



By LOUIS JOSEPH VANCE

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## PROLOGUE.

"It breaks the speed limit to smithereens."

*That's a candid opinion about this story. There may have been swifter tales, but not recently. It's an acroplane of a yarn, moving so fast that you lose your breath while you follow it. But you don't need any breath, anyway, because you forget about respiration with your eyes on reading of this kind.*

*Every man has his day of days. Yours may have come and you may be swimming in the full tide of fortune. If so, read how P. Sybarite found his. If your own ship is still in the offing, you will enjoy learning how the little spunky red headed bookkeeper won a fortune and an heiress, foiled all his enemies and had some of the most amazing adventures ever penned—all in less time than it takes the hour hand to round the clock dial twice.*

## CHAPTER VII.

*The Lady of the House.*

A once, like a demon of exceptional malignity, a breathless and overpowering rage possessed P. Sybarite. Without the least hesitation he stretched forth a hand, snatched the pistol from the grasp of the woman—who seemed to relinquish it more through surprise than willingly—threw himself halfway down the stairs and took a hasty pot shot at the marauder almost invisible in the darkness as he rounded the turn of the next flight.

Missing, the little man flung on recklessly. As he gained the next floor down the hall lights flashed up, switch-on from the upper landing by the woman of the house. Thus added, he caught another glimpse of his prey midway down the next flight, and checked to take a second shot at him. Again he missed. With but one thought he hurried on, swung round to the head of the stairs, saw his man at the bottom, pulled up to him and—

Beneath him a small rug slipped on polished parquetry of the landing. P. Sybarite's heels went up and his head down with a sickening thump. He heard his pistol explode once more. Then, bounding up with uncommon resiliency he saw the street door of the house close behind the fugitive and heard the heavy slam of it.

Above him on the stairs the lady of the house appeared.

"Come back!" she called in a guarded tone. "He's made a clean getaway. Got to hand him that. No use trying to follow. You wouldn't catch up in a thousand years. Come back—d'you hear?—and give me my gun!"

A trifle dashed, P. Sybarite obeyed.

"Now then"—she addressed the little man, with a brilliant smile—"now we can powwow. Come into the den, and led the way toward the rear of the house. He trotted submissively in her wake.

Turning into a dark doorway, the woman switched light into an electric dome, illuminating an interior apartment transformed by a wildly original taste in eccentric decoration into a lounging room of such distressful unlikeness that it would have bred unrest in the soul of a lotus eater.

Black, red and gold—lusterless black of coke, lurid crimson of fresh blood; bright, glaring yellow of gold, new minted—were the predominant notes in a color scheme at once somber and violent.

"Cozy little hole," P. Sybarite couldn't forbear to comment with a shudder as he dropped into a chair in compliance to the woman's gesture.

Offering cigarettes in a golden case, she selected and lighted one for herself. "My servants are all abed," she said, "or I would offer you a drink."

"You have servants in the house, then?"

"Do I look like a woman who does her own housework?"

"You do not," he affirmed politely.

"But can you blame me for wondering where your servants've been through all this racket?"

"They sleep on the top floor, behind sound proof doors," his hostess explained complacently, "and ring orders to answer only when I ring, even if they should happen to hear anything."

"But there was a burglar," P. Sybarite contended brightly. "You saw him yourself."

"No."

"But—but you did see him—later on the stairs."

Smiling, the woman shook her head. "I saw no burglar, merely a dear friend. In short, if it interests you to know, I saw my husband."

"Madam!" P. Sybarite sat up, with a shocked expression.

"Oh," said the woman lightly, "we're

go a bit out of your way to do me a favor tonight?"

"Or any other night?"

"Very well," Mrs. Inche rose. "Wait here a moment."

Wrapping her negligee round her, she swept magnificently out of the den, and a moment later again crossed P. Sybarite's range of vision as she ascended the stairs. Then she disappeared, and his reverie was presently interrupted by the sound of the woman's high, clear voice.

"Hello, Columbus, seven four hundred, please! Hello, Mason! Taxicab, please—Mrs. Jefferson, Inche! Yes—charge. Yes—immediately. Thank you!"

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A moment later she reappeared on the stairs, carrying a wrap of some sort over her arm. When she again entered the den it proved to be a man's coat and soft hat that she had found for him.

"Get up," she ordered imperiously, "and change to these before you get pinched for impersonating an officer. I've called a taxi for you, and this is what I want you to do—go to Dutch House. That's a dive, Fortieth street."

"I've heard of it," nodded P. Sybarite. "Any sober man who stays away from it is almost perfectly safe."

"I'll trust you to take care of yourself," said the lady. "Ask for Red November. You know who he is?"

"The gangster? Yes?"

"If he isn't in wait for him if you wait till daylight."

"Important as all that, eh?"

"It's life or death for me," said Mrs. Inche serenely. "I've got to have protection. You've seen yourself how bad I need it. And the police are not for the likes of me. Besides," she added, with engaging candor, "if I squeal and



"Tell him, Nella wants you!"

tell the truth then Friend Husband will be disinterested for sure, and I'll have had all my trouble for nothing."

"You make it perfectly clear, Mrs. Inche. And when I see Mr. Red November?"

"Say to him three words—Nella wants you! He'll understand. Then you can go home."

"If I get out alive."

"You're safe if you don't drink anything there."

"Doubtless, but I'll feel safer if you lend me the loan of this neat little toy," said P. Sybarite, weighing in one hand her automatic pistol.

"When it came to viscous second thought, alone in the gloom of an un-sympathetic taxicab, P. Sybarite inclined to concede himself more ass than hero."

Dutch House, to which he was bound, bore the reputation of being as sinister a dive as ever stood cheek by jowl with Broadway and brazenly flaunted an all night liquor license in the face of law abiding New York, of which it was said that no sober man ever went there, other than those who went to prey, and that no drunkard ever escaped from it unfeasted; haughty of the most deadly ruffians to be found in town.

And to this place P. Sybarite was traveling to deliver a message from a notorious woman to a gang leader, in the shape of a snug, smooth fit, grace of style and splendid wearing qualities.

PACKARDS retain their shape and stylish lines in the hardest kind of service.

Principally they are the snug, smooth fit, grace of style and splendid wearing qualities.

P. Sybarite removed his gold and thoughtfully encashed it under one of the cushions of his cab. It seemed a long chance to take with \$100, but \$100 wasn't a great deal, after all, to a man as flush as he, and better lose it all, said he, than make a noise like a peripatetic mint in a den of thieves and worse.

The cab drawing up to the curb, out P. Sybarite hopped, a dollar in hand for the chauffeur, and with it the admonition: "I'm keeping you. Wait till I come out, if I'm all right, and don't let your motor die, 'cause I may be in hurry."

"Gotcha!" said the chauffeur tersely.

"You misjudge me," the little man insisted. "Money is really no object."

"Still," she frowned in puzzlement, "I should think a clerk in the leather business—"

"I'm afraid I've misled you. I should have said that I was a clerk in the leather business until today. Now I happen to be independently wealthy, a clerk no longer."

"I think," announced the lady thoughtfully, "that you are one of the slickest young lads I ever listened to. On the other hand, you're unquestionably a perfect little gentleman. And anyhow, I'm going to take you at your word and trust you. You're willing to

A row of vehicles lined the curb, among them a single taxicab of decent appearance.

Now, as P. Sybarite went to enter Dutch House shadows appeared on the ground glass of the side door, and, opening with a jerk, it let out a gush of fetid air and together with Respectability on the prowl—incognito, slyly lurking in the air and in haste.

He paused for a bare instant on the threshold, affording P. Sybarite opportunity for a good, long look.

"Two-thirty," said Respectability busily over his shoulder.

The man behind him growled an indistinct affirmation. "Two-thirty; don't worry; I'll be on the job."

"And take care of that boy."

"Grab it from me, boss, when he wakes up he won't know where he's been."

The door closed, and Respectability was rudely jostled by P. Sybarite.

The ebony and gold cane of Respectability quivered in mid air.

"Put down that cane, Mr. Brian Shaynon," said P. Sybarite peaceably, "unless you want me to play horse with you in a way to let all New York know how you spend your wee small hours!"

With a gasp (prudently lowering his stick) Mr. Shaynon bent to peer into the face exposed as P. Sybarite pushed back his hat, stared an instant, goggling wheeled about and flung heavily toward his taxicab.

"The Bizarre!" wheezed he to the chauffeur, and dodging in banged the door.

(To Be Continued.)

## Help!

Although nature is, without question, the greatest healer, it often becomes necessary to give it a little help, in order to rush recovery. The best help is, to clean out the body and strengthen it. This is best done by the well-known remedy, called Triner's American Elixir of Bitter Wine. This remedy has a very good effect on the digestive system by cleaning it out perfectly and giving it new vigor. In pains caused by the accumulation of gasses, either in the stomach or in the intestines, this remedy acts very quickly and usually gives nearly immediate relief. At drug stores, Jos. Triner, Manufacturer, 1333-1339 S. Ashland avenue, Chicago, Ill. We wish to recommend Triner's Liniment as one of the best medicines for stiffness of the muscles and joints, for swellings and sprains. Price of Triner's Liniment—50¢, by mail 60¢.

Mrs. J. M. Hiber was among the passengers this morning for Omaha where she goes to visit for a few hours in that city looking after some matters of business.



## A MATTER OF POINTS

or advantages of

THE  
*Packard*  
SHOE

Principally they are the snug, smooth fit, grace of style and splendid wearing qualities.

PACKARDS retain their shape and stylish lines in the hardest kind of service.



## PRICE RIGHT

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The Electric Shoe Store  
South 6th St., Plattsmouth, Neb.



Miss Agnes Eads of Lincoln spent Sunday at the home of her parents, Mr. and Mrs. S. J. Eads.

Mrs. W. P. Yoho and son, Darvin, returned home Sunday evening from a visit with relatives at Utica, Neb.

A. H. Vanlandingham shipped a load of cattle and hogs to the South Omaha market the fore part of the week.

Ben Lehman was down from Dodge, Neb., the fore part of the week attending to some business matters here.

Samuel Vaughn left Thursday afternoon for Vermont, Ill., to look after business interests and to visit relatives.

Mr. and Mrs. Sanders Vanlandingham of Davey visited from Saturday until Tuesday at the home of Mr. and Mrs. A. H. Vanlandingham.

Joe Allen and family moved last week onto the farm vacated by Fred Wenzel early in the spring. They will live here until next spring at which time Mr. Allen will take possession of his own farm.

Willie Nettlehut arrived Wednesday of last week from East Las Vegas, New Mexico, to look after interests out at his farm southwest of town. Willie reports that his wife's condition is not much improved. He will return to East Las Vegas in a few days at which place they expect to spend the winter.

Valentine Wollen and wife of Sturges, S. D., arrived Friday evening for a visit with her sister, Mrs. S. Mathews, whose health is very poor.

Mrs. Maude Jack, of Washington, D. C., arrived in Eagle on Wednesday of last week to spend a thirty days' vacation at the home of her parents, Mr. and Mrs. W. G. Jack, who reside south of town.

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Mr. and Mrs. R. E. Countryman returned Monday from their summer visit in New York and Pennsylvania. They report a fine time and a most enjoyable trip. Five weeks were spent at Schenectady, N. Y., with their daughter, Mrs. Elizabeth Turner.

Ben Debaugh, of Port Richmond, Staten Island, N. Y., is visiting his sister, Mrs. George Olive. He came out to take his mother back with him to make her home there. Ben is in the automobile business, and expected to make the trip in his special car but found the roads too bad, so he left his car in Chicago and made the trip on the train. He will probably return the last of the week.

Mrs. Alma Ramey of El Reno, Okla., is making an extended visit in this city, being a guest of her cousin, Mrs. Julia Thomas, and other relatives. Mrs. Ramey was formerly Miss Alma Chamber of this city, and formerly resided here for a number of years.

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Letter files at the Journal office.

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