WOLVES of the SEA

By RANDALL PARRISH

Copyright by A. C. McClurg & Co.

CHAPTER XXXII.

The Last of the Namur.

The vessel was plainly a total wreck, rapidly pounding to death on a sharp ledge of rock. Both masts were down, and, lifted as the bow was, it was easy to perceive the deck was in splinters where falling spars and topmasts had crushed their way through. The bows had caught, seemingly jammed in between rocks, the stern sunk deep, with cabin port holes barely above reach of the waves. Not a living thing appeared on board, and, as the fog slowly drifted away, my eyes could discern no sign of any boat, no evidence of the crew, along the wide sweep of water. A voice aroused me.

"What was it you said, Jack, 'bout treasure on the old hooker? Why not get it afore it's too late?"

"It's thar, all right, Ole," and I knew the speaker to be Haines. "Ain't it, Mr. Carlyle?"

"Yes, lads; there must be money on board, unless those fellows took it with them in the boats. I know of fifty thousand pounds stolen in Virginia, and no doubt there is more than that. The bark is liable to slide off that rock any minute and go down like a stone. What do you say, bullies? Here is a risky job, but a pocket full of gold pieces, if we can get aboard and safely off again. Who'll go across with me?"

There was a babel of voices, the men crowding about me, all else forgotten as greed gripped their imaginations.

"Stand back, lads! I cannot use all of you. Four will be enough. You'll not lose anything of what we bring back; it'll be share and share alike, so fall, to, heartiles."

I paused at instant to speak to Dorothy, seated on the flag locker, explaining to her swiftly my object in exploring the wreck and pledging myself not to be reckless in attempting to board. I read fear in her eyes, yet she said nothing to dissuade me.

I slipped down a rope and dropped into the boat, taking my place with a steering oar at the stern, and we shot away through the green water. The Namur proved to be a more complete wreck than our distant view had revealed, and lying in a more precarious position. It was no pleasant job getting aboard, but ordering Haines to accompany me, and the others to lie by, I made use of a dangling backstay, and thus hauled myself up to a reasonably secure footing. The fellow joined me breathless, and together we perched on the rail to gain view of the deck.

It was a distressing, hopeless sight, the vessel rising before us like the roof of a house, the deck planks stove in, a horrible jumble of running rigging, booms and spars, blocking the way forward. There were three bodies tangled in the wreckage within our sight, crushed out of all human resemblance, and the face of a negro, caught beneath the ribs of the galley, seemed to grin back at me in death. Every timber groaned as the waves struck and rocked the sodden mass, and I had no doubt but that the vessel had already broken in two.

Haines was evidently reluctant, but sailor enough to follow as I forced myself to the deck, clinging hard to keep my footing on the wet incline. A light spar had fallen here, and by making this a species of broken, we crept as far as the companion, the door of which was open, and gained a view of the scene below. It was a dreary hole in the dim light but presented no obstacle to our entrance, and I led the way down the stairs, stripping the rail to keep from falling.

The door of the captain's room gave, but it required our combined efforts to press it open against the volume of water, sloshing about within. For a moment my eyes could scarcely recognize the various objects as I clung to the frame of the door and stared blindly about in the gloom. Then slowly they assumed shape and substance. Screwed to the deck, the furniture retained its place, and everything else was jammed in a mass of wreckage, or else floating about in a foot of water, deepening toward the stern. There were two chests in the room, one of which I instantly recognized as that of Roger Fairfax. The sight of this made me oblivious to all else.

"There's the chest we want, Haines," I cried, pointing it out. "Have the lads back the boat up to this port; then come down and help me handle it."

"Yes, sir," his voice trembling; "but—but isn't that a man over there—in the bunk? Good God, sir; look at him!"

The white, ghastly face stared at us, looking like nothing human in that awful twilight. I actually thought it a ghost, until with desperate effort the man lifted himself, clawing with gaunt fingers to the edge of the bunk. Then I knew.

"Sanchez! You! those cowards left you here to die!"

"No one—none for me," he answered, choking as the words were scarcely intelligible. "Who are you and what brought you here?"

"I'll tell you, Sanchez. Curse you, man!" I stepped back as the

"D——n You, Take Your Gold and Go!"

your name drives me mad. I accept no rescue from you! Damn you, take your gold and go."

"But why?" I insisted, shocked at the man's violence. "Is it because I interfered between you and Dorothy Fairfax?"

"That chit; bah, what do I care for her but as a plaything. No, my hate runs deeper than that. How came you here—in the boat stolen from the Namur?"

"No, Captain Sanchez. The day after we left the ship we boarded a schooner found adrift, the crew stricken with cholera, with not a man left alive on deck, or below. She lies yonder now, the Santa Marie—a slaver."

"Merciful God!" and his eyes fairly blazed into mine as he suddenly forced his body upward in the bunk. "The Santa Marie adrift! the crew dead from cholera? And the captain—Paradilla, Francis Paradilla—what of him?"

"He lay alone on a divan in the cabin—dead also."

He tried to speak, but failed, his fingers clawing at his throat. When he finally gained utterance once more it was but a whisper.

"Tell me," he begged, "there was no woman with him?"

"There was no woman," I said gravely, "on deck or in the cabin."

"What mean you by saying that? There was one on board! Don't lie to me! In an hour I am dead—but first tell me the truth. Does the woman live?"

"No, she died before. We found her body in a chest, preserved by some devilish Indian art, richly dressed and decked with jewels."

"English?"

"I judged her so, but with dark hair and eyes. You knew her?"

"In the name of all the fiends, yes. And I know her end. He killed her—Paradilla killed her—because she was as false to him as she had been to me. Hell! isn't it strange you should be the one to find her and bring me this tale, Geoffry Carlyle?"

"Why? What is it to you?"

"You go back to England and tell the duke of Dalchough how his precious sister died."

"His sister! Good God, you cannot mean that woman who Lady Jura Clive-Ayre?"

"Why should I know better than I? courteously, "since I was called in to bury her in the Commercial?"

He sank back, a mass of shivering for breath, but with eyes glowing hatred. I knew it all now, the dimly remembered story coming vividly back to memory. Here then was the ending of the age long feud on the family honor of our race. On this strange coast, three thousand miles from its beginning, the final curtain was being rung down, the drama finished. The story had come to me in whispers from others, never even spoken about by those of our race—a wild, headstrong girl, a secret marriage, a duel in the dark for brother desperately wounded, and then the disappearance of the pair. Two days later it was known that Sir John Collinswood had detected in a large snare—but from that hour England knew him no more. As though the sea had swallowed them both, man and woman disappeared, leaving no trace behind.

The face I gazed dumbly into was drawn and white with pain, yet the thin lips grinned back at me in savage derision.

"You remember, I see," he snarled. "Then out of here, Geoffry Carlyle. Leave me to die in peace. The gold is there; take it, and my curse upon it. Hurry now—do you hear the bark grate on the rocks; it's near the end."

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Before the Governor.

The sound startled me; I imagined I heard the keel slipping, yet before we had reached the door opening on deck the slight movement ceased. My hand gripped the frightened Haines.

"Tell them in the boat to do as I said; then come back here."

"My God, sir, she's a goin' down."

"Not for some minutes yet. There are thousands of pounds in that chest; you've risked life for less many a time. Jump, my man!"

The boat lay in close, bobbing up and down dangerously, yet held firmly beneath the opened port. The box was heavy enough to tax the strength of two men to handle it, but of a size and shape permitting its passage. Sanchez had raised himself again, and clung there to the edge of the bunk watching us.

"Now let down easy, lads," I called. "No, place it amidships; get it even, or you go over. Fix it to ride steady, and stand by—we'll pass a wounded man out to you!"

I stepped across to Sanchez. He saw me coming, and drew back, his ghastly face like a mask.

"No you don't, Carlyle!" he snapped angrily. "Keep your hands off me. So you want me to die with my neck in a noose, do you? I was born a gentleman, and, by God! I'll die like one—and go down with my ship. Get out of here now! You won't? You will, or else die here with me! I'll give you a minute to make your choice."

He left no doubt as to his meaning. From beneath the blanket, the black muzzle of a pistol looked straight into my eyes. The hand holding it was firm, the face fronting me savagely sardonic.

"I'd like to kill you, Carlyle," he hissed hatefully. "By God, I don't know why I shouldn't. Every time I look at you I see her face. If you take a step nearer I pull the trigger—go!"

It was a hard pull back to the Santa Marie. Dorothy greeted me first, and we stood close together at the rail as the men hoisted the chest on deck. She said nothing, asked nothing, but her hands clung to my arm, and wherever I turned toward her our eyes met.

There was a sudden cry forward, and a voice shouted:

"There she goes, buckles! That's the last o' the Namur!"

I turned swiftly, my hand grasping her fingers as they clung to the rail. The battered hulk slid downward, the deck breaking amidships as the stern splashed into the depths; then that also toppled over, leaving nothing above water except the stunt end of a broken bowsprit, and a tangle of wreckage floated about on the crest of the waves. I watched breathlessly, unable to utter a sound; I could only think of that stricken man in the cabin, those wild eyes which had threatened me. He was gone now—gone!

I yet held Dorothy's hand tightly clasped in my own, and the depths of her uplifted eyes questioned me.

"We will go aft, dear, and I will tell you the whole story," I said gently, "for now we are homeward bound."

* * * * * * *

I write these few closing lines a year later in the cabin of the Ocean Spray, a three master, full to the hatches with a cargo of tobacco, bound for London, and a market. Dorothy is on deck, eagerly watching for the first glimpse of the chalk cliffs of old England. I must join her presently, yet linger longer to add these final sentences.

There is, after all, little which needs to be said. The voyage of the Santa Marie north proved uneventful, and, after that first night of storm, the weather held pleasant and the sea fairly smooth. I had some trouble with the men, but nothing serious, as Watkins and Haines held as I did, and the pledge of Dorothy's influence brought courage. I refused to open the chest, believing our safety, and chance of pardon, would depend largely on our handing this over in good faith to the authorities. Watkins and I guarded it night and day until the schooner rounded the cape and came into the Chesapeake. No attempt was made to find quarters below, the entire crew sleeping on deck, Dorothy comfortable on the flag locker.

It was scarcely sunrise, on the fifth day, when we dropped anchor against the current of the James, our sails furled and the red English colors flying from the peak. Two hours later the entire company were in the presence of the governor, where I told my story, gravely listened to, supplemented by the earnest plea of the young woman. I shall never forget that scene, or how breathlessly we awaited the decision of the great man, who so closely watched our faces. They were, surely a strange, rough group as they stood thus, hats in hand, waiting to learn their fate, shaggy-haired, unshaven, largely scum of the sea, never before in such presence, shuffling uneasily before his glance, feeling to the full the peril of their position. Their eyes turned to me questioningly.

Opposite us, behind a long table, sat the governor, dignified, austere, his hair powdered and face smoothly shaven; while on either side of him were those of his council, many of the faces stern and unforgiving. But for their gracious reception of Dorothy and their careful attention to her words I should have lost heart. They questioned me severely, although the governor spoke but seldom, and then in a kindly tone of sympathy and understanding. One by one the men were called forward, each in turn compelled to tell briefly the story of his life; and when all was done the eyes of the governor sought those of the council.

"You have all alike heard the tale, gentlemen," he said. "Nothing like it hath ever before been brought before this colony. Would you leave decision to me?"

There was a murmur of assent, as though they were thus gladly relieved of responsibility in so serious a matter. The governor smiled, his kindly eyes surveying us once more, then, with extended hand he bade Dorothy be seated.

"The story is seemingly an honest one," he said slowly, "and these seamen have done a great service to the colony. They deserve reward rather than punishment. The fair lady who pleads for them is known to us all, and to even question her word is impossible. Unfortunately, I have not the power of pardon in cases of piracy, nor authority to free bond slaves, without the approval of the home government; yet will exercise in this case whatsoever of power I possess. For gallant services rendered to the colony, and unselfish devotion to Mistress Dorothy Fairfax, I release Geoffry Carlyle from servitude pending advices from England. I also grant parole to these seamen, on condition they remain within our jurisdiction until this judgment can be confirmed and full pardons issued. Is this judgment satisfactory, gentlemen?"

The members of the council bowed gravely, without speaking.

"The chest of treasure recovered from the sunken pirate ship," he went on soberly, "will remain unopened until final decision is made. As I understand, Master Carlyle, no one among you has yet seen its contents, or estimated its value?"

"No, your excellency. Beyond doubt it contains the gold stolen from Roger Fairfax; and possibly the result of other robberies at sea.

"The law of England is that a certain percentage of such recovered treasure belongs to the crown, the remainder, the true ownership undetermined, to be fairly divided among those recovering it."

"Yet," spoke up Dorothy quickly, "it must surely be possible to waive all claim in such cases?"

"Certainly; as private property it can be disposed of in any way desired. Was that your thought?"

"A Fairfax always pays his debt," she said proudly, "and this is mine."

There was a moment's silence as though each one present hesitated to speak. She had risen, and yet stood, but with eyes lowered to the floor. Then they were lifted and met mine in all frank honesty.

"There is another debt I owe," she said clearly, "and would pay, your excellency."

"What is that, fair mistress?"

She crossed to me, her hand upon my arm.

"To become the wife of Geoffry Carlyle."

THE END.

Now the days are good and warm and sunburned faces and hands will need prompt attention. Why not drop in at Silverthorns and try their Palm cream or camphoratum, or Rubbup cream, that is so much liked by so many. 5-25-tf

Silverthorns
FAMILY DRUG STORE
LA GRANDE, OREGON.

Service—

Our undivided attention given to Laundry Work—That's why we are able to give you the very best service.

The Modern Laundry

Guard the Family Health

Health is often endangered by unsanitary cooking utensils. Physicians have found that cancer is caused by enamel ware chipping off and irritating the stomach.

If you have children or invalids in the family beware of cheap cooking utensils that crack, scale, peel off, tarnish or rust. Disease germs lurk in the worn places and there is further danger of tainting the food. Health is too precious to take risks with it.

Be safe. Use

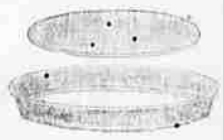
"1892" Pure Spun Aluminum Cooking Utensils

which are guaranteed for 15 years constant service and will never spoil food nor endanger health.

This new ware is featherweight, beautiful, easy to clean—does not tarnish nor rust. The slight extra cost is more than made up by long service and absolute safety.

Look for Trade mark on Every Piece

The Maltese cross with the words Pure Illinois "1892" Aluminum—the original, insures that you get the genuine. There are imitations, so be sure this trade mark is on every piece.



For Sale By
FURNITURE EXCHANGE
ED DONOHUE

LAXATIVE for Aged People

THE BANE of old age is constipation. The bowels become weak and unable to perform their functions without aid. For this purpose only the mildest and gentlest laxative should be used. The use of harsh cathartics aggravates the trouble and makes the constipation worse. Chamberlain's Tablets are a favorite with people of middle age and older on account of their gentle action.

Chamberlain's Tablets

Our Hand Painted French Ivory

Toilet Sets make pleasing and serviceable gifts. We also carry a complete line of reliable watches and jewelry.

DOES YOUR WATCH KEEP CORRECT TIME?

G. S. Birnie
Watchmaker, Jeweler, Optician

YOUR EYES—What Would You Do Without Them?

Remember, Doctors refer their patients to us, and come themselves for properly fitted Glasses, to stop the headaches and waste of nerve energy.

Our office is equipped with the latest and most scientific instruments for proper examination of the eyes.

If glasses are not needed, we will tell you so. We grind our own lenses—plant on the premises.

J. H. Peare & Son
OPTOMETRISTS AND JEWELERS LA GRANDE, OREGON

Just Arrived

Oxfords and Pumps

—They are beauties. We invite you to call and inspect them.

White Golf Oxford	$8.50
Brown Kid Colonial Pump	$5.00
Black Kid Colonial Pump	$7.50
Black Kid Pump, medium heel	$6.00
Black Kid Pump, low heel	$6.00
White Kid Pump	$8.50

L. J. FRENCH SHOE CO.
The Only Exclusive Shoe Store in La Grande.