



CHAPTER XI—Continued

"Please have a smoke, Mr. Liang." His tone was that of an equal. "This is not to be an interrogation. It's a conference in which we need your help."

Liang inclined his head with a murmured "Thank you," and took one of the cigarettes, which Vance lit for him.

Vance returned to his chair and Liang sat down. "Mr. Liang," Vance began, "I think that I apprehend the position in which you have been placed by the unfortunate events which have taken place in this house, and I also think you realize that I have not been entirely ignorant of your predicament. You have acted, I might say, in very much the same way I myself might have acted, had our positions been reversed. But the time has come when frankness is wisdom—and I hope you trust me sufficiently to believe me when I tell you that no possible danger can come to you. You are no longer in jeopardy. There is now no possibility of misunderstanding. As a matter of fact, I have not misunderstood you from the first."

Liang again bowed his head, and said: "I should be most happy to help you, if I might be assured that the truth would prevail in this unhappy house, and that I would not be accused of things of which some one desired I should be accused."

"I can assure you of that, Mr. Liang," Vance returned quietly. Then he added significantly: "Mr. Wrede is dead."

"Ah!" the man murmured. "That puts a different aspect on matters." "Oh, quite. Mr. Wrede was killed by a dog he had abused."

"Lao-Tzu has said," returned Liang, "that he who abuses the weak is eventually destroyed by his own weakness."

mitted that night, it was I who was supposed to take the blame. . . . "You are quite right, Mr. Liang. I think that both weapons were left here in order to involve you."

"I did not quite understand the situation," the Chinaman continued. "But I felt that it might be safer for me if I took the poker and the dagger and hid them. I could see the possibilities of a case being built up against me, if the weapons were found in the library, especially as it might be proved that I had been here at the time. Moreover, the dagger is Chinese, and it could be easily ascertained that I was not in sympathy with the means Mr. Archer Coe used in depriving my country of its rightful antiques."

"Yes," nodded Vance. "That was no doubt the intention of the murderer. . . . And so, when you had the opportunity, you placed both weapons in the room upstairs?"

"That is true," Liang admitted. "I placed them there when the butler sent me to Miss Lake's room the next morning. Perhaps if I had realized how serious the situation was and had understood all of its complications, I might have acted differently. I do not yet understand the mechanism of the crime. The physical misunderstanding, so to speak, between Mr. Wrede and Mr. Archer Coe took place in this library, and yet his dead body was in his bedroom upstairs."

"There was no possibility," inquired Vance, "that Mr. Wrede could have assisted Mr. Coe upstairs, after the melee?"

"Oh, no," Liang was quite emphatic. "Within a few moments of the encounter here in the library, Mr. Wrede came out through the kitchen, surreptitiously, and departed through the rear door."

"How can you be sure it was Wrede, Mr. Liang, if you did not see him?" Vance asked.

"The Chinaman gave a slow smile. 'In my country the senses are more acute than in the Occident. I had heard Mr. Wrede move about this house too often not to know his step and sense his presence.' Liang paused and looked at Vance. 'And may I be permitted now to ask a question of you?'"

papers you had so neatly arranged on the kitchen table. . . . "I was afraid, afterward," he said, "that you might have noticed that. . . . The fact is, Mr. Vance, I was standing guard. At about half-past two that morning, I was awakened by a slight sound, I sleep lightly—and I am sensitive to sounds. I listened, and some one opened the door and passed through the kitchen into the butler's pantry and the dining room, and on into the library—"

"You recognized the footsteps?" "Oh, yes. The person who came in so softly was Mr. Wrede. . . . I naturally did not trust him, knowing what I did, and I hoped that I could trap him in some way. So I rose, dressed, turned on all the lights in the kitchen, and took my post at the table—as if I were working. Fifteen minutes later, I heard Mr. Wrede come back softly into the butler's pantry and then retreat again toward this room. I knew that he had seen the lights in the kitchen and was afraid to enter. I did not hear the front door open—which is the only other means of egress except the windows—and I decided to stand my ground."

"A little later I heard Mr. Grass call out, and then I heard the butler telephoning. Even so, I thought it best to remain in the kitchen, for it occurred to me that Mr. Wrede might still be hiding in the house, waiting for a chance to escape through the rear door. When you came into the kitchen and informed me of the attack on Mr. Grass, I suggested the den window. I do not see how else Mr. Wrede could have gone out of the house."

Liang looked up sadly. "I am sorry my efforts were not more successful, but at least I made it difficult for Mr. Wrede."

Vance got up and put out his cigarette. "You've helped us no end," he said. "You've clarified many things. We are most grateful."

He walked to Liang and held out his hand. The Chinaman took it and bowed.

CHAPTER XII

The Startling Truth.

WHEN Liang had gone out, Vance sent Gamble for Hilda Lake. As soon as she entered the library, Vance informed her that Wrede was dead.

She looked at him a moment, lifted her eyebrows, shrugged slightly, and said: "It is no great loss to the world."

"Furthermore," Vance went on, "I believe that Mr. Wrede murdered your uncles and attempted the life of Mr. Grass."

"I would not be in the least surprised," the young woman commented coldly. "I have suspected all along that he murdered Uncle Archer, but I could not quite see how he accomplished it. Have you learned his modus operandi?"

"No, Miss Lake," he admitted. "That's a part of the problem still to be solved."

"But why," she asked, "should he kill Uncle Brisbane? Uncle Brisbane was his ally."

had not had a satisfactory ending—there were many things that had been left unexplained; there were many links in the chain of evidence which had not been found. But before the night was over there were no longer any mysteries: each step in this monstrous crime, and each perplexing and contradictory factor had been clarified.

"The final elucidation of the mystery came in a most unexpected manner. We were sitting in Vance's library, talking, after dinner. 'It's dashed mystifyin'," he muttered. 'What I can't understand is how Archer got upstairs after he had been stabbed in the library. There's little doubt, after Liang's story, that the bloody work was done downstairs.'"

"I'm not so sure you're right about that, Vance," submitted Markham. "If your theory is correct, you must logically admit the proposition that a dead man walked upstairs."

Vance inclined his head. "I realize that," he said thoughtfully. Then he leapt to his feet and stood before Markham, tense and animated. "A dead man walked upstairs," he repeated in a strained, hushed voice. "That's it! That's the answer to everything. . . . Yes, Markham,"—he nodded with curious significance—"a dead man walked upstairs!"

"That's what happened the other night. Archer Coe—already a dead man—walked upstairs. And what is even more terrible, Markham—he didn't know he was dead!"

Vance turned quickly and went to a set of thick quarto volumes on the lower shelf of one of his bookcases. He ran his finger along the books until he came to volume "E." He turned the pages and found what he was looking for. Then he glanced down the column of fine type.

"Listen, Markham," he said. "Here's a historical case of a dead person walking." He read from the encyclopedia: "Elizabeth (Amelie Eugenie), 1837—1898, consort of Francis Joseph, emperor of Austria, a daughter of Duke Maximilian Joseph of Bavaria and Louisa Wilhelmina, was born on the 24th of December, 1837, at Lake Starnberg. . . ." He turned the page. "But here's the passage regarding her death: 'Elizabeth spent much of her time traveling through Europe and at the palace she had built in Corfu. On the 10th of September, 1898, she was walking through the streets of Geneva with her entourage from her hotel to the steamer, when an anarchist, named Luigi Luccheni, ran suddenly into the roadway and stabbed her in the back, with a shoemaker's awl. The police immediately pounced upon the man and were about to drag him away, when the empress stayed them and gave the order that they should release him. 'He has not injured me,' she said, 'and I wish, on this occasion, to forgive him.' She continued her walk to the steamer, which was more than half a mile distant, and made a farewell speech to her subjects from the deck. She then retired to her cabin and lay down. Several hours later she was found dead. Luccheni had actually stabbed her without her being aware of it, and she had died hours later of an internal hemorrhage.'"

Vance closed the book and threw it to one side. "Now do you see what I mean, Markham?" he asked. "A dead person often does strange things without knowing he is dead."

"Do you recall what Doctor Doremus said? 'An internal hemorrhage! That's the whole story—that's the key to everything. That's how Archer could have been killed in the library and still have walked upstairs.'"

He went to another bookcase, and, after a moment's search, pulled out a black, gold-lettered volume. (TO BE CONTINUED)

BRISBANE THIS WEEK

A Long Swim Money Flows West \$5 for \$3.39 Not So Barren

The new year, 1935, latest contribution of Father Time to the long chain of beads called "eternity," is here, and we are in it.

We shall continue to read opinions and rumors, plans and criticism of plans, in our slow progress to prosperity's shore. It is a long swim when you are thrown overboard in the middle of Lake Superior. This country was thrown overboard in another lake of superior prosperity and unlimited expectations back in 1929.

Farmers, newspapers devoted to the farmers' interest, big bankers in the East, are interested in the fact that the money tide that for so long flowed from producers in the West to accumulators in the East, is now flowing in the other direction.

The money tide goes out toward the farms of wheat raisers and stock, in the West and Middle West, and to the cotton farmers in the South. It is as though the Great Lakes had been tilted upward at the eastern end, and the waters sent rushing toward the Rocky mountains.

The tide will not flow long in that western direction, probably. Men that have the mortgages and collect the interest accumulate the money, in the long run.

Long ago, a man wagered that he would stand on London bridge offering genuine gold sovereigns for a shilling each and find few takers. The gold sovereigns were genuine, but nobody would buy. Mel Smith, a circus official called "Lucky" Smith, bet that Los Angeles citizens would refuse to buy genuine \$5 bills for \$3.39. Hundreds walked by, looked at the genuine bills. Some cried "Fake!" Only two purchased. "Lucky" Smith won a \$100 wager.

Many Americans wish they had been as skeptical about certain stock back in 1929.

The distinguished George W. Russell of Ireland, who signs his writings "A.E.," says, "I am always struck by the terrible barrenness of rural life in America." He thinks we must "find some way to enrich it" and if we don't, "then the disease which destroyed ancient Italy will eat into America. You will no longer feed yourselves, and you will be struck with palsy of bread and circuses."

Mr. Russell may find greater richness in Irish farmhouses, but it is a richness of the character and of the mind, not the surroundings. There is little barrenness about, other than intellectual, in our rural life with its automobile, radio, moving pictures within easy reach, rural delivery, porcelain bath tubs, mail order catalogues, prayer meetings, revivals, annual circuses, the public library, soon reached by automobile.

TRUE GHOST STORIES

By Famous People

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By RITA WEIMAN Author.

RITA Weiman is too strong-minded to have a ghost story," cautioned her husband. "Beg your pardon," he added. "Come to think of it she does have a ghost story, a very real one. She has a knack of foreseeing things. Tell about your 'voltage story,' Rita."

Simultaneously, the author, her husband and I drew our chairs closer to the fireplace, above which burned dim lights from Chinese furniture, which she favors.

"Seven years ago," she began, "I read an obscure notice in the newspaper, about John Hulbert of Auburn, N. Y., an electrician, resigning as executioner at Sing Sing, because he was being ostracized from society. At the same time he justified his job, saying he was only fulfilling his work as a servant of the state."

"I thought this was a grand idea for a story. I wrote a story about an electrician, who was ostracized by his family and friends, because they found out he was serving as an executioner and who eventually killed himself because of their actions, by seizing a high-voltage electric wire. I sold the story to a magazine."

"A few months later the editor called me to say that the owner of the magazine felt that my story was a plea against capital punishment and that he did not feel that his magazine should take issue on the subject. I should keep my check, but the story would not be published by them; I could resell it if I wished."

"I let the matter drift, although I felt that I wanted to see the story published. "One morning, two years later, my secretary handed me a paper. "Look," she said with amazement in her voice.

"Joins in death the 140 men he slew," said the headlines. John Hulbert, by suicide, answers the question all who knew him asked. "How I rejoiced that my story had not been published! I would always have been haunted by the thought that Hulbert had read my story and brooded over it, and had eventually committed suicide."

"In view of the strange finale of events, the magazine then published the story, and I rejoiced that I had been saved from that ghost."

Housewife's Idea Box



Use Sour Milk. Sour milk can be used just the same as sweet milk. Add one-third of a teaspoonful of baking soda for each cup of the sour milk you use. Then proceed to add exactly the same ingredients as if sweet milk were being used. Many housewives think it makes better biscuits than sweet milk. THE HOUSEWIFE.

Point of View Diversity of opinion proves that things are only what we think them!

NASAL IRRITATION due to colds. Relieve the dryness and irritation by applying Mentholatum night and morning. MENTHOLATUM Gives COMFORT Daily

FEEL TIRED, ACHY—'ALL WORN OUT?' Get Rid of Poisons That Make You Ill. IS a constant backache suffering you miserable? Do you suffer burning, scanty or too frequent urination; attacks of dizziness, rheumatic pains, swollen feet and ankles? Do you feel tired, nervous—all unstrung?

DOAN'S PILLS Beautiful SKIN—needs more than cosmetics. Beauty of skin comes from within. When constipation clogs bowels with internal wastes, the skin suffers. Doan's Pills relieve the clogged system promptly, mildly, effectively. At your drug store 25c & 50c.

CUTICURA Relieves Skin Troubles. Bathe the affected parts freely with Cuticura Soap and hot water, dry gently, and anoint with Cuticura Ointment. Pure and healing, these super-creamy emollients bring quick relief and soon heal itching, burning, scaly skin affections, eczema, pimples, rashes and all forms of skin troubles.

PARKER'S HAIR BALM Removes Dandruff—Stops Hair Falling—Imparts Color and Beauty to Gray and Faded Hair. Florestan Shampoo—Ideal for use in connection with Parker's Hair Balm. Makes the hair soft and fluffy. 60 cents by mail or at druggists. Haecon Chemical Works, Patchoque, N. Y.

FOR A NERVOUS WOMAN Mrs. Leslie Jefferson of 803 Ave. C, Dodge City, Kansas, says: "Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription improved my appetite and rid me of that nervous, run-down condition. I also felt stronger and had more energy." All druggists write to Dr. Pierce's Clinic, Buffalo, N. Y., for free medical advice. Size, tabs, or tablets 50 cts.; liquid \$1.00. Leg. size, tabs, or tablets \$1.35. "Who Do Our Part."

MEN WANTED Local men with mechanical training or ability to train for many opportunities offered by the fast growing Diesel Industry. A special arrangement will be made by the DIESEL POWER ENGINEERING SCHOOLS with the first men accepted in each community. For interview write at once, giving age, education, references to— DIESEL ENGINEERING SCHOOL 401 Mor. Natl. Bldg., Dept. W, Omaha, Neb.