THE IRON PIRATE

A Plain Tale of Strange Happenings on the Sea

By MAX PEMBERTON

CHAPTER XX.

It was later that Captain Black, Doctor Osbart 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 with out arousing suspicion. At the first, Black had thought to leave me on the steamer; but I gave him solemn word 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 sad 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 Osbart 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 Osbart 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 Osbart 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 Bellonic. 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 me a newspaper, wherein there was column after column concerning the robbery of the Bellonic. At last, the police were on the trail of Captain 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 men. 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, we 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 rumbling 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 over the sea 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 shut 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 perils of the pursuit. It was a spectacle to move the most stolid apathy; the sight of a couple of hundred demoniacal figures lighted 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 scum 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-bearer followed her, as a shark follows a death ship; we seemed even to have backed into its course—it came on as 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 battleship. 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 shone 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 sight 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 nad chilling silence.

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

We found the crew sullen 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 ten knots. The foremost ironclad crept up minute by minute; 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 outpacing 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 seas; 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 seas. I waited for the crash, and in the suspense hours seemed to pass. At 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.)

HORSES THIRTY FEET TALL

Roamed in Wyoming Some Time Ago and Are Now Fossilized.

Out in Wyoming a lot of scientific grubbers have unearthed the fossil remains of a horse thirty feet long and more than thirty feet high. The grubbers seem to have pieced the horse together without any comment and they don't offer a word of information concerning either his genealogy or his track record.

A horse thirty feet long would appear to be a lot of horse. If he belonged to the cave man the latter certainly had his hands full. A horse so tall that a thirty-foot ladder became necessary when his bridle was to be put on might well be called the pride of the stable — although no ordinary stable would begin to accommodate him.

If the cave man hadn't any ladder and couldn't borrow one the next best thing was to climb a tree. Then try to imagine him shinning up a tall palm with the heavy bridle on his back, only to find when he attained the right altitude that the horse had moved beyond reach and was peacefully browsing on the tall grass of the jungle!

Of course, a thirty-foot horse could be expected to cover much more ground than the ordinary animal of the same breed—even at a walk. And if he took it into his head to work his way across lots there would appear to be nothing to impede him. Fences would go down before him like stubble and a merely playful cavort would carry him over raging torrents.

When a thirty-foot horse shied at a bit of white paper in the roadway the chances are that he jumped clear over into the next county.

As a war horse the thirty-footer must have been a startler. When he let out a neigh the enemy fled in blind and unreasoning terror. When he champed his bit and pawed the ground the very hills shuddered. When he switched his tail the hireling foe fell about him like ripened grain.

And then think of the nightmare that could be expected to follow the first sight of this prodigious equine! He certainly was a wonder. It is a great pity we know so little about him.—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Except the Good Singers.

"When a young lady refuses to sing it's a——"

"It's a dream; they never do."—Houston Post.

Editorials

Opinions of Great Papers on Important Subjects.

VANISHING FORESTS.

IN the Pacific Northwest, nearly two hundred thousand men are employed in cutting down the last primeval forests of this country and slicing these stately armies of spruce and fir and cedar into 5,000,000,000 feet of lumber and 6,000,000,000 shingles every year.

This timbered area is the richest natural treasure of the American continent, compared with which the gold mines of Alaska and Nevada are of picayune value for this and for coming generations.

It is so wonderfully rich a treasure that, according to Ralph D. Paine, in Outing, its owners are squandering it like drunken spendthrifts. A billion feet of lumber is wasted every year; enough to build one hundred thousand comfortable American homes.

It is characteristic of Western men and methods that the ways of logging in the East should have been flung aside as crude and slow. The giant timber of the Washington forests on the slopes of the Cascades is not hauled by teams or rafted down rivers. Steam has made of logging a business which devastates the woods with incredible speed, system and ardor.

The logging camps of the Cascades differ as strikingly from the lumbering centers of northern New England as the electric gold dredges of the Sacramento Valley contrast with the placer diggings of the Forty-niners. In other words, the greater the need of preserving the forests, the greater is the American ingenuity for turning them into cash as fast as possible.—New York Sun.

HUNTING THE POLE

THE unapproachable North Pole has been a nuisance about long enough. It has caused innumerable chilblains, bronchitises and disappointments, much popular boredom, and not a few deaths, to say nothing of the financial waste. Nobody gets there, for by the time a fellow comes within something like 200 miles of it the hardship has turned him into another sort of man—the sort that renigs. This may go on indefinitely, unless we find a way to cut it short, and that is not easy.

It has recently been suggested that if someone should absent himself for a while and then come back and say he had climbed the pole, the agony would abate. I don't believe it. Science would overhaul his data and find lacunae in it. The search for the pole would be renewed. Or, if science believed him, fresh expeditions would set out to verify his findings and enlarge their scope. Thus we see why Arctic explorers don't lie, why they one and all confess their failure; fibs would not do a bit of good, whether swallowed or not.

But don't imagine that it's scientific enthusiasm alone that lures men to brave the Polar ice. A genial Maecenas finances the venture, and when you get home you can write a $25,000 book and go on a $100,000 lecture tour. As your Arctic experience has fitted you to live on shoe strings and candle ends, this means wealth.

Financially, pole hunting is bound to become more and more attractive. Wireless telegraphy will soon permit an explorer to flash home hair-lifting dispatches at the rate of $50 a syllable.—Boston Transcript.

THE SIMPLIFIED SPELLERS.

IF Congress thought to discourage that band of patriots known as the simplified spellers by refusing to adopt simplified spelling it is going to be disappointed. The simplified spellers are not in the least cast down. Dr. Funk, author of "The Widow's Mite" and chairman of the committee of spellers, says his committee never asked the government or the President to adopt the new plan, and now that the government has snubbed the President and refused to adopt it the situation remains exactly what it was before.

These simplified fellows can't spell themselves and it grieves them to know that anybody can do so. They pretend to like a new code of spelling, but that is only a bluff. What they are trying to do is to make good spellers abandon their ways and thus bring about a state of anarchy; then they will get up and claim to be as good spellers as anybody. It does not seem likely that they will succeed. Good spellers are naturally proud of their accomplishment and we do not think any of them will be bamboozled into abandoning it for the benefit of any person who has difficulty in spelling well.—Kansas City World.

ANOMALIES OF PROSPERITY.

NATURAL prosperity continues to show that it entails certain penalties as well as pleasures. The very force of the swelling tide tends to react upon itself. Thus business activity is so great that money commands high prices. It is not only the stock gamblers who suffer. Legitimate enterprises are halted by the difficulty of financing them. It is well known that the published rates for money do not by any means tell the story. Money, like any other commodity, is worth what it will bring, and neither lender nor borrower is likely to take the public into confidence into transactions far above the normal rate. The scarcity of money is one disagreeable phase of prosperity; the great enterprises are hampered and scarcity of labor is another. Here, too, great enterprises are hampered and delayed by the circumstance that men are not to be had to do the manual labor. They cannot be secured even by offering extravagantly high wages. There are simply not enough men in the country to do the work of the country. The tide reacts upon itself again.—Chicago Chronicle.

GETTING INTO SCHOOL.

The registering of the names of new primary pupils for the coming school year was in progress in New York's largest school as a representative of the New York Sun entered. The law prohibits a child from becoming a wage-earner before reaching the age of 14 years, and forbids their admission to the public schools before they are 6 years old. These rules are disliked by many of the East Side parents, and attempts are often made to evade that relating to school age by adding to the years of the youngsters when they are brought to the schoolhouse. The teachers are required to explain, over and over again, that a child who has just passed a fifth birthday is not yet 6 years old, although the social conventions of the East Side hold to the contrary.

"How old?" the teacher asks the mother of a tiny girl who is clinging to her skirts.

Conscience and desire struggle. Finally the mother says, hoarsely, and it is necessary to lean forward a little to hear:

"I can't tell a lie. I was born in Wien."

Just why birth in the Austrian capital should be put forward in such a predicament she does not say, and the teacher, used to weird statements, does not ask. She keeps to the subject at hand.

"You mean she is not 6 yet?"

A last ray of hope is evident in the forthcoming whisper.

"Not yet, but she will be soon."

The teacher shakes her head, and weeping mother and thumb-sucking child are obliged to seek the kindergarten, which to the East Sider means a waste of time and effort. "Mere play," they say, contemptuously. "I want the child to go to school."

The next applicant was a small boy who came alone. Evidently, he had been well tutored in memorizing what was thought most essential.

"Where do you live, dear?" asked the teacher.

"Sixth."

"You mean you are 6?"

"Sixth."

"Are you vaccinated?"

"Sixth."

"Born in this country?"

"Sixth."

Judgment of no undecided character descends upon his unhatted mop of hair.

"You go home and get a birth certificate and a vaccination paper before you come back."

Of the next, who was accompanied by his grandmother, the teacher observed, "But he certainly looks less than 6."

"Ach!" and his gray-haired grandmother drew him forward as if to protect him from some threatened violence. "Show your teeth, Abraham."

The mouth opens, disclosing a jagged-edged crater.

"Feel his seconds."

The grandmother is personified willpower, and the teacher unwillingly advances a finger, which is seized and rubbed across the mouth of the cavern and then tossed back as of no further use in this world or the next.

"Don't he look six with those seconds?"

Nevertheless she is told she must bring better evidence of the boy's age.

A silver cup, supposed to be presented at his christening in Russia and engraved with date and name, was unswathed from its wrappings, and triumphantly exhibited to the teacher as evidence in behalf of the claims of the next applicant.

The teacher takes the loving-cup and admires it generously. It is a bit battered and shows its long journeyings.

"How do I know," she says, patting a tow head that accompanies the cup "that this is Moritz?"

The mother looks at her with the expression of one who wrestles with crass ignorance. There is the cup, and here is Moritz. She tries to explain in broken English, but the teacher is frightfully stupid. She cannot make her understand, and finally goes away to get a birth certificate.

The various documents brought forward and presented to the teachers for inspection during registration form a curious collection. Passports, birth certificates, certificates of vaccination, written or printed in Yiddish, Russian, Hebrew, Hungarian, appear among them. Obviously, the lingual accomplishments of the teachers of the New York public schools must be of an unusual kind.

ONE OF MAN'S LIMITATIONS.

He Can Not Be Careless About the Way He Wears His Hat.

There are things, it is a comfort to know, which even a man cannot do, and a man is supposed to be able to do almost anything. Now a novelist may put his heroine's hat on her head at any angle he chooses—it is one of the few privileges of womanhood—and leave her not a bit less charming or dignified, but I defy him to put his hero's hat at a rowdy angle over his ear at a crucial point in his career and leave him still heroic!

The Achilles heel of a man is his hat. He must guard that as he does his reputation, for it is at once his strength and weakness. It would hurt an archbishop—and an archbishop necessarily stands for all that is good and great—less in the eyes of the public to commit a crime than to wear his hat on the back of his sacred head—real back!—and so exhibit himself to his distressed diocese. He may have all the known virtues and many that are not known, but even an archbishop cannot with impunity defy convention. Still, if he is so inclined, why should not a great and good man wear his hat over his nose without creating unfavorable comment? The fact is he cannot. He is ruled by convention and convention is the red tape of society.

The cast iron laws of fashion, which is only another name for convention, are such that if the greatest man in England were to walk with all his accustomed dignity from the marble arch to the bank with a trailing peacock's feather attached to the band of his immaculate silk hat he would be followed by a mob in two seconds and by the time he reached Vere street the outraged majesty of the law would take him into custody as a suspicious character.—Putnam's Monthly.

A Base Libel.

"Yes," said Tess, "he proposed to me last night."

"The idea!" exclaimed Jes. "On his knees, I suppose?"

"Oh, you mean thing! I was not! At least—not until afterward."—Philadelphia Press.

There are always lots of wolves until the men engage in a wolf hunt.

MARK TWAIN AT HOME.

By his gift of story-telling Mark Twain has endeared himself to the whole American people. A pleasant glimpse of the way in which this gift was exercised in his own home, for his own children, he gives in his autobiography, published in the North American.

"Along one side of the library, in the Hartford home," he says, "the bookshelves joined the mantelpiece; in fact, there were shelves both sides of the mantelpiece. On those shelves and on the mantelpiece stood various ornaments. At one end of the procession was a framed oil-painting of a cat's head; at the other end was the head of a beautiful young girl, life-size—called Emmeline, because she looked just like that,—an impressionist water-color. Between the pictures there were twelve or fifteen of the bric-a-brac things already mentioned; also an oil-painting by Elihu Vedder, 'The Young Medusa.'

"Now and then the children required me to construct a romance,—always impromptu,—not a moment's preparation permitted,—and into that romance I had to get all that bric-a-brac and the three pictures. I had to start always with the cat and finish with Emmeline. I was never allowed the refreshment of a change, end for end. It was not permitted to introduce any bric-a-brac ornament into the story out of its place in the procession. In the course of time the pictures and the bric-brac showed wear. It was because they had so many and such tumultuous adventures in their romantic careers.

"As romancer to the children I had a hard time even from the beginning. If they brought me a picture in a magazine, and required me to build a story to it, they would cover the rest of the page with their pudgy hands, to keep me from stealing an idea from it. The stories had to come hot from the bat always.

"Sometimes the children furnished me a character or two, or a dozen, and required me to start out at once on that slim basis and deliver those characters up to a vigorous and entertaining life of crime. If they heard of a new trade, or an unfamiliar animal, or anything like that, I was pretty sure to have to deal with it in the next romance.

"Once Clara required me to build a sudden tale out of a plumber and a 'bawgunstrictor,' and I had to do it. She didn't know what a boa-constrictor was until he developed in the tale. Then she was better satisfied with it than ever."

Puzzle of the Marine Barracks.

Among the interested visitors at the marine barracks at Washington on one occasion there was a party of young girls from a Maryland town. They proved very much interested in everything pertaining to the life and discipline of the post. "What do you mean by 'taps'?" asked one young woman. "Taps are played every night on the bugle," answered the officer. "It means 'lights out.' They play it over the bodies of dead soldiers." A puzzled look came to the face of the questioner. Then she asked. "What do you do if you haven't a dead soldier?"

Double Star in the Dipper.

Not everyone is aware that Mizar, the second star of the big dipper, is a double star. To observe this doublet on a clear night requires good vision.

THE RULE AND THE TEST.

Few Resolutions Can Be Rigidly Adhered to on All Occasions.

"Twenty years ago," Miss Harriet observed, 'I made a rule from which I have never deviated since. It is largely to the observance of that rule that I attribute my freedom from wrinkles and worry."

Miss Harriet's hearers looked interested; one was very apt to look interested when Miss Vinton was talking.

"Was it an Emersonian rule?" Constance asked, slyly.

"It was," Miss Harriet returned, calmly. "I had to go through a great deal of unnecessary suffering before I arrived at my decision; mankind—and especially womankind—spends a great deal of life in undergoing unnecessary suffering, and I was no exception. But one day my eyes were opened. Since then I have sternly refused to accept any gift except flowers from any friend I possess."

Constance and Katharine exchanged involuntary glances; each face, although amused, revealed a trifle of embarrassment.

"Of course," Miss Harriet pursued, "I don't expect you to take my advice—I've given up expecting anybody to take advice—that's another emancipation; I am merely saying that it is a pity to have such a pretty room as this spoiled by that atrocious vase and the paper-doll lady in the very extensive frame."

"Would you mind telling us," Katharine inquired, respectfully, "how you managed your emancipation without hurting people?"

"I didn't manage it without hurting people. It did hurt people's foolish feelings at first—mine most of all. But it's easy now. As soon as I find I am making a new friend I lead the conversation to the subject of gifts, and express my sentiments clearly and unmistakably, and after a gasp of surprise, people take it sensibly and realize the comfort of it."

Constance sighed wistfully. "It does sound comfortable," she said. "But I know I never could."

Two days later, as the girls were coming in from a concert, they met little Katie Barry just leaving. Katie was a cripple, and Miss Harriet, in her usual breezy fashion, found many things to do for her, and was repaid by an adoring devotion. To-day Katie's thin little face was fairly radiant.

"I brought Miss Harriet a present," she confided to them. "She liked it a lot."

With one impulse the girls flew to the library. It was even better than they expected. Miss Harriet was gazing with an expression of grim dismay at an imitation bronze vase with a huge pink bow.

"Well," she greeted them, "say it! Now's your chance."

But the girls, to their honor, said nothing—then. Only to each other they acknowledged a certain comfort in the situation.—Youth's Companion.

The Dog Was Tired.

A little incident related by the late General Shafter in an article on the capture of Santiago illustrates the spirit of the American soldiers who entered Cuba, and at the same time contains a bit of humor that was none the less enjoyable because it was unconscious.

The men had been in battle all day, and, weary as they were, had then walked eleven rough, muddy miles in the dark, a remarkable and arduous performance, which served to show their sterling military qualities.

A correspondent noticed a corporal of the Twenty-fifth Colored Regiment carrying a pet dog in his arms. Surprised that an overworked soldier should voluntarily burden himself, he said:

"Corporal, didn't you march all night before last?"

"Yes, sah."

"Didn't you fight all day yesterday?"

"'Deed I did, sah."

"Didn't you march all last night?"

"Yes, sah."

"Then why do you carry that dog?"

"Why, boss, 'cause the dog's tired."

Tides Upon Land and Sea.

A correspondent of the Geodetic Survey has recently made observations with the seismograph at Mauritius that have led to the suggestion that not only the ocean and the atmosphere but even the land may experience the effects of a daily tide running round and round the earth as it revolves on its axis.

But, while the tides in the air and the sea are due more to the moon than to the sun, the supposed "land tide" arises solely from the sun's action.

Moreover, it is caused not by the attraction of the sun but by its heat. A wave of depression is supposed to follow the sun from east to west, caused by the extraction of moisture from the soil.

At Mauritius it is found that there is a relative upheaval of the land to the west of the place of observation from morning until evening and a relative depression on the same side, or an upheaval to the east, during the same night.

Surprise to the Office Boy.

In a certain large and busy office downtown there are five telephone booths, and it takes a good deal of the time of one office boy to answer the many calls. During rush hours, indeed, these calls are almost incessant, and when the duty of attending to them was assigned to a new boy the other day he got into trouble right away. Before answering a call he learned that the party at the other end was the wife of one of the members of the firm. He called this member out of his office and told him his wife wanted to speak to him on the phone. The member, approaching the booths, asked, "Which one?" "I'm sure I don't know, sir," replied the boy. "I didn't know you had more than one."—Philadelphia Record.

When a strong, healthy man gets a severe pain, he is sure he is nearer death than the invalid who loafs around the edge of the grave continually.

For that tired feeling policemen should give tramps arrest.