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THE SEA-MON-
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straight up and down on one side, as if it had been prepared on purpose for them; and they decided to build the oven up against it. So the dirt was levelled off beside the stone by the boy with the shovel, the one with the hatchet cut the bank next it smoothly down, while the trowel fellow superintended the making of mortar out of clay. All busied themselves. A flat stone was found for the bottom of the oven, which was bedded in mortar; then two rows of bricks were laid up against the side of the bank, and others, the same height, on the outside, the rock forming the back, the front below left open for the furnace. Then a flat stone was brought and laid on the bricks, for the floor of the oven; two rows more of bricks were laid on this, all round, another flat stone put on top, and the oven was done. A little piece of the corner of the oven floor had been chipped off, round which a chimney of clay had been built for a flue, which was to lead the smoke off.

There could not have been much more exultation at the finishing of Solomon's Temple than attended the completion of this great work. Even those who had done nothing but bring the mortar claimed that its superiority was owing to them; which, of course, was noisily denied by those of the shovel and trowel. But there arose a dispute now as to who should dig the clams. Each one contended that he had done his share of the work; but the tide was coming in, and they all saw that their oven would be of no use if they had no clams to bake in it, and so they concluded to sacrifice a little to expediency, and "pitched in" with a will to secure their bivalves before the tide covered them up. This was soon done, and then preparations were made for lighting the fire. Dry chips had been brought, which, with a newspaper, had been put into the furnace; and now another altercation arose as to who should have the honour of "touching her off." It was decided in favour of Tom Whidden, the boy with the shovel, and great excitement prevailed.

"Now get out of the way," said he, "or some of you'll get drawn up the chimney. He scratched a match, and applied it to the kindling stuff. It took fire, blazed a moment, and then went out in smoke. Great disappointment was felt by all; and the opinion was expressed, in no very flattering terms, that Tom hadn't touched it off right, whereat he was very indignant. He yielded to another, who, after the kindling had again been fixed, tried it with no better success.

"Here, Ike, you try it," cried half a dozen voices.

Ike was sitting upon the bank near the chimney, to see, as he said, the smoke come out; and when they called him he came down.

"'Tis easy enough to do that," he said. "Well, let's see you try it."

He stooped down and fixed the kindlings, rummaged in his pockets for some more paper, made a little opening among the wood, and applied the match. The fire took, the smoke drew up through the chimney, and the whole furnace was in a blaze.

"Hurrah, hurrah!" yelled the boys, and danced wildly around. "Bring more wood!" and every one ran to get fuel, the fire going splendidly. It was not for a moment suspected that Ike had had his hand on the flue, as he sat there, to feel the heat as well as see the smoke, when the others tried to light it; and he got considerable praise for what he did not really deserve, and so much the worse for him.

But the success was not complete; for the wet work required more fire than could be raised to dry it, the stone forming the bottom of the oven was too thick to be heated through, and the afternoon was growing short; so they compromised by baking their clams in the old way, and left the oven for future experiment. But that very night a high tide came up which surrounded the oven: the wind blew over the creek, and dashed the water upon it; and they when went to see it the next day, they found it a miserable ruin!

But it is said that it is an ill wind that don't blow anywhere; and as Ike and the rest looked upon the wreck, and fretted about it, one cried out, "Look there!" and pointed to a pile of eel-grass that had drifted ashore, in the midst of which were seen a pair of terrible eyes, that seemed to be watching them. The eyes were as large as a man's, and had an evil look in them, which made the boys scramble up the bank with terror. Looking down they saw what seemed to be the form of a monstrous fish entangled in the seaweed, which flapped its tail as if trying to free itself.

"Run for Captain Bob," cried Ike. Joe Hayes and Si Moody started off upon smart run, to bring the captain; while Ike remained to look after the prisoner, which might be a whale, or a shark, or a sea-serpent, so far as he knew. Finding that it could not free itself, he ventured near it; and the great eyes looked more evil as he gazed upon them. The fish struggled in the water, and Ike was afraid it would get away before Captain Bob came; but soon he heard voices, and the captain appeared, armed with a long boat-hook, with the boys by his side.