

The Sea Scourge

CHAPTER XIII.

Time passed on, and the week was gone. On the morning of the day which had been set for the last to be spent in these regions by the two lovers, Paul arose with a dizzy, aching head, for the night just passed had been one of uneasiness and anxiety.

Ben Marton was now so far recovered that he needed only rest and care, and the wounded men were also out of danger; so Paul left no one who needed his assistance. Up to the present time he had not made up his mind how he should manage with regard to Burnington. He had the fullest confidence in that man, though there was yet something about him which he could not fathom. At length, however, he resolved to write a brief statement of his plans without letting the man know anything about where and how he was going; so he went down to the cabin, and having made sure he was not observed, he took a sheet of paper, and with a pencil he wrote as follows:

"Burnington—When you open this I shall be on my way from those who have thus far proved only a curse to me. Should you ever wish to see me again, you will find me with my friends in America, if I have any such there. You know where to find me much better than I can tell you, for you evidently know more about them than I do. With regard to this matter, I have not given you my full confidence, it is true, and I am sure that you have not confided the half of your knowledge concerning myself to me. But I hope to see you again."

The youth sealed this letter, and at the first opportunity he slipped it into Burnington's hand, saying, as he did so: "You will not open this till after dark—till midnight. Will you promise me?" "Certainly," responded Buffo, in blank surprise.

"Then take it, and be sure that no one else sees it. Remember, now, you are not to open it until well into the night."

Burnington would have asked many questions, but there was no opportunity, so he slipped the missive into his bosom and then turned away; but he did not keep his promise, for in half an hour afterward he had read the letter, and his face showed that he was troubled.

After dinner Paul told the captain he was going up to the castle. Laroon smiled a bitter smile as he heard this, but he made no objections. Paul made up a bundle of linen which he said he should get washed, and within that he concealed a full suit of Billy Mason's clothes; and thus prepared, he called away his boat's crew, and went over the side. He had taken all the money he could raise that he felt free to use, in all amounting to thirteen hundred dollars—for, of course, the prize money of the Russian corvette had not yet been distributed, and Paul had not dared to ask for any of it, for fear of exciting suspicion.

The castle was reached, and the crew had pledged themselves to obey their young commander to the very letter, and be faithful to his interests. He knew he could depend upon them, and he felt so unbusiness on that score. Billy Mason had been thoroughly instructed in the part he was to play, and he was prepared for it. The portcullis was raised, and the boat passed under and was moored at the landing stairs close by the building.

Paul found Mary waiting for him with much anxiety, but her countenance brightened as soon as she saw her lover, for she knew by his looks that all had gone right thus far.

"Are you ready?" was the youth's first remark, as soon as they had secured a situation by themselves.

"Everything is done that I can do," the maiden answered.

"Then I think we are safe. No one suspects us—no one dreams that we are going—none save Buffo Burnington."

"And does he know?"

"Yes; or rather he will know, for I wrote him that we were going."

As the night drew on they both grew nervous and uneasy, and Mary was sure that she could hear the beating of her lover's heart as she stood next to his side. Billy Mason had watched the coming darkness, and as soon as he thought he could do so without being discovered he crept into the boat and hid himself under the thwart. A little while afterward Paul went to the boat, and as soon as he found that the youngster was there he repaired at once to Mary's apartment, where he found a lovely girl—the very beau ideal of a handsome sailor. The youth next went to see that the corridor was clear, and having found it so, they passed over to the maiden's sleeping room, which was on the front of the building. The window was carefully raised, and Paul could see the dusky forms of three of his men below. He whistled very slowly, and they whistled "All safe."

It was but a few moments' work to knot three linen sheets together, and with these Paul lowered the girl safely to the ground. Just as she touched terra firma a dark form came gliding up from beneath the shade of the wall, and Mary would have cried out in alarm had she not recognized her faithful Oteheva.

"Heaven bless and protect you!" murmured the noble-hearted slave girl, at the same time throwing her arms about her mistress' neck. But she was too wise to detain the party, so she only added, after she had received a kiss and a blessing in return:

"I shall not leave here until I am sure you are safely off. Be not afraid of detection from your absence to-night, for I will see that no one enters your apartment."

There was one warm pressure, and

then the faithful girl glided away just as Paul came out upon the veranda.

"Hallo, my men," cried the youth.

"Ay, ay," responded one of the crew.

"Come—look alive. We must be off as soon as possible, for I promised to be on board early. To your oars at once."

Near the landing stood several of the main servants, all of them willing tools of the pirate captain; but they did not recognize their young mistress beneath her disguise, and with a trembling step she descended to the boat. But she had not the power to lift an oar; she sank down upon the thwart where young Mason should have sat, with her powers of both mind and body about gone. Paul quickly leaped to his seat, and he saw at once how Mary was situated; but there was no danger of detection now, for it was too dark for those on the landing to see the movements of those in the boat, and the heavy portcullis came down with a low, grating sound. Both Paul and Mary now breathed more freely. The barrier was passed, and the road was open.

At this moment they reached a point which Mary designated as the place where Oteheva had concealed a bundle of her clothing. The bow was pulled in to the shore, and beneath the cover of an overhanging rock was found quite a bundle. This was taken on board, and they started down the stream.

At length they came to the point of land where Paul had resolved to land, and the boat was again laid in by the shore. The youth helped Mary out, and then he landed himself. The gold he had concealed about his person in leathern belts, and the diamonds were in a small bag which Mary carried. Turning to his crew, he said:

"Now, my brave boys, you will remain here and wait for me until daylight, and if I do not return by the time you can see the distant mountains plainly, you may return to the brig; and there you may answer your captain as you please. Now, I am about to leave you. Most of my shipmates have ever been kind to me. You have the warmest love of my grateful heart. Farewell."

Paul would have turned away at once, but Billy Mason sprang forward and caught his hand, and the rest followed his example. He embraced the noble fellows in turn, and uttered one simple word more of farewell, and then turned away.

CHAPTER XIV.

The night was quite dark, and as Paul and his companion struck into the wood path, the way became one of almost impenetrable gloom. Once, at a few rods distant from the shore, he stopped.

Fortunately the path was a very clear one, for it led to the wide opening where the horses were kept, and was consequently much traveled. In half an hour they reached the opening, and here Paul caught a horse. He had already concealed a bridle there, which he readily found, and as soon as the animal was prepared with his fixtures, Mary was helped upon his back. The youth took his seat behind her, and then started on. The animal proved to be a kind and gentle one, and he kept the path without difficulty.

It might have been near midnight when the fugitives came to the open country that bordered upon the small bay where the fishermen's huts stood, and by this time the stars had begun to peep through the breaking clouds, but the moon had not yet risen. Paul rode at once to the found no one there. This was to him a rough pier where the lugger lay, but he had omen, and it struck him with fear. His next movement was to make his way to the cot where lived the man who was to have taken command of the lugger. He knocked at the door, and it was soon opened by the man whom Paul most wished to see.

"How is this?" asked our hero. "You were to have everything ready for sailing by an hour before midnight."

"To-morrow was the day set," said the fisherman, looking perplexed. "You said you might be here in the evening, but at any event, by an hour before midnight. Did you mean to-day?"

Paul saw that the man was honest in what he said, and he saw, too, where the mistake had come in. The fisherman had planned to sail on the morrow, and they had confounded the evening and midnight of this morning with the close of the day they had set. It was surely a blinding, blundering piece of work on their part, and so Paul felt it to be. But there was no help for it now but to get ready as quickly as possible, and the youth had the good sense not to bother them by finding too much fault with their carelessness.

"How long will it take you to get ready?"

"Oh, only a few hours. I can call up the men, and have all ready soon."

Paul promised him a hundred dollars, and this had the effect of hurrying matters somewhat; but they were further delayed by the tide being out. Those were painful moments to Paul. There he stood, or rather walked upon the pier, and thought of how all this might have been avoided.

"Oh!" he uttered to Mary, at the same time clasping her hands in agony, "if these dolts had possessed the intelligence of common sheep, all this might have been obviated, and we should now, at this moment, have been away. We should have been free! Oh, 'tis too bad—too bad! See how slowly the sluggish tide comes in."

And then Paul walked away to the side of the rough pier and then back again; and this he repeated many times. Ever and anon he would step and look at the water where it gathered about the

rudder of the lugger, and he wondered why it did not rise faster. Every moment seemed an hour to him, and the lazy element appeared to gain nothing.

But the water was not to be forever in rising, and at length the rudder was covered and in a few moments more the old lugger began to right up. The moon had now risen, and it was quite light, for the clouds had all broken away. Paul helped Mary on board, and then conducted her below, where there was a rude sort of cabin partitioned off for the sleeping quarters of the crew, and this he had secured for Mary's own use, having planned to sleep himself on deck under some mats which the fisherman promised to provide. He selected the best bunk he could find, and then set about arranging the bedding so that Mary might take as much physical comfort as possible. Thus he was engaged when the men on deck began to gather in the shore fasts, and he knew from the feeling of the vessel that she was very near effort, for he could hear her keel grating upon the sand.

"We shall be off ere long," he said to his companion. "Now you lie down, and I will go on deck and help get the old thing off."

"What was that? I heard a voice—someone hailing the vessel, I thought," uttered Mary, turning pale.

Paul leaped upon the deck and a sight met his gaze that made his heart stand still. A dozen men were standing upon the pier, directly alongside the lugger, and in advance of the rest he saw the short, square form of Mari Laroon.

"Ah, my boy," cried the pirate captain, leaping on board as he spoke, and at the same time motioning for his men to follow him, "we have once more met. You have no idea how anxious I have been." "Back, back, sir!" uttered the youth, drawing a pistol from his bosom as he spoke. "Lay a hand upon me and you shall die."

"What—would you shoot your own father?" said Laroon.

Before Paul could reply he was seized from behind, his pistols taken from him, and his arms pinioned. Some of the men had come up back of him without his notice. As soon as this was done, Mari Laroon started for the companion way and disappeared down the ladder, and in a moment more there came a sharp, wild cry up from the cabin. Paul started, and with his feet he knocked down two of the men, but he could do no more, and while he was yet struggling, the captain reappeared, leading Mary by the arm.

"Now, my son," he said, as he came near to where Paul stood, "we will be on our way back, for you have been away long enough. Don't you begin to feel homesick?"

The youth was now too much disgusted to speak. He had wit enough to see what caused Mari's lightness of manner. The captain had evidently been fearing that they were gone past catching, and thus to come upon them so easily raised his spirits.

The pirate had something upon his tongue to say, but he kept it to himself. He led Mary from the deck of the lugger, and his followers went after him with Paul. Laroon spoke a few words with the fishermen, and then turned up toward a clump of cocoa trees, where a number of horses were hitched. He spoke no more until he had reached the horses, and then he said only enough to inform those who guarded Paul how they were to dispose of him. During this time Paul had been wondering how all this came about. Either the boat's crew must have been discovered; or Laroon must have gone up to the castle; or Burnington must have turned traitor. He disliked to think the last thing, and yet it would hold the most prominent place in his mind.

"Look ye, Paul," uttered the pirate captain after he had assisted Mary to the back of his horse, "where is your boat and the men you had with you?"

The youth hesitated a moment, but he quickly understood that if he did not answer this question plainly his boatmen might have to suffer, so he answered:

"They are waiting where I left them. I suppose, I told them to wait for me until daylight, and that if I did not return then, they might go on board."

"Very considerate, to be sure," responded Mari with a bitter sneer. He asked no more, and would have ridden off at once, had not Paul detained him.

"Unbind me," said the youth. "I shall not try to escape alone."

The captain pondered upon it a few moments, and then gave directions for unbinding the "boy's" hands. This was done, and then the pirate chieftain started on, and in a moment more his men followed him, Paul riding the horse he had come down on, and which had joined the others as soon as they had been left by the cocoa trees. For some distance not a word was spoken. Paul rode by the side of Philip Storms, the second lieutenant, and he knew this officer to be friendly to him.

"Storms," he said, as soon as he was sure no one else would hear him, "at what time did the captain leave the brig? Do not fear to trust me, for I give you my word that whatever you may say shall never be used to your prejudice. Tell me, if you know."

"Well, he left about 9 o'clock."

"And when did he return for you?"

"He took us with him."

(To be continued.)

Boarding House Repartee.

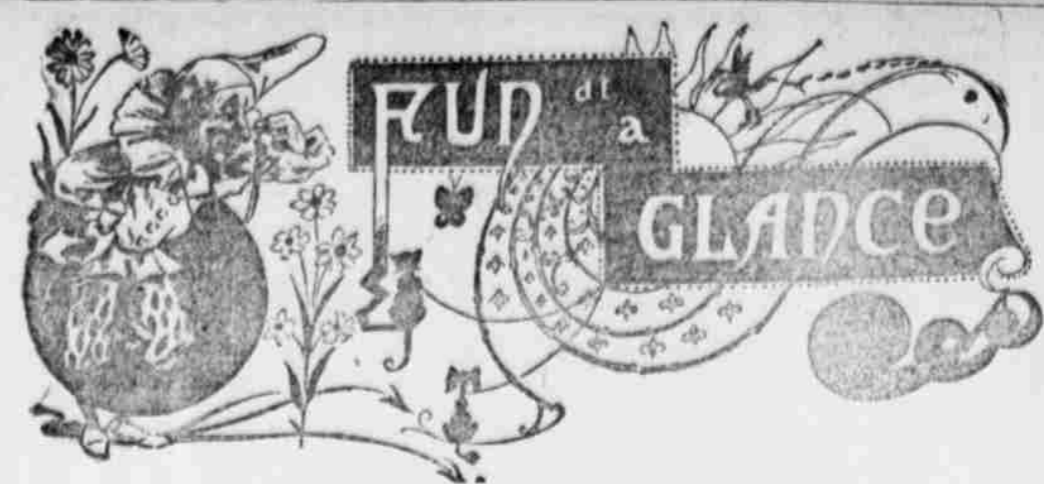
"The strong should always assist the weak," said the fluffy-haired typewriter boarder.

"But it isn't always possible," rejoined the cheerful idiot.

"Why not?" asked the key tickler.

"Well, take this butter, for example," said the c. l. "How could it aid the coffee?"

A politician roasts on the fence because there are voters on both sides of it.



Justified.

"Didn't you tell me," said Mr. Cumrox, "that some musicians wrote a lot of songs without words?"

"Yes," answered his daughter, "Mendelssohn did."

"Well, judging by the average songs nowadays, I don't blame him."—Washington Star.

Both Sides of It.

Green—Boostem, the promoter, tells me he is out for everything there is in it.

Brown—Yes; and the easy marks he induces to invest are out everything they put in it.

A Custom of His.



The Pastor—My dear sir, isn't \$100 a rather large wedding fee?

Western Groom—Oh, no, pard; that is what I always pay.

Stopped at the "Uncle's"

Green (looking for a trade)—How long have you owned that watch?

Brown—About two years.

Green—Does it gain or lose?

Brown—Well, it lost thirty days not long ago.

Off.

"Why is it that Crabby talks so little?"

"He has a foolish idea that he thinks before he speaks."—Detroit Free Press.

Nothing to Do.

"Well," said the old doctor, "you've got your diploma now."

"Yes," replied the young one, "I worked very hard for it, and I ought to go away for a vacation, but I have to start right in and practice."

"Well, that will give you a long and much needed rest."—Philadelphia Ledger.

Then It's Different.

"Love," remarked the person with the quotation habit, "laughs at locksmiths."

"It does," rejoined the student of human nature, "until the parson comes along and claps on the wedlock."

Nothin' Doin'.

Mr. Poorman—Then may I hope to claim you as my bride when the roses bloom again?

Miss De Style—No, Mr. Poorman. You need not hope until you can afford to buy winter roses.

Useful Accomplishment.

"I'm glad I learned to sew on buttons when I was a bachelor," observed Peckem.

"Why, Henry?" asked Mrs. Peckem. "Because," he answered, "I find the accomplishment so useful, now that I am married."

Classifying Him.

"I'd have you know, sir," said the pompous city chap on vacation in the country, "that I work with my head instead of with my hands."

"Haw!" exclaimed the honest farmer. "I 'lowed at first that yew wuz a Jay, but accordin' tew yore statement yew must be a woodpecker, b'gosh!"

The Incentive.

"Going away?" asked Tawker.

"Yes," snapped Bachelor, plodding on with his suit case.

"By the way, the Popleys next door to you have a baby, I hear."

"I hear, too; that's why I'm going away."—Philadelphia Press.

AT NEWPORT.



"Look, papa! The duke has brought his coronet." "Tell him to go ahead and play it. I don't mind the noise."

He Didn't Own It.

"What do you mean by jabbing your umbrella in my eye, sir?" asked the indignant victim.

"Kindly give me your address," calmly replied the offending party, "and I'll ask the owner of the umbrella to mail you an apology the first time I see him."

The Terrorism of the Summer Boarder.



Mr. Kinnickinnick—I thought Widow Ranchburger wa'n't goin' to take no more summer boarders, but I see from the paper here her house is full of 'em.

Mrs. Kinnickinnick—Well, she took one of them last spring for better or worse, and now she has to take a whole bunch more to support him.

Accounted For.

"Phizzer has started up a soda water fountain."

"Why, how could Phizzer do that? He hasn't a penny of his own."

"Well, I heard him say he had the fountain charged."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

A Bar to Familiarity.

"My dear sir," began the bunco man, "your face strikes me as being familiar."

"So?" coldly replied the intelligent farmer; "my fist most generly strikes people for bein' that way."—Philadelphia Ledger.

Odd.

"Jones and his wife are forever at odds with each other, aren't they?"

"Yes, they're always trying to get even with each other."—Philadelphia Press.

Cover the Ground.

"Between the two, Jones and his wife cover a good deal of lingual ground."

"How is that?"

"Well, he makes a good after-dinner speech, and she makes a good before-breakfast one."—Detroit Free Press.

A Kind Chaperon.

Tess—My chaperon was just as nice as she could be. She told me while we were at the shore I must keep Jack Huggard at a distance.

Jess—But I thought you liked Jack Tess—So I do. She meant to keep him at a distance from her.—Philadelphia Press.

What a Woman.

"My! you look as if you had been overcome by the heat," exclaimed Goodley.

"So I am almost," replied Hancock. "It certainly has been very hot to day."

"Yes, but I wouldn't have minded so much if my wife hadn't dragged me about town to-day to do our shopping for next Christmas."—Philadelphia Ledger.