

The GREEN PEA PIRATES

By PETER B. KYNE

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Author of "WEBSTER-MAN'S MAN," "THE VALLEY OF THE GIANTS," Etc.

HICKS AND FLAHERTY ON VENGEANCE BENT.

Synopsis.—Captain Phineas P. Scraggs has grown up around the docks of San Francisco, and from mess boy on a river steamer, risen to the ownership of the steamer Maggie.

CHAPTER III.—Continued.

"That'll do, bosun," Gibney thundered. Then, in his natural voice, to Scraggs: "All set, Scraggy. Guess we're ready to be pulled off. Get down in the engine room and stand by for full speed ahead when I give the word."

"Quick! Hurry!" Scraggs entreated as he disappeared through the little engine-room hatch, for the tide was now at the tip of the flood and the Maggie was bumping wickedly and driving further up the beach.

"Ahoy!" they answered in unison. "All ready! Let'er go-o-o-o!"

The Squarehead stationed himself at the bits with a lantern and Mr. Gibney hastened to the pilot house and took his place at the wheel.

"He fired me," McGuffey replied honestly. "If he hadn't I'd have quit, so it's a toss-up. Comin' in from Halfmoon bay last night we got in the fog an' piled up on the beach just below the Cliff house."

"I'll think it over, Mac, an' let you know," Hicks replied evasively.

Mr. McGuffey, sensing his defeat, retired forthwith to hide his embarrassment and distress; as the door closed behind him, Hicks and Flaherty faced each other.

"Jack," quoth Dan Hicks, "can two towboat men, holdin' down two hundred-dollar jobs an' presumed to have been out o' their swaddin' clothes for at least thirty years, afford to be laughed off the San Francisco waterfront?"

"I know one of them that can't, Dan. At the same time, can a rat like Phineas P. Scraggs and a bench-comber like his mate Gibney make a pair of star-spangled monkeys out of said two towboat men and get away with it?"

"They did that last night. Still, I've known monkeys that would fight an' was human enough to settle a grudge. Follow me, Jack."

Together they repaired to Jackson street bulkhead. Sure enough, there lay the Maggie, rubbing her blistered sides against the bulkhead.

"We're outnumbered," Jack Flaherty whispered. "Let's wait until she's unloaded an' Gibney an' Scraggs are aboard alone."

They retired without having attracted the attention of Mr. Gibney. Promptly at twelve o'clock the longshoremen knocked off work for the lunch hour and Nella Halvorsen drifted across the street to cool his parched throat with steam beer.

CHAPTER IV.

The crews of the Aphrodite and the Bodega slept late, for they were weary and, fortunately, no calls for a tug came into the office of the Red Steak company all morning.

ried it to the counter, wet his tarry index finger and started turning the pages in a vain search for the American steamer Yankee Prince.

"Flaherty," he said, "I think you're a liar."

"The same to you and many of them," Flaherty replied, not a bit abashed. "You said she was an eight thousand-ton tramp."

"I never went so far as to say I'd been aboard her on trial trip, though—and did cut down her tonnage, showin' I got the fragments of a conscience left," Hicks defended himself.

He closed the book with a sigh and placed it back on the shelf, just as the door opened to admit no less personage than Bartholomew McGuffey, late chief engineer, first assistant, second assistant, third assistant wiper, oiler, water-tender and stoker of the S. S. Maggie.

"I been lookin' for you, captain," he announced. "Say, I hear the chief o' the Aphrodite's goin' to take a three months' layoff to get shet of his rheumatism. Is that straight?"

"Well, say, I'd like to have a chance to substitute for him. You know my capabilities, Hicks, an' if it would be agreeable to you to have me for your chief your recommendation would go a long way toward landin' me the job. I'd sure make them engines behave."

"What vessel have you been on lately?" Hicks demanded cautiously, for he knew Mr. McGuffey's reputation for non-reliability around pay day.

"I been with that freshwater scavenger, Scraggs, in the Maggie for most a year."

"Did you quit or did Scraggs fire you?"

"He fired me," McGuffey replied honestly. "If he hadn't I'd have quit, so it's a toss-up. Comin' in from Halfmoon bay last night we got in the fog an' piled up on the beach just below the Cliff house."

"This is interesting," Jack Flaherty murmured. "You say she walked ashore on you, McGuffey? Well, I'll be shot!"

"She did. Scraggs blamed it on me, Flaherty. He said I didn't obey the signals from the bridge, one word led to another, an' he went dancin' mad an' ordered me off his ship. Well, it's his ship—or it was his ship, for I'll bet a dollar she's ground to powder by now—so all I could do was obey. I hopped overboard an' waded ashore. I suppose all my clothes an' things is gone by now. I left everything aboard an' had to borrow this outfit from Sean Johnny."

"So I guess you understand, Captain Hicks, just how bad I need that job I spoke about a minute ago."

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While waiting for Scraggs to come up out of the engine room, and take him to luncheon, Mr. Gibney sauntered aft and was standing gazing reflectively upon a spot on the Maggie's stern where the hawsers had chafed away the paint, when suddenly his forebodings of evil returned to him a thousand fold stronger than they had been since Scraggs' return to the little ship.

He glanced up and beheld gazing down upon him Captains Jack Flaherty and Daniel Hicks. Battle was imminent and the valiant Gibney knew it; therefore he determined instantly to meet it like a man.

"Howdy, men," he saluted them. "Glad to have you aboard the yacht," and he stepped backward to give himself fighting room.

"Here's where we collect the towage bill on the S. S. Yankee Prince," Dan Hicks informed him, and leaped from the bulkhead straight down at Mr. Gibney. Jack Flaherty followed. Mr. Gibney welcomed Captain Hicks with a terrific right swing, which missed; before he could guard, Dan Hicks had planted left and right where they would do the most good and Mr. Gibney went into a clinch to save himself further punishment.

"Scraggy," he bawled, "Scraggy-y-y! Help! Murder! It's Hicks and Flaherty! Bring an ax!"

He fung Dan Hicks at Jack Flaherty; as they collided he rushed in and dealt each of them a powerful poke. However, Messrs. Hicks and Flaherty were sizeable persons and while, individually, they were no match for the tremendous Gibney,



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nevertheless what they lacked in horsepower they made up in pugnacity—and the salt sea seldom breeds a craven. Captain Scraggs thrust a frightened face up through the engine-room hatch, but at sight of the battle royal taking place on the deck aft, his blood turned to water and he thought only of escape.

Backward and forward the tide of battle surged. For nearly three minutes all Scraggs saw was an indistinct tangle of legs and arms; then suddenly the combatants disengaged themselves and Scraggs beheld Mr. Gibney prone upon the deck with a gory face upturned to the foggy skies.

When he essayed to rise and continue the contest, Flaherty kicked him in the ribs and Hicks cursed him; so Mr. Gibney, realizing that all was over, beat the deck with his hand in token of surrender. Hicks and Flaherty waited until the fallen gladiator had recovered sufficient breath to sit up; then they pounced upon him, lifted him to the rail, and dropped him overboard. Captain Scraggs shrieked in protest at this added touch of barbarity, and Dan Hicks, turning, beheld Scraggs' white face at the hatch.

"You're next, Scraggs," he called cheerfully, and turned to peer over the rail. Mr. Gibney had emerged on the surface and was swimming slowly away toward an adjacent float where small boats landed. He climbed wearily up on the float and sat there, gazing across at Hicks and Flaherty without animus, for to his way of thinking he had gotten off lightly, considering the enormity of his offense.

The least he had anticipated was three months in hospital, and so grateful was he to Hicks and Flaherty for their forbearance that he struggled a resolve to "lay" for Hicks and Flaherty and thrash them individually—something he was fully able to do—and forgot his aches and pains in a lively interest as to the fate of Captain Scraggs at the hands of the towboat men.

He was aware that Captain Scraggs had fallen ignominiously to rally to the Gibney appeal to rebel boarders, and in his own expressive terminology he hoped that what the enemy would do to the dastard would be "a plenty."

The enemy, meanwhile, had turned their attention upon Scraggs, who had dodged below like a frightened rabbit and sought shelter in the shaft alley. He had sufficient presence of mind, as he dashed through the engine room, to snatch a large monkey wrench off the tool rack on the wall, and kneeling just inside the alley entrance he turned at bay and threatened the invaders with his weapon. Thereupon Hicks and Flaherty pelted him with lumps of coal, but the sole result of this assault was to force Scraggs

further back into the shaft alley and out of range.

The towboat men held a council of war and decided to drown Scraggs out. Dan Hicks ran up on deck and returned dragging the deck fire hose behind him. He thrust the brass nozzle into the shaft-alley entrance and invited Scraggs to surrender unconditionally or be drowned like a kitten.

Scraggs, knowing his own fire hose, defied them, so Dan Hicks started the pump while Flaherty turned on the water. Instantly the hose burst up on deck and Scraggs' jeers of triumph filled the engine room.

The enemy was about to draw lots to see which one of the two should crawl into the shaft alley and throw a cupful of chloride of lime (for they found a can of this in the engine room) in Captain Scraggs' face, when a shadow darkened the hatch and Mr. Bartholomew McGuffey demanded belligerently: "What's goin' on down there? Who the devil's takin' liberties in my engine room?"

Dan Hicks explained the situation and the just cause for drastic action which they held against the fugitive in the shaft alley. Mr. McGuffey considered a few moments and made his decision.

"If what you say is true—an' I ain't in position to dispute you, not havin' been present when you hauled the Maggie off the beach, I don't blame you for feelin' sore. What I do blame you for, though, is carryin' the war aboard the Maggie. If you wanted to whale Gib an' Scraggy you should ha' laid for 'em on the dock. Under the circumstances, you make this a personal affair, an' as a member o' the crew o' the Maggie I got to take a hand an' defend my skipper agin' youse two. Fact is, gentlemen, I got a date to lick him first for what he done to me last night. Howsomever, that's a private grudge. The fact remains that you two jumped my pal Bert Gibney an' licked him somethin' scandalous. Hicks, I'll take you on first. Come up out of there, you swab, and fight. Flaherty, you stay below until I send for you; if you try to climb up an' horn in on my fight with Hicks, Gibney'll brain you."

A faint cheer came from the shaft alley. "Good old Mac. At-a-boy!"

"You're on, McGuffey. Nobody ever had to beg me to fight him," Dan Hicks replied cordially, and climbed to the deck. To his great surprise, Mr. McGuffey winked at him and drew him off to the stern of the Maggie.

"There'll be no fight," he declared. "although we'll thud around on deck an' yell a couple o' times to make Scraggs think we're goin' to it. He figgers that by the time I've fought you an' Flaherty I won't be fit for combat with him, even if I lick you both; he's got it all figured out that I'll wait a couple o' days before tacklin' him, an' he thinks my temper'll cool by that time an' he can argue me out o' my revenge. Savey?"

"I twig."

Mr. Gibney had returned to the Maggie by this time and he now took his station at the engine-room hatch and growled at Flaherty and abused him. "Keep up your courage, Scraggy," he called, as Hicks and McGuffey pranced around the deck in simulated combat. "Mac's whalin' the whey out o' Hicks an' Hicks couldn't touch him with a buggy whip."

At the conclusion of the three minutes of horse-play, Mr. McGuffey came to the hatch again. "Up with you, Flaherty," he called loud enough for Captain Scraggs to hear. "Up with you before I go down after you."

Flaherty was about to possess himself of a hatchet when the face of his confederate, Dan Hicks, appeared over McGuffey's shoulder and grinned knowingly at him. Immediately, Flaherty hurried defiance at his enemies and came up on deck, and once more to Captain Scraggs came the dull sounds of apparent conflict overhead.

Suddenly a cheer broke from Mr. Gibney. "All off an' gone to Cooper-town, Scraggy," he shouted. "Come up an' take a look at the fallen."

Out of the shaft alley came Scraggs with a rush, tossing his wrench aside the better to climb the ladder. He was half way up when Mr. Gibney reached down a great hand, grasped him by the collar, and whisked him out on deck with a single jerk.

Here, to his horror, he found himself confronted by a singularly scathless trio who grinned triumphantly at him.

"Seen 'is believin', Scraggs," Dan Hicks informed him. "That's a lesson you taught me an' Flaherty last night, but evidently you don't profit by experience. You're too miserable to beat up, but just to show you it ain't possible for a dirty bay pirate like you to skin the likes o' me an' Flaherty we purpose hangin' the seat o' your pants up around your coat collar. Face him about, Gibney."

With a quick twist, Mr. Gibney presented Captain Scraggs for his penance; Flaherty and McGuffey followed Dan Hicks promptly and Captain Scraggs screamed at every kick. And now came Mr. Gibney's turn. "For fallin' to stand up like a man, Scraggy, an' battle Hicks an' Flaherty," he informed the culprit, and tossed him over to McGuffey to be held in position for him.

"Don't, Gib. Please don't," Scraggs wailed. "It ain't comin' to me from you. I never heard you callin' a-tall. Honest, I never, Gib. Have mercy, Adelbert. You saved the Maggie last night an' a quarter interest in her is yours—if you don't kick me!"

Mr. Gibney paused, foot in midair; surveyed the Maggie from stem to stern, hesitated, licked his lower lip, and glanced at the common enemy. For an instant it came into his mind to call upon the valiant and able McGuffey to support him in a fierce counter-attack upon Hicks and Flaherty,

Only for an instant, however; then his sense of fair play conquered.

"No, Scraggy," he replied sadly. "See ain't worth it, an' your duplicity can't be overlooked. If there's anything I hate it's duplicity. Here goes, Scraggy—and get yourself a new navigatin' officer."

Scraggs twisted and flinched instantly, and Mr. Gibney's great boot missed the mark. "Ah," he breathed, "I'll give you an extra for that."

"Don't! Please don't," Scraggs howled. "Lay 'o'n me an' I'll put in a new boiler an' have the compass adjusted."

The words were no sooner out of his mouth than Mr. McGuffey swung him clear of Mr. Gibney's wrath. "Swear it," he hissed. "Raise your right hand an' swear it—an' I'll protect you from Gib."

Captain Scraggs raised a trembling right hand and swore it. "I'll get a new fire hose an' fire buckets; I'll fix the ash hoist and run the bedbugs an' cockroaches out of her," he added.

"You hear that, Gib?" McGuffey pleaded. "Have a heart."

"Not unless he gives her a coat of paint an' quits bickerin' about the overtime, Bart."

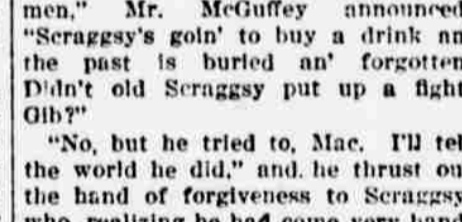
"I promise," Scraggs answered him. "Perrived," he added, "you an' dear ol' Mac promises to stick by the ship."

"It's a whack," yelled McGuffey joyfully, and whirling, struck Dan Hicks a mighty blow on the jaw. "Off our ship, you hoodlums!" He favored Jack Flaherty with a hearty thump and swung again on Dan Hicks. "At 'em, Scraggy. Here's where you prove to Gib whether you're a man—thump—or a mouse—thump—or a thump. thump—bottled—thump—fat."

Dan Hicks had been upset, and as he sprawled on his back on deck, he appeared to Captain Scraggs to offer at least an even chance for victory. So Scraggs, mustering his courage, flew at poor Hicks tooth and toenail. His best was not much but it served to keep Dan Hicks off Mr. McGuffey while the latter was disposing of Jack Flaherty, which he did, via the rail, even as the towboat men had disposed of Mr. Gibney. Dan Hicks followed Flaherty, and the crew of the Maggie crowded the rail as the enemy swam to the float, crawled up on it and departed, vowing vengeance.

"All's well that ends well, gentlemen," Mr. McGuffey announced. "Scraggy's goin' to buy a drink an' the past is buried an' forgotten. D'nt old Scraggy put up a fight, Gib?"

"No, but he tried to, Mac. I'd tell the world he did," and he thrust out the hand of forgiveness to Scraggy, who, realizing he had come very hand-



"I'll Fix the Ash Hoist and Run the Bedbugs and Cockroaches Out of Her."

somely out of an unlovely situation, clasped the hands of Mr. Gibney and McGuffey and burst into tears. While Mr. McGuffey thumped him between the shoulder blades and cursed him affectionately, Mr. Gibney retired to change into dry garments; when he reappeared the trio went ashore for the promised grog and a luncheon at the skipper's expense.

This Scraggs person is some fine little promiser.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Rapid Americanization. An American visitor was giving the other day some examples of the extraordinary speed and completeness with which the process of Americanization is carried out, even in the case of extreme alien types.

Perhaps the most extraordinary instances occurred in the newly erected mansion built in the style of an E-shaped Elizabethan manor of a Chicago multi-millionaire. He decided to import a ghost to heighten the illusion of antiquity, and after a prolonged search and the expenditure of a considerable sum of money, a satisfactory specimen was picked up in Devonshire and shipped to Chicago in cold storage.

It walked by daylight and had every appearance, both as regards garb and figure, of having just missed the sailing of the Mayflower. The millionaire and his friends, some of the best people in Chicago, were delighted with its old-world looks and solemn deportment. On the third day, unfortunately, it was seen eating a doughnut.—London Morning Monitor.

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No Offense. Chairman Lasker of the shipping board said, in an interview: "These men are taking needless offense. They were taking offense where none is intended."

"A tall, gaunt, vinegar-faced woman walked into Wawa station one day and said to the ticket agent: "Gimme a ticket for Chester Heights."

"Single?" said the agent. "The woman's eyes flashed steely sparks."

"None o' yer darn business," she blazed. "Gosh knows, though, I might have married a dozen times over if I'd been willin' to grubstake some 'shiftless, patty-faced monkey like vers."

Not for a While. He was a bachelor in the forties and she was a sweet young thing of twenty, but he loved her and was courting her vigorously in all the ways an old bachelor knows how to woo a young maid. Then one night he decided he would sing to her. Going to the piano, he picked up some loose sheets of music and began to play. Finally he came to one which pleased him and began to sing: "Grow old with me—The best of us."

But the sweet young thing had interrupted him very forcibly. "I won't do it," she tossed back impudently, "at least not for 25 years."—Brooklyn Standard Union.

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Taken in Turn. "Let's see, whom were we discussing?" "I forget! Who went out of the dressing room last?"—London Mail.

Cheap philosophy is the kind that expresses itself in platitudes; but that is always time-tried and true.

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