

wood, but a little examination showed his mistake. It was marked with yellow and reddish striae, like those of marble, for it had floated in on the waves. He tried to lift it, but it was too large and heavy. Then with considerable exertion he succeeded in turning it over, and rolling it out of reach of the tide. It had a peculiar odor which he found very agreeable, and he was loath to leave it behind. But even the odor would not compensate for its bulkiness, so at last he turned away and walked slowly up the beach.

But the rich perfume followed him, and presently he retraced his steps and examined the block once more. Then he went to the cabin after the wheelbarrow. When his father returned from a fishing trip, a few days later, the block was lying among some old nets behind the cabin. The old man looked it over critically.

'No, I don't know what 'tis,' he said, in answer to a question from Jacob, 'but s'pose likely it's some sea-growin' stuff. It smells mighty good. Howsumever, it's too big an' awk'ard to have lyin' round. Ye'd better roll it back to low water an' let the tide carry it out.'

But Jacob did not roll it down to low water. It remained behind the cabin for several weeks, then he removed it to the small back room where they kept their nets and other fishing gear.

Ten or fifteen miles up the point were a number of inland ponds and shallows. Birds were plentiful here, and at certain seasons the snipe shooting was excellent. Hunters were comparatively scarce, but occasionally parties of city sportsmen appeared and remained during the shooting season. They usually came in yachts, and either made a camp near one of the ponds or returned and slept on board their boats each night. Sometimes, but not often, they wandered down as far as Peter Gradt's cabin.

One afternoon a small yacht was seen heading down the coast. As it reached a point opposite the cabin it rounded to and a boat came ashore. Peter Gradt and his oldest son were away fishing, but Jacob was behind the cabin mending a net.

Two men left the boat and approached the cabin, the others walked away toward the dunes. All of them had guns, and they evidently intended to explore the flats for birds.

'Hello, my lad!' exclaimed one of the men as they came round the corner of the cabin and saw Jacob at work, 'can you let us have a piece of half-inch rope, ten or twelve feet long? Our man forgot to bring any, and we have some splicing to do. We will be glad to pay you your own price for it.'

'I guess I can let you have some rope,' answered Jacob as he rose from the net, 'but I don't want any pay for it. Come in here.'

He led them into the little back room and began to overhaul a pile of nets and cordage. Suddenly he heard a low exclamation of wonder, followed by a suppressed whispering. As he turned he saw them regarding the gray block he had found on the beach. They turned away, however, with apparent unconcern and began to examine the other objects in the room. Neither of them appeared to take any further notice of the block.

When they turned to go, however, one of them said, as though with sudden recollection, 'By the way, what was that queer-looking thing in the corner? the gray, funny-smelling rock, I mean?'

Jacob looked at him sharply. He felt sure there was something behind this seeming carelessness.

'I don't know,' he answered. 'I picked it up on the beach.'

'Do you want to sell it?' asked the man as he began to button his coat as though it made very little difference to him whether it was for sale or not. At any other time Jacob would not have hesitated. He would even have been willing to give the block away, for its novelty had already worn off. But now his suspicions were aroused.

'I guess I'd better keep it,' he said, quietly.

'Oh, give him a dollar for it, Alf, and come along!' exclaimed the other man, affecting to be impatient.

'Suppose we say five?' and Alf looked at Jacob, inquiringly.

The boy caught his breath. Five dollars! He had never seen so much money in his life. But his hard, practical shrewdness did not desert him. He shook his head.

The men looked at him keenly. Then the one called Alf asked, insinuatingly:

'What good is it to you? I thought money was scarce down this way, and that you would snap at five dollars. The thing is very curious, and I would like to have it well enough; but I can't pay a fancy price. Now what will you take? the lowest figure, mind!'

'I'd rather you'd make me an offer,' replied Jacob, after a moment's thought. 'I'm willin' to sell, but you must give me something like what it's worth. I suppose the best thing for me would be to take it up to one of the big towns.'

This last was a sudden inspiration, and it had its effect. The men looked at each other, quickly.

'The fellow either knows what it is or has some idea of its value,' Jacob heard one of them say in a low voice to his companion. Then they walked aside and talked earnestly for some minutes. When they came back Alf held a roll of bills in his hand.

'Look here, my boy,' he said, persuasively, 'it would be foolish for you to take that thing up to the city, and perhaps have some sharper get it away from you. It is valuable; we don't mind telling you that; and we would like to have it. This man and I make perfumery, and we could use it in our business. We can afford to give you more than an outsider would. If you'll let us have a bill of sale of it, fair and square, we'll give you three hundred dollars, cash. What do you say?'

Jacob could only stare blankly at them for a moment. Then he nodded eagerly and took the paper and pencil the man offered. A few minutes later the men called to some of their companions, and the block was carried down to the boat.

When Peter Gradt and his son returned from fishing they found Jacob waiting for them on the beach. A few words acquainted them with the wonderful events of the day.

'What'll you do with the money?' asked Peter, after the first excitement was over.

'Can I do just what I like with it?' asked Jacob.

'Of course. It's your'n. But I'd advise ye to git a boat an' outfit. There's enough money in that there roll to give you a fine set-out in fishin'.'

Jacob shook his head.

'If you don't mind,' he said, with a glad ring in his voice, 'I'll take it an' go away to school.'

'Well, do jest what ye think best. But I'm afeard it'll spile the makin' of a good fisherman.'

As they walked toward the cabin the old man turned, with sudden curiosity in his face.

'What'd they say the stuff was?' he asked.

Jacob looked blank.

'They didn't say,' he answered, ruefully, 'an' I forgot to ask.'

It was not until many years afterwards, not until he had been away to school and had come back and worked his way up to the command of a fine schooner, that he told his father he knew now that that stuff must have been ambergris.

A Bagster Bible Free.

Send four new subscriptions to the 'Northern Messenger' at thirty cents each and secure a nice Bagster Bible, suitable for Sabbath School or Day School. Bound in black pebbled cloth, with red edge, measures seven inches by five and three-quarter inches when open.

Soft Soap

A THANKSGIVING STORY.

(By Ernest Gilmore, in 'The Independent.')

There had been a grand Thanksgiving dinner at the Macy mansion, six courses all told each and all served admirably by Matthew, the butler, and little Alf, Matthew's helper. First, there had been soup, oyster, and pickled onions, and nasturtiums. Second, there had been a mammoth turkey, roasted to just the right point by Dilsey, the cook; a pair of ducks, broiled pigeons and baked venison, flanked by mashed potatoes, stewed tomatoes, succotash, squash, turnips, fresh-boiled pink and white beets, and clam soup, with crackers, and celery, apple-sauce, and bread and butter; yes, and coffee, too, belonged to the second course, for sensible Mr. Macy, senior, said he 'never cared for coffee after dinner.' Third, there had been pies, pumpkin and mince pies, flaky-crust and delicious, with cheese. Fourth, there had been pudding—plum-pudding. Fifth, icecream, cakes, and jelly. Sixth, rosy apples, grapes, and winter pears, walnuts, raisins, and glasses of cold orange-water.

'Such a dinner as to make one too lazy to navigate,' said Uncle Phil, settling down in a big arm-chair by the open Franklin stove, in the cozy back parlor.

'Wasn't it a rouser? Did you ever eat such a dinner before?' asked ten-year-old Robbie Macy, sitting down on the rug in front of Uncle Phil.

'Humph! I ate better dinner years and years ago than you had to-day, when I was a little shaver, no larger than you,' Uncle Phil said, teasingly. And Rob answered, doubtfully:

'I don't see how you could have had such a good dinner as we had, let alone a better one. Why, Mamma said you lived way out West, where lots of Indians were.'

Uncle Phil laughed.

'So you infer, because there were Indians out where we were, that we had nothing to eat. Do you?'

'I suppose you had something to eat,' Rob replied, roguishly; 'but I don't believe 'twas plum-pudding and great big slices of turkey-breast. Now, was it, Uncle Phil?'

'We didn't have plum-pudding, that's a fact; and we didn't have great slices of white turkey-breast, that's another fact; but, Rob, we had slices of dark turkey-breast—nice, juicy wild turkey. I can tell you it was good, too.'

'Pho! I don't like dark meat. I'm glad I was not there.' And Rob turned a somersault over to Rover, who lay peacefully on the other side of the big velvet rug.

'Rob!'

'Well, sir.'

'Shall I tell you a story about a Thanksgiving we had out West, when I was a boy?'

Rob stood at his Uncle's knees in less than a minute, with wide-awake, delighted eyes.