

CLASSICS TO GO
TALES OF FISHES



ZANE GREY

Tales of Fishes

Zane Grey

CONTENTS

CHAP.		PAGE
	VERSES	<u>0</u>
I.	BYME-BY-TARPON	<u>1</u>
II.	THE ISLAND OF THE DEAD	<u>8</u>
	THE ROYAL PURPLE GAME OF	
III.	THE SEA	<u>26</u>
IV.	TWO FIGHTS WITH SWORDFISH	<u>54</u>
V.	SAILFISH	<u>72</u>
VI.	GULF STREAM FISHING	<u>88</u>
VII.	BONEFISH	<u>107</u>
VIII.	SOME RARE FISH	<u>136</u>
IX.	SWORDFISH	<u>153</u>
X.	THE GLADIATOR OF THE SEA	<u>180</u>
	SEVEN MARLIN SWORDFISH IN	
XI.	ONE DAY	<u>197</u>
XII.	RANDOM NOTES	<u>216</u>
XIII.	BIG TUNA	<u>221</u>
XIV.	AVALON, THE BEAUTIFUL	<u>250</u>



THE GREAT COLORED ROLLERS OF THE PACIFIC

ILLUSTRATIONS

TARPON THROWING HOOK	<i>Facing p.</i>	<u>2</u>
LEAPING TARPON	"	<u>3</u>
SAVALO, OR SILVER KING	"	<u>4</u>
THESE WILD FOWL HAVE THE WONDERFUL BEAUTY AND SPEED OF FALCONS	"	<u>5</u>
RABIHORCADO	"	<u>12</u>
THE BOOBIES HAD NO FEAR OF MAN, BUT BOTH YOUNG AND OLD WOULD PICK WITH THEIR SHARP BILLS	"	<u>13</u>
YOUNG BOOBIES	"	<u>14</u>
SUGGESTIVE OF A WILD, WIND-SWEPT ISLAND OF THE SEA	"	<u>15</u>
NESTS EVERYWHERE IN THE SAND AND MOSS	"	<u>16</u>
THESE HUGE BLACK RABIHORCADOS WERE THE LARGEST SPECIES OF FRIGATE OR MAN-OF-WAR BIRD	"	<u>17</u>
RABIHORCADO RISING FROM THEIR EGGS	"	<u>20</u>
BOOBIES OF ISLA DE LA MUERTE IN THE CARIBBEAN SEA	"	<u>21</u>
A SWORDFISH LEAPING OFF THE BOLD BLACK SHORE OF CLEMENTE	"	<u>28</u>
ON THE RAMPAGE	"	<u>29</u>
SWORDFISH ON THE SURFACE	"	<u>32</u>
HOLDING HARD	"	<u>33</u>
A CLEAN GREYHOUND LEAP	"	<u>36</u>

316-POUND SWORDFISH	“	<u>37</u>
THE WILD OATS SLOPE OF CLEMENTE	“	<u>44</u>
WHERE THE DEEP-BLUE SWELL BOOMS AGAINST THE LAVA WALL OF CLEMENTE ISLAND	“	<u>45</u>
FOUR MARLIN SWORDFISH IN ONE DAY	“	<u>68</u>
A BIG SAILFISH BREAKING WATER	“	<u>69</u>
FOUR SAILFISH IN ONE DAY ON LIGHT TACKLE	“	<u>76</u>
SAILFISH THRESHING ON THE SURFACE	“	<u>77</u>
MEMORABLE OF LONG KEY	“	<u>84</u>
LEAPING SAILFISH	“	<u>85</u>
SOLITUDE ON THE SEA	“	<u>92</u>
SUNSET BY THE SEA	“	<u>93</u>
TWIN TIGERS OF THE SEA—THE SAVAGE BARRACUDA	“	<u>98</u>
HAPPY PASTIME OF BONEFISHING	“	<u>99</u>
THE GAMEST FISH THAT SWIMS	“	<u>110</u>
A WAAHOO	“	<u>111</u>
AT LONG KEY, THE LONELY CORAL SHORE WHERE THE SUN SHINES WHITE ALL DAY AND THE STARS SHINE WHITE ALL NIGHT	“	<u>144</u>
THE FAMOUS STUNT OF A MARLIN SWORDFISH, “WALKING ON HIS TAIL”	“	<u>145</u>
SURGING IN A HALF-CIRCLE	“	<u>148</u>
BROADBILL SWORDFISH ON THE SURFACE—THE MOST THRILLING SIGHT TO A SEA ANGLER	“	<u>149</u>
SHINING IN THE SUNLIGHT	“	<u>156</u>
THROWING WHITE WATER LIKE THE EXPLOSION OF A TORPEDO	“	<u>157</u>

A LONG, SLIM SAILFISH WIGGLING IN THE AIR	“	<u>160</u>
FIGHTING A BROADBILL SWORDFISH	“	<u>161</u>
THE ONLY PHOTOGRAPH EVER TAKEN OF LEAPING BROADBILL SWORDFISH	“	<u>180</u>
XIPHIAS GLADIUS, THE BROADSWORDED GLADIATOR OF THE SEA	“	<u>181</u>
A STRAIGHTAWAY GREYHOUND LEAP, MARVELOUS FOR ITS SPEED AND WILDNESS	“	<u>188</u>
LIKE A LEAPING SPECTER	“	<u>189</u>
WALKING ON HIS TAIL	“	<u>192</u>
A MAGNIFICENT FLASHING LEAP. THIS PERFECT PICTURE CONSIDERED BY AUTHOR TO BE WORTH HIS FIVE YEARS’ LABOR AND PATIENCE	“	<u>193</u>
TIRED OUT—THE LAST SLOW HEAVE	“	<u>196</u>
HAULED ABOARD WITH BLOCK AND TACKLE	“	<u>197</u>
R. C. ON THE JOB	“	<u>204</u>
304 POUNDS	“	<u>205</u>
R. C. GREY AND RECORD MARLIN	“	<u>205</u>
328-POUND RECORD MARLIN BY R. C. GREY. SHAPELIEST AND MOST BEAUTIFUL SPECIMEN EVER TAKEN	“	<u>208</u>
SUNSET OVER CLEMENTE CHANNEL	“	<u>209</u>
A BLUE-FINNED PLUGGER OF THE DEEP —138-POUND TUNA	“	<u>244</u>
AVALON, THE BEAUTIFUL	“	<u>245</u>
THE OLD AVALON BARGE WHERE THE GULLS FISH AND SCREAM	“	<u>252</u>
THE END OF THE DAY OFF CATALINA	“	<u>253</u>

ISLAND
SEAL ROCKS

“ [264](#)

ZANE GREY

By W. Livingston Larned

Been to Avalon with Grey ... been most
everywhere;

Chummed with him and fished with him in every
Sportsman's
lair.

Helped him with the white Sea-bass and Barracuda
haul,

Shared the Tuna's sprayful sport and heard his
Hunter-call,

Me an' Grey are fishin' friends.... Pals of rod and
reel,

Whether it's the sort that fights ... or th' humble
eel,

On and on, through Wonderland ... winds a-blowin'
free,

Catching all th' fins that grow ... Sportsman Grey
an' Me.

Been to Florida with Zane ... scouting down th'
coast;

Whipped the deep for Tarpon, too, that natives love
th' most.

Seen the smiling, Tropic isles that pass, in green
review,

Gathered cocoanut and moss where Southern skies
were blue.

Seen him laugh that boyish laugh, when things
were goin'

right;
Helped him beach our little boat and kindle fires at
night.
Comrades of the Open Way, the Treasure-Trove of
Sea,
Port Ahoy and who cares where, with Mister Grey
an' Me!

Been to Western lands with Grey ... hunted fox and
deer.
Seen the Grizzly's ugly face with danger lurkin'
near.
Slept on needles, near th' sky, and marked th'
round moon
 rise
Over purpling peaks of snow that hurt a fellow's
eyes.
Gone, like Indians, under brush and to some mystic
place—
Home of red men, long since gone, to join their
dying race.
Yes ... we've chummed it, onward—outward ...
mountain,
 wood, and Key,
At the quiet readin'-table ... Sportsman Grey an'
Me.

I

BYME-BY-TARPON

To capture the fish is not all of the fishing. Yet there are circumstances which make this philosophy hard to accept. I have in mind an incident of angling tribulation which rivals the most poignant instant of my boyhood, when a great trout flopped for one sharp moment on a mossy stone and then was gone like a golden flash into the depths of the pool.

Some years ago I followed Attalano, my guide, down the narrow Mexican street of Tampico to the bank of the broad Panuco. Under the rosy dawn the river quivered like a restless opal. The air, sweet with the song of blackbird and meadowlark, was full of cheer; the rising sun shone in splendor on the water and the long line of graceful palms lining the opposite bank, and the tropical forest beyond, with its luxuriant foliage festooned by gray moss. Here was a day to warm the heart of any fisherman; here was the beautiful river, celebrated in many a story; here was the famous guide, skilled with oar and gaff, rich in experience. What sport I would have; what treasure of keen sensation would I store; what flavor of life would I taste this day! Hope burns always in the heart of a fisherman.

Attalano was in harmony with the day and the scene. He had a cheering figure, lithe and erect, with a springy stride, bespeaking the Montezuma blood said to flow in his Indian veins. Clad in a colored cotton shirt, blue jeans, and Spanish girdle, and treading the path with brown feet never deformed by shoes, he would have stopped an artist. Soon he bent his muscular shoulders to the oars, and the ripples

circling from each stroke hardly disturbed the calm Panuco. Down the stream glided long Indian canoes, hewn from trees and laden with oranges and bananas. In the stern stood a dark native wielding an enormous paddle with ease. Wild-fowl dotted the glassy expanse; white cranes and pink flamingoes graced the reedy bars; red-breasted kingfishers flew over with friendly screech. The salt breeze kissed my cheek; the sun shone with the comfortable warmth Northerners welcome in spring; from over the white sand-dunes far below came the faint boom of the ever-restless Gulf.

We trolled up the river and down, across from one rush-lined lily-padded shore to the other, for miles and miles with never a strike. But I was content, for over me had been cast the dreamy, care-dispelling languor of the South.

When the first long, low swell of the changing tide rolled in, a stronger breeze raised little dimpling waves and chased along the water in dark, quick-moving frowns. All at once the tarpon began to show, to splash, to play, to roll. It was as though they had been awakened by the stir and murmur of the miniature breakers. Broad bars of silver flashed in the sunlight, green backs cleft the little billows, wide tails slapped lazily on the water. Every yard of river seemed to hold a rolling fish. This sport increased until the long stretch of water, which had been as calm as St. Regis Lake at twilight, resembled the quick current of a Canadian stream. It was a fascinating, wonderful sight. But it was also peculiarly exasperating, because when the fish roll in this sportive, lazy way they will not bite. For an hour I trolled through this whirlpool of flying spray and twisting tarpon, with many a salty drop on my face, hearing all around me the whipping crash of breaking water.



TARPON THROWING HOOK





LEAPING TARPON

“Bye-bye-tarpon,” presently remarked Attalano, favoring me with the first specimen of his English.

The rolling of the tarpon diminished, and finally ceased as noon advanced.

No more did I cast longing eyes upon those huge bars of silver. They were buried treasure. The breeze quickened as the flowing tide gathered strength, and together they drove the waves higher. Attalano rowed across the river into the outlet of one of the lagoons. This narrow stream was unruffled by wind; its current was sluggish and its muddy waters were clarifying under the influence of the now fast-rising tide.

By a sunken log near shore we rested for lunch. I found the shade of the trees on the bank rather pleasant, and became interested in a blue heron, a russet-colored duck, and a brown-and-black snipe, all sitting on the sunken log. Near by stood a tall crane watching us solemnly, and above in the tree-top a parrot vociferously proclaimed his knowledge of our presence. I was wondering if he objected to our

invasion, at the same time taking a most welcome bite for lunch, when directly in front of me the water flew up as if propelled by some submarine power. Framed in a shower of spray I saw an immense tarpon, with mouth agape and fins stiff, close in pursuit of frantically leaping little fish.

The fact that Attalano dropped his sandwich attested to the large size and close proximity of the tarpon. He uttered a grunt of satisfaction and pushed out the boat. A school of feeding tarpon closed the mouth of the lagoon. Thousands of mullet had been cut off from their river haunts and were now leaping, flying, darting in wild haste to elude the great white monsters. In the foamy swirls I saw streaks of blood.

“Bye-bye-tarpon!” called Attalano, warningly.

Shrewd guide! I had forgotten that I held a rod. When the realization dawned on me that sooner or later I would feel the strike of one of these silver tigers a keen, tingling thrill of excitement quivered over me. The primitive man asserted himself; the instinctive lust to conquer and to kill seized me, and I leaned forward, tense and strained with suspended breath and swelling throat.

Suddenly the strike came, so tremendous in its energy that it almost pulled me from my seat; so quick, fierce, bewildering that I could think of nothing but to hold on. Then the water split with a hissing sound to let out a great tarpon, long as a door, seemingly as wide, who shot up and up into the air. He wagged his head and shook it like a struggling wolf. When he fell back with a heavy splash, a rainbow, exquisitely beautiful and delicate, stood out of the spray, glowed, paled, and faded.



SAVALO, OR SILVER KING



**THESE WILD FOWL HAVE THE WONDERFUL BEAUTY
AND SPEED OF FALCONS**

Five times he sprang toward the blue sky, and as many he plunged down with a thunderous crash. The reel screamed. The line sang. The rod, which I had thought stiff as a tree, bent like a willow wand. The silver king came up far astern and sheered to the right in a long, wide curve, leaving behind a white wake. Then he sounded, while I watched the line with troubled eyes. But not long did he sulk. He began a series of magnificent tactics new in my experience. He stood on his tail, then on his head; he sailed like a bird; he shook himself so violently as to make a convulsive, shuffling sound; he dove, to come up covered with mud, marring his bright sides; he closed his huge gills with a slap and, most

remarkable of all, he rose in the shape of a crescent, to straighten out with such marvelous power that he seemed to actually crack like a whip.

After this performance, which left me in a condition of mental aberration, he sounded again, to begin a persistent, dragging pull which was the most disheartening of all his maneuvers; for he took yard after yard of line until he was far away from me, out in the Panuco. We followed him, and for an hour crossed to and fro, up and down, humoring him, responding to his every caprice, as if he verily were a king. At last, with a strange inconsistency more human than fishlike, he returned to the scene of his fatal error, and here in the mouth of the smaller stream he leaped once more. But it was only a ghost of his former efforts—a slow, weary rise, showing he was tired. I could see it in the weakening wag of his head. He no longer made the line whistle.

I began to recover the long line. I pumped and reeled him closer. Reluctantly he came, not yet broken in spirit, though his strength had sped. He rolled at times with a shade of the old vigor, with a pathetic manifestation of the temper that became a hero. I could see the long, slender tip of his dorsal fin, then his broad tail and finally the gleam of his silver side. Closer he came and slowly circled around the boat, eying me with great, accusing eyes. I measured him with a fisherman's glance. What a great fish! Seven feet, I calculated, at the very least.

At this triumphant moment I made a horrible discovery. About six feet from the leader the strands of the line had frayed, leaving only one thread intact. My blood ran cold and the clammy sweat broke out on my brow. My empire was not won; my first tarpon was as if he had never been. But true to my fishing instincts, I held on morosely; tenderly I handled him; with brooding care I riveted my eye on the frail place in my line, and gently, ever so gently, I began to

lead the silver king shoreward. Every smallest move of his tail meant disaster to me, so when he moved it I let go of the reel. Then I would have to coax him to swim back again.

The boat touched the bank. I stood up and carefully headed my fish toward the shore, and slid his head and shoulders out on the lily-pads. One moment he lay there, glowing like mother-of-pearl, a rare fish, fresh from the sea. Then, as Attalano warily reached for the leader, he gave a gasp, a flop that deluged us with muddy water, and a lunge that spelled freedom.

I watched him swim slowly away with my bright leader dragging beside him. Is it not the loss of things which makes life bitter? What we have gained is ours; what is lost is gone, whether fish, or use, or love, or name, or fame.

I tried to put on a cheerful aspect for my guide. But it was too soon. Attalano, wise old fellow, understood my case. A smile, warm and living, flashed across his dark face as he spoke:

“Bye-bye-tarpon.”

Which defined his optimism and revived the failing spark within my breast. It was, too, in the nature of a prophecy.

II

THE ISLAND OF THE DEAD

Strange wild adventures fall to the lot of a fisherman as well as to that of a hunter. On board the *Monterey*, from Havana to Progreso, Yucatan, I happened to fall into conversation with an English globe-trotter who had just come from the Mont Pelée eruption. Like all those wandering Englishmen, this one was exceedingly interesting. We exchanged experiences, and I felt that I had indeed much to see and learn of the romantic Old World.

In Merida, that wonderful tropic city of white towers and white streets and white-gowned women, I ran into this Englishman again. I wanted to see the magnificent ruins of Uxmal and Ake and Labna. So did he. I knew it would be a hard trip from Muna to the ruins, and so I explained. He smiled in a way to make me half ashamed of my doubts. We went together, and I found him to be a splendid fellow. We parted without knowing each other's names. I had no idea what he thought of me, but I thought he must have been somebody.

While traveling around the coast of Yucatan I had heard of the wild and lonely Alacranes Reef where lighthouse-keepers went insane from solitude, and where wonderful fishes inhabited the lagoons. That was enough for me. Forthwith I meant to go to Alacranes.

Further inquiry brought me meager but fascinating news of an island on that lonely coral reef, called *Isla de la Muerte* (the Island of the Dead). Here was the haunt of a strange bird, called by Indians *rabihorcado*, and it was said to live off

the booby, another strange sea-bird. The natives of the coast solemnly averred that when the *rabi* *horcado* could not steal fish from the booby he killed himself by hanging in the brush. I did not believe such talk. The Spanish appeared to be *rabi*, meaning rabies, and *horcar*, to hang.

I set about to charter a boat, and found the great difficulty in procuring one to be with the Yucatecan government. No traveler had ever before done such a thing. It excited suspicion. The officials thought the United States was looking for a coaling-station. Finally, through the help of the Ward line agent and the consul I prevailed upon them to give me such papers as appeared necessary. Then my Indian boatmen interested a crew of six, and I chartered a two-masted canoe-shaped bark called the *Xpit*.

The crew of the *Hispaniola*, with the never-to-be-forgotten John Silver and the rest of the pirates of Treasure Island, could not have been a more villainous and piratical gang than this of the bark *Xpit*. I was advised not to take the trip alone. But it appeared impossible to find any one to accompany me. I grew worried, yet determined not to miss the opportunity.

Strange to relate, as I was conversing on the dock with a ship captain and the agent of the Ward line, lamenting the necessity of sailing for Alacranes alone, some one near by spoke up, "Take me!"

In surprise I wheeled to see my English acquaintance who had visited the interior of Yucatan with me. I greeted him, thanked him, but of course did not take him seriously, and I proceeded to expound the nature of my venture. To my further surprise, he not only wanted to go, but he was enthusiastic.

“But it’s a hard, wild trip,” I protested. “Why, that crew of barefooted, red-shirted Canary-Islanders have got me scared! Besides, you don’t know me!”

“Well, you don’t know me, either,” he replied, with his winning smile.

Then I awoke to my own obtuseness and to the fact that here was a real man, in spite of the significance of a crest upon his linen.

“If you’ll take a chance on me I’ll certainly take one on you,” I replied, and told him who I was, and that the Ward-line agent and American consul would vouch for me.

He offered his hand with the simple reply, “My name is C —.”

If before I had imagined he was somebody, I now knew it. And that was how I met the kindest man, the finest philosopher, the most unselfish comrade, the greatest example and influence that it has ever been my good fortune to know upon my trips by land or sea. I learned this during our wonderful trip to the Island of the Dead. He never thought of himself. Hardship to him was nothing. He had no fear of the sea, nor of men, nor of death. It seemed he never rested, never slept, never let anybody do what he could do instead.

That night we sailed for Alacranes. It was a white night of the tropics, with a million stars blinking in the blue dome overhead, and the Caribbean Sea like a shadowed opal, calm and rippling and shimmering. The *Xpit* was not a bark of comfort. It had a bare deck and an empty hold. I could not stay below in that gloomy, ill-smelling pit, so I tried to sleep on deck. I lay on a hatch under the great boom, and what with its creaking, and the hollow roar of the sail, and the wash of the waves, and the dazzling starlight, I could

not sleep. C. sat on a coil of rope, smoked, and watched in silence. I wondered about him then.

Sunrise on the Caribbean was glorious to behold—a vast burst of silver and gold over a level and wrinkling blue sea. By day we sailed, tacking here and there, like lost mariners standing for some far-off unknown shore. That night a haze of clouds obscured the stars, and it developed that our red-shirted skipper steered by the stars. We indeed became lost mariners. They sounded with a greased lead and determined our latitude by the color and character of the coral or sand that came up on the lead. Sometimes they knew where we were and at others they did not have any more idea than had I.

On the second morning out we reached Alacranes lighthouse; and when I saw the flat strip of sand, without a tree or bush to lend it grace and color, the bleak lighthouse, and the long, lonely reaches of barren reefs from which there came incessant moaning, I did not wonder that two former lighthouse-keepers had gone insane. The present keeper received me with the welcome always accorded a visitor to out-of-the-world places. He corroborated all that my Indian sailors had claimed for the *rabihorcado*, and added the interesting information that lighthouse-keepers desired the extinction of the birds because the guano, deposited by them on the roofs of the keepers' houses, poisoned the rain water—all they had to drink.

I climbed the narrow, spiral stair to the lighthouse tower, and there, apparently lifted into the cloud-navigated sky, I awakened to the real wonder of coral reefs. Ridges of white and brown showed their teeth against the crawling, tireless, insatiate sea. Islets of dead coral gleamed like bleached bone, and beds of live coral, amber as wine, lay wreathed in restless surf. From near to far extended the rollers, the curving channels, and the shoals, all colorful, all quivering

with the light of jewels. Golden sand sloped into the gray-green of shallow water, and this shaded again into darker green, which in turn merged into purple, reaching away to the far barrier reef, a white wall against the blue, heaving ocean.

The crew had rowed us ashore with my boatmen Manuel and Augustine. And then the red-shirted captain stated he would like to go back to Progreso and return for us at our convenience. Hesitating over this, I finally gave permission, on the promise that he would bring back the *Xpit* in one week.

So they sailed away, and left us soon to find out that we were marooned on a desert island. When I saw how C. took it I was glad of our enforced stay. Solitude and loneliness pervaded Alacranes. Of all the places I had visited, this island was the most hauntingly lonely.



RABIHORCADO



**THE BOOBIES HAD NO FEAR OF MAN, BUT BOTH
YOUNG AND OLD WOULD PICK WITH THEIR SHARP
BILLS**

It must have struck C. the same way, and even more powerfully than it had me. He was a much older man, and, though so unfailingly cheerful and helpful, he seemed to me to desire loneliness. He did not fish or shoot. His pleasure appeared to be walking the strand, around and around the little island, gathering bits of coral and shells and seaweeds and strange things cast up by the tides. For hours he would sit high on the lighthouse stairway and gaze out over the variegated mosaic of colored reefs. My bed was a hammock

in the loft of the keeper's house and it hung close to an open door. At night I woke often, and I would look out upon the lonely beach and sea. When the light flashed its long wheeling gleam out into the pale obscurity of the night it always showed C.'s dark figure on the lonely beach. I got into the habit of watching for him, and never, at any time I happened to awake, did I fail to see him out there. How strange he looms to me now! But I thought it was natural then. The loneliness of that coral reef haunted me. The sound of the sea, eternally slow and sad and moaning, haunted me like a passion. Men are the better for solitude.

Our bark, the *Xpit*, did not come back for us. Day by day we scanned the heaving sea, far out beyond the barrier reef, until I began to feel like Crusoe upon his lonely isle. We had no way to know then that our crew had sailed twice from Progreso, getting lost the first time, and getting drunk the second, eventually returning to the home port. Some misfortunes turn out to be blessings.

What adventures I had at Alacranes! But, alas! I cannot relate a single story about really catching a fish. There were many and ferocious fish that would rush any bait I tried, only I could not hold them. My tackle was not equal to what it is now. Perhaps, however, if it had been it would have been smashed just the same.

In front of the lighthouse there had been built a little plank dock, running out twenty yards or so. The water was about six feet deep, and a channel of varying width meandered between the coral reefs out to the deep blue sea. This must have been a lane for big fish to come inside the barrier. Almost always there were great shadows drifting around in the water. First I tried artificial baits. Some one, hoping to convert me, had given me a whole box of those ugly, murderous plug-baits made famous by Robert H. Davis. Whenever I made a cast with one of these a big fish would

hit it and either strip the hooks off or break my tackle. Some of these fish leaped clear. They looked like barracuda to me, only they were almost as silvery as a tarpon. One looked ten feet long and as big around as a telegraph pole. When this one smashed the water white and leaped, Manuel yelled, "*Pecuda!*" I tried hard to catch a specimen, and had a good many hooked, but they always broke away. I did not know then, as I know now, that barracuda grow to twelve feet in the Caribbean. That fact is mentioned in records and natural histories.

Out in the deeper lagoons I hooked huge fish that swam off ponderously, dragging the skiff until my line parted. Once I was fortunate enough to see one, which fact dispelled any possibility of its being a shark. Manuel called it "*Cherna!*" It looked like a giant sea-bass and would have weighed at least eight hundred pounds. The color was lighter than any sea-bass I ever studied. My Indian boatmen claimed this fish was a man-eater and that he and his crew had once fought one all day and then it broke away. The fish I saw was huge enough to swallow a man, that was certain. I think this species must have been the great June-fish of the Gulf. I hooked one once at the mouth of the Panuco River in Mexico and it nearly swamped the boat.



YOUNG BOOBIES



**SUGGESTIVE OF A WILD, WIND-SWEPT ISLAND OF
THE SEA**

Soon my tackle was all used up, and, for want of better, I had to use tiny hooks and thread lines—because I was going to fish, by hook or crook! This method, however, which I