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'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 Belle, 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; that Pardee played a chess match the previous night and that he and Drukker had a heated argument. Belle Dillard and Arnesson had gone to the theatre. Pardee is also questioned.

CHAPTER XXIV.—(Cont'd.)

An unusually soft note had crept into Pardee's voice, and for some reason which I could not exactly explain I got the feeling that he was fond of Belle Dillard. Vance, too, must have received the same impression, for after a brief pause he said:

"You will realize, I trust, that it is not our intention to pry unnecessarily into any one's private affairs; but the question of motive in the two murders we are investigating still remains obscure, and as Robin's death was at first superficially attributed to a rivalry for Miss Dillard's affections, it might help us to know, in a general way, what the true situation is concerning the young lady's preference. . . . As a friend of the family you probably know; and we'd appreciate your confidence in the matter."

Pardee's gaze travelled out of the window, and the suggestion of a sigh escaped him.

"I've always had the feeling that she and Arnesson would some day be married. But that is only conjecture. She once told me quite positively that she was not going to consider matrimony until she was thirty." (One could easily guess in what connection Belle Dillard had made this pronouncement to Pardee. His emotional as well as his intellectual life had apparently met with failure.)

"You do not believe then," pursued Vance, "that her heart is seriously concerned with young Sperling?"

Pardee shook his head. "However," he qualified, "martyrdom such as he is undergoing at present has a tremendous sentimental appeal for women."

"Miss Dillard tells me you called on her this morning."

"I generally drop over during the day." He was obviously uncomfortable and, I thought, a little embarrassed.

"Do you know Mrs. Drukker well?"

Pardee gave Vance a quick, inquisitive look.

"Not particularly," he said. "I've naturally met her several times."

"You've called at her house?"

"On many occasions, but always to see Drukker. I've been interested for years in the relation of mathematics to chess. . . ."

Vance nodded.

"How did your game with Rubinstein come out last night, by the by? I didn't see the papers this morning."

"I resigned on the forty-fourth move." The man spoke hopelessly. "Rubinstein found a weakness in my attack which I had entirely overlooked when I sealed my move at the adjournment."

"Drukker, Professor Dillard tells us, foresaw the outcome when you and he were discussing the situation last night."

I could not understand why Vance referred so pointedly to this episode, knowing as he did how sore a point it was with Pardee. Markham, also, frowned at what appeared to be an unforgivably tactless remark on Vance's part.

Pardee colored, and shifted in his chair.

"Drukker talked too much last night." The statement was not without venom. "Though he's not a tournament player, he should know that such discussions are taboo during unfinished games. Frankly, though, I put little stock in his prophecy. I thought my sealed move had taken care of the situation, but Drukker saw farther ahead than I did. His analysis was uncannily profound." There was the jealousy of self-pity in his tone, and I felt that he hated Drukker as bitterly as his seemingly mild nature would permit.

"How long did the game last?" Vance asked casually.

"It was over a little after one o'clock. There were only fourteen moves in last night's session."

"Were there many spectators?"

"An unusually large number, considering the late hour."

Vance put out his cigarette and got up. When we were in the lower hall on our way out to the front door he halted suddenly and, fixing Pardee with a gaze of sardonic amusement, said:

"Y' know, the black bishop was at large again last night around midnight."

His words produced an astonishing effect. Pardee drew himself up as if he had been struck in the face; and his cheeks went chalky white. For a full half-minute he stared at Vance, his eyes like live coals. His lips moved with a slight tremor, but no word came from them. Then, as if with superhuman effort, he turned stiffly away and went to the door. Jerking it open he held it for us to pass out.

CHAPTER XXV.

As we walked up Riverside Drive to the District Attorney's car, which had been left in front of the Drukker house in 76th Street, Markham questioned Vance sharply in regard to the final remark he had made to Pardee.

"I was in hopes," explained Vance, "of surprising some look of recognition or understanding from him. But, 'pon my soul, Markham, I didn't expect any effect like the one I produced. Astonishin' how he reacted. I don't grasp it—I don't at all grasp it. . ."

He became engrossed in his thoughts. But as the car swung into Broadway at 72nd Street he roused himself and directed the chauffeur to the Sherman Square Hotel.

"I have a gaspin' desire to know more of that chess game between Pardee and Rubinstein. No reason for it—sheer vagary on my part. But the idea has been workin' in me ever since the professor mentioned it. . . . From eleven until past one—that's a deuced long time to play off an unfinished game of only forty-four moves."

We had drawn up to the curb at the corner of Amsterdam Avenue and 71st Street, and Vance disappeared into the Manhattan Chess Club. It was fully five minutes before he returned. In his hand he carried a sheet of paper filled with notations. There was, however, no sign of jubilance in his expression.

"My far-fetched but charmin' theory," he said with a grimace, "has run aground on base prosaic facts. I just talked to the secretary of the club; and last night's session consumed two hours and nineteen minutes. It seems to have been a coruscatin' battle, full of esoteric quirks and strategical soul-searchin's. Along about half past eleven the onlooking genii had Pardee picked for the winner; but Rubinstein then staged a masterly piece of sustained analysis, and proceeded to tear Pardee's tactics to smithereens—just as Drukker had prognosticated. Astonishin' mind, Drukker's. . . ."

It was plain that even now he was not entirely satisfied with what he had learned; and his next words voiced his dissatisfaction.

"I thought while I was at it I'd take a page from the Sergeant's book, so to speak, and indulge in a bit of routine thoroughness. So I borrowed the score sheet of last night's game and copied down the moves. I may run over the game some day when time hangs heavy."

And with what I thought unusual care, he folded the score and placed it in his wallet.

The following day brought nothing but discouragement. The report from Captain Dubois stated that the revolver given him by Heath contained no sign of a finger-print. Captain Hagedorn identified the weapon as the one used in the shooting of Sprigg; but this merely substantiated our already positive belief. The man set to guard the rear of the Drukker residence spent an uneventful night. No one had entered or departed from the house, and by eleven o'clock every window had been dark. Nor had a sound of any kind come from the house until the next morning when the cook set about her chores for the day. Mrs. Drukker had appeared in the garden a little after eight; and at half past nine Drukker went out the front door and sat for two hours in the park reading.

Two days went by. A watch was kept on the Dillard house; Pardee was put under strict surveillance; and a man was stationed each night under the willow trees behind the Drukker house. But nothing unusual happened; and, despite the Sergeant's tireless activities, all promising lines of investigation seemed to be automatically closed. Both Heath and Markham were deeply worried. The newspapers were outdoing themselves in gaudy rhetoric; and the inability of the Police Department and the District Attorney's office to make the slightest headway against the mystery of the two spectacular murders was rapidly growing into a political scandal.

Vance called on Professor Dillard and discussed the case along general lines. He also spent over an hour on Thursday afternoon with Arnesson in the hope that the working out of the proposed formula had brought to light some detail that could be used as a starting point for speculation. But he was dissatisfied with the interview, and complained to me that Arnesson had not been wholly frank with him. Twice he dropped in at the Manhattan Chess Club and attempted to lead Pardee into conversation; but each time he was met with the reticence of cold courtesy. I noticed that he made no effort to communicate with either Drukker or Mrs. Drukker; and when I asked him his reason for ignoring them, he answered:

"The truth cannot be learned from them now. Each is playing a game; and both are thoroughly frightened. Until we have some definite evidence, more harm than good will result from any attempt to cross-examine them."

(To be continued.)

The Lilac-Bush

O see that lilac bush! The North wind blows—
She shivers and she turns herself away—
And, to his wooing, answers "Nay" and "Nay,
Too rough thou art, and clumsy in thy play!"

Then gentle South-West Wind comes courting, soft,
With hint of tears behind his laughter gay.
The lilac bush waves graceful arms aloft
And decks with tender green each tiny spray,
Swaying now this, now that, now every way.

But when the golden sun dries up the showers,
Piercing the mists with bright and glorious ray,
With purple pyramids of scented flowers
She crowns herself, her beauty to display,
And turns her face to him, and whispers "Stay!"

—Janet Reade,
in John O'London's Weekly

What New York Is Wearing

BY ANNABELLE WORTHINGTON

Illustrated Dressmaking Lesson Furnished with Every Pattern

Here's a smart dress that will withstand wear. It is extremely moderate in cost. Yellow linen with brown dots made the original. The belt was brown patent leather. Its yoke-like collar of plain yellow linen ending in deep pointed outline is very slimming. Two brown buttons are effective trim.

The skirt in box-plait effect at the front with plain back is smart and practical.

Style No. 3073 may be had in sizes 14, 16, 18, 20 years, 36, 38, 40 and 42 inches bust.

A model such as this adapts itself lovely to cotton mesh in angora finish, pique, men's shorting, shantung, pastel wool jersey and flat crepe silk.

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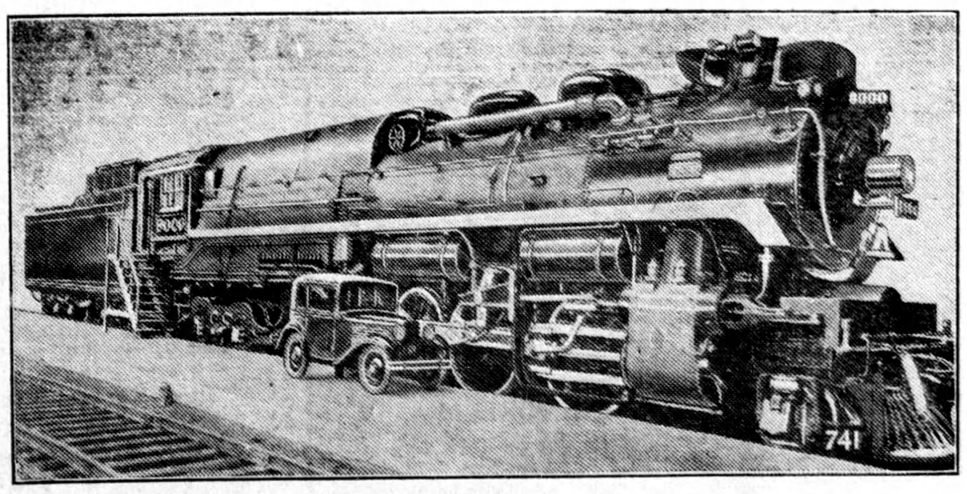
Veranda Serenaders

In the sultry stillness of evening a fresh trio of wanderers settles stealthily on the lawn. The leader mops his flushed brow, waves the bow of his 'cello, then begins carelessly to weave the rich tone of his instrument in with the gentle strumming of his companions. Softly at first, and then the strains of "Old Black Joe" smother the steady droning of the locusts. One by one figures glide from the old house into the lace patterned moonlight on the verandah. A slight pause, and the lively notes of "Money Musk" start grandfather's foot to patting and grandmother's head to nodding over memories of her first Virginia reel. A wilted straw hat is passed from hand to hand; and if the coins chink reassuringly, the leader signals for "My Old Kentucky Home" before they steal away.

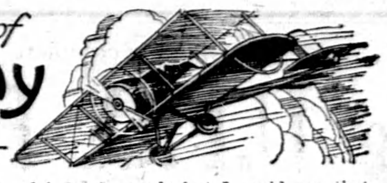
High-flying records stand at 43,166 feet for men, held by Lieut. Soucek, of the American Navy, and 32,500 (about six miles) for women, held by Miss Eleanor Smith, another American aviator.



THE GIANT AND THE PIGMY

Although it has the advantage of the height of the platform above rail-level, when lined up against the Canadian Pacific Railway's new "8000" multiple-pressure locomotive, the Bantam Austin coupe, shown in the above picture cannot measure up to the top of the huge cylinders of the great engine, which is the largest and most powerful of its kind in the world, and unique on the American Continent.

The ADVENTURES of CAPTAIN JIMMY and his Dog SCOTTIE



What came before—After many adventures flying over China, Captain Jimmy is captured by bandits. He escapes in a freight train and meets an old friend, Lieut. Stone, on board, seeking a brother who has also been captured by bandits.

After we had cut the freight engine free from the cars, we roared along the tracks at a great rate. Now and then we rushed by little groups of soldiers in the fields. Soon we would be near the enemy's headquarters.

"We're getting close up to the lines," I yelled above the infernal racket and clattering our engine was making. "Before long we must abandon ship and set out on foot. Otherwise some stupid Chinese General may have ties put on the track and stop us. And it's going to be just the least bit difficult to make him believe we didn't steal this old wagon. So I think we'd better swap this thing while we still own it."

"Too late. Here he is," Stone replied.

There, on the track, not half a mile away was piled an immense number of wooden ties. Around about were perhaps a hundred soldiers with eight or ten officers on horseback.

"Jump before we're hit, Jed," I hollered. "Get a horse somehow and ride for those woods. There will be plenty of vacant ponies when they hear us go into action with our brakes and whistle. You understand, Fu?" I added.

"Uh Huh — me savvy," Fu answered.

The group of soldiers stood near the obstruction on the track and waited for us to arrive. Quite apparently they expected us to set the brakes and come to a stop. But they didn't know our brakes.

Down we bore on them—not at any great speed—but I could see that we were going to hit with a sound thump.

Suddenly we jammed on the brakes, pulled the whistle valve wide open and skated into their midst like a shrieking, fire-eating dragon.

"Jump!"

And jump we all did. Scottie went into action with the rest of us, and, having the advantage of being on top of the tender, he quite naturally jumped higher and went further.

Out of the corner of my eye I saw him sail thru' the air. A Chinese officer was striving to quiet a frantic horse. Straight as a bullet sailed Scottie landing right on the back of that Chinaman's neck.

Off the horse they both went, and of all the blood curdling yells—whew!—that officer just knew the old dragon had got him at last.

Meanwhile I was doing a bit of sailing on my own account.

I jumped for a man on horseback but I miscalculated my speed and missed him entirely. Just behind him, however, was a second mounted Chinaman and I closed in on him like a football tackler and off he went.

There was no time to stop and palaver and argue about methods. I had to get a horse and get out—and so I did. It was a regular bedlam let loose. Our old locomotive had slid into those ties, kicked a few off the track and then rolled over on her back, wheels in the air, like a tired old horse.

(To be continued)

Note:—Any of our young readers writing to "Captain Jimmy", 2010 Star Bldg., Toronto, will receive his signed photo free.

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When Poets Were a Race Apart

Occasion took me the other day to the British Museum Reading Room and to while away the rather long interval of waiting for books to be brought to me, I took down an old colume of the Annual Register out of an idle curiosity to see what was happening in the world of letters in the year of my nativity. . . . In poetry, Tennyson reigned in kingly loneliness, with Browning greatly respected but quite a small star to the moon of Tennyson's glory. It was mentioned that "Enoch Arden" had been received that year with immense enthusiasm, and, the recorder added, such was its vogue that it was not easy to go into a drawing-room where you would not find a copy of "Enoch Arden" lying on the table, and if you went on a railway journey you were almost sure to notice that at least one passenger in your carriage would bring the book out of his pocket and become absorbed in reading it.

Tennyson, in fact, shared the popularity of Dickens; he was as supreme in one art as Dickens was in another; but we have no poet nowadays who so towers above his fellows, none who has so subdued the public with his magic that the reading world, roused to excitement by the news that he has finished a new book, hurries out in thousands to spend money in buying it as soon as it is printed. This does not happen now; none of our poets has been able to take such miraculous hold on a vast multitude either by the power of his verse or the picturesque charm of his personality. There are several reasons for this. For one thing all our poets now cut their hair short, are clean shaven, dress like stockbrokers or city clerks, and mix with the crowd as if there were no difference between them and the next man. They are no longer wrapped in mystery as a race apart, like the Levites; they look commonplace and ordinary, and this discourages the public from believing they or their works are otherwise; and the portraits of them scattered freely through the press give them away even to people who have not seen them. I suppose it is difficult to go hero-worshipping unless the hero either looks the part or holds impressively aloof and keeps out of sight.

Another reason for the apathy of the general reader is, perhaps, that the poetry written to-day is not so great, or does not seem so great to him as the poetry of Tennyson seemed to our grandfathers. The only poet of our time who wakened such enthusiasm that his name was in the mouths of everybody, whether they had read him or not, so that the publication of a new poem or book of poems by him became an event of national interest, was Kipling. But with the passing of years this glow of eager enthusiasm even for him has cooled and dwindled, until now the influence of his name merely warms the system of the general reader to a respectable ardour.

Probably the Victorians were more emotional, more generously impulsive, less hypercritical and sophisticated than we are; they still believed poets were inspired, but we have been so over-fed with all manner of wonders in these latter years that our poets have lost that halo, and we rank them indifferently with practitioners of other ingeniously mechanical, unsensational crafts.—St. John Adcock, in "The Glory That Was Grub Street."

The Chemist

Life is a chemist who distils
The fluids of the brain;
His rarest Ecstasy is made
From Centuries of Pain.

And when you pass his amber door
Wonder awhile on this—
How many agonies compose
One molecule of bliss.

—Eliot Bliss, in the Observer.

A woman entered a library and asked for "Kegs and Nails." It turned out that the book she wanted was "Cakes and Ale." The other case is historical and relates how a request for "Milk and Asparagus Lost" was sent to Mrs. Thrale, Dr. Johnson's friend. The best the lady could make of it was Milton's "Paradise Lost," which volume she sent.

"I never met a judge yet who did not, if he could, somewhat incline toward the poor man."—Sir Henry McCardie.

ACHES

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