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Frank Reade, Jr., AND HIS NEW TORPEDO BOAT; OR, AT WAR WITH THE BRAZILIAN REBELS.

by "NONAME."
CHAPTER I.

SAVED BY A BOMBSHELL.

Readstown was a very handsome little city located at the junction of two rivers that emptied into the ocean. It was chiefly celebrated as the residence of a noted inventor of submarine boats, named Frank Reade, Jr., after whose father the place had been named. Frank lived in a magnificent dwelling, near which stood the great workshop, foundries and machine buildings in which his world-famous contrivances were produced.

About eleven o'clock one October night in October the inhabitants of the city were startled by hearing a terrific explosion coming from the direction of the inventor's place.

So heavy was the discharge that it shook strong buildings, the earth trembled, and terrified, wondering what it could be, the people were rushed down.

A scene of intense excitement ensued.

People rushed from all directions toward the inventor's shop, pale and terrified, wondering what it was that had happened, and saying each other excitedly what it must have been.

Following the explosion a lurid gleam flashed out, not unlike an appalling discharge of sheet-lightning.

It lit up the sky, and for an instant cast a ghastly glow throughout the vicinage for a great distance.

Before the blinding light vanished there came a sound of whistling and screaming up in the air, much as if a hundred steam whistles had been given a sudden blast.

In a moment more intense gloom and a deadly silence ensued, and the startled citizens waited suspensefully, as if in expectation of something dreadful occurring.

For a few moments the deep silence lasted.

Then one of the gates was flung open.

Within the entrance stood Frank.

He was a fashionably attired young man.

Rather tall and slender, he possessed an athletic figure, and prominent features that lent him a distinguished appearance.

He stood regarding the crowd in silence a moment.

Then he was assailed with numerous questions.

"What has happened?"

"Did you cause the explosion?"

"Have any been killed?"

"Great heavens, what a shock!"

"It must have been a powder magazine."

"Are the buildings blown up, Mr. Reade?"

These and innumerable other remarks were made.

The inventor finally held up his hand to ensure silence, and a hush fell upon the multitude.

"Gentlemen, it was only a harmless accident!" he exclaimed. "My two old friends, Barney and Pomp, were loading the magazine of my new submarine torpedo boat with a number of these bombs, here he held up a metal hand-grenade, the size of a base ball, so all could see it, and then he continued: "While carrying several of them from my laboratory in the ammunition room in the shop, out to the Destroyer, my new boat is named, Pomp let one of the grenades fall, and it rolled to the end of the yard down a steep terrace. There it struck a stone and burst."

"Do you mean to say that little thing made all the noise and glare of light we just heard and saw?" demanded one of the bystanders incredulously.

"Why, certainly," Frank replied.

"How could it be?"

"Because it was charged with a compound I have recently invented, which has a greater explosive force than dynamite," replied Frank, explainingly. "I have been experimenting with this material, and have loaded a number of torpedoes with it to be used in my new electric air-gun aboard the boat."

"I don't believe that a little thing like that did it," said the man in skeptical tones. "It isn't possible."

"Do you want me to prove what I say?" asked Frank in nettled tones.

"Yes. Yes!" resounded on all sides.

"Then stand back, all of you, for here's my opportunity now of not only showing you the power of this shell, but also of saving some of you from being gored to death!"

He pointed out the street at a wild steer.

The beast had broken loose from one of the railroad cattle pens, and was then charging on the crowd.

Along it came, its muzzle bent to the ground, saliva dripping from its lips, and bellowing as it leisurely pealing from its horns. A wild shout of alarm arose from the crowd, for the electric lights, with which the street was furnished plainly showed them the monster that was sweeping toward them.

It was very evident that before many of them could get out of the way, the furious brute would reach some, for there was a tremendous crowd choking up the street.

"Room for me! shoo! shoo!" shouted Frank.

He raised swiftly through the retreating crowd.

In a moment he stood alone facing the steer.

The animal arrived with a resounding roar of the explosion.

There was a dazzling glare and a deafening report.

A cloud flew up in the air composed of dirt and stones that was rippet from the road bed, and among it the torn fragments of the wild steer's body.

A deep silence ensued.

Then such a tremendous deafening roar that Frank's nerves tingled.

"Hurrah for Frank Reade, Jr.!!! Hip-hip-hip! yodeled a man.

"Hurrah, hurrah, hurrah!" screamed the rest.

The inventor had probably saved several lives and they knew it.

"Gentlemen, are you satisfied that I have not exaggerated the force of these bombs?" asked Frank, when he could make his voice heard.

"Yes--yes!" came the reply.

"Then never doubt me again!"

And so saying Frank left the cheering, enthusiastic crowd, and passing through the gate he closed and locked it.

Shortly afterward the crowd dispersed.

Frank strode through several spacious yards inclosed by high brick walls, and headed toward a large deep basin, walled in, from which a canal flowed out to one of the rivers.

A gate in the wall opened, and by the mellow electric arc lights that illuminated the ground Frank observed a man come running out toward him.

He was a raw-boned Irishman named Barney O'Shea, who had accompanied Frank on most of the voyages he made in his wonderful inventions.

He was a red-headed Celt, with a good-natured face, full of life, pluck and ructions as could be, and was noted as a lively performer on the violin.

"Be heavens, he's alive!" he gasped, disappointedly, when he saw the new lava of the explosion.

"Are you sorry for it, Barney?" laughed the inventor, good-naturedly.

"I'm not," confessed Barney, with a broad grin. "But, bedad, it's sure I was that yer'd blowed yerself right glory with ther bomb ye carried in yer hand. Imagine me disn't "intiment ter find ye the other bo'son, bedad, it's me jewel, but I can't help it.

"Faith, it's an illogant wae we could tave over you, Masther Frank, me jaw, but never mind--better luck next time, ter glory."

"Hark! What's that yelling?"

"Sure it do be soundin' a daik lute Pomp, ther nagyar." And a roar of laughter followed Barney.

"Faith, him an' me was roarin' past her canal basin ter see what was ather bustin', whin all a sudden me fat slipped from under me, an' tack ther coon in ther ship."

Before I could get ther grip av me fingers in his wool ther black-an'-tan gorilla wint ther head intor ther water, bad cess to him, an' left me ter go on alone.

"Help! Help!" yelled Pomp's voice at this juncture. "Oh, golly,
FRANK READ, JR., AND HIS NEW TORPEDO BOAT.

This room was filled with torpedoes of one hundred times the explosive force possessed by the hand grenades. And she had the electricity turned off as well as all of the other loaded small arms and ammunition in the magazine, the vessel would have been blown into fragments.

Frank did not pause here. He dashed through a door into the next room.

This apartment contained the machinery for working the screw besides the electric batteries, dynamos, motors, water pumps, air pumps and innumerable cells of battery.

It was here the trouble lay.

The chemicals in the accumulator jars had started the current, and a disconnected wire was pouring the electricity into the vessel's hull as fast as it was generated.

Frank saw at a glance where the trouble lay.

He at once seized the live wire with his rubber-gloved hand and secured it to the binding post where it belonged.

Instantly the water ceased to drain the vessel's hull of all the electricity that had charged it.

The current swept into the machinery.

It began to work like a clock and revolve the screw.

Up stairs rushed the young inventor to the turret.

This room was furnished with a steering wheel, a compass, various electrical instruments and a number of levers, by means of which all parts of the Destroyer were controlled.

Seizing one of these levers, Frank reversed it.

That threw the current from the machinery, and it stopped.

Then the danger was over.

Barney and Pomp came aboard rather gingerly.

"Have ye all right?" queried Frank.

"She's all right," replied Frank, cheerily.

"Don't I tell yo' he done it?" demanded Pomp.

"Cast off those hawser's!" shouted Frank.

"Is it so?" asked Frank.

"Yes. I want to see how she operates."

"Come here, nigger, an' lend me thar yo' ar yor lips."

Away hastened the two to the hawser's, and casting off the boat was set adrift.

Frank quickly put his machinery in motion.

She turned around, ran down the canal, and reaching the river, she passed out into the dark gloomy sea.

Barney and Pomp had gone inside and made an examination of the torpedoes to see if it had been damaged by the current.

The room back of the cabin was a combined dining-room and kitchen, and the apartment aft of that a store-room for food, water and numerous tools, and so on, along the young inventor.

At the extreme end of the deck-house was a vestibule designed as an exit for the occupants of the boat when submerged.

The battery was working the motor, the motor operated the machinery, and the machinery revolved the screw.

In lack of the engine room there was a compartment in which hung numerous metal diving suits and other submarine essentials.

Nothing was injured here.

There were three more rooms, or rather reservoirs, down in the vessel's run which were not to be penetrated further.

The one at the bow and stern was holding enough air, hydraulically compressed, to last half a dozen men for a week.

By a peculiar device it could be let into the living rooms in jets, mixed with a spray of purifying solution.

There were valves for shutting off the carbonic acid gas resulting from the vitiation of this air when they breathed it.

The middle compartment was a water ballast reservoir.

Valves opening in the top were used to overcome the buoyancy of the air and sink the boat to any desired depth.

By means of a pump this water could be forced out again to allow the boat to rise superficially, impelled by the buoyancy of the condensed air.

When Barney and Pomp had finished their inspection, the torpedo boat had reached rough water.

They then went aloft and joined Frank in the cupola.

"Shure she's as tight as a bottle, and she shimmers like a dook," said Barney.

"Have ye toamed her?"

"Yes; she can make thirty knots an hour," Frank replied.

"Whar yo' gwine wet her, honey?" asked Pomp, curiously.

Frank pointed up the compass.

"I'm going to blow the rocks to pieces that crop up to the top of the sea, and menace passing ships yonder," he replied.

"Trot'th she's a dade or cuss interiously ter do t'hat," said Barney.

"Fer shure an' its only a fortight ago a gallant bark ahtre her nose agin thum rocks, an' int all hands ter ther bottom, God rast ther shuhs in hearen, ain't she?"

The rocks Frank designed to destroy were soon reached.

Over them the waves were boiling and hissing in foam.

Stopping the boat, Frank turned an electric current into a large powerful search light standing in the bow on deck.

Its dazzling shaft lit up the waters far ahead.

He slantled the light down in the sea about the rocks.

Then he left the wheel in Pomp's hands.

Going down below with Barney, he opened the breech of the electric gun, thrust in a cylindrical torpedo and peered out.

The waters were illuminated with dazzling light.

Now he saw the black, jagged rocks plainly.

In a dead niggah! For de Lawd's sake, somebody hist me out oh hush, or lee gwine ter git drownned b'elshah!"

"Get him out, Barney. That brawl's big fat with signifyin' f'or. You tripped him on purpose!" cried Frank. "I can see by your scrons you're guilty!"

The good-natured Irishman chuckled and went to Pomp's aid.

The inventor was, as usual, a little bent over, looking like a green frog as black as ink, and was swimming in the cold water of the big basin.

Being unable to climb up the steep brick walls, he was keeping himself up by hanging to a beam about five feet above the water with his hand, and was, as he said, "Run for your Jives!"

"O!J, I've chillered an' burnt my nigger," said Barney, quickly.

"Murder!" he yelled, frantically. "I'm over me head!"

"Yah! yah! yah! Done cooch yo' dat time, honey?" checked Pomp.

And Frank had to haul them both out with a rope.

Then the two drenched and shivering jokers solemnly shook hands and called it a day.

"Come on aboard of the Destroyer, boys," laughed Frank, "we've got work to do with the submarine boat to-night, and besides that, you both need a change of clothing."

The boat floated in the big basin.

She was a large, peculiar looking craft, and as they started to cross the gang plank to board her, a most singular event occurred. That almost cost their lives.

CHAPTER II.

BLOWING UP THE ROCKS.

The deck of the Destroyer was almost flush with the surface of the water, and was built up with a square-deck house on top of which stood a cupola used as a wheel-room.

The vessel was made entirely of tough steel plates two inches in thickness, her length being 300 feet, her beam 40 feet, and her draught twenty.

As Frank and his comrades boarded her, there suddenly sounded a fearful cracking about the boat, and myriads of blue fire balls burst out all over her.

She was electrified.

The current was so strong that Barney and Pomp were shocked in consequence of their shoes being wet, while the soles of Frank's foot began to smoke and burn.

"Run for your Jives!" shouted the young inventor.

"Wow! said Barney, with drawn arms.

"Ooh! ooh! screamed the coon, dancing up and down.

"Dat mus' be needles gwine froo dis niggah like de bee!" he said.

He landed Square on Barney's head, and nearly killed the former, "I'm rotten!"

"'Fo suh," assented Pomp, declaratively. "Dat mus' be de way.

"Unless I can get aboard and stop the escape of that current, the heat from it will melt the steel bulk like wax."

"Fat, it's as much as your lobe is worth to venture in now."

"Oh, go' dey?" cried Pomp.

"Oh, I've got to. Besides I won't run much risk if I insulate my body in a rubber suit," said the inventor, quickly. "While I'm gone haul her over to the side of the basin by the hawser."

Leaving his friends pulling the rope, Jack rushed away into one of the big brick buildings.

The inventor was clad in a rubber diving-suit which covered his head, body and extremities, while over the face there was a glass visor almost impervious to electricity.

The inventor got on his rubber diving rope.

A flight of stairs led from this room up to the cupola, while under them a spiral staircase descended into the hold.

The vessel was filled with incandescent lamps which now glowed brilliantly, lightning up the interior.

Frank hastened down below.

He landed on the next deck.

Here a huge pneumatic gun stood.

Its muzzle projected through a tabular opening in the bow, which was furnished with a spring trap that closed water tight when the piece was withdrawn.

Above it was a bull's eye to see ahead.

"Are you going to do it yet, Barney?" asked Frank, decisively.

"Aye, I've come to think av it," said Barney, scratching his red head reflectively, "they nager as I was chargin' thar electric batteries afore we heered thar bomb bustin' beyant in thar shritate. As I'm after thinkin' thar current must he broke loose from thar battery, an' run into thar ait by thar hull."

"'Fo suh," assented Pomp, declaratively. "Dat mus' be de way, sah."

But all of them were severely shocked ere they reached it.

From the hull the current was "grounding" in the water so heavily that scores of fish were killed and floated on the surface.

By the time Frank and his friends reached the ground their shoes were destroyed, but they no longer felt the current.

"What could have happened to the current?" asked the current, Frank, wonderfully, as he stood watching the glittering sparks flying off the boat's hull.

"I don't know, Fm a little ter think av it," he said Barney, scratching his red head reflectively, "'tis nager as I was chargin' thar electric batteries afore we heered thar bomb bustin' beyant in thar shritate.

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Here a huge pneumatic gun stood.

Its muzzle projected through a tabular opening in the bow, which was furnished with a spring trap that closed water tight when the piece was withdrawn.

Above it was a bull's eye to see ahead.
Sighting the gun to bear upon them, Frank pressed a key. The electric current discharged the gun with a loud bang of air and a tremendous bursting outside.

Away flew the shot, piercing the water like a fish, and instantly the automatic mechanism of the valve closed it with a snap.

A muffled report was heard. The rock, as the torpedo was blown to stones, and rose from the sea with tons of water to a great height.

One of the flying pieces struck the Destroyer. It hit one of the valves of the water chamber and smashed it. In gurgling with the water with a rush.

"Look out! We're sinking!" shouted Frank.

Don left the settled destroyer like a stone when she got full enough, and Frank and Barney fled up-stairs, for the coast was bowing like fury in the pilot-house.

CHAPTER III.

OFF FOR THE WAR.

Fortunately for the inmates of the boat all the windows and doors were hermetically closed when she went down. Consequently no water leaked into the living rooms.

"What do I think?" yelped Pomp, wildly.

"Y'why we ain't sinkin'!"

"A piece of rock struck our hull," Frank replied. "A hole has been stoned through it, we can't enter the water-chamber."

"Is it sure yes or av that?" queried Barney, anxiously.

"Oh, yes," said Frank. "No water is entering anywhere else."

"To' heigh deep is you fer out yet?" asked Pomp.

"About twenty five fathom'"

"Have we plinty air aboard?"

"Continuous," said Frank, glancing at one of the registers. "I'li be nearer the bottom now."

He pointed out the window.

The searchlight was gleaming through the brine with a foggy look, but showed up objects a great distance off. Below them was a corrugated bed of sand. It was dark and pitted with knobbly rocks.

Sea weeds of various kinds floated with the currents, myriad of fishes swam about in the liquid depths, shells were strewn over the bottom, and a semi-gloom obscured everything beyond the radius of the light.

The bottom of the sea was a strange place. Around, in a gentle shock, the founded Destroyer becalmed over her side.

"Here we are at the bottom," said Frank. "And now to see what the damage is."

It found the air getting heavy.

Pulling a lever he opened the valve that admitted the air from the reservoir, and then went below.

Frank put one of the metal diving suits.

It was made of aluminum—a light, strong metal looking like silver—and fit his figure like a suit of tights.

Upon the suit were connected a hose and a pair of goggles. The head was fitted with compressed air, which was automatically injected into the helmet in back of an electric lamp that rested on top.

This lamp deprived its current from a battery in the knapsack. Having attired himself in the suit, Frank went up into the deck-house, and going ashore, he entered the vestibule.

Opening the sea-door.

By that immersing himself before venturing out, he escaped the danger of suddenly plunging into the great pressure of the unaltered depth.

Once the chamber was full, he opened the door.

Stepping out on the slanted deck, he found that his body and shoe weights held him down easily.

Although these weights amounted to sixty pounds in the air, they lost three-quarters of that weight under water, and now cost him only as much exertion as it would to carry fifteen pounds on the surface.

Going to the lower side of the deck, Frank left the boat.

He passed around the hull.

His electric light was blazing.

It showed him the broken valve plate.

In order to get to the top it was necessary to take out the broken parts and set in an entirely new valve.

He returned to the boat.

In the store-room were various duplicate parts of the boat.

Finding the rubber and closing the door, Frank pulled a lever on the wall that started a pump emptying the compartment.

As soon as it was empty he opened the store-room door.

Here he procured everything he needed.

Calling Barney to aid him, the Celt donned a diving-suit and both went out to repair the damage.

In less than an hour it was fixed.

Frank then passed into the turret.

Here he put the pump in suction emptying the water that had been shipped, and the Destroyer began to rise in mind.

The lighter she became the higher she arose. Within a few moments she reached the surface.

Around, in the search-light in quest of the dangerous rock, but Frank now saw that it was gone.

The torpedo had blown it to pieces.

"It's gone!" he exclaimed, in satisfied tones.

"Gorrarmignty!" exclaimed Pomp.

"Yo' specs it could stan' dat shot an' stay dar?" Marse Frank, dey ain't no ship dat will ever strike on dat yere rock agin' an' go down, sah, yo' kin' 'pend on dat."

"Faith, we have nothin' ter do with it," said Barney.

"Frank, we have got here to make a deep sea voyage in her, as I have almost nothin' to do in Reachestown." "What's the disadvantage?"

"Not that I'm aware of yet," replied Frank, "but if any opportunity occurs, I'll make a deep sea voyage in her, as I have almost nothing to do in Reachestown."

"But, I'd goosy it'll git before we want 'n a divagation," sighed Barney, regretfully.

"Upon me soul, it's months since I've had a rifle or broken a head. Master Frank, dear, it's yer pitty misdeeds that yer have spilt, that's av money on this boat, and no more will give yer chance av blowin' thim ter pieces with it."

"Have no fear on that score," laughed Frank. "If no chance comes in my way to make the practical use of her, I'll find a mean't"

Just then the Destroyer's machinery stopped.

The lights were extinguished.

Having moored her, our friends went home, for it had begun to rain and the hour was very late.

On the following morning, after breakfast, Frank took the newspaper up, and passed into his den to read it.

The first article that attracted his attention was an account of a tremendous rebellion occurring in South America.

That unfortunate country was always in a boll of one kind or another for years past.

In this instance the rebels had been plotting to overthrow the emperor, Don Pedro, and substitute a republican form of government to suit themselves rather than continue as an empire, as it was then going.

An army and navy had been raised.

Arms and ammunition were procured.

A riot had been incited, and although the rebels had been driven and driven and driven back, they were still in possession of a large part of the country.

The inventor was given the offer.

It furthermore stated that the American boy, Dick Davit, had been captured.

This interesting event carried with it a most important question wrtich the government could do nothing immediately to protect the American interests in Brazil, as foreign nations were already making movements and so forth.

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That night a number of United States officials, and the boy in question, came on from Washington, and held a secret conference with Frank, Barney and Pomp.

At the conclusion the entire matter was settled.

The inventor was given certain orders, he was empowered to act as if the vessel belonged to the United States, and Dick Davit was commissioned to go with Frank.

Then the officials saw the boat, and departed satisfied.

Hasty preparations were made for the voyage by our friends, and within twenty-four hours the Destroyer was equipped.

Leaves was taken of every one ashore who had any claim upon the affections of our friends.
Then, accompanied by Dick, they departed in the torpedo boat for Brazil, embarked upon one of the most perilous voyages they had ever undertaken.

CHAPTER IV.

A MYSTERIOUS STEAMER.

The Destroyer made rapid progress down the coast, and Frank found that Dick Davit was a typical American boy, of a plucky, wholesome disposition.

He was an orphan, and had followed the sea for two years. Rather short and heavily built, attired in a sailor suit, and having a thin, sun-burnt face, he was particularly noticeable for the keen, alert eyes and the happiness of his nature.

When the torpedo boat reached the Gulf of Mexico he had acquired a thorough knowledge of the operation of the boat, and could take his turn at the helm as well as the rest. As he stood thus at the wheel one afternoon, Frank entered, with a thoughtful look upon his face, and said:

"Do you know anything about the organization of the rebels who have committed most of the atrocities I have heard of?"

"Yes, sir," promptly replied the boy. "I was among the rascals for a span of three months, and, therefore, easily learned a great deal about them."

"My orders from the War Department are to proceed directly to Brazil after delivering a message to Don Pedro, take the American Consul and all citizens and sailors of our country under my protection."

"If you do, you'll be sure to have a fight with the rebels."

"So much the worse for them, then. Now, how about their organization?"

"The most formidable part of the whole gang is aboard of the armed fleet. They are the fellows who are making most of the mischief. If we can wipe them out of the sea, there will be an end to the dangerous quays they have been committing."

"Very true. Under whose leadership are they?"

"Francisco Solano Lopez."

"What! The ambitious dictator of Paraguay?"

"Yes, sir. He commands the fleet."

Frank's surprise finds its foundation in actual history. The man referred to was a political schemer who had caused no end of war and bloodshed for the Brazilians. For several years the right of way up the Paraguay river to the interior of the province of Matto Grosso had been disputed. Without any previous declaration of war, Lopez had captured a Brazilian vessel in the Paraguay, and rapidly followed this outrage by an invasion of Matto Grosso and Rio Grande in Brazil and the province of Corrientes, in the Argentine Republic.

"Lopez," said Dick, "gathered a large force of Brazilian rebels about him, and conspired to overthrow the emperor. They were incited on by cupidity for the arch schemer offered to give them the wonderful diamond mines of Brazil if they succeeded."

"Ah! Now I understand the motive."

"I explained this to the Secretary of War. Well, the rebels gladly joined in the movement. A riot followed. Dom Pedro drove them out of the city, and on the sea, they gave chase to his vessels. Piracy and plunder followed. Now they are sweeping the main road for any rascality for gain. Lopez encourages this. By the way we may get a tow-horse to contend with."

"You may well believe so. The emperor sent out five ironclads to beat these rebels. Two of those vessels returned badly crippled without doing any damage. The others lie buried fathoms deep under the ocean."

"My thunder, they must have modern arms!"

"Dreadnaught guns, Hotchkiss guns, forty-pounder broadside batteries, needle guns. In fact, there is scarcely a navy in the world better equipped for a hard struggle than they are."

A serious look swept over Frank's face. This was more formidable than he expected.

Privileged as his own weapons were, he realized that he was destined to use all the force that would make the ironclads of powerful navies hesitate.

"Do you know where these men are to be found?" he asked.

"Yes, I can pilot you to their rendezvous."

"How many men are there on the ships?"

"As near as I could discover, one hundred on each ship."

"About 2,000 men all told."

"That's the figure sir."

"And are their vessels armored?"

"Yes, sir."

"Steamers or sailing vessels?"

"Both. Five steamers, I think."

Just then Barney came on deck. Frank met him a short distance from Barney.

He and Pomp having been sitting out deck, the Irishman playing his fiddle and the darkly umplying an accompaniment to the tune on his banjo.

"Sal ho!" yelled the Irishman.

He had suddenly discerned a vessel two leagues away on the eastern horizon. All events would eventually bring his attention the course of the Destroyer. Frank peered out the window.

In a moment he espied her. Picking up a telescope, he scanned the ship.

She was a large steamer with guns, and was making at least fifteen knots an hour.

It was then blowing fresh from the north-west, and a choppy cross sea was on that made the Destroyer rock.

"Looks like a European steamer," said Frank presently.

"But where can she be loading on that course?" queried Dick.

"Probably for Panama."

They watched her for some time longer.

At the end of an hour they were a league closer together.

Then they noticed that the Destroyer was seen, for some men on the steamer's deck were leveling their binoculars at the electric boat.

After some time thus spent, the steamer changed her course and ran toward the Destroyer.

"It's a call they're agon' ter make us, sir," said Barney.

"Yes; I wonder what flag she sails under?"

"Faiths, she might be a Bulgarian or a Kentucky privateer for all we kin tell be ther naked luck as her flagstaff."

"Hat there goes a signal to him to?"

A puff of smoke and flash of fire came from the steamer's deck.

It was followed by the report of a gun.

As the roar died away Frank stopped the Destroyer.

In a short time the steamer ranged up in halting distance, and their friends observed that her decks swarmed with a dark, swarthy crew.

Still no flag was shown.

But the stars and bars were run up on the torpedo boat's pole by Pomp, and when the steamer drew closer, some one yelled:

"Ahoy, there!"

"What do you want?" shouted Frank.

"Come aboard! I wish to speak to you."

"We have no quarter-boats."

"Oh! what sort of craft is that?"

"An electric boat."

"The Destroyer!"

"Yes," replied Frank, amazed that they knew her, for she had only just been built, and it seemed odd that any one in so remote a place as this could have heard of her already.

"Captain Frank Reade, Jr., commanding?"

"Yes," assented the inventor, more and more astonished.

"Bounding for Rio Janeiro?"

"Yes," said Frank for the third time, his amazement increasing.

"To fight the Brazilian rebels?"

"Yes!"

By this time the young inventor was the most surprised person on the ocean, for it was incredible that these utter strangers knew his vessel, himself, and his intentions.

There was a moment of instantaneous pause.

Then the speaker shouted:

"Well, I'm glad you have admitted it."

"Why so?" demanded Frank, curiously.

"Because we have been on the lookout for you."

"You have! For what reason, may I ask?"

"One of our agents in Washington learned all about you and your intended cruise, and called us the news."

"Ah! So that's how you learned all about it!"

"Exactly," was the reply.

"But why are you interested in me?"

"If you will come aboard I'll tell you." But he added: "I can as I have no boat, I told you."

"Wait a moment." Then the speaker turned to one of his companions and said something.

A short dialogue ensued between them. Then the man spoke to Frank:

"Ahoy, there!"

"What now?"

"Can't you run alongside?"

"No; I might damage my vessel in this chop sea."

"We will put out fenders for you."

"I prefer to remain where I am."

"Very well."

"Tell me what you want."

"It is a secret."

"I have no secrets from my companions."

"Very well, since you are so obstinate. We were watching for you to blow you and your craft to pieces, as this is Francisco Lopez's boat, and you are a bitter foe."

As the man spoke the steamer swung around, her port bow flew open on her starboard side, and in the opening our friends saw a grim array of broadside guns frowning out.

At the breech of each gun there stood a man with the lock-striking in his hand, ready to fire upon the Destroyer at the word of command from the rebel chief.

Frank uttered a cry of dismay.

He now understood the mystery.
A shot of astonishment escaped the steamer's crew, and the gunners pulled the lock strings of their weapons. Frank restored his men by the sea, but so sudden had been the descent of the Destroyer, that the bowing cannon balls flew over her.

Had Frank been a moment later in carrying out his plan, the submarine boat would have been struck. Strong as she was, such a heavy battery at short range, would have done her the most serious damage.

Further down she sunk in the sea. Frank had an instrument for measuring her depth from the surface of the sea. It was an ingenious thing worked by pressure. By deducting fifteen pounds to the square inch, which is the pressure of the atmosphere on the earth and sea, Frank calculated and he was half right but he was deceived. For example: When the boat reached a depth of twenty feet he stopped her descent by shutting off the influx of water, and saw that the register recorded twenty-three and one-half pounds. By taking off the fifteen pounds air pressure, that left the sea.

Far below, in the gloomy abyss, the tops or marine veesel, denizens of the deep. Frank stopped to locate the bull of the rebel ship. "Up behoind an' plug him 'in ther loights," He took the management of the boat.

The rest proceeded down to the gun room. The frightful creature missed him.

The shark shot past, and he clasped the Irishman, in his teeth caught the rope above him and vanished in the gloom. As he had hold with the other mates pulled the search-light in the direction of the Destroyer beneath the surface of the sea. What's the matter with the bull," said the inventor. "I must have lied and buried herself in that fog," said the inventor. "It's a case av jim-jam to me just now," said Frank. "You're a long way away wid thim," growled Barney. "And Dick to aid him, they wore all about us." As he winched up, he muttered. "Hey, Frank!"

"Safe," he muttered, sighing with relief. "But why don't yer dhrop thim in," said Frank. "Don't you recognize the steamer as that av Lopes," said Frank. "No, for I never saw his flagstaff before."

"Not a thing," said Barney. "What sort of a looking man is Lopes?"

"He looks like a black beard," said Frank. "We must not remain here. They saw where we went down and may train their guns to bear upon this spot." It was a cannon ball lying down through the water from the surface of the sea. The frightful creature missed him.

"They've commenced to do just what I feared," said Frank. He seized the machinery lever and pulled it. The boat's screw began to revolve, and she glided ahead without causing a ripple on the surface.

Frank started the electric light ablaze. A slivery halo extended all around the boat.

Toward the surface the brine had a pale green hue in the light of the declining sun. This color intensified gradually as it descended into the profound depths until it looked positively black. Through the element there flashed the bodies of various kinds of denizens of the deep. Some fled from the boat in excessive terror, while others became reconciled to their fate and swam to the surface to breathe. Far below, in the rocky abyss, the tops or marine veesel, denizens of the deep.

Dick, however, had never before been under the ocean, and gazed out the window in utter amazement.

At some distance from the spot where they had first descended Frank stopped the Destroyer. "I am going to blow that craft off the sea," said he. Just then Barney and Pomp rushed up. "Arrah but it's ther splashin' thin won't growl the Celt in angry tones. "Faith, a mon mought as well how an assassin shate up behoind an' plug him in his houghs an' his livir wid a carrivin' kind an' tair gun shot at widout warnin'!"

"Remember that we are not dealing with honest enemies."

"They're the only weapons I'll fight 'em wid," said Barney, furiously. "Pawers, don't yer dhrop them a pill in their log, an' 'dhriv them trow ther clod!"

"Just my intention," said Frank. "Just the bow of the other wheel, an' bejeers I'll ha' yer pes- chune that ship an' her lock av Davy Jones in wan minite be her chronometric clock!"

He took the management of the boat.

The rest proceeded down to the gun room. Barney then began to manipulate the search-light in an attempt to locate the steamer.

Frank also observed the Destroyer beneath the sea, like some gigantic fish, and the glaring search-light wandered from point to point in an effort to locate the hull of the rebel ship.

Quarter of an hour passed by without the light encountering the vessel, and Barney grew impatient.

There were tons of gulf weed floating about, which caught on the boat and the boat in large quantities. "Be jingo, it's quay a-terfectly plawre she could hoy gorn," muttered the Irishman, in impassive tones. "Shure she must hoy put on sliam av' win' lacke the devil for we'd be affther soakin' her wi' our torpedoes."

At this juncture there came a sudden shock. It ran through the boat in a convulsive tremor. She began to diminish her speed. Again the shock was felt. Then she stopped for a moment. Then she went ahead a little. Then she stopped again. Barney looked scared. He stopped the machinery. "Regawsey she has a flit," he muttered. "Hey, Frank!"

"What's the matter with the boat?" called the inventor.

"It's a case av jim-jam to me just now," said Frank. "Have you run down anything?"

"Sorra a thing, me jewl. Chip yer oye on ther machinery." Frank complied. He could find no defect. The batteries were in good order. So was the screw-boat.

Yet it was evident something was wrong. But what? Surely nothing inside. Frank pondered.

"Maybe the wheel is caught," said the inventor. "That is plausible. It would catch, jar, and hitch that way if it were."

A Thrill of horror passed over him. He bung clown at arms' length. "Send her to the top!" he ordered.

When she burst from the surface nothing was seen of the steamer. She had vanished as completely as if she had disappeared. Unfortunately the screw was pointed off to the windward, where a dense haze was rolling up across the sea.

"She must have fled and buried herself in that fog," said the inventor. "May the cloud Nick them away wid thim?" growled Barney. "There I've been huntin' for thim like a blood-hound, an' no wan to find 'em! Shure it's kickin' meself I'll soon be doin'."

"I'm convinced that our wheel is bound," said the inventor. "Bad cuss to it! Why did it happen now? If we had ther mouse at ear same, shure we could soon overhaun that omnibous, an' give them discontent licking he ever had!"

"Don't you notice lots of weed drifting down below?"

"Skaters av it!"

"I'll go overhaul and examine the screw," said Frank. Pomp put on a diving suit. Calling Pomp and Dick to aid him, they passed out on deck. Pomp tied one end of a rope around his body and handed the other end to the coon. "Lower me over the stern till I signal you to stop," said he. "Yessah," said Pomp. "Come heah, Dick, an' git me a bail!"

Over went Frank the inventor. He shook the rope when he reached the wheel. As he expected, it found it bound with an immense collection of seaweed which it had wound around its screw blades and shaft.

To tear it away required considerable time. Nearly an hour was spent on the wheel was free of the big escam- brades. Frank realized at this time the steamer must have gained a point fifteen or twenty miles beyond his reach. He was just upon the point of signaling Pomp to haul him up when suddenly an enormous anchor shot out of the gloom, and made a lightning-like dive for him.

Over went the monster upon its back to seize him in its mouth, when Frank swung himself aside. The frightful creature missed him. But its teeth caught the rope above him and severed it. Down dropped Frank like a stone.

CHAPTER VI.

THE BOMBARDEMENT OF RIO.

A Thrill of horror passed over Frank when he felt the rope part and his body sinking downward. The shock shot past him and vanished in the gloom. Down went the young inventor and out flew his hands, when one of them came in contact with the screw.

He clasped the blade.

In a twinkling he had hold with the other hand. His descent was checked.

The wheel turned with the weight of his body, until the blade to which he clung hung underneath.

He hung down at arms' length.

In an instant he collected his shattered faculties and calmly thought over the serious situation.

"If I can get astride of the wheel, he pondered, "I can face myself of these helpless operations that I can manage." He exerted all his muscles and hitched himself upward inch by inch until his hands touched the axis.

Then he seized it between the stone post and the center of the screw.
He quickly handed himself up and got astir between two of the blades of the screw. He then unfastened the weights on his back and breast. Leaning them fall, he began to undo the loosed soles on his shoes, in the meantime keeping a sharp lookout for the shark. Around and around whirled the wheel faster and faster every moment, until it was taking off his half fainting vessel. The young inventor hung on for his life. He was undergoing the most frightful torture. Every revolution his body was terribly whirled around in the water until his brain fairly swam. A tremendous roaring and hissing sounded in his ears. He momentarily expected his glasses to break from the fearful pounding it was getting, and yet to the water to drown him, while he was forced to try the flying wheel, if one of the blades hit him, it would cleave him like an ax.

Barney had put on the power. He wanted to see if the wheel would turn yet. Finding that it did, he chuckled and kept it going until he heard a piercing yell at him that Frank was off the rope. Unheard, pressing forward, the man-eater's impetus with which it was clear yet. The sudden transition partially revived him. He felt himself sinking. When he looked around, he was to go a certain depth, the pressure of the sea would crush him.

With rare presence of mind, he kicked off the loosed laden sole. As he was relieved, he let go with his right hand, and the air in his reservoir in the knapsack carried him surfaceward. Within a minute he floated on top. Here he quickly revived. Pomp saw him.

"Barney!" yelled the coon, excitedly. "Come about, dar' Mare Frank and do somethin'! B'fore long, he'll be yo' heah menty.

"All right!" roared the Celt, as he turned the boat.

By this time Frank felt like himself again. He saw the boat going in the direction of approaching him slowly.

"Nothing!" he shouted. "Nothing but something that made him snigger.

It was the dorsal fin of the shark between him and the boat, and the man was swimming toward him.

Frank's knife in his belt which he had been hewing away the weed from the screw. He drew it out, fastened her planes upon the cannon edges, and waited for the chance which it was to come at a pinacle, and the roll of drums and booming of soldiers' bugles were heard.

All was a scene of fear, panic and excitement as the bursting shells came pouring into the city from the sea.

Frank ran like a madman for the water front to get aboard of the torpedo boat.

CHAPTER VII.

A SEA FIGHT.

"T'ain city is bombed! All hands to quarters! Make ready for action!"

Thus cried Frank as he dashed aboard the Destroyer. His companions had heard the noise of exploding shells and were standing about the deck watching the city.

A scramble was made for the interior of the boat. In a few moments everybody was ready. Frank started the Destroyer down the bay under full speed, and the ironclad anchored up the harbor got under way.

In quarter of an hour the lower fortress was reached, and the flash and roar of guns came from the place.

Screaming shells were curving through the air toward the fort, and bursting with roars that shook the sea.

As soon as the torpedo boat opened up the headland, Frank discerned a number of shadowy ships in the offing, from the decks of which there came the continued rumble and roar of guns.

"There they are now, Pomp," he said to the coon, who stood beside him in the cupola. "I'll stop their barking presently."

"'Ee doin' it, sir!"

"'That's hard to say in this gloom. But I can count five.

"'Gwine ter sink 'em, sar?"

"Under water. There's my prey—see the big fellow yonder who seems to be doing so much of the firing?"

"'Dat all right, sir?"

"'Exactly. Here—you take the wheel. Send her down under that craft, Pomp, and get me in a position to fire at her."

"'How deep yo' gwine down?"

"'No more than fifteen feet. That will be enough to cover the top. I'll go down and arouse the gun."

The coon was perfectly familiar with the boat. When Frank left him, he sent her under as he was directed, and she glided toward the lighting slip.

HIS NEW TORPEDO BOAT.
Frank loaded the gun with Barney’s assistance, and sending Dick aloft to have the light flashed, he peered out the bull’s-eye in the bow in search of the vessel’s hull. In a few moments he saw it ahead to the right. 

Pomp turned the boat around and brought it to a pause. 

They were pursued. 

The cylindrical projectile flew through the brine so rapidly that only a white foamy streak was left behind it. In a few moments it struck the ship’s hull and burst. 

A heavy dull boom was heard inside the boat, for water is a good conductor of sound. 

Then there was seen a sudden and violent rending of the hull amid a mass of turbid water agitated into whiteness. The ship vanished. 

She was literally blown to fragments. Not one of her crew of rebels escaped alive. Frank reloaded the gun. 

"Thatassel her, and she’s not going to bother us any more," he remarked. 

"Be hearest!” said Barney, "’t’s the illigist boost yer affter givin’ thim. Share they won’t come down in a week." 

Frank shut the breeching tubes. 

"Hey, Pompi'” he called. 

"Yes, sah’” replied the coon, immediately. 

"Send her to the surface and find another.” 

"Orright, sah’—right away, sah!” And the pump began to hiss, throwing out the water from the reservoir and the boat began to rise. 

When she reached the surface the darkly peering around, and saw by the search-light that the rebel ships were retreating. A veritable panic had seized the Destroyer at one of their ships in that strange, mysterious manner gave them to understand that some awful power was pitted against them. 

The Destroyer arose from the sea they knew it was, and despite the weapons they carried they fled. 

None of them knew at what unexpected moment she might glide beneath their hull and blow them to pieces. It imbued them with a feeling of anxious suspense. Moreover, the Brazilian men-of-war were coming out of the bay, and now began to open fire upon them. 

"Dar’s de ironclads givin’ fo’ ter shoot us, sah’.” 

"Oh, I see! Where are you taking us now?” 

Aftah anudder ob de rebel ships. 

"All right—just in her.” 

The Destroyer was swiftly shooting ahead. 

She ran on for half an hour, but nothing was seen of the vessels she was pursing. 

Pomp raised her again. 

It was then raining and blowing hard. A flash of lightning tore across the sky. 

As its brilliant gleam lit up the sea, the coon observed one of the rebel ships bearing down upon him. 

The Destroyer got out of the way, for she was almost on top of the Destroyer when Pomp saw her. 

"Merdane!” he yelled, spinning the wheel around. The torpedo boat essayed to glide away, but there came a grinding crash as the bow of the ship struck her. 

She was knocked far over on the side from the collision, and the ship’s bow splintered in the air. 

A chorus of yells pealed from the started crew of the ship, and Frank came running up from below. 

At one glance he saw what had happened, and slanted down: 

"Barney! Out on deck with you and see if we are damaged.” 

"I will!” returned the Celt, complying. 

Gathering bar-hauled, and in a moment more he was making a careful examination. 

Frank waited suspensefully. 

"Well?” he shouted. 

"Sure, there’s a hole knocked in our side.” 

"As I feared. Can it be repaired?” 

"If think so. We’re shipwrecks!uther be ther bucketful.” 

Frank glanced at the rebel ship. 

Her stern had been rent to pieces. 

Half the plates were torn and splintered, and she was fast filling and settling down. 

Her crew had abandoned all hope of saving her, and were taking to the boats. 

"She’s a wreck!” muttered Frank. 

"Down’ spee she am as hard as dis yer boat!” chuckled Pomp. 

"Nor shall we have to waste a shot on her,” said Dick. Frank the Destroyer was off the ship, for it was fast sinking, and bound to go down. 

Three of her quarter boats got safely away loaded with men, but the other one, while still attached to the davit lines, was violently dashed against the ship’s side and smashed. 

The yelling crew were buried in the sea. Here the ones who could swim kept afloat, but the others who couldn’t sank like stones. 

It was an appalling sight. 

The ship settled lower every moment. Frank drove the submarine boat over to the swimmers, and they eagerly grabbed her deck and clambered up. In this manner twenty of them were picked up. 

All were Brazilians. 

Alas, wept the Destroyer swiftly. She had been fifty yards from the foundering vessel when it sunk forever, leaving a big eddy on the surface. 

Had the torpedo boat been steering over the spot then, she might have been sucked down with her. 

This would have been extremely disastrous with the hole in her side, for she might never have risen again. 

Indeed, until the break was repaired, Frank dared not send her beakeath the sea again. 

"Pomp, attach a hose to the pump, and start. It emptying the water from the engine room!” cried Frank. 

"Yesah!” replied the coon, hastening down-stairs. 

In the meantime and Frank can make prisoners of the men on deck, and we’ll carry them to the city, and put them in the hands of the authorities.” 

"Ah! are you going to continue the chase, sir?” 

"No. We are too badly disabled. I must repair the damage. I’ll leave the vessel to the mercy of the ironclads. Besides, it’s too much for me to hunt for those ships in this gloom, for none of them carry lights.” 

The boy went below. 

He and Barney had but little trouble to apprehend all the men on the deck and lock them in one of the rooms. 

By the time this was done, the water was pouring into the interior of the boat so fast that electric light 

The coon came running up-stairs presently. His eyes bulged, and his obvyous face was convulsed with fear. 

"Oh, Lord! Oh, Lord! he groaned dementedly. 

"What’s the matter?” demanded Frank, in tones of anxiety. "Why don’t you start the pump? Don’t you see the boat is filling?” 

"Can’t do it, nobow.” 

"Why not?” 

"De pump am brack’!" 

Great heavens!” gasped Frank. "The boat will founder!" 

Every one was terribly alarmed.
Frank Reade, Jr., and his new Torpedo Boat.

"Kill the villains!"
"Tell them from the soldiers."
"Down with bayonets!"
"Justice! Justice!"

Missiles began to fly from the crowd.

"The captain had trou"ble to keep his men calm.

"Now the soldiers turned and presented their bayonets at them."

"That brought the excited people to a pause."

"Back! Back!" said Frank.

"We will shoot you down like dogs if you interfere with our duty!"

The rabble was intimidated.

Panning and hanging back, they allowed the soldiers to march on in peace with their prisoners.

In this manner the rebels were finally lodged in prison and ultimately suffered the penalty of their crimes.

Frank and his companions remained aboard the Destroyer that night, and in the morning saw one of the ironclads come in, towing two of the rebel boats astern.

Both were badly battered up by gushots.

A large number of prisoners were taken, and when the news spread to the shore it was the cause of great rejoicing.

Frank and his companions set to work upon the damaged plate of the Destroyer and repaired it.

The two vessels then went a-scouring, and having learned what had transpired on the sea when they left it, he returned, told his friends the news, and the Destroyer left the bay.

It was a clear and beautiful day upon the water, an easy off-hand swell rolling the sea in sweeping undulations.

Frank passed out on deck with Dick.

"The commander of the iron-clip told me that they had a battle with the rebels for the bay, and after the two ships were captured that we saw, he left the rest of the fleet flying through the storm after the others."

"I think our Destroyer will run for their retreat, sir."

"Whereabouts is it?" queried Frank.

"Down the coast near Sagos do Sombrio."

"Can you guide us to the place?"

"Very easily, as I have often been there."

Frank nodded and glanced around over the sea.

A short distance away he observed a large, dark object floating in the water.

A nearer glance showed him that it took on a metallic hue. When the Destroyer ran up wind, the object was seen to move up and down with a slow, steady movement with every roll of the waves.

Frank turned to Barney, who stood at the wheel.

"Barney, look out! That's the destroy'er to the sink."

"How's he?" asked Frank.

"Looks like it," replied Barney.

Frank assented. Under the keel of the boat.

"Perhaps we can see the bottom out from your elevation!" cried Frank, beckoned by numerous voices.

"Why, d'yer call it!"

"It's a cargo ship," said Barney.

"Can't you see that?" queried Frank.

"No. There were but four of us," replied Barney.

"Why, you see, that was the A1 clipper bark Sally Ann T., of Boston, and we had a cargo of freight aboard, and were bound for San Francisco, when we stopped by the steamer Guaco Boreal—"

"That's Lopez's craft!" interposed Dick.

"Well," continued the sailor, "those rascals boarded us, and before we could get their game they attacked us. In the fight eight of the crew were killed. We four were all who lived to tell the tale. They locked us down between decks and rifled the bark. Then they stood off on their own craft and began to chase us away. All of a sudden the vessel capsized. But she floated bottom upwards. The air in her was almost exhausted when you found us. Our experience inside the bark was terrible. None of us could pluck up the heart to speak."

"Here is another example of the brutality of those rebels!" Frank muttered.

"Now I am convinced of the piracy you said they committed. It only makes me feel all the more eager to avenge the injury done to our countrymen."

He questioned the men at some length further, and then headed for the coast, where he landed.

The torpedo boat then went on.

Toward the fall of night a steamer was described ahead, and as the Destroyer rapidly overhauled her, Dick cried:

"Wey, there's the Guaco Boreal now!"

"It's the same craft we encountered in the Gulf," said Frank.

He had gained such a good view of the rebel ship that he could make no mistake about her.

A daring plan to capture her suggested itself to Frank's mind, and as he once called all hands inside.

He then mounted to the cupola.

Here he sent the Destroyer under the sea to a depth of forty feet, and drove her flying toward the rebel's flagship.

Preparations were made to carry out the plan Frank had arranged to get the steamer in their power.

CHAPTER IX.
STRANDED ON A SUNKEN BAR.

Everything became very dark within the boat when she sunk under the sea, until Frank turned on the electric lights.

There was a strong submarine current flowing from the east which kept the Destroyer in the rearward.

It thus became necessary for Frank to manage the boat with the utmost skill to keep her on her course, for he had no means of seeing where they were.

To keep her located, he could only follow a direction such as he felt sure she laid in.

A dim glow from the electric lights fell out from the boat's windows and lighted up the brine.

When the search-light poured its dazzling glow ahead of the Destroyer, it revealed an exclamation.

Below the bottom was seen at a depth of less than one hundred feet under the keel of the boat.

It was covered with queer coral formations.

Myriads of fishes were swimming about in the liquid, flashing here and there like fire-flies as the electric glow glanced upon their silvery scales.

Swarms of jelly-fish lazily floated above the boat, accompanied by numerous nautilus and Portuguese men-of-war, with long, graceful mantacles hanging down from their transparent bodies like the cord-like roots of trees.

Huge levithans mingled with the tiniest of the fish tribe, and crabs without number were seen among the brilliant sea plants festooning the bottom.

Black rocks rose from the midst of muddy pools covered with slimy mosses and lichens, over which singular bugs were creeping on their surface.

The scene was constantly changing from arid plains of white sand and coral reefs to the glassy waters of the ever-changing light.

It was a most wondrous region.

But it was marked by a deadly silence.

Finally Frank caught sight of the steamer ahead.

Her screw was rapidly revolving and churning the water to the whitest foam in its wake.

The young inventor kept his glance upon the spinning wheel intently for some moments, and then said Pomp.

"Take the wheel," said he.

The currents stirred up the sand in places until it clouded the water that our friends could not see a yard ahead.

Massive ferns shot up fifty feet from the bed of the ocean and mingled with gigantic trees and grasses.

The scene was constantly changing from arid plains of white sand in which lurid buried the wrecks of ships, to rocky spots of forbidding appearance, that suddenly merged into places covered with the most beautiful and luxuriant vegetation.

They passed over hills and valleys, yawning chasms and rugged plateaux in an ever changing light.

It was a most wonderful region.

But it was marked by a deadly silence.

Finally Frank caught sight of the steamer ahead.

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Her screw was rapidly revolving and churning the water to the whitest foam in its wake.

The young inventor kept his glance upon the spinning wheel intently for some moments, and then said Pomp.

"Take the wheel," said he.
When they were one hundred yards astern of the steamer, he motioned the darky a third time. He started the boat ahead at the same rate of speed at which the steamer was going.

Frank then turned the light, and the glow filled the air as was attached. This current filled the air with terror, and they could not handle her. Preferred were intelligent upon saving their necks. There was no way they could see what towed them.

"FIGHTING THE BOAT'S CREWS.

A sarcastic, sneering laugh pulsed from his thick, red lips as he saw the torpedo boat stop.


"So the dam' lot, but how we goin' ter git afloat?" asked Pomp.

"Oh, I know a way," replied the inventor reassuringly.

Two of the other boats now drew near, and their crews, very much emblazoned by the sight of the terrible torpedo boat stranded, opened fire upon her.

The bullets flew around her like hail. When glasses were shot to atoms and fell jingling to the floor, and dozens of bullets flew into the interior of the Destroyer in dangerous proximity to our friends.

CHAPTER X.

"Put on your armors and fire at them from the deck, boys!"

As Frank gave this order his companions dashed down into the crew-room, clad themselves in their metal suits, and arming themselves with pneumatic repeating rifles, they passed outside. By the time they reached the deck Frank had a surprise awaiting them.

The submarine boat was afloat.

She carried water ballast.

By pumping it out Frank lightened her. Hence she easily floated off the sand bar.

Now she dashed for the nearest quarter boat.

Barney, Pomp and Dick were on deck and began to fire. The rebels fired back volley after volley at the deadly trio, but their bullets fell harmlessly against the metal suits worn by our friends. They were utterly invulnerable to rifle bullets.

As soon as the rebels realized that they were no longer the crew of the torpedo boat, while they themselves were being wounded with every shot that was returned, the rebels yelled for mercy.

"Surrender, then!" cried Frank, in Portuguese, for he was a good linguist. "Surrender, or die!"

"Yes! Yes!" screamed the boatmen.

"Fling down your arms!"

"We will! We will!"

And they did.

Up to them dashed the Destroyer. In a moment more the rascals were all taken aboard, and having been handcuffed to each other, were taken inside.

The crews of the remaining four boats panting, in alarm, for they saw plainly that they had terrible foes to deal with.

At this juncture there sounded a frightful explosion.

The steamer blew up!

A slow match had been lighted in the powder magazine, and having reached the explosives the vessel was destroyed.

Her fragments flew up in air and dust and sound.

The sea was strewn with the debris while all the metal parts went to the bottom of the sea.

It was the resort of desperate men.

Barney had realized that the steamer was doomed. Rather than allow her to fall into the hands of their enemies, they preferred to blow her up.

In this design they succeeded well.

"Now there's no resort for the fellows in those quarter boats," grimly muttered Frank. "They can't pass on to reach land, and must light us, if they wish to resist capture."

He sent the Destroyer rushing toward the nearest boat.

The crew fired a perfect fusillade.

It did no serious damage.

And it was suddenly interrupted.

The keen prov of the torpedo boat struck the rowboat.

Crash went the wood.

It was crushed like an egg shell.

The crew was flung into the sea.

Here they were uttered the most heartfelt mercy.

"Come aboard!" shouted the young inventor to them.

"You will kill us," replied one.

"No. You shall have fair trial, no more."

This assurance encouraged them.

Every one boarded the low-setting deck. As fast as they came aboard, the boy, the Celt and the colonel secured them and locked them up with the others.

Seeing how matters were going, the rest of the boats' crews made a desperate effort to escape.

"Destroy their boats!" cried Frank.

"Hurroo!" yelled Barney, who was al ays in his glory when fighting.

"Be heavens, they are all did mist!"

"Watch the black chowder if yo' wanter see the boats sink," roared Pomp, as he let drive. "Lord ob lub, Ish, yo' ain't it wif dis yer boat. Bless my soul, yo' see dat shot!"

"There goes one of them to pieces!" cried Dick, excitedly, as he kept on firing. "And hang me if a number of those dagos didn't hit too. Never mind. Give them another."

And another round was fired.
The two remaining boats were destroyed. Now all hands were in the water and some were drowned. The torpedo boat flew ahead furiously, and plunging in among the submerged vessels, passed between them and dumbfounded and submitting to arrest, or having their brains blown out in the water. Every one chose the form of a rubber tube, and the alternative of the flotsam had proved to be successful for Frank, as he had captured three-fourths of the steamship's crew alive, although he had lost the prize vessel.

As soon as every one of the rebels was imprisoned, the three fighters on deck abandoned their armor.

A general jubilation ensued. The boat had been stopped, and Frank joined his friends.

"This isn't so bad," he remarked delightedly. "Sight-seers and prisoners, and only one boat lost.

"I say, honey, I might have been in Lopez's.'"

"Yes, Barney, but we'll meet the rascal again.

"An' de steamship!" growled Pomp, regretfully.

"Never mind, boys. Lopez is badly crippled now."

Frank took one of the prisoners out.

He designed to gain some information from the man.

Putting a revolver at the terrified fellow's head, he said:

"Unless you truthfully answer my questions, I intend to blow your brains out-do you hean!"

For God's sake don't kill me, sir," whined the man.

"Then tell me where the rest of your feet is."

"They have gone down the coast."

"Bound for your rendezvous?"

"Yes—at Lagon do Smorvio."

And the Brazilian iron-clads.

"Two of them were captured."

"What were the plans of Lopez for the future?"

"None were formed since the defeat of our battalion."

"Why were you going to your base?"

"To reorganize and form a new expedition."

Frank could not gain much information from the fellow, and finally relinquished all hope to the agent of the government.

On the following morning after mess while Pomp was at the wheel, he described a steamer coming up the coast.

It came in broad on the faces of the iron-clads. She bore down upon the Destroyer, and Frank ran his boat alongside under the umbrellas and stripes.

The commander of the steamer, Frank gave him an account of what happened.

"I will put the prisoners in your hands," said he, in conclusion, "and you can carry them back to Rio, for I am going on in pursuit of the rebels."

"I will gladly avail myself of your offer," replied the officer.

The prisoners were transferred aboard the frigate. When this was done, Frank asked:

"What has become of the other iron-clads?"

"Of the other iron-clads?" asked the officer, in wonder. "I do not know what has become of the other two.

It was fair to presume that they were hunting for the rebel ships and that Frank then parted with the officer. Salesites were exchanged, and while the man-of-war went up the coast, the Destroyer went down. A lookout was maintained for some sign of the missing ship, and the broken glasses were replaced by new ones.

Nothing was seen of Frank's prey. Later that day Barney got out his saddle and Pomp his bayo, and seating themselves on the shady side of the deck, they struck up a lively tune, and enlivened the monotony with some songs.

But Frank was not there. Pomp wanted to play a tune called the "Brun' New Coon," and Barney was equally as determined to play "Always Mind Your Sister, Jenny."

Both were determined and both were obstinate.

"If yo' wanter do what I say, honey, ain't gwine ter play at all!"

"Be hevenes, I'll go it alone then!" replied Barney.

"No, sah! I ain't gwine ter leabe yo' do it."

"Well'll" roared Barney.

And he started in.

Bang! went the head of Pomp's bayo down on Barney's coconut before he had out three notes.

In front of the Cen, it broke the sheepskin with a report like a pistol shot, and Pomp gave a howl of distress. A roar of laughter pealed from Barney's lips. He laughed so hard that he was fairly in the water.

Whang! went the coon's boot against the hilarious Cen's anatomy like a split-driver, and with a wild whoop, Barney was propelled forward till he landed on the face of the postman.

It was Pomp's turn to laugh now.

But he was not left long in the enjoyment of his fun, for there suddenly appeared a light on the horizon, and a sudden shriek in the air, which was instantly followed by a deafening explosion.

It was a bomb shell which had been fired from somewhere along the shore and had been aimed at the Destroyer and scattered among the trees, while floating in the water at the base of the rocks was a ship at anchor.

He now saw the inlets of the Destroyer, and observed that it was a winch passage choked up with vegetation.

"There are several guns mounted on those heights!" he remarked to his companions. "Yet despite that I'm going to drag away coon, down hill and everybody about her. If I find it I'll pay to do so."

He kept the boat going toward the vessel after submerging her, and soon reached it.

Bringing the Destroyer to a pause on the seaward side of the craft, he raised her up some, and going out, climbed on the vessel's deck.

Not a soul was to be seen there.

She lay in the shadow of the rocks. Frank approached the cabin and peered in.

It was empty.

Then he steered up forward.

Going down the forecastle companion, he glanced around and discovered that this place, too, was vacant.

In a word, the vessel was deserted.

Satisfied of this, Frank changed his plans.

As the vessel was heavily armed, he felt confident that she was one of the rebel ships.

The name, he saw, was La Stella.

Returning aboard the Destroyer, he mentioned the name to Dick.

"Isn't she one of Lopez's vessels?" he asked.

CHAPTER XI.


The shore was lined with bushes and trees, and seemed to present a solid front to the sea.

This, however, was a mere delusion, for far beyond the shrubbery Frank caught sight of a sandbar, at a distance between the fire and the trees he detected the sparkles of water, and realized that the shrubbery grew on a sandbar lying some distance off shore.

The shot had come from the boat flowing between the bar and the main, and the inventor jumped to the conclusion that his enemies were either in the boat or on the main.

Ordinarily their lurking place would not have been detected by crews or passing ships.

It was a good refuge for people of their stamp.

But Frank could count to no intellect.

He carefully scanned the shore with his glass.

Not a break in the coast line of the bar appeared.

Then he made up his mind that it was a concealed entrance for there certainly must be an opening somewhere.

"All right!" he cried. "Close doors and windows!"

This was a signal of descent.

"It's safer for us under water," said Dick, meaningly.

"Yes. We can't see them, and they can see us," Frank replied.

"Isn't this their rendezvous?"

"Do you know anything about the place?"

"No, sir. There's a bay on the other side of the bar I've never been in it, " the boy replied.

"Well, I intend to get in there if there's an inlet."

"All ready, my dear?" shouted Barney just then, down below.

"Down she goes!" Frank exclaimed, pulling the valve lever, and the boat began to sink.

In a few moments she was buried until the top of her cupola was flush with the surface of the water.

Here Frank stopped her.

Then he drove her in shoalward.

She was then invisible to everybody but one who might be looking for her and continued on until a hard grazing under the keel warned Frank that the water was shoaling.

He then turned her parallel with the coast.

She glided down to the southward slowly.

"Where are you going to?" curiously asked Dick.

"I am in search of a chance, a hole to put her."

"Well, I intend to get in there if there's an inlet."

"Do yer mind ther's a chance?"

"That's so," assented Frank. "Scarcely more than enough for an hour."

"Faith, it's smothered we'll be if we didn't reell ther'sroyer."

"In deep water, Frank assented gravely. "If we were under a greater pressure and our supply of air was consumed, we would not have buoyancy enough left to reach the top."

Just then Dick exclaimed:

"There's a channel now at the starboard!"

He pointed to a deep, wide trench running westward.

Frank turned the boat into it.

After a lapse of ten minutes it abruptly curved to the right.

Operating the pumps a few moments, he caused the boat to rise a few feet until half the cupola was out of water.

Once the windows were washed clear, Frank glanced around.

The boat was in a long and narrow bay.

On one side were rocky bluffs, and on the other the bar covered with dense and luxuriant vegetation.

Up on the bluffs there burned a fire.

Frank leveled a glass at it and caught sight of a large number of men entrenched among the rocks, while floating in the water at the base of the rocks was a ship at anchor.

He now saw the inlets of the Destroyer, and observed that it was a winch passage choked up with vegetation.

"There are several guns mounted on those heights!" he remarked to his companions. "Yet despite that I'm going to drag away coon, down hill and everybody about her. If I find it I'll pay to do so."

He kept the boat going toward the vessel after submerging her, and soon reached it.

Bringing the Destroyer to a pause on the seaward side of the craft, he raised her up some, and going out, climbed on the vessel's deck.

A soul was to be seen there.

She lay in the shadow of the rocks. Frank approached the cabin and peered in.

It was empty.

Then he steered up forward.

Going down the forecastle companion, he glanced around and discovered that this place, too, was vacant.

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As the vessel was heavily armed, he felt confident that she was one of the rebel ships.

The name, he saw, was La Stella.

Returning aboard the Destroyer, he mentioned the name to Dick.

"Isn't she one of Lopez's vessels?" he asked.
"Why yes. She's the very one I was captivated on," the boy replied.

"You don't say so! Well, as she's deserted, I'm going to destroy her."

"Look out for the fellows over our heads, sir."

"One shot will sure put an end to the rest of the men of the boat in the wheel-house, Pomp, till I leave her a shot." My Lord! What yo' gwine ter say, honey?" "You might hold her off by the middle of the bay," Yassah, replied Pomp. "I gib yo' seventy yards range.

Frank went below and loaded the gun.

By the time Frank got Pomp had the boat off at the range in question, and sent her to the top. The torpedo tube was yet far beneath the surface, but Frank easily calculated that an angle suited to bring about where he wished the projectiles to hit. No sooner was the vessel on top when the troops and marines on up on the cliffs were her, they gave a yell, and the gunners rushed to their ordnance and began to get it ready for use.

Frank fired the shot.

The projectiles curved upward. Flying from the surface of the bay it flew at the ship.

It hit the rocks just below the spot where the entrenchment was.

It broke some stone and pulverized dirt flew up in the air from he shot, and quite excited the hearts of the terrified men that could have been a great distance.

Frank went up on deck.

He saw to the rebel ship had been injure.

The rest were running away among the rocks in the wildest disorder, with no further thoughts of hostility.

"None of them will ever trouble me again," he muttered.

"Gwine fer ter gib 'em anudder, Marse Frank," called Pomp. "It isn't necessary. Send her out on the sea."

"Unadis de wuthi, sah."

"No. Keep her on top, Pomp."

"Yes, sah."

And saying, the coon steered the Destroyer toward the inlet. She soon reached it, and pushing the tree branches aside, forced her way out to the open ocean.

Here she sped away to the southward.

Night fell upon the sea.

Pomp prepared supper, and when it was concluded Frank went out deck with Barney and glanced at the sky. It was very cloudy. A sudden flash of light in the distance caught the Colts' attention. "How was it lightin' on their side?" he asked.

"Why, no," said Frank, with a smile. "Shure an' there goes another wan.

"To what are you alluding, Barney?"

"Luck beyst.

He pointed ahead, and a moment afterward the inventor caught a glimpse of the flashing of light in the gloom.

He leaned forward in a listening attitude. A faint report reached his ears. "A shot," he exclaimed.

"What! Is it shootin' I see?"

"Yes. There's trouble ahead there, Barney."

"Ain't much happenin' Bedad it's a hand I'll after takin' in it.

"Hey, Dick! Put on speed there!"

"Ay, ay, sir!" replied the young sailor.

The coon steered the Destroyer at the top of her speed, and as she swiftly bore down upon the flashing lights they heard the repeated roar of guns.

Presently they saw what was transpiring. A large ship was attacked by two other vessels.

The big fellow carried the American flag, and as soon as Dick caught a good view of the other two, he exclaimed:

"Why, they're two of Lopez's boats, Mr. Beadle."

"And they are engaged in a piratical outrage that shall not go unpunished!" ringingly cried Frank.

The Destroyer rushed swiftly toward the combatants, and our friends saw that the Yankees were gallantly defending themselves.

CHAPTER XII.

FIGHTING WITH ONS.

The American ship had lost her decks, the spars on the forecast were blown away, and the shot fired by the rebels were badly pounding her hull. There were no guns aboard, but her gallant crew were armed with rifles and pistols, and were crouching behind the bulwarks, firing volley after volley at their aggressors.

In the midst of the fray the Destroyer rushed up.

Barney and Dick had manned the gun, and Frank stood beside the coon in the wheel-house. Out shot the dazzling search-light upon the scene, and Frank shout down the tube to the Ishmael:

"Head ahaun, Barney, fire two-yard yards. Fire quick!"

An instant afterward a projectile flew from the gun. It struck the ship amidships.

All the works above the water were torn away, and ft In the middle of the ship. The crew of the second vessel now directed their guns at the Destroyer, and a broadside was fired.

Several of the shots struck the torpedo boat at an angle.

In the meantime the vessel was immobilized, forming a hollow in the bow, another dug a piece out of the stern, leaving a slavering white scar, and the third tore part of the raftering off the deck house.

Fortunately, however, in the position of the vessel, not opened to let in the water, and Frank screamed down the tube:

"Barney, load the gun again!"

Then he swung the boat around, and when her bow was presented toward the ship, he stopped and steadied her. The distance being mentally calculated to be quarter of a mile. Barney elevated the angle of the gun to carry that distance.

When he fired the shot flew over the ship. Frank did not lose a moment, but steered the Destroyer straight tow the vessel from which the shots had come. In a few minutes he had the torpedo boat around at the stern of the ship, where her broadside guns could do no injury, and running up to within a cable's length, he cried:

"Level and fire, Barney.

The shot was discharged, and it struck the ship's keel. When the explosion came, the vessel was lifted up from the water, and torn asunder.

In the water again she filled and sunk.

Many of her crew were left struggling in the water, but Frank did not attempt to pick them up. He sent the boat flying toward the other vessel. As they passed the American ship, he shouted:

"Can you manage yo' gun, Dick?"

"Yes," replied the skipper. "She will easily float."

"Then make prisoners of the men in the water."

And so the Destroyer after the remaining boat.

Unrehearsed with fear of our friends, the crew had made haste to sail away, thinking they could thus escape.

But they did not know how fast the torpedo boat could travel. When they saw how swiftly the Destroyer came upon them, they manned a swivel gun and fired back a shot at her. It crashed through the cupola window.

Frank and Pomp were soon convinced that they were gone, as it flew furiously between their heads, and showered a mass of splintered wood and broken glass all over them. But missed them the wall in back, tore a hole through, and finally fell into the sea astern.

"Hey, Barney, I'll run check-a-block with them!"

"Shure I'm mos't ready."

Along swept the Destroyer like a race horse. Presently she hove up to the ship, the gunner on which had his swivel in readiness for a second shot.

"Fire!"

The torpedo struck the vessel almost as soon as it left the tube. Not much of the ship or crew was left in less than a minute afterward.

For the remaining life of the Yankee ship. It was a dangerous experiment, however, for it caused the torpedo boat to recoil with such a terrible shock that her gear was thrown out of order, and her crew knocked down.

A rain of debris from the destroyed vessel came down upon her, hanging her all over, and she would have been seriously injured had not her steel plates been so thick and strong.

Frank scrambled to his feet and looked out. "She's gone!" he exclaimed.

Barney and Dick came rushing up-stairs, and upon seeing how matters stood, their excitement at once.

Pomp had gone out to see how the Destroyer had stood it. He soon returned to the interior, and going below adjusted the gauge.

"Ain't enen got a scratch!" he declared. "I've fixed the machinery."

"I'll return to the ship yender," said Frank. The vessel he indicated had gone on slowly with what little canvas she could carry, and reached the swimming men.

Every one of them had his arm around the Destroyer. The Destroyer soon reached the ship.

Fashing the search-light across her deck, Frank observed that the crew were busy hanging that presents.

"Stop stringing up those men!" shouted Frank. "They are my prisoners."

"That's so. But we will save you the trouble of hanging them," said Frank. "You needn't trouble yourself to do that. The Destroyer ran alongside of the ship, and Frank made his way to her deck where he was met by the captain. Gripping the inventor's hand in lovingly, the old fellow began to pour out a torrent of thanks for what been done for them.

"I want no thanks," said Frank. "I am working my torpedo under a letter of marque from the United States Government in the
interests of American seamen and citizens who are jeopardized by these Brazilian rebels.

"All the same we are mighty grateful.

"You can show your respect then if you do as I say.

"I'll do the best I can to accommodate you without noise."

"Confin her prisoners below, and carry them to Rio. There put them in the hands of the authorities with our account of their villainy. I'll charge you they will then get their just deserts. Will you do this?

"Yes—of course, I will."

Frank turned to leave the ship.

Once more aboard the Destroyer, he called his companions together, and they began operations at once.

The crowd was rushing.

Towards midnight they reached the remaining line in the south hand shore, and Frank caught sight of a floating object ahead looking like a buoy. It floated below the surface of the river, and seemed to be held at a distance of a few feet from the bottom.

"That's queer," he commented. "Why don't that buoy float on top?"

"Maybe the anchor cable was short, and the tide rose high and covered it," suggested Dick, practically.

"Perhaps. Then again see there—a number of lines cross our course just below the surface of the river. There they only saw wreckage, or were they put there to prevent the advance of vessels up the stream?"

"I think not, but never heard of them before."

"Well, I'm going to smash through them."

In order to make sure of cutting the lines he lowered the boat to within a few feet of the bottom. Then he drove her ahead.

She struck the line with a heavy shock.

It parted suddenly, and a terrific explosion followed. The boy had burst to pieces above the boat.

In a word, it was a submarine torpedo.

The boat staggered, but was put there to be broken, so that the torpedo would burst if an enemy's ship ascended the river. Most of the force of the explosion went upward, far up there was less water pressure aboard than above. Consequently the Destroyer escaped being blown to pieces. Large pieces of flying iron struck her metal plates with the force of a gun shot. Some burned in the boat. One piece pierced the bull's-eye of her search-light, broke the carbon, and rendered the instrument unfit for use. Another missile, however, caused them a most serious injury.

It smashed one of the windows, and the water rushed in.

Frank heard it and peered down the stairs.

Pomp now came rushing up to the turret, yelling wildly:

"One ab de windhaws am broke!"

Frank had already raised the boat.

"Barney! Put in a new glass quick!" he shouted.

"In wan moment," replied the Celt.

As soon as the aperture was above the water no more water came in, and Barney got a new glass to put in.

Both banks of the river were lined with armed men, and others were running from all directions to join them.

"A cry of arrangement" escaped them when they saw the Destroyer thus suddenly come up from under the river. They now realized what it was that exploded one of the torpedoes they had submerged.

As soon as they saw the boat they knew what she was, for Lopes and the rest of the boat crew had ascended adrift when their steam boat was destroyed in the battle. They then joined the boat, and the bullets riddled it all over.

"Close the hatches!" shouted Frank.

He feared the rifle bullets might pierce the other glasses.

Dick and Pomp hastily went from window to window and drew the metal shutters over them.

Feeling more secure now Frank started the Destroyer up the river, but she had not gone far when he beheld a line of stone walls on each embankment.

Entranced behind these breakwaters were a number of guns, to which the crowd was rushing.

CHAPTER XIII.

THROUGH THE DANGEROUS RIVER.

The Destroyer was submerged to a depth of five feet, and the bottom of the river was but twenty feet below her keel.

Half the gun crew came to the surface when Frank caught sight of a floating object ahead looking like a buoy. It floated below the surface of the river, and seemed to be held at a distance of a few feet from the bottom.

"That's queer," he commented. "Why don't that buoy float on top?"

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Feeling more secure now Frank started the Destroyer up the river, but she had not gone far when he beheld a line of stone walls on each embankment.

Entranced behind these breakwaters were a number of guns, to which the crowd was rushing.

Frank stopped the boat.

"Pomp!" he shouted.

The crew responded in person.

"All de windows am closed up," said he.

"Good! I'm going to storm those batteries!"

He left the boat in the darkey's charge, and dove down below.

The gun was already lowered, and he had only to get the range to fire a shot at the treasurers.

The bowing projectile hit the wall on the left hand bank and shattered it to fragments, blew up the guns from their carriages and swept through the ranks of the rebels.

The scene that followed was frightful. Frank changed the position of the boat.

Again the pneumatic gun sent its destructive missile, and although it missed its mark, it landed among the trees back of the wall, and destroyed many of the men.

These terrible shots put the crowd to flight.

By this time Barney had the window repaired, and when Pomp came down that the rebels fled, Frank came up stairs.

At one glance he saw how matters stood, and as he wished to lead his movements from observation, he resolved to go under the river again.

The search-light was needed, however, so he procured a new glass, some carbarns and some tools from the store-room, and went on top of the cupola to fix it.

Having accomplished his purpose and joined his friends, he sent the boat under the water again.

A few huts were burned, and a sharp lookout was kept ahead by the use of the search-light for more torpedoes.

Presently a similar arrangement was seen.

Frank stopped the Destroyer at a safe distance from it.

"Barney, drive a shot ahead to explode that thing," he said.

Barney sent a shot bowling ahead through the water, and it tore through the lines and burst.

The torpedo was exploded by the bursting of the projectile, and as the way to the lake was now opened, the boat flew ahead once more, and left the river.

Frank raised the boat to the surface and glanced around.

To his surprise he found her in the midst of a circle of armed ships that were swarming with men.

They floated along the shore of a small but beautiful lake, on the shore of which there was a settlement.

Frank submerged the boat again, as he spoke, and sent her flying directly toward the nearest shore, where the gun crew was procured, and a few feet of the bottom.

Here he brought her to a pause beneath its hull.

And there he remained for fully half an hour.

It was fortunate he did so, for the guns began to roar on all the vessels, and after shot was fired at the water in every direction. Had the torpedo boat been gliding among the middle of the bay or another of the boats would certainly have hit her.

Frank went down below with Barney.

He had a gigantic scheme in view, and began to put it into practice as quickly as he could.

A large coil of insulated copper wire was procured, and a dozen or more bombs of the kind with cup ancker and binding posts, after which they put on their diving suits.

He then brought her to a point beneath its hull.

"I'll blow up a number of the vessels together!" said Frank.

He gave the crew some instructions, and then he and Barney went on deck with the implement.

One of the bombs was fastened to the ship, and the wire was bound to it, after which the boat was driven to the next vessel, another bomb secured, and the wire was bound to it.

In this manner a series of eleven of the vessels were joined together, after which Frank took the remaining end of the wire to the binding post on the deck house.

Having secured it he motored to Pomp.

Just as the crew was about to switch the electric current into the wire, there came a tug at it.

The ship had begun to move away.

The wire parted between them somewhere.

Nothing could be done to prevent it, and in the manner some of the vessels escaped annihilation.

When the explosion came, several of them were blown up.

CHAPTER XIV.

LORD IN THE FOG.

Ten twilight was deepening into the pall of night, and two big ironclads that came from Rio, attracted by the sound of the explosions, came steaming up the river. In ten minutes they reached the lake, and their commanders observed how matters stood.

They manned their guns, and starting straight across the lake, one in advance or the other, they shelled the rebels' vessels, and basted several of them to pieces.

As quickly as possible the ships crews retired, and a terrible conflict ensued between them.

The rebels were caught in a trap.

It was impossible to maneuver their ships in the little lake to any advantage, and they therefore made a desperate effort to escape to the open sea.

Meanwhile their dynamite guns were creating sad havoc with the ironclads, and a murderous ruin of bullets was poured down at the marines from a Hotchkiss gun mounted up in the crow's-nest on a mast of one of the ships.
Frank brought the Destroyer to the surface. She ascended in the mouth of the river.

She saw him heading toward her and he ordered Barney to man the gun, and open fire upon the oncoming ships.

This order was immediately carried out.

In this manner, while the frigates were steaming about the lake, pouring a destructive fire into the boat, the Destroyer planted in the water, remained undisturbed.

A constant roar of guns echoed among the rocks on shore and reverberated far out to sea.

Frank had sunk one boat, sunk another, and was preparing for a third when three of them came rushing toward her in a bunch.

"Barney—let them have it!" he shouted.

"Shouted, I can't!" came the startling reply.

"Why not?"

"Bekase their guns won't work."

"Heaven's grace—Has anything happened to it?"

"Their cylinder head has blown out of the air-compressor."

Frank was disgusted.

No power could be put in the gun. As it was incapable of throwing a shell, Frank determined to sink the boat and repair the damage.

But a glance at the air register showed him the dismaying fact that there was not enough air stored to last ten minutes. It would require several hours to fill the reservoirs.

A light was inevitable.

He shouted aloud to direct his crew.

Then he rushed down stairs and put on his own suit.

Arming all hands with the deadly grenades, they rushed out on deck just in time to prevent the nearest boat from sinking them.

The marines were armed to the teeth. They were with determination.

They answered the hail with a volde of bullets that were capable of piercing the armor of any ship and the leaden bullets glanced off the armor like raindrops.

Then the grenades began to fly.

Every explosion revealed a field of artillery.

They tore the woodwork to pieces and mangled the rebels.

A frightful din of shots and yells arose.

Gradually the fire spread over the scene.

As the other vessels drew closer more or less of their fire was directed to the nearest boat and the leaden bullets glanced off the armor like raindrops.

Frank was disgusted.

"Confound it, they've given us the sea."

He shouted to all.

"Go ahead!"

"All right!"

And off swung the frigate.

The hawser was secured to her stern.

It was no exertion for her powerful engines to pull the torpedo boat astern, and the hawser was cast off.

All the rebel boats not destroyed had got out of the bay and were heading for the sea.

The crew of the frigate had witnessed the service Frank had done them, and realized that he was their friend.

As soon as the Destroyer was aboard, she ran after the man-of-war, and they soon reached the sea.

Here a bitter disappointment awaited them.

The ships had all vanished in a dense fogbank that swept in from the ocean.

"Confound it, they've given us the sea!" exclaimed Frank, in tones of intense disgust, when he discovered this.

"Bad luck to their nagels" growled Barney. "It's only war now, shot I was after wanin' at that Lopez gallop, and thin I might have gone to geez wid a key conscience."

"Befo' yo' done git 'seav'in' dar," said Pomp, wisely, "wha' yo' doin' done fine out which war day is most likely ter an' den foller dem?"

"That's so," added Dick.

"And as those rogues have been so badly routed all around, what's more likely than that they've headed for the Paraguay in order to get up into Lopez's country."

"Your view is such a practical one I'm going to follow it," said Frank, smiling.

"How manny av thin spalpeens escaped?" asked Barney.

"Nine of the ships," Frank replied.

"I don' have none av yer not," said Pomp, "kase dat's whar Dom Pedro's yadder ships am."

"Oh, they'll go south, without a doubt," said Dick.

The frigate went on.
The news of Frank's capture reached New York in due season, and a report was made to the government. A large reward had been appropriated for the inventor by the government, to be paid in case he proved successful. As the news of his exploits had preceded him, the money was promptly sent to Frank. But he, Barney and Pomp, were very wealthy. The sum they gained was a mere bagatelle to them. They promptly gave it all to Dick Davis, the poor sailor boy, and he suddenly found himself enriched.

"Sail ho! Sail ho!
Where away?" hastily asked Frank.

Frank Reade, Jr., and his New Torpedo Boat,

Frank had indeed received the line of grapnels. His companions in treason suffered the penalty of their crimes.

A Cry of Consternation escaped Frank.

The Destroyer is lost!" was his exclamation.

"The Destroyer is sinking!" he shrieked. It was a fact.

The water had been gushing into her through the opening made by Frank's shot, and she was rapidly filling.

In the excitement no one but the young sailor had observed that she was going down. Now, however, it occurred to Frank that only by the most rapid work could he hope to save her. "Clear away the boats!" he cried, energetically. He set the example. All hands instantly followed his cue.

The weight had burst the line of the grapnels. They had not gone fifty yards from the ship when it began to sink in fifty fathoms. It was impossible for the weapons of the rebels to pierce the metal armor of the four, and they had consequently escaped injury.

In due course of time she reached the capital. Here they were unlaunched, however, for the vessel finally resolved itself into one of Dom Pedro's flyboats. Frank turned northward, and rowed away. He then hastened up-stairs and told Frank.

"Do you think the pump will keep her afloat?" he asked.

"I am certain of it," replied the dashing young inventor. "I'm going to board the ship.

The news of Frank's capture spread like wild fire, and when our friends arrived below they were given a grand ovation. An invitation came from the emperor to Frank and his companions to come to the palace. They accepted it, and met the American consul there. Here they were honored as few foreigners are.

"You have been the means of breaking the insurrection, sir," said Don Pedro to Frank. "With the capture of Lopez, the rest of the rebels have become discouraged. Dispatches from the interior apprise me that the war is at an end."

"I am glad to hear it," said Frank.

"We have nothing further to apprehend here now," the American consul added. "Mr. Reade, when you return to the United States, I am sure you will be able to render our government a service of which you have shown in the defense of our interests in these waters."

"My work was done with the sanction of our government," Frank replied. "But upon my part it was purely voluntary. I am therefore amenable to no one."

This was a phase of the case of which every one was ignorant.

Our friends remained in Brazil only long enough to assure themselves that hostilities had indeed ceased. They then left for New York in an outward bound steamer. Four days after they departed Lopez escaped from jail, succeeded in regaining his own country, and ultimately died.

His companions in treason suffered the penalty of their crimes. Frank and his friends reached New York in due season, and a report was made to the government. A large reward had been appropriated for the inventor by the government, to be paid in case he proved successful. As the news of his exploits had preceded him, the money was promptly sent to Frank. But he, Barney and Pomp, were very wealthy. The sum they gained was a mere bagatelle to them. They promptly gave it all to Dick Davis, the poor sailor boy, and he suddenly found himself enriched.

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