



The Devil's Own A Romance of the Black Hawk War By Randall Parrish

CHAPTER X

The Loss of Rene.

There was the echo of an oath, a harsh, cruel laugh, the crash of planking, a strange, half-human cry of fright from the negro—that was all.

What had been the fate of the others I could not for the moment determine. The darkness shadowed everything, the bulk of the keelboat alone appearing in the distance, and that shapelessly outlined.

"Well, then he isn't likely to bother us any more. Suppose he was the white man?"

"Sure he was; it was the nigger who was up ahead. We hit him, an' he dropped in 'tween ther boats, an' went down like a stone."

"Not a d—d twit'er; maybe she's fainted. I dunno, but that's ther way females do. What shall I do with the bird, Kirby?"

"Oh, hold on to her there awhile, long as she's quiet. I'm going to try the steam again, and get outside into the big river."

The steam began to sizz, settling swiftly into a rhythmic chugging, as the revolving wheel began to churn up the water astern.

I permitted the current to bear me downward, my muscles aching painfully from the struggle, and with no other thought in my mind except to keep well out of sight of the occupants of the boat.

Uncertain which way to turn, and

conscious of a strange lassitude. I made no struggle to reach land, but permitted myself to be borne downward in the grip of the water.

There was no occasion for fear, although I became aware that the sweep of the current was steadily bearing us farther out toward the center of the broad stream, and soon felt convinced that escape from my predicament would be impossible until after daylight.

Suddenly the wrecked boat's bow grated against something immovable; then became fixed, the stern swinging slowly about, until it also caught, and I could feel the full volume of down-pouring water against my body.

It seemed a long while coming, and never did man gaze on a more dismal, ghastly scene than was revealed to me by those first gray gleams dimly showing in the far east.

It was an unusually large steamboat for those days, a lower river packet, I guessed, with two funnels painted yellow and a high pilot house surmounted by a huge brazen eagle.

Indifferent at that moment as to where the approaching boat might be bound, or my reception on board; desirous only of immediate escape from my unfortunate predicament, I managed to remove my sodden coat and furiously wave it in the air as a signal.

"Hey! you out there! If you can swim jump for it. I'm not going to

run into that snag." I measured the distance between us with my eye and leaped as far out as possible, striking out with lusty strokes. The swift current swung me about like a chip, and swept me downward in spite of every struggle.

"Keep your head, lad!" roared out a hoarse voice. "Hang on now, an' we'll get yer."

It was such a rush, such a breathless, desperate struggle I can scarcely recall the details. All I really remember is that I gripped the rope and clung; was dragged under again and again; was flung against the steamer's side, seemingly losing all consciousness, yet dimly realizing that outstretched hands grasped me and lifted me up by main strength to the narrow footway, dropping me there in the pool of water oozing from my

clothes. Someone spoke, lifting my head on his arm, in answer to a hail from above.

"Yes, he's all right, sir; just a bit groggy. What'll we do with him?"

"Bring him along up to Haines' cabin and get him the old suit in my room. You might warm him up with a drink first. You tend to it, Mapes."

"I was caught there last night," I answered, unwilling to say more. "Boat got snagged in the dark and went down."

"Live around yere, I reckon?"

"No; just floating. Came down the Illinois. Where is this steamer bound?"

"H—I alone knows," dryly. "Yeller Banks first, anyhow; we're loaded with supplies."

"Supplies! For Yeller Banks?" in surprise. "Why, what's going on there? My friend, there aren't ten families within a hundred miles of that place."

"No, I reckon not; but that's a h—l ov a lot o' fellers that what ain't families but kin eat. Didn't yer know, pardner, that's a right smart war on; that the Illinois militia is called out, an' is a-marchin' now fer Yeller Banks? They're liable fer ter be thar too afore ever this d—d snow makes it, if we have ter stop an' pick em more blame fools onto the river. Come on, let's go up."

"Wait a minute. This is an Indian war? Black Hawk has broken loose?"

"All right, are you? Water pretty cold yet, I reckon. Been sticking on that snag long?"

"Several hours; but my boat was wrecked before we lodged there."

"Seems to be a mighty populous river up this way, hey, Mapes?" he remarked genially. "Castaways round every bend."

"What do you mean? Have you picked up others?"

"Certainly have. Hit a keelboat twenty miles below."

"A keelboat operated by steam?"

away, and I was thrust through an open cabin door by the grasp of the mate before I could really sense the true meaning of this unexpected news.



A D—d Queer Combination, if You Ask Me."

ask me; two nigger wenches, Joe Kirby an' a deputy sheriff from down St. Louee way."

"Two women, you say? Both negroesses?"

"Well, that's what Joe said they was, an' I reckon he knew. However, one ov 'em looked er white as anybody I ever saw. The deputy he tol' ther same story—sed they was both slaves that Kirby got from an' plantation down below; some French name, it was."

"You knew Kirby, then?"

"H—I, ov course. Thar ain't many river men who don't, I reckon. What is it to you?"

"Nothing; it sounds like a strange story, that's all. I want to get this wet stuff off, and will be out on deck presently."

(To Be Continued.)

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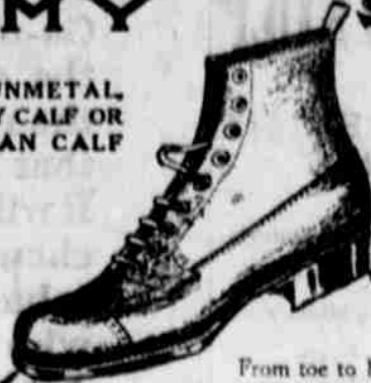
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department in years came Friday night, when on the recommendation of D. G. McPherson, chairman of the Police committee, the position of night officer, held by F. L. Kuip, was declared vacant by Mayor Eastes after a unanimous vote of instruction by the council.

Prepares for Tax Roll. Comparison shows the Oregon Trunk railway with an assessed value of \$585,500 in 1918, and \$586,000 for this year, the O-W. R. & N. railroad with \$188,388 last year and \$201,281.27 now, and the Bend Water Light & Power Co., the other chief taxpayer of the public utilities,

with \$115,000 in 1918 and \$139,257 in 1919. The American Express Co. a year ago was \$2,611 as against an assessed value of \$2,783.41 today, and the Deschutes Power Co., which in 1916 was \$17,344, is now \$17,388. The Deschutes Mutual Telephone Co., at \$3,438 in 1918, is \$3,528 this year, the Farmers' National Telephone Co., \$1,080 a year ago, is \$1,120 on the new list, and the La Pine & Southern Telephone & Telegraph Co., is the same now as a year ago, \$110. The Pacific Telephone and Telegraph Co., has advanced from \$18,548 to \$22,040. Mr. Mullarky is now engaged in dividing the different apportioned values among the districts of the county, and expects to be able to give a very close approximation of the tax and millage which will be paid in the city of Bend, within the next few days.

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