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Arthur Ransome

Complete Works

Series Thirteen

The Complete Works of

ARTHUR RANSOME

(1884-1967)

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The Delphi Classics Catalogue

Version 1

The Complete Works of

ARTHUR RANSOME

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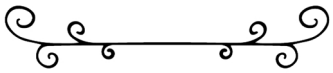
Complete Works of Arthur Ransome



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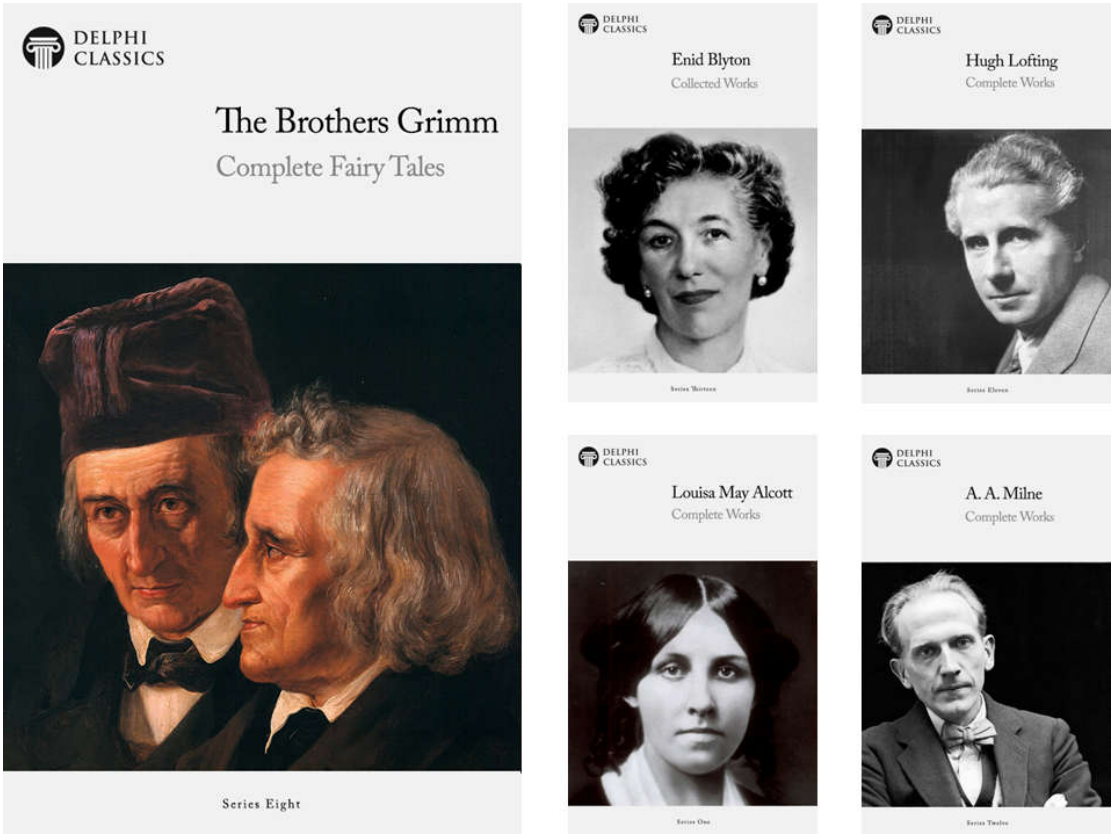

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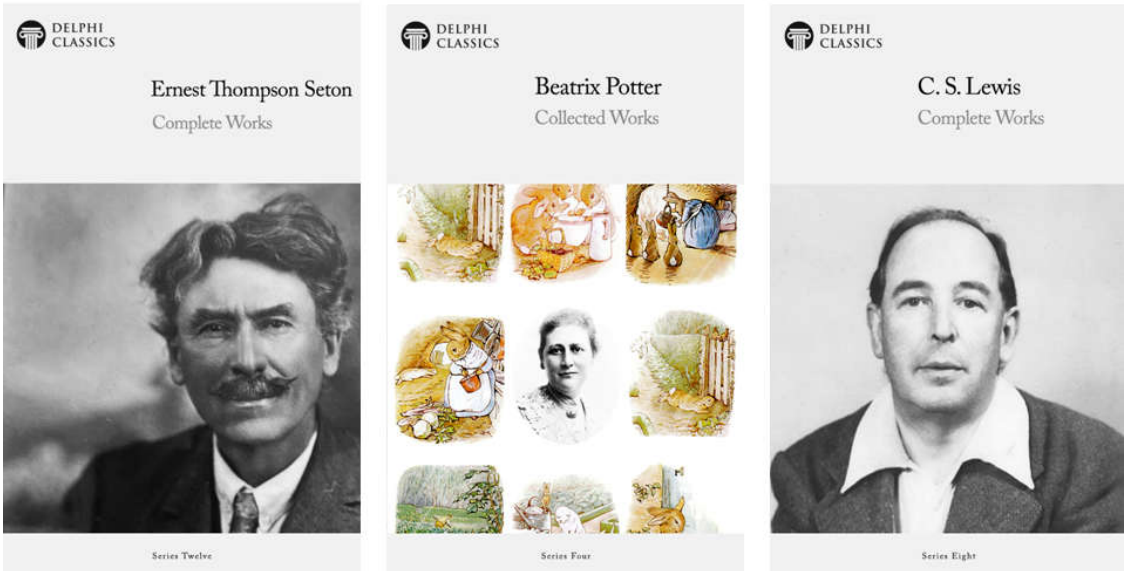


The Swallows and Amazons Books

Leeds, a city in West Yorkshire, c. 1890 — Arthur Ransome's birthplace

The birthplace, 6 Ash Grove, Hyde Park

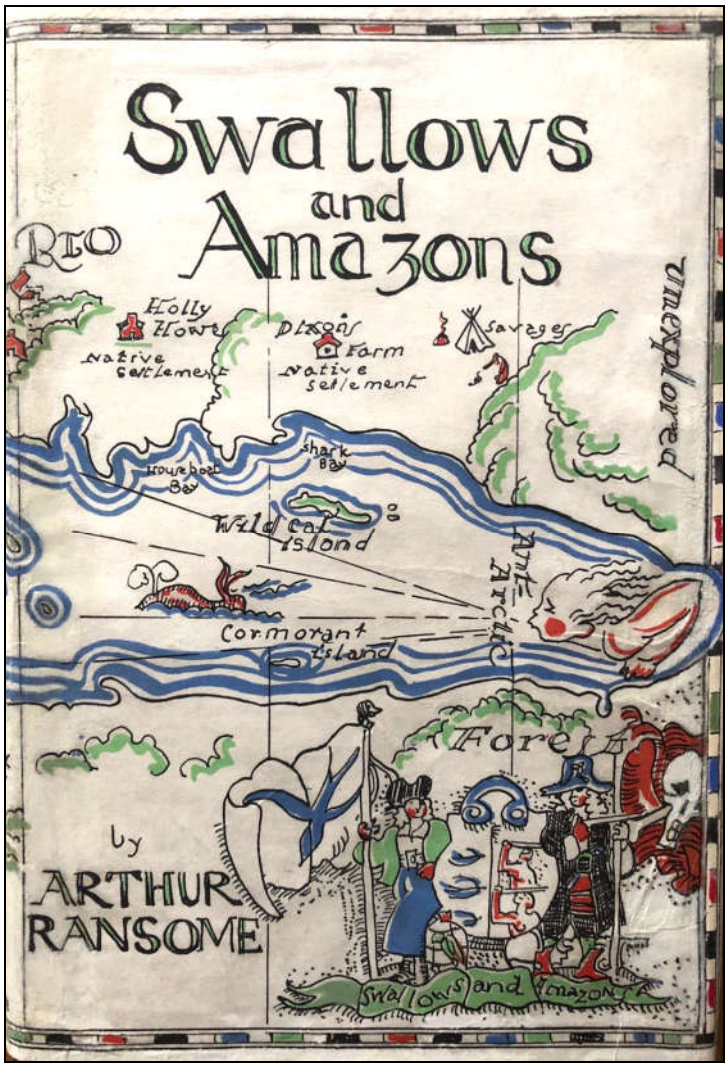
Swallows and Amazons (1930)

Illustrated by the Author with help from Miss Nancy Blackett

Swallows and Amazons was first published in July 1930 by Jonathan Cape. The novel was the first of thirteen children's books that form the *Swallows and Amazons* series. The last novel in the series, *Coots in the North*, is incomplete; it was discovered by Ransome's biographer, Hugh Brogan, among the author's papers and short stories years after his death. The adventure books are set predominately in picturesque parts of England during the interwar period. The series proved to be a triumph for Ransome and although it was not immediately a commercial success, it was received well by critics from the start. It is now considered to be a classic of children's literature and for exerting a huge influence on the development of the genre in the twentieth century.

The first book is set in August 1929 and centres on the adventures of the Walker and Blackett children. The two families meet when the Walkers go on holiday to the Lake District during their summer break from school. John, Susan, Titty and Roger Walker enjoy sailing in a dinghy called 'Swallow', while Nancy and Peggy Blackett sail a dinghy called 'Amazon'. After the children meet, they enter a daring competition to see who can capture the other's boat and claim sailing supremacy. Once the hierarchy is established, they form a team to seek revenge on the Blackett's Uncle Jim, who is normally an ally to his nieces, but has recently become withdrawn and grumpy while writing his memoirs. The novel was inspired by the summer Ransome spent teaching his friends' children to sail. He even dedicated the original edition to the Altounyan family before later dismissing them as important influences on the novel.

Ransome as a young man



The first edition

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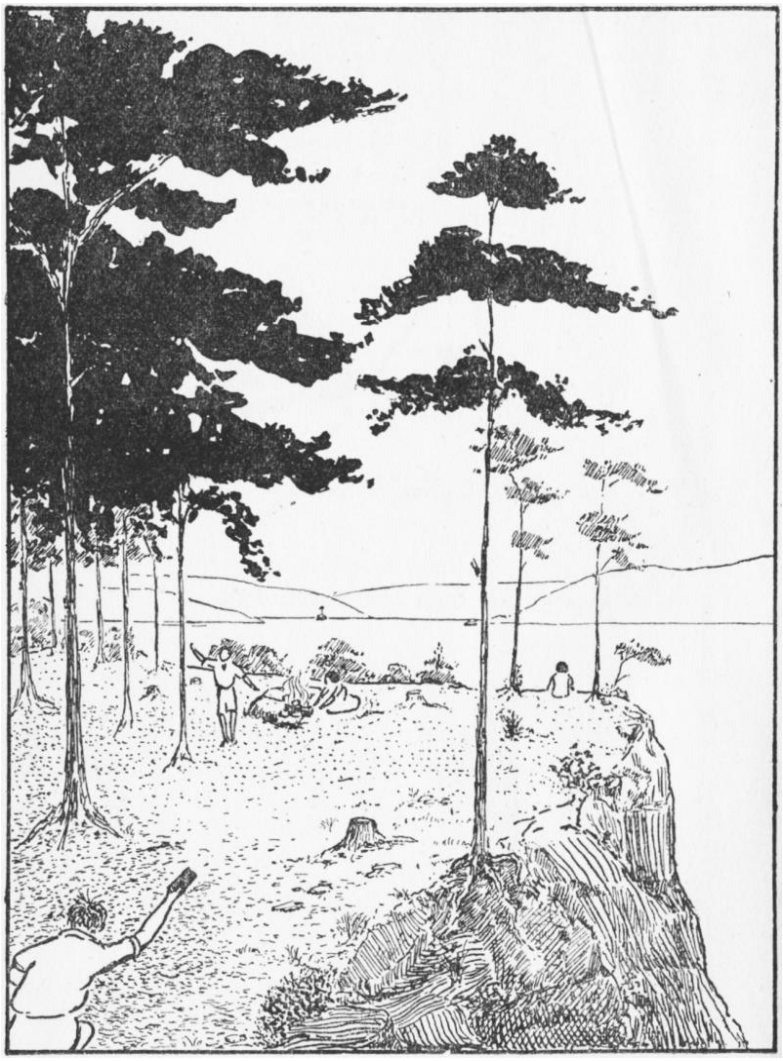
Bowness-on-Windermere, Lake District — the main town on the lake in the novel is called Rio and is based on the twin towns of Bowness-on-Windermere and the nearby town of Windermere.

Mavis, Taqui and Susie Altounyan, three of the five children that partly inspired 'Swallows and Amazons', boating with a nanny in the early 1920's



An early frontispiece by the author

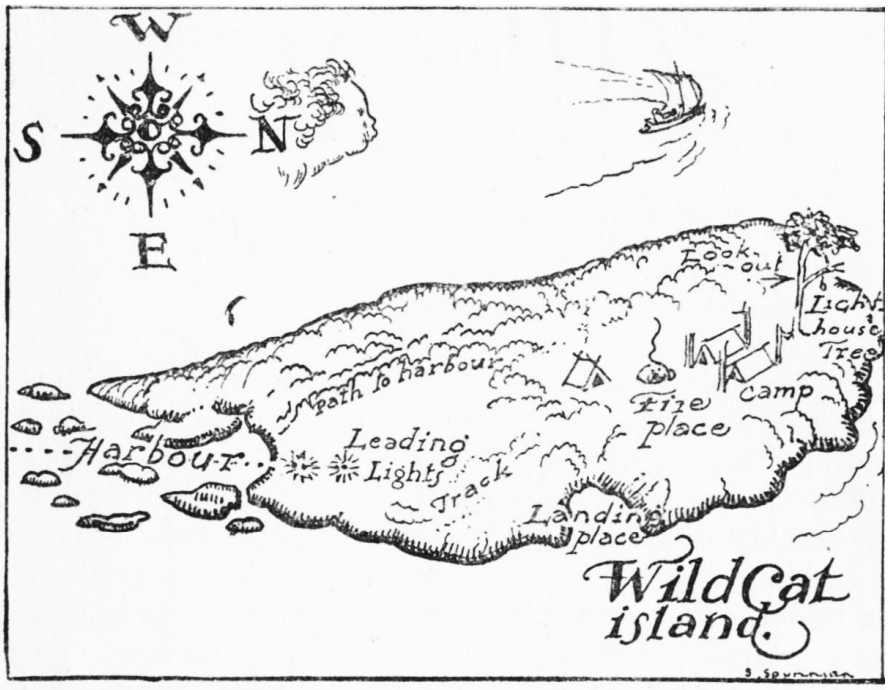

SWALLOWS·AND·AMAZONS·FOR·EVER

TO

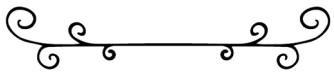
THE SIX FOR WHOM IT WAS WRITTEN

IN EXCHANGE FOR

A PAIR OF SLIPPERS


W
S
N
E
Look-out
Light house
Tree
path to harbour
camp
Fire place
Harbour
Leading Lights
track
Landing place
Wild Cat island.

CHAPTER I. THE PEAK IN DARIEN



"OR LIKE STOUT Cortez, when with eagle eyes,
He stared at the Pacific — and all his men
Looked at each other with a wild surmise —
Silent, upon a peak in Darien."

Roger, aged seven, and no longer the youngest of the family, ran in wide zigzags, to and fro, across the steep field that sloped up from the lake to Holly Howe, the farm where they were staying for part of the summer holidays. He ran until he nearly reached the hedge by the footpath, then turned and ran until he nearly reached the hedge on the other side of the field. Then he turned and crossed the field again. Each crossing of the field brought him nearer to the farm. The wind was against him, and he was tacking up against it to the farm, where at the gate his patient mother was awaiting him. He could not run straight against the wind because he was a sailing vessel, a tea-clipper, the Cutty Sark. His elder brother John had said only that morning that steamships were just engines in tin boxes. Sail was the thing, and so, though it took rather longer, Roger made his way up the field in broad tacks.

When he came near his mother, he saw that she had in her hand a red envelope and a small piece of white paper, a telegram. He knew at once what it was. For a moment he was tempted to run straight to her. He knew that telegrams came only from his father, and that this one must be the answer to a letter from his mother, and letters from John, Susan, Titty, and himself, all asking the same thing, but asking it in different ways. His own letter had been very short. "Please, daddy, may I, too? With love. Roger." Titty's had been much longer, longer even than John's. Susan, though she was older than Titty, had not written a letter of her own. She had put her name with John's at the end of his, so that these two had sent one letter between them. Mother's letter had been the longest of all, but Roger did not know what she had said in it. All the letters had gone together, a very long way, to his father, whose ship was at Malta but under orders for Hong-Kong. And there, in his mother's hand, was the red envelope that had brought the answer. For a moment Roger wanted to run straight to her. But sail was the thing, not steam, so he tacked on, heading, perhaps, a little closer to the wind. At last he headed straight into the wind, moved slower and slower, came to a stop at his mother's side, began to move backwards, and presently brought up with a little jerk, anchored, and in harbour.

"Is it the answer?" he panted, out of breath after all that beating up against the wind. "Does he say Yes?"

Mother smiled, and read the telegram aloud:

BETTER DROWNED THAN DUFFERS IF NOT DUFFERS WONT DROWN.

"Does that mean Yes?" asked Roger.

"I think so."

"Does it mean me, too?"

"Yes, if John and Susan will take you, and if you promise to do whatever they tell you."

“Hurrah,” shouted Roger, and capered about, forgetting for a moment that he was a ship, and anchored in a quiet harbour.

“Where are the others?” asked mother.

“In Darien,” said Roger.

“Where?”

“On the peak, you know. Titty called it that. We can see the island from there.”

Below the farm at Holly Howe the field sloped steeply to a little bay where there was a boathouse and a jetty. But there was little of the lake to be seen, because on each side of the bay there were high promontories. A path ran down the field from the farm to the boathouse. Half-way down the field there was a gate, and from that gate another path ran into the pinewoods that covered the southern and higher promontory. The path soon faded away into nothing, but on the very evening of their first coming, a fortnight before, the children had found their way through the trees to the far end of the promontory, where it dropped, like a cliff, into the lake. From the top of it they had looked out over the broad sheet of water winding away among the low hills to the south and winding away into the hills high to the north, where they could not see so much of it. And it was then, when they first stood on the cliff and looked out over mile upon mile of water, that Titty had given the place its name. She had heard the sonnet read aloud at school, and forgotten everything in it except the picture of the explorers looking at the Pacific Ocean for the first time. She had called the promontory Darien. On the highest point of it they had made their camping place, and there Roger had left them when he had come through the trees to the field and, seeing his mother at the gate, had begun his voyage home.

“Would you like to take them the answer?”

“And tell them it’s Yes for me too?”

“Yes. You must give the telegram to John. It’s he who has to see that you are not duffers.”

Mother put the telegram in its red envelope, and gave it to Roger. She kissed him, anchored as he was, and said, “Supper at half-past seven, and not a minute later, and mind you don’t wake Vicky when you come in.”

“Aye, aye, sir,” said Roger, pulling in his anchor hand over hand. He turned round, and began tacking back down the field, thinking of how he should bring the news.

Mother laughed.

“Ship ahoy!” she said.

Roger stopped, and looked back.

“You had the wind against you coming up the field,” she said. “It’s a fair wind now. You needn’t tack both ways.”

“So it is,” said Roger, “it’s dead aft. I’m a schooner. I can sail goosewinged, with a sail on each side.” He spread out his arms for sails, and ran straight down the field to the gate into the pinewood.

When he came out of the field into the wood he stopped being a sailing vessel. No one can sail through a pinewood. He became an explorer, left behind by the main body, following their trail through the forest, and keeping a sharp look out lest he should be shot by a savage with a poisoned arrow from behind a tree. He climbed up through the trees to the top of the promontory. At last he came out of the trees on a small open space of bare rock and heather. This was the Peak of Darien. There were trees all round it, but through them could be seen the bright glimmer of the lake. In a hollow of rock a small fire was burning. John was stoking the fire. Susan was spreading bread and marmalade. Titty, with her chin on her hunched-up knees, was

sitting between two trees on the edge of the cliff above the lake, keeping watch and looking at the island.

John looked up and saw the telegram. He jumped up from the fire.

"Despatches?" he said.

"It's the answer," said Roger. "It's Yes, and it's Yes for me too, if I obey orders, and you and Susan take me. And if it's Yes for me it must be Yes for Titty."

John took the telegram. Titty scrambled up and came, running. Susan held the knife with the marmalade on it over the bread so as not to lose any, but stopped spreading. John opened the envelope, and took out the white paper.

"Read it aloud," said Susan.

John read:

BETTER DROWNED THAN DUFFERS IF NOT DUFFERS WONT DROWN.

"Hurrah for daddy!" he shouted.

"What does it mean?" asked Susan.

"It means Yes," said Titty.

"It means that daddy thinks we shall none of us get drowned and that if any of us do get drowned it's a good riddance," said John.

"But what are duffers if not duffers?" asked Susan.

"It doesn't say that," said Titty. "It says that if we were duffers we might as well be drowned. Then it stops and starts again, and says that as we aren't duffers..."

"If," said John.

"If we aren't duffers we shan't be drowned."

"Daddy put that in to comfort mother," said Susan. She went on spreading the marmalade.

"Let's start at once," said Roger, but at that moment the kettle changed its tune. It had been bubbling for some time, but now it hissed quietly and steadily, and a long jet of steam poured from its spout. The water was boiling. Susan took the kettle from the fire, and emptied into it a small packet of tea.

"We can't start to-night anyhow," she said. "Let's have tea, and then we'll make a list of the things we shall want."

"Let's have tea where we can see the island," said Titty.

They carried their mugs and the kettle and the tin plate piled with thick slabs of brown bread and marmalade to the edge of the cliff. The island lay about a mile away towards the lower, southern end of the lake, its trees reflected in the glassy water. They had been looking at it for ten days, but the telegram had made it much more real than ever it had been before. Looking down from Titty's Peak in the evening of the day on which they had come to the farmhouse where their mother had taken lodgings, they had seen the lake like an inland sea. And on the lake they had seen the island. All four of them had been filled at once with the same idea. It was not just an island. It was the island, waiting for them. It was their island. With an island like that within sight, who could be content to live on the mainland and sleep in a bed at night? They had gone back and told their mother of their discovery, and begged that the whole family should leave the farmhouse the next day, and camp on the island for ever. But there was little Vicky, a fat baby, like the pictures of Queen Victoria in old age, full of all sorts of needs. Mother could not take Vicky and the nurse to camp even on the best of uninhabited islands. Nor, without leave from daddy, could she let them go alone. And though John and Susan were both well able to manage a sailing boat, Titty and Roger had only begun to learn how to sail when their father had been home on leave a

year before. In the boathouse below the farm there was the Swallow, a sailing boat, a very little one, and there was also a big, heavy rowing boat. But no one wants to row who has ever sailed. If there had been no island, no sailing boat, and if the lake had not been so large, the children, no doubt, would have been happy enough to paddle about with oars in the bay by the boathouse. But with a lake as big as a small sea, a fourteen-foot dinghy with a brown sail waiting in the boathouse, and the little wooded island waiting for explorers, nothing but a sailing voyage of discovery seemed worth thinking about.

So the letters had been written and posted, and day after day the children had been camping on the Peak of Darien by day, and sleeping in the farmhouse by night. They had been out in the rowing boat with their mother, but they had always rowed the other way so as not to spoil the voyage of discovery by going to the island first. But with each day after the sending of the letters it had somehow seemed less and less likely that there would ever be an answer. The island had come to seem one of those places seen from the train that belong to a life in which we shall never take part. And now, suddenly, it was real. It was to be their island after all. They were to be allowed to use the sailing boat by themselves. They were to be allowed to sail out from the little sheltered bay, and round the point, and down the lake to the island. They were to be allowed to land on the island, and to live there until it was time to pack up again and go home to town and school and lessons. The news was so good that it made them solemn. They ate their bread and marmalade in silence. The prospect before them was too vast for chatter. John was thinking of the sailing, wondering whether he really remembered all that he had learnt last year. Susan was thinking of the stores and the cooking. Titty was thinking of the island itself, of coral, treasure and footprints in the sand. Roger was thinking of the fact that he was not to be left behind. He saw for the first time that it was a good thing to be no longer the baby of the family. Vicky was youngest now. Vicky would stay at home, and Roger, one of the crew of a ship, was to sail away into the unknown world.

At last John took a sheet of paper and a pencil from his pocket.

"Let's make the Ship's Articles," he said.

The bread and marmalade had all been eaten, so he turned the plate upside down, and put the paper on the back of it, and lay on his stomach on the rock. He wrote:

"Sailing Vessel Swallow. Port, Holly Howe. Owners..."

"Who are the owners?"

"She belongs to us for the rest of these holidays anyhow," said Susan.

"I shall put 'Walkers Limited' to do for all of us."

He wrote, "Owners, Walkers Limited." Underneath that he wrote:

"Master: John Walker.

Mate: Susan Walker.

Able-seaman: Titty Walker.

Ship's Boy: Roger."

"Now," he said, "you all have to sign opposite your names."

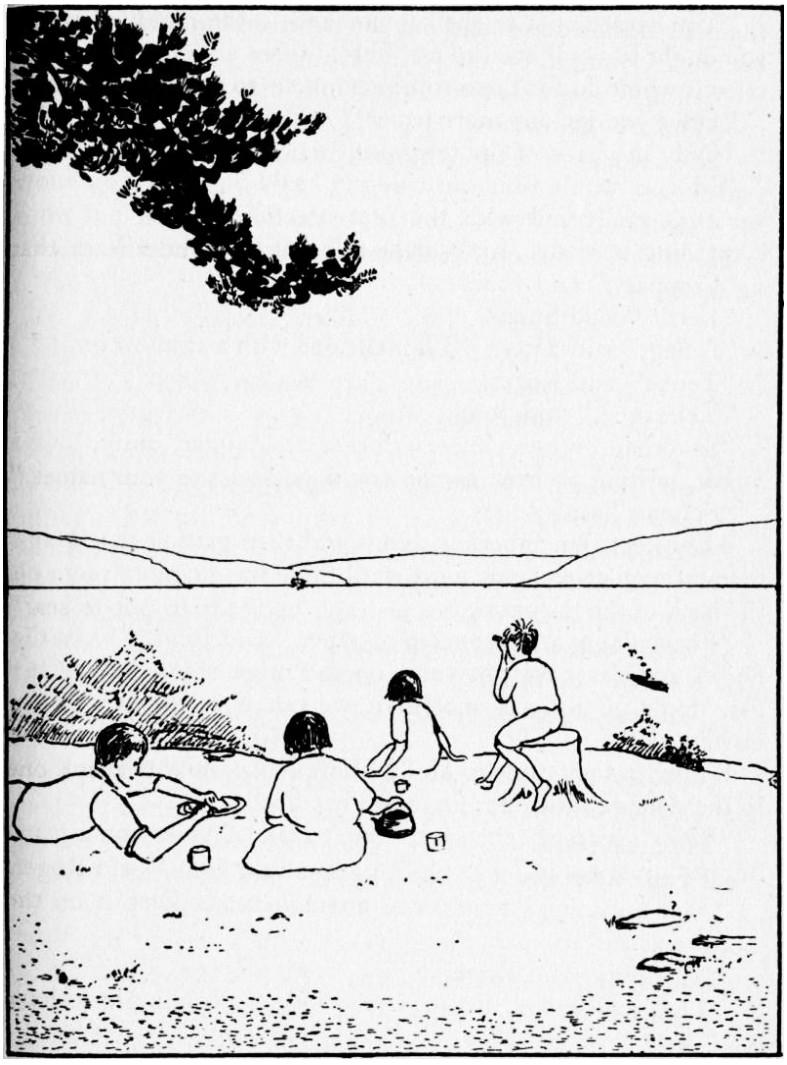
They all signed.

"Well, Mister Mate," said John.

"Sir," replied Susan smartly.

"How soon do you think we shall be ready to put to sea?"

“With the first breath of wind.”
“What do you think of your crew?”
“The best I ever shipped.”
“Can they swim?”
“Able-seaman Titty can. The Boy Roger still keeps one foot on the bottom.”
“He must learn.”
“I don’t keep a foot on the bottom all the time,” said Roger.
“You must learn as soon as possible not to keep it on the bottom at all.”
“All right,” said Roger.
“That’s all wrong, Roger,” said Titty. “You ought to have said, ‘Aye, aye, sir!’ ”
“I nearly always do,” said Roger. “I said it to mother.”



MAKING SHIP’S PAPERS

“You must say it to the captain and to the mate. Perhaps you ought to say it even to me, but as there are only two in the crew it won’t do for them to be saying sir to each other.”

“Have you got any more paper?” said Susan.

“Only the back of the telegram,” said John.

“Mother won’t mind our using it,” said Susan. “You know we can’t really sail with the first breath of wind, not until everything is ready. Let’s make a list of the things.”

“Compass,” said John.

“Kettle,” said Susan.

“A flag,” said Titty. “I’ll make one with a swallow on it.”

“Tents,” said Roger.

“Telescope,” said John.

“Saucepan, mugs, knives, forks, tea, sugar, milk,” said Susan, writing as hard as she could go.

“Spoons,” said Roger.

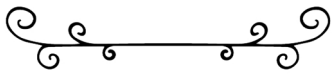
They kept remembering things and then getting stuck, and then remembering some more until there was no more room on the back of the telegram.

“I haven’t got another scrap of paper,” said John. “Even the Ship’s Articles have got sums on the other side. Bother the list. Let’s go and ask mother if we can have the key of the boathouse.”

But when they came to Holly Howe Farm, mother met them in the doorway with her finger on her lips.

“Vicky’s asleep,” she said; “don’t make a noise coming in. Supper’s just ready.”

CHAPTER II. MAKING READY



"WHAT CARE I for a goose-feather bed,
With the sheet turned down so bravely, O?
For to-night I shall sleep in the cold open field
Along with the wraggle-taggle gipsies, O!"

Ship's Articles, though important, are but a small part of making ready for a voyage of discovery. There was a great deal more to do. Luckily, mother had nearly finished making the tents. She had decided as soon as they had sent off the letters that tents would be wanted if the expedition to the island was allowed, and that if it was not allowed, the next best thing would be a camp on shore. So she had bought the thin canvas and had been working at tent-making every day, while fat Vicky was sleeping and the others were fishing by the boathouse or camping on the Peak of Darien. That night, after Captain John and Mate Susan had followed their crew to bed, mother had finished both tents.

Next morning, after breakfast, John and Susan, with mother to help them, Titty to watch, and Roger to get in the way, had put up one of the tents between two trees in the Holly Howe garden. The tents were of the simplest kind. Each tent had a three-cornered piece for the back. The back was sewn to the sides, and a piece of stout rope was stitched to the canvas inside to make the ridge of the roof. The ends of this rope were fastened to two trees, and so held the tent up. No tent poles were needed. Along the bottom edges of the back and sides there were big pockets, to be filled with stones. On rocky ground, where you cannot drive in tent pegs, this is a good plan. At the front of the tent there were loose flaps, joined to the sides, so that they could be rolled up and tied out of the way with two pairs of tapes that worked like the reef points in a sail.

"Properly," said John, "we ought not to take tents with us. We ought to make a tent out of a sail by hanging it across the gaff for a ridge pole, and we ought to hold it up with two pairs of oars, a pair at each end. But one tent would not be big enough and to make two we should want eight oars and two sails, big ones. Swallow has only got one small sail, and two oars. So these tents are much better."

"They are good enough tents except in a high wind," said mother. "Father and I often slept in one when we were young."

Titty looked gravely at mother.

"Are you really old?" she said.

"Well, not very," said mother, "but I was younger then."

Mother had bought two square waterproof ground-sheets, one for each tent. One of them was spread inside the tent that was being tried.

"You be careful," said mother, "to keep the edges of the ground-sheet inside the tent, or if it rains you'll find yourselves sleeping in a puddle."

Everybody crowded into the tent and sat down. Titty borrowed fat Vicky from nurse, and brought her in too. Susan shut the flaps of the tent from inside.

"We might be anywhere," Titty said.

"Next time we put the tent up we shall be on the island," said John.

"What about mattresses?" said mother.

"Rugs," said Captain John.

“Not enough,” said mother, “unless you want to be like the lady who ran away with the wraggle-taggle gipsies and caught her death of cold.”

“The song doesn’t say so,” said Titty. “It only says she didn’t care.”

“Well, and what happened to Don’t Care?”

“Came to a bad end,” said Roger.

“A cold is a bad end when you are camping, especially on a desert island,” said mother. “No, we must get some haybags filled for you to sleep on. If you put them on the ground-sheets and lie on the top of them, and roll yourselves up in rugs and blankets, you’ll come to no harm.”

Captain John was in a hurry to try the Swallow under sail.

“Let’s go down to the harbour and overhaul the ship,” he said. “We can take her out now, can’t we, mother?”

“Yes. But I’d like to come with you the first time.”

“Come along. Do. You can be Queen Elizabeth going aboard the ships at Greenwich that were sailing to the Indies.”

Mother laughed.

“It doesn’t matter a bit about your not having red hair,” said Titty.

“All right,” said mother, “but I think we must leave Vicky with nurse.”

So they all crawled out of the tent. Fat Vicky was given back to nurse, and Queen Elizabeth walked down to the boathouse with Captain John of the sailing ship Swallow, Mate Susan, Able-seaman Titty, and the Boy Roger, who ran on ahead with the big key to get the boathouse open.

The boathouse was a stone one, with a narrow quay along each wall inside, and a small jetty sticking out beyond it into the lake.

Roger had got the door open by the time they came to it, though he had had a tough struggle with the rusty lock. He was already inside, looking down on the Swallow. The Swallow was a sailing dinghy built for sailing on a shallow estuary, where the sands were uncovered at low tide. Most sailing dinghies have centre-boards, plates which can be let down through their keels, to make them sail better against the wind. Swallow had none, but she had a rather deeper keel than most small boats. She was between thirteen and fourteen feet long, and fairly broad. Her mast lay in her, and beside it, neatly rolled up, were boom, gaff, and sail, and a pair of short oars. Her name, Swallow, was painted on her stern.

Captain John and his crew looked at her lovingly. She was already their own ship.

“Better bring her outside and make fast to the jetty while you step the mast,” said Queen Elizabeth. “You won’t be able to get her out if you step the mast while she’s in the boathouse. That beam is too low.”

Captain John went aboard his ship. Mate Susan untied the painter, and between them they brought the Swallow out of the boathouse. Then Susan fastened the painter to an iron ring on the end of the jetty. She too climbed down into Swallow.

“Can I come too?” asked Roger.

“You and Titty and I will wait till they have the sail up,” said Queen Elizabeth. “Give them plenty of room and a free hand. We should only be in the way if we went aboard now.”

“Hullo,” said John, “she’s got a little flagstaff, and there are flag halyards on the mast to hoist it by.” He held up a tiny flagstaff with a three-cornered blue flag on it.

“I’m going to make her a much better flag than that,” said Titty.

“Better take this one to make sure you make yours the same size,” said Queen Elizabeth.

John and Susan had done plenty of sailing, but there is always something to learn about a boat that you have not sailed before. They stepped the mast the wrong way round, but that was set right in a moment.

"She doesn't seem to have a forestay," said John. "And there isn't a place to lead the halyard to in the bows to make it do instead."

"Let me have a look," said Queen Elizabeth. "These little boats often do without stays at all. Is there a cleat under the thwart where the mast is stepped?"

"Two," said John, feeling. The mast fitted in a hole in the forward thwart, the seat near the bows of the boat. It had a square foot, which rested in a slot cut to fit it in the kelson.

"Get the sail ready and hoist it, and make fast there and see how she does," said Queen Elizabeth.

"I wonder whether the real Queen Elizabeth knew much about ships," said Titty.

"That Queen Elizabeth was not brought up close to Sydney Harbour," said mother.

Susan had got the sail ready. On the gaff there was a strop (which is really a loop), that hooked on a hook on one side of an iron ring called the traveller, because it moved up and down the mast. The halyard ran from the traveller up to the top of the mast, through a sheave (which is a hole with a little wheel in it), and then down again. John hooked the strop on the traveller and hauled away on the halyard. Up went the brown sail until the traveller was nearly at the top of the mast. Then John made the halyard fast on the cleats, which were simply pegs, underneath the thwart which served to hold the mast up.

"That looks all right," said Queen Elizabeth from the jetty. "But to make the sail set properly you must pull the boom down. That'll take those cross wrinkles out."

"Is that what those blocks (pulleys) are for hooked to a ring in the kelson close to where the mast is stepped? But they are all muddled up."

"Isn't there another ring under the boom, close to the mast?" asked Queen Elizabeth.

"Got it," said Captain John. "One block hooks to the ring under the boom, and one to the ring in the bottom of the boat. Then it's as easy as anything to haul the boom down. How's that?"

"The crinkles in the sail go up and down now, and not across," said Mate Susan.

"That's right," said Queen Elizabeth. "The wind will flatten them out as soon as we start sailing. Can I come aboard, Captain Drake?"

"Please," said John; "but never mind about being Queen Elizabeth just now." He was just going to sail Swallow for the first time, and he had quite enough to think about without queens.

Titty, Roger, and mother climbed down from the jetty into Swallow, as she lay there with flapping sail, ready to start.

"Will you take the tiller, mother, while I cast off?" said Captain John.

"Not I," said mother. "Queen or no queen, I'm a passenger, and I want to see how you manage by yourselves."

"Right," said Captain John. "Mister Mate, will you come forward to cast off. Send the crew below to keep their heads out of the way of the boom."

"Aye, aye, sir," said Mate Susan. "Get down on the bottom, you two." The boy and the able-seaman crouched in the bottom of the boat with their heads below the gunwale. John took the tiller. Susan untied the painter from the ring on the pier, put the end of it through the ring, and held it.

"Ready," she said.

"Cast off," said the captain, and a moment later Swallow was moving.

“Are we going to the island?” asked the boy.

“No,” said mother. “It would take too long to go there and back. There’s a lot to be done if you are to start to-morrow morning. Just sail her a little way up against the wind, and then we must run back to deal with haybags and stores, and all the other things you’ll want for the voyage.”

So Swallow’s trial trip was a short one. John sailed her up against the wind, tacking from side to side, and making a little every time, just as Roger had done when he had tacked up the field the day before. Then they turned round for the run home, and raced back with the water creaming round her.

“Your ship is all right, Captain John,” said mother, when they were once more moored to the jetty, and Susan and John were stowing the sail, and taking the mast down to take the Swallow into the boathouse.

“She’s a beauty,” said John.

The rest of that day was full of business. Mother was stitching haybags out of sacking. Titty had taken the little flagstaff up to the farm, and had cut a triangular flag out of some of the canvas left over from the tents. Mother had drawn a swallow on a bit of paper, and Titty had cut one out of some blue serge that had once been part of a pair of knickerbockers. Then she had put the pattern on the white flag, and cut out a place to fit it. Then she had sewn the edge of the blue swallow all the way round into the place for it in the white flag. When she had done there was a fine white flag with a blue swallow flying across it, and it looked the same from both sides. Then she had fastened it on the little wire flagstaff where the blue flag had been, so that it was ready to hoist to the masthead.

Captain John and the mate were getting together the really important stores and deciding what they could do without. The list had grown very much last night after supper. Roger was kept busy running up and down to the boathouse with all sorts of things that everybody agreed could not be left behind.

The mate’s chief task was fitting out the galley, with the help of Mrs. Jackson, the farmer’s wife, who was lending the things.

“You’ll want a kettle first and foremost,” said Mrs. Jackson.

“And a saucepan and a frying-pan,” said Mate Susan, looking at her list. “I’m best at buttered eggs.”

“And are you really?” said Mrs. Jackson. “Most folk are best at boiled.”

“Oh, well, I don’t count boiled,” said Susan.

Then there were the knives and forks and plates and mugs and spoons to be thought of, and biscuit tins, big ones to keep the food in, and smaller tins for tea and salt and sugar.

“We’ll want rather a big one for sugar, won’t we?” said Roger, who had come in and was waiting for something else to carry down to the boathouse.

“You won’t bake, I don’t suppose,” said Mrs. Jackson.

“I think not,” said Mate Susan.

The pile of things on the kitchen table grew and grew as Susan crossed off the items on her list.

John and Titty came in to show her the new flag and to see how she was getting on.

“Who is going to be doctor?” she asked.

“Surgeon,” said Titty. “It’s always surgeon on board ship.”

“You are,” said John. “You’re the mate. It’s the mate’s job. He comes dancing on to the scene, ‘And well,’ says he, ‘and how are your arms and legs and liver and lungs and bones afeeling now?’ Don’t you remember?”

“Then I ought to take some bandages and medicines and things.”

“Oh, no,” said Titty. “On desert islands they cure everything with herbs. We’ll have all sorts of diseases, plagues, and fevers and things that no medicine is any good for and we’ll cure them with herbs that the natives show us.”

At this point mother came in and settled the question. “No medicines,” she said. “Anyone who wants doctoring is invalided home.”

“If it’s really serious,” said Titty, “but we can have a plague or a fever or two by ourselves.”

John said: “What about a chart?”

Titty said that as the ocean had never been explored, there could not be any charts.

“But all the most exciting charts and maps have places on them that are marked ‘Unexplored.’ ”

“Well, they won’t be much good for those places,” said Titty.

“We ought to have a chart of some kind,” said John. “It’ll probably be all wrong, and it won’t have the right names. We’ll make our own names, of course.”

They found a good map that showed the lake in a local guide-book. Titty said it wasn’t really a chart. John said it would do. And Mrs. Jackson said they could take it, but must keep it as dry as they could. That meant another tin box for things that had to be kept dry. They put in besides the guide-book some exercise-books for logs and some paper for letters home. They also put in the ship’s library. Titty had found on the shelves in the parlour a German Dictionary left by some former visitor. “It’s full of foreign language,” she said, “and we shall want it for talking with the natives.” In the end it was left behind, because it was large and heavy, and also it might be the wrong language. Instead, Titty took Robinson Crusoe. “It tells you just what to do on an island,” she said. John took The Seaman’s Handybook, and Part Three of The Baltic Pilot. Both books had belonged to his father, but John took them with him even on holidays. Mate Susan took Simple Cooking for Small Households.

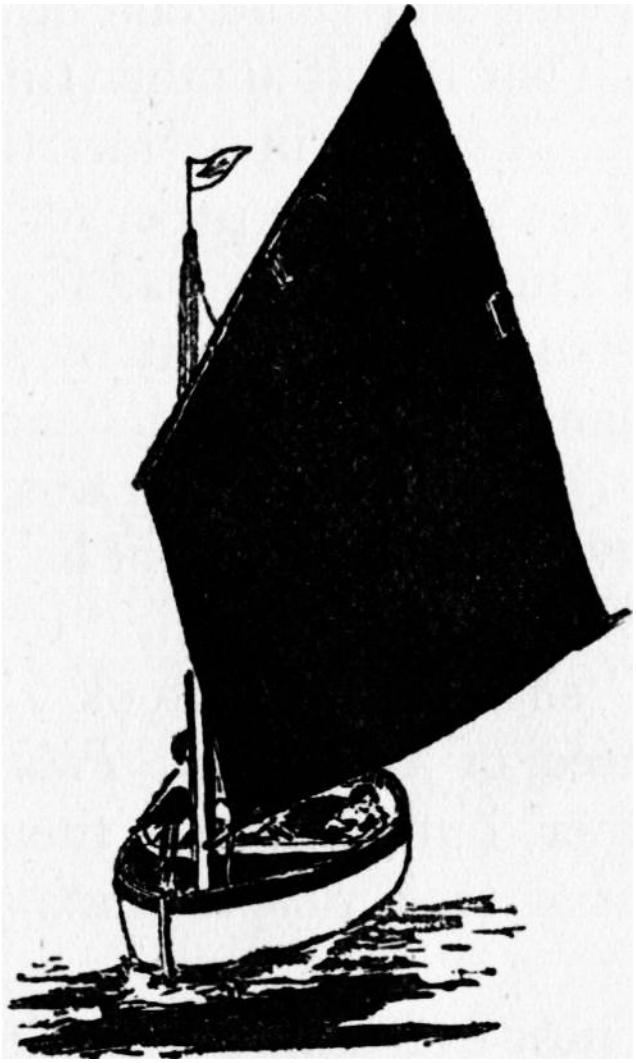
At last, when almost everything was piled in the boathouse, just before it was time for Roger and Titty to go to bed, the whole crew went up the path into the pinewood to the Peak of Darien to look once more at the island. The sun was sinking over the western hills. There was a dead calm. Far away they saw the island and the still lake, without a ripple on it, stretching away into the distance.

“I can’t believe we’re really going to land on it,” said Titty.

“We aren’t unless there’s a wind to-morrow,” said Captain John. “We’ll have to whistle for a wind.”

Titty and Roger, by agreement, whistled one tune after another all the way home. As they came to the farm the leaves of the beech trees shivered overhead.

“You see,” said Titty, “we’ve got some wind. Wake up early, and we’ll go out and do some more whistling before breakfast.”



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