



SYNOPSIS

**CHAPTER I.**—In the small New Jersey village of Stratford, in the year 1749, Richard Lindsay, who tells the story, is a strict disciplinarian whose chief activities are fishing and hunting. Proud of his marksmanship, he gives an exhibition before some visitors 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 ducks, 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 slayer 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.

**CHAPTER IV.**—Realizing his helplessness and under threat of a lingering death, Lindsay agrees to a ransom. Young McAllister name and take his place in Andrew's household.

**CHAPTER V.**—The Black Panther comes upon a plundered ship, with all on board murdered. Barclay tells his followers the deed is the work of a pirate ship, the Shark, owned by McAllister, and the Black Panther starts in pursuit. The Shark is overtaken and destroyed, with all her crew.

Idea of the spectacle; the air was filled with a shower of debris which struck, indeed, all around our boat, but fortunately without doing us serious harm. Within two minutes the vessel had disappeared, and only bits of wreckage and the bodies of the murdered crew were left to mark her last resting place.

Until we had reached the schooner and the captain had changed his dripping garments, he still spoke no word. Then, with an expression on his face at once somber and determined, he summoned the crew aft and addressed them. As if he and his followers were the gentlest and most benevolent of men, he denounced the murderers of the crew and passengers of the Sea Gull as cutthroats and villains of the deepest dye. Then, showing them the knife he had picked up on the Sea Gull's deck, he told them that the vessel which had done the deed was the well-named Shark, the pirate brigantine belonging to Andrew McAllister and captained by Anthony Hollidge, as bloodthirsty a scum of the seas as his master. But when he spoke of the act of their fellow pirates in leaving as a welcome for the Black Panther a burning fuse, running straight to the powder magazine of the Sea Gull, the captain's language became unprintable and the hoarse murmurs of the crew were evidence that their disapproval was as strong as his own. And finally, playing skillfully on their pride as seamen, the captain admitted that he had been caught napping, and that in our excitement over sighting one sail, we had not kept the proper lookout for two; while the Shark, wider awake, had detected our approach and had sought, by the setting of this carefully timed trap, to blow at least a portion of us into eternity. There was only one way, he told them, to wipe out the stain upon our honor: To sight our adversary at daybreak, to follow and engage her, and to give or take no quarter until one or the other of us had joined the hapless Sea Gull at the bottom of the ocean.

The men, after vociferously signifying their acceptance of this plan, went forward, while the captain and Burford, descending into the cabin, began poring over their charts of the Caribbean, debating whether to lay to, or to keep way on the schooner during the night. For reasons which they did not reveal, they seemed sure that the Shark had headed south, and accordingly we laid our own course in that direction.

With the first dawn of day, the lookout at the masthead lustily announced the presence of a sail. I had never before seen the captain so excited, as he paced the deck with an air so vengeful and so savage that I was glad to stay as far from him as I could. Yet as the day advanced his mood gradually altered to one of grim mirth, for everything appeared to favor our fortunes, and to injure those of the enemy. When the breeze sprang up, as it presently did, it came light and puffy from the north and east, and we, in the sailor's phrase, "brought the wind up with us," drawing steadily nearer and nearer to our foe, until the captain, gazing through his spy-glass, announced that she was without doubt

the Shark, and at once ordered the white flag, with the sable panther, to be displayed at the peak.

Presently, however, the wind increased to a steady whole-sail breeze, and I, being totally ignorant of our surroundings, thought of the old adage that a stern chase is a long chase, and expected every instant to see the captain's mood change again. But to my surprise, he remained as cheerful as ever, and as soon as the opportunity offered I asked Burford the reason for the captain's good humor, and learned that directly to the southward, in the shape of a crescent moon, stretched a line of low banks, resembling the famous Caymans, so close to the surface that to be once among them meant certain shipwreck. Into this bay we were now driving the Shark; it was no longer possible for her to escape us; she would have to fight.

"But why did she walk into such a trap?" I asked.

Burford shrugged his shoulders. "Perhaps," he answered, "they counted on their fuse burning true. Perhaps all hands, from the captain down, were roaring drunk. And they have one chance yet, though it's a long one. There is a channel through the banks, but there aren't three men in Jamaica who know it, and it's not likely that they have one of those three on board the Shark now."

All this time we were drawing closer, and now at last we made ready, in anticipation of our adversary's suddenly altering his course and showing fight. Surely, I reflected, I was to have a taste of real fighting now; and at the thought of the women and children I had seen lying dead on the Sea Gull's deck, I welcomed the conflict. My companions, to be sure, were vile enough, but they could not be worse than their foe, and I was ready to risk my life to strike one good blow in revenge.

Yet still the Shark did not alter her course; still she bore on to the south; and I could see, from the look on the captain's face, that he did not understand her maneuvering. "She can't be going to try the channel," he cried. "Look at the color of the water; they're almost on the shoals now." But the next moment, leveling his glass, he exclaimed: "They are going to try it. I know that nigger at the wheel; it's Brown Moss, the best pilot in Jamaica. D—n them, they'll give us the slip after all."

He was half frantic with the violence of his rage. His swarthy face was flushed almost purple, and he ground his teeth in the extremity of his passion. Then, by ill luck, his eye happened to fall on me. "Here, you sharpshooter," he cried suddenly, "pick me off that helmsman. An' quick, too, or we'll be aground our selves."

I had my rifle in my hands, in readiness for the expected battle, and thus had no alternative but to carry out, or rather to try to carry out, the captain's command. At once, therefore, I stepped to the rail, dropped on one knee, and making in this novel situation, the best allowance I could for the different courses the two vessels were steering, I calculated my distance and let drive. And yet, as I did so, I was conscious that something hindered my aim; and while at the time, perhaps, I could not have put it into words, I know now what the trouble was. When I aimed at a squirrel in a tree top, or at a black duck feeding in the sound, I aimed to kill; every nerve and sinew was bent to that one purpose; all was concentration, and I was aware of nothing else in the world. But now, shooting at a negro who had never done me harm, in spite of myself I aimed half-heartedly, not really wishing to hit the mark. And thus I scored a clean miss, though the bullet, indeed, could not have gone so far astray, for the pilot, not lacking courage, instantly turned and waved a hand at us, while holding the Shark true to her course.

The captain exploded in angry wrath. "D—n you, I thought you were a marksman," he cried, and seizing a rifle from Burford's hand, he made as if to shoot in his turn; then, as if not caring to endanger his hold over his men by exposing himself to their derision if he missed, he thought better of it and handed the piece to me. "Try again," he said; and to Burford he commanded: "Load the boy's rifle as quick as you can."

I could not but admire the quickness with which his mind worked. To load my own arm again was the best possible judgment, for in delicate work like this the thorough knowledge of one's piece is essential. And accordingly, though I held as true as I could with Burford's rifle, I had no great expectation of dropping my man. What the result of the shot really was, I shall never know, if the negro were hit, he gave no sign; but I have always imagined that the bullet struck

him, though not in a vital spot. In any event, he remained erect at his post, and the Shark continued to glide down the entrance of the channel.

And now, at this second miss, I realized, for the first time, that the negro's was not the only life in danger. The captain's dark face turned actually livid, and quick as a flash he whipped a pistol from his belt and leveled it at my head. "You kill the man on your next shot," he said in a tone of the most dreadful and ominous calm, "or so help me God, I'll scatter your brains over this deck."

At the same instant Burford handed me my rifle. Once more I dropped to my knee; once more I took a moment to calculate distance, velocity of wind, the allowance that must be made for the different angles at which we sailed; and then, according to my custom, I banished from my mind all thoughts of ships, of sea and sky, and of everything in the world save that broad brown back, gleaming in the sun, and forming, against the background of the white mainsail, a magnificent target. "His life or mine," I thought grimly, and pressed the trigger. This time there was no suspense; simultaneously with the report the negro's hands loosened their grip on the wheel, his arms flew upward and then in a crumpled heap he slid headlong down the deck.

"Well shot!" roared the captain. "Well shot, my bully!" And then savagely and exultantly, "Now let them find the channel; they won't have two men on board that know it in five minutes by my watch, they'll be aground."

He did not exaggerate; in fact, the catastrophe occurred sooner than any one anticipated. There was confusion on the decks of our antagonist; in one, I dare say, in view of what he just happened, cared to be the next to stand a trick at the wheel. Driver with good headway, and with just sufficient depth of water not to check her too soon, we saw her bow rise suddenly, followed by half the length of her hull; then, all headway ceasing, she hung poised for an instant settled slowly to leeward, and there hung fast.

The captain's face was transfigured with an unholy joy. "Look at her!" he cried. "Look at her! Her starboard guns pointed at the bottom of the sea, and her port guns pointed at



"Here's the End of the Shark, Lads We Can Knock Her to Pieces as We Please."

the sky. Here's the end of the Shark! Lads; we can knock her to pieces as we please."

It was evident that he spoke the truth. Heeled over as she was, her guns were rendered useless; it only remained for us to begin, at our leisure, what would be not a battle but a slaughter. Bearing down a trifle closer to make sure of our range and paying no more heed to her scattered musketry fire than to the buzzing of so many hornets, we gave her our port broadside, then luffed, came about, and followed suit with our starboard guns, while Burford incessantly handled our long Tom with deadly aim. Both masts came crashing down, splinters flew from her rail; huge holes gaped through her exposed and unprotected hull; what a few moments before had been a trim and beautiful vessel was now a hopeless wreck.

Presently Burford came running aft "Those that are left," he cried, "are manning the boats. They're going to run for it." And to prove the truth of his words almost at once we saw three boats put off from the Shark, endeavoring, as best they could, to keep the bulk of the wreck between themselves and us. Yet with each succeeding stroke that they took, the difficulty of avoiding our fire became greater. Burford's deadly aim with our long Tom shattered one, leaving those of its inmates not killed outright struggling in the water; while a whole broadside trained on the second reduced her to a like plight. The third, however, managed to get out of reach, and I imagined that the captain would let her go, trusting to the elements or to rival freebooters to finish them in a fitting manner. But I had not yet plumbed the depths of his hatred for McAllister or any one connected with him, and to the shout of "Boarders away" our fastest longboat was lowered and manned, rigged forward with a contrivance new to me, a V-shaped piece of wood, narrow end forward, and with an opening like a loophole on either side of the apex. What this was for I realized when the captain or

THIS YOUNGER GENERATION

When Grand-pa was a high school lad  
Way back in Sixty-two,  
He sorely vexed his poor old dad  
By things he used to do.  
He used to smoke and even play pool  
His conscience never pained him  
And smoked instead of going to school!  
Great grandpa thus arraigned him.

(Chorus)  
"This younger generation  
Is going to rack and ruin.  
They're headed for damnation,  
They don't know what they're doin'!"  
But Grand-pa came to man's estate  
When time had duly flown;  
Got broad of paunch and bald of pate  
And two kids of his own.  
With yells he made the whole house rock  
And reason he had plenty.  
The kids stayed out 'till ten o'clock  
And they were not quite twenty!

(Chorus)  
Now dad's wild oats have all been sown  
And reaped, aye, long ago.  
He's found a wife and settled down  
And has a son named Joe.  
Now dad's a pillar of the church  
But doubts and fears assail him.  
Lest Joe the family name besmirch  
When for some crime they jail him!

(Chorus)  
Old Noah sang the same old song  
Before he built the ark,  
If Ham did not take dad along  
And stayed 'till after dark,  
Mayhap his stout heart quaked the while  
The fear he pondered over,  
That he might lose, thru boyish wile,  
His stand-in with Jehovah!

(Chorus)  
Lewis T. Poole '29.

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