

The Bell

BY LOUIS JOSEPH VANCE
AUTHOR OF "THE BRASS BOWL" ETC.
ILLUSTRATIONS BY RAY WALTERS
COPYRIGHT BY LOUIS JOSEPH VANCE

SYNOPSIS.

David Amber, starting for a duck-shoot on a young lady equestrian who has been announced by her father as the bride-elect at the sudden appearance in the road of Behari Lal Chatterji, the appointed mouthpiece of the Bell, addresses Amber as a man of high rank and a mysterious little brown box. The "box" into his hand, disappears in the wood. The girl calls Amber by name. He in turn addresses her as Miss Sophie Farrell, daughter of Col. Farrell of the British diplomatic service in India, and visiting the Quains. Several nights later the Quain home is burglarized and Amber is left marooned. He wanders about, finally reaches a cabin and recognizes as its occupant an old friend named Rutton, whom he last met in England, and who appears to be in hiding. When Miss Farrell is mentioned Rutton is strangely agitated. Chatterji appears and summons Rutton to a meeting of a mysterious body. Rutton, who is a revolutionary and dealer in arms, returns wildly excited, says he has killed the Hindu, takes Amber to a mysterious strand, Amber decides to leave at once for India, and when dying asks Amber to go to India on a mysterious errand. Amber decides to leave at once for India, and when dying asks Amber to go to India on a mysterious errand. Amber decides to leave at once for India, and when dying asks Amber to go to India on a mysterious errand.

CHAPTER X. (Continued.)

"Pardon, hazor, but is this worth it while? I am no child; what I know I know. If thou art indeed not Har Dyal Rutton, how is it that thou dost wear upon thy finger the signet of thy house?"—Salig Singh indicated the emerald which Amber had forgotten—"the Token set thee by the Bell? If thou art not my lord the Maharana of Khandawar, how is it that thou hast answered the summons of the Bell? Are the servants of the Body fools who have followed thee hither, losing trace of thee no single instant since thou didst slay the Bengali who bore the Token to thee? Am I blind—I, Salig Singh, thy childhood's playmate, the grand vizier of thy too-brief rule, to whom thou didst surrender the reins of government of Khandawar? I know thee; thou canst not deceive me. True it is that thou art changed—sadly changed, my lord, and the years have not worn upon thee as they might—I had thought to find thee an older man and, by thy grace, a wiser. But even as I am Salig Singh, thou art none other than my lord, Har Dyal Rutton."

Salig Singh put his shoulders against the wall and, leaning so with arms folded, regarded Amber with a triumph not unmarked with contempt. It was plain that he considered his argument final, his case complete, the verdict his. While Amber found no words with which to combat his false impression, and could only stare, open-mouthed and fascinated. But at length he recollected himself and called his wits together.

"That's all very pretty," he admitted fairly, "but it won't hold water. I don't suppose those faithful servants of the Bell you mentioned happened to tell you that Chatterji himself mistook me for Rutton, to begin with, and just four or five days ago I was in time to recover the Token. Did they?"

The man shook his head wearily. "Nothing to that import hath come to mine ears," he said.

"All right. And of course they didn't tell you that Rutton committed suicide down there on Long Island, just after he had killed the babu?"

Again Salig Singh replied by making a negative movement of his head.

"Well, all I've got to say is that your infernal 'Body' employs a giddy lot of incompetents to run its errands."

Salig Singh said nothing, and Amber pondered the situation briefly. He understood now how the babu's companion had fallen into error; how Chatterji, possessing sufficient intelligence to recognize his initial mistake, had, having rectified it, saved his face by saying nothing to his companion of the incident; and how the latter had remained in ignorance of Rutton's death after the slaying of Chatterji, and had pardonably mistaken Amber for the man he had been sent to spy upon. The prologue was plain enough, but how to deal with this, its sequel, was a problem that taxed his ingenuity. A single solution seemed practicable, of the many he debated: to get in touch with Labertouche and leave the rest to him.

He stood for so long in meditation that the Rajput began to show traces of impatience. He moved restlessly, yawned, and at length spoke.

"Is not my lord content? Can he not see, the dice are cast? What profit can he think to win through furtherance of this farce?"

"Well," curiously prompted Amber to ask, "what do you want of me, then?"

"Is there need to ask? Through the Mouthpiece, the Bengali, Behari Lal Chatterji, whom thou didst slay, the message of the Bell was brought to thee. Thou hast been called: it is for thee to answer."

"Called—?"

"To the Gateway of Swords, hazor."

"Oh, yes; to be sure. But where in thunderation is it?"

might to you—and, I say, be kind enough to shut the door as you go in. I'll just wait until you do."

The Rajput found no answer; conceivably, his chagrin was intense. With a curt nod he turned and re-entered the house, Moto following. The door closed and Amber jumped briskly into the ghar.

"Home, James," he told the ghari-wallah, in great conceit with himself. "I mean, the Great Eastern hotel—and juldee jao!"

The driver wrapped a whiplash round the corrugated flanks of his horse and the ghari turned the corner with gratifying speed. In half a minute they were in the Chitpur road. In 15 they drew up before the hotel.

A Bengali drifted listlessly past, a bored and blasé babu in a suit of pink satin, wandering home and interested in nothing save his own bland self and the native cigarette that drooped languidly from his lips. He passed within a foot of Amber, and from somewhere a voice spoke an oath that the babu's lips did not move—a clear yet discreet whisper.

"Tomorrow," it said; "Darjeeling."

Amber hitched his cloak round him and entered the hotel.

CHAPTER XI.

The Tonga.

"Badshah Junction, Mr. Amber."

"Badshah Junction. We'll be there in 'alf an hour."

Inexorably the voice droned on, repeating the admonition over and over. Mutinous, Amber stirred and grumbled in his sleep; stirred, and grumbled wakened to another day. Doggott stood over him, doggedly insistent.

"Not much time to dress, sir; we're due in less than 'alf an hour."

"Even a tonga will be a relief after



It Was Signed: "Pink Satin."

three days of this, Doggott," he observed, surrendering himself to the ministrations of the servant.

It was the third morning succeeding that on which he had risen from his bed in the Great Eastern hotel in Calcutta, possessed by a wild anxiety to find his way with the least possible delay to Darjeeling and Sophia Parrell—a journey which he was destined never to make. For while he breakfasted a telegram had been brought to him.

"Your train for Benares," he said, "leaves Howrah at 9:30 imperative." It was signed, "Pink Satin."

He acted upon it without thought of disobedience; he was in the hands of Labertouche, and Labertouche knew best. Between the lines he read that the Englishman considered it unwise to attempt further communication in Calcutta. Something had happened to eliminate the trip to Darjeeling. Labertouche would undoubtedly contrive to meet and enlighten him, either on the way or in Benares itself.

In the long, tiresome, eventless journey that followed his faith was sorely tried; nor was it justified until the train paused some time after midnight at Mogul Serai. There before Amber and Doggott could alight to change for Benares, their compartment was invaded by an unmistakable loafer, very drunk. Tall and burly; with red-rimmed eyes; a pasty, pock-marked face, dirty and rusty with a week-old growth of beard; clothed with sublime contempt for the mode and exalted beyond reason with liquor—a typical loafer of the Indian railways—he flung the door open and himself into Amber's arms, almost knocking the latter down; and resenting the accident at the top of his lungs.

"You miserable, misbegotten blighter of a wall-eyed American!" At this point he became unprintably profane, and Doggott fell upon him with the laudable intention of throwing him out. In the struggle Amber caught his eye, and it was bright with meaning. "Pink Satin!" he hissed. "He's gone ahead. . . . You're to keep on to Agra. . . . Change for Badshah Junction, Rajputana Route. . . . Then tonga to Kuttarpur. . . . Farrell's there and his daughter. . . . That's right, my man, throw me out!"

His downfall was spectacular. In his enthusiasm for the part he played, he had erred to the extent of delivering a blow in Doggott's face, more forcible, probably, than he had intended it to be. Promptly he landed sprawling on the station platform.

And the train continued on its appointed way, bearing both Amber and the injured Doggott.

Thus they came to the heart of Rajputana.

In the chill of dawn they were deposited at Badshah Junction. A scanty length of rude platform received them and they stood, then, forlorn in a howling desolation. For signs of life they had the station, a flimsy shelter roofed with corrugated iron, a beaten track that wandered off northwards and disappeared over a grassless swell, a handful of mud huts at a distance, and the ticket agent. The latter, a sleepy, surly Eurasian in pyjamas, surveyed them listlessly from the threshold of the station, and without a sign either of interest or contempt turned and locked himself in.

Amber sat down on his upturned suitcase and laughed and lit a cigarette. Doggott growled.

Presently the sun rose in glory and sent its burning level rays to cast a shadow several rods long of an enraged American beating frantically with clenched fists upon the door of an unresponsive railway station.

He hammered until he was a-weary, then depurized his task to Doggott, who resolutely found him a stone of size and proceeded to make dents in the door. This method elicited the Eurasian. He came out, listened at

wink deliberately at Amber the while he broadly sketched for him his ancestry and the manner of his life at home and abroad.

"Thunderstruck, Amber caught himself just as he was on the point of attempting to drag the driver from his seat and beat him into a more endurable frame of mind. He swallowed the hint and gave up the contest.

"Oh, very well," he conceded. "I presume you're trying to say there isn't another tonga to be had and it can't be helped; but I don't like your tone. However, there doesn't seem to be anything to do but take you. How much for the two of us?"

"Your servant, sahib? He cannot ride in this tonga," asserted the driver impressively.

"He can't. Why not?"

"You can see there is room for but two, and I have yet another passenger."

"Where?"

"At the first dak-bungalow, sahib, where a small tonga broke down last night. This tonga, which I say is an excellent tonga, an aram tonga—a tonga for ease, is sent to take its place. More than this, I am bidden to go in haste; therefore there is little time for you to decide whether or not you will go with me alone. As for your servant, he can follow by this afternoon's mail tonga."

Upon this ultimatum he stood, immovable; neither threats nor bribery availed. It was an order, he said; he had no choice other than to obey. "Shahshah!" Would the sahib please to make up his mind quickly?

Perforce, the sahib yielded. "It'll be Labertouche; he's arranged this," he told himself. "That loafer said he'd gone on ahead of us."

And comforted he issued his orders to Doggott, who received and acceded to them with all the ill-grace imaginable. He was to remain and follow to Kuttarpur by the afternoon's tonga.

Climbing aboard, the Eurasian settled himself against the endless discomforts of the ride which he foresaw; the tonga was anything but "an aram tonga—a tonga for ease"; there was no shade and no breeze, and the face of the land crawled with heat-bred haze.

To a crisp cracking of the whiplash over the backs of the two sturdy, shaggy, flea-bitten ponies, the tonga swept away from the station, swift as a hunted fox with a dusty plume.

Amber leaned forward, watching the driver's face. "Your name, tonga-wallahah?" he enquired.

"Ram Nath, sahib." The man spoke without moving his head, attending diligently to the management of his ponies.

"And this other passenger, who awaits us at the dak-bungalow, Ram Nath—is he, perchance, one known both to you and to me?"

Ram Nath flicked the flagging ponies. "How should I know?" he returned brusquely.

"One," persisted Amber, "who might be known by such a name as, say, Pink Satin?"

"What manner of talk is this?" demanded Ram Nath. "I am no child to be amused by a riddle. I know naught of your 'Pink Satin.'" He bent forward, shortening his grasp upon the reins, as if to signify that the interview was at an end.

Amber sat back, annoyed by the fellow's impudence yet sensitive to a suspicion that Ram Nath was playing his part better than his passenger, that the rebuke was merited by one who had ventured to speak of secret things in a land whose very stones have ears. For all that he could say their every move was watched by invisible spies, of whom the rock-strewn waste through which they sped might well harbor a hidden legion. . . . But perhaps, after all, Ram Nath had nothing whatever to do with Labertouche. Undeniable as had been his wink, it might well have been nothing more than an impertinence.

Meanwhile the tonga rocked and bounded feebly over an infamous parody of a road, turning and twisting between huge boulders and in and out of pebbly nullahs, Ram Nath toiling it along with the hand of a master. But all his attention was of necessity centered upon the ponies, and presently his tufted slipper fell from his knees and clattered upon the floor of the tonga. Amber saw his chance and put his foot upon it.

"Ram Nath," he asked gently, "have you no other arms?"

"I were a fool had I not." The man did not deign to glance round. "He hath need of weapons who doth traffic with the Chosen of the Voice sahib."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

HOME TOWN HELPS

WHY PLANT STREET TREES

Ornament, Health, Comfort and Protection Are Four Good and Sufficient Reasons.

There are at least four good reasons why we should plant street trees: First, for ornament; second, for health; third, for comfort, fourth, for protection.

1. Ornamentation. That street ornamentation pays in many ways is no one will deny, but it pays directly in dollars and cents. Beautifying a neighborhood is not a mere fad. It costs but little more to make it attractive than to leave it or make it unsightly, and a well-kept, well-planted district will not only attract, but command residents desirable in every way. It is not mere sentiment that prompts the railroads to advertise the attractions along their lines. Beauty to them represents cash, and each year they spend immense sums calling attention to the attractions of the sections through which they pass. If people choose a line of travel because of its natural and acquired beauties, how much more eagerly will they seek such a place for a residence. That both are eagerly sought for is undisputed. Landscape beauty is capital. Again, not one of us would be satisfied to spend his life in a desolate, though surrounded with the necessities of life in plenty. Our natures crave better and more beautiful surroundings, and we oftentimes travel far seeking the most beautiful location obtainable.

2. Health. Trees add greatly to the healthfulness of any district by cooling and purifying the air, the foliage evaporates large quantities of water and the reduction of temperature in this way is greatest during the hottest and driest weather. The foliage also absorbs impure and therefore harmful gases. Trees also promote circulation of air (due principally to unequal temperature.)

3. Comfort. Trees add materially to comfort either in city or country, not alone to shade the passer-by, and the idler who rests beneath their branches, but in a climate like ours, with perpetual sunshine, they soften the glare and heat of the sun on sidewalks.

4. Protection. Every one will readily concede that street trees afford protection from both wind and sun, but as a protection against fire they are not so well known. The chief of the San Francisco fire department writes that shade trees on sidewalks are beneficial in checking the spread of fire. First, they are good as wind-breaks, keeping sparks and embers from near-by buildings. Second, they shield the houses, preventing them from catching fire from the heat. He tells of a fire where a single large tree prevented the destruction of a three-story flat adjoining. In this case there was considerable delay in getting water, so that the fire gained great headway.

Relieves Backache Instantly

Sloan's Liniment is a great remedy for backache. It penetrates and relieves the pain instantly—no rubbing necessary—just lay it on lightly.

Here's Proof.

"I had my back hurt in the Deer War and in San Francisco two years ago. I was hit by a street car in the same place. I tried all kinds of drugs without success. Two weeks ago I saw your liniment in a drug store and got a bottle to try. The first application caused instant relief, and now except for a little stiffness, I am almost well."

FLETCHER NORMAN
Whittier, Calif.

SLOAN'S LINIMENT

is the best remedy for rheumatism, neuralgia, sore throat and sprains.

Miss E. Kim of Brooklyn, N.Y., writes: "Sloan's Liniment is the best for rheumatism. I have used six bottles of it and it is grand."

Sold by all Dealers.
Price, 25c., 50c., and \$1.00.

Sloan's Book on Rheumatism, Cattle, Hops and Cudweed sent free. Address: Dr. Earl S. Sloan, Boston, Mass.

Your Liver Is Clogged Up

That's Why You're Tired—Out of Sort—Have No Appetite.

CARTER'S LITTLE LIVER PILLS will put you right in a few days. They do their duty. Cure Constipation, Biliousness, Indigestion and Sick Headache. SMALL PILL, SMALL DOSE, SMALL PRICE. Genuine must bear Signature.

Brewer's Wood

PISO'S

is the name to remember when you need a remedy for COUGHS and COLDS.

NATURALLY A HIT.

The Rooster—Our young friend, Mr. Pig, is making a hit on the stage. The Duck—What is he playing? The Rooster—Ham-let.

To Rent an Umbrella.

To mend an umbrella that tears lose from the rib at the point, when you are on the street and needle and thread are not available, close the umbrella and bring the cloth in position, insert a small hairpin in the hole of the rib, and wind securely round cloth. This "first aid to the injured" is so efficient you will be tempted to leave it permanently.—National Magazine.

One Resemblance.

"They tell me that aviator you engaged was a bird."

"We thought so after he displayed his bill."

FROM TEXAS

Some Coffee Facts From the Lone Star State.

From a beautiful farm down in Texas, where gushing springs unite to form babbling brooks that wind their sparkling way through flowery meads, comes a note of gratitude for delivery from the coffee habit.

"When my baby boy came to me five years ago, I began to drink Postum, having a feeling that it would be better for him and me than the old kind of drug-laden coffee. I was not disappointed in it, for it enabled me, a small, delicate woman, to nurse a bouncing, healthy baby 14 months."

"I have since continued the use of Postum for I have found fond of it, and have discovered to my joy that it has entirely relieved me of a bilious habit which used to prostrate me two or three times a year, causing much discomfort to my family and suffering to myself."

"My brother-in-law was cured of chronic constipation by leaving off coffee and using Postum. He has become even more fond of it than he was of the old coffee."

"In fact, the entire family, from the latest arrival (a 2-year-old who always calls for his 'potie' first thing in the morning), up to the head of the house, think there is no drink so good or so wholesome as Postum." Name given by Postum Co., Battle Creek, Mich.

Read the little book, "The Road to Wellville," in pkgs. "There's a reason."

Ever read the above letter? A new one appears from time to time. They are wonderful, true, and full of human interest.

Bartender Was Irritating

One in St. Louis Aggravated the English Actor, and Then Declined to be Kicked.

"An English actor, who has an accent as English as they make 'em, does not like American bartenders in general, and for the bartenders in St. Louis he entertains a particular aversion."

"I want to eat a bar in St. Louis, dear boy," he said on one occasion, "and I ordered a bottle of beer. The bartender, don't you know, did not hand me the beer. He dashed it down on the bar and slid it along for about ten or twelve feet, don't you know. It stopped right in front of me. I looked at him with a stony stare, as was quite proper, but he paid no attention to me."

"Then I gave him a quartah. He

threw on the bar a coin, which rolled on the floor. Again I stared at him, as if to insult him, but he paid no attention to me whatever—none whatever. So I called a small black boy and said to him:

"You will find a coin on the floor, and you can have it for your trouble."

"Then I turned to the bartender: 'If you will come from behind that bar I will kick into you some knowledge of what is polite and propah on the part of a bartender.'

"But he would not come from behind the bar. Then I gave him the numbuh of my room, and told him I would be glad to see him there at any time and give him the kick which he deserved. But he never came to the room."

"So, you see, dear boy, your American bartenders are impolite, and they won't be kicked. What is a gentleman to do?"—Popular Magazine.

Forty Years a Teacher.

Mrs. Ellen Richards, who was in St. Louis recently as president of the National Home Economics association, has just completed her fortieth year as a teacher in the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The women students gave a luncheon to commemorate the event and there were eulogies by the professors upon her work as a chemist, "as a social seer and as an evangelist." Over a thousand dollars has been raised to be called the Ellen Richards fund, and to be used as she desires. She was lately given the Ph. D. degree by Smith college.

A Question of Economy.

"Rafferty," said Mr. Dolan, "do you think there's anything at all in this talk about locomotive engines running on wain rail?"

"I dunno. If the expense of steel rails is as bad as some people say, wabbe they'll have to."

The Good Mayor.

Mayor Gaynor, praising the street cleaning department of New York, uttered the other day an epigram that might advantageously be framed and hung in every mayor's office in the land.

"A good mayor," he said, "should be as ashamed of a dirty city as he would be of a dirty shirt."