

THE IRON PIRATE

A Plain Tale of Strange Happenings on the Sea

By MAX PEMBERTON

CHAPTER XVII.—(Continued.)

His anger was fierce, terrible as a tornado. His teeth gnashed, his hands shook, he rolled in his chair like a great wounded beast; but when he saw that I was unmoved, he fell quiet again, and said in a low, coaxing voice:

"Don't compel me, lad, to do what I have meant not to do. You're here for good or ill. These men are nothing to you; they're lazy dogs that the world's well rid of—let 'em die, and save your own carcass. You've been here days now—the first man that ever lived among us without signing our papers. You've a straight notion that my hand's agen Europe, and, for the matter of that, agen the world, too; those that share with me shall swing with me. It isn't of my asking that you're amongst us, or that you took up the work of Hall, who put the first nail in his coffin that night he came to my bed at Spezia. I saw him there, though he thought me sleeping; and that night I wrote death against his name, as I wrote it against yours when you entered my room in Paris. There's reasons why I've broken my word in your case, though you'll never know 'em; but there's no reason why you shouldn't swear to go through it with me. There's my papers. Sign 'em now, or you lie a corpse before an hour on the clock."

He leaned over his writing table and put into my hands a rough sheet of parchment. But my eyes were dimmed with the restless excitement of the situation. The silence of the room was terrible to bear; it was as though I struggled for life while already in the tomb. My thoughts went hurriedly to Europe, to my hope, to my friends. I took heart for a step which was the last mad design of a driven man.

"Give me the pen!" I said suddenly. He put the pen into my hands, and leaned back with a chuckle of satisfaction; but the movement cost him the game. I clutched his pistol with a lightning grasp, and covered him with it.

"If you raise a finger I'll shoot you like a dog," I cried.

Then the man, who was no-traven, sat motionless in his chair, and his face might have been cut from marble.

"If you raise your voice to call out, or if anyone comes to this room, you die where you sit," I said.

"You're the first that's bested Black," he said. "I'm caught like a rat in the hole. What do you want? Name it, and I'll know how we stand!"

"I want my life—now that I refuse to sign that paper. You can give me the order that no man's to lay a finger on me, and you will?"

He thought a moment, looking straight down the barrel of the Colt. Then he said:

"Yes, I can't avoid that—I'll give you that."

"And my liberty on the first occasion offering."

"No," he replied very slowly and sternly; "they'd tear me to pieces."

There was no doubt that he had right in this. I put the pistol down; then I offered him my hand, and he jumped up from his seat, grasping it with a great clutch.

"You're a sound plank of a boy."

The sound of firing, rapid and oft repeated, came to us from the shore of the cove below. He went to his window and I saw the whole bay lit with silver light from a full-risen moon, and the distant peaks as grim beacons above a land of west.

Out on the snow there was a hungry crowd of starving souls, crying for bread; and those to whom they cried answered them with their muskets, drenching the glittering white with many a red stream.

"For heaven's sake, help those men, if you have anything but the instincts of a brute in you!" I cried.

There was a pause before he answered me. Then he snatched a rifle from a case and said:

"Take that pistol and come on. There's blood to let."

I followed him down the passage to the beach, where he blew a whistle sharp and shrill.

"That'll wake 'em on the ship," he explained. "I'm not afraid of these, but there's fighting to be done—now don't show ill you're wanted."

He advanced towards the snow plain and sang out:

"John, you there, Dick—hands to quarters, do you hear me? Move right quick, or I'll move you!"

They put down their arms from their shoulders in blank amazement, and listened to him as he went on:

"There's enough down for one night, I reckon, and I'm not going to be kept awake by your firing."

They came round him slowly and sulkily, and he drove them to the big houses with fine round phrases. I lurked near him, but an American saw me and cried:

"Say, Cap'en, hev ye took to adoptin' that boy as ye seems so fond of?"

"Awful, instantaneous. As the men fled towards the hills, Black called after them: 'Bring to, you carrion, or I'll wipe you out, every one of you! Any man who'll save his throat, let him come here!'"

At these words they turned back to a man, and came cowering to the water's edge. Thirty of their fellows lay dead or wounded on the stones.

"Where's your leader?" asked Black, and they pointed to the American, who lay with the blood pouring from a wound in his left thigh.

"He's there, is he?" screamed the infuriated man. "Well, I'll cure him like a ham. Get torches, some of you, and let 'em burn."

All helped him in his ghastly work, and brought shovels and picks, which they carried to the higher plane of snow.

"We've got to die, both of us," said the American at last; "you en me, Black, en there isn't much as we kin look for. Go on, lay me right here as I lay now; but I'll rise agen you, and the day'll come when you'd give every dollar ye're worth to dig me up, en give me life agen."

I touched Black on the arm and was about to plead with him; but at the sight of me he raised his fist, and I moved away. He stood foaming and muttering, his hands clenched. The haste of the men was not half haste enough for him; and when they began to dig he hurried them the more, until a great pile of snow had been thrown out.

I watched them roll the man over into the trench and shovel the snow quickly upon him. He watched them, silent in his terror; but when his head only was uncovered he gave a shriek of agony, which rose like the great cry of a man going before his God, and ceased not to echo from height to height until long minutes had passed. Black gave a great start, and shivering as a man struck down with a deadly chill, he passed from the grave to the beach.

CHAPTER XVIII.

It was on the next afternoon, near to the setting of the sun, that Doctor Osbart came to my room with great news for me.

"This business with the men has completely upset our plans," said he. "Black hoped to winter here; and to let the hubbub in Europe quite subside before he put to sea again. Now he can't do that. There's only one thing that will keep the hands quiet, and that's excitement. He has determined to sail to-night; but, before we talk of that, we must have the conditions."

"What have you to ask?" said I.

"Simply this," he answered. "You shall give your word, as a man of honor, that you will make no attempt to leave the ship without permission."

"I accept."

Then slowly the great engines began their work, and we swept out to the open sea. We dined that night in the saloon upon the deck, a commodious place lighted by electricity, and in every way luxuriously fitted. The walls of it were paneled in white and gold, and were covered with curious designs, old heroes fighting, old gods drawn by lions at their chariots; Jason seeking the fleece in a golden barque; Oristes fleeing the Furies. The long seats were covered in leather of a deep crimson, and there was a small piano. The dinner itself was admirably served, and was partaken of by the deaf and dumb engineer, by the doctor, the Scotsman and myself. Black talked without reserve before me, knowing well that I could do him no injury. He relied mostly on the doctor for advice, and discussed everything with him in the best of tempers.

"My plan is this," he said; "we're short of oil, and Karl here is beginning to get uneasy. I shall knock over a couple of whalers in these seas and fill the tanks. Then, as they're looking for us in mid-Atlantic, we'll get south of Madeira, and run against two or three of the big ones making for Rio or Buenos Ayres. We shall pick up a good bit of money; and it'll be a month before they get on our course that way, for I mean to let 'em down light when it's not a case of saving our own skin."

We passed the Danish settlement of Godthaab early on the next morning, though so far out at sea that I could make nothing of it; while we lost the coast of Greenland altogether before the day had passed, a hazy shower of dust-like snow greeting our coming to the Atlantic and to a perceptibly warmer latitude. During this day, and until we sighted the Shetlands, the small screw tender kept our course, and we exchanged signals with her every morning.

Finally we sighted the coast of Ireland, and I know not if I have ever had a greater pleasure than that distant view. It was as though I had passed from a dead land to the land of man, from the silent ways of night to the first breaking of the day.

CHAPTER XIX.

It was not until daybreak on the following morning that we reached the track of ocean-bound ships; but our voyage was altogether in favor of Black, for the sun had scarce risen when Doctor Osbart got from my bed to see what he called my first introduction to business.

"There's the Red Cross Line's Bellonic not a mile off on the starboard quarter," cried he exultingly, "and we're going to clear her."

I dressed anyhow, almost as excited as he was, and stepped on to the gallery. All eyes were turned to the north, where, now almost abreast of us, there was the long and magnificent hull of the great liner. She went at a tremendous pace and was rapidly leaving us, when the great gun forward sent a shell plunging the sea fifty yards ahead of the Bellonic.

The effect of the call was seen upon the great vessel, whose decks were soon dotted with black objects, while three more men appeared on the bridge, and the signal flags ran up.

"Give it him for'ard," roared Black; and the shot that answered his command struck the quivering hull not twenty feet from the windlass and you could see the splinters carried fifty feet in the air, while the shrieks of terror came over the sea to us.

Screaming like wild beasts, the men turned the handles of the Maxim guns; the balls rained upon the defenseless liner as hail upon a sheepfold. I saw strong men reel and fall their length as death took them; the breeze bore to me the wailing of women, and the sobs of children.

The flag dropped and the signal was made to us to come aboard.

"Lower away the launch, you John!" cried Black, "and take every shilling you can lay hands on, and hang up that skipper for a thin-skinned fool."

"You'd better go," said Osbart to me, "you'll be amused;" and suggested it to Black.

"Yes, he shall go," he cried; "if we swing, he shall swing. Let him get aboard."

I might as well have put a pistol to my head as to have refused. They bundled me into the launch; but they would not leave me when they came alongside, and "Roaring John" himself drove me up the ladder. Seven of us at last stood on the bridge, and were face to face with the captain of the Bellonic, and four of his officers.

The deck was a very babel of sounds, of groans, of weeping. The ship's surgeon himself seemed paralyzed before the sight of the carnage around him. But above all this terror, I know of nothing which struck me with such fearful sorrow as the sight of a fair young English girl lying by the door of the great saloon, her arms extended, her nut-brown hair soaked in her own blood, while his tears fell over her, and you could see his hands falling upon her dead face, and his ravings were incoherent and almost those of a maniac. Meanwhile another scene was passing on the bridge between the man John and the captain of the Bellonic.

"What do you want aboard of my ship?" cried the latter; and "Roaring John" answered him with a mocking leer:

"We've come aboard to hang you, to begin on."

The men with the young officer cocked their revolvers at this, and I said in a mad frenzy which would not brook silence:

"You scoundrel, if you touch another soul here I'll shoot you myself; if I had my revolver on me. Do you make a business of killing children?" I cried again, and pointed to the dead body of the girl-child. I don't know who was more surprised, the captain of the Bellonic, listening, or the man John.

"You cub," he cried; "if you talk to me I'll skin you alive!" but I said quickly:

"Gentlemen, these men want every shilling on this ship. Give it them now and save your lives, for you have no alternative. If you give the money up, you have my word that they won't touch you."

"As there's a heaven above," exclaimed the young captain, "they shall pay for this day's work with their lives. I hand my speche over under this protest; but don't deceive yourselves—half the warships in Europe shall follow you within a week."

He turned away, and presently the ruffians with me had lowered money to the value of a hundred and fifty thousand pounds into their launch. When at last we put off again, and the launch was full of the jewels and the money, it seemed that I had passed through a hideous dream.

On the second day after the robbery of the Bellonic, we stopped a second and then a third ship; though I saw nothing of it, as all the fighting was on the starboard side, and my cabin was to port; but there was a sharp fight on the third morning with a Cape-bound vessel, and again towards the afternoon with one of the North German Lloyd boats homeward bound to Bremerhaven; Osbart, coming to my rooms, delighted to give me the details of these captures.

(To be continued.)

Handicapped.

The obese citizen who was headed toward the depot six blocks away paused to look at his watch.

"Have I time to catch the next train for St. Louis?" he asked, addressing a policeman on the corner.

"You have the time," replied the officer, "but you don't seem to have the speed."

Joyful Age.

"Yes," admitted the maid, "I have just celebrated the twenty-eighth anniversary of my sojourn on earth."

"I congratulate you," rejoined the old bachelor. "At that age a girl ceases to worry about her inability to acquire a husband and begins to have a good time."

Promise of Improvement.

"Edith," exclaimed her mother, "I'm sorry I brought you to the shore at all. Here five days and you're engaged to two young men. It's disgraceful!"

"Yes," admitted the summer girl, "it's pretty slow work, but give me time, ma, give me time."—Philadelphia Press.

Snarl of Luck.

"Meeker's good luck seems to be coming in bunches," remarked Enpeck, as he laid aside his paper.

"How's that?" queried Mrs. Enpeck. "He has just got \$5,000 from a man who has alienated his wife's affections," replied Enpeck.

His Identity.

"Papa, who is a gentleman of the old school?"

"One, my son, who insists on having Bright's disease when he can abundantly afford appendicitis."—Puck.

Erute.

His Wife—What do you think of my new photographs, John?

Her Husband—They flatter you, my dear. The man must have hypnotized you into looking pleasant.

It Is Even So.

Elderleigh—There are two things a man never forgets.

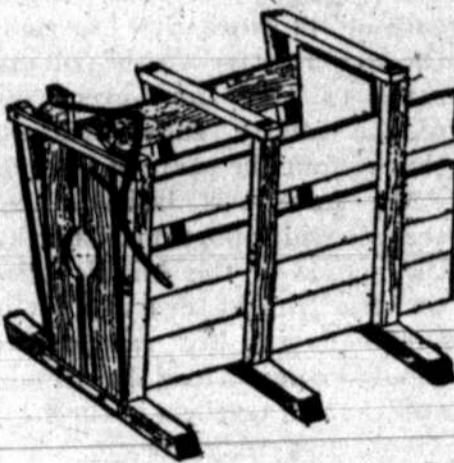
DeYoung—What are they?

Elderleigh—His first love affair and his first shave.



Rack for Dehorning.

The illustration shows a rack to be used either for dehorning cattle or ringing hogs. For allia use three pieces 4 feet long and 4 inches by 4 inches mortised for bottom of posts 8 inches each side of center to allow the sides and bottom boards to drop into place. Four posts 4 inches by 4 inches and 5 feet 4 inches long and two posts 4 inches by 4 inches, and 5 feet 8 inches long are tenoned to the allia. Three cap pieces 2 inches by 4 inches and 4 feet 2 inches long are mortised at the ends to receive tops of posts. The caps are of oak. One oak piece in front of the cap, which holds the stanchion, is 2 inches by 2 inches, and 4 feet 2 inches long. The lower oak piece in front of the stanchion is 2 inches by 4 inches and 2 feet long. The lumber is 2 inches thick and 7 feet long for sides. One board 2 inches by 17 inches and 7 feet



BACK FOR DEHORNING.

long is used for the bottom. For stanchions in front use one board 2 inches by 10 inches, 5 feet 6 inches long; one board 2 inches by 10 inches, 5 feet 2 inches long. For back gate use two pieces 2 inches by 12 inches, 4 feet 4 inches long, cut sloping to fit the frame. It is put on with hinges. The stanchions in front are bolted at the bottom between a 2 inches by 4 inch piece, and the sill, leaving a space up and down in front 5 inches wide. Two and a half feet from the bottom of the stanchion slope, cut a place for the animal's neck. The 2 inches by 2 inch oak piece is bolted to the side of the cap with blocks to allow the top of the stanchions to open and close and work with a lever. The lever, which can be made of wagon tire, is 5 feet 6 inches long. A 3/4-inch hole is punched in the top of the lever, a second hole 13 1/2 inches from top hole, and the third hole 11 inches from second hole. The upper hole is for attachment of two iron straps, one on each side, which are fastened to the left hand stanchion. From the lower hole two pieces of iron 1 1/2 inches long go to the right hand stanchion. When the stanchions are closed one or two half-inch holes in a post back of lever, in which to use an iron pin to hold the stanchions in place.—Montreal Star.

Water and Salt for Cows.

Eight gallons of water a day is the average quantity required for a cow, and the milk given is about 87 per cent water. In some pastures there is no water, the cows being supplied night and morning, which forces such cow to drink four gallons at a time in order to be supplied. As the cow does not know that she must drink four gallons, she may use less, and she will reduce her milk supply accordingly.

Extensive tests and investigations have been made by the experiment stations to determine the advisability of adding salt to the ration of dairy cows. As a result of these trials, it is recommended that dairy cows be given at least one ounce of salt per day. Exceptionally heavy milkers will require more than this. The uniform results obtained with all cows employed in these trials indicate that salt in addition to that obtained in their food is absolutely essential to the continued health of a dairy cow, while producing milk. It is evident, moreover, that the amount of salt which must be supplied directly will greatly vary in different localities, it being more at high elevations and at places remote from the sea.—Agricultural Epitomist.

A Kettle Support.

At butchering time and whenever water is to be heated it is a bother to set the kettle or to hang it with chains.

A simple hoop with three or four legs welded on, saves the time and trouble. Any blacksmith will make it for a few cents if you furnish an old cart tire for hoops and legs. Order the legs the right length to hold the kettle just high enough. It is easily moved then from house to barn, or to a neighbor's.—Farm and Home.

Kaffir Corn in Mexico.

Kaffir corn is being cultivated successfully in the State of Oaxaca, Mexico, and its cultivation is to be extended. This corn, which is a native of Egypt, requires only the moisture of the dew for its wants, and appeals to the farmer for planting during the dry season.

Treatment of the Soil.

We have but little more definite knowledge of the soil and the principles involved in its treatment than we had sixty years ago, says the Scientific American. Fertility is not nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium alone, though the potential value of any field, or State, or country, from the agricultural standpoint, is measured by these constituent elements in its soil; yet it has been demonstrated that soils which contain an abundance of these elements, and which are potentially capable of producing crops for centuries perhaps, are not capable of producing profitable crops without the addition of further amounts of these constituents. The chemical investigator is, therefore, compelled to take into consideration other facts than this. He must, if he would cover the whole field, know something of geology, of botany, of physics, of biology, of bacteriology, and of the other natural sciences, because chemistry alone is not capable of fully comprehending the problem; thus, the opportunity for specializing in any branch has been very great, and it is because of the broadness of the subject, and the opportunity, as already pointed out, and the necessity, also, for giving immediate help from the knowledge that we have that has prevented in a degree a broad study of the fundamentals essential for enabling genuine progress to be made.

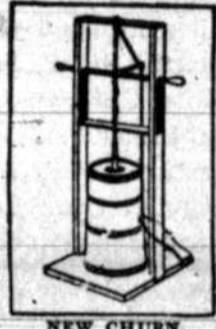
Alfalfa a Swine Tonic.

Raising 1,000 hogs a year without ever having any sign of cholera in the herd is the claim put forth by M. Barber of Bloomington, Neb. He makes a specialty of this industry and has 300 acres of alfalfa, where the hogs are raised.

"My hogs are raised in the field from the time they are pigs till they are about 8 months old, when I put them on a feed of corn," said Mr Barber to a representative of the Kansas City Drivers' Telegram. "If fed in summer time I soak the corn. But the alfalfa is the most important feed they get, and is the one great thing that keeps them healthy all the year around. In all the years that I have been raising and handling hogs in this way, I never had a case of hog cholera on my farm. This is due to the alfalfa, which keeps the hogs healthy."

Improved Butter Churn.

The old-fashioned hand butter churn, so long associated with fresh air and country life, seems destined to be overtaken by other up to date churns and which require less labor to operate. The old-fashioned churn was a clumsy affair, and not a little "elbow grease" was required to manipulate it. In the illustration is shown one of newer hand churns, which nevertheless contains most of the principles of the older churns. The only change is in the application of the power mechanism. In this machine the power is so placed that little effort is required to operate it. A foot pedal is added, and the hand power is entirely different from the old method. Instead of forcing the paddle up from the churn after every descent with the hands, springs are placed beneath the hand grips which do the forcing automatically. It would be possible to operate this churn and at the same time read a book or newspaper.



NEW CHURN.

Young Farmers Going to Cities.

A recent news telegram from York, Pa., says: "With the return to the county commissioners to-day of the last registry assessor's book it was shown by the totals that the population of voters in the county has decreased in six months nearly 400. The shrinkage in the male population is attributed by the commissioners to the desertion of the farms by young men, most of whom have been lured to Philadelphia and other cities under the impression that they can speedily make fortunes."

In the borough of Red Lion sixty voters have gone to the city within six months. The decrease in population is greater than in the boroughs. The total registration in the boroughs and townships of the county last spring was 22,802. The present registration shows 388 less."

Renovating Work Soils.

Prof. W. J. Spillman, in bulletin No. 245 on the renovation of wornout soils, says:

"To build up and maintain fertility in the soil, feed a large part of the crops, and return the manure to the land. If manure is not available, plow under crops grown for the purpose. Plow deep, but do not subsoil. Grow leguminous crops for the nitrogen they add to the soil."

Commercial fertilizers and lime may be important means of improving the soil but the fertilizer requirements of different soils and different crops in different seasons are so little understood that we are not yet in a position to make positive recommendations that are of general application."

The Decline of the French.

The introduction of new varieties, budding, and the attacks of insects, as well as diseases formerly unknown, have curtailed the usefulness of the peach tree and confined it to certain localities. Budding or grafting the trees, whether apple, peach or pear, is now but a reproduction of the original variety, and may introduce all the imperfections as well as the advantages of the variety, to every portion of the country.

THE WEEKLY HISTORIAN



1569—First English lottery took place.

1610—Galileo discovered Jupiter's satellites.

1644—Archbishop Laud beheaded.

1808—Cape of Good Hope surrendered by the Dutch to the British....Vienna evacuated by the French.

1813—William Jones of Pennsylvania became Secretary of the Navy.

1815—Gen. Andrew Jackson defeated British at Battle of New Orleans.

1840—Penny Post introduced in England by Rowland Hill....Chartist rising at Sheffield, England.

1841—Samuel Scott, daring American diver, accidentally hanged himself on Waterloo bridge, London, while giving exhibition.

1842—Francis Coppee, French poet, born.

1844—Sir Hudson Lowe, governor of St. Helena during Napoleon's captivity, died.

1854—Astor library, New York, opened.

1861—Steamer Star of the West fired upon at Charleston....Jacob Thompson of Mississippi resigned as Secretary of the Interior....Philip F. Thomas of Maryland resigned as Secretary of the Treasury.

1863—Metropolitan Underground Railway, in London, ceremoniously opened.

1866—Steamer London, from England to Australia, founded in Bay of Biscay; 220 lost.

1868—Chinese government appointed Burlingame its special envoy to all the treaty powers.

1871—Paris bargained....Prince Frederick Charles gained victory over Chanzy at Le Mans.

1880—Upper suspension bridge at Niagara Falls destroyed by wind storm....Thirty-three persons killed and scores injured in whirlwind at Reading, Pa.

1893—Princess Marie of Edinburgh married to Crown Prince of Roumania.

1895—Royalist outbreak at Honolulu suppressed by Dole government....Great street railway strike in Brooklyn.

1897—Count Muraviev appointed Russian minister of foreign affairs....Anglo-American arbitration treaty signed at Washington....National monetary conference met at Indianapolis.

1899—Railroad wreck at West Dunellen, N. J.; seventeen lives lost.

1900—Chicago drainage canal opened.

1901—Twenty-six lives lost in orphan asylum fire at Rochester, N. Y.

1902—Seventeen lives lost in Park avenue tunnel wreck in New York City....Lewis Nixon chosen nominal leader of Tammany Hall.

1904—Chinese Emperor ratified commercial treaty with the United States.

1905—Five killed in railroad collision near Ripon, N. M.

FOREIGN

The upper house of the Austrian, or Cisleithan, reichsrath has accepted without amendment the bill establishing universal suffrage, which previously had been passed by the House of Representatives.

London papers reported that James Bryce had refused a peerage and would go to the United States as ambassador without changing his name, and thus be the first plain citizen to represent his country at Washington.

Just as it came from the French Chamber of Deputies, the new church and state separation act was finally passed by the Senate, 190 to 100. This was directed against those churchmen who had refused to accept the original separation law of 1905, and all clergy who refused under orders from the Pope to give over possession of their residences and church properties to the state do so on penalty of losing pensions. While the priests have disregarded the law providing for religious associations, the laity have made the necessary declarations to protect the churches and other places of worship. It is presumed that the other ecclesiastical buildings will be rented to the bishops and priests at a nominal figure, just as the clergy who have said most without making a legal declaration to hold a public meeting have had only nominal fines imposed upon them.

The French minister of finance has ordered the mints to substitute on all coin the words "liberty, equality and fraternity" for the old device "God protect France." Minister of Education Briand announced that the church buildings taken possession of by the state would be devoted to educational and museum purposes, the seminary of St. Sulpice at Paris becoming part of the Luxembourg museum. The expelled sisters of the Assumptionists order left Paris for Belgium, in the midst of a throng of sympathizers, who shouted: "Down with the Free Masons."