

SPANISH DOUBLOONS

By CAMILLA KENYON
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SYNOPSIS.

CHAPTER I.—Jane Harding, respectable and conservative old spinster, but never too old to think of marriage—with more money than brains, is inveigled by a strong-minded spinster, Miss Higgleby-Browne, into financing an expedition to hunt for buried treasure on Leeward Island. Her niece, Virginia Harding, undertaking to stop her, gets on the vessel engaged for the hunt, and in the confusion is unwillingly carried along.

CHAPTER II.—By no means concealing her distaste for the expedition and her contempt for its members, Virginia makes the acquaintance of the honorable Cuthbert Vane, and is somewhat impressed.

CHAPTER III.—Talking with Dugald Shaw, the leader of the expedition, Virginia very frankly expresses her views, practically accusing Shaw and the other members of the party, including a somewhat uncertain personage, Captain Magnus, and a shady "financier," Hamilton H. Tubbs, of being in a conspiracy to defraud Miss Jane Harding. Their relations, naturally, are somewhat strained.

CHAPTER IV.—Landing on the island is a matter of some difficulty, Virginia being carried ashore in the arms of Cuthbert Vane, to her disquietude. The landing, however, is safely effected.

CHAPTER V.—Led by Miss Higgleby-Browne, the party draws up an agreement whereby Virginia Harding is barred from participation in the profits of the expedition. Believing the whole thing to be a fraud, Virginia is not greatly worried. Cuthbert Vane alone votes against the exclusion of Virginia.

CHAPTER VI.—Wild pigs abound on the island, and "Cookie," the colored member of the party, insists he has seen a "hant," in the form of a white pig. During a walk Virginia meets the "hant," a white bull terrier, and proudly brings him into camp.

CHAPTER VII.—On the island is the hut of a covara gatherer, and the presence of the dog, named "Crusoe" by Virginia, is thus accounted for. Rummaging about, and feeling herself not to be a regular member of the expedition, Virginia comes upon a sand-imbudded sloop, the Island Queen. Returning to the camp, she is intercepted by Captain Magnus, who accuses her unpleasantly. She escapes him, with the aid of "Crusoe."

CHAPTER VIII.—Fired with the idea of herself discovering the treasure, Virginia pays a visit to the cave which has been suggested as the most likely place in which it has been concealed, and there she is caught by the tide and rescued by Dugald Shaw, from certain death. Thinking her unconscious, Shaw whispers words of endearment, which she treasures.

CHAPTER IX.—In idle curiosity Virginia, doubting about the wreck of the Island Queen, finds a diary, identified only as having been kept by "Peter," a former seeker of the treasure. In it he tells of his finding of the hidden wealth and there her reading is interrupted.

CHAPTER X.—Opinions as to the proper methods of prosecuting the search for the treasure are divided, and a wide divergence is apparent in the councils of the little party. Virginia's interest in the leader of the expedition increases.

CHAPTER XI.—The diary which Virginia has found in the remains of the Island Queen reveals the fact that the existence of the gold was known to others, and an active and successful search for it carried on. The record tells of the finding of the treasure and its transportation to the small boat, but it is evident the finder never left the island with his wealth. Virginia, of course, believes it to be on the Island Queen, and so within her reach. For various reasons she decides to say nothing of her discovery until she has investigated further.

CHAPTER XII.—Led by directions in "Peter's" diary, Virginia finds a highly important clue to the hidden treasure, but her courage fails when it comes to pushing her investigations.

CHAPTER XIII.—Interrupting a fervent declaration of love by the announcement of Mr. Tubbs that he has found the clue to the whereabouts of the treasure. He demands, as the price of his secret, a half of the wealth found. The party declines to accept his terms and decides to continue the search without his aid. During the excitement Captain Magnus disappears.

CHAPTER XIV.—In view of the discovery made by Mr. Tubbs, a new agreement is drawn up, entirely favorable to Virginia. Turning from the document, the party is surprised by the appearance of an armed force, against whom there could be no effective resistance.

CHAPTER XV.—Captain Magnus, it turns out, has "double-crossed" his treasure-seeking companions, and with four other desperadoes plans to carry off the gold, which he believes Tubbs' discovery has made practical.

CHAPTER XVI.

From Dead Hands.

At the head of the file, Capt. Tony advanced through the clearing, and what with his flowing black beard, his portly form and a certain dramatic swagger which he possessed, he looked so entirely Italian and operatic that you expected to hear him at any moment burst out in a sonorous basso. With a sweeping gesture he flung down upon the table two brown canvas bags, which opened and discharged from gaping mouths a flood of golden coins.

Slinker and the cross-eyed man shouted aloud. They ran and clutched at the coins with a savage greed. "Gold, gold—the real stuff! It's the doubloons, all right—where's the rest of 'em?" These cries broke from Slinker and Horny confusedly as the gold slid jingling between their eager fingers.

"The rest of 'em is—where they is," pronounced Tony oracularly. "Somewhere in the sand of the cave, of

course. We'll dig 'em up tomorrow morning!"

"What was the point in not digging 'em all up while you was about it?" demanded Slinker, lowering. "What was the good o' digging up just these here couple o' bags and quitting?"

"Because we didn't dig 'em up," responded Tony darkly. "Because these was all ready and waiting. Because all we had to do was to say 'Thankee,' to the feller that handed 'em out. We got these here bags of doubloons, as I says, without havin' to dig for 'em—onset we had found the cave, which it's no thanks to old Washtubs we ain't looking for it yet. We got these here bags right out of the fists of a skeleton. Most of him was under a rock, which had fell from the roof and plinned him amidships. Must of squashed him like a beetle, I guess. But he'd still kep' his hold on the bags."

I turned aside, for fear that anyone should see how white I was. To the rest, these poor bones might indeed bear mute witness to a tragedy, but a tragedy lacking outlines, vague, impersonal, without poignancy. To me, they told with dreadful clearness the last sad chapter of the tale of Peter; Peter who had made me so intimately his confidante, whose love and hopes and solitary strivings I knew all about.

Vaguely I heard around me a babble of exclamations and conjectures. Murmurs of interest rose even from our captive band. Then came Slinker's voice, loud with sudden fear:

"Say, you don't suppose the—the Bones would of got away with the rest of the coin somehow, do you?" he demanded.

"Got away with it?" Tony contemptuously thrust aside the possibility. "Got away with it how? He sure didn't leave the island with it, did he? Would he of dug it up from one place just to bury it in another? Huh! Must of wanted to work if he did! Now, my notion is that this happened to one of the guys that was burying the gold, and that the rest jest left him there for a sort of scarecrow to keep other people out of the cave."

"But the gold?" protested Slinker. "They wouldn't leave that for a scarecrow, would they?"

"Maybe not," admitted Tony, "but suppose that feller died awful slow, and went on hollering and clutching at the bags? Well, that cave wouldn't be a pleasant place to stay in, would it? And no one would have the nerve to snatch them bags away to bury 'em, 'cause a dying man, especially when he dies hard, can have an awful grip. So what they done was just to shovel the sand in on the gold—they'd stowed away and light out quick."

If the ingenuity of this reasoning was more remarkable than its logic, the pirates were not the men to find fault with it. Desire is the most eloquent of advocates, and the five ruffians had only to listen to its voice to enjoy in anticipation all the fruits of their iniquitous schemes. The sight

of the golden coins intoxicated them. They played with the doubloons like children, jingling them in their calloused palms, guessing at weight and value, calculating their equivalent in the joy of living. Laughter and oaths resounded.

And now the night that I unutterably dreaded was upon us. But the



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pirates still thought of nothing but the gold. They had exhausted their own portable supplies of liquor, and were fond in their denunciations of our boneyard camp, as they termed it.

It was Tony who intercepted a tentative movement of Capt. Magnus in my direction, and ordered me into the cabin with my aunt and Miss Browne. Through the walls of the hut we heard loud and eager talk of the morrow and its certain golden harvest as the pirates made their dispositions for the night. Then the voices trailed off sleepily and silence succeeded, broken only by the ceaseless murmur of the waves around the island.

CHAPTER XVII.

Of Which Cookie Is the Hero.

Next morning I came out of the hut in time to see Mr. Shaw and his companion in duress led forth from the sleeping quarters which they had shared with their captors. They were moored as before to a palm tree, by a rope having a play of two or three feet, and their hands unbound while they made a hasty breakfast under the eye of a watchful sentinel. Then their wrists were tied again, not painfully, but with a firmness which made any slipping of their bonds impossible.

While the pirates were breakfasting a spirited dispute took place among them as to who should go to the treasure cave and who stay in camp to guard the prisoners. Slinker and Horny urged with justice that, as they had missed all the excitement of the preceding day, it was their turn to visit the cave. The right to see the Bones they passionately claimed. Tony supported them, and it ended with Chris and Captain Magnus being told off as our guards for the morning.

In leaving the cabin I had slipped into my blouse a small penknife which I had found in Aunt Jane's bag. It was quite new, and I satisfied myself that the blades were keen. My own large sheath-knife and my revolver I had once again deprived of at the suggestion of the thoughtful Magnus. I had surrendered them unprotestingly, fearful of all things that my possessions might be ransacked and Peter's diary, though hidden, with much art at the bottom of the bag, he brought to light. For I might yet sell the secret of the Island Queen at a price which should redeem us all.

As the heat increased a voice of lamentation broke from Chris. He was dry—dry enough to drink up the congealed ocean. No, he didn't want spring water, which Cookie obsequiously tendered him; he wanted a drink—wouldn't anybody but a fool nigger know that? There was plenty of the real stuff aboard the schooner, on the other side of the—adjective—Island. Why had they, with incredible lack of forethought, brought along nothing but their pocket flasks? Why hadn't they sent the adjective nigger back for more? Where was the bottle or two that had been rooted out last night from the medical stores? Empty? Every last drop gone down somebody's greedy gullet? The adjectives came thick and fast as Chris hurried the bottle into the bay, where it swam bobbling upon the ripples. Captain Magnus agreed with the gist of Chris' remarks, but deprecated, in a truly philosophical spirit, their unprofitable heat. There wasn't any liquor, so what was the good of making an adjective row? Hadn't he endured the equivalent of Chris' present sufferings for weeks? He was bidding his time, he was. Plenty of drink by and by, plenty of all that makes life soft and easy. He bet there wouldn't many hit any higher spots than him. He bet there was one little girl that would be looked on as lucky, in case she was a good little

girl and encouraged him to show his natural kindness. And I was favored with a blood-curdling leer from across the camp, of which I had put as much as possible between myself and the object of my dread.

But now, like a huge black Gany-mede, appeared Cookie, bearing cups and a large stone crock.

"It suitlyly ain't a fact, Mistah Chris, sah," said Cookie, "dat dey is a mighty unsprituous fluidity 'bout dis yere spring watah. Down war I is come from no pussions of de Four Hund'ed ain't eveh 'customed to partake of such. But the sassiety I has been in lately round dis yere camp ain't of de convulsious ordah; ole Cookie had to keep it dark dat he got his lile drop o' comfort on de side. Dis yere's only home-made stuff, sah. 'Tain't what I could offah to a gennelmuin if so be I is got the makin' of a genuwine old-style jurep what is de beverage of de fust families. But bein' as it is, it am mighty coolin', sah, and it got a lile kick to it—not much, but jes' enough to make a gennelmuin feel lak he is one."

Cookie's tones dripped humility and propitiation. He offered the brimming cup cringingly to the pale-eyed, red-nosed Chris, who reached for it with alacrity, drank deep, smacked his lips meditatively, and after a moment passed the cup back.

"'Tain't so worst," he said approvingly. "Anyhow, it's drink!"

Magnus suddenly began to laugh.

"Stelp me, it's the same dope what laid out the Honorable!" he chortled. "Here, daryk, let's have a swig of it!"

Cookie complied, joining respectfully in the captain's mirth.

"I guess you-all is' got stronger haidz den dat yung gennelmuin!" he remarked. "Dis yere ole niggah has help hisself mighty freely and dat prohibitionist Miss Harding ain't eveh found it out. Fac' is, it am puffyk harmless 'cept when de haid is weak."

False, false Cookie! Black brother in perflly to Mr. Tubbs! One friend the less to be depended on, if a chance for freedom ever came to us!

Cookie refilled the pirates' cups, and set the crock beside them on the ground.

"In case you gennelmuin feels yo'selfs a lile thirsty later on," he remarked. He was retiring, when Captain Magnus called to him.

"Blackie, this ain't bad. It's coolin', but thin—a real nice ladylike sort of drink, I should say. Suppose you take a swig over to Miss Jiny there with my compliments—I'm one to always treat a lady generous if she gives me half a chance."

Obediently Cookie hastened for another cup, set it on a tray, and approached me with his old-time ornate manner. I faced him with a withering look, but, unmindful, he bowed, presenting me the cup, and interposing his bulky person between me and the deeply quaffing pirates. At the same time his voice reached me, pitched in a low and anxious key.

"Fo' de Lawd's sake, Miss Jiny, spill it out! It am mighty powerful dope—it done fumented twice as long as befo'—it am bou' to give dat trash de blind-staggahs sho'tly!"

Instantly I understood, and a thrill of relief and of hope inexpressible shot through me. I put the cup to my lips and after a brief parade of drinking passed it back to Cookie, spilling the contents on the ground en route.

Gradually the rough disjointed talk of the sailors began to languish. Covertly watching, I saw that Chris' head had begun to droop. The hand that held the cup was lifted, stretched out in the direction of the enticing jar, then forgetting its errand fell heavily. After a few spasmodic twitchings of the eyelids and uneasy grunts, Chris slumbered.

Captain Magnus was of tougher fiber. But he, too, grew silent and there was a certain meal-sack limpness about his attitude. His dulled eyes stared dreamily. All at once, with a jerk, he roused himself, turned over and administered to the sleeping Chris a prod with his large boot.

"Hey, there, wake up! What right you got to be asleep at the switch?" But Chris only breathed more heavily.

Captain Magnus himself heaved a tremendous yawn, settled back in greater comfort against his sustaining tree and closed his eyes. I waited, counting the seconds by the beating of the blood in my ears. In the background Cookie hovered apprehensively. Plainly he would go on hovering unless loud snores from the pirates gave him assurance. For myself, I sat fingering my penknife, wondering whether I ought to rush over and plunge it into the sleepers' throats. This would be heroic and practical, but unpleasant. If, on the other hand, I merely tried to free the prisoners and Captain Magnus woke, what then? The palm where they were tied was a dozen yards from me, much nearer to the guards, and within range of even their most languid glance. Beyond the prisoners was Miss Browne, glaring uncomprehendingly over the edge of her book. There was no help in Miss Browne.

I left my seat and stole on feet which seemed to stir every leaf and twig to loud complaint toward the captive pair. Tense, motionless, with burning eyes, they waited. There was a movement from Captain Magnus; he yawned, turned and muttered. I stood stricken, my heart beating with



I Stood Stricken, My Heart Beating With Loud Thumps.

loud thumps against my ribs. But the captain's eyes remained closed.

"Virginia—quick, Virginia!" Dugald Shaw was stretching out his bound hands to me, and I had dropped on my knees before him and begun to cut at the knotted cords. They were tough strong cords, and I was hacking at them feverishly when something bounded across the clearing and flung itself upon me. Crusoe, of course!—and wild with the joy of reunion. I strangled a cry of dismay, and with one hand tried to thrust him off while I cut through the rope with the other.

"Down, Crusoe!" I kept desperately whispering. But Crusoe was unused to whispered orders. He kept bounding up on me, intent to fulfill an unachieved ambition of licking my ear. Cuthbert Vane tried, under his breath to lure him away. But Crusoe's emotions were all for me, and swiftly he coming uncontrollable they burst forth in a volley of shrill yelps.

A loud cry answered them. It came from Captain Magnus, who had scrambled to his feet and was staggering across the clearing. One hand was groping at his belt—it was flourished in the air with the gleam of a knife in it—and staggering and shouting the captain came on.

"Ah, you would, would you? I'll teach you—but first I'll settle him, the porridge-eatin' Scotch swine!"

The reeling figure with the knife was right above me. I sprang up, in my hand the little two-inch weapon which was all I had for my defense—and Dugald Shaw's.

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Lawrence Wells was home for a visit at the W. L. Wells home from Eugene.

Mrs. Jones again accompanied her husband, Lester Jones, when he came to conduct services at the Christian church Sunday.

Miss Gladys Willbanks went home to Albany Monday from a visit here.

Mrs. Kneeland, sister of E. Russ, returned Monday from her visit with their aunt in Portland, who is 83 years old and very feeble.

Warned Over

The following news and other items were omitted last week owing to the physical impossibility of putting them in type on Wednesday and Thursday with other matter that could not be postponed:

Mrs. Harry Park of Brownsville left for Paradise, Kansas, Wednesday, on receipt of a wire saying that her sister, who has long been an invalid, was very low.

The county and state will spend more than \$1,000,000 on roads in Linn county in 1922. Hope we'll be able to see the effect.

Mrs. F. J. Skirvin was an Albany shopper Wednesday.

G. D. Stuckrath of Junction City, who had been visiting at the Harmon home on route 2, went to Albany for the day Wednesday.

Mrs. Emma Morris of Oregon City arrived in Halsey today to be at the bedside of her daughter-in-law, Mrs. Pansy Morris who is very low at Brownsville.

W. A. Carey took his father, B. I. Carey, to Salem the first of the week. He will make his home with his daughter, Mrs. I. E. Harrington, for a while.

Mr. and Mrs. W. P. Wahl were in Albany Wednesday, where they visited the father of the latter, T. F. Smith, who is very ill at the home of his son, A. N. Smith.

W. A. Davenport of Brownsville and W. J. Ribelin of Halsey are among the vice-presidents of the Linn county realty board. Some meetings that will prove interesting to all realty dealers are planned for the coming year, the first of which will be in Lebanon this month or next.

Wednesday evening the first and second teams of the Halsey high school girls played a game of basketball which the first team won. Then the high-school boys played against the All Stars and were beaten 39 to 12.

J. N. Fruit of Crawfordsville went to Corvallis Tuesday to visit a brother. From there he goes to Clements, in the San Joaquin valley, seeking relief in the change of climate from asthma.

N. W. Windom, recent Brownsville bridegroom, went to Harrisburg Tuesday for a stay of a week or so.

William Mills of the Brownsville flouring mills took train Tuesday for his old home in the Coos Bay country to boost his products. He came over with a truckload of his output which was on the way to Albany.

Mrs. D. Taylor took a run to Harrisburg Tuesday.

Ted Mitner left Tuesday for Willamette university at Salem.

Surprise is voiced that fishing and hunting licenses in this county yield more revenue than before the price was increased. The increase amounts to \$1,878.25 over the 1920 figures.

Miss Alice Lasley and Charles Greil were married at the bride's home at Peoria Sunday.

Arthur Filkins of Seio, who was reported as a deserter for evading the draft, has been exonerated by the government. He enlisted in Canada and served in the war.

Mr. and Mrs. Karl Bramwell and children spent new year's day in Eugene with Mr. Bramwell's mother, Mrs. Albert Miller.

Miss Faith Adams got home from Portland Tuesday for a couple of days at her Brownsville home before returning to her school at Reedsport.

G. E. Shorey and wife and child went home to Dallas Monday, after visiting at the W. A. Shorey home.

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T. R. Talent of Brownsville took the train here for Portland Monday. At the same time Miss Rita Talent entrained for Monmouth, where she is a student. Miss Talent had visited at the home of her brother, Oscar Talent.

(To be continued.)

Poison gas is to be banned in war.