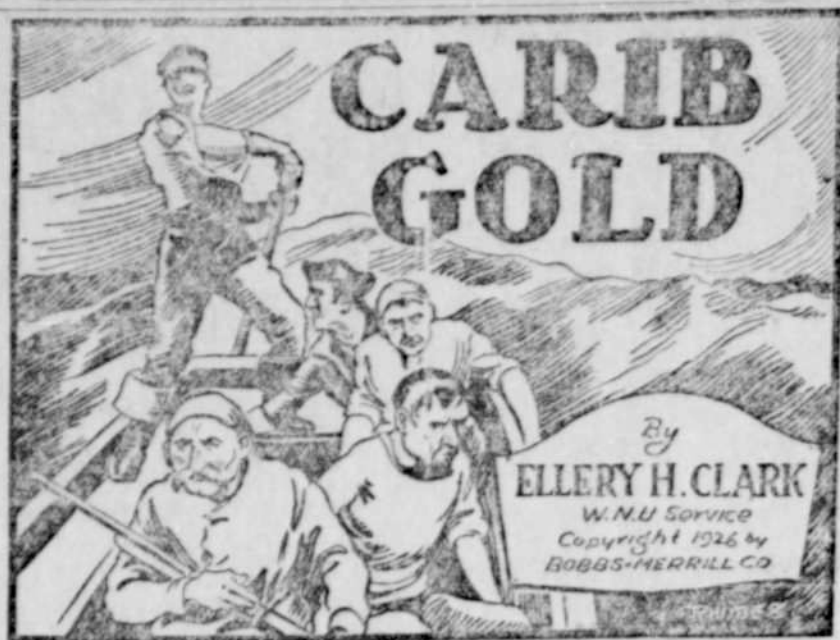




CHAPTER VI.—Barclay sets Lindsay ashore on Jamaica island, after telling him to seek out Shively, manager of McAllister's plantation, introduce himself as Robert, and out all he can about his "uncle's" house, and its defense, and report to Lindsay in two weeks. On his way to the town Lindsay is a witness to the kidnapping and tying up of a colored man, whom he frees. A man tells him he is Quanny, well known jockey, and the kidnapping was a trap laid for him to win a match race the next day. Quanny sends Lindsay to his employer, Colonel Singleton, to explain the matter. He does so, and next day Singleton's horse, with Quanny up, wins the race.

CHAPTER VII.—Lindsay has made the acquaintance of a young man, George Lewis, whom he admires. While watching a card game in which Lewis is engaged, Lindsay detects a player cheating. He denounces the cheater, and a duel follows. Lindsay wagers his life on his admitting the truth of Lindsay's accusation.

The taking of the island would be no easy task.

Of McAllister himself I saw surprisingly little, and this, for a number of reasons, suited me exactly. For one thing, I thoroughly disliked the man, and knew that he and I had absolutely nothing in common; for another, I had more time to be with Helen; and for a third I very much doubt, if I had been hard put to it by a flood of questions, whether I could have played my part as Robert McAllister. Naturally enough, he accepted my story as true, and it was easy enough to see, before I had been under his roof twenty-four hours, that he was the most thoroughly selfish, self-centered man imaginable. Andrew McAllister, for him, was the only person in the world; the rest of us, I honestly believe, were merely shadowy unrealities. It was evident that his invitation had not been for the benefit of the nephew, but of the uncle, and that the shrewd Captain Barclay had been right in surmising that it was the nephew's reputation as a marksman which had so endeared him to his uncle's heart.

Every day, indeed, McAllister had a drill with the maroons, in which I of course took part, and he was constantly calculating on how the island might be attacked, and on the way in which these attacks might best be met. Yet all the time McAllister took pains to convince me that there was no real danger of being attacked by anyone, and that he merely felt it was wise to be prepared. "For why," he demanded as we sat one evening over a glass of wine, "should anyone wish to harm me? I've done no wrong; I haven't an enemy in the world. Some people"—he lowered his voice, and with his right hand caressed his chin, a favorite gesture when more than usually disturbed—"some people think I'm a rich man. But I'm not—just a few pounds laid by for a rainy day."

You may imagine how all this disgusted me. If he had come straight out with the truth—hideous as it was—I might have half-endured the man, but this pretense of being all that he was not was too much for me to stand. And from his general talk of protection of the island he went on to speak of the slave trade, explaining artfully enough that while there was much about it that he disliked, still it was the only way in which the tropics could be made fertile, since white men could never stand the burning



"Some People Think I'm a Rich Man. But I'm Not."

heat of the sun. And after more sophistical argument he came at length to the point, that he himself dealt directly with Africa, and that he was daily expecting the arrival of his bark, the Ashantee, with a cargo of ivory, gold dust and slaves. In fact, another vessel just arrived, a faster sailer in light airs, had reported passing the bark three days before, so that she might be expected at any

Meanwhile, as I quickly assumed my place in the routine of affairs on the island, my friendship with Helen progressed by leaps and bounds. She explained to me, on the second evening of my stay, the mystery of her presence upon the island. Twenty years ago, it seems, her father, Eustace Leigh, a young Englishman of birth and breeding, had come to Jamaica to seek his fortune, and had met, on landing, one of Kingston's reigning belles, a dark-eyed Castilian beauty of pure Spanish blood. There had followed a volcanic and passionate courtship, a true "affair of the heart" on either side, and within a month of their first meeting they were man and wife. Then came a year of purest happiness, and then, like darkness on unclouded skies, the shadow of death, and within a day or two of Helen's birth, Eustace Leigh had found himself, save for his infant daughter, once more alone, an inconsolable and heart-broken man.

Of her early life at Kingston she had pleasant though uneventful memories, for Eustace Leigh, after his wife's death, had lost all interest in the companionship of his former friends. Some years afterward Leigh had entered the service of McAllister, and thus they had lived, on the whole happily enough, until a year ago. Meanwhile, as Helen had blossomed into womanhood, she had, of course, many admirers, among them a certain planter named Don Manuel, a petty tyrant and libertine, whom she had disliked from the first, and whose attentions she had sought to discourage in every possible way. But although his courtship had been a distinct annoyance, it had been no more than that until the tragic morning when Eustace Leigh had been found in a lonely by-way, stabbed to the heart. Thus left alone, Helen remembered that her father had told her, in any emergency, that she could turn to McAllister for aid.

To the island, therefore, she had come, and at first had been received, as she herself admitted, coldly enough. I could imagine the feelings of this selfish old miser, aghast at the prospect of having to protect a friendless orphan. But he had promised her that he would consider the matter, and then, to her surprise, had appeared a day or two later in Kingston, had dwelt, with a remarkable show of emotion, on his affection for her father, and had offered her not only a home on the island, but adoption as his daughter. Amazed, but only too thankful for this refuge, she had accepted with gratitude, and had lived, ever since, with McAllister.

To me, with my greater knowledge, the whole story made easy reading. To Helen, considered by herself, or to Helen, had she lacked her beauty, he would have paid no heed; but to Helen as she was, with all her youthful loveliness, the canny Scotchman was disposed to warm, seeing in her the attraction that might bring young Robert McAllister to Jamaica, not only to strengthen his island garrison, but to further I knew not what other plans besides.

Helen continued to treat me as she had done on the day of my arrival, teasing and afflicting me to her heart's content.

Two days had passed, without further news of McAllister's bark, but it was easy to see where his thoughts were bent, for though the next day was hot and sultry, so that even the breeze from the sea seemed to blow less refreshingly than usual, he rowed over, with two of his bodyguard, to the western bank of the river, and with telescope under his arm climbed to a hilltop, remained there until lunch time, and immediately after eating, instead of taking his customary siesta, returned to the hill again. Helen and I had strolled, as usual, to our trysting place, but although love, as they say, laughs at locksmiths, it could not make light of the unusual oppressiveness of the afternoon. I had never seen anything like it. Little as I knew of the weather in the Caribbean, I felt positive that we were on the very brink of a storm.

I had not, however, the faintest conception of what a tropical hurricane is like. Before many moments had passed, the sky was filled with driving clouds, a dark and rapidly advancing line on the water showed the coming of the wind, and from far out at sea we could hear a menacing roar which told of the frightful force of the impending storm. And then there broke upon us such a turmoil of rushing wind and raging sea as I had never imagined possible. I seized Helen's arm, and in the lee of a huge cottonwood we crouched, breathless, and the next instant, to my utter amazement, I found the dripping form of McAllister beside me. He was like a man possessed, his face a dull red from his exertions, his rain-soaked clothing clinging to his meager form. He placed his mouth close to my ear "Quick!"

he shouted, "we've got to man the boat. The Ashantee is off the bar. . . . must get to her somehow, or she'll founder and we'll lose every slave on board. Lively now! Bear a hand!" No sooner had McAllister uttered his words than he must have seen their madness, and as a sturdy young tree to our left suddenly came rushing to the ground, barely clearing us in its fall, we made our way, half voluntarily, half blown along like so many withered leaves, until we had gained the protection of the house.

Here, for the next few hours, we were forced to stay. Never in my life had I imagined such a storm as this. But if I, with nothing but the lives of Helen and myself to think about, was awed and terrified, imagine the feelings of McAllister, the miser and money-lover, with the knowledge that somewhere in the storm and darkness, the Ashantee was battling for existence, laden with her precious spoils from the African coast. I have never seen a man suffer so; each new wild gust of wind, each boom of the huge breakers on the land seemed to pierce him to the heart. And when, about midnight, we could, for the first time, feel conscious of a diminution in the gale, he urged me to accompany him to the point, to see if we could learn anything of the fate of the bark.

Once outside the door, I realized immediately that though it still blew tremendously, the wind was steadier, less like a hurricane and more like an ordinary storm. And thus, clinging together, and bending over almost double to force our way into the wind, we passed once more through the belt of trees and fought our way out to the point.

In the darkness we had become separated, and I had all that I could do to look out for myself without trying to rejoin McAllister, when suddenly I was conscious of a strange and terrifying sensation, and found that without in the least intending to do so, I had whirled about and was gazing intently toward the woods. I am at a loss, without making myself ridiculous, to explain my feelings, but I can only say that without seeing anything pass me in the intense blackness, at the same time I was conscious that something had passed. This sounds lame enough, and perhaps I can make myself more clear by saying that if I believed in ghosts or spirits, I had exactly the sensation that something of this kind had passed me, borne on the yelling wind. But at once, with a shake of my head, I dismissed such fancies from my mind, and made my way to the very border of the sand. By this time McAllister had rejoined me, and we stood there together trying to pierce the gloom of the night. All at once a huge wave swirled almost to our feet, and when it retreated, drawing sand and pebbles in its wake, it left behind it a gift from the sea, a dark, shapeless something that lay sprawled before us. Together we bent over it, and as the clouds again parted, allowing the faint and watery radiance of the starlight to filter through, I started back in horror, for the black mass was the bruised and bleeding body of a negro, his clenched teeth and the expression of agony on his face showing the desperation of his fight with the waves. Beyond all doubt he was dead; nor could there be further question as to the fate of the bark. I heard McAllister groan, like a man stricken to the heart. And strangely enough at such a moment I thought of the dying curse of the old man.

CHAPTER X

The Curse of the Old Man.

By noon the next day the hurricane had subsided. Everywhere, however, the gale had left its traces; trees had been uprooted, vessels wrecked, and crops destroyed. Andrew McAllister had suffered heavy losses. To say nothing of the damage to the plantation, not a vestige remained of the bark except the timbers that lined the beach and the corpses of the slaves and of the crew.

McAllister himself was like a man who has been dealt a sudden and terrible blow. He seemed visibly bent and withered; could neither eat nor sleep; and in the evenings would sit with me, mourning over and over again, the slaves, the gold and the ivory, sunk deep at the bottom of the sea. Unable to sit still, he would pace the room, muttering more to himself than to me, and with a half-belief in the superstitions of the blacks, cursing his bloodthirsty overseer for causing the death of the old man.

And indeed, if it was the ghost of the dead magician with whom we were dealing, he seemed bound for a complete revenge, for the hurricane and the wreck were not our sole misfortunes. On the very next day one of the maids, who had been to the beach, just before dusk, came flying home, half terrified to death. Something, she averred, had frightened her; something stealthy and shadowy had followed her, skirting the edge of the mangroves, something that had chilled her blood in her veins. Had she seen it? She hesitated. No, she had not seen it, and yet she knew that it was there.

Of course I was not impressed with this wild tale, though in spite of myself I could not help recalling the strange sensation I had experienced on the night of the wreck, a sensation which exactly corresponded to the description of the maid.

Still worse was to follow. Caesar, the second in command among the maroons, owned a nondescript black dog of the spaniel type, which ranged over the island as it pleased, and on the very next evening, shortly after

(To Be Continued Next Week)

A Place Reserved For You

In every issue of this paper there is space reserved for you. It will be devoted to you and your family if you want to help make this paper an interesting one. The editor cannot call on you every week so it is up to you to help. Remember your own home town paper is the only paper that gives a rap about the upbuilding of your town.

HONEY COOKIES WIN

The prize winning recipe for cookies at the recent national honey cooking contest held by the G. B. Lewis company of Watertown, Wis., has just been determined, says H. A. Scullen, bee specialist of the Oregon experiment station, as follows:

Three eggs, well beaten, 1 cup honey, 1-3 cups flour, 1 teaspoonful vanilla, 1 cup chopped nuts, 1 lb. chopped dates, 1 teaspoonful baking powder. Mix honey and well beaten eggs together. Add baking powder and flour sifted together, then chopped nuts and dates. Bake in long flat pan; mixture should be ¼ in. high in pan and ½ in. high after baked. Cut in strips ½ in. wide and 3 in. long and roll in powdered sugar before serving. Pack away in crock.

NUT BREAD

Four cups flour, 1 cup sugar, 4 teaspoons baking powder, 1 teaspoon salt, 1 grated nutmeg, 1 egg, 2 cups milk, 1 cup nut meats. Sift dry ingredients together. Then add nut meats. Beat eggs and add milk to it, add all together. Let raise 20 minutes and bake 40 minutes in moderate oven.

CREAM OF WHEAT MUFFINS

One half cup cream of wheat (uncooked), 1 cup flour, 4 teaspoons baking powder, 1 tablespoon sugar, 1 tablespoon melted butter, ½ teaspoon salt, 1 cup milk, 1 egg. Mix and sift dry ingredients and add milk, beaten egg and melted butter. Pour into greased muffin tins and bake in a hot oven 20 minutes.

PRUNE CAKE FILLING

One cup washed pitted prunes, 1-3 cup orange marmalade, 1-3 cup finely chopped walnuts, 1 teaspoon lemon juice. Put prunes through food grinder. Add to them the other ingredients, mix well and spread between layers.

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