

The Green Pea Pirates

By PETER B. KYNE

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WHEREIN MR. GIBNEY PUTS ONE OVER.

Synopsis.—Captain Phineas P. Scraggs has grown up around the docks of San Francisco, and from mess boy on a river steamer, risen to the ownership of the steamer Maggie. Since each annual inspection promised to be the last of the old weatherbeaten vessel, Scraggs naturally has some difficulty in securing a crew. When the story opens, Adelbert P. Gibney, likable, but erratic, a man whom nobody but Scraggs would hire, is the skipper. Nels Halvorsen, a solemn Swede, constitutes the forecastle hands, and Bart McGuffey, a wastrel of the Gibney type, reigns in the engine room.

CHAPTER II—Continued.

She did—with a crack that shook the rigging and caused it to rattle like buckshots in a pan. A terrible cry—such a cry, indeed, as might burst from the lips of a mother seeing her only child run down by the limited—burst from poor Captain Scraggs. "My ship! My ship!" he howled. "My darling little Maggie! They've killed you, they've killed you! The dirty lubbers!"

The succeeding wave lifted the Maggie off the beach, carried her in some fifty feet further, and deposited her gently on the sand. She heeled over to port a little and rested there as if she was very, very weary, nor could all the thrashing of her screw in reverse haul her off again. The surf, dashing in under her fantail, had more power than McGuffey's engines, and, foot by foot, the Maggie proceeded to dig herself in. Mr. Gibney listened for five minutes to the uproar that rose from the bowels of the little steamer before he whistled up Mr. McGuffey.

"Kill her, kill her," he ordered. "Your wheel will bite into the sand first thing you know, and tear the stem off her. You're shakin' the old girl to pieces."

McGuffey killed his engine, banked his fires, and came up on deck, wiping his anxious face with a fearfully filthy sweat rag. At the same time Scraggs and Nels Halvorsen came crawling aft over the deck and when they reached the clear space around the pilot house, Captain Scraggs threw his brown derby on the deck and leaped up until, his rage abating ultimately, no power on earth, in the air, or under the sea, could possibly have rehabilitated it and rendered it fit for further wear, even by Captain Scraggs. This petulant practice of jumping on his hat was a habit with Scraggs whenever anything annoyed him particularly and was always infallible evidence that a simple declaratory sentence had stuck in his throat.

"Well, old whirling dervish," Mr. Gibney demanded calmly when Scraggs paused for lack of breath to continue his dance, "what about it? We're up Salt Creek without a paddle; the devil to pay and no pitch hot."

"McGuffey's fired!" Captain Scraggs screeched. "Come, come, Scraggsy, old tarpot," Mr. Gibney soothed. "This ain't no time for fightin'. Thinkin' an' actin' is all that saves the Maggie now."

But Captain Scraggs was beyond reason. "McGuffey's fired! McGuffey's fired!" he reiterated. "The dirty rotten wharf rat! Call yourself an engineer?" he continued wailing. "As an engineer you're a howling success at shoemakin', you slob. I'll fix your clock for you, my hearty. I'll have your ticket took away from you, an' that's no Chinaman's dream, neither."

"It's all my fault runnin' by dead reckonin'," the honest Gibney protested. "Mac ain't to fault. The engine room telegraph busted an' he got the wrong signal."

"It's his business to see to it that he's got an engine room telegraph that won't bust—"

"You dog!" McGuffey roared and sprang at the skipper, who leaped nimbly up the little ladder to the top of the pilot house and stood prepared to kick Mr. McGuffey in the face should that worthy venture up after him. "I can't persuade you to git me nothin' that I ought to have. I'm tired workin' with junk an' scraps an' copper wire and pieces o' string. I'm through!"

"You're right—you're through, because you're fired!" Scraggs shrieked in insane rage. "Get off my ship, you maritime impostor, or I'll take a pistol to you. Overboard with you, you greasy, adappated bunder! You're rotten, understand? Rotten! Rotten! Rotten!"

"You owe me eight dollars an' six bits, Scraggs," Mr. McGuffey reminded his owner calmly. "Chuck down the spondulicks an' I'll get off your ship." Captain Scraggs was beyond reason, so he tossed the money down to the engineer. "Now git," he commanded. Without further ado, Mr. McGuffey started across the deck to the fo'castle head. Scraggs could not see him but he could hear him—so he pelted the engineer with potatoes, cabbage heads and onions, the vegetables descending about the honest McGuffey in a veritable barrage. Even in the darkness several of these missiles took effect.

ness: "If we ever meet again, Scraggs, I'll make Mrs. Scraggs a widow. Paste that in your hat—when you get a new one."

The Maggie was resting easily on the beach, with the broken water from the long lazy combers surging well up above her water line. At most, six feet of water awaited the engineer, who stood, peering shoreward and listening intently, oblivious to the stray missiles which whizzed past. Presently, from out of the fog, he heard a grinding, metallic sound and through a sudden rift in the fog caught a brief glimpse of blue flame with sparks radiating faintly from it.

That settled matters for Bartholomew McGuffey. The metallic sound was the protest from the wheels of a Cliff house trolley car rounding a curve; the blue flame was an electric manifestation due to the intermittent contact of her trolley with the wire, wet with fog. McGuffey knew the exact position of the Maggie now, so he poised a moment on her bow; as a wave swept past him, he leaped overboard, scrambled ashore, made his way up the beach to the great highway which flanks the shore line between the Cliff house and Ingleside, sought a roadhouse, and warmed his interior with four fingers of whisky neat. Then, feeling quite content with himself, even in his wet garments, he boarded a city-bound trolley car and departed for the warmth and hospitality of Scab Johnny's sailor boarding house in Oregon street.

Captain Scraggs sat down on the half-emptied crate of vegetables and commenced to weep bitterly—half because of rage and half because he regarded himself a pauper. Already he had a vision of himself scouring the waterfront in search of a job.

"No use hoo-hoo'n' over spilt milk, Scraggsy." Always philosophical, the author of the owner's woe sought to carry the disaster off lightly. "Don't add your salt tears to a saltier sea an' no insurance. I got you into this and I suppose it's up to me to get you off, so I guess I'll commence operations." Suiting the action to the word, Mr. Gibney grasped the whistle cord and a strange, sad, sneezing, wheezy moan resembling the expiring protest of a lusty pig and gradually increasing into a long-drawn but respectable whistle rewarded his efforts. For once, he could afford to be prodigal with the steam, and while it lasted there could be no mistaking the fact that here was a steamer in dire distress.

The weird call for help brought Scraggs around to a fuller realization of the enormity of the disaster which had overtaken him. In his agony he forgot to curse his navigating officer for the latter's stubbornness in refusing to turn back when the fog threatened. He clutched Mr. Gibney by the right arm, thereby interrupting for an instant the dismal outburst from the Maggie's siren.

"Gib," he moaned. "I'm a ruined man. How're we ever to get the old



"How're we to get My Maggie Off the Beach?"

sweetheart off whole? Answer me that, Gib. Answer me, I say. How're we to get My Maggie off the beach?"

Mr. Gibney shook himself loose from that frantic grip and continued his pull on the whistle until the slaggie, taking a false note, quavered, moaned, spat steam a minute and subsided with what might be termed a nautical sob. "Now, see what you've done!" he bawled. "You've made me bust the whistle."

"Answer my question, Gib."

"We'll never get her off if you don't quit interferin' an' give me time to think. I'll admit there ain't much of a chance, because it's dead low water now an' just as soon as the tide is at the flood she'll drive further up the beach an' fall apart."

"Perhaps McGuffey will have heard

enough to telephone into the city for a tug."

"Tain't scarcely probable, Scraggsy. You abused him vile an' threw a lot of fodder at him."

"I wish I'd been took with paralysis first," Scraggs wailed bitterly. "You'd best jump ashore, Gib, an' phone in. We're just below the Cliff house and you can run up to one o' them beach resorts an' phone in to the Red Stack Tug Boat company."

"Twouldn't be ethics for me, the registered master o' the Maggie, to desert the ship, Scraggsy, old atck-in-the-mud. What's the matter with gettin' your own shanks wet?"

"I dassen't, Gib. I've had a touch of chills an' fever ever since I used to run mate up the San Joaquin sloughs. Here's a nickel to drop in the telephone slot, Gib. There's a good fellow."

"Scraggsy, you're deludin' yourself. Show me a tugboat skipper that would come out here on a night like this to pick up the S. S. Maggie, two decks an' no bottom an' loaded with garden truck, an' I'll wag my ears an' look at the back o' my neck. She ain't worth it."

"Ain't worth it! Why, man, I paid fifteen hundred hard cash dollars for her."

"Fourteen hundred an' ninety-nine dollars an' ninety-nine cents too much. They seen you comin'. However, grantin' for the sake of argument that she's worth the tow, the next question them towboat skippers'll ask is: 'Who's goin' to pay the bill?'

It'll be two hundred an' fifty dollars at the lowest figger, an' if you got that much credit with the towboat company you're some high financier. Ain't that logic?"

"I'm afraid," Scraggs replied sadly. "It is. Still, they'd have a lien on the Maggie—"

"Steamer ahoy!" came a voice from the beach.

"Man with a megaphone," Mr. Gibney cried. "Ahoy! Ahoy, there!"

"Who are you an' what's the trouble?"

Captain Scraggs took it upon himself to answer: "American steamer Mag—"

Mr. Gibney sprang upon him tgerishly, placed a horny, tobacco-smelling palm across Scraggs' mouth and effectively smothered all further sound. "American steamer Yankee Prince," he hawled like a veritable Bull of Bashan, "of Boston, Hong Kong to Frisco, with a general cargo of sandal wood, rice an' silk. Where're we at?"

"Just outside the Gate. Half a mile o' the Cliff house."

"Telephone in for a tug. We're in nice shape, restin' easy, but our rudder's gone an' the after wheel o' the crank shaft busted. Telephone in, my man, an' I'll make it up to you when we get a safe anchorage. Who are you?"

"Lindstrom, of the Golden Gate Life Saving station."

"I'll not forget you, Lindstrom. My owners are Yankees, but they're sports."

"All right. I'll telephone. On my way!"

"God speed you," murmured Mr. Gibney, and released his hold on Captain Scraggs, who instantly threw his arms around the navigating officer's burly neck. "I forgive you, Adelbert," he crooned. "I forgive you freely. By the tail of the Great Sacred Bull, you're a marvel. She's an all night fog or I'm a Chinaman, and if it only stays thick enough—"

"It'll hold," Gibney retorted doggedly. "It's a tute fog. They always hold. Quit huggin' me. Your breath's bad."

Captain Scraggs, hurried forcibly backward, bumped into the pilot house, but lost none of his enthusiasm. "You're a jewel," he declared. "Oh, man, what a head! Whatever made you think of the Yankee Prince?"

"Because," Mr. Gibney answered calmly, "there ain't no such ship, this land of ours bein' a free republic where princes don't go. Still, it's a nice name, Scraggs, old tarpot—more particular since I thought it up in a hurry. Eh, what?"

"Halvorsen," cried Captain Scraggs. The lone deckhand emerged from a hole in the freight forward whether he had retreated to escape the vegetable barrage put over by Captain Scraggs when McGuffey left the ship. "Aye, aye, sir," he boomed.

"All hands below to the galley!" Scraggs shouted. "While we're waitin' for this here towboat I'll brew a scuttie o' grog to celebrate the discovery o' real sea-farin' talent. Gib, my dear boy, I'm proud of you. No matter what happens, I'll never have no other navigatin' officer."

"Don't crow till you're out o' the woods," the astute Gibney warned him.

CHAPTER III.

In the office of the Red Stack Tug Boat company Captain Dan Hicks, master of the tug Aphrodite; Captain Jack Flaherty, master of the Bodega, and Tiernan, the assistant superintendent on night watch, sat around a hot little box stove engaged in that occupation so dear to the maritime

heart, to-wit: spinning sea yarns.

The telephone rang and Tiernan answered. Hicks and Flaherty hitched forward in their chairs to listen.

"Hello. . . . Yes, Red Stack office. . . . Steamer Yankee Prince. . . . What's that? . . . silk and rice? . . . Half a mile below the Cliff house, Eh? . . . Sure, I'll send a tug right away, Lindstrom."

Tiernan hung up and faced the two skippers. "Gentlemen," he announced, "here's a chance for a little salvage money tonight. The American steamer Yankee Prince is ashore half a mile below the Cliff house. She's a big tramp with a valuable cargo from Hong Kong, with the rudder gone and her crank shaft busted."

"It's high water at twelve thirty-seven," Jack Flaherty pleaded. "You'd better send me, Tiernan. The Bodega has more power than the Aphrodite."

This was the truth and Dan Hicks knew it, but he was not to be beaten out of his share of the salvage by such flimsy argument. "Jack," he pleaded, "don't be a hog all the time. The Yankee Prince is an eight thousand-ton vessel and it's a two-tug job. Better send us both, Tiernan, and play safe. Chances are our competitors have three tugs on the way right now."

"What a wonderful imagination you have, Dan. Eight thousand tons! You're crazy, man. She's thirteen hundred net register and I know it because I was in Newport News when they launched her, and I went out with her skipper on the trial trip. She's a long, narrow-gutted craft, with engines aft, like a lake steamer."

"We'll play safe," Tiernan decided. "Go to it—both of you, and may the best man win. She'll belong to you, Jack, if she's thirteen hundred net and you get your line aboard first. If she's as big as Dan says she is, you'll be equal partners—"

But he was talking to himself. Down the docks Hicks and Flaherty were racing for the respective commands, each shouting to his night watchman to pipe all hands on deck. Fortunately, a goodly head of steam was up in each tug's boilers; because of the fog and the liability to collisions and consequent hasty summons, one engineer on each tug was on duty. Out through the Gate they nosed their way, heaving the lead continuously, made a wide detour around Mile rock and the Seal rocks, swung a mile to the south of the position of the Maggie, and then came cautiously up the coast, whistling continuously to acquaint the Yankee Prince with their presence in the neighborhood.

In anticipation of the necessity for replying to this welcome sound, Captain Scraggs and Mr. Gibney had, for the past two hours, busied themselves getting up another head of steam in the Maggie's boilers, repairing the whistle and splicing the wires of the engine room telegraph. Like the wise men they were, however, they declined to sound the Maggie's siren until the tugs were quite close. Even then, Mr. Gibney shuddered, but needs must when the devil drives, so he pulled the whistle cord and was rewarded with a weird, mournful grunt, dying away into a gasp.

"Sounds like she has the pip," Jack Flaherty remarked to his mate. "Must have taken on some of that dirty Asiatic water," Dan Hicks soliloquized, "and now her tubes have gone to glory."

Immediately both tugs kicked ahead under a dead slow bell, guided by a series of toots as brief as Mr. Gibney could make them, and presently both tug lookouts reported breakers dead ahead.

Dan Hicks sent a man forward to heave the lead under the nose of the Aphrodite, which was edging in gingerly toward the voice. He had a searchlight, but he did not attempt to use it, knowing full well that in such a fog it would be of no avail. Guided, therefore, by the howlings of Mr. Gibney, reinforced by the shrill yips of Captain Scraggs, the tug crept in closer and closer, and when it seemed that they must be within a hundred feet of the surf, Dan Hicks trained his Lyle gun in the direction of Mr. Gibney's voice and shot a heaving line into the fog.

Almost simultaneously with the report of the gun came a shriek of pain from Captain Scraggs. Straight and true the wet, heavy knotted end of the heaving line came in over the Maggie's quarter and struck him in the mouth. In the darkness he staggered back from the stinging blow, clutched wildly at the air, slipped and rolled over among the vegetables with the precious rope clasped to his breast.

"I got it," he spluttered, "I got it, Gib."

"Safe, O!" Mr. Gibney bawled. "Pay out your hawser." They met it at the taffrail as it came up out of the breakers, wet but welcome. "Pass it around the mainmast, Scraggs," Mr. Gibney cautioned. "If we make fast to the towin' bits, the first jerk'll pull the anchor bolts up through the deck."

When the hawser had been made fast to the mainmast, the leathern lungs of Mr. Gibney made due announcement of the fact to the ex-

pectant Captain Hicks. "As soon as you feel you've got a grip on her," he yelled, "just hold her steady so she won't drive further up the beach when I get my anchor up. She'll come out like a loose tooth at the top of the flood."

The Aphrodite forged slowly ahead, taking in the slack of the hawser. Twenty minutes later, after much backing and swearing and heaving of lines the Bodega's hawser was also put aboard the Maggie. Mr. Gibney judged it would be safe now to fasten this line to the towing bits.

Suddenly Captain Scraggs remembered there was no one on duty in the Maggie's engine room. With a half sob, he slid down the greasy ladder, tore open the furnace doors and commenced shoveling in coal with a recklessness that bordered on insanity. When the indicator showed eighty pounds of steam he came up on deck and discovered Mr. Gibney walking solemnly round and round the little capstan up forward. It was creaking and groaning dimly. Captain Scraggs thrust his engine room torch above his head to light the scene and gazed upon his navigating officer in blank amazement.

"What foolishness is this, Gib?" he demanded. "Are you clean daffy, doin' a barn dance around that rusty capstan, makin' a noise fit to frighten the fish?"

"Not much," came the laconic reply. "I'm a smart man. I'm raisin' both anchors."

"Well, all I got to remark is that it takes a smart man to raise both anchors when we only got one anchor



"The American Steamer Yankee Prince Is Ashore Half a Mile Below the Cliff House."

to our blessed name. An' with that anchor safe on the fo'castle head, I, for one, can't see no sense in raisin' it."

"You tarnation Jackass!" sighed Gibney. "You forget who we are. Do you s'pose the steamer Yankee Prince can lay on the beach all night with both anchors out, an' then be got ready to tow off in three shakes of a lamb's tail? It takes noise to get up two anchors—so I'm makin' all the noise I can. Get any steam?"

"Eighty pounds," Scraggs confessed. Having for the moment forgotten his identity, he was confused in the presence of the superior intelligence of his navigating officer.

"Run aft, then, Scraggs, an' turn that cargo winch over to heat the band until I tell you to stop. With the drum runnin' free she'll make noise enough for a winch three times her size, but you might give the necessary yells to make it more lifelike."

Captain Scraggs fled to the winch. At the end of five minutes, Mr. Gibney appeared and bade him desist. Then, turning his improvised megaphone seaward he addressed an imaginary mate: "Mr. Thompson, have you got your port anchor up?"

Scraggs took the cue immediately. "All clear forward, sir," he piped. "Send the bosun for'd an' heave the lead, Mr. Thompson."

"Very well, sir." Here The Squarehead, who had been enjoying the unique situation immensely, decided to take a hand. Presently, in sing-song cadence, he was reporting the depth of water alongside.

Do Hicks and Flaherty collect? Watch for next week's doings.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Joke Was on Whistler.

Whistler, the great American artist, was dining with Sir Henry Irving. Two of his earliest pictures were on the wall and he remarked jokingly at the beginning of dinner that he could study them from the point of view of his riper years. Though he spoke with a smile, he did indeed look at them a great deal. Suddenly he exclaimed. "Irving, look what you've done!" "What?" asked Irving. "Why, these pictures, both of them, are upside down, and you've never noticed it even." "Well," said Irving, "surely I can be excused. It's taken the man who painted them over an hour to discover it."

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