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 by an arrow on the archery range beside the home of Professor Dillard. District Attorney Markham is puzzled and calls in Philo Vance, a wealthy young bachelor who dabbles in solving mysteries.

The police arrest Sperling, Robin's rival in archery and love, just as he is packing his bag. Belle Dillard, the professor's niece, is also loved by Sigurd Arnesson, a brilliant mathematician and a protege of the professor's. Mrs. Drukker and her son Adolph, neighbors, seem to know something which they fear to tell.

Sperling is being questioned by Sergeant Heath. He asks if the bow which the arrow has been shot from has been found yet.

CHAPTER X.—(Cont'd.)

"Sure we found it." Heath laughed unpleasantly. 'Right where you left it—in the alley."

"What kind of a bow was it?" Sperling's gaze had not moved from some distant point.

"What kind of a bow?" repeated Heath. "A regular bow——"

Vance, who had been watching the youth closely, interrupted.

"I think I understand the question, Sergeant. It was a woman's bow, Mr. Sperling. About five-feet-six, and rather light—under thirty pounds, I should say."

Sperling drew a slow, deep breath, like a man steeling himself for some bitter resolution. Then his lips parted in a faint, grim smile.

"What's the use?" he asked listlessly. "I thought I'd have time to get away. . . Yes, I killed him."

Heath grunted with satisfaction, and his belligerent manner at once disappeared.

"You got more sense than I thought you had," he said, in an almost paternal tone, nodding in a businesslike manner to the two detectives. "Take him along, boys. Use my buggy—it's outside. And lock him up without booking him. I'll prefer the charge when I get to the office.

"Come along, bo," ordered one of the detectives, turning toward the hall.

But Sperling did not at once obey. Instead he looked appealingly at Vance.

Could I—might I——" he began.

Vance shook his head.

"No, Mr. Sperling. It would be best if you didn't see Miss Dillard. No use of harrowin' her feelings just now. . . . Cheerio."

The man turned without another word and went out between his captors.

CHAPTER XI.

When we were again alone in the drawing room Vance rose and, stretching himself, went to the window. The scene that had just been enacted, with its startling climax, had left us all somewhat dazed. Our minds were busy, I think, with the same idea; and when Vance spoke it was as if he were voicing our thoughts.

"We're back in the nursery, it seems. . . . .

" 'I,' said the Sparrow,
'With my bow and arrow,
I killed Cock Robin.' . . . .

"I say, Markham, this is getting a bit thick."

He came slowly back to the centre-table and crushed out his cigarette. From the corner of his eye he looked at Heath.

"Why so pensive, Sergeant? You should be singing roundelays and doing a joyous tarantella. Has not your villain confessed to the dark deed? Does it not fill you with gladness to know that the culprit will soon be languishin' in an oubliette?"

"To tell you the truth, Mr. Vance," Heath admitted sullenly, "I'm not satisfied. That confession came too easy, and—well, I've seen a lot of guys come across, but this one somehow didn't act like he was guilty. And that's a fact, sir."

"At any rate," submitted Markham hopefully, "his preposterous confession will damp the newspapers' curiosity and give us a free field to push our investigation. This case is going to make an ungoldly noise; but as long as the reporters think the guilty person is jailed, they won't be bothering us for news of 'developments'."

"I'm not saying he ain't guilty," asserted Heath pugnaciously, obviously arguing against his own convictions. "We certainly had the goods on him, and he mighta realized it and spilled the works, thinking it would go easier with him at the trial. Maybe he's not so dumb after all."

"It won't do, Sergeant," said Vance. "The lad's mental workin's were deucedly simple. He knew Robin was waiting to see Miss Dillard, and he also knew, she'd non-suited him, so to speak, last night. Sperling evidently didn't have a high opinion of Robin; and when he heard of the gentleman's death at the hands of some one who wielded a short, light bow, he jumped to the conclusion that Robin had overstepped the bounds of propriety in his wooing, and received a righteous shaft through the heart. There was then nothing for our noble, mid-Victorian sparrow to do but slap his own manly bosom and proclaim: 'Ecce homo!' . . It's most distressin'."

"Well, anyhow," grumbled Heath, "I'm not going to turn him loose. If Mr. Markham don't want to prosecute, that's up to him."

Markham looked at the Sergeant tolerantly. He realized the strain the man was under, and it was in keeping with his bigness of nature that he took no offence at the other's words.

"Perhaps, however, Sergeant," he said kindly, "you'll not object to continuing the investigation with me, even if I don't decide to prosecute Sperling."

Heath was at once contrite. He got up briskly and, going to Markham, held out his hand.

"You know it, sir!"

Markham took the offered hand, and rose with a gracious smile.

"I'll leave things with you, then, for the time being. I've got some work to do at the office, and I told Swacker to wait for me." He moved dispiritedly toward the hall. "I'll explain the situation to Miss Dillard and the professor before I go. Anything special in mind, Sergeant?"

"Well, sir, I think I'll take a good look for that rag that was used to wipe up the floor downstairs. And while I'm at it I'll go over the archery room with a fine-tooth comb. Also, I'll put the screws on the cook and the butler again—especially the cook. She musta been mighty close at hand when the dirty work was going on. . . . . Then the regular routine stuff—inquiries in the neighborhood and that sorta thing."

"Let me know the results. I'll be at the Stuyvesant Club later to-day and to-morrow afternoon."

Vance had joined Markham in the archway.

"I say, old man," he remarked, as we went toward the sairs; "don't minimize the importance of that cryptic note left in the mail-box. I've a strong psychic suspicion that it may be the key to the nursery. You'd better ask Professor Dillard and his niece if 'Bishop' has any provocative significance for them. That diocesan signature has a meaning."

"I'm not so sure," returned Markham dubiously. "It appears utterly meaningless to me. But I'll follow your suggestion."

Neither the professor nor Miss Dillard, however, could recall any personal association with the word 'Bishop'; and the professor was inclined to agree with Markham that the note was without any significant bearing on the case.

"It strikes me," he said, "as a piece of juvenile melodrama. It isn't likely that the person who killed Robin would adopt a vague psuedonym and write notes about his crime. I'm not acquainted with criminals, but such conduct doesn't impress me as logical."

"But the crime itself was illogical," ventured aVnce pleasantly.

"One can't speak of a thing being illogical, sir," returned the professor tartly, "when one is ignorant of the very premises of a syllogism."

"Exactly." Vance's tone was studiously courteous. "Therefore, the note itself may not be without logic."

Markham tactfully changed the subject.

"What I came particularly to tell you, professor, is that Mr. Sperling called a short time ago and, when informed of Mr. Robin's death, confessed to having done it himself. . . . ."

"Raymond confessed!" gasped Miss Dillard.

Markham looked at the girl sympathetically.

"To be quite frank, I didn't believe Mr. Sperling. Some mistaken idea of chivalry undoubtedly led him to admit the crime."

" 'Chivalry'?" she repeated, leaning forward tensely. "What exactly do you mean by that, Mr. Markham?"

It was Vance who answered.

"The bow that was found on the range was a woman's bow."

"Oh!" The girl covered her face with her hands, and her body shook with sobs.

Professor Dillard regarded her helplessly; and his impotency took the form of irritation.

"What flummery is this, Markham?" he demanded. "Any archer can shoot with a woman's bow. That unutterable young idiot! Why should he make Belle miserable by his preposterous confession? . . . Markham, my friend, do what you can for the boy."

Markham gave his assurance, and we rose to go.

"By the by, Professor Dillard," said Vance, pausing at the door; "I trust you won't misunderstand me, but there's a bare possibility that it was some one with access to this house who indulged in the practical joke of typing that note. Is there, by any chance, a typewriter on the premises?"

It was patent that the professor resented Vance's question, but he answered civilly enough.

"No,—nor has there ever been one to my knowledge. I threw my own machine away ten years ago when I left the university. An agency does whatever typing I need."

"And Mr. Arnesson?"

"He never uses a typewriter."

(To be continued.)

What New York Is Wearing

BY ANNABELLE WORTHINGTON

Illustrated Dressmaking Lesson Furnished With Every Pattern

A charmingly slender crepy patterned wool bolero frock belts its waistline at normal. The pin tucked shoulders provide a nice little fulness across the bust and at same time are decorative as well.

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My Neighbor

Her steps seem always newly scrubbed;
Her children's frocks just freshly tubbed.

Muffins for tea are feather-light
And served on cloths of snowy white.

Old brass gleams in the firelight's glow
Her hearth is spotless, too, I know.

Yet she finds time to laugh, and play;
To gather flowers, and make home gay.

And so I pray: "Lord, bless my neighbor,
Who know the dignity of labor."

—Helen Cameron Graham in "The New Outlook."

Trees in Winter

I think the trees, with all their leaves away,
Look like aged people,
Wrinkled, withered, grey.
The maple's an old lady, by her dainty grace,
The chestnut, strong and gnarled, a man's lined face.

The elm-tree's a grandmother, in a shawl,
The oak stands up, grandfather-like,
Erect and tall.
But trees are only old until the spring,
Then they'll put on green clothes to dance and sing.

—Florence Westacott in "The New Outlook."

Care of Sink

Have you one of those old iron sinks in your kitchen? Of course it is an "eyesore" to you, but why not give it the same care you would a white porcelain sink?

Every time you use it, thoroughly wash it with hot soapsuds, then rinse well and dry. About twice a month rub it with a clean cloth dipped in fine machine oil.

With such care your sink will have a polish and be quite as smooth as a porcelain sink.

ISSUE No. 5—'31

Mongrels Possess Keenest Brains

In France Dogs Are Bred for Mental Powers Regardless of Looks

(Condensed from The American Weekly, November 9th, 1930)

In the news it is not the noble looking thoroughbred dog, but the mongrel with no aristocratic pedigree, that sounds the fire alarm, drives away the burglars, or rescues the baby from drowning.

On the stage it is never the handsome winner of the blue ribbon at the dog show, but plain "Mr. Mutt," of unknown ancestry, who stars in all the clever tricks. Only on the screen, where the director's patience and intelligence count for more than the dog's, is the blue-blooded canine aristocrat of any use at all.

The reason is this—the pedigreed dog has the points that catch the eye, the mongrel has almost a monopoly on intelligence. The cause, according to Dr. William J. Lentz, director of the Small Animal Hospital connected with the University of Pennsylvania, and George E. Roberts, who has spent fifty of his sixty years training dogs and other animals for the stage, is that dog breeders are doing man's faithful friend a cruel injustice—making a beautiful but stupid animal out of a creature with almost human intelligence.

For more than ten thousand years the human race has been breeding its partner and associate, the canine race, for intelligence and character, rather than beauty. The cave-man did not care how his dog carried its ears as long as there was brain enough between the ears to understand the job of guarding the cave and hunting. The pup that was slow to learn was cooked and eaten, regardless of whether it had "cute" ears and a "gay" tail. As a result of this careful selection through the ages, the average dog of about a century ago had evolved a brain with convolutions on it quite similar to those of its master.

Just about that time dog breeding began on a large scale, and Dr. Lentz believes that had the breeders bred for brain we would have dogs to-day that could not only be intelligent servants and assistant police detectives, but be able to talk, though not by speech, because their vocal apparatus is unadaptable to articulation.

Instead of performing this valuable service, dog fanciers bred exclusively for appearance, a beautiful coat, long or short legs, shape of head and how ear and tail were carried. Often as not they did not breed for beauty, but rather the reverse, producing such monstrosities as some of the bulldogs and the hideous asthmatic pug. All the time brains were neglected so thoroughly that it amounted to breeding out intelligence, except in a few varieties like the hunting dogs, the St. Bernards and the Newfoundlands—breeds that still had work to do.

It does not take long to breed the smartness from the inside of its head to the outside of a dog's body. Hardly more than twenty-five years ago the collie, one of the most popular dogs in the world, was famed for its high intelligence. Then the effects of breeding for points began to show. The old style collie that made the name famous had a head wide enough for a sizeable brain with ample room for convolutions. The new style, for some perverse reason, called for a head so narrow as to almost suggest a pickerel, and the breeders got it at the expense of brains. It is now in the mongrel collie that one finds the famous collie intelligence.

An even quicker example of extinguishing a dog's intelligence in favor of its points is the case of the German shepherd or police dog. The animal won its fame originally because of its remarkable mind, so bright that it was possible to teach the creature to perform the most astonishing services as a policeman's assistant. The original brain that could do these things was big and had to be encased in a roomy brain-box much too wide for some people's ideas of beauty.

In Europe, where they still employ the dog for useful purposes, they still breed that wider head, but in the United States breeders have relentlessly narrowed its skull, until now the once smart animal is becoming an unemployable canine moron, like the Russian wolfhound, the fashionable Borzoi and the greyhound, which for size get along with the minimum of brains.

Gustave Michaud, in France, started in to breed dogs for their mental powers regardless of looks. Although unable to complete his experiments, he obtained such startling results in a few canine generations that Dr. Lentz believes super-dogs could be easily produced, but that it would take longer than any one man's life. The stock from which these four-footed future canine Einsteins are to come will never be found on any show bench, but among the strays and "yaller" dogs who have been taught no parlor tricks, but have learned themselves the more difficult ones of collecting a living from back porches and avoiding the dog-catcher.

Breeders of race horses had in mind only one thing—speed; but they soon found that a stupid horse was not much good in a race, even if he had the legs. So they bred for brains as well as legs and wind, with the result that beauty was incidentally thrown in, the beauty that goes with perfection. Few would dispute that a thoroughbred race horse is at least as good to look at as anything in a dog show. The horse is not naturally as intelligent an animal as the dog, but the thoroughbred racing equine is the brightest of its kind, as the dog thoroughbred is the dullest.

Mr. Robert, the dog trainer, gets high prices for some of the stage dogs he breeds, and to look at many of them one would think he was getting something for nothing. But he and his customers know better. They are dealing in brains, a scarce and high-priced commodity.

The most precious strain of brainy blood in his kennels came from little Beaucoup, for which he paid not a cent. Beaucoup was a hungry little mongrel who attached herself to a circus, probably because she was sufficiently intelligent to know a good master when she saw one. At any rate, Robert found her a faithful and devoted friend.

That hungry little tramp founded a royal dynasty of the stage. Her sons, daughters and grandchildren have become stage stars, and she has started a new sort of pedigree, one that really means something, a pedigree of brains. So, like Gustave Michaud, George Robert is putting back the brains which the fanciers have taken out of dogdom, and he is getting well paid for it.

A dog may be bright and quick, understanding its master's orders and foreseeing them, but still not be using reason but only memory and intuition. Dr. Lentz gives an example of real discretion and reasoning on the part of a German shepherd or police dog.

"On the occasion of my first visit to a certain friend's home," he said, "the dog made me his friend. Perhaps it was his instinct that told him I was not an undesirable person, and he was not only willing that I should come to the house, but on my arrival each time he would come to meet me, as a sort of welcoming gesture on behalf of his master.

"But my friend one evening put the dog to the reasoning test, and to my mind he made good. We were alone in a room smoking, and the dog was lying on the floor, apparently contented. Being reared in Germany, the dog understood German, and my friend addressed him in that language, saying:

" 'I am going out of the room, and while I am gone I want you to keep your eye on this man,' indicating me. 'Don't let him leave until I get back. Watch him all the time I am gone.'

He then left the room and the dog and I remained alone. This dog had been my friend, but as soon as his master left the room, the shepherd's eyes were upon me. Bigger and bigger they grew, his muscles became tense.

"Just for a test, I moved in my chair and looked toward the door. The dog was on his feet in a minute and ready to spring. I am convinced that he would have done so if I had started for the door.

"A moment later my host returned, and again spoke to the dog in German, saying that he had been mistaken, that I was all right — that there was no further need for watching. Immediately the dog again became my warm friend, and he has since remained so."—"Magazine Digest."

Dickens and Kipling Head Book Sale List

New York—Dickens, Kipling and Stevenson items topped values at the dispersal sale of the library of an anonymous New York collector at the American Art Association-Anderson Galleries here on Jan. 7. The collection was important chiefly for its modern first editions. Two hundred and twenty items brought $20,791.

The highest price was paid for a set of the 10 variant issues of Dickens's Christmas books, (London, 1843-8), which sold for $1300. Next in value was Kipling's "Departmental Ditties and Other Verses" (Lahore, 1886), in the original wrappers, bought for $875.

The collection was rich in Barrie items, although the prices were relatively insignificant, the best value being "Scotland's Lament" (London, 1895)—a four-leaf pamphlet, of which only 12 copies were printed—which went to the Brick Row Book Shop for $340. Blackmoor's "Lorna Doone" (London, 1869) sold for $825. Kipling's "Jungle Books" (London, 1894-5) fetched $310, and his "Letters of Marque" (Allahabad, 1891), $290.

One of the choicest items at the sale was Stevenson's "The Pentland Rising," (Edinburgh, 1866)—a pamphlet which has the distinction of being the author's first book. It brought $800. The same dealer paid $800 for the Stevensor woodcuts, "The Graver and the Pen," $800 for "New Arabian Nights" (London, 1882), and $625 for "Treasure Island" (London, 1883). "A Child's Garden of Verses" (London, 1885), autographed, brought $435.

"British Made"

London Times Trade Supplement: If it is no longer universally true in all branches of industry that "British" and "best" are synonymous terms, "British made" is still regarded in most parts of the world as a recommendation of intrinsic value, nor is there any substantial evidence that the reputation of British makers for good quality is waning. The general complaint against British merchandise is not that its quality is deficient, but that its price is too high, which is quite another story.

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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.

Gargle with Aspirin tablets at the first suspicion of sore throat, and reduce the infection. Look for Aspirin on the box—and the word Genuine in red. Genuine Aspirin tablets do not depress the heart.

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