

CHAPTER X.

The Loss of Rene.

There was the echo of an oath, a harsh, cruel laugh, the crush of planking, a strange, half-human cry of fright from the negro-that was all. The sudden violence of the blow must have hurled me high into the air, for I struck the water clear of both boats. and so far out in the stream that when I came again struggling to the surface I was in the full sweep of the current, against which I had to struggle desperately. In the brief second that intervened between Sam's shout of warning and the crash of the two boats I had seen almost nothingonly that black, menacing hulk, looming up between us and the shore, more like a shadow than a reality. Yet now, fighting to keep my head above water and not to be swept away. I was able to realize instantly what had occurred. I had been mistaken; Kirby had not fled down the river; instead he had craftily waited this chance to attack us at a disadvantage. Convinced that we would decide to make use of the rowboat, which he had left uninjured for that very purpose, and that we would venture forth just so sbon as the night became dark enough, he had hidden the stolen craft in some covert along shore to await our coming. Then he sgrang on us, as the tiger springs on his prey. He had calculated well, for the blunt prow of the speeding keelboat had struck us squarely, crushing in the sides of our frail craft and flinging me headlong.

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. The craft bore he light, and had it not been for a voice speaking I doubt if I could have located even that. The rowboat could: hot .be distinguished-it must have sunken, or else drifted away, a helpless; wreck. The first sound my ears caught, echoing across the water, was an .. oath, and a question; "By -! a good job; do you see that fellow anywhere?

"Naw," the response a mere growl. "He's a goner, I reckon; never knowed whut hit him, jedgin' from the way

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

"Sure he wus; it wus the nigger who was up ahead. We hit him, an' he dropped in 'tween ther boats, an' went down like a stone. He never yeeped but just onct, when I furst gripped ther girl. I don't reckon as she wus hurt et all; leastwise I never aimed fer ter hurt her none."

-d twitter; 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 awhite, long as she's quiet. I'm going to try the steam again, and get outside into the big river. H-, man, but this hasn't been such a bad night's wors."

The steam began to sizz, settling swiftly into a rhythmic chugging, as the revolving wheel began to chure up the water astern. Confident of being safely hidden by the darkness. I permitted the current to bear me downward, my muscles aching painthiny from the struggle, and with no I guessed, with two funnels painted other thought in my mind except to yellow and a high pilot house surkeep well out of sight of the occupants of the boat. To be perceived by first, approaching me, bow on, I could them and overtaken in the water meant certain death, while if they continued to believe that I had actually sunk beneath the surface, some future carelessness on their part might yield me an unexpected opportunity to serve Rene. The few words overheard had made sufficiently plain the situation. Poor Sam had already found freedom in death, crushed between the two colliding boats, but the girl had been grasped in time and hauled uninjured aboard the heavier craft. This had been the object of the attack-to gain possession of her. Very evidently I had not been seen closely enough to be recognized by Kirby. In a measure this afforded me a decided advantage, 'provided we ever encountered each other again-and I meant that we should. The account between us was not closed by this incident; far from it. There in that black water, struggling to keep affoat, while being swept resistlessly out into the river, with no immediate object before me except to remain concealed by the vell of darkness, I resolved solemnly to myself that this affair should never end until it was ended right. In that moment of decision I cared not at all for Rene Beaucaire's drop of negro blood, nor for the fact that she was a slave in her master's hands. To my mind she was but a woman, a sweet, lovable, girlish woman, in the unrestrained power of a brute, and dependent alone on me for rescue. That was enough; I cared for nothing more. ...Wishestlent strokes I waited patient-

ly until the steady chugging of the engine prew faint in the distance, and then finally ceased entirely.

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. Suddealy something drifted against my body, a black, ill-defined object, tossing about on the swell of the waves, and instinctively I grasped at it, recognizing instantly the shell of our wrecked boat. It was all awash, a great hole stove in its side well forward, and so filled with water the added weight of my body would have sunk it instantly. Yet the thing remained buoyant enough to float, and I clung to its stern, thankful even for

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. The struggle to keep affoat was ho longer necessary, and my head sank in relief on the hands gripping at the boat's stern, while we floated silently on through the black mystery.

Suddenly the wrecked boat's bow grated against something immovable; then became fixed, the stern swinging slowly about, until it also enught, and I could feel the full volume of downpouring water against my body. The blindly floating boat had drifted upon a snag, seemingly the major portion of a tree, now held by some spit of sand. I struggled vainly in an attempt to release the grip which held us, but the force of the current had securely wedged the boat's bow beneath a limb, a bare leafless tentacle, making all my efforts useless. I found a submerged branch on which to stand, gripped the boat desperately to prevent being swept away, and waited for the dawn.

It seemed a long while coming, and never did man gaze on a more dismal, ghustly scene than was revealed to me by those first gray gleams dimly showing in the far east. All about stretched utter desolution; wherever my eges turned the vista was the same-a wide stretch of restless brown water surging and leaping past, bounded by low-lying shores, forlorn and deserted. How far I had aimlessly drifted downstream during the night was a mere matter of conjecture. I possessed no knowledge of where I was. Each bank of the river appeared about equally bare and desolate, entirely devoid of promise. However, I chose the west shore for my experiment, as the current seemed less strong in that direction, and was about to plunge in, determined to fight a way across, when my eyes suddenly detected a faint wreath of smoke curling up into the pale sky above a headland far to Banks furst, enyhow; we're loaded the southward. As I stared at this with supplies." became black and distinct, tossed about in the wind. I watched intently, elinging to my support, scarcely trusting my eyesight, while that first wisp deepened into a cloud, advancing slowly toward me. There was no longer doubt of what it was-unquestionably some steamer was pushing its course upstream. Even before myears could detect the far-off chug of the engine the boat itself rounded the sharp point of the headland and came Into full view, heading out forth toward the middle of the river in a search for deeper water.

It was an unusually large steamboat for those days, a lower river packet, mounted by a huge brazen eagle. At perceive but little of its dimensions, nor gain clear view of the decks, but when it veered slightly these were revealed, and I had a glimpse of a few figures grouped forward, the great wheel astern splashing the water, and between, a long row of windows reflecting the glare of the early sun. Even as I gazed at this vision a flag crept up the slender staff at the bow

and reaching the top rippled out in the crisp breeze. A moment later I deciphered the lettering across the white front of the pilot house-Adventurer of Memphis.

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. At first there was no response. no evidence that I had even been seen; then slowly, deliberately, the steamer changed its course and came straight up the river, struggling against the full strength of the current. I could see a man step from out the pilot house onto the upper forward deck, lean out over the rail and speak to the others below, pointing toward me across the water. A halfdozen grouped themselves at the bow, ready for action, their figures growing more sharply defined as the struggling craft approached. The man above stood shading his eyes with one hand and gesticulating with the other. Finally the sound of his voice reached

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

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. I was squarely abreast of the boat, already caught in her suction, and being drawn straight in toward her wheel, when the looped end of a flying noose struck my shoulder.

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

It was such a rush, such a breath less, 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 lu the pool of water oozing from my



Groggy."

clothes. Someone spoke, lifting my head oh his arm, in answer to a hall 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."

The liquor I drank out of a bottle burnt like fire but brought me new strength, so that with Mapes' help I got to my feet and stared about at the group of faces surrounding us. They presently." were those of typical river men, two negroes and three whites, ragged. dirty and disreputable. Mapes was so bushily bearded that about all I could perceive of his face was the eyes, yet

picked him our as being the mate. "How long yer all bin roostin' on thet snag?" he questioned, evidently somewhat amused. "Dern me, stranger, if I ever see thet sorter thing done

"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 Where is this steamer

"H-l alone knows," dryly. "Yeller

"Why, what's going on there? My friend, there aren't ten families within a hundred miles of that place."

Mapes laughed, his mouth opening like a red gash, exhibiting a row of yellow fangs.

"No. I reckon not; but thar's a h-1 ov a lot o' fellers thar whut ain't famllies but kin eat. Didn't yer know, pardner, thar's a right smart war on; thet the Illinoy militia is called out, an' is a-marchin' now fer Yeller Banks? They're liable for tor be than too afore ever this d-n scow makes it, if we have ter stop an' pick eny more blame fools outer the river. Come on, let's go up."

"Wait a minute. This is an Indian war? Black Hawk has broken loose?" "Sure; raised particular b-i. We heerd down et St. Lonee he'd killed bout a hundred whites, an' burned sum ov 'em-ther ol' devil.

"And where is he now?" "Dunno; never wus up in yer afore, We bin runnin' 'tween St Louce an' New Orleans, till the gov'ment took Maybe the captain kin tell yersumwhar up Rock river, I reckon,

wharever that is.' We climbed the steep steps to the upper deck, and were met at the head of the ladder by the captain, evidently desirous of looking me over. He was a solidly built individual, wearing white side whiskers and a bulbous nose, and confronted me not alto-

gether pleasantly. "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." The captain laughed and winked

aside at the mate. "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 keelhoat operated by steam?" "Couldn't say as to that. Was 'It, Mapes? The craft had gone down when I got on deck. Had four aboard, but we got 'em all off an' stowed 'em

back there in the texas. You better

get along now and slinck those wet clothes." The captain turned rather sharply

away, and I was turust inrough an open cabin door by the grasp of the mate before I could really sense the true meaning of this unexpected news. Mapes paused long enough to gruffly indicate a coarse suit of clothes draped over a stool, and was about to retire without further words when recovered sufficiently from the shock to halt him with a question:

"I suppose you saw those people picked up from the keelboat?" "Sure; helped pull 'em aboard. A d-d queer combination, if you



-d Queer Combination, If You

sk me: two nigger wenches, Joe Kirby an' a deputy sheriff from down

"Two women, you say? Both ne-

"Well, thet's whut Joe said they wus, an' I reckon he knew. However, one ov 'em looked ez white as enybody I ever saw. The deputy he tol' ther same story-sed they was both slaves thet Kirby got from an ol' plantation down below; some French name, it wus. Seems like the two wenches hed run away, an' the deputy hed caught 'em, an' wus a-taking 'em back. Kirby cum 'long ter help, bein' as how they belonged ter him."

"You knew Kirby, then?". "H-I, ov course. Thar ain't many river men who don't, I reckon. What

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

. (To Be Continued.)

these were intelligent, and I instantly Cut This Out-It Is Worth Money.

Don't miss this. Cut out this slip enclose with 5c to Poley & Co. 2835 Sheffield Ave., Chicago, Ill., writting your name and address clearly. You will receive in return package containing Foley's and Tar Compound, for Honey coughs, colds and croup. Sold Everywhere—adv.

At principal dealers on the Pacific Coast, If Manufacturers BUCKINGHAM & HECHT San Francisco

BLACK GUNMETAL, MAHOGANY CALF OR INDIAN TAN CALF

TAX COMMISSION

Apportioned Valuations Indicate Big Increase, But Actual Valuations Reveal Much Smaller Percentage of Gain

night, when on the recommendation a very close approximation of the of D. G. McPherson, chairman of the Police committee, the position of in the city of Bend, within the next night officer, held by F. L. Kutp, was declared vacant by Mayor Eastes after a unanimous vote of instruction by the council. To replace the former with the apportioned values of 1916, show a jump from \$419,431.50, to \$545,106.62. When these amounts are given in terms of actual assessed valuation, from which they were originally computed, the increase is not so noticeable, as the apportionment in 1918 was made on a 45 per cent ratio, while an advance of 13 per cent was allowed this year by the ommission.

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 Kidney Pills and Foley's Cathartic \$201,281.37 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., wheil in 1916 was \$17,344, is now \$17,388. The Deschutes Mutual Telephone Co., at \$3,438 in 1918, is STATEMENT GIVEN BY \$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 Pactic Telephone and Telegraph Co., has

BUCKHECHT

ARMY SHOE

the BUCKHECHT Army Shoe is every inch

a man's shoe! Worn by men in all walks of life

comfort and extra service. Get a pair today!

at all times, in all climes. A shoe built for unusual

advanced from \$18.548 to \$22,040, Mr. Mullarky is now engaged in dividing the different apportioned values among the districts of the department in years came Friday county, and expects to be able to give tax and millage which will be paid few days.

Our Grocery Prices Are Right At All Times----Try Us and be Convinced

> THE A TO Z **GROCERY**

ALWAYS A MADVET PADU MAHVEI

Palace Market Bend, Oregon for Eggs, Butter, **Poultry** Beef, Veal, Pork

Chas. Boyd

Sell your products

lat home

Having the Largest Line of

Used Furniture

in Bend we are in a position to make you some very attractive offerings.

Almost Anything You Want

If you are going to have a NEW RANGE this year, first consider the

Monarch Range

..:...Featuring the Duplex Draft......

We also Buy Used Furniture

See Us first before buying

Standard Furniture Co. Bend, Oregon

BRICK vs. OTHER BUILDINGS

BRICK BUILDINGS IN BEND---VALUE ABOUT \$500,000

FIRE LOSS IN FIVE YEARS NONE

OTHER BUILDINGS ---VALUE ABOUT \$2,000,000

FIRE LOSS IN FIVE YEARS OVER \$100,000

Build With BEND BRICK & LUMBER CO.