

In Sheep's Clothing.



By Capt. Ormond Steele

CHAPTER V.—Continued.

While the dancing was in progress Captain Fox found an occasion to draw Frenaud to one side, when, without attracting attention, he whispered:

"I say, Frenaud, I want you to have a care."

"I don't understand," replied Frenaud, not at all surprised at the mysterious manner of his commander, with which he had become very familiar.

"I mean you must not step on Denham's toes."

"On Denham's toes?"

"Yes; some one of these girls must be next to him than all the others."

"His sweetheart, Captain?"

"Yes!"

"If you can point her out among all these beauties," said Frenaud, nodding at the many pretty girls now drawn up on one side for a contra dance, "of course I shall take care not to offend the gentleman by showing too much attention to the lady."

"It is one of the two, and I have been puzzling my brain, and exhausting my observation to find out if Miss Hedges or Miss Condit is the favored one."

"Miss Condit is his adopted sister, Captain."

"So long as he knows she is not his sister by the blood, their relationship will be an incentive rather than a bar to love," said Capt. Fox, shaking his yellow head if still, puzzling his brain over the strange question he had proposed to himself.

"It really looks to me," responded Frenaud, "as if that dark-eyed, dashingly Miss Hedges were the favored one. I'll swear to it that she has bestowed a score of kindly glances on him to-night, to one on any of the rest of us."

The unexpected appearance of the two young ladies under discussion put an end to the conversation.

"Ah, Capt. Fox," said Lea Hedges, "you have weary wear already of the dance, though it lacks an hour of midnight."

And Mr. Frenaud quite forgot that he was to have been his partner in this set," laughed pretty Ellen Condit, blushing in the most becoming way at what she imagined to be her own audacity in addressing the swarthy young officer in this way.

"I was about to seek you," replied Frenaud quickly. "I should never forgive myself if I let this opportunity pass."

He gave her his arm, bowed to the Captain, and Lea Hedges, and led Ellen to the center of the room, where the young people were going through the stately figures of Sir Roger de Coverly.

Alone with Lea Hedges, and Captain Fox came back to the salutation with which she had first accosted him.

"Weary of the dance, Miss Hedges," he said, with a quick, bold glance of admiration that brought a heightened color to her glowing cheeks: "it is not that, but I am so bewildered by my surroundings, so happy to be among the ladies and gentlemen of my own country again, that I forgot what I should do to give expression to my delight. We sailors are apt to err on points of etiquette, and the ladies, in sympathetic admiration of our advantages, are given over to ships and see the hearts behind them."

"We are anxious that our guests should enjoy themselves, as these our older friends are doing," said Lea, waving a graceful arm in the direction of the officers of the Sea Hawk, who were now drawn up in a row, as on parade, "but at the same time we are most anxious that they shall all enjoy themselves in the way that to them is most pleasant."

"Ah, you have there given in one sentence they key to all true hospitality, though I did not need your kind words to be assured that it was to be found here. And now, to carry out my wishes, what say you to a promenade, or is it too cool?"

Capt. Fox turned to the window, by which they were standing, and drawing the heavy curtains further back so that both could look out, he pointed to the bay now glistening in a silver mirror in the moonlight and commented:

"The sea is beautiful, but it is most beautiful where the water flashes in its front like an eye, or reflects its outlines as if it held them in its heart."

"I doubt not, Captain," replied Lea, archly, "but you write sonnets at times or match rhymes in your idle moments with your officers. But we shall stroll down to the beach; it is not far and the air is not too cool."

Lea left him for a few moments and reappeared with a scarlet scarf thrown over her shoulders in a way that enhanced her loveliness as a proper frame brings out the beauty of a picture.

She took the Captain's arm, and they walked out through the garden and felt on their faces the soft wind laden with the odor of apple blossoms and sweet violets.

The regular beating of dancing feet, the rise and fall of the music, the murmur of the tide, like the drowsy sound of sea shells, all forbade conversation. They walked to the sea shore, where Lea sat down on the gunwale of a stranded boat, against which the Captain leaned.

"Ah," he sighed, "since my earliest memory I have tried to fancy what heaven is like, but without success; hereafter I shall have no difficulty; I shall only have to recall this night."

"I am glad you like this place," said Lea, her eyes on the water, and the moonlight showing the frank expression of her face. "It is to me the most beautiful place in the world; but perhaps that is because I know no other land."

"Nor do you need to," replied the Captain, with well affected rapture. "It has been my good fortune, or my cruel fate, call it what you will, to see every land under the sun where men dwelt, but though my acquaintances with your beautiful island is brief, I must confess the pleasure of being here is only clouded by the thought that I may at any moment be called to leave."

"It is this your first visit to America, Captain?" she asked.

The question was evidently unexpected, for the Captain coughed slightly and hesitated, as he thought she would make some comment on the words of praise, which he had delivered for effect, rather than with any idea of their truth, for, in this respect, he was like all other men of the world.

"I have been on the American coast before, particularly along the South American coast, and through the West Indies, but this is my first visit to the province of New York."

"Then you have not seen New York City?"

"No; but I hope to do so unless or-

dered to the West Indies to look after the pirates."

"An undertaking that is as dangerous as it is thankless," said Lea. Then, with a sigh, "the Sea Hawk has just returned from duty, though many were fearing that she would never come back."

"She has in Denmark a brave captain, and the crew are, without doubt, worthy of him," said Capt. Fox.

"True; but the Adventure Galley was a fine ship, and Capt. William Kidd, who took command of her in Bermuda, was said to be a very brave and competent man—he came from England for that purpose, yet Capt. Kidd and the Galley have not been heard from since."

"He is supposed to have been wrecked or destroyed by the pirates," said Capt. Fox, as if he were uttering an opinion about which there could be no disagreement.

"Yes, that is the general belief; at least it was until the last few months."

"And it is changed?"

"It is changing."

"From what cause?"

"They say that is, those that should know, that Captain Kidd is still alive and his vessel still afloat."

"The boy must be unable to find a port, like the mythical Flying Dutchman," laughed Captain Fox. "But how do the people account for his absence?"

"They say that instead of fighting the pirates, in the Spanish Main, he joined them, and is now their chief," said Lea.

"Impossible!"

"I simply told the story as 'twas told to me. The news came from New York only last week that the Adventure Galley was recently seen off the coast of the Carolinas. But," she added, with a slight laugh and a changed manner, "what should we care if there be one to prey the more or less. They will not trouble us I am very certain."

"And if they should do so, Miss Hedges, may I be there to see. He would be a very rash pirate, indeed, that dared to enter this bay while the Sea Hawk and Wandering Star were with shoted guns and stouter arms to man them. The true sailor never courts a fight that can be avoided, but I cannot imagine anything that would inspire us to action like the defense of these shores, and their inhabitants—I will not add charming, inhabitants."

"Thanks. Shall we go back? the music has ceased," said Lea, rising and taking his arm.

"As you say, though it seems to me that I could never weary of the place or the companionship."

"The novelty would soon wear off—"

"It is only old Dinah," said Lea, who, now that the intruder came into the room, recognized the old nego woman, who for some years had been living among the Montauk Indians, whose lands were near by.

She was old, crippled and repulsive; and not even the Indians, though her coming was comparatively recent, could or would explain who she was, or where she lived before they adopted her.

The superstitious red men cared for her, and held her in awe, if not in veneration. She spoke English imperfectly, and claimed to have been a voodoo priestess in Africa, from which land she was carried to the New World as a slave.

She still practiced the voodoo incantations and repulsive mysteries, which gave her unbound power over the simple-minded Indians.

The crowd saw the motion of Captain Fox's hand to his sword, for she raised her staff to warn him rather than to defend herself, while, in a voice that sounded like an old man's, she called out:

"Iz de dead come to life, en whar's all iz hez gone din at Bermuda?"

"She is insane," whispered Lea, again taking the captain's arm.

Then he stepped up to the table and poured from a pouch his ounce of gold.

"Gold! gold! it is gold!" he exclaimed, hardly knowing whether he was in the flesh or not.

"Where did you get that?" asked Sutter, and when the events of the day were rehearsed, he added: "But you don't know it to be gold. I have my doubts about it."

After some discussion, the substance was tested with aqua fortis, and was proved to be genuine precious metal. Marshall's excitement was now extreme, and he would not hear to Sutter's proposal that he should spend the night. Back to the mill he rode through the driving rain, and when Sutter in the morning followed him, he met Marshall on foot, ten miles away from the mill.

"What are you here for?" exclaimed Sutter.

"I had to come, I was so impatient to see you," was the feverish reply.

When they arrived at the mill-race they found the men employed there excitedly gathering gold. Captain Sutter called them together, and exacted a promise from them that they would keep the matter secret for six weeks, during which time they should attend to their accustomed duties at the mill and ranch.

"Dinah is eccentric, but I am sure she would not harm any one."

"Where have you trusts been?" asked Lieutenant Frenaud, appearing before them with Ellen Condit on his arm.

"Rambling to the shore," replied Lea. "Proving that sailors soon weary of the land."

"No, Miss Condit," said Captain Fox, with a gallant bow, "but the night was beautiful and I could not resist. And we were repaid with quite a little adventure with a certain old Dinah, who practices the art of prophecy, or something of the kind, for the neighboring Indians."

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and the lid flew open, and then handing it to the doctor. He took a pinch and bowed as he raised it to his nose—just as men lay when about to drink wine—he took a pinch himself. This done, he imitated the doctor by taking out a red handkerchief, that looked like a good-sized flag, and they inclined their heads toward each other and blew bugle blasts of great vigor and resonance into the handkerchiefs.

"I agree with you, my dear Doctor," said the squire, replacing the handkerchief in one of the side-pockets of his velvet coat. "The officers of the Wandering are gentlemen tried and true, of that there cannot be the slightest doubt; and I am right glad to welcome them here. But I cannot see that in any of the essential requirements of gentility or seamanship, or even in those exterior qualifications that rejoice the eyes of women, and which men are created to behold, that they surpass our own people, the officers and crew of the Sea Hawk."

"Well, said Squire Condit, "said the doctor, taking out his snuffbox and presenting it in turn. "Perhaps one who has a brother and a nephew among the officers of the Sea Hawk is not competent to judge impartially between the merits of these sailors; but I would not fear, were they foes opposed to each other, which may heaven forbid—as to the result of the contest."

"Nor would I," replied the squire, helping himself to a pinch of snuff from the doctor's box, and preparing to smoke it. "Perhaps one who has a brother and a nephew among the officers of the Sea Hawk is not competent to judge impartially between the merits of these sailors; but I would not fear, were they foes opposed to each other, which may heaven forbid—as to the result of the contest."

"Just step across this 'stony' line, some dreary winter's night, and peep within the dark, cold, stone mill. The rushing brook, the rock, the stone mill, the winter's breath from Nature's clock. The post lingers still."

The golden hours are in their wealth, and all the harvest moon.

The bairns breathe forth good health.

But gone at summer's noon.

These seasons and their pleasures passed;

Old age comes, and the winter comes;

The old man cannot always last,

And now, it bids 'Adieu.'

Just step across this 'stony' line,

Some dreary winter's night,

And peep within the dark, cold, stone mill.

Old age comes, and the winter comes;

The music hath a charm;

With games and nuts, they declare,

There's no place like the 'Farm.'

Farm Gates and Bars.

have sometimes thought that it was a pity that the man who invented bars did not die when he was young, writes John M. Stahl, in the Practical Farmer. Bars are not much improvement over a gap in the fence, and they cost almost as much as a gate. Except in places where entrance will be very infrequently desired, it is cheaper to have a gate than bars; but, as first indicated, there are places where bars are justifiable.

There is an easier way of making bars than by cutting mortises through a post. To do this one must have an auger, chisel, etc., and the work is not inconsiderable.

"How old was he?"

"A little over five," the stranger said.

"And that was twenty years ago?"

"Twenty-one years ago—let me see; why it is, twenty-one years ago this blessed first of June. Ah, now I recall; my wife spoke of it this morning, and told me that we always celebrated the event like a birthday. Captain Fox has invited us aboard his ship this evening, so, after all Ralph's arrival, as we call it, we'll make much of it. Of course my family will be there, Doctor," said the squire, stamping his feet as he spoke.

"How far is he?"

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