

THE LAST VOYAGE OF THE DONNA ISABEL

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SYNOPSIS.

The story opens with the introduction of John Stephens, adventurer, a Manna-chistic man marooned by authorities at Valparaiso, Chile. Being interested in mining operations in Bolivia, he was denounced by Chile as an insurrectionist and as a consequence was hiding. At his hotel his attention was attracted by an Englishman and a young woman. Stephens rescued the young woman from a drunken officer. He was thanked by her. Admiral of the Peruvian navy encountered Stephens, told him that war had been declared between Chile and Peru and offered him the office of captain. He learned that that night the Esmeralda, a Chilean vessel, should be captured. Stephens accepted the commission. Stephens met a motley crew, to which he was assigned. He gave them final instructions.

CHAPTER IV.—Continued.

"Secret! It has been as ze devil drovo," snarled "Ze last was sandel-wood in ze South seas. I care little, so ze pay be good."

"Then we'll get down to facts," and I sat back in the chair fronting the two of them. "Mr. Tuttle, how many men have you enlisted for this affair?"

"Twenty."

"Those fellows out yonder?" and I nodded toward the closed door. He exhibited his feline teeth, his eyes narrowing.

"They'll be about all ye'll want to tackle, I guess," he volunteered, with some assumption of cheerfulness, "unless maybe you decide to turn this expedition into piracy, an' give 'em half the spoils. They're that sort, all right."

I straightened back in my chair, my jaws set hard, my gaze endeavoring vainly to catch and hold his shifty eye.

"Mr. Tuttle," I said, sternly, "as I understand matters I am captain this cruise, and you're mate. Whenever I desire your advice I'll probably ask for it. Just at present please confine yourself to my questions. What crew have you?"

The expression of his face was angry enough, yet he evidently thought best to answer civilly.

"First and second officers, boatswain and gunner, five coal-heavers, the rest seamen."

"Nationality?"

"Every mongrel race under the sky."

"You have no engineer?"

"Couldn't pick up any; however, there's one on board, and, no doubt, we can persuade him to stick to the job."

The man's manner and tone remained surly and insolent, but I stifled my indignation and held back the hot words burning my tongue. It was necessary that I make the best of it now, but after we were once safely at sea I intended very shortly to take the measure of this Yankee whaleman. My eyes wandered toward the olive-tinted face of De Nova, barely visible through the enveloping smoke of his cigarette. The latter nodded cheerfully, as though he interpreted my thought.

"Oh, so men was all right, Monsieur," he put in, smilingly. "Maybe a bit rough, but, sure, w'at would you?" his shoulders rising to the question. "Mr. Tuttle he grumble, but it was all bark. I know him, so I know how he'll see you. You hear him talk to ze spirits; w'en he do zat, it make me sick, by golly!"

"You blathering, mougeful laddie," the whaleman's nasal voice rising shrill with anger. "I don't have to count boards in order to lift my soul to the other world."

There is liable to be fighting enough before morning," I interposed, sharply, fearing a quarrel, "without comrades falling out about their beliefs. Leave that for lubbers ashore to argue over. Now tell me what arrangements have been made for boarding the Esmeralda?"

Tuttle spat into the sawdust, his gaze still on De Nova.

"Two boats concealed beneath the piling of the Mercantile Company's coal wharf; a whaleboat and a cutter."

"Any arms?"

"A dozen rifles, six in each boat." I arose to my feet, glancing at my watch in the dim light. He had not given me the customary "sit" in any of his replies, yet I ignored the omission, willing for the time being to sink formality for the sake of action.

"Very well, Mr. Tuttle. Have your men there in an hour from now. They had better travel in parties of two; and see that they start out sober. You understand these orders clearly, I hope, sit—have them there in an hour, sober. De Nova, you must know how to bring sail-teams to their senses; get busy with that gang. Now work rapidly and quietly, both of you, for if we get caught, this is likely to be a hanging matter for all of us."

I stared at the two of them for just an instant—De Nova on his feet, Tuttle leaning forward in his chair—and stepped forth into the outer room, closing the door behind me. A drunken yell greeted my reentrance



The Two of Us Were on the Sand, Grappling Like Wild Cats.

into the boisterous crowd, but ignoring everything, glancing neither to right nor left, I picked my way through the motley gathering out into the welcome blackness of the night.

CHAPTER V.

In Which We Gain the Deck.

I paused a moment amid the dense shadows to reflect more carefully upon some of the details of our night's work. For the first time I clearly realized the desperate nature of this adventure upon which I was so recklessly embarked. Could we once attain the yacht's deck unobserved and make our attack with unobtrusive swiftness to prevent the discharge of firearms, the rest might be accomplished without great risk of discovery, barring some unexpected mishap. The very audacity of such an attempt was strongly in our favor. If we succeeded in stealthily warping the Esmeralda beyond range of the guns of the shore batteries all real and immediate danger would be over. Probably not a war vessel in the harbor had steam up, and, if they did, no Chilean warship could hope to overhaul us when once fairly at sea.

I gave the personnel of the crew Tuttle had collected brief consideration. They were no rougher than I should naturally expect men to be who were volunteering for such a task. Besides, Jack ashore and Jack at sea are two widely differing personalities; once sobered and on shipboard, steadied somewhat by the perils of their position, and exhilarated by the promised reward, they would doubtless prove efficient enough. Tuttle might require a lesson in sea etiquette, and, if he did, I felt perfectly confident of my ability to administer it promptly and forcibly. As for De Nova, I had no doubt that he would prove himself a good man. So, altogether, my spirits rose as I thus contemplated a definite plan of action.

The movement on the water was only the merest ripple, with the riding lights of the various ships at anchor reflected back as from a giant mirror. Two vessels, a full-rigged ship and a small schooner, lay close in shore, apparently deserted, their decks gloomy wastes, their bare spars sticking up skeleton-like and ghostly. Farther out, and somewhat to the left, a yellow lantern, perhaps in the bow of a guardboat, bobbed about, zig-zagging here and there like some erratic star. It was some time before I could locate with any certainty the particular vessel I sought. The harbor was littered with sea craft of every description, and my knowledge regarding the Esmeralda was most meager, being merely her point of anchorage, and that she was a large steam-yacht, schooner rigged.

Finally, into the focus of the leveled glasses there crept indistinctly the delicate tracery of her bow, rendered more plainly visible beneath the green radiance of her riding lamp. Lights were showing faintly through several portholes amidships, certain proof that she was not entirely deserted, yet the cabins aft were dark, and the only moving figure I could distinguish with certainty was slowly pacing back and

forth along the lee rail of the poop. Suddenly, out from the enveloping smudge, came a shower of sparks and a red glare, and, a moment later, I traced the outlines of a steam launch cleaving the black water. It quickly vanished behind the fog wreaths hanging to seaward, the faint sound of its churning dying away, leaving the silent loneliness behind more solemnly impressive than ever. Only from off the land came echoing the noises of men—the loud vivas, the reiterated boom of explosives, the ceaseless blare of bands.

The scene became oppressive in its barrenness, and I felt the need of movement to overcome its weakening effect upon the nerves. This was to be a night of action, not of dreams, so I groped my uncertain path back along the littered wharf and around the curve of the shore line, beneath the gloomy shadows of coal sheds. Of lights there were comparatively none, if I except the uncertain glimmer of rockets along the water's surface, and I was consequently compelled to feel my way from object to object like a blinded man. Still, the course was sufficiently familiar so that I successfully maintained both footing and direction, finally emerging safely close beside the spot appointed for our rendezvous. There was considerable open space here, the Mercantile Company's sheds standing some 30 feet back of the shore line, and their wharf for the unloading of barges extending more than 50 feet out into the harbor.

I could dimly perceive a great crane at the farther extremity, with dangling buckets, outlined against the sky. The night was too dark for me to decipher the face of my watch, yet it could not now be long before the arrival of the men. I crouched down beside a post to await their coming, once again searching the harbor with my night-glasses.

The company at last arrived by twos from out the enveloping gloom, silently grouping themselves amid the shadows. I could distinguish an occasional gruff cough, and the shuffling of feet, but there was no sound of conversation or hilarity. Evidently De Nova had sufficiently sobered them to their duty. At last one man detached himself from among the crowd and moved stealthily forward. I met him at the shore end of the wharf, peered into his face, half-concealed beneath the visor of his cap, until I recognized the fellow.

"Crew all here, Mr. Tuttle?"

"Yes, sir," he answered, startled by my sudden appearance into courteous response, "but mighty uneasy to be off."

"They shall not be delayed. Get the boats out at once. You are to take charge of the whaleboat and I will accompany De Nova in the cutter. Fall silently to the end of the wharf and lie by there to await instructions. Do your men understand the boats they are assigned to?"

"Ay, ay, sir."

"Very well, then; get the boats out, and the crews aboard. Not a sound, remember, for there are guards patrolling the harbor."

I must confess this preparatory work was well and smartly accomplished,

the men the merest silent shadows as they hauled the two hidden boats forth from concealment and quietly took their assigned places at the oars. Tuttle's crew was first afloat, De Nova experiencing some difficulty from attempting to lead too near shore, in somewhat shallow water.

"Drop overboard, two of you, and shove off," I ordered, finally. "Lively now, lads, but no splashing."

The two fellows in the stern lowered themselves into the shallow water, bending down so as to put their shoulders against the planks for a heave. Suddenly, not three feet distant, a smudge of shadow uplifted, and I became conscious of a pallid human face gleaming faintly through the dark. Instantly I leaped toward it, with such force as to send the heavily laden boat swirling forward, the heaving men plunging face downward into the water. There was a startled exclamation in Spanish, a short-arm blow shot into a dimly revealed, half-familiar face, a fierce grip at the throat, and the two of us were on the sand, grappling like wild cats. Out of the water, dripping from their bath, the two seamen came to my aid, and, between us, we pinned the fellow to helpless silence.

"Toss him into the boat," I said, panting from exertion. "He will be safer with us than left ashore."

It appeared even darker out on the water than when we looked off upon it from the land, but, with a few cautious strokes, we discovered the smudge which represented Tuttle's whaleboat, and drew up within an oar's length of where he lay waiting.

"Mr. Tuttle," I began, speaking slowly and concisely so that the men in both boats could hear, "this is going to be no boy's play to-night, and I expect implicit obedience to my orders. Do exactly what I tell you and no more. You know the situation of the Esmeralda, and I want you to put your whaleboat in under her bow. If you keep a point east of north you can scarcely miss it. There is a lumping big brigantine anchored 100 feet beyond, with only a single light showing on her foremast. If you come up under her shadow you are not likely to be seen before you drift down against the Esmeralda's cutter. Make use of the anchor-chain, and get half a dozen men quietly over the fore-castle rail. Don't move from there until you receive some signal from me. Then

clap down the fore-castle scuttle, and make straight for the engine room. That will comprise the entire duty of your crew; and, above all things, let it be accomplished silently. Don't permit one of your men to carry a loaded firearm. Use blaying pins, if you need to, or a marlin-spike, but no guns. De Nova and I will go in by way of the stern, and we will be responsible for the after-deck and the bridge. Has any one a question to ask?"

There was no response, the only sounds audible being the soft lapping of the water and the deep breathing of the men. I could distinguish them leaning eagerly forward, but the faces were unrecognizable in the gloom.

"You understand clearly?"

"Ay, ay, Mr. Stephens," and Tuttle's nasal voice had completely lost all its former trace of insolence.

"Then pull away slowly and noiselessly; don't hurry; we'll give you plenty of time to get in. Good-by, and good luck to you."

The balanced cars dipped gently into the water, scarcely rippling it, and the sharp-stemmed whaleboat slid away into the surrounding blackness like a ghost.

"All right now, De Nova," I whispered. "I'll go forward about a point and watch out for signals."

We slipped through the water silently, the sound of the dipping oar-blades little more audible than the suppressed breathing of the oarsmen. Confident that if any eyes were watching from the deck they were not likely to be directed astern, we made wide detour, creeping cautiously in beneath the slight bulge of the yacht's side, until the fellow behind me fastened his boathook firmly into the after-chains. Breathlessly we waited listening, but no sound reached us other than the slight hiss of escaping steam.

"Hold hard!" I whispered, the word passing back from man to man. "Two remain with the boat, the rest follow me."

I crept silently up into the chains and peered cautiously over onto the open deck. It was wrapped in darkness and silence, the sole gleam of revealing light coming from out the open main-hatch, and that only the merest glimmer slightly illuminating the ship amidships. There was a lump afloat in the after-cabin, but the shades were drawn so closely I could scarcely perceive its presence. I became aware that De Nova stood beside me.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

At the National Capital

Gossip of People and Events
Gathered in Washington

Ex-Senator Wilson's Joke on New York



WASHINGTON, D. C.—Former Senator John L. Wilson of the state of Washington was one of the most peppery members of congress that ever sat in either house. Mr. Wilson's reputation extends over both sides of the capitol, he having served in the Fifty-first congress in the house as the first representative from the then new state of Washington, and in 1895 he was elected to the senate, where he served one term. Mr. Wilson is now the owner of the Seattle Post-Intelligencer, and at the same time is heavily interested in Washington state industries and real estate.

While in Washington recently, Mr. Wilson delivered himself of some astounding facts with respect to the

resources of the state of Washington and the general attitude of its people toward the question of conservation. "The issue of conservation with us is merely the question of the removal of friction between the national government and the state," said Mr. Wilson.

"When Gov. Hughes of New York came out to see our fair at Seattle he made a speech in which he said that we of the west would probably be surprised to know that the state of New York had set aside 1,000,000 acres of land for a forest reserve. It fell to me to reply to the speech of the governor and I told him that we were indeed surprised that anybody in the state of New York would let that much get away from him. Then I told the governor that if the forest reserves of the state of Washington were placed side by side in one contiguous body of land the entire Empire state of New York could not only be put down in the middle of it, but a man could walk around the boundaries of the forest reserve and still be unable to see the boundary of the state of New York."

Threat to Blow Up the U. S. Senate



MEMBERS of the United States senate showed more than ordinary interest in the report from Chicago that a newspaper in that city had received a letter from a man signing himself "C. Hodges," declaring he intends to blow up the upper branch of congress with nitro-glycerin.

Some of the insurgents are hoping that "C. Hodges" will put off the painful operation until they have had an opportunity of "surging." Senator Tillman says he hopes to be in South Carolina when the blow off comes.

"C. Hodges" wrote that physicians had given him but six months to live, and that at first he had intended taking morphine to end his existence quickly. He changed his plans, he said, when he read an article charging that corruption existed in the senate, and he determined to blow up the body with nitro-glycerin and kill himself at the same time.

The letter follows: "To the Editor in Chief: I am going to blow up the congress with nitro-glycerin. My only reason for giving you this

information is that I do not wish to injure or kill innocent people.

"Don't think my opening remarks are a joke or threats emanating from a diseased brain. I mean business, as you will find out later.

"This dishonorable body called the United States senate has plundered the public long enough, and it's time something was done to learn them a lesson—one they will remember for some time to come.

"The physicians inform me that I can only live about six months as I am suffering with incurable internal trouble and nothing will save me.

"I intended taking morphine and ending my existence until reading an article giving the history of the senate and its corruption.

"It determined me to change my plans on self-destruction for the time being and plot how I will wipe out the gang of grafters and also end my miserable life also.

"I have secured enough nitro-glycerin to blow up h—l, and God help the so-called detectives who try to stop me.

"I know the people won't appreciate my sacrifice in their behalf, but later on they will say that my act was a just punishment.

"There is no use of going into details; I leave this to your judgment, use it as you see fit.

"I will not write you again, but wait for results that are going to happen. Yours, "C. HODGES."

Peary and Family Dug Out of a Drift



WASHINGTON.—Commander Robert E. Peary, U. S. A. N., who sledged to the north pole and back about a year after Dr. Cook of Brooklyn made the trip on the Imagination Limited, had an arctic experience a few nights ago within seven miles of Washington that was almost as bad in some respects as anything he experienced in latitude 90 or thereabouts.

As a result of the unique adventure the explorer was inconvenienced for several days.

"I ab nod sure," he told a friend, "bud I thig I took good. By doze id all dubbed up. Aid id sidy?"

Bound for Dinner Party.

Commander Peary, Mrs. Peary and Mrs. Peary's sister were on their way to keep an eight o'clock dinner engagement at the country home of Ralph P. Barnard, son of Justice Job Barnard of the supreme court of the District of Columbia. The taxicab in which they were riding skidded,

backed a couple of times, and hopped off the road into a six-foot snowdrift. The chauffeur managed to keep his seat, but the Pearys involuntary assembled in one corner of the vehicle.

"Heavens!" thundered the explorer. He also made further comments that escaped reproof during the excitement.

"This seems quite natural and home-like," he added, without noticeable enthusiasm. "I observe that we are in latitude 7.50, longitude 5:15 p. m. You folks sit here while I conduct a relief expedition of one."

Whereupon the commander, although in evening garb and wearing low-cut patent leathers, started off across country in the direction of the nearest light.

The next day he intimated in nasal tones that it was one of the meanest trips he ever made. He plowed and wallowed through drifts of snow that sometimes reached his knees, sometimes his vest, and, on one memorable occasion, his shoulders.

The explorer knocked at several doors before he arrived at the hospitable home of Mr. Barnard, where the work of digging out the taxicab took more than an hour, and the Pearys and the other guests sat down to a dried up eight o'clock dinner at half past ten o'clock.

Servian King Wants an American Heiress



WHERE is Count Pablo Mysky Tre-skaya, also known as Capt. Kardoff? He is supposed by his friends in Washington to be in Chicago in the interest of the Karageorgevitch family, which now sits on the Servian throne, and is planning to marry into money. A rich Chicago bride for future queen of Servia would be just about what King Peter would like.

Both sons of King Peter are preparing to travel early in the new year, and the itinerary includes a two months' stay in the United States, unless the agent's report makes it inadvisable. One of them will succeed to the throne. Count Tre-skaya is a mysterious stranger, about whom

Washington's ultra-exclusive set has been talking. Upon his appearance here he was believed to be a secret agent for some Balkan nation.

Now it turns out that King Peter commissioned him to come to this country and report what opportunity his two sons might have toward making an alliance with American girls.

Servia does not maintain a diplomatic representative in Washington, and this may have made the count's business difficult to transact. He is well supplied with funds by the house of Morgan, Harjes & Co., the Paris branch of J. P. Morgan & Co.

A report that the Servian princess want to marry American girls reached Washington last spring. Czar Nicholas, Emperor Francis Joseph and King George of Greece tried to plan an alliance for the sons of King Peter, but none of these would consider an alliance with any prince to whom they were individually related.

This is why the prince will seek to marry merely money.