

# JOHN TOPP, PIRATE

By Weatherby Chesney and Alick Munro.

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## CHAPTER XVIII.

While allowed the two Spaniards to get half way up the hillside unmolested, and then he broke out. With a shrill laugh which echoed to and fro in the gullet of the serpent and out through the fanged jaws in a very extract of discordant sound, he raised a din which startled even me, though I now knew the secret of it.

The Spaniards stopped, gazed at one another with scared faces and looked as though the movement of a leaf would make them turn tail and fly. Their ears told them that the din came from the stone serpent; but, then, who ever heard of a serpent laughing? Not since the days of Mother Eve had such a thing been, and so, plucking up their courage again, they continued on their way. But at the first step the serpent spoke afresh.

In the best Spanish which Willie Trehallon could muster it called them scurrile knaves and cowards and a variety of other choice names, in which the boatswain had a true sailor's duncy, and when they were thoroughly scared—as who would not have been in a like case?—it bade them 'bout ship and run if they wished to live another hour.

And that these two doughty Spaniards promptly did, thereby making Willie rub his hook gleefully and I my two hands, for we thought we had effectually frightened them and all their comrades to whom they would tell the tale into leaving the hill alone for the future.

But there is a saying, "Never put value on a ship until you have broken into her treasure room." We had reckoned without Don Miguel, for scarcely had another two hours passed when a band of 20 armed men emerged from the bush below. The serpent had routed two. Would it rout 20, with the alchemist captain to lead them?

At the head came Don Miguel, and with him the bandy legged little chap with the bright steel bassinet whom we had seen the day before from Shelter Island, and a couple of paces behind these two were the rest of the band, among whom we recognized the two doughty champions whose flying backs had given us a little while before so much satisfaction.

As the party drew up in the open Willie Trehallon saluted them with a shrill mocking laugh, which had the effect of making the rank and file turn round as if preparing to bolt. But the two officers dealt such hearty buffets right and left with the flat of their swords that the fellows had evidently thought that the danger of being run through by the fiery Don Miguel was a more pressing one than that of being devoured by a mere stone serpent. They stood their ground, therefore; the five arquebusers unsling their crutches and blew their matches, the two bowmen fitted an arrow apiece, and the rest crammed their bonnets well down over their foreheads and waited for they knew not what.

"Come up, good senores all," croaked the serpent's grating voice, when Don Miguel gave the word for advance. "Come up and defile this holy court and commit any indignity that pleases you. Come and build your signal fires on my wall and make my stones ring with your impious cursing. Ha, ha, ha! Pluck up your faint hearts, caballeros, I will not hinder while you work your wicked wills. Batter down these stones and hurl them into the sea if you wish. I will not harass you in the work, but afterward—then—ha, ha, ha!"

The serpent said no more, but the pause and the wild yell of laughter were sufficiently suggestive.

The Spaniards stood for a moment against. He of the bassinet was apparently the most scared of the lot, for his bandy legs shook visibly under him and his sword clattered to the ground as he clasped his hands and began to call upon the saints to shield him. Had he been in command every man would have used his heels as soon as his quivering muscles gave him strength to do so. But Don Miguel was different. He stormed, he cursed, he ground his yellow teeth, he all but fumed at the mouth in his frenzy of rage, and yielding to the greater terror of the two each man stood his ground.

"Miserable coward!" yelled Don Miguel at his lieutenant. "What do you fear?"

"The Devil," said the bandy legged man, taking off his bassinet and wiping the perspiration from his brow with the sleeve of his doublet.

"The devil, you poor fool! Where's your wit? Is not the devil clever beyond all human learning?"

"Aye, surely. We believe so," replied the other, crossing himself devoutly.

"Good! Then how do you account for his speaking such villainous Spanish as came from up yonder? Full half of the words were not understandable, and in those which did bear some faint resemblance to Castilian there was, or my ears deceive me, a strong flavor of the barbarous English tongue. Bah! Don Sancho, you're little short of a poltroon."

"Hard words, Don Miguel, and I may call upon you to prove them," said the other sullenly.

"Do it then. My sword is ever ready to back up my tongue. But first follow me up this steep, and if I see you behave as a man against the English

devil whom I will unearthen for you perhaps I will take back part of what has been said. Forward!"

And up they came with all their following. The serpent sent down a perfect rain of warnings and curses, but they were not to be stopped again.

"Well," said I, when from sheer lack of breath Willie Trehallon had ceased his outcry, "they've got the better of us now, I fancy. Don Miguel will soon find the entrance to our snail's home. What are we to do, Willie?"

"There's two ways o' getting at a snail's body, Master Topp," replied Willie sullenly. "One is by boiling the shell, the other is by crushing it. Don Miguel can do neither."

"A pinch of salt or a whiff of smoke will make him show his horns."

"Don Miguel bain't able to get nigh us to plant the salt—leastways I pith the man as tries to come up them stairs, an as for the reek they may build as big a fire as they like below, but we shall always be able to get fresh wind at the chimney top here."

"And with our store of bananas we can stand a considerable siege on short rations? Exactly so. But I was not thinking of our own skins. I was figuring out how we might manage to trap Don Miguel, and now I think I see a way. You noted a small dark cell just at the foot of the stair leading up here? Well, my plan is this: You stay where you are, and I'll go below and hide in that cell. Don Miguel will enter—if he doesn't come of his own ac-

count, I'll venture to send him a hail of invitation—he will pass me and go up the stair. Then I shall step out and deal with all who try to follow, and as two men cannot advance abreast it will be an easy enough task. As for the senior commandant, we have him between two swords and ought to be able to take him alive."

"Master Topp," said the boatswain, saluting with hook and forelead, "your brain's sharpening right wonderful. The first jacket o' honest ale that wets my lips shall be drained to your health. But," he added eagerly, "let me fill the cell an hold the lower alley."

"No. It is my plan and so my choice. You have the post of honor, for it will be yours to tackle Don Miguel, and a tough customer you'll find him. But do not kill him, Willie, if you can avoid it."

"H'm! I'm thinking I shall thrust guard plate deep, Master Topp. You would yourself if you'd suffered one-half o' what I have."

"Still, spare him. He's of more worth to us alive than dead at present. Afterward—I stopped. Great heavens, it was of Inez's father that I was speaking thus!"

"Aye, afterward!" growled Willie. "Afterward, Master Topp! There'll be a bitter reckoning when Captain Ireland comes. You may lay your last tester on that. But in the meanwhile I'll thrust as daintily as the don will let me."

I picked my way down the windings of the passage in the serpent's body with the intention of finding out what the Spaniards were doing up above and if possible of enticing them to come down from the wall and attack me in the narrow path. But when I reached the entrance I heard the voices of Don Sancho and a couple of others just above me, so I crept into the cell to listen.

He first of all suggested to the soldiers that they should go first, but they hung back and seemed inclined to argue the question. Now, the chasm was far too uncanny for the bandy legged don to enter himself, so he settled matters by sending off one of the men for the superior officer, while he himself pluckily remained on guard with the other.

Presently Don Miguel came and, snapping out a few caustic words about poltroonery, cowardice and the like, dropped, sword in hand, through the opening and strode along the alley. It would have been easy to run him through as he passed had I been so minded; but, hoping that Willie Trehallon would take him at his leisure and with a reasonably whole skin, I lay quiet and let him pass.

His followers trailed on leisurely enough, and their leader must have climbed the greater way up the stair before I stabbed the first of them. The second played me a couple of passes, and by the time he rolled over Don Sancho, who came next, was in full flight down the passage. I sped after him, but he was too quick for me and sprang up among his fellows. The whole crowd then made threatening

demonstrations against me, but not a hero of them would accept a civil invitation to come down and have it out man to man.

It was just like a bear pit. I was the bear at the bottom, who could not get at the yapping hounds above without being slain, while they did not dare to descend and bait me. And so, seeing that one of them had unsling his arquebus and was fixing its crutch and blowing his match for a shot, I left them to amuse one another and went to see how Willie Trehallon had fared with Don Miguel.

Their struggle must have been a short one, for when I came up to the chamber in the snake's head I found the Spaniard lying on the floor with the squat figure of the boatswain perched on his stomach. The victor had a bare brown foot on each of his enemy's arms, while in his only hand he held, with significant intention, Don Miguel's own jewel hilted misericorde.

It was a most refreshing sight. "You be back soon, Master Topp," said Willie without turning his head. "We have just this very minute decided who should sit uppermost."

At this the Spaniard drew back his lips in an evil smile, showing two rows of yellow teeth that protruded outward like a calf's, and I thought his face the most devilish and fearsome my eyes had ever fallen upon. Then, as if suddenly recollecting himself, he closed his mouth, smiled and lay before us a pale, perfect Apollo. The suddenness of the change sent a cold shudder through me—it smacked so much of magic. The boatswain, too, was plainly not a little disconcerted, for he set to work scratching his bare, shining poll with the hook, a sure sign that he was puzzled, and presently, still without taking his eye from the prisoner, he rapped out:

"Best kill him at once, Master Topp, for fear of accidents."

A flicker of fear passed quickly over the Spaniard's face at the words, but it was only a flicker, and in an instant it was gone.

"You hear, Don Miguel?" said I. "Have you any plea to urge why we should not kill you?"

"No," he said shortly; "no plea that you would consider adequate."

I knew of one which he might have urged with success, but as he evidently did not at present recognize me it was not the time to remind him of Whittly and Vigo.

"Then, senior, you do not shrink from death?"

"When you promise us immunity from hurt if we set you free?"

"No, I will not, for you would mock me if I did. And," he added fiercely, "my word shall not be held up to the scorn of any one."

This reading of my thoughts and intentions took me back somewhat, but after a moment's pause I asked if he would give his word not to attempt to attack us or to escape, supposing that I ordered the boatswain to release him from his present uncomfortable durance.

"Yes, senior. I pledge my honor so far," he answered carelessly, so I bade Willie rise. He did so after some demur and very unwillingly.

The Spaniard gazed at me sullenly and persistently, and as I began to feel eerie and uncomfortable under his stare—for I feared the evil eye, and those black orbs were baneful—I told Willie that I had something for his private ear. With a bow to the prisoner which, considering that I was long unused to movements of courtesy, was passable enough I led the way down stairs, and Willie followed, carrying Don Miguel's sword and dagger tucked underneath his right armpit. Some 20 steps below he halted, but I bade him go farther still, for I wished to be sure that we were out of earshot of our captive.

"Now, Willie," I said when we had nearly reached the bottom, "why this gloom? Our fortune could not have been better."

"No," replied the boatswain slowly, "but we might have made a better use o' it."

"Prove that."

"I had my steel at you rasnal's throat, an you made me stay it," was the reply.

"Understand me," I said sternly; "I won't have Don Miguel injured while he is in my hands, if for no other reason because he can be made to serve us."

"Aye," answered Willie scornfully; "that he can. We've left him up there alone, an he can send a hail to Don Sancho to tell him how matters are. Who's to hinder him, since we don't seem to want to? Pho, Master Topp! D'you think our bird won't chirp to his mates when he's got the chance?"

"I hope so."

"You hope so! Why, Master Topp, you must be bewitched. That bandy legged little don will have another score o' men up from the cave before you can wink."

"Let him. We can hold our snail's house against them."

"But not against starvation. The bananas is about done already, an I'd liefer tackle a leather scabbard than the skins."

"How is the wind, Willie? Or has your sailor's eye deserted you along with your other faculties? Come, tell me what you read in the sky up aloft there when you were sitting on the don's stomach."

The boatswain shot a look of perplexity at me, and then his eye brightened. He began to see my drift.

"Chopped round gently to the eastward," he answered promptly. "Swell blowing down an big clouds floating high an unbroken. A murky night coming on."

"A murky night coming on! Yes, and what about Captain Alexander Ireland and the lads with him? Will he sleep through that murky night, think you? Or will the boat leave Galley Island on the instant that darkness falls? I tell you, Willie Trehallon, my sworn

# CONTAGIOUS BLOOD POISON



Mrs. T. W. Lee, Montgomery, Ala., writes: "Several years ago I was inoculated with poison by a diseased child who infected my baby, and for six long years I suffered untold misery. My body was covered with sores and ulcers. Several physicians treated me, but all to no purpose. The mercury and potash they gave me seemed to add fuel to the awful flame which was devouring me. Friends advised me to try S. S. S. I began taking it and improved from the start, and a complete and perfect cure was the result."

Contagious Blood Poison is the most degrading and destructive of all diseases, as it vitiates and corrupts the entire system. The first sore or ulcer is followed by little red pimples on the body, mouth and throat become sore, the glands enlarge and inflame, copper colored spots appear, and hair and eyebrows fall out. These are some of the milder symptoms; they increase in severity, finally attacking the vital organs; the body is tortured with rheumatic pains and covered with offensive eating sores. It is a peculiar poison, and so highly contagious that an innocent person handling the same articles used by one infected with this loathsome disease, may be inoculated with the virus. It can be transmitted from parent to child, appearing as the same disease or in a modified form—like Eczema or Scrofula. Many an old sore or stubborn skin trouble appearing in middle life, is due and traceable to blood poison contracted in early life. You may have taken potash and mercury faithfully for two or three years and thought you were cured, but you were not, for these poisonous minerals never cure this disease; they drive it from the outside, but it is doing its work on the inside, and will show up again sooner or later. You may not recognize it as the same old taint, but it is. S. S. S. has cured thousands of cases of Contagious Blood Poison, and it will cure you. It is the only purely vegetable blood purifier known, and the only antidote for this poison. S. S. S. cleanses the blood thoroughly of every particle of the poison—there is never any return of the disease.

## CURE YOURSELF AT HOME.

Send for our Home Treatment book, which gives a history of the disease in all stages, and is the result of many years of close study of blood poison and actual experience in treating it. You can cure yourself perfectly and permanently at home, and your secret is your own. Should you need any information or medical advice at any time, write to our physicians. They have made a life study of blood diseases, and will give you letter prompt and careful attention. Consult them as often as you please; we make no charge whatever for this service. All correspondence is conducted in the strictest confidence.

Address: SWIFT SPECIFIC COMPANY, ATLANTA, GA.



Shipmate will be at the cave's mouth before the midnight glass has turned, and it seems to me that he'll find his task an easier one if half the foe is sitting round the snail shell. Why, man, I schemed for it!"

"An you were right, Master Topp," said the boatswain, half vexed at finding himself in the wrong. "I vow you be right after all."

And with that we went aloft again, he to resume his interrupted sleep beside Don Miguel, whom we found lying down in the shelter of the snake's teeth, and I to take the watch.

(To be continued next Friday.)

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**How to Cure a Cold.** Don't go to bed. Don't stop work. Don't take a Turkish bath and render yourself liable to an attack of pneumonia. Krause's Cold Cure, in convenient capsule form, will cure you in 24 hours. They are pleasant to take and cause no ringing in your head or other disagreeable sensations. Price 25 cents. Sold by Geo. B. Christoph.

When you want a physic that is mild and gentle, easy to take and pleasant in effect use Chamberlain's Stomach and Liver Tablets. Price, 25 cents. Samples free. Every box guaranteed. For sale by the Kiesau Drug Co.

Headache often results from a disordered condition of the stomach and constipation of the bowels. A dose or two of Chamberlain's Stomach and Liver Tablets will correct these disorders and cure the headache. Sold by the Kiesau Drug Co.

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**An Honest Medicine for La Grippe.** George W. Waitt, of South Cardiner, Mo., says: "I have had the worst cough, cold, chills, and grip and have taken lots of trash of no account but profit to the vender. Chamberlain's Cough Remedy is the only thing that has done any good whatever. I have used one bottle of it and the chills, cold and grip have all left me. I congratulate the manufacturers of an honest medicine." For sale by Kiesau Drug Co.

My heart and hand another claimed, His plea had come too late. It's ever thus with people without pluck and vim. Take Rocky Mountain Tea, don't get left again. GEO. B. CHRISTOPH.

**Strikes a Rich Find.** "I was troubled for several years with chronic indigestion and nervous debility," writes F. J. Green of Lancaster, N. H., "no remedy helped me until I began using Electric Bitters, which did me more good than all the medicines I ever used. They have also kept my liver in excellent health for years. She says Electric Bitters are just splendid for female troubles; that they are a grand tonic and invigorator for weak, run down women. No other medicine can take its place in our family." Try them. Only 50 cents. Satisfaction guaranteed by the Kiesau Drug Co.

**Good Advice.** The most miserable beings in the world are those suffering from Dyspepsia and Liver Complaint. More than seventy-five per cent. of the people in the United States are afflicted with these two diseases and their effects: such as Sour Stomach, Sick Headache, Habitual Constiveness, Palpitation of the Heart, Heart-burn, Waterbrash, Gnawing and Burning Pains at the Pit of the Stomach, Yellow Skin, Coated Tongue and Disagreeable Taste in the Mouth, Coming up of Food after Eating, Low Spirits, etc. Go to your Druggist and get a bottle of August Flower for 75 cents. Two doses will relieve you. Try it. Get Green's Prize Almanac Kiesau Drug Co.

**A Good Thing.** German Syrup is the special prescription of Dr. A. Boschee, a celebrated German Physician, and is acknowledged to be one of the most fortunate discoveries in Medicines. It quickly cures Coughs, Colds and all Lung troubles of the severest nature, removing, as it does the cause of the affection and leaving the parts in a strong and healthy condition. It is not an experimental medicine, but has stood the test of years, giving satisfaction in every case, which its rapidly increasing sale every season

Krause's Cold Cure for colds in the head, chest, throat or any portion of the body, breaks up a cold in 24 hours without interruption to work. Will prevent colds if taken when first symptoms appear. Price 25c. Sold by Geo. B. Christoph.

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**Elly's Cream Balm** cleanses, soothes and heals the diseased membrane. It cures catarrh and drives away a cold in the head quickly.

**Elly's Cream Balm** is placed into the nostrils, spreads over the membrane and is absorbed. Relief is immediate and a cure follows. It is not drying—does not produce sneezing. Large Size, 50 cents at Druggists or by mail; Trial Size, 10 cents by mail. ELY BROTHERS, 55 Warren Street, New York.

**Announcement.** To accommodate those who are partial to the use of atomizers in applying liquids into the nasal passages for catarrhal troubles, the proprietors prepare Cream Balm in liquid form, which will be known as Elly's Liquid Cream Balm. Price including the spraying tube is 75 cents. Druggists or by mail. The liquid form embodies the medicinal properties of the solid preparation.

confirms. Two million bottles sold annually. Boschee's German Syrup was introduced in the United States in 1868, and is now sold in every town and village in the civilized world. Three doses will relieve any ordinary cough. Price 75 cts. Get Green's Prize Almanac. Kiesau Drug Co.

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