

# THE IRON PIRATE

A Plain Tale of Strange Happenings on the Sea

By MAX PEMBERTON

## CHAPTER X.—(Continued.)

"We must not now," said Roderick, "before they miss the 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 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 groan of terror at the sight of her—for she seemed but a thing of shadow hovering over 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 hit 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, looked at the sight of him, and fell fainting in my arms.

The skipper got the whole situation at the first look. He came on 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 hailed them.

"You, Karl Williams—are you coming out now, for me to fog 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 galley."

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 shadow 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 sea.

"There's one down amongst you," said the skipper; "but 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 calm as ever he was in Portsmouth 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 cable. There we could hear them blubbering 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 XI.

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 to 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.

He indicated the deck house by the bridge, where my glass showed me a shining sun 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 gloom 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 fast, 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 saltrice 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 hull's outline; 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 our hands heartily, as though the discovery of our purpose had unclouded his mind. But we had no time for full understanding, for at that moment the air itself seemed torn apart by a great commotion, 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 suspicious amongst them I saw the form of Captain Black standing by the steam-raising 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 half a boat's length he 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—you, Dan! introduce yourself to the gentlemen."

Dan's reply was instantaneous. He had up with his shot gun, and the long rullian, 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.

me got 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 Hanks; 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 vessel 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 back possession of us, and made their search. It was a short haul, 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 vessel, 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 others 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 their patches and the pro-trading smell 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.)

## Wasn't She Saving?

"Ingenuity, thy name is woman!" said the conductor, as a plump woman laden with packages alighted from his car. "Do you know what she did? Well, after she had stowed her packages in her lap, she opened her bag, dug down into it, brought up her purse and gave me 10 cents. 'For two,' she said. I thought she intended paying for the bundles and was about to tell her that it was needless extravagance, when she said: 'I'd like two transfers.' I grinned."

"Are you getting a transfer on your parcels?" I asked.

"She replied in a very matter of fact way: 'Oh, no; but you see, a friend of mine is going to meet me at the corner and I want to pay her fare; but it'll be an awful nuisance for me to get my purse again with all these bundles, so I thought if you'd give me two transfers I'd save all that trouble.'"

"I gave her two transfers. The company won't lose anything by it, and if the friend doesn't happen to be waiting on the corner, it'll be something in."—New York Press.

## Cause of the Stoop.

The Portrait Agent—One notices a great many stoop-shouldered men in this vicinity. Due to hard work, I suppose?

The Storekeeper—Nuthin' else, b'gosh. Totin' around the average crop up whiskers peculiar to these here parts ain't no sycure, I tell you!—Puck.

## Unmentionable.

"Let me see," said she. "What is it you call these men who run automobiles?"

"Pardon me," replied the gallant man, "I'm too much of a gentleman to tell you what I call them."—Philadelphia Ledger.

## Fallacy Exploded.

"Talk is cheap," remarked the man with the quotation habit.

"Not always," rejoined the practical man. "My wife talked me into buying her a \$50 gown this morning."

## In After Years.

Mrs. Newed—And will you love me just as much when I am old, darling?

Newed—More, I think. You probably won't be so silly then.

If men were relatively as strong as beetles they could juggle with weights of several tons.

# FARMS AND FARMERS



## How to Bud Peaches.

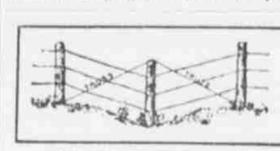
"For a budding knife take a common case knife—a broken one will do—cut blade off square about one inch from butt, sharpen this end not very thin, but sharp. Keep the normal edge as keen as possible. Now, to use it, set the end edge squarely across the branch or seedling, where you wish to set your bud, and with gentle pressure cut through the bark to the wood. Next, set the same edge vertically just below where you have made the cross incision and cut through the bark as before, and before withdrawing the knife give it a slight twist, which will throw the bark open for the reception of the bud. The bud is cut from the seton of the variety desired by starting the knife in the seton about one-fourth of an inch below the bud, and cutting upward to the same distance above, taking off the bud with a shield shaped piece of bark and a small shaving of the wood of the seton. Insert this in the incision already made in the stock and tie the bark to the stock down over it firmly, but not too tight. For tying, anything neatly will do. I have used corn husks when other material was not handy."

## Making a Brooder at Home.

Here are the plans for a brooder that can be easily made by anyone: Make a box 5 feet 4 inches by 3 feet 8 inches and 2 feet high, using 2x2 inch pieces for corner posts, and matched boards for siding. Inside nail strips around 11 inches from bottom to support the floor, which should be made of matched lumber and left so it could be taken out and cleaned. Make door in end level with floor, also glass in upper half of each side for light. Top made to slant both ways and about half of each side hinged on so as to make feeding and cleaning easy. Place large piece of sheet iron on underside of floor with half-inch strips between floor and iron. Cut door in lower part of end; place good metal bowl lamp under sheet iron; bore several holes in floor over lamp, putting tin can punched full of holes over this to keep out dirt. Place thermometer on inside and you will have a brooder which will give the best of satisfaction.

## Anchoring Fence Posts.

Here is a handy way of anchoring fence posts in draws or low places: Instead of hanging a stone to the post,



ANCHORING POSTS IN DRAWS.

take a double wire and use it in the form of a truss, as indicated in cut. The plan is so simple that little description is necessary. If the cut is very deep, one can use a longer post, or spike a 2x4 into the post, and so put the truss wire yet higher, and hence that much more effective.

## Why Young Trees Are Best.

These are the advantages of planting young trees: They can be trained to the desired form better than older trees, says Fanning. A 2 or 3-year-old tree is branched and has had its head already formed by the nurseryman; and a yearling tree of the apple, pear and sweet cherry, is usually unbranched. Sometimes the nurseryman has headed the tree too high or has not been careful enough about starting out the scaffold limbs, and it is difficult to correct the form of the head after it has been started. There is an unmistakable preference for low-headed trees, due chiefly to the need of economy and efficiency in spraying and harvesting. The single disadvantage of low-heading is greater inconvenience in tillage. This is much more than offset by the advantages. In the judgment of most growers, within ten years the height recommended for heading apple trees in the East has been reduced at least two feet. The bearing of this on the matter of yearling trees is that the grower can head a yearling tree where he pleases.

## Cowpeas for Hogs.

Those living where they can successfully grow the cowpea should utilize this valuable crop as a cheap ration for pigs. The pea is rich in protein and furnishes the needed growth, and does away with the necessity of millstuff. Drill three or four pecks of seed per acre the latter part of May or the first part of June, and give the needed cultivation till the vines cover the ground enough to check weed growth. Turn the pigs into the field when the pods begin to ripen, and they will do the harvesting. If the old hogs are pastured on peas, they need corn or some other carbonaceous feed to give proper balance, for they cannot utilize so much protein as pigs. Try a patch of cowpea pasture this year, and get your hogs in fine shape for the corn when it comes.

## Hard Mouthed Horses.

Here is something of practical value to anyone driving a horse that pulls on the bit: Fasten a small ring to each side of the bridle and as near the brow band as possible. Pass the line through the bit rings and snap them into the rings at the brow band. This, with a common jointed bit, will enable a child to hold a puller or hard mouthed horse with ease under almost all circumstances. It can be used on a fast horse in double team or on both, as desired. It is cheap and easily applied, and it won't make the mouth sore. It is better than any patent bit.—Farm Press.

## Water for Butter Washing.

Bulletin No. 138, on the "Effects of Bacteria Wash Water of Butter," describes a series of experiments showing the importance of pure water for washing butter. Sterilized water is shown to be practical, cheap and profitable. The all around food for milk cows is grass. Therefore look well to the pastures and see that their quality is improved.

## Farm Notes.

Farmers who make money by skinning the farm are like companies who pay dividends by watering their stock. The all around food for milk cows is grass. Therefore look well to the pastures and see that their quality is improved.

## Handy Saw Horse.

The illustration shows the best contrivance for holding slabs or other



HANDY SAW HORSE.

refuse wood while sawing it for kindling or fuel.

## Sure Way With Boll Weevil.

The best way to circumvent the boll weevil is to raise more corn and hogs, more alfalfa and mule colts, more hay and calves, more oats and chickens, more wheat and turkeys, and build more factories. With full crops of all these things, the boll weevil would have little terror for Texas.—Bonham (Tex.) News.

# THE WEEKLY HISTORIAN



## Dried Beet and Molasses Pulp.

Brief notes are given on the production of two feeding stuffs and feeding experiments with cows are reported by the Wisconsin station. The ration used for comparison consisted of five pounds of hay, thirty-five to forty pounds of silage, and about eight pounds of a grain mixture consisting of wheat bran, distillers' grains, and cottonseed meal in the proportion of 2:2:1. Dried-beet pulp or molasses-beet pulp was substituted for the wheat bran in the ratio of 3:2 by weight. Two tests were made, the first including fifteen cows and the second six.

When wheat bran was replaced by dried-beet pulp in the proportion indicated there was no appreciable difference in the effect of the two rations. Molasses-beet pulp substituted in the same manner produced, however, about 12 per cent more milk and 8 per cent more butter fat. Beet pulp showed a tendency to decrease the fat content of the milk. The results, therefore, indicate that when wheat bran is valued at \$18 a ton, dried-beet pulp is not worth over \$12 and molasses-beet pulp over \$13 a ton.

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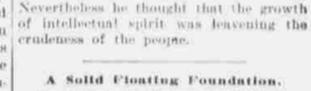
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## A Solid Floating Foundation.

A writer in the Technical World Magazine tells of a new engineering device, invented by William E. Murray of Los Angeles, Cal., by means of which it is possible to build in the open sea structures that usually require solid rock foundations, such as breakwaters, lighthouses, forts, bridges, etc. These will remain perfectly steady, no matter how turbulent the surface of the sea may be. This result is obtained by immersing the floating structures deep down in the still waters in such a way that the surface vibration cannot affect them. The simplest form is a hollow upright cylinder of iron, with a broad projecting flange. This base will act as a lever to counteract any horizontal pressure at the top. In this way it is hoped that torpedo stations may be placed far out to sea, forming an impenetrable barrier to an attacking fleet. Again, it is proposed to thus erect floating wharves, which would rise and fall with the tide.

## Mrs. Sage's University Gift.

Chancellor MacCacken of the New York university announces that Mrs. Russell Sage had transferred to the university title to fifteen acres of land adjoining the university grounds, valued at \$300,000. This will increase the campus to thirty-seven acres, and will enable the chancellor to carry out his great project of grouping a number of colleges in a great quadrangle. The summer school next year will be enlarged. At present this university has 286 instructors and 2,524 students.