

THE
PIRATE'S POCKET BOOK

THIS book you hold in your hand belonged once to a very celebrated Pirate.

He was so celebrated that the newspapers--of that time--always said nice things about him, and always knew what he was doing before he did himself. As he was a very truthful man, he did the things, so that the editors might not get into trouble.

Which was kind.

By which I do not mean that he was always kind.

[Illustration: MAP of Tomb's Island (_very exciting_.)]

Nobody knew how old he was. Some said that he was so old that he had never been born.

Some said that he must be young or he could not be so wicked.

So you see there were two opinions about him.

There are always two opinions about a celebrated man.

If you look at him you will see that he dressed to please himself.

[Illustration: Supposed birthplace of Tomb family. Family of Bone still living in the cottage.]

He wore a nice hat--but you have noticed that; and he had a roving eye.

By which I do not mean his eye walked about like this, but that he looked around him a good deal.

[Illustration]

If you are thinking of becoming a Pirate--and there is plenty of room at the top of every profession--you will have to look about a good deal, because you will have enemies.

[Illustration: _He dreams of other worlds to conquer._]

Tom Tomb--that was not his name, but it was the way he signed other people's cheques, and your father and mother will tell you that this is a very mean trick--lived partly on an island, and partly on board the _Inky Murk_.

[Illustration]

You will understand that I mean not with one foot on the island and one on the boat, but sometimes on one and sometimes on the other.

[Illustration]

Now T. T. never robbed the poor.

[Illustration]

Because it was not worth his while.

[Illustration]

[Illustration]

But any person who looked rich suffered accordingly.

[Illustration]

The Inky Murk was the name of his boat. You can make one curiously like it with two chairs and a rug.

[Illustration]

One day Tomb captured a young fellow--a very handsome lad too.

It was off a certain island where Tom Tomb had a neat cottage, in the garden of which he grew flowers for a pastime.

[Illustration]

Because, of course, he needed a little time to himself in between his tremendous fights.

[Illustration]

The young fellow was stealing flowers.

He was surprised to see Captain Tomb.

When I say he was surprised, you will see what I mean by the picture.

[Illustration]

"What cinderadustmat do you mean," yelled Tomb, in a voice like a railway accident, "by stealing my flowers?"

"I thought they were wild," said the young fellow, taking his pipe from his mouth.

[Illustration]

"Wild!" shrieked Tomb. "Wild!!" he bawled.

This last yell was so powerful that three of his buttons flew off his coat.

The young fellow caught them neatly in his left hand, and presented them to the Captain on bended knee.

[Illustration]

The neat act saved the lad's life.

"An honour to serve you, Captain Thomas Tomb," said he.

[Illustration]

"You know me?" asked Tomb, smiling upon the boy.

[Illustration]

"I thought it must be your face," said the lad boldly.

He was about to speak again, had not Tomb silenced him with a gesture.
He liked the lad.

Had he spoken again, Tomb would have silenced him for ever.

He was about to say that any other man with a face like that would have
died long ago, from wounded vanity.

[Illustration: From a very rare old print.]

"Would you care to be a Pirate, my youthful fellow?" said Tomb.

[Illustration]

The lad hesitated. "My father . . ." he began.

"Dead," said Tomb, in a hollow voice.

"My mother . . ."

"Dead," Tomb replied, in a monotonous whisper.

"My brother and sister . . ."

Tomb raised a sorrowful hand: his heart was touched.

"My family . . ." said the young man in despair.

"My poor boy," said Tomb, with tears in his eyes, "my poor, dear fellow,
I killed them all not an hour ago."

[Illustration]

"Then my sweetheart would object to my becoming a Pirate," said the lad,
weeping.

"Enough," said Tomb; "you are called from henceforth Dingy David. Now to
sea!"

[Illustration]

For ten years they plundered upon the Spanish Main, until they acquired
so much money that Bilge Island, Tomb's business address, smelt of
hoarded gold, and the beach glittered with jewels.

[Illustration]

Then both Tomb and David--I am keeping the secret of his real name to the end--became tired of so much adventure.

They had sailed in many seas: the Spanish Main--commonly known as the Dining-room Carpetwaters--the Kitchen Archipelago, the Drawing-room Inland Sea, the Creek of Conservatory, and the Lake of Passages. They had roamed the Wilderness of the High Street, the terrors of the Gardens they knew, and the Gulf of Front Hall was common water.

So they retired for a breathing space and a wash to that Island where the neat cottage stood and the geraniums grew.

[Illustration]

They moored the Inky Murk to a low-growing pom-pom tree, and then, stepping carefully, like those unaccustomed to dry land (or wet land either, for the matter of that), they gazed upon each other in silence.

[Illustration]

No one, not even the most careful observer, would have recognised in the two dusty figures, the once spruce forms of Captain Thomas Tomb and Dingy David.

[Illustration]

"Home!" said the young fellow, throwing a diamond at a wave-crest. (When I say "diamond"--they were always finding them in corners of their pockets.)

"Home once more!"

"Cinderadustmat!" exclaimed Tomb. "Let me hear you, oh! let me hear you say the word again!"

"Home," said the young fellow, gazing at the ripe ockapillies hanging overhead.

[Illustration]

Mastering his ill-concealed emotion, T. T. rose and strode--(when I say strode--T. T. never walked: he strolled, strutted, strode, or stepped, invariably)--towards the house.

[Illustration]

Threw open the door!! xxxxxx! o! z! What a sight met his eyes!!

Dust, dust, dust--everywhere.

[Illustration]

Dust met his eye. (When I say that, I mean that he saw dust--over all the simple cottage furniture he loved.)

He groaned three times.

The young man, who was idly chewing the stone of a crinquet, turned and saw, through the open door, dust, dust, dust.

[Illustration]

[Illustration]

Leaping to his feet, he rushed to the Captain's side.

"Captain," said he, "we must have a Charwoman."

(I say charwoman, meaning a woman who is paid to do work that other servants are hired to do, but will not.)

[Illustration]

In less time than it takes to skin an acquadatoric, Dingy David was in the rowing-boat making for the shore of the mainland.

[Illustration]

Sixty-eight hours of hard rowing, without a rest, brought the strong young fellow to the coast.

It was night.

[Illustration: Pause--excited reader.]

A light burned in the window of the lonely cottage that stood upon the shore.

[Illustration]

It was the work of a moment for Dingy David to seize upon the beautiful maiden who was writing jam labels, by the light of a solitary candle.

Such are the lives of the humble.

[Illustration]

Without a glance at her face, he carried her at breakneck speed to the boat--pushed off, and rowed like Hercules for the island.

[Illustration]

Exactly one hundred and thirty-six hours--which is five days sixteen hours from the time he started--David brought the captive beauty and laid her, senseless with fatigue, at the feet of Tom Tomb.

[Illustration]

"What have we here?" asked Tomb, pronouncing the H very clearly.

"A charwoman, sire," responded David; and, smiling, the lad fell asleep.

[Illustration]

When he awoke the sun was shining and the day was warm.

One glance showed him that the cottage was a model of cleanliness.

(Pirates are sharp glancers.)

[Illustration]

A smell of breakfast smote his nostrils pleasantly.

It was the work of a moment to dash into the house, wash, shave, and--there, upon a snowy bed, were laid the very clothes in which--long years ago--he had been captured.

In another moment he was in them and dashing downstairs, doing up the buttons as he went.

He flung himself, panting, into the breakfast-room.

[Illustration]

The glorious girl looked up from her bacon with a cry.

Tomb started to his feet.

The young man opened his mouth.

[Illustration]

"Ermyntrude!" he called.

"Wencheslaus!" she exclaimed.

For once Tomb's cool courage failed him.--He started back.

The sweethearts were in each other's arms.

[Illustration]

"Listen," said Tomb, when he regained his breath; and they, gazing into each other's eyes, listened.

"Gaze elsewhere," said Tomb, "and I will unfold a tale."

In the heat of the moment he put his sleeve into the butter.

Ermyntrude sprang to his assistance. Tomb enfolded her in his embrace.

[Illustration]

"This lady is my daughter," he said, turning to Wencheslaus, who stood amazed.

"I will not bother you with the story," said Tomb, "but five and forty years ago I wooed and wed her lovely mother. Twenty-one years ago to-day

Ermyntrude was born, and her mother, after lingering two years, died. Leaving the girl in the care of an honest fishwife (when I say honest, I mean, as honest as her profession allowed), I roamed the seas as a Pirate: sorrow made me merciless. Then, when I wished to return to my daughter, I found that I had lost her address."

"Father!" said Ermyntrude.

"My daughter," he exclaimed, "I am a careless man!"

"And I?" said Wencheslaus--"what is the secret of my birth?"

Going up to him, Tomb, with one superb movement, bared the youth's arm. Upon it was tattooed, in gold and purple, the crest of a noble family.

"As I thought!" exclaimed Tomb; then he removed his hat. "Lord Wencheslaus of When-cheeselawn!"

"Then my father _was_ . . ." the youth began.

"The Duke of Thingamaroo," said Tomb, bowing low.

[Illustration]

A cry sounded from the cellars of the cottage.

Tomb again started.

"I had forgotten," said he. Then he put his hand into his pocket, and drew forth this very book.

"Ten years ago," said he, consulting his notes, "I told you that I had killed your family. It was not true."

"Not true?" said Lord Wencheslaus--for so we must now call him.

"Not strictly accurate," Tomb replied. "I immured them in these cellars, with ten years' provisions."

With a noble gesture, he flung the key of the cellars upon the table.

"Release them, my Lord," he said.

[Illustration]

We draw a veil over the rapturous meeting.

[Illustration]

When the boat was loaded with the noble family, Lord Wencheslaus (erstwhile Dingy David) and Ermyntrude Tomb stood hand in hand in front of Captain Thomas Tomb.

"You must often come and see us, father," she said.

"My little Ermyntrude," he said, "you can bet your back hair your poor old father will often come."

Lord W. wrung Tomb's hand: his emotion was too great for words.

They stepped into the boat and sailed away.

[Illustration]

As they touched the mainland they started.

Boom! boom!! came the sound of guns across the water.

Tom Tomb was at his old game.