

"We'll head them off this time," said Tom, yet this was not means certain, it depending somewhat on the quickness of the trip made by the lumber schooner. The *Mascotte* was by no means a first-class steamer, and it had been a question, the day before the voyage was undertaken, if she had not better be laid up for repairs to her engine and boilers. But of this our friends knew nothing.

As soon as the trip was begun Dick and Harold Bird had in interview with the captain of the steamer and told the latter how anxious they were to get track of the *Dogstar*. To their dismay, however, the captain proved to be anything but agreeable and said he could not bother himself over their personal affairs, even when offered pay to do so.

"He's a regular lemon," said Tom. "I don't think he'd do a favor for anybody."

"And this steamer is a tub," answered Sam. "I shouldn't wish to travel very far in her."

Yet with it all the boys felt in pretty fair spirits as they gathered on the deck and talked matters over. But in less than an hour they were in open rebellion.

They went to the dining room for dinner and were served with food that was scarcely fit to eat.

As they had paid for first-class accommodations all found fault.