

STEWART TELLS OF MRS. LEEDS' VISITS TO WATER PALACE

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New York, March 24.—An amazing story of life aboard the "Modesty," the palatial yacht of James A. Stillman, with Mrs. Florence H. Leeds occupying the sumptuous boudoir, was told for the first time Wednesday.

Direct from the lips of one who worked on the yacht and knew the intimate details of those who spent their days and nights in the \$350,000 floating palace comes the tale of astounding incidents.

It tells how Mrs. Percy Rockefeller, sister of Stillman, and other important figures in society and finance visited the yacht, creating the necessary for "keeping the Leeds girl out of sight."

It tells how a millionaire friend of Stillman, John A. Prentice, quit the Modesty one night recently and "bunked" aboard another yacht in Miami harbor, presumably because Prentice had come to his own conclusions about the relations of Stillman and the former chorus girl.

The story tells of another woman whom Mrs. Leeds considered a formidable rival for the affections of Stillman and how on one occasion "Mrs. Leeds" searched the vessel from stem to stern in an effort to see if the rival was secreted on the Modesty.

The story is presented just as it came from the lips of Frank Murphy, who until a few days ago was chief steward on the Modesty. Murphy arrived in New York Wednesday on the City of Montgomery of the Savannah line.

To all questions he has returned the same answer: "I like Mr. Stillman. He is a fine man. My sympathies, however, are with Mrs. Stillman in her present difficulties, and I intend to do anything I can to help her clear her name. I shall not volunteer any statement but if I am subpoenaed in any court, I shall be forced to tell the truth as I know it."

DRESSED AS BECK HANDB
"And if I tell my story, I do not see how any court in the land can avoid granting Mrs. Stillman an absolute decree."

Fitting in startlingly with information that has come to Mrs. Stillman's attorneys from Miami, Murphy asserted that detectives within the past three weeks gained crucial information for Mrs. Stillman in the Florida resort city.

These detectives, disguised as fishermen and attired in oilcloths and dungarees, rowed to the Modesty, where they secured information of the greatest value to Mrs. Stillman in her "firmative defense" counter-charge against the president of the National City bank.

The detectives approached Captain Edward Wawerick, First Mate Charles Knutson, Launchman Andrews, Chief Engineer Lee Matthews and the eight members of the crew of the Modesty and asked them how they'd like a trip to New York. "Jim" Stillman, receiving reports of these various activities, said coolly:

"I wonder why they are watching me?"

ORDERED PORTHOLES SHADDED
Nevertheless, the matter of the boat issued instant orders for a strict watch to be posted on the yacht and ordered "shades down on all portholes."

Mrs. Leeds received the news differently. She grew intensely excited. Two weeks ago last Saturday Stillman received a telegram from New York and left hurriedly. His friend, Prentice, returned with him.

A day or two later "Mrs. Leeds," worried and upset, said: "I am awaiting word to leave at any time."

On Monday, March 14, she did leave for Havana.

She was accompanied only by Bertha Potter, her companion. Her little 31-month-old son, "Jay Ward Leeds" called by her "Jesse," and by Stillman

"Jay Jr.") was left behind. The former "Flo" Lawler and Miss Potter sailed for Havana. She said, while superintending the carriage of a small steamer trunk:

"I don't know where I'll end up or where I am going."

WITH STILLMAN ONE YEAR
Frank Murphy went to work for Stillman in March, 1920. He was employed first in the Stillman town house, at 270 Park avenue, and then went aboard the Modesty as soon as the vessel was commissioned. This was in the middle of August, 1920.

Murphy said: "The Modesty was built by the Morris Heights Shipbuilding company. It is one of the most magnificent motor yachts ever built—125 feet long, 18 foot beam. With its wonderful interior fittings, supervised by Mrs. Leeds and a firm of New York decorators, it cost Mr. Stillman, I have been told, \$350,000.

"The Modesty (we call it the 'Immodesty now'), was to be a present for Mrs. Stillman, I was told. As a matter of fact, I have never seen Mrs. Stillman aboard. In fact I never saw Mrs. Stillman."

"Mrs. Leeds picked the Modesty's decorations. The same firm decorated the beautiful little villa she purchased for \$50,000 in Miami.

NEVER SAW MRS. STILLMAN
"I saw Mrs. Leeds first the day the Modesty was commissioned—August 15 last, as I recall. She came to the shipyard with Mr. Stillman in an automobile. They were the only guests when the yacht took the ways. Mrs. Leeds christened the vessel with a bottle of cider—no champagne was handy.

"She was a beautiful little woman, very peppy, and with the most wonderful hair—yellow golden. I'd call it. This hair was the most striking thing about her."

"I have served on many a yacht, but never on one so wonderfully fitted out as the Modesty. It has ten staterooms for guests besides crew quarters. The dining salon, forward, was a dream. There was a beautiful piano and a phonograph. Mr. Stillman has a wonderful bedroom, a double room with two beds and done in pearl (putty), the decorators call it), with black stripes. In Mr. Stillman's is a boudoir with the same color effects."

CALLED IT MRS. LEEDS' ROOM
"The draperies match; also the rich shades. The boudoir contains two dressing closets and a lovely mirror. Both bedroom and boudoir furniture, I am told, are Louis XIV style. The dressing tables are covered with cretonne. The carpet in Mrs. Leeds' room is blue."

"I call it Mrs. Leeds' room because she was the only steady occupant of the boudoir."

"After the Modesty was put into commission we anchored off the New York Yacht club. Early in September there was a small, formal and not very lively dinner party. Mr. Stillman and Mr. Prentice were there—also Mrs. Percy Rockefeller, Mr. Stillman's sister."

"Also, early in the fall, and a couple of days after this little dinner party, Mrs. Leeds came aboard for the first time since the Modesty was commissioned. She came in the morning, alone. Right then our suspicions were confirmed. You know it's a rule on a yacht that 'when a woman comes aboard alone mum's the word.'"

"That first day we took a 'half up the Sound' and returned in the night. Mrs. Leeds stayed on board all night, using her beautiful little boudoir. Mr. Stillman seemed very attentive to her, but somehow I gained an impression, that was later strengthened, that she was not so fond of him as he was of her."

"This was the lady's first visit. There were many others—always the story was the same. Mr. Stillman would entertain respectfully one evening and then devote himself to Mrs. Leeds the next."

"Then, one evening Mr. Stillman brought another woman aboard. She was about as tall as Mrs. Leeds, but her slimmness gave her an appearance of being taller. She had dark reddish hair, not yellow reddish like Mrs. Leeds."

"The following morning we saw a little gray car come shooting down to the landing of the New York Yacht club. It was Mrs. Leeds' car and she was driving."

SHE SOUGHT OTHER WOMAN
"She came out to the Modesty and called for me. She seemed greatly excited. She said to me, 'Steward, a woman has been aboard. Who is she?' 'Somehow I got the impression she was having Mr. Stillman followed and had the goods.'"

"I didn't see Mrs. Leeds for a good while after that."

"We arrived in Miami on February 7, 1921. Because we drew so much water we had to anchor in the causeway. The day after we cast anchor Mrs. Leeds came out. She looked ravishing in a knitted sport dress and tennis shoes. She remained for lunch and dinner. Thereafter she came every day for those two meals, and she re-

mained over night two or three times a week—and sometimes oftener."

STILLMAN BASES CASE ON LOVE LETTERS TO HIS WIFE
New York, March 24.—(U. P.)—One of the three affidavits in the first open hearing of the Stillman divorce scandal at White Plains yesterday contained copies of five letters Mrs. "Fifi" Potter Stillman is alleged to have received from Fred Beauvais, French-Canadian guide, whom James A. Stillman charges is the father of Mrs. Stillman's 2-year-

old son, Guy. It was learned authoritatively today.

These letters, it was said, referred to "our child" and the "joys of parenthood."

"ADMITTED ERROR"
"Together with another letter, which Mrs. Stillman is alleged to have written to her multi-millionaire husband in 1918, in which she is said to have 'admitted her error in a fit of hysteria,' they are understood to form the main foundation for Stillman's suit to obtain a divorce and establish the alleged illegitimacy of Guy Stillman."

The full text of these letters is expected to be made public Monday, when Justice Morchauer is scheduled to announce his decision on Mrs. Stillman's application for increase of alimony to \$10,000 a month and counsel fees to \$75,000.

HAS AMENDED ANSWER
It is also possible that Mrs. Stillman's amended answer to her husband's suit, filed in White Plains late yesterday, in which she is understood to have made counter charges against Stillman and "Mrs. Florence Leeds" will be given full publicity.

"Mrs. Leeds," who left Miami, Fla., with her infant son, "Jay Leeds," last week at the same time that Stillman's yacht Modesty disappeared from its anchorage off that town, was reported today to have been seen in Palm Beach. At the latter place it was rumored that she expects to return at once to Miami.

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