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The Pirate of Alastair

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CHAPTER VI.—(Continued.)

I followed his directions to the porch enclosed with glass, and found Miss Graham sitting there with an elderly woman who proved to be her aunt, Miss Corey. She presented me, and the elder lady, after making a few comments on the awful night, withdrew. Still standing, I put my hand into my inner pocket and drew forth the box with the locket.

"When I went back to the ship this afternoon I found you had dropped the locket from your chain. Permit me to return it."

"Oh!" she said. "How good of you to bring it! I discovered it was gone and was afraid I might not be able to find it after the storm. Thank you so much, Mr. Sargent."

I felt singularly cold and haughty, and seemed to detect a certain reserve also in her manner. The air of the Penguin Club was not conducive to informality.

I had intended to call her attention to the fact that the locket was open when I came upon it, but could not bring myself to do so in the face of the chill that seemed to have settled down upon us.

"Won't you sit down and talk to me?" she said, but I shook my head.

"I must be getting back. The storm is getting worse every minute. The wood road will soon be a swollen river."

There came a growl of thunder and a flash of vivid lightning. Miss Graham scarcely moved a muscle. "I love storms," she said, "but I don't blame you for wanting to get home as soon as you can. You must be soaked even in those clothes."

I looked at my rough attire, and then at the dainty white evening gown she wore, and laughed a little sharply at the contrast.

"It's lucky I don't often come to the club," I said. "They would probably warn me from the premises as a scarecrow of ill omen."

Rodney Islip came on to the porch, in evening dress, as though to emphasize my own incongruities.

"Will you dance, Barbara?" he said. "They're playing one of your favorite waltzes." Then he discovered me. "Hello, old chap!" said he. "How the deuce came you here? You don't mean to tell me you rode through the thick of this storm?"

Petty resentment got the better of me; I secretly noticed him, and bowed to the girl.

"Don't let me keep you, Miss Graham. My mission is over. Good night."

She held out her hand; I barely touched it. I was at the door when Rodney spoke. "I say, old man, have you seen the evening papers? Terrible times in France, more trouble on the market; let me get you the news." He was so full of the stock exchange, himself, that he thought we must all be interested.

"No, I thank you," I answered, bluntly, and went out, scoring myself for my rudeness to this chap whose only fault lay in the fact that Miss Graham cared so much about him. I was to be still more scornful of this rudeness to him in the days to come.

I stood in the shadow while they passed me, then I stole back to the glass-enclosed porch and looked in for a moment at the dancing. I watched Islip lead Miss Graham on to the floor and float away with her, and I caught sight of the locket hanging on its chain about her throat. She looked very fair in her white gown, with her neck bare, and Islip looked very happy as he danced with her.

I looked again at my own rough, un-couth arm. This was no place for me. Suddenly I hated the Penguin Club and all its civilization, all its clothes and dances. I would be off to my little hut in the dunes, with no one but Charles by, and he my very humble servant.

Nero was ready, and I swung myself up and plunged off again into the night. Flashes of lightning showed me the depth of the water in the woods. I ploughed my way homeward, caring nothing what happened, riding as though a legion of devils pursued.

I paid no attention to Charles' fire and the hot dog that he had ready. I flung off my sodden clothes and went to bed, finding my one satisfaction in the crashing gusts of the thunder that seemed to bombard Alastair from the sky. It was certainly the night for any mysterious deed, I remember thinking as I fell asleep.

CHAPTER VII.

I must have been asleep for some time when a sudden sky-cracking crash of thunder broug me wide awake. An instinctive movement made me jump out of bed and go to the front window which looks out upon the sea. The blackness of the pit, and only the roar of the waves against the cliff! Then while I peered into the night came a flash of lightning, revealing the beach and the waves and the open sea with startling clearness. The scene was over in the time it takes to tell it, but I had seen something—a long ship's boat, our blades flashing, half way across the light of the shifting Shoal and Alastair. There

had not seen the tormented schooner, the landing on the beach of the long boat, the march into the pines, and the final picture of that tall, gaunt figure gazing seaward. I could not believe that my imagination or my dreams could be so vivid as my remembrance of those scenes.

I questioned Charles closely at breakfast as to how he had passed the night. It seemed that he had slept stolidly through all the uproar. Even had he not, he would probably have seen nothing for his room was at the back of the house.

The storm continued, though it lessened violence. After breakfast I ventured out, dressed for a waiting, and went first to the place where, as I remembered, the long boat had been beached. The waves had done away with all traces of the keel. Then I followed as nearly as I could the path which the strangers had taken to the pines; but the wind, blowing rain had obliterated the footprints. After breakfast I passed in there. I poked into the pines, only to be drenched by waterfalls from my palms. The mystery was as deep as ever when I finally desisted and went back to shelter.

After some thought, I determined to keep my secret to myself. Charles would respectfully listen to my statement, but without further evidence he would be only too apt, taking the facts in conjunction with my mysterious ride to the club in the evening, to believe I had dreamed it all. What would a schooner's crew be doing on our lonely beach in the height of a midnight storm? A reasonable man would naturally be inclined to doubt.

I settled down to work, and, shutting my mind both to the mystery and to Miss Graham, succeeded in getting a good deal done by night. The next day I passed in similar fashion, living in quiet comfort so long as the storm lasted.

The third day broke fair, and early in the morning I swept the sea and the beach with my binoculars. Never were sea and land more peaceful; the tempest appeared to have cleared the atmosphere and brought it to a new serenity. My work accomplished, I set out for the little river to the west of the cliff, to see how my catboat had weathered the gale. I found there was some balling to be done, and then, called by a gentle breeze, I ran up sail and for an hour beat up the channel. The hot sun of noon sent me home, and I sat down to my mid-day dinner.

Charles had brought me papers and a note from the club. I ran through the papers first, to prove to myself how little I cared for the note, but at last I broke its seal.

"I am going to hold you to your invitation for supper in the Ship now that the storm is over. May we have it to-day about 6?"

That was all, without even a signature. I was in two minds as to what to do. I could not disappoint her without seeming more than childish, without writing myself down once and for all as no gentleman, and yet the sight of her note roused much of my sleeping resentment. If I went, I would at least show her that two could play at her game.

I visited the ladder and decided on a menu. Then I startled Charles half out of his senses, though to his credit he did not seem to be surprised. "You will pack those things"—I pointed out certain provisions—"in the wheelbarrow, and take them on to the Ship on the beach. You will also take the folding-table from my study, and two folding-chairs, and set the table on the dock. I am going to take supper there with a lady at 6. You can leave the rest in my hands. Have the supper ready at a quarter before the hour, and then leave. We will not require any service."

"Yes, Mr. Felix," said Charles, sedately. I frowned as though the whole proceeding bored me, and returned to my work.

As half past 5 I dressed carefully and left the house. As I walked up the beach I could not help but contrast this sunny scene with the night of the storm. What ever that night had brought to Alastair, it was clear I was not to know much about it.

I waited on the shore until Miss Graham appeared, and crossed the path with her to the Ship. I pulled the short rope-ladder over the side and helped her on board. We beheld a supper table immaculately set, and packed in two.

Miss Graham was delighted, and I could not help relenting a little when I saw how very pleased she was. More over, I was the host, and she my guest, and I could not cast a shadow over my own feast. I tried, therefore, as best I could, to forget Islip and the locket, and to think only of that beautiful late afternoon it was, of how fresh the smell of the sea came to the old Ship's decks, and of the beauty of the girl who sat across from me. I think she detected that at first I was making an effort, and so tried to help me, for she was very lively and talkative, making much sport of the supper, all the courses of which were spread before us at once, and of our having to wait upon ourselves.

When we had finished supper, I asked Miss Graham's permission to light a cigarette, and pushed my chair a little back from the table. There was a new moon in the sky, and I pointed it out to her. "This is the flower hour of the day," I said. "If only the ship would up anchor and take us for a sail!"

"If your pirate doesn't come now, just after supper, with a crescent moon hanging right side up, I don't believe he ever will," put in the girl pensively.

Her playful words, combined with the ingenious voice and the far-away, childish dreaming of her eyes, aroused something of my old resentment. Almost before I knew what I was doing I had fallen a victim to an impulsive temptation, and was leaning on the table with my eyes fixed on her.

EVENTS OF THE DAY

Newsy Items Gathered from All Parts of the World.

PREPARED FOR THE BUSY SEASER

Less Important but Not Less Interesting Happenings from Points Outside the State.

Corn is suffering in Nebraska from intense heat and lack of moisture.

The British house of commons has passed the South African confederation bill.

San Diego, Cal., police will arrest women appearing on the streets wearing kimonos.

Mexican officials deny the report that Porfirio Diaz, son of the president, has been assassinated.

Seven men and three women were mangled by an explosion of natural gas at Cleveland, Ohio.

The reports that Abdul Hamid, ex-sultan of Turkey, is dangerously ill, are denied at Constantinople.

Harriman has secured control of the Vanderbilt system, thereby adding about 12,000 miles to his lines.

Kiefer, Oklahoma, bank robbers surprised at their work, killed the cashier and fatally wounded the cashier.

Prince Albert Leopold, heir to the Belgian throne, has just returned from the Congo and says conditions are satisfactory.

An earthquake has been recorded by the instruments in the weather bureau at Washington. The origin was estimated at about 2,500 miles distant in California or Mexico.

All records for attendance are being broken at the Seattle fair.

Moorish tribesmen make almost constant attacks on the Spanish forts.

The uncertainty of the wheat market will cause storage of much of the California crop.

There is serious difference between Great Britain and her colonies on the naval policy.

The Rock Island railroad has placed an order for 5,000 freight cars and 50 locomotives.

The powers will send a fleet to Crete to force the removal of the Greek flag and prevent a Turkish attack.

A storm in Chicago caused three deaths by drowning and a number of injuries. The property loss is heavy.

An explosion on a Russian submarine boat caused injury to 14 men, one fatally. The vessel was American built.

Millionaire Bradbury, of San Rafael, Cal., sentenced to serve a term in the penitentiary for perjury, has received a reprieve, but will have to serve 30 days in the county jail.

The shah of Persia is married. He is 11 years old.

There are rumblings of a revolution in Northern Mexico.

A hot wave in London has been the cause of many deaths.

Wholesale executions and fighting have been renewed at Barcelona.

Thaw has been given a few days' respite before returning to the insane asylum.

Almost the entire town of Milton, Del., has been destroyed by fire. The loss will reach \$100,000.

Johnson Porter says there is room along the Deschutes for two railroads, each having double tracks.

Greece will ask the advice of the powers before answering the last note of Turkey on the Crete affair.

Mrs. Parkhurst, the English suffragette leader, will soon visit the United States and deliver a series of lectures.

Rioting has occurred at Stockholm, Sweden, in connection with the strike. Dynamite has been used to blow up street cars.

William K. Payne, son of the house leader, has been appointed deputy assistant attorney general at a salary of \$5,000 a year.

Minster Wu, of China, has been recalled.

The earnings of the Northern Pacific show an increase of \$250,000 over last year.

An Evanston, Ill., tailor has had a diamond set in the nail of his little finger.

China has sent a note to Japan in which the mikado's policy regarding the railroad rights is called unjustified aggression.

Richard Carlin, who confesses to having been a burglar for seven years, has told the New York police that there is no profit in the business.

HILL BACKS ROAD.

Construction of Oregon Trunk Up the Deschutes to Be Rushed.

Portland, Aug. 17.—Uncertainty as to the actual force behind the Oregon Trunk was removed when John F. Stevens made the announcement that he had acquired a controlling interest in the project, which, in its execution, is to be financed by J. J. Hill, personally. The acquisition of this property by Mr. Stevens and his associates and the identification of Mr. Hill with it are of major importance to the railroad situation in this state. It is regarded as the initial step by Hill in his invasion of Central Oregon and the eventual building of a railroad to San Francisco. Subsequent developments resulting from Hill's invasion of Oregon are expected materially to alter the railroad map of the state.

"On being asked several days ago if I had any interest in the Oregon Trunk or if I represented any railroads that were interested, I said no, and the latter statement still holds good," said Mr. Stevens.

"Since then, however, I have acquired a controlling interest in the project, have all necessary financial arrangements completed, and the road will be built as fast as it can be reasonably done with men and money. The matter is a personal one, and I have no objection to saying that J. J. Hill, as an individual, is financially interested to any extent necessary to carry the road through to successful completion.

"Plans in detail are not fully developed, but will become apparent from time to time, as conditions may seem to require. It may be said, however, that the Oregon Trunk proposes to provide as quickly as practicable a northern outlet for Central Oregon, regardless of the designs of any other transportation company."

Having made this announcement, Mr. Stevens refused to budge an inch.

FIGHT TO BE KEPT UP.

Ballinger and Pinchot to Meet Again in Denver.

Denver, Aug. 17.—Every subject that in any way can be connected with the commercial, industrial and agricultural growth of the West, from the Panama canal to scientific dry farming, will be discussed in Denver this week at sessions of the 12th annual convention of the Trans-Mississippi Commercial congress.

Between 5,000 and 7,000 delegates are expected. The congress began its sessions yesterday, although the real work will not be taken up until today.

One of the features of the congress probably will be the renewal of the struggle between Secretary of the Interior Ballinger and Chief Forester Pinchot, begun publicly at Spokane last week. These two men and 800 delegates from the National Irrigation congress at Spokane are expected today.

Among the multitude of subjects to be discussed are railroads and transportation; commercial problems, closer relations with southern republics, with special reference to the Panama canal; national defense, with special reference to the Pacific coast and Hawaii, which will send delegates; conservation of national resources, irrigation and reclamation; good roads; beet and cane sugar industry; reform of the consular service; drainage of submerged lands, and separate statehood for Arizona and New Mexico.

Among the accredited delegates will be five women, two from Denver, two from Arizona and one from Texas. The government will take advantage of the congress to give illustrated lectures every night explaining what Federal authorities are doing in the way of public works, including the Panama canal.

Rival to Be Built.

Victoria, B. C. Aug. 17.—There was much military activity both in Japan and Manchuria when the Empress of India left Japan, in consequence of Japan's determination to rebuild the Antung-Mukden railroad. Meanwhile, a further cause of trouble has developed in consequence of China having determined to build a rival line through Manchuria to connect Corea with Chientao, the island in the Tumen regarding whose ownership China and Japan are still involved, with Kilin, on the Chinese section of the Manchurian railroad.

Concrete Building Falls.

Winnipeg, Aug. 17.—A concrete apartment block known as the Brodal-berg, being erected here, collapsed Saturday evening. Heavy rains had moistened the concrete so that the steel girders gave way. Four men were inside at the time inspecting the work and were crushed, two so severely they were taken to a hospital in a dying condition.

Strikers Resume Work.

Fort William, Ont., Aug. 17.—The striking dock laborers of the Canadian Pacific railway will return to work tomorrow. A mass meeting of the strikers and their friends, numbering 5,000 was addressed today by Mayor Peltier, who urged the men to return to work and submit their grievances to a board of arbitration.

HEAT CAUSES DEATH

Withering Blast Sweeps Missouri, Kansas and Oklahoma.

VEGETATION IS KILLED THEREBY

Ten People Dead and Many Prostrations—Corn Shriveled Up by Fierce Blasts.

Kansas City, Aug. 17.—Unusually intense heat, officially recorded by the government weather bureau as high as 110 degrees, caused at least ten deaths, numerous prostrations and much damage yesterday in Missouri, Kansas and Oklahoma. Throughout the Southwest the day was the most trying since the devastating drought of 1901. As the withering winds swept across the plains much vegetation fell.

In this city the heat continued and prostrated a score, some of whom are in a dangerous condition. The Union depot was like an oven. Babies became seriously ill and medical attention was needed before their mothers could resume their journeys. The distress of a party of immigrants was great.

The likelihood of an ice famine added to the gravity of the situation here. Dealers reported that the factories were running night and day, but that the demand had exceeded the supply. Most of the dealers refused to deliver more than 25 pounds to any residence, and feared they would have to cut this quota down.

At Wellington, Kan., the official temperature was 106. Corn was suffering greatly in that district. The day was the hottest Topeka has had for eight years, 102 degrees being officially recorded. Two prostrations resulted there.

QUAKE FELLS MOUNTAIN.

Thousands of Buildings Destroyed and Great Property Loss.

Tokio, Aug. 17.—Reports received today concerning the earthquake in Central Japan Saturday, show there were many fatalities and great damage was done to property. The dead at present are said to number 30, though it is feared further fatalities will be reported from the outlying districts.

The number of persons injured is 82. Thus far 362 buildings, including many temples, are reported to have been destroyed and more than 1,000 others badly damaged.

The town of Asaku, in Gifu, suffered terribly. The banks of the Hida river broke and the country is inundated. The people of the district fled to high ground and remained in the open all night. Intermittent shocks were felt throughout Saturday night and early Sunday morning.

The mountain Ibuki, a short distance west of Gifu, collapsed with a thunderous roar.

Slight damage was done at Nagoya, to the southward of Gifu, and neighboring villages.

CANADA CAN FEED BRITAIN.

Grain Crop of Dominion is Reported Greatest in History.

Winnipeg, Aug. 17.—From all points in Manitoba, Alberta, Saskatchewan and British Columbia the unanimity of opinion points to the anticipatory result of this year's harvest, as being the greatest in the history of the Canadian West. In some places, such as Southern Alberta, the phenomenal growth makes it hard for the people to conceive such prospects. Farmers are now busy gathering the hay crop, which is a heavy one. The grain harvest will be general during the latter part of the present month.

The statement is made on good authority that the completed Grand Trunk Pacific railway from Winnipeg to Edmonton is tributary to wheat lands capable of feeding the whole people of Great Britain and Ireland in case of need.

Plan Red Cross Annex.

London, Aug. 17.—Based on the German and Japanese models, the war office has issued proposals for a great voluntary Red Cross scheme in connection with the territorial army plan. It will be worked in connection with the existing Red Cross society and St. Johns Ambulance society and would provide the entire country with complete organizations. Men and women are to be trained in establishments in every territorial area as nurses, stretcher bearers and other branches of the Red Cross service.

Big Sperm Whale Taken.

Victoria, Aug. 17.—The steamer Tees, which arrived from the west coast of Vancouver Island this afternoon, brought news that a sperm whale, the first taken since last year, was caught by the Kuyouk whalers last week, and 58 barrels of oil taken from the whale.