

The Pirate of Alastair

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CHAPTER XIV.—(Continued.)

Duponcean and I lifted the chest between us, and as silently as we had entered the woods our party of four withdrew from them. When we came to the edge we halted, and after a few whispered words turned towards the shelter of the cliff. We were some quarter down it when from the pines at our back came a loud halloo. Almost simultaneously a man sprang out of the shadows before us, and called "Stup!"

"Run!" said Rodney, and, like a football player, lunged, lantern and all, straight at the man's knees. The two went down in a heap, and the man's revolver went off without harm.

"Run, Mr. Felix!" cried Charles, and I saw him jump at the struggling men and pull Islip free.

Duponcean and I ran, caring nothing for shelter now, but making straight for the ship. The enemy must have numbered half a dozen. There were cries behind us, and a bullet whizzed into the cliff on our left. Another shout, and we knew they were in full pursuit, with Rodney and Charles acting as our rear-guard.

Luckily the chest was not heavy, and when we came to the rocks we could scramble over them without delay. Into the water we plunged, and, reaching the side of the ship, heaved the chest on board. Then we scrambled up, dripping and we pulled our rear-guard over the side.

Another splash, and I fired straight down into the water. At the shot the enemy retreated, and, cursing, took himself back to the rocks where his friends stood, a mark against the sky.

"We'll get that pirate!" one of the men called. There was silence on the ship. More threats and curses followed, and then the enemy retired, promising to rout us out next day.

Rodney was the first of us to speak. "Up anchor and off for the Spanish Main!" he cried. "I really feel like a pirate. Where's Duponcean?"

"Here!" We turned and saw our gentleman adventurer sitting on the chest.

Rodney burst into a laugh. "To think that not one of them knew what it was you two carried! They must have thought that we were foraging for food."

We had all four come out of the scrimmage unscathed, except for a few bruises, but were too much excited to sleep. With much ceremony, we took the chest below and placed it inside of that other brass-bound box that had waited so long for a new treasure. I was sure that Rodney was eager for a look at the inside of Duponcean's box, and, to tell the truth, I also was hoping for a peep at it, but Duponcean preferred to keep its secrets entirely to himself. He was communicative only to a certain point; beyond that he was a very sphinx, and in some way the facts he told us seemed to enwrap him in more mystery.

I went up on deck, where Charles was pacing steadily back and forth.

"You saved Mr. Islip from a very bad position, Charles," I said. "How did you manage to quiet that fellow so soon?"

"With an upper-cut I learned in the old country, sir. I left him fast asleep. He'd been prowling round the kitchen, sir, and making himself generally disagreeable, and I was glad to settle the score."

"If'n, so we left one trussed like a pig in the woods, and another asleep on the beach. This begins to look serious."

"Yes, Mr. Felix; that's what I've been saying to myself for the last half-hour."

We spent that night in a state of suppressed excitement—that is, all of us except Duponcean, who seemed to regard a trial by bullets as nothing out of the usual.

CHAPTER XV.

I watched the east turn pale with the coming sun, and the sea pass through the pale, translucent colors of the shells beneath its surface, delicate reds and blues and the infinitely soft mother-of-pearl. Then the hues deepened, and the sun, not yet too bold for the eye, rose like the center of a gorgeous flower. The sea-world was his, and through and over the vast space of it glittered his tiny messages of living flame. They came even to the side of the ship and shivered themselves radiantly against its old, gray-green, sea-worn boards.

I had the world to myself, the sea and its dancing colors, the ship and its early-morning memories. That awe and veneration which steals over the watcher of dawn—as though witness to a birth both physical and spiritual—stole over me, and I wondered how often in the ages past solitary watchers had marvelled from this deck. Life was new and strange and sweet, and as boundless as the ocean before me.

I came back to reality, and wondered how it was that I, who only a week before had been busy with my manuscript in the study of my cottage, should now be facing a life as strange as it was daring. Man cannot live a life to himself alone, occurred to me, and I thought that he would not even if he could. The ordinary, normal course no longer appealed to me, I cared not if our opponents were

servants of the law or of a private power struggling to overwhelm my friend. I looked down at the pistol in my belt and smiled; the life of an adventurer was not so bad when it gave one the sea and the sky and the fellowship of men.

Duponcean stood beside me, his face serene, delight in the fresh day mirrored in his eye.

"Why will men fight and prey on each other?" he asked wonderingly.

"You should know," I answered.

"Yes," said he; "I should, and I do. Utopia has not come, and meanwhile we each covet what others have and we have not. Those men yonder merely represent powers that want to do what I have done."

Charles and Rodney came on deck, and we breakfasted on what was still left of our provisions—a scanty store, that stood in immediate need of replenishing. Then we held a council of war.

"If they are wise," said Rodney, "they'll settle down to besiege us. They could starve us out of here in forty-eight hours. I've an idea, however, that they're afraid to do that for fear of legal consequences. I take it this is a purely personal fight."

I had the same thoughts; some French enemies of Duponcean's were trying to kidnap him, had been my conclusion.

"Look!" Duponcean was standing, and we followed his gaze and saw a sail-boat—my sail-boat—round the cliff to the west and lie in the open sea. "Not that way," he said; "there'll be no more swimming done. They're going to guard us from the ocean."

Then Rodney spoke up. "Perhaps I can get across the beach to the cottage and bring some of the tinned meats back."

"Unless they have confiscated my house as well as my boat," I suggested. "However, it's worth a try. Charles stays on guard, and I go with you."

So, a little later, the two of us, having an eye that the men in the sail-boat should not see us, lowered ourselves over the side, and waded waist-deep through the water. We crawled up the rocks and, lying low, peered through breaks at the beach. There was nothing but shining sand between our position and the house.

Carefully we stole over the rocks and, separating slightly, so that each might be unimpeded by the other, advanced westward. I had an impression of what it must be to march across a desert in the face of an unseen foe. Only, we did not have the protection of the desert, for there were dunes above us on the right.

We had gone perhaps half-way when the silence rang with a shot. A little furrow blew up in the sand before me, and I saw a light cloud of smoke steal away from the dunes. An instant's silence, another report, and a furrow was ploughed in the sand ten yards to the rear. We were hemmed in by an unseen ring.

We faced the dunes, standing stock-still. Two more guns cracked, and the bullets sped in the air, above our heads, but not so far that we could not hear them sing. Rodney could stand it no longer.

"Come out and show yourselves like men!" he cried, his voice high-pitched and straining. An instant's pause, and then two men leaped forward.

Islip's pistol cracked, then another man joined the two, and as by instinct we separated.

Then began a running fire while we beat a retreat. I kept close as I could to the water, emptying my revolver in such a way as to retard the enemy without wounding them; for we suspected that they were seeking to intimidate us, without actually resorting to bloodshed, and we, for our part, had no desire to have any deaths on our hands. They gained on us, for we retreated while they advanced, and it was only by taking full speed to my heels and making for the rocks that I won a temporary respite. The enemy stopped, and now we could pepper them, shooting to right and left as fast as we loaded.

I glanced backward, and saw the sail-boat very close—much closer than I liked.

"They're going to board the ship!" I cried, and splashed into the water. I tumbled up the side and made for the farther bulwark, calling to Duponcean and Charles to stir themselves. As I did so two men came scrambling over the outer rocks and made for the ship, while a third held the sail-boat to the shore. I heard shouts, and saw Rodney cross beside me. He stood a moment unprotected, and that instant a bullet took him in the arm and I heard him give a cry of pain.

"It's nothing—a scratch on the flesh," he muttered as he crouched.

The two men were climbing the seaward side. I waited, and as the first reared above me I was on him and with all the force in my body hurled him back, so that he lost his hold and fell splashing. The other was balancing, had one foot over, had sprung, when Duponcean and Charles seized him, and he went, legs swinging in a circle, beside his fellow in the sea.

We crouched, for the man in the boat was firing. The two below scrambled out of the waves and scurried back to

the sail-boat. Then Rodney and Duponcean kept that side of the ship, while Charles and I watched the other. There were a few more scattering shots, then the enemy made off.

In time we left Charles on guard and went down to the cabin, while Duponcean examined and bandaged Rodney's arm. Rodney was right; it was merely a flesh-wound in his fore-arm, but, slight as it was, it seemed to turn him into our hero. It was the first blood of the war.

When the wound was attended to we went on deck, all of us aquiver with excitement, and there we four sat, each with a pistol in his hand, and warm blood beating in his veins.

Noon came, and we lunched on scraps, and tried to make out on smoking many pipefuls of tobacco. The sun slowly crossed the western heavens and commenced to drop. Suddenly I discovered that I was parched with thirst.

"Water, water everywhere, and not a drop to drink! There's no use discussing it any longer; we'll be caught here like rats in a trap," I said. "We'd better get away before we fall to eating horse-leather."

"I have plenty of water and food in my house. It'll stand a good long siege. If any of those rascals are living in it, I'd like to turn them out. What do you say?"

"It sounds pretty good to me," assented Rodney.

Duponcean nodded, and so it was arranged that we should leave the ship. There were no two ways about it, to go or stay and be starved into surrender.

CHAPTER XVI.

Our change of base was to be made after sunset, between those hours when the darkness should first steal across the beach, and those when our enemy might expect that we would venture forth under the shade of night. We decided to leave Duponcean's chest where it was for the present, in the belief that the enemy would instantly turn their attention to my cottage, and that the box would be safest in some such place as that deserted cabin.

With night-fall we prepared, glad to be about something after eight hours of patient watching. We were to go in single file, I first, Rodney next, his wounded arm in a sling, then Duponcean, and finally Charles, with some little space between us. We cleaned and loaded our revolvers, and about 8 o'clock, when we could no longer see the sail-boat standing out against us, I bade good-by to the ship, slid over the side into the water, crossed through it, and crept over the rocks. I turned and signalled to Rodney that the coast was clear, and saw him lower himself by one arm and find a footing. Then, with a silent prayer that no stray bullet might lodge in one of us before we reached cover, I stepped gingerly on to the beach. You have seen pictures of African warriors stealing tip-toe through the jungle, their whole bodies alert for any noise. So I went, my sense of hearing abnormally acute, my eyes straining into the twilight for peril. I could neither run nor stop, but stepped on with the precision of an automaton, hoping that in time the stretch of sand would have slipped past beneath my feet and I come to the refuge of the dunes. I did not look back, but knew that three other men were tip-toeing as silently behind me, keen as was I to break into a dash. So on and on I went, for endless time it seemed then—bearing only the sob of the ebb and flow of the tide and the soft, sibilant rattle of the water as it slipped back over a stretch of stones.

I neared the cottage, had gone one-half, two-thirds, three-fourths, of the way, and then of a sudden a screaming gull whirled above my head, and, without thought save that I must break this tension, I shot forth full running for the house. I raced over the hard sand, over the soft sand, and when I came to my cottage fell panting in the wide arms of the dunes, quivering, breathless. A moment later the three others had fallen near me, and we all lay there like so many bags of meal.

"That's panic!" said Rodney. "I know now how it comes without any cause."

After a time Charles rose and stole to the kitchen-window. He looked in and shook his head. Then he disappeared around the other side. "Nobody there," he presently reported.

I looked at my pistol and led the way. The front door was ajar, and without any more ado I entered my house on tip-toe, keen-eyed as a cat. The others followed, and Charles closed the door and bolted it. I went into the kitchen, found it also empty, and secured that entrance; then, with the same care, we four filed up the stairs and into my study. A man sat in my Morris-chair, smoking my morrischaun pipe. I covered him with the revolver as he looked up.

"Hello!" said he. "Never mind the gun. I'm alone in the house, and my gun's not in shooting order."

"Suppose I see, sir," said Charles, and a moment later he found a revolver in the man's hip-pocket and appropriated it.

"Well," I demanded, "what have you to say to breaking into a man's house in his absence?"

The other—you could see he had a sense of humor from the wry smile he made—leaned back and cocked his eye at me. "I heard you'd gone to sea," he answered, "and wouldn't be coming back soon."

"Ah, that's where I have the advantage of you, and a very considerable advantage. What I want is the Frenchman over there." He looked past me at Duponcean. "I come in for gold when I capture him."

I signalled to Charles, and in a trice he had bent the man's arms tight around the back of the chair. I found a rope and tied him there fast. We bound his mouth securely, so that even his wry smile disappeared, and then left him.

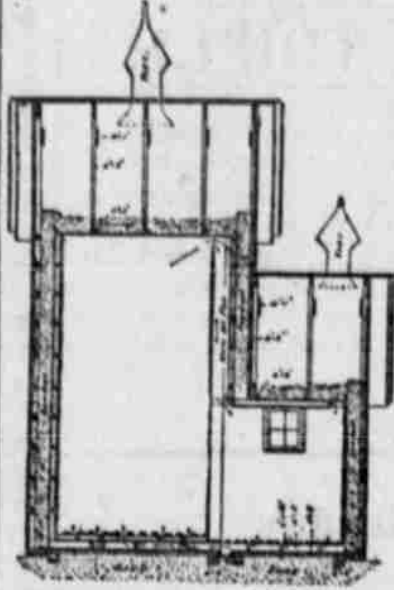
(To be continued.)

If you can not drive an ox, drive a donkey.—Spanish

FARM AND GARDEN

Meat Refrigerator.

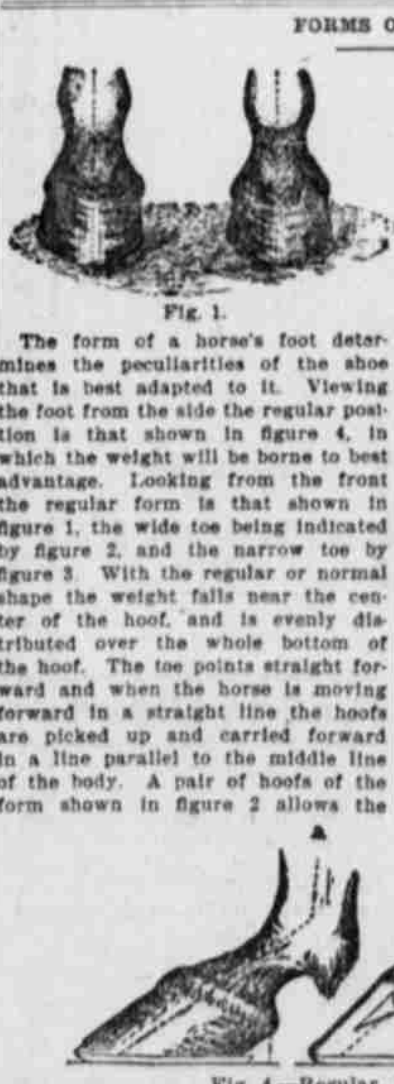
The accompanying illustration shows the plan of refrigerator with meat chamber attached, the accompanying illustration is given. Provision must



be made for the circulation of air so that it will not become stagnant at any point and by coming in frequent touch with the ice will be kept cool. The relative sizes and positions of the ice chamber and refrigerator are shown and these can be made larger or smaller in proportion to meet the requirements.

Keeping the Wheat Pure.

One of the most important factors in growing improved wheat for seed is to keep the wheat pure. Many farmers are careless on this point, often planting new seed on old wheat



ground, thus allowing it to become mixed with volunteer wheat the first year. This mixing of varieties causes wheat to deteriorate in yield and quality. When wheat is grown for seed it should be on clean land, which is free from volunteer wheat and from other volunteer grain, rye being especially objectionable. Care must be taken in harvesting and threshing the seed wheat to keep it from becoming mixed with other varieties of wheat. Again, in order to maintain the quality and yield of wheat it is necessary to maintain the fertility of the soil and to give the land good culture.—Farmers' Mail and Breeze.

To Destroy Woodchucks.

A Pennsylvania farmer gives this experience with woodchucks (ground hogs): He had set several hundred early cabbages, and in going through his patch early one morning he found several plants missing. He found the woodchucks' hole under the wall—in fact, several holes—near his cabbage field. He armed himself with several steel traps and used all his cunning in setting them in the burrows of the

woodchucks, but after several mornings of patient waiting, capture by trap proved unsuccessful. But, having heard that they were very fond of salt, he mixed a liberal quantity of Paris green in about a quart of salt and placed a handful near each burrow. He was not troubled again that season, and this has been his remedy ever since.

The Cowpea as a Fertilizer.

The cow pea is a large beanlike plant that produces a large amount of forage. It is valuable as a green food or for plowing under for green manure. It has been used successfully for improving worn-out soils, especially those that are light and sandy in texture. Its greatest advantage for this purpose is its ability to gather nitrogen from the air and mineral elements from subsoil. When the crop is plowed under, these are left near the surface, where they will be available to shallow-rooted crops and those which cannot get nitrogen from the air. It has been little used for hay in the North, because it cannot be readily dried in this climate. It makes a good green feed for milk cows between August 16 and September 15, or it may be preserved in the silo by mixing with corn fodder. For green manuring, the seed should be sown broadcast in late June or early July, at the rate of one and a half bushels per acre. It is especially valuable for growing in young orchards. When wanted for fodder it should be sown in early June, in drills 3/4 feet apart, at the rate of one bushel seed per acre.

Fly Repeller.

The Kansas Agricultural College has experimented with the various chemical formulas to repel flies from live stock and recommends the following as fairly satisfactory: Resin, 1 1/2 pounds; laundry soap, two cakes; fish oil, one-half pint; enough water to make three gallons. Dissolve resin in a solution of soap and water by heating, add the fish oil and the rest of the water. Apply with a brush. If to be used as a spray, add one-half pint of kerosene. This mixture will cost 7 to 8 cents a gallon and one-half pint is considered enough for one application for a cow. At first it will be necessary to use two or three appli-

FORMS OF HOOF.

The form of a horse's foot determines the peculiarities of the shoe that is best adapted to it. Viewing the foot from the side the regular position is that shown in figure 4, in which the weight will be borne to best advantage. Looking from the front the regular form is that shown in figure 1, the wide toe being indicated by figure 2, and the narrow toe by figure 3. With the regular or normal shape the weight falls near the center of the hoof, and is evenly distributed over the whole bottom of the hoof. The toe points straight forward and when the horse is moving forward in a straight line the hoofs are picked up and carried forward in a line parallel to the middle line of the body. A pair of hoofs of the form shown in figure 2 allows the

weight to fall largely into the inner half of the hoof. In motion the hoof is moved in a circle. Horses that are "toe-wide" are likely to interfere when

in motion. In the third form (figure 3) the weight of the body is directed on the outer half of the hoof. The irregularity of form causes a paddling motion and frequently interfering.

Preventing Disease.

It is more easy to prevent disease in animals than it is to cure. Hog cholera prevails more or less in all sections of the country, but in the majority of cases it is due to the condition of the herds and mismanagement in feeding than to any other cause. Hogs must have green or bulky food, also salt and charcoal. These substances are not in a direct way preventive of cholera, but they keep the animals in a more thrifty condition and render them less liable to disease.

Harvesting Horse-Radish.

Horse-radish may be harvested in the fall, before the ground freezes, or in the spring, before rank top growth begins. Run plow deeply along side of row to remove earth, lift out and trim main root; thoroughly wash and brush and rinse in clean water. Peel off outer skin and grate.



It Stays on the Line.

An improvement has been recently made in the construction of clothes props which all women who take an active part in the household routine will appreciate. It would seem that the old-style prop had done service so long that there could be no improvement suggested, but a well known shortcoming of the old wooden pole is that in a wind it is soon dislodged and falls over to drag back and forth over the dirty surface. The new pole is supplied with a double hook which prevents the pole from leaving its place under the rope.

Kitchen Hatties.

The question of proportions of ingredients used in cooking is often puzzling. An experienced cook gives the following suggestions:

One cup of liquid to three cups of flour for bread.

One cup of liquid to two cups of flour for muffins.

One cup of liquid to one cup of flour for batters.

One teaspoonful of soda to one pint of sour milk.

One teaspoonful of soda to one cup of molasses.

Cherry Pie.

Line a deep plate with paste and rim and wet the edge. Mix one tablespoon of flour with half a cupful of sugar and sprinkle it over the crust, dotting it with one teaspoonful of butter. Fill the plate with cherries that have been washed and stoned. If the cherries are sour more sugar will be required. Cut a slit in the upper crust, lay it over the fruit and press the edges firmly together. Bake about half an hour and serve as soon as cooled.

French Jam.

Wash and wipe the fruit, take out the stones and put the peaches through the chopper, skins and all. Measure and add three-quarters as much sugar as you have peach pulp, and the kernels—all of them. A few minutes' boil will bring the jam to the requisite consistency, since there is no water to boil away. Have no fear of the skins. They cook up and can not be found.

Ox-Tail Soup.

Cut a small ox tail into pieces and fry in butter. Moisten with a quart of consommé and a dash of mushroom catsup. Cook for one hour, season with pepper, add a little well-washed barley, a little Worcestershire sauce and a bouquet of herbs. Boil thoroughly for forty-five minutes, skim and serve. Lemon and hard-boiled egg slices may be added if desired.

Peanut Butter.

Shell and remove the skins from freshly roasted peanuts and grind them fine through a meat grinder. Measure the powder thus produced, add to it half as much butter and rub with a silver spoon to a soft paste. Spread on thin bread sandwiches or on heated crackers.

Peppermints.

Take two and one-half cups sugar, one-half cup water. Boil five minutes, turn into a bowl, add one tablespoon confectioner's sugar and one-fourth teaspoonful peppermint or checkerberry extract. Stir until nearly stiff and drop quickly on buttered paper.

Vermont Buns.

One and one-half cups sweet milk, half cup sugar, half cup butter, two eggs, two-thirds yeast cake. Make a thin batter and let rise until light; add flour to mold and let rise again. Mold and make into biscuit and let rise two hours. These are fine.

Corn Cake.

Three-quarters cup corn meal, one and one-quarter cups flour, two heaping teaspoons baking powder, one-quarter cup sugar, one tablespoon molasses, one egg, one cup milk, one-quarter teaspoon salt. Bake 20 minutes.

Pop-Overs.

Two cups of flour, two cups of sweet milk, two eggs, one teaspoonful of butter, one of salt. Cream all together and bake in muffin rings in a quick oven for about 15 minutes.

Fried Green Tomatoes.

Slice the green tomatoes, sprinkle with a few drops of olive oil, dip in crumbs to which salt has been added. Sauté in butter till tender.