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THE MOUTH ORGAN BAND.

When the fireflies dance where the roses are blooming,
And lilies bend low to the breezes' caress;
When the cinnamon vine all the air is perfuming
And Evening has donned her most beautiful dress—
Oh, then, as the stars in the firmament glisten
And Night spreads her mantle abroad o'er the land,
'Tis pleasant to rest in the moonlight and listen
To sweet serenades of the mouth-organ band.

It isn't pretentious—this organization;
Its members are few. There is "Skinny, the Kid,"
The blacking of boots is his humble vocation,
But musical genius can never be hid.
There's "Bob"—he sells papers along with his fellows;
He's short just a leg and he's minus a hand,
But he's chock-full of song and with lungs like a bellows,
He plays the loud bass for the mouth-organ band.

And there's Widow McGann's little boy—
"he's a daisy!"
So all his companions declare with a smile,
And add: "Why, dat kid he kin jus' set you crazy."
When he gives you de music in tremolo style,
George Washington Jefferson Franklin Boz-zar—
He's colored—the alto is in his command,
And all through the air runs a ribbon of sorrow
Whenever he plays with the mouth-organ band.

When they come up the street playing
"Star-Spangled Banner,"
"The Last Rose of Summer," or "Sweet By and By,"
Though strangely grotesque is the music and manner,
A tear all unbidden may moisten the eye.
"Or Music is holy—" the daughter of Heaven"—
Her wonderful meaning we all understand,
And she gladdens our lives when with marvelous leaven
She touches the hearts of the mouth-organ band.
—Nixon Waterman, in L. A. W. Bulletin.

Capture of the "Comet."

BY DAVID WECHSLER.
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ON THE morning of June 20, 1871, the brig Comet, bound from Charleston to Bahia, was off the coast of French Guiana in a dead calm, which had set in at midnight. As far as could be seen from the deck not a sail was in sight, and after breakfast the watch on deck turned to at various jobs and the captain remained in his cabin. At about nine o'clock, and without our having suspected her presence, a ship's boat touched our port bow, and next moment a gang of men came tumbling in board. The entire watch happened to be in the waist of the brig at that moment, and the fellows, to the number of 14, reached the deck without opposition or question. No sooner had I caught sight of the first one than I recognized the uniform of the French convicts at the penal settlement of Cayenne, but the last of the gang was over the rail before I stepped forward to ask what was wanted. A burly big fellow, who was surely a Frenchman, but spoke excellent English, advanced a step or two and replied:

"We are convicts, as you perceive. We escaped yesterday morning. We do not mean you any harm, and if you will do as we wish all will be well. If you are not the captain then please call him."

There were six muskets among the 14 men, and one had but to glance at the faces to realize that they were desperate. I looked over the rail and saw a large yawl, provided with mast and sail and oars, and a breaker of water and a box of bread were stowed in the bows.

"We had plenty of wind yesterday and up to midnight," said the spokesman. "After that we took to the oars. Let us see the captain and come to an understanding as soon as possible."

I sent the boy down for Capt. Bright, and if I had been astonished at sight of the convicts pouring in over the bows he was dumfounded at finding them drawn up in line across the deck. He was trying to ask for an explanation when the spokesman doffed his cap, bowed, and said:

"My dear sir, you see before you 14 convicts who escaped yesterday from Cayenne. We were all serving life sentences. In making our escape we had to dispose of six guards, and these muskets belonged to them. We sailed down the coast, and then changed our course, but it is likely that we shall be pursued. Your ship is ours, but we only wish to use it to convey us to some safe and distant place. It is for you to say whether we shall shed more blood."

Capt. Bright was a frey old fellow, and I expected to hear him call upon the crew to attack the invaders. He grew red and white with anger, clenched

his fists, and moved towards the spokesman as if to strike him. Then common sense came to his aid. There were ten of us to 14 of the convicts, and we stood no show. They were as good as in possession of the craft, and would not hesitate at killing us all if provoked.

"So you are convicts?" said the captain at last.

"We have that honor, sir," replied the leader.

"Where do you wish to go to?"
"To any spot on the American coast. We are sorry to trouble you, but under the circumstances it cannot be helped."

"You have a big boat here," said the captain, as he stepped to the rail, "and why don't you make use of it to go where you will?"

"For the reason that there is only one sailor among us, and because it is a pretty long run up to the American coast. We have our plans, and they cannot be altered. With all respect, I say that you must land us where we wish."

"You have possession," said the captain, as he paced back and forth, "and I am forced to do as you wish. Let there be no trouble. I will agree to land you on the coast of Florida, and you shall agree to preserve order among your fellows, and to leave the ship without act of violence."

"Sir, I give you my word that it shall be so," replied the leader; and that ended the talk.

The convicts had no dunnage, but were to berth under the topgallant forecastle. Their boat would be wanted to set them ashore, and it was hoisted on deck. This job had just been concluded when a sail was sighted in the east. She had a breeze with her and was headed in our direction. She had approached within two miles before we got the first puff. She was a coasting schooner, but we could not make out her nationality until she flew her flag. Then we saw that she was French, and had no doubt that she was sent in pursuit of the convicts. The men began to mutter and curse as they realized her mission, and the leader asked for Capt. Bright and said to him:

"That schooner has been sent in pursuit of us, and is probably aware that we are on board. We have six muskets and plenty of ammunition, and we shall fight her. You will please order your crew below that none may be harmed."

The captain nodded to us to dispose of ourselves as we saw fit and retreated to his cabin without a word. He probably hoped, as we all did, that the schooner would have men enough aboard to make short work of the convicts. Neither Mr.

"Ah! no! She is smaller than the brig and a poor sailer; we do not want her."

For an hour the schooner was held captive. Then she was fended off, and after she had drifted half a mile away her people appeared on deck and were very brave. They wasted a good many cartridges in long-range firing, and finally lowered a boat and sent the lieutenant of marines to us with a demand that the convicts surrender. They did not fire upon him, as he was under a flag of truce, but they hooted and jeered; he finally rowed away, but soon returned with an offer to grant them immunity if they would return with the schooner to the colony. This proposition also was hooted at, and the lieutenant was ordered off. When he had been taken aboard, the schooner headed away for the coast.

The dead were simply cast overboard, but the convicts asked our assistance to care for the wounded. That we gave them. They had made such a good fight for their liberty, and had shown such moderation after the heat of the battle, that we had a better feeling toward them. They did not swagger about, as one might expect, but uttered a cheer as the schooner turned tail, and had but little to say. When the dead had been launched overboard and the wounded attended to, the leader of the convicts said to Capt. Bright:

"I think you had better now proceed on the voyage, but you will stand down the coast until the schooner is out of sight. If overhauled again we might not be so lucky."

We ran to the south for ten miles, then came about and headed up the coast, at the same time edging further out to sea. None of us wanted another fight on his hands, and the captain was anxious to reach the Florida coast and get rid of his visitors. As was afterward ascertained, two other craft were sent out from Cayenne in search, but neither sighted us. From one of the wounded soldiers I gathered the particulars of the escape of the convicts. They were loading a vessel at the wharf when the yawl was pulled in by some sailors from a bark at anchor a mile away. There were six soldiers guarding the convicts, some on the wharf and some on the ship, and at a signal all were attacked. Only two were killed, but the other four suffered severe injuries. Before an alarm had reached the prison sheds, half a mile away, the convicts had seized the yawl and put to sea. They were pursued by other small boats, but the yawl out-sailed them.

The wounded soldiers at first expected



THE CAPTAIN MOVED TOWARD THE SPOKESMAN AS IF TO STRIKE HIM.

Rawlins, the chief mate, nor myself left the deck for a time. The Comet had all plain sail on her, and we wanted to watch the wind as well as the schooner. The breeze was light, with no signs that it would strengthen right away, and as it reached us the brig was headed up to lie on the port tack, while all the convicts worked to haul the main-sail yard about.

"This is good," said the spokesman, as he rubbed his hands together. "I would rather fight her standing still than when running away. See! She is coming right down on us, but I don't believe she has over a dozen soldiers on her decks."

We then left the decks to the convicts. Those armed with muskets were ranged along the bulwarks, and those without were looking for other sorts of weapons. What followed we gathered by hearing instead of seeing. The schooner was satisfied that the convicts had boarded the brig, and knowing that they would make a fight for it, she steered boldly down and laid us aboard. There were 12 soldiers and seven or eight sailors on her decks, and armed with cutlasses and muskets and pistols they swarmed over the rails in a fierce attack. For ten minutes there was a lively battle above us. When at last we heard loud cheering we rushed up in belief that the convicts had been overcome. To our surprise, we found that they had driven the soldiers back. The odds had been heavily against them but they had fought like demons. One of their number had been killed and two badly wounded. In addition the convicts had secured three more muskets and two or three cutlasses and pistols, and were firing down upon the schooner's decks, compelling her people to keep under cover. Had they desired they could have boarded her and made everyone prisoner. When I saw how things were, I suggested this to the leader, but he smilingly replied:

to be put to death by the convicts, but not a man had even a harsh word for them. If the fellows had had liquor there is no telling how free they might have made with the brig, but as it was no lot of passengers could have behaved better. One of them had a few hot words with the cook one day, and the leader of the gang walked up to him and said:

"Julius, we are not here to make trouble, but to regain our liberty. Stop this thing at once. If you can't rest content, I will give you six inches of cold steel and throw your carcass to the sharks!"

The one sailor among them offered his services and insisted on doing a sailor's work, while the rest of them were always at hand whenever there was pulling or hauling to be done. Not a question was asked as to the direction we were steering; they took it for granted that the captain would keep his word. The leader paced the deck with me for two hours one night, and asked many questions concerning the United States. He declared, and he seemed sincere, that his crime was the killing of a man under extreme provocation, and that he intended to make an honest living in the states. He said there were others with the same intentions, but that about half the gang were bad men and would soon land in prison. Not one of the fellows had a penny, and all were still in convict dress. How they were to manage without stripping forecastle and cabin I could not figure out. The captain had \$800 aboard, and I think he expected to be asked for it when the convicts were ready to depart. Perhaps he would have been but for his own sensible action.

When we were within 20 miles of Abaco island, off the southernmost point of Florida, he called three of the convicts into the cabin and had a long talk with them. He advised them to land on the island and remain for a day or

two, then proceed along the coast in their boat. He gave each man of the gang five dollars in silver, and from the slop chest, the cabin and the forecastle he rigged them out in such garments that they might pass for shipwrecked sailors. When they came out of the cabin they held a general talk and agreed on the story they were to tell, and as fast as they could change their clothes the prison dress was thrown overboard.

At three o'clock one afternoon we ran in close to Abaco, and the big yawl was lowered and provided with water and provisions. Each and every convict shook hands all around and expressed his gratitude; then one by one they dropped into their boat in an orderly manner. When the last one was in the boat shoved off, the gang gave us a cheer, and we were not yet out of sight when they landed on the island. I never heard of any of them afterwards, though something must have been published in the papers about their arrival at some port; but they had dealt so fairly by the Comet that, convicts though they were, I have always wished them good luck.

BACK TO HIS OLD HOME.

Statesman Wins a Bride Who Owns Property That Once Was His.

There is a representative in congress from Maryland, one of the most popular of the delegation from that state, who has had a romance in his life which goes to prove the truth of the saying that fact is stranger than fiction. The representative is essentially a self-made man, and is not ashamed of it, for it was not his fault that fortune imposed upon him the task of carrying out his golden future. His father died and he had devolved upon him the task of supporting a mother and several brothers and sisters. Work in the machine shop of his little town grew slack, and he started to Baltimore with a brave heart and seven cents in his pocket.

The first night he reached the city he put in walking the streets. Owing to his own efforts he finally secured employment in one of the largest machine shops of Baltimore. He sent for his mother and the children, and prospered for a season. They lived in a little house on a small street and were happy. Then work grew scarce and the present representative lost his place. The rent was in arrears, and one day when the young man saw the agent of the house he was told that unless the rent was paid by a specified time they would have to go.

"The house belongs to a young lady in the country," the agent said, "and she needs the rent to buy herself dresses and other things. The income from the house is all she has for pin money."

The rent could not be paid in full, and the family, with the mother in the last stages of consumption, moved into another, though they hated to leave. The congressman fell in love with his wife through a photograph which a friend had and he worried the friend into taking him to the little country town and introducing him. The engagement followed, but the family objected to the match. The only objection they could offer, for the young man had never touched a drop of liquor, and was noted for the way in which he trod the paths of rectitude, was that he had worked as a machinist and ordinary laborer.

"I knew of this," said the congressman to the Star reporter, "and I determined, after we became engaged, that I should show my intended wife exactly what I had been, for I had advanced to a higher position then. I took her out driving one evening and arranged so that we should reach the entrance of the works where I had been employed at a certain time. We got there about six o'clock when the men came out, dirty, soot blackened and weary. I told her I had been one of them only a short while before."

"Afterward I drove past the place where we had been forced to leave on account of my not being able to pay the rent. I told the whole story of how the agent had said it belonged to a young lady in the country, who needed the rent for pin money. We stopped at the little house, and I pointed it out."

"There it is, Mary," I told her. I turned and looked at her, and there were tears in her eyes. She was sobbing softly, and I thought she had been touched simply at the story of my struggle to support myself and my family."

"Do you know whose house that is?" she asked, in a broken voice. I told her I did not.

"It was her own. She was the young lady of whom the agent had told me, and to whom the rent had to be paid. It seemed almost incredible, but it was the truth."—Washington Star.

Strange Indian Vengeance.

In the course of his investigations Dr. Calmette has discovered the nature of a mortal poison which some of the natives of India employ to kill the cattle of their enemies. The poison is applied to little pointed rods inserted in the end of a short stick, which can be concealed in the hand. Approaching the cattle, the poisoner slightly scratches them with the venom-charged points. The ends of the little rods break off and remain in the wounds, which are barely visible. Dr. Calmette found that the poison was extracted from a kind of bean, growing on a leguminous plant known botanically as *abrus precatorius*. This poison is called *abrin*, and is almost as fatal in its effects as the most violent serpent venom.

ANCIENT MOUNDS IN ENGLAND.

Rare Relics Undisturbed for Centuries.

Scientific men are deeply interested in archaeological discoveries just made concerning the ancient Britons. Thirteen graves opened at a little place called Danesdale, near Driffield, in East Yorkshire, revealed relics that showed that the burials took place at least 1,000 years before the advent of William the Conqueror to British soil. For so long that the memory of man runneth not to the contrary, the mounds or graves just opened have been supposed to be the last resting places of ancient Danes. They were called the "Danes' graves." Indeed, the town of Danesdale referred to gained its name from that supposition. The graves or mounds are 173 in number, but only 13 have thus far been opened. They are surrounded by forests, and upon some of the mounds huge trees are growing.

Archaeologists have long believed that investigation of the ancient mounds would lead to important discoveries. It was this sentiment which led the East Riding Antiquarian society, through Canon Greenwell, of Durham, to institute the inquiry which resulted in opening the mounds. Deep down in the first mound opened were found not only the bones of an ancient Briton, but the iron tire of his chariot, the iron bit and trappings of his horse, and a bronze pin, beautiful in design, and enameled. The shape of the grave and the curious curled-up position of the skeleton left no doubt as to the age to which all belonged, and disposed to the satisfaction of every one of the Danish theory which had so long prevailed.

Perhaps the most notable of the relics, so far as establishing the antiquity theory is concerned, was the bronze pin. It is a specimen of the earliest known British enameling and is of a type most peculiar to the iron period. It has a peculiar twist in the shank which makes its origin an absolute certainty. It is one of the curious facts found in British history that pins such as the one described only existed during a certain period. Distinct changes in articles of this sort were made at a certain point in the development of Britain. This fact is known absolutely, and therefore this pin settles beyond question the point as to the time before which it must have been made.

Two other graves were opened at Arras and Beverley in which chariots were found, and in the one at Arras the tires and naves of the wheels were complete. The tires are of iron and the naves of bronze. There were also found in these graves an iron mirror with bronze mountings, the end of a shank of a bronze whip, and two or three rings through which the reins of the chariot must have been carried. The bones found at Beverley had gone to decay, but at Arras the human remains and the bones of the horses appeared as fresh as if they had been buried 100 years ago.

The graves referred to as having been opened were not close together. For instance, the places of discovery, Danesdale and Arras, are 12 miles apart. The theory advanced by the archaeologists who have taken the matter up is that the district throughout which the mounds are found was formerly the burying place of the ancient Britons, probably years before the Danes attempted the conquest of the island. The relics discovered indicate that they once were part of and the property of leaders among the aboriginal inhabitants of Britain.

There has been a dispute for a very long time between archaeologists as to the occupation of the territory in which the mounds were found by the Danes and by the early Britons. One faction of disputants held that the mounds, being accepted as graves of ancient Danes, were conclusive evidence that the Danes were in possession of the country centuries before some persons claimed to believe. The second faction held that the Danes had never held possession of the country, but that it was for centuries located in the center of the stronghold of the Britons of early days.

The formation of the tires and the naves of the chariots found also indicated a hitherto unknown communication between the Romans and the early Britons. The tires and the naves are almost exactly similar to those now in the British museum at London, which are known to have been in use in Rome about the same period in which the original chariots to which the British tires and naves were attached sped over the soil of the island. It establishes a new fact in history in reference to the relations and power of Rome, and, while it settles one dispute, makes seemingly incorrect a number of assertions regarding the period in which the burials in the British graves took place.

It is very likely that several more of these mounds will be opened for the purpose of ascertaining whether they are the resting places of Britons of a certain century, or whether, as many believe, the mounds are located in what was the burial ground of the leaders of the early Britons for many centuries. Should the latter prove true it is more than likely that discoveries will be made which will entirely change the history of Britain as far as it relates to that period which led up to the Conquest.—Philadelphia Times.

No Harm in Thinking.

Maud—I'm thinking of writing a novel.

Claud—Well, there's no harm in that.—Town Topics.