

SOUTH ATLANTIC LEGACY

By Sydney Parkman

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CHAPTER XIX. "LAND AHEAD"

William Ewart Gladstone descended the companion way cautiously and with a sidelong glance at the sleeping girl, padded forward on bare feet to the fore peak where he deposited the dirty plates he was carrying on the floor boards.

At that moment she opened her eyes and for a few seconds lay blinking sleepily about her. Then, as she became aware of the negro's presence, she sat up abruptly and thrusting the blanket from her, swung her feet to the floor.

"Laws, Missy, yo' sho' does sleep when yo' gits down to it!" the man told her with a wide grin. "De Mahjah, he ain't never close his eyes all de night. Me an' Zach offer fo' to give him a spell but dey ain't nuthin' doin'."

"What's the time?" she demanded. "Hit's gittin' along fo' nine o'clock," the negro answered. "We jes' done had brekfus, but de Mahjah he say fo' to let yo' have yo' sleep out. But now I gues' yo'll want sumfin' fo' to sorter stay yo' stummick?"

She remained sitting on the settee for some moments, collecting her thoughts and then she rose to her feet and followed him.

The Major was seated aft in the cockpit, with one arm over the tiller, and as she emerged from the hatchway, he glanced at her with eyes red-rimmed from want of sleep. She felt a pang of remorse at the thought that he had been sitting there all night while she slept in relative comfort below, but the recollection of the manner in which he had tricked her into accompanying him on this hare-brained trip, and their heated argument overnight did something to temper this feeling of compassion.

Nor did his first words serve to alleviate the tension between them. "Well, you're awake at last, are you?" he grunted. "It's to be hoped you're feeling a little more reasonable this morning."

"No Daddy; I can't say that I am," she returned calmly. "Not what you'd call reasonable anyway. I still think the whole thing's completely and utterly mad. Still, there's no use talking about it now. We'll find out which of us is right before long, so we might as well forget it for the time. When do you calculate we ought to arrive at this island?"

"Some time before mid-day," he told her. "And when we do get there, you'll realize just how pishadedly wrong you've been. I would never have believed you could be so idiotically obstinate about anything as you have been about this. Just because you happen to like this fellow Maloney..."

"Oh, don't let's start the argument again, Daddy!" she interrupted wearily. "We thrashed it out last night, and we won't get any further now. Is there a bucket anywhere about? I want to wash myself. And you want a shave?"

"I daresay I do," he retorted sulkily. She found a canvas bucket and having filled it with sea water, she retired to the cabin again and made a somewhat sketchy toilet. Then she boiled a kettle of water on the reeking oil stove and made herself a pot of tea. A number of tins of preserved meat and fruit were stacked in one of the lockers in the fore peak, but she contented herself with nibbling two or three hard ship's biscuits which she found in a tin box, and having thus broken her fast, re-emerged into the open feeling considerably better for her efforts.

The two negroes were squatting forward, smoking and talking together in low voices, and after looking about her for a few moments, Diana turned to her father.

"Wouldn't you like to be relieved for a bit?" she asked, and as he looked at her doubtfully, she added, a trifle impatiently: "It's all right, you know. I'm not going to try and head back or anything like that."

"I didn't suppose you would," he returned gruffly. "Very well then, you know the course—nor-nor-west, a half west. And if you see any signs of land let me know at once."

He rose stiffly to his feet and she took over the tiller from him and checked the course from the little binnacle. The Major stood for some little while, staring out ahead under the foot of the mainsail and then slowly descended to the cabin.

For the next half hour Diana remained at the tiller, with the breeze blowing through her hair and an occasional drift of spray stinging her cheeks in the hot sunshine. The sloop was beautifully balanced, and she had no difficulty in holding to the course she had been given. Forward the two negroes kept up an intermittent, low-voiced conversation of which she could hear only an occasional word above the crisp sound of the little vessel cutting through the water and the steady hum of the trade wind. As far as she could see the Major appeared to be studying the chart again on the cabin table, and she marvelled anew at his credulity in having embarked on this crazy expedition on the word of this man Becker.

From what he had told her on the previous night, it seemed that this mysterious American had deliberately set out to sow mistrust of the little priest in her father's mind at their first inter-

view in Havana—an interview of which she had been completely unaware at the time. What the man's aim had been, she could not think, but it seemed evident to her that his interest in their affairs could not be ascribed to sheer altruism.

She fell to wondering what Toby and Father Maloney were doing about it now. They would have no idea of what had happened, and she pictured their consternation at finding that she and her father had vanished in this way. They would know of course that the absentees had gone out to see in the sloop late at night and they would probably imagine that some disaster had overtaken them. What else could they think in the circumstances? Probably they were even now searching the coast for the wreck of the sloop!

Her train of thought was interrupted by William Ewart Gladstone, who turned round suddenly and called out: "Dar' land ahead, Missy! Ah gues' de Mahjah'll want to know 'bout dat!"

"Where is it?" she called back; and he pointed out over the port bow.

She leaned out and peered under the foot of the mainsail, and at that moment the Major emerged hurriedly from the cabin.

"What's that? Land?" he demanded. "Where is it?"

"Off the port bow," she told him. "But I can't see... Yes, I can! There it is!"

CHAPTER XIX (Continued) "WHAT DO YOU SAY, NOW?"

A vague yellow blur was showing in the distance across the blue waste of tumbling water—a blur which might easily have escaped Diana's notice had not her attention been called to it.

The Major stared hard at it for some moments, and then he turned to her with a light of excitement in his eyes.

"That's it!" he declared. "That's San Domingo island—at the southern end of the Columbus Bank. But we ought to have it on the starboard bow. We've been heading up a little too much."

"Is that where we're making for?" Diana asked, half-impressed in spite of herself by his evident satisfaction.

"No; but we get our bearings from here," he told her. "We should pass to the south of this, and when it's bearing due north from us, we alter course again. Hi! Slacken off those jig sheets a bit, will you?"

He was already paying off the main sheets as he spoke, and Diana put the helm up and brought the sloop on to a course which would bring the island on to her starboard bow.

"I'll take over again now," the Major told her as he made fast the sheets; and she relinquished the tiller to him and sat up on the coaming of the cockpit.

"How much farther away is it now?" she asked after a few moments. With the wind on the quarter, the sloop was driving through the water at a good six knots, and already the island was beginning to assume a more definite shape against the blue of the sky.

"We pass San Domingo within a mile, and then alter course to nor-west by west," he told her. "Our particular cay lies dead ahead then, at about six miles. We shall pass several others on the way—if we can see them. They're only a few feet above sea-level though and the one we're looking for is slightly higher. About fifteen feet at its highest point."

"That's not much," she commented doubtfully. The sooner they arrived at the island they were seeking, the better, she felt. She cherished no kind of hope that it would actually prove to be the site of her uncle's cache, but to miss it would be to prolong the search—and their subsequent return to Carbonaras.

"It's sufficient, if we keep our course," her father told her confidently. "It's all your uncle had to go by. The only thing that was worrying me is the tidal factor, but as I've made this land-fall successfully, I've no doubt I can

manage the rest easily enough. They were within a couple of miles of San Domingo Island now and closing it rapidly. As far as Diana could see it appeared to be nothing more than a large mound of yellow sand, rising some thirty or forty feet above the surface of the sea, and she wondered why it had been thought necessary to endow it with such an imposing name.

In the course of the next ten minutes, Gladstone unexpectedly provided confirmation of the Major's theory.

He came aft and leaning on the edge of the cabin skylight nodded towards the island.

"Dis per's somewhere near de place whar de Cap'n call on dat las' trip, Major," he announced. "Hit was jes' around dese parts, 'cause de look o' dat island dar sorter stick in my min'."

"Oh you recognize it, do you?" the Major said glancing at his daughter to see the effect of the announcement.

"Well, presently, you'll see the place whar he went ashore. I suppose you'd know it again would you?"

"Yassuh, Ah sho' would," the negro assured him.

When the man had gone forward again, the Major turned to his daughter.

"You heard what that fellow said?" he asked. "Without knowing anything about it, he's already recognized that we're on the right track."

Diana made no answer to this. It certainly began to look as though there was something in Becker's story after all, but she was far from admitting all its implications. There was something here which she could not understand at all, and it seemed to her that her best plan was to say nothing and abide the result.

At the end of another half-hour, they passed within sight of one of the sand cays which the Major had referred to. It was a long low bank, rising hardly more than five or six feet from the surface of the sea.

"This ought to be it!" the Major exclaimed. "Here! Take the tiller while I have a look at it!"

He climbed up on the cabin top, steadying himself with a hand on the backstay, stared out long and earnestly at the tawny mound of sand which slowly heaved itself above the intervening stretch of sea.

"Yessuh! Ah 'clar to goodness dat's de cay we done call at wid de Cap'n!" Gladstone pronounced suddenly. "Aint dat so, Zach?"

The morose Zach was understood to grunt assent, and the Major nodded and clambered down again into the cockpit.

"Well what do you say now?" he demanded in a low voice. "Do you still think Becker was trying to mislead me?"

"I don't know what to think," she admitted. "If this is really the place..."

"There's no 'if' about it!" he interrupted with a kind of impatient triumph. "It is the place and if you're ready to do your part, the money's as good as ours!"

"Does you want me'n Zach should cast de dory loose?" Gladstone's voice enquired from forward; and the Major turned and nodded assent.

"Yes; and you'd better get some chain up on deck," he ordered. He stared out ahead of the rapidly nearing island, and then descended into the cabin again to have a last look at the chart.

When he returned on deck five minutes later they were within half a mile of the island, and he took over the tiller once more and altered course slightly to port.

"There's a sand-spit running out to the south-west that we've got to clear," he said. "That's all I remember about those instructions in the letter, but I'm hoping you still remember the rest?"

"Yes," she assented; and nothing more was said between them. Despite her lingering doubts she was beginning to tingle with excitement now that they were so near their destination and she

For Our Children

By the year 2,000 A.D., scientists have prophesied, tuberculosis will be eradicated if the present rate of progress in the drive against the disease continues. Thus, to our children and our children's children, the white plague that has beset mankind since the earliest days of recorded history will be but a memory. We, to whom tuberculosis is still a dread fact, that threatens our lives and our security, can help bring nearer that happy day by purchasing Christmas Seals.

That Body of Yours

By James W. Barton, M.D.

More Than Extra Food Needed to Increase Weight

Some mothers are naturally distressed when they find that despite the amount and the variety of food eaten by their youngsters they still remain underweight. If the youngster is wiry or resembles one of the parents in being underweight at this age, not much is thought of it, but often there is no history of extreme underweight on either side.

yet there will be no increase in weight the youngster continues to be underweight. In early years the youngster is usually extremely hungry, and drawn heart is rapid and somewhat bulging eyes will be protruding.

Another cause of underweight is infection of teeth and tonsils. So much of the body's energy is being used to fight this infection that there is not enough left for proper growth aside from any increase in weight.

Sometimes the youngster will play so hard and so long, perhaps stay up so late at night, that he is actually tired all the time and the food eaten is not fully absorbed into the blood.

When the cause for underweight has been removed—fatigue, gonorrhea, infected teeth or tonsils—then what is called the upbuilding diet should be used. This includes all the usual foods—proteins (meat, eggs, fish, poultry, cereals) all the starch foods (bread, sugar, potatoes), all the fat foods (cream, butter, egg yolk), and the minerals and vitamins (fruits, vegetables, dairy products). The next point is to give increased amounts of the foods known to be fattening: "an extra tablespoonful of butter with each meal adds 300 calories, and improves the flavour of cereals, vegetables, and meats without being noticeable when used as a seasoning. A tablespoonful of thick cream on cereal, or whipped cream on desserts and of melted butter on a salad, will add 300 calories more. One or two tablespoons of olive oil, at bedtime furnish 100 or 200 more calories and may help relieve constipation. If fats do not agree then foods rich in starch may be taken: sugar, bread, potatoes. The best foods for mid-morning or mid-afternoon lunches are milk, raw eggs, fruit juices, crackers and cream cheese, which are not so bulky and are easily digested."

In her book dietetics, Simplified, Dr. Jean Bogart in addition to pointing out the need of an all round diet with extra fats and starches in underweight states, "Rest, relaxation, fresh air, and moderate exercise are very important (in adults as well as children), if the upbuilding diet is to be successful. It is sometimes necessary to keep tense, nervous, over-active or over-fatigued persons in bed for a time before they will begin to put on weight. By this means, the amount of energy their bodies use is cut down. If the undernourished state is due to some disease condition (infected tonsils, adenoids) or to faulty living habits or conditions these underlying causes must be corrected before the patient will derive much benefit from the diet."

The ideal way then of increasing weight, whether in children or adults, is to make sure that the living habits and conditions are right, plenty of

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