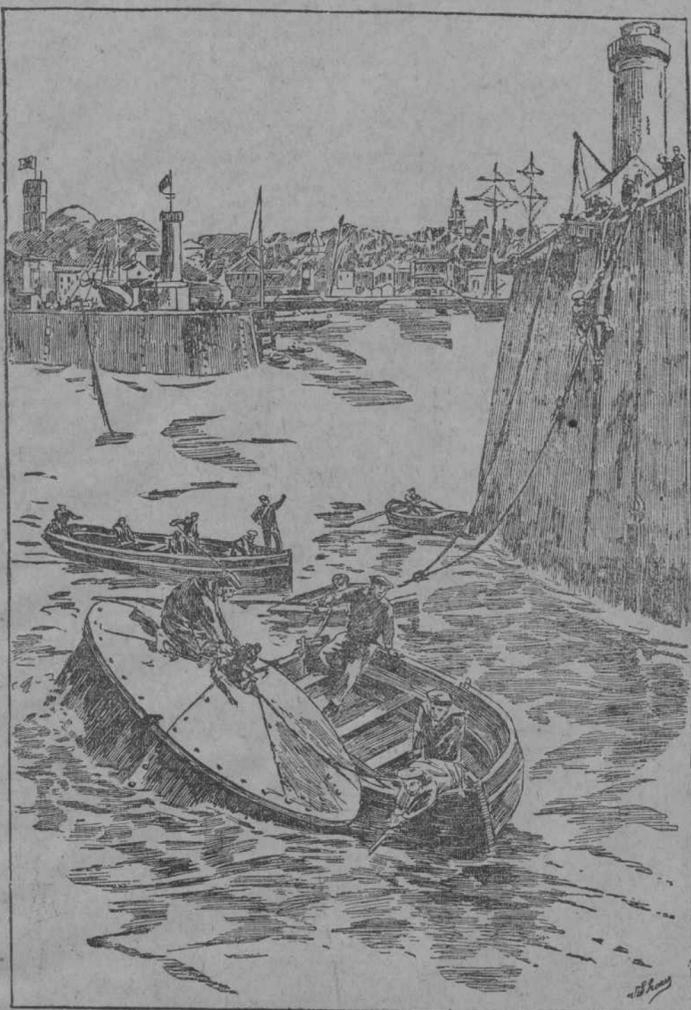


# PROPELLER ISLAND

JULES VERNE'S LATEST NOVEL

AAA  
STORY  
OF  
AMERICAN  
BILLIONAIRES  
AND  
THEIR  
MARVELOUS  
MOVING  
ISLAND  
FIVE  
MILES  
LONG.



Propeller Island Harbor and Installation of Telephonic Cable to America

Jules Verne, the greatest of all imaginative writers, has just finished another marvellous romance. In "Propeller Island" the famous Frenchman's latest, and, perhaps, greatest work, he makes liberal use of the vast fortunes of our American multi-millionaires. The conception of "Propeller Island" in many respects is not unlike Jules Verne's masterpiece, "Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea."

This island of the Verneque fancy is a floating island at sea, made to order for pleasure-seeking American millionaires. Plain, every-day millionaires, of whom the woods in America are so full, would not suffice for so gigantic an undertaking, which required \$500,000,000 of capital, divided into 500 shares of \$1,000,000 each.

An ordinary island, stuck fast to mother earth, would not do for these sybaritic novelty-hunters, so they got together the best engineering brains of America and demanded an artificial island that could be shifted about from point to point as desired, just as the desert Arab can fold up his tent and sink away silently to some other spot.

The beauty of this was that whenever, for any reason—heat, cold, storms, ennui, or a desire for adventure and new scenes—the inhabitants wished to move away, all they had to do was to notify the engineers, and the island would quickly get up steam and go bounding over the waves with the ease, if not the speed and grace, of a transatlantic liner.

The engineers hit upon the ingenious idea of a huge propeller island, which was in reality a gigantic yesso-ely, operated on scientific principles, and successfully defying all known forces of nature as usually applied to things that float. Only by reason of the wonderful mechanical achievements of the nineteenth century was this floating island realized. Its capital was Billion City, an appropriate name, because only men of the Gould, Vanderbilt and Astor class could afford to enjoy its privileges. The circumference of this multi-millionaires' Utopia was about eleven miles—five miles long and three miles wide.

HOW THE ISLAND WAS MADE.  
Six years before the time when the story begins an American company, under the title of the "Standard Island Company," had been organized, with a capital of \$500,000,000 in 500 shares of \$1,000,000, for the construction of an artificial island which should offer to the nabobs of the United States all the advantages, comforts and pleasures not attending fixed residence on shore. The shares are speedily placed, so numerous in America are the immense fortunes amassed by railroad deals and banking operations by striking oil and dealing in pickled pork, says Jules Verne. It takes four years to build the island. The island is sometimes called "Standard Island" and sometimes "Propeller Island."

It is now in order to give the details of the wonderful machinery which enabled the island to always push out the most pleasant spots on the Pacific Ocean, and to move itself from one part of the earth to another.

Standard Island is an island of steel plates, and the strength of the hull is in proportion to the weight which it is intended to carry. It is composed of 270,000 separate compartments, each of these being 11 feet high and 30½ feet long and broad. These compartments, held firmly

together by bolts and rivets, ultimately form an oval island four miles long and three miles wide, with a circumference of eleven miles. The hull is immersed to a depth of thirty feet and rises twenty-one feet above the water line. The volume of Standard Island amounts to a total of 15,000,000,000 cubic feet, and the displacement to about three-fifths of the volume, or 9,000,000,000 cubic feet.

All below the water line is covered with a preparation long vainly sought for by ship owners which prevents barnacles, etc., from fastening themselves to the hull. Incidentally we are informed that the inventor of this preparation retired from business as a billionaire.

The foundation of the island is fully secured against any mishap, the steel hull being throughout strengthened by ponderous crossbeams, and the greatest possible care being taken in riveting and bolting.

Special docks have to be provided to make the construction of this immense vessel possible. For this purpose the Standard Island Company buys all the land on Madeleine Bay, in Lower California, and there the work is carried to successful completion under the supervision of the famous William Ferson, who unfortunately died shortly after seeing the structure afloat. Ever after Madeleine Bay serves as a refuge for Standard Island. There subsequently all the repairs are made.

The steel foundation—the hull, so to speak—is covered with a deep layer of rich earth, except that portion reserved for the city. This stratum suffices for ample lawns, flower and vegetable gardens, meadows and a few small groves. It does not seem advisable to try to raise beets and the like on this right tight little Paradise, since arrangements have been made for regular supplies of fresh meat, but care is taken to insure a plentiful home supply of milk, eggs and poultry.

### ALL THE COMFORTS OF HOME.

Three-fourths of the ground of Propeller Island—i. e., about eight square miles—is given over to gardening or transformed into lawns. The latter are resplendent in deepest emerald green all the year round, while the gardens produce vegetables and fruit of almost incredible size. These results are partly due to "electroculture"—i. e., to the promotion of growth by the application of electrical currents. Of course, money is no object when the aim is to maintain the reputation of Propeller Island as "the Jewel of the Pacific Ocean."

The capital, Billion City, covers about one-fifth of the "deck," or about two square miles, and has a circumference of over five miles. It forms an oval, divided into halves by a central street—First Avenue. At one end is an observatory and at the other end rises the imposing City Hall, or Court House. The latter contains the offices for the heads of the various departments of the island government.

After the completion of the metallic foundation, buildings rise as if by magic along the lines marked out for streets and avenues—magnificent as well as plain dwelling houses, retail stores, churches and temples, but no sky-scraping tenements of twenty-seven stories. The building material is light and strong—mostly aluminum, since that metal is incorrodible and seven times lighter than iron. In combination with the metals cement blocks are used, and sometimes also hollow glass blocks, bound together by very thin layers of mortar, so that those who wish may live in a veritable glass house.

The Standard Island Company owns the

because his spring of life, wound up in the long ago, has run down, and there is no help for it.

Of course, to insure safety while roaming over the vast expanse of the Pacific, means of defence cannot be overlooked. A troop of fifty soldiers, under the command of Colonel Stewart, keeps faithful guard. This militia receives high pay. In fact, a private on the island gets more than a colonel in Europe.

The police are not strong in numbers. Why should they be, in this abode of peace and order? No one can settle down on the island without permission of the authorities. Day and night vigilant Custom House officers patrol the "coasts." Entrance is possible only at the harbors. If any resident happens to transgress, justice overtakes him swiftly, and at the first opportunity he finds himself cast on more inhospitable shores, never again to return to glorious Standard Island.

ARRIVAL OF SUPPLY STEAMERS.  
The island has two harbors, one on each side—Larboard Harbor and Starboard Harbor. These harbors being on opposite sides, an interruption of communication with the outside world is simply impossible. If the weather makes landing in one harbor impossible, the other may be entered in safety.

It is in these harbors that the necessary supplies are landed—coal oil by special steamers, flour, wine, beer, spirits, tea, coffee, chocolate, spices, canned goods, etc., also cattle, sheep and hogs from the American markets—in short, anything and everything which even the most fastidious gourmet may desire. Likewise dry goods and notions, and all those things on which the heart of dude or society queen are set arrive at regular intervals, in bewildering variety. All goods are bought through the middlemen on Propeller Island, and the prices are naturally very steep.

The question may be asked: How can steamers ply regularly between the American coast and this island with propellers, which moves in any direction, and is here to-day and twenty miles away to-morrow? The answer is very simple. The changes of location are in strict adherence to a programme mapped out by the Supreme Council, who are guided by the advice of the meteorologists. The island's course is over that part of the Pacific within which are found the most charming groups of islands, and where there is almost no change in temperature.

Hence Callista Munbar could rightly say: "Winter? Don't know it."

Propeller Island moves only between 35 degrees north latitude and 35 degrees south latitude, an area of about 1,400 sea miles. But even if the supply steamers are not informed of the whereabouts of the floating paradise, they can easily find it.

It is quite natural that these Billion City aristocrats should wish to be independent of all the rest of the world. Therefore, in order that they may not have to use any of the twenty-five cables of the Eastern Extension Australia and China

may be expected from it.

So to the electricians is delegated the task of providing a suitable means of propulsion. Of course they solve. The plants suffice to set in motion dynamos of almost unlimited power. These dynamos drive an immense system of propellers placed near the two harbors. Each plant develops 5,000,000 horse power, the hundreds of boilers being heated with fuel in the shape of petroleum bricks, which take up less room than coal, but develop far more heat than the latter.

The most tremendous waves, the fiercest storms, have no effect on the island. There is no motion to produce seasickness, and there is a faint vibration due to the rotation of the screw propellers. With a sharp prow, 200 feet in length, at either end, the island cuts through the waves without difficulty and without noticeable shock.

Of course the electric energy developed by the dynamos serves other purposes also. It illumines city, park and "country," and fills the lighthouses with fountains of light which flood the waters for miles around, thus making collision absolutely impossible. The dynamos furnish the branch currents applied to telegraphic, telephonic, tele-phonographic and telephonic purposes, and supply electricity for private houses, stores, etc. They feed the artificial moons of 5,000 candle power each.

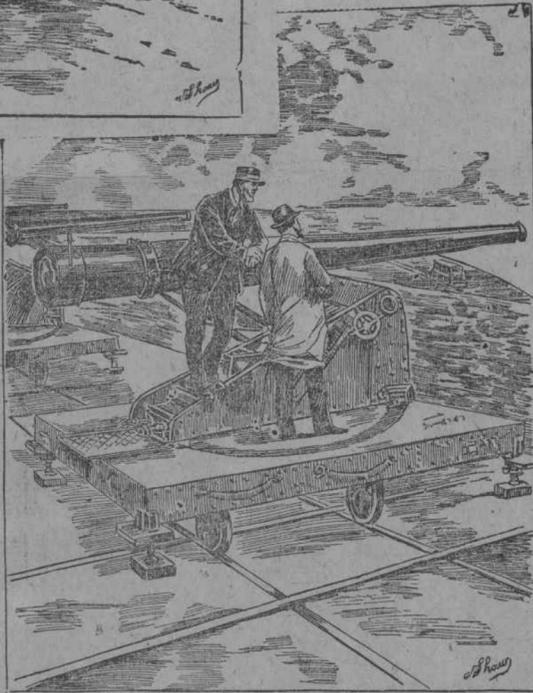
### A DISMAL END AT LAST.

This, then, is the world's eighth wonder, that masterpiece of human intellect—an achievement worthy of the twentieth century. Strange are the adventures of the inhabitants of Standard Island, and strange is the catastrophe which destroys this abode of splendor.

It comes about in this way: The Governor of the island has died. Now, though the Propeller Island is meant to be an isle of peace, party hatred somehow rises in the breasts of these children of the twentieth century. Two cliques nominate different candidates. At first the competition is a decorous one, but very soon the waves of party hatred run high, and Billion City is threatened with civil war.

But the unexpected happens: Each of the warring factions takes possession of one of the monster motors, and consequently of one of the monster propellers. One party wants to go to New Zealand, and the other to the Sandwich Islands, so it happens that the machines operate in opposite directions. Slowly the island begins to turn around its own axis; then faster—faster—faster! Centrifugal force puts in its work by loosening the structure, and a terrific tornado, happening to have business in that locality at that time, makes destruction complete.

The city of the billionnaires goes to pieces, is irredeemably lost, but the author kindly permits the poor rich folks to escape with their lives. "Propeller Island" is unquestionably one of Jules Verne's best productions.



Coast Battery on Propeller Island,

whole property, all the inhabitants, however rich, being only renters. Nevertheless, nothing is omitted which is necessary to the comfort of these immensely rich Americans—a class alongside of whom the sovereigns of Europe and the nabobs of India play only a secondary role.

From the very beginning the venture proves profitable. Horses and apartments are rented at fabulous prices, sometimes reaching nearly \$1,000,000, competition being brisk because of the number of families able to spend so much annually for such luxurious homes. From this source alone the company makes a fair profit. So it is apparent that the capital of the island fully deserves its name of Billion City.

After the first families there arrive several hundred new families, who pay a yearly rent of from \$20,000 to \$40,000, and who have to be content with more modest surroundings. The rest of the population consists of teachers, commission merchants, employes and domestics; foreigners are rare, and no permission is given them to settle down anywhere on the island.

### AN IDEAL CITY.

The number of lawyers being small, lawsuits are almost unheard of. Doctors being even more scarce than lawyers, the death rate falls to a ridiculously low figure. But then, it must not be forgotten that every inhabitant possesses a full knowledge of his constitution, of his inner muscular force, measured with the dynamometer; of his lung capacity, determined by means of the spirometer; of the condition of his heart, as shown by the sphygmometer, and of his general vitality, recorded on the magnetometer.

The city has no saloons, cafés or restaurants, no fast set, no drunkards. The city furnishes electric energy, light, mechanical power, heat, compressed air, chilled air, cold air, hydraulic power, and forwards pneumatic telegrams and telephone messages very promptly.

If anybody dies on this island, shielded from all climatic inclemencies and quizzed against attack from microbes, it is simply

because his spring of life, wound up in the long ago, has run down, and there is no help for it.

Of course, to insure safety while roaming over the vast expanse of the Pacific, means of defence cannot be overlooked. A troop of fifty soldiers, under the command of Colonel Stewart, keeps faithful guard. This militia receives high pay. In fact, a private on the island gets more than a colonel in Europe.

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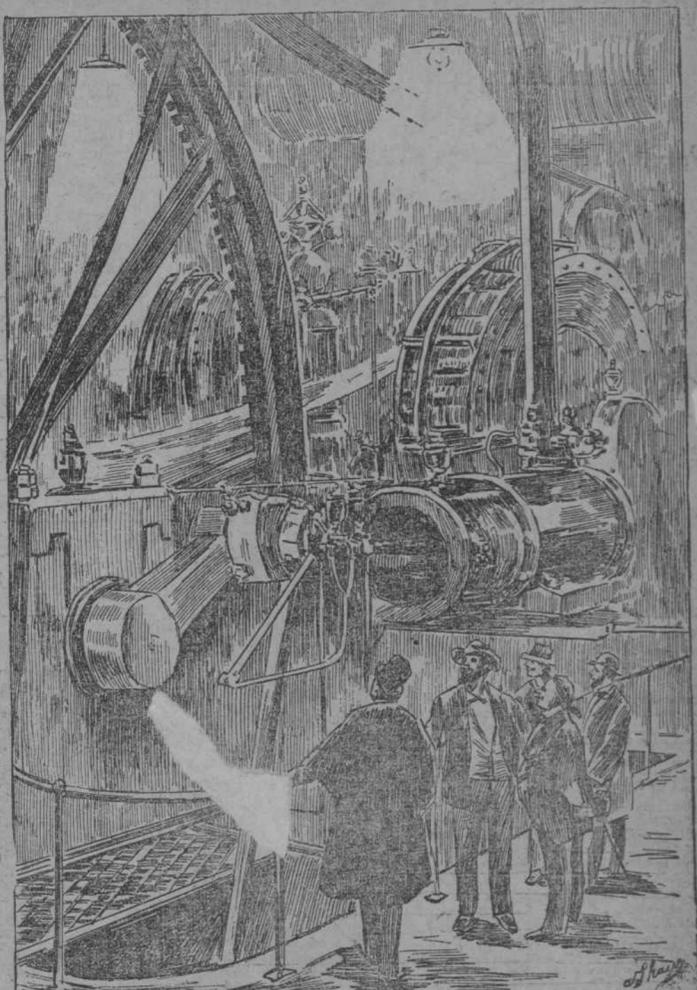
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Electricity, the soul of the universe, has made such progress that almost anything



In the Machine Room at Propeller Island.



Propeller Island from the Sea.



The Final Destruction of Propeller Island.