

# O'Keefe, Akoond of Swat: A Tale of Modern



## Methods and Luck of a Lucky Man---By Wm. H. Osborne

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### CHAPTER VII--Continued.

**A**ND as he listened he began to find out many, many things that he was glad to learn. Answering mechanically from time to time, he learned, bit by bit, the history of the career of Constitutional Smith. The captain, who had finished with his wine and had started in on rum, talked and talked. O'Keefe heard what he had to say. He found out that Captain Jenks of the "Sarah Margaret" had led a questionable life among the denizens of the underworld in the eastern metropolis, and had graduated to assume the position of mate on a smuggling craft; had finally been jailed and imprisoned for a serious offense, and on his liberation had sought the Pacific coast; by some deal had bought the "Sarah Margaret," and had engaged in a quasi-legitimate freighting business; one that rested always under suspicion, and that he had acquired gradually but surely a reputation as the greatest shanghaiing captain on the coast, a title of which he was justly proud. O'Keefe was willing to acknowledge that Captain Jenks had earned it at any rate.

O'Keefe gathered from the captain's conversation, although the captain did not acknowledge it, that Constitutional Smith was in his way a greater man than Captain Jenks, and that he was one of the very few great criminals in the country. Jenks pretended a familiarity with most of Smith's exploits, though it is doubtful whether he really knew of many. But O'Keefe, allowing for the exaggerations for which the rum and the captain were responsible, began soon to understand the strength, the cleverness and the finesse of this man Smith.

And as the captain talked and talked Billington O'Keefe gradually began to understand the situation, or part of it at least. And he realized, now that he had the confidence of the captain, the very great importance of his returning to Monroe.

While the captain was in his very happiest mood O'Keefe touched him on the knee. "Jenks," he said, impressively, "what is the very soonest I can get a boat back to the coast?"

"Back!" exclaimed Jenks. "What d'you want to go back for? You're safe here. There ain't no cops behind you. You don't want to go back. Stay here, an' we'll have a good old time of it. That's what."

O'Keefe shook his head. "I want to go back," he answered, "to get even with the fellow that did me up. That's why."

This was a condition of affairs which Captain Jenks appreciated. Revenge, he considered, was one of the finest inventions of Providence, or of men. The desire for revenge he knew to be one of the finest qualities of the human race. He understood it completely. But, nevertheless, he wanted to keep his old cronies, Smith, with him for awhile. With men who were in his own class Jenks was fond of good fellowship.

"But I'll tell you what, Smith," he finally remarked, "it's all right. We can sight a vessel in a day or two, and we can put you aboard by hook or crook. And I'll do it an' glad to, if you'll give me your word to take a cruise with me the next time I'm back at Frisco or Monroe. Monroe's the handiest, and I'll probably be back there afore I expected to, an' you'n me can take a trip an' have a time."

O'Keefe acquiesced, and it became a bargain. But for a day or two or three, no sail hoisted in sight. And when one did at last, the situation had changed to such a great extent that no one halted it from the "Sarah Margaret."

For there had come a sudden squall out of a clear sky, and it was necessary for all hands on the "Sarah Margaret" to turn to and trim the sail--and even clear the decks. For a time even the "Sarah Margaret" found it necessary to drive along under bare poles, so very fierce was the blast. The squall itself did not last long, however, but its indirect effect was felt aboard the "Sarah Margaret." And its indirect effect was internecine strife. And it happened in this wise:

It will be remembered that at the start Billington O'Keefe had announced himself by his true name. It will also be remembered that he did not particularly insist upon his identity because of fear that the captain might possibly hold him for ransom, or bleed him in some other manner.

He had, therefore, been very careful to hide any actual evidence of his identity, even though he had upon the second occasion reiterated that he was Billington O'Keefe.

Billington O'Keefe all his life had been used to more or less manual labor. In the Klondike, when every shovelful dug out of the banks of earth meant a small fortune in itself, perhaps, he had worked like a beaver. And his methods of work were like of those of mankind the world over; he usually rolled up his sleeves, spat on his hands and started in.

But ever since his advent upon the "Sarah Margaret" he had been careful not

ment. Then, making a sudden lunge, he tore open the shirt of O'Keefe and gazed upon his breast. There, also, was a carefully tattooed design.

"Hell an' blazes!" shouted Captain Jenks, "you're a damned impostor. You ain't Constitutional Smith. Constitutional Smith ain't got no marks like that. I know just what he's got. He's got a dancing girl on his right arm and he's got his initials, 'H. K.'--Hezekiah Smith--on his breast; that's what he's got. An', by George, you're an impostor; that's what you are. You ain't Constitutional Smith, not by a darned sight. Hay, Bullitt!" he yelled to his mate.

Jenks o' the "Sarah Margaret." You're a nice one, you are. Look at his marks. He ain't no Smith, an' he knew it all the time. Drank my good lick, by George; smoked my tobacco, and ate my vittles--an' him a-sayin' that he was Constitutional Smith. An' me a-tellin' him enough to put Smith an' me in the cooler, an' you, too, Bullitt, fr ten'r fifteen year."

He drew away and spat viciously and ominously upon his hands. Then he started forward with a sudden spring. But he came to a full stop half way.

"Bullitt," he exclaimed, "I'll tell you what. I ain't just drunk enough to fight. I see this feller's finish. But I'm a-go!"



THEN MAKING A SUDDEN LUNGE HE TORE OPEN THE SHIRT OF O'KEEFE AND GAZED UPON HIS BREAST.

When Bullitt arrived Captain Jenks was beside himself with anger; he was once more in a frenzy of rage. But he was more deliberate this time.

"Bullitt," he yelled, "what do you think of this here? Here this son of a seacook told me that he was Constitutional Smith--"

"I told you I was Billington O'Keefe," protested the offender. "I told you time and time again."

"You shut your mouth," exclaimed the captain, lunging toward him; "you ain't got nothin' to say. Here's this fellow, Bullitt, told me up an' down that he was Constitutional Smith--foiled me, by George--told me that to my face--me, Captain

to do it up in style. I ain't goin' to be in any hurry. You an' me, Bullitt, has got to have some fun out o' this here thing. I'm goin' to be scientific or nothin'. You an' me'll have a feast tonight--all by ourselves. We'll get rarin', tearin' drunk. It's goin' to be clear tonight, an' ca'm, too, by the sign. We'll get drunk as lords, an' then, by George, I'll tackle this lyn' impostor by the light of the moon. We'll have a 5 o'clock tea. We'll do it all deliberate."

He drew his flask and took a drink--a large one. Billington O'Keefe stood silent. He kept his brain busy.

The captain grabbed him once more by the arm with a firm grip. "Take hold of

to observe one of these formalities. He had worked, and he had with frequency moistened his palms, blistered as they were, in the old-time way. But he did not roll up his sleeves.

But since the discovery by Captain Jenks that he was Constitutional Smith, his lot had been so easy aboard the "Sarah Margaret" and his identity so well established and understood, that he had become easy in his mind and a bit more careless in his conduct.

And when the storm struck the "Sarah Margaret" and the captain and all hands set themselves to work. Billington O'Keefe rolled up his shirt sleeves with the rest and started in.

After the storm abated the captain strolled over toward O'Keefe.

"Thunderin' big blow, Constitutional," he remarked; "didn't last long, though." He caught sight of the arm of Billington O'Keefe.

"Gee, Smith," he said, catching hold of it, "you haven't got the arm you used to have. You got a good arm fr a man o' your heavy build, but you haven't got the arm you used to have. But, by the lord, what the hell is this--"

He caught O'Keefe by both arms and stood gazing at them. The arms were liberally ornamented with tattoo marks.

"What is this?" he repeated. He looked first at the right arm and then at the left and kept looking at each one in turn. And Billington O'Keefe knew then that he had made the mistake of his life.

For on his right arm in large, deep blue letters and in fancy scroll appeared the one word, "Billington." And upon the left arm, with the same amount of elaboration, appeared the word, "O'Keefe." There were the marks of identity of the famous Klondike king.

The captain gazed at them in astonish-