



Children's Stories That Never Grow Old.

SWISS
FAMILY
ROBINSON

OUR ship had been tossed about in a most terrible storm for several days, and we all feared that at any moment she might go to the bottom.

"Come boys," said I to my four sons: "we shall at least go down side by side." Just then we struck a rock.

"We are lost! Launch the boats! Try for your lives!" a voice cried.

I ran to the deck and found that all the boats had left, and we alone remained. I cried out for the men to come back and take us with them, but it was in vain. I thought our last chance was gone. Still the ship did not sink. I went to the stern, and to my joy saw that she was held up by a huge rock.

"Be of good cheer, we are at least safe for some time, and we may yet reach land," I said to my wife and boys.



FRITZ, my oldest son, and I then made a raft. Fritz found some firearms, and Ernest a tool chest, and Jack came up to us with two huge dogs, one of which he rode like a horse. After we had loaded all the things we had gathered together on the raft, and had set free some ducks and geese which we hoped would fly to shore, we all got on the raft and reached the shore safely, the dogs swimming alongside.

We made a tent with the old sail cloth we had brought with us, and the boys fetched some moss and dry grass with which to make our beds. We set fire to some dry twigs, and my wife made a pot of soup which we ate with relish. The boys then went down to the water's edge to save two large casks which had washed near shore. It was not long before I heard a shrill cry from Jack, and running with an axe in my hand, I found him in a pool of water where a large crab held him by his toes. I struck it with the axe, and Jack ran off with it in high glee.



FRITZ and I then went to a grove of palm trees near by.

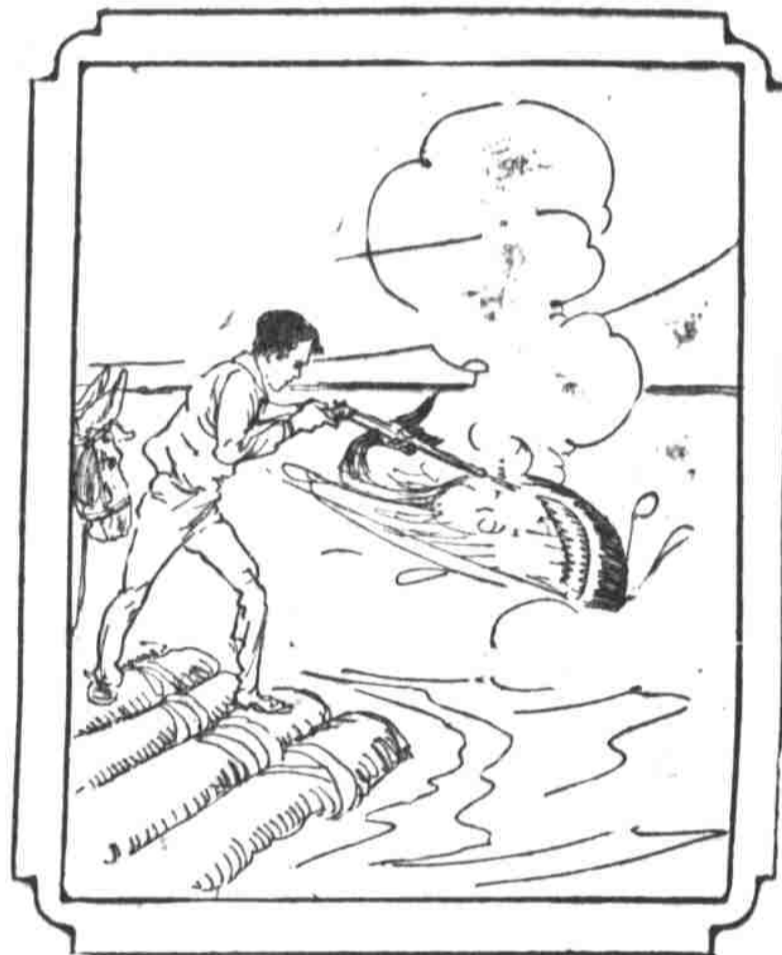
"Do you see those nuts at the top of the tree, Fritz?" I said.

"To be sure I do; but they are far too high to reach. Look!" he cried, "there are some monkeys. Let me have a shot at them."

"Do not do that," I said; "it will do no good to kill them," and with that I threw some stones up at the tree.

The monkeys started throwing coconuts at us, and so many that we had hard work to pick them all up. We had not gone far with them when one of the dogs dashed by us after a troop of apes. One of them could not climb, as she had a young one in her arms, and this one the dog attacked.

Fritz called the dog off, but the ape was dead. The young one, as soon as it saw Fritz, sprang on his back, put his paws in his hair, and would not let go.



I AT length got the ape from Fritz, and took it up in my arms like a child; then I put it on the dog's back, and it held tight by the hair of the dog's back, which Fritz led with a string. That night the ape went to bed with Jack and Fritz, and we all slept in peace.

Next day Fritz and I went back to the wreck to save the live stock, and get whatever else might be of use. We made a float for the cow, the ass, the sheep and goats, and we also brought with us a lot of food. We had gone but a short distance when I heard a loud cry from Fritz.

"We are lost," he said, pointing to a great shark near by. Though pale with fright, he took aim with his gun, and shot the fish in the head. It sank at once and I knew that we were safe once more.

WHEN we got back to the tent my wife told me that while we were at the wreck she had gone in search of a place to build a house, and to my surprise told me she had found a tree twelve yards around and so big that we could build rooms in it and have stairs up the trunk, and in this way we could be safe from any wild animals. I thought this a good idea, and we all started to see this wonderful tree, which proved to be a fig tree of vast size.

"If we can fix a tent up there," I said, "we shall have no cause to dread wild beasts."

It was late at night when we had taken all our belongings to this spot, and got the wood to build our hut.

Next day we rose very early, as we knew we had a long day of toil before us. Just as we were starting to work, Jack cried out:

"Be quick! here is a strange ocast with quills as long as my arm!"



IT WAS a large porcupine, and when the dogs ran near it made a loud noise and shot out its quills, which stuck in the dogs and made them bleed. Jack shot at the beast, and it fell dead on the spot. Ernest and I then went in search of some thick canes which grew in the sand near by. These we cut down and bound to four long poles and thus made steps which would, we thought, reach far up the trunk of our tree. On our way back one of the dogs made a dart at a clump of reeds, and a troop of large birds rose with a loud noise. Fritz let fly at them, and brought down two at a shot.

"Look," said Ernest, "what fine plumes he has. He has web feet, too, like a goose, and long legs like a stork."

"Yes," said I, "he is a fine bird, and is called the Flamingo."

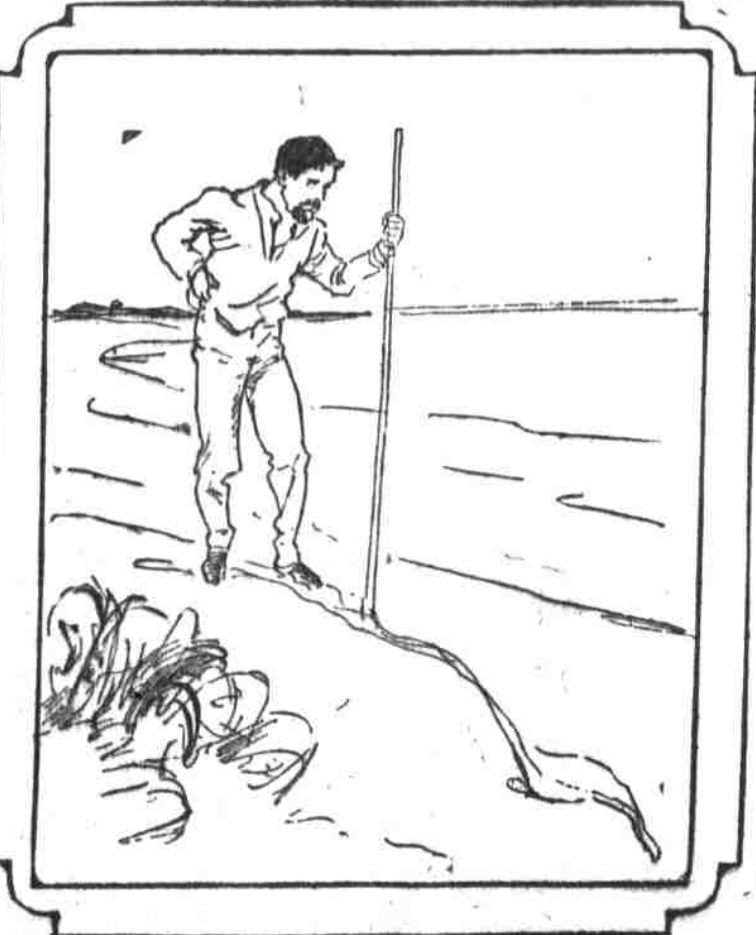


THAT night we had finished the hut, and we lit our fire around the tree, tied the dogs to the roots, and went up to sleep out of harm's way, for the first time since we left the ship. When the steps were drawn up we all felt that we were now safe at last.

"Let us call our home 'The Nest,'" my wife said.

"Here's to 'The Nest,'" said I, "and may we live long and bless the day that brought us here."

And here we lived for ten long years, and our cares were few, and our life was full of joy and adventure. Yet I often cast a look at sea, in hope that some day I should spy a ship which would take us back to our own beloved land.



BUT the boys did not share my hopes. "Go back?" Fritz would say. "No, no. Why should we go back? We have all we can wish for; let us leave our fate in the hands of God."

