

**MASTER
ROCKAFELLAR'S
VOYAGE**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649244461

Master Rockafellar's voyage by W. Clark Russell

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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W. CLARK RUSSELL

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VOYAGE**

MASTER ROCKAFELLAR'S VOYAGE

BY

W. CLARK RUSSELL

AUTHOR OF "MY DANISH SWEETHEART," ETC., ETC.

WITH 27 ILLUSTRATIONS BY GORDON BROWNE

FIFTH EDITION

METHUEN & CO. LTD.
36 ESSEX STREET W.C.
LONDON

FR
02
1829

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MASTER ROCKAFELLAR'S VOYAGE

CHAPTER I.

HE BEGS TO GO TO SEA.

MY name is Thomas Rockafellar; father and mother always called me Tommy, and by that name was I known until I grew too old to be called by anything more familiar than Tom. I have seen people look at one another, and smile, perhaps, when they have heard the name Rockafellar mentioned as that of a family; but I here beg leave to state that the Rockafellars are an exceedingly ancient race, who, if they do not claim to have arrived in this country with William the Conqueror, can excuse themselves for not having landed with that chieftain by being able to prove that they had been many years established when the keels of the Norman galleys grounded on the Hastings shore.

Amongst my ancestors were several sailors, who had served the king or queen of their times in the navy of the state. A portrait of Ebenezer Rockafellar, who was a rear-admiral in the early years of George the Second's reign, hung in the dining-room at home, and represented a face like that of the man in the moon when the planet



EBENEZER ROCKAFELLAR.

rises very crimson out of the sea on a hot summer's evening. He had a tail on his back and a great copper speaking-trumpet under his arm and his forefinger, on which was a huge ring, rested upon a globe of the world. The artist had painted in a picture of a thunderstorm happening through a window, with the glimpse of a rough sea, and an old-fashioned ship like a castle

tumbling about in it resembling a toy Noah's ark tossing on the strong ripples of a pond.

It might have been my looking at this red-faced ancestor of mine, and admiring his speaking-trumpet, and the noble colour of weather which stained his face that first put it into my head to go to sea. I cannot say. Who can tell where little boys get their notions from? I would stand before that picture, and in my small way dream about the ocean, about sharks, tropic islands full of cocoa-nut trees, and monkeys, and parrots gorgeous as shapes of burnished gold; and I would dream also, all in my small way, of flying-fish like little lengths of pearl flashing out of the dark-blue brine on wings of gossamer, and elephants and ivory tusks, and of black men in turbans and robes glittering with jewels, like the dark velvet sky on a midsummer night; and so on, and so on, until there arose in me a passion to go to sea, and behold with my own little eyes the wonders of the world.

Father and mother tried hard to conquer my desire; and then, when they found I would still be a sailor, they pretended to consent, secretly meaning to weary me out, or to give me a good long chance of changing my views by delaying to take any steps to humour my wishes. At last, finding my mind to be wonderfully resolved, my father talked to my mother gravely about my

disposition for the sea—told her that when a boy exhibited a strong inclination for a walk, no matter of what nature if honest, he should not be baulked—that I might have the makings of another Captain Cook in me, or at all events of a Vancouver, and end my days as a great man.

"Besides, my dear," said he, "one voyage at least cannot harm him; it will fill his mind with new experiences, it will also test his sincerity; it will act as the strongest possible persuasion one way or the other. It will be cheaper too than a year of schooling, and more useful, I don't doubt. So, my dear, let us make up our minds to send him into the Merchant Service for one voyage."

However, it was some time before my mother consented. She would not very strongly have objected to the Royal Navy, she said, but she considered the Merchant Service too vulgar for a Rockafellar.

"Vulgar, my dear!" cried my father; "why, do you forget that your own Uncle Martin was in the service of the Honourable East India Company?"

"Ah but," she answered, "Uncle Martin was always a perfect gentleman, and even had he been a common sailor on board a barge, he would have carried himself with as much dignity and been as fully appreciated by people capable of distinguishing as if he had been an Admiral of the Blues."