

Eustace, the Outcast.

CHAPTER XIV.

RALPH BECOMES THE HELPLESS VICTIM OF RANDOLPH'S REVENGE.

If Ralph Bloxam had been a prudent or a cautious man, he would not in present circumstances have thrown down the gauntlet of defiance to Randolph Graham. He might have reflected that he was still in the latter's power, and even more in his power than ever. For so long as Randolph commanded the Falcon he exercised almost despotic authority over those in the vessel, and if private feeling or malice prompted him to oppress any of the men, he had abundant opportunity to gratify it to almost any extent, for against the cruelty of a capricious or revengeful officer common sense had in those days almost no redress. Now, most cloddy Ralph, by what he said in the cabin, gave Randolph motive enough to use against him all the power of which he was possessed. He had plainly and emphatically declared that as soon as they got to port he would immediately proceed to reveal a secret which would ruin Randolph for life, and out him out of a princely estate. Was not this supplying motive enough for the bitterest and most deadly hostility, and would not a little cunning have taught Ralph to conceal this intention of his instead of boldly avowing it? But Randolph Bloxam was not a prudent or a calculating man. He was too passionate in his nature for that, and so vehement was his rage against Randolph and his mother on account of their treachery, that he felt some small relief to confront the youth in the cabin and triumphantly declare the nature and extent of the revenge he meant to take. But we repeat, this was not prudent, and this he ultimately discovered.

Randolph himself was not very prudent—at least his vengeful and vindictive nature was so strongly developed that it hurried him to a course of action in which he did not guard himself sufficiently from the risk of exposure, as was proved by the meretriciousness he had just experienced on board the Hector. But if he was not as prudent as a less brutal nature would have been, he could calculate pretty clearly, and he came to the resolution that to ill-use Ralph during the rest of the voyage would prove no material benefit to himself. By Ralph's dogged, stubborn air, he perfectly understood that neither threats, nor entreating promises, nor bribes would turn him from his purpose. One thing only would save him, and that was Ralph being effectually and for ever got rid of. He set himself, therefore, not to torture or ill-use Ralph, but to plan his destruction, and if he could accomplish this with cruelty so much the more would his fiendish heart be satisfied. His active, subtle brain did not require to cogitate much till it was able to devise a plan for his fiendish purpose. He spread out before him a chart for that portion of the ocean in which they were now sailing and laid his finger with a grim smile on a little speck which represented a deserted island. It was known to be a bare, desolated, rocky island of but a few miles in extent which could afford no subsistence to a living thing, and on these accounts was uninhabited, and for months, even for years, unvisited. It was only when a storm or contrary wind drove a ship to its neighborhood that human eye ever lighted on it, and this was a circumstance of such rare occurrence that very few navigators had ever been in sight of it. Randolph's diabolical purpose was to leave Ralph in this solitary place to die of starvation. Here was at once revenge and security—a sure way of disposing of him, and torturing him at the same time. What Randolph had now to think of was a pretext for inflicting on him his terrible punishment. That also he was not long in discovering. Ralph's chief failing he knew to be a craving for strong drink. All that he had to do therefore, was to put the means of intoxication in his power, when he was very sure Ralph would give him the opportunity he desired. This plot being laid, the course of the Falcon was considerably changed, so as in a few days to come within sight of the island, and, with great stealth and cunning, Randolph laid his snare for the unsuspecting gamekeeper.

By a deep calculated mildness of discipline Randolph sought to make himself popular with the crew, so that the act he meditated might not evoke a mutinous spirit. Of Ralph himself he took no notice, but he secretly contrived to place brandy in his way, and the old passion for drink coming upon him in all its force, he stole what it was meant should steal, and lay in his hammock drunk, with the empty bottle by his side to convict him of the crime of theft and drunkenness. Ralph was no great favorite in the ship. His fury at being pressed had made him savage, taciturn, and unamiable, and though he did his share of work it was with sullenness, which gained him little friendship among his messmates. Nevertheless they had no wish to see him punished, and hoped that some day he might be released from his imprisonment.

Further cries while the rest of the lashed were being administered. The stinging pain probably subsided at the fourth or fifth blow, and the rest produced a sensation of dull agony. The boatswain deemed by Ralph's motionlessness that he was exhausted if not unconscious, and looked to the doctor, who stepped forward and felt his pulse. The latter did not order the punishment to cease, but the man brought down the cat more lightly, and in this manner the full number was inflicted. When the last blow fell Ralph lay upon the gun as still as if he had been in a dead faint, and made no sign or motion while they were loosing the cord that bound him. When all the fastenings were untied, he was lifted down and laid upon the deck, when, to the general amazement of all, he leapt to his feet and springing upon Randolph, clutched him by the throat. So sudden was the action that for a moment every one was petrified, and ere they had presence of mind enough to interfere, Randolph was lying on the deck in Ralph's ferocious grip, and was already black in the face. A minute or two of such a grip and Randolph's life would have been forever crushed out of him. But, of course, the instant their surprise permitted, the sailors rushed to the help of their officer, and Ralph was literally choked off him, cursing furiously at not being allowed to murder him outright. Randolph lay for some moments gasping for breath, surrounded by the astonished sailors, and ministered to by the doctor, who gave him a few drops from a phial which had a wonderful restorative effect. 'I'll do for him yet,' roared Randolph, with a spasmodic effort. 'Lay him in a black hole, and feed him on bread and water. Let no one speak to him or go near him. Quick, do you hear?' 'Ah, you want to shut my mouth now, but my turn will come—I'll murder you, if I should hang for it the next minute. You won't always have your men about to protect you.' How many more wild words of wrath Ralph would have uttered we know not, but his roaring was cut short by half a dozen powerful men pulling him away forward, where heavy irons were fastened on him, and he was carried down to the lower parts of the ship, and shut up in utter darkness, being left alone with his snarling back and furious thoughts. Randolph, shaking with rage and fear, retired to his cabin, and in its privacy strove to get over the effects of Ralph's choking grasp, and indulged in thoughts as to his future course. By the attempt made on his life, by the threats he had expressed when that attempt was baffled, Ralph had forfeited his life, according to the articles of war, and Randolph was not sure if he would exceed the limits of his power if he hung him at the yard-arm. As it would at least now be perfectly safe for him to put into execution his previous plan of leaving him on the desert island, and this would serve his purpose just as well or even better, for it subjected Ralph to a lingering torture of starvation. On consulting the chart he found that they must now be in the vicinity of the laud.

Next morning when he ascended to the deck the breeze was stationary, the sea was calm as a lake, and the desert island lay in its dismal solitude and black desolation under their lee. It was a low lying piece of rugged rock, apparently of volcanic origin. About the center there were several peaks and craters, but otherwise the surface was tolerably level, and gradually descended to the water's edge, where for some distance seaward on ugly reef showed its projections here and there among the blue water. The water that was now in peaceful tranquility teeming with the rugged surface of the reef, would, when rendered angry with the tempest, lash itself in foam and fury, and with a roar of wrath against the iron bosom of its present love, and then God help the vessel that got between them. And so thought the crew of the Falcon as she lay motionless within a hundred yards of the reef, a position which, in a storm, would have been within the very jaws of death. The bleak, bare, desolated island had a weird interest as they gazed upon it, being the only break in the water for hundreds of miles in all directions. There it lay in its utter solitude, the home of no living thing, seldom visited by human presence, seldom seen by human eye. Randolph stood on the quarter-deck, gazing with a grim smile at its sterile and savage desolation. The sight of it yielded him a strange pleasure for it was to be made the instrument of his cruel revenge. 'Rather an ugly neighbor that in a storm, sir,' observed the chief mate, and Randolph shrugged his shoulders, and ran his eye along the dark line of rock and water patchwork. 'Best to give it a wide berth in a gale when it rises on the lee,' was his rejoinder.

Don't you think, sir, we had better get away from it as soon as possible? That cat's hair up there betokens a gale and the sky is beginning to have a dirty look to windwards.' 'And so we shall almost immediately,' said Randolph, slowly. 'It won't take long for a boat to go to the island and return.'

'Do you mean to land, sir?' 'No; but I mean to leave Ralph Bloxam here, as a punishment for what he did yesterday.'

Roberts started. 'Leave him here, sir—here, on that bit of barren rock? He will die of starvation.'

'Poor man,' Randolph impatiently returned. 'He has the power to finish himself whenever he chooses. Come, we must not delay. Get the boat over the side, and put two men in her. You will go with them and land the prisoner.'

It was soon known in the ship that Ralph was to be left on the island, and the horrible nature of the punishment filled every mind with horror. But Randolph knew better than to allow the thoughts of the men to dwell upon it, and no sooner was the boat over the side than Ralph was brought from below and made acquainted with his fate.

'Coward—scoundrel—blackguard,' he roared as he glared in the mocking and triumphant face of Randolph. 'I know what you mean by that. You hope to get rid of me. You know I would run if I ever let you to England, and this is the way you are taking to murder me.'

'Off with him,' exclaimed Randolph, with a wave of his hand. Ralph snatched his teeth, and looked up to behold the malignant face of his persecutor bent over the bulwarks. He shook his clenched fist at him and shouted, 'Blasphemy, you are perhaps not done with me yet. The day may come when we shall meet again, and won't I take it out of you—everything you have done to me.'

Randolph, smiling in contemptuous exultation, and withdrew from the side. The smile was that of a man who had no longer anything to fear, for now he counted himself secure from the injury which Ralph had the power to inflict. In a few minutes the boat had passed through the creels of the reef, and touched at the edge of the island. Ralph, who was still bound, was lifted ashore and seated upon a ledge of rock. Roberts cut the cords that tied him, and threw the knife at his feet, saying it might be of some use to him. Then they re-entered the boat, and rowed away, leaving the culprit without water and without provisions. Ralph uttered no further word, but sat in gloomy silence, eyeing the boat as she crossed the reef and ran in under the Falcon's side. He saw the boat raised and fastened in its place. Then the Falcon filled and bore away, and at her side was a row of faces gazing fixedly upon him, till his and their grew indistinct in the distance, and at length melted from view. Then, and not till then did Ralph realize his utter and hopeless desolation, and he threw himself on his face on the hard rock, and raved with all the fury of a madman.

'Away with him,' roared Randolph, with a spasmodic effort. 'Lay him in a black hole, and feed him on bread and water. Let no one speak to him or go near him. Quick, do you hear?'

'Nothing,' answered Ralph, doggedly. 'Well, these crimes are of a very serious character, and the rules of the service require that they should be severely punished. I sentence you to receive forthwith three dozen lashes.'

'What!' roared Ralph, 'do you dare to order me to be flogged?'

'Ha! mutinous language. Boatswain give him four dozen.'

'Ay, ay, yer honor.'

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'Lash him to the gun,' cried Randolph. Instantly several strong arms seized Ralph, and he was dragged to the spot of punishment.

'Hands off,' shouted the gamekeeper. 'I ain't a sailor, I tell you; you have no right to lay a hand on me.'

'Must obey orders,' said the boatswain.

'Strip him, men, and tie him firm.'

Ralph made a desperate resistance. His savage nature was roused to the utmost, and he put forth his great strength with ferocious energy. They had great difficulty in manning him, and twice they had him laid on the gun, and ere his legs and arms could be tied, he burst from their hold, and made another desperate struggle on the deck.

All this while Randolph looked on with exultant satisfaction. The cruel, cowardly, brutal soul of the monster enjoyed with keen relish the spectacle of his enemy's impotent rage—nay, gloated over it as only such a debased and treacherous nature could gloat, and ever and anon, as Ralph's flashing eyes caught his fiendish gleam of the latter brightened, and the smile of malice and mockery broadened on his lips, again was Ralph brought to the gun and extended on it, while three or four of the sailors lay upon him, and by main strength and crushing weight kept him there till the ropes were passed round his arms and legs, and he was made secure beyond all power of further resistance. His jacket and shirt were torn from off him and his back laid bare. In the position in which he now lay he could see only Randolph, who, the further to gratify his brutal soul and increase the torture of his victim, stepped forward and stood in front of the gun full in Ralph's view.

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Hoc run for him life, dog run for him character.

Hungry fowl wake soon.

Men can't smoke and whistle same time.

No throw way dirty water before you hab clean.

Old fire stick no hard to catch.

One tief (thief) no like to see noder tief carry long bag.

Parson christen him own pickaninny first.

Rain never fall at one man door.

Shoe alone know its stocking hab hole.

Rock stone at ribber bottom no know sun hot.

Seven year no 'nough to wash speckle off Guinea hen back.

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Cuss cuss (calling names) no bore hole in wall.

Cunning better dan strong.

Ebry day a fishing day, but ebry day no for catch fish.

Finger neber say, 'Look here;' him say, 'Look dere.'

When cackroach gib dance he no ax fowl.

Big blanket make man sleep late.

Follow fashion break monkey neck.

Goat say him hab wool, sheep say him hab hair.

Proverbs from the South.

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[Continued.]

wonderful and mysterious curative power is developed which is so varied in its operations that no disease or ill health can possibly exist or resist its power, and yet it is

Harmless for the most frail woman, weakest invalid or smallest child to use.

'Almost dead or nearly dying' For years, and given up by physicians of Bright's and other kidney diseases, liver complaints, severe coughs called consumption, have been cured.

Women gone nearly crazy! From agony of neuralgia, nervousness, wakefulness and various diseases peculiar to women.

People drawn out of shape from excruciating pains of Rheumatism. Inflammatory and chronic, or suffering from scrofula!

Erysipelas! Salt rheum, blood poisoning, dyspepsia, indigestion, and in fact almost all diseases fail.

Nature is heir to Have been cured by Hop Bitters, proof of which can be found in every neighborhood in the known world.

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DANIEL GORDON, CABINETMAKER. Leading Undertaker. Has on hand now the LARGEST STOCK OF First-Class Furniture.

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GODERICH BOILER WORKS. Have just received a large stock of BRASS & IRON STEAM FITTINGS. BOILERS & ENGINES. New Salt Pans and Boilers.

Wanted to be Known. CHOICE CONFECTIONERY. CANNED FRUITS AND FISH. TOBACCO, CIGARS, &c.

E. BINGHAM'S RESTAURANT. D. K. STRACHAN, PRACTICAL MACHINIST.

Mowers and Reaper. Sulky Hay Rakes, Plows and Agricultural Implements and Machinery Generally. ALL WORK THOROUGHLY DONE.

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