

# The Pirate of Alastair

By  
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## CHAPTER X.

Signs multiplied. When Charles and I returned to the house we found muddy footprints staining the dining-room floor and tracked across the kitchen. No intruders were to be seen, nor other evidence of their visit but the mere fact that the sanctity of my home—hitherto always left open to the winds—had been invaded, angered me. I bade Charles see that the house was securely locked hereafter whenever he left it in my absence.

Over the mantel in my den hung two muskets, out-of-date but still capable of boring holes in the atmosphere. My little armory held a shotgun, for use in the marshes, and two revolvers, whose only use heretofore had been for target practice. I took them from the drawer and looked them over; they were ready for work when needed.

I sat on the porch, and considered the situation. Something was about to happen, something—I could not tell what—that centered around this man who had mysteriously taken possession of the Ship and proposed to offer combat on the sands. What he was or who he was I could not guess; speculation in these lines brought me immediately into blind alleys; but there was no doubt that in situation and character he was certainly the direct descendant of a more adventurous age. I was unmistakably drawn to him. I could see him as he stood on the beach, buffeted by the storm, gazing at the men who were pulling away, and as he had stepped from the hatchway, hat in hand, bowing to Barbara Graham with the chivalrous manner of a cavalier, and again as he sat across the table from me, his slender hands ready to seize upon the pistols, his eyes, full of amusement and audacity, looking straight into mine. There was no doubt about it, the Ship belonged to him by right of inheritance, and his arrival had brought me strange tidings. I thought over the matter a long time before I went to bed.

Early the next morning I took my dip in the sea, and was returning, clad in a bath-robe, when I caught sight of a man peering at me from the pines. I waved my towel, and he disappeared. As I was finishing dressing, a little later, I stepped out upon my balcony, and I saw the same man, much nearer now, gazing intently at the cottage. I hate spies, so I spoke somewhat angrily.

"Hi, there! What do you want?" I cried, beckoning to him.

He came forward rather sheepishly, and touched his hat.

"I was only taking a look at your house, sir."

"And is that what you were doing some twenty minutes ago?"

"Yes, sir; that's all I was doing."

"Are you an architect?" I demanded.

He wore a plain blue suit, with an old straw hat, and might have been almost anything.

He smiled. "No, I was merely looking about to see what there was to see. There wasn't any harm meant."

"There isn't any harm done, but, then, there isn't anything to see. I'm not very partial to sight-seers, especially when they hide behind trees. If there's anything you want to ask me about, speak out."

He hesitated a moment. "A stranger—a tall man who speaks French—hasn't stopped at your house, has he?"

"No. Is he a pal of yours?"

The man grinned. "Not exactly. Well, I won't trouble you any more. Good morning."

At breakfast I again cautioned Charles to remember that he knew nothing.

I could do no work in my present state of mind, so I slung my field-glasses over my shoulder and went to call on Duponceau. He was sitting at the cabin table, breakfasting on the remains of our last night's supper. My heart smote me.

"Why didn't you let me know? I could have brought you breakfast."

"It matters little; yesterday I obtained some food from a farmer, but that is too dangerous." He smiled. "I'm quite used to doing with little."

I sat down while he finished breakfast. After that we walked the short length of the cabin, Duponceau asking me a great many questions about the coast and the country inland. I told him what I could, and he seemed satisfied. Then I decided to take my easel and paints and go up on the cliff above the Ship to paint. "I can keep a good lookout from there of the farther beach," I said. "One can sweep it thoroughly from the cliff with a pair of glasses."

I settled down on the cliff, and for half an hour forgot everything but the scene in front of me. At the end of that time I looked up the distant beach with my glasses. Some one was sitting there, half way up. I studied the figure and decided that it was a woman, no other than Barbara Graham.

Pride is a curious quality. Sometimes it will not even last overnight. My one desire now was to have a few words with Miss Graham, so I left my easel as it stood, and went towards her.

She was half lying, half sitting, in the soft sand, some of which she had moulded into a cushion for her back, and a book lay open at her side, but she was not

reading. She was gazing at the sea.

"What do you think of our pirate?" She started, looked round at me, sat up, and clasped her knees with her hands. I sat down on the sand beside her.

"I was just thinking of him. I was thinking that I like him tremendously."

"Naturally. He rescued you from a very disagreeable fellow."

"Yes," she agreed, without looking at me; "and a girl can never forget a debt of gratitude for that sort of thing."

"I must apologize," I said, "for my rudeness. Of course it was no business of mine whose portrait you had in your locket."

"Of course not," she agreed; "although it happens that was just the reason why I put it there."

"Put what there?"

"Put Rodney's portrait in the locket, and the locket where you would find it."

"You did? Why?"

"Oh, just to see what you would do—and you did it."

"Yes, I did," I admitted. "Then you're not—" but she interrupted by turning to me.

"Monsieur Duponceau was as polite as he could be, and laughed at all my protests on the way home, but I think he was running into some danger on my account. I believe he has come to Alastair to hide."

"I know he has."

"Oh, tell me all about it!" she begged.

"I know very little. He's an adventurer, and he's fled from Europe, and there are people very anxious to take him back, and he's going to live in the Ship. Moreover, it seems reasonably certain that there's going to be trouble."

"Is there?" she cried, half in excitement, half in delight. "Oh, let's help him!"

I found that I only needed this chance to avow myself openly.

"We will. I've decided to stand by him, whatever happens."

Barbara looked exceedingly delighted.

"If I were only a man!" she exclaimed.

"As it is, I'll have to do everything by proxy."

"You can help us a lot."

"How?"

"By coming to see us often and bringing us news of the outside world." I instantly identified myself with Duponceau. "That is, if it doesn't begin to look too dangerous," I added.

She turned to face the ocean again.

"I should like to do something to help him," she said, "because I like him. Suppose we go to see him now."

I picked up my easel and paints on the cliff, and we boarded the Ship.

At the foot of the cabin stairs Barbara saw the silver-mounted pistols blazing in the sun.

"Oh!" she said, looking at Duponceau, who stood in the door very tall and straight. "Shall you use those?"

"I should not be surprised," he answered gravely.

"Against whom? I haven't seen an enemy on the beach."

"You will see," he answered. "They will come—secretly—perhaps to-night."

"To-night!" she echoed. "And how many will there be?"

There was a grim little smile about his lips now. "I cannot tell; perhaps a dozen, possibly a score; that depends on how resolute a man they think me."

"I think you very resolute," she said soberly; "quite the bravest man I have ever seen."

Unquestionably there was no logic in this remark, and yet I couldn't but own that I agreed with Barbara.

"To-night," she mused, her eyes deep with the deliberation of a general. "How will you defend the Ship—one against a dozen?"

"You forget Charles and me," I put in.

"Will you fight, too?" she asked.

"Surely. I looked up my weapons this morning and put them in order. I will bring them on board this afternoon and add them to Monsieur Duponceau's."

"And you, too, believe in the enemy?" she inquired.

"Most certainly. I saw one of them this morning."

Barbara sat down on one of the chairs I had left. "To think," she said, "that Captain Kidd should come to life again! But where is the buried treasure?"

I thought of the chest I had seen carried into the woods on the night of the storm, but said nothing. When I glanced at Duponceau he was smiling at Barbara. "This is a very desperate matter for me," he said, "but even the most desperate affairs are brightened by a woman. You are my good angel, mademoiselle."

He said it in such a way that Barbara could not but be pleased.

"Thank you, monsieur; and what plans have you made for defense?"

Duponceau outlined his plans. First of all he would stay well hidden from sight; then if his enemies should find him, there were three points of attack: from the open sea, from the cliff above the causeway, and from the beach beyond the protecting circle of rocks. We studied each in turn, and planned how three men, well armed, could hold the Ship against a score. "I should like more

ammunition than I have," Duponceau confessed.

"There is plenty in my cottage," I told him.

"Let's get it now," cried Barbara, "and some of the guns."

We went to the cottage, and Barbara in her interest, forgot what she would have termed the proprieties, and entered and looked about my dining-room while I collected cartridges and pistols. She insisted on helping Charles put up a quantity of food to carry to the Ship. At last we started forth again, she with the provisions, I with a shotgun and two revolvers. Half way down the beach two men came out of the pines and walked down to meet us.

"Where are you going with those guns?" one of them, a surly faced chap demanded.

"What business is that of yours?" I asked.

He changed his tactics. "We're looking for a man who's reported to have landed somewhere on this beach a night or two ago."

"Yes," I said pleasantly, gazing absently at the sky.

"Well," went on the other, "where are you taking those guns?"

I looked at him angrily now, but before I could find words Barbara was speaking.

"If there is one thing I particularly dislike," she said, "it is curiosity. If you must know, we came out here to hunt sand-snipe, and we're just about to begin. That's all; you may go now," and she waved her hand towards the pines. The men were clearly surprised. They were more so when they saw the girl calmly sit down on the sand, motion me to do likewise, and proceed to load one of the revolvers. Shortly after, they withdrew, whispering to each other.

In order to disarm suspicion, we sat there some time, and I built miniature sand fortifications in order to teach Barbara the art of war.

"I wonder if I can learn to shoot?" she said presently. "If I meet many more like those, I shall be tempted to try."

I handed her a loaded pistol. "Aim at that rock out there," I said, pointing at one showing above the water.

She took aim, did not close her eyes, pulled the trigger. The report, sharp and clear, cut the silence of the beach like a knife. We saw the water splash where the bullet entered. A frightened gull screamed loudly away.

The little puff of smoke faded; all was still again.

Barbara looked at the revolver, then at me. Her lips were smiling, but her eyes were deep with excitement.

"The war has begun," I said. "That shot was to let the world know that Alastair is armed."

(To be continued.)

## WAS A TRIFLE SLOW.

### Train Schedule of a Certain Southern Railroad Beaten by Hog.

"For several years I have been a commuter on the Erie," said the sun-burned man, according to the New York Herald, "and I have joined in the general railery at the expense of that unique system. But never again. I have just come from Florida, where they have railroads compared with which the Erie is the personification of rapid transit. If you get off the main line of travel in Florida you are up against it good and plenty."

"I wanted to go from Tampa over to the east coast, and part of the itinerary took in a branch road from Orange City Junction to New Smyrna. The distance is twenty-seven miles. You leave Orange City Junction at 4:35 p. m., and if the train is on time it gets you to New Smyrna at 7:15. Only two hours and forty-seven minutes to come twenty-seven miles! That's all! Two trains a day are operated over this road—combination passenger and freight trains."

"There used to be an engineer, named Bill Rogers who ran this afternoon train. He is dead now. I understand the strenuous life was too much for him. Bill used to be greatly annoyed by the razorback hogs that roam at large through the country, branded just like cattle. There was one hog in particular that gave Bill a lot of trouble. Every evening he could be found lying comfortably between the rails at a point about two miles outside of New Smyrna, and Bill would have to climb down from his cab and pry the hog off with a crowbar. You can kill a negro down in that country and nothing is thought of it, but you mustn't kill a hog. If you do, you are liable to go to jail."

"Well, Bill had a grouch on one day, and when he saw the hog stretched out in the usual wallow he determined to defy the law. So, instead of stopping to pry the hog off the track, he opened up his throttle and started for the obstruction at full speed. Just as the engine was almost upon him the hog seemed to realize that something was wrong. Not waiting for the usual assistance, he got up, shook himself, and started down the track ahead of the engine. And I have the assurance of at least a dozen respectable witnesses that the hog beat the train into New Smyrna station by a fraction over three minutes!"

### An Assured Fact.

"Do you think that man who talks so much is really acquainted with his subject?"

"Well, there can be no doubt that he is on speaking terms with it."—Washington Star.



### Maraschino Cherries.

Pit the cherries and weigh them, saving all the juice. To every four pounds of fruit there must be two pounds of sugar and a cup of liquid. Enough juice should exude during the stoning process to furnish the liquid, but if not add a little water. Make a sirup of the sugar and water, set at the side of the range and bring to the boiling point. Take from the fire and, while still warm but not scalding hot, pour the sirup over the cherries. Set aside for half an hour, then put over the fire in a porcelain lined kettle and heat slowly. Boil for five minutes, take out the fruit with a skimmer, boil the sirup for twenty minutes, skimming off the scum as it rises and, just before taking from the fire, add a pint of Maraschino cordial for every four quarts of fruit. Pack the cherries in jars, fill each jar to overflowing with the liquid and seal.

### Citron Preserves.

Pare the fruit and cut it into slices about the size of a caramel, weigh the fruit and to each pound of it allow one-half pound of sugar. Put the citron on to cook in fresh water and boil until quite clear, remove carefully to a colander and drain. Wet the sugar with clear water and boil until reduced to a sirup, add to this sirup one lemon, sliced thin, and a piece of ginger root for every pound of sugar that has been used. Put the citron into the sirup and boil together for twenty minutes. Fill jars with the fruit, pour in the sirup and seal.

### Boiled Raisin Cake.

Cover one and a half cups of raisins (seeded) with boiling water and simmer twenty minutes. Cream three-quarters of a cup of sugar with a quarter of a cup of butter, and add one and one-half cups of flour, half a cup of the raisin water and one egg beaten light, but not separated. One teaspoonful of soda should be sifted with the flour. Season with one teaspoonful each of nutmeg and cinnamon, add the raisins, well dredged with flour and bake one-half hour. An excellent cake, cheap, easily made, and with a flavor of its own.

### Watermelon Pickle.

Use one melon. Cut out heart, peel rind, cut into squares and soak overnight in strong salt water. Put one quart vinegar on to boil, stir in five coffee cups sugar, one teaspoonful cloves and five sticks of cinnamon, one grated nutmeg and one-half lemon. Add rind that has been rinsed in cold water. Boil ten minutes, put in jars. Not necessary to seal.

### Cooking New Potatoes.

Place them in boiling water with two or three sprigs of mint. When they are cooked and drained pour over them some melted butter. The mint adds a more delicious flavor. New potatoes should have the skins removed by rubbing them with a brush. When rubbed they will be white and smooth.

### Fruit Cookies.

Cream one cup of butter with one and a half cups of sugar, add three beaten eggs, a level teaspoonful of baking soda dissolved in two table-spoonfuls of sweet milk and, last of all, stir in a cup of chopped raisins that have been rolled in flour. Mix, roll out and bake in a hot oven.

### Filling for Cake.

One cup of sugar, four table-spoonfuls of water boiled till clear. Stir into the beaten white of one egg quickly and add one-half cup seeded and chopped fine raisins and one-half cup chopped hickory nuts or English walnut meats.

### Loosening Cakes from the Pan.

After baking a cake and if it sticks to the pan, the easiest way to take it out without breaking it is to wet a clean cloth and wrap around the pan. It will come out all together.

### Curried Eggs.

Four eggs, one ounce of butter, one ounce of chopped onion, half an ounce of flour, one gill of milk and water, one teaspoonful of curry powder, the juice of half a lemon, boiled rice.

### To Improve Coffee.

Add to the pot of coffee when ready to serve a half teaspoon of vanilla and a pinch of baking soda the size of a bean. The soda destroys the sour taste caused by the free acid in the coffee.

### Short Suggestions.

Keep a bag of sulphur in the bird cage to drive away lice in hot weather.

Ice cream becomes butter if it is not allowed to chill before the can is turned in the ice.

To preserve pineapple, allow only three-quarters of a pound of sugar to each pound of pineapple

## THE RIVALS.

Miss Caroline won, but she was a "Square Sport."

Miss Caroline and Miss Matilda Barge, of Old Hentley, were notable workers for church fairs. They desired earnestly to help in a good work; but, also, they so arranged their labors as to add undoubted zest to the monotony of their quiet lives. Always each sister selected a special article, of the same value as the other's choice, of which she made as many as she could. Then it was a race to see who should make the most and earn the most.

At one fair, for which Miss Caroline was making clover-leaf penwipers and Miss Matilda tomato pincushions, the finish was unusually exciting. The day before the event Miss Caroline, who was slightly the swifter needlewoman, had thirteen penwipers to her credit, and Miss Matilda was but half a pincushion behind. Then the telephone rang; Miss Caroline answered it.

On returning, her first glance showed her Miss Matilda just biting off the final thread which attached a green velvet stem to a scarlet satin fruit. Miss Caroline resolutely caught up the materials for a new clover-leaf—and missed her spectacles. She hunted through her work basket, then through the room, then through the house, in growing exasperation and misery.

A hasty look during her wanderings showed another tomato ripening rapidly under Matilda's fingers. Her search grew into nervous frenzy; but still the glasses were not to be found.

Then, peering wildly for the third time under a big four-post bed from one side, a despairing Caroline met the eyes of an intent Matilda, crawling sympathetically on the other.

"You go straight back to work, Matilda!" she commanded, sharply. "This is too ridiculous! I can find my own spectacles, I should hope!"

But she could not; it was Matilda who found them, nearly two hours later, clinging to a curtain. Two exhausted sisters hurriedly resumed work in the waning afternoon, and by sundown Caroline had caught up with Matilda, and passed her.

When the receiving committee counted the fourteen pincushions and fifteen penwipers, they smiled, and somebody said, "Miss Caroline is ahead, as usual."

"No," said the chairman, "an order has been left for an extra pincushion for the parsonage, to be made after the fair. That makes them even; and won't Miss Matilda be pleased! You know she lost two hours at the last minute, too, helping Miss Caroline find her spectacles—"

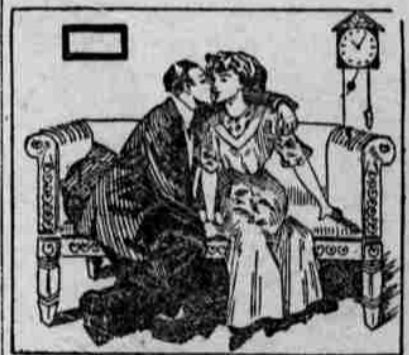
The youngest member nodded appreciatively. "Then that's why Miss Caroline gave me the order, and the pincushion to be sent anonymously—the dear, queer, square old thing! Good sport, Miss Caroline!"

"My dear!" protested the chairman, with a shocked laugh. "But—well, really, I suppose she is. Don't forget to put that extra tomato on the order list."—Youth's Companion.

### Familiar Saying.



From hand



To mouth.

### Shakespeare Vindicated.

"I think that Shakespeare was wrong."

"As to how?"

"Does anyone ever really have greatness thrust upon him?"

"It often happens. There's the vice presidency, you know."—Louisville Courier-Journal.

### Small World.

Bore—and I have always regarded it as a somewhat singular circumstance that whereas my father was born in India, and my mother in Belfast, I myself was born in London.

She (doing her best)—Re-a-a-a-ly! How strange you should all have met.

### Way to Improve.

It is impossible to make your conduct perfect, but it is easy to make it better than it has been.—Atchison Globe.