

THE LAST VOYAGE OF THE DONNA ISABEL

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SYNOPSIS.

The story opens with the introduction of John Stephens, an adventurer, a Massachusetts man, stationed 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 then ordered to leave the country. Stephens, confronted by the Peruvian navy, was declared between Chile and Peru and offered him the office of captain. He accepted that night the Esmeralda, a Chilean vessel, should be captured. Stephens accepted the commission. Stephens met a motley crew, to which he was assigned, and gave them final instructions. They boarded the vessel. They successfully captured the vessel supposed to be the Esmeralda, through strategy. Capt. Stephens gave directions for the departure of the craft. He entered the cabin and discovered the English woman and her maid. Stephens quickly learned the wrong vessel had been captured. It was Lord Darlington's private yacht, the lord's wife and maid being aboard. He explained the situation to her ladyship. Then First Mate Tuttle laid bare the plot, saying that the Sea Queen had been taken in order to go to the Antarctic circle. Tuttle explained that on a former voyage he had learned that the Donna Isabel was lost in 1793. He had found it frozen in a huge case of ice on an island and contained much gold. Stephens consented to be the captain of the expedition. He told Lady Darlington. She was greatly alarmed, but expressed confidence in him. The Sea Queen encountered a vessel in the fog. Stephens attempted to communicate. This caused a fierce struggle and he was overcome. Tuttle finally squaring the situation. Then the Sea Queen headed south again. Under Tuttle's guidance the vessel made progress toward its goal. De Nova, the mate, told Stephens that he believed Tuttle, now acting as skipper, insane because of his queer actions. Stephens was awakened by crashing of glass. He saw Tuttle in the grip of a spasm of religious mania and overcame him. The sailor upon regaining his senses was taken ill.

CHAPTER XVI.

In Which I Again Come to Command.

Dade awoke me, the gray light of the Antarctic day streaming in through the porthole.

"I pounded on the door twice, sir," he explained, quickly, "but you was asleepin' so hard I had to come in. Somethin' 's gone wrong in Mr. Tuttle's stateroom, sir."

"Wrong! what do you mean?"

"Well, sir a gun went off in there just now, an'—"

I was already upon my feet, pulling on my clothes.

"Run up on deck and ask De Nova to come down here at once. Lively now, my lad."

The two had already reached the foot of the companion stairs when I came out, and Dade had evidently made the situation clear to the mind of the crew.

"Have you been in here, monsieur?" he asked, anxiously.

"No, not yet, but I fear the worst, and thought it would be better for us to go together. Stand by, Dade, for we may need you."

The ex-whaleman was lying on the floor in a curled-up heap, a revolver resting beside him, perhaps a foot from his hand. The pungent odor of powder was still in the room. We turned him over, revealing a bullet wound just in front of the ear. Beyond all doubt he had shot himself while sitting upon the edge of the bunk, and had tumbled forward, dead before he struck the deck. I glanced toward De Nova, who stood staring silently down at the dead man, and at Dade, almost yellow with terror, peering cautiously in through the open door.

"He is beyond further trouble," I said, solemnly. "The poor devil. Help me lift him back into his berth."

Dade held aloof, but De Nova took hold with me, and together we straightened out the body, covering it decently with a sheet. Then we passed out into the main cabin and closed the door.

"What sort of weather have we outside, Mr. De Nova?" I questioned, endeavoring to quell the beating of my heart.

"Clear an' cool, monsieur, ze win' nor'west."

"Then we are holding our course?"

"Oui, oui," gesticulating, "but w'at we do now? w'at we do now?"

"Well, that depends entirely upon you and the crew." I returned, shortly. "Mr. Tuttle is dead, beyond recall. I am the only competent navigator left on board. For the sake of my own life, as well as the safety of those women in our care, I propose assuming command. Have you anything to say?"

The crew stood motionless, grasping the edge of the table, his black eyes still fastened on Tuttle's closed door.

"Well, you had better decide," I went on, stoutly, "and anyway the only thing for us to do is to put this matter straight before the crew. Keep quiet about what has happened until after breakfast—you, too, Dade—and then have the whole crew piped aft. Go on about your work until then, and keep your tongues still."

I sat down on the divan, watching Dade as he bustled about from the table to the pantry, ever casting furtive glances toward the silent stateroom in which the dead man lay.



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"To H— I Wid That Sort o' Rot, Mr. Stephens—We're Sailor-Men."

Finally I got up, and, to Dade's horror, re-entered the mate's room, returning with the chart upon which our course had been pricked up until noon of the previous day, and spread it out across my knees. I was still engaged in studying it when Lady Darlington, fully dressed, emerged from her cabin. She touched me before I was even aware of her presence.

"Is Mr. Tuttle still ill?" she questioned, anxiously, "and have you been on duty all night?"

"The first officer is dead," I answered, and made her sit down beside me. "I will tell you all the facts."

She listened silently, her breath quickened from excitement, her face colorless. I dwelt upon the man's mental condition, his ghostly hallucinations, my discovery of him in the main cabin, and his final mad act of self-destruction. The very relating of the tragic story served to clear my own mind and strengthen my resolve.

"What—what will this mean to us?" she questioned, her lips trembling. "Will it release us from our bondage? Will it result in abandoning this crazy search after treasure?"

"Honestly I do not know, Lady Darlington," I acknowledged with reluctance. "The present attitude of the crew remains to be discovered. Practically we are as helpless as before. My one advantage lies in the fact that I am the only navigator on board. Yet they have power to compel me to do their will. I cannot battle against them alone."

"But you no longer believe in Tuttle's story?"

"I never have really believed it. But this is not a question of what I believe; it all hangs upon the faith of the men forward."

"But if they realize he was insane, surely they must also decide that his treasure ship was likewise a delusion."

I shook my head, gravely doubting her conclusion.

"I regret to say I possess no such expectation. The average sailor, Lady Darlington, is not given to reasoning; he is more a creature of impulse. I fear we are already too close to our goal to now be turned back by the mate's death. The men will insist on completing the voyage. I intend to have the entire crew piped aft after breakfast, and will talk to them. I wish you to go on deck with me at the time, and hear all that is said."

I paused, intently watching the expression of her face. "Whatever decision I may be driven to, I hope it will not forfeit me your respect."

"Oh, no."

"You will retain confidence in me, even if the bow of the Sea Queen continues to point southward?"

She lifted her gray eyes to mine in unshaded frankness.

"Whatever you think best, Mr. Stephens, I shall believe to be right," she responded, softly. "Will my trust help you?"

"It is the one thing needed," Thus armed I can fight it out."

The meal following was far from cheerful, although the bright sun streamed down through the deck transom to fall in golden bars along the table, as our thoughts would constantly recur to that silent figure lying in the near-by bunk, while our conversation was largely about him, and the consequences of his death.

Finally, bidding both mistress and maid prepare themselves for an early call to the deck, I went forward to the bridge, relieving De Nova while he descended to the main cabin for his breakfast. The crew had already completed their meal and swarmed out of the forecabin, apparently aware that something was in the wind. I noticed big Bill Anderson circulating among the various groups, talking earnestly, and felt convinced the crew was endeavoring to settle upon some united course of action. Brutal and unlearned as he was, the boatswain was a thorough sea-lawyer, understanding well how to influence his mates, and with enough at stake in this game to render him desperate. The second mate joined me.

"Call all hands aft, Mr. De Nova," I said, after a glance into his face, "every man Jack of them, except the two at the wheel. I will talk to them from the rail."

I took my position there, with Lady Darlington and Celeste close at hand, but somewhat sheltered under the lee of the longboat from the stinging wind. The herd came shuffling aft, and ranged themselves awkwardly enough on the open deck. De Nova cast his eyes over them, counting, then climbed the short ladder and joined me.

"His here, monsieur." Then lowered his voice. "Mapes was dead in ze fo'c'astle."

"Mapes! Oh, he was the man who fell from the foreyard?"

"Oui, an' it all makes ze crew feel scare."

I glanced at the group, and around at the stern vision of sea. Altogether it formed a dismal, disheartening picture—the men, bundled up in their heavy clothing, stamping their feet on the deck, their ragged beards forking out, their eyes gleaming beneath the peaks of woolen caps drawn low, shuffling impatiently, and occasionally moving over to the rail to spit; the yacht, long battered by the seas, stripped of every unnecessary adornment, her hatches battened down, her funnel rusty, her sails close reefed, her forward deck a sheet of glistening ice, the sharp wind whistling through the frozen rigging as she staggered through a cold, gray, wintry sea, straining and groaning in every timber as the gleaming surges struck her quarter and the relentless wheel held her to the course. The whole view photographed itself indelibly upon my mind, and I clung to the rail, gazing

CHOOSE YOUNG MEN

CHANGE IN POLICY OF RAILROAD DIRECTORS.

Veterans Are Being Superseded and a New Generation Has Arisen—The "Youngsters" Seem to Be Making Good.

This is the day of the young man in the railroad profession. Recent changes in the executive organization of several of the leading western railroads—and they have been far more frequent during the last few months than usual—have demonstrated this conclusively.

Taking no account for the present of the causes which have led so many of the principal railroad systems to reorganize the personnel of their executive officers, one prominent tendency has been manifest throughout. The old war horses of the railroad game, who have spent their lives in the service, and who by their efforts have made the American transportation system what it is, as well as having been responsible in a measure for what it is not, have stepped aside, and their places have been filled with men of lesser years, just as the battle scarred furniture of their sanctuaries has been replaced with new mahogany.

And the new men seem to be making good, as far as can be judged from the achievements of those whose promotion to leadership has not been of too recent date. No one is claiming that they are made of better timber than their predecessors, but they seem to be able to arrive sooner.

They have had opportunities for education, not always school education, but access to the ideas of others not possessed by the pioneers, each of whom had to blaze his own trail without the guidance of custom or precedent, and often without knowledge of what his fellow workers in the same lines of endeavor were doing or had already accomplished.

Another characteristic is noticeable in the new officers as in the new furniture. They seem to be smoother, more polished and brilliant, and much of their training has been along the lines of diplomacy. The "public be damned" theory is not dead, but where it exists the theorists who still hold to it are wise enough to keep it buried as deep as possible. Where the previous generation of railroad chiefs was wont to get what it wanted or thought it ought to have by any means that offered, and while it had not time for palaver in an emergency, the newer set of railroad officials proceeds along different lines, preferring to gain its ends by co-operation with the public and by less strenuous methods.—Chicago Tribune.

WINS HIGH POSITION



E. O. McCormick.

The appointment of two vice-presidents of the Southern Pacific railroad—E. O. McCormick of Chicago and William F. Herrin of San Francisco, has been announced. Both have their headquarters in San Francisco, according to a Chicago dispatch.

Mr. McCormick has been in Chicago since 1904, as assistant director of traffic of the Southern and Union Pacific, under J. C. Stubbs. He came to Chicago from San Francisco, where he had been passenger traffic manager of the Southern Pacific for a number of years. His elevation to the vice-presidency of the road was greeted with many expressions of pleasure by those of his associates in the railroad world who heard of it.

As vice-president of the Southern Pacific Mr. McCormick will have supervision of all the traffic, both passenger and freight, on the Pacific system, embracing the lines in California, Arizona, New Mexico, Nevada, Utah and Oregon, and will report to the director of traffic, Mr. Stubbs.

Mr. McCormick began his railroad career in 1878, in the general offices of the Lake Erie & Western at Lafayette, Ind. Later he was employed in the freight department of the Monon road at the same place. In 1889 he was appointed general passenger agent of the Cincinnati, Hamilton & Dayton, where he remained for 14 years, leaving to become passenger traffic manager of the Big Four at Cincinnati.

Six years later he attracted the attention of E. H. Harriman, and was sent by him to San Francisco as passenger traffic manager of the Southern Pacific. Since then he has been constantly with the Harriman lines, coming to Chicago in 1904 as assistant traffic director of the Union Pacific, Oregon Short line, Oregon Railway and Navigation Company and the Southern Pacific system.

Mr. Herrin, also made a vice-president, will have supervision of the legal and land departments and the corporate organizations of the Pacific systems, and the financial business of the company in California, and will report to the president.

ATTORNEY IN ODD POSITION

Employed to Sue Railroad Company First for Whistling and Then for Not Whistling.

On a trip one day in Kansas, Stewart Taylor, Kansas City attorney, ran across "Joe" Waters, a Topeka lawyer, at Alma.

"What are you doing here?" Taylor asked.

"Well, I've got a couple of suits against the Santa Fe," the Topeka man, who is a brother of L. H. Waters of Kansas City, answered. "I'm going to collect damages from the road once for whistling and once for not whistling."

"I don't quite get that," Taylor said.

"Well, it's this way. There's an engineer on this run who used to court a girl in this town. His suit didn't prosper somehow, the girl choosing to remain a maid. She owns a little place on the outskirts of the town, close to the railroad tracks, and lives there. It seems his rejection stirred up the acid in the engineer's disposition, and every time he takes his train past the house of his former sweetheart he lets a shriek out of the whistle. Sometimes he'd even stop the train to prolong it until he could feel sure she had a headache. She stood it until she was a nervous wreck and then sued the railroad for damages."

"The other suit against the road concerns the same engineer. He must have been saving up his steam to let off in front of the house of his spite, because he neglected to blow the whistle one day when he approached a crossing just outside of town here and ran down a farmer's wagon, killing a horse. The owner brought suit and gave me the case; so here I am to make the company pay for whistling and for not whistling."

RAILROADING IN THE ANDES

American Engineers and Conductors. But They Don't Stick to Jobs for Long Periods.

Archer Harman, president of the Guayaquil & Quito railroad, returned from Ecuador to New York and reported to Ned York great progress in the building of the road, 300 miles of which was completed in 1909. The road connects Guayaquil on the coast of Quito, the capital, on the Andes plateau. It is one of the tallest jobs in railroading that has been attempted. The elevation at Cotopaxi pass is 12,500 feet. Most of the engineers and conductors are Americans, but they do not stay long in the employment of the company, being of a roving disposition. Their places after they think they have made enough money to go wandering again, are filled by other rovers. About ninety per cent of the workers on the road outside of the engineers and conductors are natives. The speed of trains on the plains is sometimes between 40 and 50 miles, and in the passes about 12 miles.

Has "Fresh Air" Cars.

The Erie railroad has provided one car in some of its suburban trains for those who object to the steam heat and stuffy atmosphere of the regular cars. The cars carry signs reading "Fresh Air," and are started out with the doors, ventilators and alternate side windows wide open. Any person riding in these cars is privileged to close the window next to him, but has no right to insist on the closing of other ventilation openings. The will of the majority of those who ride in the cars will control the turning on of the steam, which may be wanted in very cold weather. Those who find the cars too cold can always move to other cars in the trains. This, it is considered, is a novel but sensible way of solving the vexatious problem of heating and ventilating cars.

To Learn American Methods.

One of the big Brazilian railroads has just perfected a plan by which it will send four of its mechanics to the United States every six months and put them at work in some of our big railroad shops so that they may become familiar with American methods.

Hub—Would you like to see women voters at the polls?

Nob—Yes, indeed. At the north and south poles.—Sewanee Tiger.