

The Trail of the Dead:

THE STRANGE EXPERIENCE
OF DR. ROBERT HARLAND

By B. FLETCHER ROBINSON and J. MALCOLM FRASER

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CHAPTER XVIII.—(Continued.)

I do not know how we lived through that first furious hour. Isaac Troberne made no second mistake, but crouched at the tiller, tripping the succession of great seas that swung upon us out of the throbbing blackness. Stung by passing halibuts, drenched to the skin, and aching with cold, I tolled with a tin pinnakin, baling until my back creaked with stiffness and my hands could scarcely feel the handle. Graden and the sailor worked beside me, so that we managed to keep the water under. Now and again a silt in the rushing dark above us showed me Marnac lying by the sternman's side. Was he alive or dead? I did not know, nor did I stay my labor to make inquiry.

The daylight came at last, the God-given light for which all poor mariners must pray in their hours of danger. With it came a lessening of the wind and a falling sea. Yet there had been an angry menace in the brilliant colors that lit the eastern sky, and I stared eagerly over the muddy green of the hurrying surges. Indeed, I was the first to see a steamer's smudge of smoke on the western skyline.

"Her be making for we, gentlemen," remarked our sternman, after a long stare at the distant vessel. "Happen he would take 'e aboard, if you be so minded. The weather be blowing up again, and it's a long reach back to Polveren."

"I don't like deserting the ship, Isaac," said Graden, "though, to tell the truth, I don't relish another day in the chops of the channel."

"Hain't no desertion, sir. Me and Jake can take her wham; and, to tell 'e the truth, he'll ride the lighter for the want of him!"

He pointed to where Marnac sat crouching under an oilskin coat. Save for occasional shivers, the old man seemed to be no worse for his handshake with Death. He received the sailor's remark with a benevolent smile. "Don't 'e go grinning at me, you wicked-minded old fool!" cried Isaac. "Twas only through special mercies that Providence forgot you was on board. We'd 'a' been sank for arden, else."

Within half an hour we could see the steamer clearly, an ancient tramp of the seas, bluff in the bows, square in the flank, with a coloring of soot and rusty iron. She answered our signals with a melancholy toot and stood towards us. Graden, who had been watching her approach at my side, turned and walked aft.

"I have already dropped your revolver overboard, Professor Marnac," he said, "but I must trouble you to hand me your pocket-book. Money, you know, is often the most valuable of weapons."

The professor obeyed with a gentle cluck of amusement. "I trust, Sir Henry, that the notes are not damaged," he said in the low, musical tones with which I was so familiar. "Indeed, I was assured that the case was waterproof."

"Now, your loose gold, if you please."

"Here it is, Sir Henry, with my watch and chain. Observe that my pockets are now completely empty. Ah, Mr. Harland, forgive me if I do not notice you before. I fear that these nautical adventures will interrupt your course of studies. Did you hear whom the university have appointed in my stead? I should be sorry if my students, amongst whom I always held you to be the most studious, if not the most able, should be long without a lecture—like sheep that have lost their shepherd, Mr. Harland."

I turned from him with a feeling of nausea. Mad or sane, he had done such deeds as placed him beyond the intercourse of humanity.

The steamer was close upon us now, and as she came rolling down the heave of the swell we were hailed from the bridge in a tongue that was strange to me. Before we could reply, a seaman had sprung to the bulwarks and sent the coils of a line spinning over us. This Isaac made fast, allowing a fair space to intervene between his little craft and the rusty metal fabric that towered above us.

"Good-bye, Isaac," said Graden, shaking the little Cornishman warmly by the hand. "I will see to your check the moment I get to London."

"Don't 'e mention it, zur. I was right proud to take 'e. Nor do 'e trouble about we uns. Jake and I will be making Polveren by midnight at latest—please be."

CHAPTER XIX.

It was an anxious scramble—they had to swing out a chair for Marnac—but the trawler was as handy as a row-boat, and at last the three of us stood on the deck of the stranger. A more ill-assorted trio of bedraggled voyagers never ranged in line.

But if we were strange to look upon, so were the group of men who confronted us. They were of the degenerate Latin breed, dark, small, uncertain in temper, and dirty by nature and training. Their seafaring dress seemed as ill-suited to them as a sash and a colored cloak would be to a British shellback.

"Eengleshe?" asked one whom I took to be the mate. "Eengleshe? What say?"

"We are Englishmen who were driven out to sea by last night's storm. If I may see the captain, I will explain," said my cousin.

The man grinned his lack of comprehension. Plainly his vocabulary was of the smallest.

"These men are Portuguese, Sir Henry," said Marnac, stepping quickly forward. "I know their tongue. Allow me to explain the situation."

But he got no further. My cousin's long arm shot out, gripping his collar firmly from behind. With a gentle heave, he swung the professor from his feet and dropped him behind us.

"Please to keep silence, Professor Marnac. Your explanations might be somewhat biased," said he, with a grim smile. And then turning to the sailors, who had been watching the little scene with evident surprise—

"Do none of you speak English?" he asked.

They seemed to understand the question, for some talk, asked out by much gesticulation, ended in one of their number trotting up the ladder to the bridge, where he disappeared into the wheelhouse. An instant later a long, red-headed man emerged and came running towards us.

"And shure wud Oi not have greeted yer honors before now," he exclaimed in the most strenuous of brogues; "but 'twas me trick at the wheel, and niver a wan of these spalpeens wud relieve me. An' what can Oi do fer ye now at all?"

"What best is this?"

"The Portuguese ship, San Joseph, fr'm Buenos Ayres to Hamburg, wid a mixed cargo, and a very mixed crew. If it hadn't been for a lack an' sorrow when the wine was in me, faith! it's not in this greasy flat-iron that Tim Blake wud be after serving."

"Do you speak the language, my man?"

"Inlady an' Oi do, sorr; an' good reason, seeing that Oi've been steward on th' yacht iv wan iv th' Portuguese nobility."

"That's good news. And now where is the captain?"

"Faith! but 'twas a fool iv a time we were after havin' in the Bay last night, sorr, an' the old man's turned in. The second mate has gone aft, gatherin' his courage in both hands fer to wake him. Inlady, sorr, 'tis a resolution that wud put the fear iv the Lord into a better man than him."

"Rather a Tartar, eh?"

"A strong man, sorr, an' a good seaman fer a greaser, though his temper is most prodigious. But see, here he comes, like a look out iv a theater."

He was indeed a fine figure of a man, fully six feet in height and proportionately broad. His skin was very dark, and his eyes of the deep blackness that I have since observed in Indian races, but very soft and glowing. His hair, which he wore at a greater length than is customary amongst sailors, showed under his cap in glossy curls; and his mustache was twisted back almost to his ears.

He bowed to us with a deliberate courtesy, uttering a greeting in his own tongue. He spoke no English, and it was through the medium of Tim Blake that he offered us hospitality. It was no time for explanations, so, guarding Marnac between us, we hurried down to a large cabin where warm garments and a-saming cups of hot coffee and sugar were brought by the worthy Irishman, to whose care we had been assigned. As far as could be judged, I had not contracted so much as a cold in the head, despite my long exposure. When we had completed our change of clothes, my cousin beckoned me outside the cabin, closing the door on our prisoner.

"I have asked Blake to take me to the captain, for it is right that he should know the true position of affairs," he whispered. "While I am gone, you must sit with Marnac. Remember, do not let him out of your sight for a moment."

"Very well," I said, and he strode off down the dark alley of the passageway.

When I re-entered the cabin I found Marnac muffled to the chin, under the blankets of a bunk. He gave me one of his quick, evil glances, that was unpleasantly reminiscent of an aged rat surprised in an iron gin. I had so great a horror and detestation of the man that his mere presence was a source of physical discomfort to me; and when, sitting up amongst his wraps, he commenced to pester me with questions, I could endure it no longer. I retired outside the cabin, seating myself with my back to the door. I was as well there, I argued, as in the interior, and in a position infinitely more satisfactory to myself.

The garments they had lent me were thick and warm; the dose of brandy had been considerable. I was weary from the toll of a sleepless night. Those are my excuses for the fact that in the course of the next five minutes I fell soundly asleep.

It was Graden who woke me, a very angry and exasperated Graden who shook my senses into with unnecessary violence. I started up, protesting against his treatment.

"I thought better of you than this," he said, with his hand still fixed in my collar.

"My back was against the door. He could not pass without waking me. What does it matter?" I grumbled, with every sign of irritation.

"I told you to watch him, to stay in-

side the cabin, and I find you snoring here. No more excuses, please. You know the ability of the man. Let us hope he has not taken advantage of any chances you gave him."

He opened the door cautiously, peeped in, and then flung it wide with a great oath. The cabin was empty!

Yet there was no doubt as to his manner of escape. In the middle of the flooring there gaped a little hole, with a heavy square of wood lying beside it. On examination we found that this entrance had also been barred by a grating, which now swung downwards on its hinges, disclosing a wooden ladder, the foot of which was indistinguishable in the gloom below.

"He is in the hold!" I cried. "He is hiding somewhere amongst the cargo! We shall never find him without the help of the crew."

Amongst the excellent points in my cousin's character was that of perfect self-control. There was no anger in his voice to remind me of my blunder when he spoke again.

"It's not the hold, Cousin Robert," he said. "This is the ship's lazaretto, where the food is stored. There are usually two entrances, each similar to this. If he has escaped by the second, it's a bad business. It will mean he has found a friend, for these gratings should be secured. But it may be that he is lurking amongst the pork and biscuits. If so, we ought to find him easily enough. I don't want to bring the crew into this affair if I can help it. It will be enough if the captain knows."

"That's the blackest part of the luck. The ship caught it pretty badly last night; they were right in the thick of it. I found the captain on deck superintending three or four sailors who were clearing away the wreckage of one of the boats. He was in an amazing temper, and Blake advised me that if I had a favor to ask him, I had best let him cool off a bit. So I dismissed the Irishman and climbed up to the bridge. I should think I'd been there about twenty minutes watching the work, when I saw a sharp-looking lad pop out from the companion and go over to where the captain was standing. They had a fine pow-wow together, looking up at me from time to time. I rather puzzled me, and presently I dropped down the stairs and walked over to where they were. The captain seemed decidedly chilly, and I soon saw by his manner that he was not wanting a talk just then. Whereupon I came below. So kindly light the lamp I see in the bracket round, Cousin Robert, and we'll go hunting again."

CHAPTER XX.

We descended the ladder, Graden going first, and I following with the lamp, the light of which I endeavored to throw over his shoulder.

It seems a cowardly thing to confess, writing as I am in the broad daylight, with the bees amongst the flower-beds singing their song through the open window, but though we were two to one, and our quarry an old man, my cousin had twice to rate me for the deliberation of my movements. We peered about amongst the lurking shadows, with the thunder of the seas hammering on the iron sides without. Now and again a heave of the ship would send us staggering apart, to bring up amongst unexpected barrels. Perhaps it was the want of sleep that had jangled my nerves, but I knew in my heart that if I were suddenly to catch a sight of those wicked eyes staring out from the gloom before us, I should shriek and run like a hysterical schoolgirl.

But Marnac was not there. The grate of the second stairway was closed and locked, and yet he had disappeared. Someone had helped him—that was plain enough. We stood disconcerted amongst the details of the ship's larder.

"Well, he's gone right enough," said my cousin. "Hallo! what the deuce is this?"

He took the light from my hand and stooped to examine something at his feet. It was a steel cylinder, about eight feet in length; a second lay beside it.

"Ammonia!" So they run a cold storage on board."

"How do you know that?" I asked.

"My dear cousin, if you can't remember the part that ammonia plays in the manufacture of ice, I shall not attempt to—hallo! stop that—stop that, I say!"

He sprang forward, caught his foot in an empty sack, and fell heavily, extinguishing the lamp. As he did so, I saw an arm reach down and draw up the grating through which we had descended. A key clicked in the padlock. Graden was on his feet in an instant, and together we rushed to the foot of the ladder.

In the patch of grey daylight above us we could see the face of the captain looking through the bars, and peeping down beside him, with the sweetest dimple of an old man's smile upon his lips, was Professor Marnac!

There was a pause, filled with much whispered talk from above. Then the red head of our friend Tim Blake came thrusting into the picture. He seemed much distressed at the situation.

"Faith! but 'tis not Oi that knows 'twat to believe," said he; "but the skipper here will have it that ye're a pair iv desperte and revolting characters. Oi am also to tell ye, gentlemen, that ye've the very mischief's own choice of ut. Either ye will let me r-run through yer pockets wid me practiced hand, upon which ye may come up an' make us acquainted wid yer general defence, or, if ye refuse, he jabsbers! but they'll clap on the hatches an' lave ye in the dark."

"Tell the skipper, Blake," said my cousin, "that he has been grossly deceived, for we are law-abiding English gentlemen. Nevertheless, if he will keep to his terms and hear our case out, we consent to being searched."

(To be continued.)

All good thought and good action claim a natural alliance with good cheer.



Corn Root Louse.

Time spent in killing insect pests must usually be set down as so much time lost from the constructive work of improving the tilth of the soil, and attending to the other needs of the crops. Occasionally, however, an improved system of cultivation gets rid of our insect enemies at the same time. This is conspicuously the case in the method recently proposed by Prof. Forbes, of Illinois, for destroying the corn root louse.

The pest works havoc to both sweet and field corn. The small brown ant attends the louse and is responsible for carrying it about the field. Professor Forbes found that by using a disk harrow one to three times early in the spring, before the corn is planted, from 80 to 95 per cent of the ants and corn root lice are destroyed, and no further treatment is required during the season. The peculiar virtues of this remedy are that it is simple, effective and good for the corn, since the soil is thereby put in a better state of cultivation.

Safe Chicken Coop.

It has been proven by statistics that the raising of chickens is the greatest industry in the United States. Of course this includes those who are in this business on a large scale for profit, and also those who probably keep a half dozen fowl in the back yard. Nevertheless, whether for business or pleasure, chicken raising is an interesting pastime that appeals to everybody. It is claimed that chickens should have as much care as a human being to insure the best results, and modern methods certainly tend in that direction. The chicken coop shown here is a good example. It is simple, efficient and durable. As shown here it is rectangular in form, being made of sheet metal. The top and sides are bent to shape, with flanges at the bottom which connect with the flooring. At each side are supports which hold the coop slightly above the ground, tending to keep the coop moisture-proof and preventing rain or other water from entering. At each end are perforated doors, which are very easily held in position. At the bottom of each door is an extension, through which passes a rod, the latter extending through the top of the coop and also into the ground, preventing the coop from being displaced. In this way the fowl are rendered safe against the attacks of animals.



CHICKEN COOP.

At Weaning Time.

At weaning time there is not so much danger of losing the pigs as of checking their growth. The pig is not yet a hog, and he can hardly subsist as the hog does. A good deal of nourishment in liquid form is needed, and also some tender grass. It does not take much grain, but they like a bit of oats, wheat or corn. Their teeth cannot handle much that is hard; hence softening it by soaking will be beneficial. Sweet milk and middlings warmed with hot water will appeal to their appetites at weaning time, and it need not be made as strong as when fed later. It is generally known that your milk should not be given.—Field and Farm.

Routing Crab Grass with Clover.

Crab grass is like the dog in the manger. It kills out every other stem of green grass and then turns brown itself. It makes a coarse and ugly cover in the lawn and the individual who attempts to eradicate it by digging and cultivation may be entirely without a lawn for two or three years. If anything can get the best of crab grass in a fair contest, it is white clover. In a number of lawns in Washington and elsewhere white clover has furnished the means for a final victory over crab grass. The white clover gradually invades the area of crab grass, replacing the latter with a close, dark-green carpet.

Home-Made Kerosene Emulsion.

The amateur can make this very easily: Take of hard soap half a pound and dissolve in one gallon of boiling water; then add two gallons of kerosene and churn thoroughly for ten minutes. The efficiency of the preparation depends upon thorough mixing. This stock mixture is diluted four times for scale or up to twenty times for lice. The stronger dilution will have one gallon of kerosene to six and a half of water. Where the water is very hard, use one gallon of sour milk to two gallons of kerosene.

Dry Farming.

The Campbell system of dry farming, which was first tried in the semi-arid portions of North Dakota and about which much has appeared in newspapers and magazines within the past year or two, is doing great things for many portions of the Western States, where with a rainfall of but ten or twelve inches per annum bumper crops of corn, wheat, beans and other crops can be grown. This system of crop culture is based on the conservation of practically all of the moisture in the soil through a dust or surface mulch, and under it as high as forty bushels of corn to the acre have been grown in North Dakota, fifty bushels of wheat per acre in western Nebraska, while better than twenty tons of beets have been produced in Colorado. While this method of crop culture has little value in those portions of the country where there is an abundant rainfall, it does have a tremendous import in all territory where there is fertility in the soil, but an annual rainfall of less than twenty inches.

Sheep the Market Demands.

Says a Western writer on sheep: "The market calls for sheep with a dark face and legs, and a close fleece is a advantage. There never has been a time when a fair profit could not be obtained from the keeping of sheep. There are in the world to-day 90,000,000 fewer sheep than twelve years ago, and the consumption of mutton and wool is rapidly increasing, hence it is safe to conclude that sheep to the farmer is a safe proposition. Do not start on a large scale; begin low and work up. The Western farmer does not like to do this, and you are no exception. You have never planted the apple because you did not expect to stay to eat the fruit. You must rush on and do big things. Do you not know that in the animal as well as the vegetable world rapid growth means rapid decay? Plant this live stock business and then give it time to strike its roots deep down, and after it is fairly rooted allow the top to grow."

Care of Orchards Pays.

Fruit growers about Saugatuck, Mich., have been busy trimming their apple trees, says Country Gentleman. Ten years ago they were thinking of cutting them down and setting out peach trees. To-day every half-acre tree is trimmed, and if there is 40 enough manure, fertilizer is bought for these half-acre trees. Six years ago one of Saugatuck's young farmers married a Chicago girl who used to spend her vacation there. She loved country life, and was a subscriber to agricultural magazines. Her husband's orchard was just like the rest, untrimmed and had never been sprayed. She made him buy manure, trim the trees, plow and spray. Two years ago he began to hire his neighbor's orchards. Last year he was the only one who had apples to sell, and cleared \$2,000.

Grow Feed on the Farm.

The Massachusetts State crop report contains an article by Prof. F. K. Cooley on "Some Causes Affecting the Profits of Dairying." On the subject of feeding dairy cattle the professor urges that feeds be produced on the farm as far as possible. Usually the best practice is to purchase only feeds rich in protein and raise the coarse fodders on the farm. Cows fed on starvation rations yield no profit, and those overfed with expensive feeds are also kept at a loss. The point of highest profit in feed must be determined by experiment and calculation, and varies with the locality and circumstances of the feeder.

Easy Way to Get Rid of Stumps.

A method of getting rid of stumps which has been highly recommended and which, to be effective, should be done now, is as follows: Bore a hole one or two inches in diameter and about eighteen inches deep into the center of the stump. Then put into this hole one or two ounces of saltpeter. Fill the hole with water and plug it up. In the spring take out the plug, pour in about one-half gallon of kerosene oil and light it. The stump will smolder away to the very extremities of the roots, leaving nothing but the ashes.—Farming.

Improving the Herd.

Select as far as possible females which conform to the standard of excellence of the breed. If this is accomplished it will insure a uniformity in type that is highly desirable. In addition to this it is possible to select cows and heifers that are similarly bred they will be more likely to produce uniformity in their offspring.

Care of Machinery.

Thousands of dollars' worth of farm machinery is now being shipped into the country that will never again be protected from the weather. This exposure means an appalling financial loss to the farmers, since it reduces fully one-half the period of usefulness of an intricate machine. When buying your new implements, promise yourself that you will provide them shelter and the best of care. Make your arrangements for housing before you purchase. Summer rains are as destructive as winter snows.

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