

HOW BILLY BANE DRIFTED OUT GOLDEN GATE TO THE SEAL ROCKS

SLIPPING out with the tide, when the face of San Francisco Bay was as smooth as glass, Billy Bane found himself adrift in a boat at Sausalito. Billy got into the boat to play, loosened the rope and the current that came down through Raccoon Strait started him on a voyage to the ocean, all alone and late in the afternoon.

Add to this that Billy had some sandwiches and a red apple to eat and that he was only six years old and did not know how to row and had never been alone in a boat before, and the real facts for starting his story of adventure are all in print.

The fog came in like a ghost from the ocean, hardly moving, as the wind was very light. It lay upon the water and Billy Bane and Billy Bane's boat were blotted out from view.

Then Billy began to wonder, for through the fog there came a noise.

"Boo-o-o-o-o-o," shouted some queer giant on the shore at Billy.

At least Billy thought that it must be a giant, because it had such a dreadful voice.

"Boo-o-o-o-o-o yourself," shouted Billy. "You can't scare me, old giant. I've read all about Jack the Giant Killer and I know, I guess, all about the giant business."

Then another giant on Alcatraz Island took to shouting behind him, and all it said, so Billy thought, was "Who, who who?"

So Billy answered, "I'm Billy, old giant; who are you."

Then there were some more giants shouting. You and I know that these were only the fog sirens, that make a noise to tell ships where they are when the fog comes in, but Billy had never been down to the salt water before and his head was full of giants and their stories and so he was sure that he heard giants talking.

Only," he said to himself, "it is queer that all they can say is 'boo' or 'boo' or something like that. Perhaps they do that just to scare Billy; but Billy saw a mountain lion once, and I guess he knows."

Some Italian fishermen, rowing in through the fog, kept a horn blowing, and Billy heard that too and laughed.

Toot, toot, toot," he called in answer. "F-i-s-h—fish; fish—fresh fish."

The Italians heard Billy, but they did not know that a little boy was adrift and going steadily to sea, where there are great waves and where only large ships are safe when the wind blows.

They rowed along steadily, still blowing their horn so that no other boat should run them down and sink them, and Billy called after them again until something else made him look up and forget the fish horn.

Something came whirling through the fog with squeaking wings, and the first thing Billy knew it came plum down on the edge of the boat and sat there. It looked like a bird, with webbed feet and funny little eyes and a stout bill, and it was white, with some dark feathers.

The truth is that this visitor scared Billy a little. "I wonder if it is a witch turned into a bird?" That he thought, and then his common-sense said "Let's see."



With that he gave some crumbs of bread from one of his sandwiches to the visitor, which, being really a seagull that was tired of flying, and that had been chasing the ferry boats to be fed all day long, was not at all afraid of Billy.

No indeed. It hopped and fluttered down into the bottom of the boat and ate the crumbs; then made a queer, shrill call for more, and there being no more coming hopped up on the bow of the boat and eyed Billy with a comical look that probably meant wonder. Billy never saw so tame and funny a bird before, and so he laughed loudly and heartily. This was too much for the bird, and it slowly rose and flew away.

"Come back, bird; I didn't mean to hurt your feelings. Honest, I didn't. Come back and play with me."

But the gull went away and was seen by Billy no more.

By this time the boat began to rock a little with the faintest sort of waves from the ocean, and if Billy had been a sailor he would have known that his boat was in the Golden Gate. But of course he did not, but he began to wonder what was making the water go up and down. He guessed that it was a witch.

But just then something terrible happened. With a hissing sound, with a thundering noise of something beating in the water as it seemed to Billy, with a sudden calling of scared voices and a rush of a huge monster through the water, a bigger monster than Billy had ever heard of, ploughed swiftly by and made a swell that sent water over the side of Billy's boat. Billy held on tight and never cried out. As the monster sailed off into the fog beyond Billy saw that the monster seemed to have men and women on its back. When it was by its thundering noise stopped and there was a splash just after and then the voices of men and some one called out "Give way."

Of course you know that the monster was an ocean steamship and that the people on its "back," as Billy called it, were the crew and passengers. The splash in the water meant that a boat had been launched by order of the captain to pick Billy up and take him on board the ship.

But Billy was afraid of the monster; afraid too of the strange people who were sailing around on a monster's back. When men called to him he did not answer, for he was too much frightened and did not want to have the monster get him nor did he wish to be caught by any of the "magicians" that the monster was carrying around on the water.

So the steamship finally went on again with a churning of the water that again seemed terrible and a horse whistle blew, which, of course, Billy believed to be the voice of the monster, and then he was more glad than ever that the men had not found him in the fog, for he knew that he would be scared to death if he had to talk to a monster that had such a voice as that.

How it happened I don't know, but, very soon after that, Billy's boat came to the seal rocks beyond the Cliff House. An eddy in the tide or a chance wind blew his boat to the rocks and held it there a little and Billy, believing that he was at his journey's end, got out on the rocks. Then his boat drifted away and he was alone on the rocks—that is, alone all except the sea lions.

Billy believed these sea lions to be some more monsters and he watched them swim about and dive into the water to catch fish and climb slowly back on the rocks. He did not like to hear them roar, for he was sure that they were talking about him. He thought, too, that he would walk home, but he found that there was water on every side. The wind cleared the fog away for quite a distance and Billy then saw where he was.

His boat was drifting steadily off from him. He did not care much, being too young to know that he was in danger from the sea lions if they should decide, after talking it over, that he was some odd kind of a fish that should be eaten; in danger from falling from the rocks and being drowned in the ocean; in peril of being kept on the rocks to starve if the fog should again be thick so that no one could see him.

Billy did wish that he had the sandwiches that had drifted away with his boat, for the sea air had made him hungry. But he comforted himself by curling up in a place where there was no sea lion and went to sleep. His dreams were queer enough.

He slept a long time. When he woke the sky was sprinkled with stars. All around him the sea was dark and heaving and the waves sped by the rocks swiftly and beat on the shore beyond, and ran far up the beach with foam flying above them, just like racehorses with white manes.

But this was not what took Billy's first attention. For, not far away, he saw something red come out of nowhere, glare at him like a great eye, look him through and through and then seemed to close up. Then, a little later, another something that was green, as it looked to Billy, also came from nowhere, looked at him as if he were something good to eat and also went out.

"I-I-I-I won-n-n-der wha-a-t tha-a-t i-s-s?" said Billy, and his voice woke a drowsy old sea lion that rolled over and fell into the water with a great splash and made the water shiny for a minute as if it had fire in it.

Then Billy, who had never heard of phosphorescence in the sea water, really believed that he was in an enchanted land.

"That is a red eye and that is a green eye. They belong to a giant on the shore. And he looks at me first with the red eye and then winks that shut. And then he looks at me with the green eye and then winks that one shut. Peek-a-boo, old giant with the two queer eyes!" so said the queer little boy.

Billy thought that it would be better to play peek-a-boo with the giant than to have it seem that he was afraid; for he had learned, in all the fairy stories he knew, that the brave boys were the only ones that managed to get away from the giants, and he wanted to get away.

For a long time he watched the giant with the red eye and the green eye—which you and I know was only a lighthouse with a lantern that turned round and round, so that a light through a green glass would be seen for a little, and then a light with a red glass would come around, and that the lantern would turn all night long by machinery.

"There is old red eye, and there is old green eye, peek-a-boo, giant," Billy said over and over. But, of course, he went to sleep again and was not awake until the sun was shining and the night was gone.

Then he heard voices and saw men at the Cliff House pointing something that looked like little guns at him, and he waved his hands and called out as loud as ever he could: "Don't shoot, misters, it is only Billy."

Perhaps they heard Billy, although I have my doubts. At any rate, Billy saw a man run down the road toward the life saving station as fast as ever he could. Very soon some men rowing a boat in a way that Billy much admired came close to the rocks and one of the men reached for Billy and took him off the rocks.

And when he came to the beach Billy saw his mother and she was crying aloud, "Oh! my Billy, my Billy boy; thank God he is alive and coming back to me. Oh, Billy, Billy, my darling!"

And when he was ashore his mother hugged and kissed him a thousand times, it seemed to him. And his father hugged and kissed him, and so did a lot of women that were on the beach, and he was surprised to see that some had been crying.

"Oh, Ma," said Billy, "gee, but I am hungry. But didn't I have a great flirting with a giant that had a green eye and a red eye.

Then his mother choked up again and sobbed and said, "Billy, you have had a narrow escape from death. Never go in a boat again."

Billy saw that his mother wanted him to promise that he would keep away from boats and he has never put foot in one since.

You see that the people on the ocean steamship that passed Billy told about seeing a child alone in a boat in the fog and Billy's father and mother, looking for news of their missing child, heard about it and that led to his being found, as everybody at the Cliff was asked to look out to sea with spy glasses. So the glasses were what Billy supposed to be little guns pointed at him that morning.

WHEN BENNY WENT DOWN AMONG THE FISH

BENNY sat on the end of the little pier, dangling his bare, brown legs over the shallow waters of the blue and placid bay. He held in a lazy fashion a swinging fish line with a hook unbaited, for some wise finny had come to examine the worm which had covered its black, sharp point, and, examining, had decided to taste the worm bit by bit, till the many samples had uncovered the dangerous hook sufficiently for Mr. Finny to realize the trap so temptingly set for him. Then desiring to get even with the monster who would thus try to catch him or one of his fellows, he nibbled cautiously at the tempting worm-flesh till nothing was left on the hook save a rusty spot near the point.

"Ah, ha!" grinned the fish, swimming slowly away. "Now catch one of us if you can." Then he was off into deeper water to tell his mother of what had happened.

So Benny, all unaware that the hook hung black and threatening in the water—a veritable warning to the fishes to keep their distance—sat with his drowsy eyes upon the cork wondering if it would ever bob with the nibble of a fish. At last, becoming too sleepy to sit up, Benny tied the end of the line to a projecting plank of the pier and stretched himself out his full length to sun and to sleep.

The August sun soon sent him to deep and proceeded to burn a nice little blister on the end of his nose the while, for only that part of Benny's piquant face thrust itself out from under the brim of his big sun hat. But Benny had not slept more than forty winks when he was roused by a strange little voice coming from the water just beneath him. "Hi-I, there, you boy," it said. "Come, open your lazy eyes and look down here."

Slowly Benny opened one eye—allowing the other to remain asleep—and peeped through a crack between two boards into the calm, clear water below. To his surprise there was the prettiest big fish he had ever seen beckoning with a fin to him. Becoming deeply interested, Benny forgot the dream his sleeping eye was indulging in and quickly jerked that member open to aid his vision. "Well, I never!" he exclaimed, now fully awake. "What a funny sight to see a fish making signs like a boy and speaking in a human voice. What sort of a fish are you, anyway?"

"Just you come down and see me; then you'll find out for yourself," replied the pretty fish that seemed quite as large as Benny himself.

"Won't anything hurt me?" asked Benny, preparing to drop from the pier into the water in response to the fish's cordial invitation.

"No; you shall meet with no harm," assured the fish.

"All right, I'm coming," called out Benny. And in another minute he was in the bottom of the bay where the water was over his head by several feet. "Gee whiz! How cool and—and—moist it is here," he said, sitting down on a bunch of seaweed.

"Yes, we never feel the heat down here," said the fish. 'Sometimes I wonder why people don't come to live in the water—it's so cool and clean."

"Oh, they couldn't breathe here," explained Benny. "And the water would spoil their good clothes."

The fish made no reply to this, but sat looking at Benny with a peculiar expression in his eyes. Then whirling himself nearer to Benny, he lifted a fin and said: "My young friend, I want to know why you people wish to catch, kill and devour us. We never do any harm to you."

Benny felt the warm blood rush to his face. "I had never thought of it," he confessed. "When I was only three years old papa took me fishing with him and let me hold the pole. That was a very long time ago, for I am now 10 years old, going on 11." And Benny felt he must have made a great impression by stating such a ripe age. "You see," he went on, "I never was taught to think anything about you fishes or whether or not you cared if you were caught."

"Well, we don't relish being swallowed," the fish remarked drily. "You can put yourself in our place and then you may understand something more about it. But—I don't want to talk about so unpleasant a subject any more during your call. You are my invited guest and it behooves me to make you have a pleasant time. Now I'm going to call some of my friends to meet you and help me to entertain you."

Following this statement the fish swam a little way down the bay, flapped his tail and clapped his fins together like a person clapping his hands. The noise of switching tail and clapping fins called a great crowd of fish, crabs and lobsters together. They came in groups, swimming through the water merrily, chatting and laughing together in their own fish, crab and lobster fashion.

Benny was introduced to the callers, bowing low before each and shaking the fins of the fishes and the claws of the crabs and lobsters. Then all sat on the wet sand in the shadow of the long pier, which served as a roof for them.

"I'm sure I find it very pleasant to meet you all," said Benny, with just a touch of embarrassment. "It's quite a suprise to me to learn that fish, lobsters and crabs can talk and have feelings like—like—ahem, like people. I never suspicioned them of—of—of knowing things like we do.

"Oh, the beings in the water are very much like those of the land," observed the big lobster, reaching out a long claw and patting Benny on the shoulder. "But there are some funny notions concerning us among the inhabitants of dry land. For instance, I've heard it said by boys and men who were here in the water trying to catch us that we have cold blood and cannot feel. They say the favorite way of cooking us and our little cousins the crabs is to plunge us in boiling water while we are still alive or put us in a broiler and hold us over the coals till we die a death of slow and intense torture."

"That's true," said Benny. "My mamma always cooks lobsters and crabs alive. But I'm sure she doesn't know that it hurts you or she would not do so. I've heard her say that fish and lobsters and crabs feel no physical pain."

"Suppose we hold the same ignorant idea concerning you and your kind," said a crab that sat near one of Benny's bare feet. "Suppose I should take it into my head—for crabs have heads—that you could not feel my pincers should I clamp them over your toes?"

"Oh, p-l-e-a-s-e don't!" cried Benny, feeling a bit frightened, for the crab looked vicious, and he was afraid he might do the cruel thing he hinted at.

There was a laugh went up from all the fishes, crabs and lobsters at this, and Benny's host said: "Never fear, lad; not one of my friends here would do you any harm. They, like you, are my guests. And now that we have assembled for a good time let us drop the present subject of conversation and forget that there has been anything unpleasant said on either side. What do you say to a few races."

"Yes, yes," cried several fishes and crabs and lobsters. "Let's have a race between a crab and a fish. Then let's see our friend Lobster give race with a fish."

Then all was confusion for a few moments while racers were chosen and judges selected. "Say, friends," said the host, "I suggest that our guest of honor, this young person from the land, be invited to race with one of us. Let him pick his opponent from those already chosen to race."

All agreed to this, and Benny, thinking it would be great fun to race with a lobster, chose the biggest one present, saying: "Now, I'll give you the start of ten feet and beat you without half trying. I think a handicap race will be more exciting, and it will give you a chance to hold your own against me."

The lobster laughed and replied: "No, I'll not grant you the handicap. There wouldn't be any race under such circumstances, for should you give me ten feet the start of you I'd be at the end of the race before you had got fairly started. Suppose I give you fifty feet the start of me. That'll be more in keeping with our relative powers of speed, I fancy."

But as Benny shook his head emphatically to the lobster's proposition, laughing at the egotistical fellow in his sleeve, they at last agreed to start even. So they took their places, toeing up to a line drawn in the sand by the crab. Then the starter counted "one, two, three—go!" and away sprinted Benny beside the lobster. But if he started beside the lobster he did not keep that near to him longer than it takes to count three, for before Benny could realize that the race was on the lobster was fully fifty feet in advance of him, and he kept on gaining at such a rate that Benny gave up the race and turned to go back to the starting point, when he tripped his toe in some seaweed and fell.

And what a fall! The water seemed to close in over him with a coldness which until now he had not felt. He got a mouthful of salt water, then he strangled and—awoke. Yes, awoke to find he had just that moment fallen from the pier where he had dozed off just a little while ago.

Being a good swimmer, Benny rose quickly to the surface, spat the water out of his mouth and shook it from his nose and eyes and pulled for the shore. It was an easier way of getting on land than climbing the piling of the pier. Once on the sandy beach Benny sat down and became absorbed in thought for a few minutes; then he said aloud: "Well, I've heard of fish stories, but talk about dreams—that one was a dandy. Gee whiz! how that old lobster did run. I reckon by now he's out in the ocean—if he kept on at the gait he was going when I called myself to a halt. But it's getting late! Guess I'd better go and see if there's any fish on my hook. One thing sure," he went on as he walked out on the pier, "if fish and lobsters and crabs can r-e-a-l-l-y feel—well, I don't want mamma to ever put 'em in boiling water alive again, so I don't."

LEMOS' WITCH DRUM AND THE RATTLESNAKE'S RATTLE

BY DAVID H. WALKER.

LEMOS was a mighty medicine man among the Indians in the early days among the Sierra Nevada Mountains, before the face of a white man had ever been seen on the North American continent. A greater and better medicine man than he, whom we would call a magician, had commanded that wherever Lemos went he should carry a witch drum, which, beaten by magic and without hands, always told when Lemos was drawing near.

Taw Wee Nee, the Indain chief whom every one loved, was hated by Lemos, as truly bad people always hate the good ones. But Lemos was afraid of Taw Wee Nee, who was a mighty warrior, who, naked-handed and alone, had fought with and conquered the greatest of the grizzly bears on the mountainside.

Lemos would have done harm to Taw Wee Nee if he could have surprised him, but the beating of the witch drum told of his coming. In the middle of the night Taw Wee Nee had started from sleep to hear the faint sound of that drum. As he hunted in the depths of the forest its rattling sound broke in upon him. Bears, wolves and mountain lions ran away at that noise.

Trees shivered in midsummer; the brooks stopped flowing; flowers hung their heads and withered when Lemos approached. So men and all nature knew of the evil in the heart of Lemos.

"Beware," sang the west wind to Taw Wee Nee.

"Do not go near Lemos," sighed the solemn old pine tree as it nodded at Taw Wee Nee.

Even the old bald eagle screamed the name of Lemos with terror as if flew among the crags and sailed over the canyons that were deepest on steady wing and warned Taw Wee Nee.

"No," stoutly answered Taw Wee Nee to the eagle, "I will not flee, but seek Lemos and make an end to this. Last year the corn was ruined when Lemos passed through the fields. The cattle died. I will face the wicked medicine man alone and will fight him for the sake of my people."

So Taw Wee Nee went forth alone and found Lemos in a cave where he was feasting on the raw flesh of a grizzly bear that he had killed by a magic charm as it walked under the good green trees in freedom on a lovely summer afternoon.

Lemos was bent and old. His eyes were small and as fierce as a wild beast's. His mouth was horribly large, reaching from ear to ear, and long, yellow fangs instead of teeth made him look dreadful. His skin was covered with spots. As he ate the flesh of the bear he fondled a snake that curled around his neck and fought with him for a share of the meat.

A hundred wicked years had wasted the body of Lemos until he was so thin that his hands seemed to be almost transparent. But every year had made his eyes sharper and more cruel. Now they seemed to be on fire with hatred and triumph as they gazed on Taw Wee Nee.

"Welcome to the magic glen," croaked Lemos, while his witch drum beat sullenly at his side.

"I did not come to say fine words, wicked Lemos," answered Taw Wee Nee, "but to rid the world of a curse. That curse is you, Lemos."

"You are then more welcome than ever," said Lemos sourly.

Hardly were these words out of his mouth before Lemos, doubling himself up like a ball, rolled on the ground toward Taw Wee Nee, going so fast that Taw Wee Nee was in his grasp in a second. In that magic clutch no animal or man had power to resist.

Struck as by a cannon ball Taw Wee Nee fell. Like a rope the great snake that was Lemos' slave twined itself around Taw Wee Nee's hands and feet and, behold, he was a prisoner.

"Well done, Taw Wee Nee," cried Lemos, taunting him, "you have started well on your trial to rid the world of Lemos. Suppose you try again. Or, better, suppose you promise that you will never try again?"

"I shall rid the world of you, wicked Lemos," answered the brave Taw Wee Nee. "I will promise nothing but that."

"Then away with him to my cave. There let him think, for tonight he shall be no more," cried Lemos, in rage.



Some of the magic charms of Lemos moved Taw Wee Nee and he found himself in the middle of a cave that was so dark that he could hardly see for a time. Then he noticed that just below him was a little hill that was covered with sharp stones.

With a terrible struggle he managed to draw the snake to this hill and threw himself down on the sharp stones. Taw Wee Nee was mangled and bleeding from the fall, but his thought had saved him from the snake for the time. That reptile, more hurt than Taw Wee Nee was by the flinty rocks, loosened his hold around Taw Wee Nee, for sheer pain and crawled away to the mouth of the cave, where, with head raised, it watched Taw Wee Nee, ready to strike him with its fangs if he should try to escape.

"Wicked snake," cried Taw Wee Nee to the reptile, "what wages do you get for your hurts and service?"

"None," answered the snake bitterly; "nothing but blows and hard words."

"I know a place," said the cunning Taw Wee Nee, "where there is plenty of food for you and freedom from Lemos, and it is not far."

"Where?" asked the snake eagerly.

"The medicine man cannot cross the stream that runs below the white mountain toward the sea. It is on the other side of that stream. Go and see."

"No, no," said the snake. "That will never do. Lemos will punish me if I leave you here, for you might escape."

"You are a stupid snake," said Taw Wee Nee. "You will be punished now if Lemos finds me here with my hands and feet untied. You would better go and see that what I say is true. I will stay here until you come back."

At that the snake crawled off, for he knew, as all the animals and reptiles in the Sierra knew, that Taw Wee Nee would tell the truth always.

As soon as the snake was outside of the cave Taw Wee Nee prepared to meet Lemos, whose witch drum, beating, told that the medicine man was drawing near.

"It is courage agaist magic and I win for the sake of my people." So saying Taw Wee Nee seized a large stone and stood ready to hurl it as soon as Lemos should darken the door of the cave as he prepared to enter.

And now the medicine man or magician came closer, and with him he brought a wicked spider to whom he was saying: "Wise spider, you shall sing Taw Wee Nee to death, and his fine feathers that he wears on his head and the deerskin moccasins and his fine blanket of bearskin shall be yours, that you may be warm in the winter. Only sting hard and fast and spoil his handsome face first, for I hate to see it."

Taw Wee Nee heard, and his face lighted with triumph. Sure was his aim, as many a wild beast that had fallen before his might had known. Swiftly sped the stone as soon as Lemos appeared.

The medicine man, thinking that Taw Wee Nee was still tied by the snake, was surprised. But what could stand against the mighty arm of Taw Wee Nee in fair and open war? Nothing. Not even the century-old skull of Lemos. He fell and died.

"Down, cursed cave!" cried Taw Wee Nee, and he closed the door with a huge bowlder. As he turned to go away he heard the witch drum of Lemos still beating. It was calling for its wicked master who would never stir again.

A sound of something swiftly passing through the grass at the same instant struck the ears of Taw Wee Nee. Turning, he saw the medicine man's snake running toward him, with mouth opened in anger.

"I am here," said Taw Wee Nee. "I have kept my promise and have not gone away. But I am no longer a prisoner. Lemos is dead in the depths of his own cave and I have barred the door. See for yourself."

Into the gloom of the cave the snake plunged, going through a hole at one side of the bowlder. Soon the reptile came forth again, and, with a rush, sought to kill Taw Wee Nee.

The brave-hearted chief did not try to dodge the snake, but boldly seized it, struggling and trying to bite, and made it a prisoner by main strength.

Around his own neck Taw Wee Nee hung the witch drum of Lemos that Lemos had dropped and that was beating more furiously than ever, as if the spirit of the dead Lemos were calling on it to take vengeance for him. Trailing the serpent head downward on the ground, Taw Wee Nee returned in triumph to his own teppee.

"There is one thing yet to do," said Taw Wee Nee. "Into the body of the serpent and into the bodies of all serpents of his kind I command that the noise of the drum of Lemos shall enter that hereafter no snake of his tribe shall be angry without giving notice to man that he is near, even as Lemos was compelled to do with his drum."

"Mercy, mercy," pleaded the snake. "If I travel with noise I shall starve, for all animals will escape from me."

"No mercy for you, but safety for man," answered Taw Wee Nee.

"So I end the witch drum of Lemos and renew its noise in the serpent of Lemos," then cried Taw Wee Nee. He raised the dreaded drum before all his tribe and threw it upon the ground, where it was broken into many pieces.

And the serpent? From it came a rattling noise, like the witch drum of Lemos. For the first time the snake had a rattle and it and its tribe have been known as rattle snakes to this day.