

FEB. 22, 1916

THE CARLETON PLACE HERALD.

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Gordon Craig SOLDIER OF FORTUNE

By RANDALL PARRISH
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CHAPTER XVIII. In Possession.

ONE of the hands hung the coil so that it fell at my feet, and I did as directed, as otherwise we would have been crushed under the vessel. As it drew taut the boat swung in gently against the side of the Sea Gull.

"Now, you thief," he screamed, "it's my turn to play jailer. Come up, both of you."

"Just a moment, Captain Henley," I answered, rising to my feet. "If there is any one to be punished I am the one; this woman had nothing to do with it."

"That's for me to decide," he snarled, and whipped out a revolver. "I know how to handle both of you. Come, jump now, you dog, or you never will move again. Pass the girl up first, and be lively about it. Give them a hand there, Peters, and don't be too easy."

There was no excuse for delay; besides, those lads under the heavy canvas must be nearly smothered. With my arm about her I lifted her up to where Peters could reach down and grasp her hand, and then followed as quickly as possible. Henley had swung down to the deck and stood there, his men grouped about him, the revolver still in his hand. One glance at his face told me he was insane from rage, thinking only of revenge.

"Take the woman below," he snarled, his cruel teeth gleaming. "She'll get her lesson. Here, Louis, don't you hear me? Lock her in, and bring me the key. I'll handle this sniveling thief first. So you couldn't run a boat, hey? Not so easy as it looked, was it, you dog? Thought we'd be gone this morning, didn't you? You'll find I'm not quite as easy as all that. Now you'll take your medicine!"

I still stood motionless, my back to the rail, letting him rave, but watching every movement. I remember the faces about me, fierce, scowling faces, of men wild to lay hold upon me at the first word of command. What did Henley mean to do? Kill me or give me over into the hands of those merciless devils? All I could read in his eyes was hatred, exultation, consciousness of power.

"Hard luck, Craig—hey!" he began tauntingly. "Played with the wrong man, didn't you. Now I've got the girl just as I want her, and as for you—Lord! but I'll keep you to play with all the way to Honduras. It will be a pleasant voyage, my friend. Here, Masters, you and Peters stand by. Now, you robber, give me those papers."

I handed them out, watching closely. Peters stood at my right, one hand on my arm; the other fellow must have been behind me. Henley grasped the envelope, opening the flap to be sure of its contents. The movement caused him to lower the revolver and avert his gaze for just an instant. With one motion I lunged Peters aside and jammed a clinched fist into the captain's face.

Masters must have struck me at almost the same instant my fist landed on Henley, for we went down together, his revolver discharging, the flying bullet gouging my left shoulder, burning the flesh like a red-hot wire. Yet I grappled him even as we crashed to the deck, but the fellow lay stunned, motionless as a dead man. Everything happened quicker than I can tell it; with such rapidity, indeed, that not a hand touched me. I could barely struggle up on one knee, dazed still by the stroke which had felled me, and glance about when the bluejackets came tumbling over the rail and leaped at the astounded crew of the Sea Gull. It was a swift, short fight, the assailants having every advantage. I saw the lieutenant, bare handed, dash into the group, striking out left and right, his men at his heels. There was a volley of oaths, a thud of falling bodies, a sharp command and the shrill pipe of a boatswain's whistle. Two men rushed forward, the first disappearing behind the chart house. The second encountered Broussard stepping off the bridge ladder and buried the fellow to the deck with one blow of a sledge hammer fist. Scarcely pausing to see whether he was alive or not, the assailant ran on toward the forecabin.

The whole affair was over in two minutes, the bluejackets circling out like a fan and pressing their enemy into a helpless mass against the rail. For a moment the fight was furious, every man for himself; then the lieutenant drove like a wedge into the bunch, and it was all over.

"On to the bridge there, Coates, and hold up her head," sang out the officer. "Boatswain, take charge of these beauties and run them into the forecabin. Leave two men on guard and take a squirt into the engine room. Report to me here."

He glanced toward me. "Say, what is the matter with you—shot? You're white as a sheet of paper, man."

"I got one on the head with a belaying pin from the left of it. The bullet touched me—here. Lord, how it burns!"

"Who did the shooting?"

"Henley here." And I touched the

fellow with my foot. "He fired just as I hit him."

"So that's the man!" he exclaimed. "We've done a good day's work."

Henley stirred as he spoke and opened his eyes, staring up into my face.



The Faces About Me, of Men Wild to Lay Hold Upon Me.

and then at the lieutenant's uniform. The sight of the latter perplexed him. "Who are you?" he asked angrily, making an effort to rise. "Where is Broussard?"

"Henley," I said, stepping in between them, "the game is up, and the best thing you can do now is to keep quiet. This gentleman is Lieutenant Hutton of the revenue cutter Saline, and his men have the crew of the Sea Gull under hatches forward. Give me back those papers."

He had the envelope still clasped in his left hand, and he glanced at it dully and then beyond me toward Hutton. Apparently his brain, yet numbed by the blow, failed to entirely comprehend. The lieutenant, however, was a man of action. With grip on his collar he jerked the wretch to his feet and held him there.

"Hand over those papers to Craig," he ordered shortly, "and be lively about it. I haven't anything to do with that affair, and I don't think you will have much more from now on. You are my prisoner, and you are good for a ten spot at least. Stand up, you coward." He forced him back against the rail and glanced about the deck. The boatswain was coming aft.

"Well, Sloan, how did you find things?"

"All serene, sir; the whole crew bottled up and mighty little fight left in them."

"The engine room?"

"The engineer was a bit ugly, sir, and had to be manhandled proper. He's lyin' in a coal bunker with a sore head, cussin' blue. But the assistant is a young feller an' kin run the engines. I left him in charge with a couple o' lads lookin' after him."

"Who has the wheel?"

"Somers, sir."

"All right. Have steam kept up, and make the course south southeast. Here, take this man along also. He's the captain, but no better than the rest."

Henley stared back, with some crazy hope of resistance, but the great fist of the boatswain gripped his collar.

"Come on, you," he said, jerking him savagely. "Yer bloody pirate; make another crack an' I'll land yer one. Is he that Henley, sir?" of the lieutenant.

"Yes; ever hear of him?"

"Have I? Aye, many the time. He's wanted in Galveston, sir, for somethin' worse than runnin' arms—it was a knifin' job, sir."

"What became of the girl?"

"The steward took her below and locked her in before the portholes started."

We went down the companion stairs together into a deserted cabin. No steward was in evidence, and, finding the captain's stateroom locked, the lieutenant kicked open the door and entered. I turned back, explored the



I Clashed the Straying Hand and Drew Her to Me.

passage and finally dragged Louis out from a dark corner of the pantry.

"Oh, Lor', Massa Craig," he whined. "Ah ain't done nuthin', deed Ah ain't, sah!"

"You locked up the girl!"

"Ah just had to, sah. Captain Henley he just nat-rally skin me alive, sah, if Ah don't. But Ah nebber hurt her none."

"Where is she?"

"In No 5, sah; here—here am de key."

"All right, Louis," and I tossed him into one corner. "Now, listen; set that table and get some food on it quick. Make coffee, but don't wait for anything else."

"Yes, sah."

I crossed the cabin and inserted the key. As the door opened she stood there waiting, her hands held out.

"It—it is all over with? You have been successful?"

"Yes, don't worry," and I held her hands fast, looking into her eyes. "There can be no further trouble. Captain Henley and his crew are prisoners. The lieutenant is in Henley's cabin, going through the papers. He wants to have a full report ready when the Saline comes up. The three of us will breakfast together."

"You must permit me to wash the wound on your head first," she insisted. "The hair is all matted with blood. Please."

She ministered to me with womanly gentleness, parting the matted hair and cleansing the wound with water. While in no way serious it was an ugly bruise and required considerable attention. Sitting there on a stool while she worked, I could hear Louis bustling about in the cabin, but my mind was busy with a thousand matters requiring settlement. At last I refused to be ministered to any longer. As we entered the cabin the lieutenant stood in Henley's door.

"I was looking for you, Craig," he said, coming forward and bowing to my companion. "Here is a newspaper clipping which may be of interest. I found it on the deck."

I read it hastily and in silence handed it to her, watching her face as she read. It was a local item describing the finding of a dead body which could not be identified. The details of the man's appearance as well as the clothes worn were carefully depicted, evidently in hope some one might thus recognize the party. She remained with the bit of paper in her hands for what seemed a long while, while we waited. Then her eyes were slowly lifted to our faces.

"That was Philip Henley," she said soberly.

"Your husband, madam?" asked the lieutenant as I remained silent.

"Yes; legally my husband, although he had driven me from him by dissipation and neglect. I—I cannot tell you the wretched story now."

"Nor do I ask it," he hastened to assure her. "What is it, Mapes?"

A bluejacket stood at the foot of the stairs, one hand lifted in salute.

"The Saline, sir, is alongside and hailing us. The boatswain sent me, sir."

We followed the two on deck, and after one glance about I led her

around the bulge of the cabin to the narrow deck space astern. The boat in which we had escaped had been hoisted into its davits, and we halted in its shadow. I could perceive the whiteness of the Saline's deck and the group of officers on the bridge. The captain, facing us, hollowed his hands.

"What have you to report, Mr. Hutton?"

"The vessel is in our possession, sir, and the crew under guard below."

"Any injuries?"

"None serious, sir."

"And the captain—Henley—did you get him?"

"He's with the others."

"Better put the fellow in irons, Hutton. There are some serious charges against him, you know."

"What is to be our course, sir?"

"Pensacola. Don't wait for us."

"Aye, aye, sir. Shall I hold Craig and the lady?"

"Not on this case. We have all the evidence needed. If you take their addresses that will be all that is necessary. Pleasant voyage!"

He waved his hand and then, perceiving us as he turned away from the rail, lifted his cap in salute.

"It is all over now, dear," I whispered.

"Yes, but—but I do not feel as though I could ever touch that money."

"You will have no choice. The courts will decide that."

"I know what I would like to do with some of it."

"What?"

"Buy this—this boat."

"In memory?"

"Of course. You loved me then."

"And now and always. Do you know what is the first thing I shall do when we make Pensacola?"

"No."

I clasped the straying hand and drew her to me, looking down into her eyes.

"Telegraph my father I am coming home."

"Is that all?"

"And that I shall bring a wife with me. Right here I end my career as a soldier of fortune."

Under the protecting shadow of the boat our lips met.

THE END.

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A Woman's — Problem

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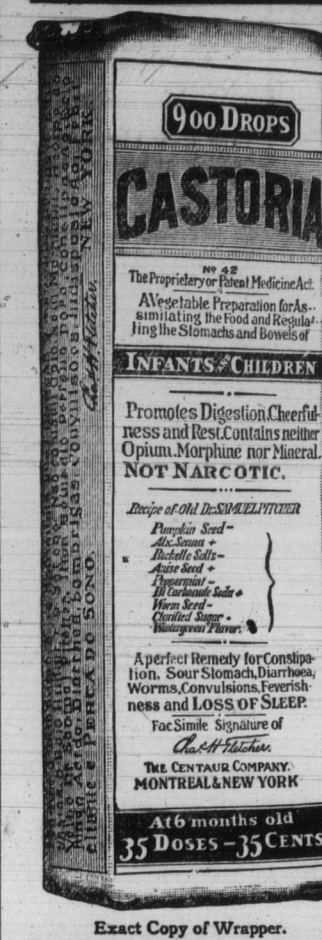


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Career of the Organization of the "Forty Immortals."

The Institute of France had its inception in 1570, when there was founded in Paris by the French poet, Antoine de Balf, a literary and musical society, known as the Academy of the Valais. Charles IX. granted it letters patent on Nov. 20, 1570, as "The Academy of Poetry and Music." It had, however, no stability. Attacked upon every occasion and criticised by its opponents, its members ceased to meet after 1584. Almost half a century passed before a revival took place.

For some time since the year 1629 a small circle of enthusiastic students was wont to meet at each other's home for the study of French language and literature. From year to year its membership increased, and in 1634 Cardinal Richelieu proposed to the society to have their private status changed into a public institution, with many rights and privileges. Upon agreement by the society it was henceforth known as "the French Academy," with a charter from Louis XIII. of January, 1635. It consisted then of forty members—the "forty immortals"—and at no time and under no pressure whatsoever has this number been increased.—London Standard.

The Story of "Hard Hit"

"Mr. Orchardson, if I thought that by killing you I could paint a picture like yours I would stab you to the heart." Such was the remark made by Pellegrini, the famous caricaturist, to the Royal academician, Sir William Orchardson, when at a private view he first saw "Hard Hit," the picture of the ruined gambler. "It was," said the artist, "the greatest compliment I could have had." Curiously enough, the model who sat for the ruined gambler was rather fond of cards himself. One day the artist noticed that he looked somewhat depressed. "What is the matter?" he asked. "I was awfully hard hit last night," he answered. "By Jove," replied the artist, jumping up with delight. "I've got it at last! 'Hard Hit' is yours." And that is how the picture got its name.

Johnnycake.

In tracing the term "Johnnycake," says a writer, we find ourselves at a time antedating by many years steam cars and hotels on wheels, in an age when mankind depended entirely upon his four footed companions for transportation and had only saddlebags in which to carry his luggage. Taverns were few and far apart, and a touch was always acceptable. Cornmeal, forming so large a part of the dietary in those days, held a chief place in making up the lunch. Wet with water and a little salt added, it was baked in a shape that stored away in the saddlebags nicely and was called Johnnycake. This is the origin of our modern, unconventional Johnnycake.

Too Soon For Her.

Apologies of those who never enjoy the luxury of a carriage save when the death of some one makes for a free ride to the cemetery a clergyman told of a little girl standing at Fifth avenue and Thirtieth street, New York. She was a ragged little thing, and she was watching some carriages rolling past with the most wistful blue eyes.

"Well, little one," he said, "would you like to own one of those carriages?"

The blue eyes turned up, and there were tears in their corners.

"I never rode in a kerridge," she said softly. "Me little brudder died afore I was born."

Still Cheerful.

"Did you attend Miss Sereasm's birthday party?"

"Oh, yes, I was there."

"What kind of time did you have?"

"The best ever."

"What is your impression of her?"

"She's a game loser."—Birmingham Age-Herald.

About Dry Goods Mainly.

"Before we were married, Tom, you used to drink in every word I said."

"Yes, but your conversation has become so dry now that I can't drink it in."

His Occupation.

"Johnny, is your father an optimist or a pessimist?"

"He ain't neither one. He's a chiropodist."

As Bill Nye Saw It.

Bill Nye described a five shot Colt's revolver as "Professor Colt's five volume treatise on the ventilation of the human system."

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