

QUEER RACE.

STORY OF A STRANGE PEOPLE.

BY WILLIAM WESTALL.

CHAPTER XI.—CONTINUED.

“You didn't call me?” he said, reproachfully. “You must be both tired and hungry. Go and get something to eat, then turn in for an hour or two. I think we shall either of us get much sleep to-night.”

“There is going to be a change of weather. The glass is going down fast, and the wind is gathering to windward. But all that is not for us just yet. When you had your grub and your sleep, we reef the foresail. Then we shall be all right.”

“I had hoped we should sight the ‘Santa Anna’ soon, and find her treasure aboard. ‘Oh, we shall find the treasure, sure enough! What would be the use of slipping her if we didn't?’

“I will make the beggars drown themselves,” he said. “Then he disclosed his plan. Rats, he explained, cannot live without water, and this was the reason why there were so many of them about the water-tanks, where they slaked their thirst by licking up the drippings and droppings. But as there was so much less water drawn than formerly, there were fewer droppings, and the rats being for that reason extremely dry, water would make a splendid bait. All that was necessary would be to take buckets, put a few inches of water at the bottom—mixed with molasses to prevent them from jumping out—fix long strips of wood on the sides, so balanced that when the rats ran along them to get at the water they would fall into the buckets.

“Very well,” I said. “But in my opinion the less you have to do with the rats the better. If they have not got the fever—I wish they had—they can give it.”

“Oh, I have no fear. I shall not take the fever. I never thought I should. Besides, that storm must have blown it all out of the ship.”

So Tom arranged his buckets, put them down in the hold near the water-tanks, and awaited the result with great expectations. “An hour later he came up in great glee, bringing one of his buckets. ‘Look here!’ he exclaimed. ‘And there's more in the others.’

In the bottom of the bucket was a writhing mass of worms. The water had not been deep enough to drown all of them, and the survivors, entangled in the molasses, were fighting desperately over the bodies of their comrades.

“Poor wretches!” I said. “Put them out of their misery, Tom!”

“Poor wretches! Put them out of their misery! I would rather put them into a bit more. Isn't it them as did all the mischief? But here goes! I'll chuck them into the water and let the sharks catch 'em—if they can. They'll be well met.”

And with that Tom went to the taffrail, and turned the bucket upside-down, whereupon all the rats, dead and alive—all save one, a fierce-looking, gray-whiskered veteran, which contrived to cling to the side-fell pell-mell into the sea.

“Get out, you big devil!” said the boatswain, seizing it by the tail. But instead of getting out, the rat twisted round and fixed its long, sharp teeth into the captain's thumb. Tom dropped the creature by the neck, choked it off, and sent it spinning.

“By—, it hurts!” he exclaimed, popping the wounded thumb into his mouth. “You had better go and bathe it with hot water,” I said. “Rat-bites are nasty things, some say.”

“We are in the doldrums,” he answered, doggedly; “there can be no doubt about that; and I have always said as if the ‘Santa Anna’ was not cast away—I have always said as she was somewhere in the doldrums; and I am sure I am right.”

This was conclusive, and I could only say that I hoped we should sight the “Santa Anna” soon, and find her treasure aboard. “Oh, we shall find the treasure, sure enough! What would be the use of slipping her if we didn't?”

CHAPTER XII.—DEFOGGED. As may be supposed, life on the becalmed vessel was not particularly amusing. We had not much to talk about, and out of his own line old Tom was as ignorant as an infant. There were, fortunately, plenty of books on board—at least a hundred of them being fiction—and I spent much of my time in reading, and studying, as well as I could with the means at my disposal, the theory of navigation. Then I wrote up the log-book, or rather, made an entry in it every day, for there was very little to set down. Had I not done so I should have lost count of time, so like was one day to another. Now and then I went into the engine-room, and by getting up steam, starting and stopping the engine, I familiarized myself with its working. After awhile, I became a fairly expert engineer, and had our coal bunkers not been so nearly empty, I should have shipped the screw and steamed in the direction whither I thought lay the nearest land.

Bolsiver pattered about the ship, mended sails, spliced ropes, washed the decks, smoked, and slept; yet he got very weary, and one day proposed that, by way of diversion, we should make war on the rats. I asked how he would do it, seeing that he had neither cats, traps, dogs, nor ferrets.

“I will make the beggars drown themselves,” he said. “Then he disclosed his plan. Rats, he explained, cannot live without water, and this was the reason why there were so many of them about the water-tanks, where they slaked their thirst by licking up the drippings and droppings. But as there was so much less water drawn than formerly, there were fewer droppings, and the rats being for that reason extremely dry, water would make a splendid bait. All that was necessary would be to take buckets, put a few inches of water at the bottom—mixed with molasses to prevent them from jumping out—fix long strips of wood on the sides, so balanced that when the rats ran along them to get at the water they would fall into the buckets.

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“I had lately read a second time. In some instances a third time, the medical books in the captain's cabin, and the knowledge thus acquired, and my own observation, had given me certain ideas as to treatment of yellow fever, which I now proceeded to put into practice. Medicine having produced no effect in previous cases, I determined to try something else.

One of the most characteristic symptoms of the malady is intense heat, the patient's temperature being often as high as one hundred and seven degrees. I presumed, though I did not know for certain, that this was owing to an arrest of perspiration. The main point, therefore, was to make my patient sweat; so I rolled him in a wet sheet, then put a pile of blankets on top of him, and made him drink about a gallon of hot water. I kept him in the pack for hours, and when I unpacked him, washed him all over with salt water. This operation I repeated several times in succession, and always when the fever got worse and his skin became hot and dry. I do not presume to say that I cured Bolsiver, for the illness ran its course; but, at any rate, he recovered, and that is what none of the others did. The fever may, however, have been of a milder type than theirs, and it is of course quite possible that he would have got better in any case, and did actually get better, not because of, but in spite of, my treatment. But my guest thought otherwise. He quite excitedly had cured him, said that he owed me his life, and, in the fulness of his heart, protested that, whether I had him to find the “Santa Anna” or not, he should give me half her cargo of gold and silver.

“Thank you, Tom,” I said, laughing. “I'll take it, with all my heart; and it will be the biggest fee ever paid to a quack doctor since the world began, and that is saying a great deal.”

“There is nothing to laugh at,” answered the boatswain, who could never bear being chaffed about his craze. “There is nothing to laugh at, and I'll make a man of you yet, Mr. Erls; never fear! You will be the richest man in Liverpool one of these days.”

But Tom did not get better either very soon or very easily. He lay in his hammock three weeks, and rose from it a yellow-skinned, lantern-jawed ghost, hardly able to put one leg before the other.

“I shall not be of much use when the change comes,” he said, as I supported him to a Southampton chair, under an awning we had rigged up a short time before he fell ill.

“What change?”

“Change of weather, to be sure. And it is bound to come soon. How long have we been here?”

“We have been becalmed five weeks; but as to how long we have been here I would not venture to offer an opinion. I am not sure whether we are here!”

“You are getting beyond me now, Mr. Erls. Not sure whether we are here! Where else should we be?”

“I mean that we are moving. At any rate, I think so. I happened this morning to throw a cork overboard at the stern, and now it is at the bows.”

“There must be a current, then.”

“It looks so; and if the cork, moves so must the ship, though not so fast.”

“You may soon find out whether she moves. Make a trial with the log.”

“A happy thought! It never occurred to me. I will do it at once.”

“Who He Wished to Avoid It.”

“There comes Filkins. Let's go around the block.”

“What's the matter? Had a quarrel with him?”

“Oh, no; we're the best of friends.”

“Owe him money?”

“Not a cent.”

“Think he wants to borrow?”

“No; he always has money.”

“Always has a hard story to tell, perhaps?”

“Never knew him to tell one in all the years I have known him.”

“Well, why in the world don't you want to meet him?”

“He has a baby that is always saying bright things.”—Chicago Tribune.

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By his rapidity and accuracy in addition, F. L. Jenkins recently secured an excellent position in Des Moines, Ia. Fred attended Elliott's Business College, Burlington, Ia.

A Diabolical Trio. If there is one more fiendish than the hateful trinity, dyspepsia, biliousness and irregularity of the bowels usually existent together, we are unaware of it. These co-operative organs, the stomach, the bowels and the liver are usually thrown out of gear together, and the restoration of regularity to one is usually the signal for the others to fall into line. Hostetter's Stomach Bitters controls all three beneficially and completely, not only regulating but invigorating them. It also exerts a most happy influence upon the kidneys and the blood, giving a healthful impulse and enriching the second. It overcomes malaria and a tendency to chronic rheumatism and neuritis, and improves appetite and sleep. To the nervous affords unspeakable relief. A wineglassful three times daily will, if persisted in, achieve results to be expected from no other health medium.

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