

# Mc Dougall's Good Stories for Children

## A Wonderful Tale OF A BRIGHT BOY, A SHIPWRECK, A CARGO OF MIRRORS, A STRANGE ANIMAL

UNCLE OLIVER was smoking his pipe on the porch when the children came home, and he went indoors with them, for he was a man who preferred to be with youngsters rather than with grown-ups. As soon as they had taken their hats and coats off they flocked around him and asked him all manner of questions, as usual. Finally Mabel inquired:

"Did you ever see a fire-eater, Uncle Oliver? There's a picture of one on a fence down town."

"Yes," he replied, "and I knew one, once upon a time."

"Does he really eat fire?" asked Tim.

"No."

"Then what does he do?"

"Blows fire from his mouth."

"How does he do that?"

"Well, I can't exactly tell you. He fills his mouth with cotton filled with some inflammable stuff like benzine, and he lights it, keeping his mouth closed tight so that it doesn't burn him, and breathing through his nose. When he gets his lungs full of air he just blows it out and that sends forth a flame. It is very surprising how much fire he can send forth."

"Why doesn't it burn his lips?" asked Mabel.

"He keeps 'em wet all the time. It takes a lot of practice to become an accomplished fire-eater, let me tell you."

"What was the man's name that you know?" asked Tim.

"He was a boy and his name was Tommy Haviland. He learned the trick from his Uncle Fortner, who was a great performer on the piccolo in a German band. He never told me how it was done, but I have read about it in a book."

"Did Tommy Haviland get rich?" asked Tim.

"Not by fire-blowing, but he became wealthy by capturing the Multipod, the Elastic Multipod."

"Oh, what's a Multipod? Never heard of that before."

"Multipod means many-footed."

"Oh, you mean a centipede?"

### OFF ON A LONG TRIP

"No, I mean a Multipod, which was an animal bigger than an elephant—at least this one was—and it was the only one I ever heard of. He discovered it in the island of Umph, away off the coast of Asia."

"Oh, tell us all about it," cried the children, seizing chairs and sitting in a circle around Uncle Oliver.

"Well, I don't know as it is a very interesting story," began Uncle Oliver, "because it's all about cannibals and pirates, wrecked ships, piles of gold and pearls and awful animals in caves. You wouldn't like that kind of a story."

"Oh, certainly not," said Tim, as he winked at his sisters. "We could not bear to listen to it." He winked all over as he drew near to his uncle, who went on:

You see, this boy Tommy had a bad uncle named Bill Fortner as well as the good Uncle Charley in the Dutch land, and he lived with Uncle Bill, who made him get up at four o'clock in the morning to build the fire, bring in the milk, and do everything that he didn't want to do himself. Then all day he worked in Uncle Bill's looking-glass factory, for he was learning the trade.

He never received any pay, however, so he rarely had any money to spend unless his Uncle Charley, the piccolo-player, gave it to him. The only fun he had was in learning some of the many tricks his Uncle Charley knew. Among them was this fire-eating, at which he soon was even more adept than his uncle.

But Uncle Bill caught him at it one day in the shop and gave him a licking, because the shop wasn't insured. Tommy often thought of running away and going with a circus or something of the kind, but just when he was really determined to escape his uncle said to him one day:

"Tommy, I am going to make a salesman of you. There's a ship sailing to the Philippines, and you shall go in her with a lot of sample mirrors and try to sell them over there, where, I am sure, they need them."

Of course Tommy was delighted, but he didn't show it for fear his uncle would see it and change his mind. He hastened to get ready, and next day was on board the ship, which was the Giddy Owl, of Abscon, and commanded by Captain Dave Barrett. Here he found that a large packing-case filled with looking-glasses was being placed in the hold. He saw his own name on the box, and when he went to the captain the latter asked him what he was in the box.

"Looking-glasses," replied Tom.

### STRANGE DEEP SEA CREATURES

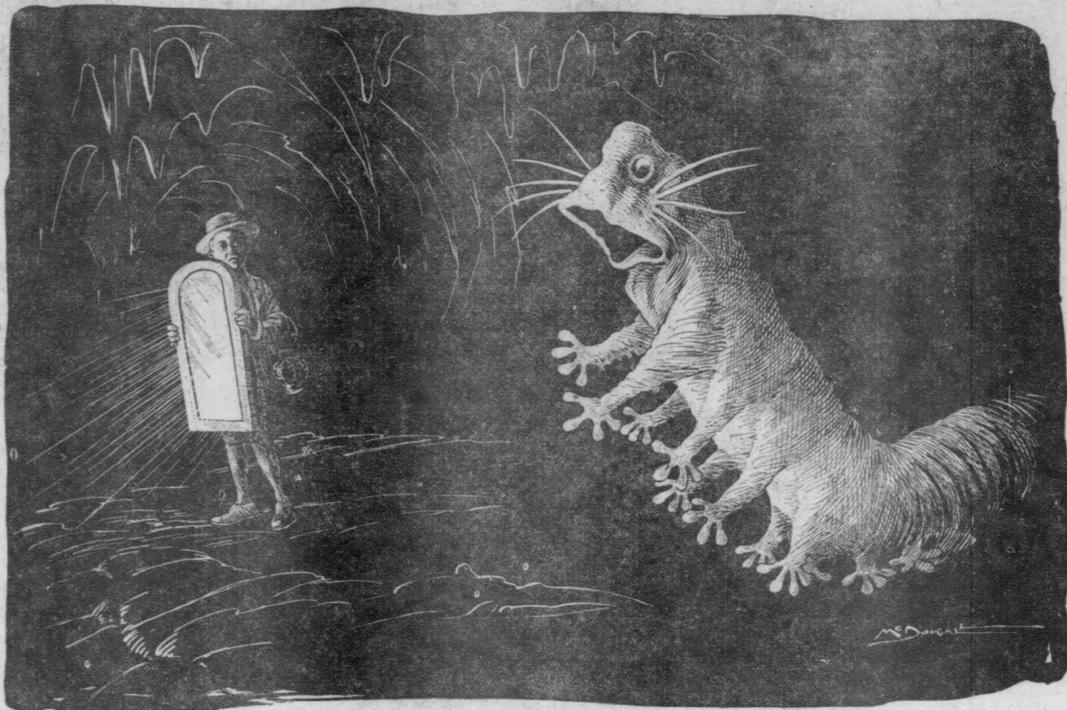
"Humph! I wonder where we can sell them! People don't wear clothes in the countries we visit, so they don't need looking-glasses very much!"

Well, that dashed poor Tommy's hopes right at the start, but he made up his mind to try as hard as possible to sell the mirrors. As this was his first opportunity to make his way in the world, he determined to get rid of them even if he had to sell them at cost. Little did he imagine in what an astonishing manner he would dispose of them nor the price he would get.

Meanwhile he had nothing to do on board ship but read and watch the great waves, and now and then out came to amuse Captain Barrett or the crew, which you may be sure tickled them all vastly, for it was a wonderful thing to see immense flames proceeding from a lad's mouth without harming him in the least.

Sometimes, when the wind failed and the sea was calm as a mill-pond, Tommy used to fish for the ship for the flying-fish, but usually the days were too warm to permit of that sport. All of the crew hid in the shade of a sail while Tommy and Captain Barrett reclined beneath an awning watching the flying-fish circling butterfly-like around the craft, skimming over the water like swallows, or swiftly darting aloft to avoid the sly and ever hungry catfish.

The disappointed "meow" of the latter could be heard in the deep when he missed his prey, as well



HE THREW THE SUNLIGHT ON THE GREAT SHINY CREATURE

as the deep-toned bay of the great, hulking dogfish sinking along in the dark shadow of the ship, and sometimes the howl of the sea-wolf far down in the depths, lurking there in the hope of falling in with some wandering sea-urchin on an errand to his mermaid grandmother in the seaweed forest like poor lamented Red Riding Hood. Sea-lions and sea-turtles, too, were down there in that slow-heaving deep, as well as sea-elephants and great sea-cows, whose muffled bellows could be faintly heard at times as they roamed across the wide fields of sea-cumbers and sea-nemones growing there. But Tommy rarely caught sight of any of these marine creatures.

At night when the water was alight with glowing phosphorescence, as if untold millions of fireflies were flitting through the waves, he sometimes saw the great electric fish with windows in their sides through which streamed a brilliant glare, or heard the drumfish beating his solemn tattoo to marshal the hosts of the deep—whales, sharks and gigantic eels—to gather and investigate the strange monster that floated above them on the surface, for ships are rare in the waters of the Pacific, so vast is that ocean.

He saw down in the half-lighted waters the sunfish, the moonfish and the starfish vying with one another in an endeavor to outshine every competitor. Fish of all shapes and sizes crowded the water, and Tommy thought that with the brilliant light and the great gathering it might be a fish ball that was being held below him.

Captain Barrett was full of stories about the wonders of the deep. Hour after hour he would sit and spin yarns about strange things which he had seen or which had befallen his friends.

He told about the monstrous barracouta, which bites only the toes of swimmers; how he had once beheld the sea serpent, and, strange to say, it was not at sea, but while coming home from a banquet; how the electric eel attached himself to his ship and did something to the compass so that Captain Barrett steered the ship a thousand miles out of his way and discovered the Unsociable Islands, which were not down on his chart; how a saw-fish sawed a big square hole in the Merry Griz, of Boston, let in a lot of water, entered the ship and then clapped the boards back again, after which the fish remained in the hold for days eating the cargo of white grapes.

### A PIRATE SHIP APPEARS

He told how another ship of his, the Ann Meador, of Harlem, once ran into a school of fish so deep and so compact that the vessel was lifted clear out of water and carried seven hundred miles out of her course, as the fish swam along day after day, and when at last, off the Straits of Kerfuzalem, the fish suddenly sank into the depths, the ship had warped so from the sun's heat that she leaked like a sieve; how he saved the ship from sinking by catching thousands of blow-fish and throwing them into the half-empty hold, where they immediately blew themselves full of air (as you perhaps may have seen them do if you ever lived near the seashore), and, forcing all the water out of the hold, they buoyed the vessel up so effectively that she sailed along with only her keel in the water!

He related how he used to capture the wary catfish by placing a sea-lark in a wire cage and when the catfish crowded around them scooped them up in a net; and how, when he commanded a whaler named the Wobbly Worm, he once drove a school of whales into the Bay of Calumel, where they crowded together and squeezed each other in their fright until the whale oil just spouted into the air and he filled every barrel on board in one day without harpooning one whale!

Then he drifted away from fish stories and related how, when he took the Sutherland to Siam with a load of dried lima beans and was becalmed off Sumatra, the sun's heat caused the cargo to sprout and when he sailed into port the whole ship was a mass of bean-veins clear to the top of the masts, and he sold the fresh vegetables to the royal family for more money than he could have got for the dried beans.

And also, how, on another occasion, he had painted the ship with a fire-proof paint that he had invented himself, and when the ship caught fire she burned for two days, until at last there was nothing left of her but the fire-proof paint, and in that thin shell of paint they drifted for two weeks until they reached Pernambuco, and then he had another ship built up again inside the paint!

Another time, in the far North, his ship sprang a leak and sank right near shore, when she had filled with water, but when the tide went out the water in her froze solid before it could run out again through the leak, so that at the rise of the tide, of course be-

ing now almost solid ice she floated easily, and thus he was enabled to sail her back to Boston, where he sold the ice to an ice company at a good profit.

All these and dozens of other tales the captain told for Tommy's benefit, and if the boy was not fully impressed with all the wonders of a seafaring life it certainly wasn't the captain's fault. The result was that Tommy grew to watch for marvels, and so when the strangest things happened to them he was not unprepared.

One day they were sailing slowly along and nearing Asia, when on the horizon appeared the first sail they had seen for weeks. It neared them swiftly, coming with a breeze from the S. E. half E. by W. and as it came full into view the captain turned pale and his bald head broke out into a cold perspiration. He muttered: "Malays, by Hilday!" and then shouted for the men to arm themselves, as the approaching ship was a pirate craft.

### WRECKED ON A STRANGE SHORE

But there were but two swords and a revolver on the Giddy Owl, and realizing that an attempt to resist would mean a slaughter of his crew, Captain Barrett responded to the hail of the Malay captain with a salute and the pirates swarmed on board, but they merely took the valuable portion of the cargo, leaving such bulky articles as Tommy's box of mirrors and the like, and soon the ship's company had the satisfaction of witnessing their peaceful departure.

They could hardly believe their eyes when they saw the Malay craft sail away as swiftly as she had come, but the captain was sad and depressed; so gloomy, in fact, that he didn't notice the approach of a simoom, which is a dreadfully fierce wind-storm very frequently encountered in the waters of the Asiatic ocean. The storm swept up, and before they had unfurled any sails at all it took them aback, and away went every mast, breaking off at the deck like matches.

Then Captain Barrett woke up, but all he could do was to order the mass of wreckage cut away, after which the Giddy Owl rolled like a log in the tremendous seas that broke over and swept her from stem to stern for two days, her crew with little food and all wet to the skin. Then came a calm, during which the wreck drifted along in a current for days and days, until every atom of food was consumed and the water gave out; but they were spared further torture by the sea's kindness, for then they were at last grounded on the white sandy beach of a large and unknown island whose gigantic mountains towered clear to the blue sky.

They reached the shore and soon found a spring of cold, clear water, and saw that there were whole forests of bread-fruit, coconut and banana trees growing there, so they had no longer the least fear of starving. How delicious these fruits tasted to the famished men I leave you to imagine, when one considers how good even a two-cent yellow banana tastes to a boy who never fails to get three meals a day, with a few slices of bread and butter between times.

But, alas! just when they had all filled up, taken a long drink of the sweet, refreshing spring water and laid down to have a nap, out from the forest rushed a horde of savage Dyaks, the fiercest savages ever made, and in a trice every man was bound hand and foot, after which they were led away along a woodland path to the abode of the King of Dyakia. This was a palace built of bamboo and adorned, as all Dyak houses are, with the heads of people they have killed in war, and the captives saw at once what their end was to be.

### TOMMY STARTLES THE NATIVES

But they were not to be slaughtered at once. They were taken to a prison and well guarded while the Dyaks searched the ship for booty, and when the cases of goods were brought ashore the captain was asked why so little was to be found. He explained that the ship had been taken by pirates and looted, which made the Dyak king so mad that he had an apoplectic fit, during which he died.

The savages were so enraged at this event that they were about to kill all the Giddy Owl's crew at once, but Tommy had taken advantage of a chance to secure his valise during the excitement, and he had secreted his fire-eating materials about him, so that when the angry savages, roused to the prison with their poisoned spears and daggers to destroy all within it, he stepped out and standing before them blew out at them a stream of flame six feet long!

To say that the Dyaks were amazed is too weak an expression; they were simply paralyzed, and many of them turned back-comers when they saw this

All of them fled when Tommy stepped nearer, fled as if every Dyak demon they had ever heard of was after them, and the whole village was deserted by all but the seventeen hundred dogs belonging there. The captain said:

"Wall, by Hadley, that's a useful gift, after all! Just keep that 'ere fire lighted and we'll have 'em subdued and pliable as wax!"

Late in the day many of the natives returned, and standing at a distance called out for Tommy; and when he appeared they, kneeling on the ground, begged him to become their king. To this he agreed, and was soon installed in the bamboo palace, but he insisted on having the captain and the crew with him as attendants, although the Dyaks were at first inclined to resist the demand.

Well, for many a day King Tommy Haviland ruled his Dyak realm, but it was not much fun. He had taken his big box of mirrors into the palace for security, and that was all they had saved of the remains of the cargo, what the captain, in fact, said was the most worthless of it all; but it really proved the most precious, as you will shortly see.

Tommy tried to rule wisely and teach the savage natives a few things that civilized people value, such as bathing, cooking their food, keeping quiet at night so that white people can sleep, and to refrain from murder and torture; but the more he preached at them the less they liked it, and pretty soon, after they had watched him eating and doing all the ordinary things that a boy does, they concluded that he was not a god, but merely a clever young man who had learned a few tricks.

Little by little they grew to fear him less, and soon they would have begun to despise him had not the Elastic Multipod, commenced his operations again in that island.

This fearful creature lived in a long tunnel-like cavern in the mountains, that divided the island like a wall. It was a hideous, worm-like monster, bigger than an elephant and with a million legs. I guess, and the strangest thing about it was that its end or tail was actually fastened in some manner to the rock at the extreme end of its cavern. It never came out in the daytime, as the least ray of sunlight falling upon it would have killed it at once, but at night it shot forth and seized whatever creature was abroad, after which it snapped back, just like a rubber band, into its hiding place, there to devour at leisure whomever it had caught. Away at the remote end of its cave it sat, all shrunk up into quite another shape, a pale, clammy, whitish thing surrounded by legs. So elastic, however, was its body that it could stretch out for a mile, twist and turn through the trees after a flying, frightened savage, and snap him up in its strange, shapeless mouth in a twinkling.

### CAPTURED BY THE MULTIPOD

And as it glided softly through the dense forest, or over the tumbled rocks, its thickly-padded feet made no noise to warn any who might be abroad; only its dully-gleaming, oyster-like eye betrayed its presence in the dark shades.

The Multipod had seized twenty or thirty natives before they came to Tommy and prayed him to attack the thing with his fiery breath and drive it into its cavern.

Of course, Tommy, as well as the captain, was astonished to hear of such a creature as the Multipod, for neither of them had ever read in their Natural History of such an animal.

Tommy wished to learn more of its habits and appearance before he agreed to do anything. Therefore he climbed a tree at sunset and waited a long time before anything appeared, but just as he was growing tired and stiff he suddenly saw the gleam of its eyes below as it glided silently through the woodland. Tommy's heart was beating so loudly that he feared the Multipod would hear it and look up, but it moved its long, pale, worm-like form past him until its head vanished in the darkness far beyond. Then he heard a wild scream; it had caught some unwary Dyak outside of his hut, and in another moment he saw the head, with the savage writhing in its shapeless jaws, passing beneath his lofty perch. He almost fell from the limb in his fright.

The Multipod disappeared as silently as it had come, and soon he took courage and slid down the tree-trunk and ran to his palace. When he told Captain Barrett what he had seen the old mariner was shocked.

"I thought it was all as big a fairy story as the ones I used to spin you on board ship!" said he, shuddering. "Why, the thing might get any one of us. Something must be done, that's sure."

"There's no doubt about that. We must destroy this awful monster!" exclaimed Tommy.

"Where's there's a will there's a way," exclaimed

## Taken by Savages HE BECAME THEIR KING, DESTROYED A DEADLY BEAST AND ESCAPED VERY RICH

the captain. "I'll just ponder over some trick or other to-night while you're asleep and tell you how to do it in the morning."

But in the long, sleepless night that followed, Tommy himself devised a splendid plan to settle Mr. Multipod, if it were true that a single gleam of sunlight would destroy the monster.

He arose early and asked of the Dyaks many questions regarding the matter, and all assured him that it certainly was supposed to be true that sunlight was fatal to all Multipods.

Then he was sure of success, and calling some of the crew to help him he unpacked all of his looking-glasses, giving several to each man, after which he awakened old Captain Barrett and asked him to accompany him to the foot of the mountains, where the cave of the monster was to be found. Captain Barrett stammered for a moment and then said:

"Wall, I dunno! I am a brave man and bold, but I have the rheumatiz powerful bad and can't walk."

But the thought of being left behind was too much for the old mariner, and finally he agreed to go with the rest; and so, carrying a few mirrors they all trudged off, followed at a far and safe distance by a few curious Dyaks, wondering whether Tommy would succeed in his project.

Tommy was aware that there was no danger until they had penetrated into the cavern, where the light of the sun was too feeble to be effective, and therefore he placed the captain at the entrance. He gave him a big mirror and told him to hold it so that the sunshine on it would be directed far into the windings of the cavern, which, as I have said, was quite like a tunnel, but twisting and turning in all directions far into the base of the mountain.

Then, advancing into its depths, he placed a sailor at a turn in the tunnel with another mirror held so as to catch the light from that held by Captain Barrett. So he proceeded; at each turn a man with a mirror reflecting the brilliant blaze of a hot sun to the next man beyond, until at last he was the only one left, and holding a looking-glass against his chest he advanced boldly along the dark passage until a sudden strange sound, half growl, half moan, far ahead of him, caused him to stop.

### KILLED BY THE LIGHT

Turning his mirror so that it caught the light from the man behind, he flashed a broad ray of sunshine down the tunnel before him, and was startled to behold the awful thing coming silently toward him, with its greenish eyes aflame.

As the sunlight struck it full in its shapeless face it reared its form upward, writhed in awful agony, and then fell down in a lump on the cavern floor.

Tommy held the light on it till he was sure that it was quite dead, and then advanced to it. There it lay, a mass of white, flabby pulp stretched along the cavern for twenty or thirty feet, with its myriad legs kicking out, more perhaps like a gigantic caterpillar than anything else; but, my! how immense and terrible even in death!

Then Tommy lighted a ship's lantern and called all of the men to come and see the Multipod. When they came they also lighted lanterns, and then Tommy looked about.

The first thing he saw was an immense pile of gold coins, pearls, rubies and other precious things which the creature had stripped from his victims and stored away in a small room at the side of his cavern. There were seven or eight wagonloads of treasure, so much that Tommy's eyes popped out in amazement.

Then they explored the cavern, and discovered where the Multipod was fastened to the solid rock by his tail as if he had grown right out of it. A few minutes afterward old George Carmony, the boat-swain, shouted:

"Hi! Sink my blooming tarpaulins if there ain't another way out!"

Sure enough, he had discovered a back door to the Multipod's cavern, a door that led them out to the other side of the mountains. Here was a land that the Dyaks had never visited, for the mountains were far too high for them to climb even had they dared approach them, and this lovely land was quite uninhabited.

They soon found that they were altogether safe and undisturbed here, and therefore they brought out all the treasure from the cave and piled it up outside. Then they cut the Multipod from the rock and hauled him out, also.

So they stuffed the Multipod with leaves and grass and things, and stood him up in the woods to scare off any Dyaks that might happen to come snooping around to see what had happened to them; but none ever came, because the savages all concluded that they had been eaten up, every one, by the dread monster. They changed their minds when they found that the Multipod was never seen again, but the crew and captain and passenger of the Giddy Owl never cared what they thought.

Under the captain's direction they built themselves a boat, fashioning her of great timbers that grew there in plenty, and when she was finished they sailed away to far Bombay, with a fair wind from S. S. E. by W. one-half N., which is as fair a wind as is made, both for man and beast, and they reached that port without accident or incident, having had adventures enough, so the captain declared, for several voyages, and he certainly ought to know.

### DIVIDED THE TREASURE

When they got home they divided the vast treasure, of which Tommy got half, the captain a quarter, and the crew the remainder; and every man in the crew, poor men who had been glad to toil aloft and slow for sixteen dollars a month, got over a million dollars each, so you may just guess what Tommy Haviland is worth.

The Multipod he set up in the big hall of the house he built, and some day he will give it to the Museum, but if you should happen to be passing his house ring the bell and ask to see it. He is always pleased to show it to nice, clean-faced children, and it is well worth seeing, I assure you.

"So that," concluded Uncle Oliver, with a sigh, "is the story of the boy who got rich, and, after all, I might say it was really because he was a fire-eater, for had he not been able to do this trick he would have been eaten up by those cannibal Dyaks."

"Gee whizz!" said Tim, with gleaming eyes. "I'd like to see that there hundred legged rubberneck Mollypod!"

WALT McDUGALL.