

# JOHN TOPP, PIRATE

By Weatherby Chesney and Alick Munro.

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## CHAPTER VI.

We returned to Vigo Bay in less than four months and with us a large company of other ships, all bearing grain, for which the failure of the Spanish wheat crop promised a profitable market. We neither sold our cargo, however, nor did I succeed in carrying off my sweetheart. And this is how it happened:

Scarcely had we anchored when a negro page came off to the ship in a small boat, bringing me a note from Inez.

She was in sore trouble through her love for me, for Don Miguel had forbidden her to have anything more to do with me and had locked her in her room to make sure that his commands were obeyed. And there was even worse news than this in the letter. Orders, she told me, had been received from the court to seize all the English shipping in the bay, to confiscate the cargoes and to imprison the crews. As a captive in the town dungeon I should be farther from her than ever; but, still a free man, I might some day return and carry her off, and so by the love I bore her she entreated me to be gone at once.

Here was a pretty piece of news! We questioned the page, but as he either did not know or would know nothing we sent him off ashore in his boat.

"What are we to do?" asked Alec.

"I'm going ashore," I replied decidedly.

"What for?"

"To rescue Inez."

"Jack, it's useless. You would be arrested long before you reached her."

"I mean to try all the same."

"It'll be foolhardy, I tell you. Much better take the advice she gives you, escape now and come back again to carry her off."

"Alec, I can't go away and leave her in that scoundrel's power. I must go ashore."

Alec shrugged his shoulders. "Well, if you must, you must. I'll go with you, of course, and try to see you safe through, but I quite expect we shall both be locked up for our pains. We will spread the warning among the other English ships on our way."

We went on deck at once and began to lower the boat. We were lying a good two miles farther out than the other ships, so we had a stiff pull before us.

Night was just beginning to fall, and there was some hope that the darkness might cover our movements and enable us to rescue Inez and then slip out of the harbor before the Spaniards had made up their minds to strike. It was a desperate chance, though.

The boat was already on the bulwarks when Alec shouted, "Hold on, all!"

"Too late," he said. "There's a fleet of boats putting out from the shore now, each one crammed full of soldiers. We must leave the other ships to shift for themselves, I'm afraid, and make a bid for our own freedom. That big fellow there, coming up before the wind, seems to have been told off to look after us."

We were well armed, of course, as the most peaceful ship has to be when there are so many sea thieves unhandy, and though the Spanish galleon was five times our size we would have fought nothing of tackling her, five Spaniards to one Englishman being by no means crushing odds, but there were three other ships outside of us evidently waiting to pick up stragglers, so we were to all appearances hopelessly shut in.

The men looked at one another in consternation.

Alec, however, had made his plan. "Put back the powder," he cried, "and buckle on your side arms. Not a shot must be fired, mind, or we shall have the whole nest of wasps buzzing round our ears. Every man of you take a pike or ax and hide under the bulwarks. We must make that fellow think he has caught us napping."

Our preparations were quickly and quietly made, and long before the big Spaniard was near enough to see what we were doing every man of us was under cover, and the decks looked quite deserted. But when he sheered alongside and hove his grappels into our rigging Alec gave the word, and with a ringing cheer 60 lusty English lads rushed from their hiding places and were hacking and prodding away among his crew before the unsuspecting Spaniard knew that anything had happened. They were taken completely by surprise, but after the first minute or so they recovered and fought like wildcats. They were about three to one, so counting one Englishman to five of them the odds in our favor were overwhelming. The Spaniards fought desperately enough until about half of them had been killed, then the rest threw down their arms, called for "quarter" and scrambled down the ladders in utter rout. We clapped the hatches on them, and the big galleon of Spain was ours.

Leaving me with 20 men to take care of our prize (whose sails were all set), Alec tumbled back with the others to our own ship and set about making sail as quickly as he could.

"An ax here and cut the cable!" I heard him call. "No time to weight! Let go those spritsails! Lay out along the bolt sprit and cast the gas-

kets! Be fasten in the starboard sheet and cant her round! Handsomely, now! Topsails next! Work with a will, lad! Time's precious!"

I lost the next words through the distance, and not wishing to slip too far ahead I baggiped my mizzen, braced my main course and so allowed Alec to creep up to me again.

He made sail with marvelous quickness and soon was within speaking distance.

"Are your guns all loaded, Jack?"

"Aye, and double shotted and the lint stocks lighted and lying in the tubs beside them."

"Then make straight for that big



"Put back the powder," he cried. "Not a shot must be fired."

chap on your larboard bow as if you meant to speak him. Fool him if you can. Say I'm your prize. If he suspects you, give him a broadside for his sharpness. Only keep the wind of him, and you can do what you like. I'll slip across his bow and pepper that side of him. And if that isn't enough do what your mother wit suggests, but mind it must be quickly done whatever it is or we'll have the other two beating up to help him."

Now, had I acted on my opinion I should have steered straight for the open sea, dead before the fair wind, in which case I should inevitably have aroused the suspicions of all three ships and so have allowed them to concentrate on our course and cut us off. Alec's plan was obviously the best, for when they saw I was steering plump for the southernmost one the others held quietly to their places in the mouth of the bay.

When I got within a cable's length, an officer hailed me. I waited as long as I dared and then answered, but apparently there was something wrong with my Spanish, for he replied angrily that I was drunk and an insolent scoundrel for daring so to address him.

At this juncture one of my men, a soft hearted fellow, who knew enough of the tongue to make out that the don was using very free language to me, let fly at him with his gun and sent a three ounce ball straight into his breastplate.

That effectively put an end to our diplomacy, so I gave the order to fire as each gun bore. I had warned the gunners to aim high, and at the third shot the Spaniard's mainmast broke off short like a carrot. His mainyard, too, came down by the run, bringing the sail with it, but as he was still under command I put up past him, reloading the guns meanwhile and then hauling my wind once more gave him a second dose over either quarter.

Meanwhile Alec and his men had been working like furies and tossing their guns about like child's toys, raining such a shower of broken shot into his hull from their lesser elevation that his lower deck must have been almost untenable.

The Spaniard had been unprepared for our attack and took some time to beat his men to quarters, but they served their guns well and fast when they did get to them, and the shot soon came flying about our ears like hailstones. His running rigging, however, was pretty well cut to pieces, and as we had half a dozen good bowmen stationed ready who sent a clothyard shaft through the ribs of every man who set a foot on his ratlines he lay pretty helplessly head to wind, with his remaining sails in the most thorough confusion. Had we been able to play the game out at long bowls we could either have sunk him or reduced the number of his crew sufficiently to allow us to carry him by boarding, but the other two Spanish ships were beating up to us, and on her next tack the nearest would be within gunshot.

Alec therefore gave the word to run away west by south, before the wind, through the southern entrance of the bay. The order did not come a minute too soon, though the majority of us were so worked up by the excitement of the fight that we would never have noticed that it was high time for us to quit.

We held on this course for about two hours, and then, as the sky had fortunately clouded over, we hauled our wind and stood due south to give our pursuers a chance of passing us in the darkness. They would never expect us to turn south, so when they missed us at daylight they would naturally look for us to the northward if they continued the chase. That was our theory. What they actually did I cannot say, for we never saw them again.

We held on this strategic course for a

time, and on the second morning rose a brig coming toward us, and as every one at sea is presumed a rogue until he is proved an honest man we cleared the decks for action and beat to quarters. As the stranger neared us one of Alec's men recognized her as the brig Catchall, belonging to Captain Fleming, the well known freebooter. So as he was not likely to let such a vessel as our galleon pass without an overhaul we quite expected another fight. However, he drew within long haul and, bringing his ship to, signed that he wished to speak us.

"What ship's that?"

"The brig Severn of Bristol, Alexander Ireland, master. What ship's that?"

"Brig Catchall, Captain Fleming. What's the galleon?"

"The Lope de Vega of Vigo, a prize to the Severn."

"How the thunder did you get hold of her?"

"Fought for her."

"Then is there war with Spain?"

"I think so."

"You think so?" Then followed some talk with his own people which we could not hear. "Will you lie to and let me bring my boat alongside? I'm honest as the whole bench of bishops today."

"Aye, aye!"

Alec called on me to come on board the Severn, and presently a weather beaten, thickset man of middle age was rowed across to us. We went below and pledged one another in a jack of ale (as the Severn's hold was still filled with wheat instead of the cargo of Spanish wine we had expected to bring back), and then Captain Fleming was told of the seizure and fight in Vigo bay. He listened attentively, nodding his grizzled head at every sentence, but making no remark until he had heard the whole story.

"It was a lucky, plucky escape, captain," he said, looking approvingly at Alec, "and one that does credit to the stuffing of your headpiece. But make no error about its being an affair of unauthorized individuals. It is the beginning of war, I tell you, and a bloody war it will be. I've seen it coming for this year or more. Ships are being gathered into all the ports, and great nobles are chartering vessels for other purposes than honest trade or a little free cruising. King Phillip of Spain will make a big move before long. Mark my words, sir."

"England will be ready for him when he does," replied Alec proudly.

"Aye, lad, I warrant she will, but it's time she was stirring, or the Spaniards—curse the whole nation of them—will be cruising about the English channel and up to London town before any of us are many months older. Now, Captain Ireland," he continued, standing up and beating his fist on the table in time with his sentences, "I'm a freebooter and an outlaw; but, though there's many an Englishman would be glad to hear that I was dead, I love my country with the best of them. So when you get back to port spread the news of this threatened invasion and say that a warning shall be brought when Phillip's armada sets sail and that I am the man who will bring it. And may God keep me and mine on sentry go about the seas till the crack of doom if I fall in this my watch over England's safety!"

And he brought his fist down upon the table with a crack that made our ale pots dance.

"Pardon me, captain," said I. "We honor you for those words, but I'd like to remind you of one thing—Franky Drake will hang you if he gets his fingers on your shoulder. I have heard him say so."

"Master Topp," he replied, looking at me steadily, "if I can save England by my news I don't mind if I swing for the bringing of it, and you can say so from me to any one that asks."

We gave Captain Fleming a ringing cheer as he stepped into the boat. A watch had been stationed to guard the honor of England, and it was a common pirate who went on sentry go.

But pirate though he was he was a patriot too. May England never have any lack of such sturdy sons as Captain Fleming, freebooter!

(To be continued next Friday.)

**Still Probing Booz Case.**  
West Point, Dec. 22.—The military court-martial inquiry into the alleged brutal cases of hazing which are said to have caused the deaths of Booz and Breth will not be able to finish its work this week. An adjournment will be taken until Wednesday and the remainder of the testimony will probably be secured next week. Nothing adduced in the evidence yesterday showed that there was any brutal hazing practiced at the academy and the trend of the evidence went to show that neither Booz nor Breth was possessed of the necessary mental capacity to go through the entire course of studies necessary for graduation.

**Killed by a Boy.**  
Ottawa, Kan., Dec. 26.—An unknown man, a horse trader, was shot and instantly killed here last night by Johnny Servatius, a boy 17 years old.

The trader had camped near the Servatius home and Servatius' father gave him a revolver, telling him to protect the property. The boy and the trader quarreled and the boy fired. The ball entered the heart. The trader's wife was taken to jail, being found drunk. Servatius gave himself up. He claims the shooting was in self-defense.

**Wheat Going by Way of Sea.**  
Tacoma, Wash., Dec. 26.—The British ship Glenloch, now in the harbor, is to establish a precedent in the exportation of Pacific coast wheat. She is to load with 221,000 bushels in sacks and will sail for Liverpool via the Cape route, being the first steam vessel to carry wheat to Europe via that route with wheat.

## MADDENED ELEPHANTS.

The Great Brutes Often Driven Wild by Fearful Tusk Aches.

"Zanzibar," said Robert Crawford, "is the greatest market for South African Ivory, which is brought there in large quantities from the interior. This ivory is placed in large warehouses from which it is either sold at once or else held therein for a better market. The man in charge of these warehouses was a very interesting character, an expert in ivory. He told me many curious things about it and among others propounded the following theory as an explanation of why elephants go mad and occasionally run amuck.

"In the warehouse were a pair of magnificent tusks, measuring fully 14 feet from tip to tip, which in life must have been carried by a veritable Goliath among elephants. The expert in showing me these tusks pointed out the fact that while one was complete and flawless the other was broken off at the point and showed deep scratches and abrasions throughout its length.

"Now," said he, "if you will look near the base you will find a hole made by decay that had struck into the nerves and given that elephant a toothache. And think what a toothache of toothaches a 14 foot tooth must have held. In his effort to relieve this pain the elephant rubbed his tusk against rocks and trees and drove it into the earth, which mutilated it in the manner you see here. I have frequently come across places where an elephant has ripped up great spaces in the forest and torn down the trees, and I am positive that toothache was the cause of this frenzy.

"An elephant in a circus going suddenly mad and killing his keeper is not an uncommon thing, but I'll wager that in nine cases out of ten if they would properly investigate the matter they would find that the brute's sudden frenzy sprung from so ordinary a cause as common, everyday toothache."

Exchange.

## DAMAGE FOR STOLEN KISSES

Iowa Supreme Court Affirms Judgment of \$375 for Young Woman.

Des Moines, Dec. 24.—The supreme court Saturday affirmed the judgment in favor of Mae Brenner of Decatur county, who sued R. W. Boeger for damages, charging that Boeger seized her and, without her consent, did repeatedly hug and kiss her. For this alleged breach of etiquette Miss Brenner recovered \$375 damages at the end of a long trial in the district court. The defendant appealed to the supreme court, alleging 22 errors in the ruling of Judge Towner, the trial judge. The supreme court in sustaining the judgment, said that nothing irregular was found and that there was no reason why the girl should not recover the money.

## Lives With Bullet in His Heart.

Chicago, Dec. 26.—Proof that a man may live with a bullet in his heart was afforded yesterday by the use of the X-ray upon Charles B. Nelson, who was in 1896 the central figure in a sensational shooting that nearly resulted in his death. Under the fluoroscope the ball in Nelson's heart could be plainly seen rising and falling with each pulsation of the vital organ. The bullet had been there since the night of July 1, 1894.

## Free Until January 1, 1901.

In order to introduce The Semi-Weekly State Journal to a whole lot of new homes it will be sent from now until January 1, 1901, to any person sending us one dollar for a year's subscription. This gives you the papers from now until January 1, 1902, for only one dollar. The State Journal is the recognized state paper and should be in every home in the state. Printed at the capital it gives more prompt and accurate reports of Nebraska doings than any other paper, and as it gives you two papers each week it furnishes you with the latest news several days ahead of other papers. You will not want to be without The Journal during the legislature and the great senatorial contest. The earlier you send the dollar the more papers you will get for your money. Address, The Journal at Lincoln, Neb.

## Order for Hearing of Final Account.

In the matter of the estate of M. E. Andrus, deceased.

In the county court of Madison county, Nebraska.

Now on the 13th day of December, 1900, came Burt Mapes the administrator, de bonis non, of said estate, and prays for leave to render an account as such administrator.

It is therefore ordered that the 16th day of January, 1901 at one o'clock p. m. at my office in Madison, be fixed as the time and place for examining and allowing such account. And the heirs of said deceased and all persons interested in said estate are required to appear at the time and place so designated, and show cause, if such exists, why said account should not be allowed.

It is further ordered that said Burt Mapes, administrator, de bonis non give notice to all persons interested in said estate by causing a copy of this order to be published in the N. B. NEWS JOURNAL, a newspaper printed and published in Madison, Nebraska, for three consecutive days next to the day set for said hearing.

Witness my hand and seal of my office at Madison, Nebraska, this 13th day of December, 1900.

(SEAL) W. M. B. T. S. County Judge.

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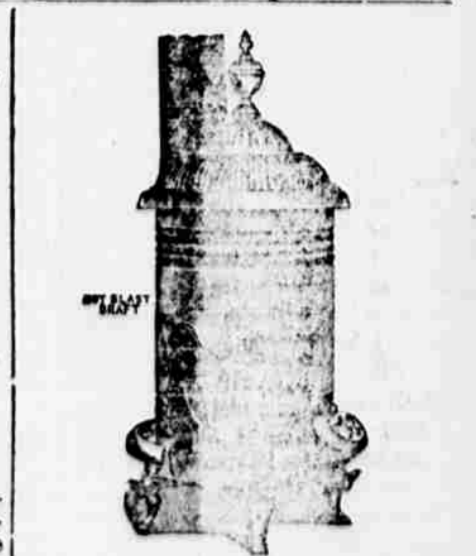
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