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From the Flag of our Union.

BEN. NAPIER,

THE ISLAND DESPERADO.

BY GEORGE S. RAYMOND.

"Do you remember anything of old Ben. Napier?"

Ask that question where you will about Lake Erie, anywhere between Buffalo and Detroit, of men and women old enough to remember events fifteen years gone by, and the chances are that in ninety-nine cases out of every hundred, you will receive an affirmative answer, couched in language something like this:

"Do I remember him? What—Old Ben. the *Island Desperado?* O, yes, his name, and many of his desperate acts are as familiar to me as my own most common thoughts;" and were you to enquire further concerning the history of this strange man, whose very name was for many years the terror of all the region extending from the mouth of the Detroit River round by the French settlements of the River Raisin, along the shores of the Maumee Bay, and thence as far eastward as Sandusky City and Huron; almost any person would tell you a story of the old fresh water buccaneer, something like this:

He was a perfect giant in stature, and was known to possess the strength of at least three ordinary men. There was nothing repulsive in his features, and he might have been pronounced handsome, but for a habit he had of contracting his shaggy brows, and peering out under them with his keen gray eyes, so bright and flashing, that they seemed to pierce you through and through at a glance. His head was large, even in proportion to his Herculean frame, and covered with a shock of the strangest hair that mortal ever wore. It was gray; but not the gray of age, for ever since he came among the island from—no one knew where, soon after the close of the war in 1815, his hair had been the same—just the color of a mouse, or Maltese cat, with irregular streaks of dirty gray running in every direction; and these gray streaks were rather bristles than hair, and 'twas said he had the power of erecting them at will, as a porcupine does his quills. Be this as it may, this singular head-covering, when divested of the otter skin cap, which he always wore, summer and winter, gave him a most terrible appearance.

Strange stories were told of his having made a league with Satan, one of the conditions of which was that he was never to be arrested by officers of the law, and another was that he should never grow old; and as it was known that more than a hundred attempts had been made to secure his person, often under circumstances where escape seemed impossible, and yet he had never been captured, together with the well known fact, that so far as appearances went, he was not a day older in the summer of 1834, than he was in 1815, carried conviction to the minds of thousands that there did in reality exist between the Lake Pirate and Lucifer, some compact, by virtue of which old age and officials of the law were set at defiance.

There were certain vague, indefinite rumors about Napier's having been a salt water sailor and a West India cruiser in his younger days; but they were only rumors after all, for no one pretended to know anything of his history previous to his coming to Lake Erie; but since his settlement among the islands, his career had been a constant succession of crimes and adventures, many of them so skilful in plot and daring in accomplishment, that his name had grown famous, and his presence terrible, not only on the water, but for leagues back from the shore either side of the lake.

At first he took possession of Cunningham's Island, some five miles from the mouth of Sandusky Bay, inhabiting a log hut built by some early squatter, and making a show of cultivating a few acres out of more than a hundred of cleared land on the island, but occupied principally in cruising along either side of the lake in a small sloop, which he claimed to have bought of an old French fisherman in Canada—but which people generally supposed he had stolen and then murdered the owner, to prevent his claiming property. This suspicion was strengthened by the circumstance of the old fisherman having been found in the water dead, and with several marks of violence on his person, a few days after Napier came into possession of the sloop.

For nearly three years he lived there with two runaway slaves, almost as gigantic in stature as himself, and during that time it was estimated that this fresh water pirate had carried off from the main land not less than thirty cows, half that number of horses, full four hundred sheep, together with calves, pigs, and fowls, with a great number, besides a vast amount of other property; and yet so great was the general terror of this island desperado, that no one dared to venture within the limits of his domain for the purpose of claiming their property, nor was there a magistrate in the neighborhood, either in Ohio or Canada, who would have issued a writ for his arrest, so much did they fear his vengeance.

At length the island on which he had located was purchased from government by an eastern company, whose agent finding Napier was not to be displaced very readily by force, finally adopted a more pacific policy, and purchased his good will and removal at the same time, by the payment of a few hundred dollars in cash.

From Cunningham's he removed to South Bass, or as it is more generally called, Put-in-bay Island, where he was soon after joined by another desperate character named Frink, who although quite a young man, he had served one term in the Ohio Penitentiary for burgalry, and had just escaped from the jail at Lower Sandusky, where he had been incarcerated to await his trial for counterfeiting.

A year passed away, when the owners of the two slaves having been advised of their whereabouts by a letter from Napier, came on and took possession of them, paying the pirate three hundred dollars for the information. Soon after this affair Frink suddenly disappeared, and Napier's story was that he had fallen overboard from the sloop in a drunken fit, and sunk before he could pick him up.

No one believed this story, but Frink had no friends to investigate the matter, and it remained a mystery for more than a year, when some sailors found a body partially burried beside a fallen tree on a neighboring island, which, by the clothes and certain marks known to those who were acquainted with him, was identified as that of Frink.

Then there was a fresh excitement for a week, and talk of arresting the murderer, but the talk and excitement died away together, and the Island Desperado remained undisturbed in his home, with Frink's wife for his only companion, he having married her in Canada within a fortnight after her husband disappeared.

Years went by, and he removed from one of the islands to another, as those he inhabited were taken possession of by their rightful owners, until at length he made his home on the smallest and most northwardly of the whole group, where he remained comparatively quiet until the spring of 1834, when an act of his, more daring than anything he ever attempted, aroused the long slumbering vengeance of the law and a subsequent outrage committed a few days after, was the means of his arrest and punishment.

A British vessel from Malden, bound for, the Wellond Canal, and Lake Ontario, and having some eight thousand dollars in money on board, was lying in among the Islands becalmed, when she was boarded about midnight by nine men in masks who climed in on deck from a small sloop which they had pulled noiselessly along side in the dark, and after compelling the captain and the crew of the vessel to leave her in the boat, they first plundred her of the specie, and then set her on fire. The crew escaped to the main land on the Canada shore, which was but a few miles distant, where the captain made his complaint to the nearest magistrate, the consequence of which was that the Canadian authorities offered a reward of two thousand pounds for the prepetrators of the practical act.

"Ten days after this affair occured, a small brig was lying at one of the lower wharves in the city of Buffalo, all ready to sail for Detroit with the first fair wind.—Indeed, she had been ready to get underway ever since daylight; but all day the wind had been blowing strong from the westward, and now that it was quiet dark, the young captain was walking impatiently back and forth on the wharf alongside his little vessel, chafing at the prospect of being obliged to lay there all nigh for there was no indication of the winds changing before morning.

"Well, it's no use fretting," he soliloquized, as he stopped in his walk, and leaned thoughtfully over a pile to which the brig was made fast. "I may as well take it patiently; but I should like to be off tonight, for every hour of this dreadfull uncertainty is to me a long year of mental torture. Only eight days to go on and return in—and if I return not within that time, Juliet will be forced to wed a man old enough to be her grandfather, and she utterly despises, just because he is rich, and her father must have five thousand dollars to save him from bankruptcy."

"And what if I fail in obtaining the amount of my uncle?"

"Try some one else who has the a bigger heart, and counts his dollars less frequently than Samuel Phelps, Esq;" and as the young captain started up from the pile over which he had been leaning, a tall, gentecelly-dressed young man laid his hand very familiarly upon his shoulder, and in a carpless, off-hand manner, thus addressed him.

"Good evening, Captain Weston; how soon do you sail?"

"The moment the wind comes fair," replied the captain, with a slight tone of impatence in his voice.

"Then you have not one moment to spare, sir, if you would be ready for the breeze, for we shall have it out here at southeast fresh by twelve o'clock."

"I am all ready now sir," replied Captain Weston, this time, in a tone of undisguised astonishment.

"No, sir, you are not ready, and it will take you full three hours to make all the necessary preparations," spoke the stranger, in a most positive voice.

"What do you mean, sir?" asked the captain.

"I'll tell you just what I mean, after I have satisfied myself that there are no other ears than our own to listen to our discourse;" and the stranger proceeded to make a careful survey of the neighborhood, until he had apparently satisfied himself that there was no one concealed among the boxes and bales on the wharf, when he returned to the captain's side, and thus resumed the conversation:

"Captain Weston, you are engaged in marriage to Miss Juliet McNeil, I believe?"

"I have been so," answered the wondering captain, "but she will be forced to—"

"Marry that soulless old miser, Solomon Bensley, unless you can raise five thousand dollars within eight days—eh? Isn't that about it captain?"

"It is;" replied the other gloomily; "but who are—"

"O, never mind who I am, just now, sir; let us settle this business matter first, and then if we have time before the wind comes fair, perhaps we may have an introduction. In the first place, then, I understand your position exactly. You want five thousand dollars within eight days, or you lose that sweetest little beauty in the whole Empire State, and the five thousand you expect to, or rather hope to get from your somewhat miserly old uncle in Detroit. You may fail—indeed, I am almost certain you will, and my advice is that you go not near that half miser uncle of yours at all; its better to apply elsewhere than suffer the mortification of a refusal."

"But I have ne one else to—"

"Yes, you have some one else to assist you," interrupted the stranger. "Here sir, take this. Just the change to a dollar. A light draft for five thousand dollars on the Eagle Bank;" and he held out a paper, which the half bewildered captain took, mechanically, and commenced some confused, incoherent speech, which the mysterious banker cut short with:

"Come, captain; no time to make speeches, or even say thank ye now. Let's trot up to Lawyer Hall and give him that draft, to be paid over to General McNeil to-morrow, and placed to your credit with his daughter, and then back here as fast as we can, for I have several things to say to you, and you have some preperations to make before you are ready to sail. Come let's be off," and taking the young captain's arm, the stranger hurried him from the warf, and away up the street almost at a run.

The hour of nine was just ringing from the various steeples, as they returned to the brig, and as soon as the stranger had satisfied himself that there were no listeners near, he thus addressed his companion:

"Now, Captain Weston, for a bargain. You have received five thousand dollars from me for a passage from Buffalo to Detroit?"

"Yes, I have; and I must say that yours is one of the strangest freaks I ever heard of; to pay five thousand for a five dollar passage—"

Stop, captain; there is eleven of us to go, you understand."

"Yes sir; but that only makes—"

"Just fifty-five dollars, captain; and the remainder you are welcome to as steward's fees. But, see here, Captain Weston; you have forty-nine thousand dollars in the brig's cabin for the Michigan State Bank."

For the first time, a dark suspicion of the stranger's character flashed upon the captain's mind—a suspicion that the five thousand dollars had been paid him as a bribe to take the eleven robbers on board, that they might plunder the brig at their leisure. And yet when he came to reflect a moment, it seemed the most absurd idea in the world to suppose that if such had been the stranger's intentions, he would have taken him to one of the most respectable lawyers in the city, and have him acknowledge the receipt of that draft before a dozen witnesses; no, no,—robbery could not be his motive, or he would not thus court publicity. It was a sad puzzle for the captain, and for more than a minute he stood there in silence, before he replied to the last remark of the stranger.

"I have the amount of money you have just named, in specie on board my vessel," he at length said; "but how you came to know it, I cannot conceive."

"Perhaps you will no longer wonder that I should know it, when I inform you that I am employed by the bank to guard it; and now listen, Captain Weston, while I tell you something that you have little dreamed of:

"Yesterday afternoon, that specie was brought aboard the brig, and this morning at nine o'clock a messenger left Buffalo in the steamer to convey the intelligence to Napier, the Island Desperado, who, with a band of miscreants similar to those who plundered the British schooner, will be on the lookout for you among the islands; besides, your whole crew, except the cook and one man, is in the plot to rob and burn the brig as they did the schooner."

"Now your men are all away on shore, and I will call my friends on board, cautioning you beforehand, captain, not to breathe a word of our being here to a single soul of your crew;" and as he ceased to speak, the young stranger applied his fingers to his lips, and made a low, chirping noise, not unlike that of a field cricket, which was instantly answered from the deep shadows of a warehouse near at hand, and a moment afterwards the dim outlines of ten human forms came creeping out towards the brig, and following the captain, they all passed down into the cabin without a single word having been uttered.

As the stranger had predicted, the wind came out fair at midnight and within five minutes thereafter, the brave little brig was dashing away on her westward course under every spare yard of canvass that could be set, while the crew gathered about the windlass, and talked over their enterprize in low, cautious whispers, and the captain with his friends, all equally cautious, were weaving their counter plots in the cabin.

It wanted nearly an hour to midnight on the evening after the brig left Buffalo, when the islands were made ahead, and almost at the same moment that the cry of "land ho" was heard from the lookout, a burly-looking Portugese, the steward, walked up to him, saying:

"I say, Jim—cap'n wants see you down dar in cabin."

Without the slightest fear of foul play Jim entered the cabin, and the next moment he staggered backwards in perfect amazement, at the sight of eleven determined looking men armed, each with a heavy sword, dagger, and brace of pistols; and not one word of remonstrance, or a motion of resistance did the villain make, as the young stranger produced a set of double irons, with which he proceeded very deliberately to ornament his wrists and ankles.

There were four more men in the watch all of whom were called down and disposed of in the same manner; and then while the captain and steward went forward to fasten the other watch below, the mysterious stranger, with his companions, thrust the five manacled prisoners down into the run among the boxes of specie, and almost at the moment that this was accomplished, the man at the helm reported a small craft in sight to windward. Five minutes more and she was alongside the brig.

One after another they climbed up from the tiny sloop, over the brig's bulwarks, and down upon her deck, seven in all; and foremost of the number was the Herculean ruffian, Ben Napier himself. For a few moments they stood there, irresolute, evidently astonished at not seeing any person on deck, except the man at the helm.

"The villains have anticipated us; plundered the brig, and escaped," muttered the stalwart chief, as he strode aft, followed by his six comrades. "Is this you, Nelson?" he asked, as he bent down his head to get a glimpse of the helmsman's features by the light of the binnacle lamp.

"No, sir, not Nelson," replied the man promptly; "Nelson is down there, sir, with the watch, all but myself," and the man pointed down the open companion-way.

The brigand chief descended alone, and a moment after he disappeared, there was heard a stifled exclamation of a brief scuffle followed, and then all was quiet again.

"Enter, comrades," came up from the cabin, in a clear, ringing tone; and as the six remaining pirates obeyed the familiar summons, they beheld their leader securely bound, hand and foot, and gagged, so that he was incapable of speech; and there, in the bright glare of the lamp, they saw ten determined-looking men, all completely armed, while in the center of the cabin, and beside their prostrate chief, stood the handsome young stranger, with a smile of satisfaction wreathing his fine features, as he contemplated the consternation of the entrapped freebooters.

"*Luke le Sauble!* Sold—betrayed!" exclaimed the astonished pirates, as they recognized in the young stranger one of their own comrades: and without a thought of resistance, they submitted to, be ironed and within thirty minutes, the brig, with her prisoners all secured below, was kept on her course once more; and before noon on the following day, the notorious Ben. Napier, with his six companions, captured on board the brig, were delivered over to the Canadian authorities at Amhersburg, where they were imprisoned on the charge of robbing and burning the British schooner.

The young stranger, who had befriended the captain in so singular a manner and who had planned and executed the capture of Napier and his pirate gang, remained in Canada to give his testimony against them at their trial, so that when Captain Weston arrived in Detroit, he knew just as little of his young friend, as he did the first moment he met him on the wharf at Buffalo.

Three months went by, and Napier with his six associates in crime, had been tried convicted, and sentenced to the far-off Australian penitentiary of Great Britain, at hard labor for various terms; the young man who had arrested them, and become the principle witness for the crown at their trial, had received the reward, and returned to Buffalo; but who he was, or what could have induced him to befriend the young Captain in so singular manner, remained a mystery still, until one evening about three weeks after the trial and sentence of the pirates, when Captain Henry Weston, who had been the husband of Juliet McNeil for nearly two months, sat conversing with his bride and her parents, in the parlor of the general's beautiful mansion just outside the city, on Black Rock road, and for the thousanth time he was wondering who on earth the stranger could have been, when a sudden soream of joy, uttered by his wife, and echoed back in quiet exclamations of recognition from both her parents, aroused, and directed his attention to a tall, handsome young man standing just within the open door.

"Luke le Sauble!" exclaimed Weston, speaking the name by which he had heard the young stranger addressed on board the brig on the night that Napier and his associates were captured. "Luke le——"

"Frank! O, Frank, you have then come back to us at last, my dear brother?" murmured Juliet, as interrupting her husband's speech, she bounded forward and hung there upon the young stranger's bosom with her arms about his neck.

"O, God! I thank thee that I am permitted once more to look upon the face of my darling boy!" said Mrs. McNeil, tottering forward, and clasping his right hand in both her own while the stern, white-haired old general became a very child again as he grasped the left hand of his brave but erring boy, and besought him to remain with them, begging his forgiveness for the unnatural tratment which three years previously had driven his noble-hearted boy forth from his home, and made him a vagabond.

As soon as quiet was restored the young man proceeded to explain whatever there was of mystery in his connection with Captain Weston and the pirates.

At the time he left home three years previously, he had gone to New Orleans, where he first became the dupe, and then the associate and accomplice of gamblers. He had returned to Buffalo some two months previous to the piratical outrage on the British schooner, in which three of his southern friends had taken an active part. He had never seen Henry Weston until the evening when he accosted him so abruptly in Buffalo; but he had learned all the particulars of his conditional engagement with his sister, and the five thousand dollar draft which he had given to the young captain was the proceeds of a single night's venture at one of the fashionable gambling-hells.

He had been made acquainted with all the details of the plan to rob the brig, and had pledged his word to take an active part in the affair; and he had kept his word although not exactly in the sense that his friends of the islands understood him when he made the promise to be with them.

In conclusion, I would merely remark that Henry Weston and Frank McNeil are both in command of favorite steamers on the western lakes this season, and either of them will tell you that the brief account which I have given of the Island Desperado, together with the manne rof his capture is substantially correct.

☞ A strange occurrence recently took place near Sheppardstown, Cumberland county, in this State, in which a man was shot by a snake. A gentleman by the name of Louman, store-keeper in Siddonsburg, York county, was out hunting; he discovered a large snake, and in order to secuse it from running away, he placed the butt of his rifle, loaded with a ball at the tine, upon the body of the snake, *with his hand directly across the muzzle.* The snake in writhing to free itself, coiled around the gun stock, and with one of its coils struck the hammer, which was down upon the cap at the time, hard enough to discharge the gun; the contents of which entered the ball of the hand near the wrist, and in a diagonal direction came out between the junction of the little finger and the one next to it happily no bones being broken. The most providential part of the casuality, however, was that Mr. Louman was just in the act of bring the gun in front of him, for the purpose of *leaning on the muzzle*, the better to enable him to reach a stick, near by, with which to kill the snake. A few moments delay in the discharge of the gun might have cost him his life. The whole circumstance is a very singular one.

☞ The other day, a small boy came tearing by our office with his rags fluttering in the wind, his face smeared with molasses, and a shingle flourishing in his hand while he was shouting to another boy about the size of a pepper box, who stood nearly a quarter of a mile down the street: "Oh! Bill! Bill! git as many boys as ever you can, and as many shingles as ever you can and come up the street as soon as ever you can, for there's a great big, large hogsit of 'lasses busted on the pavement—busted all to smash!"

☞ New York is so full of strangers now that some of the large hotels lodge a portion of their guests in the parlor at night.

☞ Why are tell-tale women like German watches? Do you give it up? Because they are all repeaters.

"CUT, CUT BEHIND."

BY JAQUES.

Walking over Hanover street one fine day, I saw just before me, one of Hawthorne's coaches rattling up the street while in the rear of it, two ragged urchins, breathless with haste, were racing as if for dear life after the coach to catch up and secure a ride.

Pretty soon the smaller of the two was fortunate enough to gain the coveted seat on the step, and rode off, gleefully chuckling at his less fortunate playmate, who retreating to the sidewalk, at once vociferated—"Cut, cut behind!"

The driver's cruel lash curled around and cut the cheek of the little fellow on the step, and screaming with pain he dropped off, while the envious little wretch who had been the means of his fall, set up a derisive shout of laughter, and vanished around a corner. Whereat, I moralized. Behold thought I, a perfect illustration of some of man's petty games of life! See here, an exemplification of his envious jealousy and revenge. The boy who did not get a ride might have been willing to share his ride with his mate, but he did not get the chance and so, because he did not, and his comrade did, he straightway revenged himself on fortune by depriving his more fortunate fellow of his enjoyment.

And when I see a young man whose idleness and inactivity, or lack of perseverance and application have made him unsuccessful in life, decrying the merits of others, doubtineg their efficiency, and endeavoring to prejudice the minds of others against them, and *because* they are so unsuccessful, I straight bethink me of the boy who called out—"Cut, cut behind!"

When I see an unsuccessful candidate for public office maligning, or at best, speaking coldly of the character and qualification of his rival—impugning his motives and artfully endeavoring to poison the minds of the people who uphold him; when I see such a man covertly working it to secure the ultimate downfall of his late antagonist, on merely political grobnds, I am irresistibly reminded of the well known cry—"Cut, cut behind!"

When I see vulgar, illiterate persons laboring to drag back to their own level such of their past associates as may have been fortunate enough to rise to a more elevated sphere of life; when I see such endeavoring to blast the character of their more ambitious and high-minded brethren, or discourage their efforts by sneers, sarcasm and ridicule, and therewith affect their present standing, I feel that they, too, have been giving a lesson to the urchins that cry—"Cut, cut behind!"

When I see an editor who has got the worst of it in a long race for public favor attempting to cry down the deserving features of his more fortunate rival, when gangrened by jealousy, and smarting with defeat, he tries to compensate for victory by traducing and slandering his competitor I think at once that he is crying in another form of speech—"Cut, cut behind!"

In short, whenever and wherever, I see honest endeavors retarded and discouraged when I see patient merit made to falter and to faint by reason of the bare opposition of envy, and detraction I seem to hear again ringing in my ears, the breathless cry of—Cut, cut behind!"

THE OLD SONG OF THE WHIGS.—The day of election not being far distant, the Whigs of Pennsylvania are setting up their usual annual cry about "the mismanagement of our public works," and "the extravagance of the State administration." They take these economical fits at stated periods, and while the fit is "on," a stranger to their ways would think them the most scrupulously honest people on earth. But we who know them better, give them precious little credit for rectitude of intention. We do not fail to compare their practices with their professions, and the comparison does not rebound to their credit. When they talk of plunder on the public works, our mind reverts to the Big Break. When they talk of squandering money on useless improvements, memory carries us back to the days of Gettysburg Tapeworm. When they intimate that and this thing have been done without authority of law, we are involuntary reminded of RITNER and STEVENS's cool assumption of the functions of the General Assembly, on the plea that it would have been expensive to call the General Assembly together. When they talk of wielding the patronage of the goverment so as to further individual and party purposes, it is impossible for us to forget the use made of the goverment patronage at Millerstown, about the middle of October, 1838. The RITNERITES talking about the extravagance of a Democratic State Administration! The admirers of THADDEUS STEVENS *blowing* about malfeasance in office! The GALPHINS charging Democratic officers with plundering the people! *Where is Satan?* It is time for him to rebuke sin in earnest.

Pennsylvanian.

☞ A Kentucky wag, who lost a pile on Letcher's election, professes to have discovered what the whig party is. He says it is an organization got up by the Locofocos to wid money from *Frecesty!*