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The Story Of The CARGO OF MIXED PICKLES

BY GEORGE BARTON

It was just prior to the Spanish-American war that the Cuban insurgent was sailing the king of Spain no end of trouble, although the United States authorities were doing all in their power to observe the neutrality laws. But in spite of extreme precautions munitions of war continued to leave this country and were eventually smuggled into the rebel line.

The representative of His Most Christian Majesty made life miserable for the head of the State department at Washington. He in turn passed the trouble on to the secretary of the treasury, and that official issued countless proclamations to the collectors of the customs at various ports saying the violations of the law must be stopped at any cost. But the Cuban filibusters continued to be as numerous and as active as mosquitoes in a Jersey swamp.

Very early in the game Barnes got his eye on one "Clancy" Levi Cross, a sailor of fortune, who was deficient in what some persons call scruples. The captain was a man who had his ups and downs in the world, but he was persistent and resourceful and would never stay beaten.

One morning maritime circles awoke to find the captain had chartered the tramp steamer Golden Rod for the purpose of carrying a cargo of food stuffs to Jamaica. When Barnes reached his office he learned that the vessel was already loaded and that the enterprising Cross had his clearance papers. A review of duty prompted the chief inspector to inspect the wharf to make a careful examination of the cargo before permitting the vessel to leave its dock. The man returned with the information that everything was in proper shape. The principal item in the miscellaneous cargo was one hundred casks of mixed pickles, the tops of which were all stamped with the trade mark of a well known firm. When the inspector showed some scepticism about this the captain seized a hatchet and pried open the top of the nearest barrel, revealing layer after layer of symmetrical pickles of various sizes and shapes.

In spite of this visible evidence Barnes had the Golden Rod spotted all the time it was in the dock. During the morning the crew arrived. They were simple looking fellows and there were not more than enough of them to barely navigate the boat. Shortly before noon Captain Cross called for a messenger and gave him a note to deliver. The boy had been conveniently provided by Barnes and as soon as he got the letter he went direct to him. It was addressed to "Mr. John Polk." In case of a sailor's boarding house not many blocks away. The chief quickly copied the letter, which read as follows: "Sorry you can't join us. All of us remember you, especially at meal time. Joe Tompkins unexpectedly lost his villa yesterday. It happened at a little before 6; leastwise before 7 o'clock. Won't you tell this to John this evening, and do it sure!"

The old man hastily sealed the original letter in the envelope and bade the messenger deliver it to the address designated by Captain Cross. Clancy watched the proceedings with an unfrankish eye. Finally he unbent his mind, reluctantly, but with a sort of defiance.

"Dangerous business, isn't it, chief?"

"What?" snapped Barnes.

"Intercepting people's letters."

"Clancy," said the old man solemnly, "there are times when your moral sense overclouds your gigantic intellect."

The blank look on the face of his assistant made the chief laugh.

"All's fair in war, and this is war," he added sharply to close the discussion.

"You didn't get much," grumbled the faithful servant, who had been permitted to see the letter.

"If that's a question I'll answer it a little later," said Barnes. "But in the meantime let no one disturb me for the next half hour."

He entered his private office and closed the door behind him. Clancy's mind worked slowly and there were times when he could not comprehend his superior, but what he lacked in keenness of intellect he more than made up in loyalty to his chief. Barnes knew and appreciated this faithfulness, and although he occasionally twitted the faithful one, he would not have parted company with him under any consideration. Clancy patrolled the space in front of the doorway with both eyes alert to prevent any one from interrupting the old man. Ten, fifteen and then twenty minutes went by, and still Barnes remained closeted in his room. Clancy was beginning to wonder how much longer it would last when a loud shout came from within. It was a cry of joy. The door was thrown open and Barnes appeared on the sill, beckoning exultantly to his faithful sentinel.

"It's all right, Clancy; it's all right," exclaimed the chief, putting his arms around the young man.

"What's all right?" asked Clancy, with a lamentable weak attempt at pretended ignorance.

"The letter!" cried Barnes. "Get ready to leave town with me on the 3 o'clock train."

"Might I ask why?" said this look of injured dignity.

"Certainly," and he handed him the letter. "Look at that. I've underlined every fourth word, and the whole thing is as clear as daylight."

Clancy slowly spelled out the eleven word message, which, as the chief had understood it, appeared in the letter as follows:

"Sorry you can't JOIN us. All of US remember you, especially AT meal time. Joe TOMPKINS unexpectedly lost his villa YESTERDAY. It happened AT a little before 6 o'clock. Won't you tell THIS to John this EVENING, and do it SURE."

While Clancy was still gasping for breath over the solution of the seemingly innocent message, Barnes went to the telephone and got in communication with Captain Cross of the United States revenue cutter Albatross. Five minutes later the officer, a manly looking fellow, hastened to the custom house to get a more coherent account of the case. The sincerity and the intelligence of the captain delighted the chief inspector. The Golden Rod had already started down the river, and as a result of the conference between the two men it was decided that the Albatross should follow as soon as it was possible to get up steam.

"We must make another search of the Golden Rod before it gets out to sea," declared Barnes with emphasis.

"It's too bad," said the captain musingly. "What you didn't get one of your men on the boat before it started down the river."

Barnes' eyes glistened. He spoke confidently.

"If you overtake her I'll guarantee that you'll find one of our men ready to welcome you when you climb over the side of the Golden Rod."

The captain left to prepare the revenue cutter for action. Barnes and Clancy hurried to the street and boarded a swift electric car for Tompkinsville. By the time the chief had matured his plans they were backed in the portage way of the place down. The old man who knew the place like a book, hurried to a shop and purchased two second hand sailor suits. The obliging proprietor cheerfully permitted the two men to change their civilian clothing for the uniforms and agreed to hold



ONCE AGAIN THE COPY OF THE OLD PAPERED WHICH WAS PULLED AWAY A HEAD SILENT.

the discarded suits subject to his orders.

The sight of the chief in a jaunty sailor cap filled Clancy with mirth. Barnes was too much filled with the importance of his mission to see the humor of the situation, and, ignoring Clancy's hysterics, promptly returned to the water front. A big black hulled steamer lay out in the stream. It was the Golden Rod, great clouds of dark vapor pouring out of its smoke stack. The chief and his assistant strolled onto the pier. A shabbily dressed, stocky built man was there talking to a number of seamen who sat waiting in a lifeboat. The moment he spotted the two men he shouted peevishly:

"Hey, there, were you two fellows engaged to go on the Golden Rod?"

"Aye, aye, sir," promptly responded the meandering Barnes, touching the forefinger of his right hand to his cap in true nautical style.

"Well, jump in then," growled the mate, for it was John Polk to whom the mysterious letter had been addressed. "You're not very punctual."

Barnes and Clancy climbed down the side of the wharf and seated themselves in the boat. The mate followed, and four of the men setting the oars rowed rapidly in the direction of the steamer. During the ride the chief had an opportunity of scrutinizing the men in the boat. There were eight of them, and they looked fit for any sort of enterprise. The mate stood up in the stern of the raft and directed the movements of the oarsmen. They worked with such a vim that they were soon beneath the shadow of the tramp steamer. In a few minutes they were all on the deck of the Golden Rod and the lifeboat had been hauled up and fastened in its place. The mate, addressing the men collectively, asked:

"Where's the captain?"

At this a loud voice broke out from the companionway near the bow of the steamer. Barnes looked in that direction, and presently a great big head, tanned down beneath a pair of powerful shoulders, emerged from the opening. The stocky built man, which seemed in layers of fat in the neck, was dressed in a dark collar or tie. The sleepy eyes were half closed by heavily furrowed lids, while a stubby nose sat mockingly over firmly shut lips, which in turn drew a straight cynical line above a strong chin. The only sign of weakness in that brutally masculine countenance was in the short, closely cropped side whiskers, which emphasized the disproportionate and ridiculously small ears on each side of the man's face. Age and vice had combined remorselessly to trace hundreds of tiny wrinkles which crossed and recrossed the weather beaten skin until it resembled a network of delicate strings. He raised his arm and pulled off his slouch hat in a sideward fashion, displaying a round skull covered with short cut gray hair. The thumb of the right hand was missing, and the hairy wrist gave him an indubitable a gorilla-like ap-

pearance.

It was Captain Levi Cross, master of the Golden Rod.

Barnes was no coward, but this instantaneous mental photograph sent a chill quivering down his spinal column. The captain's body followed his head until he stood on the deck facing the mate and his eight recruits. The full length picture did not improve the autocrat of the Golden Rod. Nature, which sometimes loves to pile on the agony, had given him a long body and short legs. He turned to the mate shortly.

"What made you late?"

"It's not late," expostulated Polk, pulling out an open-faced watch the size of a penny. "It's not 6 o'clock yet."

The master ignored the reply. He waved the thumbs down in the direction of the forecabin.

"Send those fellows below. We're going to get up steam and pull out of here in a jiffy."

When they piled like convicts going into cells, Barnes passed on the first step of the steep stairway and cast an anxious glance across the horizon. His countenance fell. The Albatross was not in sight. He proceeded to the forward hold of the vessel, and the first objects that greeted his eyes were the one hundred casks of mixed pickles. They were carefully stowed away in the extreme corner of the box. A dirty padded lantern hung from the ceiling and cast a dim light about the apartment. The men were told to sleep in pairs, and Clancy, who had indignantly when occasion required it, contrived that he should occupy the bunk with Barnes.

It was a long night, but by the time the first hint of daylight streaked the horizon the chief and his assistant knew that the men on the Golden Rod were fighters of fortune about to join the Cuban insurgents—for a consideration.

The sorry looking recruits were scattered into groups. Some talked in muffled undertones; others pulled out packs of greasy cards and began to gamble. Barnes longed for a sniff of fresh air. He crawled cautiously up to the deck. His first look was for the Albatross. He strained his eyes. To his delight, he beheld a tiny column of white smoke in the far distance. He looked again, and faintly detected the white, graceful body of the revenue cutter. Elated, he hurried downstairs to announce the good news to Clancy.

In the darkness he could scarcely see. As his eyes became accustomed to the light he finally discovered Clancy lying

down in his bunk in the extreme corner of the hold. It made the chief angry, and he was about to break out into reproaches when the Irishman turned and raised a cautioning finger. He beckoned Barnes to approach.

"Don't let those other fellows get on to you," he whispered, "but there's something doing here."

"What is it?"

"Crawl up in the bunk, lay low and you'll soon find out."

He crawled up. The first thing he noticed was a little ray of light, which proceeded from a knot hole in the frail partition which separated the forecabin from an adjoining cabin. He closed his eyes to this, and what he saw put him in a very serious frame of mind. Levi Cross and

Polk, the master and the mate, were in the room. A cask was on the floor—one of the hundred casks of mixed pickles which figured in the papers of the Golden Rod. But the thing that made Barnes stare until his dancing eyes nearly jumped through the knot hole was the utter absence of mixed pickles. Cross took the head of the cask, and, running his thumbless right hand down into it, scooped up a mass of blackish powder.

"Well," said Polk, impatiently, "what is with Al gunpowder?"

The chief mate thought this was good enough to deserve another drink; so did the master. On the theory that one good turn deserves another they took a second drink. A loud knock at the cabin door disturbed the potatoes.

"What d'ye want?" growled the master in deep bass tones.

"Nothing, sir," called out the voice of the cabin boy, "except to say that the Albatross is in sight."

While in her fourteenth year Anne was

Queens of England

Anne Boleyn, second wife of Henry VIII of England, was born at Bocking Hall, in Norfolk, England, about the year 1500. Biographers disagree about the date of her birth, some placing it about 1500, others giving the year 1501. But Lord Herbert, the best authority on the matter, says Anne was 26 years old on her return to England from France in 1522.

Anne's earliest years were spent happily at the fine country home of her father, the place of her birth. One of her youthful playfellows was Thomas Wyatt, the celebrated poet. The Wyatts and Boleyns were neighbors and both belonged to the nobility.



ANNE BOLEYN.

chosen to act as one of the maids of honor to the Princess Mary Tudor, the beautiful young sister of Henry VIII. When Mary was wedded to the old King Louis XII of France Anne, one of the favorites, was

It's Don't beat about the bush."

The master raised his heavy eyelids and, lowering his voice, said impressively:

"Gunpowder—the finest gunpowder that was ever put in a cannon. We'll get big money for it, too, and you'll get four shares, old shipmate."

The white shipmate grinned, showing a set of discolored teeth. Both repeated themselves at a table, and the master reached over for a decanter and poured a big drink of whiskey into a rusty tin cup. After he had drained the last drop of it the mate turned to him curiously:

"Where did you get the powder?"

"Well," said the master, stroking his forehead with the four fingers of his right hand, "that's the curious part of it. I got that stuff from an old pal of mine."

"An old pal?"

"Yes, Jack Fenwick. We were in a little game together about ten years ago. He got pinched and I escaped. Some people said I saved myself at his expense. Anyhow, he got five years in the penitentiary. Well, I met him a few weeks ago for the first time since—since the unfortunate occurrence. I was a bit chary of him at first, but Jack didn't bear me any ill will. No, not at all. He heard that I was in the filibustering line and was making a little money selling supplies to the insurgents, and he offered to put me on to a good thing. A week after he took me to a place where they had these hundred casks of powder. I gave him \$50 for the lot, and if I don't get twenty times that much for 'em I'll eat my shirt."

After this candid recital the master took another drink. He forgot to ask the mate to join him, but that functionary, not at all abashed, found another cup and helped himself liberally. The men had been drinking for some time, and their faces were flushed and their voices husky. Polk struggled to express a question that had been chafing itself in his muddled mind for many minutes.

"How'd you fool the customs?"

The query hit the master plump on the funny bone. He laid his tin cup down and, leaning back in his chair, roared with laughter. Polk smiled feebly, surprised that anything he could say should be conducive to such pronounced mirth. Finally the other paused in his hilarity and wiping the tears from his eyes with a pair of dirty knuckles said:

"It was as easy as dropping anchor. We put 'em on the ship papers as mixed pickles. When the inspector came fooling round I had a cask opened and showed 'em pickles. But it was the only cask of pickles we had. Every one of the other blessed ninety-nine packages was filled

with Al gunpowder."

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"Nothing, sir," called out the voice of the cabin boy, "except to say that the Albatross is in sight."

The look of stupid insistence on the man's face disappeared. The veins in the bull neck stuck out in purple lines. An angry light flashed from under the heavy eyelids and the straight lip shut very tight. He jumped to his feet and in the act overturned the decanter and the tin cup half filled with whiskey. A cloud of thoughts filled his half awakened mind, but only two words came from his mouth:

"The Albatross!"

He staggered unsteadily up the stairway. The chief mate looked longingly at the spilled liquor, and then regretfully followed his master onto the main deck.

Barnes, whose eye had been fastened to the mate since his last awakened mind, and jumping out of the bunk hastened to the deck, followed by Clancy. Cross was standing in the stern of the boat with a telescope to his eye. He closed the eyepiece with a click and hurried down to the engine room.

"Put all the speed out," he shouted to the engineer.

"We're going as fast as we can," replied the grimy-faced individual.

"I know better," shrieked the master. "You can go faster—you must go faster."

A fireman was placidly smoking a pipe. Cross went up to him and shook his shoulder roughly.

"Give us more coal there, and keep piling it on—d'ye hear?"

The fireman obeyed. He shoveled the coal on in wholesale quantities. The fire, already at white heat, crackled furiously. The engineer put on more steam, and in the course of ten or fifteen minutes the Golden Rod was doubling its speed.

The master stood in the pilot house and encouraged the crew with the fiercest profanity Barnes had ever heard. A half hour and an hour passed, and the chief inspector of customs noted with delight that the revenue cutter was gaining on the tramp steamer. Her handsome white hull was in sight, and Captain Fenwick could be seen on the bridge in conversation with his lieutenant. Cross realized that the Golden Rod was losing ground and he stormed about the deck like a crazy man.

"You blundering fools," he shouted to the crew, "be going to stand there and let this hell bound of a government boat run ye down? Why don't ye do something? What are ye smirking about? What good are ye, anyhow?"

The first mate, in a last effort to keep up the dignity of his position, tipped his forefinger to his cap.

"Cap'n, the men are doing all they can."

The master's face flushed. The brutality seemed to come from the pores of his skin.

"You, too," he shrieked, "you dirty dog, to go back on me! I have a notion to throw you overboard!"

The frenzied man made a menacing motion toward the mate. Polk regarding discretion as the better part of valor, executed a masterly retreat. This policy of nonresistance upset the captain's plans, and he decided to go into the cabin. In the meantime the Albatross steamed ahead with unerring certainty. Every revolution of the main shaft brought it nearer to the Golden Rod. Both boats were coming out of the bay and emerging into the broad ocean. Cross came out of the cabin, wiping his mouth with the back of his hand. He could see the Albatross now without the aid of his telescope. Just as he looked the captain of the revenue cutter signalled a request for surrender.

"Blissful impudence!" shouted Cross. "Well show him how we'll surrender."

Once more he retreated into the cabin. During the next ten minutes he went down stairs three or four times. On each trip he turned the spigot of an ice cooler and took a drink out of the rusty tin cup. On his last return to the deck he walked aft to give some directions to the men. Barnes, taking advantage of his absence, slipped down the stairway and peeped into the ice cooler. His worst fears were confirmed. The cooler contained Jamaica rum.

The Albatross still moved on with the grace and rapidity of the bird which which it was so aptly named. The officers, in their bright uniforms, could be seen patrolling both the port and starboard sides of the vessel. Captain Fenwick, standing on the navigating bridge in front of the pilot house, lifted a megaphone to his lips and shouted:

"I call on you to surrender or accept the consequences!"

Cross, half maddened by his repeated visits to the ice cooler, lifted his thumbs high in the air, and, doubling up his fingers, shouted drunkenly:

"Come on, curse ye, come on, at your peril!"

Barnes thought this mere babbling, but was soon undeceived. The master gave some orders to the chief mate. He in turn communicated with the crew. A half dozen men rushed to either end of the boat and began pulling a pile of canvas from two bulky looking objects. In a minute a pair of old fashioned cannon stood revealed. Crude derricks were quickly erected, the guns were raised with elevating gear and revolved on a swivel.

"Now, you dough-heads," shouted the master, "up with the powder and wadding—get your ramrods and load for action!"

All this was done so quickly that Barnes and Clancy stood still, as if stunned. A cask of powder was brought on deck, two sets of men got to work and the cannon were quickly loaded. At this point Barnes came to his senses. He ran to the master, who was sweating like a bull and swearing like a trooper. He touched him on the

shoulder.

"Take my advice, Cross, and quit; you're being chased now for violating the neutrality laws. Five one of those cannon on a United States vessel and you become a pirate."

Cross turned to him in amazement. The look on his face was thunderous. The veins on the bull neck veined his forehead. He halted his speech, but his answer was not in words. He swung his gorilla-like arm wildly and the thousand hand struck Barnes square in the face with terrific force. The chief lost his balance and fell on the deck with a thud. The act made all the blood in Clancy's body boil. He rushed over, and, doubling up his fist, struck the master full in the bulging neck. But his fist rebounded back as if he had hit a bale of wool. Simultaneously the chief mate put his foot out and dexterously tripped the young man, and he fell in a heap by the side of his chief.

"Mutiny!" bawled the master. "Their hands and feet and throw 'em in the hold!"

The struggle was brief. When it ended Barnes and Clancy were tied and lay helpless in the bow of the boat. One of the crew was for lowering them in the hold. The others thought the game not worth the candle, and the two prisoners lay parting with their backs on the boards and their eyes gazing up into the empty sky.

"Now, boys," shouted the master, "honourably go all 'em with both guns, give 'em a broadside!"

The orders were quickly executed. Two loud reports sounded across the broad expanse of water. One shot fell wide of the mark, and the iron ball fell into the faithless depths of the ocean. The other grazed the edge of the wooden sternward which served as a figurehead beneath the bow of the Albatross. The officers on the revenue cutter conferred on the quarter deck. As they peried it became evident that the challenge from the Golden Rod was accepted. The three guns on the starboard side were trained in the direction of the fishing steamer. Three vivid puffs of white smoke and then smothering struck the tramp boat that made it quiver from stem to stern.

When the trembling ceased the Golden Rod looked as if it had been struck by a cyclone. One shot had taken a way half of the smokestack; another tore open a side of the pilot house and scattered boards, glass and splinters all over the deck; the third cut away the upper section of the stern. The hapless Barnes and his assistant were covered with the debris. The face of Polk, the chief mate, became white as chalk and he was incapable of speech. The crew clustered together and covered behind the unjaded section of the pilot house like wet hens in a thunder storm. The master was the only one who had any nerve left, and he was hysterical from the shock.

"Lead 'em up again," he shrieked, "and be quick about it!"

Polk pulled himself together and urged the men to speed. Another cask of powder was brought up and opened. The cannon was fired and the water given to fire. There was no response. The man in charge pulled the stout cords, the caps snapped, but the big guns were silent. Once again the cords on the old fashioned ordnance were pulled, and once again all dead silence. Some unaccountable his pulse went the matter over to the half emptied powder barrel.

He put his hand in it, and something about the gritty substance made him go pale. He ordered up two more casks. The tops were quickly knocked out of them, and Cross put his hands into both simultaneously. When he looked up his eyes were dancing and he was possessed of devil, the color left the bull neck, the firm mouth drooped and he fell back as limp as a wet rat.

"What's the matter? Speak, man!" shouted the mate.

Cross tried to articulate, and failed. He tried again, and was just able to say:

"Boys—ye—sold out. We've got a cargo of—of—of—"

"Sold!"

"Yes plain and. Jack Fenwick's evened up scores."

He raised himself feebly to his full height, shook convulsively and fell forward, from an apoplectic stroke, with a shock that shattered the timbers of the crippled steamer.

Barnes realized the significance of this scene. He shouted to the mate:

"Quick, untie me! I may save you before the Albatross fires again."

Polk was distracted, but there was no time for hesitancy. Besides, he had a commanding ring in Barnes' voice. He released the prisoner. As soon as the cords were loosened the chief jumped to his feet and, grabbing a white shirt that lay near by, fastened it to a stick and waved it furiously. The captain of the Albatross signalled back, "All right," and the pirate crew prepared for the formal surrender.

In less than an hour mate, crew and recruits were prisoners and the wreck of the Golden Rod was being towed back to port by the revenue cutter. Barnes and Clancy were guests of honor on the government boat, although they modestly, and with some truth, insisted they had done nothing to entitle them to special honors. The last thing they saw as they stepped ashore was the stark remains of Captain Levi Cross, with the bull neck, the wrinkled, weather beaten face and the thumbs, gorilla-like hand, stretched out imploringly on the forecabin deck of the wrecked Golden Rod.

"Oh fare—oh fare, did ye say? Bedad, are ye again to California?"

Pat was a widower, and on St. Valentine's Day went to pay his respects and to offer himself to a widow who was no longer young and charming. After Pat had made the offer of himself, and before waiting for the widow's answer, he remarked wistfully:

"Av course, Mrs. Maloney, Of'm not much pertains, but it's not one iv yer sons to notice me ragged sunset. I'm after account' yours, an' we'll call it even."

There were some strange folk came to town.

From a place little known to renown.

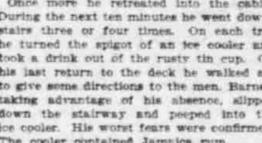
From an inn in the sea,

(But that's nothing to me);

Foibles they were, dressed in brown.

—M. W.

A Fish Story



This is a most pathetic tale of a boy who was slow as a snail:

"One day he did wish

"He was some sort of fish,

And straightaway he turned into a whale.

But the ocean was cold, as he found,

So he swam about on the dry ground:

But the dust in his eye,

"A home I must find in the sand!"

So wriggled he on towards the bay,

Where he went and decided to stay

"Way from work and from school,

To be a whale-fool.

And they say he is there to this day!"

MAUD WALKER

Irish Wit

Pat, in looking through his pockets one morning, missed some money. Turning to his wife, he asked: "Sure, an' did ye take any money from me pocket last night, or dear?"

"Only car fare, Pat," replied his wife.

There were some strange folk came to town.

From a place little known to renown.

From an inn in the sea,

(But that's nothing to me);

Foibles they were, dressed in brown.

—M. W.