

THEODORE THINKER'S TALES.

JACK MASON,

THE OLD SAILOR.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS.

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NEW YORK:
CLARK, AUSTIN, MAYNARD & CO.,
3 PARK ROW AND 3 ANN STREET.

1860.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1850,

By CLARK, AUSTIN, & CO.,

In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States for the
Southern District of New York.

Jack Mason,
THE OLD SAILOR.

Jack Mason had been to sea a great many times when I first knew him, and he has been a great many times since. He has sailed in a ship almost all over the world. Such a host of stories as he can tell! Why, I do believe if he could find

little boys and girls to talk to, he would begin in the morning as soon as he had got through his breakfast, and do nothing but tell stories about what he has seen, until it was time to go to bed at night. I don't know but he would want to stop once or twice to eat. Jack loves a good dinner as well as anybody.

Jack is the one that you see

in the picture, with his pea-jacket on, and a book in his hand. He is in a ship, telling his stories now to that boy sitting on a coil of rope. See, the boy is looking right at the old man, hearing all he says. I wonder what Jack is talking about now. He must be telling one of his best stories, I guess; for the boy lifts his head up, as much as to say, "Dear me!

who ever heard of such a thing!"

Jack is a good man. He is not like a great many sailors that I have seen. He does not use bad words. He never drinks rum, or any thing of the kind. Sailors are apt to swear; but Jack Mason never swears. He is a Christian: he loves to pray and read his Bible. The book which he holds in his

hand, as he is talking to that boy, is a Bible. He often has a Bible in his jacket pocket, when he is on board of his ship; and once in a while he stops telling stories about what he has seen, and reads some of the stories in that good book.

When I was a little boy, Jack fell from the high mast of the ship, and hurt himself so badly that he had to stay at

home a long time after that. Poor fellow! he did not like to be shut up in the house. It was hard work for him. But he could not go out, until his hip got well. When he was able to sit up in a chair, I used to go and see him, and hear him tell his stories. I did not go every day, because my mother thought I had better not go every day. But I went as

often as she would let me go, and staid as long as she would let me stay.

Jack was always glad to see me, and glad to tell me stories. I was always glad to hear his stories. Some sailors, who have spent a great deal of time on board of a ship, and have seen a great many places, are not good men. They do not always tell the truth. So, when

they tell stories about what they saw where they went, we do not know whether to believe them or not. But Jack Mason was a good man, and I knew he would not tell me what was not true.

Shall I tell you some of the stories that this good old sailor told me when he had to stay at home, because he had broken his hip? I think I can re-

member some worth telling again.

“O yes, Mr. Thinker, tell us all the stories the old sailor told you.”

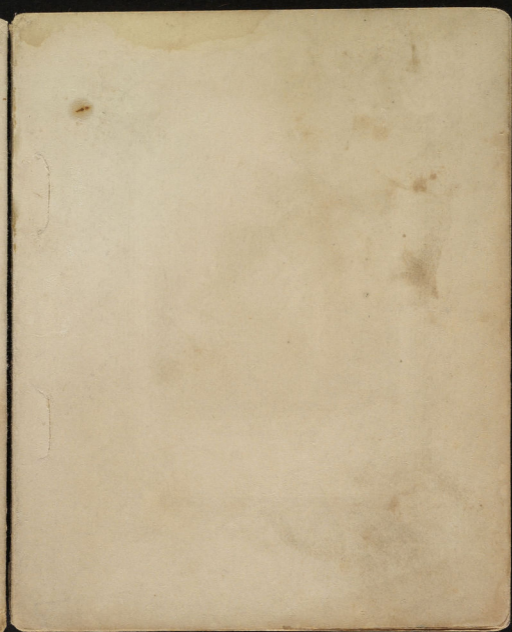
“No, I cannot do that. I cannot remember them all.”

“Well, tell us all you do remember.”

“I will see about it. I will tell you some of them, at any rate. Let me see, what story

shall I tell first? Shall I tell you his story about what he saw once, when he sailed a great way north? I guess I will."

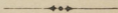






Jack telling his stories.

JACK MASON'S VISIT TO THE
NORTH SEA.



If you should go a great way north, you would find it very cold. The further you go north, the colder it is. I went so far that way one time, that I got almost frozen. The ship I sailed in came close to an iceberg once, and we all

thought for a while that the ship would strike the iceberg. If it had struck, it would have been broken all in pieces, and we should have been drowned or frozen, every one of us. God was kind and good to us, though. The wind was blowing very hard, and right toward the iceberg. But just as we had got almost up to it, the wind changed, and blew us away from it.

But I forgot that you do not know what an iceberg is. It is a great hill of ice. In the North Sea, these ice-hills are often as high as your church, and sometimes a great deal higher. These hills of ice are floating along the water there, and when it is foggy or dark, the sailors cannot always see them. So sometimes the ship strikes them, and is dashed to

pieces. Sometimes it gets between two of these ice-hills, and gets crushed, as if it was a little boat. Then the men in the ship have to get out, and jump upon one of the ice-hills. But they are pretty likely to be frozen to death then.

THE INDIANS.



In that cold country I saw some Indians. They were dressed in skins. I never saw such dirty-looking men and women before in all my life, and I have never seen any such since. They had never seen a ship before, I should think. I

thought they did not know much more than the white bears. Why, they would sell almost all the clothes they had on, if we would give them a few pieces of glass, or a nail or two. One of the women who came to the ship had a little girl about four years old, and she said she would give us that girl, if we would let her have a tin pan which she saw.

These Indians tie their children on their backs, when they have to walk a great way. They licked the oil on the outside of our lamps, just as a dog or a cat would have done. Oh, what dirty people! They eat their meat raw. We killed a seal one day, and our captain gave it to one of the young women. She took it, and bit it into pieces with her teeth

Then she passed it round to
the rest of the Indians, and
they all helped eat it.



THE WHITE BEARS.



There are a great many white bears in that country. Sometimes you can see two or three of them sitting on one of these ice-hills. How they ever got there, I am sure I cannot tell. I guess they went out on the ice only a little way from the shore, to get some-

thing which they saw was good to eat; and while they were on the ice, it started off, and they could not get to the shore again.

One of the men who sailed in the same ship with me, told me a story about a white bear, which made me laugh for an hour after I heard it. He said he was in a small boat with another sailor once, about a

mile away from the ship. I forget what they went out in the boat for, but I suppose the captain of the ship sent them out for something. They were rowing along in the boat, and they came close to an iceberg. They saw something alive on the iceberg, but they could not make out what it was: they did not know but it was a man. But they came a little nearer

to the great ice-hill, and they soon found out what sort of a thing there was on it. *Splash* something went into the water; and in a minute a great white bear jumped into the boat, as wet as a drowned rat.

Well, the sailors thought they had got to die, sure enough. What could they do? The first thing that they thought of, was to try to kill

After that, he walked slowly to one end of the boat, just as if he was quite at home there, and lay down upon a coat which one of the men had brought along, and went to sleep.

The sailors saw then that all they had to do was to row the bear to the shore. So they went to work. When they got to the ship, the captain

and all the sailors laughed a good deal, you may be sure. The shore was not far off. The sailors rowed until the boat touched the shore, and the bear got out, and walked slowly away. He did not so much as thank the men for the ride he had been taking. But the men were glad to get rid of him, thanks or no thanks.

MORE INDIANS.

When I went in the whale-ship, I saw another tribe of Indians, that were very different from those I told you of before. They knew more than those Indians. They used bows and arrows; and you would have been pleased to see how

they would hit a mark a great way off, with their arrows.

One of them, who had a name so long that I will not try to speak it, used to come every day to our ship, when we were lying near the shore. He liked pieces of glass, and nails and tin, and things of that kind, quite as well as the other Indians I told you of. He had seen white men before, so he

was not at all afraid of us. I suppose that almost all the white men he had seen before used rum and tobacco. He asked all our sailors for these two things, and kept asking every day. I am sorry to say that some of the men gave him some rum once in a while, and one day he drank so much that he got drunk. Poor man! He was not so much to blame,

I think, as the bad sailors that gave him the rum. What do you think about it?

This man would dive in the water further than anybody I ever saw before or since. Some of the sailors used to throw pieces of tin into very deep water, and tell him he might have them if he would dive and bring them up. He was so fond of such things, that he

would always gladly dive to get them.

I once saw him dive for an old worn-out knife. The water was very deep where it was thrown. It was so deep that none of us thought he would get it. He went down, and staid a long, long time. We thought he never would come up again. The sailor that threw the knife into the water

began to be sorry he had done it, because he thought the poor Indian was drowned. But, by and by, he came up again, with the knife in his mouth. He had been hunting after the knife on the bottom of the sea.

These Indians had boats which were made of the bark of trees. They were so light, that an Indian could carry one of them on his shoulder.

The man who used to come to the ship so often, brought his little girl with him one day. She was not more than six or seven years old. She had never seen any white men before, and at first she was afraid of us all. But when she saw that the white folks would not hurt her any more than the Indians would, she liked us very well, and wanted to stay with us all

the time. The captain showed her his watch, and she looked at it a long time. She thought she had never seen so strange a thing before. "Is it alive?" she asked her father. He could not tell whether it was alive or not, any more than the little girl could.

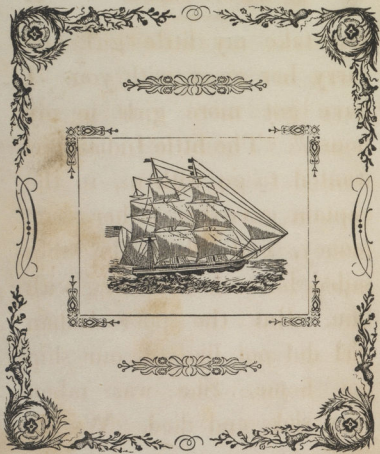
The captain liked the little girl very well. He wanted to take her home with him. So

he asked her father if his little girl might go a great way off, where the white men lived. The Indians could not talk like us. They could talk, but they did not use the same words. The captain made out to tell the Indian what he wanted, by using signs, just as he would have done if he had been talking with a deaf and dumb man. And what do you think the fa-

ther of that little girl said, when he knew that the captain wanted to take the girl home with him? If anybody should ask your father if he would let you go away and never come back again, you can tell what your father would say. He would say, "No, I cannot spare my dear little child."

But the Indian said, "Yes, give me some money, and you

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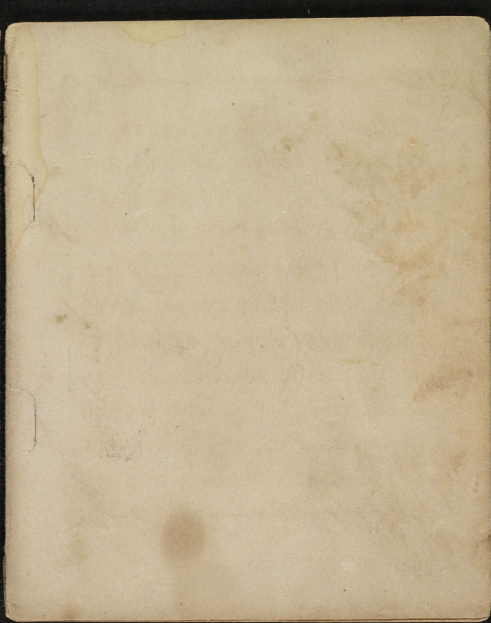
can take my little girl, and carry her away with you. I have got more girls in my house." The little Indian girl wanted to go with us, so the captain gave her father some money, and when the ship sailed, he took her along with him. But the poor Indian girl did not live till our ship got home. She was taken very sick, and died. We all

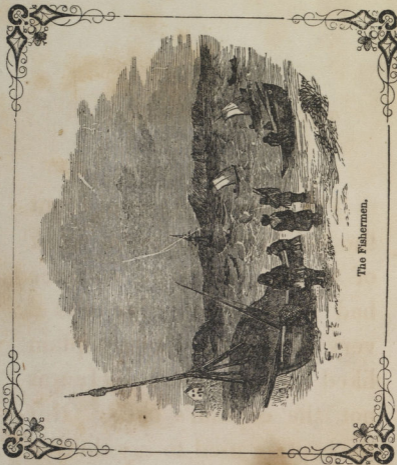
felt very bad when she left us. We had taught her a great many things. She could read a little. She knew all her letters, and could spell out such easy words as there are in your little primers and picture books. She did not know any thing about God, and Christ, and heaven, before she came to the ship. But some of us told her about them. She was glad to

hear about them. Oh, how her bright eyes did sparkle when she heard that Christ came into the world, and died for such little girls as she! How happy it made her, to think that He loved her! By and by, she used to pray every night, when she went to bed. I taught her to say that sweet little prayer which you know so well, and love so well:

Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray the Lord my soul to keep:
If I should die before I wake,
I pray the Lord my soul to take.

Oh, I was very sorry when our little Anna died! We called her Anna. She had another name at home; but we liked Anna better than we did her old name. I was very sorry when she died, and we were all sorry.





The Fishermen.

THE LITTLE SAILOR BOY



The story I told you about the Indian girl makes me think of a little boy that we once had in our ship. He was a very good boy. The captain liked him very much. He was not the captain's child. But the captain used to say that he

loved little George as much as if he was his child. The reason the captain loved him, and the reason everybody loved him, was because he was so kind and so good natured, and because he always did just as he was told to do.

I must tell you how George first came to live with us in the ship. We were once a great many hundred miles off, and the

that if the captain would be kind to him, little George might go. So he went, and he was the very best boy I ever saw in my life. He used to talk to the sailors; and when they did wrong, when they said bad words, he would tell them it was naughty, and God would not love them if they did so. The sailors did not get angry with him, because they all saw

that little George was good and kind, and that he wanted to do them good. I know of a good many sailors who stopped swearing, because little George told them, in his kind way, that he could not bear to hear them swear, and that God would not love them if they did so.



At the same time we were informed that

that little George was good and

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Rocks in the South.