

JIM FALKNER, PIRATE

By James Oliver Curwood

ILLUSTRATED BY HENRY RALEIGH

THE big clock in the city hall was striking ten when Falkner reached the pitch-black cobble-stoned street to which his letter had directed him. It was a curious letter and an unusual hour for an appointment with a rich man; but it struck him, as he stopped to light his pipe, that up to date the street was the most disquieting feature of all. It ran close along the lake front and smelled dankly of fish, tar and oils. It was narrow and the buildings rose high on each side, unlighted and black, giving a tunnel-like effect to the passage between them. For a few moments Falkner stood

and looked into the mouth of this city abyss, whence came no sound of footsteps or voice, wondering how he would find the number he wanted and why it was that a millionaire chose this sort of a dungeon for his offices. Suddenly, a block and a half down, he saw a thin streak of light shoot out into the street and remain there, and he at once made up his mind that this was meant to guide him. Puffing at his pipe and with his right hand in his coat pocket, where his fingers touched a chilly little automatic revolver, Falkner dived into the darkness.

There was something about his present adventure that curiously stirred Falkner, to whom adventure of one sort or another had been the spice of existence ever since he had left college. Never had he entered into a thing more blindly than he was going into this. A week before, a letter had been delivered to him aboard his sloop at Milwaukee—a letter which he would have attributed to a crank or a madman if it had not borne the signature of a well-known Chicago millionaire. Among other things it urged upon him, if he valued his future prospects, to be on hand at a certain appointed hour at a certain number in a certain street in Chicago; and inclosed was a check for five hundred dollars as a guaranty of faith on the part of the sender.

It was just five minutes past the appointed hour when Falkner halted under the stream of light that shot out of a second-story window, struck a match and found the number he wanted.

A narrow stairway, blacker than the black street, led to the second floor; and Falkner stumbled down, making considerable noise because of the unusual narrowness of the steps. Scarcely had he reached the top when a door opened and a flood of light poured forth. In this light stood a man whom Falkner had never seen, and whose round, pink face, good-humored smile and cheerful corpulency dispelled in an instant half of the doubts that the black street and the blacker stairway had forced upon him. The man appeared to be about fifty, though his short-cropped hair was almost white. He was pulling vigorously at a big black cigar and chuckled audibly when Falkner stumbled at the last step.

"No lights out here," he apologized. "Is this Captain Jim Falkner?"

"It is," said Falkner.

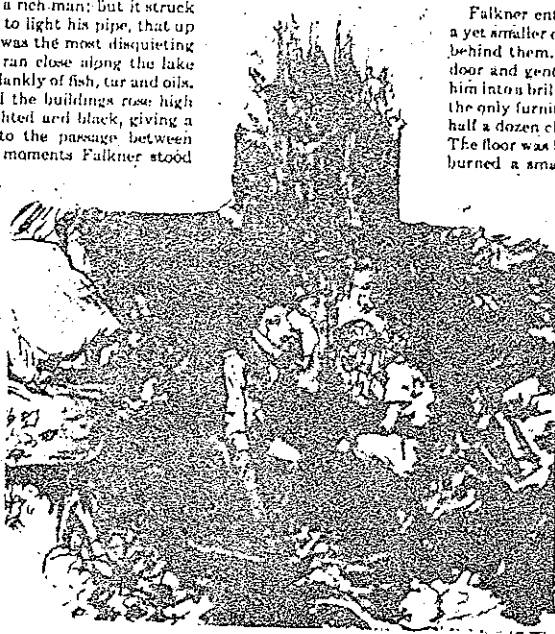
"Of course it is! I knew it. Foolish question," jerked out the other. "In fact, I've got your picture on my desk."

He reached out a hand and Falkner was surprised at the strength of his grip.

"Cut it out of a paper when you found that lost copper ship," he explained. "Mighty good piece of work that! The scoundrels who beat you out of your salvage ought to be hung."

Falkner laughed as he accepted the cigar which the other had already pulled from a bulging waistcoat pocket.

"I suppose I ought to ask if this is Mr. Winn," he said. "Yes; I'm Winn—J. Cortlandt Winn. Come in."



"We're Going to Have Explorations Now or I'll Be a Ten Miles Through You!"

Falkner entered from the main hall into a yet smaller one and Winn closed the door behind them. Then he opened a second door and gently thrust his visitor ahead of him into a brilliantly lighted room, in which the only furniture seemed to be a big table, half a dozen chairs and an empty bookcase. The floor was bare. Directly over the table burned a small arelight; and under this, gazing straight at him as he entered, was seated a young woman.

"My daughter—Captain Falkner," said Winn.

The girl bowed slightly. Her broad-brimmed hat shaded her face, but not enough to conceal from him its remarkable beauty. She continued to gaze at him intently for a moment, her lips parted and her dark eyes filled with a questioning curiosity. As Falkner seated himself opposite Winn he caught a glimpse of her profile and the glint of the light in her hair. On the table before her was a diminutive paper pad, bound in a red morocco cover, and between her fingers she held a slim yellow pencil. Falkner faced the millionaire shipowner with new and ill-concealed interest.

"I won't detain you long, Captain Falkner," said Winn, and his voice became sharp and decisive. He ran a number of papers between his fingers as he continued: "You are undoubtedly puzzled at my communication and you will be more mystified before I am through. One thing I must ask of you, however, before I continue with the proposition that I have in mind: Whether you accept it or not, I must be assured that not a word of what passes between us is to go beyond this room. If you do not wish to go into the adventure which I have in mind, and which will take perhaps a month of your time, we are to shake hands and forget that we have ever seen each other. If you join me I will pay you twenty-five thousand dollars for your month's service."

Falkner's glance shot from Winn to the girl. Her beautiful eyes were glowing with subdued excitement as she looked at him.

"That's rather an unusual price to offer an ordinary lake captain," he replied. "It arouses my curiosity. I can only give you my word that whatever you may say will be regarded as confidential. If you can accept that you may go on."

A curious smile played over Winn's face.

"I do accept it, Falkner," he said. "Listen!" He leaned half over the table, his plump hands clasped in front of him. "This is a remarkable adventure that I am about to put in your way. Success means—well, everything to me! I have been planning it for months and up until one month ago the one thing I lacked was a man—a brave man; a man who was willing to take a risk; a man whose word was as good as a Government bond. I remembered you because I was one of the owners of the ship whose copper salvage you lost. Here—right here"—he paused to tap the papers under his

hand—"I've got your record down in black and white from the day you lucked that country school-teacher down in Ogontz and then bolted for the city. I sent a man down to your old country home to find out what you were as a boy, and I've followed you, year by year, clean up to the present time."

Falkner gave a gasp of astonishment. He looked at Miss Winn, then stared back at the shipowner.

"I hope you missed some things," he said.

"A few—perhaps," returned Winn, glancing over the papers; "but we at least discovered enough to prove that you are the man we want. You had ambition and ginger enough to work your way through the engineering course at college. Then you went down into Mexico and helped to build a railroad, and made a deuced good record for yourself there. It was mighty unfortunate for you that you got mixed up with Velasquez and that Honduras revolutionary movement. I've got a pretty good account of your fight at Chico, where you captured two forts and put three hundred Government troops to rout with only forty men. By George, that was a dandy! I want to hear more about it sometime. After that you went into the filibustering game twice and did the jobs up so neatly that you pulled out with fifteen thousand cash. Here's a hiatus. I can't understand what brought you to the Great Lakes, where life is pretty tame; but I can guess—treasure hunting! You've been searching for sunken ships and you've found three. One of those ships would have made you rich if you hadn't been too honest to get away with the copper."

"You see, I'm confident you're the man I want. A little matter of holding up a ship on Lake Superior and abducting eight of her passengers will be just a sort of holiday recreation for you. That's what I want you to do."

Falkner had recovered his self-possession. Coolly he relighted his cigar, which had gone out.

"This is all mighty interesting," he said, with an ominous hardness in his voice. "You've gone over my history and at the end you sum me up as a high-class criminal. Eh?"

A low exclamation that was scarcely more than a fluttering throat note came from the girl. Falkner looked straight at her, wondering if she would speak. Her eyes were filled with a sudden painful anxiety as she looked from him to her father.

"Great Heavens—no!" almost shouted the shipowner. "Falkner, I want a man!—and a man isn't a criminal. If I've given you a wrong impression I'm a fool. I've called you here because I feel that I can place absolute confidence in you—because, in three words, you are brave, adventurous and at the same time honorable. You're the only man of your sort on the Lakes; and you must understand the confidence I place in you when I tell you that I am



McGraw Flies Upon His Back, With a Giant of a Man On His Chest, Dually Targeting Him

practically surrendering my own reputation, as well as my daughter's, into your hands. If you cannot have faith in me will you in Gladys—Miss Winn?"

Again Falkner looked at Miss Winn. The girl's eyes met his with clear frankness, but she did not speak. Her silence was beginning to disturb him.

"Go on, Mr. Winn," he said. "I am at least anxious to hear something of the business which you have mapped out for me."

"It is this," said the shipowner in a low voice, and the girl leaned nearer. "Three weeks from today the steel freighter Uranus leaves Duluth for Buffalo with a load of ore. In her cabins she will carry eight passengers—all men. I want you to board this freighter, kidnap those eight men and hide them somewhere in the wilderness along the north shore for a week or ten days. At the end of that time your work will be done and I will hand you a check for fifteen thousand dollars. I will give you the first ten thousand tonight if you agree to do the work. More than this I cannot tell you. You must remain in the dark as to my motive for kidnaping these men and hiding them away for a time; but I can assure you there is practically no danger in the undertaking."

Falkner's strong face lighted up with an amused smile.

"Only a little matter of piracy, eh?" he laughed. "And do you know what that means, Mr. Winn? On the Great Lakes piracy is subject to the laws of the state for which the vessel upon which the piracy is committed is bound. The Uranus, you say, will load for Buffalo. In New York the one penalty for piracy is death. Don't assume that I am afraid. I like excitement. Perhaps I am too fond of it. But as for flying the black flag and committing crime—"

"You won't be committing a crime!" cried Winn, striking the table with his fat hand. "I give you my word on that, Falkner. I know it's hard to believe, but it's true. You run absolutely no risk, except the small one of holding up the crew of the freighter while you unload her passengers. You can't believe this, of course; so I've arranged for a way to checkmate your suspicions. Would I sacrifice my daughter, Falkner? Ask yourself that. And she is to accompany you. She is to captain the expedition. You are to obey her orders implicitly. If you become a pirate she becomes one. If peril faces you it confronts her as well. I am sending her as a pledge that in boarding the Uranus and kidnaping her passengers you will not be committing a crime. You will so completely surprise the vessel's crew that, with a little display of arms, they will give you no trouble. You will need half a dozen good men to board the ship, armed with revolvers. Load the pistols with blank cartridges, but give each man some sort of a weapon—a sand-billy, for instance—that will stun but not kill if you are forced to fight. What do you say? Will you undertake this expedition—under Gladys, my daughter?"

With that soft, strange throat sound, so like the fluttering note of a bird, the girl suddenly leaned over the table and held out one of the little pages of the note-book to Falkner. She smiled straight into his eyes, and then she pouted her red lips pleadingly as he took the slip, upon which she had written the following words:

Please pardon me for not speaking. I must unfortunately write all that I have to say. But I can hear. You will go, won't you? Please!

With a curious thrill, Falkner understood the meaning of the diminutive pad under the slim white hand of the shipowner's daughter. She could not talk. She was dumb. He looked at her again. Her mouth was still pouted; her eyes glowed with luminous and anxious questioning. It was this girl, and not Winn or the fortune he offered him, that he thought of now. Her beautiful face still pleaded with him and he felt a sudden tremulous stir within him that held him silent while he looked into her eyes. Her lips moved. He could see the words as she framed them: "You will go? Please!" She held out a hand to him; and with a low, strange laugh he clasped the hand in his own big brown palm, trembling like an excited boy.

"Yes; I will go!" he said.

He felt her fingers tighten about his. She laughed—a sweet, voiceless laugh—her dark eyes glowing with joy; and in that moment Falkner felt the earth slipping away from under his feet.

"I will go," he said again, speaking to her alone. "I will go—with you as my captain."

An hour later, in the cabin aboard his sloop, Falkner pulled two slips of paper from his coat pocket. One was a check for ten thousand dollars; the other was Miss Winn's

note. A dozen times he read the words she had written, a slow flush burning in his face. As he refolded the slip he noticed a bit of writing on the other side of the paper. In a careless hand the girl had written:

"Captain Jim Falkner, Pirate."

II

THREE weeks and two days after Falkner's first interview with J. Cortlandt Winn, the sloop-yacht Silver Fox lay thirty miles off Thunder Cape, riding lazily and with a scarcely perceptible rolling motion in the long Superior swells.

In the bow stood Miss Winn, searching the level sea with a pair of powerful binoculars. As Falkner came from his cabin he stopped for a moment in the shade of the deck-house to look at the girl, whose tall, slender form was silhouetted against a late afternoon sun. She looked bewitchingly girlish as she stood poised a step or two back from the rail, her shining hair done up in a big long braid, her white arms bared to the elbows, and the light breeze blowing curling tresses about her face and shoulders. He



"I am Doing This, Not for the Money Your Father is Paying Me, But for You"

drew a deep breath and stepped forward. The three days they had been together since leaving Duluth had sped with blissful swiftness for him and yet it seemed as though he had known her for years. They had been days of a steadily increasing yearning—days of joy; days of pain; days in which there had come to him, in the same hour, hope and hopelessness. And with these there was a growing fear—a fear that this girl, in spite of Winn's protestations, was facing a deadly peril.

She turned as he came up, with one of those sweet smiles that made him want to take her in his arms.

"I can make out three freighters," she wrote on her pad. "One of them is a big boat. It ought to be the Uranus."

He took the glasses from her hand.

"It is," he said quietly, after a few moments. "I can tell by her funnels." Before leaving his cabin he had steeled himself for a certain unpleasant task, and the girl saw something of what was coming in his eyes. Her face became serious before he had spoken. "Miss Winn," he said, "I have restrained myself from questioning you during the past few days, but I feel that it is my duty now in spite of my contract with your father. There has come a change—" His voice trembled a little as he came near to the truth that was making his heart beat excitedly and that sent again that telltale flood of warmth into his face. "There has come a change in me! I must know. Why is there need of all this mystery? Why am I about to board that ship? What is the reason for the abduction of its passengers? You know. You must know. I am risking everything blindly—my ship, my

men, myself. And I am doing this—" He stopped again, and she saw his throat twitch. "I am doing this, not for the money your father is paying me, but for you. If I am doing this cannot you be honest—fair with me? Cannot you trust me?"

He was almost sorry that he had spoken. For an instant the tremulous look of pain that he had first observed in Winn's office shot into her eyes. The color left her face and her lips quivered, as though he had hurt her. She wrote on her pad and he saw that her fingers trembled.

"I am sorry," she said. "I can tell you nothing—nothing more than you already know. I trust my father. I have faith in you—absolute! Can you not have faith in me—in us?"

"In you—yes!" he cried quickly, and somehow her quivering little hand came into his. "Miss Winn—Gladys—forgive me for what I am about to say. I do not fear for myself or for my men. I understand and they understand what we are undertaking. But it is you! Listen! I can run to Thunder Cape, send you ashore and still overtake the Uranus tonight. Will you let me do that? If there is danger—and I am sure there is—you must not face it. I will board the ship tonight, but you must go ashore."

His voice and eyes told her more than the words he uttered. He still held her hand; and she answered him with the beautiful glow in her eyes, the pouting of her red lips, as she shook her head—the color surging back into her cheeks.

"You must go ashore!" he repeated.

She drew her hand away and wrote rapidly, and he read the words as they came from her pencil:

If you care at all—about me—you will let me go with you tonight. I will not go ashore voluntarily. If you force me ashore you will be a traitor—to me. I must share the responsibility of what is going to happen. It is necessary—to save you from possible peril! I refuse to let you go on alone.

Her face was white again when she looked up. Her tremulous lips made an effort as if to speak and then suddenly she turned and left him, running lightly to her cabin.

For ten minutes Falkner stood staring out over the lake toward the black trails of smoke of the approaching freighters. Then he returned to his own room and wrote on a piece of notepaper: "You're a little brick! The Uranus is in sight—the third ship. We'll board her at the end of the first watch tonight." And then he added, with a happy smile: "Captain Jim Falkner, Pirate."

This note he delivered to Miss Winn by the woman cook.

III

MISS WINN took her meals in her own little cabin and Falkner did not see her again for many hours. At eight o'clock the Silver Fox was running three-quarters of a mile astern of the Uranus, and Falkner had a final talk with his men. There were six, including himself and not counting the engineer. On this trip the regular stoker had been eliminated and the cook's place had been filled by one of the men's wives. Falkner felt

that he could trust every member of his crew. Clarkson, Findy and McGraw were old companions in adventure who would stick by him in any project; Hawkins, the engineer, had accompanied him to the Lakes from his last filibustering expedition; Peters, mate and wheelman, had been in his service for two years. Only of Sullivan was there a question, and Falkner allowed his eyes to fall more fully upon him as he gave his final instructions. He saw that each man was armed with a short sand-billy and to each of them he gave an automatic revolver loaded with blank cartridges.

"Don't fire a shot unless you are compelled to," he warned; "and then, if you can, shoot so that your powder will be felt." And don't crack any heads with the billsies. You're going to do a thousand dollars apiece for this job and we've got to do it without seriously injuring a person aboard that ship."

At nine o'clock he went to Miss Winn's cabin and knocked upon her door. The girl opened it. She had changed her light suit for a heavier and darker dress, and had coiled her hair upon her head. Her face was tense and pale as she looked beyond Falkner to where the lights of the Uranus were glowing half a mile to starboard. With a low laugh Falkner offered her his hand. The girl's was as cold as ice, and the old shudder of fear ran through him. After all, it was to be piracy—nothing less. Then the girl smiled and nodded her head.

"Yes; we are ready," he said, a little grimly. "We are bearing down upon her now. Will you remain in your cabin?"

She shook her head negatively and went with him to the starboard rail, her hand resting snugly in his arm. He had little to say now. His face was stern and set, his jaws were squared; in his eyes there was a light which the girl had not seen before. In a few moments he left her to join his men. Rapidly the Silver Fox bore down upon the freighter. At last Falkner raised his megaphone.

"Ship ahoy!" he cried. "Is that the Uranus?"

In a moment the reply came back:

"This is the Uranus."

"Then slow down and let us run alongside," shouted Falkner. "This is the yacht Sea Gull, of Port Arthur, and we have important telegrams for you from the owners."

As he had expected, the ruse worked. He heard the resonant clang of the signal-gong in the engine room of the Uranus and the big ship began to lose speed. Two minutes later the Silver Fox ran alongside and Findy and McGraw attached grappling hooks. The freighter lay so deep in the water that from the deckhouse Falkner jumped aboard, with Clarkson a bound behind him. The ship's mate and the watch were the only men on the big freighter's deck, and before either had spoken a word Falkner and Clarkson covered them with their revolvers.

"If you make a move or a sound we'll blow your heads off!" warned Falkner. "Up with your hands!"

The two startled men complied in an instant. The chilly glitter of the automatics was too real to question. As quick as cats, Findy and McGraw came up behind them and smothered whatever words they might have uttered under the folds of cloths specially designed for that purpose. Within three minutes after boarding the two men lay flat upon their backs, bound and gagged.

"Findy, you go up and gossip with the wheelman," commanded Falkner; "and you, McGraw, watch the door to the captain's cabin. If he sticks his head out get a hold on him that won't let any sound get beyond your own ears. We don't want to arouse the crew aft, or there'll be the swiftest sort of a fight. Now, boys, for the passengers!"

Falkner, with Hawkins and Peters close behind him, made for the observation room above the forward cabins. The door was unlocked, and Peters struck a match while the other two searched for the electric light switch. In the flood of light that followed its discovery the three men dropped black masks from under their hats over their faces. Falkner could not restrain an amused chuckle as he looked at Hawkins and Peters, who stood with pistols in their hands and looked as piratical as any cutthroats that ever sailed with a Kidd or Blackbeard. Hawkins, with his red hair and huge red beard that fiercely bristled out from under his mask, was alone worth a small army as a terrorizer, and for this reason Falkner sent him in advance as they tiptoed in single file down the narrow stairway that led to the staterooms. Scarcely had they reached the foot of the stair when the sound of subdued laughter came to them, and from under the door that opened from the sleeping quarters into the ship's sitting room there issued a brilliant streak of light. Without a word, Falkner strode forward and lunged open the door. At a small table in the center of the room sat four men, playing poker. Two others were looking on the game. For a moment the players were so entranced in the movement of certain piles of chips that they did not notice the interruption. When they looked up three dangerous-looking men and three chillingly murderous automatics menaced them from the door.

"Please make no noise, gentlemen," said Falkner. "We shall be compelled to shoot the first man who makes an outcry. We want you outside!" He thrust the fierce Hawkins out into the room and pointed to the door that led directly to the deck. "Open that—and brain the first man who shows an inclination to run! Now, gentlemen, we want you to travel out that doorway in single file."

The occupants of the room had not uttered a word; and now, as they rose to their feet, even the somber Peters could scarcely restrain a laugh at the spectacle they made. The man who followed Hawkins was one of the fattest Falkner had ever seen and the waistbands of three of the remaining five seemed ready to burst in an effort of envious competition. They were not a dangerous-looking lot.

There was only one young man among them; and Falkner grinned when he saw that three of the prisoners against whom he had brought such a formidable force were completely bald. Every man there breathed respectability and affluence; the very glister of the bald heads, the huge and immaculate white waistcoats, bespoke their importance and social standing—and a sudden uncomfortable chill shot through Falkner. He had expected ordinary passengers—or at least nothing like this appalling aggregation, whose very rotundity and all-round luxurious appearance made him realize more than ever the enormity of the act he was committing. Not one of these men made a remonstrance as they followed Hawkins through the door except the huge fat man, who spluttered and rumbled beneath his breath, but not loud enough to call forth a warning from his captors. For a moment they stopped where Sullivan was guarding the deck and the two bound men, while Falkner showed them how to board the Silver Fox. Not until they were seated in a row on the yacht's forward deck, with Sullivan leaning over the rail above them, did Falkner rejoin Hawkins and Peters, who were already returning for the other two passengers.

Suddenly a terrific and blood-curdling yell split the calm stillness of the night, followed almost in the same instant by the rapid firing of an automatic.

"That's McGraw!" cried Falkner. "Hustle up the others, boys! I'll go to him."

He ran across the deck toward the outer entrance to the captain's cabin and, to his horror, found McGraw flat upon his back, with a giant of a man on his chest, busily throttling him. He knew that it would now be only a matter of a few minutes before the ship's hands aft would be pouring on deck, and he brought his sand-billy down upon the captain's head with considerable force. The grip on

joyously up into her face, like a boy. She ran her hand through his hair again, and he took her other hand and pressed it to his lips. It lay there for a moment, warm and sweet, and then there came a knock at the door; and as Miss Winn drew back Peters entered. From the door the girl smiled back at him once more and left the cabin.

Peters sat down and grinned at his chief. There was something almost sheepish in his look. Falkner sat up.

"What happened?" he asked.

"Cap'n Dix slugged you a good one in the head with a piece of iron pipe," explained Peters, his long, thin face still wearing a grin. "Before McGraw got him with his sand-billy he yelled like a pack of hyenas and half a dozen of the crew came running from aft. Sullivan and Findy held them back until we got the other two aboard and cast off. Good Lord! —"

"What the devil is there to grin at?" demanded Falkner.

"I can't help grinning at what we got," said Peters. "The other two were fat an' there's four baldheads. One of them two was so old and fat we had to help him aboard. I put 'em in the long cabin an' set Clarkson an' McGraw to guard 'em; but they're as harmless as children. They hadn't been there fifteen minutes before the whole bunch was playing setback and poker, and smoking cigars that smelled so good I'd like to eat a box for breakfast. Listen to that!"

Above the throbbing of the yacht's engines Falkner heard a distant rumble of laughter, as if many voices had joined in a sudden burst of merriment.

"They're taking it easy," went on Peters; "and the devil of it is they're telling pirate stories while they play and predicting all sorts of things for us. They've got Clarkson an' McGraw sweating blood; and every little while that whale of a fat un describes an execution he once saw in New York, where they killed a pirate with electricity. Falkner's face wore anything but an amused look as he rose to his feet and examined himself in a glass.

"Clarkson and McGraw are still wearing their masks?" he inquired.

"You couldn't pry 'em off with crowbars," said Peters; "and Hawkins is shaving off his red whiskers in the engine room. That bunch has scared 'em stiff."

"And how about you?"

Peters laughed uneasily.

"I don't like the layout, Falkner. They're too big, too fat an' rich! I shouldn't wonder if we'd tied up to the eight richest men in the United States, mobby counting out the two skinny ones—and that's dangerous!"

"Tell Clarkson and McGraw to leave the bunch and lock the door," said Falkner. "I don't believe they need a guard."

With early dawn, the Silver Fox was running close in to a wild and forest-covered shore, and just as the sun appeared above the wilderness the yacht began picking her way slowly through a maze of black reefs and small islands until at last she ran into a small cove completely shut in by a rocky ridge

and a thick forest of spruce and balsam. Between the water and the forest was a white strip of sandy beach a hundred yards in width. Falkner pointed this out to Peters and Findy, who stood beside him.

"Pitch your tents there," he said. "We'll give our prisoners absolute freedom ashore. They can't get away. There isn't a settlement within thirty miles and I don't believe any one of them could make his way for five hundred yards through those rocks. They're as safe as if in a jail. Land all the provisions and after you've done that make ready to sail."

While the mate set about to carry out his instructions Falkner went to Miss Winn's cabin. The girl gave a little gesture of surprise and pleasure when she saw him.

"I'm so glad you weren't badly hurt," she wrote for him; and then, as she looked up with the witchery of her wonderful smile and saw the unchanged seriousness of his face, her own became suddenly quiet and questioning. A little frightened by what she saw, she put out her hand and rested it on his arm.

"I have come to say goodby, Miss Winn," he said, struggling to speak calmly. "Within half an hour the Silver Fox will be under way for Duluth, with her whole crew on board, except myself. You must go with her."

(Continued on Page 61)



They Were Not a Dangerous-Looking Lot

McGraw's throat relaxed, the captain rolled over and, before Falkner could strike again, had staggered to his feet. He prepared for the other's rush, but his blow went wild—and just what happened after that he could never tell. He knew that some hard and heavy object landed on his head, and he crumpled down as completely helpless as though his back had been broken. He was conscious of a flood of something warm pouring over his face; then he heard loud voices, shouts, the firing of pistols—and everything was blank.

IV

FALKNER'S first return to consciousness was marked by a strange pain and the realization that a cool hand was stroking his face and smoothing back his hair. He opened his eyes; and the second dawning that came to him was that he was in his own well-lighted little cabin and that the Silver Fox was under way. Then he saw Miss Winn, her beautiful face leaning over him; and before he knew what he was doing he put up his hand to her shining hair. He recovered himself in a moment and dropped it back, with a laughing groan.

"Soaked—soaked good and hard," he smiled up at her, a little painfully. "Did we get 'em all?"

She nodded affirmatively, smiling down on him with her lips and glowing eyes in a way that made him laugh

Cadillac progress

Research marks a well
been the motor car of
motor car of now

Electric lights.
Red carburetor. More
drums. Steel bodies
of essential details.

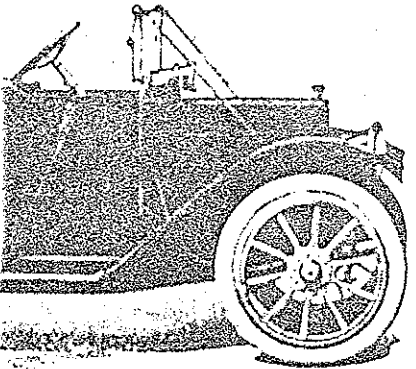
Delco system of starting, lighting and
integral part of that power.
of efficiency, for the first time, in a unit,
actions, is of itself an interesting achieve-
as an adjunct to an indifferent car would

the Cadillac adds lustre to that achieve-
ordinary must cut with new and honest
Cadillac would still be the incarnation of ease,
ing attaches to the word luxury as applied
mechanically removes itself from the realm of

in the 1912 Cadillac

and in another column)
color. The new carburetor has not only simplified the matter of
to low to high speeds without change of adjustment, excepting at

new improved methods
function and results in which the increase is to 11 gallons



IN BRIEF
operationally easy in operation. Both equipped with equalizers
CRIMING GEAR - Cadillac patented worm and worm gear action
adjustable, with lock bracket, 17 inch steering gear. 38 inch
ing wheel with walnut rim, aluminum spokes. **WHITE, BASK,**
scooter. **TIRYS** - built by the French Hartford of Morgan & Wright
INGS - front, semi-elliptical. Rear three-quarter platform
SH - Cadillac blue throughout, including wheels, light fittings,
of trimmings. **STANDARD EQUIPMENT** - Dynamos with 30
11 battery for automatic starter, electric lights, and terminal
Deka distributor system. Lamp especially designed for Cadillac
black enamel with nickel trimmings. Two head-lights. Two
lights, tail light. Three gasoline gauges on dash. Indio. Full back
a compass, ball foot ball in front, roller bed, tire iron, set of tools,
sling pump and tire repair kit. Cover mat in all new and except
of care. Speedometer, standard, improved with 1 inch face and
night.

LES AND PRICES-

Touring Car	\$12,925.00
Phaeton	15,825.00
Roadster	13,600.00
Limousine	15,825.00
Coach, Sedan type, aluminum body	17,500.00
Limousine, Berlin type, aluminum body	17,500.00

Price of U. S. B. Detroit, including standard equipment.

Detroit, Mich.

JIM FALKNER, PIRATE

(Continued from Page 2)

A sudden blue fire shot into the girl's eyes. She wrote rapidly in her little book: "Yes, I must return to Duluth with the yacht. But why are you remaining behind - alone?"

"Because I refuse to imperil for a moment longer the lives of my men," he replied, and the hard ring in his voice sent her back a step, staring at him. "I shall carry out my contract - not with your father, but with you," he continued. "I shall remain with the prisoners. Within a few hours two revenue cutters and a dozen tugs and swift yachts will be securing Superior and searching the shores for the criminals who boarded the Uranus. If we are discovered -" He shrugged his shoulders. "If we are - I will take the punishment alone."

She stood looking at him still, but in her eyes there came a glorious change. A flood of color rose into her cheeks. She wrote again and gave him the slip of paper.

"You are the bravest man in the world!" she said to him. "If they find you I shall come to you - and confess my part. And you - when you are done here - will you come to see me at my home?"

He looked at her and for a moment dared not speak. She put her two hands on his arm and looked up into his face.

"You really want me to come?" he asked softly.

She nodded. Her red lips parted "Yes."

"Then I'll come," he said. "Goodbye, Miss Winn. Gladys -"

She seemed to come a little nearer to him and suddenly he bent down and kissed the beautiful, tremulous mouth so temptingly close; and then, with his brain reeling, he stepped back through the open doorway of the cabin. The prisoners were already aboard, tents were going up in the shade of the forest and the supplies were being rushed from the creek's pantry; but Falkner paid little attention to these things as he stepped across the long planks that were laid from the yacht's deck to a big rock wharf. He realized that at this moment he had surrendered to his lover's will. His kiss was an insult to Miss Winn. In the shelter of a rock he drew powder and paper from his pocket and wrote:

"Can you forgive me for what I have done? Can you still believe me to be brave and honorable? If you can, God bless you! There is only one reason for what I did - I love you!"

He called Peters and asked him to deliver the note. Then, putting his usual hat over his eyes, he walked back to the rocky shore. He did not catch another glimpse of Miss Winn; and as the last tent went up and the last box of supplies was carried ashore his heart sank dead within him. The girl had refused to pardon him for his insult. He went down to the shore, shook hands with the men of his crew and gave Peters his final instructions.

"Lay up the Silver Fox at Duluth," he said; "charter a tug with the check I've given you and join the big search that will be made for the kidnapped passengers. Be sure and get a new crew - two men will be enough; and just ten days from today put back into this cove. If we're not discovered before then no one will suspect the game we're playing. I'll disappear back into the woods and you can make some sort of a pursuit if you want to. See the point? You'll be the lucky rescuers."

Peters hurried aboard and Falkner stood watching the yacht as she got under way. She was just passing the mouth of the cove when the mate appeared from behind Miss Winn's cabin and launched a heavy object through the air.

"Hi, Cap'n; that's for you!" he yelled. It fell close to Falkner - a dainty linen handkerchief tied about something heavy. As he untied it a stone fell to the beach and a piece of paper trembled between his fingers. A glad cry broke from his lips as he read what the girl had written:

"I cannot understand your note. Forgive you! I wanted you to kiss me. I guess I was to blame - if there is any blame - for I think you are the bravest man in the world! Besides, I got over with you - when they brought you in and I thought you were dead! I don't believe you will ever want to see me again, for I have deceived you terribly. I am not dumb, as you suppose. It was only a trick - almost a contemptible one, I am afraid - to keep you from questioning me

too much; but if you should care, please come and see me when you get rid of those troublesome prisoners. Then - then perhaps I can make you understand!"

Trembling with joy - a happiness greater than that of any dream he had ever dreamed - Falkner stared after the yacht until she disappeared beyond the islands; then, reading the note again, he turned back to the prisoners. They made a funny spectacle, for Peters had followed his instructions and each of the eight men stood with his hands securely bound behind him and his eyes blindfolded. It was Falkner's plan to give all his prisoners the use of their vision, but to free only two or three of them at a time, so that they could not make a combined rush upon him. He had scarcely released the enormously fat man, however, before the latter thrust out a hand and, with a good-humored laugh, said:

"If you're out for ransom, old man, you've won. You've done a mighty slick job - so deuced slick that we've agreed not to equal on you. You might as well pull that rag from your eyes, because we know who you are. You're Captain Jim Falkner and your boat's the Silver Fox. You dropped this and I picked it up."

He handed Falkner a slip of paper. It was the note which Gladys Winn had given him in her father's office nearly a month before, on the back of which she had written: "Captain Jim Falkner, Pirate."

A cold chill ran up Falkner's spine. Then he laughed and gripped the fat man's hand.

"You're right!" he said. "I might as well take this thing off. And I'm not so very sorry. It tickles my nose."

TWENTY-FOUR hours after the bold holdup of the freighter Uranus every newspaper wire in the United States was lit with the news. Nothing more sensational had come into the hands of the editors since the blowing up of the Maine. At first the facts were accepted with some little discrimination by the more cautious. It was scarcely believable that a piratical crew, armed with bludgeons and automatics, had actually boarded a lake ship and by force of those arms had carried off her passengers. Managing editors smiled as they printed the first stories; but smiles quickly changed to looks of astonishment and even horror. The thing had really happened. As the details came in, "extras" with glaring headlines were printed by the million throughout the country. Three American and two Canadian warships rushed to the scene of the piracy; and the authorities of both Governments were instructed to fit out armed yachts and tugs along both shores.

On the second day, the larger newspapers came out with full-page headlines covering columns of type and pictures. In the first rush, photographs of the Uranus and her captain and pictures of her crew brought from ten to twenty-five dollars each, while the pictures of the eight abducted men appeared in almost every issue. With these there were thrilling portrayals in pen and ink and crayon, covering half-pages, showing the masked boarders leaping over the side, the struggle with the crew, the terrific fight between Captain Dix and McGraw, imaginary struggles between the passengers and the invaders of their cabins, and every other scene that could be worked out to fit the situation by hungry editors and artists.

Who were the daring pirates? Where were they? What had become of their prisoners? These and a thousand other questions were asked by the newspapers, in business offices, over clicking typewriters, at breakfast tables - even by the children in the schools. Not one of them could be answered. Each day added to the mystery; and as the mystery grew deeper and more thrilling the newspapers devoted still more space to it, many of them sending their own correspondents to join in the search for the pirates. War between the two greatest nations in Europe could not have created a bigger sensation.

Falkner, hidden away in a wilderness cove, behind another wilderness of reefs and islands, guessed what was happening. For a few hours after the discovery that his identity was known to his prisoners he felt as though the gates of doom were already opening for him. He could see no escape. There was but one chance and that



We Start You

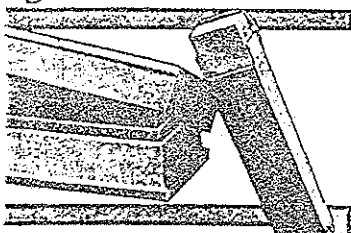
... 100% ...

THIS TAG INSURES

... 526-528 BROADWAY ...

RUNDUM

ng Stones



p—About the House—
Annual Training School
 um Sharpening Stone means
 tly conditioned tools—And
 mean better work.

oy who uses tools of any kind
 rundum Sharpening Stone—
 most remarkable sharpening
 agent ever discovered.
 sell them. If yours doesn't—
 with an inferior stone.

Stone for Carpenters	\$1.00
a Stone	1.25
a Stone in aluminum box	2.75
ook Stone	.25
Stone in soft leather case	.75
board case	.15

mpany, Niagara Falls, N. Y.



ty of Power Needs!

ARD" Motors—1-30 to 15 horse
 more than 2,000 different kinds of
 kshops, offices, wholesale and retail
 efficient power at a much lower cost.
 applied our motors to individual
 ad waste. Workshops, repair shops
 ARD" Motors at a big saving over
 ve been proven to be the most prac-
 ces, multigraphs, mailing machines,
 ry kind of office machinery.
 ess where the right "STANDARD"
 r and give you the most efficient



Horse Power
 idition—what you use it for and
 ve to you that a "STANDARD"
 your power bills.

& MYERS CO.
 Springfield, Ohio

Philadelphia, Boston, St. Louis,
 Chicago, Atlanta and Rochester.
 Complete line of Alternating and
 Direct Current, Bracket, Ceiling, Oscillat-
 ing, Office, Factory and Home.

was in flight. It was possible for him to strike straight northward into the wilderness and to lose himself forever, but this left his crew to face their terrible penalty alone; for, now that he and his vessel were known, the men who had accompanied him on the desperate expedition could be easily traced. So he discarded the thought of personal escape. In spite of what seemed to be the utter hopelessness of his own situation he could not help being deeply interested in the strange department of his prisoners. At first he attempted to hold aloof from them, but the fat man and his associates would not stand for this.

"No matter if you are a bloody pirate," said the fat man, "you've got to join us and play rum."

Every hour added to the mystery of the situation and to Falkner's uneasiness. He was astonished at the contents of the boxes which Winn had sent aboard the Silver Fox at Duluth. They contained everything in the way of delicacies and solid luxuries, from potted lobster and *paté de foies gras* to dill pickles and limburger cheese. There was one case of wine and several of good old-fashioned lager, and it occupied the time of at least two members of the kidnaped band to cool the beverages in the chill water of Superior. Not for an instant was there a flash of ill humor in the crowd. The six fat and well-fed men and their two lean companions seemed bent on making a holiday lark out of their unusual predicament, and from morning until night the luckless Falkner was a mark for a thousand questions and the butt of innumerable jokes. How long was he going to hide them away in the jungle? Why didn't he demand his ransom? What would happen to him when he was caught? Would he be hung, shot or electrocuted? At least six times a day the fat man described some new and blood-curdling feature of the execution he had witnessed.

At last he was forced, through lack of further material, to come down to the curious wiggling of the victim's toes; and he asked Falkner, in all seriousness, if he thought he would wiggle his. Would he rather be shot, hung or killed by electricity—or wasn't a pirate given his choice? He assured him, in all friendliness, both for himself and his associates, that they would all be on hand to see his last wiggle, whichever way he went. On the fifth day the fat man said that he and his friends were willing to pay a thousand dollars apiece for their freedom. He said they had enjoyed the little picnic thus far, but that the lager was gone and they were growing tired of it. He offered Falkner a check for eight thousand dollars. Falkner refused.

It was on the sixth day that matters came to a climax. During the night preceding, a big and hungry bear wandered down from the rocky fastnesses of the hinterland and helped himself to the camp supplies. He left footprints behind him as if he had a hat; and no sooner were these discovered than the eight prisoners took up the pursuit, with the hope of catching a glimpse of the beast a short distance from camp. Falkner followed close behind the rearmost, a short, pudgy man with a rosy face and long ash-gray hair that fell almost to his shoulders. The pursuers were hurrying between a narrow break in the rocks, the fat man leading, when a balsam limb swept back, entangled itself in the pudgy man's hair, lifted a wig from his head and sent it flying through the air like a bird on the wing. The man gave a startled cry as he faced Falkner. What came from between Falkner's lips was not intelligible. Before the other could speak he leaped upon him, caught him by the throat and bore him down on the rocky trail. There was the threatening glare of an animal in his eyes as he almost snarled down into his victim's whitened face.

For that face was the face of J. Cortlandt Winn, the millionaire shipowner!

AFTER a few moments Falkner loosened his fingers and lifted part of his weight from the other's prostrate body. With his first glimpse of Winn's face it had rushed upon him that his disguised employer was at the bottom of some diabolical plot, for which he was to pay the penalty; and now as he heard returning voices he pulled out his automatic and pressed the cold muzzle of it hard down against Winn's forehead.

"Get up!" he commanded. "Get up—and remember that this isn't loaded with blank cartridges now. Come on! You've got to go with me!"

He pulled Winn into the thick undergrowth and did not stop until the two were a hundred yards back in the forest. To his astonishment the shipowner smiled at him, though he was puffing like a porpoise.

"Falkner—congratulations, old man. You're a brick!"

"We're going to have explanations now or I'll bore ten holes through you!" said Falkner.

"Sure!" said Winn, regaining his breath. He looked admiringly at Falkner while he rubbed the red marks on his own neck; and with that look it suddenly dawned upon Falkner that he was the father of the girl he loved. "What a dad-blinked, son-of-a-gun of a man you are, Falkner! I wish you were my son—honest I do! See here!" He fumbled in his pocket and drew out a big black wallet. "Here's your check for the fifteen thousand. It's all turned out gloriously. I had planned to explain the first day ashore, and wanted to; but the others wouldn't let me—said you might queer the game if you knew too soon. By the way, Jim"—he chuckled as he spoke Falkner's name—"can you guess whom you've kidnaped?"

Falkner stared. The beginning of the dawning of a great understanding held him speechless.

"I'm tired," said Winn, "and half choked to death. Good Lord, how you can pinch! Here—have a cigar." He paused to light one of his big cigars. "Well, to begin with," he continued, "the ship which you boarded was mine."

"Yours!" gasped Falkner, chewing his unlighted cigar.

"Yes, mine," went on Winn, smiling and mopping his red face; "and when you boarded that ship and captured my friends and myself you captured every blessed member of the board of directors of the one-and-only Sanspareil Biscuit Company. You took us off the map. And you did away with us just at the psychological moment. We knew you were coming. We were waiting to be kidnaped. It was our salvation!"

He stopped, and Falkner's eagerness blazed in his face.

"It was a put-up game, then!" he cried.

"But I don't understand it. Go on."

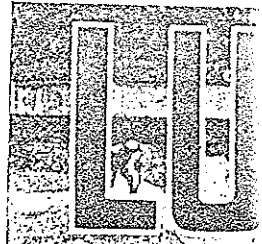
"It's simple," continued Winn. "Gladys has an imaginative turn of mind. She thought the scheme out and then turned it over to me. You see, the Sanspareil Biscuit is the best biscuit on earth, but in running up against competition it ran up against what began to look like death for it. It wasn't allowed to go on its merits and we couldn't advertise it enough to beat our competitor. It looked like bankruptcy. But now—now, my boy!—why, can't you guess what every newspaper in America has been doing for a week? Think of it! The entire board of directors of the Sanspareil Biscuit Company kidnaped by pirates and perhaps murdered! There isn't a six-year-old child in the United States today—Dutch, Irish, Chinese or Hunk—but who's heard of Sanspareil Biscuit! The Sanspareil Biscuit is a household phrase from the Atlantic to the Pacific. It's in everybody's mouth, literally and orally. We've had a billion dollars' worth of free advertising, and we'll get another billion's worth when we turn up and tell 'em we can give no explanation for the kidnaping. This has been the biggest advertising coup of any century since the night Nero burned Rome! We won't be able to make enough Sanspareil biscuits. Everybody will want to eat 'em if for nothing more than curiosity—and once they taste 'em they'll never buy any other. Do you understand, Jim, my boy? If the truth ever leaks out—and there isn't one chance in a hundred that it will—we're all here to swear that the whole thing was a joke to create a little excitement. It was my ship, my board of directors—and my treat!"

"Good Lord!" was the remark of Captain Jim Falkner.

Four days later a black and ugly tug nosed her way into the cove a little before sunset. The next morning she landed a hatless, coatless and generally disheveled lot of passengers at Sault Sainte Marie. At nine o'clock Falkner sent the following telegram to Gladys Winn:

"All O. K.! Am on my way to see you. You're a brick! But you've got a big debt to pay."
 "JAMES FALKNER."

The noon train was rushing him toward Chicago.



In The Big Moments of The Game



Count
 ers—everywhere
 Lucky Strike Sliced
 And now there's a new
 have to do is to tap it in your
 Lucky Strike Tobacco
 Patterson Process—original
 Always pure, mild, fine
 Lucky Strike Sliced P.

R. A. Patterson

10c At All Dealers

