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TRACTICAL NOT A PLANT

"ORIENTAL GOODS."

Synopsis. - Captain Phiness P Scraggs has grown up around the docks of San Francisco, and from mass boy on a river steamer, risen to the ownership of the steamer Maggie. Since each annual in-spection promised to be the last of the old wontherbeaten vessel Scraggs naturally has some difficulty in securing a crew. When the story opens, Adelbert P. Gibney, likable, but erratic, a man whom nobedy but Scragge would hire, is the skipper, Neils Halvorsen, a selemn Swede, constitutes the forecastle hands, and Bart Mc-Guffey, a wastrel of the Gibney type, reigns in the engine room. With this motiey crew and his an-clent vessel. Captain Scraggs is engaged in freighting garden truck from Halfmoon bay to San Francisco. The inevitable happens; the Maggie goes ashore in a fog. A passing vessel halling the wreck, Mr. Gibney gets word to a towing company in San Francisco that the ship ashore is the Yankes Prince, with promise of a rich salvage. Two tugs succeed in pulling the Maggie into deep water, and she slips her tow lines and gets away in the fog. Furious at the decep-tion practiced on them, Captains Hicks and Flaherty, commanding the two tugboats, ascertain the identity of the "Yankee Prince" and, fearing ridicule should the facts become known along the water front, determine on personal vengeance. Their hostile visit to the Maggie results in Captain Scraggs promising to get a new boller and make needed repairs to the steamer. Scraggs refuses to fulful his promises and Gibney and McGuffey "strike." With marvelous luck. Soraggs ships a fresh crew. At the end of a few days of wild conviviality Gibney and McGuffey are stranded and seek their old positions on the Maggie. They are hostilely received, but remain. On their way to San Francisco they sight a derelict and Gib-ney and McGuffey swim to it. The lict proves to be the Chesapeake, richly laden, its entire orew stricken with scurvy. Scraggs at-tempts to tow her in, but the Mag-gie is unequal to the task and Gibney and McGuffey, alone, sail the ship to San Francisco, their sai-vage money amounting to \$1,000 apleos. His crew baving deserted him, Captain Soraggs induces them to return. At an "old horse" sale the three purchase two mysterious boxes which they believe to contain smuggled "Oriental goods."

just to make it interestin' an' add a spice t' th' grand openin', I'm willin' to bet again my own best judgment an' lay you even money, Scraggsy, that it ain't ginseng, but Oriental goods."

"I'll go you five dollars, just f'r ducks," responded Captain Scraggs heartily. "McGuffey to hold the stakes an' decide the bet.

"Done," replied Mr. Gibney. . The money was placed in McGuffey's hands, and a moment later, with a mighty effort, Mr. Gibney pried off the lid of the crate. Captain Scraggs had his head inside the box a fifth of a American steamer Maggie, an' as such, second later.

"Sealed zinc box inside," he announced. "Get a can opener, Gib, my boy."

"Ginseng, for a thousand," mourned Mr. Gibney. "Scraggsy, you're five don't stand for you shoulderin' any dollars of my money to the good. Gin- loss on them two cases o'-Oriental seng always comes packed in air-tight boxes."

He produced a can opener from the cabin locker and fell to his work on a corner of the hermetically sealed box. As he drove in the point of the can opener, he paused, hammer in hand, and gazed solemnly at Scraggs and McGuffey.

"Gentlemen," (again McGuffey nodded approvingly) "do you know what a vacuum is?"

"I know," replied the imperturbable McGuffey. "A vacuum is an empty hole that ain't got nothin' in it."

"Correct," sald Mr. Gibney. "My head is a vacuum. Me talkin' about ginseng root! Why, I must have water on the brain! Ginseng be doggoned! It's opium !"

Captain Scraggs was forced to grab the seat of his chair in order to keep bimself from jumping up and clasping Mr. Gibney around the neck.

"Forty dollars a pound," he gasped. "Gib-Gib, my dear boy-you've made us wealthy-"

Quickly Mr. Gibney ran the can into the

RED CLOUD, NEBRASKA, CHIEF

ly, and contented himself with glowering at Mr. Gibney. The mate sat down on the hatch coaming, lit his pipe, and gave himself up to meditation for fully five minutes, at the end of which time McGuffey was aware that his imagination was about to come to the front once more,

"Well, gentlemen," (again McGuffey nodded approvingly) "I bet I get my twenty bucks back outer them two Chinks," he announced presently, "How'll yer do it?" inquired McGuf-

fey politely. "How'll I do it? Easy as fallin' through an open hatch. I'm a-goin' t' keep them two stiffs in th' boxes until dark, an' then I'm a-gcin' to take "em out, bend a rope around their middle, drop 'em overboard an' anchor 'em there all night. I see th' lad we opens up in No. 1 case has had a beautiful job of embalmin' done on him. but if I let them soak all night, like a mackerel, they'll limber up an' look kinder fresh. Then first thing in th' mornin' I'll telephone th' coroner an' tell him I found two floaters out in th' bay an' for him to come an' get em. I been along the waterfront long enough t' know that th' lad that picks | ules an' the Hop Sing tong through the up a floater gets a reward o' ten dollars from th' city. You can bet that

Adelbert P. Gibney breaks even on th' deal, all right." "Gib, my dear boy," said Captain

Scraggs admiringly. "I apologize for my actions of a few minutes ago. 1 was unstrung. You're still mate o' th' welcome to th' ship. All I ask is that you nail up your property, Gib, an' remove it from th' dinin' room table. want to remind you, however, Gib, that as shipmates me an' McGuffey goods. We was t' share th' gains, if

any, an' likewise th' losses." "That's right," said McGuffey, "fair an' square. No bellyachin' between shipmates. Me an' Scraggs each owns

one-third o' them diseased Chinks, an' we each stands one-third o' th' loss. If any."

"But there won't be no loss," protested Mr. Gibney.

"Drayage charges, Gib, drayage charges. We give a man a dollar to tow 'em down t' th' ship."

"Forget it," answered Mr. Gibney magnanimously, "an' let's go over an get a drink. I'm all shook up."

CHAPTER VIII.

Had either Mr. Gibney or McGuffey been watching Captain Scraggs after he had left them they would have been much puzzled to account for that worthy's actions. First he dodged around the block into Drumm street. and then ran down Drumm to California, where he climbed aboard a cable car and rode up into Chinatown. Aropener around the edges of one corner riving at Dupont street he alighted of the zinc box, inserted the claws of and walked up that interesting thoroughfare until he came to No. 714 He glanced at a sign over the door and was aware that he stood before the entrance to the offices of the Chinese Six Companies, so he climbed upstairs and inquired for Gin Seng, who presently made his appearance. Gin Seng, a very nice, fat Chinaman, arrayed in a flowing slik gown, begged, in pidgin English, to know in what manner he could be of service. "Me heap big captain, allee same shin," began Captain Scraggs, "On board ship two China boys have got." (Here Captain Scraggs winked knowingly.) "China boy no speak English-"That being the case," interposed Gin Seng, "I presume that you and I understand each other, so let's cut out the pidgin English. Do I understand that you are engaged in evading the immigration laws?"

goods,' an' consigns 'em to the Gin Seng company, 714 Dwoont street, San Francisco, Now, why are these two countrymen o' yours shipped by freight -where, by the way, they goes astray, for some reason that I don't know nothin' about, an' I buys 'em up at a old horse sale?"

Gin Seng shrugged his shoulders and replied that he didn't understand.

"You lie," snarled Captain Scraggs. 'You savey all right, you fat old idol. you! It's because if the railroad company knew these two boxes contained lead corpses they'd a-soaked the relatives, which is you, one full fare each from wherever these two dead ones omes from, just the same as though they was alive an' well. But you has em shipped by freight, an' aims to spend a dollar an' thirty cents each on 'em, by markin' 'em 'Oriental goods.' Helluva way to treat a reintion. Now, looky here, you bloody heathen. It'll cost you just five hunired dollars to recover these two stiffs, an' close my mouth. If you don't come through I'll make a belch t' th' newspapers an' they'll keel haul an' skulldrag th' Chinese Six Compacourts for evadin' th' laws o' th' interstate commerce commission, an' make 'em look like monkeys generally. An'

then th' police'll get wind of it. Savey, policee-man, you fat old murderer? Th' price I'm askin' is cheap, Charley. How do I know but what these two poor boys has been murdered in cold blood? There's somethin' rotten in Denmark, my bully boy, an' you'll save time an' trouble an' money by diggin' up five hundred dollars."

Gin Seng said he would go back to Chinatown and consult with his company. For reasons of his own he was badly frightened.

Scarce had he departed before the watchful eye of Captain Scraggs observed Mr. Gibney and McGuffey in the offing, a block away. When they came aboard they found Captain Scraggs on top of the house, seated on



Captain Scraggs "shut up" prompt. | plain wood box, labels 'em 'Oriental | obdurate and eventually the Chinaman paid over the money and departed with the remains of his conservmen. "I knew he'd come through, Bar," Mr, Gibney declared. "They sot to ship them stiffs to China to rest alongside their ancestors or be in Dutch with the sperrits o' the departed forever after."

"Do we have to split this swag with that dirty Scraggs?" McGuffey wanted to know. "Seein' as how he tried to give us the double cross-'

"We'll fix Scraggsy-aW ship-shape an' legal so's he won't have no come back."

They had not long to wair. Upon his arrival at Gin Seng's place of business Captain Scraggs had been informed that Gin Seng had gone out twenty minutes before, and further inquiry revealed that he had departed in an express wagon. Consumed with misgivings of disaster, Scraggs returned to the Maggie as fast as the cable car and his legs could carry him. In the cabin he found Mr. Gibney and McGuffey playing cribbage. They laid down their hands as Scraggs entered.

Mr. Gibney began at once: "To show you what a funny world this is, while me an' Bart's settin' on deck a-waitin' for you to come back, along breezes a fat old Chinaman in an express wagon an' offers to buy them two cases of Oriental goods. He makes me an' Mac what we considers a fair offer. Lemme see, now," he continued, and got out a stub of lead pencil with which he commenced figuring on the white ollcloth table cover. "We paid twenty dollars for them two derelicts an' a dollar towage. That's twentyone dollars, an' a third o' twenty-one is seven, an' seven dollars from twenty-five leaves eighteen dollars comin' to you. Here's your eighteen dollars, Scraggsy, you lucky old vagabond-all clear profit on a neat day's work, no expense, no investment, no back-breakin' interest charges or overhead, an' sold out at your own figger."

Captain Scraggs' face was a study in conflicting emotions as he raked in the eighteen dollars. "Thanks, Gib," he said frigidly.

"Me an' Gib's goin' ashore for lunch at the Marigold cafe," McGuffey announced presently, in order to break the horrible silence that followed Scraggsy's crushing defeat. "I'm willin' to spend some o' my profits on the deal an' blow you to a lunch with a small bottle o' Dago Red thrown in. How about it, Scraggs?"

"I'm on." Scraggs sought to throw off his gloom and appear sprightly. "What'd you peddle them two cadavers for, Gib?"

Mr. Gibney grinned broadly, but did not answer. In effect, his grin informed Scraggs that that was none of the latter's business-and Scraggs assimilated the hint. "Well, at any rate, Gib, whatever you soaked him, it was a mighty good sale an' I congratulate you. I think mebbe I might ha' done a little better myself, but then it



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After Esthonian Oil.

Belgian interests are planning to exploit 25,000,000 acres of oil land and shale deposits in Esthonia and to build a pipe line from them to the Baltic.

CHAPTER VII-Continued.

For an hour Mr. Gibney sat on the stern bitts and ruminated over a few advantageous plans that had occurred to him for the investment of his share of the deal should Scraggs and Mc-Guffey succeed in landing what Mr. Gibney termed "the loot." About eleven o'clock an express wagon drove in on the dock, and the mate's dreams were pleasantly interrupted by a gleeful shout from Captain Scraggs, on the lookout forward with the driver. Mc-Guffey sat on top of the two cases with his legs dangling over the end of the wagon. He was the picture of contentment.

Mr. Gibney hurried forward, threw out the gangplank, and assisted Mc-Guffey in carrying both crates aboard the Maggie and into her little cabin. Captain Scraggs thereupon dismissed the expressman, and all three partners gathered around the dining room table, upon which the boxes rested.

"Well, Scrnggsy, old pal, old scout, old socks, I see you've delivered the goods," said Mr. Gibney, batting the skipper across the cabin with an affectionate slap on the shoulder.

"I did," said Scraggs-and cursed Mr. Gibney's demonstrativeness. "Here's the bill o' sale all regular. McGnffey has the change. That bunch o' Israelites run th' price up to \$10.00 each on these two crates o' ginseng, but when they see we're determined to have 'em an' ain't interested in nothin' else, they lets 'em go to us. McGuffey, my dear boy, whatever are you a-doin' there-standin' around with your teeth in your mouth? Skip down into th' engine room and bring up a hammer an' a col' chisel. We'll open her up an' inspect th' swag."

Upon McGuffey's return, Mr. Gibney took charge. He drove the chisel under the lid of the nearest crate, and prepared to pry it loose. Suddenly he paused. A thought had occurred to htm.

"Gentlemen," he said (McGuffey nodded his head approvingly), "this world is full o' sorrers an' disappointments, an' it may well be that these two cases don't contain even so much as a smell o' ginseng after all. It may be that they are really Oriental goods. What I want distinctly understood is this: no matter what's inside, we share equally in the profits, even if they turn out to be losses. That's understood an' agreed to, ain't it?" Captain Scraggs and McGuffey indi-

rated that it was.

"There's a element o' mystery about these two boxes," continued Mr. Gibney, "that fascinates me. They sets my imagination a-workin' an' joggles up all my sportin' instincts. Now, Celestials."

with a quick, melodramatic twist, bent back the angle thus formed. Mr. Gibney was the first to get a

peep inside. "Great snakes!" he yelled, and fell back against the cabin wall. A hoarse

scream of rage and horror broke from Captain Scraggs. In his eagerness he had driven his head so deep into the box that he came within an inch of kissing what the box contained-which happened to be nothing more nor less than a dead Chinaman! Mr. McGuffey, always slow and unimaginative, shouldered the skipper aside, and calmly surveyed the ghastly apparltion.

"Twig the yellow beggar, will you, Gib?" said McGuffey; "one eye half open for all the world like he was winkin' at us an' enjoyin' th' joke." Not a muscle twitched in McGuffey's Hibernian countenance. He scratched his head for a moment, as a sort of first ald to memory, then turned and handed Mr. Gibney ten dollars.

"You win, Gib. It's Oriental goods, sure enough."

"Robber !" shrieked Captain Scraggs. and flew at Mr. Gibney's throat. The sight reminded McGuffey of a terrier worrying a mastiff. Nevertheless, Mr. Gibney was still so unnerved at the discovery of the horrible contents of the box that, despite his gigantic proportions, he was well-nigh helpless.

"McGuffey, you swab," he yelled. "Pluck this maritime outlaw off my neck. He's tearin' my windpipe out by th' roots."

McGuffey choked Captain Scraggs until he reluctantly let go Mr. Gibney, whereupon all three fled from the cabin as from a pestilence, and gathered, an angry and disappointed group, out on deck.

"Opium!" jeered Captain Scraggs, with tears of rage in his voice. "Ginseng! You and your imagination, you swine, you! Get off my ship, you lout, or I'll murder you."

Mr. Gibney hung his head.

"Scraggsy-an' you, too, McGuffeygot to admit that this here is one on Adelbert P. Gibney. I-I-"

"Oh, hear him," shrilled Captain Scraggs. "One on him! It's two on you, you bloody-handed ragpicker. I suppose that other case contains opium, too! If there ain't another dead corpse in No. 2 case I hope my teeth may drop overboard."

"Shut up!" bellowed Mr. Gibney, in a towering rage. "What howl have you got comin'? They're my Chinamen, ain't they? I paid for 'em like a man, didn't I? All right, then. I'll keep them two Chinamen. You two ain't out a cent yet, an' as for this five I wins off you, Scraggs, it's blood money; that's what it is, an' I hereby gives it back to you. Now, guit yer whinin', or by the tall o' the Great Sacred Bull, I'll lock you up all night in th' cabin along o' them two defunct

"Exactly," Captain Scraggs managed to gasp, as soon as he could recover from his astonishment. "They showed me your name an' address, an' they won't leave th' ship, where I got 'em locked up in my cabin, until you come an' take 'em away. Couple o' relatives of yours, I should imagine."

Gin Seng smiled his bland Chinese smile. He had frequent dealings with ship masters engaged in the dangerous, though lucrative, trade of smuggling Chinese into the United States. and while he had not received advice of this particular shipment, he decided to go with Captain Scraggs to Jackson street bulkhead and see if he could not be of some use to his countrymen.

As Captain Scraggs and his Chinese companion approached the wharf the skipper glanced warily about. He had small fear that either Gibney or Mc-Guffey would show up for an hour, for he knew that Mr. Gibney had money in his possession. However, he decided to take no chances, and scouted the vicinity thoroughly before venturing aboard the Maggie. These actions served but to increase the respect of Gin Seng for the master of the Maggie and confirmed him in his belief that the Maggle was a smuggler.

Captain Scraggs took his visitor in side the little cabin, carefully locked and bolted the door, lifted the zinc flap back from the top of the crate of "Oriental goods" and displayed the face of the dead Chinaman. Also he pointed to the Chinese characters on the wooden lid of the crate.

"What does these hea scratches mean?" demanded Scraggs.

"This man is named Ah Ghow and he belongs to the Hop Sing tong." "How about his pal here?"

"That man is evidently Ng Chong Yip. He is also a Hop Sing man." Captain Scraggs wrote it down. "All right," he said cheerily; "much obliged. Now, what I want to know is what the Hop Sing tong means by shipping the departed brethren by freight? They go to work an' fix 'em up nice so's they'll keep, packs 'em

"Well fix Scraggsy."

an upturned fire bucket, smoking pensively and gazing across the bay with an assumption of lamblike innocence on his fox face.

He soon departed, but Mr. Gibney was suspicious. "He's got his lines fast somewhere-you can bank on that," was his comment. "While we was away he rigged up some kind of a deal, Bart. It stands to reason it was a mighty profitable deal, too. My imagination may be a bit off the course at times, Bart, but in general if there's a dead whale floatin' around the ship I can smell it."

"What do you make out o' that fat Chinaman cruisin' down the bulkhead in an express wagon an' another Chinaman settin' up on the bridge with him?" McGuffey demanded. "Seems to me they're comin', bows on, for the Maggie,"

"They tell me to deduct somethin', Bart. Walt a minute till we see if they're comin' aboard. If they are-" "They're goin' to make a landin',

snatchin' Scraggs-"

"They're boardin' us, Gib." "-has arranged with yon fat China-

man to relieve us o' the unwelcome presence of his defunct triends. He's gone an' hunted up the relatives an made 'em come across-that's what he's done. The dirty, low, schemin' granddaddy of all the foxes in Christendom! I'll fish around an' see what figger Scraggs charged him," and Mr. Gibney stepped to the rall to meet Gin Seng, for it was indeed he:

"Sow-see, sow-see, hun-gay," Mr. Gibney saluted the Chinaman in a facetious sttempt to talk the latter's language. "Hello, there, John Chinaman. How's your liver? Captain he alle same get tired; he no waitee. Wha's mallah, John. Too long time you no come. You heap lazy all time." Gin Seng smiled his bland, inscrutable Chinese smile. "You ketchum two China boy in box?" he queried. "We have," boomed McGuffey, "an'

beautiful specimens they be." "No money, no China boy," Gibney

added firmly. "Money have got. Too muchee money you wantee. No can do. Me pay two hundred dollah. Five hundred dol-

lah heap muchee. No have got." "Nothin' doin', John. Five hundred dollars an' not a penny less. Put up

the dough or beat it." Gin Seng expostulated, lied, evaded,

away in a ginc coffin, inside a nice and all but wept, but Mr. Gibney was pesition when complete.

ain't every day a feller can turn an eighteen-dollar trick on a corpse." "Comin' to lunch with us?" McGu .-

fey gemanded. "Sure. Wait a minute till I run forward an' see if the lines is all fast." He stepped out of the cabin and presently Gibney and McGuffey were conscious of a rapid succession of thuds on the deck. Gibney winked at McGuffey.

"Nother new hat gone to h-1," murmured McGuffey.

"The job that confronts us is to get there munitions down to our friends in Mexico." (TO BE CONTINUED.)

MIND HYPNOTIZED BY SIGNS

One Reason Why City Man Fails to Familiarize Himself With the Town's Landmarks.

"Do you know why it is so hard to keep landmarks in your head in the city these days?" asked the old-

"It is something that has bothered me a great deal. I can remember that up to ten or twenty years ago I never had any trouble remembering that on such and such a corner was a threestory building with a wabbly tin cornice. On another corner was a yellow warehouse, etc.

"But a fellow doesn't remember these things any more unless he makes it a duty. I mean that the mind is no longer impressed photographically with the appearance of buildings-or vacant lots.

"The reason is the advertising signs that assault the eye wherever one looks. The letters of the alphabet are so familiar to the eye that when we see a sign the eye at once begins tracing the letters. This doesn't mean that we read all these signs. Our eye is just unconsciously attracted to the familiar type-and this type is about all it sees on a building or a vacant lot.

"I don't refer only to sign boards. The merchants nowadays, particularly the smaller merchants, fill their windows with signs of all descriptions. The names of the stores are lettered all across buildings. The result is we remember neither building nor sign.'

Ingratitude Always Monstrous.

Ingratitude is monstrous; and for the multitude to be ungrateful were to make a monster of the multitude .--Shakespeare.

Bridge Cable Woven In Place.

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timer.

Gib.' "-then I deduct that this body-