

## CHAPTER XI.

### HIGH AND DRY.

**T**HE boys did not awaken until a late hour on the following morning, and then, even though it was only about "half-tide," they could see above the surface of the water a considerable part of the upper-works of the steamer.

They felt lame and stiff when they came out of the tent, but this actual evidence of progress took that feeling away in a great measure, and all hands were as eager for work as if they had been taking rest for a week.

One of the boys from the hotel had brought them a can of hot coffee, and, after a hurried bath in the sea, which amounted to hardly more than a dip into the water, they ate their breakfast in quite as much haste, for they wanted to have everything in and around the tent looking in ship-shape order when Captain Sammy arrived.

Each moment that passed revealed more of the little steamer to the view of the eager watchers, and, paddling out to the rafts, they had

the satisfaction of seeing that, without a doubt, she would be high and dry at low-water.

Already was the rail of the steamer uncovered, and it was at last possible to see very plainly the little craft that was to be under their complete control.

She was a side-wheel boat, on the paddle-boxes of which was painted in black, with just a trifle of ornamentation, the words:

THE PEARL,  
OF TAMPA.

The smoke-stack was painted red, and the remainder of the outside work pure white. The paint had suffered but little discoloration by its long bath.

About three feet of the bow was decked over flush with the rail, and evidently served as a tank for fresh-water; then came the main cabin, built straight up from the bottom flooring, and occupying fully twelve feet of the length. At the forward end of this, and rising about three feet above the top, was a tiny pilot-house, hardly more than three feet square, in which could be seen a wheel that had once been highly polished, and curiously inlaid with different colored woods and what looked to be pieces of bone or ivory.

The interior of the cabin was painted light

gray, and it occupied the full width of the craft. A door at the forward end permitted communication with the bow, and one aft led into the little hall that ran past the engine-room to the stern. Two windows on either side afforded means for the free circulation of air, and between these windows were two berths, one above the other, on each side.

The machinery—which was, of course, directly between the paddle-boxes—occupied about eight feet of space, and aft of this was a small room, about four feet deep, that was evidently intended for the engineer.

Aft of this was the standing-room, five feet deep, over which had once been an awning. Nothing was now left of this but shreds of cloth hanging in the most forlorn-looking manner.

If the boys had superintended the construction of the boat they could hardly have had one that pleased them better, or which was more suited to the work to which they intended to put her.

Now that they had seen the interior of the *Pearl*, they were doubly anxious to ascertain just how much damage had been done to her, so that they might know how much labor would have to be performed before she could be floated.

Already they could see a jagged hole on the port side of her bow, through which Bobby could have crawled, but whether any of her bot-



tom planking had been torn out it was impossible to tell.

They were so busily engaged in trying to ascertain the extent of her injuries that they did not hear the approach of Captain Sammy, who was stumping along the beach, evidently in a state of the greatest surprise because the work had progressed so rapidly, and it was not until he spoke that they were aware of his presence.

"Now, that's what I call business," he said, approvingly. "You couldn't wait for daylight, but had to sit up all night, so you could see the craft to-day, eh?"

"We thought it was a pity to waste so much time, when it wasn't a great deal of work to take advantage of last night's tide," replied Dare.

"Well, if I had known what you had been doing I should have brought some stuff to work with this morning. Say, you, Charley and Bobby, come in-shore here and put me on to the raft, and then row over to the dock. Tell one of the men there to give you some canvas, pump-tacks, and cold tar; then get back here as quick as you can."

The boys obeyed the little captain's orders very readily, and while they were at the dock Captain Sammy and Dare unfastened the cables from one of the rafts and poled it ashore.

The planks which had formed the top were now to do service as ways for the boat to rest

on while she was being repaired, and these were nailed together and weighted down by the chains and rocks, so they could not float when the tide came up again.

By the time the boys returned from the dock the entire bow of the steamer was out of water.

The injury she had received was now found to be far less than had been supposed. She had been badly stove in at the bow, but the bottom planking was found to be intact, and she had sustained no damage save in that one place.

The water had run out of the deep hole in the bows as the tide receded, until all that was left in her remained at the stern.

"Now, you boys," said Captain Sammy to Charley and Bobby, "get on board and go to pumping just as soon as the rail is above water, and when the tide comes in to-night I promise you it shall float the *Pearl* wherever we want her."

The little man, with Dare's assistance, then began nailing the canvas over the broken timbers, and when it was all done a thick coating of tar was spread over it.

Charley and Bobby had worked industriously at the pump until they were nearly tired out; and when Captain Sammy's work was finished Dare took their place, and remained there till the sucking sound of the pump-boxes told that

the *Pearl* was freed from the burden of water that had held her captive.

She was high and dry on the beach, and while they were waiting for the in-coming tide Captain Sammy ordered the boys to clean out the sand and other dirt which had accumulated in the cabins and engine-room.

Then her anchors and cables, as well as every other movable thing on board, and some of the chains used for raising her, were piled up in the stern, in order to raise her bow as high as possible above the water when she should float.

That done, the tired party went to the tent for the dinner, which had been delayed until the work was finished, and again they waited for the tide, though this time it was with the certainty that the little steamer would float upon it unaided.

Their waiting was of short duration, for so much time had been employed in getting the craft ready for the last portion of the labor of raising her that the tide was flowing in before they began to eat their dinner.

As soon as the water began to ripple around the stern of the *Pearl* Charley and Bobby were ordered on board with long poles. They were to force her along when she began to float, while Captain Sammy and Dare stood by the hawser that had been made fast to the bow, in order to pull her on to the ways that had been laid as high



up on the beach as it was thought the steamer would float.

When in sailing trim the *Pearl* drew but fourteen inches of water; but now, owing to the heavy load in the stern, the tide had risen nearly three feet around her before she began to swing slowly around.

"Hold her there!" shouted Captain Sammy to those on board. "Don't let her swing one way or the other," and then he and Dare pulled her a few inches ahead until she grounded again.

The yacht floated with her bows high out of the water; and even if the precaution of patching her up with canvas had not been taken, she could hardly have shipped any water after she was once afloat.

In this slow way she was forced up the beach until, when the tide began to ebb again, she had settled firmly down on the plank ways, and so high up that the workmen would not be disturbed by the water more than two hours each day.

"There!" said Captain Sammy, as he lighted his pipe, seated himself on the sand, and unbuckled his leg for a more complete rest while enjoying his triumphal smoke, "the *Pearl* has been raised, an' all you boys have got to do is to patch up the hole in her bows. You want to find some well-seasoned cedar lumber, and you'll have the work done in no time."

Now, after what looked to be the most difficult of the task had been performed, Dare began to doubt his ability to repair the steamer in a workmanlike manner, and his face told quite plainly just what was troubling him.

"I s'pose you begin to think the worst part of the work has yet to come?" said the little man, as he tapped with his wooden leg on the tarred canvas.

"I'm afraid we sha'n't be able to make it look as nice as it did before, although I think we could make it watertight," said Dare, frankly.

"Well, I'll tell you what can be done. I'll see to getting the lumber, and I'll come over here and boss the job, providing you'll take me out as a passenger when you start on your cruise, in case I should want to go."

There could be but one answer to such a proposition, for the boys had come to like the little man so much during their acquaintance with him that they would be only too well pleased to have him with them, and Dare told him as much.

"Then," said Captain Sammy, apparently delighted at the boys' liking for him, "we'll have the *Pearl* ready in two days, and on Monday you can start."