

The Pirate of Alastair

By RUPERT SARGENT HOLLAND

Author of "The Count at Harvard," etc.

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CHAPTER VI.—(Continued.)

I followed his directions to the porch enclosed with glass, and found Miss Graham sitting there with an elderly woman who proved to be her aunt, Miss Corey. She presented me, and the elderly lady, after making a few comments on the awful night, withdrew. Still standing, I put my hand into my inner pocket and drew forth the box with the locket.

"When I went back to the ship this afternoon I found you had dropped the locket from your chain. Permit me to return it."

"Oh!" she said. "How good of you to bring it! I discovered it was gone and was afraid I might not be able to find it after the storm. Thank you so much, Mr. Selden."

I felt singularly cold and haughty, and seemed to detect a certain reserve also in her manner. The air of the Penguin Club was not conducive to informality. I had intended to call her attention to the fact that the locket was open when I came upon it, but could not bring myself to do so in the face of the chill that seemed to have settled down upon us.

"Won't you sit down and talk to me?" she said, but I shook my head.

"I must be getting back. The storm is getting worse every minute. The wood road will soon be a swollen river."

There came a growl of thunder and a flash of livid lightning. Miss Graham scarcely moved a muscle. "I love storms," she said, "but I don't blame you for wanting to get home as soon as you can. You must be soaked even in those clothes."

I looked at my rough attire, and then at the dainty white evening gown she wore, and laughed a little sharply at the contrast.

"It's lucky I don't often come to the club," I said. "They would probably warn me from the premises as a scare-crow of ill omen."

Rodney Islip came on to the porch, in evening dress, as though to emphasize my own incongruities.

"Will you dance, Barbara?" he said. "They're playing one of your favorite waltzes." Then he discovered me. "Hello, old chap!" said he. "How the deuce came you here? You don't mean to tell me you rode through the thick of this storm?"

Petty resentment got the better of me; I barely noticed him, and bowed to the girl.

"Don't let me keep you, Miss Graham. My mission is over. Good night."

She held out her hand; I barely touched it. I was at the door when Rodney spoke. "I say, old man, have you seen the evening papers? Terrible times in France, more trouble on the market; let me get you the news." He was so full of the stock exchange himself that he thought we must all be interested.

"No, I thank you," I answered, bluntly, and went out, scolding myself for my rudeness to this chap whose only fault lay in the fact that Miss Graham cared so much about him. I was to be still more scornful of this rudeness to him in the days to come.

I stood in the shadow while they passed me, then I stole back to the glass-covered porch and looked in for a moment at the dancing. I watched Islip lead Miss Graham on to the floor and float away with her, and I caught sight of the locket hanging on its chain about her throat. She looked very fair in her white gown, with her neck bare, and Islip looked very happy as he danced with her.

I looked again at my own rough, un-couth garb. This was no place for me. Suddenly I hated the Penguin Club and all it contained, all its civilization, all its clothes and dances. I would be off to my little hut in the dunes, with no one but Charles by, and he my very humble servant.

Nero was ready, and I swung myself up and plunged off again into the night. Flashes of lightning showed me the depth of the water in the woods. I ploughed my way homeward, caring nothing what happened, riding as though a legion of devils pursued.

I paid no attention to Charles' fire and the hot frog that he had ready. I flung off my sodden clothes and went to bed, finding my one satisfaction in the crashing guns of the thunder that seemed to bombard Alastair from the sky. It was certainly the night for any mysterious deed, I remember thinking as I fell asleep.

CHAPTER VII.

I must have been asleep for some time when a sudden sky-cracking crash of thunder brought me wide awake. An instinctive movement made me jump out of bed and go to the front window which looks out upon the sea. The blackness of the pit, and only the roar of the waves against the cliff! Then while I peered into the night came a flash of lightning, revealing the beach and the waves and the open sea with startling clearness. The scene was queer in the time it takes to tell it, but I had seen something—a long ship's boat, oar-blades flashing, half way between the light of the Shifting Shoal and Alastair. There followed blackness, and another crash of the sky's guns.

I waited, my eyes trained on the spot, and again came the flash, and now, out near the Shoal, I saw a long, black schooner, bare of canvas, pitching like mad in the mael of an angry sea. She was not on the Shoal—she might be some distance off it—but she was tasting a very nasty squall. Darkness, another peal, more lightning, and now I saw that the long boat, shooting furiously landward, was heading towards me, was making straight for the beach as fast as the waves and the oarsmen could drive her. Another lifting of night, and I saw a tall man—his seemed strangely, uncannily tall

—half standing, half stooping in the stern sheets, the ends of a cape flying past him in the gale.

When I could see again the long boat was making ready for the dash into the roaring surf. The oarsmen—there were some twelve—were laboring to keep the bow straight on. The tall man was standing up to see where he should go, and I caught sight of his white and storm-distorted face. I could not move, I could not utter a cry; I stood transfixed, scarce breathing, my body taut, waiting to see what would happen next.

Seconds passed in the darkness, then a flash, and I saw that the boat had weathered the worst of the surf, and was grinding on the shore. Four of the men had leaped out and were hauling hard at the sides; the steersman, gaunt and black, still clutched the tiller, half crouching, and was shouting. Succeeding darkness gave me a chance to wonder what manner of men were these making for Alastair, deserting their ship on the coast, and landing where there was no harbor, and only a shingle beach. Light again, and I stood dumfounded, transfixed, for I saw a little procession marching up the beach to the pines east of me: first the tall man in the long, black, flapping cloak, then two men bearing a good-sized box between them, and then two others, carrying what looked to me like shovels. Darkness, a terrible roar of thunder, and I pinched myself to make sure that I was awake.

I struck a match and held it behind my hand in order that no signal should be given. My watch told me the hour was half past one. I found that I was shivering from the cold, and slipped into my coat. At every flash of light I was back at the window, raking the beach with my eyes. I saw nothing but the grounded boat, with a number of men standing by, and far off the tossing hulk of the schooner.

I did not even dare step into the hall to call Charles, so afraid was I of losing something of this remarkable sight. Minutes passed. I kept my watch in my hand. Flash succeeded flash at greater intervals, but the scene was still the same: the boat evidently waiting, the farther reaches of the beach empty.

Half an hour had gone when my patience was rewarded. The same procession appeared from the pines, minus only—so far as I could see—the box that two of them had carried. There was a long interval of blackness, and then I saw the long boat plunging again through the breakers, and the crew struggling to keep her righted with their oars. I could see the boat was sharp at either end, and the men no novices at the dangerous work of beaching. They were gone, going back to their schooner, and I felt that the spirit of mystery was lifting from Alastair.

Still I waited, and in time the scene lighted, and I saw that the boat had left something: the tall, cloaked man still stood upon the beach, gazing seaward as though to catch the last of his mates. I remember that even in that brief instant I felt there was something strange about him, something fantastic, something out of keeping with the New England shore.

Darkness shut in, the roar of thunder lessened, the lightning passed; the outer world only sent me the deep, distant booming of the sea upon the cliff. I stumbled back to bed and pulled the clothes about me, full of wonder at what my eyes had seen.

I lay there for a long time, thinking, conjecturing what all this strange matter meant. Somehow, my quiet beach had been transformed; the space between the cliffs now shadowed forth a mystery, and yet, preposterous as the idea seemed, I felt in some way that I had always expected a remarkable something to happen, my dreams in some way to come true, for Alastair was no common place and was fit for some surprising history.

In time I dropped asleep, to dream of queer things.

CHAPTER VIII.

When I awoke in the morning I was more than half of the mind that I had dreamed of the lightning's singular pictures, or at least that, being suddenly startled from sound sleep and dazzled by successive flashes and stunned by the roar of thunder, my imagination had played some trick on me. Anything else seemed too remarkable to be believed. Yet I could not quite convince myself that I had not seen the tormented schooner, the landing on the beach of the long boat, the march into the pines, and the final picture of that tall, gaunt figure gazing seaward. I could not believe that my imagination or my dreams could be so vivid as my remembrance of those scenes.

I questioned Charles closely at breakfast as to how he had passed the night. It seemed that he had slept stolidly through all the uproar. Even had he not, he would probably have seen nothing, for his room was at the back of the house. The storm continued, though with lessened violence. After breakfast I ventured out, dressed for a wetting, and went first to the place where, as I remembered, the long boat had been beached. The waves had done away with all traces of the keel. Then I followed as nearly as I could the path which the strangers had taken to the pines; but the wind and rain had obliterated the footsteps, if there had ever been any there. I poked into the pines, only to be drenched by waterfalls for my pains. The mystery was as deep as ever when I finally desisted and went back to shelter.

After some thought, I determined to keep my secret to myself. Charles would respectfully listen to my statement, but without further evidence he would be

only too apt, taking the facts in conjunction with my mysterious ride to the club in the evening, to believe I had dreamed it all. What would a schooner's crew be doing on our lonely beach in the height of a midnight storm? A sensible man would naturally be inclined to doubt.

I settled down to work, and, shutting my mind both to the mystery and to Miss Graham, succeeded in getting a good deal done by night. The next day I passed in similar fashion, living in quiet comfort so long as the storm lasted.

The third day broke fair, and early in the morning I swept the sea and the beach with my binoculars. Never were sea and land more peaceful; the tempest appeared to have cleared the atmosphere and brought it to a new serenity. My work accomplished, I set out for the little river to the west of the cliff, to see how my catboat had weathered the gale. I found there was some bailing to be done, and then, called by a gentle breeze, I ran up sail and for an hour beat up the channel. The hot sun of noon sent me home, and I sat down to my mid-day dinner.

Charles had brought me papers and a note from the club. I ran through the papers first, to prove to myself how little I cared for the note, but at last I broke its seal.

"I am going to hold you to your invitation for supper in the Ship now that the storm is over. May we have it to-day about 6?"

That was all, without even a signature. I was in two minds as to what to do. I could not disappoint her without seeming more than churlish, without seeming myself down once and for all as no gentleman, and yet the sight of her note roused much of my sleeping resentment. If I went, I would at least show her that I could still play at her game.

I visited the larder and decided on a menu. Then I startled Charles half out of his senses, though to his credit he did not seem more than churlish, without seeming myself down once and for all as no gentleman, and yet the sight of her note roused much of my sleeping resentment. If I went, I would at least show her that I could still play at her game.

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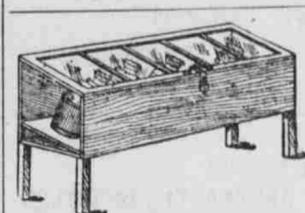


A Good Strainer Is Necessary.

Dirty-carrying bacteria once in the milk has done its harm, and no number of strainers of any kind yet invented can take out the pernicious germs: The best strainer for the average dairyman is a metal vessel, as shown in the cut, with a wire screen of 100 wires to the inch. A wire screen on a strainer should be replaced as soon as it becomes broken or rusted. The only satisfactory way to clean the screen of a strainer is with a small, stiff brush. The best kind of a strainer is one with the screen on the sides, rather than on the bottom, for then there is no undue pressure, which sometimes forces small particles of dirt through the screen. The screener cannot be counted upon to make up for previous carelessness in milking. Scientists say that a poor strainer may even in-



crease the bacterial content of milk. In using cheesecloth or thick linen for straining milk it should not only be boiled after use, but should then be wrapped in a paper and baked in the oven for thirty minutes and then kept wrapped up until time to use again.—Farm and Home.



SUNNING BOX FOR DAIRY UTENSILS.

Truck Patch and Orchard. When one of our Western farmers goes down East he is impressed with the fact that the truck patch, the orchard, the poultry yard and the dairy are relatively of vastly greater importance than in the country where broad fields of grain, alfalfa, spuds and sugar beets are in fashion and big bunches of beef cattle enliven the landscape. The great cities, some of them containing more people than the entire State of Colorado, must be fed from the farms. The products of the West are mainly such as may be readily transported over long distances. But milk, vegetables and small fruits are better, as well as cheaper, if produced near the place of consumption, and this line of agriculture has from the exigency of things become the industry of Eastern farmers.—Field and Farm.

Acidity and Butter Flavor.

It has been a generally accepted theory among teachers of art and writers on dairy subjects that the production of good butter necessitates the development of a certain amount of acid in the cream, for two reasons, to develop a desirable flavor and to improve the keeping quality. Recent investigations by the United States Department of Agriculture indicate, however, that butter made from Pasteurized sweet cream has better keeping qualities and remains free from objectionable flavors for a longer time than butter made from sour cream. If these facts are established it might seem that in the years to come only sweet cream would be bought for butter making.

Starting Indians as Farmers.

The Cheyenne River Agency will be busy for some time to come, as the distribution of live stock to Indians has commenced. To each head of a family is to be given twenty-three head of 2-year-old heifers, or in case he so desires a team of mares, a wagon and harness, agricultural implements, five cows and \$50 in cash, says the Pierre correspondent of the St. Paul Dispatch.

This distribution means that to any of the Indians who desire will be given a start of about \$1,000 in value either toward starting a herd of cattle or beginning farming operations without any expense.

The Country School.

The farmers in every school district are responsible for the school they produce, says Hoard's Dairyman. If they wanted better schoolhouses they could easily make them. If they wanted better teachers they could procure them by paying what they are worth. If they wanted the school to help make intelligent boys and girls who would understand the chemical terms that are used in farm literature, they could secure that also. If the country school is a bad failure, if it fails to make intelligent men of their boys, the farmers are alone to blame for it.

Rape as Stock Food.

For generations English farmers have made extensive use of dwarf Essex rape as a stock food. This plant may be described as a ruta-baga ruta to head. The seed is sown like ruta-baga turnips and cultivated, without thinning.

Commercial Egg Farm.

The production of market eggs is probably the safest branch of the poultry business, and the amount of capital invested need not be very large. In the New England States, New York and New Jersey there are many commercial egg farms, keeping from 500 to several thousand hens. The farmers, too, in this section of the country keep large flocks for eggs for the Eastern markets, and all seem to be doing well and making money. What we need in the South is more egg farms. Lands are cheap, material for housing and labor cheap, and, again, it is not necessary in the South to build such expensive houses. We have every advantage in the Southland for producing eggs at a less cost than our Northern brothers, and with quick and satisfactory railroad facilities to the Eastern markets the South should become the greatest poultry producing section of the entire country.

Other branches of the poultry industry may pay better than egg farming, but none are attended with so little worry and risk and are so certain of steady returns and a fair remuneration for the time and money expended.

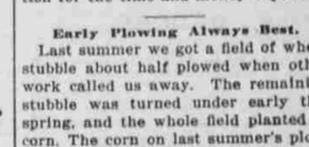
Early Plowing Always Best.

Last summer we got a field of wheat stubble about half plowed when other work called us away. The remaining stubble was turned under early this spring, and the whole field planted to corn. The corn on last summer's plowing is now several inches taller than that on the land plowed this spring, and is ranker and better in every other way.

There is a difference between summer and fall plowing, the difference being in favor of the summer plowing. Turning a green growth into the soil seems to be very much better than turning an equal growth under, but waiting until it has matured and dried before doing it. Here on this farm we aim to do all the plowing possible this summer. It may be hot work but the days are long and one does not need to hurry the teams. Not only is it better to get the work done as soon as possible for any crop to be sown this fall, but our experience proves to us that the earlier the better if corn is to be the next crop.—Farmer's Mail and Breeze.

A Hog Shelter.

The form of individual hoghouse shown in the illustration is 6 feet square on the ground and both doors are hinged so they will open and close readily; 12 foot boards make the side and roof. Use good soft pine flooring, as it is lighter and much easier to move when necessary than heavier lumber; four pieces 2x4 inch and 6 feet long are for sills; two pieces 2x4 inch and 6 feet long are for ridge and plate. The door in the roof can be opened when the sun shines. Sunshine is the best tonic known for little pigs in early spring, and the door



INDIVIDUAL HOGHOUSE.

is essential when the sow needs attention at pigging time as a means of entrance and, as is sometimes the case, a very handy exit.—Breeders' Gazette.

Feeding Manure to Plants.

Our people are perfectly satisfied that they can put character into milk and cream and butter by feeding the dairy cow a properly balanced ration and all that she will properly stand. The cow is simply a machine, the soil is simply a machine, and the cabbage head is a machine into which we can put a certain amount of material and turn out from it so many dollars. If you feed this vegetable matter, with high-grade nitrogenous manure you can make it pay.

Dairy Notes.

Butter methods are gradually gaining favor. Working to the best advantage means using brains. Cold and overfeeding will kill the young calf more quickly than anything else.

The man with a "dual purpose" dream usually wakes up to find that he is in the beef business. It's just about as hard to get a good heifer out of a scrub as it is to make water run up hill.

The creamery patron has his monthly cream checks while the other fellow has the store bill. The ordinary man may be judged by the company he keeps, but the dairy farmer is judged by the cows he keeps.

The best way to insure high prices for dairy products is to make them so good that the people can't help eating them.

FOREIGN-MADE CIGARETTES.

We Import Heavily Despite Our Large Domestic Production.

Though the United States is the greatest cigarette producing nation of the world, there are imported into this country every year more than \$3,000,000 worth of foreign made cigarettes, some Turkish and some Egyptian. Turkey is a large tobacco producing country, yielding 50,000 tons of tobacco every year, and the Turks, it is well known, are a nation of smokers.

The amount of tobacco raised in Egypt is inconsiderable, and yet Egyptian cigarettes are imported into this country in considerable amounts every year. The explanation of the matter is simple. It seems that the Greek tobacco crop last year was the largest Greece ever harvested—about 200,000,000 pounds. A brand of Greek tobacco is used for Egyptian cigarettes.

Why, it is asked, Egyptian? The answer is that Egyptian cigarettes are made by Greeks, because cigarette paper is too expensive for Greece, where it is a government monopoly. Thus the business has gone over to Egypt. The most famous cigarette makers of Egypt are Greeks.

A very large business in cigarette making has been established in Alexandria, and it is in the hands of Greeks, who import their tobacco from their own country and in turn ship it to foreign countries. England and the United States are the chief markets for Egyptian cigarettes, which are, in fact, Greek cigarettes, those bearing the little Turkish being imported from Turkey direct.

There has been a decided influx of foreigners who manufacture cigarettes into this country, during the last few years. Americans are inclined to like the taste of the foreign brand better than the domestic product and the manufacture of them is heavy.

ALPINE ADVENTURE.

In the northeastern corner of the Tyrol is the best skee-ground in Europe, writes W. A. Baillie-Grohman in "Tyrol." The region has many lofty peaks, which makes mountain climbing of interest. The author gives one of his adventures on a peak near the village of Kitzbuehel.

"On one of these peaks occurred to me many years ago a little adventure which gave me an opportunity of admiring the grand view rather longer than was pleasant.

"I was out stalking chamois, and having some unoccupied hours in the middle of the day, when stalking is practically useless, as the beasts are resting, I thought I would ascend one of those pinnacles upon which at that time few human beings, I suppose, had ever set foot.

"The very last bit was a smooth faced rock not more than twelve feet high, but absolutely unclimbable if unaided by rope, or another man, upon whose shoulders one could get, and so obtain a hand grip of the top, and thus draw oneself up. As I was alone I had recourse to a short length of rope I had in my rucksack. Making a slip-knot, I threw it upward till it gripped some projection. Then I drew myself up.

"While looking about me, an unfortunate movement of my legs, which were dangling over the brink as I sat, caused the rope to slip and fall down to the small ledge on which I had stood when flinging it upward. This ledge, or band of rock, was so comfortably narrow, not wider than thirty inches, and the abyss below was a perpendicular wall four or five church steeples in depth.

"At first it did not seem such a serious fix to be in. By letting myself drop to the ledge, my extended arm gripping the top, the distance between the soles of my feet and the ledge was not more than four feet or so—nothing to speak of if that yawning gulch had not been there and I had my boots on my feet. But having taken these off and left them below, together with my coat and rifle, I should have to drop on to sharp rocks barefooted, and hence would be very apt to lose my balance.

"The more I considered the position the more I funked that drop, and to make a long story short I stayed on that pinnacle two nights, until the morning of the third day, before my ger drove me to risk the drop, which I did in safety.

"How I got down the remainder of that descent, 'shinning' down chamois and creeping along narrow ledges, was a mystery to me after-ward, for I was faint with hunger and my knees trembled and shook under me. When I reached the first habitable place where I happened to be known, the peasant woman at the door hardly recognized me."

As He Remembered It. "Shadbolt, did you ever have a touch of anything like the appendicitis?" "Once. Have you forgotten, Dick, that when you were operated on for it you touched me for an even better friend?"—Chicago Tribune.

That Wheezy Sound. "Bay, inquired the boy next door of the little girl whose father suffers from asthma, 'what makes your father wheeze so?'" "I guess it's one of his inside gans playing!"—Puck.

Women are great talkers, but most of their victories over men can be traced to tears or smiles.

A woman isn't necessarily gifted because she has the gift of gab.