

# A DOCTOR'S MISSION

BY EMILY THORNTON  
Author of "ROY RUSSELL'S RULE,"  
"GLENROY," "THE FASHIONABLE MOTHER," ETC.

## CHAPTER XIV.—(Continued.)

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No sleep came to her weary eyes until long after midnight, when she was awakened by a knock at her door. It was the first of the last twenty-four hours, and again she again she prayed that all might go well, and nothing terrible result from the loss of that dreadful knife.

Rising with the alarm of the usual bell that rang to awaken the household, the poor girl again commenced to review the problem that had presented itself to be worked out the night before. Once she asked the question:—  
Should she accede to Sir Reginald by telling him the accident that had befallen her, or should she not?

Before deciding positively, she resolved to pay the coroner a morning visit, and by listening, study out, if all was going on as usual.

This resolve she instantly carried into effect. Turning once more from her room, down the corridor, she placed her feet close to the panel, and listened intently to hear if any movement could be discovered within the concealed room.

All was still! Not the faintest motion was perceptible; therefore, feeling greatly relieved, she returned, quite sure that all might be well, and firmly resolved to say nothing of what had happened, and while keeping silent endeavor to drive the entire circumstance from her own mind, and so be at ease.

The day passed on as usual, and when night brought her to the shelves, she once more found to her satisfaction all things remaining, and felt that now, indeed, all was right. Poor Ethel! She little knew the fearful consequences yet to ensue from her first blunder.

The third afternoon had arrived, and nothing had transpired to lead her to suppose that the least trouble from that unfortunate occurrence. She had, therefore, regained the courage she had lost, and was fast driving the entire circumstance from her mind.

This afternoon Sir Reginald had expressed a wish for music, therefore she had brought her guitar to the parlour, and had sung several ballads for his amusement.

"I think," at length he said, interrupting her, "that it grows cloudy. Please look out and tell me if a shower is approaching."

Ethel arose at his bidding, and after examining the sky returned, saying, as she resumed her seat:

"There is, indeed, a very black cloud lying in the west, which foretells a hard shower."

"Then put aside your instrument and draw close to me, as I have some private instructions to give you in regard to a new work to be done to-night. Are you entirely alone?"

"We are," Mrs. Fenton left the room to prepare you some nourishment, and your wife and niece are in the grounds," replied Ethel, trembling, she knew not why.

"Then listen intently to my instructions. If the storm rages about half past nine or ten o'clock to-night, you must visit the Haunted Tower and put in motion some machinery I have erected there."

"Oh, Sir Reginald," murmured the shrinking listener, "please do not ask that of me."

"You just attend to my orders, and do what I tell you to do. Never dare dispute my will."

The baronet then proceeded to give minute directions for the lighting of each torch, and the arrangement of the frightful and hideous images there concealed. At his conclusion he remarked:

"Do you think you understand every particular of the work I now require to be done?"

"I do," replied Ethel, "but, sir, my soul revolts from the whole thing. I consider it a wicked deception, and I beg you to excuse me from undertaking it."

"Who cares what you think about it? No one asked your opinion. Do it, you shall, so do not dare to utter another word against it."

"Sir Reginald, I have faithfully performed your wishes in regard to feeding the animal, whose life you value so highly. Knowing that to preserve the life of even the lowly of God's creatures is a duty, but I can see no possible necessity for striving to impose upon the credulity of the inhabitants of this quiet place."

"That, I tell you, is my business and not yours," was the angry reply. "You are here simply to attend to my work, and I have well paid you for doing so."

"I know that; but surely I am at liberty to point out an error in your wishes and judgment. Sir Reginald, this thing that you ask me to do is wrong, and I entreat you to carry it no farther. You say you have done this yourself for twenty-five years; surely that can answer any purpose you may have to effect by it. Please, then, be satisfied, and let this thing rest."

"I tell you I will not," replied the baronet, fairly purple with rage; "do you not see that your obstinacy is throwing me into a terrible and injurious excitement? I command you to obey my wishes. If you do not, you will lose your job for this night, even though I know you have not where to lay your head. Do you hear?"

"I do," murmured the distressed girl. "Will you obey?"

"No answer came, the only reply she could make being a burst of tears. Maddened by her silence and sobs, the baronet started up, leaning upon his elbow, a thing he had been expressly forbidden to do, as it would jar his hip, he shook his fist violently in her face, while he demanded in fury:

"Will you obey?"

"I will!" she at last gasped, between her sobs. Poor girl! seeing his violent excitement, and remembering her aunt's last charges, she dared not disobey.

"Then see that you do it," he returned, more calmly, as he sank back with a groan upon his pillow.

There was no escape from the disagreeable duty that awaited her, so at her usual time she took the lighted candles in her hand and started with fearful eyes to attend to the task before her.

CHAPTER XV.  
After Dr. Effenstein had asked permission of Sir Reginald Glendinning to search the Haunted Tower he felt exceedingly puzzled as to how to penetrate the mystery of that place, he could not understand how the thing was to be accomplished.

In all his visits to Sir Reginald, although reserved in manner, his every nerve had been on the alert. He had been told that the room occupied by the present baronet was the one where Sir

Arthur had met his fate. Knowing this, he fairly worked that room.

He tested its width, height and breadth; the height of the two windows from the floor, the size of those windows, and particularly he noted the one from which the rope had dangled that had been used to lower the body to the room.

He had several times walked to that window, as if meditating over his patient's case, and looked out, surveying the ground below, and the distance from it to the lake, which was visible through the trees.

From the house, which he visited daily in his professional calling, he often drove around, examining the stables and out-buildings, and sometimes slowly went around the tower to view the ruined part, and to see if by any means he could ever effect an entrance.

One day, it was the one on which Ethel started for the eventful walk, he in fact noticed a small, well-trodden pathway leading up to a clump of bushes that behind those bushes concealed from view, might be an open passage to the place, although he felt certain there was no doorway.

The more he thought of this the more he was sure it would be the case.

Why that well used path through the grass if not for some such purpose? Yes, some human feet were in the habit of entering there, and he resolved to return to the place, under cover of darkness, and investigate those bushes.

Full of this discovery, and full of hope that he might yet penetrate to the mysterious tower, he took his horse with the whip and drove hastily away.

But just as he emerged again into the rambles, he saw Miss Belle Glendinning sitting at her window, and he felt that he had been seen. He turned his horse around the premises, as a conscience whispered it must speak to her of a prying nature.

Feeling, however, that it was done, and not wishing to be recalled, he passed on, and proceeded to visit the houses of several sick persons who needed his advice and assistance.

On his return it was that he suddenly heard a well struck of terror, and looking around had seen Ethel in that dangerous situation, while the nearest thing told of the death that awaited her. Springing to the ground, he had rushed to her assistance, and had wrenched apart those stiff fastenings and drawn her from her peril.

After he had left her at the Hall it was hard to recall his true thoughts to their proper sphere, but with set teeth and a firm resolve, he plunged into study, and active work, in order to be at peace with himself.

The great suffering of a new patient even detained him by his side until, after midnight the second evening, and a third time had night folded the earth before relief came to the weary one, and Earle could be seen at liberty to pay the lonely rain the desired call.

Then a violent storm was raging! This storm was strange to say, the first that had occurred in the evening since his slight voice of the haunted tower, and the dancing demon, just five weeks before.

Not wishing to be seen by any of the inmates, he did not venture out until after nine o'clock. Then the wild wind and driving rain served to retard his progress, and he felt that it was full quarter to ten before he had reached the pathway that led to the Haunted Tower.

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CHAPTER XVI.  
Wiping away her tears, poor Ethel placed the basket of food and knife upon the floor, by the entrance of the tower, as Sir Reginald had told her to attend to the business in that quarter before administering to the wants of the concealed quadruped.

At last the weary steps were climbed, and she stood panting on the high level, just below the upper windows of the place. It was standing on this landing that her part of the ghostly work was to be performed.

Taking then a long handled torch, with which the lighted candles were to be touched in order to light them, she applied the candle to it, and reaching up soon had every one illuminated and flung long ways in the usual uncertainty looking

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# PHANTOM ISLES OF THE PACIFIC

## Hundreds of Illusions Charted as Land.

The Hydrographic Department of the British Admiralty recently erased from the charts a group in the South Pacific known as the Royal Company's Islands. Every one of those large projections of the world showing the boundlessness of the British Empire contains the name Royal Company's Islands attached to several dots south of Tasmania. Not only in the name, but to prevent any insular standing or elevation, there is usually printed under the name a thick red line to indicate that the territory is British. But they are not British, or American, or anything else but a fiction, and hereafter the big empire will be smaller by the loss of several islands.

About the same time the British were removing the Royal Company's Islands with a penknife, the United States was sending out the cruiser *Cassin* to search, during the practice cruise to Hawaii, for another island which is charted on the tracks between San Francisco and the Sandwich



SOME OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS WHOSE EXISTENCE IS DOUBTED ARE MARKED.

Islands, but which, these seem every reason to believe, is as much a phantom as the Royal Company's Islands.

These are only two recent incidents connected with the fictitious islands of the Pacific, which ocean seems to be the favorite with those skippers who see land in the broad expanse of water which is never again seen, although the Atlantic in earlier years furnished perhaps as many examples of illusions, being dotted down in ships' logs as islands, reefs and shoals.

It is largely on account of these reports of fabulous spots of land sprinkled over oceans that hydrographic departments are a very necessary part of the government of every maritime nation.

The Atlantic, being the first great ocean highway frequently used and also being of lesser extent than the Pacific, was the first to have its fabulous islands dispelled. The island of Antilla, called Heptapolis by Mercator a century later, clung on to the maps with great tenacity almost down to the nineteenth century. Antilla, or the seven cities, was not only put down as an established material fact, but it was given a population. According to the stories then believed, the Spanish, driven out by the Moors, had taken possession. If the island ever had an existence, there is nothing now to prove it. There were also several other equally popular and equally fabulous islands in the Atlantic, which navigators after the Middle Ages proved to be existing only in the lively imagination of a darker time. One of these was the island of the Irish Saint Brandon, belief in which was not thoroughly destroyed until the eighteenth century; another was Brazil Island, which did not appear to have any fixed habitation. It seemed to be a perfect delirium, when finally, about forty years ago, the British Admiralty removed it from the hydrographic charts.

Of all the fabled Atlantic islands the most curious instance of a phantom survival is to be found in Jacques Island, which first made its appearance on the maps during the Middle Ages. On the old charts it is shown off the Newfoundland coast at about 47 degrees north and about 43 east. The map reproduced on this page is from a large atlas published by one of the best map publishers in 1855.

Not only was it charted, but there was a widespread belief in its existence, owing, no doubt, to the fact that it was shown in every large atlas of the time. In spite of this belief there is no record of any ship having seen the lonely island. When the submarine cable had been laid between England and France and in various parts of the Mediterranean a cable to connect both sides of the Atlantic was naturally considered.

The stretch was about 3,000 miles, and there was doubt as to the practicability of the scheme. While the discussion was going on, in the later 40s, the proposition was put forward that by making a landing on Jacques Island, a good deal of difficulty could be avoided. Jacques Island then came in for a good deal of prominence, and there was its undoing. A little investigation proved Jacques Island to be a myth, and the Atlantic cable was laid on the bottom of the ocean from one continent to the other without the relay intended. Notwithstanding this terrible fall from power, the mythical spot remained on many maps until comparatively recent date.

No numerous became recently discovered islands, reefs and shoals in the Pacific that in 1857 the United States Hydrographic Office prepared a register chart of these "dangers to navigation." The reason they were so called was because of the uncertainty of the existence of many of them. Having been reported they

were presumed to exist, and although some of them were never again visible, they remained on the chart, for were they genuine and not noted on the navigation charts a vessel might strike one at night or on a misty day and go to the bottom. That many of the islands do exist seems to be evident from the fact that every little while a ship is lost and never afterwards heard of. The presumption is that she has gone on one of the hidden reefs that are not yet marked or are incorrectly charted.

It was not long after the chart of the reported dangers to navigation in the Pacific had been issued before more information was brought, in one way or another, to the Hydrographic Office, and by 1890 this information had increased to such an extent that the chart became almost useless, and it also showed the impracticability of issuing another chart. A volume was then published giving all the details that had come to the knowledge of the office. In five years a new edition, taking note only of the North Pacific, was published.

In this volume there are described nearly 1,200 "dangers" reported in the Pacific north of the equator, and the greater number of the "dangers" are mentioned as "islands," of which subsequent inquiry has shown that the majority are as fabulous as the island of Antilla or as Jacques Island.

The South Pacific was the subject of a volume issued in 1879, in which 1,300 "dangers" were reported. As in the former case, most of these were islands, and opposite their names were the words, in bold-faced type "Position Doubtful" or "Existence Doubtful." There had been by 1881 sufficient new reports to fill a good-sized supplement. Since then there have been only occasional addenda printed and distributed, and in the Hydrographic Office a draughtsman is almost constantly employed erasing phantoms which have been unveiled, and putting down new "islands" which may in turn prove to be fabulous. Within the last four years more than twenty-five mythical land spots in the Pacific have been taken off the charts, and about as many more have been added.

One of the latest reports received by the office is dated Bremen, April 10. It is given as a specimen of the fragmentary way in which these reports are received: "The Prinz Waldemar Watkins, on the voyage from Banda to Berlinhafen, reports at 6:40 a. m. on Dec. 17, in latitude 1 degree 22 minutes south, longitude 130 degrees 30 minutes east, saw a reef under water estimated to extend half a sea mile from S. E. W. to N. E., and about 100 meters broad." Straight-

way this is entered on the records and placed on the chart, for if it really does exist it is a menace to navigation. It is something to be on the lookout for, yet in a year or two it may be reported as a myth, or in a different position.

The question naturally arises, "How comes it that mythical islands are reported? How can any one see an island that has no existence?" To the landsman it appears inexplicable, but to the sailor the explanation is simplicity itself.

At times there appear in the sea long, dark patches or bright, yellowish patches, which at a distance give the mariner the impression of shoals. Looking on his chart he finds none charted in that neighborhood and, consequently, enters his discovery in his log. When he reaches port he gives information, which finally finds its way to the Hydrographic Office of his government, and then to all the others throughout the world. Sometimes a tired whale will float lastly on the bosom of the deep, and at a distance appear to the man on the bridge as a reef or, perhaps, as a distant island. A school of fish will stir up the water or change its hue, and the wide-awake sailor may see in it one of those "dangers to navigation," which will live for a time on a chart with the embarrassing letters "E. D." opposite the entry, meaning its existence is

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## SUN, MOON AND EARTH.

### Ultimate Return of Moon to Earth Predicted by Scientist.

The alterations now occurring in the distribution in the solar system have led Professor George Darwin to predict that the moon will ultimately return to the earth which gave her sudden birth so many ages before; and it may further be prophesied that the planets and their satellites must ultimately yield to the gravitational influence of our dying sun and must return to the bosom of their parent.

We must conceive of the solar system of to-day, then, as gathered into one central mass, closely aggregated around that point which from the beginning has constituted its center of gravity. And what will be the stage of this shrunken object? It will be a dark star, dead sun. There are myriads of such in the heavens. Sir Hooker has said that to count all the bright stars that we can see and say "these are all there are" would be like counting the red-hot horseshoes in England and saying, "this is the total number." This dark to be well, therefore, be just such another as millions more.

There will be no life upon it. We can not conceive the terror of its cold, for the nebula has been dissipating energy in the form of light and heat, into the chilly depths of interstellar space ever since the first hour of its longevous shrinkage.

What is the destiny of this dead sun, among whose constituent atoms, remember, will be those in the printer's ink before your eyes and those in the eyes before your eyes? Are they forever—stable in desolation, as Stevenson has it—to be borne onward through infinite space? No; this shrunken globe, the common tomb of sun and earth and stars and of the bodies of the great that once breathed there, may live again. Give it but the consuming embrace of such another voyage and in a moment a new nebula will be born.

The force of their impact will suffice to evaporate their substance into another cloud which will repeat the history of the old. The path of the two dead suns will determine the position of the "principal plane" which will form the ground plan of the new system.—Harper's Magazine.

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