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"BE JUST AND FEAR NOT."

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## Adventures of Tad;

OR THE  
HAPS AND MISHAPS OF A LOST SACHEL.

A Story for Young and Old.

BY FRANK H. CONVERSE,  
AUTHOR OF "PEPPER ADAMS," "BLOWN OUT  
TO SEA," "PAUL GRAYTON," ETC.

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Published by Special Arrangement.)

"Wasn't a touchin' of her—was I, Mickey Dolan?" returned Bob, stepping back in evident alarm. "I will, though, if she don't give me my purty!" he added, with a threatening shake of the head, encouraged at the sight of his friend who, after carefully turning back his tattered shirt-cuffs, was rapidly revolving a pair of red fists with a view of paralyzing the bold intruder by his own display of science.

"I don't care," undauntedly replied the small female, speaking for the first time. "It's not your dog, and I won't give him up—there, now!" And I regret to say that Miss Polly Flagg further emphasized her declaration by stamping a small foot on the pavement with considerable force.

"Don't worry, miss!" said Tad, reassuringly. "They won't dare lay a finger on you—or the dog, either—while I'm here; and there's a policeman just smiling round the corner, too." The latter information intended for the ears of the two warlike youths, having an immediate effect. Mickey thrust his

hands in his pockets, and walked away, whistling. "Mulligan Guards," while Bob, with a parting scowl, quite equally divided between the girl, the dog and Tad himself, ran hastily across the street, and disappeared up the nearest alley.

"Which way might you be going, miss?" asked Tad, with great politeness, as Miss Polly Flagg, looking extremely relieved, made preparation for departure by cuddling the small dog securely in her arms.

"Down to Commercial wharf, where our vessel lies, with the unobtrusive answer. "My father is Captain Jethro Flagg, and I'm Polly Flagg," continued Miss Polly, vaguely conscious that some sort of introduction was the proper thing, under all the circumstances.

"My name is Tad—I mean Thaddeus—Thorne, and I'm from Philadelphia," said Tad, wishing that his jacket was less threadbare and his shoes were whole, as he glanced at the simple but neat dress of his companion, whose face was completely overshadowed by a deep calico sun-bonnet shaped like the tip of a market wagon.

"Oh!" returned Polly, and then, instead of speaking of the weather, or asking Tad how he liked Boston, Polly plunged headlong into a personal explanation: "The cook was wretched this morning, and I had to go to market for father's w-up-down. And while I was hurrying back through Lewis Lane, because it was nearer those horrid boys chased the poor little dog that had got lost, and he ran to me so pitiful," said Polly, bending over the small animal in her arms until it was completely eclipsed by the sun-bonnet, "that I caught him up, and said they shouldn't leave him. Then you came along, and I'm ever so much obliged."

The abrupt wind-up, though a little incoherent, was perfectly satisfactory to Tad.

"He'll be a nice little dog after he's washed," Tad remarked, patting the pup to cover his embarrassment, for Tad wasn't used to thanks, particularly from girls.

"I guess he's a Newfoundland," he continued, with a knowing glance at the animal's ears and paws, "and they're first-class water-dogs, you know."

Polly nodded, and, after a short pause, looked curiously at the handsome little traveling sachel in Tad's hand.

"You don't belong to any of those vessels?" she asked, inquiringly. For they had crossed busy Commercial street, and were walking along the platform on the water front, where the pelicanian looks down upon the howling mazes of masts, spars and cordage belonging to the coasting and fishing craft huddled in the basin between the two wharves.

"No," replied Tad, in a low voice. He could not tell her that he belonged to nothing—to no one, as he mentally expressed it. It would make him seem like a sort of vagrant, youthful tramp. Nor did he to Polly's secret disappointment—account for his possession of the handsome little traveling sachel, with its silver mountings, at which Polly had cast admiring glances.

"I hope he came by it honestly," thought Polly, and then was ashamed of the ungenerous self-suggestion.

Yet, I am afraid it hovered unconsciously in her mind, for she had in the flush of her gratitude decided she would ask Tad to take dinner with herself and Captain Flagg, on board the "Mary J." But as they reached the end of Commercial wharf, where the "Mary J." was moored, Polly hesitated a little.

"You can come aboard, if you like," she said; but Tad, who noticed her almost imperceptible change of manner without being able to account for it, shook his head.

"Oh, no, miss; I don't look fit," he replied, with a glance at his shabby clothes and patched shoes, that was pathetic. "I come down here," he continued, simply, "because there wasn't any other place where I could get down and look over the papers—good-morning, miss," and before Polly could reply Tad was gone.

CHAPTER IV.

Just astern of the "Mary J.," a large iron steamer was discharging her cargo of cotton bales, a dozen or more of which were piled up one upon another, at the very end of the wharf.

Looking about him to make sure that he was unobserved, Tad scrambled up the back side of the tier, and, crawling nimbly over the top, dropped into a narrow niche between two of the bales, where, well sheltered from the wind, and warmed by the sun, he found that without being seen he could look directly down upon the "Mary J.'s" deck.

Polly Flagg had thrown aside her ugly head-gear, and, using the end of the half-board for a wash-bench, was vigorously scrubbing the small dog, who feebly protested, in a bucket of warm water furnished by the cook—a diminutive colored man with very round shoulders, and woolly locks plentifully powdered with gray.

"There, little dog," said Polly, as she rubbed the white sopping pup with a bit of an old sash-cloth, "you were never so clean in your life before. Now, George Washington!"—addressing the colored individual—"take him and lay him in the galley, by the fire, till he's dry."

"Pears though he orter be considerably refrigerated by his absorption, Miss Polly," returned Washington, with a convulsive giggle, as, receiving the small bundle, he hurried back to the galley, which was a sort of large "cubby-house," midway between the two masts, where the cooking was done.

Meanwhile, Polly unpinched her dress, which she had carefully turned up in front during the washing, pulled down her sleeves and, without resuming the big sun-bonnet, walked to the rail, where she stood looking up the wharf in an expectant attitude.

"She isn't exactly stylish-lookin'," said Tad, viewing Miss Polly critically, from his point of observation, "but she's got a goodish kind of a face."

No-Polly was not stylish-lookin'. Her cheeks were as rosy and round as a Baldwin apple, and her small nose not innocent of freckles. Then, too, her mouth was rather large, though one forgot its size in the kindness of her smile, which, moreover, showed a very perfect set of small, even, white teeth.

Polly had a pair of pleasant dark eyes that, when she was a bit excited, looked almost black, and she was also the possessor of what the novelists call "wealth" of bronze-tinted chestnut hair, with a natural curl in it, which no amount of art could have imitated. But Polly briefly summed up her own personal appearance in one terse sentence: "I'm a little faded and a snub-nosed."

And no amount of reasoning could convince her she was not undeniably plain—or, as she unhesitatingly affirmed—"awful homely."

"I don't believe it's polite to stare at ladies, even if they can't see you," suddenly thought Tad. And vaguely wondering at his own newly-awakened sense of propriety, Tad settled back in his cozy nook and, putting out his feet, began ruminating over the "Lost Sachel," but his search was in vain. Watches had been taken, diamond-stolen, gold-headed canes taken by mistake and pet poodles lured from their homes—for the recovery of each and all of which rewards were offered, with the suggestive "no questions asked," as an extra inducement for their return.

But there was no reference in any of the papers to a small alligator-skin sachel, with nickel mountings, left by mistake in the waiting-room of the Broad Street depot, or words to that effect; and Tad began to wonder what he had best do next. He could not advertise under the head of "Found," for five cents was all the money Tad had in the world; so, finally, he was forced to the conclusion that all he could do was to wait, and hope that the sachel would hang on a spell longer.

It was much harder to decide what he should do with himself. The bag had some one to look out for it, but there was no one to look out for Tad. And, for the first time in his short life, Tad felt a feeling of something like homesickness creep over him.

A familiar voice on the wharf, close to the pile of cotton bales, aroused Tad very suddenly from his reverie.

"It's that Jones!" he excitedly exclaimed, though under his breath, as he peered down at the speaker. It was indeed that ingenious gentleman, as lifting his hat with winning politeness, he had accosted Miss Polly, who was evidently impressed at such a display of courtesy.

"May I ask, miss," said Jones, calling up his most agreeable smile, "whether you have seen a snub-nosed boy, carrying a small alligator-skin sachel, anywhere in this vicinity within half an hour?"

"Why, yes—he was down here awhile ago, but I guess he's gone up-town again," replied Polly, wondering what the stranger wanted of the boy who called himself Tad Thorne.

Mr. Jones looked sadly disappointed at Polly's answer, while Tad, winking at himself, chuckled silently. What Mr. Jones might have said is uncertain, for just then a third party here in sight—to use a nautical phrase—who, Tad felt by a sort of instinct, must be Captain Jethro Flagg. He was a tremendously stout man, with iron-gray hair and a rim of white whiskers which made a sort of halo about his fat, weather-beaten face. The blue shirt, pea-jacket, canvas trousers, oil-skin hat and heavy sea-boots which he wore left no doubt as to the nature of his calling.

"Now, then, Eph'm," said Captain Flagg, in a voice like a trumpet with a bad cold, as, turning about, he addressed a long-legged youth who

was immediately seized by Tad, who had scrambled to his feet in a twinkling, though only a second or two sooner than the active Jones himself, who, taking to his heels with the speed poetically attributed to the startled fawn, was quickly lost to sight among the surrounding drays and express-wagons.

Without his hat, and in a very bewildered frame of mind, Captain Jethro Flagg rolled heavily around the corner of the pile of cotton bales. Following him at suitable intervals came breathless Polly, astonished G. Washington Johnson and the remainder of the "Mary J.'s" crew, including the chief mate—all comprehended in the lengthy name of Ephraim K. Small, otherwise known as "Eph."

Tad's honest face shone with pleasurable excitement as he handed the tin box to Captain Flagg, and began brushing his heavy knees while Polly Flagg smiled her approbation.

"My lad," said Captain Flagg, placing his big hand on Tad's shoulder, "it's high eight bells—come along and have some dinner. We'll talk over matters aboard the vessel."

An invitation of this sort—particularly under all the circumstances, was not to be refused, and Tad, recovering the sachel from his hiding-place among the cotton bales, accompanied Captain Flagg on board of the "Mary J.," where mutual explanations followed, while George Washington was bringing the dinner into the small cabin.

In contributing his own share, Tad insensibly told the most of his gimpie story, after which Polly Flagg, with sparkling eyes, related her morning adventure, which Tad's connection there-with, hearing which, Captain Jethro gravely shook hands with Tad across the table, without speaking. Indeed, he finished his dinner in like silence, and, after pushing his chair back, sat staring so hard at the youth that Tad began to feel very hot and uncomfortable.

"My lad," suddenly said the Captain, "which way might you be callin' to Tad?" he began, and put back to Philadelphia, or," continued the speaker, rising to fanciful heights, "is it dead before the wind to whatever port promises the best freights and biggest profits?" With a dim comprehension of Captain Flagg's meaning, Tad, conscious of a slight choking in his throat, replied sadly that he didn't know—he hadn't another, no friends, and, summing it all up, "said the Captain, putting blushing Tad on the shoulder, "I've made up my mind to give you."

"No, sir," interrupted Tad, with a decisive shake of the head, "I didn't want any thing for what I've done."

"To give you—a chance aboard the "Mary J.,"—to be a-e-e-e a gallant sailor boy o-o-o-o-y." Trolling out the concluding words, which were a reminiscence of some old sea-song, in catching a glimpse of Tad's mischievous face peering over the top of the cotton bales, Captain Flagg's fingers insensibly relaxed their hold upon the japed tin case containing his papers and money.

This was the moment for which Mr. Jones had been watching! Whipping the tin case from the Captain's unsuspecting grasp, he dodged round the pile of cotton bales before Captain Jethro could say "Jack Robinson" or Polly recover her breath to scream.

Now, despite his sudden, ill-timed mirth, Tad had been sharply watching the movements of the erratic Mr. Jones, whose purpose he had dimly suspected from the first moment of his pretended interview. And, as he snatched the case, Tad, scrambling from his hiding-place with inconceivable rapidity, slid down on the back side of the cotton bales, just in time to confront the escaping Jones.

Unlike the average boy-hero of fiction, Tad did not throw himself bodily upon the would-be robber, regardless of personal safety, etc.; he merely resorted to a device not unknown to playful youths in moments of extreme hilarity, he threw himself on all fours in front of the flying feet of the raudulent felon.

Uttering a wild whoop of dismay, Mr. Jones plunged with outstretched arms over Tad's prostrate body and struck the wharf with such startling suddenness that the tin case flew from his

fingers and was immediately seized by Tad, who had scrambled to his feet in a twinkling, though only a second or two sooner than the active Jones himself, who, taking to his heels with the speed poetically attributed to the startled fawn, was quickly lost to sight among the surrounding drays and express-wagons.

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