

The Sea Scourge

CHAPTER XXI.—(Continued.)

During the supper the buccaneer made out little conversation, for his mind was too heavily burdened with other affairs than those he could converse of there, and as soon as he had done he left the room, leaving Burnington alone with Paul and Mary. As soon as he was fairly gone the dark man said, while a faint smile worked upon his features:

"Paul—and you, too, lady—I fear you have not yet forgiven me for the part I seemingly played against you. It was not for your ill that I did that thing. I meant to help you, and you may yet know that I have done you no harm. Was there been a man—a stranger—here yet?"

"Yes. Last night one came."
"Did he give his name?"
"He said it was James Fox."
"Where is he now?"
"Gone up to Garoune's."
"Did you notice that man particularly, Paul?"

"Ay, I did," uttered the youth, with energy, "and I know I have seen him before. Who is he? Burnington, I do put confidence in you once more. Now show me that I do not misplace it, by telling me truly who that man is, for I am sure that you know him."

"I will make you one answer," returned Bufo, in a serious tone, "and that shall be final on that point. James Fox has reposed confidence in me, and I will not violate it. He shall tell you ere long all you would know, and at the same time he will tell you of me. Now, if you would trust those who would save you, show it by asking no more questions. Trust me, and yet show it not. Let Mari Laroon think you hate me, for the more he thinks that the more easily I can work."

Paul and Mary gazed into the face of the speaker, and then they looked at each other, and each seemed only intent upon discovering what emotions the other manifested, yet they both showed by their looks that they were ready to trust the strange man.

At this moment Otehewa entered the room. She caught the stranger's eye, and she came near dropping the tray she carried in her hands. Both Paul and Mary noticed her emotion, but they noticed it not so deeply as did the man himself who had caused it. Slowly the Indian girl drew nearer, and as she set her tray down close by where Burnington was seated, she gazed fixedly into his face, never minding the look he gave her in return. A shade rested on her face—a shade half of doubt and half anxiety; but it soon passed away, and then a look of strange satisfaction took its place.

In the meantime the negroes had returned. Mari Laroon met them in the court, and asked them if they had found Wanda. But hardly had he asked the question when he noticed a dark mass upon one of the saddles. He went up to it, and he saw the grim, ghastly features of the Indian guide, all covered with dirt and gore.

In a few words from the negroes he learned all; and he knew that now he must have a more dangerous enemy than before.

CHAPTER XXII.

The buccaneer chieftain bade the negroes take the body away, and say nothing about the affair for the present, and then he returned to the hall, where for full half an hour he paced up and down the place like a caged lion. "I am not to be thwarted now. If that man returns here he shall find his labor lost. All is yet in my hands, and we'll see who shall play the winning hand! What ho, there! Call away my boat, and have it manned."

As he gave this order he strode to the apartment where he had left the supper party, and found those there yet whom he had left when he went from his meal. "Burnington," he said, "I have not heard from the brig since the storm. They should have sent me up word, for I am anxious. My boat is ready and manned, and I wish you to go down and see how they are. Some of the men may have been injured during the gale, and if so you will need their surgeon; so go you may accompany him, Paul. Come, the boat waits."

Both Paul and Burnington seemed somewhat startled by this order, and for a moment were dumb.

"But," uttered the old man, at length, "it is hardly fair to send me off so soon. I am all run down with fatigues now."

"Never mind—'twon't hurt you to ride down the river; and then you may rest as much as you want to when you get there."

Paul also made objections, but the captain would listen to none of them. Go they must, unless they openly rebelled, and that they were not yet prepared to do.

Paul hoped that the captain would leave him and Mary alone a few moments at least, but he did not. Yet he could not leave her without one fond embrace, and moving quickly to her side he bent over her and wound his arms about her and imprinted a warm kiss upon her fair cheek.

"I shall see you soon again, Mary," he said, "and until then keep up a good heart."

"Heaven bless you, my brother!" murmured the stricken girl.

"Ah!" whispered the youth. "I am not sure of that. He has lied to us!" The maiden started up with a cry of surprise and hope; but she found the quick, burning eyes of Laroon fixed on her, and she did not speak. On the next moment Paul was gone from her, and she sank back upon her seat.

Laroon followed the two men from the room, and saw them in the boat. Paul would have said more if Burnington had not stopped him. Ere long the boat had passed through the arch, the portullis was lowered, and the buccaneer returned to the dwelling. He called Hagar and bade her go to the cot where the priest was stopping, and tell him to come to the castle.

Laroon had had the sense to keep the priest out of the castle since the first night of his coming, for he knew that his presence would be not only unpleasant to Mary, but also be likely to retard her recovery; so he had been kept at one of the cots without the walls—the one occupied by Laroon's chief herdsman.

Mary was still sitting in the eating room when the pirate returned. She looked up as he entered, and he saw the shudder that passed through her frame. Otehewa stood close by her side; but the latter had heard the bad man's step, and for the moment her face wore only a look of cold, bland indifference, and at that moment she looked as though she cared for nothing or nobody. Well it was for her mistress that Mari Laroon was so deeply deceived in the maid.

"Now, my love," said Mari, as he approached close to where the maiden sat, "we will very soon have our joys for this life fixed. Go and prepare yourself at once, for on this night you become mine for life. Go and dress to suit yourself, and it will suit me—only let it be done quickly."

The maiden seemed at first in a dream, but soon she realized it all, and starting to her feet, she gazed a moment wildly on the wicked man's face, and threw herself on her knees at his feet. "Spare—spare—oh, spare me!" she cried in tearless, burning agony, while she clasped her hands and raised them frantically toward him.

A dark, grim smile passed over the pirate's face, but when he spoke his features were as stern as ice. "Mary," he said, "you know how much has been done to thwart me. But now the power is in my hands. Go and prepare. Otehewa, you will assist her."

"Yes, sir." And as the slave girl spoke, she moved to the maiden's side, and seemed to wait for her to rise.

Without another word, Mary followed Otehewa from the room, and when she had reached her own chamber she threw herself upon her bed and burst into a flood of tears.

"My mistress," said the faithful girl, after the maiden had wept for some minutes, "hope is not yet all gone. But you cannot escape this ordeal. It must come."

"Heaven have mercy!" groaned the stricken maiden, clasping her hands in agony. "O Otehewa, you do not know what you say. Go through with this ordeal! His wife!"

"—ah! Speak not so, my mistress," urged the faithful girl, at the same time winding her arms about Mary's neck. "This night there shall be an empty mockery performed by a man who profanes the sacred name of God. While I live have faith in me. On the morrow Bufo Burnington will be here."

"And what of him?" asked Mary, quickly.

"More than I can tell, I'm sure. I know he has the power and will serve thee. But waste not time now. Be sure our bad master must be obeyed for the present."

Mary saw where she stood, and that she must obey; and she allowed her maid to do as she pleased, she herself seeming only a piece of mechanism in the hands of a master. At length she was prepared. She was robed in white, for so Otehewa had chosen. Her hair was free from jewels, but a few orange blossoms were braided with it. About her pure, white neck was a chain of gold, from which depended a cross set with magnificent diamonds. Mary had objected to every article, but the maid noticed her not.

Soon there came a rap upon the door, and Hagar presented herself. She had come to announce that her master waited for his bride. Again the poor girl would have fainted but for the words of her attendant.

"If you falter now, all will be lost," urged Otehewa. "I know Mari Laroon well, and I know that he will carry out what he has begun. Sustain yourself yet a few hours, and I will do the rest. Will you not trust me?"

Of course Mary could not say no; and yet how great a thing she gave in that trust. She stood upon the brink of a yawning gulf, and she was bidden to leap into it. She was to be forced to make the dreadful plunge. "Leap," says the maid, "and I will see that you do not sink, for I will carry you safely over." But as the devoted one looks down into the herid pit she sees nothing but death and torment. So she may give up, but hope is far from her the while.

And Mary followed Hagar from the chamber, and Otehewa walked by her side and supported her. They entered the drawing room, and Laroon was there habited in his most sumptuous uniform of his own designing. The priest was there in his sacred robes, and some of the servants stood back by the high windows.

"By my faith," uttered the buccaneer, as he moved forward and took Mary's hand "I never saw you look so well. Now we will soon be one for life."

Perhaps Mari Laroon mistook that look which he received, for one of calmness. It was a calmness, but such calmness as a marble slab maintains when the fierce blast sweeps over the churchyard. She was now all rigid and cold, for her heart had sunk to its lowest depths.

"We are ready."

Thus spoke the buccaneer chieftain—and he spoke to the priest. The man of the church moved forward, and Mari Laroon took Mary's cold hand in his.

The priest read from his book; and, then, he asked the bridegroom the usual questions. They were answered promptly, but yet nervously. Next he asked Mary the same questions, but she did not answer. A flash of fire darted from the pirate's eyes, and he turned a terrible look upon the priest. That man cared not whose soul was crushed, and he went on with the ceremony. In one more short minute the words had been spoken and Mary Delaney was pronounced the wife of Mari Laroon!

The slaves, acting under instructions, set up a wild shout of professed joy, in the midst of which Mari led his bride to a seat.

"My master," cried Otehewa, coming up and falling on her knees before him, "let me be the first to wish you joy of your blessing. Mine shall be the task of serving your fair and lovely wife with all my poor strength."

"Good Otehewa, I'd give thee thy freedom w'er't not for my bride. But bring the wine now."

The servants brought the wine and placed it upon the sideboard. Hagar would have served her master first, but Otehewa was too quick for her. The Indian girl seized a small waiter and upon it she placed two goblets. One was of rock crystal and small, while the other was of silver and held a pint. Beneath her sleeve the maid had a small bladder secured by a string to her waist, and within this was a small portion of her own preparing. She had gathered it from the herbs of her own native forests, and she knew well its properties. With a small knife she punctured the bladder and then, as she poured out the wine into the goblet of crystal, she so held her wrist that the bladder emptied itself into the silver cup. When she had filled them both—and the mystic maneuver she had performed had detained her hardly an instant—she hastened to the newly wedded pair.

"Now, mistress," she said, with a merry laugh, "here is crystal for you—and it is an emblem of your purity and virtue. Here, my master, is silver for you—and it speaks of your ambition and worth. Health, peace and long life to you both."

Never was a bad man more charmed. He raised the goblet and poured off the contents at one draught.

The buccaneer saw that his bride was not to be made jowly in the presence of the company now assembled, and with one more bumper all around he dismissed them. Otehewa had yet a small portion of her medicine left, and this she contrived to put into a goblet which she left upon the sideboard half filled with wine. Two persons had already attempted to drink it, but she had stopped them by claiming it as her own. At length Hagar approached it, and Otehewa drew away to the side of her mistress again, and she had the satisfaction of seeing the old negro drink the wine. She was happy now, for she had not a hope thus far lost.

At length the buccaneer and his bride, and Otehewa and Hagar were sole occupants of the great room. The pirate turned to Mary, and kissed her cold brow. With a deathly feeling the bride staggered from the room. She leaned heavily upon Otehewa's arm, and faintly she murmured:

"To my own chamber To my own chamber!"

Mary reached her room, but she could do no more. She sank down upon her bed, and she was powerless and senseless. Otehewa knew what to do for her and ere long the poor girl was revived. Otehewa saw that her mistress had wholly recovered, and then she went below to see how matters went on there. She stopped in the hall to harken, but all was still, save a loud snoring from the drawing room. She entered this room and when she had seen all there, a smile of triumph passed over her features. The pirate chieftain lay upon the floor in a sound sleep, while Hagar sat back in a chair snoring fearfully. First the girl placed a cushion beneath Laroon's head, so that the uneasy position should not tend to awaken him before day; and then she laid down another cushion upon which to place old Hagar's head. She dared not leave the bedlam in the chair for fear she should get uneasy before morning and tumble out and perhaps thus wake up. The hag was little else but skin and bone and Otehewa easily placed her on the floor.

This done, the girl put out the lights and then made her way noiselessly back to the chamber of her mistress. From that moment Mary possessed the love of one who would at any moment have sacrificed life itself at that love's call.

"Now, my sweet lady," she said, "you may sleep in peace."

"But you will not leave me?" said Mary, timidly.

"Not if you wish it otherwise."

Mary threw her arms about the neck of the faithful creature, kissing her dark cheek. "You are my sister, Otehewa—my sister, and so I will ever love and bless you."

Now Otehewa wept such tears as she had not wept before for years; and from that moment her life was devoted to the benefit of the noble, generous being whom she called mistress.

(To be continued.)

Two Styles.

That the fashions for millinery are divided into two distinct classes is indicated by the following from Illustrated Bits:

Mrs. Spenders—I wonder what will be the popular styles in hats this season?

Mr. Spenders—My dear woman's hats will be divided into two styles this season, as usual; the style you don't like, and the style I can't afford.

When some men try to solicit, all they get is cancellation of business on hand.

People who blame others are apt to praise themselves.

GOOD Short Stories

At a reception at Bar Harbor for Miss Alice Roosevelt, a young man was introduced to her. In the embarrassment of having to say something, he stammered:—"Miss Roosevelt—ah—'m very happy to meet you—I have often heard of your father."

One evening recently a well-known writer received a check from a magazine, which was a good deal larger than he had anticipated. The occurrence seemed worthy of a celebration; so, in company with a young artist, he sought a restaurant noted for its expensive menu. With a luxurious shrug, and with indifference to the cares of the world, he ordered an elaborate repast. His companion, being of the sex especially thrifty when dealing with household matters, begged him to be cautious. No, indeed, for that night he was Prince Bountiful. At length it came time for the reckoning. "Waiter," drawled the host, "bring me my check; and, waiter—bring it v-e-r-y gradually."

Upon one occasion when "Tom" Taggart, chairman of the Democratic National Committee, was distributor of the spoils, there was much speculation as to who would be coroner of Marion County, Ind. There were plenty of doctors who were anxious for the job, but only one of them, a dapper young physician, had the nerve to ask Taggart about it. "Mr. Taggart," he said, "I have come all the way down to your office to ask whom you favor for the nomination for coroner. I do not like to go ahead without knowing where I stand." Taggart slapped him on the back, and smiled in his most winsome manner. "I'll tell you one thing," he said; "you are no worse off than you were."

A story showing the incorruptibility of the London Times is told with Lord Randolph Churchill as the central figure. Churchill had made up his mind to resign. It was a great piece of news, and Churchill, on going to Buckle, the editor of the Times, felt justified in thinking that the paper would maintain a friendly attitude toward him in exchange for the exclusive information. Mr. Buckle informed him that the paper's attitude toward him would continue to be unfriendly. "But for such a piece of news," exclaimed Lord Randolph, "why, there is not another paper in England but would be grateful." "That is true," replied Mr. Buckle, "but the Times can not be bribed."

A rumor has recently gone the rounds of the newspapers stating that Dr. Daniel Coit Gilman, the president of the Carnegie Institution at Washington, was about to resign his office. Many different reasons for the resignation were given, among them being that he was breaking down from old age. At last, to get at the truth of it all, a reporter called upon him for a little first-hand information. "Resign?" was Dr. Gilman's answer; "certainly not." And after an instant's pause, he added: "Joseph Le Conte, my old colleague at the University of California, was asked just such a question as you have put to me on his 18th birthday. His reply will do for mine. He said: 'Why should I resign? I have just begun my life's work.'"

WHY DO MEN LAUGH?

What the Scientists Think Is the Cause—A Mystery.

Why do men laugh? is a question which M. C. Vanlair, a wise and witty Frenchman, has been trying to answer in no spirit of mockery in the *Revue Bleue*. And the answer is not so easy to give as the lay person, guiltless of physiological psychology, might suppose. Prof. William James, that master of paradox, has assured us that we are mistaken in supposing that we laugh because we are pleased; on the contrary, he asserts, we are pleased because we laugh—a conception that seems to put us all into the same class with him whose loud laugh "spoke the vacant mind." There appears at least to be scientific reason for believing that the expression is prior to the feeling of pleasure which it is held to denote. We all remember the story of the physician who was one day consulted by a sorrowful-looking individual, who said that he was suffering from intense melancholy. "Cheer up!" quoth the doctor. "Go to the opera house and witness the primaces of Grimaldi and you will forget yourself." "Alas," returned the woe-begone man. "I am Grimaldi!"

The fact is that laughter, the gift of the gods, is an exceedingly mysterious gift. Mr. Vanlair has been trying to trace its genesis, much as Darwin after long study evolved a consistent theory of the origin of blushing. There certainly was a time when man or his simian ancestor did not know how to laugh. What caused him first to open his mouth and emit broad ruffaws? It seems to be generally agreed among the evolutionists that

laughter came rather late in the life of the race as a luxury. It is not so old as the mimic reflexes of fear, anger, surprise or the various defensive movements which were formerly voluntary. No one ever had to laugh as a means of self-preservation or menace. What, then, was the nature of the prehistoric gesture?

M. Vanlair rejects in a general way the theory that man first laughed over his food; that as the mouth, in uncivilized society was—and still is—wide open in the process of eating and as gorging was the chief pleasure in the life of aboriginal man the law of association gradually made the opening of the lips into a symbol of pleasure. The French scientist has a more comprehensive theory to expound. He believes that laughter grew out of the expansiveness of the whole human organism in the relaxation that was made possible when danger was removed. All animals shrink into themselves in times of peril. When the danger is passed the creature "mobilizes its members," to use the psychologist's phrase—just as in civilized society a man "expands" in jovial surroundings or "thaws out" in the sunshine of quiet contentment. That which grew into a laugh might have become a twitching and quivering of the whole body had not the expression fortunately been limited by processes of natural selection to the face. True, a few people still laugh with their feet, but had laughter developed as it began we should laugh all over to such an extent that we should daily run the risk of dying of apoplexy.

The notion that the cat-laugh is the quintessence of humor M. Vanlair rather rejects as fanciful. So, too, he would probably repudiate the grimace with which Superintendent Price's tame fox in the Middlesex fells greets its master—a grimace which the owner feels certain is one of pleasure. The right to hold both one's sides with laughter, according to this French scientist, belongs pre-eminently to mankind.

MUCH VACANT LAND YET.

Dangers of an Overcrowded Population Are Still Remote.

The material development of the country is quietly progressing at a remarkable rate in one direction which is not given much popular attention. More than 22,824,299 acres of the public lands were turned over to private individuals last year. This means that an area almost equal to that of the State of Indiana has within that time been added to the productive regions of the United States. Most of the newly opened lands were homesteaded by farmers, as will be seen from the following figures: There were 54,395 patents of all classes issued within the year. Of this number, 47,654 are classed as agricultural, 4,904 as Indian allotments, 1,104 as mineral patents, 204 as coal patents, 276 as private land claims, 187 as railroad patents and 44 as swamp land patents. The total sum which the government got by way of fees and commissions for issuing these patents was \$11,024,744. Under a recent law the most of the receipts from the sale of public lands will henceforth be set aside for reclaiming arid lands by irrigation.

In the public domain there are still unappropriated 380,979,307 acres of surveyed lands, and 591,976,109 acres of unsurveyed lands, or a total of more than 970,955,000 acres. A great many tracts in this immense area, of course, will always remain uncultivated and unsettled, but it has been estimated that when the contemplated system of irrigation shall be put into working order, so much good land will be opened that a population as large as the whole nation's present population could find room there to thrive prosperously and contentedly.

Rapid strides are now being made in the developing of the public domain. The excitement and uproar of former pioneer days are absent in this work, but the process is marked and very effective. The passenger traffic on Western railroads is evidence of this fact. Agreeable reflections arise in contemplating that the United States still owns so much arable public land. The dangers of an overcrowded population by immigration or natural increase are still remote. The census for many years yet to come will not show an excess of people above what the West will need in settling up its vacant lands.—Kansas City Journal.

Romeo and Juliet Up to Date.

"Romeo! Romeo!" sobbed the swarthy Juliet. "They will not letta us love—a ana more. My people tella me I mus' notta marry you."

"What I care?" replied Romeo, savagely. "I will t'row dees bomb on da fron' porch. I will blow youra people all over dees ward."—Newark News

Thinkers, Not Doers.

To invent a new process and perfect it technically is one thing—to make it financially a success is an entirely different affair. Inventors are too often deficient in qualifications for managing their own business.

A man's last will and testament is a dead give-away.