



## Tom Tells the Truth

TOM ARRIVED AT HOME FEELING VERY SAD, AND HIS AUNT'S FIRST words made him feel no better.

"Tom, I ought to beat you!"

"Aunt Polly, what have I done?"

"I went to see Mrs. Harper to tell her about your dream. Joe had already told her that you were here that night. Tom, I do not know what to think of a boy like you. I believed your story of your dream. I expected her to believe it. Why did you let me be such a fool?"

"Aunt Polly, I wish I had not done it. I did not think."

"Oh, child, you never think. You never think of anything but yourself. You could think enough to come here and laugh at our troubles. You could think to tell that story of a dream. But you could not think to save us from suffering."

"Aunt Polly, I know that it was bad. But I did not plan to be bad. And I did not come here that night to laugh at you. I came to tell you that we were not drowned. I did not want you to be sad."

"Tom, I would be thankful to believe that. But I doubt that you had such a thought."

“Yes, I did, I did. It is the truth. I wanted to save you from being sad.”

“Then why did you not tell me, child?”

“You began talking of Sunday and all the people praying for us in the church. And I began thinking about going there on Sunday. And I put my letter in my pocket and went away.”

“What letter?”

“The letter to tell you that we were pirates. I wish now that you had opened your eyes when I kissed you.”

“Did you kiss me, Tom? Are you sure?”

“Yes, I did, Aunt.”

“Why did you kiss me?”

“Because I loved you and you were weeping in your sleep and I was sorry.”

The words sounded like the truth. The old lady said, “Kiss me again, Tom! And then go to school.”

When he was gone, she looked at his little coat. In the pocket she found his piece of wood with the writing on it. She read the words, with tears falling from her eyes. Then she said, “Now I could forget anything bad that the boy does. I could forget a million bad things.”