

The Diamond Boy

PICTURES BY A. WEIL

BY LOUIS JOSEPH VANCE

SYNOPSIS.

"Mad" Dan Maitland, on reaching his New York bachelor club, met an attractive young woman at the door. Janitor 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 his attorney. Maitland, with a woman's name, naturally, Dan set out for Greenfield, to get his family jewels. Maitland, on reaching home, surprised his wife in gray, cracking the safe containing his gems. She, apparently, took him for a well-known crook, Daniel Anstey. Half-hypnotized, Maitland opened his safe, took therefrom the jewels, and gave them to her, first forming a partnership in crime. The real Dan Anstey, sought by police of the world, appeared. Maitland overcame him. He and the girl went to New York in her auto. She had the jewels. She was to meet him that day. A "Mr. Smith" introduced himself as a detective. To shield the girl in gray, Maitland, without cash, called up his home and heard a woman's voice expostulating. Anstey, disguised as Maitland, tried to bring from her the location of the gems. A crash was heard at the front door. Maitland overpowered the crook, allowing him to escape to shield the young woman. The girl in gray made her escape, jumping into a cab. An instant later, by working a ruse, Anstey was at her side. He took her to Attorney Hannerman's office. There, by torture, he tried in vain to bring from her the location of the gems. He left her a moment and she phoned O'Hagan, only getting in the words: "Tell Mr. Maitland under the brass bowl," the hiding place in the latter's room, when Anstey heard her words. Hannerman also was revealed as a crook. He and Anstey set out to secure the gems and leave town. The girl was still imprisoned.

CHAPTER XV.

The Price.

Slowly Maitland returned to the study and replaced the lamp upon his desk; and stood briefly in silence, long fingers stroking his well-shaped chin, his face a little thin and worn-looking, a gleam of pain in his eyes. He sighed.

"So she was gone!"

He laughed a trace harshly. This surprise was nothing more than he might have discounted, of course; he had been a fool to expect anything else of her, he was enjoying only his just deserts both for having dared to believe that the good in human nature (particularly in woman's nature) would respond to decent treatment, and for having acted on that asinine theory.

So she was gone, without a word, without a sign!

He sat down at the desk, sideways, one arm extended along its edge, fingers drumming out a dreary little tune on the hard polished wood; and thought it all over from the beginning. Nor spared himself.

Why, after all, should it be otherwise? Why should she have stayed? Why should he compliment himself by believing that there was aught about him visible through the veneer acquired in a score and odd years of purposeless existence, to attract a young and pretty woman's heart?

He enumerated his qualities specifically; and condemned them all. Impulsively, he was a conceited ass. A fascinating young criminal had but to toss her head at him to make him think that she was pleased with him, to make him forget that she was what she was and believe that, because he was willing to stoop, she was willing to climb. And he had betrayed himself so mercilessly! How she must have laughed in her sleeve all the time, while he pranced and bridled and preened himself under her eyes, blinded to his own idiocy by the flame of a sudden infatuation—how she must have laughed!

Undoubtedly she had laughed; and, measuring his depth—or his shallowness—had determined to use him to her ends. Why not? It had been her business, her professional duty, to make use of him in order to accomplish her plundering. And because she had not dared to ask him for the jewels when he left her in the morning, she had naturally returned in the evening to regain them, very confident, doubtless, that even if surprised a second time, she would get off scot-free. Unfortunately for her, this fellow Anstey had interfered. Maitland presumed cynically that he ought to be grateful to Anstey. The unaccountable scoundrel! Why had he returned?

How the girl had contrived to escape was, of course, more easy to understand. Maitland recalled that sudden clatter of hoofs in the street, and he had only to make a trip to the window to verify his suspicion that the cab was gone. She had simply overheard his concluding remarks to the caddy, and taken pardonable advantage of them. Maitland had footed the bill. She was welcome to that, however. He, Maitland, was well rid of the whole damnable business. Yes, jewels and all!

What were the jewels to him? Beyond their sentimental associations, he did not hold them greatly in prize. Of course, since they had been worn by his mother, he would spare no expense or effort to trace and re-collect them, for that dim sainted memory's sake. But in this case, at least, the traditional usage of the Maitlands would never be carried out. It had been faithfully observed when, after his mother's death, the stones had



Maitland Woke Up. "What's That?" He Questioned Sharply.

been removed from their settings and stored away; but now they would never be reset, even should he contrive to reassemble them, to adorn the bride of the Maitland heir. For he would never marry. Of course not.

Maitland was young enough to believe, and to extract a melancholy satisfaction from, this.

Puzzled and saddened, his mind larked back forever to that carking question: Why had she returned? What had brought her back to the flat? If she and Anstey were confederates, as one was inclined at times to believe—if such were the case, Anstey had the jewels, and there was nothing else of any particular value so persistently to entice such expert and accomplished burglars back to his flat. What else had they required of him? His peace of mind was nothing that they could turn into cash; and they seemed to have reaped him of nothing else.

But they had that; unquestionably they had taken that.

And still the riddle haunted him: Why had she come back that night? And, whatever her reason, had she come in Anstey's company, or alone? One minute it seemed patent beyond dispute that the girl and the great plunderer were hand-in-glove; the next minute Maitland was positively assured that their recent meeting had been altogether an accident. From what he had heard over the telephone, he had believed them to be quarrelling, although at the time he had assigned to O'Hagan the masculine side of the dispute. But certainly there must have arisen some difference of opinion between Anstey and the girl to have drawn from her that frantic negative Maitland had heard, to have been responsible for the overturning of the chair—an accident that seemed to argue something in the nature of a physical struggle; the chair itself lay upon its side, mute witness to a hasty and careless movement on somebody's part.

But it was all inexplicable. Eventually Maitland shook his head, to signify that he gave it up. There was but one thing to do—to put it out of mind. He would read a bit, compose himself, go to bed.

Preliminary to doing so, he would take steps to insure the flat against further burglarizing, for that night at least. The draught moving through the hall stirred the portiere and reminded him that the window in the trunkroom was still open, an invitation to any enterprising sneak-thief or second-story man. So Maitland went to close and make it fast.

As he shut down the window-sash and clamped the catch he trod on something soft and yielding. Wondering, he stooped and picked it up, and carried it back to the light. It proved to be the girl's hand-bag.

"Now," admitted Maitland in a tone of absolute candor, "I am damned. How in the dickens did this thing get there, anyway? What was she doing in my trunk closet?"

Was it possible that she had followed Anstey out of the flat by that route? A very much mystified young

man sat himself down again in front of his desk, and turned the bag over and over in his hands, keenly scrutinizing every inch of it, and whistling softly.

That year the fashion in purses was for capacious receptacles of grained leather, nearly square in shape, and furnished with a chain handle. This which Maitland held was conspicuously of the mode—neither too large, nor too small, constructed of fine soft leather of a gun-metal shade, with a frame-work and chain of gun-metal itself. It was new and seemed well-filled, weighing a trifle heavy in the hand. One face was adorned with a monogram of cut, gun-metal, the initials "S" and "G" and "L" interlaced. But beyond this the bag was irritatingly non-committal.

Undoubtedly, if one were to go to the length of unsnapping the little, frail clasp, one would acquire information; by such facile means would much light be shed upon the darkness. But Maitland put a decided negative to the suggestion.

No. He would give her the benefit of the doubt. He would wait, he would school himself to patience. Perhaps she would come back for it—and explain. Perhaps he could find her by advertising it—and get an explanation. Pending which, he could wait a little while. It was not his wish to pry into her secrets, even if—even if—it was something to be smoked over. Strange how it affected him to have in his hands something that she had owned and touched!

Opening a drawer of the desk, Maitland produced an aged pipe. A brazen jar, companion piece to the ash receiver, held his tobacco. He filled the pipe from the jar, with thoughtful deliberation. And scraped a match beneath his chair and ignited the tobacco and puffed in contemplative contentment, deriving solace from each mouthful of grateful, evanescent incense. Meanwhile he held the charred match between thumb and forefinger.

Becoming conscious of this fact, he smiled in deprecation of his absent-minded mood, looked for the ash-receiver, discovered it in place, inverted beneath the book; and frowned, remembering. Then, with an impatient gesture—impatient of his own infirmity of mind—for he simply could not forget the girl—he dropped the match, swept the book aside, lifted the bowl.

After a moment of incredulous awe, the young man rose, with eyes a-light and a jubilant song in the heart of him. Now he knew, now understood, now believed, and now was justified of his faith!

After which depression came, with the consciousness that she was gone, forever removed beyond his reach and influence, and that by her own willful act. It was her intelligible wish that they should never meet again, for, having accomplished her errand, she had flown from the possibility of his thanks.

It was so clear, now! He perceived it all, plainly. Somehow (though it was hard to surmise how) she had found out that Anstey had stolen the

jewels; somehow (and one wondered at what risk) she had contrived to take them from him and bring them back to their owner. And Anstey had followed.

Poor little woman! What had she not suffered, what perils had she not braved, to prove that there was honor even in thieves! It could have been a no inconsiderable danger—a danger not incommensurate with that of robbing a (dress of her whelps—that he had managed to fitch his foot from that pertinacious and vindictive soul, Anstey!

But she had accomplished it; and all for him!

If only he could find her, now!

There was a clew to his hand in that bag, of course, but by this act she forever removed from him the right to investigate that.

If he could only find that caddy.

Perhaps if he tried at the Madison square rank, immediately—

Besides, it was clearly his duty not to remain in the flat alone with the jewels another night. There was but one attainable place of safety for them, and that the safe of a reputable hotel. He would return to the Bartholdi at once, merely pausing on his way to inquire of the cabmen if they could send their brother-nighthawk to him.

Maitland shook himself into his top-coat, jammed hat upon head, dropped the jewels into one pocket, the cigarette case into another, and—on impulse—Anstey's revolver, with its two unexploded cartridges, into a third, and pressed the call button for O'Hagan, not waiting, however, for that worthy to climb the stair, but meeting him in the entry hall.

"I'm going back to the Bartholdi, O'Hagan, for the night. You may bring me my letters and any messages in the morning. I should like you to sleep in the flat to-night and answer any telephone calls."

"Yess, Mistor Maitland, sor." "Have the police gone, O'Hagan?" "There's a whole bottle full yet, sor." "You've not been drinking, I trust?" The Irishman shuffled. "Shure, sor, an' wud that be shpittible?"

Laughing, Maitland bade him good night and left the house, turning west to gain Fifth avenue, walking slowly because he was a little tired, and enjoying the rather unusual experience of being abroad at that hour without company. The sky seemed cleaner than ordinarily, the city quieter than ever he had known it, and in the air was a sweet smell, reminiscent of the country-side—reminding one unhappily of the previous night when one had gone whistling to one's destiny along a perfumed country road.

"Good ev'nings, Mistor Maitland, sir! It can't be you!"

Maitland looked up, bewildered for the instant. The voice that hailed him out of the sky was not unfamiliar.

A cab that he had waited on the corner to let pass, was reined back suddenly. The driver leaned down from the box and in a thunderstruck tone advertised his stupefaction.

"It aren't in nature, sir—if yer'll pardon my mentionin' it. But 'ere I leaves you not ten minutes ago at the St. Luke building and finds yer 'ere, when you 'aven't 'ad time—"

Maitland woke up. "What's that?" he questioned, sharply. "You left me where ten minutes—?"

"St. Luke buildin', corner Broadway an'—"

"I know it," excited, "but—"

"—avin' took yer there with the young lady—"

"Young lady!"

"—that comes outer the 'ouse with yer, sir—"

"The devil!" Maitland hesitated no longer; his foot was on the step as he spoke. "Drive me there at once, and drive for all you're worth!" he cried. "If there's an ounce of speed in that plug of yours and you don't get it out—"

"Never fear, sir! We'll make it in five minutes!"

"It'll be worth your while."

"Right-O!"

Maitland dropped into his seat, dumfounded. "Good Lord!" he whispered; and then, savagely: "In the power of that infamous scoundrel!" And felt of the revolver in his pocket.

The cab had been headed north; the St. Luke rears its massive bulk south of Twenty-second street. The driver expertly swung his vehicle almost on dead center. Simultaneously it careened with the impact of a heavy bulk landing upon the step and falling in a heap on the deck.

"My word, what's that?" came from aloft. Maitland was altogether too startled to speak.

The heap sat up, resolving itself into the semblance of a man; who spoke in decisive tones:

"If yeh're goin' there, I'm goin' with yeh, 'r yeh don't go—see?"

"The sleuth!" gasped Maitland, astounded.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Bright College Years.

"Smith tells me he has been graduated from an automobile school."

"Yes; he feebly refers to it as alma motor."—Puck.

WESTERN CANADA

During the early days in the period of the growth of the grain crop in Western Canada, as well as throughout the ripening and garnering period, there is yearly growing an increasing interest throughout the United States, as to the results when harvest is completed. These mean much to the thousands of Americans who have made their homes in some of the three Provinces that form that vast agricultural domain, and are of considerable interest to the friends they have left behind.

The year 1909 is no disappointment. The crops of wheat, oats and barley have been harvested and it is now safe to speak of results. Careful estimates place the yield of spring wheat

parts of the world the production of wheat is diminishing today; but as it diminishes Canada's will increase; therefore, it is safe to predict that in a few years from now a large part of the world will be looking to western Canada for its wheat supply, and especially will the United States. In many parts of western Canada it is possible to have a hundred-mile square of wheat, without a break. A writer says: "We were driven west and north of Moose Jaw through 20 miles of dead ripe wheat, acres of stocks and well-worked summer-fallows. One of these fields would yield 40 bushels to the acre, and another man had oats that would yield 90 or 100 bushels to the acre. In this district wheat will average 30 to 35 bushels. The conditions



A Central Canada Farmer Finishing Cutting His 70-Acre Field of Wheat

at 30 bushels per acre, winter wheat at 40 bushels, and oats exceed 50 bushels per acre. Barley also has proved an abundant yield. What will attract the reading public more than volumes of figures will be the fact that those who have been induced through the influence of the Government to accept of 160 acres of free grant land; or, by the persuasion of friends to leave their home State of Dakota, Minnesota, Iowa, Illinois, Michigan, Indiana, Ohio, Nebraska or the other States from which people have gone, have done well. Financially, they are in a better position than many of them ever expected to be, and in the matter of health, in social conditions, they have lost nothing.

One person who has just returned from a trip through the Lethbridge District, where winter wheat has a strong hold with farmers, says:

"We saw some magnificent sights. The crops were, in fact, all that could be desired."

In a few years from now these great plains over whose breadth for years roved hundreds of Town thousands of School herds of cat- House

were never better and throughout the district the people are assured of a most prosperous year."

It would be unfair to close this article without quoting from an expert crop-correspondent regarding the two Battlefords in Central Saskatchewan, on the line of the Canadian Northern Railway. Writing on August 18th of this year, he says:

"It is necessary to drive about six or seven miles out of the town of North Battleford in order to see the best crops of the district. This morning I was driven about 20 miles to the north and west of the town and in all the drive did not see a poor crop. I saw one wheat crop which the owner estimates will yield 40 bushels per acre, and I believe it."



County School House



City Church in Central Canada

He then crossed the Saskatchewan river to the South town, or Battleford proper, and continues his report:

"Conditions around the old town are as good if not better than those to the north

of the river. This district has much the best wheat crop prospect of any I have inspected this year, considering sample and yield. The weather conditions for the whole season have been ideal and the result is what might easily be termed a bumper crop. A sample sheaf brought in from the farm of George Truscott was shown to me which spoke for itself. This farmer is said to have sixty acres which will yield 45 bushels per acre.

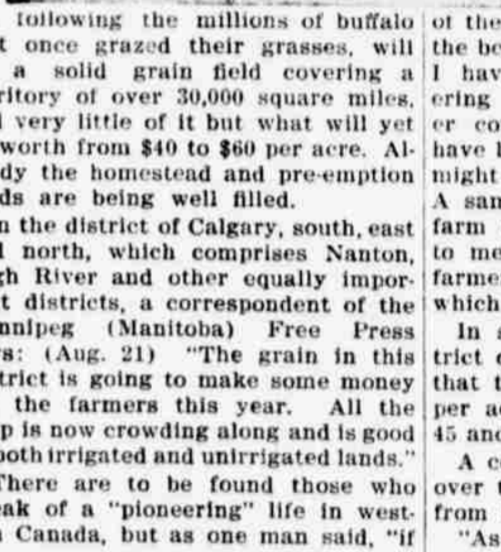
In stating an average for the district of South Battleford I would say that the wheat will yield 36 bushels per acre. The oats will yield about 45 and barley 35 bushels per acre."

A correspondent summing up a trip over the Canadian Northern Railway, from Dauphin to Battleford, says:

"As I inspected the crops in the va-



City Church in Central Canada



City Church in Central Canada



A Specimen Group of Elevators That May Be Seen in Many Towns in Central Canada

this is pioneering I don't for the life of me see what our forefathers had to complain of." He didn't know, though, for the pioneering of his forefathers was discomfort and hardship. The opening up and development of western Canada, with its railroad lines to carry one to almost the uttermost part of it, the telegraph line to flash the news to the outside world, the telephone to talk to one's neighbor, the daily and weekly mail service which brings and carries letters to the friends in distant parts; the schools headed by college-bred and highly certificated teachers; the churches manned by brilliant divines; the clubs; the social and festive life; what is there about any of this to give to the man who goes there to make his home the credit of being a pioneer? Nothing! He might as well be in any of the old middle-west States. In other

rigid districts I found the farmers and other citizens without exception filled with expectant enthusiasm over this year's prospects. No district was found which could not boast of fields of 35 bushels per acre wheat, or 50 to 60 bushels per acre oats, and of 40 bushels per acre of barley."

It is not an unusual thing in many parts of western Canada for a farmer to have 10,000 to 30,000 bushels of wheat. In the Rouleau district it is said that there are several farmers who will have 20,000 bushels of oats many fields will return one hundred bushels to the acre.

It takes an army of men to handle the Western Canada crop, and it is estimated that 20,000 people have been brought in this year to assist in the great undertaking; there being excursions from the outside world nearly every day for the past six weeks.