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The Unarmed Pirate

How She Plundered Was a Mystery.

By F. A. MITCHEL

Lieutenant Wickersham, in command of the United States gunboat Zac Taylor, cruising in the Malay archipelago, received a wireless order from the admiral to look out for a pirate vessel that had been doing a lot of damage to shipping in the South China sea. No well defined location for the pirate was given, since it was not known. Probably the order was sent to every United States vessel cruising in that region.

The second day after receipt of the order the watch on the Taylor reported to the officer of the deck that a ship was to be seen on the starboard quarter. She was changing her course very frequently. She did not look at all like a pirate, but on account of her mysterious actions the watch thought it his duty to report her.

The commander of the Taylor ordered the ship's course changed toward the vessel in question. No sooner had this been done than the other exhibited a clean pair of heels, evidently in flight. When the gunboat came close enough to the fugitive to discern what she was like Wickersham was surprised to see a very ordinary looking vessel, as unlike a pirate as possible. There were no ports for guns or any other evidence of a capacity for fighting. About dusk the stranger ran close into shore. She was still too far for those on the gunboat to see what was doing on board of her, but since the anchor chains could be heard rattling in the hawse pipes Wickersham did not give himself any uneasiness as to her getting away from him.

By the time the Taylor had come near the vessel night had fallen, and since the latter craft showed no light the gunboat felt obliged to stand off. However, Wickersham, suspecting that she might escape him under cover of the darkness, sent a boat in command of Ensign Throckmorton to reconnoiter. The party was gone an hour. When it returned Throckmorton made a very singular report.

He had found the vessel deserted. On her were all sorts of plunder, showing that she was undoubtedly a pirate. There was no cargo unless about a thousand barrels of oil might be considered such, but it seemed rather that this might have been for fuel. And yet the furnace was constructed for coal, of which there was a scant supply.

Wickersham was puzzled. Never had he heard of a pirate unarmed, unmanned, before. Nevertheless there was abundant evidence that the vessel was the one he had been ordered to look out for. The fact that she had fled when he gave chase was alone sufficient to condemn her. As for her crew, they had doubtless gone ashore under cover of darkness.

It did not seem that there was any need to take further action till morning. The anchor of the pirate being on the bottom, there being no crew aboard to raise it and the shore to which they must have gone being eight or ten miles distant, the lieutenant decided to let the matter rest for the night and the next day go aboard the craft himself and make a personal examination. So he turned in, leaving the executive officer in charge.

When the first faint light appeared in the east the commander was awakened to be informed that the pirate had disappeared. Jumping out of his bunk, he put on a dressing gown and slippers and hurried on deck. The vessel certainly was not where she had been the night before, but the day had broken, and the man in the crow's nest reported her or a vessel very like her on the horizon. Wickersham, after bringing a glass to bear on her, pronounced her the pirate and gave orders to get up the anchor and make chase immediately.

The pirate was standing eastward along the tenth parallel of latitude, evidently making for the open sea. The gunboat managed to keep her in sight and make a small gain. During the day the lieutenant made inquiries among the crew to learn if any one had heard any sound during the night. One man said that he fancied he had heard an anchor chain being carefully slipped through a hawse pipe. He had called the attention of the officer of the deck to it, but since the officer had heard nothing himself he paid no attention to the man's report. Nevertheless Wickersham made up his mind that the pirate had slipped her anchor and sailed away without it.

The mystery worked on the men, some of whom were ignorant and superstitious, and knots were constantly gathering to discuss the strange craft, the opinion being occasionally expressed that the ship was a phantom. But this did not reach the ears of the commander, who would have taken means to quash it.

During the day a wireless message was flashed by the admiral asking if the Taylor had seen anything of the pirate. Wickersham asked for information as to the vessel that he was ordered to capture. The answer was that the admiral had no description of her. It had been reported that several vessels due at Chinese ports had not come in. The weather had been fine; therefore there was no suspicion that they had been wrecked by storm. It had been reported that one Dixon, an Englishman, who was known to be a pirate, had bought a vessel at Canton, and it was supposed that he had fitted her up for piratical purposes. It looked as if he had captured the missing vessels and sunk them with all on board.

This information did not relieve Wickersham's perplexity. If the vessel he was chasing was the one Dixon had purchased, how had he been able to capture ships, plunder them and sink them without any armament? Nevertheless that this had been done was evident from the valuables found on the deserted unarmed ship which was now fleeing before the Taylor.

Toward the close of the second day of the chase the island of Formosa was sighted, and Wickersham began to fear that his prey would escape him by putting into some indentation or inlet along the Formosan coast. The commander of the fugitive vessel ran to within a few miles of shore, but did not put in, evidently waiting for dark in order that his pursuer might not be able to see him when he left the open water. However, reaching a convenient point for hiding, he ran into it while there was still sufficient light for Wickersham to see him.

The fact of his doing so set the lieutenant thinking. Might she not have paused in her flight, when she could have kept on, for a purpose? The fact that so many vessels had disappeared suggested that the pirate had some newfangled device for wrecking them. Might she not come out during the night and practice it on the Taylor? As soon as it was dark, taking a position off where the pirate had put in, Wickersham dropped his anchor and ordered every light on the ship put out. He would not even permit a lamp to be left burning, though covered. He resolved to remain awake during the night, ready for any emergency. However, about midnight, becoming drowsy, he went to sleep in a hammock, having given orders to be called should anything unusual occur. About 2 o'clock he was awakened and told that voices had been heard near the gunboat. Springing up, he went on deck and listened. His hearing was very acute, and he was sure that he heard a sound of oars which had been imperfectly muffled. He ordered a gun to be loaded on each of the four quarters, ready to be fired. Some of his subordinates wondered what he expected to shoot at, while the more superstitious of the crew began to fear that there was something supernatural about.

But the lieutenant ordered every man to keep perfectly silent and remained on watch himself. When the first ray of light came he descried a boat pulling directly toward the Taylor. It was a mile away, and a cable's length behind it the water seemed disturbed, as though some obstacle was moving through it. Then suddenly the lieutenant rushed to the gun that pointed toward the coming boat and stood with the lanyard in his hand, peering into the breaking darkness. Others on the deck were able to descry the moving boat, but not the object disturbing the water behind it.

Nevertheless in a few minutes all could see something that caused a cold chill to run down their spines. It was the periscope of a submarine. From it every eye was turned to their commander, who was carefully sighting the piece near which he stood. Calling to his next in command to come to him, without taking his eye off the periscope, he resigned the lanyard to him, with orders to pull it when he gave the order. When the periscope came within a hundred yards of the Taylor it slowed down and began to settle in the water.

"Fire!"

There was an explosion, and the periscope careened, showing evidence of being wrecked, then disappeared. In a few minutes the surface of the water was covered by oil. Wickersham gave a sigh of relief, which was re-echoed by every man on the Taylor.

The men in the boat turned and were pulling away lustily when a well aimed shot from another gun sent her to the bottom, leaving her crew, some dead, some wounded and some unhurt, floating on the water.

"Man a boat!" cried Wickersham.

A boat was soon pulling to the men struggling in the water. They were picked up and brought on to the Taylor. One of them was Dixon. This was his story:

He had been using the vessel he had bought to carry plunder which was secured by means of a submarine he kept with him. He would put a torpedo into a vessel, then while she was sinking board her and secure what valuables he could find. His boarding party was well armed, but seldom needed to use their weapons. After gathering the plunder he would leave the vessel and her crew to go down together, taking pains that no person lived to tell the tale. Believing that the Taylor would eventually get him, Dixon had resolved to torpedo her. Unfortunately for him, the night was dark, and he was unable to find her till daylight revealed him to his intended prey.

Wickersham reported the facts to the admiral, who directed him to hang the few pirates he had captured. The order was obeyed while the Taylor was making for the plunder ship, which was overhauled. The men, supposing that the Taylor would surely be torpedoed, took little care and did not see the gunboat until she was well on them. Then they tried to escape in boats, but were all captured and served the same punishment as the others.

The admiral's order to hang the pirates without trial enabled him to hush the matter up, which course he deemed advisable, and, although reported to Washington, the matter never got into the newspapers.

Luck.

"Do you believe there is anything in luck?" asked the young man.

"Yes," answered the home grown philosopher. "There is a lot of intelligence and perseverance in it."—Exchange.

Wesley and Tea.

In his younger days John Wesley found it difficult to stop drinking tea. He wrote in 1746: "We agreed it would prevent great expense, as well of health as of time and of money, if the poorer people of our society could be persuaded to leave off drinking of tea. We resolved ourselves to begin and set the example. I expect some difficulty in breaking off a custom of six and twenty years' standing, and accordingly the first three days my head ached and I was half asleep from morning to night. The third day my memory failed almost entirely. On Thursday my headache was gone, my memory as strong as ever, and I have found no inconvenience, but a sensible benefit in several respects from that day to this."

Later in life Wesley returned to the use of tea, as his big teapot preserved in his house in London shows.

Who Were They?

A Case That Puzzled a Detective.

By EUNICE BLAKE

In important social centers where persons congregate who are interested in passing themselves off for more than they are worth there are establishments where jewelry, fine clothes and other articles intended for display may be hired. There is no better location for such a business than a gambling center where crowned heads, nobles, capitalists and such like are to be found in large numbers.

At Monte Carlo there was ten years ago the firm of Dorel & Co., whose stock of jewels was worth several million francs. They would loan these gems, charging therefor an amount equal to 5 per cent a month on the money invested in them. Their intention was to loan only to persons in good standing, but since they took a risk on any one they let have their jewels they hired detectives to keep all their debtors in sight and if possible forestall any loss.

A great many Americans visit Monte Carlo, and occasionally one of them would apply to Messrs. Dorel & Co. for the wherewithal to make a display. Since an American knows more about America and Americans than Europeans know about them the firm concluded to send to New York for a detective to occupy this especial field. Harry Havens was sent by a prominent detective agency and straightaway entered upon his duties.

Havens for the purpose of trial was set to watch a man who purported to have descended from one of the old Dutch settlers of New York. He was known as Heiliger Van Zant. He told Mr. Dorel, head of the loan firm, that his family, though impoverished, still held a high social position in New York society. He had followed a Russian heiress to Monte Carlo whom he was desirous of marrying. He needed clothes and a moderate amount of jewelry that he might make a suitable appearance. As for money, he had enough of that to enable him to make necessary expenditures.

He was furnished with what he asked, and Havens was set to look after him, though his story was believed and the property loaned him was not very valuable. As I have said, the detective was given an unimportant case that he might prove his worth.

Havens was not long in getting a view of the Russian heiress, Maria Nicholevna. She was about twenty-five years old and a fine looking woman. She stopped at one of the principal hotels with her mother, an aristocratic looking old lady, with two iron gray curls on either temple. She was known as "the Countess." The two ladies drove out a good deal and sometimes played at the gaming tables.

Havens had doubts as to Mr. Van Zant's being a genuine member of the old Dutch aristocracy of New York. He secured an introduction to Van Zant and asked him a few questions about life in New York, and the replies were hardly satisfactory. But the gentleman excused his ignorance on the ground that he had been educated abroad and had not been at home since he was sixteen years old. His accent was decidedly English, and this he accounted for from the fact that he had studied at Eton college.

Dorel & Co. knew nothing about the relationships between persons who were constantly coming to and going from Monte Carlo, relying entirely on those they employed to watch their clients. Havens was one day about to enter the office of his employers when he met Maria Nicholevna coming out. The detective was a close mouthed man and made no mention of the fact, but he jotted it down in his mental memorandum book.

The next evening the lady appeared in the gaming pavilion in company with Van Zant, wearing a coral necklace, the carving of which was so delicate that Havens knew it must be of considerable value.

Inquiry at the office of Dorel & Co. brought out the fact that it had been loaned by them; that it had been made in Rome and was worth $1,000. Havens was also told that the lady was laying her nets to catch a British earl, who was in Monte Carlo incognito.

Dorel & Co. went on lending articles of display, and Havens continued to perform his duties, which were to keep track of the supposed New Yorker. But he was equally interested in the Russian heiress.

Why she should borrow jewelry if she were rich he could not tell unless her own gems were in Russia, locked in the family vaults.

If she were really trying to catch an English earl, borrowing the stones might be in order. Havens did not set it down as convincing evidence against her.

Van Zant was intimate with an Englishman named Perkins, whom Havens thought it might be advantageous to pump. He sought Perkins and soon found an opportunity to lend him 100 francs ($20).

This put Perkins under obligations, and he told Havens as a great secret that Van Zant was no American at all, but Lord Herbert Hinchelwood, eldest son and heir of the Earl of Abbingward. Lord Herbert was inclined to be wild and had come to Monte Carlo unknown to his father, the earl, to take a flier at the gaming tables.

"The plot thickens," muttered Havens to himself.

"Query: Is Van Zant a New Yorker or Lord Herbert Hinchelwood, or is he neither?

"Is Maria Nicholevna the daughter of a Russian countess or an adventuress?

"Are these two deceived in each other, or are they working in a common plot?

"Is Perkins a stool pigeon for Van Zant or what he pretends to be, a London stockbroker?"

Havens leaned toward the opinion that Van Zant and Marie Nicholevna were both adventurers laying a trap for some person or persons unknown to him. But he was very uncertain. Both were either high bred persons or capable of imitating such. There is illimitable chicanery constantly going on among the nobility of Europe, who are of many grades.

Most of them are constantly scheming to gain something from some one else. Some are honorable; some are swindlers. The fact that Van Zant had borrowed the clothes he wore and Maria Nicholevna the coral necklace did not necessarily prove that they were impostors.

One evening Havens missed both Van Zant and Maria Nicholevna from the gaming tables, where they usually spent an hour or two tossing coins on to the table, sometimes winning, sometimes losing.

The detective had noticed that they were not especially interested, but were simply betting to pass the time. He believed they were absorbed in a bigger game, or at least a game of another kind. Their disappearance did not worry him so much as to his responsibility for Van Zant, since the value of his borrowings from Dorel & Co. was small.

He leaned to the opinion that they had gone after some one for whom they were laying a trap. On inquiring he learned that Maria Nicholevna, or "the countess," had gone to Nice and Van Zant had followed her there.

Havens went at once to the office of Dorel & Co. for information. What was his surprise to learn that Van Zant had been there and had returned all the articles he had borrowed, stating that his baggage, which he had left in England, had been forwarded to him. Maria Nicholevna had returned the coral necklace.

The detective was puzzled. The conditions would fit almost any theory. He formed no theory, for he had learned by experience that theories are misleading. He departed for Nice. After a search he learned that both his quarries were there at different hotels.

Soon after his arrival he saw Maria Nicholevna driving with her mother. She was returning to her hotel, and the detective followed the two into the house. He dined there at table d'hote and saw the Russian ladies in company with some persons who he felt sure were Americans.

Scraping an acquaintance with one of them, a young man from Philadelphia, he put on the pumping process, but only learned that his informant believed Maria Nicholevna was what she pretended to be.

One morning Havens was passing the little church used for worship principally by foreigners sojourning in Nice, when a carriage drove up, and who should alight but Van Zant. He went into the church, and the detective followed him. At the other end of the building were Maria Nicholevna, her mother and a few friends. No sooner had Van Zant joined the others than he and Maria Nicholevna stood before a clergyman who was waiting for them and were married.

Havens had gone over to Nice from sheer curiosity, for when Van Zant had disappeared from Monte Carlo, having returned what he had borrowed, the detective's official duties were ended. He remained in Nice a few days, scanning the marriage notices in such newspapers as he could get in order to see under what names the parties had married.

It was not long before he saw an announcement of a marriage between Lord Herbert Hinchelwood, younger son of the Earl of Abbingward, to Maria Nicholevna, daughter of Countess Warewtski of Warsaw.

Havens was not satisfied, but there was nothing for him to do but go back to Monte Carlo and ask to be assigned to another case. Nevertheless, having been told that Hinchelwood was heir to the title, he believed something was wrong.

One day, a month later, he read in a Paris newspaper that the wife of Lord Herbert Hinchelwood had applied to have her marriage with him annulled. The couple had met in Monte Carlo, where Lord Herbert had passed himself off as an American, but had given out as a secret his real identity. The lady had married him supposing him to be the eldest son of his father and heir to the title, and he had married her supposing her to be immensely wealthy.

Lord Herbert already had several wives living, or such was supposed to be the case. At any rate, he had a bad reputation and had been disowned by his father. The lady was the daughter of a Polish count whose fortune had disappeared, and he had become a music teacher in Paris.

Such was the experience derived by Mr. Havens, detective, in his first case in the service of Messrs. Dorel & Co. at Monte Carlo. He remained with them several years, and his notebook will furnish plans for a number of stories, the characters of which were either nobles or connected with noble families. But he says that none of them puzzled him so much as this case of an earl's son and a count's daughter. At any rate, in no other case were two sharpers bitten, each by the other.

Love For an Hour.

What is it that makes people so much better company at a masquerade than under any other circumstance?

In the circle of the black mask and the domino we have no name, no past, no future, no self to live up to or down to and the mood that is uppermost need never impose itself upon a later mood.

We can be spontaneous and genuine. No wonder we are good company!

For on the whole our spontaneous impulses are kindly and gay.

We are almost ready to love our fellow men for an hour if we are not thereby committing ourselves to loving them for a lifetime.—Pittsburgh Press.

How the Butterfly Is Protected.

The brilliant coloring on the wings of some kinds of butterflies is a bitter tasting pigment, which to a certain extent protects those species from being eaten by their foes. Frogs will try to eat sulphur butterflies and after tasting them will promptly reject them. The brilliant colors may be produced in order to advertise the nauseous taste as well as to aid the butterfly in attracting a mate of its own kind.—Westminster Gazette.

Pedagogue.

The word "pedagogue," as applied to schoolteachers, is from a Greek word, paidagogos, compounded of pais, boy and agogos, leader; hence paidagogos, leader of boys. In ancient Greece the paidagogos was not strictly an instructor, but a domestic slave who looked after the boys of a family, took them to and from school and kept them off the streets. The boys were put in his charge at the age of six, and he probably sat with them in school. Although his position was simply that of a trusted servant, it came in time to be applied to the teacher, though always with a slurring or contemptuous significance.

As She Saw It.

A young girl who had been born and brought up in a boarding house atmosphere was suddenly transplanted into a wealthy home. After she had been there a month a friend of her patroness said:

"I expect you notice a great difference between your present and your former surroundings."

"Oh, yes," said the girl. "There when a man and a girl walk out together everybody always says, 'Will he marry her?' Here they say, 'Will she have him?'"—New York Times.

Descended From the Crusaders.

The Touaregs, a Sahara desert tribe, whose members wear veils so continually that near relatives are said not to recognize each other if the garment in question happens to be removed, are direct descendants of a party of crusaders who were lost on the way to conquer Jerusalem and Mecca.—