

RED HAIR AND BLUE SEA



STANLEY R. OSBORN
ILLUSTRATIONS BY HENRY JAY LEE

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WHAT HAPPENED BEFORE

Palmyra Tree and her parents, with Palmyra's two suitors, Van Buren Rutger and John Thurston and some other friends, are cruising on the Yacht Rainbow.

Palmyra, startled by seeing a hand thrust in through the port of her cabin, makes a secret investigation and discovers a stowaway—a man so mild in appearance that she is disappointed—and tells him so. He commands her to glance at the door. She obeys and sees a huge, fierce, copper-hued man—with a ten-inch knife held between grinning teeth.

CHAPTER II

Next morning Mrs. Crawford and her guests were gathered in the lee of the deckhouse, bunched in their rugs. The sun, only at intervals, had been blinking through, bringing a touch of warmth to the surface of the sea, charming the spreading canvas into life. As, presently, Palmyra roused from her preoccupation to join the others in a laugh, the luminary glanced down again and printed on the deck black and sharp-edged, the lifting shadows of the sails.

Such a shade lay across the girl's face. When the Rainbow rose to a surge, the shadow moved, as a curtain up, and the sunbeams caught in turn and illumined perfect teeth, dimples, eyes that danced with fun; set a flame the crown of bright hair, her most noticeable endowment.

But soon she was sober again. She had been shaken by that fierce visage leaping out at her from the dark. She should have suspected a second presence. One glance at Burke's hand, gloved though it was, should have sufficed. It was small, pudgy, never the thick and sinewy paw that had fastened upon the cabin port. Her wits about her, she should have mistrusted Burke's song; not have waited to be told afterwards that he was chanting: "Silent, go, stand against the door knife in teeth and look terrific."

At this point the shadow of the sail came swooping down again across Palmyra's eyes and she awoke to find that Mrs. Durely, the stewardess, was regarding her with an amused and curious expression. The girl flushed guiltily.

Mrs. Durely stepped forward, hesitated, held out a card tray. "A gentleman to see you, Miss Tree," she announced.

"A gentleman to see Miss Tree?" inquired Mrs. Crawford in an amused acceptance of the play. "Why, how unexpected."

"Airplane or sea horse?" questioned Van.

At this moment she caught sight of the man himself, standing in the alley between the house and the rail.

"Mrs. Crawford," she introduced, "this is Mr. Burke, the well-known pirate. Will be pleased, yo ho ho, to demonstrate walking the plank. I'm sure if you could see him scuttle a ship you'd feel we'd been greatly distinguished."

By daylight the pirate's face had lost its cherubic aspect. Still singularly undeveloped as to line and feature, there was now more visibly upon it a maturity of significance that could only have been stamped by dissipation, hardship and danger, or some more violent temperamental urge than, at first view, could have been suspected.

But if Burke's face had gained in significance, his figure had not. Moreover, he now verged on the pathetic, shaking with cold. Palmyra recollected, with a stab of pity, that brown creature down below.

The girl started, impulsively, to rise, then sank back again. She had seen the steward below, a short time past, overhauling blankets, a reserve supply for the men forward. If she could manage to get one or two of these coverings, Compassion urged the deed. But—she was afraid.

Presently, however, a well-authenticated chin settled into place and two lips grew arbitrary. She arose, excused herself, and marched down the companionway. Yes, the blankets were still there. She snatched two, secured her torch and reached the bulkhead door, unchallenged.

She switched on the torch, forced herself forward. Then after a moment's hesitation: "Here—you! Are you cold? I have two blankets."

She stood, waiting, listening. She could feel the darkness move with unseen menace, but the dead silence of that prisoned space gave no sound of life.

She might have swept the ray into all the corners, but she hesitated to repeat the vision of the night before. Rather, she held the blankets up invitingly and, in silence, turned the jet of light upon them. For almost a minute she waited thus. Then, suddenly without warning preliminary of sound, there appeared within the outer circle of light the ends of four great massive square fingers.

Almost, the girl sprang back, cried out in panic.

A moment the fingers paused. Then they came thrusting toward her from the dark. For a flash it seemed that it must be herself they meant to seize. Then they closed upon the blankets, rested there an instant, withdrew into the night whence they had come.

But, brief as the interval, it had been enough. Here at last was the hand that had been sent through the port: square, sinewy, brown, adorned even to the great-grandmother mits.

And only then did she belatedly realize that these mits were not of silk, but of tattooer's ink.

When the girl came on deck the next morning there the savage sat, cross-legged on the fore-hatch, huddled. "Me tell 'em, sir? Is it likely died under his blankets in the sun."

As Palmyra and her parents appeared, Ponape Burke was explaining that the remote intelligence at his feet knew no word of any white man's language.

If the savage recognized her she was unable to note any change in his countenance. Indeed, she saw that this copper mask would seldom, if ever, yield to the civilized eye any useful indication of the mood within.

Ponape Burke, showman, had seized a double handful of the bush of hair on the native's head, and was saying: "Isn't so much that he's got hair?"

Burke was saying, as that his hair ain't black, as you expect, but a pretty gay species o' tan. Which ladies and gents, is South Sea beauty-parlor stuff."

"Tis dee-lightfully sanitary, ladies," the showman added, "and colors the hair up any shade o' blond you like. But—" he tittered and glanced audaciously at Miss Tree's own head—"the very foxiest and most envied hue some o' em succeeds in getting up is a real orangey near-red."

Van laughed. "Oh admirable," he cried. "An admirable effect. And never till the moment did I suspect."

"Excuse me, miss," said Ponape Burke, "but didn't I hear this gent a-calling you 'Palm-tree'?"

She assented.

"But what, what kind of a joke..." "It isn't a joke," she affirmed, "my family name is Tree and—" she glanced amusedly at Constance—"my given name is Palm."

The stowaway stared, grinned, repeated the name. He turned to his savage, spoke animatedly, nodded his head toward her. The brown man's eyes sought the girl's face once more and she felt sure he had, in some obscure way, been moved. There was certainly a something new upon that strange countenance.

As the savage sat upon the hatch a corner of the blanket touched the teakwood. When he reached to rescue the fabric his thick right fore arm shot out from under cover and so remained. The girl became aware of a line of blue-black markings along the inner side of this arm. She discovered with surprise that these tattooings were letters—her own alphabet. At first she did not catch the word because two of its symbols were upside down.

"Why," she cried impulsively, "what is that he has tattooed on his arm?"

Here the pirate took up the story of his brown companion's name.

If it had been a pop bottle that the fat horizon-burster (white man) flung into the bird's nest fern beside the spring, this lion of a man would not now be here.

Far away on some somulent speck of coral he would be drowsing through the years; ignorant as to white man's ways, safe forever from the questionable leadership of Ponape Burke; never to touch and cross the life of Miss Palmyra Tree of Boston. But it was not a pop bottle that the fat horizon-burster flung into the bird's nest fern. It was a bottle which had held olives.

There, as the olive bottle had fallen, the island mother, her babe upon her hip, had found it. She had held the empty bottle up before the eyes of the naked brown baby that he might admire the bright red and green of its lithograph. She had tried to make out the inscription upon it—

ONYX BRAND
The Hubbard Extra-Choice
QUEEN
OLIVE

The print was oddly familiar, yet bafflingly unreadable, as a sentence in Russian would have been to Palmyra. For in the mother's alphabet there were but fourteen letters: eleven of our consonants unmeaning character.

But as her glance fell upon the word "Olive," she smiled. Here was a combination that spelled; every letter as familiar as if it had been the name of her own village.

"Behold, chiefly son," she had cried to the baby on her hip; "there is a so-island word—O-l-i-v-e. What to it, think you, is a meaning? And set forth upon a horizon burster's strong liquor" (to her all bottles meant).

Presently the mother's face had lighted with inspiration. Here, undoubtedly among warriors, was the great word. And here, upon her hip was the greatest man alive. What better, then, than this for a name? And so it was the brown baby was known forever to all white man as "Olive" and to his South Sea kinsmen, according to their reading of its letters, as "O-lee-vay."

Burke's glance took in the silent motionless mass of man on the hatch with prideful ownership. Then he broke again into his oddly unadmitted laugh. "Look at him now," he cried. "Mad clear through."

They turned their smiling eyes upon the brown man.

"Mad clear through" repeated his master. "Since Miss Tree pointed to his arm we have all been laughing a lot. And he thinks it's at him."

Later in the day Palmyra found her pirates alone.

They sat side by side, gripping stolidly the khaki fabric that struggled, flapping to the wind behind their backs.

"Speaking o' this big brute," Burke began, indicating Olive; "he don't do nothing now but ask questions about you."

The girl did not know whether to like that or not.

To begin with, said Burke, it was her courage. She had not squawked at the hand in the port nor the face under the spotlight. And she'd come down with blankets when a brown being was in misery with cold.

As regarded the hand: The stowaways, precariously hidden on deck in a boat, had taken the first chance to sneak below. Burke had got to cover, but a seaman, unexpectedly starting that way, would have caught Olive.

The islander had slipped overside at that point, dangling from a stanchion, only his hands visible. He had put one down to the port, intending to hang trailing from that if the sailor had come near. A roll of the yacht thrust his forearm through. Then the seaman had turned away and Olive lifted himself on deck.

But far more important than Palmyra Tree's courage and kindness was her name. To the white man it had seemed interesting, to the brown, astonishing.

"In the low islands," said Burke, the palm-tree's the most important thing they have got. Couldn't live without it a day."

Here aside from fish, there was often no food except the pandanus—scorned elsewhere—and the coconut. The nuts were eaten at every meal; cooked or raw, green, ripe, genminated. For all the accessories of life the palm could be made, if need were to furnish the material.

And she was named Palmtree!

"But, lady," Burke persisted, "ain't the things I've mentioned—not even your name—which counts so much as—" he paused calculatingly—"as that hair o'yours, red hair?"

She was again annoyed, but decided to laugh.

Burke was silent for an interval, his oddly undeveloped features rather absurd in their maturity of thought.

"I suppose," he began at last, "you haven't no idea how a Mary like you hits us islanders, kanaka or white?"

"Oh," he added with a shrugging gesture acquired from the natives, "you'd never guess—never." He hesitated in a diffidence strange to his nature. "But think, miss. Here we are, maybe ten, fifteen years never seeing any woman's face except these silly brown critters or perhaps the wife o' some missionary or trader, here too long—sickly, pale, done for. And then, of a sudden, along you comes; a—vision."

He stammered, in his effort to find words that should do justice to his sentiment, but not off.

"All pink and white, peaches and cream," he went on recklessly; "a living being as beautiful as a painted picture. I ain't meaning no disrespect, but that, Miss Tree, as I reckon you will understand, just fair knocks them white and brown alike, dead in a row."

"But do you really believe Palm Tree's pirate has been in gun battles and all that?" Constance Crawford was asking.

Palmyra now spoke. "It's nonsense to take that little man seriously," she affirmed.

There was a general assent.

"When he says such things," she added, "it's like hearing a baby swear; awful, and you ought to be shocked, but at the same time comic. I delight in his efforts to make himself out something brigandish."

John Thurston had not joined in the accord. As he stood holding to the main shrouds, the big muscles of arm and shoulder swelling under his coat, he was never quite the yachtsman on an idle cruise; always, intangibly, a something of the construction engineer on his way to the Philippines to take charge of government work—the Rainbow to put him aboard a transport at Honolulu, or possibly if time permitted, at Guam.

"You're all probably right about Burke," he said presently. "But did you ever think how thoroughly we're bound down by the old conventional nonsense in character reading—phenology and all that? A strippling develops a square jaw. Presto—we recognize a determined character, a human bulldog. Really it's only more bone in his jaw. And if he has a broad high forehead..."

"Solid ivory again," said Van.

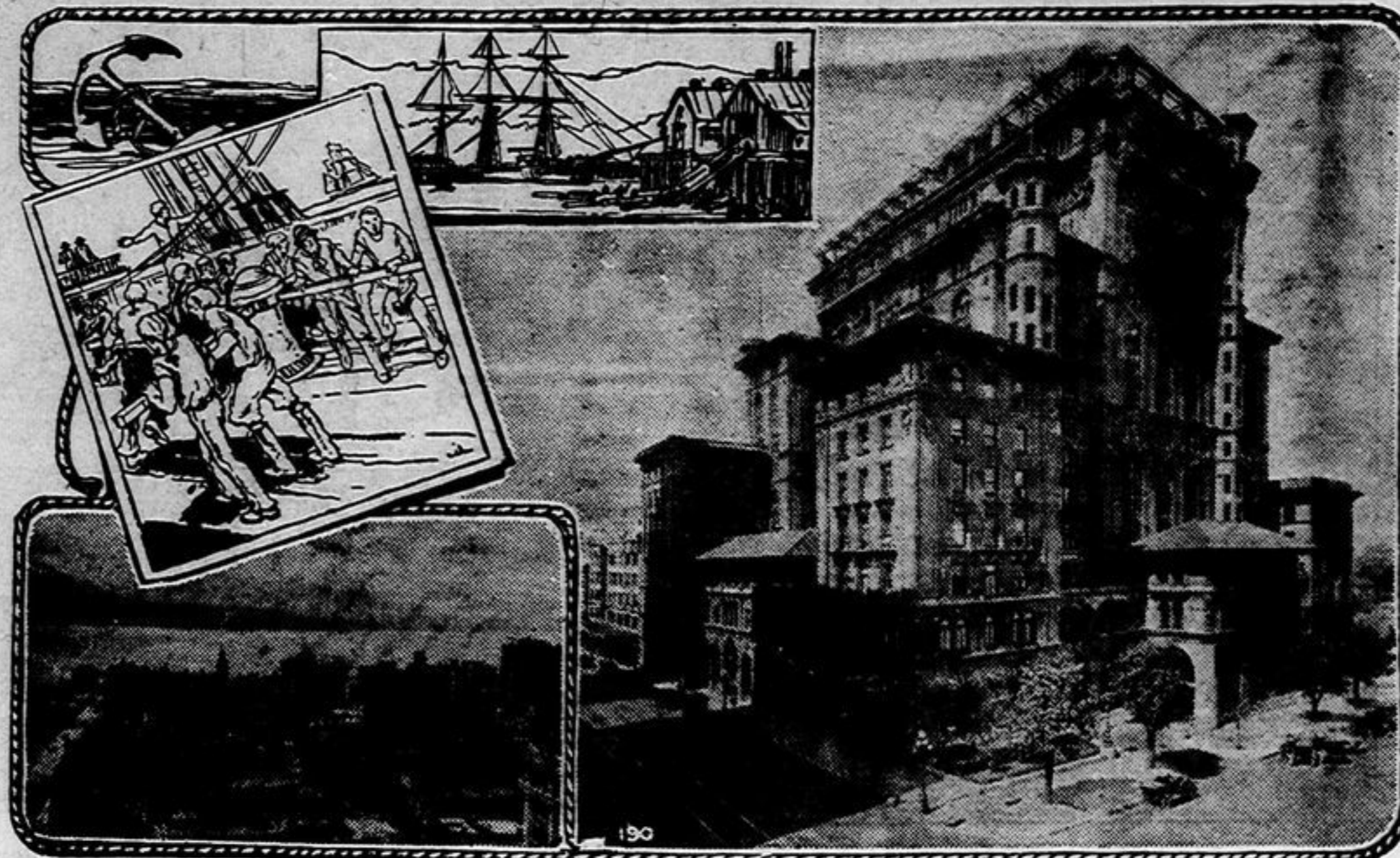
"Palm's pirate couldn't be further from our fixed idea of a cutthroat: fierce moustachios, hawk nose, deep-set, piercing, evil eyes. Yet in real life your cold-blooded, murdering brute is quite as likely to be some effeminate youth selling soda water with a lisp."

"Never," said Van, "did I have soda water with a lisp."

Palmyra had been wondering why everyone on board—everyone except Constance—wanted her to marry Van. She saw that they all did, and she felt that their reason must be good. Constance, of course, said it was only ancestors. The Tree family worshipped the family tree. "And Van," Constance had said commercially, "has the finest line of ancestors put out by any house in America." It was nothing in Van personally, she had added. "John does things. But Van only is things."

The girl got up restlessly and stood

Now A Sea Music Festival



The Sea Music Festival, January 23-26, will be staged in this, the Hotel Vancouver. Inset is a general view of the Pacific Coast City as viewed from the roof garden of the Hotel.

The idea of a Music Festival is not new to Vancouver, but the Festival devoted entirely to sea music, which is being organized to take place in this city next January, is the first of its kind, and as such is attracting widespread attention. There is a vast amount of music connected with the sea, dating back as far as the Song of Miriam, which tradition says was sung to the Children of Israel, on the bank of the Red Sea. Yet somehow no one till now had thought of devoting a whole series of concerts to this subject, and it is a tribute to the growing importance of Vancouver as a world port that the Canadian Pacific Railway, which is organizing this Festival, should have chosen to locate it here.

It is less than two years ago since the Canadian Pacific experimented with its first Music Festival, which was held at Quebec and dealt with the folksongs preserved by the French-Canadians whose forefathers brought these old songs with them to this country three hundred years ago. That experiment met with such favor that it was repeated on a still more ambitious scale last Spring. Both these Festivals drew many visitors to Quebec from other parts of Canada and from the United States, the Governor-General showing his interest by going down to attend the celebration by special train. They have had the effect of creating a better understanding of the French-Canadian people, and the lovely old melodies which had hitherto been known mostly in the backwoods of Quebec, are now being sung all over Canada. The leading musicians of this country are realizing that in these melodies Canada has a priceless heritage.

Following on the Quebec experiment, a Scottish Musical Festival was staged at Banff, in connection with the Highland Gathering. This made such an appeal to the national pride of the Scots that the idea was repeated at the second Festival last September.

At Winnipeg, the Canadian Pacific selected another phase of popular music available in this country, namely, the folksongs of the settlers of Continental European extraction, who are now generally classified as New Canadians. Fifteen racial groups participated, and the demonstrations of folksong and folk dancing was a revelation to the Anglo-Canadians. One practical result of this Festival is the projected open-air folk museum, for which the City of Winnipeg has declared its readiness to provide the land on which the various racial

groups have offered to build typical peasant cottages in which their handicrafts may be permanently exhibited. Such a Museum would undoubtedly provide Winnipeg with the tourist attraction which at present is admittedly lacking, and would also be the source of everlasting interest and pride to every thoughtful citizen of Canada.

What will result from the forthcoming Festival at Vancouver remains to be seen, but there is every evidence that it will be well worth attending. A galaxy of concert stars will be supported by a number of local choirs and by the Scottish Symphony Orchestra. John Goss, Jeanne Dusseau, Paul Bai, and the Hart House Quartet, represent but a few of the names that should attract the crowds. Most interesting of all, perhaps, will be the Sea Chanties which F. H. Wallace, once a Captain on a Bluenose boat and author of "Wooden Ships and Iron Men" will stage. Captain Wallace has collected chauties from sailors on Canadian sailing ships, and can thus give a truly Canadian flavour to those fine old Sea Songs. The Festival, which will last four days, will be under the same direction as the Yuletide Festival which will centre around the Empress Hotel at Victoria a month earlier.

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