

# The Devil's Own

A Romance of the Black Hawk War

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"Contraband," "Shoes of the Irish  
Brigade," "When Wilderness  
Was King," etc.

ILLUSTRATIONS  
BY  
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## CHAPTER X—Continued.

"Seems to be a mighty populous river up this way, hey, Mape?" he remarked genially. "Castaways round every bend."

"What do you mean? Have you picked up others?"

"Certainly have. Hit a keelboat twenty miles below."

"A keelboat operated by steam?"

"Couldn't say as to that. Was it, Mape? The craft had gone down when I got on deck. Had four aboard, but we got 'em all off an' stowed 'em back there in the Texas. You better get along now and shuck those wet clothes."

The captain turned rather sharply away, and I was thrust through an open cabin door by the grasp of the mate before I could really sense the true meaning of this unexpected news. Mape paused long enough to gruffly indicate a coarse suit of clothes draped over a stool, and was about to retire without further words when I recovered sufficiently from the shock to halt him with a question:

"I suppose you saw those people picked up from the keelboat?"

"Sure; helped pull 'em aboard. A d—d queer combination, if you ask me; two nigger wenches, Joe Kirby an' a deputy sheriff from down St. Louis way."

"Two women, you say? Both negroes?"

"Well, that's what Joe said they was, an' I reckon he knew. However, one o' 'em looked as white as anybody I ever saw. The deputy he tol' her name story—said they was both slaves that Kirby got from an ol' plantation down below; some French name, it was. Seems like the two wenches hed run away, an' the deputy hed caught 'em, an' was a-taking 'em back. Kirby cum 'long ter help, bel'n' as how they belonged ter him."

"You knew Kirby, then?"

"H—I, ov course. Thar ain't many river men who don't, I reckon. What is it to you?"

"Nothing; it sounds like a strange story, that's all. I want to get this wet stuff off, and will be out on deck presently."

I was shivering with the cold, and lost no time shifting into the warm, dry clothing provided, spreading out my own soaked garments over the edge of the lower bunk, but careful first to remove my pocket of private papers, which, wrapped securely in oiled silk, were not even damp. Fate had played a strange trick, and I knew not how best to turn it to advantage. One thing only was clear: whatever was to be accomplished I would have to do it alone—nowhere could I turn for help. In the first place Kirby undoubtedly had the law with him, and besides was among friends—those who would naturally believe him and were loyal to the institution of slavery. The very fact that this was a Memphis boat we were on precluded any possibility that the crew would sympathize with a nigger-stealer. Nor could I anticipate any assistance from without. Steamboats were few and far between on these northern waters, and at this time, if the report of war was true, everything afloat would be headed upstream, laden with troops and provisions. That the report was true I had no doubt. The probability of an outbreak was known before I left Fort Armstrong; the crisis had come earlier than expected, that was all.

This, then, was the situation—through an odd intervention of Providence here we were all together on this steamer, which was steadily

tion if we met face to face. Still, would he? The daring hope that he might not come to me in a flash. Might it not be possible to so disguise myself as to become unnoticeable? I sprang up to stare at my features in the small mirror hanging over the washstand. The face which confronted me in surprise was almost a strange one even to my eyes. Instead of the smart young soldier, smoothly shaven, with closely trimmed hair, and rather carefully attired, as I had appeared on board the Warrior, the glass reflected a bearded face, the skin visibly roughened and reddened by exposure, the hair ragged and uncombed. Even to my view there remained scarcely a familiar feature—the lack of razor and shears, the exposure to sun and water, the days of sickness and neglect, had all helped to transform me into a totally different appearing person from what I had formerly been; the officer and gentleman, had, by the mystery of environment, been changed into the outward semblance of a river roustabout. Nor was this all. The new character was emphasized by the clothes I wore—far too large to fit; also the texture and color, not to mention the dirt and grease, speaking loudly of a rough life and the vicissitudes of poverty. The metamorphosis was complete; so complete that I laughed aloud, assured by that one glance that the gambler, confident that I was dead, would never by any possibility recognize me in this guise, or while habilitated in such nondescript garments.

But the girl—Rene? And so this was how I had appeared to her. No wonder she questioned me; doubted my first explanation. I had approached her confident that my appearance as a gentleman would awaken her trust; I had felt myself to be a most presentable young man, in whom she must instantly repose faith. Yet this had not been true at all—instead I came to her with the outward bearing of a worthless vagabond, a stubble-bearded outcast. And yet she had trusted me; would trust me again. More: she could never be deceived, or fail to recognize my presence aboard if she had the freedom of the deck. Kirby might be deceived, but not Rene. If I could only plan to meet with her first alone, the peril of her recognition would not be extreme.

But I must also figure upon the other woman. Who could she be? Not Eloise Beaucalre surely, for the mate had only mentioned one of the two as being sufficiently white to be noticeable. That one would surely be Rene, and it was scarcely probable that Eloise, with no drop of negro blood in her veins, could appear colored. Perhaps this second woman was Delia, the quadroon mother. But if so how did she chance to fall alone into Kirby's clutches? Was she aboard the keelboat, locked below in the cabin, when it rammed into us? If she had been captured at Shrunks' camp during their murderous raid, what had become of her companion? Where was Eloise Beaucalre? The harder I sought to straighten out this mystery the more involved it became.

With every additional glance at the face reflected by the mirror my confidence strengthened in the ability to encounter Kirby and, pass unrecognized. Convinced as he undoubtedly was of my death in the black waters of the river he could not possibly imagine my presence aboard the Adventurer, while my personal appearance was so utterly changed as to suggest to his mind no thought of familiarity.

The conditions were all in my favor. I was smiling grimly at this conceit, well pleased at the chance thus afforded me, when the stateroom door was suddenly flung open and the hairy face of the mate thrust within.

"I reckon yer better tote them wet duds down ter the boiler room," he said gruffly, "an' then git sum grub. Likely 'nough yer wouldn't mind eatin' a bit. Be yer a river man?"

"I've never worked on a steamboat, if that is what you mean."

"No; well, I reckoned not, but the captain he thought maybe yer had. I tol' him yer didn't talk like no steamer hand. Howsmever, we're almighty short o' help aboard, an' maybe yer'd like a job ter help pay yer way?"

My fingers involuntarily closed on some loose goldpieces in my pocket, but a sudden thought halted me. Why not? In what better way could I escape discovery? As an employee of the boat I would go about the decks unsuspected and unnoticed. Kirby would never give me a second thought or glance, while the opportunity thus afforded of speaking to Rene and being of service to her would be immeasurably increased. I withdrew my hand, swiftly deciding my course of action.

"I suppose I might as well earn a bit," I admitted, hesitatingly. "Only I had about decided I'd enlist if the war was still going on when we got up there."

"That'll be all right. We'll keep yer busy till then, anyhow. Go on down below now an' eat, an' when yer git through climb up the ladder an' report ter me. What'll I call yer?"

"Steve."

"Steve—hey; sorter handy man, ain't yer?"

"Well, I've done a little of everything in my time. I'm not afraid to work."

During most of the remaining hours of the morning the mate kept me employed below, in company with a number of others of the crew, in sorting over the miscellaneous cargo, which had evidently been very hastily loaded. The work was hard and dirty, and after a few hours of it I must have looked my assumed part to perfection. The overseer gave me a hat which added little to my personal appearance, and by the time we were called to knock off for the noon meal I was thoroughly tired and disgusted, feeling as much a roustabout as I certainly looked.

The meal was served on an unplanned plank, the ends resting on kegs in front of the boilers. I was still busily munching away on the coarse, poorly cooked food when Mape, prowling about, chanced to spy me among the shadows.

"Hullo; is that you, Steve?" he asked gruffly. "Well, when yer git done eatin' I got another job fer yer on deck. Yer hear me?"

I signified that I did, and indeed was even then quite ready to go, my heart throbbing at this opportunity to survey other sections of the boat. I followed him eagerly up the ladder, and ten minutes later was busily employed with scrubbing brush and a bucket of water, in an endeavor to improve the outward appearance of the paint of the upper deck. I was engaged busily scraping at the dingy paint of the pilot house, when a negro, evidently a cook, from his dress, came up from the lower deck, bearing a tray well laden with food in one hand, and disappeared aft. He did not even notice my presence or glance about, but I instantly shrank back out of sight, for I became immediately conscious that someone was closely following him. This second man proved to be one of the fellows in civilian clothing I had previously noticed at the table below, a tall, sallow individual, attired in a suit of brown jeans, his lean, cracker face ornamented by a grizzled bunch of chin whiskers.

"Yer wait a minute thar, Jim," he called out, "till I unlock that thar door. I ain't ter kind that takes chances with no nigger."

I recognized the peculiar voice instantly, for I had listened to that lazy drawl before while hidden in the darkness beneath the Beaucalre veranda—the fellow was Tim, the deputy sheriff from St. Louis. The negro rested his tray on the rail, while the white man fumbled through his pockets for a key, finally locating it and inserting the instrument into the lock of the second cabin from the stern. I heard no words exchanged with anyone within, but the negro pushed the tray forward without entering, sliding it along the deck, while Tim, evidently satisfied that his charges were quite safe, promptly reclosed and locked the door, returning the key to the security of his pocket. After staring a moment over the rail at the shore past which we were gliding he disappeared after the negro down the ladder. Eager as I certainly was to make the poor girl aware of my presence on board, the chance of being seen, and my purpose suspected by others, restrained me. Besides as yet I had no plan of rescue; nothing to suggest.

Even as I hesitated, industriously scrubbing away at the paint, Kirby and the captain appeared suddenly, pausing a moment at the head of the ladder in friendly conversation. Parting at last, with a hearty laugh over some joke exchanged between them, the latter ascended the steps to the pilot house, while the gambler turned aft, still smiling, a cigar between his lips. I managed to observe that he paused in front of the second cabin, as though listening for some sound within, but made no attempt to enter, passing on to the door beyond, which was unlocked. He must have come to the upper deck on some special mission, for he was out of my sight scarcely a moment, returning immediately to the deck below. This occurrence merely served to make clearer in my mind the probable situation—the after cabin was undoubtedly occupied by Kirby, perhaps in company with the deputy; while next to them, securely locked away and helpless to escape, were confined the two slave women. In order to reach them I must operate under the cover of darkness, and my only hope of being free to work, even then, lay in the faith that the gambler might become so involved in a card game below as to forget his caution. So far as Tim was concerned I felt perfectly capable of outwitting him; but Kirby was dangerous.

## CHAPTER XI.

### The Story of Elsie Clark.

The next two hours dragged dreadfully slow, in spite of my pretense at steady work, and the fact that my thoughts were continuously occupied. A cautious whisper, sounding almost

at my very ear, caused me to glance up quickly, startled at the unexpected sound. I could perceive nothing, although I instantly felt convinced that whispering voice had issued from between the narrow slats defending the small stateroom window. No one was in sight along the deck, and the rag I was wielding hung limp in my hand.

"Who was it that spoke?" I ventured, the words barely audible.

"Ah, did—the prisoner in the stateroom. Have both those men gone?"

"Yes; I am here alone. You are a woman? You are Rene Beaucalre?"

"No, Ah am not her; but Ah know whar Rene Beaucalre is."

"You know? Tell me first who you are."

"Elsie Clark. Ah am a mulatto, a free negress. Ah bin helpin' Massa Shrunks, an' cookin' fer him. Yer know what it was whut happened down thar?"

"I know part of it, at least—that Shrunks has been killed. I was at Shrunks' cabin and found the bodies. Tell me exactly what occurred there."

"Whut's yer name?"

"Steven Knox; I am a soldier. Rene must have told you about me."

"No, sah; she never done tol' me nothin'. Ah didn't much mor'n see her anyhow, fur as thet goes."

"Not see her! Then she is not confined there with you?"

"Wiv me? Dar ain't nobody confined yer wiv me. Ah just ain't set



Kirby and the Captain Appeared Suddenly, Pausing a Moment at the Head of the Ladder in Friendly Conversation.

eyes on nobody since Ah done got on board, 'cept de cook. Ah reckon dem white men aim fer ter tote me soufe, an' sell me as a slave; dat's why Ah's locked up yere dis way. But Ah sure does know whar dis yer Rene Beaucalre wus."

"Where?"

"Wal, sah, it was 'bout like dis: Long 'bout three o'clock in de mornin' ol' Bill Sikes cum up frum de lower pint, a-drivin' his kivered wagon, an' made Massa Shrunks git up er bed fer ter git him anodder team o' hosses. Den dey done routed me up fer ter hustle up sum grub."

"Sikes; who was Sikes?"

"He lives down by de lower pike, sah; he's an abolitionist, sah."

"Oh, I see; he and Shrunks worked together. He helped with the runaway slaves."

"Yes, sah. Ah's bin called up that way afore. So Ah just nat'raly went ter work cookin', an' putty soon dey all ov 'em cum stragglin' in ter de cabin fer ter eat. Dar was four ov 'em, sah, 'er voice a husky whisper. "Bill Sikes, totin' a gun in his han', a free nigger whut dey called Pete, an' two wimmin. De bigger one was a quadroon, maybe 'bout forty years ol', an' de odder she want'n much more'n a gal; an' dar want'n nuthin' ov de nigger 'bout her, 'cept it might be de hair, an' de eyes—dem was sure black 'nough."

"You learned who they were?"

"Course Ah did. Sikes he 'splained all 'bout 'em ter Massa Shrunks, an' Ah heerd whut he sed. Ah was a waitin' on 'em. We all ov us helped fer ter put 'em in de wagon, hid under a lot o' truck, an' den Sikes he done drove 'em out thro' de bluffs. Ah done walked wif de gal, an' she tol' mor' 'bout herself, an' whar she cum frum; an' dat wus her name, sah."

"Her name? What name?"

"Rene Beaucalre; de quadroon woman, she wus her mother."

I could scarcely voice my surprise, the quick throbbing of my heart threatening to choke me.

"She claimed that name? She actually told you she was Rene Beaucalre?"

"She sure did. Why? Want'thet her name?"

"I do not know," I confessed. "Perhaps I shall understand better, if you go on. What happened after they left?"

"Why, we just went back ter bed, an' 'long 'bout daylight, I reckon, sum fellars cum ashore off a steamboat, an' done broke inter de house. We never done heerd 'em till dey bust in de door. One ob dem he knocked me down, an' den Ah saw Massa Shrunks kill one, afore dey got him. Ah don't know just whut did cum ob de free nigger; Ah reckon maybe he run away. Dar's a fellar on board yere whut killed Massa Shrunks; an' he's de same one whut made me cum 'long wif him. A smooth-faced man, sorter tall like, all dressed up, an' who never talks much."

"Kirby—Joe Kirby, a river gambler." "Dat's de name—Kurbay. Wal, he's de one whut was lookin' fer dis yer gal, Rene Beaucalre. He wanted her pow'ful bad. Dey hunted all 'round fer ter git her, cussin' an' threatenin', an' a haulin' me round; but 'twan't no sorter use. So finally dey took me 'long ter a boat in de creek—a keelboat, run by steam. Most ob dem men disappeared; Ah never did know whar dey went, but dis yer Kurbay

done shut me up in de cabin. Ah don't know much whut did happen after dat, 'till 'bout de time de steamboat done hit us; an' 'bout de next thing Ah wus yanked up yere on deck."

"But there was another woman on the keelboat when it was sunk—a prisoner also. Surely you must have seen her," I insisted.

"Ah saw her—yas," eagerly. "But Ah don't know who she wus, sah, nor whar she ever cum frum."

"Then she is not there with you?"

"No, sah; Ah's yere all lone. Ah reckon, tho', she sure mus' be on board sumwhar. All whut Ah does know is, dat de gal called Rene Beaucalre sure ain't on board; fer she, an' her mah, am at Beardstown long fore dis, an' a headin' right smart for Canada; while Ah's headin' fer down soufe. Ah's just told yer all dis, Mister White Man, 'cause you's a frien' ob de Beaucalres—yer wus, wusn't yer?"

"Yes," I said soberly, "I am; and, if I can find any chance to help you, I am going to do it, Elsie. Don't talk any more—the captain is just coming out of the pilot house."

As greatly as this brief, hastily whispered conversation had served to clear up certain puzzling matters in my mind, the total result of the information thus imparted by Elsie Clark only rendered the situation more complex and puzzling. Evidently the other prisoner had not been confined on the upper deck, but had been more securely hidden away below, where her presence on board would better escape detection. For what purpose? A sinister one, beyond all doubt—the expression of a vague fear in Kirby's heart that, through some accident, her identity might be discovered, and his plans disarranged. I comprehended the part he intended Eloise Beaucalre to play in his future, and realized that he cared more to gain possession of her, to get her into his power, than he did to obtain control of the slave. This knowledge helped me to understand the predicament which this revelation put him into, and how desperately he would strive to retain the upper hand. If, in very truth, she was Judge Beaucalre's white daughter, and could gain communication with others of her class, bringing to them proof of her identity, there would be real men enough on board the Adventurer to rally to her support. We were already sailing through free territory, and even now he held on to his slaves rather through courtesy than law. Once it was whispered that one of these slaves was white, the daughter of a wealthy planter, stolen by force, the game would be up.

But would she ever proclaim her right to freedom? If she was indeed Eloise Beaucalre—and even as to this I was not as yet wholly convinced—she had deliberately assumed to be Rene, doing so for a specific purpose—that object being to afford the other an opportunity for escape. Why, she had not so much as trusted me. From the very beginning she had encouraged me in the belief that she was a negress, never once arousing the faintest suspicion in my mind. Nothing, then, I was convinced, short of death or disgrace, could ever compel her to confess the truth yet. Kirby might suspect, might fear, but he had surely never learned who she was from her lips—that she was Eloise Beaucalre.

The conviction that this young woman was white, educated, refined, the daughter of good blood—no fleeing negress, cursed with the black strain of an alien race, a nameless slave—brought to me a sudden joy in discovery I made no attempt to conceal. "Eloise Beaucalre, Eloise Beaucalre"—the name repeated itself on my lips, as though it were a refrain. I knew instantly what it all meant—that some divine, mysterious hand had led from the very hour of my leaving Fort Armstrong, and would continue to lead until the will of God was done. It was not in the stars of Fate that such villainy should succeed; such sacrifice as hers fell of its reward.

Nevertheless, in spite of this resolve, and the fresh courage which had been awakened within me by the faith that from now on I battled for the love of Eloise Beaucalre, no immediate opportunity for service came. I could only wait patiently, and observe.

I was convinced that Kirby, whatever might be his ultimate purpose regarding the girl, had no present intention of doing her further injury. He contemplated no immediate attempt at forcible possession, and would be well satisfied if he could only continue to hold her in strict seclusion. The thing he was guarding against now, and while they remained on board, was escape or discovery.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

### The Flowing Tide.

No one, however great his genius or high his position, is all-important to the world; its work will go on without him. There may be ripples and disturbances in the current for a time where he sinks out of sight, but the tide will soon be flowing on as before. This truth may be painful to personal vanity, but it is comforting to every generous soul that cares more for others than for self.

### Territory Taken From Spain.

At the close of the war with Spain the American government obtained possession of Porto Rico, Guam and the Philippines, agreeing to pay Spain \$20,000,000 and give Spanish ships special trading privileges in the Philippines for ten years. Neither statehood nor citizenship was promised to any of the islands taken over and they are governed as territorial possessions.

There are ants in Nicaragua that cultivate minute mushrooms for food in their underground homes by forming a compost from leaves of trees.

# SCRAPS OF HUMOR



### Tonsorial Repartee.

"Have you seen Prof. Diggs lately?" "Met him yesterday."

"Blundering along as usual, I suppose?"

"Yes. He had just mistaken a barber shop for a meat market, which was next door. 'Dear me!' he exclaimed. 'This is no place for mutton chops.' 'Not unless you want to get 'em trimmed, sir,' replied the head barber."

### An Independent Wife.

Flatbush—And your wife writes to you on postal cards?

Bensonhurst—Oh, yes.

Flatbush—I shouldn't think you'd allow her to do so.

Bensonhurst—Oh, she's very independent. She doesn't seem to care who knows what she says.

### Quite a Job.

"Senator Twobble says he labored long and hard over that speech he delivered today."

"He means comparatively long and hard. He took the manuscript right out of his secretary's hands and insisted on writing the last two paragraphs practically without any assistance whatsoever, except in the matter of punctuation and a singular verb that should have been plural."

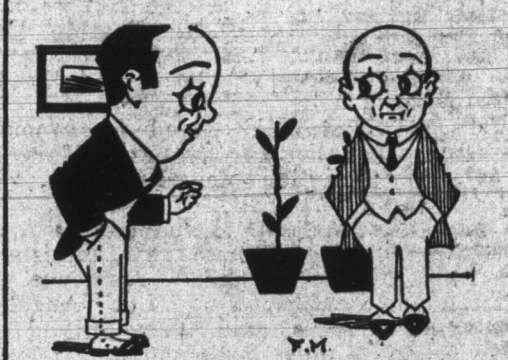
### Sorely Stricken.

"The chairman of the reception committee seems to be upset about something."

"He has cause to be."

"What's gone wrong?"

"Somebody sat on his silk hat and there's not another one to be had in town. He simply can't do himself justice in welcoming the distinguished visitor without the proper headgear."



### ASSISTING NATURE.

"Our young rubber trees are not growing very rapidly."

"Why don't you go around and stretch 'em a little every morning."

### Must Have the Goods.

Unless you sometimes have the stuff, it doesn't pay to try to bluff.

### Milder Moods.

"There's no doubt about it," mused Senator Sorghum, "we're a great deal more gentle and refined than we used to be."

"There have been some hard-boiled methods."

"Not in statesmanship. There was a time when a political quarrel might lead to a duel. Now the worst you can expect is a libel suit."

### That Explains It.

Miss Peachblow—I must confess I was quite astonished when I heard of your engagement. What business is your fiance in?

Miss Leftover—He's a collector of antiques.

Miss Peachblow—Oh! I see.

### A Schemer.

"I must tell you, Edgar, that I can not cook."

"But those excellent meals I have had at your house?"

"Were all prepared by our cook."

"Do you think we can get her away from your folks when we are wed?"

### Especially Cash to "Give Up."

"You must give up coffee and—"

"I never drink it, doctor."

"And stop smoking."

"I don't smoke."

"Humph! That's bad. If you haven't anything to give up, I'm afraid I can't do much for you."

### Its Pitch.

"Those loud newly rich folks evidently believe that money talks."

"Talks! In their case it screeches."

### Placework.

Mrs. Housekeep—A dollar an hour is too much to pay for beating those rugs. I'm afraid you'll loaf on the job."

The Odd Job Man—I can do it for 10 cents a wallop, ma'am. It'll amount to the same thing.

### A Cheap Triumph.

"Don't you believe me, dearest, when I tell you that you are the only girl I ever loved?"

"Oh, yes. But that's not nearly as nice as it would be to know that I'd stolen you from some other girl."



"A D—d Queer Combination, If You Ask Me."

churning its way northward, every turn of the wheel bearing us deeper into the wilderness. The chances were that we should thus be aboard for several days; certainly until we encountered some other boat, bound downstream, which would accept us as passengers. Meanwhile what should I do? How escape observation? How reach Rene, without encountering Kirby? The answer was not an easy one. The deputy would not know me, for I had never been seen by him. Kirby believed me dead, yet might recognize me in spite of that convic-