# The Green Pea Pirates

By PETER B. KYNE

Author of "WEBSTER-MAN'S MAN," "THE VALLEY OF THE GIANTS," ETC.

#### HORRID WAR.

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 premised to be the last of the old weatherbeaten vessel, scraggs naturally has some diffi-Scraggs naturally has some difficulty in securing a crew. When the stery opens, Adelbert P. Gibney, likable, but erratic, a man whom nobody but Scraggs would hire, is the skipper, Neils Halvorsen, a solemn Swede, constitutes the foreenstic hands, and Bart McGuffey, a wastrel of the Gibney type, reigns in the engine room. With this metley crew and his ancient vessel, Captain Scraggs is engaged in freighting garden trace from Halfmoon bay to San Francisce. The inevitable happens; Francisco. The inevitable happens the Maggie goes ashere in a fog. A passing vessel halling the wreck, Mr. Gibney gets word to a towing company in San Francisco that the ship ashore is the Yankee Prince, with promise of a rich salvage. Two tugs succeed in pulling the Maggie into deep water, and she slips her tow lines and gets away tion practiced on them, Captains Hicks and Flaherty, commanding the two tugboats, ascertain the identity of the "Yankee Prince" and, fearing ridicule should the facts become known along the water front, determine on personal vengeance. Their hostile visit to the Maggie results in Captain Scraggs promising to get a new botter and make needed repairs to the steamer. Scraggs refuses to fulfill his promises and Gibney and McGuffey "strike." With marvel-ous luck, Scraggs ships a fresh crew. At the end of a few days of wild conviviality Gibney and McGuffey are Stranded and seek their old positions on the Maggie. They are hostilely received, but remain. On their way to San Francisco they sight a derelict and Gib-ney and McGuffey swim to it. The derelict proves to be the Chesapeake, richly inden, its entire crew stricken with scurvy. Scragge at-tempts to tow her in, but the Mag-gle is unequal to the task and Gib-ney and McGuffey, alone, sail the ship to San Francisco, their salvage meney amounting to \$1,000 apiece. His crew having deserted him, Captain Scraggs induces them to return. At an "old herse" sale to return. At an "old herse" sale the three purchase two mysterious boxes which they believe to contain amuggled "Oriental goods." They find, instead, two dead Chinamen. Scraggs seeks to "double cress" his two associates, but Mr. Gibney eutwits him and makes a satisfactory financial settlement with the Chinese company to whom the bedies have been consigned, leaving Scraggs out in the gued, leaving Scraggs out in the cold. Gibney resents McGuffey's action in lending money to Scragge without consulting him, and after a terrific wordy combat the three separate, McGuffey becoming as-sistant engineer on an oil tanker. Gibney disappearing, and Scraggs, forced to lay up the Maggie, takes a subordinate position on a ferry steamer. Senor Lopes, Mexican revolutionist, makes Scraggs a generous offer for transportation of munitions to Lower California. Scraggs accepts, and the old Maggie is once more put into comm Arriving at his destination, Scraggs finds his old companion, Mr. Gibney, is the consignee. Time having softened animosities, the reunion is joyful.

### CHAPTER IX-Continued.

"Why?" demanded Captain Scraggs instantly on the defensive.

"Not that I'm holdin' any grudge agin you, Scraggsy," said Mr. Gibney affably, "but I wouldn't a-had you no more now than I would when we was runain' in the green-pea trade. It's because you ain't got no imagination, and the Maggie ain't big enough for my purpose. Havin' the Maggie sort of puts a crimp in my plans."

"Rot," snapped Captain Scraggs. "I've had the Maggie overhauled and shipped a new wheel, and she's a mighty smart little boat, I'll tell you. I'll land them arms in Descanso bay all right."

"I knew you will," said Mr. Gibney sadly. "That's just what hurts. You see, Scraggsy, I nover intended 'em for Descanso bay in the first place. Thore's a nice healthy little revolution fomentin' down in the United States of Colombia, with Adelbert P. Gibney playin' both ends to the middle. And there's a dog-hole down on the Gold coast where I intended to land this cargo, but now that Scab Johany's gone to work and sent me a bay scow instead of a sea-goin' steamer, I'm in the nine-hole instead o' dog-hole. I can never get as far as the Gold coast with the Maggie. She can't carry coal enough to last her."

"But I thought these guns and things was for the Mexicans," quavered Captain Scraggs. "Scab Johnny and Lopez told me they was."

Mr. Gibney grouned and hid his face in his hands. "Scraggsy," he said sadly, "it's a cinch you ain't used the past four years to stimulate that imagination of yours. Of course they was purchased for the Mexicans, but what was to prevent me from lettin' the Mexicans pay for them, help out on the charter of the boat, and then have me divert the cargo to the United States of Colombia, where I can sell 'em at a clear profit, the cost bein' nothin' to speak of? Now you got to rome buttin' in with the Maggie, and what happens? Why, I got to be honst, of course. I get to make good on my bluff, and what's in it for me? I headed. About a hundred and twenty

Phineas Scraggs? Not on your life. If It hadn't been for you buttln' in with your blasted, rotten hulk of a freshwater skiff, I'd-"

Mr. Gibney paused ominously and savagely bit the end of his cigar. As for Captain Scraggs, every drop of blood in his body was boiling in defense of the ship he loved.

"You're a pirate," he shrilled. "And you're just as big a hornet as you ever was," replied Mr. Gibney. "Always buzzin' around where you ain't wanted. But still, what's the use of bawlin' over spilt milk? We'll drop into San Diego for a couple of hours and take on coal, and about sunset we'll pull out and make the run down to Descanso bay in the dark. We might as well forget the past and put this thing through as per program. Only I saw visions of a schooner all my own, Scraggsy, and-well, what's you're a natural-born mar-plot. Always buttin' in, buttin' in, fit for nothin' but the green-pea trade. However, I guess I can turn into my old berth and get some sleep. Put the old girl under a slow bell and save your coal. We'll have to fool away four or five hours in San Diego anyhow and there nin't no sense in crewdin' the old hulk."

that really your lay-to steal the junta, and sell out to a furrin' coun-

"Of course it was," said Mr. Gibney pettishly. "They all do such things in the banana republics. Why should I be an exception? There's half a dozen different gangs fightin' each other and the government in Mexico. and if I don't deliver these arms, just see all the fives I'll be savin'. And after I got the cargo into Colombia and sold it, I could have peached on the rebels there, and got a reward for it, and saved a lot more lives, and come away rich and respected."

"By the Lord Harry," said Captain Scraggs, "but you've got an imagination, Gib. I'll swear to that. Gib, I take off my hat to you. You're all tight and shipshape and no loose ends bobbin' around you. Don't tell me th' scheme's got t' fall through, Gib. Great never heard of such a grand lay in my at." life. It's a absolute winner. Don't give up, Gib. Oil up your imagination and find a way out. Let's get together, Gib, and make a little money. Dang it all, Gib, I been lonesome ever since I seen you last."

"Well," replied Mr. Gibney, "I'll turn in and try to scheme a way out, but I don't hold out no hope. Not a ray of it. I'm afraid, Scraggsy, we've got to be honest."

Saying which, Mr. Gibney hopped up into his berth, stretched his huge legs, and fell asleep with his clothes on. Captain Scraggs looked him over with the closest approach to affection that had ever lightened his cold gray eye, and sighing heavily, presently went on deck. As he passed up the companionway, the first mate heard him murmur: "Gib's a fine lad. I'll be dad burned if he ain't."

At six o'clock next morning the Maggie was rounding Point Loma, heading in for San Diego bay, and Captain Scraggs went below and awakened Mr. Gibney.

"What's for breakfast, Scraggsy, old kid?" usked Mr. Gibney.

"Fried eggs," said Captain Scraggs, remembering Mr. Gibney's partiality for that form of nutriment in the van- 1 ished days of the green-pen trade. "Ham an' fried eggs an' a sizzlin' pot o' coffee. Thought a way out o' our mess, Gib?" "Not yet," replied Mr. Gibney as he

rolled out of bed, "but eggs is always stimulatin', and I don't give up hope on a full stomach."

An hour later they were tied up under the coal bunkers, and at Mr. Gibney's suggestion some twenty tons of sacked coal were piled on top of the fo'castle head and on the main deck for'd, in case of emergency. They lay in the harbor all day until about four o'clock, when Mr. Gibney, by virtue of his authority as supercargo, ordered the lines cast off and the Maggle steamed out of the harbor. Off Point Loma they veered to the south, leaving the Coronado islands on the starboard quarter, ten miles to the west. Mr. Gibney was below with Captain Scraggs, battling with the problem that confronted them, when the mate stuck his head down the companionway to report a large power schooner coming out from the lee of the Coronados and standing off on a course cal-

culated to intercept the Maggie in an hour or two. Captain Scraggs and Mr. Gibney sprang up on the bridge at once, the latter with Scraggs' long glass up to

"She was hove to under the lee of the island, and the minute we came out of the harbor and turned south she come nosin' after us," said the

mate. "Hum !" muttered Mr. Gibney. "Gasoline schooner. Two masts and bald-

Nothin' but glory. Can you hock a | ton, I should say, and showin' a pretty | leaped into the hold. "Bear a light chunk of glory for ham and eggs, pair of heels. There's somethin' up here until I can root out the wheels of for'd-yes-let me see-ye-es, there's two more-holy sailor! it's a gunboat! One of those doggoned gasoline const patrol boats, and there's the federal fing flying at the fore."

"Let's put back to San Diego bay," quavered Captain Scraggs. "Til be durned if I relish the idee o' losin' the Maggie."

"Too late," said the philosophical Gibner. "We're in Mexican waters now, and she can cut us off from the bay. The only thing we can do is to run for it and try to lose her after dark. Tell the engineer to crowd her to the limit, There ain't much wind to speak of, so I guess we can manage to hold our own for a while. Nevertheless, I've got a bunch that we'll be overhauled. Of course, you ain't got no papers to show, Scraggs, and they'll search the cargo, and confiscate us, and shoot the whole bloomin' crowd the use? What's the use? Scraggsy, of us. I bet a dollar to a doughnut that fellow Lopez sold us out, after the fashion of the country. I can't help thinkin' that that gunbont was there just a-waitin' for us to show up."

For several minutes Mr. Gibney con tinued to study the gunboat until there could no longer be any doubt that she intended to overhaul them. He made out that she had a long gun "Gib," said Captain Scraggs, "was for'd, with a battery of two one-pounders on top of her house and something cargo, double-cross the insurrecto on her port quarter that looked like a men, dressed in white cloth, could be seen on her decks.

Presently Mr. Gibney was interrupted by Captain Scraggs pulling at his sleeve.

"You was a gunner once, wasn't you. Gib?" said Captain Scraggs in a trembling voice.

"You bet I was," replied Mr. Gibney. "My shootin' won the trophy three times in succession when I was on the old Kearsarge. If I had one good gun and a half-decent crew, I'd knock that gunboat silly before she knew what had hit her."

"Gib, I've got an idee," said Captain Scraggs. "Out with it," said Mr. Gibney cheer

fully. "There was four little cannon lowered into the hold the last thing before snakes, don't tell me that. Ain't there | we put on the main hatch, and the amsome way o' gettin' around it? There | munition to load 'em with is stowed in must be. Why, Gib, my dear boy, I the after hold and very easy to get

> Mr. Gibney turned a beaming face to the skipper, reached out his arms, and folded Captain Scraggs in an embrace that would have done credit to a grizzly bear. There were genuine tears of admiration in his eyes and in his voice when he could master his emotions sufficiently to speak.

> "Scraggsy, old tarpot, you've been long time comin' through on the imagination, but you've sure arrived with all sail set. I always thought you had about as much nerve as an oyster, but I take it all back. We'll get out them two little jackass guns and fight a naval battle, and if I don't sink that Mexican gunboat, and save the Mag-



I'd Sooner Die Fightin' Than Let Them Stand Me Up Agin a Wall in Ensenada."

gie, feed me to the sharks, for I won't be worthy of the blood that's in me. hatch. Reeve a block and tackle through that cargo gaff and stand by to heave out the guns."

But Captain Scraggs had repented of his rash suggestion almost the moment he made it. Only the dire necessity of desperate measures to save the Maggie had prompted him to put the idea into Mr. Gibney's head, and when he saw the avidity with which the latter set to work clearing for action, his terror knew no bounds.

"Oh, Gib," he walled, "I'm afraid we better not try to lick that gunboat after all. They might sink us with all

hands." "Rats!" said Mr. Gibney, as be

these guns. Here they are, labeled 'cream separator.' Stand by with that sling to-

"But, Gib, my dear boy," protested Captain Scraggs, "this is insanity!"

"I know it," said Mr. Gibney calmly. "Scraggsy, you're perfectly right. But I'd sooner die fightin' than let them stand me up agin a wall in Ensenada. We're fillbusters, Scrnggsy, and we're caught with the goods. I, for one, am goln' down with the steamer Maggie, but I'm goin' down fightin' like a

"Maybe-maybe we can outrun her, Glb," half sobbed Captain Scraggs,

"No hope," replied Mr. Gibney. "Fight and die is the last resort. She's eight miles astern and gainin' every minute, and when she's within two miles she'll open fire. Of course, we won't be hit unless they've got a Yankee gunner aboard."

"Let's run up the Stars and Stripes and dare 'em to fire on us," said Captain Sernggs.

"No," said Mr. Gibney firmly, "my old man died for the flag an' I've salled under it too long to hide behind it when I'm in Dutch. We'il fight. If you was ever navigatin' officer on a Colombian gunboat, Scraggs, you'd realize what it means to run from a Mexican."

Captain Scraggs said nothing further. Perhaps he was a little ashamed Maxim rapid-fire gun. About twenty of himself in the face of Mr. Gibney's simple faith in his own ability; perhaps in his veins, all unknown. there flowed a taint of the heroic blood of some forgotten sea-dog. Be that as it may, something did swell in his breast when Mr. Gibney spoke of the flag and his scorning to hide behind it, and Scraggs' snaggle teeth came together with a snap.

"All right, Gib, my boy," he said solemnly, "I'm with you. Mrs. Scraggs has slipped her cable and there ain't nobody to mourn for me. But if we can't fight under the Stars and Stripes, by the tail of the Great Sacred Bull, we'll have a flag of our own," and leaving Mr. Gibney and the crew to get the guns on deck, Captain Scraggs ran below. He appeared on deck presently with a long blue burgee on which was emblazoned in white letters the single word Maggie. It was his own houseflag, and with trembling hands he ran it to the fore and cast its

"Good old dishcloth!" shricked Mr. Gibney. "She never comes down." "D-d if she does," said Captain

Scraggs profanely. While all this was going on, a deck hand had reeved a block and tackle through the end of the cargo gaff and passed it to the winch. The two guns came out of the hold in jig time, and while Scraggs and one deckhand opened the after hold and got out ammunition for the guns, Mr. Gibney, assisted by the other deckhand, proceeded to put one of the guns together. He was shrewd enough to realize that he would have to do practically all of the work of serving the gun himself, in view of which condition one gun would have to defend the Maggie. He had never seen a mountain gun before, but he did not find it difficult to put the simple mechanism together.

"Now, then, Scraggsy," he announced cheerfully when the gun was finally assembled on the carriage, "get a sizeable timber an' spike it to the center o' the deck. I'll run the trail spade up against that cleat an' that'll keep the recoll from lettin' the gun go backward, clean through the opposite rail and overboard. Gimme a coupler gallons o' distillate an' some waste, somebody. This cosmoline's got to come out o' the tube an' out o' the breech mechanism before we commence shootin'."

The enemy had approached within three miles by the time the piece was ready for action. Under Mr. Gibney's instructions Captain Scraggs held the fuse setter in case it should be necessary to adjust with shrapnel, Mr. Gibney inserted his sights and took a preliminary squint. "A little different from gun-pointin' in the navy, but about the same principle," he declared. "In the army I believe they call this kind o' shootin' direct fire, because you sight direct on the targef." He scratched his ingenious head and examined the ammunition. "Not a high explosive shell in the lot," he mourned. "I'll have to use percussion fire to get the range; then I'll drop back a little an' spray her with shrapnel. Seems a pity to smash up a fine schooner Pipe all hands and lift off that main like that one with percussion fire. I'd rather tickle 'em up a bit with shrapnel an' scare 'em into runnin' away."

He got out the lanyard, slipped a cartridge in the breech, paused, and scratched his head again. His calm deliberation was driving Scraggs crazy. He reminded Mr. Gibney with some asperity that they were not attending a strawberry festival and for the love of heaven to get busy.

"I'm estimatin' the range, you snipe," Gibney retorted. "Looks to be about three miles to me. A little long, mebbe, for this gun, but-there's nothin' like tryin'," and he sighted carefully. "Fire," he bawled as the Mag-

gle rested an instant in the trough the sea-and a deckhand jerked th. lanyard. Instantly Mr. Gibney clappe the long glass to his eye.

"Good direction-over," he mus mured. "I'll lay on her waterline nex time." He jerked open the breeci ejected the cartridge case, and rammeanother cartridge home. This sho struck the water directly under the schooner's bow and threw water over her forecastle head. Mr. Gibne, smiled, spat overboard, and winker confidently at Captain Scraggs. "Like spearin' fish in a bath tub," he de clared. He bent over the fuse setter "Corrector three zero," he intoned "four eight hundred." He thrust cartridge in the fuse setter, twister it, slammed it in the gun, and fire again. "Over," he growled.

Something whined over the Maggiand threw up a waterspout half mile beyond her.

"Dubs," jeered Mr. Gibney, and sighted again. This time his shrapnel burst neatly on the schooner. Almost simultaneously a shell from the schooner dropped into the sacked coal on the forecastle head of the Maggie and enveloped her in a black pall of smoke and coal dust. Captain Scraggs screamed.

"Tit for tat," the philosophical Gibney reminded him. "We can't expect to get away with everything, Scraggsy, old kiddo." The words were scarcely out of his mouth before the Maggie's mainmast and about ten feet of her ancient railing were trailing alongside. Mr. Gibney whistled softly



"My Maggle's Tall Is Shot Away."

through his teeth and successfully sprayed the Mexican again. "It breaks my heart to ruin that craft's canvas," he declared, and let her have it once

"My Maggie's tail is shot away." Captain Scraggs wailed, "an' I only rebuilt it a week ago." Three more shots from the long gun missed them. but the fourth carried away the cabin, leaving the wreck of the pilot house, with the helmsman unscathed, sticking up like a sore thumb.

"Turn her around and head straight for them," the gallant Gibney roared. "She's a smaller target comin' bows on. We're broadside to her now."

"Gib, will you ever sink that Greaser?" Captain Scraggs sobbed hysterically.

"Don't want to sink her," the supercargo retorted. "She's a nice little schooner. I'd rather capture her. Maybe we can use her in our business, Scraggsy," and he continued to shower the enemy with high bursting shrapnel. When the two vessels were less than two miles apart the one-pounders came into action. It was pretty shooting and the wicked little shells ripped through the old Maggie like buckshot through a roll of butter. Mr. Gibney slid flat on the deck beside his gun and Captain Scraggs sprawled beside

"A feller," Mr. Gibney announced, "has got to take a beatin' while lookin' for an openin' to put over the knockout blow. If the old Maggie holds together till we're within a cable length o' that schooner an' we ain't all killed by that time, I bet I'll make them skunks sing soft an' low."

"How?" Captain Scraggs chattered. "With muzzle bursts," Mr. Gibney replied. "I'll set my fuse at zero, an' at point-blank range I'll just rake everything off that schooner's decks. Guess I'll get half a dozen cartridges set an' ready for the big scene. Up with you, Admiral Scraggs, an' hold the fuse setter stendy."

"I'm agin war," Scraggs quavered. "Gib, it's sure h-Il."

"Rats! It's invigoratin', Scraggsy. There ain't nothin' wrong with war, Scraggsy, unless you happen to get killed. Then it's like cholera. You can cure every case except the first one."

They had come inside the minimum range of the Mexican's long gun now, so that only the one-pounders continued to peck at the Maggie. Evidently the Mexican was as eager to get to close quarters as Mr. Gibney. for he held steadily on his course.

"Well, it's time to put over the big stuff," Mr. Gibney remarked presently. 'Here's hopin' they don't pot me with rifle fire while I'm extendin' my compliments."

Captain Gibney, a victor, organizes "The Syndicate."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

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