

840    ADVENTURES OF JIMMIE DALE

brushed his cheek, there came a quick half sob to Jimmie Dale's lips.

"Marie!" he whispered. "Marie—at last!"

Came the rip and tear and rend of wood, the thud of a falling door from the front of the shed, the rush of feet—but Jimmie Dale was in the boat now, and the packing case above was swung back into place.

"Right ahead, Jimmie!" she breathed. "The planks at the end of the pier swing aside—yes, there—no, a little to the right—yes!"

The boat shot out into the river—farther out—and the pier and shed merged into the shadows of the shore line and were lost.

And then Jimmie Dale let the oars swing loose. She was crouched in the bottom of the boat close beside him. He bent his head until his lips touched her hair, and lower still until his lips touched hers. And a long time passed. And the boat drifted on. And he drew her closer into his arms, and held her there. She was safe now, safe for always—and the road of fear lay behind. And into the night there seemed to come a great quiet, and a great joy, and a great thankfulness, and a wondrous peace.

And the boat drifted on.

And neither spoke—for they were going *home*.

THE END