

Our Young People.

[FOR CANADA.]

THE PHANTOM SHIP.

BY MARJORY MACMURCHY.

"You haven't got your sails fixed right," Tom Leath pushed his hat back on his head and looked from the toy ship, whose white sails were swelling faintly with the breeze blowing across the pond, to Billy Parker, who was swinging his empty basket carelessly beside him.

"What's wrong with them?"

"You've got them on the wrong side."

Tom looked doubtfully at the sails.

"You fix them, please."

Billy dropped his basket and lifted the ship from the water. His brown fingers worked in and out deftly among the white sails.

"There!" he exclaimed, setting the rudder, "now she'll go."

Across the rippling pond went the ship, leaving a gentle wake behind her. She landed on the opposite shore with all sail set. Billy and Tom raced round the pond to meet her with shouts of delight.

"Hullo, what's the matter?" cried a boy, suddenly springing up from behind a sand bank, "Oh, just your old ship, Tom, come and help me to build my sand castle."

"No," said Tom, "Billy is showing me how to sail her, you come and help us, Humphrey."

"I'll come if you put up the Stars and Stripes, I won't help sail a boat flying the Union Jack."

"Not much," cried Billy, "We aint Americans, we're Canadians."

"Well, the Union Jack ain't the Canadian flag, it's the English flag."

"It is," cried Tom excitedly, "just as much as your flag is the Stars and Stripes, I'll fight anybody who says it isn't."

He squared up to Humphrey with doubled fists.

"I don't fight with boys a head shorter than I am," said Humphrey loftily.

"I don't care," said Tom, "if I don't, you needn't."

"Yes, I need, guess I'm not a coward."

"Here you two," growled Billy, "stop that. Of course the Union Jack is our flag, you know that, Humphrey, would you fly it on your ship to please Tom?"

"I'd like to see myself doing it."

"Then don't ask Tom to fly your flag, come on and play. What do you call your ship, Tom?"

"I haven't given her a name yet, let's call her the Shannon."

"No, the Monitor," cried Humphrey.

"I'll tell you," said Billy, "let's call her the Phantom Ship."

"Why?"

Billy glanced around him cautiously and lowered his voice.

"Didn't you ever hear of the Phantom Ship? Well, a long time ago a pirate and his crew used to come up this bay with their ship and leave their treasure at an

island a little way down from here. Once they got caught with the ice and had to stay all winter. There's a little house down there where the pirate captain used to live. Then once the ship got on fire and burned all up, and now whenever there's going to be a storm you can see the ship all burning going up and down the bay. Sometimes it sails so close to ships that they can see the rigging and the masts all afire and the crew walking round."

"Did they ever come right close to them?" asked Humphrey eagerly.

"No, often and often they have tried to sail out close to it but it would go off down the bay faster than any ship could sail."

"Did you ever see it?"

"No, but my father has lots of times."

"My! I wish we could see it," sighed Humphrey.

"Suppose we try," said Tom. "Could we, do you think, Billy?"

"Course we could. I'll get father to let me have the boat and we'll go out fishing mackerel and then stay out till late, and perhaps we'll see it. I heard Lot say he seen it last night, so it's almost sure to be there to-night."

"Oh, how splendid," cried Tom, dancing up and down in the sand, "when will we start, Billy?"

"Don't make such a row, we'll go out this afternoon with the other boats and then when they come in we'll go out farther."

"What will we have to bring?" asked Humphrey.

"Bring your warm coats and as much grub as you can get, it's awful cold out there at night."

"Were you ever out all night, Billy?"

"Yes, often, with father, out cod fishing."

"There's the dinner bell," cried Tom, "what did you bring down for our dinner, Billy?"

"Corn and raspberries," answered Billy, picking up his empty basket and flying across the sand. "I'll be down about five, I'll have to help with the hay after dinner."

Tom and Humphrey were summer boarders. Billy was a farmer's son whose superior knowledge by land and sea was the envy of their souls.

"Do you suppose we'll really see it, Humphrey?"

"Of course we will, but don't you say anything about it or they won't let us go."

Billy was sitting on the side of the boat handling the fishing lines with a skill that made Tom's heart ache when the boys plodded through the deep sand.

"Don't be all day now," Billy cried lustily, "we won't get a bite of mackerel before sundown if you don't hurry up."

"My coat is awful heavy," said Tom, throwing it down in the boat, "and I brought a lot of cookies."

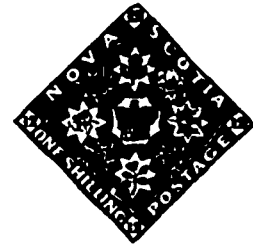
"Didn't you know enough to wear your old clothes going out fishing?" said Billy, looking at them scornfully.

Tom glanced crestfallen at his blue sailor suit. "I haven't any older clothes down here," he said.

"Oh, well, come on and help shove the boat out."

(To be concluded next month.)

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