

In Sheep's Clothing.



By Capt. Ormond Steele

CHAPTER XVI.—Continued.

Thrasher took up the situation, and finishing his cigar with a flourish...

"I am going to the inn," said Mr. Hedges, handing him a coin; "I'll see you again."

"Will you send back an answer, sir?" "Yes; to-morrow all the Captain's friends will give you letters to hand to him."

"But, sir, I must leave to-night." "To-night?" in chorus from the people about Thrasher.

"Yes; I must go to Gardner's Island, where a boat will take me to New York," replied the fellow, with a self-possession that proved him no novice in this business.

"How long will you remain?" asked Valentine Dayton.

"About two hours."

"Very well; we shall try to have the letters by that time," said Mr. Hedges. Thrasher bowed humbly and left.

He had but just gone out of hearing when the Squire, bursting with impatience, called out:

"Well, George, what is the trouble?" "Trouble!" repeated Mr. Hedges.

"Why, the trouble is that Fox is to be back in a few days, and I am to report to him for orders!"

"Report to Fox for orders?" "Fox to have command of the Sea Hawk?"

"What does Ralph mean?" "These were a few of the exclamations that broke from the lips of the people on the veranda when Mr. Hedges uttered the sentence given above."

Mr. Hedges ran the fingers of his left hand nervously through his frosted hair, his right hand clutching the letter.

He was debating the propriety of reading it, and on such an important question, for he had the old-time regard for official etiquette. He could not afford to come to a hasty conclusion.

"Sit down, sit down," he said at length; "I can't see any harm in letting you all know now what your love and friendship was not sent to Ralph, with strong injunctions to answer as soon as possible, and give them all the particulars, particularly the particulars of his return."

When all the letters were ready, Mr. Hedges, as Valentine Dayton took them down to the inn, where they were Thrasher among his pipe with an air of great enjoyment, and looking like anything but a man exhausted by a long ride.

"These letters," said Valentine Dayton, "are a gold mine for you, my pocket and handing it with the letter to Thrasher, 'are all private, so I will pay you now, and when you hand them to Capt. Denham, I am sure he will give you an additional reward.'"

"I like Cap'n Denham as much as any man I ever came across, except, perhaps, mebbe, Cap'n Fox; he comes up to me to him; and you'll see I won't forget myself," replied Thrasher, whose flushed face showed that he had been taking advantage of his unexpected prosperity to treat himself to wine.

Soon after this the post-rider left for Greenport, from which point he said he was going to Gardner's Island, then and still in the possession of the family that first purchased it from the Indians.

"I don't like that man, Thrasher," said Mr. Hedges, as an Indian stood on the beach signaling the Sea Hawk to send a boat for them.

"Nor do I, but of course the fellow has nothing to do with the nature of the messages he carries. I almost wish the Sea Hawk was out of commission, and we were settled down on shore again," said Valentine.

"Oh, it's all very well for you, Val, who have a pretty girl ready to become your wife, to talk about settling down; but here am I—five-and-forty, with no wife and the prospect of none."

"That is your own fault, Uncle George."

"Perhaps it is; I could have married in my time, and when I was your age, if any one had told me I should live to be as old as I am now, without getting married, I would call him crazy. You here I am, with no bride but the ship and no home but the sea."

"Oh, come, Uncle George, don't talk in that way. Every house on the island is your home and every man is your friend; and as getting married, why a man of forty-five should be in his prime. If you doubt this start out a once with the object of getting a wife, and my word for it, you can win a girl nearly as sweet as Ellen Condit, and that is saying a great deal for the powers of fascination of any man, young or old."

The lieutenant's bronzed face and clear, brave eyes took on a softer expression, and his usually strong, bold voice had in it a sub-tone of music, as he said:

"Perhaps you are right, Val. I know I feel as strong, and my head is as clear, and my heart as stout as it ever was; and talking 'bout being too old to love, I'll tell you something if it wasn't I'm afraid of you, I'm afraid of me."

"You do me an injustice, Uncle George, if you think I could entertain any other feeling than respect for what I think to be the noblest emotion that can stir the human heart. A man himself in love, is not apt to ridicule the feeling in another."

"I think you are right, my lad, and more particularly when that other is one's uncle. But I don't see why I shouldn't tell you, though you may think strange of my taste, that I have had my eye on a certain girl for two years and more."

"May I ask if I know her?" "You do, Val," said the lieutenant, blushing through his tan.

"Well, Uncle George, who is she?" "She is not of our race," said the lieutenant, with a solemn shake of the head.

"Not of our race? What do you mean?" "I mean, Val, she ain't white."

"But she ain't black!" cried Val.

GOOD ROADS FOR CUBA.

THE ISLAND IS A NATURAL PARADISE FOR WHEELMEN.

The picturesque beauty of the scenery is sure to attract the attention of the American Cyclist—The Militant Apostle of Better Highways is General Stone.

It might seem a trifle premature to consider Cuba as a favorite resort for wheelmen. The island is not now blessed with many roads available for anything more than mule trains, but the militant apostle of good roads, General Roy Stone, has shown in Porto Rico what a little Yankee energy can do for the improvement of highways.

And, of course, the same can be done in Cuba, and doubtless will be done now that the island has ceased to be a colony of Spain. For one thing, the picturesque beauty of the island, enhanced by the charm of its semi-tropical verdure, is sure to attract the attention of American wheelmen, and when wheelmen get their eyes on a country it is certain that the condition of its roads will speedily improve.

In the case of Cuba, however, wheelmen will find that their task will be not so much the improvement as the creation of roads, for practically no roads worthy of the name exist, and even the streets of the cities and towns are in a wretched condition.

Were the patient native mule endowed with speech like his kinsman of the Balaam story, he would undoubtedly cry out against what passes for a street in a typical Spanish town. It will sound a little strange to read of century runs being made in Cuba, but the thing may happen, and that, too, before many years.

In the winter, with the improved sanitary conditions that will soon obtain in the Cuban cities, the island will become a favorite resort for a multitude of Americans.

The beautiful Isle of Pines will probably become one of the most popular places in the West Indies. Even in the midst of their fierce fighting our sailor and soldier boys were struck by the charm of the country around Santiago.

Scattered about in the sugar districts of Cuba are splendid sugar plantations owned by Cubans and Americans, whose owners, under a decent and stable government, would soon open up the country by good roads and other improvements.

Then there is the centre of the island, as yet practically unexplored and unknown, but said to contain great forests of valuable woods. It will not be long before this terra incognita will be opened up under the stimulus of American enterprise.

Towns will arise, railroads will be constructed, and then about that time along will come the wheelmen, not long after which we shall hear of this, that and the other bicycle path or path runner, it may be, through a grove of palm trees, while the air is laden with a tropical fragrance and the stillness of the forest is punctuated with the notes of strange birds.

If the adventures of the American wheelman fails to take advantage of this new and delightful experience, we have very much misjudged him.

General Roy Stone has already spent some time in Cuba, but his duty there has been simply to advise in the building of temporary military roads for the use of the army.

But it may well be that these temporary roads will become the nuclei of permanent roads, just as the points near Santiago at which engagements with Spanish troops have taken place may become interesting towns and villages with American names in the new Cuba which is to be.

Indeed, it is inevitable that this American invasion of the island is going to make many changes in its geography and topography. While the more important places will, of course, retain their names, American industry and commerce will create new centres of life and trade and develop to their fullest extent the splendid opportunities for growth and progress that have been so shamefully neglected by Spain.

But to revert to our first thought, Cuba is a natural paradise for the wheelman, and when he finds it out he is going to see that good roads are built.—New York Tribune.

TRAGEDY OF CAT ISLAND.

A Chapter From Early Missouri River Steamboating History.

"There used to be a place in the river north of here that was called Cat Island," said Billy Alford to a St. Joseph, (Mo.) News man the other day. He is an old time engineer, and many years ago was familiar with every mile of the Missouri river.

He was assured that a island bearing the same name is still in existence. "It may be the same place, and it may not," said Alford. "The river is so treacherous that it may have washed that island away and formed another one in its place since I knew anything about it. There was a big tree on the island as I remembered it, and we used it once to hang the rank-and-file gambler on the river.

We tolerated that man three seasons, because the river men did not want to resort to violence. At first he seemed to be square, but we began to hear whispers about him. It was in 1858 that he floored a young fellow out of \$500—just a plain case of robbery. He had let the young fellow win just to get him interested, and then aimed to rake in the whole thing. Somehow the young fellow got hold of the wrong cards when there was \$9000 in the pot.

The youth reached for all the money on the board, but the gambler made a grab for it, and took as much as his hand would hold. Stuffing it into his pocket as he ran, he jumped overboard and made for the shore. By the time we realized what was going on he was far astern; but the captain sent a boat after him, loaded with armed men. They had to shoot him and break his arm before he would stop. That was near the place known as Cat Island, and we headed the Henrietta—that was the name of the boat—for the shore. The mate and a dozen men did the job, and the inexperienced young man from the east got his money back. The young fellow left the boat at Omaha and came back down the river ahead of us. When we returned the body of the gambler was still hanging to the tree. The other young man, who had been floored, had come to St. Joseph and committed suicide on account of remorse. His body and money was sent back to his father, and I heard afterward that the old man said that the boy was worth more dead than he was alive. He said the youth left home with \$10 and a new suit of clothes.

"It seems that he knew the cards himself, and that he had got the best of the man we hanged in a former game at Cincinnati. We used to feel mighty queer after that when we passed Cat Island in the night. I never knew why it was called Cat Island, but I imagined it was given the name because it was inhabited only by cats. I know I could hear their cries every time we passed the place for that hanging, and it made the cold shivers run down my back. There is a close connection between cats and murders and ghosts, anyway. I have wondered a thousand times who the man was we hanged on the island that night with such little ceremony. He was not a young man, but he was a handsome fellow, and might have had a family somewhere. I have wondered if some woman and little children did not wait years and years for him to come back, and wonder what had become of him. They might have believed him to be an honest man, engaged in a legitimate business, and might have loved him just as well. I don't believe the body was ever taken off the island, but I don't really know what became of it. I never heard anything more about it."

"Washing Streets for Diamonds." Perhaps the most interesting fact in connection with Kimberley, South Africa, the diamond city, is the "street washing," which has been a recognized industry for some time past. With the exception of two or three of the principal thoroughfares all the streets have been subjected to the washing process, and some of the debris washers have done very well. The "washing" consists of overhauling the earth for diamonds.

At nearly every meeting of the borough council applications for permission to wash streets or portions of streets are received. The would-be washer has to obtain the consent of persons resident in the street or road, to put the latter into sound repair again and pay title to the municipality in the shape of 10 per cent. on his gross take. Last year \$4800 was paid to the municipality in that way, a good proportion of which represented commission on street finds.

In the early days of the diamond fields the ground was washed in a very primitive style, many diamonds being thrown away in the debris, as it is called. This debris was subsequently used for street-making purposes, and the now, years after, with better machinery at their disposal, people find it pays to "wash the streets."

Many houses built on "maiden" debris are removed in order to wash the latter, and stones of comparatively large size are frequently found by the energetic debris washer, who literally works from morn to night, from sunrise till sunset.—Pearson's Weekly.

An Historical Quilt. One of the exhibits which attracted widespread attention at an historical exhibition given in Saugerties recently was a quilt, the property of Mrs. Richard Lewis of that village, who is a descendant of the Rev. Thomas Judson, a clergyman, who came over on the Mayflower. The figures on the quilt were colored an indigo blue, with a die spot, in vogue at that period. The colors in the quilt are in a good state of preservation.

Bananas in Porto Rico. Porto Rico's annual product of bananas is given as 200,000,000 and of coconuts 3,000,000.

False Report. "It was very sorry to hear that you had failed, Jones," said his next-door neighbor.

"It was a slander, sir. I did not fail. It was my plans that failed, sir. Had they succeeded I could have paid every dollar I owe and had a handsome fortune left."—Detroit Free Press.

PEARLS OF THOUGHT.

The man is usually in the right who owns himself in the wrong.

A kind heart is a fountain of gladness, making everything in its vicinity to freshen.

If a man is busy, and busy about his duty, what more does he require from time or eternity?

No matter how many mistakes you may have made. The point is—what have you learned by them?

What men want is not talent, it is purpose; in other words, not the power to achieve, but the will to labor.

The mind requires not like an earthen vessel, to be kept full; convenient food and aliment only will inflame it with a desire of knowledge and an ardent love of truth.

Be resolutely and faithfully what you are; be humbly what you aspire to be. Be sure you give men the best of your wares, though they be poor enough, and the gods will help you to lay up a better store for the future. Man's noblest gift to man is his sincerity, for it embraces his integrity also.

SLOW-BURNING POWDER. The Brown Prismatic Powder and the Way It Is Loaded in Charges.

E. B. Rogers of the United States Navy in an article on "Big Guns and Armor of our Navy" in the St. Nicholas says:

Black powder, with its glistening grains, is unfitted for our modern guns, because it explodes too quickly, and when the charge is fired it turns almost instantaneously into gas, exerting immediately all its force, which, of course, decreases when the shot moves toward the muzzle, because the gas has more room (that is, the inside of the gun) to expand in.

But nowadays what is called "slow-burning" powder is used. When it is ignited the projectile at first moves slowly; but as the powder continues burning, the quantity of gas, and consequently the pressure, is constantly increasing; thus the speed of the shot becomes greater and greater as it goes out of the gun. Sometimes grains of powder still burning are thrown out when the gun is fired, which shows how slowly it ignites.

This new powder is brown, and it is made up into hexagonal, or six-sided, pieces, with holes through their centres. A mass of it looks exactly like a lot of rusty iron nuts. Each of these grains or "prisms," is about the size of a large walnut, and when the charge is made up the prisms are nicely piled, and over the pile is drawn a white serge bag. The white bag is a "powder section," and contains one hundred and ten pounds of brown powder; and five of these make up the full or "service" charge for the great thirteen-inch rifle, whose projectile is two-thirds as tall as an ordinary man, and is larger, and weighs more than many of the very cannons themselves with which Admiral Nelson fought the battle of Trafalgar in 1805.

A Logging Camp. The summer logging camp ordinarily is not a picturesque place. It is built beside the railroad, in order that supplies need not be carried far by hand or by "dray," and whatever beauty it has is gained from its environment of heavy forest. The various buildings, or "shanties," as they are always called, are clustered in a compact little village. Nearest the railroad—it may be in the "cook's shanty," next it, perhaps, is the "men's shanty," or sleeping quarters of the crew; next them, again, is the office where the camp accounts are kept and where the foreman and scaler sleep. The barn or "hovel," is at the end of the camp, with the granary beside it. The blacksmith's shop and the workbench of the "handy-man" are near by. The "root-cellar," which is both pantry and cold storage room, is built where the cook and his assistants have ready access to it.

The cook's shanty is the dining-room as well as kitchen, while the office is also a storehouse from which the timber-jacks can obtain tobacco and such principal articles of clothing as they may need. All the chief buildings are long and low, made of rough boards or logs, and roofed with sheathing and tar paper. The sleeping bunks in the men's shanty are along the sides of the cabin in a tier two deep; this shanty is the loggers' rendezvous on cold evenings, and in it the smell of strong tobacco constantly lingers. Such is a summer logging camp, and, rough and crude as it may seem, it is no bad home for men toughened by hard out-door labor.—Lippincott's Magazine.

Promotion for the Enlisted Man. The highest promotion to which an enlisted man in the navy can aspire is from petty rating to warrant rank. In this way he may become a boatswain, a gunner, a sailmaker, a carpenter, or, if the Navy Personnel bill now before the Congress becomes law, a warrant-machinist. Warrant-officers have no army counterparts. They are not commissioned officers, and they are not enlisted men. They are something like the baronets and knights in the British scale of precedence, though the parallel is not exact. They wear a uniform not unlike that of the commissioned officers, and are addressed as "Mr.," and have their own mess. Their names are borne on the "Naval Register" in regular lists. Their pay ranges from \$1200 per annum (when at sea) during the first three years of service up to \$1800 after twelve years from date of appointment. They have all the benefits of retirement and retired pay the same as commissioned officers.—New York Independent.

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