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THE BUTLER CITIZEN.

VO. xxxvii BUTLER, PA., THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 1900 No. 44

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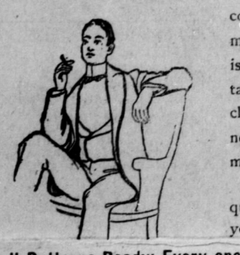

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DEALER IN

LUMBER.

JOHN TOPP, PIRATE

By Weatherby Chesney and Alick Munro.

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ILLUSTRATIONS BY H. C. COULTAS.

CHAPTER I.

"Ho, ho, John Topp!" said the boys. "You daren't tackle him, that's what it is. The stranger can thrash you, and you know it."

Now, I knew nothing of the sort, and, in fact, rather fancied that I could thrash Alexander Ireland as easily as I had every other boy in Whitby, but the others were jealous of my prowess, and therefore egged me on to tackle the stranger in the hope that he might prove too smart for me. For thus their broken noses and lost teeth would be avenged.

I was at that time a bull necked, squarely built young lout of 15, and Alec was red haired, slender and wiry, and about six months my senior. I was the best fighter in Whitby—even Dan Asquith, the squint eyed butcher's boy, said so—and I had a reputation to lose; Alec was a newcomer to the town and had none.

"Come on, carrotty head!" I cried, stung at last into action by the jeers which I affected to despise. "They tell me you are a good fighter; let us see which of us two is to be cock."

But the stranger kept his hands in his pockets.

"Why should I fight?" he asked gravely. "I haven't quarreled with you."

"Afraid?" said I contemptuously. "Right! Say I can beat you, and you shan't have your thrashing."

"No," he replied steadily. "I am not afraid of you, but I don't choose to fight for nothing."

"That's all brag," I said, as I edged up to him. "You've either got to fight or acknowledge you're afraid," and I gave him a shove with my shoulder.

"All right then; I'll fight."

And without more words we stripped and set to.

For an hour and a half by the church clock the fight went on, each of us doggedly determined to come up to the mark so long as his trembling knees would support him.

At last the end came, and it was Ireland who eventually struck the knockout blow. How many rounds we fought I do not know, but at last I felt that unless I could finish him off quickly I should not be able to toe the mark the next time the umpire called time. So, summoning up all of my failing energies for one last slashing blow that would make me the victor and him insensible, I rushed at him like a mad cart horse. He did not flinch, but stood his ground waiting for me. Dodging my blow, he seized my left hand with his right, ducked his head under my arm, whipped his other hand between my legs and before any one quite knew exactly what had happened I had flown through the air and was knocked out of me like corn out of a burst bag. It was all done in less than a couple of seconds, and, as I had fallen on my head, I lay quiet enough.

"Alec Ireland," I said when I had recovered, "I own you have given me a thorough drubbing. Will you shake hands?"

"No, no," he said. "You had the best of it but for the last fall, and if it hadn't been for that south country trick by which I lifted you over my shoulder I should have had to knuckle under to you."

Such was the beginning of my friendship with Alexander Ireland. On that very night we took together the solemn sailors' oath, by which we became sworn shipmates for life, and to this day we have neither of us broken it.

My new friend and I quickly found that we had a great deal in common. The perils and pleasures of the sea had always had an enthralling fascination for me, and when I discovered that Alec shared my passion for salt water my previously vague longings became suddenly crystallized into a definite purpose—I would be a sailor. Consequently it soon became the greatest enjoyment of my leisure time to sit in the dark little parlor of the Angel and listen to the tales of the old seamen who frequented it—tales of the great captains they had known and sailed under, who, caring as little for the violence of the tropical hurricane as for the ice grip of the cold north, had braved the storms of unknown oceans in their stout little ships and had brought back from every clime its choicest treasures to lay them at the feet of our sovereign lady, good Queen Bess.

There was, however, one thing, and that no small one, over which Alec and I very nearly quarreled. And what should that be if not a woman? For it is woman's bright smile and coyly drooping eye which shatter half the friendships of man with man, even when the longed for down has hardly yet appeared on the upper lip and the razor is still a joy to be gloated over in secret.

Inez was her name, and she was the daughter of Don Miguel, a Spanish gentleman who had for a reason which I did not then know taken up his residence in Whitby. I had known her since she was a child of 10 and had never thought of her more than of any other girl in Whitby until one day I chanced to see her in the street with a new gown on. It was a wonderful gown—the skirt of it was slashed and puffed out to the size of a 40 gallon cask—and as I looked and marveled it suddenly struck me that the laughing face above it was the most bewitching I had ever seen. Perhaps it was the fine dress that did it, and perhaps it was the pretty mouth that smiled and wished me a "good day." I am not quite sure which it was, but the next time I met her in the lane near her father's house I asked her to be my sweetheart. After a few blushes and a few kisses she said she would, and I was the proudest lad in Whitby.

Alec, however, was not pleased at my success, and very soon he told me so.

"Jack," he said, "I didn't think my sworn shipmate would prove a traitor."

"A traitor!" I exclaimed. "It's a hard word, and I don't know what I have done to deserve it. How am I a traitor?"

"She is a Spaniard, Jack. The Spaniards are the queen's enemies, and you and I have said we meant to fight for the queen."

"Inez is no one's enemy."

"But her father, Don Miguel, is a Spaniard."

"Yes; I suppose he is. Is that all you have to accuse him of?" I asked, somewhat nettled at his persistence.

"Isn't it enough? I tell you that every Spaniard is an enemy to England and Queen Bess, and since my father, Captain Harry Ireland, was murdered by the Spaniards every Spaniard is an enemy to me."

"And shall be to me, too," I said as I gripped his hand. "But I don't see that the rule applies to the daughters."

"Spanish daughters become Spanish mothers, Jack."

"Not when they marry Englishmen."

"Do you mean to marry Inez, then?" he said, looking at me earnestly.

"Yes; when I am old enough, if she will have me."

"No fear of her refusing a stout Englishman! Well, if that is so I will say no more, although I admit I don't like it."

But, although Alec agreed to let me have my way, I could see that he was displeased at what I was doing, and his displeasure at first angered and then grieved me.

"Alec," I said to him one day, "I'm going to see Inez tonight. Will you come with me?"

"Do you really want me to go?"

"Yes, Alec, I do."

"Will her father be there?"

"No. We never see him in the evening."

"Then, if you are sure of that, I will go. But have you never guessed, Jack, why it is that you never see Don Miguel in the evening?"

"Because he is busy in his workshop."

"At what sort of work?"

"How should I know? I never asked him."

"I will tell you. He is an alchemist."

"What?" I cried. "Are you sure of that, Alec? Alchemy! Why, it's the devil's own trade."

"So they say. But to me it seems that if the devil had any favor for the work, alchemists would be richer than they are. It's an ill trade, though, at best and not the one I should choose for my comrade's father-in-law."

This news of Alec's troubled me, for, though he declared that the devil could have no share in such profitless toil,

I was the proudest lad in Whitby.

yet I had always been told that every alchemist had sold himself to satan, and I more than half believed it. Still, I argued that Inez was not to be blamed for her father's sins, and in the end Alec agreed with me.

After that night I never had any more disagreement with him on the subject of my lovemaking. Inez fairly laughed and sang herself into his good graces. She had the sweetest voice I ever heard, and as she sat in a corner by the fire and sang us quaint little sea songs that her nurse, Ann Garrat, had taught her I wondered whether the mermaidens that the old sailors of the Angel spoke of were one-half so sweet and pretty as my own little Spanish sweetheart.

"Why, Jack," said Alec as we walked home from her house, "she is hardly a Spaniard at all, except for her black hair and eyes. No Whitby girl could have sung those English sea songs with a prettier accent than she did."

"No Whitby girl could have sung them half so well," I answered warmly, "and, as for her being English, her nurse has seen to that. Dame Garrat hates Spain almost as much as you do, and she won't allow Inez to speak a word of Spanish in her hearing."

"Well, she's a sweet girl, Jack, and I'm glad of it for your sake. It's a pity, though, that her father is a Spaniard."

I said nothing in reply to this, for, to tell the truth, I was not much more in love with the surly Don Miguel than was Alec. By and by, as we walked, Alec began to hum a tune, and after a short time he sang the words too. It was the last song Inez had sung to us, and I remember the chorus went like this:

Then, ah, for the cruel creeping waves,
With their clay cold lips of spray;
But, hi, for the merry dancing waves
That with the sunbeams play!

"Take care, Alec!" I said, with a laugh. "You'll be falling in love with Inez yourself."

"No, no, Jack; I like her, it is true, but I'll never be a rival to my sworn shipmate."

Nevertheless when I said "Good night" to him and turned in at my father's gate I heard him go singing down the road, and the words that came floating up the breeze to me sounded suspiciously familiar. It seemed to me that what he sang was:

Hi, for the merry dancing waves!

And the tune, at any rate, was the same.

CHAPTER II.

Before Alec's arrival on the scene I grieve to say that besides being one of the greatest dunces in the school I was also, so the master said, the most troublesome young scapegrace he ever had the misfortune to cane. He told my father that he could not conscientiously take any blame to himself for my deplorable ignorance and depravity, as he would warrant that there was scarcely a square inch of my ungainly carcass that his ferule or birch broom had not scored. I was innately wicked, he declared, and my poor father groaned and said he feared the schoolmaster was right.

There was really some justification for this belief of my father's, for all my ten brothers (I was the youngest of 11) were either doing well or giving promise of it, and I was the only one who had ever given my worthy parents the least trouble. The others were mostly parsons, or on the way to become parsons; so, as my father, too, was in the church, there was plenty of piety in the family, but I am very much afraid that the collective goodness of all my relatives was more than balanced by my individual depravity. I have heard my mother say—and it has never occurred to me to doubt it—that the first use I made of my legs after I learned the art of locomotion was to walk straight into a scrape. It is a habit I have not dropped with increase of years.

Now, however, I had for the first time a companion who, like myself, appeared to be happiest when in trouble, and for the next two years Alec and I continued to live in a state of intermittent rebellion with those in authority. We both hankered after excitement, and the pursuit of it continually led us into hot water. Now it would be a scuffle with his lordship's men for snaring his lordship's grouse, now a brawl in a tavern and now, again, a threat of severe punishment for scaring half the town with a turnip lantern on a dark winter's night. Once we went off for a whole week and lived like conies among the hills, and on another occasion we hid ourselves in a ship's hold and sailed down to Scarboro in her and then tramped the whole way back over the moors on foot.

Adventures like these cemented our friendship and taught us to be quick and ready in emergencies, but they did not tend to increase our popularity with those in authority, and to such an extent did our ill repute spread that when anything went wrong or any evil was committed of which the perpetrators were not at once discovered every finger pointed to Alexander Ireland and John Topp as the culprits. And, truth to tell, these judicial digits did not often point askew.

Alec, indeed, pursued his studies with some amount of diligence; but as for me the perpetual war which I waged with the schoolmaster was far too bitter to admit of my profiting by his efforts to instruct me. I increased, therefore, in very little except stature, but in that I bid fair to be pre-eminent in Whitby.

My eventual sudden departure from the town was caused by the unexpected boiling over of a pan of water, and this is how it came about:

I had gone to see my sweetheart Inez, and Alec had, as usual, accompanied me. He still took great pleasure in the sea songs she used to sing to us, and, besides, his presence was a help to our lovemaking, as he was always willing to converse with Dame Garrat and so divert her attention from Inez to me when we happened to wish to speak of anything of an especially private nature. We had a prearranged system of signals by which I could always let him know when I wanted him to talk louder than usual, and, to tell the truth, our knowledge of the code was in no danger of growing rusty from want of use.

On this particular night, however, the conversation had been of other times and places than our own. We had been discussing the marvelous wealth of the new world, and Alec and I had fought a wordy battle about the relative merits of glory and gold. He was all for glory, and I was for gold first and glory only as an afterthought when the gold was safe below hatches.

"Jack," said Inez to me when Alec and I had, in our despair of converting one another, come to a controversial deadlock, "there are other ways of making gold than by fighting for it."

"Yes, sweetheart, I know there are," I answered, "but you would not have me to become a smug faced merchant?"

"No, but there are other ways still."

"The devil's work!" I cried.

"My father's work, Jack," replied Inez gravely.

"Yes, sweetheart, and I wish it were not," I began when Alec interrupted me.

"Jack, my boy, you're a fool. How can the devil have anything to do with it? The trade's respectable enough, though it doesn't seem to be very profitable to its professors—a sure sign, by the way, that it's an honest one."

"Jack," said Inez, "will you see for yourself?"

"Visit Don Miguel at his work?"

"Yes."

"Not I!" I said, with a shudder. "I should expect to be enchanted.

Alec, however, chaffed me for my superstitious fears and said that nothing would please him better than to see how the work was done. Now, to be called a coward in the hearing of my sweetheart was naturally more than I could stand, so I told Alec I would go with him.

Inez said there was a window in the pantry from which we could see Don Miguel's laboratory without his knowing that any one was watching him, so we stationed ourselves there. Alec was all curiosity to see what was going on; but, though I tried to conceal my fears, I was horribly afraid that some unholy sight would meet my eyes. From my cradle I have been taught that it is always safest to shun the devil and his works, and I believe it to be a thoroughly good rule.

Don Miguel's laboratory was a fearsome place. There were rows upon rows of retorts and flasks of various quaint shapes, shelves with big, dusty, learned looking books on them, cases of bottles containing tinctures of various colors, both dull and bright; charcoal furnaces, and steaming vats of bubbling liquids. The floor was marked out into arcs, circles, triangles and every sort of uncanny geometrical figure, and one corner of the room was entirely filled by a large blast furnace, over which Don Miguel was leaning, intently watching some substance that was hissing and gurgling in an earthenware crucible.

There was no light in the room except that which the glow of the furnace gave, and as at each blast it burned up brightly and shone for a moment on the pale, eager face of the alchemist and then died away in a gloom again which by contrast was almost darkness I thought I had never gazed upon such an unholy scene.

As we watched we saw that a critical point in the process had evidently been reached. The Spaniard was trembling and muttering as he peered into the crucible whenever the dragon's breath of the furnace gave him light, and, though we could not hear what he said, it was perfectly clear that he was wildly excited—unless, perhaps, it was the working of madness that we saw.

By and by he seemed to see the sign for which he was looking. With a low cry of delight, more like the yapping of a dog than anything else, he stopped the furnace blast and lit a rushlight candle. Then he took the crucible from the flames and poured the contents into another vessel.

For four or five minutes he held it up to the light, and during all that time, as he watched the silent workings of his hell broth in the vessel, I never once saw his eyelids blink. Then he gave a wild, unearthly yell of delight, which made my very marrow run cold, as though a tub of water had been thrown over me, and as his excited utterance became louder we could now hear what he said:

"It turns! It turns! The color—the lovely blood red color! See how it rises, red showing through the green! Success has come to me at last, and tomorrow I shall have gold! Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha! Gold, gold, gold!"

At this moment one of the flasks that had been gurgling and spluttering in another corner suddenly boiled over, and the liquid fell, hissing, on to the charcoal embers. A cloud of steam rose into the air, and at the sight my overstrained nerves could bear the tension no longer, and I uttered a sharp cry. The Spaniard heard it, and it made him start involuntarily. Some of the decoction in the vessel he was holding splashed over and burned his hand. With a yell of pain he let the vessel fall, and the precious essence was spilled on the floor, over which it ran in an oily stream, burning with a blue, sulphurous flame. He looked up at the window, saw our white scared faces peering at him, and with another yell (of rage this time) he snatched up a sword that was lying on a table and made a rush for the door.

"Fly, Jack, fly! He'll murder you!" cried Inez as she pushed me away from the window.

I snatched a hurried kiss from her and fled, and Alec with me.

Down the lane we ran with all the speed that fear gave us and Don Miguel hard on our heels. We gained on him slightly and, taking advantage of the darkness, doubled and crouched down under the side of a haystack. He did not see our maneuver, and we breathed more freely as the sound of his footsteps grew fainter in the distance.

"A near shave, that!" I said as we made over some fields to avoid meeting the Spaniard as he returned.

"Yes," replied Alec, "but why did you run?"

"For the same reason as you did, I suppose," I answered, somewhat surlily.

"Afraid?"

"Yes, afraid. What of it?"

"It isn't like John Topp."

"John Topp fears no man," I said sharply, "but the devil I won't tackle."

"Jack, your superstition is childish," said Alec gravely. "An angry Spaniard was the only devil I could see."

"Then, for the matter of that, why did you run?"

"Partly because you did."

"Thanks! And the other reason? The angry Spaniard, eh?" I said, with a sneer.

"Yes, Jack, the angry Spaniard."

"Then which of us is the coward, I'd like to know—you or I? I run from the devil, and I'm not ashamed to own it; you run from a man because he's angry and has a sword in his hand, and apparently you are not ashamed to own that."

"That was not my reason," said Alec.

"No? Then what was it? Surely a very cunning one, for I quite fail to see it." It was my turn now, I thought.

"He's your sweetheart's father," replied Alec simply.

I stopped dead. "Alec," I said, "I give you leave to hit me as hard as you like, straight from the shoulder, here on my blundering, stupid mouth—a straight left hander, mind! And I promise you I won't return the blow."

"No, thanks," replied Alec, with a laugh.

"I wish you would," I answered penitently. "I deserve it for venturing to speak of cowardice and Alec Ireland in the same breath. Can you forgive me?"

"Of course I do," said [illegible], with another laugh, and he wouldn't let me say another word about it. I saw, too, that when all the other motives of pure chivalry, it is hard that his own sworn shipmate should accuse him of cowardice. I was thoroughly ashamed of myself, and even now the only excuse I can make for my disloyal suspicions is that the fearsome scene we had witnessed in the alchemist's laboratory had so scared me that I did not rightly know what I was saying.

It's a thin excuse, though, at the best.

CHAPTER III.

"One eye, one hand and an otter skin cap"—that is my earliest recollection of Willie Trehalion.

Our first meeting took place when I was quite a youngster. He had come up to the vicarage on some errand or other, and when I told him my father was out he said he would wait and offered to pass the time in telling me a story for a pot of ale. I remember well, even now, how he grumbled at the poorness of the liquor I gave him, and, to tell the truth, our small beer was exceedingly small.

But, admitting that I could not fairly be blamed for the weakness of the

I hung upon his words.

brew, he sat down on the bench outside the kitchen door and to pay for his drink spun me such wonderful yarns of floating islands on which there lived magicians who sold winds, of mermaids and sea serpents and other marvels of the deep, all of which he had himself seen in his travels, that I hung upon his words and thought him the greatest hero I had ever seen. And afterward, whenever I met his squat, square figure rolling down the street, he always had a nod or a cheery "How goes it, my young master?" for me, a piece of condescension which gave me more pleasure than did the most extravagant praise from the schoolmaster or any other of my lawful teachers.

That my estimate of Willie's qualities was not altogether accurate was proved by the manner of his leaving Whitby.

One night, in a frolicsome mood, engendered, no doubt, by liquors more potent than the vicarage beer, he attempted to break the constable's head, and as next day he had to sit in the stocks as a penalty for his joke he considered that he had been insulted by the inhabitants of Whitby. He disappeared, therefore, from the town, and, though I did not see him again for nearly eight years, I remembered his stories, but the man himself became a mere hazy phantom in my mind until on the day after our adventure with the alchemist I met him again.

About midday Don Miguel had called at the vicarage and asked to see my father. They were closeted together for a long time, and, as I began to fear that this conjunction of the church with one of the devil's own favorites boded ill for my comfort presently, I told Alec.

"Well," said he, "what can we do? We shall just have to take our punishment."

"Yes, I suppose so," said I, "but if I've to be punished I don't see why I shouldn't have some fun first, and in any case it would be a shame to waste a fine afternoon like this at school."

"It does seem a pity," he replied, "and it will be very hot and wearisome, with nothing to do but pester old Prosody in his after dinner sleep. Come on; let's do something else."

"Right. What shall we do?"

"Fish."

"The very thing! Then I can take a salmon as a present to Dame Garrat in the evening. She's apt to get sharp tongued if I go too often empty handed to see Inez."

So we borrowed a boat and a net and set up the river at the second hour of the flood. We had just grounded our boat on the bank near the high bluff, where the stream turns off to the north, and were busy making fast one end of our net on the shore when we noticed that a stranger had taken up his quarters on the opposite bank.

He was a short, dark, sturdy man in the dress of a sailor. He wore loose knee breeches, with a short canvas smock over them; coarse blue worsted stockings, and shoes latched with brass buckles. Round his waist was a broad leather belt, into which was stuck a bone handled sheath knife; on his upper spars was a huge brown, wide sleeved, wide skirted coat, with the tails looped up to be out of the way, and on his head was a cap of brown skin. He was standing in a 20 foot boat, which he had fitted with a house of canvas and wood, and was finishing his work by giving it all a generous coat of tar.

The figure seemed somehow familiar to me, and when I saw that the tar pot hung from a hook which had been substituted for a right hand the feeling that I ought to know the man grew stronger. Suddenly he broke out into a song, accompanying himself by beating a tattoo with the tar brush on the top of the cabin. The song was one I frequently had heard Willie Trehalion bawl through the Whitby streets years ago:

Sail away,
Hack away,
Plunder! [Rap with tar brush.]
Scatter all the money like a man.
Come back,
Nothing lack,
Thunder! [Rap.]
Gather all the valuables you can.

This one verse was solo and chorus both, and to begin singing the song was very much like starting to roll a big stone down hill—it was easy to start, but almost impossible to stop till the voice, like the slope, was exhausted.

"Willie Trehalion, ahoy!" I cried, and the singer turned round to see who was calling.

He had not altered one jot since I saw him last. His face was browned by the sun, wrinkled by the winds and purpled by strong liquors, and, as this richness of coloring was in strong contrast to the rest of his head, which, underneath the protecting otter skin cap, was as round and smooth as an ivory ball, the effect of the whole was distinctly striking. Add to this background of purple and white a globular blue nose, a jag for a mouth, an irregular depression where the right eye should have been, and (always remembering the iron hook for a right hand) you have a fairly faithful picture of Willie Trehalion, bos'un.

We pulled across to him, shooting the salmon net as we went.

"How goes it, Willie?" I cried. "Don't ed to a stout lad since I seed thee last, master, but the same face as Willie Trehalion left eight years ago last gull egg season. It'll be scraped with a razor afore long, trust me. And who be this?"

"My sworn shipmate, Willie."

"Sarvice to you, master. And his name, if I may be so bold?"

"Alexander Ireland," I said. "Came to Whitby since you left."

Willie started when I told him the name, and I saw his solitary eye scanning Alec all over, as if he expected to see something familiar in him.

"Any manner o' kin to Captain Harry Ireland, what was lost on the Spanish main?"

"Son," said Alec.

"Put it there!" cried the sailor, moistening his leathern fist and holding it out for Alec to grasp. "Put it there, if a young gentleman like you ain't too proud! I sailed under your father, lad."

"Sailed with my father!" exclaimed Alec excitedly. "Then you can tell me about him."

"That I can. I sailed with him to the Barbary coast an back just afore he left London river for the Spanish main. It was a r'yal voyage we made an good for him if he'd been content with what was brought home then. But he was always a venturesome man, was Cap'n Ireland, an his search for Manoa proved to be his last voyage, poor body!"

"Tell me about it," said Alec eagerly. And I could see that his face was flushed with excitement at the prospect of hearing news of his father.

"We went out to the Barbary coast with about ten peddler's packs o' beads an gewgaws, along with some risted nails an a few score o' barrel hoops, an we came back with a cargo as a Jew would sell his beard for a look at. Such a cargo—gould dust an gould peas an gould pebbles an ornaments o' gould an a great gould kettle big enough to stew a goat in, that Cap'n Ireland gave to the queen's own majesty! I tell 'ee there was gould enough to fill this boat o' mine three times over. Why, there was a many o' us as selled the ragged old clothes off our backs, let alone what was stowed away in the chests, an some even would have traded the weapons o' the ship o' Captain Ireland hadn't stopped them. Elephants' teeth there was, some black with age an some still bloody from their moorings, an river horses' teeth an other things as I disremember the outlandish names of. An when we left the king o' the blacks fell a-blubbering because we had nothing more to sell him.

"A right swift pass we made o' it home, too—58 days out o' the Barbary river—never an hour more—when our anchor was dropped again in honest Thames mud. An when the merchants came aboard with their clerks an the news was spread on shore the bells was set a-ringing out o' sympathy with our good fortune. It was a r'yal voyage for sure!"

"And afterward?" asked Alec when the boatswain stopped.

"Afterward? Why, afterward we went an spent our money like men. No more work for a spell, so off we set ashore. We lived like emperors, sparing nothing we wanted, some for a week, some o' the thrifty ones even longer. You should ha' seen us setting casks o' good ale abroach for every one to drink your father's health, young sir, an decking the girls with ribbons till they looked like a lot o' laughing rainbows! Eh, but those were merry days!"

"But my father," said Alec impatiently—"what of him?"

Willie's single eye dwelt for a second on the questioner's face and then turned away.

"Best draw your net, masters, afore you hear any more o' the yarn," he pronounced. "Tide's ebbing fast, an you'll have a tough job to get across as it is."

Absorbed by the interest of Willie's story, we had quite forgotten about our fishing, and now the rapidly ebbing tide gave us considerable difficulty in hauling in our net. The catch, however, was a good one—seven very fair fish and one 20 pounder, which, I resolved, should go as a peace offering to Dame Garrat, the Spaniard's housekeeper.

There was a small grate in the cabin of Willie's boat, and we soon had the rich, red salmon steaks toasting before it.

The scent of the cooking brought an addition to the party. A gaunt, long legged, black cat put his nose round the door and leered at Alec and me with such an evil expression that we involuntarily shrank back, and I, at least, had uncomfortable recollections of the stories I had heard of witches and of the evil eye. A cat may be a mere cat and nothing more, but the other sort—never name them—are much the same to look at, and I had no particular fancy for being hurried away on a broomstick to attend a witches' Sabbath.

Willie noticed my consternation and broke out into a roar of laughter.

"Ha, ha, Master Topp! Afraid o' Nep, I see. Come, Nep; there's a compliment for you! You've scared the young gentleman with your pretty smile. No need to fear him, my lads. If there ever was any witchery in him, the salt water has washed it all out by now. Nep's been half over the world with me, an you might rub him in the dark for a week without getting a spark out o' him."

That was all very well, but when Nep set up the brine stiffened bristles on his tail and, arching his back, spat and swore at me through his jagged teeth, all because I moved my 20 pounder out of his reach, I thought it advisable to rap out a piece of Latin just by way of precaution. As a child I was taught to do so, and I have followed the rule with success throughout life. Nep, however, was nothing more than he seemed, and in later days we became shipmates and firm friends, though it took some time before I became sufficiently accustomed to his eccentricities to be able to pass him without a shudder.

When the steaks were cooked, the boatswain produced from one of his lockers a little canvas bag of spices and from another some rough wooden plates, and while we set to with our knives Nep did the same with his teeth, growling vigorously to show his satisfaction, though I had previously taken the precaution to sign a surreptitious cross over the share that Willie gave him. We made a hearty meal, and Willie, after he had with sailorlike tidiness stowed everything back into its place, tucked himself comfortable into a corner of his cabin, took the cat on his knee and advised us to follow his example and enjoy 40 winks to help our digestion.

"But you haven't yet told me about my father," objected Alec.

"Your father, young sir," said Willie solemnly, "sailed once more for the Spanish main in search o' the goulden city o' Manoa, an o' him an o' the company o' brave lads as went with him never a word has been heard to this day."

Alec was silent for a few moments, and neither Willie nor I cared to interrupt his thoughts.

"Mayhap not," answered Willie, "but if he hain't, why, then he's in the inquisition's claws, an that's nigh upon the same thing, for you'll never set eyes on him again, though it's sorry I be to have to say such a word to you."

"Jack," said Alec solemnly, taking my hand, "I shall search for my father, and I know that some day I shall meet him again, but how—I wonder how?"

"I'm with you in the search, Alec," I whispered.

Willie had been watching us narrowly, with a smile of half doubting approval seaming his face. Now he spoke:

"Well, well, lads, if ever you do start to throw away your lives on sich a fool's quest just let Willie Trehalion know, an mebbe he'll ship with you as boatswain. Captain Harry Ireland was the best captain that ever stepped, an I'm thinking that this old tar can't do better than take sarvice under his son. But you'll never find your father, lad. Manoa has led many besides him to their graves, an mebbe'll be the death of a few more before it's found."

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

Effect of Fear on Wounds.

The fear of poison in a lacerated wound under certain circumstances is in itself quite sufficient to give a wounded man tetanus, or lockjaw, than which no more horrible complication exists. Thus for a long time it was thought that the natives of the Solomon and other neighboring islands lately added to the empire used poisoned arrows and many white men shot by them died in tetanic convulsions, including one very horrible case of a commander in the navy who had made a special study of tetanus.

At length the French governor of New Caledonia, noticing that the symptoms exhibited were not consistent with the use of any known poison, appointed a medical commission to inquire into the affair, when it was discovered that the arrows of the natives were not poisoned at all, although constructed in such a way that a small piece of the bone point almost always remained in the wound. The irritation produced by this prevented the wound from healing quickly, and the mental disturbance produced by fear and perhaps change of climate did the rest.

It was discovered at the same time that the natives of other islands who firmly believed in the poison theory seldom suffered much inconvenience from the arrow wounds, because they, believed that the spells given them by their own sorcerers prevented the poison from taking effect.—Pall Mall Gazette.

Irascible Von Bulow.

During Hans von Bulow's leadership of the orchestra at Hanover a tenor of fame was engaged to play a star role in "Lohengrin," according to Das Neue Blatt, and while the singer was rehearsing his part Bulow was forced to go over the same bars a number of times without the new actor beginning to sing. Tired of his wasted efforts, the leader stopped the orchestra and angrily turned to the singer.

"I know that a tenor is proverbially stupid," he said, "but you seem to make an extensive use of this unwritten law."

At another time, while one of his grand intermezzos was being played with great feeling by his musicians, a peculiar noise, hardly perceptible by untrained ears, annoyed the leader for some little time. At first he thought it resembled the flutter of wings, but soon he discovered an elegant lady fanning herself in one of the boxes close by. Bulow kept on with his gestures, fixing his eyes on the offender in a manner which meant reproof. The lady, not heeding this, was sudden