THE ACADEMY BOYS IN CAMP

Title: The Academy Boys in Camp

Author: S. F. Spear

Release Date: June 19, 2015 [eBook #33968]

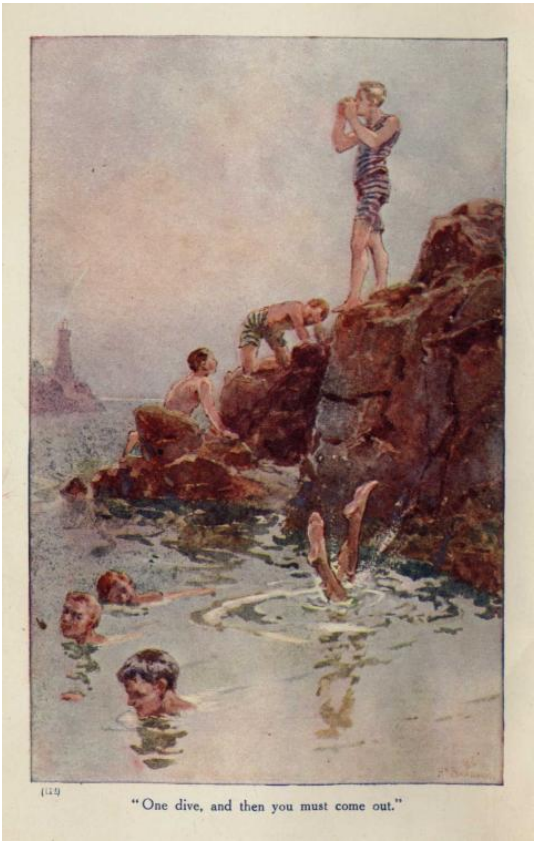
Language: English

*** START OF THIS PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE ACADEMY BOYS IN CAMP ***

Produced by Al Haines.

THE ACADEMY BOYS IN CAMP

BY S. F. SPEAR



"One dive, and then you must come out."

LONDON, EDINBURGH,
DUBLIN, & NEW YORK
THOMAS NELSON
AND SONS
1909

CONTENTS.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

THE ACADEMY BOYS IN CAMP.

CHAPTER I.

THE ROLL-CALL.

Groups of excited boys were gathered in the school-room of Massillon Academy one morning in June, near the end of the term.

So busy were they with their conversation that the bell had sounded twice before they began to disperse, and even then the last words were exchanged as they went to their seats.

"Order!" was the stern command from the teacher's desk.

Quiet at once followed, and the roll was called as usual, followed by morning devotions.

Then Mr. Bernard came forward to the edge of the platform, and said quietly, "The leaves containing the lesson for the day have been torn from my 'Anabasis,' and a rumour has reached me that all the class-books have been similarly mutilated. Let those who have thus lost portions of their books stand up."

Fifteen boys, the entire class, sprang to their feet as if they had been waiting for the signal–some with a laugh, as if they considered it a good joke; others indignant; and all with an air of excitement and expectation, knowing that the offender was sure to be called to account.

Mr. Bernard glanced from face to face with short, sharp scrutiny, and said, without further comment, "Be seated."

Taking the large school ledger from the desk, he said, "I will call the roll. Let each boy answer on his honour. If you say 'No,' I shall understand that you had nothing to do with planning or executing this mischief."

There were eighty-five boys in the Academy; and as their names were called, each and all, from Adams to Warden, answered with a ringing "No!" After the last name there was a silence.

Mr. Bernard put aside the ledger, and surveyed the school. A slow, sweeping glance of the keen gray eyes searched every boyish face.

The most guilty-looking lad in the room was Joe Chester–"Little Joe" as every one called him; and Joe Chester was above suspicion.

Mr. Bernard did not for a moment suspect that Joe's confusion was the result of guilt; but knowing the boy so well, he felt sure that he had some knowledge of the offender, and that the knowledge was a burden.

After another glance along the seats where the older boys sat, the teacher said, very soberly, and with a peculiar look in his searching eyes: "Is it possible that we have a liar amongst us? A LIAR!"

The boys shrank visibly from this plain speaking, but the teacher repeated it slowly, "A LIAR!"

A lie was a deadly sin with Mr. Bernard, and the boy who would tell a deliberate falsehood he considered mean enough and bad enough for any wickedness.

He was a "liar," and no other word would describe him, even if he wore the finest broadcloth, or stood at the head of the class. The word had been spoken

almost in a whisper, but with such emphasis that it seemed to ring through the school-room, and to come echoing back from the four walls.

Every honest boy felt thankful that the word could not apply to him; and some who had never considered an untruth a very shocking thing felt they would never be guilty of another.

To the astonishment of all, after another silence, in which the echo of the terrible word seemed still sounding through the room, Mr. Bernard said quietly, "You are dismissed."

The matter was surely a serious one when they were dismissed so early in the day with lessons unheard. The boys passed out in silence, most of them forgetting to be glad of a holiday.

Not till they were out of the building did any boy venture even to whisper to his neighbour.

Some retired at once to their rooms; but most of the pupils gathered in knots on the playground, to talk over the subject uppermost in the minds of all.

Joe Chester was not ready to discuss the question, and was not intending to join the crowd of talkers; but as he passed there was a cry: "Chester! Ho there, Chester!"

He waved his hand towards them, and was passing on, when one of the older boys seized him roughly by the collar, and straightway pulled him into one of the groups.

Joe struggled bravely to release himself; but being one of the smallest boys in the class, he stood small chance of escaping his assailant; so laughing good-naturedly, he allowed himself to be drawn into the centre of the crowd of eager talkers.

"That's right! Don't let him off till he gives a guess as to the scamp!" shouted several boys.

"Perhaps he did it himself," said the tall youth who had appointed himself policeman to collar Joe and bring him to the conclave.

"See here, Ralph Drayton, if I had been mean enough to play such a miserable trick with the books, I wouldn't be mean enough to deny it," said Joe stoutly, throwing his head back proudly, and looking the other straight in the eye.

Drayton laughed derisively, and said with a sneer, "Oh, I forgot; he is 'Saint Bernard's' pet billy-goat. *He* never would do anything bad, would he? Oh no." Then in a change of tone, he added in a conciliatory way, "Never mind me, Chester; of course I am funning. No one suspects *you*."

"No, I suppose not," said Joe coolly.

This he said with his honest blue eyes fastened searchingly on Ralph Drayton's small black ones.

The black eyes fell beneath the glance, but Drayton quickly recovered him-

self, and loosing his grasp on Joe's collar, said with a laugh, "I'll bet anything that the janitor did it!"

"Oh, pooh! The janitor!" said a half-dozen boys derisively.

"What did *he* care about the lesson?"

"Well, who then could it be? If I could find out, I'd thrash him for spoiling my book. I'll get a lecture from father at home when he sees that torn book. You see my brother Nelson is coming next year, and he will take my books as I leave them. My copy was new too!" and Ralph's tone was one of righteous indignation.

Joe Chester was too impatient to listen longer, and turned to go; but Drayton shouted, "Hold on, Chester! where are you going?"

"In," answered Joe shortly, motioning with his head towards the commons.

"Wait for me; I am going in too. It's no use to stand here and guess who did the mischief."

Joe Chester walked straight on, but Ralph Drayton overtook him with three strides.

As soon as they were out of hearing of the group on the playground, Drayton turned suddenly and said, "See here, Joe Chester, what do you know about this fuss?"

Joe walked on and made no answer.

"You know something. I saw it in your eye just now back there, and I saw it in your red face when old Bernard called the roll. You can't cheat me!"

"Well, Drayton, I am sure I don't want to cheat you. Yes, I do know something about it."

"What! do you know who tore the books?"

"Yes."

This Joe said steadily, with his eyes upon Ralph's face.

Both boys paused in their walk; and Joe, leaning back against the fence, folded his arms.

"Who was it?"

"You want to know, really?"

"To be sure I want to know."

"Well, Drayton, it was a fellow about your size; and the sooner he goes to Mr. Bernard and owns it, the better for him and for all the rest of us."

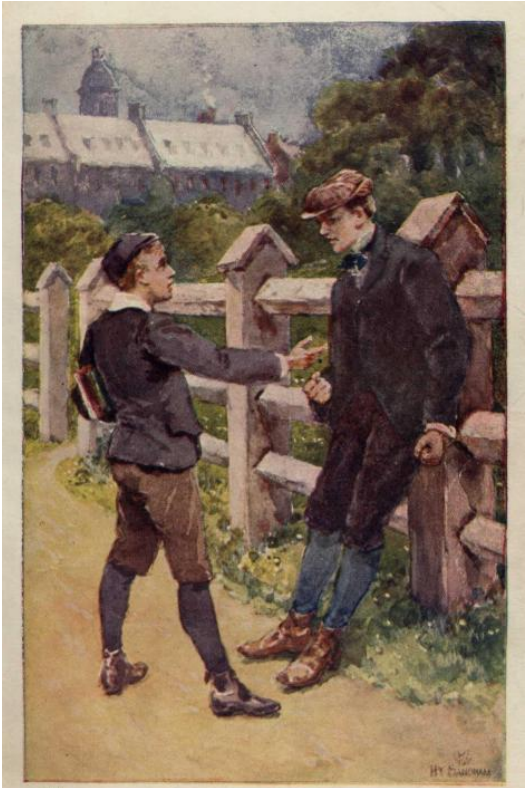
Drayton turned pale, and said, "Chester, do you mean that I did it?"

"I do mean just that."

Drayton's fists doubled up threateningly, and he was about to assume a fighting attitude, when he changed his plan, and tried to coax Joe.

"Oh come, Joe, you know better. You are only chaffing. I thought at first that you were in earnest."

"You thought right then," added Joe dryly.



"It was a fellow about your size."

Drayton made no reply, but tried to stare indignantly at Joe.

The effort failed; his own eyes dropped before the steady, honest eyes that looked him through.

"How do you know?–what made you think I did it?" added Drayton hurriedly, fearing that he had admitted his guilt.

"I saw you burning paper in the garden last evening, and although I had no idea then that you were up to mischief, I felt sure of it as soon as I found the fellows all complaining about their books."

"Pooh! those were letters I was burning–some I didn't want to carry home."

"They were not letters, they were book-leaves. I saw them plainly."

"Spy!" hissed Drayton furiously. "You hung around and watched."

"I did not. I was passing along that way because I left my geometry under the big tree, and I had to finish my lesson before bedtime."

"Oh yes," sneered Drayton. "You had time to take special notice of the size of the paper. You'd no business there; and I have a good mind to thrash you within an inch of your life."

Joe laughed at this furious threat. "I didn't know you owned the garden, or I would have kept out of it. As for thrashing, you know I don't thrash easy, even by a boy of your size. You tried it once. If you think it will help you out of your scrape, you can try it again."

Drayton looked amazed. Here was little Joe Chester not only defying him, but actually laughing at his threat as if it were a joke.

"Well, I'll tell you what it is, Chester: if you breathe a word about this I will have my revenge somehow."

Chester began to look fierce now himself. "Come, Drayton, you have blustered and fumed long enough. You had better change your course. I am not easily frightened."

Drayton had reached the same conclusion, and, changing his tone, said almost pleadingly,–

"Chester, if I am found out in this I'll be sent home, and my father would be awfully cut up if I had to leave this school. He is in a hurry to get me into college, and this would put me back if I get expelled. Don't you tell what you know, will you, Joe?" Then he added hurriedly, "I was an idiot to do it! I knew it as soon as I tore out the first leaf, which happened to be from Mr. Bernard's book. After that was gone, I was in for the business, and I just rushed it through."

"What put such a silly joke into your head?" asked Joe, curious to have that explained.

"Oh, Ben Carver and I planned it together. We thought it would be fun to get up a fuss over the books; but Ben backed out."

"Then Ben Carver knows it too?" asked Joe, with a sigh of relief, as if his

burden were lightened by this assurance that some one else shared the secret.

"Yes, Carver knows, but I can trust him. He will just as soon lie as not, though he hadn't the pluck to carry out the plan. It all rests with you, Chester: if you will stand by me I shall come through all right."

"Well, Drayton, I'll do anything I can, except lie, for you. You needn't ask that."

"What if Bernard asks if you know?"

"If he asks me that question plump and fair, I shall have to say yes."

Drayton looked frightened and pale.

"Then it is all up with me, for he *will* ask as sure as fate."

"Now, Ralph, take my advice," said Joe, putting his arm over Drayton's shoulder. "Go and tell Mr. Bernard the truth. It isn't too late. Come; I will go with you."

The boy shook off Joe's arm, and said, "Nonsense, Joe; he might forgive the mischief, but he never would overlook the lie. I would be expelled at once. No, Joe, my only hope is in you. If you won't lie for me–"

"And you do not expect me to do that?" interrupted Joe proudly.

"No. I suppose you wouldn't lie to save yourself, and I can't expect you to for me, but I hate to go home in disgrace. The fact is, though I have been bragging around here, my father has pretty hard work to give us boys an education. Oh, such an idiot as I was!"

"Well, Drayton, I am sorry for you. I really am; and you may depend on me never to expose you. I'll let you do that yourself."

Drayton brightened up.

"Then you will keep mum?"

"Of course I will."

"Lie or no lie?"

"I didn't say that at all. If Mr. Bernard asks if I know, I shall be obliged to say yes, but he can't make me tell who did it."

"Not if he should threaten to expel you?"

Joe hesitated for a moment, and then said, "He would hardly do that, but if he should,–no, not even then."

"Joe Chester, you are a good fellow! Give us your hand! Now mum is the word!"

CHAPTER II.

A COSTLY "YES."

It was near the close of the summer term, the end of the school-year, and the boys were looking forward with brightest anticipations towards the camping season. Provided their school reports had averaged well throughout the year, the boys were given a fortnight of camp-life before scattering to their several homes.

Sometimes they had gone to the mountains with their tents and accoutrements for hunting and fishing; sometimes to Lake Myrtle; and last year they had explored Barrimore river from the mouth to the source.

This year Mr. Bernard had obtained permission to take his boys out to Whaleback, an island containing about a hundred acres, uninhabited save by the family of the lighthouse-keeper.

There they would be "monarchs of all they surveyed," and no one would be disturbed by their noise–consequently no one to complain of "those dreadful boys."

This excursion was the great treat of the year for the Academy boys, and through the spring months it was the favourite theme for conversation.

Some ten or fifteen of the boys had forfeited their right to join the excursion by bad conduct or incorrigible laziness with lessons; but those who had reason to expect to go were already collecting and putting in order fishing-tackle, guns, bows and arrows, and all the things that boys consider essential to camp-life.

The rifle barrels were polished till they shone like steel mirrors; and under the careful supervision of one of the teachers, the owners practised with them two or three times a week.

The archery club had their targets set in the playground, and were in daily practice, the members considering themselves rivals of the rifle club.

Joe Chester was one of the most eager of all for the fun of camp-life, and he, with some four or five other boys, had ordered a boat to be sent to the landing where they were to take the steamer for the island.

Two or three other boats had also been engaged for the use of the scholars–row-boats; for Mr. Bernard absolutely declined the responsibility of sail-boats, even for those who were accustomed to manage them.

During the forenoon following the summary dismissal of school, the boys were anxiously discussing the probable effect of this mischief upon their vacation trip; and, after all, their conjectures ended in a return to the same question, "Who can the mean fellow be who made all this trouble?"

In the midst of the discussion the great bell sounded, and the boys returned to the school-room.

There were no laggards now; every boy was in his seat before the desk-bell

had been struck.

Mr. Bernard stood in the desk with his hand on the open ledger, while the other teachers were seated near by.

The room was so still that a pin dropped would have sounded loud, and the boys almost held their breath while they waited for Mr. Bernard to speak.

He was evidently in no haste; lessons could wait. After a silence that seemed very long to the boys, he began to speak.

It was a short, sharp lecture upon the meanness of falsehood and all deceit, without a word in regard to the original trouble–the mutilation of the books.

I think it doubtful if a lecturer ever before had so attentive and awe-struck an audience. At the close he said, "Boys, I will call the roll once more. Let each answer on his honour–if he have any honour–whether he mutilated the books of the class in 'Anabasis.'"

Again from the beginning to the end of the roll the names were called, and again every voice unhesitatingly answered, "No."

Joe Chester's face was crimson; he dared not look up.

Some of his school-mates noticed his confusion, and whispered to their neighbours, "Look at little Joe! Do you suppose he did it after all?"

"Is it possible?" exclaimed Mr. Bernard in a despairing tone. "Have I been harbouring a liar among my boys all the year?"

With a sigh he opened the book again, and said, "On your honour, boys, answer me this question: Do you know who did the mischief? Although I confess I almost forget *that* in my regret that one of my boys has told a direct lie."

Once more the boys answered to their names, "No."

Joe listened almost heart-sick, hoping that Carver would say yes; but his negative was a decided one.

Then followed "Cheney."

"No."

"Chester."

The whole burden was to rest on him after all.

Joe blushed to the very roots of his hair, and without glancing up, answered bravely, "Yes, sir."

There was a little pause, followed by a suppressed buzz of surprise; then Mr. Bernard proceeded with the roll.

Again Drayton's name was called; and, as before, he answered boldly, "No."

No one but Joe Chester in all the school knew aught of the mischief-maker.

The ledger was returned to its place in the desk, and leaving the room in charge of Mr. Andrews, one of the head-teachers, Mr. Bernard retired to his study, and summoned poor Joe for an interview.

The boy turned as pale as he had been rosy, as he passed up the room and

across the platform to the door of the study, and disappeared.

"Little Chester, after all!" said some.

"Ain't I glad I am not Joe Chester?" and similar expressions, were exchanged by the boys, until Mr. Andrews began to distribute black marks, which had a tendency to restore order, as a certain number of these marks would prevent participation in the summer gipsying, and some of the boys were alarmingly near the limit.

The eighty-five tongues were stilled, but twice eighty-five eyes were continually straying towards the study door behind the desk. In the meantime, Drayton could only conceal his anxiety and alarm by pretending to be very much engaged looking up a Latin translation, while all the time he was saying over and over to himself, "Joe promised to be mum! Joe promised to be mum!" and the minutes seemed hours.

"What could teacher and scholar be doing?"

The boys were all asking themselves that question, as they studied, or tried to study, in obedience to Mr. Andrews's orders.

It was a full hour before Joe appeared and came across the platform.

He did not glance up as he came down the room, and hastily seated himself, bending over his book, with both hands thrust through his short curls.

Mr. Bernard did not appear at once, and the lessons went on as usual.

When the usual hour for closing came, Mr. Bernard addressed the school again:–

"I am aware that among boys there is a code of honour in regard to information that will implicate a companion, and I have respect for it; but in this case, if the boy who is guilty will not confess, I deem it my duty to the school to hunt him down, and it seems to me that ordinary scruples ought not to prevent justice. This lie rests like a cloud over the whole school. Chester refuses to tell me what he knows."

A murmur of applause followed, but a heavy rap on the desk silenced it, and Mr. Bernard continued:–

"I am sorry to add, that unless the guilty boy is manly enough to save him by confessing his guilt, Chester must lose his fortnight in camp."

An audible "Oh no!" followed this. But Joe's voice did not join in the murmur; he only bent a little lower over his book, and looked steadily at the page without seeing a word upon it.

"You are dismissed."

The bell gave the signal for each class, and the boys passed out in an orderly way; but once outside there was a shout, "Chester! Chester!"

As soon as he appeared he was seized by the crowd and borne on the shoulders of his comrades to the centre of the playground, where all began cheering

and scolding him in the same breath.

"If any fellow is mean enough to keep still and let you bear the punishment, he ought to be told on! I wouldn't keep his secret for him!" exclaimed one of the older boys.

"I declare I didn't know we had such a mean fellow among us!" said another.

"He must feel about the size of a dried pea about this time."

"But he won't be mean enough to let you stay behind and go himself to camp out," said Fred Wurden, one of the quiet boys.

Some of the more impulsive boys cried, "If Joe can't go, we won't any of us go!"

Joe said little, and went away to his room as soon as possible with David Winter, his room-mate. Drayton had not joined the indignant crowd. He and Ben Carver had an errand at the village, and hurried away; and during the remainder of the term these two boys held themselves aloof from the other boys, who were, however, too busy with their plans for vacation to remark upon it.

Only once did Ralph and Joe meet alone, and then Ralph said, "I don't know how this affair is to end, old boy; but I would rather be in your shoes than mine."

"So would I!" exclaimed Joe heartily.

At length the examinations were over, and the last day of school was about closing, when Mr. Bernard said, "To-morrow morning at six we are to start for the Cape to take steamer for our island camp-ground. Several boys will be left behind, having forfeited their pleasure. Unless the boy who was guilty of the mischief, and the far greater crime of hiding himself behind a lie, will confess, Joseph Chester must stay behind."

There was a pause long enough to allow the guilty boy time to speak.

"There is time now for the guilty boy or boys to speak."

No voice answered, and the silence grew painful.

Then Mr. Bernard said, "Chester, my boy, unless you receive other orders you will remain behind. This, I think you know, gives me more pain than it does you, and I am sure you understand why I deem it necessary."

Chester bowed, and made a desperate effort to bear the sentence bravely, but soon resorted to the old attitude, and sat staring blindly at his book, with both elbows on the desk and both hands buried in his hair.

The boys passed out of the room when dismissed, and only Chester remained behind with the teachers, who waited to speak with him; but finding that he could not well bear their pity, and that his quivering lips could not frame a reply, each expressed his regret at the disappointment, and presently Joe occupied the room alone. Still he showed no sign of moving after a half-hour had passed.

Presently the door opened and some one peeped in; then Joe heard a step

inside, and with the pretence of looking up a book on the different desks, he stood a moment at Joe's side, and dropped a note on his open Virgil, and then hastily retreated.

Joe unfolded the note and read:–

"JOE, I hate to go. I only go to keep my father from finding out. You can't hate me any more than I hate myself. D."

That evening Joe kept his room; he could not bear to hear his friends saying continually, "Poor Joe!" "Oh, if Joe could go!"

CHAPTER III.

OFF FOR WHALEBACK.

In the early morning Joe heard the shouts of the merry crowd as they went down through the Academy grounds to the river where the steamer was waiting to take the party out to the island. The boys were laden with blankets, fishing-rods, guns, or other warlike implements; while tents and cooking utensils were taken along in a waggon.

David Winter remained behind with Joe until the whistle sounded, feeling sure that the culprit would confess at the last moment, and that Joe would go after all.

Finding that the hope had been a vain one, he gave Joe a parting hug that would have done credit to the most affectionate bear in the world, and without a word darted out of the room.

As soon as Joe was alone he opened a little note that he had been holding tight in his hand–one that Mr. Bernard had put there himself when he came to the door to say good-bye.

It was a short note, but it gave Joe a great deal of pleasure,

"DEAR BOY,–I am sure you know that I am more than sorry to leave you behind.

"It seems to me the only way to reach the offender, and I hope he will yet confess. Be sure I shall send for you at once if he should do so. Meanwhile don't go home. The summons may come at any time. Yours with affection, J. W. BERNARD."

The boat was gay with flags that streamed from every available point, and the band was playing the liveliest airs as the boys stepped on board.

"Are we all here?" asked Mr. Bernard, as he stood on the top of the saloon and glanced over the crowd of lads.

"All but little Joe!" said one or two boys a little spitefully.

"Carver isn't here yet, sir!" said another.

"Sure enough; where is Carver?" asked the teacher.

"Blow the whistle again!" shouted Mr. Bernard.

"Drayton is missing too!" exclaimed Mr. Andrews.

"O father, here's a note one of the chambermaids gave me for you. I forgot all about it," cried Max Bernard, the teacher's little son, who was to make one of the party.

Mr. Bernard opened the note hastily and read:–

"MR. BERNARD,–I can't go with you. Let Joe Chester go, please. I did the mischief, and was afraid to tell. Ben Carver knew about it, but did not do it. We are going off together. Please send our fathers word that we are safe. RALPH DRAYTON.

"*P.S.*–I was never sorrier in my life, Mr. Bernard."

Mr. Bernard read the note again carefully, and then said to the waiting crowd,–

"Drayton and Carver have gone, they do not say where; but in this note which they leave behind, Drayton confesses that he is the guilty person."

A murmur of astonishment passed around the throng of boys, which was changed to a cheer when Mr. Bernard added,–

"Who will go back for Chester?"

A score of eager voices shouted, "I, sir!" and before he could speak again a dozen boys had leaped ashore, led by David Winter, and were scampering like a herd of wild deer across the fields towards the Academy boarding-house, each determined to be first in announcing the good news to Joe Chester.

It was at least a mile from the shore to the house, and the boys raced as they had never raced before, Dave, Joe's "chum" and room-mate, keeping the lead all the way, but with such an effort that he only reached the head of the stairs as one or two of the other boys reached the foot.

Without stopping to knock, he pushed open the door, and fell upon Joe, who, hearing the rush of feet, had come forward with eager expectation.

He pushed open the door and fell upon Joe.

"What's the matter, Dave?" Joe cried in real alarm, as the boy, too breathless to speak, incoherently gasped, "It's all right! You are to go. Come on, old boy!"

The other boys were in the room now, and as all were panting and holding their sides, it was rather difficult for Joe to make out the story they had come to tell.

But he was to go to the island after all; he knew that, and that was good news enough.

He gathered, also, that Drayton had confessed and was missing.

"Where did you say they are gone?"

"Nobody knows."

"Nobody cares!" added another.

"I care," said Joe boldly. "I wish I had time to hunt him up!"

"You, of all fellows! You hunt him up!" exclaimed Frank Furman.

"The idea of your troubling yourself about him!" cried Dave angrily. "You make me mad, Joe!"

"But I know something how he was feeling, and what a hard thing it was for him to confess."

"Never mind him!" said Dave impatiently. "The boat is waiting! Where's your baggage?"

"I'll take your rod," said Ned Gould, taking Joe's fishing-rod from the hooks.

"No, not that one. Ralph left his for me. The janitor brought it around; he said he found it in the hall. Poor Ralph!" said Joe, examining the paper tied to the rod with the address, "For Joe Chester."

"Humph! that's the least he could do!" grumbled Dave. "Come, get your things together quick!" and he pulled Joe's valise from under the bed.

Joe was too excited to help much, but among them all they soon had the valise filled; and with a whoop that would have delighted the heart of a red Indian, the boys dashed downstairs, nearly crushing the janitor, who was labouring slowly up to investigate the noise coming from Room 8.

The race back to the steamboat was not quite so brisk as that to the house had been, but they were not long on the way.

They were hailed by the throng of boys on the boat with cheer after cheer as they came in sight, and most of the boys leaped ashore and rushed to greet the hero of the occasion, who was quite overcome with congratulations and expressions of delight.

Mr. Bernard had gone to make inquiries about the two missing boys, and the boat was kept waiting till nearly noon, when he came with the tidings that Drayton and Carver had sailed that morning in a fishing-smack from that very wharf.

Mr. Bernard had also written to the boys' parents, giving a brief account

of the trouble, with information in regard to their sailing, the name of the vessel, and the time when it might be expected to return to port. At the close he had expressed his regret that he must decline to receive the boys again as pupils.

"Gone in a fishing-smack!"–"Such high-toned fellows, too!"

These were some of the exclamations of the boys.

The delay was over at last.

The boat swung around from the pier and steamed away; the band played "Bonnie Dundee," and the boys' shouts quite drowned the music.

The day was beautiful and bright, and every one was in high spirits, as the little boat puffed its way out between the capes and towards Whaleback, which lay within sight, and among scores of white sails, from that of the tiniest wherry up to the broad canvas of the huge ships sailing proudly away to foreign ports.

They passed one fishing-smack on which somebody thought he espied two boys who looked about Drayton and Carver's size; but when they passed it no one but the captain and his one helper could be seen.

"I'll bet Drayton and Carver are down in that cabin. I just know I saw them dodge; besides, I saw the twinkle in that old fisherman's eye," said Dick Wooster.

The orders were for the steamboat to land its passengers on the southern side of Whaleback; and as they steamed past the lighthouse on its rocky perch, and the long line of jagged coast against which the waves were dashing furiously, the boys wondered how they were to get ashore. On rounding the southern end, a fine pebbly beach, sheltered a little by projecting points of land, offered a comfortable entrance for boats.

The steamboat anchored outside, and four boats were lowered and speedily filled with boys, who were almost ready to jump overboard and swim ashore in their eagerness to land.

The landing occupied some time, as the boats made many trips before all the boys, tents, bedding, stove, cooking utensils, and, last but not least, the provisions for the hungry crowd, could be put on shore.

Jonas Brown, the cook, and his man Freitag (conveniently translated by the boys, "Friday"), attended to that part of the labour, and long before the boxes and barrels were all ashore, the boys were demanding something to eat.

Some started off on an exploring tour; others helped to put up the tents; and some of the hungriest went grubbing in the clam-beds,[#] still wet with the receding tide.

[#] Clams are shell-fish, used for food.

"Here are clam-forks, boys," shouted Jonas. "Glad to have your help. You dig the clams, and I'll build up my fire and get ready for a bake. I reckon that will taste as good as anything."

"A clam-bake! a clam-bake! Who will dig clams?"

More boys volunteered than could find forks to dig with; but not to be outdone, some of them worked with sticks, prying in the mud wherever the little holes indicated the presence of the shell-fish.

Jonas showed those who had forks how to strike them deep into the beds, and the boys were apt scholars; so that by the time the rocks were well heated, and the sea-weed gathered, there were clams enough piled up on the shore to furnish a feast even for such a crowd of boys.

While the clams were slowly baking under their sea-weed cover, Jonas and his Friday pitched their cook-tent, set up their stove, and baked biscuits to be eaten with the clams.

Long before the roast was pronounced "done," the boys were on hand waiting for the sea-weed to be removed, and a hungrier pack of young savages never danced around a clam-pile.

A barrel of biscuits had been opened on their first arrival at the island, and the boys had "taken the sharp edge off their appetite," as they said, by eating them; otherwise Jonas would never have been able to bring those clams to the stage of perfection that he did.

"Come, Jonas! they are done to a turn!" cried the impatient boys.

"They will lose all their goodness in that good smell," said Joe, sniffing the air.

All noses went up, and fifty boys gave a prolonged "Ah! Isn't that gul–orious?"

It did seem that Jonas was provokingly slow in testing those clams; but at last he said, in his drawling way, "Well, now, I reckon them'll do!"

The boys cheered this remark, and hastened to offer their assistance in removing the sea-weed; but Jonas declined their offer in a most decided way.

"Now, you just move off, every boy of you! or you shan't have a clam. Off with you, till I get 'em out in piles, and give every one a fair chance!"

The boys knew by experience that it was policy to keep Jonas good-natured; so, with a good deal of pushing and whooping, they widened the circle, and contented themselves with watching the operations and exhorting Jonas to "hurry up."

"Now, that there pile belongs to the gentlemen!" said Jonas, pointing to the first heap that he threw down on the clean pebbles.

"O Jonas! aren't we all gentlemen?" asked Walter Martin, and a chorus of groans followed from the other boys.

Jonas vouchsafed no reply, but continued to shovel out clams and divide them into a half-dozen piles along the beach; while the boys danced around, awaiting the signal of the bell.

Freitag presently appeared with the great bell, and, although the summons was wholly unnecessary so far as the boys were concerned, as they had been at the scene of action for nearly an hour, it brought the teachers from their work of tent-raising.

After a blessing asked by Mr. Bernard, permission was given to the hungry crowd to attack the shellfish.

There were three courses provided–roast clams, then warm biscuit, and finally a dessert of gingersnaps, a barrel of which stood open from which all helped themselves.

Fortunately the boys were not difficult to suit, and they pronounced it a meal fit for a king.

CHAPTER IV.

IN CAMP.

After the dinner Mr. Bernard said, "There are two dozen hatchets, and I want two dozen boys to use them."

"Oh yes, the fir-boughs to be chopped!" said a dozen voices.

"I'll chop!"

"I'm the boy for a hatchet!"

In a minute the two dozen hatchets were seized, and as soon as the boys received their directions about the bushes they were allowed to cut, they started off for the pasture, followed by a crowd to drag the boughs back to camp, where others of the party, who had done the same work before, were to lay them down for beds. The pasture where the boys had gone for the fragrant fir-boughs extended across the end of the island and stretched back a half-mile to the woods,–a dense growth of hemlocks, junipers, firs, oaks, beeches, wild cherries, thorn trees, and hazel bushes. Along the course of a stream running from a spring grew rows of alders, over which ran the clematis; and along the edge of the water-course grew clumps of ferns and patches of velvety moss.

These woods extended for a mile, thinning at the other end of the island into a bush-covered pasture that, a little later in the season, would furnish all the

blueberries and whortleberries the boys would want, and, later still, would be a garden of golden-rods and wild asters. All around the shore of the island, except at the southern end, was a border of rough boulders and cliffs, upon the highest of which was perched the lighthouse, with its revolving lantern.

While the boys were at work in the pasture, Jonas and Freitag were putting up their long tables of matched boards and covering the whole with oilcloth, "to look more civilized-like than bare boards," Jonas said.

Then the great baskets of tinware were unpacked, and the table set for the next meal; for Jonas had camped out before with Mr. Bernard's school, and he knew that they liked to see signs of the next meal as soon as one was disposed of. Moreover, he had discovered that they were less likely to be around sampling the crackers if they saw the table set. He may have been deceived in this, but Jonas was a pretty keen observer, especially in the line of his profession.

Seeing some of the boys idle, Jonas called, "Here, you fellows, catch me some fish for supper. There's plenty of chances along the shore yonder. I saw 'em when we came past.–You go along too, Freitag, and help 'em."

The boys were all eager for the sport.

"Here's bait, and a big pile of fishing-rods all rigged. Take that there big basket for your fish," continued Jonas, as if he were giving orders to a group of fishermen.

The boys, however, followed his directions good-naturedly, each seizing a rod, but leaving "Friday," as they called the man, to bring on the bait and fish-basket.

"Remember your promise, boys, not to go into dangerous places," called Mr. Bernard.

"Yes, sir, we will be careful," answered the boys. They were soon perched on the rocks, dropping their hooks into the water and pulling them out, exclaiming, "I've got a bite!"

"So have I."

"My! ain't they plenty!"

"There's one! Hold on, my beauty! Let go my hook!"

It was lively work, as they said, and presently they had enough to do to bait hooks and take off fish without much talking. Jonas gave a grunt of satisfaction as Freitag came dragging the heavy basket and exclaiming, "Py, but dat was a pig pizness!"

"Now, I can get a supper as is a supper!" exclaimed the cook.–"Freit, you just get them fish ready, and I'll cut up the pork. It ain't nigh supper-time, of course; dinner isn't much more than over, so you boys go off somewhere. Why don't you go see the lighthouse?"

Now Jonas was very cunning in making this suggestion, for he knew the

lighthouse was at the other end of the island, a mile and a half away, and if the crowd would only start on that pilgrimage, he could have peace and quiet, and get supper at his leisure. His suggestion seemed good to the boys, and they cried, "Oh yes, the lighthouse!"

"Hurrah for the lighthouse!"

"Mr. Bernard, may we go to the lighthouse?"

Mr. Bernard was in his tent; but hearing his name called, he came outside.

"We want to go to the lighthouse. Can we go?"

"Yes, if Mr. Andrews is ready to go now; he has an errand there to see about a supply of milk. Now, boys, I have not found out the dangerous places on the island, and until we have explored a little ourselves, I want you to use extra precautions. Remember, no bathing except on the beach where we landed; that slopes very evenly, and I think there is no under-current."

"We will be careful, sir."

"We will remember," said the boys.

"Come on; who wants to go to the lighthouse?"

"Ho, for the lighthouse!"

The choppers and bough-layers were at leisure again, and many of them joined the party.

Others said, "Oh, I am too tired to go so far!"

"Wait till to-morrow!"

But the first speakers were already hurrying across the pasture with Mr. Andrews, stopping here and there to pick strawberries or raspberries, and to look for some blueberries that had ripened before their fellows.

The walk was longer than they expected, and the way through the tangled underbrush of the woods was no easy one; but they at length came out into the pasture-land at the northern end of the island, and from there the path was smoother.

The light-keeper gave them a gruff but hearty welcome, and his wife invited as many to come into her nest of a house as the little room would hold.

The two boys belonging to the family were shy but radiant at the prospect of something to break the monotony of their island life.

"I suppose you want to go up and see the lantern, boys," said Jacob Kramer, the light-keeper.–"Here you, John and Jerry, go up with 'em, and tell 'em all about how it works."

John made no reply save to run up the steps leading to the lighthouse, and Jerry, with the crowd of other boys, followed, or as many as could enter at once.

After the lantern had been examined, John led the way down the side of the cliff where they could see the surf-bell rung by the waves.

"That sounds like somebody's funeral!" exclaimed Joe Chester, shrugging

his shoulders.

"Doesn't it keep you awake at night?" asked Ned Gould.

John shook his head.

"Nothin' keeps me awake, only the storms when the big waves strike 'way up against the house and spatter the top windows."

"Do you have such storms as that, really?" asked Dave.

John nodded, and added with frankness,–

"When them come Jerry and I get scared, and crawl down to father's room."

"Don't you get lonesome here?" asked Joe, glancing around at the rocks and water forming the landscape.

"Not very. We don't get lonesome at all in the summer."

"What do you do for fun?"

"Oh, we build towers on the cliff. We've got a big one now. Come over and see it;" and both boys scampered off over the rough rocks with their bare feet, leaving the others to pick their way more carefully.

The tower was as high as Jerry's head, and large enough for four boys to stand upon comfortably. In the centre was a fir-tree from which the boys had trimmed every branch, until it was like a flag-staff.

"Some time we are going to have a flag of our own to fly atop there," said Jerry with pride.

"I've got a good-sized flag over in camp that you may have; it will do till you can get a bigger," said Walter Martin.

"What else do you do besides build stone things?" asked Dave curiously.

"Oh, lots of things."

"You fish off the rocks, I suppose."

"Yes, plenty of fish round here. We go off in the boat with father, too, to tend the lobster-pots."

"Lobster-pots! what are they?" asked Joe.

"What you catch lobsters in. Didn't you ever see a lobster-pot? There's some there on the grass."

"What! these cages? How do you catch them with these?"

The boys gathered around the "cages" and examined them.

"See, this hole grows small at the back of it, and the lobster is so anxious to get the bait inside that he squeezes through; but after he is in he doesn't know how to double his claws back and get out, so he just don't; he stays."

"And you catch him?"

"He catches himself," laughed John.

"All we do is to set the pot,–that is, we bait it,–and then we anchor it off somewhere, and after a while we go back for it and get the lobsters."

"How do you get them out?"

"See these little doors up above? We open them, and reach in there."

"Don't they bite?" asked Dan.

"If you don't know where to catch 'em they nip, I tell you."

"Of course you swim like fish, both of you," said Joe, who was quite a famous swimmer himself.

"Can't swim."

"Can't swim? What fellows you are! Why don't you learn? What if you should tumble overboard? what would you do then?"

"Go to the bottom," answered John with a broad smile, as if that were a funny thing to do.

The boys exclaimed over this lack of knowledge, and Joe finally said, "See here, you two fellows; get your father to let you come over to our camp every day, and before our camp-life is over we will teach you so you can swim like fish."

This was a delightful proposal to the boys, not only because they wanted to swim, but because it would take them among other boys.

As soon as the party returned to the lighthouse, John and Jerry whispered the invitation to their father, and asked if they might accept.

He consented willingly.

"May we learn to swim?"

"Well, yes, I suppose so. I want ye to learn. I suppose it's time you did; and there ain't no chance at this end o' the island."

"There is a good beach where we are camping, and we shall fasten a rope across to show the boys how far they can go safely."

During the boys' absence Mr. Andrews had been negotiating with the lightkeeper for all the milk he could spare, and also for a supply of lobsters; and it was now arranged that John and Jerry were to bring milk every morning to camp, and remain as long as they liked during the day.

"Come, boys; it will be nearly dark before we get back!" said Mr. Andrews, bidding the keeper's family good-bye.

"And we shall lose our supper.–Good-bye, John and Jerry. Come over early." As if there were any need to tell the eager boys that.

They kept near the shore on the way back; and though it was a rocky road to travel, they saved a half-mile thereby, and arrived with very keen appetites just as their comrades had finished supper.

"I'm so hungry I could eat a whale, Joe," exclaimed Dave.

"A whale! why, I could eat a brick house," was the quick response.

"Jonas, did you save us anything?" asked a chorus of voices.

Jonas waved a frying-pan for answer, and presently set before them fried fish, crisp and brown, bread hot from the oven, and warm gingerbread, all of which won the unbounded approbation of the famished boys.

After supper the various events of the day were recounted, and all united in declaring that it had been the jolliest twelve hours they had ever known–a remark that Mr. Bernard had heard every summer on the first day in camp.

"Now, boys," said Mr. Bernard, "you are tired and will want to retire early. Come into my tent, and we will have prayers together."

This tent was divided unequally into two parts; the larger devoted to general assemblages–for morning and evening devotions, and for a resort in wet weather; for sleeping-tents were crowded with beds and baggage.

Besides the large apartment in Mr. Bernard's tent, there was one smaller–a tiny affair, where he slept and wrote or read.

The boys gathered now in the large tent, and sat down on the ground while Mr. Bernard read the Bible to them and explained the portion selected in a brief and interesting way that held the attention of the listeners. After the reading he offered a prayer, asking a blessing upon them all, and praying that none but good influences might prevail with any of them.

Then the "good-nights" were exchanged, many of the boys crowding around the teacher to thank him for the pleasure they were having; and as they scattered to their tents, many boyish words of hearty admiration were spoken of the teacher who had planned this vacation treat for them.

"I tell you, Dave, there ain't many teachers like him!" exclaimed Joe Chester, as he and his friend crept under their blankets on their mattress of fir-boughs.

"No, *sir*, not many."

The boys were too tired to talk much, and they were soon lulled to sleep by the dash of the ocean against the beach, and the rattle of the pebbles as they followed the receding water only to be tossed up by the next incoming wave.

CHAPTER V.

THE SWIMMING-POOL.

No bell was needed to awaken the boys in the morning; and one tent after another was thrown open to the breeze as the boys in undress ran down the beach for a plunge.

"Colder than Greenland's icy mountains," shouted Joe, as he met some of the boys on their way to the water when he was returning to his tent.

"Yes, colder than the north-east side of the pole," added David, who followed

close behind.

"But jump in all of a sudden and it isn't bad," continued Joe.

The boys returned one after another, racing and jumping and exclaiming over their icy bath; and presently all were rosy and glowing with the exercise, ready for anything in the line of work or fun.

They found it hard to calm down at once, as they gathered in Mr. Bernard's tent for morning prayers; but at the first quiet reminder of the teacher the boys ceased their joking and listened to the Scripture reading and the fervent prayer that they all might be helped to live noble, Christian lives. He asked that they might not be contented to go through life selfishly, seeking only their own comfort and happiness; but that they might watch for opportunities to be helpful to others, and that they might be kept from all meanness of word or act.

When they came from the tent the savoury odour of breakfast was wafted to them from the cook-tent.

Jonas and Freitag had been fishing off the point as soon as daylight, and now the victims of their hooks–only an hour ago swimming in the broad ocean–were served up on tin trenchers, set at intervals along the table.

John and Jerry arrived in time to furnish the milk for the coffee, and room was made for them at the table, although they had already eaten breakfast.

During the meal the boys were discussing plans for the day, and probably the fishermen in their vessels a mile away heard the noise, and wondered at the babel of voices sounding across the waters.

The archery club announced that they intended to set up their targets in the pasture and practise.

The rifle club were asking permission to use their rifles in the woods, knowing that they were only to do so under the supervision of one of the teachers.

Some wanted to fish, and were discussing the relative advantages of the different shores of the island.

"If you want rock-cod I'd advise ye to go out on the point that juts out alongside the beach," said Jonas, throwing in a suggestion as he brought a fresh supply of bread.

"I am going to hunt for crystal quartz; who wants to go with me? I found quite a lump yesterday. See here," and little Fred Wurden displayed his treasure.

"My! where did you find that?"

"Oh, I've seen plenty of that! I know where there's plenty of it–a big hole in the rocks, where them shiny things are all hanging down!" said John, the light-keeper's son, with shining eyes.

"Where?"–"Show us!" cried a number of voices; and even Mr. Andrews made inquiries, and said he would go to the place after breakfast.

"As soon as the tide is right, I move we have a swimming match," said Joe

Chester.

"When *will* the tide be right, I'd like to know?" asked Dave.

"It is on the ebb now, and by the time our breakfast is done it will be quite low," said another grumblingly.

"Don't you worry; there's water enough in the ocean for you to swim in, if the tide is down!" said Jonas. "Yes, water enough, forty fathoms deep!"

Jonas shook his head knowingly.

"I've been out on the point more than once, and sometimes the water is still, and I can see bottom. I sounded with that long fishin'-rod o' mine, and, allowing for the tide, I reckoned there must be about as nice a pool left there at low tide as you'd want to see."

"Good!"–"Good for you, Jonas."

"Mr. Bernard, did you hear Jonas?" asked Joe.

"I think I heard, but there are so many talking at once I am not sure. If it is about a swimming-place, I assure you I will investigate the matter this morning, and find a safe place for you to go."

"Thank you, sir," answered Joe for himself and the others.

"I shall stretch ropes across, showing how far I am willing you should go out; and I expect you to obey me strictly. You know we have promised your parents to run no risk. We have camped out three summers, and have never met with an accident; and I sincerely trust our record may not be changed through any carelessness of ours."

The boys agreed to follow his wishes in every particular.

Then, having finished their breakfast, they scattered about the island, some going to the rocks to fish, some to pick berries, and others to practise with bows or rifles.

Mr. Bernard and two other teachers went to the beach with drills, iron staples, cement, and ropes, to make the bath-beach as safe as possible.

As it was ebb-tide, it was easy to see by the wet sea-weed on the sides of the little cove the height of the water when the tide was in; so there was no delay in locating the position of the first rope to be used at high-water.

Holes were drilled in the rocks, and strong iron staples cemented in, in which the rope was fastened.

After that was accomplished they sat on the rocks and watched the sea, or read until the tide was at its lowest, and the boys began to gather around, anxiously questioning whether there was "a chance yet."

"That looks like a first-rate swimming-pool, Mr. Bernard, just as Jonas said," remarked Joe, coming to stand by his favourite teacher.

"So it does, Joe; but wait till I make sure. The water is much deeper than it looks. I will get my bathing-suit and try."

"Hurrah! be all ready, boys; Mr. Bernard is going to try the water."

Led by Joe, the crowd scampered away for their trunks, and returned before Mr. Bernard appeared.

He came at length from the bath-tent, and went down into the water amid the cheers of the boys; and probably their applause prevented a hasty retreat when he learned from experience the temperature of the water.

"I am not taking this plunge for my own pleasure, boys!" he said, shivering and laughing. "I hope you will appreciate the act, for I am a martyr in your behalf."

The first six or eight feet from the edge sloped gradually from one to three feet in depth; beyond that the water deepened rapidly until he was floated from his feet and forced to swim; but everywhere the gravelly bottom could be seen, and he was sure there were no treacherous holes to trap the unskilful.

"Is it all right, Mr. Bernard?" asked Joe, standing on the rocks and swinging his arms, impatient for the leap.

"Yes, I think it is."

"May I come?" and Joe's body was thrown into a diving position.

"Any of you who are accustomed to dive may come here. The others must come in by the beach, where the water is shallower."

Before he had finished the sentence, some dozen boys dropped or dived into the pool, and presently he found himself surrounded by a circle of seal-like heads as the young swimmers came to the surface one after another.

"It is too cold for me," he said, as the boys challenged him to swim a match. "I must get dressed and warmed.–Mr. Andrews, look out for the boys. I will send Freitag and Jonas to drill the rocks for the other staples," and Mr. Bernard hastened away, inwardly determined that he had taken his last plunge in that pool. The more timid boys and those who could not swim at all stood at the edge, thrusting in a foot, and then dancing and shrieking at the cold.

John and Jerry stood looking on in open-mouthed amazement or admiration, Joe could not decide which.

"I promised to teach you to swim, didn't I?" cried Joe, coming through the water towards them, grasshopper fashion.

"But you needn't," said both boys retreating, as if fearing that he would seize them and force them in.

"But it's fun!"

John shrugged his shoulders.

Joe swam to and fro with his mouth open at the surface of the water, and blowing like a young sea-lion; then suddenly, to the horror of the two brothers, he disappeared beneath the waves.

"Oh, he's drowned!" shrieked both boys.

No one paid any attention to their cry, and John fairly danced into the water in his fright.

"He's gone under! can't somebody get him?"

"Who?" asked one of the swimmers, looking around.

"Why, that boy Joe. I saw him go under!"

"Oh ho, Joe Chester! You couldn't drown him if you should try. There he is away over there by the rocks. He's a regular water-rat."

And the speaker disappeared under the waves himself.

"I mean to learn to do that myself, Jerry," said John in a confidential tone.

Jerry nodded, as if to say, "So will I."

It seemed to the boys that they had hardly got into the spirit of the sport, before Mr. Andrews, with watch in hand, shouted, "Time's up, boys!"

"Oh no," groaned the swimmers. "Give us one more dive!"

"Well, one dive, and then you must come out."

The boys swam to the rocks, climbed up like dripping monkeys, and in a minute the pool was full of eddies where the divers had gone down.

As they came to the surface, Mr. Andrews shouted again, "Come; time's up!"

As soon as his words were spoken every head disappeared, and it was useless to call them again until they were obliged to come up for air.

"Come on, boys; we agreed to mind!" said Joe. "Let's go ashore;" and following his own advice, he swam in, and ran up the beach to the bath-tent, followed by his companions, all giving whoops and cries, to help to warm them, they said.

CHAPTER VI.

THE FOG-STORM.

There were two or three more days of pleasant weather, with boating and fishing and target-shooting; and then a fog crept in, hiding the ocean from view, and even shutting down like a thick curtain between the tents.

"Thick enough to bite," Joe said.

Everything was wet, and Jonas was cross; so there was not much comfort, although most of the party were cheerful and good-natured.

The table was taken apart and set up in the large tent; but Jonas and his

Friday had further to travel with the meals, and they grumbled accordingly.

"No knowin' how long this fog will hang around," growled Jonas, as he set the tin plates down with a clatter.

"I've known it to last a week," said Frank Furman.

"A week! what are you thinkin' of? It about always lasts a week! I've known it to last a month!"

"O Jonas!" chorused the boys, glad to see any signs of good-nature, "have you really?"

"Humph! I camped out with a party once, and we never saw the sun after we landed till the day we left, and that was three weeks; for they were hardy fellows, and they said they were bound to stay till that fog cleared out, if it took all the vacation."

"Did they?" asked Joe, as Jonas paused in his story to count plates.

"No, they didn't. They got enough of it; and when the third week was ended, and the fog was packed down tighter than ever, one of 'em said, 'Come, boys, I'll give it up. I am completely mildewed now, inside and out. We have eaten and drunk and breathed fog for twenty-one days, and for once I've had enough of one thing.'"

"Well, Jonas, go on; what did the rest do?" asked David.

"Why, they all said 'Amen,' and packed up as quick as they could, and got into the yacht, and started for the nearest shore. We had to go by the compass, because we'd no idea where the sun was. Part of the way we rowed, and part of the way we drifted, and by-and-by we got ashore. Once in a while I see one of them fellows, and they laugh about it now, and call it a good joke; but they didn't laugh much then."

"You didn't neither, I'm sure," said Freitag, shrugging his shoulders.

"You are right there. I felt like I could bite a board-nail, for I had to work around, good weather or bad. No, there was only one fellow that called it funny, after the first two or three days; and that man nearly killed himself laughing about it! That fellow would have found a queer side to his own tombstone. He laughed about the fog, and he laughed at the way the other fellows took it; and he laughed so when he left the island, that the others threatened to throw him overboard. I've never seen him but once since, and he began again as soon as he spied me; and he dragged me into a shop and bought me a nice pipe, laughing all the time the shopman was doing it up. 'That was a jolly trip, Jonas!' says he; and I heard him chuckling after I left him.–But goodness, Freitag, ring that bell! the breakfast will be stone-cold."

"You don't suppose this will last," said Max Bernard disconsolately. "Our tent is dripping now. We'll all be sick!"

"Sick! nonsense! You won't get cold in a salt fog," cried Walter Martin.

"It will most likely end in a big storm," exclaimed Jonas croakingly, feeling quite safe in making such a prophecy.

The boys groaned at the suggestion, and one of them remarked that "there was nothing so consoling in dull weather as making toffy."

Joe, remembering that Jonas had lost his jackknife, slipped his own into his hand as a bribe, and got his unwilling consent to give them butter and sugar and a chance to boil it.

Joe Chester and David Winter were chief cooks on the occasion, with a large crowd of advisers and tasters; and when the toffy was boiled they poured it into a baking-pan to cool, and took it to the large tent.

Although Jonas had given them a generous supply of sugar and butter, there were so many boys the toffy was eaten before it was thoroughly cool.

They had a great deal of fun over it, and the pleasure helped to while away the dull day.

They could not have toffy-making every day, and the fog still remained. Some days the fog did not lift at all, and at other times it would disappear for an hour or two, giving them a glimpse of bright sunshine, then it would return to wrap them in as closely as ever.

One day they had the good fortune to see a fog-bow, which is like a rainbow in very subdued colours—"a Quaker rainbow," Joe called it.

After a week had passed, and the boys had exhausted their resources for indoor amusement, the storm predicted by Jonas commenced in the night.

Joe waked his friend Dave by pulling his hair, words having failed to arouse him.

"Let go there!" growled Dave.

"Wake up, boy! wake up! There's an awful storm!"

"What d'you say?" asked Dave sleepily.

"There's an awful storm, I tell you! Don't you hear the rain pelting on the tent? The wind blows like fury. I expect our tent will be down in a minute. The water is all running in under the canvas."

"Dripping through it, too," cried David, thoroughly awakened by the great drops that fell fast upon his upturned face, to avoid which he sprang from bed only to alight in a pool of water deep enough to splash under his feet.

Both boys laughed in spite of their discomfort, and just then Mr. Bernard came to the tent and rapped on the canvas.

"Boys, how are you getting on?"

"Oh, *swimmingly*."

"Yes, I presume so. It is a fearful storm! You are fortunate to have your tent standing. Several have blown down. You had better come over to the large tent. We have been strengthening the stakes around that. Wrap yourselves in your

blankets and run."

The boys got on their rubber boots, and covering themselves with their red blankets, they opened the tent, stood a moment to watch the sheet of rain as it descended, and then ran across to Mr. Bernard's tent, which was about two rods away.

"Let us in!" cried Joe, bumping his blanketed head against the canvas curtain. Some one opened the tent, and the two boys stumbled in.

"Joe and Dave!"

"Oh, got drowned out, too!"

"Did your tent go down?"

"For once Joe Chester's got water enough!"

And the boys inside made room on the table where most of them were perched.

The teachers, with Jonas and Freitag, were driving stakes inside and fastening the tent to them to help to anchor it; and it seemed to need it, for sometimes the wind would sweep in beneath the canvas and swell it like a big balloon, as if it must either burst or go up in spite of ropes and stakes.

"God help the sailors!" exclaimed Mr. Bernard solemnly, as one of the sudden gusts died away.

"Oh, Ralph and Ben!" cried Joe. "Where are they? Do you suppose they are out in that little vessel, Mr. Bernard?"

"God forbid! I trust they are in some safe harbour. Fishermen are wise in such matters."

"But if they *are* out!" continued Joe anxiously. "Ralph will be frightened! You know he is a coward, and afraid of the water, anyway."

"I don't see how they happened to go in a vessel," said Frank Furman.

"They went to get away from us all, poor fellows; they didn't know what else to do," said Joe pityingly. "Besides, the weather was pleasant then, and the water didn't look as if it ever could be rough; don't you remember?"

"I think they have been sick enough of it before this," suggested another.

"Oh, very likely they are safe in their own homes, and pitying us poor wretches. They would be likely to get that fisherman to put them ashore at the first port they made," added Ned Gould.

Still Joe worried about them, and Mr. Bernard was very solemn; he had been anxious about the two absent lads ever since the storm commenced.

The wind continued till morning, but the rain ceased soon after midnight, and the boys, wrapped in their damp blankets, lay across the long table with legs dangling down the side, packed very closely together, and trying to sleep; but the roaring of the sea, and the rattle of the stones tossed by the waves, the creaking of the tent as it swayed to and fro as far as the ropes would allow, all combined

to keep them awake.

Some gave up the effort to go to sleep, and tried to while away the time by telling doleful stories of shipwrecks and other disasters; and then, growing sleepy at daylight when the others went out to see the havoc of the storm, they were sound asleep when Mr. Bernard's bell summoned the boys for prayers, and they had no time for a morning toilet.

The thanksgiving for shelter and safety in the fearful storm found an echo in every heart; and when he prayed for their two companions that they might be returned to their friends in safety and with the determination to be true and noble boys hereafter, Chester felt like uttering a loud amen.

The sun was shining brightly again, and every trace of fog was gone, but the wind was still blowing, and the sea a perfect witch's caldron.

After breakfast the bedding was taken out to dry, and anchored with large stones to the ledge to keep it from flying away.

The tents were once more pitched, and they all felt that with the return of the sun there was also a return of pleasure in camp-life.

Even Jonas seemed in a fair way towards good-nature again, and that made them all more cheerful.

During the fog-storm he had been crabbed enough; and Joe said if he saw a boy come within five yards of the cook-tent he would growl like a bear.

He was improving now, and when one of the boys suggested doughnuts for a variety, Jonas announced that the next job he "tackled" should be to fry doughnuts.[#]

[#] Small, roundish cakes.

"Twisted fellows, Jonas," suggested Joe.

"Yes, twisted."

"And will you give us one while they are hot?"

"Ye-es; go 'long with you, every one of ye."

CHAPTER VII.

THE WRECK.

John and Jerry were late coming with the milk, and they were in a state of great excitement.

"Did you hear about the wreck?"

"Wreck!" cried the boys in chorus, as they gathered around the news-bearers.

"Yes, a wreck."

"Where?" was the eager query.

"Right on that reef near the surf-bell."

"Tell us about it!"–"Anybody lost?"

"Yes, one fellow. Father's been talking with 'em. He can't but just make out what they say. She's just keeled up on that ledge. I tell you she looks awful!"

"She? Is there a woman there?"

"I don't know."

"Oh, he means the vessel when he says 'she,'" exclaimed Frank Furman.

"Wasn't it an awful storm?"–"Wasn't it!"

"I tell you we was scared, Jerry and me! I thought sure the old lighthouse was going over, and our house, too. Everything was creakin' and groanin', and the surf was flyin' up against the windows."

"Father stayed by the lantern all night; he afraid the light might go out," added Jerry. "We didn't know nothin' about the wreck till daylight."

"John, tell me what kind of a vessel it is," said Joe, pale with some sudden apprehension.

"It's a schooner."

"Were they fishermen, do you think?"

"I think so. They are trying to get her off before she breaks up. They think if they get her over to the Cape she can be mended."

Joe had already darted away to Mr. Bernard's tent, and rapping on the canvas, he asked hurriedly, "Mr. Bernard, may I come in?"

"Come."

"O Mr. Bernard, John and Jerry are here, and they have been telling us about a wreck over there on the ledge."

Mr. Bernard threw down his book and listened.

"One fellow was lost. The boys think it was a fishing-vessel. What if it should be the *Una*, Mr. Bernard?"

The teacher arose hastily and put on his hat.

"Did they know the name of the vessel?"

"I didn't ask, Mr. Bernard; I didn't dare to," answered Joe, still very pale.

"I will go over there at once."

"Oh, may I go too?"

A reluctant consent was given, and Joe boldly asked,–

"May we all go–Max and all?"

"Yes, you may all go.–Max, come with me."

Joe hastened back to the boys, shouting, "Come on! Mr. Bernard says we may go over to see the wreck!"

"Good for him! Hurrah, boys! we are off for the wreck."

"What did you say about a wreck?" asked Jonas, as John and Jerry delivered the milk at the cookhouse.

The boys enlightened him, and Jonas, turning to his man Friday, said, "Come on, Freit–we'll let the dishes go;" and seizing his hat he hurried after the boys, who were scampering off towards the lighthouse with the teachers.

They attempted to go by the shorter route over the rocks on the shore, in spite of John's warning, but after some of the party had been drenched by the surf they retreated to the woods.

Joe kept close to Mr. Bernard's side, without speaking a word, and some of the boys behind whispered, "They are afraid it is that vessel that Ralph and Ben went in."

This sobered them all, and there was very little conversation as the crowd hurried on. They could hear the "boom-boom" of the sea against the cliff long before they reached it, and Joe's heart felt heavier than ever.

Ralph had never been a favourite among his schoolmates, and Joe, especially, had never been attracted toward him. Their acquaintance had developed during the last weeks of the school, while the search was being made for the offender; and in helping him then he came to pity him, and feel an interest in him, quite sure that the boy had received a lesson that would make him hesitate to speak an untruth again.

At length John ran through the bushes out on the top of one of the high boulders, where he pointed to the dismantled vessel with the men working at the pumps.

"What's the name on the stern?" asked Joe, straining his eyes as the waves now and then left the end of the vessel.

No one could tell, but it was plain to all that the word was a long one.

"It can't be the *Una*, then!" cried Joe with a sigh of relief.

"No–thank God for that; but these poor fellows are having a hard time," said Mr. Bernard.

"Bad enough!" exclaimed the light-keeper, who had joined the party on the rocks. "They think they can save the vessel; but unless she is off before noon she's gone! She will break up fast in this sea."

"Is there no way for us to help them?" asked Mr. Andrews.

"No; it would be nonsense to try to get to them with my boat. The landing here is bad at the best; and I never think of going out except in fair weather."

"What kind of boats have you?"

"Nothing but a common sail-boat and a couple of skiffs, and they wouldn't stand a sign of a chance in this sea."

"What will the men do if the vessel goes down?"

"They've got their boats all ready to launch, and their boats are much better than mine."

"They are calling you, father!" cried Jerry, pulling his father's coat.

"Who?"

"The men over yonder."

"Yes,–hear them!" said the boys excitedly.

"Keep still, all o' ye!" said the light-keeper. Then, making a speaking-trumpet of his hands, he shouted, "Ship ahoy! what's wanted?"

Converting his speaking-trumpet into an ear-trumpet, he listened intently.

"She's filling fast! Is there anything there to fasten our rope over?"

The light-keeper glanced quickly around, and shouted back, "Yes!"

Then the boys saw the sailors draw something forward near the taffrail.

"What are they going to do, Mr. Kramer?" asked Joe.

"Fire us a line."

There was a little delay, then a puff of smoke, and a line fell across the island. There was a great rush and scramble for it, and some of the boys in their eagerness fell over each other, doing more harm than good; but the line was secured, and pulled in with a will. At the end of this line was fastened a rope, and this, in turn, brought a double cable.

"A long pull, and a strong pull, and a pull all together!" said the light-keeper.

There were hands enough to pull, but after all it was hard work; and there was a cheer when they got hold of the double cable and ran with it to an old oak stump.

The light-keeper sent John for some heavy spikes, which he drove into the stump, in a circle above the cable, to prevent its slipping up when it began to move.

"Pull tight now!" shouted Kramer.

The boys could see the rope tighten.

"What are they doing now, Mr. Bernard?" asked Dave.

"That's what I should like to know," said Joe. "They are coming ashore, I think."

"Coming ashore! What! on that rope?"

"Astride of it, or hanging on by their hands? That's what I'd like to know!" and there was great confusion among the boys, all talking at once.

"Boys, keep quiet!" said Mr. Bernard. "The captain is calling."

"All ready there?"

"Ay, ay,–all ready!" shouted the light-keeper.

"They can't hear," said Mr. Bernard; "the wind is this way."

"All ready!" shouted Kramer again, beckoning with his hand.

"Oh, they are launching a big basket!" cried Ned Gould.

"They are coming in that? Whew!" cried Frank Furman, fairly dancing with excitement.

"Ready, there?" was shouted again from the vessel.

"All ready!"

"Steady, then–pull!"

"Now, boys, stand off!" said Kramer, motioning the crowd away. "I only want the men now; steady pulling is what we want."

Mr. Bernard, Mr. Andrews, Mr. Wiseman, Jonas, and Freitag began to pull with the light-keeper, who timed them with a monotonous, "There she comes! there she comes!" while the boys watched the basket in breathless excitement as it moved on, swaying frightfully at times as it hung over the seething mass of water.

At length a loud cheer from the boys, and a "Hold, there!" from the occupants of the basket, announced its safe arrival with its precious freight.

The vessel's cook and the captain's little son, a boy of eight years, were the passengers, and a cheer, loud and long, as they were helped ashore, announced their safety to the anxious father on the wreck.

The basket was speedily returned to the vessel, and once more it started on its shoreward trip.

"That's the mate," said the cook. "The captain vowed he'd be the last man to leave."

"Take that child to the house, and tell mother to get him warmed, John," said the light-keeper.

The boy refused to go until his father should get across; so Joe wrapped him in his overcoat, and they stood together watching the advancing basket.

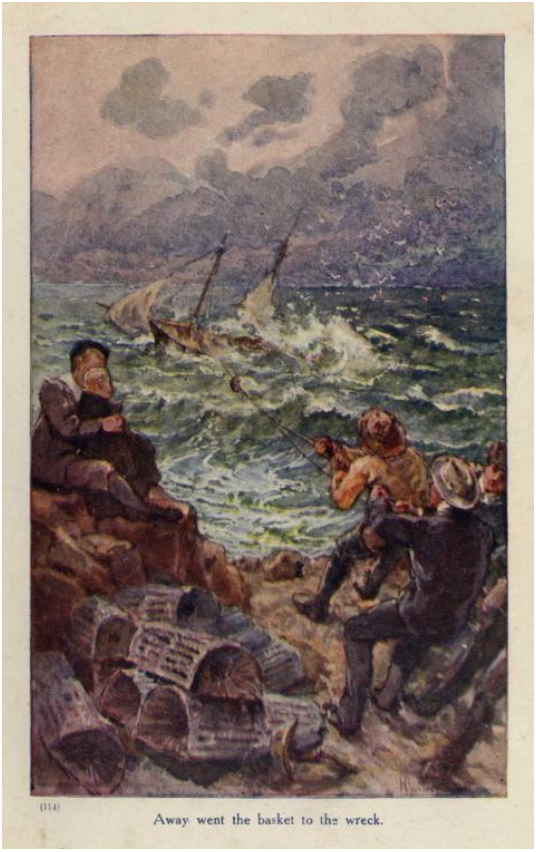
"How did it seem coming over in that basket?" asked Joe.

"I don't know; I was too frightened to think; I kept my eyes shut, and just curled down in Jim's lap."

Another cheer presently announced the arrival of the basket the second time, as the mate landed safely and waved a signal to the captain.

"I tell you, friends, that cheer you sent up when the basket got across with the captain's boy was the most welcome sound I ever heard; and poor captain, he almost broke down with joy. Now if we can get him over safely we shall give thanks in earnest."

Away went the basket to the wreck as fast as the men could pull the rope, every foot of which the mate examined carefully as they pulled.



Away went the basket to the wreck.

The captain was below, when the basket reached the vessel, and it was some minutes before he reappeared.

"He has got Jingo, Bertie," cried the mate.

"Oh, has he? I thought Jingo would have to drown. Are you sure, Mr. Osmond?"

"Yes," said the mate, looking through his field-glass. "He is going to stow everything into that basket that he can. I am afraid he will get it too full."

"Ready!" shouted the captain.

"Steady!" cried the mate. "If we spill that load we lose the best man that ever trod the deck of a vessel!"

Again the light-keeper's monotonous chant, "There she comes! there she comes!" commenced, and slowly and steadily the basket advanced.

Suddenly, when it was about two-thirds of the distance over, the rope ceased to move, and the basket hung motionless over the rough sea.

"What's the matter?" shouted the light-keeper, looking at the mate.

"The cable must have caught on the rigging, with no one there to keep it clear. We thought we guarded against that," said the mate.

"Oh, father can't get ashore!" cried the child, pale with terror.

Joe tried to comfort him, assuring him that they would find some way to save him.

Another pull, long and strong, but the rope did not yield.

"What will be done?" asked Mr. Bernard, losing all his ordinary calmness. "Can he help himself at all?"

"He can if anybody can," answered the mate gruffly.

"Hark, he is calling!"

Every ear was strained to catch the words.

"Let go there! let's see if I can move."

They all left the rope and crowded near the edge of the rocks, watching the slow and dangerous transit as the shaky basket was pushed along step by step, with a jerky motion that tipped the basket from side to side in a frightful way.

"Hold on there; I'll sling a line, captain," as the basket came near enough to make it possible.

The man seemed too exhausted to pull a foot further, and he crouched down in the basket as low as possible, with hands outstretched to catch the line.

A dozen attempts were made in vain, as the wind would blow it out of its course; but at last the coil dropped into the basket, and was easily clutched and made fast.

The boys commenced to cheer, but Mr. Bernard hushed them, saying, "Not now, boys,–wait!"

Steadily on came the basket now, and in a few moments the mate seized it

and steadied it as the captain stepped ashore.

"O father!" cried his son, throwing his arms around him.

"Thank God for his great goodness!" he said reverently, as he held the child close.

The basket contained dry clothing for the party, and among it little Herbert's rat-terrier, almost lifeless with fright.

The light-keeper hurried the rescued party to the house, where his wife had hot coffee and a bountiful meal ready for them. The men were too much exhausted to talk, and were glad to accept the offer of a chance to sleep off their fatigue.

"Now, boys, we must go back and leave it quiet here; these men need rest."

"Come on, then, John and Jerry; show us the spouting-horn," cried Joe.

"Will it take us far out of the way, boys? I am too tired to waste steps," said Mr. Bernard.

"No, sir; we can go to camp right up that shore," and John led the way, running like a young deer.

"There she spouts!" he shouted as they came within sight of it.

Loud were the exclamations of surprise and delight as the column of water shot up into the air with a boom like a cannon.

"What makes it?" asked Maurice Perry.

"I don't know, I'm sure," said John. "This one always does so after a storm; and one on the other side there spouts and bangs at low tide–the lower the tide the louder she bangs."

Mr. Bernard and the rest of the party had arrived now, and as if for their benefit the horn spouted full eighty feet, dropping the spray in a shower all around them.

"What makes it bang so, Mr. Bernard?" asked Maurice again, not satisfied with John's answer.

"The air driven by a rush of the water, Maurice. There is a hole in the side of that rock, extending up to the surface, and the air rushes through, followed presently by a mass of water, and the escape of the air from its pursuer causes the loud report."

"It is simply a big pop-gun," said Joe, "and it works itself, without any boy's help."

"Oh, I see a rainbow," said Lewis Germaine.

"Where, where?" asked the others.

"Right there in the spray."

"Oh, so there is! just as bright."

"Isn't that fine?"

After they had exhausted the list of adjectives expressing their admiration

and delight, John said, "I'll show you somethin' else some time when it's low tide."

This he said with a very proud air, as if he owned all the wonders of the island.

"Show it now."

"Can't; it only shows at low tide."

"Oh, the other spouter!"

"No; somethin' else."

"What is it?–tell us." And the boys gathered around him.

"Why, right down there, where you see that big rock with a sharp pick–see it? Well, right down behind there is a place where the tide leaves a big puddle when it goes out, and that puddle is full of live things."

"What are they?" asked Joe laughing;–"not whales?"

"Oh, nothin' like that. Flowery kind of things, awful pretty, that shut up if you look at 'em very hard, or leastways if you poke 'em ever so easy."

"Those are sea-anemones," said Mr. Bernard.

"Then there are crowds of little things with pricks all over their backs, and if you turn them over they stick out those splinters sideways, and make 'em long-like, and pull themselves right side up again," said John, trying to imitate, with his own arms, the sea-urchin's movements with his spines.

"There's more than that there, too," piped Jerry. "There's five-fingers, plenty of 'em–big ones, and baby-fellers, too, no bigger than your finger-nail; nor so big."

"Sometimes fish get in there, too," said John. "I tell you it's an awful pretty puddle."

"I should think so, indeed," said Mr. Andrews. "It certainly is a 'puddle' worth seeing.–When will the tide be low, Jonas?"

"About five o'clock, I reckon, though the fog has been too thick to tell whether there has been any tide or not," answered the cook, who had come with the others to see the "spouting-horn."

"Very little doubt of that, I should judge from appearances," said Mr. Lane, one of the teachers.

"I am too tired to come over again to-day, boys," said Mr. Bernard, turning to take little Max's hand. "But you can come at low tide, if you like. I suppose John and his brother will be willing to meet you."

"Oh, they are going to camp with us!–Aren't you, John?"

"No; we want to see what becomes of the wreck–we don't have one every day."

"No, I hope not," said Joe. "Well, good-bye till to-night."

CHAPTER VIII.

ANEMONE POOL.

"By the time we get over there, Mr. Andrews, the tide will be down. Are you ready?" called Joe, rapping on the tent occupied by that gentleman and Mr. Lane.

"Yes; we will come directly. You need not wait."

"All right, sir.–Come on, boys. They'll come after. Who wants to race?"

"I do," cried Walter Martin. "Race open for all! No handicapping either. One, two, three! Luck to the fellow that happens to start ahead!"

Away went two score boys over the pasture, like a herd of wild deer, clearing the hillocks and patches of hemlock at a bound.

Dave got the lead, and, with Joe close at his heels, he reached the woods; and there discovering that they had the race to themselves, and the other boys calling "Time! time!" at the top of their voices, they both cried "Quits," and dropped together by a blueberry patch, where, as soon as they recovered breath, they began to pick and eat. They waited there until their companions came up; and then, tired of racing, the party sauntered lazily along, picking berries by the way.

"No John or Jerry here yet?" said Maurice Perry, as they came near the rendezvous.

"We can find the place easy enough though," said Ned Gould. "It was near that rock with a peaked top, John said."

The whole troop of boys leaped down from rock to rock along the boulder-strown shore, until they reached the rock spoken of as a landmark.

"I don't believe the tide is low enough," said Joe, peering into one pool after another. "Hullo! there are John and Jerry.–Hullo there! Come, find your 'puddle.' We can't."

"Good reason why. It's covered up with water. The tide isn't low enough. There it is, right there; but you've got to wait till the tide is down, and the water in the 'puddle' settles."

After a while, a standing-place on the outer edge of the pool was free from water, and as many of the boys as possible crowded upon it.

"You'd better get off that. A big wave will come and give you a duckin',"

said John laughing.

The boys were hesitating whether to heed the advice, when a shout went up from the crowd higher up on the rocks.

"Jump! Quick! You'll be ducked!"

The shout gave the warning to some in time, and, leaping across the pool, they clambered up to a safe place; but others, stopping to look around and see what was the matter, were drenched by a huge incoming wave, that fairly took them from their feet and hurled them into John's "puddle," among the "live things" he had told them of.

There was a great shrieking, and sputtering, and splashing, as the boys emerged from their bath, wiser, if not sadder, for the experience.

When the teachers arrived, they found some half-dozen boys dressed in an exceedingly primitive style, while they wrung their clothes, and hung them to dry on the boulders.

"I told 'em not to go there," said John. "You can't hurry the tide out; it takes its own time, no matter how many folks is waitin'."

"'Time and tide wait for no man,'" suggested Maurice.

"Well, the rest of us will take warning, and keep where it is safe," said Mr. Andrews, striving to peer into the troubled waters of the pool.

After a few more waves had swept over, making the crowd run back in a lively way from the edge, John announced oracularly,–

"There, that's about the last. There won't be any more come over that strip of ledge on the other side; but you can't see nothin' till it gets settled."

He was right in his prophecy: no more rude waves chased them from their position, and gradually the water of the pool grew clearer and clearer, until some of its wonders could be plainly seen.

"I see an anemone!" cried Mr. Andrews.

"Yes, dozens of them. How beautiful–purple and yellow in every shade!" added Mr. Lane.

"What! those filmy-looking things against the sides?" asked Joe, lying flat on the rocks to see better.

"Yes; those are sea-anemones."

"See 'em shut up when I poke 'em," cried John, coming with a stick to show them off.

"No, no, John; not yet," cried Mr. Andrews, motioning him away. "We want to see them open. See them wave their tentacles in search of food! Ah, one fellow has a periwinkle eating!"

"You don't mean to say that soft-looking thing can eat that winkle!" exclaimed Dave.

"Yes, indeed, and very much larger things than that.–Let me take the stick,

John."

Then touching one of the anemones with it in the gentlest way, he caused it to draw in its tentacles and shut up like a puckered bag, all beauty gone.

"Oh, leave the rest open!" cried the boys.

Mr. Lane stooped down, and, working carefully and perseveringly, detached one from the side of the rock, and offered it to Joe. But it was not an inviting-looking object out of its element; and Joe, shrinking back, said, "Thanks,–no jelly for me."

"Now look at the sea-urchins and star-fish," said Mr. Andrews, picking up a specimen of each. "See these spines, how stiff and unyielding they look."

"Only put him down bottom upward," interposed Jerry, setting one down that he held in his hand.

The boys crowded around and watched the curious creature as he slanted his spines until he brought them into position where he could move himself on them, and gradually bring himself right side up again.

The boys experimented with them and with the star-fish for a long time, and tried to spread the latter out to dry on the rocks; but by the time they had smoothed out the last ray the first would be curling up, conscious that it was in an unfriendly place.

"We will take some over to camp and pin them on a board," said Mr. Lane, collecting specimens of various sizes from that of a penny to that of a hat-crown.

"Pin them down? You wouldn't stick pins into them, Mr. Lane!" said Joe, horrified.

"In the cause of science. Besides, they have no brains, and consequently no feelings to hurt."

"They may not have brains; but if they have no feeling, why do they twist up when you bother them?"

"I've seen 'em growing a new finger when one's been pulled off," piped Jerry.

"Yes; they can readily supply any such loss."

"Wasn't I right in saying it was a pretty puddle?" asked John proudly.

"Yes, indeed; but it deserves a better name. Let's call it Anemone Pool."

"That's it. That sounds first-rate," answered the boys. "Anemone Pool it is."

The wet clothes were still damp, but the owners dressed themselves, and were proceeding to hurry away, when John said, "Hold on! I forgot to tell you something." The boys stood still and looked back, waiting for the speaker to come to them.

"Those men from the wreck said they spoke a fishing-smack just off yonder the night before the storm, and they had aboard two of the scaredest fellows you ever see."

The boys were all attention now, and crowded around John.

"The captain of the smack said the boys had been sea-sick ever since they shipped, and as soon as the fog came on they had been so frightened he didn't know what to do with 'em."

"Well, what did he do?" demanded Joe impatiently.

"He wanted Captain Melrose to take them off his hands; he thought there was goin' to be a storm, and he really hadn't room for 'em. He said they just stayed around and moped."

"Poor fellows!" said Joe soberly.

"Captain Melrose couldn't take 'em; he was bound out. The other cap'n said somethin' about the two belongin' on an island with a campin'-party; and afterwards when he came ashore here and see all you fellows he concluded this was the island."

The boys exchanged glances with Mr. Lane and Mr. Andrews, but not a word was spoken for several minutes; then Mr. Andrews said, "Boys, go on to camp, and Mr. Lane and I will go back to the lighthouse and interview these men to see if we can get any further information."

The boys went slowly away, feeling very sober over John's news, and the two teachers hastened in the opposite direction.

"What do you suppose has become of them?" asked Dave, in a low tone, of his friend Joe.

"I wish I knew; and yet I don't either. That awful storm came after Captain Melrose spoke the smack. Oh, I wish they would come sailing by now!"

"What would you do?"

"I would fly over to Mr. Bernard and beg him to let them land. I think they've been punished enough, and I think he thinks so too, and would forgive them."

"Who wants to go out in the boat?" shouted Ned Gould, looking back towards Joe and Dave, who owned part of the little craft.

"I," said Joe; "but it's too rough yet from the storm. Look at the white-caps."

"Who cares for white-caps? It's all the more fun when the boat dances."

"Well, fun or no fun, you won't get Mr. Bernard's permission to go before to-morrow, and very likely not then."

"Oh, bother! Mr. Bernard is always tying us up so. We can't go here, we can't go there," said Ned angrily.

"That's so. I should think we were old enough to do as we choose. My father doesn't want me to be made a Miss Nancy; he wants me to rough it," growled Walter Martin.

"I've managed a boat ever since I was out of petticoats," continued Ned, "and father knows it; but I suppose Mr. Bernard would be horrified if I should

ask leave to borrow the light-keeper's boat for a sail."

"I don't think Mr. Bernard is a bit too strict," said Joe boldly. "Just remember that he has the care of a big crowd, and feels responsible for our safety. I believe most of our folks would say he couldn't be too careful in such a place as this."

"Oh, of course you would stand up for him!" sneered Walter, "you and he are such friends."

Joe laughed good-naturedly.

"Well, if we can't use our boat we might as well set her adrift. What's the use of having a boat?" growled Walter.

"Bite off your nose to spite your face!" whispered Dave.

"I'll tell you what we'll do. I'll get Mr. Bernard to let us go off to the other end of the island down by the place John told us about, and we'll bring our lunch and have a high time!" exclaimed Joe.

"Can't go without a teacher along to look after us, just as if we were infants out with their nurse," grumbled Walter.

"I will ask Mr. Bernard to give us liberty for once, and trust us to take care of ourselves," laughed Joe, determined to restore Walter to good-nature.

"He won't do it."

"I'll ask, anyhow. I believe he will."

"There's the supper-bell!" shouted Dave, dashing away toward camp.

The rest of the crowd quickened their steps to a run, and were soon gathered around the table, having returned from their long walk with keen appetites.

Joe gave Mr. Bernard the story told by Captain Melrose and repeated to them by John Kramer; and added that the two teachers had gone on to the lighthouse, hoping to hear something that would give them a clue to the whereabouts of the fishing-smack.

CHAPTER IX.

A DAY OF FREEDOM.

The next morning, directly after breakfast, Joe was reminded of his promise, and approaching Mr. Bernard, he said, "I want to ask a favour, sir."

"Very well, Joe."

"We boys, the whole crowd of us, want to go off on a lark."

"That is frankly said, Joe," said Mr. Bernard smiling.

Joe laughed, and continued, "We want to go over to a fishing-place John tells about, where the fish are extra big and quick to bite."

"I am willing, Joe, perfectly willing."

"But that isn't all, Mr. Bernard," said Joe reddening, and finding it harder to ask the favour than he expected. "We want to go on our own hook, and not have any one to look after us."

"That would be sorry fishing, to get on your own hooks, Chester," was the laughing reply. "But I understand: you object to the company of the teachers. Is that it?"

That did not sound just right to Joe, but it was the truth; so he laughed and admitted the fact. "What have you against us, Joe? Are we too strict?" asked Mr. Bernard good-naturedly. "Have we offended your majesties in any way?"

"Oh no, sir. The teachers are very nice; but some of the boys think they are tied up too much, and get kind of uneasy."

Mr. Bernard glanced over the crowd of boys gathered round to hear the decision, and seemed to be studying the question.

"We would be just as careful as if the teachers were there," interposed Lewis Swift; and many other voices added a like assurance.

"Very well, boys. If you will all be careful, I will agree to your going without a leader. I think myself that it is much wiser to have one of the teachers with such a troop of boys. When men gather in companies, they always appoint a leader, and consider it no disgrace to them."

"That's so," said Joe Chester. "I never thought of that; did you, Walt?"

"No, but I'm for a day of freedom!" replied Walter in a low tone. Then aloud he said, "So we may go, Mr. Bernard, may we?"

"Yes, you may go. Success to you, and a safe return!"

"Three cheers for the teachers!" cried Ned Gould, waving his cap, and adding in a low tone to Walter, "Nice fellows–at a distance!"

Jonas grumbled a good deal at having so many lunches to put up.

"It's worse than getting dinner for you! It will take all my bread and gingerbread."

"Put in plenty; we'll be hungry as sharks," said David, bringing along a good-sized basket.

"Put in some potatoes, Jonas, and we'll make a fire and cook some for dinner ourselves. I can fry fish on a stick," said Joe.

"Now, you youngsters, save all the fish you catch, and Freitag and I'll come over and fetch 'em back."

"All right, Jonas; we'll have a big load for you."

Mr. Bernard gave them numerous cautions; and, promising to remember them, the boys hurried away, laden with baskets of lunch, fishing-rods, and bait.

They were in high spirits, and Mr. Bernard could hear them, long after they were out of sight, singing, "Cheer, boys, cheer."

"This is something like–don't you say so, boys? It seems good to be our own masters. I'm sick of hearing 'Don't do this,' and 'You'd better not do that.' It spoils all the fun of camping out."

"Well, Walt, we are free for once. Let's enjoy our liberty, and not grumble," said Joe.

They made a second breakfast of blueberries on the way, and arrived at the fishing-place in the best of spirits.

They found the sport, as John had told them, the liveliest kind imaginable; and all were soon engaged with hook and line.

The tide was quite low, but coming in steadily, and they found it necessary to retreat before it continually. Sometimes the advancing waves would overtake them in their eagerness for one more bite, and as a result it was necessary now and then to remove their rubber boots and empty out the water.

"I guess there'll be more fish than Jonas and his man Friday will want to carry," said Dave, as he began to gather the fish from the rocks to put them in the basket. "Let's have a lunch."

"So say I," said Donald Parker. "There's plenty of drift-wood close at hand."

The fires were soon built, the potatoes were put to roast, and the fish were hung by the gills on sticks over the coals.

There was a great deal of laughing and shouting over the preparation for "Lunch No. 1," as they called this, intending to save enough food to have several more during the day.

Some began to eat their fish before they were half cooked, and others found theirs burned or smoked; but all were merry over the gipsy meal, when Joe, standing up and looking around, said, "Where are Walt and Ned?"

"Sure enough, where are they?" asked Dave, dropping his fish into the fire. "I haven't heard their voices for ever so long."

"Nor I," said several boys.

"Not since we first got here."

"Walt Martin! Ned Gould!"

"Ned! Walt!" shouted the crowd, making war-whoops with their hands over their mouths.

"Shout again, all together!"

Again they all shouted, loud enough to frighten the mermaids in the sea.

"Ho, Walt!"

Only a prolonged echo came back, and seemed to mock them.

"Now it's mean for those fellows to go off and frighten us!" cried Joe indignantly.

"I say as much. They've hid somewhere to make us hunt them up. I move we let them wait, and eat our lunch."

So they began eating again, talking meanwhile of their missing companions.

No one remembered anything about them after they reached the rocks.

Each boy had been busy selecting his place, baiting hooks, and pulling in fish, with the frequent shout, "Look out there! Big wave coming!"

Then would be a rushing back, and dragging of lines, as the tide pursued them further and further back.

"Perhaps they've gone up to the lighthouse," suggested Dave. "I'll go up and see."

"Hold on, Dave; I'll go too," said Joe, disposing hastily of a large piece of gingerbread. "One of you fellows tend my fish."

"All right! Eat it, too, if you want us."

Joe and David met John and Jerry coming rapidly down over the rocks.

"We heard an awful yelling, and thought we'd come and see what the matter was."

"We were calling Walt and Ned. We thought perhaps they had come up here. Have you seen anything of them?"

"No; they haven't been near us. Perhaps they've tumbled into the sea."

"Cheerful suggestion!" said Joe, shrugging his shoulders.

"They'd hardly be likely to do so without one yell at least; and both of them together would make a considerable noise. No; I suppose they are hiding somewhere to frighten us."

"What are you doing–fishing?"

"Yes; you see we are over here by ourselves–no teachers with us," said Joe.

"Wish there was now!" added Dave.

"So do I. If one of the teachers had come, those boys wouldn't be playing their pranks this way."

"What's the matter?" shouted Mr. Kramer, coming out on the ledge before his door. "What are you youngsters howling about?"

"We can't find two of the boys."

"Can't find 'em! Where were they when you see 'em last?"

"They came over from camp with us, and we all began to fish; that's the last any of us saw of them."

"Humph! that's a nice business," said the light-keeper thoughtfully, knocking the ashes out of his pipe, and tucking it in the pocket of his monkey-jacket.

"We didn't miss them until we made our fires and were cooking our fish."

Jacob Kramer said nothing, but started across the ledge that paved his yard.

"How long have you been over there fishing?"

"Oh, we got there by nine o'clock."

"And now it is about eleven," said Kramer, looking at the sun.

"Yes, sir," replied Joe, referring to his little silver watch; "it is five minutes past."

"If they went around the cliff just beyond the fishing-place, and didn't watch, the tide would soon cut them off."

Joe and Dave looked frightened.

"Where would they be now? can they get over the cliff?"

"Over the cliff? Not much, unless they can walk up a wall like a fly. It isn't less than forty feet high in any place right there, and part o' the way it's sixty and seventy, straight up and down. I'll go and look over."

He led the way to the brow of the cliff, about twenty yards off; and, lying down flat, looked over the edge.

The boys held their breath until he spoke.

"Yes; there are the young scamps!"

Joe and Dave threw themselves upon the ground and crept to the edge also.

"Keep back there, you rascals! This is no place for you."

The boys crept back until it was safe to stand again, saying, "I saw them!"

"So did I! What a place!"

"Hullo, down there!" shouted Mr. Kramer.

Ned and Walter looked up in evident surprise and relief.

"O Mr. Kramer, can't you get us off?" they screamed.

"I don't think I can."

"The tide is coming higher and higher, and we have climbed as far as we can. Will we have to drown?"

The light-keeper looked down some time before answering–it seemed an hour to Joe–then he said in a tone the boys below could not hear, "The tides are so much higher now, and the sea so rough since the storm, there's no knowin' how high it will get."

The boys below, tired of waiting for an answer, screamed, "Mr. Kramer, do something to help us. Bring a boat around here and take us off."

"That's the worst place on the island to take a boat. The water drives in furiously, and then sucks back enough to drag the solid cliff after it, if it wasn't anchored very strong."

This the light-keeper said to the two boys near him; and Ned and Walter, in their perilous position under the cliff, waited breathlessly for an answer, nearly frantic at the delay.

"Mr. Kramer, O Mr. Kramer! How high does the tide come here?"

"I can't see. Can't you tell by the looks of the rocks?"

"No, we don't know how."

”You can tell how high it comes generally by the seaweed and barnacles. I think it won’t come up to you,” he said at last.

This was sorry comfort.

”But you are not sure! Oh, come round in the boat, please.”

”I shan’t risk my boat in there unless it’s a case of life or death, for she’d be smashed in a moment, and no one could save himself in that whirlpool.”

”But can’t you go out in the boat and be near, so you could get to them if the water got too high where they are?” asked Joe eagerly.

Kramer hesitated.

”Oh, do, Mr. Kramer,” urged Joe. ”We boys will make up a purse and pay you.”

”Nonsense, boy! If I do it at all it won’t be for money. I tell you a boat would get smashed there very quick. It would go against the rocks in spite of me. I’ll get some of those wrecked fellows waked up, and go out. I suppose the youngsters will feel better to see the boat.”

”Oh yes,” said Joe; ”we shall all feel easier.”

”It is almost half an hour yet before the tide is high,” said the light-keeper meditatively as he looked below again.

”Here, you down there! I’ll come around in the boat.–John, you run to the house and wake up a couple of those men. You needn’t disturb the captain. I only want two. Fetch ’em along quick down to the boat-landing!”

John was off in a minute, and Joe and Dave ran down to the boat with Kramer, who, now he had made up his mind, seemed inclined to hurry.

The two men from the house soon followed, and the boat was quickly launched.

CHAPTER X.

BOYS IN A TRAP.

Meanwhile the other boys, having disposed of their lunch, and hearing nothing from Joe and David, became more anxious, and set off for the lighthouse.

There they learned from Mrs. Kramer that John had reported Walter and Ned surrounded by the tide, and that the boat was to be launched to go to the rescue.

In great excitement the crowd of boys rushed down over the rocks to the

place where the men had just pushed off in their boat.

There were two pairs of oars and two strong boat-hooks in the skiff, and the three men were ready to do all they could for the castaways.

The boat was soon out of sight beyond the spur of the cliff that helped to form the trap in which Walter and Ned were caught, and the crowd rushed back to their lunch-place, to see if they could get a glimpse of the boat there; but another spur, around which the boys had gone to hide, shut off the view.

When they reached their fishing-ground, they found, to their disgust, that the tide had risen over much of their lunch, and had carried off many of their nice, jointed rods, that were still floating provokingly near, but just out of reach.

The baskets had been tipped over by the waves, spilling all the fine fish they had caught in the morning.

"Did you ever see such luck?" cried Clifford Davis–"everything at sixes and sevens."

"This is the result of too much freedom, eh?" asked Don.

"That's so, Don," said Joe. "I wish we were all safe out of this scrape."

Some of the boys had taken the precaution to throw their rods well up on the rocks, and with these they tried to rescue the floating baskets and rods, but with a limited success; only a few could be recovered.

It was a great temptation to Joe and Dave, knowing of the look-out on the edge of the cliff and yet keeping away from it; but they understood too well the risk that would be run by a crowd of careless, venturesome boys, who would never believe that they could come to harm by just looking over the edge of the cliff, however steep it might be.

The time seemed very long as they waited for Mr. Kramer's return, or some tidings from the missing boys.

"Pretty near high tide," exclaimed Joe soberly, as he held his watch for Dave to see.

"The boat is around there by this time, and the question is now whether they are to be taken off that way or left to wait for the tide to get as low as it was when they dodged around that place."

"Why, isn't Mr. Kramer going to take them off anyway?" asked Lewis Germaine.

"Not if he finds they are safe without it. He won't risk his boat in there if they can be saved any other way. The water rushes in there like a mill-race, and sweeps out again the same way."

"Then we may have to wait two or three hours yet before we can see the boys!" exclaimed Don.

"Yes," said Joe, "all that time."

He presently whispered to David, "I can't stand it, boy. You stay here, so the

others won't suspect. I am going to look, if I can steal off without their knowing it. Don't you say that I'm gone."

"All right," said Dave. "Get back as quick as you can."

Joe began skipping stones lazily, and, moving slowly away from the rest of the party, disappeared behind some rocks, beyond which he dropped suddenly, and crept on hands and knees up the bank where the bushes were thickest.

Once out of sight of his companions, he arose and hurried out to the point on the cliff overlooking the prison-house of his two friends. There he crept carefully to the edge and looked over.

"Good! they are safe, and there's the boat."

"How are you there? All right?" he heard the mate of the wrecked vessel shout.

"All right! No, sir–not by a good deal. The water is still coming up," shouted Walter.

As the boat was pulled within speaking distance the frightened boys became more and more alarmed, it plunged about so wildly on the rough water; and they thought, perilous as their position was, it was preferable to a change to the boat.

"We'll drown getting into that skiff, Walt," said Ned, paler than ever at the dilemma.

"Yes, if there is any chance here, I would rather stay till the tide goes down; wouldn't you?"

"Yes, I would."

"Say, Mr. Kramer, just lie off there, and wait; perhaps the water won't come up here."

"That's just what I'm doing. You don't catch me risk my boat in there unless you are ready to go under."

"When is it high tide?" shouted Walter.

"Five minutes before twelve."

Walter looked at his watch eagerly. "I believe it won't reach us, Ned. It is ten minutes off high now, and unless the last few waves are extra high we will have a standing-place in this cleft in the rock."

Ten minutes dragged slowly away, and the angry waves had not reached them. They waited a little longer, to be sure, and then cried joyfully, "It is twelve o'clock and after, and we are all right."

"Good! Then all you've got to do is to wait, and learn wisdom against another time. The tide will be down low enough to let you out of that trap in about two hours and a half, or three, at most."

The boys groaned, and then Ned said dolefully, "We'll starve to death. I didn't know I was hungry until the danger was over."

"You'll be hungrier before you get off," shouted the hard-hearted Kramer, laughing provokingly.–"A good lesson for the young scamps. It seems they made a fuss about having a teacher go along with 'em to look after them, so the head man, Mr. Bernard, let 'em off alone to-day. That little chap, Joe, he owned they'd got enough of it."

"I'll lower them something with a line when we get ashore," said the mate, glancing up at the perpendicular face of the cliff. "It isn't long ago that I was wrecked myself and wanted help."

Joe had seen enough to gladden his heart as he lay looking over the edge of his high perch. The boys were safe at high tide, and the boat was coming back without them, so he went back toward his companions, and when within hailing distance, cried, "Come on, boys; let's go over to the boat-landing, and wait till Mr. Kramer gets back."

The boys were ready for anything that would help to pass away the time, and they rushed away in time to see the boat rounding the rocky point that had hidden it from view.

"Whew! there they come, but no Walt or Ned," exclaimed Cliff Davis.

"What did you find out, Joe?" whispered David, locking arms with his friend.

"The boys are all right: the water won't come any higher. But won't it seem a long time before they get back?"

When the boat reached the landing the mate called cheerily, "Boys, your messmates are all right, but very hungry; have you got any dinner with you?"

"Yes; we saved some for them, but the tide carried off a lot."

"Well, bring it along, and I'll get a line and lower it to them."

"Hurrah for you, sir!" shouted the boys. "Oh how glad they'll be!"

Joe and Dave ran for the lunch, while John scampered to the house for a long line.

Going out on the cliff, the mate tied the basket to the line, and prepared to drop it over.

"Stand back," he shouted, as the boys crowded forward. "I shan't do it unless you all stand back."

"Are they down there? Can you see them?" asked the boys eagerly.

"Yes, I see them."

"My! just think, we might have been here watching them just as well as not," exclaimed Lewis.

Joe and Dave exchanged wise glances at this, and Mr. Kramer said, "Lucky you didn't know it, for a crowd of you boys jiggling and pushing and fooling, as boys do, would have gone over. Stand back there!"

"Hullo, below!" shouted the mate. "Here's some food for you."

Walter and Ned, looking up, saw the basket slowly descending, and the boys listening heard a faint cheer above the roar of the sea.

"Got it?"

"Yes, all right!" shouted Walter, taking the basket from the line.

"There! that's all I can do for them," said the mate, reeling in the line. "Now, boys, I'll give you some advice for nothing: Go back to a safer place, and wait for your friends. They will be prisoners for over two hours yet, and if you stay here some of the rest of you will be pretty likely to tumble over to keep them company; only I reckon your company wouldn't be good for much after you got down there."

"All right, sir," said Joe, glad to have some one speak authoritatively.–"Come on, boys! Let's go back and lie around on the rocks and tell stories."

"Agreed, if you will be the teller," cried several, knowing that he had Robinson Crusoe and the Arabian Nights at his tongue's end.

Away went the crowd back to the fishing-place; and Mr. Kramer and the other two men returned to the lighthouse.

CHAPTER XI.

THE ESCAPE.

The time passed much more quickly to the crowd listening to Joe, as they lay on the rocks in every attitude imaginable, than to Walter and Ned under the cliff, with the sea still surging around them.

As soon as their fright was over, they began to blame each other for the trouble they were in.

"It was your idea, hiding from the boys," said Ned, as they paced to and fro as far as their prison would allow.

"Yes; but you were just as willing as I, old fellow. We were both idiots. We might have known the tide would cut us off."

"Won't the teachers laugh at us! 'Serve them right,' they'll say, plague on them!" grumbled Ned.

"Well, it does serve us right; but I wish the boys would keep quiet about it though, and not give the teachers a chance to laugh at us."

"But they won't; they'll say it's too good to keep."

The lunch lowered by the mate restored their good-nature, and they waited,

watch in hand, as the waters abated around their perch. Ned even recovered enough to joke about their misfortune, and Walter sang,–

"On a lone, barren isle,
Where the wild, angry billows
Assail the stern rock," etc.

At length the tide was so low they ventured out to the high rock that shut them away from the rest of the party; and too impatient to wait longer, they doffed boots and stockings, rolled their trousers above their knees, and, waiting till the waves rolled back, they dashed into the water, and were quickly around the other side of the cliff, and in sight of their companions.

"There they are!" shouted Don Parker, interrupting Joe's story in its most exciting part.

"Where?"–"Who?"

"Walt and Ned."

"Sure enough, so they are!"

"Hurrah!"–"Welcome to the castaways!" cried the crowd, leaping to their feet.

"Glad to see you, old fellows!" said Joe; "but you gave us an awful fright."

"We gave ourselves a greater, I'll be bound," said Walter frankly. "That was a mighty uncomfortable place we stumbled into."

"Yes, and we thought we'd seen the last of you fellows," added Ned, throwing himself down upon the rock, and pillowing his head on his locked arms as he lay on his back. "That's just as near as I want to come to Robinson Crusoe's experience. We were worse off than he was–he had plenty of room; and one time when the tide was highest we had the spray flying over our heads. My coat is wet now."

"Is it this week, or next, or the year 1900?" said Walt. "It seems ages since we dodged around behind that rock to see if we could frighten you."

"You won't feel complimented, I am afraid," said Joe laughing, "when I tell you we didn't miss you till noon. We were so busy fishing, we thought only of that, until some one went to cook fish; then we all got hungry and decided to have a lunch. When we got ready to eat we missed you."

"That was when we heard them shouting, Ned."

"Yes, I suppose so."

"Why didn't you answer?"

"We did; we just yelled. But it was no use, and we knew it, for we could hardly hear you, the sea roared so, as it made up into that pocket in the cliff; and

we knew by the sound that you were all shouting together, though it reached us just as faintly. Oh! it was awful there. I thought I was a pretty good kind of a fellow till then, and I thought of all the bad things I ever did."

"So did I," said Ned, looking up at the clouds meditatively. "I wonder if folks always do when they get into danger?"

"I think they do. I've heard my uncle tell how he felt when he came within an inch of drowning. He said everything came back to him like a flash," said Cliff Davis.

"Well, it's awful anyway!" added Walter. "I shall never forget how it seemed to have that water come at us like wild beasts, roaring and snapping at us as if it would swallow us whole in a minute."

"Don't talk about it, Walt," said Ned shuddering "I saw you down below there, when Mr. Kramer first hailed you," said Joe to change the subject, which was getting painful.

"You did?" asked Ned, opening his half-closed eyes.

"You did?" echoed the crowd.

"Where were you?"

"Yes, that's what we would like to know."

"Up on the cliff, lying flat on my stomach; but as soon as I got one glimpse, Mr. Kramer ordered me back."

"Why didn't you tell us, so we could look?" grumbled the crowd.

"I didn't want you to break your necks. It was bad enough to have two fellows down in that trap, without letting the rest of the party tumble down on them. Kramer drove me back, but I went and peeped once afterwards. Dave knew I was going. I couldn't stand it a minute longer; I knew the men had gone in the boat, and was afraid you two would drown before it could get around there, or afraid the boat would swamp if you tried to get in. I prayed hard for a minute."

"Did you?" asked Walter, looking quickly at Joe. "So did I–harder than I ever did before in all my life."

Ned said nothing, but lay with his eyes closed; and the other boys were unusually quiet.

"Wasn't I glad to hear you say, 'It's twelve o'clock, and we are safe!'"

"Is my hair gray, Joe?" asked Walter, half laughing, and half in earnest, as he took off his round cap, and revealed a crop of short black curls.

"Not much that I can see."

"I have heard of hair turning gray from fright, and I thought perhaps I might be needing hair-dye."

"When shall we go back to camp, boys?" asked Dave.

"It depends on whether you are going to tell about our scrape, whether I go back at all," replied Walter, laughing, and yet half in earnest. "You fellows

promise not to say anything about it, won't you?"

"I am willing. It's all over now, and no harm done to any one; but the teachers will hear of it from Kramer," replied Joe.

"Yes, I suppose so; but don't let's tell to-day."

"Just as you say. We got a joke on ourselves too. While we were rushing around looking at the boat, the tide came up over our baskets of fish and the lunch, and carried off the very best of the fishing-rods. So the laugh will be against us all."

"Here is Jonas with his 'man Friday,' after the fish!" exclaimed Maurice Perry, doubling up with a fit of laughter, as he glanced at the empty baskets that had been rescued after much effort.

"Well, boys, had good luck?" called Jonas as soon as he came within speaking distance.

"First-rate, Jonas," answered Joe.

"Where are the fish, then?" demanded Jonas, staring at the empty baskets.

"Echo answers, 'Where?'"

"You didn't catch any, after all. You've been foolin' around here all day!" cried the cook wrathfully. "Now you'll get little supper for this, 'cause I've been dependin' on them fish. Here, give me a rod! I'll catch some for the gentlemen's supper. You boys can go without.–Come on, Freitag!"

The boys were rolling on the rocks and laughing, which added greatly to Jonas's wrath.

"Lazy scamps!" he said.

"Now, Jonas," remonstrated Joe, as soon as he could recover himself and sober his face enough to speak, "we are not laughing at you; we are laughing at ourselves. Don't get mad. We met with a big misfortune. We got fish enough to stock a market–beauties too; and while we went over to see Mr. Kramer the tide came up and swept them all out, and worse still, carried off our fishing-tackle."

"That's so, Jonas."

"Humph! great thing to laugh about!" grumbled Jonas, somewhat mollified.

"You ought to pity rather than scold us," cried Joe, pretending to feel hurt. "We lost most of our lunch, too. You'll do as well as you can for us with supper, won't you?–'cause this has been an awful hard day on us."

"Oh–oh, hear!" cried the crowd, writhing again in convulsions of laughter.

Jonas shrewdly suspected that they had not told all their bad luck; but he had heard enough, and summoning Friday to get a fishing-rod and hurry along, he went down where it seemed most probable to him that the fish would be plenty.

When the boys went back to camp they fully intended to keep the rest of the story to themselves; but at the supper-table, when Mr. Bernard asked for an

account of their day's adventures, each looked at his neighbour to see who would be spokesman, and in looking they fell to laughing, and there was no one sober enough to answer.

"You evidently had a very jolly day, boys," said Mr. Bernard, with a twinkle in his gray eyes.

"Not very, sir," said Joe, feeling that it was impolite to leave the remark unanswered. The boys all laughed again, and Joe said, "The tide carried off our lunch, and our fish, and ever so many of the best rods."

"Ah, that was bad, but not half so had as if you were in danger yourselves."

The boys exchanged glances, and Walter and Ned reddened very uncomfortably.

Had the news travelled across the island so soon?

Surely Mr. Andrews and Mr. Lane both looked very wise as they glanced down the double row of boys.

"It's no use; I am going to tell," exclaimed Walter abruptly. "We had a horrid time, Mr. Bernard. Ned and I got hemmed in by the tide, and had to stay five hours. It wasn't much fun."

"I had heard as much, Walter," said Mr. Bernard kindly. "Mr. Kramer told Jonas. We may thank a kind Providence that you escaped with your lives. It was a very frightful experience, I am sure. I don't see how any of you can feel like laughing."

"O Mr. Bernard," said Joe apologetically, "we didn't all day, I assure you. We were wretched enough while Walt and Ned were missing; but after they got back safe, and we came to think it all over, and remember that we were only having our own way as we wanted to, and what a hard way it had turned out, it struck us as a pretty good joke on ourselves."

"Perhaps it was, boys, but the escape has given us new cause for thankfulness to the good Lord who holds us in his keeping, and I think our little prayer-meeting to-night will become a praise-meeting, in which every heart will join."

CHAPTER XII.

THE MISSING BOYS.

To take up the story where Ralph and Ben Carver dropped out, we must return to the evening after the final examination.

They had come to their room early, as all the scholars had, to pack for their camp trip. Ben pulled out the valises from the closet, and began to stir up the contents of his trunk to make a selection of the thickest and oldest garments to take with him.

"There's a jacket in the sear and yellow leaf, but it's warm; in she goes. Those trousers, I don't know about them. There's a pretty big hole in them; but yes, they'll do to fish in. Come, Ralph, get your clothes together," exclaimed Ben, seeing that his room-mate had thrown himself down astride of a chair, and with his head supported by both hands, looked like a third-rate tragedy actor.

There was no answer, and Ben went on packing and talking.

"I'm going to take more things this time. I know I hadn't anything fit to wear last year. Camp-life is very hard on clothes and shoes."

There was no response from Ralph, and Ben, pausing in his packing, exclaimed,–

"What's the matter, Drayton? You look as glum as a catfish with a hook in his gills!"

"I feel just as I look, then."

"Come on, boy, we've got to start right after breakfast, and there'll be no time to pack then."

"I don't care."

"Nonsense! Come, here's your valise gaping at you."

"I'm not going, Carver."

"Fiddlesticks! you are too. There's the foot-ball and your fishing-tackle. I'll get your things together for you."

"No. I tell you I shan't go. I've let this thing go on far enough. I absolutely haven't courage to go with the rest of the crowd to that island, where I can't get away, if I feel ever so much like running."

"The supply of courage has given out, has it?" asked Ben laughing. "There has been a pretty heavy drain on it, I will admit."

"Yes, it has given out," and Ralph laughed in spite of his melancholy.

"That's bad; but come, old fellow, you'll feel better after we get off."

"And leave Joe Chester behind?"

Ralph got off the chair that he had been torturing, and, putting his hands deep in his pockets, paced to and fro.

"No, Ben; I'm a pretty mean lot, but I declare it's getting beyond my depth. The next thing I shall go all under."

"And drag me too," added Ben, casting a sidelong glance at his friend.

"Yes, you too. I have been dragging you along in the same mire, until, to accommodate me, you've got in about as deep as I have."

"Don't mind me, Drayton. It doesn't trouble me one bit," said Ben carelessly.

"My lies have all been in the cause of friendship. Come, cheer up, old fellow. We'll both reform after this, and never again tell lies."

"If I ever do tell another, I'll be a fool," said Ralph emphatically. "It doesn't pay; besides, it is mean work."

"Yes, but what could you do? Confess to that job with the books? That was enough to expel you; don't you know it was?"

"I don't care; that would be better than living a lie here day after day, and seeing those eyes of Joe Chester's on me day and night. No, sir! I'm not going to the island and leave him behind. You are mistaken in me. I've got to the end of my rope."

Ben whistled dolefully; went and drummed a funeral march on the window; then coming back, and dropping into a chair, rested his elbow on the table, and his cheek on his hand, looking up meanwhile at his companion.

"What's the next thing on the bill of fare, then?"

"I'm going to cut," answered Ralph deliberately.

"What good will that do?"

"I'll leave a note for Bernard, confessing about the books, and then Joe Chester can go. Even if the master did not get the note till after the boat started, he would come back for Joe."

"Now, Ralph, if you do this I am set adrift too, you see. I have told as many lies as you have, and if you tell on yourself it will come out somehow,–that I know."

"No, it won't, Ben."

"It will, as sure as anything. Anyhow my courage is gone too. I don't want to face Mr. Bernard and the other fellows. No, sir! I shall stick by you. Give us your hand, old fellow. 'Sink or swim, live or die, survive or perish,' we'll stick together. What's the use of a chum that won't stick? Now, where shall we go? That's the question."

"That's the question," repeated Ralph, beginning to throw things into his open trunk, to be left till called for, because he expected this was to end his school-days at Massillon Academy.

"If we start off now on foot we shall be tracked, for Mr. Bernard will not rest till he gets news of us."

"That's so. And if we wait and go by train in the morning, all the town will know it. That will never do."

Both meditated a while, and then Ben said, waving an imaginary hat around his head, "I tell you! Let's go over to the Cape and see if we can't find a vessel bound out. Father sent me ten pounds for the camp out, and we'll hire a passage."

"Agreed!–the very thing! What shall we want to take?"

"We will wear these school-suits, and pack up some rough clothes, our

blankets, and just about what we would take to camp, for we may have to work our way to get the fellow to take us."

Ralph was about to throw his fishing-rod into the closet with his foot-ball and base-ball, when he exclaimed, "Hold on; I will make my will, and leave that rod in the hall for Joe Chester. Here, give me a card! 'For Joe Chester.' There, that will please the little chap, and let him know I remember him. Now I must write to Bernard. Where's my portfolio? Oh, here. Well, now, what to say to him? That's a puzzler. Shall I say anything about you, Ben?"

"I suppose you'll have to; but I am not anxious to be remembered to him," was the laughing reply, as Ralph dipped his pen in the ink and wrinkled his brow, trying to think of the proper thing to say. "Tell him I'm just as bad as you are, and we thought we had both better get out from such a high-toned crowd."

"Well, it is a good crowd, Ben–a splendid set of boys, take them all together. You know it is. No; I am going to do the right thing, and confess without any nonsense. He won't think me any meaner than I think myself. I'll just say that you knew about it, and so thought you had better go too."

After dipping his pen and scowling again, he wrote hastily:–

"MR. BERNARD,–I can't go with you. Let Joe Chester go, please. I did the mischief, and was afraid to tell. Ban Carver knew about it, but did not do it. We are going off together. Please send our fathers word that we are safe.–Respectfully yours,

"RALPH DRAYTON.

"*P.S.*–I was never sorrier in my life, Mr. Bernard."

"There, Ben, how does that sound?" he asked, throwing the letter across the table to his companion.

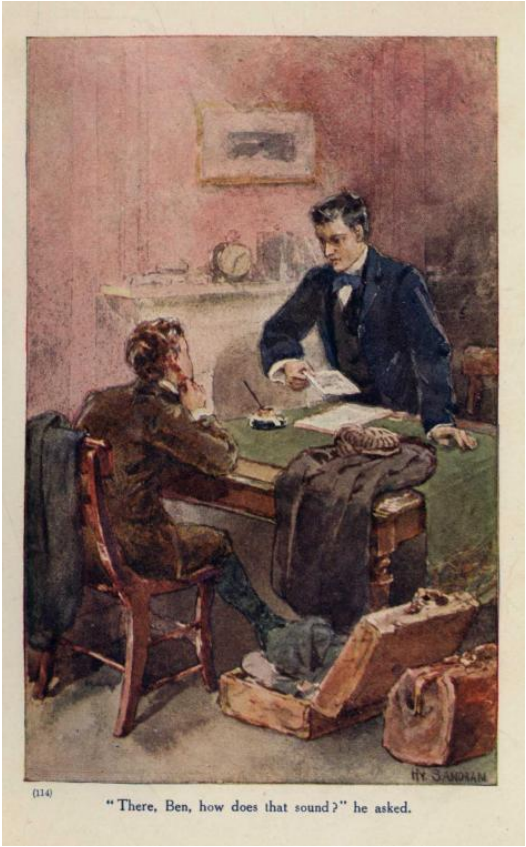
Ben laughed as he read it, and said, "Nothing could be better. I couldn't have done it so well myself."

"Seal it then, please. I don't want to read it over."

"Now, shall we start, or go to bed for an hour or two?" asked Ben, as the arrangements were all completed.

"I am afraid we would oversleep, and not get away till daylight, if we lie down. Let's sit up and talk till after midnight. We want to start before the first streak of light."

"All right."



"There, Ben, how does that sound?" he asked.

They chatted a while, and then grew sleepy. So after finding himself nodding a number of times, Ralph said, "Let's just take a short nap, Ben."

"So I say."

Folding their arms on the table for a pillow, the boys dropped their heads upon them, and were speedily sleeping soundly. They might have slept till the rising-bell rang, only Ralph was awakened by a fearful dream, in which he thought Mr. Bernard had seized him, and was trying to hold him under the water as a punishment for lying, to wash off the sin of it, Ralph thought. He started up so violently that he nearly fell over backward.

"What! what's the matter?" cried Ben in alarm.

"Nothing but a dream," said Ralph laughing. "But it is lucky I had it, for it is getting toward morning, and we may as well be stealing out. We had better take our boots in our hands and just crawl, those confounded stairs squeak so!"

Taking their valises, the boys, with a parting glance around the room to see if they had left anything, opened the door softly, and crept downstairs cautiously, waiting long after each step; for, as Ralph had said, they did creak unmercifully, as if in a league to betray them.

They knew the boys, their schoolmates, were too soundly sleeping to be disturbed, and if Mr. Andrews, whose room was at the farther end of the hall, did not hear them, they were safe.

They were down at last; and, unlocking the outer door, they stepped outside, and closed it carefully behind them.

"Good!" whispered Ben. "Now put on your boots, and away you go."

The moon was down long ago, and only the stars gave light to the runaways as they hastened through the Academy garden and over the fence into the field leading to the shore, feeling that every bush by the way might have some one behind to arrest them.

Everything on the Cape was quiet.

There were several vessels at the wharf, but if manned at all, it was by a sleeping crew. They crept under the outside stairs leading to the second story of a sail-loft, and waited impatiently and uncomfortably for daylight.

"It seems like a graveyard or a funeral. I hate things so still," whispered Ben, as if whispering were necessary in such stillness.

"It is an hour yet before daylight," said Ralph, looking at his watch.

"We may as well have a nap."

"If we can get one. Oh, how cold it is down here!"

The boys crept closer together for warmth, and with their heads on their knees tried to sleep; and after much turning and twisting, and grumbling at the hard seat, and shivering in the cold night air as it blew across the water, they at

last fell asleep.

CHAPTER XIII.
ON BOARD THE "UNA."

It was broad daylight when the boys waked again, cold and cramped from their uncomfortable position, and they found the men beginning to stir about on the vessels at the wharf, washing the decks and overhauling rigging.

It was some time before Ralph and Ben could find courage to venture forth from their hiding-place.

"But it is no use to wait. We must go. Unless we can get away before the steamboat comes, we will have to skulk off and try another plan. Come on; I'll ask."

Dire necessity gave Ralph courage; and motioning Ben to follow, he went on the wharf and hailed the first man he saw: "Are you the captain of that ship?"

"It ain't a ship, sonny, and I ain't the cap'n by a long chalk. Why?"

"I wanted to know when you expect to sail."

"Sail! we are just in; cargo all in the hold," said the sailor good-naturedly, relighting his pipe, and looking curiously at the two boys. "What d'ye want to know for? Don't want to ship, do you?"

"Not exactly; we want to go as passengers on a sea-voyage."

"Where do you want to go?"

"Oh, nowhere in particular."

"I never sailed to that port," said the sailor, laughing as well as he could and still hold on to his pipe with his teeth.

"Is there any vessel going to sail from here to-day?" asked Ben.

"Well, now, there isn't a very big fleet here. If any of 'em was going to start soon, you'd be likely to see some stirring about. There's a little smack over the other side, just goin' out; but that ain't your style, I reckon."

The boys looked in the direction indicated by the sailor's tar-stained thumb, and saw the sails going up.

"Let's go over there, Ben," said Ralph, pulling his companion's arm.

They were soon at the vessel's side, and as the crew only numbered two, and only one of these was a full-grown man, it was not difficult to know who was the captain.

Ralph, cap in hand, asked politely, "Captain, can you take two passengers?"

"Two what?" roared the captain as he gave a final pull, and fastened the sheets around a belaying-pin.

"Passengers," answered Ralph meekly, feeling very much like retreating before the roar.

"Do you take this for a Cunarder?"

Ralph and Ben laughed, and said, "No; we see it is nothing but a fishing-smack."

"Nothing but–humph, you little land-lubbers, don't you know this craft will beat anything else afloat?"

"Will it?" asked Ralph, eying the craft narrowly. "It looks as if it might. Will you take us?"

"Humph! you want to go fishing, do you? Your clothes look like that business. Got any overalls anywhere about you?"

"No, but we have thick old things in our valises."

"If you'll take us, captain, we will pay you just what you ask. We'll give you ten pounds," said Ben recklessly, with his hand in his pocket grasping the little red pocket-book that contained just that sum, sent by his father to defray his part of the camp expenses.

The captain whistled, and said, "Money's plenty! I ain't quite such a highway robber as to take ten pounds. What do you want to go for?"

"Oh, for fun, and for our health! The doctors have ordered a sea-voyage for us, we've been studying so hard."

"There now, Ben! What did you say last night about lying?" interrupted Ralph.

"No, captain, we want to go on a voyage, and we've got the money to pay for the trip. Won't you take us?"

"Well, now, I don't know about that. You are running away from home, you two chaps; I know you be."

"No, honest!" said Ben. "We are hundreds of miles away from home now, and our fathers don't expect us back for over a month yet. It's vacation now, and we want to go somewhere: that's what father sent me the money for."

"I don't know whether you are tellin' the truth or lyin', boys."

"That's the truth," said Ben, "every word of it."

"You ain't used to quarters like mine. Look down in that cabin!"

The boys looked down, and felt that he was right; but Ralph answered bravely,–

"Oh, pooh, we don't mind! we can stand anything you can."

"You can now–eh? Ha, ha, ha!—Marcus, they can stand anything I can–ha, ha, ha!"

It was very aggravating to hear the two men laughing at their expense, but the boys joined in the laugh, and insisted that they could.

"How about fare? Like pretty good food, I reckon; don't you now?"

"Oh, we don't care what it is, if we only get enough. We expect to rough it."

"Oh, you do! Well, now, you ain't never sea-sick nor nothin'; are you?"

"Oh, sea-sick! No; I've been on the lake many a time when it was rough enough," said Ben loftily.

"Oh, the lake! yes, I see.–Then of course they won't be sea-sick in a chop sea here, Marcus; will they?"

Marcus only answered with a provoking chuckle.

"I declare I've a good mind to take you, just to take the conceit out of you."

"We don't care what you do it for, if you only say we can go," said Ben laughing.

"Have you got pork and potatoes aboard, enough to keep two more, Marcus?"

"Ye-es," drawled Marcus; "they won't draw very heavy on the food."

"No; that's so, poor wretches!–I tell you, boys, it won't be fun going in a fishing-smack. Rough seas like enough, and rough quarters, and rough fare."

"We know that–we expect that; we'll promise not to grumble," said Ralph.

"And we'll pay you well, captain," added Ben.

"Well, now, wait till we see how much trouble you make before you talk about the pay. I don't believe I ought to take you; but I'd like to have you get enough of it for once."

"Then we may come! Wait till we get our luggage."

"Luggage!" cried the captain in alarm; "how much have you got?"

"Oh, only two valises;" and away darted the boys toward the sail-loft, and a minute later leaped on to the dingy little vessel; and with some misgivings, but a feeling of relief, they sat down forward of the cabin, and watched the men push off.

"My native land, farewell,–farewell," hummed Ben as they moved away from the wharf.

"Oh, hush, Ben!" said Ralph dolefully.

The men were too busy, as they tacked about to get before the wind, to notice their passengers, and they talked together about the boys and the commotion there would be when their absence was discovered.

The *Una* was bound outside for mackerel, and her deck was covered with empty barrels for their reception.

She was, as the captain had boasted, a swift sailer, and once before the wind she fairly flew through the waves, throwing the spray over her deck in a shower;

and, excited by the novelty of their situation, Ralph and Ben quite enjoyed the sail.

They had followed the captain's advice, and changed their clothes, putting on the heaviest and warmest garments they owned.

Marcus, they found, was man-of-all-work on board, and Captain Dare was a host in himself–more at home on the sea than on the land, and needing little help during the summer months in the management of the little craft, of which he was sole owner.

The breakfast consisted of fried pork, fried potatoes, and biscuits; and it tasted good to the boys with their keen appetites.

After a while Ralph and Ben both began to feel like keeping quiet; and the captain, who was watching them as he smoked and tended the sails, saw that Ralph was growing pale.

"There it comes!" he thought. "Now won't they wish themselves high and dry on the shore?–How do you like it, boys?"

"Splendid!" cried Ben, who was wiping the spray from his face.

Ralph said nothing, but smiled a ghastly smile.

"What's your names, boys? I haven't heard yet."

"I'm Ben Carver; my folks live in–Why, what's the matter, Ralph? you look like a ghost!"

"He feels like one too, I'll be bound!" exclaimed Marcus, who was scraping the breakfast refuse over the side of the vessel.

"Are you sick, Ralph?" asked Ben, putting his hand on him.

"A little, but it will soon be gone," said Ralph, trying to brace himself against the terrible feeling that had seized upon him.

"P'raps it will, and p'raps it won't," said Marcus with a laugh.

"Get rid o' them potatoes and things, and then you'll feel better," said the captain kindly.–"Marcus, mix him some hot ginger."

Ben was feeling very well still, or he forgot himself in waiting upon his friend, making him as comfortable as possible in the bow of the boat, where the breeze would blow over him, and where he was out of the way.

It was so cool that Ben brought their blankets and tucked them around Ralph, who was shivering.

"Cheer up, comrade! we are miles away from Saint Bernard and his cherubs; and after you get over this bad turn we'll have a jolly time, and no thanks to them!"

Ralph nodded, and rewarded him with a dismal smile.

Ben had hardly got his friend snugly tucked away in the blankets, when he glanced back shoreward and saw the steamboat making straight toward them apparently.

"Ralph Drayton, there's the steamboat covered with our boys! Let's get out of this as quick as we can. They'll see us!"

Ralph forgot his misery, and throwing off his blankets, he looked quickly in the direction indicated by Ben.

Sure enough! The boat was coming with its crowd of merry boys, and the band playing gaily.

Without a word the two boys crept along the side of the cabin away from the steamboat, and disappeared in the depths below.

The captain saw them, and being keen at noting signs, he guessed at once that his passengers were runaways from the party on the boat. "But it beats me what they wanted to run away from a good time for! I ain't got to the core of that apple yet," he soliloquized with a puzzled look.

Ralph and Ben remained in close confinement until long after the boat had passed the smack, not daring to look out themselves, nor to ask either of the men on deck, fearing that they in turn might ask questions that would be disagreeable to answer. At length Ralph gasped, "O Ben, just look out; I can't stay in this horrid place any longer!"

Ben went up the steps and peeped around the end of the cabin.

"Good! they are away off where they can't see us. Come on; I'll help you up."

"I'd like to know what you two fellows ran down below for just then?" said the captain.

The boys pretended not to hear the remark; and just then Marcus shouted, "There's a school!"

The boys turned in alarm, thinking only of their own affairs and the only school that interested them; but the captain, turning the vessel's bow, quickly answered, "Good! Bring the lines and bait."

The lines were soon ready, the bait thrown overboard, and the vessel brought-to before the wind.

As they drew near the "school," and could see the countless multitudes fairly leaping, Ben forgot his disgust over the ill-smelling bait, and eagerly watched the fishermen as they dexterously tended the lines and landed their flapping prey on the deck.

Ralph was too sick to give any more than a passing glance at the work; but Ben cried, "That's the fun!–Give me some hooks, Marcus, and let me help."

"Help yourself! there's plenty there. One will be all you can manage though," said Marcus, snapping a fish from one of the hooks with a jerk.

"Come on, Ralph! perhaps you'll feel better to stir about. Shan't I get you a line? I tell you it looks lively out here! The water is all alive with fish, just jumping and turning somersaults–regular acrobats!"

A groan from under the blankets was the only reply, and Ben proceeded to use his hook and line as he saw the others do.

It was rare sport, and in his excitement he forgot that he had felt at all sea-sick.

As soon, however, as the "school" had passed, and the last fish had been pulled in, Ben felt some of the disgust returning. There lay the slippery fish scattered over the deck, flapping still, and refusing to die. Beautiful fish they were, banded and mottled with green and blue and purple; but Ben turned away from them with a shudder, which was changed into a groan as the two men began to dress them for packing.

"Want to help, boys?" asked the captain, with a wink at Marcus.

"Not much, captain."

"Ralph, this is going to be horrid," he whispered, as he threw himself down by his friend, and put his head under the blanket with him.

"Going to be? Isn't it already? I hope it won't get any worse," groaned Ralph. "How long do you suppose the voyage will last?"

"Oh, I don't know; how long do you?"

"And where are we going?"

"Sure enough, we didn't ask."

"Well, wherever it is, we are in for it now, and have got to make the best of it."

A prolonged groan was the only answer.

CHAPTER XIV.

TRIBULATIONS.

The two men worked steadily and cheerily over the fish, sorting and dressing and packing them in salt, only leaving off long enough to eat some bread and cheese with dry salt codfish.

"Come, boys, dinner's ready. Step up and help yourselves," said the captain, with his mouth full of bread and cheese, which he had made into a sandwich for convenience and speed.

"We don't feel hungry," answered Ben, looking out from the blanket long enough to see that the captain was complacently munching his food as he sat astride of the board on which he had been dressing the fish.

"Don't feel hungry! That's queer. *I* do, now. This salt air ought to make you eat like a shark," exclaimed the captain, as he set his teeth through an enormous piece of dried cod. "I'm hungry enough to eat those mackerel raw, if there was nothing else handy."

"Oh, don't!" groaned Ralph, crawling further under the blanket, and feeling his stomach rise up and roll over uneasily.

All the afternoon the fishermen worked over their "catch," and the boys did not venture out from their retreat until a great splashing of water told them that Marcus was washing the deck. Then they began to look around and breathe in the sea air, that seemed to bring a revival of spirits to the boys.

Before supper-time another school of mackerel came by, and the lines were again thrown out, and lively work recommenced.

The two boys watched the sport as the men tended their lines so dexterously, going from one to another, and keeping a fish in the air continually, as Ben said.

This was exciting enough to make even Ralph forget his sea-sickness for the time; but when the "school" had passed, the work of dressing mackerel began again, and this was not at all soothing to disturbed stomachs.

"Let's go to bed, and get out of this, Ben," exclaimed Ralph in disgust.

"All right."

They tiptoed by the pile of fish that were still flapping feebly, and looked down into the cabin. It was not an inviting place, and Ralph hesitated.

"Going to turn in, boys?" asked the captain, thrusting his knife into a fish before he looked up.

"Yes, we thought of it."

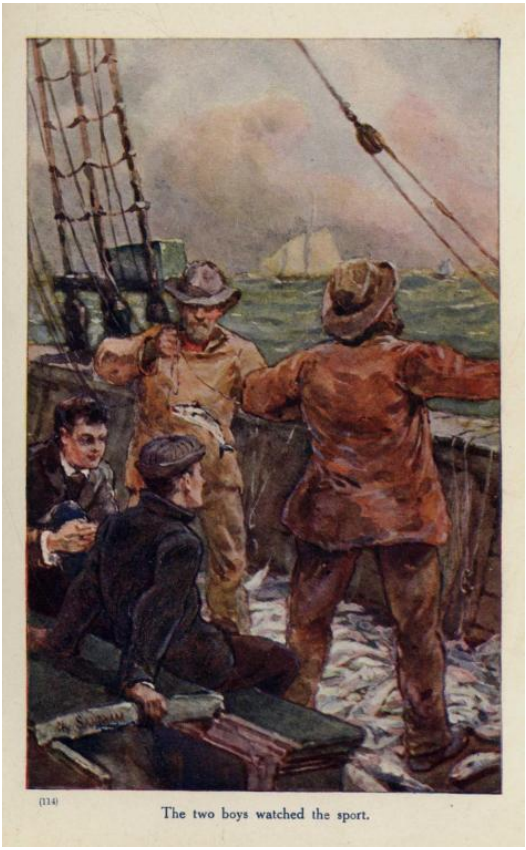
"Without any supper? That will never do. Help yourselves in there. The biscuit-barrel's in the corner, and the codfish hangs right over it. Eat a good meal, and you'll feel better. There ain't nothin' equal to dry codfish for turning sea-sickness."

"Thanks; but we don't feel hungry," said Ben.

"That's queer. It beats me how anybody can be out to sea and not feel hungry! Well, a night's rest will make you better, like as not. You'll sleep like a couple of tops; that is, if you've got good clean consciences afore God."

The boys made no reply.

"I hope you have. It's bad work being out to sea, or anywhere else, for that matter, with anything lying heavy on your conscience. Now, I don't pretend to be any guide for any one. I'm bad enough myself; but I always says every night, 'Just look me over, Lord, and if there is any bad in me'–and of course I know there is plenty of it–'forgive it, and help me to start better to-morrow.' It's mighty comfortin' for me to know that He sees that I *mean* fairer than I *do*."



The two boys watched the sport.

After these remarks the captain finished dressing the fish he held on the board, and the boys disappeared down the short flight of steps leading into the cabin.

It was a close place there, and filled with odours of fish; in fact the whole vessel seemed to be stuccoed with fish-scales.

"Are we first or second cabin passengers, Ralph?" asked Ben laughingly, "or are we steerage?"

"Steerage, sure enough!"

"Well, it isn't the worst place that ever was. I'd rather be here than outside there in the sea, with a shark after me," continued Ben, who was far more inclined than Ralph to be jolly under difficulties.

"Bad as it is, I'd rather be here than on the island camping out, with Joe Chester left behind," said Ralph.

"Yes, of course you would. If I had my fiddle here I'd cheer you up; that is, if I didn't feel kind of gone about my own stomach." And Ben sat down suddenly on the captain's green chest in the corner, looking very pale.

It was Ralph's turn now to wait upon *him*, and putting his head out of the door he shouted, "Captain, where shall we sleep?"

"Oh, anywhere you've a mind to. Take the bunks if you want to. Marcus and I'll look out for ourselves."

Ralph looked sharply at the rough bed, and said, "It isn't a royal couch, but tumble in, Ben." Ben was too sick to care where he went, and letting Ralph pull off his boots and coat, he literally tumbled in, as requested.

Whether it was a lack of good consciences that the old captain had spoken of, or the strangeness of their situation, or the awful sea-sickness, the boys could not sleep. They lay and tossed in their close berths, listening to the "thud" and "swish" of the waves against the sides of the little vessel, and the creak of the yards, as the canvas swung around in the wind.

It was a bright moonlight night, and the fishing was good, so the noise on deck continued nearly all night, making it still more impossible for the boys to sleep, until, their labours being over, Marcus came below for a nap. Rolling himself in a blanket, he dropped down in the corner of the cabin, and in less than five minutes he was snoring loud enough to drown the creak of the sails.

Ralph and Ben slept at last, and were only aroused in the morning by the captain's voice as he hailed another fishing-vessel. Marcus was preparing breakfast, and the odour of the coffee came into the cabin to tempt the boys.

"That smells good," cried Ben, throwing off his blanket. "Let's get out of this pen, Ralph, as quick as ever we can. I believe I'm hungry."

"Good!" said the captain, looking down into the little cabin, having overheard the exclamation. "How fare ye this morning?"

The boys answered as cheerily as they could, and hastening up on deck, they washed their faces and hands in sea water, and were ready for breakfast.

The deck was scrubbed clean, and the sea air was pure and sweet. Even Ralph felt hungry, and the fried mackerel, with biscuits and coffee, tasted very good. The fishing was dull that day; no schools of mackerel were to be seen, and the men busied themselves with trolling for cod and hake, or anything that would bite; and before night a long row of fish was spread out on the top of the cabin to dry, much to the boys' disgust. The second night was passed much like the first, in trying to become accustomed to their close quarters; and the third was much like the second. The only excitement was in running down schools of fish; but as this was always followed by the disagreeable work of dressing them, the dainty passengers were earnestly hoping they might not see any more.

"How long before you go ashore, captain?" asked Ben, as he walked the deck uneasily.

"Oh, when I get my load."

"But what do you call a load?"

"Now, that's a question I never could answer. I never saw the time I couldn't get on one more haul of fish. A smack is like an omnibus–it always has room for one more," said the captain laughing.

"You are pretty full now."

"Bless you, no! This isn't a trifle to what we ought to do. Mighty poor fishing this trip. Reckon I've got a Jonah aboard."

"A couple of them, perhaps," answered Ben, with a wink at Ralph.

"The fog is coming on," continued the captain, looking off seaward. "We shan't be able to see our hands afore our faces to-night, like as not."

"What do you do in a fog?" asked Ralph eagerly.

"Do? why, we make the best of it, boy. What do you suppose?"

"I thought, perhaps, you went ashore, or anchored somewhere," said Ralph hesitatingly.

"Oh, you did? The fog lasts two or three weeks sometimes. No; we go ahead, and catch every fish we can."

"Aren't you afraid some other vessel will run you down?"

"It would be about as bad for her as it would for us," answered the captain, puffing the smoke from his pipe contentedly. "I'd rather have it pleasant; but we don't have the ordering of the weather, and I've fallen into the way of making the best of things–weather and everything else. If it's good weather, I'm glad; if it isn't, I don't fret. If the fish bite, I'm glad; if they don't, I just stay out the longer; and sooner or later I get a good load. It don't do no good to be frettin' and fussin'."

The captain's words did not cheer the boys. They felt far from contented at

the prospect of a fog at sea; and when it came rolling in and closing down around them, hiding not only the strip of shore in the distance, but also the island and the other vessels that were near them, they wished themselves on shore more earnestly than ever.

"We didn't bargain for this," said Ben, making a wry face at his companion.

"No, nor for anything else we have had. I'd rather be in the Rocky Mountains," grumbled Ralph.

"So had I, or on the top of the North Pole, provided it is planted in solid ground instead of water," was Ben's laughing reply.

"I'm in earnest. I hate the sea. I'm afraid of it just as soon as it begins to be rough. I don't see what possessed us to come to sea," continued Ralph, peering uneasily through the fog.

"We couldn't help it, if I recollect right," said Ben. "There wasn't any place to run to on land, so we took to the water like musk-rats. But we are all right. Captain Dare knows everything about vessels and fogs. I am not going to worry myself about it at any rate, unless a big storm comes; then I suppose I would be scared enough."

CHAPTER XV.

THE LITTLE CABIN.

The captain indulged in an afternoon nap, to be in readiness for a watchful night; and the fog grew thicker and heavier as the evening came on.

The great lantern was lighted early, and the wall of fog reflected the light back in a weird, ghostly way upon the boys, who sat in the bow, dreading to go down into the little cabin.

"I feel as if we were shut up in a tomb of fog," said Ralph dismally.

"Well, if 'misery likes company,' it may make you happier to know the other boys are in the fog too, over on the island," returned Ben.

"Yes, but they have solid ground under their feet, and are not likely to be run down as we are; besides, they'll have a jolly time in spite of the fog. I know I could if I were on shore and not sea-sick, and that fog-horn of Marcus's didn't sound so dismal. I wonder how many blasts he blows in a minute?"

"Let's go to bed; morning will come quicker," exclaimed Ben in desperation.

"If we could only sleep."

"Well, we did pretty well last night."

"Pretty well; but the cabin is so fishy and musty, and my stomach rolls over so many times in a minute, I can't sleep," complained Ralph.

"'Hark, from the tombs, a doleful sound,'" said Ben, and then laughed in spite of his discomfort. "We sit here and croak like a couple of ravens, and Marcus toots that everlasting horn; let's go below and try that," he continued.

Ralph arose and staggered to the cabin steps, said good-night to the captain and Marcus, and, followed by Ben, crept into his berth. Ben tried to sing one of the school glees to cheer himself and friend, and forget his sea-sickness.

"Oh, hush, Ben! That makes me as homesick as a cat. I tell you that little room of ours at school was an awful cosy place, after all. Just think of that bed. We used to call that hard."

"Yes, and that grate where we had a fire on cold nights."

"We used to rail at it and call it stuffy, but if we were only there now I'd feel like dancing."

Ben struck up another tune, and hummed it through, chorus and all, to try to keep from utter wretchedness.

Ralph was quiet till he finished; then he said,–

"Ben, Mr. Bernard is a good man. He had the right of it about that lying business. I hate myself for it."

"So you said before," answered Ben, beginning another air.

"I know it," interrupted Ralph, "I mean it more and more. I mean never to deceive any one again."

"Quoth the raven, 'Nevermore;' anyway never till you get into trouble again," said Ben.

"I don't care how great the trouble may be, I'll confess and be true. Do you know I tried saying last night what the captain told us he said. Somehow I never liked before to think the Lord was looking at me, but now I am glad he is, for he can see I really mean to do better."

"It's queer you feel that way. I don't see any use worrying over a little lie. I've told dozens of them, and I never felt bad about it. I feel uncomfortable enough now, but I reckon it's my stomach and not my mind. I say, let's go to sleep."

This was easier to say than do, and both boys tossed and rolled in misery with sea-sickness, home-sickness, and fear, until from sheer exhaustion they fell asleep.

The morning dawned foggy, and foggy the day ended. The next day was like this; and the boys were too sick and worried to taste a mouthful of food. The fog did not prevent the fishing, and the two men kept busy with their lines, or their work of dressing the fish, and had little time to devote to the boys, even if

they had known what to do for them.

"I wish the two little land-lubbers were safe ashore," was the fervent remark uttered over and over again by the captain, as he and Marcus worked together.

"A storm is coming, and this fog will get blown higher than a kite," the boys heard the captain say.

"Yes, it feels like bad weather," was Marcus's answer, as he gave a wise glance around their foggy prison and blew a long blast on the big horn.

"Hear that, Ben?" asked Ralph.

"What? The horn? Yes, I hear it."

"No! Didn't you hear what Captain Dare said? We've got to have a storm after all. In this little vessel, too. It will go down, sure as the world," and Ralph grew paler than ever. Ben felt very much as his friend did, but said less.

"I hear another horn, captain."

"Yes!" said the captain, listening.

Marcus blew again long and loud; and again was answered from out in the fog. After a while the two vessels came within hailing distance, and Ralph, seized with a sudden longing, rushed up to the captain, and said eagerly,–

"O captain, it's a larger vessel than this! Don't you suppose they would take us aboard? If there is going to be a storm, I would rather be in a large vessel; this is such a little egg-shell."

"Egg-shell! not a bit of it. But I'd like nothing better than to get rid of you. I don't want passengers to look out for in a gale. My little smack has rode out many a storm, but I'd rather be alone with my one man."

"Oh, ask them! beg them!" urged Ralph, more and more excited.

"Tell them we've got money to pay with," added Ben a little more quietly.

The captain laughed, but gratified them by hailing the brig. "Here are two boys, sea-sick and scared; storm coming; no accommodation. Can you take them off my hands?"

"We are bound out," came the answer from the vessel, whose outlines were only dimly seen through the fog.

"Never mind where they are bound, tell him," said Ralph, pulling the captain's arm; "we don't care."

"We've no room for passengers," added the invisible speaker on the brig.

"Nor I neither," grumbled the captain of the smack. "I ought to have knowed better than to take 'em;" then aloud he added, "They'll die of fright on my hands if there comes a tough gale."

"Who are they?" asked the voice in the fog.

"Two young scamps that belong to a school that's gone on Whaleback to camp. Leastways that's what I guess.–Isn't it so, boys?"

"Yes."

The vessels were soon far apart, and the boys, disappointed in their hopes, sat down by the captain to watch him splice a rope.

"How did you know we belonged to that school? and how did you know where they were going to camp?" they asked.

"I guessed at one and heard the other. They told me on the wharf that Bernard's school was going to camp on Whaleback; and when that boat came by, and you two ran for the cabin so sudden like and kept so still, I put two and two together and made four easy enough without a slate or pencil."

"That's because you are an old tar," said Ben.

"But I haven't figgered out yet what you wanted to run away from that crowd for! It seems to me if I was a fellow of your age I'd rather go to camp than go aboard a fishing-smack and be sea-sick and scared to death."

Neither of the boys cared to answer.

"You had some reason, I suppose. I'd really like to know it. Tell me truly now–were you lying when you said your folks were willing you should come?"

"We didn't say just that. We said they didn't expect us home for a month, and they don't," said Ralph; then, regardless of Ben's frown of disapproval, he added, "I'll tell you how we happened to leave them. I did a mean thing–a shabby joke that didn't turn out the way I meant–and then when Mr. Bernard told the boy who did it to stand, I didn't dare to."

"Of course you didn't!" said Ben apologetically.

"No 'of course' about it!" said the captain abruptly. "An honest boy never gets out of a scrape in a mean way."

"Well, I know it now, but I didn't dare to stand up. And then he pulled the line tighter by telling any one who knew the boy who did the mischief to stand; and Joe Chester was the only fellow that confessed to knowing. He gave us several chances on that, and tried to shame us out of lying; and at last, as long as Joe Chester wouldn't tell, Mr. Bernard said unless the other fellow confessed, Joe would have to lose his camping-out time with the crowd."

"Did you own it?" asked the captain.

"Not then. I felt meaner than dirt; but I was afraid I'd be expelled. It went on that way till the night before the school left for the island; then I couldn't stand it to have Joe left behind, and I up and wrote a note and left it for Mr. Bernard, confessing all."

"And what did you have to do with it, Ben?" asked Captain Dare, wondering why Ralph had not mentioned him.

"I? Oh, I knew about it, but I wasn't going to tell on Ralph."

"Then you got behind me to keep out of their way," said Captain Dare. "Well, what is going to be the end of it all?"

Ralph shook his head.

"None of us know, and that's a fact, boys! But it ought to be a lesson to you to keep truth on your side. Lies never pay."

"So I believe," said Ralph in sober earnest.

"I begin to think so too," said Ben. "Anyhow, these didn't."

"Now's the time to take a fresh start, then; and I hope we'll all of us live so we can be glad to have the Lord see all we do and hear all we say,–yes, and know all we think, too. That's the tough part–the heart is such a queer thing. Sometimes it looks all fair and smooth, and we feel pretty well satisfied with ourselves; but just dig down a little way and we'll find a lot of rubbish there we are ashamed of. The only way is to keep it open for the Lord to look through all the time."

Then, after a silence, during which the boys looked gloomily out into the fog that seemed to be growing blacker and heavier like a pall, he added cheerfully, "Well, good-night, boys; keep up good courage. The *Una* is a tough little boat, and has rode out many a stiff gale."

"She's such a little thing to fight against big waves and strong wind," said Ben.

"Yes; when I'm down in that cabin I feel as if there was no more than a paper wall between us and the other world," added Ralph.

"Less than that, boy, less than that. There's only a breath 'twixt us and the other world any time, on sea or on land. What's the difference, as long as God's hand holds on to us? I feel just as safe as my little grand-baby does in his crib," said the captain.

"I don't," said Ben in a low tone; "I'd give all I own, and all my father owns too, if I was near enough the shore to jump on it. I'd be willing to make a long leap too."

"Good-night," again said the captain, as if to dismiss them.

"Good-night," replied the boys; but they were restless and anxious, and could not bear to go down into the close cabin, which seemed more like a prison than ever.

The storm had not commenced, and the only sign of it that the boys could see was the blackness of the fog and the peculiar feeling of the air, which seemed heated and heavy.

They sat down again behind the cabin, where the captain could not see them, and spoke in whispers.

"Let's stay on deck all night," said Ben. "If she capsizes we would stand a better chance here."

"I don't suppose we'd have the least chance in either place," was the doleful reply.

"That vessel might have taken us off," grumbled Ben.

Ralph was feeling too badly to talk, and he stared at the fog in a despairing way. They sat there until the wind began to blow, and the spray from the big waves to dash over them; then, as a last resort, they retreated to the cabin.

"Good-night, captain," said Ralph dolefully as he passed.

"What! you two fellows on deck yet! I thought I sent you below a couple of hours ago. Down with you! You'll be washed overboard if you stay up here."

CHAPTER XVI.

A WRETCHED NIGHT.

The boys went reluctantly into their berths, but not to sleep.

Sick and frightened, they could only listen anxiously to the beating of the waves against the vessel, and the hurried movements of the two men on deck, as, tossed by the winds and the sea, the *Una* rolled heavily to and fro.

The moments seemed hours, and the hours seemed ages.

Never in their lives had they been so terrified. Several times the water rushed down into the cabin, as the waves broke over the deck; and Captain Dare looked down upon them, long enough to ask if they were drowned out.

"Hear the thunder!" exclaimed Ralph, as the heavy roll and crash sounded overhead, and the cabin was lighted almost continually with flashes of lurid light.

Ben made no reply, but buried his head under the blanket.

"It's queer I don't feel so scared as I did," said Ralph soberly. "I feel something as Captain Dare does–that after all we are in God's hand. Hear that peal! It seemed to roll right over the deck."

Ben made no answer, but cowered still closer under the blanket.

The rain now descended in perfect sheets upon the deck; and although the cabin door was closed, the water poured down through the cracks, and came in around the small windows above the berths, adding to the discomfort of the boys, who could not escape the drenching there without stepping into the water with which the cabin floor was covered.

The rain fell as if another flood had commenced; and the wind had no mercy on the little vessel–breaking her yards and snapping her topmasts; and unreefing with goblin fingers the topsails, it whipped them to tatters.

At length the thunder ceased to mutter, and after midnight the rain fell no more; but the wind continued to blow, and the little vessel to run before it.

It was sunrise when the captain opened the cabin door and looked down.

"Well, boys, get up and give thanks! The little vessel has weathered the toughest kind of a gale. We are all safe now."

"Is the danger really over?" asked the boys eagerly, as they sprang from the berth upon the wet floor.

"The worst is over, thank God! It was a tough storm and a stiff blow, but the *Una* rode it out," he said proudly. "One mast got a bad wrench, and all the canvas that could get loose got ripped into rags; but that's nothin' to what it might have been, considerin' how the wind roared and howled over the sea. Folks blame the sea for these accidents; but bless you, the sea ain't to blame! How can it help rearing up, with a gale like that throwing it on its pitchfork? I don't like to see things abused, and I stick up for the sea; it behaves well enough as long as the wind lets it."

"Where are we?" asked the boys, as they reached the deck and looked curiously around. "There's no land at all in sight!"

"No; we got blown well out to sea. It's lucky we didn't try to make a port last night: we'd have been caught among some o' them islands if we had, and knocked to pieces on the rocks."

"That's so," added Marcus, with a wise shake of the head.

"You two fellows did first-rate last night!"

"You are chaffing, captain," said Ralph, looking red.

"No, honestly. I expected I'd have trouble with you when that storm came; but I'll say that for you–you did first-rate!"

"We were too scared to do any other way," confessed Ben with a laugh.

"Scared or not, some folks will make a rumpus just when they ought to keep stillest.–Now, Marcus, give us a good breakfast, and then we'll shake out our canvas and see where our damages are. We must be working back, for I don't propose to let this wind drive us off shore any further than I can help.–One time last night, along the first of the blow, we came very near Whaleback, boys; but a miss is as good as a mile when the danger is over."

"Whaleback! Oh, I wish we were there now! No, I don't either!" exclaimed Ralph.

"*I* wish you was there, anyhow," said the captain gruffly. "That's where you belong. I believe the master there would take you back and forgive you. You've got a good dose of punishment, if ever a couple of young liars had."

"You don't know how Mr. Bernard feels about lying. He will never want the other boys to be with us again,–never!" said Ralph.

"I don't know about that," and Captain Dare shook his head wisely. "I know there isn't nobody hates a lie worse nor me; but it ain't for me to hold back when a fellow is sorry for it, and quits the whole business of lying."

"And I mean to do that!" interposed Ralph with emphasis; "but Mr. Bernard doesn't know it."

"No, and that's just what I was wishing you on Whaleback for, so you could tell him."

"He wouldn't believe us!" exclaimed Ben. "We couldn't expect him to, after we lied to him as we did. No, I don't want to see him. A storm at sea is bad enough; but I believe I'd rather go through another than go ashore and face him."

"I'd like to have him know how I feel about it," said Ralph. "I mean to write him a letter after I get back to father's. Of course we never can be taken back into school."

"Breakfast!" shouted Marcus, flourishing the towel with which he had been polishing the tin plates.

"I believe the fright last night took away my seasickness," said Ralph, as he helped himself to the fish Marcus had broiled. "The fright did it, or else it died a natural death, for I had it long enough. I feel more like myself than I have since I came on board."

"So do I," said Ben, following Ralph's example.

"When is this voyage going to end, captain?"

"Oh, when I get my load, I told ye before. It will take some time for this sea to go down enough to give us another chance at the fish; but with fair luck I reckon a week more will fill us."

The boys groaned.

"What! don't you like it? You seem so fresh after the storm, I concluded you was makin' up your mind to follow my profession. Then you don't mean to take to the business as a steady thing?" Captain Dare asked, with a twinkle in the funny light-gray eyes overshadowed with bushy brows.

"No," answered the boys laughing. "Dry land for us."

After breakfast, the two men unreefed the sails, and began to repair damages. The small boat that had been stowed on deck during the storm was again launched and towed behind.

The broken topmasts were useless; but the most serious injury was to the foremast, which was sprung out of position.

This they braced as well as possible, and setting all available canvas, they began the process of tacking, to regain their former-position.

As the wind abated, they began to troll for fish; and in spite of the rough sea, the boys felt well enough to help with the lines.

"If you stay aboard long enough, I'll make good fishermen of you yet," said the captain with a chuckle, as he noticed the colour in their cheeks and the sparkle in their eyes when they surveyed the mass of fish they had helped to catch.

"Now, just turn to and help to dress 'em," said Marcus.

The boys respectfully declined to join in this work, and went to sit in the bow as far as possible away from the board on which the fish were being prepared for drying.

They had been so busy fishing, the time had passed very quickly, and, tired and sleepy, they soon went to bed, thankful that the storm was over and their seasickness gone.

The morning dawned bright and clear, and when they went on deck at sunrise, Captain Dare pointed to the islands toward which they were once more sailing.

"Home again! home again, from a foreign shore!" sang Ben; and Ralph was at ease enough now to join in the song.

"That sounds good," said the captain approvingly. "Give us another. Sing us a hymn tune."

After a little consulting together the two boys sang the chant, "The Lord is my Shepherd." When they ceased, the captain said,–

"Give me that again; twice more, and then I'll let you off. I never heard anything so good as that!"

The boys complied, and wondered, as they sang it, why there seemed so much more in the chant than they had ever noticed before in singing it at school.

"I never noticed that chant much," said Ralph: "it means a lot more than it used to. I wonder why?"

"Bless your heart, boy! you've got more feelin' in your soul now, and more thoughts in your head. I tell you that's a psalm that has to grow on you. It don't mean nothin' particular to folks that haven't had trouble, but to them that have, it keeps growin' and growin', until they see more and more in it every time they think of it. I say that psalm over and over to myself when I'm sittin' here o' nights with my hand on the helm, but I never knew it could be sung. I used to sing once; I wonder if I could learn that. I'd give 'most anything to do it."

"Why, of course you can," exclaimed Ralph. "See here, it is just as easy;" and he hummed the first line. "Strike right in and sing it with us."

The two boys sang the chant again and again, until the captain had mastered it; and during the day he hummed it as he worked, resolving in his joy over his success that he would go out of his way to do those lads a favour, but it should be a surprise, and he would not tell Marcus even of his intention.

It proved a fine day for fishing. School after school of mackerel came by, and the boys worked industriously, helping the fishermen to gather their harvest. At night, tired and sleepy after their unusual labours, they went below early, and the captain, with a wink and crook of his finger at Marcus, beckoned him to his side.

"That's Whaleback yonder."

"Yes, I know it is; what of it?"

"There's a good breeze."

"Yes."

"I'm going to make for that island, and anchor off the south end, where the beach is."

"You are?" asked Marcus, puzzled to know what this could be for.

"In the mornin' when our two chaps wake up they'll be so near their mates it won't be my fault if that affair doesn't get settled," and the captain rubbed his hands and laughed softly.

"Oh, I see! All right. Just as you say."

So while Ralph and Ben slept soundly in the cabin of the *Una*, the little vessel sailed on and on in the moonlight, and before midnight dropped anchor just off the south end of Whaleback. The weather-beaten face of the old captain broadened with mirth as he looked across at the cluster of tents showing white in the moonlight, and thought of the commotion he would create in the morning. As he crept down into the cabin to indulge in a nap, he laughed aloud over his manoeuvre; but the two boys were too soundly asleep to be easily disturbed.

CHAPTER XVII.

A SURPRISE.

At the earliest dawn of day the captain and Marcus stole quietly from the cabin, closing the door carefully that the boys might sleep undisturbed. "I don't want to miss a mite of the fun I've got planned out, Marcus. I tell you I feel like a boy myself this morning."

They kept very quiet, fearing that Ralph and Ben might appear too soon upon the scene. After a while they saw Jonas emerge from his tent with a fishing-rod over his shoulder. Intent on business only, thinking about the breakfast he was to prepare, he had gone nearly out to the end of the point of rocks at the side of the beach, before he discovered the fishing-smack anchored within speaking distance. The captain had already stepped into his boat, and with a few strokes of the oars he reached the rocks where Jonas stood rubbing his eyes to make sure he was not dreaming.

"Well, I never! Where did you come from all of a sudden?" was Jonas's greeting.

"Hush! Don't talk loud. I've got a couple of passengers I don't want waked up."

"Who are you, anyhow?" asked Jonas, his curiosity getting the better of any politeness he might have used.

"I am Captain Dare of the *Una*."

"You are the fellow that carried off two of our boys," exclaimed Jonas, with a sudden increase of interest.

"They took passage with me," said the captain with dignity. "Is the headmaster over yonder?"

"Mr. Bernard? Yes, asleep still."

"I want to see him."

"About the boys?"

"Yes."

"All right. How glad he'll be!"

"Go call him then, but don't let any one else know,–that's a good fellow."

"I'll do it; but just tell me one thing. Have you got those chaps aboard?"

Captain Dare nodded and laughed. Without waiting to hear more, Jonas rushed over the rocks, and made his way to Mr. Bernard's tent. The teacher was a light sleeper, and in camp he was ready at any time for a summons, so he lifted the flap of the tent at once in answer to Jonas's rap, and saw the cook making motions of secrecy. He beckoned him inside, and Jonas began, almost breathless after his run–"The *Una* is anchored off here, and the captain wants to see you before the others get astir."

Mr. Bernard uttered an exclamation of surprise and delight, and without waiting to ask any more questions, hastily donned his clothes and hurried after the messenger, leaving little Max asleep in the tent. Jonas led the way to the point of rocks, and there in the boat sat the captain.

"Captain Dare!" exclaimed Mr. Bernard.

"Yes, sir, that's my name."

"I am Mr. Bernard."

The two men shook hands most cordially.

"He's all right! I'll risk *him*!" was the mental exclamation as the captain's twinkling eyes surveyed the teacher from head to foot. "I've got two of your boys in my cabin yonder, Mr. Bernard."

"Alive and well?" asked the teacher eagerly.

"Yes, alive and well. Better boys, too, than when you saw them last, Mr. Bernard."

"God be praised! This gives me joy," was the fervent response.

"And, Mr. Bernard, they've had pretty heavy punishment. I really hope you'll call it enough and forgive 'em. They are ashamed and sorry, I know. I'll

answer for that."

The teacher's eyes were moist, and he took off his glasses to wipe them as he said, "May I go on board with you?"

"That's just what I want. I told those chaps you'd forgive 'em; but they said I didn't know you, and you'd never trust 'em again. You may, though. I'll answer for 'em you may–both on 'em. You'll never catch either of 'em in a lie again."

"Are the boys expecting me?"

"Bless you, sir, no; they don't know no more about it than your boys up yonder asleep in their tents. No, it's all a surprise;" and the old captain chuckled with delight.

"Say nothing about this, Jonas, and keep quiet, so the boys will sleep till we get our arrangements made."

"All right, sir; I've got my fish to catch yet," answered Jonas, baiting his hook.

"Never mind those fish–that's slow work. I'll send my man ashore with mackerel and cod enough to last you a while."

The teacher seated himself in the boat, and Captain Dare pulled quickly back to the vessel.

"Marcus, pick out some of the No. 1 mackerel and the best cod and hake, and pull over where that fellow is waiting," said the captain, as he stepped on the deck of the *Una*; then turning to his guest, he said gleefully, "Those boys are still asleep, I reckon, but there they are safe and well down in my cabin," and he opened the door a little to look in. "Yes, sound asleep, the young rascals; won't they be surprised! I said I'd go out of my way to do 'em a favour to pay 'em for learnin' me that hymn tune, but they hadn't no idea what I meant to do."

The door moved by sliding, and when the captain pushed it open Ralph opened his eyes.

Was he dreaming, or was that Mr. Bernard's face looking down upon him, full of kindness and forgiveness?

No, it was no dream. Mr. Bernard was coming down the steps, and Ralph sprang from the berth to meet him, knowing before a word had been spoken that he was forgiven.

Just then Ben opened his eyes, and sleepily looked around.

What was that? Mr. Bernard with his arm around Ralph's shoulder.

Surely he was still asleep, and still in dreamland.

"O Ben, he forgives us–he has come for us," cried Ralph with quivering lips. "Isn't it too good to believe?"

Mr. Bernard held out his other hand to Ben, and drew him to his side.

"Where are we, Mr. Bernard, that we found *you*?" asked Ralph with a puzzled look.

"Ask your good captain. He has gone out of his course, in the kindness of his heart, to do us all a favour."

"No favour at all," said the captain earnestly, waving his hand in token of disclaiming any obligation on their part,–"no favour at all. I like to see things get righted, and I like to have a hand in doing it.–Besides, didn't you two chaps teach me that chant that's going to help me through many a long night at the helm?"

"You will allow us to *feel* thankful to you, captain, if we keep quiet about it, won't you?" asked the teacher laughing. "We have been anxiously watching for your vessel ever since we heard from you.

"Heard from us! when?" asked the captain with a puzzled look.

"We heard by the vessel you hailed the night before the storm."

"Well, now, where did you see *her*?"

"On the rocks just off the lighthouse."

"What! cast away?"

"Yes: she went on the rocks the night of the storm; but the crew were saved, all but one man. They have been over at the lighthouse, waiting to see the last of the wreck, after rescuing all the cargo they could."

The captain turned to the boys, and said: "That was an escape for you. If we had had our way, you would have been on that wreck too. How little we know what's best for us! I'd rather not have the ordering of things if I could. I'd be sure to make a mess of things. God knows best, and that's true every time."

"It was fortunate indeed," added Mr. Bernard. "But we have been more anxious than ever, since Captain Melrose reported you."

"We didn't think you would care," said Ralph with a flushed face.

"Why, Ralph, have you been in my school all this time and know me no better than that? There has been no time since the trouble began that I would not have received you gladly if I had known you to be honestly sorry for your fault. You know me better now, I hope."

Ralph put his hand in the outstretched palm of the teacher, and said, "Yes, Mr. Bernard, I could never be afraid of you again; but I mean with all my heart never to do anything again that I shall be ashamed to tell you."

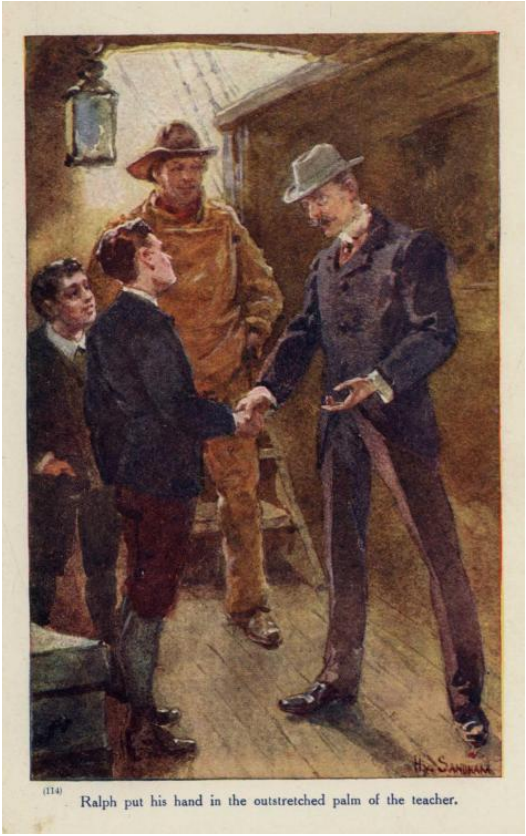
"God grant you his help to keep this resolution. We need his help, my boy; you know that."

"Yes, I know. I am very sure that *I* do."

"And you, Ben?" asked the teacher, turning to the other boy, who had kept in the background,–"you mean to be honest and true, too."

"Yes, sir, I mean to be true like Joe Chester; and I think you are very good to give us another chance. It is what neither of us expected. We thought our days at your school were over."

"Not yet, I hope,–not till you are ready for college.–Now, how shall we tell



Ralph put his hand in the outstretched palm of the teacher.

your friends you have come?"

"Don't any of them know it?" asked the boys quickly. "I have been wondering that we heard no noise."

"No, indeed, no one knows it; but they will soon be astir, and then there will be noise enough, for camp-life has not quieted them down at all.–Captain Dare, if my boys spy the *Una* they will make an attack upon us that will frighten you, unless you are used to war-whoops."

"I'm not easily scared at a noise," said the captain laughing.

"Joe Chester would make nothing of swimming across here," said Ben.

"No, indeed, and in his delight at your return he would be sure to do something rash," added Mr. Bernard.

"How can he be glad to have us back?" asked Ralph with reddening face. "I am sure I am ashamed to see him, I treated him so shabbily."

"You may be sure he remembers nothing against you. He has been your warmest friend in camp, and most anxious for your welfare. If I had been ever so harshly inclined toward you, I should have been won by his intercession in your behalf. He was sure all the time that you regretted your course."

"Joe is a good fellow, and he judged me by himself," answered Ralph warmly, "and that was more than I deserved."

"Joe is a noble boy, true to the very core; but we must decide quickly how to manage your return to camp."

Before they had proceeded further, however, the question decided itself.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE GREETING.

On the fishing excursion the day before, David had taken cold, and was awake with toothache half the night.

He did not arouse his friend, however, and it was not till daylight that Joe discovered his condition.

"I'll go over to Mr. Bernard's tent and get something to stop it. Why didn't you call me before?" asked Joe, dressing as quickly as possible.

"Oh, I didn't like, you were so sound asleep. Besides, I kept thinking it would get easier; but it aches now worse than ever."

"I'll go over immediately," said Joe, pulling on his boots. "Mr. Bernard keeps

a lot of stuff in his tent, and I guess he'll find something to help you."

"Likely as not he will offer to come over with his nippers to pull the thing out, but tell him, 'No, thank you.'"

"Good-bye, old fellow; I'm off. Keep your head under the blanket."

Joe lifted the flap of the tent and stepped outside. Everything was quiet; the camp was asleep. The sky in the east was all aglow with the coming sun. Joe drew a long breath of the fresh morning air, and looked around as he ran toward Mr. Bernard's tent.

Suddenly his eyes fell on the little vessel at anchor. In a moment he understood it all, and, turning quickly, he rushed back to his own tent, and seizing Dave by the shoulder he shook him till the blanket dropped off, and then he performed a dance around the tent, adapting his motions to the narrow quarters.

"Are you crazy, Joe Chester?" asked David, sitting up and looking very much dazed after having been rolled so snugly in the blanket.

He held his hand over his aching face, and felt rather cross at Joe's unseemly antics.

"I believe I am, Dave. Just get up and peep out; it will do your toothache good," whispered Joe. "But don't let the other fellows hear."

"What's the matter now?" grumbled Dave; but he jumped out of bed and looked out of the tent in the direction indicated by Joe's finger. "What's that,–a vessel?"

"It looks like one, doesn't it?"

"What's she doing there?"

"She's at anchor. But hush! don't talk so loud."

"That's queer; but what's that to us that you should go on at that rate? I thought you had made some great discovery," said Dave, preparing to retreat.

"Well, I should like to know if I haven't. I tell you, Dave, that's the *Una*," cried Joe in a triumphant whisper.

"The *Una*?" asked Dave, letting go his cheek, and looking up with increased interest.

"Yes, sir, the *Una*; and of course Ralph and Ben are there, too."

Dave gave a prolonged whistle below his breath, but Joe hushed him.

"I'll run to Mr. Bernard's tent and see if he knows. You'd better dress and come down if your tooth doesn't ache too hard."

"I don't care if it does; I'll go," said Dave, seizing his clothes and beginning to dress in haste.

"Well, tie up your head in something, and come on."

Joe darted out of the tent, and ran noiselessly to Mr. Bernard's.

In vain he rapped on the canvas, as little Max, the only occupant, was still soundly sleeping.

"Mr. Bernard knows it," thought Joe, as he ran like a greyhound down to the rocks, followed by Dave, who came only half dressed and wrapped in a blanket like a young savage.

Jonas and the captain's man were throwing the fish from the boat up on the rocks, and they did not hear the boys until they rushed upon them with a suppressed whoop.

"Where are they, Jonas? Have they come ashore?" demanded Joe.

Jonas raised himself slowly from his work, and stared at the speaker, as he answered with provoking slowness, "Where's who?"

"Oh, you know. The boys–Ralph and Ben. Have they come ashore?"

"Not as I know of; I haven't seen 'em."

Marcus had thrown out the last fish, and was about to push off his boat, when Joe leaped in, and Dave followed, blanket and all.

"That's cool, I must say. What business have you got in here?" growled Marcus; but Joe saw that it was a good-natured growl, and he only laughed as he seated himself.–"Now, what shall I do?" asked Marcus, appealing to the cook. "I don't believe these chaps are wanted over there."

"Yes, let them come," called Mr. Bernard, who, having heard the voices, appeared at the vessel's side.

"All right, sir–just as you say," answered Marcus.

In a few moments the boat had reached the vessel; and Joe, nimble as a monkey, was up the side in a twinkling.

David, having his blanket to manage, crawled up more slowly; and when he reached the deck, Joe had disappeared down in the little cabin, where he was shaking hands, and bringing a welcome that set Ralph and Ben at ease immediately.

"And who is this?" asked Mr. Bernard, as Dave came stumbling down the steps, trailing his blanket.

"Dave Winter."

Then the hand-shaking was renewed, and Captain Dare received his share of welcome and thanks for returning the boys to them.

"This is the most like the prodigal son of any story I ever got mixed up in," Captain Dare remarked, as soon as there was a lull in the conversation.

"Only there are two of us," said Ben laughing.

"Cap'n, the whole pack's comin'," shouted Marcus in a tone of dismay, looking down into the crowded cabin. "If they board us, we'll be swamped."

They all laughed, and Mr. Bernard protested that they would spare the *Una* from such a fate.

"Now, captain, if you will put us ashore, you will make us still more your debtors."

"I'll do that, Mr. Bernard, although I would like to keep you aboard till I sail."

"Don't talk of sailing yet. You must come ashore, and see our quarters, and at least take breakfast with us,–you and Marcus too."

"Oh yes, captain," cried Ralph and Ben, eagerly seconding the invitation. "We want all the fellows to know you."

The captain laughed, and allowed himself to be pushed up the cabin steps, where loud cheers from the crowd on shore greeted the party.

The news had spread from tent to tent that the *Una* had arrived, and the runaways returned to them; and with whoops and hurrahs the half-dressed crowd rushed to the beach.

Some unfastened the boats moored there and pushed off in them, and others stood on the rocks and shouted, as Mr. Bernard, followed by the captain, Ralph, Ben, Joe, and Dave, came on deck.

There was no mistaking the warmth of the greeting from their schoolmates. Hats were waved and cheer after cheer given as the boat reached the shore, and the boys climbed up the rocks, followed by Mr. Bernard and Captain Dare. It was so different from the reception they had imagined when they thought of a return to school.

If they had been received coldly or with sneers and taunts, they would not have wondered; but this welcome seemed wholly unaccountable, and Ralph and Ben received it very modestly, feeling that it was entirely undeserved.

Captain Dare and Marcus were introduced to the crowd of boys, and were escorted to the tents, while the *Una* was left to swing to and fro on the rising tide.

The half-dressed boys hastened to finish their toilets, and had barely time for this before the bell for prayers rang, and they all gathered in the large tent, where Mr. Bernard gave hearty thanks for their new happiness. The prayer was suited to the occasion, and it touched every heart.

When it ended, Ralph, who stood by Mr. Bernard, said in a manly way, though his lips trembled as he spoke, and his face was pale, "I want you all to know, boys, that I don't deserve this welcome from you and the teacher. I was a mean fellow, and a wicked fellow, and a sneak to boot; but I've made up my mind that I'll lead a different life, with God's help."

There was perfect silence after Ralph ceased speaking and stepped back a little.

Ben did not know that Ralph intended to say anything of the kind, and indeed the boy himself had not thought of it until, touched by the prayer offered in his behalf, he was moved to speak.

"I suppose I ought to say something too," he thought; "but I declare I'd rather be back in the *Una* with a gale blowing." Red and awkward, he got up and

said, "I'm sure I don't deserve it either. You are all awful kind about it, and I hope you'll never have to be ashamed of us again. I mean to be honest and true after this."

As soon as he had spoken he got behind Mr. Bernard, and fanned himself with his cap to get the flame from his face.

Ralph whispered to the master, and to the delight of the captain the whole school began the chant he liked so much–"The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want."

With his hands behind him, and his huge frame swaying to and fro, he joined with unbounded comfort, as well as with spirit and understanding, in the music.

Knowing his fondness for singing, Ralph asked Mr. Bernard to have more; and the boyish voices sang hymn after hymn, and some of the school glees, that they had practised many times, and had even given in concert in the town of Massillon, where the Academy Glee Club was looked upon as something to be proud of.

When they ceased, Captain Dare said, "It's good to be here. I wouldn't have missed it for all the world. I shall hear that singing above the roar of the wind and the sea,–I know I shall."

Jonas had prepared quite a sumptuous repast in honour of the event–that is, considering the fact that there was no market within four or five miles. There was fish broiled and fish fried, mackerel, cod, and hake, hot biscuits, and bread; best of all, coffee that scented the air with odours from "Araby the blest."

Captain Dare was given the place of honour at Mr. Bernard's right hand, and Marcus sat among the boys, listening to the stories of their accidents and adventures, as they were detailed to Ralph and Ben, who were not anxious to talk of their own experience, acknowledging that the days that had been spent on the *Una* were wretched days to them.

"The fact is," said Ralph, with sudden frankness when urged to give an account of himself, "we were scared and sea-sick the worst way. At least I was. Ben was braver than I: he did his best to keep jolly, until the storm came,–then he gave in; didn't you, Benjamin?"

Ben nodded laughingly. "I'll never deny that. You were the braver of the two then; but I believe any 'land-lubber,' as Captain Dare calls us, would be scared with such a commotion of wind, sea, and thunder and lightning, to say nothing of rain that came down by the tubful."

Ben shrugged his shoulders as he ended his account of affairs, and sought consolation in another of Jonas's biscuits. After breakfast Captain Dare said: "My man Marcus is looking at me, as much as to say, 'Come, you are wasting time;' but, Marcus boy, we ain't. I believe I've got pleasure enough out of this time to

last till I'm an old man. I suppose you think I'm that now; but, bless your hearts, my lads, when you get as old as I am you'll think old age a long way off. But we must be going now. My little vessel there is as restless as a colt. She can never bear to be tied up. See her dancing and tossing around! She wants to be off. I must be getting her in port for repairs."

"Oh, don't go yet, captain!"

"Stay all day," cried the boys.

"No, don't tempt me. I must get my load of fish, and go home to see my grand-baby. When you go back to Massillon, be sure to visit my folks and see that baby; he's a fine fellow, if I do say it. I set a heap by him, and he does by me too, strange to say. But good-bye, all of you."

"Ralph," said Ben, pulling his friend's sleeve, "we haven't paid him for our passage yet."

"Sure enough; and there are our valises aboard the vessel–we must get them."

The entire company of teachers and scholars went down to the beach to see the visitors off; and Ralph and Ben went over to the vessel in one of the boats to have a few last words with Captain Dare, and to bring away their goods and chattels.

When they had brought the valises from the cabin, and had come to give a final shake of the hand, Ben took his purse from his pocket and said, "Now, captain, how much shall we pay you?"

"Off with you, boy! Not a penny. You are welcome to that trip, I am sure. It turned out better than any of us expected, didn't it? I shall always like to think it over."

"But, captain–" began Ralph.

"No 'but' about it. The vessel is mine, every timber of it, and if I've a mind to take passengers, it's nobody's business. So off with you. Keep your promises. Be good boys, and that's all I'll ask. God bless you. Good-bye."

Ralph and Ben returned to the shore, and stood with the crowd waving and cheering as the *Una*, with all sails set, glided away.

As long as they could see the two men, they stood on the rocks and waved hats and handkerchiefs; and Marcus gave a return salute by flourishing his dish-towel and blowing his fog-horn–the same horn that had sounded so dismally in the fog when Ralph and Ben were at sea.

"There goes a man worth knowing!" exclaimed Ralph. "He is rough enough outside, but he is pure gold through and through. Where would we have been if we hadn't fallen into his hands?"

Ben shrugged his shoulders as he said, "Not here, surely."

"Indeed we wouldn't; and when school begins in September we wouldn't

have been there either."

"We didn't cheer him half loud enough," cried Joe Chester in a fresh spasm of gratitude. "I wonder if they could hear if we all gave one tremendous yell. Let's try it. All together now. One, two, three." Then followed a shout that succeeded in bringing the two men to the vessel's side for one more salute.

"There, that will do for this time, boys; I think they know that you appreciate their kindness," said Mr. Bernard, laughingly uncovering his ears, after protecting them from the roar of the crowd. Leaving them on the beach planning the day's pleasure, he returned to the tent to read and rest.

CHAPTER XIX.
IMPROVING THE TIME.

"Only two more days, boys, and the boat will be here for us, and the tents will have to come down," exclaimed Joe, as he stood on the beach with a handful of pebbles, skipping one after another out over the swimming-pool.

"That's so," said Ben, sighing over lost opportunities.

"The question is what to do first now. Shall we show Ralph and you the sights?"

"Oh, it's jolly just to be here, Joe, without hunting up any fun!" said Ralph, leaning back in his rocky seat. "I could lie on the rocks here, and be comfortable, and call it a good time, too, after our dismal experience."

"Having had that, it's all the more reason you should have all the pleasure we can crowd into these two days," said Joe, putting his hand on Ralph's shoulder.

"Yes," said Dave; "we must stretch these next two days over all the fun we can."

"The archery and rifle matches come off this afternoon; but I shan't fire another arrow till then. It is too bad your bow and rifle were left behind, boys: but you can use my bow, Ralph; and there are plenty of fellows in the rifle club to lend you a rifle, Ben," said Joe.

The offers followed at once, but the two boys declined, and Ben, who was a member of the rifle club, and one of the best marksmen, said, "No, indeed; I haven't practised for a fortnight, and I should disgrace my record if I should join in the match to-day. No; I'll look on and applaud."

"Let's go and swim a while, and after that take a run over to the lighthouse,"

suggested Joe.

"And show the boys the place where Walt and Ned acted Robinson Crusoe," added Don.

"Which was Robinson, and which Friday?"

"I don't think that question was ever decided," answered Ned good-naturedly.

"Ho, for a swim! Who will go in?" cried Fred.

"I," and "I," answered the boys, as they ran for their bathing-suits.

They soon appeared dressed in all imaginable costumes, and a band of fantastics could hardly have been funnier. Into the water they walked or leaped or dived, with much shouting and shrieking over the cold. Ralph was a timid swimmer, and did not like the water well enough to attempt any fancy motions, contenting himself with paddling about where he could reach the shore very quickly, if he chose. Ben, however, was strong and bold, and followed Joe and the others in diving from the rocks and swimming under water. Nearly the whole school were in the water together this morning, to celebrate Ralph and Ben's arrival. The two boys from the lighthouse were there also, and under Joe's instruction were learning to "strike out" quite boldly. Little Max was also learning, and he shouted to his father, who sat on the rocks, laughing at the antics of his boys, "See, father, how many strokes I can take. Now you count. I can go 'dog paw,' too."

The time passed so quickly that the boys could hardly believe that Mr. Bernard's watch was reliable when he gave the signal for an exodus from the water. As usual, there was pleading for a few minutes more,–one more dive, or one more race across the pool,–then a great splashing and dashing and general commotion, as the multitude obeyed the order, followed by a scamper of the dripping mermen to the tents. After dressing, they met for further discussion as to the next thing in order, and, after much debate, most of those who were not intending to practise for the matches decided to go over to the lighthouse.

"Is the wreck there now?" asked Ralph.

"Yes, it's there, what there is of it, but it is 'most all to pieces," answered John Kramer.

"And where are the men?"

"Oh, father took them across in his boat after they had done all they could to save things. I tell you, they were awful plucky about getting things out. Father says he wouldn't have risked his bones on the old hull for nobody."

"No, I don't believe he would, boy," said Walter dryly, recalling the slowness with which he responded to their petitions for help when he and Ned were in trouble. "Your father will never come to his death through want of care for himself, rest sure of that, Johnny; so don't you lie awake at night worrying about

him."

The path to the lighthouse lay through that part of the pasture where the blueberries were most plentiful and tempting, so it was long before the boys reached their destination; and their blue mouths told the secret of their delay.

After the lighthouse had been visited and examined, the boys led the way to the fishing-ground, where the tide had come up over their fish and lunches and rods. Here all began to talk together, relating the experience of that eventful day, and though they all spoke one language, it seemed like a second Babel, but little inferior in point of sound to the first. Each boy having had an experience that differed a little from his neighbour's, felt it necessary to make a statement of facts. After a while Joe shouted above the din,–

"See here, boys, it is low tide; let's go around and see the 'Exiles' Rock!'" and he led the way down to the spur around which Walter and Ned had run to hide.

"Look out there! you fellows will be caught just as we were," shouted Walter.

"No, we won't. We know too much for that," answered Dave.

"Come on and visit the scene of your fame and glory, Walt!" exclaimed Ned.

"No, sir; the fame and glory were too slim to tempt me again," was the laughing reply, as Walter threw himself down on the rocks to wait for the others.

"I am going. I feel curious to know how it seems to be there again," and Ned ran after the other boys, who had disappeared around the spur. "Imagine these waves ten times rougher and fiercer, leaping and roaring away up by your very feet, with the spray flying in your faces, and you can have some idea how Walt and I felt here," he said, after he reached his companions; then he added, "And yet you can't; for the worst of it all was that we didn't know where the tide would stop, or whether it would stop at all until it had washed us off our perch."

"There couldn't be a much worse place to get caught!" exclaimed Ben, shrugging his shoulders, as he always did, to express the feeling that matters and things were in a bad condition.

"Let's get away from here," said Ralph. "I have had all the experience with the raging seas that I want."

Then, with many similar comments, the crowd of boys surged back to the place where they had left Walter.

"Now for Spouting Horn!" cried Joe. "Here, not that way. The low-tide spouter is on this side," he added, as the boys were starting off.

"It is just about time to see the pool, too," said Fred.

"Yes, we will do both. There'll be time enough to see that after we have watched the spout a while."

"There she blows!" exclaimed Don, as they came near the place in time to

hear the report, as the column of water shot up into the air and fell in delicate spray.

A prolonged "Oh–h!" ending in a whistle from Ralph, expressed his admiration of the wonderful sight; and he and Ben hastened forward to be as near as possible before it spouted again.

"I don't want to hurry you, boys," said Joe, "but we have another sight to show, and the tide has turned. In a little while it will be too late to see the pool."

There was another race of the multitude, and in spite of their haste the tide had crept nearly up to the place they had come to see. The waves were beginning to flow up over the barrier separating the pool from the ocean, and there was only time to secure a few specimens of star-fish and sea-urchins, and to admire the natural aquarium; then they were obliged to retreat before the rushing water.

Ben, who was lying flat on the rocks, trying to get possession of a beautiful lilac-coloured sea-anemone, would not heed the shouts and shrieks of warning from his comrades, and as a result, before he could scramble to his feet, a succession of waves rolled over him, hiding him from view. When the waves rolled back he was blowing the water from mouth and nose, and laughing as heartily as those who had been spectators of the ludicrous sight.

"The great Atlantic merman!" shouted Dave, as he rolled on the rocks in a fit of laughter.

"I got the creature though!" Ben cried triumphantly. Then seeing the mass of jelly in his hand, with no trace of the beauty he had sought to seize upon, he threw it down with an expression of disgust. "Pooh! Is that the thing? I don't want that!" he exclaimed. "Alas! I got ducked for nothing, except to make sport for the rest of you. Well, look at me and laugh all you want to," he added good-naturedly, as he tried to wring himself out. There was no need to tell the boys that, and the shrieks of laughter continued long after they started campward.

"See! see!" shouted the archers, as the boys tramped past the targets. "A wreck! a wreck! Ben Carver rescued from the briny deep."

"Why this wetness, Benjamin?" cried Henry Burnham, as he paused, with his arrow on the string.

"Oh, that was acquired in my thirst for science."

"Couldn't be satisfied without going into it head over heels, eh?"

"Here, come to our tent. I carried your valise there, Ben," said Joe. "Your teeth are chattering now; I am going to get Jonas to make you some ginger-tea. That'll warm you up, I tell you."

Away ran Joe, and by the time Ben had changed his garments, he returned with a mug.

"Here it is, piping hot. Drink that, Ben, and I'll warrant you'll be able to melt out the inside of an iceberg by just breathing on it."

Ben took the mug, and, after eying the contents with a comical look of distrust, took one sip, then with a wry face he said, "Here, boys, pass this beverage around. There's nothing mean about me. I always share my treats. This will warm you so much, you will love even the misguided wretch who invented logarithms."

The offer was laughingly declined, and Ben, pouring the contents on the ledge, returned the mug to Jonas with many thanks for his liberality.

CHAPTER XX.

THE TWO MATCHES.

"Ho, for the match! Come, Dave, bring out your weapons; the boys are gathering."

Dave quickly obeyed Joe's summons, and the two friends, with bows and quivers, followed by Ralph and Ben, joined the archers. Fourteen boys composed the club, and at the time appointed they, as well as the spectators, were ready for the signal. Mr. Andrews kept the score, and there was great excitement as the shots were registered; but in spite of much loud talk the match ended satisfactorily to all outsiders, and to most of the participants, for Joe Chester won. A prolonged shout announced Joe's victory, not only to all on the island, but to vessels far out on the water.

Before the excitement had fairly abated, the signal for the rifle match was given, and away started the crowd to that part of the island where the targets were set for the marksmen. Ben being one of the best of the club, was particularly interested in this match, and he watched eagerly the movement of every rifle, longing for his own, and the chance to use it. Many rifles were offered to him, and every one urged him to join in the trial of skill; but his answer was, "No, indeed; I shan't risk my reputation now without any practice." Mr. Andrews kept the score here also, and although there were some hot disputes over the shots, Donald Parker was pronounced the winner of the prize.

"Now I'll try a rifle," exclaimed Ben.–"Here, Don, lend me yours."

Most of the boys were gathered in knots, eagerly discussing the match, but at the sound of Ben's firing they gathered around him.

"Hurrah for Ben!"

"That's a good one!"

"There's another!"

He fired the same number of shots as that allowed to the club, and the score was better than any made by the others, beating even that of the prize-winner.

"I thought I could do it," he said, with sparkling eyes, "but I didn't want to risk it in the match. Perhaps I couldn't have done it, either. I shouldn't have been so cool."

The boys were too excited over the long-talked-of matches to enter upon any other sport, and they gathered in knots on the ledges and in front of the tents, talking about this and that rifle or bow, or the scores of the different marksmen, comparing them with those of former matches.

"Come–to-morrow is packing-up day, and we've got to be up early.–and have all the fun we can before the steamboat swoops down on us."

"Like a wolf on the fold," added Fred.

"Oh, that dreadful monster!" cried Max. "If it would only forget to come."

"Or break its paddle-wheel," added Ned.

"Humph!" exclaimed Jonas, who was already beginning to pack baking-tins and things he did not intend to use. "If she doesn't come in time, you'll find yourself on short rations, I can tell you. We are on our last barrel of biscuits. Haven't flour enough for more than one batch of bread; and not a drop of treacle, even if we had the flour, for gingerbread."

"Nor any ginger, even if we had the treacle and flour," added Ben, with a mischievous twinkle of the eye. "Of course there is no ginger, Jonas was so generous with that in my tea."

The boys laughed, but Jonas, indifferent to that, continued his deficit list. "The coffee's gone, and the butter-tub is scraped clean."

"Mercy!" cried Dave. "This is getting melancholy. It's worse than Mother Hubbard's bare cupboard."

"Yes," added Joe with a sigh. "It's nothing but a howling wilderness here, and the sooner we get out of it the better. No, I'll take that back. I'm willing to live on blueberries if everything else gives out. The blueberries are plentiful still."

"Yes, and the clam-beds are not quite cleaned out," said Ben cheerily.

"A fellow that would starve on the edge of the clam-beds deserves to die."

"I suppose there are some fish left in the sea too," suggested Max.

"Yes, a few. Very likely those the tide carried off with our baskets, the day we had our freedom, came to life again, and are out of hospital by this time," said Joe.–"You can't scare us, Jonas. We don't feel a bit afraid of starving."

"No, maybe not, but you'd grumbled well if you didn't get nothin' but fish and berries for fare. You would," answered Jonas, as he nailed down the top of the box.

"I suppose we would," said Joe, "but I'd like to wait over and try it.–Come

on, Ralph; you and Ben can have a shake-down in our tent.–No, you other fellows can't have them; they've taken apartments with us. Good-night to the rest of you."

"Oh, don't leave us so soon. This is the last night. Only think–to-morrow we shall scatter on the four winds," said Walter.

"Not to meet again till the roll is called in September," added Ned with a doleful whistle.

"That sounds pretty bad, but I think we'll be able to bear it, considering that we are going to our own homes," answered Joe.–"But this has been a good time, Ralph–so much better than you or I dreamed possible the day school closed," he added as they walked off arm in arm.

"Yes, indeed, it looked gloomy enough then; I couldn't see the way ahead at all, and I felt that there never would be any more good times for me in the world. I tell you, Joe, I didn't deserve to have it turn out so. Two or three times to-day I have wondered if I am not dreaming, and if I shall not wake up in the cabin of the *Una* with that awful sea-sick feeling."

"But it's no dream, old fellow," said Joe cheerily. "You are back among us, and every boy in the crowd was glad enough to see you. Mr. Bernard, too, was as happy as the rest of us."

"That's so queer. I thought he would never forgive me. I wonder if my own father will? Joe, will you do me a favour? Will you stop at my home on your way through? I'm going to tell father the whole story, and let him know the worst of it. I want you to go along and keep my courage up."

Joe laughed and said, "Want me for a body-guard, do you?"

"My father is a very strict man, and he hasn't any patience with anybody that is mean; and that's just what I was, besides being bad. I don't mean to excuse myself a bit, whether you are there or not; but if you would stop with me, I'd like it. I want him to see you too, Joe."

"Enough said; I'll stop. Here's the tent; walk in. Dave and Ben are already in the bunk. Well, you and I will take the shake-down."

"We thought you would be waking us up if we slept on the floor, so we crawled in here to be out of the way," explained Dave.

"That's all right, Dave.–Now, Ralph, you and I have the floor; let the other fellows keep quiet. It isn't the softest bed I ever saw, but it is a good deal better than that you have had for some nights past."

"Yes, especially if you haven't anything you want to hide. I tell you it's good to be free of that. I'll never forget what Captain Dare said, and I can say it to myself now."

After the other boys were sound asleep, Ralph lay thinking over the weeks that had passed since he had burned the leaves in the garden at the back of the

school-house. All the way along he followed the story again. He heard the roll called for the guilty boy; and saw again Mr. Bernard's face as he looked around upon his boys in astonishment and grief, as he said, "Is it possible that we have a *liar* among us? A *liar*!" Then he saw Joe Chester's face as he was summoned to Mr. Bernard's room to be questioned. He remembered how he felt when it was announced that Joe Chester must remain behind unless the guilty boy confessed; and the miserable days that followed, when, ashamed of himself, he still pretended to be innocent. Then followed the last night of school when the question was decided, and he determined to go on no further with the deceit. This was the turning-point, and he felt that the worst was over when he thought of the letter of confession, the flight from the house, and the refuge with Captain Dare, which, in spite of all the discomfort resulting from it, had proved such a blessing to him. He remembered the very words of the old captain that had awakened the good resolutions in his heart, and he at last fell asleep feeling glad that he had opened his heart, and that there was nothing he wanted to conceal from God's eyes.

CHAPTER XXI.

A FULL DAY.

As soon as daylight began to dawn Joe was awake, and pulling open the flap of the tent, he glanced anxiously around. "Hurrah! a pleasant day," he exclaimed under his breath.

"Boys, wake up, and let's have a row. The water is smooth, and we'll have a jolly pull all by ourselves before the other fellows are stirring. Don't make a noise."

The four boys threw off their blankets, and dressed as hurriedly and quietly as possible, and ran down to the beach, where the boat was fastened, high and dry above high-water mark.

"Whew!" whistled Ben, looking with dismay at the long stretch of beach, down which they must drag or push the boat before it could float. "The tide doesn't favour us in this job, does it?"

"No, but the boat isn't heavy. We have pushed it down many a time," said Joe courageously.

"Never, with only four pairs of hands," added Dave, not quite so enthusiastic

as his friend.

"Oh, come on. If we wait for the tide to come up, we shall have a whole posse of boys crowding in."

"All right; a long pull and a strong pull and a pull all together."

"There she goes."

"'She starts, she moves, she seems to feel
The thrill of life along her keel,'"

said Dave in declamatory style.

"Well may she feel it, grating over these stones," said Ben, laughing and pushing with all his strength.

"Whew! Now! There, all together again."

[Illustration: "Now! All together!" (missing from book)]

If was a hard push, but the boat was launched at last, and the four boys in. Each took an oar and pulled hard and fast.

"Let's go over to 'Gull Rock,'" said Joe. "We are headed that way, and it will make just a good trip before breakfast."

"Which is Gull Rock?" asked Ralph, looking over his shoulder as he rowed.

"That long line of dark off there just to the left of that brig."

"Joe Chester! are you crazy?"

"We can do it, and be back in time for breakfast. I know we can."

"All right; go ahead! let's try it," said Ben. "This is my first and last row this vacation, and I'm ready to put in my best stroke. When I invested in this boat I expected to get my money's worth of fun out of it; but–

'The best-laid schemes o' mice and men
Gang aft agley.'"

"Especially when you have a scapegrace for a chum," said Ralph soberly. "If it hadn't been for me you would have been here through it all. I declare it is too bad, Ben."

"Nonsense! I haven't grumbled, have I? Wait till I do, old chap. I reckon I needed the lesson I got as much as you did, and I'm not sorry that I had to learn it. Now, don't let's groan," and Ben began to sing,–

"'I never was on the dull, tame shore,
But I loved the great sea more and more.'"

"But how was it when you were on the great sea in a fog-storm?" interrupted Ralph laughingly.

"Oh, go away. This is poetry; that wasn't."

"Not by any manner of means. You are right there."

"There's Jonas going to market to get fish for breakfast," said Joe, as he saw Jonas and Friday coming down the rocks with basket and fishing-rods.

"You ought to be phosphorescent enough to be useful as matches, if you have been having fish morning, noon, and night for a fortnight," suggested Ben.

"Very likely we are. The nights have been so bright we haven't needed to light candles, so we haven't had any use for matches; but I imagine we would all throw out a faint light if we got where it was dark enough."

"We'll have two more chances to add to our stock of phosphorus. Fish for breakfast and fish for dinner! I see the gulls on the rocks now. We must be two-thirds across, boys," said Dave. "I tell you we are doing strong pulling."

"Yes, but nothing fancy about it," laughed Ben. "I reckon an amateur boat-crew would hoot us."

"Who cares for style? I go in for speed. I can feather my oar every stroke if I want to," said Dave.

They pulled steadily, and Gull Rock was readied at last.

"Shall we land?"

"Yes, if we find a good place. Let's row along-shore and see what the chances are."

"There!" exclaimed Joe, "there's a fine chance up in that cove. There are lots of nests there; see the gulls fly up! We'll carry back some eggs, or the boys won't believe we've been so far."

"All right; in she goes," said Ben, lifting his dripping oar.

Dave did the same, and the two oars on the other side brought the boat quickly around, so Ben could seize the rock and jump ashore with the rope. Before he had fastened it the other boys had leaped ashore also, and were hunting for gulls' eggs.

"Oh, here they are by the hatful!" cried Joe. "We can get all we want and take only one egg from a nest, so the old birds won't be discouraged," he said, taking his round cap off, and going from nest to nest until he had filled it.

The others did the same, and after taking a hasty run over the island, they jumped into the boat again, pulled in the rope, and were homeward bound. The pull back was more leisurely; and, as Ben said, "they paid more attention to style."

The other boys were at the landing when the boat arrived with its bare-headed crew, and the caps were speedily emptied of the eggs, which were eagerly taken by the crowd to keep as mementoes of the vacation. After breakfast Jonas was besieged by one after another, begging to have the eggs boiled hard, so they would be safer to carry.

"Well, bring 'em all along, and I'll make one job of it," said Jonas good-naturedly. "I'll put on a kettle and boil the whole lot, and you can divide 'em afterwards."

There was a general scramble for the boiled eggs, but every boy got one or more to put away in his valise as treasures to be taken home and preserved for the sake of the pleasant vacation days. Such a motley collection as these boys had got together during the two weeks–sticks and stones and rubbish of all kinds, mementoes of some good time; and they must be taken from the island whether the more valuable property could be carried or not!

The steamboat was not expected till the afternoon, and during the early part of the day some of the boys went rowing, some to wander in the woods. Ralph and Ben joined a fishing-party going to the place from which they had been driven by the tide "on Liberty Day," as they laughingly called it.

"Do me the honour to use my rod, Ralph," said Joe. "I think you have seen it before."

Ralph pretended to be ignorant of his meaning. He admired the rod, but said, "No, Joe; I am going to cut one yonder that will do just as well for me."

"It is not; it is yours."

"Well, call it mine. I'm much obliged; but really now, I don't want to fish. I've had enough of that. I am going to search for bait, and keep the hooks supplied. Just give me one half the glory of catching the fish."

"All right. We'll make it a point to keep you busy, boy. Here, bait's wanted," cried Ralph, jointing the rod and untwisting the line. "I can't start with a bare hook."

"Hold on till I get started in the business. I haven't got in my supplies," answered Joe, leaning down over the side of the rocks and pulling off winkles that were fastened to it. "There now; go at it. Both hooks are baited, and more meat's ready. Who wants bait? Here are fine fat winkles to cover bare hooks."

"Bait mine."–"My hook is bare," was the constant cry, as the boys crowded around Joe, who patiently baited the hooks with the meat taken from the little shells, until his fingers were dyed purple.

"Well, you are a good-natured fellow, sitting here and doing this while we have the fun," exclaimed Ned, coming for the twentieth time to have his hook baited.

"That depends on how you look at it," was the philosophical answer. "I

might say you are the good-natured fellows to catch my fish for me, while I sit here and smash shells in a lazy way. This is just as good fun as fishing when you like to do it."

"I'm glad you like it," said Walter. "It is a good deal livelier work for us than if we had to stop and search for bait ourselves."

"I move that we return a vote of thanks to Joe Chester for his philanthropy or some kind of an opy–perhaps that isn't the right word–and then go back to camp. It must be near dinner-time, and Jonas will want these fish," suggested Ben. "Cheers for Chester! He's 'a gentleman and a scholar.' Hip! hip! hip!"

The cheers were given with a will. The boys were always ready to cheer on the slightest provocation, partly because they felt free to make as much noise as they liked on this island, so far out on the sea, and partly because they appreciated all good-natured acts, and this was their way of expressing their thanks.

Joe laughingly declared that they did him too much honour, and then, to change the subject, said, "Let's string the biggest fish on sticks, and take them to camp that way. Enough for dinner, you know. We can carry them easier that way."

This was soon done, and with their fish and rods they sauntered leisurely back to the camp, stopping here and there where the hillocks tempted them with blueberries.

"I hope Mr. Bernard will make arrangements to have the camp here next summer. He couldn't find a jollier place," exclaimed Ben.

"No; this beats all the camps we ever had," said Joe. "I move that we ask Mr. Bernard to come here again."

"Any fish?" shouted Jonas, as they came near the camp ground.

The boys held up the sticks for their answer, and Jonas gave a grunt of satisfaction as he paused in dipping water from the spring to relieve them of their burden.

"We need a good bath," said Joe, looking at his stained hands and soiled jacket. "I, for one, will have a final swim."

"You had the *last* yesterday, I thought," said Dave.

"Yes, but this is an appendix." And in a few minutes he had changed his fishing for a bathing suit, and was diving off the rocks. Several others followed, but the sport was interrupted by the dinner-bell; and Joe hastened to make his toilet and join his friends at the table.

"Well, boys, this has been a successful trip, has it?" asked Mr. Bernard, as he glanced from one bright face to another. "Have you had all the pleasure you anticipated?"

"Oh yes, and more too," was the enthusiastic answer. "It has been a splendid time–the best camp we ever had."

"And we want to thank you for it," said Joe, leaning forward to look at Mr. Bernard, who stood at the other end of the long table. "We don't know any other way to express our feelings except by giving three cheers. Will that do?" he asked laughingly.

"Oh yes, that will express them better than anything you could say," was the laughing reply.

"I move three cheers for our teachers–the best teachers any boys ever had. Hip! hip! hip!"

Then followed a deafening shout that came from the hearts as well as from the throats of the boys.

CHAPTER XXII.

TENTS DOWN.

The boat was due at four, and the tents were to be down and ready at the landing. So as soon as dinner was over every one went to work.

Jonas made a great rattling of pots, pans, and plates, as he packed them away in barrels and boxes.

"No more use for them until next summer, and there's no knowin' who of us will be alive to use 'em then!" exclaimed Jonas, with a wise shake of the head.

"That's so," said Friday solemnly.

"'Tain't noways likely that the same crowd will get together again. Somebody'll be missing. They are a fine set o' fellows, take 'em all around. Some o' them are as good as you'd find anywhere.–Here, Freit, lend a hand on this 'ere box. No, roll that barrel down to the beach; I'll see to this."

While they were thus engaged, the boys were packing their valises, and trying to decide what to take and what to leave.

"I've got rocks enough to stock a cabinet, and only one valise, that was full when I came," said Joe, kneeling before said valise, with his arms full of "specimens."

"To ballast a ship, you'd better say," added Ben, laughing. "What do you want that rubbish for?" and he pulled over the precious collection in a contemptuous way.

"Hands off, Vandal! Avaunt! You'll smash that infant star-fish!" cried Joe. "I've tramped miles and risked my neck getting these together, and now you call

them rubbish! Avaunt, I say!"

"Tents down!" called Mr. Andrews, passing along, and seeing some of the tents still standing.

"Yes, sir," answered Joe, placing the "rubbish," as Ben called it, in an old jacket, and tying the bundle with fish-line. "There, I'm all right; I'll take this in my hands. There'll be room enough in my trunk when we get back to school."

Ben laughed, and said, "You'll have your labour for your pains. You'll throw the whole lot over the back-yard fence, or your mother or sisters will for you, before many weeks."

"Nay, nay! You haven't half looked at the things; or, worse still, are no judge, boy. Mr. Bernard said they were good specimens."

"All right–carry them home; but if your folks are like mine the things will disappear. I got a lot of snakes once, the prettiest fellows you ever saw, and had them in a wire box; but no one would go near my room to clear it up, and because I wouldn't throw them away, my sisters hired a fellow to drop the box in the pond. Wasn't I angry?"

"That's different; I don't much blame them," said Joe. "Nobody will bother my collection. There, my luggage is ready."

"So is mine," said Ralph, who had been sitting on his valise outside, listening to the conversation. "Where's Dave?"

"Oh, he went to the shore long ago. There he stands with his spy-glass, watching for the steamboat, as if it would be the most welcome sight in the world; and he doesn't want to leave any more than we do.–Now, down with the tent! Pull up those stakes, boys. Mine are up. Down she goes! Let's write our names on the canvas; perhaps we shall get the same tent next year."

"Oh, doesn't the place look forsaken?" groaned Joe, as he saw the tents, one after another, rolled up and carried by the boys to the beach, where the baggage was piled.

"I see the smoke!" cried Dave.

A chorus of groans from the crowd answered this announcement.

"Hush, raven! don't croak. Don't bring your bad news here. Get down from your watch-tower, and let's have a game of leap-frog, and forget the steamboat," said Ned.

There were boys enough answering this summons to make the leaping process long and tiresome; and by the time a dozen boys had gone the length of the row, they were glad to unbend their backs and throw themselves on the grass to rest.

Nearer and nearer came the boat, and no spy-glass was needed to tell the party that it was coming for them. Straight toward the island it steamed, and it was only a question of minutes when the motion would cease and the anchor

drop.

Another chorus of groans from the waiting crowd was the only greeting extended even when the band began to play. Unmindful of the cool reception, the boat swung around as near to the rocks as possible, and the great wheels ceased to revolve.

"All ready there!" shouted the captain, hat in hand.

"All ready," was the answer.

The small boats belonging to the school were already laden with baggage, and the boys began to row across with the load. The larger boats belonging to the steamer were soon plying to and fro, carrying the camp outfit. This occupied a long time, and then the boys reluctantly followed.

John and Jerry with their father were there to see them off and hear the music. The last boatful of boys had come up the side of the steamer, and the last boat had been hoisted on board.

"Are we all here?" asked Mr. Bernard, looking anxiously around over the crowd under his care.

"He ought to count us," suggested Dave. "Perhaps some of the fellows are hid under the bushes."

Jonas and Freitag were the last on board, and they gave the assurance that "nothin' nor nobody wasn't left behind."

The whistle sounded; the escaping steam was turned down to work again; the water foamed, and the wheels were in motion.

Here was another chance to cheer, and what schoolboy would allow such an opportunity to be wasted? So cheers were given and caps waved by the party on deck and the three people on the shore. The band played "Home, Sweet Home," and the steamboat bore them toward the Cape.

"Alas, and alack! and is it over?" sighed Joe, as he looked longingly back at the receding shores of the island. "And you had so little of the fun, Ralph."

"I don't know," answered Ralph. "It is a question whether you enjoyed more in the whole fortnight than Ben and I did in these two days. Just the pleasure of getting back among you all and being friends with Mr. Bernard would have been treat enough for me, after my experience."

"And for me too," interposed Ben soberly–"to say nothing of the good times fishing, swimming, rowing, and tramping about through the woods and over the shore. If you enjoyed it any more than I did, I don't know how you managed to bear it, Joe."

It was a sun-burned, rugged-looking set of boys that landed at the Cape, and, with valises in hand, started across the fields to the Academy, talking, as they sauntered along, of the good times they had enjoyed. They were to spend one night there, and get their worldly possessions in readiness to take, or to leave

till another term.

"Ben Carver, are you the same fellow that stole out of this room with me a fortnight ago?" asked Ralph, as they entered their room together and shut the door.

"Am I, or am I not? Sure enough. Only a fortnight ago! Think of it! Why, I feel as if it were years ago. We little thought we would be back here now, and feeling as comfortable as we do, when we stole down the stairs that night, and went across the fields to hide from Mr. Bernard."

"Yes, from him and every one else. I wanted never to see Joe or any of the boys again–never!"

"May I come in?" said Joe's voice at the door.

"Come."

"We are to have the hall all to ourselves this evening, and talk over our camp life–all speaking at once, if we want to."

"And we shall want to," said Ben.

"Very likely," laughed Joe. "We generally do. Mr. Bernard says if we can't think of anything to say he will come in and help us. We told him he would be welcome, but that he probably wouldn't be able to get a word in."

"Not the least chance."

"Come on; there's the bell! Supper, and after that the jollification in the hall. Then we'll pack and say good-bye to the old Academy, and each other too, until next September."

"Remember you are going home with me," said Ralph as they ran down the stairs, and slackened their pace to enter the dining-room less like whirlwinds.

"Remember? Ah, yes; I remember that. Isn't it odd to be sitting instead of standing at the table, and using napkins and glasses? I like the camp tables best, though, as it is."

After supper, the boys gathered in the hall, and talked over their life in camp. Even the dark, foggy days, that seemed so uncomfortable at the time, were spoken of now with pleasure.

Mr. Bernard came later in the evening, and after joining in the merry-making a while, and listening to the stories of the boys, he said some pleasant good-bye words, thanking them that they had given so little trouble; and then leaving them all in the hands of the Great Master, and asking him to be their friend and helper in all the future, he shook hands with each one, with an added "God bless you" for Ralph, and said good-bye.

We cannot follow these boys to their homes, pleasant as that would be, so we will join in the general farewell that sounded on every hand as the boys went back to their friends.

THE END.

* * * * * * * *

IN THE LAND OF THE MOOSE. Achilles Daunt.
TREFOIL. Margaret P. Macdonald.
WENZEL'S INHERITANCE. Annie Lucas.
VERA'S TRUST. Evelyn Everett-Green.
FOR THE FAITH. Evelyn Everett-Green.
ALISON WALSH. Constance Evelyn.
BLIND LOYALTY. E. L. Haverfield.
DOROTHY ARDEN. J. M. Callwell.
FALLEN FORTUNES. Evelyn Everett-Green.
FOR HER SAKE. Gordon Roy.
JACK MACKENZIE. Gordon Stables, M.D.
IN PALACE AND FAUBOURG. C. J. G.
ISABEL'S SECRET; or, A Sister's Love.
IVANHOE. Sir Walter Scott.
KENILWORTH. Sir Walter Scott.
LEONIE. Annie Lucas.
MAUD MELVILLE'S MARRIAGE. E. Everett-Green.
OLIVE ROSCOE. Evelyn Everett-Green.
QUEECHY. Miss Wetherell.
SCHÖNBERG-COTTA FAMILY. Mrs. Charles.
"SISTER." Evelyn Everett-Green.
THE CITY AND THE CASTLE. Annie Lucas.
THE CZAR. Deborah Alcock.
THE HEIRESS OF WYLMINGTON. Everett-Green.
THE SIGN OF THE RED CROSS. Everett-Green.
THE SPANISH BROTHERS. Deborah Alcock.
THE TRIPLE ALLIANCE. Harold Avery.
THE UNCHARTED ISLAND. Skelton Kuppord.
THE WIDE WIDE WORLD. Miss Wetherell.

T. NELSON AND SONS, London, Edinburgh, Dublin, and New York.

* * * * *

NELSON'S "ROYAL" LIBRARIES.
THE EIGHTEENPENCE SERIES.

SECRET CHAMBER AT CHAD. E. Everett-Green.
SONS OF FREEDOM. Fred Whishaw.
SONS OF THE VIKINGS. John Gunn.
STORY OF MADGE HILTON. Agnes C. Maitland,
IN LIONLAND. M. Douglas.
MARGIE AT THE HARBOUR LIGHT. E. A. Rand.
ADA AND GERTY. Louisa M. Gray.
AFAR IN THE FOREST. W. H. G. Kingston.
A GOODLY HERITAGE. K. M. Eady.
BORIS THE BEAR HUNTER. Fred Whishaw.
"DARLING." M. H. Cornwall Legh.
DULCIE'S LITTLE BROTHER. E. Everett-Green.
ESTHER'S CHARGE. E. Everett-Green.
EVER HEAVENWARD. Mrs. Prentiss.
FOR THE QUEEN'S SAKE. E. Everett-Green.
GUY POWERS' WATCHWORD. J. T. Hopkins.
IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS. W. H. G. Kingston.
IN THE WARS OF THE ROSES. E. Everett-Green.
LIONEL HARCOURT, THE ETONIAN. G. E. Wyatt.
MOLLY'S HEROINE. "Fleur de Lys."
NORSELAND TALES. H. H. Boyesen.
ON ANGELS' WINGS. Hon. Mrs. Greene.
ONE SUMMER BY THE SEA. J. M. Callwell.
PARTNERS. H. F. Gethen.
ROBINETTA. L. E. Tiddeman.
SALOME. Mrs. Marshall
THE LORD OF DYNEVOR. E. Everett-Green.
THE YOUNG HUGUENOTS. "Fleur de Lys."
THE YOUNG RAJAH. W. H. G. Kingston.
WINNING THE VICTORY. E. Everett-Green.

T. NELSON AND SONS, London, Edinburgh, Dublin, and New York.

* * * * *

NELSON'S "ROYAL" LIBRARIES.

THE SHILLING SERIES.

ACADEMY BOYS IN CAMP. S. F. Spear.
ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL. Miss Gaye.
ESTHER REID. Pansy
TIMOTHY TATTERS. J. M. Callwell.
AMPTHILL TOWERS. A. J. Foster.
IVY AND OAK.
ARCHIE DIGBY. G. E. Wyatt.
AS WE SWEEP THROUGH THE DEEP. Gordon Stables, M.D.
AT THE BLACK ROCKS. Edward Rand.
AUNT SALLY. Constance Milman.
CYRIL'S PROMISE. A Temperance Tale. W. J. Lacey.
GEORGIE MERTON. Florence Harrington.
GREY HOUSE ON THE HILL. Hon. Mrs. Greene.
HUDSON BAY. R. M. Ballantyne.
JUBILEE HALL. Hon. Mrs. Greene.
LOST SQUIRE OF INGLEWOOD. Dr. Jackson.
MARK MARKSEN'S SECRET. Jessie Armstrong.
MARTIN RATTLER. R. M. Ballantyne.
RHODA'S REFORM. M. A. Paull.
SHENAC. The Story of a Highland Family in Canada.
SIR AYLMER'S HEIR. E. Everett-Green.
SOLDIERS OF THE QUEEN. Harold Avery.
THE CORAL ISLAND. R. M. Ballantyne.
THE DOG CRUSOE. R. M. Ballantyne.
THE GOLDEN HOUSE. Mrs. Woods Baker.
THE GORILLA HUNTERS. R. M. Ballantyne.
THE ROBBER BARON. A. J. Foster.
THE WILLOUGHBY BOYS. Emily C. Hartley.
UNGAVA. R. M. Ballantyne.
WORLD OF ICE. R. M. Ballantyne.
YOUNG FUR TRADERS. R. M. Ballantyne.

T. NELSON AND SONS, London, Edinburgh, Dublin, and New York.

A Word from Project Gutenberg

We will update this book if we find any errors.

This book can be found under: https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/33968

The Full Project Gutenberg License

Section 1. General Terms of Use & Redistributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works

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 outside 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 ac-

cess 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 https://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.

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 Guten-

berg™ web site (https://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 both the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation and The Project Gutenberg Trademark LLC, the owner 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 PUR-

POSE.

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, is 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 web page at https://www.pglaf.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 principal office is in Fairbanks, Alaska, with the mailing address: PO Box 750175, Fairbanks, AK 99775, but its volunteers and employees are scattered throughout numerous locations. Its business office is located at 809 North 1500 West, Salt Lake City, UT 84116, (801) 596-1887, email business@pglaf.org. Email contact links and up to date contact information can be found at the Foundation's web site and official page at www.gutenberg.org/contact

For additional contact information:

Dr. Gregory B. Newby
Chief Executive and Director
gbnewby@pglaf.org

Section 4. Information about Donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

Project Gutenberg™ depends upon and cannot survive without wide spread 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 https://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 meth-

ods and addresses. Donations are accepted in a number of other ways including checks, online payments and credit card donations. To donate, please visit: https://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 thirty 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 Web site which has the main PG search facility:

https://www.gutenberg.org

This Web site 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.