The Pictures by Wall

By Louis Joseph Vance

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SYNOPSIS.

"Red" Dan Maitland, on reaching his New York bachelor club, meet an attractive young stranger at the door. Justice O'Hagan assured him no one had been within that day. Dan discovered a woman's finger prints in dust on his desk, along with a letter from Sir Anthony Maitland dated with Bangemuende, Bohemia, and signed "Rupert." Dan, fearing for the country seat, he met the young woman in question, he had seen leaving his bachelors' club. Her auto had drown down. He fixed it.

CHAPTER II—Continued.

"Don't!" she insisted—as much as to say that he was fabricating and she knew it! "We must hurry, you know, because . . . I—er—I've dropped my handkerchief! By the tree, there. Do you mind—?"

"Of course not." He set off swiftly toward the point indicated, but on reaching it cast about vainly for anything in the nature of a handkerchief. In the midst of which futile quest a change of tempo in the motor's impatient drumming surprised him. Startled, he looked up. Too late; the girl was in the seat, the car in motion—already some yards from the point at which he had left it. Dismayed, he strode forward, raising his voice in pertinent expostulation.

"But—I say—!"

Over the rear of the seat a gray gauntlet was waved at him, as taunting as the mocking laugh that came to his ears.

He stood, thunderstruck, appalled by this monstrosity of ingratitude.

The machine gathered impetus, drawing away. Yet in the attitude he bestowed of the gray girl came to him very clearly.

"Good-by," it had a laugh. "Thank you and good-by—Handsome Dan!"

CHAPTER III.

"Handsome Dan."

Standing in the middle of the road, staring the dust cloud that trailed the fast disappearing motor car, Mr. Maitland cut a figure sufficiently forlorn and disconsolate to have inflicted pity from the least sympathetic heart.

His hands were thrust stiffly at full arm's length into his trousers pockets; a rumpled silk hat was set awry on the back of his head; his shirt bosom was sadly crumpled; above the knees, the casual glance, he presented the appearance of a well-groomed gentleman in evening dress; below, his legs were sodden and muddled, his shoes of patent leather, torn wrecks. Also he was jauntiness and elegance, slack for ease and aplomb!

"Tricked," observed Maitland, casually, and protruded his lower lip, thus adding to the length of a countenance naturally long. "Outwitted by a chit of a girl! Dammit!"

But this was crude melodrama. Reality which, he strove to smile; a sorry failure.

"Handsome Dan," quoted he; and cocking his head to one side eyed the road inquiringly. "Where in thunder d'you suppose she got hold of that name?"

Bestowed upon him in callow college days, it had stuck from-life-time's memory a weary year. Of late, however, its use had lapsed among his acquaintances; he had been to considering himself upon having lived it down. And now it was resurrected, flung at him in amused mockery by a person whom, to his knowledge, he had never before laid eyes upon. Odious appellation, hateful invention of an ingenious enemy!

"Handsome Dan! She must have known me all the time—she must have was making an exhibition of myself. . . . Wentworth? I know no one of that name. Who the devil—how—she be?"

If it had not been contrary to his code of ethics, he would gladly have raved, gnashed his teeth, footed the dance of rage with his shadow. Indeed, his restraint was admirable, the circumstances considered. He did nothing whatever but stand still for a matter of five minutes, vainly racking his memory for a clue to the identity of "Miss Wentworth."

At length he gave it up in despair and abstractedly felt for his watch fob. Which wasn't there. Neither, investigation developed, was the watch. At which crowning stroke of misfortune—the timepiece must have slipped from his pocket into the water while he was thickering with that infamous carburetor—Maitland turned eloquently red in the face.

"The price," he meditated aloud, with an effort to resume his poise, "is a high one to pay for a wave of a gray glove and the echo of a pretty laugh."

Trifle sadly that a long, columned facade, and wondering whether or not his entrance at that ungodly hour would rouse the ire of his home servants. If it did not—he contemplated with mild amusement the prospect of their surprise when, morning come, they should find the owner in occupation.

"Handsome was right," he conceded; "any—"

The syllables died upon his lips; his gaze became fixed; his head thrust wildly for an instant, then rested still; and instinctively he held his breath, stepping to the edge of the veranda the better to command a view of the library windows.

These opened from ceiling to floor and shedding right have presented to his vision a blank expanse of dark glass. But, oddly enough, even while thinking of his lawyer's warning, he had fancied. "Ah!" said Maitland, softly.

A disk of white light, perhaps a foot or 18 inches in diameter, had flitted swiftly across the glass and vanished. "Ah, ah, the devil, the devil," murmured the young man, unconsciously.

The light appeared again, dancing athwart the inner wall of the room, and was lost as abruptly as before. On impulse Maitland buttoned his top coat across his chest, turning up the collar to hide his linen, darted stealthy a yard or two to one side, and with one noiseless bound reached the floor of the veranda. A breath later he stood by the front door, where, at first glance, he discovered the means of entrance used by the midnight marauder: the door stood ajar, a black interval showing between them.

So that, then, was the way! Cautiously Maitland put a hand upon the knob and pushed.

A sharp, penetrating squeak brought him to an abrupt attitude, heart hammering shamefully again. Gathering himself to spring, if need be, he crept forward on the tips of his toes, and reconnoitering cautiously determined the fact that the bolts had just been withdrawn on the inside of one window frame, which was swinging wide. "It's a wise crook that provides himself with quick exit," considered Maitland.

The sagacious one was not, apparently, leaving at that moment. To the contrary, having accomplished things ready for a hurried flight upon the first alarm, the intruder turned his back upon the window and disappeared out of the light within. The clink of steel touching steel became audible, and Maitland nodded. Bannerman was in without letting the brass rings from which his keys might have dangled. And then Maitland was in the passage, acutely on the alert, recognizing from the continued click of metal that his antagonist-to-be was still at his difficult task. Inch by inch—there was the tapestry! Very gently the householder pushed it aside.

An insidious aroma of scorching varnish (the dark lantern) penetrated the passage while he stood on its threshold, feeling for the nearest switch. Unhappily he missed this at the first cast, and—heard from within a quick, deep inn-hale of breath. Something had put the burglar on guard.

Another instant wasted, and it would be too late. The gray man had to chance it. And he did, without further hesitation stepping boldly into the inner room, at the risk of being making one final, desperate pass at the spot where the switch should have been—and missing it. On the instant there came a click of a different calibre, and the room was flooded with light. A revolver had been cocked, somewhere there in the blank darkness.

Maitland stood motionless, waiting. In another respect the warning came too late; his fingers had found the switch at last, and automatically had turned it.

The glare was blinding, momentarily; he could not see the man which Maitland waited did not come. When his eyes had adjusted themselves to the sudden change, however, he saw, directly before him and some six feet distant, a woman's slight figure, in a dark, tailored costume to her two feet, head framed in rolling, features effectually disguised by a pair of goggles and a pair of motoring goggles shone blankly in the warm white light.

On her part, she seemed to recognize Maitland immediately. On his . . . It may as well be admitted that Maitland's wits were paralyzed for a time, temporarily at least; a state of mind not unpardonable when it is taken into consideration that he was called upon to grapple with and simultaneously to assimilate three momentous facts. For the first time in his life he found himself nose to nose with a revolver, and that one of able-bodied and respectable proportions, moreover. For the first time in his life, again, he was under necessity of dealing with a housebreaker. But most startling of all he found the fact that this housebreaker, this armed midnight marauder, was a woman! And so it was not altogether fearlessness that made him to all intents and purposes ignore the revolver. For he had not time enough to spare from the wonder of it to give credit for courage if his eyes struck past the black and deadly mouth of the revolver to the pale face and into the blank and expressionless eyes of the wind mask; it was not lack of courage for his skill in integrity, but the sheer, tremendous wonder of it all, that rendered him oblivious to the eternity that lay the other side of a slender, trembling finger tip.

And so he stared, agape, until presently the weapon wavered and was lowered and the woman's voice, touched with irony, brought him to his senses.

"Oh," she remarked, coolly, "it's only you."

Thunderstruck, he was able no more than to parrot the pronoun: "You—you?"

"Were you expecting to meet any one else, here, to-night?" she inquired in an sweet mockery.

He lefted his shoulders helplessly, and tried to school his tongue to obedience. "Well, I'm—I'm—Well, certainly I didn't count on finding you here, Miss Wentworth. And the black cloak, you mean—"

"Reversible, of course; gray inside, as you see—Handsome Dan!" The girl laughed quietly, drawing aside an edge of the garment to reveal its inner face of silken silver and the trifled ruffles of the gray skirt underneath.

He nodded appreciation of the device, his mind now busy with the relations as to what he should do with the girl, now that he had caught her. At the bare prism he recognized the sober persistent reputation of the spectacled nickname.

"Handsome Dan," he iterated all but stupefied. "Why do you call me that, please? Have we met before? I could swear, sure, I'd remember you."

"But you are altogether too modest," she laughed. "Not that it's a bad trait in the character of a housebreaker."

"But really! It seems a bit incredible that any one so widely advertised as Maitland—the man really should feel surprise at being recognized. Why, your portrait and biography appear in everything from the yellow journal in America recently!"

And, dropping the revolver into a pocket of her cloak, she leaned as if might be a servant—or even Maitland," she diverted the subject, with a nod.

"But—but if you recognized me as Amisty, back there by the ford, didn't you suspect I'd come in—here?"

"Why, of course! Didn't you all but tell me that you were coming here?"

"But—"

"I thought perhaps I might get through before you came, Mr. Ashby. I knew all the time that, even if you did manage to surprise me—er—on the job, you wouldn't call the police." She laughed confidently, and—oddly enough—at the same time nervously. Maitland observed the fact and wondered, and as surely a very careless one, to run around the way you do, Miss Wentworth, and attempting to grow a beard or a mustache, after your picture has been published broadcast."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

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At That Very Moment the Safe Was Being Attacked.

him who weakly entertained it) he crossed the drive and struck in over the lawn, shaping his course direct for the front entrance of the house.

By dead reckoning the hour was two, or something later; and, after a cautious pause to gain the lead, waited gently southward from Long Island sound. All the world beside hibernated in sound slumber, breathless, insensate. Wraith-like, gray shreds of mist drifted between the serried boles of trees, or, rising, rolled the moon's wan and pallid face, that now was low upon the horizon. In silent rivalry long and velvet-black shadows skulked across the ample breadths of dew-drenched grass. Somewhere a bird stirred on its unseen perch, chirping sleepily; and in the rapt silence the considerable interruption broke with startling stress.

In time—not long—the house lifted into view; a rambling block of home-grown architecture with little to recommend it save its keen association with a comfort. At the edge of the woods the lord and master paused indefinitely, with little purpose, observing the pale, columned facade, and wondering whether or not his entrance at that ungodly hour would rouse the ire of his home servants. If it did not—he contemplated with mild amusement the prospect of their surprise when, morning come, they should find the owner in occupation.

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CONDUCTOR A HARD WORKER

His Duties Are Many, and They Call for Ability Away Above the Average.

As a conductor he will begin in the freight service. His caboose will be a traveling office and more than that it will carry all the furniture of a home up and down the line. It may be a homely little car, but it is just as much a home as a homelike place. From its elevated outlook he may command a good view of the train as well as of the surroundings, and he will be supposed to know all the while that the brakemen are attending to their duties; that the train is in good order, particularly that there are no hot-boxes smoking away from the journal bearings of any car; fire to the train and its valuable contents. There is a deal of bookkeeping to be accomplished in that traveling office, says Edward Hungerford in Outing. The conductor will receive bills of lading of the cars of his train and their contents, and he is held responsible for their safe delivery to their destination or the junction points where they are to be delivered to other lines.

When he comes to the passenger service there will be still more bookkeeping to confront him, and he will have to be a man of good mental attainments to handle all the many, many varieties of local and interline tickets, mileage books, passes and other forms of transportation contracts that come to him and detect the good from the bad, to throw out the counterfeits that are constantly being offered to him. He will have to carry quite a money account for cash fares, and he knows that every penny he will have to pay for out of his own pocket.

But that is only a phase of his business. He is responsible for the care and safe conduct of his train, equally responsible for the proper work of the engineer. He also receives and signs for the train orders, and he is responsible for keep in mind every detail of the train's progress over the line. He will have his own assortment of expressions to answer at every stage of the journey, and he will be expected to maintain the disciplines of the railroad upon its trains. That may mean in the one instance the ejectment of a passenger who refuses to pay his fare—and still he must not involve the road in any big damage suit—or in another, the subjugation of some gang of drunken loafers. The real wonder of it is that so many conductors come as near as they do to the Chesterfieldian standards.

Ticket-Printing Machine.

The ticket-printing machine adopted by the German government is designed to simplify the work of railway offices, and makes unnecessary the usual large stock of many kinds of tickets at each station. The apparatus at Cologne made for 1,390 stations—is three feet long, four feet high and twenty inches wide. It carries a printing plate for each kind of ticket required, and an alphabetical index circle shows at a glance the names of the stations to which tickets are issued. The only stock needed is a supply of pieces of cardboard of the right size. When a ticket is called for, a blank card is slid into place opposite the required station, a handle is depressed and the ticket drops out, printed with the names of the departure and destined stations, consecutive number, fare, route, class of carriage, and other facts. At the same moment a duplicate is printed on a continuous sheet to serve as a record. Actual sale in time is claimed, a clerk having handled as many as 600 tickets in an hour; there is no delay from the giving out of the supply of tickets, and at the end of the day the continuous sheet gives an accurate record of the business done with no sign of a shortage, there can be no ticket robbery, no issue of unrecorded or false tickets.

Schwab's Guest Train.

The "Schwab Special," the train that brought Lucien Schwab from Paris to South Bethlehem recently as the guest of the Bethlehem Steel company, cost $2,348, according to the statement of a Lehigh Valley railroad official here.

The train was most luxurious. There were the "club car," the diner, the "Alhambra and Mr. Schwab's private car, Loretta, one of the handsomest and most complete private cars in the world. Seventy-three men were engaged in running the train, including the engine crew, the chef and his staff, cooks, conductors, waiters, chefs, porters and brakemen. Both the diner and the "Alhambra" had kitchens had traveling representatives aboard and extra mechanics were also on board.

Employes' Relief Fund.

The Pennsylvania railroad has an employes' relief fund that has been in existence 23 years, and has become a most important benevolent enterprise of great magnitude. On the lines east of Pittsburg $112,687.39 was paid to beneficiaries of the relief fund on the lines west of Pittsburg in January to employes, and $1,711.55 was paid to employes, and $1,711.55, and to families of employes who died $7,750, a total of $35,463.95 for the month. The disbursements for relief on the entire system since the fund was organized amounted to $3,000,000. The fund is maintained by an annual appropriation from the treasury of the company, and a small assessment from the beneficiaries.

ILLINOIS BREVITIES

Springfield.—Instead of lounging in an upholstered chair in a private office in the Illinois state house of public Mound, commonly, recently filed a petition in bankruptcy. He was at work with a hammer and nails, garbed in overalls, when the referee appointed in the case sought his whereabouts.

When the crash came that caused his bank to close, Kelly came to Springfield and filed a petition in bankruptcy, bought his tools and obtained a job.

East St. Louis.—In the airship East St. Louis, made by W. J. Smith of Belleville and Charles W. Zeller made a successful flight of ten miles. The landing was a wheel field. Zeller was in the air one hour and 45 minutes. The airship started with Hugh A. Robinson as Zeller's companion, but the gas bag did not have sufficient carrying capacity for two and Zeller had to run the engine and work the rudder.

Mattoon.—Rather than face a serious charge preferred by his own 11-year-old stepdaughter, Austin Woolridge, a wealthy farmer, killed himself in the presence of a posse at his home four miles south of this city. The house was surrounded at the time by a determined posse and the fugitive or one barrel of a gun at the posse, but it was empty. The other barrel turned upon his breast and death was instantaneous.

Waukegan.—"I never lie down except when I go to sleep," declared Wilbur Glenn Voliva when he filed notice of contest against the local officials of Zion City, who took the oath of office. Voliva waited until the new officers of the council had been sworn and then filed his contest notice with the hold-over members. Voliva asserts that the new city officials, who are inimical to his interests, were elected by fraud.

Chicago.—An open verdict was returned in the case of Dr. John T. Binkley by a coroner's jury. A string was attached to the verdict, however, in the form of a recommendation that the police continue their investigation. Deputy Coroner Kennedy, who officiated at the inquest, said at its close that in his opinion the case had probably had been murdered and that robbery was the apparent motive.

Dix.—A new bank has been organized in Dix, capital stock $12,500. The officers are: Albert Watson, Mount Vernon, president; vice-president, W. K. Parker, Tuscico; cashier, J. Otis Purcell, Dix; assistant cashier, John H. Hawkins, Dix. Mr. Watson is president of five other banking institutions in this part of the state and is one of the foremost capitalists in Illinois.

Assumption.—The local option people held their first inning when the city government put into force their ordinance prohibiting the sale of soft drinks. The United States marshal was called in to assist. J. H. Pratt, an old citizen and a justice of the peace for 15 years, was taken to Springfield for selling liquor without a government license.

Bloomington.—For the first time in the history of this city, there is a dearth of house numbers in hardware stores and other establishments. The activity in placing numbers on the homes of the city is due to the announcement that a law has been made that a post office mail inspecting officer will soon visit the city for the purpose of looking over the field.

Pontiac.—Commencement exercises of the Illinois State Reformatory Industrial school was held in chapel hall, attached to the school at Pontiac. Orations were delivered by six members of the graduating class and diplomas presented by General Superintendent M. M. Mallary, besides which there were two vocal solos, two full choruses and an organ voluntary.

Lake Forest.—Twenty-nine graduates of Lake Forest college were awarded diplomas in Reid Memorial chapel, Lake Forest, by John Shelton Reed, president of the college. Rev. Ira Landrith, general secretary of the Presbyterian Brotherhood of America, delivered the baccalaureate on "The Secret of Success."

Rockford.—Rev. N. P. Sjostrom has been elected to call to the pastorate of Immanuel Swedish Lutheran church in Chicago. He has been the pastor of this Lutheran church here eight years. He has not yet decided whether to accept the call.

Harrisburg.—Fire destroyed the general store of A. L. Massey on Lincoln avenue, causing a loss of $3,000. The residence of Perry Stiff on the same street was also destroyed. Loss, $1,500.

Carlinville.—The balloon St. Louis III., which ascended with five passengers, two of whom were women, at Carlinville, made a final landing near Carlinville after a flight of 60 miles in seven hours.

Elgin.—Will Kreinbrink, aged 18, was seized with cramps and drowned while bathing in Fox River.

Bushnell.—James Cole, a resident of Bushnell since the town started in 1856, has been cashier of the First National bank from 1892 to 1906 and later president of Cole's Trust and Savings bank, died here, aged 74.

Harrisburg.—The residences of John Raley, S. O. Endicott and S. W. Weaver on East Church street were destroyed by fire. Loss, $3,500. The fire was caused by an explosion of a gasoline stove in the Endicott home.

Bloomington.—The safe in the post office at Wenona was dynamited and the safe robbers escaped without booty.