

JOHN TOPP, PIRATE.

By WEATHERBY CHESNEY and ALICK MUNRO.

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[CONTINUED.]

Alec, however, was not pleased at my success, and very soon he told me so.

"Jack," he said, "I didn't think my sworn shipmate would prove a traitor." "A traitor!" I exclaimed. "It's a hard word, and I don't know what I have done to deserve it. How am I a traitor?"

"She is a Spaniard, Jack. The Spaniards are the queen's enemies, and you and I have said we meant to fight for the queen."

"Inez is no one's enemy."

"But her father, Don Miguel, is a Spaniard."

"Yes; I suppose he is. Is that all you have to accuse him of?" I asked, somewhat nettled at his persistence.

"Isn't it enough? I tell you that every Spaniard is an enemy to England and Queen Bess, and since my father, Captain Harry Ireland, was murdered by the Spaniards every Spaniard is an enemy to me."

"And shall be to me, too," I said as I gripped his hand. "But I don't see that the rule applies to the daughters."

"Spanish daughters become Spanish mothers, Jack."

"Not when they marry Englishmen."

"Do you mean to marry Inez, then?" he said, looking at me earnestly.

"Yes; when I am old enough, if she will have me."

"No fear of her refusing a stout Englishman! Well, if that is so I will say no more, although I admit I don't like it."

But, although Alec agreed to let me have my way, I could see that he was displeased at what I was doing, and his displeasure at first angered and then grieved me.

"Alec," I said to him one day, "I'm going to see Inez tonight. Will you come with me?"

"Do you really want me to go?"

"Yes, Alec, I do."

"Will her father be there?"

"No. We never see him in the evening."

"Then, if you are sure of that, I will go. But have you never guessed, Jack, why it is that you never see Don Miguel in the evening?"

"Because he is busy in his workshop."

"At what sort of work?"

"How should I know? I never asked him."

"I will tell you. He is an alchemist."

"What?" I cried. "Are you sure of that, Alec? Alchemy! Why, it's the devil's own trade."

"So they say. But to me it seems that if the devil had any favor for the work, alchemists would be richer than they are. It's an ill trade, though, at best and not the one I should choose for my comrade's father-in-law."

This news of Alec's troubled me, for, though he declared that the devil could have no share in such profitless toil, yet I had always been told that every alchemist had sold himself to Satan, and I more than half believed it. Still, I argued that Inez was not to be blamed for her father's sins, and in the end Alec agreed with me.

After that night I never had any more disagreement with him on the subject of my love-making. Inez fairly laughed and sang herself into his good graces. She had the sweetest voice I ever heard, and as she sat in a corner by the fire and sang us quaint little sea songs that her nurse, Ann Garrat, had taught her I wondered whether the mermaids that the old sailors of the Angel spoke of were one-half so sweet and pretty as my own little Spanish sweetheart.

"Why, Jack," said Alec as we walked home from her house, "she is hardly a Spaniard at all, except for her black hair and eyes. No Whitby girl could have sung those English sea songs with a prettier accent than she did."

"No Whitby girl could have sung them half so well," I answered warmly, "and, as for her being English, her nurse has seen to that. Dame Garrat knows Spain almost as much as you do, and she won't allow Inez to speak a word of Spanish in her hearing."

"Well, she's a sweet girl, Jack, and I'm glad of it for your sake. It's a pity, though, that her father is a Spaniard."

I said nothing in reply to this, for, to tell the truth, I was not much more in love with the surly Don Miguel than was Alec. By and by, as we walked, Alec began to hum a tune, and after a short time he sang the words too. It was the last song Inez had sung to us, and I remember the chorus went like this:

"Then, ah, for the cruel creeping waves,
With their clay cold lips of spray;
But, hark, to the merry dancing waves
That with the sunbeam play!"

"Take care, Alec!" I said, with a laugh. "You'll be falling in love with Inez yourself."

"No, no, Jack; I like her, it is true, but I'll never be a rival to my sworn shipmate."

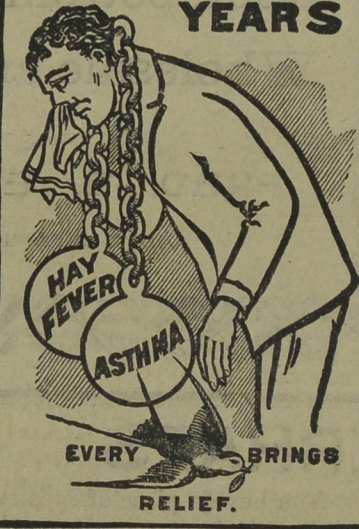
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[TO BE CONTINUED.]



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