(CHAPTER XV—Continued.)

—18—

Tony thereupon ordered the women to sit down on the ground in the shade and not move under penalty of "gettin' a wing clipped." We obeyed in silence and looked on while the pirates with wolfish voracity devoured the meal which had been meant for us. They had pocket-flasks with them, and as they attacked them with frequency the talk grew louder and wilder. By degrees it was possible to comprehend the extraordinary disaster which had befallen us, at least in a sketchy outline of which the detail was filled in later. Tony, it appeared, was the master of a small power schooner which had been fitting out in San Francisco for a filibustering trip to the Mexican coast, and his three hard companions were the crew. None was of the old hearty breed of sailors, but wharf-rats pure and simple, city-dregs whom chance had led to follow the sea. Tony, in whom one detected a certain rough force and ability, was an Italian, an outlaw specimen of the breed which mans the fishing fleet putting forth from the harbor of San Francisco. When and where he and Magnus had been friends I do not know. But no sooner had the wisdom of Miss Browne imparted the great secret to her chance acquaintance of the New York wharves, than he had communicated with his old pal, Tony. The power-schooner with her unlawful cargo stole out through the gate, made her delivery in the Mexican port, took on fresh supplies, and stood away for Leeward island. The western anchorage had received and snugly hidden her. Captain Magnus, meanwhile, by means of a mirror flashed from Lookout, had maintained communication with his friends, and even visited them under cover of the supposed shooting expedition. And now, while we had been striving to overcome the recalcitrancy of Mr. Tubbs, Captain Magnus had taken a short cut to the same end. You felt that the secret of Mr. Tubs would be extracted, if need be, by no delicate methods.

But Mr. Tubbs' character possessed none of that unreasonable obstinacy which would make harsh measures necessary under such conditions. His countenance, as the illuminating conversation of the pirates had proceeded, lost the speckled appearance which had characterized it at the height of his terrors. Something like his normal hue returned. He sat up straighter, moistened his dry lips, and looked around upon us, yes, even upon Aunt Jane and Miss Higglesby-Browne, with whom he had been so lately and so tenderly reconciled, with a sidelong, calculating glance. After the pirates had eaten, the prisoners on the log were covered with a rifle and their hands untied, while Cookie, in a lugubrious silence made eloquent by his rolling eyes, passed around among us the remnants of the food. Yet under all the terror was a bedrock confidence that there was, there must be somehow in the essence of things, an eternal rightness which would keep me safe from Captain Magnus. And as I looked across at Dugald Shaw and met for an instant his steady, watchful eyes, I managed a swift little smile a rather wan smile, I dare say, but still a smile.

Cuthbert Vane caught, so to speak, the tail of it, and was electrified. I saw his lips form at Mr. Shaw's ear the words, "Wonderful little sport, by Jove!"

A curious stiffening had come over Cuthbert Vane. For the first time in my knowledge of him he showed the consciousness—instead of only the subconsciousness—of the difference between Norman blood and the ordinary sanguine fluid. His shoulders squared; he lost his habitual easy lounge and sat erect and tall. Something stern and aquiline showed through the smooth beauty of his face, so that you thought of effigies of crusading knights stretched on their ancient tombs in High Staunton church. He was their true descendant, after all, this slow, calm, gentle-mannered Cuthbert. It was a young lion that I had been playing with, and the claws were there, strong and terrible in their velvet sheath.

Captain Tony, having finished his pipe, knocked the ashes out against the heel of his boot and put the pipe in his pocket.

"Well," he said, stretching, "I'd ruther have a nap, but business is business, so let's get down to it. Which o' them guys has the line on the stuff, Magnus?"

"Old Baldy, here," returned Magnus, with a nod at Mr. Tubbs. "Old Washtubs I call him generally; ha, ha!"

"Then looky here, Washtubs," said Tony, addressing Mr. Tubbs with sudden sternness, "maybe you could bluff these here soft guys, but we're a different breed o' cats, we are. Whatever you know, you'll come through with it, and come quick, or it'll be the worse for your hide, see?"

Mr. Tubbs rose from the log with promptness.

"Captain," he said earnestly, "from long experience in the financial centers of the country, I have got to be a man what understands human nature. The minute I looked at you, I seen it in your eye that there wasn't no use in tryin' to bluff you. You are a congenial crowd, you boys—gosh, but you do look good to me after the bunch o' stiffs I been playin' up to here! All I ask is, to let me in on it with you, and I'll be glad to put you wise to the best tricks of a sly old fox who ain't ever been caught yet without two holes to his burrow. I won't ask no half, nor no quarter, either, though I just signed up for that amount with the old girl here. But give me freedom, and a bunch o' live wires like you boys! I've near froze into a plaster figure o' Virtue, what with talkin' like a Sunday school class, and sparkin' one old maid and makin' out like I wouldn't melt butter with the other. So H. H. will ship along of you, mates, and we'll off to the China coast somewheres where the spendin' is good and the police not too noisy, and try how far a trunkful of doubloons will go!"

With a choky little gurgle in her throat Aunt Jane fell limply against me. It was too much. All day long she had been tossed back and forth like a shuttlecock by the battledore of emotion. She had borne the shock of Mr. Tubbs' sordid greed for gold, his disloyalty to the expedition, his coldness to herself; she had been shaken by the tender stress of the reconciliation, had been captured by pirates, and now suffered the supreme blow of this final revelation of the treachery of Tubbs. To hear her romance described as the sparking of an old maid—and by the sparker! From Miss Higglesby-Browne had come a snort of fury, but she said nothing, having apparently no confidence in the effect of oratory on pirates. She did not even exhort Aunt Jane, but left it to me to sustain my drooping aunt as best I could.

As Mr. Tubbs made his whole-hearted and magnanimous proposal Captain Tony opened his small black eyes and contemplated him with attention. Then he glanced round upon his fellows.

"What say, boys? Shall we ship old Washtubs on the schooner and let him have his fling along with us? Eh?" And as Captain Tony uttered these words the lid of his left eye eclipsed for an instant that intelligent optic.

From the pirates came a scattering volley of assents. "All right—hooray for old Washtubs—sure, close the deal."

"All right, Washtubs, the boys are willing. So I guess we better be moving toward that chest of doubloons."

It was arranged that Slinker and a cross-eyed man named Horny should remain at the camp on guard. As a measure of precaution Cookie, too, was bound, and Aunt Jane, Miss Browne and I ordered into the cabin. The three remaining pirates, armed with our spades and picks and dispensing a great deal of jocular profanity, set out for the cave under the guidance of Mr. Tubbs.

Thankful as I was for the departure of Captain Magnus, I underwent torments in the stifling interior of the cabin. Aunt Jane wept piteously. At last I heard a faint moan:

"Virginia!"

I went to her. "Yes, auntie?"

"Virginia," she murmured, "I think I shall not live to leave the island, even if I am not—not executed. In fact, I have a feeling now as though the end were approaching. I have always known that my heart was not strong, even if your Aunt Susan did call it indigestion. But oh, my dear child, it is not my digestion—it is my heart that has been wounded! To have reposed such confidence in a serpent! To realize that I might have been impaled upon its fangs! Oh, my dear, faithful child, what would I have done if you had not clung to me although I permitted serpents to turn me from you! But I am cruelly punished. All I ask is that some day—when you are married and happy, dear—you will remove from this desolate spot the poor remains of her who—of her who—" Sobs choked Aunt Jane's utterance.

"Jane—" began Miss Higglesby-Browne.

"I was speaking to my niece," replied Aunt Jane with unutterable dignity from her corner. Her small features had all but disappeared in her swollen face, and her hair had slipped down at a rakish angle over one eye. But, of course, being Aunt Jane, she must choose this moment to be queenly.

"There, there, auntie," I said soothingly, "of course you are not going to leave your bones on this island. If you did you know, you and Bill Halliwell might ha'nt around together—think how cozy! (Here Aunt Jane gave a convulsive shudder.) As to my being married, if you were betting just now on anybody's chances, they would have to be Captain Magnus', wouldn't they?"

"Good gracious, Virginia!" shrieked Aunt Jane faintly. But I went on relentlessly, determined to distract her mind from thoughts of her approaching end.

"All things considered, I suppose I really ought to ask you to put my affairs in order when you get back. If I am carried off by the pirates, naturally I shall have to jump overboard at once, though I dislike the idea of drowning, and especially of being eaten by sharks. Would you mind putting up a little headstone—it needn't cost much—in the family plot, with just 'Virginia' on it? And anything of mine that you don't want yourself I'd like Bess to have for the baby, please. Ask her when the little duck is old enough to tell her my sad story—"

By this time Aunt Jane was sobbing loudly and waving her little hands about in wild beseeching.

"Jane!" broke in Miss Browne again in awful tones. But at that moment the door of the cabin opened and the face of Slinker peered in.

"Say," he remarked, "there ain't no sense in you girls stayin' cooped up here that I see. I guess me and Horney can stand you off if you try to rush us. Come out and cool off a little."

The great heat of the day was over and the sun already dropping behind the peak of the island. Mr. Shaw

"There Ain't No Sense in You Girls Stayin' Cooped Up Here."

and Cuthbert had been allowed to sit in the shade, and I thought their wrists were not too tightly bound for comfort. Cookie had been released, and under the eye of Horney was getting supper. Crusoe had earlier in the day received a kick in the ribs from Captain Magnus, fortunately too much occupied with the prisoners to pursue his vengeance further, and had fled precipitately, to my enormous relief. The dog was quite wise enough to know that he would help me best by keeping out of the clutches of our common foe.

Just then there come from the woods the sound of footsteps and voices, and the three pirates and Mr. Tubbs entered the clearing. A thrill ran through the camp. Captors and captives forgot all else but the great, the burning question—had the treasure been discovered? And I am sure that no one was so thrilled as I, although in my mind the question took another form.

For now I was going to know what had been waiting for me there in the cave, when I stood yesterday at its black entrance, afraid to go in.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

SIMPLE DIET ALWAYS BEST

As True Now as When Addison Advised It, More Than Two Centuries Ago.

Two hundred years ago Addison wrote: "Nature delights in the most plain and simple diet. Every animal, but man, keeps to one dish. Herbs are the food of this species, fish of that and flesh of a third. Man falls upon the smallest fruit or excrescence of the earth, scarce a berry or mushroom can escape him.

"It is impossible to lay down any determinate rule for temperance. Were I to consider my readers as my patients, and to prescribe such a kind of temperance as is accommodated to all persons, I would copy the following rules of a very eminent physician: 'Make your whole repast out of one dish; if you indulge in a second, avoid drinking anything strong till you have finished your meal; at the same time abstain from all sauces, or at least such as are not the most plain and simple.'"

First Papermaker.

The original papermaker is the paper spider, in the dense woods in the interior of Africa, that large spider building its home from fine paper of its own making, when it selects a smooth surface about two inches square, covering it with fine threads that are papery, placing its 50 eggs beneath, then spinning a thin border that pastes it down tight until the eggs hatch in three weeks.—Indianapolis News.

HORSE IS FOND OF MOTORCARS

Chewing of Detective's Car Wins New Summons for Licenseless Peddler.

New York.—Were all the horses in New York endowed with the genius that characterizes Nero, who works for Maurice Kelly, peddler, there would be fewer motorcars about.

Detective Walter J. Coffey is attached to the Oak Street station. Because he lives in Flatbush he employs a flivver to ride to duty.

The other night he parked the flivver in front of the Oak Street station house. Right here is where Nero, peddler's horse, comes in. He was parked a few minutes later directly back of the flivver.

Endowed with the identical passion that prompted his namesake to burn Rome, and propelled, perhaps, by a

Commenced to Tear the Leather Out.

whim to institute general war against the machines that have all but put him and his likes out of business, Nero commenced to tear the leather out of Officer Coffey's car with his teeth and to scatter upholstery amid the snowflakes.

This process continued until Nero was spied from the window by Officer Coffey. What Officer Coffey said to Nero is not recorded. Neither is any mention made of the speech which Officer Coffey made to Peddler Kelly when he arrived five minutes later.

In the course of this harangue, however, it became a matter of suspicion to the detective that Kelly, who lives at No. 918 Jefferson avenue, Brooklyn, was plying his trade without a license.

Here, indeed, was heart balm! Officer Coffey handed Peddler Kelly a summons. And as the two men mounted their respective vehicles, preparatory to altered parking arrangements, a third dissertation delighted the ears of the bystanders.

This one was addressed by Peddler Kelly to his horse.

STEALS TO GET INTO JAIL

Twice Refused Lodging, Man Takes Pencils and Asks Arrest in Goshen, N. Y.

Goshen, N. Y.—J. H. Guy, a prisoner in the Orange county jail, stole two pencils, according to the authorities, to get into custody after he had been refused lodging at two jails. Guy was out of work and needed food and rest.

Guy asked Policeman David Clark for a night's lodging in the Goshen jail. Refused, he went to the Orange county jail, only to be turned down again. The authorities allege he left, saying he would force them to care for him, went to Conklin's coal office, forced an entrance, and violated the law technically by taking only two pencils.

Then, seeking a policeman, Guy said he had broken the law, and demanded he be arrested. He was held for the grand jury.

Guy is the most contented prisoner Sheriff W. M. Leonard has in his calaboose.

Automobile Mirror as a New Flirtation Aid

Los Angeles, Cal.—Now comes the rear sight automobile mirror as the latest vehicle for flirtation. Mrs. Hattie Webb of Los Angeles introduced the mirrors in her testimony when she sought a divorce, alleging that Mrs. Babe Eberlee always sat in the back seat of her husband's automobile and flirted with Mr. Webb. The husband did not contest the case and Mrs. Webb was granted a divorce and the custody of the two children.

Corn Shredder Severs Man's Hands.

Lewistown, Pa.—Cecil Richardson lost both hands when he attempted to free one hand that had been caught in a corn shredder which he was operating on his father's farm. Richardson was wearing gloves, and these held his hands after they had been caught in the cogs.

Making Good an Old Boast.

A process has been discovered whereby old leather can be converted into gelatin. Such transformation offers a ready way of utilizing many articles after their value to every one but the junk man appears to be gone. Since head coverings are sometimes made of leather, it would appear that at least the man confident that his candidate will win in an election may literally back up his confidence with the time-honored promise that he will eat his hat in the event that his man loses.

HELP INVALIDS TO FORGET

Presence of a Canary or Goldfish in the Sickroom Invariably Has Beneficial Effect.

Next time you sit in a room, the furnishings of which include a bowl of goldfish, consider how much time you spend watching the small fish as they swim slowly about or dart about in pursuit of each other.

Probably you will conclude you were indulging the usual tendency of the normal person to be attracted to moving objects. In sick persons and convalescents this tendency is more pronounced, and in the aged and very young it is still more so.

That psychology of this attraction was given by Dr. Edward N. Leavy, formerly veterinarian to the animals in Central park zoo. He is now connected with a Fifth avenue pet store.

"Sick persons lying in bed spend a great deal of time watching the goldfish if an aquarium is in their room," he said. "It takes their minds off their pains and aches and is very beneficial."

Canaries share with goldfish the honor of being the chief animate entertainment to the sick.—New York Sun.

One isn't troubled much by the laws against violence if he isn't troublesome.

The Wrong Foot.

From a telegram recently received by the district superintendent of an Indian railway from a Babu station master: "Coming on duty early in the morning clad in my new and white uniform I perceived a man seated on a box in a naked and aggressive manner. Taking him to be an ordinary passenger, I proceeded to slap him, whereupon he hastily arose, unlocked the said box, clad himself in a policeman's uniform he took thereout and arrested me. The shoe is thus situated on the erroneous peddle. Please arrange."—London Morning Post.

National Emblems.

The rose, England's national flower, was chosen as the country's symbol at the close of the War of the Roses. The shamrock is firmly imbedded in Irish hearts because St. Patrick used it to illustrate one of his sermons. The thistle was adopted as the national emblem of Scotland because, in the reign of Malcolm II, a moat filled with thistles saved a Scotch fortress from Danish invasion.

A Forgotten Art.

In New York's streets there may be counted hundreds of signs that read "Watchmaker." Yet perhaps less than a dozen of such concerns could make a watch.

The crooked path is longest.