

PARTNERS
THREE

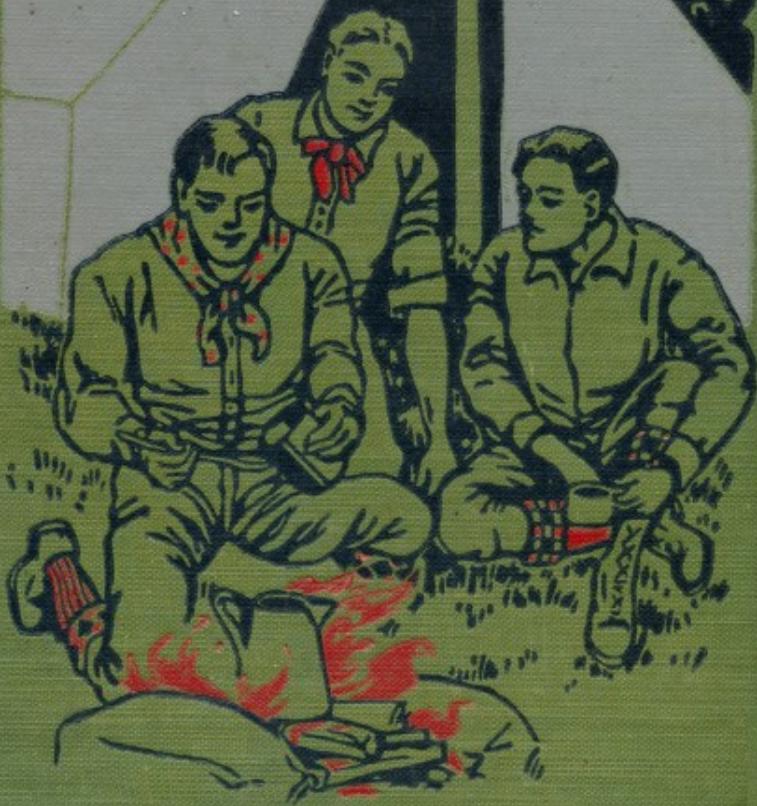
BARBOUR



DONOHUE

PARTNERS THREE

RALPH HENRY BARBOUR



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THE CRYSTAL SPRING NOSED HER WAY OUT OF HERRICK'S COVE.

PARTNERS THREE

BY

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ILLUSTRATED
BY CHARLES M. RELYEA



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CONTENTS

Chapter		Page
I	<u>JACK HERRICK, SKIPPER</u>	1
II	<u>A RESCUE</u>	11
III	<u>A PAIR OF AMATEUR SALTS</u>	23
IV	<u>BURIED TREASURE</u>	41
V	<u>BEE COMPOSES AN “ODE TO THE SEA”</u>	53
VI	<u>BEE PLANS AN EXPEDITION</u>	65
VII	<u>ON NOBODY’S ISLAND</u>	79
VIII	<u>HAL NAMES THE LAUNCH</u>	91
IX	<u>THE EXPEDITION LANDS</u>	109
X	<u>BEE DIGS FOR TREASURE</u>	125
XI	<u>THE MAN WITH THE GLASS EYE</u>	137
XII	<u>THE SUNKEN WRECK</u>	149
XIII	<u>MAROONED!</u>	161
XIV	<u>BILL GLASS TO THE RESCUE</u>	175
XV	<u>A VOYAGE OF DISCOVERY</u>	193
XVI	<u>THE HOUSE OF MANY CLOCKS</u>	205
XVII	<u>THE INVADER’S RETREAT</u>	215
XVIII	<u>BEE FINDS A NEW CLUE</u>	223
XIX	<u>BILL RETURNS THE CALL</u>	235
XX	<u>TRAINED CLAMS</u>	245
XXI	<u>“SCHOONER ASHORE!”</u>	257
XXII	<u>IN THE TEETH OF THE GALE</u>	267
XXIII	<u>THE LIFE-BOAT WINS</u>	277

XXIV	<u>OLD VERNY'S WHARF</u>	287
XXV	<u>MR. FOLSOM MAKES AN OFFER</u>	301
XXVI	<u>THE LETTER IN THE DORY</u>	315
XXVII	<u>TREASURE TROVE!</u>	321

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

THE CRYSTAL SPRING NOSED HER WAY OUT OF
HERRICK'S COVE

BEE PLANS AN EXPEDITION

MAP OF NOBODY'S ID., BY B. MANSFIELD

MAROONED

THE HOUSE OF MANY CLOCKS

THE LIFE-BOAT WINS

Partners Three

CHAPTER I

Jack Herrick, Skipper

The *Crystal Spring* nosed her way out of Herrick's Cove, caught the southeasterly breeze on her big sail and moved lazily along past the end of Greenhaven Neck. The *Crystal Spring* was not built for speed. She was snub-nosed and square-sterned and wide in the beam. The mast was stepped well forward and a short bowsprit made room for a jibsail that was seldom used. Aft the mast was a small hatch nearly flush with the deck. Amidship was a second hatch, larger than the first. Coiled over it, like a gray snake, was a length of two-inch hose attached at one end to a rusty pump set into the deck. The *Crystal Spring* was not a beauty, no matter how you looked at her. She was painted black, as to hull, and gray as to deck and hatches. Her mast needed scraping and her patched mainsail was grayer than her deck. On the stern was the inscription "Crystal Spring, Greenhaven." She sat low in the water and moved sluggishly. To be sure a three-mile breeze isn't conducive to speed, but even in a gale the *Crystal Spring* wouldn't have shown her heels to anything that sailed out of Greenhaven.

With his feet in the shallow cockpit sat the skipper and crew of the *Crystal Spring*, one arm draped over the long tiller. The skipper and crew was sixteen years of age, had a good-looking weather-tanned face, a sturdy body and was

named John Herrick—and called Jack. He had a pair of nice brown eyes, a straight nose well freckled, a fairly wide mouth and a square and rather aggressive chin. Just at present his mouth was puckered up, for Jack was whistling—I almost said a tune. Let's simply remark that he was whistling and let it go at that, for the fact is that Jack could no more whistle a tune than he could sing one; and if you ever heard him try to sing you'd understand. As he whistled, his gaze roamed from the sail to the shore and thence out to sea. Seaward there was little to look at—only a smudge of smoke like a narrow cloud trailing above the horizon. Shoreward was the end of the Neck and the squat white lighthouse agleam in the sunlight of a late June morning. Behind the lighthouse was the keeper's little cottage with its weathered roof and green blinds, and its tiny garden of sweet peas and nasturtiums, making a spot of bright color against the yellow-green of beach-grass and the gray of boulders. The tiller moved a little, the sail flapped for an instant and then filled again and the sloop slowly turned to pass Popple Head and run along close to the granite breakwater, seeking the harbor entrance.

With the breeze behind him Jack found the canvas cap he wore uncomfortable and dropped it into the cockpit, revealing a somewhat touselled head of brown hair. I call Jack's hair brown for want of a better word. As a matter of fact it was of some indescribable shade between brown and the color of oakum, and, at that, it had lighter streaks in it. I think that nature had intended him to have quite respectable and commonplace brown hair, but as his cap was usually just where it was now—that is, off his head—the sun and the winds and salt spray and the fogs had worked their wills. On

the whole, the result, especially when the sun was on it, was rather pleasing. The rest of Jack's attire was quite simple. A white canvas blouse, clean if not altogether guiltless of stains, covered the upper part of his body and a pair of old gray trousers did for the rest. He wore no shoes, although two brown canvas "sneakers," in each of which a brown cotton stocking was tucked, reposed in the cockpit.

A man in khaki overalls and a red flannel shirt emerged from the door of the lighthouse and waved a hand. Jack waved back. The man was Captain Horace Tucker, the lighthouse keeper. Captain Horace was a distant relation of Jack's on his mother's side, and Jack called him uncle, although the relationship was not really as close as that term implied. The lighthouse fell astern and the long, gray wall of the breakwater stretched away beside him. Jack scrambled to his feet, placed one bare foot on the tiller and craned his head. As the tide was almost at flood he could just see over the top of the breakwater. For a minute he scanned the harbor. Then, with a shake of his head, he jumped back into the cockpit.

"Not much doing today, I guess," he muttered.

Half-way along the breakwater a man was fishing for perch. Jack headed the sloop further away so as not to interfere with him. As the *Crystal Spring* drew abreast, however, the fisherman called across.

"Much obliged, but there wa'n't no call to do it. I ain't had nary nibble so far. I cal'ate Friday's storm's driv all the fish out to sea."

“Try down by the beacon,” called Jack. “The water’s deeper there.”

He pointed ahead of him and the fisherman nodded and pulled up his pole and line. Down the shore, beyond the little rocky island called The Lump, a hand-liner was coming in with all sails set.

“That’s Desco Benton,” murmured Jack. “I guess I can sell to him if that plaguey chug-boat don’t get to him first.” He eyed his sail anxiously, eased the sheet a bit and watched for the end of the breakwater with its red beacon light set up on a tripod of timbers, for all the world like a little fat man with three legs. The sunlight shone dazzlingly on the ruby glass as Jack swung the sloop around the end of the granite barrier and across the bar. Before him lay the big round harbor, with Gull Island almost in the center, and innumerable boats lining the fish wharves or anchored in the channels. At the left the old town of Greenhaven ambled away up the hill, its white houses and crooked streets elbowing and jostling each other at every turn. Straight ahead, at the end of the mile-long basin, across what is known as the Neck Marsh, a second cluster of roofs showed where Cove Village lay along the edge of Lobster Cove.

It was a busy scene even at nine o’clock in the morning. Over at the Eastern Halibut Company’s wharves two schooners were unloading; Jack could see the sunlight glinting on the white bellies of the big fish as they were pitched from deck to wharf; on Gull Island, a short distance ahead, Abner Lacy’s *Esmeralda*, which had been in collision with a steamer trawler off White Face Bar a few days before, was being winched up the railway for repairs; the ring of the

mallets on the blocks and the clicking of the windlass came loudly across the quiet water. Half-way between island and Neck the ferryboat was churning its way; Jack could see Captain Trufitt edging along the narrow deck taking fares. On the town side of the harbor a whale-back was unloading coal and the rattle and hum of the hoisting engine beat incessantly across. An Italian salt bark, her battered red hull deep in the water, had berthed in the broad channel and a lighter was sidling up to her. They would unload until she drew less water and then take her over to one of the wharves. At the Folsom Company's docks a dozen schooners were fitting for their summer trips to the Banks. Small sailboats and rowboats dotted the blue expanse and just beyond the inner end of Gull Island a neat steam-yacht, resplendent in white paint and mahogany and brass, awaited her turn on the marine railway.

Over on the Neck side they were launching a sloop at Davis's boat-yard where, hauled up on the shore and covered from the weather with canvas or boards, half a dozen sailing craft of various descriptions awaited their owners' orders. There was a distinct odor of drying fish in the air—in almost any direction you could catch a glimpse of the "flakes" behind the fish houses—which, mingling with the odors of lumber and pitch and paint from the yards, of seaweed from the shallow beach and of the soft, salty breeze from the ocean, constituted a fragrance that was as much a part of Greenhaven as the granite hill on which it was built. Jack knew that odor well and loved it. He breathed it gratefully now as, guiding the *Crystal Spring* toward the broad channel, he saw Desco Benton's *Hetty and Grace* rush past him near

shore, shortening sail as she went. Jack cast an anxious gaze up the harbor.

“I guess that chug-boat will beat me again,” he muttered, “though I don’t see her anywhere yet. Likely she’s at the landing. Get on, you old sea-crab!”

The latter command was addressed to the *Crystal Spring*, which, now in the lee of the breakwater, was moving more leisurely than ever. Down the harbor the *Hetty and Grace* came about into the wind and Jack saw the anchor splash. It would take him ten minutes, maybe, to reach her, for he would have to tack in a moment and stand over toward the shore. And then what he feared and expected happened. Out of the press of boats around the town landing a cat-rigged boat driven by a gasoline motor chugged its way. It was painted buff, with a black strip, and to the bare mast was fixed a white placard with the word “Water” on it in black letters. Straight across to the *Hetty and Grace* it went and Jack sighed and shrugged his shoulders.

“Either I’ll have to rig up an engine or go out of business,” he muttered. “Well, I’ll try the steam-yacht.”

But when, five minutes later, the sloop wallowed up to within hailing distance of the handsome *Sea Mist*, a man in blue coat and brass buttons informed him shortly that her tanks were full.

“I’ve got the best water around these parts,” persisted Jack, as the *Crystal Spring* drifted by. “It’s spring water right out of the ground this morning.”

The man grinned. “That’s what they all say,” he jeered. “And it all tastes like bilge, too.”

“Mine don’t. Better try some. Let me fill up a tank for you, sir.”

“All full, I tell you.” The man turned away, Jack swung the helm over and the *Crystal Spring* began her day’s cruise in and out of the shipping. It was almost eleven before Jack made his first sale. A Portuguese fisherman bargained a good ten minutes. Then the *Crystal Spring* was made fast, the hose was lifted to the schooner’s deck and pulled down a forward hatchway and Jack, attaching the long handle to the pump, began his labor. It wasn’t easy work, but Jack’s muscles were used to it, and, as the fisherman had only one butt to fill, it was soon done. Then Jack took his pay, recoiled his hose, cast loose and went on again. What breeze there had been earlier in the day had almost died away and the sloop’s progress was slower than ever. Now and then Jack caught sight of the *Morning Star*, as the rival water boat was poetically named, chugging its way about the harbor. But even the *Morning Star* wasn’t doing much business today. At noon Jack made fast to the stern of a lumber schooner near the coal wharf and ate his lunch. It was pleasant enough there in the sun with so much to watch, and the lunch that Aunt Mercy had put up tasted awfully nice, just as it always did, but Jack wished that trade was brisker in his line of business. And just when he was thinking that there was a hail across the basin.

“Water boat, ahoy!” came a voice.

CHAPTER II

A Rescue

Jack jumped to his feet, dropping two of Aunt Mercy's best doughnuts, and looked about him. The hail came again and Jack saw Desco Benton waving from the *Hetty and Grace*.

"Right-o!" he called, and quickly cast loose. It took the *Crystal Spring* almost five minutes to half drift and half sail across to the hand-liner, and all the way Jack wondered what Desco wanted of him. When he was alongside the master of the *Hetty and Grace* appeared at the rail again.

"Where you been, Jack?" he growled. "I been waitin' all the mornin' for you."

"I'm sorry, Desco. I saw the other boat putting out to you and I thought you'd got water."

"Them Portuguese? Oh, I sent 'em off in a hurry. That stuff they pump ain't water, it's pizen. One of 'em says to me awhile back, he says, 'Cap'n, this water's the finest spring water in Greenhaven.' 'Spring water' says I. 'Spring water! If it is it's *last* Spring water!'" And Desco leaned on the rail and laughed hoarsely at his joke. "Where'd they get that stuff, Jack?"

"Right out of the hydrant at the landing," replied Jack with a smile. "I guess it's all right when there isn't a break in the main, but there usually is. Then it's about the color of pea soup. Have a good trip, Desco?"

“Fair to middlin’! I landed ’em down to Boston. Here, give me hold o’ that pipe. How you gettin’ on, Jack?”

“About the same way—fair to middling,” answered Jack as he uncoiled the hose. “There isn’t much doing just now. Folsom’s boats get their water at the wharves these days. They had a pipe put in. I suppose it’s cheaper for them that way.”

“Huh, I cal’ate it is. An’ Folsom never was a man to waste money. Cal’ate that’s how he’s come by so much on it. I got two butts ’most empty, Jack, and the deck cask, too. Here, Manuel, lug this down to the butts and sing out when you’re ready.”

While Jack pumped the master of the *Hetty and Grace* leaned across the rail and talked. He was a big, broad-shouldered, yellow-bearded Nova Scotian, of thirty-five or thirty-six years, a good sailor and a lucky master. Desco Benton’s luck was proverbial around Greenhaven and it had stood him in good stead many times. “As lucky as Desco Benton” was a common saying among the fishermen. The *Hetty and Grace* was a small but staunch little knockabout schooner, Essex built, with the lines of a pleasure yacht. Desco owned every plank and nail in her and was immensely proud of her. She could sail, too. That fact had been demonstrated two years before when Desco had beaten every schooner in the fisherman’s race to Boston Light and back, having his anchor down and all sails snug when his nearest competitor came racing around the breakwater.

“How’s your folks?” he asked presently. “I cal’ate that sister o’ yours is quite grown up by now.”

“Faith’s thirteen, I guess,” Jack replied as he worked at the long pump handle. “She’s going to high school.”

“I want to know! An’ how about you, Jack? Wasn’t you in high school, too?”

“Last year. I had to quit when father died. Someone had to make some money and it looked like it was up to me.”

“Of course. Well, edication’s a good thing, I cal’ate, though I never had much time for it, but it don’t butter no parsnips, Jack.”

“I’m going back some day, I expect. I want to, anyway. I want to go to college if I can, too. Looks now, though, as if I might be pretty old before that happens.”

“College, eh? H’m; I had a feller sailin’ with me a couple o’ years back that was a college grad-oo-ate; name o’ Jasper Fitzwilliam. He wan’t no good at all. But I cal’ate there’s a difference in ’em. I cal’ate that young Folsom’ll have a college edication. I passed him comin’ in, him an’ another boy. They was in a motor-boat about half a mile off The Lump. Seemed to be hove to off there an’ I cal’ate they was fishin’. He’ll be a rich man some day, when his dad dies, eh?”

“I suppose so. He seems a nice chap. He was in my class at high school last year, though I didn’t know him very well. Funny place to fish, off The Lump, Desco. I never heard of anyone catching anything there, did you?”

Desco shook his head as the signal came to stop pumping. The sailor crawled up through the hatch with the hose and Desco bade him lug it forward to the small butt lashed by the deck-house. Jack began his labors again. Desco, his gaze

fixed on the western sky, where a few white clouds like great bunches of cotton batting were creeping up, pointed with the stem of his pipe.

“There’s goin’ to be a thunder squall before long, Jack,” he said. “Better get your slicker out.”

Jack looked and nodded. “It feels like it too,” he answered. “I’d just as lief it didn’t come till I get this old lugger back to the Cove.”

There was a yell from the sailor at the hose and Jack stopped pumping. A few minutes later Desco dropped Jack’s line to the deck of the water boat and Jack, pushing the boom out, took the tiller again and waved good-bye to the master of the *Hetty and Grace*.

For two hours or more he cruised slowly about the harbor without doing any business. It was almost four o’clock, and the *Crystal Spring* was ambling along just inside Gull Island, when Jack saw the lighthouse tender push her snub nose around the breakwater and turn sharp into the narrow channel. The tender usually bought water when she visited Greenhaven, and Jack, casting an anxious backward glance in search of the *Morning Star*, hustled the *Crystal Spring* all he knew how. The lighthouse tender was already out of sight behind the island, although Jack could see the tips of her masts above the buildings. His first tack took him to the end of the breakwater. Then, as the water boat came around, he saw that the tender already had her mud-hook down. The *Morning Star*, it seemed, had for once been caught napping, and Jack smiled as he pushed the sloop along. But the smile faded a moment later, for around the farther end of the island sped the *Morning Star*, her eight horsepower engine puffing

away at full speed. Had the *Crystal Spring* been similarly equipped it might have proved a very pretty race, but as it was the *Morning Star* had everything her own way. Before Jack had covered half the distance between him and the tender, the *Morning Star* was alongside the government boat. A moment later lines were passed aboard and the two Lampron brothers were manning the pump. As the *Crystal Spring* sailed by Tony Lampron grinned across at Jack and shouted, "Where you been some time, eh, Mister?" and his brother Frank waved a hand and laughed. Jack made no sign, but he was angry and disappointed, and at the end of the island he swung the *Crystal Spring* around and headed up the channel for home. It wasn't likely that there would be any more business today. And he didn't much care, anyhow. Besides, the thunder storm that Desco had predicted was almost at hand, and Jack could see by the angry streaky look of the clouds that there would be wind as well as rain. He didn't care to be caught outside in a blow. The *Crystal Spring* was staunch enough but she was anything but dry in dirty weather. Jack resolved to get around Popple Head and at least under the lee of the Neck before the storm burst.

To be on the safe side, however, for already the thunder was rumbling, he kicked down the latch of a little locker under the poop and pulled out a yellow oilskin coat and hat. He substituted his shoes and stockings for the oilskins and slammed the locker door shut again just as the sharp detonations of an engine exhaust reached him. A stone-throw to leeward Charley Paige, leaning against the tiller of his little power boat, waved to him and pointed westward. Jack waved back and, nodding his head, luffed the *Crystal Spring* around through the swell of the fisherman and headed along

the breakwater. The breeze had grown flukey and of a sudden a great gray cloud passed over the sun and the ocean darkened to steel color. A clap of thunder broke overhead. A puff of wind came out of the west and the boom went down as the first puff of the squall caught the big sail. Then came a drop of rain and Jack, straddling the tiller, donned his oilskins, buttoning the long coat closely about him, and pulled the sou'easter down over his head. It was evident that he was in for a wetting after all.

The *Crystal Spring* began to roll as the wind increased, behaving in a most frolicsome, undignified manner. Half-way between the beacon and the lighthouse point the rain began in earnest, slanting out of the west and pelting at Jack's back vindictively. There was quite a sea by now, although the rain flattened the surface somewhat and the squall blew the tops of the waves into spume. Jack, finding himself in for it, began to whistle tunelessly, leaning against the tiller and peering out from under the brim of his sou'easter. It was too thick to see very far ahead and it behooved him to be watchful, since a fisherman might be beating his way in around Popple Head. But he sighted nothing and the lighthouse was abeam and he brought the sloop's blunt nose around. In another minute he would be in the lee of the shore and well out of some nasty weather. The thunder still crashed at intervals and now and then the dun clouds were rent asunder by the livid flashes of lightning. The lighthouse dropped astern and the *Crystal Spring*, with a final impatient roll, settled back on an even keel. And at that moment, following a crash of thunder, Jack heard a faint hail.

He shaded his eyes with his hand and peered shoreward. But as far as he could see there was no one in sight. He had about reached the conclusion that he had been mistaken when the hail came again, a mere atom of sound above the rush of rain and sea and the creaking complaint of the sloop's timbers. Jack turned seaward and strained his eyes through the murk. At first only a blank gray wall of mist rewarded him, but as his gaze accustomed itself to the task, suddenly a darker blur, something neither rain nor sea, came to his vision for a moment and then was lost again. Half doubting, Jack hauled on the sheet and jammed the helm to starboard. The *Crystal Spring* came about with a resentful lunge that sent the water in her big tank swashing noisily from side to side. With his eyes fixed ahead Jack gave the sloop all she could carry and in a moment the squall caught her again as she passed out of the lee of the land and dipped the end of the long boom in the racing sea. Again came the hail, clearer this time, and seemingly from off the port bow.

Jack moved the tiller a little, peering out from under the sail. And then, almost ahead, a small boat jumped into view, a tiny craft with two figures huddled in her. Jack shouted a response and kept on, and as the *Crystal Spring* staggered past the smaller craft he saw that the latter was a motor boat, perhaps not over eighteen feet long, apparently broken down. In another moment she was lost to sight. It was no easy matter to bring the water boat's head into the wind and fully five minutes passed before Jack, allowing for the drift, sighted the launch again. Then, steadying the *Crystal Spring* as best he could, he bore up to the disabled boat and made a trumpet of his hands.

“Stand by to catch a rope!” he shouted. There was a faint response from the launch and Jack, seizing a coil of half-inch rope from the locker, snagged the tiller with his knee and got ready to throw. The sloop wallowed up to within a dozen feet of the launch and with a sweep of his arm sent the coil hurtling across the water. It was a lucky throw and as the *Crystal Spring* went by Jack saw one of the occupants seize the rope.

“Make fast to the bow cleat,” he shouted back, “and haul in!”

A figure moved cautiously along the pit of the tossing launch, crawled to the deck and with fumbling fingers tied the line to the cleat. The launch had been drifting stern foremost and now Jack brought the *Crystal Spring* around so that the launch might come up under her lee. Aboard the latter they were hauling valiantly and in a minute the little motor boat was alongside and the occupants were climbing aboard the sloop. They were sorry-looking mariners. Both appeared to be boys of about Jack’s age. Neither wore oilskins and their blue serge suits were soaked through and through. One of the boys had lost his cap and his hair was plastered tightly to his head.

“Bring that slack with you,” Jack directed, “and make the line fast to that cleat there. That’s the ticket. Now then, I’ll have you ashore in a minute or two, but you’ll find a couple of blankets in the bunk for’ard if you want them. Open that for’ard hatch and you’ll see them.”

But the boys shook their heads as they sank to the cockpit. “We can’t get—any wetter,” said one. “We’re terribly much

obliged—to you for—” He paused, and then, “Why, it’s Jack Herrick, isn’t it?” he exclaimed.

Jack nodded as he gazed ahead in search of the Cove.

“That’s me. And you’re Harry Folsom. Catch any fish?”

CHAPTER III

A Pair of Amateur Salts

A quarter of an hour later the three boys were sitting about the “air-tight” stove in the front room of the little, white, clap-boarded, green-shuttered house that was Jack’s home. They had left the *Crystal Spring* safely moored in the Cove, with the motor boat swinging astern, dropped into the little dory and paddled ashore. From the little beach up to the Herrick house was but a few yards, and in a trice they were inside, listening to the surprised ejaculations of Aunt Mercy and dripping water onto the immaculate waxed floor of the “passage.” Aunt Mercy Fuller was Jack’s mother’s sister, and ever since Mrs. Herrick had died, when Jack was only four years old, the sharp-voiced, kind-hearted little woman had kept house at the Cove. After the death of Jack’s father, only a year ago, Aunt Mercy’s presence was more indispensable than ever, for Jack’s sister, Faith, was only thirteen, and so, still in school. All of Jack’s dry clothing had been requisitioned and the drafts in the stove opened wide, and now, none the worse for their wetting, the two visitors were recounting their adventures to the household.

Harry Folsom was nearly Jack’s age, being some three months younger. He was like Jack in many ways, for which the fact that each came of an old Greenhaven family was perhaps accountable. Harry’s hair was of quite an ordinary shade of dark brown and his face was not tanned and seasoned by sun and weather. And his eyes were gray instead

of brown. But dissimilarity seemed to end there. He was much like Jack in build and weight and he had the same easy, careless swing from the hips when he walked, and the same way of looking straightly and unwinkingly when he talked. Harry's father was Josiah Folsom, the head of the big fish company of Greenhaven, and a man of much wealth. He and Jack had been together at high school the year before, but last fall Jack had left school to sail the *Crystal Spring* and Harry, or Hal, as he was called, had entered Norwalk Hall, the big preparatory school some thirty miles distant and just over the line into New Hampshire.

His companion Hal had introduced as Beaman Mansfield. Harry called him Bee and so we might as well do the same. Bee was visiting Harry, it seemed, having arrived with him in Greenhaven only the evening before. They were roommates at school and evidently great chums. Beaman Mansfield was fifteen years of age, slight, tall, black of hair and eye, and almost sallow as to complexion. As Harry narrated their exploits Bee interpolated remarks which, if they were not especially informative, seldom failed to amuse.

“You see,” said Harry, “that launch is a new one. Dad got it for me a week ago and I never saw it until yesterday. This morning we thought it would be a good plan to go for a sail in her. So we filled her tank with gasoline and started out. I'd never run a motor boat before, but Bee said he knew something about the things—”

“I know a heap more now,” observed Bee, gravely.

“So we started. She went finely for about ten minutes and we were down off The Lump. Then she stopped. I told Bee to get busy and find out what the trouble was and he monkeyed

around with a wrench and a screw-driver for almost half an hour.”

“I deny it!” exclaimed Bee. “I knew at once where the trouble lay!”

“Yes, you did!”

“I certainly did! It was in the engine.”

“Oh! Well, it took you long enough to dig it out. Anyhow, we got her started again and she went like a breeze; must have made at least twelve miles an hour, Jack, and we were about two miles down the shore when—*bing*, stopped again!”

“And she’s been ‘binging’ ever since,” murmured Bee.

“By then it was time for lunch. So we rowed ashore near the life saving station and walked up to that little store where the old toll-gate used to be. It’s quite a ways up there.”

“About ten miles,” said Bee thoughtfully.

Jack laughed. “I dare say it seemed that far if you were hungry. It’s about three-quarters of a mile, I guess.”

“Well, we were hungry,” replied Bee. “I was, at any rate. I’d had nothing since breakfast but that nasty yellow cup-grease and gasoline.”

“We bought some crackers and some sardines and two oranges. I’ll bet old man Doonin had had them all for at least six months.”

“I think they were some of his Christmas stock left over,” remarked Bee reflectively.

“They were pretty fierce, anyway, and we decided the best thing to do was to hike home and get a real feed. So we went back to the launch and tried to start her again. But she wouldn’t start—”

“It was another case of ‘bing!’” said Bee.

“And it took us all of an hour to get going. Bee and I took turns at the fly wheel—”

“I beg your pardon?” remarked Bee, sitting up quickly. “Did I understand you to say that *we* took turns? Allow me to correct you, Hal, *I* took turns!”

“Well, I like your cheek! My arm’s as stiff as—as—as a board! And it aches every time I move it! I’ll bet I turned that old wheel over two thousand times today; and it weighs a ton, too!”

“What sort of an engine has she got?” asked Jack.

“An eight-horsepower Philbert.”

“I think myself it’s a chestnut,” observed Bee. “And if you think your arm aches, why, I just wish you had mine!”

“Did—did you get the boat started finally?” asked Faith anxiously. The boys laughed, and Faith, a pretty, dark-haired young lady, inclined to be shy, blushed.

“Yes, finally,” answered Hal. “That was about—what time, Bee?”

“About two hours after lunch time,” replied Bee, gloomily.

“Yes, about half-past two, I guess. Then she went pretty well for awhile, although she choked and coughed a good deal—”

“She has consumption,” said Bee, with a shake of his head. “She won’t last long.”

“She stopped once near the outer buoy and again just off the light. And that time Bee said he was going to fix her right and began to take the engine to pieces.”

“It was the only thing to do,” explained Bee gravely to Jack. “Take her to pieces and put her together again.”

“You got her to pieces all right,” continued Hal, “but you couldn’t get her together again.”

“Well, there were two or three small thing-mabobs I couldn’t find places for. I still think she’s just as well without them.”

“All that time we were drifting along the breakwater. We haven’t any anchor yet, you see, and there was no place to tie up to. Then the squall came up while we were trying to get her to start and the first thing we knew we were going out to sea at about a mile a minute.”

“She went faster than she did at any other time all day,” said Bee. “It just showed what fixing the engine did for her.”

“Yes, you ‘fixed’ it all right,” said Hal, sarcastically. “If it hadn’t been for Jack we’d be half-way to Africa by now.”

“I’ve always wanted to see Africa,” replied his chum, calmly. “It must be a very interesting place.”

“Maybe,” laughed Hal, “but I don’t care to go there in an eighteen-foot motor boat. Of course we couldn’t do much when the blow came. We tried to keep her bow into the waves, after we’d found we couldn’t row her, but that was pretty hard work. And after awhile, when we got around

Popple Head, we gave that up and put all our strength into shouting. I don't mind telling you that we were getting sort of scared when you came, Jack."

"You had a right to be," said Jack, dryly. "If I hadn't heard you you'd have had a pretty wet night of it. That wind would have taken you across toward the Isle of Shoals, I guess, if you'd floated long enough. Did you have anything to bail with?"

"Only my cap," said Bee. "And it wasn't satisfactory. I told Hal I thought his would have been better."

"Dear, dear," murmured Aunt Mercy. "You boys certainly had a narrow escape from death. I hope you won't ever try anything so silly again."

"No'm, we won't," Hal assured her. "We're not going out in her again until we have an anchor along."

"And a tomato can," suggested Bee.

"A tomato can?" Hal questioned. "What's that for?"

"To bail with."

"Why not have a bailer?" laughed Jack.

"All the boats I've ever been in," replied Bee, soberly, "carried empty tomato cans for bailing purposes. I wouldn't know how to use anything else."

"And I guess," said Jack, "you'd better get your engine put together again before you take another trip. It might be that the things your friend couldn't get back were sort of necessary, Hal."

“I don’t think so,” said Bee. “Maybe, though. I’m not sure that I know where they are. Did I give them to you, Hal?”

“You did not!” replied Hal indignantly. “And if you’ve gone and lost them—”

“Well, they may be kicking around under the grating somewhere. After we get the water out of her we’ll have a look. I don’t believe, though, we’ll ever find them; they were little trifling things.”

The others laughed and Jack arose and went to a window. It was still raining hard, but the thunder and lightning had passed over and the wind had diminished considerably. The old iron-case clock on the mantel behind the glowing stove said a quarter past five.

“You fellows had better stay and have some supper,” he said. “There’s no use trying to get back in this rain.”

“Oh, much obliged,” said Hal, “but we can get across to the ferry all right. It’s just a little way, isn’t it?”

“About a quarter of a mile. But your clothes aren’t dry, I’m afraid. You’re welcome to wear what you have on, but they don’t fit very well. The best thing to do is to telephone over to your folks that you’re all right and then stay here until your things get dried.”

“We—ll, it’s awfully good of you.” Hal looked inquiringly at his friend. Bee appeared not to see the question. He only sighed comfortably and stretched his long legs farther toward the stove. “If we won’t be too much bother, Miss—Miss Fuller, I guess we’ll stay.”

“You won’t be any bother at all,” Aunt Mercy assured him. “I’ll just tell Susan to cook a little more supper.”

“Let me go, Auntie,” said Faith.

“No, I’ll go. I cal’ate I’d better get down a pot of that barberry preserve.”

“Gee,” laughed Jack, “I wish we had shipwrecked folks to supper every night, don’t you, sis?” and Faith shyly owned that she did. Aunt Mercy pretended to be insulted.

“I cal’ate, Jack Herrick, that you don’t ever suffer for preserves in this house!” she declared.

“No, ma’am, not exactly for preserves. But that barberry preserve—say, sis, we ain’t had any of that since about Christmas, have we?”

“You had some last Sunday night,” returned Aunt Mercy with asperity. “And I’ve a good mind not to give you any, if you can’t remember when you do have it!”

“Quite right, ma’am,” said Bee approvingly. “I think it would be good punishment if you just gave it to the rest of us. I’m sure *I* shan’t forget it, ma’am!”

Aunt Mercy regarded him severely. “Humph!” she said. “I cal’ate, young man, you don’t miss much in this world for want of a tongue in your head!” Whereupon, with a grim smile, she sailed out of the room.

Hal chuckled. “I guess that will hold you for awhile, old Bee!” Then, turning to Jack, “Did you say you had a telephone here?” he asked.

Jack shook his head. “No, but there’s one at Cottrell’s store, just over the hill. I’ll run over there, if you like, and tell your folks you’ll be home after supper.”

“What’s the matter with my going?” asked Hal. “Let me have your oilskin coat, Jack, and point out the way. I guess I ought to let father know I’m all right. He may be getting worried.”

The two boys went out, leaving Bee and Faith together in the quaint little low-ceilinged room. Bee looked about him with interest. “You’ve got an awfully comfortable home here, Miss Faith,” he said. “It’s so sort of old-fashioned and nice.”

“It’s quite an old house,” said Faith embarrassedly. “Father’s grandfather built it almost a hundred years ago. There wasn’t much of anything on the Neck in those days, they say, except the lighthouse. Do you live around here?”

“No, my home’s in Pennsylvania. I wish I did live around here, though, for I’m crazy about the water and boating and fishing and—”

“And being shipwrecked?” suggested Faith with a laugh.

“N—no,” Bee acknowledged, echoing her laughter, “I guess I can do without that for awhile. I was in a blue funk out there. And—and I’d have been seasick in about another minute, I guess.”

“You were both very foolish to go out in a boat you didn’t understand,” said Faith gravely. “Besides, I never think a motor boat is really safe, anyway, do you?”

“I don’t know. I never was in one until this morning.”

“Why—but I thought you said—you understood them!”

“Oh,” responded Bee carelessly, “I had to say that to get Hal to go out. He wanted to wait and find someone to show him how to run the thing. We’d have lost a lot of valuable time, you see.”

“Oh! You mean that—you aren’t going to be here long and you didn’t want to waste a day?”

“Oh, I shall be around here for a month, probably. My folks have gone abroad and Hal’s going to put me up for as long as I want. I had a chance of going across with the folks, but Hal talked so much about Greenhaven all winter that I thought I’d rather come here. And I’m glad I did, too. I’m going to have a dandy time. Hal’s people are as nice as pie to me. I suppose you know them, Miss Faith?”

“N—no, I don’t. You see—” She paused and Bee waited politely for her to continue. “What I mean,” she went on at last, “is that the Folsoms are very rich people and we’re—we’re not. So, of course, we don’t know them very well.”

“Oh!” Bee considered that a moment. “Well, I like them very much. Hal’s a dandy, too. I didn’t care much for him at first, though. They put us to room together at school and we had a scrap the first night. Then we didn’t speak for two or three days. Then we had another scrap and Hal licked me and after that we were pretty good chums.”

Faith looked puzzled, but she only said, “Oh!” in a doubtful tone, and Bee went on:

“I suppose you and your brother go to school here?” he inquired. “Hal showed me the high school this morning when we came down to the wharf.”

“I go,” replied Faith, “but Jack had to give it up this year. Poor Jack! He hated to do it.”

“Er—you don’t mean—he wasn’t expelled, was he?”

“Jack? Oh, no indeed. But father died a little over a year ago and so Jack thought he ought to go on with father’s business and make money. Father used to be a fisherman and owned his own schooner. Then, when I was about five, he had an accident. He fell and broke one of his legs when he was ’way up off Newfoundland and it wasn’t set right for two weeks because the schooner was in the ice and there wasn’t any doctor around. And then when they finally got him to a doctor it was too late and his leg was never much good afterwards. So he sold his schooner and bought the *Crystal Spring* and made her into a water boat. You see there’s always been a spring up on the hill just back of our house and father only had to run a line of pipe to the Cove and then fill up the tank and sail around to the harbor and sell the water. He used to sell lots and lots of water a few years ago, but now the fish companies generally supply the water for their boats themselves. And lately two Portuguese men have started a water boat, too, and as their boat has a gasoline engine poor Jack isn’t doing very well. He said the other day he guessed he’d either have to have an engine put in the *Crystal Spring* or go out of business.” And Faith, a little breathless and more than a little surprised at her unusual loquacity, came to an embarrassed pause.

“That’s too bad,” said Bee sympathetically. “I wouldn’t think there’d be enough business for two water boats here. If I were he I’d certainly put in an engine and see that it was big enough to beat the other fellows!”

“He wants to, but—I guess it costs a good deal,” replied Faith.

“What costs a good deal, sis?” asked Jack as he and Hal returned to the sitting-room.

“An engine for the *Crystal Spring*,” explained his sister.

“Oh! Yes, it would cost a lot more than I could afford, I guess,” he said gloomily. “But I’ll either have to have one put in or give up. Those Lamprons can beat me every time. Isn’t supper ready yet? I’m starved to death!”

When, a few minutes later, Aunt Mercy summoned them to the little dining room, that supper proved worth waiting for. The visitors declared that they had never been so hungry and had never tasted things half so good, and Aunt Mercy was so pleased that she was positively wasteful with the barberry preserve!

“May I leave the launch here until I can get someone to come over and fix her up?” asked Hal.

“Yes,” Jack answered, “I’ll look after her. She’ll be all right. If I can find time in the morning I’ll get the water out of her. For that matter, maybe I can fix her up for you myself. I know a little about gas engines. I’ll have a look at her if you want me to.”

“I wish you would,” replied Hal gratefully.

“I’ll come over and help you,” said Bee.

“You’ll stay away from her!” exclaimed his chum with energy. “If it hadn’t been for you she’d have been all right.”

“Hear him!” Bee scoffed, appealing to Aunt Mercy. “Why, that silly chug-chug didn’t know the first thing about going until I worked and toiled over her! Of all ungrateful brutes, Hal, you’re the—the limit!”

“I’d have learned how to run her myself,” said Hal amidst the laughter of the rest, “if you hadn’t been so keen on starting out. I wanted to have someone show me about the thing, Jack, but this idiot couldn’t wait. Say, what do you think he wants to do?”

Jack shook his head. “Drown himself, I guess.”

“He wants to go out to Hog Island and hunt for buried treasure!”

Jack laughed, and even Aunt Mercy smiled at the idea, but Faith came to Bee’s defence. “I think that would be lovely,” she approved. “I read a book once—”

“There isn’t anything on Hog Island, I guess,” said Jack, “but rocks and seagulls. You’d better try somewhere else, Mansfield.”

Bee shrugged his shoulders, undisturbed. “I’m not particular about where it is, Herrick. But I certainly don’t intend to spend a month on the coast and not have one good hunt for buried treasure. I’ve always wanted to hunt for buried treasure and now’s the time. I dare say there’s plenty of it around here. There always is. Captain Kidd probably left a few chests of gold and diamonds somewhere about. He was awfully careless, Kidd was, with his treasure. Why, everyone knows that he buried chests of gold all up and down the Atlantic coast!”

“I’ll bet he didn’t bury any on Hog Island,” Jack laughed. “You can’t dig six inches anywhere there without striking solid ledge. I’ve been out there three or four times.”

“Then we won’t go to Hog Island, Hal,” said Bee calmly. “I merely suggested that particular place because it was the first island I saw. We’ll find another one. How about the thing you call The Lump?”

“Just a ledge sticking out of the water,” said Jack. “If you really want to hunt for buried treasure, though, Mansfield, you might have a go at Nobody’s Island.” He smiled across at Hal. “Most everyone has around here!”

CHAPTER IV

Buried Treasure

“That’s the ticket!” Bee snapped his fingers gleefully. “That’s the very place I’m looking for. Nobody’s Island, eh? There must be buried treasure on an island with a name like that. Where is it?”

“About three miles up the shore,” replied Jack, smiling. “It isn’t much of an island any more, though. Some years ago the sea ran in back of it and then, I suppose, it was a real island. Nowadays it isn’t an island at all, except once or twice a year when there’s an uncommonly high tide. Come on into the sitting-room and I’ll show it to you on the chart.”

“Father always said there was money buried somewhere there,” said Faith as she followed the boys into the front room.

“I don’t doubt but that there is,” responded Jack as he spread a chart across the center table, “but I don’t believe anyone’s going to find it. I’ll bet a hundred people have dug on Nobody’s Island since I can remember. Years ago, when a man didn’t have anything particular to do, Mansfield, he took a shovel and went over to Nobody’s Island and dug for gold. Here it is; see? The chart doesn’t call it an island, though; it just says, ‘Salvage Head,’ and lets it go at that. These two little rocks out here, just off the beach, are The Tombstones. Boats used to pile up there every little while trying to get around the Head. But in those days Clam River—this is it here—had two mouths, one on each side of the island. You

could go in here to the north of Salvage Head and sail clean around and come out here on the east. Then a storm or something filled up the northern inlet and now it's just sand there and you can walk right across. Father always said that some day that inlet would open up again, but it hasn't yet."

"Do you mean that there used to be real wreckers there?" asked Bee eagerly.

"Real as anything! There was a sort of family of them named—what was the name, Auntie?"

"Well, folks used to call them Verny," replied Aunt Mercy, who had settled herself with her crochet, "but I believe the real name was Verginaud."

"That was the name, Verny," said Jack. "There were three of them, old man Verny and two sons. They used to carry a lantern along the shore of the island and the sailors would think it was a boat's light and go plump into The Tombstones or on the beach. Then the Vernys would flock down and get the pickings. Sometimes they'd go over here on Toller's Beach—Toller's Sands it was called then—and decoy ships onto Toller's Rock or The Clinker. That's The Clinker, that little rock just off the point. So, you see, they got them coming and going."

"Gee, that sounds like the real thing!" exclaimed Hal. "What did they do with the stuff they got from the ships?"

"I don't know; sold it, maybe; kept it, more likely. I guess they didn't get very big hauls for the ships were mostly coasting schooners or fishermen. They didn't have to do any work, anyhow, although father said they planted corn and potatoes over here at the back of the island."

“What became of them?” asked Bee.

“Well, about forty years ago things got so bad that the sheriff took a posse over there and cleaned them out; arrested old Verny and one son; shot him when he tried to get away so that he died afterwards; and burned their cabin down. That was the last of them around here.”

“And what about the buried treasure?” asked Bee eagerly.

Jack shrugged his shoulders. “Well, there’s always been a belief that Big Verny, as he was called, when he saw the posse coming buried a chest of money and other valuables. I don’t know how much truth there is in it. Father used to say it was so, though.”

“Besides,” said Hal, “folks have picked up money in the sand over there, Jack.”

“I guess that only happened once, Hal. If you really want to hunt for treasure, Mansfield, I guess Nobody’s Island is the most promising place we can offer you.”

“You bet I’m going to hunt! How soon will that chug-chug of yours be ready again, Hal?”

“Oh, maybe in a couple of days. Can you wait that long? I don’t believe anyone will get ahead of you and find the treasure.”

“You can’t tell,” replied Bee with a grin. “Someone might. We’d better not lose much time. Perhaps we’d better hire a boat, eh? How much will you rent yours for, Herrick?”

“I’ll rent her cheap,” replied Jack grimly, “and then make more than I’m making now. Only thing, though, it would

take all day to get there in the *Crystal Spring*; she's about as fast as a crab."

Bee was studying the chart again. "Say, can I buy one of these things around here?" he asked suddenly.

"Plenty of them," laughed Hal.

"You may borrow that if you like," said Jack. "I don't use it. Only take care of it, please, because it was my father's."

"Sure you don't mind? I'll take care of it. Thanks. I want to study this thing right. There's nothing like knowing the lay of the land when you go after buried treasure. You see," he went on as he folded the chart up and tucked it safely in his pocket, "I'm a bit of an authority on hunting for buried treasure. I've read all the best books on the subject, from Stevenson down to the five-cent variety, and there isn't much I don't know. What about getting home, Hal?"

"I guess we'd better start along. It must be—gee! it's after eight! I didn't think it was so late. Let's get back into our rags, Bee, and hike."

"Jack, if it's after eight," said Faith, "they can't go on the ferry. You know it stops at seven-thirty."

"That's so; and I'm sorry, fellows. I tell you what, though. You get your clothes changed and I'll row you across. All we'll have to do is walk over to Johnson's and I'll borrow one of his dories."

"But isn't it raining?" objected Hal.

"Not a bit. Hasn't been for an hour or more. In fact—" Jack pushed a shade aside and peered out—"the stars are out bright."

“But isn’t it a longish way across to town?” asked Bee.

“About a mile, but that isn’t far. Want to come along, Faith?”

“May I, Auntie?”

“Why, yes, I suppose it won’t do you any harm. But you see that the seats are dry, Jack.”

And so ten minutes later the quartette set out very merrily across the Neck, which was quite narrow between Herrick’s Cove and the harbor. They climbed the hill back of the cottage, past the spring from which Jack piped his water to the sloop, across the winding road, through somebody’s back yard and so came to the harbor side, where in front of them numberless lights pricked out the dark water and the town beyond. Westward the red gleam of the breakwater beacon shone dully. Jack led the way down the lane toward the float. As they passed the house a door opened and a man’s voice asked: “What’s up?”

“It’s I, Mr. Johnson—Jack Herrick. I want to borrow one of your dories,” explained Jack.

“Help yourself,” was the hearty response. “And get a good pair o’ oars. There’s some of ’em sort o’ mean, Jack.”

Soon they were seated in a dory, Hal in the bow, Jack at the oars and Faith and Bee together facing him. A few strokes sent them into deep water and Jack settled down to the long pull ahead.

“If you see anything, Faith, just sing out,” he instructed. “I’ll make for the town landing, Hal. It’s easier to find than some of the other wharves. Will that be all right?”

“Dandy,” replied Hal from the bow. “If you don’t hear from me again, wake me up when we get there, Jack.”

“This,” remarked Bee, stretching himself comfortably and colliding with Jack’s feet, “is what I call fine. A sailor’s life for me every time! ‘Yo ho ho, and a bottle of rum!’ O, you Hal!”

“What?” asked Hal sleepily from the other end of the boat.

“Wake up, you lazy beggar, and hear the birdies sing! This is no time for slumber. Look at all the pretty little stars, and the pretty little lights! Smell the—the—what-do-you-call it—the ozone!”

“That’s the fish wharves you smell,” laughed Jack.

“Can’t help it; I like it; and I prefer to call it ozone. Get the ozone effect, Hal?”

“Shut up, you,” mumbled Hal.

“Sleep then,” said Bee disgustedly. “But when we collide with a—a lighthouse or a sunken wreck or—or something you’ll wish you’d kept awake, old Hal. You won’t have a ghost of a show at being rescued. You’ll be trampled under foot in the mad rush; and serve you right for sleeping on—er—on occasion like this. I think—mind you, I say I *think*—that we are e’en now about to collision with something.”

“Yes, Jack, there’s a boat straight ahead. Pull on your right oar.”

“Well,” said Bee admiringly, “you must be able to see in the dark, Miss Faith. I couldn’t have told whether that was a boat or a trolley car.”

“Oh, it isn’t really dark tonight,” said Faith. “The stars give a lot of light. Jack and I rowed across one night when—well, it was pretty dark, wasn’t it, Jack?”

“Black as your pocket. It was late in the Fall and there weren’t many lights showing. I thought the light on the pier on Gull Island was the light on Curtis’s coal wharf and ran plump into a bunch of spiles. We had quite a lot of fun getting across that time. The old dory leaked like a sieve and when she bumped she sprung a few new leaks and the first thing we knew our feet were in water up to our ankles. Sis had to bail all the way across.”

“Fun!” ejaculated Bee. “Is that your idea of a real good time? I suppose, then, if we ran into a rock and the boat sunk you and Miss Faith would laugh yourselves to death!”

“There’s the place we bumped,” said Jack, nodding toward the dark bulk of Gull Island. “We’re more than half-way over now.”

“Aren’t you tired?” asked Bee curiously. “How far can you row?”

“Oh, four or five miles,” replied Jack carelessly. “More than that, I suppose, if I had to. But after three miles your arms begin to get pretty stiff.”

“I guess mine would!” laughed Bee. “I’m going to try that short stroke of yours some day. Will you show it to me? I’ve never seen anyone row just like that before.”

“Doryman’s stroke,” replied Jack. “It doesn’t tire you like a long stroke. Many schooners ahead, Faith?”

“No, Jack, none, if you keep the way you’re headed. I can see the lantern on the landing now.”

On one of the fishing boats a sailor was playing on a concertina and singing. Jack stopped rowing a minute and they listened.

“That fellow can sing, can’t he?” said Bee.

“It’s Desco Benton, sis,” said Jack. “I’d know his voice if I heard it in a fog at sea.” He plied his oars again and soon the dory was in the shadows of the wharves and shipping. Cautiously Jack sent the boat toward the landing, worming in and out of the launches and sail-boats moored in the basin. Then they awoke Hal—he declared he hadn’t been asleep, but Bee told him he had snored all the way across—and presently the dory sidled up to the float, under the glow of the big lantern, and they said good-night.

It was arranged that Jack was to look over the launch in the morning and if possible fix it up so it could be brought back to town. If the task was beyond him he was to tow it over behind the *Crystal Spring*. “Anyhow,” he said, “I’ll be here at nine o’clock with her, Hal. You’d better be around then. Good-night!”

“Good-night, and thank you very much for everything, Jack.”

“Not forgetting the supper,” added Bee. “Nor the chart. Will you go with me, Herrick, and look for buried treasure?”

“I will if I can find the time,” laughed Jack. “Good-night!”

Faith added her farewell to his and the dory backed out, leaving the two boys on the landing.

“Port your helm!” bawled Bee.

“Port it is, sir,” called Jack.

“Steady as you are!”

“Steady it is, sir!”

“Good-night!”

“Good-night!”

CHAPTER V

Bee Composes an “Ode to The Sea”

Jack was promptly on time the next morning, the *Crystal Spring* crowding her nose into the basin just as the clock in the white tower of the City Hall struck nine. Behind the water boat came the launch. By the time Jack had made a landing Hal and Bee came down the gangway to the float.

“I got the engine together all right,” explained Jack as the boys viewed the launch from the stern of the sloop, “but I couldn’t make her start. I’m pretty sure the trouble’s in the wiring. I didn’t have time to go over it thoroughly, Hal. If I were you I’d start at the battery and follow it right up.”

“But I couldn’t tell whether it was right or wrong,” Hal objected. “I guess I’d better get a man to come and fix her up, Jack.”

“Well—but he will charge you three or four dollars, Hal.” Jack frowned thoughtfully. Then, “I tell you what I’ll do. You leave her here until noon, and I’ll come back and look her over, Hal. I’d do it now but there are two or three schooners coming in and they may want water. I’ll come back about twelve. Will you be here?”

“I guess so.” He looked enquiringly at Bee. “There’s nothing especial to do, I suppose.”

“Let’s loaf around the wharves,” said Bee, “and come back here at noon. There’s lots I want to see, Hal. I want to know how they dry the fish, and what the difference is between a

haddock and a pollock, and why is a codfish and—oh, lots of things! I think it's dandy of Herrick to take so much trouble with your old chug-chug and the least we can do is to be on hand and encourage him with our cheerful presence. Besides, it's quite necessary, if we're to find that buried treasure, to have this thing fixed up so she'll take us over to the island."

"Well, I'll try to get here by twelve," said Jack, as he pushed the nose of the sloop away from the landing and swung himself aboard. "And if you can be here you'd better. We may have to have some new wiring or connections or something. And, by the way, Hal, why don't you stop at Whiting's and buy a folding anchor and some rope? You oughtn't to go out again without it, you know."

"I will. And some other stuff, too. She's got to have lanterns and a fog-horn, I suppose. And a compass, and—"

"A tomato can," said Bee gravely. "I refuse to trust my young and valuable life to her again without a tomato can."

"If I put all the things in her that the law requires," said Hal gloomily, "I'd be broke. Besides, there wouldn't be any room for me!"

"Did you find those things I couldn't get back, Herrick?" Bee asked.

"Yes, they were kicking around in a foot or so of rain water. They weren't important, anyhow," he continued with a smile. "Just two or three nuts from the cylinder heads and the commutator. Well, see you later, fellows."

The *Crystal Spring* swung her long boom outboard and crept away from the landing, leaving Hal and Bee looking after her.

“I like that chap,” said Bee with conviction. “I think I’ll have to have him along when I look for that buried treasure.”

“If you don’t keep still about your old buried treasure,” laughed Hal, “I’ll dump you into the harbor.”

“You will, eh? In the first place, my young friend, you wouldn’t dare to, and in the second place you couldn’t do it. Now lead me to the codfish.”

When they returned to the Town Landing at twelve the *Crystal Spring* and her skipper were before them. Jack waved his hand in triumph as they came down the gangway. “I found the trouble,” he announced. “It was just a loose connection here at this binding post, where the wire grounds on the engine. I’ve been all over the wiring and tightened everything up and she will run like a breeze now. Want to try her?”

They piled in, Jack put the switch on, threw the fly-wheel over once and the engine started. Then he threw the clutch in and took the wheel. The launch moved briskly out of the basin, swung around the corner of the sea-wall and, Jack advancing the throttle, began to chug down the harbor at a good ten miles. Bee looked on in awe.

“You certainly understand these things, Herrick,” he said admiringly.

“I used to have a little one-cylinder motor boat when I was about twelve,” replied Jack. “She wasn’t anything like this, but the principal is the same with all of them. Hal, you’ll find that she’ll do best with your throttle about there; see? If you advance it any farther she’ll begin to miss a little. If you want more speed open the cut-out, although that really doesn’t

make very much difference, I guess. She steers nicely, doesn't she?"

"Yes, and she'll turn almost in her length," said Hal. "Suppose that carbureter gets out of order, Jack, what do I do?"

"Take my advice and don't do anything," replied Jack with a smile. "It's dollars to doughnuts the trouble's somewhere else and if you monkey with the carbureter you'll never get it back again where it was. Sometimes on a cold morning you'll have trouble getting the right mixture. Hold your hand over the air intake in that case; flood the carbureter first, though. You may have to turn her over a good many times, but she'll start finally. I wouldn't fuss with the carbureter ever, Hal."

"Of course not," said Bee. "Why, even I had sense enough not to touch that yesterday!"

"Then I'll bet you didn't see it," said Hal. "You took everything else to pieces!"

"I know I did. And look how she went afterwards! I guess you never saw a launch drift any faster than she did out there!"

Jack brought the boat around in a long turn and headed back toward the basin. "Well, I guess you'll find now that she'll do something else beside drift. She can make a good twelve miles with the tide, Hal."

At the landing Jack turned the launch over to her owner and scrambled back to the *Crystal Spring*. "I haven't had any lunch yet," he said, "so I'll have to get busy. You and your

friend come over in the launch some time and see me, Hal. I'm usually around after four, and most all day on Sunday."

"We will," Hal replied, "and I'm awfully much obliged for everything you've done, Jack. Hope I'll be able to pay you back some day."

"Oh, that's nothing; glad I could do it," answered Jack as he hauled in the sheet. "Hope she'll go all right, Hal. So long."

The others waved to him from the float as the *Crystal Spring* poked her blunt nose harborward and then turned to climb the hill to Hal's home and luncheon. In the afternoon they installed the anchor in the locker forward under the gasoline tank, fixed the new lanterns where they belonged, stowed a patent fog-horn and a box compass under one of the seats and then went out for a spin. Bee wanted to learn how to steer and Hal gave him the wheel, but not until they were out of the press of boats in the harbor. Bee had one or two narrow escapes from running into the sea-wall, but by the time they were over the bar he had learned the knack of it. Meanwhile Hal sought to acquaint himself with the mechanism of his engine, slowing it down, stopping it and starting again until Bee protested that the engine would get peevish and refuse to go at all. But fortunately nothing like that happened and they went down the shore beyond The Lump, turned seaward there and headed toward Popple Head and the lighthouse. It was a fine day, with plenty of bright sunlight and a brisk southwesterly breeze that kicked up enough of a swell to send the spray flying aboard now and then. Bee was in his element and insisted on singing all the nautical songs he knew, which, however, were not many.

After that he amused himself by turning the bow of the boat so that she got the waves on the quarter and wasn't detected by Hal until that young gentleman had been thrice drenched to the skin by the clouds of spray that swept over him. Bee, crouching low, escaped the worst of them. Hal made him head the boat around again and Bee had to find a new amusement. He finally solved the problem by composing what he called "An Ode to the Sea" and singing it to an improvised tune that, to Hal at least, lacked harmony.

“O Sea! O Sea! O beautiful Sea!
O Sea! O Sea! O Sea! O Sea!
You're full of salt and wet, I know,
And you kick up a fuss when the wind do
 blow!
Some say you're blue; I think you're green,
But you're the nicest Sea I've ever seen.
You're full of waves and fishes, too,
And if I had a line I know what I'd do.
O Sea! O Sea! O beautiful Sea!
You make an awful hit with me.
O Sea! O Sea! O——”

Just then Hal threatened him with an oil-can and his muse deserted him. Off the light they turned back toward the harbor, running alongside the gray granite breakwater, and Bee found much to interest him. The tide was low and along the wall the seaweed hung in swaying fringes. Now and then he saw a star-fish or a crab, and once the launch almost bumped into the breakwater when he caught sight of a rock-cod and nearly fell overboard in his excitement.

“Hal, do you realize,” he asked a minute later, “that this noble craft has no name?”

“Yes, what shall we call her?”

That led to a long discussion that lasted until they were around the beacon and chugging past Gull Island, Hal thoughtfully reducing the boat’s speed to something like four miles an hour for fear that Bee might see another rock-cod! All sorts of names were suggested, but none seemed just right, and finally Bee said; “It’s no use. All the perfectly good names I suggest you don’t like. And you can’t think of any good ones yourself. We’ll leave it to Jack Herrick!”

“The dickens we will! I intend to name my own boat!”

“You’re not a good namer,” replied Bee firmly. “Jack Herrick can mend an engine and run it. Any fellow who can do that can find a right name, Hal. We will go after the *Crystal Spring* and demand a name for your launch.”

But the *Crystal Spring* wasn’t to be found, although the launch went up the harbor and back again. Then, as it was getting toward five o’clock they decided to give up the search and seek the landing.

“Tomorrow,” said Bee, “is Sunday. We will go over in the morning and call on Jack Herrick. Meanwhile the launch must wait for a name.”

“I like *Sea Spray*,” said Hal.

“I’m glad you do,” laughed Bee. “You got quite a lot of it!”

“Or, maybe, *Mermaid*,” added Hal.

“*Mermaid!* That’s a punk name! You might as well call it—call it—” Bee searched wildly for a simile—“call it *Annabel Lee!*”

“Who’s Annabel Lee?” asked Hal.

“I don’t know. It’s just a—a name, I guess; I mean, I cal’ate; nothing like speaking the language of the people you’re with.”

“We don’t say ‘cal’ate’,” protested Hal. “We talk just as good English as you Pennsylvania Dutch do!”

“Well, don’t get waxy about it. I like ‘cal’ate’; it—it’s expressive. Say, what do I do when I get to the landing? Run the bow up on the float, or what?”

“No, you don’t, you idiot! Here, let me have the wheel. You climb out there and take the boat-hook—Gee, we haven’t got any boat-hook, have we? Well, take an oar.”

“The oars are in the locker and you’re sitting on it,” said Bee. “I’ll use my feet.”

So he climbed to the bow and sat there until the launch approached the float and then fended her off with his feet, finally jumping ashore with the painter and making it fast quite knowingly. Then, after seeing the launch safe for the night, the two boys went home to dinner, very proud of their seamanship and very hungry by reason of it.

CHAPTER VI

Bee Plans An Expedition

Jack was sitting on the side steps with a shoe in one hand and a blacking-brush in the other. It was nine o'clock Sunday morning and the late breakfast had been over for some time. From the open window of the kitchen, just over his right shoulder, the voices of Aunt Mercy and Susan, the maid, issued cheerfully. Somewhere upstairs Faith was moving about at her morning duties, singing like a thrush. It was a wonderful day. It gave promise of being seasonably warm later on, but just now the sunlight was but comfortably ardent and a little westerly breeze stole across the Neck and the harbor beyond, salty and cool. The house stood some thirty yards from the water, half-way up a little hill green with wild grass and the anemone and sheep-laurel. Herrick's Cove was a tiny indentation in The Front, as the natives called the ocean side of the Neck, sufficiently protected by jutting ledges at the mouth to make a safe anchorage, with the hill at the back shielding it from the northerly and westerly storms. Between high water and the commencement of the slope a small, steep crescent of beach lay. Into the cove at one side ran a line of spiles supporting both a narrow plank, upon which an agile person could walk to the end, and a four-inch iron pipe. Against the farther spiles the *Crystal Spring* was moored. The pipe led up hill to the spring and when Jack wanted to fill the tank in the water boat he had only to lift the hatch, drop in the end of a length of cotton hose connecting with the pipe and turn a cock. The cove this morning was as

blue as the sky above and as untroubled. The sloop, the tall spiles, and the jutting rocks were reflected as though in a mirror.

The house was a low two-story structure, painted white, with blinds which, originally green, had been wrought upon by the salt winds until they were now of a hue more blue than green. Along the south side of the house a flower bed was already in bloom with old-fashioned spring posies. (Aunt Mercy's flowers always bloomed a week earlier than any on the Neck.) There was no fence about the house. The front door faced the road that ambled westward to the lighthouse and northward followed the harbor side, ever curving, until it reached the town. Across the road were other houses perched here and there between it and the harbor shore. The settlement was known as Herrick's Cove, just as the cluster of houses at the other end of Neck was known as The Fort and the residences on the harbor edge half way to the canal, which divided Neck from town, was called The Center. Aside from these settlements Greenhaven Neck was a bare expanse of moorland with here and there a granite ledge lifting its head from the tangle of stunted trees and pepper-bush, sweet-fern, wax-berry and laurel and here and there a bog filled with sphagnum moss and cranberry. One or two summer cottages had gone up on The Front, but in the main, Nature still held full sway.

From where Jack sat on the side steps industriously shining his Sunday shoes he could look straight ahead along the dusty road to where the squatty stone lighthouse, dazzlingly white in the sunlight, stood firmly on its granite ledge. Beyond it, against the blue summer sky, a flock of gulls were circling and dipping, their plaintive, discordant

cries coming to him on the breeze. Suddenly, above the hungry notes of the seagulls and the lisp of the west wind and the sounds from the house, came the steady *chug, chug, chug* of a motor boat. Idly, Jack wondered whose it was and arose to his feet to look. But the boat was hidden by the shore and he subsided again and gave a final brush to the shoe he held. Then he set it down beside its fellow, already polished, and began to whistle one of his tuneless airs, tapping time against the edge of the step below with the blacking brush. At that moment the *chug* of the motor boat grew suddenly louder and Jack looked down to the cove just as a white launch came around the corner. The boy in the bow at the wheel waved a greeting. Jack waved back and descended the slope. The engine stopped its chatter and the launch sidled up to a spile near the beach. Hal shouted a direction and Bee, leaving the wheel, clambered to the deck in front and picked up the painter. Then leaning toward the spile he sought to pass the end of the rope about it. The natural result was that he pushed the bow of the launch away and in a moment he was clutching the slippery post with his arms and striving to pull back the launch with his feet.

“Whoa!” he shouted. “Come back here! Hey, Hal, push her back!”

But Hal, having no boat-hook nor oar at hand, was helpless, and a moment later the launch had abandoned Bee to his fate and he was clinging to the spile with arms and legs. Jack, on the beach, shouted with laughter. Hal, pulling at an obdurate locker lid to get an oar, sputtered directions and advice.

“Hold tight, Bee! Just a minute! I’ll get an oar! Hang this thing! I can’t get it open! Reach up and grab the plank, Bee!”

But when Bee tried to adopt the latter suggestion he began to slip down the spile and so, with a yell of dismay, returned to his close embrace. By that time Jack had recovered from his amusement and went to the rescue. Climbing onto the plank, he hurried out and reached down a hand to Bee.

“Here, take hold and I’ll pull you up,” he said with a chuckle.

“If I do I’ll drop,” panted Bee. “Take hold yourself!”

So Jack got a grip around one of his wrists and finally Bee managed to wriggle up to the plank. Then he sat down, with his feet hanging over the water, and laughed until the tears came. And Hal, bobbing helplessly about in the middle of the cove, and Jack, clinging to the pipe, laughed with him.

“Did—did you see that launch trip me up?” gasped Bee finally. “And—and look at my Sunday-go-to-meeting suit! It’s all over green slime and crushed oysters! It’s completely *spiled!*”

“Oh, what a pun!” cried Hal. “Push him overboard, Jack!”

But Jack, viewing Bee’s clothes, had mercy. “You are in a mess, aren’t you?” he asked solicitously. “The crushed oysters, as you call them, will brush off, but that green stain will stick like anything. I’m awfully sorry, Mansfield.”

Bee viewed the front of his attire philosophically. “Well, anyway,” he said, “I won’t have to go to church today, will I? There’s nothing like looking on the bright side of misfortune. Throw us the line, Hal, and we’ll pull you in.”

“You run away and play,” replied Hal, working vigorously with an oar and making little headway. “The line won’t reach half-way there.”

“Well, keep on rowing, old chap. Only be sure and have the launch here by the time I want to go back. Come on, Herrick, let’s go ashore.”

“If you’d kept hold of the line when you had it,” muttered Hal.

“Get up in the bow,” Jack advised. “Then you can put your oar over either side.”

Following that direction, Hal made better progress and at last the launch was tied up to the spiling and Hal had clambered up beside the others. Then they filed ashore and walked up to the house. Bee said he “cal’ated” he wouldn’t go inside as he wasn’t very presentable and so they sat down on the steps.

“How does she run?” asked Jack.

“Like a breeze,” replied Hal enthusiastically. “She’ll be all right now, I guess, if I can keep Bee from meddling with the engine.”

“Humph!” said Bee. “The next time you break down out of sight of land you can do your own repairing.”

“I intend to; don’t you worry! Gee, but it’s swell over here, isn’t it, Bee?”

“Fine and dandy,” replied Bee. “Wish I lived here. Are those chicken-coops yours, Herrick?”

“Yes, but they’re lobster-pots,” laughed Jack.

“Oh!” said Bee blankly. Then, recovering quickly; “I meant chicken-lobster coops,” he explained. “Do you catch many?”

“No, not many nowadays. There used to be plenty of them, but they’re dying out. I’ve got a couple of pots out there now; see where those little red floats are, just beyond the cove? I haven’t looked at them this morning, but I guess there’s nothing in them.”

“Think of catching your own lobsters!” exclaimed Bee wonderingly. “Bet you I know one thing about lobsters you don’t think I do.”

“All right,” said Hal. “Go ahead, professor.”

“They aren’t red when you catch ’em. I forget who told me that. It’s cooking that makes them red. Clever, what?”

“Awfully,” laughed Jack. “And do you know what to use to open an oyster?”

“An ax, I suppose.”

“No, an oyster cracker.”

Bee looked dejectedly at Hal. “Isn’t he a cute little rascal?” he asked mournfully. “‘How do you open a clam? Answer: Use an oyster cracker.’ Isn’t that funny?”

“*You’re* a clam,” said Hal. “And, say, instead of wasting the golden moments asking conundrums, Bee, we’d better get down to business.”

“Right-o! Jack we have come to consult you on two subjects. In the first place, what are you going to do this afternoon?”

“Oh, forget about this afternoon,” exclaimed Hal, “and let’s get the name fixed up.”

“Everything in turn, old Hal,” replied Bee soothingly. “Let us dispose of the more important affairs first.” He looked enquiringly at Jack.

“This afternoon?” asked Jack. “I don’t know. What’s up?”

“Well, can you come with us and show us Nobody’s Island? Hal says he knows where it is and can go right to it, but I don’t trust him. Will you come along?”

“Yes, if you want me to. How are you going?”

Bee nodded toward the cove. “In that,” he said sadly. “Are you brave enough?”

“I’ll risk it if you fellows will,” Jack laughed. “We can keep close to shore, you know. What time?”

“What time do we have dinner, Hal?”

“Two, on Sundays.”

“My, that’s a long way off! Well, we will say at three, Mr. Herrick. How is that?”

“Any time’s all right for me. I’ll look for you about three or a little later. Are you still thinking of digging for old Verny’s treasure?”

“I certainly am! And if it’s there I’m going to find it! I’ve purchased a book entitled ‘Historical Greenhaven’ and have read all it has to say on the subject of Nobody’s Island and your old friend Verny. The book says that several times silver dollars and pieces of jewelry have been picked up on the beach there. That looks promising, doesn’t it?”

“Yes, but I never really heard of but one silver dollar being found, and that was so worn that you couldn’t be certain it had ever been a dollar.”

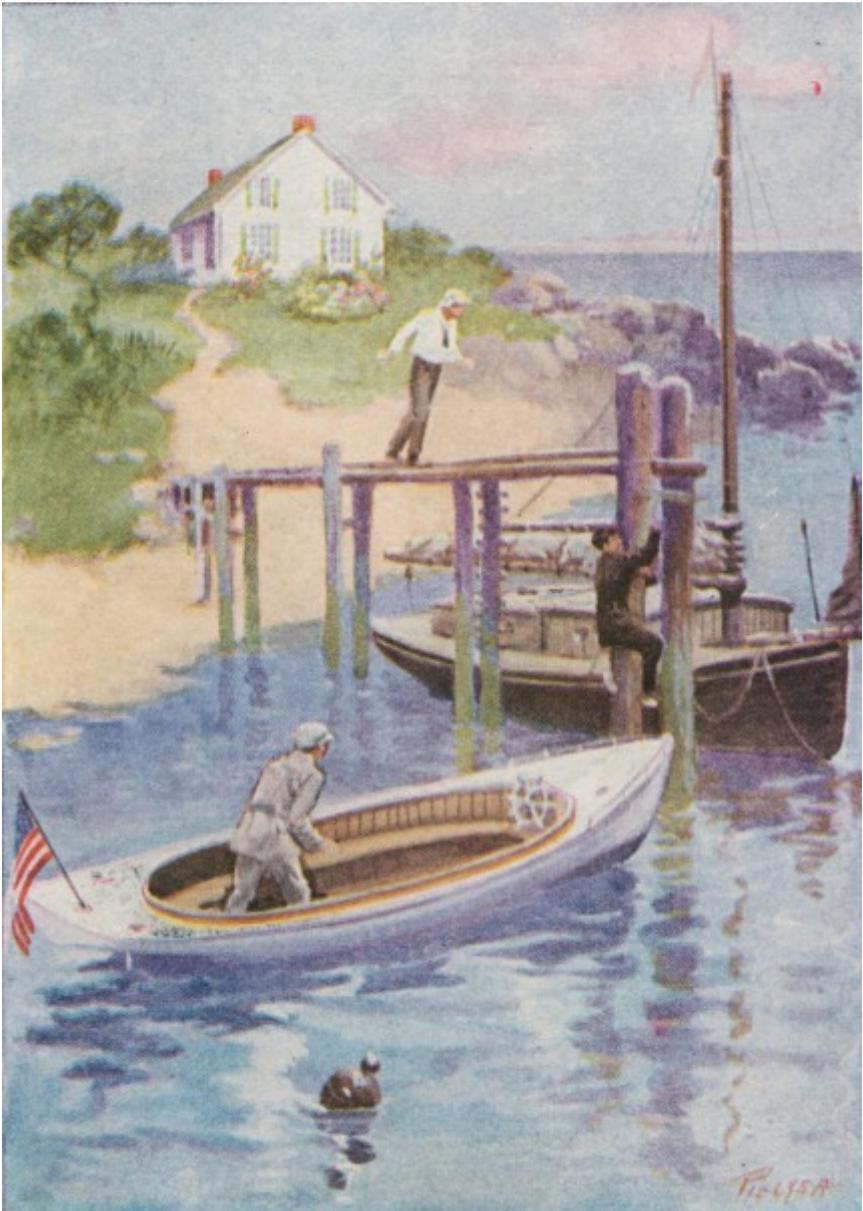
“But the book says!”

“Oh, don’t be a mule, Bee! Don’t you suppose Jack knows what he’s talking about? Books tell all sorts of lies.”

“All right. But if there’s been one dollar picked up it shows that there are more there.”

“Just how do you figure that out?” asked Hal.

“Logic, my son, logic. That’s something you aren’t acquainted with. But never mind that now. I wrote a letter to my father last night, Herrick—Say, I’m going to call you Jack, if you don’t mind?—And I told him that I was organizing an expedition to search for buried treasure and that he was to send me fifty dollars immediately to outfit the expedition.”



BEE PLANS AN EXPEDITION.

Jack smiled. "Think you'll get the fifty?" he asked.

"No, not more than twenty-five. But I've got twenty dollars now and so I'll have enough. This thing is going to be done right, fellows; it's going to be done scientifically. This

afternoon we will look over the ground, do you see? Then I'll know just what is necessary. In two or three days I'll be ready to begin operations."

"You're a silly chump," laughed Hal. "He won't talk of anything but Nobody's Island and hidden treasure, Jack! And he wants to go and camp out there and dig the whole place up!"

"Why not?" asked Bee. "Wouldn't it be fun camping out, even if we didn't find anything? Think of the good time we could have!"

"What would we eat?" asked Hal dubiously.

"Fish, which I would catch when I wasn't digging, and all sorts of things in cans. We could take fresh meat with us, too, I guess. I wish you wouldn't think so much about your old stomach, Hal."

"Well, it's the only one I have and it's got to last me," replied Hal untroubledly. "How about you, Jack? Want to join the party?"

"I'd like to awfully, but I don't suppose I could. I have to stay with the ship down there. I haven't camped out since I was a little bit of a chap. Maybe I could manage for a couple of days, say Saturday and Sunday."

"How much," asked Bee, "will you rent the *Crystal Spring* and your own personal services for by the week, Jack?"

Jack smiled. "I guess we aren't for rent," he said.

"Why not? I'm in earnest. I want you to go along and I'd feel a heap more safe if we had the sloop to depend on. Not that I don't love that dear little launch down there, but just

look what it did to me today! Now come on, like a good chap! What's your figure?"

"Why—why, if you really mean it," said Jack, "I guess you can have the *Crystal Spring* and her skipper for—well, about fifteen a week. That's pretty near as much as I've been making lately."

"Pretty near as much won't do," replied Bee emphatically. "I shall pay you twenty."

"No, fifteen's enough."

"Twenty!"

"Compromise on seventeen-fifty," advised Hal.

"All right! It's a bargain, Jack. You'll get your sailing orders in a day or two; say about Wednesday. We'll go up or down or over or whatever it is in the sloop and haul the launch with us. We can use the launch for pleasure and the sloop for business."

"I don't see any need of having a whole blooming navy on hand," objected Hal. "If we have the sloop we won't need the launch, and if we have the launch—"

"Don't mumble, Hal; talk right out if you have anything to say," advised Bee. "Now, what time might it be? Great Scott, Hal, we'll have to scoot!"

"Well, but—"

"Now never mind your 'buts'; come along!" and Bee seized him by the arm and proceeded to drag him down to the cove. "You might as well learn discipline right now, old Hal. We'll be back about three, Jack."

“But we didn’t do anything about that name for the launch,” Hal objected. “I thought we were going to ask Jack ___”

“We were, but more important affairs prevented. We’ll attend to that this afternoon. So long, Jack! Turn her over, Hal! That’s the ticket! Once more! There she blows! Reverse her, Hal; we’ll have to back out or sink the water boat. All right; slow ahead! Great work! We didn’t bump a thing! Three o’clock, Jack! Bye, bye!”

CHAPTER VII

On Nobody's Island

It was nearer half-past three than three, however, when the launch, heralded by a dismal solo on the patent fog-horn by Bee, came into Herrick's Cove. Jack was all ready, sitting perched on the bow of the sloop. He had taken off his Sunday clothes and felt more comfortable; especially since he had changed those highly-polished shoes for a pair of brown canvas "sneakers." He tumbled into the launch as Hal ran her alongside and a moment or two later they were chugging down the coast, the rocky shore of The Front only a good stone-throw away. (Bee declared he felt safer near land). Soon Fort Point was reached and Hal and Jack showed Bee the old fortifications thrown up by the citizens of Greenhaven in the War of 1812. A cluster of neat little white houses surrounded the embankments and a few seats dotted the green slopes. Then the Neck was left behind and the launch headed across Eight-Fathom Cove, with Cove Village hugging the yellow beach a half-mile away. Beyond the village Toller's Sands began, a two-mile stretch of slightly-curving beach backed by white sand-dunes bare of vegetation save for a few patches of sedge and here and there a stunted, grotesque tree.

"There used to be a farm there," remarked Jack, who was steering. "But the sand finally buried it up. They say that if you dig into that long dune you'll find the old house. A few

years ago some of the fence posts were still sticking up out of the sand, but they've gone, too, now."

"Do you mean," asked Bee with wide eyes, "that the sand covered up the farm and the house and everything?"

"Yes, but I guess the farm wasn't a very big one."

"But—but how long did it take? Why didn't they stop it?"

"You can't stop that sand when it starts going. I don't know how long it took; probably two or three years, though. One day when I was over there with my father he took a piece of wood we found on the beach and laid it on the sand back there and watched. In twenty minutes it was covered up and when we came back a couple of hours later there was a regular mound there. That's the way those dunes start. A bunch of grass or something gets in the way and the sand blows into and makes a little lump as big as your two hands, perhaps. Then the sand blows and blows—it's always moving, even on still days—and more of it lodges there, and more and more, and finally there's a hill as big as those you see. They're always changing, too. The sand blows from one to another, and sometimes in the Fall or the Winter a big tide sweeps over the beach and eats into them. You get a dandy view from that biggest one. Ever been up there, Hal?"

"No, I guess not. I haven't been over to the Dunes for years. It would be fun to go some time, wouldn't it?"

"I'd love to," agreed Bee. "And we might take shovels and dig out that house!"

"Yes, that would be a nice way to spend a month or two," replied Hal sarcastically. "Any time you want to amuse yourself that way, Bee, I'll furnish the shovel."

“Is that Nobody’s Island there ahead?” asked Bee.

“No, that’s Toller’s Rock,” Jack explained. “The island is beyond it, around the corner. That black reef dead ahead is The Clinker. We’ll keep outside it today, although when the tide is full you can get in between it and the shore.”

The dunes gave place to low grassy hills and Toller’s Rock sprang from the latter, a great mass of weather-beaten granite, and jutted boldly into the sea. Once around The Clinker their destination was in plain sight. The shore receded for several hundred yards to the mouth of a little river which wound its way inland through miles of salt marsh. Beyond the river’s mouth a rounded hill arose from the marsh level. It was well grassed on the landward side and a considerable grove of small trees clothed the summit which was perhaps forty or fifty feet above the beach. Here and there a ledge cropped out, suggesting that at one time Nobody’s Island had been just what Toller’s Rock was now, a bare mass of granite. But why Nature had clothed the one rock and left the other bare was not evident. Bee looked somewhat disappointed as he gazed at it.

“It isn’t very—very romantic looking, is it?” he asked. “It ought to be more rugged and—and forbidding.”

“You’re hard to suit,” laughed Jack. “We’ll anchor in the river, Hal; there used to be an old pier there.”

The pier hardly deserved the name any longer, for all that remained of it were a few rotting spiles. But after the launch had negotiated the sand-bar at the entrance to the little stream Jack worked it in between the spiles and passed the line around one of them and over a rusty spike. Then they pushed

the stern of the launch to within a few feet of the shore and managed to jump ashore. The place of disembarkation was some fifty yards up the river and on the southwestern side of the island. Bee declared, though, that it was poppycock to call the place an island, since it was surrounded by water on but three sides. What it really amounted to was a hill rising from a sandy floor that was some six feet above high tide, with the ocean on two sides of it and Clam River on the third. On the fourth side, inland, nothing remained to show that at one time the river had flowed there too, although, as Jack pointed out, only some two hundred feet of sand, sprinkled with beach-grass, separated ocean and stream.

“Some day when there’s a good big northeaster and a high tide the ocean will eat through there again, as like as not, and then it will be a real island once more.”

“Let’s go to the top,” suggested Bee. “One of the first things to do is to make a map of it.”

“What do you want a map for?” asked Hal.

“What for?” Bee viewed him with disgust. “Don’t you know you always have to have a map of a place where you’re going to search for buried treasure? Honestly, Hal, sometimes I look at you in wonder! Don’t you know nothing, scarcely?”

They climbed the hill and reached the grove on top. The trees—oak, maple, wild cherry and hemlock—were small, but vigorous. Bee pointed to one disgustedly.

“That’s a nice thing to find on a treasure island,” he said. “A lot of names and initials cut in a tree trunk! It’s almost enough to discourage a fellow right at the start! I dare say as

soon as we get nicely settled and begin to dig for that gold a lot of folks will come here and have a picnic!”

“Well, you needn’t be surprised if someone comes here to camp,” said Jack. “There’s usually a camp or so here every summer, although since the bridge across the river up there fell down it isn’t quite so handy to get to.”

“Oh, they’ll probably build a new bridge or start a ferry,” replied Bee pessimistically. “Let’s sit down here and meditate.”

A flat rock, sprinkled with half-rotted needles from a hemlock tree that grew beside it, afforded an excellent seat. Behind them was the grove; in front the slope of the hill, more abrupt here than elsewhere and covered with coarse grass and bay-berry bushes. Wherever a rock cropped out a little colony of Christmas ferns grew precariously. Just above the beach ran a tangle of sedge and low bushes; wild cherry, sweet fern, sheep laurel; interspersed with weeds and blackberry briars. To the left, half-way down the slope, one lone tree, dwarfed and misshapen, rustled a few leaves in the soft breeze.

“We’ll name this Lookout Rock,” said Bee. “You get a dandy view from here, don’t you?”

Before them lay mile on mile of blue ocean, asparkle in the afternoon sunlight, dotted here and there with a white sail or a trail of smoke.

“Old Verny picked out a pretty good place to build his house, didn’t he?” asked Hal. “Do you know where it stood, Jack?”

“No, I don’t. Somewhere on the ocean side, probably. Perhaps right below where we’re sitting.”

“Was it pulled down or what happened to it?”

“They say the sheriffs or revenue men or whoever they were burned it down when they arrested the old chap. I suppose that explains why there isn’t any of it left. I’ve never seen even a timber of it.”

“I suppose those rocks out there,” said Bee, pointing to the right, “are The Tombstones.”

“Yes, and many a schooner has piled up there, too,” answered Jack. “Father used to say that on a very calm day you could look down between Big Tombstone and Little Tombstone and see the ribs of a ship. I never saw them, though. Usually it’s too rough.”

“You say they used to carry a lantern to attract the boats,” mused Bee. “Where did they do it?”

“Why, right along the beach down there, I guess. On the other side, too, probably; that would catch the boats coming down the shore. They’d think the lantern was a light on another ship and first thing they’d know they were piled up on the rocks or the sands. I never heard what happened to Old Verny. Some say they put him in prison for life, though. They should have hung him!”

“Maybe they did,” said Bee. “Maybe his ghost haunts the island on dark and stormy nights. Wouldn’t that be corking?”

Hal shivered. “If I ever see his ghost around here I’ll take the shortest and quickest route home!”

“Well, I’m going to walk around and make a map of the place,” said Bee, arising energetically. “Want to come?”

Both Jack and Hal, however, declared that they were quite comfortable and that they would wait for him where they were.

“Don’t get lost,” laughed Hal. “And if you come across Old Verny ask him where he buried his treasure.”

Bee produced a pencil and a small tablet of paper and strode off. Jack and Hal exchanged amused glances.

“He’s daffy on the subject,” said Hal. “Doesn’t talk about anything else.”

“Does he really mean to come here and dig?” asked Jack.

“Oh, yes, he’s absolutely serious about it. We’re to bring a tent here and camp out. I don’t mind. I rather like camping out, don’t you? And he insists that you must come with us. He thinks you’re pretty fine, Jack, and says we can’t get along without you. I hope you’ll come.”

“Why, I’d like to. I don’t want to make him pay me for it, Hal, but—I don’t think I could afford to do it unless he did. Has he a lot of money?”

“Bee? Oh, yes; his father’s terribly rich, I believe; he’s a coal operator, whatever that is; owns mines, I guess. Bee gets money whenever he asks for it, pretty near. Still, he doesn’t usually waste it like this. I don’t mean that he’s mean, because he isn’t; he gives a lot to the school funds, like football and baseball and such; but he’s always careful to get his money’s worth.”

“Well, it would be rather good fun to have a camp here for a week or so; especially if we struck good weather, and we’re likely to at this time of year. There’s good fishing all around here, and good shooting, too, in season; lots of ducks on the marsh back there in the Fall. I don’t quite see why he wants the *Crystal Spring* here, though.”

Hal laughed. “Oh, he just wants to do the thing right, I guess. Thinks it would look more like the stories he’s read. He’s always getting hold of some book about buried treasure; doesn’t read any other kind if he can help it. We might as well humor him. Of course, the hunting for the treasure part of it is just nonsense, but he likes to make believe that he’s going to find it.”

“There’s a whole lot of ground to dig up,” said Jack with a smile. “Of course, if we knew just where Old Verny had his house we might have a go at it, but as we don’t it would be pretty hopeless.”

“Seems as though some of the old fellows in town ought to know where the cabin stood,” reflected Hal. “It wasn’t much more than thirty or forty years ago, was it, that it was burned?”

“About forty-one or two, I suppose.”

“Bee talks to every old chap he runs across on the waterfront,” said Hal, “and maybe he’s got a clue. Hello!”

Hal had been digging with his heel in the brown loam at the foot of the rock and now he leaned over and picked something up.

“What do you suppose this is?” he asked, as he bent over it.

“Looks like a buckle,” said Jack. “It’s a funny one, though. Is it iron?”

“No, I don’t think so.” Hal scraped a corner of it on the rock. “By jove, it’s gold, Jack!”

CHAPTER VIII

Hal Names the Launch

“Let’s see.” Jack took the buckle and examined it. It was nearly three inches long and almost as wide and was a heavy, clumsy contraption. Opening his knife, he scraped it a little. Then he shook his head. “Brass,” he said.

“Is it?” Hal was disappointed and his face fell. “Well, I never saw a brass buckle like that before. What do you suppose it was for?”

“It might have come off a harness,” mused Jack. “Only—no I don’t believe it did. Looks more like a buckle you’d wear. I guess it’s pretty old. Let’s take it home and clean it up and see what it looks like. Maybe it was Old Verny’s.”

Just then Bee came climbing up the slope and they showed it to him.

“Great!” he exclaimed as he took it and looked at it. “An old buckle, unmistakably Spanish!”

“Unmistakably your grandmother!” jeered Hal. “How do you know it’s Spanish?”

“It must be. It isn’t American, is it?”

“No, I suppose not. But it might be Chinese or Egyptian or Italian or—”

“Well, it looks Spanish to me,” persisted Bee. “I shall keep it and polish it up.”

“You’ll keep it! Say, who found that thing, I’d like to know?”

“Whatever is found,” replied Bee, dropping the trophy in his pocket, “belongs to the Company, my young friend.”

“What Company?”

“The Treasure Hunters’ Company, Limited,” replied Bee. “That’s us. When we get through we will make an even distribution of everything we have found—”

“Gee, we’ll be rich!” Hal jeered. “What are you going to do with your share, Jack?”

“I guess I’ll put an addition on the house,” replied Jack gravely, “or—no, I know what I’ll do; I’ll put a gasoline engine into the *Crystal Spring!*”

“I shall invest my share in United States bonds,” said Hal importantly. “Nothing like owning a few bonds. Then, when you’re old and decrepit—”

“Shut up,” said Bee good-naturedly, pushing his way between them and seating himself on the rock. “Now look here, fellow members of the Company. I’ve been over the place and [here’s a rough map of it](#). Of course I haven’t got distances absolutely correct, but they’re near enough. They are—er—relatively correct.”

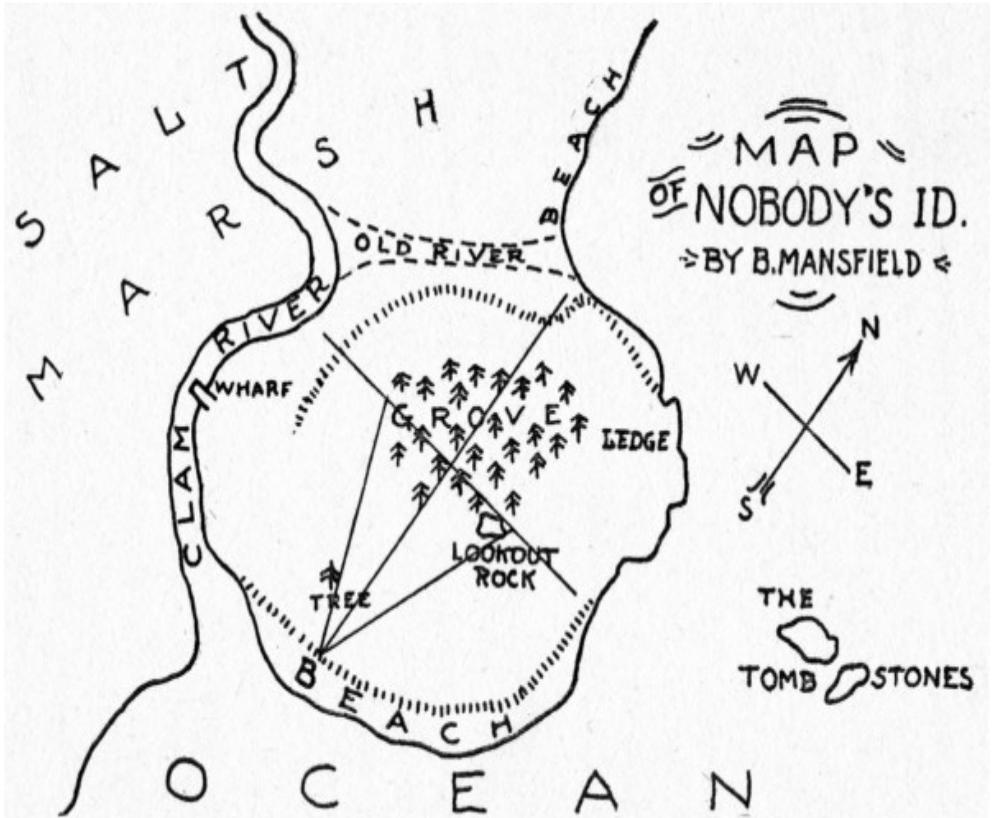
“Think of that!” murmured Hal.

“Now,” continued Bee, “it’s evident that when it comes to digging for the treasure we may—er—eliminate practically three-fourths of the island.”

“Why?” asked Jack, studying the rough map that Bee held.

“Because at that time there was a branch of the river running along somewhere about here. I’ve indicated it with broken lines, you see. Old Verny wouldn’t have been likely to have built his house right on the river, would he?”

“N—no, probably not. It’s pretty certain he built it somewhere around the south side of the hill, Bee. Around here we usually try to get protection from the north winds, you see.”



MAP OF NOBODY'S ID.

BY B. MANSFIELD

“My own idea exactly, Jack,” agreed Bee. “He certainly didn’t build it here at the northeast side because that’s all ledge there and he’d have blown away, I guess. He wouldn’t

have put it at the back of the hill because he wouldn't have had any view of the sea except over toward the north. He'd have kept away from the east side because, as Jack says, he'd have got the north winds more or less. That accounts for three sides, doesn't it? Well, and it leaves us the south side. He would have been sheltered there and he would have been near the river where he must have kept his boat and where he probably had a landing. Do you think those posts down there are part of his pier, Jack?"

"I think so. It isn't likely that anyone would have built a wharf here."

"All right. We're agreed then that the house or the cabin or whatever he lived in was on the south side of the island. Then the question arises: just where was it on the south side?"

"He's a wonderful arguer, isn't he, Jack? And, professor, what is the answer to the question which has arisen?"

"It isn't answered definitely yet," replied Bee, digging Hal with his elbow, "but if we bear in mind that the old rascal wanted shelter from the north, as he undoubtedly did, we can—er—reduce the probable territory to a small tract. He wouldn't build very near the beach for fear of high tides, and he couldn't have built up here on top because the trees are too close together. I've looked through this grove and there's no evidence of any clearing. So, then—"

"Hold on a minute," interrupted Jack. "You're forgetting that these trees may have grown since Old Verny left. I dare say lots of them aren't more than twenty or thirty years old."

Bee frowned. “That’s so,” he acknowledged. “But wait a bit, Jack. If the trees weren’t here when Verny was he certainly wouldn’t have built on such a bleak spot as the top of the hill, would he?”

“No, I don’t think he would have. I guess it’s safe to say his cabin was somewhere on the slope of the hill, and probably on the south or southwesterly side.”

“Oh, who cares where it was?” demanded Hal, with a yawn. “It isn’t there now and nobody knows that he ever buried any treasure.”

“Now, suppose, then,” continued Bee, undisturbed, “that we divide the island longitudinally and latitudinally with lines in this fashion. The lines, you see, intersect pretty nearly in the middle of this bunch of trees. That has no importance. I merely mention it.”

“For the love of Mike, Bee, get to something that *has* got importance!” implored Hal. “My brain is reeling already!”

“Your *what?*” asked Bee unkindly. “Now then, Jack, if we draw a line from where the latitudinal line and the edge of the grove meet on this side to where the longitudinal line meets the beach, and if we repeat the—er—operation on the other side, we have an isosceles triangle—”

“Help!” murmured Hal.

“Enclosing the territory within which it is probable that our old friend the wrecker had his cabin,” continued Bee, warming to his lecture. “It stands to reason, though, that he wouldn’t build very near the apex of the triangle—that is, near the beach—because he would be less protected there than farther up the slope. And we have already decided that

he didn't build on top of the hill. So, then, we have a very small territory left, hardly more than a hundred by, say, fifty. Get that, Hal?"

"I do not! What's more, I refuse to listen to your ravings any longer. I'm sorry I brought you here. I—"

"Well, you see what I mean, don't you, Jack?"

"Yes, and I guess your reasoning is all right, Bee. Only—"

"Only what?"

"Only it's a fair guess that if we ever do find out where Old Verny had his cabin it'll be somewhere we never thought of."

"It can't be," replied Bee, "because I've thought of every place there is! Now come over here and let's look about. If we know that he had his place somewhere within the territory—er—specified—"

"We don't know it," said Hal. "We've only got your word for it. And you talk so many words that no one knows what you're saying. You fellows go and look, if you want to. I'm going to sleep." And Hal slid down to the ground, put his shoulders against the rock, pulled his hat over his face and evinced every intention of carrying out his threat.

Bee observed him in pained disgust. "Honest, Hal, I've a good mind to leave you out of the Company. You don't take any interest at all in things! Come on, Jack."

They walked around nearer the river side of the hill and studied the slope there. There was nothing to indicate that at one time a house had stood on it. A few small boulders lay about, to be sure, but they had evidently never been used in

building. To the left of Bee's supposititious territory and just above the beach the small tree stood, misshapen and solitary. Aside from that the vegetation consisted of wild grass and briars and an occasional low bush of bay-berry or laurel. Bee frowned intently as he descended the hill, Jack following.

"What do you suppose his cabin was built of, Jack?"

"Wood, I suppose, since they burned it down. Probably of planks and stuff that he gathered along the shore. Perhaps he used timbers from the wrecks."

"Wouldn't he have had a foundation, though?"

"I don't believe so. Anyway, there aren't any stones in sight that look as though they'd been used that way. And, of course, burning the house wouldn't have affected the foundation. Maybe they've got covered up, though."

Bee shook his head silently as though disagreeing with that theory. Finally—

"What gets me, though," he said, "is that there isn't even a level place here. It doesn't seem likely he'd have built on the slope without levelling off a bit."

"I don't know. The slope isn't steep. He might have."

"He must have. I'm certain the cabin stood somewhere around here. If I was going to dig I'd start pretty near where we're standing."

"But look here, Bee, we don't know that; supposing, of course, he really did bury some money or something, he buried it near the house. He might have buried under a tree or—well, almost anywhere."

“That’s true, but the story goes that the old chap saw the constables coming and hurriedly dug a hole and hid his wealth. Well, if that is so he wouldn’t have climbed to the top of the hill in plain sight of the officers; now would he? He’d probably have dug a hole behind the house or—That’s it!”

“What’s it?”

“Why, very likely he didn’t have any floor to his cabin and he just dug a hole in the dirt inside! How’s that?”

“Sounds likely enough,” Jack agreed. “But you don’t want to lose sight of the fact, Bee, that maybe there wasn’t anything buried, after all. If they didn’t see him do it, how did they know? And if they did see him do it they’d have dug it up. I wouldn’t bank too much on that yarn.”

“I know,” answered Bee untroubledly. “Still, it’s just as likely that there was treasure of some sort as that there wasn’t. If the old villain was piling ships up on the rocks here for twenty years or so, as the book I read said he did, he must have got something from them.”

“Well, if they were all schooners, and I guess they were, he wouldn’t find very rich pickings aside from the cargoes. Skippers don’t carry diamonds and gold around with them much.”

“They don’t now, maybe, but perhaps they used to. They traded around at different ports, didn’t they? Well, didn’t they have to have money with them to pay for things? Jack, I’m plumb sure there’s something buried on this island, and if I can find it I mean to. And, look here, you said awhile ago that he might have buried the stuff under a tree. Didn’t we decide that the trees weren’t there then?”

“I believe we did,” laughed Jack. “We don’t know that for certain, though. Maybe he buried it alongside a rock, Bee.”

Bee pondered that, his gaze sweeping the slope for likely boulders. “It wouldn’t be hard to dig beside the few rocks here,” he muttered, “and if everything else fails we’ll try that. Well, I suppose we’d better be getting back home. We can’t do any more here today, I guess!”

When they announced that intention to Hal he declared that it was the first sensible thing he had heard Bee say all the afternoon. After they were back in the launch and were moving slowly down the little river, dodging the sand-bars that infested it, Bee was strangely silent. But as he kept his eyes on Nobody’s Island as long as it was in sight it wasn’t hard to guess the reason. He was still pondering the problem of Old Verny’s treasure. Hal, catching Jack’s eyes, nodded at Bee and tapped his own head significantly. Jack smiled. Once around The Clinker, with Nobody’s Island lost behind Toller’s Rock, Bee came back to earth, however.

“We’ll start Tuesday, fellows,” he announced suddenly.

“Start where?” asked Hal, above the thumping of the engine.

“Start for the island; start our search for the treasure.”

“Tuesday? Why Tuesday?”

“Because it’s the day after tomorrow,” replied Bee. “Can you be ready then, Jack?”

“I guess so. You really mean to do it, then?”

“I surely do. We can get everything we want tomorrow, I think; we’ll get up a list tonight, Hal; and we can load the

stuff onto the *Crystal Spring* Tuesday forenoon and go over to the island right after lunch. Can you have the sloop at the town landing about ten o'clock Tuesday forenoon, Jack?"

"Aye, aye, sir!"

"All right. That's settled. Now, Hal, let's settle on a name for the launch, eh?"

"You needn't trouble yourself," answered Hal. "She's already named."

"She is? What is it?"

"Her name is *Corsair*," replied Hal with dignity.

"*Horse Hair*? Why *Horse Hair*?" asked Bee bewilderedly.

"I didn't say *Horse Hair* I said *Corsair*!"

"Oh, *Coarse Hair*! Well, what—"

"C-o-r-s-a-i-r, *Corsair*, you silly goat!"

"*Oh!* And again *oh!* *Corsair*, eh? Well, that might do. What do you think, Jack?"

"Sounds all right to me," replied Jack when the name had been relayed to him.

"Still, I think we might find a better one," said Bee. "Now, let's see—"

"Look here," exclaimed Hal warmly, "she's my boat and if I want to name her *Corsair* I guess I can. And I do. And so she is!"

"Grammatically, Hal, your construction is weak. 'I do and so she is' lacks—er—clarity. If I were you—"

“She’s named *Corsair!*” insisted Hal doggedly.

“All right; don’t get peevish about it; only it seems to Jack and me—”

“I don’t care what it seems to you,” replied Hal, slathering oil on the engine with a lavish hand. “It’s settled. I’ve named her *Corsair*—”

“So you remarked before. I think it’s a perfectly lovely name, don’t you, Jack? So—so original, too! By the way, what is a corsair, Hal?”

“Look it up in a dictionary,” growled Hal. “You make me tired. Always butting in—” The rest was lost in the noise of the engine.

Bee smiled sweetly. “No offence, old Hal. Say, all joking aside, what *is* a corsair?”

“A corsair is a pirate,” replied Hal suspiciously. “It is also a pirate’s ship.”

“Oh, then we’re pirates, are we? That is, *you* are?”

“The name is *Corsair*,” averred Hal determinedly.

“All right, Mr. Pirate. And now, if you’ll just slather a few pints of that cylinder oil around the propeller casing you’ll have been pretty well over the boat with it. From the way you’re wasting it you must be some close relation to John D. Rockefeller.”

Hal set down the oil can with a grin. “You’re an awful idiot, Bee.”

“I are indeed. Hello, here we are at Mr. Herrick’s own private little cove! Jack, it’s you who should be the pirate

instead of Hal. With a harbor of your own like this you could have a dandy time. You could sit on your doorsteps up there with a spy-glass and when you saw a likely looking merchantman approaching you could sally—no, *dash* forth and attack her. Then, after you'd swiped—I mean captured all the treasure and made the captain and crew walk the plank you could dash back again. Honestly, Jack, I think you made a big mistake in your choice of professions. Instead of being the driver of a nautical waterwagon you should be flying the Jolly Roger and slicing off people's heads with a cutlass!"

"You'd have an easy time of it if *you* were a pirate," said Hal with elaborate sarcasm. "You wouldn't need to carry a cutlass. You could just board a ship and talk them to death!"

"Right you are, old Hal! If I was a pirate I'd lay about me with my trusty tongue and the scuppers would be filled with words! Ready with the bow line, there!"

"Half-speed, Hal!" called Jack from the bow. "Stop her!"

The *Corsair* floated into the cove and alongside the sloop. Jack climbed out and Bee took his place at the wheel.

"Tuesday at ten, Jack," said Bee. "Don't forget. If you have anything you think we'll need put it aboard, like a good fellow. We may see you tomorrow, though. All right, Hal; back her up easy."

When the launch had made the turn and was pointing her slim bow toward the mouth of the cove Bee made a trumpet of his hands and shouted back:

"O Jack!"

"Hello?"

“Her name is *Coarse Hair*! Hal says so!”

Jack laughed and waved his hand as the launch disappeared around the point.

CHAPTER IX

The Expedition Lands

At a little before three on Tuesday afternoon a regular flotilla of boats might have been seen to swing around Toller's Rock. I doubt if it was seen, for the Rock and the shore beyond all the way to the farther side of Nobody's Island was apparently empty of life, if one excepts the gulls and the land birds. Perhaps the word procession would be better than flotilla, for first came the *Crystal Spring*, wobbling along under her big gray mainsail, then the *Corsair*, floating gracefully at the end of a towline, and finally the *Faith*, dipping and rolling a little in the manner of young and playful dories. The *Faith* was Jack's boat, a small, pea-green lapstreak dory that had spent most of its life in Herrick's Cove and was now palpably excited by its tremendous adventure. The sloop was brought around into the wind near the mouth of Clam River and as close to the shore as Jack dared take her on a falling tide and the anchor was dropped. Then Hal and Bee tumbled into the launch and, with the dory still in tow, ran up the river to the old pier. Here they made fast the *Corsair* and rowed back in the dory to the *Crystal Spring*. Then began the unloading of the supplies. Bee remained in the dory and Jack and Hal passed the things down to him to stow away. As fast as the dory was loaded Jack jumped in and took the oars and rowed to the shore. There, with bare legs, the boys removed the cargo from boat to beach. Four trips were necessary before everything had been landed. Bee declared proudly that he

had forgotten nothing, and the others, viewing the sands, enthusiastically agreed.

“I guess you’ve got everything but a sewing machine and an automobile there,” said Hal.

The anchor was pulled up and the sloop half-drifted and half-sailed into the mouth of the river. The anchor went down again and the big sail was lowered and furled, Hal and Bee lending willing if inexperienced assistance. There was just room for the *Crystal Spring* to swing around with the tide in the new anchorage and in case of a blow she was fairly well protected. Even if she did settle her stern on the sand, Jack explained, it wouldn’t matter, since she would float clear again the next tide. Then the three boys tumbled once more into the dory and rowed to the old pier where the *Corsair* was snuggled. The launch, too, bore her share of the supplies, being laden with six long inch-and-a-half planks, five pounds of spikes and a hatchet. Working with a will, the boys soon had a three-foot platform laid on the old spiles. Hal declared that he didn’t see any use in having a wharf when the things were already landed, but Bee reminded him that there was the treasure to think about.

“It will be a heap easier to bring that chest of gold down here and lower it into the boat than it would be to get it into the dory and out again. You have to think of all those things, Hal. There’s nothing like looking ahead and being prepared.”

Hal laughed. “When you find that treasure, Bee,” he replied, “I’ll swim out to the sloop with it.”

Then they went around to where their goods littered the beach and considered the question of a location for the tent.

The tent, a good-sized A of waterproof duck, had been loaned by Hal's father. In fact, Bee had been very fortunate in not having had to purchase much of anything besides provisions. A pick, a shovel, a crowbar and a hatchet had also been loaned by Mr. Folsom; Mrs. Folsom had supplied blankets, pillows and cooking utensils; Jack had brought fishing lines, hooks and sinkers and Hal had added whatever of his possessions, including a shot-gun and a revolver, that Bee had seen fit to requisition. Even the planks had been obtained gratis, being some that had been left when repairs had been made to the Folsom wharves. Provisions Bee had had to pay for, but as he had obtained a liberal discount through Hal's father, his capital had not been much depleted.

It was finally decided that the tent should be pitched on the southwest side of the hill at the edge of the grove. Jack pointed out that they would be shielded from the sun during the warmest part of the day and sheltered from rain storms as well by the crest of the hill and the trees. "There may not be any rain storms," he said, "but if there are they're likely to come from seaward. We'd better ditch around the upper side of the tent, too."

It wasn't easy to get the tent up on the place they had selected for it seemed that wherever they tried to drive a peg they struck ledge. But they finally succeeded and drew aside to admire their handiwork.

"That's a corking tent," said Bee. "And I'm glad it's rain-proof, aren't you?"

Jack agreed, but wondered whether it would not have been wiser to have had the opening face the west instead of the

east. “If we have any very hot weather it’s going to be stifling in there.”

“That’s easy,” said Hal. “We can raise the sides of the tent around the bottom. Let’s get the stuff up here and think about supper. I’m getting starved. Bee was in such a rush to get away that I didn’t have time to eat a decent luncheon.”

“Eat!” Bee groaned. “I thought you’d never get through. That’s one thing that scares me a bit,” he confided to Jack as they descended to the beach. “We’ll have to go to town every day to buy food for that chap, I’m afraid.”

For the next twenty minutes they were busy toiling up the slope with boxes and bundles and trotting down again for more. The only pause came when Bee dropped a bag of lemons from the summit of his load and the elusive things rolled in every direction down-hill. Jack and Hal, glad to rest a minute, sat down and laughed while Bee, depositing the rest of his load on the ground, tried to round them up.

“I can only find eight of the pesky things,” he said at last, raising a perspiring face to his grinning companions. “Come on and help me you pair of gargoyles.”

“We’re tired,” said Hal. “We refuse to lend you any lemon aid.”

“Ow!” Bee collapsed to the ground and gave a spirited imitation of a boy having a fit. In the course of the performance he inadvertently upset the bag again and once more the lemons rolled away. Finally, Jack going to his assistance, all but two of the lemons were found and the routine began again.

“Some day,” panted Bee, as he trudged on up the hill with his bundles, “folks will find this island covered with a lemon grove and they’ll wonder, won’t they?”

When all the belongings were within the tent Hal raised the question of cooking arrangements. Hal had tried all day to confront Bee with some contingency not already provided for by that foresighted youth and so far had failed. He failed again in the present instance, too, for Bee answered promptly.

“Jack’s going to build a stone fire-place near the door here,” he said.

“Oh, am I?” laughed Jack. “How do you know I can?”

“You look like a mason,” replied Bee calmly. “Besides, if you don’t know how I’ll show you.”

“Then why don’t you do it yourself?” challenged Hal. “It seems to me you’re doing more bossing than work.”

“Somebody has to supply the brains, old Hal,” answered Bee cheerfully. “Come on and we’ll lug some stones for the mason.”

There were plenty of them but those that were of the proper size were mostly at the foot of the slope, and long before they had enough at the tent Hal was heard to murmur that for his part he thought it would have been a heap more sensible to have brought a cook-stove along!

But when the fire-place was finished even Hal had to own that it looked a lot jollier than a stove. “And a good deal more appropriate,” added Bee. “Whoever heard of hunting

buried treasure on a desert island and cooking meals on a real stove? That would be a—a—one of those things.”

“One of what things?” asked Jack, pausing to view his work.

“Why, one of those an—anach—”

“Anachronism, he means,” explained Hal. “He doesn’t know much English, Jack. You’ll have to excuse him. His education has been sadly neglected.”

“There’s something in that,” replied Bee. “When he put me in to room with Hal, the Principal told me I was next to the stupidest boy in school. Of course, I don’t know what he meant by that.” Bee added the latter part of his remark rather hurriedly, as Hal was poising a nice large stone in his hand and had his gaze fixed disapprovingly on the speaker. “Folks do say such funny things sometimes.” Whereupon Bee by the simple expedient of rolling over backward, got behind Jack and out of range.

“Now, we’ll have to hustle around and find some wood,” said Jack. “We can get some small stuff under the trees, I guess. Dead branches do pretty well. And there’s plenty of stuff on the beach, only it won’t be very dry probably. You fellows scurry around in the grove and I’ll go down to the beach.”

Afterwards they took the hatchet and cut sweet-fern, which Hal discovered quite a patch of at the back of the island, and sheep-laurel and spread it on the ground in the tent. On this they put their blankets, and, although now and then a sharp twig promised some discomfort, they decided that it would prove better than sleeping next to the ground.

“And, anyway,” said Bee, who had never run across sweet-fern before, “it smells dandy; even better than sweet-grass.”

After arranging the provisions near the door of the tent there seemed nothing left to do save wait for supper. It was only a few minutes past five and even Hal had to acknowledge that it was still too early to start the fire. Jack suggested that they might collect more wood and save themselves trouble another day, but that idea didn't seem to appeal to the others. Hal asked Bee why he didn't do a little digging for the treasure and get up an appetite. He even offered to accompany Bee and look on. But Bee said there was no use digging until he had decided where to dig. So they concluded to take a walk over the island instead.

“Keep your eyes open, fellows,” advised Bee. “We might find the place where Old Verny had his cabin.”

But although they made a complete circuit of the island they discovered nothing more exciting or useful than a horseshoe crab which Bee marvelled at and treasured. From the northwest side of the hill they could follow the winding of Clam River for nearly two miles and Jack pointed out where, far up the little tidal stream, the old bridge used to stand. Far off, backed by a low wall of trees, ran the railway embankment. Farther southward Greenhaven was visible, the sun dyeing the white houses on the hill with rosy light as it sank into the west. Between the town and the island was a well-nigh untenanted expanse of marsh and meadow which, near the shore, merged into the gleaming sand dunes. One or two weather-beaten cabins dotted the area, but they were a good way off and served only to accentuate the loneliness

that, with the approach of evening, seemed to envelop Nobody's Island. Hal gave a little shiver as he turned away.

"Come on and let's light the fire and have some supper," he said. "This place will get on my nerves in a minute."

"It does seem a long way off from everything, doesn't it?" agreed Bee. "That sunset is wonderful, though."

"I'd rather see a sirloin steak," muttered Hal.

"Well, that's just what you will see in about half an hour," Bee responded cheerfully. "And I'll bet Jack can cook one to the King's taste, too!"

"Oh," said Jack, "so I'm to do the cooking, am I?"

"Of course. You surely couldn't expect Hal to do it, and the only thing I ever tried to cook was a fried egg; and I didn't know enough to take the shell off first!"

They sought the tent and Jack set about getting a fire. "What are we going to have?" he asked.

"We've got ten pounds of steak and chops, a bag of potatoes, six loaves of bread, lots of butter, tea and coffee," enumerated Bee. "And other things besides; bacon, flour, lard, sugar—er—oh, everything the heart of man could desire."

"Well, we'll have a slice of steak, then, and some boiled potatoes. I'll boil enough so there'll be some left for frying in the morning. How about coffee? Want that or tea?"

"Tea," answered Hal.

"Coffee," said Bee.

“Then I’ll have to cast the deciding vote. We’ll have tea. Coffee in the morning and tea the rest of the time. And— Great Scott!”

“What?” the others demanded in a breath.

Jack smiled. “Nothing,” he answered, applying a match to the little heap of twigs in the fire-place. “Somebody might find a skillet and a sauce-pan. A kettle, too, for the tea. Got one, Bee?”

“Surest thing you know.”

“Fine! Just fill it half-full of water for me, will you?”

“Water?” Bee, the tea-kettle in hand, gazed blankly at Jack.

“Of course! We can’t have tea without water, can we?”

Hal, solving the situation, let out a whoop of delight. At last Bee had been caught napping! Bee grinned in a rather sickly fashion.

“Is—is there a spring here, Jack?” he inquired.

“Not that I know of. Why? You brought water along, didn’t you?”

Bee shook his head. “I—I never thought of it.”

Hal kicked his heels with joy. “Get some water for him, Bee; don’t stand there like a dummy! Go on, get some water!”

“But—but Old Verny must have had water! Where’d he get it, Jack? There must be a spring or a well or—or—”

“He probably used bottled water,” said Hal. “I dare say the grocer brought it to him.”

“Well, I never heard of a spring on Nobody’s,” replied Jack, “and I never saw any signs of one. Perhaps Verny had a well.”

“He must have! I’ll look for it,” and Bee started off with the tea-kettle in hand.

“Don’t be an idiot!” cried Hal. “If there ever was a well it’s filled up long ago. You ought to have thought and brought water along. There’s nothing like looking ahead and being prepared, Bee!”

Bee tried to smile at that gibe, but made dismal work of it. “Then—then what can we do? We couldn’t use salt water, could we, Jack?”

“There’s just one thing we can do,” said Hal eagerly, “and that’s go home sensibly. We can’t stay here all night without any water to drink.”

“Go home!” exclaimed Bee blankly.

“Of course. Unless you want to row back to town and get a bucket of water.”

“Speaking of buckets,” said Jack as, the fire burning briskly, he arose to his feet, “have we got one?”

“Two,” said Bee. “They’re in there. Why?”

“Well, you watch this fire and keep it going and I’ll take the bucket and get the water.”

“I refuse to drink salt water!” exclaimed Hal.

“Who said anything about salt water?” laughed Jack. “I’m going to bring you some of the best water there is.”

“Wh—where are you going to get it?” demanded Hal and Bee in chorus.

“Out of the *Crystal Spring*,” answered Jack as he swung off down the hill to the wharf. “She’s half-full of it!”

“Gee, I never thought of that!” ejaculated Bee, subsiding on the ground with his tea-kettle still tightly clutched.

“It seems to me,” said Hal sternly, “that there’s a whole lot you never thought of.”

Bee had nothing to say. He only added more wood to the fire and in silence watched Jack jump into the dory and pull out to the sloop. For the rest of the evening he was chastened in spirit.

That supper tasted wonderfully good. Jack was a clever camp cook and the way that two-pound piece of steak was cooked and the way the potatoes almost fell to pieces at the touch of a fork showed it. Perhaps the tea was a little bitter; anyhow, condensed milk doesn’t seem to go with tea as well as with coffee; and Hal said uncomplimentary things about the butter, but no one could find fault with the rest of the repast. They sat on the ground between the front of the tent and the fire and ate to repletion. And afterward they heaped more fuel on the dying blaze and snuggled back contentedly while the afterglow dimmed and a half moon grew from frosty silver to mellow gold and threw a broad pathway across the quiet water. They talked for an hour or more, but the fresh air and the exertions of the day soon began to tell and long before nine Hal was snoring frankly, his head

propped up on Bee's shoulder and Bee and Jack were nodding. Finally the lanterns were found and Jack managed to fill them from the gallon oil-can, spilling a good share of the oil on the ground in the darkness, and then lighted them and hung them from the tent poles. Hal was somehow awakened and, yawning and stumbling, got his clothes off and tumbled between his blankets. Bee and Jack speedily followed and soon all was still on Nobody's save for the lapping of the waves on the beach and the healthy snoring of the members of the Treasure Hunters' Company, Limited.

CHAPTER X

Bee Digs For Treasure

The next morning dawned fair, with a little southeast breeze blowing from where, afar off on the horizon, lay a bank of haze. The adventurers were up early. The sunlight beat on the wall of the tent and made sleep almost impossible after seven o'clock. There was a chill in the air though, as the three, with towels flying from their hands, scrambled down to the beach and plunged, shouting and laughing, into the water. The sea was several degrees warmer than the air outside and Hal was for remaining there and having his breakfast brought to him on a life-belt. But he got little encouragement from the others and so followed them out and rubbed his body to a glow with a towel in the faint warmth of the early sunlight. After that, although Jack worked as quickly as he knew how, it seemed hours and hours before the bacon and fried potatoes and fragrant coffee were ready. Hal occasioned merriment by trying to toast a slice of bread on the end of a stick and having to rescue it from the fire a half-dozen times before it was ready for eating. Bee regretted the lack of eggs and explained innocently that the reason he had not brought any was because they could find sea-gulls' eggs on the rocks. "They always do that on desert islands," he added. He was visibly disappointed when Jack informed him that the gulls didn't nest on Nobody's and that, anyhow, he didn't think Bee would care much for gulls' eggs if he tried them.

They cleaned the dishes by the simple expedient of carrying them to the beach and rubbing sand on them, afterwards rinsing them off with salt water. Then Bee was, he declared, ready for business.

“You fellows can do what you like for awhile. I’m going to look around and decide where to begin operations.”

Hal groaned. “Look here, Bee,” he protested, “you aren’t really going to waste time and break your back digging are you?”

“Waste time! What did we come here for, I’d like to know? I’m going to find the likeliest spot and then we’re going to dig for that treasure chest. Meanwhile, why don’t you fellows see if you can catch some fish for dinner?”

Hal sighed and shrugged his shoulders. “All right. Come on, Jack. We’ll go fishing. If you find anything, Bee, fire a cannon and we’ll come back.”

They left him, crow-bar in hand, surveying with a thoughtful frown the southwest slope of the hill. They took the launch and went out beyond The Tombstones. There Jack dropped the anchor and they put their lines over. From time to time they looked back toward the island, but Bee was not in sight from where they lay, and Hal unkindly said he was willing to bet that Bee was fast asleep in the tent. By ten o’clock the sun had grown pretty warm and, as they had three small rock-cod and seven perch flopping around in the bottom of the launch, they decided to return to the island. “Although maybe we’re better off out here,” said Hal, “for Bee may put us to work with a pick or a shovel!”

When they came within sight of the tent they saw Bee hard at it. Evidently he had reached a decision as to the locality of the cabin, for he was knee-deep in the earth and his shovel was appearing and disappearing with fine regularity.

“Just look at the silly chump,” said Hal affectionately. “Isn’t he a wonder? I suppose we’ll have to humor him, Jack, and take our turns with the shovel. But I must say that that isn’t my idea of a good time!”

Bee was red and perspiring when they reached him. He had started to dig within some ten or twelve yards of the tent and a little to the west of it and had made quite a good-sized hole in the ground. He leaned on the handle of his shovel and looked up at them triumphantly while beads of perspiration ran down his face.

“This is the place, all right!” he proclaimed. “Just look there.” He pointed to where a rusted nail, about four inches long, lay beside the excavation. “I found that in the first shovelful I turned out, Jack!”

“H’m; found any more?”

“Not yet, but it shows pretty conclusively, doesn’t it, that the cabin stood here or pretty near? Now my idea is to dig trenches about eighteen inches wide right along the slope here; see? If I dig them, say, two feet apart I’m pretty sure to run across the chest or the box or whatever he put his treasure in.”

“Great Scott!” said Hal. “How long do you think it will take you to do that, Bee? Why, you wouldn’t get it done in a month!”

“Get out! Why, see what I’ve dug already, and I’ve only been at it—What time is it, anyway?”

“Almost half-past ten,” replied Jack. Bee’s face fell.

“Really? Well, it took me longer than I thought then.” He sat down on the side of the bank and reflectively examined four big purple blisters that decorated the palms of his hands.

“They’ll break pretty soon,” said Hal cheerfully. “Then you won’t be able to shovel. How long have you been at it?”

“An hour, or a little more.”

“And that’s all you’ve done!”

“It’s hard in places. Look at the rocks.”

“There’s no use digging where the ground has never been disturbed before,” said Jack, who was examining the rusty nail, “and that ground never has. See the way those stones fit against each other. You’re at the foot of a ledge, I guess; that stuff looks like rotten granite.” He tossed the nail aside and Bee quickly rescued it and dropped it into his pocket.

“I’ll try farther down,” he murmured. He climbed out of the hole, measured off two feet on the slope and began again with the pick. But it was evident that Bee’s enthusiasm was suffering a temporary eclipse. The half-dozen blows he struck were weak and uncertain. Suddenly he put the pick down and looked at the palm of his right hand.

“Has it broken?” asked Hal eagerly. Bee nodded and reached for his handkerchief to tie around it. But Jack interposed.

“Here,” he said, “give me that pick. I’ll dig for awhile. You rest. And you’d better wash that blister and keep the dirt out of it. Haven’t an old pair of gloves with you, have you?”

“No.” Bee opened and closed his hand experimentally. “That’s funny, isn’t it? I suppose my hands are pretty soft.”

“Probably,” said Jack. “Where do you want to dig this?”

“I thought we’d dig a trench about two and a half feet deep right along here. I’ll just tie a handkerchief around this and help you in a minute.”

“You sit down and tend your wounds,” said Hal. “I’ll take the shovel a while. I guess my hands are as soft as yours, though.”

“I’ve heard rosin was good for them,” said Bee.

“If you hold the shovel loosely, Hal, and stop when you feel the blisters coming you’ll be all right. As soon as I get out of the way you can come along behind with your shovel.”

“Just like a couple of Italians digging a trench for gas pipes,” murmured Hal. “I never thought I’d live to see this day!”

Bee washed his sore hand with sea water and wrapped a handkerchief about it. Hal fell in behind Jack and shoveled aside the sod and dirt loosened by the pick. With coats off and sleeves rolled up the two boys labored valiantly and at the end of half an hour had a trench some eight feet long and a foot deep. The soil was a thin, dusty brown loam, with streaks of coarse gray sand which Jack said was disintegrated granite. Hal, wiping his forehead, said he was quite ready to

believe it, and didn't Jack want to swap implements awhile? Bee said they were getting on finely and thought there were fewer stones than higher up.

"Maybe there won't be any in the next trench," he said hopefully.

Hal leaned on the pick and viewed him reproachfully. "Bee, you don't really mean that you're going to dig another one of these ditches?" he asked.

"Of course; probably three more—unless we find the treasure first."

"Find the treasure!" growled Hal. "I'll bet you anything there isn't any treasure here and never was! And if you think that I'm going to waste my young life swinging a silly old pick and having sunstroke you've got another guess! Besides, I can feel the blisters coming."

"You knock off," said Jack. "I'll get this a little deeper and then maybe the boss will let us quit until it's cooler."

"It *is* pretty hot," acknowledged Bee. "We might wait until after dinner."

Hal stuck the end of the pick into the sod with a vicious blow and climbed out of the trench. "I've quit," he announced disgustedly. "Come on, Jack."

"Has the whistle blown?" laughed Jack. "You go ahead and get cooled off. I'm not tired. I'll get this a little deeper and be with you in a few minutes."

Hal went off grumbling to the tent and Bee seized the pick and tried to wield it. But the bandage on his hand interfered sadly. He kept going, however, until Jack decided to quit.

“There, that’s down pretty near two feet,” said Jack. “Now we’ll take a rest and then get some dinner. Come on. If you insist on using that hand, Bee, you’ll have it so sore you won’t be able to move it. You leave the digging to Hal and me today. After all, we’ve got plenty of time, I guess. No use trying to do it all today.”

They found Hal stretched out on his blankets in the tent.

“It’s no use your coming in here if you want to get cool,” he announced peevishly. “It’s as hot as Tophet in this place.”

“Let’s get up under the trees where there’s a breeze,” Jack suggested. The breeze, however, was hard to find. Still, it was cooler than in the tent, and the three boys stretched themselves out on a thin carpet of pine needles and leaves.

“Just see how smooth it is today,” said Bee, nodding at the water. “Let’s go out after dinner and see if we can see that wreck you told about, Jack.”

“All right. We can try. I guess we won’t find the water much smoother while we’re here. We ought to have one of those glass bottomed boats they use out in California. I was reading about them once. They say you can look right down into the water for fathoms and see the fishes and the seaweed and coral.”

“What’s a fathom?” asked Bee.

“Six feet. Father used to tell about a couple of men who used to sail out of here. They were brothers. One of them was six feet and four inches and the other was six feet and two inches tall. They used to call the taller one Long Fathom and the other Short Fathom.”

“I thought a fathom was a long way; four or five hundred feet,” said Bee.

“Maybe you were thinking of a cable. A cable’s six hundred feet, and ten cables make a knot.”

“And a knot is more than a mile, isn’t it?”

“Eight hundred and two feet more. Twenty knots equal just about twenty-three miles.”

“I don’t see why they don’t measure distance on the water by miles,” said Hal. “It’s beastly confusing.”

“If you come to that,” replied Jack, “the knot is the more sensible measurement. Every degree of the earth’s circumference is divided into sixty knots, making twenty-one thousand and six hundred knots. There are three hundred and sixty degrees, you know.”

“Oh, yes, I knew, of course,” laughed Bee. “Only I guess I’d forgotten. Now let’s see. A fathom is six feet, a cable is six hundred feet and ten cables make a knot. And a knot is—is eight hundred and sixty feet longer than a mile.”

“Eight hundred and two feet,” corrected Jack. “And now, as the lesson is over, say we go down and see what the neighbors have brought in for dinner.”

“Fine idea!” agreed Hal. “I’ve got just one question to ask, though, before the class is dismissed. Professor, how many knots are there in a knotal mile?”

“Why, he’s just told you,” began Bee. Then the pun dawned on him and he chased Hal down the hill with wild threats. They had some of the chops for dinner, with potatoes baked in a bed of ashes, bread and tea. And afterwards Jack

made a batter of prepared flour and fried griddle cakes in the skillet. Unfortunately Bee had neglected to provide syrup, but sugar did pretty nearly as well, and by the time the last cake had disappeared the trio had no ambition beyond lying on their backs and staring sleepily into space.

“I wouldn’t look at a shovel for a million dollars,” muttered Hal. “And if any one mentions food to me I’ll die!”

“Those were some cakes,” groaned Bee. “Did you—did you put lead in them, Jack?”

“Lead? Get out! They were as light as feathers!”

“Were they? Then I guess I know how a feather mattress feels!” He rolled over in search of a more comfortable position and gave an exclamation of surprise. “There’s a man in a rowboat down there, fellows, and he’s coming ashore!”

CHAPTER XI

The Man With The Glass Eye

By the time Jack and Hal had painfully assumed sitting positions the arrival had beached his dory and was stepping ashore.

“Who is it?” asked Hal.

Jack shook his head. “I don’t know. Maybe a clammer. Which way did he come, Bee?”

“Search me. I only saw him when he was shoving his boat onto the sand. What’s a clammer?”

“A man who digs clams,” laughed Jack. “I guess he’s coming up to look us over.”

The man had pulled up his dory—a rather disreputable looking craft sadly in need of paint—just inside the mouth of the river and was slowly climbing the slope. When he reached the place where the boys had been digging he stopped and examined the excavations for fully a minute. Then he came on and the campers had their first good look at him.

“My word!” ejaculated Hal sotto voce. “Isn’t he a fine old cutthroat!”

Which uncomplimentary description seemed very appropriate to the rest. The man was short, stocky and wide of shoulder. A pair of rusty black trousers, a faded blue pea-jacket and a cheap gingham shirt comprised the bulk of his

attire. But it was the countenance that had prompted Hal's simile. The face was wrinkled and seamed and of the hue of leather, and a straggling brown beard covered the lower half of it. The nose was hooked and crooked and a pair of light colored eyes, which might have been gray or green, gleamed brightly at the group by the tent. The eyebrows were heavy and came together over the nose. On his head was an old felt hat, the front brim pulled down. A ragged mustache met the beard and hid the mouth, but the man seemed to be smiling as he greeted the boys.

"Howdy do, mates," he said in a gruff voice that seemed to come from his scuffed boots. "Fine weather we're having."

"You can't beat it," replied Hal flippantly.

The stranger paused in front of the group and thrust his big, gnarled hands into the pockets of his jacket. The boys were gazing fascinatedly now at the man's right eye which, no matter how its companion roamed, remained fixed upon them with a baleful gleam.

"Campin' out, I see," said the man. "Havin' a fine time, too, I bet ye."

"Great," agreed Hal. "Anything we can do for you?"

"Thank ye, my boy. I might take a bit to eat if it's right handy. Not wishin' to put ye to no trouble, however."

"That's all right," said Jack. "We haven't anything cooked, though. Maybe there's some tea left, and we've got plenty of bread and butter."

"The butter's not very good," warned Hal.

“I ain’t partic’lar,” was the response. The left eye followed Jack as he disappeared into the tent, while the right eye continued to regard Hal and Bee unblinkingly. Jack returned with several big slabs of bread and a generous square of butter. The teapot proved good for another cup of tea and soon the stranger, seated on an inverted bucket, was lunching. He ate slowly, consuming the bread in huge bites and washing it down with draughts of the luke-warm tea. If he was really as hungry as he had led them to suppose he disguised the fact well. “I cal’ate you’re going to build,” he observed between mouthfuls of the bread and butter.

“Build?” echoed Jack. “No, I guess not.”

“Oh? Well, I see you’d been a-diggin’ of a hole down there.”

“Yes,” replied Hal, who had taken a violent dislike to the visitor, “we were digging for clams.”

Both eyes turned toward Hal and the ends of the ragged mustache quivered in what was apparently a smile. “Fond of a joke, you be, ain’t ye?” he inquired with a rumble that might have been a laugh.

“Yes, I be,” answered Hal, in spite of a warning look from Jack. “Be n’t you?”

“Oh, yes, son, oh, yes!” rumbled the man. “I be mighty fond of a good joke—on t’other fellow! I cal’ate what you’re diggin’ for is yellow clams, eh?”

“Yellow clams?” repeated Jack questioningly.

The left eye closed in a portentous wink. “Aye, gold clams, mate. Ho, they all try it. Man an’ boy, I been around

this place fifty year or more, on an' off, an' I've seen 'em diggin' an' diggin' an' diggin', but I never seen nothin' come up, mates. Big Verny hid it well."

"Did you ever see him?" asked Bee eagerly.

"Often, when I was a youngster. I've spoke to him, too. A big man he was, might be six foot an' more, an' as strong as a bull."

"He lived here, didn't he?" pursued Bee. "Do you remember where his cabin was?"

The visitor's active eye swept over the slope. "Not exactly," he answered. "It might have been pretty near where you been diggin—" (An exclamation of satisfaction from Bee.) "Or, again, it might have been more to the land'ard side. I recollect it was between the trees an' the beach."

"Then the trees were here then?" asked Jack.

"Them trees has always been here long as I can remember, mate. An' Big Verny's cabin was here long before I first seen the island. A funny sort o' hutch it was, too; built of wreckage an' pieces o' tin for a roof. There was a sort o' shed farther along. He kept a cow an' a pony in it."

"Did he live here all alone?" Hal asked.

"No, there was two sons with him some o' the time. An' he had a wife once, but she died."

"Is it true that he used to show lanterns and make ships run on the rocks?" Bee inquired.

"Well, I can't say as to that, son. There was them as said he did an' them as said he didn't. Anyway, there was a sight

o' wrecks around here them days. An' finally the revenue officers came over here one night—just about sundown it was—and cleaned up the nest. Big Verny they caught, but Jule got away. He was the youngest of the boys. He weren't so very young neither. Folks say he ran plumb into the sea and swum down the shore to the beach."

"What became of the other son?"

"He put up a fight an' they shot him. Died in the jail, I heard. Big Verny was tried and sent to prison. He died too, after."

"Do you really think he buried anything on the island?" asked Bee.

"Big Verny? Sure he did, mate, an' some day it'll be found. It's here somewhere." He looked about him speculatively. "Maybe you'll strike it yourself. Nobody knows where he put it. Some says he buried it near the cabin an' some says he buried it in the sand. There's no way o' knowin'. I used to dig myself years ago when I was younger; blistered my hands many's the time. Why, I've stuck a shovel, one time or another, in most every foot o' this old hill! Never found any gold, though; 'ceptin' this, and it be silver."

He dug a gnarled hand into a pocket of his trousers and brought up a few coins from amongst which he selected a worn one. He flipped it across to Jack.

"What is it?" asked Jack as he examined it.

"A English shillin'. I dug it up somewhere near here; I forget just where, now."

Bee and Hal examined the coin in turn. It was worn almost smooth, but sharp eyes could still detect the stamping. Bee was eager and excited.

“What have I told you fellows?” he demanded. “If this—gentleman found this here, why, there must be more of them!”

“That’s only silver,” said the man. “There’s gold here too; doubloons, likely, and solid bars of it. An’ jewels, too, most likely. Big Verny caught a lot o’ things in his nets!”

“I wish you could remember where the cabin stood,” said Bee as he returned the coin. The man chuckled hoarsely.

“I’ve often wished the same myself. Likely there’s where he hid his money, mate. Well, I’ll be goin’. Good luck to you, mates; I’m hoping you find them yellow clams. Be you goin’ to stay here long on the island?”

“Until we find that treasure,” replied Bee determinedly.

The man chuckled. “Ho, bully boy! Keep at it, mate, keep at it. You can’t never tell when your shovel’ll strike wood. Then you’ll all be rich, eh? Think o’ them red fellows a-glitterin’ at you, and jewels, red an’ white an’ green an’ blue, a-tricklin’ through your fingers, eh? Aye, aye, good luck to you, mates!”

“Do you live around here?” asked Jack.

The visitor waved a hand vaguely in the direction of the winding river. “Up there when I’m to home. Bill Glass is my name, mate. Lots o’ folks knows Honest Bill Glass. Poor I be, but honest; which is due to my attendin’ Sunday school reg’lar, mates.”

“Fishing, are you?” Jack nodded at the dory pulled up on the beach.

“I do a bit at times. Clammin’, too. Maybe you’d want some clams, mates? I sell ’em cheap. I’ll bring some around to you some day soon. Don’t buy if you don’t want ’em. Honest Bill Glass don’t take money without givin’ complete satisfaction. Poor I be, but honest, mates. Good day to you.”

He went off down the slope, slowly, with an odd drag to his feet, and again stopped at the trench. After a moment he looked up and back and waved a hand. Then he went on. They watched him push off his dory and scramble aboard with an agility surprising in one who looked to be fully fifty-five or -six years old, and settle at the oars. He rowed with short, slow strokes up the river. For several minutes they could follow the course of the old dory, and then it was lost to sight behind the bank at a turn.

“Well, he’s a character,” said Jack. “‘Honest Bill Glass,’ eh? I’ll bet he would steal the shoes off your feet if he had a chance!”

“A regular old pirate is what he looks like,” said Hal. “He might have stepped right out of one of those silly stories you’re forever reading, Bee.”

“Mightn’t he?” agreed Bee with enthusiasm. “But what was the matter with his eyes? Did you notice them?”

“Sure; one of them is glass,” replied Hal. “Gee, I’d hate to meet him on a dark corner at night! I’m not sure I won’t dream of him as it is. I hope he doesn’t come butting in here again.”

“He said he was going to bring us clams,” replied Bee. “I wonder where he lives.”

“Probably up there at the end of the river,” said Jack. “There are two or three shanties near the railroad. I guess, though, we can dig all the clams we need ourselves. I don’t like his looks, fellows.”

“But I’m glad he came,” said Bee. “I was beginning to get a bit discouraged. Now, though, we know that the treasure must be here.”

“Oh, I wouldn’t believe him on oath,” scoffed Hal. “Did you notice that shilling he passed around?”

“Yes, and if he found that here on the island—”

“He didn’t.”

“How do you know he didn’t?” demanded Bee anxiously.

“Because I could read the date on it, even if it was worn almost off. It was 1884. That’s less than thirty years ago, and Old Verny hid his treasure—if he did hide any—more than ten years before that.”

“Are you sure about the date?” asked Bee, crestfallen.

“Ab-so-lutely, old Bee. It was plain as the nose on your face if you held the coin right. I don’t see what he wanted to lie for, though.”

“Then you don’t think he ever saw Old Verny or ever dug here?”

“He may have,” said Jack. “I didn’t see the date on the shilling, but he probably thought he’d have a joke on us. Anyhow, he didn’t seem to remember where the cabin stood,

and if he knew Old Verny—Big Verny, he called him—you'd think he'd remember where the old pirate lived.”

“He’s a fakir,” said Hal with decision. “And I’m going to sleep with my revolver under my head tonight. Gee, he may come around here and murder us for our clothes! He wouldn’t get much else, I guess.”

“Oh, I guess he’s a harmless old duffer,” rejoined Jack carelessly. “And I dare say we shan’t see him again. Now, what about going out to The Tombstones? Recovered from those flap-jacks yet?”

“Sure,” said Hal. “Let’s go. Want to, Bee?”

Bee looked undecidedly at the excavations and then at his hand. Finally he nodded. “Yes, I guess so. When we get back I’ll have another spell with the shovel, I think. It’ll be cooler then.”

CHAPTER XII

The Sunken Wreck

The surface of the water was almost like a mirror as they chugged out of the river in the *Corsair*, Jack at the wheel and Hal industriously slopping oil over the engine. But once around the end of the island they began to meet cat's-paws. Jack guided the launch in between the two black rocks which shoved their heads, draped with seaweed, a few feet above the surface. The anchor was dropped and the line payed out for nearly sixty feet before a hold was found. By that time the launch was just to the north of the channel between the two ledges. The surface was ripply, but Bee, who was given the first chance, reported that he could see quite a ways down. He lay sprawled out on the stern deck, with Jack and Hal holding his legs and his face a few inches above the water.

“See any timbers?” asked Jack.

“No, I don't think so. I'm not sure. Now and then—Hi, yes, I do, fellows! There's a long curving thing down there. I thought at first it was a rock, but it can't be.”

“Get up and let someone else have a look,” said Hal.

“Just a minute,” replied Bee in a smothered voice. “There's something further down—Gee, if the water would only keep still a minute!”

Finally he consented to being pulled back on deck and Hal took his place. Hal couldn't see a thing, he declared, and

scoffed at Bee when he was pulled back. But Jack verified Bee's story. He got them to lower him until he could put his face under the water. At intervals he lifted his head for a breath and then put it under again. When he finally told them to pull him back he was drenched to his shoulders.

"Bee was right, though," he said. "You can see three or four ribs and something square that might be a deck-house; only I don't see why a deck-house wouldn't have floated away. The ribs are covered with barnacles and mussels and seaweed. It looks as though the boat had gone clean over the ledge and broken her back. Probably she was trying to round the island and thought she had lots of room. I wonder who she was."

"Has she been there a long time?" asked Bee awedly.

"Years and years. My father used to tell about seeing her when I was just a tiny tot. I wouldn't be surprised if she'd been there fifty years or even more!"

"Why couldn't I see anything?" grumbled Hal. "I'm coming back here some day when it's calmer."

"You won't ever find it much calmer," said Jack. "And, anyway, there's a sort of current between the rocks here that keeps the surface blurred. Better have another look now, Hal."

So Hal tried again, with Jack telling him where to look and what to look for, and had better luck. "She must have been a big old ship," he said as he wiped the water from his face. "Why, those rib things seem to go down for twenty or thirty feet!"

“Wish I were a diver,” said Bee. “I’d go down and see what’s there. Maybe I’d find a treasure chest or a skeleton or something.”

“What I like about you, Bee,” Jack laughed, “is that you aren’t at all hard to please. Most anything suits you. If you can’t find a lot of gold and jewels you’ll take a skeleton and be satisfied. Say we go for a little trip up the shore, fellows?”

Bee, still fascinated by his glimpses of the sunken ship, readily agreed, to the surprise of the others, and Jack pulled up the anchor and headed the *Corsair’s* nose straight up the coast. Bee demanded the wheel presently and Jack relinquished it to him, and he and Hal settled themselves comfortably on the seats abaft the engine and proceeded to enjoy the cruise. There was enough air stirring to mitigate the heat of the sun and the radiation from the engine and it was very pleasant there in the launch. Hal, keeping one ear open, so to speak, for sounds of trouble from the engine, closed his eyes and relapsed into condition of half-slumber in which he was vaguely conscious of the rhythmic rise and fall of the boat, the steady jar and click of the engine and the *pop, pop, pop* of the exhaust. Also he was vaguely conscious of some disturbing factor which eventually resolved itself into a monotonous chant from the bow. It was Bee, again pouring out his soul to the ocean.

“O Sea! O Sea! O Sea!
O beautiful, beautiful Sea!
You’re calm enough just now, all right,
You’re blue and tum-ti-tum—ti bright,
But you can’t fool me, O Sea, O Sea;
You can be just as mean as mean can be

And toss little boats all over the shop,
And no one knows when you're going to stop.
O cruel Sea! O cruel Sea!
Don't you ever go and get fresh with me.
I think you're fine when you don't act funny,
But I hate you, Sea, when I'm sick in my
tummy——”

“That’s a punk rhyme,” laughed Jack.

“Hello! I thought you were asleep,” replied Bee, looking around. “That’s my ‘Ode to the Sea.’ There are seventeen other verses, but I haven’t composed them yet. Some ode, isn’t it? Is old Hal asleep?”

“Not quite, I guess. He’s trying to make himself think he is.”

“How can anyone sleep when you’re making a disturbance like that?” growled Hal. “If he starts again, Jack, heave him overboard, will you?”

“Aye, aye, sir! I’ll keel-haul him if you say so.”

“No, string him to the yard-arm,” murmured Hal.

“Someone’s stolen the yard-arm,” said Bee. “I shall now compose an ‘Ode to the *Coarse Hair*.’”

“Oh, brave *Coarse Hair*! O, gallant craft
As graceful as a lumber raft!
How blithely doth thou skim along!
How—how like—how like——”

“Oh, shut up!” yelled Hal. “For the love of mud, Jack, throw something at him!”

“Ah! Ingratitude! I shall now chant an ‘Ode on Ingratitude.’”

“You do and I’ll come up there and kill you,” said Hal earnestly. “Where are we, Jack?”

“About four miles from the island and a mile or so off Tuckersville. That’s Brig Reef off there. I guess we’d better swing around, Bee, and head her back. Want me to take her?”

“I do not. I am quite capable of swinging her around. In fact, shipmates, I think I’m getting to be something of a navigator. Hereafter I shall sign my name ‘Beaman Mansfield, A. B.,’ meaning able seaman.”

“You’d better sign it ‘B. A.,’ meaning blooming ass,” replied Hal. “*Here! What are you doing? Trying to upset us?*”

“No, sir, I was swinging her around. She—er—swung a trifle abruptly, so to speak.”

“She certainly did,” grumbled Hal. “That wave went all the way down my back. Ugh!”

“I’m sorry, old Hal, but the *Coarse Hair* is inclined to be a bit kittenish today. She’s feeling her oats—I mean her gasoline.”

“By Jove!” exclaimed Hal. “I wonder—”

“What?” asked Jack as the other paused.

“How much she’s got.”

“How much what? Gasoline?”

“Yes. She didn’t have very much yesterday. I—I guess I’d better look and see.”

He made for the bow, but Bee was already unscrewing the cap in the deck. “Find the stick underneath there, Hal.”

Hal got the measuring stick out of the locker and Bee dropped one end of it through the opening. It produced a very empty sound as it struck the bottom of the tank and when Bee pulled it out only a quarter of an inch was wet. The boys looked at each other in dismay. Then Bee laughed.

“Aren’t we a nice little bunch of launchers?” he asked. “How far will that take us, Jack?”

Jack shook his head. “Hard to tell. It may take us all the way back and it may not. Haven’t any more aboard, have you?”

“Gasoline? Not a bit,” replied Hal.

“Couldn’t use oil, could we?” Bee questioned. “We’ve got quite a supply of that, unless Hal’s slopped it all on the engine.”

“Well, we’ll keep her going,” said Jack. “After the gas gives out we’ll use the oars. Luckily it’s nice and smooth.”

“And I just love to row,” murmured Bee. “It—it’s so poetic. ‘Merrily we row along, row along, row along!’ Say, how would it do to imitate the Irishman who was painting the fence? You know he hurried to get through before the paint gave out. Maybe if we put her at full speed we can get home before the gasoline’s all gone!”

“She’s sputtering now,” said Hal sadly. They listened. Yes, she was already “missing.”

“She’ll go a long time yet, though,” said Jack. “Probably we won’t have to row more than a couple of miles.”

“Oh, I’m so disappointed,” said Bee. “I hoped we’d have the pleasure of rowing all the way! ‘Gasoline! Gasoline! First you put it in the tank; then you turn—’”

“Oh, cut out the funny-business!” begged Hal. “It’s a wonder you wouldn’t have reminded me that the tank was low.”

“It’s a wonder you wouldn’t have reminded me to remind you,” replied Bee imperturbably. “Anyhow, why be tragic? Rather let us eat, drink and be merry, for presently we row! And speaking of drinking, fellows, a nice cold glass of lemonade wouldn’t go badly. Or even a chocolate ice-cream soda.”

Hal had walked disgustedly back to the engine and now, with oil-can in hand, was anxiously watching its dying efforts. Whenever the carbureter gasped he slathered oil right and left. The *Corsair’s* speed diminished little by little until finally Jack was called on to decide whether she was actually progressing at all. She was still pushing forward, however, and Nobody’s Island looked very near, although Jack dashed Bee’s elation by declaring that distances across water were deceptive and that a good mile and a half still separated them from home.

“We can make it before supper time, though,” he added.

“Before supper time!” ejaculated Hal. “What time is it now, then?”

“Ten minutes to four. Rowing a launch is mighty slow work, and we’ll have the tide against us, too. What locker are the oars in?”

“Over here. I’ll get them.” Hal pulled up the lid after some exertion. “No, they must be on the other side. Look here, I thought we put—yank that lid off, Jack!”

“No oars here,” said Jack quietly as he looked in.

“And no boat-hook! And no—no nothing! Somebody’s swiped them! Bee, do you hear? Somebody’s stolen the oars and the boat-hook and that new rope and—”

“Yes, and the compass and the lanterns, and the fog-horn,” replied Bee, who had hurriedly peered into a forward locker. “That’s a fine note!”

“I’ll bet you anything it was that glass-eyed pirate!” exclaimed Hal wildly. “Honest Bill Glass! I hope—I hope he drowns!”

“You’re sure you had them when we came to the island?” asked Jack thoughtfully.

“Positive! It’s a wonder he left the anchor, the old scoundrel!”

“Maybe he’s coming back for that tonight,” suggested Bee.

“If he does I’ll be waiting for him,” answered Hal grimly. “What shall we do, Jack?”

And, as though echoing the question, at that moment the engine came to a final stop.

CHAPTER XIII

Marooned!

Bee, leaning against the wheel, whistled softly. Hal looked from the idle engine to the green slopes of the island in deep disgust. Jack swept his gaze up and down the shore. An hour ago there had been a half-dozen sails in sight; now, save for a tug and a line of barges afar out, and a four-masted schooner some five miles southward, not a craft was in sight. Hal broke the silence first.

“This is a nice mess!” he exclaimed. “What shall we do?”

“I don’t believe there’s much we can do,” responded Jack. “I guess if we wait long enough somebody’ll come along and give us a tow, but until then about the only thing is sit down and be comfortable.” He acted on his own suggestion. Hal looked for rescuers and found none.

“Who do you suppose stole our oars?” he growled.

“I’m inclined to suspect Honest Bill Glass,” replied Jack, with a smile. “When a man begins by assuring you he’s honest it’s a good plan to look out for him. I suppose we ought to have been more careful, but nobody ever steals things around here—except some of the Portuguese now and then. I wonder if Bill went aboard the sloop. If he did he didn’t find much. He might take my slicker and the bedding in the cabin and a few cooking things, though.”

“When we get back I mean to take a trip up the river and pay Bill Glass a visit,” declared Hal. “Even if we don’t find

the things I'll have the satisfaction of telling him what I think of him, the old pirate!"

"We might find out when he's away and then go up there and make a search," suggested Bee. "Bill looks like a bad man to tackle."

"I'm not afraid of him," declared Hal. "We—we've got the law on our side, too."

"Well, we ought to have some proof first," said Jack. "Guess we'd better snoop around a bit before we say too much."

After that silence fell over the *Corsair* for a while. Then Bee hazarded the theory that the *Corsair* was drifting away from shore and Jack untroubledly confirmed it. "Breeze and tide both against us," he said. "But somebody's bound to be along pretty soon."

"I hope so," said Hal. "I'm getting hungry."

Bee looked at his watch. "Most time for afternoon tea," he agreed. "Look here, Jack, how would it do if we took turns swimming and pulling the launch after us?"

"We might do that if we had a quarter of a mile or so, to go," answered Jack, "but we're a good two miles off shore now. We couldn't do it, Bee. If she keeps on in the direction she's going she may go aground on Hog Island after awhile."

"Hog Island!" exclaimed Hal, glancing across the blue waters to where a long, low stretch of brown rocks scantily crested with green showed to the south. "Why, that's three miles from here, isn't it?"

“About that. But we’re drifting pretty fast. We ought to do it in a couple of hours, unless someone gives us a tow first.”

“I don’t see that we’d be much better off there,” said Bee. “There’s nothing to eat on Hog Island, is there?”

“Well, you might find some of those gull eggs you wanted to sample,” replied Jack with a smile. “Anyhow, it would be better than drifting around all night in this craft.”

Hal shuddered. “It’s getting rougher, too,” he said.

“Yes, the breeze is freshening a little. Maybe, though, it’ll work around to the eastward toward sunset. If it does we stand a show to drift on shore farther down the coast. Kind of funny there are no boats around today.”

“I suppose if we didn’t want one the place would be full of them,” said Hal disgustedly. “We’re opposite the island now, Jack.”

“Yes, this breeze is sending us along fairly well. Ever think of having a small mast, Hal, so you could sail her if you had to?”

“No, but I believe I will—if I ever get back. I’ve seen them on launches.”

“They’re handy at times,” agreed Jack.

The conversation dwindled again. Presently Jack went to the wheel and turned the rudder hard aport, as he did so looking ahead at Hog Island, which was already perceptibly nearer.

“If we had that boat-hook,” he remarked, “we might set up a distress signal. As it is, I don’t see how we can. I guess the

best thing is to try and make Hog Island. That's land, anyway. And there used to be a little stone hut there, although I believe the roof was gone when I saw it last. Years ago they used to go out to the island and gather kelp and some of the men built a hut to sleep in in case a blow came up."

"You don't happen to know of an island around here that has a hotel on it, do you?" asked Bee plaintively. "I'd just dearly love a thick steak and a baked potato and—"

"Cut it out!" groaned Hal. "If you can't talk sense, Bee, keep still. You evidently think this is a joke!"

"There's a schooner," exclaimed Jack, "but I guess she's headed down the coast. See her? She's just come around the Head."

The others looked in the direction of Jack's finger and saw her. But when she had caught the breeze she pointed her nose to the southwest and grew smaller. The sun was nearing the hills to the west and the long beams fell across the water dazzlingly. The breeze strengthened and the surface became more choppy, the *Corsair* dipping and tossing as she drifted seaward.

"Do you think we'll make Hog Island?" asked Hal anxiously after awhile.

"Looks now as though we'd either bump into it or go by just inside," answered Jack. "If we get within a hundred yards or so I guess we can make it. How are you at swimming, Hal?"

"I once swam sixty strokes," replied Hal with a smile, "but it nearly did me up!"

“And lived right on the ocean all your life!” marvelled Bee. “Thunder! Why, I never saw anything bigger than a mill-pond when I was a kid and I’ve swam—swum—swimmed—say, which is it, anyway?—swammed a half a mile lots of times.”

“Then,” said Jack, “as it looks now as if we’d pass the island if the *Corsair’s* let alone, you and I may have to go overboard and try towing, suppose we get our clothes off, Bee.”

Twenty minutes later it was certain that the launch, left to her own devices, would pass inside Hog Island and continue out to sea. Jack watched the end of the rock draw abreast some seventy or eighty yards away. About midway of its length a small promontory jutted out on the shoreward side, and just before the *Corsair* drew even with this Jack gave the word and plunged overboard, slicing down into the green water in a beautiful dive and reappearing at the nose of the launch, shaking the drops from his eyes. Bee tried to emulate that dive, but his disappearance was more of a splash, and when he came up he was sputtering wildly. However, Bee could swim if he wasn’t a master of the art of diving, and when he laid hold of one side of the rope and Jack took a grip farther ahead and they struck out the *Corsair*, obediently, if slowly, swung her nose toward the island. Once started she seemed glad to seek port, and in a few minutes Jack was carefully seeking foothold on the ledge.

“You’d better stay in the water, Bee, until I find a place to land. These rocks are terribly sharp. Pull on the line some more. That’s enough. Heave your anchor over, Hal. Does she

hold? Good enough. Now, Bee, we'll pull her in over this way so Hal can step ashore."

Five minutes later the *Corsair* was anchored in the protection of the little promontory, with the line from the bow tied to a rock on shore, and Bee and Jack, dried by the breeze, were getting into their clothes again. Hal waited for them, gazing the while disconsolately across two miles of water to where Greenhaven Neck stretched itself against the coppery glow of the sunset. As he looked, the light on Popple Head began its vigil and a weak white gleam reached him as the revolving rays pointed eastward. Hal heartily wished himself on the mainland just then.

"Now," said Jack, buttoning his jacket across his chest and shivering a little, "we'll see if that hut is still here."

Hog Island was only a long and narrow reef, the highest point of which lay at high tide scarcely ten or twelve feet above the water. The broadest place was at the northern end, and here, under the lee of a ledge, the boys found the stone hut. It was a rough structure at the best, the builders having possessed, it seemed, but little skill in masonry, but the walls were rain-proof and, perhaps, wind-proof, and had there been a roof overhead it would have made a very acceptable shelter. A few loose planks, heavy enough to have withstood the gales, still rested across the top of the four walls, and these the boys shifted until they were side by side at the back. Other planks, of oak and apparently at one time parts of a ship's hull, were scattered nearby, and it took the three but a few minutes to lift them back to their places. Smaller pieces of driftwood, gathered from between the ledges, were

laid over the interstices and the shipwrecked mariners viewed the result with elation.

“Now it may rain if it wants to,” said Hal.

“It won’t rain,” said Jack, “but it’s going to blow some harder before morning.” He held his hand up and wriggled his fingers, finally rubbing them together.

“Blessed if he isn’t feeling of the weather, Hal!” laughed Bee. “Can you tell what it’s going to do that way, Jack?”

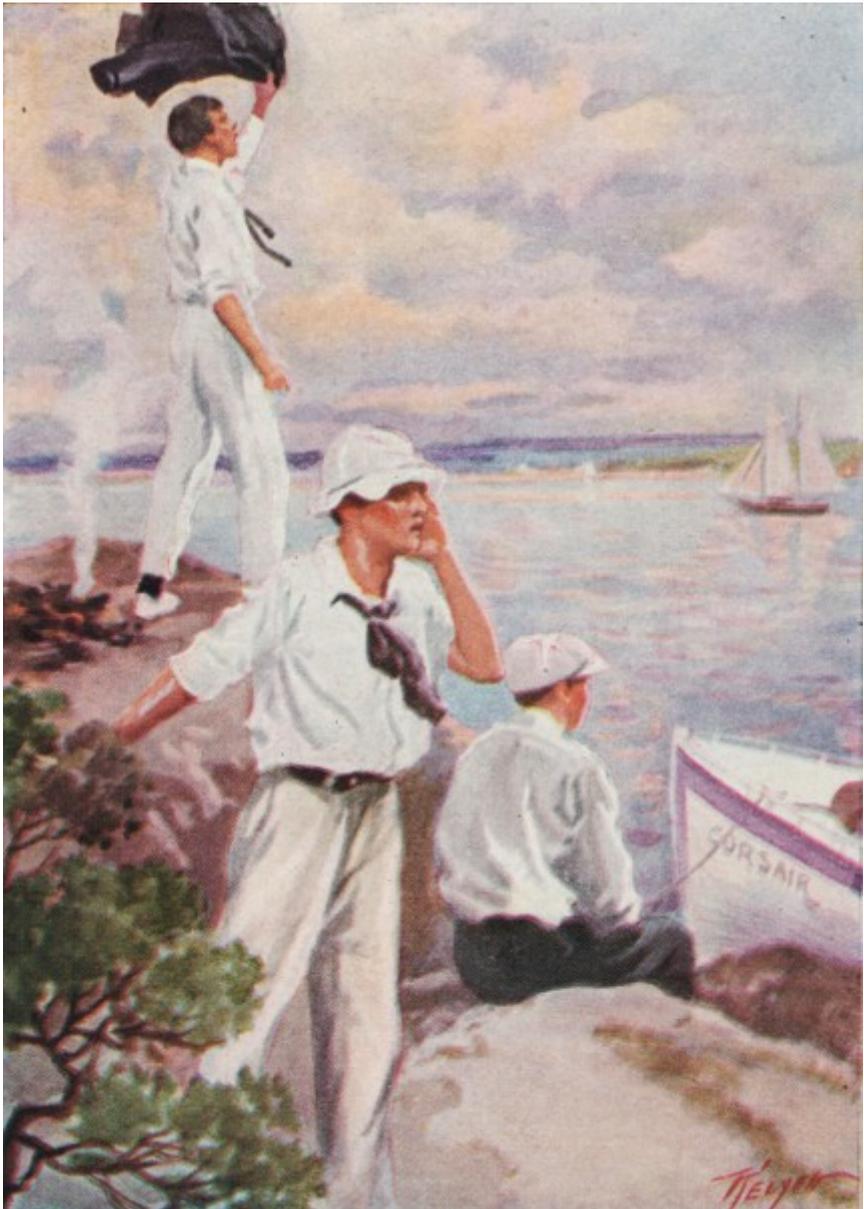
Jack smiled. “I don’t suppose I can,” he replied. “Not really, that is. But sometimes I think I can. It’s a trick I caught from my father. He could tell what the weather was going to be two days ahead. Now we’d better hustle around and build a fire; two fires, in fact. We’ll build one about the middle of the island, on the highest point, as a signal, and we’ll have one here near the door of our castle to keep us warm. I hope there’s plenty of driftwood. If there isn’t we may have to burn our roof up.”

By this time it was twilight and Popple Head Light glared across at them at intervals as though trying to make out what they were up to. There was plenty of small wood above high-water line, left there by the winter gales, and soon a good-sized beacon was blazing.

“I don’t know whether anyone will see that or know what it means if they do see it,” said Jack, “but it’s worth trying. Now we’ll pile some more wood here so we can keep it going until bedtime and then we’ll carry some back to the hut.”

By the time the second fire was lighted the boys were ready to sit down and rest. The flames threw a ruddy light

into the little hut and the three seated themselves just inside the doorway, out of the wind, which was now blowing sharply from the northeast, and discussed their chances of being rescued.



MAROONED.

“If Captain Horace sees that,” said Jack, “he may send out to see what’s up. The trouble is, though, that in the summer campers come out here sometimes, and he might think we were campers.”

“Who’s Captain Horace?” asked Hal.

“Captain Horace Tucker. He keeps the light. He’s a sort of uncle of mine.”

“I wouldn’t care a bit if I only had something to eat,” sighed Bee. “I think it’s rather jolly out here; this hut and the fire and—and all; but I surely would like to see a large, juicy sirloin steak walk around the corner!”

“How about gull eggs, Jack?” asked Hal. “Would they be any good?”

“Well, maybe they’d taste better than nothing in the morning, but I don’t believe we’re hungry enough to eat them yet. They’re pretty strong, Hal. Besides, I didn’t see any nests, did you?”

“No, but I wasn’t looking for them.”

“Well, I was, and I didn’t see one. Maybe in the morning, when it’s lighter, we can come across some. I have an idea, though, that gulls lay their eggs a good deal earlier than this.”

“Couldn’t eat a gull, could we?” asked Bee hopefully.

“No, not unless we were actually starving,” laughed Jack. “Then we’d get about the same effect by soaking our belts in salt water and eating those. By the way, Hal, have you any fishing tackle on the launch?”

“Not a thing—” began Hal. But Bee interrupted.

“Sure we have, Hal! We stowed our lines and hooks in the stern closet this morning, don’t you remember?”

“The ‘stern closet’ is good, Bee,” Jack laughed. “Well, that means we may have some breakfast if someone doesn’t take us off before.”

“Maybe old Honest Bill Glass swiped those things too,” said Hal.

“How could he when we used them this morning?” demanded Bee. “Don’t be a chump, old Hal! But say, Jack, we haven’t any bait. There was just a little left and I threw it away.”

“Mussels will do,” replied Jack. “Of course I don’t promise we’ll catch anything; sometimes you just simply can’t when you need to very badly; but we’ll have a try. And you don’t feel quite so hungry now if you know there’s a breakfast coming later.”

Bee sighed dolefully. “I’d swap that breakfast gladly for a light supper,” he said. “Let’s go to sleep, fellows. Maybe we can forget we’re starving to death.”

But they didn’t retire quite yet. The signal fire had to be replenished first and they all stumbled back to it over the rocks and threw more wood on, sending the crimson sparks flying far on the wind. Across the dark water the lights on Greenhaven Neck gleamed faintly and the white eye of the lighthouse seemed to follow them as they retraced their steps to the hut. They built up the fire at the doorway and then settled down for the night, lying side by side for warmth, against the more sheltered wall of the hut. For a while they talked, more and more drowsily every minute, with the sound

of the waves and the whistle of the wind in their ears. But the day had been a busy one and all were thoroughly tired and presently one by one they dropped off to slumber.

CHAPTER XIV

Bill Glass To The Rescue

Hal rolled over, yawning, and then opened his eyes and looked about him blankly. Through a doorway a glare of blue sea and golden sunlight smote his eyes. Where was he? He sat up and stared. Then recollection returned and he reached over and stirred Bee into wakefulness.

“Where’s Jack?” he asked. “Wake up, you old lazy-bones! Where’s Jack got to?”

In turn Bee gazed uncomprehendingly at the rough walls and ceiling of this strange bedchamber and then turned sleepy eyes toward Hal. “Hello,” he muttered. “Is it breakfast time? Where are we?”

“We’re on Hog Island,” replied Hal, “and you can bet it’s breakfast time all right, only I’m not sure about the breakfast. I wonder if that’s where Jack’s gone.”

“To breakfast?” Bee sat up suddenly, blinking. “Where is it?”

“It’s in the ocean, I guess. Maybe Jack’s gone fishing.”

Hal got up stiffly and went outside. Bee, still blinking in the glare, presently followed him. Sure enough, there was Jack in the stern of the *Corsair* with two lines over the side. Hal sent a hail and Jack looked up and waved.

“I’ve got four perch,” he shouted. “I’ll be back in a few minutes. Get the fire started.”

This they did, and then went down to the water and dabbed some on their faces. Somehow the thought of breakfast, now that they were up, didn't appeal to them. It was Bee who found the reason.

"Gee," he said, "I wish I could drink this stuff. I'm as thirsty as—as a sponge!"

"That's so," said Hal. "I was wondering what the matter with me was. You don't suppose there's any rain water anywhere, do you?"

"I don't know. There are some pools up there. Let's try them." They did, but with disappointing results. All the water they tasted was too brackish to drink. They walked over to meet Jack, who was pulling the launch in toward the ledge. It was a wonderful summer morning and the Neck lay green and beautiful across the blue sea. Afar off, a tiny speck beyond Popple Head and the white lighthouse, a lobsterman in a dory was visiting his traps. Seaward a schooner lay hull-down against the clear horizon. Aside from these the ocean was empty. Overhead a flock of gulls wheeled and mewed. Jack bore five small blue-perch when he reached them. He was immensely proud of them, but Hal and Bee viewed them with scant enthusiasm.

"I'd a heap rather have a drink of water," muttered Bee.

"I know," Jack agreed. "I'm a bit thirsty too. However, we won't have to stay here much longer. There'll be schooners coming out of the harbor before long; power boats, too. One went by just as I got out of the hut, but I couldn't make him hear or see. It wasn't very light then. Did you start a fire?"

"Yes," Hal answered.

“Then I’ll clean these and we’ll have breakfast. You won’t feel so thirsty after you’ve eaten something.” He looked toward the harbor entrance and saw the lobsterman. “I wonder if we can make him see,” he muttered. “I’ll have a try, I guess.” He passed the fish to Bee and climbed back to where the remains of the beacon smouldered, but, although for the better part of ten minutes he waved his cap and, finally, his jacket, the lobsterman paid no heed. “The sun’s back of us,” explained Jack, giving up at last, “and I guess he can’t see me. Well, let’s cook breakfast.”

The fish, although pretty bony, tasted good, after all, and Jack’s prophecy that they would feel less thirsty was verified. Afterwards they went to the top of the ledge and, seating themselves comfortably, began the watch for a rescuer.

But folks seemed unbelievably stupid today. One small schooner which came beating around Popple Head in the faint, flukey breeze from south, actually passed less than a half-mile away from them and the three castaways almost waved their arms off and shouted their lungs out in the endeavor to attract the attention of the four men visible on the schooner’s deck. They could see the man at the wheel plainly as he finally raised his hand and pointed toward the island, and they could see another man walk to the rail amidship and look across. But that was all that happened. Fifteen minutes later the schooner was making good headway toward Fort Point.

“She’s probably going hand-lining off Peterboro’ Shoal,” mused Jack.

“I hope they don’t catch a thing,” murmured Hal disgustedly.

“I hope they all fall overboard and are eaten by a shark,” declared Bee.

Jack laughed. “That shark wouldn’t have to have another meal for a month, would he?” he asked. “Here’s a motor boat coming down the shore, fellows. Let’s see if we can make him understand that we want to be rescued.”

But they couldn’t. The motor boat, one of the stub-nosed, wide-beamed half-cabin crafts used by the Portuguese fisherman, was well over toward the shore, and, although once they thought one of the two occupants waved back at them, the boat never changed its course. Several schooners slipped out of the harbor and sailed southward, and once a big red-hulled salt bark appeared in convoy of a tug and dropped anchor off The Lump. But at ten o’clock the boys still adorned the grassy plateau on the ridge of Hog Island and still gazed shoreward with diminishing hope. The sun was beating down all too ardently now and they were actually suffering for want of water. Finally Jack, with a despairing shake of his head, arose and took a long look around him. There were many sails in sight, but all far away.

“I guess, fellows, unless we can attract the attention of some boat on the outer side of the island it’s no good.” Jack nodded at the *Corsair*, swaying daintily about off the ledge below them, her neat varnished sides reflected waveringly in the water. “That’s what’s making the trouble. Folks see us waving and then catch sight of the launch and conclude that we’re a bunch of those idiotic campers amusing ourselves. If we could only hide the launch some way perhaps someone might come out to us. Anyway, it’s getting too hot here. Let’s

get back to the shady side of the hut. We can see pretty nearly as much from there, I guess.”

“I’d give everything I’ve got for a bucket of water,” said Bee sadly. “Even my third interest in the treasure.”

“Hang that old treasure, anyhow,” exclaimed Hal. “If it wasn’t for that we wouldn’t be out here parching up with thirst. If I ever do get off this place I’m going home and stay there!”

They made their way back to the hut and sank gratefully into the shade it afforded. Now and then Jack arose and climbed to a place where he could see the ocean on all sides, and it was on his return from one of these expeditions that he announced a scheme to rig up a signal of distress. “We’ll take the longest plank on the roof and set it up on top of the hut and tie something to it. I guess it will have to be your shirt, Hal; it’s nearer white than Bee’s or mine and can be seen plainer.”

Hal made no objection to providing the signal and they set to work. The longest plank proved to be a heavy, worm-eaten piece of oak not over seven feet in length. They collected small rocks from nearby and tossed them to the roof of the hut. Then Hal gave up his negligee shirt, a white flannel one with a pin-stripe of pink, and Jack secured it to the plank by the simple expedient of knotting the sleeves about it. After which Jack climbed to the roof, the signal was passed up to him and he set the plank on end and piled the stones around it. When they drew off to view it, however, it did not seem especially successful, since the breeze was too light to much more than stir the shirt. Now and then it fluttered away from the plank in the semblance of a flag, but for the most part it

hung quite limp and it seemed very doubtful that it would be noticed.

“Well,” said Jack, wiping the perspiration from his face, “it’s the best we can do. If the breeze would draw around into the east a little more I’d advise taking to the launch and trusting to being blown ashore. The tide’s setting in now, you see.”

“Why not try it?” asked Hal.

“Because with the wind as it is now we’d miss the island by a half-mile and keep on going all day, I guess. And we’d be pretty hot and miserable in that open launch with the sun beating down on us for six or eight hours. We’re better off here in the shade.”

There wasn’t much said for the next half-hour or so. Jack kept up his look-out, but nothing approached the island. Hal went to sleep and Bee closed his eyes and tried to follow suit. He had almost succeeded when Jack’s voice roused him.

“There’s a fellow in a dory making across from Eight-Fathom Cove,” said Jack eagerly. “He was going along shore at first, but now he’s turned and is headed straight this way. It looks as though he had seen our signal.”

Bee had to have the dory pointed out to him, since the sunlight on the water dazzled his eyes. Then for a long time they watched the approach of the boat, without awakening Hal, each moment fearing to see the rower change his course. “He must be coming here, though,” Jack murmured half aloud. “There aren’t any traps out that far, and no nets. Maybe he’s coming out this way to fish. Let’s get up on the roof and wave, Bee. We’ll take turns, though. I’ll go first.”

So Bee gave him a leg-up and he scrambled to the top of the hut and became a human semaphore. Finally, just when his arms were getting thoroughly tired out, the single occupant of the dory, which was not a half-mile or so distant, took off his hat and waved back.

“He sees us!” cried Jack. “It’s all right, Bee. Here, I’ll take Hal’s shirt down. Wake him up and tell him to put it on. That chap will be here pretty soon.”

“What are you going to do when he gets here?” asked Hal, who, having been awakened and had the situation explained to him, was now sleepily struggling into his shirt. “I don’t suppose he’s got any gasoline with him.”

“Maybe he’s got some water, though,” said Bee, longingly.

“We can do either of two things,” replied Jack. “We can get into the dory, go ashore, get gasoline and come back here for the launch, or we can make a dicker with him to tow the launch across to the cove. I guess he will do it if we offer him some money.”

By this time the dory was only a little way off. It had been green at one time, but most of the paint had departed. The man at the oars presented to view a broad back clad in a blue gingham shirt. On his head, in spite of the heat, was a felt hat. Jack gazed puzzledly for a moment. Then,

“Well, I’ll be blowed!” he exclaimed. “Who do you suppose it is, fellows?”

“Not that old thieving pirate?” cried Hal.

“That’s what! Honest Bill Glass!”

Hal bristled up immediately. “The old robber! Wait till I talk to him!”

“Don’t do it!” begged Bee in alarm. “Don’t get him mad, Hal, or he may turn back and leave us here. Wait until we get on shore. After that I don’t care what you say to him.”

“That’s good advice, Hal,” said Jack, with a smile. “Better not get him peevish, I guess. Let’s go down there and talk to him.”

Honest Bill Glass rowed his dory up to the side of the *Corsair* and looked her over. Then he turned to the boys on the edge of the rocks.

“Mornin’, shipmates!” he boomed across. “Changed your camp, I see. I never heard tell, though, of any treasure on Hog Island.”

“Our gasoline gave out yesterday afternoon,” replied Jack, “and the best we could do was make this island. We’ve been signalling ever since we got here and you’re the first to see us. Have you got any water aboard?”

“Not a drop,” replied the man. “Thirsty, be ye?”

“Just about dead,” said Jack. “Suppose you tow us across to Herrick’s Cove. We’ll all take a hand at the oars.”

Bill Glass tipped his hat back and scratched his head reflectively, looking across at the mainland. Finally, “Seems to me you could have rowed that launch across there before this,” he said. “Got oars, I cal’ate, ain’t ye?”

“The old scoundrel!” fumed Hal, none too quietly. “The old hypocrite!”

“No, we lost our oars,” answered Jack patiently. “Someone took them out of the launch, we think, night before last. So I guess unless you’ll give us a tow we’ll have to stay here.”

“Lost your oars, eh? I want to know! Well, mates, I’d like to take ye across, but it’s a long way over there and I be out fishin’. Tell ye what I’ll do, though. After I get through fishin’ I’ll come back here for ye. Time’s money to a poor man like I be, mates.”

“We’ll pay you for your time and trouble,” said Jack. “We’ll give you two dollars to tow the launch across, and we’ll help row. How’s that?”

“I’d like mighty well to oblige ye,” replied Bill Glass in his rumbling voice, “but two dollars won’t pay me for a day’s fishin’ lost, now will it? I leave it to you, mates.” He dipped his oars in the water. “Just ye wait till I be through fishin’ an’ I’ll come and fetch ye, sure as sure.”

“Why, you old—” began Hal. But Bee kicked him into silence.

“Well, we’ll call it three dollars, then,” returned Jack easily. “That’s more than you’ll make fishing, I guess.”

Bill had to consider that a long time. Finally, though, he replied. “It ain’t only time, mate; it’s the trouble too, ye see; an’ I be gettin’ oldish an’ ain’t so spry as I was. But Honest Bill Glass ain’t the kind to leave a shipmate in trouble. I always been one o’ the self-sacrificin’ kind, I have. So I’ll take ye across, shipmates, for a dollar a head.”

“All right,” said Jack.

“An’ a dollar for the launch,” added Bill Glass.

“Well—” began Jack.

“Cash in hand, mate. Mind ye, I ain’t doubtin’ your word, but business be business and it’s human natur to forget. Cash in hand, mates! a dollar a head *an*’ a dollar for the launch. All I’m seekin’ is just to square myself for a day’s catch, mates.”

“I’d rather stay here and starve!” exclaimed Hal, passionately. “Four dollars when he’s stolen our oars and— and—”

“S-sh, he’ll hear you!” warned Bee. “Don’t be an idiot, Hal. What’s four dollars? I’d give twenty for a glass of water this minute! Tell him yes, Jack.”

“But have we got the money? He says he’s got to have cash.”

“I’ve got it. But tell him we’ll give him two dollars now and two dollars when he lands us in the cove. I don’t trust the old reprobate, Jack.”

Bill agreed to those terms and in five minutes the boys were seated in the old dory and the *Corsair* was made fast behind it. Bill took up the oars and the journey began. “A gasoline boat,” observed Bill presently, “is a mighty uncertain thing, I cal’ate. There was a fellow by name of Sam Purley used to have one around here about ten years ago. ’Twant as handsome to look at as that one be, but it was a pretty good just the same. Well, one day Sam was out in her over by Tinker Ledge fishin’. Just such another day as this, it was, mates. An’ all of a twinkle—poof!—that there boat just bust into flames, Sam said. First thing he knowed she was scatterin’ gasoline all over the place an’ Sam he got

his share. Only thing he could do was jump overboard, which he did. No one ever seed anything of the boat afterwards, but Sam he was picked up by a coal-barge and taken down to Portsmouth. Pretty badly burned he was, too.” Bill turned and looked speculatively at the *Corsair*, bobbing along behind. “All of ’em’s likely to act the same way, I cal’ate. Uncertain, they be.”

Later Bill reverted to the subject of the oars. “Did I understand ye to say that your oars had been stolen?” he asked.

“They certainly were,” replied Hal belligerently.

“Sho!” Bill’s countenance expressed concern and innocence. The boys afterward agreed that an angel could have looked no more guileless than Bill Glass at that time. “Left ’em in the boat, did ye?”

“Yes, they were in one of the long lockers,” replied Jack. “We think someone took them night before last.”

“Also a boat-hook and a compass and a fog-horn and two lanterns and sixty feet of new rope!” added Hal angrily. “And I guess I know who got them, too,” he added meaningly.

Bill met his gaze unflinchingly. “I want to know! Compass an’ fog-horn an’ boat-hook, too! Well, well! I’m surprised, I be. ’Tain’t often anything’s stolen around these parts. We be pretty honest, we Greenhaven folks. But them Portigees, you can’t trust ’em, mates. They’d steal the wig off a bald-headed schoolmar’m. They’ll take most anything, they will. If I was you I’d keep things locked up. It’s pretty lonesome around Nobody’s an’ them Portigee fellows is forever sneakin’ around lookin’ for something to steal.”

“We’re going to keep things locked after this,” said Jack, “but that doesn’t help bring the other things back.”

“Well, you said you knowed who’d taken ’em. Cal’ate you might get ’em back, mate. If I was you I’d go straight up to ’em and say I knowed they had ’em. Like as not they’d give up.”

“We’re going to the police,” said Hal explosively. “That’s what we’re going to do. And we mean to get those things back.”

Bill nodded reflectively. “Well, that’s one way, and I ain’t saying it’s a bad way. Only thing is, mates, by the time them police officers gets started the fellow that’s got your gear may have hid it or sold it. Things like compasses an’ such sell like hot cakes. Well, I surely hope you get ’em back, mates. An’ here we be at our destination an’ all flags flyin’. I cal’ate you’ll be goin’ back to the island tonight, mates.”

“I think so,” replied Jack. “In fact, I know we shall.”

“Ain’t found that treasure yet, I cal’ate?”

“Not yet. Just row up to the spiling, please. That’s it. Much obliged. And here’s the rest of the money we owe you.”

“Much obliged to you, mates. Any time you want a service done just you call on Honest Bill Glass. Always glad to oblige, I be. Wish you luck, mates!”

From the *Corsair*, made fast to one of the spiles in Herrick’s Cove, the three boys watched Bill Glass row off around the point. Jack grinned. “He’s a jolly old villain, isn’t he?” he asked.

“Yes,” replied Bee. “And I wonder if he really did swipe those things. He looked so confounded innocent all the time!”

“Swipe them! Of course he swiped them!” exploded Hal. “I’ll bet you anything we’ve only got to go up to his cabin to find them. And I mean to do it, too! And if you fellows won’t come along I’ll go alone!”

CHAPTER XV

A Voyage of Discovery

Aunt Mercy and Faith were surprised to see them, surprised and pleased, too. And when, after they had drank all the water they wanted—which, by the way, took some time—she heard their account of the recent adventure. Aunt Mercy had quite a few remarks to make regarding foolhardiness. The boys listened very meekly, for, although the scolding was addressed to Jack, the others understood quite well that they were included in the audience, and waited for the squall to blow over.

“Hmph!” said Aunt Mercy finally. “Hmph! Now I suppose you’re ’most starved to death, ain’t you?”

“A—little hungry,” replied Hal. “But it doesn’t matter.”

“Of course it matters!” snapped Aunt Mercy. “Gracious goodness, how the boy talks! No victuals since yesterday noon—”

“We had a fish and a third apiece this morning,” ventured Bee.

Aunt Mercy sniffed her contempt. “No victuals since yesterday noon,” she repeated, “and now he says it doesn’t matter! Faith, why don’t you tell Susan to hurry dinner instead of sitting there with your mouth open and your eyes like saucers? And you’d better tell her to cook two or three slices of ham—”

There was an involuntary groan from Bee.

“What’s the matter?” asked Aunt Mercy.

“N-nothing, ma’am. Could I have another drink of water?”

“Hm; maybe she’d better not cook the ham,” said Aunt Mercy as she watched Bee hurry toward the big silver pitcher. “Tell her to cut some of the cold beef.” And when Faith had hurried out to the kitchen, “Now, I hope, you’ve all had enough of camping out,” she continued. “If you all insist on getting yourselves drowned, why, you can do it right here in the cove. I guess the water’s deep enough there.”

Hal looked doubtful, but Bee declared stoutly that they were having a dandy time and weren’t thinking yet of leaving the island. When Aunt Mercy appealed to Jack the latter disclaimed all responsibility. “You see, Aunt Mercy,” he said with a smile, “I’m hired out to Bee for a week, and I have to do just as he says.”

Aunt Mercy said “Hmph!” again and declared that she washed her hands of the “whole kit and kaboodle” of them. Whereupon she too departed for the kitchen to see about dinner.

“What’s a ‘kit and kaboodle’?” asked Bee anxiously.

“I don’t know,” answered Jack, “but it’s something Aunt Mercy’s acquainted with. Don’t worry, though; she isn’t really angry; that’s just her way. Wait until you see the dinner she’ll give us!”

They waited and they saw. It was a wonderful repast. Bee and Hal still talk of that dinner with enthusiasm. They each declare that it was the best they ever ate. There was picked-

up codfish and cold roast-beef and baked potatoes and string beans and crab-apple jelly and much home-made bread, still warm from the oven, and big bowls of blueberries and many, many slices of spice cake. And they ate it all and finished up with a pan of chocolate fudge that Faith had made the evening before. It was really worth while being nearly starved to have such appetites as they had and be able to satisfy them!

At two Jack took a wheelbarrow and went to the store and brought back a five-gallon can of gasoline. Then they embarked again in the *Corsair* and chugged across the harbor to the town landing. Jack saw to the purchase of more gasoline, Hal made a hurried visit to his home and Bee wandered off to buy oars, boat-hook and provisions. At a little after four they cast off again and began their return to Nobody's Island. Bee proudly displayed a brand new spade and Hal observed it without much favor.

"What's that for?" he asked. "Haven't we got a shovel already?"

"Yes, but now we can all work at the same time," replied Bee. "One of us can use the pick and the others can shovel."

"Gee, you think of the fooliest schemes!" grunted Hal. "Don't you ever have any pleasant thoughts?"

The return voyage was quite uneventful. The *Corsair* dipped and rolled along as though she had never caused a moment's uneasiness to anyone. Everything about the camp seemed the same as when they had left but Jack rowed out to the *Crystal Spring* to make certain that thieves had not visited her too. When he came back he reported all correct on

board. “They wouldn’t have found much, anyway,” he said, “but I’d rather they let things alone.”

Bee went down to look at the excavations and, had he received the least encouragement, would have started work again. But Jack and Hal were satisfied to lie in the sun and wait for it to come time to start supper. “It’s funny,” said Hal, “but in spite of all that dinner I ate I’m pretty nearly starved again!”

When Bee joined them he was again full of the subject of treasure hunting and tried to explain just what they were to do the next morning. But the others were decidedly unsympathetic. “Don’t talk digging tonight, Bee,” begged Hal. “After what we’ve been through we deserve perfect rest for at least twelve hours. It’s terribly wearing to be cast away on a desert island. Say, do you fellows smell anything?”

They sniffed and decided that they did.

“Smells like something gone dead,” said Bee. “I think it’s in the tent.”

Hal disappeared to investigate and presently returned with the fish they had caught the morning before held at arm’s length in front of him. “Something *has* gone dead,” he announced with averted head. “I think I’ll bury them in the trench.”

“You’ll do nothing of the sort,” exclaimed Bee. “Take ’em down and throw them in the ocean.”

So Hal, with a groan, descended the hill and obeyed instructions. Jack asserted that he was too tired to cook much that evening and so they contented themselves with a can of

tongue, bread and butter and tea and turned in early thoroughly wearied out.

The next morning, a cloudy, muggy morning it was, Bee went back to his digging as soon as breakfast was over, and the others felt that they could do no less than help him. It was warm, back-breaking work and the only thing that rewarded their labors after the third trench had been completed was a blue-gray stone, in shape like an elongated egg, with a groove running around the middle of it. Bee declared that it was the head of an indian war club, but Jack said it was only a stone that had been worn by the water. Anyhow Bee added it to his collection. By that time it was nearly noon and Jack's suggestion that they knock off work and take a swim met with instant agreement. The sea was smooth and oily and a cloud bank lay along the horizon. But the water was of just the proper temperature and they swam over to the *Crystal Spring* and dived off the deck and lazed around in the water and out until long after it was time to cook dinner. When, at last, a thick slice of steak was lifted from the frying-pan and apportioned amongst them they were so famished that Jack opened a can of baked beans and added that delicacy to the menu. Afterwards, Bee I think, wanted to dig again, but the repast had had its effect on even his enthusiasm and he joined Jack and Hal in their lazy efforts to hit the handle of the spade with stones from a distance of forty feet. It was while they were engaged in this amusement that Jack called their attention to a dory which had just come into sight around a bend of the river.

“The pirate,” said Bee. “Do you suppose he's coming here?”

“If he does,” said Hal grimly, “I’m going to hide everything we’ve got! I’m glad we had the sense to bring the oars and boat-hook up here with us yesterday.”

“We didn’t go down to see whether the anchor had been taken, though,” said Bee. “Look, the old rascal is waving at us.”

Bill Glass was just rowing by the little wharf. Jack waved back to him. “He’s not going to honor us with a call, I guess. He’s got two lobster-pots in the stern and I suppose he’s going out to drop them somewhere.”

“I wonder where he stole them,” murmured Hal. “Have you missed a lobster-pot, Bee?”

Bee patted his pockets gravely and shook his head. “No, I’ve got all mine,” he replied. They watched the man in the dory row out of the river and finally disappear around the Clinker.

“He’s probably going over to Eight-Fathom Cove,” said Jack. “That’s a great place for lobsters, or used to be.”

“Look here,” exclaimed Hal, “now’s our time!”

“What for?” Bee queried.

“To get our oars back, and the rest of the things. If we go up to the old pirate’s place and look around maybe we’ll find them. Let’s do it!”

“Pshaw, if he took them he’s got them hidden away by this time where we’d never find them,” replied Bee. “Maybe he’s sold them. Besides, how about our digging?”

“Digging!” cried Hal. “I want my oars and my compass and—”

“If we do go we’d better start pretty soon,” advised Jack. “We don’t want him to come back and find us snooping around, I guess.”

“All right,” agreed Bee. “Can we go in the launch?”

“I think so. How much does she draw, Hal?”

“Less than a foot, I think. I’ll get the oars. Even if we don’t find anything it’ll be fun. I’ve always wanted to explore the river.”

Five minutes later they were off, Jack at the wheel piloting the launch carefully over the sandbars that in places came nearly to the surface. Once or twice the *Corsair* scraped her keel and once they had to make their way through a patch of eel-grass and Jack told Hal to throw the clutch into neutral so the long green strands would not bind the propeller. They poled through the grass with an oar and went on again, the river narrowing every minute but growing no shallower. By the time they had followed the winding stream for a mile or so the banks on either side had become so high that it was only by craning their necks that they could see over them. The sun, although not actually visible, was filling the afternoon world with a golden haze and making itself felt if not seen. Here in the river, cut off from the breezes that slightly swayed the grasses on the edges of the banks, the heat was almost intolerable, while the mosquitoes, which hovered about the launch like a cloud, were, to use Bee’s phrase, blood-thirsty and ferocious. The *Corsair* had to proceed slowly and cautiously both because of the shallows

and of the abrupt turns and the boys were beginning to despair of ever reaching their destination when Jack, pointing ahead, called their attention to some rotting spiles standing on either side of the stream.

“There’s the old bridge,” he explained, “or what’s left of it. There used to be a sort of a cart-road through here. Anybody that wanted to could cut the marsh hay in those days and there used to be lots of teams over here. Bill Glass’s place can’t be much further, for we’re almost up to the railroad, I think. Climb up there, Bee, and see what you can see, will you?”

Bee balanced himself on the forward decking, fighting mosquitoes, and gazed about him. “A house about a half-mile over that way,” he reported. “At least, it’s sort of a house. And one to our right, a small cabin; two of them; or maybe one’s a shed.”

“They can’t both be on the river,” objected Jack.

“No, the first one’s away back, near the railroad. The other one’s on the river, I think. I guess we’ll fetch it in a few minutes. It looks as if it might be the pirate’s castle—or a pig-stye!”

“The other one is probably a Portugee shack,” said Jack. “There are several of them along the railroad. Any other cabin near Bill Glass’s?”

“Don’t see any. No, it’s the only one around. There’s a cluster of huts away down the track, but they’re a mile or more away. I guess we’ll get to Bill’s just around this turn, Jack. I don’t see how he lives here with all these mosquitoes, tough as he is!”

“If a mosquito bit Bill Glass,” growled Hal, “good-bye, mosquito.”

The river—although it was absurd to call it a river any longer since, as the Irishman put it, you could jump it in two jumps—broadened a little and the banks were lower; one could see across the broad expanse of salt-marsh and flats without straining one’s neck out of place. The *Corsair* chugged quietly and slowly around a long bend and suddenly two things happened; a heron—at least, Jack said it was a heron—took flight from the ledges with a startling beating of wings, and a little wharf jutted out from the bank just ahead.

CHAPTER XVI

The House of Many Clocks

It hardly deserved the name of wharf, for it was merely two planks supported on poles sunk in the sand, with a home-made ladder descending to the water. A rusty chain and padlock hung from one of the poles. The *Corsair* stopped its sober chugging and Jack guided it up to the ladder. The wharf jutted out some six feet from the bank into what was practically a tiny basin. Beyond it the stream narrowed again and went twisting off out of sight behind low banks covered with grasses and rushes. Just at the turn a few cattails showed that the little basin was probably the limit of tide-water and that beyond the stream was fresh. The boys made fast the launch and quietly climbed the ladder to the rickety landing. There was an old anchor up there and a battered tin can showing the remains of one or two defunct clams. A dozen feet from the bank stood the cabin, a small affair of drift-wood and old lumber, with a sagging door half open on its leather hinges, one small window and a roof variously covered with pieces of tin, sheet iron and tarred paper, from which a foot or so of stove pipe protruded. A few feet distant at the left was a still smaller structure, half hen-house and half shed. A few thin, wiry looking hens and a ridiculously long-legged rooster scratched about in the dirt outside. The shed open in front, held a motley collection of broken lobster-pots, spars, rigging and canvas. There was a chopping block there, with a hatchet sticking into it, and a pile of wood broken into stove lengths was stored in a corner.

Between wharf and house lay a litter of planks, a lobster-pot, a rotting fish-net draped over a carpenter's horse, a number of cork floats, some empty tin cans, a pot of blue paint and a paint brush and, supported between the lobster-pot and the carpenter's horse, a pair of oars, painted blue and still sticky to the touch.

"There they are!" exclaimed Hal triumphantly. "What did I tell you? He's gone and painted them blue!"

"Hm," said Jack, "It would be pretty hard to identify them, wouldn't it?"

"They're just the same length and everything," asserted Hal stoutly. "Of course they're mine!"

"They're yours if you say so and they're his if he says so," said Bee judicially. "I guess he's got ahead of us here, Hal. I don't believe we'd have any right to take them. We never could prove they were the oars that were stolen from us."

"But—but—" began Hal excitedly.

"Let's just look around a bit," said Jack, "and see if we can find anything else that belongs to you. We'd better not waste too much time, either. It's probable, Honest William is off for the day, but there's no telling." He pushed open the door and stepped inside the cabin and the others followed. It was so dark in there that for a moment they could see nothing clearly and while they waited to accustom their eyes to the gloom there was a sudden clamor that sent their hearts into their throats and sent them tumbling over each other's back through the doorway.

*Ding-ding, ding-ding, ding! Dong-dong, dong-dong, dong!
Tink-tink, tink-tink, tink! Ding-dang, ding-dang, ding!*

“Ship’s-clocks,” laughed Jack, “and dozens of them, from the noise! I guess they won’t hurt us. Come on.”

They stepped inside again just as the last clang died away, and Jack opened the door as far as it would go to afford more light. When they could finally see each of the boys gave expression to his astonishment.

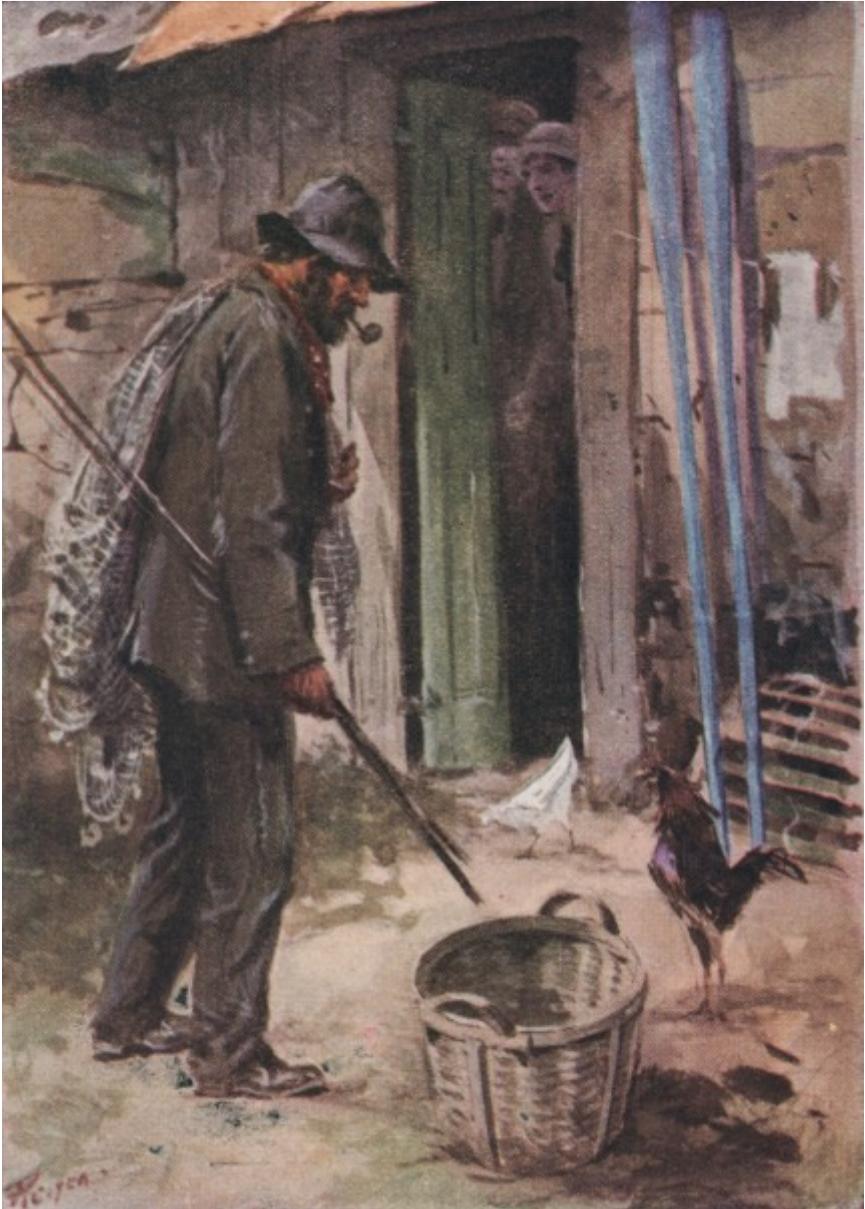
“Gee!” exclaimed Bee.

“Well!” cried Jack.

Hal grunted. “It’s a regular robber’s den,” he said.

The cabin was perhaps fourteen feet one way by twelve the other. Under the window was a small table with the remains of a meal on it. In one corner was a cook-stove, with a cupboard above it in which stood cooking utensils and a few groceries. In another corner was a bed. Perhaps bunk would describe it better, for it was built against the two walls for all the world like a ship’s berth. There was a seaman’s chest near the stove, a rocking chair near the door and a stool by the table. The floor was partly hidden by pieces of oilcloth and scraps of carpets. The walls had been at some time covered with paper, wrapping paper, newspaper, colored pictures, but over the paper hung as remarkable a collection of objects as one is likely to find outside a museum. Ship’s-clocks—Bee counted fourteen of them later—and sextants, quadrants, spy-glasses, lanterns, barometers, log-lines, rusty cutlasses and swords, a carbine or two and a flint lock musket, pictures of sailing vessels, flags and signals, brass rowlocks in bunches, a ship’s name-board bearing in faded gilt letters the inscription *Susan T. Moody*, the model of a full-rigged five-master in a glass case and, last of all, a parrot

in a cage. It was Bee who first spied the parrot and tiptoed up to it.



[THE HOUSE OF MANY CLOCKS.](#)

“Hello, Polly,” he said softly. But Polly refused to even wink. “Pretty Poll! Polly want a cracker?” The parrot

regarded him fixedly with glassy eyes.

“What’s the matter with you? Can’t you talk?” asked Jack. “You look—Oh, shucks, fellows, it’s only a stuffed parrot!”

“Wonder where he stole it,” said Hal, prodding it through the bars of the cage to make certain that it was really not alive. Just then there was a noise behind them and the three turned startledly to see a big yellow cat emerge from beneath the stove, arching his back and blinking gravely across at them.

“Gee, you scared me, pussy,” said Bee.

“What’s your name? Come over here and have your back rubbed, you old rascal.” The cat accepted the invitation, crossing the room to rub against their legs and purr ecstatically.

“Nice old kitty,” murmured Bee, scratching the cat’s neck. “Isn’t he a dandy, Hal?”

“Yes, I wonder where he stole him,” replied Hal darkly. Jack laughed.

“Hal, you haven’t a very good opinion of our friend Bill, have you? Well, there’s plenty of truck here, fellows, but I don’t see any compasses or fog-horns, although there’s a brass trumpet up there. If those are your oars out there, Hal, what do you suppose he did with the boat-hook?”

“And that new rope,” added Bee.

“They’re here somewhere, I guess,” answered Hal, surveying the room again. “Maybe the rope’s in the shed. There was a lot there.”

The cat leaped to the table and began to lick one of the dishes. "That's the way Bill gets his things washed up, I suppose," said Bee. "I wonder if we couldn't get a cat, fellows. It would save us a lot of bother!"

"I'll bet anything my compass and fog-horn are in that chest," said Hal, eyeing it suspiciously. "I guess I'll have a look."

"I wouldn't," said Jack. "We haven't any right in here really, and it wouldn't be a very nice thing to do, Hal."

"But he stole my things!" Hal objected.

"Maybe he did; I think so too; but I don't like the idea of sneaking into a man's house while he's away and prying into his chest. We'll have a look in the shed. Just hear those clocks tick. Funny we didn't notice them at first. He's got some dandies here, too. Look at this one, Hal. That must have cost sixty or seventy dollars."

"Wonder where he—"

"If you say that again," warned Bee, "I'll beat you. You're worse than a parrot! Come on out to the shed and let's see if we can't find the boat-hook."

"All right," said Jack. "Old Bill may be back soon and we might as well get away before he comes."

"Wait a minute," exclaimed Hal. "Look up there, fellows!"

They followed the direction of Hal's finger and saw a trap door that evidently opened into a space between the ceiling and the roof.

“I’ll bet you anything,” said Hal eagerly, “that that’s where he hides his loot.”

“What makes you think he plays a lute?” asked Bee flippantly.

“I’m going up there,” asserted Hal resolutely.

“Better not,” counselled Jack. “Anyway, I don’t see how you can. There’s no ladder in sight.”

“I don’t need any ladder. You fellows lift me up and I can push off that hatch and get through. I don’t believe it’s locked.”

“I don’t like it,” said Jack. “After all, the things didn’t cost very much, and you’ve bought new oars and—”

“I don’t care if they only cost ten cents,” replied Hal doggedly. “They’re mine and I mean to have them if they’re there. If you fellows won’t help me I’ll go out and find a ladder; or I’ll move the table under here and—”

“Don’t be a silly goat,” pleaded Bee. “If your things are up there the hatch is sure to be locked. Come on and be sensible.”

“It can’t be locked. There’s no lock there. Look for yourself.” Hal measured the distance from floor to ceiling with his eye and looked speculatively at the table on which the yellow cat had curled himself up and was washing his face. “Anyhow, I mean to have a try at it and I think you fellows might give me a lift. If they were your things that were stolen I’d try to help you get them instead of siding with the thief!”

“Well—” began Bee irresolutely.

But just then a shadow darkened the doorway and,

“Ho, mates,” said a deep gruff voice, “makin’ yourselves
to home I see!”

CHAPTER XVII

The Invader's Retreat

The three boys started guiltily and stared in consternation at the figure in the doorway, whose wide shoulders stretched almost from lintel to lintel. With the light behind him, it was impossible to see the face distinctly, but there was no mistaking that voice nor that figure. It was Bill Glass himself. Hal, courageous in the conviction of his wrongs, recovered first.

“We were looking around,” he said with a suspicion of insolence that made Bee glance uneasily at the window. “You have so many interesting things here, Mr. Glass, and I’ve been wondering where you—” Bee made up his mind to sell his life dearly—“got them all.”

Bee in his relief subsided in the rocking chair. Bill Glass entered the cabin with a rumbling chuckle that seemed to start at his shabby boots and grow in volume all the way up.

“Interestin’s just the word, shipmate. Some o’ them things could tell stories what would make them eyes o’ yours stick plumb out o’ your head if they could talk. Sit ye down, mates, sit ye down. Nice kind o’ weather for the time o’ year.”

“I guess we’ll be going,” said Jack carelessly. “We just thought we’d drop in. Not finding you at home, we took the liberty of looking around.”

Bill nodded soberly. "Right you be, right you be. I thought maybe, though, you seen me goin' out that time you waved to me."

"Oh, was that you in the dory?" asked Bee innocently.

"That was me, mate, but I cal'ate you couldn't tell at that distance."

"Oh, we knew you," said Hal rashly and rudely. "What's more, we're getting to know you better all the time."

Bill Glass blinked untroubledly. "That's right, mate. We be neighbors in a way o' speakin' an' neighbors ought for to be friendly. I take it kind o' ye to call, mates."

Jack couldn't make up his mind whether the man was speaking sarcastically or not. "You—you've got a real cosy place here," he murmured.

"It does well enough for a chap like I be," agreed Bill. "Not much in the way o' luxury, you see, but comfortable, comfortable. I ain't a-sayin' that I wouldn't like a fine house on Church Hill, mates, an' a carriage to drive about in an' servants to wait on me, but I be contented, I be contented. There's many that lives in fine state an' ain't no happier'n I be; not so happy, likely. It's a clean conscience, mates, as brings joy and happiness. Poor I be, but honest. That's me, shipmates all, Honest Bill Glass."

"That's a nice pair of oars you have out there," said Hal with apparent irrelevancy.

"Eh? Oh, them oars. Yes, they be a good pair."

"I see you've just painted them," Hal pursued in spite of the appealing glances of Bee and Jack.

“Yes, I have to do that mates, so’s they won’t be taken by mistake. Them Portigees ain’t particular whose oars they row with. That’s why I likes to have ’em a distinguishin’ color, so to speak. Now if you had had your oars painted mates, I guess maybe you wouldn’t have lost ’em.”

“We didn’t lose them; they were stolen from us,” replied Hal sharply.

“But what,” interposed Jack hurriedly, “is to keep anyone from painting them over another color?”

“Well, they might, an’ that’s a fact, but they ain’t so likely to. Haven’t found your oars yet, have ye?”

“No, not yet,” Jack replied. “We haven’t had time to look around much.”

“We know where they are, though,” said Hal meaningly. “I guess we won’t have to look very far for them.”

“I want to know! Well, I was thinkin’ as how maybe you’d like to buy a good pair. That pair there might suit ye an’ I’d let ’em go right down cheap; say two dollars to you, mates.”

Hal grew so red in the face that Bee feared results and so jumped to his feet. “Let’s—let’s go out and look at them,” he stammered nervously.

“We’ve got a new pair,” exploded Hal, “and I wouldn’t buy those from you, anyway, you—you—”

“That’s so,” cried Jack hurriedly. “We bought a pair yesterday. You see, we went to town after you left us. We bought a boat-hook too, and—and other things.”

“Did ye now?” asked Bill regretfully. “I wish I’d known ye was intendin’ to buy. I could have sold you oars cheap. An’ I’ve got a boat-hook ye might have had too.” He blinked benevolently as he followed them outside. The sun had appeared at last and the mist was rolling inland across the marsh. Hal, almost choking with repressed emotion, was dragged aside by Jack.

“Don’t be silly,” begged the latter. “There’s no use in getting the old chap down on us. There’s no telling what he might do; set fire to the sloop, perhaps, or steal the launch. It doesn’t do any good, Hal.”

“Oh, all right,” muttered Hal, “but those are my oars, and he knows it! And you heard what he just said about the boat-hook!”

“Yes, but it may not be yours, and—”

“It is mine!” He turned suddenly toward Bill Glass. “Say, I might buy that boat-hook if you don’t want too much for it. May I have a look at it?”

“Cert’nly! Cert’nly!” Bill walked over to the shed and fumbled for a moment amongst a pile of stuff on the rafters.

“I’ll know it in a minute if it’s mine,” whispered Hal. “It was brand new and—”

“Here ye be, mate.” Bill Glass came back with the article in his hands. “Pretty nigh as good as new it be, too.”

Jack and Bee grinned at the expression of surprise and disappointment that overspread Hal’s countenance as he looked at the boat-hook. It was weather-stained to the hue of an old fence-post and the brass hook on the end was covered

deep with verdigris. Jack thought that Bill Glass had a mocking twinkle in his good eye as he offered the implement for inspection. Hal, however, took one disgusted look at it and waved it away.

“I don’t want it,” he said ungraciously. “It isn’t the one—I mean it’s too old. Come on fellows!”

“Fifty cents takes it,” urged Bill. “It’s a bargain, mate.”

But Hal was marching straight for the wharf and Bee and Jack followed perforce. Bill Glass ambled along behind, boat-hook in hand. He watched silently while Jack unfastened the painter and Hal kicked the switch on angrily and twirled the fly-wheel over. Then, with the engine running, he remarked:

“Cute things, they be, them motor-boats. Times I think I’ll have to get me one, mates.”

“Great Scott!” exclaimed Bee involuntarily. Luckily the humming of the engine partially drowned his voice. Hal threw the lever forward and the *Corsair* made a rush across the little basin as though determined to climb the further bank.

“Hey!” bawled Jack at the wheel. “Whoa, for the love of mud!”

Hal made a clutch at the throttle with one hand and pulled back the lever with the other just in time. Jack, scampering across the little decking forward, tried to fend the boat off the bank with his feet, but the momentum buried her nose a foot deep in the mud and sand.

“Reverse her slowly, Hal!” he called. Hal, completely flustered by this time, threw the lever forward again. The propeller churned wildly and the *Corsair* dug further into the bank.

“Don’t cal’ate,” observed Bill Glass mildly from the wharf, “you can go much further in that direction, mates.”

Hal finally got the lever at reverse and, after a moment’s struggle, the *Corsair* backed out into the pool. Jack spun the wheel, Bee fended the launch away from the wharf and at last she was straightened out. “All right,” called Jack. “Let her go!”

The launch poked her nose down-stream and Bill Glass waved politely with a big brown hand. “Come again, mates,” he rumbled, “come again. If I ain’t here, just make yourselves to home!”

CHAPTER XVIII

Bee Finds A New Clue

For a quarter of a mile there was little conversation aboard the *Corsair*. Hal, very red in the face, slathered oil right and left, a certain sign nowadays of mental unrest, while Jack piloted the launch and Bee, able seaman that he was, sat in the waist, hands in pockets, and whistled softly. At last, however, Hal burst forth.

“That wasn’t my boat-hook,” he declared angrily, “but he’s got mine, all right, the old robber!”

Bee smiled. “Do you know, fellows, I’m sort of getting to like Bill. He’s got a sense of humor, hasn’t he? That was a nice delicate touch of his when he brought out the wrong boat-hook!”

“Huh!” grunted Hal disgustedly.

When they reached Nobody’s Island Hal insisted on carrying away from the launch and the dory everything removable and would have taken the rudder-wheel off had not Jack pointed out the difficulty of re-attaching the wire rope. When they reached the tent Hal gave an exclamation of triumph.

“There!” he proclaimed. “I guess I’m not such an idiot as you fellows think! Somebody’s been here since we left. Look at those boxes. We didn’t leave them that way.”

“That’s so,” acknowledged Jack.

“Here’s a footmark that doesn’t belong to any of us, either,” announced Bee, pointing to the imprint at the opening of the tent of a broad-soled shoe. “Dollars to doughnuts, fellows, it was Honest Bill again.”

Jack began to laugh. “Well, that’s rather a good one on us, isn’t it?” he asked. “While we were ransacking Bill’s castle he came and paid us the same compliment!”

Bee grinned delightedly. “That’s what! Isn’t he the funny old cut-up?”

“I don’t see any fun in it,” grumbled Hal. “Instead of laughing your fool heads off you’d better see what he’s stolen!”

But after an examination of their belongings it was not apparent that anything was missing. Hal refused to believe such a thing possible for awhile, and when convinced declared that their visitor couldn’t have been Bill Glass. “He’d never have come here and not swiped something,” insisted Hal with deep conviction. “It wouldn’t be like him.”

“I wouldn’t be surprised,” said Jack, “if he laid a trap for us, fellows. I dare say he wanted to see what we had here and thought that if we saw him going away we’d go up there to find Hal’s things. Then as soon as we’d gone he came back here, and overhauled our truck. If he didn’t take anything it was probably because he didn’t find anything he wanted.”

“Still,” objected Bee, “he did have some lobster-pots in his dory when we saw him and they weren’t there when he got back.”

“That’s easy. He might have left them most anywhere. Maybe, for that matter, he really did put them down

somewhere nearby. Anyhow, I'm pretty sure he meant us to leave camp awhile so that he could look about."

"He's a regular old pirate, that's what he is," said Hal. "He must have robbed a ship-chandler's to have got all that stuff he had up there."

"More likely to have picked the things up one at a time, just as he picked up your things," said Jack. "Well, the only thing to do is to see that he doesn't add any more of our property to his museum of antiquities. What I don't understand is why he keeps all that truck. What does he want of fourteen or fifteen clocks and all those sextants? Why doesn't he sell them and get money?"

"Perhaps," suggested Bee, "he is a collector. That might explain a lot, for they say that when a man has the collecting bee in his bonnet he isn't always too particular how he gets things. Maybe Honest Bill really is honest—according to his ideas!"

"Well, they're not mine," grumbled Hal. "I don't care about the value of the things he stole, but it makes me mad to have him get away with it! And to think of his having the cheek to offer to sell me my own oars!"

"That was another delicate touch of humor," laughed Bee. "I thought you were going to burst right up, Hal, when he said that!"

"I'd like to punch his head," said Hal.

"Maybe, but I wouldn't advise you to try it," replied Jack grimly. "He could take the three of us and bump our heads together, I guess. He looks as strong as an ox. What are we going to have for supper, fellows? I'm getting hungry."

The next day began uneventfully. Bee insisted on digging, and after breakfast they started operations again. By eleven o'clock there were two more trenches along the hillside and the three boys were about tired out. They went in swimming before dinner, however, and discovered that they were not too weary to eat. It was a frightfully hot day and even Bee hadn't the heart to suggest more labor after the mid-day meal. Instead, he wandered off by himself on a round of the island. He had begun to lose faith in the locality he had selected to dig in and was quite ready to start operations elsewhere if he could only decide on a new place. But one spot looked as likely to yield buried treasure as another. He strove to picture the island in Old Verny's day, but try as he might he could not convince himself that the cabin had been located anywhere but on the side of the hill where they had dug. And yet they had already very thoroughly explored a territory some thirty feet by fifty without result and two more trenches would bring them as close to the beach as it seemed advisable to go. After that, then, the next step appeared to be to lengthen the trenches. But searching for buried treasure was beginning to lose its lure even for Bee, while as for the others, they were already exhibiting indications of mutiny. He sighed as he came back within sight of the camp. If only there was a little more certainty as to the existence of the treasure!

Jack and Hal were fast asleep, stretched out on their beds, Jack snoring frankly and vigorously. Bee took a seat outside in the shade where a mere suggestion of breeze crept past him. From there he looked straight down-hill at the trenches which, with their mounds of upthrown earth between, looked unpleasantly like a row of graves on a battle-field! One

consolation, he reflected, was that the farther down the hill they went the easier the digging became, and the next two trenches would be excavated in sand. His gaze wandered to the left and fell on the small, grotesquely-shaped tree that stood alone just above the beach at the beginning of the slope. The few leaves it bore hung dejectedly in the scorching heat. Bee experienced a feeling very much like sympathy for the tree when he thought of the winter storms it had stood up against all these years. "Plucky little thing," he reflected. "I wonder what sort of a tree it is." His vagrant curiosity got the better of his disinclination to move and he arose and loitered down the slope through the blazing sunlight. The tree was scarcely four inches thick at the base of the trunk and its gnarled branches, the highest of which hardly topped Bee's head, grew out at all sorts of impossible angles. The leaves were short and ovate and looked—Bee frowned—yes, they really did look like apple-tree leaves! He wished he knew more botany. Of course the tree couldn't be an apple-tree, for what would an apple-tree be doing here? Perhaps, though, a bird might have dropped a seed or—yes, that was it! Jack had said that picnickers sometimes came to the island. Probably years ago someone had thrown an apple core away. Bee studied the tree again. Somehow, it looked older than its size would indicate. Then he kicked away the sand and earth at the foot and found the remains of a larger trunk, so rotten that it crumbled into brown fragments under his shoe. So, then, there had been a bigger tree there at one time, he reflected. Perhaps a gale had blown it down. At all events, the present tree had grown from the trunk of the former. But was it really an apple-tree? If so the original tree might have been standing when Old Verny lived on the island. Perhaps he had planted it! And in that case—Bee felt

a thrill of excitement!—why, in that case maybe the cabin had stood near the tree! What more likely than that Old Verny had planted the tree beside his house? Only—*was* it an apple-tree? Perhaps Jack or Hal would know. He hurried up the hill and awakened the astonished and protesting boys in the tent.

“Wha—what’s the row?” asked Hal sleepily.

“Do you know an apple-tree when you see one?” demanded Bee eagerly.

“Do I know—Say, what sort of a joke is this? Why don’t you let a fellow alone?”

“It isn’t a joke at all,” replied Bee earnestly. “Come on, you fellows, and look at the tree down there. I want to know if it’s an apple-tree.”

“What if it is?” demanded Hal. “Aren’t any apples on it, are there?”

“No, but if it’s really an apple tree it means that we’ve got a clue at last!”

“A clue? What sort of a clue?” asked Jack. “And suppose it’s a pear tree?”

“A clue to the location of the treasure. Come on, please!”

They went, Hal mumbling that for his part he couldn’t tell an apple-tree from a hat-tree. But Jack had more acquaintance with the subject and only had to look once at the tree to reach a decision.

“It’s an apple-tree,” he declared.

“Hurrah!” said Bee.

“Tiger!” added Hal. “But what difference does it make whether it’s an apple tree or a pear tree or a—or a cauliflower?”

“None.”

“Then what’s all the shouting about? Why do we have to leave our perfectly good beds and streak down here in the sun with the thermometer at a thousand and twenty and look at a silly old tree? Hey?”

“Come back into the shade and I’ll tell you,” replied Bee with a laugh at his chum’s disgust. “It’s like this,” he continued when they were in the lee of the tent. “If that’s an apple-tree it’s pretty certain that it didn’t grow there by accident; I mean without—er—human agency. Either it was planted or an apple core was tossed there or a seed was dropped. How old should you say that tree was, Jack?”

“Oh, I don’t know; six years, ten years. It’s hard to say, Bee, because a tree in an exposed place like this grows very slowly. There’s a cedar near the old fort that they say is eighty-odd years old and it’s only about twelve feet high and the trunk is twisted around and around like a huge big rope.”

“Well, say eight years?”

“That’s safe, I think.”

“All right. But that tree didn’t grow from a seed, fellows; it sprang up from the trunk of an older tree that was broken off or died down to the ground. The old tree looks to have been about a foot across. If you look you’ll find the stump of it yet. Now what I claim is that the old tree was either planted by Verny or else sprang up from a seed he dropped there.”

“But why Verny?” asked Hal skeptically. “Why not anyone else? Lots of people have camped out here before us, Bee.”

“Because the older tree must have been at least thirty years old before it died, and I don’t believe many people came to this island that long ago. What do you say, Jack?”

“I don’t believe they did. You think, then, that Old Verny ___”

“Planted that tree, or the seed of it, forty years or more ago, and that he planted it *near his cabin!* And just as soon as it gets a little cooler, fellows, that’s where we’re going to dig!”

CHAPTER XIX

Bill Returns The Call

They weighed the pros and cons of Bee's theory for the better part of an hour. Hal advanced all the arguments he could think of against it, but Jack sided with Bee almost from the first. "I don't say you're right, Bee," he stated, "but I do think it's a pretty good theory. And as we haven't anything better to go by we might as well grab the theory. If that tree was there when Old Verny lived here it's fair to suppose that it was near the cabin; perhaps right alongside of it. And maybe when he buried his chest of treasure he buried it under the tree. I guess we'd all be mightily surprised if we found it there, though!"

"It's somewhere near the tree, anyway," declared Bee with enthusiastic conviction.

"Then," asked Hal, "what about your theory that the cabin stood inside of the triangle you figured out?"

"Well, the tree is only about twenty feet out of the triangle, and if the cabin stood to the left of the tree it would be practically inside it, you see. I wonder, now, which side of the cabin Old Verny would have planted a tree. That would have been on the west side."

"He'd have planted it on the south or east side, I would think," said Jack. "But maybe he didn't know much about such things. Then, too, the tree may have sprung up from a seed dropped by accident."

“I guess,” decided Bee, “we’d better assume that the tree was in front of the cabin, perhaps near the door. That would be the south side, where it would be sheltered pretty well from winds and would get lots of sunlight.” He looked down the slope and examined the ground. “It isn’t very steep right there, either.”

“It’s pretty near high-water, though,” Hal objected. “In winter a storm would drive the waves almost into the cabin, wouldn’t they, Jack?”

“N-no, I don’t believe the water ever gets up that high because, you see, Toller’s Rock jutting out there like that is a good deal of a protection. Still, it seems to me more likely that the cabin stood higher up.”

“Well, we’ll dig at the tree first,” said Bee, “and then we’ll—er—radiate out from it.”

“I’m no silly radiator,” grumbled Hal. “Besides, I have blisters on my poor little paws.”

“Any more excuses?” laughed Bee.

“Well, I think we should have some fish for supper. Tell you what, you two; I’ll catch fish while you dig up the treasure. If I’m not here when you find it you won’t have to divide up with me; see? I’ll what-do-you-call-it-em-relinquish all claim to it, Bee. Do it for you in writing, if you like.”

“No one can read your writing,” responded Bee unkindly. “And, anyhow, you’re going to stay right here and swing a pick.”

When, finally, Bee's impatience would brook no further delay and he gave the word to start work, the three descended to the scene of operations, shovels and pick in hand. Even Hal was slightly excited and plied his pick with a good will. The trunk of the old tree was uncovered and they found themselves digging through a veritable network of roots. It seemed as though the tree, unable to make its normal growth above ground, had determined to work off its natural energies below, for such a root-system as they encountered appeared quite out of proportion to the size of the tree. Bee ruled that the tree was not to be injured and was very indignant when Hal carelessly sent his pick squarely through a big root. Whereupon Hal declared that he didn't pretend to be a fancy picker and that if Bee wasn't satisfied with the way he was doing it he (Bee) could plaguey well do it himself!

It took them over an hour to prove to their satisfaction—and disappointment—that the treasure was not concealed within three feet in any direction from the tree. Then, their enthusiasm somewhat abated, they rested on their tools and considered what to do next. It was finally decided that they should dig a series of trenches up the slope, starting at the tree. Luckily there were few rocks thereabouts and the soil provided easier labor. They had just started on the first trench when Hal said:

“There's Bill the Pirate down there, fellows.”

He was just swinging his dory up to the little wharf when they looked, and presently he appeared over the bank of the river with a bucket on his arm and headed toward them.

“Now what do you suppose he wants?” growled Hal. “And what’s he got in the pail?”

“He’s probably returning your compass and fog-horn,” said Bee. “His conscience has troubled him.”

But when Bill Glass drew near it became evident that the pail held not a compass and a fog-horn, but clams!

“Howdy do, mates?” he greeted, coming to a stand and setting the pail down. “Thought maybe you’d like a few clams. I been diggin’ an’ got ’bout a bushel of ’em. Fond o’ clams, be ye?”

“Very,” responded Jack politely. “How much are they?”

“Oh, well, I won’t make no charge today. If you like ’em you just let me know an’ I’ll fetch some more some day an’ you can pay me for ’em. I usually gets thirty cents for that many.”

“We’d rather pay for them, thank you,” said Hal stiffly.

“You can’t,” replied Bill with a smile. “They ain’t for sale today. They be a present from a neighbor, mates. I’ll take ’em up and dump ’em somewheres so’s I can have the bucket.” But he didn’t start at once, after Bee and Jack had somewhat embarrassedly thanked him, but stood looking at the excavations they had dug around the tree. That is, his good eye looked at the hole in the ground and his glass eye gazed dreamily out to sea.

“I knowed you’d do that afore long,” he observed presently.

“Do what?” demanded Hal truculently.

“Dig by the tree. They most of ’em does. I did myself, mates. Just the same, I wouldn’t been surprised if you’d missed it, cause the old tree blowed down ’bout ten years ago an’ this one ain’t never made much of a showin’.”

“Oh!” said Bee. “Then—then this has been dug up before?”

“Lots o’ times, mate. It’s what you might call a fav’rite spot. Ain’t found much, I cal’ate.”

“Nothing yet,” responded Bee, with a sigh. “We thought that probably the old tree stood near the cabin.”

“Maybe, maybe; I don’t seem to remember it.”

“Seems to me it’s mighty funny,” observed Hal, “that you don’t remember where the cabin stood if you were around here then.”

“I was a youngster then,” replied Bill, “an’ forty year’s a long time, mate. Then, too, my memory ain’t what it used to be.”

“But don’t you recall whether the cabin was on this side of the island?” asked Bee.

“Well, I’m nigh on to certain it wa’n’t on any other side,” replied Bill Glass reflectively.

“Then it must have been on this side,” concluded Bee eagerly.

“’Tain’t unlikely, ’tain’t unlikely, mate. Have you found your oars an’ things yet what was stolen from ye?”

“Not yet,” answered Jack, with an apprehensive glance at Hal, who, leaning on the handle of the pick, was viewing Bill

Glass with frank dislike. “We—we haven’t taken any steps in the matter yet.”

Bill shook his head. “Wouldn’t leave it too long, mates,” he said. “Them Portigees be slippery critters. Like as not the feller as took them things has sold ’em by now over to Tuckersville. Would you know ’em again if you seen ’em?”

“Yes, even if they’d been painted!” snapped Hal.

“That’s fortunate, then, for you might look in the junk shops an’ get ’em back. Well, I’ll take these clams along up. Wish you good luck, mates.”

“I’ll go with you and find a pan or something to put them in,” said Jack. Bill was silent until they reached the tent and had emptied the clams out into the receptacle Jack provided. Then, with a jerk of a big, stubby thumb over his shoulder:

“He don’t like me, that young feller. I know his father. Used to sail on his boats. Fine man, but pig-headed as all get-out, he be. Well, so long, mate. Hope you like them clams.”

“Thank you,” answered Jack. “We’re very much obliged to you. I wish, though, you’d let us pay you for them.”

Bill shook his head as he swung his pail to his arm and thrust his big hands into the pockets of his trousers, which, today, were tucked into a pair of rubber boots. “I don’t want no money for ’em, mate,” he growled. “I be in debt to ye, in a way o’ speakin’, an’ Honest Bill Glass always pays his debts, mate. Cal’ate we be in for a storm afore long.” And Bill tramped off slowly down the hill to the wharf, leaving Jack to wonder what he had meant.

“In debt to us,” muttered Jack. “Now awwhat did he mean by that?”

“He meant,” said Hal, when Jack repeated the remark, “that he owed me for the things he stole out of my boat. What else could he mean?”

“He might have meant,” replied Bee thoughtfully, “that he had a grudge against us. If he has I hope he’ll forget to pay us back.”

“I don’t believe it was that,” Jack doubted. “He seemed quite friendly. He wouldn’t have brought the clams unless he meant well, I guess.”

“They’re probably poisoned,” said Hal promptly. “You don’t catch me eating any of them!”

“Oh, don’t be a silly goat,” begged Bee. “What would he want to poison us for? Besides how the dickens could anyone put poison in a clam? Look at them; they’re closed as tight as a— a drum.”

“I wouldn’t trust him, though,” responded Hal, unconvinced. “A man who will steal will do anything.”

“Poppycock! You’ve got an overwrought imagination, whatever that is. You ought to write detective stories, Hal. ‘The Poisoned Clams, or the Pirate’s Revenge!’ How’s that for a corking title?”

CHAPTER XX

Trained Clams

There was no more digging done that afternoon, although Bee returned to the scene of operations and, seating himself with his feet in a trench, spent a full half-hour ruminating amongst the ruins, as Jack put it. Bill Glass had somewhat tarnished their enthusiasm. If the locality had already been dug up at least once what was the use of doing it again. Bee came back to the tent finally to lend a hand at the supper preparations, acknowledging himself “quite discouraged.”

The sun had worked down behind a mass of sullen, coppery-gray clouds by the time the fire was started and Jack, feeling of the air, as Bee called it, shook his head and predicted bad weather on the morrow. “I don’t believe we will be able to do any work, fellows,” he said. “Looks to me like a good big gale coming. Perhaps, if it isn’t bad in the morning, we might go home and wait for it to pass.”

“I’d like to be here in a gale,” said Bee. “I should think it would be stunning.”

“Ye-es, but a tent, even a rain-proof one, isn’t exactly the place to stay in a nor’easter, especially if it hangs on for a couple of days, as it’s quite likely to.”

“Me for home and mother,” declared Hal. “Why not make it tonight?”

“Oh, shucks, there isn’t going to be any storm!” Bee scoffed. “Look at that sunset! Besides, there isn’t a cloud in

the sky, except a few over there in the west. If it looks bad in the morning we'll go back, but don't let's spoil a jolly evening. How are you going to cook those clams, Jack?"

"In wet seaweed, and you're going to get the seaweed," replied the chef. Jack put the water on to boil and then took the clams down to the beach. Under his direction Bee and Hal set about gathering seaweed and driftwood, while Jack scooped a shallow bowl in the sand and set a few stones about the edge. In this a fire was started, and, leaving the others to keep it going, Jack returned to his "stove" at the tent. Up there he boiled the tea, emptied the contents of a can of baked beans into a frying pan and cut the bread. When he got back to the fire on the beach it was a roaring pit of flames, and Hal and Bee, panting and perspiring, were lying at a respectful distance, resting from their exertions. Jack searched until he found a pole and with it poked at the fire until Bee protested.

"We've nearly killed ourselves building that," he said, "and now you're simply ruining it. First thing you know it will get peevish and bite you, Jack."

"I want to hurry it along. We've got to have a nice big bed of coals before we can do anything. Run up and see about those beans, Bee, like a good fellow. I don't want them to burn. And you might put one or two small pieces of wood on the fire up there."

Bee arose with a groan. "Gee, this thing of cooking supper all over the island is no cinch," he murmured. "I wonder why we didn't do it right and have two or three more fires scattered around."

Presently Jack threw off the burning wood and laid a layer of wet seaweed over the glowing bed of embers. On the seaweed he placed the clams, covering them with another layer of seaweed. Then he heaped more wood on top and sat down to wait. Bee returned with the news that the water was coming to a boil in the kettle and that he thought the beans were pretty nearly hot enough because they had burned his finger when he tried them! Jack's pole was again put to work, the fire was scattered and the top layer of seaweed removed.

"Look at the poor little things!" exclaimed Bee, as the clams were revealed. "They're gasping for breath!"

"They certainly smell mighty good," said Hal as Jack gathered them into the tin. "Do you think they're done, Jack?"

"To a turn. Hurry up and let's get at them while they're hot." At the tent Jack quickly melted some butter and the three boys, by this time almost hungry enough to eat shells and all, set to work. Hal forgot his fears and went at those baked clams as though his life depended on eating his share. Each filled a dish with them, took it into his lap and said nothing for several minutes. At last Bee, disposing of his shells by the simple expedient of tossing them over his head, held out his tin plate.

"More," he said.

"I don't see why we haven't had clams before," remarked Hal, filling his own plate again. "Shove the butter this way a bit, Jack, will you?"

“I shall be up before sunrise tomorrow,” said Bee, “clamming. How do you catch them, anyway?”

“Take a shovel,” replied Jack gravely, “and walk quietly along the flats until you see one. Then you chase it. If it gets to its nest before you can grab it you have to dig it out.”

Bee eyed him suspiciously. “Nest? What are you talking about? Clams burrow in the sand. Think I’m a fool?”

“Can’t a burrow be a nest?” asked Hal. “They’re always called clam nests. Haven’t you ever heard the saying ‘As cozy as a clam in its nest?’”

“No, I haven’t. And I don’t believe you have to chase clams. How the dickens could they run?” He held one up for inspection. “They haven’t any legs!”

“They don’t have to have legs,” replied Jack, “and they don’t run. I didn’t say they ran. What they do is put their heads out and pull themselves along with their teeth. And maybe they can’t go!”

“It’s wonderful,” agreed Hal seriously. “Marvellous!”

Bee observed them and grunted skeptically.

“I remember a fellow who used to live on the Neck,” said Jack, “who had a pair of trained clams. Ever hear of him, Hal?”

“Seems to me I have. Wasn’t his name Simpkins or something like that?”

“Hopkins, George Hopkins. He trained those clams to race and used to take them around to the state fairs and things like that. Made quite a lot of money, I believe.”

“I remember now,” said Hal. “He used to put a dish of melted butter down and the clams would see which could get to it first. You wouldn’t think a thing like a clam would have so much—so much intelligence, would you?”

“Pity you aren’t a clam,” scoffed Bee. “You fellows must think I’m pretty easy to believe a yarn like that. Trained clams! Did this fellow Jenkins—”

“Hopkins,” corrected Jack, soberly.

“Did he ever think to have some hurdles and let the clams jump over them?”

“I don’t believe so. I remember, though, that he taught one of them to climb trees. I think that was Hortense. I believe Percy never would learn that trick.”

“Hortense! I suppose those clams came when you called them?”

“Oh, yes; that is, usually. Once, though, Hortense got up into a tree and refused to come down. And when, finally, Hopkins climbed up there for her he found she was making a nest in the branches! I’ve often wondered what became of those clams.”

“Don’t you know?” asked Bee. “I read about it in the paper a couple of years ago. They were walking along the beach one day, hand in hand, when a big wave came up and drowned them. It was indeed a clammy death.”

“I’ll have a clammy death,” laughed Jack, “if I don’t stop eating these. Want some more, Hal? Lots of them here. No? Well, how do you fellows feel about baked beans?”

“Are they trained beans?” asked Bee suspiciously.

“No, just baked. Have some?”

“About seven, thanks. I’m not as hungry as I was. I’ll bet I’ve eaten twelve dozen of those bivalves. A clam is a bivalve, isn’t it?”

“Always, unless it has three shells.”

“What is it then?” asked Hal, reaching for the teapot.

“A curiosity. Who’s seen the canned cow?”

By bedtime a little breeze had sprung up from the east and the temperature made a sudden drop. The boys were glad to get into the shelter of the tent. Hal had been very quiet for some time and was the first under the blankets. It was perhaps an hour later when Jack was awakened by hearing his name called.

“Hello!” he cried. “What is it?”

“It’s me,” answered Hal’s voice from the darkness. “I’m dying! I knew he’d poisoned them!”

“Dying? What for?” Jack, half awake, crawled shivering out of bed and groped for the lantern. “Who poisoned what?”

“The clams. Bill Glass poisoned them,” groaned Hal. “I told you he had. O—oh! Can’t you do anything, Jack?”

“Yes, I can light the lantern if I ever find it,” muttered Jack. “Hi, Bee!”

“What?” asked Bee sleepily.

“Wake up. Hal’s got a tummy-ache.”

“So have I,” grumbled Bee. “Let me alone.”

When the lantern was finally lighted Hal was discovered as nearly tied in a knot as he could be, groaning pathetically. “It’s the clams, Jack. They were poisoned. I—I think I’m going to die!”

“I think you’re going to drink a pint of hot water if I can get a fire started,” muttered Jack, struggling into his trousers. “Get up, Bee, and lend a hand.”

“All right,” yawned Bee. “What’ll I do? Want your tummy rubbed, Hal?”

“*No!* Don’t touch it! Haven’t you got any medicine, Jack?”

“Plenty. I’m getting it as fast as I can. Find a match, Bee.”

The wind was blowing hard and the tent was tugging at its ropes, and starting a fire wasn’t an easy matter. Luckily, however, a few embers still remained and there was wood handy and at last Jack had the fire going and the kettle on. But the wind blew the flames around, driving sparks into the air, and the water heated slowly. Meanwhile Hal groaned on, protesting between groans that he was poisoned and would surely die.

“All the matter with you is that you ate too many clams,” replied Jack. “I’ll have you fixed up in five minutes, Hal.”

“I shan’t—be alive—in five minutes,” groaned Hal. “Why did we come away without any medicine? Ow! O-o-oh! Can’t you do anything for a fellow, Jack?”

“Just a minute now,” comforted Jack. “Feel a little better, do you?”

“No, it’s getting—*worse!* It—it’s ptomaine poisoning, and folks die of that, don’t they?”

“Not generally, I guess. Turn over and let Bee rub you, Hal.”

“*No-o-o!* I don’t want—to be rubbed! Isn’t that—water hot yet?”

It was, and Bee supported Hal’s head while Jack poured cupful after cupful of scalding water down his throat, Hal protesting whenever they allowed him a chance that they were burning his insides.

“Never mind that, have some more,” replied Jack. “Feel better now?”

“I don’t know,” moaned Hal, as Bee laid his head down again. “You’ve scalded—my throat horribly.”

Hal had rather a hard time of it for another quarter of an hour, during which the others sat beside him and shivered in the cold blasts that crept under the tent. Jack piled all the clothing he could find on Hal’s bed and at last the latter fell off to sleep.

Jack stretched his arms, yawning and shivering. “There, he’s all right, I guess. Let’s get to bed. My, but it’s cold!”

“Isn’t it? My feet are like chunks of ice. I had a stomach ache myself when you woke me up, but I guess I worked it off. No more trained clams for me, Jack!”

CHAPTER XXI

“Schooner Ashore!”

They awoke the next morning with the crash of the surf in their ears, a northeasterly gale blowing around the side of the hill and a leaden, cloudy sky overhead. The *Crystal Spring* was rocking to and fro at the mouth of the river and Jack viewed her anxiously as he dressed shiveringly in the tent. Hal arose rather pale and heavy-eyed, but not much the worse for his over-indulgence in baked clams, and viewed the depressing outlook distastefully. But after a hearty breakfast, which they had to eat inside the tent because of the wind, they all felt more cheerful. Hal was for going back to Greenhaven, but Jack refused to make the trip.

“Look at that sea, Hal,” he said. “The launch wouldn’t do a thing but fill up with water by the time we’d made the point there. And as for the *Crystal Spring*, well, I guess she’d make harbor finally, but she’s no heavy weather boat and I don’t fancy trying to sail her today. Maybe it’ll clear up by afternoon.”

“What can we do here, though?” asked Hal dismally.

“Dig,” replied Bee. “It’s a dandy day for digging; cool and without any glare to hurt your eyes. We can get a lot done today.”

“We can, can we? Well, I don’t intend to freeze to death out there,” replied Hal rebelliously. “I’m sick of digging, anyway.”

“You’ll be lot warmer digging than you will sitting here,” laughed Jack. “Come on and get up an appetite for dinner, Hal.”

But Hal refused and they left him hugging the fire, with a blanket over his shoulders. Jack took the pick and Bee seized a shovel and they made the dirt fly. It was really the only way to keep warm, as Jack had said. They were just finishing the first trench when Hal joined them.

“A fellow could freeze to death up there,” he muttered, picking up the second shovel. “What’ll I do, Bee?”

After that the work went merrily and Hal soon forgot his ill-temper. They finished the second trench by noon and then Bee suggested having a swim. And a glorious battle with the breakers they had! To dive through a six-foot comber and ride back to the beach on the crest of another is rare sport and splendidly conducive to the cultivation of appetites. At dinner even Hal agreed that so far they had had a bully time and he said no more about returning to Greenhaven that day. They went back to digging about two and managed to excavate most of the third trench before the wind, which was growing harder and harder every hour, drove them back to shelter. They saw to the guy-ropes and pegs, as Jack pointed out that it wasn’t pleasant to have your tent blown down on top of you; gathered a new store of wood and retired to their inside, watching the cloud-wrack go sailing overhead and the waves dashing into spray against Toller’s Rock. A sea-going tug passed a mile out, making hard weather and shipping water at every plunge. They watched her until she had rolled herself out of sight behind the spray-drenched headland. By four o’clock the wind was little short of a young hurricane,

as Jack expressed it, and the tent was rocking and swaying. The wind rushed under the flaps and inflated the canvas until it threatened to sail into the air like a balloon. Jack began to look anxious.

“I think I’ll go down and see how the sloop’s getting along,” he announced. “It looks to me as though she was a little farther up than she was. I’ve got another anchor aboard and I guess I’d better drop it.”

The others volunteered to accompany him and they went staggering down the slope to the wharf, clutching at their caps and stumbling over bushes under the rude buffets of the wind. The river was running high, with masses of driftwood and froth piled along the margin. The *Corsair* had swung in amongst the spiles and was apparently trying to rub her varnish off, while the dory—

The boys looked at each other in dismay. Where was the dory? There was not a vestige of it. It had been securely tied to one of the spiles; Jack had attended to it himself; and that it could have tugged loose seemed impossible.

“Bill Glass,” breathed Hal with a kind of “I-told-you-so” inflection.

“I don’t believe it,” replied Bee stoutly. “You’re getting so you blame Bill Glass if you bite your tongue, Hal. Besides, I saw him when he went off and he certainly didn’t have Jack’s dory.”

“He could have come back last night and taken it, couldn’t he?” asked Hal scathingly. “Oh, he’s got it all right enough!”

“But he wouldn’t dare to,” persisted Bee. “Why, he couldn’t hide a dory, could he?”

“He doesn’t have to hide it. He’s painted it blue by this time!”

“Well, somebody must have taken it,” said Jack troubledly, “for I don’t believe any amount of wind would have untied those hitches of mine. Still, I suppose I’d better go up the river a ways and look. May I take the launch, Hal?”

“Of course, and we’ll go along.”

But although they chugged up the stream for a half-mile or more they saw no trace of the *Faith* and finally Jack declared that it was useless to look farther unless they meant to go all the way to Bill Glass’s. “That dory never got around three bends in the river,” said Jack, “without being towed. She’d have gone ashore long before this.”

So they turned the launch and went back in the teeth of the gale. Fortunately, although the tide was unusually high, the banks of the stream still afforded some protection from the wind. Otherwise the *Corsair* would have blown on the sand-bars time and again. Back at the island, they kept on to the *Crystal Spring*. The sloop had worked pretty well over to the south side of the river entrance and was rolling and plunging most undignifiedly. Jack scrambled aboard as soon as the launch was under her lee and presently returned with his second anchor. They ran around the stern of the sloop and almost across to the opposite beach. There Jack tossed the anchor over. Then, paying the cable out, the launch pitched her way back to the sloop and Jack made the rope fast on the bow. They were all pretty well drenched by the time they got back into the quieter water of the river, and as soon as they had made the launch secure where she could not rub against

the spiles they got back to the tent as quickly as their legs would carry them.

They heaped wood on the dying fire and tried to dry their garments, but it was not so easy. If they got in the lee of the fire they were choked with smoke and deluged with sparks, while if they moved elsewhere they got little heat and the wind went through their wet clothing until their teeth chattered. Jack finally announced that there was but one thing to do, and that was to get their clothes off, rub themselves dry and warm with towels and dry the garments at the fire. This proved a good idea, for by the time they had applied the rough bath towels vigorously to their bodies they were in a comfortable glow. Draping themselves in blankets, they threw more fuel on the fire and held their clothes in the warmth until they were at least fairly dry. By that time it was long after five o'clock and supper was to be thought of. They decided that hot coffee would be appropriate and that it would be useless to try and do any cooking. So half an hour later they huddled in the tent and ate cold canned tongue, bread and butter, cheese and vanilla cookies and drank plenty of steaming hot coffee.

“That coffee is certainly what I needed,” sighed Hal, “but I won’t be able to sleep a wink before ten o’clock.”

“Perhaps you wouldn’t anyhow,” replied Jack, “with this wind howling so. I wish I was sure this old tent wouldn’t leave us in the middle of the night.”

They lighted the lanterns and heaped up the fire again and strove to be cheerful. But the lanterns flared and guttered and the boom of the sea and the roar of the wind were depressing. Even Bee began to look glum, and long before it was nearly

their usual bed-time, conversation had entirely died out and the three boys were huddled under their blankets silently watching the lanterns swaying from the roof-pole. They had decided that they would not take their clothes off, since, as Jack pointed out, it might be necessary for them to get up and chase the tent across the island before morning.

“I’d give something to be at home just now,” observed Hal once, “with my back to the library fire. This camping-out isn’t all it’s cracked up to be, fellows.”

“And this is certainly camping *out*,” agreed Bee. “I suppose it was on nights like this that Old Verny used to light his trusty lantern and take a stroll along the beach, eh, Jack?”

“I dare say. I guess there’s more than one boat in trouble tonight. The wind must be blowing a good forty miles.”

There was not much pleasure in talking, however, even if they had had anything to say, for the noise of the elements was so great that they had almost to shout to make themselves heard across the tent, and so they relapsed into silence again and regretted having drunk that coffee.

About nine o’clock a flurry of rain set in and the drops dashed against the tent like hailstones. Several crashes of thunder followed, and once the lightning flared so brightly that the glow of the swaying lanterns was dimmed in the tent. Then the rain blew over, the thunder died away as quickly as it had come and only the dry gale remained. But its fury continued unabated and by ten o’clock had even perceptibly increased. The only thing that saved the tent was the fact that it was protected from the direction of the storm by the shoulder of the hill and the grove. Even as it was, it seemed

every moment that at the next onslaught the canvas would be ripped into ribbons or torn from its ropes. The boys huddled under their blankets with taut nerves and staring eyes, watching the canvas above them bulge and flap and the lanterns rock and flare, with sleep a long way off. And yet it is probable that, an hour or so later, each was drowsing a little, for when the first sudden *boom* of the cannon came Jack heard it as though in a dream, while Bee and Hal, being questioned, declared they had heard nothing. They waited. The minutes passed and only the howling and screeching of the tempest was audible. Jack had about reached the conclusion that he had imagined the sound when it came again:

Boom-m-m-m!

The boys started, and Jack, tossing aside his blankets, jumped to his feet.

“What is it?” shouted Bee anxiously.

“A ship ashore,” answered Jack, buttoning his jacket and pulling his cap down on his head. “Come on!”

CHAPTER XXII

In The Teeth of The Gale

He seized the lantern and in a moment they were out of the tent, staggering along in the wake of the flickering light, the wind beating and buffeting them at every step. The world was a wild confusion of darkness and turmoil. Jack led the way around the side of the hill and presently the full force of the gale found them and they reeled under the shock of it. After that it was only by bending forward and digging their feet into the ground that they could get ahead. The air was wet with salt spume from the waves below. They fought onward a step at a time, their eyes half-closed, gasping for breath. And suddenly ahead of them in the blackness a trail of light flared skyward and a rocket burst into flying sparks.

Jack pulled the others down beside him on the ground. "She's on The Tombstones," he shouted. He hid the lantern under his jacket and peered for a minute through the darkness. "Two-masted schooner," he announced. "Fisherman, I guess. I can just see her." But the others, strain their eyes as they might, could make out nothing.

"What can we do?" cried Bee.

Jack arose. "Come on," he shouted. They staggered ahead again, Jack leading the way upward until they were at the edge of the grove. There, while Hal and Bee crouched beside him, Jack braced himself against a tree and waved the lantern back and forth in long sweeps of his arm. Again the cannon boomed and again a rocket trailed into the night. Bee thought

once he heard a hail from the schooner, but he could not be certain for the wind was full of strange sounds and voices. For several minutes Jack waved. Then, summoning the others, he led them back around the hill. They went almost at a run, stumbling over rocks, tripping over bushes, the wind behind them seemingly bent on blowing them off the island. Hal wondered how they could ever find the tent again, but Jack led them to it unerringly and they staggered in, breathless and white-faced. Jack placed the lantern down and sank to his bed. No one spoke for a moment. Then—

“Isn’t there anything we can do, Jack?” faltered Hal huskily. “Could we get to them in the launch?”

Jack shook his head. “Let me think a minute,” he said. He placed his elbows on his knees and sank his chin in his hands, gazing at the ground. Bee, nervously buttoning and unbuttoning his jacket, watched impatiently. Finally Jack beckoned and they gathered close to him.

“I guess,” he said, “the only thing we can do is get word to the life savers. Maybe they’ve seen the rockets already and are on the way, but there’s no way of being sure about that. There’s no patrol in summer and I guess the only place they’d see the signals from is the Fort.”

“Where’s the nearest station?” asked Hal.

“Greenhaven; Harbor Beach,” said Jack.

“But that’s miles away! They’d never get here!”

“They could do it in an hour, I think. They’d come straight down the harbor and through the canal into Eight-Fathom Cove. They have a motor boat and it can go pretty fast. They’ll have an awful time off Toller’s Sands, though, and

maybe they won't dare to try it. But I guess it's up to us to get word to them. There's nothing else we can do, is there?"

Hal and Bee shook their heads. Through the storm came the *boom* of the cannon again. Bee moved impatiently.

"Whatever we do, let's get at it!" he exclaimed. "How long will that boat last out there?"

Jack shook his head. "There's no knowing."

"But how can we get to Greenhaven?" demanded Hal wildly. "You don't mean the—the launch?"

"Up the river to the railroad," answered Jack. "The river's full and I guess we can make it without running aground. There's a switch tower back of Cove Village and we can telephone from there. Will you fellows try it?"

"Of course," answered Hal. "You take the lantern and Bee and I will bring the oars. Is there anything else we'll need?"

"No. All ready? Come on, then!"

Down the hill they plunged. Near the last trenches they had dug they passed out of the protection of the hill and the wind had a clean sweep at them. They had to cling together there. Then they were on the sands. Dimly they could see the swaying mast of the sloop a few rods away. Finally the dim, flaring light of the lantern fell on the wharf and the *Corsair*. Jack handed the light to Hal and scrambled down the bank. The river was high and running with waves. Clinging to a spile, Jack reached the painter and pulled the bow of the launch in. One by one they scrambled aboard. Hal started the engine; it took several minutes to do it; then Jack cast off and seized the wheel. The lantern was hidden in the stern locker

and *Corsair* chugged slowly forward into the darkness. Jack strained his eyes, but as yet he could see nothing. Luckily he knew the direction the stream took and for the first few minutes the launch was steered by guess work. Then the banks began to be distinguishable from the water as his eyes became accustomed to the darkness and he called for more speed. Hal, crouching in the back of the launch, opened the throttle further and the *Corsair* began to dip and roll. Bee staggered forward and stood beside Jack.

“Can you see where we’re going?” he shouted.

“I can see enough,” Jack answered. “Lots of depth tonight. We’ll get there, I guess. Faster, Hal!”

The roar of the surf lessened behind them as the launch sped inland along the narrow stream. The banks protected them somewhat from the wind, but its voice was in their ears all the time and the *Corsair* shivered and rocked as the gusts found her. At such times Jack had all he could do to keep her off the bank. The minutes passed. One turn after another was passed in safety, the launch reeling off a good six miles an hour. Then there was a sudden shock, a moment of hesitancy and again the *Corsair* was plunging forward.

“Sand-bar,” shouted Jack in Bee’s ear. “Got over it!”

Seaward the rockets still flared in the darkness. It already seemed hours since they had started, although it is probable that they had been going but a scant fifteen minutes. Jack shouted to Bee and Bee scrambled back to inform Hal that they had passed the old bridge.

“He says it’s only about three-quarters of a mile further to the track,” cried Bee. “We’re near Bill Glass’s place now.

How's she running?"

"Fine." Hal squirted some oil in the general direction of the engine. Then the oil-can flew out of his hand and he sat down forcibly on the grating, with Bee on top of him. The *Corsair* had brought up with a jolt!

"Stop her!" came Jack's voice faintly. "Reverse! Quick!"

Hal, gathering himself up, grabbed at the lever. The propeller churned and the *Corsair* shivered. Jack hurried back.

"She's hard aground," he shouted. "Have you reversed her?"

"Yes."

"Where are the oars?"

Seizing one, he hurried back to the bow. Bee took the other and joined him. The propeller lashed and the boys pushed, but the launch, her nose deep in a bank of clay, refused to budge. Gradually her stern, under the force of the wind, swung around until it struck against the opposite bank with a jar.

"Stop your engine, Hal!" cried Jack. "It's no good. Get the lantern out, Bee. We'll have to foot it."

They scrambled up the bank from the bow, slipping on the mud and slime, and with the wind howling about them and trying to blow them into the water struggled on over the marsh, tripping on tufts of grass, fighting for every inch. Once Bee lost his footing and would have gone headlong into the river had not Hal seized him. Then there was an exclamation from Jack. The lantern light fell on a tiny wharf

jutting into the stream. Turning, Jack led them away from the river. "It's Bill Glass's!" he cried. "We'll stop here a minute."

The cabin suddenly loomed before them and they staggered into its shelter. Jack raised his hand and hammered at the door. There was no response from within and he pushed against the crazy old portal. It swung readily on its leather hinges, scraping across the floor.

"Hello! Bill Glass!" cried Jack.

"Hi! Who be ye?" came a muffled voice from the cabin.

"Jack Herrick. There's a schooner on The Tombstones. We're trying to get word to the life savers."

"Come in, mates." They obeyed, the lantern light throwing fantastic shadows over the strange room. On the edge of the bunk sat Bill Glass, already struggling with his trousers. "Sit ye down an' rest, mates," he said. "So there be a schooner ashore, eh? Aye, there'll be plenty o' them in trouble this night. Could ye see her, mates?"

"Faintly," answered Jack, fighting for breath. "We heard her gun and then saw the rockets. She's hard on The Tombstones, I think. We thought if we could get to the switch tower down the track we could telephone from there."

"Aye, so ye could, so ye could. What time might it be?" Bill peered at the nearest clock. "Nigh one bell, is it? Then there be time to get to the railroad afore the night freight comes by. Where be my jacket?"

The cat appeared from under the stove and eyed them blinkingly. Bill Glass buttoned his old pea-jacket about him, found his hat and reached down a lantern.

“No call for us all to go, I cal’ate,” he said as he lighted it. “Leave your lantern here for them, Jack Herrick, an’ you come along o’ me.”

“That’s so, fellows,” said Jack. “We’ll get there quicker if there’s fewer of us. You wait here.”

“Aye, an’ build ye a fire in the stove, mates, an’ get warm. There be coffee there, an’ tea, likely, if you’ll look a bit. Come on, mate!”

CHAPTER XXIII

The Life-Boat Wins

Bill Glass, lantern in hand, plunged into the darkness and the storm, Jack following at his heels. Their way led them away from the winding river and under the radiance of the lantern Jack saw that they were treading a well-defined path through the marsh-grass. It was as much as he could do to keep up with his guide, whose shuffling gait, while it might look slow, covered ground with remarkable rapidity. And while Jack was forced to stagger under the force of the gale, Bill Glass, his head erect, never faltered. Five minutes of tramping brought them to the railroad trestle which was here raised some eight feet above the marsh, and even as they reached it the rails began to hum and afar to the northward a white light came into view.

“There she be,” said Bill. “Best give me a boost, mate; I be n’t as spry as I was.” Jack aided and Bill scrambled to the trestle. Then the lantern was handed up and Jack followed. If it had been hard to keep one’s footing below it was infinitely harder here and Jack was disconcerted to find that Bill meant to walk along the track. How he managed to step safely from one timber to another with that gale lashing and buffeting him Jack couldn’t understand, for it was all the boy could do to keep his feet. But fortunately a dozen yards brought them to a place where the cross timbers had been carried several feet out at the side of the trestle to accommodate a barrel of water for use in case of fire. Here there was room to stand

out of the way of the train, and, better still, something to hold on to. Bill set the lantern on the track and waited.

“She be heavy tonight,” he muttered, “or maybe the wind be rocking them cars.”

The humming of the rails was not audible up there but the white light grew and grew and soon Bill was out on the track waving his lantern. And then, above the roaring of the wind, sounded the shrill, imperative blasts of the locomotive whistle, followed more faintly by the jangle and bumping of the freight cars as the brakes were set, and the long train came to a stop some distance down the track. Bill Glass seized his lantern and started off toward it and Jack, his knees quaking, followed as best he could. But when he too reached the engine the engineer was already making ready to go on and he had to seek another barrel platform with Bill Glass and wait while car after car went clattering, jarring by. When the rear light had passed Bill piloted the way back. By this time Jack had become fairly adept at walking a trestle in a fifty mile gale, although he was heartily glad when Bill stopped and climbed down to the ground again. Once more on the path it was possible to talk and be heard, and Jack asked anxiously;

“Will they tell the life savers?”

“Jim said he’d stop at the section house a mile below here and telephone to town. Jim’s got two sons at sea himself and he won’t forget, mate.”

There was no more said until they reached the cabin again, which was no slight task, since the wind was more in their faces going back. But finally the welcome gleam of the light

met them and they staggered into the shelter of the building and pushed open the door. Hal was fast asleep in a chair and Bee, the yellow cat in his lap, was only half awake.

“I thought you’d walked into the river or lost your way,” he said with relief. “Old Hal’s asleep, isn’t he? Wake up, Hal!”

Bill Glass said it might be two hours before life savers would reach the wreck and set about making some coffee. He soon had the fire started and the kettle filled with water. The boys could not but admire the deft way in which he accomplished things, even Hal acknowledging grudgingly afterwards that “the old pirate was no fool.” As Bill busied himself about the stove Jack told how they had been awakened by the sound of the cannon and how they had gone out to locate the wreck, afterwards speeding up the river in the launch until a sudden gust had rammed her bow into the bank.

“We’ll have a sip o’ coffee,” said Bill, “an’ then we’ll take the dory an’ go back there to your boat. Likely we can pull her off.”

When the coffee was ready they each drank a cupful of it and, although their host offered them no milk for it, it warmed and invigorated them. Afterwards they got into the dory under the little wharf and, Bill at the oars, and two lanterns to light them, went slowly down the narrow stream. They reached the launch in almost no time at all and Bill again took command of the situation. Hal was directed to start the engine and keep her at neutral. Then the stern was pushed off and the propeller was started slowly at reverse. Bill clambered to the bank, braced himself and pushed, while

Bee and Jack shoved on the oars, and in a moment the *Corsair* was free again. Bill hitched his dory astern and, since there was not room there to turn the launch about in, directed Jack to go on up the stream for a ways. How in that blackness, Bill Glass could tell one place from another, was a mystery, but in a minute he ordered the engine stopped and, taking an oar, soon had the launch headed down stream. Then they set off for the island once more. Bill spoke only once on the journey. Then making a trumpet of his hands, he shouted across to Hal at the engine;

“That be likely one o’ your father’s boats out there. Ain’t no others I knows of carries signal guns.”

The wind was almost dead ahead for most of the way and the *Corsair* tossed and careened like a sloop in a squall. Long before they found the wharf they began to encounter waves, and they were all pretty well sprinkled by the time the landing was made. All the way back they had watched for rockets beyond the island but had seen none. Jack said they had probably used them all up. Bee suggested that perhaps help had already reached them. But when, after making fast the launch, they battled around the beach in the teeth of the gale a dim light showed in the locality of The Tombstones and Bill Glass, peering under his hands through the darkness, announced that the schooner was still there.

There was nothing they could do but watch and wait, and after Bill had signalled for some minutes with his lantern and received finally an answering wave from the schooner they crept back to the tent for shelter. At intervals Bill went to the flap and viewed the sea in the direction of Toller’s Rock. There wasn’t much conversation. There was little to say and

the noise of the waves and wind made talking difficult. The tent still threatened to go at every blast and still held. An hour passed and the hands of Bee's watch pointed to ten minutes past two when there came an exclamation of satisfaction from Bill Glass, who had gone to the tent door for perhaps the twentieth time.

“There she be!” he called. “Roundin’ the Rock this minute. I see her light.”

The boys clustered behind him and looked. A far out was a tiny flicker that came and went as the waves tossed the boat up and down. Then suddenly a strong beam of white light shot across the water, moved right and left and disappeared again.

“They be a-lookin’,” said Bill. “That be her search-light.”

From the front of the tent they watched the tiny speck of light draw nearer and nearer until, at length, it was abreast of the island. Then it disappeared suddenly and there was a gasp from Bee.

“She’s sunk!” he cried.

“Not she,” answered Bill Glass. “She be all water-tight compartments. Upset she can, mate, but never sink. That light be in the bow an’ she’s passed us. There be her search-light again.”

There came a chorus of cries from the boys as suddenly, out of the blackness, the wrecked schooner appeared bathed in light. For a moment only the search-light played upon her and then darkness shut down again.

“Square between the ledges she be,” exclaimed Bill. “Mainmast broke short off and fore-top-mast hangin’. Crew’s in the riggin’ and the sea’s breakin’ over her deck hard, mates. But her hull be all right yet, I cal’ate.” They hurried around the hill again, fighting the gale, until they were opposite the scene.

“I saw three or four men clinging to ropes,” said Bee to Jack in an awed voice. “Will they get them off, Jack?”

“Surely,” Jack answered. “I wonder if the life-boat can get alongside of her.”

“Aye, that she will,” replied Bill Glass. “Come around lee side o’ her, likely. She be one o’ Folsom’s boats, I cal’ate. A mighty long overhang for’ard, she has, an’ she might be the *Jupiter*.”

For what seemed many minutes there was no sign of the life-boat’s lights. Then the bow lantern glinted again near shore and was gone.

“Crawlin’ around to looard, she be,” said Bill Glass admiringly. “Eh, I’d like mighty well, mates, to be havin’ a hand down there myself!”

The search-light flooded the scene again, but this time its radiance disclosed only a part of the dark hull and the deck-house and a smother of water that seemed rushing in all directions. The disk of light again disappeared, and in its place shone, startlingly brighter and nearer at hand, the bow light of the rescuer. After that the watchers on land could only surmise what was taking place down there in that cauldron of seething waves and frantic winds, for the search-light did not show again. It was Bill Glass who pictured the

scene for them, shouting to them as they clustered close about him.

“She be alongside now, mates, under the quarter likely. All hands leave ship! Aye, aye, twice I’ve heard that word, mates; once off Sable Island an’ once ’most in sight o’ port. They be climbin’ down in the life-boat now, I cal’ate, an’ the skipper’s got his log-book an’ his gold watch an’ maybe a trinket or two. All hands to the life-boat! Eh, they won’t need much tellin’! Thankful to go, they be, I cal’ate.”

A light moved, swaying along the deck, and then went down out of sight.

“That’ll be the last, I cal’ate,” said Bill. “Skipper, likely. Now she be castin’ off. Can you see her light, mates?”

They couldn’t for a moment, but presently it appeared and moved, rising and falling, and once they thought they heard the beat of the engine as the life-boat fought her way off the shore and headed seaward.



THE LIFE-BOAT WINS.

“Aye, a good job, shipmates!” shouted Bill Glass as the bow light was lost to them. “God bless ye for brave boys!” He turned and led the way back toward the tent. Eastward

there was a lightening of the horizon that told of the coming day. Back in the tent Bill blew out his lantern.

“If I be n’t in the way, mates,” he said, “I’ll just stop here for a bit. It’ll soon be mornin’ an’ I be anxious to see what kind o’ a fix that boat be in.”

“Make yourself at home,” said Jack heartily. “Take this blanket and put it around you. Want to lie down here and have a nap?”

“No, no, I’ll just sit her an’ smoke a pipe, thank ye. But you best be havin’ a sleep.”

“I don’t know about sleeping,” said Bee tiredly, “but I guess I’ll lie down awhile. Will you wake me, if I should go to sleep, Jack?”

Jack promised, being certain that he would not sleep himself. But ten minutes later each of the three boys was slumbering, and Bill Glass, the acrid smoke from his pipe trailing out of the tent, sat open-eyed awaiting the dawn.

CHAPTER XXIV

Old Verny's Wharf

The sun came up over a heaving sea and the gale diminished. By five o'clock, although the wind still blew hard, it had shifted a point or two and Bill Glass predicted that by forenoon it would be gone. Sleepy-eyed the boys tumbled out of the tent and followed Bill around the side of the hill. There is always something depressing in the sight of a wrecked ship and none of them spoke for several minutes.

The schooner lay gripped between the two ledges, her bow high out of the water and the seas rushing across her abaft of the foremast. Her deck had been swept clean and not a boat was in sight. She had settled on a nearly even keel. The mainmast was broken short off some eight feet above the deck and although it had been cut away it still wallowed alongside, held by a rope or two. The foremast stood, but the topmast hung in splinters. As far as could be seen, however, the hull had not broken and Bill thought she was not leaking much.

"She be an old-timer," said Bill. "The *Jupiter*, just as I told ye last night. They made 'em staunch and able twenty years ago, mates. She be one o' your father's boats, mate, an' likely she be well filled with fish. Maybe they'll get her off, but she's lyin' ugly, she's lyin' ugly." And Bill shook his head.

"They'll send tugs around pretty soon, I guess," said Jack. "But they'll have to wait for high tide, won't they?"

“Aye, along toward two o’clock, I cal’ate. They’ll lighten her first, though. Maybe if the sea goes down they can save the cargo. I don’t know though.”

“There’s one ship right under her now,” said Bee. “We saw her the other day.”

“Aye, the *State o’ Maine*,” agreed Bill. “She went to pieces there forty-odd years ago, I cal’ate. A brig, she was. Seven men went down with her, they tell.”

Bee shivered. “I’m glad I didn’t see any of them,” he murmured.

“Gone long afore this, they be,” answered Bill. “Well, I must be gettin’ home. Cal’ate, though, I’ll be back again later.”

“Won’t you have some breakfast with us?” asked Bee.

“Thank ye, mate, but I’ll be goin’ back. There’s Benjamin Franklin to feed an’—”

“Benjamin Franklin!” exclaimed Bee.

“The cat,” replied Bill with one of his hidden smiles. “He an’ me be old friends an’ Ben don’t take kindly to waitin’ for his breakfast.”

They watched Bill go down the hill and across the sandy stretch to the wharf and then set about preparing breakfast, everyone taking a hand since all were hungry. The wind had sensibly diminished and it was possible to build a fire outside. Jack was just touching a match to the kindlings when a faint shout reached them and they saw Bill Glass a hundred yards or so up the river waving his hand and pointing across the flat between the river and the sea.

“Now, what’s he mean?” muttered Jack as they moved around the shoulder of the hill. Then three ejaculations of astonishment burst from as many throats. Across what yesterday had been a level stretch of dry sand and beach-grass flowed a twenty-foot inlet! The sea had claimed its right of way once more and once more Nobody’s Island had become an island in fact as well as in name! At the ocean end the waves had eaten a wide indentation in the shore, from which the new stream curved westward until it joined the river. Even as they looked a long section of the bank crumbled and splashed into the water and the little cove widened.

“Well, what do you think of that!” exclaimed Bee.

“Father always said that inlet would come back some day,” said Jack, “and last night’s storm was just the kind to do it, for it was blowing straight across that sand. It’s a good thing it wasn’t there when we came back from Bill Glass’s or we might have turned into it and found ourselves in the surf. Look at the wreckage over there, fellows. There’s wood enough to last us all winter.”

“There’s a whaling big boat down there,” announced Hal. “See it! Lying on its side where all that seaweed is piled up.”

“That’s right. It’s probably one of the *Jupiter*’s. We’ll have to go down there after breakfast and look at it.”

“Now,” said Bee, as they ate, “we can go ahead. There’s no use trying to find buried treasure on an island that isn’t an island at all. That’s what has been queering us, fellows. Now that it is really an island again, though, we can’t miss it!”

“You don’t mean that you’re going to start that business again?” groaned Hal.

“Right away,” answered Bee cheerfully. “That storm has removed the hoodoo from—from our undertaking, Hal.”

“Well, it certainly removed a lot of other things,” laughed Jack, “and why not a hoodoo?”

“I’m hoping it removed our shovels,” said Hal. “We left them down there where we were digging and I don’t see them now!”

“They’re in the trenches,” answered Bee. “I looked. And the trenches are pretty nearly filled up again.”

After breakfast they went down to the new cove. The dory lay on the opposite side of the inlet, however, and although Bee suggested wading across, investigation proved that the water was at least four feet deep in the shallowest place. So they removed their clothes, plunged in and swam to the opposite side, Bee remarking that it was quite a thing to be the first bathers there. When they reached the dory, however, they found that it was half full of sand and that their united efforts failed to even budge it.

“Well,” said Jack, “it won’t get away in a hurry. We’ll leave it for someone else to rescue, I guess. There are probably more dories along shore.”

They returned across the inlet and ran up and down in the wind to get dry. It didn’t take long, but it was cold work and they were glad to pull their clothes on again. Afterwards they set out along the edge of the stream. The tide had begun to rise and the water was running in fast. Now and then the edge of the sandy bank on their side would break away and

topple down, dissolving like sugar in a tea cup. Bee, who had loitered a few steps behind the others, stopped and said “Hello!” in a surprised voice and the others turned back.

“What have you found?” asked Jack.

Bee was kicking the sand with his foot and by the time Jack and Hal reached him he had laid bare the top of a roughly-laid stone wall or pavement. “It’s a cabin,” he exclaimed eagerly. “I mean it’s the foundation of it. I’m going to get a shovel.”

“Bring them both!” called Jack as Bee sped off around the island.

Five minutes of digging, however, showed them that instead of finding the foundations of the wrecker’s cabin they had unearthed the end of a little stone wharf, and Bee was greatly disappointed. “Still,” he said presently, “if the wharf was here it’s possible the cabin was nearby.” He looked about for a probable site, but the sand continued for nearly a hundred feet before the hill began and he finally agreed with the others that Verny would not have been likely to build his house thereabouts. “Just the same, I don’t see why he needed two wharves,” he objected.

“I guess that other one must have been put up by someone else,” pondered Jack. “When you come to think of it, those wooden spiles wouldn’t have lasted for over forty years, would they? This was probably Old Verny’s wharf and he put it here so he could get to it from either side of the point.”

“Well, we’ve found something,” said Hal, “even if we haven’t discovered the treasure. What’s that?”

The sound he had heard proved on investigation to be the whistle of a tug and by the time they had reached the seaward side of the island it was evident that the task of getting the *Jupiter* off was about to begin. Two tugs and a small lighter were lying off The Tombstones and already a boat was putting off from one of the tugs. In the stern of it sat two men whom Hal recognized even at that distance.

“That’s dad and Tom Dickenson,” he said. “They’re going to look things over, I guess.” Hal waved his cap and after awhile the men saw and waved back. “Look here, why can’t we go out there?” asked Hal eagerly.

“Not in the launch,” replied Jack. “We’d be on the rocks in five minutes with that wind and tide. Let’s wait awhile. Maybe by noon the wind will be gone. It’s holding up every minute now.”

So they perched themselves in a partly sheltered corner of the big ledge overlooking The Tombstones and watched operations. The row boat, with four men at the oars, circled around the *Jupiter*, tossing and rocking on the waves. The two tugs, one having the lighter in tow, wallowed and pitched at a safe distance, drifting in toward shore and then steaming back again, until the row boat returned. Then activity began in earnest. The tugs drifted down to within a rope’s throw of the ledges and dropped anchors. Cables were payed out into rowboats and in a few minutes the bow of the *Jupiter* was alive with men. The lighter was hauled alongside, cables were made fast, hatches thrown off, wreckage was cleared away and the work of unloading the schooner was begun. The work went merrily in spite of the high seas that still swept now and then across the after deck.

The men disappeared under clouds of spray at times, but the baskets were lowered and filled with fish and hauled up again by block and tackle and swung over the side to the lighter, which lay under the bow, with remarkable regularity. The mainmast, floating alongside, was hauled away by two men in a cockleshell of a dory and made fast to one of the tugs. At the end of an hour the wind, always drawing further into the north, was scarcely more than a good blow and the surface of the sea perceptibly calmed.

Bill Glass reappeared just before noon and joined the boys on the hill. The last of the unloading was finished shortly after and it was evident that all was in readiness for an attempt to haul the *Jupiter* off the ledges; all, that is, save the tide. That would not be at its height until 1:56, Bill Glass announced. The lighter was pulled safely away from the schooner meanwhile and taken around the point and anchored. Then the tug which had towed her lowered a boat and Hal, watching, jumped to his feet.

“That’s dad,” he said. “He’s coming ashore. Come on, fellows.”

Hal hurried around the hill and down to the beach toward which the boat was making, and the others, including Bill Glass, followed more slowly. The boat ran up on to the sand on the crest of a breaker, a tall sailor in rubber boots leaped over the bow and pulled and tugged, another wave helped and Mr. Folsom jumped nimbly ashore. When the others arrived father and son were already walking up the hill toward the tent. Mr. Folsom was a man of medium size, with sharp black eyes, a dark beard and a seamed and weather-tanned face that told of the days when he had been a sailing

captain instead of the head of a great business. He wore glasses, had a voice at least one size larger than his frame led you to expect and talked quickly and incisively.

“How are you, Bee?” he greeted, nodding briefly. “Having a good time here? Who’s this, Harry?”

“This is Jack Herrick, dad. Jack, this is—”

“Glad to know you, Jack.” Mr. Folsom shook hands quickly. “I knew your father very well. Hello, Bill Glass? What are you doing here? Keeping an eye on these young Crusoes? How’s your health?”

“Ain’t complainin’, sir, ain’t complainin’. Sorry to see the old *Jupiter* gone, Mr. Folsom.”

“Gone? Not a bit of it! There isn’t hole or a crack in her, Bill. She’s good for another ten years. We’ll have her on the railway by sunset. A couple of dollars worth of pitch and oakum’s all she needs.”

“Glad to hear it, sir, glad to hear it. How about the crew, Mr. Folsom? All safe be they?”

“Every mother’s son of them. Jasper White has a broken arm and a Portugese named Paletto or something like that got a couple of ribs busted. That’s all. I’ve got them in the hospital. Where’s this camp of yours, Harry?”

Hal led the way up and Mr. Folsom viewed it with interest.

“Good thing you pitched it on this side the island,” he observed. “You’d have blown away otherwise. What time do you serve dinner?”

“It’s time now,” answered Hal. “Will you stay, dad?”

“If I get an invitation,” replied Mr. Folsom dryly.

“We’ll have to have canned things, I guess,” said Jack.
“We are all out of fresh meat.”

“Anything is good when you’re hungry, Herrick. By the way, I want to tell you youngsters right now that the next time a storm like that comes up you’re to put out for home. Understand? Your mother had conviption fits all night, Harry. And I guess your folks must have been worried about you, Herrick. You ought to have known enough about weather to have seen what was coming, eh?”

“Yes, sir, but by that time it was too stormy to get back,” replied Jack. “Hal wanted to go but I was afraid to risk it.”

“I see. Well, you might have reached the railroad and picked up a train. Don’t try it again. Found that treasure yet, Bee?”

“No, sir, not yet. We’re still hunting. We found Verny’s wharf this morning, though.”

Mr. Folsom had to hear about that and Bill Glass asked no end of questions and presently they all trooped down to see it.

“You remember this, Bill?” asked Mr. Folsom when they had looked it over.

“Seems like I do, sort of,” responded Bill, scratching his head to aid memory. “Seems, too, like there was a way alongside where the old man used to pull his boat up. That would be gone now, though, I cal’ate.”

“Yes, there’s been many a sea through here since Old Verny left,” agreed Mr. Folsom. “Well, that’s interesting, but

not vastly important, boys.”

Hal pointed out the dory to him and he said he would send someone for it. Then they retraced their steps to the tent. Bill Glass, disclaiming any desire for food, nevertheless accepted an invitation to dinner and Jack set about opening the choicest of their canned delicacies.

“I suppose you boys slept right through the trouble last night,” observed Mr. Folsom presently. “Or did you know about the *Jupiter*?”

The boys looked at each other and Hal began to laugh. Mr. Folsom frowned. “Well, what’s the joke, Harry?” he asked.

“Why—why, dad, I thought you knew!”

“Knew what? What tomfoolery have you been up to now, eh?”

“I like that!” laughed Hal. “If it hadn’t been for us, especially Jack and—Mr. Glass—things would have been a heap worse, I guess! It was we who sent word to the life savers, dad.”

CHAPTER XXV

Mr. Folsom Makes An Offer

“*What?*” exclaimed Mr. Folsom. “How? When was this? Come, come, let’s have it, Harry!”

So Hal, Bee assisting and Jack corroborating when called on, told the story from the time they had been awakened by the cannon until they reached Bill Glass’s cabin. After that Bill himself took up the tale. “Plucky they was, Mr. Folsom,” he said in concluding. “Why bless ye, sir, ’twan’t no night for a dog to be out! Most blowed away many’s the time we did, sir. One thing, sir, be plumb certain, an’ that be that them boys saved more’n one life aboard the schooner last night! Take my word for it, sir! An’ Honest Bill Glass don’t lie!”

Hal frowned. He had grown to like Bill Glass much better since yesterday, but he didn’t think it good taste on Bill’s part to insist on his honesty when they all knew that he had helped himself liberally to their belongings! But Hal’s father only nodded.

“I believe you, Bill,” he said. “Boys, this is a big surprise to me. I didn’t know how the life saving crew learned of the wreck, but it hadn’t occurred to me that it might have been through you. I don’t see but what you’re a parcel of young heroes! Well, I am certainly grateful, and I think the men will be when they learn of it. It appears to me, Herrick, that you’re the prime hero of all, eh?”

“Oh, no, sir.” Jack shook his head. “We all had a hand in it.”

“It was Jack’s idea, though,” said Hal. “We’d never have thought of getting to the railroad, would we, Bee?”

“Speak for yourself,” replied Bee with dignity. “I’d have thought of it—ultimately; perhaps this morning!”

“And I haven’t forgotten, Herrick, that you saved these two simpletons from an unpleasant experience, at least, and perhaps worse,” continued Mr. Folsom. He was looking at Jack very hard with his sharp eyes, and Jack, embarrassed, bent over his cooking. “You don’t look very much like your father, but I guess you must be—a whole lot.”

“He be more like his grandfather,” agreed Bill Glass with conviction. “I mind a story they used to tell about the old Cap’n, sir. Likely you’ve hearn it. ’Twere in the old days afore the railroad came to Greenhaven an’ we had to go to Shepard’s Falls to get the cars. ’Twas a three mile drive an’ like as not when you’d get there the train would be gone an’ there’d be no other till afternoon. Seems old Cap’n Herrick driv over one day an’ afore he could get his horse put up an’ leg it to the station, the train was a-pullin’ out. The Cap’n he waved an’ he shouted, but they didn’t see him an’ kep’ on a-goin’. So the Cap’n he lit out after the train. He had pretty long legs, the Cap’n did, an’ they say as long as they could see him from the station he was gainin’ on the train every leap! He cal’ated to catch up with it at Saunder’s Mill, which be only half a mile away, for in them days the train used to stop maybe three or four minutes at a station. Well, when the Cap’n got to Saunder’s there wa’n’t any train in sight. The agent there was on the platform, though, an’ the Cap’n he

asks: ‘Young feller, have you seen a train go by here?’ Well, the agent he stared an’ he says, ‘Yes, sir, the Newb’ryport train just went out.’ ‘How far ahead be she?’ asks the Cap’n. ‘Maybe a half-mile by this time,’ says the agent. ‘Sho!’ says the Cap’n. ‘Blessed if she ain’t gainin’ on me!’ An’ off he set again down the track. Well, sir, he hadn’t gone more’n a half-mile farther, likely, when he sees the train. Seems they’d got a hot bearin’ or lost a spar or somethin’, an’ the Cap’n he walks up and climbs aboard. An’ just then the conductor comes along an’ sees him an’ says, ‘Why Cap’n Herrick, where’d you come from?’ An’ the Cap’n, bein’ a little angry, says, ‘I come from Shepard’s an’ I’d be in Newb’ryport now if your fool train hadn’t been in my way!’”

Jack laughed with the others and announced that dinner was ready. There weren’t plates enough to go around, nor cups either, but they got along somehow and everyone ate hungrily save Bill Glass. Bill explained apologetically that he’d had his breakfast pretty late—most eight o’clock—and wasn’t hungry yet! Mr. Folsom praised the dinner and the cook and then announced that he would have to get back to the tug.

“I guess we can start to haul her off pretty soon now. Want to come along, Bill?”

Bill accepted the invitation eagerly. Hal asked if they couldn’t go too, but Mr. Folsom said they might be in the way. “You can see everything from here, boys. One thing you had better do, though, Hal, and that’s take a trip home this afternoon and let your mother see that you’re all right. You can spend the night and come back here tomorrow if you haven’t had enough of it. Herrick, you come along too and

have some dinner with me this evening. I can't promise as good as you gave, but you won't go hungry. Harry, come and walk down to the beach with me."

By half-past two the *Jupiter* was safely off the ledge and by three the whole flotilla of boats had disappeared around Toller's Rock. The boys had meanwhile decided to follow Mr. Folsom's advice and return to town for the night. Hal was loath to leave their property unprotected, prophesying that they'd find even the tent stolen in the morning. But after he had removed almost everything movable except the tent to the *Crystal Spring* he felt easier in his mind. They were to take the sloop. The *Crystal Spring* had stood the gale well, but she had managed to swing her stern onto a sand bank and it took quick work to get her off before the tide fell. As they moved out of the river mouth Hal waved a fond farewell to the *Corsair*.

"I shall never see you again," he mourned. "Bill Glass said the other day that he guessed he'd have to have a motor boat, fellows, and here's his chance."

"Look here," said Bee, "I'm beginning to think we were all wrong about the pirate. I don't believe he stole those things, after all."

"Well, who did then?" asked Hal.

"I don't know, but I'll bet it wasn't Bill Glass. I like Bill!"

The wind had died down to a fresh breeze out of the north, but there was enough of it to send even the *Crystal Spring* along at a good pace and it was only a little after five when she sidled into Herrick's Cove. Jack had tried to refuse Mr.

Folsom's invitation to dinner, but the others would not hear of it.

"Besides," said Hal, "he particularly wanted me to bring you. He—there's something he wants to see you about."

So after a brief visit with Aunt Mercy and Faith the boys crossed the Neck and took the ferry to town. Jack had changed into his best clothes, and Hal and Bee, still in camp attire, pretended that he was ashamed to be seen with them and walked behind him all the way up the hill to the house. Mrs. Folsom proved to be a rather plump, pleasant-faced, placid lady and Jack concluded that Mr. Folsom had stretched it a little when he had told about the "conniption fits." She welcomed Jack warmly and rather embarrassed him with her praise of his conduct. Mr. Folsom reached home late and dinner wasn't served until long after seven, by which time there were three very hungry boys waiting. The dinner itself was more elaborate than any Jack had ever partaken of and he had to watch Hal closely to see which knife or fork to use. After dinner they went out to a wide screened porch that was furnished just like a room, with electric lights and deep chairs and tables and rugs and books, and Mrs. Folsom made coffee in a funny copper contrivance and Mr. Folsom, stretching himself in a long wicker chair, lighted a cigar and turned to Jack.

"Herrick, Harry tells me you're still running that water boat your father had. Doing pretty well, are you?"

"Pretty well, sir."

"Could do better, though, if you had power, Harry says."

“Yes, sir, it’s hard to get around. And when there’s a calm I have to use the oars. There’s another boat selling water now —”

“So I hear. Ever think of putting an engine in yours?”

“Yes, sir, I’ve thought of it. I guess I’ll have to pretty soon.”

“I would. Now look here, Jack, here’s a proposition. Last year we piped water down to the wharves so our boats could fill their tanks right at their berths. But the town water isn’t fit to drink half the time and our skipper tells us it gets rotten after it’s been in the butts a week or two. I don’t drink it myself; we buy spring water; and I don’t believe it’s fair to ask the men to. So much for that. Now I’ve got a twenty horsepower Albany engine stored away that came out of the *Bessie and May* a couple of years ago. It’s in good shape; never was used much; and it isn’t doing any good where it is. Here’s my offer, Jack. You take your boat up to Collins and Haggins’ railway and I’ll have them put that engine in her and fix her up in good shape. If she needs overhauling they might as well do it. I’ll have them make a good all-around job of her; new timbers or planks where they’re needed; new stick, too, if you want. And a couple of coats of paint.”

“Why—why—” stammered Jack. “Thank you very much, Mr. Folsom, but—”

Mr. Folsom raised a protesting hand. “Wait a minute; I’m not through. Now I might do this for you and still be in your debt, my boy, but I think you’re enough like your father to refuse to let me. So I’m going to make a trade with you. That spring water of yours doesn’t cost you anything and it’s

mighty fine water. Now if I do what I've offered to, Jack, will you serve Folsom and Company's boats with water for a year without charge?"

"But—but that wouldn't be fair, sir! If you said three years—or four—"

"Hold on! We use a lot of water, my boy, nowadays. We have sixteen vessels in our fleet. Don't lose sight of that. It will keep you pretty busy attending to us at times. No, a year is enough. After that we'll make a new dicker with you, and I guess I can trust you to give us fair terms. Now, what do you say? Yes or no?"

"I say yes, of course, sir, and I—I can't begin to tell you how much I—how grateful—"

"I understand. And I'm grateful to you for what you did last night, and what you did the other day when you rescued my boy and Bee off the Head. And now there's one more thing. Have you ever thought of putting that water up in bottles and selling it that way?"

"No, sir."

"Think it over. In this town I suppose more than half of us buy spring water in bottles or carboys for drinking purposes. And I guess most of us would as lief drink Crystal Spring water as any other kind. You could sell it cheaper, too, for you wouldn't have to ship it. Better think that over, Jack."

"Say, that's a dandy scheme, dad!" exclaimed Hal. "How did you happen to think of it?"

"That doesn't sound flattering, Harry," laughed Mr. Folsom. "As a matter of fact, however, I hadn't thought of it

until I began to talk. Then it occurred to me that if Jack here could deliver that water to me I'd just as lief have it as the kind the grocer sells me. Jack, you stop at the office some day and we'll talk it over. You'll need a little money, probably, to get the thing started. Perhaps I can help you there. Coffee ready, Lucy?"

Later a date was agreed on when the *Crystal Spring* was to be at the marine railway and Mr. Folsom promised to see that the gasoline engine was delivered in time. The boys were greatly excited about it and Bee expressed regret that he could not remain in Greenhaven and help Jack run the boat. "And between times," he said, "I could buzz around town in an auto truck and deliver bottles of spring water, Jack. Honest, you'd better make me an offer. I'm a dandy chauffeur—marine or—or terrestrial!"

"That's a fine old word!" applauded Hal. "But if you can't chauffeur an auto truck any better than you can a launch— Say, Jack, I wonder if the *Corsair's* gone yet! Dad, who is this Bill Glass?"

"Who is Bill Glass?" Mr. Folsom set down his coffee cup.

"Why do you ask, Harry?"

"Why, because you seem to know him pretty well and we think he's a bit of a robber." And Hal told of the disappearance of the articles from the launch and of Jack's dory. When he had concluded Mr. Folsom shook his head.

"Harry, it's a bad plan to judge folks by their looks. I've been fooled too often myself not to have learned that. There's your mother. When I first saw her I thought she was a quiet, easy-going little woman who wouldn't say 'boo!' to a fly.

Well, you see how she's turned out. Tyrannizes over me all the time; beats me; starves me to death!"

Mrs. Folsom smiled placidly as the boys laughed.

"But you're all wrong about Bill Glass, Harry. Bill never stole in his life, and I doubt if he ever told a lie. Whoever took your things, it wasn't Honest Bill Glass. Ever hear how he came by that name? Bill years ago sailed for Townsend; was mate and then captain. He had the *Ellen T.* for a couple of years and then they gave him the *Massachusetts* the first year she was built. Well, Bill had her off New Foundland and he got caught inside the three-mile limit by a revenue boat. Bill didn't know he was inside the line until they nabbed him and took him to port. They libelled the boat and the case went to court. There wasn't much of a case against him because it was pretty doubtful just where the *Massachusetts* had really been, owing to the fog. I guess if Bill had been willing to lie about it they'd had to release him. But when they asked Bill he told the truth. 'Quarter of a mile inside the limit,' said Bill. And they put on the fine and Townsend had to pay it. But that lost Bill his job. Townsend said he was a fool. Bill sailed for me as mate several years and then built himself a cabin over on the hay meadows and went to fishing. I guess he'd managed to save a little money, for I don't think he makes much fishing, although I've seen him come in with a catch now and then. No, it wasn't Honest Bill Glass who took that dory, boys."

"I didn't think he did, anyway," said Bee stoutly. "At least, not lately."

"Still, he certainly held us up good and hard for bringing us off Hog Island," said Hal.

“Oh,” laughed Mr. Folsom when he had heard about that, “Bill probably saw you suspected him and thought he’d make you pay for it. And besides I don’t see but what four dollars was a fair enough price. When you first asked me about Bill I thought maybe you’d heard something.”

“Heard what, sir?” asked Harry.

“Well,” hesitated Mr. Folsom, “maybe I oughtn’t to speak of it. You boys will have to promise not to let it go any further. It’s pretty well known, I suppose, but nobody ever mentions it.”

“We promise,” said Hal eagerly. “What is it, dad?”

Mr. Folsom laughed. “You’re as eager for gossip as a woman, Harry. It’s just this; if you boys ever found any treasure on Nobody’s Island it wouldn’t belong to you after all.”

“It wouldn’t? Why, sir?” asked Bee.

“Because it would belong of right to Bill Glass.”

“Bill Glass! Why—why, does he own the island, sir?”

“No, although maybe he’s got as good a title to it as anyone. But that’s not the reason. The real reason is that anything Old Verny buried belongs to his heirs, and Bill Glass is Old Verny’s son!”

CHAPTER XXVI

The Letter In The Dory

“Yes,” continued Mr. Folsom when the expressions of surprise had died out, “Bill’s real name is Jule Verny, or Verginaud. He was just a young chap when they took the old man prisoner and shot his elder brother, but he must have been a good swimmer, for they say he swam all the way from the island to Fort Point. Anyhow, he got away. And he stayed away for years, although there wasn’t any reason why he should have, for he was just a boy and didn’t have anything to do with his father’s misdeeds, I guess. He showed up in Greenhaven years afterwards, when he was about thirty, I suppose, and no one would ever have known who he was if old Mother Chilten, who was about a hundred and never forgot a face, hadn’t called him by his name on the wharf one day. And Bill wouldn’t lie about it. But he always clung to the name of Glass, which I’ve suspected was a nickname given him on account of his glass eye. So now you know who Bill Glass is.”

“But I don’t see,” said Bee presently, “why Bill seemed so anxious to have us dig for the treasure. He always insisted that it was there somewhere and that we might find it. If it is his—”

“Perhaps that is the reason,” replied Mr. Folsom with a smile. “I guess Bill has hunted pretty well for it and now he’s willing to have someone else do the work for him. I guess if you had found it you’d have discovered Bill not very far

away, Bee! I suppose now you'll give up your treasure hunting. I didn't tell you this before because I thought there wasn't much danger of your running across it and I didn't want to spoil your fun."

"I'm not ready to give up yet," replied Bee stoutly. "After all, it isn't the money we want; it—it's just the finding it! And unless the others are tired of it I'd like to keep on awhile longer. Anyway, it's lots of fun on Nobody's, Mr. Folsom, and I'm getting so I'd rather sleep in a tent than indoors!"

"We'll give you until Monday, Bee," laughed Hal. "If you haven't found the treasure by that time we'll quit. That's fair, isn't it?"

Bee agreed that it was, and shortly afterwards Jack, thanking Mr. Folsom again for his kindness, took his departure for the Neck. He didn't go to sleep very soon after he was in bed, in spite of the fact that the hour was late. He had far too much to think about and was far too happy!

The next forenoon the *Crystal Spring* returned to the island, but owing to the fact that there was almost no breeze—the day had turned out hot and sultry—it was nearly dinner time when she reached her anchorage. As the anchor splashed, Hal, who had laid hold of the *Corsair*, which was to bear them ashore, glanced toward the wharf. Instantly—

"Jack!" he cried. "Bee! The dory's back!"

And sure enough, there was the *Faith* tugging gently at the painter. Conjecture was rife and the mystery was not explained until the *Corsair* was alongside the dory. In the bottom of the boat, lying on an old net, were the things stolen from the launch!

“There’s the compass!” exclaimed Bee.

“And the fog-horn!” said Hal.

“And the lanterns!” added Jack.

In fact, everything had been returned except the boat-hook, and why that was not there was explained a moment later when Hal descried an envelope tucked amongst the articles. It was addressed to “Mister H. Folsom, Esq.” and Hal broke the flap and drew forth a sheet of blue-lined, gilt-edged paper.

“It’s from Bill Glass,” he exclaimed. “Listen, fellows.” And, with pauses where Bill’s pencil had run away from him or failed to work smoothly, Hal read:

“Dear sir, here be your dory. I seen you wan’t going to look for it so i done it for you. Them portigees had it like i knewed they had and told you so. I had to pay them 2 dollars and ½ before they let go of them but thats alright because you paid me 4 dollars for bringing you off Hog Island and that was more than the job was warth but i was cross because you thot i had stolen your belongings. Wishing you luck i remane resp’t’y yours H. B. Glass.

“P. S. The boathook want there but i got one you can have cheap the one i showed you.

“P. P. S. Regards to the others from H. B. G.”

“What’s the H. stand for?” asked Bee when they had read the note the second time.

“Why, Honest,” replied Jack. “Honest Bill Glass. See?”

“Well, he’s certainly proud of that first name, isn’t he?”
Bee laughed.

“I guess he has a right to be,” returned Jack. “It isn’t such a bad first name, Bee.”

“No, that’s true. Well, he is certainly a brick, fellows. And we’ll have to look him up and thank him.”

“Maybe he will look us up,” replied Jack. “He probably left the dory here on his way out. I wonder who the ‘Portigees’ are who took the things. Probably some of those who live up by the track. It wouldn’t be difficult for them to sneak down the river at night and not be seen. Anyhow, I guess it doesn’t matter, now that we’ve got everything back—everything except the boat-hook. And as Bill says he has one we can have cheap.”

“I guess the least we can do is buy it,” laughed Hal. “Let’s go up and see if things are all right in the tent.”

Their way led them by the scene of their recent excavations and suddenly Bee gave a cry of surprise and regret.

“Fellows, the tree’s blown down! Gee, but I’m sorry. I liked that tree; it was such a plucky little old chap. And I suppose it was our fault, too. We dug around the roots and weakened it.”

Bee walked across to where the apple tree lay on its side on the sand, uprooted, its leaves already limp and withered. He viewed it sorrowfully for a moment and then turned away to overtake the others. As he did so his gaze encountered something which protruded from the soil in the hole left by the uprooted tree. For a moment he stared unbelievably. Then,

with a shout of triumph, he jumped into the depression and when the others looked around he was half out of sight and a perfect stream of sand was flying through the air! When Hal and Jack, hurrying back, reached the scene Bee already uncovered one end of an iron chest. "Quick!" he panted. "Get the shovels! I've found the treasure!"

CHAPTER XXVII

Treasure Trove!

Jack ran for the shovels and in a moment, breathless and excited, the three boys were laboring mightily, getting in each other's way and taking a quarter of an hour at least to do what might have been accomplished calmly by one worker in ten minutes! But at last the chest lay exposed. It was over two feet in length by some eighteen inches wide and of about the same depth. It appeared to be made of sheet iron and was reinforced on the edges. There was a handle at one end and traces of one at the other. It was covered with red rust and as they lifted it from the hole it threatened to fall to pieces in their hands. There were two simple hasp locks in front, one near each end. The boys laid the chest on the ground and looked at each other in triumph.

"I told you we'd find it!" exulted Bee, his eyes sparkling. "And we have!"

"And it isn't ours," mourned Hal. "What do you suppose is in it? It feels heavy enough!"

"I mean to find out," responded Bee. "Let's take it up to the tent, fellows."

"What's the use?" asked Jack. "It isn't ours. It belongs to Bill Glass and we might as well dump it into the launch and take it to him."

"That's all right," replied Bee doggedly, "but when I find hidden treasure I have a look at it, no matter whose it is! And

I mean to open that chest and see what's inside! It's Bill Glass's, but we found it and we ought at least to have a look at it."

Jack perhaps felt that Bee's reasoning was faulty, but his own curiosity was too strong to allow of much conviction in his tones when he replied, "Well, we haven't any business to open it, Bee, but—"

"Never mind the 'buts'," said Bee. "Where's that pick? We'll open it right here and have a look. Then we'll put it in the launch and hand it over to Bill. Do you suppose there are jewels there, Jack? There must be gold, because it's so heavy!"

The point of the pick solved the locks in a twinkling. Hal and Jack bent forward and Bee, after a moment of breathless hesitation, raised the lid.

The first thing that met their eyes was a layer or covering of yellow-brown material that turned out to be canvas, stained and rotted. It fell to pieces as Bee tried to lift it aside, revealing a strange hodge-podge of silver and silver-plate; old-fashioned butter-dishes, castors, spoon-holders, sugar-bowls, knives, forks, spoons!

"What do you think of that!" gasped Hal.

Bee delved into the mass, scattering the things to the ground. A watch-case minus the works—it might have been gold or only gold-plate—rewarded his search, as did a gold brooch set with coral. Then a small leather pouch, white with mold, secured with a leather thong that broke when Bee strove to loosen it, tumbled out of a sugar-bowl. Bee peered

into the pouch and then inverted it. A number of coins fell out.

“That’s more like it!” Bee muttered.

They were all of silver, dollars and fifty-cent pieces, and when they were counted summed up to exactly twenty dollars. Bee tossed them back into the pouch disappointedly and proceeded to empty the chest. A ship’s clock was near the bottom, its brass green with verdigris, its dial chipped and cracked, its old hands pointing to fourteen minutes after seven.

“Now,” exclaimed Jack, “I’ll bet I know where Bill Glass got all those things he has on his walls! He dug them up here on the island!”

“That’s just about it,” agreed Hal. “Whenever Old Verny found a chest on a boat he just loaded it with this sort of truck and sunk it in the ground somewhere and I suppose Bill has been digging them up for years! It’s a bit of a sell on us, isn’t it?”

“No,” answered Bee, who, having reached the bottom of the chest without discovering anything more valuable than the gold knob from a cane, was now returning the articles. “We set out to look for a treasure chest and we found it. I’m satisfied. Of course, it would have been more interesting to have found diamonds and gold, but we did what we set out to do. And Bill’s richer by twenty dollars—to say nothing of more spoons and sugar bowls and such things than he will ever be able to use!”

“He has probably been doing that for years,” mused Jack. “Maybe that’s the way he’s lived. Whenever he got hard-up

he took a shovel, dug up a treasure chest and sold the contents! If that watch-case and the cane head and the other thing are really gold Bill ought to make about—about fifty or sixty dollars out of this lot. And that isn't so bad!"

"It must have kept Old Verny pretty busy burying things here," said Bee. "I wonder—" He paused and his eyes narrowed thoughtfully—"I wonder, fellows, if this is *the* treasure chest, the one he buried when the officers came after him. I don't believe it is! I believe that chest is still here!"

Hal groaned. "For the love of mud, Bee, don't tell me you're going to start all over again!"

Bee shook his head with a smile. "Not this summer, anyway, old Hal. But—next year—perhaps! It's pretty good sport, this treasure hunting, but I've had enough for now and I'm ready to return to town and read about it in stories for awhile. Come on; let's get this down to the launch and take it to Bill."

When, twenty minutes later, they laid their find in front of the half-open door of Bill Glass's cabin and knocked, there was no response. Jack pushed the door wide and they looked in. The cabin was empty save for Benjamin Franklin. Benjamin sat amidst the dinner dishes, blinking benignly in the sunlight. On the walls the fourteen clocks tick-ticked noisily and the stuffed parrot studied them with beady eyes. They laid the chest on a chair and Bee found a piece of paper and wrote on it: "For Honest Bill Glass, with best wishes from The Treasure Hunters Company, Ltd." This he placed on the old chest and they started out. Then—

"Ding, dong!" said a ship's clock with a tenor voice.

“Ting, tang,” piped a clock with a soprano voice.

And then came all the others in a weird jumble of sound, and the boys hurried out laughing, Bee with his hands over his ears.

“Two bells,” exclaimed Hal. “Why, it’s long after dinner time! Come on, fellows; something calls me!”

So they tumbled back into the *Corsair* and returned to the island for their last dinner there. By three o’clock everything was bundled aboard the sloop or the launch and they said good-bye to Nobody’s Island.

“We had a mighty good time there,” reflected Bee. “It wasn’t what you’d call a fancy treasure island, but it was a good plain treasure island. Something sort of tells me I’ll be back there some day, fellows.”

“If you are I’ll see that you don’t have a shovel with you!” muttered Hal as he emptied the last drop of oil in the oil-can where it would do the least possible good. Then the breeze caught the patched, gray mainsail of the *Crystal Spring* and the three boats rounded The Clinker and Nobody’s Island was lost to sight.

Three weeks later, almost to an hour, the boys again sat in the cockpit of the *Crystal Spring*. But what a different *Crystal Spring* it was! Amidship, an engine, gay in black enamel and brass, hummed and purred and clicked. The mast had been freshly scraped and varnished, the deck looked like new, the hull glistened like a raven’s wing and an immaculate

white mainsail lay furled along the boom under a creamy canvas cover. No, you'd hardly have recognized the old sloop. There was even a new pump, and instead of having to operate it by hand Jack need merely uncouple the propeller shaft by the move of a lever, start the engine and the pump would throw such a stream as would fill a tank in almost no time!

Bee was returning home on the morrow and this meeting was in the nature of a farewell gathering, although Jack was to accompany the boys back to dinner later. The *Crystal Spring*, lazing along at three or four miles an hour, was passing the entrance of the canal at the end of the harbor when Jack suddenly moved the helm over and, reaching forward, pulled the throttle wider.

“What is it?” asked Hal.

Jack pointed to where, a mile away, the snub-nosed lighthouse tender was just moving into sight around the end of the breakwater.

“Hurrah!” cried Bee. “Hit her up, Jack!”

The *Crystal Spring* dug her nose and pushed the water aside while the engine hummed louder and faster. No one could liken the sloop's progress to the flight of an arrow, but what she lacked in grace she made up for in power, and by the time she was half-way to Gull Island she was slapping off a good seven miles! And just as they reached the inner end of the island a buff cat-rigged boat under power hurried forth from the basin.

“There she is!” whispered Hal. “Can you beat her, Jack?”

“Watch me,” answered Jack with a grim smile.

The *Morning Star* had something of a start and her engine was buzzing and her exhaust popping for all they were worth. But foot by foot the old *Crystal Spring* gained as they swept by the wharves. Along the string-pieces idlers, sunning themselves, saw the race and shouted them on. The government boat was slowing down to drop her anchor now.

“Open her up just a tiny bit more, Hal,” directed Jack softly. Hal touched the throttle lever gently and the engine purred more quickly. Then the bow of the sloop was even with the stern of her rival and the Lampron brothers, gazing across, scowled angrily. Faster now the *Crystal Spring* swept through the water. The *Morning Star* no longer led; the sloop was even with her. And now the *Crystal Spring* was actually drawing away; there was clear water between them!

A little farther the *Morning Star* held on, then the helm went over and the rival water boat swung off her course, accepting defeat. In the bow, at the wheel, Tony Lampron gazed after the *Crystal Spring* and shook his fist. Jack, seeing, smiled and seized a small megaphone from its rack. As the *Morning Star* headed back toward the basin Jack put the megaphone to his mouth.

“Where you been some time, Mister?” he shouted.

THE END.

Transcriber's Notes:

A List of Illustrations has been provided for the convenience of the reader.

Obvious printer's, punctuation and spelling inaccuracies were silently corrected.

Archaic and variable spelling has been preserved.

Variations in hyphenation and compound words have been preserved.

[The end of *Partners Three* by Ralph Henry Barbour]