

Partners of the Tide

By
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Author of "Cap'n Ed"

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CHAPTER V.

FOR a moment Miss Tempy made no reply to her sister's speech. Instead she sat there with her eyes fixed upon Miss Prissy's face and her thin fingers picking nervously at her dress.

"Haven't got any money?" she repeated after a pause. "Haven't got any money left? Why, then—why, then, we'll have to take it out of the bank up to Boston. Of course, Bradley must go to college. You know he must, Prissy."

But Miss Prissy shook her head. "You don't understand, Tempy," she said. "I ought to have talked with you about it long ago. I can see now that I ought to; but, oh, dear, father always said you was too delicate to bother with money matters, and I've been used to taking all the care myself, and so I've just gone on and on, worryin' and plannin' and layin' awake nights until I can't go on any further. Oh, Tempy," she cried, and the tears rolled down her cheeks, "you don't understand. The money in the Boston bank has all gone too. We haven't got more than \$500 left in the world, and when that's gone—She waved her hands despairingly.

But still Miss Tempy did not comprehend. "Why, all of it can't be gone!" she said. "All of the insurance money and everything! Why, it was \$5,000!" She mentioned the sum reverently and in an awestruck whisper.

"Yes," said Miss Prissy, trying hard not to be impatient; "yes, 'twas \$5,000, and father died over ten years ago, and we've been livin' on it ever since."

"But \$5,000, Prissy! Five thousand!"

"Oh, my soul and body! Anybody'd think 'twas a million. Jest think, now; jest think! We've lived on it for pretty nigh eleven years; paid for our clothes and livin' and havin' the house painted six years ago, and—"

"But it needed paintin'!"

"Needin' it! I should think it did! But it cost more'n we'd ought to spend, jest the same. Oh, it's more my fault than anybody's. Long's father lived the place was kept up, and you and me was used to havin' things as good as our neighbors, and I went on and on, never thinkin' we was too extravagant until all at once the money that we first put in the Harniss bank was used up. And then it come home to me, as you might say, and I realized what we'd been doin'. Oh, I've tried and tried; scrimped here and pinched there. What do you s'pose I sold the wood lot for? And then the cran'by swamp?"

"Why, you said we didn't need 'em, and it was too much trouble to run 'em."

"Said, Oh, I don't doubt I said all sorts of things to keep you from knowin'. But I sold 'em to help pay the bills. And then you was took down with the typhoid, and there was that big doctor's bill, and then Bradley came, and he had to have clothes and a little money to spend, like the other boys. And now!"

Miss Prissy choked, tried to go on, and then broke down and cried heartily and without restraint.

In all the years since the death of Captain Allen Miss Tempy had never seen her common sense, practical sister give way like this. The sight alarmed her much more than the story of the financial situation had so far done. She didn't fully understand the latter yet, but every one of Miss Prissy's sobs was to her a call for help that needed an immediate answer.

"There, there, dear," she said, running to the other rocker and putting her arm around her sister's neck. "You poor thing! You mustn't cry like that. You're jest worried yourself sick. You're all worn out, I shouldn't be surprised if you've got a little cold, too, in that drafty schoolhouse. Let me make you a good, big cup of pepper tea right away; now do."

Miss Prissy turned a sob into a feeble laugh.

"Oh, dear me, Tempy," she said, laying her hand on the other's arm. "I believe you think pepper tea'll cure anything, even an empty pocketbook. I wish 'twould pay bills; then, I don't know but I'd drink a hogshead. But it won't, nor cryin' won't, either. Set down, and I'll tell you jest how things are."

So Miss Tempy, reluctantly giving up the "pepper tea" idea for the present, went back to her chair, and Miss Prissy continued.

"The money in the Boston bank is gone," she said, "and a year or more ago I wrote to the broker folks that bought the bond for us when father died, and they sold it for me and got a little less than a thousand dollars for it. I put the money into the bank at Harniss, and though I've tried my best to be economical, there ain't but five hundred and eighty left. That and the place here is all we've got."

In a bewildered fashion Miss Tempy strove to grasp the situation.

"Then we're poor," she said, "real poor, and I thought we was rich. Well, shall I give up that new bonnet I was goin' to have next spring, and I s'pose I hadn't ought to subscribe to the Comforter either. I did think so much of it."

"I'm afraid we'll have to give up more than the Comforter, Tempy. I've

thought and thought till my poor head is nearly worn through. We might sell the place here, but 'twould be like sellin' our everlastin' souls—if 'tain't unreligious to say it—and, besides, property at Orham is so low now that we'd only get half what it's worth, and when that money's spent there wouldn't be anything left."

"Sell the place! Father's place! Why, Prissy Allen, how can you talk so! Where would we live?"

"Well, we might hire a little house down at South Orham or somewhere."

"South Orham! Where all those Portuguese and things live? I'd rather die!" And it was Miss Tempy's turn to cry.

"You needn't cry for that, Tempy. We won't sell yet awhile. Not till there's nothin' left. But we can't have the barn shingled, and as for Bradley's goin' to college, that I'm afraid, is out of the question."

"Oh, dear, dear! And the barn looks awful, Melissa Busted was sayin' only last week that folks was wonderin' when we was goin' to have it fixed. And poor Bradley! My heart was set on his bein' a minister. I don't know but I'd live in the poorhouse to make him one. They say Mr. Otis keeps a real nice poorhouse, too," she added.

Miss Prissy smiled, dejectedly. "It hasn't got to the poorhouse yet," she said, "and I hope we can send Bradley through high school anyhow. But we'll have to scrimp awful. Not we must try to earn some money. I was talkin' to Abigail Mullett at the church fair last August, and she spoke about those aprons and one thing another that I made and said she never saw such hemmin' and tuckin'. She said she'd give anything if she could get somebody to do such work for her in the dressmakin' season. I've been thinkin' maybe she'd put out some of her work to me if I asked her to. She does more dressmakin' than anybody around; has customers 'way over to Ostable and keeps three girls sometimes. And you know how the summer folks bought those knit shawls of yours, Tempy. Well, I don't doubt we could get orders for lots more. We'll try, and we'll let Bradley start at high school and see how we make it go."

So Miss Tempy brightened up, and in a few minutes she had in her mind sold so many shawls and Miss Prissy had done so well with her hemming and tuckin' that she saw them putting money in the bank instead of taking it out. In fact she was getting rich so fast in her dreams that her sister didn't have the heart to throw more cold water at this time. And even Miss Prissy herself felt unwarrantably hopeful. She had borne the family burdens so long that to share the knowledge of them with another was a great relief. They discussed ways and means for a half hour longer, and then Miss Tempy insisted on getting that "pepper tea."

"I honestly believe," she said, "that if I hadn't took pepper tea steady for the last four or five years I shouldn't be here now. That and Blaisdell's emulsion has given me strength to bear most anything, even the prospects of the poorhouse. Thank goodness, I've got a new bottle of emulsion, and pepper tea's cheap, so I shan't have to give that up even if we are poor'n Job's turkey."

"All right," sighed Miss Prissy. "I'll make you feel any better to par-bill my insides with hot water and pepper, fetch it along. Don't say anything to Bradley about what we've been sayin'. 'Twon't do any good and will only make the poor child feel bad."

Bradley was not in the dining room. The book he had been reading was turned face downward on the table, but he was gone, and so was his hat.

"Why, I never!" exclaimed Miss Tempy. "He never went out an evenin' before without sayin' anything to me or you. What do you s'pose is the matter?"

"You don't think he heard what we said, do you?" anxiously asked her sister. "I thought I shut the door."

"You did shut it, but now you speak of it, seems to me I remember it was not latched when I come out jest now. I hope he didn't hear. He's such a sensitive boy, jest like all the Allens."

The "pepper tea" was prepared a double dose this time, and the sisters sat sipping it, Miss Prissy with many coughs and grimaces and Miss Tempy with the appreciation of a connoisseur. After a moment's silence she said:

"Prissy, do you know what I've been thinkin'? I've been thinkin' what a blessin' 'twould be if we had Cap'n Titcomb to go to for advice now."

"Humph! If I've thought that once I've thought it a million times in the last year," was the decided answer.

It was after 10 o'clock, and only Bradley's absence had prevented the ladies from going up to bed, when the outside door of the dining room opened, and the missing boy came in.

"Bradley Nickerson, where've you been?" exclaimed Miss Tempy, running to meet him. "We've been pretty nigh worried to death. Why don't you shut the door? Who's that out there? Why—why, Cap'n Titcomb!"

"What's that?" cried Miss Prissy, hurrying in. "You don't mean—Well, Good evenin', Cap'n Titcomb. Won't you step in?"

The captain accepted the invitation. He was as much embarrassed as the old maids, even more so than Miss Prissy, who immediately, after a swift sidelong glance of disapproval at her agitated sister, assumed an air of dignified calmness.

"How d'ye do, Prissy?" stammered the captain. "Tempy, I hope you're well. Yes, I'm feelin' fair to middlin'. No, thanks. I ain't goin' to stop long. It's pretty late for calls. Fact is, Brad-

ley's got somethin' to say. Excuse me, Brad."

The boy, too, was embarrassed, but as the two looked at him expectantly he fidgeted with a button on his jacket and said:

"Miss Prissy, I didn't mean to listen, but the door wasn't shut tight, and I couldn't help hearing what you and Miss Tempy were saying a little while ago."

"There!" exclaimed Miss Tempy. "I was afraid of that door. You remember I said so, Prissy."

But Miss Prissy didn't answer. She merely looked at Bradley. "I heard what you said," he went on the boy, "and when you told about what you was going to do, I could go to high school, I—I thought first I'd come right in and tell you you mustn't. But then I thought you wouldn't believe I meant it or wouldn't pay any attention to it if I did, so I went outside to think it over by myself. And then—then I went right up to see the cap'n."

"I hope," said Miss Prissy sternly, "that you didn't repeat our talk to Cap'n Titcomb without tellin' us you was goin' to."

"No, no, he didn't," hastily broke in the captain. "He didn't tell a word. You've got a pretty fair kind of boy here, if you want to know. I shan't say more than his usual enthusiasm."

"Hum!" was Miss Prissy's only comment. "Go on, Bradley."

"All I told him was," said Bradley, "that I didn't think it was right for me to go to school and college when I ought to be earning some money. I'm going on seventeen now, and lots of fellows I know are going to work. I don't believe I'd make a very good minister," with a look of appeal at Miss Tempy. "And I'd a good deal rather go to sea. All our folks have been to sea—my father and my grandfather. Yes, and your father, too, you know." The last as a happy inspiration.

"Don't you think that we know best what?" began Miss Prissy, but the captain interrupted her.

"Let him spin his yarn, Prissy," he said. "Nothin' is settled yet, so don't worry."

"So I went to the cap'n," went on Bradley, "and asked him if he'd take me on board his schooner. I shan't be a sailor, but I know a lot about boats, and I don't get seasick even when it's mighty rough. Do I, Cap'n Ezra?"

"No," replied Captain Titcomb gravely. "You manage to keep your cargo from shiftin' pretty well for a green hand."

"And he said he'd take me as a kind of cabin boy. Didn't you, cap'n? And learn me things and get me advanced as soon as I was fit for it. And he'll pay me wages, too, right away. There! And I won't cost you a cent more. Please let me go."

The captain did not again visit the Allen home, although next day Bradley called on him at his room in the hotel. They talked of the proposed plan, of course, but Captain Titcomb did not urge its acceptance. On the contrary, he spoke very plainly of the disagreeable features of a sailor's calling and hinted that being aboard a vessel was "there's always a chance for a feller to break out of jail."

At the end of the interview he said: "Brad, I ain't askin' any questions 'bout what made you take this sudden fit, but I'd like to know this: Do the old maids know 'bout that Sampson fund for sailors' children? They could git over a hundred a year out of that if they applied for it, you understand?"

"I don't believe they'd take a cent if it was anything like charity," replied the boy. "Miss Prissy especial. She's awful down on folks that she says are living on charity."

"Um, hum! I see. Well, I know a feller that's one of the head cooks and bottle washers of the Sampson crew. Maybe I could rig it so—Well, never mind. Don't say nothin' yet."

Three days later it was settled. Bradley was to go to Boston the following Monday with Captain Titcomb and ship with him as the combination "boy and postman" for a period of three months. Really, it was settled when the captain suggested it, but it took some time for the old maids to formally make up their minds to the decided change.

Monday morning Bradley's trunk was packed, and Barney Small called to take him and it to Harniss. The old maids wept over him, and Miss Prissy told him to be a good boy and write once a week at least. Miss Tempy said: "Remember, Bradley, you're an Allen now, and you must live up to the family. Oh, Prissy, don't it seem jest like it used to when father was goin' on a voyage? Bradley's growin' to look so like him."

And the sisters went into the house to cry together.

THE Thomas Doane, seen from the wharf in the faint light of the street lamp, was a mere shape of blackness, with masts like charcoal marks against the sky and a tangle of ropes running up to meet them. The windows of the after deckhouse were illuminated, however, and as Bradley and the captain stepped from the wharf to the rail and from that to the deck a man came up the companionway from the cabin and touched his hat.

LINEN WAR PRICES TO HOLD

IF the expectations of linen goods importers and manufacturers' representatives are borne out, the housewife will be obliged to continue paying high prices for her household linens as well as for fancy fabrics—the dress goods varieties for some little time to come.

The linen market in New York sees no possibility of a decline to lower price levels for the present. Opinions as to when more reasonable prices are likely to make their appearance vary from six to nine months to a year, and even longer.

The primary cause for maintaining present prices is said to be the flax situation. Flax is reported to be scarce in every producing country and has been practically unobtainable for manufacture into civilian goods since the war, brought about such a need and heavy demand for goods manufactured from this commodity.

The labor situation in the British Isles, in France, and Belgium, or wherever linens are produced, is another important cause which makes the trade said, for maintenance of high prices and for a temporary continuance of the scarcity of linen merchandise.

In addition, the British Government is expected to control the price of flax in Britain, for at least a year to come, which in itself is sufficient to keep prices at high levels, merchants contended. There are practically no stocks of linens abroad, and England has been taking in the neighborhood of 80 per cent of the goods her mills could turn out (for war purposes) which had left a bare 20 per cent for the remainder of the world.

It is estimated that it will be at least six months before supplies of manufactured goods can begin to come into this country in anything like appreciable quantities. Irish linen shipments are expected to be the first to reappear in anything like quantity consignments. France will probably be second in resuming her exports, while it is thought that Belgium will probably not be able to restore her damaged plants and install the necessary new machinery for the next year or two.

While the war needs of England will not be so strongly felt in the linen manufacturing markets, now that the war is over, yet importers believe Britain will, of necessity, require linen goods for so long as her army remains mobilized. Only lately England placed contracts for several million yards of linen tent duck, which is proof, the trade holds, that her linen needs are not yet satisfied.

A Belfast linen manufacturer, discussing the situation, said that it would be six to nine months before American importers would begin to notice any trend toward lower prices.

The flax situation, which furnishes the strong argument for present price levels, is an interesting one. None of the dealers cared to hazard a guess as to what supplies might be made available by the Government in England or Ireland, now that the war was virtually over. Nor was it possible, they said, to estimate with any degree of accuracy how much flax had been raised in Russia, the greatest flax-producing country, this past year.

It was true that several small shipments had come out from Archangel within the past three or four months, but this was immediately taken in charge by the British Government for war purposes. Reports which the trade had received concerning the flax yield of the British Isles have not been encouraging, it was said. The production was stimulated by the Government, but, on the other hand, the civilian trade did not benefit by a possibly larger yield, because all of it, and more, was needed by Great Britain for war uses.

It is possible, of course, that linens may be offered before long, in this country, somewhat under the prices that are asked to-day, the trade said. This would, however, not be indicative of a lower trend of the market as a whole, but should it come about, it was said, it would be merely the result of some holder who, having grown nervous, or perhaps unable to carry the goods any longer, was inclined to let them out 10 or 15 cents a yard above the market. The importers, however, cannot even imagine such a case.

A letter received lately from Belfast by the representative of a manufacturer of linens was to the effect that there could not be much of a change either in the price or the supply of manufactured goods within the next six months.

Now that an armistice has been signed, there was likely to be a better Christmas trade in linens at retail than would have been the case had the war continued, dealers said. The realization of this may be responsible for the fact that a certain wholesale buyer confirmed a large order, since the market's high prices, for goods which, ten days or so ago, the buyer in question was not sure he would take.

The present basis of the market, so far as household linens are concerned, is shown by the fact that a tablecloth costing \$7 to-day could be bought for about \$2 or \$2.50 before the war. Linens that cost around \$1 a yard in the pre-war period, are to-day about \$3 a yard.—The New York Evening Post.

EX-EMPRESS EUGENIE REJOICES

London, Nov. 18.—Probably nowhere in all the world was the news of the German surrender and the downfall of the Hohenzollerns received with more gen-

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une satisfaction and pleasure than at Farnborough, the little village in Surrey where the Ex-Empress Eugénie has made her home since 1881. Since the commencement of the war the one-time Empress of the French, whose title and position were lost to the Germans in the war of the early '70s, has followed every detail of the conflict with an interest that at times became so intense as to rouse anxiety among the members of her household, who feared that the daily poring over of newspapers and maps might have an injurious effect on the health of the aged Empress, who is now past her 90th year. When news reached her that the Americans had captured Sedan, the surrender of which city to the Germans in 1870 resulted in the overthrow of her husband's throne, Eugénie is said to have indulged in indescribable rejoicing. Upon learning of the complete victory of the French and their allies, of the surrender of the Germans and the flight of the imperial family, she is said to have remarked with deepest emotion: "The moment for which she had waited so many years had now arrived and that she could die happy in the knowledge that France had been revenged."

Spain now joins in

London, Nov. 16.—Enthusiastic manifestations are taking place throughout Spain in celebration of the triumph of the Allies. Victory meetings are being held everywhere and the King and Government have sent telegrams of congratulations to the heads of the Allied Governments.

The Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs Friday night gave a reception in honor of Allied diplomatic representatives in Madrid.

THE C. P. R. AND THE VICTORY LOAN

The C. P. R. has always supported national and imperial movements; but in buying \$17,000,000 worth of Victory Bonds, it gave an immense filip to the good cause. That action synchronized with the advent to the supreme place of a young man, who has the courage of the hopeful and inspiring years. Of course, there was no more thought of that sort in the mind, but it was fine that the new president should do that notable thing—give a distinction to the C. P. R. in the connexion. There was a certain psychology in it, though possibly unconscious. Lord Shaughnessy bought a big Atlantic fleet over-night, and gave the transportation world a thrill. He also created the ready-made farm idea in the West, and favorably influenced immigration thereby. There was the dramatic sense in these things, just as there was the dramatic sense in Mr. Beatty, for the company, subscribing \$17,000,000 to the loan. These things give certain distinction and prestige. They are big. They bulk in the regard. They create a favorable impression.—Journal of Commerce.

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