



LORD STRANLEIGH ON THE HIGH SEAS

Beginning the Adventures of Young Lord Stranleigh in America
By Robert Barr



FEW minutes before noon, on a hot summer day, Edmund Trevelyan walked up the gang plank of — at that moment — the largest Atlantic liner afloat. On the stroke of twelve she would leave Southampton for Cherbourg, then proceed to Queenstown, and finally would make a bee-line west for New York. The young man was costumed in rough tweed of subdued hue, so well-fitting and distinguished that it seemed likely the young man would be regarded as the best-dressed passenger on board. He was followed by Ponderby, his man, whose usually expressionless face bore a look of dissatisfaction with his lot, as though he had been accustomed to wait upon the nobility, and was now doomed to service with a mere commoner. His lack of content, however, was caused by a dislike to ocean travel in the first place, and his general disapproval of America in the second. A country where all men are free and equal possessed no charms for Ponderby, who knew he had no equal.

Once on deck, his master turned to him, and said: "You will go to my cabin, Ponderby, and see that my luggage is placed where it should be, and satisfy yourself that none of it is missing."

Ponderby bowed, and obeyed without a word, while Trevelyan mounted the grand staircase, moving with the easy nonchalance suited to a day inordinately hot. The prospect of an ocean voyage in such weather was in itself refreshing, and so prone is mankind to live in the present that Trevelyan quite forgot what he had read in the papers on his way down from London: that New York was on the grill, its inhabitants sweltering; sleeping on the house-tops, in the parks, on the beach at Coney Island, or wherever a breath of air could be had. On the upper deck his slow steps were arrested by an exclamation:

"Is n't this Mr. Trevelyan?"

The man who made the inquiry wore the uniform of the ship's company.

"Ah, Doctor, I was thinking of you at this moment. I read in the papers that you had been promoted to this boat, and I said to myself: 'This is not an ungrateful world after all, when the most skilful of medical officers is thus appreciated.'"

"You put it delightfully, Trevelyan, but I confess, at my time of life, I hesitated about adding twenty thousand tons to the burden I carry. By the way, I read in the papers that Edmund Trevelyan is no other than Lord Stranleigh. But, of course, you can never believe what you see in the press, can you?" laughed the Doctor.

"Personally, I never do. But I assure you that Edmund Trevelyan is a name that belongs to me, and I wear it occasionally, like an old, comfortably-fitting coat."

"Ah, well, I'll not give you away," and the Doctor hurried off to his duties.

THE young man continued his stroll, smiling as he remembered some of the Doctor's good stories. He regarded his meeting with the friendly officer as a good omen, but hoped he would encounter no one else who knew him.

The next interruption of his walk proved of not so pleasant a character. Approaching him on deck with nervous tread, was a shabbily-dressed man, who appeared from ten to fifteen years older than Stran-

leigh, although in reality there was no great disparity in their ages. His face was haggard, and lined with anxiety; his eyes had that furtive, penetrating glance which distinguishes the inveterate gambler. Stranleigh watched his oncoming with amazement.

The Honourable John Hazel had been a member of some of the most exclusive clubs in London, but whether or not Nature had endowed him with any useful talent, he had become notorious as a reckless card-sharper, and quite unscrupulous when it came to obtaining money. No one knew this better than Lord Stranleigh, who had been so often his victim, yet had regarded his losses lightly, and forgiven the Honourable John time and again. But recently this younger son of an ancient and honourable house had committed an unpardonable sin: he had been found out. He had been permitted to resign from all his clubs but one, and from this he was expelled by an organization with a committee not so lenient. After that he disappeared. He was "done for" so far as England was concerned.

"Jack, by all that's wonderful!" cried Lord Stranleigh, as the other approached.

HAZEL stopped, his eyes veiling, as though he held a hand at poker that was unbeatable.

"I haven't the pleasure of knowing you, sir," he said, haughtily.

"I'm glad of that, because I'm Edmund Trevelyan at the moment, and hoped I should meet no one on board who knew me."

"I don't know Edmund Trevelyan, and have no desire to make his acquaintance," returned the other, coldly.

"Quite right, and your wish does you credit. I have no wish to force my friendship on any man. Nevertheless, Jack, time was when I helped you out of a hole, and if occasion arose, I should be glad to do it again."

"You might have prevented my expulsion from the Camperdown Club, had you cared to raise a finger," said the other, sulkily.

"Jack, you're mistaken. I did what I could for you, as in other crises of the same nature. The Committee were adamant; prided themselves on their independence, as if they were a group of blooming Radicals. The House of Lords is n't what it was, Jack, as you may discover when you come into the family title. Indeed, Jack, it has been on my conscience that my urgent advocacy prejudiced your case instead of helping it."

"Well, it does n't matter now," said the other, with a sigh. "I've shaken the dust of England from my feet forever."

"The mud, you mean?"

"Oh, I admit I've wallowed," rejoined the other, ruefully. "We're off, so I must be going," and he moved away from the rail, where the two had been gazing over the side.

"Going? Where are you going?"

"Where I belong. I'm traveling third-class. The moment the steamer gets under way I have no right

on the first cabin deck; before she left I took the liberty of a sight-seer to wander over the ship."

"My dear Jack," said his friend, in a grave voice, "this will never do. You cannot cross the Atlantic in the steerage."

"Oh, I have visited my quarters, and find them comfortable enough; I've been in much worse places lately. Steerage is like everything else maritime — vastly improved since Robert Louis Stevenson took his third-class trip to New York."

"Well, it's a decided change for a luxury-loving person like my friend, the Honourable John Hazel."

"It's very condescending of you to call me your friend," replied the Honourable John, bitterly.

"Condescension be hanged! I'm rather bewildered, that's all, and wish for further particulars. Are you turning over a new leaf, Jack?"

"A new leaf? A thousand of them? I have thrown away the old book, with its blotches and ink-stains. I'm starting a blank volume that I hope will bear the inspection of even the Camperdown Committee."

"What's the programme?"

"I don't quite know; it will depend on circumstances. But I think it's the West for me. It seems to offer the only life I'm at all equipped for. I can ride, and shoot reasonably straight."

"Is there any money in your inside pocket?" asked Stranleigh.

"How could there be?"

"Then you'd better let me grub-stake you; I believe that is the correct Western term."

"As how, for instance?"

"I'll secure you a comfortable cabin; you can pay the damage when you make a 'strike' out West, so there's no humiliating condescension about the offer."

"It's very good of you, Stranleigh, but I can't dress the part."

"OH, that's easily arranged," said Stranleigh.

"Ponderby always overdresses me. His idea of the world is, there is only London; the rest of the planet is a wilderness. You could n't persuade him that a decent suit might be made in New York, any more than that I am the worst-dressed man in London. We are about the same height and build. Ponderby will have in my mountainous luggage anywhere from twenty-five to forty suits never yet worn by me, and he will feel as much pleasure in rigging you out as he took in the crowning of the new King."

"It's very good of you, Stranleigh, but I can't accept."

"I am pleading for Ponderby's sake," urged the other. "Besides, there's a point you have overlooked. If you attempt to land from the steerage — traveling under an assumed name, I suppose —"

"As you are yourself."

"I own the name Trevelyan," returned Stranleigh in an even tone. "As I was saying, if you attempt to land, shabbily dressed and almost penniless, you will find yourself turned back as an undesirable alien, whereas you can go ashore from the first cabin unquestioned, save for those amazing queries the U. S. Government puts to one, the answers to which Ponderby will be charmed to write out for you."

Hazel, without reply, walked back to the rail, leaned his arms on it, and fell into deep thought. Stranleigh followed him. (Continued on Page 12)

