"SALADA" TEA

211

The Tea that comes to you,
"Fresh from the Gardens"

The Bishop Murder Case

A PHILO VANCE STORY

BY S. S. VAN DINE

SYNOPSIS.

A man known as Cock Robin is found with an arrow in his heart; another, Johnny Sprigg, is found with a bullet through the top of his head. District Attorney Markham calls in Philo Vance, who claims the murders are founded on nursery rhymes and are the work of a maniac.

Those associated with the case are: Prof. Dillard, his niece Bell, and his protege, Sigurd Arnesson, also a professor of mathematics. John Pardee, a neighbor with a passion for chess; Mrs. Drukker and her son Adolph. Mrs. Drukker is mentally unbalanced and Adolph is a cripple, with a super-brain.

Mrs. Drukker tells how the murderer paid her a terrifying visit the previous night. Vance learns that Adolph Drukker lied as to his whereabouts on the morning of Robin's death. Vance questions Prof. Dillard again.

CHAPTER XXIII.—(Cont'd.)

Vance leaned slowly forward and crushed out his cigarette with that taut deliberation which I had long since come to recognize as a sign of repressed excitement. Then he rose carelessly and moved to the chess table in the corner. He stood there, one hand resting on the exquisite marquetry of the alternating squares.

"You say that Mr. Pardee was analyzing his position on this board when Drukker came over to him?"

"Yes, that is right." Professor Dillard spoke with forced politeness. "Drukker sat down facing him and studied the layout. He started to make some remark, and Pardee requested him to say nothing. A quarter of an hour or so later Pardee put the men away; and it was then that Drukker told him that his game was lost—that he had worked himself into a position which, though it looked favorable, was fundamentally weak."

Vance had been running his fingers aimlessly over the board; and he had taken two or three of the men from the box and tossed them back, as if toying with them.

"Do you remember just what Mr. Drukker said?" he asked without looking up.

"I didn't pay very close attention—the subject was not exactly one of burning moment to me." There was an unescapable note of irony in the answer. "But, as nearly as I can recall, Drukker said that Pardee could have won provided it had been a rapid-transit game, but that Rubinstein was a notoriously slow and careful player and would inevitably find the weak spot in Pardee's position."

"Did Pardee resent this criticism?" Vance now strolled back to his chair and selected another cigarette from his case; but he did not sit down again.

"He did—very much. Drukker has an unfortunately antagonistic manner. And Pardee is hypersensitive on the subject of his chess. The fact is, he went white with anger at Drukker's strictures. But I personally changed the subject; and when they went away the incident had apparently been forgotten."

We remained but a few minutes longer. Markham was profuse in his apologies to the professor and sought to make amends for the patent annoyance our visit had caused him. He was not pleased with Vance for his seemingly garrulous insistence on the details of Pardee's chess game, and when we had descended to the drawing room he expressed his displeasure.

"I could understand your questions relating to the whereabouts of the various occupants of this house last night, but I could see no excuse for your harping on Pardee's and Drukker's disagreement over a game of chess. We have other things to do besides gossip."

"A hate of gossip parlance also crown'd Tennyson's Isabel thro' all her placid life," Vance returned puckishly. "But—my word, Markham!—our life is not like Isabel's. Speakin' seriously, there was method in my gossip. I prattled—and I learned."

"You learned what?" Markham demanded sharply.

With a cautious glance into the hall Vance leaned forward and lowered his voice.

"I learned, my dear Lycurgus, that a black bishop is missing from that set in the library, and that the chessman left at Mrs. Drukker's door matches the other pieces upstairs!"

This piece of news had a profound effect on Markham. As was his habit when agitated, he rose and began pacing back and forth, his hands clasped behind him. Heath, too, though slower to grasp the significance of Vance's revelation, puffed vigorously on his cigar—an indication that his mind was busy with a difficult adjustment of facts.

Before either had formulated any comment the rear door of the hall opened and light footsteps approached the drawing room. Belle Dillard, returning from Mrs. Drukker's, appeared in the archway. Her face was troubled and, letting her eyes rest on Markham, she asked:

"What did you say to Adolph this morning? He's in an awful state of funk. He's going about testing all the door-locks and window-catches as if he feared burglars; and he has frightened poor Grete by telling her to be sure to bolt herself in at night."

"Ah! He has warned Mrs. Menzel, has he?" mused Vance. "Very interestin'."

The girl's gaze turned swiftly to him.

"Yes; but he will give me no explanation He's excited and mysterious. And the strangest thing about his attitude is that he refuses to go near his mother. . . . What does it mean, Mr. Vance? I feel as though something terrible were impending."

"I don't know just what it does mean." Vance spoke in a low, distressed voice. "And I'm afraid even to try to interpret it. If I should be wrong. . . . ." He became silent for a moment. "We must wait and see. Tonight, perhaps, we'll know. But there's no cause for alarm on your part, Miss Dillard" He smiled comfortingly. "How did you find Mrs. Drukker?"

"She seemed much better. But there's still something worrying her; and I think it has to do with Adolph, for she talked about him the whole time I was there, and kept asking me if I'd noticed anything unusual in his manner lately."

"That's quite natural in the circumstances," Vance returned. "But you musn't let her morbid attitude affect you. And now, to change the subject: I understand that you were in the library for half an hour or so last night just before you went to the theatre. Tell me, Miss Dillard: where was your hand-bag during that time?"

The question startled her; but after a momentary hesitation she answered: "When I came into the library I placed it with my wrap on the little table by the door."

"It was the lizard-skin bag containing the key?"

"Yes. Sigurd hates evening dress, and when we go out together I always wear my day clothes."

"So you left the bag on the table during that half-hour and then kept it with you the rest of the evening. And what about this morning?"

"I went out for a walk before breakfast and carried it with me. Later I put it on the hat-rack in the hall for an hour or so; but when I started for Lady Mae's at about ten I took it with me. It was then that I discovered that the little pistol had been returned, and I postponed my call. I left the bag downstairs in the archey-room until you and Mr. Markham came; and I've had it with me ever since."

Vance thanked her whimsically.

"And now that the peregrinations of the bag have been thoroughly traced, please try to forget all about it." She was on the point of asking a question, but he anticipated her curiosity and said quickly: "You went to the Plaza for supper last night, your uncle told us. You must have been late in getting home."

"I never stay out very late when I go anywhere with Sigurd," she answered, with a maternal note of complaint. "He has a constitutional aversion to any kind of night life. I begged him to stay out longer, but he looked so miserable I hadn't the heart to remain. We actually got home at half past twelve."

Vance rose with a gracious smile.

"You've been awfully good to bear with our foolish questions so patiently. . . . Now we're going to drop in on Mr. Pardee and see if he has any illuminatin' suggestions to offer. He's generally in at this time, I believe."

"I'm sure he's in now." The girl walked with us to the hall. "He was here only a little while before you came, and he said he was returning home to attend to some correspondence"

We were about to go out when Vance paused.

"Oh, I say, Miss Dillard; there's one point I forgot to ask you about. When you came home last night with Mr. Arnesson, how did you know it was just half-past twelve? I notice you don't wear a watch."

"Sigurd told me," she explained. "I was rather mean to him for bringing me home so early, and as we entered the hall here I asked him spitefully what time it was. He looked at his watch and said it was half-past twelve. . . ."

(To be continued.)

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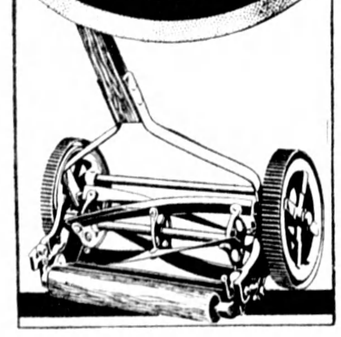

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The Golfing Trail

"The white moth to the closing vine;
The bee to the opened clover."
And the mashie pitch to the ghastly ditch
Ever the wide world over.

Ever the wide world over, lad;
Clear to the Arctic Zone;
From the glacial ice you can see the slice
And hear the duffer moan.
There are greens by the Guadalquivir;
Fairways in Old Cathay;
And a tough tenth hole that will rend your soul
On the road to Mandalay.

"The wild boar to the sun-dried swamp;
The red crane to her reed."
And an easy par at Kandahar
To lure the golfing breed.

There's a nine-hold course at Quito
With greens that fringe the sky,
And they cut the grass in the Khyber Pass
To furnish a brassie lie.

By the wash of the Parramatta
Is the golfing flag unfurled,
And the crack of the club in the hands of the dub
Is the shot heard 'round the world.

Canadian Agricultural Implement Industry

According to the Dominion Bureau of Statistics, 39 of the 62 firms in Canada engaged in the agricultural implement industry in 1929 were located in Ontario; 12 in Quebec; 5 in Manitoba; 4 in Alberta, and one each in Prince Edward Island and Saskatchewan.

"Better times are on the way, but they will not come all at once."—Arthur Capper.

ISSUE No. 21—'31

The ADVENTURES of CAPTAIN JIMMY and his Dog SCOTTIE

What came before: Captain Jimmy and his dog Scottie get lost in the darkness, while flying over the Chinese War Zone. They are captured by bandits and separated Captain Jimmy makes his escape and plans to search for the faithful Scottie.

Yes, sir. Just as I crowded the old Chinese interpreter into the freight car to hide from those pursuing bandits, a black object came hurtling in and struck me square in the belt.

"Scottie!"

We untangled ourselves, and there was a grand reunion. But there wasn't any time to waste. The bandits were following closely on our trail. Some place must be found to hide.

In the corner of the car were piled a number of tea chests. These I shoved out so the three of us could hide in behind. Over the top I spread some old straw matting.

If only the train would move along before the bandits caught up, we would be all right, but it seemed to be waiting on the switch until a train coming the other way had passed.

Suddenly the sound of hoofs rang on the rocky railway siding, and a score of bandits began running up and down the train peeking into the cars. Things looked pretty serious, especially when a big Chinaman began rummaging around among the tea chests. Luckily he did not notice our hiding place.

Something had to be done quickly, however, or the outlaws would return and find us. Quietly I signalled Fu Hsu and Scottie to follow me. We dropped out of the car and crept softly along the side of the train away from the bandits, and groped our way in the dim early morning light toward the engine.

The engineer and fireman leaned out of their cab anxiously, wondering what was happening down along the track. I slipped in behind them and gave them a good shove. Off they went—end over end into the ditch.

Promptly I threw the reverse lever and opened the throttle. There was a violent spinning of drive wheels. The cars bumped and crashed against one another noisily, and at the same time I pulled the whistle valve wide open. The whistle fairly shrieked. It was a perfect bedlam let loose.

Panic stricken, the bandits rushed to the doors to escape. Some jumped out, some were pushed out, others simply fell out. But in less time than it takes to tell it, there was not a bandit on board.

Away we roared, gathering speed as we backed down the track for we dared not go forward in the face of the signals. The engine rocked and swayed. I took up the shovel to feed the boiler fire, when suddenly a heavy boot stuck out from under the coal and someone hollered.

What next. Even the coal was alive with Chinese bandits.

"Maybe I'm a bandit, Captain" said the owner of the boot. "But not Chinese anyway!"

Where had I heard that familiar voice before? I shoved him into the light. His face was like a black mask from the coal dust.

"By Golly! Jed Stone," I yelled.

And so it was. My old friend Jed Stone who I had not seen for many years. Our meeting was one of those odd co-incidences that you couldn't make happen in a lifetime if you tried to plan it.

Jed told me a startling story. He had a brother Guy, engaged in Chinese famine relief work. A bandit gang had passed through the country raiding and plundering the pitifully scant food supplies of the people. Guy followed the bandits for days, and tried to reason with the chief. Making no impression he finally lost control of himself, and before anyone could interfere, soundly thrashed the villain.

(To be continued.)

Note: Young readers wishing photo of Captain Jimmy may have same by writing "Capt. Jimmy", 2010 Star Bldg., Toronto.

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French Savings Pass $960,000,000 Total

Paris.—French savings institutions are holding more than $960,000,000 for "rainy days" in France.

The old woolen stocking, it would seem, has gone out of fashion in France and, despite recent bank scandals, the thrifty French public is increasing its savings deposits.

Savings deposited in 1930 showed an increase of 16 per cent. over 1929, while the number of new accounts was nearly 10 per cent. higher than in 1929.

It is estimated that every fourth person in France has a savings account, the public banks and postoffices alone reporting 10,000,000 accounts. The total savings deposits in 1930 was $960,000,000.

The per capita savings in France represent about $24 a person, not counting the investment in French rentes and government bonds, whose total value represents many times the saving deposits.

Difference in Force of Gravity

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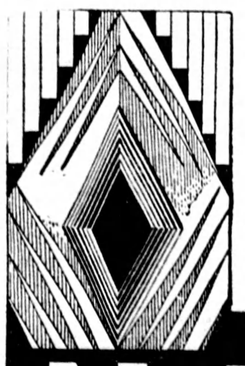

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