

FICTION

Frank Gee Patchin

The Battleship Boys in Foreign Service

A PUBLIC DOMAIN BOOK

A PUBLIC DOMAIN BOOK



eBookTakeAway

FICTION

**The Battleship Boys
in Foreign Service**

OR

**Earning New Ratings in European
Seas**

By

FRANK GEE PATCHIN

Illustrated

THE SAALFIELD PUBLISHING COMPANY
Akron, Ohio New York

Made in U. S. A.

The Battleship Boys in Foreign Service

OR

Earning New Ratings in European Seas

By **FRANK GEE PATCHIN**

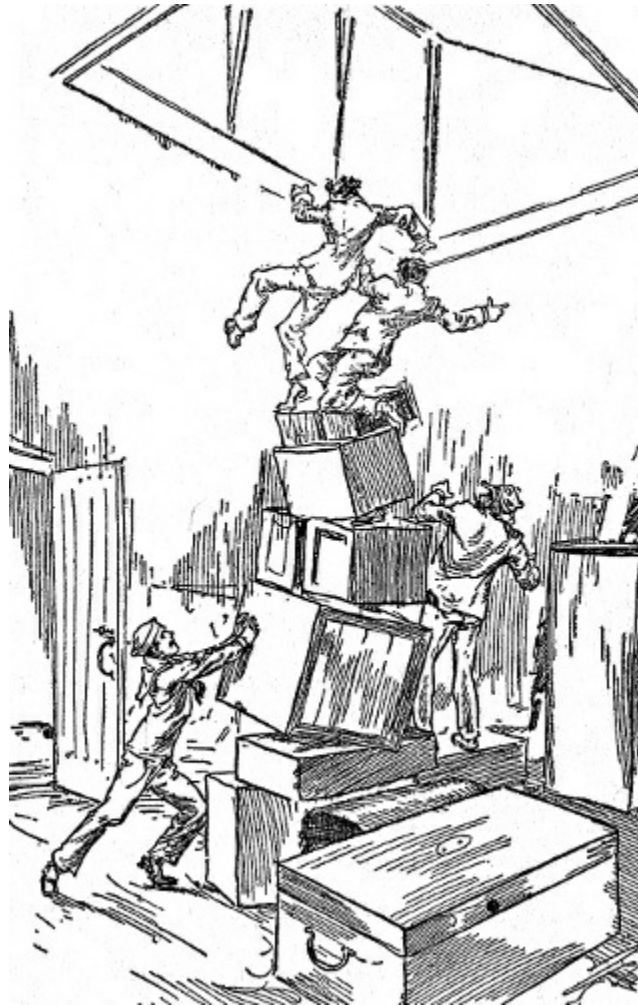
Illustrated

THE SAALFIELD PUBLISHING COMPANY
Akron, Ohio New York
Made in U. S. A.

Copyright MCMXI

By **THE SAALFIELD PUBLISHING COMPANY**

PRINTED IN U. S. A.



"Hip, Hip, Hooray!" Yelled Dan.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. BATTLESHIP BOYS TO THE RESCUE	7
II. A SERIOUS CHARGE	20
III. AMBASSADORS ON THEIR TRAIL	32
IV. ICE CREAM COMES HIGH	42
V. A PLUNGE INTO SOCIETY	52
VI. STRANDED IN A STRANGE CITY	59
VII. UNDER THE FLAG ONCE MORE	66
VIII. HIS FIRST COMMAND	74
IX. ROUNDING UP THE STRAGGLERS	83
X. OUTWITTED BY A BOY	95
XI. BETWEEN SKY AND SEA	106
XII. IN THE COILS OF A "TWISTER"	118
XIII. TWO ARE MISSING	127
XIV. DOWN THE AMMUNITION HOIST	136
XV. LAND HO!	146

XVII. ON GIBRALTAR'S PEAK	154
XVII. ON THE BLUE MEDITERRANEAN	167
XVIII. JOLLY TARS IN EGYPT	178
XIX. ON THE SHIPS OF THE DESERT	193
XX. CALLING ON THE MUMMIES	201
XXI. CONCLUSION	209

The Battleship Boys in Foreign Service

CHAPTER I

BATTLESHIP BOYS TO THE RESCUE

"This is the famous Bois de Boulogne Sam."

"The what?"

"Bois de Boulogne, one of the most popular drives in Paris."

"Huh!" grunted Sam Hickey. "That sounds to me like some kind of sausage. What do they ever name their streets that way for in Paris?"

"All the names in this great, gay city mean something," answered Dan Davis. "This park here bears the same name. It was infested by desperate robbers as far back as the fourteenth century."

"Robbers!" exclaimed the red-haired boy.

"Yes."

"Are they here yet?"

"No; Napoleon cleaned them out. We shall soon be out by the Arch. The Frenchmen call it Arc de Triomphe."

"They do?"

"Yes."

"Just like that?"

"Of course."

"I'll bet there isn't a Frenchman in France who would know what you were talking about if they heard you call it by that name. I don't know anything about French, but if that is French give me plain United States. You are sure there are no robbers left in the Bologna sausage?"

"Bois de Boulogne, Sam," corrected Dan. "No; there are no robbers here. You need not be afraid."

"Afraid! What do you take me for, Dan Davis. I---"

"Hark!"

"Nothing of the sort. I'm no coward. I, a sailor in Uncle Sam's Navy, and afraid of robbers? Pooh!"

"Listen! Did you hear that, Sam?"

"Hear what? No; I didn't hear anything. But--wow! What's that?"

Hickey gave a sudden startled jump.

"It's a woman's scream," breathed Dan, listening intently. "Did you hear it?"

"I--I should say I did. Yes, and there it goes again. She's some sort of foreigner. I wonder what is going on?"

The scream was repeated. Though the lads were unable to understand what the voice was saying, it was evident that the woman, whoever or whatever she might be, was in dire distress.

"Where is it--where is it?" demanded Sam, now very much excited.

"The sound came from off yonder, where the trees are thickest."

"I see nothing."

"I do," answered Dan. "See, yonder is a carriage. Come on! There's a woman in trouble. What is it?" shouted the boy, raising his voice.

"Help! Help!" came the answer in plain English.

"It's one of our own countrywomen--our own United States. We're coming, madam!"

Dan was off with a bound, followed a few paces behind by his red-haired friend, Sam Hickey.

As they ran they made out a coupe that had been drawn up beside the road. One man was holding the horses by the heads, while a group of others were standing by the door of the carriage.

"What's going on there?" demanded Dan.

"I--I guess Napoleon didn't chase all the robbers out," stammered Hickey in a doubtful tone.

"They are robbers and they're robbing two lone women," exclaimed Dan.

"I guess we're Johnnie-on-the-spot, then," answered Sam. "Me for the party holding the horses. He looks kind of weak like."

Two women, attired in evening gowns, were standing beside their carriage, which, at a glance, was seen to be an elegant private equipage. The men surrounding the women wore small, black caps with the visors pulled down over their eyes, and long, flowing handkerchiefs about their necks.

As the lads drew near they saw two of the men strip the handkerchiefs from their necks, quickly twisting the cloths about the necks of the women. The cries of the latter were stilled almost instantly.

"Break away, you villains!" roared Dan Davis.

"Yes; chase yourselves or you'll get your faces slapped," added Sam. "Vamoose! Allez vous--scat!"

"We're coming, ladies! Charge them, Sam! They're thugs! Look out for yourself!"

"I've got one of them!" yelled Sam Hickey triumphantly.

In passing the horses he had sheered close to the fellow who was holding them, hitting the man a blow on the jaw that tumbled him over in a heap. The man did not rise, but Sam was too excited to notice the fact.

"Whoop!" he howled, making a rush and coming up by his companion. "We're the wild men from the land of the cowboy!"

The boys swept down on the robbers, the formers' fists working like the piston rods of a locomotive.

The ruffians turned on them instantly.

"Quick! Into your carriage!" called Dan. He had neither the time nor opportunity to assist the ladies in doing so. Both boys were now altogether too busy to give further heed to the frightened women.

Smashing right and left, they fell upon the robbers.

Bang!

A bullet whistled close to the head of Sam Hickey. The latter made a dive for the man who had fired the shot, and ere the fellow could pull the trigger for another shot, Hickey's fist had struck him on the jaw, laying the fellow flat on his back.

"Whoop!" howled the boy. "That's the way we do the thing in the good old United States."

Dan was having a lively battle with two men, each of whom held a knife in his hand and was making quick thrusts at the lad, who was quickly diving in and out.

All at once Dan's foot came up. It caught one of the men on the wrist of his knife hand. The fellow uttered a yell and his knife went soaring up into the air. Dan tried to serve the other assailant in the same way, but instead of reaching the man's wrist, the kick caught the fellow in the stomach. This answered quite as well. With a groan the robber fell down heavily.

"Lay in! We've got them!" yelled Davis.

"I am laying in," answered Sam. "Lay--lay in yourself. Whoop! That was a beauty. I spun him like a top. He's spinning yet! Watch him, Dan!"

Dan knew better than to turn his head. Three desperate men were now seeking to surround and put an end to his fighting abilities. Dan found them more difficult to handle than he had those others who had gone down under his sturdy blows.

In the meantime the women had sprung into their carriage, and the driver, whipping up his horses, had started away.

Attracted by the uproar, a squad of gendarmes were bearing down on the scene on the run.

"Robbers!" yelled the driver in French as he swept past the officers of the law.

"Where?"

The driver pointed with his whip toward the trees under which the battle was being waged.

"The police!" yelled one of the robbers, catching a glimpse of the gendarmes, as the latter ran into the light of a street lamp.

Instantly every man of the robbers plunged into the bushes and disappeared, those who had been knocked down by the two brave lads having gotten to their feet just in time to get away.

"Follow them!" cried Dan. "We'll capture a couple of them, anyway."

Sam caught a foot on the curbing and fell headlong. His companion hesitated for one brief instant. Both lads thought they had put the robbers to flight. They did not know that the desperate men had seen the police coming, for the cry of "police" had been uttered in French.

"Look out! Here they are again!" warned Dan. "Sail in, Sam! They've surrounded us."

Sam was up like a flash. They were now well off the road. The spot was dark and the boys did not know that it was the police who had come upon and surprised them.

Dan Davis laid low the first gendarme just as the man placed a hand on his shoulder. Sam gave the next officer a good stiff punch that must have made the man's head swim, for it sent him staggering away.

Hickey uttered a yell of triumph. His fighting blood was up. He went at them with a rush, punching with both hands, nearly every blow taking effect.

All at once Dan Davis made a discovery.

He caught the glint of a brass button.

"Cease firing!" he roared.

"Not on your life! Not till I've licked this heathen----"

"Sam! Sam! Stop! It's the police we are fighting! Stop, I tell you!"

Hickey's ready fists dropped to his sides. He stepped back, half inclined to run.

"Well, well! What do you think of that?" he growled.

Dan, too, had stopped fighting the instant he made the discovery that it was the police whom they had assaulted. He sprang back, gazing almost in awe at the rest of the squad of gendarmes who were bearing down upon them.

"This is the time we have put our foot in it. Gentlemen, I beg----"

He did not finish the sentence.

A blow from one of the gendarmes laid him flat on the ground. At the same instant three men jumped on Sam Hickey. They took him so utterly unawares that he had not made the slightest resistance.

"Get away, you fools! Don't you know----"

Hickey's breath was fairly knocked out of him. He was at the bottom of the pile, unconscious almost the next second.

The Battleship Boys had gone down fighting valiantly, the lads whom the readers of this series now know so well. They were the same boys who, in "THE BATTLESHIP BOYS AT SEA," enlisted in the United States Navy, serving their apprenticeship at the Training Station in Newport. It was there that they proved by their faithful attention to duty, their courage and fitness to serve the Flag of their country. Then, on board the battleship "Long Island," it will be recalled how Dan Davis whipped the bully of the ship in a fair stand-up battle; how Hickey was punished for an offence for which he was not wholly to blame, being confined to the brig on rations of bread and water; and how finally both lads proved themselves by their heroic rescue of a drowning diver. The latter was the man who had been responsible for all their trouble on shipboard. For their bravery in facing almost certain death the boys were rewarded by a grateful

government in the bestowal of that much-coveted decoration, the medal of honor.

Again, in "THE BATTLESHIP BOYS' FIRST STEP UPWARD," the reader will remember Sam Hickey's having sighted a "shooting star," while on lookout duty, and that the shooting star was a rocket signal of distress from a sinking schooner. It will be recalled how Dan Davis was left alone on the doomed ship; how the battleship turned its big guns on the schooner, shooting the decks from beneath his feet, and how, in the end, the plucky lad saved the schooner and its cargo. Dan's heroic effort in saving a boat load of men from almost certain destruction by a rushing torpedo, and his winning of a promotion to the grade of petty officer will also still be fresh in the reader's mind.

And now the boys were on their first foreign cruise. The battleship "Long Island" had come to anchor off Boulogne, France. The Battleship Boys had asked for a shore leave of one week, which was readily granted to them. In that time they had planned to visit Paris and London, which they would have ample time to do, and rejoin their ship before their leave of absence expired.

They had arrived in Paris that morning, after an all-night ride on one of the fastest express trains in France, but which Sam Hickey had referred to under the undignified title of "milk train."

After considerable difficulty they had secured lodgings at a pension, as the boarding houses in France are called, and had at once started out to see the city. This they did with the aid of a map. They were self-reliant boys, and the thought of getting lost did not trouble them at all.

During the afternoon they had wandered off along the fashionable avenue, the Bois de Boulogne, and into the beautiful park of the same name, where they lingered until nearly night. Hunger alone brought them to a realization that it was time they sought their lodgings. So anxious were they to see Paris, that they had forgotten all about breakfast, and, when noon arrived, they saw no place where they could procure food.

They were on their way back when they met with the adventure that now promised to involve them in serious difficulty. They had assaulted a body of men who were police officers of the republic of France.

The gendarmes had not seen the robbers. They had seen only Dan Davis and Sam Hickey, who now presented a most disreputable appearance. The boys had lost their caps bearing the name of their ship, their blouses were torn and covered with dirt, while Dan's shirt was ripped in several places where the knives of the desperate men had made great rents in it, his trousers were torn, and his face bruised where he had been struck by one of the robbers. Hickey was in a similar condition.

The gendarmes were chattering loudly, accompanying their words with wild gestures.

Making sure that their prisoners were wholly overpowered, they quickly secured them, one of the number in the meantime having sent in a call for a patrol wagon. Soon the auto wagon came puffing up and backed down to the curb.

Quite a crowd had gathered, attracted to the scene by the uproar.

"What is it?" questioned one after another.

"Apaches!" answered the officer in charge.

A growl of rage ran over the gathering. There is no criminal in Paris so dreaded or so hated as the one who belongs to the so-called "Apaches." These men have but two aims in life--to rob and kill. It is nothing to them who the victim may be, or how innocent. They are infinitely worse than the worst red Indian of the past.

The Apaches are found everywhere in Paris, and woe to the stranger in the gay city who happens to stroll out alone at night, for the Apache will track him to the death if he chances to strike the stranger's trail.

It was this desperate band of criminals to which Dan Davis and Sam Hickey were supposed by the police to belong. On the contrary, the Battleship Boys had met and practically whipped a band of Apaches single handed and without weapons. It was an achievement to be proud of, had they known it, but at that moment neither lad was in a condition to realize anything.

Searching the clothes of their prisoners for weapons, and finding none, the gendarmes picked Dan up by the head and heels, hurling him into the patrol. Next came Hickey. He was thrown in on top of his companion.

Half a dozen officers piled into the wagon and sat down on their prisoners. At that moment the patrol started away with the two boys, moving over the smooth pavements of the French capital almost without a jar.

CHAPTER II

A SERIOUS CHARGE

By the time the patrol reached headquarters the Battleship Boys had recovered consciousness. They were half-smothered, lying on their faces as they were.

Sam began to fight and kick.

"Get off my neck!" he howled, in a muffled voice. "Get off, or I'll pass you a punch when I get out of this!"

"Keep quiet, Sam," advised Dan. "They will use you roughly if you don't."

"Keep quiet, nothing! I'll show them they can't use an officer in Uncle Sam's Navy this way."

His further remarks were lost, for the man who was sitting on Hickey's neck moved over, throwing his weight on the lad's head.

Soon after that the wagon drove up before the dingy headquarters. The prisoners were jerked from the wagon rather than lifted out, and were dragged into the building, up a pair of stone steps and along a dimly lighted corridor.

Arriving in front of a grated door, the policemen in charge of the boys waited until an attendant had unlocked and opened it, whereupon they threw the Battleship Boys inside.

The door shut with a loud clang, and the gendarmes marched away, down the corridor without a word to their prisoners.

For a moment the boys lay where they had been thrown. Then Dan sprang to his feet, and, going to the door, peered out into the corridor. All he could see was a brick wall in front of him.

Sam sat up, rubbing his red head reflectively.

"I wonder where we are?" muttered Dan.

"Where we are?" repeated Sam.

"Yes."

"Don't you know?"

"I do not."

"I know."

"Where are we?"

"We're in the brig again."

"In the brig? Why, we are in Paris. Have you forgotten? I guess your shaking up must have resulted in a loss of memory."

"I have forgotten nothing. I'll never forget the wallop I got. Say, Dan, do you know what they hit me with?"

"No, that is what I have been trying to decide in my own case."

For a few minutes there was silence.

"This is a nice mess--a fine mix-up!"

"Yes," agreed Dan Davis. "I fear we have gotten ourselves into a lot of trouble. We have assaulted the Paris police. I wonder what the captain of the 'Long Island' will say when he hears of it?"

"If it's left for us to tell him it will be a long, long time before he hears anything about it."

"Don't be foolish. We will tell the police the truth and they will have to let us go; but the question is, when are we going to be allowed to tell the truth? It doesn't look as if we were even going to be questioned to-night."

For full two hours the boys sat on the hard stone floor, discussing their predicament, trying to plan some way of

extricating themselves from their present unfortunate position. No conclusion was reached. All they could now do was to wait and trust to luck.

"Well, I'm going to bed," announced Sam Hickey.

"Where?"

"Right here on the floor. It isn't much of a hammock, but I'm going to pipe myself down just the same. I wish I were back on the battleship. Don't you, Dan?"

"Yes, I do. Good night, Sam."

"Good night."

Sam rolled over on his back, using his arms for a pillow, and was soon snoring loudly. This made Dan feel sleepy, and he, too, shortly toppled over sound asleep.

How long they had lain thus they did not know. Sam suddenly awakened. Some one had hold of one of his feet and was dragging him across the cell.

"Leggo my foot!" yelled the red-headed boy, struggling to get up.

Dan, hearing the commotion, bounded to his feet. He was quickly seized and jerked out into the corridor, where he was soon joined by Sam. Then they discovered that they were in the hands of officers, though not the same ones who had arrested them.

Neither of the officers said a word, but, taking firm hold of the arms of their prisoners, marched them rapidly down the corridor.

"I guess they must be going to hang us," said Hickey.

"They don't hang people over here," answered Dan.

"They don't?"

"No."

"What do they do with them?"

"Guillotine them."

"What's that?"

"In other words, they cut your head off here in France," answered Dan, with a short laugh.

"Wow!" exclaimed Sam with such vehemence that the officers in charge of him gave him a violent shake, uttering some rapid commands in his own language.

"I guess we'd better not stir up the animals any more," said Sam, with a wink at his companion.

"No. And be careful what you say. Do not volunteer any information. It will perhaps be better for me to answer the questions, unless they question you directly."

The officers conducted the lads into a sort of reception room, where they stood holding tightly to their prisoners until a door was opened at the far end of the room and another man in uniform beckoned them to enter. The officers did so, thrusting their prisoners into the room ahead of them.

Unlike the outer room, this one was brilliantly lighted; so much so that the boys blinked vigorously for a few seconds. Then, becoming used to the light, they began to take stock of their surroundings.

The first thing that caught their attention was a keen-faced man sitting behind a flat desk, industriously twirling his moustache as he surveyed them keenly from beneath half-closed eyelids.

The boys gazed at him intently. There was no quailing on their part, though had they realized what a questionable looking pair they were, they might have lost some of their assurance.

The officer behind the desk addressed them in French.

"We do not speak your language, sir," spoke up Dan.

"Ah, so I perceive," answered the man in very good English. "You are English?"

"Not much. We're Yankees," Sam blurted out with considerable emphasis. "And you'd better not monkey with us unless you want the United States Government to get you by the collar and jerk you seven different ways at the same time."

"Be silent!" thundered the officer.

"I'm mum," answered Sam, with a sheepish grin.

"What is your name?"

"Sam Hickey, sir."

"And yours?" glancing at Dan.

"Daniel Davis."

"Residence of both?"

"United States of America," answered the boys with one voice.

A clerk was noting down their replies.

"May I ask, sir, why we are thus detained? We have done no wrong."

"Stop! I will ask all the questions here. What is your business, if you have any?"

"We are sailors on the U. S. S. 'Long Island.'"

"Sailors, eh?"

"Yes, sir."

"If this be true, where are your uniforms?"

"We are wearing what is left of them, sir."

The officer glanced at the trousers of the lads and observed that they were such as were worn by sailors.

"A very excellent disguise."

"Disguise!" exclaimed Sam with explosive force. "What are you talking about?"

"Be quiet," warned Dan. "You are only making it the harder for us. He doesn't believe our story, as it is."

"I don't care whether he does or not. I'm getting warm where my collar was until it was torn off. Disguise! The idea!"

"What are you doing in Paris?"

"Getting into trouble, principally," muttered Sam under his breath.

"We came here to see the city, sir," answered Dan.

"When?"

"This morning, or yesterday morning. I do not know whether it is morning or evening now," he answered.

"You say you are from a United States ship?"

"Yes, sir."

"What is the captain's name?"

"Captain Farnham, sir."

"Where is your ship?"

Dan told him.

"When did the ship arrive?"

"Yesterday morning."

The officer went over some papers on his desk, finally selecting one which he consulted, then replaced it on his desk with a nod.

"Where is the rest of your gang?"

"What do you mean, sir?"

"The other men who ran away."

"I am sure I do not know. We were trying to catch up with them when we were caught."

"Ah! You admit!"

The officer spoke rapidly in French to the clerk, who scribbled industriously.

"Well, sir, what have you to say for yourself?" demanded the officer abruptly, turning toward Sam.

"I've got a lot that I should like to say, if you will give me half a chance," said Sam promptly.

"I'll hear your story. Bear in mind that whatever you say will be used against you. It is being taken down by the secretary. Speak! I shall listen."

"It was this way," began Hickey.

"Be brief!" commanded the officer sternly.

"We were walking along Sausage Avenue, peaceable like----"

"What's that?"

"He means the Bois de Boulogne," explained Dan, with the trace of a smile on his face. "Never mind, Sam; I will tell the officer, if he will permit."

"Silence!"

He motioned for Hickey to continue.

"As I was saying, we were walking along Bologna Avenue----"

"Bois de Boulogne," again corrected Dan.

"Yes; something of that sort. We were talking, when, all at once, my friend here heard a woman scream. Then two women screamed. We didn't know what they were screaming about, because they were screaming in some language we didn't understand. Maybe they were talking in French. I guess they were. Well, we didn't know what kind of trouble it was, but we knew it was a woman in trouble, and that was enough."

"Proceed!"

"We sailed in. There were a lot of fellows attempting to rob a couple of ladies beside a cab. We thought so, anyway, and we mixed it up right away. I gave the fellow who was holding the horses a short arm punch over the eye with my left, and hooked his jaw with my right. You ought to have seen him curl up and go to sleep," added Hickey, with a laugh.

"Never mind that; tell me what happened."

"That's what I'm trying to do, if you will let me alone. While I was doing that, my friend Dan had fired himself right into the bunch. He put several of them out and by the time I mixed in everybody was fighting. Some of the fellows tried to stick us with knives, and one miserable coward fired a shot at me. I guess he came pretty near winging me. His bullet nearly clipped a lock of hair from my head. Well, anyway, we had them pretty well thrashed when, all of a sudden, one of the robbers let out a yell and in a minute they had hit the trail for the bushes, with Dan and myself after them. If I hadn't fallen over a curbstone maybe we would have caught them. About that time the police jumped on us, and I don't remember very much after that, until we were taking a ride in the automobile."

"Your story is well told, but it is not in accordance with the facts."

"You mean that I lie?" demanded Sam belligerently.

"Why did you assault the gendarmes?" demanded the official, ignoring Sam's question.

"We did not know they were the police, sir," spoke up Dan Davis. "We could not see plainly in the darkness under the trees. We thought the robbers had returned. We defended ourselves as best we could, sir. I am sorry we struck any of your men; it was a mistake."

The official, with chin in hand, regarded the boys thoughtfully for a minute or so.

"Your story is not satisfactory."

"I am sorry, sir," answered Dan.

"We might give you another one. Perhaps that would please you more," growled Sam, whose temper was rising.

"Oh, Sam!" exclaimed Dan.

The eyes of the official narrowed.

"I have no doubt of your ability to do so," he said sarcastically.

The officer pressed a button, whereupon four police officers entered the room. Addressing them in French, he said:

"Remove the prisoners to the Conciergerie," this being the detention prison where those awaiting trial were confined. "I am satisfied that they are desperate characters."

"What are you going to do with us?" demanded Sam Hickey sullenly.

"Put you both in prison."

"Sir," spoke up Dan, "may I not ask why you are doing this--what charge is made against us?"

"Yes, seeing you are so innocent, I will tell you. You were caught red handed. You are accused of attempting to rob two women--you are accused of assaulting police officers of the republic of France, and, further, you are believed to belong to the desperate band of Apaches with which our city is infested."

Dan uttered an exclamation of surprise.

"Well, I must say you're the worst lot of thick-heads I ever saw in my life," remarked Sam in deep disgust.

The official waved them away, whereat the officers led the boys from the room.

"I wish we could get word to the battleship," said Dan in a low tone. "I wish I had thought to ask him to permit us to do so."

"It wouldn't do any good. They're determined to make a mark of us. But wait till the Old Man hears of this. Won't he raise a row? Won't he make these chattering Frenchmen stand around lively? Well, I guess he will!"

"Perhaps Captain Farnham may not know anything about it, and when we do not return on time we will be black-listed as deserters. That will be awful."



CHAPTER III

AMBASSADORS ON THEIR TRAIL

The entire matter was laid before the Prefect of Police shortly after the Battleship Boys had been removed to another cell in the Conciergerie. He listened gravely to all the facts, nodding his approval of the work of his assistants.

At the direction of the police head a message flashed over the wire half an hour later, as follows:

"Farnham,
"Commanding U. S. S. 'Long Island':

"Two men giving the names of Davis and Hickey, accused of having held up and robbed two women in this city to-night, claim to be sailors on your ship. Do you know them? Not only this, but they assaulted the officers who sought to arrest them. The prisoners are believed to be Apaches. The courtesy of a reply is solicited.

"Lepine,
"Prefect of Police."

Day had barely dawned, when another message was flashed over the wires. This one, however, came from Boulogne and was addressed to the American Consul to France, instead of to the prefect of police. It read as follows:

"Hamlin, Consul,
"Paris:

"Those crazy French police say they have two men, Davis and Hickey from my ship, locked up accused of highway robbery. Preposterous! They are two of my best men. Get the men out at once, please. No finer types than these two to be found in the enlisted force. Kindly acknowledge at once.

"Farnham,
"Commanding U. S. S. 'Long Island.'"

Consul Hamlin was a man of action as well as a diplomat. Urgent though the captain's message was, however, international diplomacy would not permit the consul to go direct to the office of the Prefect of Police. There were certain set forms that must first be observed. But the consul lost no time. The wheels of the great government machine were set in motion on the instant. The first move was to communicate with the French foreign office.

"The American consul desires an immediate audience with the premier, if possible," was the message that the former's secretary telephoned to the foreign office.

This request being granted, Consul Hamlin entered his carriage and was driven to the foreign office, where an audience with the premier was accorded him at once. This meeting, though cordial, was extremely formal.

"Your excellency," began the consul, "two of my countrymen are, I am informed, held by the police department, charged with having held up and robbed two women last evening. Has the matter been brought to your attention, may I ask?"

"It has not."

"Then I will give you such information as I possess in regard to the matter," said Mr. Hamlin.

The consul stated his case, adding that if the men under arrest were the men he believed them to be, a very serious mistake had been made.

The premier promptly put himself in communication with the Ministry of Justice, and the latter in turn with the Prefect of Police. All the facts in the possession of the police on this particular case were returned through the same channel.

"I have the honor to inform you," said the premier, "that I have ordered the release of the men Davis and Hickey. They will be turned over to you, as you request, by the prefect in person."

"I thank you--my profoundest thanks----"

"No; it is for me to offer you an apology," interrupted the premier quickly. Then, with many expressions of good will on both sides, the consul took his leave. Half an hour later Mr. Hamlin was received by the Prefect of Police with great ceremony.

"You are here," began the police official, "in behalf of the two young men whom we have in our charge----"

"Accused of the attempted robbery of two women last evening. I am, monsieur."

"And I am most happy to say that later investigations have made it easy for me to grant your request that they be liberated. I am now well satisfied that they are not guilty of the attempted robbery."

"Naturally not."

"But of the assault on my officers there can be no doubt. They----"

"That was surely a mistake on their part, Monsieur le Prefect."

"Yes, yes; no doubt----"

"I am too glad to hear you say that, Monsieur le Prefect. These young men, I am informed by the commanding officer of their ship, are above reproach. A grave mistake has been made."

The prefect bowed humbly.

"A thousand pardons."

"Will you be good enough to summon the young men here?"

"Certainly."

A few moments later the Battleship Boys were standing in the presence of Mr. Hamlin and the Prefect of Police.

"Well, lads, your appearance is certainly against you. Indeed, you look as if you might be all they have accused you of being," exclaimed Mr. Hamlin with a laugh.

The faces of the Battleship Boys brightened. It was one of their own countrymen who was speaking.

"What is your name?" he asked, addressing Dan.

"I am Daniel Davis, sir. This is Samuel Hickey. I am a gunner's mate on board the 'Long Island,' he being a coxswain on the same ship."

Mr. Hamlin nodded affirmatively.

"How did you happen to get into the difficulty?"

Dan related in a straightforward way all that had occurred on the previous night, not omitting their brief battle with the police, whom he said they had taken for the robbers attacking them again.

Mr. Hamlin and the prefect listened attentively until the narrative came to a close.

"The way of the peacemaker is hard indeed," smiled Mr. Hamlin.

"But you see, sir, we were not exactly peacemakers," announced Davis.

"I am forced to agree to that. Monsieur le Prefect, I presume there is no objection to these young men accompanying me from this place at once, is there?"

"They may accompany you, certainly. That is in accordance with the request of the premier."

"I thank you, Monsieur le Prefect. I hold myself wholly responsible for these young men."

"Monsieurs, a thousand pardons," said the prefect, turning to the Battleship Boys with a profound bow. "You are at liberty to go where and when you please."

"Come, lads; I take it you have no desire to remain here longer?"

"I should say not," spoke up the red-headed Sam.

Dan saluted the prefect, but Sam hardly more than glared at the police head as the boys left the office in company with the ambassador.

"Well, lads, what do you propose to do now?" questioned Mr. Hamlin, when they had reached the street.

"I think we shall finish our sight-seeing, sir," replied Dan.

"Very good, but you need clothes, both of you. Have you a change of clothing with you?"

"We have only these uniforms, sir."

"Come with me, and I will see that you are fitted out."

"Thank you very much, sir. We have money; but, if you will be good enough to show us where we can purchase clothes, we shall be under a further great obligation to you," answered Dan.

Mr. Hamlin accompanied them to a store, where the boys were soon supplied with shore clothes, hats and all. They presented a far different appearance now. It was the first time they had worn citizens' clothes since they had entered the Navy, but they did not enjoy the change as much as they had expected. They would have preferred to be in their uniforms.

"Now, my lads, keep out of trouble. I do not believe you need advice from me. You seem well able to take care of yourselves. Yet, should you have further difficulty, or if you wish to see me, come or send word to me at once. Here is my card."

"We thank you very much, sir. Will--will you tell Captain Farnham that we are all right?"

"Certainly. I shall wire him at once. By the way, where are you boys living?"

"We have a room at 33 Place de la Concorde, sir. We have not slept there," added Dan, with slightly heightened color; "but we hope to do so to-night."

Bidding Mr. Hamlin good-bye, the Battleship Boys started away for their lodgings. At about that time another gentleman called at the office of the prefect. The card that he sent in read, "Guillermo Martinez, Ambassador."

He was the Spanish ambassador to France.

Senor Martinez's greeting was most cordial, but the ambassador lost no time in stating the object of his visit.

"You have two young men here, I believe, Monsieur--young men who are said to have robbed or attempted to rob two women in the Bois de Boulogne last evening?"

"Two young men were arrested," he replied.

"They were sailors?"

"I believe they are."

"English sailors?"

"No; American."

"Ah! It is well. I have come here, with the permission of the premier, to request that those young men be liberated at once."

"I have but now received a message from the Ministry of Justice, requesting that I receive you. I am honored, senor. May I inquire your interest in this matter?" questioned the prefect, shrewdly suspecting the truth.

"Because I have reason to believe that a serious error has been committed."

"Indeed, senor! On whose part, may I ask?"

"I should say that it was on the part of your department, Monsieur Prefect--that a great injustice has been done to two very brave young men, who risked their lives to serve two women in dire distress."

The prefect smiled.

"If these men whom you have in custody are American or English sailors, I beg that you may quickly convince yourself of their innocence and liberate them. I ask this in my official capacity."

"The foreign governments appear to be taking a deep interest in the case of these young men, senor:"

"Why say you that, Monsieur le Prefect?"

"Because you are the second official who has been here this morning demanding that they be set free," answered the police officer, smilingly. "It is most surprising."

"Indeed."

"They may not be, and probably are not, guilty of the robbery charge, but at least the men assaulted my officers."

"I am sure that feature of the case could be easily explained."

"You would have difficulty in convincing the officers who were assaulted of that," laughed the chief.

"Will you release the men?"

"It will give me great pleasure to serve you, senor, in any manner in my power. Do you know the women who had such a narrow escape last evening, may I ask, senor?"

"Certainly."

"Would it be proper for me to ask their names!"

"They are my wife and daughter," announced the ambassador. "Both ladies were positive of the facts as I have stated them---"

"That the men were sailors?"

"Yes. And when they read this morning that two sailors had been arrested, accused of the attempted robbery, the ladies were greatly disturbed. They insisted that justice be done, that I spare no efforts to obtain the release of the brave young sailors."

"Disturb yourself no more, Senor Ambassador."

"You mean?"

"That the men have been discharged. They are free."



CHAPTER IV

ICE CREAM COMES HIGH

"Ice cream! Ice cream! Ice cream! Can't you understand that much English?" demanded Sam Hickey.

The Battleship Boys had entered the first restaurant they found. This proved to be none other than the Cafe de la Paix, one of the fashionable resorts of Paris. The waiter who attended their table was unable to speak a word of English, nor could either lad make his wants known, but the waiter quickly brought an employe to whom the boys stated their wishes.

"Four dishes of ice cream, and in a hurry," commanded Sam Hickey. "What are those things in the basket there?"

"I do not know," answered Dan. "They are some kind of cake. I see them on each of the tables."

"I'm going to help myself. They don't look very nourishing for a good, healthy appetite like mine, but they are better than nothing at all."

Sam helped himself liberally. The cakes tasted so good that he ate ten of them; then, motioning a waiter, he ordered another basketful. By this time the ice cream was served. Ice cream was a luxury that the Battleship Boys did not get on shipboard, so they ordered another plate each.

"There, I guess that will keep me going until supper time," decided Sam. "I wonder how much we owe him?"

"I should say about a dollar," answered Dan, motioning for the garcon and asking for their check.

Dan's eyes grew large as he examined the bill that had been laid beside him.

"I'm hungry yet. I could eat another round of the same thing," announced Sam. "How much does he say it amounts to?"

"I'm trying to figure it out. Six ice creams, thirty francs. Twenty-five biscuit at a franc apiece, twenty-five francs. Fifty-five francs altogether."

"Fifty-five francs!" exclaimed Sam. "Wha--wha--how much is that--how many cents is that in plain United States? I never could figure this heathen money."

"Five francs make a dollar," figured Dan, talking to himself. "Five goes into fifty-five eleven times. That's eleven dollars' worth of ice cream and cakes we have eaten."

"Eleven dollars?" gasped the red-haired boy.

"Yes, that's it," answered Dan ruefully, gazing at his companion in a dazed sort of way.

"But we didn't order any cakes, Dan."

"It's those round cakes that were in the basket. They were put here so we would eat them. That's a trick we didn't know anything about."

"Eleven dollars," groaned Sam. "It's highway robbery. I wish we had held up the women and----"

"Sam!"

Dan's tone was sharp.

"Don't let me hear you speak like that again."

"No; I'm to be the easy mark. I'm to be frisked eleven dollars' worth, and----"

"Don't grumble; let's pay and get out, or they----"

"Yes, they'll be charging us rent for the chairs we are sitting in, first thing we know. Can't we steal some spoons to get even?"

Dan was handing the waiter the money, which he did without comment, Sam, meanwhile, slowly counting out his share of the check, which he passed over to his companion.

"What do they call this place, Dan?" questioned the red-haired boy as they started away.

"Cafe de la Paix."

"That's it. We should have known better. I see it all now. Why didn't we look at the sign over the place before we went in?"

"What do you mean?"

"Cafe de la Pay. That's it; that's the place."

"Sam Hickey, have you gone crazy?"

"Cafe de la Pay--that's the place where you pay. And we did pay. I never knew a place that was so well named," continued Sam with a sickly grin. "We paid, didn't we?"

"Leven dollars' worth," answered Dan sheepishly. "Are you still hungry?"

"Hungry? No; I've lost my appetite; I've changed my mind. I shan't dare get another appetite while I am in Paris. Say, it's lucky they locked us up in the brig over at police headquarters, isn't it?"

"Why?"

"Because we'd be about a million dollars in debt by this time. Whew, but they've got the original get-rich-quick scheme in this burg. Come on; let's go out in the park where we will not see things to eat. They excite me too much. I'm liable to lose control of myself and eat again. If I change my mind again we're lost."

As they stepped out a group of men made a sudden rush toward them.

"Guide, guide, guide, sir--guide? Have a guide? Show you all the sights of Paris----"

"We do not wish a guide, thank you," answered Dan.

"Guide, guide, guide, guide----"

"Say, why didn't you fellows come around, last night?" demanded Sam. "We needed a guide then. We don't now. We've been guided up against pretty nearly everything that ever happened, as it is."

By this time others of the same sort had hurried to the scene. All were shouting at once. It seemed as if all the guides in Paris had congregated in front of the Cafe de la Paix for the sole purpose of waylaying the unsuspecting Battleship Boys.

Several guides grabbed Dan by one arm, while as many more caught hold of Sam. Now others took a hand, pulling this way and that.

"Show you everything for five dollars, that's all. Show you----"

"See here, you fellows!" demanded Hickey, whose color was rising with his temper. "I cleaned out a bunch of Apaches last night and I licked half a dozen policemen to rest myself. If you want the same kind of a hand-out just keep right on. Leggo my arms!" he roared. "Shove off!"

For an instant the men did let go.

"Give them the flying wedge, Dan!"

The boys bolted through the throng of guides, bowling two or three of them over, sprang out into the street, then ran across to the opposite side.

"Let's get out of this confounded town," grumbled Sam. "First thing you know I'll be getting into a fight. I shouldn't like to get mixed up in one, 'cause I promised the captain I'd behave myself while I was over here."

"Come along," said Dan, taking his companion by the arm. "We will go to see the sights by ourselves. I guess we shall see as much without a guide as with one. No telling what sort of trouble these fellows would get us into. I don't like their looks at all."

"They'll look worse if they ever grab hold of me that way again."

The boys hurried around a corner and down the Avenue de L'Opera. They looked very neat and well groomed in their new suits. They strolled along after getting out of sight of the guides, visiting some of the smaller parks of the city. Chancing to come across a tourist agency they bought seats on a "Seeing Paris" car, and were driven about the city with a lot of other tourists, most of whom were Americans. With some of these they got quite well acquainted.

The visitors inspected the Cathedral of Notre Dame, erected in the twelfth century; stood within the portals of the Madeleine, the famous little edifice occupied by the insurgents during the Commune, and in which building three hundred of them were shot down.

The Battleship Boys also visited many other famous churches and noted public buildings. The other Americans, having learned who the lads were, made it their business to explain to them all about the places visited, relating many interesting historical stories, some of which were already familiar to Dan Davis, who had read widely for his age.

The day that had begun so unhappily for the boys came to a close all too soon, and they decided to return to their boarding house, which was not far from where the tourist automobile stopped to discharge its passengers.

They had paid for their accommodations at the pension for the full time they expected to be in Paris, so they had no fear of being overcharged for their meals there.

The table looked most inviting as they entered the dining room, taking the places assigned to them.

The boys had just begun their dinner when they were summoned to the drawing room, where they found a foreign-looking man in livery awaiting them.

"Are you Monsieur Dan Davis?" he asked in English, but with a strong foreign accent.

"Yes, sir."

"You are to go with me, you and your friend."

"Go with you?"

"Yes, sir."

"Look out," whispered Sam. "I'll bet this is another pay-as-you-enter game; then they won't give you anything to eat after you get in."

"I do not understand you, sir. Why should we go with you?"

"The carriage awaits you at the door."

"The carriage awaits you, sir," mimicked Sam, with a grimace at his companion.

"Be still, Sam. I do not understand at all what you mean, sir. Have you not made a mistake? We know no one in Paris--no one would send a carriage for us."

For answer the servant extended an envelope, bearing a coat of arms. Dan opened it wonderingly.

"Mr. Daniel Davis and Mr. Samuel Hickey are requested to dine with the Spanish ambassador, Senor Guillermo Martinez, this evening at 8.30 o'clock."

Dan opened his eyes wide when he read this, then passed the invitation to his chum. Sam perused it, cocked one eye up and winked at Dan.

"We seem to be getting quite popular. What are you going to do?"

"I do not know what it all means, but I'm going to accept the invitation, though I am not sure I am right in doing so. What do you think about it, Sam?"

"I don't think. I've gotten past thinking. Things are moving too fast for me. I'm out of commission."

"Do you know why the ambassador wishes to see us?" he asked of the servant.

"No, sir. He did not say, sir. He said he would tell you when you arrive. Will you be ready soon?"

"We are ready now. We will be with you as soon as we get our hats."

It took the lads but a few moments to make themselves ready, after which they hurried down to the street. There they found a handsome carriage, with a coachman on the box, awaiting them.

Entering, they were driven rapidly away.

"This is different," laughed Dan, settling back among the soft cushions.

"Yes; it's somewhat different from last evening," answered Sam. "We didn't have any soft things like these to sit on then."

"No; and we knew little more about what was going to happen then than we do now."

"I'm willing to take a lot of chances on this, just the same," retorted Sam, with an audible chuckle.

The carriage drove up in front of a handsome residence on the Champs Elysees, almost directly opposite the Elysee Palace Hotel, the door of the vehicle was opened and the Battleship Boys stepped out.



CHAPTER V

A PLUNGE INTO SOCIETY

"Welcome, my lads!" greeted the Spanish ambassador, grasping the lads warmly by the hand. They had been led into a broad hall by a footman and then on into a drawing room brilliantly lighted.

The boys had never gazed upon such a brilliant scene; for a moment they were too dazed to speak. Suddenly they realized that the ambassador was introducing his wife, Madame Martinez. Then a beautiful, dark-eyed girl was led forward.

"This, young gentlemen, is my daughter, Senorita Inez Martinez, to whom we hoped you might owe your liberty. Happily, however, for you, your own consul succeeded in getting you released before the matter was brought to my attention. I trust you have suffered no ill effects from your unjust imprisonment?"

"No; thank you," answered Dan.

"On the contrary, it was a mighty good thing for us," spoke up Hickey.

"How so?" asked the ambassador.

Dan nudged his companion, but there was no stopping Sam when he once got started.

"Why, sir, these get-rich-quick people would have had all our money by this time. I never saw anything like it."

"You do not mean that you have been robbed?"

"Oh, no," interrupted Dan. "You see, we do not know the ways of the country. We thought we had paid too much for some things. It is all good experience, however, and we are not finding fault."

"Ah! I hope you like Paris? I take it, this is your first visit here?" suggested the ambassador's wife.

"Is it not a glorious city?" added the daughter.

"Yes," agreed Dan, "it is a wonderful city."

"I don't think so," objected Sam. "I've had a hard time of it ever since I came here--that is--until--until to-night," as he noted the eyes of the beautiful senorita fixed upon him.

Somehow her voice had a strangely familiar ring to him. He felt sure that he had heard it before, but the more he thought about it the more perplexed did he grow. The young woman seemed to divine what was passing through the red-headed boy's mind. She smiled teasingly, then began talking as if to give him further opportunity to make up his mind where he had seen her before.

Dan, too, was puzzled, but he concealed his perplexity better than Sam had. Davis was growing quite at his ease. It seemed to him as though he had always been with people of this sort, and he found himself talking easily and well, discussing many subjects with which the average sailor is not expected to be familiar.

"I take it that you lads hope to be petty officers one of these days," said Senor Martinez.

"We have already won our ratings in that class, sir."

"Indeed. What is your rating, if I may ask?"

"I am a gunner's mate on the Battleship 'Long Island.' My friend is a coxswain connected with the same ship."

"Do you--do you shoot the big guns?" questioned Senorita Inez, with a brilliant smile.

"I hope to do so, some day--that is, I hope to do so at target practice, though I trust the time may never come when I shall have to train a gun on the ship of another government."

"I am with you in that, my lad. I hope it may never be your lot to do so. Of course you have ambitions to rise in your profession?"

"Yes, sir; it is our hope to become officers of the line at some time in the distant future."

The ambassador nodded thoughtfully.

"It is a splendid career that your Navy offers. Any man who has it in him to advance himself may do so. The opportunities are unlimited."

"Yes, sir; but the way is hard."

"All things worth having are difficult of attainment. Were they not, there would not be rooms for those at the top," smiled the Senor.

The dinner was the most elaborate that the Battleship Boys had ever sat down to. Their host was in uniform and the ladies were in evening gowns, while behind the chairs of each stood a servant in livery.

The Battleship Boys were filled with wonder over what had befallen them. Strangely enough, their host seemed quite familiar with their records, and all about their experiences with the Paris Apaches and gendarmes.

Senor Martinez appeared to take a keen enjoyment in their perplexity, though he was forced to admit that Gunner's Mate Davis was sufficiently well-bred to hide his curiosity.

At last the dinner came to an end, whereupon the party withdrew to the drawing room.

"Shall I sing for you?" asked the senorita, with a flash of her black eyes.

"I should be most happy to hear you," replied Dan courteously.

"Yes; I like singing," added Sam. "The singing we hear on board ship, sometimes, makes you wish you could jump overboard."

A well-bred laugh greeted his announcement.

"Do you sing?" questioned the young woman.

"I thought I did once."

"When was that?"

"At a Sunday-school picnic that I attended at home in Piedmont."

"Oh! And did you sing?"

"They all said I didn't. They said my voice was a poor imitation of a steam calliope."

The well-bred laughter of the little company was lost in a roar. A glance at Hickey's twinkling eyes told them that he was far from dull, and that he was enjoying the fun he was creating fully as much as the rest were.

"So, you didn't sing after all?"

"No, I didn't sing. I just made a noise that might have been singing--if it had been."

Thus the evening passed, full of song, of laughter and brightness.

Dan, after a time, glanced at a French clock on the mantle. He gave a start when he noted that it lacked but fifteen minutes of midnight.

"Oh, we must be going, sir. I did not know it was so late," he said, half rising.

"In a moment, my lad. I presume you are somewhat curious as to why I invited you to my home this evening?" questioned Senor Martinez quizzically.

"We are, indeed, sir. I have been wondering why you should do such a thing. We are just plain American sailors, sir, serving our country as best we know how. We are not used to being received in the splendid way you have received us to-night."

"My lad, that was well said. It has been an honor to have you here. We have felt the keenest pleasure in being able to ask you. As for your being plain American sailors, let me say that such men as you and your friend would be a credit to any Navy. I congratulate yours in possessing you. Can you not guess why you have been invited here this evening?"

"I have not the slightest idea, sir."

"No, we're all at sea, and I guess that's the proper place for sailor lads," added Sam.

"I had very good reasons. You have done myself and family a very great service."

"A service?" exclaimed Hickey wonderingly.

"Yes. And let me say here that perhaps I never should have known of you, had not my wife and daughter insisted that I look you up and ask you to come here. They have purchased a little gift for each of you, which you will find at your pension upon your return. I have had it sent there so that you may have a little surprise when you reach your lodgings."

The boys did not answer. There was nothing they could think of to say.

"Have you not noted anything that struck you as familiar about my wife and daughter?"

"Mr. Hickey has," interjected the young woman, with a merry twinkle in her eyes, "He has been wondering all the evening where he has seen me or heard my voice."

"That's the time you hit the target right in the center," answered the red-headed boy. "If I'd been a ship, and that had been a projectile you had fired at me, I'd been headed for Davy Jones's Locker by this time."

The girl laughed merrily.

"I'll tell you, my lads; you saw my wife and daughter last evening."

"Last night!" exclaimed the boys.

"Yes."

"Where, may I ask?"

"On the Bois de Boulogne. It was they whom you saved from the terrible Apaches, who no doubt would have put them to death after having robbed them. You see, my lads, myself and family have reason for feeling that we owe you a deep debt of gratitude."

"Is it possible?" muttered Dan Davis, looking from one to the other of the smiling faces.

"Well, all I've got to say is that it was worth going to jail for," added Sam Hickey, with an admiring glance at the senorita.



CHAPTER VI

STRANDED IN A STRANGE CITY

"Dan, I've been touched!"

"What's that?"

"Touched, I tell you! Touched," persisted Sam Hickey, raising his voice with each word.

"You--you don't mean you've lost your money?" demanded Dan Davis incredulously.

"No; I mean I've been touched for it."

"Nonsense! You have lost it, if you haven't it. Look through your pockets again. You have put it in some other pocket; that's all."

The boys were strolling slowly toward the pension where they were staying. They had insisted on walking back to their lodgings, after having left the residence of the Spanish ambassador, and this despite his warnings that it was not safe for them to do so at that hour of the night.

"Have you found it?"

"I have not. And that's not the worst of it."

"What do you mean?"

"I never shall find it."

A troubled expression appeared on Davis' face.

"How much, did you have with you?"

"You mean how much did I have left?"

"Yes."

"I don't know. I never can learn to count this foreign money. I had quite a bunch of it. Maybe twenty dollars or something like that."

"I am surprised, Sam. You are so careless. It's a wonder you did not lose your money before this. I take care of my money. You never heard of my losing any, did you?"

"How about the cafe where you pay?"

"That was different. That money was not lost."

"Not lost?" exclaimed the red-headed boy. "Well, if it wasn't lost, will you tell me where it is? Will you tell me that?"

"I spent it."

"You bet you did. And I've spent mine, only I didn't get anything for it. This town is the limit. I don't wonder they had a revolution here. They will have another, too--you mark me! Now, you've had so much to say about my being careless with money, suppose you examine your own pockets. Maybe you've been touched, too."

Dan laughed.

"No danger of that. No one could go through my pockets without my knowing it."

"Couldn't, eh? Why these Frenchmen could touch you through a stone wall, and never move a stone. Just for the fun of the thing, shell out and let's see what you have in your pockets."

"All right; if it will please you. My money is safe."

Dan thrust a confident hand into his trousers' pocket; then he went into the other pocket.

An expression of surprise appeared on his face, as he drew forth a handful of small silver from a vest pocket.

"Well, what about it?" demanded Sam. "Got it?"

"I've--I've lost my money, too; almost every cent of it."

Hickey uttered an uproarious laugh.

"How much have you there?"

"About five hundred centimes, that's all."

"Five hundred centimes! You don't mean it?"

"Yes; that's all."

"All? Good gracious, isn't that enough? Why, man, it's a fortune. We're all right, even if I have lost mine."

"Wait a minute. Do you know how much five hundred centimes is?"

"No; ask me something easier."

"Well, it is about the equivalent of a dollar in American money."

Sam groaned.

"Broke!"

Dan nodded.

"I don't understand it at all. Where could we have lost our money?"

"Lose it, nothing! I tell you we have been touched--touched good and properly. It's a wonder they didn't take our clothes while they were about it. By gracious, they even got my jack-knife. I'll fight somebody in a minute."

Dan did not answer. He was too amazed and upset to talk just then.

"So no one can touch you without your knowing it!" jeered Hickey. "You are an easy mark. I am not in the same class with you. Hold me up while I laugh."

"Don't laugh, Sam; this is serious."

"Of course it is. I wouldn't laugh at it if it weren't. Most of the funny things aren't worth laughing at. The serious things are, most always."

"Very well; laugh if you wish. I shan't. I am wondering what we are going to do. We certainly are in a fix."

"You've got five hundred what-do-you-call-thems, haven't you?"

"Five hundred centimes, yes. They will not go far. A dollar will not purchase much in France."

"But the five hundred sounds big enough to buy a house and lot with. I could put up a pretty good bluff on five hundred of anything."

"We had better go home. The hour is late. We can talk there, though talking will not help us out of this trouble at all."

"Yes; that's a good idea. These Paris folks will have the shirts off our back if we stay out here much longer. What time is it?"

"I don't know."

The boys wandered on, finding their pension without difficulty. Once in their own room, they sat down facing each other.

"This is a nice mess we're in, Sam."

"We've been in worse," answered the red-headed boy wisely.

"It is fortunate for us that we have paid our board."

"How about the return tickets? Have you lost those, too?"

Dan went through his pockets again. The more he searched, the more excited he grew.

"I--I----"

"Stung again?" jeered Sam Hickey. "Maybe I got touched for my money, but I didn't lose my tickets. You lost them both. But have you lost them?"

Dan nodded helplessly.

"Oh, this is too bad!"

"Yes; I wish I'd changed my mind and stayed aboard ship. Let's get back there right away."

"How?"

Sam reflected.

"That's so," he said, with a grin.

"There is no other way for it, but to walk."

"How far is it to Boulogne?"

"It must be all of a hundred miles."

"Not for me," declared the red-headed boy, with an emphatic shake of the head. "Hello, what's that on the table there?" he demanded, suddenly espying a neatly wrapped package.

Dan rose and took up the package. It was addressed to Daniel Davis and Samuel Hickey.

"Open it."

Davis was already doing so. He tore off the wrapping, disclosing a neat plush box underneath.

"This must be the package that the ambassador referred to, Sam."

"Yes, that's it. Hurry up and open it. I hope there's some money in it."

"No; we could not accept it if there was. Ah!"

"Well, what do you think of that!" muttered Sam.

The ease upon being opened disclosed, to their amazement, two handsome gold Swiss watches, with solid gold chains attached. On the back of the first case Dan found his initials engraved. Opening the case, he read the inscription, "Presented to Gunner's Mate Daniel Davis for heroic conduct in saving two women from the Paris Apaches." Sam's case bore a similar inscription.

"Beautiful!" breathed the Battleship Boys in one voice.

"We're all right now," exclaimed Hickey.

"How so?"

"We can borrow some money on the watches."

"I guess not," answered Dan firmly. "We'll walk first!"



CHAPTER VII

UNDER THE FLAG ONCE MORE

"I'm going to see the consul," announced Dan Davis next morning as they were dressing for breakfast.

"Better wait until he gets out of bed," suggested Hickey.

"Yes; we will walk about until ten o'clock; then I will go over. He will no doubt loan us enough money to pay our fares to Boulogne."

"Sure thing. What's a consul for, if it isn't to help a fellow-countryman who is in trouble?"

To their disappointment, they found the consul out. The boys called several times that day. At last, late in the afternoon, they found him at his office, when they quickly made known their predicament.

"Certainly I will help you, my lads. I will send over and have your tickets bought for you. That will save you all trouble in the matter. I do not think you will be able to get a train until late this evening, however."

"You are very kind, sir," said Dan. "As soon as possible after reaching the ship we will send you the money you have advanced to us."

"Never mind that. It is but a trifle."

"Oh, no, sir; that will not do. We shall return it."

"If you wish to remain in Paris longer I will loan you more money."

"Thank you, but we think it best to get back to the ship. Our leave has not quite expired, but we shall feel better to be back."

The tickets were brought to them in due time. Late that evening the boys presented themselves at the Gare du Nord, the station from which they were to take a train for Boulogne. It was not yet train time, however, so the boys strolled about watching the people.

"Guide, sir? Show you all about the city, young gentlemen?" questioned a man in fairly good English.

Sam fixed him with a stern eye.

"Get out!" he commanded.

"Guide, sir?"

"No, sir; we do not need a guide," spoke up Dan.

"How much do you charge?" questioned Sam.

"Two dollars for two hours."

"Humph! I'll tell you what I'll do. If you'll stand up before me for two minutes I'll send you two dollars as soon as I get back to the ship."

"Stand up before you?"

"Yes."

"For what?"

"So I can knock your head off! I owe you fellows a thrashing."

"And so do I," broke in Dan. "You go away from here and let us alone, or I'm liable to forget myself and give you a thumping that you won't forget for the rest of the season. Now, beat it!"

"Yes, scat!" added Sam.

The guide gazed at them for one apprehensive moment.

The Battleship Boys made a threatening move in his direction, whereat the guide turned and beat a hasty retreat.

Half an hour later, after much difficulty, the young sailors managed to find their way to a second-class carriage on the Boulogne train.

At last they were on their way to their ship. The boys breathed a sigh of relief.

"It has been a great experiment," said Dan.

"Fine!" laughed Sam.

"And we've seen a lot."

"And got 'done' a whole lot more," added the red-headed boy. "If there is anything we haven't bumped up against I should like to know about it."

Dan nodded reflectively.

"Let me see; we have visited pretty nearly every point of interest in the French capital; we have had a battle with the Paris Apaches, got arrested and locked up; got our names in the Paris papers; had two government officials working on our behalf, and have been dined by the ambassador of a foreign power. That's going some, isn't it, Sam?"

"Yes; but you have forgotten the most important part of it all."

"What have I forgotten?"

"That we got touched for our rolls, and went broke in Parea."

Dan laughed happily.

"The next question is, where are we going to sleep?"

"We shall have to sleep sitting up."

"Yes; these railway carriages, as they call them, are built on the bias. I'd like to see a fellow try to sleep on these seats, divided off by arms, without being crippled for life."

Dan was looking about the carriage. Sam observed that his companion's face had suddenly lighted up.

"Made a discovery, eh?"

"Yes, and I have an idea."

"Good! Get it off your mind before you lose it. What's the idea?"

"I'm going to sleep in the upper berth."

"The upper berth?" wondered Hickey.

"Yes."

"I don't see any upper berth."

"Then watch me."

Dan proceeded to remove his coat and vest, collar and tie. Next he took off his shoes, Hickey in the meantime watching his companion with suspicious eyes.

Along either end of the compartment, over their heads, was a luggage rack extending the entire length, or rather, width, of the compartment.

Dan grasped the rack, pulled himself up to it and lay down as snug as if he were in reality in the upper berth of a sleeping car.

"Hooray!" shouted Sam.

"Can you beat it?"

"Not this trip. You're a wonder, Dan. That's almost as good as the hammock on shipboard. Will the thing hold you?"

"I hope so. It seems secure. You try the other one."

"I don't know whether I want to trust myself in that spider web or not."

"It's made of woven leather strands. It holds me all right. Try it."

Hickey pulled himself up to the rack, lay down, then peered over the edge, grinning.

"This isn't so bad, after all. But I dread to think what will happen to me if I should have the bad luck to walk in my sleep."

"Don't do it. You must get used to it, for to-morrow night we shall be sleeping in our hammocks again."

A few minutes later the boys were sound asleep, unmindful of the swaying of the rapidly moving carriage, which was almost like the roll of the ship. They did not awaken until daylight. The carriage had stopped and they could hear talking outside.

"Breakfast time; get up!" shouted Hickey.

A guard opened the door and peered in.

"Hello, down there!" called Dan.

"Yes; is that the way you bolt into a gentleman's bedroom without knocking?" demanded Hickey.

The guard glanced up with a puzzled expression on his face, then slammed the door shut.

"We'd better get out of here, Sam, or they will have the police after us again," muttered Dan, scrambling to the floor.

Hastily pulling on their clothes, they got out to the platform, having recognized the station as Boulogne.

"We've got to go without our breakfast this morning, Sam."

"I suppose so," replied the red-headed boy ruefully. "My, but I've got an appetite!"

"So have I, but it will keep."

"I guess it will have to."

Half an hour later the boys were standing on the quay. Off just outside the breakwater lay the battleship "Long Island."

"Doesn't she look good?" breathed Dan. "I'm really happy to get back."

"I'd be happier if I knew there was a square meal awaiting me," answered Sam. "How are we going to get aboard?"

"I'll show you."

Dan pulled out his handkerchief and began wig-wagging with it. After a little a signal flag was observed on the forecastle. It was waving a question.

"What do you want?"

"We want to come aboard," answered Dan.

About that time the officer of the deck had leveled his spyglass upon the boys.

"Messenger!" he called.

"Aye, aye, sir."

"Tell the captain that two men in citizen's clothes are on the quay asking to be put aboard."

The messenger returned a moment later.

"The captain wants to know who they are, sir."

"Tell him they look to me like two of our men, Seamen Davis and Hickey. I do not know why they should be in citizen's clothing, however."

Again the messenger hurried below with the information.

"The captain says it is all right, sir. He says have a cutter go out to meet them, sir, and bring them aboard."

A cutter was launched, and a few minutes later was plunging through the green seas, headed for the quay. Great seas were breaking over the dike, drenching those in the cutter as they shot alongside the quay.

The Battleship Boys were taken off, and shortly afterwards they stepped to the deck of the "Long Island," coming to attention as they saluted the Flag.

"Home again," said Dan, his eyes glowing happily.

"You bet," answered Sam Hickey. "Got any real food aboard? I'm half starved. No more French biscuit diet for mine!"

CHAPTER VIII

HIS FIRST COMMAND

"The captain wishes to see you, sir," said an orderly, approaching Dan.

"I am in shore clothes, orderly."

"The captain knows that. You are to come at once."

Dan hurried below, leaving Sam to tell the admiring sailors of the experiences through which they had passed in Paris.

"Well, my lad," greeted the captain, with a laugh, "you are back, I see."

"Yes, sir."

"You did not stay your leave out?"

"No, sir."

"Get tired of it?"

"Well, yes, sir--rather."

"How was that?"

"We had a pretty good time. We saw everything worth seeing, I guess."

"What is this that I hear about you lads trying to rob a couple of women?" questioned the captain, with a quizzical smile.

Dan flushed rosy red.

"Did you hear about that, sir?"

"Certainly."

"Oh, yes, I remember! the consul said you had telegraphed to him. I am sorry, sir, that we got into so much trouble, but we did what we thought was right."

"Indeed you did," answered the captain, dropping his quizzical tone. "Not only that, but you proved yourself real men. But did you really assault some of the French police?"

"I am afraid we did," answered Dan, meeting his commanding officer's eye squarely.

"Bad, very bad. But how did it occur?"

Dan related, briefly, their meeting with the Apaches, and the fight with the police a few minutes later. From that he told of their arrest and imprisonment. Davis told the story well, the captain listening intently until the narrative was finished.

"You boys certainly have had an experience. But you have not told me why you cut your leave short?"

"We lost our money, sir."

"Lost your money?"

"Yes sir."

"How did that happen?"

"As my friend Hickey would put it, we were 'touched,' sir."

The captain threw back his head, laughing heartily.

"That is not a new thing to happen to a sailor. Do you know how it occurred?"

"We can only guess at it, sir. We had been dining with the Spanish ambassador----"

"Dining with the Spanish ambassador?" questioned the captain in well-feigned surprise.

"Yes, sir; did I not tell you about that?"

"No."

"It seems that it was his wife and daughter whom we rescued from the Apaches. We did not know that until some time afterwards. The ambassador invited us to dine with them at the embassy; then later in the evening he told us who the women were that we had rescued."

"Well, I must say you lads are getting on in the world pretty fast."

"Yes, sir; it seems to me that we have not been losing any time."

"I should say you had not. But about losing your money?"

"We walked home from the ambassador's residence, sir. On the way we sat down on a seat in one of the little parks. We had not sat there long before two gentlemen came along and sat down. There was one on either side of us."

"They began talking to us in English, and, learning who we were, became quite friendly. They were very pleasant gentlemen, sir."

"So I should imagine."

"After talking for some time, we decided to move on, and, bidding them good night, went to our pension."

"Then you think those pleasant gentlemen were those who got your money?"

"They must have been, sir. We were not near enough to any one else to give him a chance to get into our pockets. I am ashamed of myself, sir, to have been so easily fooled."

"Many men more experienced than either of you lads have been taken in, my boy. You did very well. I commend you both for the way you have conducted yourself in the trying experiences you have had. The American consul said some very pleasant things about you."

"We had to borrow some money off him to get back to ship, sir," said Dan. "I should like to return it to him at once. Shall I be able to put a letter ashore?"

"I am afraid not. We shall be sailing very shortly now. We were waiting----"

Some one knocked at the door.

"Well?"

"Orderly, sir."

"Yes, what is it?"

"The master-at-arms reports that twelve men are ashore, having overstayed their leave, sir."

"Thank you. Send the executive officer here to me."

"Aye, aye, sir."

"Davis, go to the canteen at once, and procure your uniform. See that your rating badge is sewed on the sleeve; then report back to me here."

"Aye, aye, sir."

Dan hurried away, delivering the captain's order to the keeper of the canteen. He was quickly furnished with a new uniform and a rating badge, the latter showing that he was a petty officer. This rating badge consisted of two white crossed cannon with three red chevrons beneath, all surmounted by a white eagle, worn on the sleeve.

Dan went out on the spar deck where he changed his clothes abaft of the second stack.

While he was thus engaged, the executive officer reported to his superior officer. The two officers were engaged in conversation for some moments.

"See that the master-at-arms is informed immediately of my wishes. I am sending Davis because I wish him to have the experience."

"Are the men to carry arms, sir?"

"Yes."

"Has authority been obtained from the local authorities, sir?"

"Yes; that has been arranged for, in case we found it necessary to land a patrol."

"Very good, sir. Shall I send Davis to you?"

"I already have ordered him to report. See that the master-at-arms has everything arranged at once. I desire to get away from here to-day if possible."

"Aye, aye, sir."

The executive officer saluted and left the captain's cabin. He had been gone but a few moments when there came another knock at the door.

"Seaman Davis, sir."

"Come in."

Dan Davis, in his new uniform, stepped into the room, looking very handsome and manly. He stood erect, with shoulders well back, in perfect military position.

The captain surveyed him with critical but approving eyes.

"I wish you to perform a service, Davis," announced the captain in a business-like tone.

"Aye, aye, sir."

"I am giving you this detail that you may get the experience. By rights, the marines should do it, though it is discretionary with me to send whom I choose. I have decided to send you."

Dan did not reply. He could not imagine what was wanted of him.

"You will take a detail of six men, armed, carrying five rounds of ball cartridges. Proceed ashore in steamer number one, and round up the delinquents. Bear in mind that you are on foreign soil, and that any indiscreet act on your part might involve the United States in trouble with the French government."

The captain paused to give his words force.

"Aye, aye, sir."

Dan's eyes were sparkling, strive as he might to appear as if it were nothing unusual to be sent ashore at the head of a patrol.

"Twelve delinquents are ashore, having overstayed their leave. Bring in all you can find, reporting to the American consul as to those whom you fail to round up. Do you understand?"

"Yes, sir."

"You will use no unnecessary force, but simply bring in the men. You will remember that you are clothed with no little power. Exercise it discreetly. I know that I can depend on you. That will be all. Report at once to the master-at-arms, who has instructions and orders in this matter. Make all possible haste, as I desire to sail this afternoon, or as much earlier as is possible."

"Aye, aye, sir. Is that all, sir?"

"Yes."

The Battleship Boy saluted and retired. Proceeding directly to the forecabin, he reported to the master-at-arms, who had already ordered out the men who were to constitute the patrol.

Dan's companions were looking on smilingly, for the lad was popular among his fellows.

"Here is the list of the men whom you are to bring in," said the master-at-arms.

Davis took the list, going over it deliberately and fixing the names in his mind, after which he stowed the paper in his blouse pocket.

"You have your orders?"

"Yes, sir; the captain has given me my instructions. You have no idea where I shall find the men, sir?"

"No; that is for you to find out when you get ashore. Are you ready?"

"All ready, sir."

"Take charge of the patrol."

"Carry arms!" commanded Davis, turning to his squad. "Right face, forward march! Board steamer!"

The men scrambled over the side, going down the Jacob's ladder into the steamer that lay awaiting them below.

"Cast off!" commanded the Battleship Boy. The steamer whistled once and headed for the landing stage.

Dan sat on the stern rail alone. He was impressed with the importance of his assignment. He realized that he had it in his power, perhaps, to bring on war between two friendly powers. Every minute the steamer was drawing nearer and nearer to the landing stage.

Dan felt no nervousness. He did not try to make up his mind what he should do when he got ashore. Time enough for that when he got there.

The landing stage reached, the men were piped out.

"Fall in, forward march, by twos!"

The men fell into step and marched steadily up the street.

It was a small command that Dan Davis had under him, but he was as proud of it as if he had been commanding a company.



CHAPTER IX

ROUNDING UP THE STRAGGLERS

"Halt!"

The men came to a quick stop in front of a resort where Dan thought he might possibly find some of the absent sailors.

Instead of ordering his men to go in, he entered alone.

"Have you any American sailors here?" he asked.

The proprietor shook his head. He did not understand the words, perhaps, but he had seen the detail of armed sailors halt before his place, and well knew the meaning.

"You are sure you have none of our men here?"

"Non." (No.)

"Who went into that room there?" pointing to a door that had closed with a bang as Dan pushed open the front door.

The proprietor shrugged his shoulders and turned away.

The boy's mind was made up at once. A few quick strides brought him to the door in question. He threw it open and sprang in.

A pair of legs, clad in the blue of the Navy, were protruding from beneath a table. Dan grabbed the legs, giving them a mighty tug. The result was that a sailor was jerked out into the middle of the room.

"So you thought you would get away from me, did you, Anthony? Stand up."

Anthony did stand up. He sprang to his feet, launching a terrific blow at Seaman Davis. Dan merely parried the blow, making no attempt to return it.

"Anthony," he said, stepping back. "I have a patrol outside. Do you want me to call them in?"

"I'll lick you first," growled the man.

"Stop where you are! You are not wholly responsible for what you are doing or saying, but you know what will happen to you if you resist. I came in here to get you, and I'm going to take you out with me."

Dan whirled at that instant. He had caught an expression in the eyes of his man that told him something was going on behind him. The boy ducked like a flash, thus avoiding a vicious blow that had been aimed at him by the proprietor of the place.

"Don't you do that again!" warned Dan sternly. "You are facing the United States Government now, remember. Stand aside!"

With this he grabbed Anthony by the arm. The sailor struggled to release himself, but Davis' grip was too strong to enable him to break away easily. Anthony swung his free hand. That was just what Dan wanted.

With a quick twist he brought both the sailor's arms behind the latter's back, giving the fellow a violent push.

There was nothing for Anthony to do but to go ahead. He did so with a rush, Dan running behind him and pushing with all his might. They struck the swinging doors with a bang. The doors flew out, the Battleship Boy and his prisoner landing with a bump against the astonished jackies of the patrol, who were waiting outside.

"Two of you men take this fellow down to the steamer and tell those aboard that he is under arrest. Tell the coxswain I shall hold him personally responsible for the man's safe keeping. Hurry back. You will find us up the street somewhere. Anthony, you had better go peaceably unless you want to spend the next three months in the brig."

The two men detailed for the purpose led the ugly sailor away.

"Twos right, forward march!" commanded Dan.

The little company trudged up the street, many persons pausing to look at the slim, well-set-up fellow who was plainly in command of the four remaining men of the squad.

The part of the town in which they now found themselves was the location of most of the sailor boarding houses in Boulogne. Somehow, Dan had an idea that some of their men would be found there. He kept his eyes open, slowing his men down.

"Halt!" he commanded.

Dan had espied a sailor from one of the trans-atlantic ships on the other side of the street. He crossed over to the man.

"Good morning, shipmate," greeted Davis. "I'm looking for some of our delinquents. Have you seen any of our men in this quarter within the last hour or two?"

"You from the 'Long Island'?"

"Yes. Have you seen any of our fellows?"

"I guess I have. One of them gave me this black eye 'bout half an hour ago. I'd have trimmed him proper if he hadn't had a gang back of him."

"Where was that?"

"Down the street a piece."

"Where is the man now?"

"See that two-story building down there?"

"Yes."

"Well, that's a sort of hotel; that's what they call it; but I reckon it's a joint where they shanghai fellows for the long cruises. I wouldn't go in there for the price of a round-trip voyage."

"Thank you. I'll soon find out."

"You ain't going in there, are you, shipmate?"

"Sure. Why not?"

"Why, they'll knock your block off, the first thing if you try to get a man out of there."

"Don't be too sure about that," answered Dan, with a smile. "I guess they had better not try it."

"Take my advice and take your men in with you. I see they have their guns, and you'd better see to it that the guns are loaded, while you are about it."

"Thank you very much. I will look out for myself."

By the time the young commander rejoined his squad the two men who had taken their prisoner down to the ship's steamer had returned. Dan now had six men that he could use.

"Forward march!" he commanded.

They continued on until they reached the place that the merchant sailor had indicated.

"Men, I want you to wait here. Do not enter unless I give three short, sharp whistles, then come quickly. But do not lose yourselves. Under no consideration use your guns. It is not necessary. We have our fists if it comes to a fight."

"Hadn't you better take a couple of us with you?" questioned one of the men.

"No, it is not necessary. An armed force might stir up trouble."

Dan entered the place, and he saw at once that the sailor had not overdrawn the character of the house. It was about the worst he ever had seen. The place was thronged with tough characters, few of whom were sailors; or, at least, they did not appear to be.

"I don't believe a man of them has ever smelled salt water unless he's been out on the breakwater," thought Dan.

Glancing about, he failed to see any of the men for whom he was looking. He strolled about, attracting as little attention as possible, though several of the men regarded him suspiciously.

The front room was a sort of office and lounging room. A small desk, on one side, was walled off by a rusty iron screen.

Around by the lower end of the desk was a door opening into a rear room.

Dan decided to investigate. He made his way as quietly as possible to the end of the desk, pushed the door slightly ajar, peered in and sneezed.

The odor of bad tobacco was almost over-powering. The boy blinked and sneezed again.

"Shut that door, you lubber!" roared a voice from the rear room.

Davis shut it, but when the door closed he was on the inside, with his back against the door.

It was with difficulty that he made out the faces of the men congregated there. Not one of them paid the least attention to him.

"Ah, there's one of my men now," muttered the boy.

The man indicated was an ordinary seaman, who had been aboard but a short time. His name was Kuhn. He was in deep conversation with a man better dressed than most of the others. The older man appeared to be seeking to convince the sailor of something that he was telling him.

Dan edged over near them and listened. Perhaps he suspected what was going on, for Dan Davis was a shrewd lad, and he was learning many things about the life of the sailor and the snares that are set for him.

A moment's listening convinced him that he was right. The well-dressed stranger was trying to induce Kuhn to desert and join a ship bound for China. A large increase in wages was promised, good grub and a real berth to sleep in.

"But they'll come and get me and lock me up," protested Kuhn. "I'll be a deserter."

"Nothing of the sort, my lad. How are they going to get you when you are in China? Why, you'll never be heard from again. I'll tell you what the skipper of the schooner is willing to do for a likely lad like you."

"What?"

"Sh-h-h, don't say anything about it, but he's promised to make you first mate."

"He has?"

"Sure thing."

The sailor's eyes glowed with anticipation.

"All right; if you will get me out of this uniform, so I shall not be recognized, I'll----"

"You'll come with me," finished a voice behind Kuhn, as a hand was laid lightly on his shoulder.

The sailor leaped to his feet, his face flushing. An angry light flashed to his eyes as he recognized the features of Gunner's Mate Davis confronting him.

Dan had heard enough. He understood. He did not blame the young, inexperienced sailor so much, but he felt rising within him a righteous indignation toward the Englishman who was seeking to induce the young fellow to desert the flag under which he was serving.

"Come, Kuhn; it is time you were getting back to the ship," said Dan in a quiet tone.

"I--I am not going."

"Not going?"

"No. I----"

"Never mind, Mr. Sailorman. The boy and me is friends. You just let him alone. I'll see that he gets back to the ship afore you get there yourself."

Dan turned upon the Englishman.

"Who are you?"

"I just told you. I'm a friend of the shipmate here."

"A nice sort of friend you are," replied Dan witheringly. "Are you coming with me, Kuhn? You know what it means to

refuse to return to ship as you have just done. The ship is preparing to sail. If I have to use force it will be the worse for you. I know what this man is trying to do with you. He is a bad man, Kuhn. He is trying to induce you to desert----"

"You go away and let me alone----"

"See here, young fellow," commanded the Englishman savagely, "if you know what is good for you, you get right out of here, and don't you come back again. It'll be the worse for you if you do. Understand?"

"Look out that you do not get into trouble yourself. Kuhn, you are coming with me."

The Battleship Boy laid a firm grip on the arm of his shipmate and began moving toward the door by which he had entered the room.

Suddenly Kuhn was jerked violently from his grasp. Dan made a spring, recovering his prisoner.

All at once the Englishman uttered a series of short, sharp exclamations in French. Like magic, nearly every man in the room was on his feet. They appeared to understand perfectly what was wanted of them, and with one accord made a rush for Seaman Davis.

"Stand back!" roared the young officer, boldly facing the mob. "You will have to answer to your government if you dare lay hands on me."

They gave no heed to his warning, but threw themselves upon the lad. Dan fought manfully, using his fists to good purpose, and many a hardy stoker and sailor went down before Little Dynamite's sturdy blows.

Not daring to cease fighting long enough to reach for the boatswain's whistle with which he had provided himself before leaving ship, he uttered three sharp whistles with his lips, but in the din about him the whistles failed to carry beyond the room.

The whistles did, however, have the effect of quieting the uproar. The men interpreting them as some sort of a signal, hesitated, looked at each other inquiringly, then at the cool, hatless young fellow who was facing them, working his way determinedly toward Ordinary Seaman Kuhn. The latter was standing with a half-frightened expression on his face. He had begun to realize the enormity of his proposed act.

"Kuhn, come here!" demanded Dan sternly.

The sailor made a move as if to comply with the order. Ere he had taken a step forward, however, the Englishman had fastened upon his arm.

"You're in it now. You can't get out. If you go back to the ship they will put you in the brig. You just stay here till the ship has sailed, and you'll be all right."

"But where--where? They'll come here and get me."

"We'll see to that."

Again Dan had forced his way to where Kuhn was standing, but before he was able to lay his hands upon the young fellow a dozen men threw themselves upon the Battleship Boy.

Davis struggled with all the strength that was in him. His struggles were fruitless. Men of brawn and muscle had hold of him now. He was as a child in their hands, though, had his hands been free, he would have given a good account of himself.

Some one gave a few brief directions in French. The men picked Dan up, bearing him through a door, into a long, dark hallway, down which they carried him until they reached a door at the end. Opening the door, they threw the Battleship Boy in bodily, slamming and locking the door.

"I've made a mess of it," groaned the lad, "but I'll beat them yet."

CHAPTER X

OUTWITTED BY A BOY

The room was quite dark, except for the light that came in through an open skylight above Dan Davis' head. A glance about him told the boy that he had been thrown into a storeroom. All about him were boxes, cases and trunks.

"It will do me no good to shout. If I do, I'll give them the satisfaction of knowing that I'm done for. No; I won't yell. My men could not hear me if I did."

Dan pondered for a few moments, and an idea came to him.

"I believe I could batter that door down," he mused. "I'll take a look at it."

A brief examination convinced him that such an attempt would be foolish. The door was constructed of heavy plank, and had been made to withstand assaults. The room in which he had been made a prisoner was a place where sailors' chests were stored, a sort of safe deposit vault. There were no windows on either side, only the skylight in the ceiling, some twelve feet above the boy's head.

Dan gazed up at it longingly.

"I wonder if I could do it," he thought. "I cannot more than fail, anyway."

He quickly went to work, piling up boxes and chests. The latter were so heavy that he was unable to handle them and get them up more than three high. On top of these he piled boxes and climbed to the top of the pile. He found that he was still some distance from the skylight. This was a double affair, with the lights turning up on either side of a brace between them.

Dan crouched down, measured the distance and made a leap straight up into the air. His fingers barely touched the frame of the opening, then down he shot.

The lad landed on the edge of the upper packing case. It toppled over with him, and nearly every one of the boxes he had piled up came down with a crash that made that part of the building shake.

An empty case turned over Dan, imprisoning him beneath it. At first he lay still, not knowing whether he had been injured or not. Finally concluding that he had not been hurt, he eased the case from his body and crawled out.

"Either they are all deaf and dumb, or else they have deserted the place," he said out loud. "I don't believe I shall try that again. I'll try some other plan, and----"

Footsteps were heard coming down the hall. A new idea occurred to the lad. In an instant he had flattened himself on the floor, pulling the packing case over him as it had been before.

A key grated in the lock and several men entered. Among them was the Englishman. Dan recognized his voice, though the fellow was speaking in French. The men set up a great chattering when, as they thought, they found the room empty. It appeared plain to them how their man had made his escape.

"He's climbed out of the skylight!" cried a voice in good English.

"I shouldn't wonder if he is up there now. He can't get down," answered the Englishman with whom Dan had had the trouble out in the other room.

"Get him, quick! Somebody climb up there!"

The men began chattering in French again. Instantly they started piling boxes on top of the chests which they had put in place on the pile again.

"This is the time I lose," muttered Dan.

Fortunately for him, however, they were getting their cases from the other side. They found light and empty cases for their purpose, and it required but a moment to fling them up in place.

Three men instantly clambered to the top of the pile thus made. One man was lifted by the other two and boosted to the skylight. He grasped the frame, holding on, his feet standing on the hands of the other two beneath him.

The pile of boxes wavered and swayed beneath the weight placed upon them.

In the meantime Dan Davis had raised the box from his own body just far enough to enable him to peer out. He saw what was going on, and his eyes lighted up with joy as a sudden idea occurred to him.

"I'll show them they can't beat a Yankee tar," he thought, raising the box little by little. Fortunately for him, the men on the floor were at the other side of the pile of boxes, while those on top were too busy with their own affairs to look down.

Crouching for a spring, he gathered himself.

All at once the box over him landed several feet away with a crash.

Dan was on his feet in a twinkling. The door leading into the hallway stood open. Freedom was at hand, but the boy was not yet ready to take advantage of the opportunity offered him.

With a bound he threw his whole weight against the pile of packing cases.

For one giddy moment the cases trembled, then fell inward toward the men on the floor. Those above emitted a yell. Down they went, howling and shouting, their companions not having had time to get out of the way, being caught under the falling boxes and buried beneath them. All of the men were fighting, kicking and struggling to extricate themselves from the wreckage.

"Hip, hip, hooray!" yelled the Battleship Boy, unable to control his delight at the downfall of his enemies. "Next time maybe you'll think twice before you try to beat the United States Government."

With that Dan sprang out into the hallway. He slammed the door, turned the key in the lock, then hurled the key from him.

"Let them stay there and think it over for the rest of the day. It will do them good," he laughed, starting for the other end of the hall. He stepped into the room from which he had been taken a short time before.

There were still a number of men there, but they had not observed his entrance. Dan's eyes swept the room. In a far corner, crouching low in his chair, sat Kuhn, making himself as inconspicuous as possible. There was a frightened expression on the young sailor's face.

Dan walked quickly around the outer edge of the room. Kuhn did not happen to look his way. The fellow's eyes were fixed on the door leading out into the office in momentary expectation of seeing a squad of blue jackets enter the place.

"I've got you this time, young man!" exclaimed Davis, pouncing upon the sailor.

Kuhn toppled from his chair to the floor, with Dan on top of him.

"Get up!" commanded the Battleship Boy, scrambling to his feet and jerking his prisoner up beside him. "Out of here, before I serve you worse. I'm getting angry. You'll regret acting the way you have to-day. Come along!"

Ere the others in the room had an opportunity to protest, Dan had dragged his man to the door, which he kicked open, pushing his man through, then running him to the front door. With a shove, Dan sent his prisoner staggering to the sidewalk. Ere Kuhn stopped going he had measured his length in the street before the eyes of the jackies who comprised the patrol.

"Hold him, men!" commanded Davis. "That's it. Take him down to the steamer, two of you. I believe there are other men in this place. It is taking long chances, but I am going in to find out. Two of you come in with me this time. Be careful that you do not start anything. Take no part in any fight that may occur unless I tell you to do so."

At a carry arms, two of the detail followed Dan into the office of the place.

Approaching the proprietor, he said:

"Do you speak English?"

The man, a fat, red-faced Frenchman, nodded surlily, his eyes on the two armed men standing at attention at one side of the room.

"Are any of our men in your place?"

The fellow shook his head.

"I have reason to believe there are."

"No men here."

"Do you wish me to report your conduct to the Prefect of Police?"

The fellow's face took on a darker shade.

"Unless you convince me that none of our sailors are under your roof, I shall place a guard at the door to see that none of our men leave; then I shall go to the police and enter a complaint against you. They don't love you any too well now, you know."

Davis had taken a long shot, but he saw, from the expression on the proprietor's face that it had reached the mark.

Just then the Englishman, followed by the other men whom Dan had imprisoned in the store room, burst into the office. Espying the Battleship Boy, the Englishman made a dash toward him.

"There he is! Grab him!"

The men behind the Englishman started forward. None had observed the two jackies standing rigidly at one side of the room with eyes front.

"Stop where you are!" commanded Davis.

They paid no attention to his command.

"Port arms!" he commanded sharply, turning to his own men. "Load!"

Two audible metallic clicks sounded above the noise in the room.

"Take aim! Steady, there," he ordered, in a voice just loud enough for his men to hear. "I wouldn't have you pull the triggers for a million dollars. Don't get excited."

The rush stopped instantly.

"Now, you fellows, I want you to stand out of my way. At the first sign of opposition on your part I shall order my men to fire. Mr. Proprietor, lead the way through your place."

Backed by the two armed men, Davis started in the wake of the proprietor. They examined all the rooms on the ground floor, after which Dan, leaving his men in the hallway to guard the rear, proceeded upstairs where a number of rooms had been arranged for lodging places. In one of these he found three sailors sound asleep on the floor. They were awakened with no little difficulty.

"Guard, there!" called Dan down the stairway.

"Aye, aye."

"One of you come up here. Take these men out to the patrol with instructions for two of them to march these fellows down to the steamer. Tell the men to report back at once. If the other two have returned, send one of them in to me!"

The sailors, rubbing their eyes, rose, grinning sheepishly.

"Where are we heading, matey?" demanded one of them.

"For the ship and perhaps the brig," answered Dan shortly.

"What for?"

"Overstaying your leave. Come, hurry out of here!"

The men ruefully made their way down the stairs, and a few minutes later were on their way to the landing stage, where the steamer was waiting to receive them. Dan was convinced that the men had not intentionally overstayed their leave. Still, he had little sympathy for men who had so light a regard for their duty as to forget it entirely.

"Now, Mr. Proprietor, what other rooms have you in this establishment?"

"None."

"I am afraid I can't take your word for anything after the way you have tried to deceive me. We will look about below a little. Where does that door lead to?" he asked, espying a small door under the stairway after they had reached the hallway again.

"To the cellar. There's nothing down there."

"Open the door."

The owner of the place did so. Dan peered down into the darkness and was about to turn away, when he thought he heard voices. He listened intently.

"Who is down there?" he asked of the proprietor.

"No one."

"Get a light and lead the way."

The proprietor did so, his face working convulsively as he sought to control his rage.

Leading the way across the cellar, the fellow threw open a door. A great wave of damp, smoky air smote the newcomers in the face.

"So that's the game, is it?" demanded Dan triumphantly. There were the others of the missing men, enjoying themselves immensely. They were laughing and joking.

"Attention!" commanded Davis.

A loud laugh greeted his order.

"Bring him in here. It's Little Dynamite!" shouted the men. "Hurrah, for Little Dynamite! Hurrah!"

Sudden silence settled over the room. Behind the stern-faced Battleship Boy the eyes of the occupants of the room all at once made out their companions, armed with Krag rifles.

They understood.

"Attention! Forward march!" ordered Dan.

The men rose, hesitated, then bowing before the authority that they knew represented the United States Government, they filed from the room, up the stairs and into the hallway, where another guard stood at attention.

Dan led the way through the hall, on through the two rooms. He paused at the street door, while the men filed past him. They lined up in the street where Dan had halted them.

"Right dress. Twos right, forward march!"

The disconsolate sailors started away down the street, guarded in front and rear by armed men, with the Battleship Boy at their head.

Dan had had a lively time, but he had carried out his orders faithfully.

No conversation was indulged in, and, reaching the landing stage, the men were ordered into the little steamer, which quickly got under way and headed for the battleship. Shortly after that the delinquents were climbing up a sea ladder to the deck, the gangways having been taken in in preparation for getting under way.

"All present, sir," announced Dan, saluting the officer of the deck.

CHAPTER XI

BETWEEN SKY AND SEA

"You got them all, did you?" questioned the captain.

"Yes, sir."

"Good work! Did you have any trouble?"

"Nothing very much, sir."

"You look it," the captain laughed. "You will appear at mast this afternoon, at one o'clock, and give such evidence as you may have obtained, relating to where you found the men, and who of them offered resistance."

"Aye, aye, sir."

"Mr. Coates, are all our men accounted for?"

"I will ascertain, sir."

The executive officer returned a few minutes later and saluted.

"The master-at-arms reports that the ship's crew is on board."

"Very good; we will get under way at once. Davis, I take pleasure in commending you for your excellent work. You have done much better than I had any idea you could possibly do. That will be all. Your uniform needs attention."

"Aye, aye, sir."

Dan seemed fated to lose his clothes. He was without a hat, his garments were torn and soiled and his hair looked as if it had not felt the touch of a comb in many days. His condition necessitated another visit to the canteen for fresh supplies.

"If this keeps on I shall be spending all my wages for uniforms," said the boy with a happy laugh, as he drew a cap, a new jacket, a blouse, and a new rating badge.

The forecandle presented a scene of activity when finally Dan emerged upon it from the forward companionway. Orders were being passed rapidly, boatswain's mates were piping up their different watches and jackies were making all snug about the decks.

"I think we are ready, Mr. Coates," announced the captain.

"Up anchor!" roared the executive through his megaphone.

Chains rattled and clanked as the powerful electric apparatus began hauling in the heavy anchors.

"Anchors shipped, sir," sang a midshipman from the forecandle.

"Slow speed ahead, both engines," ordered the captain.

The ship swung slowly about, clouds of black smoke belching from her funnels. Poking her nose out into the English Channel, the battleship headed southward for a long cruise.

The band on the quarter-deck about this time struck up "The Red, White and Blue," every jackie on the decks raising his voice in the words of the song. It was an inspiring scene.

Dan Davis felt an unusual pride that afternoon. He had accomplished something of which he was proud, and for which he had a right to be proud.

Shortly after mess the mast court was called, at which all the delinquents that the Battleship Boy and his squad had rounded up were arraigned on deck. This was the part of his work that the boy did not like. He was placed in a position where, if he should tell the truth, he would be obliged to give information that would send some of his shipmates to the ship's brig for many days. It was a foregone conclusion that Dan would tell the truth, and he did. He related the story of the arrest of each man, leaving out his own part in the affair as much as possible. However, the facts were skilfully drawn out by the commanding officer.

Most of the men who had overstayed their leave were remanded for trial by summary court, and two days later, at muster, sentence was pronounced.

The "Long Island" was now starting on a long cruise to southern waters. The Battleship Boys were looking forward to new sights and new scenes, as well as new experiences, of which they were to have a full measure.

The English Channel was left behind two days later, the battleship beginning once more her strife with the broad Atlantic. The skies were gray and the water of that dull leaden hue which to the experienced eyes of the sailor means trouble.

Before that afternoon had come to a close huge seas were breaking over the forecandle, sending the spray over the bridge and high up on the military masts.

"The glass is falling, sir," announced the navigating officer.

"Yes; we are in for a rough night," answered the captain. "Is all secure, Mr. Coates?" he asked, turning to the executive officer.

"All is secure, sir."

The quarter-deck, long since, had begun shipping seas, so that now it was wholly awash, the deck being buried beneath tons of water, save now and then when it would rise, dripping, from the sea, only to bury itself again a few minutes later, the after flag staff disappearing beneath the green seas that swept over it.

Sea after sea would rise over the forecandle, leap the forward turret, striking the weather cloths of the bridge with a swish and a thud, then go hissing past the officers on the bridge with terrific speed.

Watches had been set as if the hour were late, for it was becoming more and more difficult to see ahead, in the blinding salt spray that hung over the ship like a fog.

As far as the eye could reach the sea was a mass of angry, swirling waters, here and there rising into great white-capped mountains.

All at once the voice of the lookout in the tops sang out a new call.

"Waterspout off the starboard bow!"

Instantly every man within sound of the lookout's voice sprang up to view the sight.

"Pipe all hands up to see waterspout!" roared the executive officer.

It was dangerous business coming on deck in that sea, but the men knew how to look out for themselves. They came piling from hatchway and companionway like as many monkeys.

"Where away?" called one.

"Off the starboard bow," answered a voice from the bridge.

When the battleship rose on a great heaving billow a splendid sight was obtained of the twister. The swirling pillar of water appeared to reach high up into the skies. The column was traveling at tremendous speed.

"What would happen if the thing should hit us?" questioned Sam Hickey apprehensively.

"It would rake your red hair and turn it green," jeered a companion.

"I'd hate to be on board a ship that it did hit," added a boatswain's mate.

"I was on a barkentine, trading between New York and Brazil once, when we got hit by a twister," said a machinist's mate.

"Do any harm?"

"Not much. Stripped her clean, washed seven sailors overboard and a few other trifles."

"Do you mean it washed a few other trifles overboard?" questioned Hickey.

"No; I don't mean anything of the sort. I mean that it cut up a few other capers. We were picked up by a coasting steamer three days later, half drowned."

"Any danger of her coming our way?" asked Sam a little apprehensively.

"I guess not. The officers will look out for that."

The officers on the bridge were looking after the waterspout, and very carefully at that. An extra watch was posted in each of the military tops, with instructions to keep a keen lookout. Hickey was one of these. His station was on top of the forward cage mast, a hundred feet from the deck.

The red-haired boy's head swam as he clung desperately to the rope ladder in his perilous ascent. Now and then the battleship would heel over until it seemed as if she never would come back.

When half way up he paused a few seconds, to turn his head aft and get a free breath, for water was smiting him at every step. He saw a signal wig-wagged to him from the after mast. It was from Dan Davis, who was going up on the same duty.

"I'll race you to the top," signaled Davis.

"Go you!" answered Sam, starting up the ladder at a lively clip. Dan was not caught napping. He was off with Sam. Every little distance up these masts is a landing made of woven leather strands, and a person mounting to the top has to cross each one of these, taking a ladder on the other side.

The Battleship Boys barely struck the high places in crossing the landings. It seemed as if they surely must fall.

"Look careful, aloft there!" roared a voice from the bridge.

"Aye, aye, sir," floated back the reply from Hickey.

They had reached next to the last landing, far up there in the spray-laden air, when a shout attracted all eyes aft.

A man was seen hanging from the platform by his feet. With each roll of the ship his body would swing far out from the mast, as he hung suspended between sea and sky.

"Man the main mast!" thundered an officer, his voice being heard above the roar of the storm.

Half a dozen jackies sprang for the mast.

"Who is the man aloft there?" demanded the captain.

"It's Gunner's Mate Davis, sir," answered the executive officer.

The captain groaned.

"He'll be lost. Look alive there, men! Quick! Quick!"

Sam had seen and understood, but he did not halt. He was under orders to go to the top, and to the top he went as fast as his feet and hands would carry him. Not until he had reached the swaying platform at the top of the cage mast did he venture to look astern.

The lad's heart fairly leaped into his throat as he saw his companion's terrible peril.

In running across the landing, Dan had been caught by a sudden violent lurch of the ship and thrown forward. He felt his head and shoulders going through between the braces of the mast. With quick instinct he spread both legs, turning his toes outward.

Nothing else saved him from plunging a hundred feet into the sea. And there he clung by his feet, every muscle in his body strained to its utmost tension. With each roll of the ship he felt that he would be unable to hold on through another.

"Hold fast!" shouted a voice far below him.



"Hold Fast!" Shouted a Voice Below.

"Hold fast--they're coming!" howled Sam Hickey from his perch high in the air. His voice was lost on the roar of the gale, but he did not know it.

"Where's that confounded waterspout?" he muttered. "Oh, I see it. The thing is going to come pretty close to the ship, I'm afraid. But I don't care. I'm too high up to get hit by it."

His mind turning from the waterspout to Dan Davis, Sam wheeled, steadying himself by holding tightly to the railing that extended around the top. Every lurch of the ship was like "cracking-the-whip" at school. It seemed to make every bone in one's body snap.

Sam groaned as he saw Dan swaying back and forth.

"Oh, why doesn't he grab the mast? Why doesn't he?"

Sam did not know that Dan was making desperate efforts to do this very thing, but thus far had been unable to.

All at once the lad's feet slipped out of position.

"He's going! He's going overboard!" yelled Hickey in a voice that was heard on the bridge and to the stern of the superstructure.

Sam shut his eyes and stood there trembling. He had forgotten waterspout, raging sea and all--all save the fact that his companion was falling.

A yell aroused him. The yell was different from the rest. It was a yell of joy. Sam opened his eyes, blinked, rubbing the

salt water out of them, then gazed aft through the mist.



CHAPTER XII

IN THE COILS OF A "TWISTER"

"There he goes! Oh, that's too bad!" groaned the captain.

He had seen the boy's body shoot outward.

"No, he's struck something. He's caught a stay," cried the executive officer.

"He'll never hang there. He'll surely go over now."

Dan was hanging with desperate courage to the rope that he had caught.

"Such grit! What a pity!"

By this time the jackies had reached the platform, but they could be of no assistance to their shipmate. Dan was hanging twenty feet out from where they were.

He seemed to have lost his bearings, and, for the moment, appeared not to realize where he was. Little by little his power of reasoning returned to him, while all hands were watching him with breathless interest. The stay to which he was clinging extended forward to the foremast, running from the middle of the mainmast to the middle of the foremast.

Hand over hand the plucky lad began moving along the rope brace. It was slow progress at best. At last he was directly over the huge funnels. Hot, suffocating smoke, belching from the funnels, hid him from the view of those on deck. The smoke and coal gas well-nigh strangled the boy, but he kept on. A cheer reached his ears as he at last emerged from the cloud of black smoke.

"Keep it up, Dynamite! Keep it up!" howled a dozen voices.

"Steady now! Hold to your course. You're on the last lap!"

"Come on, Dan!" howled Sam Hickey, dancing about on his insecure foothold, almost beside himself with excitement.

On the other hand, at that moment, Dan Davis was perhaps the least excited of all that ship's company. He was in full command of himself, though his arms ached and he had to exert great self-control to keep from letting go. Now and then he would pause, hanging by one hand to rest the other arm, then he would go on again, moving more rapidly than before.

"Bridge, there!" roared Sam.

"Aye, aye."

"Can't somebody come aloft to give Davis a hand when he reaches the foremast?"

"Get aloft, there!" bellowed the executive officer.

"Yes, the boy Hickey has more sense than all the rest of we officers down here," exclaimed the captain.

Men ran up the ladders in a squirming white line, and quickly clambered out into the steel rigging. As Dan neared them they stretched forth their hands.

"Only a little way further, matey," they encouraged. "That's the boy! You'll make a tight-rope walker one of these days, only you want to learn to walk with your feet instead of your hands."

"Grab me!" called Dan.

"Got him!" yelled a jackie at the top of his voice.

The word carried to the bridge and to the superstructure, where a hundred or more sailors were crouching trying to peer up into the mist. They broke forth into a wild yell of applause.

In the meantime strong hands had grasped Dan, pulling him in among the steel supports of the cage mast, where they held him while he rested from his great ordeal.

Sam Hickey was dancing a jig on the top of the military mast, yelling as if he had suddenly gone mad.

"The boy is safe, sir," announced the executive officer.

"Thank God!" breathed the captain. "Aloft, there!"

"Aye, aye."

"Is Davis all right?"

"Yes, sir."

"Send him below as soon as he is able."

"Aye, aye, sir."

"I'm able now," said Dan. "I'm going below. I've got to get back to my station."

"All right, matey. Want any help?"

"No; I can get down alone."

Dan's arms ached, and his muscles were pretty well stiffened, as he started to make his way down the rocking mast.

At last he reached the foot of the mast, which was the navigating bridge of the ship, and started to run down the steps to return to his post.

"Davis!" The voice was sharp and commanding.

"Aye, aye, sir," answered the boy, halting and saluting.

"Where are you going?"

"To my post, sir," he answered, as he faced the commanding officer.

"You need not return to your post. There are enough men aloft in the mainmast now. You have done quite enough. How did you happen to fall?"

The boy explained, not omitting the fact that he and Sam were running a race for the tops.

The captain did not rebuke the boy for this, perhaps realizing that Dan had already been severely punished for his foolhardiness.

"That is all for the present. Aloft, there!"

"Aye, aye, sir."

"How about that waterspout!"

The seas were engulfing the ship so that the officers could not see the waterspout at all. They had wholly lost sight of it.

"Yeow! Wow!" yelled a voice far above their heads.

Looking up, they saw the red-headed Sam dancing again, shouting lustily and pointing off the starboard bow.

"Aloft, there, what is it?"

"Waterspout! Waterspout!" howled Hickey.

"Where away?"

"It ain't away at all."

"Where away? Answer, you lubber!"

"Right off the starboard bow, sir. Look out, she's going to hit us! Lo-o-o-o-k out! Ye-ow!"

"Hard aport!" shouted the captain. "Hold fast on the bridge! Look alive, men aft, there! Waterspout coming aboard. Every man look out for himself!"

All tried to do so, but not all were quick enough to get under cover. Only a few of them succeeded.

With a terrifying roar the waterspout swept down on the ship. It towered above them like a huge mountain, bearing to the northeast. It struck the battleship on the starboard bow, sending a shiver through the ship, hurling to the deck

every man who was not clinging to some support.

The twister recoiled after sending tons of water over the ship--recoiled as if to gather strength for a final crushing blow. The quartermaster, who had been holding the steering wheel, had been wrenched from the wheel and hurled down a flight of steps to the spar deck. Not an officer on the bridge was on his feet.

Dan Davis, who had crept up the companionway to get a better view of the waterspout, was huddled against the cage mast, clinging to one of its supports.

All at once he discovered that no one was at the wheel. Without waiting for an order, he leaped forward. Grasping the wheel, he swung it sharply to port. The thought suddenly occurred to him that the best way to meet the twister would be head-on. He did not know what the result of such a meeting might be, nor did he have time to think. As it was, the ship was laboring in the trough of a terrific sea, and might be swamped.

The bow of the ship pierced the base of the waterspout. With a mighty roar the towering column of water suddenly collapsed. The sound was like thunder, as tons upon tons of water beat down on the decks. The whole ship seemed to be under water. Everything movable was moving. The officers lay prone upon the narrow navigating bridge, clinging to its stanchions for their lives.

At the wheel a hatless boy, fairly swimming in salt water, was working to get a foothold that would enable him to swing the ship. At last he managed to wrap both legs about the wheel frame, and there he clung, tugging at the wheel with all his strength.

Very slowly, at first, the ship began to respond. First the battleship seemed to shake itself, trying to throw off the great weight of water upon its decks; then its blunt, stubborn bow rose clear of the seas. A moment, and the shining decks themselves cleared the water, every scupper discharging a green salt flood overboard, every deck below soaked with brine.

The captain was the first to regain his feet. He sprang up, his eyes taking in the after part of the ship in one sweeping, comprehensive view. Then his eyes rested on the man at the wheel.

"Davis, is that you?"

"Yes, sir."

"You weren't at the wheel before we were struck?"

"No, sir."

"How did you happen to get there?"

"I guess I must have been washed here, sir."

"Where is the quartermaster who was at the wheel?"

"I saw him falling down the after companionway, sir. I think you will find him on the spar deck, sir."

"You steered us out?"

"Yes, sir."

"Where is the spout?"

"I smashed it, sir."

"You what?"

"Smashed it."

"How?"

"I steered the ship into it."

"You did that?"

"Yes, sir," answered Dan, now expecting that he was in for a severe rebuke.

"Explain."

"I saw, immediately after the wheelman had been swept away, that the ship was in a bad position. The waterspout was going to hit us, quartering on the starboard bow. It seemed to me that the best thing to do would be to split it. I didn't know whether I could do it or not, but I made up my mind to try. There was no one to ask, nor time to do so. I had to do something in a hurry."

"So you rammed the waterspout, eh?"

"I did, sir."

"What do you think of that, Coates?" as the executive officer picked himself up, wet, capless, very much the worse for his encounter with the waters of the twister.

"What is that, sir?"

"Davis rammed the twister."

The captain then went on to relate in detail what had happened while they were on their faces, holding fast to the bridge stanchions to keep from going overboard.

"Davis, I shall have to commend you again and for this--perhaps saving the ship--I shall send your name in to the department. Quartermaster, here!"

"Aye, aye, sir."

"Man the wheel!"

CHAPTER XIII

TWO ARE MISSING

Night came on; dark, heavy clouds were hanging low in the sky, the wind shrieking dismally.

The jackies, however, were happy. They were not disturbed by the roar of the gale. So rough was the sea, however, and so heavy the roll of the ship, that it was decided not to set the mess tables for the evening meal. The men sat around on the lower decks, legs crossed, balancing themselves and their plates of food, joking and laughing over the little mishaps of their companions.

Down in the captain's quarters matters were little better. Most of the time the commanding officer was holding to his own table with both hands. A plate of hot soup had just turned turtle, landing in his lap, soiling the spotless uniform that he had put on after returning from the bridge. The officers in the ward room, where all the other commissioned officers eat, were having their own troubles.

All at once there was a yell. Some tumbled over backwards in their chairs, while others sprang up and scrambled out of harm's way, as a huge object came hurling through the air. It landed full force on the mess table, the table going down beneath it with a mighty crash.

The dark object was the ward-room's upright piano. The captain, hearing the crash, rushed in from his quarters adjoining.

"What's wrong?" he shouted.

"Nothing, captain. There's music in the air, that's all," answered the ship's surgeon. This put all hands in good humor, even though a quantity of china had been utterly ruined.

China was not troubling the jolly tars forward, nor were they disturbed over the wet decks on which they were sitting. Every man of them was soaked with salt water.

In the galley kettles were sliding across the range, and from there out on to the deck. Food was everywhere, except where it should have been.

Suddenly the jackies on the seven-inch gun deck set up a yell of delight. A steward descending a ladder carrying a kettle of hot beans suddenly lost his hold.

With a howl, he plunged headlong. Sam Hickey chanced to be right in the path of the human projectile. The kettle of boiling hot beans turned turtle just as it was hovering over the red-headed boy's head. Down came kettle, beans and all over Sam's head. Part of the contents scattered, catching other unlucky jackies who were sitting near him.

Hickey's yells could be heard above the roar of the storm, as he scrambled madly to his feet, tugging at the kettle to get it off his head. The handle had dropped down under his chin.

Shipmates sprang to his rescue, else Sam would have been seriously burned. As it was, his face was red and swollen, his hair was matted with beans and his eyes glared angrily.

"You did that on purpose," he howled, starting for the unlucky steward.

"Yes, of course he did," urged several voices. "He ought to be dumped overboard for the fishes."

"No; he's too tough, they wouldn't eat him."

The steward himself settled the question of his disposal, by scrambling up the companionway as fast as he could go. He knew the jackies well enough to be aware that they would like nothing better than having some sport with the "sea cook," as they call every man connected with the kitchen department.

"Hello, Sam, what's the matter?" questioned Dan Davis, as he shot across the deck head first, having lost his grip on the frame of the water-tight door where he had been standing for a moment.

"Look out! Here comes the dynamite projectile!" warned a voice.

Dan landed among a group of sailors, and what food they had in hand was scattered all over that part of the deck. The next second he found himself sprawling in the middle of the deck, where they had hurled him.

Hickey grinned.

"What's the matter with you?"

"I must have been fired with a charge of smokeless powder, as I don't see any smoke," laughed Dan. "Well, you are a sight! What happened to you?"

"Beans!" jeered the jackies.

"I thought you looked like one of the fifty-seven varieties," laughed Dan Davis, at which there was a loud uproar.

"Throw him overboard. It's them kind of jokes that causes waterspouts and earthquakes. Don't you ever dare say anything like that again, Dynamite, or we'll forget you're a shipmate and bounce you!"

"You had better begin right now, then," retorted Dan defiantly. "I'm ready for any kind of a row you want to start. It's a good night for a rough-and-tumble. We haven't anything else to do. Come on, if you are looking for trouble."

Dan squared off as if ready for a fight. Just then the ship gave a heavy lurch. The Battleship Boy disappeared under one of the big guns. His messmates hauled him out by the feet, amid shouts of laughter, and began tossing him about as if he were a ball.

Davis took his rough treatment good-naturedly.

"Thought you were going to fight?" jeered the jackies.

"No; like Sam Hickey, I've changed my mind," laughed Dan.

"Hark!"

"What is it?" All hands stopped to listen.

"It's the bugle. They're piping some squad to quarters. I wonder what's up now?"

"That's the whaleboat crews they're piping up," nodded Dan. "I guess the boats are being washed away."

"There goes another call."

"Starboard seven-inch gun crew called to quarters!" shouted Gunner's Mate Davis. "Jump for it, boys!"

There was a rush of those of the gun crew who were on the deck with Dan. They well knew that something was wrong at their station. For all they knew they might have been called to work the gun; still such a call was hardly to be looked for during the mess hour.

Reaching the seven-inch turret, they found the place flooded with salt water. With every lurch of the ship a great column was forced in, as if through a gigantic hose. The first charge of this caught Sam Hickey, sweeping him clear out into the corridor.

Sam came back, choking and coughing, yelling at every one in his excitement.

"Attention!" roared the gun captain.

"Attention!" repeated Dan Davis. He saw instantly what had happened.

"The steel buckler plates have been wrenched loose!"

These buckler plates are employed to cover the opening in the side of the ship about the guns. Without them the ship would be flooded in heavy weather.

It was not an easy task that had been set for the gun crew. Every man knew that.

"Who will volunteer to do the work outside?" demanded the gun captain.

"I'll attend to that," answered Dan promptly.

"Me, too," added Sam, without hesitation. "I can't get any wetter than I am."

"You'll get something besides wet," said the captain. "Very well, you two go out. Hold fast! Look out for yourselves."

The Battleship Boys were climbing from the turret ere the words were out of his mouth.

"Don't try any tricks, Sam," advised Davis.

"Better take that advice to yourself. If I remember rightly you were running a race, or something, when you fell off the cage mast to-day. Woof!"

A heavy sea smashed into them, laying them flat on the deck. The boys hung on until the sea had rolled over them. They were high up on the superstructure, where the seven-inch guns are located. Not a thing could they see in the darkness, but they knew their way about as well as if it had been broad daylight.

The buckler plates were thrust in from the inside of the turret, the duty of the lads outside being to make fast the catches which were employed to hold the buckler plates in position in heavy weather. Under ordinary conditions it was not necessary to set these emergency catches. It had not been done in this instance, consequently the plates were battered in, flooding the deck and all that part of the ship.

"All ready out here!" shouted Dan.

With a grating sound the bucklers were shoved into position.

"Click!"

The catches snapped into place.

"Right!" bellowed Hickey, placing his lips close to the side of the muzzle of the gun.

"Come, let's get out of here," called Dan.

"Look out for yourself. Duck! Grab!" roared Sam.

"Wha--what----"

Dan did not complete the sentence. A wall of water struck the turret with a report like that of the three-inch forward rifles.

From the depths of the great green wave came a muffled yell. Sam Hickey's grip had been wrenched loose from the guard rope at the side of the muzzle of the seven-inch.

At the same instant both lads felt themselves lifted from their feet.

Then down, down they dropped. It seemed to them that hours were consumed in that terrible drop. They felt themselves falling into an abyss of the sea. Such was not the case, however, though their situation was, at that instant, every bit as serious as if they had in reality been falling into the sea. As it was, they were being swept toward it.

The smash of the wave having carried them from their feet, rolled them along the upper or spar deck, dropping them down some twenty feet to the quarter-deck, that was all wash. Fortunately the water below caught them, or they might have been killed in the twenty-foot fall to the quarter-deck.

Suddenly Sam came into violent contact with something that he gripped anxiously. That something did not give way. Dan met with a similar experience, and there the lads hung, neither knowing what had become of the other, seas smiting them, threatening every second to hurl them on and into the sea itself.

In the meantime those of the gun crew had returned to the gun deck to dry their clothes. The gun captain, however, waited for the return of the boys who had gone outside.

"I wonder what has become of those boys," he mused, peering out through the hatchway that he opened the merest crack. There was neither sight nor sound of them.

"Davis! Hickey!" he bellowed.

His effort brought no answer.

The gun captain knew no personal fear. He stepped out, closing the hatch behind him quickly. He clung there, watching, listening, then shouting. All at once he turned and hurried back to the gun deck. Sending word to the executive officer, he informed that officer of the absence of the two boys.

The captain heard the news a moment later, and a stir ran all through the ship.

"They're overboard. Nothing could save them, sir," advised the executive officer.

"Man the searchlights. Both tops!" commanded the captain, now all activity. "Pipe all hands to stations!"

CHAPTER XIV

DOWN THE AMMUNITION HOIST

The searchlights flashed out over the troubled sea. Nothing but water--angry, foaming water--could be seen. Not a sign that looked as if it might be a man were they able to pick up.

"They're trying to find us. They think we have gone overboard," muttered Dan Davis. He uttered a loud shout.

At that instant there sounded another shout close by him. At first he thought it was the echo of his own voice. All at once he made the discovery that some one else was near.

"Hello!" shouted Dan.

"Hello yourself!"

"Is that you, Sam?"

"No, it's only part of me. Most of me has been blown overboard. That you, Dan?"

"Ye-e-e-s," answered Davis in a choking voice. "Yell, Sam, if you've got any voice left. Yell for your life. They don't see us."

Hickey uttered a lusty howl. Dan saw at once that the men in the tops were unable to depress the searchlights enough to sweep the quarter-deck with the light rays.

"They don't see us, Sam. Yell louder."

"I'll have to borrow a stomach pump to jerk the salt water out of me, before I can yell any more at all. I'm afloat, inside and out, and not a compass to guide me. Where are we?"

Dan felt about him cautiously.

"I think we are astern somewhere. Judging from the position of the searchlights, I think we must be somewhere on the quarter-deck."

"How'd we get here?"

Another wave made it impossible for Davis to answer for a minute or so. When finally he had gotten his breath he said:

"I think we must have been washed here. But----"

"Say, let's get out of here, Dan."

"But how we ever dropped from the topside to the quarter-deck without being killed is more than I can figure out."

"I'm going to try to cross the deck."

"Don't do it, Sam. You will be swept into the sea instantly. Wait! I have a plan."

"What is it?"

"Can you work your way along the rope railing to where I am?"

"I can swim over to you."

"Come on, then, but keep tight hold of the rail."

"Here's the flagstaff," shouted Sam. "I've got my bearings now."

"You will need something more than that to get you out of this scrape. Come up close to me and I'll tell you what to do."

"Here I am. Where are you?"

Dan reached out a hand, grasping the arm of his companion.

"There ought to be a rope right at the foot of the staff, here. Yes, here it is. Hold fast to me, so I don't go overboard, while I untie the knot."

"What are you going to do?"

"I'll show you in a minute."

Dan made the rope fast to a cleat on the after stanchion, then took a twist about his own arm with the free end.

"Now, I want you to stand right here until I give three tugs on the rope."

"What are you going to do?"

"I don't know what I am going to do, but I'm going to try to get to the twelve-inch turret with this rope."

"You'll have to swim for it, then."

"I expect to have to swim part of the way, but leave that to me. When I give three long tugs on the rope you start working along it."

"But where will we go? The water-tight doors are fastened on the inside; we can't get in. We shall be swept from the deck. I guess I'll stay where I am, and hang on until morning."

"No; you can't do it. You will be washed overboard. Watch the rope. I may go over, too, but you can tell by the feel of the rope, and if you think I'm going over, haul in. I'll yell, too. The wind is this way and you can hear me. Now, don't bother me. I'm going in a minute."

Dan hung to the rail, rope in hand, watching the roll of the ship, which he was obliged to observe not by sight, but by the sense of feeling.

All at once, as the stern rose into the air, he darted forward. He was in water nearly up to his waist, but as the quarter-deck rose the water rushed to the sides of the ship in a raging flood.

Suddenly Dan felt himself being drawn backward. At first he could not understand the meaning of it. Then he realized. Sam was hauling him in.

"Stop it! Stop it!" yelled Davis.

Sam kept on hauling. Losing his foothold on the slippery deck, Dan went down. At the same time the quarter-deck shipped a big wave and Dan was swimming blindly. Through it all he managed to keep hold of the rope with one hand. He was being dragged along the deck so fast that he could not get to his feet, even after the water had receded a little.

Finally, yelling at the top of his voice, Hickey finished his work, grabbed Dan from the deck and slammed him against the rail.

"I got you! I got you! I saved your life, didn't I?"

"Sam--Sam Hickey, you're the biggest fool I ever bumped into in all my life!"

"A fool--a--see here, is that all I get for saving you----"

"What did you haul me back for?"

"Because you yanked on the rope."

"I did nothing of the sort."

"You did."

"I didn't."

"We--we won't argue the question. I--I haven't enough breath left in me to argue. Now, next time, don't you pull on the rope until you hear me yell, or until the rope swings way over to port. I am going to run quartering so that if I get caught by another wave I will be washed toward the twelve-inch turret. Understand?"

"Sure, I understand."

Waiting until the stern rose again, Dan made another dash. This time he had, as he had planned to do the other time, reached a spot opposite the turret before the deck sank under another wave. He was washed right up against the turret when the wave did come.

The instant the wave left him, he took a turn about a big ring-bolt on the turret.

"Sam! Sam!"

A faint "hello" was wafted to him on the gale.

"Come on!"

Dan waited and waited, but no Sam came. He began to grow worried.

"Sam!"

"Yeow!"

"Come on. I'm waiting for you."

A strain on the rope told Davis that his companion had started, and a few minutes later Sam Hickey stood beside him.

"What's the matter, Sam?"

"Nothing, except that I'm wet."

"Why didn't you come when I called you?"

"I was watching the sparks up there on the wireless aerials. Say, it is just like a lot of lightning bugs. Did you ever watch the sparks at night?"

"Yes, but not when I was trying to save my life and another's. I don't believe it was half worth the effort. I am beginning to think that there doesn't much of anything matter, so far as you are concerned. Let's get inside now."

"How are you going to do it?"

"We will climb up under the turret, through the manhole."

"I never thought of that."

Dan unfastened the opening on the under side of the turret projection, and, sending Sam ahead, climbed in after, closing the opening behind them. It was intensely dark in the turret and the room was so small that it was with difficulty that the boys could find their way through.

For a minute or so they were engaged in climbing up to get into the enclosure from where a ladder led down into the lower part of the turret.

"Now, Sam, be very careful that you don't fall. This is a bad place to be fooling around in when it is dark. I wish I could turn on the electric lights here, but I don't know where the button is."

"Shall I light a match?"

"No, sir!"

"Why not?"

"Supposing there should chance to be some powder scattered on the floor, and----"

"Wow! That would be a nice thing, wouldn't it? There'd be an explosion, eh?"

"There might be. Better take the chance of bumping our heads----"

"Say, Dan, where are you going?"

"I am going to follow you. Come here. Give me your hand."

"What for?"

"Get in here. Make yourself as small as possible."

Hickey crawled into the small opening, though he did not know where he was.

"What is this place you're stowing me in?" he demanded.

"It's the ammunition hoist," answered Dan, as he began to pull down on a rope.

The ammunition hoist for the twelve-inch guns is a sort of dumb waiter that is raised and lowered by pulling on a rope

attached to its top and bottom.

A few minutes later the guard on duty in the magazine corridor was startled by a creaking and groaning sound. After listening a moment, he traced the sound to the ammunition hoist.

All at once the hoist came down with a bang, spilling Hickey full length on the floor of the corridor. The guard made a grab for the newcomer, and, at the same instant, Sam Hickey wrapped both arms about the legs of the marine who was on guard duty.

That worthy went down on top of Sam. For a minute there was a lively tussle, but ere it had come to an end, the ammunition hoist shot down again and Dan Davis leaped out into the passageway. He gazed in astonishment at the two men on the floor.

"Get up, Sam! What in the world are you trying to do?"

Sam threw the guard off.

"This chocolate candy soldier jumped on me when I came down. Let me at him----"

Davis pulled his companion away.

"You'll have to come with me," announced the guard. "I shall be obliged to arrest you. Your conduct is suspicious."

"Well, I like that!" grumbled Sam. "First you get tossed overboard and then you get arrested because you didn't go drown yourself. I won't be arrested."

"Take us to the master-at-arms; he understands," said Dan.

They were led to the upper deck, where they were suddenly confronted by Captain Farnham.

"What's this, what's this?" he demanded.

The marine guard explained.

"You may release them, guard. Now, lads, explain how you got into the ship? I can see from your appearance that you must have had a hard time."

"We got in through the twelve-inch turret," explained Dan, after having told the captain of their experiences.

"Most remarkable. I have come to the conclusion that there is no use in worrying about you boys. It is evident that there is nothing on land or water that can kill you. But you are shivering, Davis."

"I am a little cold," admitted Dan.

"Go to the chief steward and tell him I order that coffee be made for you. How about you, Hickey? Are you in a chill also?"

"No, sir; my hair keeps me warm, sir. At least that's what the boatswain's mate says."

The captain laughed heartily.

"Run along, both of you, and get warmed up. It will soon be time to turn in. Good night."

"Good night, sir," answered the Battleship Boys, saluting and turning away.

CHAPTER XV

LAND HO!

The following days passed uneventfully. The storm abated late the next afternoon, for the ship was running into southern seas where the skies took on a deeper blue, the water a golden hue under the southern sun.

One afternoon a few days later the lookout sang out, in a voice that had a note of gladness in it:

"Land ho!"

"Where away?"

"Three points off the port bow."

Glasses were leveled in the direction indicated, and the jackies on the forecastle, who had heard the cry, lined the rail, scanning the horizon with shaded eyes. But the land was too far away to be seen from where they were standing.

"There it is!" cried Dan, half an hour later, as a thin blue line appeared to rise from the sea off the port bow. "What land is it?"

"Spain, I reckon," answered a shipmate. "Leastwise, it was Spain when I was along here last time."

"Spain, did he say?" questioned Hickey.

"Yes."

For a few moments the Battleship Boys gazed in silence. It was their first glimpse of the shores of that far-away country. After a time the rocky shores grew into plain sight.

"That is Portugal over there," said a boatswain's mate. "We ought to sight Lisbon before dark."

Dan and Sam looked into each other's eyes.

"We are seeing things for sure, aren't we, eh?" grinned Hickey.

"Yes; it is a wonderful experience, well worth all the hardships we have gone through."

"I wonder if they are going to stop?"

"I don't know. Do we make port anywhere along here?" Dan asked of the boatswain's mate.

"I don't know. The captain hasn't taken me into his confidence yet."

"Can you blame him?" came back Dan Davis, quick as a flash.

"Look here, Little Dynamite, don't get fresh," answered the boatswain's mate, with a good-natured laugh. "I'll tell you, though, that it is more than likely that we'll tie up to a tree somewhere along here. We need some repairs after the banging around we've been having for the last two weeks. We'll have a field day when we do, and don't you forget that."

"I don't want that kind of a field day," spoke up Sam. "Field day aboard ship means work, and lots of it."

"Lisbon lies off yonder, in that depression in the shore line that you can make out if your eyes are good, boys," said the boatswain's mate, pointing off the port bow.

"I see it, I see it," cried Sam.

"And I," added Dan. They gazed long and searchingly. "I was in hopes we would run in and anchor there."

"The captain is making for some other place. We are grinding along at a nineteen-knot gait. That ought to bring us up somewhere about to-morrow night."

"Have you any idea where?"

"Yes; I've got an idea, but I guess you had better figure it out for yourself."

After mess that night Dan got out a map and studied it carefully, after having stolen a glance at the standardized

compass high up on the after part of the superstructure.

"I believe we are headed for Gibraltar," he said to himself.

"You've guessed it, lad," said the mate, coming up behind him. "I thought you'd get your course figured out. It's better for a man to get in the habit of looking those things up for himself. He doesn't forget them when he gets them that way."

That night the Battleship Boys turned in full of anticipation. They were heading into strange seas. There was hope that they soon would have an opportunity to go ashore and see something of the people and the life that thus far they knew only from the books they had read.

The first thing in the morning, after getting their baths and dressing, the boys ran out on deck. There, looming faintly through the morning mist, the mighty rock of Gibraltar rose from the sea.

"I see it," breathed Dan Davis, in a tone that was almost awe. "That is Gibraltar, Sam."

"Yes, anybody could see it."

"Isn't it wonderful?"

"I'll tell you after I get a closer look at the place," replied the red-headed boy.

"I never thought to see so grand a sight."

"What's that thing on top of it, Dan? They must have a church up there."

"It must be the signal tower. I remember one of the men telling about that. It is fourteen hundred feet above the sea level."

Hickey uttered a low whistle.

"I'd hate to walk in my sleep up there."

"Up there they keep a constant watch on all ships coming in from the sea."

"And do you think they see us?"

"Of course they do, and they know who we are, and where we are bound probably better than we do. I wonder whether we are going through the straits?"

"The Straits of Gibraltar?"

"Yes."

"Of course we are. We are going to all the places down around here, I heard the Old Man and the executive officer talking about it when we were up off Boulogne. We're going all the way around Africa before we head back for America. It is going to be a long cruise."

"I know that, Sam. We are going to be away from home for a full year. Think of that. But when we get back, we are going to have a leave to go to Piedmont and see all the folks."

A bugle call piped all hands to clean ship. They were nearing port and everything must be in perfect condition. There was need of work, for the long storm had left the ship in bad condition.

The early view of the famous rock gave the impression of a barren cliff, but now little patches of emerald green began to grow out of the great gray pile.

"Look at the guns sticking out!" exclaimed Hickey, later in the day, as the ship drew nearer and nearer.

"Wonderful!" breathed Dan.

"I don't see anything so wonderful about it. It looks business-like, that's all," said Sam. "Say, do you know what I'll bet I could do?"

"What?"

"I'll bet that in three shots I could knock the block off the top of that mountain with the seven-inch."

"You mean the lookout station up there?"

"Yes."

Dan surveyed it with critical eyes.

"If you did you would have to show better marksmanship than you have thus far."

"Marksmanship? Why, I haven't fired a gun since I've been in the Navy."

"You have had dotter practice, which is practically the same thing."

"There's the town."

As they neared the southern point they could see the white walls of the city glistening in the sun. Everywhere one looked new sights came into view, and not for one moment did the Battleship Boys cease wondering over what they saw.

A low, dark line attracted Sam's attention, far off to the right of them.

"I guess that must be the Dark Continent," he said with a laugh.

Dan gazed fixedly at the point to starboard indicated by his companion.

"I think you are right. That must be Africa over there. Just think of it! Would you like to be there, Sam?"

"I don't know," admitted Hickey. "Somehow, I always think of snakes when Africa is mentioned."

"There's the harbor," cried Dan, interrupting.

"And I see some ships there, too."

"I believe they are war ships," added Dan. "Yes; look, look, Sam! Look!"

"Where, where? What, what?" demanded Sam, dancing about excitedly, looking first at his companion, then toward the harbor.

"The Flag! The Flag!"

"Oh, is that all?" said Sam in a disappointed tone.

"Isn't that enough? Thousands of miles from home and to come in sight of the Stars and Stripes! Wouldn't that send the blood coursing through your veins?" demanded Dan, with flashing eyes.

"Yes; I guess it would make some folks blood run cold. What ships are those?"

"Let me see; there are three of them."

"I know that--I can count. What I want to know is who they are?"

"I don't know, Sam. Here comes the master-at-arms. I'll ask him."

Dan did so.

"Those are the 'Idaho,' 'Georgia' and 'Wisconsin.' They are to join us here for the rest of our cruise."

"Thank you," answered Dan.

By this time they were approaching the harbor, and all work was suspended for the moment.

"Boom!" roared the "Long Island's" six-pounder. "Boom!" answered the other ships of the fleet. "Boom!" roared a gun from the mountain. The air seemed full of smoke and powder. Bands played, jackies shouted themselves hoarse, flags fluttered down from gaffs, only to go up again on the after gaffs. The American ships were at anchor, the three already in having only just arrived.



CHAPTER XVI

ON GIBRALTAR'S PEAK

That afternoon the Battleship Boys got leave to go ashore. Their good conduct always earned a quick shore leave for them when many others were denied it.

The quaint old semi-Moorish town at the base of the great mountain appealed to the lads and impressed them deeply. Red-coated British soldiers were everywhere about, wearing their jaunty caps tilted to one side, carrying their swagger-sticks airily, and now and then deigning a glance at the Battleship Boys.

"Do you know what those fellows remind me of?" questioned Hickey.

"Not being able to read your mind, I cannot say," answered Dan.

"That cap, at least, reminds me of the organ grinder's monkey that passes the hat for pennies. But they are the real thing, aren't they?"

"The caps?"

"No, the monk--I mean the soldiers."

"Boom!" roared a gun.

There was no answer to it, and Dan, wondering, asked a citizen what the meaning of the shot might be.

"One o'clock, me lad," was the answer.

Sam laughed aloud.

"Do--do they announce the hours here by firing guns?" he questioned.

"They do."

"Then--then I guess I would prefer to sleep at sea. What do you think of that?"

"It certainly is a curious custom," agreed Dan.

The boys wandered about the quaint town, peering into out-of-the-way places, talking with a soldier here and there, when they found one who was willing to unbend sufficiently to answer their questions.

What impressed them most was the tremendous masses of masonry, parapets and guns. In whatever direction the boys glanced their eyes rested on the frowning muzzles of big guns.

"How would you like to have all those guns turned on a ship in which you were?" asked Dan.

"If they all shot straight it would be all day with us. But, Dan, don't you think that rock is a pretty good mark itself?"

"Yes. And if it is all like what it is here at the bottom, I think a shot from a seven or eight-inch would crumble it. I----"

"Look!" cried Sam.

What appeared to be a basket of some sort was rising in the air far above their heads.

"What is it?"

"It looks like some kind of air-ship. But that cannot be possible."

"There's some one in it!"

"Are you sure?"

"Yes," answered the red-headed boy, now all excitement.

"I know now what it is," cried Dan. "I've read about that--no, I haven't read about it either. A jackie on the 'Long Island' told me about it. That is a metal basket in which the signal men and watchmen go up to the lookout station that you see on top of the mountain."

"You don't say," muttered Sam in amazement. "How does it soar through the air that way?"

"It doesn't. It is on a cable that is pulled up by some sort of power."

"Let's go over and look at the thing," urged Sam.

Dan was willing. He was as curious as was his companion, and even more enthusiastic, for all this was new and full of interest.

It was after making numerous inquiries that they found their way to the landing platform from which the basket started on its way upward. By this time the metal basket had returned. There was room in it for four men. The boys looked it over curiously and enviously.

"How would you like to take a ride in it?" questioned Dan, smiling into the solemn face of his companion.

"I'd give a dollar and a half," answered Sam earnestly. "Let's get in and look the thing over."

"I am afraid strangers are not allowed to do that. Yes, we'll get in. We can imagine we are going up to the top of the mountain, anyway."

Both boys climbed into the basket, gazing up into the air, where the thread-like cable grew smaller and smaller until it was lost to view entirely.

"I wonder how it works?" questioned Sam, turning to the mechanism of the basket.

"Perhaps by electricity. Sh-h-h!"

"What is it?"

"Some one is coming," whispered Dan.

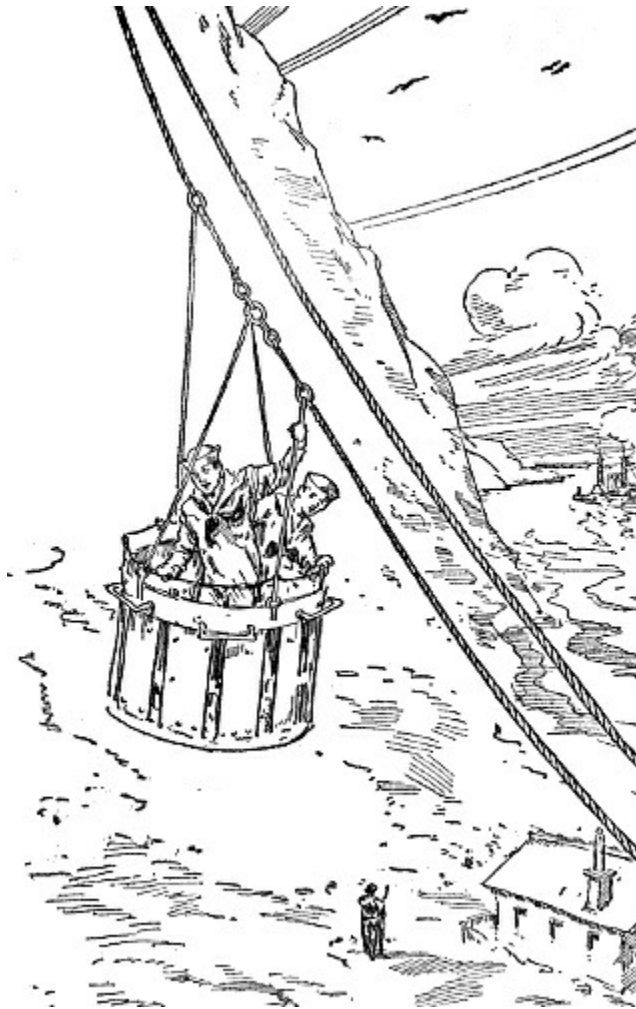
The boys crouched down out of sight in the basket, laughing delightedly as they nudged each other.

"They'll be surprised, if they find us here," said Sam.

"Keep still. He's going away now, whoever he is." Peering over the basket, Davis saw that the man, a soldier, was walking rapidly down to the engine house, just below the landing platform. The man disappeared within.

"Look out! We're moving!" howled Sam.





"We're Going Up!" Howled Sam.

A glance over the side showed the platform dropping from beneath them at a rapid rate.

Sam made a move as if to jump from the basket.

"Sit down!" commanded Dan. "Do you want to kill yourself?"

"But we're going up," protested Hickey.

"We can't help it. We don't know how to stop the car, and even if we did, I doubt whether we could do it from here. I have an idea that the car is controlled from that engine house down there. I know now why the man came up to look at the car. He wanted to see that everything was right before he started the basket upward."

"Do--do you think we are going to the top?"

"It looks very much that way," answered Dan, with a mirthless laugh.

The basket appeared to be gaining a little speed as it moved upward. It was swaying giddily from side to side, and had the boys not been used to being in high places on a rolling ship, they no doubt would have been made sick by the swinging of the basket.

"Hurrah!" cried Dan. "I know what I'll do!"

"Are you going to jump overboard?"

"No. Do you see the 'Long Island' lying out there in the harbor?"

"Sure I see her."

"I'm going to wig-wag to her."

Dan stood up while Hickey held him. Then Davis began making signals to the ship with his handkerchief.

"There they go. Some one is answering," cried Davis in high glee. "Won't they be surprised?"

"What are they saying?"

"I can't read the message so far away. I wish we had a glass."

"Come on up, fellows. We're having a ride up to the clouds," wig-wagged Dan.

Glasses already were trained on them from more than one ship in the harbor.

"Two enlisted men going up on the cable, sir," said the officer of the deck to the captain of the "Long Island."

"Who are they?"

"I'll ascertain, sir."

Dan caught a flash of the signal flag as the sun shone down on it, and, with quick intuition, he understood that the ship was asking who they were. He signaled their names back.

"I can't read you so far away. Have no glasses," wig-wagged Dan. "Going up by accident."

The information was quickly conveyed to the captain of the "Long Island."

"Those boys are both wired for electricity," laughed the commanding officer. "All they need is a dynamo to set them in operation, and they usually carry the dynamo about with them."

"I'm afraid they will get into trouble with the authorities, sir," said the executive officer.

"Why so?"

"They have no business to go up there. The English government is, as you know, very secretive and very strict about its fortifications here at Gibraltar."

"Never mind, Coates. Leave that to the lads. They have a way of getting out of scrapes."

In the meantime the swaying basket was mounting higher and higher into the air. So lost were the Battleship Boys in admiration of the wonderful view unfolded before them that they almost forgot to take note of their sensations.

A gun was fired from somewhere below them. The boys instinctively threw their hands to their ears. It sounded as if the gun were right beside them.

"We are a pair of landlubbers," announced Dan Davis, with a sheepish grin.

"I thought it was right here."

"So did I, for a minute," answered Dan. "Sound travels up fast and strong, you know. There is the signal tower. We shall be up there pretty soon. Look out for a row when we get there, Sam."

"I'm ready for any old kind of a row. I'm having the time of my life this morning."

Looking up with shaded eyes, they saw the lookouts examining their basket with their glasses.

"They have spotted us," said Dan.

"I don't care. Let them spot. Maybe they will know us next time they see us."

The basket mounted the last stage of the journey, going more and more slowly. At last it reached the landing. Dan was the first to leap from the car, followed quickly by Hickey.

"Good morning," he greeted, coming to a salute, as he found himself facing three red-coated soldiers.

"Who are you?"

"Men from the U.S.S. 'Long Island.'"

"What are you doing here?"

"Just taking a little pleasure trip," answered Hickey, before Dan could open his mouth to explain. "You've got a fine place up here, but it must be rather drafty in winter time. I never did like drafts at that time of the year. Do you know----"

"Get back into that basket!" interrupted the lookout sternly. "You have no business, up here."

"Well, I must say you fellows are not very hospitable," grumbled Sam. "Can't we take a look around your shack?"

"You cannot. You will be lucky if something worse doesn't happen to you."

"I am sorry if we have done anything wrong," spoke up Davis. "We got into the basket to look it over and the machinery started. But that is no reason why you should be so gruff about it."

"Get in there!"

"Come on; he's a grouch," exclaimed Sam. "I'd rather be viewing the scenery on the way down than standing here looking at that. Why, he needs only a cake of soap in his hand to make a full-page ad. of him."

Sam made a dive for the basket.

"Start your machinery going as soon as you want to," said Dan. "We are ready."

There followed a peculiar grinding sound. The basket began to move, gaining speed as it proceeded. It was going down much faster than it had ascended.

The boys waved their hands in farewell to the grouchy sentry.

"That's what I should term a formal call," announced Davis with a laugh.

"It wasn't a call at all; it was a call down," retorted Sam. "Wow! Just look over the side!"

Dan took one peep, then withdrew his head.

"What a fall that would be," he breathed.

"Yes, we'd be the Batteredship Boys instead of the Battleship Boys, were we to fall down the rest of the way," jeered Hickey.

"That was an awful joke, Sam; but perhaps it is better to get a thing like that out of your system. My, but we're going fast!"

The basket seemed to be gaining momentum every second. Sam Hickey's hair was rising, his cap having soared away on the breeze.

"Stop it!" howled Sam.

"I'd like to, but I can't."

"Put on the brakes! There must be a brake. Do something!"

"Do something yourself. I don't know how the machine works."

"We are nearing the bottom. I think the car has slackened its speed some. I see that I've got to do whatever is done here, or we'll both land in the middle of the bay with a loud splash," retorted Sam.

Hickey ran his hands over the mechanism, finally discovering a lever on the outside of the basket.

"Here it is. Here's the brake. Now you'll see me steer the old tub. I'll make a landing that would make our quartermaster green with envy."

"Be careful. We are nearly at the bottom now, Sam. I think it will slow down without any effort on our part. That evidently is the way the basket always comes down."

Sam gave the lever a shove.

"Shut it off! What have you done?" yelled Dan.

The basket shot forward, as if impelled by some sudden force.

"I--I can't. The--the thing won't work."

"You've done it this time," groaned Davis.

"You've killed us both----"

"Wow!" howled Hickey.

Dan made a grab for his companion just as Sam's heels were disappearing over the side of the basket. Davis missed the heels, then he followed Hickey, while the basket was smashed with terrific force against some solid object. The boys shot from the basket, turning somersaults in the air as they plunged downward.

They did not cry out, but each lad believed that his time had come.

CHAPTER XVII

ON THE BLUE MEDITERRANEAN

The boys landed with great force, then shot down the slope that led from the lower landing stage.

The basket, in striking the landing, had been shattered, and it was when the crash came that the Battleship Boys were fired overboard.

By a lucky chance, they had sustained nothing more serious than black and blue spots, torn uniforms and dirty faces.

Dan sprang to his feet, after lying on his face a few seconds.

"Sam! Sam!"

"All present or accounted for," answered the red-headed boy, sitting up and rubbing the dirt from his eyes. Neither of them could see very clearly as yet.

"Well, we are a pair of luck----"

A heavy hand was laid on the shoulder of each.

"Wha--wha--what!" exclaimed Dan, turning sharply.

A file of soldiers confronted them.

"We--we fell down, didn't we?" said Hickey, with a sheepish grin.

A red-coated soldier with a corporal's stripe on his sleeve motioned to his men. They took firm grip on the arms of the Battleship Boys.

"What does this mean?" demanded Dan.

"You are under arrest."

"Arrest?"

"Yes."

"For what?"

"Going where you had no right to go."

"But we meant no harm. And, besides, we are American sailors on board the 'Long Island.'"

"You will explain to the officer of the day."

The boys were taken to the barracks, where they were, after a time, brought before the officer of the day. He wore a white coat instead of a red one, and squinted at the boys through a monocle.

He heard the story of the squad that arrested the Battleship Boys, then, turning to the lads, asked who they were.

Dan stepped forward and explained briefly, telling the officer of their trip up the mountainside. The officer listened gravely.

"You say you are from the 'Long Island?'"

"Yes, sir."

"How long have you been ashore?"

"Not more than two or three hours."

"Have you leave to be ashore?"

Dan's eyes snapped.

"We should not be here if we didn't have leave, sir. You can very easily find out all you wish to know about us, if you will communicate with our ship out there."

"The matter will have to be laid before a higher authority than mine. You have committed a very grave offence. If, as you say, you belong to one of the American ships, your conduct may bring about grave results."

"I am sorry, sir. Perhaps we have done wrong; but if so, it was not intentional. That should count for something."

"Take them away, corporal!"

"May I ask where you are taking us to, sir?" questioned Dan.

"You are going to be locked up."

"What, again?" demanded Hickey.

"So this isn't the first time, eh?" demanded the British officer.

"Will you be good enough to communicate with the ship, sir?" asked Dan.

The officer of the day made no reply, and the boys were led away by the same squad that had picked them up after their thrilling slide down the cable.

They were taken to the barracks, where they were placed in a room and a guard stationed outside.

"Slid right into jail, didn't we?" demanded the red-headed Sam, after they had been left alone. "That was a slide for jail instead of a slide for life. I guess you and I had better stay aboard ship after this, Dan."

"We do have a way of getting ourselves into trouble. I wonder how long the red-coats are going to leave us here?"

Hours dragged on. The boys grew hungry, but no one came near them. They could hear the measured tramp of the sentry on the outside.

In the meantime word had been sent to the battleship "Long Island." Immediately upon receiving the news, Captain Farnham had put off in his motor boat. He was fully convinced that it would be useless to send one of lesser rank than himself to intercede for the Battleship Boys.

Captain Farnham went directly to the office of the Governor-General, before whom he laid the case.

The governor looked serious. He thought he would have to submit the whole case to his own government. Men from a foreign warship had been caught prying into the secrets of the fortification. That was more than serious.

"Nonsense, sir!" exploded the captain. "Mere boyish pranks. I wish them released. I will hold myself personally responsible to your government for your action in releasing them."

The governor shook his head.

"I am afraid the matter is beyond me to settle in that way."

"Governor," said the captain in an impressive tone, "the shore leave of these men expires at nine o'clock to-night. I greatly desire to have them on board by that time. The 'Long Island' sails to-morrow morning at daybreak. I trust that no act of yours will interfere with the movements of United States ships. I bid you good afternoon."

The captain bowed low and left the governor's presence, returning to his own ship at once.

Nothing more was heard from the shore before nightfall, but shortly after dark a patrol entered the room where the Battleship Boys were being held. They took the boys in charge, holding to them tightly, as if expecting the boys would run away, conducting them in silence down to the landing. There a boat belonging to the garrison was awaiting them.

The boys were ordered to get into the boat.

"You will tell your commander that you are not to come ashore again during the ship's stay in this harbor," announced the officer in charge.

Dan stood up in the boat.

"I shall do nothing of the sort. I am not in the habit of giving orders to my captain, sir. If the English government, through its Governor-General, desires to communicate with the captain of the 'Long Island,' let him do so in the proper manner. Good night."

Dan sat down, well satisfied with himself.

"There, Tommy Atkins, will you be good now?" jeered Sam Hickey.

The officer motioned for the boat's crew to pull away, which they did. Half an hour later, just before nine o'clock, the boat drew alongside the "Long Island," and the Battleship Boys ran up the sea ladder, reporting their arrival on board.

That evening they were summoned before the captain, who gave them a friendly talk regarding their duties and conduct when on foreign soil.

"I am not rebuking you, my lads," he said. "I am simply giving you some good advice. Foreign governments, especially monarchies, are very touchy, much more so than is your own country, so be careful."

"We will, sir," answered Dan.

"We will, sir," added Sam Hickey.

"Until the next time," thought Captain Farnham, passing a hand over his face to hide the smile that he could not repress.

At daylight next morning the four ships of the fleet weighed anchor, circled and steamed out of the harbor, soon after poking their noses into the blue waters of the Mediterranean Sea.

Algiers was sighted late in the day, then the ships dropped the shores to port and starboard and settled down to their course. The next port was to be Port Said, the beginning of the Suez canal. The hopes of the Battleship Boys were high. They were about to make their first visit to the Orient, and already they were planning on the shore leave they would have. They had forgotten their experiences during their last shore leave, as perhaps they had the admonition of the captain. They were looking forward to what was before them.

Gun drills and dotter practice were now indulged in for the greater part of the time by the gun crews, and thus far the starboard seven-inch crew held the record for quick, effective work. Every man of the seven-inch crew was looking forward to the day when the crew would be allowed to work their gun with ball and powder, shooting at a real target. There seemed no prospect of such an experience during this cruise, for it was a cruise intended principally to give the men of the fleet a chance to see the world.

After several days of leisurely steaming the low-lying shores of Egypt appeared off the starboard bow, looking golden against the blue of the waters of the Mediterranean. The captain had decided not to stop at Alexandria, but to continue on to Suez and there give his men a long shore leave, when they would have opportunity to see sights that few of the battleship's crew had ever beheld.

The fleet came to anchor off the mouth of the canal at twilight. Port Said lay in a deep shadow, with only the numerous twinkling lights to show that the chief town of the Egyptian province of the isthmus was near at hand.

Songs floated out over the water after the anchors had been let go, these sounds of gayety from the shore causing the jackies of the fleet to look longingly shoreward.

"To-morrow we'll get a leave," predicted Sam, as he and Dan were sitting on their gun turret in the soft evening air.

"Not to-morrow, Sam."

"Why not?"

"I understand no shore leave is to be granted here. We shall be entering the canal early in the morning, on our way to Suez."

"Oh, pshaw! That's a shame."

"We are going to have a good time. You won't tell if I confide something to you?"

"Never."

"We are going to have several days ashore."

"How do you know?"

"I heard the captain telling the doctor. A lot of us are going inland."

"Where to?"

"I don't know. I did not catch that, though the captain mentioned the place. I guess some of the petty officers are going

with us to see that we behave ourselves."

"The idea!" grumbled Sam.

"Just the same, I think you and I need a guardian. We do not seem able to keep out of trouble when we go ashore alone. Do we, now?"

"I guess that isn't a joke, after all," answered Sam, while an appreciative grin overspread his face.

On the following morning the battleship moved slowly into the canal.

The ship's chaplain was shading his eyes, gazing off to the left, when the boys came and leaned over the rail near him.

"Lads, do you know what lies beyond, almost within sight?"

"No, sir."

"It is the Holy Land. Palestine, Damascus, Jerusalem, all are within easy reach even of the guns of this ship."

"Is it possible?"

"Yes; yonder lies Arabia with its great deserts; and there, off the port bow, is Mount Sinai. It is a wonderful country."

"Were you ever there, Padre?" questioned Sam, addressing the chaplain after the manner of all sailors.

"Yes, I once made a pilgrimage there. I wish that I might go again."

"I hear we are going to make a pilgrimage when we get to Suez," said Sam irreverently.

"So I understand."

"Do you know where we are going, sir?" questioned Dan.

"I cannot say. But you will see much."

"Yes, sir, we hope to."

"Yonder, off the starboard beam, lies the valley of the Nile."

"Shall we see it?"

"Not on this cruise, my lads. Some other cruise you may get shore leave when in Alexandria and take a short journey up the stream."

Night had set in before the ships of the fleet emerged from the canal into the Gulf of Suez, where lay the city of Suez. The moonlight glistened on the domes and minarets, making a picture long to be remembered by the Battleship Boys.

Lights twinkled off on the shore; strange sounds floated out across the waters, now a wailing cry, a ripple of laughter, then music and shouting.

Harsh and disturbing came the bugle's command, "Hammocks up."

Regretfully the boys turned away from the rail and sought their billets, for the bugle's command must be obeyed instantly.

Soon the ship settled down to silence and sleep, the only sound on board being the footsteps of the watch as they paced back and forth on their stations.



CHAPTER XVIII

JOLLY TARS IN EGYPT

After the work of the morning had been gotten out of the way next day, the word was passed about that shore parties were to be allowed to leave the ship immediately after the noon mess.

One party was to spend the day in Suez, while the other was to take a longer journey. The Battleship Boys were of the latter party. There were all of fifty of them. When they were ready to start they marched to the quarter-deck, where the captain addressed them.

"I am giving you three days' shore leave, men, in recognition of faithful service and attention to duty. I shall expect you to carry yourselves as befits an American man-of-wars-man. Arrangements have been made for you to visit Cairo and the Pyramids. I shall hope to see you all report on time and happy. That will be all, men. The steamers are waiting to convey you to the landing."

The men, regardless of discipline, gave three cheers for Captain Farnham.

Then they piled over the side of the ship with shouts and laughter, no effort being made to check their merriment.

"It pays to be good," howled Hickey from the bow of the steamer to those still aboard. "If you're good you can go visit your friends, the mummies. I'll give your kindest to the caliphs."

With a shrill whistle the steamers headed for the landing, every jackie on board singing. Reaching the landing, the whole crowd rushed for the train that was waiting to convey them to Cairo.

"Oh, look at the man with the kimono," shouted Dan.

"That's no kimono; that's the conductor's uniform," answered a voice.

There were a number of American tourists aboard the waiting train, and many of these waved American flags from the windows.

The jackies went wild. They hurrahed for America; they hurrahed for the tourists, winding up with a "Hip, hip, hurrah, for the kings of ancient Egypt."

By this time the conductor was charging up and down beside the train as if he had suddenly lost his senses.

"Has he gone crazy?" called Sam.

"No; he is always that way when he is starting the train. He has a fit at every station on the line. He wouldn't think he were earning his salary if he didn't," answered a traveler.

The conductor's robe, a cross between a kimono and a bath robe, was taken in at the waist by a sash, while a bright red fez adorned his head. The fez was the wonder of the jackies.

"That would match your hair, wouldn't it, red-head?" called a shipmate who observed Hickey looking at the fez.

"I'll have it, too, if he gets near enough to me. Maybe you think I don't dare?"

"I dare you."

Sam made a dive for the conductor. Dan Davis stuck out a foot and Hickey measured his length on the ground, right at the feet of the gayly robed conductor.

"Who did that?" demanded the red-headed boy, bounding to his feet, his eyes blazing with wrath.

"I did. Do you think I am going to let you mix us up in any more trouble? If you had done what you proposed, we should have been arrested, the whole crowd of us. Now, behave yourself, Sam Hickey, or I'll thrash you right here before the train starts."

"That's the talk, Dynamite!" called another sailor.

"You can't do it. You can't----" sputtered Sam.

"All aboard!" howled the jackies. At the same time half a dozen of them picked Sam up bodily and tossed him in through a car window. The engine gave a toot, and the train moved off, all hands singing the "Star Spangled Banner."

For some distance the route led along the edge of the Suez canal. Ships were passed, and at sight of one the sailors would lean far out of the windows, swinging their caps and hurrahing.

The conductor hurried along the running board, trying to make the passengers keep their heads in, but he might as well have tried to prevent the wheels going around.

It was like throwing a cat into a bed of catnip and expecting him to be calm. The sailors joked the conductor good-naturedly, but it is doubtful if he understood a word of what they were saying.

"He's got more on his mind than the captain of a battleship," laughed Dan.

"More than the admiral of the fleet, you mean," shouted a jackie. "I wouldn't have his job for the whole railroad itself. They say they chop a conductor's head off every time a train is late in this country."

"I know of some roads in America to which they ought to apply that practice."

"So do I," agreed Sam Hickey. "This reminds me of the milk train on the peanut road out at Piedmont. Piedmont is where we hail from, mates," he explained.

"Yes; you look the part," answered a shipmate, at which there was a roar of laughter.

Sam's eyelids were at half mast.

"I'll rub your nose in the desert for that when I get----"

"Go tell it to the Sphinx. We're on the desert now."

Stretches of yellow sand reached away and on to the foot of the Arabian mountains in the far distance. Along the track the train passed processions of dusty travelers, gorgeously arrayed with brilliantly colored mantles thrown over their heads.

"Look! Look, there's a circus going by!" yelled Hickey.

"Where, where?" Jackies rushed to his side of the car and leaned far out.

"It's a caravan. What's the matter with you, red-head?"

A long line of camels was dragging itself along the highway, each camel holding the bobbing figure of a native, while on foot at the rear strung a long procession of other natives. It was a most picturesque sight. It was the first time the Battleship Boys had seen camels on their native soil, and the boys leaned from the windows, watching the unusual sight until the caravan was lost in the distance.

Villages of yellow mud huts, their flat roofs covered with thatch, the buildings surrounded by a drove of Arab goats, chickens, pigs, camels and donkeys, were frequently passed, the sight causing the jackies keen amusement.

Everything was quaint and unusual; the lurching camels, the Arabs with their long guns and queer costumes, all combined to make the journey one long to be remembered.

"Cairo! All out for Cairo!" sang the voice of the petty officer in charge of the party.

"Cairo! Cairo!" howled the jackies.

"Remember, boys, you are in a city now--not out on the desert."

This suggestion was sufficient for the moment, and the men-o'-warsmen lowered their voices as they did so. But another din almost as great as had been their own arose. A perfect army of beggars surged toward them. Arabs, Greeks, Hindoos, Nubians, black, white and brown men surrounded the jackies, crying out in shrill voices, "Backsheesh! Backsheesh!" All tongues sounded alike when it came to begging.

"Get out of my pocket, you heathen!" roared Sam Hickey.

"This is almost as bad as Paris!" cried Dan Davis, trying to fight his way through the mob. "But I'd rather meet a regiment of these howling Dervishes, or whatever they are, than one Paris guide."

"Give them the flying wedge," shouted a jackie.

"Whoop! Go!"

Beggars tumbled to right and left. Greek, Hindoo, Arab, Nubian and Albanian went down in a yelling, shouting heap on

either side as the jackies charged into their ranks.

Clang, clang!

"Look out for the trolley car," shouted Dan.

"What--trolley cars in this heathen country!" cried one.

"Yes, and I'll bet that car there came from Newport, R. I.," jeered Hickey. "Yes, sir; that's the very car that I used to ride to town on from the training station."

A shout greeted this announcement, but the sailors were amazed at what they saw. Had it not been for the strange mixture of races, and the quaint costumes, the sightseers might well have imagined themselves in some American city. Veiled women rode in carriages through the busy streets; here and there an automobile tooted its horn, while dogs infested the gutters, snapping at the heels of the Navy men.

"This is the original crazy house," laughed Dan. "I never imagined anything like it."

The sailors did not separate. They traveled about together, attracting a great deal of attention. Now and then they met an American, who, when he addressed them in their own language, would be greeted with a cheer. Up one street and down another strolled the jackies, sometimes singing their national anthem, then dropping into the march step to the "hep, hep, hep!" of one of their number.

The bazaars came in for a considerable share of attention. In these the lads bought freely all manner of curios, for most of which they paid all of twice what the articles were worth. Sam Hickey got into an argument with an ebony-hued Nubian who had substituted an inferior article for something that Sam had purchased. The fellow denied having done so, and refused to make good the difference, or to hand over the original article.

"All-right; I can't lick you without causing international complications, as the captain calls it, but I'm going to have part of your clothes."

With that Sam snatched the fez from the Nubian's head and stuffed it in his trousers' pocket. The merchant made a dive at the red-headed boy, but found himself face to face with a solid wall of jackies, who had suddenly stepped between the enraged merchant and his victim.

"See here, you man with the iron face," threatened one, "we'll take your whole shop along if you don't look out, and we won't buy it, either."

"Come along, boys; we can't afford to have any row here," warned Dan. "We want to see the Pyramids, you know."

"Hurrah for the Pyramids!" shouted the boys.

"Donkey, sir, donkey?" questioned a group of native boys as the jackies came from the bazaar.

"Who's a donkey?" demanded Sam Hickey.

"Want a donkey, sir?"

An idea occurred to Dan.

"How much do you charge for a ride?"

"Twenty piastres for half an hour," answered the lad, in very good English.

"Twenty pi----"

"That's about ten cents," spoke up a sailor who had been in Cairo on a former cruise.

"Good! How many donkeys have you? Enough for all of us?"

"I get 'em. You wait."

"If you'll hurry we will wait. Don't be long. My friends are not in a mood to wait for anything to-night. Run, boy!"

The boy darted away. In a few minutes donkeys began gathering, their young masters prodding the lazy beasts, urging them along with shrill shouts and sundry twists of the animal's tails.

"Look at the donkeys," shouted the jackies. "What's going on here?"

"You are all going to take a ride with me," announced Dan Davis. "We'll wind up the evening with a parade; then we'll pipe up hammocks."

"Hurrah for Little Dynamite!" howled the men.

"Let's form a cavalry company and charge the town."

"The town will do all the charging, and then some more," laughed Dan. "Mount."

With shouts of mirth the jackies swung themselves to the backs of the donkeys.

"Forward, march!" commanded Dan.

The grotesque procession started away, while the sides of the narrow streets were lined with natives and foreigners, all laughing at the ludicrous spectacle.

It was harmless fun, the pent-up spirits of the sailor boys being given full play after weeks at sea.

"Somebody sing," suggested a voice.

"I'll sing," answered Hickey.

"No; let Dynamite. He's the only sweet-voiced warbler in the crew. What will it be, Dynamite?"

Dan cleared his throat.

"The harbor's past, the breezes blow,
Yeo ho, lads, ho! Yeo ho! Yeo ho!
'Tis long ere we come back, I know,
Yeo ho, lads, ho! Yeo ho!"

The jackies greeted the effort with a howl of delight; then all joined in with a shout that brought people from their beds to the flat roofs of their houses, from which they peered down wonderingly on the strange procession.

"But true and bright from morn till night my home will be,
And all so neat and snug and sweet, for Jack at sea;
And Nancy's face to bless the place, and welcome me;
Yeo ho, lads, ho! Yeo ho!"

"The bo's'n pipes the watch below,
Yeo ho, lads, ho! Yeo ho! Yeow!"

The song ended in a roar of laughter that was taken up from the housetops, running down the narrow street like a wave at sea.

At that moment the bluejackets were nearing the bazaar of the Nubian with whom Sam Hickey had had the trouble. For some reason Sam's donkey was taken with a sudden attack of the sulks. Sam prodded the beast and yelled at him; donkey boys punched the animal with their fingers to stir him up, but still the animal refused to move.

"Twist his tail," suggested a shipmate jeeringly.

Hickey accepted the suggestion. Half turning, he grasped the beast's tail, giving it a violent twist.

"Hee--hee--hee-h-a-w--he-e-e-e-e," protested the donkey.

The jackies shouted.

"You better get a new horn for your automobile, red-head," jeered a shipmate.

"The one he has would make a good siren for the battleship," added another.

Hickey was having too much trouble, about this time, to give heed to the jeers of his companions. The lazy donkey had all at once taken matters into his own hoofs. These hoofs were flying in all directions. With every kick the circle about the Battleship Boy and his mount widened.

"I'm going to fall off. Somebody catch me!" yelled Sam.

Dan Davis, though fairly doubled up with laughter, sprang from his donkey and ran to Sam's assistance. He did not fear

that Sam would be harmed, but he saw that, with every kick, the animal was getting nearer and nearer to the bazaar.

"Hang on, Sam!" encouraged his companions.

"Sprinkle some salt on the donkey's tail," suggested another.

Dan leaped to the donkey's head.

Instantly the animal whirled. Dan, seeing what was about to occur, threw himself forward just as the hind hoofs of the animal shot out, the boy falling against the donkey's legs and hips.

The Battleship Boy was lifted right up into the air. He landed in a heap some fifteen feet away.

The jackies yelled themselves hoarse, while Dan got up, rubbing himself and grinning sheepishly.

A crash at that instant attracted their attention to the bazaar. Mr. Donkey, with the red-headed boy's arms wrapped about its neck, had bolted into the bazaar.



Sam and the Donkey Bolted Into the Bazaar.

CHAPTER XIX

ON THE SHIPS OF THE DESERT

Egyptian goods were flying in all directions. A saakka, or water carrier, who had been delivering his wares to the merchant, landed on his back in the middle of the street, followed by a varied assortment of oriental wares.

The Nubian merchant had bolted through a rear opening and made his escape to a back yard, from which he watched the destruction of his stock. The jackies, as soon as they were able to control their merriment, rushed in, pounced upon and captured the mad donkey. From the wreck they hauled out the red-headed boy, much the worse for his experience.

Several Nubian police had hurried to the scene and a great crowd had been attracted by the uproar. The Nubian was wringing his hands and wailing over his loss.

"Sam Hickey, you did that on purpose," said Davis sternly. "You drove that donkey in there to get even with the Nubian."

"I didn't. What are you talking about?"

"You know what I am talking about. You have ruined his stock. What are you going to do about it?"

"Let him buy some new stuff. I don't care what he does."

"Fellows, shall we pass the hat for the bazaar man?"

"Yes; pass the fez," shouted the sailors.

"I'll put in two dollars' worth," announced Dan. "That is, as near as I can figure it. Come, Sam."

"Not for mine!" growled Hickey.

"Put up or get a thrashing," commanded Dan.

Sam reluctantly went down in his pocket and clumped a handful of money into the red fez.

"Backsheesh!" cried the beggars at sight of the money, crowding in closer, their eyes wide and avaricious.

"You'll get 'backsheesh' if you don't clear out of here mighty quick," warned the jackies. "Charge them, fellows!"

With a yell the sailors mounted their donkeys and rode right at the persistent beggars. There followed a great scattering and yelling. The Nubian policemen stood about, solemn-faced, but making no effort to interfere. The sailors returned to the bazaar and dismounted.

Finally, the collection having been taken up, Davis walked into the booth and handed the money to the merchant.

"We are sorry to have damaged your stock, sir, but it was an accident," said Dan.

The merchant wailed and wrung his hands.

"This will pay you for your loss. As a matter of fact, I think you have made enough out of our crowd already to pay you for all the damage we have done."

"Say, honest, Sam, what did you do to that donkey to make him cut up in that way?" demanded Dan, coming out of the bazaar.

"I told you I didn't do it. His rudder got jammed; that's what was the matter with the beast. As soon as I got both engines going ahead full speed there wasn't any more trouble."

Once more the boys started off down the street, singing and shouting. Hickey's mount was now as meek as a spring lamb, but the other men kept a good distance away from the red-headed boy, not knowing at what minute the donkey might have another fit.

At last the donkey riders began to tire of their sport. Just then the watchmen in the towers began to cry out the hour of midnight.

"Eight bells," sang out Dan Davis.

"All lights are burning brightly," mocked another.

"Yes, but they will all be out soon," answered Dan. "Time to pipe up hammocks."

"Oh, not yet," protested Sam.

"Yes, now. We've had a fine time to-night, but we have another day ahead of us. Remember, we're going to see some wonderful sights to-morrow."

"Dynamite is right," called out several. "We'll all pipe down."

"Where do we stay?"

"That has all been arranged for. We go back to the station, where the boatswain's mate will be waiting for us. Sam, you and I are going over to the hotel."

"The Shepherd's Crook, or something of that sort?"

"Shepherd's Hotel, you mean," laughed Dan. "Yes; we are very extravagant, but we do not get a chance to see real life very often."

Arriving at the station, the Battleship Boys bade their companions good night, and made their way to the hotel where they had decided to stop. They had picked out the most fashionable hotel in the Egyptian capital, but they were made welcome, and the Americans, of whom there were many there, took the boys up enthusiastically. It was with difficulty that Dan and Sam got away from them finally. That night, for the first time in many months, the lads slept in a real bed.

They did not sleep well. They missed the swaying hammock, the fresh salt breeze blowing over them and the swish or roar of the waves against the side of the ship--sounds that had grown to be a part of their very existence.

At last, as day was peeping in through the open windows, they fell into a sound sleep, from which they did not awaken until late in the morning.

At eleven o'clock that morning the boys presented themselves at the Gizeh Palace, where they were to take the train that would carry them well on their way toward the Pyramids.

Others of their shipmates came straggling along, and within an hour nearly all were there, some having decided to remain in the city and finish their sight-seeing there in preference to going out on the desert.

Every man of them was bright-eyed, happy, and ready for whatever the day might bring forth.

At Gizeh station, some seven miles from the city, all the passengers were hustled out for a change of cars.

"Do we walk?" came a chorus of demands. "How far is it?"

"No; we take ship from here," answered Davis, with a quizzical smile.

"A ship?" demanded Hickey incredulously.

"Yes."

"Pooh! You're joking. This is a desert, not a sea."

"You will see."

"Pipe down punning. It's too hot to laugh," commanded a voice.

Dan, with the boatswain's mate, had arranged a surprise for their shipmates, a new experience for every man of the party.

Headed by the Battleship Boys and the boatswain's mate, the bluejackets walked away from the station for a short distance. Suddenly they came to an open space of sand. There, lounging about, was a large group of Bedouins, clad in long, flowing robes, wearing turbans and armed with long, stout sticks. Beyond the Bedouins, their many-jointed legs folded under them, lay a herd of camels with half-closed eyes and disdainfully curling lips.

"See that hump!" yelled the jackies the moment they set eyes on the ungainly beasts. "There are some bumps for you."

"See them feed the babies," cried a chorus of voices.

Several camel owners were squatting in front of their animals stuffing little balls of grass down the throats of the beasts, while the latter chewed lazily.

"Where's the ships?" demanded Hickey, looking about him expectantly.

"There they are," answered Dan, with glowing face. "That is the surprise we have in store for you."

"What, camels?"

"Yes. Otherwise known as 'ships of the desert.'"

"Are--are we to ride those things?"

"If you wish. All of those who prefer may go the rest of the way by train. It is a short journey, but we thought you would like it."

"Like it? No train for us! Hurrah for the hunch backs!" came the answering clamor.

Few chose the train, it is needless to say. All was excitement, everybody trying to talk at once, and to this the Bedouins added their chatter in Arabic, interspersed here and there with an English word. The camels, catching something of the excitement of the moment, lumbered to their feet. The boys glanced at the great height of the beasts rather apprehensively.

"Where are the ladders?" demanded a voice.

"Ladders?"

"Yes; it will take a ladder or a flying machine to get aboard those ships. I don't know whether I want to take the chance or not," said Hickey.

"Line up here, boys," commanded Dan. "All ready, Mr. Bedouin."

The camel drivers uttered short, sharp commands to their animals, whereupon the beasts got down on their knees.

"All aboard!" called Dan. "No Jacob's ladders here; you will have to climb."

The boys piled on, so many getting aboard the first one that the beast was unable to rise. It toppled over sideways, spilling all the passengers overboard into the sand.

"Attention!" shouted Dan. "Let's do this thing right or we'll never get to the Pyramids. One at a time. There, that's right."

At last all were up, Dan on the back of the tallest camel at the head of the line.

"All right, back there?"

"Wait; I'm sliding off!" howled Sam.

"Anybody got a rabbit's foot in his pocket? If so, pass it along to Coxswain Hickey."

"I'm off. Wow!"

Sam hit the ground, sending up a little cloud of yellow dust. The jackies burst into a roar.

"Leave him! Let him walk!"

"Yes, go on. It will do him good."

The camels started off, with every man on them shouting suggestions to poor Sam, who had regained his feet and was racing along trying to keep up with the camels, and hurling threats at his companions in a dust-choked voice.



CHAPTER XX

CALLING ON THE MUMMIES

For a full mile they made the red-headed boy run. Then, at Dan's command, a camel was made to kneel, and the perspiring coxswain was permitted to climb the animal's hump.

"That--that was a mean trick," growled Sam. "I'll even up with you for that, Dan Davis!"

Dan laughed happily.

"You needed the exercise. It will put you in good shape for climbing the Pyramids."

A few minutes more of riding brought them to the feet of these awe-inspiring monuments, and with the aid of their guides the jackies scrambled up the sides of the Great Pyramid.

"We must see the tombs on the inside of the Pyramid, fellows," cried Dan after they had descended by skips and jumps the long steps of the Pyramid.

"Yes," cried Sam. "I promised to give the regards of the stay-at-homes to the mummies."

The guides lighted long wax tapers, and they entered the dark, ill-ventilated passage leading into the great pile of masonry.

"Whew!" said Dan. "I don't wonder mummies have that dark-brown color, if they have baked in this oven a few hundred years. Guide, is there any one in here except our party?"

"No. Why?"

"I saw two men, I thought, in one of those passages to the right."

"It's nothing but a mummy ghost," suggested a shipmate.

All at once they emerged into a great high-domed chamber, the walls of which were covered with strange carvings.

"What station is this?" questioned Dan.

"The King's Chamber," replied the guide.

"What is the King's name?" he asked.

"Not know. Dead maybe two thousand years."

"Two thousand years? He must have known our boatswain," said Hickey solemnly.

The others began asking questions, and Dan, walking to the other side of the chamber, began examining the inscriptions on the walls. He was standing near a corridor when suddenly he became conscious of a shadow coming between himself and the light. He started, then peered into the long corridor.

"What are you looking for?" demanded Sam, who had come up behind Dan at that moment.

"I think there is some one out there," he replied. "I saw shadows again."

"Do you really think some of those old kings are nosing around here?"

Dan laughed softly.

"I'll risk their getting out. I think some of our fellows are playing tricks on us. What do you say to our turning the tables on them? We'll hide in the corridor, and give them a scare when they creep up to see where we are."

Davis and Hickey crept along on their hands and knees, chuckling softly over the scare they were about to give their mates.

"Sh-h-h-h," warned Dan suddenly, in a low voice. "I heard something."

"Was--was it the boys?"

"I don't know. I heard some one whisper, and it wasn't in English, either. Be careful."

The passageway had curved abruptly, going off in another direction, but in the intense darkness they did not notice this.

Suddenly Dan touched his friend's arm.

"The light in the King's Chamber has gone."

"Call out."

"No, no. We will turn and go back. We were foolish to try a thing of this sort."

Keeping close together, the boys began crawling rapidly. All at once Dan stopped.

"We surely should have reached the King's Chamber before this," he declared.

"Maybe we have gone on past it?"

"I think not. We should have recognized the place had we passed through it."

"Then there's only one thing to do--whoop her up until the mummies turn over."

"I guess you are right."

Dan uttered a loud hello. There was no answer. Sam shouted, with no better result.

"Sam, we've been left alone in the dark this time--we're lost in the Great Pyramid."

Meanwhile the other bluejackets had finished their tour and had emerged into the bright sunlight.

While taking up a collection to settle with the guide, Spunk McGraw, a friend of the Battleship Boys, suddenly looked up.

"See here, where's that red-headed boy?" he demanded.

"He's hidden so he won't have to hand out when the plate's passed," answered a joking voice.

"And Dan Davis is missing, too," said McGraw, with a scared look on his face.

"They're not going back on the train," one of the jackies volunteered. "They said they were going back part way on the camels."

"Oh, that's it, then," answered McGraw in a relieved tone. "Let's go to the station and find out what time we can get a train."

And no more thought was given to Dan and Sam until the boatswain's mate found them missing at rollcall back in Cairo that evening.

"Did they come back with you?" the mate questioned.

"No, sir," replied Spunk McGraw. "I think they were going back to the place where we change cars by way of the camels."

"They may have been held up on that camel ride, sir," spoke up one of the men, "but they may be on the train following. You can't keep Davis and Hickey in one place against their will for very long."

A ripple of laughter ran along the line at this, but when the next train came wheezing in with no Battleship Boys, the mate looked grave.

"It is my opinion that those men are lost in the Pyramid," he announced with solemn emphasis. "I want ten men to go back with me to find them. The rest of you will leave for Suez under McGraw's command on the midnight train."

Within half an hour he had procured an automobile and two Pyramid guides, and with his detail of jackies had departed for the Pyramids.

Back in the Pyramid the Battleship Boys were still lost and in utter darkness.

"What's the matter with our following the passageway back to the King's Chamber?" asked Sam Hickey.

"For the reason, Sam, that we do not know where the chamber is."

"I guess you're right," he agreed.

"Come along; we'll try it in this direction," said Dan. "Keep hold of my hand. We do not want to get separated."

The lads made their way along through corridor after corridor. They could see nothing save now and then when they lighted a match.

"Hark!"

Dan gripped his companion's arm sharply.

"I heard something again."

Their voices had dropped to whispers.

"It might have been some animal, and we have nothing to defend ourselves with," said Dan Davis.

"We have our knives," answered Sam.

"Yes; we'll use them if we meet any four-footed enemies. Strike another match, please."

Sam did so at once. Instantly something happened. As the match flared up, blinding them for the moment, Sam leaped into the air.

"Wow!" he howled. "Look ou----"

Dan uttered an exclamation before Sam had finished the sentence. Something had given him a violent push from behind. At the same instant Dan Davis was served in a similar manner. Instead of jumping, however, he whirled with the intention of grappling with his assailant, whoever he might be.

Another push sent him reeling backward. He grasped wildly for something to check his fall, but his hands slipped along the smooth rock.

"I must be going all of a mile a minute," thought the boy. "Poor Sam. Poor----"

Suddenly he felt his body leave the sloping rock and shoot into space. Then all at once everything became a blank.

Dan landed heavily and lay still, but in a few minutes he began to struggle with himself, fighting off an almost irresistible inclination to lie back and go to sleep again. A few minutes of this and he sat up.

"Oh, Sam! Hello, Sam!" he shouted.

"Hello yourself," answered a voice so close to Dan that he could not repress a start.

"Where are you?" cried Dan eagerly.

"That's what I've been trying to find out myself," answered the red-headed boy.

"Are you injured?"

"Injured? Not I. I'm going to strike a match. That's about the only thing about me that hasn't been struck sixteen times to the inch since I started in to shoot the chutes."

Lighting the match, he uttered an exclamation of delight. On one side of the place was a heap of rubbish. They touched a match to it, and a bright blaze rewarded their efforts.

"How did you happen to fall over, Sam?" Dan questioned.

"Just as you did, I guess. I was pushed."

"You know I told you some one was dogging our footsteps earlier in the afternoon."

For a moment Davis sat lost in thought.

"Let us push on, Sam," he finally said. "We may find our way out, and our mates can find us in one place as well as in another, if they find us at all."

Dan took one of the glowing sticks from the fire to light the way, and started out.

"We'd better follow along on this level. We shall never get back the way we came."

"All right; I'm ready."

"Sam, I think we're going down instead of up," said Dan after a few minutes.

"What's the odds? We might as well bury ourselves deep while we are about it."

Both lads laughed at the red-haired boy's grim joke, neither one thinking of whining over their dangerous situation.

CHAPTER XXI

CONCLUSION

Fully half an hour had passed when Davis suddenly uttered a low "Sh-h-h!"

"I hear voices again," whispered Dan.

"So do I, now. I wonder where they are?"

"Let's creep around this corridor. Speak only in whispers until we find out whether they are friends or enemies."

After making the turn the lads found they could hear the voices more plainly. A moment more and their groping fingers made the discovery that they were touching wood.

"It's a door," whispered Dan. "Be ready to meet some trouble. I'm going in."

The door opened with a great noise, its rusty hinges squeaking warningly.

Two Bedouins were sitting cross-legged on the stone floor. Above their heads hung a smoky oil lamp, while about the walls were weapons.

"We have lost our way," said Dan courteously. "If you will show us the way out we will pay you well."

With an angry exclamation the two Bedouins sprang to their feet, making a dash for their revolvers in a niche in the wall. Davis caught the significance of the movement.

"Down them, Sam!"

"I'm on the job," howled Hickey, as he landed on the back of the man nearest him.

At the same instant Dan had hurled himself at the other man. There had been no time for further explanations.

There followed a few minutes of desperate, silent struggling, and then Sam suddenly uttered a yell of triumph.

"I--I've got him this time. I've----"

Ere he had finished the sentence there came a thud. Hickey had, by a clever wrestling trick, thrown his man, the fellow's head striking the floor so heavily that he lost consciousness.

A moment later Dan succeeded in throwing his man over flat on his face.

"Tear up some of those robes over there and make me a rope, quick," he commanded.

With the rope so made Dan bound the hands of the prisoners behind their backs.

"I don't know whether you understand English or not. I reckon you do," announced Dan, after they had shaken Sam's man back to consciousness. "We want you to lead us out of this place. We have your guns, and if you cut up any we shall be obliged to shoot. If you behave yourselves we will let you go when we get outside, providing you are not wanted by the police. Now go."

"And if you take us to any of your fellows we will shoot you first, then take our chances with the rest," added Sam.

The captives made no reply, but the boys were satisfied, from the expression on their faces, that they understood. The Bedouin inclined his head toward a passageway, and the strange procession started.

Some twenty minutes later they stepped out into the fresh night air of the desert.

"This is great," breathed Hickey, with a glowing face. "Shall we take these fellows along with us?"

"No, we will keep our word to them."

They untied the Bedouins, and the fellows slunk away and disappeared.

Dan uttered a loud hello.

"That you, Dynamite?" came an answer from one of the jackies who had been left outside.

With shouts of delight the party assembled, and all hands listened wonderingly to the story the boys had to tell. The

guides told Dan and Sam that they had unearthed the lair of one of the worst bands that ever infested the desert in the vicinity of the Pyramids.

As a result of the information they gave, the band of brigands was routed from their hiding place for good and all.

Late that afternoon the lads once more set foot on the deck of the "Long Island," and the battleship shortly afterwards got under way. At muster that afternoon Dan and Sam were once more called before the captain.

"I have this day received an order from the Navy Department," began the captain. "It provides that for gallant service and quick wit Gunner's Mate Davis is to be promoted to Chief Turret Captain. He will assume his duties to-morrow morning. Coxswain Hickey is promoted to Gunner's Mate first class. Lads, I congratulate you."

The bugle blew and the men marched from the deck.

That night Dan Davis climbed into his hammock for the last time. On the following night he would take possession of a real berth in the chief petty officers' quarters.