

# The Whig's Splendid Serial Story

## The Dog Star

By Corallo Stanton and Heath Hosken



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He was dressed in a suit of hellebore grey material, resembling a kind of tussore silk. He wore a vividly pink shirt, with a large cinnamon-colored bow of the type usually but erroneously associated with the Quarter Latin. His collar and cuffs were of the same hue and material as his wonderful shirt, and the latter displayed elaborate solitaires, in which many precious stones appeared to have been set, irrespective of taste or utility.

His boots were of light, lemon-colored patent leather, with white kid uppers—boots of extreme length and narrowness, with toes which, although pointed, were at their extreme end perfectly square. The hellebore trousers were turned up, a l'Anglaise, so high that although the boots were buttoned like a woman's halfway up the emaciated calf of the man, they displayed socks of a vivid and impossible tartan.

This was Henri Van Ost as he appeared in London. Henri Van Ost, the general manager of the British firm of the Rubber Company, which was just at the moment forming the principal topic of foreign political controversy.

The man might have been any age from twenty-five to fifty. He held himself erect enough—his corsets saw to that—and he moved with a jaunty air. From him exuded a very potent perfume—it was the odor of a mixture of rose, Sandal de Cologne, and Jockey Club, called in the perfumery price lists "Parfait Amour."

His hands were gloved in lemon kid, and he wore a large pink rose in his buttonhole; also, he carried an umbrella that resembled a lady's parasol.

Theodore visibly shuddered at the apparition. It was far worse than she had expected. It was literally appalling. She gave him her hand instinctively. With the air of a courier on the stage he raised it to his rouged lips and bowed very low.

"At your service, chere madame," he said unctuously.

Without another word she followed him to the taxicab which was waiting by the kerb at the corner of Duncannon Street.

"Forgive the great eagerness I display, madame," he said, speaking in his ugly Belgian French, "but later I will fully explain, and you will see that for everything I have done and am doing there is more than a sufficient reason."

"I am sure of that, m'ieur," she murmured. "But tell us—where are we going?"

"Leave everything to me, chere madame," he answered, with exaggerated courtesy and with an air of ridiculously overdone mystery that made her feel inclined to laugh aloud.

"I am fully alive, believe me, my dear madame, to the dangerous position of affairs. Madame's safety and good name could not possibly be in better or more loyal keeping. He nodded with a sly look of cunning. She thought at the moment that his was the face of a rat.

"I should hope not," exclaimed Theodore, with a little shudder of disgust. Magdalene Street, Tottenham Court Road, was not a particularly attractive neighborhood. There was an odor of onions and stale cooking in the heavy, heated, moist air; there was a superabundance of very dirty children and unkempt loafers; a general note of squalor prevailed, and the foreign names over the shops sounded a note of mystery.

The motor cab lurged into the garage-strewn kerb and pulled up with a jerk outside a newspaper shop, a nondescript place that appeared to divide its interest between journals and tobacco. Over the dingy window, in faded lettering, was inscribed:

LIBRAIRIE COSMOPOLITAINE

"Quick," said Van Ost, opening the door of the cab, jumping to the pavement and offering his hand. "Don't let us waste a moment. No one has seen us so far; of that I am quite convinced."

Theodore obeyed his invitation without a word.

"You know what to do," said Van Ost to the chauffeur. "Be back in twenty minutes' time, and in the meantime, drive all the while."

"Very good, sir," snapped the man, and drove off without another look or word.

"This way, chere madame," explained Van Ost, ushering his beautiful companion along a narrow, evil smelling passage or hall alongside the newspaper shop to a glass-pannelled door on which was painted in foreign lettering:

LACTUALITE

Director: Jean Van Administration, Redaction et Annonces

Van Ost opened the door with a key. It gave immediately on to a steep and narrow staircase, ill-lighted and badly ventilated. It was altogether a most unimpressive spot.

"Here we are, dear lady," exclaimed Van Ost, tripping up the stairs. "I have a room in readiness for us, and there we can talk without danger of being disturbed."

"But this is simply impossible," Theodore protested. "I really cannot say here. Wherever you are taking me? You must surely see how unpleasant it is for me."

"Not at all, madame; it is nothing—nothing, I assure you. A respectable newspaper office of a friend of mine, in whose work I am financially interested. And it is quite safe and—and, if I may say so, madame, perfectly respectable. This is not even a Socialist paper. It is a journal devoted to quite a conventional cause."

To have seen such a creature, as has never been out of this country in his life; he has never once set foot in Africa.

"You talk exactly like Glare," said Theodore in a bored tone of voice.

"Van Ost, I am not in the least interested in all this. I don't care whether Drake has been to the Lobanzo or whether he has not. All I know is that he looks very much like making a mess of things, as far as I am concerned, and consequently he is dangerous."

"He is nothing," said Van Ost airily. "He is not to be considered."

"But, for all that, he is doing an unconscionable amount of harm," she insisted.

"Quite so; but that is because the public has been fooled with lies," retorted Van Ost excitedly.

"Are they lies?" asked Theodore wearily. "The Lobanzo was such a long way certainly."

"Why, certainly, madame. Can you doubt it? The African native of the Lobanzo—ugh! who shall speak of him without being ill? He is not a man; he is a creature; he is animal, worse than animal. He is gross; he is unappealing! How is it to be considered possible for a moment to treat him, to regard him, in our minds even, as Monsieur Drake would have us treat him, eh? Our Christian brother! Mon Dieu! He knows no honor, no decency—he must be whipped, not spoken to. He is lazy—ah, how lazy and stupid as myself can call. Argument with him has no avail. Punishment must be meted out to him—punishment, chere madame, that he will understand. Imprisonment? It is just what he most likes; it is a reward, in their European chattering. Eh? He has it to him as a luxurious massage. We must take care as we find him, he! This tubercle Drake and these people who swallow all he chooses to tell them, and in their comfortable houses and talk about the Bangala, the Bogoko, the Aruwimi as human beings; paw! They should just take a little summer holiday in the B.I.R.C., and they would soon have a different tale to tell."

session of the proofs of her folly, which others might call by a very much stronger name; and there was no dismay apparent because of the knowledge that the little bundle of papers she held in her hand was incomplete, since the original secret circular about which so much had been said and on which so much depended to them all was not in that little bundle, but had been stolen from her boudoir at Dunbury.

"But tell me, Van Ost, how did you get these?" she asked, looking at the papers a little vacantly.

"It was difficult," he answered, with a shrug of his thin sloping shoulders. "From whom did you get them?"

"Drake."

"But how?"

"By the simple expedient of buying them from one of his most trusted servants," he answered, with a cunning smile. "Oh, dear lady, those humanitarians have their price, just as other people. Why, Drake is making a pot of money out of this campaign on behalf of the wretched niggers he glorifies, this tirade against the nobles and the B.I.R.C. Look at his paper and his weekly publications—they have enormous circulations. And then again this ridiculous novel, this rapid exhibition of sloshy, sentimental gush—"The White Man."

"Really, it's making a fortune out of it to order got ten pounds down and a chimerical royalty of about one and a half per cent. I have found out all that. I tell you, madame, I know everything there is to be known, and I am going to fight them tooth and nail if I can only tide over the next few days without being caught. Then there's the tremendous income from donations and subscriptions of the Lobanzo Natives Protection Association, the African Emancipation League, and that other, the Universal Brotherhood of Mankind Society. It's a scandal, madame—a wicked fraud on a credulous public."

"I know, now," she murmured, tapping the little bundle of papers impatiently; "but all this doesn't help us in the least."

"But Van Ost was wound up. He was declaiming as to a public meeting. "Drake," he cried in impassioned tones, "his sacred Drake cares no more for the native of the Lobanzo, certainly far less than either you or I, and certainly Sir Glare Monk. Bah! I am sick with such a man; he is not a man at all, madame—he is a turgid humbug, plain with a silver public which is just sitting around him asking him to make a fool of it. Mon Dieu! I will expose him; I will justify all of us. Only give me time, madame, only give me a few days—that is all. To have seen such a creature, as has never been out of this country in his life; he has never once set foot in Africa."

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with your immoderately brilliant mind, most long ago have made yourself complete mistress of the situation."

"I don't know anything about the wretched creature," she said. She spoke snappily; and, as she looked at him, she did not seek to conceal her distaste. In her own mind, she was not at all certain that a healthy, full-blooded Bangala boy might not be preferable to this grotesque imitation of a man. This decadent creature, who was all brain, of a brilliant, hard, machine-like type, and whom nobody would ever have credited with a single one of the natural healthy instincts and impulses of a man. She decided that no carnal could be more revolting than Henri Van Ost, with his insufferable dandyism, his cosmetics, and his superlative conceit. She would probably have found him merely comic had she not been to a certain extent in his power.

"I think, madame, that you belittle your own great intelligence," he said with a smile.

"Well, anyhow, I don't want to talk about the brutes," she retorted. "I'm sick to death of the whole thing."

"But Sir Glare, your good husband, the great over-lord of the Lobanzo, as they call him," persisted Van Ost, carrying out his line of thought quite regardless of her impatience, "does he not think as I do about the matter? In his heart and mind, into which, madame, you no doubt penetrate deeper than other human beings, does he not hold exactly the same opinions? Does he not realize that there is only one thing to make these niggers work—the whip?"

"Oh, Glare talks much as you do," she said indifferently. "He doesn't think much of these niggers—nobody does who's ever been out there. But, then, he's different. He wouldn't countenance any of the awful things that you do."

"That we do," he corrected, with a smile and an exaggerated bow.

"Oh, we if you like. I'm not thus-akinced. I'm talking about my husband. He has a great public position, and he has a conscience. And he's not so greedy as you are."

"As we are!" he reminded her again, with another bow, whose very exaggeration of respect was a delicate mockery.

Theodore gave a harsh laugh, and a shadow swept across her face. For a second a light that was sheer lust—the lust of gain and greed—came into her eyes.

"You remind me," she said, "that I have to stick to this abominable business, though I am sick of it. If it were not for the money, that I must have, I should get out of it now, at once."

"That is impossible," put in Van Ost. He took a little paper from a small bundle and rolled himself a cigarette with the aid of a pipe which he carried in an oval silver box. He had, extraordinary hands for a man; they were perfectly shaped, and almost transparent, and the veins showed blue. Their every movement was instinct with incredible grace.

"Allow me to make that very clear, madame. It is absolutely impossible. It would be fatal, indeed. At this point we must not have any disturbance of the balance of power; we must have no operations going on that might call attention to the inner working of the company. Just now we are in a most prosperous condition, and all this foolish agitation is doing us no harm. Your holdings are so distributed under different names that no one has the slightest suspicion. I think you will admit that that enviable state of affairs is due to my arrangement and my advice."

"Oh, yes, yes—I have never denied it," she exclaimed. "And I have shown my gratitude. You are a miracle, dear Van Ost, your financial genius is extraordinary. There has never been the slightest hitch; everything has run on wheels. But I am sick of it, all the same. I know that no one has the faintest suspicion that I have anything to do with the B.I.R.C.—Glare least of all. I know I owe that to you. I know that since I started speculating in rubber shares just to amuse myself, and I came across you in Ostend, you have been a very good friend to me."

"It was my privilege, madame. I recognized in you a woman of unusual business ability. It was an honor to assist you."

"It has been a convenience to you, Van Ost," she put in, with sudden directness, "the greater portion of the shares in your company pass into the hands of someone whom you could rely upon to act as you chose. Don't let us beat about the bush. You have been of use to me, but I have also been of use to you. But why am I arguing with you? I was talking about money. I have to trust you must have money; I have never wanted it as I want it now."

The Belgian shrugged his shoulders deprecatingly.

"You must be a very rich woman, madame."

(Continued next Saturday.)

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One of the dual-purpose Short-horns at the O.A.C. has made a remarkable record. In her first four lactation periods she gave an average of well over 10,000 lbs. of milk a year. In her fourth year, not yet concluded, and which began on the 20th of June last, she has a record of 11,400 lbs. to the first of October, and she is still giving 26 lbs. a day. With all that she weighs at present about 1,500 lbs., is in prime beef condition and has the appearance of an animal bred for purely beef purposes.

**Holland to Issue Loan.**

London, Nov. 25.—Holland will shortly issue a loan of 125,000,000 guilders, according to a despatch to Reuters from The Hague. The loan will be issued at 97, bearing interest at 4 per cent.

**The Lady's Expenses.**

Helena, Mont., Nov. 25.—Miss Jeanette Rankin, of Missoula, who was elected to Congress on the Republican ticket on Nov. 7th, spent \$877.70 on her campaign, according to her expense account on file to-day at the office of the secretary of state.

**Kansas Returns.**

Topeka, Kan., Nov. 25.—Official figures on the presidential election in Kansas, just completed at the office of the secretary of state, follow: Wilson, 314,538; Hughes, 277,656; Benson, 24,685; Hanly, 12,582.

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