THE BUCCANEERS

By F. A. MITCHEL

Some 200 years ago piracy was much in vogue on the ocean. The buccaneers of that day arose in this way: The English and the Spaniards were at war, and the English fitted out privateers to prey on the Spanish ships bearing treasure from Spain's Mexico possessions. When the war closed the privateers continued their depredations illegally under the flag of the skull and bones instead of the cross of St. George. After awhile the attention of the British navy was directed to eradicating them, but it proved a slow process and had not been entirely achieved at the beginning of the last century.

One afternoon the English merchant ship Petrel, Captain Stoughton, sailing down the east coast of Mexico, passed a corvet also bearing the British flag and was asked if she had seen anything of a low cut, rakish vessel. Captain Stoughton replied that he had not and passed on. An hour later, coming to the mouth of the Rio Grande river and the waters not being as well charted in those days as now, he concluded to run in a short distance and lay at anchor till morning.

Now, when the Petrel entered the river the low cut, rakish vessel mentioned was lying a trifle farther up stream. Captain Stoughton brought his glass to bear on her and didn't like her looks. But it was nearly dark when he discovered her, and he did not dare attempt to regain the ocean in the darkness.

Nevertheless as soon as the anchor had been dropped he called his first officer into his cabin, told him that he suspected the craft he had seen to be a pirate and directed him to take a boat and six men, go northward, find the corvet and report the vessel's presence in the mouth of the river.

Meanwhile the captain of the pirate lay low during the night, intending as soon as daybreak to make a prize of the Petrel, put the crew and every one else on board to the sword and loot her. Captain Stoughton, knowing that if the vessel near him was what he suspected this would be the result, awaited the dawn with great anxiety, hoping his messenger would bring the corvet.

But when light came a heavy fog came with it. This brought disappointment to the pirate captain, as well as to Stoughton, though the latter was not certain whether it would be a disadvantage or an advantage to him. It certainly brought delay, and delay meant suspense. Before break of day he awoke all on board and, telling them of his suspicions, directed each and every one of them not to make the slightest noise, even to speak in whispers. There were women and children on board, and the dread was so great that the order was obeyed. The children were shut in the cabins, where they would not be heard.

Half an hour after daybreak the sound of oars was heard. They must be either from the pirate or the boat sent to the corvet. That they were from the pirate was soon evident from a volley of oaths spoken by the captain who was in command of the boat and in search of the Petrel. The women all went to the cabins to make sure that if a child made a sound it should be muffled, while the men stood in a group on deck armed with such weapons as the ship afforded, that they might sell their lives as dearly as possible.

The pirate commander had noted the direction of the Petrel and steered by compass. In his yawl were twenty men armed to the teeth. They passed the Petrel some 500 yards astern and, reaching the shore, turned and this time passed under her stern 100 feet away. Every man on the Petrel's deck stood mute, listening to the orders in the boat, which they could hear as plainly as if spoken on the Petrel's deck. Every man thanked heaven for the density of the fog and prayed that it might not lighten. The women in the cabin heard almost as plainly as the men, and every child too young to understand the danger was covered with blankets.

The boat passed without detecting the ship, and it was fortunate that it missed by so narrow a margin, for when it turned again it went a hundred yards too far above. Captain Stoughton felt temporarily relieved, but every moment dreaded that the fog would lift and the ship's presence be detected. But as the sounds from the boat receded he felt that the evil was at least deferred.

When the fog passed it was blown out to sea, first exposing the pirate boat, next the Petrel. When the boat's crew saw the ship they gave a blood-curdling yell and pulled for her. But suddenly they ceased rowing. As the fog passed out it revealed the corvet nearer the Petrel than were the pirates.

That was the last of the latter. Being upstream, there was no escape from the man-of-war. Panic stricken, their captain was for a time unable to unite them in an effort to get away. Some insisted on pulling in one direction, some in another. The corvet quickly lowered three boats, each containing as many men as the pirate yawl. Before the pirate leader could get his men to obey him these boats were in the water and making for him. Then in his haste he ran aground.

One of the corvet's boats made for the pirate ship, which was captured with all on board. They, with the boat's crew, were taken ashore and every man hanged.

Uses For Old British Uniforms.

Black cloth clothes purchased by secondhand dealers, provided they are too far gone to be "revived," are sent to France, Russia and Poland to be made into caps, which the working people of these countries wear. The castoff red coats of the British soldiers almost all go to Holland, for in that damp country the people have a notion that red cloth keeps off rheumatism. Therefore, all careful Dutchmen of the laboring classes wear red cloth waistcoats next their skin. These are made by cutting off the sleeves of the British soldiers' red coats and altering the shape a little. The showy uniforms of the guards and the full dress liveries of the lord mayor's footmen and the royal servants come into the hands of the old clothes dealers and go chiefly to the south coast of Africa, where they are sold to the native chiefs. Travelers are sometimes amused at being received in full state by a swarthy chief on his throne dressed out in footman's livery or a rifleman's uniform.—London Answers.

The Country Boy's Creed.

"I believe that the country, which God made, is more beautiful than the city, which man made; that life out of doors and in touch with the earth is the natural life of man. I believe that work is work wherever we find it, but that work with nature is more inspiring than work with the most intricate machinery. I believe that the dignity of labor depends, not on what you do, but on how you do it; that opportunity comes to a boy on the farm as often as to the boy in the city; that life is larger and freer and happier on the farm than in town; that my success depends, not upon my location, but upon myself; not upon my dreams, but upon what I actually do; not upon luck, but upon pluck. I believe in working when you work and in playing when you play and in giving and demanding a square deal in every act of life."—Suburban Life.

Conserve Your Steam.

A man who never amounted to much once got a job running the engine of a sawmill. He was greatly impressed with the importance of his position and wanted every one to know that he was the man who made all the wheels go round. The first morning he steamed up the engine he jerked the whistle wide open and made the welkin ring for miles around, saying to himself as the echoes bounced over the hills, "I am certainly the big noise in this part of the country." Just then the foreman started the force on a big day's work and discovered that there was not enough steam left to start the machinery. He of the big noise was promptly canned, and the job was given to a hole. Moral.—You can't saw wood if you use all the steam blowing your whistle.—Exchange.

Poe's Airship Hoax.

Edgar Allen Poe was a pioneer in the art of aerial hoaxing. In 1844 the New York Sun announced one morning: "Astounding news! Atlantic crossed in three days! Triumph of Mr. Monck Mason's flying machine!" Folks rushed for the paper, and found therein a long and detailed account of the crossing of the Atlantic in a steerable balloon by Mr. Monck Mason, Harrison Ainsworth and four others. The balloon was minutely described, long extracts were printed from a diary which Harrison Ainsworth was supposed to have kept on the way, and the whole story had such a touch of truth that it took some days for New Yorkers to realize how completely they had been hoaxed.—London Chronicle.

Good Sitters.

Turkish women are said to have one accomplishment in which they excel the women of all other nationalities. They know how to sit. Hester Donaldson Jenkins calls attention to the fact that the Turkish verb to sit is used where occidentals would use to live, or stay, or visit. To the question, "Where are you living?" one gets the reply, "I am sitting in Stamboul." Or to the question, "Are you married?" the answer will be, "No, I am sitting at home." And when they sit they sit quietly, "in the perfect repose of a sleeping cat." They don't have to keep their hands busy. They don't crochet or knit. They just sit.

Redeemed Himself.

Sir Charles Napier had an effective method of dealing with cowards. On one occasion a flying soldier was stopped by his fellows, who were about to shoot him when the general intervened.

"Give the man another chance," he ordered. "Place him in the front rank, and if he turns again let him be shot."

The man eagerly embraced this chance of life, overcame his fears and fought bravely for the rest of the day.

Humbled Her Pride.

"Where did you learn French?" a Parisian asked a New York woman traveling abroad.

"From a native," was the proud answer.

"Ah," said the Frenchwoman, "A native of what?"

All Off.

Jack—So the doctor said you had tobacco heart. Have you told your fiancee?

Tom—Yes, and she's given me the marble one.—Boston Transcript.

Naturally.

Judge—You said the defendant turned and whistled to the dog. What followed? Witness—The dog.—Illinois Siren.

Lose no time. Be always employed in something useful, but avoid all unnecessary actions.—Franklin.

A Country Doctor's Story

By CARROL H. PIERCE

I doctored Farmer Chubb's family for years and knew the constitution of every one of 'em. Billy, the only boy in the family, was a queer little chap. I never gave him a dose of medicine that he didn't ask me just how it was going to affect him, and, if it didn't act as I said it would, the next time I was called in he would throw it up at me. We doctors don't like that sort of thing, and I took a dislike to Billy.

The boy grew up and went off somewhere, I don't know where, but his mother said he was going to settle there and grow up with the country. She was sure he would be mayor or governor or something like that, for he was so smart.

One day when I was visiting the house to see some one of them that was sick Chubb asked me if I wouldn't buy a draft for him at the bank in Rogersville the next time I went there and drop it into an envelope he gave me addressed to his son Billy. He handed me $100 for the purpose, and I consented to oblige him.

This didn't look very well to me for Billy. He was twenty-four years old and hearty. His father was having all he could do to get along, and I didn't see why his boy should accept money from him. But I said nothing to the old man about what I thought, because it was none of my business. He asked me not to say anything to any one else about it, and I promised I wouldn't.

It wasn't long after this, when I was called in again for something, that Mrs. Chubb gave me $50 and asked me to buy a draft when I went to Rogersville payable to Billy and send it to him in the same way the old man did. But I wasn't to say anything to her husband about it. I agreed to send the money for her and promised not to let on to Chubb that I had done it.

"It beats all," I said to myself, "what people will do for their children!" Here was I doctoring the family without sending in any bill because I knew they were hard up and they sending money all the while to a man who ought to have been sending money to them.

You bet when I drove away from the house I was mad all over. I made up my mind that the next time any of them asked me to send money to the man, who was either speculating or gambling or loafing, I would let out what I thought about it. And I wasn't going to make any more promises not to tell, either.

But when it came to the scratch I couldn't do it. Mrs. Chubb sent another draft by me, and when I asked her if she didn't think Billy had better be sending her money she looked at me so reproachfully that I didn't say another word. She said that Billy had invented a machine for getting the seeds out of watermelons, or something like that, and what she was sending him was the last payment for his patent right.

One day a girl came to my house, pretending that she came for consultation. What she really came for was to ask me how she could send money. I told her to buy a draft, and she asked me if I wouldn't buy one for her, seeing I went to Rogersville, where the only bank was, nearly every day. I asked her what name I should make it payable to, and she said William Chubb.

I thought I should explode. The good for nothing chap was taking money from a girl. Howsomever, if a doctor learns anything it's to confine himself to his pills and keep his mouth shut. So I bottled up my wrath and told the young woman I would be happy to serve her. She gave me $18, but as she didn't know that the draft would cost anything I paid the exchange myself.

That was the last draft I was asked to send to William Chubb. His father introduced the subject of his son to me one day, but I cut him short, and he saw just how I felt and didn't press the subject. Mrs. Chubb didn't say anything, but it seemed to me she looked well pleased about something. Then one day Farmer Chubb astonished me by calling for my bill. It had been running seven years and amounted to $250. I made it $235. I was more astonished than ever to receive payment.

One day I was just starting out on my daily round of visits when a well dressed, prosperous looking young man stepped up to my buggy and accosted me.

"Don't you know me, doctor? I'm Billy Chubb."

"How de do, Billy?" I said, trying to appear cordial. "Where you been all this while, and what you been doing?"

"Oh, I've been slashing around. I've picked up something since I've been away. I've come back to be married. I want you to come to my wedding. I'm going to marry Sarah Crofts."

Sarah Crofts was the girl who had sent him the $18.

As soon as I saw Farmer Chubb again I spoke of his son and let him talk all he wanted to. He told me that Billy was a natural speculator; would take money from any or everybody to put a deal through, but he seemed to have a gift for knowing just what to take hold of and nearly always won.

And so it turned out. Billy not only made himself rich, but was enabled to give his father and mother anything they wanted. He adores his wife, and his wife is mighty well satisfied with him.

Weight Dead and Alive.

It is a very popular idea that a person when dead weighs heavier than when living. One reason that a dead body is thought to be heavier than a living one is probably this: In carrying a living person we have the center of gravity adapted by the person carried to suit the convenience of the carrier and maintained in a position as far as possible to fall within the base of his body. Again, the elasticity of the structure of the body, especially the cartilages, though not in reality diminishing the weight, gives an appearance of lightness, as we see in the beautiful movements of the stag, and this would seem to corroborate the notion that living creatures are lighter than dead ones. It has also been asserted that the breath makes the living body lighter than the dead. But we need hardly say that a man when dead weighs no more than when living.

They Eat the Bait Off the Hook.

Of all sad things of tongue or pen, the saddest of all is the cunner, that skinny, bony little fish that knows how to enter the jaws of hell and carry off its teeth. This measly vermin of the pathless deep is stronger for its size than the lion of the desert or the red ant of tradition. It is quicker than the wit of woman and more elusive than the shadow of a dream. It is bolder than a Bengal tiger and more justly entitled to kingship among the creatures of the sea than Job's leviathan or the great whale of Scandinavian mythology. Hats off to the cunner. Man is both fearfully and wonderfully made, but in the presence of this superfinny miracle of subaqueous evolution he stands humble and aghast. The best way to get him is with a small hook about the size of a bent pin and a goose-pimple full of clam.—New London Telegraph.

The End of the Earth.

The ancient Persians believed in the renovation of the earth. A comet in the course of its revolutions will strike the earth and set it on fire. Rivers of molten metals will float down the mountains and deluge the valleys. All men must pass through these streams. The good will find them like baths of milk. The evil will find them like torrents of lava, but they will be purified thereby and finally will join the good upon the new earth and sing praises to the eternal source of all. This belief was held also among the American Indians and the Hindus. The Egyptians believed that the earth would be destroyed by fire and water. The Chaldeans said that when all the planets met in the sign of Capricorn the earth would be overwhelmed with a deluge of water, and whenever they all met in Cancer it would be consumed by fire.

Sheets in Scotland.

The custom of sleeping in one large sheet, doubled at the foot, seems to have been peculiar to Scotland and to have made special impression on more than one English traveler. Fynes Moryson, writing in 1598, says, "They used but one sheet, open at the sides and top, but closed at the feet and so doubled," and John Ray, the naturalist, who visited Scotland about 1662, remarked that "it is the manner in some places there to lay on but one sheet as large as two, turned up from the feet upward." The practice, I imagine, was continued until recent times, and I have, when a boy, slept in a sheet of the kind. Such pieces of linen were termed "sheets," par excellence, the single coverings which are now used being called "half-sheets."—London Tatler.

Fixing the Price.

A shambling old negro went down the street leading a big dog with a "For Sale" sign on its collar. A little girl spied the dog and wanted it. She teased so hard that her mother finally asked its price.

"Two dollahs," said the negro, an expectant grin dividing his features.

"Two dollars!" exclaimed the lady. "Why, the dog isn't worth that much! I'll give you 50 cents."

The negro drew himself up indignantly. "Lady," he said, "Ah couldn't think of it. Why, de fellow Ah got dis dog from gave me a dollah to get rid of him!"—Everybody's.

Cause For Tears.

Dr. Pitcairn, being in a church in Edinburgh where the preacher was not only emphatic, but shed tears copiously, was moved to inquire of a countryman who sat by him what it was all about. "What the deevil makes him greet?" was the inquiry. "Faith," said the man, slowly turning round, "ye had maybe greet yourse' if ye was up there and had as little to say!"—Dundee Advertiser.

Some Exercise.

"Duke," said the medical man, "you motor, ride horseback and biplane. You never walk. Your legs will become atrophied from lack of exercise."

"My legs get some exercise, doctor. I kick the servants quite frequently."—Kansas City Journal.

Origin of "Whisky."

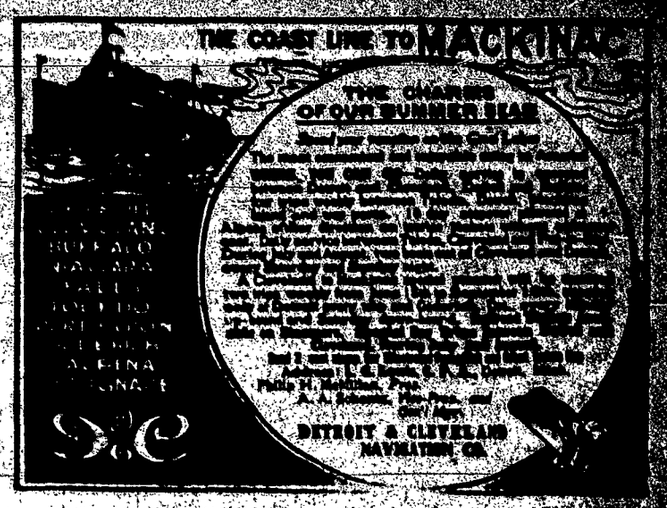
The word usk is an Anglicized form of the Welsh word wysg, a Celtic word meaning water. It is connected with the Irish word uisque, from which the Saxon gets the word whisky.—Cardiff Western Mail.

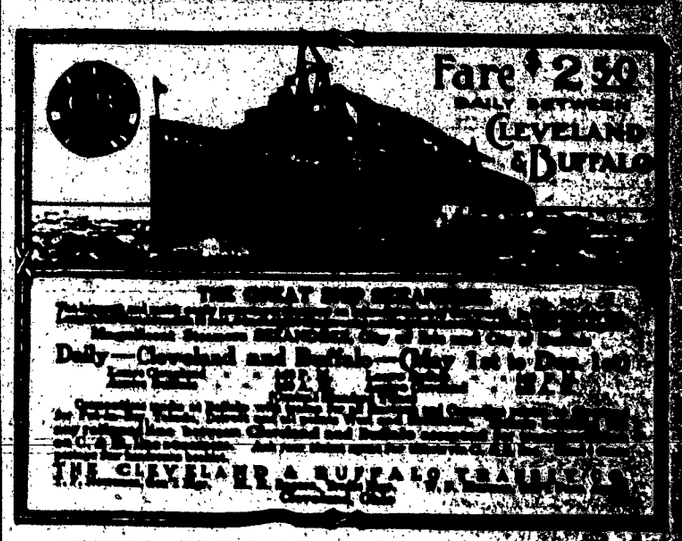
Honk, Honk!

"Did she come to the door when you serenaded her with your mandolin?"

"No; but another fellow came along and brought her out with an auto horn."—Washington Herald.

Philosophy is nothing but discretion.—Selden.





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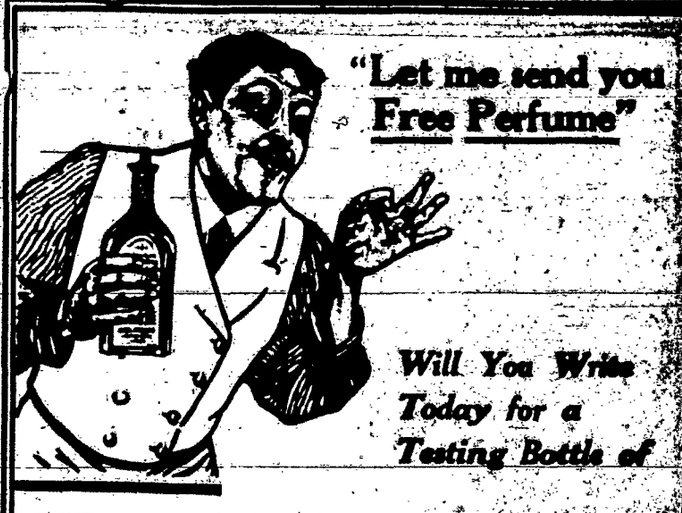

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