

In Sheep's Clothing.



Capt. Ormond Steele

CHAPTER XIII.—Continued.

Off Montauk Point it was discovered that one of the middle chains was broken, and the better to repair it sail was taken in, and the Wanderer came to anchor.

Capt. Denham and every man on board the ship, with the exception of Fox and Frenaud, believed that the break in the middle chain was the result of accident.

Capt. Fox and his Lieutenant arranged the accident to advance, and they even knew the point where it was to happen.

"The Wanderer needs overhauling, and I hope to be able to do so in New York," said Capt. Fox, coming down to the cabin where Ralph Denham was reading.

"How long will the break detain you?" asked Ralph, taking the captain's coat and preparing to remove his pumps.

"Very well; let me rest for a short time. If I should go to sleep, which I rarely do in the daytime, wake me in an hour or so."

Ralph Denham threw himself on the luxurious couch, and as Don closed the door there was an expression of mingled pity and admiration on his face.

Captain Denham, though fully aware that the ship was at anchor in a calm sea, felt that he was being rocked and swayed by gentle, invisible hands.

Through the open port-hole that admitted light and air to his room, he heard the splash of the rippling water against the ship, but it was transformed into a more soothing sound than was ever known from the ship of a triton or fell from the sea, but treacherous lips of the fabled mermaid.

The music and the swinging kept on till the cabin expanded into a gorgeous arcade, down which he floated to music of increasing rapture, while maidens of exquisite form, with golden tresses that shimmered in the rosy light, beckoned him on, and Lea Hedges led them; he could not be mistaken in the cornelian lips and teeth of pearl.

What cared he now for earth? He was in an elysium more refined and glorious than Mahomet promised to his faithful followers.

The earth had sank beneath him; it had rolled up like a vesture and passed away, and he had become a part of that illimitable space, about which he had often thought, and the new life on which he had entered was bounded by eternity.

"Is he asleep?" asked Frenaud, coming into the cabin on tiptoe about the middle of the afternoon, and addressing Don, who had been ordered to remain in attendance on Captain Denham.

"Yes, sir, dead asleep," was the reply.

"Then," said Frenaud, "go on deck and tell the captain to come down."

CHAPTER XIV.

CAPTAIN FOX AND LIEUTENANT FRENNAUD

PUT THEIR HEADS TOGETHER

"Asleep, did you say?" said Captain Fox, when he joined Frenaud in the cabin, and made sure he could not be overheard by the unconscious man in the next room.

"The hashash has had its effect," replied Frenaud, "and he is as indifferent to life as if he were lying down there beside the anchor."

"Good; the point is to keep him in that condition till I am ready to act."

"That can be easily done. While in that sleep he will obey. If I were to tell him to get up, go aft and leap overboard, he would do it."

"But the effect will soon wear off. I had an opportunity to look into the workings of the drug, as given in that wine, when we were in Bombay; but I had no idea that I would ever need to employ it. Confound it. I am as wicked as the next man, but I dislike sneaking methods. I'd rather knock a man on the head than drown him in the sea, but I will send a messenger, and for this messenger I will give you a note that will announce to the chief your arrival. In the meantime, you can spend your time examining the coast, with a view to secreting the greater part of the treasure now on board."

"I understand, sir," said Frenaud, who rose to his feet, and stood, while the captain gave his order; "but permit me to ask how I am to know of your return?"

"Should I come back by day, you can see the ship. Should I return by night, keep a fire burning at the same point, and I will come ashore to you in the gig."

"And bring him, sir?" Frenaud jerked his thumb in the direction of Ralph Denham.

"Yes, if I can keep him alive on your prescription."

"Follow it out, sir, according to directions, and you can't fail," replied Frenaud.

man of large intelligence, had not the intellectual grasp to seize his superior's plans, or the penetration necessary to see through them.

"His being alive or dead forms important factors in the case. There has long been a belief in England that Colonel Graham is criminally responsible for his brother's death, and there is a very general belief that the child was not drowned. The mother, a wealthy lady in her own right, has never ceased her exertions to find her boy, and I am informed by the Colonel that she is now in the new world prosecuting her search."

"Are Graham children?"

"He is not even married. I doubt if he could get any one, even among the peasants of his estates, to marry him."

"Could you not make more money by communicating with the lady?"

"No; and then a man who was privy to her secret would not be apt to continue his favor in her sight, even if he restored her to her son. Now, as to Ralph Denham living or dead; let me say that with him alive I could prove his case beyond all dispute, for not only is his old nurse Dinah alive, but he is as like his father, as I remember him, as it is possible to conceive."

"That is an important point."

"A very important point, Frenaud."

"But when you have accomplished your purpose, what is to be Denham's fate?"

"I will leave him in the hands of the Indian, Uncas, who pledges himself to keep him secure and concealed for six months. At the end of that time the chief will be more than ready to slay the man who has provoked his jealousy, and I think I shall be willing, for, as I believe, he has provoked my jealousy, said the Captain, laughing lightly, and going over and opening the door of the room in which his wife slept.

Opening the door again, he came back with a pleased expression on his face, and said:

"He sleeps like a child."

"And I will show you how to keep him asleep."

"Ah yes, Frenaud, I was going to ask you what that was done."

"I told you that people in this state obey those who speak to them; all their own will power being deadened by the drug."

"I see."

"Then, you can see, it is an easy matter to feed him, and keep him in that condition as long as you please."

"So it is. Now, let me give you instructions."

Suddenly Fox's manner changed from that of an equal to that of a superior, giving an order which he expected to have implicitly obeyed.

"Get together whatever food and clothing you will need for five days, for yourself and two men, whom you can send from among the crew. To-night, when I see a light fire burning on the side of the beacon hill, on Montauk headland, I will send you ashore. Uncas will not 'oin you till to-morrow night, but he will send a messenger, and for this messenger I will give you a note that will announce to the chief your arrival. In the meantime, you can spend your time examining the coast, with a view to secreting the greater part of the treasure now on board."

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TO BE CONTINUED.

Insect Chemistry.

A singular discovery was announced by Mr. Oswald Larter at the November meeting of the Entomological Society in London. It was that the image of the moth known as *Dilaranura vinula* secretes caustic potash, which it uses for penetrating the cocoon in which it is inclosed.

Caustic potash, as every one knows, is a powerful cauter which destroys the skin when brought in contact with it. That it should be secreted, or formed, in the mouth of an insect, as Mr. Larter says, is very curious, and Professor Meldola, in discussing the discovery, remarked that the fact that an animal secreted a strong caustic alkali was a new one.

"But, Frenaud, I told you that I do not intend carrying out the Colonel's plan," said Captain Denham.

"Yes; when he was a little boy, and his father was drowned you saved him, and with the uncle, took him off to another Long Island. Oh, I could sit down and tell you all from A to Z, and you'd be as interested as the lawyer sharks."

"Yes, well, my heart was tender then—it's tough enough now," said Fox, with a laugh that told he felt no sense of degradation at the change in his feelings.

"Then it is not a feeling of humanity that leads you to save his life?"

"Did I say I was going to save his life?"

"I so understood you."

"I told you, Frenaud, that I would save him until I had drained Graham of his last ducat, or exhausted his last vestige of power."

"You don't like the old Colonel?"

"Fudge, Frenaud, you know with us it is not a matter of like or hate, but of success. We want to win, and when we succeed enough we can sink or swim. We can sink the ship and go home to England and live in luxury, and all the glory that wealth brings, to the end of our days," and Fox's blue eyes flashed at the picture he had conjured up.

"But if you carried out Graham's wish and got rid of this fellow," Frenaud nodded towards the room in which Captain Denham was sleeping, "don't you think you would make him more securely your friend?"

"My friend?"

"Yes, he has the power."

"I know he has, but he never has and never will use his power, or his wealth, from a sense of friendship. If Graham were sure that Ralph Denham was dead now, he would hasten to give warning that I was a pirate in these seas, and he would exhaust every power to destroy me."

"He does not like you, then?"

"Men never like men; they cannot trust, and we can never trust our partners in crime. I see, Frenaud, you look as if you thought this remark had decided personal bearing, and I confess it has. Now, what keeps the officers and crew of this ship together, as closely as if they were bound by the strongest ties in the world?"

"Interest, Captain."

"There you have it. It is all interest, all self. Now, take away the hope for gain, which is the interest, or let a greater gain be held out to those who would betray or turn upon us, evidence, and every man and officer in the crew would be breaking his neck in order to be the first to reap the reward, and in himself the safety of the law. I have looked into the question from all sides, and I have come to the conclusion that it is self-interest that rules the world. I know my knowledge of the law, and I could exhaust every power to destroy me."

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