The Snake's Mark

Being an Account of the Finding of the Lost Treasure of the Hallowell Family.

BY P. Y. BLACK.

SYNOPSIS OF PRECEDING CHAPTERS.

Justin Hallowell quarrels with his uncle and leaves Boston, together with his chum, Oziel Hasket. The two escape on the ship of Dixey Lynch, who likes Justin, but tries twice to kill Oziel. Because of the peculiar snake's mark on his forehead, the sailors fear Justin. The ship anchors off Long Island and provisions for a long voyage. Oziel discovers the plots of the sailors, who try again to kill him, but succeed only in leaving him behind. Oziel makes his way to New York City, where he chances upon Murrin, Justin's uncle. The two fit out a stout ship and overtake Lynch and his crew. A sea fight follows and the pirates are overcome. Lynch and Donnereau are taken prisoners. Oziel and Justin attempt to solve the mystery about the snake's mark. Murrin makes a compact with Lynch and Donnereau. A landing is made on the treasure island. Murrin and his men quarrel with Lynch and the blacks. Justin and Oziel escape into the surrounding thicket and come upon a party of natives executing the snake dance. Justin recognizes the old high priest as his father. The old priest, seeing his son in danger from the wrath of Donnereau, rushes unconscious and ignorant of the past. He is now in danger, as the snake's mark was disappearing. The natives, accepting the sign, receive Justin as his successor. Oziel loses Justin and meets the priest, who tells of his being cast on the island. The storm separates father and son. On the following day Oziel meets the priest and learns of his danger because the fading snake's mark no longer awes the natives. Donnereau and the blacks plan to make Justin the new high priest. The old man, now thoroughly enraged, shows himself to the people, and the snake's mark stands out clearly on his forehead. A battle follows between the pirates and natives. Murrin goes over to the side of the Hallowells, and the former conspirators fight against one another. Oziel rescues Justin from Donnereau, and another tropical storm and earthquake saves the young men from the pirates.

DIXEY LYNCH'S COMPROMISE.

When Oziel disappeared after the conspirators in the wood he left the victorious party exhausted, and the white members of it gazed one on the other in much dubiety. Sir Roger's attention was first given to the savages, who were now scattered about the grassy promontory, like as many black dogs, panting and nursing their wounds and eying the remainder of the whites, whose arrival with the priest-marked Justin had caused all this broil, with much suspicion and disfavor. The old man moved among them, and it was plain they had learned, in his long years' residence to respect, even to love him. They prostrated themselves before him, caught his feet and seemed to seek pardon for having ever listened to the arch conspirator Donnereau. The astute Gabriel saw with a grateful smile that, at the critical moment, he had leaned to the stronger side. But now that he had time to think and recast his plots, he considered that, as Sir Roger was now very plainly in full possession of his lost memory and wits, haste should be made to convince him of his own—the trader's uprightness in these matters, more especially as the treasure's hiding place must be now known to Sir Roger alone. He approached the old cavalier with a rubbing of his lean hands, a side-wise, jackdaw's look, and words of humble congratulation.

"Sir," he said, "now has mine old heart been rejoiced as never before, and mine eyes gladdened by sight of my kinsman in such hale guise. Your separation from your brethren in this vast and waste wilderness has been long a sore trouble and the cause of many tears in the night watches to me, by whom your memory, though it had not pleased providence that we should meet, was cherished in the grateful presence of your gracious son and fair niece, whose upbringing it has been my pride to conduct."

"The honest young man who fought by me today," broke in Sir Roger, frowningly, "has acquainted me, Master Murrin, of the reason of your coming to my lamentable place of misery—a misery which has, by the wondrous grace of providence, passed in a measure, as by a miracle. I am aware you are husband to my dear wife's sister, and of your charge in Boston. We will argue these matters at more length at a fitter time. Now—and you will pardon me if your deviating policy in the past as related to me by this Oziel makes me blunt—what is your purpose? What do you seek? My safety and Justin's, or your own aggrandizement?"

Old Gabriel paused one second to anathematize Oziel for meddling again, but did it under his breath, and started again on pouring out a volume of deprecatory explanations.

"Few would be innocent," he began, with an uplifting of the eyes, "if it be enough to accuse. Far from my brethren in our most heaven-blessed British Israel, and extraordinarily circumstanced as I now am, I am aware that the ill-considered words of a hasty and inexperienced youth might bear"—

He stopped suddenly, with a cry; his cheeks blanched, and he caught at Sir Roger for support. The old man, too, was disturbed, and the savages rose in a panic, for the point of land trembled beneath them, and the lake was troubled into swelling waves, and thunder broke above them.

"Wha—what is it?" cried Gabriel.

The shaking of the ground passed, and all was still, but Gabriel found a difficulty in proceeding. Before, however, he had time to collect his wits, a white rag waved from the gloomy thickets, and a loud voice from the jungle cried to them:

"Sir Roger, I beg a truce. Thy memory, so magically revived, will remind you that I, who knew you in the eastern seas when fighting was frequent among brave men, can trust to your honoring a white flag."

"What would you, Dixey Lynch?" cried Sir Roger. "Brave or not, thou art a pirat'cal mutineer, as I mind thee, and deserve no favor. Yet, if you bring tidings of my son Justin, your flag shall be respected."

Dixey Lynch at that stepped out of the wood.

In spite of the great and oppressive heat, in spite of the humiliation of defeat, in spite of the fact that he must have known that Sir Roger, with revived memory, looked upon him with contempt and was aware, doubtless, of his purpose in being in these latitudes, Master Dixey Lynch was as self-possessed now as on board his own sloop, as gracefully confident as when inducing Marian Hallowell to let her cousin go a-sailing, as callous to shame as when he denied to Oziel's face that he had tipped him overboard.

The negroes at the back of Sir Roger shook their spears at him, but Dixey advanced on them with an amused smile. Old Gabriel drew his little form up and looked on the rover with a glance of haughtiest righteousness and disdain, but Dixey nodded to him as if on Boston wharves.

"Ah, fried Gabriel, 'tis very warm," said he, and, within twenty paces of Sir Roger and twenty of the forest, he halted and made the dignified bow of an honorable ambassador. Sir Roger said nothing, but glowered on him.

"Sir Roger," said Dixey, "as between gentlemen of honor"——

"Sir!" the old man cried, glaring.

"There need be no time lost in useless discussion of the past."

"The subject is my son," Sir Roger interrupted, impatiently. "Is he alive? What have you done with him when you fled from the temple?"

"He is alive," said Dixey, promptly, and the old man sighed with relief.

"In faith, Sir Roger," the rogue continued, "if I had had word you were like ever to recover from your crack on the head in the wreck, I would not have listened to Donnereau's scheme to circumvent your black friends and get possession of your treasure, but gone another way about and brought more bold boys to the attack. You will observe, sir, that, unlike my old friend and partner, Gabriel, yonder, I make no bones of telling you what was our purpose here."

"I already know your purpose," said Sir Roger, calmly; but the maligned trader raised his eyes to heaven.

"By the Mogul," said Dixey, shrugging his shoulders. "Oziel Hasket lost no time in telling you. Nightly do I regret that all my attempts to relieve that young turnip-grower of this world's cares failed. I do not see him. Is it possible fortune has seen fit to let him be slain in the fight?"

No one answered him, and he shifted the other foot forward and went on.

"To business, then, Sir Roger. This Donnereau, your acquaintance with whom has doubtless taught you is a man of singular acuteness for a negro, when he told me of your presence here, told also of many boxes and bags brought ashore by your request from the wreck, after you had been ordained to the priesthood of this very interesting, if somewhat unorthodox, parish. These, in deference to your sanctity, were hidden about here, unopened. Now, Sir Roger, it's these boxes—this treasure which I know your ship was loaded with—that I want you to hand over to me."

"Now," cried old Gabriel, trembling at this unheard-of impudence, "was ever such a barefaced villain!"

"Nay, nay, good Gabriel," cried Dixey, with an engaging smile. "Be not afraid; you shall have none. I propose to charter your schooner in the bay to carry me back to civilization. But treat me fair, old Gabriel, in the price."

"Was ever"— Gabriel began, but Sir Roger answered, grimly:

"The renegade Donnereau was right. In my unhappy madness, for it was little else, I had chests brought from the vessel, vainly striving to remember whence I had brought them, and for what purpose. I have not looked at them for years, but they are here, and may not be decayed."

"O ho! Sir Roger," Dixey laugher, cheerfully. "Gold and rubies, etc., decay not so speedily. I care not for the chests."

"And for this treasure," said the old man, gravely, for which you risked so much, what would you do?"

"Give you your son unhart."

"Have I not men enough here to take him? You are only two?"

"In faith, Sir Roger, that is not the question," said Dixey, with a cunning laugh. "Well do I remember your rank as a gentleman of honor in war, and thus I know that my life is safe while I carry this white kerchief. But 'twere poor luck to go back to the sea with only life, after so dashing a venture. In short, Sir Roger, here's the case. In yonder wood sits Donnereau, and a madder man you never saw, with wounds and vexations at his plots going awry. Justin is bound beside him, and at sound of cry from me, or pistol shot, his dagger strikes. See you the case?"

Sir Roger quivered: Gabriel listened curiously. Little care had he that Justin should live to claim this treasure.

"So there it stands," and Dixey smiled pleasantly. "Yield up this treasure and give your word to let us pass in peace whither we will, or shoot me down, or rush to Donnereau, or raise a cry, and Justin goes to kingdom come on the instant."

"Man," cried Sir Roger, "do you know your life there as you stand is in my hands?"

Dixey bowed most eloquently.

"But I know the value of Sir Roger's word, and I am used to playing for high stakes. I am not afraid. Kill me, and you kill your son."

Sir Roger paused and eyed the rover thoughtfully, and a faint smile played on his lips.

"You are a bold scoundrel," he said at last. "But you judge right. What is all that trash to me, who hunger now but to be buried in my native land? I am old, and could make little use of it. Give me my boy, and take what you ask."

"Sir Roger," gasped Gabriel; but Sir Roger waved him off sardonically.

"How, Master Murrin," said he. "Were you not explaining your love for Justin and me? Surely you will be pleased to see us safe at the price of a few chests. Hither, then, Dixey Lynch! Take your heart's desire, and let me to my boy."

Lynch leaped at once into joyous activity. His last card took the trick. He pressed on the old man's heels, and behind him hung Gabriel and his three men left from the fight. The savages gathered curiously, and so intent were they all on Sir Roger's steps that none noticed the growing blackness, the increased mutterings of thunder, the agitation of the waves of the lake.

With no more words the old man led them to the altar on the edge of the cape, and motioned to the negroes. At a nod and a word from the priest the savages bent to the great stones and, laboring hard, pushed and raised them one from another. As the last was moved away, a hole in the ground was discovered, and to that Sir Roger pointed.

"Wait," he said, as Lynch was about to run forward. "The chests you seek are buried in a cave beneath the altar. You can have them, but tell me first where I shall find my boy."

"Two hundred yards back in the jungle," cred Lynch in frantic haste. "Go with Gabriel and his men quietly and bid Donnereau come. He will understand and fly fast enough. But hold! When you are gone, who will hold off these black devils?"

Sir Roger waved his wand, which still he bore, and said a few words, and at once the negroes, though somewhat sullenly, drew back toward the woods.

"You are satisfied?" Sir Roger asked, and at Dixey's nod hastened away.

But he had not gone ten yards, calling Gabriel to follow, before a curse from Dixey turned his head, and, looking back, he saw that old Gabriel held a pistol pressed to Lynch's head.

"A share," cried the desperate old man, "or, in spite of Sir Roger and all his blacks, and a thousand Justin's lives, I blow your brains out."

"Come, then," cried Dixey, with another curse. "First let us have the chests, and once aboard the schooner we will talk of shares."

The two greedy men jostled each other in the passage to the cave, and so contagious was the fever of their eyes, glittering with avarice, that the three men of the schooner, without more debate than an exchange of looks, drew cutlasses and plunged after them, ready in turn to fight for a portion of the gold.

They had hardly disappeared when the thunder rolled again, and again the whole earth shook and the lake rose up against its shores in boiling waves. Sir Roger, in dismay, hurried to the woods, but again he had to turn at the sound of voices behind him. The treasure-seekers were out again, sweating under the weight of a great box, dragging it, pushing it to the air. There they hacked and hewed it with cutlasses until the lid burst open, and they dived head first at its contents in a delirium of greed. A cry of anger came from them. They hauled out nothing from the box but old clothes and uniforms. Down they rushed to the cave once more and brought up more chests. In their blindness, their madness, they saw not that the negroes has scattered and fled, that Sir Roger gazed on ironically from a distance, nor did they mark the thunder crash, nor feel the earth shake. They knocked the old chests asunder and parted them with a cry and white, perplexed faces. Gold and jewels there were none—nothing but books and papers and clothes and trash. There came a fearful crash in the sky and a yell of agony from Donnereau in the woods. Sir Roger dashed into the jungle, crying in that tumult: "Justin! Justin! My son!"

By the scattered altar Lynch and Gabriel Murrin faced each other, and suddenly, as dogs over a bone, in their fury of disappointment, they began to blame each other for the fault, and flew together with cutlasses drown. The other men stood apart, stupefied. As they were thus postured for one instant, the thunder rolled again, the sky seemed to close in on them, and the earth cracked in all directions. Up rose the lake, hissing and bubbling, and with a mighty roar the whole point of land, the place of sacrifice and of battle, crumbled and sank, while the hideous shrieks of the doomed treasure-seekers rose to the skies and echoed in the mountain tops, and at last ceased, as Dixey Lynch and old Gabriel fell together, fighting still, mid rocks and ruins, to the bottom of the lake.

AFTER THE EARTHQUAKE

Before the crash of the earthquake had passed, Sir Roger was well into the wood, nor saw the final catastrophe and the disappearance of the white men. To his continued crying of his son's name at last he heard an answer, and recognized with joy Oziel's voice. Running on, he came to the great chasm in the earth, on whose brink lay the two friends, Justin still white and insensible. Oziel, utterly exhausted, and in a dreadful state of mind at these convulsions of tropical nature which he could only account for, in his unlearned simplicity, as direct judgments of an angry God upon so wicked a land. Poor lad, he was on his knees in earnest prayer when Sir Roger found him, and so Sir Roger reverently left him, while he attended to the care of his son, whom at last he was able to embrace.

When the sorely-tried lad was restored after a time to consciousness, the old man calmed their fears and told them of the search for the chests. The earthquake had passed; the thunders rumbled more distantly, and a heavy, cooling rain descended. Through this downpour the three made their way to the open cautiously, for Sir Roger did not know of Lynch's death, and feared his rage. But the scene that met their eyes dispelled all alarm. The ruined cape, the mud and rocks thrown up, the altered aspect of the angry lake, told their own tale, and the three gazed, awestruck, at the mighty grave of the gold robbers. The judgment was too recent, too appalling for comment, but to the lips of Justin came curiously the words of Dixey's song, and he muttered them as now he pressed Oziel's hand in safety:

When the moon sails in southern sky,
Where the south wind blows softly by,
There's the red gold where the dead men lie,
Where all bold lads are sailing.

He paused, and his father looked on him thoughtfully.

"Not a sign of the chests, Justin," he said; "they rest in the same grave with the wretches who valued them at the price of human life."

Justin shuddered.

"Let them be, my father," he said. "I have had enough of treasure hunting."

Sir Roger said no more then, but Oziel laughed for the first time for many weeks.

"Then there is some prospect, lad," he cried, "if that be so, of our seeing good Boston town and peace and quietness again."

Indeed, no other thought had honest Oziel now that the villains were safely killed than to bear Justin back to Marian in safety, and say to that lone maid:

"I have obeyed you; I have been faithful."

The treasure might lie for him till doomsday at the bottom of the lake. But Sir Roger grew strangely thought-

They Knocked the Old Chests Asunder and Parted Them With a Cry and Perplexed Faces.

No danger in Schilling's Best tea.

It is delicious besides.

Fortunate Bicycle Riders

are those that know what Ballard's Snow Liniment will do. No soreness from stretched sinews or strained muscles. Quick recovery when mishap befalls. No liniment penetrates like this one. It has all the virtues of other liniments and peculiar merits of its own. Cures where others only relieve. Banishes Rheumatism, Neuralgia; relieves Strains, Cuts, Burns and Frost Bites. Pain and Inflammation simply can't stay where it is applied. Your money awaits you if it fails to satisfy. Price, 50 cents.

Sold by Z. C. M. I. Drug Department.

MYSTERY IS CLEARED UP.

Mr. Sigafus' Papers Were Stolen From His Valise.

Chicago, March 4.—The mystery surrounding $200,000 worth of deeds, bonds and negotiable paper which were found in an alley last night, was solved today, when it was discovered that the papers had been stolen from the waiting room in the Dearborn street station. J. R. Sigafus, the owner of the papers, while waiting in the depot last night to take a Santa Fe train for California, left his valise containing the papers and about $60 in currency on a seat. When he returned the valise was gone. As Mr. Sigafus could not delay his trip and did not have time to report the matter to the police before his train pulled out, he left instructions with the railroad people to report the matter to the authorities this morning.

WALL PAPER IS POISON.

Alarming Discovery Made By a Cornell Chemist.

Ithaca, N. Y., March 4.—Dr. E. M. Chamel of the chemical department of Cornell university has announced that, as a result of the chemical analysis of wall paper which he has been carrying on for several months, he is able to state that nearly all wall paper sold at the present time contains arsenical poison, some of them in surprising quantities.

Dr. Chamel's investigations were prompted as a result of the several cases of arsenic poisoning which were said to have been caused by contact with paper covered walls. One of these cases was in W. S. Bancroft's family at Cornell university, which was caused by red wall paper. Dr. Chamel says there is no basis for the popular belief that green wall paper contains the most arsenic.

White's Cream Vermifuge

Is the one worm remedy that does every possible good without the possibility of harm. It is a purely vegetable preparation that cannot fail to expel worms. If your child eats well, but fails to grow; if it is dark under the eyes, if it is fretful or if it sleeps poorly, the chances are that the worms are sapping its vitality, retarding its growth and endangering its life. You can use Cream Vermifuge with absolute certainty of results. Large bottles, small dose. Price, 25 cents.

Sold by Z. C. M. I. Drug Department.

Bamberger sells coal right.

Z. C. M. I.

Carpet Department Specials.

Do you want an EXCLUSIVE PATTERN CARPET, the very best that can be obtained in the west—Royal Wilton, of magnificent design?

Z. C. M. I. Carpet Department is the place to secure it.

Do you want the best worth for your money in ORIENTAL COUCH COVERS, TAPESTRIES or CURTAINS of superb quality and design?

Z. C. M. I. is the place to get it.

Do you want the finest quality of LINOLEUMS, OIL CLOTHS, etc., at the lowest market prices?

Z. C. M. I. is where you can obtain it.

Do you want the best and cheapest WALL PAPER CLEANER—in fact, the only perfect preparation for this purpose on the market? Will make wall paper look as good as new.

Z. C. M. I. is the institution that can furnish it.

Do you want anything in the HOUSE FURNISHINGS line—the best in quality and style and most reasonable in price?

Z. C. M. I. can please you best.

Inspect Our Display Windows Without and Within.

Z. C. M. I.

T. G. WEBBER, Superintendent.