



## Tom Decides What to Do

HALF AN HOUR LATER TOM WAS BEYOND MRS. DOUGLAS' HOUSE ON Cardiff Hill. He entered a thick forest, went to the center of it, and sat down under a tree. He was very sad. He wished that he could die—for a short time.

But soon he began to think again of living. He would go far away, to countries across the sea. How would Becky feel then? He would be a soldier, and return famous, after many wars. No, he would join the **Indians**, and hunt and fight with them in the Far West. But no, there was something better. He would sail across the seas in a long, fast black ship. He would follow other ships, take the gold and silver they carried, then send them to the bottom of the sea. That was it! He would be a **pirate**, famous in the whole world. Tom Sawyer the Pirate!

Yes, it was decided. He would start his journey the next morning.

At this moment he heard a call from far away in the forest.

He went to a place, very near, where he kept some of his things. From this place he took a long knife made of wood. He tied it to his side. He was not Tom Sawyer now. He dreamed he had become a famous leader named Robin Hood who had lived with his men hundreds of

years before, in another forest.

He advanced slowly, moving carefully from behind one tree to another. Believing for the moment that he really was Robin Hood, he said:

“Stay where you are, my men. Do not move until I call.”

Now Joe Harper appeared. He, too, had a long wooden knife.

Tom called, “Stop! Who comes here into Sherwood Forest? No person enters my forest until I say that he may!”

“I am Guy of Guisborne,” said Joe Harper, continuing the game. “I go where I wish. Who are you?”

“I! I am Robin Hood, as you shall soon know when you lie dead there on the ground.”

“Are you indeed that famous man? Gladly will I fight with you.”

They took their two long knives, and began a slow, careful fight. Then Tom said, “Now fight faster.”

They were soon hot from their efforts. “Fall!” Tom said. “You must fall!”

“You fall! I am fighting better than you.”

“But the story of Robin Hood says that I kill you. Turn and let me hit you in the back.”

Joe turned, received the blow, and fell.

“Now,” Joe said, rising, “you must let me kill you.”

“I can’t do that. It is not in the story.”

“It should be.”

“Joe, you can be Robin Hood for a while. I will be Robin’s enemy, and you can kill me.”

This was agreeable, and more fighting followed. Then Tom became Robin Hood again, and he was hurt, and all his blood ran from his body. And Joe, who had now become all of Robin Hood’s men, watched with tears in his eyes as Robin Hood died.

Then the boys went home. They were sad because Robin Hood had lived so long ago. They would have liked living with him in Sherwood Forest better than being President of the United States.