



BY CHAUNCY C. HOTCHKISS.
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CHAPTER I.

"TWIXT THE DEVIL AND THE DEEP SEA."

I thank God I am no coward, else that which I am about to write would be unwritten for loss of subject matter. Nor do I make a boast of my bravery, seeing it is a thing born in man and not of his own making. For, as it will become a woman to take to herself the credit of her beauty (for the reason that it is fashioned by a power not her own), so it would appear vainglorious in me to and myself for not playing the part of a child when necessity demanded the action of a man. And, furthermore, if in the following I seem to make much of my quickness of brain and power of arm, let me here disclaim all unjust pride in the matter, for my size and strength are things I owe to a cause higher than myself, and as for my wits, why, they are but those God gave me, and they worked as He saw fit to have them.

These things I say in self-justification for what follows. I have known fear, but, thank God! not the fear that paralyzes action. In a measure I felt it when I first opened my eyes upon the Phantom, and, later, the very day on which my story opens.

We were then somewhere northward of the Delaware capes, with as fair a sea under and above us and as fair though hot a sky as ever fell to my lot to see. I say we, meaning the schooner Phantom, short-handed with two blacks and a mate, and myself, Donald Thorndyke, master, bound from Norfolk to New London with a cargo of scrap lead to be turned into bullets, and five hundred pounds in good British gold secretly built into the bulkhead of the cabin. This latter, with the schooner, being the sole property I possessed, were further protected by a double set of clearance papers, the false especially forged by my own hands to deceive such of the ships of his gracious majesty George III. as by chance might be encountered betwixt the two ports.

And there was no small chance of such an encounter, as one may well know by glancing at the history of the united colonies in the year of grace 1778.

I had been held long in Norfolk for the lack of a mate with a knowledge of navigation, being myself by no means a blue-water sailor, only dodging about the coast in years past on the laudable mission of besting the king's customs—a practice which had been winked at by the authorities up to the time of the breaking out of hostilities. And this profession injured neither credit nor character, for such were the unjust commercial laws with which parliament had compassed us that the term of "smuggler" bore no opprobrium in those days. More was it a title of virtue in the mind of each good colonist, and to this trade was I bred by my father, who stood to be as staunch and God-fearing a man and one above a mean act as ever listened to a pardon or issued orders from a quarter-deck. Until two years ago, he had been my compass, rudder, mainstay and entire trust, but the coast fever of the tropics had cut him down, and no more would I meet his brig fresh from Jamaica somewhere off shore, and fill up with contraband goods to be distributed as my judgment saw fit. No more would he greet my mother and sister in the low kitchen hard by the heights of Gay Head and talk of our getting to be forehanded. No more would I hear him, in the "captain's room" of the "Anchor Watch" tavern, damn his glorious majesty for being a pig-headed Dutchman with a ring in his nose, or deliver a tirade in good set terms against Bute, North, Germain, and the rest, who were leading him to the loss of his American colonies. That was all in the past. Now I was ripe for my voyage and home.

But it was by no means an easy matter to come by a navigator of any sort at that time. The war had absorbed such talent long since, and the traders were at a discount, owing to the risk with no chance for prize money. So it was with great satisfaction that at last I met with one—John Lounsbury, a man I had slightly known in Westchester before the war was well on. He being set to get east, was willing to act as mate on my own terms; and, though I knew him to be of shady character, and with morals to be spoken about behind one's hand, I was glad enough to get him, especially as he seemed so loud against the king, and, when he knew what was under my hatches, so well pleased to be able to pilot a load of metal on its first trip toward the vitals of his majesty's hirelings.

And thus it was that on the 18th of June, 1778, we were, as I said, a little northward of the Delaware capes, with a small wind due east and on the starboard bow, and the land a low, blue cloud over the schooner's trail.

It was smothering hot in the cabin, where I had but just finished fisting up the log. The clock had barely gone three when Lounsbury hailed me from the deck in a fashion not to be borne, being neither respectful nor seamanlike, and at variance with his usual custom.

"Below there! Thorndyke! Lay up here!"

Now, I made no profession of being a patient man, especially in the face of injustice or bold disobedience; and, as disrespect on my own quarter-deck has a savor of each, I was not far behind his words when I stepped out of the companionway.

A negro was at the wheel, and the mate was striding the weather side of the deck with a spyglass under his arm, a pipe in his teeth, and a very easy, self-satisfied set to his countenance.

He was a short, burly man, bearing a heavy, bronzed face, and having a smile the meaning of which might be anything. His light blue eyes were always half closed, in a manner to be called a squint in another man; but his actions had been bluff, good-natured and open, and the fellow had hitherto always shown a sense of respectful humor in our intercourse.

As I strode up to him, I marked him slew his little eyes around to take me in from their corners, but he made no move to face or give me particular notice. I guessed then that something untoward was in the wind, and took the shortest way to arrive at the bottom of it.

"Mr. Lounsbury, I'd have you find it convenient to address me as captain on my own vessel, and bear yourself with decent respect in so doing."

For an answer he turned his back to me, and spat over the rail, then facing about again, burst into a loud laugh. I looked at him as though he had suddenly been bereft of wit, at which he sobered down, and then spoke out with a snarl:

"Faith, 'tis a fine farce finely played."

"What the devil has come to you?" I vociferated.

"Well, we'll belay all an' drop the curtain," he continued, setting his back against the rail and jerking his thumb over his shoulder. "Ye may be captain, but 'twill soon be captain o' nothing—d'ye see?—savin', of course, ye come to terms with Jack Lounsbury. Do ye mark that, an' 'at, an' that?" he went on easily, turning and pointing to three sails that were well up on the horizon.

Then something of the matter came to me at once. That they were British ships I well knew, for the French were not yet due to arrive, and American privateers moved not in flocks. In wonder at my mate's actions and words, I had not marked this rising danger, but at a glance saw that escape by flight was useless, as the oncoming vessels were spreading out from east to south and rapidly sailing down on a fresh wind, which they were evidently bringing with them. To pass through them unnoticed was unhoped for; to be chased was to proclaim my character.

Lounsbury was no coward, I knew; but that he was a traitor to me, or mad, I had small doubt. His manner and words heated my temper, but now that I must have recourse to deception, I let him bide the while, and turned attention toward getting out of the danger bearing down from windward. Putting a curb on my temper, I said:

"You will get up the British ensign and hold the course. We will clear them yet." And with this I turned toward the companion.

Now, whether he feared I was about to arm myself, and preferring to take me as I stood (which was more than most men dare attempt), or whether his plans were ripe for action, I know not; but he interposed his square figure betwixt me and the door, and with a mighty patronizing air, spoke thus:

"Faith, captain, I had no call to harrow ye, seeing the game is in my own two hands; but list a bit, and we may yet be comrades again. No matter how I know, but I do know ye look to cozen yonder ships by false papers, seeing 'tis impossible to dodge them as they have the weather gauge of ye an' ye are in the bight of the land. Now what use might be yer papers should I see fit to damn ye as a rebel with a cargo of rebel lead assigned to rebels? About as much use as a rabbit's tail to a cow in fly-time. Ye be a man o' sense an' have little likin's. I take it, for a taste o' either Cunningham (the British provost marshal at New York) or one o' the prison hulks, an' ye can escape them both if my standing by ye will help, by just handing over the bit o' gold ye have snugged away below."

The shock of this demand with the knowledge of what might lay in store for me caused me to lose thought of all else save how the fellow had gotten so familiar with my private affairs, and to this day I have never entirely fathomed it. And it was here I was clutched by fear of the danger bearing down on me, for my best-laid plans were rendered valueless by the scoundrel I had too easily taken on trust. I cannot account for his insight, save that he had probed my locker when I was absent (this fact being plain enough), and had in some mysterious way come at the fact that I possessed treasure which, by search, he had discovered hidden somewhere beyond his reach. Be this as it may, I saw that my secret was no longer mine alone.

It is very possible my emotion showed in the face, and he, mightily astray in guessing my temper, doubtless thought I was completely in his power. And, in fact, for the moment I might have confessed as much had I given thought to it. Before I could gather words to frame an answer, he continued, though with lowered voice:

"'Tis five hundred pounds to the penny, I fancy; if more, ye can keep the rest. Did ye play Jack Lounsbury for a suckling? I started this voyage on your terms, but we'll finish on mine. Have ye slept since the war began that ye knew not the color o' Lounsbury o' Rye? Come, now, speak out!"

"Then ye looked to fall in with yonder ships, did ye, ye scoundrel?" said I, while I gathered myself together.

"Ay, two o' them. The one to east is a flight o' luck."

"What are they?"

"The tail o' Howe's fleet from Philadelphia. Ye may swear that Clinton has evacuated the place an' is marching across Jersey for New York. So it was to be. Am I plain enough? They be bound for the same place, an', d—n it, man, shall we go with them or no? Speak out!"

"Does anyone know of my private matters save yourself?" asked, as I knitted my strength to fulfill the purpose I had arrived at.

"None o' that now! I see ye game! What I know, I know! An' ye think if I am made 'way with, all's safe." With this he backed a pace, and drawing a pistol from his pocket, presented it full at me. "Now," he continued, with a devilish look in his half-closed eyes, "ye are my prisoner an' I captain; an' as for the matter o' that, I have been all along."

I had guessed the man was armed. Knowing me, he would hardly have had the daring to thus speak to my face without means of defense. Of his possible backing by the

crew, I had given no thought (which came near making an end of me), but my wrath was boundless, and, as his firearm came nearly within reach, I quickly stretched out my left hand and struck up the weapon, then with an oath I made a step forward and planted my right fist in his face. The blow fell far too short to bring him down, only knocking his nose from his mouth; but, as if surprised, his little eyes opened wide, he turned under its force, and again with all my power I struck him fairly beneath his left ear.

Though it may be unbecoming in me to chronicle my own strength, the blow was a fearful one. It lifted him clean off his feet; the pistol and spyglass went spinning into the larboard scupper, where he followed them, falling with a crash, the blood spouting from his ears, nose and mouth. I had little doubt that I had killed him, and as little care, but with a natural instinct I followed and bent over him.

At that instant the fresh wind from the south struck us. Possibly we had lain in a calm for a space while the breeze veered from the east, but of that I have no knowledge, only, as we presented a full beam to the blast, it lurched us to larboard, and caused me to straighten myself to get a balance.

It was well I did, and I have since looked upon that gust as an interposition of the Almighty to save me from the knife of an assassin, for as I lifted myself I caught a glimpse of the bare feet of a negro making toward me. He was on me in a breath, I saw the glitter of his knife, and wheeled in time to catch the descending blade in my left arm just above the elbow. With a mighty wrench I twisted about, breaking the steel in my flesh, and, catching the fellow by the throat, held him for one instant, then, lifting him, flung him clean over the rail into the sea. From first to last he uttered no sound, and if ever he came to the surface I saw him not.

In the maddened fury possessing me my wound felt no more than the prick of a needle, though I found the steel was through and through the flesh. Plucking out, I ran forward with the determination of taking the status of the remaining hand, but I could not find him at first, for both galley and fore-castle were bare of everything human. As I came up from the latter I saw him astride the starboard spreader of the foremast with a pistol in his hand. I doubted not that he would have shot at me as I passed under him on my way forward, only that the helm being relieved of pressure the vessel had gone into the wind, and the violent motion of the head-sails and tremor of the mast under the thunderous crashing of the foresail made an aim impossible. His attitude and the pistol told the story of the part he was expected to play in the mutiny which had probably been hatched before leaving Norfolk. But the cowardly cur had either skulked at the last moment or I had been too rapid for him, and he had swarmed up the shrouds to be out of reach, and there sat looking down at me. I passed no words with him, but, running back on the larboard side, fetched my rifle from the cabin, and, standing by the break of the poop, drew a bead on him and commanded him to drop his pistol and come down. As first he demurred, then whimpered, and, finally dropping the pistol, swung himself to the halyards, down which he slid to the deck, where, falling to his knees, he began begging for his life, his black face turned to a sickly green through abject terror.

The blood I was losing from my arm (and it was a sight) took it from my head, and



"I swore I would blow his brains out."

my temper was a trifle less murderous by the time the fellow had come within my power. I had traded on his ignorance, as had he but known my gun was uncharged, matters might have taken a different complexion. Sternly ordering him below, I drew the slide over the hatch, and then, feeling my life was safe from him, fetched a deep breath and took a look about me.

The ships were in fair sight by this, the one eastward doubtless a troop ship bound for New York with reinforcements for Sir Henry Clinton, who had already begun his call for help, and kept it up through his administration. The ship to the west looked to be a man-of-war, judging by her size and rig, but 'twas the third that caused me the most uneasiness—a fine, large schooner coming down before the wind, and now about four miles away.

That the Phantom was her object I nowise doubted. To pass myself as a royalist bound from Savannah to New York with lead for his majesty (that being the gist of my forged papers) would hardly do in the face of one dead man lying in the scuppers and a single dial in the rigging below. But I saw nothing else to be done for to have my true colors known would be to lose liberty and property at once. To fight was impossible; to run, as far out of the question.

Be the upshot what it might, my arm demanded my first attention, and I passed into the cabin, where I made a shift to stop the flow of blood, bind it up and get it into a sling. Owing to the twist of the knife 'twas an ugly gash, though, fortunately, no artery was severed, and in the end it served me a good turn instead of being a source of great trouble.

My next step was to get my papers into proper shape by destroying the regular clearance, and 'twas here I discovered the cause of the tone of my mate, for, though there had been taken nothing of value besides, the locker showed itself to have been rifled of the false documents. To be without credentials showing my business on the high seas were as damning as to openly sail under the flag of the colonies, and the discovery of the theft left me for the moment high and dry. Bethinking me, then, of the bare possibility of Lounsbury having carried the matter with him, I jumped to the deck for the purpose of overhauling his body.

A glance seaward showed the schooner now about two miles away, but bearing straight for me. I could easily imagine the perplexity that possessed them at sight of the actions of the Phantom, for, as the helm was still free and all plain sail made on her, she dove into the wind for a space, and there hung in irons with a thunder of canvas overhead; then filling on the opposite tack she staggered off, until, rounding up again, the entire performance was repeated. For all the world she was like a man well schooled in liquor, using the width of the road in his journeying.

That which lay before me to do must be done quickly. Lounsbury sprawled on his back, so that access to his pockets was an easy matter. There was nothing in his peajacket save the junk carried by a seaman, though I soon discovered that around his body was a belt stuffed full of papers. But the stolen ones were not among them, and I felt a sense of hopelessness come over me as the certainty of their loss was forced on my mind.

But it was not for long. A hasty glance at the belt's contents at once opened my eyes to the character of the man before me, and caused me to come to a sudden determination regarding my future action. 'Twas a desperate resolve, but, saving some untoward circumstance, it insured liberty, or, at least, immunity from present imprisonment, although it would put my fortune in jeopardy. It was no time to look far beyond the present; freedom was worth more than fortune, and even that might not, in the end, be lost; so, throwing the belt overboard, I placed the papers carefully in my pocket and went forward.

The pistol dropped from aloft I found on the deck, and with it in my hand I slid back the hatch cover of the fore-castle and called to the black to come up. This he did, blinking mightily as he struck the strong light, when, clapping the weapon to his ear, I swore I would blow his brains out, and, if necessary, follow him to the ends of the world to do it, if he breathed a word of my ever having been master of the Phantom.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

RESULT OF A MARRIAGE.
How One of Roumania's Miserly Countesses of Old Nobility Lived in Squalor.

A most extraordinary character lately died in Jassy, namely, the Countess Balsch, one of the last of the old Roumanian nobility, all titles, except some few complimentary ones, having been abolished since the declaration of independence after the Russo-Turkish war.

The old countess, although extremely rich, was an inveterate miser, and hardly spent a penny, except in defending a lawsuit which her only daughter, a widow and an extreme invalid who had incurred the countess's displeasure by marrying without her consent, had started against her, claiming but 300 francs monthly to live on.

On this she spent thousands, until the death of her unhappy daughter at a hospital in Paris brought the case to a close.

When the authorities entered the dead countess's dwelling to take possession of her property, they discovered, secreted in numberless impossible places, no less than 1,610,000 francs, a quarter of a million being in Napoleons and ducats.

While making a full inventory they found hid in a bundle of old moth-eaten curtains a box containing another 40,000 francs, so that the entire amount left by this extraordinary woman amounts to 1,650,000 francs.

Numberless little cheap notebooks were also found, in which the eccentric being had noted down every halfpenny spent.

Some books devoted to her law expenses were headed: "Costs of process against that beastly and poisonous serpent, my daughter."—London Daily Mail.

A Hunter's Tale.

"It was a bitter cold night in January," said an old North Pennsylvania woodman, "when I heard one of my hounds yelping around the outside of the house as though something was chasing." I jumped from my bed and looked out of the window. It was clear moonlight and I saw two wolves chasing the dog around the house as fast as they could leg it, but the hound was swifter of foot, and managed to keep a few yards ahead at each turn. I had two loaded guns in the house, and I placed one of them in the corner by the door, cocked the other, and opened the door a few inches to get a shot at the wolves as they came past. The frightened hound saw the crack in the door, dashed into it, threw the door wide open and knocked me off my feet. Both wolves rushed in, and the dog leaped upon the bed that stood in a recess. I shut the door in a hurry, banged away at one of the wolves, killing it instantly. Then I grabbed the other musket, and the second wolf made a spring at the window, breaking three panes of glass. But it didn't break the sash, and as it fell backward, I bored a hole through its heart. The hound hadn't been hurt at all, but it was so scared that it never was worth a copper for hunting after that night.—Golden Days.

Three Enemies of Man.

Vegetarians should take pleasure in the sermon of a famous Italian prelate who was lately asked to preach at an English university. He spoke in English, of which he believes himself a perfect master, and his hearers were able to keep their gravity till he came to this remarkable proposition: "There are, my brethren, three enemies against whom all our life long we are bound to fight—the devil, the world, and (for a moment he pondered) the meat."—Chicago Inter Ocean.

Dr. Holmes' Partner.

The following flash of wit proves beyond a doubt that the late Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes was occasionally associated with another as brilliant as himself: He used to dabble a little in photography, and once when he presented a picture to a friend he wrote on the back: "Taken by Oliver Wendell Holmes and Sun."—Youth's Companion.

As to Robinson.

Little Harry—Pa, do you think Robinson Crusoe was very unhappy on that desert island?

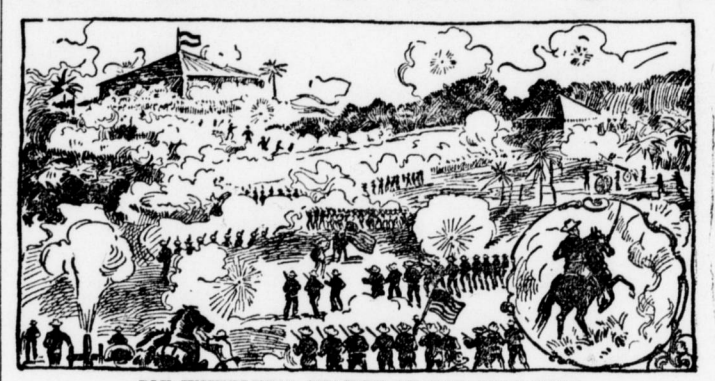
Pa—Well, if he was he was foolish. He didn't have his wife with him.—Cleveland Leader.

Probably.

"I'd like to find some business that isn't overcrowded."

"If you do, you'll probably find that there isn't anything in the business to attract a crowd."—Puck.

GEN. JOE WHEELER
PRAISES PERUNA,
The Great Catarrh Cure.



JOE WHEELER'S CHARGE AT SAN JUAN HILL.

Major General Joseph Wheeler, commanding the cavalry forces in front of Santiago and the author of "The Santiago Campaign," in speaking of the great catarrh remedy, Per-ru-na, says: "I join with Senators Sullivan, Roach and McEnery in their good opinion of Per-ru-na. It is recommended to me by those who have used it as an excellent tonic and particularly effective as a cure for catarrh."

United States Senator Sullivan, "I desire to say I have been taking Per-ru-na for some time for catarrh, and have found it an excellent medicine, giving me more relief than anything I have ever taken.—W. V. Sullivan, Oxford, Miss."

United States Senator Roach, "Persuaded by a friend I have used Per-ru-na as a tonic, and am glad to testify that it has greatly helped me in strength, vigor and appetite. I have been advised by friends that it is remarkably efficacious as a cure for the almost universal complaint of catarrh.—W. N. Roach, Larimore, North Dakota."

United States Senator McEnery, Hon. S. D. McEnery, United States Senator from Louisiana, says the following in regard to Per-ru-na: "Per-ru-na is an excellent tonic. I have used it sufficiently to say that I believe it to be all that you claim for it.—S. D. McEnery, New Orleans, Louisiana."

A free book on catarrh sent to any address by The Per-ru-na Drug Mfg. Co., Columbus, Ohio.

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