

THE BOY INVENTORS' DIVING TORPEDO BOAT

BY

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"THE BOY INVENTORS AND THE VANISHING GUN,"
"THE BOY INVENTORS' FLYING SHIP,"
"THE BOY INVENTORS' ELECTRIC HYDROAËROPLANE," and
"THE BOY INVENTORS' RADIO TELEPHONE," ETC., ETC.

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NEW YORK
HURST & COMPANY

Republished 1929
M. A. DONOHUE & COMPANY
NEW YORK CHICAGO

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These have been left in their original state so as to maintain the historical accuracy of the text. This may also include inconsistencies in spelling of the same word in multiple locations within the text along with typesetting mistakes and oversights.

Minor punctuation fixes have been made to make the text more readable without confusion.

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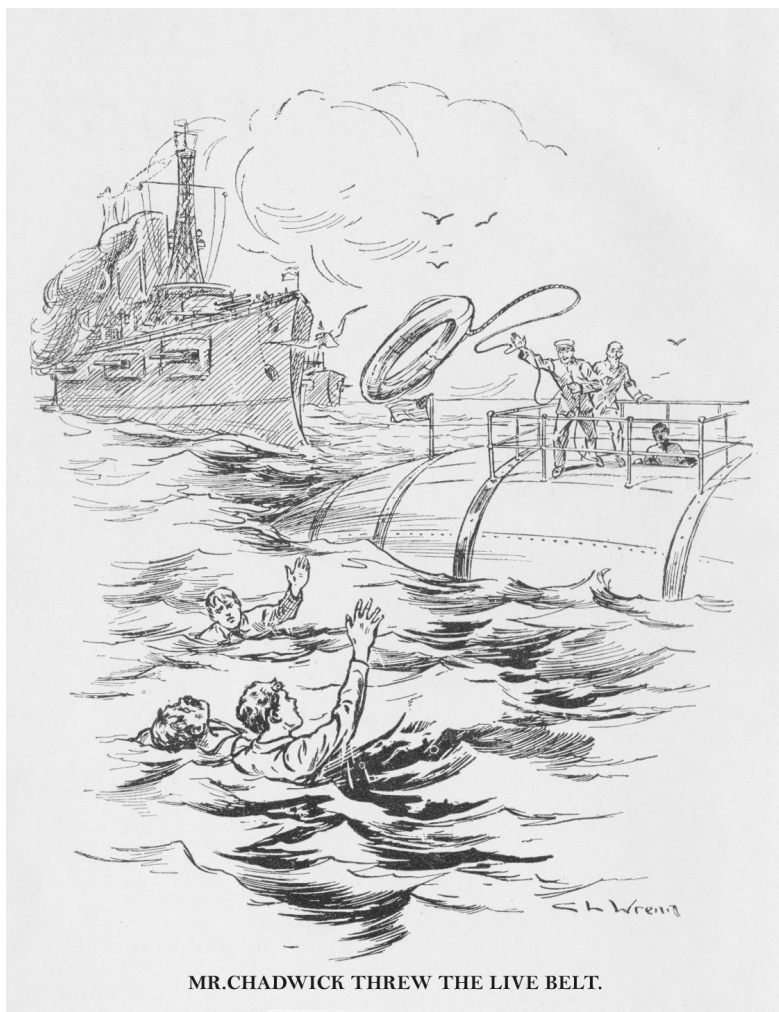
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MR. CHADWICK THREW THE LIVE BELT.

The Boy Inventors’ Diving Torpedo Boat

CHAPTER I. THE RUNAWAY CAR.

“What’s the trouble?”

“I don’t know. Seems to me that the car is running away.”

“It surely does. Gracious! Feel it lurch then?”

As he spoke Jack Chadwick, a good-looking, clean-cut lad of about seventeen, sprang to his feet. His example was followed by his cousin, Tom Jesson, a youth of his own age.

But the trolley car, at the same instant, gave a bound and a side jump that hurled the boys against each other.

Simultaneously the motorman turned his head and gave a frightened shout: “She’s got away from me! We’d all better jump!”

The car was on a steep down grade. Its speed was momentarily increasing, and it leaped and swayed wildly as it dashed down the hill. The motorman had hardly spoken before he made a leap from the front platform. The two boys saw his form sprawling on the road as he landed staggeringly. He was followed by the conductor of the car, who, more fortunate, managed to keep his feet after his jump.

All this happened with the rapidity of a swiftly moving motion picture film. The two boys found themselves alone.

When they had left Boston for High Towers, the

suburban estate of Professor Chadwick, Jades famous father, the car had for some reason 'been almost empty. The last passenger, with the exception of themselves, had vacated it some moments before the brakes had failed to work and the vehicle had started on its mad career down the steep hill.

In a flash the runaway car had passed the two operatives who had deserted it in terror, and was dashing forward faster than ever toward the foot of the hill.

Jack and his chum started for the front platform. Jack had a vague idea that perhaps he could control the runaway car. Before them they could see, at the foot of the hill, a sharp curve of the tracks, and beyond the flashing water of Bluewater Cove, a small but deep inlet.

All this they had but a minute to realize. Hardly had the details of the scene impressed themselves on their minds-scarcely had Jack grasped the brake handle and twisted it desperately, before the car appeared to leap into the air like a thing instinct with life. There was an alarmed shout from both boys, which was echoed by a gray-haired man, who rushed from an odd-looking building, abutting on the water, at the same instant that the car left the tracks at the curve.

The lads had just time to glimpse his overalled figure and to note his alarm, when everything was blotted out as the car dashed into a clump of trees and was utterly demolished.

It was an hour or so later when Jack and his chum came back to their senses. Their eyes opened on a scene so strange to them that they were completely at a loss to account for their surroundings. Jack lay on a sort of cot-bed, while his returning senses showed him Tom reclining on a similar contrivance almost opposite him.

The room in which they were was an unceiled,

unpapered apartment. The walls were of rough pine wood, and above them the naked rafters showed. In one corner was a stove, and in another a well-furnished set of book shelves. A library table which was littered with papers supported a reading lamp as well as what appeared to be models of different bits of machinery. Taken as a whole, the room appeared to be a section of a large wooden shed, paneled or partitioned off to serve as a living place.

To Jack's eyes, trained as they were to comprehend the details of machinery, it was perfectly plain that whoever occupied the place was engaged on some difficult, or at least abstruse, problems connected with a mechanical device; although, of course, as to what the nature of this might be, the lad could not hazard a guess.

"Where in the world are we, Tom?" he asked, as he saw by Tom's opened eyes—one of which was badly blackened—that his cousin was in full possession of his senses.

"I don't know. It's a funny-looking place. Say, Jack, are you hurt?"

"No; that is, I don't think so."

Jack stretched his limbs carefully. Apparently the result of his self-inspection was satisfactory, for the next moment he said: "No; I'm sound as a new dollar. How about you, Tom?"

"All right, except that my eye feels as if it was as big as the State House dome. Jiminy, what an almighty smash!"

"Yes; we were lucky to get out of it alive. But where on earth are we? That's what I want to know."

At this juncture a door at one end of the room opened and the same figure that had rushed from the waterside shed as the car left the curve appeared. It was that of a kindly-faced man of about sixty. His tall figure was bent

and stooped, but fire and energy still twinkled in a pair of piercing black eyes. Although the possessor of these attributes wore overalls, it was evident that he was not a laboring man. His face was rather that of a dreamer, of a man accustomed to deal with mental problems. In one hand he carried a pitcher of water, while in the other he had a stout volume bound in yellow calfskin.

“Ah! So my young patients are better already,” he remarked as his glance rested on the two wide-eyed lads. “You had a miraculous escape,” he continued. “I saw you on the front platform of the car as it left the rails and headed for a clump of trees. I did not think that there was a possible chance of your surviving, but it appears that you did.”

He blinked his odd, dark eyes and smiled at Jack, who was sitting up on his couch. His coat and vest had been removed, and his head throbbed rather wildly.

“What happened, sir?” he asked. “I remember the car running away, and then I made for the brakes—that was after the conductor and the motorman jumped—but after that it’s all confused.”

“No wonder,” was the reply. “I dragged you and this other lad out of a mass of debris. Had it not been that a heavy beam protected you from being crushed, you would have undoubtedly been killed.”

“The car was smashed, then?”

“It is a complete wreck. The conductor and the motorman were but slightly injured so that you all came safely out of it by a miracle, as it were.”

“We don’t know your name, but we are deeply grateful to you for all that you have done for us,” declared Jack. “My name is Chadwick, and this is my cousin and churn, Tom Jesson.”

“Chadwick?” repeated the man, with the manner of one who recalls a familiar name. “Are you any relation of

the famous Professor Chadwick, the inventor?"

"I am his son," rejoined Jack, not without a ring of pride in his voice.

"Then you must be one of the lads who went through those extraordinary adventures in connection with the wonderful vanishing gun which you helped Mr. Pythias Peregrine perfect?"

"We are the same boys," replied Jack smilingly, "but so far as helping Mr. Peregrine was concerned, I'm afraid we got him into more trouble than anything else."

"Not from what I have heard," rejoined the gray-haired man with conviction; "had it not been for you the vanishing-gun device would have been stolen, and possibly Mr. Peregrine's life sacrificed. But now, perhaps, it is time that I made myself known to you. My name is Daniel Dancer."

"*The Daniel Dancer?*" exclaimed Jack, astonishment appearing in his eyes. Tom's round and rubicund countenance was alight with the same eager surprise as they awaited the answer.

"I believe that I have been referred to as *The Daniel Dancer*," was the quiet rejoinder. "You appear to have heard of me before."

CHAPTER II.

THE "WHITE SHARK."

"Who hasn't heard of Daniel Dancer?" cried Tom enthusiastically. "Why, as dad used to say, your name is almost a household word in the field of invention."

The gray-haired man regarded him quizzically.

"Possibly it is," he rejoined, "but at the present moment I am as much at sea regarding a mechanical problem as any tyro."

He nodded his head in the direction of the model be strewn table.

"What I meant to make the crowning achievement of my career, my diving torpedo boat, the *White Shark*, is at present at a dead standstill."

The two boys regarded him wonderingly.

"You mean that work on it is at a standstill?" inquired Jack presently.

"Precisely so. I have to face certain mechanical problems that have—I am free to admit it fairly stumped me."

"You see," he continued briefly, "the *White Shark* is to be a combination diving and 'skimming' boat."

The boys merely nodded and waited for Mr. Dancer to continue. Plainly, developments of possibly startling interest were at hand.

"But it is impossible for me to explain to you just what the *White Shark* is, and what I hope to accomplish with her, without affording you a view of the craft," resumed Mr. Dancer; "if you feel strong enough I will show her to you."

"But it seems to me that I read in a Boston paper some time ago that your work here was of the most secret sort," said Jack.

“So far as the outside public is concerned such is the case,” was the reply, “but to my fellow laborers in the same field, as it were, I am glad to be of service and to provide them with an interesting sight; for I am vain enough to believe that the *White Shark* is one of the most remarkable craft in the world at the present time.”

“I should like to see it above all things,” cried Jack eagerly.

“The same here,” responded Tom, with expectant eyes, “I feel quite recovered from my shaking up.”

“That is good. Now if you will get up and follow me, I think I can show you something that will surprise you.”

So saying the inventor crossed the room to another door than the one by which he had entered. The boys, following him, found themselves in a big shed from which “ways” sloped down to the water’s edge. An extended view of the ocean was not possible, for two doors of stout construction barred the gaze of any curious person who might have tried to obtain a view of the *White Shark* from the sea.

But for these details the boys had no eyes. Their gaze was riveted on what, in outside appearance, at any rate, fully justified its designer’s appellation: “One of the most remarkable craft in the world.”

The *White Shark* was secured at the top of the ways, presumably ready to take a plunge into the element for which she was designed. She was about seventy feet in length, and shaped like a rather stout barrel with pointed, conical ends.

At one end was a propeller of bronze, and at the other a long tube, like a snout, or nose. This puzzled the boys greatly, but for the time they refrained from asking questions. The material of which the *White Shark* was constructed was a mystery also. It glistened like polished nickel and was as smooth and bright as a mirror.

“The *White Shark* is built throughout of Monel metal, a material that will not tarnish or corrode, but always remains bright,” explained Mr. Dancer.

Jack nodded his head.

“It’s something quite new, isn’t it?” he asked.

“Yes. It’s the invention of a friend of mine in New Jersey. It is almost as light and far stronger than aluminum.”

There was a ladder leaning against the side of the odd craft and Mr. Dancer, beckoning to the boys, signed them to follow him. He ascended the rungs with remarkable agility for a man of his apparent age and reached the top of the cylindrical craft long before the boys did.

The rounded top of the diving craft was as smooth and bright as its sides. A low rail ran round the “upper deck,” if such it could be called, and at first sight it appeared that there was no way of penetrating to the interior of the *White Shark*.

Mr. Dancer bent, however, and pressed a button, at first hardly discernible. A panel slid back noiselessly, revealing the first steps of a flight of steep stairs.

“One moment till I light your way,” said the inventor, “I don’t want you to fall down stairs and get into trouble twice in one day.”

He gave an odd, dry little laugh as he said this and reaching within, he pressed another button. There came a sharp click, and below them the fascinated boys saw the interior of the unique vessel illuminated by a soft white light of intense radiance.

“I invite you on board the *White Shark*,” said Mr. Dancer with a bow and a wave of his hand toward the entrance; “you will be the first outsiders to visit it.”

With hearts that beat a little faster than usual at the idea of the novel experience before them the two lads stepped within the opening and began the descent of the stairs.

CHAPTER III.

A WONDERFUL CRAFT.

At the foot of the stairs they found themselves within a room, narrow and high ceiled by the curved deck above, from each side of which three doors opened. In the center, suspended from the ceiling so as to be out of the way when not in use, a table swung, which could be lowered when wanted. Along the walls were folding chairs and lounges of the same description. At one end were bookshelves containing what appeared to be scientific works. A soft carpet was on the floor and the decorations of the chamber were handsome, but plain and solid looking.

The light which flooded the place came from a ground-glass dome in the ceiling. At the end of the room opposite to that occupied by the bookshelves was a table with glittering, metallic apparatus on it. Jack and Tom instantly recognized this as constituting an unusually complete wireless outfit.

“Why, the *White Shark* surely is a wonderful craft!” exclaimed Jack delightedly, gazing about him.

Tom echoed his enthusiasm; but Mr. Dancer merely said:

“Wait; I have more, much more, to show you.”

He opened one of the doors that led off the main chamber which they had just been examining. It disclosed a small cabin, furnished with two Pullman bunks, one above the other.

“There are three cabins like this,” said Mr. Dancer. “Those other two doors open into a bathroom and kitchen respectively. The last door leads to my private cabin.”

In turn these rooms were shown. Mr. Dancer’s cabin

was similar to the others, but slightly larger. A writing desk and some scientific instruments were within it. The kitchen proved to be a perfectly equipped "ship's galley," clean and compact, and the bath room fixtures were of the whitest porcelain, and included a fine shower bath.

"Now for the engine room," said Mr. Dancer, when the boys had expressed their delight over the features of the *White Shark* they had already seen.

He opened a metal door in the after bulkhead of the main cabin and ushered the partially bewildered lads through it. The engine room of the *White Shark* was an odd looking place. Instead of pipes and valves, wires and switches were everywhere. In the center of the metal floor were two powerful electric motors, and at the side of each was a dynamo which, Mr. Dancer explained, connected with the storage batteries in which electricity was stored for practically every purpose on the diving craft.

"I light, cook, and drive my engines by electricity," explained their guide; "in fact, everything on board is done by it. Even my steering devices and aluminum diving apparatus is electrically controlled. It is simple, takes up but little room and is always efficient."

"Those must be very powerful engines," ventured Tom, who had been examining them with interest.

"They can develop more than 1500 horsepower each," was the reply, "and weigh but very little in comparison with their efficiency. They will drive, or so I figure, the *White Shark* at twenty-five miles an hour on the surface, and might be made to develop thirty and even more miles per hour if pushed hard."

"But you can't go so fast under water," said

Jack. "No; the resistance is, of course, much greater, but I hope to do twenty miles under the surface of the sea."

“That will be faster than any submarine has ever gone?”

The question came from Tom.

“Yes, much faster, but then, in constructing the *White Shark*, I have got far away from the ordinary types of diving craft.”

“What is that long snout at the bow for?” asked Jack.

“That takes the place of a conning tower. It is a sort of telescope through which I can look out while running far under water. Near its end are concealed two small, but very powerful, searchlights that transform the perpetual darkness under the water to almost the light of day.”

“But on the surface,” asked Jack, who had seen submarines before at naval maneuvers, “don’t you use a conning tower?”

“No; we spy out our surroundings by an improved periscope, with the general principles of which I suppose you are familiar.”

“Yes; it’s a tube that can be raised above the surface and then reflects that surface upon a sort of desk, where the operator of the craft can see every detail plainly.”

“That describes it roughly. And now let us visit the steering room and the torpedo chamber. I also want to show you the submarine gun with which the *White Shark* is fitted.”

“This surely is a wonder ship,” gasped Tom; “a submarine gun! I suppose we’ll be introduced to a submarine lawn-mower next.”

Passing back through the main chamber, they reached the bow. At the front end of the conical-shaped room was what appeared to be the mouth of a steel tube. This, the boys knew, was the lookout tube. The inventor switched on the lights and showed the wondering lads just how a ray of light, powerful enough to pierce the

gloomy ocean depths, could be shot out from it. He then exhibited to them the periscope device and worked it for their benefit. By manipulating a crank the long tube of the periscope rose from the deck above, and upon the ground glass beneath its lower end the boys soon made out the details of the shed outside.

Behind the periscope attachment, and so situated that it commanded a full view from the lookout tube, was the steering apparatus. But instead of the customary wheel all that appeared was a row of buttons and a switch board of polished wood.

The whole contrivance was not unlike the desk of a telephone "central," which most of you boys must have seen. In fact, both Jack and Tom thought it was a telephone switch board, and said so.

Mr. Dancer smiled.

"There is communication with all parts of the boat from the steersman's seat," he said, "but it is by speaking tubes. I also have an automatic annunciator which signals the engine room if I want to go fast, slow, or to back up."

"I noticed it when we were in the machinery section," said Jack. "You have the entire boat under your control from here?"

"Yes; I could, in an emergency, stop the engines from here. But what I am most anxious to show you is my submarine gun and compressed-air devices for sending torpedoes on their deadly missions."

He turned to what appeared to be a steel box affixed in the bow portion of the craft alongside the sighting tube. At one side of the box were levers, and a chute led down to it from above.

"The torpedoes are stored overhead," explained the inventor; "when wanted this lever is pulled and one slides down and enters this box. From there it is

launched by compressed air, which is piped here from the engine room. In my type of torpedo each missile carries its own miniature engine, also propelled by compressed air. When it leaves the side of the *White Shark* a catch within that 'launching box' engages a projection on the side of the torpedo which starts the miniature engine in the latter."

"And the submarine gun?" asked Jack.

"Right here. Doesn't look much like a gun, does it?"

He indicated a cylindrical object of blued, glistening steel. To be sure, its "breech" was like that of the accepted type of modern guns built to handle high explosives, but its barrel was almost square and apparently projected through the skin of the *White Shark*.

This impression was confirmed by Mr. Dancer.

"The barrel of my gun, at least that part of it which projects outside the submarine, is composed of flexible rungs of metal, much as a high-pressure hose is constructed; but, of course, it is many times stronger."

He went on to explain that this gun was capable of propelling an explosive bullet half a mile under water, and that it could be aimed in any direction by means of a system of levers and guiding ropes controlled from the interior of the *White Shark*.

"But you cannot use gunpowder or dynamite in the gun," objected Jack, who, as we know, under the tuition of Mr. Pythias Peregrine, had become an expert on modern gunnery.

"No; but I have substituted another force; what it is you will hardly guess. I flatter myself that the idea is entirely original."

"If it's like everything else on this wonderful craft it must be," assented Jack warmly. "The force that I use is

nothing more nor less than steam," responded the inventor.

"Steam?" echoed Jack. "Why, how—"

"Wait and I'll show you," was the reply.

Mr. Dancer bent over the breech of the odd-looking gun and threw it open. "I am going to show you the most remarkable feature of the *White Shark*," he said.

CHAPTER IV.

MORE STRANGE DISCOVERIES.

Within the breech of the gun was disclosed a chamber enclosing a small cylinder of steel. This was ribbed by metallic strips connected with electric wires and capable of being superheated by electrical current. Inside this chamber was placed the explosive projectile which it was desired to launch.

This done, a small amount of water was admitted to the electrically connected chamber, and a switch turned which caused the metal to become superheated. In a flash steam, at terrific pressure, was formed, and by a twist of a handle it could be released when desired. Simple as the device appeared, Mr. Dancer informed the boys that in some experiments that he had made it had proved most effective.

With the inspection of the gun their survey of the craft practically was over, except for the exhibition by Mr. Dancer of the anchoring device and other minor details.

When they stood once more on the top of the curved deck Jack exclaimed with enthusiasm: "You have the finest craft of its kind I have ever seen or read of, Mr. Dancer." But, far from seeming elated, the inventor only sighed.

"It appears all right, I know," he said, "and it cost me almost all my fortune to build it; but there is one fatal defect in it: the diving devices do not work properly."

The boys regarded the gray-haired scientist with astonished eyes.

"It won't dive?" asked Jack, at length.

"No; that is, not properly. You see, I had devised a sort of double skin for it in parts, and I imagined that I

could fill this with water and make the craft sink when I so desired, and then pump out the water when I wished to rise."

"And you did not do so?" queried Jack.

"Yes, I equipped it with the tanks all right; but I found that I would have to install such large pumps that it would be impracticable to work them with the power I had; so that now, as I told you some time ago, you find me at a standstill."

"You mean that you cannot think of any other plan of making your craft ascend and descend in the water?"

"That's just it. I'm up against a stone wall. They call you the 'Boy Inventors.' I've heard how you have aided other inventors in trouble. Can you think of a way to make the *White Shark* dive?"

"Not off-hand," declared Jack positively; "but I promise you we'll give the matter thought and do our best to help you. And now, Mr. Dancer, we should be getting back. It is late and my father, for whom we ran into town to purchase some electric apparatus, will be worrying about us."

"But the wreck of the car has blocked the road and I have no vehicle handy that you can use."

"I thought I noticed a wireless apparatus on the *White Shark*; is it working?" asked Jack. "Yes; but its radius is limited. You see, I had to install the aerials inside the hull of the submarine; but with the powerful current I can command I can send a message up to twenty miles, or even more, under favorable conditions."

"If you don't mind, then, I'll send a message to High Towers asking Jupe, that's our colored man, to come right over with the automobile."

"What, you have a colored man who can take wireless messages?"

"Yes indeed, Jupe learned all of that on our trip to the Gulf of Mexico."

"True, I recall now reading about the colored man in some magazine account of your adventures. You must have had a stirring trip and some exciting times."

"We did, indeed," was Jack's reply.

Readers of "The Boy Inventors' Wireless Triumph," the first volume of this series, will agree with him. This story told of the finding of Tom's father, an explorer long lost in the mysterious land of Yucatan, and also related the odd quest of Prof. Chadwick, including the astonishing adventures of the two young inventors in a wonderful craft of their own designing.

After returning from this exciting trip they encountered, and aided materially, the inventor of a vanishing gun, designed to fight airships. Unscrupulous men tried to steal the plans of the gun, and finally succeeded, but through the boys' pluck and cleverness their purposes were ultimately foiled. These experiences form a part of the story entitled, "The Boy Inventors and the Vanishing Gun."

We now find them on the threshold of even stranger adventures than have already befallen them and, having made this necessary digression, let us follow our enterprising lads once more within the hull of the *White Shark*, the diving craft that so far had not dived.

Jack found the wireless of the usual type and lost no time in sending out his call for High Towers. After some delay, Jupe answered. Jack told him to bring the small runabout to the place, which he described, as soon as possible.

The colored man agreed to be with them in half an hour, and, much relieved, the boys sauntered out of the shed with Mr. Dancer to await the arrival of the auto.

They were standing in the road outside the gates of

the carefully secluded workshop, when a man on a high-powered motorcycle suddenly appeared from the direction of the grade down which the runaway car had dashed.

Mr. Dancer uttered an exclamation as he saw him.

"It's Adam Duke!" he exclaimed, in a rather perturbed tone.

The words had hardly left his lips before the motorcycle chugged up to where the little group was standing, and the rider swung himself from his seat.

When he pushed up his goggles, after alighting, the boys saw that the newcomer was a tall, well-built man of middle age. But what might have been a clever, good-looking face was marred by an expression of fixed sullenness and aggression.

"Well, what's all this?" he muttered rather gruffly, as he stared at the two lads. As for Mr. Dancer, even if his exclamation of recognition had not told them, the boys would have known that he was no stranger to the new arrival.

"What do you want?" he exclaimed, as the man motioned inquiringly toward the two boys.

"A few words with you alone, Mr. Dancer."

Then, as the inventor hesitated:

"Come; I'm in no mood to be trifled with."

Under the tan that overspread his rather wizened features the inventor turned pale.

"You must excuse me a minute," he said, turning to the boys.

Then he and the newcomer turned, the latter having leaned his motorcycle against the fence, and they entered the territory beyond the forbidding palings that marked the dwelling place of the *White Shark*.

CHAPTER V.

A WILD CHASE.

"That's odd," remarked Jack, as the two men vanished.

"What's odd?"

"Why, if ever I saw a man badly worried, it was Mr. Dancer. What do you suppose is the matter?"

"No idea. He's in debt, perhaps."

"No, that man didn't look like a bill collector."

"I didn't like his looks much, anyway. Wonder who he can be?"

"Well, there's his name on a name plate on that motorcycle,-Adam Duke."

"That's the name that Mr. Dancer used when he came up. By the way, what do you think of Mr. Dancer, Jack?"

"A fine type of man. He is rather dreamy and impracticable, as only too many inventors are apt to be."

"He has some wonderful features embodied in that submarine, though."

"Indeed he has. But a submarine that won't dive isn't much good."

"No more use than a motor that won't mote," coincided Tom with alacrity.

"Have you any ideas to help him out, Jack?" he continued.

There was a far-away look in Jack's eyes before he replied. Then came his answer:

"Yes, Tom, I have thought of something, but whether it would be practicable or not I don't know yet."

"Well, if you've thought of anything, I'll bet you'll manage to work it out some way," quoth Tom with admiring conviction.

“I wish that I could be as sure of that as you, Tom,” was the rejoinder; “but hark! what’s that?” he broke off suddenly. “It seems to me that we can be of aid to Mr. Dancer right now, Tom.”

“Gracious, yes! Listen, there it goes again!”

The sound both boys referred to was a sharp cry for help coming from beyond the palings.

“Help!” shouted a voice that they had no difficulty in recognizing as Dancer’s, and then again came the cry for aid, sharp and thrilling in its urgent need.

“Help! Help!”

“Come on, Tom!”

“I’m right with you, Jack!”

Together the two boys dashed through the gate which had been left open when Mr. Dancer and the man they knew as Adam Duke entered it.

Once inside they paused for an instant. Nobody was in sight, but a cry issuing from a small building told them that it was within that structure that they were needed, and needed in a hurry. Simultaneously both lads ran toward the building, a small shed, apparently used as an office.

As they neared it, a figure darted from the door. It was Adam Duke.

“What’s the trouble?” demanded Jack.

“Nothing,” snarled Duke with an effort at self-control; but his face was flushed and his eyes wild; and then he shouted:

“Take that, you young cub!”

A massive fist shot out, and Jack, taken utterly unawares, was knocked from his feet into the dust.

Before he could recover himself, Duke was darting for the gate, but with Tom clinging to him like a bulldog to a cat.

“Good for you, Tom!” shouted Jack, gathering himself together and regaining his feet.

He was about to follow Tom and the man Duke when a moan from within the shed from which Duke had darted arrested him.

“Mr. Dancer or somebody is in pain or injured,” he exclaimed. “My first duty is to him.”

Flinging a quick word of encouragement to Tom, the boy ran into the shed.

“Mr. Dancer! Mr. Dancer! Are you there?” he cried as he entered the place which was in semi-darkness.

“Who is it? Oh, who is it?” came in a moaning, broken voice from some corner of the dark shed.

“It’s Jack Chadwick! I’ve come to help you,” rejoined Jack as his eyes, growing more accustomed to the gloom, made out a figure huddled in a half shapeless mass in one corner of the place.

“I fear you are too late, my lad. The scoundrel Duke has—has—”

“Yes?” urged Jack, bending over the recumbent man.

But Mr. Dancer’s eyes closed and he sank back unconscious. It was not till then that Jack felt that his hands were wet, and realized that the inventor was bleeding from a wound on the head, apparently inflicted with some blunt instrument.

“The man Duke has wounded, perhaps fatally injured him!” was his thought as he hastily sought for some means of staunching the blood, which was flowing copiously.

A pitcher of water stood on the desk, and Jack hastily soaked his handkerchief in it. Then, returning to Mr. Dancer’s side, he bathed the ugly wound.

Almost immediately he was rewarded by Mr. Dancer opening his eyes and gazing at him in a somewhat dazed way.

“Can you tell me what has happened?” asked Jack.

“Yes; it was Duke struck me. He has a sort of hold on me, a monetary one. I can’t explain now, but he has stolen papers from that desk.”

“Important ones?”

“Yes; in a way they are important.”

“Hold on, I may be able to catch him yet!” cried Jack, darting from the shed.

His quick ear had caught the sound of an approaching auto, which he recognized as his own from the noise of the exhaust.

Sure enough, as he reached the gate in the palings, his red racing runabout, designed by himself along new lines, was pulling up to the sidewalk.

“Fo’ de lan’s sake!” Jupe shouted as he pulled up; “what’s all dis hyah bobbin’ an’ flummery?”

As the colored man shouted the words, making up expressions in his own peculiar way when his vocabulary failed him, Jack saw that Tom was lying at the roadside while Duke was making a jump for his motorcycle. He had just time to take in all this when Tom scrambled to his feet. At the same instant Duke sprang to the seat of his motorcycle and was off like a flash.

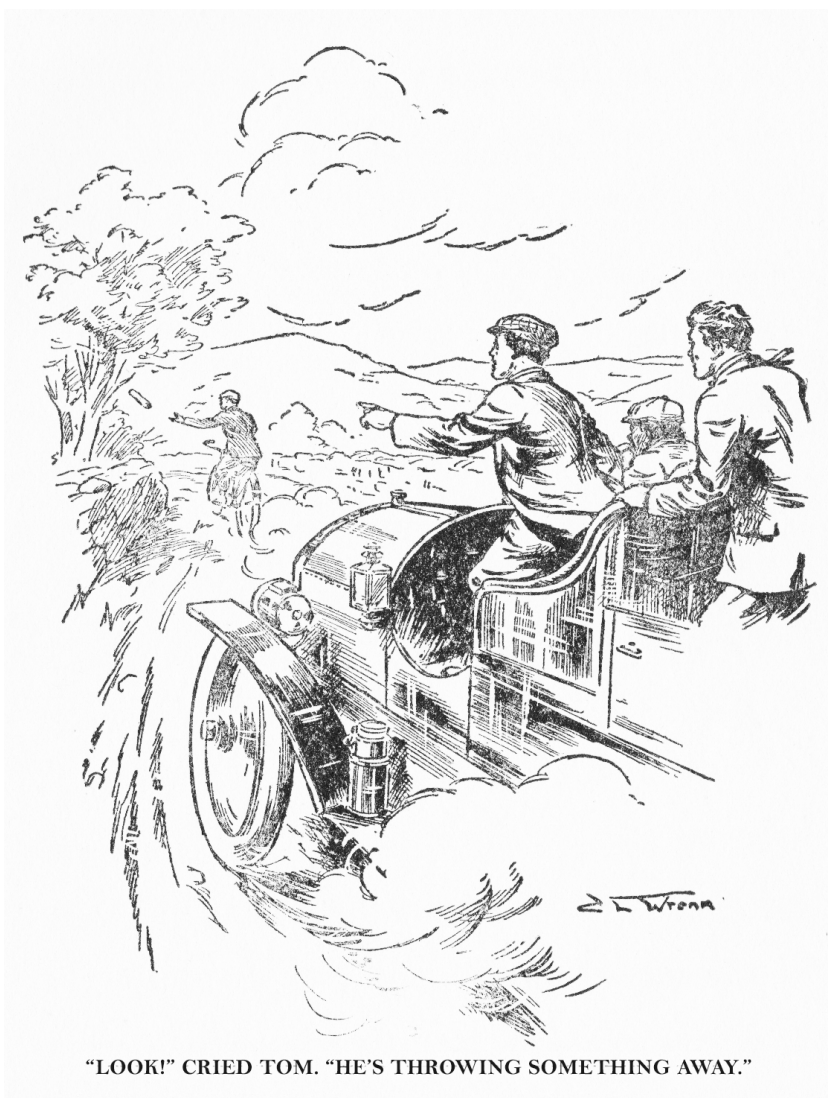
“After him!” shouted Tom, running toward Jack and the red motor car. “Don’t let him escape!”

“Then you are not hurt, Tom?”

“No; but he managed to fling me off and I hit the road with a pretty hard bump.”

“Good-I mean it’s good you weren’t hurt. Start her up, Jupe; don’t let that fellow ahead escape.”

Both boys leaped into the car, and as they chugged off Tom asked Jack if he had heard anything of the cause of the attack on Mr. Dancer.



"LOOK!" CRIED TOM. "HE'S THROWING SOMETHING AWAY."

"He said something about 'papers' when he regained consciousness," rejoined Jack, "but I didn't question him further."

"Gollygumption, ef you boys ain't allers in some sort of conniption fits," sputtered Jupe; "what's de conflaggerationous matter now?"

“Just this, Jupe, that by chance we met Mr. Dancer, an inventor. A short time after, he was brutally attacked by that man ahead of us on the motorcycle. The man also stole some papers. We must catch him if possible.”

“We cotch him or bust up dis yar Red Raben!” declared Jupe, using the odd name he had devised for the small but speedy red runabout.

The car roared and swayed as Jupe “opened it up.” It sprang forward with a jump like that of a live thing.

The man on the motorcycle glanced back over his shoulder. He saw that the fast little automobile was overhauling him, and instantly speeded up his machine.

It was a grim race and promised to be a long one, for the motorcycle appeared to be a speedy one, and Duke apparently intended to spare no efforts to escape.

CHAPTER VI.

JACK MAKES A PROMISE.

Both pursuers and pursued were hampered by the rather steep up-grade. But it was not long before they reached the summit, and then began an even more hair-raising exhibition of speed than before. The red auto appeared to rush through the air, the fences and trees on either side whizzed by in a blur, while the road unrolled like a white ribbon as they burned up space. "Gracious, we're going!" gasped Tom. "So is that chap ahead," rejoined Jack with grim humor; "let her out some more, Jupe."

"Golly to goodness, Marse Jack, ah daren't," panted Jupe, the words coming out of his lips between gasps. "De littlest bit mo' ob dis an' we am all busted to smithereens, fo' sho'."

"Well, do the best you can then."

"We's doin' dat right now," Jupe assured his young employer.

For a few minutes more the chase continued in stern silence. Fortunately, no vehicles or pedestrians were encountered, as the road was a more or less lonely one.

Suddenly Tom gave a yell of triumph. "Hurray! He's slackening speed, Jack."

"Sure enough he is. Something's the matter with his machine. Hit it up, Jupe."

"Look!" cried Tom the next instant; "he's throwing something away."

"So he is; a bundle of papers."

"They're the ones he stole! I reckon he knows we'd soon catch him if his machine broke down, and he has thrown them away to cause us to stop and pick them up. Are you going to?"

“Yes; they must be more important than capturing the man. Slow up, Jupe, we’ll pick up those papers.”

“I hate to lose the chance of catching that rascal.”

“Well, maybe we can catch up with him again,” rejoined Jack.

The machine came to a stop and Jack jumped out. A glance at the papers showed him that they were covered with carefully drawn plans and calculations. He readily guessed that they must be the articles for which they were in search.

“That came out finely,” he said as he revealed the contents of the bundle to Tom; “we’ve recovered Mr. Dancer’s work without half as much trouble as I expected.”

“Yes, but we’ve lost that man,” declared Tom.

He pointed ahead. Far down the road a dot was rapidly disappearing in the distance. Somehow the motorcycle had recovered its speed and was now so far ahead that catching up to it seemed impossible.

This being the case, there was nothing to be done but to turn back and make with all haste for the inventor’s plant. They reached it without further event and found the inventor awaiting them outside the palings. He had bound a white cloth around his wound, which he declared did not hurt him much.

“We have good news for you,” cried Jack, waving the papers; “I guess we’ve recovered what that rascal took.”

A brief examination showed Mr. Dancer that the papers recaptured were the identical ones taken from his desk. He explained that he had once been associated in the machinery business with Duke, but that the latter had proved dishonest and that he had closed all negotiations and dealings with him. Duke in revenge had made one or two attacks on him before, and this time had almost succeeded in injuring him seriously,

besides stealing the plans of the diving torpedo boat.

“He must have known, however, that they would be useless to him,” the inventor continued, “for most of my ideas are patented and I used a secret method of calculation of my own. Without the key nobody could understand what was on the papers.”

“And in any event the boat is not yet completed?”

“No,” sighed the inventor, “I am afraid that all my time and expense has gone for naught unless some means of making the boat dive can be found.”

“Well, I will promise to do all I can,” Jack promised him; “I’ll lay the case before my father to-night.”

“Thank you very much,” was the rejoinder; “there is nothing like putting a fresh young mind to work on such problems. Often the very fact that one has devised a thing makes one blind to its defects and thus unable to remedy them.”

“I hope we shall hit on a way of solving your difficulties,” struck in Tom. “By the way, we pass a police station on our way home; do you wish us to ask them to send protection to you tonight?”

“No, I have no fear of Duke returning. But if he should do so, I shall have my assistant, Silas Hardtack, with me to-night, and as he is a former man-o’-war’s man and afraid of nothing, I shall be well protected.”

“At least lock those papers in that iron safe I noticed in your office,” urged Jack. “I shall do so. Thank you for what you have done. Good-night!”

“Good-night!” hailed the boys, “we’ll see you to-morrow. “

“I hope so, and I hope you will bring with you some solution of my difficulties.”

CHAPTER VII.

THE LAUNCHING OF THE MODEL.

That night in the library of the Chadwick home, two boys and a dignified looking man, who wore a nut-brown beard slightly tinged with gray, sat poring over a pile of books and papers, their work illumined by a strong electric reading lamp.

The eldest of the party was, of course, Mr. Chester Chadwick, and the two lads, his son and nephew. Tom's father, Mr. Jesson, was absent in the Northwest, making a collection of the flora of the region.

"It is plain enough," Mr. Chadwick was saying, "that your friend's craft, owing to its construction, cannot be equipped with the usual tanks employed in submarine designing. What we have to do, is to find out some other way of forcing it beneath the surface and keeping it there, if necessary."

Jack, who had been busy with a sheet of paper for the last twenty minutes, looked up.

"I think I've got an idea," he said; "of course, although it looks all right on paper, it might not work out in practice."

"Let's see it, my boy," said Mr. Chadwick.

The rough sketch that Jack had made showed the *White Shark* equipped with peculiar looking, paddle-wheels of spiral design instead of the ordinary type. I "My idea is," he said modestly, "that of the Archimedian screw. When on the surface these spirals could be set level, but a slight tilt would drive the 'White Shark' down toward the bed of the sea. To rise, you would simply have to re-verse the process."

Mr. Chadwick nodded thoughtfully.

"Your idea sounds by no means impossible of being

put into practice," he said after a moment's consideration and a swift scrutiny of Jack's rough sketch.

"We would have to test it out with a model, of course," said Tom.

"Of course. But the engines in the *White Shark* are not so placed that they would drive propellers of this character, for, you know, there would be one on each side, on the principle of paddles instead of stern propellers."

"That was my idea," said Jack; "but I think it would be a simple matter to alter the position of the motors and install all the necessary driving shafts and gears."

The subject was discussed till late and they parted for the night determined to put Jack's idea to a test in the morning. There was much apparatus of various character about the workshops attached to High Towers, and they anticipated that the work of constructing a rough model would not take long. As readers of the other volumes of this series know, High Towers was a big estate embracing a lake and surrounded by a high fence, insuring privacy.

Mr. Chadwick had grown rich from his many inventions and could afford to indulge in the luxuries of his science. But, in spite of the idea of the young enthusiasts that it would not take long to construct a model, it consumed more than a week. The work of installing the Archimedian screws, so that they would be worked properly, was especially tedious.

But at last it was done. The complicated model of the *White Shark* was very like its original, only it was built on a scale of an inch and a half to the foot. It was an odd looking thing, with its two screw-like fins attached to the sides. Inside it were electric motors, and Jack had devised a system of controlling it from the shore with

electric wiring; for it had been previously decided to test it in the lake at High Towers. To sum up its appearance in a homely simile, the *White Shark* looked like a cigar-shaped bottle with corkscrews on each side.

It was an excited group that on the morning of the test emerged from the workshop in which the young inventors had wrought out their ideas. Mr. Dancer was one of the group, for, during the construction of the model, he had been a constant visitor at High Towers and had displayed much interest in the work. He had almost recovered from the cut on his head, which proved to be only a flesh wound probably inflicted with a blackjack. Nothing more had been heard of Duke, although the police had been notified and a hunt was on for the inventor's assailant.

The united efforts of the party were required to place the model on a hand truck preparatory to wheeling it down to the lake, where a sort of launching platform had been built. The eyes of all were bright with anticipation, though, and in the general excitement and enthusiasm there was no complaint of the work, which was really hard.

High Towers Lake was a body of water partly artificial and partly natural. Thick brush grew round its edges and it was indented by many small bays or coves.

When they reached the water's edge, they found the electric apparatus which was to control the diving model already in place and the wires ready to be connected. This did not take long, and then came a momentary pause before the ceremony of launching.

"We ought to give it a name," declared Jack before he cut the cord which held the model in place.

"By all means," said Mr. Chadwick; "come, Tom, think up one."

"I have already thought of one," was the reply. "The

Mister T. Jesson, I suppose,” scoffed Jack.

“No, not that, nor the *J. Chadwick*, either,” retorted Tom; “my name was *White Shark, Jr.*”

“Very good, indeed,” said Mr. Chadwick with a laugh, “the *White Shark, Jr.*, it shall be.”

“Let’s hope it proves a good example to its parent,” chimed in Jack.

“Well, the child is father to the man, as they say in the copy books,” smiled Mr. Dancer, “so let’s hope that the rule will work out in the case of a submarine.”

“Oughtn’t we to christen it?” asked Tom.

“In what way?” demanded Jack.

“By breaking a bottle of wine over the bow, of course.” This came from Tom. “Well, we have none of that sort of stuff here,” said Mr. Chadwick, “so I would propose that, as the native element of the model is to be under the water, we let her ‘christen’ herself as she dives into it.”

All agreed that this was a good plan, and then as everything was ready Jack drew his knife across the cord. The little craft slid down the ways just like what Tom called “a regular ship.”

It struck the water in a cloud of spray and Mr. Chadwick shouted:

“I hereby christen thee *White Shark, Jr.*”

“Hurrah!” shouted Tom, furnishing the applause proper on such occasions.

“Don’t holler till you see how it works,” remarked Mr. Dancer, cautiously; “put on the power, Jack.”

As the model submarine rose to the surface after its dive, Jack pressed the button that started the motors going. The spark flashed along the wire and the tiny craft’s propellers flew round with a whirring sound.

“Now for the real test,” said Mr. Dancer after a

breathless pause, during which the *White Shark, Jr.*, sped around in a circle, for Jack had set the rudder so that the craft could not get too far from shore.

The boy obeyed and at the same instant everyone uttered an undignified yell of triumph. As the concealed machinery tilted the screws downward, the *White Shark, Jr.*, vanished from sight! Five seconds later Jack brought the little craft to the surface again, and then put it through a series of diving and rising evolutions that showed that his invention worked perfectly.

“If my dream is ever realized it will be solely owing to you!” cried Mr. Dancer, glowing with the fire of success and warmly clasping the boy inventor’s hand.

CHAPTER VIII.

JUPE BATTLES WITH A WATER MONSTER.

It was while congratulations were still being showered on Jack,—for his father denied all credit save for his occasional aid in the construction of the model,—that a peculiar accident occurred.

The wires controlling the machinery of the diving torpedo boat were wound on reels, there being about two hundred feet of wire to each reel. This, of course, made it necessary to restrict the *White Shark, Jr.*, to a limited radius of operations. Suddenly, however, instead of continuing to circle in an orderly way as the model had been doing, it darted off straight across the lake at lightning speed. Before Jack could do anything to stop it, it reached the limit of the wires, snapped them like so much thread, and was off like an arrow over the water.

It was just at this instant that Jupe pulled out in a small rowboat used for fishing—for the lake was kept stocked—from one of the small coves already mentioned. He did not see the *White Shark, Jr.*, dashing across the pond straight at him. The party on shore yelled warnings; but Jupe, who was slightly deaf, did not hear them.

Instead he kept right on rowing.

“Wow! Look out for fireworks in about two seconds!” shouted Tom, who could not control his merriment. The others had to laugh, too.

In the meantime Jupe—supremely unconscious of the fate that was rushing down upon him at express speed—stopped rowing from some impulse and looked about him.

“Gollyumptions!” they heard him yell as he saw the model submarine racing straight at him, “by de trumpet ob Jubel, what kin’ of a fish am dat?”

“It’s a shark!” yelled Tom at the top of his lungs, “the

White Shark, Jr.”

“A shark! Fo’ de Lawd! Ah’s a gone coon!” bellowed Jupe in real dismay.

“It’s a submarine!” yelled Tom in return, “get out of its way!”

“It’s bin’ eatin’ beans and hay!” shouted Jupe, “but it’s still hungry, Great Gumptions to Goodness!”

Crash!

The runaway submarine model struck the rowboat full in the side. Jupe, who had risen to his feet, was knocked overboard in a flash by the impact of the blow. But the *White Shark, Jr.*, never stopped going. Shoving the boat before it, it sped on toward the opposite shore.

Jupe came to the surface—fortunately he could swim—and grasped the side of the boat. It was the opposite side to the one the model diving boat had struck, and Jupe could find no explanation for the fact that his craft was moving.

“Clar’ ter goodness!” he yelled, “dat shark mus’ be towin’ me to shore!”

But he clung on till he felt his feet touch ground, and then, yelling for help at the top of his voice, he dashed off into the bushes in an effort to get as far from the shark-haunted lake as possible. It was not until half an hour later that he ventured back, hearing voices near where he had come ashore.

They were those of Mr. Chadwick and his companions. Although the model was almost wrecked in the bow, they could not find words to blame Jupe, so elated were they over the unqualified success the trial had proved. The model was placed in the boat and rowed back to its starting point.

“I can patch it up so that we can use it again,” declared Jack as they carried it ashore and made an examination.

“Marse Chadwick,” begged Jupe, “you gib me a lil’ medicine for my insides. I declar’ I’s plum scared inter a stomach-ache by dat dar shark.”

“I’ve a good mind to give you a good scolding, you rascal,” laughed Mr. Chadwick, “and as for the sort of medicine you want, you won’t get any from me.”

“Not jes’ a teeny drop, Marse Chadwick? Ah sho’ does feel po’ful po’ly.”

“Not a drop, Jupe. Now be off and catch some fish for dinner.”

“And look out you don’t get run over by a whale this time,” chuckled Tom.

“Gollygumption! An ole whale, de daddy uv all de whalesses in de seas, couldn’ hev scared me no wusser dan dat contraption,” declared Jupe as he shuffled off.

It was something like a month after this incident that a group stood in Mr. Dancer’s workshop surveying the original *White Shark*. The addition of the Archimedian screws on her sides had materially altered her appearance, and made her look more like some sort of fish than ever. A long period of difficult and disheartening work had been concluded but an hour before, and now the finishing touches were complete.

“My! my! Things hev changed since I sailed on the old *Ohio!*” sighed Silas Hardtack, a grizzled old veteran of the Seven Seas, as the party which consisted of Jack, his father, Tom, and Mr. Dancer, stood regarding their finished work, in which all had had a share, “when I went to sea we’d hev called such do-dads as thet ‘floating tea-kettles.’”

“And a few years from now, submarines and fast cruisers driven by crude oil engines in place of cumbrous machinery will be the backbone of the navy,” prophesied Mr. Chadwick.

Old Silas has already been mentioned as Mr. Dancer’s

assistant and factotum. He had a great habit of perpetually recalling the way things were done when he "sailed on the old *Ohio*." In fact, if one believed all that he attributed to the craft of his youth, there never was such another ship.

"Well, now that our work is done, I'm anxious to try if the *White Shark, Sr.*, works as well as her *Junior* type," said Mr. Chadwick. "Are you ready for a test, Dancer?"

"There are some last adjustments to the machinery that I want the boys' help on," was the response, "and then I think everything will be in readiness for the supreme test."

His face paled as he spoke and he clenched and unclenched his hands nervously. A few short hours would prove now if he had squandered his fortune and his time or actually produced the most efficient type of submarine known.

As for the boys, they were half crazy with excitement. As they looked at the odd craft before them, it was hard for them to realize that in it they were, within a short time, to make a test that might be of the most dangerous order.

For not one of the party had any assurance, except their faith in their handiwork, that, once submerged, the *White Shark* would rise again. It was not a cheerful thought to dwell upon this suspicion that danger of the gravest sort, a death at the bottom of the sea, might lie before them.

But in the last hours of work on the machinery all such thoughts were forgotten. Every bit of machinery was gone over, lubricated, and adjusted. The screws were worked from a geared shaft, which ran across the ship and was connected with the motors by powerful gearing. Levers at the right and left of the engine room controlled the pitch of the screws. In general appearance the engine room was but little changed, except in small

details, from its condition when we last saw it.

Then came the moment when everything was declared ready down to the last detail.

“The *White Shark* is now as perfect as human hands can make her,” declared Mr. Dancer with—for him—a rare touch of oratory.

At five-thirty in the evening, an hour when the sun was declining to the horizon, for the time was in early fall, the last of the party that was to make the adventurous trip was on board. The group gathered on the curved upper deck consisted of the inventor himself, Mr. Chadwick, Silas Hardtack, the two boys, and Jupe.

For an instant before the time came for the final plunge, they stood in silence. Then each went to the place assigned to him previously. Jack and Tom went to the engine room and Mr. Dancer to the steersman’s place, while Mr. Chadwick, Silas, and Jupe remained on deck to attend to the last details of the momentous start.

The great doors which barred the opening of the construction shed had been opened, the “ways” were greased to facilitate the *White Shark*’s slide to the water, and the last ropes that held the craft in place were wound round the stern “bitts” on the after deck.

“Ready?” hailed Mr. Chadwick through the open panel.

“Ready!” came back from the steersman’s seat, booming through the mouth of the deck speaking-tube, which opened just below the panel.

Jupe, his ebony arms bared, stood above the retaining ropes, axe in hand. By his side stood Silas Hardtack.

Mr. Chadwick’s hand dropped—the preconcerted signal.

“Now, my hearty!” yelled Silas, slapping Jupe on the back. The darky’s axe fell and the ropes parted like pack thread.

For one molecule of time there ensued a breathless

pause. Then came a start and a trembling throughout the structure of the wonderful diving craft.

But this was only for the space of a breath. The next instant the slide toward the water began. At the same time, Silas reverently broke out on a stern flagstaff the splendid emblem of Old Glory.

“Whee, Jack, we’re off!” exclaimed Tom below in the engine room, oil can in hand.

“Yes, off on an unknown voyage,” softly whispered Jack, his hand on the starting lever, awaiting with keen intensity the signal to start the engines on which so much depended.

Mr. Chadwick’s watch told off just ten seconds between the start of the *White Shark* and the instant she struck the water in a cloud of foam. Holding on to the rail with both hands, the party on deck barely escaped being hurled off at the violence of the impact.

“Whoopee! She’s afloat!” bellowed Silas Hardtack as soon as he caught his breath.

“Gollyumpton, I hope she stays that way!” responded Jupe, his eyes rolling in his ebony countenance.

The sea was as calm as a mill pond. Far off on the horizon lay the smoke of a steamer. But except for that, the expanse of water before them was as solitary as a desert.

All at once a tremor, a feeling of life ran through the structure of the craft.

The novel propellers had begun their work.

Gracefully as a floating swan the *White Shark* moved off on her maiden trip.

“So far without a hitch,” breathed Mr. Chadwick, “but will she dive—and if she does, will she come up again?” he added.

Possibly that was the question which each soul on board the newly launched craft was asking himself.

CHAPTER IX.

OFF ON THE STRANGEST CRAFT ON RECORD.

It was not long after the start, that word was sent on deck by means of the speaking tube located near the panel, that it was time to come below. The flag was lowered and one by one those who had lingered on the whale-like back of the diving boat descended.

Mr. Chadwick was the last to enter the craft. As he did so, he pressed the controlling button and the panel slid into place with a metallic clang. The interior of the *White Shark* was filled with the buzz and hum of machinery, her lights glowed brightly and the air was as sweet and fresh as that of the outside world.

Considering the power of her engines and the amount of machinery within the metal hull, there was wonderfully little vibration. The craft glided along almost as smoothly as a limited express. But before long, as they left the quiet waters of the little bay, the diving craft began to pitch and roll to the motion of the Atlantic swell.

Mr. Chadwick was standing beside the inventor at the steering device, Jack and Tom, of course, were in the engine room, while Silas and Jupe were occupied in putting everything to rights in the cook's galley, this and the storeroom forming Jupe's department.

"Well, the time has come for the *White Shark* to make her first dive," announced Mr. Dancer at length.

The inventor was keeping rigid control over himself; but, despite his efforts to force a firm voice, his lips quavered as he pronounced his decision.

"Very well. I think we are all ready, Dancer," responded Mr. Chadwick, who appeared as cool as an icicle. In one hand he held his watch, for it was the

intention of the heads of this unique experience to record in minute detail all that occurred on the *White Shark's* first voyage.

"I'm going to give the signal now, Chadwick."

"Whenever you see fit," was the response.

The inventor's lean, nervous fingers flew to the engine-room signaling appliance.

"DIVE!"

That was the word that flashed up before the boys' eager, waiting eyes.

"It's come at last," murmured Jack.

As for Tom, he could say nothing. But his heart seemed to be beating till it shook his frame.

His face was pale under its wholesome tan. As Jack's hands sought the levers, Tom clutched his comrade's shoulder with a grip that almost made Jack flinch.

"Steady, Tom, old boy," warned Jack, noting his comrade's agitation. "I—I'm all right, Jack, b-b-b-but it is kind of creepy, you know, isn't it?"

"I don't know, I haven't had time to think," Jack began, when he broke off with a cry. "Tom—Tom, old boy, give us your hand! She's—she's—"

"Going down!"

The words broke from Tom's lips with a sort of sigh.

Then came a shout from Jack.

"Hold fast, all!"

It was well that he gave the cry. That is, it was well for Silas and Jupe. As for the rest, they knew what to expect and had gripped fast to some handhold.

Jack glanced at the engine room indicator.

The *White Shark* was being driven toward the bottom of the sea at an angle of thirty-five degrees. When it is considered that a grade of twenty-five degrees is called

steep, one can form some appreciation of the position of things on board.

From the galley came suddenly a yell of anguish and a sound as of smashing crockery. In the cabins, loose articles could be heard tumbling about, while a deep voice boomed out:

“Shiver my timbers, but this beats heavy weather on the old *Ohio*!”

Jupe’s voice rang out in anguish:

“Gollyumption, dere goes dat bufly soup I had fo’ suppah! Good land alive, de butter’s done got mixed up wid de onions! Dar goes anudder plate! Say, lemme off’n dis cantamperous contraption ob a floating oil-stove!”

“Jupe’s in trouble,” grinned Jack, “how do *you* like it, Tom?”

“Um—um, well, I suppose it’s all right, Jack.”

“Well, we’re going down, aren’t we?”

“Yes, but how about coming up? Hullo, Mr. Dancer’s put her on an even keel. How deep are we?” Jack glanced at the depth indicator on the metal wall above him.

“Seventy fathoms.”

“Gracious, four hundred and twenty feet!”

“That’s right, but the *White Shark* is constructed to bear at least ten times the amount of pressure we are withstanding.”

“But if we ever went too deep?”

“We’d be crushed flat as a pancake.”

“Humph!” was Tom’s sole remark. In the face of what Jack had just said, he could think of nothing more suitable to reply than this unsatisfactory exclamation!

CHAPTER X. IN DIRE DANGER.

“Cl-a-a-a-ng!”

The signal, twice repeated, crashed out from the bronze gong under the engine room telegraph.

“What’s the order, Jack?”

Tom gazed anxiously at the young chief engineer of the diving boat as he put the question.

“Rise!”

The two boys exchanged glances. This meant that the instant had arrived that was to prove the success or failure of the invention. Once more Jack’s agile fingers busied themselves with levers and wheels.

“You have set the propellers to a rising position?”

“Yes, Tom; a few seconds now will tell the story.”

The *White Shark*, which had been forging ahead on an even keel almost on the bed of the ocean, continued to proceed in that manner for a short time. Then, as the twin propellers affixed to her sides “bit” into the water, she slowly raised her bow toward the surface.

“Clang! clang!”

The gong resounded again. But this time it was not an order recorded on the face of the signaling dial that it indicated, but a summons to the speaking tube.

Jack sprang toward the bell-shaped mouth of the tube.

“Hullo!” he cried.

“Hullo! Engine room?” came back the query.

“It’s Mr. Dancer,” breathed Jack over his shoulder; and then—“Yes, sir!”

“Congratulations. The *White Shark* is a success.”

"I knew it, sir; I felt it, that is. We've done a wonderful thing."

"You may well say that, Jack," came another voice, that of his father; "I'm proud of you, lad. It was your skill that did it."

"Father, I—" began Jack, when something occurred that placed a check on his further speech.

He had barely time to seize a handhold to keep from being flung off his feet to the metal floor of the engine room.

"What in the world?"

"Great jumping gollyumptions!"

"Shiver my mizzenmast!"

"We've struck something!"

The exclamations recorded above came in a volley from Tom, Jupe, Silas, and Jack.

The progress of the diving craft had been suddenly checked. Preceding the startling cessation of motion there had come a grinding, rasping shock that 'ran through the submarine's structure from stem to stern. The boys had only time to exchange glances when there came a summons from the signal gong.

"Back up!"

"Oh, if we only knew what had happened!" cried Tom, starting for the door that led, by way of the main cabin, to the fore part of the craft.

In a flash Jack was after him, pausing only to set the lever that was expected to carry out the hastily signaled orders.

"Hold on, Tom!"

The words snapped out like so many pistol shots.

"But, Jack, we may be damaged! Sinking!"

"That makes no difference; your place is here. Stand by that lever."

The crisp, incisive tones of his chum's voice brought Tom out of his panic in a jiffy.

"All right, Jack; which one?"

"That one to the port side. I'll stand by this."

With throbbing pulses and strained muscles they waited nervously the next order. But none came. The *White Shark* shook and quivered as her engines reversed with every ounce of power they possessed; but still she did not move.

Then came another order. This time through the speaking tube: "Drop everything and come forward."

The power was shut off, and, followed by the curious and beseeching glances of Silas and Jupe respectively, the boys made their way through the interior of the hull to the steersman's section.

They found Mr. Chadwick and Mr. Dancer anxiously peering out through the observation tube.

"What is it? What's happened?" demanded Jack anxiously.

"Are we in any danger of sinking?" asked Tom.

"No, I think not. But we are in a bad fix," was Mr. Chadwick's response; "look out through the observation tube and tell me what you see."

The two boys pressed forward, taking the places of their elders. The searchlights concealed in the mouth of the tube were turned on at full power. The bright rays pierced the black subwaters of the Atlantic like a gleaming sword of flame. But at first the two lads could see nothing, just emerging as they had from the bright light of the engine room.

But after a while their sight became clearer. Before them, like some scene viewed by vivid moonlight, they saw the depths of the sea. Fish swam to and fro seemingly fascinated, like moths about candles, by the

brilliant rays of the searchlights. Looking down they could make out rocks with fantastic fronds of seaweed waving from them.

And then suddenly something else loomed into view—a long, writhy-looking black object right across the bows of the *White Shark*.

“It’s a serpent! A big sea snake!” cried Tom.

“I only wish it were,” sighed Mr. Dancer, “but it’s worse than that. It’s the anchor cable of some large ship.”

“Can’t we cut through it?” asked Jack.

“No, I fear we are hopelessly tangled in it. When you backed the boat she refused to leave the cable.”

“How did we come to run into it?”

The question came from Tom.

“You may well ask that, my boy, in view of the fact that the searchlights show up the ocean for quite a distance.”

“It was an accident,” struck in Mr. Chadwick, “an unavoidable accident.”

“Yes,” continued Mr. Dancer, “you see, we were coming along at a fine clip when suddenly in front of me I saw an anchor flash downward.”

“Some big craft is at anchor above?” asked Jack.

“There must be. I had no time to avoid this entanglement before the anchor was hard and fast in the ocean bed.”

“We’ve got to get loose,” declared Tom.

“Of course, unless we wish to remain here below till the craft above us up-anchors, which may not be for days or may take place in an hour.”

In rejoinder to Mr. Dancer, Jack’s father said:

“That is too uncertain. By the way, Dancer, how long will the air remain pure in the *White Shark*?”

“For twenty-four hours. I have an emergency oxygen device which increases that supply by some five hours, but the quality of air would be bad.”

“It does not seem any too good right now,” said Jack, aside to Tom. Then he added: “How are we caught, sir?” addressing his query to Mr. Dancer.

“I think that a projection on the observation tube has become entangled in the rope.”

“In that case we are in a bad fix?”

“About as bad as it can be,” was the reply; “there’s no way of getting out there and cutting the obstruction loose, even if we had diving dresses, which we haven’t.”

Mr. Dancer looked about him despairingly as he spoke.

“Too bad that such an accident should have marred our first trip,” he said with that placid submission to circumstances which was characteristic of him.

“The only thing to do is to think of some way to release ourselves,” declared Mr. Chadwick energetically.

“Obviously; but what to do, my friend?” The question was put bluntly and Mr. Chadwick had no reply for it. Tom broke the silence that followed.

“I think I’ve got a scheme,” he said.

They pressed about him eagerly while from the main cabin came a loud wail.

“Golly ter gracious, ah knowed suthin’ lak dis yar ‘ud happen. De idea ob dis yar diving ‘bout lak fishes ain’t right. Now we’s all gone coons.”

“Silence!” roared the voice of Silas Hardtack. “I’ve been on the old *Ohio* in worse holes than this ‘un, and I’ll bet my bottom dollar we’ll get out of this some way. But if you’ve got to die, ‘cookie,’ die like men did on the old *Ohio*—without a squeal or whimper.”

CHAPTER XI.

TOM'S PLAN FOR RESCUE.

The words of the old salt were an inspiration to the anxious group in the steersman's section of the craft.

"What's your plan, Tom?" asked Mr. Dancer, bravely banishing all trace of alarm from his voice.

"Just this. We'll see if we can't shoot ourselves loose."

"Shoot ourselves loose!"

The others looked at Tom Jesson as if he had gone suddenly crazy. But he returned their glances without a trace of embarrassment.

"I mean just what I said," he repeated steadily.

In his voice there was a ring that compelled respectful attention to his next words.

"We have a submarine gun?"

"Yes," responded Mr. Chadwick eagerly.

"Well, now's the time to use it."

"In what way?" It was Mr. Dancer's turn to ask questions.

"To cut that rope."

"Jove! Chadwick, the boy's right!"

The inventor clapped Tom on the shoulder.

"You take charge of this," he said; "anyhow, you know the details of the gun as well as I do by this time."

"I'm not saying that my plan will be successful, mind," warned Tom.

"Carry it out on your own lines. I'll depend upon you absolutely."

"Thanks," said Tom, half laughing, "but I'll need help."

"You shall have it," agreed the inventor instantly.

"Whom do you wish to aid you?" inquired Mr.

Chadwick.

"Silas and Jupe," was the reply; "Silas knows the gun almost as well as I do. Jupe can carry ammunition."

"Silas! Jupe!" The two summoned by Mr. Dancer appeared. Silas's weatherbeaten countenance betrayed no signs of emotion. Jupe, on the other hand, evidenced every variety of fear.

"Fo' de lub ob de Holy Poker, Marse Jack!" he cried, "what kin' ob new trubbel am dis?"

"Why, you are not scared, Jupe?"

"Not scared? Gorryme! Fust mah soup am spilled, ah'm scal-dead, an' ebberyting knocked galley west, den ah heahs dat we am stuck at de bottom ob de sea!"

Jupe threw his hands above his head.

"Lan's sakes and Moses pipes!" he cried, "what you tink ah am? Annuder Jonah at de bottom ob de ullibguitous ocean, swallowed up in de tummy ob a ombliferous whale?"

Even in their predicament they could not help laughing at the old negro's perturbation.

"Cheer up and get to work, Jupe, and stop enriching the English language," urged Mr. Chadwick.

"Yep, ef he don't stow that guff I'll treat him as we did landlubbers on the old *Ohio*," growled Silas, with a meaning look at the shaking Jupe.

"Ah don't want nuffin' lak dat; 'deed I don't, Marse Siltack," he wailed; "wha' you want me to do, sah?"

"I'll show you, you fountain-pen-colored moke, jes as soon as I get my sailing orders," roared Silas.

"That won't be long," declared Jack. "Fire away, Tom."

"I want some ammunition for the submarine gun and then I want you to help me handle it," said Tom.

“Bully for you, my hearty!” cried Silas. “I used to was first mate back on the old *Ohio* first gunner’s mate, I mean. Ever hear the song:

“There was Bill Smith and me!
In our country’s navee;
We served ‘em on the sea;
Wet or dry; yo-ho!
And we—”

“That will do, Silas,” broke in Mr. Dancer “take Jupe and bring that ammunition at once.”

“Aye, aye, sir!” declared Silas in what he would have called “man-o’-war fashion.”

“Come on, you black imp of Satan,” he concluded to Jupe; “let’s get some pills fer that gun.”

“Pills!” cried Jupe. “Fo’ de lan’s sake, Marse Silas, sah! We got stuck on de bottom ob de sea and you talks ‘bout givin’ de gun medicine! I resigns mah commission as chief cook and bottle washah ob dis yar packet jes’ as soon as we gits asho’—ef we ebber do.”

“And if not?” Tom teased him.

“Wa’al, sah, den I ‘signs it anyhow.”

A few minutes later Silas and Jupe had brought the ammunition for the submarine gun from the steel-walled magazine in which it was kept. Naturally, steam being the driving power for the projectile, there was no powder necessary. In fact, the explosive bullet used looked much like the missile hurled from a four-inch, quick-firing gun.

It was highly polished, and at its extremity had a sort of mushroom-shaped tip. This was the “bow,” so to speak, of this submarine death craft. It was made broad so that it was not likely to miss anything at which it was aimed. The idea of the projectile was that as soon as it struck an object the mushroom-shaped tip drove down

on a mercurial cap, which exploded the charge of high explosive when it detonated.

The gun was sighted through a small tube with an illuminated "eye" at its extremity. Through this tube it was possible to see outside the metal walls of the diving boat, and to sight the object to be aimed at in the glow cast from the searchlights in the observation tube.

Many times during the weeks of work on the *White Shark* Tom had experimented with the gun, and now there was no hesitation in his manner as he placed an explosive shell within the breech of the gun and closed it. This done, he sighted the weapon carefully and then, with compressed lips and grim, determined manner, he pressed the lever that admitted the water to the superheated chamber.

A small wheel was then turned which closed the water chamber. When it had been thus sealed, Tom's next act was to press the button which set the electric current to its work of turning the water into superheated steam.

"One! two!" he counted, and then, with a quick nod as of assurance that he would succeed, he bent over the gun and suddenly twisted a small handle.

There was not a sound, but everyone standing in the chamber knew that the gun had been fired. It was almost uncanny, this idea of releasing a giant force without there being the faintest sound to show that the projectile had sped on its way through the water.

Following the discharge of the gun came a moment of intense anxiety, and then a cry from the inventor:

"Hurray! It's succeeded!"

"Good shot, my boy!" cried Mr. Chadwick.

Peering through the observation tube, they had seen the snake-like line of the rope part as the projectile struck it and exploded, turning the water all about into

thick white obscurity. This condition lasted only an instant after the explosion. It then became clear that the *White Shark* was once more free.

Jack and Tom scampered to the engine room as soon as they saw that the dangling rope no longer menaced the safety of the ship.

“Rise at full speed!” came the shouted order from Mr. Dancer. The motors whirred and the *White Shark* shot toward the surface. It was not till then that Jack said in a speculative voice:

“Shouldn’t wonder if there’ll be trouble when that ship up above finds out we’ve cut her anchor line.”

CHAPTER XII.

A BRITISH SKIPPER.

Not more than five minutes after her propellers had been set in the rising position the *White Shark* emerged on the surface. As soon as she reached it, power was shut down and the panel slid back. Then all emerged on deck, where an odd sight met their eyes.

Through the twilight gloom they made out the form of a bluff-bowed, square-rigged ship. Over her rail forward leaned the figures of several sailors, while aft, a bearded man, whom they easily guessed to be the captain, was regarding the sudden appearance of the submarine with amazement.

In a voice that proclaimed him a dyed-in-the-wool Britisher, he hailed them: “ ‘Oo in the bloom in’ world may you be?” cried the astonished tar.

“Simply a party of experimenters,” rejoined Mr. Chadwick. “As you see, this is a submarine.”

“Ho yuss,” came in a voice of intense sarcasm, “h’and does yer call h’it h’experimentin’ ter carry away my bloomin’ anchor cable? I comes to anchor here to wait for a pilot an’ you h’ups and cuts my rope. ‘Oo’s goin’ ter pay fer h’it? That’s what h’I want ter know.”

“I guess we can come to an amicable arrangement on that,” declared Mr. Chadwick; “how much do you want for it?”

“Ho! I don’t suppose you’ll mind jus’ forkin’ over a ‘undred pounds.”

“You’ve got another guess coming, my friend,” was Mr. Chadwick’s rejoinder. “I happen to know something about the cost of cables myself. I’ll give you sixty dollars for that rope, and even that’s too much.”

“ ‘Ow much is sixty dollars in your bloomin’ money?”

inquired the skipper of the square rigger after he had turned to and ordered his crew to lower another anchor.

“Twelve pounds,” rejoined Mr. Chadwick.

“H’all right, I suppose I ‘ave to toik h’it; but h’I never thought that Halbert Jenkins ‘ud live ter ‘ave his bloom in’ cable cut by a submarine. H’I suppose that the next thing that ‘appens, my royals ‘ull be carried h’off by a h’airship.”

“A hair ship,” grinned Tom. “They must use barber poles for masts on a craft of that kind.”

“H’I didn’t mean the ‘air of the ‘ead; h’I meant the h’air of the hatmosphere,” responded Captain Jenkins with dignity. “You bloomin’ h’American kids h’are too fresh, by a jolly sight.”

“We get that from living in the fresh h’air,” remarked Tom in a low voice to Jack who, like the rest of the submarine’s crew, was on the broad grin at the British skipper’s indignant explanation.

“If you young men will go below and start the engines we’ll run alongside and pay for the damage we’ve done,” said Mr. Chadwick. “We don’t want to become entangled in any international complications.”

As the boys dived below, followed by Mr. Dancer, they heard the British captain confiding to Mr. Chadwick that a “good spanking would do them kids a lot of good.”

With her propellers moving at slow speed, the whale-like form of the submarine was ranged up alongside the big, black bulk of the British ship. Mr. Chadwick handed up a roll of bills to the skipper of the old craft and expressed his regret over the accident.

“H’ih, that’s all right,” grinned the seaman with airy good nature as he counted the money with a wetted thumb, “h’it h’aint h’everybody wot gets bumped by a

submarine, guv'ner. It'll be a rare yarn ter tell the moites when h'I gets back to h'old h'England."

Shortly afterward the submarine was put at full speed and headed for the shore. The return voyage was made without incident and soon after darkness had fallen, the odd craft lay once more at her moorings just outside the construction shed.

To reach the shore they tumbled into a small boat that had been left at the moorings, and with long, strong strokes Silas wielded the oars. As the bow of the boat grazed the piles of the landing place, Mr. Chadwick, his face glowing, turned to the inventor.

"Dancer, let me congratulate you on a brilliant success."

"I reckon the boys here have contributed as much to it as I have," he said dryly.

"I wish we could get a chance to take a really long cruise on the *White Shark*," sighed Jack, hurrying on to prevent more compliments from the grateful inventor.

"Perhaps we shall have an opportunity," rejoined Mr. Dancer, little imagining that in the near future his words were to prove prophetic.

CHAPTER XIII.

AN IMPORTANT TELEGRAM.

“Hyah’s a telegram fo’ you, sah. De boy says no answer.”

Jupe handed Mr. Chadwick the yellow missive just at the conclusion of breakfast at High Towers, the morning after the trial trip of the *White Shark*.

The boys watched curiously as he opened the envelope. Telegrams were no uncommon things at High Towers. Anxious manufacturers and inventors in quandaries of various kinds were in the habit of summoning Mr. Chadwick, post haste, to solve their mechanical problems.

But in the present instance Jack felt a conviction that this telegram was of unusual import. His conviction became a certainty a minute later when Mr. Chadwick uttered an exclamation.

“Jack,” he said, turning to his son, “I want you to look up the next ship sailing for Cuba. You will find a list in the shipping column of the morning papers.”

“All right, dad. Come on, Tom,” said Jack, rising from the table and hurrying to the library.

“What’s in the wind now?” he said excitedly, as they sped along a passage.

“You mean about Cuba?”

“Of course. Wonder why the governor wants to know about a vessel for that island.”

“He wants to go there, I suppose,” rejoined the practical Tom.

“I don’t see what could take him there, except that iron mining property he bought recently, not far from Santiago.”

"Well, whatever it is, it's something urgent. I saw his color change when he read that wire, and, anyway, a telegram always means a rush order somewhere."

By this time they were in the library, and turning to the shipping columns of the papers.

"Nothing for Cuba for a week," declared Jack after a prolonged scrutiny of the sailing list. "Well, that settles—Whew! Tom, maybe this sheds some light on the subject."

He pointed to a glaring headline on the opposite page:

"AMERICANS IN DANGER IN CUBA.
REVOLUTION IN SONORA PROVINCE."

"Sonora Province,' why that's where dad's mine is located," rushed on Jack breathlessly. "Depend upon it, that's what's up."

"Gee whiz! Don't I wish we could go there!" breathed Tom as they sped back to the dining room.

"Nothing sailing for Cuba for a week, dad," Jack announced. "Did you see about the trouble in Sonora Province?" he went on with an artless glance.

Mr. Chadwick laughed.

"I knew you were dying to know what was in this telegram," he said, "and you have certainly adopted a clever way of eliciting that information. I suppose you read of the revolution in the papers?"

Jack nodded. "They say that property down there is in danger,—lives, too."

"You might have placed the lives first, my boy. But apparently the papers are right. Here is the source of my information. Read it out aloud."

He handed the telegram to Jack, who took it and read for his cousin's benefit:

“Revolution started here. Rebels strong. No troops at hand. The mine in risky position. Come at once if possible. Native helpers and workmen fled.

JAMESON.”

“Jameson is my superintendent at the mine,” explained Mr. Chadwick. “We have been experimenting with a new method of smelting the ore on the spot. Hitherto all Cuban ore has had to be shipped to this country for refinement. We save by using my processes and doing it at the mine.”

“And all that machinery is installed there?” asked Jack.

“Yes; it is worth considerable, too. Of course Jameson may be exaggerating the danger, but as he is a long-headed sort of Scotchman, I hardly think so. I ought to be there as quickly as possible.”

“How long does it take to get there?” inquired Jack.

“Five days from New York. There are no fast craft running on that line. Twelve knots is about the best they can do.”

“Then, with no steamer sailing for a week, it would be almost a fortnight before you could get there?”

“Yes; and the *Sea King* is being refitted with new boilers.”

The *Sea King* was Mr. Chadwick’s yacht. She has already figured in one portion of the boys’ adventures, namely, those related in “The Boy Inventors’ Wireless Triumph.”

“Too bad; the *Sea King* would have made the trip in no time. Isn’t there some other way?”

“I might charter a yacht; but it is a long job sometimes to find one that suits and is ready to start at once.”

"A small craft wouldn't do?" asked Tom.

"No. It's coming on to the hurricane season down in those waters. In case of bad weather no small craft could ride such seas."

Jack had been knitting his brow. Suddenly his expression cleared.

"No small craft could ride them," he echoed; "but," and he threw deep emphasis into his voice, "I know of a small craft that could weather any sort of hurricane."

"I confess I don't understand you, my boy," rejoined his father, knitting his brows.

"The sort of vessel I'm thinking of wouldn't stay on top at all," replied Jack; "it would sink to a safe depth out of the hurly-burly, so to speak, and stay there till the storm blew over."

"You mean the *White Shark*?" asked his father. "Jove! that is an idea."

"I wasn't sure that you'd think it a practicable one," rejoined Jack, "but I don't see why it shouldn't be entirely feasible."

"This looks like the trip we were talking about last night, the one Mr. Dancer said he'd like to take."

"I wonder if he would charter the *White Shark* for such a voyage," said Mr. Chadwick thoughtfully.

"I'm sure he would," rushed on Jack eagerly. "I know he hasn't got much money. The building of the *White Shark* has made him a poor man."

"I could offer him a good figure. Such a voyage would be worth it," continued Mr. Chadwick. "Besides, I would like to help out a brother inventor in difficulties."

The latter part of this speech was characteristic of Mr. Chadwick. Unknown even to his closest friends, his hand was often in his pocket for needy investigators in the field of science. Although the public does not know it, it

was his liberality in this regard that gave to the world the Chalmers Patent Steel Refining Process, the Walworth Tubular Boiler and half a dozen other almost epoch-making inventions.

“Tell you what,” cried Jack, “we’ll take the car and spin over and see him about it.”

Tom skipped about, hardly able to contain his joy.

“A trip to Cuba under the sea, and revolutionists and—and, oh, everything that’s jolly.”

“Nothing very jolly about a revolution,” rejoined Mr. Chadwick, somewhat grimly, “they’re no fun, I can tell you. But, seriously speaking, I think your suggestion a good one, Jack. We could live on board the *White Shark* in case of serious fighting ashore, and such a craft would afford a far swifter means of reaching Cuba than any steamer.”

It was half an hour later that two excited boys and a graver, more thoughtful senior, were discussing the proposal with Mr. Dancer. Mr. Chadwick’s liberal offer for the use of the *White Shark* for his proposed trip had almost literally taken Mr. Dancer off his feet.

“I hardly know how to thank you, Chadwick. It’s a great chance, a great chance,” he exclaimed, “but it is too much, really—”

“I shall feel offended if you won’t consent to take us,” put in Mr. Chadwick.

“That’s not the difficulty,” said Mr. Dancer quickly. “I want to make the voyage. It will give the *White Shark* a testing out that will try her every rivet. But there may be danger. Your young folks here—”

Jack and Tom exchanged anxious glances. Perhaps, after all, the plans that had looked so rosy were to fall through.

“I haven’t the slightest doubt after what I have seen of

her that the *White Shark* can survive any test that may be placed upon her. The fact that I am willing to take my lads along should prove my faith in your craft.”

“Thank you, Chadwick,” said the inventor with grateful eyes, “then the last objection on my part is removed. But when I have sold my craft to some government—I hope to Uncle Sam’s—I must repay you—”

Mr. Chadwick waved his hand as if brushing aside the idea.

“You have repaid me far more than I can ever give you by affording me such an opportunity, Dancer,” he said earnestly.

“So then it’s all settled,” cried Tom with shining eyes.

Moved by a common impulse the boys, glowing with excitement, clasped hands and a wild war dance took place.

As they paused, out of breath from their exertions, Mr. Chadwick, in business-like tones, asked:

“When can you be ready to sail?”

“By midnight,” said the inventor after a rapid mental calculation. “Then you boys had better stop capering about and get busy on making a list of all we shall need. Then you can go to town to purchase the necessary articles.”

“Will we get busy?” cried Jack, sitting down at the desk and drawing up a sheet of paper and poising a pen above it:

“First article, please.” After that the provisioning and stocking of the *White Shark* for what was to prove a long and adventurous period, went forward rapidly. After lunch the boys in their red runabout set out for Camwell, a suburb of Boston, where they were sure to be able to purchase everything necessary.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE VOICE IN THE DARK.

“Hush a minute, Tom! What was that?”

Jack, who was driving the little red flyer, brought the car and Tom’s tongue to a simultaneous halt.

It was after dark and the two lads were returning from Camwell with the car loaded down with what they had purchased. In fact, both of them were perched on the summit of a pile of boxes and bundles, every available nook and cranny being filled with articles for which their lists had called.

The spot where the car was brought to such an abrupt halt by Jack was a lonely one. On one side of the road, thick brush with tall, melancholy trees beyond, grew close down to the right of way. On the other, the outlines of a fair-sized barn bulked up black against the surrounding darkness, for the night was starless.

The two lads had set out from Cam well an hour before. Purchasing such a lengthy list of articles as their orders called for had proved no light task. To their annoyance, too, the magnitude of their purchases and the way in which they hastened from store to store, had caused quite a stir in Camwell, a small manufacturing place mainly devoted to the production of steel and similar industries.

In fact, at six o’clock, the hour at which the factories suspended the work of the “day shift,” a small crowd had followed them from one place of business to another. The bolder ones in the crowd had even made inquiries as to their business. The boys had, of course, answered evasively, and flattered themselves that no one in Camwell was aware of their identity. They were careful in the extreme to avoid any reference to the object of their purchasing expedition—or foraging raid, it might

almost be called. But, nevertheless, both had been glad when their car chugged merrily out of Camwell, leaving behind a residue of rumor concerning the descent on that uneventful town of "the millionaire kids."

As the car came to a halt at the roadside, both boys listened intently. At first there was no repetition of the sound that had caused Jack's exclamation.

Then suddenly it came again, a weird sort of moan.

"Sounds like some one in pain," ventured Tom.

"It does," agreed Jack, "perhaps some one has been struck by a car; or—"

He broke off abruptly as a figure sprang from the dark bushes at the side of the road opposite the barn.

"Hullo, who's that?" hailed Jack.

"Hullo, yourself," came back a rough voice in reply; "who are you?"

"Two boys in a big hurry. What's the trouble here?"

"Yes, we thought we heard a moan," came from Tom.

"I'm glad you've stopped. I've got my friend back in the brush there. We was walking from Camwell to Boston when a car struck him. I guess he's badly hurt."

The man's voice appeared to hold genuine regret.

"What's the trouble with him?" asked Jack.

"Dunno. I ain't got enough education fer that, boss. He jes' lies there an' groans."

"That's what we heard," murmured Jack.

"That's what you heard," repeated the man in the road.

Then he went on in an odd, hesitating voice, as if hardly daring to ask a favor from the two well-dressed young automobilists.

"Say, guv'ners both, would you mind takin' a look at him? Then maybe if he's badly cracked you could git a doctor with that benzine buggy of yourn."

"I don't know much about surgery," confessed Jack;

“but we’ll help you out if we can. At any rate, we can carry him to the machine and take him to the doctor’s.”

“That’s the stuff, mate. You’re a good feller, I kin see that.”

Somehow the whining, fawning tones of the man’s voice annoyed Jack; but nevertheless he was not the kind of lad to pass by anyone who was injured or in distress. So he asked Tom to detach one of the oil lamps and prepared to make an investigation.

“Where is he?” asked Jack when Tom had the lantern off and ready for use. It cast a good, strong light, and as its rays fell on the countenance and general outline of the man who had summoned their aid, Jack was impressed still more unfavorably than he had been by the fellow’s voice.

He was a short, thick-set, roughly dressed individual, with a crop of unshaven beard on his chin that stood out like the bristles on an old toothbrush. On his head was a battered cap. His eyes were small and blinky, and as evasive as a rat’s.

“Poor Jim is right back in there, guv’ner,” he declared in answer to Jack’s question, motioning toward the bushes. “I carried him there after he got hit,” he explained.

“Why didn’t you leave him on the roadside?” asked Jack.

Somehow, for some reason he could not explain, he was suspicious of this man with the bristly chin and the blinky, red-rimmed eyes.

But the fellow answered glibly enough, momentarily disarming the boy’s suspicions.

“You see, poor Jim’s head was cut. I thought there might be water back there, so’s I could ‘a’ bathed it a bit,” he declared.

“Right this way, guv’ner,” he went on, pushing his way into the brush. “Hark! That’s poor Jim now!”

As if his voice was meant to guide them, the injured man at this instant gave a heartrending groan. If Jack had felt any hesitation in following the rough-looking customer who had apprised them of the accident, all doubt left him now. The man who uttered that moan must be badly hurt.

The blinky-eyed man reached a small opening in the brush. Tom flashed the rays of the detached oil lantern hither and yon against the background of closely growing bushes and scrub timber.

"I don't seem to see anyone," he was beginning, when Jack detected a sudden footstep behind him.

"There he is, guv'ner, poor old Jim, right there," urged Blinky, pointing in the direction opposite that from which Jack had heard the footfall.

Tom pressed forward; but Jack, prompted by some impulse he could not explain, disregarded Blinky's instructions and turned about. It was well for him that he did so. As he turned his head a dark figure bounded toward him from behind.

Jack felt a club, or some other weapon, "swis-s-s-s-h!" by his ear.

A fierce growl broke from the man as his blow missed. Before he could poise the implement for another, Jack had closed with him.

At the same instant, from beyond, came another voice. Even in Jack's predicament he realized that this new tone held something familiar. But he had little time to think of that.

"Blinky! Duggan! Have you got 'em?" hailed the new voice.

"Not yet, but in a jiffy," came from Jack's assailant as he wrested himself free of Jack's grip and, with a roar like a wild bull, intended to frighten the lad, launched his bulky form full at the boy.

CHAPTER XV.

THE MAN BEHIND THE MYSTERY.

With doubled up fists, firmly planted in a scientific attitude of defence, Jack awaited the onslaught.

“I’ll teach you a lesson!” bellowed his assailant.

Jack said nothing, but stood his ground firmly. However burly his opponent was, he had never been taught even the rudiments of what has been called the “noble art” of self-defense.

His tactics were those of a wild bull. He swung his arms wildly, and even in the darkness Jack could see the gleam of his clenched teeth. All this the boy rightly judged to be, like the yells which had been directed at him, part of a plan to frighten him.

But while Jack was alarmed, it is true, he was not so easily scared as all that. At school he had been one of the best fellows in the “gym” with the gloves. His muscles, what with right living and lots of exercise, were like so many bundles of steel cords under his healthy skin.

On the other hand, the road agent, or highwayman, for Jack felt that he could be nothing else, was big, but flabby. As again and again Jack met his onrushes with swift and skillful side steps and ducks, he generally managed, too, to leave some memento of his athletic skill on one portion or another of his opponent’s anatomy.

In the meantime, what of Tom?

Like Jack, he was no unskilled novice in the art which Jack was practicing with such good effect. Like his cousin, too, he had no lack of courage; but it must be confessed that as he heard Jack’s shout of warning and realized that they had been trapped for no good purpose, his heart gave a frightened bound.

But he had no time in which to dwell on his sensations. As the voice which had struck Jack as familiar boomed out, Blinky made a rush at Tom not unlike the other rogue's onslaught. But Blinky was more skillful with his fists than his companion.

Tom speedily found that it was all he could do to defend himself, strive as he might with every ounce of trained strength in him. He defended his face to good purpose against a tornado-like rain of blows. Blinky could not beat down his guard there.

Nevertheless, all about his body the rascal's fists played like lightning. Tom pluckily defended himself, his grit rising as the odds against him grew more desperate. But at last, in warding off a heavy blow aimed at his ribs, he, for an instant, relaxed his guard on his face.

Instantly, with the snake-like swiftness of a fencer's foil, Blinky's burly arm shot forward. But if it had the swiftness and precision of a sword, it had also the force of a battering ram. Tom was lifted right off his feet and fell blunderingly into a patch of brush. It was lucky for him that the tangle of bushes broke his fall, saving his head from coming in contact with the ground.

"He's safe for a while," muttered Blinky, examining poor Tom's white face and closed eyes by the light of the lantern which had been knocked over but not extinguished.

"Hey, Blinky! Gimme a hand here! This kid's too much for me," came from the rascal's companion, who was busily engaged now, not in attack, but in defending himself.

The owner of the voice which had urged Blinky and his companion on, was not in evidence. Perhaps he thought discretion the better part of valor, and kept himself carefully out of the fray. However that may have been, he was not to be seen.

At his companion's appeal for aid, Blinky, with a haste worthy of a better cause, hurried to his side.

"Rush him!" he cried.

Together they charged on Jack like the forward rush of a football team sweeping across the gridiron.

"It's all off now," flashed through Jack's mind. There was not time to turn and run, not a second in which to think up a line of defence. Besides, had Jack been able to run, he certainly would not have fled and left Tom's fate in uncertainty.

It was all over in an instant, and it could have had no other conclusion. Jack found himself lying on his back one minute and the next he was turned on his face and his hands tied behind him.

"What's the meaning of all this?" he managed to gasp out indignantly. "I am Jack Chadwick. You fellows are going to get in a lot of trouble over this."

"Oh, I guess not, Master Chadwick," came a low, sneering voice not far from Jack's ear, "I guess not."

It was the familiar voice that Jack knew he had heard before. But where? For the life of him he could not imagine. Nor indeed was his mind in a condition right then to be at its clearest.

"Who are you?" demanded the boy. "What have you attacked us for?"

"Partly to get even for a certain occasion in which you interfered with my plans, and partly to trouble you for that money you have in your shoes," As a flash of lightning illumines a whole landscape, so did the first words of the other instantly recall to Jack why his voice had sounded so puzzlingly reminiscent. "A certain occasion on which you interfered with my plans!"

"You're Adam Duke!" he gasped out.

"Confound you! So you recognize my voice, do you? I

didn't mean you to. But, after all, it doesn't much matter. By the time you rejoin your friends again I'll be far away. Take his shoes off, Blinky."

Jack flushed with indignation.

"What for?" he asked angrily. "What do you expect to find?"

"About five hundred dollars, and a similar sum in your friend's shoes."

Jack's heart sank. How Duke had obtained his information he could not imagine, but it was true. He and Tom had decided to draw that sum each from their substantial deposits in the Camwell bank. Fearful of carrying such a large sum in bills of big denomination on their persons in ordinary fashion, they had decided to conceal them in their shoes,

It was not hard to hide the five one hundred dollar bills, placing three in one shoe and two in the other.

How could the man Duke have guessed where they carried their valuables, and how came he to know the route that they would take home-not the usual one between Camwell and their destination?

CHAPTER XVI.

ADAM DUKE'S METHODS.

As if Duke had guessed the boy's thoughts, he broke into a harsh laugh. Had it been light, the boy would have been able to see the yellow, puckered skin about the man's nervous jowls quiver with merriment.

"I don't forget easily," he chuckled, "and when I saw you in Camwell, everything came back to me. I'm telling you all this so that any time you feel inclined to get into trouble with me again you'll think twice."

"Well?" demanded Jack, face downward in the dusty patch of cleared ground among the rank growth of weeds.

"You don't recall seeing me at the bank, I guess?"

"I certainly do not. I should otherwise have been on guard against you," was the indignant reply.

"As if a lad like you could match me in craftiness! Well, I was in the bank to deposit some funds of the Camwell Steel Company. It may interest you to know that I am now their trusted employee and chemical expert. I saw you and recognized you, though you did not, of course, recall me, for since our encounter, you see, I wear a beard."

From Jack's position he could not see this, but he fully recognized the fact that to escape the vigilance of the authorities Duke must have disguised himself, for full descriptions of him had been sent out, following the outrage committed on Mr. Dancer. He said nothing, however, and Duke resumed.

"I'm telling you this to flaunt you. To show you what a fool a lad who thinks himself smart can prove to be. I heard you draw your money at the bank, and slipped into another machine, a small car belonging to the

company.

“I saw you talking in low voices and then, as you rounded a corner beyond which was a factory blank wall, I saw you place the money in your shoes. Of course I was out of the machine then, but I guessed what you were going to do and hid behind a big pile of steel rails. Maybe you recall seeing them? Or were you too busy transferring your bills?”

Jack did indeed recall now the pile of steel rails, rusted and neglected, lying piled against the factory wall. The place had appeared deserted, for he had given it careful scrutiny for signs of life before he and Tom produced their money and transferred it to its new abiding place. How he wished now that he had looked behind that pile of rails!

“So now that you see there is no use of trying evasion with me, I’ll have Blinky and Duggan take off your shoes and relieve you of your wealth. It’s too much coin for a young chap like you to have, anyhow.”

At this stroke of humor the two individuals mentioned broke into a harsh laugh. In fact, they appeared to think it the best joke in the world. As for Jack, in his bitter chagrin, he said nothing. If only they had taken out the money the last thing before they left town, he thought. But then he recalled, as a partial palliation of his bitter feelings, that the bank had closed long before they could, by any possibility, have concluded the marketing for their voyage.

He felt Blinky and his companion draw off his shoes and rifle them of his money.

“Now the other,” ordered Duke.

“All right, boss, but I guess he’ll give less trouble than this kid,” growled Blinky.

“You mean that you hit him pretty hard?”

“Well, so hard that he wasn’t saying nothing when I left him,” was the brutal reply.

Jack’s flesh crept. Could they mean that Tom, bravely defending himself, had been badly hurt by this ruffian? But the next minute he experienced at least some partial measure of relief.

“Don’t be scared, boss,” Duke’s face must have looked anxious in the yellow lantern light, “it was just a love tap; but young whippersnappers like him ain’t used to such.”

“Well, get the money and then bring it here,” ordered Duke.

As he spoke, Jack caught the sound of the rustle of bills. Evidently then the money had been transferred to Duke for division with his satellites later. The footsteps of Blinky and Duggan could be heard trampling off in the brush.

“What are they going to do with us?” Jack wondered. “Poor old Tom,” was his next thought, “knocked down—and—out by that rascal! I wish I was free, although,” he admitted with a sigh, “I couldn’t do much against this bunch.”

Suddenly the boy heard a slight spatter on the dusty ground in front of him. “Confound it, rain coming up,” he heard Duke explain to himself. Then the man who stood over Jack’s recumbent form must have looked up at the sky.

“We’re going to get a storm, too,” Jack heard him mutter.

The drops began to fall faster and faster. Out of the distance came a low growl of thunder.

“Hurry up!” Jack heard Duke urge. “Bring that other kid here and tie him. We’ll put ‘em both in that old barn. They’re too young to get wet and it is going to be a sharp

storm.”

“All right, boss,” came back Blinky’s voice, “we’ve got the money.”

“Well, you know what to do with it. Bring it here,” responded Duke peremptorily.

“You ain’t going to forget us, boss?” came in Duggan’s voice.

“Not likely; when I told you to follow me from the factory and help in this little job I knew I’d have to pay you to keep your mouths shut.”

“Oh, all right! All right!” hailed back Blinky. “We know you’re all right, boss.”

A few minutes later Jack heard Tom’s unconscious form being dragged up. Then he himself was laid hold of by Duggan, while Duke aided Blinky with Tom.

The lightning was now flashing incessantly and the angry, growling of the thunder was getting momentarily closer.

“They ought to thank us for getting them out of the wet,” remarked Duke with grim humor as he aided Blinky to drag Tom across the road toward the barn. As for Duggan, he easily handled Jack, tied as the lad was.

As Duggan raised him to hurl him into the barn a bright flash showed Jack that the place was a gaunt, rat-haunted old structure, half filled with hay near the door.

“I’ve slept in lots worse places,” remarked Blinky as he saw the accommodations.

“Jail, for instance,” thought Jack, “and nobody ever deserved it better.” But he kept his thoughts to himself.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE TABLES ARE TURNED.

Amidst a continuous roar and rattle of thunder and flashing of vivid lightning, Jack and the still unconscious Tom were thrown, none too gently, into the old barn. Luckily, the soft nest of hay saved them from bruises.

“Now let’s be getting back to the car,” exclaimed Duke.

“How about splitting that money right now?” growled Duggan.

“That will wait.”

“It won’t.”

“Well, I say it will.”

There came a blinding glare of lightning. Jack, who was now lying on his side, saw Duke’s face, even as a flashlight illumines the countenances of a party waiting to have their pictures taken in a dark room. It was livid and evil, but determined.

“Oh, you do, eh, Mister Duke?”

There was a panther-like snarl in Blinky’s voice. “I do, yes.”

“Well, we don’t. You split it right here and now.”

“That’s right; do as Blinky tells yer.”

This time the menace in Duggan’s tone was unveiled. He made a step toward Duke. The other recoiled. It was plain then that he feared his desperate employees.

“Hold on, Duggan,” warned Blinky, who appeared the more pacific of the two.

“What for? We were chumps ever to have given him the money.”

“How do ye mean?”

“Why, couldn’t we have knocked him on the head and got away with it, eh? That’s what I’d like to know.”

Duggan’s voice held a high, angry note.

“I wish they’d all get to fighting among themselves,” thought Jack. “What’s that old saying, ‘When thieves fall out, honest men come into their own’?”

“Come, Duke, give us our money. Then you take your car—the one you brought us here in ahead of the boys—and get out.”

“Yes, the car’s hidden in the bushes yonder. Give us our money, go start your car, and then we’ll go our way and you yours. You won’t see us again.”

“In any case,” growled Duggan. “What do you mean by ‘any case’?” snarled Duke.

It was plain enough to Jack that he had planned to make dupes of the two men and take all the money. Now that his plans were frustrated, he was by turns humble and threatening.

“None of your impudence,” he growled; “aren’t you under me in the works? Don’t your jobs depend on me?”

“No more than yours depends on our keeping our mouths shut,” ground out Blinky.

“Aw, stow all this lip.”

Duggan shot out the words with menace. His eyes blazed.

“Look here, Duke, yes or no? Play or quit? Money or no money? Ah, you would, would you?”

Duke, as if by magic, had produced a pistol and was leveling it at the others. But Duggan was fully his match. A quick jab of his fist, a twist of his wrist, and the revolver went flying out of his hand. It spun through the air toward Jack, landing in the hay close beside the boy. Before any of the three quarreling men knew exactly what had occurred, Jack was facing them, the pistol just

knocked out of Duke's clasp in his hand.

It did not waver as it swept the semi-circle of desperadoes. Blank astonishment was written on their faces as a flash showed them their boyish defier and the formidable weapon—it was an automatic of the latest type—that he grasped.

“Confound you, how did you get that pistol?” bellowed Duke irately.

The others, their late troubles forgotten, made as if to beat a retreat.

“Look out. I'm nervous and my hand might shake,” warned Jack, a mischievous sense of humor overcoming him at their panic. “If it ever did,” he went on, “ten shots would come out of this gun—all at once!”

“You—you—young—” sputtered Duke impotently. He almost appeared to foam at the mouth. “Your hands were tied. How did you get them free, you young jackanapes?”

“No conjurer is bound to tell the secret of his tricks, Mr. Duke,” rejoined Jack, who was actually beginning to enjoy the humor of the situation. “Isn't it enough that I have got them free, and that you threw me your pistol? That was real kind of you.”

“I—I didn't throw it to you, you young rascal. Those scoundrels, Blinky and Duggan, jerked up my arm.”

“I'll take the deed for the will,” declared Jack with perfect coolness. “Don't move, any of you. I'd hate to discharge this thing.”

Duggan sputtered like a dumb animal, mad with fury. He was past speech.

“It all comes from meddling with these ‘Boy Inventors,’ ” he growled. “I've heard of 'em before. Nobody ever got 'em dead to rights yet.”

Flash! Bang! A blinding flash; an ear-splitting crash!

The earth seemed to be suddenly bathed in blue flame, while the air sizzled with crackling electricity. Then came a deafening explosion and a still brighter flash of light.

Jack thought he heard a cry, but before he could make certain he himself toppled over.

A bolt of lightning had struck the old barn, felling also all three actors in the drama at which we have been onlookers.

CHAPTER XVIII. HEAVEN'S INTERVENTION.

Luckily, Jack had received but a small portion of the electric fluid. It was only a few minutes after the bolt had struck the barn with such a deafening crash and such startling results, that he opened his eyes.

"What on earth has happened?" were his first thoughts. "Where am I? Oh, I know, in that old barn. They threw us in here and by good luck I cut my finger slightly on an old grass hook which had been left on top of the hay. That gave me an idea and I easily cut my bonds by leaning back against its sharp edge and gently sawing.

"Then that gun came flying through the air and I grabbed it up. I guessed that Duke was the only one in the party that had one, and knew it, too, for he had no fear in threatening his two accomplices. Then came that thunderbolt. My! how my head aches and—"

He broke off short. Smoke puffed in his face and the hay behind him broke into a lurid flame. The light showed that the bolt had ripped a hole in the roof of the barn and had then buried itself in the hay not ten feet from where Jack and Tom lay, setting fire to it.

The flames had hardly made themselves manifest before they were shooting up brightly toward the roof.

"My! That bolt must have struck mighty close to me!" thought Jack. "I'm lucky to be alive."

"I've got to get out of here," he added the next instant; "that fire's burning like a box factory. Come on, Tom!"

He shook his comrade's shoulder, but the other only moaned.

"That brute struck him a terrible blow," exclaimed Jack; "but thank goodness, he appears to have some

color in his face now, though he must have been mighty pale for a time. Well, that's a good sign."

He bent over his comrade, and while the flames crackled and roared furiously upward he dragged Tom out of their reach, across the door-sill of the barn and out into the fresh air. As he did so, he stumbled over a recumbent form near the door.

It was Blinky. Close by were the insensible bodies of Duggan and Duke. "I've got to get Tom to a safe and comfortable place before I bother about them," thought Jack.

The flames were leaping up through the hole in the roof, lighting up the whole neighborhood as plain as day. By their glare Jack found a bed of soft fern and laid his chum's still form upon it. Then he went back for the other victims of the lightning, for he knew that if they lay where they were the flames would soon become hot enough to scorch them.

One by one the boy pluckily dragged the heavy forms of the men who a short time since were trying to do him harm, to a place of safety. By the time he had finished, there was a glare coming from the burning barn that was as bright as the blaze of a thousand arc lights. Glancing over toward Tom, Jack was overjoyed to see his cousin sitting up with his eyes open and gazing somewhat dazedly about him.

"Thank goodness you're better, Tom," he cried, hastening toward his chum, for he had ascertained that Duke and his cronies were only insensible and probably would recover possession of their faculties shortly.

Pending this time, Jack had bound their hands and feet securely with some light rope he had found on a fence near the barn.

"What's happened?" gasped Tom, gazing about him in the glow of the flaming barn. "What's on fire? Where

are we?"

"Not a hundred yards from where we stopped the machine, Tom. Those rascals lying bound yonder knocked you insensible and overpowered me. They had found out about the money in our shoes. By the way, one of them is our old friend Duke."

"Gracious! Adam Duke?"

"The same."

"But how did he come to be here?"

"Struck by lightning like that barn was, and like I was, I guess."

"No; but I mean how did he come to be at the place he was when we were attacked?"

"The old fox saw us draw our money and drove ahead of us to this lonely place in a machine that belongs to a workshop that employs him."

"He trailed us in Camwell, then?"

Tom appeared to be still a bit dazed, and Jack decided to defer the details of the story to some more appropriate time and place.

"I'll tell you all about it later" on," he said hastily; "right now I want to recover some stolen property from the inside coat pocket of our friend, Mr. Duke, who, I perceive, is beginning to move."

This was true. As well as his bonds would permit him, Duke was stirring uneasily. Presently his two companions began to move, too. At first they were too confused in their ideas to notice that they were bound.

"Where are we—in jail?" demanded Blinky.

"I dunno," replied Duggan in a flat, weak voice, "what d'you think?"

Plainly, and quite believably, both were not unfamiliar with the state's free lodging house to which

they had reference.

“No; you’re not in jail, you rascals, though you richly deserve to be,” exclaimed Jack, stepping forward. “Duke, give me those bills you stole from us.”

“Don’t you do it,” warned Duggan.

“Pay no attention to him,” retorted Jack, “it will be best for you to give them up at once.”

“And if I don’t?”

“You are bound fast and tight and cannot escape. If you refuse to tell me whereabouts they are on you, I shall summon the authorities, leaving my cousin to guard you with the pistol you were kind enough to present to me.”

“You’ll smart for this! See if you don’t! I’ll fix you sooner or later. I’ll—” warned Duke furiously.

A quick, certain footstep sounded behind them.

Then came a sharp, imperative voice, with a marked New England twang.

“What in ‘tarnation’s all this yar?”

CHAPTER XIX.

AN INSUFFICIENT DISGUISE.

Jack turned quickly and found himself facing a tall, lanky, sharp-featured man dressed in homespun clothes and cowhide boots. On his thin was a fine specimen of the type of facial adornment popularly known as a billy-goat. On his chest flashed a huge nickel star.

"Stand where ye are, by gosh!" he warned.

"Why," began Jack, "I've—"

"No lip, young feller!"

The constable, for such he evidently was, drew out a huge old-fashioned revolver and flourished it.

"Look out what you're doing with that," warned Tom, whose sense of humor had come back again with his recovered good health, and who was now an interested spectator of the scene.

The constable glared at him, as if undecided whether or no he was being made fun of. The boys now saw what they had not noticed before, that quite a crowd, made up of farming folks attracted by the glare of the flames, had assembled. No effort was made to put out the fire. It had gone too far for that. The barn's heaviest timbers showed now like a row of blackened, stumpy fangs against the red glare of the flames within. The roof had fallen in long since.

"Wall, I swan to goodness!" demanded one old gaffer in the crowd, "what's all this, Officer Hake?"

"By hemlock, I don' jes' know, Squar'," came the reply. "I seen ther flames same as you did, an' hitched up ole Bess yonder ter drive out hyar."

"Go on, officer," said the old man who had been addressed as "Squar'," with judicial coolness.

"Wa'al, I found ther barn all on fire—it's Gus Davis's,

Squar',—an' these two young fellers 'lookin' about dazed-like, while them three characters yonder lay bound on ther ground."

The squire expectorated profusely.

"Great Doctors!" he exclaimed, "I'll call court right hyar an' inquire inter this. Young feller, in ther name of ther great an' sov'ran commonwealth of Massachusetts, do you-wa'al, what yer got ter say fer yerself?"

"Just this, sir," and Jack related a plain, straightforward story, while in that odd, flame-lit courtroom the rugged-faced farm men and women pressed eagerly about.

The judge appeared impressed.

"Got ther numbers of them thar notes?" he asked sharply, referring to Jack's declaration that they were in Duke's pocket.

"Yes, sir."

Jack produced a memorandum and read off the numbers of the stolen notes. The old squire checked them off as Jack read them, in a battered old sealskin wallet with silver trimmings worn with age.

"Orfcer Hake."

The order came as Jack finished reading, repeating each number to make sure that the squire jotted them down right.

"Go look in that feller's pockets an' see if you kin find them banknotes."

While Duke, pale as ashes, struggled and swore, he was rigidly searched. The notes were found in his inside pocket just as Jack had said they would be.

"Wa'al, by gum, young feller," said the squire as the rural constable handed the bundle to him for inspection, "that part of yer' story's right. Now for the next."

He adjusted his spectacles and glanced rapidly at

each note, checking them off as he went along. As he concluded, he turned to Jack.

“Gimme your hand, young feller,” he said warmly, “thet’s a right smart, slick bit o’ work you done.”

“Thanks,” said Jack, “but there’s more to be said yet, your honor. That man lying yonder from whom the notes were recovered, is Adam Duke, a fugitive from justice.”

“It’s a lie!” howled Duke, beside himself with fright.

“You told me so yourself,” went on Jack calmly. “Besides, I recognized your voice.”

“What, that thar feller’s Adam Duke!” exclaimed the constable incredulously. “Why, I got ther circular hyar what describes him. Duke had a moustache, this fellow has a beard.”

“I half suspect it’s false,” declared Jack.

There was still a ruddy light from the fire and the squire decided to test this part of Jack’s story, even though he had already determined to hold the man on suspicion. Besides, in any event, there was the highway robbery charge against him.

“It’s a lie! All a lie, I tell you!” roared Duke as they examined his glossy, luxuriant beard. It did indeed seem too close to the real article for an assumed imitation.

“By heck, young feller, that beard’s as genuine an article as my goatee,” declared the constable.

Several others echoed this opinion. Even the village barber, for the burned barn was close to a small hamlet named Hexham, declared that he would stake his professional reputation on the veracity of the bound man’s whiskers.

But alas for all these wiseacres! The heavy rain accompanying the storm had done what nothing else could have accomplished, without design on Duke’s part.

It had loosened the foundation which stuck the hairy growth to his face. Jack, determined in his own mind from Duke's frightened look that he had hit the right nail on the head, gave the whiskers a good tug.

They peeled off like a porous plaster, while the crowd yelled and Duke swore. Stripped of his disguise, Duke's face was instantly recognized from the portrait which adorned the police circular. Two hours later he and his cronies were in the Hexham lock-up, waiting to be taken to the county seat for trial.

It may as well be set down here that at the subsequent proceedings, inasmuch as the chief complainants did not appear, all three got light sentences, the judge remarking that they were extraordinarily lucky.

But while that trial was going on our young friends were facing dangers and difficulties in tropic waters to which all that had gone before appeared tame. Their return with their supplies to Mr. Dancer's workshop and their stories of the night's events, had resulted only in the *White Shark's* not clearing on her adventurous cruise till early dawn. Otherwise their start for Cuba was made as previously planned.

Nobody saw the dull white form of the diving boat slip seaward and then head due south. Had any persons witnessed the departure, they would not have had long in which to watch it, nor could they have explained the phenomenon of the queer form slipping through the' quiet sea and then suddenly vanishing from view.

Had they attempted it, another "sea-serpent story" might have enlivened the columns of the newspapers, for, as the *White Shark* got beyond shallow water, she dived like one of her vicious namesakes—the tigers of the deep—and the waters closed over her.

CHAPTER XX.

A NAVAL ENCOUNTER.

“Jack, this is glorious!”

“You may well say that, Tom. I’m enjoying myself as much as if I were on a vacation.”

At twenty-five knots an hour the *White Shark* was cutting along on her voyage to the south. The sea was smooth, but it rippled just enough for the brisk, salt-laden breeze to blow an occasional shower of brine over the two lads standing on the rounded back of the novel submarine craft.

It was the morning of the second day out. So far everything had gone without a hitch. The machinery was running so smoothly that Silas Hardtack had been left on watch in the engine room, while the boys came up on deck to inhale a whiff of the fresh sea breeze.

Mr. Chadwick was busy over some problems connected with a new type of threshing machine he was evolving for the use of the government in experimental work. Jupe was busy in his galley. From time to time, through a ventilator which was kept open while the *White Shark* was on the surface in fair weather, there floated up to the boys the rattle of dishes and the appetizing smells of the dinner that Jupe was preparing.

“I’ve got an appetite like a horse, Jack.”

“So have I. Nothing like what poets call the ‘balmy breeze’ to give you that.”

Through the open hatchway appeared another figure, that of Silas Hardtack. The old man was a practical navigator, and as he came on deck he brought with him his sextant.

“Eight bells,” he announced, “I’m going to shoot the sun.”

"Fire away," chuckled Jack, "but don't shoot it out."

Old Silas raised the sextant to his eye and aimed it at the sun. Then he gazed at the marked arc of the instrument and made a swift mental calculation.

"How are we getting along?" inquired Jack.

"Wait till I get it worked out, Master Jack," responded the old salt, "but we've been making twenty-five miles an hour for the last forty-eight hours. I only hope this weather lasts."

"Same here; it's important we should make a rapid run."

"Yes; from what I know of those Cubans, they're a bad lot when they get scrapping. But bless you, if we had the old *Ohio* along we could blow the whole island into the water if we wanted to."

"I hope we wouldn't want to do anything like that," exclaimed Tom, "it must be a very interesting place to visit."

"I read up on its history a bit before we left home," put in Jack.

"Ah, and what do the books say about it?" asked Silas. "They're mostly wrong, I suppose."

"I'll tell you what I remember, if you like," volunteered Jack.

"All right, heave ahead, my hearty, but don't make it too long; I've got to get back and give them engines a good drink of oil."

"Cuba is the largest of the West Indian Islands," began Jack. "It is very mountainous, but possesses few rivers of any size. The coasts are said to be very bad. Long reefs run far out to sea."

"Aye, aye, I've been aground on one of 'em on the old *Ohio*," struck in Silas.

"I hope we'll not get into any trouble of that kind,"

said Tom.

"The island, which is 43,500 square miles in area, was discovered by Columbus in 1492. The Spanish occupation dates from a short period after that time. There have been numerous revolutions. In fact, the history of the island appears to be one of unrest; but since 1898, when the United States intervened and freed Cuba, there has been much less trouble. Still, as you know from the papers, there has been plenty of unrest from time to time."

"Are there any wild animals there?" asked Tom, who liked hunting.

"Very few. Wild pigs and a few deer. There are boa constrictors, though, and large lizards of various kinds."

"How about gold or silver?"

"Very little. Not enough to make it profitable to prospect or mine for either of them. There is plenty of iron, though, most of the mines being located near to Santiago, at the mouth of which harbor, as you know, Uncle Sam's navy licked the Spaniards off the face of the map."

"I wish the old *Ohio* could have been there," sighed Silas; "she'd have shown how Yankees can fight. Well, thank you, lad, for your yarn. Now I'll get below. Don't forget you relieve me in a short time."

"We won't forget, Silas. We're anxious to see how far we've come."

When they went below they found out. In the forty-eight hours or more that she had been under way, the *White Shark* had made twelve hundred miles, which Silas declared was a "bumper" run.

While he hastened forward to communicate the results of his observations to Mr. Dancer, Tom and Jack examined the chart which was still spread out. It showed

that they were about off the "Capes."

"It seems to me I read something about the Atlantic fleet being ordered to Europe before long," said Jack. "What if they should be steaming out from the Capes now? You know they rendezvoused at Newport News."

"Let's get a glass and go on deck and see if we can sight anything," suggested Tom. "If they are steaming to sea we ought to be able to see them."

"All right. Just wait till I find out if everything is running smoothly and I'll go with you. We don't have to stand by for orders now."

A thorough investigation was made by the young engineer, the result of which showed that everything was running in fine shape. Armed with the binoculars, the two boys went on deck. Tom was the first to gaze westward. Then came Jack's turn.

Of course the shore was invisible, for their course compelled them to be many miles out at sea, but Jack thought he saw a dark blur on the horizon.

"Take a look, Tom," he urged, "and see what you make it out to be. It looks like a steamer's smoke."

Tom took the glasses and gazed long and steadily in the direction Jack had indicated.

"It is smoke," he announced presently. "Gee whiz, Jack, whatever is making it is coming toward us, too. What if they should be Uncle Sam's ships steaming eastward!"

"In that case," said a quiet voice behind them, "I think we should be justified in heading toward them and giving them a chance to look us over."

"Well, that's one way of putting it," laughed Jack, for the newcomer was Mr. Chadwick, who had seen the boys going on deck with the binoculars and had arrived in time to overhear Tom's last words.

"There are several columns of smoke," cried Tom, after another long look.

"That appears to make it conclusive that it is the fleet," said Mr. Chadwick. "I know they were to sail for the Mediterranean station about this time. Boys, we ought to have a fine marine spectacle. I'll go below and consult Mr. Dancer."

While he was below, the *boys* kept the glasses busy, focusing them on what were now, beyond a doubt, as many as a dozen columns of black smoke. Before long they could make out dark hulls and odd-looking masts rising above the horizon.

"Go below and tell them the news," cried Jack, "and, oh, Tom, bring up the flag."

He referred to the ensign which could be fitted into a socket astern when it was desirable to fly "Old Glory."

Tom soon reappeared with Mr. Chadwick and old Silas. Mr. Dancer would not leave the wheel of his craft even to see a naval parade under such unique conditions. Of course the periscope afforded him a limited view of the inspiring sight.

Before long the monster war dogs were plainly visible and the glasses were no longer needful. There were eight of the ships—huge, formidable craft, painted the dull gray that is Uncle Sam's fighting color. At the bow of each, as they came on, a creamy wave of foam curled up, and at the rails of the bridge of the foremost craft a group of officers could be seen pointing at the strange object their glasses had just "picked up," and which "strange object" was, of course, the submarine *White Shark*.

The battleships were steaming "in column," that is, in single file. Each preserved its correct distance from the other, varying hardly an inch as they progressed.

Right up alongside the leader of the column ran the

little *White Shark*. From the vast, lofty decks of the battleship she must have looked like some marine monster with—by some Jonah-like miracle—a crew of men and boys on her curved back.

The jackies lined the rails in crowds, as the big vessel drew up closer. Everyone on board, appeared to be aware of the presence of the submarine. Bright colored flags appeared in strings signaling from ship to ship the news.

Mr. Dancer ran the *White Shark* into what appeared to be quite dangerous proximity to the big craft. But fast as the battleships were steaming, the *White Shark* kept pace with them. From the bridge inquiries were showered as to the nature of the submarine and whither she was bound. To these, evasive answers were returned, as it was not deemed advisable for the destination of the submarine to be known.

All at once, as the tiny metal chip of a *White Shark* rushed along by the side of the huge leviathan of naval warfare, an object clothed in white fell from the stern deck. Like a flash it darted downward.

For an instant the watchers on the deck of the submarine thought something had been thrown overboard from the cook's or quartermaster's section of the ship.

But a moment later a booming, roaring cry ran along the battleship's crowded decks. Her steam siren shrieked like the wail of a lost soul.

"What's the matter?" demanded Jack.

"It's a man overboard!" cried Silas. "That's what it is!"

CHAPTER XXI.

FRESH DANGER.

“Man overboard!”

The, cry that never fails to thrill the heart of every sailor rang out on the deck of the submarine, as old Silas rightly interpreted the uproar on the battleship. Far above them boats were swung out and crews rushed into them. From the stern of the big fighting ship life belts and lines were tossed.

But long before any of the man-o'-war's boats could touch the water, the submarine was headed about and rushed at full speed toward a tiny black object bobbing on the water far astern of the cumbrous battleship.

That object, looking no bigger than a shoe button, was a man fighting for his life in the wake of the ship from which he had been lost. Mr. Dancer, in the steering section of the *White Shark*, had seen the accident reflected in the periscope. His mind was made up in an instant.. Using the emergency appliances he had for handling the engines, he had brought the *White Shark* around in incredibly short time and had headed for the drowning man.

Up on deck Jack and Tom had their shoes and their coats off, ready to leap after the castaway if necessary. Mr. Chadwick had seized a lifesaving buoy from its hook just inside the hatch and stood ready to hurl it. As for old Silas, he shouted:

“Hold on, mate! We're comin'! Hold on!”

The sea was not in itself rough, but in the wake of the speeding battleship it was decidedly so.

The *White Shark* rolled and plunged like an empty bottle as, at express speed, she cut through the boiling mass of foam and angry, choppy waves.

“He’s still afloat!” cried Tom, as the *White Shark* rose on the top of a wave and they saw the head of the swimmer they were going to save, if human aid could do it.

“And making a brave fight for his life, too,” cried Jack. “Fight on, old fellow, we’re coming.”

The man waved a hand as the *White Shark* ranged close to him. Before any of those on deck knew what he was going to do, Jack was overboard. In a few strong strokes he was alongside his man. The next minute they saw Jack clutched with the desperate grip of the drowning, and dragged under water.

“He’ll drown!” cried Tom despairingly, and the next instant he, too, was overboard and striking out for the spot where the two swimmers who had vanished had last been seen.

Suddenly they flashed to the surface, and Tom saw, to his huge delight, that Jack had broken the other’s grip and was now swimming with an unconscious burden.

“I had to almost knock his head off before he’d let go,” panted Jack, as Tom swam up.

“Where’s the *White Shark*? You can’t hold him up much longer.”

“Here she comes! Hurray!”

The submarine slowly ranged up to the group in the water, and Mr. Chadwick threw the life belt. Tom caught it and the two boys thrust it over the unconscious man’s head. Then, while they swam alongside, holding on to the belt, Mr. Chadwick and Silas hauled in on the line attached to it. In this way they reached the side of the submarine and were pulled on deck almost exhausted.

They had hardly reached safety when Mr. Chadwick gave a cry of alarm.

“Look!” he shouted, “look!”

Coming right at them was something they had quite forgotten. The second battleship in the long column of sea fighters!

She was close enough to them to make her bow look like a steel cliff. They could almost hear the roar of her cutwater as it cleaved its way through the sea.

“Come below instantly! Close the panel! It’s our only chance!”

The voice was Mr. Dancer’s. It came from the mouth of the speaking tube situated in the hatch for purposes of communicating with the deck from below.

Without stopping to take another look at the huge menace bearing down upon them, the boys, assisted by Silas, picked up the unconscious form of the man they had rescued and carried him below. All this was done with lightning speed. Anxiety, cold panic, made them move like those who dream, but still with promptitude.

As the metal door clanged to Jack shuddered; it sounded almost as if the steel bow of the battleship was cutting into them at the moment, cleaving them in two and sending the *White Shark* and her crew to an unmarked grave in the bed of the ocean.

The diving boat gave a sickening plunge the next instant. It seemed as if she were making an almost perpendicular dive to the depths. Those in the cabin who had rushed from the deck in the nick of time were thrown in a bruised mass at one end of the main cabin. As for Jupe, only a wild yell proceeded from his regions. He had no idea of what was happening.

It appeared to him that the *White Shark* was taking her last plunge. It seemed that way to the others, too. Huddled together, they turned white, questioning faces on each other. Not even the unconscious man was more deadly pale.

Nobody spoke, but each knew without resorting to

words, of what the other was thinking.

Had the dive come too late to carry the *White Shark* safely under the keel of the battleship driving down upon them?

Suddenly there came a grating, grinding shock that seemed to shake the *White Shark* to the last rivet of her fabric.

“Great heaven! They’ve struck us!” cried Silas in a terrible voice.

“We’re going to the bottom!” shouted Tom beside himself with terror. The submarine hesitated for an instant, and then turned slowly on one side. “It’s the end!” cried Mr. Chadwick.

CHAPTER XXII.

A NARROW ESCAPE.

For one sickening instant the diving craft shuddered and shivered like a stricken live thing. All the while the dull whirr of the engines, the thrill of the cylinder of metal in which six human lives were at stake, continued.

To the huddled mass piled together in inextricable confusion at one end of the main cabin, the brief space of time that ensued between the crash of the battleship's impact and the slow, shuddering recovery of the submarine, appeared to be hours. In reality it was but minutes.

Anyone of them, except perhaps Jupe, would have willingly faced death on land had it been inevitable. But penned in a metal cylinder under the depths of the ocean, things were very different.

However, forward in the steering compartment was the guiding spirit of the occasion. Not for an instant did Daniel Dancer, dreamer and inventor, swerve from his post or his duty. With quick, sure fingers he manipulated the emergency machinery following the crash. For aught he knew, at any instant through a wound in the side of the almost human craft he had created the water might come pouring in.

But although his face was deathly pale he controlled the machinery with a heavy hand. When the crash came his heart had bounded to his mouth. Like Mr. Chadwick he had murmured to himself:

"It is the end!"

With indomitable pluck he stuck to his post, but his pale lips moved as if in prayer.

One! two! three minutes passed, and still came no sign that the blow dealt the *White Shark* had been a mortal one. Her engines buzzed steadily on. Glancing

almost fearfully at the array of indicators in front of him, the inventor manipulated the devices which he knew would show the slightest injury to the craft they controlled.

But one after another they responded. The *White Shark* was in perfect control.

“Can it be possible, after that fearful blow?” breathed Daniel Dancer, half afraid to believe the good fortune which investigation showed him must be his.

He set the craft on an even keel and hailed the others.

Mr. Chadwick’s voice came back:

“How is it, Dancer? Tell us the worst.”

“The best, you mean,” cried the joyous inventor. “By a stroke of miraculous fortune, that battleship only struck us a glancing blow, although if it had been a fraction of an inch nearer—”

His voice trailed off hesitatingly. He could not trust himself to speak. Men who have looked into their tombs and then beheld themselves snatched back to earth again, are not given to much speech.

The others came crowding into the steering chamber. Wonder was on every face and a sort of reverent look, too. Each felt that only divine Providence could have saved them in that fearful moment.

“The *White Shark* is not damaged at all?” demanded Mr. Chadwick incredulously.

“Not a bit. Hark at her engines. I expect our back is dented, but outside of that I anticipate finding no considerable damage.”

“Den we ain’t done drowned at de bottom ob de sea?”

The voice came in a plaintive wail from the door of the steering chamber. In it was framed the white-aproned form of Jupe. His face was gray and his eyes

rolled like saucers.

“Not yet, Jupe,” laughed Mr. Chadwick happily, such was his relief over their salvation from a fearful death, “we’re still in the ring.”

“Das right, boss,” grinned Jupe, “and de dinner am still on de wing. I was jes’ goin’ ter call you ails when gollyumptions, dar come dat cantankerous smash!

“Fo’ de lub ob goodness, boss,” he went on, “what was dat hit us? Granddaddy whale or suthin’?”

“Neither, Jupe; but a battleship.”

Jupe threw up his hands.

“A battleship! Good lan’ ob Goshen, ah done heah ob a locusmocus buttin’ ah niggah’s haid. but I nebber heard tell ob a battleship hitting a peanut like dis yar.”

“Peanut!” cried Jack with mock indignation.

“Ah jes’ means a menagerie peanut, Marse Jack.”

“That’s where you find them, as a rule—in a menagerie.”

“Oh, I don’ mean dat peanut what you *eat*. Ah mean, compahed wid dat battling ship dis yar *White Shark* ain’ as big as a peanut to a whale, no sah. But ah am certingly grossly ‘xaggerated ter fin’ dat we am still in de water and not undah it,” concluded Jupe, shuffling off to repair the damage in his kitchen.

Luckily, most of the “china” was agate ware, and the majority of the movable articles, including the kitchen utensils, were designed so to remain stationary, so the damage was not as great as might have been anticipated; but it was bad enough.

“And now for the surface,” declared Mr. Dancer; “and, in the meantime, Chadwick, you had better look at that half-drowned man. You’ll find the medicine chest in my cabin.”

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE "WHITE SHARK" AND THE SQUADRON.

Mr. Dancer worked on his odd-looking collection of levers and buttons, and the *White Shark* obediently shot upward, but, of course, not at so sharp an angle as that at which she had descended to escape the battleship's prow. In a few seconds she was near the surface, as the periscope indicated.

To avoid the danger of coming up under another battleship, which has, by the way, destroyed dozens of submarines, Mr. Dancer rose to the surface on a long, slanting course. As he glanced at the periscope indicator he saw that they were by no means too far off for safety—that is, had the fleet been in motion. But the periscope disclosed it lying motionless, while small boats dotted the water in every direction.

"Chadwick, how's your patient?" called out Mr. Dancer.

"Oh, better. He is sitting up. When we are ready we can transfer him back to his ship."

"That was a white thing you did for me, mates," declared the sailor, who told them that his name was Jim Harding. "I'll never forget it, either, see if I do."

"That's all right," declared Jack; "glad to get you out safe and sound. But how did you come to go overboard?"

"I dunno exactly. I was standing on the deck rail with some of my mates, when all of a sudden two fellers, skylarking behind me, bumped into me. I guess I was too much interested in your craft here to pay much attention to what I was doing. The first thing you know I found myself in the water. My! That was an awful struggle! I guess I came pretty near taking you down with me, too," he went on, addressing Jack.

“Well, if you did, I gave you a good sound crack on the head,” laughed Jack; “it was the only thing to do.”

“Course it was, mate,” rejoined the other. “I wondered what made my head so sore there.”

“Pigeon’s egg on it, eh?”

“All of that. Feels more like a turkey’s. Say, this craft’s got any of our navy submarines beat”

At this instant Mr. Dancer’s voice came again.

“We are in the middle of the fleet,” he hailed. “I’m going to play a trick, or, rather, I have played it.”

“What is it?” inquired Mr. Chadwick.

“Why, I’m running submerged with only just the tip of the periscope out of the water. One would have to have sharp eyes to see it yet. Although we are twenty-five feet down, I can see all that is on the surface of the water.”

“Yes, but what’s the trick?” urged Jack.

“Have the panel ready to slide back. Then you all get under it. When the companion way register points to ‘Open!’ you operate the machinery that slides it back.”

“Very well,” said Mr. Chadwick, “what are your next instructions?”

“As soon as the panel is open, run out on deck and give a good, hearty cheer. I’ll join you.”

They congregated under the panel.

“All right!” came Mr. Dancer’s voice after a short interval. Click! Back slid the panel. In rushed fresh air and sunlight.

“Now, boys, remember the instructions,” was Jack’s father’s warning as they stumbled up the steel steps toward the parallelogram of air and light.

With great self-control the boys held back their enthusiasm till ordered to “cut loose.” It was the more

hard to do this, as from every ship came a deep, roaring and booming of cheers for the plucky little submarine craft and her brave ship's company.

All about lay men-o'-war boats, ordered out on a search, doubtless, and each huge battleship lay motionless. It made a wonderful picture to the group that stood on the drenched decks of the submarine that had just risen from the depths, to which not many minutes ago it had appeared that she was consigned forever.

Practically every battleship in the squadron knew by wireless and signaling of what had occurred. They had learned how the men on the leading battleship, *Manhattan Island*, had seen the submarine apparently rammed and sunk by the craft second in line, the *San Francisco*. The reappearance of the small diving craft was deemed wonderful, because several of the keenest sighted officers had been prepared to swear that they saw the actual impact.

Wonderful enough, Old Glory, drenched and dripping from the dive, still hung at the stern of the *White Shark*.

"Jack, hustle astern and get those colors!" cried Mr. Chadwick.

The boy hastened aft and released the flagpole from its socket. Reverently he bore the colors forward.

"Now wave them with all your might!" came the order.

As Jack, with all the power his muscular young arms could command, waved the colors, strenuously renewed cheers came from the battleships. They were in response to a burst of cheers from the company of the *White Shark*, among whom Jim Harding stood waving to his shipmates,—a man literally snatched from a double grave.

Across the back of the submarine, almost amidships,

was a deep dent; but no other harm had been done. The battleship had struck her a glancing blow just as she dived, but had it come an inch closer the injury would have proved fatal to the career of the *White Shark* and its crew.

"Come aboard!" bellowed an officer of the Manhattan Island as the *White Shark* moved 'longside the gangway to send the sailor Harding back on board.

"No time. Thanks just the same," rejoined Mr. Chadwick.

"Can we do anything for you?"

"Nothing at all, thanks. Good-bye!"

"Jove, you are brave men, and those boys are the salt of the earth," came from another officer on the bridge.

"You had a jolly close shave, though," reminded another. "We thought you were gone for a minute."

"So did we," laughed Mr. Chadwick in response— "for a minute."

Surrounded by his mates, Harding made his way up the gangway and on board, after bidding a grateful farewell to those who had risked their lives to save his. For half an hour pleasant chat was exchanged, and the officers of the *San Francisco* came rowing up and offered apologies for having almost ended the *White Shark's* existence.

They were accepted freely. Mr. Chadwick and Mr. Dancer fully understood that to check the way of a big battleship, or even to alter her course, is not the work of an instant. It was due to this that the near-casualty had occurred, the lookouts on the *San Francisco* not having seen the inconspicuous part of the *White Shark* which appeared above water till almost above her. It was then too late.

The shock which had shaken the *White Shark* to its

bed plates had not been felt on the battleship any more than a mosquito would be noticeable to a mammoth. Even had the submarine been cut in two, the shock would not have been perceptible on the *San Francisco*.

"That just shows you that a ship might hit us at night and they'd never know they'd sent us to the bottom," cried Tom in dismay.

"You're a cheerful talker," struck in Jack, who was one of the group; "but come, there go the signals to get under way. The boats are in, and look at the smoke and steam pouring from the funnels! Goodness, what a formidable-looking fleet! Uncle Sam has no reason to be ashamed of his navy."

"I should say not," struck in Silas Hardtack; "but on the old *Ohio* we thought we were pretty good; and I guess we were, too," he concluded modestly.

Amidst waving and cheering and mutual shouts of good will, the fleet swept by, the crew of the *White Shark* standing respectfully at salute as one after another the great vessels glided past in stately procession.

At length the last of the column swept by, and then, and only then, did the *White Shark* head round once more on her course.

"We lost some time," declared Mr. Chadwick as they stood gazing after the fast diminishing outlines of the battleships, "but it was worth it."

"An' now, gents, am you comin' to dat dinner, or am yo' gwine ter spite yo' stomachs till supper time?"

It was not till then that they recalled that they had eaten nothing, all thoughts of food having been swept aside by the excitement of the scenes they had just gone through.

CHAPTER XXIV. A MYSTERY ADRIFT.

That night the watches at the steering appliance were divided into four. Mr. Dancer who, with the exception of a few brief snatches of sleep, had been at the controls of the *White Shark* almost continuously since the voyage had started, went to his cabin right after supper.

Then came Tom's watch, lasting from eight till midnight. Jack's followed, from midnight till 4 A. M., and Silas Hardtack's from that hour till 8 A. M., when Mr. Dancer insisted that he would be able to resume control.

This arrangement put at least one person who understood the engines in the engine room constantly. Mr. Chadwick watched while Jack steered, sleeping from time to time; for it will be recalled that the engines were controllable from the steering compartment, so that actually all the engineer was compelled to do was to "stand by" for signals and see that the motors were properly lubricated and kept in order.

At eight o'clock, when the signal sounded for everyone to turn out;" Mr. Dancer emerged from his cabin, looking, as Tom put it, "as fresh as a daisy." Each in turn took a salt water shower in the bathroom, while the appetizing aroma of Jupe's bacon and coffee and hot biscuits filled the main cabin.

Through the night the submarine had been run at a distance of fifty feet below the surface of the water, so as to avoid all risk of striking floating objects or passing vessels. At such a depth the craft was safe from the risk of contact with the keels of even the largest ships.

It had seemed odd to the boys as they stood their "tricks" at the wheel to think, as they alternately eyed the compass and the observation tube, that above them

vessels might be passing “on their lawful occasions,” wholly unconscious of the “man-fish” cruising below them in the quiet depths.

One thing, too, the boys noticed was the immense amount of fish attracted by the glare from the observation searchlights. Through the green, pellucid water, illuminated by the bright light from the observation tube, it at times appeared as if they were gazing into a show tank in some vast aquarium. Like most boys, Jack and Tom had both read “Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea,” but even that fascinating history of life in deep waters had failed to give them any idea of the immense amount of life that goes on in the submarine depths.

Of course, at the speed the *White Shark* kept up—for time was imperative—it was impossible to see much more of the fish than their fleeting forms, like flocks of birds seen from a train window. But even this was interesting. You may be inclined to ask how the *White Shark* was kept on her course without danger in the depths.

The answer is that she was guided just like any other ship in the dark night, by her compass. Before turning the watch over to the next man, each occupant of the steering chair gave him the direction in which Silas Hardtack, the ship’s navigator, had ordered the prow to be kept. The course was due south, and this made it doubly easy to keep the *White Shark* on her true line of progress.

As to depth, the chart showed ample water everywhere, even should the *White Shark* traverse the underwaters at a depth of two hundred feet. But there was nothing to be gained by doing this, as, at such great depths, pressure and friction would be so increased as to seriously impede the submarine craft’s progress, and

haste was a necessity.

After this digression concerning the night, we will follow the boys up to the deck after break—"fast, for at dawn the *White Shark* had been driven to the surface and the ventilators opened. While the air was not foul, still it was a relief to open everything that could be opened, and set in motion fans that drew the stale air out of the interior of the craft.

As soon as their morning meal had been dispatched, both boys hastened on deck. The sea was still and calm, the air cool and clear and the sky cloudless.

They were in the gulf stream, and the water was of an intense blue. At the sides where the Archimedian screws were biting steadily into the water, it had a hue of the most transparent turquoise. Great patches of yellow gulf-weed floated everywhere, and as the *White Shark* nosed through these, flying fish flew from them in whole coveys.

It seemed as if the boys could not tire of watching these strange fish, which, of course, do not "fly" at all in the true sense, but skim the water, supported by their broad fins.

"Hullo!"

"Hullo, yourself, Tom; what's up?"

"Look yonder there, Jack. Don't you see some object?"

"I do, floating off to the eastward."

"What can it be?"

"Don't know. Looks as if it might be a boat."

"I'll get the glasses. We'll soon see."

Tom dived below and reappeared with the binoculars. A short scrutiny convinced them that their eyes had not played them false. The object on the horizon was a boat, a small craft like a rowing skiff—at least, that was as well

as they could make out.

“Shall I tell Mr. Dancer?”

The question came from Tom.

“Yes; do so at once. It may be some shipwrecked sailor adrift. At any rate, we ought to look into it.”

Both Mr. Dancer and Mr. Chadwick agreed with this. For the second time in forty-eight hours the *White Shark* was diverted from her course, and headed toward the drifting object. As they drew closer it became evident enough, however, that the boat was empty, or at least if it had an occupant that he was past sitting up.

“May he some poor fellow overcome by the heat and thirst,” suggested Mr. Dancer. “We’d better take a closer look.”

Accordingly, the *White Shark* was run right up alongside the drifting boat. As they drew near, all hands held their breaths. They did not know upon what tragedy of the ocean they might be going to stumble. But the boat—a small white one, like a ship’s dinghy—was empty. Nor did it bear any evidence of having been occupied recently.

Above the stern seat was a name board, “Mary Gloster, Liverpool.” Except for a coil of rope and some fishing lines, there was nothing to show where the boat came from or what she had been last used for. *The* fishing lines gave a clew, however.

“Somebody’s been fishing and got adrift and been picked up by a passing vessel which did not bother to load on the dinghy,” said Mr. Chadwick.

“That looks reasonable,” agreed Mr. Dancer.

“At any rate, we’ve done all we can do and time is precious.”

“Can’t we tow it?” asked Tom. “It’s a dandy little boat, and it seems a shame to leave it behind.”

"It does; but how can a submarine tow a boat except to Davy Jones' locker?" laughed Mr. Chadwick quizzically.

"Well, hold this rope till I get into it and examine it for more clews," said Tom, who loved a mystery and scented one here.

"Very well, Master Tom, Jack can make the boat fast to the rail, but when the engines start you'll have to come on board."

Tom nodded and jumped into the boat which was bumping alongside. He threw the line in its bow to Jack, who made it fast around the submarine's deck rail.

"Go ahead, old Sherlock Holmes," he grinned, "get a clew."

"All right. I might find a bag of gold," retorted Tom. "Yes; and you might find a bag of cookies, but you won't."

Back and forth flew the raillery, but Tom patiently dug around the floor of the drifting boat, in which, to make it more odd, were a pair of oars.

"I guess it's just a mystery of the sea," he said at length, "and wow! this sun's hot. I'll come on board and get a drink of water. I'm dying of thirst."

"Well, your enthusiasm soon petered out," scoffed Jack. "Wish we could go fishing, though. That's a dandy boat for that. Wouldn't you like to?"

"Like to what?"

"Go fishing, of course," responded Tom. Mr. Dancer's head appeared above the hatchway.

"Go fishing, eh? Well, you can if you like. Something's wrong with the reverse gear. It may take some time to find the trouble and fix it."

"Do you want help?" asked Tom, hoping the answer would be in the negative.

"No, thank you. You boys go on and see if you can't catch a mess of nice fresh red snapper for dinner. It will make a pleasant change."

Tom flew below to get some stale meat from Jupe for bait, and broad shady hats for himself and Jack.

He was radiant when he reappeared. "Hurray, Jack, we'll have a regular picnic. See, I got Jupe to fix us up a lunch, and here's a jug of water. We might get thirsty."

"Don't go too far," warned Mr. Chadwick, who had come on deck to see the fishing expedition off.

"No danger of that. We'll be within call. Blow the whistle if you want us."

Jack referred to the compressed air whistle within the hatch. Its tone was loud and carried far, and it was designed to be used when the *White Shark* was going through crowded waters on the surface.

"All right, three blasts will be the signal that we are ready."

"All right, dad. Good-bye!"

"Good-bye. Careful now."

"Oh, sure we will; it's like a late this morning."

With Jack at the oars the boys rowed around a bit and "dropped their lines over from time to time with fair success.

"I guess we've not got the right kind of bait, Tom," declared Jack at length; "they don't seem to be biting right."

"Well, let's pull around a bit and then try our luck again."

"All right. You do the pulling, though. It's too warm for one chap to do all the work."

"Rowing's my middle name; give me the oars."

"Here they are. Don't fall overboard in changing

seats. I fancy I saw a shark's fin cruising round here."

"Now I'll show you how to row."

Tom bent to the oars and pulled with a will. The small boat cut over the water merrily.

After a while Tom paused. They looked about them.

"My, Tom, we're a long way from the *White Shark*," exclaimed Jack.

"Well, didn't I tell you I was a strong rower? I must have pulled your lazy anatomy a good four miles."

"Well, let's try fishing. If they signal us we can hear it from here."

"Oh, sure. Come on; bet you I get the first fish."

"Bet you a doughnut you don't. Ah, see there!"

Tom drew aboard a fine red snapper. It lay flapping in the bottom of the boat, its bright golden scales glinting, while the boys gazed at it admiringly.

And all the time a danger they never dreamed of was sweeping down on them like a thief in the night, silent and unseen.

CHAPTER XXV. LOST IN THE FOG.

After that, the fish bit fast and furiously. It seemed that the boys had nothing to do but to bait their hooks, throw them over and pull in a fish. There were all varieties, many of them strange to the two lads. Suddenly Tom's hook was seized by something that gave a tug that almost pulled the boy out of the boat into the water.

"Wow!" yelled Tom. "I've got a whale!"

He twisted his line about a thwart, for whatever had caught the other end of the line almost pulled his arms out when he attempted to hold it unaided.

"You mean the whale's got you," shouted Jack, laughing.

But the next instant his laughter turned to a shout of dismay.

"Your whale's running away with us."

This was true. The creature that had hold of Tom's line was darting off at a rapid rate and pulling the boat behind him.

They skimmed over the water at great speed, Tom enjoying the fun hugely.

"This beats motor boating," he declared, "no engine to bother with and just as fast. Guess I'll catch this critter when he gets tired out and introduce him at home as a new form of motive power."

"You'll do nothing of the sort, Tom. Cast him off. Here's my knife. Cut the line."

"Why? Let's go on a bit further," begged. Tom.

"It would be all right if your fish motor would tow us toward the *White Shark*, but look back there!"

Tom turned and saw the *White Shark* terribly far off.

He thought of the long pull back to her, and his muscles fairly ached in anticipation. Hesitating no longer, he took Jack's proffered knife and slashed the line. As he did so, a few yards ahead a huge barracuda gave a leap into the air, landing back with a mighty splash and darting off at a mile-a-minute gait.

"There, that's what gave us a tow away out here," declared Tom, as the huge fish, which must have weighed two or three hundred pounds, vanished. "Wouldn't it have been great if we could have induced him to turn round and tow us back to the *White Shark*? I'd have begged him a bucketful of bait for the kindness."

"Well, quit talking rot and pick up the oars," admonished Jack.

He had been looking about him and noticing a curious effect in the atmosphere. A sort of filmy haze had grown up between them and the *White Shark*, almost obscuring the latter.

Tom picked up the oars, grumbling as he did so.

"Huh! I wish we'd never made fast to that fish."

"I told you to cut loose sooner," rejoined Jack; "just for that you'll do some extra pulling."

Under what sailors term an "ash breeze" namely, the power of a pair of oars—the boat moved but slowly.

"It seems to me that we are going twice as slow as when we came out," muttered Tom, the perspiration pouring down his face from his exertions.

"It does seem so," agreed Jack; "maybe there is some sort of ocean current hereabouts."

After that there was silence for a time. Torn pulled steadily while Jack looked about him at the weather. The odd mist or haze he had noticed had grown thicker. Presently the whole sea began to steam. It was as if the water was boiling and giving off great clouds of vapor.



HESITATING NO LONGER—HE SLASHED THE LINE.

"Crickets!" cried Jack anxiously. "We're in for it now, Tom!"

"Why, what's up? They'll wait for us."

"Yes, if we can find them. Look about you."

Tom gave over rowing for a time and looked up.

"Gracious!" he exclaimed in dismay. "Fog!"

"Yes, that's what it is, all right."

"Then we're lost!"

Tom's voice was quavery with sudden alarm, but Jack

kept a steady head.

“Now, don’t get rattled,” he admonished. “Keep cool, just as you would if you were lost in the woods.”

The haze grew momentarily thicker. In white, wraith-like folds it encompassed them, beating in softly all about them, like the waves of a vaporous sea.

“Let’s see,” mused Jack, “the *White Shark* lay off that way, didn’t she, when we saw her last?”

He pointed out into the steamy white smother.

“But are you sure she did?” asked Tom, whose pluck was coming back now that the first shock was over.

“Almost certain. At any rate, we’ll pull in that direction. Give me one oar and you take the other; we shall get along faster so.”

With one boy at each oar the boat did get through the mist faster. They pulled till they were fairly exhausted, but at last Jack paused.

“If we are coming in the right direction the *White Shark* must be close at hand now,” he declared. “Let’s try shouting.”

The boys yelled and shouted with full lung power, but no answering shout came back out of the mist. At last they were compelled to give in. Their throats were raw and cracked from their vocal exercise.

They exchanged blank looks.

“Well?” demanded Tom flatly.

“There’s no use blinking the fact, Tom,” was Jack’s rejoinder, “we are lost.”

“Can’t we do anything?”

“Nothing, except make the best of it, like the Indian who was found wandering about by a party of hunters. ‘Are you lost?’ they asked him. ‘No,’ replied the noble red man, ‘me not lost, wigwam lost.’ That’s about the way

we've got to look at our situation, Tom, old boy."

Jack tried hard to make his voice cheerful and confident, but somehow Tom did not smile at his companion's story. And all about them the fog shut in ever closer and closer.

CHAPTER XXVI.

“A PHANTOM OF LIGHT.”

For a long time Jack tried to keep Tom's spirits up by joking and laughing. But jokes in a situation like the one that encompassed the two boys are but sorry things, and at length Jack gave over.

“Is there anything we can do?” asked Tom mournfully.

“We might cut holes in the fog and climb to the top,” laughed Jack, and then more seriously he continued: “I don't know what there is to do, Tom, old boy, except to wait. ‘Wait till the clouds roll by, Nellie,’ you know.”

“That may not be for days.”

“Don't let's discuss that. Are you hungry?”

“Pretty well. But I think we had better go easy on what food we have; we may need it before long.”

“All right, we'll put off the lunch part of it, then. But I must have some water; I'm awfully dry after that row.”

“So am I; but we must be careful of the water, too.”

The boys each took a sparing drink from the stone bottle, letting the water first moisten their mouths and then trickle down their parched throats. This done they looked about them once more. But if they had expected to discern a single ray of hope, they were disappointed. The fog was as dense as ever, denser, if anything. The outlook, to say the least of it, was not encouraging.

Hour after hour wore on thus. During the afternoon they ate sparingly, and took turns lying in the bottom of the boat and taking a nap! At last darkness shut down on them, and then they began to be really panic-stricken.

Not a sound had come to them out of the fog, and, for all they knew, they might be miles from the *White Shark*. The ocean was full of currents thereabouts; that, Jack knew full well. Possibly they had been caught in

one of those and were being carried farther and farther from their friends. At any rate, it seemed certain that if they were anywhere near the submarine they would have heard the sound of the whistle; for Jack knew that those on board that craft must be worried half distraught by the nonappearance of the young fishermen.

"I wish this old boat had been at the bottom of the sea before we ever found her," muttered Tom disconsolately.

"So do I. But wishing will do no good. It's action that counts in this world."

"Of course; but how are you going to get action when there is no field for it?"

"You're right, Tom; but waiting about like this, not knowing what's going to become of us, or even being able to see a foot ahead, is tough."

"Wonder what they are doing on board now?"

Tom's words brought up a vision of the snug cabin of the submarine with all its comforts, and the table spread with Jupe's excellent cooking.

"Don't," groaned Jack, "don't make me think of it. They must be terribly worried, Tom."

"I wish their worry would bring them to find us," rejoined Tom; "but, of course, they couldn't do that in this mess. It's a regular game of blindman's buff."

"Yes, and we are *it*, I'm afraid."

The night wore on. It was deathly silent there in the dense fog. In the pauses of the conversation they bravely tried to keep up, they could hear the lapping of the little waves against the side of the boat. This made Jack think what a good thing it was that a gale had not sprung up instead of a fog. In such case, their position would have been even worse.

All at once, far off in the fog, came a peculiar sound—a throbbing like the beating of some titanic heart.

"A steamer!" exclaimed Jack.

This suggested a fresh peril. In the fog they might be run down by the unseen ship. Clearly, judging by the increasing sound of the throbbing propeller, she was coming toward them.

"We must get out of her path!" cried Tom.

"Of course; but how are we to tell just where she is, in this fog? I can't locate sound at all."

"No more can I. I only wish it was possible to attract her attention in some way."

"Why? I don't see that that would do us much good. We could get out of her way quicker than she could out of ours."

"That's true; but she might pick us up."

"What good would that do? You couldn't expect them to heave to and go hunting for the *White Shark*, especially if she is a mail boat. The best she could do would be to land us in some port, and—G-g-g-great S-s-cott, Tom, *pull* for your life!"

Both boys snatched up the oars and pulled for all they were worth, digging the oar blades deep into the water.

A spot of light loomed up through the fog. A huge bow towered blackly above them. With the sweat starting from every pore, the boys pulled frantically. They just managed to avoid the vessel which, like a ghost, glided past in the smother. Bright beams came from her portholes and she seemed like a phantom of light as she swept by.

For a minute she shone glitteringly through the mist, and then was gone as quickly as she had appeared. Through the fog came the sound of music and laughter. She was a passenger ship, and there was a gay dance going forward on board. But not one of the dancers so much as dreamed that they had passed almost within a handshake of two lost and miserable boys, adrift on the broad Atlantic in a cockleshell of an open boat.

CHAPTER XXVII.

LAND IS SIGHTED.

The vanishing of the steamer for some reason left with the boys a feeling of blankness and loneliness that had not, with all their distress, been there before.

“Just think of everybody on board that steamer having a good time, and here we are so close to them and so wretched,” grumbled Tom.

“Getting sore about it won’t make things any better, Tom,” admonished Jack. “Let’s be cheerful.”

“Cheerful? Huh!”

“Well, try to be as cheerful as we can, then. Getting in the dumps about it won’t help matters any.”

But Tom sat silently in the stern of the boat until he grew so sleepy that Jack told him to lie down and cover himself with the sail and take a nap.

“I’ll tell you when to relieve guard,” he said.

Tom looked ashamed of himself. Jack’s tenderness touched him and made him realize how cross and selfish he had been, while Jack was trying to beat up amidst their troubles.

“I’m sorry, Jack,” he said contritely, holding out his hand.

That was all, but Jack understood and clasped the proffered hand warmly.

“Now lie down, old chap, and get some sleep. Let’s hope that by the time you wake up things will have improved.”

Tom crawled under the canvas of the sail and in a jiffy was off in dreamland. It appeared to be not more than ten minutes later that he was aroused by somebody throwing a bucket of water over his head. At least that

was the way it appeared to Tom. He sat up angrily, not at first realizing where he was.

He saw Jack regarding him amusedly. The fog had gone and in its place a brisk breeze blew, whipping the sea into small waves. One of these had just broken in spray against the bow and given Tom his morning bath in such an unceremonious manner.

“Any sign?” asked Tom, as he saw what appeared to be a look of hope on Jack’s face. “No, not a sign,” rejoined Jack, understanding without further words just what Tom meant.

“But you look sort of—sort of—”

“Cheered up?”

“Yes, that’s it. What makes you so?”

By way of rejoinder Jack ordered Tom to “look there,” pointing off over the port bow of the dancing cockleshell. Tom followed the direction of Jack’s finger with his eyes. He saw, as the boat rose on the crest of a wave, a small patch that appeared to be a cloud of a delicate purple hue.

“Well, what of that?” he inquired, not seeing much interest in a cloud.

“That’s land over yonder; I’m sure of it,” declared Jack.

“What sort of land?” Tom appeared skeptical.

“Why, an island, of course. One of the Bahamas, I imagine. We’re about in that latitude.”

“Never mind the island a minute; just where are we, and, where’s the *White Shark*?”

“I’ll have to say ‘don’t know’ to both questions. I’ve no more idea than you have.”

“But we didn’t row during the night, and we can’t have been so awfully far from her. In that case, why is it that we see no sign of her?”

“My theory is that we got caught in one of the ocean currents—may be in it yet—and were dragged from the vicinity of the submarine during the night. Then, too, we may have rowed in the wrong direction last night when first we discovered that we were lost.”

“That being the case, I don’t see what you have to look cheerful over.”

“You don’t? Well, I do. Suppose that’s an island over yonder. We can get up the sail and be there in a few hours.”

“What will we find when we get there? Sand and monkeys, I suppose.”

“There are no monkeys in the Bahamas, Tom, and so far as the island being a barren one is concerned, we shall have to take our chance on that.”

“I guess it’s worth trying, anyhow. We might as well do that as toss about out here.”

“Let’s hoist the sail then.”

This was quickly done, the canvas being of the leg-o’-mutton variety. Under the small sheet the little boat flew skimmingly over the waves.

Had the circumstances been different, the boys would have thoroughly enjoyed the exhilarating sport. But in their case, it was more business than sport that occupied their thoughts. If the distant speck which Jack believed was an island should prove to be an uninhabited one, their position would be about as bad as bad could be. They ate their last provisions for breakfast, and a sorry meal it made, and drank almost the last of their precious water, only leaving a small quantity for emergencies.

As they flew along it soon became evident that Jack’s surmise was a correct one. The distant land was an island, and upon it was something that at first puzzled them. This was what looked like a tall, leafless tree.

"I wonder what it is?" murmured Tom as they gazed at it.

"A royal palm, perhaps, with its top blown off in the last hurricane," hazarded Jack.

But Tom suddenly burst into a joyous exclamation.

"Royal palm, nothing, Jack! It's—it's a lighthouse!"

"Hurrah! Then the island is inhabited, and we are all right!" cried Jack, his relief showing in his glowing face.

"Hold on. Don't go too fast," counseled Tom, "we're not there yet, you know."

As if in answer to his words, at almost the same instant a big wave flopped over the bow of the boat. Jack, who was steering, had let the craft veer to a little, not being very skillful at steering with an oar, which he had to use, there being no rudder in the boat.

"Jiminy! Do you want to sink us?" remonstrated Tom, starting to bale out the water with the tin can in which they had brought their bait. This kept him busy so long that he had not much time to notice his surroundings, but presently, raising his head above the bulwarks, he was alarmed to see that the sea had increased in violence till it was really rough. The wind, too, was freshening and blowing harder every minute.

The boat was riding the big rolling seas like a duck, and Jack was handling her with real skill, but at any moment he might let the little craft fall off and then there was every chance of a big sea boarding and swamping her.

"Goodness, we seem to get out of one trouble only to tumble into another," exclaimed Tom. "Easy there!"

A shower of spray flew high over the small boat, drenching its occupants to the skin.

"This would be all right sailing near home," said Jack, shaking the water out of his curls, "but right now it

strikes me that we could do with a little less sea.”

“Do you think she’ll last till we get to land?” asked Tom uneasily. “If it doesn’t blow any harder, we ought to do all right.”

“But if not?”

“Then we are going to have a pretty tough time in making port.”

For an interval after that, neither of them spoke. It took all Jack’s skill to handle the boat, while Tom kept his eyes riveted on the island which every moment grew more distinct in outline.

You are not to think, though, that the boy could gaze continuously at the island. At times the boat would plunge down into a watery valley from which it seemed impossible she could ever rise. Again, topping a wave crest, Tom was able to view the island for a flash.

It was a low, sandy islet with a few stunted wind-blown palms at one end. At the other stood the lighthouse—a tall, thin tower painted in broad red and white bands alternately.

CHAPTER XXVIII. A SINGLE CHANCE.

The sea grew rougher as the wind freshened, just as Jack had feared it would. The little boat fairly flew along now, at times almost burying her lee gunwale. It was at such moments that Jack showed his skill as a sailor. One fraction of a mistake in his handling of the small craft and she would have keeled over a particle of an inch too far and filled up.

But with a closer view of the island a disconcerting fact was discovered. There appeared to be no place to land. The surf could be seen in great white clouds rising from the white beach, on which the big rollers crashed with a noise like thunder.

“How in the world are we going to land there?” Tom asked in dismay, gazing at the surf as it was tossed ten feet into the air. The thunder and roar of it could be plainly heard.

“We’d be smashed up in a second in those rollers,” declared Jack. “We must find some other landing place, that’s all.”

At the risk of swamping the boat, he headed her on a course that would carry them around the lighthouse end of the island. Flying along, half buried in foam, the little craft made good weather of it. But they now had a beam sea, and she was more difficult to manage.

Suddenly, from a small tin-roofed house that nestled under the tall lighthouse, a man came running at top speed. He had seen the boat and now shouted something, pointing to the other side of the island. Jack rightly guessed that he meant that there was a harbor on that side.

Hurling spray high over her, the little boat dashed around the end of the islet. On the other side the sea was

just as high, but a sort of reef ran out at one point, behind which natural breakwater lay the harbor of which the lighthouse keeper had tried to tell them.

The waves broke on the reef with terrific violence, and at first Jack looked in vain for an opening. At last, however, he saw one. But it looked terribly narrow. To get through it he would have to run his boat almost in the shadow of the big breakers, any one of which would have smashed boys and boat like eggshells. Yet he knew that he must make that opening to reach the smooth water beyond.

Luffing up, he went about on another tack. In his eagerness he stood half upright in the stern, crouching forward above his steering oar, guiding the plunging boat as a skilled horseman controls a restive animal. Tom, who was huddled in the bottom of the boat so as to give her more stability, saw the opening. He glanced back at Jack with a look that said:

“Dare we chance it?”

Jack’s lips were set in a grim line. His muscles stood out like whipcords on his arms. The wind blew back his curls above his high forehead. He was a picture of strong, confident, American youth. But in reality there was in his heart anything but confidence that he could make that opening. It could not have been more than twelve feet or so across, and on either side the cruel fangs of the reef showed when the rollers broke over them.

On flew the boat like a runaway horse with the bit in its teeth. But Jack had her under perfect control. Twice he tacked; once, in executing the maneuver, he almost swamped his small craft. But she recovered and once more headed up for that pitifully small opening between the teeth of the reef.

This time Jack did not tack. Gripping his steering oar

with one hand, and the sheet rope of the sail with the other, he made straight for the opening. Grimly he told himself that he must force the boat through. It was that or the alternative of being pounded to death on the reef.

And now the opening was quite close. With fascinated eyes and beating heart Tom gazed at it and then stole a backward look at Jack. The figure he saw gave him confidence that, come what might, Jack would not lose his nerve in a situation where the slightest hesitancy *might* mean death for both of them.

Almost at the same instant the reef was on them. Tom almost uttered a cry as he saw the boat headed for what appeared to mean annihilation. But with a quick, skillful twist of his oar, Jack headed her off, and like an arrow she shot for the opening.

As she flew through it, Tom could have reached out and touched the reef with his left hand, by so close a margin of safety did they gain entrance. But the daring trip was made in surety, and the next instant the reefs were thundering behind them and they were skimming over calm water inside the natural breakwater, formed by the outer rim of rocks.

"I never thought you could do it, Jack," exclaimed Tom, fixing admiring eyes on his chum. "It was the cleverest bit of boat handling I've ever seen."

"Oh, it wasn't so very hard," rejoined Jack modestly; "it was getting on a tack that would bring me flying through, that was the hard part."

"I was scared stiff, I can tell you. I thought sure we'd be battered to a pulp on those rocks."

"All the more credit to you for not making a holler. Luckily I had too much to do to think of getting scared. But it's all over now, and I'm not a bit sorry, I can tell you. All the skin is off my hands. But—hullo! there comes the lightkeeper down to meet us."

The same man whom they had seen run out on the beach was now coming down to a sort of rough wharf which stretched out into the lagoon. He was a tall chap, thin and lanky, with an unhealthy-looking complexion. As they drew closer they saw that his face was streaked with shadows and drawn in tense lines. His eyes were sunken and blurred. Apparently he was not far off from a breakdown.

“Oh, but I’m glad you’ve come!” he exclaimed in a voice that was half hysterical. “My partner has been gone for more than two days! I guess that fog delayed him getting back, and the light’s gone bad—she’s gone bad. Last night she wouldn’t shine, and there are big reefs that stretch out for miles that her light warns of.”

The boys tied the boat and climbed up a flight of rough steps to reach the surface of the wharf.

The man greeted them with open hands.

“I should have gone crazy if you had not come!” he exclaimed. “I should have gone crazy!”

“What’s the matter with the light?” asked Jack.

“I don’t know. The boss is the mechanic. He could have fixed it, but he went away on the supply ship. He should have been back last night, but he didn’t come. Oh, I have had a terrible night!”

“Surely something can be done,” said Tom, really distressed by the man’s excitement.

“I don’t know. I can’t tell what is the matter,” was the rejoinder.

“Well, I have some little mechanical skill,” replied Jack “Suppose we go up to your house and have some breakfast, of which you seem to be in need and we certainly are, and then I and my cousin, Tom Jesson here, will go to work on your light.”

CHAPTER XXIX.

A FORTUNATE FIND.

The lighthouse keeper's hut was well furnished and provisioned, and they partook of a good meal. While they ate, enjoying to the full the hot coffee and crisp bacon with which their host served them, they listened to his tale of his life.

He had been an orange grower in Florida, but a frost had wiped out all his plantation in a single night. A ruined man, he was compelled to seek any sort of employment, and through a friend had secured a position as assistant keeper at this lonely lighthouse. The name of the island on which the boys had landed was Nacassa, and it was one of the most easterly of the Bahama group.

The light had been placed on Nacassa by the British government, to whom all the Bahama Islands belong, to warn ships of the dread Nacassa reefs, which, it appeared, were once celebrated for the annual harvest of wrecked ships they gathered in.

By the time the keeper had concluded his story the boys had finished eating, and Jack declared that he was ready to see if he could find out what ailed the light.

They entered the tower by a small door and began climbing winding stairs that coiled round and round inside the narrow limits of the lighthouse. At last they reached the top. The light was run by a clockwork mechanism, which, in its turn, was operated by weights which were drawn to the top of the tower every day. It was their gradual descent during the night that made the clockwork run and the light revolve.

Jack examined the machinery with interest. He wound up the weights and carefully listened to the "click-click" of the mechanism as they descended. He was puzzled to

locate what was wrong for a while, but at last he found it. Like most such troubles it was a very small one, which was just what made it so hard to find.

A screw head had worked loose and allowed a cogwheel to shift. This is what had caused the whole trouble. With a screwdriver and a new screw Jack soon had the mechanism running as well as ever.

“And so that’s all that was the matter with it,” cried the man of the tower. “Why, I could have fixed that myself, and I don’t know a monkey wrench from a handsaw. I guess, though, it’s like Columbus’s egg trick—easy when you know how, and blamed hard when you don’t.”

“Perhaps that’s it,” said Jack, with an enigmatic smile. He knew, but didn’t say so, that only long experience and a deft hand for mechanics had enabled him to locate the trouble at all, it was such a very obscure one.

“At any rate, I’m ever so grateful to you lads,” the man said fervently. “How to thank you, though, I don’t just know.”

“Oh, that’s all right,” said Jack. “The best way you could repay for any help we have been fortunate enough to give you, would be to tell us some way to find our friends.”

The man puckered his brow in thought. The boys had told him their story, and he was really anxious to help them. What with Jack’s mechanical skill and his clever handling of the boat, the assistant keeper’s admiration for the lad was tremendous.

“Tell you what,” began the keeper suddenly, but he broke off abruptly again.

“No, that wouldn’t do, either,” he concluded, shaking his head.

“What wouldn’t do?” asked Jack.

“We’ll try anything, however impossible it seems,” struck in Tom.

“Well, but neither of you kids could work wireless?” demanded the man.

“Wireless! Why, that’s my middle name. Have you got one on the island?”

“Sure. Dick Fennell, that’s my mate, he installed one by way of amusing himself. I don’t know how good he is at it, but he’s got a likely looking set of doo-dads and things.”

The boys could hardly keep from bounding down the spiral stairway three steps at a time.

“Here’s a bit of luck,” exclaimed Jack, “if only that wireless is working we may be able to get into communication with the *White Shark*.”

“Yes, if she’s on the surface,” rejoined Tom, who, as has been seen, was somewhat of a pessimist.

“Oh, she’s sure to be,” rejoined Jack. “I’ll bet they’re cruising about looking for us now. By the way,” he broke off, addressing the lightkeeper, “is there any sort of an ocean current that sets toward this island?”

“Yes, there’s the Great Bahama current that would land you here if you drifted from the northward.”

“Depend upon it then. Tom, it was just as I thought, a current that separated us from our friends,” said Jack as they descended the stairs *en route* for the wireless plant of the senior lightkeeper.

It was odd that they had not observed the weblike aeralis before, for now that Zeb Carter, the assistant, pointed them out, they were plain enough, stretched between the lighthouse itself and a dead palm tree. The room which housed the instruments was more of a rough shed than anything else, and was roofed with

palm leaves.

Carter pulled a rubber cloth, designed to keep the instruments from moisture, off the table that held them. "The boys regarded the set approvingly. It was a powerful one of the latest type. Evidently Fennell had not stinted himself on the price of his hobby.

Power was furnished from a dynamo run by a small gasoline engine. Fennell, so Carter said, had complained of trouble with this engine. Before starting it, therefore, Jack looked it over. He soon located the trouble—in the timer—and adjusted it. Then he started the engine. Soon the dynamo began to buzz loudly.

"Now then, I guess we're all ready," said Jack.

He sat himself down at the sending lever, first setting the switch, and then began sending out the submarine's secret call.

"W-S! W-S! W-S!"

The spark crackled and blazed as it leaped across its terminals, but that was the only sound in the place except the distant roar of the surf. Again and again, for haH an hour or more, Jack continued to call, stopping every now and then to adjust his receiver and listen for a reply.

Once he caught an answer, but it was only a steamer on her way to the West Indies.

Suddenly Jack gave a cry of triumph.

"What a double-dyed idiot I am!" he exclaimed. "I haven't even had the sense to adjust this instrument to the same wave lengths as those of the *White Shark's* set!"

Bending forward, he quickly made the necessary adjustments in the condenser. Then once more he sent the call vibrating into the caverns of space.

CHAPTER XXX.

A FISH STORY.

Then came the same breathless pause for an answer. But this time the suspense was not regardless. To Jack's ears came a tiny ticking in reply.

"Who wants the WHITE SHARK?"

Jack uttered a yell which apprised the others that he had at last caught the connection he was after. The boy's hands flew as he switched to the sending key.

"Jack Chadwick and Tom Jesson. Who is this?"

"Your father," came flashing back through space the next instant. *"Good heavens, boy, we had given you up for lost. Where are you?"*

"Don't just know, right now," flashed back Jack; *"will tell you in a second."*

"Where have you been'!" came crackling back, impatiently. *"We have passed a dreadful night anxiety."*

"It's too long a story now. I will tell it to you when we meet. Is the engine fixed?"

"Yes; it was mended just after that fog shut down. We didn't miss you till then."

Jack turned to the lighthouse keeper. "What latitude and longitude is this island in?" he asked.

"27° 31' N. by 79° 5' W."

The reply was written on a scrap of paper and handed to Jack. He flashed it over the waves of space to the operator so anxiously waiting in the cabin of the submarine.

"Why, you are not more than a hundred miles from us," came the reply; *"we'll come there at top speed."*

"Tell him the harbor is on the southeast side of the island," prompted Tom.

"The harbor is on the southeast side of the island," flashed Jack *"Anchor off there and we will come out to you."*

"Very good, my boy. Thank heaven, we have found you," was Mr. Chadwick's fervent reply. Then came the good-bye and the keys were closed; but the boys had a vivid mental picture of the scene on the *White Shark*. How the engines would be relentlessly driven in an effort to break a record to reach Nacassa Island!

"It ought to take them about four hours to get here," Jack figured.

"I can hardly wait till they arrive," said Tom impatiently. "I wish I had something to occupy my time to keep my mind off the waiting."

"Try fishing," suggested Carter.

Both boys broke into a laugh.

"I guess we've had enough fishing to last us a hundred years," declared Tom.

"I wouldn't go as far as that," rejoined Jack; "but I guess we've had a sufficiency for a while. As the Dutchman said, *'Too much is enough.'*"

"I had a great experience out here with a big fish," said the lightkeeper.

The boys saw at once that a story was coming, and as it would help pass the time they settled back to listen. They were sitting in deck chairs just within the shadow of the little hut.

"What was it?" asked Jack.

"I don't know that it will interest you, but it will pass the time anyhow," said Carter, "so here goes:

"Well, I was fishing off that wharf, the one you just landed at, when I saw the biggest barracuda I had ever seen. He was all of eight feet long—the dictionary tells of 'em being twelve—thick as a telegraph pole and as steely

looking as a big torpedo.

“‘Good land,’ thinks I, ‘if I could only land that fish and have him mounted, he’d sell for a good figure to some of those inter-tourists who come to Florida to go back with big fish stories.’ To tell the story right, they have to take the fish to prove it; and lots of fellows make a tidy living selling big fish to big men who wouldn’t know a barracuda from a porgie if they saw them in an aquarium.

“Well, I starts in on my preparations to land Mr. Barracuda. I saw him cock up a knowing eye at me and then sink down, down, down out of sight. But I knew somehow that he would come back, and I just sat and waited. It was funny to watch all the different kind of fish down in that water. First a flock of parrot fish, pink and white striped like zebras would float by. Then come a striped shark, yellow and black, like a tiger, with maybe a string of young sharks—‘puppies,’ they call ‘em—following her.

“Next thing would be a big old devil fish, snapping his beak, and then a school of small fry, swimming for their lives to get away from some barracuda. But, though while I waited I saw a lot of barracuda, I didn’t see the one I called mine.

“Well, I came there every day for a week, and I tried every kind of bait I could think of, but Old King Cole, as I had come to call the big fish, was always absent on pressing business. It ran *along* like this for maybe a month before I saw him again. I ran hot foot to the shack. Got my rod and two hundred yards of stout line. Then I baited up with live bait and went after Old King Cole.

“Well, sir, he must have been hungry, for he took my bait like a flash, and then the fight began. Gracious, how that fish fought! Just when I thought I had him tired out,

he'd start again. But the funny thing was that the harder I'd tight him the livelier he seemed to get. Finally I yelled to Dick, who was up by the light, to get me a revolver quick.

"What you got there?" he hollers.

"The biggest fish in the world; and if I don't get him he'll get me, by thunder!" I yells back.

"Dick he came on the run with that gun.

"I told him to watch and I'd play the fish near the surface. Well, I gave him tine and then, Ginger! on he came like a locomotive. 'Now!' yells I, and Dick fired. Again I called, and Dick let him have two more. The weight on the line grew dead all of a sudden and the water turned crimson. When it cleared I looked down into it and could hardly believe my eyes. There, in the shallow water, lay dead a fish three times the size of my barracuda! At first I couldn't realize that it was a dead shark lying there, I was so astonished.

"All that trouble over a shark!" grumbles Dick.

"I tell you I hooked a barracuda," I protested.

"Dick gave me a queer look. But we rigged a block and tackle and got the shark out. Well, sir, what do you think we found?"

The boys shook their heads.

"That shark had swallowed my barracuda, and the barracuda had stuck in his throat! We had to cut him open to get my fish out, and then we had a tussle to kill the barracuda. What do you think of that?"

"That you're wasting your time here," grinned Tom.

"How's that?"

"Why, you ought to be writing for one of the outdoor magazines. They'd pay you big prices!"

CHAPTER XXXI.

FACING A SERIOUS SITUATION.

“Cuba!”

The word came from Mr. Chadwick as, two days after the events narrated in our last chapter, the dim outline of a rugged coast came into view from the deck of the *White Shark*. The submarine had arrived on time at Nacassa, and the boys, having witnessed the arrival of the supply steamer with Fennel on board, had rowed out to the diving boat.

But after all their adventures in her, they had hated to part with the little boat in which they had weathered such a terrific sea, and so, in response to their earnest solicitations, the craft was hoisted on board and lashed securely to the deck ring bolts.

“Remember, if it is swept away when we dive. don’t blame me,” said Mr. Dancer, and the boys promised that they wouldn’t. Privately, though, they thought it was secure against anything.

“How long before we come in sight of your mine?” asked Jack.

“Oh, Sonora is quite a way down the coast. don’t expect to sight it before this evening. By the way, I cabled Jameson before we left that if all was well he was to hoist a white light. If not, two red ones.”

“You don’t anticipate any real trouble, do, you?” asked Mr. Dancer, who was taking an airing on deck while Silas did a “trick” at the wheel.

“I don’t know. These rebels are inflamed against Americans. They think that the Cuban government grants them favors. Then, too, some of them have an idea that by destroying American property they can force the intervention of the United States.”

“So that is the case. In that event I suppose things might prove to be serious. Is the Cuban army a strong one?”

“It consists mostly of rurales, a sort of rough-and-ready cavalry. But they have a few troops of infantry.”

By lunch time the bold and rugged outline of Cape Maysoi, the eastern extremity of Cuba, was visible. The coast here rises in barren, rocky terraces, and Jack was able to tell the others that these odd geological formations were caused by the gradual receding of the sea as ages passed by.

All the afternoon. they swept. along the coast, which was exceedingly lonely and barren. Only a few cattle grazers’ huts could be seen as a sign of human habitation, and the rugged, stark mountains that formed the background only enhanced the sterile, wretched look of the grim coast.

One noteworthy sight was theirs ‘when they passed Guantanamo Bay; the rendezvous of Uncle Sam’s fighting ships for battle practice every winter.

“Well, they could shoot at that shore every day and not hurt anything,” commented Jack.

Night had fallen when Mr. Chadwick declared that they were in the vicinity of Sonora. The chart showed plenty of water close into the coast, and they crept in as near as they dared. The mountains here towered precipitously up from the sea. At their feet were many caves formed by the ceaseless wash of the waves in the basal formations.

These caves exist all along that coast of Cuba, and some of them are known to run many miles underground. But nobody has ever fully explored them.

Anxiety and suspense grew keen as they neared Sonora. The cliffs rose blackly and forbiddingly against the star-spattered sky, but as yet there was no sign of a

light ashore. Suddenly, from the base of one of the cliffs, the expected signal came. But it was not the white light that they had hoped for,—the light that would have meant that all was well.

Like two drops of blood on a black velvet curtain, two scarlet lamps flamed out against the dark background of the cliffs.

“Good heavens!” exclaimed Mr. Chadwick, “that means the worst. Jameson is not a man who would get alarmed unnecessarily. Jupe, get a red lamp from below and swing it to and fro twice.”

“Y-y-y-yes, sah,” stuttered Jupe, who had no great stomach for fighting. To him the mysterious proceedings of the night seemed fraught with direness also. “H-h-h-ere you am, sah,” he stammered, coming on deck and handing the lantern to Mr. Chadwick.

“I told you to wave it, Jupe.”

“Y-y-y-yes, sah; but am you shuh dat wha’eber dat contraption am asho’ ain’t a gwine ter shoot jes’ as soon as ah wabe?”

“So you wouldn’t mind me being shot, eh?” said Mr. Chadwick, smiling despite his very real anxiety. “All right, Jupe, give it to me.”

The lantern was waved twice. The signal was answered from shore.

“What now?” whispered Jack.

Somehow the impulse to speak in whispers was almost irresistible. What with the darkness of the night and the mystery of their errand, it seemed that danger was lurking everywhere.

“We’ll wait here,” rejoined Mr. Chadwick; “the mine is at the top of that cliff, a little bit back from the edge. It is an old one worked long ago by the Spaniards, and is as full of galleries and passages as a rabbit warren. If those

rascally rebels once got into it, it would make a fine hiding place for them;”

“Is Mr. Jameson going to row out?” asked Jack, knowing that this was the only way by which the superintendent could reach them.

“Yes; we keep a boat further down the coast. See, he must have got out of the mine in some way and reached the boat and then rowed to this spot. He is a daring fellow.”

“Here he comes now,” whispered Tom, pointing to a red light which began to move over the water toward them.

“Tut! He ought to have put that lantern out,” exclaimed Mr. Chadwick. “Ah! I thought so!”

A red flash from the top of the cliff split the night. A report followed and then the whole top of the cliff blazed fire. The red light vanished, but whether extinguished by a bullet, or by Jameson’s hand, it was impossible to tell.

“Confound it, the rascals keep a good lookout. I hope they haven’t injured Jameson. He ought to have had better sense than to leave that light as a mark for them to aim at.”

A few minutes later, however, anxiety for Jameson was alleviated. A boat drew alongside out of the darkness.

“Are you all right, Jameson?” hailed Mr. Chadwick anxiously.

“Aye. I’ll be bonny, thank ‘ee, Mr. Chadwick,” came a voice with a strong tinge of a burr in it; “yon callants thought they’d finish me the noo, but they dinna ken James Jameson.”

“Well, come on board at once. You must have much to tell me.”

“Oh, aye,” rejoined Jameson, lifting his huge bulk out

of the boat. "I hae that; I hae that."

He clambered on board, securing his boat. His narrative was brief, but succinct. Two days before the rebels had surrounded the mine and were now encamped in great force outside the stockade. Only ten men remained inside the stockade on guard duty.

All the rest had deserted. Provisions were running low, and a spring which supplied water had, in some way, been cut off from the outside.

"I reckon the scallywags count on starving us out," concluded Mr. Jameson.

"But how did you get out to reach the boat? It was kept a mile up the coast."

"Oh, aye. Well, I climbed over the stockade, d'ye ken, and made me way to the bit boat wi'oot trouble."

Thus did Jameson describe what must have been an act fraught with peril, for he had had to pass through the rebel lines. Mr. Chadwick felt this.

"I wish you would tell us all, James Jameson," he said.

"Hoot, toot! I tole ye all. No use wasting words, mon."

"So that is the situation?" mused Mr. Chadwick. "Well, that's about as bad as it can be. When do you think they will make the attack?"

"I dinna ken; but I think to-night. They ken there is gold in the safe, for it would be pay day the noo. But then they ken we hae a machine gun, too, and they're canny afraid of thot, I'm thinkin'."

"I'm glad of that. But where are the regulars?"

"There are some troops above Santiago, Mr. Chadwick, but not enough to fight their way through that boilin' of rebels. The callants all hae Remingtons, too, and some of the regular troops haven't even guns."

"That's bad. Then the men inside are penned in

without much hope of getting out alive unless we bring relief."

"That's the situation in a nutshell."

"But how is it going to be done?" asked Mr. Chadwick with a trace of irritation in his voice at the calmness of the Scot superintendent. "We cannot leave those men in there to perish."

"No, eets no to be thocht of."

"But the troops are not strong enough to cut their way through the rebel ranks?"

"I'm no sayin" they aren't, and I'm no sayin' they are."

"Upon my word, Jameson, can't you suggest something except just to stand there and negative suggestions?"

"I'm thinkin' I've done some work to-night, Mr. Chadwick," was the dignified reply.

"You're right, you have," exclaimed Mr. Chadwick contritely; "forgive me, Jameson, bot I'm overwrought and nervous. But can't we try the troops from the outside?"

"Eet would be of no use whatever, Meester Cbadwick, and that's the Laird's own truth. There's one way to drive those rascally rebels to the woods, though."

"And how is that?"

"To get the government troops on the inside. We could cut the rebels up a bit wi' the machine gun and put the fear of the Laird in their hearts, and then charge 'em from inside the stockade."

"Yes; but how are you going to march your troops through the rebel ranks? You admit yourself that it is impossible."

"It is impossible to get them inside by marching through the rebel ranks; but," he paused impressively as if to give his words weight, "there's another way, d'ye

ken?”

“Another way of getting inside the stockade?”

“Aye, that’s what I’m tellin’ you, mon. Long, long ago, d’ye ken, the Spaniards worked that mine. They worked it pretty thoroughly, too, in their primitive way; that cliff is fair honeycombed wi’ passages an’ such.”

“Yes, yes, go on, Jameson; every minute is precious.”

They all leaned forward eagerly as the rawboned Scot, not in the least perturbed, went leisurely on.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE "WHITE SHARK" TO THE RESCUE.

Not to try our reader's patience as sorely as Jameson tried that of his auditors, we will put his narrative in brief form. In exploring the abandoned passages of the mine workings, he one day came upon a flight of steps cut in the rock. He followed them up and found that they led from the summit of the cliff down into the interior of one of the big basalt caves. The mouth of the cave was large, for he could see the gleam of green water framed by the black rock, but the free space above the entrance was hardly large enough to admit a rowboat at high tide. Being naturally of a curious disposition, he made soundings and found that the water in the cave was very deep, as deep as it was outside, in fact.

"I'm no guessin' what the old Spaniards used the cave for," he concluded; "to drown slaves that had been cantankerous, maybe. I've heard o' such things. But we can use it to a better purpose the night—to, save human lives!"

"I confess I don't quite understand," said Mr. Chadwick.

"Hoot, mon, ye fash me. This bit boat is a divin' boat, is she nae?"

"She surely is," spoke up Jack.

"Wee!, then, you run doon the coast to the barracks above Santiago, pack your soldier laddies in this cabin when yoo get to the cave mouth, and then dive into it."

"Jove, Jameson man, I see your plan!" cried Mr. Chadwick excitedly. "You mean to get the soldiers inside the cave and then rush them into the stockade by means of the secret stairway."

“Preecisely. “

“Then let’s start at once. Dancer, you think the plan is feasible?”

“If there is sufficient water,” was the reply.

“I’ll answer for that,” Jameson promised him. “I made thorough soundings.”

“Let’s start right off, then. Every instant counts. Dancer, will you go below to the wheel?”

“Yes; I’ll take it. It will be a delicate task getting into that cave, but luckily, our searchlight observation tube will help us.”

“How long will it take us to run down the coast to the barracks, Jameson?” asked Mr. Chadwick.

“Not more than an hour. How fast can ye go?”

He was told.

“Then ye’ll do it in less time than that in the bonnie bit divin’ boat.”

The engines were started at once, and at top speed they set off for the barracks where the regular troops were quartered.

“I wish we had a dozen marines off the old *Ohio*,” grumbled old Silas as they sped along, “they’d lick all the rebels that ever breathed.”

“What, all of them, Silas?” asked Tom, winking at Jack.

“Well, they wouldn’t leave more than a corporal’s guard at any rate,” declared Silas confidently.

At last the light that marked the entrance of the harbor where the barracks were located came in sight. Mr. Jameson went below to help pilot the craft in. They came to anchor and summoned the attention of the sentry by three harsh toots of the whistle. A sharp challenge followed, which the superintendent

answered in Spanish.

Jameson's boat had been towed along, and it now came in handy to take Mr. Chadwick and the superintendent ashore. In less than fifteen minutes it was back, loaded down dangerously close to the bulwarks with Cuban soldiers under a very young and voluble officer. They were odd-looking chaps to the boys' eyes, accustomed to associate the name soldier with smart uniforms and well-drilled figures. The Cubans, were slouchy and badly drilled and disciplined, talking back to their officers freely. But they looked wiry and were no doubt well adapted for the type of fighting they were called on to do.

The boat made three trips ashore and back, and at the end of her last trip there was packed on board the submarine a complement of twenty men under three officers.

These were all that could be spared, for the garrison itself was in fear of an attack by the rebels, who had become heated by several recent victories. No time was lost in making a start back. The Cubans paled a little at the idea of making a trip in a submarine, but their officers reassured them that all was well.

Jameson bent over Mr. Dancer as they neared the spot where the entrance to the cave was located. At last they reached it. Word was, given to close the sliding hatch and make everything fast.

Some of the Cubans who understood a little English turned green and shook visibly from fright as they heard these orders given. They knew that they were about to dive under the sea for some purpose, but for what they luckily didn't guess, or they might have been even more frightened. Their officers reassured them with sharp words of command.

“Gee! what a seasick-looking lot of monkeys,” commented Silas Hardtack with disgust as he elbowed his way forward among their packed ranks.

“Every man to his trade, Silas;” admonished Mr. Chadwick, who had overheard.

“Ready for a dive!”

“Aye! aye!” boomed back from the engine room in response to the hail from the steering compartment.

“Stand by, everybody!” roared Silas in a voice that had weathered many a gale. “You monkeys better grab something,” he said to the Cubans, “or you’ll get something you don’t expect.”

The next instant came the motion with which all on board but the Cubans were now thoroughly familiar. Down shot the *White Shark*.

Down! Down! Down!

A wail of terror went up from the Cubans. Shouts to the saints and their friends rent the air.

“We are sinking, Jose!” yelled one.

“Well, you didn’t think you was going up in a balloon, did you?” grated out Silas.

“Muerto! I am killed!” cried another in agonized tones.

The officers stood firm amidst all the yells and lamentations, but their eyes blinked a little and they looked anything but comfortable. Nor can they be altogether blamed. Picture yourself, reader, routed out of a comfortable bed to go on a diving expedition in a boat that you had no means of knowing would ever reappear on the surface.

But at length, the diving motion ceased and the *White Shark* came up on an even keel.

“Clang! Clang!”

“Stop her!” boomed out in the engine room.

“Back her!”

“Come ahead—slow!”

“Stop!”

“Thank gracious that’s over,” breathed Jack as he shut down the motors and wiped his hands on a bit of waste, “I expected every minute to feel us hit the side of the cave as we dived, and then good night!”

“It reminded me of coming through that hole in the reef.”

“Almost as uncomfortable,” agreed Jack, “but hark! There’s Silas opening the hatch. We’re not needed here, let’s go on deck.”

They found the *White Shark* lying in an immense pool of water almost crystal clear. Above them rose the rocky dome of a huge cave. All this was illumined by a powerful light which Silas had been ordered to carry on deck.

The *White Shark* lay against a sort of platform of stone from which the stairs upon which Mr. Jameson had blundered appeared quite plainly leading up to regions above.

“Well, we’ve been in some queer places,” declared Jack, “but this has it a little bit on all of them. Look at those stalactites hanging from the roof. They’re as big as telegraph poles.”

“Young telegraph poles,” reproved Tom, laughing at Jack’s exaggeration.

The soldiers were quickly disembarked and right glad they were to get their feet on dry land again, although some of them looked misgivingly about them at their odd surroundings. They chattered like so many monkeys till ordered to fall in by their officers.

“What’s he telling them to do?” asked Tom of Silas,

who understood some Spanish.

“He’s telling ‘em to fall in. On the old *Ohio*—”

“Fall in? Fall in where?” demanded Tom with a cherubic look of innocence.

“Into the pool,” supplemented Jack with a wink at Tom. But Silas had stalked off full of offended dignity.

As he went he muttered something about what was done to “fresh kids” on the old *Ohio*.

Under Mr. Jameson’s guidance the troops marched off up the old stairway which, as Jameson had hinted, the Spaniards had used for dark purposes. The rest followed behind. The two boys, half wild with excitement, brought up the rear, having been admonished by Mr. Chadwick to keep out of danger. As for Jupe, he lay under his bunk. The red lights, the soldiers and the mysterious cave had been too much for him.

As they emerged into the stockade, the haggard-faced defenders of the place looked at them as if they had been angels from heaven. One of the men stated that through a peephole in the stockade he had seen the rebels outside massing as if to make a charge.

“Then we are just in time, laddie,” said Mr. Jameson. “Some of you mount the machine gun and open fire, then the troops will follow up. Give a few cheers, just to show them outside that you’ve got plenty of heart left in you.”

The machine gun stood on a platform just inside the stockade. Only its muzzle projected, but as quite a big hole had been cut so as to give it plenty of “range,” the operator was protected by a steel “barbette.” As the cheer died down the gun began to bark. It roared and spat like a packet of fire crackers. Howls and yells told of the dismay of the rebels.

“Now!” roared Jameson, who had been looking through the peephole.

The gates were flung open and out dashed the troops, while white fire was burned to illumine the scene. But the sight of the troops was enough. Unable to understand how the regulars had got within the stockade, the superstitious rebels saw something supernatural in it. They broke and fled in all directions, while the regulars, with a great hullabaloo and show of ferocity, chased them.

And after all, nobody was killed. The machine had wounded a few of the rebels, but these had been carried off by their friends. In fact, the rebels had taken good care to keep out of the machine gun’s way. That was not their style of fighting.

It was the next day after the *White Shark* had been backed out of the cave successfully that the cruiser *Dixie* appeared, having steamed full speed from Santiago, where her officers had learned of the attack on the mine. Twenty marines were landed further down the coast and placed in defense of the workings till the revolution was over, which event was not far off.

With her mission accomplished and her every faculty tested, the *White Shark* shortly thereafter left Cuba for the United States. On board she carried a happy, contented crew who had gone through much excitement and some hardship.

But not one was the worse for it. All enjoyed radiant health and spirits.

When Mr. Dancer returned home, it was to find that glorious news awaited him. It concerned the *White Shark* and her type of submarine, and from that day on the name of Daniel Dancer became one of the most famous in the history of his particular line of

work. Moreover, he—but that is another story.

You may rest assured that our friends did not lose sight of each other at the conclusion of a voyage which as even Jupe declared had been “conlubrious fo’ all consarned in the contraption”; meaning probably “salubrious for all concerned in the transactions.”

And now the time has come to say good-bye once more to our Boy Inventors. But of their further activities and adventures you may read in a forthcoming volume which will deal with other experiments and inventions. For, not content with what they had already achieved, the cousins determined to convert their already famous automobile into a machine of triple power and purpose. Their success, and the utterly unexpected experiences incident to it, is recorded in “The Boy Inventors’ Flying Ship.”

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