



SYNOPSIS

CHAPTER I—In the small New Jersey village of Stratham, in the year 1749, Richard Lindsay, who tells the story, is a carefree youth whose chief activities are fishing and hunting. Proud of his marksmanship, he gives an exhibition before some villagers and a stranger, with whom they afterward dine at the tavern. The conversation turns on a notorious pirate, whose ship, the Black Panther, is thought to be in the vicinity.

CHAPTER II—Next morning Lindsay, after wild duels, is sitting in a "blind" when three strangers land on a beach near him. Surprised, he makes no sound. The men bury a chest while he watches. The work finished, he sees two of the strangers kill the third. The actual player is the man with whom Lindsay had talked the day before. Lindsay's presence is discovered. After apparently determining to kill the youth to prevent his talking, the question of his shooting ability seems to be of importance, and he gives the two men proof of his skill. His acquaintance, whose name he learns is Burford, tells Lindsay the third man is Captain Barclay, and his ship, off shore, is the Black Panther. The three go aboard.

CHAPTER III—On the ship Lindsay meets a youth whom he resembles in a remarkable manner. The youth is Robert McAllister, whom Barclay has captured on his way to his uncle's plantation in Jamaica. The pirate tells a story of wrong done to him by Andrew McAllister and admits he has sworn to kill him. He would use young McAllister as a spy in his uncle's household. The youth refuses to be a party to the treachery, and Barclay and Burford kill him.

I felt my heart sink at his words. "Then McAllister?" I cried, and did not complete the question.

His nod was sufficient answer, and without more words he led the way. We were standing out to sea, and the schooner, well heeled over, was howling along at a great rate. The captain, back to us, stood leaning against the rail, gazing out at the broad expanse of sea and sky. He turned at our approach, with one gesture dismissed Burford, and with another bade me take my place at his side. "You are learning," he said, "something of Fate's revenge; something of the tangled threads that make up the pattern of life. Doubtless you consider a man's life of great importance—a sacred thing. Perhaps it is in your village; but here—and he indicated with a sweep of his hand the ship and the sea and the sky—"a man's life is no more precious than a flea's. Take yourself. You are nothing to me—less than nothing. Save for a chance resemblance, you would this instant be snugly tucked away on the sand spit yonder, with a great hole in your forehead, and sand for your blanket, and the ooze of the tide for your bed; sleeping for all eternity."

In spite of myself, I shuddered at the picture, for though no scholar, this swaggering captain had a marvelous knack of using words. Presently he continued: "And young McAllister was nothing to me. You have the proof of that. And you see what happens to stubborn young men. I am warning you. You doubtless think there is right in the world and wrong in the world, and that you must do what is right. But I tell you that on this schooner there is no right or wrong except my word. What I wish is right; what I do not wish is wrong. You are not, I think, an over-bright young man, but I hope that at least you can see that."

Now I did not take this conclusion kindly, for though the world in general has, I fear, seemed to share that idea of my abilities which the captain had just expressed, I myself have at ways felt that I was brighter than supposed, baring perhaps, as I admit, a certain slowness at times in grasping a situation quickly. Yet mindful of what Burford had said to me, I kept my temper and answered quietly enough. "Yes, I understand that."

He looked at me with that curious gleam in his eyes which was often there, and which I hated—a kind of amused, contemptuous glance that made you feel his delight in his cleverness and his scorn for your stupidity—and then all at once he said: "Well, Mr. McAllister—"

He stopped with those words, as if to see if he could catch me napping, but for once he did not, for though I own that for an instant I thought he had made a slip, the next second I perceived first that he was too clever a man to do that, and secondly that if it was not a slip there was a purpose in it. And what that purpose was it was not hard to guess. And so, to surprise him, and to show him that he had underrated me, I answered roundly, as he paused: "Yes, Captain, that's my name."

And indeed he was surprised. At first I think he could not believe the quickness I had shown, but presently, perhaps from a smile which I could not restrain, he saw that I understood him, for he laughed and fetched me a clap on the back, crying, "Well, well, I thought you were simple, and here I find that you are deep and subtle—yes, a d-d dangerous rogue."

Now, although this should not have pleased me, I own that it did, and

after a little he went on, "Now then, as man to man—and I own that I liked this too—I am going to tell you my whole plan. There is that black-hearted Andrew McAllister, rich and prosperous with the treasure that was half mine—and what has he done? He has bought a great plantation on the southern coast of Jamaica, and there he is raising sugar cane and growing richer still. Where does his labor come from? Why, it's slave labor, of course. And he doesn't have to buy his slaves from others; he has a ship that does nothing but trade, back and forth, in a kind of circle, and every port she touches makes him richer. Look now, while I make it plain to you. Two vessels he has; one a brigantine, the Shark, that sails the Caribbean, a pirate out and out. But it's the other that's his steady, respectable trader; she's the bark Ashantee. That bark he loads in Jamaica with sugar and molasses, and up the coast she goes to New England. What happens to that sugar and molasses? It's made into rum—the best New England rum. And where does that rum go? It goes out to Bonny and Calabar. And what is loaded in exchange for that rum? Some gold and some ivory, but mostly niggers—prime niggers, worth fifty pounds a head; and back comes the bark to Jamaica, and the slaves are landed at Andrew McAllister's plantation, and they raise more sugar and molasses, and that makes more rum, that brings more slaves to Jamaica again. Around and around in a circle; can you improve on that for a damnably way of getting rich? Isn't that a game to make the devil rub his hands and laugh?"

I could only nod assent. And I could not help thinking what my father would say if he could hear of this wicked trade. Of the horrors of the "middle passage" I had heard him tell, of the dead bodies flung over to the sharks; aye, and sometimes, when winds baffled and food and water ran low, of live men hurled to their deaths under the shadow of the midnight sky, with no one to know of their murder and avenge it. Surely, as the captain said, this sailing in an evil circle was a game to make the devil laugh.

So vividly, indeed, did he present the picture to my mind, that I must own that for the moment I did not see the incongruous side of a man of his profession thus condemning McAllister; for it was a case of the pot calling the kettle black, and while the captain's fine show of indignation would have come well enough from the mouth of another, it fell oddly from the lips of a professed pirate, a murderer, and a plunderer of the seas. Yet, as I have said before and as I may say again, Capt. Francis Barclay was the strangest mixture of a man I have ever known—at one and the same time, though it sounds, and doubtless is, incredible, a rascal and a gentleman, a murderer and a philosopher, a cruel sneering brute and a man who could yet charm you with his subtle speech, into thinking that black was white. And so now, as doubtless he intended, he managed to fill me with resentment against Andrew McAllister and his nefarious trade.

Undoubtedly, indeed, he could see by my face, which I am told too openly reveals my emotions, that I was justly indignant, for he continued, "And who runs his plantation for him? That bald-headed spawn of Satan, Jack Shively, his precious mate. Which is the worse of the two, you ask me?"—though I had not asked him at all, and had not studied hard enough at school to appreciate his rhetorical skill—"Well, that's hard to say. But I'd answer you this way. Give me McAllister for wholesale villainy, for working out schemes on a big scale. But for downright petty cruelty there's no one to beat Shively. I've seen him torture a prisoner to death, and laugh while he was doing it. And he's the man, if you can imagine it, who has full charge of McAllister's great plantation. Why, boy, it's a very kingdom of the damned. There's only one rule—the rule of the whip—and whether he has cause for it or not, whenever the whim takes him he singles out a slave and has him—or her, he treats the women the same as the men—lashed to a tree, and flogs away till the poor nigger's back streams blood. Whether they die or not he doesn't care, so long as he has his fun. He's a coward at heart; he wouldn't meet you in a fair fight; but he's brave as a lion with those poor defenseless blacks. A missionary went to Shively once, and begged him to treat the slaves with more consideration, to give them some time to learn religion, some hours for recreation and play. And what was Shively's answer? That he had his master's interests to look out for, that religion and recreation paid no dividends, that wiser men than he had figured it out, and that it was cheaper in the end to drive slaves to death in a few years and then fill their places

with new ones than to let them live out their allotted span in health and some kind of happiness. Treats them like brutes, you may say. Why, the meanest brute that ever skulked and cowered in the depths of the jungle is a king beside those poor black slaves."

Certainly, as he put the matter, I felt a hearty hatred for both these men—the plot-making master and the brutal mate—and the captain, doubtless perceiving the impression he had made, hastened to drive it home.

"Well, enough of Shively," he continued. "Let me tell you something more about McAllister. You imagine of course, that he lives on his plantation. But he doesn't. His conscience is too black for that. He's picked the spot where he lives on purpose. The plantation borders on a beautiful river, with a narrow outlet to the sea, but a little ways inland the river broadens into a kind of lagoon, and in the middle of it is an island, and on the island McAllister has built his house, or, as you might almost say his fort, for that's what it really is. He has a garrison, I understand, of a dozen men, good fighters, and there the old fox lives, never stirring from his den unless he has to. And there he hoards and plans and adds to his treasure. A coward, a skulker—" and he made a gesture of contempt too deep for words.

There fell silence, while he gazed over the rail into the sunshine with a fierce and eager gleam in his eyes. It was some time before he turned to me again. "I called you McAllister, just now," he said, "and you understood my reason. That young man was true to his uncle; you cannot blame him; he did not know what Robert McAllister really is. And so—you become Robert McAllister. We have the chest with his clothing and all his effects; we have the letters from his uncle; we are bound to make a success of our plan. No one on the island has ever seen you; no one had ever seen him and the resemblance between you is strong that if we could bring back young McAllister from the dead, and dress you alike, it would take a wise man to tell you apart. I've given you the outline of the scheme; now for the details. I land you near his home; you make your way to that cursed bald-headed mate, and make yourself known, and he brings you to the island. All you have to do is to play the dutiful nephew, to get McAllister's confidence, to find out all you can about the island and its garrison, to find out, above all, where he keeps his treasure. Then, in a fortnight, you will meet me again, and we shall talk things over. What will happen next depends on what you have learned. It may be better to storm the island, or it may be that you will have to kill him yourself. But no—he broke off suddenly, and much to my relief—"that wouldn't do unless it was the only way! I want to have his skinny throat between my hands. But we can settle that later. There's only one thing to do now, and that is for you to give me your solemn word of honor that you will be faithful to me and that you will undertake this venture as I suggest. If you refuse"—he turned squarely toward me, and his tone was hard as steel—"then much as I regret it, I'll have you stripped and tied to the foremast before five minutes are gone, and I'll rouse my gentle darlings from their d-d drunken sleep and have them pelt you with empty rum bottles till they've let out every drop of blood in your veins. So make your choice, once and for all. Will you die like a dog or live like a man?"

I was silent, unable to give a direct and immediate answer. To be stripped and lashed to the mast, and to have those drunken ruffians pelt me with glass that would break and shiver on my naked flesh—that indeed, as he had expressed it, would be dying like a dog. But living like a man—there was the rub. To pass myself off for another, to lie, either by speech or action, a hundred times a day, to gain a man's confidence and then basely to betray him—was this living like a man? And at length, with a great feeling of resentment, I turned upon him.

"It's a fine choice to give me," I cried. "God knows I have no wish to die, but to be a traitor, a sneaking spy—how can I do that?"

To my surprise (for I never got over being surprised by the varying moods of this man) instead of being angry he gave me a hearty clap on the back. "Well spoken," he cried, "and believe me, lad, if Andrew McAllister were a decent man, if he were even half of a decent man, if I knew one good thing to say for him, I'd never ask you to do what I propose. But you don't seem to understand. If I asked you to kill a rat, a snake, a cockroach, would you hesitate? And if I told you to set a trap for them, to catch them by stratagem, would that make any difference? Of course it wouldn't. I've called Andrew McAllister a fox, but I apologize—to the fox, I mean. He's a rat and snake and cockroach all in one; he's lower than the filthiest vermin that walks or flies or crawls. Get rid of Andrew McAllister and that d-d bald-headed Shively by any means—fair or foul—and the angels in Heaven will bless you and seven hundred slaves will praise the day that you were born. To rid the world of two such blackguards is a noble deed."

As you may well imagine, I had listened eagerly to every word, for I felt that my life hung in the balance. And as you may also imagine, I was only too willing to be persuaded, for I shrank not so much, I think, from death itself as from the ghastly manner in which it was to come. The captain, I am sure, read all this in my face.

(To Be Continued Next Week)

HITEON.

Hiteon Rebekah attending Beaver Rebekah lodge Tuesday night were: Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Hite, Mr. and Mrs. Christ Christensen, Mrs. and Mrs. Christ Christensen, Mrs. Parker Downing, Mrs. Elizabeth McGowan, Mrs. George Anderson, Miss Effie Van Kleek, Mrs. Harry Eliander and Mrs. Lester Davies.

The Hiteon Progressive club met at the home of Mrs. Harry Robinson Wednesday afternoon. "Housekeepers Exchange" roll call brought forth many useful ideas. A report was made on the visit to Scholls Study club, and Public Welfare Institute in Portland. Mrs. Charles Struthers gave a very interesting geographic article concerning conditions in Russia. Following the meeting the hostess served a dainty lunch. The next meeting will be at the home of Mrs. William Campbell, which will be a business meeting with "Club House Ideas" as a roll call.

Miss Florence Selander was a Portland visitor Saturday.

Mrs. Willett and daughter, Lillie, called at the Metzentine home Sunday afternoon.

Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Carlson of Seattle, are visitors at the Peterson home.

Messrs. Carl and Herbert Olson and Connie West went on a fishing trip Sunday.

Week-end guests at the Selander home were Emma Selander, Isabella Selander, Arnold Berg, Leroy Selander and Mangus Grundfosson.

Miss Irene Hansen is home again after a serious illness at the Portland Surgical hospital.

Mrs. Lester Davies and mother, Mrs. Sophia Olson were guests at the home of Mrs. Lena Olson Sunday afternoon.

Mr. and Mrs. Herman Metzentine and son, Everett, spent Sunday evening at the Walsh home in Tigard. Mr. Walsh is quite ill.

Mrs. Ed Newman, of Portland, was a week-end guest of her mother, Mrs. Anna Sieges.

The Bible Study class met Monday evening at the home of Mrs. Charles Van Kleek. The next meeting will be at the Struthers home.

Mr. and Mrs. Oscar Selander spent Sunday in Portland.

Mr. Everett, Presbyterian Home Missionary will conduct church services at the Hiteon schoolhouse Sunday evening, May 1. Everybody come.

Don't forget the "500" party to be given at the Christensen home Friday evening, April 29. Amusement for everyone. Admission 25c and 15c. Proceeds to be given to the Doernbecker hospital for children.

SHAHAPTA.

Wendy Butler, Correspondent.

Mr. and Mrs. I. F. Julian and their daughter Ruth, of Hillsboro, were visitors at the Beebe home Sunday.

Mr. and Mrs. F. Beebe attended a performance of Den Hur at the auditorium.

Mrs. J. D. Claghorn has returned home from Seattle where she has been visiting her daughter, Mrs. L. Wright.

The Shahapta Women's club will meet at Mrs. J. W. McCuen's on May 4. After a luncheon the election of officers will take place.

Miss Barbara Richwood was confined to her bed for a few days with a slight illness.

The condition of Mrs. Julia Schmitt, who is suffering from a stroke remains unchanged.

MISS L. F. A. F. A. F.

Mr. and Mrs. Fred Hall had as week-end guests Mr. and Mrs. Marble of Corvallis, Mr. and Mrs. Perry of Camas, and Mr. and Mrs. Bertolotto of Portland.

The Hillsdale Parent-Teacher's gave an entertainment Friday night and featured the Kitchen Cabinet Band. There was a large attendance.

Mrs. R. C. Thompson entertained Mrs. George Arrowsmith of Seattle at a bridge luncheon Monday.

HUBER NOTES

Mr. and Mrs. W. D. Hedges, of Portland, nephew and niece of Mr. Hedges, of Beaverton, were Sunday guests of the Manns.

Mesdames H. C. Frost, Ed Hudson, and James Lynch were luncheon guests of Mrs. Mann on Thursday.

Leland Shaw, a member of the college degree team that initiated candidates of Oregon City lodge, spent the week end with his parents Mr. and Mrs. Dan Shaw.

Anson Miller is busy with carpenter work at his place on Hennessey avenue.

Mrs. Frank Fluke and family are busy trying to put the Clark place in some semblance of care and cultivation.

The Boy Scouts troop No. 15 of Huber, report a fine meeting on Friday the 22nd. Several new scouts joined the troop. All are looking forward to splendid work and 100 per cent efficiency.

Camp Fire Girls We-La-Go-Na group held their weekly meeting at the Huber club house Tuesday April 26.

The club show Saturday night was rather poorly attended. There will be another in two weeks, May 7, try and make it a packed house. It is for your boys and girls.

On Saturday April 30, there will be a card party at the Huberclub house. Every father and mother, older sister and brother, uncle and auntie are urged to attend. This is for the boys and girls clubs recently formed.

During all of this week there is being held a cooking demonstration at the Huber club house. The boys and girls clubs are taking an active part. The winners will be announced next week.

Several Huber ladies attended the "Spring Flower Show" held in the Multnomah Hotel, last week, one of the interesting flowers they saw was the Botanical Tulip that goes to sleep at night and opens its petals to the morning sun. This variety was shown by "Bettendorp Gardeners."

The residents on route 4 have been sympathizing with the mail carrier. Most of the mail boxes have been quite out of his way. The latest development on the new road is the setting up of all of the boxes.

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