

ME AN' JIM.

Where me an' Jim played marbles—Jim Clarke, his name in full— There's still a village only there, an' passin' days are dull. But them old times the locust shades reached clean across the street. The white blooms hanging over us—seen nothin' since so sweet. An' Jim could, I remember well, plump out the middle man. As easy's some wild cowboy now with his good rifle can. An' I seem to hear: "My go this time," as plain as then it rung. When me an' Jim played marbles an' Jim an' me wuz young.



MASTER ARDICK BUC CANEER

SYNOPSIS.

Master Ardick, just reached his majority and thrown upon his own resources, after stating his case to one Houthwick, a ship-master, is shipped as second mate on the industry, bound for Havana. Mr. Tym, the supercargo, deserts a sail. The strange vessel gives chase, but is disabled by the industry's guns. In the fray one of the crew is killed and Houthwick is seen to fall. The captain is found to be dead, but the industry is little damaged. Sellinger, first mate takes charge and puts into Sidmouth to secure a new mate. Several days later, when well out to sea, an English merchantman is met, whose captain has a letter addressed to Jeremiah Hope, at Havana. The crew of the vessel tell strange tales of the buccaner Morgan, who is sailing under the king's commission to take Panama. One night a little later, the English vessel having proceeded on her course, a bit of paper is slipped into Ardick's hand by one of the sailors.

CHAPTER V. OF A VERY STIRRING PIECE OF BUSINESS.

I was eager and I might say anxious to know what the slip of paper contained, and determined to examine it without delay. I would not take it to the binnacle, for there the helmsman might see me, and yet I was for making use of the binnacle lantern. I ascended the poop ladder, turning over a little plot in my mind, and when I was nearly up with the binnacle box I stopped and uttered a sharp exclamation. "A shilling!" I growled. "Curses! Right on the villainous tailor that must leave a pocket as open as a chimney! I took it out of the box without waiting for his consent and whisked it around to the hither side. The fellow dare not leave his tiller, even had he sufficient interest or curiosity to do so, and for the instant I was safe. I held the paper low that none forward could make me out, and on spreading it open discovered that it bore a few lines of most villainous, ugly writing. They had the seeming, indeed, of having been traced with a bit of charcoal or the point of a charred stick. I brought all my clerical powers to bear, and, in quicker time than I could have thought possible, finally deciphered the words. Luckily they were few in number. "Men be going to mutinize" (so the missive ran). "Fower days. The mate, hee is the leader. I am watched."

It seemed to me at that moment that the fellow at the wheel must have heard the throb my heart gave. I looked at him as I straightened up—at his black outlines, as he bowed over the tiller tackle—and hung for the moment all in the wind. I left him and walked leisurely to the head of the ladder, whence, with a careless air, I surveyed the deck. By the faint light of the stars I could make out the dim shapes of two of the men, and a red spark by the foot of the mainmast, where a third was at the moment starting his pipe. None were very near, which was the thing I would know. The foot of the poop must lie well in shadow, so that one slipping up to the companion and slyly opening it would run but small risk of being seen. I was heavy and heartsome under the sudden smiting of this business, and could not yet persuade myself that it was all true, or bring myself into the heart of it to appreciate it.

I threw one swift glance around and saw no one apparently looking. The two nearest men had swung about and were facing aft, and the smoker had hunched partially around, giving me the square of his shoulder. Now was my opportunity. I darted in, closing the door after me. A glance showed that a lighted lantern hung against the mast, but the berth was empty. I stopped for nothing further, but strode low and softly toward the captain's cabin. This was the first—counting from the starboard side—of the three after rooms, the next being occupied by the mate and the third by the supercargo. I skirted the table and reached the door and put out my hand to rap gently upon it. While yet my knuckles were presented the door farthest on my right—that is to say, the supercargo's—abruptly opened and Mr. Tym himself put out his head.

I fell back a step, not being prepared for this interruption, and ere I could speak or utter a caution he strode out and hailed me sharply: "Stand! What do you seek?" "Hist! hist!" I said, in a sharp whisper.

per. "A word with you, if you will, but no noise." By this time he recognized me, which now I saw that he had not at first, and he fell back without a word, and motioned for me to enter. I whipped in with all speed, and immediately that I was past him he gently closed the door.

I immediately advanced my lips to his ear, and acquainted him, in the fewest words possible, with what was doing. "Speak cautiously, sir," I concluded, "for you know the mate's berth adjoins this."

He took away his head, and looked at me as one thunderstruck. Instead of answering, he plucked off his binnacle and put them in the case, and walked to the window. I conceived that he might be collecting his wits, which must be a little shaken, and that without any impairment of his courage. Clapping up his hand to guide the sound, he said in my ear: "We will confound the arch villain. Stay but a moment, till I can prepare, and we will be about it."

My own spirits and courage rose at this, and I stood up very sturdily, as I nodded assent. He thereupon softly advanced to the wall, whence he took down his sword and buckled it on, and from beneath his bunk produced a box, which proved to contain a brace of pistols, with powder and ball.

He handed these weapons to me with a sign to load them, and while I was obeying him he took from a covered shelf against the bulkhead a little iron tool, which at first I took to be a kind of awl, and this he proceeded to screw into the wooden cap of his arm, having first removed the iron hook.

I was now ready to hear him declare his plan, but he first took from a nail a coil of small cord, after which he whispered in my ear: "Before aught else is done we must secure the mate. That stands clear in my mind. And we may not wait to summon the captain, lest the fellow take the alarm. Mark me, I will knock on his door, and say I desire to speak with him. On his appearance we will each clap a pistol to his head—take you this—and compel him forth and bind him."

He softly opened the door, and we stole out. As I crossed the threshold, I heard a sharp, sudden little knocking from somewhere in the shadow of the table. It gave me a start, and I glanced that way, only to discover that which affected my nerves a vast deal more. A tall but stooped figure made a scramble from all fours to its feet, and with one long, straddling bound was bursting out of the companion.

"Pradey!" yelled the supercargo, and let fly with his pistol. I could see that he was too late, and thereupon, with a shock of alarm and mortification, I made a dash of it also, and flew through the open door. The mate was bounding off the quarter deck to the main, shouting out something which I did not catch, and in a veritable fury I let go my pistol. I could not have made a close shot, but his yelling increased, and now I could see the crew pouring out of the forecastle hatch, and the watch running toward him. I had the sense to perceive that all was up, and sullenly retreated, stopping at the companion to shoot the bolt of the door.

When I turned about, though the place was still a little smoky, I made out both the supercargo and the captain, the latter in his shirt, with a drawn sword in his hand. "Pray you dress," said Mr. Tym, with excellent coolness, as the captain stood fast, glaring fiercely toward the companion. "Nay, we are safe enough for the moment," he added, glancing down at the door leading into the 'tween-decks, which I now perceived he had secured.

"The abominable villain!" growled Sellinger, relaxing his warlike attitude, however, and lowering his point. "I will take your advice, and be with you presently."

He withdrew into his berth, and Mr. Tym said to me, almost humorously: "Abominable or not, he played a shrewd part, and is like to reap the reward of it. A very pretty piece of eavesdropping, indeed."

"How will it be with us now?" I asked, aloud. "Can we make a sufficient defense, think you?" "Nay," he answered, coolly, "not if they stand to it with heart. You conceive that they have in all points the advantage. They can starve us out—for we have nothing beyond a few biscuits, and no drink but wine—or can batter in the doors, and bear us down by main force; or they can set a watch upon us, and keep us boxed up here till they reach some convenient point, when they can scuttle the ship, and leave us in the plight of so many inconvenient kittens."

"Stay!" I cried, as a sudden thought struck me. "I think they will be at none of that. I mean the scuttling. Remember you not the magpie from the Happy Bess? He that yarned so concerning Morgan? I am ready to swear that his talk and the mate's scheming have brought this about. These rogues will be for turning pirates."

I had just uttered this when Capt. Sellinger came out of his cabin. He was fully dressed, save for his coat, and was now armed with a brace of pistols in addition to his sword. "I believe you have hit the nail on the head," cried the captain, with a savage snarl on the table. "Oh, that snake! Aye, he is at the bottom of it. These simpletons would not have risen but for him. On my soul, never was a crew better treated. Such pork and such beef, and such soft tack on Sundays, and then the scouse and the ale! Ah, well, it avails not talking of it. What is your counsel, Master Tym? What may we do in such a strait?"

"My counsel is of the simplest," answered Mr. Tym, without hesitation. "We should stand clear of the doors, lest they take it into their heads to

shoot through, and watch sharply every point at which they might seek to catch us at advantage."

"I think they are coming," I said, as coolly as I could. Secretly my heart began to thump. "Aye, and another gang advances 'tween-decks," I added, as I also heard a stir there.

"Stand ready," said the supercargo, in low, hard tones. "All together with the pistols, and then a rush. Yet tarry till the rams, or what else they may batter with, have made a fair opening. Master Ardick, you have no sword; therefore remain somewhat back. Also I would counsel you to whip your cloak about your left arm, that it may serve in a sort as a shield. Pistols forward, friends! They come!"

CHAPTER VI.

OF THE STAND THAT WE MADE, AND DIVERS EVENTS THAT FOLLOWED.

I know not what manner of implements the fellow used, but they were passing effectual, for both doors crashed in at the first assault, and we caught sight of their pack of bodies and bristle of weapons. But an instant so, and then we all let go in a volley, making a tremendous noise in the small place and confusing everything with smoke. One fellow in the opening of a companion fetched a dreadful howl, as high-pitched as a dog's, and before the sound was well out of him thrust headlong forward and crashed down at our feet. The gang in the door thereupon set up a great roaring and cursing, and in the midst of it four or five of them dashed recklessly in. The foremost bent forward, and I saw his hand go out with a pistol in it, but before he could fire the captain let bang at him and he fetched up short and gave a queer sort of writhing bow and fell back upon the threshold. The others hung in the wind a moment, whereupon Capt. Sellinger raised a great shout and set upon them with his sword. I had a moment now to glance over my shoulder, and perceived that Mr. Tym was holding the others at bay, they, indeed, crowding together, cursing and stamping, but not offering to advance. Encouraged at this and wishing to be performing some part, I caught up Mr. Tym's cloak, which I had before neglected, wound it around my left arm, and, having exchanged the pistol for my sheath-knife, advanced a pace and made ready to fall on. By this time the light in the place was exceeding



He fetched up short.

dim, the smoke, though in part drawing up through the companion, continuing also about the lantern, till it had the seeming of a beacon in a fog. Nevertheless, upon looking with some intentness, I made out that the fellows the captain was fighting were three of the ordinary sailors, by name Tom Doll, Will Minton and Jack Walling, all men of fair courage but not extraordinarily able of body or of known skill with weapons.

"Have at one of these fellows, sir!" I shouted to the captain, and, discreetly picking out Doll, I made a bold dash and so disarmed the rascal that he fetched his blow at me before the time, and I closed with him ere he could get his hanger up again and dug my knife into his side. He collapsed like an empty sack, uttering a direful groan, and at the same moment the captain ran Minton through the heart. Walling, who was an active fellow, then upon whirled short and with one flying bound cleared the door and landed well out upon the deck.

"That gives us riddance of so many of the rogues!" puffed the captain, who was by this time very short of breath. "Stay you here, Ardick, and guard the companion while I go to Tym's assistance. By St. Paul! he has little need of it, such poltroons as these fellows be!"

Mr. Tym had now fallen back a pace from his first station, for some of his adversaries had obtained pistols, and as we joined him they let go a sort of scattering volley. Their range was limited on account of the walls of the stairs, and no harm was done. There was a bit of silence, but not to mention, and immediately the whole gang came bursting up. Then it was that the supercargo acquitted himself rarely. Forward he darted, and before the first fellow, who happened to be Pierre Lovigne, could order his guard the little lithe man stooped, whipped in and passed his sword a foot through the burly rascal's midriff. Back two paces then, and, as the next fellow pressed on, the sword flew round, and with a sidelong stroke shore away two or three of the rascal's fingers. It was all while I seemed to be getting one long breath and letting it out again!

"Have at ye, scum!" yelled the captain, fired at this feat of arms, and he brandished his sword and ran in upon the now crowded and confused seamen. Mr. Tym saw the opportunity and sprang to his side, and together they thrust and slashed so fiercely, and yet with such deadly skill, that three more

of the sailors were either killed or desperately wounded, and the others broke and poured headlong down the steps.

The captain's blood was up, and he made to follow, but Mr. Tym caught him by the sleeve, and in a word or two showed him the danger of it, so that he reluctantly gave over.

All this time that arch traitor, the mate, had kept in the background, but now we heard his voice, and I conjectured that he was rating and perhaps trying to rally his men. It seemed that he had been in the rear of those who came up from 'tween-decks, but either from necessity or inclination had fallen back when Mr. Tym and the captain made their final onslaught.

But do what he could the fellows he was talking to had no heart for further ventures, and we heard them break away from him and retreat to the forward part of the ship. He must have followed, for it was immediately quiet 'tween decks, and so that point of our defense seemed to be safe enough. As for the companion, it still stood open, just as they had broken it in, but the misused door only banged at will with the motion of the ship, and no one appeared to be near it or to guard it.

We were now minded to investigate the condition of the fallen mutineers, and found all dead. Capt. Sellinger was for bringing the affair to a head without further parley, and would have us sally out and fall upon the fellows and cut them down if they would not surrender. Mr. Tym opposed this, saying we were still three against eight, not including the wounded sailor and old Lewson (the latter would hardly desert to us as yet), and in the open deck we could not expect to work such havoc as we had in the cabin. In the attack here they had fallen on us without order or precision, crowding together till they could not get the avail of their weapons, and missing their shots because of their hastiness, but on deck they could spread out and encompass us front and rear, and would be certain to be more circumspect. But for the surprise into which they had been thrown by the sudden call of the mate, it was doubtful if we could have gained the day as it was. "Better to wait, then," urged Mr. Tym, "and let the rascals call for a truce, which doubtless they will soon do, being now a light crew for the ship, and likewise lacking nautical instruments, those being all here in the cabin."

THE BLANKVILLE D. A. R.

A Difficult Problem Was Presented to the Club, But It Was Solved All Right.

"I have here," announced the secretary of the Blankville Daughters of the American Revolution, "a note from Mrs. Foraigne, in which she applies for membership."

Condemnation was at once plainly depicted upon the countenances of the daughters. "Dear me, dear me, how dreadfully embarrassing!" murmured the lady regent. "She entertains so delightfully," sighed a daughter. "And so often, added another. "And is so helpful in church work," continued a third. "And in everything we get up," said a fourth. "We really cannot offend her. It would never, never do," chorused several decidedly.

"But what on earth can we do?" asked the secretary hopelessly. "Because she is an English girl Jim Foraigne married when he was in London," exclaimed a number together. "But she's a most charming and helpful woman." "I really do not see what we can do," moaned the lady regent, despairingly. "We can't offend her, but on any account, and we can't admit her; under our rule it's utterly impossible."

HE HAD INVESTIGATED.

A Visitor at Niagara Falls Who Was Prepared to Prove They Were the Real Thing.

We had got back to the hotel after doing the whirlpool at Niagara when the well-preserved old man whose face carried a look of solicitation approached to ask: "Well, you have seen everything, and are ready to go?" "Yes." "Not a bit." "You—you don't doubt that it's real water pouring over the falls?" "Not the slightest." "And the roaring," he whispered—"you don't imagine the roaring to be a put-up job?" "Of course not." "I am glad of that. You found Goat Island real, solid land? It didn't turn out to be the end of the bridge?" "Oh, no. Goat Island is all there, and no humbug about it." "And you expected the whirlpool to go 'round and 'round, of course? I trust that your expectations were realized?" "Fully realized, sir."

WORLD REVOLVES FOR THEM.

Some Musicians Who Take Themselves So Seriously That Are Amusing.

There is nothing funnier than the musician who takes himself tremendously serious. I mean "himself," not music, which is a very different thing. Empires may totter, republics rise up in their places, but the musician of whom I am speaking is not in the least affected by either. A wholesale massacre does not impress him half as painfully as being relegated to a bad place in a programme.

And when the newspapers are ringing with thrilling accounts of wars and deeds of heroism, our friend is quite satisfied to cast a glance over the first page of the Daily Telegraph, where he no doubt reads to his entire satisfaction that he will sing "The Corsair's Lament" in Shepherd's-bush on the 11th inst., and in Wormwood-scrubs on the 15th.

I once heard an amusing story of an obscure singer who flourished a good many years ago, and who was enormously impressed with a sense of his own importance. He rarely got an engagement, and when he did his wife was reduced to tears till the concert was a thing of the past.

The arrangements of the whole household were upset. He invariably insisted on going to the seaside for at least three days before the concert, on account of the immense advantage to be got out of sleeping three nights in pure air.

Nothing that was provided for the meals of the rest of the family would do for him. Mysterious-looking dishes were brought to table of which the great man alone was allowed to partake, while at regular intervals he drank some strange fluid from an enormous bottle, which his children were forbidden to touch unless they were specially desirous of being whipped and sent to bed superfluous.

He also made a point of resting for three hours every afternoon previous to the all-important event, an arrangement which one would have hardly thought necessary, seeing that no power on earth could ever drag him out of bed before midday. He wouldn't even practice for fear of tiring his voice!

His repertoire consisted of four songs, which he had learned in a fit of tremendous energy when he was a young man.—Cornhill Magazine.

Pride.

"No, George, don't ask me. I can't go down the fire escape with all those people looking." "You must. You'll be burned to death if you stay here." "I can't help it, George. I wouldn't go down that ladder for all the world. These shoes I have on are two sizes too big for me."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Men's Tastes.

Mr. Grubbs—I don't see why you should spend such a pile for clothes. Mrs. Grubbs—I always supposed men liked to see a woman well dressed. Mr. Grubbs—They do—when some other man pays the bills.—N.Y. Weekly.

A Diplomatic Plan.

"I only believe what I see and hear." "And if a man calls you a liar?" "Well, I have to see how big he is."—Philadelphia North American.

\$500 Reward

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