THE LAST VOYAGE OF THE DONNA ISABEL

BY RANDALL PARRISH
AUTHOR OF BOB HAMPTON OF PLACER, ETC.

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SYNOPSIS.

The story opens with the introduction of John Stephens, adventurer, a Massachusetts man marooned by authorities at Valparaiso, Chile. Being interested in mining operations in Bolivia, he was deported by Chile as an insurrectionist and as a consequence was idling. 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 confronted Stephens, told him that war had been declared between Chile and Peru and offered him the office of captain. He desired 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. 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 1753. 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.

"Oh, God! There's Another!. Another, But I'll Kill That One, Too.!"

CHAPTER XV.—Continued.

The slight change of voice perceptible in this final sentence might have excused the utterance of the question trembling on my lips, yet I set my teeth, and remained silent.

"It is odd how our lives are influenced," she continued, thoughtfully. "I feel that the charm of the sea has been the one great impelling force which has molded mine. I wonder is it destined always to be so? Are these waters even now bearing me on as Fate wills? Ever since I can remember I have permitted the ocean to take that place in my heart which, perhaps, should be otherwise occupied. It has been my master, my strongest love. But I must not think this, much less say it," hastily awakening, and pointing forward. "See, Mr. Stephens, how those clouds and the waters blend yonder in such fantastic forms; they appear an army of sheeted ghosts bearing down to block our passage into the Polar sea."

I looked in the direction indicated, scarcely noting the phenomena, but wondering what was the real meaning concealed behind her veiled utterance. In truth Lady Darlington was not a woman easily interpreted. She was by no means a creature of moods, yet behind her effort at outward cheerfulness I was constantly aware of something hidden, some haunting memory of the past, more to be dreaded even than her present environment.

Sometimes I even thought she deliberately played with me; yet this was not so. There was nothing of the coquette in her nature, nothing of purposeful deceit in either words or action, and I cast the unworthy thought from me with the indignation it deserved. Still, her method was most strange, most peculiar. Indeed, she was like two women, ever keeping me on the qui vive, alive with expectancy, yet never quite bringing to me that open-heartedness I so much desired. One second, as though by purest accident, I looked down into her soul; the next I saw nothing but the outer covering. Without in the least meaning to be so she became a teasing puzzle, an enigma of womanhood, before whom I was beginning to worship, unable to analyze even my own feelings, half-hopeful, half-afraid.

Hence it was that on this day I remained leaning against the piano, listening to her really brilliant execution of difficult music, gazing down upon her unconscious face, the swing of the deck under my feet, but with a heavy heart behind the smile upon my lips. The music finally ceased, yet we lingered there conversing over the memory aroused by its rendition, when Tuttle emerged from his room, prepared for his turn of service on deck. He stopped and stared across at us, his hand on the knob of the closed door.

"Such songs are most unseemly under our present circumstances," he said, solemnly, apparently addressing the lady only, for his glance never met mine. "In presence of death and the hereafter, madam, prayer is the natural outlet of the soul."

Her sympathetic face whitened, the expression of her eyes changing instantly.

"What—what do you mean, Mr. Tuttle? Are we in any special danger?"

"In the midst of life we are in death. What is man that thou art mindful of him, or the Son of Man that thou visitest him? Death rides upon the wind, races upon the waters. Place not your trust in princes, nor in any of the powers of earth, but upon the mercy of the Most High. Be warned, madam; be prepared for his early coming, for already has it been given unto me to behold the End."

He strode past us, stony-faced, his gaunt form outlined against the gray sky without as he pushed back the companion door. Lady Darlington watched his disappearance with parted lips and eyes filled with fear.

"The fellow has gone crazy over his nihilistic theories," I endeavored to explain. "Do not permit such folly to affect you."

"But—but, Mr. Stephens, he means it, he believes it. What is it he has seen?"

"Some vision of his insanity, no doubt—nothing that need worry us who are sane."

Her fingers pressed tightly upon my hand.

"But if he is really insane how much more dangerous it makes our position! Do you really think he is?"

"Only along that one line, Lady Darlington," my voice growing firm with conviction. "Otherwise he seems as sane as most men. We must humor him to that extent, but regarding all other matters there is no occasion for you to worry. The man is a magnificent seaman, and handles the Sea Queen with remarkable skill. He will bring us out safely, and you must not permit his prophecies of disaster to influence your mind—they are only the ravings of a diseased brain."

I do not know how much of what I said she actually believed, yet as I talked on in apparent confidence her expression gradually changed, and finally I had Celeste bring her wraps, and I escorted her forth upon deck. The fresh, stinging air soon served to drive from her brain the last vestige of terror, although at first she watched Tuttle on the bridge very closely. However, the fellow had left his weird fancies all below, and his sharp orders, coupled with the able manner in which he sailed the vessel, rapidly brought back even my own evaporated faith.

Lady Darlington did not appear again after supper, although Celeste sat in the main cabin and chatted vivaciously with De Nova while he ate. They appeared so deeply engrossed in each other that I finally took my pipe and went on deck, leaving them undisturbed, their laughter echoing to my ears as I slid to the companion door. There was a taste of snow in the wintry air—delicate, scattered, whirling flakes that cut the exposed flesh like needles, while the wind whistled through the frozen rigging in shrill music. The decks were as gloomy and dark as the surrounding sea was desolate and gray, the endless vista of circling water and sky merely merging imperceptibly into the haze of distance—everywhere the white-capped waves frantically chasing each other, crest following crest, the deep hollows between as black as death.

It got upon my nerves at last, and I went below, striving manfully to shake off all memory of the depressing picture. Ten minutes later I was securely braced in my bunk, so soundly sleeping I forgot to dream.

I could never tell what awoke me; some strange noise, no doubt, for I sat straight up, staring through the blackness toward the closed door. Almost at the very instant I heard the smash of glass in the main cabin. I was only partially undressed, and with one spring was at the latch, the fierce pitching of the yacht making me instantly apprehensive of accident. At the first glance I perceived nothing unusual under the dim light, then I saw a man sprawling on the floor in midst of a litter of glass from a broken mirror. I leaped across toward the fellow, twisting my hand into the collar of his pea-jacket, and whirling him face upward to the light. It was Tuttle, and he shrank away from me cowering like a whipped cur, his hands thrust out, his eyes staring. It was an appalling face, ghastly, terror-stricken.

"What is it, Mr. Tuttle?"

"Oh, Christ! Christ!" he shrieked, apparently never seeing me at all, his teeth gnashing, a foam on his lips. "I saw it again—right over there! But I killed that one! I killed that one! It will go back to hell ahead of me! Oh, God! there's another! Another, but I'll kill that one, too!"

Straight toward me he came with the fierce, unexpected leap of a wild animal. Half-dazed I grappled him. It was the contest of man against beast, for he fought clawing and snapping, snarling forth curses. The necessity of saving myself stiffened me to it, and I struck out hastily, landing twice before we came to the grip. It seemed to me he possessed the strength of a dozen men, yet I got my fingers in his neckband, and we went crashing down together on the deck. As we struck he went suddenly limp, his fingers shaking, his eyes staring up dully at the light. I held him thus in my grip an instant, suspecting some trick; then, as he never moved, I drew him up until his shoulders rested against the support of a chair.

"What is it, man?" I questioned, anxiously. "What has happened? Are you sick?"

He made no response, gave not the slightest sign that he even heard me. I poured out a glass of liquor, held it to his lips, and he gulped it down, but seemingly in a stupor.

"Come along," I said, sternly, realizing that my will must dominate his, if I would move him to action. "I am going to take you to your berth, and make you lie down. You are sick, and need rest. Get up, now."

He attempted no resistance as I lifted him, even clinging to the chair for support, his entire body shaking like a jelly fish. I braced him in through the open door, tumbled him over into the bunk, and he lay there, staring straight up with unwinking eyes, his face as yellow as parchment. He was completely dressed for the deck, his pea-jacket buttoned to the chin, his heavy sea-boots on. I loosened the one, drew off the others, shut the door, and left him there alone. It was clear enough he had again beheld the ghost, but how came he to be fully dressed, his clothing still wet with the salt spray? Breathing hard from the exertion, I glanced curiously at my watch to note the hour. Barely two o'clock. Why, it was his trick on deck; he had deserted his position to come below. The Sea Queen was rushing through the gloom with no officer on the bridge. De Nova would be in his bunk asleep. I sprang to my own room, and hastily finished dressing, fully determined on standing out Tuttle's watch on deck. As I came forth again into the main cabin, winding a muffler about my throat, a vision in white fronted me, grasping the table to keep from falling.

"What is it, Mr. Stephens? What has happened?"

"Nothing that need in any way alarm you," and as the vessel gave a sickening plunge, and her eyes opened in apprehension, I caught her arm firmly. "Truly, believe me, there is no danger. Mr. Tuttle has been suddenly taken ill, and I am going to relieve him on watch. You have confidence in me, have you not?"

Her eyes searched my face earnestly, the gray depths full of anxiety.

"Oh, yes."

"Then now is the time to show it. I shall remain on deck, probably, until morning. I wish you to go back, lie down and rest. Let me assist you to return to your stateroom."

I held her closely to me, so closely I could feel the throb of her breathing, the warmth of her flesh, realizing that she was clinging to me in utter forgetfulness. Only at the door did she draw away slightly, yet even then with her hands clasping my arm, her hands clasping my arm, her eyes gazing directly into mine.

"You have told me all?"

"All of the slightest importance; the details can wait daylight. I ask you to confide in me now, and sleep. May I have your promise?"

There was something mystifying in those gray eyes I had never perceived before, and she caught her breath in a quick sob.

"Yes," she replied, simply, her lashes drooping, "you may have my promise."

On deck I discovered the yacht laboring desperately in a heavy cross sea, the sky clear, and two men straining at the wheel. In spite of the starshine, they were so bundled up that I was compelled to stare directly in their faces before I could recognize either.

"Mr. Tuttle has been taken sick and gone to his berth," I explained briefly. "I will serve out his watch. What course have you?"

"Sou'-sou'-east by sou', sir."

I glanced inquiringly at the compass-card, and then forward, sweeping the seas with my glasses. There was no ice in sight, but the bitter cold of the air was sufficient proof of plenty not far away.

"When did Mr. Tuttle go aft?" I asked.

"'Bout 30 minutes ago, sir."

"Did he leave any word?"

"He never said nothin,' did he, Bill? He'd been actin' queer, an' a-talkin' to hisself, an' all at once he ran down the steps, an' went aft. Bill an' I figured it out as how maybe he was cold, an' wanted a drink."

At four o'clock, the sky already beginning to mist as if from thickening frost, I dispatched one of the hands aft to rout out De Nova. He came stumbling up the steps, perhaps ten minutes later, still rubbing the sleep out of his eyes, but became wide awake enough when he recognized me.

"Sacre, w'at was zis, Mons. Stephen? W'ere was ze mate?"

Crouching behind the tarpaulins out of the keen sweep of the wind, I explained in rapid detail what had occurred since he went below.

"It will probably have to be watch and watch with us, De Nova," I ended, firmly. "Tuttle is no longer fit to be left in charge of the deck. You agree to that?"

He shrugged his shoulders.

"By gar, it look like zare was nossing else for it."

"No; it is the only way. Call me at the end of your trick. I'll look in on Tuttle again as I go below."

I did so, discovering him still upon his back, his eyes wide open, staring straight up at the deck-beams above.

"Is there anything I can do for you, Mr. Tuttle?"

He wet his parched lips with his tongue, turning his head ever so slightly at sound of my voice.

"Another drink of brandy," he muttered, thickly. "I don't see what is the matter with my legs; they won't move."

I brought him the liquor, lifting his head so he might drink more easily, and expressing a hope that he would feel much better by morning. He returned no answer, and I went across to my own berth and turned in.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Thoughts of the Old Home

When All Else Is Forgotten, Those Linger in the Memory.

You can't forget, no matter how hard you may try, for your old home, the one you first knew, is so deeply impressed upon your mind that all the glories, the riches and the blandishments of modern times cannot blot the picture out, and in spite of all you go back to it by the memory route, and linger there often, and more often as the years gather around you.

That is why you like to read of the old days, even though you would not have them return.

Do you ever tell your children about your old home, and of your visits to granddaddy's; your tours of exploration through old attics infested with wasp's nests, and hanging with dried herbs, seed corn, sickles and one truck and another?

And, maybe, some time you may have slept in an attic under a clapboard roof through which you could see the stars, and through which sifted fine snow when the wind was strong. Nor were you cold, for the home-made blankets and the quilts the girls had pieced, and the coverlets that grandmother had woven were warm on top, while the thick straw tick, and the soft feather tick formed a nest that would be "warm and comfy" anywhere.

You would hardly regard these as essential to your comfort in your new house, but they were real blessings then, and are blessed to recall and talk about now.

Would you forget these?—Pittsburg Gazette-Times.

Length of Spider's Web.

If straightened out, an ounce of spider web would extend 350 miles.

MAY LOSE LICENSES

STATE AUDITOR'S WARNING TO INSURANC ECOMPANIES.

THE TESTING OF SEED CORN

Superintendent Bishop Sending Out a Bulletin Advising as to How the Work Can Be Done.

State Auditor Barton recently published a letter in which he stated that if rate wars did not cease among fire insurance companies of this state he would revoke he licenses of companies that sell insurance for less money in one town than in another of the same class. His desk is stacked high with letters called forth by this statement and in it most of the insurance officials assert that they are always opposed to rate wars but they cannot control their agents. The replies are so nearly uniform that they have caused some little amusement at the auditor's office.

While the rate war may be justified by the necessities of competition in one town, says the auditor, it is evident that it works a discrimination against the other towns. Moreover, the auditor does not believe that fire insurance companies can afford to sell insurance as cheap as they frequently do and he thinks that the rule might work toward the conserving of life insurance funds.

Tests on Seed Corn.

Superintendent Bishop is now sending out a bulletin advising school superintendents and teachers how to test seed corn.

The school men are advised to get together classes that will handle the testing of seed corn. They are admonished to "be sure that the test is so accurate and thorough that the owner of the seed corn may rely upon the result as indication of the actual condition of his seed corn as to germinating power."

Blanks are enclosed, so that interested school men may send in notice of their needs in the way of copies of instruction.

GEORGE W. NORRIS

The Nebraska congressman who was central figure in the great revolutionary movement in congress. Unexpectedly to the regulars of the Republican organization, he put over a resolution of the highest constitutional privilege, changing the rules of the house so far as the composition of its committee on rules is concerned by creating a committee of fifteen to be selected from various geographical divisions among the membership and eliminating the speaker from the committee. The confusion and consternation which that resolution created is history.

Out for Senator.

William B. Price of Lincoln, a pronounced county optionist, has issued a formal statement announcing himself a candidate for the United States senate on the democratic and populist, or people's independent tickets.

Petition to the Governor.

Governor Shallenberger has received a petition for the removal of a house of ill repute which is said to be located half way between Wymore and Blue Springs. The petition is signed by fifty-two persons, many of them women.

Making Room in State House.

Bids from contractors will shortly be received by the state railway commission for putting the basement under the commission rooms in shape to house a part of the office force. The commission is now crowded and the physical valuation department, now housed on the second floor, must give up its quarters as soon as the next legislature meets. The basement under the commission rooms will be further excavated, a cement floor will be laid, the walls will be plastered and decorated.

Wants Suit Dismissed.

The Union Pacific has decided that it does not care to exchange transportation for advertising when this is done under pain of prosecution, but it does not care, if possible, to acknowledge that the act is illegal. Edison Rich, attorney for the Union Pacific, called on the state railway commission, hoping to have the suit now missed. The commission conferred with Attorney General Thompson. It was decided that the case would not be dismissed at once.

Corn About Gathered.

Farmers coming to Lincoln from towns out in the state report that most of the corn caught by the early snows last winter has been gathered, or "picked" as they say. It is in bad condition. Huskers are compelled to sort the grain as they gather it, throwing into one part of the wagon the ears which have lain under the snow all winter, and into another part of the wagon those ears which stood up well. This latter part is marketable, but the "down" corn has to be fed to the stock.

IS HUMANITY TRUST

Rockefeller's Great Wealth to Be Given to Mankind.

Son of the World's Richest Man Will Head Corporation and Be the Chief Almoner of Great Fund.

New York.—To make the Rockefeller foundation for charity what the Standard Oil Company has long been to business, and with John D. Rockefeller, Jr., as its head, is the intention of John D. Rockefeller, Sr.

The younger Rockefeller has announced that he had retired from the directorate of the Standard to assume the management of his father's benefactions, of which he thus becomes almoner in chief.

Rockefeller, Sr., in deciding to distribute his vast wealth, it is known, was moved by his deep religious convictions, which in his later years have led him to believe that he only holds his money in trust and that it actually belongs to those who need it. He believes that the work of scattering the last cent should be completed before he passes away, but as this seems impossible of accomplishment he named his son as his deputy.

The announcement in Wall street was taken to mean two things—that

all past estimates of young Rockefeller's future must now be revised, and that hereafter the Rockefeller millions will no longer be a market factor. Instead, it is assumed that they will pass wholly into conservative securities, such as is proper for trust funds, savings banks and insurance companies to acquire.

John D. Rockefeller is now 33 years old. Greeted on his graduation from Brown university, some years ago, as in prospect the richest young man of the world, he now leaves the field to J. Pierpont Morgan, Jr., ten years his elder. Mr. Morgan, Sr., and Mr. Rockefeller, Sr., are both very near of an age. The former will be 72 in next April and the latter was 73 some months ago. Both are in vigorous health.

Seen in retrospect, young Rockefeller's retirement from the Standard Oil board, which actually took place on January 11, assumes a deeper consistency with the gradual narrowing in recent years of his financial activities—a phenomenon not heretofore understood, as he showed no inclination to play the country gentleman or the sporting man, as have other sons of millionaires, such, for instance, as Alfred Vanderbilt and Foxhall Keene. He is still on the directorate of the Delaware, Lackawanna & Western Railroad Company, and of the American Linseed Oil Company, but it is known that it is his intention to withdraw from these corporations as soon as practicable.

It is not thought likely the new foundation for philanthropy, as proposed by the bill introduced in the United States congress a few days ago will assume settled policies for years to come, but in this connection Frederick T. Gates, one of the incorporators of the foundation, said that two main points had been missed.

"In the first place," indicated Mr. Gates, "every other eleemosynary institution has been organized for some special object, and thus limited in its sphere of hopefulness. For instance, in cases of grave disaster, such as the Paris floods, they have been powerless to aid. This is not so of the new foundation.

"Another thing—there are no sectarian boundary lines in the charter of the new foundation, and nothing to prevent it from absorbing the work of other organizations which have outlived their usefulness under present conditions."

Mr. Gates was understood to mean that there will be a gradual merger, along familiar Rockefeller lines, of the Rockefeller charities. Nobody yet ventures to name the amount for which the foundation will be endowed, but the general understanding among those in the confidence of the family coincides with that of Senator Gallinger, who introduced the bill to incorporate the foundation, when he said that he believed ultimately the entire Rockefeller fortune—about $1,000,000,000—would be devoted to the work.

Lucky Passengers.

One evening, just after dinner, a young husband of Indianapolis was, in accordance with his custom, giving his better half the gist of the news, when suddenly he laid down the paper with this exclamation:

"By George! Here's an account telling how, during the recent storm off the New England coast, a ship loaded with passengers went ashore. Why, that vessel belongs to my Uncle Tom in Portland!"

"How fortunate!" returned the young wife. "And just think how glad those passengers were to get to dry land!"—Sunday Magazine of the Los Angeles Herald.

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Kind Lady—How came you to be out at the knees?

Beggar—Why—er—er—prayin' fer work, ma'am.

FOR THE SKIN AND SCALP

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An Ungallant Outlook.

"Again, the ungallant outlook of some husbands causes divorce," said ex-Gov. Pennypacker, in a witty after-dinner speech in Philadelphia.

"It is amazing what an ungallant outlook some men have. I said one day to a Bucks county farmer:

"'Have you got a wife, Hans?'

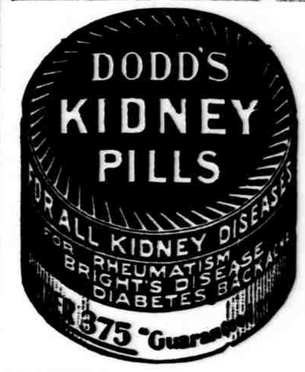
"'Why, yes, to tell the truth, I have,' Hans replied. 'For the little bit the critters eat, it ain't worth a man's while to be without one.'"

Dr. Pierce's Pleasant Pellets regulate and invigorate stomach, liver and bowels. Sugar-coated, tiny granules. Easy to take as candy.

Hope is a fine thing, but it doesn't always enable a man to deliver the goods.

Tell the dealer you want a Lewis' Single binder straight 5c cigar.

There's a lot of hot air used in toy balloons and soaring eloquence.



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