

The Home Reading Circle



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SYNOPSIS.
The firms of "Perkins & Case" and "Brown & Phillips," traders of Saigon, China, want to establish branches at Sarawak, Borneo, and for this purpose are sending \$25,000 each, in silver, by a steamer. The crew of this steamer desert at the last minute because the story of the money has leaked out and the steamer is afraid of Wong-Lee, a noted pirate. To outwit the latter it is decided to send the money by a small American brig, the "Gull." A crew is obtained from another American brig, the "Hunter," then at Sarawak, which had just been sold to an English trading firm. Captain John Rayner, a shrewd Yankee, commands the "Gull." The American sailors are concealed in the cabin with plenty of guns and ammunition, and a crew of six Chinese sailors is shipped ostensibly for a voyage to Corea. As soon as the "Gull" is out at sea the Americans appear and the Chinese are imprisoned being taken to the next day Captain Rayner is satisfied that a swift junk that is following them is none other than the famous Wong-Lee, a shrewd Yankee, commands the "Gull." The American sailors are concealed in the cabin with plenty of guns and ammunition, and a crew of six Chinese sailors is shipped ostensibly for a voyage to Corea. As soon as the "Gull" is out at sea the Americans appear and the Chinese are imprisoned being taken to the next day Captain Rayner is satisfied that a swift junk that is following them is none other than the famous Wong-Lee himself.

PART II.
Captain Rayner could speak the Chinese language like a native, and the conversation between him and Wong-Lee was held in that tongue.
"I am sorry to trouble you," began the pirate, as the captain advanced, "but I have lost my mate and three men. Last night at midnight we heard some one hail from the water, and a boat was lowered to the rescue. A sudden squall came up and the junk was driven away. I think the boat must have been picked up when daylight came."
"Ho, ho, of course," said Capt. Rayner for as he interpreted the statement, "but we must appear to swallow him whole."
Then turning to Wong-Lee he expressed his regrets at the loss of the men and his hope that they had been picked up. We hadn't seen anything of them, but other craft were sailing to and fro. We were so short-handed and the men were so busy that a poor lookout had been kept. He complimented the man on the speed of his junk and the way she was handled, and he boldly stated that our bark was going down the Gulf of Siam to take out cargo from a wrecked merchantman. It was plain by the twinkle in Wong-Lee's eyes that he didn't believe it, but he was a good dissembler. He expressed a curiosity to look the ship over. We knew little his game, but were ready for it. He had a glass of wine in the cabin and made good use of his eyes, but not a weapon did he see. He entered the forecastle with the excuse that he wanted to construct one for the junk, but his idea was to discover if there was a watch of duty below. He was aboard for a full half-hour, and his glances took in every detail, and when he left he shook hands in a cordial way and was off to his cabin. He was bound for the northern Philippines, he said, and we would probably remain in sight of each other all day.

"The smiling, deceitful old repro-bate!" growled Captain Rayner, as the pirate pulled off to his junk, "the captain expecting to find his cut-throat crew on deck, and he'd have had possession in ten minutes. Sharp as he is we deceived him as to numbers and that we are armed. He'll follow us all day, and then try to board us at night."
The junk let us get a long start of her and then followed after. I got another look at her with the glass before we swung our yards, and while I could not make out any loopholes for guns, that fact did not count in our



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PIMPLY FACES

DRAMATIC NOTES.

Fay Templeton has written a comic opera. Meba has \$100,000 invested in gowns. Lockyay is rehearsing the "Royal Opera." Materna has opened a vocal school at Vienna. Hayzen Coffin has entered vaudeville in Cleveland. Buffalo Bill's income averages about \$7,000 a year. Nellie Al Henry will probably play in London next season. Donnelly and Girard will star in "The George" next season. Lewis Morrison will be seen in "The Doctor's Great" next season. Sam'l of Posen Curtis will be seen at Chicago in "Gentleman Joe." The new opera, "The Cane," and Meba received this season about \$50,000. Sydney Sanderson will star the role of Ned in Leoncavallo's "Tosca." Richard Price's son doubts that he is to marry Anna Robinson, an actress. Josephine Knapp is a member of the Washington Castle Square opera company. A niece of Austria's Empress has married the baritone of the Munich opera house. The author of "Zanuba," a lyric drama that has scored a hit in Bordeaux, is 22 years old. The author has sold to the Opera, London, the first performance of his Japanese work for \$10,000. Laura Joyce Bell will shortly be seen in Boston in "The Walking Delegate," a new comic opera. John Drew has prevailed upon his mother, Mrs. John Drew, to abandon her operatic career. Katherine Germaine and Frank Deshon will be the principals in a summer opera company at Atlantic City. Wm. R. Rising is to head an organization called "The International Concert company." "Miss Richman" is the title of an opera shortly to be produced by E. E. Rice, with Theresa Vaughn in the title role. Rosa Caplan has positively decided not to marry the wife of Alexander and his repertoire will include "Don Caesar," "For France" and "The Three Guardsmen." "So long as the American people wish to have a good theater," says E. E. Rice, "I have my good health, I shall continue to appear before them." At Berlin, the popular theater, Libre, founded by the artist, under the patronage of admission of about 12 cents, has prospered in a most extraordinary manner. The tour of Paul Czannevsky next season will be directed by Kullt Adler and his repertoire will include "Don Caesar," "For France" and "The Three Guardsmen." What sequence there is in that \$11,500 realized by the benefit given to Kitty Alloy? In one night was raised a sum ten times that which her father left after years of distinguished endeavor. When Hammerstein produces the London comic opera success, "La Pomme," at his native New York, he will probably only give a burlesque of the opera in his music hall. Joseph Herbert has already begun engaged to write the play. What sequence there is in that \$11,500 realized by the benefit given to Kitty Alloy? In one night was raised a sum ten times that which her father left after years of distinguished endeavor. When Hammerstein produces the London comic opera success, "La Pomme," at his native New York, he will probably only give a burlesque of the opera in his music hall. Joseph Herbert has already begun engaged to write the play.

that Wong-Lee would not last long. We had had a man aloft with the glass for three hours, but he had not once made out the junk. At a quarter to twelve he still reported nothing in sight, but half an hour later, as the bark was lazily rising and falling on the groundswell, the pirate suddenly appeared, coming up astern and close aboard. The lookout aloft had probably fallen asleep. The junk was being moved by her sweeps, and there was just time to call the men sleeping on deck when she ran us aboard the port-quarter. Such yells and shouts as the pirates uttered would have made a band of Indian warriors envious, and they had men ready in the rigging with stink pots, and others with grappling irons. The Chinese stink pot is an open iron pot filled with some horrible smelling compound, and turning for about ten minutes the odors given out will prostrate a man almost as quick as a bullet. We knew they would come, and one of the Malays was detailed to look out for them a kick them overboard. As the craft came together about the forty pirates attempted to board us. Every man of us except the Malay open fire and if we had had only the junk to deal with I am sure we could have beaten her off. Wong-Lee had a card up his sleeve, however. He lowered two boats, filled them with men, and while we were bravely holding our own, they boarded us on the starboard bow and came running aft. We had two men down at the time, both dead, and a third badly wounded. Everyone saw they were many more, and the cry of call of the captain there was a precipitate retreat to the cabin. When we came to count noses we found ourselves five short. The one aloft was dead. The missing two were Malays, and from their desperate manner of fighting we had little doubt that they also lay dead on the deck. We were thus reduced to nine men, and while we were cramped up in the cabin the pirates had possession of the decks. We expected them to make a rush at the doors, but no such movement came. They first cleared the decks of the dead, heaving each body into the sea, and then we felt the junk working her way ahead with all clear of us. No sails were fuzled at us, and for a moment we were puzzled to know what the fellows were at. Then we suddenly felt the bark heel to a breeze, followed by a jerk and a tug, and Captain Rayner called out: "They've got our tow rope aboard the junk, a prize crew on board here, and we are bound for old Wong-Lee's headquarters! By daylight he'll have us among the islands to the west, and we might as well say good-bye to each other right now!" We had all plain sail on the bark, and the pirate in charge appeared to know how to handle her, but the junk sailed the faster and kept the two bows fast. We could hear the fellows shouting about on deck, and although they made no effort to get at us, we were in a state of expectancy every moment till daylight finally broke.

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From Judge.

The only people who are positive they are fitted to bring up children in the way they should go are very old gentlemen and maiden ladies.

An amusing little scene, in which the "helpful old gentleman" figured, occurred the other day at the Grand Central station. Quite a family party were assembled, of the class that believes in making the most of a free country, to await the arrival of an unexpected guest. Children were there galore, playing tag all around the old gentleman's feet, falling periodically over his canvas bag, squealing wildly as they ran into passengers, and retreating in heaps as a "cop" approached.

"The helpful old man" stood it as long as he could conscientiously, then, locking over his spectacles, said severely, "Stop that racket—your children!"

"Well, I like that!" answered one of the mothers, in a loud, angry tone.

But, if she did, the old gentleman didn't, and faced the woman as he continued:

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"Well," replied the frate lady, "if you've raised three families you've done your duty, and I'll thank you to allow me to raise mine."

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