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Turgenev Wallace Fonatne Sydon Freud Schlegel  
Twain Walther von der Vogelweide Fouqué Friedrich II. von Preußen  
Weber Freiligrath Frey  
Fechner Fichte Weiße Rose von Fallersleben Kant Ernst Richthofen Frommel  
Engels Fielding Hölderlin Eichendorff Tacitus Dumas  
Fehrs Faber Flaubert Eliasberg Eliot Zweig Ebner Eschenbach  
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**The Submarine Boys' Lightning  
Cruise The Young Kings of the  
Deep**

Victor G. Durham

# Imprint

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## CHAPTER I

### WHY THE "DANGER" SIGN WAS UP

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That sign might have been over an air-hole in the ice; or it might have been near rapidly moving shafting and belting in a factory.

As a matter of fact, the letters, white against the red paint on the door of the shed, meant danger in the most terrible form. It was the sort of danger, which, defied too far, would send one traveling skyward.

The shed stood in a lonely corner of the big Farnum shipbuilding yards at Dunhaven. Now, it was the Farnum yard in which the Polard submarine boats were built, and this shed contained some two dozen Whitehead submarine torpedoes, each with its fearful load of two hundred pounds of that dread high explosive, guncotton.

It was in the month of February, and the day, at this seacoast point, was cold and blustery, when two boys of seventeen, each in natty blue uniforms and caps resembling those worn by naval officers, crossed the yard toward the shed. Over their uniforms both boys wore heavy, padded blue ulsters, also of naval pattern.

"Danger?" laughed young Captain Jack Benson, stopping before the door and fumbling for the key. "Well, I should say so!"

"Something like two tons and a half of guncotton in this old shed," smiled Hal Hastings. "That's not mentioning some other high explosives."

"It's this gun-cotton that begins to make our calling in life look like a really dangerous one," muttered Jack, as he produced the key and fitted it into the lock.

"Once upon a time," murmured Hal, "we thought there was sufficient danger, just in going out on the ocean in a submarine torpedo craft, and diving below the surface."

"Yet we found that submarine travel wasn't really dangerous," pursued Captain Jack. "Really, riding around in a submarine craft seems as safe, and twice as pleasant, as cruising in any other kind of yacht."

"After we've gotten more used to having hundreds of pounds of gun-cotton on board," smiled Hal, "I don't suppose we'll ever think of the danger in that stuff, either."

Jack unlocked the door, swinging it open. Then both young men passed inside the red shed.

It needed hardly more than a glance, from an observing person, to make certain that neither boy was likely to be much bothered by any ordinary form of danger.

For a number of months, now, Jack Benson and Hal Hastings had lived all but continually aboard submarine torpedo boats. They had operated such craft, when awake, and had dreamed of doing it when asleep. Being youths of intense natures, and unusually quick to learn, they had long before qualified as experts in handling submarine craft.

They had yet, however, one thing to learn practically. It needs the deadly torpedo, fired below the water, and traveling under the surface, to make the torpedo boat the greatest of all dangers that menace the haughty battleship of a modern navy.

Now, at last, Captain Jack Benson, together with his engineer, Hal Hastings, and Eph Somers, another young member of the crew, were about to have their first practical drill with the actual torpedo. An officer of the United States Navy, especially detailed for the work, was expected hourly at Dunhaven. The three submarine boys were eager for their first taste of this work. Barely less interested were Jacob Farnum, shipbuilder, and president of the submarine company, and David Pollard, inventor of the Pollard type of submarine craft.

In this shed, placed on racks in three tiers, lay the two dozen Whitehead torpedoes with which the first work was to be done. As Jack stepped about the shed, looking to see that everything was in order, he was thinking of the exciting work soon to come.

Eph Somers was near at hand, though up in the village at that particular moment. There was a fourth member of the crew, however, named Williamson. He was a grown man, a machinist who had been long in Farnum's employ, and who was considered a most valuable hand to have in the engine room of a submarine.

Williamson, during the preceding fortnight, had been away in the interior of the country. He had taken a midwinter vacation, and had gone to visit his mother. Now, however, the machinist knew of the work at hand, and his return was expected.

"Really," declared Jack, turning around to his chum, "Williamson ought to be here not later than to-morrow morning. He had Mr. Farnum's letter in good season."

At this moment a heavy tread was heard on the light crust of snow outside. Then a man's head appeared in the doorway.

"Speaking of angels!" laughed Hal.

"Williamson, I'm mighty glad to see you back," hailed Captain Jack, delightedly.

"I'm glad to be back, if there's anything unusual going to happen," replied the machinist, as they shook hands all around. Then, as they fell to chatting, the machinist seated himself on a keg, the top of which was about half off, revealing, underneath, a layer of jute bagging.

"We're going to have some great practice work," declared Hal, moving about. "We're just waiting for that Navy man, and then we're going out on the new submarine—the one that's named after me, you know."

Out in the little harbor beyond rode at anchor two grim-looking little torpedo boats, each about one hundred and ten feet long. The older one was named the "Benson," after Captain Jack. But the latest one to be launched, which had had its full trial trip only some few

days before, bore the name of "Hastings" after the capable young chief engineer of the Pollard boats.

Both of the boys, by this time, happened to be looking away from the machinist. Williamson, in utter unconcern, drew a pipe out of one of his pockets, filled it, and stuck the stem between his lips. Next, he struck a safety match, softly, against the side of the match-box, and lighted his pipe, drawing in great whiffs.

"Just how far does this practice go!" inquired the machinist, still sitting on the keg and smoking contentedly.

At that moment Captain Jack Benson caught, in his nostrils, the scent of burning tobacco.

In an instant a steely glitter shone in the young captain's eyes. Firm, strong lines appeared about his mouth. All that part of the face showed white and pallid. Just a second or two later Hal Hastings also turned. Like a flash his lower jaw dropped, as though the hinge thereof had broken.

When Captain Jack's voice came to him it sounded low, yet hard and metallic. One would have wondered whether he had suddenly become ugly.

"Williamson," he directed, "just step outside and see if Eph is there!"

Hardly noting the unusual ring in the young commander's voice, the machinist, still with the pipe-stem between his teeth, rose and walked out into the open. With an almost inarticulate yell Captain Jack Benson leaped after him, striking the man in the back and sending him spinning a dozen feet beyond.

Hal Hastings, too, dashed through the door way; then paused, grasping the edge of the door and shutting it with a bang.

"What on earth do you mean by knocking a fellow down like that?" demanded the machinist, angrily, leaping to his feet and wheeling about, leaving the lighted pipe on the snowcrust.

"Look at the sign on this door," ordered Hal Hastings, pointing to the big white letters.

"Danger, eh?" asked Williamson, speaking more quietly. "Well, that door was open and swung back when I came along, so I couldn't see any warning. But what is there in the shed that's so mighty dangerous?"

"What do you suppose is in the half-open keg that you were sitting on?" demanded Captain Jack, rather hoarsely.

"What!" queried the machinist, curiously.

"The head of that keg is half off," Jack continued. "Now, if any sparks from your pipe had dropped down and set the bagging afire—well, that keg is almost full of cubes of gun-cotton!"

"Whew!" gasped Williamson, beginning to look pallid himself.

"Nor is that all," Hal took up. "Of course, if you had touched off that gun-cotton in the keg, it would have sent us all through the roof. But the smaller explosion would have touched off the two tons and a half of gun-cotton in those Whitehead torpedoes. That would have laid the whole shipyard flat. In fact, after the torpedoes went up, there wouldn't have been much left of any part of Dunhaven!"

"Gr—great Hercules!" gasped the machinist, his face now losing every vestige of color.

Then, after a moment:

"With so much sky-high trouble stored in that shed, you should have a sign up."

"There is one, on the door," replied Captain Jack. "But the door happened to be swung open, so that you couldn't see it. Yet I guess you're the only one in all Dunhaven who didn't know what the shed contains."

"And how does the little town like the idea!" demanded Williamson, beginning to smile as his color slowly returned.

"Why, the people can't expect to have very much to say," Jack replied.

"We have a permit to store the explosive, and it's at the request of the United States Government. You're not afraid to be near so much rockety

stuff are you?"

Williamson gazed at the young skipper reproachfully.

"Now, what have I ever done, Captain, or what have I failed to do, that should make you think me only forty per cent. good on nerve? Though I'll admit that my appetite for smoking won't be good when I'm near this shed. How long is the stuff going to stay here? That is, if some idiot doesn't play with matches in that shed."

"I expect it will about all be used, after the Navy officer gets on the scene, and drills us in using torpedoes," Captain Benson answered. "It isn't intended to keep that sort of stuff stored here all the time."

"Oh! Then I reckon I won't toss my job into the harbor," grinned the machinist. "How soon are you going to want me?"

"You can go aboard the 'Hastings' at once," replied Skipper Jack. "It won't do any harm to have the machinery of the new boat looked over with a most critical eye."

"Any gun-cotton, rack-a-rock wool or dynamite silk stored on board the new craft?" inquired Williamson, with a look of mock anxiety.

"Nothing more dangerous than gasoline," Captain Jack smiled.

"Oh, I don't mind that stuff," chuckled the machinist. "I want a smoke. That's why I'm particular about not going to work near any stuff that has such a big idea of itself that it swells up every time a match or a lighted pipe comes around. I'll go aboard now."

With this statement, Williamson strolled down to the beach, untying a small skiff and pulling himself out to the newer of the pair of very capable submarine torpedo boats that lay at moorings out in the little private harbor.

Hal, in the meantime, had quietly swung the shed door to and locked it.

The great white word, "Danger," was once more in plain view.

"What are you going to do now!" asked young Hastings of his chum.

"I reckon I'll spend my time wondering where the Navy man is," laughed Captain Jack.

"Let's go up to the office, then. Mr. Farnum may have had some word in the matter."

As they neared the door of the office building, Eph Somers, who was a combination of first officer, steward and general utility man on board the Pollard boats, came in through the gate, joining his friends at once.

Readers of our previous volumes are now well acquainted with these young men and their friends. In "*The Submarine Boys on Duty*" was told how Jack and Hal came to Dunhaven at just the right moment, as it happened, to edge their way into the employ of Jacob Farnum, the young shipbuilder, who was then engaged in the construction of the first of those famous submarine torpedo craft. The first boat was named the "Pollard," after David Pollard, the inventor of the craft and of its successors. By the time that the "Pollard" was ready for launching Jack and Hal had made themselves so valuable to their employer that the boys were allowed to take to the water with the boat when it left the stocks. Eph Somers, freckle-faced and sunny aired, was a Dunhaven boy who had fairly won his way aboard the same craft by his many sided ability. Yet, under the direction of Messrs. Farnum and Pollard these youngsters so rapidly acquired the difficult knack of handling submarine boats that they remained aboard. In the end Jack Benson became the recognized captain of the boat. Some notable cruises were made, in which the great value of the Pollard type of submarines was splendidly proved, thanks largely to the cleverness of the boys who handled her.

The "Pollard" was present during naval manoeuvres of a fleet of United States warships. Captain Jack conceived and carried out a most laughable trick against one of the battleships, which attracted public attention generally to this new craft.

In the second volume of the series, "*The Submarine Boys' Trial Trip*," our readers found the young men engaged in giving further and much more startling demonstration to naval officers of the full value of the Pollard type of boat. Incidentally, it was told how a grasping financier attempted to get control of the Farnum shipyard and its submarine business, with a series of startling plots that the submarine boys were instrumental in balking. The submarine boat itself passed some of the severest trials that could be invented, yet the trials through which the builders and the submarine boys passed were far greater. Yet, in the end, just as Mr. Farnum and his associates were about to go to the wall, financially, the Navy Department purchased and paid for the "Pollard." In this volume was also told how Jack and his friends were the first to discover a simple, yet seemingly mysterious, method of leaving and entering a submarine boat at will when it lay on the bottom of the ocean.

Then, in "*The Submarine Boys and the Middies*," was related how Captain Jack and his chums secured the prize detail of going to Annapolis with the company's new boat, the "Farnum," there to teach the midshipmen of the Naval Academy how to operate boats of this class. That narrative was unusually full of adventures, including the laughable recital of how Eph innocently brought down upon the trio a first-class sample of hazing by Uncle Sam's naval cadets. Captain Jack had many startling adventures with the secret agent of a rival submarine company, who sought to discredit and disgrace the young commander of the submarine boys.

In the volume preceding this, entitled "*The Submarine Boys and the Spies*," the third of the company's boats, the "Benson," named in honor of the young captain, was discovered in Florida waters. This newest submarine had been sent to Spruce Beach, in December, to undergo some tests and to give an exhibition, the U.S. gunboat, "Waverly" being on hand to act as host. In this volume it was related how Captain Jack's very life was at stake, from the foreign spies gathered at Spruce Beach to pry into the secrets of the mysterious submarine. Here the United States Secret Service officers were called in to aid, yet it was Captain Jack and his friends who contributed to the full success of the government sleuths. At this period of his career Captain Jack's greatest dangers came through the wiles of charming women spies, especially one beautiful young Russian

woman, Mlle. Sara Nadiboff, easily the most clever of all international spies. Yet the cleverness of the submarine boys carried them successfully, and with highest honor, through the gravest situations in their eventful, young careers.

Just at this particular time the young men had been going through dull days. Beyond the fact of the mere presence of the heavily charged torpedoes at the shipyard there had been nothing like excitement, for some time. This dullness, however, was destined to turn, suddenly, into the most intense and exciting activity.

As Jack pushed open the outer door of the office building of the shipyard, Jacob Farnum, the owner, happened to be bustling through the corridor.

"Hallo, boys!" came his quick, cheery greeting. "I was just about to send for you."

"Any word," queried Jack, good-humoredly, "as to when that cold-molasses naval officer is going to be here!"

From within the office sounded a light laugh.

"You'll see him shortly," grinned Mr. Farnum. "But come in, boys."

As the three submarine boys entered the office, in a group, their glances fell upon two men, in the uniform of United States sailors, standing at ease near the door. In a chair near Mr. Farnum's desk sat a third man, dressed in ordinary citizen attire. He was a man of about twenty-eight, dark, smooth-faced, slender of figure, yet broad-shouldered.

"Lieutenant Danvers," called Mr. Farnum, smiling broadly, "I want to present my submarine boys to you. First of all, Jack Benson, our young captain."

Realizing that his question had been overheard, Jack went forward with a very red face, holding out his hand. With a quiet smile, Lieutenant Frank Danvers, U.S. Navy, took the boy's hand. Then Hal and Eph were presented.

"I see that I was mistaken about the molasses," laughed Jack.

"Nothing as sweet as all that about the Navy, eh?" smiled Mr. Danvers. "However, my delay in getting here was due entirely to delay in official orders. I am now on the ground, however, and ready for prompt—"

At this moment the outer door shot open with a bang. Hal looked out into the corridor to see what had caused the disturbance.

"Look a-here!" sounded the voice of machinist Williamson, in an injured tone. "Here I am, looking about for a quiet place for a five minutes' smoke. Captain Benson sends me out to the 'Hastings,' telling me that it will be all right there. So I light my pipe on the platform deck and go below. Great Jehosh! The first thing I run on to is a couple of torpedoes, about a mile long and two hundred yards thick, loaded up with gun-cotton or pistol-satin enough to blow the ocean up into the sky. And I haven't had my smoke yet!"

"That's all right," called Hal, quietly, as the machinist's somewhat shaking voice died out. "You're always safe, man, in following any lead that Captain Jack Benson gives you. Go back on the 'Hastings' and have your smoke out."

"But those two torpedoes, loaded up to the muzzles with artillery-felt, or some other exploding kind of dry-goods!" protested the machinist.

"Those two torpedoes are dummies," laughed Hal Hastings. "They're aboard just for dummy torpedo practice. There isn't a kick in a dozen of 'em. Go back and get your smoke, man!"

Hal must have looked at the machinist with unusual sharpness, for Williamson went promptly out through the door, closing it after him.

"I'm ready to go aboard, Mr. Benson," proposed Lieutenant Danvers, "and make a start whenever you're so inclined."

"We'd better put it off for half an hour," proposed Skipper Jack, with a laugh. "That'll give Williamson a chance to have that smoke of his over with."

"That'll suit me," agreed the naval officer, cheerfully. "In fact, Mr. Benson, if you won't think me too much like cold molasses"—Jack

wincing—"I would propose that we start at a little after one o'clock this afternoon. Even at that, we'll be out long enough between that time and dark."

"Any arrangement that suits you, Lieutenant, suits me," nodded Jack Benson. "You're going with us to-day, aren't you, Mr. Farnum?"

"Don't you believe, for a moment," retorted the shipbuilder, "that I'd let anything keep me from the first torpedo practice on one of our boats. And I'm almost ashamed of Dave Pollard. That fellow, instead of being here, is away somewhere in hiding, dreaming about a new style of clutch for the after end of the torpedo tube. Oh, yes, I'll be with you!"

"Hallo!" muttered Eph, stepping to a window that looked out on the yard near the street gate. "What's this coming? A hundred people, at least, and they look like a mob!"

There was, in truth, a goodly inpouring of people, and fully a dozen of these new-corners seemed to be trying to talk at the same time.



## CHAPTER II

### TORPEDO PRACTICE AT LAST

"Perhaps they're coming to make a row about having so much gun-cotton stored close to the village," hinted Lieutenant Danvers.

The same thought was in Captain Jack Benson's mind. However, they were not long to be kept in doubt, for Jacob Farnum had moved hastily to the outer door.

"Good day, friends!" called the shipbuilder, as he pulled the outer door open, for he recognized most of the faces of men and women in the crowd. "What's wrong, friends!"

At the very doorstep the leaders of the crowd halted.

"The 'Mary Bond' isn't in yet, Mr. Farnum," called one of the men.

That was the name of a fishing smack that put out from Dunhaven at regular intervals through the winter. She carried a Dunhaven captain and mate, and, altogether, fourteen men and boys.

"When should she have been in!" queried Mr. Farnum. The crowd had halted, now, and all but their chosen speaker remained silent.

"Yesterday morning, sir," replied the spokesman.

"Do you people fear that harm has come to the 'Mary Bond!'" queried the shipbuilder.

"Why, it must be so, sir. For the smack wasn't due to go out more'n some forty miles. With the winds we've been having lately she could come in, any time, within a few hours."

"Perhaps the captain had a poor run of luck," suggested Mr. Farnum. "He may be staying out longer than usual."

"No, sir, for all the reports that have come in off the sea are of big catches. The ocean has been swarming with fish these last few days," replied the spokesman.

"Then, friends, I take it there's something you want me to do. What is it?" demanded Jacob Farnum.

"We've come to ask you, sir, if you won't have one of your torpedo boats put out and look for the 'Mary Bond.' Your boats can go a big distance in a few hours. We're afraid, Mr. Farnum, that the smack's canvas or sticks may have suffered in the big blow of yesterday. We're afraid, too, that the 'Mary Bond' may be drifting about helplessly on the sea, just for the need of a little aid. We're afraid, sir, that good Dunhaven men may be in great danger of going to the bottom, and leaving behind families that—"

The spokesman stopped, a little choke in his voice. As though in answer sobs came from some of the women.

"Now, now, friends, if that's the trouble, we'll soon know about it," promised the shipbuilder, one of the biggest-hearted men living. "One of our boats is going out for practice. But, if you'll supply a good sea-going hand or two, the second boat shall go out and sweep the seas hereabouts, looking for the 'Mary Bond.'"

A cheer went up at once. Mr. Farnum flushed with pleasure. Not above doing a kind act, he also enjoyed having it appreciated.

"Who'll command the relief boat!" called one of the women. "Jack Benson?"

"No," replied Mr. Farnum, shaking his head. "Captain Benson must go out on naval business to-day."

A murmur of disappointment went up from the crowd. Jack Benson was a young skipper on whose success a Dunhaven crowd would make bets.

"But, see here," proposed the shipbuilder, "I'll go out myself, on the 'Benson,' and take Williamson along with me. Now, you folks find any local salt-water captain and a couple of good deck hands to go with me."

"When will you start, sir?" asked the spokesman.