

The Pirate of Alastair

By
RUPERT SARGENT
HOLLAND

Author of "The Count at Harvard," etc.

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CHAPTER XI.

It was of the first importance that Monsieur Duponceau should keep himself well hid, and to this end he spent his days in the cabin of the ship, coming out only when night had fallen, and then most circumspectly. There were not the same reasons for concealment in his case, however, so I boarded the ship soon after I left Barbara that day and set up my easel as an excuse in case any chance observers should look across the beach and see me. This also gave me the chance to keep a careful lookout.

It was perhaps 4 o'clock when, as I sat on the gunwale of the ship, sunning myself and leisurely smoking a pipe, I saw Charles approaching with a pitcher and glasses.

"The afternoon being so warm, I thought that you and the other gentleman might be wanting something cool to drink, sir," he explained, when he had come on board; "so I made a pitcher of claret cup."

"Much obliged to you, Charles. Take it down to the cabin, where it'll keep cool until we want it."

Charles disappeared with the clinking pitcher. When he returned I spoke again.

"What is Monsieur Duponceau doing?" "He is lying in one of the bunks, sir, with his eyes wide open, and when he sees me, he says, sort of pleasant-like, 'You're trying to make me think I'm back in Poree, but unfortunately the setting isn't the same!'"

"I don't expect to be much at home for some time, Charles. I'm going to help Monsieur Duponceau here. We may need you suddenly, so keep an eye on the broken mast, and if you see a lamp or a flag come over at once. Otherwise, keep mum."

"Yes, Mr. Felix, I've been pestered all day with some of them skulking fellows that want to know my business. May I land 'em one if they interfere?"

"You man land 'em one whenever you feel like it; only, land so hard that there won't be any come-back."

"Yes, I will, sir," and Charles made so bold as to grin. I could see that the spirit of fight was taking hold of him also.

I went back to my pipe and my drowsy survey of the sea. There was little wind, and the oily rollers swept calmly in with a curiously machine-like rhythm. Far out the funnel of a south-bound steamer sent a black ribbon across the sky; to the west of the Shifting Shoal a sloop was lying to, waiting for the evening breeze. I half dozed, thinking what a peaceful scene it was.

Half an hour later I heard Duponceau call my name from the cabin stairs.

"It's getting intolerably warm down here; might it not be possible for me to come on deck if I kept in the shadow of the gunwale?"

I looked the situation over, and decided that no one could possibly see a man who hid at the side of the ship, keeping low down by the rail. I advised Duponceau of this, and then told him the moment, the beach being clear, he might dart from the hatchway, and scurry across to shelter. This he did, and, with a sigh of thankfulness at having reached fresh outer air, he stretched himself in the shadow, and I sat opposite, facing him and watching the shore.

"I've been sleeping," Duponceau said, "so that I could stand watch to-night. What a beautiful world! But it's not like France; nothing is like France. And to think I may not see it again!"

"Why?" I asked.

"Because—" He hesitated. "Because I have enemies who would shut me away from the sea and the sky and the sun, and so I have to come to some lonely corner of the New World, and seek refuge. Ah, this new world of yours! It is good for the young, but not for those who have grown gray in the Old. There is only one world for them and one land for me—I love it as I might love a woman."

Foreigners have the habit of sentiment; it did not seem strange to me to listen to the thoughts of an exile spoken in a voice that was musically clear. The frankness of the man cleared away all barriers.

Suddenly looking up, I caught sight of Barbara coming towards us by the path behind the cliff. She carried a package under her arm. As I watched her descend carefully, I saw the two men that I had met in the morning come out of the pines and approach her. As she saw them appear, Barbara involuntarily glanced over to the ship, and the men instantly turned their eyes in the same direction, and so caught sight of me.

"Sit still and keep very low," I whispered to Duponceau, under cover of my pipe.

Barbara took a step forward.

"Not so fast. Where are you going?" demanded the surly faced chap.

"I am going—where I choose," she answered, and took another step.

"You're not going out to that ship," he stated. "There's some one hiding here we mean to find."

I caught his words and jumped to my feet.

"What's the trouble? Miss Graham,

won't you come on board?"

I was careful to lean directly over Duponceau, in order to shield him better.

"We'll all three come," announced the man.

I was put out; it would be impossible for Duponceau to crawl from the shelter of the gunwale to the cabin now without being seen. I temporized.

"Well," said I, "suppose—"

"Come on," said the leader to Barbara; "you were very anxious before." He stepped forward.

"Hold up!" I cried, pretending to get angry. "I didn't ask you to come over here. It happens that I'm painting, and don't wish to be disturbed."

The other man laughed. "We won't hurt your painting. I've never been over that boat, and she looks interesting."

Duponceau was still crouching low under me. It was time for me to be emphatic.

"The ship is mine. I bought it when I bought my cottage. I don't want you on board, and if you try to come on I shall certainly keep you off."

Now Barbara spoke up. "If all this contending is over me," she said, "I'll give up my visit to-day. Some other day will do as well, Mr. Seldon. Good-afternoon," and she started away.

"Not so fast!" The surly faced man was beside her, had his hand on her arm. "You will either go with us, miss, or he gives us a chance to search that boat."

I could scarcely keep Duponceau crouching longer; I could feel that his fingers were itching for one of his revolvers.

"Stop!" called a voice from the cliff, and I saw Rodney Islip standing there. He took in at a flash that Barbara was in trouble, and came leaping to her aid. "What the devil's this? Take your hand away!" and he raised his walking-stick in the man's face. The latter, startled at Islip's violence, dropped Barbara's arm and fell back.

"Now, what do you fellows want here?" demanded Islip. "I've a mind to thrash you both for touching a lady."

"We're going on board that boat," said the man; then he hesitated. "Od' we'll take the lady with us."

"Oh, you will?" said Islip.

"Yes," said the leader, his confidence returned; "and I don't think you'll stop us."

Rodney and he squared. The fight would be two to one; Barbara was trembling.

"Now," I cried, and looked along my leveled pistol, "if it's come to fighting, we'll all be in the fight. Islip, bring Miss Graham on the boat. There's a bullet waiting for the man who stops you."

The men fell back, hesitating, and seizing advantage of the moment, Rodney took Barbara's hand and led her over the causeway. They came up the ladder and on board.

"That's all!" I cried to the men on shore. "You can go!"

I had the drop on them, and their hands did not even seek their pockets as they turned and went into the woods. But I knew that they were as sure of Duponceau's presence as if they had seen him on board.

"Well," said Islip, as he saw the strange figure of the Frenchman hidden behind the bulwark, "here's a pretty kettle of fish! So there is a mystery, and we're carrying guns."

"My dear lady," said Duponceau, rising, "I shall never forgive myself for causing you such distress."

But Barbara was not distressed; instead, she looked very much pleased.

I motioned Duponceau to go below to the cabin, and the others followed him there. I sat at the top of the steps, where I could both join in the conversation and watch the shore.

Barbara placed her package on the table. "I thought I was only bringing you provisions," said she, "but instead I've brought you a recruit. Mr. Islip, this is Monsieur Duponceau," and she added lightly, "the pirate of Alastair."

Islip shook hands. "So you're in on this, too, are you, Seldon?" he called up to me. "All arrayed against the blood-hounds, I take it? Well, whatever the game is, count me in on it. I'll feel more as though I were back in little old New York."

"Good!" cried Barbara. "Now you've four men to man the ship, counting Charles, and a spy at the club to bring you news and food."

She caught sight of the pitcher of claret and poured out four glasses. Then she raised one to her lips.

"I pledge myself in the defense of Monsieur Duponceau, who came out of the sea and found the land inhospitable!" she cried. "Drink with me!"

We drained our glasses.

"That's the oath of fidelity," she said, looking at Islip and me, and I think she knew she could trust us both to the end of the adventure.

The sun was dropping low, and Barbara prepared to leave the ship. Islip started to join her.

"No," she said; "I'd rather go alone. No one will stop me now. You must stay here and watch during the night."

He bowed, but insisted upon escorting

her ashore and setting her on the path homeward. Then he came back to the ship.

"It's curious," he remarked to me as we sat alone on deck, "but I don't feel as though I were living in the twentieth century any longer. It seems as if I'd gone back to about the sixteenth. I'm just thirsting for a revolver and a chance to get in a fight. I didn't know I was really so much of a savage."

"Same here," I answered. "I've always longed to have a fight on this ship. Then there's something about this man I can't resist."

When it fell dark we supped on the food Barbara had brought, and then we divided up the watch for the night.

CHAPTER XII.

We were not yet sufficiently good sailors to drop to sleep in the stuffy bunks below when it was not our turn on watch. Rodney tried it, but soon came up on deck, announcing that he never had felt more wide awake in his life and believed he could last through the night without a wink. So we three busied ourselves making the ship snug, and Rodney in addition in vain trying to interrogate Duponceau.

There was no doubt but that in the direction of the beach we were practically impregnable. Invaders would first have to climb the rocks and then splash through the water, or, if they came by the causeway, pass the narrow defile at the base of the cliff. In either case we would have ample chance to defend ourselves, and even if they succeeded in reaching the ship's side we would have the advantage of being six feet above them. I pulled in the rope ladder that still hung over the side and stowed it away in a cupboard in the cabin. When we had done everything precaution could suggest, we three gathered on the forward deck and sat with our backs to the sea, facing the shore.

The night was clear and cool; there was little sound beyond the regular throbbing of the waves on the beach and the occasional distant call of a bittern from the marshes up-river. As I listened to the talk of the other two, I realized that Rodney was slipping under that same indescribable fascination of Duponceau's as readily as I had done.

"But I say," put in Islip at last, "do you mean to tell me that you came all the way over here without any luggage, that you let those chaps land you just as you were, without anything else?"

"Without anything else save a little box of papers"—Duponceau smiled—"and each paper worth many thousand times its weight in gold."

"Why," said Islip, "what kind of securities were those?"

"See how I trust you," returned the other. "We hid the box in the ground back in the woods, between two roots of a hemlock, one pointing south by the compass, the other west. The hemlock is ten paces west of a scarred fir that was stripped of its sea branches by lightning."

"I know the tree," said I.

Rodney rubbed his hands joyfully. "Ye gods and little fishes, think of it! Ever since I was a boy I've wanted to have my hand in a buried treasure. We used to hide tin cans in the back yard, just to dig them up again. And now to think that I've come across a real treasure! What would those other boys say?"

"Here's one of them now," I put in. "I used to do the very same thing myself."

Duponceau was smiling again. "You can both take it lightly," he said, "because you do not know. Many men, aye, many governments, would give almost anything for a chance at that box out there."

"Better and better. The higher the interest, the more sport for us," said Rodney. "I've always wanted to be mixed up in an international affray. I'm more than ever glad I decided to come to the Penguin, for more reasons than one," and he looked across slyly at me.

I could not help liking him, even if he was in love with Barbara; he was so open and frank about everything.

After a time Duponceau went below for a two hours' nap, and Islip and I sat on deck, smoking and chatting. About midnight the air grew colder, and we walked to warm ourselves.

"Do you think," said Rodney, finally, "that we might go on a hunt for that tree? My eyes are fairly itching to follow that trail, and we might reconnoitre the enemy's position you know. We could make tracks back to the ship if there was any need."

"Wait till Duponceau comes up, and we'll ask him," I suggested.

In time, at the end of his midnight nap, Duponceau came on deck, and gave us permission to take a survey of the shore. "If I need you," he said, "I'll make the call of the osprey—listen!" and he sent forth a long, quavering cry that was echoed back to us, from cliff and beach.

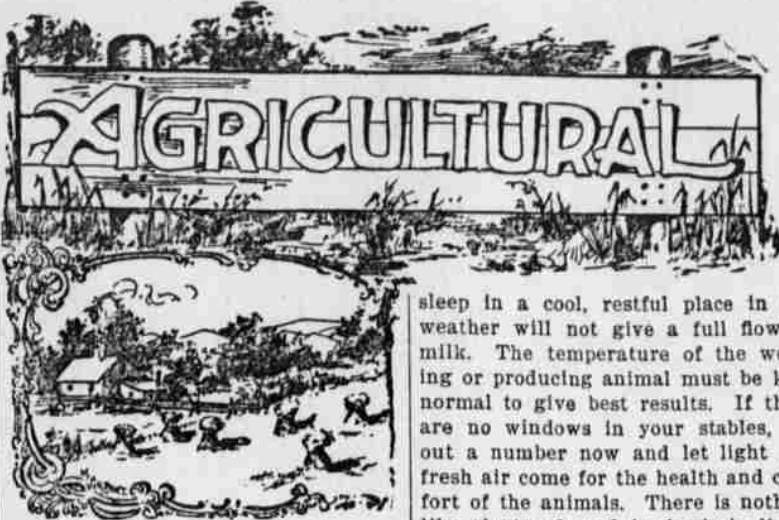
Armed with revolvers, Rodney and I slipped out of the ship, forded the lake, and, keeping as close as we could to the rocks, for the night was bright with stars, headed towards the pines.

We said not a word, but tip-toe, I leading, he following, we skirted the woods until we came to the scarred fir. There I turned to look back; the beach lay a bright silver field sloping to the sea, which rippled like quicksilver beneath the stars. The beach was empty as the desert, and still, save for the lapping waves.

"Ten paces to the east," whispered Rodney, and, with infinite caution, we tiptoed through the pines. The trees are very thick there; we felt as if ploughing into an unknown screen. We came to the hemlock, and crouched on the sea side of it, some instinct telling us that there was need of caution. On hands and knees I crawled a foot farther, and beheld a white tent, its guide-ropes running to the hemlock's roots. Islip pulled himself up beside me.

(To be continued.)

Centipedes are eaten in some parts of South America.



Sanitary Milk Pails.

Much the larger proportion of milk is carried in wide-topped, uncovered pails from the cow to the strainer, a distance of 25 to 100 feet, across a cowyard, under a hay loft, or past a manure pile, thus exposing a large surface of warm milk, which absorbs all kinds of undesirable odors and collects dirt and dust.

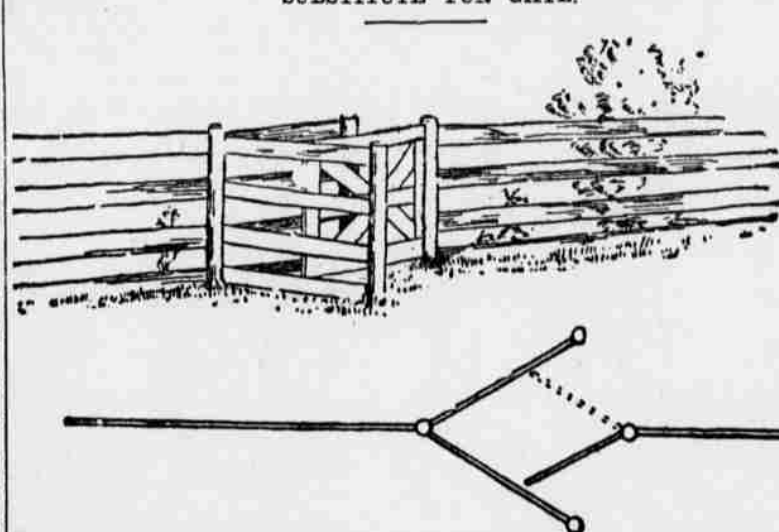
Galvanized iron is something used for milk pails, but it is not best, for the rough surfaces afford hiding places for bacteria. Wooden vessels should not be used for holding milk, for it is almost impossible to keep them clean. Besides imparting a me-



talic flavor to milk, rusty tinware is objectionable because it is impossible to keep it clean. Good tin is the only practicable material for milk vessels, and it must be kept shiny and bright.

The most important thing in producing milk is to keep the dirt out. This can only be done by carefully grooming the cows and by using a sanitary pail, two of which are shown here. There are several types of these pails, but they all have the same principle. There is a cover with a small opening, under which is fastened a cheesecloth strainer. The one with

SUBSTITUTE FOR GATE.



There are places where a common everyday gate is an utter nuisance and where a turnstile or some other gate substitute or contrivance is particularly convenient and welcome. With the arrangement herewith illustrated the gateway is always closed to animals, but men may pass through it without difficulty. The accompanying drawing will give a clear idea of the plan. The sketch is made to represent a very small gate, but to answer all purposes the wing panels and gate perhaps should be half a rod in length.

the spout strains the milk as it enters the pail, and also as it is poured out.—Farm and Home.

Saw Rats Freight an Egg.

After an investigation covering two weeks, William Krohbach of Danby, Pa., has learned the reason he has been receiving only two or three eggs a day from his flock of sixty hens, and incidentally found out something about the inventive capacity of rats.

One morning he heard a noise in his chicken house, and quietly making his way there, he saw two big rats in the act of making away with a newly-laid egg. One of the rodents was lying flat on its back with the egg tightly clutched in its four paws, while the other rat was dragging it along by the tail. Krohbach was so impressed by the sight that he watched the rodents for three minutes, during which time they carried the egg for twenty yards along the fence until they came to a hole in the ground, into which they took the egg. One of the rats became tired while carrying the egg and changed places with its fellow.

Ventilating Stables.

Horses and cows are in the stable at night for rest. When the weather is warm the atmosphere in close confinement becomes very warm and oppressive, so much so that the animals become very uncomfortable, and hence fall to get proper rest. The horse that does not get proper rest is not in a good condition for heavy work the following day, and the cow that does not

sleep in a cool, restful place in hot weather will not give a full flow of milk. The temperature of the working or producing animal must be kept normal to give best results. If there are no windows in your stables, cut out a number now and let light and fresh air come for the health and comfort of the animals. There is nothing like plenty of good fresh air in living and sleeping rooms, whether the rooms be for the occupancy of man or of animals. This holds good for both winter and summer.

Spraying Experiments.

Experiments with fungicides upon potatoes have been carried on at the Vermont Experiment Station for eighteen years. Experiments made recently were designed particularly to determine the relative gain from spraying potatoes with bordeaux mixture and paris green, comparing the results from two, three and four applications. Two applications of bordeaux mixture made in August proved less efficient in checking the flea beetle and early blight than where other applications were made, particularly the spraying made in early July. The increase in marketable tubers for the sprayed over the unsprayed lots varies from 52 to 172 per cent.

Drinking Water for Fowls.

Scummy drinking vessels cause sickness. They should be scalded out every now and then. Filthy water drunk daily is very irritating to the bowels. Water is the principal constituent of the flesh, bones, feathers and eggs of fowls, and necessarily large quantities of it is consumed daily. Therefore, it should be seen that the water supply is not only pure, but fresh.

Thistle as Stock Food.

Stock of all kinds greatly relish the plants of the Russian thistle, which has fairly jumped out of the ground since the rains, and our Eastern plains

are verdant with it. Why not make hay of it? So palatable is the hay to cattle that they leave green pasture and break through fences to devour this obnoxious and outlawed weed if it is cut and stacked before the reddish tinge comes on to the plant, which occurs about the middle of July. Many of our Colorado people have used Russian thistle for forage for several years, and some of them say that it is as good as alfalfa. In a recent analysis the Russian thistle assayed as follows: Protein, 17.95; ether extract, 3.61; ash, 21.98; crude fiber, 20.14, and carbohydrates, 36.32. All over Eastern Colorado there is a lamentable shortage of protein feed-stuff. Corn, corn stalks, straw, millet, Kaffir and prairie hay are all long on starchy matter, but short on protein. In the thistle we have a crop that grows on the arid reaches which will not only yield a large amount of forage, but a very palatable one at that, and a crop that is rich in the two elements in which others are deficient.—Field and Farm.

Bordeaux Mixture.

The Bordeaux mixture is the proper remedy to use for all fungous troubles, viz., mildew and rust of beans; potato and tomato rot and leaf-blight; melon and cucumber diseases; celery leaf-blight and rust, etc. The half-strength mixture (two pounds copper sulphate, two pounds quicklime, fifty gallons of water) is strong enough to use in the vegetable garden, except for potatoes