

SPANISH DOUBLOONS

PICTURES BY J. AWEIL

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(CHAPTER XVII.—Continued.)

"Down, Crusoe!" I kept desperately whispering. But Crusoe was unused to whispered orders. He kept bawling out on me, intent to fulfill an unachieved ambition of licking my ear. Cuthbert Vane tried, under his breath, to lure him away. But Crusoe's emotions were all for me, and swiftly becoming uncontrollable they burst forth in a volley of shrill yelps.

A loud cry answered them. It came from Captain Magnus, who had scrambled to his feet and was staggering across the clearing. One hand was groping at his belt—it was doubtful if in the air with the gleam of a knife in it—and staggering and shouting the captain came on.

"Ah, you would, would you? I'll teach you—but first I'll settle him, the porridge-eatin' Scotch swine!"

The reeling figure with the knife was right above me. I sprang up, in my hand the little two-inch weapon which was all I had for my defense. And Dugald Shaw's, the shouting of men, and a shrill continuous note which I have since realized came from the lungs of Miss Higgleby-Browne. Magnus made a lunge forward—the arm with the knife descended. I caught it—wrenched at it frantically—striving blindly to wield my little penknife. Whether or not with deadly intent I don't know to this day. He turned on me savagely, and the penknife was whirled from my hand as he caught my wrist in a terrible clutch.

All I remember after that is the terrible steely grip of the captain's arms and a face, flushed, wild-eyed, horrible, that was close to mine and inevitably coming closer, though I fought and tore at it with all the strength I possessed. I knew would scorch me to the soul—and then I was suddenly free, and falling, falling, a long way through darkness.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The Young Person Scores.

My first memory is of voices, and after that I was shot swiftly out of a tunnel from an immense distance and opened my eyes upon the same faces which I had left upon the same indefinite period in the past. There was Aunt Jane's, very tearful, and Miss Higgleby-Browne's, very grim, and the Honorable Cuthbert's, very anxious and a little dazed, and Cookie's, very, very bright. The face of Dugald Shaw glared at me for the quite intelligible reason that I was lying with my head upon his shoulder.

As soon as I realized this I set up suddenly, while every one exclaimed at once, "There, she's quite all right—see how her color is coming back!"

The penknife that I had lost in my struggle with Captain Magnus had fallen at the Scotchman's feet. Wrenching himself free of his all but severed bonds he had seized the knife, slashed through the rope that held him to the tree, and flung himself on Captain Magnus. It was a brief struggle—a fast, deadly, planted on the captain's jaw had ended it, and the captain, half dazed from his potatoes, went down limply.

Throughout the fray Chris slumbered undisturbed, and he and the unconscious Magnus were now reposing side by side, until they should awake to find themselves neatly trussed up with Cookie's clothes-line.

But my poor brave Crusoe dragged a broken leg, from a kick bestowed on him by Captain Magnus, at whom he had been valiantly in my defense.

So far so good; we had slightly defeated our two guards, and the camp was ours. But what about the pirates who were still in the cave and would shortly be returning from it? They were three armed and sturdy ruffians. It would mean a battle to the death. Our best hope would be to wait in ambush behind the trees of the clearing—I mean for Dugald Shaw and Cuthbert Vane to do it—then show down the unsuspecting pirates as they returned. This desperate plan, which so unpleasantly resembled murder, cast gloom on every brow.

"It's the women, lad," said the Scotchman in a low voice to Cuthbert. "It's—it's Virginia." And Cuthbert heavily assented.

Seeing myself as the motif of such slaughter shocked my mind suddenly back to clearness.

"Oh," I cried, "not that. Why not surprise them in the cave, and make them stay there? One man guard the entrance easily—and afterward we could build it up with logs or something."

Everybody stared.

"A remarkably neat scheme," said Mr. Shaw, "but impossible of application. I'm afraid, because none of us know where to find the cave."

I shook my head.

"I know!"

There was a lengthy silence. People looked at one another, and their



We went in Silence through the green hush of the woods. The restored to my belt. Mr. Shaw had seen to this, and had said to me, very quietly.

"You know, Virginia, if things don't go our way, it may be necessary for you to use it—on yourself."

And I nodded assentingly.

We went in Silence through the green hush of the woods, not in single file. My place as guide was in the van, but Mr. Shaw, deposed me from it and went ahead himself, while Cuthbert Vane brought up the rear. No one spoke, even to whisper. Guided by Dugald Shaw, when needed, by a light touch upon the arm. Our enterprise was one of utmost danger. If we met the pirates with their lives or ours—and I recall with incredulity my resolution to lunge five of my six bullets in a pirate before I turned the sixth upon myself.

We passed the cave, and I saw that the vines had been torn aside again, and that the tombstone was gone. We came to the brink of the cliff, and I

pointed silently downward across the ledge to the angle in which lay the mouth of the cave. My breath came quickly, for at any instant a hand might be thrust forth from the opening.

Mr. Shaw and Cuthbert dropped down upon the ledge. Though under whispered orders to retreat I could not, but hung over the edge of the cliff, eager and breathless. Then with a bound the men were beside me. Mr. Shaw caught my hand, and we rushed together into the woods.

A quake, a roar, a shower of flying rocks. It was over—the dynamite had done its work, whether successfully or not remained to be seen. After a little the Scotchman ventured back. He returned to us where we waited in the woods—Cuthbert to mount guard over me—with a cleared face.

"It's all right," he said. "The entrance is completely blocked. I set the charge six feet inside, but the roof is down clear to the mouth. Poor wretches—they have all come pouring out upon the sand."

All three of us went back to the edge of the cliff. Seventy feet below, on the narrow strip of sand before the sea-mouth of the cave, we saw the figures of four men, who ran wildly about and sought for a footing on the sheer face of the cliff. As we stood watching them, with, on my part, at least, unexpected quanta of pity and a cold interior sensation very like that which they discovered us. Then for the first time, I suppose, they understood the nature of their disaster. We could not hear their cries, but we saw arms stretched out to us, (but frantically shaken, hands lifted in prayer. We saw Mr. Tabbs flop down upon his unaccustomed knees—it was all rather horrible.

I drew back, shivering. "It won't be for long, of course," I said musingly. "Just till the steamer comes—and we'll give them time to eat—but I suppose they think—they will soon be just a lot more skeletons!" And here I was threatened with violent antipathy to my late Amazonian mood.

Why should the frequent and natural phenomena of trees produce such panic in the male sex? "It's been too much for her!" exclaimed the older Scot in tones of anguish. "Hurry, lad—we must find her some water!"

"Nonsense!" I interposed, winking rapidly. "Just think of some way to calm those creatures, so that I shan't see them in my dreams, begging and heehawing!" For I had not forgotten the immensity of my debt to Tabbs.

So a courier was written on a leaf torn from a pocketbook and thrown over the cliff weighted with a stone. The captives swooped upon it. Followed then a vivacious pantomime by Tongue, consisting of a series of unpremeditated, while Mr. Tabbs, by gestures, indicated that though sadly misunderstood, old H. H. was still our friend and benefactor.

It was an attractive group to which on our return to camp I related the circumstances which had made possible our late exploit of impugning the pirates in the cave. The tale of my achievement, though recounted with due modesty, seemed to put the finishing touch to the extraction of Violet, for she smiled finally and forever, and was henceforth even hailed by Aunt Jane. The diary of Peter was produced, and passed about with awe from hand to hand. Yesterday's discovery in the cave had rounded out the history of Peter to a melodramatic conclusion. But though we knew the end we guessed in vain at the beginning, at Peter's name, at that of the old grandfather whose thrifty piety had brought him to Havina and to the persistence of the dying mate of the Bonny Lass, at the whereabouts of the old New England farm which had been mortgaged to buy the Island Queen, at the identity of Helela, the wild-eyed still, perhaps, for the lover who never would return.

But even our regrets for Peter did not chill the exultation with which we thought of the treasure-chest waiting there under the sea and in the cabin of the Island Queen.

All afternoon we talked of it. That, for the present, was all we could do. There were the two prisoners in camp to be guarded and they had presented us with a valuable and remarkable of a strongly personal and unpleasant trend on discovering their situation. There was Crusoe inviolated, and needing petting, and getting into every body on the score of his romantic past as Benly as well as of his present vivacity. The broken leg had been cleverly set by Dugald—somehow in the late upheaval Miss and Mister had dropped quite out of our vocabularies—with Cuthbert as surgeon's assistant and me holding the chloroform to the patient's nose. There was the fatigued and restless from excitement which everybody felt, and Peter's diary to be read, and golden dreams to be indulged. And there was the delicate question to be discussed, of how the treasure should be divided.

"Why, it all belongs to Virginia, of course," said Cuthbert, opening his eyes at the thought of any other view being taken but this obvious one.

"Nonsense!" I instantly interposed. "My finding the diary was just an accident; I'll take a share of it—as reward."

Here Miss Browns murmured some thing half inaudible about "confiding to members of the expedition," but subsided for lack of encouragement.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

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The fatherly hen was provoked and Mary Jane's father threatened to sell her if she didn't take care of the chickens. That brought Mary Jane to strategy. That evening when her father came home she was waiting for him.

"Where's your hen?" he demanded. "Is she caring for her chickens?"

"Oh, no," Mary Jane was very serious. "She's in the coop getting ready to lay some more chicks." "Indianapolis News.

Hot St. ft.

Some of the corn I've been made nowadays has a potency all its own. They tell this story in illustration.

In the North Carolina mountains two ducks opened a fire, and in doing so killed a little doe drop fell on a little bull, who immediately dropped; his bull, elicited his feelings, threw back his head and backing up in a balky cotton the two negroes had been carrying, snorted:

"All right, big boy, let's go!"

American Legion Weekly.

Classifying Him.

"Wombat is a scrippner."

"Wants a big navy?"

"No, wants to scrap it!"

Skirts Are Longer.

"Does Mildred still dress in the height of fashion?" "Well, not quite as high as she did last year."

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BRIGHT IDEA NOT PATENTED

Generous Marine Willing All Should Have the Benefit of His Really Brilliant Thought.

The marine and his best girl were seeing the sights of New York. The temptation to steal a kiss was strong, but he knew that people do not stop to kiss on the street in broad daylight, even if it is one of those rare occasions when the marine has a chance to parade Broadway with his lady friend.

Suddenly the leatherneck had a bright idea. He knew it looked all right to kiss a person goodby on the street.

"Lissen, Lucille," he suggested. "What do you say if we shake hands, kiss each other good-by then walk around opposite blocks and meet again?"

"You're on," said his lady love.

The scheme turned out to be such a success that several blocks were walked in the same manner, and the entire trip up town was a series of meetings and partings.

Now the leatherneck is wondering why he was so dumb he never thought of it before.—The Leatherneck.

In.

"I am thinking about going into politics," remarked the young man.

"My friend," responded Senator Sorghum, "you are a taxpayer, a man entitled to vote and a man responsible to the laws of your country. You are already in politics and you couldn't get out of it to save your soul."

Tempering Justice With Mercy.

"In writing up this performance of 'As You Like It,' given by the Clarksville Dramatic club, use a little discretion."

"How's that, boss?"

"Well, that you ever saw a professional show."

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