The Bachelor Pictures

A Novel by LOUIS JOSEPH VANCE

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SYNOPSIS.

"Jack" Dan Maitland, on reaching his New York bachelor club, met an attractive young woman at the desk. Jardine O'Hagan searched him no sooner than within that day. Dan discovered a woman's finger pointed in his direction. Meanwhile with a letter from the Minister, Dan had left the young woman, to be, perhaps. Dan set out for Greenfields to get his family jewels. During his walk to the country seat, he met the young woman in gray, whom he had seen leaving his bachelor club. Her arm had broken down. He fixed it. By a ruse she had gained the club, and had been unfortunately in grave danger of the safe containing his gems. She, apparently, knew him for a well-known crook, Daniel Antsy. Half-hypnotized, Maitland opened his safe, turned over the jewels, and gave them to her, first forming a partnership in crime. The well Dan expected sought by police of the Continent, Antsy, was in Greenfields. Maitland became him. He met the girl outside the house and they sped on to New York in her auto. He had the jewels and she promised to meet him that day. Maitland received a "Mr. Smith."

CHAPTER V—Continued.

Maitland accepted the card and eliminated his brows. "Why?" he said, noting it down, his manner becoming perceptibly less cordial. "I say, O'Hagan."

"Yesser"

"I shall be busy for— Will half an hour satisfy you, Mr. Snaith?"

"You are most kind," the stranger bowed.

"In half an hour, O'Hagan, you may return."

"Very good, sor." And the hall door closed.

"So," said Maitland, turning to face the man sharply, "you are from police headquarters?"

"As you see." Mr. Smith motioned delicately toward his business card—as he called it.

"Well?"—after a moment's pause.

"I am a detective, you understand."

"Perfectly," Maitland assented, unmoved.

His caller seemed partly amused, partly—but very slightly—irritated. "I have been assigned to cover the affair of last night," he continued blandly. "I presume you have no objection to giving me what information you may possess."

"Credentials!"

The man's amusement was made visible in a fugitive smile, half-hidden by his small and neatly trimmed mustache. Mutely eloquent, he turned back the lapel of his coat, exposing a small nickel; at which Maitland glanced casually.

"Very well," he consented, bored but resigned. "Cover what you like; it is brief as you can; I've an engagement in"—glancing at the clock—"an hour, and must dress."

"I'll detain you no longer than is essential. . . . Of course you understand how we are affected by this man Antsy."

"What puzzles me," Maitland interrupted, "is how you got wind of the affair so soon."

"Why, we have not heard?" Mr Snaith exhibited polite surprise.

"I am just out of bed."

"Antsy escaped shortly after you left Maitland Manor."

"Ah!"

Mr. Snaith knitted his brows, evidently at a loss whether to ascribe Maitland's exclamation as due to surprise, regret, or relief. Which pleased Maitland, who had been at pains to make his tone noncommittal. In point of fact he was neither surprised nor regretful.

"Thunder!" he continued, slowly, "I forgot to phone Higgins."

"That is why I called. Your butler did not know where you could be found. You had left in great haste, promising to send constables; you failed to do so; Higgins got no word. In the course of an hour or so his charge began to choke—or pretended. He Higgins became alarmed and removed the gag. Antsy lay quiet until his face resumed its normal color and then began to abuse Higgins for a thick-headed idiot."

Mr. Snaith interrupted himself to chuckle lightly.

"You noticed a resemblance?" he resumed.

Maitland, too, was smiling. "Something of the sort."

"It is really remarkable, if you will permit me to say so." Mr. Snaith was studying his host's face intently. "Higgins, poor fellow, had his faith shaken to the foundations. This Antsy must be a clever actor as well as a master burglar. Having cursed Higgins root and branch, he got up and dressed and explained that he was—Mr. Maitland! Consternation of Higgins' position. What could he do?"

"What he did, I gather."

"Precisely."

"And Antsy?"

"Once loosed, he knocked Higgins over with the butt of a revolver, jumped out of the window and vanished. By the time the butler got his senses, Antsy, presumably, he was miles away. . . . Mr. Maitland!" said Snaith, sharply.

"Yes?" responded Maitland, elevating his brows, refusing to be startled.

"Why," crisply, "didn't you send the constables from Greenfields, according to your promise?"

Maitland laughed unsoftly and looked down, visibly embarrassed, acting with consummate address, playing the game for all he was worth; and enjoying it hugely.

"Not that kind." Snaith shook his head.

"But his departure was somewhat hurried. I can conceive that he might abandon his kit—"

"But it was not his."

"Not Antsy's?"

"Antsy does not depend on such antiquated methods. Antsy, Mr. Snaith, is not of exterior instances, with a particularly stubborn safe, he employs a high explosive that, so far as we can find out, is practically noiseless. Its nature is a mystery . . . But such old-fashioned strong-boxes as yours at Greenfields he opens by ear, so to speak—listens to the combination. He was once an expert, regretably employed by a prominent firm of safe manufacturers, in whose service he gained the skill that has made him—what he is."

"But,"—Maitland cast about at random, feeling himself cornered—"surely he not have had accomplices?"

"He's no such fool. Unless he has gone mad, he worked alone. I presume you discovered no accomplice?"

"I? The devil, no!"

Smith smiled mysteriously, then fell thoughtful, pondering.

"You owe an enigma," he said, at length. "I can not understand why you refuse us all information, when I consider that the jewels were yours—"

"Are mine," Maitland corrected.

"No longer."

"I beg your pardon; I have them."

Snaith shook his head, smiling incredulously. Maitland flushed with annoyance and resentment, then on impulse rose and strode into the adjoining bedroom, returning with a small canvas bag.

"You shall see for yourself," he said, depositing the bag on the desk and fumbling with drawstring. "If you will be kind enough to step over here—"

Mr. Snaith, still unconvinced, hesitated, then assented, halting a brief distance from Maitland and toying abstractedly with his cane while the young man plucked at the drawstring.

"Concealed right kind, this," commented Maitland, annoyed.

"No matter. Don't trouble, please. I'm quite satisfied, believe me."

"Oh, you are!"

Maitland turned; and in the act of turning, the loaded head of the cane landed with crushing force upon his temple.

For an instant he stood swaying, eyes closed, face robbed of every vestige of color, deep lines of agony graven in his forehead and about his mouth; then fell like a lifeless thing, limp and invertebrate.

The so-dazed Mr. Snaith caught him and let him gently and without sound to the floor.

"Poor fool!" he commented, kneeling to make a hasty examination. "Hope I haven't done for him. . . . Well, he is the first time. Bad precedent! . . . So! He's all right—conscious within an hour. . . . Too soon?" he added, standing and looking down. "Well, turn about's fair play."

He swung on his heel and entered the hallway, pausing at the door long enough to shoot the bolt; then passed hastily through the other chambers, searching, to judge by his manner.

In the end a closed door attracted him; he jerked it open, with an exclamation of relief. It gave upon a large bare room, used by Maitland as a trunk closet. Here were stacked boxes or straps and cords in ample measure. "Mr. Snaith" selected one from them quickly but with care, choosing the strongest.

In two more minutes, Maitland, trussed, gagged, still unconscious, and breathing heavily, occupied a divan in his smoking-room, while his assailant, in the bedroom, ears keen to catch the least sound from without, was rapidly and cheerfully arraying himself in the Maitland gray-striped trousers and accessories—even to the gray socks which had been specified.

"The less chances one takes, the better," he soliloquized "Mr. Smith."

He stood erect, in another man's shoes, squaring back his shoulders, discarding the habitual stoop, and confronted his image in a pier glass.

"Good enough Maitland," he commented, "I'm quite satisfied not to his counterfeit presentment. "But we'll make it better still."

A sinister smile curled his upper lip; he stowed the mustache carefully away in his breast pocket. The corners of his eyes, he noted, made quick work of the crow's feet about his eyes, and, simultaneously, robbed him of a decrepit appearance. A pair of yellow chamois gloves, placed conveniently on a dressing table, covered his hands and—he was now—Maitland.

And it was Daniel Maitland who studied himself in the pier glass.

Contented, the criminal returned to the smoking-room. A single glance assured him that the man was still dead to the world. He sat down at the desk, drew the drawstring, opened the bag; a peep within which was enough. With a deep and slow intake of breath he closed the drawstring and dropped the bag into his pocket. A jeweled cigarette case of unique design shared the same fate.

Quick eyes roaming the desk observed the telegram form upon which Jardine O'Hagan had scribbled a name and address. Momentarily perplexed, the thief pondered this; then, with a shrug, tossed the pad aside and scribbled, with no attempt to imitate the other's handwriting, a message:

"Regret unavoidable detention. Letter of explanation follows."

To this Maitland's name was signed. "That could be read to clear him neatly, if I understand the emergency."

The thief rose, folding the telegraph blank, and returned to the bedroom, taking up his hat and the murderous cane as he went. Here he gathered together all the articles of clothing that he had discarded, conveying the mass to the trunkroom, where an empty and unlocked kit-bag received it all.

"That, I think, is about all."

He was musing aloud, this criminal, this Antsy. Nothing essential escaped him. He rejoiced in the minutiae of detail that went to cover up his tracks so thoroughly that his campaigns were as remarkable for the clues he did leave as for the fastidious design, as for those that he didn't.

One final thing held his attention. A bowl of hasnuts stood brass, inverted upon a ponderous book, upon the desk. Why? In a twinkling he had removed both and was studying the impression of a woman's hand in the dust, and nodding over it.

"That girl," deduced Antsy. "Novice, poor little fool!—or she wouldn't have wasted time searching here for the jewels. Good looker, though—from what little he"—with a glance at Maitland—"gave me a chance to see of her. Seems to have snared him, all right, if she did miss the haul. Little idiot! What right has a woman in this business, anyway? Well, here's one thing that will never land me in the pen!"

As, with nice care, he replaced both bowl and book, a door slammed below stairs took him the ball in an instant. Maitland's Panama was hanging on the hatrack. Maitland's collection of walking sticks bristled in the stand beneath it. Antsy appropriated the former and chose one of the latter. "Fair exchange," he considered, with a harsh laugh. "After all, he loses nothing . . . but the jewels."

He was out and at the foot of the stairs just as O'Hagan reached the ground floor from the basement.

"Ah, O'Hagan!" The pronunciation of Maitland's ironic drawl was impeccable. O'Hagan no more questioned it than he questioned his own sanity. "Here, send this wire at once, please; and," pressing a coin into the ready palm, "keep the change. I'm hurried and didn't bother to call you. And, I say, O'Hagan!" from the outer door: "Yesser"

"If that fellow Snaith ever calls again, I'm not at home."

"Very good, sor."

Antsy permitted himself the slightest smile, passing out and down the drawn on the chamois gloves. As he did so his eye flickered disinterestedly over the personality of a man standing on the opposite walk and staring at the apartment house. He was a stocky fellow, in a blue serge suit, dressed, with a derby pulled down over one eye, cigar butt protruding aggressively from the corner of his mustache, beefy cheeks, and thick-soled boots duly polished.

(To be continued.)

"So," Said Maitland, Turning to Face the Man Squarely, "You Are from Police Headquarters."

Costly Necklaces.

The most costly necklace in the world belongs to the Countess Benckiel, a lady well known in Paris and Paris society, the value of which is said to be $150,000. It is really composed of three necklaces of the exotic interest. One was the property of the ex-queen of Naples, sister of the King of Bavaria, and was, at one time, once the property of a Spanish grandee, while the third was formerly owned by the Empress Eugenie. Not long ago a necklace composed of 412 pearls, in eight rows, the property of the late duchess of Montrose, was sold for $60,000. The Empress Frederick of Germany is said to possess a second a necklace of 35 pearls, worth at least $200,000, while Lady Ilchester's necklace of black pearls is valued at about $125,000.

BREAKS AIR RECORD

PRESIDENT TAFT CONGRATULATES ORVILLE WRIGHT ATTER WONDERFUL FLIGHT.

FIRST TEST A BIG SUCCESS

While Hubert Latham is Falling Into English Channel the American Sets New Mark for Aeroplane Endurance.

Washington.—The world's aeroplane record for two men, as to both time and distance, was broken Tuesday in a beautiful flight of one hour, 13 minutes and 40 seconds—upwards of fifty miles and at a speed averaging about forty miles an hour—by Orville Wright at Fort Myer, with Lieut. Frank P. Lahm of the army signal corps as passenger.

The former record was made last year by his brother Wilbur, joint inventor with him of the machine in which both achievements were performed, at Le Mans, France, with Prof. Paulenie of the French institute as passenger. That flight was one hour, 10 minutes and 23 seconds.

The cheering which heralded the setting of a new mark in the conquest of the air was led by President Taft in person, who was an intensely interested spectator throughout the flight, and who hastened at its conclusion upon personally congratulating the brothers upon their success. This success was attributed to the Wrights in that it completed the first of two crucial tests of their machine required upon their bid for the United States government—the so-called "endurance test," which required them to fly one hour continuously in the air with one passenger.

The other test, that for speed, will be complied with to-day, weather permitting, when Orville is to take Lieut. Benjamin Foulois of the signal corps on a cross-country flight to Alexandria and return, a total of ten miles, over a measured course, and at a speed required to average 40 miles an hour.

Miss Katherine Wright, who nursed her brother through the period of his recovery from the disaster last fall, anxiously watched him from the doorway of the shed where the aeroplane is kept, and when he returned unhurt from his flight gripped him eagerly by the arm, nestled her face against his breast and said:

"Orville for you, brother, it was beautiful."

It is a question whether this word of praise was not more to him than that which came a few minutes later when the president of the United States, who had waited for him at the other end of the great parade ground, took him warmly by the hand and said to him in the presence of his brother Wilbur: "I congratulate you heartily, sir. It was a great exhibition. You came down as easily and gracefully as you went up. You beat the world's record."

Dover, England.—Hubert Latham's second attempt to fly across the English channel ended disastrously Tuesday. Almost in the moment of victory his monoplane fluttered down into the sea two miles beyond the Admiralty pier, like a bird with a broken wing. Thousands of persons crowding the water front saw the fall and feared Latham was dead.

A flock of large and small craft raced to the scene of the disaster and a pinnace from the British battleship Russell picked up the unlucky flyer and his machine was towed by torpedo boat destroyer Escopette. After a surgeon had attended to his injuries the aeronaut was carried ashore and he was taken to the Lord Warden hotel. His face was bandaged and bleeding and his nose was broken. The machine, badly wrecked, was hoisted from the boat to the dock.

ON TRAIL OF BANK LOOTER.

Secret Service Man Begin Search for Tipton Man Whose Shortage May Exceed $100,000

Tipton, Ind.—Secret service agents took up the search Tuesday for Noah R. Mazker, absconding former cashier of the First National bank whose shortage, it is now believed, will be more than $100,000.

The United States authorities began their inquiry into the affairs of the assistant United States district attorney, made a preliminary investigation.

The officials of the bank say they have no further information as to the extent of the shortage. They had reason to believe it would not far exceed $100,000. However, they said they would rely on the expert department examiner to discover the amount of the loss.

Miller Weir, national bank examiner at large, took charge of the bank Tuesday evening and began work on the books. Lee Ehrke, president of the bank, has gone to his home at Peru, Ind. He is president of the First National bank of Peru.

Commits Murder in Court.

Little Rock, Ark.—Shooting over the head of United States Senator Jeff Davis, Ed Willis, a resident of Pine Bluff, fired a bullet into the heart of Nathaniel Parker Willis of Indianapolis in the circuit courtroom Tuesday. The shooting was the tragic ending of a lawsuit brought by Willis against his divorced wife, who had subsequently married Ellis, for the possession of his child. Willis, who is a relative of his mother who was waiting across the room and rushed towards him as he fell.

COUNTY COMPANION.

Hired Man's Remarks Could Hardly Be Said to be In Nature of a Compliment.

The young lawyer, having been nominated for the office of county attorney, thought to surprise an eccentric genius of a hired man of Si who was working as a hired man on the young lawyer's father's farm.

"Well, what do you think?" the young man began.

"Sometimes one thing, Lonny, an' sometimes another."

"But, Si, they have nominated me for county attorney."

"They might ter'd done worse, Lonny. Howsomever, don't holler till you git out of the woods."

The young attorney was duly elected, and on his next visit to the farm to report the fact he found Lonny to Si, who was at the woodpile, saw in hand.

"Well, Si, I am elected by a large majority. What do you think of that?"

"Well, Lonny, down in our parts where I was raised, when we wanted a stopper fo' hadn't any corks, we generally took a corn cob."—Youth's Companion.

SKIN ERUPTION CURED.

Was So Sore, Irritating and Painful That Little Sufferer Could Not Sleep —Scratched Constantly.

Cuticura's Efficacy Clearly Proven.

"When about two and a half years old my daughter broke out on her hips and the upper parts of her legs with a very irritating and painful eruption. It began in October; the first I noticed was a little red spot and a constant desire on her part to scratch her limbs. She could not sleep and the eruptions got sore, and yellow water came out of them. I had two doctors treat her, but she grew worse under their treatment. Then I bought the Cuticura Remedies and only used them two weeks when she was entirely well. This was in February. She has never had another rough place on her skin, and she is now fourteen years old. Mrs. R. H. Whitaker, Winchester, Tenn., Sept. 22, 1908."

Potter Drug & Chem. Corp., Sole Props., Boston.

VERY ABRUPT.

Spring Poet—Yes, sir; I can write about anything, sir.

Irate Editor—Well, then, suppose you just right-about face and head for the door.

Well, Not Very Often.

The little daughter of a Republican candidate for local office in a Philadelphia, when told that her father had received the nomination, looked serious for a minute, then her wee voice trembled a bit as she exclaimed:

"Oh, mamma, do they often die of it?"

Idaho Cutover Act Lands.

Now open for entry and settlement in the choicest agricultural section of the Northwest. Homes for the thousands. Write for Free Illustrated Government Pamphlet. Address Director Government Information, Bureau of Immigration and Irrigation Lands, Boise, Idaho.

Some are interested deeply in cross bearing, but only as long as some one else is doing it.

Lewis' Single Binder straight 5c cigar. Lewis' 10c for cigars not so good.

Duty has a stern face only when looked at askance.

A Tonic For The Sole Family

This splendid tonic will keep every member of your family in good health. Adults suffering from dyspepsia, or indigestion, general exhaustion or breakdown will find in Dr. Jayne's natural tonic renewed health and strength. Delicate, rapidly growing children will find in this tonic the assistance their digestive organs need to get the proper nourishment and strength from their food.

DR. JAYNE'S TONIC VERMIFUGE

acts directly on the stomach and other digestive organs, restoring them up and enabling them to do their work properly. In this way it helps about *permanent health and strength*. On the other hand, ordinary tonics, which give artificial strength by stimulation and by supplying food material, are only effective as long as they are taken.

Sold by all Druggists—25 cents, 50 cents, $1.00.

Use Dr. D. Jayne's Expectorant if you want to get rid of your cough or Cold.