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LEVER BROTHERS LIMITED, TORONTO



# \*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\* PIRATE.

WEATHERBY CHESNEY

and ALICK MUNRO.

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\*\*\* so nothing. His duty, he said, was to war against Spain. His conscience was satisfied that by destroying her chipping he wounded her mortally, but his conscience would never consent to killing men other than in fair fight. On deck I was loyal to my captain,

as was my duty, but in the cabin ! spoke my thoughts freely, as was a aworn shipmate's privilege. "The crew is getting surly," I told

him one day, "with this long continued Il success, and it will take little to make their muffled grumblings break out into open mutiny."

"What will they have?" be answered impatiently. "But sailors are the same all the world over. I make not the slightest doubt that Shem, Ham and Japheth growled among themselves on deck whenever Captain Noah was in | I'll leave the matter in your hands, his state cabin. But let our lads say what they want, and I am ready to listen. It is not as if they were hired for a set trading voyage to a certain port and back again, with thumb marks and crosses duly set against an agreement and bounty money pocketed and guzzled before the anchor was tripped. I am their captain only by election and hence to a certain degree their servant."

"How if they depose you?"

"Then I shall serve under the new captain. Who is it to be-yourself?" "You know me better than to think that," said I warmly.

"Yes, Jack, I do. But who else isthere?"

"Willie Trehallon."

"Willie Trehalion would never take the cross staff from my hands. Besides, he does not know how to use it But what about the old man? He has the ear of many of the crew, and from what I hear was a shipmaster beforehe fell into the hands of the Spanfards." "I can well believe that," said L

"It was only the other day he took the cross staff in those twisted fingers of his, shot the sun, ciphered out his reckoning on the slate and, turning round, Oh, ho, oh, Master Topp!' he chuckled. "He's a lubberly navigator who cannot And his position to a matter of three minutes.' And then when I had gone over the work afresh and found that he seemed to be right, 'Ah, ha, ha, Master Topp, you're a better scholar with endgel than with pencil! More weight in the forearm than in the head, eh? Stick to the sea long enough and you'll blunder a stout ship ashore yet before you're hanged.' And he would have added more in the same strain, but I didn't wait to hear it."

"Ah," laughed Alec, "the old man's infirmities protect his skin from the trouncing of John Topp's fist, and the old man's wit is too sharp pointed to take a trouncing from John Topp's

"Maybe," said I silkily, "but I have no fancy to be taught by a daft man." "Why not, if he knows something which you don't? Put your pride in the powder room, Jack, along with the other touchy explosives, and remember that every man on this earth has something to teach. At least, so I have found. The mummer chap from Stratford says that there are sermons in stocks and stones and good in every-

"Where's the good in a Spaniard?"

asked slyly. "To till land and build towns for her and for the present to gather gold for you to plunder."

"Right!" said I. "Then let us set about the plundering. I tell you this profitless cruise must cease or there'll De powder burning within the walls of who would at once spread the news of the fortress. The men's sulks will come to a head shortly if you don't give them a sop to their greed." Afexander Ireland got up and paced

beard in irritation.

"The devil seize you all for a set of unhung robbers!" he cried passionately. "Not one of you has a spark of true pa- nately. By this means we kept our potriotism in him. From this spot I have sition as far as possible unchanged,

There's easy, good washing shead for the Sunlight Maids emy, and without losing a single man. And why? Because their crews have nothing to fight for. But intercept a rich plate ship and in one fight we may less half our ship's company, and then it will be 'Hurrah for England, while

> her there,' Well, so be it. As my hounds will not hunt dry scented any "You speak confidently," said I, half scared at his vehemence, "as though you could point out the course of a fat

prize without further search."

yet the Scourge has men enough to sail

"And so I can," he answered quietly, and, unrolling a chart of the main, he skewered it on to the table. "See here! The vessels coming empty from the east touch no land before reaching here and so make for this strait in happy ignorance of our presence. Not so those that are full of treasure and homeward bound. Every port on the coast has been advertised of the pestilential Englishman's whereabouts, so they steer a point or two to the northward of the regular course and pass by the other side of Margherita, near that same El Pueblo del Norte which we harried three months ago. Now, if we creep round the eastern end of the island warrant we'll be within gunshot of some hulking gold wagon before we're a couple of Sundays older."

"anen," said i, "in the name of that's sensible do it!" The captain laughed shortly. "No,



"The crew is getting surly," I told him Jack. If you and the other rascals are so greedy for gold, you can put the Scourge about whenever you please,

And I-I'll fight her for you down to the last plank when the time comes." Without another word I sprang up

The men were idling about the hot decks in surly knots of threes and fours, but the news brightened up their sullen faces as rain does a parched prairie. They jumped to their sta- eh? tions like a parcel of holiday schoolthe headsails sprang aloft like larks, and driven by eager arms the windlass heaved us up to the stream anchor at which we were riding.

"Flatten in the starboard jib sheet there and cant her head off! Handsomely, now! There she comes round, the beauty! Forrard there, let draw and sheet home! Now, helmsman, set her head north-northeast and by north and keep her so till we are clear of the

A good whole sail breeze was coming from the east by south, which tempered the sun's brazen rays to a pleasant warmth and sent us sweeping along through the smooth Caribbean sea on one of our best points of sailing. The hands were in high good humor at the thought of a full fleshed prize. A cask of rich alicante had been brought on deck and broached, and thus with most cheerful augury we began our

Patriotism might wait. It was plun-

CHAPTER XXVI. As long as we were within sight of Margherita we held on as though making for some of the Windward group, for we knew that there would be watchers on the cliffs, to say nothing of the pearl fishers in their canoes, our neighborhood, and so spoil our chance of making a capture, unless we could manage to baffle them. But when the highest peaks of the islands were the cabin, plucking at his short red just visible as dots on the horizon from our mastheads, we hauled our wind and began making short boards under easy canvas to north and south alterjust out of sight of Margherita, and

lookeut would let nothing of value

cape us on the road to Spain. For 15 long days did we patrol the seas on narrow sentry go, without sighting a sail. On one night a mermaiden was reported by Job Trehalion the tiller, and he told us with a shamefaced chuckle that it must have been the comeliness of his features which attracted her. Another afternoon we hauled a monster shark aboard and ate him, with the greater relish when we remembered that he would doubtless have done the same by us had the tables been turned.

On the fifteenth night we watched, with no little uneasiness, a pale, flickering flame passing along the waters in colling curves some two leagues off toward the north-northwest. The knowgreat sea serpent prowling in search of prey and would have tried to scare it away with a shot from our big gun had not Alec flatly forbidden it. Now, though at the time I thought this veto of his ill judged and foolhardy, as tend-

ing to make the men careless in guarding against the common dangers of the deep, yet, as the issue showed, it was the lucklest thing for us that the men noise of firing gone abroad just then the reward of our patient search would have slipped away ere we could pluck it, and we should never have known the rich prize we had lost. Scarcely had the last flicker of the

sea serpent's trail died into the night when Job Trehallon, who as the keenest sighted man on board was jockeying the fore crosstree, halled that another light was shining out now. "What kind of light?" cried Alec.

"A clear, steady glow, sir, though it bain't bigger than a pea."

"Where awar?" "Down to loo'ard. Square abeam." At the welcome news we slacked out our sheets, put the belm up and ran off before the wind to see what manner of company that light promised us.

When we had run half a league, Job sang out that there were three lights now and that he could make out that they were the poop lanterns of a large ship hove to end on to us,

In an instant all was preparation. Our numbers were small, but the 32 men who assembled without needing a drum to beat them to quarters were tough as whipcord and wiry as gamecocks. There were no 'prentice hands to hinder matters by overwilling scurry and bustle, nor were there any cowards who would duck to flying bullets. Each man knew his place and his work and went to it. Guns were cast loose and loaded, pikes unlashed from the booms, axes and small arms taken from their racks, lintstock tubs arranged along the decks, the powder room thrown open and everything cleared for action. Yet all this was done with the greatest quietness, so that if possible we might creep up within range of the enemy un-

The night was dark and suited our purpose well. The Scourge's course was down the wake of the few rays of where. The portholes opened, and moonlight that crept through the cran- brass cannon grinned through them nied clouds, but the side of her cloths and gleamed evilly in the moonlight. which faced the Spaniard was shroud- A swarm of battle lanterns flew aloft ed in heavy shadow. The galleon, on and perched like firefiles in the rigging. the other hand, was plainly visible to . An attempt was made to get the galthe eager eyes which peered over our leon under way so that she might anbulwarks. She was hove to, as is the swer her helm and thus be easier to cautious habit of the dons during even fight. But her people were a mere disnow shot off a cataract of foaming wa- pline, and so crowded as they were ter as the beak rose again into the salt they succeeded best in getting into laden air. She was riding very dead, each other's way. Some flew to the and many were the congratulatory rib sheets and braces, some merely hurried nudges when the men saw how low she about bawling orders and directions to

"Eight hundred ton, never a one less, if charges were rammed home, were firmy eye ha'n't lost its trick o' measur- ed. Bow chaser, stern chaser and ing, an laden that deeply her waist's broadside pieces were fired as fast as 'most flush wi' the wave tops. There'll the gunners could load them, but as be tidy pickings behind those stout ribs they did not trouble themselves to take o' hers, very tidy pickings."

"Oh, ho, ho!" chuckled the old man haps have disturbed the fishes, but softly. "Counting the moldores and from us, the enemy, they drew not forgetting the cahallaros that them. Smacking your lips over the There the great galleon lay helpless, tidy pickings like my burly Jack here, like some wooden island, spitting inwhose soul thirsts after plunder more than his belly does after drink. But, Boatswain Willie and Lieutenant Jack. there's going to be a bloody fight first,

boys. Up went the stowed foresall, | time I see ahead for the galleon youder. Sleek sides backed through and through with shot, carvings splintere! and gildings blackened, her pinions plucked, her fabric dismantled, and Ler scruppers will bleed till the sea around glows like an autumn sunset. Oh, ho, Captain Ireland! You're like to choke our good friends, the sharks, with very surfeit before this world is a night and

"Think of it! Scarce a shot will leave your guns that does not dull its speed on human flesh. That galleon has not spare housing for a fly. She's crammed with men close as peas in a pod, soldiers and servants, passengers and cooks, marines and officers. There should be nearly 600 pairs of ears aboard her. Saints! What a merry conceit it would be to shred off those same ears and carry 'em home like a string of dried figs as a present to her most gracious majesty! What say you, Jack Topp, shall we do it?"

I was about to make a sharp answer, for the old dotard's savagery sickened me, when Alec sternly called for silence for fear that our voices should give the alarm. And so I held my

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tongue, and the old man subsided into smothered gurglings.

Save for the creaking of the gear and the gentle splash of the water against | long gun was dismantled and our bowthe bends we crept as quietly as a craft | sprit snapped off short just outside the full of specters. But the noises inseparable from the working of a vessel or which, they say, a Spaniard is specially quick to scent, at length stirred the drowsy sentinels to their duty, and presently the noise of great confusion came to us over the water.

On board the Spaniard terror and tremulous preparation were every-



A tall armored figure sprang on to the

whoever would listen, and some loaded "An 800 ton galleon," rumbled out ordnance and small arms with frantic Willie Trehalion in a growling whisper. haste. These last, as soon as the any special aim the volleys may per-

> nocuous fire from every point. But the Scourge drew on under perfect com-

mand and in perfect silence. when we were almost aboard of the enemy, Alec put down his helm and, "Ah, ha! It's a blissfully grewsome running across her bows, poured in a heavy raking fire as each gun bore and then, getting before the wind again, came back under her stern and repeated the dose from the same pieces. While they were still lying helplessly head to wind he went about once more and, sending his starboard broadside into her poop windows as he shot past, ran away to northward and engaged at

Hitherto, save for a few shot holes in the sails, a trailing rope or two and here and there a white jagged splinter, we had suffered nothing. But Alec had noted that the don's fire was steadying down as discipline began to assert itself and, knowing that one well aimed broadside must either dismantle or sink us, remembered that in a fight against heavy odds brains and not brute force should be the watchword. So, confident in the powers of his long gun, he sheered off to a distance and began pelting the Spaniard with single shots as fast as the piece could be loaded. The don, on his part, after a quarter

of an hour's furious cannonade, grew tired of firing at a mark which was obviously beyond the range of his guns and, setting his sall trimmers to work, got the galleon on the larboard tack. She was headed for Margherita, and it was plain to us that she intended to run for shelter under the batteries of El Pueblo del Norte.

Now, such a project by no means sulted our ideas, and so we redoubled our efforts with the long gun, hoping to carry away some spar that would disable her. But though Jan Pengony could plump a shot into the hull every time be clapped his lintstock to the priming there was not a gunner among us able to dent either mast or rigging. And so, flattening in our sheets once more, we made after her close hauled and, ranging up to windward, tried an-

chained some of us to a galley's bank and, taking the quoins from the gun carriages, let ffy a cloud of inquisite: ial engines that brought everything down by the run about their ears. Fet-

leon with foremast gone below the round top, mainyard cut through in the slings and rigging all in hopeless bights, full head to wind, lying an un-

But rejoicing came too soon. In auswer to Alec's summons to surrender a tall armored figure sprang on to the poop and, halling us, swore he'd fight the ship while two planks of her held

The cheer died on our lips. The armored Spaniard was Don Miguel del Cassamoro.

CHAPTER XXVII.

robber. You've overshot your mark this time, Senor Captain Ireland." "Perhaps so," said Alec unconcernedly. "But pardon my surprise, senor. I hoped you were a ghost long ago. Too

wicked to be drowned, eh?" The Spaniard whipped out a venomous oath and yelled to his men to fire again. A broadside crashed over our deck, too high fortunately to do much injury to the low lying hull, but our

Then indeed for awhile the battle forestay carried away we could do nothing but lie head to wind parallel trour antagoinst until a tress neadsail was rigged. Had it been blowing fresh we might have had her round before the wind and so run to a distance to refit. But the firing had flattened down the light breeze almost to a dead calm, so we had perforce to stay where we

In a strait like this we had counted upon being able to row the Scourge out of danger, as we had already rowed her up alongside a prize in a calm, but now, as fortune would have it, an unlucky round shot entering in at an open port had hit the six sweeps as they lay lashed on the deck and had broken every one of them into two. And so, with the decks becoming more of a shambles every minute, we stood our ground and fought the guns like furles, and though our pieces were outnumbered by more than two to one we hoped by serving them twice as quickly to return as good or even better than we got. Besides, every shot of ours found a billet somewhere in the Spanlard's hull, while many of his, through the greater elevation of his guns, flew harmlessly over the little Scourge. Had it been otherwise we could never have hoped to keep her afloat.

While we were still a cable's length from the enemy's stern a strange thing happened. A sailor ran on to the poop, leaped overboard and swam as though for his life toward us. Spanish shot pitted the water round him like thunder drops in a pond, but as be held up his hand as if appealing to us for asthe finest night, and her heavy bow organized mob, each trying to be use- sistance we engaged his assailants and now thrashed down into the swell and , ful, but entirely without order or disci- made them think rather of their own

> The swimmer meanwhile came up alongside and, getting his fingers into the main chains, scrambled on board. Though vastly changed by the hard-(To be Continued.)



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