

A Change of Commander

By DWIGHT NORWOOD

In the olden time, when the buccaniers infested the Spanish main, an English pirate named Ricketts, finding that the Atlantic was becoming poor hunting ground on account of the number of skull and bones flags on it, concluded to betake himself to the Pacific. Having weathered the Elorn, he turned his course northward in the hope of falling in with merchantmen among the many islands lying directly north of the equator and east of Australia.

Ricketts, though fifty years old, had never sailed in any except Atlantic waters. He had been an officer in the British navy and during the long period when the duties of British warships were to prey on Spanish commerce with Spain's possessions in the new world had acquired a taste for piracy. This induced him to go into the business himself. He knew the north and south Atlantic, their winds, their currents, their periods of storms, their fogs and protracted calms. But the Pacific was to him an unexplored tract.

None of his officers had had any more experience in the Pacific than the captain, but one of them had heard from sailors who had spent much time on it that many of those indications which forebode a change of weather were different from those on the Atlantic. The captain, who had all a Britisher's confidence in himself, accepted the idea that a man who knew the Atlantic had anything to learn on the Pacific, and a man who rules a pirate ship is not to be contradicted.

While approaching the Marquesas Islands, Ricketts fell in with a schooner which he appropriated and compelled the crew to walk the plank. There was a gentleman aboard from the colony of New York named Fletcher, with his wife and daughter, and being British subjects, Ricketts concluded to spare them. There was also a young sailor, Dargan, whose vigorous appearance pleased the captain, and he gave him his life on condition that he join the pirate crew. Dargan was an American, but all his time was spent at sea in voyages between the East Indies and Philadelphia.

Dargan, by pretending to sympathize with the pirates and on account of a masterful way he had with him, acquired an influence over the pirate crew. The captain was a tyrant, and the men hated him. Nevertheless they were ignorant of navigation, a knowledge their captain possessed, and required his superior intelligence to keep them from being swung at the end of a rope. For these reasons Ricketts maintained his ascendancy and felt so confident in it that he did not notice the influence Dargan was gaining over them.

One afternoon Ricketts was pacing the quarterdeck, now and again sweeping the horizon with his glass in search of prey, when he heard a voice amidships sing out in stentorian tones: "Haul the weather braces!" The captain turned with a scowl to see who except himself dared give an order on the ship he commanded and saw Dargan and the men running for the braces. Before Ricketts could recover from his anger and collect his faculties the braces were manned and the sailors stood ready for the next order.

"Drop those braces!" cried the captain in a fury.

"Hold the braces," said Dargan calmly, but firmly.

Every man's face turned from Dargan to Ricketts. A few dropped the braces; the rest held them. Whipping a pistol from his belt, the commander fired a shot at Dargan which grazed his cheek.

"There's a hurricane coming, men," said Dargan. "If you drop the braces we're lost!" This stounded the men amazingly. The captain's pistol contained but one ball, so he could not fire another. The wind suddenly dropped, and the sails flapped. Ricketts looked at the water to leeward and saw a black line coming.

"Haul taut! Haul every man of you, for your lives!" cried Dargan. The yards swung round so as to take the coming wind. Then suddenly the stillness was broken by shrieks in the rigging above, and the plate ship careened till the water poured over the lee gunwale. The crew clung to what they could catch; the captain was pitched against the rail and lay still with a broken leg.

The storm was over in a few minutes, and the sun came out, a harbinger of changed conditions for the plate ship. Dargan, who was obeyed as commander, agreed with the crew that if they would assent to taking the ship into port he would secure a pardon for every man except the captain. A course was then laid to New Zealand, where a surrender was made. The New Yorker and his family supported Dargan's story, the crew were pardoned, and the captain was hanged to the yardarm.

Americans in Ireland.

Dublin, the capital, is as distinctly different from Belfast as Washington is from Pittsburgh, for Dublin has few industrial plants and is a hotbed of politics. It has many historic spots, fine monuments, wide streets, a splendid university, a fine castle and a cathedral where the famous Dean Swift occupied the pulpit for years. Cork, too, is a pleasant city with a style distinctly its own, and here the American feels at home. It seems that half the residents there have friends or relatives in the United States, and one is continually hearing stories of these friends. The majority of the Irish who return to Ireland seem to open up a business in Cork, for I counted no less than a dozen shops on Patrick street with the word "American" attached to their signs. There was an American haberdasher, an American book store, an American photographic studio and an American lace store. One of the best places to see the native of southern Ireland is at "Paddy's Market," a sort of huge second-hand store set up in the open street in Cork.—Mrs. C. R. Miller in *Lealté's*.

Music of the Chinese.

Chinese music does not entirely lack admirers among occidentals. There are, it appears, trained musicians of our own kind who seriously profess uncertainty whether the Chinese have not really advanced beyond us in music.

One authority has pointed out that the Chinese were the first in the history of music to develop a system of octaves, a circle of fifths and various other harmonical techniques, and those in the days when our ancestors had not even evolved the simplest forms of melody. While no one has apparently contended that we shall finally arrive at an understanding of and a liking for something that shall approach the Chinese "harmonious discords," there are not wanting those who claim to have discovered among the musicians and lovers of music a steadily increasing interest in harmonious discords—the essence of which was formerly unknown.—Washington Star.

Meaning of the Green Bough.

The custom of placing a green bough on the roof of a newly built house is not confined to Germany, but was adopted by the French Canadians, who brought it with them from Brittany. The custom originated from the superstition prevalent centuries ago that every tree is inhabited by a spirit; consequently it was believed that every time a tree was felled another spirit was dispossessed, and this was supposed to cause some bitterness on his part against society. Rather than risk having these homeless and disgruntled spirits vent their ill feeling upon the houses under construction or upon the builders a branch was planted on the highest part of the house for their occupancy. They were then supposed to be mollified, and if they remained so until the roof was put on any evil design contemplated would prove harmless, for the spell would be broken.

Brazil Found by Accident.

Amerigo Vesputci made the first map of Brazil, although only of the coast line, and it was the publication of this map that led to the fixing of the name of the new world. Brazil itself was revealed to Europeans in 1500 by an accident—the drifting out of its course of a Portuguese expedition. The country indirectly owes its modern advancement to Napoleon. To escape from the conqueror King John of Portugal fled to his dominions in America and, believing Portugal lost to the royal family, set about putting Brazil upon a civilized basis by throwing open its ports to the whole world.

A Bit of Forestry.

"Do you know how to tell a hard wood tree from a soft wood tree?" said a forester. "I'll tell you how to do it, and the rule holds good not only here among our familiar pines and walnuts, but in the antipodes among the strangest banyans, baobabs and whatnots. Soft wood trees have needle leaves, slim, narrow, almost uniform in breadth. If you don't believe me consult the pine, the spruce or the fir. Hard wood trees have broad leaves of various shape—the oak, the ebony, the walnut, the mahogany and so on."

She Doesn't Shut Up.

Mr. Flatte—Did you hear what he called his wife?
Mrs. Flatte—No.
"A delicate little plant."
"Well?"
"Why, delicate little plants generally shut up during a storm."—Yonkers Statesman.

Art in the Soup.

The artist's wife leaned over and looked at her husband's soup after she had handed it to him.
"Oh," she cried, "look at the scroll the fat has made in your soup. Isn't it artistic? Don't eat it. It is so beautiful!"

London's Great Fire.

The great fire of London in 1666 started in a house on Pudding lane and ended at Piecrust alley. Thirteen thousand two hundred houses were burned, including eighty-nine churches.

After the Squeeze of the Day.

"Where is that pair of old shoes of mine, wife?"
"Why, John, have you forgotten we had a wedding in the block last week?"—Yonkers Statesman.

One he must be thatched with another or it will soon rain through.—Owen.

An Important Occasion

By JOHN TURNLEE

During the summer begira of Americans to Europe Miss Virginia King met on the steamer outward bound David Redwood. He dived with her through galleries in Dresden and Munich, climbed mountains in Switzerland and parted with her in Paris, he being obliged to return to his native land early in September.

The result of this sightseeing was an engagement, and it was agreed that Mr. Redwood on his return to America should seek the acquaintance of the young lady's father and make a formal application for her hand. She was of course to write her father of the acceptance of her suit, and as she was prone to decide things for herself the only part Mr. King was to take in the matter was to go through the formalities.

On Mr. Redwood's arrival he wrote Mr. King a note, stating that he had met his wife and daughter abroad and with their kind permission would be happy to call on Mr. King if he would inform him what time and place would be agreeable. The young man was invited to dine with his prospective father-in-law on the following evening at his suburban residence at East Arlington, a dozen miles from the city.

On the train Redwood sat next a gentleman who, when the conductor came along, offered a commutation ticket to East Arlington.

"Pardon me," said Redwood. "I see you are from East Arlington. Can you inform me what direction I shall take to reach the residence of Edward King?"

"Edward King? Oh, you're the fellow where he lives. I go right by his house. I'll show you the way with pleasure."

The gentleman—Barbour was his name—proved quite frank, and before their journey was ended Redwood had told him that he had met the King in Europe, and since King had told Mr. Barbour of his daughter's engagement the latter was not long in divining the young man's errand.

"Is Mr. King—ahem—a general man, a man of the world?" asked Redwood.

"On the contrary, he is very strict. Can't tolerate tobacco; never drinks any wines or liquors and is very attentive to formalities. But if you are going to see him on a matter of importance I would advise you to beware of him. He has a way of finding out about people by throwing them off their guard. They say that before employing a man in his business he will proceed to be a roaster to him, and if there is anything wild about the fellow it will show itself."

"Thank you very much for the information," said Redwood, and turned the subject.

On the arrival of the train the gentleman showed Redwood to the King residence and went to his own home. The visitor was admitted by a butler and told that Mr. King was dressing for dinner and would be down presently. Then the butler disappeared and returned in a few minutes with a cocktail and a box of cigarettes on a salver.

"Thank you; you needn't leave that," said Redwood, looking at the liquor and the cigarettes longingly. "I neither drink nor smoke."

But the butler left the refreshments on a table and departed without a word.

Mr. King came down and received his visitor cordially. Naturally knowing the object of the call, he was a trifle disconcerted.

"I see you have not drunk your cocktail," he said. "Do so, and I will join you in another. Oscar, bring two cocktails."

Redwood protested that he never drank wines or liquors; they didn't agree with him—and, as for smoking, he regarded it a filthy habit. Mr. King looked at him with an expression of disapprobation. When the butler brought more refreshments he drank his cocktail, apparently much disgruntled at being obliged to drink alone. Then they went into dinner.

A bottle of champagne was on ice beside the host's chair, but Redwood declined to drink any of it. Of course Mr. King could not urge his guest to break through his accustomed habits.

During the dinner Redwood mustered the necessary courage to go through the formalities of asking Mr. King for his daughter, and the matter being over with the host regretted that his prospective son-in-law would not join him in a glass of wine to the health of their beloved Virginia. It was hard for the young man to resist the temptation, but, fearing he was being tested and might lose the girl he loved if he yielded, he stood firm.

During the awkward pause that followed there was a ring at the door-bell, and the gentleman Redwood had met on the train entered. Mr. King's expression changed.

"Hello, Jim!" he exclaimed. "You're just in time to prevent my drinking alone Ginlie's health upon her engagement. This is Mr. Redwood, to whom I have just given her."

With a twinkle in his eye, Mr. Barbour took up the glass that was filled for him and said: "Pray excuse me, Mr. Redwood, for perpetrating a huge joke on you. The temptation was too strong for me. My friend Ned King is a temperate man, but not such as I pictured him to you. I am glad to join you both on this very happy occasion."

And the three drank the health of the absent one with great gusto.

PARAGUAY'S FLOWER TREES.

Thousands of Square Miles of Forests Blaze With Blossoms.

A great many of the big trees of Paraguay—the giants—flower in the spring and summer, and vast masses of the most gorgeous blossoms are at the disposal of the bees. In fact, it was difficult for one who has never seen it even to imagine these thousands of square miles of forest ablaze with gold and heliotrope, white, yellow, pink and green blossoms during the flowering season.

Curiously enough, the two trees which attain the greatest size and almost invariably stand head and shoulders above the general mass bear the most beautiful flowers. They are the lapacho and lapacho cresso, the former having large heliotrope and purple blossoms—something like Canterbury bells—clusters of which grow at the end of each twig. The lapacho cresso has a bloom exactly similar in shape, but of a rich golden yellow color. Both these trees array themselves in full regalia of bloom before a single leaf appears, and it is only after the flowers begin to fall that the foliage commences to appear.

When all the other trees have ceased flowering there remains the bitter orange, of which the forests are full and the blossom of which imparts to the honey a particularly delicate flavor.—Wide World Magazine.

FREEDOM IN FRANCE.

No Country in the World Where Individual Liberty is Greater.

I believe that there is no country in the world where there is greater individual freedom than in France. Every one apparently does just about as he pleases. The gendarmes are not watching for infractions and never seem to interfere with anybody. People tumble their dogs into the public fountains and enjoy the parks with a freedom that would not be permitted in New York. Yet no one does anything really harmful. I mentioned these things to the American consul, who said:

"Yes, the French have great individual license and are too proud of it to abuse it. Whatever they lack in political freedom they make up in personal liberty. That is the chief article of their faith. The gendarme seldom lays hands on a citizen. Where something really serious happens there are usually serious consequences, but it does not often happen."

Then he told me of a runaway youth whom he wished apprehended and held for American advice. The authorities said: "We will watch him for you, we will keep you posted as to his comings, his goings and his doings, but we cannot lay hands on him. There is no warrant for so serious a stop."—Albert Bigelow Peale in *Century*.

Smoke Consuming Schemes.

The most ingenious scheme ever invented for doing away with the smoke difficulty with steam locomotives was tried some years ago on the Metropolitan railway of England. "Between the rails a trough was laid, and the engine carried a sliding shoe device adapted to slide over this and to open doors as it passed whereby smoke let from the stack to the shoe was enabled to pass into the trough, thence being exhausted to a collecting plant." Another scheme for solving the smoke difficulty was to construct a series of smokestacks leading to the back of the train. This would have kept the cinders out of the passengers' eyes possibly, but would hardly have been sufficient to make the smoke settle on the company's right of way.—Indianapolis News.

The Mocking Bird.

Because of its incomparable melodies and imitative powers the mocking bird is the most renowned singer of the western hemisphere. Its place in the affections of the south is similar to that occupied by the robin in the north. It is well that this is true, for the bird appears not to deserve protection strictly from an economic standpoint. About half of its diet consists of fruit and many cultivated varieties, such as oranges, grapes, figs, strawberries, blackberries and raspberries, are attacked. One-fourth of its food is animal matter, and grasshoppers are the largest single element.

When Writing Was Undignified.

The years have brought a change in the estimation of authors and authoresses. A century ago to be "literary" in public spelled social disaster. When Lady Scott, for instance, published her novel "Trevelyan" in 1833 it was remarked that "of course nobody from London would call on her now." This was a view typical of the period. Now even butlers write poems.—London Express.

No Economy There.

Bronx—In Russia they never say, "What's in a name?" Lenox—Why not? Bronx—It's taken for granted that it's the whole alphabet.—Lippincott's.

Sympathy.

"Your husband, madam, is suffering from voluntary inertia."
"Poor fellow! And here I've been telling him he's just lazy."—Baltimore American.

What's Coming to Them.

Redd—And do you think they are rivals for her hand? Greene—No; I think they are rivals for her father's foot.—Yonkers Statesman.

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