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TOM SWIFT AND HIS WIRELESS MESSAGE OR THE CASTAWAYS OF EARTHQUAKE ISLAND BY VICTOR APPLETON AUTHOR OF "TOM SWIFT AND HIS MOTOR-CYCLE," "TOM SWIFT AND HIS MOTOR BOAT," "TOM SWIFT AND HIS AIRSHIP," "TOM SWIFT AND HIS SUBMARINE BOAT," "TOM SWIFT AND HIS ELECTRIC RUNABOUT," ETC. ILLUSTRATED BOOKS BY VICTOR APPLETON THE TOM SWIFT SERIES TOM SWIFT AND HIS MOTOR-CYCLE Or Fun and Adventures on the Road TOM SWIFT AND HIS MOTOR-BOAT Or the Rivals of Lake Carlopa TOM SWIFT AND HIS AIRSHIP Or the Stirring Cruise of the Red Cloud TOM SWIFT AND HIS SUBMARINE BOAT Or Under the Ocean for Sunken Treasure TOM SWIFT AND HIS ELECTRIC RUNABOUT Or the Speediest Car on the Road TOM SWIFT AND HIS WIRELESS MESSAGE Or the Castaways of Earthquake Island TOM SWIFT AMONG THE DIAMOND MAKERS Or the Secret of Phantom Mountain TOM SWIFT IN THE CAVES OF ICE Or the Wreck of the Airship TOM SWIFT AND HIS SKY RACER Or the Quickest Flight on Record TOM SWIFT AND HIS ELECTRIC RIFLE Or Daring Adventures in Elephant Land (Other Volumes in Preparation) TOM SWIFT AND HIS WIRELESS MESSAGE CONTENTS I. AN APPEAL FOR AID II. MISS NESTOR'S NEWS III. TOM KNOCKS OUT ANDY IV. MR. DAMOM WILL GO ALONG V. VOL-PLANING TO EARTH VI. THE NEW AIRSHIP VII. MAKING SOME CHANGES VIII. ANDY FOGER'S REVENGE IX. THE WHIZZER FLIES X. OVER THE OCEAN XI. A NIGHT OF TERROR XII. A DOWNWARD GLIDE XIII. ON EARTHQUAKE ISLAND XIV. A NIGHT IN CAMP XV. THE OTHER CASTAWAY XVI. AN ALARMING THEORY XVII. A MIGHTY SHOCK XVIII. MR. JENKS HAS DIAMONDS XIX. SECRET OPERATIONS XX. THE WIRELESS PLANT XXI. MESSAGES INTO SPACE XXII. ANXIOUS DAYS XXIII. A REPLY IN THE DARK XXIV. "WE ARE LOST!" XXV. THE RESCUE-CONCLUSION CHAPTER I AN APPEAL FOR AID Tom

Swift stepped from the door of the machine shop, where he was at work making some adjustments to the motor of his airship, and glanced down the road. He saw a cloud of dust, which effectually concealed whatever was causing it. "Some one must be in a hurry this morning," the lad remarked, "Looks like a motor speeding along. MY! but we certainly do need rain," he added, as he looked up toward the sky. "It's very dusty. Well, I may as well get back to work. I'll take the airship out for a flight this afternoon, if the wind dies down a bit." The young inventor, for Tom Swift himself had built the airship, as well as several other crafts for swift locomotion, turned to re- enter the shop. Something about the approaching cloud of dust, however, held his attention. He glanced more intently at it. "If it's an automobile coming along," he murmured, "it's moving very slowly, to make so much fuss. And I never saw a motor-cycle that would kick up as much sand, and not speed along more. It ought to be here by now. I wonder what it can be?" The cloud of highway dirt rolled along, making some progress toward Tom's house and the group of shops and other buildings surrounding it. But, as the lad had said,

the dust did not move at all quickly in comparison to any of the speedy machines that might be causing it. And the cloud seemed momentarily to grow thicker and thicker. "I wonder if it could be a miniature tornado, or a cyclone or whirlwind?" and Tom spoke aloud, a habit of his when he was thinking, and had no one to talk to. "Yet it can hardly be that." he went on. "Guess I'll watch and see what it is." Nearer and nearer came the dust cloud. Tom peered anxiously ahead, a puzzled look on his face. A few seconds later there came from the midst of the obscuring cloud a voice, exclaiming: "G'lang there now, Boomerang! Keep to' feet a-movin' an' we sho' will make a record. 'Tain't laik we was a autermobiler, er a electricity car, but we sho' hab been goin' sence we started. Yo' sho' done yo'se'f proud t'day, Boomerang, an' I'se gwine t' keep mah promise an' gib yo' de bestest oats I kin find. Ah reckon Massa Tom Swift will done say we brought dis yeah message t' him as quick as anybody could." Then there followed the sound of hoofbeats on the dusty road, and the rattle of some many-jointed vehicle, with loose springs and looser wheels. "Eradicate Sampson!" exclaimed Tom. "But who would ever think that the colored man's mule could get up such speed as that cloud of dust indicates. His mule's feet must be working overtime, but he goes backward about as often as he moves forward. That accounts for it. There's lots of dust, but not much motion." Once more, from the midst of the ball-like cloud of dirt came the voice of the colored man: "Now behave yo'se'f, Boomerang. We'm almost dere an' den yo' kin sit down an' rest if yo' laik. Jest keep it up a little longer, an' we'll gib Massa Tom his telephone. G'lang now, Boomerang." The tattoo of hoofbeats was slowing up now, and the cloud of dust was not so heavy. It was gradually blowing away. Tom Swift walked down to the fence that separated the house, grounds and shops from the road. As he got there the sounds of the mule's progress, and the rattle of the wagon, suddenly ceased. "G'lang! G'lang! Don't yo' dare t' stop now, when we am most dere!" cried Eradicate Sampson. "Keep a-movin', Boomerang!" "It's all right, Eradicate. I'm here," called Tom, and when the last of the dust had blown away, the lad waved his hand to an aged colored man, who sat upon the seat of perhaps the most dilapidated wagon that was ever dignified by such a name. It was held together with bits of wire, rope and strings, and each of the four wheels leaned out at a different angle. It was drawn by a big mule, whose bones seemed protruding through his skin, but that fact evidently worried him but little, for now the animal was placidly sleeping, while standing up, his long ears moving slowly to and fro. "Am dat yo', Massa Tom?" asked Eradicate, ceasing his task of jerking on the lines, to which operation the mule paid not the least attention. "Yes, I'm here, Rad," replied Tom, smiling. "I came out of my shop to see what all the excitement was about. How did you ever get your mule to make so much dust?" "I done promise him an extra helpin' ob oats ef he make good time," said the colored man. "An' he done it, too. Did yo' see de dust we made?" "I sure did, but you didn't do much else. And you didn't make very good time. I watched you, and you came along like an ice wagon after a day's work on the Fourth of July. You were going fast, but moving slow." "I 'spects we was, Massa Tom," was the colored man's answer. "But Boomerang done better dan I 'spected he would. I done tole him yo'd be in a hurry t' git yo' telephone, an' he sho' did trot along." "My telephone?" repeated Tom, wonderingly. "What have you and your mule Boomerang to do with my telephone? That's up in the house." "No, it ain't! it's right yeah in mah pocket," chuckled Eradicate, opening a ragged coat, and reaching for something. "I got yo' telephone right yeah." he went on. "De agent at de station see me dribin' ober dis way, an' he done ast he t' deliber it. He said as how he ain't got no messenger boy now, 'cause de one he done hab went on a strike fo' five cents mo' a day. So I done took de telephone," and with that the colored man pulled out a crumpled yellow envelope. "Oh, you mean a telegram," said Tom, with a laugh, as he took the message from the odd colored man. "Well, maybe it's telegraf, but I done understood de agent t' say telephone. Anyhow, dere it is. An' I 'spects we'd better git along, Boomerang." The mule never moved, though Eradicate yanked

on the reins, and used a splintered whip with energy. "I said as how we'd better git along, Boomerang," went on the darkey, raising his voice, "Dinnah am mos' ready, an' I'm goin' t' giv yo' an extra helpin' ob oats." The effect of these words seemed magical. The mule suddenly came to life, and was about to start off. "I done thought dat would cotch yo', Boomerang," chuckled Eradicate. "Wait a minute, Rad," called Tom, who was tearing open the envelope of the telegram. "I might want to send an answer back by you. I wonder who is wiring me now?" He read the message slowly, and Eradicate remarked: "'Taint no kind ob use, Massa Tom, fo' t' send a message back wif me." "Why not?" asked the young inventor, looking up from the sheet of yellow paper. "'Case as how I done promised Boomerang his airman, an' he won't do nothin' till he has it. Ef I started him back t' town now he would jest lay down in de road. I'll take de answer back fo' you dis arternoon." "All right, perhaps that will do," assented Tom. "I haven't quite got the hang of this yet. Drop around this afternoon, Rad," and as the colored man, who, with his mule Boomerang, did odd jobs around the village, started off down the highway, in another cloud of dust, Tom Swift resumed the reading of the message. "Hum, this is rather queer," he mused, when having read it once, he began at it again. "It must have cost him something to send all this over the wire. He could just as well have written it. So he wants my help, eh? Well, I never heard of him, and he may be all right, but I had other plans, and I don't know whether I can spare the time to go to Philadelphia or not. I'll have to think it over. An electric airship, eh? He's sort of following along the lines of my inventions. Wants my aid--hum--well, I don't know--" Tom's musings were suddenly cut short by the approach of an elderly gentleman, who was walking slowly down the path that led from the house to the country highway which ran in front of it. "A telegram, Tom?" asked the newcomer. "Yes, dad," was the reply. "I was just coming in to ask your advice about it. Eradicate brought it to me." "What, with his mule, Boomerang?" and the gentleman seemed much amused. "How did he ever get up speed enough to deliver a telegram?" "Oh, Eradicate has some special means he uses on his mule when he's in a hurry. But listen to this message, dad. It's from a Mr. Hosmer Fenwick, of Philadelphia. He says:" "'Tom Swift--Can you come on to Philadelphia at once and aid me in perfecting my new electric airship? I want to get it ready for a flight before some government experts who have promised to purchase several if it works well. I am in trouble, and I can't get it to rise off the ground. I need help. I have heard about your airship, and the other inventions you and your father have perfected, and I am sure you can aid me. I am stuck. Can you hurry to the Quaker City? I will pay you well. Answer at once!'" "Well?" remarked Mr. Swift, questioningly, as his son finished reading the telegram. "What are you going to do about it, Tom?" "I don't exactly know, dad. I was going to ask your advice. What would you do? Who is this Mr. Fenwick?" "Well, he is an inventor of some note, but he has had many failures. I have not heard of him in some years until now. He is a gentleman of wealth, and can he relied upon to do just as he says. We are slightly acquainted. Perhaps it would be well to aid him, if you can spare the time. Not that you need the money, but inventors should be mutually helpful. If you feel like going to Philadelphia, and aiding him in getting his electric airship in shape, you have my permission." "I don't know," answered Tom, doubtfully. "I was just getting my monoplane in shape for a little flight. It was nothing particular, though. Dad, I think I WILL take a run to Philadelphia, and see if I can help Mr. Fenwick. I'll wire him that I am coming, to-morrow or next day." "Very well," assented Mr. Swift, and then he and his son went into one of the shops, talking of a new invention which they were about to patent. Tom little knew what a strange series of adventures were to follow his decision to go to the Quaker City, nor the danger involved in aiding Mr. Fenwick to operate his electric airship. CHAPTER II MISS NESTOR'S NEWS "When do you think you will go to Philadelphia, Tom?" asked Mr. Swift, a little later, as the aged inventor and his son were looking over some blueprints which Garret Jackson, an engineer employed by them, had spread

out on a table. "I don't exactly know," was the answer. "It's quite a little run from Shopton, because I can't get a through train. But I think I'll start tomorrow." "Why do you go by train?" asked Mr. Jackson. "Why--er--because--" was Tom's rather hesitating reply. "How else would I go?" "Your monoplane would be a good deal quicker, and you wouldn't have to change cars," said the engineer. "That is if you don't want to take out the big airship. Why don't you go in the monoplane?" "By Jove! I believe I will!" exclaimed Tom. "I never thought of that, though it's a wonder I didn't. I'll not take the RED CLOUD, as she's too hard to handle alone. But the BUTTERFLY will be just the thing," and Tom looked over to where a new monoplane rested on the three bicycle wheels which formed part of its landing frame. "I haven't had it out since I mended the left wing tip," he went on, "and it will also be a good chance to test my new rudder. I believe I WILL go to Philadelphia by the BUTTERFLY." "Well, as long as that's settled, suppose you give us your views on this new form of storage battery," suggested Mr. Swift, with a fond glance at his son, for Tom's opinion was considered valuable in matters electrical, as those of you, who have read the previous books in this series, well know. The little group in the machine shop was soon deep in the discussion of ohms, amperes, volts and currents, and, for a time, Tom almost forgot the message calling him to Philadelphia. Taking advantage of the momentary lull in the activities of the young inventor, I will tell my readers something about him, so that those who have no previous introduction to him may feel that he is a friend. Tom Swift lived with his father, Barton Swift, a widower, in the village of Shopton, New York. There was also in the household Mrs. Baggert, the aged housekeeper, who looked after Tom almost like a mother. Garret Jackson, an engineer and general helper, also lived with the Swifts. Eradicate Sampson might also be called a retainer of the family, for though the aged colored man and his mule Boomerang did odd work about the village, they were more often employed by Tom and his father than by any one else. Eradicate was so called because, as he said, he "eradicated" the dirt. He did whitewashing, made gardens, and did anything else that was needed. Boomerang was thus named by his owner, because, as Eradicate said, "yo' nebber know jest what dat mule am goin' t' do next. He may go forward or he may go backward, jest laik them Australian boomerangs." There was another valued friend of the family, Wakeneld Damon by name, to whom the reader will be introduced in due course. And then there was Mary Nestor, about whom I prefer to let Tom tell you himself, for he might be jealous if I talked too much about her. In the first book of this series, called "Tom Swift and His Motor-Cycle," there was told how he became possessed of the machine, after it had nearly killed Mr. Damon, who was learning to ride it. Mr. Damon, who had a habit of "blessing" everything f

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