

They were of small number and exceptional to the Government and people of Canada.

Said Byner Clyne one morning when pacing the "Azure Dove's" deck with Reuben soon after dawn, the sun not yet on the horizon:

"You take side with the North, preferring the strongest, eh?"

"Preferring the right side, sir. The lady I'm associated with as Secretary is of the highest aristocracy in England; thinks and acts and speaks as I have done. The conservation of nationality in the United States in amity with England, advances all social well-being. What are they looking at? The captain and first officer on the cross trees with their telescopes, the Duke of Sheerness and second officer in the shrouds with theirs. Let us inquire. Here comes our fellow-passenger who has been up the rigging with his glass, Captain Clapper Hayvern. Good-morning, captain; something low in the water out yonder?"

"Well, you see the dog watch report a long low steamer which crossed the "Dove's" bows, came astern, and getting alongside again hailed. On being answered sheered off. Then, as Captain Stardark calculates, shot ahead again, and got out yonder."

"What steamer do you suppose it to be?"

"If that be the same as scudded around the "Azure Dove" in the night, there can be small doubt of the name. Only one craft afloat could, or would have been fitting as a bird of prey around this here "Dove"—the pirate, El Abra."

Most of the female passengers had from first day of the voyage until now remained in their berths. The venerable lady in long white curling hair and antique cap, El Abra's mother, had not been seen by any passenger except Agnes Schoolar and Isa Antry; nor did the Clynes know she was on board. Probably they were unaware of her existence, as she seldom visited her son, and never among Southern grandees. Mother and son were affectionately attached, and he supplied her with all money she chose to accept; but he disliked Renshaw, her second husband, even to hatred. And Renshaw, as you may remember, appreciated the animosity; saying any son would dislike a man who married his mother; he would have himself behaved bad to such a man.

Rhoda Renshaw, that was her name now, had given Abram Lud the secret of making the Lancashire Witch pills in the first instance; which becoming popular in the South enabled him to assume the designation of Doctor El Abra. His magnificent leonine head and mane; powerfully magnetic eyes; aptitude and boundless success in financial speculations, and luxurious tastes, gave him a place in society eminently beyond dispute.

Rhoda, from the Irish blood of the O'Loneys, had an impulsive and generous nature, which her son partly inherited with the wondrous flowing hair. She had a continuous succession of orphans, outcasts and other waifs around her as a family. And now she was proceeding to England with Agnes Schoolar on Lillymere's affairs, the waifs and orphans were left in charge of Renshaw and servants at Conway in Canada.

The "Azure Dove" soon reached out to the suspicious craft lying on her track. Captain Stardark ran up the British Ensign, as well as the American. Byner Clyne and Hestra waved the Palmetto.

They only aggravated the captain of El Abra. His long guns sent the "Azure Dove" to the bottom, the passengers struggling with the ocean in the ship's boats.

The corsair steamed away when he had damaged his victim so much that signals of distress were followed by launching of boats. Whether any of the passengers went down with the "Azure Dove" was unknown at the time. Captain Stardark and five of his crew perished with the ship; having remained at posts of duty saving the passengers until too late to escape. With them remained Clapper Hayvern, who leapt into the sea, barely eluding the vortex. By strong swimming Clapper got on board the second officer's boat, which contained Agnes Schoolar, the Clynes, and some passengers, whose names I have failed to ascertain.

One boat, containing seven of the ship's crew, pulled away without any passenger. These men called to companions at duty on deck to look to their own safety, which admonition the brave fellows at duty disrearded. Reuben made a remark on this to Lady Mortimer, whom, and the three female Pensyldines, with four maids, he, the Duke of Sheerness, and ship's first officer had succeeded in saving into one boat. The remark having a politico-economic tendency, was suffered to pass almost unanswered.

Where was El Abra's mother? Except Agnes Schoolar, none in the ship had known that Rhoda Renshaw was mother of the Guerilla-corsair.

Rhoda was afloat on a hen-coop on the cold, wide ocean, alone, unseen of any. Who knows but she was that night dreamt of by men and women, now of prosperous life, in Canada some, in the States some, whom, as waifs of misery, she had gathered and fed and clothed; put to learn trades, and started in business? Who knows what sustained her? The hen-coop and a satisfied conscience had

to do with her buoyancy; but there may have been more.

She floated all day and ensuing night in the cold November fog; up on ridge of the billows, down in the trough of the sea. Her feet, fortunately, entangled in a coil of rope underhanging the slim ark, which carried drowned fowls within, and herself without. Her arms stretched through the top spars and clutching a centre rod going along the coop lengthways.

The venerable white hair, thickly curling and flowing, drenched in the spray, or wafted in the wind, was the sail her ship carried. Exhausted in strength, and all but lost in mind and sense, the aged woman and the hen-coop were drawn by grappling irons on board a passing ship, when she had been thirty hours in the water.

It was the American barque "Eaglefeather." There the old lady was tenderly cared for and nourished; warmly clothed and rendered comfortable. When strong enough, she examined her wallet and found the Lillymere packet of birthright proofs safe, though the contents were soaked with sea water.

The "Eaglefeather," last from Bordeaux, was bound west for New York. The third day after the rescue a steamer hove in sight. As it approached, the officers of the barque remarked the long, low outline of hull and rakish spars. After using telescopes ten minutes, they whispered the fearful name—El Abra. And soon the corsair proved himself. He summoned the crew to put what passengers they had, if any, in the ship's boats, and he would pick them up.

Captain Bryster of the "Eaglefeather" placed Rhoda Renshaw in the barque's gig, having no other passenger, and lowered the boat with two sailors, intending to go himself on board the corsair to consult on terms of his ship's release. But as soon as the boat touched water, a voice through a sea-trumpet ordered the two sailors to return to the barque's deck, and the captain to remain where he was. One of the sailors obeyed this command, the other did not, but stayed with the passenger.

Whereupon the corsair opened fire and sank the "Eaglefeather" and all hands; the small boat escaping narrowly by vigour of the one man's oar stroke. He rowed for the ship of doom, but it steamed away, leaving him and the lone woman of the hen-coop, whom he had aided to rescue, to voyage together without food or water in the solitude of the broad ocean.

This sailor's name was Haystan. With nothing to look at but far distant ships, open sea, and his fellow-passenger, Haystan fixed eyes of curiosity on Rhoda's abundant white hair, with occasional glances at her countenance, which seemed to bear resemblance to something in his memory. But when their eyes met steadily, hers became to him fearful. He had seen a portrait of El Abra, at a European port, where, as Chief of rebel Guerillas, he was popular with such as made ventures in secesh bonds, or built corsair ships. He purchased an El Abra handkerchief containing a portrait of the man from whom the dread scourge of the ocean was named, and now took it from his neck, unfolded the portrait, and swore.

He swore at the woman for a sea-witch. That she was either the mother of the Evil One, or mother of El Abra.

He would have risen and slain her, or leapt overboard and drowned himself in frenzy, had not the magnetic eyes—mother eyes of the wondrous orbs of El Abra, constrained him to remain still.

Haystan quivered in every nerve, perspired and grew cold by turns. And so passed one day.

In the night he thought she winked, and he might creep forward and fell her dead. But when he had lifted the oar to give the blow, he beheld her eyes gleaming and sparkling as the ocean foam sparkled in darkness. His arms shook, he let fall the paddle in the sea, and sank down benumbed in every muscle of the limbs.

All this while, in the day and in the night, not a word did Rhoda utter. She retained the one position, holding in paralysis the insane sailor; who else would have slain her, or destroyed himself.

On the second day they drifted alongside two of the boats now lashed stem and stern, which five days before had come away from the sinking "Azure Dove." The first officer's party comprising Lady Mortimer, the Duke, the Pensyldines, four maids, and Reuben, all famishing. And the second officer's boat containing Agnes Schoolar, the Byner Clynes—father and daughter, Clapper Hayvern, and the persons whose names I have failed to ascertain; they also famishing.

Some hours later a ship of war came, and picking them up, carried all into Hudson waters.

Haystan continued to rave that the old woman had enchanted him, and was either mother of El Abra, or of the other once named to be named no more. Had the officers of naval war believed the old lady to be El Abra's mother, she might have fared ill in personal liberty. But, attributing the accusation to the man's mental imbecility, and learning from Lady Mortimer and the Duke of Sheer-

nes, that Mrs. Rhoda Renshaw was wife of a respected Canadian official servant, no heed was given to the sailor. For here, I may repeat, none except Agnes Schoolar knew Rhoda's relationship to the Guerilla, whose fame now filled the world.

Byner Clyne and Hestra soon found friends and concealment. Some of the part owners of the corsair which had consigned them, unwittingly, to destruction, took care of them; and entered into counsel about the other rovers of the ocean which Clyne, as their agent, had gone out to purchase and equip.

#### CHAPTER XXXVI.

IN THE CONFLICT STILL, THOUGH OUT OF BATTLE.

Mr. Thomas Inkle, the banker, had the morning mail-bag emptied on his private table, the letters opened and read, and sat mute and thoughtful when Mrs. Inkle entered, asking a question of deep family import:

"Owt?"

Which the banker replied to:

"Nowt."

She departed without farther remark, returning when the afternoon mail had been read, again inquiring anxiously:

"Owt?"

To which Mr. Inkle answered:

"Nowt."

Day after day the question was the same:

"Owt?"

And the reply:

"Nowt."

They conversed at other times in the chambers of retirement, but Mr. Inkle forbade waste of time in banking hours. Yet Tilda having, like himself, a weighty uncertainty on the parental affections, could not refrain from interrupting business a little, just a little, when the mails arrived.

Household discussion came up one evening when they retired within the curtains of repose, thus:

"Will it injure the bank, Thomas, if the report go out that he has been with the Southerners?"

"Nothing can injure the bank, Tilda, while I live. A country progressive in solid prosperity as this is, year by year a wider and a better tillage; year by year new developments of the natural resources, must ever yield revenue on well secured advances as mine are. No, Tilda; Tom's misfortune will not injure the Bank of Inkle, but it may kill the banker; if it come true he is hung. After that the institution might cryne, and—there now, Tilda, don't cry, you are provided for against all mishaps to the bank. Dunnot thee greit, laas."

"It is not the wretched gold hoards I cry for, but my son, my son. That a son of ours should be hung! What is the use of all our gold if it could not save his life?"

"It was his head-strong will that would not be controlled. I told him to have nowt to do with the reb. loan. After he would, unknown to me, have a hand in it, I told him he had better risk losing than go in person to negotiate for cotton. But he went, and, through all the disguises he assumed, was recognized and taken as a spy, and, they say, hung. But even that is not the worst of it; not by a long sight."

"Inkle! What could be worse?"

"This is worse, Tilda; as I've heard to-day from one of my agents. Tom was taken by cavalry scouts, called Redbolts, commanded by that young fellow, De Lacy Lillymere, who wanted to marry our daughter, Emily. He was executed by Lillymere's order."

(To be Continued.)

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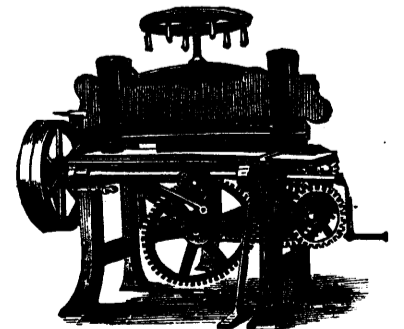
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