

THE IRON PIRATE

A Plain Tale of Strange
Happenings on the Sea

By MAX PEMBERTON

CHAPTER XX.

It was later that Captain Black, Doctor Osbark and myself entered the 7:30 train from Ramsgate; leaving the screw tender, now disguised, with the man John and eight of the most turbulent among the crew of the nameless ship aboard her. We had come without hindrance through the crowded waters of the Channel; and, styling ourselves a Norwegian whaler in ballast, had gained the difficult harbor in alluringly easy fashion. At the first, Black had thought to leave me on the steamer; but I gave him solemn word that I would not seek to quit him, that I would not in any way betray him while the truce lasted, and that I would return, wherever I was, to the tender in the harbor at the end of a week.

I will not pause to tell you my own thoughts when I set foot on shore again. I could not help but carry my memory to the last occasion when, with Roderick and Mary, I had come to London in the very hope of getting tidings of this man who now sat with me in a Kent Coast express. Where were the others then—the girl who had been as a sister to me, and the man as a brother; how far had the fear of my death made that childish face which had known such little sadness in its sixteen years of life? It was odd to think that Mary might be then returned to London, and that I, whom perchance she thought dead, was near to her, and yet, in a sense, more cut off from her than in the grave itself.

It was after 10 o'clock that the ride terminated, and, following Black and Osbark into a closed carriage, I was driven from the station. We drove for fifteen minutes, staying at last before a house in a narrow street, where we went upstairs to a suite of rooms reserved for us. After an excellent supper Osbark left us, but Black took me to a double-bedded room, saying that he could not let me out of his sight.

"Boy, if you make one attempt to play me false," said he, "I'll blow your brains out."

On the next morning Black quitted the house at an early hour after breakfast, but he locked the door of the room upon Osbark and myself. "Not," as he said, "because I can't take your word, but because I don't want anyone fooling in here." He returned in the evening at 7 o'clock, and found me as he had left me, reading a novel.

The following day was Thursday. I shall always remember it, for I regard it as one of the most memorable days in my life. Black went out as usual early in the morning; his object being, as on the preceding day, to find out, if he could, what the Admiralty were doing in view of the robbery of the *Bellona*. We had been left thus about the space of an hour when there came a telegram for the doctor, who read it with a fierce exclamation.

"The captain wants me urgently," said he, "and there's nothing to do but to leave you here. You must put up with the indignity of being locked in. The man who owns this house is one of us."

When he was gone I sat in the great armchair, pulling it to the window, and taking up my book. I could hear the hum of town, the rumbling of buses, and the subdued roar of London awake. I could even see people in the houses at the other side of the leads, and it occurred to me, What if I open that casement and call for help? I had given a pledge, it is true; but should a pledge bind under such conditions?

I was in the very throes of a mental struggle when the strange event of the day happened. I chanced to look up from the book I had been trying to read, and I saw a remarkable object upon the leads outside my window. It was the figure of a man, looking into my room; and presently, when he had given me innumerable nods and winks, he took a knife from his pocket, and opened the catch, stepping into the chamber with the nimble foot of a goat upon a crag path. Then he drew a chair up to mine, slapped me upon the knee and said:

"In the name of the law! I take you by surprise; but business, Mr. Mark Strong. In the first place I have wired to your friend, Mr. Roderick Stewart, and I expect him from Portsmouth in a couple of hours; in the second, your other friend, the doctor, is under lock and key, on the trifling charge of murder in the Midlands, to begin with. When we have Captain Black, the little party will be complete."

I looked at him, voiceless from the surprise of it, and he went on:

"I needn't tell you who I am; but there's my card. We have six men in the street outside, and another half dozen watching the leads here. You will be sensible enough to follow my instructions absolutely. Black, we know, leaves the country to-night in his steamer. The probability is that he will come to fetch you at 7 o'clock—I have frightened it all out of the people downstairs—if he does, you will go with him. Otherwise, he's pretty sure to send someone for you, and, as you at the moment are our sole link between that unmitigated scoundrel and his arrest, I ask you to risk one step more, and return at any rate as far as the coast, that we may follow him for the last time."

I looked at his card, whereon was the inscription, "Detective Inspector King, Scotland Yard," and I said at once:

"I shall not only go to the coast, but to his tender, for I've given my word. What you may do in the meantime is not my affair. I suppose he's made a sensation?"

"Sensation! There isn't another subject talked of in any house in Europe—but, read that; and it's ten thousand in my pocket, any way!"

Detective Inspector King went as he had come, passing noiselessly over the leads; but he left his newspaper, where in there was a column after column concerning the robbery of the *Bellona*. At last, the police were on the trail of Cap-

tain Black; yet I saw at once that, lacking my help, he would elude them.

It was half past six when at last a man unlocked the door of my room and entered. He was one of Black's negroes.

"Sar will come quick," said he, "and leave his luggage. The master waits."

He gave me no time for any explanations, but took me by the arm, and, passing from the house by a back door, he went some way down a narrow street. There a cab waited for us, and we drove away, but not before one who stood on the pavement, had made a slight signal to me, and called another cab. In him I recognized Detective Inspector King, and I knew that we were followed.

CHAPTER XXI.

We drove rapidly and took a train for Tilbury. The journey was accomplished in something under an hour; and when we alighted and got upon the bank of the river, I saw a steam launch with the man John in the bows of her. I entered the launch and we started immediately, going at a great pace towards Sheerness; and reached the Nore after some buffet with the seas in the open. At this point we sighted the tender, and went aboard her, when we made full speed towards the North Foreland.

Black had made a colossal mistake, from his point of view, in setting foot in England; but the crowning blunder of his life was that fatal act of folly by which he had sought to shield me from the law. Now the object of letting Black reach his vessel again was as clear as daylight; it was not so much the man as his ship which they wished to take.

But were we followed? I had seen nothing to lead me to that conclusion as I came down the Thames; and now, favored by an intensely dark night, I promised, if nothing should intervene, to gain the Atlantic in two days, and to be aboard that strange citadel which was our stronghold against the nations. There was no sign of any warship pursuing; no indication whatever that the tender, then steaming at thirteen knots towards Dover, was watched or observed by any living being.

I was dead worn out and slept twelve hours at the least, for it was afternoon when I awoke. Black was not in the cabin, and I went above to him on the bridge. There was no land then to be seen; but the clear play of sparkling waves shone away to the horizon over a tumbling sea, upon which were a few ships. Upon one of these he constantly turned his glass.

By and by all the crew began to observe Black's anxiety and to crowd to the starboard side; but he told them nothing, although he never left the bridge. It was somewhat perplexing to me to observe that, while the great ship was undoubtedly following us, she did not gain a yard upon us.

This strange pursuit lasted three days and into the third night; when I was awakened from a snatch of sleep by the firing of a gun above my head. I got on deck, where my eyes were almost blinded by a great volume of light which spread away from a point some two miles away on our starboard bow. We had been in the Atlantic then for twenty-four hours, and I did not doubt for a moment that we had reached the nameless ship. Had there been any uncertainty, the wild joy of the men would have banished it.

I heard the voice of Black singing, "Hands, stand by to lower boats!" At that moment the cruiser showed her teeth. Suddenly there was a rush of flame from her bows, and a shell hissed above us—the first sign of her attempt to stop us joining our own ship.

We were no more than a quarter of a mile from safety, but the run was full of peril, and as the launch stood out, the nameless ship of a sudden shot off her light, if possible to shield us in the dark. But the pursuer instantly flooded us with her own arc, and, following it with quick shots, she hit the jolly-boat at the third. Of the eight men there, only two rose when the hull had disappeared.

"Fire away!" cried Black, shaking his fist, and mad with passion; "and get your hands in; you'll want all the bark you've got just now."

But we had hauled the men aboard as he spoke, and though two shells foamed in the sea and wetted us to the skin in the passage, we were at the ladder of the nameless ship without other harm, and with fierce shouts the men gained the decks.

For them it was a glorious moment. They had weathered the perils of a city, and stood where they could best face the crisis of the pursuit. It was a spectacle to move the most stolid apathy; the sight of a couple of hundred demoniac figures lit by the great white wave of light from the enemy's ship, their faces upturned as they waited Black's orders, their hands flourishing knives and cutlasses, their hunger for the contest betrayed in every gesture.

"Boys," cried Black, "yonder's a government ship. You know me, that I don't run after war steam every day, for that's not my business. But we're short of oil, and the cylinders are heating. Boys, it's swing or take that ship and the oil aboard her."

"Look out aft—the torpedo!"

A tiny line of foam was just visible for a second in the way of the light; but, the moment the cruiser had shot it from her tube, she extinguished her arc, leaving us to light the waters with our own. There was no difficulty whatever in following the line of the deadly message.

"Full speed astern!" roared Black, and the nameless ship moved backwards, faster and yet faster. But the black death-bearing followed her, as a shark follows a death ship; we seemed even to have backed into its course—it came on us though to strike us full amidships, but the great ship swung round with a majestic sweep, and as we waited breathlessly, the torpedo

passed right under our bow, missing the ram by a hair's breadth.

We fired at the cruiser, hitting her right under the funnel, and a second time near her fore gun. Nor did she answer our firing, but rolled to the swell apparently out of action.

"Skipper, are you going aboard her now?" asked the man "Roaring John."

"She's done by her looks, and you'll get no oil if ye delay. Karl, there, he isn't as comfortable as if he were in his bed."

The little German engineer was very far from it. He was almost desperate when minute by minute his stock of oil grew less; and he ran from one to the other as though we had grease in our pockets, and could give it to him. Black took due notice, but did not lose his calm.

"You're quite sure she's done, John?" he asked, turning to the big man.

"She's done, I guess, or why don't she spit?"

The words had scarce left his lips when the cruiser's aft guns thundered out almost together, and one shell passed through the very center of our group. It cut the man John in half as he might have been cut by a sword, and his blood and flesh splashed us, while the other half of him stood up like a bust upon the deck, and during one horrible moment his arms moved wildly, and there was a horrid quivering of the muscles of his face. The second shot struck the roof of the turret obliquely, and glanced from it into the sea. The destruction seemed to move Black as no more than a rain shower. He simply cried: "All hands to cover; I'm going to give 'em a taste of the machine guns;" and we re-entered the conning tower. Then, as we began to move again, I swept the horizon with our light; but this time, far away over the black waste of water, the signal was answered.

"Number two!" said Black, quite calmly, when I told him, and this time a battery. "Well, boy, if we don't take that oil yonder in ten minutes you may say your prayers."

CHAPTER XXII.

The nameless ship bounded forward into the night, and soon was not fifty yards away from her opponent. Never have I known anything akin to the episode when bullets rang upon our decks in hundreds, and the dead and the living in the other ship lay huddled together, in a seething, struggling, moaning mass. We had opened fire upon her before such of her men as could be spared had got below.

"Let 'em digest that!" cried Black, as he watched the havoc.

I, who had not ceased to watch that distant light which marked another warship on the horizon, knew that a second light had shown out as a star away over the sea; and now, when I looked again, I saw a third light. We were being surrounded. The searchlights of the distant ships were clearer to my view every moment. Black saw them, and took a slight from the glass.

"Boy," he said, "you should have told me of this. I see three lights, and that means a fleet."

"Are you going to run for it?" I asked.

"Run for it, with two engines, yes; but it's a poor business. And we'll have to fight!"

I saw the foremost ironclad but two miles away from us, and the others were sweeping round to cut us off if we attempted flight. We lay with but two engines working, and a speed of sixteen knots at the best. Nor did we know from minute to minute when another engine would break down. At that moment there came a horrible sound of grating and tearing from the engine room, and it was succeeded by a moment of dead and chilling silence.

"The second engine's gone!" said a man above, quite calmly.

We found the crew swollen and muttering, but Friedrich, the engineer's eldest son, sat at the top of the engine room ladder, and tears rolled down his face. The great ship still trembled under the shock of the breakdown and was not showing more than a few knots. The foremost ironclad crept up mile by mile, and before we had realized the whole extent of the mishap, she was within gunshot of us; but her colleagues were some miles away, she out-pacing them all through it.

"She signals to us to let her come aboard," said "Four-Eyes."

"Answer that we'll see in chips first," said Black, and he called for Karl and made signs to him.

Those on the battleship made quite sure of us now, for they steamed on and came within three hundred yards of us. Black watched them as a beast watches the unsuspecting prey. He stood, his face knit in savage lines, his hand upon the bell. I looked from the glass, and saw that no man was visible upon our decks, that our engines had ceased to move. We were motionless. Then in a second the bells rang out. There was again that frightful grating and tearing in the engine room. The nameless ship came round to her helm with a mighty sweep; she foamed and plunged in the sea; she turned her ram straight at the other; and, groaning as a great stricken wounded beast, she roared onward to the voyage of death. I knew then the fearful truth: Black meant to sink the cruiser with his ram. I shall never forget that moment of terror, that grinding of heated steel, that plunge into the sea, that waited for the crash, and in the suspense hours seemed to pass. As last there was under the sea a mighty clap of submarine thunder. Dashed headlong from my post, I lay bruised and wounded upon the floor of steel. The roof above me rocked; the walls shook and were bent; my ears rang with the deafening roar in them; seas of foam mounted; shrieks and the sound of awful rending and tearing drowned other shouts of men going to their death. And through all was the hysterical yelling of Black, his defiance, his elation.

(To be continued.)

Couldn't Fool Her.
Miss DePlayne (proudly)—A dozen men offered me their hands at the seashore this summer.

Miss Wisely—Indeed! How long have you been a student of palmitry?

Wanted Particulars.
"Have pity on me, darling," pleaded the poor but otherwise honest young man; "I cannot live without you."

"What's the matter," queried the homely heiress; "have you lost your job?"

London cab drivers earn an aggregate of over \$40,000 per day.

RELIGIOUS

He had another and a better name, and in good time it came to light, and was entered in the Sunday school class book; but "Toodles" was the name he gave, and Toodles was the name by which he had gone during the greater part of his life; and Toodles is the only name by which he shall be known to the readers of this article.

"Where do you live?" asked the teacher.

"Around the corner," was his reply. It was the only residence given for record. But what corner he lived around is not yet known; he lived mostly "around corners," and had picked up a miscellaneous fund of information there.

Toodles liked the Sunday school. To some of the boys with plenty of home privileges, Sunday school was a commonplace blessing, if a blessing at all; but Toodles counted it among the luxuries of his scant life. It is cheering to the heart of a Sunday school teacher to have an appreciative pupil. It more than compensates for some unconventionalities in the matter of apparel and speech.

There is no place for the recording of the deficiencies of Toodles. Indeed, they are forgotten. His was a loyalty and enthusiasm that would have hid a multitude of infidelities, if there had been a multitude to hide. There were not many; it is hard now to believe that there were any.

Toodles became a diligent propagandist. He brought more boys into the Sunday school than did any other member. There was not even a teacher who had so many to her credit. And Toodles' recruits, brought in from his own stratum of society, he regarded as under his care, and they looked to him as their leader and representative.

Then came the earthquake and the fire. The church of eight hundred members seemed to have disappeared in a night. There was a hardly a member whose home was not burned and whose business was not destroyed. Scores of them left the city, and hundreds removed to other portions of the town or to the suburbs, or camped in the parks and slept between the graves in the cemeteries. The beautiful walls of the church stood cracked by the earthquake and blackened by the fire.

In time a temporary place of meeting was found, and a Sunday service was held, a pathetic contrast to the overflowing services of the days before the disaster. The Sunday school was reorganized on the same day. A pitiful handful of children appeared, and the question was what to do. Could the boys and girls be found? Could enough of them be assembled to make a Sunday school in the heart of the burned district?

Then entered Toodles. He had walked thirty-nine blocks to get there, and was late. But the school informally resolved itself into a session with Toodles. There was not a camp within or about the city which he had not visited, and he knew just who were there. He was able to give lists from memory of more of the church families than even the minister knew. He knew where the boys were.

The minister and the superintendent and the teachers got out their notebooks and sat at the feet of Toodles. Among the most encouraging facts in the reorganization of that Sunday school was the practical assistance given by this waif. And the minister said, "Brethren, it always pays to help a boy; you never know how soon he will be able to help you. Who of us supposed when we took this little lad of the street, and gave him what we could in the Master's name, that so soon we should find him one of our best helpers?"

They thanked God for Toodles, and took courage.—*Youth's Companion.*

Christian Contentment.
Poverty is largely a matter of fancy. The real poverty is in the mind—in the mind's attitude. There is such a thing as being rich without money. That man is rich who is rich in integrity, and who has that best of all blessings, a contented mind.—*Christian Contentment.* This last great boon is gained through making the most of our little enjoyments, through making the least of our little lacks, through doing our best at our little duties—through trusting in God and doing the right. To be sure, we cannot all be money rich. Some money-rich people are very poor. But we can all be millionaires of character and of faith, possessing that godliness which, with contentment, is a great gain, the real gain, the highest riches.—*G. B. F. Hallock, D. D.*

Sweet Hour of Prayer.
Christ is the only teacher of real prayer. He teaches by example and precept. He prayed trustingly, constantly, in intimate friendship with the Father. He teaches us to pray as He did. Solitude, isolation and retirement are essential to prayer. Get away from the world somewhere, alone. Our households must be so arranged as to permit a quiet time alone each day, without interruption or observation. In prayer there must be absolute concentration of the mind. Read the Bible prayerfully. Here God talks to His children. Let the thought of earthly communion with the heavenly Father become habitual. "Practice the pres-

ence of God." Look forward to the hour of prayer as the most delightful season of the day. Keep the Quiet Hour. If you thus learn to pray in secret, your public prayers will take care of themselves.

Life a Discipline.
Sooner or later we find out that life is not a holiday, but a discipline. Earlier or later we will discover that the world is not a playground. It is quite clear that God means it for a school. The moment we forget that, the puzzle of life begins. We try to play in school. The Master does not mind that so much for its own sake, for He likes to see His children happy; but in our playing we neglect our lessons. We do not see how much there is to learn, and we do not care. But our Master cares. He has a perfectly overpowering and inexorable solicitude for our education; and because He loves us He comes into the school sometimes and speaks to us.

God's Design.
In our whole life-melody the music is broken off here and there by "rests," and we foolishly think we have come to the end of the tune. God sends a time of forced leisure, a time of sickness and disappointed plans, and makes a sudden pause in the choral hymn of our lives, and we lament that our voices must be silent and our part missing in the music which ever goes up to the ear of the Creator. . . . Not without design does God write the music of our lives. Be it ours to learn the tune and not be dismayed at the "rests." If we look up, God will beat the time for us.—*Ruskin.*

SPIES ON THE MACHINERY.
Clock Arrangement Tells Automatically When It Works or Rests.
The introduction of modern detail cost accumulating methods, which have done much to systematize and cheapen manufacture, has led to the development of an ingenious apparatus which indicates at a distance when any machine is stopped and the output of any machine for a given period. Moreover, the device makes an automatic record of all these facts so that at the close of the day the manager, by scanning their graphic records, can tell the exact output of any machine and the length of time it was in operation, thereby enabling him to form an accurate judgment of the reliability of different operators. The beauty of this device is that the workman knows his every movement is being reported in the manager's office and he is helpless to misrepresent conditions.

The recorder consists of a controlling clock, which revolves a series of time charts, one for each machine under observation. The hours and division of hours are printed vertically on the chart, in addition to which a series of pencils are rigidly fixed. The adjustment is such that the machine can be made to indicate every single revolution or any multiple desired and each horizontal stroke of the pencil indicates one of these units, which is made opposite the corresponding hour and minute. When there are no strokes it indicates that the machine is stopped.

By simple mechanical arrangement an air piston is operated, which in turn establishes an electric connection, the impulse of which is transmitted to the recording machine controlling its mechanism. It is suggested that its device could be used to great advantage in connection with the engines of steamships, as a graphic record is made of speed and the exact moment when any order is carried out.—*Manufacturer.*

WALL PAPERS FROM CHINA.
Daily of Peking, Now in Its 1,300th Year, Printed on Silk.
We are apt to forget, writes Miss Kate Sanborn, in her new book, "Old-Time Wall Papers," how much we owe to the Chinese nation—the mariner's compass, gunpowder, paper, printing by movable types (a daily paper has been published in Peking for 1,200 years—printed, too, on silk). They had what we call the golden rule 500 years before Christ was born. With six times the population of the United States they are the only people in the world who have maintained a government for 3,000 years.

The earliest papers we hear of anywhere were imported from China and had Chinese or Indian patterns, coming first in small sheets, then in rolls. Some of the more elaborate kinds were printed by hand; others were printed blocks. These papers, used for walls, for hangings and for screens, were called "pagoda papers" and were decorated with flowers, symbolic animals and human figures.

The Dutch were among the most enterprising, importing painted hangings from China and the East about the middle of the sixteenth century. Perhaps these originated in Persia; the word "chintz" is of Persian origin and the French name for its imitations was "Persee."

About 1745 the Vompagne des Indes began to import these papers directly. They were then also called "Indian papers." Aug. 21, 1874, we find an advertisement: "For sale—20 sheets of India paper, representing the cultivation of tea."

Such a paper, with this theme was brought to America 150 years ago—a hand-painted Chinese wall paper, which has been on a house ever since and is to-day in a good state of preservation.

Proof Positive.
Maude—Fred proposed last night, and he was awful rattled.

Clara—Well, I'm not surprised. I always thought he had a screw loose somewhere.

Proof Positive.
We do not like to have any child coaxed to speak a piece for us or to give us a kiss.

Trying to avoid work is often the hardest kind.

THE FAMILY DOCTOR



A great deal of harm is done by self-drugging for the relief of various real or imaginary ills.

There is nothing easier. The only objection to the plan is that what is good for the cough may be bad for the cougher.

So it is with a headache. Almost any pain in the head not due to actual brain disease may be moderated, if not relieved temporarily, by some form of "headache powder"; but a frequent recourse to this means of cure may eventually weaken the heart. When this stops beating the headaches cease to trouble, but the patient is not in condition to know or care.

Every man, of course, believes himself a doctor, and often thinks he is better able to attack a cough or a case of rheumatism or a headache, whether it be his own or another's, than those who make the cure of disease a special study. All he has to do is to make up his mind what the trouble is—and any one can tell a cough when he has it—and then to take something that is "good for a cough."

Less serious, but not much so, is the abuse of tonics. A true tonic is anything that promotes the nutrition of the body. This may be done by increasing the appetite and improving digestion, which is the function of the bitter tonics; or by improving the condition of the blood by adding to it the iron it has lost; or by supplying the system with some needed substance, such as fat in cod liver oil; or finally by stimulating the tissues to increased absorption, an action which is ascribed to arsenic, mercury and others of the mineral tonics.

But these are not the "tonics" to which people are apt to resort when they run down. They take to stimulants, alcohol usually, and think they are getting strong because they feel better after each dose. The alcohol in the "tonic" is often disguised, and the user, perhaps a conscientious teetotaler, would be shocked to learn that what he was taking to give him strength had more alcohol in it than has the strongest whisky. If the system is seriously run down, a physician should be consulted, who will be able to give what is needed, whether iron, or bark, or gentian, or cod liver oil, to correct the underlying condition that causes the debility.—*Youth's Companion.*

The Bird in Hand.
Instead of getting angry, Clarkson was rather amused at the actions of his pet waiter. For two years he had dined at the same restaurant almost daily and August knew his every wish and had always been liberally tipped. That day, however, Clarkson was shamefully neglected. He had to ask for butter, his napkin was damp and soggy, the particular sauce he liked so well was not on the table, and, in fact, August was the antithesis of a devoted servant. All his attentions seemed concentrated upon a man at an adjoining table. August hovered around him like a bee around a flower, anticipating every wish and bringing him sundry little extras.

The customers were evidently a stranger. Clarkson could not recall having seen him before, and from his long patronage of the place he had come to know all the regular customers by their faces at least. His curiosity got the better of him and as he was leaving, after bestowing the customary tip, he asked:

"Why is it, August, that you have been so attentive to that man and so neglectful of me? Is he in the habit of giving extra large tips?"

"Oh, no, m'sieu," said August. "He is a stranger. He has never been here before." Then he added, apologetically, "And I am sure of you, m'sieu."

The Other Side.
"Don't you get homesick for those beautiful old Colonial mansions in the South?" they asked the Kentuckian on the night that the thermometer froze.

"Not this weather," he answered. "I haven't forgotten yet how the wind used to blow through the cracks of the windows and doors of those beautiful old Colonial mansions, and how we used to sit in rooms about the size of ballrooms, huddled around a two-by-four grate, our faces searing and the bitter blasts blowing through our back hair."

"Oh, no; in such weather as this the steam heated luxury of the Chicago flat for me," she decided.—*Chicago Inter Ocean.*

Proof Positive.
Bertha—But, papa, what have you against Charles? Wouldn't he make a good husband?

Father—He's a fool, and besides he's only after your money.

Bertha—Oh, papa, I know he would marry me without a penny.

Father—You see? He's even more of a fool than I thought!—*Le Pele-Mele.*

Proof Positive.
Maude—Fred proposed last night, and he was awful rattled.

Clara—Well, I'm not surprised. I always thought he had a screw loose somewhere.