

THE SEA-HAWK

A Forthcoming First National Picture. Part Two By Rafael Sabatini.

(Continued From Saturday.)
Up and down the gangway ran the boatswain's mates, cutting fiercely with their whips to urge the slaves to the very utmost effort. The vessel gathered speed. The looming headland slipped by. The mouth of the cove appeared to widen as they approached it. Beyond spread the dark, steely mirror mirror of the dead-calm sea.

Rosamund could scarcely breathe in the intensity of her suspense. She got a hand upon the arm of Sakr-el-Bahr.

"Shall we elude them, after all?" she asked in a trembling whisper.

"I pray that we may not," he answered, muttering. "But this is the handwork I feared. Look!" he added sharply, and pointed.

They had shot clear to the headland. They were close to the cove, and suddenly they had a view of the dark bulk of the galleon, studded with a score of points of light, riding a cable's length away on their larboard quarter.

"Faster!" cried the voice of Asad. "Row for your lives, you infidel swine! Lay me your whips upon these hides of theirs! Beat them, these dogs to their oars, and they'll never overtake us now."

Whips sang and thudded below them in the waist, to be answered by one more than one from the tormented panting slaves, who already were spending every ounce of strength in this cruel effort to elude their own chance of salvation and release. Fast as he beat the tongs marking the desperate time, and faster in response to it came the creak and dip of oars and the panting, stertorous breathing of the rowers.

"Lay on! Lay on!" cried Asad, inexorable. Let them burst their lungs—they were but infidel lungs—so that for an hour they but maintained the present pace.

"We are drawing away!" cried Marzak in jubilation. "The praise to Allah!"

And so indeed they were. Vastly the lights of the galleon were receding. With every inch of canvas spread yet she appeared to be standing still, so faint was the breeze that stirred.

And whiffs she crawled, the galleon raced as never yet she had raced since Sakr-el-Bahr had commanded her, for Sakr-el-Bahr had never yet turned tall upon the foe in whatever strength he found him.

Suddenly over the water from the galleon came a loud hail. Asad laughed, and in the darkness shook his fist at them, cursing them in the name of Allah and his prophet. And then, in answer to that curse of his, the galleon's side belched fire; the calm of the night was broken by a roar of thunder, and something smote the water ahead of the Muslim vessel with a resounding thudding splash.

In fear Rosamund drew closer to Sakr-el-Bahr. But Asad laughed again.

"No need to fear their marksmanship," he cried. "They cannot see us

Their own lights dazzle them. On! On! "He is right," said Sakr-el-Bahr. "The truth is that they will not fire at us because they know you to be aboard."

She looked out to sea again, and beheld those friendly lights falling farther and farther away.

"We are drawing steadily away," she groaned. "They will never overtake us now."

So feared Sakr-el-Bahr. He more than feared it. He knew that, save for some miraculous rising of wind it must be as she said. And then out of his despair leapt inspiration—a desperate inspiration, true child of that despair of which it was begotten.

"There is a chance," he said to her. "But it is as a throw of the dice with life and death for stakes."

"Then seize it," she bade him instantly. "For though it should go against us we shall not be losers."

"You are prepared for anything?" he asked her.

"Have I not said that I will go down with you this night? Ah, don't waste time in words."

"Be it so, then," he replied gravely, and moved away a step, then checked.

"You had best come with me," he said. "Obediently she complied and followed him, and some there were who stared as these two passed down the gangway, yet none attempted to hinder her movements. Enough and to spare were there already to engage the thoughts of all aboard that vessel.

He thrust a way for her, past the boatswain's mates who stood over the slaves ferociously plying tongues and whips, and so brought her to the waist. Here he took up the lantern which had been muffled, and as its light once more streamed forth, Asad shouted an order for its extinction.

But Sakr-el-Bahr took no least heed of that command. He stepped to the mainmast, about which the powder kegs had been stacked. One of these had been broached against its being needed by the gunners on the poop.

The unfastened lid rested loosely atop of it. That lid Sakr-el-Bahr knocked over; then he pulled one of the horn sides out of the lantern, and held the now half-broken flame immediately above the powder.

A cry of alarm went up from some who had watched him. But above that cry rang his sharp command.

"Cease rowing!"

The tomtom fell instantly silent, but the slaves took yet another stroke!

"Cease rowing," he commanded again. "Asad!" he called. "Bid them pause, or I'll blow you all straight into the arms of Shaitan." And he lowered the lantern until it rested on the very rim of the powder keg.

At once the rowing ceased. Slaves, corsairs, officers and Asad himself stood paralyzed, all at gaze upon that grim figure illumined by the lantern, threatening them with doom. It may have crossed the minds of some to throw themselves forthwith upon him; but to arrest them was the dread lest any movement towards him should precipitate the explosion that must blow them all into the next world.

At last Asad addressed him, his voice half-choked with rage.

"May Allah strike thee dead! Art thou djinn-possessed?"

Marzak, standing at his father's side, set a quarrel to the bow which he had snatched up. "Why do you all stand and stare?" he cried. "Cut him down, one of you!" And even as he spoke he raised his bow. But his father checked him, perceiving what must be the inevitable result.

"If any man takes a step towards me, the lantern goes straight into the gunpowder," said Sakr-el-Bahr serenely. "And if you shoot me as you intend, Marzak, or if any other shoots, the same will happen of itself. Be warned unless you thirst for the paradise of the prophet."

"Sakr-el-Bahr!" cried Asad, and from its erstwhile anger his voice had now changed to a note of intercession. He stretched out his arms appealingly to the captain whose doom he had already pronounced in his heart and mind. "Sakr-el-Bahr, I conjure thee by the bread and salt we have eaten together, return to thy senses, my son."

"I am in my sense," was the answer, "and being so I have no mind for the fate reserved me in Algiers—by the men who that same bread and salt. I have no mind to go back with thee to be hanged or sent to toil at an oar again."

"And if I swear to thee that naught of this shall come to pass?"

"Thou'lt be forewarned. I would not trust thee now, Asad. For thou art proven a fool, and in all my life I never found good in a fool and never trusted one—save once, and he betrayed me. Yesterday I pleaded with thee, showing thee the wise course, and affording thee the opportunity of a slight sacrifice that mightst have had me and hanged me at thy leisure. 'Twas my own life I offered thee, and for all that thou knowest it, yet thou knowest not that I knew."

He laughed. "See now what manner of fool art thou? Thy greed hath wrought thy ruin. Thy hands were

opened to grasp more than they could hold. See now the consequence. It comes yonder in that slowly but surely approaching galleon."

"Every word of it sank into the brain of Asad thus tardily to enlighten him. He wrung his hands in his blended fury and despair. The crew stood in appalled silence, daring to make no movement that might precipitate their end.

"Name thine own price," cried the Basha at length, and I swear to thee by the beard of the prophet it shall be paid thee."

"I named it yesterday, but it was refused. I offered thee my liberty and my life if that were needed to gain the liberty of another."

Had he looked behind him he might have seen the sudden lighting of Rosamund's eyes, the sudden clutch

of her bosom, which would have announced to him that his utterances were none so cryptic but that she had understood them.

"I will make thee rich and honored, Sakr-el-Bahr," Asad continued urgently. "Thou shalt be as mine own son. The Bashaik itself shall be thine when I lay it down, and all men shall do thee honor in the meanwhile as to myself."

"I am not to be bought, O mighty Asad. I never was. Already wert thou set upon my death. Thou canst command it now, but only upon the condition that thou share the cup with me. What is written is written. We have sunk some tall ships together in our day, Asad. We'll sink together in our turn tonight if that be thy desire."

"May thou burn forevermore in hell, thou black-hearted traitor!" Asad cursed him, his anger bursting all the bonds he had imposed upon it.

And then, of a sudden, upon that admission of defeat from their Basha, there arose a great clamor from the crew. Sakr-el-Bahr's sea-hawk called upon him, reminding him of their fidelity and love, and asking could he repay it now by dooming them all thus to destruction.

"Have faith in me," he answered them. "I have never led you into aught but victory. Be sure that I shall not lead you now into defeat—on this the last occasion that we stand together."

"But the galleon is upon us!" cried Vignello.

(To Be Continued Tomorrow.)

THE NEBBES



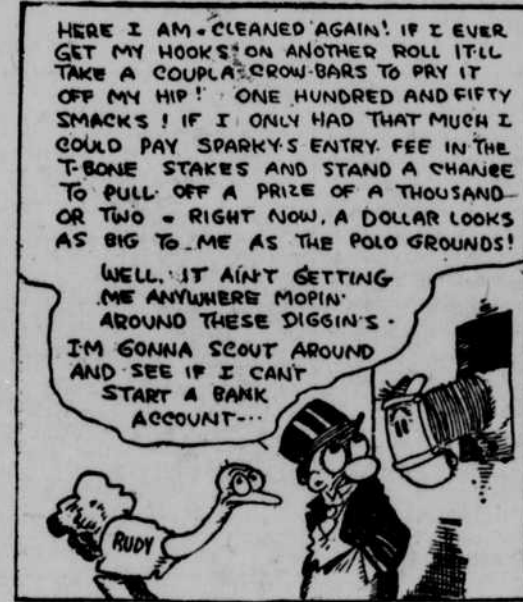
NEBB VERSUS NEBB.

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Barney Google and Spark Plug

WELL, ANYHOW, IT'S A BEGINNING.

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BRINGING UP FATHER

Registered U. S. Patent Office SEE JIGGS AND MAGGIE IN FULL PAGE OF COLORS IN THE SUNDAY BEE

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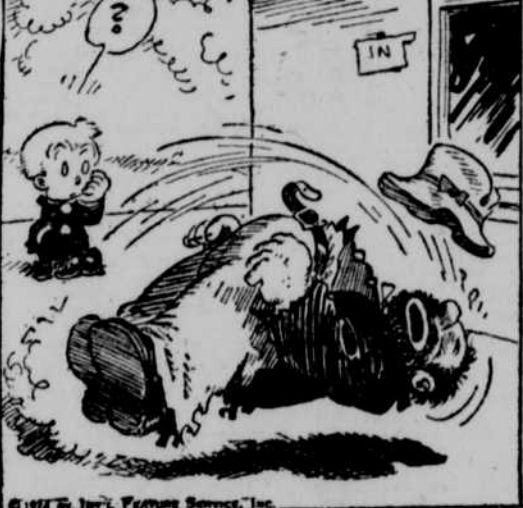


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JERRY ON THE JOB

IT ALL DEPENDS ON WHERE YOU START

Drawn for The Omaha Bee by Hoban



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New York --Day by Day--

By O. O. MINTYRE.

New York, June 16.—A page from the diary of a modern Samuel Pepys: Early up and a breakfast of corn beef hash and sat about in a torpor albeit I would leifer eat my fill and laze through the day than eat sparingly and tire with toil.

This day being my fourth without smoking I showed a weakness by lighting a pipe and to stroll with Verne Porter and we began to fashion limericks although I fear many not graceful enough for print but great fun just the same.

On the way home a gentleman in a fine limousine hailed me and invited me to ride and forsooth I did invite we had driven quite a space before he mistook me for another, but it developed he had once written me a letter and we parted good friends.

Dinner this night at Editor Keats Speed's house with my wife and all fell to playing bridge while Keats and I discoursed on this and that and the other. So home and to bed.

Patricia Salmon, who was puffed into the Follies by newspapermen attending the Shelby, Montana, prize fight, has returned to the tent shows.

Patricia joined up with a circus. She had been used to the hard-boiled atmosphere of the mining camps but she said life was not so recklessly lived as it was among the stage door Johns with high hats who trail the Follies girls.

At the corner of Pell and Mott streets, in Chinatown, the village bulletin board still fulfills its old time function of announcing in vertical Chinese writing the happenings of the day. It is one of the last customs of old Chinatown to prevail.

A few, however, do go to the Joss House daily—worshippers who place cups of tea and morsels of food for their dead before the high gilt altar.

Broadway has grown excited by news that a private detective is to print a volume of the mash notes of great men. It will contain notes he has purchased in his gum-shoe exploits along shady paths. He is said to have many incriminating epistles from high places. While there are many prominent men foolish enough to write silly letters to chance acquaintances it is not the general rule.

Most of the so-called love affairs about which Broadway prattles concern second rate chorus girls and third rate stock-brokers.

It develops that postal employees borrow more money at usurious interest rates than any other class of men in New York. The truth is that these ever faithful employees find it almost impossible to meet current expenses on their small pay. Hundreds run elevators, address envelopes and act as theater ushers after the day's work is done. The prevailing wage for the 10,000 mail carriers in New York is \$1,800 a year. It takes at least one-third of this for rent and that leaves about \$3 a day to meet current expenses.

Strangely enough the mail carrier rarely complains of his lot. He has a certain dignity about him that few other unfortunates possess. He is sober, industrious and as a rule rears a large family. He deserves better treatment.

Reflection convinces me no public servant spreads so much joy as the man who delivers the mail. Mail letters are pleasant—despite the batch that arrives the first of the month.

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How to Start the Day Wrong

ABIE THE AGENT

Drawn for The Omaha Bee by Hershfield



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