The Bishop Murder Case

A PHILO VANCE STORY

BY S. S. VAN DINE

SYNOPSIS.

A man known as Cock Robin is shot through the heart with an arrow. The body is found on the archery range beside the home of Professor Dillard, where Robin was well known. The crime seems to be the intentional dramatization of the old nursery rhyme, "Who killed Cock Robin?" District Attorney Markham is puzzled by the apparently senseless circumstances attending it and asks the aid of Philo Vance, wealthy young bachelor who dabbles in the solving of unusual mysteries. The police get on the trail of Sperling the last man known to have been with Robin.

CHAPTER III.

"What have you done about Sperling?" asked Markham.

"I got his address—he lives in a country house up Westchester way—and sent a coupla men to bring him here as soon as they could lay hands on him. Then I talked to the two servants—the old fellow that let you in, and his daughter, a middle-aged woman who does the cooking. But neither of 'em seemed to know anything, or else they're acting dumb. After that I tried to question the young lady of the house." The Sergeant raised his hands in a gesture of irritated despair. "But she was all broke up and crying; so I thought I'd let you have the pleasure of interviewing her. Snitkin and Burke," he jerked his thumb toward the two detectives by the front window, "went over the basement and the alley and back yard trying to pick up something; but drew a blank. And that's all I know so far. As soon as Doremus and the fingerprint men get here, and after I've had a heart to heart talk with Sperling, then I'll get the ball to rolling and clean up the works."

Vance heaved an audible sigh.

"You're so sanguine, Sergeant! Don't be disappointed if your ball turns out to be a parallelopiped that won't roll. There's something deuced oddish about this nursery extravaganza; and, unless all the omens deceive me, you'll be playing blind man's buff for a long time to come."

"Yeh?" Heath gave Vance a look of despondent shrewdness. It was evident he was more or less of the same opinion.

"Don't let Mr. Vance dishearten you, Sergeant," Markham rallied him. "He's permitting his imagination to run away with him." Then with an impatient gesture he turned toward the door. "Let's look over the ground before the others arrive. Later I'll have a talk with Professor Dillard and the other members of the household. And, by the way, Sergeant, you didn't mention Mr. Arnesson. Isn't he at home?"

"He's at the university; but he's expected to return soon."

Markham nodded and followed the Sergeant into the main hall. As we passed down the heavily-carpeted passage to the rear, there was a sound on the staircase, and a clear but somewhat tremulous woman's voice spoke from the semi-darkness above.

"Is that you, Mr. Markham? Uncle thought he recognized your voice. He's waiting for you in the library."

"I'll join your uncle in a very few minutes, Miss Dillard." Markham's tone was paternal and sympathetic. "And please wait with him, for I want to see you, too."

With a murmured acquiescence, the girl disappeared round the head of the stairs.

We moved to the rear door of the lower hall. Beyond was a narrow passageway, terminating in a flight of wooden steps which led to the basement. At the foot of these steps we came into a large, low-ceilinged room with a door giving directly upon the areaway at the west side of the house. This door was slighly ajar and in the opening stood the man from the Homicide Bureau whom Heath had set to guard the body.

The room had obviously once been a basement storage; but it had been altered and redecorated, and now served as a sort of club room. The cement floor was covered with fibre rugs, and one entire wall was painted with a panorama of archers throughout the ages. There were a piano and a phonograph in the room; numerous comfortable wicker chairs; a varicolored divan; an enormous wicker centre-table littered with all manner of sports magazines; and a small bookcase filled with works on archery. Several targets rested in one corner, their gold discs and concentric chromatic rings making brilliant splashes of color in the sunlight which flooded in from the two rear windows. One wall space near the door was hung with long bows of varying sizes and weights; and near them was a large old-fashioned tool-chest. Above it was suspended a small cupboard or ascham, strewn with various odds and ends of tackle, such as bracers, shooting gloves, piles, points of aim, and bow strings. A large oak panel between the door and the west window contained a display of one of the most interesting and varied collections of arrows I had ever seen.

This panel attracted Vance particularly, and adjusting his monocle carefully, he strolled over to it.

"Hunting and war arrows," he remarked. "Most inveiglin' . . . Ah! One of the trophies seems to have disappeared. Taken down with considerable haste, too. The little brass brad that held it in place is shockingly bent."

On the floor stood several quivers filled with target arrows. He leaned over and, withdrawing one, extended it to Markham.

"This frail shaft does not look as if it would penetrate the human breast; but target arrows will drive entirely through a deer at eighty yards. . . . Why, then, the missing hunting arrow from the panel? An interestin' point."

Markham frowned and compressed his lips; and I realized that he had been clinging to the forlorn hope that the tragedy might have been an accident. He tossed the arrow hopelessly on a chair, and walked toward the outer door.

"Let's take a look at the body and the lie of the land," he said gruffly.

As we emerged into the warm spring sunlight a sense of isolation came over me. The narrow paved areaway in which we stood seemed like a canyon between steep stone walls. It was four or five feet below the street level, which was reached by a short flight of steps leading to the gate in the wall. The blank, windowless rear wall of the apartment house opposite extended upwards for 150 feet; and the Dillard house itself, though only four storeys high, was the equivalent of six stories gauged by the architectural measurements of today. Though we were standing out of doors in the heart of New York, no one could see us except from the few side windows of the Dillard house and from a single bay window of the house on 76th St., whose rear yard adjoined that of the Dillard grounds.

This other house, we were soon to learn, was owned by a Mrs. Drukker; and it was destined to play a vital and tragic part in the solution of Robin's murder. Several tall willow trees acted as a mask to its rear windows; and only the bay window at the side of the house had an unobstructed view of that part of the areaway in which we stood.

I noticed that Vance had his eye on this bay window, and as he studied it I saw a flicker of interest cross his face. It was not until much later that afternoon that I was able to guess what had caught and held his attention.

The archery range extended from the wall of the Dillard lot on 75th Street all the way to a similar street wall of the Drukker lot on 76th Street, where a butt of hay bales had been erected on a shallow bed of sand. The distance between the two walls was 200 feet, which, as I learned later, made possible a sixty-yard range, thus permitting target practice for all the standard archery events with the one exception of the York Round for men.

The Dillard lot was 135 feet deep, the depth of the Drukker lot therefore being sixty-five feet. A section of the tall ironwork fence that separated the two rear yards had been removed where it had once transected the space now used for the archery range. At the further end of the range, backing against the western line of the Drukker property, was another tall apartment house occupying the corner of 76th Street and Riverside Drive. Between these two gigantic buildings ran a narrow alleyway, the range end of which was closed with a high board fence in which had been set a small door with a lock.

The body of Robin lay almost directly outside of the orchery-room door. It was on its back, the arms extended, the legs slightly drawn up, the head pointing toward the 76th Street end of the range. Robin had been a man of perhaps thirty-five, of medium height, and with an incipient corpulency. There was a rotund puffiness to his face, which was smooth-shaven except for a narrow blond moustache. He was clothed in a two-piece sport suit of light gray flannel a pale-blue silk shirt, and tan Oxfords with thick rubber soles. His hat, a pearl-colored felt fedora, was lying near his feet.

Beside the body was a large pool of coagulated blood which had formed in the shape of a huge pointing hand. But the thing which held us all in a spell of fascinated horror was the slender shaft that extended vertically from the left side of the dead man's breast. The arrow protruded perhaps twenty inches, and where it had entered the body there was the large dark stain of the hemorrhage. What made this strange murder seem even more incongruous were the beautifully fletched feathers on the arrow. They had been dyed a bright red; and about the shaftment were two stripes of turquoise blue, giving the arrow a gala appearance. I had a feeling of unreality about the tragedy, as though I were witnessing a scene in a sylvan play for children.

Vance stood looking down at the body with half-closed eyes, his hands in his coat pockets. Despite the apparent indolence of his attitude I could tell that he was keenly alert, and that his mind was busy co-ordinating the factors of the scene before him.

"Dashed queer, that arrow," he commented. "Designed for big game; . . . undoubtedly belongs to that ethnological exhibit we just saw. And a clean hit—directly into the vital spot, between the ribs and without the slightest deflection. Extrordin'ry! . . I say, Markham; such marksmanship isn't human. A chance shot might have done it; but the slayer of this johnny wasn't leaving anything to chance. That powerful hunting arrow, which was obviously wrenched from the panel inside, shows premeditation and design—" Suddenly he bent over the body. "Ah! Very interestin'. The nock of the arrow is broken down—I doubt if it would even hold a taut string." He turned to Heath. "Tell me, Sergeant; where did Professor Dillard find the bow?—not far from that club-room window, what?"

(To be continued.)

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ISSUE No. 47—'30

Skunk's Character Is Cruelly Maligned

A woodchuck is a fat thief, as dangerous to a farm garden as a host of locusts; yet even the farmer's son has a sneaking affection for the 'chuck, and a sneaking respect for anything fat which can move so fast. All the squirrels—red and gray and chipmunks alike—are skinny thieves; yet we love them. The poets include wild mice within their zones of romantic interest, and every one, except the farmer who catches them in his orchard, feels a warm glow of enthusiasm at sight of a deer. Henry Williamson writes fondly of the otter; even the weasel becomes royal as "ermine." Among wild animals, in our scale of values, only the skunk is vile.

Now, the skunk is really a very amiable little animal whose chief fault is laziness. He likes mice and birds and snakes, but is usually too indolent to catch them. Grasshoppers and crickets are his preferred food, but when the supply runs short he takes almost any food available. In the outer suburbs he finds the family garbage can a great resource; there must be thousands of suburban housekeepers who would be horrified if they knew how intimate were his nocturnal routes. There is a superstition that the skunk smells all the time and that he is aggressive. It maligns him; he can be as cleanly as a cat, and uses his special weapon only when annoyed. Traveling at night, as he does, he sometimes makes the mistake of assuming hostility before it is proved; but in that he is not so different from the human. We are all a little wary of visitors in the dark; but we have a different armature. As a matter of fact, apart from the special capacity with which nature has endowed him—one which differs only in intensity from that of mink and weasels—the skunk has precisely the kind of easy-going temperament which gives a man the reputation of being a good fellow. It is cruelly unfair to him that his name should be used as a synonym for all that is despicable.—From the editorial page of the N.Y. Tribune.

A woman will usually forgive a husband's past if he comes home with a present.

For Dry Skin—Minard's Liniment.

Something Added

Smithson, the city man, was spending his week-end on a friend's farm. During an inspection of the sheds he saw one of the farm laborers milking a cow.

"How much milk does that cow give a day?" he asked.

The man paused in his labors.

"'Bout eight quarts, surr," he replied.

"Really," said Smithson interestedly. "And how much of that do you sell?"

"Well, surr," said the labourer, without hesitation, "we sells something like twelve quarts."

What New York Is Wearing

BY ANNABELLE WORTHINGTON

Illustrated Dressmaking Lesson Furnished With Every Pattern

A darling boleró frock that is the pampered fashion of all the French couturiers.

It is youthfully smart and practical in dark green crepy woolen.

The skirt favors the new box-plaited treatment. The tightened hip yoke in pointed outline tends to lengthen the figure.

The bolero rolled in revers reveals a blouse of eggshell crepe that buttons down the front.

The belt marks the normal waistline.

Style No. 2626 may be had in sizes 14, 16, 18, 20 years, 36, 38, 40 and 42 inches bust.

The medium size requires 3⅞ yards of 39-inch material for bolero and skirt with 1½ yards of 39-inch material for sleeveless waist.

Lightweight tweed, wool jersey, velveteen, flat crepe and canton crepe make up smartly in this model.

HOW TO ORDER PATTERNS.

Write your name and address plainly, giving number and size of such patterns as you want. Enclose 20c in stamps or coin (coin preferred; wrap it carefully) for each number, and address your order to Wilson Pattern Service, 73 West Adelaide St., Toronto.

Revenge

The little set in the suburban avenue had long decided that Browne was over-proud of his bargain in the second-hand car market, and that something must be done to damp his aggressive enthusiasm.

Robinson, one of the set, was on his way to the city one day when he met Browne in his second-hand car.

"I'm going to the station," said the car-owner. "Would you like a lift?"

"No, thanks," said Robinson, seizing his chance. "I'm in rather a hurry."

Use Minard's Liniment for Toothache.

A man went into a shop for a shave and was waited upon by a man who waxed eloquent on the germ-proof nature of the business. The towel was super-heated, the razor sterilized, the soap bacterialized, and the comb and brush antisepticized. "Great scheme," said the customer, who had been waiting patiently for the discourse to finish, "but why don't you go ahead and shave me?" "But I'm not the barber, sir," said the man. "You're not? Then where is he?" exclaimed the customer. "They're boiling him," the man replied.

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Diphtheria Can Be Wiped Out And Lives and Dollars Saved

Simple Injection of Substance Called "Toxoid"—Disease Kills 1200 Every Year Out of 13,500 Cases—Tremendous Waste

This is one of a series of weekly articles on health topics, written by the Canadian Social Hygiene Council.

Diphtheria Can Be Prevented

If for ten years or less, Canada were to pay as much money towards preventing this disease as Canadians now pay for curing it and burying its victims, it could be virtually elminated. And yet at the present time 13,500 Canadians experience expensive and dangerous attacks each year, with 1200 annual fatalities.

So you see, a great national work is being left undone.

How does diphtheria kill, and how can its ravages be averted? First of all it is a germ disease. A healthy human child (children are diphtheria's victims for the most part) who happens to be susceptible to this disease, is suddenly attacked by a tiny, invisible germ of it. These lodge in the youngster's throat and feed and multiply. They give off a waste product which is a deadly poison, and this poison spreads throughout the system. A victim of diphtheria dies of poisoning, just as surely as though he had swallowed prussic acid.

However, death as we know does not always result, for the germs do not have things their own way. Certain formations and substances have been placed in the human blood by nature to fight against infection. Often, this defending army of the blood stream wins the fight against the invading army of diphtheria germs, and when that happens, the patient gets well.

Now once recovered, such an individual rarely gets the disease again. The defending army in his bloodstream has learned how to repel the attacks of this particular germ.

Comparatively recently doctors have discovered a substance called Toxoid which, when injected into a human body, induces the blood to develop that same resistance to an attack of diphtheria. In other words, the immunity to diphtheria which a patient painfully develops, it is now possible to give to a child by a simple, safe series of injections under the skin.

Your own family doctor can administer this treatment and it is up to all parents to make sure that their family doctors do so. It is safe and simple and sane and practically painless. At one time the city of New York immunized 10,000 infants with toxoid, without any ill effects whatever.

How much simpler to have your children undergo this simple treatment than to have your home quarantined and possibly lose a child or two through diphtheria! If only every public health department would see that this marvellous substance be put at the disposal of every parent, and if only all parents would insist upon protecting their children with it, diphtheria could be wiped out of Canada within ten years, and hundreds of lives and thousands of dollars saved every year.

"What do you consider the first sign of advancing age?"

"Getting mad when anybody calls you old."

Queer Animal

Bombay.—One of the queerest animals in the world was found in New Guinea and brought here for shipment to Europe by Herr Kibler, German naturalist. It is two feet long, has a bird-like bill, spines like a porcupine, pouch like a kangaroo's, lives underground like a mole, lays eggs but suckles its young and adapts itself to temperature like a reptile.

Curates are said to be drifting after training in Wales into England, where stipends are higher and the prospects of advancement are better.

What's in a Name

The magistrate was questioning a woman witness in the box.

"What's your husband's vocation?" he asked.

"He's a vegetarian," she replied haughtily.

The magistrate looked puzzled.

"No, no," he said tersely. "I mean what does he do for a living?"

"I told you once," she replied. "He's a vegetarian. He sells vegetables."

British apprentices are very popular in French racing stables, as French boys are said not to understand or care about horses.

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Don't be helpless when you suddenly get a headache. Reach in your pocket for immediate relief. If you haven't any Aspirin with you, get some at the first drugstore you come to. Take a tablet or two and be rid of the pain. Take promptly. Nothing is gained by waiting to see if the pain will leave of its own accord. It may grow worse! Why postpone relief?

There are many times when Aspirin tablets will "save the day." They will always ease a throbbing head. Quiet a grumbling tooth. Relieve nagging pains of neuralgia or neuritis. Or check a sudden cold. Even rheumatism has lost its terrors for those who have learned to depend on these tablets.

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