

Partners of the Tide

JOSEPH C. LINCOLN Author of "Cap'n Ez"

Copyright, 1905, by A. S. Barnes & Co. And after that came work, work, work. The men were organized into day and night gangs. Bradley commanded the former, Captain Titcomb the latter. The partners hired the You and I to do what she could of the work the Diving Belle had been engaged in. The lack of the schooner was a great handicap, but they had no funds with which to hire a large vessel. They made their headquarters aboard the barge now. Bradley did not go up to Orham at all. When his day's work was over he ate a hasty supper and tumbled into a berth in the skipper's cabin, sometimes to sleep, but more often to lie awake and plan for the morrow. He was still pale and weak from the effects of the blow on the head, but he would not take it easy, as the captain begged. The worry and strain of the labor were in a sense relief to him—they kept him from thinking of other things. Each morning the old maid telephoned to the station to learn how he felt and how the work was progressing. Bradley gathered from Miss Prissy's anxious remarks that in the village the partners' failure was regarded as a foregone conclusion. The news made him only more determined to succeed. Cook & Sons wired daily, and every afternoon a report was sent to them. These reports were growing more optimistic. The barge was eating her way steadily through the shoal, and as she was lightened she moved faster. They watched the cables as a cat watches a rat hole, keeping them all ways tight. The captain said: "Brad, if I didn't know what was the matter I should have my old Sunday school teacher was right. He always swore I'd be hung some day, and now all I can dream about is ropes." The captain's energy was something wonderful. A nervous man by nature, he flew from one end of the Freedom to the other, commanding, helping, hurrying. With the men he was always cheerful and sure of success, but once in a while, alone with his partner, he showed his real feelings. One morning before turning in he went across to telephone. When he came back he called Bradley aside and said: "Brad, Sam says the government weather folks are foretelling a big storm for day after tomorrow. It's coming from the south and 'll strike here about then. It's a terror, they say. It worries me. I'm more scared of a gale of wind just now than I am of the Old Harry himself." The junior partner looked troubled. "Wonder if that's what's distressing Peleg?" he observed. "Peleg has been after me ever since the fire. Says he's got something to tell me. "He's been pestering me too. I ain't had no time to listen to his yarns. Let's see him." They sent for the weather prophet, who appeared, dirtier than ever. "Look here, Peleg," was the captain's salutation. "What do we feed you for? Here's the government weather sharp smeller's got a sale, an you ain't peeped. You'll have to put specs on your second sight or we'll ship a new prophet, one or t'other." Mr. Myrick was troubled. "Now, Cap'n Ez," he protested in an aggrieved tone, "ain't I been tryin' a git at you or Brad for four days or more? I know there was a blow comin'. She's comin' a-bilin' too. And I don't need no specs neither." "Humph! Brad, this is the devil and all, isn't it? That'll do, Peleg." "But, Cap'n Ez, there's somethin' else I wanted to tell you. I—" "Never mind now. Put it on ice, gum!" Peleg "got," but with reluctance. He kept looking back and shaking his head. Captain Ezra's face was very solemn. His forehead wrinkled, and he pulled his mustache nervously. "By crissake!" he muttered. "We have got to do somethin' quick. I know you don't take any stock in Peleg, but if that gale does come we're knocked higher 'n the main truck. She's losin' up so now that a tug might help us. I can git a little one from Vineyard Haven, skipper, engineer and all, for \$40 a day." "But they won't work on spec." "No. I'm going to Wellmouth to see the bank folks. I'll tell 'em that if they ever hope to git back the rest of the money they lent on the Diving Belle they must risk enough to pay for that tug. I'm goin' now." "But you've been up all night. Let me go. You turn in." "Turn in be darned! I'd sleep about as sound as an eel on a perch hook. I can turn in when I can't do anything else. Goodby. Put in your spare time prayin' for me, will you?" He went to Wellmouth, saw the people at the bank and, as he said, "talked from his boots up." At 12 o'clock of the following day the little tug put in an appearance. She got a grip on the Freedom's bow and pulled with the tide. The expected gale did not come that day, but the next afternoon the sky was overcast, and the sun disappeared behind angry clouds. It was blowing fresh when Bradley, worn out, went to his berth at 9 o'clock. He had fought against going at all, but Captain Titcomb said: "Put in an hour or two anyway. I'll call you if you're wanted."

He called him before the second hour was up. "Come on deck, Brad!" he cried excitedly. "That sou'easter's on the road, and it's backin' up the biggest tide ever I saw. Tain't high water till 2, but she's pretty high as high as usual now." The junior partner hurried on deck. The wind was singing in the rigging, and the waves were rushing past the barge, slapping furiously at her as they passed. The night was a dead black, and the surf on the ocean side of the Point boomed like heavy artillery. "I've sent ashore for the day shift," said the captain. "We've got to make our fight now. Looks as if 'twas our last chance, and a mighty slim one." The dories brought the tired men hard all day, but they were ready to work still harder now. They realized that, one way or another, this was the end of the big job. The little tug, bouncing up and down on the waves, was throwing her whole weight on the tow line. Alvin Bearse stood by the donkey engine ready to stoke in every inch of the cable. The partners were in the bow. The buckets were flying from the hold. "She gained a heap last tide," murmured the captain. "This extra high water and the waves ought to help her like fun. But I'm afraid 'twon't be enough, and tomorrow the sou'easter 'll land with both feet." Waiting was the hardest thing. A half hour seemed longer than an ordinary day. The wind gained in force little by little. The tide crept up the barge's side. At 1 o'clock it was far higher than it had ever reached before, and so powerful was its rush that the huge hull quivered in its grasp. The water, seen by the lantern's light, was the color of chocolate, streaked and marbled with lines and eddies of foam. Half past 1. The captain put his watch in his pocket and wiped his forehead. "I know how it feels when you're waitin' to be hung," he observed. "Thirty minutes for the firm to live, Brad; then—" A mighty blow from a wave, a tremble and then a roll. The lanterns in the rigging spun around in circles. The men on the deck and below fell in heaps. The Freedom tilted, straightened and then began to rock in her cradle. The cables sagged into loops. Their silent partner, the tide, had come to the firm's rescue. Bradley got upon his feet. "Haul fast!" he screamed. Before the order was given Bradley was back at his engine. The windlass shrieked. Captain Titcomb roared through his speaking trumpet. The towboat shot forward, then back, her screw thrashing the water. The little You and I lobbed beside her. She was pulling too. And then a long, scraping, breathless interval. A halt, a shock, and, pushing a wall of sand before her, the Freedom plunged into deep water. There was no cheering. A subdued murmur, like a sigh, came from the crowd on her deck. Men drew sooty arms across wet foreheads and looked at each other without speaking. She was off the shoal, but far from being out of danger yet. She must be got over into the deep hole behind the Point, where she could safely ride out the coming gale. And to get her into this haven there was only the little tug to depend upon. Could the tiny craft do it in that wind and sea? If not, then the barge would almost surely drag her anchors, would strike again, and then—well, then all the work and the triumph so nearly won would count for nothing. They brought her up to her anchors out in the middle of the channel. There they waited for the tide to turn. The silence was heartbreaking. Only now and then did any one speak. In clusters by the rail they stared at the big waves and the foam streaks gliding by. At last Captain Titcomb snatched his watch case shut and shouted through his trumpet. The towboat puffed into position. The anchors were lifted from the bottom. The time for the final test had come. Then the little tug showed what she was made of. Coughing, panting like a bulldog straining at a chain, she pulled at that hawser, and, slowly at first, but gaining headway as she moved in the dead water of the slack of the tide, the Freedom followed her through the channel around the edge of the shoal into the cove and safety. At ten minutes to 4 that morning the last big anchor was sent down. "There!" shouted Captain Titcomb. "She'll stay where she is now if it blows hard enough to frazzle out a handspike. Boys, the job's done. Knock off!" They answered him with a cheer that woke the cat from his sleep beneath the stove at the lighthouse. The tug took them to the Point. They perched all over her, heedless of the cold and the flying spray. The men were wildly excited over the unexpected good luck. They cheered the partners again and again and gave three groans for the "quitters," meaning Mr. Clark and his friends. Peleg Myrick was bearing his concertina to safe quarters in the shanty, and they insisted that he should play it. Peleg protested that it was too wet for music on board that tug, but they threatened to leave the "push and pull pianer" overboard if he didn't play. "Play somethin' we can sing," ordered Bill Taylor. Peleg struck up a doleful dirge of the sea. It was loaded to the gunwale with wrecks and disasters. "Belay that!" cried Barney Small. "We don't want no come-all-yes. That's the tune that soured the milk. Give us a down." The musician considered; then he burst into the air that every fisherman knows:

"The grub is in the galley, and the rum is in the jug— Storm along, John! John, storm along! The skipper's from Hyannis, and he gives us hully mug— Storm along, storm along, John! "Chorus!" howled Barney, waving his cap. They joined in with a whoop. "Storm along, John! John, storm along! Ain't I glad my day's work's done! Storm along, John! John, storm along! Ain't I glad my day's work's done!" Bradley stood by the back door of the big shanty, looking out at the storm. The first sickly light of morning was streaking the dingy, tumbled sky. Inside the building the men were keeping up their celebration. No one had suggested turning in. Captain Titcomb came around the corner. "There you are, hey?" he exclaimed, with a breath of relief. "Blamed if I didn't begin to be afraid you'd tumbled overboard. Well, gosh, we did it, by crismus! We did it, thanks to the good Lord for sendin' that whoopin' big tide. Titcomb & Nicker, son ain't ready for the undertaker yet. Now you can go up to Orham and tell Gus Baker somethin' with white." Bradley shrugged his shoulders. Now that the strain was over and they had won the thoughts that he had put aside were coming back. He was realizing that the firm's success didn't mean much to him. After all, what did he really care? "I guess Gus wouldn't be greatly interested," he said. The captain seized him by the shoulders and spun him around. "Look here, son!" he cried. "What fool idea have you got in your head? What's the matter with you? Wouldn't be interested! The girl that risked her life to haul you out of the drink!" Bradley shook his head. "I guess you forget that Hammond was in the drink, too," he said. Captain Titcomb smote his partner a blow in the chest. "You crazy loon!" he shouted. "Is that what's ailin' you? Do you s'pose she cares a hurrah in Tophet for that scamp? Listen to me! I was closer 'n anybody to Gus when she rowed across the harbor that night. She was right under the bow of her skiff. He hailed her. She saw him—looked right at him. But she never reached out a hand. Left him to drown, like the durned rat he is, and went on after you. After you—do you understand? Does that look?" "Stop!" Bradley's eyes were ablaze. "Is that true? Say that again!" "True? Say it again? I'll sing it or swear it on the Bible if you want me to. Why, you ought to git down and crawl to that girl. She's—H! Where you goin'?" There was no answer. Bradley was running at full speed for the beach. A few minutes more and he was in the You and I, heading across the bay through the rising storm and in the dull morning light, bound for Orham. And behind him, from the shanty floated the chorus: "Storm along, John! John, storm along! Ain't I glad my day's work's done! Storm along, John! John, storm along! Ain't I glad my day's work's done!"

CHAPTER XXI. GUS rose early that morning. The storm had awakened her. She pulled aside the window shade and peered out at the bare branches of the silver leaf bearing and whipping in the wind, at the sheets of rain scudding across the little pond in the pasture, at the whitecaps in the inlet and harbor and at the angry sea outside. Down in the village the storm signals were flying from the pole on the cupola of Cy Warner's observatory. The southeast gale, foretold by the newspapers, had come. She saw the lighthouse on Baker's beach, a small shadowy dot in the distance. Beyond it was the bay, and miles beyond that lay Setteck Point. Only the landward end of the long beach was visible through the smears of wind driven rain, but she gazed in that direction for minutes. Grandmother Baker was still asleep when Gus came downstairs. The girl went into the kitchen, where Windfeld, gray muzzled and rheumatic, came, stretching and yawning, to meet her. She fixed the fire in the range, filled the teakettle and, putting on her apron, began mixing the rye muffins for breakfast. Every now and then she left her work to go to the window. The storm was growing steadily worse. The muffins were ready, and she put them in the oven. She went to the sink and pumped the tin hand basin full of water, but before her fingers touched it she heard the yard gate shut with a bang. She thought that "Blount's boy" must be coming with the morning's milk and stepped to the outside door to meet him, hitting the book from the staple. The door opened and Bradley Nickerson came in. He wore no overcoat or oilskins, and his clothes were wet through. The rain poured from the visor of his cap, from his sleeves and the lap of his jacket. His face was dotted with drops, like beads of perspiration. He did not wipe them away, but stood there on Mrs. Baker's cherished Ingrain carpet dripping and looking at the girl before him. She did not seem to notice his condition nor appear astonished at his coming. Her first words were strange ones. "Oh!" she cried. "Is she lost?" "Lost?" he repeated. "Lost?" "Yes, yes. The barge. Has the gale wrecked her?" Bradley seemed to be waking from a dream. "Oh, the barge?" he answered slowly. "The barge? Oh, she's all right. We got her off." Gus gave a little sob of joy. Her eyes filled with tears. "I'm so glad!" she exclaimed. "I was afraid"— He interrupted her by stepping forward and seizing her hands. "Gus!" he begged. "Oh, Gus, do you love me?" She did not hesitate nor seem surprised. "Yes," she said simply, looking up at him. For an instant he returned the look. Then the reaction came. He swayed, sank to his knees and cried like a child, hiding his face in her apron. And like a child she soothed him, stroking his wet hair and crying silently in sympathy. "Oh, my dear," he pleaded over and over again. "I've behaved like a foolish child. Can you forgive me?" She smiled, like the sun shining through the last drops of a summer shower. "It was my fault more than yours," she said. "I was selfish and so silly, but I didn't know—I didn't know." "But you know now? You're sure?" The answer was not in words alone and was entirely satisfactory. When he got home Bradley swallowed the last drop of the "pepper tea" provided by Miss Tempy—he was in a mood where nothing short of a gallon would have daunted him—and hastened upstairs to put on dry clothes. When he came down he went through the motions of eating breakfast and answered as best he could the hundred and one questions regarding the floating of the Freedom that the old maids and Clara asked. He had been up practically all night, but was too excited to think of sleep, and remembering how unceremoniously he had deserted Captain Titcomb, decided to go down to the postoffice and telephone to the Point. The storm was in full blast by this time. The wind screamed through the treetops, and the thick ropes of rain shot downward with savage force. As he entered the postoffice, the postmaster called to him through the little window in the center of the frame of mail boxes. "Hi, Brad!" he hailed. "Is that you? I jest sent a boy uptown after you. Cap'n Ez has been keepin' the telephone hot for the last half hour. He wants to talk to you the worst way." Bradley was alarmed. Had anything happened to the Freedom? He entered the telephone closet, stood his drenched umbrella in a corner and gave the four rings which made up the Setteck Point call. The wire buzzed and hummed like an overturned beehive. The receiver at his ear wailed and screeched like a banshee. At length a faint "Hello" answered his call. "Hello!" he shouted. "That you, Cap'n Knowles? Yes, this is Brad Nickerson. I want to talk with Cap'n Ez. Can you get him for me?" The life saver laughed. There were more buzzing and humming. Then Captain Titcomb's voice rose above the music of the storm. "Hello, partner!" it called. "That you? You don't say! Well, this is Titcomb. No; the Freedom's all serene. She'll ride it out as slick as a duck in a bucket. But there's a feller here wants to talk with you. Prick up your ears now!" Bradley heard his partner laugh. Then another voice began—a drawing, high pitched voice. "Is that you, Bradley?" it droned. "This is me talkin'. Do you hear?" "Me? Who's me?" "Me. Peleg—Peleg Myrick. Cap'n Ez wants to know what I'd better do with the dynamite I've got buried under my shanty. I'm scart to death of it." "The dynamite? What dynamite?" "The dynamite I took off the Diving Belle the day afore she was burned. Cap'n Ez ordered me to take it all out, so I done it the next forenoon. What'll I do with it? I've been tryin' to tell you an' the cap'n about it, but you never give me no chance. Skeezicks is the devil to dig, and if he scratches that stuff up, why—" "Stop!" Bradley shouted it. "Wait a minute! Peleg, what are you talkin' about? Do you mean there was no dynamite aboard the Diving Belle when she burned?" "Yasas. I took it all out that mornin'. What'll—" "Again Bradley shouted, "Stop!" He wanted to think. If there was no dynamite aboard the schooner, why then the insurance could be collected. If—His heart sank again. "I'm afraid that won't do, Peleg," he called. "She certainly blew up. I heard her and felt the shock under water. Everybody on the hill heard the explosion and saw it too. No, Peleg. Much obliged, but I guess you must have left some of it." The wire whirred and sang. Then the drawing voice went on. It said: "Cap'n Ez wants to know if the explosion won't pretty small for a dynamite one, now that you come to think of it. He says what about the gasoline tanks?" The gasoline tanks! The gasoline for the engine! It had been stowed in the bow of the schooner. The receiver fell from Bradley's hand. He stared at the calendar on the wall of the telephone booth. THE END.

A POST GRADUATE "I want some intelligent men as hospital orderlies," announced Lieutenant Worley. "Any pharmacists in the company?" "A flaxen-haired individual shuffled forward. "Ye gods," said the lieutenant, "are you a pharmacist?" "Sure as yane pharmeris," was the indignant reply. "Ye, ay, yane work on pharim all me life."—Frank Batholomew, in Judge. PROLOGUE. Nowhere has Booth Tarkington done such finished, exquisite work as in this story of boyhood. The full flavor of his story is not only for the grown man or woman, but for any one who enjoys the comic muse. It is a picture of a boy's heart, full of those lovable, humorous, tragic things which are locked secrets to older folks unless one has the gift of understanding. Booth Tarkington has it eminently, and "Penrod" will stand as a classic interpretation of the omnipresent subtlety—BOY. CHAPTER I. A Boy and His Dog. PENROD sat morosely upon the back fence and gazed with envy at Duke, his wistful dog. A bitter soul dominated the various curved and angular surfaces known by a careless world as the face of Penrod Schofield. Except in solitude, that face was almost always cryptic and emotionless, for Penrod had come into his twelfth year wearing an expression carefully trained to be inscrutable. Since the world was sure to misunderstand everything, mere defensive instinct prompted him to give it as little as possible to lay hold upon. Nothing is more impetuous than the face of a boy who has learned this, and Penrod's was habitually as fathomless as the depth of his hatred this morning for the literary activities of Mrs. Lora Rewbush, an almost universally respected fellow citizen, a lady of charitable and poetic inclinations and one of his own mother's most intimate friends. Mrs. Lora Rewbush had written something which she called "The Children's Pageant of the Table Round," and it was to be performed in public this very afternoon at the Women's Arts and Guild hall for the benefit of the Colored Infants' Betterment society. And if any favor of sweetness remained in the nature of Penrod Schofield after the dismal trials of the school week just past, that problematic, infinitesimal remnant was made pungent acid by the imminence of his destiny to form a prominent feature of the spectacle and to declaim the loathsome sentiments of a character named upon the program the Child Sir Lancelot. After each rehearsal he had plotted escape, and only ten days earlier there had been a glimmer of light. Mrs. Lora Rewbush caught a very bad cold and it was hoped it might develop into pneumonia, but she recovered so quickly that not even a rehearsal of the Children's Pageant was postponed. Darkness closed in. Penrod had rather vaguely debated plans for a self mutilation such as would make his appearance as the Child Sir Lancelot in expedient on public grounds. It was a heroic and attractive thought, but the results of some extremely sketchy preliminary experiments caused him to abandon it. There was no escape, and at last his hour was hard upon him. Therefore he brooded on the fence and gazed with envy at his wistful Duke. The dog's name was undescriptive of his person, which was obviously the result of a singular series of misalliances. He wore a grizzled mustache and indefinite whiskers. He was small and shabby and looked like an old postman. Penrod envied Duke because he was sure Duke would never be compelled to be a Child Sir Lancelot. He thought a dog free and unstacked to go or come as the wind listeth. Penrod forgot the life he led Duke. There was a long soliloquy upon the fence, a plaintive monologue without words. The boy's thoughts were adjectives, but they were expressed by a running film of pictures in his mind's eye, morbidly prophetic of the hideous fate he would finally speak aloud, with such spleen that Duke rose from his haunches and lifted one ear in keen anxiety. "I, bright Sir Lancelot du Lake, the child, fentul hearted, meek and mild! What though I'm but a littul child, bentul hearted, meek and—Oy!" All of this except "oy!" was a quotation from the Child Sir Lancelot, as conceived by Mrs. Lora Rewbush. Choking upon it, Penrod slid down from the fence, and with slow and thoughtful steps entered a one storied wing of the stable, consisting of a simple apartment, floored with cement and used as a storeroom for broken crockery, old paint buckets, decayed

garden hose, wornout carners, denu furniture and other condemned odds and ends not yet considered hopeless enough to be given away. In one corner stood a large box, a part of the building itself; it was eight feet high and open at the top, and it had been constructed as a sawdust magazine from which was drawn material for the horse's bed in a stall on the other side of the partition. The big box, so high and towerlike, so com-mo-dious, so suggestive, had ceased to fulfill its legitimate function, though provisionally it had been at least half full of sawdust when the horse died. Two years had gone by since that passing, an interregnum in transportation during which Penrod's father was "thinking" he explained sometimes of an automobile. Meanwhile, the gifted and generous sawdust box had served brilliantly in war and peace; it was Penrod's stronghold. There was a partially defaced sign upon the front wall of the box; the donjon deep had known mercantile impulses: The O. K. Rabbit Co. PENROD SCHOFIELD AND CO. INQUIRE FOR PRICES. This was a venture of the preceding vacation, and had netted at one time an accrued and owed profit of \$138. Prospects had been brightest on the very eve of cataclysm. The storeroom was locked and guarded, but twenty-seven rabbits and Belgian hares, old and young, had perished here on a single night—through no human agency, but in a foray of cats, the besiegers treacherously tunnelling up through the sawdust from the small aperture which opened into the stall beyond the partition. Commerce has its martyrs. Penrod climbed upon a barrel, stood on tiptoe, grasped the rim of the box; then, using a knothole as a starting, threw one leg over the top, drew himself up and dropped within. Standing upon the packed sawdust, he was just tall enough to see over the top. Duke had not followed him into the storeroom, but remained near the open doorway in a concave and pessimistic attitude. Penrod felt in a dark corner of the box and laid hands upon a simple apparatus consisting of an old bushel basket with a few yards of clothesline tied to each of its handles. He passed the ends of the lines over a big spool, which revolved upon an axle of wire suspended from a beam overhead, and with the aid of this improvised pulley, lowered the empty basket until it came to rest in an upright position upon the floor of the storeroom at the foot of the sawdust box. "Eleva-ter!" shouted Penrod. "Ting-ting!" "Eleva-ter!" shouted Penrod. "Ting-ting!" Duke, old and intelligently apprehensive, approached slowly, in a semi-circular manner, deprecatingly, but with courtesy. He pawed the basket delicately, then, as if that were all his master had expected of him, unfurled one bright flank, sat down and looked up triumphantly. His hypocrisy was shallow, many a horrible quarter of an hour had taught him his duty in this matter. "Eleva-ter!" shouted Penrod sternly. "You want me to come down there to you?" Duke looked suddenly baggard. He pawed the basket feebly again and, upon another outburst from on high, prostrated himself flat. Again threatened, he gave a superb impersonation of a worm. "You get in that eleva-ter!" (To be continued) Dubb—"The girl made a complete fool of me." Miss Bright—"She didn't have to do much remodeling, either."—Boston Transcript. "I wish I could get into some business where you don't have to begin at the bottom." "Try well digging."—Louisville Courier-Journal. "What did the man say when you told him you wanted to marry his daughter?" "Asked if I could support him in the same style his daughter had accustomed him to."—Baltimore American.



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