

THE MYSTERY

By STEWART EDWARD WHITE
and SAKUEL HOPKINS ADAMS
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CHAPTER X. The Twelve Repeating Rifles.

After my watch below the next morning I met Percy Darrow. In many ways he is, or was, the most extraordinary of my many acquaintances. During that first half hour's chat with him I changed my mind at least a dozen times. One moment I thought him clever, the next an utter ass; now I found him frank, open, a good companion, eager to please, and then a drop of his blond eyelashes, a lazy, impudent drawl of his voice, a hint of half-bred condescension in his manner, convinced me that he was shy and affected. In a breath I appraised him as an intellect, a fool, a shallow mind, a deep schemer, an idler, and an enthusiast. One result of his spasmodic confidences was to throw a doubt upon their accuracy. The more he said, the more I was inclined to believe that he was a shallow mind, a deep schemer, an idler, and an enthusiast. One result of his spasmodic confidences was to throw a doubt upon their accuracy. The more he said, the more I was inclined to believe that he was a shallow mind, a deep schemer, an idler, and an enthusiast.

much better than one would expect. I afterwards found that the neatness of this cabin and of the three staterooms was maintained by the Nigger—at port of his neck. A rack held a dozen rifles, five revolvers, and—at last—my cutlasses. I examined the lot with interest. They were modern weapons—the new high power 30-40 box-magazine rifle, shooting government ammunition, and had been used. The revolver was of course the old 45 Colt's. This was an extraordinary armament for a peaceable schooner of one hundred and fifty tons burden.

The rest of the cabin fittings were not remarkable. By the configuration of the ship I guessed that two of the staterooms must be rather large. I could make out voices whistling at the rail and a faint, distant, and indistinct sound of a piano. "Well, where are we bound, anyway?" "The dirty, unkempt, disheveled figure of a man, his face a mask of gloom, and his eyes staring at nothing, answered me. "You are mate of this vessel. Your duty is to see that my orders as to sailing are carried out. Beyond that you do not go. As to getting double wages, you must go to the captain. Remember to earn your wages, Mr. Eagen!"

He turned away to the binoculars. In spite of his personal filth, in spite of the lawless, almost piratical, character of the man, in that moment I could not but admire him. If Percy Darrow was ignorant of the purposes of this expedition, how much more so Captain Solover. Yet he accepted his lot bravely, and as far as I could tell, he intended to fulfill it faithfully. He liked him none the less for enabling me to indicate a streak in his moral nature akin to and quite as curious as his excessive neatness regarding his immediate surroundings.

CHAPTER XI. The Steel Claw.

During the next few days the crew discussed our destination. Discipline, while maintained strictly, was not conventional. During the dog watches, often, every man aboard would be below, for at that period Captain Solover loved to take the wheel in person, a duty which he carried out with the dingy checked shirt wide open to expose his hairy chest to the breeze. In the twilight of the forenoon we had some great fun. "Talk—talk—I say," said the Nigger, with hesitating deep-sea wisdom from the hairy Thackles, or with voluminous bursts of fractured English from Percy Darrow. "We," he said, "watched from his pale green eyes. The light shifted and wavered from one to the other as the ship wavered; gurgles issuing from the empty berths yawned cavernous. I could imagine the forecastle filled with the desperate men who had beaten off the Oyma. The story is told that they had swept the gunboat's decks with their own rapid-fire turned in.

No one knew where we were going, nor why. The doctor puzzled them, and the quantity of his belongings. "It ain't pearls," said Captain Solover. "You can kiss the book on that, for we ain't a diver among us. It ain't Chinks, neither."

"Well, you see, last season we were pearl fishing." "But you needed only your diver and your crew," I objected. "There was the matter of a Japanese gunboat or so," he explained. "Poaching," I cried. "So some call it. The shells are there. The islands are not inhabited. I do not see how men could properly be beyond the tide water. I have heard it argued."

"Hold on!" I cried. "There was a trouble last year in the Ishigaki Islands where a poacher beat off the Oyma. It was a desperate fight." Captain Solover's eye lit up. "I've commanded a big brigantine, name of The Petrel," he admitted simply. "She was a brigantine, aloft, but now she has much the same lines as the Laughing

miners. Thackles had a number of volumes of very cheap literature. He brought some extraordinary garish detective stories. The others contributed sensational literature with paper covers adorned with lurid illustrations. A fragment of The Marble Faun was included in the collection. The Nigger has his copy of Duval on Alchemy. I haven't the slightest idea where he could have got it.

While Pulz read, Handy Solomon worked on the alteration of his claw. He could never get it to hold, and I remember as an undertone to Pulz's reading, the rumble of strange, exasperated notes. Whatever the evening's lecture, it always ended with the book on alchemy. These men had no perspective by which to judge such things. They accepted its speculations and theories at their face value. Extremely laughable at his own speculations, I often wished the shade of old Duval could be permitted to see these, his last disciples, spelling out dimly his teachings, pronouncing his grave utterances, but believing utterly.

Dr. Schermerhorn appeared on deck seldom. When he did, often his fingers held a pen which he had forgotten to lay aside. I imagined him preoccupied by some calculation of his own, but the forecastle, more picturesque, saw him as he guarded constantly the heavy casket he had himself carried aboard. He breathed the air, walked briskly, turned with the German military precision at the end of his long, thin, and pointed beard. He roamed the cabin at the lapse of the half hour. He had, he said, remained Percy Darrow leaning indolently against the railing, his long, thin, and pointed beard. He roamed the cabin at the lapse of the half hour. He had, he said, remained Percy Darrow leaning indolently against the railing, his long, thin, and pointed beard.

One evening before the night winds I sat in the shadow of the extra dory on top of the deck house. The moon was just beyond the full, so I suppose I must have been practically invisible. Certainly the Nigger did not know of my presence, for

a thought. Then abruptly the clamor died to nothing. I felt six eyes bent on me, six unseeing eyes moving restlessly in motionless figures, suspicious, deadly as cobra. Up—now my standing with the men had been well enough. Now they drew frankly apart. One of the most significant indications of this was the increased respect they paid my office. It was as though by prompt obedience, instant deference, and the emphasizing of ship's etiquette they intended to draw sharply the line between themselves and me. There was much whispering apart, many private talks and consultations in which I had no part. Ordinarily they talked freely enough before me. Even the reading during the dog watch was interrupted at least by four to the crew's five. An incident, however, decided me. One evening I was awakened by a sound of violent voices. Captain Solover occasionally juggled the watches for variety's sake, and I now had Handy Solomon and Percy Darrow. The Nigger, being cook, stood no watch.

I was in two minds whether to report the whole matter to Captain Solover. The only thing that restrained me was the vagueness of the intention, and the fact that the afterward was armed, and was four to the crew's five. An incident, however, decided me. One evening I was awakened by a sound of violent voices. Captain Solover occasionally juggled the watches for variety's sake, and I now had Handy Solomon and Percy Darrow. The Nigger, being cook, stood no watch.

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impression of the cheap melodrama. It seemed incredible, but soon I could not dodge the conclusion that it was a made-up quarrel designed to impress the crew. Why should they desire to do so? I had to give it up, but the fact itself was obvious enough. I laughed to see them. Thackles did not come to blows, but it did come to black looks on meeting, muttered oaths, growls of enmity every time they happened to pass each other on the deck. Percy Darrow, for the first time in my acquaintance with him, was ridiculous.

About this time we crossed into frequent thunders. One evening just at dark we made out a heavy black squall. Not knowing exactly what weight lay behind it, I called up all hands. We ducked the stay-sail and foresail, lowered the peak of the mainmast, and waited to feel it—a rough and steady seamanship often used in these little California wind-jammers. I was pretty busy, but I heard distinctly Handy Solomon's voice behind me. "I'll kill you sure, you Greaser, as soon as my hands are free!"

Dr. Schermerhorn broke in: "Ach, it is that I have perfected. Pardon me, my boy, it is the first I have worked from apart. It is for a surprise. I had made in small quantities the missing ingredient. It will form a perfect irritant to the current. Now we are ready to get your re-agent? There's no known method in my book."

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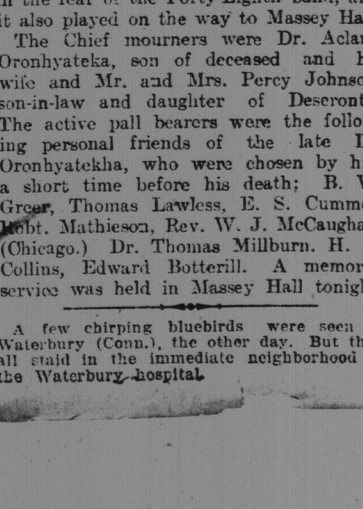
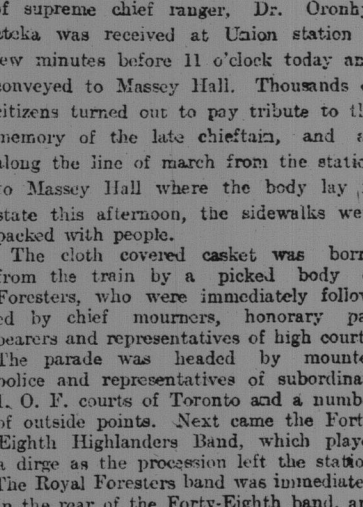
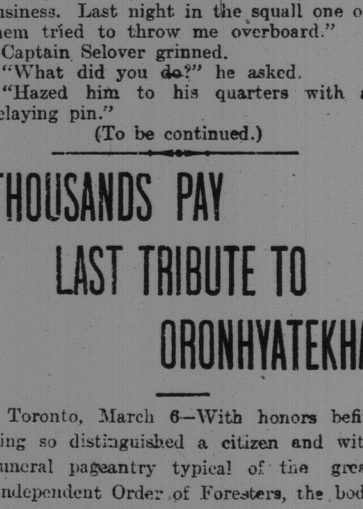
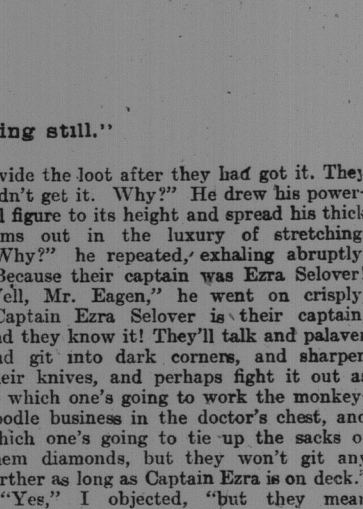
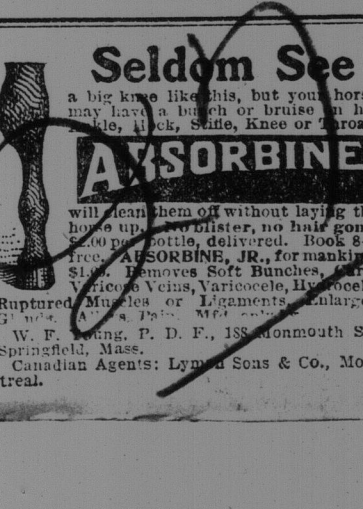
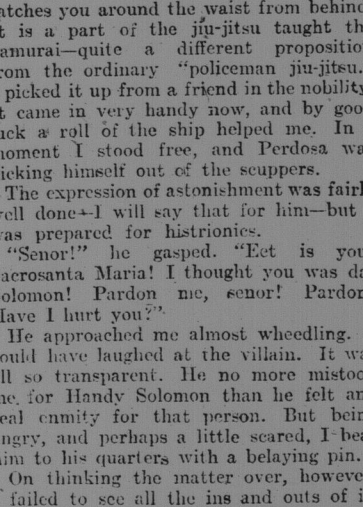
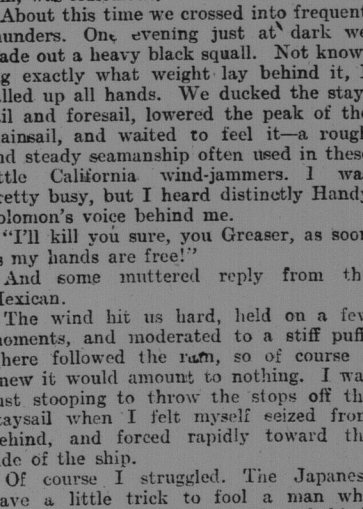
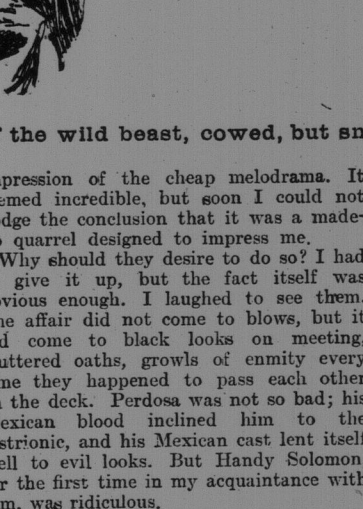
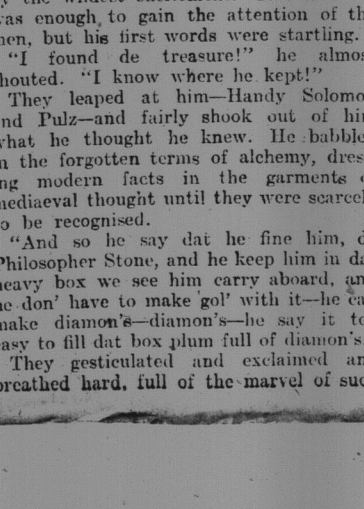
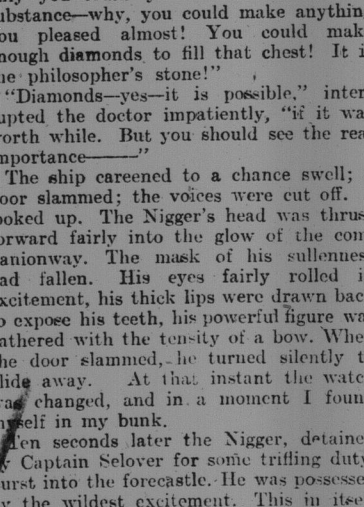
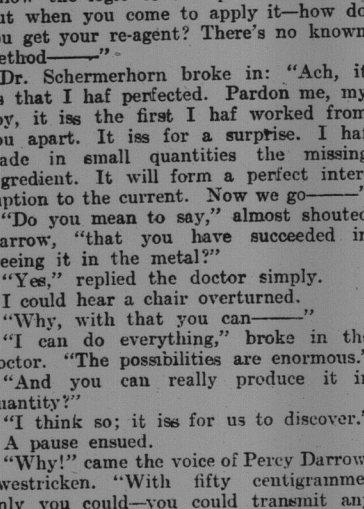
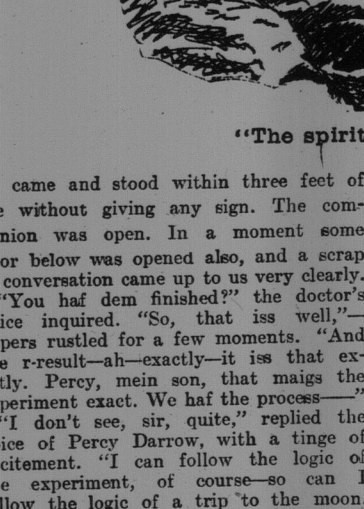
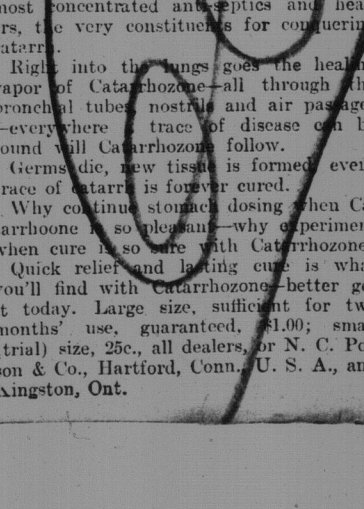
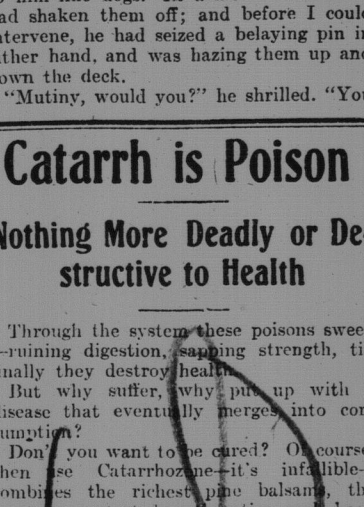
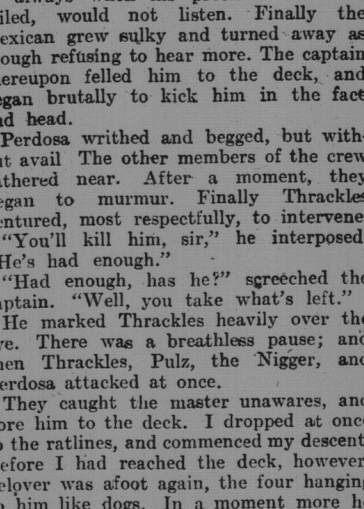
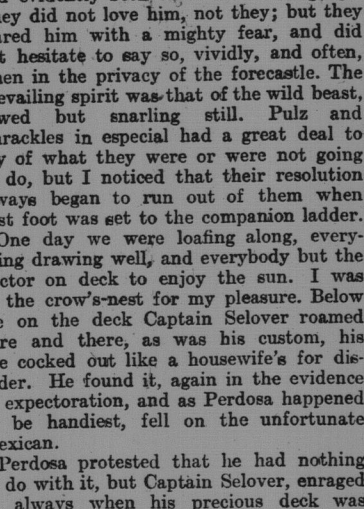
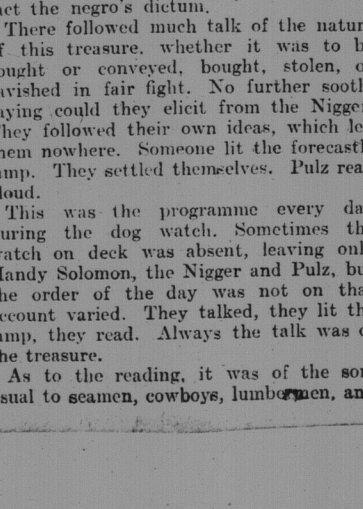
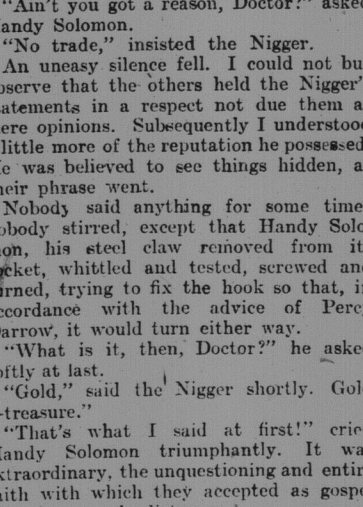
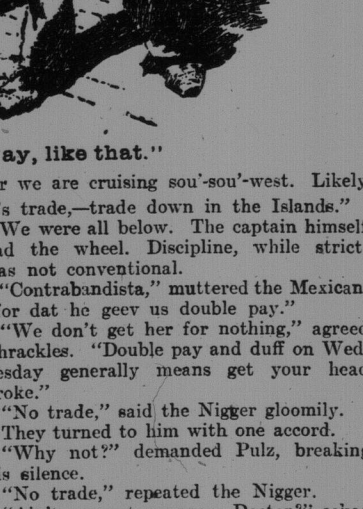
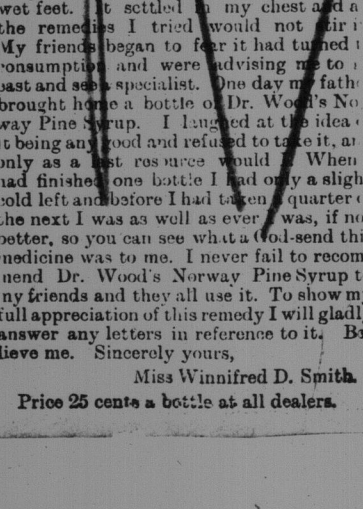
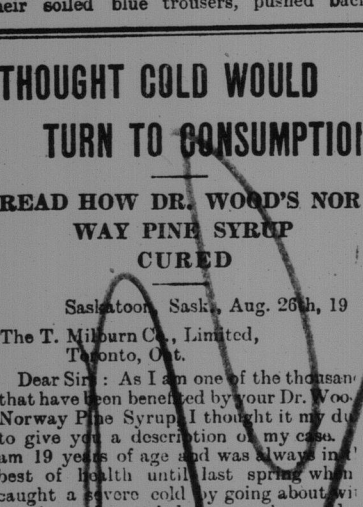
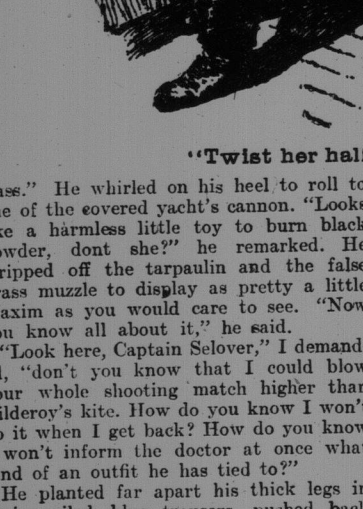
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TURN TO CONSUMPTION!

READ HOW DR. WOOD'S NOR

WAY PINE SYRUP

CURED

Saskatoon, Sask., Aug. 26th, 1906.
The T. Milburn Co., Limited,
Toronto, Ont.

Dear Sir: As I am one of the thousands that have been benefited by your Dr. Wood's Norway Pine Syrup, I thought it my duty to give you a description of my case. I am 19 years of age and was a weak, thin, and delicate man. I had been suffering from consumption for some time, and my health was rapidly declining. I had been told that Dr. Wood's Norway Pine Syrup was a good remedy, and I decided to try it. I bought a bottle of the syrup, and I began to take it. I found that it was a very pleasant and effective remedy. I began to gain weight, and my health improved. I am now a strong and healthy man, and I am able to do my work without any difficulty. I am very grateful to Dr. Wood for his discovery of this wonderful remedy. I am sure that it will be of great benefit to many other people who are suffering from consumption. I am sure that it will be of great benefit to many other people who are suffering from consumption.

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THOUSANDS PAY LAST TRIBUTE TO ORONHYATEKHA

Toronto, March 6.—With honors befitting so distinguished a citizen and with funeral pomp typical of the great Independent Order of Foresters, the body of supreme chief ranger, Dr. Oronhyatekha was received at Union station a few minutes before 11 o'clock today and conveyed to Massey Hall. Thousands of citizens turned out to pay tribute to the memory of the late chieftain, and all along the line of march from the station to Massey Hall where the body lay in state this afternoon, the sidewalks were packed with people. The cloth-covered casket was borne from the train by a picked body of Foresters, who were immediately followed by chief mourners, honorary pal-bearers and representatives of high courts. The parade was headed by mounted police and representatives of subordinate I. O. F. courts of Toronto and a number of outside police. Next came the Forty-Eighth Highlanders Band, which played a dirge as the procession left the station. The Royal Foresters band was immediately in the rear of the Forty-Eighth band, and it also played on the way to Massey Hall. The chief mourners were Dr. Acland Oronhyatekha, son of deceased and his wife and Mr. J. H. McLaughlin, (Chicago). Mr. and Mrs. Percy Johnson, son-in-law and daughter of Desrochers. The active pal-bearers were the following personal friends of the late Dr. Oronhyatekha, who were chosen by him a short time before his death: B. W. Gross, Thomas Lawless, E. S. Cummer, John Matheson, Rev. W. J. McCaughan, (Chicago). Mr. and Mrs. Percy Johnson, son-in-law and daughter of Desrochers. The active pal-bearers were the following personal friends of the late Dr. Oronhyatekha,