

The BRIGHTON BOYS IN THE SUBMARINE TREASURE SHIP



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The Brighton Boys in the Submarine Treasure Ship**

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BOYS IN THE SUBMARINE TREASURE SHIP ***

Transcriber's Note:

Punctuation and possible typographical errors have been changed.

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THE BRIGHTON BOYS SERIES
BY
LIEUTENANT JAMES R. DRISCOLL

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THE BRIGHTON BOYS
IN THE TRENCHES

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THE BRIGHTON BOYS
IN TRANSATLANTIC FLIGHT

THE BRIGHTON BOYS
IN THE SUBMARINE TREASURE SHIP



THE TORPEDO HAD STRUCK SQUARELY ABAFT THE SHIP'S MAGAZINE

The BRIGHTON BOYS in the Submarine Treasure Ship

**BY
LIEUTENANT JAMES R. DRISCOLL**

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The Brighton Boys in the Submarine Treasure Ship

CHAPTER I

NEW WORLDS TO CONQUER

"LOOK, Dick, what's that out there in the water right on the line of that ventilator?"

Jay Thacker, ensign in the Navy of the United States, veteran of many months' service in the grand fleet of the American Admiral Sims in European waters, grabbed his old chum Dick Monaghan by the coat sleeve and pointed a long lean finger out to the open expanse of sea.

The two bronzed boys, rugged and fit after their experiences of the Great War, erect and sturdy looking in their natty uniforms, stood on the aft deck of the giant *Leviathan*, United States army transport, once the pride of the German merchant marine, now a carrier of men and merchandise sailing under the Stars and Stripes.

Homeward bound were they after two years' service in the naval branch of their country's armed forces. Once ordinary seamen Richard Monaghan and Jay Thacker, back in the days when they had left Brighton Academy on a balmy spring morning to enlist in the Navy, they were coming back Ensigns Monaghan and Thacker, if you please! By virtue of their splendid records while with the American fleet, they had won the deserved promotions that had brought them to their present rank.

Through many weary months they had labored in the mine-sweeping section of the fleet, alternating with the French and English in clearing the North Sea of the deadly floating bombs set adrift by the scions of the German eagle, who sought thus to destroy those riding battleships that had awaited all in vain the coming out of the monster German fleet from the safe retreat of the Kiel Canal. It had been hard, tedious, dangerous work; work to sorely try the nerve and patience of men whose great desire had been to meet the Hun in the open sea in a free-for-all fight.

But better things had remained in store for these two valiant sons of Brighton who had turned their backs on their dear old alma mater to honor the call of their country. It had been allotted to them, along with other chosen men of the American fleet, to lay the famous mine barrier across the northern bottle of the North Sea—from the craggy shores of Scotland to the

embracing waters of the Scandinavian countries. And it had been a great day when the marvelous task had been completed, but there followed a greater day when the first of the German raiders had run afoul of the mighty barrier and had been "knocked for a goal" as Dick put it. What a rejoicing when the President of the United States and the Secretary of the Navy had cabled the thanks of a grateful nation to every last man in the fleet for this splendid bit of service that had written a new chapter high in the pages of Yankee naval history!

Now it was all over; the long days and nights of untiring vigils, of tempestuous tussles with the elements, and hard, unrelenting toil. Back home now to the country they had left in the long ago; to the old friends and familiar places they had dreamed about in the monotony of the long night hours at sea. Two years away from home and dear old Brighton! The hours dragged slowly while the great ship *Leviathan* ploughed the deep with her cargo of enlisted officers and men, now mustered out of service and awaiting only the lowering of the gangplank at Hoboken until they would be back again in "civvies" and the comforts of life again.

"What do you mean? I don't see anything," replied Dick in answer to his chum's startled exclamation.

"Don't you see it—something sticking up out of the water like a long spar, or an old masthead of some sort?" continued Jay. He got behind his chum now and pointed over his shoulder.

Dick peered more intently into the misty haze that hung low over the horizon.

"Blamed if I can see anything, old pal, except the blue expanse of water. Guess maybe you are dreaming, or perhaps old man Neptune, King of the Deep, has thrust one of the prongs of his trident up through the waves."

Monaghan guessed his old "bunkie" was "seeing things."

"Nothing of the sort," retorted Jay. "Now look again, old top, just where I tell you to." Thacker was positive he beheld some odd object on the crest of the sea probably two miles or more away.

As they looked together again their old friend Fismes, dancing at their feet on the transport deck, manifested an interest in the proceedings by setting up a raucous barking. Good old Fismes! Once a mascot aboard a German cruiser, he had been flung to the embrace of old ocean's gray and melancholy waste on a fateful day when one of the dandy little American

submarines, with a single sting from its scorpion-like torpedo chamber, had blown the Hun warship off the map of the world. Swimming in the water, all but exhausted, he had been picked up by the American crew of which Thacker and Monaghan were members. By right of their first aid measures he had been allotted to the two Brighton boys by common consent, and he, too, was coming along to America as the most treasured war trophy the two lads possessed. Through all the long days Fismes had been a close companion. Sleek and fat as a result of good care and plentiful food, he was a favorite among all the retiring service men.

"Keep still, Fismes; no more subs, old boy," cautioned Jay, remembering how the dog invariably had kicked up all kind of canine didoes every time there had been a likelihood of "going into action," after he had "joined up" with Uncle Sam.

"Do you see it now?" asked Jay with a show of impatience.

Dick was scanning the skyline intently.

"Sure, I get you, old man," he replied after closer scrutiny of the water. "Now I see it, sure as guns. About two points off the starboard quarter. What in the world is it?" he continued, shading his eyes with cupped hands the better to focus on the object.

"Blamed if I know," answered Jay. "Wait a minute. I'll run down to quarters and get the glasses."

Off he dashed with Fismes at his heels, leaving his chum standing at the rail. In a moment he was back with a burnished pair of binoculars which, once adjusted, he trained on the floating object in the sea.

"Just what I doped it to be," affirmed Jay after one long look. "A masthead bobbing up and down in the water. Some old battered hulk of a ship that has sailed its last long voyage, sure as you are born."

Dick reached for the glasses. "Let's have a look," he requested.

Jay extended the binoculars, and it took only one hurried glance on the part of his chum to corroborate the former's surmise.

"Guess you're right, pal," confirmed Dick. "A derelict loose in the pathway of ocean traffic. Some one of the vessels belonging to the allied nations probably sunk by one of the German submarines during the war. Gone to her last resting-place in the salty brine."

After studying the derelict for several minutes the two ensigns hurried off to the executive officer of the *Leviathan* to report their find. They found

him, too, with glasses examining the derelict.

"Beg pardon, sir, but we thought perhaps you hadn't seen it," said Jay deferentially.

The officer nodded a smiling assent. He was busy taking the latitude and longitude of the wreck to report to maritime quarters in New York and London by wireless. No use stopping, for nothing could be done; the derelict would float until some salvage crew came to blow it up or take it in tow—a menace to all shipping traveling this way.

Back to the rail hurried the two young officers, intent on studying the wreck as long as it remained within vision. Their discussion fell naturally into the number of grand old ships that had gone down during the war—the "wind-jammers" of earlier days, the sailing craft that had been drafted for service in the transportation of supplies, and the still more modern steam craft—all of them victims of the submarine's merciless hunger for tonnage through four years of frenzied world war.

"Many gallant old ships down there under the waves," remarked Jay as he peered thoughtfully over the rail into the swirling waters that were churned into a mad rapids by the massive propeller blades of the *Leviathan*.

Dick slung the glasses over his shoulder and fell into the speculative mood of his old Brighton roommate.

"Right you are, Jay; good old ships of the line that have anchored for the last time on the bottom of the sea. Imbedded in silt or wasting away on their rocky beds. Gone but not forgotten."

Jay stirred from his reverie.

"Not so sure about that 'gone but not forgotten' stuff," was his observation. "Science will never let all those ships stay there for keeps—not on your tin cup. Think of all the ships sunk! Think of the billions of cargo that went down with them—billions of dollars' worth of valuable stuff of all kinds."

"Yes, and most of it perishable like foodstuffs, grain and the like that by this time has crumbled into decay deep down in Davy Jones' locker," broke in Dick.

"Yes, I know," continued Jay, "but how about all the coal that could be reclaimed? Think of the ores and the steel and the guns and shells and stuff like that; they would still be good should they ever be reclaimed. And oh,

boy, think of all the gold bullion and the silver and all the priceless stuff that's still as good as the day it first saw the rays of the sun. Man alive!"

Jay's eyes sparkled at the thought of the treasure deep down in the fathoms—ransoms big enough to buy whole countries of the earth!

"Yes, I know, but how you going to get it up?" interrogated Dick. Conservative old Dick! He was figuratively from Missouri, and had to be shown any proposition in cold facts and figures before he would dive in—except when it was an order of duty. Then he was Johnny-on-the-spot with all his heart and soul, wherever duty took him.

"Get wise to yourself," counseled Jay, throwing his arm affectionately about his chum's shoulders. "You know as well as I do that it's possible; that salvagers can wrest a big bunch of that good old mazuma from 'Pop' Neptune.

"You ought to know; you've seen for yourself how it can be done," went on Jay at a rapid rate.

Both boys had, indeed, had sufficient experience under the water to acquaint them with the fundamentals of deep-sea salvage. While serving with the Yankee fleets abroad, particularly in the laying of the North Sea mine wall, they had taken many a dip in diving armor below the surface of the sea. True, it had not been in the exploration of sunken ships or the reclamation of submerged cargoes; but their long, hard hours "down below" while adjusting mine screens and bombs had qualified them as first class divers in the strictest sense of the word.

"Sure, I know; I was only kidding. I just wanted to see what you would say," was Dick's rejoinder. But while he was convinced that nonperishable cargoes could be reclaimed, he was inclined to be skeptical about the raising of sunken ships.

"Well, you just wait, old pal, and see what Uncle Sam, Johnny Bull, and the rest of them do," argued Jay. "They are raising the Hun warships in Scapa Flow right now, and pretty soon you'll see them go after all the cargo ships that lie in shallow water. I'll wager you an apple against a swell feed at the Astor those Germans are out after them already."

"I reckon you are right," put in Dick after a moment's reflection.

"And as for me, I'd like nothing better than to ship with a salvage crew this summer until Brighton opens in the fall." Jay said it with a broad grin.

Dick surveyed his chum for a moment, looking full in his eyes.

"On the level?" he queried rather incredulously.

"Nothing would strike me better—action for mine," snapped Jay. "Holy smoke! think of the chance to stock up on some big coin! If a fellow got in right he could lay away enough to finish at Brighton and go on to college. I'd go in a minute if the chance developed."

Like a flash the whole picture opened up to Dick—an opportunity to use the experience they had gained in the Navy to rake in some good honest "kale" during the summer recess.

"Dad burn it! Hanged if I wouldn't go in myself," came his convincing reply as he thrust his arm into the arm of his chum and set off across decks in answer to the evening mess call.

The chance to reclaim lost treasure measured in millions from the very bottom of the sea—something that Jules Verne had only pictured.

CHAPTER II

"DOWN WITH THE REDS!"

"COME on, Fismes, old boy; you've been with us in more than one pinch and saw us safely through," called Jay a few mornings later to the famous dog of war that he and Dick Monaghan had brought home with them from the North Sea.

Ensigns Thacker and Monaghan, home less than a week, were losing no time. It was only three months until the opening of Brighton Academy for the fall term, and both lads were keen on getting back again to finish their preparatory school courses. A job! That was what they wanted. The chance to earn a few dollars that would go a long way toward seeing them through their final year at Brighton.

Jay was a fatherless lad whose dad had lost his life some years previously in the big shipyard that was one of the major industries of the hustling New England city of Bridgeford. His mother had been able to make things go by reason of a small English estate left her by an aunt, together with an allowance provided by the shipbuilding company. An only sister had made ready money during the war in the central offices. Jay had helped work his way through three years at Brighton and was all set on a college career.

His chum, Dick Monaghan, came of a family of moderate means. Neither lad was averse to good honest toil, and invariably spent the summer recess between school years working in the shipyards at one job or another. Tall, well-built as a result of their athletic training on the football field and in the "gym" at Brighton, they could stack up against the toughest kind of work and get away with it.

Back from war, without funds except for the final pay-off, they were out again for a summer job. The home-coming had been a joyous reunion; hearty handshakes, reminiscences of the long campaign and a friendly succession of "Good work, boys," and "We're proud of you." But the job was now the thing—and the sooner the better for this pair.

"Come on, Fismes, you'll have to help us put this over," sang out Dick, as he swung alongside his chum, and together they set their faces toward the waterfront, with the dog tagging along at their heels.

"Think we'll have any trouble horning in again at the old works," suggested Dick as they elbowed their way along, bowing to various friends whom they chanced to pass.

"Well, they've been laying some of the hands off, according to what I hear," answered Jay. "However, there's no telling until we try; there may be a chance for a couple of retired seadogs."

"Here's hoping," was Dick's optimistic sally.

Soon they were in sight of the familiar old shipyard; the giant steel-framed shipways looming against the sky like monster spider webs; the throbbing rat-tat-tat of the riveting machines borne into their ears with a haunting familiarity.

"Just the same as ever, kiddo," laughed Jay, as he turned to his chum.

"Only bigger and busier than ever finishing up contracts," came the reply.

They were edging toward the main gate, when some one came hurrying up behind and literally threw himself upon the two lads.

"Well, I'll be horn-swaggled if it ain't me good old buddies Jay Thacker and Dick Monaghan," came the precipitous cry. "Mit me, boys, I'm tickled to death to see you all again."

Turning, the Brighton boys found themselves face to face with their old friend, Larry Seymour, one of their old Bridgeford crowd who had gone away into the army early in the war. Larry, the life of the party, who could find fun in a funeral and keep things stirring all the time.

"Hello, Larry," the chums exclaimed in unison, fairly hugging the newcomer. It had been more than two years since they had last met. And what a lot had happened! Larry was in overalls and begrimed with all the firsthand evidences of toil.

"Working in the yard?" asked Dick after the hand-pumping had subsided and they had told somewhat in hurried detail where they had been and what they had been doing since last they were together.

"Am I working? Say, bo, if rivets was railroad spikes I'd have built a line to Mars by way of Venus and all around to the moon again," was the bantering reply.

"Think we can land a job again?" asked Dick.

"Aces beat deuces every time, fellows," was Larry's somewhat flippant reply. "If you guys can't get a job at the works again then the figure of Justice in the courthouse has lost the scales she's been carrying in her good right fist all these years."

Dick and Jay were absorbing some of the optimism of their stout-hearted old friend. They had been a bit dubious about being able to get a job right away; and time meant a whole lot when it was only ninety days or so until the opening of Brighton.

"Montey Brown still boss of the yard?" queried Jay of the newcomer. He referred to Montague Brown, who for years had been yard superintendent of Bridgeford's bustling shipbuilding industry. Brown had told the boys when they went away into the service that their old jobs would be ready for them.

"Bet your life he's still around," was Larry's reassuring reply, to which he added, somewhat facetiously: "Montey couldn't be pried away from Bridgeford Yard by all the king's horses and all the king's men."

In lightning style Seymour traced the activities of the old workshop during the period of his re-employment following the expiration of his army term. During the war, it appeared, the yard had sailed serenely along, turning out new tonnage at a record-breaking clip, particularly vessels and equipment for the United States Navy.

Since the armistice there had come a change over the works. The places of hundreds of men who had gone out into the service had been taken for the most part by workmen of foreign birth. Many of them illiterate and unappreciative of American freedom, they had fallen easy prey to the radical labor leaders who had sprung up within the works like mushrooms growing overnight.

Preaching the doctrines of the Russian Reds, these extremists in economic thought had sown discord among the rank and file of the men, particularly the foreigners, preaching the dictatorship of the proletariat, which meant that the men who work with their hands must be the masters. Jay and Dick heard to their surprise that during the time the brave boys of America had been offering their services, their very lives, for their country, these Bolsheviks had been openly plotting against the whole republican plan of American life.

"Secret meetings, wild speeches and all kinds of goings on," muttered Larry. "All the time talking about strikes and walkouts, and even threatening among themselves to take over the whole blamed works and run 'em themselves."

To the two naval veterans, who had always shared a distinctive pride in the big shipyard, this seemed an incredible state of affairs; laborers who had enjoyed fancy wages during the time of the war while millions of loyal Americans were serving abroad now fanning the flames of industrial revolution!

"Looks like there was lots more good work cut out for us fellows right here at home," was Dick's rather caustic comment.

"You bet your life there is, and we are getting back on the job just in time so far as I can see," was Larry's rejoinder, as he went on to relate some of the later developments in the yard's labor situation. Only the previous night, it appeared, the strike leaders, in a long and noisy meeting, had decided to submit their claims forthwith for a seven-hour day and a forty percent increase in wages.

"Things are likely to open up right lively then on a moment's notice," remarked Dick.

"No telling when and what them bullshevicks is liable to pull off," offered Seymour.

By now the trio had arrived before the main gate of the yard. Old Bill Cavanaugh, the veteran watchman, recognized the two Brighton boys in an instant and gave them a hearty welcome. No need for a pass here, since no more popular boys had ever passed the gate than Dick and Jay. Fismes, too, got by with a wag of his tail.

"Hello, what's this," whistled Larry, as he directed attention across the yard to an open space fronting the administration building. Three or four score men, riggers, riveters, yard laborers of all kinds, were swaying to and fro around one who seemed buffeted about like a huge cork in a mountain brook. Loud cries, angry voices, mingled oaths and the strident tones of inflamed speakers rent the air. They seemed to be venting their anger on the lone figure in the midst of the turbulent group.

"Looks like a sure enough riot," surmised Dick.

The three youths came to a dead stop eager to get a line on what was going on and to make out if possible what it was all about.

"Let's move up closer and get an earful," suggested Dick. At once the trio headed across the yard toward the scene of trouble.

"Likely more of this Red stuff," Seymour was saying. Hardly had the words escaped his lips before the demonstration, indeed, became a regular riot. With one accord, it seemed, the crowd closed in upon the beleaguered one in their midst. Louder and louder grew their voices. Cries of "Punch the stiff!" and "Soak him!" could be heard at this distance.

"Looks like rough stuff here, boys," cried Dick, alarmed at the antics of the crowd and fearful for the fate of the lone figure whose face was lost in the pack of swirling humanity.

"And just about time that we took a hand in it; what do you say, boys?" came Jay's response.

"With you all the way," replied the other two.

Suiting action to words, Jay broke into a run, closely followed by Dick and Larry, with Fismes flying at their heels, barking furiously.

Like a flying wedge the trio of sturdy war veterans descended upon the wrangling mob. Coming closer, the boys found the central figure in the mass now defending himself against clenched fists that were reaching out from every direction, trying to land blows on his face and body. He was a stalwart man of middle age who was hammering back blow for blow now against the heavy odds pressing against him.

"Into them, fellows; lay it on thick," yelled Jay as he flung himself on the outer rim of rioters.

Bang! Biff! Crack! Three flying figures, two of them in the uniform of the Navy, the third in blue, begrimed overalls, waded into the mass before them. Right and left they swung on their opponents, a snarling canine at their heels leaping with them into the midst of the mêlée.

"Give it to them, fellows," roared Larry above the tumult as he laid out a greasy looking six-foot brute with a right uppercut under the chin, and followed suit with a smashing solar plexus on the abdomen of another towering belligerent.

In another moment the fighting trio had cleaved a lane clear through the rioters to the side of that one lone figure who was still standing his ground. One swarthy and bewhiskered rioter who seemed to be the leader of the workmen was pummeling his victim with smashing blows.

"This for you," bellowed Jay as he let loose with a terrific right arm swing full in the face. Down he went with a grunt of rage. Jay leaped to get another of the ring-leaders, but ere he landed the furry figure of a great dog flashed through the air, full upon Jay's intended victim. With a snarl of rage the animal set his teeth in the left leg of the surprised foreigner.

"Bully for you, Fismes," cried Dick, as he closed with another antagonist.

The fight lasted not more than a minute. Two bronzed navy veterans, an ex-soldier with a fine record and a good old dog who had sense enough to stick with his friends against any odds—they were more than a match for a bunch of rioting strikers. Back fell the crowd before the fierce onslaught, scattering right and left, but not quick enough to evade the mounted shipyard police who came up on the gallop, swinging riot clubs with telling effect.

With their backs to the rescued, the rescuers stood their ground until order had been restored. Only then did they turn to the man they had saved against the wrath of the mob.

"Well, of all things, our old friend Montey Brown," cried Jay in surprise, recognizing at once the yard superintendent!

"Jay Thacker! And Dick Monaghan! Did you ever? And Larry Seymour," exclaimed the veteran official, bruised and battered, but smiling through it all.

CHAPTER III

SIGNED UP FOR SALVAGE

"BY George! that was a narrow call for me," vouchsafed Brown, the yard superintendent, to the three rescuers, whom he had invited into his office following the tilt with the crowd of rioters. His face a mass of bruises, poor old Montey presented a sorry spectacle.

"But for you fellows, to say nothing of this bully good dog of war of yours, things might have gone bad for me," he continued, still somewhat out of breath. "I'm deeply indebted to you chaps and feel I never can repay you."

The boys bowed modestly and asked the old "super" to tell them what it all was about.

A truculent delegation of the so-called "Reds," it appeared, had awaited the superintendent just outside his office, prepared to present their inordinate demands. Led by their more rabid leaders they had presented what was virtually an ultimatum, and finally had become menacing when Brown told them he would have to lay the whole proposition before the management.

"We want an answer right now or we will start something," was their nasty reply. And as the superintendent had turned to make his way back into his offices they had closed in on him. One hot-headed belligerent had started the fireworks with a well-aimed blow, and then followed the riot.

"But now it's all over and I have to thank you boys for your game stand against such odds," he concluded. In turn the superintendent quizzed the boys about where they had been and what they had been doing these last two years. He listened attentively to Jay's modest statement of facts, being particularly interested in the description of how the Americans had laid the mine curtain across the North Sea.

"You both have had experience at deep-sea diving, haven't you?" he asked.

The boys replied affirmatively, Dick adding some details.

"And I reckon you are both after jobs for the summer, aren't you?" he asked again after learning that Jay and Dick expected to return to Brighton in the fall.

"You're right," they replied together.

"Well, you chaps come back to see me again day after to-morrow—nine o'clock in the morning right here in this office," said the superintendent. "I think I will have something at that time that may interest you," he added.

The boys promised to be on hand at the designated time and were quite overjoyed at the prospect of something doing so soon—and right from the boss himself, too.

"You might come along, too, Larry," the official turned to Seymour. "You sure gave me a boost just when I most needed it, and I reckon you are fit enough company for this particular project I have in mind."

Larry eagerly accepted and said he certainly would be on deck. In a few minutes the trio withdrew from the private office, and once outside gave themselves over to all manner of speculation as to what the big boss had in mind.

"It must be something good the way he talked," began Dick.

"And whatever it is I'm in on it, for what Montey Brown goes in for anytime anywhere is sure to be a first-class proposition," added Jay.

Larry was so happy over the turn of events he grabbed Fimes to him and gave the dog such a hug that the animal gasped.

It was agreed they would meet outside the superintendent's office on the designated morning at five minutes before nine o'clock. Then the trio separated, Larry going back to his work on the ways and Dick and Jay adjourning uptown to mingle among some old friends and, among other things, to lay in new "civvies." The naval uniforms were to be laid aside as precious mementoes of the war.

The two Brighton boys found themselves heroes before the day was over. When the afternoon papers came out on the street they contained two-column double-leaded accounts of the riot at the shipyard and of the spectacular part played by two navy veterans in the rescue of the yard superintendent. Everywhere they went they were hailed with a hearty welcome and given the glad hand.

"Gosh, this is awful," moaned Jay after an old resident had nearly wrung his hand off with a demonstrative felicitation.

"I'd sooner set mines in the deepest water than face much of this kind of music," wailed Dick in return.

The two boys could scarcely contain themselves until the appointed hour when they were to meet Superintendent Brown in the works. The nearly forty-eight hours dragged by slowly for the youths who in their eagerness to find out what it was all about were down at the yard two days later a half hour before the appointed time.

"Medals or mischief, whatever it is, here we go," snorted Larry, the irrepressible, as he joined the group. He was in working togs.

Just at nine o'clock they sent in their names and were promptly admitted to the private office of the superintendent.

"Good morning, boys, I see you are out bright and early, and all set for the big game," began that official.

"At your service, sir," answered Jay.

At one side of the superintendent's big desk sat a grizzled old chap who had all the earmarks of a salt-sea captain of a matured vintage—side whiskers, smooth brown skin and steely blue eyes that twinkled with merriment.

"Gentlemen, I want you to meet Captain Dwight Austin, whom I will further identify a little later," said Brown indicating the fifth man in the room. Deferentially the latter got to his feet and shook hands all around with a crisp "Glad to meet you, boys."

Brown indicated chairs and bade the boys be seated.

"I have a proposition to make," he offered by way of introduction. "It may not appeal to you, and on the other hand it may."

Drawing his chair closer to the table and surveying his auditors intently, the superintendent launched into his subject.

"You all know that during the big war many valuable ships were sent to the bottom of the sea by the German U-boats, and that with them went precious cargoes of all kinds measured in wealth that can hardly be estimated. Many of these ships went down in shallow water, where they lie to-day awaiting the time when reconstructive men of all nations can set about the reclamation of this vast treasure that awaits them in the embrace of the briny deep."

Jay and Dick glanced quickly at each other, recalling on the instant how only a few days ago they had discussed the same subject on the deck of the

Leviathan while observing a floating derelict.

"I want to take you all into my confidence at this time," the superintendent was saying, "and if what I have to say does not interest you I must bind you to silence and ask that you say nothing of the matter to anyone. I trust you implicitly and feel that you will gladly acquiesce in the matter."

The three lads eagerly agreed to abide by the will of the old yard boss.

"All right, then," he went on. "Coming right down to brass tacks, our company is organizing a salvage company to go out after some of these lost ships and their cargoes. We have come into some new and original methods of stalking lost maritime game and have proved these processes by some very satisfactory experiments. Beyond all doubt we are in a position to say that the reclamation of millions of dollars' worth of lost cargoes, to say nothing of the raising of the ships, is a feasible proposition. Not only is it feasible, but we are about ready now to send forth our first salvage ship."

Jay stirred in his chair. It was the fulfillment of his hazy dream—the groping for lost ships on the bottom of the sea and the exploration of their battered hulls!

"What we want to do is to prove to the government that our ship salvage facilities are all that we claim for them," explained Brown. "It is our purpose to go out and work first on several ships that we have in mind right here on the Atlantic coast. Once we have demonstrated what we can do, we hope to take on government contracts under government auspices. It is all as clear as crystal in our minds."

The superintendent paused for a moment while he lighted a cigar.

"What I have in mind for you fellows is this," he added. "How would you like to ship aboard this first treasure ship of ours? I understood that you, Thacker, and you, too, Monaghan, had considerable experience diving over there in the North Sea."

The boys nodded their assent.

"Good enough," replied the official. "You are just the kind of men we are looking for. Good experienced divers. We know how well Uncle Sam trains them. As for you, Seymour, you proved your courage the other day, and while you may have had no diving experience we have a place for you. What do you say, boys? The pay will be many times anything you have ever

earned in one summer. Go out there into that anteroom and talk it over for a few minutes."

The boys jumped to their feet with alacrity and followed the shipping official into the adjoining room. There, left to themselves, they plunged into the subject with vim.

"What do you think of that? Just what I was talking about the other day!" chirruped Jay as he whacked his chum over the shoulder. Dick was all smiles.

"Looks like a good thing to me—a peach of a chance, I should say." For once, at least, Dick had readily thrown all his conservatism to the wind.

"What about you, Larry?" asked Jay, turning to the third member of the trio.

"Lead me to it, gentlemen, lead me to it; but pinch me quick, for I sure think I'm dreaming," piped Larry in his inimitable style.

The three youths were in high glee. The chance for adventure, to say nothing of the wonderful remuneration that the job would hold. In less time than it takes to tell they had filed back into the superintendent's office and reported their decision.

"Fine business," said the delighted superintendent. "And now let me introduce again Captain Dwight Austin, skipper of the good ship *Nemo*, the first salvage ship turned out at the Bridgeford Yard. If you boys are in earnest, report to Captain Austin to-morrow morning at 7.30 at the Emerson wharf. I need not add that I am very well pleased with your decision and wish you all kinds of luck in your work for the summer. I don't think you will regret what you have done."

In high glee the three youths piled out of the office after affixing their names to the roster of the ship's crew.

As they bolted down the stairs and turned into the hallway leading to the exit Jay ran full into a strapping big fellow of brawny build, with shaggy eyebrows and scowling face, who was shuffling along in an unsteady gait.

"I beg your pardon, sir, I didn't see you coming," said Jay apologetically, as he stepped aside.

"What's the matter with you, stupid? Can't you watch where you're goin'?" was the gruff answer.

Jay insisted it had all been an accident.

"Keep out of my way hereafter," bellowed the other. "If you don't—this for you." And he pushed Jay full in the face with his flat dirty hand.

In an instant Jay's blood was boiling.

"I apologized to you, but I guess what you need is a lesson in politeness," was his cool retort as he stepped up close and surveyed the bully in the eye.

For answer the obstreperous rowdy made a pass for the Brighton boy's face with clenched fist.

Quick as a flash Jay parried the thrust with his left and shot over a powerful right hand swing—the kind he had planted on the rioters. It caught the bully flush on the point of the jaw—a clean smash that sent him sprawling on the floor. His honor requited, Jay stepped back to survey the damage he had done.

Half dazed from the punch and muttering to himself, the bully struggled to his feet and picked up his hat.

"All right, smarty; I'll get you sometime alone when your crowd ain't with you," he stuttered and edged away sheepishly.

It had happened so quickly Dick and Larry hardly knew what it was all about. Jay explained the circumstances.

"Serves him right," said Dick. "The world is full of fellows nowadays who think they can ride roughshod over everybody. They need to be put in their places and realize that human rights belong to all the people instead of a few."

The incident was soon forgotten in the planning for the morrow.

CHAPTER IV

ON THE GOLDEN TRAIL

IMAGINE the surprise of the boys the next morning when they appeared at the Emerson wharf to report to Captain Austin to find a trim little submarine craft hugging the quay, her hatches open forward and aft to admit her crew, the exhaust of her gasoline engines fluttering from the rear.

"Must be some mistake here; I never knew they explored the bottom of the sea from a submarine," exclaimed Dick in some surprise.

The boys had expected to find some craft of an altogether different nature. The submarine was a new one on them.

"It's the *Nemo*, all right," said Jay, pointing out the name of the vessel on the prow.

Captain Austin was standing near the conning tower directing various members of the crew as they prepared to cast off and head out of the harbor.

"Good morning, boys, come right aboard," he called out, noting the arrival of the new members of his crew.

Jay and Dick were soon on deck chatting with their captain, noting that Larry Seymour had already arrived. The three boys were assigned to the diving work exclusively and so had nothing to do with the navigation of the craft. In turn Captain Austin introduced the new arrivals to other divers aboard.

"This is Mr. Weddigen—Carl Weddigen—also a new man," said the captain as a huge hulk of a fellow lurched forward when his turn came.

Jay was almost too dumbfounded to speak. The fellow facing him was none other than the big bully he had knocked down the previous afternoon in the corridor of Superintendent Brown's office.

Weddigen backed away, refusing to extend his hand.

Jay smiled. "I guess we have met before," he remarked dryly.

Dick and Larry were on the point of bursting into a hearty guffaw, but restrained themselves.

"What's the idea?" asked the amazed ship captain, noting how Weddigen was reddening.

"I guess Mr. Weddigen can speak for himself," was Jay's only answer, not wishing to create a scene right at the outset of the new adventure.

"Well, that's rather extraordinary," began the captain.

"Just a little unpleasantness that we had yesterday," added Jay, "But we'll forget it now for the good of the cause."

"I hope things will be all right, for he is a very fine diver, according to my information, and can stand a lot with his big physique, so I am told," explained the captain.

"The matter's a closed incident so far as I am concerned," offered Jay. And so the incident was closed, except for knowing glances exchanged among the newest additions to the ship's personnel.

Soon the *Nemo* had backed away from her moorings and was headed out into Long Island Sound, the most of the divers and those members of the crew not actually engaged in the ship's navigation standing out on deck in enjoyment of the balmy spring morning.

"I guess you would not be averse to knowing something about this craft," began Captain Austin after a half hour's run. He had strolled forward to where Jay, Dick and Larry were watching the backwash of the water as the steel prow of the *Nemo* sliced its way forward with knife-like precision.

Indeed they would! The three veterans of the war, two of whom had quite a fund of submarine knowledge from their own experiences abroad, were wondering what the *Nemo* was like. Was it possible that the submersible was a diving bell from which divers could make their exit while it lay on the ocean bed? Were trap doors opened and the pressure of sea water held in abeyance by dense volumes of compressed air? Or did divers go down from the deck of the submarine just as from any other craft? If so, why the submarine, with its narrow, cramped quarters, in preference to any other type of vessel?

These were some of the questions flitting through their minds as they embarked on their first treasure-hunting voyage.

The whole thing was soon to be unfolded by Captain Austin.

"With this craft we do most of our locating," he began. "By that I mean that we are here equipped with special apparatus for finding the lost ships. Many a salvaging company has found that it is one thing to explore a

sunken ship or even raise it, but quite another thing to actually locate the submerged ship. It is one thing to know the approximate position where a ship has been sunk, but another thing to know the exact spot. Some charts may give you the exact spot where a ship has foundered, but this spot may measure five miles or more, and if the ship is located in any channel or such parts of the ocean where there is an undertow or heavy undercurrents, the ship will soon be covered with sand, moss or barnacles, and hard for divers to locate."

Plainly, this new salvage company must have some new method of finding ships all their own. The boys were keenly interested and awaiting eagerly the explanation.

"There are several ways to locate lost ships," resumed Captain Austin. "Divers can be sent down with powerful flashlights, but this is a lengthy procedure, and very often takes weeks of patient search. Then again, grappling irons or anchors may be dragged from the salvage ship. This is even less satisfactory than sending down divers. But the Bridgeford Company has a new scheme all its own. And now you shall see."

The *Nemo's* captain climbed into the turret and motioned the boys to follow him below deck. Dropping straight down into the heart of the ship the boys followed the captain into a small compartment that he was pleased to style "the listening post."

"In here we listen for lost ships just as you listen for the voice of a friend over the telephone. How does that strike you?"

While in the Navy Jay and Dick had come to know only too well how the microphone was used to hear other vessels, and how it had been a powerful means in the overthrow of the U-boats and the safeguarding of American troops bound for Europe. The microphone listened for moving vessels and was acquainted with their movements because the swish of the propeller blades was borne into the listening device of the Yankee craft.

But how could a salvage ship "listen" for a helpless wreck lying foundered on the bottom of the sea? They were soon to know. Captain Austin conducted them first into the forward hold and showed them another compartment with a massive winch used to raise or lower an object in the water under the keel. Taking them aft he showed another compartment equipped as was the one forward.

"We use the so-called Hughes balance," explained the skipper as the boys gathered close to him in order to hear above the whirr of the throbbing engines. "They are two massive rings suspended by cables and raised or lowered at will by the winches. These rings or cups are wound with copper wire. The lower windings connect with an ordinary telephone receiver while other spools are in series with a microphone and three dry cells. This makes a sensitive instrument."

Dick, who was somewhat of a mechanic, was beginning to see light.

"When these induction coils are trailed through the water from underneath the *Nemo* the telephone receiver in the control station gives no sound as long as the two balances move through the water," continued the captain. "But the minute one of them comes within the vicinity of a wreck, the electrical balance will be disturbed and the telephone will sound its warning to the operator. The nearer the balances come to the wreck the louder the sound. All you have to do is cruise back and forth near the spot where the sunken vessel is supposed to lie, and sooner or later the faithful induction balance will find the wreck."

"How do you judge for the depth?" asked Dick.

"The depth of the ocean naturally varies more or less," the captain explained further. "If a deeper strata is encountered the induction balances must be lowered further in the water than in cruising in shallow water. Not only will the induction balance give the exact spot where the ship is located, but it will give the precise location even though the lost ship is covered with sand or silt."

"But how do you determine the depth? Do you drop a plumb line, or have you a new method of depth sounding?" persisted Dick, who was taking an engineering course at Brighton preparatory to studying electrical engineering at college. Naturally he was interested in every engineering problem.

Captain Austin smiled whimsically.

"That is another of our new processes," he added after a moment's reflection. "Echo—that's the answer in a nutshell."

The captain led the way to the ship's marimeter, a cylindrical contrivance that looked as though it might house a compass or a binnacle lamp.

"The marimeter works on the principle of electricity controlled by sound vibration," the captain expounded in his competent fashion. "A sound wave is sent out from the bottom of the vessel by mechanical means and the instant this sound is started it is picked up electrically and relayed to the recording instrument and the dial of the latter begins to register. The sound wave travels to the bottom of the ocean and returns in the form of an echo, and this echo is also picked up by the diaphragm in the bottom of the boat and is also relayed by electricity to the recording instrument, causing the pointer to stop immediately. Sound travels at practically a uniform rate in the water, at about 4000 feet a second. The depth is measured by accurately taking and recording mechanically the time for sound to travel down and back. The depth is shown on the dial in fathoms, and four soundings may be made per minute."

It all sounded so simple, and yet what a wonderful contrivance as against the old-fashioned method of taking deep-sea soundings. To demonstrate Captain Austin took an electrical sounding for his new protégées and in a few seconds the "echo" had returned from the bottom of the Sound, showing a depth of ten fathoms.

For some hours, under the guidance of the ship's skipper, the trio of newcomers thoroughly inspected the *Nemo*. This plainly was the "prospecting" boat of the salvage company's fleet. It went out and staked the claim and then called on the full facilities of the fleet for completion of the job.

Captain Austin, completely won by the honesty and candor of his new friends, and acting under instructions of superintendent Brown, took the boys entirely into his confidence.

"I do not mind telling you that we are after high stakes this trip," he told them. "An English steamship, the *Dominion*, was sunk off Martha's Vineyard late in 1916. She had among her cargo a quantity of gold bullion and South African diamonds. She took fire after being shelled by a German submarine and was making a run for the coast when she went down. She is between two and three hundred feet down and it is our job to look her over for the next few days and report back to Bridgeford on our findings."

The news of impending action was joyously received by Jay and Dick, who declared they were ready on a moment's notice to take their first dip into the blue for their new employers. What! thirty dollars a day, and the

chance to win a percentage on any treasure actually reclaimed! It was a wonderful opportunity, to their minds.

"Better take a look over your diving equipment and see that everything is all right," suggested the ship's captain. Jay and Dick accordingly went thoroughly over their outfits during the next few hours, finding suits, shoes, helmets and air-line connections quite up to the standard of the latest improved diving equipment.

It was a lively crew that spent the warm spring evening above decks on the *Nemo* as she worked her way steadily on her course toward Martha's Vineyard, off the New England coast. By morning they would have arrived at their destination—ready for the adventure!

A sense of eager expectancy pervaded the snug little "sub." Although Captain Austin had not shared his confidences broadcast as he had with his new divers the men seemed to divine that they were out for real business this time. They were for the most part singing merrily and glad to be in on the big game of treasure hunting.

"Tomorrow morning we'll be back at the old stunt again," mused Dick. "Rocked in the cradle of the deep."

"Hope we get the first peep at the poor old *Dominion*," said Jay. Although this was a dangerous calling the two navy veterans had come to look upon it by now as any other ordinary duty.

"Only thing I don't like about this outfit is that fellow Weddigen," reflected Jay.

"You mean the fellow you punched on the jaw?" Jay nodded.

"Well, just let him start something and we'll show him where he's at," snapped Larry Seymour, who had just strolled up.

"Yes, I reckon we can take care of that gent if he is inclined to get frisky," remarked Dick meaningly, convinced in his own mind that Weddigen was some kind of a tough customer who was playing his own little game in this adventure.

CHAPTER V

A SUBMARINE PICKPOCKET

"GOOD morning, Mr. Thacker; I hope you feel like taking a walk on the bottom of the sea this morning."

The smiling face of Captain Austin greeted Jay as the latter climbed up through the forward hatch of the *Nemo* for a breath of the clear fresh morning air. The *Nemo* had arrived during the night at her destination and rode gracefully at anchor on an easy swell.

"Never felt better in my life," answered the Brighton boy. The two lads had enjoyed a fine night's rest even in the cramped quarters of a submarine. Pretty soon Dick came climbing on deck, throwing out his chest for an inhalation of the clear balmy ozone.

The *Nemo* was riding slightly offshore. Because of her light draft she had been enabled to go very close. The pounding of the surf could be plainly heard.

"You see those ships' ribs sticking out of the water directly alongside?" asked the captain, pointing off the starboard quarter of the *Nemo*.

Both boys followed the line of direction. A glass was not necessary, for there, not more than thirty or forty yards away, loomed the three gaunt curved ribs of a ship, clearly outlined against the white of the breaking rollers beyond.

"That's what's left of the *Dominion*," explained the captain. "Not many people know she's here; we're quite a bit out of the regular shipping lines; but that's her all right."

Jay was thrilled at the spectacle. Right there under the water reposed valuable treasure, and he the one who was to dip down deep to clutch it from the depths!

"Expect that ship is pretty well battered to pieces, but have every reason to believe the real booty is still intact," Captain Austin was saying, as several deckmen began dragging various diving paraphernalia on deck.

The chief executive turned to Jay.

"I want you to go down this morning, if you are feeling fit and fine, Mr. Thacker."

Jay indicated he was quite ready and never felt better in his life.

"This chap Weddigen is also going down," continued Austin.

Jay held his tongue, having learned well the lesson of discipline in the navy. Although he distrusted the fellow and knew he nursed a personal grudge, Jay was determined to make the best of the situation.

Dick was to remain on board the *Nemo* and supervise Jay's air and signal lines. Knowing quite well by his long experience that it was foolhardy for a diver to eat but a very little before descending into the pressure of the depths, Jay drank only a glassful of orange juice and a cup of black unsweetened coffee.

By nine o'clock final preparations for the descent were under way. Jay was going off the forward deck of the *Nemo*, and Weddigen was to take off from aft the conning tower. The huge unwieldy diving suit, the clodhopper shoes of iron, the ghoulish looking headgear with its grotesque looking eyes were ready to be donned. The *Nemo* was anchored to the lee shore of the island; the water was comparatively quiet and there seemed little danger of the "life lines" becoming unmanageable.

"Gee, wish I was going along," sighed Dick a bit wistfully.

Jay grinned. "Never mind, old pal; you'll get your turn all right before this is over. I'll stay my limit, probably not find anything, and then they will send you down."

Captain Austin called Jay and Weddigen together amidships to give them their last instructions. With a stub of a pencil he drew a plan of the wreck as near as he could estimate it from the previous reports of other divers and the ship's owners.

"The ribs sticking out of the water yonder are supposed to be forward of the room where the treasure was stored," he told them. "It is reported that the diamonds are in a small iron safe that was kept in the captain's cabin. The bullion was in iron chests also in the captain's cabin."

He indicated on the rough map where the strong boxes were supposed to lie.

"When the *Dominion* ran for the shore," he continued, "she was afire aft and amidships. She struck the sand so hard she buried her nose in the soft ground, and those ribs you see were planted so solidly that the surf was

never able to beat them down. You ought to find the captain's cabin about twenty paces aft of the ribs."

Jay examined the crude sketch long and hard, asking many questions to make as sure of his ground as possible. Weddigen scowled and guessed how he would "jes prowl around until he found it."

"Go ahead then, boys, and get in your togs," ordered the captain.

With Dick's assistance Jay was soon ready to go over. The suit securely fastened on to make sure there were no leakages anywhere that would let in water, he sprawled on a deck chair while Dick put on the ponderous twenty-pound shoes that were to help anchor him down. Soon the helmet was adjusted on to the breastplate and the thumb screws set. The eye-pieces were hinged like a ship's porthole windows and not closed until the very last minute.

As Jay was ready for the finishing touches Dick leaned close and peered into the face of his old chum.

"All right, old boy," he comforted. "I'll be right here on this end keeping close watch. If anything happens just give me the emergency quick. And, for the love of Mike, keep your googley-eyes on that bird Weddigen."

Jay smiled, an answering "Yes," and motioned for the eye-pieces to be closed. Immediately the air pump was started, feeding its supply of fresh oxygen to the imprisoned diver. With a man on each side of him Jay scuffed across deck and went over the side on a ladder leading down into the water. Just before his helmeted head went under he took one last look around for direction and fixed in his mind the path to be taken in the journey toward the *Dominion*.

Down he went. The sun shone into the water, and with the sand for a background the light in the sea was fairly good.

"Well, here we are—and now for the *Dominion*," Jay chuckled to himself as his feet hit bottom and he started along, using a small peak-nosed shovel as a push-pole to help himself along.

Through his bull's-eyes he could see ahead some distance. Vainly he cast right and left for some trace of Weddigen, but nowhere was his diving companion to be seen.

"I'll just be careful not to run afoul of that big boy's lines down here," Jay told himself. It was not so easy to defend against an attack of any kind under water clad in heavy diving habiliments.

Groping his way forward steadily inch by inch, Jay figured soon he must be in the neighborhood of those ships' ribs. The breathing was good and the air lines were working fine under the expert direction of his chum. These two had teamed together before; always when one of them was down the other looked after the equipment above deck, keeping a sharp eye on the air pump to see there was no let-up in its functioning.

Pretty soon Jay saw something looming up directly ahead. For the moment it assumed fantastic shape and the youth was unable to determine whether it was just some sort of an apparition or some tangible substance. But only for a moment.

In another instant the specter of the wrecked ship filtered through the greenish haze of the water into the eyes of the groping diver; a weird spectacle that danced and eddied to the tilt of the waters like the wavering film of a cinematograph.

"By George! there she is," gasped Jay to himself in sheer delight. In spite of his accustomed self-complacency and cool nerve the youth found his pulses fluttering wildly.

"And now to get busy," he murmured to himself, picking his way laboriously over a sand hummock. The sea muck was so loose that the young diver's ponderous shoes settled deep into it at each stride. But the water was clear and the precious oxygen was coming to him in steady relays from the *Nemo's* pump.

"What could have become of that chap Weddigen?" speculated Jay as he strained through the windows of his eyes for some trace of the other diver. Not a hint of him in any direction.

At last the youth came to the side of the wreck. His sense of direction and implicit obedience to instructions had carried him right. He had arrived directly where the nose of the *Dominion* had imbedded itself in the sand.

"Good enough," he thought, as he gazed upward to where the torn timbers lifted themselves toward the surface of the sea. One glance indicated that the *Dominion* lay listed slightly to port in such a slanting position that her bow was elevated at something like an angle of thirty degrees.

Groping his way along the side of the old freighter the persevering young diver found to his great delight that the tides and deep water currents

had banked in sand all along the side of the *Dominion*. Like a pillow ridge this sand supported the weight of the lost cargo-carrier.

"This makes it all the easier; I can walk right aboard without any formalities," laughed Dick as he dropped to his hands and knees. He figured it would be easier going "doggy" fashion than to attempt to walk up the side of the incline and run the risk of sinking deep into the fluid underfooting.

Cautiously he made his way forward. And now the giant proportions of the ship's superstructure were outlined against the green background. The three wide smokestacks loomed ominously in front of him pitched at an angle where they seemed tottering to their fall. The main mast forward with its crow's-nest still intact was poked out like a weird totem pole bereft of all rigging by reason of the lashing given it by the submarine currents.

In a few minutes Jay worked himself up close to the wounded hulk. He could see he had come alongside directly abaft the forward funnel.

"Things seem to be breaking right, for I am right off the particular spot where I want to go aboard," soliloquized the youth as he paused to adjust his air lines.

A port hole eyed him directly in front. Jay was minded to step into the enclosure and thus raise himself into a position where he could grasp the twisted deck rail and pull himself aboard. He endeavored to thrust his right leg into the opening but found the distance too great for the weight of his iron shoe, with the pressure of water against it. Just at that moment his attention was attracted by two oblique lines drawn sharply across his line of vision against the background of the ship's funnels.

"What in the world——"

And then it dawned on him. Weddigen was already aboard. The lines were his air and signal lines.

"Beat me to it, I guess," was his mental comment. This made him only the more determined to get into that cabin at all hazards.

Signaling that he desired to be raised a bit in the water Jay waited until he had been hauled up four or five feet. As his body came abreast of the ship's rail he grasped it firmly with one hand and signalled sharply with the other to stop. It was easy work to clamber over the rail.

And now for the captain's cabin! Groping his way forward along the deck from state room to state room, maintaining his footing on the sloping

incline by grasping the battered woodwork, he came at last to a companionway leading below. It was just aft the pilot house, and this, he surmised, was the way to what had once been the quarters of the *Dominion's* skipper. It was necessary to go slowly and surely, for well this young diver knew the danger of entangled air lines.

As he drew a powerful submarine flashlight from his belt and touched its illumination spring the life lines of his fellow diver brushed his helmet.

"Weddigen got the jump on me, sure enough," he thought.

Floundering along as carefully as he knew how, the Brighton boy let himself down the companionway on the rickety stairs. It was ticklish business. At any moment the air lines might be fouled by the swaying currents and the diver have to fight for his life or perish of suffocation.

"But if that big bully Weddigen can do it, I can do it," he assured himself.

By now he was conscious of a faint glow of light in the subaqueous chamber more remote than the pencil rays of his own flash. This, he figured, was the light of Weddigen. A slight turn to the left and he stepped into the erstwhile domain of the *Dominion's* chief executive.

Through the blur of water a startling picture was unfolded before his eyes. Crouched over a square iron chest, playing the rays of his flashlight over an iron strong box, was the figure of a diver. The cover of the chest had been pried off. The diver was transferring the contents of the chest into a long narrow slit of a pocket that bulged from the side of his diving armor!

CHAPTER VI

JAY FIGHTS FOR HIS LIFE

"WEDDIGEN helping himself to the diamonds!"

Could it be possible that this fellow was a submarine pickpocket who was playing his own little game? Was he a pirate of the deep who pretended to be working for others and all the time seeking covertly to appropriate reclaimed treasure solely for himself? Certainly it appeared so to Jay Thacker as he stood watching the dramatic scene.

The diver determined to see it through without making the other acquainted with the fact that he was being watched. Very quickly Weddigen was working, seemingly on the theory that Jay might arrive on the scene any moment, and that he must lose no time.

Jay noted that Weddigen was slipping something like tiny pebbles into the tiny pocket of his diving suit, letting them in very slowly and patting them down to make sure the currents would not wash them out.

"Diamonds!" gasped Jay, remembering instantly that part of the treasure to be reclaimed from the *Dominion* was to be diamonds.

The Brighton youth determined to see it through. Crouching back against the side of the areaway he brushed the eyes of his helmet the better to see. Now Weddigen was buttoning over a flap on the pocket!

Between flashes of light Jay could see that the man was working now on the chest. First he battered shut the lid again as best he could. Next he took a coil of chain from his belt and lashed it around the strong box. Then he picked up a long slim crowbar that he had brought along as a push-pole and began to work the chest across the floor of the compartment. He could only move it a few inches at a time because of its weight and the pressure of the water. Slowly but surely, though, he pushed the thing along in front of him.

"He's coming right toward me with it and I might as well make known my presence," reasoned Jay.

He was on the point of flashing on his own light when Weddigen stopped, tossed the crowbar aside and knelt again over the treasure box. For a time he fumbled in the dark while Jay stood wondering what was going on. Again a flash of light, and in that instant the Brighton youth saw that the other diver was making fast on his salvage lines. Beyond a doubt his plan was to send the treasure chest aloft now that he had worked it close to the door of the areaway where it might be yanked up the companionway and thence up through the depths to the deck of the *Nemo*.

"Going to send the rest of the diamonds up and try to get away with what he has already helped himself to," thought Jay as the daring scheme of his fellow diver was now revealed. But Jay had seen all and was determined so soon as he got back on the *Nemo* to compel an opening of that cunning little pocket on the side of Weddigen's diving suit.

But now a real danger confronted the Brighton youth. Suppose Weddigen gave the signal for the diamond chest to be raised away? Deckmen aboard the *Nemo*, when the signal was given, would haul away with all their vigor, eager to perform their part in the salvage of the much desired treasure.

Crouched in the areaway outside the cabin Jay would be directly in the line of the treasure chest as it was yanked away. Suppose that iron box came his way? Perhaps it might crash full into his life lines? One swift blow might sever his air hose and leave him helpless against the intruding water? Or suppose it cut off his signal lines, leaving him powerless to ask for a lift off the ocean bed?

There was only one thing to do, and that was to get out of there as quickly as possible. Weddigen would not signal for the strong box to be hoisted away until he, too, was out of harm's way; and Jay, now that he had been an eye-witness to the theft, was determined not to let the other know he had seen the theft until they were back on the *Nemo* again.

As quickly as possible he shuffled along the areaway and began climbing the steps toward the deck of the *Dominion*. He was just in time, too, for a glimmer of light behind him indicated that Weddigen was following close behind. Rather than reveal his presence Jay fumbled along in the darkness, climbing the steps without resorting to the use of his flash.

Once on deck he turned sharply aft and moved away from the companionway leading below. In his anxiety to make haste he momentarily

let go the state room door by which he had steadied himself and in that instant his feet flew from under him. The slimy deck would have been hard enough walking had the *Dominion* lay on an even keel; but with the pitch to port the half-rotted flooring was difficult walking for the most experienced and careful diver.

As he felt himself going the unfortunate youth grabbed for his life lines for the purpose of signaling the "emergency"; but in the swirl of water he was pitched headlong, the added weight of his own diving accoutrements bearing him along like a leaf in a windstorm. Clear across the wide slanting deck of the *Dominion* he was hurled until he brought up hard against the rotted deck rail.

Like a drowning man grasping for a straw Jay reached out to clutch the iron post outlined directly in front of him; but as he grabbed its top knob he felt the whole structure rend and twist, its fastenings loosened by the rust of a prolonged submergence. The impact of the young diver's body wrenched it loose and in a moment Jay was hurtled overboard from the inclined deck of the *Dominion* and enmeshed in a tangle of the collapsed deck railing.

It had all happened so quickly the dazed youth was unable to figure out where he was and what really had happened.

"What a pretty pickle I'm in," was all he could gasp, as he sought to tear himself free from his incumbrances.

And then, to his utter consternation, he found that his air and signal lines had become all entangled in the demolished railing! Sprawling on his back in the soft sand that undulated in a wavy crest against the side of the *Dominion* he struggled in vain to tear himself free and get to his feet. But, weighed down by his equipment, tired out by his long stay under water and imprisoned in the débris of the *Dominion*, he found his strength fast slipping.

"I've got to get hold of that emergency line," he said to himself, gritting his teeth and thrashing the water above his head for a hold on the precious life line. Eventually he found it and tugged with all his might, awaiting the welcome pull that would lift him out of the depths.

But no welcome pull came. The life lines were caught in the débris! And now he found himself breathing with difficulty. The air lines, too, had been fouled! The air supply was virtually cut off altogether, and the young diver breathing only the air contained within his diving armor!

"Looks as though I was up against it unless I can work these lines free," the thought flashed through his brain with unrelenting reality. Now, indeed, was he fighting for life against the very fates!

With the desperation born of madness Jay battled to free himself. Caught like a fly in a great spider's web, he knew every moment was precious. Unless those air lines were freed or he got a signal to the surface he was doomed.

Seizing the life lines above his helmet he drew them tight in his hands and followed them along until he came to the first entanglement of iron piping. For a moment the impediment thwarted him, and then he tore it free of the hose lines. But still no relief.

By now his brain was reeling and he could feel the blood vessels standing out on his forehead. A sense of suffocation pressed his heart and lungs and he found his breath coming in short wheezy gasps.

"Can it be that I'm lost!" he cried half aloud, the sound of his voice flooding his own ears like the wail of a siren.

But this was a time for self-control if he was to escape at all the perilous plight into which he had fallen. By sheer force of will he calmed himself and set about again to free himself. Taking the air lines as before he followed them to another point of contact with the débris and slipped down to his knees as he tugged at another joint of the tubing.

Fate, however, was hard and cruel. Try as he did, battling with all his strength and praying fervently as he worked, he was unable to move the obstacle. His fingers felt numb and weak; they refused to respond to his will. Even his legs seemed paralyzed. And again that horrible clutching at the throat and lungs!

"I——guess——I——can't——"

His voice trailed off into a whisper and his brain swam until a panorama of mythical scenes and figures flitted before his fancy. Still clutching the lines of hose that refused him life he reeled and stretched himself helplessly on the floor of the ocean. Dreamily he thought of home, of Brighton, of the service he had lately left. Now he was with the fleet vainly tugging to fasten an obdurate mine in place with other jackies of Uncle Sam's mighty war fleet.

"Now we've got the haughty Germans," he screamed in his delirium. All the while he was gasping and gurgling as his shoulders heaved and his

lungs were convulsed in the agony of suffocation. Life was slipping fast away, and life was sweet to this youth who had dared death for his country and come through unscathed in the two years' campaign in the North Sea. By the irony of fate he had lived through all the period of the war only to come home to an untimely death like this while searching for lost treasure!

Now he was floating free in the ocean, a great filmy light suffusing the whole of the green sea, a myriad of soft-clad figures dancing before his glazed eyes, the murmur of some cathedral orchestra intermingled with the song of the sea. Out, out, out through the vast unknown recesses of the sea he drifted, propelled along by some unseen force....

"Something wrong down there!" Dick Monaghan, standing guard over the life lines of his chum aboard the *Nemo*, sensed the danger of his old Brighton pal. No signal of any kind had come up to him from the depths, and yet he seemed to realize, for some strange reason, that a mishap of some kind had befallen Jay.

"What's that?" called out Captain Austin as he hurried forward to where Dick held the lines over the side of the *Nemo*.

"I had a hunch of some kind that Jay was in trouble," explained Dick. "I've been trying for the last two or three minutes to get some kind of an answering signal from below, but I can't seem to get him. And there's been such a tugging on the lift lines at times. I don't quite understand it."

"Pump working all right?" asked the captain.

"So far as we can tell, although it seems to have slowed up somewhat," Dick replied, somewhat agitated.

Just then a shout arose from aft the *Nemo*. The deckmen were hauling something over the side and yelling their heads off with delight.

"Look, a great iron treasure chest," they chorused, as the attention of Captain Austin and Dick was diverted for a moment from the possible plight of Jay Thacker.

True enough, for as they exulted, the iron box containing diamonds that Weddigen had reclaimed from the captain's cabin of the *Dominion* came over the side, dripping with sediment and seaweed, but firmly held in an encircling chain band.

"Hurrah! Hurrah! we have landed some of the lost cargo." The crew were rejoicing over the big find of the morning, hardly able to contain

themselves over the knowledge that a handsome chest of "swag" had been ferreted from its submarine hiding place, and that they would get a fine fat bonus out of the big "divvy."

"Weddigen on his way up," called out the officer in charge of the operations aft.

Only for a moment were Captain Austin and Dick Monaghan deterred from the subject that engrossed their minds. What had become of Jay Thacker?

"Haul him up as fast as you can," the captain commanded.

Jumping to their work, the forward crew began tugging away at the steel cables with which Jay had been suspended. But pull as hard as they could they could not budge the lost diver.

"Quick, men, uncover that deck winch," he ordered, now thoroughly alarmed.

In short order it was made ready for service and the steel cables supporting Jay affixed. A word of command from Captain Austin and the power was turned on. For an instant the cables wound faithfully, and then brought up taut. Something had to give; either the cables had to part, or the contained weight at the sea bottom torn free of its holdings. More power was turned on. A violent tug, and then the winch began winding steadily again!

"Thank God! it's Jay," murmured Dick a minute or so later as the helmeted figure appeared through the haze of the sea green. But the arms and lower limbs hung limp, and portions of the *Dominion's* deck rail still clung to the suspension cables.

"Hurry, men, there; haul him on deck and pull that armor off," Austin directed.

As the form of Jay was drawn on deck Dick and several assistants tried to stand him on his feet, only to see him crumple and fall like a man of straw. One glance through the eye ports showed closed lids. A twist of the thumb screw and then the helmet was raised.

"Jay! Jay! Speak to me," implored Dick, bending over his chum.

CHAPTER VII

DIAMONDS ARE TRUMP

LIGHT! The glorious sunlight of the world! Voices, too; the friendly voices of his old chums aboard the *Nemo*. These were the evidences of returned life to Jay Thacker as he lay on the deck of the *Nemo* looking up into the sky. It was like a dream and his befagged brain could scarce comprehend the situation.

"Jay, old boy, look at me. Do you know me? Speak to me, pal, and tell me you are all right again."

It was the voice of Dick. He was bending over chafing the wrists of his comrade in school and in arms. Tears were coursing down his cheeks. But now he was happy because Jay had opened his eyes again and smiled feebly through flickering eyelids.

For some time the rescued diver lay in a stupor. The heavy diving armor and shoes had been wrenched off. Several members of crew were rubbing his wrists and ankles. An oxygen tank had been used with successful results. The tiny spark of life remaining had been fanned again after a grim battle between science and nature. And science had turned the ally of nature.

"Do you know me now?" faltered Dick.

For answer Jay opened his eyes again, and this time he recognized his chum.

"Where have I been? What happened to me?" he began.

"Don't you remember? You were down there working on the *Dominion*. You got all tangled up in something and we just pulled you up in the nick of time."

And then it all came back to Jay; the terrible struggle for life on the bottom of the sea. Those twisted air lines! He seemed to be living it all over again. And that mass of débris that held him fast!

"Pull it off of me, Dick; cut me free," he moaned feebly.

"You are all right again, old boy; you're right here on the deck of the *Nemo*," reassured Dick in soothing tones.

Slowly but surely the iron constitution of the Brighton boy responded to resuscitation measures. Good fresh air flowed again into his lungs, clearing his brain and setting his circulation going anew.

"Where is Weddigen?" asked Jay, with a startled expression.

"He's here on the aft deck, pretty well tuckered out, but fine and dandy, nevertheless," Dick told him.

"And the diamonds—did he send them up?" inquired Jay.

"You bet your boots he did; all here safe and sound," was his chum's rejoinder. "A nice day's work, too; but what would we have cared for the stones if your life had been forfeit in the deal."

The diamonds! How did Jay know about them?

"How did you know Weddigen landed any diamonds?" asked Dick, bending over his chum.

"I saw them," came the answer.

"But Weddigen says he landed them all alone and didn't see a trace of you all the time he was down. How's that?" Dick was nonplussed.

"Tell you after a bit," whispered Jay.

They made him as comfortable as possible on deck, preferring to leave him out in the fresh air and sunshine rather than carry him below. Dick took complete charge of him, and a capable physician he proved as he ministered to the needs of his chum.

Now that Jay had been rescued, the men of the *Nemo* were celebrating hilariously the salvage of the precious jewels, knowing the contents of the chest must be worth many thousands of dollars. Under the direction of Captain Austin the strong box was carried below, not to be opened until the *Nemo* returned to her base at Bridgeford.

Weddigen still reclined on deck. It had been a long, hard fight under water and he, too, had somewhat overstayed his time limit.

His friends in the crew were fêting him. They crowded about, patting him on the back and congratulating him for his plucky and successful efforts to get at the lost treasure.

"Wait till we get back to Bridgeford—the swellest time you ever had in your life," shouted one enthusiast.

All of this adulation pleased Weddigen. The rôle of the hero appealed to him and he was enjoying the situation immensely.

Meanwhile Jay was slowly but surely returning to life. The oxygen tank had performed yeoman service. Color was coming back into the face and circulation had been restored. A stimulant was offered, but the stout-hearted lad declined it, smilingly preferring to keep the temperance pledge that he had taken before he had left home to go to school.

"Thanks, Cap, but I'm coming back in fine shape," he mumbled, while Dick fairly beamed over the recovery of his chum.

In a few minutes Jay was able to sit up. He drank eagerly the cup of hot black coffee that was offered him. He was very weak from his trying ordeal, and no one ventured to ask him about his hazardous trip to the *Dominion* and his narrow escape from death.

By and by Jay motioned Dick to come closer.

"Did Weddigen land any treasure?" he asked with an inquisitive look.

Dick launched into the story, telling how the strong box had been hauled over the side amid wild jubilation and taken below into Captain Austin's quarters.

"Are you sure there were diamonds in the chest?" persisted Jay.

"Sure, Mike," responded his chum. "Oodles of them worth thousands of dollars. Glittering cut stones; a young fortune big enough to put us all on easy street for the rest of our lives if they belonged to us."

Jay pondered the situation for a moment. In his eyes was a queer look that neither Dick nor Larry Seymour, who had joined the group, could fathom.

"Is Weddigen still on deck?" persisted Jay.

"Still back there resting up while the crew make a fuss over him," replied Larry.

"All right, now, Larry, do what I tell you, please," said Jay. "Just stroll back there casually and look him over without arousing suspicion. See if you don't notice a narrow slit of a pocket on the inside of the right leg of his armor suit, buttoned over with a flap. When he gets up to take off his diving suit just manage to accidentally flip that pocket open and then keep your eyes on it."

"Why, what do you mean?" offered Larry, perplexed by the directions given him by Jay.

"Remember, I never fooled you in my life, old friend," answered the latter. "Just do what I tell you, and perhaps you'll have a bit of a surprise party."

Jay was weakened by the exertion of talking and sank back to rest again with closed eyes. Withdrawing a few paces, Dick and Larry discussed the suggestions made by Jay.

"Think he is still a little dippy as a result of his experience?" questioned Larry.

"Sounds rather queer, doesn't it?" pondered Dick, unable to grasp the significance of Jay's remarks.

They agreed, however, there surely must be some ground for Jay talking so; and, moreover, they shared similar opinions regarding one Carl Weddigen, notwithstanding the fact that Weddigen had made a game fight for the diamonds and come off victorious.

"You stay here with Jay and I'll just stroll aft and look the old bird over," counseled Larry after a little further deliberation. "To my mind he's just the kind of a fellow who might put something over on us."

Dick agreed, and Larry accordingly hurried away, slowing down to a leisurely gait after he had passed the conning tower and approached the group of which the much-admired diver was the central figure. As he drew near, Larry could hear Weddigen recounting his experiences on the ocean bed in the hold of the *Dominion*. And he was omitting no detail in the narration.

All smiles and apparently with all friendly intent Larry eased himself into the circle of admiring friends.

"How's Thacker?" queried Weddigen solicitously, breaking away from his story of the reclamation.

"Coming along fine," said Larry, detailing how Jay had responded satisfactorily to treatment.

"Glad of that," responded Weddigen. "I'm sorry we couldn't both have come upon the glittering goods together and yanked them out with a little teamwork. Tell him I'll be over to see him in a few minutes."

Larry hung around while other members of the crew insisted that Weddigen complete his story of the salvage expedition. But Carl was in no

mood to continue the yarn and said he guessed he was feeling strong enough now to take off his diving clothes and go below for a snooze. Accordingly he struggled to his feet with the aid of several members of the crew.

Larry was now all attention. Following out the instructions of Jay he carefully examined the trousers of the big diver. Yes, there it was; the telltale little pocket on the side of the right leg. Larry edged up closer to get a better look at it. There was a certain bulge to it as though it was well filled.

"Gee, you're a regular Beau Brummel of a diver with your fancy clothes," offered Seymour facetiously as he smiled up into the face of Weddigen.

"What do you mean, fellow?" blurted the latter, turning short to survey the Bridgeford seaman whom he remembered as one of the three he had encountered the day he and Jay had come together just outside Superintendent Brown's office.

"Why, with your pretty little side pockets," prattled Larry with a sickly grin.

With a flourish of the hand he indicated the bulging patch on the side of Weddigen's armor, and before the latter could intervene Larry swept his hand carelessly but unerringly over the pocket, giving it such a thrust that the button slipped through the stout canvas eye-hole. At the same time Weddigen clutched the pocket as though to cover it. But he was too late!

Instantly a half dozen glittering diamonds popped from the aperture and rolled on the deck of the *Nemo*, sparkling in the morning sun like the jewels of a monarch's crown!

"What do you mean, you big stiff," growled Weddigen in dismay as the treasure that he had filched from the strong box while yet in the wreck of the *Dominion* was revealed.

"What do I mean? I mean that you're a rascal and a thief," shot back Larry, fully convinced now that the sparklers were part of the loot that had been recovered from the lost British liner.

Immediately there was a great hubbub among the crew as they pounced upon the scattered diamonds, eager to retrieve them before they rolled overboard or were jostled below by the roll of the *Nemo*.

"You're a big fool and I'll break your face so soon as I get in trim again, that's what I'll do," snorted Weddigen in a rage.

But Larry was his equal in the showdown.

"You may have a little trouble smashing my face," he countered, "but you are going to have a bigger time explaining to Captain Austin and the Bridgeford Salvage Company how you came in possession of those diamonds."

Attracted by the commotion, Captain Austin came hurrying up.

"What's all the commotion about?" he demanded. There had been excitement enough on the *Nemo* for one morning.

"It's none of your business, and I'll prove mightily easy how I came about those diamonds," Weddigen was saying as the ship's executive officer drew near.

"This man is not playing fair," denounced Larry, pointing out the diver to Captain Austin. "He's holding back a whole pocketful of diamonds on you, Captain."

The captain was so amazed he could only gaze from one to the other.

"You are making a grave accusation, Mr. Seymour, and against a man who has risked his life this morning in the recovery of thousands of dollars' worth of diamonds," the ship captain remarked slowly. There were murmurs of approval from members of the crew.

"All right, sir, I only ask that Mr. Weddigen bare the contents of that pocket on the right leg of his diving suit," retorted Larry.

All eyes were turned forthwith on the diver. But the crafty Weddigen was equal to the occasion.

"I was trying to tell this big boob I could explain everything," he countered with an air of superiority. "You see, it was this way, Captain. When I came upon that treasure chest down there I had to bang it about a bit to get it ready for the lift. You can see for yourself if you inspect it closely that the hinges were rusted. In prodding about I loosened up the lid. I thought I'd just take a peep to see if I really had the goods. There they were, all right. Some of them were lying loose, so I just scooped them up and slipped them into this vent in my suit. I didn't want to take any chances on losing them."

As he talked he stooped over and holding a cupped hand over the pocket forced out a handful of the finest of diamonds, ranging in size from one- to

three- and five-carat stones.

"There you are; I never had the slightest intention of keeping them," blustered Weddigen. "This fresh guy Seymour thinks he gets me in wrong, and I'll attend to him later. I was waiting until I got rested up a bit before coming to you with them."

Upon Larry he cast a murderous scowl of hatred as Captain Austin hurried the diamonds below, apparently satisfied with Weddigen's story.

But Larry, hearing the true story later from the lips of Jay Thacker, knew Weddigen's quick-witted defense was but skilled camouflage to cover his attempted theft of the pocketed diamonds. With the two Brighton youths, he formed a pact to keep a watchful eye on the surly diver in the future.

CHAPTER VIII

UNCLE SAM CALLS

SOME fellows are pursued by luck no matter where they turn in life. Others of evil design seem to be able to get away with anything they attempt solely on their nerve. Carl Weddigen was one of this class. Not one chap in a thousand, caught as he had been with stolen diamonds, would have breasted it out and escaped so cleverly by use of his nimble wits. Criminologists' records show that the average thief trapped as Weddigen was either surrenders abjectly or makes a break for it in an effort to escape. The crafty minority stand their ground and worm their way out by subterfuge.

"I'll say he's got the nerve, all right," remarked Dick Monaghan. The *Nemo* had returned to Bridgeford and the members of the crew were enjoying a few days' rest after their arduous and successful trip in exploration of the sunken *Dominion*.

"Nerve!" retorted Larry Seymour. "Why, if that guy had been sent into Germany by General Pershing he could have dragged the Kaiser out of Berlin and made those dazed Fritzies think he was only kidding them."

Jay Thacker smiled at that. He was feeling much better after his experiences; in fact, a couple of good nights' sleep and recreation had put him back in good trim again. Two years at sea in the U. S. Navy will toughen the bone and muscle of any lad.

Dick and Larry had been wanting Jay to go to Captain Austin to relate the whole story of what had happened on the bottom of the sea in the cabin of the *Dominion*. Magnanimously, Jay had spurned the proposition.

"They might think I was jealous because Weddigen fished up the diamonds while all I got was a handful of deck railing that well-nigh finished me," was his answer.

"Yes, but you owe it to yourself and to the company," argued Dick. "Think how that bird may clean out the bunch again."

Larry was shaking his head.

"Never on your life. Remember, I'm always on deck when he's working below, and you can bet your bottom dollar I'll put him under my nice little X-ray every time he comes up again. No, sir-ee, fellows, I'm wise to that gink for all time. He may think he's slippery, but he'll find I'm the original slippery elm."

Deep down Jay resented this big diver's bold audacity and cunning. Never had he seen anything so brazen as the way Weddigen had smoothed over the matter of the diamonds that he had carried in his diving trousers' pocket. Nervily he had sought out Captain Austin and explained the whole thing several times over. The captain had seemingly been pretty well convinced that Weddigen was on the square in the matter, and this had only strengthened Jay's determination to keep silence.

"But I'll get him in the long run, for he's a crook of the deepest dye and murder is sure to out," he had told himself.

For some days the two Brighton lads and their friend Larry Seymour remained inactive about the big shipyard at Bridgeford awaiting the call to further service. Captain Austin had told them to take things easy. Superintendent Brown and the higher officials of the company were elated at the success of the *Nemo's* crew in bringing up some of the treasure of the *Dominion* and had decreed that as part of their reward they were to loaf a while. Eventually, each lad knew, he would come in for a slice of the huge "divvy" that was sure to be tendered the company for salvaging the lost diamonds. The Brighton boys were delighted with the prospect, for it meant the money would go a long ways toward payment of their tuition for the new school year. They had expected to be assigned to the job of bringing up the gold bullion from the *Dominion*, but more urgent work awaited them.

Great secrecy was attendant upon the fitting out of a special ship in the yard that the boys had heard was to be used in salvage work later in the summer. With it the Bridgeford officials contemplated using some of their new apparatus and employing some of their lately developed processes for deep-sea salvage.

The ship, which they had heard referred to as the *Jules Verne*, was denied to everybody except the chosen men employed in putting the finishing touches on her. She was roped off in a portion of the big wet basin all to herself and armed guards kept prying eyes at a distance.

"We're apt to know sooner or later," Dick remarked as they discussed the new venture one afternoon.

"And as for me, I'm getting tired of laying around this way," said Dick. For two years they had had so much to do while serving in the Navy that inaction now palled upon them.

They had not long to wait, for one morning, a few days later, just after they had checked in the shipyard, there came a summons to them to appear in the office of Superintendent Brown. They hurried over at once, finding that official awaiting them with Captain Austin.

"Morning, boys," called out the superintendent cheerily. "I hope you are feeling in good shape again after your tussle with the old *Dominion*."

To which they answered they preferred getting down again into the danger zone rather than to sit around cooling their heels.

"That's the spirit, all right," remarked the official with a grin. "We are proud of you fellows who compose the crew of the *Nemo* for what you have already done, and we sure are going to take care of you."

Jay tried to explain that one man alone had recovered the diamonds and that he was in no sense to be credited with any of the glory.

"Just the same, you were there trying hard, and what's more you endangered your own life in an unfortunate accident while in the act of duty."

And then the superintendent began telling them why he had summoned them to headquarters.

"You chaps doubtless know that the *Jules Verne* will be ready for her maiden trip within the next two weeks," he began.

The boys perked up at this when it seemed likely they were to be let in on the big secret that had every man in the yard guessing.

"I can only say at this time," continued Mr. Brown, "that the *Jules Verne* combines our latest improved method of searching the ocean bottom and has facilities that will greatly expedite deep-sea salvage work. You will know in due time, for you chaps will be among the first batch of divers sent out on the *Jules Verne*. We shall want to thoroughly acquaint you at first with the operation of the new diving bell before you will actually engage in salvage work."

The yard official paused to draw several times on his cigar.

"In the meantime, I need you for a diving expedition of tremendous importance to Uncle Sam. Are you game?"

He looked from one face to the other, eying the boys with a roguish smile.

They nodded their heads eagerly. "If it's for Uncle Sammy, lead us to it!"

"Well, listen," said Superintendent Brown, as the boys sat wondering what was coming. "An executive officer from the Bureau of Naval Operations in Washington is here on a mission of great importance. It seems the Navy Department has been watching our salvage work, and read about what you boys were doing in the hold of the *Dominion*. They want us to do a piece of work for them that demands speed as well as secrecy."

And then he explained in detail. During the war, at the time when a fleet of German submarines had escaped the allied fleets in the North Sea and come to this side of the Atlantic to attack shipping, and particularly supply ships bound for Europe, one of the U-boats had been sunk off Cape May, N. J., at the mouth of the Delaware River. Submarine chasers putting out hurriedly from the inlet had dashed up in time to drop depth bombs on the submerging U-boat.

That the U-boat, badly crippled, had been sunk had been established beyond all doubt by navy divers who had located it on the bottom. The Navy Department had intended salvaging the U-boat at once but had been prevented by reason of the fact that the war kept the department busy sending troopships to Europe, guarding them en route and combating the Hun "mosquitoes" that threatened Atlantic ports and coastwise shipping.

When the Navy Department had eventually set about the salvage of the U-boat they had found it by this time so nearly imbedded in the floor of the ocean that only the conning tower remained above ground. The Navy was now ready to dig the U-boat out, but had decided to ask the Bridgeford Company to co-operate with them in the venture.

"And now we come to the meat of the whole thing," confided the superintendent. "The men who are to engage in this work must be of the most trustworthy character, for reasons I will now explain. We have selected you fellows to get in on this because you are naval veterans and we know you can be trusted to the limit."

The superintendent motioned the boys closer and resumed in an undertone,

"Deep down in that sunken U-boat are plans of United States fortifications, ship and munition designs and highly valuable scientific formulas that must be recovered at whatever cost. They were stolen from the archives of the department at Washington by adroit tools of the German espionage system. I am not at liberty to tell you how they were stolen, for it is one of the secrets of the department. But we are told that those plans are on that submerged U-boat. The Germans were smuggling them out of the country, and it was a lucky shot from the 'ash-cans' of our chasers that laid that particular U-boat low."

"Naturally, we are elated that the Department has come to us in such an important matter, and it is needless for me to say that we are more than anxious to make good, not alone for the sake of our company, but, and very much more to the point, for the sake of the dear old country that we love so much."

"And we—" began Jay.

"Yes, I rather fancied you two fellows would enjoy getting in on a project of this kind," interrupted the superintendent. "I don't suppose it is necessary for me formally to ask you whether you would like to look up this unlucky U-boat."

"Well, hardly." Almost in unison they had leaped to their feet to answer in the affirmative.

"Bully! You are assigned forthwith, with our hearty good wishes, and here's hoping you succeed in putting over another neat piece of work for Uncle Sam just as you did over there in the North Sea. If you fellows had laid that mine curtain before those U-boats escaped this Cape May job never would have happened. But now we've got to get those plans back. They are of immense value to our government."

"They wouldn't be of much value to Germany now!" interrupted Dick with a grin.

"Right!" laughed the superintendent. "Germany doesn't look very formidable, with her surrendered navy, and her surrendered iron and coal fields, and her surrendered stores of munitions. But you never can tell. Besides, there are scientific secrets in that collection that, even if the

defeated Huns couldn't use them, could be sold for sums that would make you gasp if I mentioned them."

The boys whistled.

"This is the information I have from the naval officer. You can see how urgent the job is. That sunken U-boat is guarded night and day by American war vessels ever on the alert. The exact spot where she lies on the bottom is known and guarded like the gold in the United States Treasury vaults.

"And now I wish you 'bon voyage,'" concluded the superintendent as he shook hands with the two lads. "You will go out this afternoon with Captain Austin on the *Nemo*; and, don't forget, when you come back the *Jules Verne* will be waiting for you."

Elated with the prospects of a new venture of such an important character, Jay and Dick arose to go, telling Captain Austin they would report immediately aboard the *Nemo* and make ready to depart for the trip down the coast to Cape May.

"Better luck to you this time, Mr. Thacker," called out the yard superintendent.

"Thanks, Mr. Brown. I sincerely hope so," the youth replied.

Jay turned and opened the door of the superintendent's office. As he stepped into the hallway he came face to face with Carl Weddigen. For an instant the latter seemed embarrassed, but quickly regained his composure.

"How are you, fellows! Is Captain Austin in there with the superintendent?" he asked imperiously.

Dick replied that he was, whereupon Weddigen coolly declared he would wait where he was until the captain came out.

The boys hurried along leaving the diver still standing outside the superintendent's office.

"Funny thing how he happened to be standing around like that," remarked Dick as they let themselves out of the administration building.

"Funny is right," countered Jay. "Looks as though he might have been spying around or trying to horn in where he hadn't been invited. I've seen enough to know what kind of a chap he is and I'm here to say I don't think he wanted to see Captain Austin at all. That was only a bluff. I'll bet he was listening in on us while 'Montey' Brown was giving us the dope on that U-boat."

"So!" whistled Dick. "All right, we have his number right now. If he is going along to Cape May—look out!"

CHAPTER IX

FOUND—ONE U-BOAT!

C APE May Light loomed in the distance like a lone sentinel of the night. At intervals of ten seconds its long penciled rays shot out over the ocean as the giant electric beacon oscillated in its rhythmic swing around the horizon. Dimly in the distance were reflected the lights along the boardwalk of the seashore resort, and far off toward the north the faint blur against the night skyline marked the spot where Wildwood nestled on the sands.

The *Nemo* rode at anchor on the smooth summer sea. To starboard lay a trim little United States destroyer that had stood guard for days over the submerged U-boat. Here and there on the surface of the sea could be seen the outlines of a submarine chaser, a fleet of them having come out to welcome the newly arrived salvage ship.

Mid-afternoon the *Nemo* had arrived from her home base in Long Island Sound and was awaiting now the morning to begin operations on the foundered German submarine. There had remained before sundown only a brief time for a superficial examination of the sea bottom, but in that time Jay Thacker and Dick Monaghan, crack divers of the Bridgeford Company, had donned diving armor and spent an hour under water.

Imagine the surprise of the navy officials when these two youths had returned to the deck to report they could find no trace of the lost U-boat!

"I don't quite understand this at all," remarked Lieutenant-Commander Wilberforce, U. S. N. He and Captain Austin were conferring together on the U. S. S. *Monadnock*, the destroyer.

"Our men declare positively that this is the identical spot where the U-boat was located by divers some time ago," explained the officer. "We have not been sending divers down these last few weeks since the department ordered us to wait until they sent salvage facilities. But we have stood guard here continually and can assure you absolutely that no foreign salvage corps has been working here."

Captain Austin ventured the opinion that the U-boat had been broken up by the shifting waters during a recent ten-day gale that had raged up and down the coast.

"No, I hardly think so," hazarded Commander Wilberforce. "When last our divers were down they reported the U-boat well above sea bottom. It's a mystery to me."

"Perhaps the German craft has been covered up with drifted sand," suggested Captain Austin.

Wilberforce thought that over for a moment.

"That hadn't occurred to me," he resumed after a moment. "There may be something to that. You see, we are just off the Delaware River breakwater and there are all kinds of cross-currents here."

For an hour or more the two officers discussed the project and collaborated on their plans for the morrow.

"I've got some pretty good divers with me," said Captain Austin as he made ready to return to the *Nemo* for the night. "I'll stack them against anything in the world. If they can't find that U-boat then nobody can find it."

"Good enough, I'm sure they'll do their best." Commander Wilberforce had thought well of Jay and Dick, and had so expressed himself during the afternoon as he saw the boys in action.

With the morning sun the boys were up and ready for the day's explorations. They were anxious to get down to business. And furthermore, they were anxious that one or the other should get the first assignment of the day. Weddigen was along, but Captain Austin had not ordered him into diving armor the previous afternoon, and the Brighton boys were hopeful that the task of searching for the U-boat was to be entrusted to them alone.

Jay was first to go over the side of the *Nemo*. The sea had looked calm and placid as a mountain lake as he started and he figured no difficulty in getting about over the bottom. But, as every diver knows, the sea is the most deceptive thing in the world. Stand on the shore on a quiet day and look out to sea over waters unruffled save for the roll of the surf. Everything lovely; yet, down deep, mighty forces heaving and tossing like a hidden monster seeking some prey to devour.

From hummock to hummock the young diver was tumbled over the submarine sandbars. First he would be knocked down and then as quickly

stood up once more. At intervals he would be lifted off his feet and swirled along in the vortex of a deadly current. Then he would be slammed down hard again and pinned with such force against the ocean bed that it seemed he never would get to his feet again. Occasionally he found himself sprawled out on hands and knees like a creeping crustacean.

Under such circumstances search for the U-boat was next to impossible. Instead of the usual green radiance of the water Jay found himself in a deadly saffron light, at times almost opaque. Experience had taught him that that meant the sand was in motion. Light conditions, therefore, were not favorable for exploration, since the youth could not see very far in any direction. Peer about as he did between his many enforced flip-flops, he saw nothing of the U-boat, even though the navy men had said it was in these very waters and within a very narrow prescribed circle.

Presently, as he was swept helter-skelter along over the sand hummocks by the twisting waters, he brought up sharp against some object that projected out of the sand like a slim piling. Instinctively he flung out an arm as he was swept close to it. His arm struck with such a resounding whack that for the moment the limb felt numb.

"What in the name of sense is this?" he speculated, unable to see for a moment because of the swirling sand. His mind conjectured all manner of things.

Clinging tenaciously to his new-found support, Jay ran his hands up and down the protuberance. It was smooth and round like some cylindrical metal object. But what was it?

Soon there came a rift in the cloud of sand particles and the filtered sun's rays came down through the opulent green. In that moment Jay cleared the sand from the eyes of his helmet that he might scrutinize the object more clearly. Turning his gaze upward, he beheld the boxed lens glass of a periscope—the eye of the submarine!

"Great guns! here's the old U-boat buried to her eyelashes in the bottom of the sea!" ejaculated the diver, surprised and stunned at his discovery. There was no doubt of it; here was the periscopic pole of a submarine with its great eyes still intact. But what of the U-boat itself? Was it there under the sandy floor of the ocean? And by what queer prank of the tides had it come to be covered over?

In succession, these questions flitted through the mind of the lad as he further inspected his new find. Leaving it, he paced off first in one direction and then in another, keeping this up until he had run a radius in every direction from the periscope pole. But nowhere was there any trace of a ship's hull within a reasonable distance of that stranded ship's eye.

Jay was all excited. To think! He had located the lost submarine in such an extraordinary manner!

"I'll have to get out of here, though, and mighty quick," was his next thought as he began to feel that queer pain across the eyes and at the base of the brain that tells a diver he has had enough for one time of the deadly sea pressure.

In his excitement he gave his signal line a mighty jerk. Afterwards they told him he had signaled the emergency. And they had been awaiting the signal so long, thinking some mishap had come to Jay, that they yanked him up in jig time.

Jay was a sight when he came over the side of the *Nemo* again. For one thing he had stayed too long. His nose was bleeding profusely and his head was bruised and battered by the pummeling he had gotten down below in the embrace of that undertow. But when they got his helmet off and freshened him up with cold water and first aid restoratives he soon rallied again to his normal self.

And then he told them all about the U-boat in its sepulcher of sand with its periscope standing out like a gravestone.

"Guess you were right," admitted Commander Wilberforce as he turned to Captain Austin, recalling how the latter had suggested the previous night that the U-boat might have been covered over by drifted sand, set in motion by cross currents and undertows.

"And that being the case, I don't see that there is much that we can do here for the present," added the Bridgeford official. "It will be necessary for us to bring down our new salvage ship before we can do anything with that U-boat. Of course, we have facilities for digging into the bottom of the ocean just as land engineers employ the steam shovel to excavate a cut or a tunnel. What do you think?"

Commander Wilberforce heartily agreed and said he would go ashore at once to acquaint the department at Washington with the full facts and ask an authorization on behalf of the Bridgeford Company for the employment of

their entire resources in exhuming the buried submarine. In the meanwhile the *Nemo* was to return to Bridgeford.

But if Commander Wilberforce and Captain Austin were through for the present, Diver Jay Thacker was not. He liked not at all the prospect of backing off at this stage of the game, leaving the U-boat possibly to be buried high over her periscope deeper and deeper until the new *Jules Verne* could get on the job from Bridgeford.

Jay was doing a tall lot of thinking. And he had formulated in his own mind a plan of action that he hoped to put into effect with the aid of Captain Austin. Not even taking his own chum into his confidence, Jay sought out the *Nemo's* chief executive and drew him below decks for a star-chamber session of his own making.

Patiently the captain heard Jay through, shaking his head negatively in disapproval of the lad's proposition.

"There's no use of your taking any such risks, and, besides, we'll come back here a little later with the *Jules Verne* and worm our way right into that U-boat."

But Jay was insistent.

"Please, Captain Austin, I'm sure I can get away with this and rescue those plans belonging to the government——"

Captain Austin, looking over Jay's shoulder, saw some one approaching and bade the young diver speak softly of the stolen plans.

The intruder was Weddigen! Jay eyed him keenly, trying to fathom whether the burly diver had overheard the remark. A cynical smile played at the corners of Carl's mouth and he smirked at Jay in a leering way.

"Well, all right, Thacker, I suppose you will have your own way," decided the ship's captain. "Go ahead, I'll wait the afternoon out for you; but, remember, we weigh anchor for home to-night."

Jay climbed on deck and prepared again to don his armor.

"Bring me a crowbar and that old mushroom anchor that lies up front in the forward compartment," he asked of one of the deckmen.

Dick was assisting his chum to get into his diving suit.

"What are you going to do this time?" asked Dick inquisitively.

"Well, I've got an idea and I want to see how it works out," replied Jay. "That freak undertow is doing some funny stunts and I think I can use it to

suit my purposes. I'll let you know after I've had another look at that periscope pole."

Pretty soon Jay was over the side again and dangling in the water, carrying the crowbar in one hand and the mushroom anchor in the other. Instantly his feet touched bottom, he set off in the direction of the periscope and soon came upon it by intuitively guiding along the course that he knew would take him to the goal of his aspiration. The water was fairly clear and the undertow still setting strong along the ocean bed.

"Now we'll see," he murmured, as he set down the anchor within easy reach and took the crowbar, commencing to dig directly alongside the periscope pole. It is not easy thus to dig on the sandy bottom of the sea; one must go in sidewise with a due allowance for the currents instead of directly down.

Little by little the sand was dislodged and turned away. And so soon as it became loosened up and was stirred around the water dragged at it and skitted it away freakily, dissolving it into particles that filled all the sea round about the diver. Pretty soon Jay was the center of a veritable submarine sand tornado.

"Good enough; just what I wanted," he chuckled.

All at once as he was digging away the crowbar struck something hard. With a firm impact it brought up against a solid substance. The diver's own buoyancy and the swing of the rolling sea kept him from digging with much force, but pecking away with determination Jay soon accomplished his purpose, and that was to make a considerable excavation over the hard metallic substance that his crowbar had encountered.

"How do you do, Mr. Submarine," he laughed. For what he had encountered with his crowbar was nothing more or less than the top of the U-boat's conning tower!

Setting the anchor in the hole, he lashed the crowbar to his body again and gave the signal to be hoisted.

"See you in the morning," he called to the sunken submarine.

CHAPTER X

CAUGHT WITH THE GOODS

IT was morning. Captain Austin, won over by the arguments of Jay Thacker, one of his crack divers, had decided to postpone the return trip to Bridgeford twenty-four hours in order to give the Brighton lad a chance to work out a plan he had hatched while exploring the wreck of the submerged U-boat.

"You say you want us to anchor directly over the submarine and play you out a hundred feet of hydraulic hose?" asked the captain of the *Nemo* as he greeted Jay and Dick on deck after morning mess.

"Right you are," chirped Jay, "and I want the hose attached to the air pump just the same as you hitch up my own air lines—only I want all the pressure of air you can put behind this new hose line."

"You shall have it, my boy," replied the captain, and gave orders to various members of his crew to rig out the apparatus for which Jay had called.

"What's all this hose line?" chortled Larry Seymour as he watched Jay preparing again to go over the side of the *Nemo*. "Looks as though you are going down to spray the mermaids with a little hot air."

"Nothing doing, kiddo; it's a vacuum cleaner to scrub up Father Neptune's parlor," remarked Dick, who had been let in on Jay's plans.

Weddigen sauntered up like a pouter pigeon.

"Nothing new about this," said he to members of the crew standing beside him. "This bird Thacker knows his onion; he's simply taking down a line of hose and proposes to bore his way into the stranded submarine with a line of compressed air. All you got to do is turn on the air, point the nozzle of the hose into the sand, and away she goes."

Jay, getting ready to adjust his helmet, overheard the remark. How did Weddigen know it was a U-boat?

"You have it O. K., Weddigen; that's just exactly what I'm going to try and do," he replied pleasantly. At the same time he was asking himself:

"Has Weddigen overheard about the plans in the U-boat?"

It was a bold plan, but quite a feasible plan after all. Taking advantage of the undertow that snatched up every loosened particle of sand and scurried it away, Jay proposed to do a little excavating in the neighborhood of the U-boat and leave it to the currents themselves to exhume the lost ship—at least to free it far enough for the divers to get inside and salvage the plans so much wanted by the U. S. Government.

And now Jay was ready to be off. His new "vacuum cleaner" was ready and the air pump working smoothly.

"Good luck to you," called out Captain Austin as Dick prepared to clamp on his chum's helmet.

The youth smiled and in a moment shuffled to the side and was over and gone deep down into the embrace of the green sea, his air hose fastened at his belt. Pretty soon he was on bottom and groping his way along from hummock to hummock, now stumbling and now lifted by the whirling currents.

Presently he came upon the periscope pole and the mushroom anchor he had left below the previous night. But now the anchor sat deep down in a wide depression that opened out of the floor of the sea like the crater of a volcano.

"Bless my soul if that undertow hasn't been working for me all night," he observed while noting that the sand had been scooped out in huge quantities in every direction radiating from the periscope pole.

Which made it that much easier for the submarine excavator. The digging, of course, but not the actual work; for the deadly currents were dragging the youth to and fro until he reeled and tottered like a drunken man. But Jay had come prepared so that he would not again be subjected to the terrific mauling he had received before. This time he had piled on lead until he was heavily weighted down. A canvas belt, slung from hips to armpits, with pockets, held close to fifty pounds of metal. In addition he had fastened around each ankle a bag containing another twenty-five pounds.

As he prepared to swing his air hose into action Jay found the sea clutching and tearing viciously at his own air and signal lines and he made sure that they were intact and working perfectly before he gave the signal for the air to be turned into the "spray" line that he carried.

At last the youth was ready for his experiment. Jay had no idea how his plan would turn out, for, while he had heard of this kind of work and knew of its practicability, he had never tried it out for himself. It was his purpose to start the sand shifting in the belief that once the movement was under way the freakish undertow and cross-currents would come to his assistance and facilitate the task of unearthing the U-boat.

"Here goes," he cried as he sat down on the sandy bottom and, holding the nozzle of the hose away from him at an oblique angle of forty degrees, turned on the air full force.

Instantly the sea began to boil up around him like a young geyser. The sand was swept and swirled in every direction by the column of compressed air that was boring relentlessly into everything it touched. The young diver could feel his feet sinking slowly into an aperture as the sea bottom was scooped up and distributed into the yellow clouds that filled all the space of water around the periscope pole.

A new danger confronted the youth. Unless he exercised extreme caution he might dig his own grave. The shifting sand might collect around his own body and imbed him quickly unless he kept it shifting away from him instead of around him. The thought of being buried alive made him shudder for an instant, but he dismissed it and set himself carefully to keep the moving sand in front instead of behind him.

He resolved to keep on the move, holding the air hose ever far in front and drawing himself, as best he could shift the weights that held him down, in a wide circle around the periscope pole, throwing the sand off to the left. In this way he hoped to make an excavation that would gradually bring the conning tower of the U-boat above the level of the sea bottom. Backing steadily all the time on the circumference of his circle, he kept the sand moving ever outward; and move it did with the assistance of the undertow that aided and abetted the work of the air hose just as Jay had anticipated it would do.

Despite the perils of the undertaking Jay persisted and soon had worked himself completely around to the starting-point, a complete circle having the periscope pole of the U-boat as the hub of the imaginative wheel. By the feel of it under his feet and by thrusting his right foot out into the hole that he had dug Jay could tell his efforts had not been in vain. Considerable sand must have been shifted.

He decided to turn off the compressed air and await the clearing of the water so that he could see what he had accomplished. He had by now been down for considerable time and was commencing to feel the effects of his hard toil, the wear and tear of the sea, and the weight of his added incumbrances. Nevertheless, since his breathing was still free and easy he decided he could risk a few more minutes anyway to view the results of his handiwork.

By and by the sand clouds began to settle and the yellow sedimentation to subside. Imagine his joy when he found that he had successfully dug a great excavation right over the deck of the U-boat amidships, with the conning tower standing out entirely freed of all sand investiture.

"Good enough," he told himself gleefully. "And now to get inside the U-boat before the sands shift back again."

Reluctantly he gave the signal to be raised away after lashing the air hose with which he had successfully accomplished the task fast to the conning tower of the U-boat.

By now he could feel his heart pounding fiercely while a fitful darkness obscured his sight. Well he knew these symptoms—he had stayed down longer than he should have. But with his signal for a lift he felt the cables tighten and then he was swept along through the water toward the surface. Soon they were hauling him over the side of the *Nemo* just when his senses were reeling.

"Boy, you stayed too long," he heard Captain Austin saying as the helmet was lifted and he breathed again the pure air of the surface.

He could only nod a reply. But within a few minutes he was himself again and able to talk.

"What success, lad?" Captain Austin was eager to know how he had gotten along.

Jay told him the story; how he had utilized the air hose in excavating the U-boat and how it now lay all exposed in its hastily improvised crater.

"Some one had better go down right away and see if they can pry into that conning tower," he counseled. "No telling when those sands will commence to shift back again with the undertow."

Immediately Dick Monaghan and Carl Weddigen stepped forward.

"Please, sir, I'd like to take a shot at it," offered Dick.

"Give me a chance, Captain; remember how I got along with the *Dominion*," pleaded Weddigen.

Other members of the crew who were divers offered to take Jay's place and the captain for a moment was in a quandary.

"Guess you better go down, Weddigen, and see what you can do by way of prodding that conning tower open," the *Nemo's* executive decided. "You have big powerful arms and good lungs." At the same time, Austin winked at Jay, thinking Weddigen knew nothing of the plans in the U-boat.

Turning to Dick the captain said:

"I'll send you down after Weddigen works awhile, and we'll see what the two of you can do."

So Weddigen hastily climbed into his diving suit and made ready to go. Weddigen went equipped with tools that he hoped to use in forcing an entrance into the submarine. He took along with him also the extra air hose since it was possible the sand was shifting again and he might find it necessary to do some more digging.

After he had gone Jay and Dick engaged in earnest conversation.

"That fellow's not to be trusted," remarked Jay tartly.

"He may undo all that you've done," added Dick.

"Yes, or get into that U-boat and make away with those navy plans." Jay had seen enough of Weddigen to give him the idea that the big fellow had ulterior motives behind his activities with the Bridgeford Salvage Company.

After half an hour's wait Captain Austin told Dick to go ahead and get ready for a descent to the U-boat.

"See how Weddigen's getting along. Maybe you can recover those plans yourself."

The captain had confided to the two divers, Jay and Dick, that the coveted plans were contained in a stout steel box that would be found in a locker in the submarine's wireless chamber just forward of the main turret.

Dick was glad of the chance to get the assignment. So far he had not had an opportunity to prove his ability as a diver to Captain Austin and he was anxious to make good. What a fine thing if he could be instrumental in reclaiming for the United States Government the long lost plans and scientific formulas! It had been hinted that among other things, the stolen

plans included the formula for manufacture of the deadly gas that U. S. chemists had discovered just before the close of the war.

"I'll certainly do my level best," soliloquized Dick as he floundered along on the sea bottom in the direction of the U-boat.

Very soon he came in sight of it. The sun, shining strong on the surface of the sea, lit up the whole area of clear water so that he was able to see quite a distance in front of him.

Through the green haze of the sea he discerned suddenly the figure of another diver. He was dragging after him a long rectangular box of some kind. Undoubtedly it was Weddigen! But what was he doing and what was the chest that he dragged with so much effort?

"The plans!" gasped Dick. In an instant it was clearly revealed to him. Weddigen had succeeded in getting into the submarine and had salvaged the stolen plans!

What was Weddigen doing now? Dick stopped short in his tracks to watch the maneuvers of the other diver.

CHAPTER XI

THE SPY!

PEERING intently through the water Dick watched every move of Weddigen. The latter had knelt on the sandy bottom and was tinkering with the steel chest. His back was turned to the Brighton youth and he, to all intents, had no knowledge of the proximity of the latter.

And then Dick made an astounding discovery. Weddigen had unfastened the extra air hose from his belt, turned on the air and was digging a hole in the sand some ten or fifteen yards away from the submarine. A cloud of sediment was stirred up by the air which for the time served the purpose of hiding the diver at his work.

Dick's first impulse was to move forward hastily and make known his presence, thinking perhaps Weddigen was having trouble lugging the chest and needed assistance. But then, it occurred to him, why would Carl be digging a hole with the air line when he had already salvaged the precious box? Why had he not gripped it with a steel cable and sent it aloft to the *Nemo*?

"By jove! I know what he's doing," exclaimed Dick to himself. "He's trying to lose those plans under the floor of the sea rather than give them back to the government!"

The youth saw red on the instant. A traitor to America! An enemy of the United States Government who, rather than return the plans that he had found, was trying to cover them up where he might return later and dig for them at his leisure.

Just for an instant Dick was undecided whether to return at once to the *Nemo* and report what he had seen or stay and see it through to the limit. To grapple with Weddigen here under the sea was next to impossible. Heavily accoutred as he was with diving paraphernalia and weighed down by additional anchors, he could hope to gain nothing by forcibly encountering the big diver in front of him.

He decided to wait until Weddigen had stopped digging and the water cleared again. In the meantime he moved closer, thinking perhaps when

Weddigen found that he was being observed he would switch his tactics and order the steel chest with its precious documents hoisted away. It was a trying moment for the lad and he bit his lip to think that he had no submarine weapon of any kind that would enable him to challenge the traitor and compel him to desist. But it was a time for quick thinking and direct action, and he firmly resolved to make the best of the situation.

Before long the stirring of the sands ceased and the water began to clear. Dick by now was no further away from Weddigen than ten or fifteen feet. But Weddigen was still crouched with his back to the newcomer and all unmindful of Dick's presence. And then, in one quick glance, Dick discerned that Weddigen had dug his hole, and was dragging the steel chest into it, preparatory to covering it up.

"The dirty dog!" hissed the Brighton youth, instinctively clenching his fists.

On the instant Dick was minded to grapple with the fellow at all hazards and wrestle with him for possession of the steel box. The only thing in the way of a weapon that he carried was a short, slender crowbar that he had used to facilitate walking, while at the feet of Weddigen lay the various tools that he had brought along to force his way into the U-boat.

And then Dick saw his opportunity! Weddigen was still unmindful of the presence of another diver, so intent was he on getting the treasure box buried. Why not steal up behind Carl, grasp his signal lines and signal for the emergency lift before the scheming diver could interfere? Up he would go, leaving the unattached strong box behind him!

"I'll do it, so help me!" the youth exclaimed in sheer delight.

Stealthily he approached, taking every precaution not to stir up any more of the sea bottom than he could help in order not to apprise Weddigen that he was so close at hand. The latter by now had the box in position and was prepared to swing the air hose in action. In a moment or two the precious plans would be gone again—covered up by a dastardly enemy of America!

Dick was almost on top of Weddigen before the latter wheeled suddenly to find that he had company. But as Carl swung round in his heavy shoes Dick took one desperate lunge through the water in the direction of Weddigen's helmet. His aim was true and his momentum despite his

weights sufficient to carry him to the mark. Eagerly he clutched the signal lines over Carl's head.

Weddigen saw the move and divined the intent—but all too late. As Dick's fingers closed over the conspirator's signal lines he gave one mighty tug and instantly released his hold, knowing full well what would happen. And happen it did! Yanked off his feet by willing hands on the deck of the *Nemo* the hapless Carl Weddigen was carried swiftly up through the swirling currents, leaving the salvage that he had recovered and tried to lose again behind him at the feet of Dick Monaghan.

It had been Dick's only play and he had seized his opportunity, just as at Brighton he had recovered many a fumble on the football field by quick thinking.

"Thank heaven!" he murmured in prayerful gratitude.

Dick now was free to make fast the strong box and hoist it away. Taking a short length of chain from his belt he trussed up the box securely, affixed one of his cables and gave the signal to raise away. Up went the chest over his head, and then he gathered the abandoned tools that Weddigen had left behind him, strapping them to his sides.

"Now for the *Nemo* and the story of Mr. Carl Weddigen and his despicable infamy before he makes a getaway."

Presently Dick was back again on the deck of the *Nemo*, still fresh in body and spirit and none the worse for his rather long stay on the sea bottom.

So impatient was the lad to be released from his diving armor that he could scarce contain himself. Glancing through the eye ports of his helmet he noted that Weddigen was being relieved of his armor, and that he was scowling fiercely at those who were assisting him.

Captain Austin and Jay Thacker were standing close by Dick, waiting only his release to congratulate him on the recovery of the government formulas and charts from the sunken U-boat. They had no idea as yet, of course, as to how they had been reclaimed, for Weddigen had given them no tangible story. Instead he had proved evasive.

"Good work, boy," Dick heard Captain Austin say, as his helmet was lifted. A proffered hand was extended him.

"Gee, chum, I sure am proud of you," Jay was smiling—all smiles.

But not so Dick. Anger blazed in his eyes and he emerged from his diving accoutrements with something like the ferocity of a beast of prey released from its trap.

While the captain of the *Nemo* and Diver Thacker looked on dumbfounded Dick fairly leaped across the deck in the direction of Weddigen and shook a fist under that diver's nose.

"You dirty dog of a traitor; don't think you will get away with it this time."

Weddigen recoiled under the fury of the verbal attack, his own teeth showing like a whipped cur that has been backed in a corner by a giant mastiff.

Instantly there was a great hubbub on deck, members of the crew jostling about just as a crowd collects on a public thoroughfare at the least sign of a commotion. It was not the first time that Diver Weddigen was thus confronted by one of the Brighton boys. Sailors of the *Nemo* recalled on the instant the scene after the recovery of the diamonds from the *Dominion*.

"You are a spy in the service of the German secret service and a cowardly villain to the very core of your heart."

Dick Monaghan was fairly railing at the cowering diver. By now Captain Austin had edged up closer with Jay Thacker right at his heels.

"Captain Austin, this man Weddigen recovered that chest of government plans from the U-boat; but he was trying to get rid of them again. He knew that Jay Thacker and I would stay here as long as you would let us in an attempt to reclaim them, and that in the event of our failure to salvage them the U. S. Navy would have persisted until it had gotten them back again. And so he tried to do away with them when he realized that it was impossible now ever to get these plans out of this country."

Captain Austin stepped away aghast with rage.

"What! Do you mean——"

Like a human machine gun Dick rattled off the story of what had happened on the floor of the ocean; how he had come upon Weddigen tugging away at the chest; how he had stood watch while the diver made ready to bury the precious documents, and how he had intervened just in the nick of time.

Through the whole recital Weddigen cringed like an animal afraid. His face was ghastly white, but with it all he endeavored to keep quiet and self-

possessed, ready to take advantage of any opening.

"I've suspected him from the very beginning," Dick was saying. "The first day you broached this proposition to us, Mr. Thacker found him spying at the keyhole of your office. Only yesterday, when Mr. Thacker was telling you how he planned to get into the U-boat, this chap Weddigen bobbed up unexpectedly."

Captain Austin was nodding in a knowing way.

At this juncture some one else took a hand in the proceedings. Jay Thacker stepped forward.

"Captain Austin, I'm neither a quitter nor a squealer," he began. Just for a moment he paused, and then resumed.

"You recall the scene on the day that we came back with the diamonds from the *Dominion*—or rather, when Weddigen came back with the diamonds. Weddigen was accused by Larry Seymour of having stolen some of the glittering gems and secreted them in a slit pocket in the side of his diving suit. Weddigen explained that the chest had come open and that he had slipped some of the jewels into his pocket only when they were in danger of being lost."

The captain of the *Nemo* remembered it all.

"Very well, captain, I had intended always to keep silent," continued Jay. "You seemed satisfied to take his word for it; and I did not feel like speaking out for fear you and some of the fellows would think I was only jealous because Weddigen had gotten the diamonds and I had not. But now I'm going to speak out and tell the truth."

Jay looked full into the face of Weddigen, fearlessly and intently. In return he was met with a bitter look of scorn.

Pointing his finger directly at the big diver, Jay said:

"Weddigen stole those diamonds. By the light of his own flash I saw him break open the chest in the captain's cabin of the *Dominion* and transfer some of those sparklers to his pockets. As God is my judge, I saw this man take those diamonds."

The hubbub increased. The crew of the *Nemo* seemed about to leap on the accused diver.

"Since he didn't get away with the theft because of the alertness of Seymour," Jay continued, "I decided to let the matter go by. But now that he's been caught again, and this time in a dastardly effort against the

country that we all love, I'm telling the whole story. He's a thief and a traitor, and Dick Monaghan and I have the goods on him."

Jay's dramatic climax in high-pitched voice with an extended hand that shook with rage aroused the crew of the *Nemo* to a wild frenzy of rage. With one accord they moved toward the indicted diver. A traitor to the United States! More yet, an emissary of the vaunted German secret service working right in their very midst!

"String him up! Give him his due! Kill him!" the cries were intermingled with the hoarse guttural exclamations of the *Nemo's* crew. They were minded on the moment to mete out justice themselves—the mob-rule spirit when it has been whetted to white heat passion.

In this trying situation, Captain Austin, exponent of law and order, took a hand. Enraged as he was at the revelations concerning Weddigen, he was determined there should be no informal lynching party aboard his craft. Better to make a prisoner of the man and turn him over to the United States Government for a trial that would bring out interesting information and certainly result in punishment of a fitting nature being visited upon this miserable spy.

Whipping out his revolver the captain advanced through the crowd to the side of the dismayed diver.

"He's my prisoner, boys; I'll just lock him up and take him back to Bridgeford with us, where we'll turn him over to Uncle Sam."

As for Dick and Jay, they were thinking not so much of the fate of the discomfited diver, but of the precious government plans and formulas that had been saved from falling into the hands of foreign and unfriendly powers! Weddigen had overheard and knew all the time!

CHAPTER XII

INTRODUCING THE "JULES VERNE"

"ALL out for the *Jules Verne*!"

A familiar voice sounded in the ears of Dick Monaghan as he swung up through the big shipyard at Bridgeford bound for the office of Superintendent Brown in the hope that he would find Captain Austin and his own chum, Jay Thacker, and learn from them some interesting news concerning the next move to be made in the game of deep-sea salvage.

"All out for the *Jules Verne*!" It was a familiar phrase to every Brighton student. At the academy, it was always "all out" when the boys quit their books at night for a romp in the corridors before "lights out."

"All out yourself, old chappie," retorted Dick. "And what's the good news this morning?"

"The good news is that the *Jules Verne* is ready for her maiden trip out into Long Island Sound, and we are bound thither, old boy, by the light of this afternoon's sun."

Dick was pleased. They had been back nearly two weeks now from Cape May and the recovery of government plans from the lost U-boat. There had been some tedious delay in fitting out the new salvage ship with its finishing touches, and the inactivity had tried the mettle of the two lads.

Eagerly they set their steps toward the offices of "Montey" Brown, the yard superintendent, intent upon procuring further and definite information. On the way they were accosted by "Laughing Larry" Seymour—"the original optimist" the boys had labeled him.

"Look who's here!" chortled Jay as Larry came swinging along.

For once the volatile Seymour was repressed.

"Heard the news yet today?" Larry was all earnestness.

"Sure, we know all about the *Jules Verne*—" Jay was in excellent spirits and not to be daunted by the changed demeanor of the usually debonair Seymour.

"Naw, I don't mean the *Jules Verne*! I mean this."

Larry snatched a newspaper from his pocket and was pointing to a glaring front page headline.

"Spy Suspect Escapes Receiving Ship *Exeter's* Brig at Charlestown Navy Yard in Boston—Carl Weddigen, Believed to be German Secret Service Emissary, Makes Getaway on Eve of Trial."

It was a copy of the Providence *Journal* that had come into Bridgeford by the morning mail. Seymour was ready to "blow up" with indignation.

"What do you know about that!" he was groaning.

Jay and Dick, their faces buried in the outspread sheet, read every detail of the news item. How their erstwhile shipmate, Carl Weddigen, he of the diamond-theft fame and the U-boat plot, had slipped his chains at Boston, dropped over the side of the *Exeter* and successfully made his getaway. Within a few days he was to have been haled before a Naval Board of Inquiry; and both Jay and Dick were to have appeared as witnesses in the case.

"Out of luck!" expostulated Jay. "Just after we round up that bird—then they let him slip away. Fine state of affairs."

Weddigen was soon forgotten in the plans for going aboard the *Jules Verne* and testing her out on the initial voyage. Captain Austin, meeting the three lads near the drydock, told them they should report for duty at seven o'clock the next morning. Jay had heard that they would go out that same afternoon; but now their chief executive told them it would be morning before they would get their first peek at the new salvage ship.

The hours dragged slowly, so impatient were the youths to see the *Jules Verne* at last. They had heard so much about her and speculated so much on the kind of ship that it might be and how it would operate. Even carefree Larry Seymour, not much given to the serious side of life, avowed for once all this secrecy had "got his goat."

"Must be something wonderful's all I can say," he laughed with a toss of the head.

"And tomorrow we're to find out all about it," Jay could hardly wait.

Morning found the three youths on hand early. Fismes, the war dog, accompanied them to the yard. Jay had wanted to take the pet along on the *Nemo* as a mascot, but it had been decided there was no space on the underwater craft for a dog. Now it might be different; for the *Jules Verne* was a

surface cruising craft from which under-water operations were conducted—that much the boys had wormed out of Captain Austin.

"Cap" himself was waiting to greet the lads and escort them aboard the *Jules Verne*.

"Ho! Ho! what have we here?" interposed Captain Austin as he wheeled to look the dog over.

"Some tramp dog that followed you fellows in?"

Jay was quick to tell the story of the famous dog of war, and to introduce Fismes formally to the Bridgeford Yard official.

"Good enough, old boy," was Cap's greeting as he took the extended paw of the dog.

"And now you shall come right aboard the *Jules Verne* with us. We need a mascot for this new ship. I know of none better, and forthwith propose you as a member of the crew. What do you say, boys?"

Jay and Dick, who shared the pet between them, heartily agreed, and Jay told how he had really wanted to take Fismes along on the *Nemo*, but had desisted, knowing there would not be room.

"But there's plenty of room on the *Jules Verne*. Come along, fellows; let's be on our way." So saying, the four deep-sea navigators set out for the new craft, closely pursued by a shaggy brown dog, who, stiff and proud, walked like an animal all conceited over new honors heaped upon him.

"Here she is all ready for us," announced Captain Austin as they came at last in sight of the *Jules Verne*.

Both Brighton lads stopped short in their tracks. They had expected to see something pretentious. Instead, here was anchored a flat wide-beamed vessel that at first glance looked for all the world like a car-float with the superstructure of a ferry boat. It might have been a houseboat at one time in its career.

But what particularly struck the fancy of the boys was a strange ram-like nose that projected straight out from the bow of this odd-looking craft. At this distance it looked like a series of huge steel cistern sections linked together after the fashion of a long sewer system. For approximately a hundred feet this cylindrical projection extended out from the bow of the *Jules Verne*. Less than a third of it was exposed to view, the remainder being under water. At the end it terminated in a queer flatiron-shaped turret

something like eight or ten feet across at the back and tapering forward to a thin prow of inches.

Truly this was a strange looking outfit! Never in all their maritime experience had the boys seen anything like it.

"You sure have one on me," faltered Dick as he surveyed the craft.

Jay was shaking his head too. "Might be the houseboat on the Styx so far as my store of knowledge is concerned."

Captain Austin turned to Larry Seymour. "What do you think of her?"

"Nix for me, Captain; you have me buffaloed," was all Larry could hazard.

Captain Austin laughed aloud.

"I thought you chaps would be surprised. Well, now let's see. The *Jules Verne* is the mother ship"—he pointed out the "houseboat" that had first caught the eyes of the boys. "She is nothing more than an old Fall River liner that we bought in and converted into our own uses. She is simply the base of operations. We live on the *Jules Verne*. She takes us wherever we want to go and she is entirely seaworthy, I assure you.

"Now, look at the access tube." The captain was pointing now to the long cylindrical tube that led away forward from the bow of the *Jules Verne*. "That is the way we get into the *Nautilus*. Oh, yes, the *Nautilus* is really the big secret of our plan. It is the small diving compartment that sets out there in the water."

"You mean the flatiron-shaped section nearly awash?" queried Dick.

"Exactly," replied the captain. "Call it a diving bell if you will. What we have here is two distinct vessels connected by a long passageway. 'The Subway' as Superintendent Brown calls it. First we go aboard the *Jules Verne*. Then we find the lost ship on the bottom of the sea that we want to work on. When we are ready we lower the access tube and the *Nautilus* right over the wreck. Down goes the tube. Down we climb just like walking down an enclosed ladder. Through the air-lock—and there we are in the *Nautilus*! Don't you get it?"

Jay and Dick nodded understandingly.

"Tell us more about the *Nautilus*," asked Dick inquisitively.

"Well, the *Nautilus* is nothing more or less than a submarine diving chamber," explained Austin. "It is set on the end of the access tube by

means of a huge differential that enables it to work back and forth like a flexible hinge. Under the *Nautilus* and under the access tube are ballast tanks. You boys who have been in the submarine and the diving business in the Navy know how easily that works. We raise or lower the diving compartment simply by 'trimming,' or blowing the tanks. In case the ballast apparatus gets out of commission, we have the *Nautilus* suspended on cables. They will bring her up again if she gets stuck down there."

"Oh, I commence to see it now," interrupted Jay. "The mother boat, or *Jules Verne*, is like your shoulder. The access tube through which you effect an entrance into the *Nautilus* is like your arm. The *Nautilus* is like your hand. You raise or lower at will, and you can put the *Nautilus* down in the water at a distance equal to the length of the access tube, or arm. Isn't that it?"

"Exactly, my boy," countered "Cap" Austin. "And can't you see the advantages of such an equipment? Heretofore, we have had to send you divers down to go groping around over the bottom of the sea after we found our quarry. You had to prod and dig and scratch around to find out the condition of the lost ship, how best she was to be entered, and all that. And by that time, you were pretty well played out and had to stop until you got in good trim again."

"To say nothing of the tides and the storms that kept pulling us away from our work," added Dick.

"Right you are," continued the captain. "But now all that is done away with. When we come to a wreck now we lower the *Nautilus*; you chaps go down with us and from the ports of the *Nautilus* we inspect the wreck without one of you having to step a foot on the bottom of the sea. When we have looked her over carefully and are all ready to get down to work, then we can let you out the bottom of the *Nautilus*, instead of sending you over the sides of the *Jules Verne*. What do you think of that? Think of it! You are already down in the sea a hundred feet or more. You are not only conserving your strength, but you are much safer than when out in diving armor floundering around in quest of your prey."

"What is the *Nautilus* like inside, and how does she operate?" Dick, mechanically inclined, was eager to solve the whole of this riddle.

"You shall know intimately for yourselves within a very short time," answered his captain. "We are going right aboard now, and as soon as

Superintendent "Montey" Brown and a number of officials higher up come along we are going to cast off and go out in the Sound to make our first practical tests."

That was good news to the Brighton boys and Larry Seymour. Headed by Captain Austin and followed by their good friend Fismes, they crossed the gangplank and stepped on the deck of the *Jules Verne*.

"Not made for grace or beauty, but a very practical old craft," remarked "Cap" as he led the way forward. The new recruits were anxious to learn all about the new diving operations as quickly as possible.

In a few minutes the rest of the party came aboard and the *Jules Verne* slipped out into Long Island Sound—ready for business!

CHAPTER XIII

DIVING DE LUXE

"ALL right, boys; now for the *Nautilus*."

It was the voice of Captain Austin, hailing the Brighton boys and their chum Larry Seymour. The three youths, with Fismes at their backs, had been sitting on a forward promenade as the *Jules Verne* worked her way through the shipping that lined the Bridgeford harbor entrance. By now the new diving ship had escaped the confines of the harbor and was out part way between the dimly distant shores of Long Island and the state of Connecticut. Occasionally a train on the New Haven flitted along the far shore line. A passenger steamship from New York to Boston via the Sound had but passed.

"Here's where you get your first peep at the *Nautilus*," said Captain Austin, as the boys climbed down the companionway to the main deck. Superintendent Brown nodded to the three youths and then in turn introduced them to a party of gentlemen composed of officials of the Bridgeford Company and others who had been interested in the formation of a syndicate to back the new diving ventures. Members of the party had heard of the boys' war record, and also of their work on the *Dominion*, and on the U-boat off Cape May. The lads found themselves the objects of much attention.

Captain Austin confided the information that this first trip of the *Jules Verne* was to acquaint all hands around with the operation of the apparatus. In other words, it was to be a demonstration that would point out the feasibilities and practical virtues of the new plan. He told them that his company still held the assignment for the recovery of the gold from the old *Dominion*, but reclaiming the gold bullion was a man-size job and they had decided to use the *Jules Verne* for it if the practical tests turned out satisfactorily.

"You boys come along now," sang out Captain Austin as he climbed into a huge hatch standing above deck and lowered away into the depths below. Without further ceremony the boys followed suit, Jay going first, followed

by Dick and Larry. Fismes had to stay behind, but barked furiously to manifest his displeasure at being deserted.

Lowering away from handrail to handrail down the wide hatch, "Cap" Austin arrived finally at the bottom of the opening, closely pursued by the others.

"Low bridge now, fellows," he cautioned.

And low bridge it was as the party entered the access tube. Like an oblique ladder leading downward the tube stretched away into the sea. The steel piping was less than four feet in diameter, and the only way to negotiate it was to duck down almost on all fours and make your way along laboriously like a telephone repairman in a conduit. Electric lights were stationed at intervals along the way to light up the submarine tunnel.

"Keep your head down, Fritzie boy, or you'll get an awful bump on the cranium," cautioned the ship's captain.

"Now we are going into the air-lock chamber, boys," he told them. "We are down below the surface of the Sound something like eighty-five feet. When we get on the deck of the *Nautilus* we will be down an even hundred feet. Follow me right through."

In response to the captain's tapping on a huge port immediately to his right it had swung open like the fire door of a huge locomotive. There, in the encircling frame, was the face of Superintendent Brown.

"Welcome, boys. 'Will you step into my parlor?' said the spider to the fly."

The yard official was all smiles as he greeted the boys.

Captain Austin set his foot through the aperture and crawled through into the adjoining chamber alongside the superintendent. The boys followed suit as rapidly as they could.

They found themselves now in a narrow little prison not more than four feet high, six or seven feet long, and about two feet wide. With difficulty the five men distributed themselves in the place. Crouched closely together, shoulders touching each other, they filled the whole compartment like so many sardines in a can.

"This is the air-lock chamber, boys," announced Superintendent Brown. "From your submarine experience to date you can easily understand the function of this chamber. We have just stepped in here from the access tube where there maintains the air pressure of the surface. We want to go from

here into the *Nautilus*, where we can roll back the open hatch from the bottom of the craft and gaze upon the very sea itself held in abeyance. How would you go about it, Mr. Monaghan?" asked the superintendent, knowing of Dick's predilection for mechanical problems and his desire to pursue his education through college.

Just for an instant Dick hesitated, and then answered: "I should say you would have to equalize the air pressure, sir."

"And you are right," answered the Bridgeford official. "That is exactly what we have to do here. It is out of the question to go directly from the pressure of the surface to a pressure of one hundred feet below the surface. We simply come into this air chamber, shut ourselves off completely from the world above us, and then step ourselves up to the required air pressure for one hundred feet."

So saying, the superintendent slammed shut the door of the port through which the party had entered the air-lock from the access tube, and made it doubly secure with a stout pin that slid into place behind a reinforcing bar.

"Now to let some more air into the chamber."

Immediately an air-cock was opened and with a hissing sound a great volume of compressed air came into the little chamber so tightly filled with humanity. Wsh-h-h-h-h! it resounded through the narrow space like the blow-off of a mighty steam exhaust. Just for a few seconds, and then it was turned off. Even though he had experienced divers aboard who were accustomed to working in high pressures below water, Superintendent Brown was taking no chances. It was always best to go slow, because with every foot of submergence there is an increase of air pressure upon every square inch of the body's surface of no less than .43 of a pound.

At a depth of 100 feet under the sea the total pressure would be approximately 45 additional pounds pressure against every square inch of the body. With the average human body representing a surface of about 2160 square inches, that meant that at a depth of 100 feet a dead weight of more than 97,000 pounds would be pressing against the body of each of them. Under such circumstances the blood is forced away from the surface of the body. The veins become thin, while the deep-lying arteries are overworked.

It was a matter of but a short time until, consulting the pressure gauge, the superintendent found that he had admitted a sufficient amount of

compressed air to equalize the difference between the surface and the one-hundred-foot submarine level.

"Now into the *Nautilus*!" As he said this, "Montey" opened the huge port leading into the diving chamber and stepped through. He was closely followed by the remainder of the party in single file, and presently they had emerged in the compartment or working chamber. Two or three men could work in it comfortably; five filled it too completely. There was just room for the quintet to stand about easily without bumping each other.

Electric lights made the chamber as light as a Broadway office building in the evening. An electric fan buzzed in one corner to keep the air on the move. A telephone hung on the wall just to the left of Superintendent Brown's head. Just at that moment it tinkled merrily. The official took down the receiver.

"Hello, hello. Yes, this is Brown. Yes, we are all fine and dandy. Yep. We are ready. Go ahead now."

The superintendent turned from the telephone.

"They are going to move us ahead slowly in the water now. All hands stand by. Maybe we may run into something."

Just then a slight jarring motion indicated that the mother ship, the *Jules Verne*, had gotten under way, and was steering the tiny *Nautilus* ahead of her through the waters of the Sound.

"Now you get the advantage of this system, boys," the superintendent was saying. "Here you are much safer and much more comfortable than if you were out there on the bottom floundering around in diving armor. You can just stand here at ease, breathing normally, with plenty of fresh oxygen pouring down from above, and with no unfavorable symptoms of any kind."

To impress this point, the superintendent switched on an air-cock to emphasize the point that the *Nautilus* was completely in touch with the mother ship up at the other end of the hundred-foot access tube.

"Look here, boys!" Captain Austin, standing by one of the huge ports that dotted the face of the *Nautilus* on either side of the prow, beckoned them to look out. Through the misty green of the water their eyes could carry quite a distance with the aid of the bright sunlight above. Certainly it was light enough so that in the event of any lost ship being encountered it could be seen in plenty of time.

Through the floor of the *Nautilus* the green of the sea showed all around. The water raced along under the glass of the aquascope as the *Nautilus* was pushed steadily ahead. Virtually the whole floor of the diving bell was framed in a trap that could be raised and lowered at will; and, from their own knowledge of submarine affairs, the Brighton boys knew that with the air pressure within the *Nautilus* equal to that of the water itself at a depth of one hundred feet, this flooring could be rolled back, and still the water would not come into the *Nautilus*!

"I know just what you are thinking about," laughed the superintendent, as he caught a glimpse of Jay and Dick surveying the transparent flooring of the *Nautilus*. "You are thinking what a wonderful thing it is that we can open the bottom of a craft submerged one hundred feet down, and yet no water pour in upon us. And it truly is a wonderful thing. Just like the Lord opened the Red Sea and enabled the children of Israel to get across and outwit their pursuers."

Larry Seymour, to whom the experience was all new, was losing no part of the proceedings.

"But what if your air pump went on the bum about the time you opened up that flooring?" he questioned.

"If the air pump failed, it would not affect the water, but would cut off our breathing supply," answered the official.

"How long could we last down here?"

"Oh, two or three of us working alone could stand it for some hours without any relief."

"Suppose some one opened the breech caps leading out into the access tube while the aquascope was up?"

"Wow-wow! In would come Mr. Ocean, and I guess it would be all day for the chaps who would be caught down here."

"Here you are, boys; see the whole panorama of the sea bottom unfolded before you," remarked the superintendent as he directed attention downward through the aquascope. The lads looked in turn and saw the sea-bottom plainly revealed, with all its sandy bottom and its jagged contour of shells and marine life. The floor of the *Nautilus* was, in fact, so close to the bottom that it was almost touching. Brown at once gave the signal to the engine room of the mother ship that stopped the *Nautilus*. With another flip of the air pressure he raised the flooring of the chamber and there lay the

limpid waters of the Sound, held in check completely even at this depth by the pressure of air within the chamber!

"By Jove! You just stopped in time," exclaimed Captain Austin as he turned from one of the forward ports.

"What do you mean, Captain?" asked Superintendent Brown.

"Look here," replied "Cap," indicating the port and motioning the fleet superintendent to look out into the green haze of water.

CHAPTER XIV

AN UNEXPECTED FIND

CLOSING the aquascope of the *Nautilus* with a quick turn of the air control, Superintendent Brown stepped lightly across the diving compartment of the new salvage ship to the side of the fleet captain.

"What's up, Cap?" he inquired casually.

Austin was peering intently straight ahead through the water. The *Nautilus* was moving slowly to and fro with the rise and fall of the tide, but her progress forward through the water had been checked by a signal to the engine room of the mother ship, the *Jules Verne*.

"Looks like we had accidentally run upon a wreck our first day out." Captain Austin had his gaze firmly directed upon the outlines of some object near at hand, the character of which he was not at all able to make out as yet. Perhaps it was just a shifting sand formation; or possibly an apparition in the water due to the passage of the sun behind clouds, or a school of fish in the bay.

Superintendent Brown took up his station at another port just to the left of the captain. His eyes by now, directed by Brown, rested on the identical object that had first claimed the attention of the captain.

"Blamed if I don't think you are right, Austin," remarked the superintendent after a bit.

He suggested that the *Nautilus* be moved forward slightly in order that the two might get a more comprehensive view of the "phantom ship" that had loomed out of the mist like some specter of the deep that Jules Verne himself had conjured in "Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea."

Cap Austin fell in with the idea, and at once took down the telephone connecting with the *Jules Verne*.

"Move us forward until I give you one bell and then stop right on the trigger," was the order to the engine room of the mother ship. Instantly the *Nautilus* was propelled forward through the water. At the ports stood the two officials straining their eyes intently.

Jay and Dick stood conversing in low tones, while Larry kept up his inspection of the diving chamber. This was a new experience for him and he was distinctly not at home.

"Looks like it is a small craft of some kind ... might be a destroyer ... perhaps a fishing boat ... no, it's bigger and of a different design ... well heeled over to port ... close enough."

Fragments of the conversation between Cap Austin and the yard superintendent floated back to the ears of the Brighton boys. They were as interested as their elders in the proceedings. What an extraordinary thing if on this first trip of the *Jules Verne* and the *Nautilus* a lost ship should be found!

"Don't you think we had better stop now and drift up a bit with the tide?" the superintendent was asking.

Captain Austin thought it better to go just a little closer. Ten or fifteen seconds passed when he leaped forward suddenly and rang the bell for the engines to be stopped immediately. Quietly and with scarcely a tremor the *Nautilus* glided to a standstill in the deep. The locomotion of the craft surely was perfect.

"Navy craft of some kind," ejaculated the superintendent after a brief pause. During the interim he had been studying the object now close at hand.

"I can see old battleship gray paint first of all," he added.

A naval craft! For the moment Captain Austin was nonplussed. Surely no one knew Long Island Sound better than he; and he had no recollection on the moment of any naval craft having been sunk there for some years. True, during the war, there had been naval maneuvers of all kinds in the Sound, particularly of the lighter draught vessels stationed at various points from the Brooklyn Navy Yard up to Rock Island, Maine. But none——And then it dawned on his mind: A sub-chaser—the E-70. Sure enough, such a craft had been accidentally rammed one day by one of the new Lake submarines just off the ways. Although valiant efforts had been made to save the craft after she had been rammed, all the work had been in vain. Down she had gone in many fathoms of water.

"I have it. It's the E-70 that went down last August," exclaimed the captain as he turned to the superintendent.

"Montey" listened while "Cap" Austin unfolded the whole story of the disaster that had wiped a ship from the roster of the U. S. Navy.

"Suppose we make sure of our identification then, particularly since we have been so fortunate as to run upon a derelict our very first trip out," suggested the superintendent.

Captain Austin agreed that it would be the ideal thing to thoroughly test out the *Jules Verne* and the *Nautilus* with a minute inspection of the find that fate had so coincidentally thrown in their way.

Accordingly they jockeyed the *Nautilus* to and fro through the water until they had found the bow of the submarine chaser. Jay and Dick had been reminded by their captain to keep their eyes open and take in every detail of the operation of the new diving craft.

"It will be only a matter of a very few days at the most until you chaps will be down here as workmen instead of guests, and you might as well get acquainted with the new boat and learn everything about her you can," the executive had told them.

Needless to say, they were more than taking it all in; they were acclimating themselves to the very best of their versatile natures. It was marvelous how well the craft could be handled. The telephone kept them constantly in touch with the mother ship. In case they wanted to stop or start suddenly, it was not necessary to wait for the telephone. An electric buzzer rung in accordance with a pre-arranged code of signals told the engineer just what to do.

By now the aquascope, or windowed floor, of the *Nautilus* was poised directly over the bow of the lost sub-chaser. By moving the chamber slightly to the left it was possible to lower away toward the bottom until the name of the lost craft might be noted from the ports of the *Nautilus*.

"Drop her down gradually now and I'll keep a sharp lookout," said the superintendent, at the same time directing Dick to take his position at the other port and likewise to pay all attention toward finding the telltale mark of the supposed submarine chaser, E-70, on the starboard side of the bow.

Jay remained by the side of Captain Austin.

"This is one thing you want to learn well in advance and to keep constantly in mind," the ship's executive cautioned as he signaled the *Jules Verne* to swing the *Nautilus* lower in the water.

What the captain had in mind was the equalizing of pressures. Every time the *Nautilus* was lowered deeper in the water it was necessary to take a greater air pressure into the big diving chamber before the aquascope could be raised. The depth always showed on the depth-dial. Also the amount of air in the chamber was registered by a clock-like gauge. In a crevice on the steel wall hung a small framed schedule under glass showing the air pressure necessary to suit varying depths. As yet the process had not been made automatic. The engineer had to keep this whole proposition constantly in mind.

"See anything yet, Montey?" the captain asked of the superintendent as the *Nautilus* dropped slowly away into the depths.

Nothing by way of identification was yet discernible, even though the superintendent had turned on the powerful submarine searchlights with which the *Nautilus* was equipped, and, with the assistance of Jay, was sweeping the sides of the derelict.

For several minutes they cast about in the water, when of a sudden Jay exclaimed eagerly:

"Hold right there."

Instantly Captain Austin checked the movement of the diving outfit.

"There! That looks like E-70 to me," exclaimed Jay. The superintendent moved over beside him and as Jay withdrew from his port station peered out through the water.

With the glaring light of the *Nautilus'* reflectors shining more dazzlingly at this close range than any extraneous natural light that filtered through from the sun, Superintendent Brown beheld the crude yet only partially obliterated legend: "E-70."

"Fine and dandy!" he shouted. "It's proof positive. The craft out there is none other than the lost U. S. submarine chaser that was rammed last summer, as Captain Austin has told us. A fine feather in the cap of all of us. A find the first day out."

The superintendent's enthusiasm was contagious. It spread to Larry Seymour like wildfire.

"Three cheers for the *Nautilus* and the *Jules Verne*!" he cried in his excitement.

Deep down under the water, all unseen by the world, these five submarine navigators rejoiced over the success of their venture. This, the

first trip of the twin diving craft, had so far proved eminently satisfactory.

"Boys, we have here the positive proof tangibly before our eyes," said Superintendent Brown. "But suppose, in order to convince our many friends upstairs on the deck of the *Jules Verne*" (he pointed laughingly up "The Subway" out of the *Nautilus*), "we take something of the E-70 along with us as a souvenir? What say?"

Everybody nodded assent.

"What will it be?" asked Captain Austin.

"Oh, say a smokestack or one of her boilers," snickered the superintendent, who had a rare good sense of humor for all occasions.

"Suppose we take the whole blooming sub-chaser with us," shot back Austin, not to be outdone in the pleasantries.

They resolved to go fishing for a souvenir of the E-70, and accordingly signaled the *Jules Verne* to be lifted in the water. So soon as the *Nautilus* had been raised level with the sloping deck of the submarine chaser he flashed again for a stop and then buzzed for a slow movement ahead. Unerringly the tiny diving chamber was pushed forward directly over the forward deck of the E-70. Through the aquascope at their feet the five men in the *Nautilus* could see the outlines of the lost craft silhouetted against the background of the sea bottom.

"Now to go down slowly," mused the ship's captain. Gracefully as in an elevator in the Woolworth Tower the *Nautilus* was eased down until it was poised directly over the forward deck of the E-70 to starboard.

"See anything you can get a hold of?" asked Captain Austin as he brought the *Nautilus* to a stop not more than five or ten feet from the submarine chaser.

Everybody in the party, including the superintendent, was down on his knees peering through the aquascope.

"Sure as a cat has kittens!" yelled Larry Seymour. "Slip me a knockout if I don't see one of that old busted bird's binnacle lamps still hanging there. See it!" He was pointing now and directing the others where to look.

Soon they saw it. And no sooner was it spied than every last one of them resolved they would stay down here now until they had their souvenir. Forthwith Captain Austin signaled the *Jules Verne* again to be lowered. Three feet was all he wanted.

And then the miracle again. One hundred feet down in the embrace of the ocean, bottled up in a diving chamber that stood directly over a shipwreck, suffering not, even though working in a high-pressure atmosphere, these five men saw the floor beneath them rolled away again and the water of the deep sea held completely in check,—an unseen hand of compressed air hurling it back as King Canute would have swept the ocean back from the strand!

"Get it, Seymour," said Superintendent Brown, pointing to the binnacle lamp of the E-70. For there it was directly beneath the open aquascope of the *Nautilus*.

And the debonair young Mr. Seymour, now quite at ease in the diving chamber that had been both a riddle and a nightmare to him when he came below for the first time, nonchalantly sat down on the floor of the *Nautilus* and thrust his legs out into the sea. With no more effort than though he were hauling out a huge sea carp, he leaned down and tore from its rusted fastenings the binnacle lamp of the E-70. Willing hands reached to assist him lift it into the *Nautilus*; but Larry was more than equal to the occasion.

"There it is—E-70," exclaimed Superintendent Brown, pointing to lettering on the side of the lamp, still visible through rust.

"And some souvenir to take to our friends on the *Jules Verne*," replied "Cap" Austin as the party made ready to vacate the *Nautilus*.

CHAPTER XV

TRAPPED IN THE DIVING BELL

JAY Thacker and Dick Monaghan, together with their friend Larry Seymour, took to the new diving ship of the Bridgeford Salvage Company like the proverbial ducks to water. Starting with their first trip the day they reclaimed a binnacle lamp from the deck of the lost submarine chaser E-70, they showed a ready aptitude for the work at hand and soon proved themselves adepts.

News of the *Jules Verne's* accomplishments had been flashed to all corners of the world and maritime engineers were much interested. Many of them came to inquire into her merits and were well pleased after an inspection of the twin craft.

Usually Jay and Dick worked together in the diving chamber. At times they had little to do except to keep an eye upon things generally. Upon these occasions they had ample opportunity to discuss their own personal affairs, and so naturally fell into talk about the new college year. Both were anxious to make the 'varsity football team for one thing and they were wondering how many of the old boys would be back and what the chances would be for turning out a championship team. The gridiron sport was their favorite.

"Wonder if Bob Greer and Chick Wharton will be back?" speculated Jay, recalling that it was a great game the pair had won through their individual efforts in the last game they had played for Brighton just before enlisting for the war.

"Yes, and I hope Jack Hammond and Ted Wainwright are on hand, too," replied Dick, recalling two of his best chums who had enlisted early in the Navy and gotten into the submarine service.

One day in early August the boys had gone down in the *Nautilus* to place a bomb under the deck of a coal barge that had been located that morning. More than two thousand tons of coal were to be reclaimed and the boys realized they would come in for a good premium on the job, which meant a lot to them, in view of their anxiety to get together as much of a pile as possible before college opened in the fall.

Larry Seymour as usual was in charge of the big centrifugal pump—the "All Day Sucker," as the crew had termed the old pump with which coal cargoes were raised.

Everything was working fine. Without a hitch the *Nautilus* was dropped in the Sound by the *Jules Verne* until the access tube lay like the hypotenuse of a huge right-angled triangle that had the *Jules Verne* for its upper apex and the bottom of the sea for its base.

Casting about over the deck of the barge, Jay, who was really the executive officer of the diving chamber with Dick as his assistant, found a suitable spot for a base of operations. Quickly the aquascope of the *Nautilus* was rolled back and the waters of the Sound lapped at the edges of the trap door.

It was necessary only to make an opening large enough to insert the time bomb that Jay had brought down from the *Jules Verne*. This was but the matter of a few seconds' work. While Jay worked at the opening Dick arranged the mechanism of the time clock. His knowledge of and his predilection for mechanics made him an expert at this kind of business.

"She's all ready," he told Jay in a few minutes.

"And I'm all ready for you, too, chum," came the reply.

Together they lowered away with their legs through the aquascope until they stood on the deck of the barge. They were in water up to their knees, while the rest of their bodies were safe and dry within the enclosure of the *Nautilus*. Carefully the bomb was inserted and so held that it would be most likely to rip open a good-sized hole in the deck when it exploded.

"Let's go, chum," counseled Jay as they completed this final phase of their immediate task. So saying they crawled back into the *Nautilus* and while Dick attended closing and making fast again the aquascope, Jay turned to the telephone to tell Larry they were ready to be raised again.

"You set that bomb to go off soon, didn't you?" called Jay to his chum, as he took down the telephone receiver.

"Yep, in seventeen minutes—just at one-thirty sharp," answered Dick.

To which Jay nodded in approval and then turned to the telephone.

"Raise away, Larry; we're all set down here and anxious to get out of the way."

In the small chamber of the *Nautilus* both boys could hear the voice at the other end of the wire when the one holding the receiver kept it slightly

removed from his ear.

"Will take you up in two minutes," came the reply from Larry on the deck of the *Jules Verne*.

The two minutes went by, but so far as the boys could tell the *Nautilus* was not in motion. The depth dial still showed a submergence of eighty feet, the distance to the deck of the coal barge.

"Must have forgotten us," mused Jay as he stepped again to the telephone.

"Your two minutes are up and we are still waiting, Larry; better hurry it up."

There was a pause, and then came the voice of Larry from the other end:

"Cap wants to know whether you have set your time bomb and when it is to go off."

"All set to go off at half-past one—in just a quarter of an hour," was Jay's rejoinder.

Jay turned from the telephone with the statement to his chum that the air pump of the *Jules Verne* was working none too well and that the chief engineer, with Cap Austin, was trying to find out what was the matter.

"Well, all I've got to say is they better get it working before very long or you and I are in danger of being blown up when that bomb goes off in the coal barge directly underneath us," suggested Dick. He was not exactly an alarmist; but the situation had possibilities that did not appear at all inviting.

"You forget there is another way for us to be raised," was Jay's comeback.

Dick had forgotten for the moment.

"You forget that when the air pump fails the *Nautilus* is raised by steel cables. Deckmen wind us up with those huge winches that stand well forward on the *Jules Verne* near the hatchway leading to the access tube."

"Sure enough!" exclaimed Dick. This secondary method had quite escaped his memory for the present. Reassured, the boys put fear out of their minds and awaited developments.

Five minutes sped by, and still nothing happened. Going to the telephone Jay asked again how they were getting along above.

"Gee, pal, I'm sorry, but they don't seem to be making much headway as yet," came Larry's reply.

As Jay listened he could tell that Captain Austin was talking to Larry. He could hear him mention the word "bomb."

"Cap says it don't look like as though we could get the pump going in a hurry, so he is going to take no chances and will haul you up with the cables," sang out Larry in return.

"All right, let 'er go, for the love of Mike!" yelled Jay.

Time was indeed getting short. In ten minutes more the bomb in the coal barge would go off. There was nothing else to do. Either the *Nautilus* had to be raised at once or the time bomb in the coal barge had to be disengaged to avert what might prove to be a disaster for the two Brighton boys. Since the air pump was out of commission it was impossible for the boys to go out through the air-lock into the access tube. There was no way to swing back the heavy doors with the compressed air cut off.

Neither could the ballast tanks under the *Nautilus* and the access tube be blown out so long as the air pump on the *Jules Verne* was out of commission.

In this extremity the cables were the only means of lifting the *Nautilus* out of the depths. The men must be working now, for it was some job to wind the winches by hand, and progress through the water would be so much slower than if the diving chamber were "trimmed" in the regular way.

Jay and Dick were not cowards. They had proved that a number of times in school and while they served in the Navy abroad during the war. Each youth had proved his gameness on more than one occasion. So in the present extremity they were far from flabbergasted at the failure of the air apparatus on the mother ship just after they had placed a time bomb in the coal barge. Cool and collected they awaited developments. Each was a quick-witted lad and could be counted on to make the best of any situation.

Finally the telephone bell rang. Jay wrenched off the receiver. Larry was talking like a phonograph in high gear.

"Bad news, fellows. Just as they were winding for the first heavy pull on the cables the right main cable on the under side of the access tube snapped clean in two. The whole system of cables is put out of business. Cap says——"

At this juncture Captain Austin leaped forward and took up the telephone.

"How much time have you got until your bomb goes off, boys?" he called down the tube, quietly and without any show of apprehension.

Jay eyed his watch for a second.

"Not more than five minutes," came Jay's even reply.

"There's only one thing to do," the Captain told him in reassuring tones. "Our pump has gone back on us and the steel cables have parted on us—a combination of hard luck that would not happen once in a thousand years. Can you get your bomb back in any way and detach it?"

Jay said they would try, and turned toward his chum. "It's our only chance now, Dick," he told him.

Together they flung back the aquascope to grapple for the bomb they had set under the deck of the coal barge. But to their horror and dismay they found that the tide had swung the *Nautilus* slightly away from the opening in the barge—at least three or four feet!

CHAPTER XVI

AN EXPLOSION IMPENDS

HERE was now no chance to avert the explosion of the time bomb within the coal barge. On the appointed time it would go off as arranged and unless the mechanism by some freak of luck refused to work; but the chances on this score were few indeed. The mechanism represented the very latest scientific thought and the bomb was essentially for submarine work of this character.

"Looks, chum, as though we were in for the fireworks," smiled Dick, who was as cool as though he were standing on the twenty-five yard line at Brighton waiting for the ball to be passed for a try at a goal from the field.

Jay had not yet given up hope of getting the *Nautilus* moving, or of escaping from her in some way. He looked at his watch. Little more than a minute until the bomb would go off!

"Why in the name of sense don't they start the engines of the *Jules Verne* and back her away from the barge?" he ejaculated in consternation. By moving the *Jules Verne* the *Nautilus* also would be moved.

"Didn't you hear Larry say there was a breakdown in the engine room of the *Jules Verne* that was the cause of the whole trouble?" put back Dick, who was by far the more self-possessed of the two.

Slowly Jay shook his head in affirmation. Memory had fled with the rapid flow of events of the last quarter of an hour. Was it any wonder his senses reeled? Two youths completely trapped in a diving chamber that was poised directly over a coal barge in which a high explosive time bomb was set to go off now at any time!

There was a chance, of course, that the detonation might not be severe enough to damage the *Nautilus*. The bomb might explode outward or downward instead of spending its energy upward under the keel of the diving bell. In that event the shock might not be sufficient to rend the seams of the light steel chamber in which the Brighton boys were crouched awaiting the inevitable crash. If—but no one could tell under circumstances like these just what would happen.

"If we could only get into the air-lock we would be farther away from the explosion and less likely of being bashed up," said Jay as he looked toward the exit chamber.

"Yes, and if we could get into the air-lock we could get out into the access tube," added Dick.

Steadily they gazed into each other's eyes. Jay held his own watch in his hand, while Dick at intervals looked at the tiny steel clock behind a wire socket on the side of the *Nautilus*. By the rays of an incandescent bulb Dick could see that the minute hand had just turned twenty-seven minutes after one o'clock.

Tick by tick the clock was measuring off the few seconds that remained until the time bomb in the coal bunker underneath was scheduled to go off. Like two men sentenced to die before an enemy firing squad the Brighton lads stood facing each other in the diving compartment. Just the trace of a smile showed over their faces. They clenched hands in a firm grasp.

"In half a minute more——"

The jingling of the telephone bell jarred the stiff silence and stirred the boys from their stupor. As though hypnotized, they had stood awaiting the finish, not thinking of any further movement calculated to free them from their predicament. They had figured everything that could be done for their rescue having been thought of, or tried out.

But now the jangle of the telephone receiver, Jay moved to take it off the hook and as he did so his right foot struck the pin that held the aquascope in position. When the pin was removed the trapdoor, or aquascope as they called it, opened upward of its own accord on an air-cushion that worked on the principle of a door cushion.

And that was what happened at this particular moment in the *Nautilus*. The aquascope opened upward, leaving the limpid waters of the Sound purling at the very feet of the two boys. Just for a second the boys recoiled in horror, thinking now they were in greater danger. With the door open there was more chance of the force of the explosion below being felt within the *Nautilus*.

Dick sprang to close the aquascope in the few seconds that remained until the explosion. But imagine his surprise when Jay intercepted and hurled him away from the trap.

"Quick, chum, follow me," cried Jay in wild acclaim.

The opening of the aquascope had given the youth an inspiration. Yes, he would do it. It was a last desperate chance, but there was no reason why it would not work if carried out in time.

Even as Dick started back in consternation when thrust from the aquascope Jay literally leaped feet first into the aquascope as though he were jumping into a miniature swimming pool. Down he went until his feet struck at last on the deck of the coal barge. In this position he stood in water up to his chest, with his head and shoulders still in the *Nautilus*.

"What are you going to do?" gasped Dick. He had failed yet to grasp the significance of his chum's quick move.

"Dive out of here and take my chances on shooting up to the surface," came the instantaneous reply.

Then it dawned on Dick. What his chum intended doing was to let himself out of the *Nautilus* through the trap door, dive free of the salvage chamber and shoot up to the surface. And why not? They were down about eighty-five feet, and they were accustomed to the pressure of that depth since the pressure in the *Nautilus* had had to be equal that of the water outside in order to open the trap safely. A sickly grin spread across the Brighton youth's face. Why hadn't either he or Jay thought of that before?

"Come on, Dick, follow me," urged Jay, and almost before the words escaped his lips he quickly took a full inhalation into his lungs, gave one last look at his chum and ducked down head first into the waters of Long Island Sound through the open trap of the *Nautilus*.

Like some weird specter in a motion picture drama Dick beheld the spectacle at his feet. First he saw Jay's head under the water; then he saw his chum flatten out under the bottom of the *Nautilus*, and as he looked again he could faintly make out Jay's feet as they faded away from the darker expanse of the barge deck below. Jay had cleared the *Nautilus* safely.

"Here goes, too," gasped Dick to himself as he leaped through the aquascope. Almost instinctively as he let go, his eyes lifted to the tiny marine clock in its basket-like cage. Right on the half hour mark showed the minute hand. With a last frantic gasp for breath Dick pulled himself down into the embrace of water. Down out of the *Nautilus* into the embrace of water and into such close proximity with that infernal coal bomb!

"If I can only hurl myself—quickly—to—one—side—before——"

Just then the bomb exploded with a frightful force that rent the waters of the Sound in that particular locality with the force of an earthquake. In the midst of this maelstrom were the two Brighton youths who had taken a last desperate chance when it seemed they were doomed to die like rats in a trap.

What—Where——!!!

Up on the deck of the *Jules Verne* there was the maddest confusion. It had maintained for nearly half an hour, since the chief engineer had first reported trouble from below. Frantically, members of the crew were endeavoring to make the necessary repairs. In the meantime, every one knew by now of the perilous position of the two Brighton boys who had been working for some time in the *Nautilus*.

"My God, man, we've got to get those boys up somehow!" raved Superintendent Brown as he paced the deck.

Captain Austin, his face tense with anxiety, was directing the knot of men who were endeavoring to string up again a set of cables that ran down along the access tube and connected under the *Nautilus*. Fortunately, the captain had seen the break coming just before the steel parted and the severed ends had been held before they had dropped overboard.

Watch in hand, Captain Austin was keeping tabs on the time limit until the bomb in the coal barge was scheduled to go off. Eagerly the captain had scanned the bay in every direction for some other vessel that might stand by and give them help. But not a craft showed anywhere close, not even a sailboat. Unfortunately, the *Jules Verne* had not as yet been fitted out with wireless, and there was, consequently, no way to communicate ashore or with any other vessel.

"How are you coming, boys, on those cables?" Superintendent "Montey" Brown kept inquiring every minute or so of the repair crew.

They were making progress, but it was slow work. Splicing was no easy task, especially with steel wire. If brand new cables could be run out it would be a much easier proposition; but that was out of the question with the *Nautilus* on the bottom of the Sound over the coal barge eighty-five feet under water. And there were no diving suits as yet on the *Jules Verne* for just such emergency cases as these.

"Tell them to keep a stout heart," Captain Austin reminded Larry Seymour several times, who was at the telephone and signal booth connecting with the *Nautilus*.

Larry in turn reported that he could not always get a reply from below.

"Probably they are trying some way to worm their way out," suggested Larry, who was nearly beside himself with worry for his two old pals. Poor old Jay and Dick! They had been such good friends for so long. Was it possible now that some disaster was to overtake them?

It was while Larry was thus painfully reviewing the possibilities of the next few minutes that Captain Austin suggested to the boys in the *Nautilus* that they try and put the time bomb in the coal barge out of commission. Eagerly the would-be rescuers on the *Jules Verne* awaited developments.

"It can't be done now, for we have moved away from the opening in the deck of the barge a yard or so," had been the answer sent up by Jay after the two imprisoned Brighton youths had inspected the barge through the aquascope of the *Nautilus*.

Well, the only chance hope of rescue now, it seemed, depended on getting the cables spliced and the winches winding before the bomb was detonated. Like beavers the deckmen of the *Jules Verne* were exerting themselves. It was a fight for two lives, and the men of the *Jules Verne* were spending themselves to the limit.

"How much time remains?" asked Superintendent Brown after what seemed an eternity of tugging with the torn cables.

In turn he was told that less than five minutes remained. By the clock in the chart house of the *Jules Verne* it was just twenty-six minutes after one. And Jay had sent up word that the bomb was set for one-thirty!

As a last resort Captain Austin called for volunteers and asked that they dive from the deck of the *Jules Verne* as the bomb was exploded in the coal barge and see whether they could find any trace of the two Brighton boys in the water, or learn whether or not the *Nautilus* had been ripped open wide by the force of the explosion. A half dozen stepped forward, and the captain asked them all to be ready.

"Stand by the telephone and try to get them so soon as the explosion goes off, for they may not be hurt at all," were Larry's orders. With receiver glued to his right ear he sat awaiting the crash.

Just then the foreman in charge of the cable repairs reported that he could commence to wind in another half minute.

"Tell Thacker and Monaghan we are going to raise them now by the cables and to keep a stiff upper lip down there," commanded Austin.

Larry buzzed and buzzed, but in vain. No answer came from the interior of the *Nautilus*. What had happened? Larry was frantic as he pushed down hard and harder on the button.

"Look!" cried one of the crew forward as he pointed off the starboard bow of the *Jules Verne* at an object that had just shot up out of the water. It was the head of a man!

As members of the crew of the *Jules Verne*, with Superintendent Brown and Captain Austin in the lead, swarmed to the side of the ship there came an upheaval from beneath and a tremor that shook the old boat from stem to stern. It was as though a geyser had let loose directly under the new diving ship.

"The bomb! It has exploded!" Larry Seymour, his face ashen white, sought anew to get a telephone communication with the two Brighton boys whom he loved so dearly.

But even as he despaired there came a welcome cry forward.

"Thacker! It's Thacker! He escaped unharmed from the *Nautilus*."

But where was Dick?

CHAPTER XVII

A DOG TO THE RESCUE

EVEN as the crowd of sailors on the *Jules Verne* cheered, Jay Thacker turned on his back in the waters of Long Island Sound and waved a hearty salute to his friends. Unharméd, he had completely escaped from the *Nautilus* just a few seconds before the bomb was exploded in the sunken coal barge.

"Jay! Jay! Keep afloat—we'll have you in a minute," yelled Larry Seymour as he crowded to the rail, tears of joy streaming down his face.

"Catch the rope!" Jay heard the cry from the deck of the *Jules Verne*. Turning he beheld a group of sailors and from their midst one who was ready to cast a line. But even before the line was hurled the figure of another lithe youth poised for a second on the rail and then dived into the water.

"Good boy, Seymour!" came the re-echoing shout. And in the next moment Jay saw the round and puffing face of Larry directly beside him. It was Larry who had dived overboard to the rescue. With a few strokes he was close up and thrust a sturdy shoulder under Jay's shoulders. Jay had turned on his back to rest for a moment.

"Thank God, boy, you got out!" gasped Larry. "Are you hurt? Can you swim?"

Jay replied he was still able to take care of himself.

"Better look for Dick; he must be somewhere around here," was Jay's rejoinder.

But taking no chances, Larry supported his old friend until the line had come over the side of the *Jules Verne*. When Jay had taken hold and was being yanked aboard Larry turned and swam back in the general direction whence Jay had come, hoping against hope that he would be able to find some trace of Dick. But he was nowhere in sight!

As for Jay, he was given a wonderful welcome when at last he was hauled over the side of the *Jules Verne*. Eager hands clasped him and landed

him in safety at last upon the deck of the vessel.

"Thank heaven, lad, you are safe again—I had almost given up hope of ever seeing you again!" exclaimed Captain Austin as he clasped Jay with a fatherly hug.

"Nor I either," said "Montey" Brown as he, with others who had come out on the trip of the *Jules Verne* and *Nautilus*, crowded around.

But Jay was thinking of something else. Dick! Where was his chum, Dick Monaghan? What had happened to him?

"We've got to find him somehow; I am sure that he followed me out of the *Nautilus*. He said he would follow suit as I prepared to lower away through the aquascope."

Under orders of Captain Austin a small dory was being lowered aft, manned by a trio of sailors who had orders to patrol the waters just forward of the *Jules Verne* over the spot where the *Nautilus* had been submerged.

"Let me go along; I've got to find my chum," wailed Jay as he saw the boat going over the side. But friendly hands restrained him. He was in no condition for further effort after his hazardous exploit.

Just then there came a cry from the bridge of the *Jules Verne*, where a number of visitors had taken their station earlier in the day to watch the demonstration of the new diving craft.

"Look! What's that object floating in the water off the port bow? Not more than three or four points off and about fifty feet ahead."

A gentleman in panama hat and palm beach suit, a representative of a maritime magazine, who had come aboard as a guest of Superintendent Brown, was pointing out over the water.

Immediately all attention was directed that way. Jay had come up out of the depths on the starboard bow of the *Jules Verne*; so, of one accord, passengers and crew of the vessel surged to the port rail and scanned the waters of the Sound. Jay was one of the first across the deck.

"Where is it? What is it?" he called out excitedly.

The journalist pointed. Every eye followed the general direction indicated by the pointing finger.

"Some object floating in the water. Can't see what it is from here," added the lookout. Several others standing by his side agreed there was something out there in the water.

"It's Dick! It's Dick, my chum!" Jay was in a frenzy and would have leaped overboard to go to the rescue had he not been restrained. Captain Austin by this time had run aft and with megaphone in hand directed the sailors in the dory to row around the stern of the *Jules Verne* and come up on the port bow of the vessel.

In all this confusion, amid all the babel of voices, there resounded the furious barking of a dog. Fismes, an eye-witness of the rescue of Jay, had become all excited, too, and was giving vent to himself with raucous barking. With canine instinct the animal seemed to sense the situation. And when everyone began pointing in a certain direction over the side, the dog concluded there was something out there demanding attention; something to be retrieved from the water.

It required no word of instruction, no exhortation, to tell this dog what to do. Gathering himself with all his strength, the lean hound leaped from the deck of the *Jules Verne* directly into the water. No one told him to go; none had an opportunity to hold him in check.

"Fismes! Fismes! Good old dog! Go to it!" screamed Jay in sheer delight.

Almost breathlessly the crowd on the ship watched the dog. As though guided by some uncanny power the dog swam straight and true in the direction of the floating object. Was it the body of a man? Was it the form of Dick Monaghan? The dog knew not; he sensed only the fact that something was floating out there in the water, and it was something that all eyes on board were watching.

"Good dog, Fismes!" they were shouting.

On and on the faithful canine swam with all the strength of his slim legs. And soon he had reached the side of this mysterious object and set his teeth in it. They who were shouting encouragement from the *Jules Verne* saw all this and marveled at the strength of the animal. They saw him take a firm hold. They saw him stop for an instant. They saw him start to swim again, this time toward the ship—and towing the object along through the water as best he could! Only a dog—but what a wonderful animal! Swimming superbly and maintaining a vise-like grip on the salvaged object.

A mighty shout arose from the deck of the *Jules Verne*.

"It's Monaghan," came the cry from Superintendent Brown, who had rushed into the wheel-house for a pair of glasses that he might get a closer

view of the magnet that had lured the dog into the water.

"Hurrah! it's Dick! Hurrah for Fismes!" screamed Jay in a perfect delirium of joy.

And Dick it was. By this time the rescue boat had arrived alongside and dragged both the inert form of Dick and the wet, tousled dog into the dory. One of the sailors was tugging at the blouse of the rescued diver and feeling for the heart pulse. The other two pulled with all their might for the *Jules Verne*.

"He's still alive," the sailor shouted as the dory came alongside.

"Thank God for that!" cried Jay as he bent over the rail of the *Jules Verne* looking down into the face of his chum. The eyes were closed and the body crumpled in an inert mass. But life still remained, and surely the spark that remained could be fanned again into a flame!

Tenderly they took the unconscious Brighton youth aboard. Expert hands began working over him immediately. First the water was drained out of the throat and lungs. Then next the pulmotor was brought into action. Every device known in the resuscitation of the drowned was applied under the direction of Captain Austin.

And in the meantime a lean brown German police dog answering to the name of Fismes was being patted and fêted by an admiring throng!

By and by they who ministered to the unconscious diver were rewarded by a flicker of the eyes and a stirring of the pulses that bespoke the return of life. The pulmotor with its stores of precious oxygen was getting in its effective work. And none watched more solicitously than Jay Thacker as he knelt close beside his old Brighton chum.

"Dick! Dick! Open your eyes. Speak to me," pleaded Jay.

And presently the eyes opened. Just for an instant and then closed again. Slowly but surely respiration became normal again. The splendid physique of the boy who had always taken good care of himself and lived a normal outdoor life was standing him good in the pinch. Where a weakling would have succumbed to such an ordeal the athletic Brighton student who had served his country so faithfully and efficiently in the Navy was pulling through.

After what seemed an eternity to Jay consciousness came back at last to his chum. Opening his eyes Dick gazed first into the face of his old "bunkie."

"It's you, Jay," he mumbled feebly.

"Yes, Dick, old boy, it's Jay," sobbed the latter. The strain had told on Jay. He was about ready to collapse but held himself together by sheer grit. And now he was rewarded, for Dick had been saved. Jay could only throw his arms around Fismes and hug the dog in his delight.

Jay told them all and in turn asked what had happened on the mother ship that had put the air pumps and the engines out of commission. Engineers were still working on repairs, and by now had succeeded in getting the engines working again. But it was some time before the air pumps were working.

In the meantime Dick responded wonderfully to treatment. For a time he was completely bewildered, knowing not what had happened to him, where he was and how he had been brought back again safe on the *Jules Verne*. But slowly it all came back to him and he was able to tell what had happened to him.

It developed that just as he had lowered away through the trap of the *Nautilus* to follow Jay in a desperate effort to escape to the surface from the depths the bomb in the coal barge had exploded. Just as he had dipped his head into the water it had gone off. Caught off balance in an awkward position before he had had a chance to dive from the deck of the barge, he had been flung against the steel side of the *Nautilus*. He had felt the impact, and then he knew nothing more, for the blow had rendered him unconscious.

And then, in turn, Dick heard the story of how his body had been discovered floating in the water, and how Fismes had dived overboard to the rescue, and held his friend safely until a rescue boat picked them both up. Dick's eyes gleamed as he heard of the splendid part played in the rescue by the war dog.

"Where is he?" asked the Brighton boy.

Jay sprang up on deck and came back presently with Fismes, fairly carrying him all the way.

"Here he is," he cried, as he appeared again in Dick's bunk room with the dog.

Old Fismes, wagging his tail and laying his silken ears back by way of recognition, stalked sheepishly across the room and licked the outstretched hand of the youth on the cot.

"I owe my life to you, and I'll guard your life as long as life is spared to me," said Dick as he pulled the nose of the dog over on the counterpane and stroked the still wet head.

"Back to Brighton he goes with us; and he'll be the best mascot the academy ever had," added Jay emphatically.

Dick nodded approval with a smile and sank back on his pillow to rest again, weak from the exertion.

In another hour the repairs had been completed and the *Jules Verne* was able to move again under her own power. The *Nautilus* had been raised, but so far there had been no opportunity to determine whether the diving chamber had been damaged.

"But that is small concern, indeed, when we consider the fact that these two brave young divers are safe and sound again after a terrible experience," exclaimed Superintendent Brown as he directed Captain Austin to start back again to Bridgeford.

CHAPTER XVIII

HONORS FOR HEROES

IT was the sixteenth day of August. Only a month remained until Brighton Academy was scheduled to begin another school year. And what a year it promised to be! Many lads who had dropped out of school at the beginning of the World War were expected to return again to the familiar dormitories to renew old friendships and to continue the interrupted courses of study that would fit them either for college entrance or for active careers of usefulness in the world of work.

None looked forward more eagerly to the commencement of this new school year than Jay Thacker and Richard Monaghan, the two lads who had been spending the summer vacation, following their discharge from service in the spring, with the Bridgeford Salvage Company in the reclamation of lost treasure and in testing out new apparatus lately devised by shipyard officials, together with noted scientists.

Ten days' rest had served to restore the boys completely to good health again after their harrowing experience in the *Nautilus* when they had been trapped at the bottom of Long Island Sound. Jay had come through entirely unaffected by his experience. As for Dick, he had felt the effects of his experience more severely. The bump that he had received when hurled against the side of the *Nautilus* by the explosion of the time bomb in the sunken coal barge had bruised him up somewhat, although no bones were broken. The nervous strain, together with the prolonged stay under heavy pressure, had left their marks. For a few days he had remained dazed; but in the end his iron constitution had triumphed. Expert medical attention, combined with complete rest, had brought him around in fine shape again.

One morning just a week after the affair in the Sound the boys were summoned to the office of Superintendent Brown.

"Bring Fismes along with you," was the additional summons.

Arriving half an hour later at the headquarters of the shipbuilding officials, the Brighton boys were surprised to find all the officials of the

company assembled, together with other distinguished looking persons, none of whom they recognized.

"Come right in, and bring that dandy dog in with you," the superintendent called when the boys' arrival was announced.

In walked the trio, the war dog falling into dignified step between his two masters. Eager eyes turned to catch a glimpse of the illustrious dog and his even more illustrious sponsors. At this juncture, Mr. John R. Walter, the president of the Bridgeford Company, stepped forward and greeted the Brighton boys. Jay and Dick had heard his name, of course; but not until now had they had the privilege of knowing him.

"I have wanted to know you boys for some time," he began. "I have heard of you both, as indeed the whole world has lately. It is a pleasure to know such manly fellows, and I want here personally to congratulate both of you for your splendid work with this company during the last month or so. I have heard of your school and of your desire to complete your education there, now that the war has ended and you have served your country so well. You are, indeed, a great credit to Brighton Academy. This is not said, my boys, by way of flattery, as I believe you are both too level-headed to be victims of self-conceit. What I have to say is merely in recognition of your good work, and is only a deserved tribute."

The president took from his inner pocket two long envelopes. One he handed to Dick; the other to Jay.

"Take these, please, as a token of our appreciation and an expression of our goodwill and kindly interest in both of you. Please do not open them until you have withdrawn from this assemblage. It is not possible to place a value upon what you have done for us lately, but possibly this may prove of some value to you in your plans for pursuing your education to its completion. With all my heart I wish you God-speed wherever you go and whatever you do."

Overwhelmed by the unexpected ovation, the lads could only mumble their thanks as they took the proffered envelopes and transferred them to their own pockets. Deferentially they bowed, while the little audience grouped about them in the shipbuilders' office applauded. And then President Walter turned to the dog.

"It is a pleasure also to know this great dog," he continued, stroking the head of the hound. "He, too, is worthy of some special recognition. To that

end, gentlemen, I desire to introduce Mr. Henry LeFevre, of New York, representing the Society of the Blue Cross."

Mr. LeFevre stepped forward and explained about the organization that he represented; how it was an international organization that looked after the interests of animals, particularly horses and dogs. Throughout the war it had rendered valiant service on the battlefields of Europe looking after the interests of the Animal Kingdom.

"The brilliant work of this dog in rescuing his master from Long Island Sound a few weeks ago came to our attention," he told the assemblage. "We decided that such a meritorious act was deserving of fitting recognition. So I am here this day personally to greet Fismes the War Dog and his owners, and to confer upon this splendid dog the Blue Cross of our Society."

So saying, the speaker took from his pocket a neat plush-lined box from which he lifted the beautiful decoration of the Blue Cross. He stooped to fasten it on the collar of Fismes, but at this juncture Superintendent Brown and Captain Austin stepped forward and suggested that the dog be placed on the big mahogany table. Jay and Dick at once lifted the hound to a place of honor amid the plaudits of the crowd. Then, with a few well chosen words, the decoration was affixed.

An impromptu reception followed the ceremony, everybody crowding around to felicitate the Brighton boys and to pet the big hound on the table who stood patiently taking it all in, alternately rubbing his nose over the sleeves of Jay and Dick as they came close to him.

"How much will you take for him?" asked one of the guests, a twinkle in his eye.

Dick smiled. "I reckon he's not for sale at any price," was his reply as he put one arm around his protégée.

"That dog is going to school," remarked Jay. "He's slated to enter Brighton with us next month. He'll be the mascot of our athletic teams; but all the time he'll be the particular pal of chum and me. We have a special reservation for him in the academy stables."

Soon it was all over and the boys with their pet had withdrawn. It had been somewhat of an ordeal for the two modest youths, and they were glad when it was all over.

"Gee, I'd sooner be a prisoner in the *Nautilus* any time than stand up under that stuff," groaned Jay.

"Well, I should say so," re-echoed Dick.

But the big surprise was still in store.

"What do you suppose is in here?" smiled Jay, taking from his pocket the envelope that President Walter had given him. Dick followed suit.

"I have no idea; let's look."

They did. Imagine their joyful surprise when they drew out a check on the Bridgeford Salvage Company for one thousand dollars each!

"G-o-o-d N-n-n-ight!" was all Jay could say. As for Dick, he just whistled and passed his hand over his face with a gesture of bewilderment.

One thousand dollars! It would permit them to finish their courses at Brighton and give them a good start on their college careers. There it was in black and white on a note that accompanied the checks:

"From the Bridgeford Salvage Company as a testimonial of faithful and efficient service in order that you may apply it to the completion of your education."

Both boys were overwhelmed with the bonus. They had expected to be paid off at the expiration of their contracts, according to the terms of the agreement under which they had been employed in June. This had stipulated they would receive an additional honorarium in the event the company was successful in salvaging any treasure during the summer. But this additional check for \$1000 was almost too good to believe.

"Now we can go right through to the diploma at Brighton," chirruped Jay as he danced around Fismes.

"And have some left for college," added Dick.

Delighted, they ran straight home to acquaint their families with the good news. To have been so handsomely rewarded was something they had never dreamed of. Now they were certain to go through with their cherished plans for an education that would enable them to compete with the best brains of the world.

A few days later the boys received a summons to the office of "Montey" Brown again. Their contracts ran on until September 10th, and they were still subject to call.

They found Captain Austin and Superintendent Brown awaiting them.

"What do you say, boys, to a little more fun before you leave us?" asked "Montey."

"Good enough," replied Jay. To which Dick added a "Fire away."

"All right," resumed the superintendent. "You remember we didn't finish up the job on the old *Dominion* off Martha's Vineyard. Remember, we got most of the diamonds, but left the gold bullion. Thousands of dollars' worth of precious metal down there yet."

"What we want to do is to go back there and finish up the job while you boys are still with us," "Montey" Brown was saying. "We propose to use the *Jules Verne* and the *Nautilus* this time instead of sending you down as divers from the *Nemo*—that is, if you are willing."

Were they willing? Sure they were, and anxious to be off whenever the salvage ship officials said the word. They said so, too, in emphatic words that left no doubt as to the fact that neither of the Brighton lads had lost his nerve as a result of their experiences of the summer.

"Let's go, men," Jay responded. "We still have a few weeks of our contract time left and nothing would suit us better than to visit the old *Dominion* again."

That settled it. The boys were informed the *Jules Verne* would sail the following morning at sunrise and they would be counted on to report in time for the sailing.

The *Jules Verne* and the *Nautilus* had been completely repaired again after the breakdown in Long Island Sound on the occasion of the coal barge incident. Taken into drydock and carefully examined, it had developed that the *Nautilus* was intact, despite the bomb explosion. None of her seams had been strained and she had been fitted out with new equipment that made a repetition of the accident in which the two boys nearly lost their lives next to an impossibility.

So, on the following morning, the Brighton boys found themselves headed again out Long Island Sound toward the Atlantic Ocean and the new seat of action off Martha's Vineyard.

"We'll have no Weddigen around this time to ball things up or put any phoney stuff across again," remarked Dick as they discussed the work at hand.

That set them talking about Weddigen. Not a trace of him had been found since his escape from the Navy Yard at Boston, although government secret service men had sought everywhere for him. But the boys had heard from the Navy Department concerning their exploit off Cape May in

reclaiming government plans and formulas from the submerged U-boat. From the Secretary of the Navy had come a letter congratulating them for their service.

"I only wish Weddigen was here, though," said Jay. "I've got a score to settle with him, and I'd enjoy nothing more than the chance to turn him over to Uncle Sam."

"Some day we may meet up with him again," returned Dick. "In that event we'll see that he doesn't escape."

Through the day the *Jules Verne* made her way slowly along. Because of the fact that she was pushing the *Nautilus* along ahead of her, navigation was necessarily slow. The speed was no better than eight knots an hour. It was nearly dusk when they arrived in the vicinity of Martha's Vineyard and quite dark when they approached the spot where the *Dominion* lay under many fathoms of water.

Quite a stir was created aboard the *Jules Verne* when Captain Austin reported that another vessel of some kind had anchored for the night in the immediate neighborhood.

"As near as I can estimate it, she is anchored just about over the spot where lies the *Dominion*," Captain Austin confided to the Brighton boys as he climbed down from the bridge of the *Jules Verne* and joined them on deck.

What manner of craft was this? Who was aboard her? And what was she doing here in this neighborhood quite out of the path of ocean travel?

CHAPTER XIX

IN THE PIRATES' NEST

PEERING through the darkness the new arrivals on the *Jules Verne* could scarcely make out the outlines of the other craft. She seemed at first glance like a good-sized sloop with a leg-of-mutton mainsail that bellied wide against the night skyline. And then again she appeared to be a huge cabin cruiser. Lights appeared from a row of ports well forward.

"What do you suppose it is?" asked Jay as he edged up close to his captain.

"Likely an auxiliary craft of some kind—sail and motor," replied the chief executive of the *Jules Verne*.

For a few minutes the trio watched the other vessel lying to only a few cable lengths away. Captain Austin had a glass that he trained on the stranger. But it was too dark to get many details of her.

"Who do you suppose he is?" asked Dick.

Captain Austin shook his head. There was no way of telling. "Looks as though some one had beat us to it," he mused.

"Do you reckon they have gotten down into the *Dominion* and gotten up any of the bullion?" queried Larry Seymour, who had joined them.

"Indeed, son, I haven't the least idea," said the captain. "It does seem mighty strange that some one else should have anchored right in the vicinity of the *Dominion*. Very few people know where the *Dominion* lies, and if this chap doesn't know, it surely is an odd coincidence that he should be anchored for the night right where he is."

The engines of the *Jules Verne* were still in motion. The anchors were just being run out and it was not possible to hear distinctly any noise that might have been wafted over the waters from the mythical craft. Captain Austin announced he would speak the vessel as soon as the *Jules Verne* had settled for the night and the engines had stopped. In the meantime the crew indulged in all manner of speculation.

"Maybe it is a United States revenue cutter," offered Dick.

"Or one of the fishing fleet that has gotten off her course and stopped here for the night," suggested Larry.

"Might be some millionaire's pleasure craft, too," put in Captain Austin. "She looks like a pretty swell boat, whatever she is. What do you think, Mr. Thacker?"

The captain turned to Jay. That youth slowly shook his head.

"I'm not a trouble-hunter, but my own private opinion is that that ship over there, whatever is she and whoever is aboard her, is here for no good," replied Jay deliberately.

"You mean—" began Dick.

"I mean that I think those fellows over there right now are after the gold in the *Dominion*," interrupted Jay. "They may have been here for days. They may have the *Dominion* pretty well cleaned out, or they may have just arrived. At any rate, my hunch is that she is a treasure-hunter—a submarine pirate."

"How are we going to find out?" interrogated Larry, very much aroused by the possibility of encountering a pirate.

"Wait until morning, I reckon," answered Jay.

Just then Captain Austin, who had moved off during the conversation, came back. He was carrying a megaphone.

"I am going to hail them," he announced. The *Jules Verne* had been anchored and her engines shut off. So the captain of the salvage ship advanced to the rail and trained his megaphone in the direction of the other ship.

"Hello! Who are you?" he bellowed, slowly and distinctly.

Eagerly the crowd waited. But no reply. Again the captain shouted and still no response. A third time he shouted, this time in an even more imperative tone. And back came an answer.

"None of your business who we are. Who are you?"

If there had been any suspicion aboard the *Jules Verne* as to the character of the other ship, that answer settled it. Whoever it was, he was not going to make himself known. He was averse to disclosing his identity and he wanted no interference, as was manifested by his saucy answer.

In reply Captain Austin gave no information to disclose his identity either. Instead he yelled:

"Never mind who we are. You can find out in the morning."

And in that same moment he resolved in his mind that he would keep the stranger well covered during the night and see that no effort was made to escape. Turning from the rail, the captain immediately called his executive officer and gave orders for the crew to be armed with sidearms, that a sentry with a rifle be posted to starboard on the side facing the stranger craft, and that a machine gun that the *Jules Verne* carried for just such protection as might arise out of an emergency of this kind be mounted on the bridge.

"Seymour, I want you to stand close by the wireless tonight, for we might want you at any time," the captain directed.

Officials of the salvage company had deemed it wise to arm the *Jules Verne*; for, since her fame as a salvage ship had gone abroad it was possible that pirate ships might lay for her and attempt to rob her. The wireless had been installed also because virtually all sea-going vessels were now so equipped. Larry Seymour, who had been with the radio service while in the army, had proved an ideal man for the post of wireless operator on the *Jules Verne*.

With these preparations complete Captain Austin ordered all men below for evening mess and called his two special divers, Jay Thacker and Dick Monaghan, into his own stateroom to have dinner with him. The three sat down to eat and were soon engrossed in a deep discussion of the mysterious ship that was their neighbor for the night.

"I'll say he has a nasty tongue in his head to answer the way he did," said Jay. He was ready for a fight; his blood was up.

"Mighty discourteous, to say the least," was the captain's comment.

They were agreed by now that the strange craft had come to Martha's Vineyard with some design rather than that she had accidentally anchored for the night in the vicinity of the submerged *Dominion*. But who she was and who was aboard her was more than they could surmise. Only daylight would reveal her—provided she stayed that long. What was to prevent her slipping away?

"I'll tell you what we'll do"—Jay had jumped from the table, overturning a plate of food in his excitement.

"I'll go aboard her myself this very night. I'll find out who she is and who is aboard her and what they are doing. I'll——"

"How will you go aboard her? Row over in a small boat and take your chances on being shot or done away with by a band of pirates? Not if I have anything to say about it," said Captain Austin firmly.

But Jay was insistent. Nothing would deter him, he said. He would swim. It was the logical thing to do. If the ship were a pirate craft they could take measures at once to capture her or wireless for help.

"But you would be running quite a risk," offered the captain.

"Nonsense," rattled off Jay. "That would be just a lark, and I am more than able to take care of myself."

In the end the leader of the salvage crew surrendered to his determined diver. It was agreed they would wait until ten o'clock when all was quiet and that no word should be spread among the crew of the *Jules Verne*. So while Captain Austin went off to inspect the ship, and in particular the guard whom he had posted, Jay repaired to his stateroom and stretched out for a little rest. Dick was with him and Fismes snoozed near the open door.

"How many men do you suppose they have on board over there?" queried Dick, pointing in the direction of the unknown vessel.

"Goodness only knows; they may have a dozen or fifty," said Jay. "She looks like a pretty big boat as near as you can size her up in the dark. If they came out here after any of that gold you can make up your mind they are well equipped to take care of themselves. They have enough men to put up a good fight and quite likely are as well armed if not better than we are."

"What makes you think they are here after the *Dominion's* gold? I thought only a few people knew where the liner went down, let alone that she carried such wealth," pondered Dick.

"True enough," said Jay. "Not many people do know where she is. But they could find out. You remember that we were out here once before on the *Dominion*. Possibly some member of the crew of the *Nemo* has spread the news."

Ten o'clock found Jay ready for the venture. He had divested himself of all his outer clothing and had resolved to make the trip dressed only in a bathing suit. The night was warm and the water just the temperature for a cool swim. The youth went unarmed.

"Just going out to reconnoiter a little bit," he had said. Jay's plan was to get aboard the strange craft in some way, look her over and report back his observations. What they would be he had not the slightest idea. His sole

intent was to learn something about the unfriendly ship that had refused to divulge its identity and to bring back this information to the *Jules Verne*. He resolved to go unarmed, deciding not even to carry a dirk in his belt, although Dick had suggested that for the sake of self-protection in a possible surprise attack.

"No, if the worst comes to the worst I'll just jump overboard and get back here in a jiffy," Jay had said.

Accompanied by his chum, Jay started from his stateroom for the bridge, there to consult a moment with Captain Austin before leaving. On the way the two Brighton boys dropped in on Larry Seymour in the wireless room just to say "howdy."

"Good enough, fellows," said Larry, as the two Brighton boys stepped into the wireless station. "I've just been talking with a revenue cutter—the *Marblehead*. She's anchored for the night in a cove about five miles around the bend of the coast line from us."

"Fine!" exclaimed Jay, as he brought his fist down on the table. And then he added: "Tell him we might need his services around here pretty shortly and to keep a sharp ear out for us."

"I've already done that much," smiled back Larry, "and he's so inquisitive he wants to know what's up. But I've told him nothing more. He knows we are a salvage ship and that we are always likely to be mixing it up with some highway—I mean high sea—robber."

"Good work," answered Jay. "And now I'm off, fellows."

Jay ran off for a moment to speak to Captain Austin and then came back to the rail, where Dick and Larry awaited him.

"You all right, chum?" queried Dick anxiously.

"Never felt better in my life," the other answered. And then they shook hands all around.

Jay waved a farewell and went over the side on a tie rope. Soundlessly he slipped into the water and straightway began to swim. He had laid his course several times during the evening and found it easy going because the strange craft had dim lights forward and aft. Jay's target lay directly between.

Accustomed to the water, a stout swimmer and in the best of condition, he made rapid progress. The youth's chief concern was to make no noise. By no means must he make the slightest sound that would betray his

approach to any who might be watching aboard the mystery ship. That some one or perhaps many were on guard Jay felt only too sure.

Here was a sure enough adventure! He prided himself on the exploit. It was just what suited his daring nature. Like Bainbridge in the harbor at Tripoli, or Hobson at Santiago! Jay remembered American naval heroes who had performed spectacularly and bravely for their country.

"This may not be war, but it's good live stuff all right!" He chuckled to himself as he swam stealthily along in the water, conserving his energy in every possible way and aiming true to his target.

Presently he came close up to the craft. Yes, she was a palatial auxiliary, just as Captain Austin had divined. Her sails were furled by now and she was wrapped in a mantle of darkness save for her signal lights and a solitary light that twinkled from the cabin ports well forward.

Jay swam closer. He was swimming slowly with only his face out of water. What was that just over the rail on a line with the main mast? The youth turned smoothly on his back and lay looking up on the deck of the stranger craft. It was a guard! Jay could see faintly the glow of a cigar and a moment later heard the man clear his throat!

Immediately the Brighton youth swam in close to the side of the vessel. There was less chance of being seen. Quietly he set his course toward the bow. Likely the guard was only to starboard since that side was next the *Jules Verne* in the near distance. Jay resolved to go around to the port side and take his chances there on getting aboard.

Accordingly, he swam quietly forward and slipped around the bow of the mystery ship, sliding in under her taut anchor chain. Once on the port quarter, Jay worked his way rapidly along looking for a line that might lead aboard the vessel. What was his great joy to find a rope ladder fully extended and firmly held above.

It was only the work of a minute to draw himself up, round over round. At the rail he paused and surveyed the deck in both directions. No one was in sight. Only from the cabin forward came a murmur of voices. The guard—if there was one—was to the far side and apparently in ignorance of the fact that a boarder had come over the side.

Jay's mission was to find out something of the craft and her crew. He resolved first to take a peep into that lighted cabin. Forthwith he directed

his course in that direction, keeping a sharp lookout on either side of him. His presence so far was undiscovered.

In a few seconds he had arrived by the nearest port. Now he must be careful, indeed. Inch by inch he moved his head along until one eye gazed through the glass. And what a sight!

There in the cabin sat three men around a table. Upon the table were laid a number of bars of shining metal. Gold—the bullion, at least a portion of it, from the *Dominion*!

The lad gasped. Here were pirates who had discovered the *Dominion* and salvaged some of her precious stores. But who were these men? Jay could see the faces of two of them. They were unfamiliar faces to him. The third sat with his back to the Brighton youth. But there was something about the shape of the head, the contour of the shoulders and the general physical build that was familiar.

Who was he?

CHAPTER XX

THE TREASURE RECLAIMED

JUST then one of the trio stirred at the table and Jay drew back hurriedly lest his presence be noted. At the same time the Brighton lad heard the guard moving on the other side of the ship. It was time to get out of here. And why not? He had seen enough to acquaint him with the fact that whoever these men were aboard this palatial craft, they were pirates bold who had filched from the *Dominion* some of her gold bullion.

The lad hesitated not a moment, but quickly ran back over the deck to the rope ladder and as deftly lowered over the side. He had come aboard all unsuspected and undetected. Now he would hasten back to the *Jules Verne* and tell Captain Austin all that he had seen. It would be up to the chief officer of the salvage ship to say what next should be done.

"They must not get away at all hazards," Jay told himself. He hated to go, for his own disposition was to confront these chaps and demand of them by what right they had helped themselves to the gold that reposed here in American waters where only qualified agents could search it out. But that, of course, would have been foolhardy. The only thing to do was to get back to the *Jules Verne* and report his find.

The trip back was as easily negotiated as the trip over. The distance was short, not more than two hundred yards at most, and the athletic diver found himself still strong and sturdy as he came alongside the *Jules Verne*. A low soft whistle brought Dick to the rail in a hurry.

"That you, Jay?" came the friendly challenge. To which Jay replied affirmatively, and was quickly drawn aboard by the eager hands of his friends.

"What luck?" asked Captain Austin, who came up on the *qui vive*.

Jay motioned them all into his stateroom and there, while Dick and Larry rubbed him down and helped him into his clothes, Jay told the whole story as rapidly as he could. Captain Austin, Dick, Larry and Jay—these composed the group—with the addition of Fismes, who was snoring in one

corner. Wide-eyed, they sat hearing the whole narrative. Patiently they heard him through.

"Did you recognize any of them at all?" asked Captain Austin.

"No, not one, except that one looked familiar," replied Jay. And then, in explicit detail, he told of him who seemed to be the leader of the trio in the cabin, who sat with his back turned.

"I could not get a look at his face, but he looked familiar to me and I've been trying to place him in my memory," added the youth.

After deliberating for a time Captain Austin decided to get in touch with the revenue cutter *Marblehead* and tell them the whole story. If the pirates decided to slip away in the night the slow-going *Jules Verne* with her diving bell, the *Nautilus*, could not pursue. But the fast little revenue cutter could overhaul them in a hurry.

Consequently, Larry Seymour repaired at once to the wireless room and in a few minutes was telling the whole story to the *Marblehead*. For some time the wireless spat its messages into the ether and then subsided as its receiver got busy. Larry was transcribing the messages.

"Captain Fowler, of the *Marblehead*, says he will move up closer to us," said Larry. "He wants us to keep a sharp lookout during the night and apprise them of the slightest movement aboard the pirate ship. If they move at all the *Marblehead* will charge down upon them. Captain Fowler proposes to go aboard at daybreak and find out who they are and by what authority they come taking the gold from the *Dominion*."

"Tell him O. K. and to keep his wireless receiver constantly on the alert," replied Captain Austin.

In the meantime extra precautions were taken to guard the pirates. An additional guard was posted and both the powerful searchlight and the machine gun on the bridge of the *Jules Verne* were inspected to see that they were in prime condition.

Captain Austin told Jay and Dick to turn in; that he would call them on the slightest provocation that their services were needed. Jay, although a bit fatigued by his swim, was for remaining up, but listened to the counsel of his chum, and together they withdrew to their stateroom.

"Might as well rest a bit, for there is bound to be some excitement in the morning," advised Dick.

So they repaired to the quiet of their own stateroom and with light extinguished lay in their bunks enjoying the cool night air that was such a relief after the heat of the day. From the corner came the gentle snores of Fismes, who was curled up fast asleep and entirely oblivious of the stirring events the morrow might hold for his masters. And pretty soon Jay and Dick, who had talked for a long time there in the darkness of their quarters fronting on the water about amidships, lapsed into slumber.

It was Dick who was first roused by a slight noise outside the stateroom. Was he dreaming, or had he heard a slight movement? The youth stirred and raised himself on one elbow. Did he imagine it, or was that the figure of a man—a head silhouetted through the stateroom window against the starry sky background? He was minded on the moment to cry out, demanding who was there. But he kept silence.

Reaching quietly under his pillow he was a bit dismayed to find his revolver not there where he expected it. Then he remembered; he had left it on the table. But he could not reach it without getting out of his bunk. Jay was still asleep.

How about Fismes? Funny the dog wouldn't be awake if some one was there. Dick listened but could hear no gentle snore that would indicate the dog was there as usual. Possibly Fismes had gone out on deck or below. The animal would prowl about at times.

Just then there was a slight stir again at the window. This time there was no mistake—some one was there. What Dick had thought was a head moved slightly. And then through the open door of the stateroom appeared in firm outline the form of a man—a huge hulk of a figure!

And then Dick did a funny thing. The best course was to have kept silence until the figure moved on. Then the Brighton youth could have slipped out of bed, grabbed his revolver and followed on. But he was not sure in his drowsy condition whether it was really a man, and whether it was friend or enemy. It might be only the guard on patrol.

At any rate, Dick sat up in bed, reached for the electric light and snapped on the light. Instantly the intruder, who had been going by the door, swung on his heel and thrust a revolver through the open door.

"Not a word, or I'll blow your brains out," snapped the visitor.

Awakening with a start, Jay jumped up in bed. The newcomer at once swung his revolver to cover him.

"Throw up your hands, and don't say a word," came the command. "If either of you speak, it means death. Not only to you, but to everybody on board. One sound and I'll blow this"—he indicated a whistle tied around his neck on a cord. "Your old boat is well covered from the little ship over yonder. We can blow you out of the water with one little broadside and the world will never know what became of you."

"Who are you?" demanded Jay as he sat on the edge of his bunk with both hands up. The youth was thinking rapidly. What could he do, though, in the face of that ugly looking revolver?

"Never mind who I am," came the reply. "Your game is up. We have cleaned out the *Dominion* of all her gold. Our ship is on the move now. You will never know us nor catch up to us. A little swim for me and then into a fast motor launch that will take me safely aboard my own ship. Do you get me? The jig is up. You have come too late. The *Dominion* has been cleaned as clean as a whistle. Haw! Haw!"

He laughed softly. That laugh! Where had Jay and Dick heard it before? Somewhere—this man——

They were both stirred by a quick command from their visitor.

"I'll trouble you for the key to your stateroom," he was saying. "I'll have to lock you both in until I get safely away. Come across, quick."

Jay was inclined to parley, hoping to engage the fellow until help came.

"Don't imagine it is so soft for you," he sneered. "Just off the cove here lies a U. S. revenue cutter. They know all about you. I was aboard you myself to-night and saw you getting your treasure together in the cabin. We are equipped with wireless and we have the revenue cutter *Marblehead* right outside here waiting for you. You'll never get away."

The muscles of the intruder's face contracted at that, and his eyes bulged a bit at Jay's startling declaration. And then his finger sought the trigger of the revolver.

"If it were not for stirring up a fuss I'd plug you both full of lead before I leave," hissed the figure in the doorway. "As it is, you'll either give me the key to your stateroom immediately or I'll shoot you both and then take my chances on getting away. Come along smart now or I'll bore you both through with this shooter."

And he took a new grip on the revolver as he stepped menacingly forward.

But just then came an ominous growl on deck just outside the stateroom. It disconcerted the intruder for a second and he turned his head slightly as there came another growl. In that instant Dick leaped for his own revolver as the lean figure of a stalwart hound dog leaped through the air, launched fully and fairly upon the giant in the doorway.

"Fismes!" yelled Jay. "Get him! Get him!"

It needed no direction to tell this dog what to do. With a malignant howl of hatred the huge war dog dove for the body of the visitor and sank his teeth in the flesh of the thigh. Bang! went the revolver, but taken off his balance by the unexpected flank attack, the intruder shot harmlessly over the head of the boys in the stateroom. At the same moment Jay hurled himself in a flying tackle just as he had flung himself at many a foe on the gridiron at Brighton.

Down went the pirate leader. Jay's lightning-like tackle cut both feet from under him. Before he could shoot again Dick leaped upon him and wrested the revolver from his hand. Against the infuriated dog and the combined attack of two such sturdy youths as Jay Thacker and Dick Monaghan he was outclassed. The struggle was short and in the end the prowling visitor lay panting and helpless.

Outside came the tramp of many feet and then the face of Captain Austin, Larry Seymour and others of the crew who had heard the shot and had been attracted by the commotion.

"What have we here?" demanded Austin heatedly as he bent over the confused mass of dog and men. It took only a glance to show what had happened. Some one had come slyly aboard the *Jules Verne* and had been trapped in the stateroom of the Brighton boys.

Jay and Dick struggled to their feet, relaxing their hold now that help had arrived in overwhelming numbers. But not so the dog. Fismes held on as though his life depended on it. With difficulty his masters succeeded in getting him to let go the figure on the floor.

"Quick, captain," shouted Jay. "The pirate ship over there is making ready to get away. This chap came aboard here to see who we were and to pay his compliments with a bomb before he left. Quick! notify the *Marblehead*."

Like a flash Larry was away to the wireless to call the revenue cutter. Order followed order as other members of the crew sprang to the searchlight and turned its blazing rays on the pirate craft. Others manned the machine gun and stood by awaiting the order to fire in case the ship so close by attempted to move.

"Zzz-t-t-tt!" the wireless snapped out its radio call. Then the key was closed awaiting the answer.

"*Marblehead* half a mile away only," reported Larry as he came dashing back to the stateroom. "She has seen our light and knows right where we are. She has two boatloads of armed men on the way now to take the pirates in tow."

The figure on the floor stirred uneasily, torn between the hurt of the wound where the dog had sunk his sharp teeth into the flesh and the despair of knowing that the game was all up.

"Get up until we can take a look at you," commanded Captain Austin as he turned to the prisoner.

Slowly the latter struggled to his feet. All eyes were on him. Who was he?

Captain Austin turned the fellow with his face full to the light. He moved closer and gazed intently for a moment.

"Don't think you can fool me, you rascal. Don't think I can't see through that disguise. You have grown beard and moustache since last we saw you. But I know you; and so do these boys. Take a good look at him, fellows—don't you recognize him?"

"Carl Weddigen!" gasped the boys almost in unison.

"Just who he is!" affirmed Captain Austin. "And believe me, he'll not get away this time."

They were fastening handcuffs on the prisoner when the sound of rifle fire across the water indicated the men of the revenue cutter were boarding the pirate.

CHAPTER XXI

BACK TO BRIGHTON

SEVERAL days had elapsed since the capture of the mysterious pirate ship and her motley crew. The *Jules Verne* had remained on the job at Martha's Vineyard while her divers carefully combed the interior of the old sunken British liner *Dominion* to find whether any of the gold bullion still remained in her hold. Relentless search, however, had disclosed no more of the precious booty—all of it had been ferreted out by the arch-conspirator, Carl Weddigen, diver extraordinary, adventurer, spy and piratical chief. But all of it in turn had been reclaimed from the interior of the *Monterey*, the fast auxiliary that Weddigen had commanded.

The fight on the *Monterey* had been short and sweet. Taken unexpectedly by the surprise attack of Captain Fowler and his men from the U. S. revenue cutter *Marblehead*, the men of the *Monterey*, deprived of the leadership of Weddigen, who was a captive on the *Jules Verne*, had given up at the first show of strength on the part of the government forces. Two huge motor launches, armed with two-pounders and machine guns, had come swooping down upon the *Monterey*. Although the crew of the *Monterey* were well armed with modern rifles and ammunition, they had hastily thrown down their arms at the first withering fire from the launches of the *Marblehead*. This fire had swept the decks of the pirate craft, killing two of her crew and wounding others.

Immediately the *Monterey* had been searched. Just as Jay Thacker, diver aboard the *Jules Verne*, had related to Captain Austin and to Captain Fowler, of the *Marblehead*, the gold bars—a dozen and more crates of them—had been found aboard the pirate craft. Thousands of dollars' worth of precious metal that would have been spirited off by Weddigen and his crew unless the resourceful salvagers from Bridgeford had intervened.

"Lucky thing you called us in time," Captain Fowler declared.

"Yes, and a lucky thing you were near," said Captain Austin. Which was true, indeed, considering that the *Jules Verne* and her crew could hardly have hoped to prevent the escape of the pirates.

And then came the unfolding of the story of Carl Weddigen. Yes, it was Carl himself; the same ingenious plotter who had first entered the service of the Bridgeford Salvage Company with the idea of gaining information as to where treasure ships were submerged; the same intriguer who had hoped to profit through his own thefts while ostensibly working for Superintendent Brown and Captain Austin; the same despicable traitor who had been thwarted in the act of stealing valued U. S. Government plans taken from the lost U-boat at Cape May.

Carefully and noting every particular, Captain Fowler, who was in fact a policeman of the high seas, had heard from Captain Austin, and from his star divers, Jay Thacker and Dick Monaghan, the whole story of Carl Weddigen. The Brighton boys started with their first encounter with Carl in the plant of the Bridgeford Company. They told of the first experience on the *Dominion* when Carl had been discovered in the act of secreting diamonds in his diving suit, and how he was compelled to disgorge through the craftiness of Larry Seymour. The affair off Cape May was related, and this was the most damaging evidence, for it proved the fellow an enemy of the United States Government.

"It surely will go hard with this chap after we turn him over to the Department of Justice at Washington," Captain Fowler had ventured in an opinion on the future status of the prisoner. For Carl was now a prisoner aboard the *Marblehead*, closely confined under constant guard in such a way that he could not possibly escape.

At first Weddigen had been sullen and close-mouthed. Repeated efforts to get him to tell his story had failed; how he had fitted out his pirate craft, where he had got the speedy little vessel, and how he had shipped his crew; and, finally, how he had cleaned out the *Dominion*. But now that he had come to realize that he was literally "up against it" and that he was to be delivered over to the United States Government to face a court trial and possible death for espionage and high crimes against the government, to say nothing of his plots against the lives of the men of the *Jules Verne*, the German prisoner had decided to tell his own story in the hope that it might in some way mitigate the whole case against him.

And this was the story he had told: Following his escape from the Navy Yard at Boston after the Cape May affair he had shipped aboard a coastwise trader bound that same day for Rio Janeiro. Going down the coast he had ingratiated himself in the favor of members of the crew by rescuing one of

their number who had gone overboard in a terrific midsummer storm. The crew, most of them Latin-Americans, had acclaimed Weddigen their hero, and he at once assumed leadership among them. One night he had confided to some of them the story of the *Dominion* and the gold bullion that still remained to be taken from her hold. In awe and in envy they had listened to the story. Their own greed aroused, they had proved willing converts to a plan to fit out an expedition and go after the treasure.

On the day that the Brazilian merchantman had touched at Vera Cruz for fresh supplies the little band under Weddigen deserted their ship and took refuge in the Mexican city. From there they had worked their way into the Tampico oil field region and one night stole the handsome new twin-screw auxiliary *Monterey*, the property of a wealthy American oil magnate. Joined by other confederates whom they had recruited among Mexican refugees and bandits, the little party of adventurers had worked their way out of the Tampico River into the Gulf of Mexico, and thence up the Atlantic coast to the little cove where the *Dominion* had run aground, and where Weddigen had seen enough while employed by the Bridgeford Salvage Company to satisfy him that the desperate effort in quest of the hidden treasure would be well worth the effort, provided he was successful. From a point near the scene of operations the crafty skipper of the *Monterey* had sent several of his crew ashore in a powerful launch to bargain in a New England seafaring town for a diver's modern outfit.

Uninterrupted in their quiet retreat, the German and his Latin-American crew had worked steadily in the reclamation of the gold bullion in the hulk of the *Dominion*. Weddigen had found among his crew one who had had experience as a diver in the West Indies, and they had worked in relays. Just when they had completed their enormous haul, on the very evening that the *Jules Verne* had arrived, the pirates had completed rifling the treasure ship. They had expected to sail the following morning early for a South American port, there to make away with their loot and dispose of their stolen ship. Weddigen had seen the *Jules Verne* from his vantage point within the cove long before Captain Austin and his men knew of the presence of another craft at the old anchorage. But he had decided to wait until after midnight and make a run for it in the darkness. He had refused to answer the challenge of Captain Austin, although he recognized the voice of that official, hoping against hope he might get away unrecognized.

Finally, when pressed for an explanation as to why he had foolishly gone aboard the *Jules Verne* in the early morning hours and thus risked his chances of getting away at all by putting himself in the way of capture, Weddigen brazenly admitted he carried a powerful bomb with which he hoped to sink the salvage ship and her crew before they could sound an alarm. But in this he had been thwarted just as he was ready to set the bomb and leave the *Jules Verne*. Loudly the pirate chief had cursed the war dog Fismes and the two Brighton youths who, he said, had been his nemeses from the very first day he had met them.

"Luckily for the United States Government and all parties concerned with the ownership of this gold bullion, there are such brave youths as Mr. Thacker and Mr. Monaghan," the revenue cutter captain told him.

Thus had been accomplished the undoing of Carl Weddigen. Now he was headed for prison and a trial where he would have to answer for all his crimes. The gold bullion from the *Dominion* had been transferred from the *Monterey* to the *Jules Verne*. Taking the *Monterey* in tow, the *Marblehead* left on the afternoon of the second day for Boston, while the *Jules Verne* put back to Bridgeford.

On the deck of the latter, as the *Marblehead* drew away from the cove in Martha's Vineyard, stood two stalwart youths who had played a stirring part in the drama that had been staged. By their side sat a lean hound with silken ears well set up and a silver-plated collar that reflected the afternoon sun with brilliant shafts of light.

"Well, how do you like Treasure Cove, old pal?" asked Dick of his chum. Treasure Cove was the name they had dubbed the inlet and bar where the *Dominion* had gone ashore during war days.

"Fine, indeed," laughed Jay. "Even though I nearly lost my life here earlier in the summer."

"And even though we both have been having a nice little party with lots of gun play these last few days," facetiously added Dick.

"One thing about it—Weddigen saved us all the work of digging up this gold out of the *Dominion*," said Dick, with a whimsical smile.

"And came near blowing us all to kingdom come—would have done it sure as guns but for Fismes here, who saved the day." Jay took the nose of the big pet in his hands and rubbed the dog's forehead while the animal grunted in appreciation.

They discussed Weddigen again and agreed he was just about the toughest customer they had ever encountered. It was a satisfaction to them to know that he had been apprehended, and that they had played a signal part in bringing him to bay.

After a time Jay said:

"Well, it's been a pretty nice summer after all, hasn't it?"

Dick shook his head in emphatic approval. He wouldn't have missed it for all the world, he added.

"And likely to prove a very profitable summer." This came from another voice near at hand.

The Brighton boys turned to greet their captain.

"Likely to net you chaps a handsome profit, indeed, after all this Treasure Cove fight heaped up on top of your various other exploits. I'll wager you it's a young fortune you draw down at Bridgeford before you go back to school."

"Perhaps more than we deserve," offered Jay.

"More than you deserve?" Captain Austin's voice rose to a high pitch. "You chaps surely merit every single dollar that will be paid to you. And it will be a good roll, my boys. Just think of it. First of all, you have the thousand dollars each that were voted you by President Walter, of the Salvage Company. Now you get a bonus on all the treasure that we have reclaimed in addition to the wage scale agreed upon in your contract. On top of this is still another item."

Both boys looked up.

"Don't forget that the United States Government offered a prize for the capture of Carl Weddigen."

"But we didn't capture Weddigen—it was Fismes," protested Jay in happy vein.

"All right then, have it your own way; Fismes gets the prize money from Uncle Sam," laughed Captain Austin.

Arm in arm, the trio retreated from the deck of the *Jules Verne* in quest of one good square meal and a full night's sleep after nearly a week of the merriest kind of adventure—actors in a great game of treasure hunting. Out on deck a brown-haired police dog stretched himself luxuriously and nestled his jaw into the embrace of two paws crossed scissor-like.

In September, on a morning that dawned in full autumnal splendor, two young men stood on the station platform at Bridgeford awaiting a train bound for New York. With them were many friends, young and old, including officials and employes from the big shipbuilding yard. They had come to wish a farewell to these two youths bound for Winchester and the opening of the new school year at Brighton Academy.

In the pocket of each youth reposed a bank book showing healthy deposits to their credit. More than six thousand dollars each in the name of Jay Thacker and Richard Monaghan—this from the Bridgeford Salvage Company for the splendid work the young divers had done throughout the summer! Enough to carry each young man through preparatory school and on into college!

"But those friendships are not counted in terms of dollars and cents, are they, chum?" said Dick Monaghan, with just a trace of a lump in his throat as he indicated the group of friends on the station platform. The train was moving out. Larry Seymour—good old Larry—had staged the farewell.

It might have been a cinder in Jay's eye; at any rate, he was blinking hard as the train gathered speed.

"You said a whole heaping mouthful that time," replied Jay, trying to laugh off the flood of emotion that welled up in him.

Up in the baggage coach ahead, a skinny brown hound, accustomed to making the best of every situation, winked at the baggage agent and curled himself up for a snooze and a dream of the new life to come at Brighton Academy.

THE END

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE BRIGHTON
BOYS IN THE SUBMARINE TREASURE SHIP ***

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