

# THE IRON PIRATE

A Plain Tale of Strange  
Happenings on the Sea

By MAX PEMBERTON

## CHAPTER XVII.—(Continued.)

His anger was fierce, terrible as a tornado. His teeth gnashed, his hands shook, he rolled in his chair like a great wounded beast; but when he saw that I was unmoved, he fell quiet again, and said in a low, coaxing voice:

"Don't compel me, lad, to do what I have meant not to do. You're here for good or ill. These men are nothing to you; they're lazy hogs that the world's well rid of—let 'em die, and save your own carcass. You've been here days now—the first man that ever lived among us without signing our papers. You've a straight notion that my hand's agen Europe, and, for the matter of that, agen the world, too; those that share with me shall swing with me. It isn't of my asking that you're amongst us, or that you took up the work of Hall, who put the first nail in his coffin that night he came to my bed at Spezia. I saw him there, though he thought me sleeping; and that night I wrote death against his name, as I wrote it against yours when you entered my room in Paris. There's reasons why I've broken my word in your case, though you'll never know 'em; but there's no reason why you shouldn't swear to go through it with me. There's my papers. Sign 'em now, or you lie a corpse before an hour on the clock."

He leaned over his writing table and put into my hands a rough sheet of parchment. But my eyes were dimmed with the restless excitement of the situation. The silence of the room was terrible to bear; it was as though I struggled for life while already in the tomb. My thoughts went hurriedly to Europe, to my home, to my friends. I took heart for a step which was the last mad design of a driven man.

"Give me the pen!" I said suddenly.

He put the pen into my hands, and leaned back with a chuckle of satisfaction; but the movement cost him the game. I clutched his pistol with a lightning grasp, and covered him with it.

"If you raise a finger I'll shoot you like a dog," I cried.

Then the man, who was no craven, sat motionless in his chair, and his face might have been cut from marble.

"If you raise your voice to call out, or if anyone comes to this room, you die where you sit," I said.

"Boy, you're the first that's bested Black," he said. "I'm caught like a rat in the hole. What do ye want? Name it, and I'll know how we stand!"

"I want my life—now that I refuse to sign that paper. You can give the order that no man's to lay a finger on me, and you will?"

He thought a moment, looking straight down the barrel of the Colt. Then he said:

"Yes, I can't avoid that—I'll give you that."

"And my liberty on the first occasion offering."

"No," he replied very slowly and sternly; "they'd tear me to pieces."

There was no doubt that he had right in this. I put the pistol down; then I offered him my hand, and he jumped up from his seat, grasping it with a great clutch.

"You're a sound plank of a boy."

The sound of firing, rapid and oft repeated, came to us from the shore of the cove below. He went to his window and I saw the whole bay lit with silver light from a full-risen moon, and the distant peaks as grim beacons above a land of rest. Out on the snow there was a hungry crowd of starving souls, crying for bread; and those to whom they cried answered them with their muskets, dyeing the glittering white with many a red stream.

"For heaven's sake, help those men. If you have anything but the instincts of a brute in you!" I cried.

There was a pause before he answered me. Then he snatched a rifle from a case and said:

"Take that pistol and come on. There's blood to let."

I followed him down the passage to the beach, where he blew a whistle sharp and shrill.

"That'll wake 'em on the ship," he explained. "I'm not afraid of these, but there's fighting to be done—now don't show till you're wanted."

He advanced towards the snow plain and sang out:

"John, you there, Dick—hands to quarters, do you hear me? Move right quick, or I'll move you!"

They put down their arms from their shoulders in blank amazement, and listened to him as he went on:

"There's enough down for one night, I reckon, and I'm not going to be kept awake by your firing."

They came round him slowly and sulkily, and he drove them to the big houses with fine round phrases. I lurked near him, but an American saw me and cried:

"Say, Cap'en, hev ye took to adoptin' that boy ez ye seems so fond of?"

"Shut your jaw, or I'll shut it for you!" replied Black. "Is the boy your affair?"

"I calculate, an' some of us wishes to know particlar if he's signed or no."

"Oh, you want to know, do you? Let them as makes complaint step right here."

Only four joined the leader; but the Captain suddenly snatched my revolver from me, and fired four shots; and for

each shot a man dropped dead on the beach; but the American stood untouched. The appalling brutality of the action seemed to awe the rest of the crew. They stood motionless, dumb with their rage; but when they recovered themselves they rushed upon us with wild ferocity. I heard a shout from the water and, looking there, I saw Doctor Osbart in the launch; and there was a Maxim gun in the bows of her.

"Clear that beach!" roared Black in awful passion; and instantly, as he dropped flat and I imitated him, there was a hail of bullets, and the main part of the crowd fell shrieking. The victory was awful, instantaneous. As the men fled towards the hills, Black called after them: "Bring to, you carrion, or I'll wipe you out, every one of you! Any man who'll save his throat, let him come here!"

At these words they turned back to a man, and came cowering to the water's edge. Thirty of their fellows lay dead or wounded on the stones.

"Where's your leader?" asked Black, and they pointed to the American, who lay with the blood pouring from a wound in his left thigh.

"He's there, is he?" screamed the infuriated man. "Well, I'll cure him like a ham. Get torches, some of you, and ice him in."

All helped him in his ghastly work, and brought shovels and picks, which they carried to the higher plane of snow.

"We've got to die, both of us," said the American at last; "you en me, Black, on there isn't much ez we kin look for. Go on, lay me right here as I lay now; but I'll rise agen you, and the day'll come when you'd give every dollar ye're worth to dig me up, en give me life agen."

I touched Black on the arm and was about to plead with him; but at the sight of me he raised his fist, and I moved away. He stood foaming and muttering, his hands clenched. The haste of the men was not half haste enough for him; and when they began to dig he hurried them the more, until a great pile of snow had been thrown out.

I watched them roll the man over into the trench and shovel the snow quickly upon him. He watched them, silent in his terror; but when his head only was uncovered he gave a shriek of agony, which rose like the great cry of a man going before his God, and ceased not to echo from height to height until long minutes had passed. Black gave a great start, and shivering as a man struck down with a deadly chill, he passed from the grave to the beach.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

It was on the next afternoon, near to the setting of the sun, that Doctor Osbart came to my room with great news for me.

"This business with the men has completely upset our plans," said he. "Black hoped to winter here; and to let the hubbub in Europe quite subside before he put to sea again. Now he can't do that. There's only one thing that will keep the hands quiet, and that's excitement. He has determined to sail to-night; but, before we talk of that, we must have the conditions."

"What have you to ask?" said I.

"Simply this," he answered. "You shall give your word, as a man of honor, that you will make no attempt to leave the ship without permission."

"I accept."

Then slowly the great engines began their work, and we swept out to the open sea. We dined that night in the saloon upon the deck, a commodious place lighted by electricity, and in every way luxuriously fitted. The walls of it were paneled in white and gold, and were covered with curious designs, old heroes fighting, old gods drawn by lions at their chariots; Jason seeking the fleece in a golden barque; Orestes fleeing the Furies. The long seats were covered in leather of a deep crimson, and there was a small piano. The dinner itself was admirably served, and was partaken of by the deaf and dumb engineer, by the doctor, the Scotsman and myself. Black talked without reserve before me, knowing well that I could do him no injury. He relied mostly on the doctor for advice, and discussed everything with him in the best of tempers.

"My plan is this," he said; "we're short of oil, and Karl here is beginning to get uneasy. I shall knock over a couple of whalers in these seas and fill the tanks. Then, as they're looking for us in mid-Atlantic, we'll get south of Madeira, and run against two or three of the big ones making for Rio or Buenos Ayres. We shall pick up a good bit of money; and it'll be a month before they get on our course that way, for I mean to let 'em down light when it's not a case of saving our own skin."

We passed the Danish settlement of Godthaab early on the next morning, though so far out at sea that I could make nothing of it; while we lost the coast of Greenland altogether before the day had passed, a hazy shower of dust-like snow greeting our coming to the Atlantic and to a perceptibly warmer latitude. During this day, and until we sighted the Shetlands, the small screw tender kept our course, and we exchanged signals with her every morning.

Finally we sighted the coast of Ireland, and I know not if I have ever had a

greater pleasure than that distant view. It was as though I had passed from a dead land to the land of man, from the silent ways of night to the first breaking of the day.

## CHAPTER XIX.

It was not until daybreak on the following morning that we reached the track of ocean-bound ships; but our voyage was altogether in favor of Black, for the sun had scarce risen when Doctor Osbart got me from my bed to see what he called my first introduction to business.

"There's the Red Cross Line's Bellonic not a mile off on the starboard quarter," cried he exultingly, "and we're going to clear her."

I dressed anyhow, almost as excited as he was, and stepped on to the gallery. All eyes were turned to the north, where, now almost abreast of us, there was the long and magnificent hull of the great liner. She went at a tremendous pace and was rapidly leaving us, when the great gun forward sent a shell plunging the sea fifty yards ahead of the Bellonic. The effect of the call was seen upon the great vessel, whose decks were soon dotted with black objects, while three more men appeared on the bridge, and the signal flags ran up.

"Give it him for'ard," roared Black; and the shot that answered his command struck the quivering hull not twenty feet from the windlass and you could see the splinters carried fifty feet in the air, while the shrieks of terror came over the sea to us.

Screaming like wild beasts, the men turned the handles of the Maxim guns; the balls rained upon the defenseless liner as hail upon a sheepfold. I saw strong men reel and fall their length as death took them; the breeze bore to me the wailing of women, and the sobs of children.

The flag dropped and the signal was made to us to come aboard.

"Lower away the launch, you John!" cried Black, "and take every shilling you can lay hands on, and hang up that skipper for a thin-skinned fool."

"You'd better go," said Osbart to me, "you'll be amused;" and suggested it to Black.

"Yes, he shall go," he cried; "if we swing, he shall swing. Let him get aboard."

I might as well have put a pistol to my head as to have refused. They bundled me into the launch; but they would not leave me when they came alongside, and "Roaring John" himself drove me up the ladder. Seven of us at last stood on the bridge, and were face to face with the captain of the Bellonic, and four of his officers.

The deck was a very babel of sounds, of groans, of weeping. The ship's surgeon himself seemed paralyzed before the sight of the carnage around him. But above all this terror, I know of nothing which struck me with such fearful sorrow as the sight of a fair young English girl lying by the door of the great saloon, her arms extended, her nut-brown hair soaked in her own blood, while a man knelt over her, and you could see his tears falling upon her dead face, and his ravings were incoherent and almost those of a maniac. Meanwhile another scene was passing on the bridge between the man John and the captain of the Bellonic.

"What do you want aboard of my ship?" cried the latter; and "Roaring John" answered him with a mocking leer:

"We've come aboard to hang you, to begin on!"

The men with the young officer cocked their revolvers at this, and I said in a mad frenzy which would not brook silence:

"You scoundrel, if you touch another soul here I'll shoot you myself;" for I had my revolver on me. "Do you make a business of killing children?" I cried again, and pointed to the dead body of the girl-child. I don't know who was more surprised, the captain of the Bellonic, listening, or the man John.

"You cub," he cried; "if you talk to me I'll skin you alive!" but I said quickly:

"Gentlemen, these men want every shilling on this ship. Give it them now and save your lives, for you have no alternative. If you give the money up, you have my word that they won't touch you."

"As there's a heaven above," exclaimed the young captain, "they shall pay for this day's work with their lives. I hand my specie over under this protest; but don't deceive yourselves—half the warships in Europe shall follow you within a week."

He turned away, and presently the ruffians with me had lowered money to the value of a hundred and fifty thousand pounds into their launch. When at last we put off again, and the launch was full of the jewels and the money, it seemed that I had passed through a hideous dream.

On the second day after the robbery of the Bellonic, we stopped a second and then a third ship; though I saw nothing of it, as all the fighting was on the starboard side, and my cabin was to port; but there was a sharp fight on the third morning with a Cape-bound vessel, and again towards the afternoon with one of the North German Lloyd boats homeward bound to Bremerhaven; Osbart, coming to my rooms, delighted to give me the details of these captures.

(To be continued.)

## His Identity.

"Papa, who is a 'gentleman of the old school'?"

"One, my son, who insists on having Bright's disease when he can abundantly afford appendicitis."—Puck.

## Brute.

His Wife—What do you think of my new photographs, John?

Her Husband—They flatter you, my dear. The man must have hypnotized you into looking pleasant.

# PROCEEDINGS OF OREGON LEGISLATURE

## Friday, February 15.

Salem, Feb. 15.—The senate, by a vote of 18 to 11, passed the reapportionment bill of Senator Hart.

There will probably be no banking legislation this session. One bill was reported in the senate today, but it is certain to be killed and most of the others will die for lack of time.

The senate bill compelling the issuance of passes to state officers was passed by the house today and sent to the governor.

The irrigation and water code bill was slain in the house this afternoon. The senate voted to buy the half block between the capitol building and the Southern Pacific to complete the capitol grounds. An appropriation of \$30,000 is made for the purchase.

The senate indefinitely postponed Hosen's bill making the Associated Press a common carrier.

The house joint resolution favoring five Supreme court judges was adopted by the senate.

Both houses passed the juvenile court bill over the veto of the governor and the measure is now a law.

The bill creating the Port of Columbia for control of pilotage and towage at the mouth of the Columbia passed the house.

The house passed the Jones bill for the purchase and maintenance of the Oregon City locks in conjunction with the Federal government.

The senate today passed 32 bills and the house 11.

## Thursday, February 14.

Salem, Feb. 14.—The house today adopted a resolution fixing 12:01 a. m., February 24, as the time for adjournment of the legislature. It was also voted that no more bills should be received except by the standing committees. There are 440 bills on the calendar and consideration of senate measures has not yet commenced. The senate is becoming anxious and is discussing means of forcing the house to act upon senate bills.

The house passed the bill appropriating \$150,000 to the Agricultural college.

The house bill creating the office of inspector of mines passed that body without opposition.

Smith's bill to abolish two of the four normal schools passed the house tonight by a vote of 38 to 16, six absent. Only one slight amendment was made from the way it passed the senate, changing the time of the meeting of the new board from the third Wednesday in June to the third Wednesday in May.

A house resolution provides for the printing of 5,000 copies of the railroad commission bill for distribution to those who desire copies.

The house passed seven bills and the senate nine. Eleven new bills were introduced in the house this morning before the resolution checking the flood appeared.

## Wednesday, February 13.

Salem, Feb. 13.—With only one dissenting vote the senate today took the Chapin railroad commission bill from the table. It is now ready for the governor's signature and it is said he will sign it. It was also reported tonight that he and the secretary of state and state treasurer had already conferred on the appointment of the commission.

At the session tonight the house devoted 90 minutes to consideration of the senate bill providing that two normals. While a vote was not reached, the sentiment of the house is apparently for but two schools.

Representative Newell proposed a constitutional amendment providing the recall of public officials. The idea is that where an officer is not serving the people the way he should, a petition containing the names of 25 per cent of the voters in his district may be filed asking his resignation. Should this not be forthcoming, a special election is called to elect a successor. At the special election the officer whose resignation is asked is also a candidate, and should he not be re-elected he must vacate the office to the successful candidate.

Representative Jewell has a plan which would increase the legislature to 36 members in the senate and 72 in the house.

The two house bills providing for the placing of the state printer on a flat salary and for the purchase of a site and erection of a building for a state printing office have been adversely reported. The house did not accept the report.

Among the other bills passed by the senate are: Liquor licenses not to be granted persons who violate liquor laws; appropriating \$125,000 annually for the State university; authorizing railroad bridge across the Willamette near Oswego.

In the house the general appropriation bill, carrying \$2,267,070, was passed and the \$1 poll tax law was also repealed.

The senate passed 35 bills and the house 16. The larger part of these were of a local nature.

There is some talk of the session being extended 10 days, as the work is so far behind.

## Tuesday, February 12.

Salem, Feb. 12.—The senate today indefinitely postponed Bailey's bill changing the primary law. The vote was so decisive as to make it clear that the law will remain as it is.

The senate also voted down the constitutional amendment to be submitted to the people granting woman suffrage.

With but one dissenting vote the house passed the bill compelling the sale at \$2.50 an acre of land granted the Coos Bay Wagon Road company according to the terms of the grant.

A bill has been introduced in the house creating Hood River county from the western part of Wasco county.

The senate has cut the allowance for the Agricultural college to \$37,500, a reduction of \$12,500.

The habitual criminal bill passed the house today. It provides that on second conviction of a crime equal to felony the punishment shall be double the sentence provided by statute.

The senate passed the Bingham railroad commission bill and tabled Chapin's measure. The Bingham bill provides for appointment by the governor. The house tabled this bill. Except for the method of choosing members the two bills are alike.

The house passed the bill providing for the state buying ground and erecting armories for the National Guard instead of paying rent as at present.

A bill appropriating \$26,000 for the support of orphans, foundlings and wayward girls was passed by the house.

## Monday, February 11.

Salem, Feb. 11.—By unanimous vote the Chapin railroad commission bill passed the house today. At the June election in 1908 two of the three commissioners will be elected by the people. The third will be elected in 1910. Until then the governor, secretary of state and state treasurer will appoint members. It is probable the house will accept the bill as it came from the house.

The house passed the bill providing for a cheese and dairy inspector and a creamery and dairy commissioner. The appointees are to receive salaries of \$1,500 each and expense allowances of \$1,000 per year.

The bill making appropriations for Drain, Weston and Ashland normal schools was favorably reported to the house. The three schools are to receive \$112,000 if the bill should become law.

The measure appropriating \$100,000 for the Seattle exposition was also favorably reported.

The proposed banking law is causing the senate much concern.

The juvenile court bill is now in the hands of the governor. He may veto it as he considers too much expense would be attached to it as a law. Multnomah county would be put to an annual expense of \$10,920.

The house passed a bill to tax timber land in proportion to the amount of timber it contains.

The bill providing "no seat, half fare" was voted down by the house.

The measure giving the state university \$125,000 a year was passed by the house.

The senate passed a bill providing \$60,000 for extensions to the portage road.

## PORTLAND MARKETS.

Butter—Fancy creamery, 32½@35c per pound.

Butter Fat—First grade cream, 36c per pound; second grade cream, 2c less per pound.

Eggs—Oregon ranch, 23@25c per dozen.

Poultry—Average old hens, 13½@14c per pound; mixed chickens, 11½@12½c; spring, 13½@14½c; old roosters, 9@10c; dressed chickens, 14@15c; turkeys, live, 17@17½c; turkeys, dressed, choice, 20@22c; geese, live, 10@12c; ducks, 16@18c.

Fruits—Apples, common, 50@75c per box; choice, \$1@2.50.

Vegetables—Turnips, \$1@1.25 per sack; carrots, \$1@1.25 per sack; beets, \$1.25@1.50 per sack; horseradish, 7@8c per pound; sweet potatoes 3½@3¾c per pound; cauliflower, \$2.50 per dozen; celery, \$3@3.25 per crate; onions, 10@12½c per dozen; sprouts, 9c per pound.

Onions—Oregon, \$1@1.35 per hundred.

Potatoes—Oregon Burbanks, fancy, \$1.40@1.50; common, \$1@1.25.

Wheat—Club, 69@70c; bluestem, 71@72c; valley, 70c; red, 67@68c.

Oats—No. 1 white, \$29; gray, \$28.50.

Barley—Feed, \$22.50 per ton; brewing, \$23; rolled, \$23.50@24.50.

Rye—\$1.45@1.50 per cwt.

Corn—Whole, \$24.50; cracked, \$22.50 per ton.

Hay—Valley timothy, No. 1, \$14@15 per ton; Eastern Oregon timothy, \$17@18; clover, \$9; cheat, \$9; grain hay, \$9@10; alfalfa, \$14.

Veal—Dressed, 5½@9c per pound.

Beef—Dressed bulls, 2½@3½c per pound; cows, 4½@5½c; country steers, 5½@6½c.

Mutton—Dressed, fancy, 8½@9c per pound; ordinary, 6@7c.

Pork—Dressed, 6@8½c per pound.