

Partners of the Tide

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Bradley pulled down the Lizzie. Barney and he hoisted canvas enough to give them steerage way, and the little vessel ran alongside of the captain's dory. Then the ropes were rigged through the block in the fore rigging, and Bradley and Barney fitted in the brakes of the clumsy hand windlass, while Captain Titcomb stood by the

"H'st away!" commanded the skipper.

The windlass creaked, the cable tightened, and the blocks groaned as a heavy weight was lifted from the bottom. A minute or two more and the captain signaled to ease up.

"Look at that," said Captain Ezra, pointing. "What do you say to a belt-buoy frame?"

"Why, sure!" Bradley's tone was a disgusted one. "Well, we've had our work for nothing. That framework isn't worth anything."

"Taint the stockin' that counts all ways; it's what Santa Claus puts inside of it. I have a notion this feller may be a surprise package. H'st away!"

More of the wet rope came aboard. Captain Ezra chuckled.

"I guessed pretty high that time," he muttered. "Now, Brad, come here."

The trim frame, green with seaweed and trimmed with kelp and shells, hung half out of the water. At its base, just above the battered and crushed one that had been the buoy, a big bronze bell glistened and dripped.

"And I can get \$25 for that bell," crowed the captain, "which in the present state of this corporation's finances must be considered a widow's mite. Well, this ain't what I was after, but it's none the less welcome, as the cat said when it found the mouse swimmin' in the milk pail. Swing her in, Barney! Now we'll go back and have another try for the Mary D.'s anchor."

They had some long talks together concerning their new venture, which up to date, although they had made some money, had not given them the opportunity for a "big job" that they hoped for.

"Brad," observed the captain as they were walking up from the wharf one evening, "are you gittin' discouraged?"

"No, not yet. I didn't expect anything different this first summer."

"What do the old maids say?"

"Oh, they believe I'm going to get rich of course."

"Of course. Well, maybe they ain't any further out in their reckonin' one way than Simmons and the rest are the other. What does that little Baker girl have to say about it?"

"Oh, well, she didn't quite like it at first, but the more we talk about it together the better the plan seems to her."

"I presume likely you and she talk about it a good deal?" There wasn't the slightest flavor of sarcasm apparent in this question, so Bradley admitted that he and Gus did have a good many talks on the subject.

And this statement wasn't an exaggeration. It had become a regular thing for the junior partner in the anchor dragging concern to drop in at the Baker homestead of an evening after supper was over and discuss happenings and plans with Gus. The feeling that the girl was not so wholly at one with him in his hopes and ambitions as she used to be had galled Bradley. He resented her criticisms of the new venture on the evening when he first told her of it. Five years before, he knew, she would have thought so. He had come home expecting to find her unchanged, forgetting how much he had changed himself, and now he determined that he would compel her to believe in him and his work.

Dancing was one of the subjects on which they didn't agree. Bradley considered dancing nonsensical and a waste of time. Gus, on the other hand, was very fond of it.

"I'd rather saw wood myself," declared the former one evening. "There'd be about as much work in it, and considerably more fun."

"But, Brad, I do like dancing, and there are dances here once in awhile, such as they are, and—well, I wish you danced."

"I suppose I could manage to navigate through a quadrille without wrecking more than half the set, but a waltz would have me out of soundings in no time."

"Will you try to learn if I teach you?"

"Think 'twill pay for the wear and tear on your nerves and the furniture?"

"I'll risk the nerves, and we need some new furniture anyway. Come, we'll begin now. I'll hum the tune, and you can imagine that Bonnie D.'s three piece orchestra is playing 'Annie Rooney,' with their own variations, and that you're waltzing—well, with Georgiana Bailey."

"Great Scott! Let's imagine something pleasant to begin on. All right, here goes! Get out of the channel, Winnie!"

One evening toward the end of the month Gus said to him: "Brad, if you were I would you go to the ball on the evening of Decoration day at the town hall? I've had two invitations."

"Humph!" The answer was somewhat hesitating.

"I supposed you didn't know. Other wise, of course."

"I should have invited my dancing teacher to go with me. Gus, would you have liked it if I had invited you?"

"I should."

"Well, then, Miss Baker, may I have the pleasure of escorting you to the grand fandango to be held in the Orham Crystal palace, under the supervision of his royal swelledness, Mr. Solomon Bangs?"

"You may, sir. Oh, Brad! Of course I'd rather go with you, because—"

"Because what?"

"Because I want to see how my puvvel vessel dancing with somebody else."

Gus was prettier than ever the night of the ball. She was dressed simply in white, but when she came out of the dressing room at the hall and took this arm Bradley noticed that the eyes of half a dozen young men followed her and that they whispered to each other.

Gus' "order" was filled in a few minutes after the first number was over; there were more applicants than dances. Bradley danced a quadrille with Clara Hopkins, who was pretty and jolly, and he enjoyed it thoroughly. He labored through a contra dance with Georgiana Bailey and didn't enjoy it as much, although that effervescent young lady purged that she had had a "perfectly lovely time," and he was "lookin' so well" and why didn't he call at the house.

Miss Bailey's blue silk gown had an imposing and very troublesome train, and she smelt like a perfumer's shop. Captain Titcomb came up the stairs. He had a dripping umbrella in his hand.

"Why, hello!" exclaimed Bradley. "I didn't know you were coming."

"Hello yourself!" retorted the captain. "I didn't know you was comin' either, so we're square on that hitch. It's blowin' up a regular snorter outside," he added.

"Georgiana's gayer'n a fin peddler's cart, ain't she?" continued Titcomb. "Cap'n Jake's the only molotin' pullet in that coop."

He broke off suddenly and was silent for a minute or more. Bradley asked him what the matter was.

"Oh, nothin'!" was the hasty reply. "Quite a crowd here tonight. Who's the little clipper in the white with blue penants in her fore riggin'—the one dancin' with Jonadab Wixon's sister's boy?"

"That's Clara Hopkins."

"Humph! You don't say! Jim Hopkins' girl! I wouldn't have known her." And the captain subsided once more.

A little while after that, as Bradley was dancing his Virginia reel with Gus, he noticed a disturbance among the crowd of watchers at the door. He was in the middle of the line at the time, and "Snuppy" Black stood next to him.

"Hello!" exclaimed "Snuppy." "Why, it can't be! By thunder, it is! Sam Hammond's come. I didn't know he was expected."

Hammond it was, and in all the glory of city clothes and unlimited self confidence. When the reel was over, he came across the floor to where Gus and Bradley were standing.

"How d'y do, Gus?" he said, extending his hand. "I'm down for a few days. Got a vacation that I wasn't looking for. Came on tonight's train and thought I'd run up here for a little while, soon as I could get away from the home folks. Let me see your order. Hello, Brad! How are you?"

He was well dressed, still in the rather conspicuous way, and he had an easy, masterful air about him that none of the country fellows had, though they all envied it. And he was goodlooking. That couldn't be denied.

The last dance was the lancers, but as "Bennie D." arose to "call off" he announced that there would be, by special request, an "extra"—a waltz. Bradley had seen Hammond talking with the prompter and with Mr. Bangs, and he knew whose the "special request" was. Under other circumstances he

wouldn't have cared so much for that waltz, but now he wanted it very much indeed.

He walked over to where Gus, flushed and laughing, stood talking with Black, her partner in the lancers. Just as he reached her side Sam came hurrying up and pushed in front of him without ceremony.

"Gus," said Hammond, "I made Ben give us this waltz on purpose so that we might have it together. You haven't been half generous to me tonight, and now I'm after my pay. Come."

He offered his arm, and for a moment the girl seemed about to take it. Then she looked at Bradley, who, disappointed and chagrined, stood silent in the background.

"Thank you very much, Sam," she said.

"This waltz belongs to Bradley,"

said, "but this waltz belongs to Brad."

"Come, Brad, the music is beginnin'."

If any one had told Bradley previously that he would thoroughly enjoy a waltz he would have laughed, but he enjoyed every moment of this one. He saw Sam's scorn as Gus stepped past him, saw the smile on the faces of Black and the other bystanders, and then they whirled away. Round and round and round. "Bennie D.'s" music wasn't the best in the world, but to Bradley just then no grand opera orchestra could have played more sweetly. His feet seemed almost as light as his partner's, and they kept perfect time.

It was over all too soon.

CHAPTER X.

BREAKFAST next morning was hardly begun when "Blount's boy"—his name was Ulysses Simpson Grant Blount, but no one but his parents ever called him by it—came to the dining room door with a note for Bradley. It was from Captain Titcomb and read as follows:

Dear Brad—There's a three master, loaded with lumber, piled up on the Boneyard. Come on down quick. Looks as if here was the chance the Titcomb-Wrecking syndicate had been praying for. Yours truly, E. D. TITCOMB.

The junior partner in the "syndicate" was Miss Prissy's claim fritters go by default and hurried down to the Traveler's Rest, where he found the captain waiting for him. A few hours later the officers and crew of the Lizzie were gazing over that vessel's rail at the tumbling froth that covered the Boneyard shoal and at the hapless lumber schooner trembling in its midst, a dismal, lonesome sight.

She had struck almost bow on, but the strong tide had swung her stern over until she lay broadside to the shoal. She had heeled but little, and her deck load of pine boards was, for the most part, still lashed in place. The main and mizzen masts were gone, but the lower part of her foremast still stood, and the great waves, striking against her stern, sent the light spray flying lengthwise almost as high as its top. The broken cordage streamed out in the wind, and a swinging block creaked and whined. On the rail by the afterhouse they could read her name; she was the Ruth Ginn of Bangor.

"The pint life savin' crew got the men about 1 o'clock this mornin'," remarked Captain Titcomb. "Skipper tried to anchor to ride out the gale, but got scared and tried to make an offin, got her into irons, and the tide did the rest. Her masts went just after they took off the men. What do you think of her? Total loss, ain't she?"

Bradley hesitated. "Well," he said, "I should say she was, so far as being any use as a schooner is concerned. That lumber, though, is a different matter. The weather would have a good deal to do with that, I should say."

"The weather's goin' to clear, if I'm any judge," observed his companion. "What do you say, Barney?"

"Looks like fairin' off to me," replied Mr. Small. "Wind's cantin' round to the west'ard. However, I ain't no weather prophet. You want to ask Peleg Myrick if you're after weather news; he seems to have a special tip from heaven on gales and calms."

The Lizzie sailed away from the wreck that, with one screaming sea gull balancing himself on the broken foremast, looked more sad and lonely than ever and anchored in the little harbor in the lee of the Point. Two or three catboats were moored there, and among them was one that the captain recognized.

"Hello!" he exclaimed. "There's Obed Nickerson's boat. I guess that settles it; some part of her's insured anyway."

They walked through the soft white sand and coarse beach grass up to the life saving station. The lookout, in the observatory on the roof, tapped on the window of his cage and waved a hand to them as they reached the plank walk leading to the door.

Inside, seated around the table of the living room, they found Captain Knowles, commander of the station; Obed Nickerson, the Orham agent of the underwriters; the skipper of the Ruth Ginn and two or three others. The skipper, sunburned, gray haired man, with a worried look on his lean face, was telling for Mr. Nickerson's benefit the story of how his vessel came to be in her hopeless plight. To a landsman it would have been an interesting yarn, but the present company had heard too many similar experiences to find anything novel in it.

"Insured, is she, Obed?" asked Captain Titcomb.

"Cargo is; schooner ain't," replied the underwriters' agent.

Captain Ezra signaled to Bradley, and they went out on the porch.

"Brad," whispered the captain, "they can't call her anything but a total loss. The underwriters 'll pay the insurance on that lumber and then dicker with somebody to save what they can of it. You and me want to be that somebody. Hello, here's Peleg!"

The versatile Mr. Myrick had tramped over from his hermitage and now, with Skeezicks shivering at his heels, was deep in conversation with Barney Small.

"Peleg says we're goin' to have clear weather for quite a spell," remarked Bradley. "Let's see; when did you say you had the next storm scheduled, Peleg?"

"Wall," drawled the weather prophet, looking becomingly important, "high's I can sagger, Cap'n Ez, she'll fair off by afternoon and stay clear more'n a fortnit. We ain't due to have another real genuine blow for more'n a month. I know 'st night's gale was comin'." I told Cap'n Knowles so. Says I, 'I don't care what the government

folks say, it's goin' to blow," says I, "like time, and then that's what wants to stand by, I says. Now."

"That's right, Peleg," broke in the captain. "I'll back you against the weather bureau eight days in the week and twice on Sunday. How's claims these days?"

"Claims?" replied Mr. Myrick. "Is scurrier'n all git out. I don't know why, unless 'twas the terrible hard winter. I was afraid of it last fall. Course I knew the hard winter was comin' and I told folks so. Oh, that reminds me! What's this I hear 'bout Sam Hammond's spendin' more'n \$4 for cigars last time he was home? Do you callate that's so?"

They left Barney to relieve Mr. Myrick's anxiety concerning the cigars and walked down to the beach. On the way Captain Titcomb said:

"Brad, we've got to get this lumber job. It's the kind of job we can do with the Lizzie, and, faggin' on a commission basis, I'll give us pretty high money and start enough to warrant our havin' a new schooner built, one with power and strong enough to handle the real big things. Wait here by the dory till Obed comes out. I'm layin' for him."

Mr. Nickerson, accompanied by one of the village boys, was on his way to the catboat, but the captain interfered.

"What in the nation are you goin' home in that clam shell for, Obed?" he asked. "Come on aboard the Lizzie with us. Brad and Barney and I will land you at the wharf afore that cat of yours is out of shoal water. Let Dan there take your boat home, and you come with us. I've got a cigar I want you to take out some fire insurance on."

So, after some persuasion, the underwriters' agent consented to make his homeward trip in the schooner. The cigars were lighted, Barney Small took the wheel, and the captain, Bradley and Mr. Nickerson made themselves comfortable in the little cabin. Then the conversation was judiciously plotted toward wrecks, and the wreck of the Ruth Ginn in particular. Obed admitted that the full insurance would undoubtedly be paid on the cargo, although, of course, the official "three man survey" must come first. Bradley asked what would be done after that.

"Obed," answered the agent, "then I guess I'll send word to the Boston Salvage company and make a deal with them to git out what they can of the lumber."

"Yes," observed Captain Titcomb, "and they'll charge you 75 per cent of the value. What's the matter with Brad and me doin' it?"

"You? What with this tub?"

"Yup, this tub. If you've got a loose tooth a string and a door'll snake it out as quick as the dentist will, and you don't have to pay for silver plated pinchers and a gilt name plate. Come, now, tell you what I'll do. Brad and me'll git that lumber out for 60 per cent on what we save."

"How you goin' to do it? You haven't got a towboat, nor even power in your own schooner."

"Don't need 'em. You couldn't start that wreck with a towboat without tankin' the bottom out of her. The only way to fetch her off the shoals is with anchors and cables, and you know it. We can do that ever as well as any Boston company that ever was. Give us a chance, Obed. You ought to encourage home talent, as Bill Samuels said to the schoolteacher that found fault with him 'cause he told his 'boy' to spell cat with a K. What do you say?"

Obed had a good deal to say, and no decision was reached that forenoon. Next day the survey was made, and that evening the captain spent at the home of Mr. Nickerson. It was after 11 o'clock when he returned to the room at the Traveler's Rest, where Bradley was waiting.

"Well," said Bradley anxiously. "Well!" exclaimed his partner, tossing his cap on a chair and wiping the perspiration from his hot forehead. "Well, Brad, I've used up jaw power enough to pretty high work that wreck off, but the job's ours at 50 per cent of the value of the lumber we save. There's nigh on to \$6,000 worth aboard, and if Peleg's forecastin' works here, and not got indignation we ought to clean up close to every stick of it. Brad, shake!"

And they shook hands. The opportunity they had been waiting for was theirs at last.

The partners talked for another hour before they separated. Three extra hands at least, so the captain figured, would be headed on the Lizzie.

So the next forenoon Bradley took the train to Harniss, where he found Alvin, oldest of the Bearse "boys." A gray headed, leather faced youngster of fifty-five, and engaged him for the sum of \$3 a day and his keep. He was to report on board at half past 7 the following morning. Then, having accomplished his share of the hiring, the junior partner returned to Orham to inspect the Lizzie with nervous care and to listen to the remarks of a dozen or more disinterested acquaintances who, having heard of the contract, had come down to the wharf to prophesy and offer advice.

Bradley called on Gus that evening. He had been so busy with Captain Titcomb, planning and working for the new contract, that he had seen her but once and then only for a moment since the night of the ball. But now, full of hope and the triumph of having secured the chance he had longed for, he looked forward to telling her the good news and receiving her congratulations.

The windows of the Baker "best parlor" were lighted up—a most unusual occurrence—and he vaguely wondered if they had "company" and who it might be.

Gus herself opened the door in response to his knock.

"Why, hello!" she said. "I wonder

ed if you had forgotten me entirely. Mr. Contractor, now that you really are a business man and the talk of the town."

"Then you knew?" he exclaimed in surprise.

"Why, of course I knew! I haven't heard anything else all day. And to make it certain, Melissa called on grandmother this afternoon, just after she had been at your house."

Bradley smiled ruefully. "You must have heard an encouraging yarn from her," he said. "Have you got company?"

"Oh, only a friend of ours that you know. Come right into the parlor."

He walked across the threshold of that sacred apartment to find Sam Hammond seated in the haircloth rocker and looking very much at home. Neither of the young men appeared particularly happy at meeting the other, but, truth to tell, Hammond was the more self possessed.

"Hello, Brad," he said easily. "I've heard nothing but you and Cap'n Ez since breakfast. I'm glad for you; it's a nice little job, if you can carry it out."

The contract had seemed anything but a little one to Bradley, and this nonchalant way of referring to it took him down a bit. Hammond continued in the same condescending way.

"I don't believe I should know how to handle a job like that," he observed, "without power or towboats or things of that sort. It would be like working with your hands tied. Our people have everything to do with, and they'd have that lumber off in no time. Did I ever tell you how we raised the Mar-grove for the Barclay line-folks. Gus? That was a job there was some fun in! She was a big iron steamer that ran

to pick up Peleg Myrick and Bill Taylor, the new hands, whose services the captain had secured without much trouble."

Barney ran the little weath'ring schooner under the tilted stern of the Ruth Ginn, and Bradley sprang from the shoals to the rail of the stranded craft. Then, one by one, all but Barney, who stayed behind to look after the Lizzie, they clambered aboard the wreck. Most of the hard pine boards that formed the deck load were in place, having been lashed well and being out of the reach of the heaviest seas, which had spent their force on the stern and after portion of the vessel.

The patent windlass was in good condition, and so, to their delight, was the donkey engine. Peleg, working manfully at the pump, reported that she had some water in her, but that it didn't "seem to be gainin' none."

Bradley got steam up in the donkey engine, and the big anchor of the Ruth Ginn, attached to a heavy cable, was lowered carefully until its shank rested across the stern of the dory. To this main cable, near its middle, were attached two others just as heavy; to each of these another anchor was made fast. The dories were rowed out almost at a right angle from the wreck into the deep water. Then the anchors were thrown overboard and a three fingered iron hand, with its spread talons deep in the sand, held the lumber schooner fast.

"Now, Brad," commanded the captain, "haul that line taut."

Bradley started his engine, the windlass turned, and the cable, that had hung loose from the bow of the wreck, lifted from the water and tightened till it groaned.

"All she'll stand, is it?" asked the skipper. "Good! Make her fast. They say tide'll wait for no man, so I guess we'll have to do the next best thing and wait for the tide. Now boys," as the men climbed aboard from the dories, "git to work and strip her."

Bradley and the captain knew that they could not hope to get out all the lumber in the hold of the Ruth Ginn if she was allowed to lie in her present exposed position. One more gale and she would be almost certain to break up. Their hope was to lighten her by getting rid of her deck load and to work her off the shoal into deep water and then tow her up to Orham harbor, where she could be unloaded at their leisure.

She lay almost broadside to the shoal, but not quite. Her bow was well up on the sand, but her stern overhung the edge of the Boneyard, which on that side was, as Captain Titcomb said, "steep as the back of a barn." The cable, tight as the steam windlass could draw it, led off from her bow to the spot where the anchors were planted under many fathoms of water. Where the tide turned its pressure against the schooner would bring her to bear on the cable with a tremendous pull. The waves, growing larger as the water deepened, should, if they plan was a good one, loosen her keel in the sand, and every inch she gave, the cable would retain. The more she loosened, the easier she would move. The slack thus made in the cable would be taken up by the windlass. She might gain but a foot a day for awhile, but some day or other, if the weather held fair, she would have worked herself through the sand and clear of the shoal.

They stripped her, cutting away her tangled ropes and sails and taking them aboard the Lizzie. Everything movable, except of course the lumber, they transferred thus or threw overboard. It was a hard job and took them all day. Bradley was a tired man when he reached home that night, but he had to answer countless questions put to him by the interested old maids. He saw Gus for a moment or two and reported progress. Then he went to bed.

Next morning was clear and calm, and they were delighted to find that the wrecked schooner had gained a little and that the cable was slacker than they left it. They tightened it again with the windlass and then set to work throwing overboard the lumber on the deck. They rigged a tackle on the stump of the foremast and with the donkey engine swung great bundles of the planks overboard, while Alvin and Barney, standing on the floating timber, with the water swashing around the knees of their fishermen's boots, made it into rafts to be towed up to Orham.

That night they hired Ira Sparrow's fishing boat, the Yon and I, to tow the lumber rafts. She was a stout little craft with a naphtha engine, and, although not nearly so efficient as a tug, did the work after a fashion and was far and away cheaper. By hiring her they added Ira to their force.

For eight days they labored steadily, except on Sunday, when they merely sailed down to take up the slack on the cable. The lumber on the deck had been rafted to Orham, and they had begun to get out that in the hold. The Ruth Ginn was moving slowly through the sand, and every day showed more and more gain. The partners were in high spirits.

(To be continued)

"I don't see how you can cherish two locks of hair." "Why not?" "One is brunette; the other blond." "They were both given me by the same girl."—Louisville Courier-Journal.

"Well, Pat," said the visitor, "we must all die once." "That's phwat bothers me," replied the very sick man. "If I could die half a dozen times, O! wouldn't mind it."—Boston Transcript.

Minard's Liniment Cures Diphtheria.



Sam did most of the talking.

on the ledge at the mouth of Boston harbor and went down. We got the contract right in the face of the salvage company in their own town."

Sam did most of the talking. Gus listened, and Bradley brooded. Perhaps, he thought, he had made a mistake in leaving the big city; perhaps, after all, he was destined to become nothing but the "longshoreman" Gus had intimated might be his fate. Captain Titcomb didn't think so, but he might be mistaken. He grew more downcast every minute.

"I tell you, honest, Brad," said Sam, with apparent earnestness, "I don't see how you and the cap'n are going to make much out of this business or get to be anything more than just anchor draggers. Speaking as a man with some experience in wrecking, your chances against the big chaps, like our crowd, look small to me. You may win out, but— He shook his head doubtfully.

Gus, at Hammond's request, seated herself before the squeaky old parlor organ and played while she and Sam sang. Bradley, who didn't sing, sat on the sofa and watched them gloomily. All day he had been in that excited nervous state where criticism or encouragement affected his spirits as the weather does a barometer. The doleful prophecies at the wharf—although at another time he would have laughed at them—had depressed him in spite of himself. The whole hearted joy and confidence of the old maids had cheered him up again, but now he was realizing that, after all, it was Gus' encouragement and congratulation that he wanted, and she had not congratulated him.

At length he rose to go, giving as an excuse the fact of his being tired and having to be up early next morning. Gus apologized to Sam and accompanied him to the door. She came out on the step; it was a beautiful night, clear and calm, with every star shining.

Bradley put on his hat. "Well, good night," he said shortly.

But Gus laid her hand on his coat sleeve.

"Couldn't you see? Sam envies you, and that's why he talks so big about New York. And he knows you're going to succeed too. Oh, Brad, your opportunity is here! You ought to be as proud and confident of yourself as I am proud and confident of you."

"Gus," he whispered, looking straight into her eyes, "do you believe in me as much as that?"

She did not shun his look. "Yes," she answered simply, "I do."

Goodness knows what might have happened then. Perhaps Gus was afraid to wait and see. At all events, she snatched her hands from his, whispered "good night," and ran into the house.

CHAPTER XI.

THE morning of the second day following the securing of the wreck