fitch was looking over an evening paper he had purchased from a newsboy on coming out of the theatre.

"Anything interesting?" asked Bert.

"Not much. I was just glancing at the sporting page. I guess we'll—"

Jack suddenly paused, and stared intently at a certain item on the printed sheet. Then he asked in a curious voice:

"What did you say was the name of the ship your people were sailing in, Tom?"

"The *Kangaroo*. Why?"

"Oh, er—nothing. I—say—New York is going to have a crackerjack baseball team this spring, if their manager gets all the players he's after!" and Jack tried suddenly to change the subject.

Tom Fairfield reached over and took the paper from his chum's hand. Jack tried to hold it back.

"Why did you ask that question—about the name of the ship my father and mother are in?" asked our hero, and there was a catch in his voice, and his face was white. "Why did you? You saw something! Show it to me!" he demanded.

"No, it—it wasn't anything!" protested Jack. "Just a rumor. You shouldn't bother about it. Those things are never true—at least it's not confirmed—and—Oh I say Tom, it isn't really anything!"

"Let me see it!" cried Tom hoarsely, amid a silence in the car as it sped along. "You're trying to hold something back from me, Jack. Is the *Kangaroo* wrecked?"

"No, nothing like that!" he answered eagerly. "There, if you've got to see it!" and he pointed to a cable dispatch in the paper.

With staring eyes Tom read:

"Sydney, N. S. W., March 25.—The steamer *Bristol*, which reached this port to-day reports passing at sea, a week ago, in lat. S. 21:14:38, long. 179:47:16, wreckage from some large sailing vessel. Part of a lifeboat picked up bore the letters '*ngaroo*.' It is surmised that it belonged to the large sailing ship *Kangaroo* which left this port for San Francisco last week with a mixed cargo, and several passengers. Captain Ward, of the *Bristol*, reports encountering heavy weather before sighting the wreckage. He cruised about in the vicinity for half a day, but saw no signs of life, and no trace of the vessel. The underwriters have posted the *Kangaroo*."

Tom read this once, and then over again. Then he stared at the paper, his face white and his hands trembling.

"Maybe it isn't true," suggested Jack gently. "And, even if there was a wreck, maybe your folks were saved. Maybe they changed their minds at the last minute and didn't sail. I wouldn't worry if I were you."

"I—I can't help it," whispered Tom. "Dad and mother are—missing! This is bad news—bad news!"

Jack put his arm around his chum.

[8]

[9]

[10]

[11]

CHAPTER II

TOM TO THE RESCUE

While the car is speeding back to Elmwood Hall, bearing Tom and his chums, and while our hero is endeavoring to bear up under the strain of the unexpected and bad news that came to him, I will take the opportunity to tell you something more about him and his friends.

As related in the first book of this series, entitled "Tom Fairfield's Schooldays," the reason why he went to Elmwood Hall was because his father and mother had to go to Sydney, Australia, to settle some business affairs about a valuable property inheritance. They did not want to take Tom with them, and so break up his schooling, so they picked out Elmwood Hall for him to attend.

The same day that Tom received the news about going to boarding school and heard that his parents were to start on a long trip, he met Bruce Bennington, who had motored out to where Tom lived, in Briartown. Bruce borrowed Tom's boat for a row, and Tom was at once struck with the air of trouble that brooded over the student—for Bruce let it be known that he was a Senior at Elmwood Hall. [13]

A little later, Tom started for the place of learning. Almost at the outset he made an enemy of Sam Heller and his crony Nick Johnson. But our hero also made friends, his chief one being Jack Fitch, with whom he roomed in Opus Manor, the dormitory of the Freshmen.

Doctor Pliny Meredith was head master of Elmwood Hall, and among the teachers was Dr. Livingston Hammond, a stout, jolly gentleman, sometimes called the "Live Wire." Doctor Meredith was known as "Merry," because, as Jack Fitch said, "he was so solemn," though not at all grim or forbidding.

There was also a certain Professor Burton Skeel, who was counted one of the most unpleasant of instructors. It was he who had made trouble for Bruce Bennington, in the matter of a forged promissory note, which threatened to ruin the career of the Senior.

But Tom was able to help Bruce in an unexpected way, and get possession of the note. The duplicity of Mr. Skeel was exposed, and he left Elmwood Hall. Not before, however, he had been the cause of considerable trouble.

His treatment of the students was so harsh that Tom proposed that they go on "strike" against him, and refuse to enter his class room. They did, Tom leading the revolt.

Our hero also led the escape from the school, when the whole Latin division of the Freshman class was made prisoners. The boys intended to desert to town, and stay there until Mr. Skeel was removed, but they lost their way in a storm, and had to come back. [14]

Tom, however, had prepared an effigy of the unpopular instructor, and in the midst of a blinding snowstorm this effigy was burned on the flag pole, Mr. Skeel trying in vain to stop the student's fun.

Thus the strike was broken, and Tom and his chums won, a new Latin instructor being engaged, and Doctor Meredith, though somewhat startled by the curious revolt in his school, managed to get material from it for a paper which he read before a very learned society.

But it was not all unpleasantness and strikes during Tom's time at the school. He had spreads, he took part in a big football game, and made a sensational run, and he was champion of his class in the annual skating race, though Sam Heller tried to trip him.

Mr. and Mrs. Brokaw Fairfield, Tom's parents, had remained in Australia ever since September, when they went there, to settle up the matter of the property that had been left to them. Tom had spent the between-term vacations with Jack Fitch, but the Easter one, his parents wrote him, they wished him to spend with an aged aunt. [15]

"And—and, maybe that's the last letter I'll ever get from them," thought our hero gloomily.

He was, as I have said, on his way back to the Hall from the theatrical performance, when Jack Fitch had unexpectedly come upon the item of bad news.

"Say, maybe this is nothing but a newspaper yarn," suggested Bert Wilson, for want of something better to say, after a period of tense silence.

"I wish I could think so," answered Tom gloomily. "But this paper is a reliable one, and that cablegram came by the Associated Press. That organization doesn't send out false news very often."

"But this may be just one of those occasions," put in George. He was not asking questions now. He, as well as the others, wanted to do all they could for Tom, who was a general favorite in school.

"Well, of course, I'm going to hope so," said our hero. "But that isn't going to stop me from doing things."

"What is your plan?" asked Jack.

"I don't just know. I want to find out about the truth of this dispatch, if I can. I'm going to telegraph, or cablegraph—or—or, do something."

"If we can do anything to help you, let us know," suggested Bert.

"That's right," added George.

"My father has a lot to do with telegraph and cable companies," said Jack. "He has a brokerage office in New York. Maybe he could get some information for you, by wire."

"Perhaps he can," agreed Tom. "I'll ask him in the morning. Oh, I wish it was morning now!"

It was rather a dejected group of students who quietly made their way back into Elmwood Hall that night. Tom's grief was like a pall over all of them, and they would not have greatly minded if they had been caught out after hours by some prowling monitor, or a late-staying professor.

But it was all too easy. They managed to get into the basement unobserved, and Demy, the friendly and studious janitor, let the boys into their corridor, whence they made their way to their rooms.

"By Jove, Tom, I wish I hadn't bought that paper," spoke Jack, as the two chums were getting ready for bed.

"Nonsense! It wasn't your fault, Jack; I'd have known it sooner or later, and I'm glad to have it sooner. I can get busy quicker."

"But even if the wreckage was found," went on Tom's chum, "that doesn't say that the *Kangaroo* is lost. She may have been in a bad storm, and some of her lifeboats may have been carried away. Why even if badly damaged she could manage to keep afloat for a long time. A wooden ship isn't like a steel one, you know."

[17]

"I suppose not. I'll hope for the best."

"And I'll wire to dad for you the first thing in the morning," promised Jack.

Tom did not pass a very good night, sleeping only a little, and that restlessly, and he was up early. So was Jack, and at the suggestion of the latter they both obtained permission to go into town, and to absent themselves from lectures that day.

"Of course, my dear lads, of course!" exclaimed Doctor Meredith genially, when the case had been explained to him. "Do whatever you think necessary. And I will help you all I can. I sincerely trust that you will find the report unfounded, or, at least, that it is not as bad as it seems."

"Say, he's all right, if he is a head master; isn't he?" asked Jack, as he and his chum were on their way to town, after an early breakfast ahead of their class.

"He sure is. Skeel was the only thorn here, and he's gone; thank goodness!"

"I wonder where?"

"I don't know. I heard he'd gone out west somewhere, changed his name, and was trying to get a berth in a new school."

[18]

The two lads made their way to a telegraph office, and, explaining matters to the agent, he kindly offered to rush the messages for them. Jack sent one to his father, requesting an answer as soon as possible.

"Now we'll have to wait a bit," suggested Jack. "Come on for a walk around town."

They were back at the office in a comparatively short time, however, and waited there while the instruments nervously clicked off their messages of cheer or sadness.

"Here comes one for you," the operator suddenly said, and Tom stared at the affairs of brass and rubber, vainly wishing that he could understand the Morse code. Finally the agent handed over a moist slip.

"Sorry I have no good news for your chum," Mr. Fitch wired his son. "Have communicated with Sydney agency and they confirm report. *Kangaroo* may not be lost, but she is missing. Can I do anything else?"

For a moment there was silence between Jack and Tom, and then the former said:

"Well, it isn't as bad as it might be. Only missing. She may be afloat, and may limp into port. It will be hard waiting, though, for you, Tom."

[19]

"But I'm not going to wait!" cried our hero.

"What?" asked Jack in surprise.

"I say I'm not going to wait for news. That's the worst thing in the world—waiting."

"But what are you going to do?"

"I'm going to the rescue!" exclaimed Tom. "I'm going to quit school, go to San Francisco, catch the first steamer I can for Australia, and hunt up dad and my mother."

"Great!" cried Jack. "By Jove, I wish I could go with you! When are you going to start?"

"To-day, if I can get packed up. I'm off for Australia!"

A MYSTERIOUS PASSENGER

Tom's sudden resolve came rather as a shock to his chum, Jack, and the latter, after his first expression of approval, began to wonder if the plan would prove practical.

"But how are you going to do it, Tom?" he asked. "Have you money enough to charter a steamer?"

"No, not exactly, though I guess I could raise it if I had to, for, since he got this Australian property, dad will have quite a fortune. But that won't be necessary."

"How else are you going to rescue them?"

"Well, I don't exactly know," admitted Tom frankly. "I just can't wait quietly around here, doing nothing. I'm going to start for Australia, anyhow, and maybe some plan will come to me on the way."

"But it seems to me," insisted Jack, practically, "that you ought to have some definite plan."

"Well, I have, part of one," went on Tom. "I'm going to Sydney, unless I find them drifting around before I get there. I'll pick out some steamer that will go as near as possible to the latitude and longitude mentioned in the dispatch, as being where the wreckage was picked up. Maybe I can induce the captain to cruise around there for a while, even if I have to pay for lost time."

"Anyhow, if I don't locate them before, I'll go on to Sydney, and there I'll hire some sort of a vessel, and set out in search of my folks."

"That sounds reasonable," admitted Jack. "I only wish I could go with you. But I'm afraid my folks wouldn't let me."

"I wish you could go, too," spoke Tom. "But I guess it's out of the question. Besides, you've got your school career to think of. Leaving now, just before the spring term, might put you back, and you'd be a Freshman for two years."

"I shouldn't mind that. Still, I won't think of going. But if I can do anything for you, don't hesitate to let me know."

"I won't," promised Tom, and then, when a telegram had been sent to Mr. Fitch, telling him of Tom's resolution, the two boys returned to school. But it was not to resume study, for there was much to be done.

Tom at once told his plans to Doctor Meredith, and the head master agreed that Tom could scarcely do otherwise than go. He made arrangements to excuse him from his classes, and Jack began to help his chum to pack.

Word soon got around the Hall of Tom's trouble and the fact that he was to leave at once was talked of on all sides. His room became a Mecca for fond friends, from every class in Elmwood Hall.

"By Jove, Tommy!" exclaimed Reddy Burke, one of the best athletes in the school. "It's a crying shame to have you leave now, and the baseball season soon to start."

"Well, I've just got to go," insisted our hero.

"Oh, sure. Well, we'll have a little celebration in your honor before you leave. Sure any lad that could get up a strike against Mr. Skeel deserves to have a gold medal. And I say, Tommy," went on Reddy, "bring me back a pet snake, or a rabbit or something from Australia; will you?"

"I'll try," promised Tom, and he laughed a little—the first time since he had received the bad news, for Reddy was a jolly soul.

Tom found it impossible to leave that day, and that night, in spite of rules and regulations to the contrary, there was a spread in the room of Tom and Jack, and in the apartment of Bert Wilson, a communicating door being opened for the occasion.

Though the sadness of Tom's leaving was felt there could not be all gloom and sadness where so many congenial spirits were gathered together. Tom was toasted again and again, and the best of wishes were expressed in his behalf. He made a brief address, and said he hoped he'd meet them all again soon.

"For He's a Jolly Good Fellow!" some one started, and it was loudly sung. And the odd part of it was that no one came to break up the little gathering.

True a monitor did hear the unusual and forbidden noise in the rooms, but, being both wise and sympathetic, he said nothing, and no report reached the proctor. Demosthenes Miller, the studious janitor, was a guest at the farewell supper, and made a speech in what he said was Latin, but—well, he is such a good chap, and was such a friend to the students, that I'm not going to say anything unpleasant about him.

And so, after all, in spite of Tom's sad heart, he could not help feeling a little better as he was a witness to the love of his classmates.

"Well, it's good-bye, old man!" exclaimed Jack a bit solemnly the next morning, as the time for parting came. Several others, deeming their farewell of the night before not enough, also came in to shake hands.

[21]

[22]

[23]

"I'll see you again—some time," faltered Tom.

He went to bid good-bye to Doctor Meredith, and his own particular professors, and then hurried on to the station, with Jack Fitch as his only companion. [24]

They parted with a handshake, and with moist eyes, and lumps in their throats.

"Good—good luck!" stammered Jack.

"Thanks," murmured Tom, and then his train pulled out, and Tom had started on his long journey.

A week later found him in San Francisco, the trip across the continent having been without special incident. He had stopped in New York, to see Jack's father, and Mr. Fitch had given him some good advice, and letters to his agent in Sydney.

"And now to hunt for a ship that will take me where I want to go," mused Tom, as he left his baggage at a hotel and started for the waterfront.

Tom was well supplied with money, and had drafts and letters of credit for a larger amount. His father had left funds in his name in their local bank on leaving for Australia, and also instructions with his business partner to supply Tom with as much cash as was necessary in case of emergency.

The news of the possible loss of the *Kangaroo* was held by Mr. Fairfield's partner to be an emergency, and Tom had drawn on the reserve account.

Following the advice of Mr. Fitch, Tom sought out a certain San Francisco steamship agency and told of his needs. [25]

"Hum," mused the manager when Tom had given the longitude and latitude where the wreckage had been sighted. "That's in the vicinity of the Eastern Group of the Friendly Islands, as near as I can make out," and he consulted a chart. "We don't have many vessels hitting just at that particular spot in the ocean. Still—hum—let me see."

He looked over a sailing list, made some notes, looked again at the chart and announced:

"Well, I guess the *Silver Star* would about hit what you want. She's not a very large steamer, but she's comparatively new, and a good safe boat. Captain's nice man, too. She doesn't carry many passengers, but her berths are not all filled, and I guess they can make room for you. If you want to stand the expense I can arrange to have the captain cruise about in the vicinity of those islands for a day or so."

"I'll stand the expense!" cried Tom eagerly. "We may sight something!"

"All right. Then I'll draw up the papers. The *Silver Star* sails in six days from now."

Those six days Tom spent in San Francisco, seeing the sights of the place, and fretting and worrying that time did not pass faster.

Tom made the acquaintance of Captain Amos Steerit, the master of the *Silver Star*, and at once took a liking to him. Our hero went on board several times, when the steamer was loading at her wharf, and made friends with some of the crew. [26]

At last sailing day came, and the bustle and confusion that had been going on for some time seemed redoubled. But there was a certain order about the proceedings, and at last everything had been done.

"I wonder if that fellow is ever coming?" murmured the captain, as he stood on the bridge, waiting to give the word to cast off.

"Who?" asked Tom, as he stood beside the skipper, for being a sort of privileged character, our hero was allowed certain liberties.

"Oh, a passenger who is going to Honolulu, and who engaged a berth by wire. He said he couldn't come on board until the last minute, but it's past that now. Ah, maybe this is he coming now."

Down the wharf came a rather stout man, followed by a stevedore carrying a steamer trunk. There was a certain familiar air about the approaching figure, and Tom found himself wondering where he had seen the man before. The glimpse of the face he had, however, was not enlightening, and our hero soon turned his attention elsewhere, for the getting of the ship under way was somewhat of a novelty to him. [27]

"Well, you finally got here, I see," half growled the captain from the bridge, as the belated passenger came on board.

"Yes, I—that is I—well, I came as soon as I could," said the man, pantingly.

Tom wheeled at the sound of the voice, but he had no chance for a close inspection of the man's face. For, no sooner had our hero shown his curiosity, than the passenger turned, and fairly ran toward the berth deck, at the same time calling:

"See you later, captain! I have forgotten something."

"Well, it's too late now, if it's got anything to do with going ashore!" cried the commander. "Haul in that gang plank there!" and he swung the engine room telegraph lever over to half speed ahead. The *Silver Star* began slowly to leave her dock, while Tom found himself wondering who the mysterious passenger could be.

"But it doesn't concern me," he mused. "I've got enough other troubles."

If Tom had only known, though, the belated passenger did concern him, and vitally, too.

CHAPTER IV

A PUZZLED CAPTAIN

[28]

Amid a confusing sound of tooting whistles, the clanging of bells, hoarse commands shouted back and forth, the *Silver Star* made her way through the shipping of the harbor, and pointed her nose toward the mysterious Pacific—the ocean that held so many strange lands and islands,—the ocean on whose broad bosom perhaps, Tom's father and mother were drifting helplessly about, in a wreck. Or mayhap they lay beneath the waves.

But Tom did not dare dwell on that terrible possibility and, for the time being, he resolutely put all thoughts of never seeing his parents again, out of his mind.

"I'm just going to find them!" he cried bravely, though he knew he had a hard task ahead of him.

But just now the busy scenes that were taking place, as the steamer started off on her voyage, held his attention, and for a moment he even forgot the mysterious passenger who had gone to his cabin in such a hurry.

"Well, Tom, my boy!" exclaimed Captain Steerit, as he looked at our hero, "we've got good clean weather to start off with, and, if I'm any judge, it will hold for some time."

[29]

"It isn't so rough on the Pacific as it is on the Atlantic; is it?" asked Tom. "At least I've read so, and the name—"

"Don't get that idea into your head," laughed the commander. "The Pacific is peaceful in name only. Of course I don't mean to say that it isn't calm a good bit of the time, at certain seasons of the year, just as the Atlantic is. But when it wants to kick up a fuss it can make a bigger one than that ocean you've got back east there.

"Yes, when we get a storm out here, we certainly get a bad one. But I'm not looking for trouble. We're going to point our nose into the nicest part of the ocean, to my thinking. You'll enjoy it, even if you have a hard trick at the wheel ahead of you. There'll be lots to see, especially if you go all the way to Australia with me."

"Well, I expect to go there," answered Tom, "for I haven't much hope of sighting anything near the place where the wreckage was seen."

"Nor I, either," spoke the captain, "though I didn't want to discourage you. The drift of the current, and the wind, wouldn't let anything stay in one place long."

"Then I'll just have to go on to Sydney and start my search from there," ventured our hero earnestly.

[30]

"Well, yes, I suppose so, though of course there's a bare possibility that we may sight something on our way out."

"What do you mean?" asked Tom quickly, a new hope springing up in his heart.

"I mean that the *Kangaroo*, from all accounts, was coming over about the same path in the ocean as we'll take going out. She was to stop at Honolulu I see by the papers, just as we are. Of course she was wrecked—or at least we'll suppose so—before she got there. And if we sail over the same course we may sight her—or what's left of her.

"Mind though!" the captain went on quickly, as he saw the look of despair on Tom's face, "I'm not admitting that she was wrecked. Just as you have told me, I believe that she may have been disabled in a storm, and part of her gear, her masts and her lifeboats, may have been swept overboard. That has often happened. In fact it's happened to me when I had charge of a big sailing ship.

"But it's possible to rig up a jury mast, make some sort of sail, and stagger on, when by all accounts one ought to be at the bottom of the sea. So you see it doesn't do to give up hope."

"And I'll not!" cried Tom. "Oh, I do hope we can pick up the *Kangaroo*. I'm going to keep a lookout every day."

[31]

"Yes, you can do that," agreed the captain. "I'll let you take a good glass, and I'll also instruct the lookout to keep his eyes peeled day and night. But it's too soon to begin yet, so you might as well take it as easy as you can. Say, did you notice the passenger who came aboard in such a hurry?"

"Yes," answered Tom, for the ship was now well on her way and there was less of interest to hold our hero's attention.

"Did you think he acted in any way funny?"

"Well, yes, I did," admitted Tom. "He didn't seem to know exactly what to do."

"And another thing," went on the captain. "It seemed to me that the sight of you scared him."

"Nonsense!" exclaimed Tom, though he was aware that the captain was eyeing him sharply. "Why should he be disturbed on account of me?"

"I can't say, I'm sure. Did you ever see him before?"

"Not that I know of," replied Tom. "Though when I heard his voice it sounded like some one I'd heard before, though I couldn't be quite sure, and just now I couldn't even place the voice."

"Well, perhaps I'm mistaken," admitted the captain. "No matter. Have you got your stateroom in shape?" [32]

"Yes, but I guess I can put a few finishing touches on it. I've been so interested in watching our start that I haven't been below much."

"Well, I'm going down to get something to eat," went on the commander with a smile, "and if you'd like to come along I can offer you a meal," for he had arranged that Tom should sit at his table.

"I will!" exclaimed the lad. "This sea air makes me hungry."

"I thought it would," responded the commander, with a laugh. "Keep her on this course, Mr. Merton," he said to the first mate, who had come up on the bridge, at a signal, to take charge of the wheel.

"I wonder if I ought to knock on his door and ask him if he's hungry?" spoke the captain, half aloud, as he and Tom went below.

"Who?" inquired our hero, though the question was not exactly addressed to him.

"That passenger I was speaking of—Mr. Pierson Trendell his name is—the one who came on board late. He was recommended to my care by a friend of one of the owners of this steamer, though I don't know him personally. He's going to Honolulu for his health I understand. Guess I'll have to be decent to him, though I didn't take much of a notion to him, and I don't like anyone who can't arrive on time." [33]

"But I'll take a chance, and ask him to come with us and have a little lunch. As you say, this sea air does give one an appetite."

They were on the berth deck now—the deck where Tom's stateroom, an outside one, was located. The captain turned into a passageway, and paused before the door of a room not far from our hero's.

"This is his berth," he remarked as he rapped on the panel.

"Who's there?" came a quick demand.

"Captain Steerit," was the reply. "Would you like to come to lunch with me, Mr. Trendell?"

"In a private room?" was the query.

"No, but at my private table."

"Any one else?"

"Humph! You're mighty particular," murmured the commander. "Why, yes," he made answer in a louder tone. "My friend, Tom Fairfield, is coming with us. Shall I have a place laid for you?"

"No, thank you—er—that is, I'm not feeling very well. The motion of the boat, you know—in fact I haven't quite got my sea legs on. Some other time, Captain."

"Oh, very well, just as you like," and with rather a frown of annoyance the captain passed on. [34]

"Very strange," he murmured, half to himself, but loud enough for Tom to hear. "They said he was an experienced sailor, and had been in all sorts of rough blows. And yet he's seasick when the water is as calm as a millpond. I can't understand it," and the puzzled captain shook his head.

"Can a person get seasick more than once?" asked our hero, rather anxious on his own account.

"Oh, yes, there are lots of such cases. And again there are some who never suffer from it. It's all a matter of nerves, I think. It never bothers me, and yet I had a first mate once, who was always very sick the first two days out, and then he'd be as steady on his legs as a sea lawyer. But every new voyage it would be the same way. But come in to lunch now," and he led the way to a private table, where Tom was soon putting away a substantial meal that was more like dinner than luncheon.

There was only a slight motion to the *Silver Star* now, hardly any more than to Tom's motorboat when he had been out in a blow, and he was beginning to feel that he would not suffer from seasickness.

Captain Steerit left him to his own devices after the meal, for the commander had many things to look after. Tom went to his own stateroom, which he put in shipshape. Then he went on deck again. [35]

The Golden Gate was fading from sight now, and the routine of a vessel out at sea was well under way. Tom saw several passengers, but the man he had begun to classify as the "mysterious one," did not appear.

"If he's going to be seasick now's his chance," mused Tom, for there was now quite a decided roll to the ship.

But it did not bother our hero, who was feeling in excellent health. Of course he could not help

worrying about his father and mother, but he looked on the brightest side, and made up his mind that if there was any possibility of rescuing them he would do so.

It was coming on toward evening, and Tom was wondering how he would sleep on his first night at sea. As he passed near the bridge, on the upper deck, he saw Captain Steerit and the first mate in conversation.

"I can't understand it," the commander was saying. "He comes on board as a man who is traveling for his health, and who wants to get all the sea air he can. Yet when I give him an outside stateroom, near young Fairfield's, he goes and changes it before I know it. He won't come out to lunch, and now you tell me he asks to have all his meals served in his cabin."

[36]

"That's it," said the mate. "He sent the steward to ask me, and I thought it best to speak to you."

"Quite right. Well, I suppose we'll have to let him have his way, but I can't understand it. He wants fresh air, but he won't come out and get it," and the captain filled his lungs with the salty, ocean breeze. "Very puzzling! Very puzzling!"

CHAPTER V

THE WATERSPOUT

[37]

"That mysterious man—they're speaking of him," said Tom softly, as he turned away. "I'm glad, after all, that he did not keep the stateroom near mine. There may be no harm in him, and he may be all right, but he certainly acts queer, and I don't want to have anything to do with him."

Tom retired that night, rocked by the gentle motion of the ship. He knew, now, that he was not going to be seasick in ordinary weather, though he realized that he still had to undergo the test of a storm.

"I wonder what it's like?" he mused. "There very likely will be big waves and a powerful wind. But I hope we don't have one. I want to make a quick voyage, and a storm would delay us."

Then he thought of the storm that had wrecked the *Kangaroo* and this brought the possible fate of his father and mother to his mind. He took out, and read over again, for perhaps the fiftieth time, the clipping from the newspaper that had given him his first hint of the bad news. There were one or two other clippings from other papers, telling the same story, and a later one, confirming the first dispatch.

[38]

"Poor dad and mother!" sighed our hero. "I'm coming to you as fast as I can. Oh! if only there was some way of reaching you by wireless! But, even if the wireless was on their vessel at first," he mused, "it wouldn't work after the wreck. I'll just have to wait."

He stretched out, but it was some time before he got to sleep, and his thoughts were rather sad as they dwelt on the possible fate of his parents.

"Oh, pshaw!" he finally exclaimed, half aloud. "This won't do! I've got to be more cheerful." Then he changed his current of thought to the good times he had had at Elmwood Hall, and soon he felt himself dozing off, as he recalled the merry midnight suppers he and his chums had partaken of.

"And when this trip is over I'm going back there, and have some more good times," he whispered.

Tom went up on the bridge after breakfast, to find Captain Steerit looking critically at the barometer.

"Anything wrong?" asked our hero.

"No, not yet. And yet it has fallen a little. I don't just like it, but otherwise the weather is good. I don't see any signs of a storm, so I guess I won't worry. How did you sleep?"

[39]

"Pretty good."

"Do you mind the motion much?"

"Hardly any."

"That's good. I guess we'll make a sailor of you, after a while. Be around at noon, when we take the observation, and I'll show you how it's done."

"I will," promised Tom, and then he went around the ship, speaking to some of the sailors and officers whom he knew. He also made the acquaintance of several of the passengers. There was one gentleman, a Mr. Case, who, with his little son, aged about seven years, was making the trip to Australia, where he had a business, near Melbourne. He had come to New York with his wife to settle up some affairs, and the child's mother had died there.

"And now I'm going back," the father confided to Tom. "I am going to try and forget my sorrow—forget it in hard work."

Tom felt a deep sympathy for him, and for the child, and the latter lost no time in making friends with our hero. They had many a romp on deck, and Tom made up a number of games and

amusements for the lad.

The promise of uncertain weather given by the barometer was not kept, and the ship slipped along through the water in a succession of calm, sunny days. Tom had almost forgotten about the strange man now. [40]

Mr. Trendell was not seen on deck, keeping carefully to his stateroom, and Tom heard that he was suffering much from seasickness. He felt sorry for the man, as only a person can who does not suffer from the qualms of the boat's motion.

"Jackie was ill on our trip over," said Mr. Case, the father of Tom's little playmate, "but I'm glad to see that he's well going back. I guess it's the attention you give him that takes his mind off it. But don't let him be a bother to you."

"Oh, I like him!" exclaimed Tom, who was fond of children. "He's a good sailor; eh, Jackie?"

"Sure," answered the little chap. "Come on, now, let's play ring-toss some more," and Tom complied.

The passengers, of whom there were only about a dozen, had soon made friends with each other—that is all but the "mysterious one," as Tom still thought of him,—and they all did what they could to make the time pass pleasantly.

Tom's sad quest became known to all and he received much sympathy, while Mr. Case told stories of shipwrecks in which persons, believed for a long time to be lost, had finally been found. This comforted our hero very much.

"How anyone can remain below on such a night as this I can't see!" once exclaimed a Mrs. Pendleton, who was taking the trip with her daughter. "Such a lovely moon, and such a calm sea! And yet, I understand, Mr. Fairfield," she said to Tom, "that there is a gentleman on board who hasn't yet been out of his stateroom—who takes all his meals there." [41]

"Yes," replied Tom. Nearly all the passengers were out on deck that evening, enjoying the calm, peaceful night, and looking at the phosphorescent sea, silvered by the moon. "I don't know why he stays below unless it is that he is very ill."

"Perhaps no one has invited him out," suggested Mrs. Pendleton, who was quite impulsive. "Let's go, you and I, Mr. Fairfield."

"Oh, no, mamma!" exclaimed her daughter. "Perhaps he has good reasons for being quiet. It is none of our affair."

"But we ought to make it our affair to see that he enjoys the best part of the trip," insisted her mother. "I'm going to get him out."

"No, you must not!" her daughter insisted. "Oh, mamma, you do the strangest things!" and she laughed. "I have to be watching her all the while," she added with a laugh, to the others. "She has no regard for conventionality."

"There's no sense in it," insisted the elder lady. "But I'll not go if you don't want me to. There, a big fish just jumped up!" she exclaimed, as there came a splash in the water. [42]

They all crowded to the rail to look, Jackie Case, who had not yet gone to bed, being the most eager.

"Where's the big fish?" he cried. There was quite a swell on, and the boat rolled from side to side at times with a dangerous pitch, but not annoying to those used to it. It was just on one of the occasions when the ship slid along, tilting her rail, with the passengers up against it toward the waves, that little Jackie tried to climb up to the highest point of vantage.

"I don't see the fish!" he cried, and he leaned over still farther. In another instant he had overbalanced, and, with a cry of terror, he had slipped across the rail.

"There he goes!" cried Mrs. Pendleton. "Jackie has fallen!"

His father came rushing up with a cry of anguish. But Tom had been near enough to make a grab for the little chap, and he hung fast. Now a voice rang out:

"Man overboard!"

"Man overboard!" repeated the lookout. "Lower the boat!"

There was a clanging of bells in the engine room, as the propeller was reversed.

"Hold tight, Jackie!" cried Tom, as he tried to get the little fellow back over the rail. "I'll help you. Hold tight!" [43]

But the little boy was too frightened to aid himself and he let go. But now our hero had a better hold and he clung on desperately, until others came to his assistance, and then both were helped to a place of safety. Tom had gotten pretty wet, but this he did not mind.

"Oh, Jackie! Jackie, my boy!" cried Mr. Case, hugging the little form to him, and then, still clasping his son, the man held out his hand to Tom.

"I—I can't thank you now," he said brokenly, "but I may be able to—sometime."

The accident broke up the pleasant little party on deck, and Tom hurried below to change to dry garments. As he passed the stateroom of the mysterious man our hero saw that one of the stewards was speaking through the partly-opened door to Mr. Trendell.

"It's all over now," the steward was saying. "A little boy almost fell overboard, and Tom

Fairfield went after him."

"Was either recovered? Was Tom Fairfield drowned?" asked the voice of the man in the stateroom.

"No, sir. They were both saved. Thank you!" This last obviously in response to a tip handed out. The door was closed and Tom passed on. [44]

"Queer," he mused, as he reached his stateroom, "very queer that he should want to know if I was drowned."

Neither our hero nor little Jackie was any the worse off the next morning for the accident. Tom's heroism was the talk of the ship.

"I think the big fish, whatever it was, that caused all the trouble, must have brought the change of weather," said Mrs. Pendleton to Tom that afternoon. "It isn't as nice as it was."

"Oh, we can't always have good weather," spoke Tom. The day was one of lowering clouds, and as our hero, a little later, went up to the pilot house, he saw Captain Steerit again studying the barometer.

"Anything wrong?" inquired Tom.

"She's falling again," was the answer. "I don't like it. I think we're in for a storm."

The wind began to rise about an hour after that, and the clouds appeared lower than ever, some of them seeming fairly to touch the distant waves. The rigging hummed and twanged like the strings of a harp. Sailors were hurrying about, making everything snug below and aloft.

"Ha! What's that?" suddenly asked the captain, as the lookout in the bows cried out a warning. The man repeated what he had said, but Tom could not catch it.

"Look, look, Tom my lad, if you want to see a strange sight!" said the commander, taking hold of Tom's arm, and directing his gaze off to the left. "Did you ever see the like before?" [45]

Our hero looked and saw, rising from the ocean, a dark mass of water, twisted into the shape of a funnel, with the upper end whipping about and twisting like a snake. At the same moment, from a black and threatening cloud above, a similar funnel-shaped mass seemed to drop, only the point of it was toward the point in the cone of water.

Suddenly the two met, forming a black pillar, and there was a loud roaring sound.

"What is it?" cried Tom, but, even as he asked he knew what the captain would say.

"Waterspout! A waterspout, and a big one, too!"

The attention of everyone on board had been called to the strange and threatening phenomenon by this time, and they all watched it anxiously.

"A waterspout," murmured Tom. "I've often heard about them, but I never saw one before. What will it do?"

"Break when the whirlwind that caused it dies out," was the answer, "but——" The captain suddenly ceased speaking. Then he cried:

"It's headed right this way! The waterspout is coming toward us!"

CHAPTER VI

SEEN IN THE GLASS

Instantly there was a commotion all through the *Silver Star*. The captain's alarming words had frightened the sailors as well as the passengers. As for Tom, he stood in fascinated wonder on the bridge, watching the approaching waterspout.

And that it was approaching, and rapidly too, could not be doubted. It was sweeping onward with a whirling motion, straight for the ship, and there was a low, moaning and humming sound to the wind that had created it, which did not add to the pleasure of the spectacle.

"Is there any danger?" asked Tom.

"There is if it hits us," was the captain's grim answer. "But I'm not going to let that happen, if I can help it. I'll go ahead full speed and try to get out of the way. It's only in a sailing ship, where it's hard to change the course against a perverse wind, that there is really any great danger, though I have heard of steamers being hit."

"Oh, Captain Steerit!" cried a woman passenger from the deck below. "Will we be wrecked?" [47]

"Not if I can help it," was his answer. "There is comparatively no danger. I'll pass the spout to one side."

"Then I'm going to try for a picture!" exclaimed Tom. "Will it last long enough for me to get my camera?" he asked, pausing on his way down.

"It will if you hurry," answered the commander. "And I may be able to give you a chance to get a rare view."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean I'm going to try to break that spout with a cannon shot. I've read of such things being done, but I never tried it. I've got a gun on board, for saluting some of the owners at the islands where I trade, and I'll have my gunner try a shot at it."

"Great!" cried Tom. "If I can get a view of the spout, as the cannon ball hits it, that will be a rare one."

He hurried below for his camera, while the captain gave his order about the cannon, and the crew ran the gun out on the bow.

When Tom came up from his stateroom he saw that the spout was much nearer. But the course of the *Silver Star* had been so changed that she was in comparatively no danger of being struck, unless the waterspout suddenly shifted. [48]

"All ready now with that gun!" cried the captain.

"All ready! Aye, aye, sir!" came the answer.

Tom was taking several views of the waterspout as it was whirling along, and some of the other passengers, grown bolder as they saw that there was no danger, were doing the same.

"Ready to snap her, Tom?" asked the commander.

"Yes, sir," answered our hero.

"Then here she goes! Fire!"

There was a puff of white smoke, a dull flame, and a report that seemed to jar the whole ship. Tom had a glimpse of something black bounding over the waves. It was the round shot from the old-fashioned cannon, and had no great speed, as cannon balls go.

"Get ready, Tom!" called the captain.

Tom focused his camera on the whirling waterspout, and waited the right moment to push the shutter lever.

It came.

Surely aimed had been the cannon, for the ball cut right through the center of the twin-joined funnel-shaped masses of water. The one that had risen from the sea slumped down into the waves again, carrying with it the mass of water that had been drawn from the heavily charged cloud, and Tom got a wonderful picture of the destruction of the spout. [49]

"There, I guess that won't trouble us any more, even if it had been headed directly for us!" called the captain, while he signalled for full speed ahead, since he had slowed down the vessel to enable Tom to take the snapshot.

"It was great!" exclaimed our hero, as he went up on the bridge to thank his friend the commander. "Do waterspouts do much damage?"

"They do when they're big enough, and when they hit a small vessel. Even a big steamer might suffer from having thousands of tons of water dropped on her decks at once. I don't want to encounter a waterspout. They are quite rare I believe. At least I've seen very few, and the farther off they are the better I like 'em. Did you get a good picture?"

"I hope so. But I can't develop it here."

"Oh, yes you can. I used to be quite an amateur photographer myself, and I had a dark room fitted up on board. I guess there are all the chemicals and other things you need, including the ruby light. Go ahead and develop your film, and see what sort of a view you have."

"That's great!" exclaimed Tom. "If they're any good I'll make some for you."

"All right. I'll be glad to have 'em."

Tom went below, noting as he did so that the sea was still foaming and agitated where the waterspout had subsided into the waves. The passengers were crowded about the gun that had been fired, congratulating the gunner, and talking about the waterspout and its sudden destruction. [50]

To get to the dark room, fitted up in a small stateroom, Tom had to go past the room of the "mysterious" passenger.

"Queer he wouldn't even come up on deck to see the waterspout," mused our hero. "He must have some strange object in remaining below. Well, I'm not going to think anything more about him."

As Tom got in front of the stateroom he noticed that the door was partly opened, and, almost instinctively, and with no intention of prying, he looked in as he passed.

What he saw startled him. There was an electric light aglow in the apartment, for the clouds had made the day gloomy, and Tom caught the reflection in a looking glass on the wall. And what he saw in the glass was the face of a man with a beard and moustache. It was a face that Tom knew well, but it was not the face of the passenger who had so hurriedly boarded the ship, and who had kept to his berth ever since.

"A beard and moustache!" gasped Tom. "I wonder if they're false? And yet they might have grown naturally. But no, they couldn't have, in this short time. They're false. And I know who that man is now! I didn't know him smooth shaven, but I do with his beard." [51]

He had a good glimpse, by means of the mirror, of the face of the mysterious man. The passenger appeared to be contemplating his countenance in the glass.

"He here!" gasped Tom, as he hurried on to the dark room. "That man on board! I must tell Captain Steerit!"

CHAPTER VII

THE STORM

[52]

Filled with his new idea, and alarmed at the possible menace to himself, Tom turned, and was about to retrace his steps up on deck to speak to the captain. Then he paused.

"Hold on a minute, Tom Fairfield," he told himself. "And don't do anything in a hurry. You came off on this voyage in a rush, and maybe that was a good thing. But just wait a minute now, and see if this is the best step to take."

He turned again, and once more walked past the stateroom of the suspected man. The door was closed this time, and Tom was rather glad of it, for he did not want to meet the passenger, now that he knew who he was.

"I'll just wait a bit about telling the captain," reflected Tom. "When I tell him the story he's bound to take some action, seeing that Mr. Trendell is sailing under false colors. And that's bound to make a row. It won't be pleasant for me, either, seeing that I've got to stay on this ship with him for some time yet. And a ship isn't like dry land—you can't get away from a person when you want to."

[53]

"No, it's better for me as it is, I think. As long as he stays shut up in his stateroom he won't bother me, though he knows that I'm on board. That's why he acted so queer, and why he's been in retirement. Now he's planning some new move."

"Yes, I'll just lay low for a while, and see what happens. There's time enough I guess. I'll go develop this picture."

Tom found the dark room well fitted up, and he was soon at work, taking the films from his camera, and putting them in the developing bath. As soon as the yellow coating began to dissolve he saw, coming out of the shadows, as it were, the dim image of the waterspout, and the shattering of it by the cannon ball.

"Say! That's a crackerjack snapshot!" he exclaimed. "As soon as it's dry enough I'm going to print some views and show 'em. I don't believe anyone on board has any better pictures than these."

In his enthusiasm over his views he forgot, for the time being, the matter that was troubling him. He found that he had a number of excellent negatives of the waterspout, showing it approaching, its destruction, and the raging sea after it had subsided into the waves.

"Good! That's great!" exclaimed Mr. Blake, one of the passengers to whom Tom showed his views a few hours later. "I hope mine come out as fine as yours. How did you print them so quickly?"

[54]

Tom explained how he had dried his negatives by dipping them in alcohol, and pinning them in front of an electric fan, so that he could make prints a comparatively short time after developing. He even used the dark room for some of the other passengers, making some prints from their films, but none of them were as good as those of our hero.

"You ought to make a set for the captain," suggested Mr. Blake. "I believe he'd like them to hang in his cabin, as a souvenir of the occasion."

"I will," declared Tom, and this brought up anew in his mind the question as to whether or not he ought to inform the commander of the secret he had unexpectedly stumbled upon.

"I guess I'll take a chance, and tell him," mused the lad. "I've thought it all over, and I'll feel better if I tell. If I don't, and anything happens, I'd feel as if I was to blame. I'll tell Captain Steerit."

But an unexpected obstacle developed. First, when Tom went to look for the captain the latter was working out some reckonings, and could not be disturbed. And then, a little later, it was time for supper, and a concert was to be given afterward, the captain having arranged for it among the musical members of his passengers. He was really too busy for Tom to see him in private.

[55]

"Oh, well, morning will do," decided our hero, little knowing what was to happen between night and dawn.

The concert was a great success, though it was strictly amateur. There were songs and instrumental numbers, for the *Silver Star* carried a piano. Some one discovered that Tom was a school lad, who had been a member of the glee club at Elmwood Hall, and nothing would do but that he must sing some songs. He did not want to, but was finally prevailed upon to do so, and he had a better voice than he himself suspected.

"Great! Fine!" complimented Mr. Blake. "If there were more of us here we could charge

admission and make a fund for the sailors. Now, Mrs. Ford, another of your piano solos."

Thus the evening went on in gaiety until even the gayest were ready for their staterooms.

"Maybe I'll get a chance to speak to the captain now," thought Tom, wishing to get the unpleasant matter off his mind before he went to bed, if possible. But Captain Steerit was still busy, and when he did have a moment's leisure, after the main cabin had been put to rights following the concert, he was summoned to the bridge by an unexpected call. [56]

"I wonder if anything can be wrong?" asked Mr. Blake of Tom.

"Wrong? How? What do you mean?"

"Well, I mean that the wind has been rising rapidly in the last hour, and the barometer is falling. I heard one of the crew say so."

"That means a storm," suggested Tom.

"I guess so. Notice how we're pitching and rolling."

"That's right," agreed our hero, for, now that his attention was not occupied with the music and songs he could observe that the ship was heeling over at a sharper angle. And, too, she seemed to be climbing up some mountain of water, only to slip down into the hollow on the other side of it.

"It is a little rough," spoke Tom, "but I don't believe it will amount to much. Let's go up and look around."

The motion on deck was more pronounced than it had been below, and the two had some little difficulty in keeping their feet as they got outside. They felt the strong wind in their faces, a wind that seemed to be momentarily increasing in violence.

"Better get below!" shouted Captain Steerit to Tom and Mr. Blake, from the bridge. "We're in for a spell of bad weather I fancy." [57]

"Any danger?" yelled Mr. Blake, above the roar of the wind, which was humming through the mast and funnel stays. "My wife is very nervous."

"No danger," answered the commander, and then he disappeared into the charthouse that opened off the bridge.

The vessel pitched and tossed, but Tom had been in worse blows than this, and he saw nothing to be alarmed about. The sky was overcast with clouds, for no stars were visible, and the wind was strong, but aside from these indications there did not seem to be anything to be alarmed about.

"Well, I'll have to wait until morning, all right," mused Tom, as he took a turn about the deck before going in. Mr. Blake left him with a good-night.

"I'll go tell my wife there's nothing to be alarmed about," he said, "but she's that nervous that it'll be just like her to sit up dressed all night."

"Oh, I guess the *Silver Star* can weather this little blow," said Tom.

Remaining on deck for about half an hour longer Tom was beginning to feel sleepy enough to turn in. The wind had not increased. If anything it had gone down, though the lad could see, over the rail, that the waves were running high. They did not break, however, being more like huge oily swells that heaved up in the darkness, showing dimly the reflection of the ship's lights. [58]

"Some power to those waves," reflected our hero. "A lot of power there when it's needed, but the trouble is it can't be controlled. Well, I hope we don't run into a worse blow by morning."

A little saddened as he looked off across the black waste, and reflected that somewhere on that heaving ocean his father and mother might be helplessly drifting, Tom went below.

As he did so he cast a look at the bridge. He saw Captain Steerit standing there with the first mate, their figures being brought out in relief against the glow of light from the charthouse. The two seemed to be in earnest conversation, and Tom, who was unaccountably nervous, could not but wonder if there was any danger in their situation.

As he passed the room of the mysterious passenger Tom saw that the door was closed, though a light showing over the transom indicated that the occupant was still up.

It must have been past midnight when Tom was suddenly awakened by being pitched sharply against the side of his berth. [59]

"Hello! What's up?" he cried.

There was no answer, but he felt himself tossed in the opposite direction, while some loose objects in his room rolled about the floor.

"Something's going on!" said Tom aloud, as he reached out and turned the electric switch, flooding his room with light.

As he did so he became aware that the vessel was rolling and pitching at what, even to his accustomed senses, was an alarming degree. Tom sprang out of bed, and brought up with a bang on the opposite side of his little apartment, giving himself quite a severe knock.

"Ouch!" he exclaimed, rubbing his elbows. He forgot to hold on to something, and felt himself sliding back toward his berth, but he had sense enough to put out his hands and save himself from another collision.

"Some motion here!" thought Tom.

At the same time he became aware of a rushing of feet on the deck above him, while hoarse commands were cried out, coming but faintly to his ears.

Without waiting to dress, Tom cautiously opened his porthole a trifle. In an instant, even through the small crack, he was drenched with a spray of salty water.

"Say! It must be a blow!" he cried, screwing the porthole glass back into place. "It's a storm all right! I'm going to get dressed, and go on deck. No telling what might happen."

Steadying himself with one hand, he sorted out his clothes with the other. He could hear the passengers in the stateroom adjoining his moving about, and he thought he detected a woman crying.

[60]

CHAPTER VIII

A BLOW IN THE DARK

[61]

"Trouble somewhere," reflected Tom, as he hastily dressed as best he could in that small stateroom, which seemed uncertain on its own part as to what was the floor or ceiling. Sometimes one of the walls would serve as the floor, and again as the ceiling.

"Trouble," repeated Tom, "or else some one is frightened. The storm must have developed in a hurry. I'm going to see what's up. I don't like being below when there's any danger."

Finishing with his dressing, Tom hurried along the passageway leading to the upper deck. He had to steady himself as he went along, or he would have received more hard knocks.

Coming opposite the room where the "mysterious" man was quartered, Tom noted that the door was ajar a trifle. It went shut with a slam as our hero passed, but whether the occupant had been the cause, or the swaying of the ship, Tom could not determine.

"No chance to talk with Captain Steerit now," Tom reflected. "But I guess it will keep until after the blow."

[62]

On deck our hero was at once made aware of the fury of the storm, and its increasing violence. He had a glimpse of great billows, foam-capped, racing along at the side of the *Silver Star*, as if to keep pace with her, mocking her efforts to speed away from them. He heard the wind fairly howling through the wire stays, as if giant fingers were playing a wild tune on some immense harp. And he felt, too, the violent pitching and tossing of the craft, as he had not in his cabin below. In fact so great was the motion that he had difficulty in keeping his feet.

"Some blow—this," gasped Tom, the words being almost snatched out of his mouth by the wind.

He saw sailors making their way here and there, fastening in place such gear as might tear away when the storm became worse. And that this was likely was becoming every moment more evident.

Tom managed to make his way forward, clinging to some safety ropes that had been rigged. He was near the bow, and could see towering billows curling toward the ship, when a voice hailed him.

"Get back! Go on back, Tom!" someone shouted.

He looked up toward the bridge, to see Captain Steerit standing there, clad in oilskins, for the spray was flying from the crests of the mountain-like ridges of water.

[63]

"Is there any danger?" Tom shouted back.

"There always is—in a storm," was the grim response. "Get back. No telling when a comber may come aboard, and it will carry you off like a chip. You can't hold on. Get back, Tom!"

Our hero decided that it was good advice to follow, and, even as he turned he felt the ship stagger as though some giant had dealt her a blow. There was a shower of spray and a rush of water that drenched Tom, and nearly carried him off his feet.

"Well I'm wet through," he reflected. "I'd better get back to bed, or else put on dry clothes. I should have put on oilskins before coming up."

As he went down a companionway he saw Mr. Blake coming up, with his wife clinging to him. She had been crying, and was even now sobbing.

"Don't go up," Tom advised them.

"Oh, is it as bad as that? Are we sinking?" gasped Mrs. Blake.

"Oh, there's no particular danger," said Tom, as calmly as he could, "only you'll get all wet. I'm drenched. Captain Steerit warned me back, just as a big wave came aboard."

"Oh, Will, I'm so frightened!" wailed Mrs. Blake. "I know we'll go to the bottom!"

[64]

"Nonsense!" answered her husband. "I told you we'd better stay below."

"It's more comfortable, at any rate," said Tom, and he helped Mr. Blake assist his wife to their

stateroom.

Tom lost no time in putting on dry garments, and over them he put a suit of oilskins, that would keep out the wet. Thus equipped he started for the deck again.

"Now that I'm up I may as well stay and see the storm out," Tom reflected. "If it grows worse I don't want to be below, anyhow. I'll have more chance in the open."

For a moment his heart misgave him, as he thought of the storm through which the ship on which his father and mother were sailing had gone.

"I do hope the *Silver Star* isn't wrecked," mused Tom. "That would upset all my plans. But pshaw! It won't happen."

He passed one of the sailors whom he knew.

"What do you think of it?" asked Tom.

The man paused for a moment before replying. Then, looking to see that no one overheard him, the man answered:

"We've got orders to put fresh water in the lifeboats, and to see that all's clear for getting away in a hurry."

"As bad as that?" asked Tom, in some surprise. "Why I fancied the ship wouldn't make much of this storm." [65]

"It isn't so much the storm," went on the sailor, "though that's bad enough, and it's getting worse. But she's opened some of her seams, and we're taking in water."

"Have they started the pumps?" asked Tom in some alarm.

"Sure, but one of them is out of commission, and the others have all they can do. Take my advice and get ready for any emergency."

"Jove! As bad as that!" exclaimed Tom with a gasp. "Surely the passengers ought to be told."

"Oh, don't worry," the sailor advised him. "The captain will tell them soon enough. And if they know too soon it may start a panic."

"That's so," agreed our hero.

He turned to go back to his stateroom, and, as he did so, he became aware that the door to the apartment of the man he suspected had been open a crack. It was quickly closed as our hero came opposite it, as if the occupant had been listening to what the sailor had said.

"I wonder if I hadn't better give Mr. Blake, and some of the others, a little warning," reflected Tom. "No, I guess I won't. The women might get all excited. Captain Steerit will surely take no chances. But now what had I better do? I'm going to take my money with me, anyhow, if we have to leave the ship." [66]

Tom had provided himself with a money belt before coming on his trip, and he now strapped this about his waist with the pockets filled. He also took a few personal belongings that would not take up much room, nor be heavy. He had on warm but light clothing, and light shoes.

"If worst comes to worst, and I have to swim for it, I can do it this way," he reflected. "It won't be cold, that's one good thing, and there aren't any icebergs in this part of the Pacific. Still I hope nothing happens."

Once more he made his way up on deck. He saw none of the other passengers there, and, taking his place in a sheltered spot, he watched the storm.

It was certainly growing worse. Every now and then big seas came crashing over the bow, sending a shower of spray up to the bridge where Captain Steerit kept unceasing watch. The *Silver Star* was pitching and tossing more than ever. Now she would poke her nose toward some big, dark billow, and it seemed as if she must bury herself beneath it. But she would rise to it, and ride on the crest, being poised there for a moment with her bow and propeller clear of water.

At such times the engines raced, the screw having no resistance, and the whole vessel quivered from stem to stern. Then the staunch craft would slide down the inclined plane of water into the valley below, only to repeat the process at the next huge wave. [67]

Then, when some big comber came aboard, the ship would stagger under the blow, until it seemed as if she must be crushed. But ever she would emerge from the battle with the sea, to stagger on once more.

It was magnificent, but terrifying, and Tom, who had never been in such a storm, was not a little frightened. But when he looked toward the bridge, and saw the commander there in his glistening oilskins, as calm and undisturbed as though he was but guiding his vessel on a summer day, our hero felt reassured.

"The ship's in good hands," thought Tom. "We'll pull through yet, barring accidents, and even with a leak, and one pump useless."

Yes—"barring accidents." That is the one thing on which sailors cannot count.

All had been done that human ingenuity could suggest. Everything movable on deck had been made fast, and the engines were going at top power to force the ship through the storm. Tom could see dark figures clustered about the lifeboats, and he knew the sailors stood ready to lower them in case of necessity.

"But I think I'd rather take my chance on the *Silver Star* than in a small boat in such a sea," reflected Tom, not without a shudder, as he looked at the heaving billows.

[68]

He could not tell whether it was raining or not, as the spray was like a fall of the drops from the clouds. There was no thunder or lightning—just a hard, steady blow.

On staggered the steamer. Tom braced himself in a corner by a deckhouse, and held on. He could look over the rail at the hissing seas that ran alongside.

Suddenly there came a hoarse cry from the lookout in the bows.

"Port! Port your wheel!" he screamed. "We'll be upon it in a second. Port!"

"Port it is!" came the quick voice of Captain Steerit.

A moment later there came a staggering blow in the dark—a blow that seemed to halt the *Silver Star* in her career—a blow that made the craft shiver from stem to stern!

CHAPTER IX

[69]

TOM GOES OVERBOARD

"Stand by to lower the boats! Order all hands on deck! Women and children first!"

Captain Steerit was yelling these commands through a megaphone to his crew, even while he turned to order the first mate, on the bridge with him, to go below to the engine room, and see what damage had been done.

The *Silver Star*, after the first staggering blow, had come to a stop, and lay pitching and tossing on the waves. Clearly her engines were motionless, for Tom missed the vibration that had told of their ceaseless revolutions.

"Something bad has happened," reflected our hero. "I've got to be on the lookout."

He glanced over the rail, and could see nothing but the black, rushing waves. He had half a mind to go back to his cabin, and see if he could not crowd some of his belongings into a valise.

"If we've got to take to the boats," he reflected, "there are not so many of us but what we can each take a little baggage. I'll need some other clothing if we come out of this safely. I'll take a chance."

[70]

He was about to go below when he once more felt the throb of the engines, and the ship quivered.

"We're under way again," he said, half aloud. "I guess it's all right. We may have hit a floating spar, or something like that. And yet, from the way the lookout yelled, it seemed to be more dangerous than that. I guess it's all right, though."

But the order to stand by to lower the boats had not been recalled, and already the sailors were swarming about them, seeing that the falls were clear, and that food and water were on board the small craft.

Small craft, indeed, they seemed, to be trusted on the mighty ocean in a storm, and yet they were staunchly made, and Tom knew that if they could be successfully launched they could weather many a blow.

"Well, if I've got to take a chance, I've got to," he reflected. "I'll get some of my things, and wait for my place in the boat."

The sound of crying and tearful exclamations could now be heard above the roar of the gale, and Tom recognized the voice of Jackie Case, the little boy whom he had saved.

"Poor little chap!" he mused. "It's tough on the women and children."

[71]

After that first staggering blow, and the confusion that followed, order seemed to come out of chaos. Captain Steerit had matters well in hand, and he issued his orders calmly. The women were comforted as best they could, and urged to get in the small boats. Some objected, fearing to trust themselves to the craft in such a storm. But the captain insisted.

"Is there really any danger?" asked Mr. Blake, as he stood by one of the starboard boats, his wife clinging to him. Tom was near enough to hear the captain's answer.

"We have sprung several bad leaks," was what the commander said, "and the pumps can't keep the water down. We must have struck a half-submerged wreck, and that further opened the seams which were started by the strain of the storm. I regret to say it, but I fear we must abandon the ship—before it is—too late!"

His solemn words set the women to weeping again, but their relatives tried to calm them. Tom had started for his stateroom, intending to get some of his belongings, when little Jackie spied him.

"Tom! Tom!" he called. "Come with me."

"In a little while, Jackie, my boy!" Tom answered. "I'll get in after you do."

[72]

"Come with me and my papa," invited the little lad, and he started to run across the heaving deck, but his parent caught him up in his arms and hugged him close.

The engines that had started up, after a temporary stoppage caused by the collision, again suddenly ceased to work, and once more the *Silver Star* lay at the mercy of the wind and waves. It was raining now, and the storm was at its height, the wind whipping the stinging drops into the faces of everyone.

"Hurry, men!" urged the captain. "Get them into the boat and follow yourselves. Where are you going, Tom?" he asked, for the commander had come down from the bridge.

"To my cabin to get some of my things," answered the lad.

"Better not. We'll have to be quick! She's beginning to settle. She won't last much longer! There must be a big hole ripped in her. What's the matter with those signal lights?" he cried.

"Aye, aye, sir!" came the answer, and a moment later there flared up the glare of the rockets that might serve to call help to the stricken vessel. The wireless, too, was crackling out an appeal, but this did not last long, as the dynamo was soon put out of commission, and the storage battery did not seem to work.

"Well, I guess we've got to go," mused Tom. "This is certainly a bad start toward the rescue of dad and mother!" and he felt a mist of tears come into his eyes, that mingled with the rain and the salty spray of the sea.

"Are all the women and children in?" asked the captain, for one boat would more than serve to hold them.

"Aye, aye, sir!" came the answer.

"Then let their husbands or other relatives join them."

The men involved in this order moved forward over the sloping and heaving deck, in the glare of the signal fires, and took their places.

"Tom! Tom Fairfield!" cried little Jackie. "I want you with me!"

"Yes, Tom, you might as well go," said the captain, holding out his hand to our hero. "Good-by."

"But, aren't you coming? There's lots of room."

"I'll come—last," was the grim answer. "Go! And good-luck to you. I've put a trusty man in charge of that boat."

Our hero sprang toward the lifeboat which was all ready to be lowered at a favorable moment. But Tom Fairfield was not destined to enter her.

At that moment, and with a suddenness that took them all unprepared, there came another frightful blow against the side of the ill-fated *Silver Star*. She heeled over, and in such a manner that the lifeboat with its load of shrieking women and pale-faced men overhung the sea.

"Lower away!" shouted some one.

"Wait!" cried Captain Steerit.

Tom felt himself knocked down and hurled across the sloping deck. In vain he tried to grasp something to stay his progress. A wave splashed up, making the deck even more slippery.

Over and over rolled Tom, and he hoped, when he came to the rail, to save himself. But the rail was not there. In the glare of the burning signal lights Tom could see where a great portion of it and the netting had been torn away. There was nothing to save him from rolling into the sea.

In vain he tried to clutch the slippery deck, to hold on to something. He did not cry for help. He knew it would be useless. Over and over he rolled.

The vessel was sinking fast now. Tom, imperiled as he was, could tell that. She rose more sluggishly to the heaving waves. There were cries of pain, terror and confused shouts.

A moment later our hero found himself shooting off into space.

Down and down he plunged. He could see the glare of the rockets reflected from the surface of the boiling waves. He saw something white floating, and he tried to hurl himself toward that.

In another instant he had hit the water feet first, and felt himself going down into the depths. He had been tossed overboard into the midst of the ocean and in the heart of the storm. The waters closed over him, and filled his ears with their booming sound.

CHAPTER X

THE DERELICT

"Air!" thought Tom gaspingly, as he went down and down into the depths. "I must get air! My lungs! They're bursting!"

He felt himself being buffeted by the waters. It seemed as though he was in a whirlpool of foam. He was being sucked down.

Even then he found himself thinking of many things besides the very evident necessity of saving himself. He was wondering what had struck the *Silver Star*. He wondered if the ship had gone down, or had gone to pieces. What had become of her passengers and crew?

And, with all that, and with the vital necessity of getting a breath of air soon, Tom found himself regretting that his mission to rescue his parents must now fail.

"But it shan't!" he found himself exclaiming mentally. "I'll get up and save myself, and them too!"

Tom had grit. It was the kind of grit that enabled him to win the football game, and to lead his class to revolt against unfair treatment.

Striking out with all his might our hero swam upward. He felt that he would never reach the top so that he might fill his lungs with air, and he blessed his lucky stars that he had put on light clothing, soft shoes and was not encumbered with anything.

For he felt that he was mounting upward. Upward through the blackness and dark waters to what?

That was something that even he dared not think about. Would he find himself on a waste of waters, or would there be some boat near to save him? Had the whole ship's company perished? It seemed likely.

Then, as suddenly as he had gone into the water, he felt himself shooting up out of it. He shook his head, as a dog shakes his body on emerging from the waves, to free his eyes of water. Then he glanced about.

There was a glare on the storm-swept surface of the heaving sea, a glare that Tom knew came from the flaring rockets and signal lights. He whirled about in the water until he could face the source of the illumination, and he saw that which saddened and startled him.

About a hundred yards away, for that distance she had been swept by the storm, was all that was left of the *Silver Star*. She was low in the water—a wreck—and the light flared from one of her signal masts, where a sailor had fastened it.

And in the glare Tom saw something else. It was a lifeboat, filled with people, and it was headed away from him. He knew this was his one chance. Treading water, so as to bring his head as much above the waves as possible, he shouted:

"Help! Help! I'm Tom Fairfield! I'm right astern of you. Help! Help! I'm—"

His voice was drowned out in a smother of foam that broke over him from a huge wave, and he had to swim to keep himself up. The boat disappeared behind the crest of a comber, only to reappear again, the dying flare from the light showing the men rowing hard.

"Help! Help!" sang out Tom again, but at the same moment he realized that in the roar of the wind and the swish of the waves his cry could scarcely be heard. Still he called again:

"Help! Help!"

Once more he was covered by a smother of foam, and again he had to swim with all his strength. When he could see the lifeboat again it was farther off, and then Tom did what he should have tried at first—he endeavored to swim after it.

"For they're rowing to get beyond the suction of the ship when it goes down," he reflected, "and when they're far enough away they'll wait to pick up survivors."

He struck out valiantly, his courage coming back to him now. It was not cold, and save for the violence of the wind and waves, Tom would not have been in bad straits, for he was a good swimmer. But he realized the peril of his situation—adrift on the open ocean.

He had swum perhaps fifty feet, getting occasional glimpses of the lifeboat as it rose on the crest of a wave, when the flare on the vessel seemed to be dying down.

Tom swung around and saw a weird and terrifying sight. As he looked the *Silver Star* seemed to stand up on end, like some stricken animal making a last stand. Then with a suddenness that was startling, the craft sank from sight, a loud boom proclaiming when the decks blew up from the compressed air under them.

Instantly the sea was in blackness again, and Tom felt his heart sinking, as he realized that he could no longer see the lifeboat, upon which his sole hope could be placed.

"But I'm not going to give up. I'll yell some more," he thought, and he called with all the power of his lungs.

"Help! Help! I'm Tom Fairfield! Right astern of you!"

He listened, but all he could hear was the roar of the wind and the swish of the waves. And then he knew it was hopeless to look for aid from that direction.

"I'll keep afloat as long as possible," he thought "and then—well—" He did not like to think further. "In the morning though," he reflected, "Ah, in the morning I may be able to pick up enough floating wreckage to make a raft, or the boat may see me. There must be more than one boat. They had time to launch more than one when I started to make my roll into the ocean."

This thought gave him courage, and he struck out with a better heart, determining not to give up as long as he could keep afloat.

[77]

[78]

[79]

[80]

"I wonder if there are sharks here," thought the shipwrecked lad. "Sharks! Ugh! And other big fish!"

He felt a shiver run through him in spite of the warmth of those southern waters, and the very warmth, and the thought of how far south he had come, made him think all the more about some fierce man-eating tiger of the sea.

"Oh, pshaw! What's the use of being a chump!" said Tom aloud, when he got a chance to free his mouth of salt water. "I just won't think of anything like that. Of course there aren't any sharks here. I'll just think that I'm trying to win the swimming race at Elmwood Hall for my Freshman class."

The very idea, thus simply expressed, made him feel better, and he struck out with better heart. Once more he went over in his mind the events that had preceded the sinking of the *Silver Star* and the necessity for her passengers and crew to put to sea in small boats. He found himself wondering what she could have hit, or been rammed by, to tear a hole in her. [81]

"And my pictures of the waterspout!" reflected Tom grimly. "They're at the bottom of the ocean by this time I suppose. And poor dad and mother—But there, I'm not going to worry. I've got to swim, and I guess I'll get all I want of it, even though I am fond of water."

All around him was blackness, save a slight phosphorescence of the ocean, and when he came up on the crest of a wave he looked about for a possible sight of a boat. But he saw nothing. He shouted occasionally, but he realized that he was only wasting his breath. On he swam, grimly and determinedly.

The storm seemed to be no worse, and Tom even found himself thinking that it was abating, after it had done all the damage possible.

There came a big wave over him, almost depriving him of breath, and sending him rolling and tumbling down into the depths again. When he came up, and had filled his lungs with air, he was almost exhausted.

When he struck out his right hand hit something in the water. Instinctively he shrank away with a start of fear that he had come in contact with some monstrous fish. Then a flash of lightning—the first since the beginning of the storm—revealed to him a large cork ring, or life preserver. [82]

He could barely repress a shout of joy—only the thought that his mouth might become filled with salt water deterred him, for he knew what that ring meant to him.

"I can get that over my head and float," he reasoned. He reached for it. The swell carried it away from him for a moment, and then he got hold of it. In a moment he had it under his armpits and he was riding easily on the surface of the sea, for the ring was a specially large one, and raised him well up.

He was floating on the surface of the sea, I have said, and yet it was not like the comparatively smooth surface of a river or lake. For, so large were the waves still, in spite of the fact that the storm was a little less severe, that Tom was down in a deep valley one moment, and on a wave-crest the next.

"Perhaps I can see the boat, now that there's lightning," he reasoned, and, each time he came up he looked about. But he could see no sign of the life-craft, nor were his shouts answered.

He swam on again, rather hampered as to speed because of the ring, but he did not mind this. His chief aim was to keep alive and afloat until morning so that he might look for help, or be located by those in the boats, if they were still on top of the sea. So Tom floated idly on, occasionally swimming when he felt a bit numbed by the cold, which he was conscious of, now that he had been in the water so long. [83]

The lightning increased in frequency and intensity, and there were mutterings of thunder.

"In for another storm, and a different kind," mused Tom. "I hope it clears up after that, so I have some chance."

The flashes became more brilliant, as the storm came nearer. Tom took advantage of every one of them to look for a boat, or for a piece of wreckage to which he might cling. But he saw nothing. Then the rain, which had ceased for a time, burst with greater fury. It fairly seemed to beat down the crests of the waves, and Tom was glad of that.

"And I can get a drink, too," he reflected, for he had swallowed some salt water, and his throat was parched. He held open his mouth and the grateful drops dashed in. The amount he was able to catch was rather disappointing, but it was better than nothing.

And then, as the fury of the storm grew, and the lightning became even more intense, Tom saw something that made his heart beat high with hope. [84]

It was a shape of something lying low in the water, and moving sluggishly on the swell. Our hero had only a glimpse of it at almost the tail-end of the lightning flash, and he waited for another illumination before deciding what the object was.

Then the whole heavens seemed lighted up by a great flash and our hero saw the object again.

"A boat!" he cried. "And some one in it."

He whirled about in the water, headed for the object, and struck out.

"Help! Help!" he cried again. "Wait for me."

Back came the answer over the waste of waters.

"We can't do anything but wait. Swim over here. Go by the lightning."

Once more Tom saw what he thought was the boat, by the glare of a flash. Then its peculiar shape impressed him.

"It's an upset boat!" he gasped. "They've been thrown out and are clinging to the bottom. But it's a big one, though. Much bigger than any of the lifeboats. I wonder what it can be?"

On he swam toward the craft.

"Are you there?" came a hail.

"Yes, I'm coming," Tom answered.

A huge wave seemed to sweep him onward. He saw that he was close to the wrecked boat. A few more strokes, and a hand was reached out to him. He grasped it desperately.

"Come aboard, mate!" a hearty voice sang out. "We haven't much, but you're welcome to it. Come aboard!"

Tom found himself scrambling up the side of some craft. In the next flash he saw the forms and indistinct faces of two men. One of them held something in his arms.

"What are you on?" gasped Tom.

"A partly submerged derelict," was the answer. "It's the one the *Silver Star* struck, I reckon, and the thing that ripped a hole in her and sunk her. It's a big derelict, my lad," the sailor went on, "and when we were tossed overboard we landed close to it, same as this other little chap did."

"What other little chap?" asked Tom, as he sank down exhausted on the deck of the derelict.

He had his answer a moment later.

"Oh, Tom. Tom Fairfield!" a childish voice cried. "I want you and I want my daddy!"

[85]

CHAPTER XI

ANOTHER PASSENGER

[86]

For a moment Tom did not move from the position into which he had fallen when he clambered aboard the derelict. He was exhausted, but, more than this, he was startled by the sound of the childish voice. And yet, in an instant, he knew who had called his name.

"Is—is he here—little Jackie here?" Tom gasped.

"That's what he is, matie," answered one of the men. "I've been holding him ever since we picked him out of the wreck of a lifeboat, poor little chap. But I guess he'd rather come to you."

"Tom—Tom Fairfield I want you!" cried Jackie. "Where is my daddy?"

Tom felt a lump come into his throat, but he rose up and answered as best he could.

"I—I'll take care of you now, Jackie," said Tom brokenly. "Daddy—I—I guess your daddy is off somewhere in a boat, looking for you. He'll row up in the morning, and won't he be surprised when he sees you here ahead of him? Oh, won't we have a grand joke on him, though!"

Jackie laughed—laughed amid that waste of waters on the wave-washed derelict.

"Oh, how nice, Tom!" he said. "I want you to hold me, and tell me about how daddy will be surprised."

"Poor little kid," murmured the sailor who held the little boy, as he passed him over to Tom when a lightning flash came.

Tom was now getting his strength and wind back after his long swim. He was still soaking wet, but the rain had now ceased, and the wind was warm. If the sea went down enough so that the waves would not wash up over the derelict they might all get dry. And then the morning would come. But what would it bring?

Tom gathered Jackie in his arms, and the boy, with a contented sigh, snuggled up to our hero's shoulders.

"Now tell me about daddy," he commanded. "Tell me about the joke on him."

Tom started to comply, forcing himself to make a joke out of what he feared would be a grim discovery in the daylight. The boy's father was probably among those drowned when the ship foundered. But little Jackie must not know it. So Tom made up a fanciful little story—telling it while the lightning flashed and the thunder rumbled, and while the derelict rose and fell on the long swells.

"Move back here, mate," said one of the sailors in a low voice. "It's higher, and more out of the water."

He moved forward to make a place for Tom, and the lad noticed that the man took a position

[87]

[88]

where he would be more exposed to the waves than at first.

"But you—" began Tom with an objection.

"Come on," ordered the man, half harshly. "You want to keep the kid dry; don't you?"

Then Tom understood, and with a grateful heart he moved up so that Jackie would not be so wet. The little fellow was breathing heavily now, and Tom knew that he was asleep.

"Well, Tom Fairfield," remarked one of the sailors, "this is tough luck, isn't it?"

"Couldn't be much worse, and yet there's lots worse off than we are," commented the other.

Tom looked at the sailors as the lightning flashed again. One he knew as Abe Fordam, and the other was Joe Weldon. They had been deck helpers, cargo shifters—doing any of the many things required on a steamer, and hardly sailors proper, for there were no sails to manipulate. Tom had made their acquaintance when he had requested them to pose for their pictures as they were coiling up an anchor chain one day on deck.

"How did you happen to get aboard this derelict?" he asked, getting into as comfortable a position as possible with his little burden. [89]

"It sort of—happened," replied Abe.

"We had lowered away the main lifeboat, with most of the passengers in it," added Joe, "right after the second crash came, and then there wasn't time to do much more. It was everyone for himself. Some of the men were cowards, too," he added contemptuously.

"That's what they were," growled Abe. "They swamped one boat by all trying to crowd into her. Me and Joe here shifted for ourselves, and got aboard a life-raft that we slid down the sloping deck. We were better off than most, too."

"But how did you get aboard this derelict?" asked Tom.

"Our raft hit it, after we'd been afloat some time, and I says to Joe that we'd better take to it, seeing as how it was bigger than the raft. So we transferred our keg of water to it, and what little grub we had, and climbed on."

"Then we found the boy," supplemented Joe.

"That's right, then we found the boy," agreed Abe. "I see something awash near the bow of this old craft, and I made a grab for it, thinking it might be more grub. But it wasn't. It was part of a lifeboat, with some life preservers jammed under the thwart. I pulled it up, and there was this kid, sort of fastened by the life preserver straps. At first I thought he was gone, but I listened close, and heard his breathing. [90]

"We got the water out of him, as best we could, and then he began to cry. He cried for his daddy something pitiful, and nobody knows where his daddy is," he added softly.

"Then he called for Tom Fairfield," added Joe.

"Yes," assented Abe, "he cried for you. And it seems sort of Providential-like that you should come swimming along. How did you do it, Tom?"

"It just happened. I rolled off the deck when the second crash came, and, when I came up I swam for it. I called for help as I saw a lifeboat rowing away, but they didn't hear me. Then I swam until I got this life-ring, and then—well I saw the derelict and made for that."

"And it's a good thing you did," commented Joe. "For Abe nor I don't know the first thing about taking care of kids. I'm glad you come."

"So am I," grunted Abe.

"What sort of a craft are we on?" asked Tom.

"A derelict lumber ship, as near as I can make out," replied Abe. "Them kind floats longest and they're the very worst sort of derelicts for a ship to hit, for they're so heavy—almost solid, you might say. This is what the *Silver Star* hit, I'm almost positive. First we hit her a light blow, and then we sort of fended off. The engines got out of commission, and something went wrong with the steering gear, I guess. Then we fetched up with another whack at it, and that finished us." [91]

"That's it," agreed Joe. "But it ain't a bad sort of craft to float on when you've been wrecked. It's better than the life-raft."

"Will it float long?" asked Tom.

"As long as we need it—maybe longer," spoke Abe, and his voice was rather gloomy.

"Have you any water, and enough food to—to last for some time?" asked Tom.

"Not an awful lot," murmured Joe. "There's water enough for four days, maybe, if we don't take too much, and some tinned meat and biscuits in the case we put on the raft. Why, are you hungry, Tom?"

"No, oh, no, not at all. I was just thinking ahead. There are four of us, counting little Jackie."

"And he'll get his share, along with the rest of us, matie," said Abe quickly. "It'll be share and share alike, until the last crumb and drop is gone."

"That's what," growled his companion.

"Are there any chances of us being picked up?" Tom inquired. [92]

"Oh, yes, plenty of chances," answered Abe. "But you can't tell how long it will be before that happens. Still we can't do anything but wait."

"Maybe one of the lifeboats will sight us," suggested our hero, as he moved a bit so that Jackie would rest easier.

"Maybe, but hardly. They'll probably row toward the nearest land," suggested Joe.

"And where might that be?" inquired Tom.

"Well, we were about three days from the Hawaiian Islands, at the rate we were going in the *Silver Star*," went on Joe, "but in the storm I guess we were pretty well blown out of our course. Probably now we're some distance to the east of 'em now, and maybe below 'em, for all I can tell. But if we can make a southwest course we're bound to fetch up at some island sooner or later, if we're not picked up by some vessel in the meanwhile."

"Oh, then we're not so badly off," commented Tom.

"It might be worse," agreed Joe. "Well, the storm's over, and it'll soon be daylight I reckon."

The lightning had ceased, and the thunder was only distantly rumbling. It was quite dark, and the derelict drifted on with its passengers staring moodily out into the blackness—all but Jackie, who was in happy dreamland. [93]

"There's the sun," announced Joe, after a pause. He pointed to where a faint light showed in the east. It gradually grew until the red ball of fire seemed to pop up from the ocean.

Jackie awoke, and sat up in Tom's arms.

"Did daddy come yet?" he asked.

"Not yet," replied our hero softly. "But he may—soon."

"And he'll be s'prised to see me here; won't he?"

"Yes, Jackie."

Tom looked at the craft on which he now was. As the sailors had surmised, it was a derelict lumber ship, and one end of it was well out of the water.

Tom was just wondering how they could improve their situation by making a sort of shelter and platform from some of the lumber when Joe cried out:

"Look! Look over there! It's a boat, or part of one!"

They looked to where he pointed. There, drifting slowly toward them was a wrecked lifeboat, one of those that had been carried on the *Silver Star*.

"If we can only get her, she may have food and water in," suggested Joe. "I'm going to swim for it, and tow it in. I see a rope trailing from the bow." [94]

Before they could object he had leaped off the derelict and was swimming toward the boat as it rose and fell on the wash of the sea. Joe was strong, and a good swimmer, and soon he was aboard again with the end of the line. By it they hauled in the boat.

"Anything in it?" asked Abe.

"I didn't stop to look. Just grabbed the line and turned back."

Now the boat was alongside. Tom looked into it and uttered a cry of surprise. It contained one passenger—a man, and it was the same mysterious man who had kept himself hidden in his stateroom aboard the *Silver Star*.

CHAPTER XII

A MUTUAL SURPRISE

 [95]

"Davy Jones!" gasped Joe Weldon, as he too looked into the boat he had towed to the derelict, and saw the man. "Another passenger!"

"And a dead one, too, I reckon," added Abe, grimly.

"Let's make sure," suggested Tom. "We must get him aboard here, unless that boat is better than the derelict. Maybe we had better take to that."

"No," decided Joe, after a careful look. "She's stove in, and only her water-tight compartments keep her afloat. It wouldn't be safe to get into her. Our own craft is better."

"Then we must get him aboard here," went on Tom. "That is, if he's alive."

"And we must get some of that drinking water out of the boat, too," went on Abe. "It's just what we need."

"Maybe there's food, also," suggested Joe. "It's a good find all right, even if the boat is a wreck."

"Is my daddy in it?" asked Jackie. [96]

"No," replied Tom sadly. "But, Jackie I'll tell you what we're going to do. We'll make a little house out of part of that boat, and we can sleep in it."

"Really and truly, Tom?"

"Surely."

"And we can camp out?"

"Yes. Now you go away up, on that high part of our ship and stay there while we pull the sick man out of the boat."

Tom put Jackie on the highest part of the derelict over which the waves did not break. In fact, now that the sea had gone down, their situation was not so bad, for they were getting dry.

"Come on now, mates, all together," proposed Joe. "We'll haul the man out first, and then see what's in the boat that's of any use to us. All together, now!"

It was no easy task to get an unconscious man from the boat, nearly awash, to what might be called the deck of the derelict. But they managed it, and he was made as comfortable as possible.

"Some of that canvas will come in handy," remarked Joe, as he pulled a large piece of it from the lifeboat. "And here are two kegs of water, and some cases of tinned food. We won't starve, or die of thirst, right away."

"Right you are, mate," agreed Abe. "Now if we could only get this boat up on the derelict, we might use the planks for making a shelter, as Tom said. Let's try."

[97]

It was even harder work than hauling the unconscious passenger up on the deck, but the sailors knew their business, and with Tom to help them and taking advantage of the swell of the sea, and an occasional big wave, they did manage to get the wrecked lifeboat up on the derelict by hauling on ropes attached to her.

"And it's a good thing we didn't try to go to sea in her," commented Abe, as he looked at the holes stove in the craft. "Even with the water-tight compartments we couldn't have gone far. She must have been rammed by some of the wreckage after this man was in her. Do you know him, Tom?"

"Yes, I know him," was the quiet answer. "Let's get the boat a little higher up."

"All together—heave!" cried Joe, and they worked the craft farther up on the derelict.

"There's an axe!" cried Tom, as the bottom of the lifeboat became exposed, when the water ran from her through the rents and gashes. "That will come in handy."

"That's what," agreed the sailors.

Now that they had their prize secure, they turned their attention to the passenger who had so unexpectedly come to them. He seemed to be still unconscious, but Tom, feeling of his wrist, detected the movement of a pulse.

[98]

"He's alive," he said.

"Then the sooner we get the water out of him the better," spoke Abe. "Though I don't believe he got much into him, for he was sitting high in the boat, and she hadn't shipped so very much."

Then they began to work over the unconscious man, Tom thinking meanwhile of the irony of fate that had again thrown him into contact with the character in whose life he had played so strange a part.

"He's coming around," announced Joe, after a bit.

"Yes, I guess so," assented Abe.

The man sat up. His eyes roved about as though he could not understand where he was. He looked first at Abe, then at Joe, and then sought little Jackie, who was seated on the highest part of the derelict where Tom had sent him. Then the gaze of the man went to Tom's face.

Over the countenance of the man came a tinge of fear, and Tom smiled grimly. He saw the features of the man as they had been on the day when he came aboard the *Silver Star* in such a hurry—a smooth-shaven face—the face on which Tom had seen the man adjusting a false beard in his stateroom that day.

The mysterious passenger gasped. Then he said:

"You—you here—Tom—Tom Fairfield?"

"Yes, I'm here, Professor Skeel," announced our hero calmly, as he faced the former Latin instructor of Elmwood Hall—the teacher against whom he had led such a successful revolt. "I'm here, and I'm surprised to see you here."

"No more—no more than I am to be here—and to see you," came the grim answer. "It's a mutual surprise I fancy."

"Yes," agreed Tom simply.

"Do you know this man?" asked Joe. "This Mr. Trendell?" for, somehow, the sailor had learned the name by which the renegade professor had gone.

"I don't know him by that name," spoke Tom, "but it doesn't matter I fancy. We have other things to consider now."

[99]

"All right," agreed the sailor. "It's none of my affair. Only when a man goes by two names—"

"What business of yours is that?" snapped Mr. Skeel, with a return of his old, overbearing classroom manner.

"Nothing, of course. But I've got a right to make a remark, and whoever you are, I'd remind you that we've saved your life."

"And what's more," went on Abe, "we're all equal here. We're not on board a ship now, and there's no captain, unless we elect Tom here, which I vote we do." [100]

"Second the motion," came from Joe. "How's that, Captain Tom?"

"I—I'll not serve under him!" muttered Burton Skeel. "I won't take orders from him."

"Then you can go adrift again, and shift for yourself if you like," spoke Joe sharply. "The majority rules here, and Abe and I vote for Captain Tom."

"Oh, I don't know enough about a ship to be captain," spoke our hero.

"You don't have to know much about a ship to navigate this water-logged craft," said Joe. "Captain we've voted you, and captain you'll be. There has to be some one to give orders, and you're him. If this Professor Skeel, as you call him, or Mr. Trendell, as we knew him, doesn't like it he can go elsewhere."

"Oh, I suppose I must give in," said the new passenger bitterly.

"That's all that need be said," commented Abe, "and if you've got a secret you can keep it. We won't ask any questions, will we mate?"

"Not I," growled Joe. "Now then, Mr. Trendell—"

"You might as well call me Skeel," said the owner of that name. "Since Tom Fairfield knows me there is no use trying to hide my identity. Not that I have anything to conceal," he added hastily. [101]

"All right," agreed Joe. "Now then, let's make this lifeboat fast in a little better shape, and then we'll chop off some of the planks and build a sort of shelter. Then we can think about breakfast—that is if the captain says so."

"Surely," assented Tom with a smile. "Do as you think best. You know much more about it than I do."

The two sailors busied themselves, while Jackie looked on interestedly. Mr. Skeel, who was rapidly regaining his strength, after a drink of water, and a bite of biscuit and meat, crawled to Tom.

"Are—are you going to inform on me?" he asked.

"Certainly not," replied our hero. "I'm done with you. I have no wish to trouble you further. I think you acted very unfairly toward our class, and what you did to my friend Bruce Bennington was criminal, but he does not want to prosecute you, so neither do I."

"You little knew the temptation I was under," said the former professor humbly. "I make no explanations, but I will say that I have decided to live a better life. I was going to try in a new country to redeem the past. I had no idea you were on the *Silver Star* when I engaged passage under another name, and when I saw you, after I had disguised myself, I was greatly startled. I kept to my room, and even thought of adopting another form of false beard and moustache so you would not know me." [102]

"I recognized you," said Tom simply. "However, you need not fear me. I will say nothing, and I hope that you can better yourself in your new situation. That is all that need be said."

"I suppose so," spoke Mr. Skeel gloomily. "This is a bad beginning for a new life, though—a wreck."

"How did you come to get in the boat?" asked Tom.

"I hardly know. There was so much confusion. I came up on deck after the crash, and waited for the order to get into the boat. Some one helped me in. I was the only one in it when the second crash came, and suddenly the boat seemed to fall into the sea. I received a blow on the head, and then I knew no more until I found myself aboard this derelict. I suppose I must thank you for saving my life."

"Not at all. It was Joe who swam out and brought in your boat. I am sorry for you. We will say no more about it. There is a hard enough task ahead of us as it is, to save ourselves."

"Do you think we can?"

"I don't know. It all depends on whether we can get to an island where the natives will be friendly enough to give us aid, or if we are picked up by some vessel. We will hope for the best. We have food and water, but not much of a craft under us. However, since your boat is here, possibly we can make some kind of a structure to shelter us." [103]

The two sailors, with the piece of canvas that had been found in the lifeboat, and with some pieces of lumber which they managed to chop out of the derelict, were constructing a shelter on the after portion of the wreck—on the highest part.

"Oh, Tom!" called Jackie, who sat beneath this improvised awning, "come under my tent!"

"I will," answered our hero with a smile.

"And bring me something to eat," commanded Jackie. "I'm hungry. I want my breakfast, and I want my daddy. When will he come, Tom Fairfield?"

"I don't know. Soon, I guess. Now we're going to play at soldiers, camping out, and we'll have breakfast in our tent. Won't that be fun, Jackie?"

"Indeed it will. Hurry up, Tom!"

Tom smiled sadly, as he collected some food and water from where the stores had been put. And yet, in a way he was glad he had this little boy in charge now, for it kept him from brooding over his own troubles. [104]

"I don't see how I'm ever going to rescue dad and mother when I'm wrecked myself," reflected Tom. "But it's too soon to give up yet," and he closed his teeth grimly, to keep back the tears that wanted to come.

CHAPTER XIII

UNDER SAIL

 [105]

"Now, Jackie, what will you have?" asked Tom briskly, as he sat under the canvas shelter with the little lad. "Will you have ice cream, or bread and milk, or a boiled egg or some cut-up pineapple, or cup custard, or any of those things for your breakfast?"

"Oh, Tom, have you really got 'em?" asked the child eagerly.

"Why, yes, of course. We always have those things on wrecks—make-believe, I mean," added Tom quickly.

"Oh, make believe," and Jackie was a trifle disappointed.

"Surely. Now here is some nice pineapple to start off with," and Tom shredded up some canned tongue, put it between two ship biscuits, and passed it to the boy. Jackie laughed as he took it, and soon was eating hungrily.

"Is it good—that pineapple?" asked Tom.

"Fine."

"Then try some of this nice mooley-cow milk to wash it down with," suggested our hero, as he passed over a tin cup full of water. "The milkman just left it for you." [106]

"Oh, Tom!" cried Jackie, "it's just like a story in a book."

"And I hope you keep on thinking so," murmured Joe as he nodded at Abe while they further made fast the canvas shelter.

Mr. Skeel helped himself to some of the food, as did the two sailors when they had finished with their temporary work, and Tom ate also.

"Now, Jackie," he said, when he had finished, "here is my knife," and he took it from his pocket. "It got all wet when I had to swim last night, but it will cut yet, and I want you to whittle out some wooden soldiers, and we'll play a game pretty soon. You just sit here and whittle, and take care not to cut yourself."

"What are you going to do, Tom?"

"Oh, I'm going to get ready to make a wooden house for us to live in," was the answer.

Tom motioned for the two sailors to follow him to the other end of the wreck. It was lower there, but now that the sea had gone down the waves did not break over it. The stern was really well out of the water.

"What is it?" inquired Joe when he and his shipmate had joined our hero.

"I think we had better take an account of stock," suggested Tom. "See how much food and water we have, how long it will last us, and what we had better do." [107]

"Right you are, captain!" exclaimed Abe admiringly. "I knowed we didn't make no mistake when we elected you."

"First then, the food," suggested Tom. "How long will it last us?"

Joe and Abe collected it—that which they had brought with them on the abandoned life-raft, and that which had been in the boat in which Professor Skeel had been found. That individual was sitting on the stern, gazing moodily off into the distance.

"Well, if we don't stuff ourselves too much, and keep at the drinking water every time we're thirsty," said Abe, "we'll have enough here for a week, at least."

"Good!" exclaimed Tom. "In that time something ought to turn up."

"If we don't turn up ourselves," commented Joe grimly.

"Here! Stow that kind of talk," said his mate quickly. "We've got a captain who'll navigate us anywhere we want to go."

"I only wish I could," spoke Tom. "The next thing to think of is making some better kind of a shelter. Can we do it out of the wood we have at hand?"

"I don't see why not," said Abe. "Joe here used to be a sort of carpenter, and I've worked at the trade too. We have only an axe, but that's better than nothing."

"Then let's make a sort of deck house," suggested Tom. "That canvas awning won't be much good in a storm."

"Right, captain!" exclaimed Abe. "What next?"

"That's all for the present. And I guess that's enough."

They first put the food and water in a safe place, on the highest part of the derelict, lashing it fast with ropes found in the lifeboat, so that it would not wash away. Mr. Skeel wanted to help in the work, but at the first knot he tied Abe exclaimed:

"That's too land-lubbery for me! It would fetch away at the first roll of the derelict. You'd better take the axe and see if you can get out some planks."

It was hard work, but to the credit of the former teacher be it said that he did manage to chop out some of the planks. He worked through a hole in what had been the deck of the lumber vessel, for she had been laden with planks in all her holds.

Soon quite a number of planks were at the service of the sailors, who had finished securing the food. Jackie was still cutting away at the toy soldiers, producing a vast quantity of shavings but not much else.

It was no easy task to make a wooden shelter, with no nails with which to fasten it. But they made pegs of wood, chopped out with the axe and whittled with the sailors' knives and these served to hold the planks together and to the deck of the derelict.

An inverted "V" shaped structure was made, with one end closed by boards, and the other by a square bit of canvas. This had been built over the place where the stores had been lashed fast, and made a sort of deck house.

"Now then," said Tom, "we don't need the canvas awning, and so we might as well take it down. It will do for beds."

"Beds!" cried Joe. "Something better than that."

"What?" asked Tom.

"For a sail! Look, we aren't moving anything to speak of now, only as the currents make us drift. Why not make some sort of a sail, and take advantage of the wind?"

"Of course!" agreed Tom, wondering why he had not thought of that before.

"And we'll need a rudder to steer with," added Abe.

"Certainly," assented his mate. "We can rig up one out of some of the planks."

"Then hoist the sail, by all means!" cried Tom.

It was no easy work to chop out a rude mast from one of the planks, set it upright and bend a sail to it, made from the canvas shelter. But they did it at last. Then a rudder was made from another plank—a crude and unsatisfactory affair but which served in a measure to guide the derelict.

The canvas was hoisted. Its end was made fast. It filled with wind, flapped and then bellied out.

"Hurray!" cried Tom in delight.

"We're under sail!" shouted Abe.

"And now to lay a course," added Joe. "Maybe we can get somewhere with this ship after all."

CHAPTER XIV

DREARY DAYS

Like some castaways on a desert island, when they have discovered a sail in the distance, so it was with Tom and the others when they found that their water-logged craft was really making headway with the rude sail they had hoisted. It seemed to them that now they could really navigate to some place where they would be saved from death at sea.

"She's really slipping along," remarked Joe.

"And with some speed, too," added his mate.

"She answers the helm," observed Tom, who was in temporary charge of the rudder, as he shifted the rough handle and noted a change in the course of the derelict.

"Well, yes, she does, but you can't count on it much, captain," spoke Abe. "That is to say we've got to keep more or less dead before the wind. No fancy tacking, sailing great circles, or anything like that. No frills; it's plain sailing for us."

"And that will do as well as any other I reckon," put in Joe. "If we keep on dead ahead long enough we're bound to fetch up somewhere or other, I lay you that, and you've sailed in these seas as much as I have, Abe Weldon. How about it?"

[112]

"Well, yes, I reckon so," was the answer. "There's islands a-plenty around here, if we can fetch one. And there ought to be more or less of vessels making in and out, for there is lots of trade with these same islands. So if we don't hit an island we may be picked up, if we keep moving."

"Then we'll move, as long as there's wind," decided Tom with a laugh.

"Can I sail the ship?" asked little Jackie, abandoning his play of cutting out soldiers. "I want to steer."

"You may help me," promised Tom. "Come and help push."

The rudder, if such it can be called, had been hung over the stern of the derelict. It was like some huge sweep, or oar on a raft, but it served the purpose. While Tom and his little charge were at this task, Joe and Abe further made secure the wooden deck house they had made. Professor Skeel helped them, but he was a moody assistant, and while the two sailors joked and sang he maintained a glum silence.

"Well, we're in pretty good shape, considering what happened to us," finally announced Joe. "What time does the dinner gong ring, captain? It looks to me like eight bells now."

[113]

"My watch has stopped," said Tom, taking his water-soaked timepiece out of his pocket, "but—"

"The sun is good enough bell for me," laughed Abe. "It's twelve now, if I'm any judge," and he looked up at the ball of yellow fire in the sky.

"Then we'll eat," decided Tom. "Shall I steer while you—"

"No sir!" exclaimed Joe. "Captain's table is first, always. I'll mind the wheel, not that there's much steering to be done, only we might as well have things ship-shape while we're at it, I suppose."

The meal was not an elaborate one, but there was no disposition to find fault—at least on the part of the more mature members of the shipwrecked party. As for Jackie, Tom played the "pretend" game with him once more until the child was satisfied that canned beef was roast chicken.

The water they had to drink was warm, and not very palatable, but they made the best of that, too, thankful that they had any with which to cool their parched throats.

After dinner they made a more complete survey of the derelict, which had not been possible earlier in the morning, as the sea was still running rather high. Now the ocean was like the proverbial millpond, and only occasionally a wave washed slightly over the submerged bow of the craft.

[114]

"The forward companionway is almost out of water," observed Joe, looking thoughtfully at it. "If we could lighten the ship a bit I believe I could get into it."

"What good would it do?" asked Tom.

"Well, I might be able to fetch up something. Maybe some stores—something to eat. Tinned stuff keeps a good while, even under water."

"How long do you think this vessel has been wrecked?" asked Tom.

"No telling. A year maybe, longer perhaps. It's in pretty good shape. I can't see anything to tell her name by or anything like that."

They all looked about them at the mystery of the sea. Whence had the vessel sailed, and to where? What had become of her captain and crew? They were questions that could not be answered.

"She's a mystery, the same as what has become of the rest of the folks of the *Silver Star*," remarked Abe. "I wonder if that lifeboat got away safely? Was the captain saved? Them things always comes to a man after he's been saved."

"Hush!" exclaimed Tom, nodding toward the child.

[115]

"That's right," agreed Abe. "We've got to keep it from him, poor little kid."

But at present Jackie seemed happy enough, and he gave no thought to the possible loss of his father. He was content to be with Tom, and help to steer the derelict, which task he assigned himself with whoever was at the wheel. That is all but with Mr. Skeel, and, somehow or other, Jackie took a dislike to the stern man. Nor did the former Elmwood Hall instructor seem to care. He performed his duties in solemn silence.

All that afternoon they sailed on, eagerly watching for the sign of a sail, or the sight of some island. But nothing rewarded their gaze.

"I guess we must be in a pretty watery part of the ocean," remarked Abe grimly.

"Oh, we'll fetch up somewhere, sooner or later," declared his mate.

"Where am I going to sleep to-night, Tom?" asked Jackie, as it began to get dusk, the sun sinking down behind the waves in a glory of gold that promised a fair day on the morrow.

"With me, of course, Jackie," answered our hero. "We'll sleep under the wooden tent."

"In the dark?"

"Oh, yes, in the dark."

"But I don't like the dark."

"It's better than the light, Jackie dear. The mosquitoes can't find you to bite you in the dark." [116]

"All right. I don't like the dark, and I don't like the miskeeters, either. Will you hold my hand?"

"Yes, Jackie."

"No, we can't make a light, worse luck," murmured Abe. "I've got some matches, that I always carry in a water-tight case, but it might not be altogether safe to make a light on a lumber derelict, even if she is partly water-logged. She might take fire."

"What was your idea of a light?" asked Tom.

"A signal, my lad. Our sail, small as it is, can be pretty well seen in the daytime, but at night we're just nothing, and if a vessel should happen along, and we were in her path—"

"However, we'll trust to luck," went on Abe.

He did not finish, but they all knew what he meant.

"We can't kick against Providence. Now let's have grub and turn in. Captain, will you name the watches?"

"Name the watches?" asked Tom.

"Yes, some one has to be on duty all night, for we might sight a light and a hail would bring help."

"Oh, I see. Well, I think you or Joe had better do that, knowing more about it."

"Very well, then I'll take from eight to eleven, Joe can take from eleven to two, and Mr. Skeel from two to five. By that time it'll be light." [117]

"But where do I come in?" asked Tom.

"You'll stay with him," whispered Abe, winking his eye, and nodding at little Jackie. Then Tom understood.

The night passed without incident, the child sleeping peacefully with Tom. Some pieces of the canvas served as a bed, and little was needed in the way of covering, for it was quite warm, and their clothing had dried out.

"No vessels sighted?" asked Tom in the morning, as they prepared for the simple breakfast.

"Not a one," answered Mr. Skeel shortly. "I don't believe we'll ever be rescued."

"Oh, stow that kind of talk," commanded Abe, half roughly. "Of course we will. Why, our voyage has only just begun."

Dreary days followed. The food and water was divided with scrupulous care, for there was no telling how long the scanty store of each would have to last. They went on three-quarter rations—that is, all but Jackie, who had his full share, though in the matter of water he did not use as much as any of the others.

The hours and days passed, and their straining eyes saw no sign of a sail, and no welcome land loomed into view. Their progress was slow—slower than they had any idea of, for the sail was small and the derelict low in the water, and heavy. Dreary and more dreary became the time. [118]

"I'll be jib-boomed if I don't think some one has moved the blessed islands!" exclaimed Abe, one day.

"It does look so," admitted his mate. "I thought sure we would sight one before this. If we could only make a bigger sail we could move faster."

"We can't, unless we take our clothing, and we need that to protect us from the sun," declared Abe. "Not being blooming cannibals that can stand any great amount of heat on our own skins."

"Then what we need is a smaller boat," decided Joe.

"What's that, matie?" asked Abe.

"I said we needed a smaller boat, and then this sail would do."

For a moment Abe stared at his companion, and then, bringing his hand down on his thigh with a report like a pistol, he cried:

"That's it! You've struck it! A smaller boat is what we need, and we're going to have it! We'll set sail in that and make three times the speed we can in this bulk. Hurray for a smaller boat!"

Joe looked at him anxiously for a moment, and then said gently: [119]

"Come in out of the sun, matie. Take a drink of water, do, and lie down. I've been touched that way myself once or twice. Just take it easy and you'll get over it."

MAKING A BOAT

"Say, what's the matter with you?" burst out Abe. "Do you think I'm crazy, Joe?"

"There, there now. It's all right. You'll be over it in a little while. Just lie down," begged his mate.

"He sure does," murmured Abe smiling. "He sure thinks I'm touched in the head. Ho! Ho! That's a good one. Joe thinks I'm crazy!" and he laughed heartily.

Joe looked at Tom, and shook his head sadly. Even Tom himself began to believe that perhaps the hardships of their position, and the horror of what might come, had turned the sailor's brain. But his laugh seemed natural.

"I'm all right!" insisted Abe, seeing that they were looking at him curiously.

"Then what do you mean by that talk about a smaller boat, and leaving the derelict?" demanded Joe half angrily.

"I meant just what I said."

"And I say anybody's crazy that talks like that. Where are we going to get a smaller boat?"

[121]

"It's right here with us now," declared Abe. "There she is," and he pointed to the half smashed lifeboat. "We can cut that in two, use the stern and bow that ain't a bit damaged, fasten 'em together in the middle, with the airtight compartments in each end, and we'll have as fine a small boat as we could wish.

"We can hoist the sail on it and then we can make some speed, instead of just drifting along. I wonder I didn't think of it before, but it only sort of just came to me now, and that's why I got excited I guess."

"I sure thought you were raving," declared Joe. "It didn't seem natural."

"And you thought I was touched by the sun; eh, mate?"

"I sure did."

"Ho! Ho! That's a good joke! A good one! It'll do to tell the boys when we see 'em again."

"If we ever do," put in Joe half gloomily.

"Of course we will!" insisted Abe. "Wait until I get the boat made and you'll see."

"But do you think you can do it?" asked Tom. "Won't it leak?"

"Not when I get through with it," declared Abe. "I can calk the seams with some of our clothes, and part of the sail cloth. You will see."

[122]

"But with only an axe, I don't see how you're going to cut the boat in two, and fasten the two ends together," insisted Tom.

"I've done harder jobs than that, matie," declared Abe. "Wait until I get to work."

He then explained his plan. The lifeboat was badly damaged amidships, but both the bow and stern, where the airtight compartments were located, were in good shape. By cutting the boat in twain, severing the damaged portions and bringing the sections together again, lapping them and making them fast with the copper nails drawn from the useless parts, Abe hoped to make a serviceable craft, though crude.

"It may leak some," he admitted, "but I'll stuff the cracks up with ravelings from the sail cloth, and our clothes that we need least. Between us we can spare enough. Then I'll make a mast for the sail, and we can leave this hulk and get somewhere. And Joe thought I was touched by the sun! Ho! Ho! A good joke! A good one!"

"All right," assented Joe. "If you make that boat you'll be a good one. I'll help, of course, but I don't believe it can be done."

"I'll show you!" exclaimed Abe defiantly.

Forthwith they began to work, even Mr. Skeel doing his share. He had settled into a gloomy silence, scarcely speaking unless spoken to, and he seemed to pay little attention to those about him. Clearly the shipwreck, and the unexpected meeting with the lad who had exposed his villainy at Elmwood Hall, had dispirited him. Yet at times he showed a flash of his old manners.

[123]

It was harder work than even Abe had imagined, to cut the boat in two, and get out the damaged part. Especially with only an axe to use. Yet the old sailor handled the implement with skill, and showed that he knew his business.

Tom looked after the meals, though he had not much to do, for the menu was not very varied. He had to keep Jackie amused, too, and invented such little games as fishing over the broken rail of the ship with a string for a line, and no hook, and making fairy castles out of the splinters that Abe knocked off the lifeboat.

Several days passed, and though they looked almost every other minute for a sail or a sight of land they saw nothing. They were borne on by the currents and the light winds that at times scarcely filled their clumsy sail.

The watches were kept as before, Tom not being allowed to share in them. But the darkness of the night was not relieved by any welcome light. The days seemed to become more dreary as they

passed, and only for the work of making the boat they might not have stood the time so well. But the work was a blessing to them.

[124]

Tom looked anxiously at the store of food, and as he saw it diminishing, and no help of rescue at hand he spoke to the two sailors about it.

"Well, we'll have to reduce rations, that's all, matie," said Joe, and he spoke cheerfully.

"Of course," assented Abe. "I'll have the boat done in a few more days, and then we can set sail. Reduce rations! If I only had a saw I could work faster, but I'll do the best I can. Reduce rations, that's all. I'm getting too fat as it is."

He laughed at his joke, and a grim joke it was, for his belt had been taken in several holes, and could stand more. They were all becoming thin.

When the next meal, after the reduced ration decision had been arrived at, was served, Mr. Skeel looked at the portion handed him on the top of a beef tin.

"Is that all I get?" he demanded roughly. "That isn't enough for a man."

"It's all that can safely be given," spoke Tom, quietly.

"Well I want more. I demand my fair share."

"That's your fair share, mate," said Joe grimly. "It's as much as any of us have. We're on short rations, don't you understand?"

"Huh! That may be so, but I notice that you have charge of the food," and he sneered at Tom.

[125]

"Because we voted him to do so," put in Abe. "And what the majority says goes!"

"The boy has more than I have!" snarled the former professor, and he glanced at Jackie who, under a little tent he had made from a spare piece of the sail, was eating his lunch at a "play party," as he called it.

"That'll do you!" snapped Joe, shaking a menacing finger at Mr. Skeel. "You eat what you've got, and be thankful on your bended knees that you've got that much. And if I hear any more talk that the boy has more than you, why I'll—"

"Easy matie," cautioned Abe. "Easy."

Tom looked distressed, but said nothing. When the water was passed, that too had dwindled in amount. Mr. Skeel looked at his share, and seemed about to make a protest, but a glance from Joe stopped him.

The weather had been fine for several days; too fine to last, Abe declared as he worked away at the boat.

"We're in for another storm, I'm thinking," he said to Joe.

"Well, keep still about it," suggested his companion. "No use making Tom and the kid worry. I guess we can weather it."

"The waves'll sweep over this old hulk, once they get running high," went on Abe. "And that deck house won't stand much. The boat, too, is likely to be washed away. If I only had a saw I could make twice the speed. But I don't reckon I could get one."

[126]

"Leastways not unless there's one aboard, down in the carpenter's quarters," said Joe, "and I don't see how it's to be come at. We'll have to do the best we can."

"I reckon so. Catch hold of that plank now, and hold it while I chop it off."

They resumed work, pausing now and then to look at the sky. It clouded up in the afternoon, and there came a heavy rain storm, unaccompanied by much wind, for which last fact they were thankful.

"This is just what we need!" cried Abe, as he saw the big drops come down. "Spread out the sail cloth, mates, and catch all the water we can. We'll need it."

The sail was hastily taken down, and with another piece of the canvas was spread out in the form of a huge bowl. The rain filled it, and, making a sort of channel at one end, the precious water was run into the nearly empty kegs. Thus their supply was replenished, and with lighter hearts they resumed their task, the two sailors and Mr. Skeel working at the boat, while Tom steered.

It was about a week since they had taken refuge on the derelict, and the signs of an approaching change in the weather were increasing. In all that time they had not seen a sail, and what was more remarkable, they had not sighted an island, though they were in that part of the Pacific where many are located.

[127]

"Either we are passing in and out among them, just far enough away so as to miss 'em, or we can't pick 'em out on account of the mist," explained Joe. "I was sure we'd sight one before this."

"Same here," murmured Abe. "It's middling queer, though. But if our grub holds out we'll soon be afloat in a better craft."

"It doesn't look like it," declared Joe. "You've got a lot of work on it yet."

"I know I have, and if only there was a saw I'd make double speed."

Joe did not answer but walked forward to where the hatchway, opening down into the lower regions of the ship, showed. It was more out of water than at any previous time, and it could be

seen that there was a passage leading into the crew's quarters. Joe stood contemplating this, and then slowly began taking off his shoes, and some of his garments.

"Hi! matie, what are you up to?" hailed Abe, seeing his actions. "Going for a swim? If you are you'd better look out for sharks. I see some big fins in the offing this morning."

"No, I'm not going to swim—I'm going to have a dive."

"A dive?"

"Yes. I'm going down and see if I can't fetch up a saw, or something so you can finish that boat quicker."

Abe dropped the axe and hurried toward his companion.

"Say, don't you do it," he gasped. "You might not be able to get up again, and we can't afford to lose you."

"No danger! If I get *into* a place, Abe, I can get *out* again. I'm going to dive and get you a saw."

"Don't do it!" urged the other. "I can make out some how."

"Here goes!" cried Joe, and with that he walked down the half-submerged companion steps and dived into the water-filled forecabin quarters.

[128]

CHAPTER XVI

WIND AND WAVE TOSSED

[129]

Abe stood looking anxiously down into the dark opening where his mate had disappeared. Tom, understanding that something unusual was taking place, also hurried up to look on, and Mr. Skeel and Jackie followed.

"Is—is it safe?" asked our hero, for it was as if some one had gone down a well.

"Well—er—hardly—that is to say, of course it is!" exclaimed Abe, quickly changing his mind, as he saw the little boy regarding him curiously. "Joe'll come up in a minute with just the very thing we need—maybe."

Tom caught the alarmed note in the sailor's voice.

"Why did you let him do it?" he asked in a whisper.

"There was no stopping him," answered Abe. "He would do it. He knew that I needed a saw, but, pshaw! I'd rather he hadn't done it. I could have made out, only the storm that—"

Then he stopped at the look of alarm on Tom's face.

"What storm?" demanded the lad.

"Oh, Joe had a notion that a storm was coming up, and he wanted us to get the boat done before then, so we'd have a chance to scud before the wind. But, bless my jib-boom! there ain't going to be no storm, in my estimation," and Abe cast a hasty glance about the heavens, now cloud-encumbered. "No storm at all—leastways not soon," he added.

Amid a strained silence they all watched the opening into the ship, waiting for the reappearance of Joe. A minute went by, and he did not come up. A minute and a half,—two minutes!

"He can't stay under much longer," murmured Abe.

"No man can hold his breath that long under water," spoke Mr. Skeel, "at least not an ordinary man. Maybe something has—"

He hesitated, Abe began taking off his shoes, ready for a rescue.

"Hadn't we better tie a rope to you?" suggested Tom, understanding the danger.

"I—I'll—" began Abe, and then there was a commotion in the water, and Joe shot up. He did not seem to be in distress. In one hand he held up a carpenter's hammer.

"We were just getting worried about you," said Tom, with a breath of relief.

"How'd you manage to stay down so long?" asked Abe.

"I—I found air down there," explained Joe, pantingly. "The cabin isn't quite full of water, and I stuck my nose up close to the ceiling and got a breath in an air space."

"Did you locate a saw?" asked Abe.

"Not yet. But I will. I found the carpenter's quarters all right. I've got to go by feeling, but I'll get a saw sooner or later. Here's a hammer, anyhow."

He tossed it to Abe and then, after a rest, he went down again. This time he remained under longer than before and coming up brought an adze, which would come in useful. It was on his third trial that he located a saw, quite rusted, it is true, but nevertheless a saw.

"Hurray!" cried Tom.

[130]

[131]

"Now I can do something!" declared Abe. "I can work quicker now."

"There are some more tools down there," said Joe. "I'm going to bring some up."

Which he did, after a number of trials, and some other things that would prove useful, including several coils of strong rope. But he could find no food, and, probably had he come upon any it would have been spoiled.

"Never mind," said Abe, when his partner had commented on this failure. "We'll make out somehow. And we'll soon be afloat in a better craft. Can you spare me a bit of that canned beef fat, Tom, so I can grease up this saw?"

Tom passed him a chunk that was hardly edible, but Mr. Skeel seemed to eye it greedily. He was a large man, and had a big appetite that was far from being satisfied on the meager rations that were available. [132]

The saw was soon in shape to use, and then Abe and Joe could work to better advantage. That night the boat sections were joined together, and the next day would see the practical completion of the craft.

"It'll have to be well calked," said Abe, as he looked critically at his handiwork in the gathering dusk. "Them seams ain't just what I'd like 'em to be, though it was the best I could do. But if I stuff 'em well with rags and such-like I guess it'll answer. We'll get at that the first thing in the morning."

"And we'll lash the boat well down to-night," spoke Joe in a low voice to his companion.

"Yes, I shouldn't wonder but what we were in for a blow," was the rejoinder. "But don't say anything to Tom."

"You don't need to. I begin to suspect something," exclaimed our hero, with a grim smile, as he came up behind the two. "I'm not afraid to know the worst," he went on. "In fact I want to know it. I'll be better prepared then. Do you think we're in for a blow?"

"I come pretty near *knowing* it, matie," said Joe in a low voice. "We weren't to tell you, but we're in the storm region now, and I don't need one of them barometers to tell me we're going to have plenty of wind and water soon. But don't worry. The old derelict has gone through many a one, and she'll stand another blow or two I guess. We'll make everything as snug as we can. You just look after the kid and yourself." [133]

"Poor little chap," murmured Abe. "I wonder where his father is?"

"Lost, I reckon, like most of the other poor souls that were on the *Silver Star*," spoke Joe, gloomily.

"Oh, you get out!" cried his mate. "You'd have us all in Davy Jones's locker if you had your way. Maybe the boy's dad is saved, and maybe all the rest were picked up. And we'll be all right soon, you see if we're not."

The cheerfulness of the old sailor was infectious, and Tom felt better after hearing his cheery talk. True, our hero had his moments of sadness, particularly when he thought of his missing parents. And often he found himself wondering what might be their fate, and where they were. At night, as he stretched out beside little Jackie, under the rude shelter, he spent many hours of wakefulness. But he tried not to show his feelings to the others.

There was a moaning and sighing to the wind as darkness came on, and the sailors, with Tom and Mr. Skeel to aid them, used the ropes to lash fast the reconstructed boat and the wooden shelter. The rude sail filled out and urged the derelict on at a faster pace. [134]

"If this kept up we'd get somewhere," observed Tom, as he relieved Abe at the helm.

"Yes, but we'll make twice the speed in our boat," said the old sailor proudly.

The wreck was rising and falling on the swell, the big oily waves seeming to curl after her as though in time they would reach up and pull her down into their depths. There were no white-caps yet—they would come later.

"We are going to have a storm, aren't we; a violent storm soon?" demanded Mr. Skeel, when it was almost dark, and the wind was sighing more mournfully than before.

"I reckon so," answered Abe calmly.

"Then can't we do something more to make ourselves secure?"

"Nary a thing more," spoke the old sailor. "We've done all we can."

The face of the former professor was white, and he paced up and down that portion of the deck less exposed to the waves. He was a coward and he showed it.

The derelict dipped her half-buried bow farther under a wave. It broke, running well up on the deck, and breaking against the lashed lifeboat, sent a shower of spray aft. [135]

"Oh, it's raining! It's raining!" cried Jackie. "If we only had umbrellas now, Tom."

"We'll need more than umbrellas before morning, I'm thinking," murmured Joe.

All that could be done had been, and when the last remnant of daylight faded, earlier than usual because of the clouds, Tom took his little charge inside the shelter. They stretched out on the canvas bed, and Tom joined silently with the child, who said aloud his simple prayers, asking that they might all be looked after by the All-seeing Providence.

The derelict forged ahead through the waves, blown by the ever increasing wind. She rose sluggishly on the swell—all too sluggishly—for she was not buoyant enough to escape the breaking swells. But still, aft, it was comparatively dry.

“It’s going to be a bad night—a bad night,” murmured Joe, who had the first trick at the helm.

Tom managed to get some sleep, holding Jackie’s hand, but about midnight he was awakened by being fairly rolled out of the shelter.

“What—what’s the matter?” he cried.

“It’s the storm!” cried Abe, springing up. “It’s broke for fair, I guess!”

Tom sprang to his feet and looked out. He could dimly see the big waves all around them, and he felt the derelict pitching and tossing in a swirl of water. It was at the mercy of the storm. [136]

Then came a fiercer burst of the elements, a dash of rain, and a tearing howl of the wind. The derelict heeled over, while a flood of water washed over the bow and came curling aft.

“Look out!” yelled Abe, as he saw Tom roll forward, and he grabbed our hero in time to save him from once more pitching overboard.

CHAPTER XVII

A HAND IN THE NIGHT

[137]

“Thanks, Abe,” gasped Tom, when he could speak, for the fright and fear of again being flung into the ocean had taken his breath.

“That’s nothing, lad,” came the calm answer. “Are you all right?”

“Yes. But this is a terrible storm, isn’t it?”

“It might be worse. It was worse when the *Silver Star* foundered. We’ll weather it, I hope.”

A cry came from the interior of the shelter. It was Jackie.

“Tom! Tom! Where are you?” he called.

“Coming!” answered Tom, and he staggered into the place where his little charge was lying.

Tom, groping about in the dark, found Jackie. The little fellow had rolled from the hollow in the pile of sail cloth that made his bed.

“All right, Jackie, it’s all right,” spoke Tom soothingly. “We’re riding on top of the waves like a merry-go-round. Go to sleep now.”

And, so tired was the little fellow, and such was his confidence in Tom, that he did slumber again.

The storm grew worse, and at times the spray from the big waves flew over the top of the wooden shelter, and dripped down inside. The wind blew aside the canvas that closed the front and threatened to lift, bodily, the structure itself. [138]

But the sailors had done their work well. The rope lashings held, though they were strained to their limit. The lifeboat, moored as it was to the deck, tried in vain to break loose to join with the waves in their revelry of the storm. Joe and Abe looked to it, testing every knot, however, and their seamanship told. For the present they could defy the storm.

Mr. Skeel fairly whimpered when he saw the big seas all about them, but no one paid any attention to him and he had to make out as best he could. He tried to shirk his trick at the helm, but Abe, taking hold of his arm, marched him to the rude steering apparatus, and bade him hold to it for his life.

“But I—I may be washed overboard,” objected the former professor.

“You’re in less danger here than any of us,” declared the sailor. “You stay here until your time is up,” and Mr. Skeel dared not disobey. His spirit had been broken when Tom, and his chums of Elmwood Hall, had successfully gone on their strike.

How they got through that night the castaways hardly knew afterward. Several times it seemed as if the wind would carry away either the structure they had built on deck, or the lifeboat that had been reconstructed with such labor. But the two sailors, with Tom to help them, made lashing after lashing, as one or another tore away and so they held to that which they needed most. [139]

Little Jackie proved himself a hero, for when Tom had explained that he must stay alone part of the time, the little fellow obeyed, though he had hard work to choke back the sobs when his companion was out on deck, doing what he could to keep the boat from being carried away.

When the storm had been raging for an hour or more there was a sudden tilt to the derelict, and a grinding crashing sound somewhere in her depths.

“What’s that?” cried Tom in alarm.

“Her cargo is shifting!” shouted Abe, above the roar of the storm. “I hope it doesn’t shift too

much.”

Almost immediately afterward there seemed to be less spray coming aft.

“She’s risen by the head!” cried Joe, who managed to make an observation at great risk to himself. “The lumber below decks has shifted aft and her bow is higher out of water. That makes it good for us. We’ll be drier now.”

And this was so. With the bow higher out of the water the craft presented a better front to the breaking seas, and what at first seemed a calamity turned out to be a great blessing. [140]

The remainder of the night, though the storm did not abate, was not such a source of worry to the refugees. True, the wind was as violent, and it even shifted their shelter from where it was lashed on deck, but the waves did not bring so much discomfort, for the higher bow sent them hissing away on either side.

Somehow morning broke, and in the gray dawn they looked about on a storm-tossed waste of waters. Now they would be down in a hollow of the waves, and again high on some crest, at which latter time they looked anxiously for a sail. But they saw none.

It was just a little after day had broken that the improvised mast gave way with a snap, and would have gone overboard with their precious sail, had not Abe and Joe made a hasty grab, saving it.

“We need that in our boat—if it ever gets calm enough to calk it,” declared Abe.

“What about breakfast?” asked Tom a little later. “I guess we can all eat.”

“Right you are, my hearty!” cried Joe. Even the terrible storm could not dampen the spirits of the sailors. Little Jackie was happier too, now that daylight had come, and only Mr. Skeel seemed moody and depressed. He looked at his companions without speaking.

The storm seemed to have spent its fury in the night, for, as the day grew, the wind lessened and the waves went down. The mast was mended and set up again, but a reefed sail had to be used, for the gale was too strong to risk another accident with the frail gear they had. [141]

“It may blow us to some island, and then we won’t have to use the boat,” said Joe.

“Oh, don’t talk that way,” begged Abe.

“Why not? Don’t you want to be rescued?”

“Yes, but I’d like a chance to use the boat I’ve made,” was the rejoinder. “Come on, now, we’ll try and calk it.”

They started this work after a meager breakfast, during which Mr. Skeel looked hungrily at the rations passed around. Even less was given than before, for the provisions were getting alarmingly low, though there was still plenty of water, for which they were thankful.

It was no easy task to calk the boat, with such tools and material as Abe and Joe had, but it was a credit to their seamanship that they made a good job of it. They tested it by pouring water into the craft as it was lashed to the deck.

“She doesn’t leak much!” exclaimed Abe in delight as he watched a few drops trickle out. “When she swells up she’ll be all right, and we can bail if we have to. Now for a sail.”

He and his companion rigged up a mast, and the sail was taken down from the derelict and fitted to it. This took another day, during which the storm’s traces vanished, and the weather became once more calm. [142]

“We’ll launch her to-morrow,” decided Abe that night. “I guess she’s all right.”

“Will it be hard to put her into the sea?” asked Tom.

“Easy enough, the way the derelict is listed now,” was the answer. “All we’ll have to do will be to get into her, cut the retaining rope, and let her slide. Then we’ll be off.”

Tom heard some one behind him as the sailor told him this, and he turned to see Mr. Skeel regarding him curiously. There was a strange look on the former professor’s face.

They went to rest that night filled with thoughts of the prospects before them on the morrow. It seemed, after all, as if they might be saved, for both Joe and Abe declared that they must be near some island, and a day’s sail would bring them to it, if they could sail fast enough.

Tom stretched out beside little Jackie that night with a thankful heart.

“I’ll find dad and mother yet!” he whispered to himself.

Mr. Skeel was slumbering on the other side of the shelter, at least if heavy breathing went for anything he was. Abe and Joe were out on deck, putting the spare provisions and water into the lifeboat, for they had decided to leave as soon as possible in the morning. [143]

Tom fell into a doze. How long he slept he hardly knew, but he was suddenly awakened by feeling a hand cautiously moving over his body. It was on his chest first, and then it went lower until the fingers touched the money belt he had worn since the loss of the *Silver Star*.

“Who’s that? Is that you, Jackie?” asked Tom, and his hand went quickly over to the head of his little charge. Jackie was sleeping quietly.

“Who was that?” asked Tom.

There was no answer. It was too dark to see, and he could strike no light. Someone moved

across the floor of the shelter.

"Abe! Joe!" called Tom cautiously. Then he added: "Mr. Skeel!"

A snore answered him from the former professor's sleeping place. Tom stole cautiously to the opening of the shelter. He could hear the two sailors talking together at the helm.

CHAPTER XVIII

TREACHERY

[144]

For a moment Tom did not know what to do, or what to think. He was convinced that an attempt had been made to rob him in the darkness of the night, and he wanted to know who was responsible. Yet he did not want to accuse or even think of any one as guilty, unless he had good proof.

"It couldn't have been Abe or Joe," he reasoned. "I could have heard them if they had left the shelter after I called out. It must have been Mr. Skeel. And yet——"

He paused, and listened once more to the steady breathing of the man who had once been, and who doubtless still was, his enemy.

"Could it have been he?" thought Tom. "It was certainly some one here in the shelter with me, and there aren't many to pick from."

He reflected that it might have been possible for little Jackie, moving in his sleep, to have tossed toward him, and gotten his hand near the money belt. And yet the hand had felt heavier than that of the child.

"Well," mused Tom, "it won't do to make a mistake. I've got to keep quiet and see what turns up. Only I know one thing—I'm not going to sleep much the rest of the night."

[145]

He paused in the doorway, and was about to turn back to lie down beside Jackie, when Abe, who was talking with Joe near the helm, spied our hero.

"Hello, Tom," the sailor called in a low voice. "Anything the matter the reason you're up? Is Jackie sick?"

"No, he's all right," replied Tom in a low voice, but loud enough so that Professor Skeel, if he was awake, could hear it; "Jackie is all right. I thought one of you came in the shelter to see me."

"One of us!" exclaimed Abe.

"Yes," answered Tom.

"We weren't there," went on Abe. "We've been standing here for the last half hour, talking about what we might do to-morrow—after we get the boat launched. We weren't near you."

"Guess you must have dreamed it, Tom," suggested Joe.

"Perhaps," admitted Tom, and yet he knew that it was no dream. "I'll go back to bed," he called.

The derelict drifted on, and Tom was not again disturbed that night. Jackie slept well, and so too did Professor Skeel—to judge by his snores.

[146]

"Well, now for a launching!" exclaimed Joe as the dawning light filtered through the early morning clouds. "We'll see what luck we have."

There was not much to do in the way of preparation, for the two sailors had very nearly finished the work on the previous day. The food and water—all that could be spared from the needs of the few remaining meals they expected to take aboard the hulk—had been put into the reconstructed lifeboat. An early and small breakfast was served, and then the work of sliding the craft off the derelict was undertaken.

As the sailor had said, this was not difficult. The deck of the lumber ship, on which the lifeboat rested, had such a slope that all that was necessary to do was to cut loose a retaining rope, and the craft would slide down on improvised rollers that had been made. This could be done when they were all aboard. It was like the launching of a small ship.

"But I think I'll give her a trial first," decided Abe, when all was in readiness for the launching. "I don't want her to turn turtle, or anything like that, when we're all aboard. Though she can't sink, with the watertight compartments."

"What's your game?" asked Joe.

"Why, I think I'll take a trip in her myself just around the hulk, so to speak, and see how she behaves. She may need trimming, or lightening, or, maybe we haven't got the sail just right. I'll make a trial in her."

[147]

The others decided that this might be wise, and accordingly, when Abe had taken his place in the craft, the rope was slacked off, and the lifeboat slid into the sea.

"Hurray!" cried Tom, as the craft took the waves. "She's a success all right."

"Not so fast! Hold on a bit!" cried Abe. "She's leaking like a sieve in one place!"

"Leaking!" cried his shipmate.

"Yes. One place where I must have forgotten to do the calking good enough. Haul me back, and we'll get her out of water again, and patch her up."

Under Abe's directions Tom, Joe and Professor Skeel pulled on the rope that was still fastened to the craft and she was worked back on the deck of the derelict. Then Abe, making a careful examination, began the work of calking up the cracks where the water had poured in.

The work took him longer than he had supposed it would, for he found out that he had to change his ideas when it came to making a reconstructed boat water-tight. He was most of the day at the task, and when he had finished he thought of something else.

"We need oars," he said. "We can't always depend on the wind, and if we get becalmed out on the ocean, with no shelter, such as we have here, we'll be in a bad way if we can't make some headway. So I will just make a pair of sweeps." [148]

Which he did out of some of the lighter planks that formed part of the cargo of the derelict. Thole pins were cut out to serve as oarlocks, for there were none on the made-over boat, and thus equipped the lifeboat could be rowed, though not very fast.

"Now I reckon she's likely to be of more use," declared Abe, when he had finished his task.

"But it's too late to start to-day," declared Joe.

"Yes, we'll wait until to-morrow," was the other's decision. The boat was left in the same position it had been in before, and they settled down to pass another night on the derelict, waiting anxiously for the morning.

It was just getting dusk, and they were thinking of turning in, when Jackie, who had crawled upon the roof of the wooden shelter, called out:

"Oh, Tom! Look! See the smoke! Somebody must be starting a fire to cook supper!"

He pointed almost dead ahead, and, at the sight of a line of smoke on the horizon Joe cried:

"It's a ship! A steamer! The first one we've seen! Oh, if we could only make her hear or see us!" [149]

It was utterly out of the question to make themselves heard by shouting, but Tom, who was at the helm, swung it around until the derelict was headed as nearly as possible toward the telltale vapor.

"Wave something!" cried Abe. "Get up on the top of the shelter and wave something! They may have a man stationed up in the crow's-nest on the lookout, and he might see us. Wave something!"

Mr. Skeel caught up a piece of the sailcloth, and, scrambling to the peak of the shelter waved the signal frantically. He kept this up for an hour, in which time the smoke gradually got below the horizon, showing that the steamer was moving away from the shipwrecked ones.

"No use," said Tom sadly. "We've got to depend on ourselves."

"And maybe it's better so," agreed Abe. "That steamer might be going to some place we wouldn't want to touch at all."

"Any place would be acceptable," spoke Mr. Skeel, bitterly. "Oh! when will we be rescued? When will I ever get a good meal again?"

"No telling," answered Abe grimly. "But if we have luck we ought to fetch some place by to-morrow. That steamer shows that we're near the lines of travel, and we'll hit on an island soon." [150]

Disappointed, but not discouraged over their failure to attract attention, the refugees prepared to spend another night aboard the derelict. Little Jackie was quite fussy, calling for his father several times, and it was all Tom could do to pacify him and keep him interested in "make-believe" plays.

Tom was a bit nervous about going to sleep, for he feared another attempt might be made to rob him. He had narrowly watched the two sailors and Mr. Skeel during the day, and he had decided that neither Abe nor Joe was guilty of the attempt to get the money belt.

"It must have been Skeel," decided Tom, "though what he was going to do with it after he got it is more than I can say. He couldn't have gone far with it, and I'd have missed it as soon as I awakened."

He took a position this time so that any one coming toward him in the night would have to step or crawl over Jackie first, and thus, in a measure, the small boy would be an alarm clock.

"But I don't believe anyone will dare try it again to-night," mused Tom. He had narrowly watched his companions during the day, and he mentally decided that Mr. Skeel had a guilty air, though, for that matter, he seldom looked Tom, or anyone else squarely in the face. [151]

Again it was near midnight when Tom awakened. And this time it was not because of anyone trying to rob him. He heard some one moving about on deck, and, cautiously peering out of the opening of the shelter, he saw a sight that startled him.

It was just light enough, because of the stars, to make out objects, and Tom beheld the form of Mr. Skeel at the lifeboat.

The former professor was fumbling with the retaining ropes, as if he intended to let the craft

slide into the water. But Tom noticed that the man was in such a position that he could leap aboard the lifeboat as it slid away from the derelict.

"He's trying to escape!" thought Tom. "He's going to take our boat and leave us behind on the wreck. There's treachery here! He's trying to get away while we're asleep—during his trick at the helm. Well here's where I spoil his plans!"

CHAPTER XIX

OFF IN THE BOAT

[152]

Determined to foil the scheme of the unprincipled man, Tom stole softly forward, himself unobserved. He thought over several plans in his mind, and decided that he must catch Mr. Skeel red-handed.

"I'll wait until he actually begins to move the boat," murmured our hero, "and then I'll call a halt. Besides I want to be sure that this is actually his game. If I jump out too soon he may say that he was only tightening the ropes, or that the lifeboat started to slip, and that he stopped it. He's foxy, and I must be the same."

So Tom watched, and the more he saw of the former professor's actions the more he became convinced that treachery was intended.

"He tried to rob me, and get the money in my belt," thought Tom, "and he was intending to escape then. That's why he wanted the funds. Now he's going without them—that is if I let him—which I won't."

The man was working swiftly and silently, pausing now and then to look over toward the shelter where he supposed all his companions were asleep. He had deserted the helm to carry out his treacherous design. Not that leaving the rude steering apparatus meant much, for there was very little wind just then, and the derelict was merely drifting.

[153]

Tom had crouched down so that he could not be seen, the lifeboat on the sloping deck of the wreck being between him and the professor. The latter was working away at the ropes. One after another he cast off. There was a slight movement to the lifeboat. It seemed about to slip into the sea.

"It's time to act!" thought Tom.

He straightened up, took a step forward and fairly confronted the man, standing up to face him across the lifeboat.

"That'll do, Mr. Skeel," said Tom quietly. "I wouldn't take that boat if I were you."

There was a gasp of surprise from the man—the same sort of a gasp as when Tom had shown him his forged note at Elmwood Hall.

"Wha—what's that?" stammered Mr. Skeel.

"I said, leave the boat alone!" said Tom sharply.

"I—I was just fixing it!" went on the man.

"Yes, fixing it to get away in it," answered our hero bitterly. "I saw you."

"It was—was slipping, and I—I—" spoke Mr. Skeel hesitatingly.

[154]

"That's enough!" cried Tom sternly. "I saw you loosen several of the holding ropes. You wouldn't have done that if you wanted to make the boat more secure. I believe you intended to desert us. And I believe you tried to take my money belt away from me the other night."

"Don't you dare say such things to me!" stormed the former Latin instructor, as though Tom were in his classroom. But the flash of the old-time spirit was only momentary.

"I dare say them because they're true," said Tom quietly. "Get away from that boat! Don't you dare touch another rope."

"Oh, I—I don't know what I'm doing!" exclaimed the unhappy man. "I—I believe I'm going out of my mind. Don't—don't tell on me, Tom."

"I must," spoke the lad gently, and with a feeling of pity rather than anger. "Our lives depend on that boat, and if you are not to be trusted Abe and Joe must know it. I shall have to tell them. They can't depend on you any more, and they must arrange the watch differently."

"Oh, Tom, don't tell!" Mr. Skeel was fairly whining now, and his underlying cowardice showed.

"Abe! Joe!" called Tom sharply.

"Aye, aye! What is it?" asked Abe, appearing at the doorway of the shelter.

[155]

"Have you sighted land—a sail?" asked Joe.

Then both sailors saw the dangling ropes that held the boat from slipping—they saw Tom standing in a menacing attitude, and Mr. Skeel shrinking away.

"The boat—it's almost overboard!" cried Joe.

"Did some accident happen, Tom?" asked Abe.

"No—not an accident. I'm sorry to have to say it, but he—this man—was about to cut it loose, and, I think, sail off in it," replied our hero.

For a moment there was silence, and then Abe exclaimed with a deep breath:

"The scoundrel!"

"By Davy Jones!" cried Joe. "We ought to throw him overboard! Get forward!" he cried, holding back his anger as best he could. "You'll berth forward after this, and we'll not trust you any more. Get forward!"

Without a word Mr. Skeel obeyed, and then Joe and Abe, with the help of Tom, made the boat secure again. Little Jackie had not awakened.

"Here's a piece of sail cloth, it's more than you deserve," growled Joe, as he tossed it to Mr. Skeel. "You won't freeze, and you can sleep on that for the rest of the night. In the morning we'll have a talk before we sail in the boat. We'll decide then what's best to be done." [156]

"Oh, don't leave me behind! Don't sail without me and leave me on this derelict!" begged Mr. Skeel.

"It would serve you right if we did," declared Joe.

"And I don't much fancy voyaging in a small boat with a man like him," came from Abe.

"But we can hardly leave him behind," said Tom in a low voice.

"No, I s'pose not," agreed Abe. "Well, we'll decide in the morning. Now, Joe, you and I'll divide the rest of the night into two watches."

"Let me take my share!" begged Tom. "I'm not a bit sleepy. In fact I don't believe I can go to sleep again."

"Well, lie down and rest then," proposed Joe. "Abe and I will stand watch and watch. It will soon be daylight. Besides, we can't take any chances with a desperate man like him. We've got to be on our guard."

"That's what," assented Abe. "You go lie down, Tom."

Which our hero did, and, in spite of the tumult of thoughts that crowded in his brain he managed to fall asleep beside Jackie.

The morning broke fair, and with a gentle wind.

"Hurray!" cried Joe, as he stretched himself. "Just the day for a launching. And the breeze is in the right direction too, if I'm any judge. We'll fetch some island now. I'm sure of it, though why we haven't done so before is a mystery to me." [157]

"That's so—and we haven't even sighted a ship," added Abe. "I never heard tell of such a thing—drifting about in this part of the ocean as long as we have, and never a sight of the thousand and one islands that are scattered around here. It's fair strange. But we'll soon be all right."

Mr. Skeel sat dejected and alone, some distance from the others, and they did not speak to him. Their hearts were too bitter against him. The scanty breakfast was served, Jackie alone getting a full ration, though naturally he did not eat much. There was plenty of water, however, but of food they must be sparing, for there was no telling how long their voyage might yet last.

"Well, what's to be done about him?" asked Abe, when they had collected their scanty belongings in the lifeboat, and were about ready for the launching.

"That's a problem," declared Joe.

"We can't leave him here, that's certain," decided Tom. "We have got to take him with us."

"But he's got to be told some plain facts," insisted Abe. "He's got to be made to understand that another treacherous move and overboard he goes!" [158]

"Well, something like that," admitted Tom. "But I guess he's had his lesson."

"Then you tell him," suggested Abe. "You made him knuckle under once, and you can do it again." For Tom had told the story of the revolt he led at Elmwood Hall.

Tom walked forward to where the renegade professor sat by himself.

"Mr. Skeel," said our hero, "we are going to leave the derelict in a few minutes, and try our luck in the small boat. But——"

"Oh, Tom Fairfield, don't say that you're going to leave me here to die!" cried the man. "Don't say that! I'll promise anything you like. I'll row the boat, or do anything, only don't leave me here alone."

"We don't intend to," spoke Tom. "We'll take you with us, but only on condition that you try no more treacherous tricks. Will you promise?"

"Yes, yes! Oh, I don't know what made me do that! I don't really believe I knew what I was doing. I'll promise anything you ask. I'll do anything you say, only take me with you, please!"

He seemed sufficiently sincere, and contrite, and both Abe and Joe agreed that the only thing to do would be to take him with them. [159]

"But we'll keep an eye on him, just the same," declared Joe grimly, "and he can't share in any

of the watches.”

Their preparations were all made. Little Jackie was all excitement and childish anticipation over the change to the smaller boat. In fact of late he had even ceased to ask for his father, so interested was he in their strange life on the ocean.

“All aboard!” called Abe, who acted as master of ceremonies. “All aboard, and I’ll cut loose!”

They climbed in, taking the places assigned to them, for there was not much room to move about. The sail was ready to hoist, Joe and Abe having made a seamanlike job of this. The food and water had been stowed away, and the tools they had succeeded in getting from the carpenter’s quarters were put in place. A large tin was provided in case there should be necessity of bailing against leaks.

“All aboard!” called Abe again.

[He was the last one in, and arranged to cut a single rope that held the boat fast](#), thus allowing it to slip into the sea from the sloping deck of the derelict.

There was a moment’s pause. They all took a last look at the wreck which had been their home for so many days. [160]

“Give the word, Joe,” said Abe in a low voice. “Watch the waves, and give the word to cut when the sea’s calm.”

“Aye, aye,” answered his mate quietly.

Fortunately there was not much of a swell on, but certain waves were larger than others, and Joe watched for a favorable one on which to launch the craft.

“Cut loose!” he called suddenly.

With a hatchet Abe severed the line. The lifeboat held for an instant, poised on the sloping deck, and then quickly slid down into the water, taking the sea with a little splash.

“Hurray!” yelled Tom. “Now we’re off!”

“Afloat again, and with something like a proper craft under our feet!” added Joe. “Hoist the sail, Abe, and let’s see how she behaves!”

The sail was run up. It filled with wind and the boat swung around, falling off before a gentle breeze. In a moment they were some distance away from the derelict.

“Good-bye, old hulk!” cried Tom. “You served us a good turn.”

“And I wish we could blow it up, or sink it, so as to take it out of the way of other ships,” spoke Abe, “but we can’t. However, we’ll give information about it.” [161]

On forged the sailboat, putting more and more distance between herself and the wreck.

“And now, once more, I’m off to rescue dad and mother,” murmured Tom. “I wonder if I’ll ever find them?” and a mist of tears came into his eyes.

CHAPTER XX

DAYS OF SUFFERING

 [162]

“Does she leak any?” asked Joe anxiously. He was up forward, attending to the sail, while Abe was at the helm.

“A few drops coming in,” replied the other sailor. “But nothing to speak of. She’ll swell up when she’s been in the water a while, and be as tight as a drum.”

“Good! We’ve got a right proper little boat, I’m thinking.”

“And she sails well, too,” declared Tom, observing the behavior of the craft with a critical glance. “She can go close to the wind, too, I believe.”

“Right you are, matie,” exclaimed Abe. “If we had a compass now we could lay as good a course as any ocean liner.”

But they did not have this aid to navigation, though the two sailors could manage to get along without it. They held a consultation, and decided that to steer in a general southwesterly direction would be the proper course.

“There’s islands there, if they’re anywhere,” declared Abe; “and there ought to be ships we could speak.” [163]

“We ought to be somewhere near the equator, if the heat goes for anything,” declared Tom. In fact in the last few days the sun had become unbearably hot.

“I shouldn’t wonder but what we were, matie,” assented Joe. “We drifted and sailed quite some distance in the derelict, and we were headed for the equator when the poor old *Silver Star* went down to Davy Jones’s locker. So I shouldn’t wonder but what we’d soon cross the line, if we haven’t done so already.”

“It sure is hot enough,” agreed Abe.

It was indeed, and being in the open boat they missed the wooden shelter they had had while on the wreck. Still there was a fine breeze that sent the sailboat along at a good speed, and served to make the atmosphere more endurable.

They had brought along all the sailcloth, and once they were well under way the sailors rigged up a little shelter where Jackie could rest out of the glaring sun. The small chap was delighted with the change to the sailboat, and laughed and chatted as if being shipwrecked was a big joke.

"Though if we get into a blow it won't be so safe in this craft as on the other," commented Abe. "Still I think we're in for a spell of good weather now, and we're somewhat out of the region of storms, if I'm any judge."

[164]

Now that they were fairly under way again they made their plans for standing watch. Of course Mr. Skeel was left out of it, save during the day, when he was to take his trick at the helm. He seemed to realize this, and, though he did not say much, he acted differently. He seemed much more humble.

At night Tom was to take the early trick, so as to enable him to remain near Jackie during the later hours. Joe and Abe divided up the rest of the night watch.

"We'll keep sailing night and day," Abe said, "for we want to get to land as soon as we can, or speak some vessel, and that may happen after dark as easily as during the day."

"The sooner the better," murmured Joe, with a glance at the rapidly dwindling store of provisions.

They took an account of the stock when it came time to serve dinner, and the total quantity of food left was less than they had imagined.

"What's to be done?" asked Tom gravely.

"Have to go on shorter rations—that's all," decided Abe. "That is, us grown folks."

"Shorter rations!" exclaimed Mr. Skeel. "I don't see how I can live on any less."

"It's a question of living several days, or dying sooner—that's what it is," said Joe, half savagely. "We've got to keep alive until we sight land, or until a ship rescues us, and the only way to do it is to eat as little as possible. Just enough to keep from starving."

[165]

"Then we'll do it," said Tom simply, and he proceeded to deal out much reduced portions of food. Fortunately there was no need to shorten the water supply yet, though they did take less, for they all knew the horror of thirst.

All that day they sailed before a fair wind, and not a moment but what they looked eagerly for a sight of some sail on the horizon, or the smudge of smoke that would tell of a steamer. But they saw nothing.

They were more anxious than they had been on the derelict, for, though the weather was calm, and seemed likely to remain so, there was no telling when a storm would sweep over the ocean. And a storm in an open boat was a different matter from one on the big, though water-logged, hulk of the lumber vessel.

True, the lifeboat had water-tight compartments, and would not be likely to sink, but seas breaking over her would mean the almost certain destruction of some, if not all, of the little band of shipwrecked ones. So they looked anxiously for a rescue.

Night came—a beautiful night with a calm sea, and a great silver moon riding over head. It seemed an augury of good luck and they all felt their hearts beat a little lighter. Even Professor Skeel looked less gloomy and sour, though he did not mingle nor talk with the others, sitting by himself.

[166]

They slept by turns, though not as comfortably as on the derelict. Still they realized that they were making better time, and time was a great object with them now.

Morning came, and found them afloat on a still calm sea, a sea that extended all around them, unbroken by any haze or mist that might mean land, or any speck or cloud that might indicate a sailing or steaming vessel. The sun beat down in a blaze of heat.

It was at noon, when Tom went to serve out the frugal meal, that he made a discovery that alarmed him.

"Look here!" he cried to Abe. "One of the water kegs has sprung a leak, and it's empty."

"Empty!" gasped the sailor, making his way to where Tom stood by the water supply.

"Yes, not a drop in it."

Abe shook the keg. There was no welcome sound of water splashing around inside it. He drew the bung, and a few drops trickled out. Then, tying a length of rope to it, the sailor lowered it overboard.

"What's that for?" asked Tom.

[167]

"I want to see where the leak is," was the quiet answer. "I don't see how a sound keg could spring a leak in the night."

"Then you think——" began Tom.

"I don't know what I do think—yet," was the reply. He held the keg aloft, and aside from the water that dripped from the outside none came from it. "There's no leak there," half growled

Abe. "Some one has emptied that water butt!" He looked to where Mr. Skeel stood at the helm.

"Do you think——" began Tom in a whisper.

"Wait. Don't say anything yet," cautioned Abe. "But we'll keep our eyes open."

But if Mr. Skeel knew he was suspected he did not show it. He accepted his small share of food and water with the others, and he did not complain, as he usually did.

For three more days they sailed on, each hour adding to their sufferings, for it was very hot. And they scarcely seemed to cool off in the night before it was daylight again.

The water got lower, and to Tom's horror, one day, as he went to serve out the food, he saw that the supply was much lower than he had thought.

"I'm sure there was more than this," he said to the sailors when the professor was at the helm.

"There's something wrong going on here," decided Joe, "and I'm going to see what it is. There's got to be a search made."

[168]

One was soon under way, but it revealed nothing. Mr. Skeel had been in the habit of sleeping on a pile of the canvas and this was looked over. The man was evidently aware of the suspicion in which he was held, but he said nothing, and quietly moved away when the sailors looked under his canvas bed.

"Unless some sort of a sea monster boarded us in the night, I don't see how the food and water could disappear," said Tom.

"There's no sea monsters that could do such a thing," declared Joe, knowing Tom was only joking. "And yet—well, we'll have to get along with less, that's all."

They were down now to almost the limit of human endurance in the allowance of food and water. All but Jackie—he had nearly all he asked for.

Half a week passed. Their sufferings had increased from day to day with the heat of the sun. Their lips and tongues began to swell and get black from lack of sufficient water, and their stomachs gnawed constantly from hunger. They were days of suffering indeed.

Their eyes were strained from looking for a sail, or a sight of land. They were weak and feverish. By dousing their bodies with sea water some of the pangs of thirst were lessened, but the matter of food could not be remedied.

[169]

Tom watched Mr. Skeel narrowly and it seemed that the professor did not suffer as did the others. Yet he did not appear to have any secret store of food or water. Indeed in a small boat it was difficult to imagine where he could hide it. Yet Tom was suspicious.

It was one cloudy night when our hero made his important discovery. It was his trick at the helm, and he had put Jackie to sleep, and moved aft to take the rude steering sweep. Professor Skeel's position was well forward, in the bow, and the two sailors, worn out by their suffering and hardships, were lying amidships.

Tom began to feel light-headed. He imagined he saw land ahead in the darkness—a ship coming to their rescue—a ship filled with ice water and good things to eat. He imagined he heard his father and mother calling to him.

"Come, this won't do!" he exclaimed, half aloud. "I must keep a better grip on myself. Maybe we'll be rescued to-morrow."

He stretched himself, and tried not to think of cool water and tables piled with food. And yet the more he tried to stop it, the more often did visions of great glass pitchers filled with ice water come before him. That day they had had only a single tin cup full of water each—one cup full for the whole hot day!

[170]

"Oh, for a good, long drink!" whispered Tom.

And then he started. Surely that was the tinkle and drip of water that he heard! Where did it come from?

CHAPTER XXI

[171]

"SAIL HO!"

Cautiously Tom peered about him. He listened as only one can listen who is suffering from thirst, and who hears the welcome sound of water. True, there was still water in the keg, but that belonged to all, and Tom had had his share. Was there more on board?

"It seems to come from up forward," murmured Tom, "up forward where Mr. Skeel is." At once his old suspicions came back to him. He peered toward the bow, but the sail was in his way and he could not see well.

"I'm going to take a look," he decided. There was scarcely any wind then, and the sea was calm. It would do no harm to leave the helm.

Carefully Tom made his way forward, walking softly past the slumbering sailors. And then the

sight he saw filled him with rage.

For there, eating and drinking from a private store of food and water he had stolen, and hidden away, was the renegade professor. It was the trickle of water, as he poured it out from a can into a cup, that Tom had heard. [172]

Hardly knowing what to do our hero paused. Should he spring on the traitor and take the stolen supply of food and drink away, or call the sailors? Yet it might be advisable to see where Mr. Skeel had hidden his unfairly gotten store. So Tom waited.

It was agony to see the man eating and drinking before his eyes—eating and drinking when Tom himself was parched and half starved. And yet so cunning was the former professor that he did not gorge himself. He was evidently saving some for another time.

At last, as Tom watched, the professor made an end of his midnight meal and began to hide away his supply. And it was in the forward watertight compartment that he placed his store of food and water. It was there, where no one had thought of looking, that he kept them. The compartment was one that could be opened and used as a locker and this use Mr. Skeel had made of it. He had evidently taken the food when no one was observing him, and had emptied one of the water kegs into an unused tin can, and thus supplied himself against the time of need, while the others were on short rations. And yet with all this, he had daily drawn as much as had the others.

"The trickster!" murmured Tom. "I'm going to expose him!" [173]

Our hero stepped forward. As he emerged in front of the sail the professor saw him and started. He tried to hide the fact that he had been eating, but he did not have time to stow away all the food in the compartment.

"I'll ask you to hand those things over to me," said Tom coldly.

"What things?"

"The food and water you stole from us."

"Food and water?"

"Yes! Don't trifle with me!" and Tom's voice was menacing. "If I call Abe and Joe it will go hard with you. They won't stand for anything like this."

"Oh, don't tell them! Don't tell!" begged the man, now a trembling coward. "I—I just couldn't stand it to be hungry and thirsty."

"How do you suppose *we* stood it?" asked Tom calmly.

"I—I don't know. But I—I couldn't. I had to have more to eat. I have a big appetite."

"You'll have to take a reef in it," went on the lad. "Now hand me over that food and water. We need it—we may need it worse before we're rescued."

"And you won't tell on me."

"Not this time. But if it occurs again——"

"What's that? What's the matter, Tom?" came the voice of the sailor Abe. [174]

The professor started. Through the darkness he looked appealingly at the lad who confronted him.

"Quick!" whispered Tom. "The food and water!"

The professor passed them over.

"What's up?" asked Joe.

"I've just found the missing provisions," said Tom grimly. "They had gotten into the forward compartment."

"The forward compartment?" queried Abe.

"Yes—by—er—mistake I fancy," and Tom spoke dryly.

He took them from the trembling hands of the professor and walked aft with them.

"I think we can all indulge in a little lunch, and a drink," he went on. "There is enough here for several more days now, and we won't have to be on quite such short rations."

"Thank heaven!" murmured Joe. "And yet I can't see how the things got in the forward compartment."

"Nor I," murmured Abe, but though he thought a great deal he said nothing more on the subject.

Tom passed around some food and water, though the professor did not get any. Nor did he ask for it. Jackie did not awaken, sleeping with the healthy fatigue of childhood. [175]

Then a little wind sprang up, and some one must look to the helm. Tom's trick was nearly up, and Joe relieved him.

"Tell me, matie, did the professor have the grub?" the sailor whispered hoarsely.

"He did," answered Tom, "but I think it's best to say nothing about it. He's had his lesson."

"Yes, but he may do it again."

"We'll take precautions, now that we know what a traitor he is," answered the lad.

Morning came—morning with the hot sun beaming down and the oily sea running after the boat containing the shipwrecked ones.

Mr. Skeel seemed to feel his position keenly, though he was such an unprincipled man at heart that it is doubtful if any lesson had a lasting effect on him.

"Well, I don't see anything of a sail," remarked Abe gloomily, as his eye roved over the waste of water. "And it's been many a weary day we've looked for one."

"And the islands," murmured Joe. "I can't understand why we haven't sighted some, unless we are farther north than I had any idea of."

"Well, we can last it out for another week—with care," said Tom slowly.

"And we'll be careful in two ways," spoke Abe. "We'll eat and drink as little as we can, and we'll watch to see that none of our supplies disappear in the night."

He looked meaningfully at Mr. Skeel as he spoke, and the professor turned his head away.

But even the discovery of the hidden food supply could not better their condition for long. The water, warm and brackish as it was, went drop by drop, for it was so hot they had to wet their lips and tongues often. The food, too, while it stopped their hunger, made them the more thirsty. Jackie, too, seemed to develop a fever, and to need more water than usual.

On and on they sailed. They were in the middle of the second week, and saw no hope of rescue. They hoped for rain, that their water supply might be renewed, but the sky was brazen and hot by day and star-studded by night.

"I—I can't stand it much longer," murmured Abe, at the close of a hot afternoon. "I—I've got to do something. Look at all that water out there," and he motioned toward the heaving ocean.

"Water! Yes, it's water fair enough, matie," spoke Joe soothingly, "but them as drinks it loses their minds. Bear up a little longer, and surely we'll be picked up, or sight land."

"I don't believe so!" exclaimed Abe gloomily.

"Tom, I want my daddy!" whined Jackie. "Why don't you get him for me?"

"I will—soon," said Tom brokenly, as he tried to comfort the little chap.

They were down to their last bit of food, and the last keg of water. The latter they had used with the utmost economy, for they knew they could live longer without food than without water. And yet there was scarcely a pint left, and it was hardly fit to drink.

They were all very thin, and the skin on their faces seemed drawn and tight. Their tongues were thick, and dark, so they could hardly speak. Jackie had been better fed, and had had more water than the others, and yet even he was failing.

Abe and Joe, being more hardy, had, perhaps, suffered less, but their privations were telling on them. Mr. Skeel had lost much of his plumpness, and his clothes hung on him like the rags on a scarecrow in a cornfield.

As for Tom, he bore up bravely. Day by day he had tightened his belt that he might "make his hunger smaller," as the Indians say. He had even given Jackie part of his food and water.

Night came, the long lonesome night, and yet it was welcome, for it took away the blazing sun. What would the morning bring?

They were all partly delirious that night. Tom found himself murmuring in his sleep, and he heard the others doing the same. Abe collapsed at the wheel, and Joe had to do a double trick. He would not let Tom relieve him.

Toward morning the last water was doled out. No one felt like eating.

"I—I guess this is the end," murmured Joe. "We've made a good fight—but—this is—the—end."

Tom said nothing. He sat in the bow, gloomily looking off across the waste of waters. He thought of many things.

It grew lighter. Another day of heat was coming—a day when there would be no water to relieve them. How many days more?

Higher crept the sun out of the waves. Tom rubbed his smarting eyes. He looked, and then he looked again. Then, scarcely believing what he saw, and fearing that it was but a vision of his disordered brain he shouted, over and over again:

"Sail ho! Sail ho!"

CHAPTER XXII

NEWS OF THE MISSING

Tom's cry echoed over the water and startled those aboard the boat into sudden life. Gaspingly Joe and Abe sat up. Mr. Skeel was galvanized into sudden activity, awakening from a troubled

dream. Little Jackie jumped up with a start.

"What—what is it, Tom?" cried Joe.

"Have we struck something?" exclaimed Abe.

"It's a sail—a sail!" fairly shouted our hero. "See that vessel over there! It's bearing down on us! A big sailing ship!"

The two sailors and the former professor gazed off to where Tom pointed. There was no doubt of it, they were gazing at a full-rigged ship.

"I saw her as soon as I opened my eyes!" Tom explained. "I was dozing, I guess. At first I couldn't believe it. But it's a ship all right, isn't it?"

He was half afraid that the others would say he was only dreaming. Anxiously he awaited their verdict. [180]

"It's a ship all right," agreed Abe.

"And coming this way," added Tom.

"No, I'm afraid she's leaving us," put in Joe, a moment later.

"Don't say that!" cried Mr. Skeel. "I—I can't stand any more!" He was fairly quivering with fear.

"It does look as though she was going away from us," agreed Abe gloomily. "Still, she may come around on the other tack, and see us."

"Then we must make signals!" cried Tom. "They've got to see us! Yell! Shout! Make 'em hear us!"

"It'd have to be a pretty good voice that could carry that far," spoke Joe weakly. "Still, she sees us. She's about three miles off. Wave everything you've got!"

At once Tom caught up a piece of canvas. Every one, save Jackie, did the same, and soon there was a wildly-waving mass of rags to be observed on board the lifeboat.

"If she only sees us!" gasped Tom. "If she only does!"

Hope awoke anew, and Tom found himself fired with an ambition to do anything that would put him in a position to rescue his father and mother.

"Is—is she turning? Can she see us?" asked Mr. Skeel anxiously, pausing in his exertions. [181]

"It's too soon to tell—yet," answered Joe. "Keep on waving."

They had almost forgotten the professor's mean and sneaking ways now, in the excitement over a possible rescue. Anxiously they watched the small speck that meant a vessel. Oh how anxiously! Would some one on board see them? Would she put about?

"Can't you head for her any more directly?" asked Mr. Skeel after a bit. "It seems to me that you're not heading any where near her."

"I'm doing the best I can," declared Abe, who was at the helm. "I can't make the wind do what I want it to. It all depends on the other ship."

They waved by turns, and again peered anxiously at the craft on which so much depended. She seemed to grow in size, at times, and again, to their despairing hearts, she appeared to become smaller, showing that she was leaving them.

But at last Joe sprang to his feet with a shout of joy.

"She sees us! She sees us!" he cried. "Look, they are putting about! They're going to pick us up! We're saved! We're saved!"

"Are you sure?" asked Tom, not wanting to have his hopes raised, only to lose them again.

"Of course! Can't you see by the way her sails are trimmed?" [182]

"Right you are!" agreed Abe. "She's going to pick us up. She's seen us!"

This was more apparent to the eyes of the two sailors than to Tom or Mr. Skeel, but they gladly accepted the news. In a little while it was evident, even to Tom, that the vessel he had sighted so opportunely was indeed growing in size, showing that she was coming nearer.

"Water! Water!" gasped Mr. Skeel sinking down in the bottom of the boat. "I'm going to faint!"

Indeed he did look to be in a bad way, and, though the others wanted and needed the precious fluid almost as much as he did, some was given him. Though, as Abe remarked, the professor had had more than his fair share. Still it was not a time to grumble, and, after Mr. Skeel had been revived, the rest of the water was apportioned out among the others. And they needed it very much, for their tongues were swelled more than ever.

"But we'll soon have all we want," declared Joe, with a laugh that sounded queer and cracked, coming from between his swollen lips. "Enough water—all we want!"

"And food, too, food!" added Abe. "I'm as hungry—as hungry——" but a simile failed him, and he sat down weakly to stare at the approaching vessel. [183]

There was nothing more to do save to wait for the arrival of the ship, which soon was seen to be a large sailing craft. Nearer and nearer she came, with the big sails bulging out with the wind.

Those aboard the lifeboat steered as best they could to make the distance between her and the rescuing vessel as short as possible, but their small sail did not catch much of the breeze.

Nearer and nearer came the ship. A crowd of sailors could now be made out on her deck, lining the rail to find out the meaning of the strange sight of a small open boat on the trackless ocean.

"Lifeboat ahoy!" came the hail when the big ship was near enough. "Are you in distress? Do you need help?"

"We sure do!" cried Tom. "We've been shipwrecked, and on a derelict. Take us off. We have no food or water."

"What ship are you from?"

"*Silver Star* out from San Francisco for Sydney. Wrecked by a derelict about two weeks ago," answered Tom. "Who are you?"

"The *Alexandria*, from Melbourne, bound for Honolulu. We'll have you on board shortly. Do you want your boat saved?"

Thus answered the first mate of the rescuing vessel. Tom looked at his sailor companions, and they shook their heads. The lifeboat, patched as it was, could be of little real service or value, and to hoist it aboard would delay matters. [184]

"We don't need it," sang out Abe. "It was hard enough to rebuild, but it's served its turn. Take us aboard without it."

"All right," came the hail, and a little later Tom and his companions, so strangely wrecked and rescued at sea, were on the big deck of the *Alexandria*.

She proved to be a large merchant ship, carrying no passengers, and the crew crowded around the refugees to hear their story.

"Water first—water," pleaded Mr. Skeel, who, now that he was safe, seemed to resume some of his former arrogant airs. "I must have a fresh drink of water."

"And I guess this little chap needs some as well as you," spoke the mate, with a shrewd guess as to the true character of the former Latin instructor. "Come below and we'll look after all of you."

A little later, water and warm soup having been cautiously administered, Tom was telling the story of the shipwreck.

"Do you think it possible that any of the passengers or crew of the *Silver Star* were saved?" he asked.

"Quite possible, though we haven't heard of it," answered Captain Buchanan of the *Alexandria*. "If they got away in a lifeboat it's very likely that they were picked up. They were in the zone of ship travel, according to what you tell me, but you and the others drifted out of it on the derelict, and you've been out of it ever since. It's lucky you put the small boat into use or you might have been there yet. And now what do you want me to do with you?" [185]

"I'd like to go on to Honolulu," said Mr. Skeel, as if he was the first one to be considered. "I have business there."

"I'm going that way, and I'll stop and put you off," answered Captain Buchanan dryly. "What of the rest of you?"

"Any place suits me, where we can get a ship," spoke Abe, and Joe nodded in agreement.

"What about you, Tom Fairfield?"

"Well, I'd like to go to Sydney, if it's possible. If not, I can go to Honolulu, and take a ship there to continue the search for my father and mother."

"Your father and mother!" exclaimed the captain. "Are they lost, too?" for our hero had not told of his reasons for being aboard the *Silver Star*.

"They were wrecked on the *Kangaroo*, or so I believe," replied Tom, and he showed the newspaper clippings that had been the means of starting him on such a long and adventurous quest. [186]

"The *Kangaroo*!" exclaimed the mate. "That's the vessel we heard——"

"Yes, yes!" assented the captain eagerly.

"Oh, have you heard any news of her?" asked Tom eagerly. "Were any of her passengers saved? Tell me!"

"It's almost providential!" exclaimed Captain Buchanan, "but a few days ago we did speak a vessel that had some news of the missing ship—the one your parents sailed on. It seems that she picked up a boat load of sailors some distance out to sea. They were from the *Kangaroo*. That was some time ago, you understand, for we have been from port some time, held back by contrary winds. But this ship, the *Belgrade* she was, had some of the rescued sailors."

"And—and were they the only ones saved?" asked Tom.

"I can't be sure of that," answered the captain, "but from the captain of the *Belgrade* I learned that another boat load of other survivors of the *Kangaroo* set out for some island near Tongatabu, in the Friendly group. They may have reached it. They may be there yet."

"Were there passengers among them?" asked Tom, his heart beating with a new hope.

"There were, my boy, though I can't tell you to hope that your parents were there. Still it may be that they were."

[187]

"I'm going to hope!" cried our hero eagerly. "Now how can I get to Sydney, or some Australian port, and set out for that island?"

"I'll speak the first Australian bound ship we meet," promised Captain Buchanan, "and put you aboard. Oh, boy, I hope you find your folks!" and he shook Tom's hand.

CHAPTER XXIII

OFF TO THE ISLAND

[188]

Once the excitement over the rescue of himself and his companions was over, Tom settled down to another task. And it was that of looking for a ship bound back to Australia, that he might once more set out in search of his parents.

"And I sure do hope there won't be any more accidents," Tom mused. "I've had my share of 'em this trip, that's certain."

The hardships and the privations suffered while on the derelict and in the open boat soon passed away, and the refugees were made to feel at home on the *Alexandria*. Little Jackie soon became a general favorite, and Tom made many friends.

As for the two sailors, they were soon at home among the members of the crew, and, as Captain Buchanan was short-handed, he signed them as first class men, so they were well provided for.

Mr. Skeel kept much to himself. He seemed in fear that his conduct aboard the boat and derelict would be told to those on board the rescue ship, but Tom and his friends had no idea of exposing the scoundrel, as it would have done no good. So Mr. Skeel kept to himself, glad enough to be let alone.

[189]

"I suppose there is no telling when you will sight a ship bound in the direction I was to travel in, is there?" asked Tom, a few days after the rescue.

"Hardly," replied the captain. "I have instructed the lookout to report the first vessel bound for Australia, though, and we may speak one any day. If she cannot take you all the way there she may be able to transfer you to one that will."

"My!" exclaimed our hero. "I certainly will have my share of travel on the sea! But I sha'n't mind, if I can only rescue dad and mother."

"And I certainly wish you all success," spoke Captain Buchanan. "What are your plans when you do reach Sydney or Melbourne, if I may ask?"

"I'm going to charter a steamer and sail for that island near Tongatabu," replied Tom.

"Charter a steamer!" exclaimed the captain. "That will be pretty expensive."

"Well, I have considerable cash with me," answered our hero, showing the money belt which had successfully resisted the efforts of Mr. Skeel to take away. "And my father's agent in Sydney will supply me with more, I think."

"Then you will be well provided for," commented the commander. "You can do almost anything—up to a certain point—with money, and it's good you have enough. I can give you a note to a friend of mine in Melbourne who can fit you out with a proper vessel for such need as you have. He is also an experienced navigator, and if you like I'm sure he would sail to this island for you. Of course I can't just say what one it was, for there are several in the group near the large one of Tongatabu, and you may have to make a search."

[190]

"I'll do it!" cried Tom, "and I'll be much obliged to you for that note. I'll engage your friend if he'll come."

Tom and the captain talked for some time longer, and our hero was given many valuable pointers about what to do. So interested did he become, and so occupied was he in looking for a vessel to take him back to Australia that he had no time to worry about his parents. Not that he did not think of them, but his thoughts were hopeful ones.

"I'll rescue them!" he declared determinedly. "And, oh! if I could only pick up some of those from the *Silver Star* who may still be adrift in open boats. And Jackie's father! If I could only find him!"

But Tom felt that this was too much to hope. Several days passed, and no Australian bound vessel was seen. Tom began to be a bit discouraged, but one morning there was a cry on deck when he was at breakfast. He hurried up to find that the lookout had sighted a large steamer approaching them.

[191]

"Oh, if it's only going to Australia!" cried Tom.

It was, as he learned a little later when the steamer hove to in answer to a signal from the

Alexandria. A small boat was sent from the sailing ship to the steamer, and Captain Buchanan requested the courtesy of transferring one of his passengers to the *Monarch*, which was the name of the steamer spoken.

The word came back that Tom would be accepted.

"Good!" he cried. "I'm sorry to leave you, Captain Buchanan, but I must rescue dad and mother!"

"That's right. Good luck to you!"

"What about Jackie?" asked Abe, who, with his mate, had come on deck to bid Tom good-by.

"He comes with me, of course," was our hero's answer. "I'm going to turn him over to his relatives," he added. "Mr. Case said he had a sister in Melbourne."

"I'm going to my daddy!" Jackie proudly informed the friends he was leaving behind on the *Alexandria*. "Tom is going to take me to my daddy!"

"I only wish I was," murmured Tom with tears in his eyes.

He and his little charge were soon on the Australian bound vessel, and the *Monarch* getting under way again was once more steaming toward the land of the kangaroo and rabbit.

In due time Tom landed at Melbourne, and his first duty was to take little Jackie to his relatives. That they were shocked was to be expected, over the news of the shipwreck, of which they had heard nothing, though they were beginning to be alarmed over the fact that the *Silver Star* had not arrived, and had not been spoken.

Their grief and sorrow were concealed from Jackie as well as possible, and he bade Tom a tearful good-by, convinced that our hero was going to bring matters about so that everything would be all right.

Then Tom sought out Captain Mosher, to whom he had a letter of introduction.

"Humph!" exclaimed the seaman, when Tom had made known his mission, and his desire to set out in search of his parents. "It's a slim chance, boy, and it's going to cost——"

"Never mind the cost!" cried Tom.

"All right, then. You're the doctor. If you want me to fit out a small steamer and go to some of the islands around Tongatabu I'm your man. Only—don't hope too much!"

"I've got to hope!" cried poor Tom. "I'm going to hope until the—the last!"

"Well, maybe you're right after all," assented Captain Mosher. "Now to business, ways and means, a steamer, a crew, fitting out and then—well, I've got to get busy."

He did, to such good advantage that inside of a week all was in readiness for the start. Tom had communicated with his father's agent in Sydney, and, as our hero had papers to prove his identity, there was no lack of money from the inheritance Mr. Fairfield had come so far to claim.

A steamer, the *Sea Queen*, was fitted out; a small but competent crew was hired, stores and provisions for a month's cruise were put aboard, and one sunny day Tom took his place with the captain on the bridge.

"Well, Tom, shall we start?" asked Captain Mosher, a kindly light in his eye, for he had taken a great liking to our hero.

"Start, and go at full speed as long as you can," came Tom's order. "I want to get to that island as soon as possible, and find dad and mother."

The hoarse whistle of the *Sea Queen* warned other craft that she was about to leave her berth. A little later her funnels belched black smoke, and from her pipe the white steam spurted. She was off for the island.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE CASTAWAYS

Quite a new experience it was for Tom to be in command of a steamer, even though it was a comparatively small craft. And he was in actual command, for, though Captain Mosher was the navigator, and had all the powers captains usually have on the high seas, still Tom was the master, and his orders would be obeyed.

"If only dad and mother were here with me, or if I knew they were safe, and I had a crowd of fellows from Elmwood Hall here," Tom reflected, "this would be sport. But as it is there's too much worry in it to suit me."

Not that he shirked his duty in the least, but it was a big responsibility for a youth, and none knew it better than Captain Mosher.

"That boy has grit!" the commander exclaimed to his mate. "There ain't many lads like him who would start off as he did on such a slim chance to find his parents. And, after being shipwrecked, he starts off again."

"Oh, 'e's H'American!" exclaimed the mate, who was quite a Cockney in his way. "'E's H'American, and H'Americans will do hanythink, so I've 'eard, sir."

"Maybe they will. The more credit to 'em."

"But H'I say, Captain, sir, 'ave you told 'im?"

"Told him what?"

"About them cannibals an' other unpleasant creatures that may be on the h'islands where we're goin'?"

"No, I haven't told him, but I'm going to. It's only fair that he should know about 'em. I think he's got grit enough to take it."

And so, after the vessel was well under way, and the captain had leisure, he sent for Tom, who was in the stateroom that had been assigned to him, next to the captain's own quarters.

"Tom, my boy!" exclaimed Mr. Mosher, after a few generalities, "it's only fair to tell you that we may have a hard task ahead of us."

"How so, captain?"

"Well, some of the islands around Tongatabu are inhabited by natives that are not always friendly."

"You mean——" and our hero paused apprehensively.

"I mean that—well, at worst, I think, they can but hold your folks captive, in case the survivors from the shipwreck landed on one of the unfriendly islands."

"Hold them captives?"

"Yes. You see these natives are peculiar. They get streaks, I might say. If a large enough party of whites landed they would be friendly, and would treat them well. But if only a few were cast on their shores they might be ugly, and make them prisoners for the sake of what few possessions they might save from the wreck."

"And you think my parents may have landed on such an island?"

"It's possible. I only tell you to prepare you for the worst."

Tom was silent a moment, and then he said quietly:

"We brought arms along, didn't we, captain?"

"Yes, Tom, but——"

"Then we'll use 'em—if we have to!" exclaimed the lad, with an energy that caused the captain to like him the more. "If any cannibals or other natives are holding my folks captive we'll go to the rescue."

"And I'm with you!" cried the commander, holding out his hand, which Tom took in a firm grip.

The *Sea Queen* was a fast little steamer and, favored by good weather, she made excellent time. In due course the island of Tongatabu was sighted and one night the vessel Tom had chartered to search for his parents lay at anchor in the harbor. There was not much of a settlement on the island in those days, but such as it was there was news to be had, of a sort, though not the kind Tom wanted.

For he could learn nothing of his parents. There were rumors of wrecks, and of castaways coming ashore, but none from the *Kangaroo*.

In fact a crew from another wrecked sailing ship had come ashore to Tongatabu, but they knew nothing of the casting away of the ship on which Mr. and Mrs. Fairfield had sailed.

"You might do one thing," said a friendly Englishman who had some business interests on the island. "I understand there are some natives here from surrounding islands. You might ask them if they have heard of any white castaways coming ashore at any of the places where they live."

Tom and Captain Mosher welcomed the suggestion and followed it. They found the natives—rather a shiftless lot—and questioned them through an interpreter. But to no purpose.

The simple black men told stories of wrecks that had happened ten years back, and related how the castaways from them had come ashore, either to remain there in an idle existence, or to take the first steamer back for civilization. There were more rumors, but nothing definite.

"The only thing to do," decided Captain Mosher, "is to visit all the islands in the immediate vicinity of Tongatabu. In that way we'll get first hand information."

"And we may find them!" cried Tom eagerly. "Let's start off again!"

This was about the third day of their stay at Tongatabu and that night they hoisted anchor, and steamed out of the harbor.

Then began a wearying search. No spot of land was too small to deter Tom, and at every large island he spent some days, hiring natives to make a circuit of it, and interviewing, through interpreters, the chief men.

But all to no purpose. There had been no wrecks in some time, and no castaways had come ashore. Tom was beginning to get discouraged.

"Oh, there are lots more islands," Captain Mosher assured him. "We'll find 'em yet!"

"H'if the bloody cannibals ain't het 'em!" said the mate.

"Keep still!" commanded the captain, emphasizing his words with a dig in the ribs that made his chief officer grunt.

They came one night to the small island of Tahatoo, hardly more than a dot in the big ocean. But there was a good harbor, in a coral lagoon, and, as there were signs of a storm, Captain Mosher decided to lay to there over night.

"And while we're here we may as well go ashore and see if there is any news," spoke Tom. His voice was despondent, for the search had been wearying and disappointing. [199]

"White mans? No hab white mans and womans here," said the head native in his broken English, when Tom and the captain put the question to him. "No hab wrecks here. If had, Walla he be kind to um. Kind to white mans and womans. Me is Walla. Walla bery kind. When you sail away, captain?"

"Why do you want to know?" inquired the commander of the *Sea Queen*, suspiciously, for usually the natives were only too glad to have a steamer spend some days at one of their islands.

"Oh, me just ask for friendly like. When you go?"

"In the morning, if the weather's good," was the answer.

"Walla t'ink wedder good," said the native grinning. "You go mornin'."

"Tom, there's something wrong here!" said the commander a little later, as he and our hero walked down toward the beach. "That native is altogether too anxious to get rid of us."

"Why—do you think——" began Tom, his heart beating fast.

"I don't know what to think, my boy, but——"

"Do you imagine dad and mother—may have been here?" [200]

"I don't know, but I think that Walla knows something. I think we'll just stroll around a bit, and we don't leave to-morrow, no matter what the weather is."

Their minds filled with strange thoughts, the two strolled back toward the native village. The hut where Walla, the head man lived, was easily distinguished by its size. Around it were other places where the poorer natives stayed.

As Tom and Captain Mosher tried to pass through an alley that led past Walla's hut, a big black man stopped them with a gesture.

"No can go," he said, grinning.

"Why not?" asked Tom.

"No can go. Walla he say so. No can go. After a bit maybe can go."

"We're going now!" cried Captain Mosher with sudden energy. "Tom, my boy, there's something on foot here. Draw your revolver and follow me. We'll see what's up."

"No can go!" insisted the native guard.

"We're going!" cried the captain. "Come on, Tom!"

Tom sprang to the commander's side. In the gathering dusk they could observe signs of activity about a hut that adjoined Walla's. A number of native men and women were moving about it.

Suddenly a shout was heard. A voice was raised in angry protest. And the words were English. [201]

"I'll not go! I'll not submit to this any longer! Where is your head man? What does he mean by taking us away from where we were fairly comfortable, and sending us somewhere else? What does it mean?"

For a moment Tom and the captain stood as if paralyzed. Then a woman's sob was heard.

"White men! White men, by Jove!" cried the captain.

"My father!" shouted Tom. "That's my father's voice! I'd know it anywhere! He's here! I've found him! Dad! Mother! I've come to rescue you! I'm here! We're coming!"

Tom sprang toward the knot of natives, Captain Mosher at his side. For a moment the blacks resisted. Tom fired into the air, and the captain did likewise. With yells of fear the natives fled, and there, in the fast-gathering dusk, in front of the hut next to that of Walla, stood a little group of white castaways—Tom's father and mother among them!

CHAPTER XXV

HOMeward BOUND—CONCLUSION

For a moment Tom hardly knew what to think. He had heard the voice of white persons, he had seen them when the natives fled at the shots, and yet he could not believe that at last he had found his parents.

Yet there could be no doubt of it. As he stood there, amid the awed natives, and looked forward,

he saw the beloved faces—faces he had feared he would never see again.

“Father! Mother!” he cried, and then he ran forward.

From the little knot of castaways two figures detached themselves—a man and a woman. Wonderingly they looked toward Tom. Then the man cried:

“It’s Tom! It’s our son! Oh, how did he ever get here?”

The woman answered:

“It can’t be possible! You’re dreaming, Brokaw! Tom could never be here. Our minds must be wandering!”

“And I say it’s Tom!” declared the man. “Tom! Tom!” he called. “Is it really you?”

“It is, father! Oh, are you all right? Have the natives hurt you? I’ve come to rescue you!”

“Thank the dear Lord!” ejaculated Mr. Fairfield. His wife said nothing. She was crying on his shoulder.

A moment later Tom had sprung to their side and was wildly hugging them, while the other white castaways, including several sailors, looked on wonderingly and sympathetically. Captain Mosher, with tears of joy in his eyes, stood as a sort of guard, with drawn revolver, but there was no need to use it, for the natives had nearly all vanished, save a small wondering ring of them that stood some distance off.

“I rather guess, Tom, my boy,” spoke the commander, “that our voyage is at an end.”

“It surely is!” cried Tom, as he introduced his parents. “I’ve found them at last!”

“H’I always said them H’Americans was great for doin’ things,” commented the mate, who had followed at a distance.

“Father! Mother!” cried Tom. “Tell me all about it.”

“Oh, dear boy, you tell us!” half sobbed his mother. “However did you find us?”

And there, as night fell, on that half-savage island, in the midst of the hut-village of Walla, the head man, Tom told his story. Its details are already familiar to our readers, so I need not go over it.

“And you kept on after us, in spite of all,” commented Mr. Fairfield, when Tom had finished telling of his days aboard the derelict, and in the open boat, followed by the search in the steamer.

“Of course I did!” exclaimed Tom. “I wanted to find you.”

“And you did, dear boy!” cried his mother. “You found us, and we have you again! Oh, I never thought to see you any more.”

“Tell me all about it,” suggested Tom. And they did.

With the foundering of the *Kangaroo* all hands had taken the small boats. There was much wind and they were separated. The one containing Mr. and Mrs. Fairfield had drifted from the others, and had finally landed at the island of Tahatoo. There the natives proved to be rather unfriendly.

True, they did not maltreat the castaways, but they stripped them of everything of value, confiscated their boat and stores and then, afraid of the possible vengeance of the whites who might start out to rescue the shipwrecked ones, Walla and his men made the castaways captives.

Mr. and Mrs. Fairfield, two men passengers, and a few sailors were in the small boat that had landed at Tahatoo. Their clothes were taken from them, and they were given a few rags to wear. They were not ill treated, as native treatment goes, but they were held prisoners.

This lasted for some time and numerous attempts to escape were frustrated. The castaways gave way to despair. Then came the arrival of Tom’s steamer. Walla at once feared vengeance, and endeavored to hold the attention of Captain Mosher and the others until he could hide his captives in the interior. But his plans miscarried.

Mr. Fairfield, suspecting that something was up, had objected to being taken away with his wife. The commotion had attracted the attention of Tom and Captain Mosher, and the rest is known to the reader.

“Oh, dad! It seems too good to be true!” cried Tom, when their stories had been told. “But your troubles are over. You’ll soon be back to civilization. I’ve got a steamer waiting for you.”

“That’s what!” exclaimed Captain Mosher. “And I don’t believe anybody but Tom Fairfield could have gone to sea and rescued you in the way he did.”

“Oh, of course they could,” declared Tom, blushing, for he disliked praise.

“Oh, I’m sure they couldn’t!” declared his mother, hugging him to her.

“Well, I’d like a few minutes private conversation with that scoundrel, Walla,” said Captain Mosher grimly. “Where is Walla?” he asked of one of the head man’s guards.

“Walla him gone ‘way,” was the answer. “Him gone far ‘way. Him say him got very bad pain, no come back long time.”

“Pain!” cried the captain. “I’d give him a worse one, if I had the scoundrel!”

A little later Mr. and Mrs. Fairfield, and all the castaways were aboard the *Sea Queen*, where

[203]

[204]

[205]

[206]

they were made comfortable, and given decent clothes in exchange for the rags the natives had forced them to wear. Then, as the storm broke, Captain Mosher rode it out in the coral-locked harbor.

"And now for Melbourne, and then for home!" cried Tom, a few days later, when calm weather prevailed. "Oh, it will seem good to get back to the United States again."

"But it's too bad so many were lost from the *Silver Star*," spoke Mr. Fairfield. "Tom, you proved yourself a man! Oh, what a time you must have had!"

"It wasn't so easy," confessed our hero, as he thought of the days aboard the derelict and in the open boat.

The voyage to Melbourne was uneventful, and to Tom's delight, when he reached there, he learned that little Jackie's father had reached home. He and a number of others had been picked up in one of the lifeboats, taken to a distant port, and had only just reached Australia. [207]

News was also had of the others of the ill-fated ship that had struck the derelict. Nearly all of them, including the captain, were saved, but chief of all Tom rejoiced in that Jackie's father was safe.

Little remains to tell. Shortly after their arrival in Australia with their son, Mr. and Mrs. Fairfield were entertained by Mr. Case, and Jackie renewed his friendship with Tom, whom he thought the greatest young man in all the world.

"He found my daddy," declared Jackie, and no one tried to make him believe otherwise.

Then, having completed all his business plans, a re-arrangement of which was made necessary because of the wreck, Mr. Fairfield, with his wife and Tom, started for home.

Their voyage to San Francisco was uneventful. They called at Honolulu on their way, and learned that Mr. Skeel had started in business, but had failed, because of unfair dealings, and had disappeared.

"Oh, Tom, I hope you never meet that man again!" said our hero's mother.

"Well, I think Tom took pretty good care of himself," spoke Mr. Fairfield a bit proudly. [208]

But whether or not Tom met Professor Skeel again, and what were the next adventures that befell our hero, may be learned by reading the next volume of this series, to be entitled, "Tom Fairfield in Camp; Or, The Secret of the Old Mill."

"Well, Tom, do you want to go back to Elmwood Hall?" asked Mr. Fairfield of his son a few weeks later, when they were once more back in their home at Briartown, having had a safe trip from San Francisco.

"I guess I do, dad. Adventures at sea are all right in their way, but they're too exciting for a steady diet. I think I can get back in time to pass with the Freshman class."

And Tom did, and a glorious time he had. For many a night there were secret gatherings in the room of himself and Jack Fitch, while the lads listened breathlessly to the tale of our hero's adventures.

And now, for a time, we will take leave of Tom Fairfield, to meet him again in new activities.

THE END

THE SPEEDWELL BOYS SERIES

By ROY ROCKWOOD

Author of "The Dave Dashaway Series," "Great Marvel Series," etc.

12mo. Illustrated. Price per volume, 65 cents, postpaid.

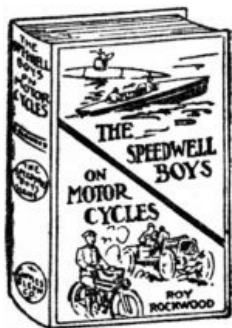
All boys who love to be on the go will welcome the Speedwell boys. They are clean cut and loyal lads.

THE SPEEDWELL BOYS ON MOTOR CYCLES *or The Mystery of a Great Conflagration*

The lads were poor, but they did a rich man a great service and he presented them with their motor cycles. What a great fire led to is exceedingly well told.

THE SPEEDWELL BOYS AND THEIR RACING AUTO *or A Run for the Golden Cup*

A tale of automobiling and of intense rivalry on the road. There was an endurance run and the boys entered the contest. On the run they rounded up some men who were wanted by the law.



THE SPEEDWELL BOYS AND THEIR POWER LAUNCH
or To the Rescue of the Castaways

Here is an unusual story. There was a wreck, and the lads, in their power launch, set out to the rescue. A vivid picture of a great storm adds to the interest of the tale.

THE SPEEDWELL BOYS IN A SUBMARINE
or The Lost Treasure of Rocky Cove

An old sailor knows of a treasure lost under water because of a cliff falling into the sea. The boys get a chance to go out in a submarine and they make a hunt for the treasure.

THE SPEEDWELL BOYS AND THEIR ICE RACER
or The Perils of a Great Blizzard

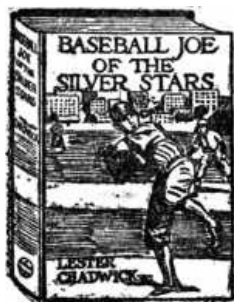
The boys had an idea for a new sort of iceboat, to be run by combined wind and motor power. How they built the craft, and what fine times they had on board of it, is well related.

CUPPLES & LEON CO., Publishers, NEW YORK

THE BASEBALL JOE SERIES

BY LESTER CHADWICK

12mo. Illustrated. Price per volume, \$.65, postpaid



1. BASEBALL JOE OF THE SILVER STARS
or The Rivals of Riverside
2. BASEBALL JOE ON THE SCHOOL NINE
or Pitching for the Blue Banner
3. BASEBALL JOE AT YALE
or Pitching for the College Championship
4. BASEBALL JOE IN THE CENTRAL LEAGUE
or Making Good as a Professional Pitcher
5. BASEBALL JOE IN THE BIG LEAGUE
or A Young Pitcher's Hardest Struggles
6. BASEBALL JOE ON THE GIANTS
or Making Good as a Twirler in the Metropolis
7. BASEBALL JOE IN THE WORLD SERIES
or Pitching for the Championship
8. BASEBALL JOE AROUND THE WORLD
or Pitching on a Grand Tour
9. BASEBALL JOE HOME RUN KING
or The Greatest Pitcher and Batter on Record
10. BASEBALL JOE SAVING THE LEAGUE
or Breaking Up a Great Conspiracy
11. BASEBALL JOE CAPTAIN OF THE TEAM
or Bitter Struggles on the Diamond
12. BASEBALL JOE CHAMPION OF THE LEAGUE
or The Record that was Worth While
13. BASEBALL JOE CLUB OWNER
or Putting the Home Town on the Map
14. BASEBALL JOE PITCHING WIZARD
or Triumphs Off and On the Diamond

Send for Our Free Illustrated Catalogue.

CUPPLES & LEON COMPANY, Publishers New York

THE BOMBA BOOKS

By ROY ROCKWOOD

12mo. Cloth. Illustrated. With colored jacket

Price per volume, 65 cents, postpaid



Bomba lived far back in the jungles of the Amazon with a half-demented naturalist who told the lad nothing of his past. The jungle boy was a lover of birds, and hunted animals with a bow and arrow and his trusty machete. He had a primitive education in some things, and his daring adventures will be followed with breathless interest by thousands.

1. BOMBA THE JUNGLE BOY
or The Old Naturalist's Secret

In the depth of the jungle Bomba lives a life replete with thrilling situations. Once he saves the lives of two American rubber hunters who ask him who he is, and how he had come into the jungle.

2. BOMBA THE JUNGLE BOY AT THE MOVING MOUNTAIN
or The Mystery of the Caves of Fire

Bomba travels through the jungle, encountering wild beasts and hostile natives. At last he trails the old man of the burning mountain to his cave and learns more concerning himself.

3. BOMBA THE JUNGLE BOY AT THE GIANT CATARACT
or Chief Nasconora and His Captives

Among the Pilati Indians he finds some white captives, and an aged opera singer, first to give Bomba real news of his forebears.

4. BOMBA THE JUNGLE BOY ON JAGUAR ISLAND
or Adrift on the River of Mystery

Jaguar Island was a spot as dangerous as it was mysterious and Bomba was warned to keep away. But the plucky boy sallied forth.

5. BOMBA THE JUNGLE BOY IN THE ABANDONED CITY
or A Treasure Ten Thousand Years Old

Years ago this great city had sunk out of sight beneath the trees of the jungle. A wily half-breed thought to carry away its treasure.

6. BOMBA THE JUNGLE BOY ON TERROR TRAIL
or The Mysterious Men from the Sky

Bomba strikes out through the vast Amazonian jungles and soon finds himself on the dreaded Terror Trail.

Send For Our Free Illustrated Catalogue

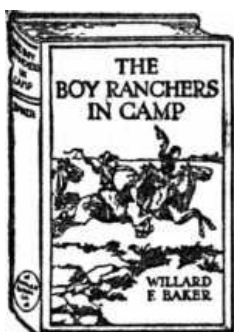
CUPPLES & LEON COMPANY, Publishers New York

THE BOY RANCHERS SERIES

By WILLARD F. BAKER

12mo. Cloth. Illustrated. Jacket in full colors

Price per volume, 65 cents, postpaid



Stories of the great west, with cattle ranches as a setting, related in such a style as to captivate the hearts of all boys.

1. THE BOY RANCHERS
or Solving the Mystery at Diamond X

Two eastern boys visit their cousin. They become involved in an exciting mystery.

2. THE BOY RANCHERS IN CAMP
or The Water Fight at Diamond X

Returning for a visit, the two eastern lads learn, with delight, that they are to become boy ranchers.

3. THE BOY RANCHERS ON THE TRAIL
or The Diamond X After Cattle Rustlers

Our boy heroes take the trail after Del Pinzo and his outlaws.

4. THE BOY RANCHERS AMONG THE INDIANS
or Trailing the Yaquis

Rosemary and Floyd are captured by the Yaqui Indians.

5. THE BOY RANCHERS AT SPUR CREEK
or Fighting the Sheep Herders

Dangerous struggle against desperadoes for land rights.

6. THE BOY RANCHERS IN THE DESERT
or Diamond X and the Lost Mine

One night a strange old miner almost dead from hunger and hardship arrived at the bunk house. The boys cared for him and he told them of the lost desert mine.

7. THE BOY RANCHERS ON ROARING RIVER
or Diamond X and the Chinese Smugglers

The boy ranchers help capture Delton's gang who were engaged in smuggling Chinese across the border.

8. THE BOY RANCHERS IN DEATH VALLEY
or Diamond X and the Poison Mystery

The boy ranchers track mysterious Death into his cave.

Send For Our Free Illustrated Catalogue

CUPPLES & LEON COMPANY, Publishers New York

Transcriber's Notes:

Printer, punctuation and spelling inaccuracies were silently corrected, except as indicated below.

Archaic and variable spelling is preserved.

Variations in hyphenation and compound words have been preserved.

Inconsistencies in formatting and punctuation of individual advertisements have been retained.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK TOM FAIRFIELD AT SEA; OR, THE WRECK OF THE SILVER STAR ***

Updated editions will replace the previous one—the old editions will be renamed.

Creating the works from print editions not protected by U.S. copyright law means that no one owns a United States copyright in these works, so the Foundation (and you!) can copy and distribute it in the United States without permission and without paying copyright royalties. Special rules, set forth in the General Terms of Use part of this license, apply to copying and distributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works to protect the PROJECT GUTENBERG™ concept and trademark. Project Gutenberg is a registered trademark, and may not be used if you charge for an eBook, except by following the terms of the trademark license, including paying royalties for use of the Project Gutenberg trademark. If you do not charge anything for copies of this eBook, complying with the trademark license is very easy. You may use this eBook for nearly any purpose such as creation of derivative works, reports, performances and research. Project Gutenberg eBooks may be modified and printed and given away—you may do practically ANYTHING in the United States with eBooks not protected by U.S. copyright law. Redistribution is subject to the trademark license, especially commercial redistribution.

START: FULL LICENSE
THE FULL PROJECT GUTENBERG LICENSE
PLEASE READ THIS BEFORE YOU DISTRIBUTE OR USE THIS WORK

To protect the Project Gutenberg™ mission of promoting the free distribution of electronic works, by using or distributing this work (or any other work associated in any way with the phrase “Project Gutenberg”), you agree to comply with all the terms of the Full Project Gutenberg™ License available with this file or online at www.gutenberg.org/license.

Section 1. General Terms of Use and Redistributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works

1.A. By reading or using any part of this Project Gutenberg™ electronic work, you indicate that you have read, understand, agree to and accept all the terms of this license and intellectual property (trademark/copyright) agreement. If you do not agree to abide by all the terms of this agreement, you must cease using and return or destroy all copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in your possession. If you paid a fee for obtaining a copy of or access to a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work and you do not agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement, you may obtain a refund from the person or entity to whom you paid the fee as set forth in paragraph 1.E.8.

1.B. “Project Gutenberg” is a registered trademark. It may only be used on or associated in any way with an electronic work by people who agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement. There are a few things that you can do with most Project Gutenberg™ electronic works even without complying with the full terms of this agreement. See paragraph 1.C below. There are a lot of things you can do with Project Gutenberg™ electronic works if you follow the terms of this agreement and help preserve free future access to Project Gutenberg™ electronic works. See paragraph 1.E below.

1.C. The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation (“the Foundation” or PGLAF), owns a compilation copyright in the collection of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works. Nearly all the individual works in the collection are in the public domain in the United States. If an individual work is unprotected by copyright law in the United States and you are located in the United States, we do not claim a right to prevent you from copying, distributing, performing, displaying or creating derivative works based on the work as long as all references to Project Gutenberg are removed. Of course, we hope that you will support the Project Gutenberg™ mission of promoting free access to electronic works by freely sharing Project Gutenberg™ works in compliance with the terms of this agreement for keeping the Project Gutenberg™ name associated with the work. You can easily comply with the terms of this agreement by keeping this work in the same format with its attached full Project Gutenberg™ License when you share it without charge with others.

1.D. The copyright laws of the place where you are located also govern what you can do with this work. Copyright laws in most countries are in a constant state of change. If you are outside the United States, check the laws of your country in addition to the terms of this agreement before downloading, copying, displaying, performing, distributing or creating derivative works based on this work or any other Project Gutenberg™ work. The Foundation makes no representations concerning the copyright status of any work in any country other than the United States.

1.E. Unless you have removed all references to Project Gutenberg:

1.E.1. The following sentence, with active links to, or other immediate access to, the full Project Gutenberg™ License must appear prominently whenever any copy of a Project Gutenberg™ work (any work on which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” appears, or with which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” is associated) is accessed, displayed, performed, viewed, copied or distributed:

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.org. If you are not located in the United States, you will have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

1.E.2. If an individual Project Gutenberg™ electronic work is derived from texts not protected by U.S. copyright law (does not contain a notice indicating that it is posted with permission of the copyright holder), the work can be copied and distributed to anyone in the United States without paying any fees or charges. If you are redistributing or providing access to a work with the phrase “Project Gutenberg” associated with or appearing on the work, you must comply either with the requirements of paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 or obtain permission for the use of the work and the Project Gutenberg™ trademark as set forth in paragraphs 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.3. If an individual Project Gutenberg™ electronic work is posted with the permission of the copyright holder, your use and distribution must comply with both paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 and any additional terms imposed by the copyright holder. Additional terms will be linked to the Project Gutenberg™ License for all works posted with the permission of the copyright holder found at the beginning of this work.

1.E.4. Do not unlink or detach or remove the full Project Gutenberg™ License terms from this work, or any files containing a part of this work or any other work associated with Project Gutenberg™.

1.E.5. Do not copy, display, perform, distribute or redistribute this electronic work, or any part of this electronic work, without prominently displaying the sentence set forth in paragraph 1.E.1 with active links or immediate access to the full terms of the Project Gutenberg™ License.

1.E.6. You may convert to and distribute this work in any binary, compressed, marked up, nonproprietary or proprietary form, including any word processing or hypertext form. However, if you provide access to or distribute copies of a Project Gutenberg™ work in a format other than “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other format used in the official version posted on the official Project Gutenberg™ website (www.gutenberg.org), you must, at no additional cost, fee or expense to the user, provide a copy, a means of exporting a copy, or a means of obtaining a copy upon request, of the work in its original “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other form. Any alternate format must include the full Project Gutenberg™ License as specified in paragraph 1.E.1.

1.E.7. Do not charge a fee for access to, viewing, displaying, performing, copying or distributing any Project Gutenberg™ works unless you comply with paragraph 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.8. You may charge a reasonable fee for copies of or providing access to or distributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works provided that:

- You pay a royalty fee of 20% of the gross profits you derive from the use of Project Gutenberg™ works calculated using the method you already use to calculate your applicable taxes. The fee is owed to the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, but he has agreed to donate royalties under this paragraph to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation. Royalty payments must be paid within 60 days following each date on which you prepare (or are legally required to prepare) your periodic tax returns. Royalty payments should be clearly marked as such and sent to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation at the address specified in Section 4, “Information about donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation.”
- You provide a full refund of any money paid by a user who notifies you in writing (or by e-mail) within 30 days of receipt that s/he does not agree to the terms of the full Project Gutenberg™ License. You must require such a user to return or destroy all copies of the works possessed in a physical medium and discontinue all use of and all access to other copies of Project Gutenberg™ works.
- You provide, in accordance with paragraph 1.F.3, a full refund of any money paid for a work or a replacement copy, if a defect in the electronic work is discovered and reported to you within 90 days of receipt of the work.
- You comply with all other terms of this agreement for free distribution of Project Gutenberg™ works.

1.E.9. If you wish to charge a fee or distribute a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work or group of works on different terms than are set forth in this agreement, you must obtain permission in writing from the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the manager of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark. Contact the Foundation as set forth in Section 3 below.

1.F.

1.F.1. Project Gutenberg volunteers and employees expend considerable effort to identify, do copyright research on, transcribe and proofread works not protected by U.S. copyright law in creating the Project Gutenberg™ collection. Despite these efforts, Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, and the medium on which they may be stored, may contain “Defects,” such as, but not limited to, incomplete, inaccurate or corrupt data, transcription errors, a copyright or other intellectual property infringement, a defective or damaged disk or other medium, a computer virus, or computer codes that damage or cannot be read by your equipment.

1.F.2. LIMITED WARRANTY, DISCLAIMER OF DAMAGES - Except for the “Right of Replacement or Refund” described in paragraph 1.F.3, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, and any other party distributing a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work under this agreement, disclaim all liability to you for damages, costs and expenses, including legal fees. YOU AGREE THAT YOU HAVE NO REMEDIES FOR NEGLIGENCE, STRICT LIABILITY, BREACH OF WARRANTY OR BREACH OF CONTRACT EXCEPT THOSE PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH 1.F.3. YOU AGREE THAT THE FOUNDATION, THE TRADEMARK OWNER, AND ANY DISTRIBUTOR UNDER THIS AGREEMENT WILL NOT BE LIABLE TO YOU FOR ACTUAL, DIRECT, INDIRECT, CONSEQUENTIAL, PUNITIVE OR INCIDENTAL DAMAGES EVEN IF YOU GIVE NOTICE OF THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH DAMAGE.

1.F.3. LIMITED RIGHT OF REPLACEMENT OR REFUND - If you discover a defect in this electronic work within 90 days of receiving it, you can receive a refund of the money (if any) you paid for it by sending a written explanation to the person you received the work from. If you received the work on a physical medium, you must return the medium with your written explanation. The person or entity that provided you with the defective work may elect to provide a replacement copy in lieu of a refund. If you received the work electronically, the person or entity providing it to you may choose to give you a second opportunity to receive the work electronically in lieu of a refund. If the second copy is also defective, you may demand a refund in writing without further opportunities to fix the problem.

1.F.4. Except for the limited right of replacement or refund set forth in paragraph 1.F.3, this work is provided to you 'AS-IS', WITH NO OTHER WARRANTIES OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR ANY PURPOSE.

1.F.5. Some states do not allow disclaimers of certain implied warranties or the exclusion or limitation of certain types of damages. If any disclaimer or limitation set forth in this agreement violates the law of the state applicable to this agreement, the agreement shall be interpreted to make the maximum disclaimer or limitation permitted by the applicable state law. The invalidity or unenforceability of any provision of this agreement shall not void the remaining provisions.

1.F.6. INDEMNITY - You agree to indemnify and hold the Foundation, the trademark owner, any agent or employee of the Foundation, anyone providing copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in accordance with this agreement, and any volunteers associated with the production, promotion and distribution of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, harmless from all liability, costs and expenses, including legal fees, that arise directly or indirectly from any of the following which you do or cause to occur: (a) distribution of this or any Project Gutenberg™ work, (b) alteration, modification, or additions or deletions to any Project Gutenberg™ work, and (c) any Defect you cause.

Section 2. Information about the Mission of Project Gutenberg™

Project Gutenberg™ is synonymous with the free distribution of electronic works in formats readable by the widest variety of computers including obsolete, old, middle-aged and new computers. It exists because of the efforts of hundreds of volunteers and donations from people in all walks of life.

Volunteers and financial support to provide volunteers with the assistance they need are critical to reaching Project Gutenberg™'s goals and ensuring that the Project Gutenberg™ collection will remain freely available for generations to come. In 2001, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation was created to provide a secure and permanent future for Project Gutenberg™ and future generations. To learn more about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation and how your efforts and donations can help, see Sections 3 and 4 and the Foundation information page at www.gutenberg.org.

Section 3. Information about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)(3) educational corporation organized under the laws of the state of Mississippi and granted tax exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service. The Foundation's EIN or federal tax identification number is 64-6221541. Contributions to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation are tax deductible to the full extent permitted by U.S. federal laws and your state's laws.

The Foundation's business office is located at 809 North 1500 West, Salt Lake City, UT 84116, (801) 596-1887. Email contact links and up to date contact information can be found at the Foundation's website and official page at www.gutenberg.org/contact

Section 4. Information about Donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

Project Gutenberg™ depends upon and cannot survive without widespread public support and donations to carry out its mission of increasing the number of public domain and licensed works that can be freely distributed in machine-readable form accessible by the widest array of equipment including outdated equipment. Many small donations (\$1 to \$5,000) are particularly important to maintaining tax exempt status with the IRS.

The Foundation is committed to complying with the laws regulating charities and charitable donations in all 50 states of the United States. Compliance requirements are not uniform and it takes a considerable effort, much paperwork and many fees to meet and keep up with these requirements. We do not solicit donations in locations where we have not received written confirmation of compliance. To SEND DONATIONS or determine the status of compliance for any particular state visit www.gutenberg.org/donate.

While we cannot and do not solicit contributions from states where we have not met the solicitation requirements, we know of no prohibition against accepting unsolicited donations from donors in such states who approach us with offers to donate.

International donations are gratefully accepted, but we cannot make any statements concerning tax treatment of donations received from outside the United States. U.S. laws alone swamp our small staff.

Please check the Project Gutenberg web pages for current donation methods and addresses. Donations are accepted in a number of other ways including checks, online payments and credit card donations. To donate, please visit: www.gutenberg.org/donate

Section 5. General Information About Project Gutenberg™ electronic works

Professor Michael S. Hart was the originator of the Project Gutenberg™ concept of a library of electronic works that could be freely shared with anyone. For forty years, he produced and distributed Project Gutenberg™ eBooks with only a loose network of volunteer support.

Project Gutenberg™ eBooks are often created from several printed editions, all of which are confirmed as not protected by copyright in the U.S. unless a copyright notice is included. Thus, we do not necessarily keep eBooks in compliance with any particular paper edition.

Most people start at our website which has the main PG search facility: www.gutenberg.org.

This website includes information about Project Gutenberg™, including how to make donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, how to help produce our new eBooks, and how to subscribe to our email newsletter to hear about new eBooks.