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"SALADA" GREEN TEA

191

'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 through the heart. Then a young chap named Sprigg is shot through the top of the head. The murderer writes mocking notes signed The Bishop. District Attorney Markham asks the aid of Philo Vance.

The following people are associated with the case: Prof. Dillard; his niece, Belle; his protege, Sigurd Arnesson, who hopes to marry Belle. John Pardee, a neighbor with a passion for chess; Mrs. Drukker, and her son Adolph, a cripple with a super-mind.

Vance is convinced Drukker is holding back information and the night that he determines to find out what it is, Drukker is murdered. The shock kills Mrs. Drukker. Vance checks over Pardee's movements, and determines to question him, but that night Pardee commits suicide in the Dillard house.

CHAPTER XXXIII.—(Cont'd.)

Vance stood looking down at the scene with sad, troubled eyes.

"*Hic jacet* John Pardee," he murmured, with a sort of reverence. "And this is the house that Jack built. . . . a house of cards. . . ."

He stepped forward as if to inspect it more closely; but as his body struck the edge of the table there was a slight jar, and the flimsy edifice of cards toppled over.

Markham drew himself up and turned to Heath.

"Have you notified the Medical Examiner?"

"Sure" The Sergeant seemed to find it difficult to take his eyes from the table. "And Burke's coming along, in case we need him." He went to the windows and threw up the shades, letting in the bright daylight. Then he retuned to Pardee's body and stood regarding it appraisingly. Suddenly he knelt down and leaned over.

"That looks to me like the .38 that was in the tool-chest," he remarked.

"Undoubtedly," nodded Vance, taking out his cigarette case.

Heath rose and, going to the chest, inspected the contents of its drawers. "I guess that's it, all right. We'll get Miss Dillard to identify it after the doc has been here."

At this moment Arnesson, clothed in a brilliant red-and-yellow dressing-gown, burst excitedly into the room.

"By all the witches!" he exclaimed. "Pyne just told me the news." He came to the table and stared at Pardee's body. "Suicide, eh? . . . But why didn't he choose his own home for the performance? Damned inconsiderate of him to muss up some one else's house this way. Just like a chess player." He lifted his eyes to Markham. "Hope this won't involve us in more unpleasantness. We've had enough notoriety. Distracts the mind. When'll you be able to take the beggar's remains away? Don't want Belle to see him."

"The body will be removed as soon as the Medical Examiner has seen it," Markham told him in a tone of frosty rebuke. "And there will be no necessity to bring Miss Dillard here."

"Good." Arnesson still stood staring at the dead man. Slowly a look of cynical wistfulness came over his face. "Poor devil! Life was too much for him. Hypersensitive—no psychic stamina. Took things too seriously. Brooded over his fate ever since his gambit went up in smoke. Couldn't find any other diversion. The black bishop haunted him; probably tipped his mind from its axis. By Gad! Wouldn't be surprised if the idea drove him to self-destruction. Might have imagined he was a chess-bishop trying to get back at the world in the guise of his nemesis."

"Clever idea," returned Vance. "By the by there was a house of cards on the table when we first saw the body."

"Ha! I wondered what the cards were doing there. Thought he might have sought solace in solitaire during his last moments. . . . A card house, eh? Sounds foolish. Do you know the answer?"

"Not all of it. 'The house that Jack built' might explain something."

"I see." Arnesson looked owlish. "Playing children's games to the end—even on himself. Queer notion." He yawned cavernously. "Guess I'll get some clothes on." And he went upstairs.

Professor Dillard had stood watching Arnesson with a look at once distressed and paternal. Now he turned to Markham with a gesture of annoyance.

"Sigurd's always protecting himself against his emotions. He's ashamed of his feelings. Don't take his careless attitude too seriously."

Before Markham could make any reply Pyne ushered Detective Burke into the room; and Vance took the opportunity of questioning the butler about his discovery of Pardee.

"How did it happen you entered the archery-room this morning?" he asked.

"It was a bit close in the pantry, sir," the man returned, "and I opened the door at the foot of the stairs to get a little more air. Then I noticed that the shades were down—"

"It's not customary to draw the shades at night, then?"

"No, sir—not in this room."

"How about the windows?"

"I always leave them slightly open from the top at night."

"Were they left open last night?"

"Yes, sir."

"Very good. And after you opened the door this morning?"

"I started to put out the lights, thinking Miss Dillard had forgotten to turn the switch last night; but just then I saw the poor gentleman there at the table, and went straight up and informed Professor Dillard."

"Does Beedle know about the tragedy?"

"I told her of it right after you gentlemen arrived."

"What time did you and Beedle retire last night?"

"At ten o'clock, sir."

When Pyne had left us Markham addressed Professor Dillard.

"It might be just as well for you to give us what details you can while we're waiting for Doctor Doremus. Shall we go upstairs?"

Burke remained in the archery-room and the rest of us went to the library.

"I'm afraid there's little I can tell you," the professor began, settling himself and taking out his pipe. There was a noticeable reserve in his manner—a kind of detached reluctance. "Pardee came here last night after dinner, ostensibly to chat with Arnesson, but actually, I imagine, to see Belle. Belle, however, excused herself early and went to bed—the child had a bad headache—and Pardee remained until about half past eleven. Then he went out; and that was the last I saw of him until Pyne brought me the terrible news this morning. . . ."

"But if," put in Vance, "Mr. Pardee came to see your niece, how do you account for his staying so late after she had retired?"

"I don't account for it." The old man exhibited perplexity. "He gave the impression, though, that there was something on his mind and that he desired a sense of human contact. The fact is, I had to hint rather broadly about being tired before he finally got up to go."

"Where was Mr. Arnesson during the evening?"

"Sigurd remained here talking with us for an hour or so after Belle had retired and then went to bed. He'd been busy with Drukker's affairs all afternoon and was played out."

"What time would that have been?"

"About half past ten."

"And you say," continued Vance, "that Mr. Pardee impressed you as being under a mental strain?"

"Not a strain exactly." The professor drew on his pipe. "He appeared depressed, almost melancholy."

"Did it strike you that he was in fear of something?"

"No; not in the least. He was more like a man who had suffered a great sorrow and couldn't shake the effects of it."

"When he went out did you go with him into the hall—that is, did you notice which direction he took?"

"No. We always treated Pardee very informally here. He said good night and left the room. I took it for granted he went to the front door and let himself out."

"Did you go to your room at once?"

"In about ten minutes. I stayed up only long enough to arrange some papers I'd been working on."

Vance lapsed into silence—he was obviously puzzled over some phase of the episode; and Markham took up the interrogation.

"I suppose," he said, "that it is useless to ask if you heard any sound last night that might have been a shot."

"Everything in the house was quiet," Professor Dillard replied. "And anyway no sound of a shot would carry from the archey-room to this floor. There are two flights of stairs, the entire length of the lower hall and a passageway, and three heavy doors between. Moreover, the walls of this old house are very thick and solid."

"And no one," supplemented Vance, "could have heard the shot from the street, for the archery-room windows were carefully closed."

The professor nodded and gave him a searching look.

"That is true. I see you, too, noticed that peculiar circumstance. I don't quite understand why Pardee should have shut the windows."

"The idiosyncrasies of suicides have never been satisfactorily explained," returned Vance casually. Then, after a short pause, he asked: "What were you and Mr. Pardee talking about during the hour preceding his departure?"

"We talked very little. I was more or less engaged with a new paper of Millikan's in the 'Physics Review' on alkali doublets; he amused himself at the chessboard for the best part of the hour."

Vance glanced at the chessboard. A number of pieces were still standing on the squares; and he rose quickly and crossed the room to the little table. After a moment he came back and reseated himself.

"Most curious," he murmured, and very deliberately lighted a cigarette. "He was evidently pondering over the end of his game with Rubinstein just before he went downstairs last night. The pieces are set up exactly as they were at the time he esigned the contest—with the inevitable black-bishop-mate only five moves off."

(To be continued.)

What New York Is Wearing

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The sharp diagonal closing is decidedly slimming. It seems to run up to meet the softly falling revers that also do their bit in detracting from breadth. The sleeves have the deep flared back cuffs, so modish.

It's perfectly dear in yellow eyelet batiste worn with a skirt of matching yellow crepe silk.

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Error is a hardy plant! it flourisheth in every soil.—Martin Tupper.

Some Anecdotes

A protracted drough is no laughing matter to be sure. An amusing story is told by Harris Dickson (in "An Old Fashioned Senator"—a biography of John Sharp Williams, Mississippi statesman):

Due to a long spell of dry weather the Williams ponds had gone dry and young John was digging a well, trying to get water for his boilers. Black Cato was the well-digger, besides being one of the joint treasurers of his church.

* * * *

For the better part of the afternoon young John had noticed five other negro men loafing around the well, and finally asked them what they wanted.

"Us wants Cato to go to town wid us an' git our church money outen de bank, forty-three dollars."

"Cato's busy," John objected, "we got to have water for this gin."

"Yas, suh; but us can't get our money without Cato—all six of us is got to sign one cheque."

* * * *

This wise precaution was made necessary by the defalcations of various church treasurers. So young John called for Cato to climb out of the well and said:

"Cato, these boys want to get their church money. Have you got that forty-three dollars in bank?"

"Yes, suh; de money's dere all right."

"Very good. Go in the store and make out your cheque. Then I'll give you the money on it, and you need not leave your work."

"But dat won't do, Mister John; dat won't do."

"Why not?"

"Cause to git the money out de bank, it takes six names on de cheque, and six faces at de bank winder—six names an' six faces."

* * * *

A Labor member of the British Parliament who had but recently returned from a visit to the United States informed the House of Commons that when he was in New York he was invited to try a drink known as "near beer."

"All I can say,' he observed, "is that the man who named it is a very poor judge of distance."

* * * *

Did you know that Keats wrote a sonnet to the cat? Here are some of the lines—quoted in "London At Home:"

Cat! who hast pass'd thy grand climacteric,
How many mice and rats hast in thy days
Destroy'd? How many tit-bits stolen? Gaze
With those bright languid segments green, and prick
Those velvet ears—

* * * *

Sir Joseph Stamp, the economist, tells a story about a candidate for parliamentary honors who, canvassing a constituency, caught sight of two small children hand in hand before their cottage door, their mother standing slightly in the background.

Anxious to do the right thing, and struck by the similarity of their appearance, he inquired if they were twins.

"No, sir," they answered.

"Well, how old are you?' he asked one.

"Five," she answered.

"And how old are you?" he asked the other.

"Five."

"Dear me, both five, and not twins! How do you manage that?"

"Please, sir, we are triplets," was the answer. "Billy's indoors."

* * * *

"Nowhere," once remarked Henry Holt, "do I hear such good talk as at the Authors Club,' 'and after reading the fascinating chapter devoted to that famous club in the deminiscences of James Howard Bridge, a former President, it is quite believable.

"Mark Twain seemed to come back to the club a few nights ago," sighs Mr. Bridge (in "Millionaires and Grub Street,") "when an old story about him was told in a new way. He had always been interested in the Baconian controversy.

"'When I get to heaven,' he said, 'I am going straight to Bacon and ask him if he really wrote all those plays of Shakespeare.'

"'But suppose he's not there,' suggested one of the listeners.

"'Then you can ask him,' was the ready retort.

* * * *

And, as luck would have it, F. Hopkinson Smith (painter and author) reappeared at the club the same night.

'They say that New Yorkers are lacking in the courtesy we find so general in the South. It is a mistake," he said. "The other day I stood at the end of a long line of men who were waiting to buy their tickets at the Grand Central Station, when a man, under a mild alcoholic stimulus, thrust himself forward, banged down half a dollar and demanded a ticket to Buffalo.

"'You must take your turn in the line,' said the ticket agent. 'Anyway, you can't go to Buffalo for half a dollar.'

"'Where can I go?' asked the inebriate.

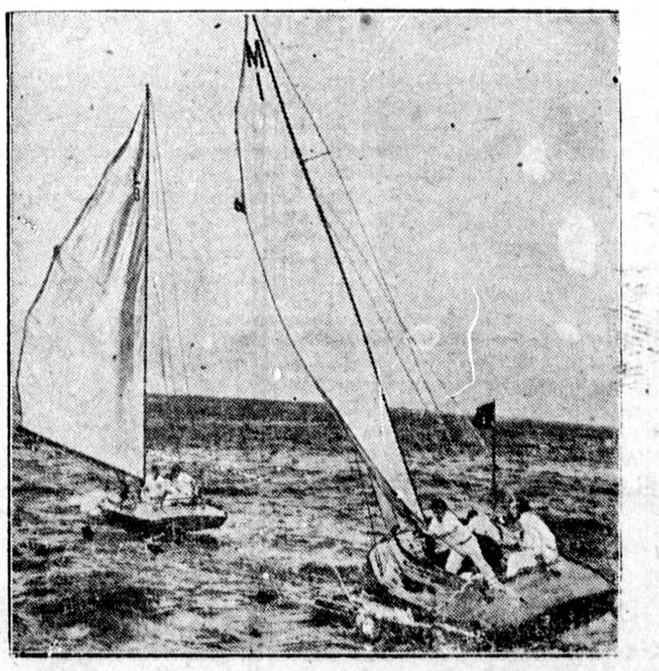
"And,' said Hopkinson Smith with deep solemnity, "every man in the line told him where he could go! Does that not prove the innate kindness and courtesy of the average New Yorker?"

* * * *

So cheer up!

"We inhabitants of the earth enjoy a piece of good fortune which we take almost as much for granted as the air we breathe," says Sir James Jeans, noted astronomer (in "The Stars in Their Courses") "I mean the fact that we have a transparent atmosphere. Some of the other planets, for instance, Venus and Jupiter, have atmospheres which are so thick with clouds as to be totally opaque. If we had been born on Venus or Jupiter we should have lived our lives without ever seeing through the clouds and so should have known nothing of the beauty and poetry of the night sky."

A Close Race



The Witch, Canadian entry, overhauling the Shadow, owned by J. Shottle, Jr., American skipper, in the recent United States-Canada yacht races on course off Seaside Yacht Club, N.J. Canada won in early races.

Vienna Courts Take Months To Define a Sheet of Paper

Vienna.—What is a sheet of paper? The answer might seem fairly obvious but it has taken the Austrian courts many months to decide it.

The question had its origin in the brain of an Austrian tax official who noticing that in a cretain legal document the foolscap pages had been cut apart and then refastened, conceived the idea that each separate page must bear a separate legal stamp instead of one sufficing for the whole document.

The lower courts sustained the contention. But the upper tribunal decided that so far as its liability to the stamp tax was concerned, a sheet was a sheet of paper, even when it had been cut into four separate pages.

The ADVENTURES of CAPTAIN JIMMY and his Dog SCOTTIE

What came before: Captain Jimmy is flying to Japan with the Chinese General Lu. They run out of gasoline and are forced to land on a deserted island in the Chinese Sea.

After our adventure with the shark, we climbed up on the high rock that stood in the centre of the little deserted island. Here we lit a roaring big fire, in hope that some passing ship would see us.

All night we kept it blazing but morning broke grey and cold without a sign of smoke or sail on the horizon. After daylight, we piled on wet wood until a great pillar of white smoke went up to the clouds but never a sign of life did we see on the still, glassy ocean.

Great smooth swells came in from the open water, rose and crashed with a dull boom against the rocks but apart from the sound of the waves, our island seemed to be the most silent, deserted spot in the world. Sometimes we'd find ourselves whispering—why I don't know—for we could have shouted all day at the top of our voices and no one would have heard us.

Day after day we kept the smoke pillar rising into the sky—night after night we kindled a huge yellow blaze on the summit rock. We almost gave up hope of being rescued. No doubt we were far from the regular steamer channels.

When we weren't gathering wood for the fire, we were hunting eggs in the sand—and believe me—they were certainly terrible. We caught a few fish—but they were very small and felt like pin cushions, they were so full of bones. Being left on a desert island isn't half as much fun as we were taught to believe when we were boys.

On the fifth night a dense cold fog came in from the sea. It smelled like sea-weed and salt water and was so thick that you could scarcely see your hand when you held it out straight. The branches dripped with moisture and we huddled close to the camp fire. Even General Lu shivered through his six suits of clothes. Scottie sneezed in disgust and hid himself in the woodpile.

Suddenly, I woke up with a start. A deep rumbling sound drifted in from the sea. I grabbed Chung and shook him and he jumped to his feet with a yell. Then the deep rumbling sound same again. Once—twice.

A steamer horn!

Sure enough. It was the deep-toned horn of a freighter. Frantically, we piled wood on the fire. I figured that some steamer was out there in the fog, not daring to move until the air cleared. Hour after hour, we fed the fire with armsful of wood and brush. Up and down we tracked until we almost dropped from weariness. Lu forgot that he was a General and worked like a Trojan. If only the blaze could be made bright enough to penetrate the fog—

Then morning came again, and a strong wind blew up from the East. Soon the air would clear. I paced impatiently up and down trying to peer through the thick white curtain of the fog.

Chung, to my surprise, lay down and prepared to go peacefully to sleep.

"Sloon we know—velly good—velly bad—no can tell," said the tranquil little Chinese. "Sleep always good—all men samee when sleep. No muchee worry."

(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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Sic Transit . . .

The Cities of the Plain are dust,
Assyria is fox's plunder;
Sidon and Tyre to silence thrust,
Ninevah fallen with fire and thunder.
Across the margin of the world
The drift of Babylon is swirled,
And centuries of rot and rust
Have gnawed Capernaum asunder.

Stone crumbles — but more stanchly fares
A Dust incredibly translated;
Judas still haggles at his wares,
Cain is forever new-created;
Delilah in a Paris frock
Goes out to tea at five o'clock:
Salome climbs the subway stairs;
Potiphar takes the Elevated!

—Sara Henderson Hay, in Harper's Magazine.

"They say that high temperature can be lessened by the use of plants."

"Ice plants?"

A Fact

It is a singular fact, that it is easy enough to clearly see and to acknowledge what is good and better, but when one attempts to make them his own, and to grasp them, somehow they slip away as it were between one's fingers.

HEADACHE?

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