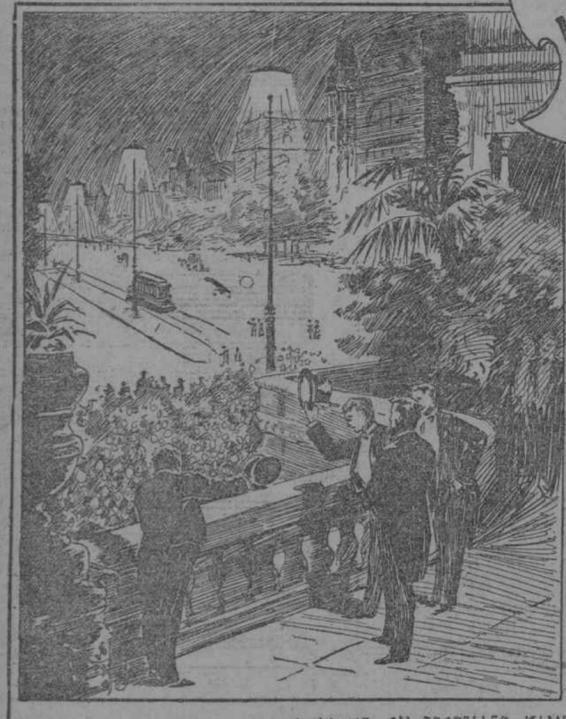


# PROPELLER ISLAND

## BY JULES VERNE

### STORY OF AMERICAN BILLIONAIRES



A SCENE - ON - PROPELLER - ISLAND

The Sunday Journal last Sunday printed a review of Jules Verne's new book, "Propeller Island." During the past week many letters have been received at this office asking the Journal to publish the book in full. For this reason, the Journal begins to-day the publication of this remarkable story, in the first installment of three chapters.

#### CHAPTER I.

WHEN a journey commences ill, it is rare that it has a happy ending. Such, at least, was the opinion of the four musicians when they picked themselves up with bruised bodies and bleeding hands and surveyed their overturned coach, with its insensible driver lying a few steps from the other dying, beside the rough mountain road. Instinctively they assured themselves that they could in no gathering darkness that their precious instruments were uninjured, and then hastened to the aid of their driver, who speedily regained his speech under the stimulus of a mighty draught of gin. It was a miracle that they had not all been killed, for at this point the road was at its steepest, and to one side yawned an abyss from whose black depths rose in the still night air the subdued roar of a mountain torrent.

The four musicians, who called themselves the "Concert Quartette," and were famous all over the United States, were travelling from San Francisco to San Diego. There had been a railroad accident a hundred miles from the latter place, and they had been compelled to finish their journey by stage, and were at least twenty miles from their destination.

But why should four famous musicians, Parisians by birth at that, be travelling in these uncharted regions of Lower California? At the period of which we write the United States of America had more than a hundred stars upon its flag. They were in the fulness of their industrial and commercial power, and had annexed the Dominion of Canada to the uttermost limits of the Polar Sea. The provinces to the southwest were theirs, too—Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, Costa Rica—all to where the Panama Canal severed the isthmus. The development of artistic sentiment had kept pace with the increase of national wealth. The citizens bought with pounds of gold the priceless art treasures of the Old World, and filled with them their great public and private galleries. The greatest lyric and dramatic artists and musicians were imported at any figure they chose to demand. There was a veritable craze for the music by composers who had lived in the latter half of the nineteenth century, and at the time of which we write the best instrumentalists were being paid at so much a note, twenty dollars for the whole ones, ten dollars for the halves, and so on.

It was because of this, therefore, that these four famous Parisians had been induced to leave their native land and to travel in the vast republic which lay across the sea.

Yvernes, the first violin, was a man of thirty-two, a little above the average height, blond of hair and dark of eye, a bit of a power, and addicted to the wearing of top hats and the draping of long cloaks about his figure. He was an artist to his finger tips and a virtuoso with a splendid future. Frascolin was the name of the second violin. He was thirty and had a tendency to obesity. In the clear space between his curling forest of dark hair and beard two black eyes sparkled through a pince-nez which never left his nose. He was a trifle envious of the success of his comrade, Yvernes, and, though a fine musician himself, was too indolent to seek to equal him.

The third violinist was Pinchinat, and, though he was the youngest of the four, he was always the "royal highness" of the quartet. Though he was twenty-seven, he was still the same incorrigible Parisian gambler that he had been a score of years

before, with a supply of jokes and good humor that was never failing. The leader was Sebastien Zorn, the chiefest of the quartet in talent, as well as age, for he was fifty-five. A round little man, with thick sandy hair and pointed beard, with mild spectacled eyes and much befringed fingers. He played the violoncello.

Such were the four Parisians who found themselves on a deserted mountain road in Lower California about 8 o'clock in the evening, with the prospect of having to drag their aching bones over five rough miles to Freschal, which their injured driver said was the nearest village. The driver was too badly hurt to walk, and so they made a comfortable couch of blankets, gave him three of their flasks of gin and left him lying contentedly beside his coach with the promise that they would send him a wagon from Freschal as soon as they arrived.

The road they had to traverse in the darkness they soon found to be a fearsome one, and Pinchinat's tales of robbers and of the savage beasts that infested the vast forests that lined the path were far from reassuring. But Freschal was reached at last, about 11 o'clock. There was not a sign of life in the two score wooden huts that made up the settlement, and after they had knocked at a half a dozen doors without eliciting a response they gave up and the four stood in the middle of the street despairing. Suddenly Pinchinat exclaimed:

"Let us wake these peasants with a vigorous concert. Something loud and lively. The quartet of Onslow's in B flat. Allons. A measure for nothing."

The instruments were out of their cases in a twinkling, and in an instant more the air was filled with such an appealing harmony as none but the deaf or dead might resist. But no four opened, and after a moment's pause the four dashed into one of Wagner's melodies with all the strength of their arms, each playing off the key by design.

Lights began to shine at the windows one after another, but before any of the occupants appeared the quartet were aware of an unexpected addition to their unseen audience. An electric carriage rolled up, and a stoutly built man stepped down and greeted them in perfect French.

"I am a dilettante, messieurs, and have had the good fortune to hear your music. Permit me to say that I have never heard musicians play so false with such perfection. Permit me to offer you my hospitality. If I mistake not, I see before me the renowned Concert Quartet."

"And this hospitality," burst in Frascolin, "where shall we find it, thanks to you? Here?"

"Two miles from here."  
"In another village?"  
"No. In an important city."  
"But there is none nearer than San Diego."  
"That is an error, messieurs. If you will do me the honor to accompany me, I will promise a welcome worthy of even such great artists as you."

"But we are to appear at San Diego day after to-morrow," spoke up Sebastien Zorn. "You need not miss your concert here," replied the stranger, "for I will see to it that you reach San Diego in ample time. Let us start at once. In twenty minutes we will arrive, and I am sure you will thank me."

Thereupon the four artists climbed into the electric car, a lever was raised, the accumulators began their work, and they were speeding away toward the coast. A quarter of an hour later they saw a vast

pale light shining in the distance, and perceived the outlines of a city of whose existence the Frenchmen had never heard or suspected. The car reached the border of the sea and stopped, and they saw that the city was on an island lying some distance out in the water. A ferry-boat, of the kind so common in the United States, was at

entirely to commerce, and others to handsome residences of the finest and most varied architectural types. "There are thirty avenues in all," said Callistus Munbar, "and the one we are now traversing is our Broadway, our Regent street, our Boulevard des Italiens. In these shops one may find every specialty and every necessity—everything that modern luxury or comfort can demand." "I see the shops," remarked Pinchinat, "but where are the buyers?" "All business is done by the telephone or the telegraph," responded Munbar. "The telegraph transmits writing as the telephone does words. There is also the kinetograph, which is to the eye what the

"West—if you like," answered Munbar, with a curious smile. "West—if you like?" repeated the first violin, with surprise. "Do the points of the compass vary to suit each individual taste?" "Yes—and no," replied Munbar. "But I will explain that later. Before we leave this section I would add that people can attend church if they like by telephone. We also marry in that way, and by the telegraph, and likewise obtain divorces." All the afternoon they traversed the city with their guide, who kept up a steady flow of explanation and description. "Here is the Coverly palace. Nat Coverly is about equal in wealth to Jen Tankerton. He is an ex-banker from New Orleans and has a

the ocean. "What island is this?" they demanded in amazement. "Standard Island."

#### CHAPTER III.

Standard Island was an island with a Propeller, and Billion City was its capital. Six years before the events narrated in this history took place the Standard Island Company, limited, had been formed, with a capital of \$500,000,000, with shares at \$1,000,000 apiece. It was formed for the purpose of constructing an artificial island which might be propelled to any part of the ocean where the climate was the most healthful. The shares were quickly taken by men of vast wealth, wealth which they had accumulated in operations in railroads, in banks, in oil and in pork.

Standard Island took four years to construct, and was an isle of steel, composed of 270,000 caissons, each 53 feet high and 32 feet square. All these caissons riveted together formed an oval mass of steel, four and three-tenths miles long, three and one-tenth wide, and a little over eleven miles in circumference. It rose twenty feet above the surface of the water. Its submerged part was covered with a preservative coating (which made a millionaire of its inventor), which prevented it from becoming foul with the vegetable and animal life of the sea.

This gigantic bulk of steel was constructed in Madeleine Bay, on the coast of old California, almost within the limits of the Tropic of Cancer, and was the work of the celebrated William Tersen, who died a few months after it was finished.

This steel shell, after being firmly riveted together, was covered with the most fertile soil, in order to raise vegetables and sustenance for the various animals which could not easily be imported, and especially for the purpose of maintaining a sufficient number of cows to insure a supply of fresh milk. By means of electric currents in the soil it was possible to produce stupendous crops.

Billion City occupied about a fifth of the entire surface. In the centre of the town stood the City Hall, in which were all the administrative offices which had charge of the government of the ten thousand inhabitants, all natives of the United States. The building materials employed in the edifices were light and strong, aluminum and bricks of glass being the principal. The island and all upon it was the property of the company, and those who lived there were but its tenants.

The rentals were fabulous, some of the palaces bringing several millions a year, and the cheapest being eagerly sought for at \$40,000 per annum. There were a few professors, furnishers, employes and domestic servants, but so universal was the use of electricity that their numbers were small. There were few lawyers and less doctors; the death rate, therefore, had become ridiculously low. Besides, each inhabitant knew exactly his constitution, his muscular force was measured by the dynamometer, his lungs by the spirometer, his heart contraction by the sphygmometer, and his degree of vital force by the magnetometer. Nothing provoked an alcoholic thirst in Billion City, and there were no drunkards or saloons. If any one died in this happy isle it was because their life machinery had run down with the weight of years.

Practical dangers might be encountered in the Pacific, and so there was an army of 500 men, each of whom was better paid than any European general. There were few police, for the residents of the island were chosen with care, but if a misdoer was discovered he was promptly deported to some distant shore from whence it would be impossible for him to return to Standard Island.

There were two harbors, Larboard and Starboard, one at each extremity, so that if the sea were rough at one end when supply ships arrived, they could enter the other haven and find there no wind. These supply ships came at stated intervals, bringing the choicest of foods and luxuries from every market of the world.

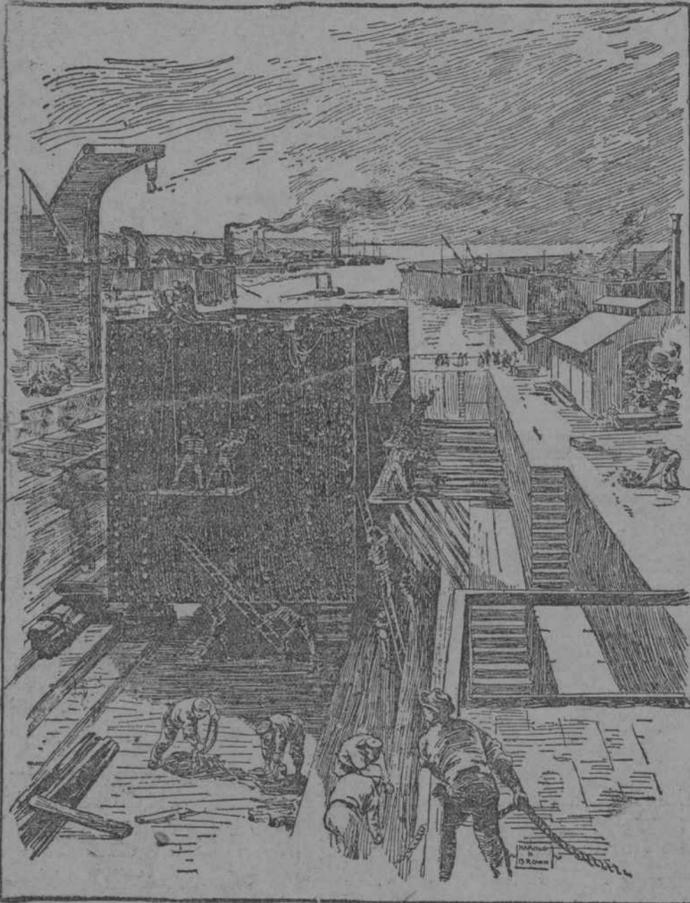
The course which Standard Island followed in its majestic march back and forth across the Pacific was well defined. It lay among the most beautiful archipelagoes, and was regulated by daily observations made by a corps of meteorologists, so as to always be in the most favorable climate. The island never went north of the thirty-fifth parallel of latitude above, or south of the thirty-fifth below the equator; from east to west its course was some 1,400 marine leagues in length.

The island was also constantly in electrical touch with the great continents and cities of the world, by means of a system of buoys and submarine cables running to Madeleine Bay. Sweet water was manufactured artificially in vast quantities, and it was absolutely free from the millions of microbes which make poisonous the purest springs of earth.

There was no need for haste when the Standard Islanders traversed the Pacific, and the speed of the structure was but twenty miles a day at best. Electricity was the motive power that drove the great propellers at the ends of the island. The five million horse-power engines were fed with compressed petroleum, and sent the vast structure through the water at an even pace, so that the shock of the waves or the jar of the mighty engines could barely be felt. It was electricity that was the servant of the inhabitants in a thousand ways. It lit even the great artificial moon that hung above the island in the tropic, starlit night.

Such was the eighth wonder of the world, the chef-d'oeuvre of human genius, worthy of the twentieth century, and which was to bear the four Parisians on its third voyage to the Western Pacific.

(CONTINUED NEXT SUNDAY.)



Building a Water-Tight Compartment.

photograph is to the ear, and the telephoto, which transmits pictures. We can even sign treaties electrically."

They reached another street, where there was nothing but residences, and here they saw electric cars moving with great rapidity, but without the slightest noise or dust. Before one of the palaces Munbar paused. "One of the principal notables of the city lives here," he said; "Jen Tankerton, owner of inexhaustible mines of petroleum in Illinois, the richest and, consequently, the most honored of our citizens."

"A millionaire?" queried Sebastien Zorn. "Pooh!" responded Callistus Munbar. "The million is to us like the current dollar with others, and here we count only by the hundred millions. There is none in this city who is not the richest of nabobs." "But are there no workers, no manufacturers?" demanded Pinchinat. "None. When there is need of labor the men come, and when their work is done they go away, well paid."

"But the beggars and their almshouses, the criminals and their jails?" asked Sebastien Zorn.

"The place is not accessible to mendicants nor to criminals." "One would believe that we are no longer in America," remarked Zorn with a smile. "You were yesterday," replied Munbar, with strange emphasis; "but you are to-day in an independent city, a free city, subject to no laws but its own."

"And its name?" broke in Zorn. "Its name?" slowly answered Munbar. "I will tell you its name when you have seen it all."

They had now reached another avenue, whose houses were less pretentious than those they had already seen. "In this quarter," explained Munbar, "people of moderate means reside—people whose incomes are only ten or twelve millions."

"Poor devils!" said Pinchinat in an aside to his companions. "There are about a thousand different religions on the earth," said Callistus Munbar, as he waved his hand toward a church standing amid some trees, "but there are only two faiths within this city—Protestantism and Catholicism. We speak English and French only. The city is divided into two sections, one for each religion."

"We are in the western section now, I think," said Frascolin, glancing at the sun,

many hundreds of millions as fingers on each hand. He and Tankerton are enemies.

"This river at our left (indicating a winding stream) is of hygienic water, free from all impurities. Water is distributed with artificial currents in the soil to nourish the plants and trees. We know no changing climates, no tornadoes or cyclones; it is always Summer here. Here (pointing to a vast machine) is what generates our electricity, and there the great electric annuities of our shore batteries. That is our flag (and Munbar took off his hat respectfully.)

The flag was like that of the United States, save that but a single star shone upon its azure field. "Let us ascend in the conservatory, so that you may have a view of the entire city," said Munbar at last, in the afternoon. They entered an electric car and shot up 300 feet into the air. When the four Parisians stepped out upon the platform at the top and gave a glance about them, they uttered a cry of surprise and rage, for they saw in the distance 101 of the California coast, but on every hand, far as their eyes could reach, naught but the blue waters of



Propeller Island in the Harbor of Hawaii.