



# "Binnacle Jim" AND THE GUARDED TREASURE



1 "Old Walfus was a hard master for th' most part," reflected Binnacle Jim, "but he had his b'nevolent spells; fer instance—when we sighted that little island in th' sou' Pacific he stepped up an' proposed we take a half-holiday, 'jist to stretch our land legs' as he put it. Arter givin' th' skipper three rousin' cheers, we hove to in th' cove an' soon had th' small boat dancin' through th' surf."



2 "Th' way we ran an' skipped an' played games there on th' beach you'd a thought school was jist out, with th' old man lookin' on indulgent like an' tellin' wot he used to do afore he got his displacement. We'd left th' parrot on board to keep th' lookout but th' way Davy Jones cut up would beat a circus show."



3 "En th' midst o' th' frolic Bill happened to glance up on th' cliff an' there lookin' down at our antics was a herd of wild goats. You'd better think that sight sobered us up—I mean we got serious, for the prospect o' fresh goat meat was too good to lose. Th' poor things seemed very gentle, never havin' seen white men afore, an' not havin' a fowlin' piece, we concluded to try kindness."



4 "We hadn't gone far before we struck somethin' that knocked th' thought o' kid-stew out our heads' an' stomachs, too, for that matter, for propped up there in a pile o' stones at th' base o' th' cliff stood a rough sign board on which was carved these words—TO CAVE-TREASURE."



5 "Th' old man was th' first to come to his-self and in a minute was flyin' down th' beach with me an' Bill scramblin' arter him. We paid no notice to th' rocks that strewed the sands, our minds was that filled with visions of glitterin' gold—all but Davies, poor lad, who didn't know what it was all about an' sposed we was pursued."



6 "Well, th' skipper held his lead til we struck th' cave and he'd probably been doin' some hard thinkin' on th' way too, for when me an' Bill come pantin' up we ran right smack into a brace o' horse pistols an' knew we'd been outwitted."



7 "He kep' us covered while he backed into th' entrance an' it seemed there was nothin' to do but let old Greedy git th' stuff. He'd hardly disappeared though, afore we heard a scuffle an' a horrible shriek wot we took for th' old man's. We might have stood by to lend a hand but from th' harsh, blood curdlin' voice o' th' thing, we figured it must be th' evil one hisself an' took to our heels."



8 "Fright," as th' feller says, "left wings to our feet" an' with the cries o' that onearthly thing ringin' in our ears, we'd covered th' half mile aften us an' the boat afore we knewed it. We was jist shovin' off when Bill glanced over his shoulder to see if we was pursued when who should he spy comin' around the pint but the skipper hisself."



9 "I've seen lots o' manhandlin', an' assault an' battery cases in my time," concluded the ancient tar, "but never sich a complete wreck as was th' old man when he tumbled into th' boat. We never got the straight o' wot happened from the captin' (if he ever found out hisself) but there's a b'lief among seamen that an evil spirit watches over hidden gold, an' it might have been that."

