

WILLY ARMSTRONG

FREIGHTED WITH TREASURES FOR BOYS AND GIRLS.

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THE LOST WHALE BOAT. A TALE OF THE ARCTIC SEAS.

By HARVEY WINTHROP.

CHAPTER I.

"Good-by, mother!"

"Good-by, my darling, and may God bless and keep you safe!"

"Don't you be afraid, mother dear!" said the hearty, frank sailor lad, looking fondly into his weeping mother's face, with eyes brightened by hope and expectancy, and youth's natural buoyancy, beneath the glittering tear-drops, which he was not ashamed to show, of sorrow at parting with one who loved him as the apple of her eye.

"Don't you be afraid, mother dear! It isn't as if I were going to sea for the first time, you know, for I have already come back all right from two long voyages, besides that coasting cruise I went with Uncle Jen. Don't you fret, mother, but keep your heart up; and next year, please God, you'll see me here as safe and as sound as ever. Ay, and you shall have a brand new bonnet, mother, and as fine a satin silk dress as the minister's lady, never you fear, out of my earnings; for, as Maxwell says, 'I'm to have a half man's share in the results of the voyage.'"

"I hope so, Willy darling, in my heart," said the poor mother, as a faint smile of tearful pride in the promises of her stalwart son stole over her wan face in a Not a word of dress or the bonnet, Willy, you know that, but for your safe and speedy return! Greenland is an awful cold country; and many poor sailor boys like you, only not half so bonny! have gone to those dreadful Arctic regions and have never come back to gladden anxious hearts at home. Ah me, it's a sore and bitter parting!" And the widow wept silently as she thought of all the perils and hardships that lay in store for her darling boy, unthought, undreamt of by him, but which a mother's eyes, prophetic in their love, could plainly foresee before him in the misty future!

The Narwhal, a fine bark-rigged Nantucket whaler, lay with her anchor short stay up in the secure harbor off the good old town of Nantucket. She was all ready to start on her northern voyage to the seal fisheries of Greenland; and only waiting for her captain and the remainder of her crew to come on board, to take in the last links of main-cable to which her ponderous anchor, over which she was now riding, was attached, spread her canvas, and away to the home of the great bear and the aurora borealis; where the sun doesn't shine for six months in the year, and the potent ice king keeps holiday quarters for ever!

A sturdy-looking vessel is the Narwhal, somewhat bluff-bowed, perhaps, but that is on account of the heavy timbers she has braced up in her head and warships, and up and down with the bilge, in order to enable her to resist the shocks she will have to encounter from a more powerful adversary even than old Neptune, though he can be pretty rough in his treatment when he likes! Bluff-bowed, perhaps, but with good "lines," a neatly sweeping counter, and a broad massive stern, fitted with a substantial rudder and rudder post, which seems capable of withstanding any force brought against it, laterally or from below.

She is daintily finished, too, is the Narwhal, although she is going to the Arctic regions, and her masts and yards look as trim as if she were a smart man-of-war frigate, going for a summer cruise; for her owners know the foolishness of the penny-wise and pound-foolish doctrine, and have rigged and equipped her so that she may want nothing when far away from man's help in the great silent land of the north. She has even wire cordage set

up for her standing riggings, and double-top-sails, to spare the hands extra work aloft in reefing when in cold latitudes; so no wonder the vessel looks all atunto, as sailors say in their expressive vocabulary; and that she is the cynosure of all eyes as she lies swinging there at her cable in the harbor off Nantucket, besides those of Willy's mother looking at her son's future floating home!

"Good by, mother darling, once more! I must go now—see, the captain is on the dock, and the boat waiting to shove off!"

"God bless you, Willy!" said Mrs. Armstrong, folding him in her arms, and hugging him tight for a last embrace. "God bless you, and good by, my son. May He who watches over the fatherless, watch over you, in your going out and in your coming in! Good by, my Willy! my boy, good by!"

"Good by, mother darling! There, one more kiss—and one more; there—good by!"

In five minutes more, the anchor is catted and "fished;" and the gallant Narwhal, with all her canvas spread to the welcome breeze, is cleaving through the blue water gaily, dashing the spray from her bows, and leaving the island of Nantucket, and all its belongings, far behind in her wake, on her way to the emerald-tinted heights of Greenland, and the fairy landscapes of the Arctic waters!

"A life on the ocean wave!" Ah! no wonder painters picture its charms, and poets sing its praises; for:

Oh, who can tell, save he whose heart hath tried,
And danced in triumph o'er the waters wide,
The exciting sense—the pulse's maddening play,
That thrills the wanderer of that trackless way?

CHAPTER II.

OUT of the harbor and safely over the bar—where but a few hours earlier the lead would have run but something over a fathom—the

Here all the fishing gear is overhauled, and harpoons, lances, and fishing spades polished with up and sharpened; while the lengthy lines to be attached to the harpoons, some five hundred fathoms long, are carefully inspected and tested, inch by inch, to see that they are all sound, and that no weak places should at the last moment rob them of their prey, by falling in the emergency of the chase. The whale boats, too, those sharp, clinker-built double-enders, which have seemingly no stem or rudder, being all bow fish, so that they may be propelled backward or forward, to avoid the rushes of the struck fish; and which are steered by the long oar that, wielded by skilful hands, is worth all the rudders in the world in a strong chopping sea. Yes, the whale boats are got ready, with their tubs to coil up the lines in, and their tomahawks to cut them clear, should they foul in running out; and the strong, bending, pliant ash oars are fixed in their places, and numbered with pickets of rope attached; the thole-pins greased, and everything prepared for the time when they welcome cry: "There she blows!" is raised from the crew's net on the foremast-crossrees, and all hands will be eager in lowering the boats and numbering off their crews, and starting off through the bluenoses, as they frolic through the seas, spouting up fountains through their blow-holes that mark their progress before the wind.

Nothing was forgotten, and Willy Armstrong had almost ceased to think of the bitter parting he had had with his poor mother; for the busy life aboard, and the new scenes in which he found himself, surrounded by many boisterous comrades, soon banished all sorrowful recollections of home, and the fond heart that wept for him far away.

He had no time for regrets and vain longings that could not be gratified; he had to mix in the action around him, and be busy with the throng; by and by he would return once more to the old place, and see the dear old face again, happy instead of tearful; and then the parting would be forgotten in the return merriment, and the gulf of absence bridged, as it was in fancy now with the rainbow of hope.

"A penny for your thoughts, Willy?" said Ben Walton, the second mate of the Narwhal, a fine young fellow, only about four years older than he, who had known him since they met at the grammar school at Nantucket; Ben, as one of the big boys, just going to start in the seal-faring line, and be hardly more than a toddler, tied to his mother's apron string, and only now coming to school for the first time.

The Narwhal was just approaching the latitude of the most southerly point of Greenland, only fifty miles to the westward. Further yet lay Iceland, and it was thence Willy's thoughts had strayed—to the peaks of Mount Hecla, breathing out fire and smoke (as he had read)—the beacon of the Pole.

"I was thinking nonsense, Ben, not worth your penny," laughed Willy, turning toward his friend.

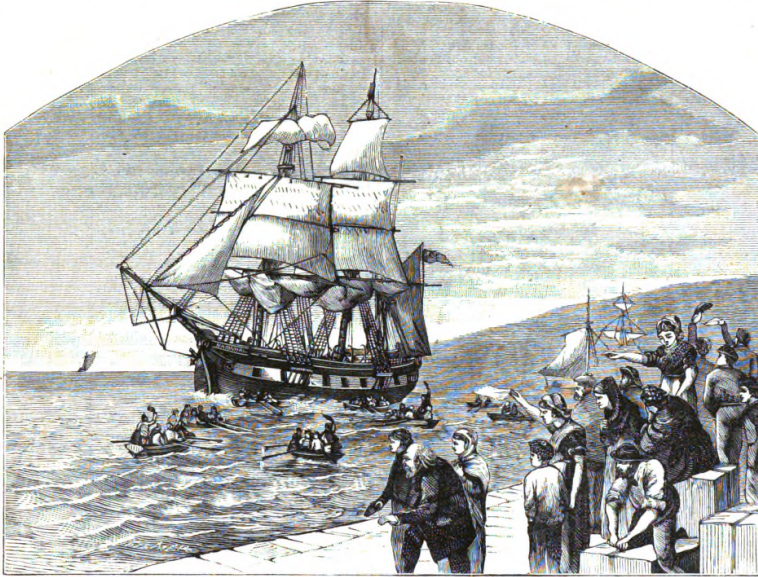
"Don't say that," replied young Walton. "How can you tell what I may think of your thoughts?"

"Well," said Willy, "if you want to know, I was wishing we could bring that volcano to us up in the frozen sea, or even a steam pipe from it; that would be of some use to me, to melt the ice round the ship, should we be beset."

"It would be convenient," Ben Walton said, "but although it's an age of invention, I fancy we shall be a few centuries older before we utilize the heat of Hecla to warm ice-bound ships in Davis's straits."

"When are we likely to see our first whales, Ben? I am longing for the chase?"

"So am I, Willie, but we may have some time to wait yet."



"ALL HANDS MAKE SAIL!"

A final hug; and mother and son were parted—he running briskly down the dock, where the boat was waiting to pull off to the ship, and which he reached just before the captain hurried up, after receiving his papers and last directions from the owners.

Half a dozen strokes from sinewy arms, and the boat with the captain and Willy Armstrong was alongside the Narwhal. A clutch of the side ropes, and a step or two up the accommodation ladder, and they stood on her deck. And then, Hi, boatswain! squeak thy shrillest whistle with a will, man, "All hands up anchor!"

The capstan is manned eagerly; and the bars go round by the aid of willing hands, with a steady tramp of feet; and the click, click of the catch falling into the teeth at its base, to prevent its slipping round back the wrong way, with the clinking cable that grates in slowly, link by link, through the yawning hawse hold, and is carefully gathered up, and arranged along the inside bulwarks, fore and aft the deck, in parallel lines of iron chains before being stowed below.

"A way aloft there, now," roars out Captain Maxwell's voice, as the ship swings clear. "A way aloft! All hands make sail!"

"And 'All hands make sail!'" echoes the boatswain.

With a cheer, the crew rush up the ratlines, and lower and drop the sails; while others man the halliards, and sheet them home; and others, again, brace the yards round to meet the wind, as the helmsman takes his place and lets the ship fall off and gather way, leaving her berth lingeringly.

Narwhal holds her way north-eastwards until she can clear the jutting Cape Race.

And then, up helm; brace back the yards; show all the fore and aft sail that she can carry, and trim her prow to where the constant magnetic needle points.

But it is only a summer's sail, and mere child's play so far; with bright blue sky above, a cobalt sea, and favoring gales; so the Narwhal makes rapid progress toward her goal; Captain Maxwell rubbing his hands with satisfaction, and walking smartly up and down the poop every day, as soon as he takes the sun, to express his delight at the number of knots she has run since the previous noon—a satisfaction duly, though more soberly, shared by John Hardy, the first mate, Ben Walton, the second mate, and Willy Armstrong; besides all the crew, some thirty hands in all, for the Narwhal is ably manned by picked hands, who have graduated in whaling vessels from boyhood, and who have an interest in the vessel beyond the mere duty of assisting to navigate her; they are really co-partners with the captain and the Nantucket shipowners, and do their work with none the less promptitude and zeal on that account, you may be certain; for aren't they working "for their sels," as one of them expresses it?

On she goes, cracking on sail day and night, for she has to make the best of the warm days and summer weather, which will enable her to penetrate the grand arcum of the Ice King, ere winter comes, and he locks his outer door; stretching northwards until Labrador lay abeam though far out of sight.



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ACCOUNTED FOR. THE scientific people tell us that nature is full of music. The goat huns on the note A in the second space. The owl hoots in B flat.

A FATAL CORSET. IN vain do the doctors tell young girls that corsets are dangerous to the health. Equally futile is the assurance of artists that petite waists are a deformity to the female figure.

SENSE IN ACTION. "WELL now, John, why did you multiply by twelve?" And John replied: "To get the answer."

TABLE DELICACIES. FASHION has a great deal to do with food. The Chinese are fond of rats, and Bostonians nourish their brains with pork and beans.

POPE LEO XIII. A Sketch of his Life and Character, and a Glimpse of the Vatican. THE Pope is believed by millions of human beings to be, by the divine grace of the Creator...

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PREACHING AND PRACTICE.

MEN of lofty ideas are often so lame in practice, that we might easily conclude it to be impossible for the same man to have force enough for the best of theory and the best of practice also.

When Prince Bismarck and Jules Favre were discussing the French-German peace, the former offered the latter a cigar. Favre declined, being a non-smoker.

At this juncture, Count d'Herisson, one of the commission, quietly offered his cigar case to the angry Prince, with a significant bow and smile.

WALKING IN CIRCLES. It is a common incident in stories for a person lost in the woods to travel in a circle, coming out at the place whence he started.

Some scientific men think this peculiarity is due to the fact that one leg is slightly longer than the other. Mr. Darwin, however, and with more appearance of reason, believes that men are right and left legged, as they are right and left handed.

CURIOS OPTICAL TRICK. DURING the past year, eight seers in the great cities have been greatly puzzled by an exhibition known as the "Thawma," or "Where is the body?"

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At this time, a Marquis, learning of the danger that threatened him, called upon the Delegate to warn and threaten him. Pecci was firm in his purpose to follow to earth the scourge of Benevento.

The castle of this noble was the first to be assaulted. The brigands within were killed or made prisoners, and the process being repeated, the nobles submitted, the brigands were swept away and the honest people of the province united in praise of the Delegate.

Pecci, removed Pecci to a higher charge at Spoleto and again to Perugia. On the latter place, he became the centre of cultured society.

In a very short time he was summoned to Rome, and was immediately created Bishop of Damietta and appointed Nuncio to the Court of Belgium.

On reading it, Gregory said to Pecci: "The King of the Belgians exalts your character, your virtues and your services, and demands for you one thing which I will accord with pleasure—the purple."

Pecci was proclaimed Archbishop-bishop of Perugia in 1846, and was at the same time created cardinal, though this was announced, Gregory dying, his successor, Pius IX. allowed seven years to go by without rendering unto Pecci what was his due.

A pleasant anecdote is related of him which has for its point his love for children and his enjoyment of their artless ways. A certain little fellow gained access to the Pope with his father, and during the serious conversation of his elders, mounted up the knee of his Holiness, unrestrained.

"I hope you are always a good boy," said the Pope. "Oh no! I bit Marie yesterday," replied the little fellow, boldly, but with a conscious blush.

GOLDEN THOUGHTS. THE clever turn everything to account. WALK and be happy; walk and be healthy. NO well-laid host will praise his own wines.

BEWARE of dreams. Beware of the illusion of fancy. Beware of the solemn deceivings of thy vast desire. 'TIS SWEET. 'TIS sweet to hear the watch dog's honest bark. 'TIS sweet to know that your enemy is forgiveness; to an opponent, tolerance; to a friend, your heart; to your child a good example; to a father, deference; to your mother conduct that will make her proud of you; to yourself, respect; to all men, charity.



PECCI

