

The Pirate of Alastair

By RUPERT SARGENT HOLLAND

Author of "The Count at Harvard," etc.

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CHAPTER X.

Signs multiplied. When Charles and I returned to the house we found muddy footprints staining the dining-room floor and tracked across the kitchen. No intruders were to be seen, nor other evidence of their visit, but the mere fact that the sanctity of my home—hitherto always left open to the winds—had been invaded, angered me. I bade Charles see that the house was securely locked hereafter whenever he left it in my absence.

Over the mantel in my den hung two muskets, out-of-date but still capable of boring holes in the atmosphere. My little army held a shotgun, for use in the marshes, and two revolvers, whose only use heretofore had been for target practice. I took them from the drawer and looked them over; they were ready for work when needed.

I sat on the porch, and considered the situation. Something was about to happen, something I could not tell what—that centered around this man who had mysteriously taken possession of the ship and proposed to offer combat on the sands. What he was or who he was I could not guess; speculation in these lines brought me immediately into blind alleys; but there was no doubt that in situation and character he was certainly the direct descendant of a more adventurous age. I was unmistakably drawn to him. I could see him as he stood on the beach, buffeted by the storm, gazing at the men who were pulling away, and as he had stepped from the hatchway, hat in hand, bowing to Barbara Graham with the chivalrous manner of a cavalier, and again as he sat across the table from me, his slender hands ready to seize upon the pistols, his eyes full of amusement and audacity, looking straight into mine.

There was no doubt about it, the ship belonged to him by right of inheritance, and his arrival had brought me strange tidings. I thought over the matter a long time before I went to bed.

Early the next morning I took my dip in the sea, and was returning, clad in a bath-robe, when I caught sight of a man peering at me from the pines. I waved my towel, and he disappeared. As I was finishing dressing, a little later, I stepped out upon my balcony, and I saw the same man, much nearer now, gazing intently at the cottage. I hate spies, so I spoke somewhat angrily.

"Hi, there! What do you want?" I cried, beckoning to him.

He came forward rather sheepishly, and touched his hat.

"I was only taking a look at your house, sir."

"And is that what you were doing some twenty minutes ago?"

"Yes, sir; that's all I was doing."

"Are you an architect?" I demanded.

reading. She was gazing at the sea.

"What do you think of our pirates?" She started, looked round at me, sat up, and clasped her knees with her hands. I sat down on the sand beside her.

"I was just thinking of him. I was thinking that I like him tremendously."

"Naturally. He rescued you from a very disagreeable fellow."

"Yes," she agreed, without looking at me; "and a girl can never forget a debt of gratitude for that sort of thing."

"I must apologise," I said, "for my rudeness. Of course it was no business of mine whose portrait you had in your pocket."

"Of course not," she agreed; "although it happens that was just the reason why I put it there."

"Put what there?"

"Put Rodney's portrait in the pocket, and the pocket where you would find it."

"You did? Why?"

"Oh, just to see what you would do—and you did it."

"Yes, I did. I admitted. Then you're not—but she interrupted by turning to me."

"Monsieur Duponceau was as polite as he could be, and laughed at all my protests on the way home, but I think he was running into some danger on my account. I believe he has come to Alastair to hide."

"I know he has."

"Oh, tell me all about it!" she begged.

"I know very little. He's an adventurer, and he's fled from Europe, and there are people very anxious to take him back, and he's going to live in the ship. Moreover, it seems reasonably certain that there's going to be trouble."

"Is there?" she cried, half in excitement, half in delight. "Oh, let's help him!"

I found that I only needed this chance to avow myself openly.

"We will. I've decided to stand by him, whatever happens."

ammunition than I have," Duponceau confessed.

"There is plenty in my cottage," I told him.

"Let's get it now," cried Barbara, "and some of the guns."

We went to the cottage, and Barbara in her interest, forgot what she would have termed the proprieties, and entered and looked about my dining-room while I collected cartridges and pistols. She insisted on helping Charles put up a quantity of food to carry to the ship. At last we started forth again, she with the provisions, I with a shotgun and two revolvers. Half way down the beach two men came out of the pines and walked down to meet us.

"Where are you going with those guns?" one of them, a surly faced chap demanded.

"What business is that of yours?" I asked.

He changed his tactics. "We're looking for a man who's reported to have landed somewhere on this beach a night or two ago."

"Yes," I said pleasantly, gazing absently at the sky.

"Well," went on the other, "where are you taking those guns?"

I looked at him angrily now, but before I could find words Barbara was speaking.

"If there is one thing I particularly dislike," she said, "it is curiosity. If you must know, we came out here to hunt sand-nips, and we're just about to begin. That's all; you may go now," and she waved her hand towards the pines.

The men were clearly surprised. They were more so when they saw the girl calmly sit down on the sand, motion me to do likewise, and proceed to load one of the revolvers. Shortly after they withdrew, whispering to each other.

In order to disarm suspicion, we sat there some time, and I built miniature sand fortifications in order to teach Barbara the art of war.

"I wonder if I can learn to shoot?" she said presently. "If I meet many more like those, I shall be tempted to try."

I handed her a loaded pistol. "Aim at that rock out there," I said, pointing at one showing above the water.

She took aim, did not close her eyes, pulled the trigger. The report, sharp and clear, cut the silence of the beach like a knife. We saw the water splash where the bullet entered. A frightened gull screamed loudly away.

The little puff of smoke faded; all was still again.

Barbara looked at the revolver, then at me. Her lips were smiling, but her eyes were deep with excitement.

"The war has begun," I said. "That shot was to let the world know that Alastair is armed."

(To be continued.)

WAS A TRIFLE SLOW.

Train Schedule of a Certain Southern Railroad Beaten by Hog.

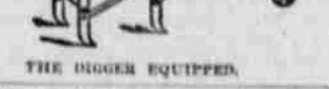


Homemade Ditch Digger.

A complete homemade ditch digger may be made by following the description here given.

The bed piece, five and a half inches long, is cut out of a hard plank two and a half inches thick, bolted at each end and in the middle to prevent splitting. The rear half is nine inches wide and the front half six inches wide.

The diggers are made of steel bars two and a half inches wide, three-quarters of an inch thick and twenty-four inches long. They are fastened to the plank by a right angle turn and bolted. The two rear diggers are held firmly by a rod with nuts inside and



out, the points being spread out so that the bed piece can easily drop into the space when the ditch is two feet or more in depth. The front digger is the same size, but set in the middle. All are held firmly by brace rods and sharpened like the flat end of a pickaxe. A wheel is set under the front end to steady the movement and is braced backward. An adjustable draw iron is placed above, through which the rod may pass at any height suited to the depth of the ditch.

The handles are also adjustable, raising them as the digger drops lower.

In hard subsoils one will save the cost of this simple device in digging seventy-five rods of ditch. In our hardpan sections of the east, which always need drainage, one does not feel encouraged to dig ditches with pick and shovel when more than half the energy is required to loosen the dirt. With this machine the toughest subsoil when dry handles as rapidly as loose sand.

Keeping Cream Sweet.

The first step in keeping cream sweet is to keep it as clean as possible. Clean cream cannot be produced by filthy methods of milking nor by handling the cream or milk in unclean utensils. Milk cans, strainers and pails should be thoroughly scalded in hot water and dried and exposed to the sunlight and pure air.

The next step is to remove the animal heat from the cream as soon as possible after separating. Run the cream from the separator into a convenient utensil for cooling. A 3 or 5-gallon shotgun can is most convenient. Cool the cream in well water by stirring. In a few minutes it can be reduced to the temperature of the water. After the cream is cooled it can be added to the cream contained in the supply can used in delivering cream to the station. The cream supply can, while being filled and held for delivery, should be kept in water at as near the temperature of freshly pumped water as possible. The average temperature of well water in Kansas is about 55 degrees. With it cream can easily be held at 58 or 60 degrees, and at this temperature will remain sweet for delivery in good shape at the station.—Kansas Farmer.

Weed Seeds in Manure.

It is well known that there is considerable risk of introducing new weeds by the purchase of manure and hay and other feeding stuffs. E. I. Oswald, of the Maryland experiment station, undertook to obtain more definite information on this point, especially as regards dissemination through manure, by studying the effect of the fermentation of manure handled in different ways and of passing through the digestive systems of animals on the vitality of various seeds, including seeds of about fifty of the worst weeds found in Maryland.

In experiments in which the manure remained for six months in a barnyard heap and for a short while in piles, as when shipped in carload lots from cities, it was found that in the first case there was no danger, and in the second case little danger of distributing live weed seeds.

Red Clover vs. Alfalfa.

Some of the old-time dairymen are coming around to the belief that red clover such as was grown around Denver twenty-five or thirty years ago, is better forage for the production of milk than is alfalfa as grown nowadays. Certain it is that we are not now getting the quality of milk that was produced a quarter of a century ago, when nearly everybody had a little patch of clover. It was quite natural, however, that we should have

exchanged the old friend for the new, for the reason that red clover is biennial in its habit of growth and under the most ideal conditions will not furnish more than two cuttings of hay in a season. On the other hand, alfalfa is a perennial plant, and when once established will continue to produce four and frequently five crops in a season for several years in succession, and this is why our dairymen have clung to it through all these years like a pup to a root. We are loth to concede that red clover is the better forage in the production of milk, but it does look that way, and we know farmers in different parts of the State who are taking up its culture quite extensively.—Denver Field and Farm.

A Fruit Tree Doctor Fake.

The latest fake practiced on farmers is done by a man who visits the place and claims that he has been sent out by the State to examine fruit tree diseases, says an exchange. The fellow will go over the orchard and mark all trees which he claims are affected. Shortly after his visit a confederate will appear and say that he has a preparation which will cure the disease for which the tree is condemned and will contract to inject a fluid into the roots for a certain price. Both men are swindlers and should be run off the place with a shotgun. The only men empowered to inspect orchards are the county inspectors, who are known to most fruit growers.

Scalding Peach Borers.

The hot water cure is recommended by many for peach tree borers. It is a somewhat drastic treatment—for the borer—though it does not hurt the tree. The borers work either at or directly beneath the surface of the ground, around the trunk. The tree may be killed up in the form of a saucer, the dirt packed a little and the scalding water poured in. This will invariably bring out any borers. It is not believed to hurt the tree, although an excess of water should not be used. An emulsion of 1 part of natholeum to 150 parts of water is also recommended.

Cabbage Worms.

The common cabbage worm is among the best known of all garden pests, both as a larva and in the adult stage, when it becomes the common spotted, white cabbage butterfly. The young plants should be sprayed with arsenate of lead, 1 ounce to a gallon of water, and the foliage kept covered until they begin to head up well. Water heated to 130 degrees Fahrenheit will destroy all worms which it hits, without injury to the plants.

Boiled Raisin Cake.

Cover one and a half cups of raisins (seeded) with boiling water and simmer twenty minutes. Cream three-quarters of a cup of sugar with a quarter of a cup of butter, and add one and one-half cups of flour, half a cup of the raisin water and one egg beaten light, but not separated. One teaspoonful of soda should be sifted with the flour. Season with one teaspoonful each of nutmeg and cinnamon, add the raisins, well dredged with flour and bake one-half hour. An excellent cake, cheap, easily made, and with a flavor of its own.

Watermelon Pickle.

Use one melon. Cut out heart, peel rind, cut into squares and soak over night in strong salt water. Put one quart vinegar on to boil, stir in five coffee cups sugar, one teaspoon cloves and five sticks of cinnamon, one grated nutmeg and one-half lemon. Add rind that has been rinsed in cold water. Boil ten minutes, put in jars. Not necessary to seal.

Cooking New Potatoes.

Place them in boiling water with two or three sprigs of mint. When they are cooked and drained pour over them some melted butter. The mint adds a more delicious flavor. New potatoes should have the skins removed by rubbing them with a brush. When rubbed they will be white and smooth.

Fruit Cookies.

Cream one cup of butter with one and a half cups of sugar, add three beaten eggs, a level teaspoonful of baking soda dissolved in two table-spoonfuls of sweet milk and, last of all, stir in a cup of chopped raisins that have been rolled in flour. Mix, roll out and bake in a hot oven.

Filling for Cakes.

One cup of sugar, four tablespoonfuls of water boiled till clear. Stir into the beaten white of one egg quickly and add one-half cup seeded and chopped fine raisins and one-half cup chopped hickory nuts or English walnut meats.

Loosening Cakes from the Pans.

After baking a cake and if it sticks to the pan, the easiest way to take it out without breaking it is to wet a clean cloth and wrap around the pan. It will come out all together.

Curried Eggs.

Four eggs, one ounce of butter, one ounce of chopped onion, half an ounce of flour, one gill of milk and water, one teaspoonful of curry powder, the juice of half a lemon, boiled rice.



Maraschino Cherries.

Pit the cherries and weigh them, saving all the juice. To every four pounds of fruit there must be two pounds of sugar and a cup of liquid. Enough juice should exude during the stoning process to furnish the liquid, but if not add a little water. Make a sirup of the sugar and water, set at the side of the range and bring to the boiling point. Take from the fire and, while still warm but not scalding hot, pour the sirup over the cherries. Set aside for half an hour, then put over the fire in a porcelain lined kettle and heat slowly. Boil for five minutes, take out the fruit with a skimmer, boil the sirup for twenty minutes, skimming off the scum as it rises and, just before taking from the fire, add a pint of Maraschino cordial for every four quarts of fruit. Pack the cherries in jars, fill each jar to overflowing with the liquid and seal.

Citrus Preserves.

Pare the fruit and cut it into slices about the size of a caramel, weigh the fruit and to each pound of it allow one-half pound of sugar. Put the citrus to cook in fresh water and boil until quite clear, remove carefully to a colander and drain. Wet the sugar with clear water and boil until reduced to a sirup, add to this sirup one lemon, sliced thin, and a piece of ginger root for every pound of sugar that has been used. Put the citron into the sirup and boil together for twenty minutes. Fill jars with the fruit, pour in the sirup and seal.

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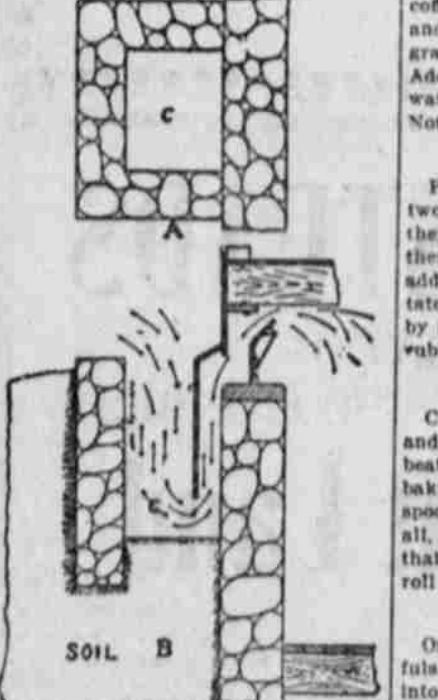
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To Improve Coffee.

Add to the pot of coffee when ready to serve a half teaspoon of vanilla and a pinch of baking soda the size of a bean. The soda destroys the sour taste caused by the free acid in the coffee.

Ventilation of Stable.



This diagram shows method of constructing a fresh air intake where the soil comes to or near the top of the wall as found in many bank barns. An excavation is necessary and a retaining wall is built around the open space marked C.

Grain or Butter?

Every dairy butter maker whose product is known to be of uniform good quality can now easily contract all of their surplus at 25 cents per pound the year round. And yet the quality designated as "common country butter" nearly always sells below that price and during four or five summer months goes as low as 12 cents. Why—why will its makers be content to follow methods that spell positive loss? Who can and will answer this question?—The Ruralist.

To Guard Against Cut Worms.

Tar paper placed around cabbage and tomato plants will keep off cut-worms. Insert the paper in the ground, making a circle about 4 inches in diameter and 3 inches deep.

Handling Milk.

It must not be forgotten that cleanliness and coldness are the two great principles in handling milk.