

movement the cub copied assiduously. But when she rose upon her haunches, and laid her narrow head in a cleft of the icefloe to peer over, he kept himself in the background and watched her with his head cocked anxiously to one side.

THE walrus were in full view, not fifty yards away. For all the pangs of her hunger, the mother bear never stirred; but remained for long minutes watching them, studying the approaches, while the scent of them came on the light breeze to her nostrils. She saw that the herd itself was inaccessible, being well guarded and close to the water. If she should try to rush them, they would escape at the first alarm; or if she should succeed in catching one of the cubs in the water; she would be overwhelmed in a moment—caught by those mighty tusks, dragged to the bottom, drowned, and crushed shapeless. But with the gleaming eyes she noted the cow and calf lying farther up the slope. Here was her chance; a dangerous one enough, but still a chance. She dropped down at last to all fours, crouched flat, and began worming her way upward among the rocks, making a covert of the smallest hummock or projection. The cub still followed her.

It was miraculous how small the great white beast managed to make herself, as she slowly crept upon her quarry. Her movements were as noiseless as a cat's. They had need to be, indeed; for the hearing of the walrus is keen. There was not a sound upon the air but the heavy breathings and gruntings of the herd and the occasional light tinkle and crash of crumbling ice.

At a distance of not more than twenty paces from her prey the old bear stopped and gave a quick backward glance at her cub. Instantly the latter stopped also and crouched warily behind a rock. Then his mother crept on alone. She knew that he was agile enough to avoid the floundering rush of any walrus; but with him she would take no risks.

Suddenly, as if some premonition of peril had smitten her, the mother walrus lifted her head and stared about her anxiously. There was no dan-

ger in sight; but she had grown uneasy. She lowered her head against her calf's plump flank, and started to push him down the slope toward the rest of the herd.

Not a dozen feet away an enormous form, white and terrible, rose as if by magic out of the bare rocks. A bellow of warning came from the vigilant old bull, down below; but in the same instant that white mass fell upon the cringing calf and smashed its neck before it knew what was happening.

With a roar the mother walrus reared herself and launched her huge bulk straight forward upon the enemy. She was swift in her attack, amazingly so; but the white bear was swifter. With astonishing strength and deftness, even in the moment of delivering that fatal blow she had pushed the body of her prey aside, several feet up the slope. At the same time, bending her long back like a bow, she succeeded in evading the full force of the mother's assault, which otherwise would have pinned her down and crushed her. She caught, however, upon one haunch a glancing blow from those descending tusks, which came down like pile drivers; and a long red mark leaped into view upon her white fur. The next moment she had dragged the prey beyond reach of the frantic mother's next plunging charge.

The rocky slope was now in an uproar. The other cows had instantly rolled their startled young into the sea and were tumbling in after them with terrific splashing. The three bulls, grunting furiously, were floundering in great, loose plunges up the slope, eager to get into the fray. The bereaved mother was gasping and snorting with her prodigious efforts, as she hurled herself in huge, sprawling lunges after the slayer of her young. So agile was she proving herself, indeed, that the bear had enough to do in keeping out of her reach, while half lifting, half dragging, the prize up the incline.

At last the body of the calf caught in a crevice and the bear had to pause to wrench it free. It was for a moment only; but that moment came very near being her last. She felt, rather than

saw, the impending mass of the cow as it reared itself above her. Like a spring suddenly loosed she bounded aside. And those two straight tusks came down just where she had stood, with the force of a ton of bone and muscle behind them.

Wheeling in a flash to follow up her advantage, the desperate cow reared again. But this time she was caught at disadvantage. Her far more intelligent adversary had slipped round behind her, and now, as she reared, struck her a tremendous buffet on the side of the neck. Caught off her balance, the walrus rolled down the slope, turning clean over before she could recover her footing.

The three bulls, in the midst of their floundering charge up the hill, checked themselves for a moment to see how she had fared. And in that moment the bear succeeded in dragging her prize up a steep where the raging avengers could not hope to follow. A few yards more, and she had gained a spacious ledge some twenty feet above them. A second or two later, in answer to her summons, the cub joined her there, scrambling nimbly over the rocks at a safe distance from the foe.

Realising now that the marauder had escaped their vengeance, the three bulls at length turned away and went floundering and snorting back to the sea. The mother, however, inconsolable in her rage and grief, kept rearing herself against the face of the rock, clawing at it impotently with her great flippers, and striking it with her tusks, till it seemed as if they must give way beneath the blows. Again and again she fell back, only to renew her futile and pathetic efforts the moment she could recover her breath. And from time to time the old bear, nursing the cub, would glance down on her with placid unconcern. At last, coming in some sort to her senses, the unhappy cow turned away and crawled heavily, with a slow, jerky motion, down the slope. Slowly, and with a mighty splash, she launched herself into the sea and swam off to join the rest of the herd a mile out from shore.



Author of "Tom King of Nowhere," etc.

## A NEW SERIAL STORY

### SYNOPSIS.

Motherless Margaret Lee flees from Paris and her keeper, Mrs. Gascoigne, to see her father in London. During the first evening at home, she looks through the father's pet telescope and sees a sight which is the basis of all the events to be narrated. In the first excitement, her father drops dead, and her only friend is Mr. Percy Marshall a chance acquaintance. Mrs. Gascoigne comes to London and a mysterious Mrs. Carlingford, a friend of her father, appears also. The former is easily driven out, but the latter is mistress of the situation. In the meantime Marshall sets out to solve the church tower mystery. He finds the church, gets in and discovers that the telescope tells the truth. His entrance is noted, his escape cut off, and he climbs down the lightning rod only to be struck senseless. Meanwhile, a woman gains entrance to the Lee home, and while Margaret is asleep, secures a paper from Mr. Lee's private box. When Margaret awakens she takes it for granted that her visitor is Mrs. Carlingford, her father's friend, and gives her her full confidence, including the Mystery of the Tower which Percy Marshall has determined to solve. Contrary to his promise, the young man does not return, and next day Margaret receives a letter stating that he has turned the matter over to the police, and he himself is leaving London. The girl is bitterly disappointed. Mrs. Carlingford rents a villa, and she and Margaret go to live in it. On the way a man follows their carriage. Mrs. Carlingford is agitated, and Margaret's suspicions are aroused. During their first night in the strange house, Mrs. Carlingford discovers a picture on the wall which makes it impossible for her to remain there.

### CHAPTER IX.

THE Reverend James Weekes was running madly about Lilith Cottage, Burnham Road; and so was Mrs. Weekes, who was particularly stout, and hence very uncomfortable; and so were five little Weekeses, aged four to ten, the youngest pair being twins. The omnibus was due any moment, and there was a

great deal to be done before the family could set off for its annual holiday at Herne Bay. The twins were weeping because James, junior, the ten-year-old son, had bespoken the end seat in the railway 'bus, that he might get out at intervals on the road to the station and run behind; and this promised mysterious and alluring pleasure that the babies were determined to share. Their brother's contemptuous derision was fuel under their tear-ducts, and the scalding drops ran down their cheeks. Adelaide, aged six, was weeping because her pet doll could not be found, and was likely to be left behind. Jemima, named after her mother, was crying because she was not allowed to take her best frock and pinafore of white muslin, nor her blue silk sash; and Jemima knew that Sundays came at the seaside as they did at home, and she would have nothing to wear at church. Gyp, the little terrier, was scampering about in the tumult, barking wildly, and taking excited nips from time to time at the nearest rug, or shawl, or leg.

At this moment of climax the omnibus drove up, and at the same time came a message from Lady Yatton that she must see the Vicar immediately. On hearing this Mrs. Weekes also showed signs of tears.

"I suppose you must go, James," she said. "We must wait over a train."

"Wait over," he cried, "and the 'bus standing there at the three shillings the hour! No, indeed." He spoke with great firmness, trying to keep all signs of relief from his voice. "You go on with the children, dear," he said, suavely, "and I will follow by a later train."

"Never!" she cried, sitting down and clasping her hands.

But her husband was already helping the driver and the maid to load the top of the vehicle with every sort of different-shaped trunk and parcel.

"Eighteen," said the Vicar, carefully counting, "that's right. Come on, children!"

These duly loaded inside he ran in to the house, pressed a hasty kiss on the unrelenting brow of his distressed wife, and fled away to Lady Yatton, peeping backward from time to time. When at last he saw his wife come out and get into the omnibus he smiled to himself, and hummed a bar of "Onward, Christian Soldiers" as he walked along. It was hard on the poor dear to have to take that journey all alone with the children and the maid, but, after all, it might be a lesson in self-reliance.

Lady Yatton, most charming and considerate of ladies, knew he was going away to-day. It must be something very important that inspired that summons. He wondered what new and beneficent idea she had now. She had built this beautiful St. Luke's Church with her own money, and had partially endowed it; and as he turned the corner and came in full view of its exquisite proportions he agreed with those who knew anything about it at all, that it was a splendid monument of munificence. He passed by the church and went on round the corner to the gate that allowed access to the Manor House.

He saw Lady Yatton through the open French window, sitting in the morning-room talking to Dr. Jennings. He quickened his steps; he had not heard of illness.

He was welcomed by the two as though they had been waiting for him for some time, and though Lady Yatton seemed rather grave and preoccupied the doctor was inclined to be somewhat amused.

"It's a most extraordinary thing," said the lady. "I felt you must know about it, Vicar. I remembered that you were going away to-day, and I hope I haven't inconvenienced you."

"Oh, no, Lady Yatton," cried the clergyman, "not in the least. My dear wife has gone with the children."

Dr. Jennings smiled at this, and Lady Yatton,