

AT THE HOUSE BOAT ON THE STYX

DOINGS REPORTED BY WIRELESS TO John Kendrick Bangs

I-The Gehenna Interviews the Kaiser

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"Well, well, well," roared Captain Kidd, as he entered the Library of the Houseboat on the Styx, and greeted Attila, the Hun, who was seated in one corner of the room sipping his favorite tipple of wood alcohol and tobacco sauce. "If it isn't good old Attil! What's the matter, old man, you look like the Gloom Trust. When I first caught sight of you I thought you were a thunder cloud, and had visions of a heavy rain, you look so black."

"Well, why shouldn't I?" retorted Attila, with a grim smile. "Because, old top," grinned the Captain, "your reign is over; your stunt is to do the rainbow act."

"Tump," sniffed the Hun. "Rainbow act, eh? After that?" He banged his hand viciously upon the first page of the Gehenna Gazette, where, capped with headlines of the most approved scare-head pattern, Captain Kidd read the following:

A Worthy Son of a Famous Hun.
Latest advice from the upper-world are to the effect that Kaiser William the Second has taken as his model in the savage forms of warfare he is waging on the women and children of earth his predecessor in pillage, Peter R. Attila, Esq., formerly of Hunville-on-the-Sprea, and now a prominent resident of Hades. Those who have followed the courses of the two distinguished potentates find an amazingly complete parallel between the infamous conduct of the two men, and a recent interview granted the Potsdam correspondent of the Gazette by the present head of the German Empire would seem to indicate that the similarity is not a mere accident, but a matter of premeditated choice on the part of the reigning sovereign.

"Yes," said the Kaiser, as he gradually received your correspondent in the dark room where he was having his daily flashlight taken, "I am perfectly willing to admit it. Attila is my great exemplar. They say I am contented, and regard myself as the great originator of all the truly progressive pureness of the present age, but I am a tribute rather than a claim."

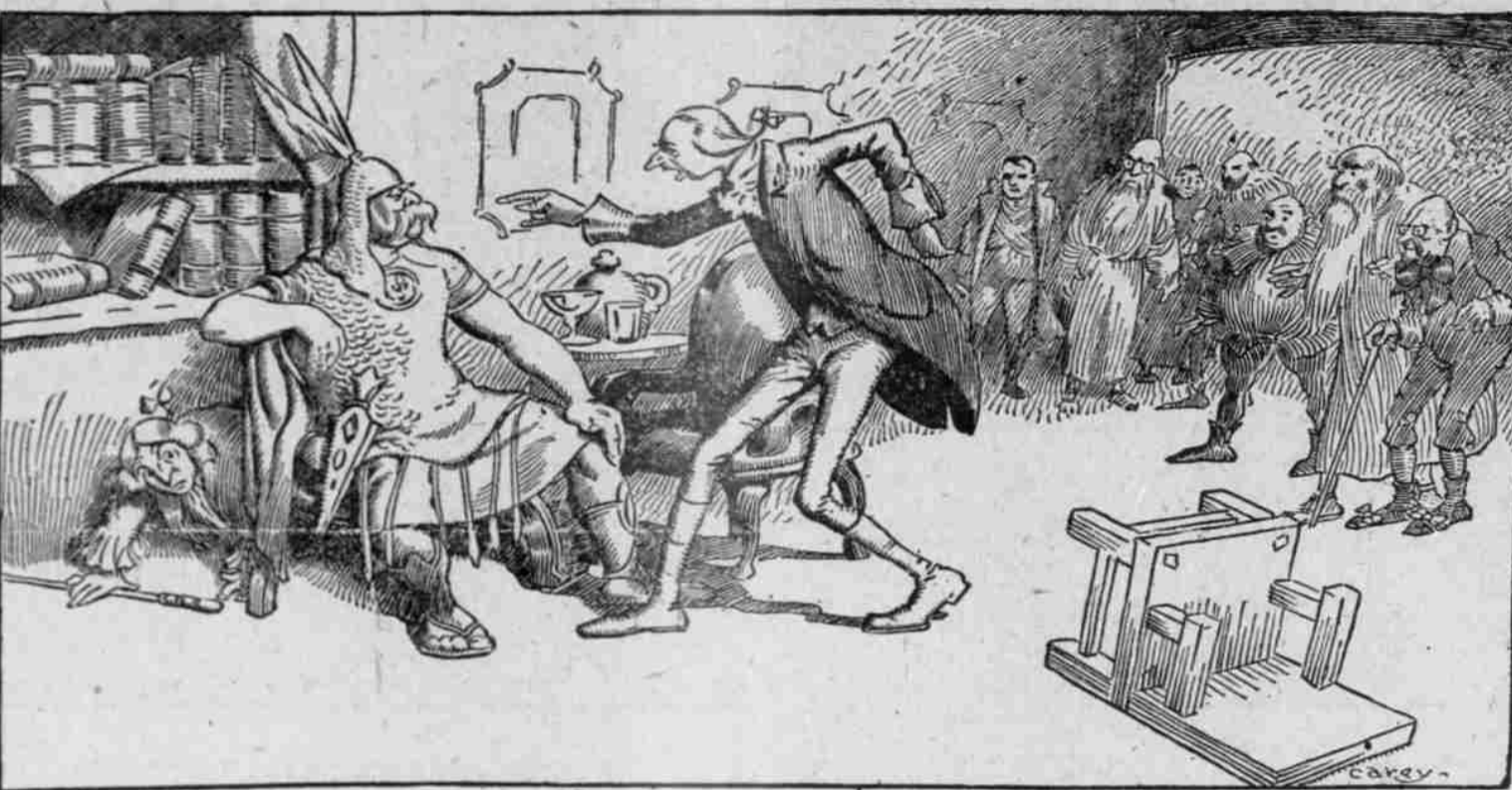
Captain Kidd read the above carefully, and with a beaming smile he turned to the angry Hun. "Why, my dear old boy," said he, "what is there in that for you to be angry about? I should say that was a tribute rather than a claim."

"Tribute nothing," retorted Attila, with a scowl. "It's pure, unadulterated libel—that's what it is, and I'm not going to stand for it. I have retained the firm of Coke, Blackstone and Lycurgus to institute a suit at once for libel against Jim Howell for printing such disgusting stuff about me. Things are getting so here in Hades these degenerate days that nobody's safe, nobody is allowed any private life; one may be very rich, and yet the driven snot and not escape calumny."

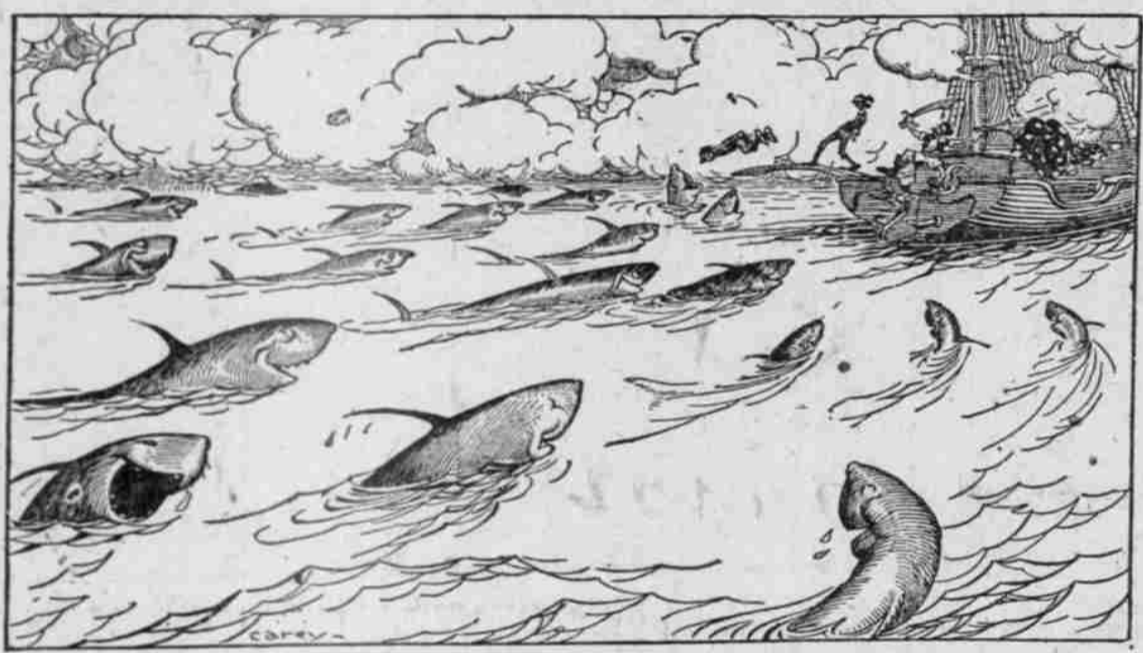
"But I don't see," began Kidd, scratching his head in perplexity.

"Of course you don't," retorted Attila. "But you'd see quick enough if it was you instead of me he'd written about. Come now—let's suppose a similar case with you as the hero instead of me. You were a pirate, were you not?"

"Ubetcha!" cried Kidd, joyously. "I was the dandiest little old buccaner that ever sailed the sea. What old whaler—Mr. Van Eyke was to portraiture that was I in the gentle art of sending millionaire sailors back to the



"WHERE IS THAT HOUND—WHERE IS HE?"



"THE SHARKS USED TO FOLLOW MY SHIP AROUND THE WORLD FOR THE PLEASURE OF SEEING ME WORK."

progress, and thereby diminishes the possible sum total of the world's advance toward that perfection of which we Hohennollerns are the supreme efflorescence. It was upon that basis that Attila the Master invariably acted, and in this present conflict in the destruction of old women, old men, and little children, for which the squeamish have so severely criticized me, I am but carrying out his noble policies for the benefit of the whole human kind."

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land to begin all over again. Why, Attil! He added, clapping his hand to his dick handle enthusiastically, "like the Kaiser I don't want to seem boastful, but by Jingo, old Scott, it's nothing but Neptune's truth that even the sharks need to follow my ship around

the world just for the pleasure of seeing me work."

"I know," said Attila. "Your record is perfectly familiar to me, and it's the best of the kind. I sometimes think that as a cut-throat you had me skinned sixty ways for Sunday. But to come to the point—suppose that old Jim Howell were to print a story on his front page something like this, for instance:

Captain Kidd in Harness Again.
Recent news from the upper-world

indicates that Captain Kidd has returned to earth again and resumed operations, although this time the buccaner is not flying the black flag upon the high seas, but is doing a land-office business as a promoter of war charities from which he is deriving huge profits at the expense of the allied beneficiaries thereof. Several individuals have just been indicted by the grand jury of New York for pocketing the bulk of the proceeds of the recent Army and Navy bazaar, at which \$75,000 was received, and from which the beneficiaries got less than \$700. The parallel between activities of this nature and the piratical scheme of Captain Kidd is so clear that—

"Stop right here!" roared Kidd, brandishing a dagger over Attila's head. "You and I have been pals for many long years, Attil, but I want to stop before you go a step further than I shall consider even the supposition of such a case a deadly insult."

"Well, there you are!" laughed Attila, quivering with wrath. "You'd better not blame me," said Kidd, quivering with wrath. "The very suggestion that had as I was I should ever consent to such a thing as to rob the poor and afflicted in any such paltry fashion as that makes my blood boil."

"Sure it does," said Attila, "and now you know how I feel when Jim Howell likens me to Kaiser William."

"Oh, but it's different in your case," said Kidd, "you must admit that as a pillager you were a pretty slick article, Attil. There wasn't much in pure thuggery as an art that you weren't up on, and generally over the top with it. If you didn't smash a few Rheims Cathedrals it wasn't because you didn't want to, but because there were other Rheims Cathedrals to smash. When it came to making a fire insurance policy look like a cent, in counterfeiting money you didn't have much on Hohennollern, you know. Anything that would hurt you, you had a way with you. You were a modern steam-heated flat. As a coal conservator you would have been Gauss's joy, because you shoveled palaces and public libraries, and private dwellings into the furnace whenever you felt your feet getting cold; and if you'd been hanged ten years ago, you'd have been hanging yet."

"Granted," said Attila, "I granted, and proud of it. I went the limit. I left scars in my track that appalled the Furies themselves. When it came to pure pitiless pillage, I had my Mohock, An-thropophagus, Blue Beard, Beechhob and old boy Bellal himself lashed to the mast. Mesallina was a lady and Nero movie-idol alongside of me. I was a glutton for rascality. If ever a loose fish swam the sea, or a happy flea the air, your old pal Attila was its prey. I was my middle name; aron my joy; ferocity my twin; but—"

"That's what I've been waiting for," said Kidd. "I know where there'd be but butting in before long. But what—"

"What I did I did to gratify my lusts and passions. If I skewered a baby on the end of my pike-staff I did it for the pleasure of hearing him squeal. I was an equine squirm. I never pretended I was doing it for the benefit of society, for God, or for the benefit of society. My son will be found lying flat on its nose at the bottom of the bottomless bit with a 15-ton dumb-bell tied in a bow-knot around its neck. See that?"

"And how well-known spook famous for its observations concerning the ways, habits, manners, and lack of manners of a certain Dr. Samuel Johnson will be found lying flat on its nose at the bottom of the bottomless bit with a 15-ton dumb-bell tied in a bow-knot around its neck. See that?"

"The next morning after breakfast Ned's father called him to come out into the back yard for a look 'at the camp, and you may be sure Ned was ready to go, for he suspected a surprise from the twinkles he saw in his father's eye."

"And he was right. There was a surprise. Out in the back yard, under the big maple tree, stood a tent, and a real or sure enough Army tent. And across the front of the tent were the words, 'U. S. Army' in great big letters."

"That's what I want!" exclaimed Ned happily, "that's like a soldier!"

"To be sure," agreed his father, "folk work best when they do things for a reason. Now look inside."

Ned did as he was told and there he found the biggest surprise of all. There was a wooden gun, for drilling, father said; and an express wagon, a nice big one that would haul a lot and over in the corner was a shelf on which stood a soap dish, a towel and a tooth brush all ready for use.

"Now," explained father, "you can drill and you can see service and when you're through you can bring your cleaning kit into the house to clean yourself up. How's that for soldier work?"

You may be sure Ned was delighted. He put up a big Army sign in the front of the tent and started drilling at once. He not only hauled supplies for his mother and kept himself clean and fresh, but he was hauling for other folks and earning Red Cross money—as fine a war worker as any grown-up!

Some Tongue Twisters.
A group of children were having the greatest fun over some new tongue twisters. Each one was trying to see whether she couldn't say the following sentences better than her neighbor, and most of them made a mess of them: Try for yourself, and see whether you will have better luck. Say them quickly.
A big black boiler on the black back of the black beast bent on breaking things badly for big brother.
Twelve tall tad toads tried to toddle to Tattletown together.
Stop at the shop at the top of Stone street and get a mixture of mixed biscuits for Peter Piper's petted panthers. Firm flesh of fleshy fresh fried fish forms a fine foundation.
She stood at the same spot serving the same sauce several Saturdays. Short socks shook simple Susan as short socks are sure to do.

FOR THE YOUNG PEOPLE

THE LITTLE FIRST-AIDER

TILLIE was walking down the street, with a tremendously important look. Indeed, if you were to have seen her and not known that she was only Tillie Hoop, you would have thought she was maybe the Grand Chief Thinker of the World! Molly Dean looked up and stared at Tillie walking alone looking so very important.

"Where're you going, Tillie?" asked Molly. "I'm going to the corner to buy some eggs for Mommer."

"The going to the First Aid Meeting?" replied Tillie. "After you buy the eggs, maybe your mother will let you come too. Ask her and see."

"Ask her?" said Molly. "What's the First Aid? Molly thought—at least she wondered— if it were anything nice or lemonade."

nurse wounded soldiers. Miss Smith, the nurse who is teaching us First Aid, says that lots and lots of nurses and doctors are going away to nurse wounded soldiers, that's why all the people at home ought to know First Aid, so they can take good care of themselves while the nurses are away. But I've noticed that almost everybody always the first thing to do in First Aid is to run and get a doctor."

When Tillie came back from her First Aid Class Molly ran to meet her. "Mommer says you can belong," she said. "When can I go?"

"Next Friday we have to go again," replied Tillie. "I'm awful glad you can belong. Won't you come over to my house and play hospital? I've got all my dolls in bed."

The two little girls went into the house and soon Peter, Tillie's little brother who was only five, and Sammy, Tillie's big brother, who was 10, came to play too. Sammy wanted to be the doctor, and Peter played wounded soldier, while Tillie and Molly were the trained nurses.

Supper time came so soon, and Molly had to go away. Nobody guessed all the excitement that was in store for them all next time they met!

It was at the breakfast table next morning that Tillie heard Molly's voice calling: "Tillie! Tillie! Tillie!"

The last "Tillie" was so loud and shrill that all three, Sammy, Tillie and Peter, jumped up, while Mother Hoop said: "Mercy! What a voice that child has!"

"The children asked to be 'scanded' and out they ran. Molly was standing on the lawn. Tillie was shouting, 'p-please come quick, Frankie is having a FIT!' Tillie was thinking quick as a flash about her First Aid lessons, and she said: "Cracked ice!"

named Frankie, but she expected to see a little boy in a fit. In the back yard, under a box hedge which was all covered with snow lay a rather slimy, spotted cat.

"Frankie, Frankie, Frankie!" called Molly, coaxingly. But the poor pussy gave a queer mew and began dashing around the poles and back steps. At last it fell down panting hard on the frozen path leading to the back gate.

"Cracked ice! Cracked ice!" said Tillie, running to Pussy's side. Well, there was plenty of cracked ice around. Tillie took a piece in her hand and held it on Frankie's forehead.

"Molly," she said in a quiet voice, just like Miss Smith's, "please get me a hot water bag at once."

A few silver coins. Charles Reade's "Drawing of a rooster playing on a piano. Reade's 'Fowl Play.'" Some pictures of the wilds of India. Walter Besant's "The Tale of Two Cities." A fur fall sewed under pictures of two large cities. Dickens' "Tale of Two Cities."

A paper with a toothpick and a lamp with it. Dickens' "Pickwick Papers." Picture of a man with letters "S A" on him. Pope's "Essay on Man."

Two small tin measures with the word "FIT" between them. "Shakespeare's Measure for Measure." Picture of a pen, a den and an "S." Thackeray's "Pendennis."

Picture of a pretty girl looking in a mirror. Thackeray's "Vanity Fair." A large safety pin. Miss Johnson's "To Have and to Hold." A few blades of grass. Walt Whitman's "Blades of Grass."

HELPING UNCLE SAM

HELPING UNCLE SAM AT HOME. "I WISH there was something a boy as big as me could do for the war," sighed Ned as he and his father turned away from watching a parade of soldiers pass along the street. Flags were flying gaily, bands were steeled in the distance, and everyone was filled with enthusiasm.

"There is something you can do," said his father as the two picked their way through the crowd, "there's a lot."

"Goody!" cried Ned happily, "tell me!" "First, keep yourself well," said his father. "That will not only save me money which I can spend for my country, but will keep the doctors from being too busy to help the soldiers. The less they do for us the more they can do for the Army. And keeping well means brushing teeth and eating just what and when you know you should and always washing hands before you eat. How's that for a start, son?"

He looked down to see the most disappointed face Ned could make. "Why, father?" exclaimed the little fellow, "that's not what I mean at all. You know how I hate to brush my teeth, and anyway, that's not Army work. I want something that seems like a soldier. What else can I do?"

A Literary Party

SO often when your friends call to spend an afternoon the time drags because you have not an interesting form of entertainment at hand, and conversation lags. Here is a suggestion for a "Literary Party," which will prove novel and interesting. Ask each guest to select the name of a book or poem or story, and represent it as intelligibly as he knows how, and it is up to the other guests to guess which book or poem he is portraying. A short list of such literary effusions and their mode of representation will suffice to show you how the game is played:

The Young Optimist.
"Did it break, little daughter?" I asked the wee maid. As I heard the pretty cup fall. "Not a bit," came back her cheerful reply. "The handle came off, that's all."



A Dear Little White Cap Was on Her Head.



He Started Drilling at Once.