# A LONE HAND.

or

## The Capture of a German Pirate

CHAPTER I.

John Crane, marine engineer, sometime of H.M. Royal Navy, sat in a wicker chair on the broad hotel varanda, indulging in the futile but very common amusement of wishing that to-day were to-morrow. He had finished the commission that had brought him to this now half-deserted port of Coatzacoalcos, on the coast of Mexico, and only awaited the mail-boat which would arrive next day. He greatly desired to be back in New York, for his resignation had already been accepted by the great shipbuilding firm with which he had been employed, and his arrangements were all made for returning at once to England and offering his services to the Mother Country.

He was still young, active, and very strong; the wish in his heart was that he might be sent to the front. But his mind told him that his proper place was in the great shipyards on the Tyne, where the clatter of hammers on steel went on night and day, and men strained nerve, brain, and muscle to repair the broken ships that limped in from the North Sea, and to turn out new steel gladiators, that England's grip on the Seven Seas might not be loosened. He knew that his services would be eagerly welcomed by the Naval Board, as he had made a name along certain lines of marine construction that quite belied his youthful appearance.

His mind was still occupied with the contents of the week-old newspapers scattered at his feet, which chronicled the disappearance of a number of British vessels plying between Australian and Oriental ports and the west coast of the United States. Ten or twelve ships were now long overdue, and there were rumours that wreckage, appearing to belong to His Majesty's light cruiser Guernsey, had drifted ashore at Tahiti. Fears were expressed that there was still a swift German cruiser at large in the Pacific, despite a statement by the Admiralty that every German war-vessel had been fully accounted for except those in German home waters. This statement laid the blame on a severe cyclone that had lately raged in mid-Pacific.

It was a quiet scene that met his eyes as he looked from the veranda over the luxurious tropical verdure of the courtyard, across the town with its polyglot mixture of old native and modern commercial architecture, to the long docks and railroad yards that bordered the bay. The opening of the Panama Canal, the European war, and the chaotic conditions in Mexico itself had combined to reduce the once great traffic through this, the Atlantic port of the Tehuantepec ship-railway, to a fraction of its former proportions. A single ship was unloading at the docks, a rusty tramp steamer flying the flag of Holland.

The rays of the sun were by now slanting well from the west, and Crane stood up and shook himself, deciding on a stroll before dinner. He walked down the narrow cobbled streets, lined and peopled with the curiously mixed evidences of native indolence and foreign industry, until he gravitated naturally to the docks, where he strolled about with an interested professional eye on the unloading of the Dutch steamer. His habit of close observation and his retentive memory of small details had played a large pare in his successful career. He had the typical engineering mind that is constantly on the alert for better ways of doing things, and neglects no point, however small, which leads to that end. So he watched keenly the work of the gigantic steel cranes, their tons of metal skeleton animated by the small human being who sat in a little box on the neck of each, with his row of levers before him. There was something almost eerie in the way they swung out over the deck, dropped a mighty arm through the ship's hatch, grasped a titanic handful of boxes and bales, and swinging back again, deposited them gently on the dock-floor, where they were pounced upon by the porters, who, like a nest of busy ants, trunbled them back into the warehouses.

As he walked along among the piles of freight, his quick eye noted something of interest, and he stopped to examine it. It was only a small metal band or clamp on the joints of a long, narrow, wooden box. It was the shape and construction of these iron bands that had caught his eye. They were admirably designed for the purpose, and something about them seemed familiar to him. They had a peculiar arrangement of small metal claws to engage the wood; and he was positive that, sometime and somewhere, he had seen them used before. The box on which they were used was some three feet square and fifteen feet long, and there were about twenty like it in the pile. Besides certain cabbalistic consignment marks, it bore, stencilled in English, the words, 'Terra-cotta. Fragile.' The thought ran through his mind that the boxes probably contained ornamental columns for the palace of some successful trader or petty ruler on a coral island of Oceania. He resumed his walk back to the hotel; but the thought of the iron strap-bands kept coming back, for his memory could not place their association, and did not like to admit a lapse.

The same thought came again next morning as he splashed in his bath, happy that he would soon be sailing north across the Gulf, bound to throw heart, mind, and body into the great war-game; and something, possibly the stimulus of the cold water, brought the answer like a flash. He had seen those straps before in the town of Essen, in Germany, where are located the great Krupp gunworks. Many years before while filling his first billet in a Belgian shipyard, he had made several trips into Germany, observant, as always. It was at the Krupp works that he had seen cars loaded with boxes carrying those peculiar bands, and had earned a reprimand from a watchman, or examining them too closely. This explained the strange uneasiness that had affected him on seeing them again. Of course, commercial manufacturing concerns had undoubtedly come to use them. It was a good clamp for heavy boxes. He put the matter out of his mind, and went down to breakrast.

But the stubborn thing would not stay out. Why had he not seen that strap since the first time until now? He had seen hundreds of cargoes unloaded in all parts of the world. He had examined the packing of thousands of parcels of sea-freight, had written technical articles on the subject; it was one of his hobbies; and never, since he was at Essen, had this particular form of iron strap passed under his eye till now. It was very strange.

Then the waiter appeared with fresh papers. The mail-boat had come in during the early morning; she would sail at noon. He glanced over the papers, and his sense of uneasiness began to take shape. There was more about the mysterious non-appearance of ships in Pacific waters. The list of the overdue was longer; a boat belonging to one of them had been found waterlogged, its stern torn away, with the body of a sailor, who had evidently been killed by a bullet, entangled in its painter. There were conjectures that a German cruiser had slipped through the North Sea cordon and into the Pacific by unfrequented routes; that she was probably interning the crews of sunen vessels on some remote island. British and Japanese war-ships were scouring the archipelagoes for traces of the supposed marauder.

As Crane ate his breakfast these things kept running through his mind, and, tangled up with them, the incident of the strap iron bands, which quite refused to stay down. Soon he finished the meal, paid his bill, saw that his luggage was placed in the mail-boat pile, then took up his hat and struck a rapid gait for the docks.

The Dutch freighter was gone and her slip lay empty. The freight had all been removed to the warehouse between the dock and the railroad tracks. However, a door stood open, and he walked into the cool, gloomy room. There were the boxes all right, piled near the opposite door. He started toward them, but a voice stopped him.

It was a Mexican watchman, who had been sprawling on a pile of freight. He was a ragged, dirty little man, but a serviceable-looking rifle leaned against the wall beside him. He was saying, 'Buenos dias, senor. Is there something you desire?'

'I simply wanted to check that pile of boxes before leaving, to see that they are all there,' answered Crane readily.

'I beg the senor's pardon. Perhaps he has a permit from the superintendent?'

'No, I haven't time for that. I must catch the mail-boat,' answered Crane, as his hand went to his pocket, and came out with a silver peso.

The man shook his head, though he eyed the silver wistfully. 'I am sorry, senor. Any one entering the warehouse must have a permit. It is orders.'

'Oh, come!' said Crane, as he pulled out four more of the coins. 'The boat leaves in a few minutes, and I probably can't get a permit and be back in time.' And he jingled the coins seductively.

But the watchman was firm. 'I am a poor man, senor, with many children. Who am I that I should break the orders of the superintendent? I should probably lose my place.'

Crane walked slowly down the dock. He had had some experience with Latin-American officials; he knew that failure to accept a bribe could usually be traced to a larger counter-bribe, or unusual pressure of some kind. He sat down on a pile, in sight of the door, but some distance away, and stared at the murky, greenish flood that heaved in oily undulations below him. This thing was getting on his nerves. All his inclinations were toward the mail-boat, and a quick voyage north and east. But a number of unformed and exasperating suspicions tugged the other way.

As he sat pondering, two men came down the dock from the direction of the harbour-master's office. One was a dapper, alert fellow, in the uniform of the Tehuantepec Railway Company; the other was a tall, dark man, dressed like a ship's officer in the freighting or coasting trade. But there was something about his gait and carriage that aroused in Crane the same sensation as those peculiar iron straps had done. The two turned into the warehouse, and Crane arose and sauntered past the door. Glancing in, he saw the tall man standing by the pile of long boxes, evidently checking them off by a paper in his hand. The watchman was talking volubly to the railway official, and Crane quickened his pace till he struck the crowded side-walk which led to the mail-boat, now almost ready to leave the dock. As he raced along he came to a quick decision; and when the Galveston pulled in her gang-planks, a few minutes later, John Crane had already retrieved his bags, packed them into a rickety closed cab, and was rattling over the rough streets to a rather obscure hotel on the other side of the town.

Having engaged a room, he retired to it, and proceeded to change into a suit of heavy, work-stained garments which he often wore in the rougher work of his calling. With heavy boots and a battered hat pulled over his brow, he looked very different, as he slouched back to the water-front, from the spick-and-span young professional man of the morning. The watchman whom he had attempted to bribe a few hours before looked at him without a flicker of recognition as he passed the warehouse door. A casual glance inside assured him that the long boxes were still there.

He lounged around the docks for a couple of hours, studying the shipping in the harbour and keeping an alert eye for the big seafaring man with the military bearing. A British freighter was taking in a cargo of cocoa, coffee, and hardwoods from the interior; and a refrigerator ship of the United Fruit Company's Line, fed by two giant cranes, was making a gargantuan meal on bananas. A few small coasting-vessels were coming and going; while a trim white yacht, with gay awnings shading a white-clad group, showed by the Stars and Stripes at her masthead that some American gentleman of leisure was sojourning here. Not a suspicious note marred the peaceful activity and tropic indolence of the scene.

(To be Continued.)


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# On the Farm

### Home-Grown Feeds—The Basis of All Rations.

Some men entertain the idea that in order to make a high record with a cow, she must be particularly well bred, fed on specially prepared feeds, and stabled in the most modern stables. Such is not necessarily the case. Many cows, that are a credit to their owners, have attained the pinnacle of fame in the dairy world by having the right blood in their veins, and then converting feeds, such as are grown on the average farm, into milk and butter fat. True, the dairyman plays an important part in securing the best from his cows by his ability to study the requirements of the individual animal, and to combine the various feeds into a balanced ration suitable for the dairy cow.

The methods of raising calves and feeding high-producing cows, as practiced by a noted Ayrshire breeder, of Norwich, may convince breeders just starting in the business that breeding, careful feeding, and proper attention, are the essentials in building up a show herd.

The herd referred to consists of from 30 to 35 animals, in the pink of condition. Individual yearly records are kept, and mature cows produce from 10,000 to 12,000 pounds of high-testing milk during a lactation period. In years past, animals from this herd have won laurels in strong competition at many of the big shows. This herd is housed in a well-lighted, frame stable. Silage forms the basis of the ration, and about forty pounds is fed each animal per day. Corn for ensilage is sown quite thickly, as it is believed more feed, and better feed, can be gown per acre than if corn is sown with the aim of producing matured cobs. In filling the silo, the corn is cut very fine, and it is believed to make better silage than the coarse-cut corn. A few roots are grown on the farm, and are considered excellent feed for dairy cows. If it were not for the extra labor entailed in handling a root crop, a larger acreage would be grown. Clover hay is fed night and morning. The concentrate part of the ration is composed of oat chop and bran, in equal proportions, the amount fed each cow depending on the milk flow. The heaviest milkers are given from ten to twelve pounds per day. Two or three pounds of oil-cake or cotton-seed meal, are fed per day. Preference is given to feeding oil-cake one meal, and cottonseed the next. The cows are watered in the stable, but are turned out for exercise when the weather is favorable.

### The Milk From This Herd

goes to a cendensary, consequently there is no skim-milk on which to raise the calves. When possible, the cows are bred to freshen in the fall, as there is usually more time during the winter for properly attending to the calves and heavy milkers, than there is in the spring and summer months. Whole milk is fed the calves for four or five weeks, after which the quantity of milk is gradually reduced and prepared calf meals used. At four months of age, the calves are fed only four pounds of whole milk, and are entirely weaned from milk by the time they are three months old. Oat chop, oil-cake, silage, and clover hay are kept before the calves. On the above feed, young animals appear to be thrifty.

Other breeders in Norwich district, who have made big milk and butter-fat records with their herds, rely on silage, clover hay, oat chop, bran, and oil-cake or cottonseed meal, to form the ration. The first three feeds mentioned can be grown on almost any farm, and the quantity of the last three feeds necessary to balance up the ration is not large. Cows, in many noted herds are raised on a limited amount of whole milk, along with oil-cake or calf-meal and home-grown roughage.

It is believed that the average farmer with his grade stock can increase the returns from his cows by judiciously combining the feeds grown on the farm with a small quantity of purchased concentrates, rich in protein, to form a balanced ration. The cow is a manufacturing plant, and the finished product will be in keeping with the capacity of the plant and material supplied. For greatest returns, both the plant and raw material must be good.

In some districts dairymen are raising choice calves without skim-milk, and with feeding only a limited amount of whole milk. Dairymen with a supply of skim-milk have the advantage over those selling whole milk, in raising calves. A good deal of the success in feeding young or old animals depends on the feeder. Feeding stock, so as to keep it in good condition all the time, it is not an easy task. Simply putting the feed in the mangers is not enough, but the animals must be watched closely to see that the feed agrees with them. There are many little attentions given to the stock by a real stockman that would never be considered important by an amateur. Yet, it is paying strict attention to details that brings success. It is necessary to know each individual animal in the herd, and endeavor to supply its wants. A variety of feeds to form as near a balanced ration as possible, regularity in feeding, and strict attentions to details, are items of importance that are considered by the successful stockman.—The Farmers' Advocate.

### Why Succulence Pays.

Numerous scientific trials and common experiences on farms have abundantly demostrated the value of adding succulent feeds to the rations of farm animals. The beneficial effects of succulence, whether supplied as pasturage, silage, soilage, or roots, are many. Just as our own appetites are stimulated by fruits and green vegetables, succulent feeds are relishes for the animals of the farm, inducing them to consume more feed and convert it into useful products.

It is reasonable to hold that such palatable feeds stimulate digestion, and it is well known that their beneficial laxative action aids greatly in keeping the digestive tracts in good condition. There is no doubt that, for breeding stock, less tense and more watery flesh, a natural sequence of feeding succulence, is more conducive to vigorous young at birth and to their hearty maintenance after birth than is the condition of hard, dry flesh produced by feeding only dry forage through the winter.

The dairy cow gives her maximum returns when she is supplied with succulence. Such feeds tend toward rapid sturdy growth with the young of all farm animals. Some succulent food is especialy beneficial in keeping the horse in condition, to which the thrift of the work horse when turned out to pasture bears witness.

But the horse at hard or fast work should receive only a limited allowance of these feeds. Steers and sheep make rapid and economical gains on pasture, and grass-fed animals are in the best possible condition to make rapid gains when placed in the feed lot. Among the most important contributions of the experiment stations are their demonstrations of the economy of feeding silage to fattening cattle and sheep and of the possibilities of cheapening the cost of producing pork through the utilization of pasture.—Wisconsin Experiment Station.

### MUST SLAY OR BE SLAIN.

**Father Vaughan Defends His "Kill Enemy" Advice.**

Strong criticism has been voiced against Father Bernard Vaughan, the famous preacher, for having advised the British soldiers from the pulpit to kill the Germans instead of being killed by them. Several letters of protest having been printed in the London Daily Graphic the following reply was sent to that paper by Father Vaughan from Manchester:

"A clipping from your enterprising and clear sighted paper contains letters from the Rev. F. B. Meyer and the Rev. J. H. Newsham-Taylor blaming me for advising our troops to kill the enemy instead of being killed by him. Truth to tell, till I read Dr. Meyer's letter I had no notion that we considered it a 'misfortune' to kill Germans.

"In my stupidity I had always felt it was a misfortune to miss them; I had no idea that soldiers in war were to be regarded as police on their beat; in my simplicity I was under the impression that our troops had gone to the front, not to take up and handcuff the aggressor, but, on the contrary, to wipe him out and do for him. Indeed, in my reading of the situation I had never regarded the enemy in the light of a burglar bent on 'swag' only, but rather as an assassin under orders to murder, massacre and mangle widows and children, leaving them nothing but their eyes to weep with.

"Of course if Dr. Meyer's contention is right I must confess to being quite wrong. In other words, if our artillery is not out primarily to find the range for killing our foe, but only to shoot or frighten black beetles, rabbits and mosquitoes, my advice to kill Germans is altogether out of place.

"As for our friend the rector of St. Peter's, Hatton Garden, the Rev. Newsham-Taylor, and his rooted conviction that it ill beseems ecclesiastical lips to advise killing Germans, I must make bold to say to him in reply that the only reason that I can discover for the unseemliness of such advice is that it is unbecoming a minister of religion to speak the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

"Sir, with Joffre and Kitchener, French and Haig, I beg once more to raise my voice reminding my countrymen that victory can be ours in one way only, by artillery attrition. And I find that the chief reason why our war lords to-day are so sanguine about peace rooted in triumph over the foe is that our artillery is now better than his. As a plain Englishman, I understand this to mean we can kill off the enemy quicker than he us.

"If our Nonconformists ministers had only exhorted their followers to join the colors in the language of Joffre and Roberts instead of in the hesitating terms of Meyer and Newsham-Taylor I venture to think we should now still be under the voluntary system instead of saddled with a compulsion bill.

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