The SUBMARINE·BOYS AND·THE·SPIES

VICTOR G. DURHAM

THE SUBMARINE BOYS SERIES

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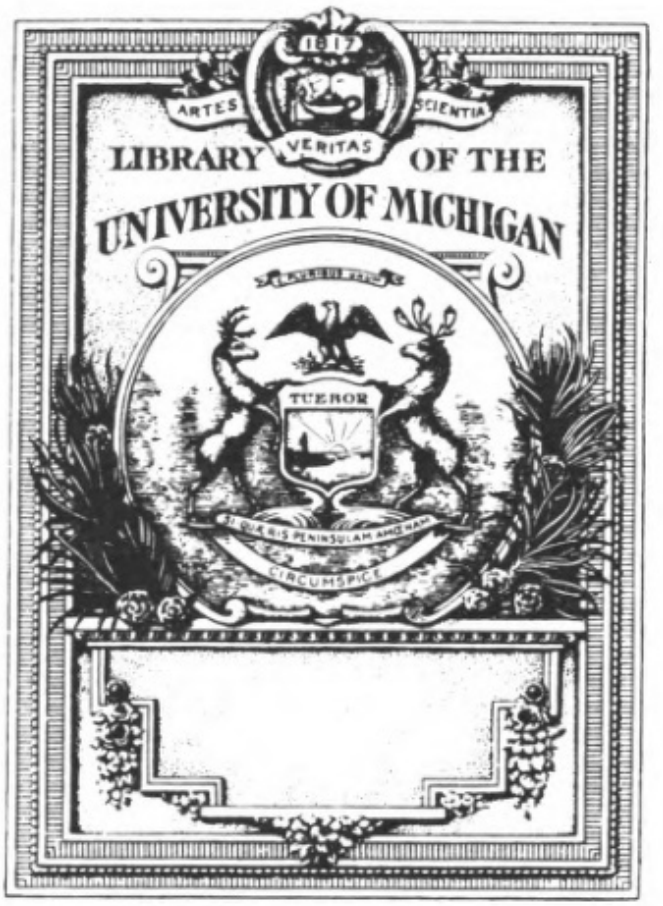

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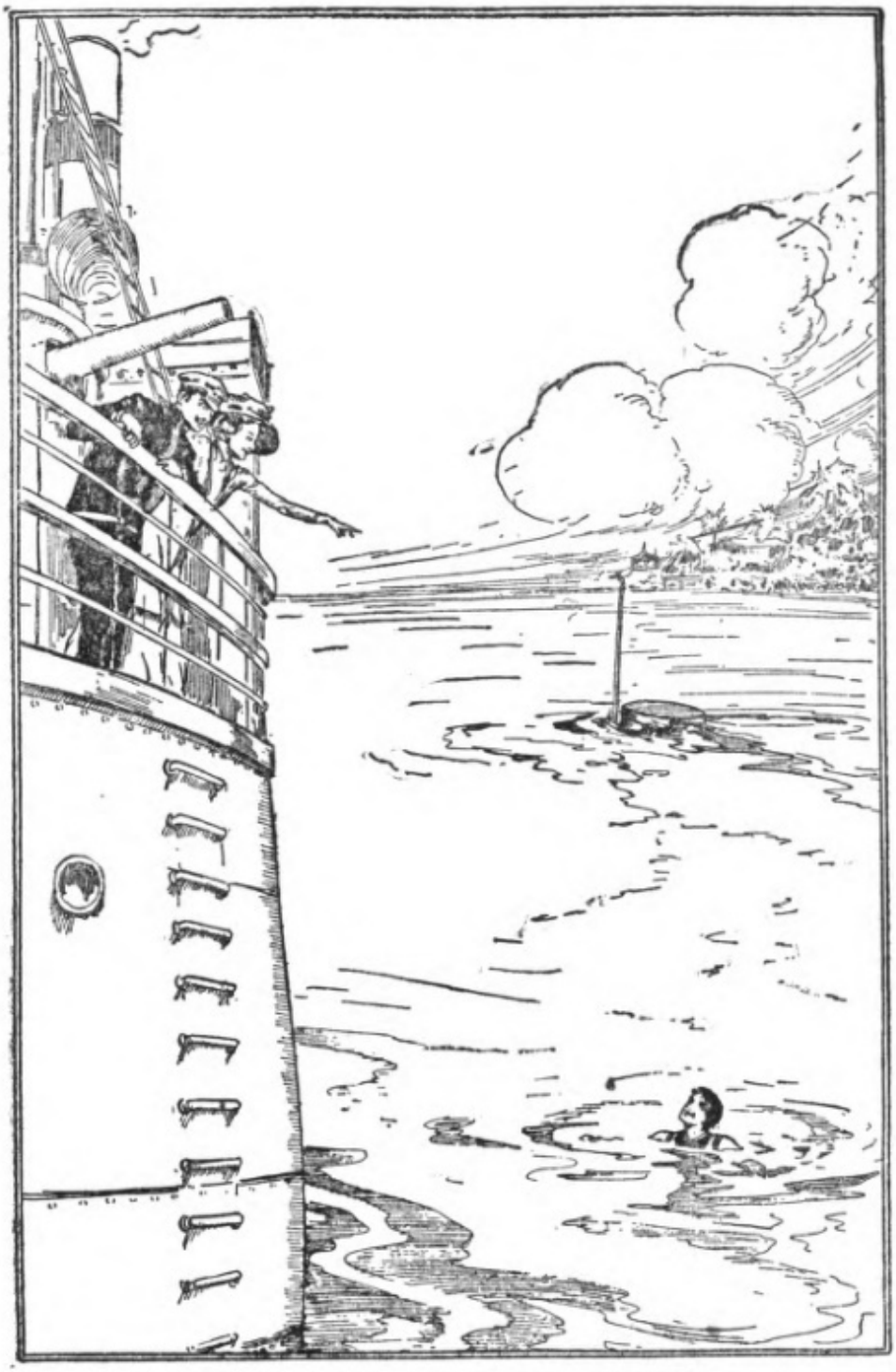

"Where did that boy come from?"

Frontispiece.

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The Submarine Boys and the Spies

OR

Dodging the Sharks of the Deep

By

VICTOR G. DURHAM

Author of The Submarine Boys on Duty, The Submarine Boys' Trial Trip, The Submarine Boys and the Middies, The Submarine Boys' Lightning Cruise, Etc., Etc.

Illustrated

PHILADELPHIA

HENRY ALTEMUS COMPANY

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The Submarine Boys and the Spies

CHAPTER I

"GUESS DAY" AT SPRUCE BEACH

"HAS anyone sighted them yet?"

"No."

"What can be the matter?"

"You know, their specialty is going to the bottom. Possibly they've gone there once too often."

"Don't!" shuddered a young woman. "Try not to be gruesome always, George."

The young man laughed as he turned aside.

Everyone and his friend at Spruce Beach was asking similar questions. None of the answers were satisfactory, because nobody knew just what reply to make.

Everyone in the North who has the money and leisure to get away from home during a portion of the winter knows Spruce Beach. It is one of nature's most beautiful spots on the eastern coast of Florida, and man has made it one of the most expensive places in the world.

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In other words, Spruce Beach is a paradise to look at. The climate, in the winter months, is mild and balmy. Health grows rapidly at this favored spot, and so fashion has seized upon it as her own. True, there are yet a few cottages and boarding houses left where travelers of moderate means may find board.

The whole air of Spruce Beach is one of holiday expectancy. The winter visitors go there to enjoy themselves; they expect it and demand it. They are gratified. From the first of December to the middle of March, life at Spruce Beach makes you think of a great, jolly, unending picnic. The greatest cause for regret is that more people of ordinary means cannot go there and reap some of the plentiful harvest of fun and frolic.

The thousands of tourists, hotel guests and cottagers at Spruce Beach had been promised that by the middle of December they would have a treat the like of which few of them had ever enjoyed before. The Pollard Submarine Boat Company, so named after David Pollard the inventor—the company of which Jacob Farnum, the shipbuilder, was president—had promised that by that date their newest, fastest and most formidable submarine torpedo boat, the "Benson," should arrive at Spruce Beach, there to begin a series of demonstrations and trials.

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Still more extraordinary, the captain of this marvelous new submarine craft of war was known to be a boy of sixteen—Jack Benson, after whom the new navy-destroyer had been named.

Newspaper readers were beginning to be familiar with the name of Captain Jack Benson. Though so young he had, after a stern apprenticeship, actually succeeded in making himself a world-known expert in the handling of submarine torpedo boats.

Those lighter readers of newpapers, who scoffed at the very idea of a sixteen-year-old boy handling a costly submarine boat, were sometimes reminded that the same thing happens at the United States Naval Academy at Annapolis, where the young midshipmen are given instruction and often are qualified as young experts along similar lines.

More remarkable still, as faithful readers of newspapers knew, Captain Jack Benson had associated with him, on the new torpedo boat, two other sixteen-year-old boys, by name Hal Hastings and Eph Somers. It was also rumored, and nearly as often believed, that these three sea-bred young Americans knew as much as anyone in the United States on the special subject of submarine boat handling.

Be that all as it might, it was known to every

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