

"The light has been seen; we will be rescued," breathed Ned, fervently. "The tide! It will extinguish the fire!"

Sure enough, the tide was coming in. It already dashed over his feet, and would soon put out the fire.

He knew he could swim ashore, but those aboard the ship seeing the fire extinguished, might not be able to locate the island.

Ned seized two of the pine knots and held them over his head, waving them to and fro.

The tide submerged the rock, came to his ankles, to his knees, to his waist. He was almost swept off his feet.

Still bravely remaining at his post, he waved the torches aloft. He could make out that the light of the ship was nearer the shore.

A moving object came through the water a few moments later. The torches were a dull mass of cinders now.

A boat reached the rock—a boat in which two sailors held the oars—and a third man stood at the bow.

The flickering light showed his face plainly.

Ned Darrow flung down the torches and sprang into the boat.

"It's a boy, and caught by the tide on a rock," spoke a familiar voice.

"Oh, Mr. James!" cried the brave signaler, tumultuously, "don't you know me?"

The under-master, for it was he, uttered a glad, thankful ejaculation. But two words parted his lips in that moment of supreme joy.

"Ned Darrow!" he cried, fervently.

CHAPTER XXIX.

HOMEWARD BOUND!

Ned Darrow fairly cried for joy, and Mr. James' face worked curiously with emotion as he clasped the boy in a welcome embrace.

"Row us ashore," he ordered to the men in the boat, "and then return to the ship and tell the captain our long quest has ended successfully."

He plied Ned with questions as the delighted boy led him to the camp. The meeting between the under-master and his brother was very affecting, and the delight of the boys was manifested in wild hurrahs.

Seated at the primitive island repast, Mr. James told of a long search for the island on the Aldine.

Ned's signal had been the means of bringing him ashore.

The crew of the Aldine had no definite reckoning as to the island where the *round robin* had been found, but they had determined to sail in every direction until the island was located.

It was not until the next morning that the castaways were removed to the ship.

The Professor's cabinet of curiosities was not forgotten, and nearly every lad carried away some memento of his pleasant career as a Crusoe.

A feeling of sadness, despite himself, pervaded Ned, as the Aldine sailed that day, and the shores of Crusoe Island, as they called it, faded from view.

There, with his companions, he had passed the most pleasant portion of his life, and as he gazed at the bronzed faces of his comrades, and realized that their experience had brought out many noble qualities of mind, he could not but regret a final parting from the flowery dells and pleasant woods where life had been a sunny holiday.

The Aldine took a due southerly course, to stop at a South American port for a cargo, and the voyage was a delightful one.

The passengers saw many islands on the trip, among them one where the inhabitants, who were semi savages, had adopted the method of building quaint little houses on posts in the water, like lake-dwellers, which served as places of protection from flood, animals, and enemies.

Without accident or delay, one beautiful morning the Aldine anchored at her dock in the Golden City.

The first movement of Professor Ballentine was to exchange the shabby habiliments of his charges for more presentable attire.

Their rough experience made them resemble savages, he declared, and they certainly were for a time the objects of the curious cynosure of the guests at the hotel where they stopped.

It was with many regrets that they parted from their loyal friends, Captain Barr and jolly Ben Banks.

"Back to the sea we must go again," said the latter. "It's our home, and we ain't much the worse for our island life."

The cowardly crew of the Neptune had scattered and disappeared, thereby saving prosecution for mutiny by Captain Barr.

The Professor announced his intention of returning to Ridgeland, and telegraphed to the parents of his charges to that effect.

A mysterious consultation with his brother, Mr. James, however, caused him to modify his plans.

The scholars were notified that they would take a brief excursion down the coast, and then return home.

Ned asked Mr. James the meaning of the expedition.

"It's in your behalf," was the perplexing reply.

"In mine?" repeated Ned, surprisedly.

"Yes. The Professor wishes to go with us, and will not leave the boys alone. We all go; it's only a few hours' sail, and while they have a picnic on the beach, you and I will visit your estate."

"My what?"

"Your estate."

"Mr. James, what do you mean?" inquired the puzzled Ned.

"I mean that our former suspicions about John Markham were correct."

"Then Sandy Flat——"

"Has turned out to be what these Californians term 'a bonanza.'"

(To be Continued.)

HOW I SAVED MY BAG OF GOLD.

BY CLARENCE KING.

CHAPTER II.

QUICKLY turned Kaweah from the trail, and tied him a few rods off, behind a thicket, then crawled back into a bunch of buckeye bushes, disturbing some small birds, which took flight. In a moment two horsemen, talking Spanish, neared, and as they passed I recognized their horses and then the men.

The impulse to try a shot was so strong that I got out my revolver, but upon second thought put it up. As they rode on into the shadow, the younger, as I judged by his voice, broke out in a delicious melody,—one of