

THE IRON PIRATE

A Plain Tale of Strange
Happenings on the Sea

By MAX PEMBERTON

CHAPTER XI.—(Continued.)

"We must act now," said Roderick, "before they miss their man. They've stopped the engines, and we shall drop behind the others. There's only one chance, and that is to surprise them. Let's rush it, and take the odds."

"If I went," said Mary, "what could they do to me? I'm going now; while I'm talking to them they won't be looking for you."

She ran up the companion-way, standing at the top; while we cocked our pistols and I crept after her. Then we lay flat to the deck, as she ran noiselessly amidships, and into the very center of the five men. To our astonishment, they gave a great hovel of terror at the sight of her—for she seemed but a thing of shadow hovering upon the ship—and bolted headlong forward; while we rushed in a body to the hurricane deck and faced Paolo. He turned very white. Dan served him as the other, and bit him with his pistol, so that he rolled senseless off the narrow bridge, and we heard the thud of his head against the iron of the engine room hatch. He had scarce fallen when Mary, with the laugh still upon her lips, reeled at the sight of him, and fell fainting in my arms.

The skipper got the whole situation at the first look. He came to us with a couple of rifles. We were now all crouching together by the wheel amidships, for Mary had recovered. By the full moon we saw dark shadows across the hatch. The men were behind the galley. The skipper halted them.

"You, Karl Williams—are you coming out now, for me to flog you, or will you swing at New York? You've got a couple of planks between you and eternity. I'm going to fire through that alley."

He raised his rifle at the word, and let go straight at the corner of the light wood erection. A dull groan followed, and by the streak on the deck I saw one man fall forward; his blood ran in a thick stream out to the top of the hatchway, and then ran back as the ship heaved to the seas.

"There's one down amongst you," said the skipper; "that's the beginning of it; I'm going to blow that shanty to pieces, and you with it."

He raised his rifle, but as he did so one of them answered for the first time with his revolver, and the bullet sang above our heads. The skipper's shot was quick in reply; and the wood of the shanty flew in splinters as the bullet shivered it. A second man sprang to his feet with a shout, and then fell across the deck, lying full to be seen in the moonlight.

"That's two of you," continued the skipper, as rain as ever he was in Paris-mouth harbor; "we'll make it three for luck." But at the suggestion they all made a run forward, and lay flat right out by the cabin. There we could hear their hissing like children.

They fired three shots as we rushed on them; but the butt ends of the two muskets did the rest. Three of them went down straight as felled poplars. The others fell upon their knees and implored mercy; and they got it, but not until the skipper, who now seemed roused to all the fury of great anger, set to kicking them lustily, and with no discrimination.

We had the other hands up by this. They got them below at the first break of dawn, and the dead they covered while Paolo, who lay groaning, we carried to a cabin in the saloon, and did for his broken head that which our elementary knowledge of surgery permitted us.

As the day brought light upon the rising sea, I looked to the far horizon, but the rolling crests of an empty waste met my gaze. Again we were alone. The night's work had lost us the welcome company.

CHAPTER XII.

It was near noon when we had buried the two stokers shot by the skipper, and more on in the afternoon before the decks were made straight, and the traces of the scuffle quite obliterated. But Paolo lay all day in a delirium, and Mary went in and out, bearing a gentle hand to the wounded, who alternately cried with the pain of it, and begged grace for their insanity. After the hour of lunch the skipper called Roderick and me into the cabin.

"One thing is clear," he said; "you've brought me on more than a pleasure trip, and while I don't complain, it will be necessary at New York for me to know something more—or, maybe to leave this ship. Last night's work must be made plain, of course; and this second officer of yours must stand by his trial. The men I would willingly let go, for they're no more than lubberly fools whose heads have been turned. But one thing I now make bold to claim—I take this yacht straight from here to Sandy Hook; and we poke our noses into no business on the way."

"That's quite right," I said; "there's no reason now why we shouldn't go straight on—if we don't meet with anyone to ask questions on the way."

We all went out on deck after we had agreed to let him have his will. We found the first officer on the bridge, looking away to the southeast, at the black hull of a steamer. I noticed that she steamed at a fearful speed, and she showed no smoke from her funnels.

"Skipper," I said, "will you look at that hull? Isn't the boat making uncommon headway?"

"You're right. She's going more than twenty knots. I've seen that ship before," he said.

"Where?" asked Roderick laconically.

"Five days ago, when she fired a shell into the Ocean King."

"In that case," said I, "there isn't much doubt about her intentions; she's chasing us."

"That may or may not be," he replied, as he raised his glass again; "but she's the same ship, I'll wager my life. Look at the rake of her—and the lubbers, they've left some of their bright metal showing amidships!"

He indicated the deck house by the bridge, where my glass showed me a shining spot in the cloak of black, for the sun fell upon the place, and reflected from it as from a mirror of gold. There was no longer any doubt; we were pursued by the nameless ship.

"What are you going to do, skipper?" asked Roderick, as foam fell upon the three of us; and we stood together, each man afraid to tell the others all he thought.

"What am I going to do?" said he. "I'm going to see the boats cleared, and all hands in the stoke-hole that have the right there!" and then he sang out, "Stand by!" and the men swarmed up from below, and heard the order to clear the boats.

They had all the grit of the old seadogs in them. The thought of a brush-up put dash and daring into them; they had the boats cleared, the water barrels filled, and the life-belts free, with an activity that was remarkable. Then they stood to watch the oncoming of the nameless ship; and when we hoisted our ensign they burst again into a hoarse roar of applause which rolled across the water waste, and must have sounded as a vaunting mockery to the men behind the walls of metal. But they answered us in turn, running up an ensign, and a cry came from all of us as we saw its color, for it was the blue saltire on a white ground.

"Russian, or I'm blind," said the skipper, for the nameless ship, which five days ago showed her heels under the Chilian mask, now made straight towards us in Russian guise.

I turned my eyes away to the crimson arch which marked the sun's decline; I looked again to the east, whence black harbingers of night hung low upon the darkened sea; I searched the horizon in every quarter, but it lay barren of ships, and soon the last light would leave us, and with the ebb of day there was no security against an enemy whose intentions were no longer disguised. I say no longer disguised. The skipper pointed to the mast on the nameless ship, where the Russian ensign had hung ten minutes before. It was there no longer; the black flag took its place.

"Pirates!" said the skipper; and then he whistled long and loud and shrilly as a man who has solved a sum. "Gentlemen, I said I would resign this ship at New York; with your permission I will withdraw that. I will sail with you wherever you go."

He shook his hands heartily, as though the discovery of our purpose had unshrouded his mind. But we had no time for full understanding, for at that moment the air itself seemed torn apart by a great concussion, and a shell burst in the water no more than fifty yards ahead of us. Old Dan fired his gun into the air with a great shout. Yet we knew that all this was the cheapest bravado; and when the skipper touched the bell to stop our engines, I was sure that he was wise.

The great vessel rode still some quarter of a mile away from us; but the glass showed me the men upon her decks, and conspicuous amongst them I saw the form of Captain Black standing by the steam steering gear. Soon their launch was making for us. The boat came so near that I could see the faces in it; and three of the five I recognized, for I had seen them in Paris. The man who was in command was the fellow "Roaring John"; and when he was within hail he stood and bawled:

"What ship?"

"My ship!" roared back the skipper, again looking at the mist-clouds, and my heart gave a bound when I read his purpose; we were drifting into them.

"And who may you be?" bawled the fellow again, growing more insolent with every advance.

"I'm one that'll give you the best hiding you ever had, if you'll step up here a minute!" yelled the skipper. "You're coming aboard, are you? And which of you shall I have the pleasure of kicking first?"

"Oh, you're funny, ain't you, and pretty with your jaw. But it's me that you'll have the pleasure of speaking to, and right quick, my mate, oh, you bet!" said Roaring John.

"In that case," said the skipper, with his calmness well at zero; "in that case—yes, Dan! introduce yourself to the gentleman."

Dan's reply was instantaneous. He had up with his shot gun, and the long ruffian, who had reached forward with his boat hook, got the dose full in his face. At the same moment the skipper called "Fire!" and the heavy crack of the rifles and the sharp report of the pistols rang out together. The very launch itself seemed to reel under the volley.

"Full steam ahead!" roared Captain York, as the nameless ship replied with a shell that grazed our chart room. Then, shaking his fist to the warship, he almost screamed; "Bested for a parcel of cut-throats!"

There was no doubt about it at all. The moment the yacht answered to the screw the fog rolled round us like a sheet, in thick wet clouds, steaming damp on the decks; and twenty yards ahead or astern of us you could not see the long waves themselves. Shot after shot hissed and splashed ahead of us, behind us; now dull, heavy, yet penetrating, and we knew that the ship lay close on our track; then farther off and deadened, and we hoped that she had lost us.

When I left the bridge it was midnight. I was soaked to the skin and nigh frozen, and the water ran even from my hair; but a hot hand was put into mine as I entered the cabin, and then a thousand questions rained upon me.

"I'll tell you by-and-by, Mary. Were you very much afraid?"

"I was a bit afraid, Mark—a little bit! I—oh, I nursed Paolo—he's dying."

The man truly lay almost at death's door; but his delirium had passed; and he slept, muttering in his dream, "I can't go to the city—Black; you know it—let

me get aboard. Hands off! I told you the job was risky; and he tossed and turned and fell into troubled slumber. And I could not help a thought of sorrow, for I feared that he would hang if ever we set foot ashore.

"Gentlemen," said the skipper later, "you owe your lives to the Banks; and, please heaven, I'll see you all in New York before three days."

And he kept his word; for we sighted Sandy Hook, and harm had come to no man that fought the unequal fight.

CHAPTER XII.

It was about 6 o'clock in the evening when we brought the *Celsus* through the Narrows. Then the greater harbor before the city itself rolled out upon our view; and as we steamed slowly into it the customs took possession of us, and made their search. It was a short business, for we satisfied them that Paolo suffered from no malignant disease.

For ourselves we went off to dine at the Fifth Avenue Hotel. When dinner was done I suggested that Roderick should take Mary through the city awhile, and that I should get back to the *Celsus*, there to secure what papers were left for me, and to arrange, after thought, what my next step in the following of Captain Black should be.

I was driven to the wharf very quickly, and got aboard the yacht with no trouble. There was a man keeping watch upon her decks. I went to my own cabin, getting my papers, my revolver and other things that I might have need of ashore.

As I was ready to go back to the officers I looked in Paolo's cabin, and, somewhat to my surprise, I saw that he was dressed, and seemingly about to quit the yacht. This discovery set me aglow with expectation. If the man were going ashore, whether could he go except to his associates? Was not that the very clue I had been hoping to get? This thought sent me forward into the fore-castle, where Dan was.

"Hist, Dan!" said I. "give me a man's rig-out—a jersey and some breeches and a cap—quick!" and, while the old fellow stared and whistled softly, I helped to ransack his box; and in a trice I had dressed myself, putting my pistols, my papers, and my money in my new clothes; but leaving everything else in a heap on the floor. As I came on deck, I saw a shadow on the gangway. The man was leaving the yacht at that moment, and I followed him.

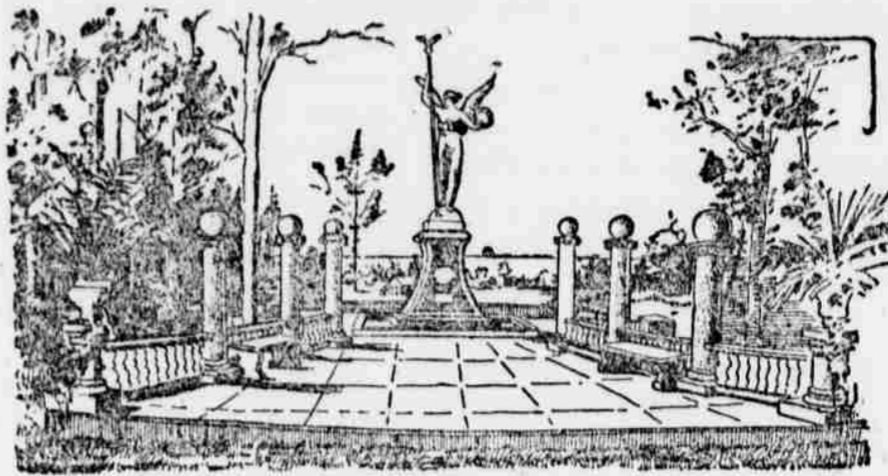
Once out into the city, and having turned two or three times to satisfy himself that he had no one after him, Paolo struck for Broadway, and thence with staggering gait he made straight for the Bowery. At last, after a long walk, and when the man himself was almost falling from the exertion of it, he stopped before an open door in the dirtiest of the streets through which we had come, and disappeared instantly. I came up to the door almost as soon as he had passed through, and found myself before a steep flight of steps, at the bottom of which through a glass partition I could see men smoking and hear them bawling uncouth songs.

It was a fearful hole, peopled by fearful men; all nations and all sorts of villains were represented there; low Englishmen, Frenchmen, Russians, even Chinamen; yet into that hole must I go if I would follow Paolo to the end. I pulled my cap right over my face and passed through the swinging door.

The room was long and narrow; banked its whole length by benches that had once been covered with red velvet, but now showed torn patches and the protruding wool of the stuffing. I passed quickly to a bench near the door, and there sat wedged against a fair-haired seaman, whose look stamped him to be a Russian.

(To be continued.)

MONUMENT TO COMMODORE PELRY.



VICTORY MONUMENT AT PUT-IN-BAY.

Put-in-Bay, nature's beauty spot, will be made more beautiful and attractive than ever by a monument which is being erected in recognition of Commodore Perry's great victory near the island. The monument is being put up at an expense of more than \$2,000, most of which has already been raised by popular subscription.

The statue is of the Goddess of Victory and is a reproduction of Alphonse Telzer's masterpiece. It will be made of copper bronze with the antique oxidized finish. The statue alone is ten feet high and is mounted on a twelve-foot pedestal of the beautiful and peculiar natural stone of the island. The pedestal will bear inscriptions telling of the victory. The wings of the goddess are two feet high and have a spread of seven feet from tip to tip.

The entire statue is mounted on a battlement wall foundation and parapet arrangement, the parapet being twenty-six and a half feet square. It is enclosed by a stone balustrade with stone abutments or posts at regular intervals. A grass line surrounds the pedestal in which will be planted flowers and green sod.

The approach to the monument is in peristyle effect. It is bedged with six pillars with tops surmounted by large glass globes with which to illuminate the spot at night. The columns are graduated in height, the tallest being nine feet and ranging from that down to the six-foot pedestals which will be surmounted with stone jardinières for flowers. These are all connected by the balustrades.

The approach is twenty feet deep and thirty feet across the front with concave sides and a convex front. A five-foot walk on the parapet encircles the statue so that it may be viewed from all sides.

BALLOONING ACROSS THE ALPS.



Two Italian aeronauts, Signori Usellini and Crespi, crossed the Alps in a balloon called "Milano." They started from Milan and descended at Aix-les-Bains, having passed across Mont Blanc. The photograph was reconstructed from materials supplied by the voyagers. Recently Mr. Leslie Bucknall left the Wandsworth gas works and in sixteen hours descended on the River Loop near the Lake of Geneva, a distance of over 420 miles. In the darkness the aeronaut located the proximity of the Alps by the echo. Had he had a reserve of gas he would have crossed the mountains.

FIRE IN THE SKYSCRAPER.

Chief Danger Is the Inflammable Office Furniture.

The construction of the new Singer building in New York, a lofty tower of forty-two stories, 612 feet high, lends the Journal of Fire to speculate on the consequences of a fire in this structure or in any very high steel frame building. It concludes that the average skyscraper is too high for adequate fire protection and that when such a building begins to burn the people in the upper stories will have to sit down with such calmness as they can muster and wait for it to be put out—or for the alternative.

"The danger is not so much to property as it is to life and for this reason the matter deserves careful consideration," says the paper named above. "The modern office building contains a small army of occupants, both men and women, and the endangering of these is a great responsibility.

"The skyscraper as a fire risk has not been sufficiently tested to justify any conclusion as to its fire safety, but judging by present knowledge and experience it represents a serious fire possibility. The question of safety for the occupants may be passed by in the belief in the 'fireproof' capacity of the building, but this belief is a delusion and a dependence on it is likely to result disastrously. The results of the Baltimore and San Francisco conflagrations were not needed to demonstrate the falsity of the 'fireproof' idea, for New York's fire experience was amply sufficient for this.

"The so-called fireproof building is fire proof only as regards the structure itself and this only to a limited extent. The building, as such, does not assure the safety of the inmates nor the security of the contents and as regards fire danger to life it is the part of prudence to consider it from the standpoint of an ordinary building. It must be conceded that in an office building it is possible for fire to start and the smoke, heat and flames to spread throughout, making it impossible to use the stairways and elevator as exits. Under the circumstances it is to be expected that a number of persons will be imprisoned above the fire and their safety dependent upon circumstances.

"The possibility of a serious fire in an office building is generally discounted on the ground that office buildings do not contain enough fuel for a considerable fire, but whoever entertains this notion should look about and estimate the quantity of combustible materials contained in an office in the shape of desks, cabinets, rugs, papers, etc. It is true that the usual office occupancy is not such as results in frequent fires, but there are the hazards due to the heat, light and power and in many instances offices are used for comparatively hazardous purposes. At the same time among thousands of offices it is reasonable to expect a certain proportion of fires and among these some that will get headway and result in a considerable fire."—Translation in Literary Digest.

Poor Memory Somewhere.

Mother—Tommy, what did I say I'd do to you if you touched that jam again?

Tommy—Why, it's funny, ma, that you should forget it, too. I'm blamed if I can remember!—Philadelphia Telegraph.

Old Law for Hours of Work.

As early as 1847 a law was passed in New Hampshire making ten hours a legal day's work.



Treatment of Consumption.

One of the earliest signs of consumption is a loss of strength and flesh, and this should always arouse suspicion in the case of a young man or woman when there is no other evident cause for it. In addition to the gradual emaciation there will usually be found a rapid pulse, shortness of breath, anemia, as shown by pale lips and extreme whiteness of the eyes, a poor appetite, and indigestion. There may be feverishness in the afternoon, together with a hacking cough and sometimes a little spitting of blood; but this is more commonly a sign which appears in the later stages.

The two mainstays of the person threatened with, or actually suffering from, consumption are fresh air and a generous diet. In no disease should the injunction to "throw physic to the dogs" be so faithfully obeyed.

If possible the consumptive should sleep actually in the open air, on a balcony sheltered from the north and east winds; but if this cannot be done, the windows of the bedroom should be kept wide open at night and the bed should be so placed that it is bathed in the air entering from without. The patients often fear this will give them "colds" or increase the cough, but it does just the opposite. Of course the sleeper should be well protected, with a hood in very cold weather, and a warm sleeping robe so as not to become chilled if the bedclothes are accidentally displaced.

The daytime should be passed in the open air. The patient, if weakness or a fever keeps him from walking, should sit all day on a porch or by an open window on the sunny side of the house, and should practice full, deep breathing for a few minutes at a time frequently.

The diet should be as nutritious as it is possible to make it. Eggs and good allowance of meat, and also of milk should be the standbys, with fat if fat can be digested. Care must be taken not to upset the stomach, for much depends upon good digestion; but a patient living in the open air day and night will be astonished at the quantity of food he can eat and assimilate. Fever at any part of the day is a sign to avoid fatiguing exercise. The bowels must be kept in proper condition.—Youth's Companion.

QUEEN OF HOLLAND IN DRESS OF FRISIAN PEASANT.

This picture, which was taken quite recently, shows her majesty, Queen Wilhelmina of Holland, with the childish look made familiar by her photograph as a little girl a few years ago. Friesland in the old days included not



QUEEN AND PRINCE CONSORT.

only a part of Holland, but also parts of Prussia, Oldenburg and Schleswig. The province of Friesland proper in the Netherlands to-day covers an area of 1,282 square miles, and it has a population of less than half a million. The people of Friesland, who speak a curious form of low German, are simple, hard-working folk, and dress in a charming old-world way which suits the young Queen's style.

Protested Proverbs.

"You can't judge by appearances." Can't you, though? How else can you judge an actor but by his appearance? "Never say die." Nice, prosperous undertaker you'd make with that motto, wouldn't you?

"Give the devil his due." What's the use of bothering, he's sure to get it.

"Seeing is believing." Not always. Your wife sees you when you come home late from "sitting up with a sick friend," but she doesn't believe you.

"Faint heart never won fair lady." Well, what of it? Ours is a brunette.—Boston Transcript.

First Prayer in Congress.

The first prayer in Congress was made in 1775 by the Rev. Jacob Duché, rector of Christ church and a man of considerable learning. He afterward turned traitor to the cause of independence.—The Sunday Magazine.

Many a rich man is unable to offer anything better than a poor excuse.