

SHEEP'S CLOTHING

By LOUIS JOSEPH VANCE

WHEN THE CUSTOMS INSPECTORS DISCOVER THAT MRS. MERRILEES HAS BROUGHT IN A LOT OF IMITATION JEWELS THEY SUSPECT HER OF TRYING TO PLAY A SMUGGLING TRICK

Synopsis—Lydia Craven, traveling as Lucy Carteret, runs away from her English home to go to her father, Thaddeus Craven, in New York, whom she hasn't seen for five years. Three days out on board the steamer *Alsatia*, she runs plump into Craven, making love to Mrs. Merrilees, a young widow, engaged to marry him. Later Craven explains his mysterious conduct and supposed bachelorhood by telling Lydia he is a British secret service agent in America. She is attacked at night and a small box containing supposed valuable documents, which he has given her to keep for him, is stolen. This is recovered for her by Quoin, an amateur detective. When the party lands at New York, Lydia, carrying the small box, has no trouble passing the customs inspection. When Mrs. Merrilees declares a \$50,000 necklace, the inspector tells her it is worth about \$300—just an imitation. This information astounds them and Mrs. Merrilees raises a row.

CHAPTER X.

The silence was short-lived; but while it lasted a power of scorn played like lightning round the devoted head of the appraiser.

As for Lydia and Peter (who had just joined the group), they gaped in open amazement; while the inspector looked sorry for Charlie.

After lightning, thunder, remote, majestic, "Are—you—mad?"

"Me? No, ma'am, not a bit. It's nothing to me, you know."

"Don't quibble, if you please. I want to know whether or not you're daft. You know perfectly well that necklace is worth ninety—sixty thousand dollars. Look at the bill. Inspector, be good enough to show this person Cottier's bill."

The appraiser examined the receipt with ostensible astonishment. "I don't understand this, ma'am," he faltered. "Nor I!"

"Cottier's don't deal in imitations, I know," he pursued with greater confidence. "All the same, I'll stake my job that those are fish-skin pearls, paste brilliants, and—well, the settings, I admit, are genuine."

"Then your job is as good as lost. I shall file a complaint and have you discharged for incompetence."

"If you'll pardon me, I don't believe you will, Mrs. Merrilees."

"Easy, Betty!" Peter Traft interposed. "Perhaps he's right, after all."

"Be quiet, Peter. When I want your advice, I'll let you know. Certainly I ought to know when I paid for that collar."

"Then you have been shamefully cheated, Mrs. Merrilees," the inspector put in.

"Quite impossible. I know real gems from articles de Paris, and I examined this necklace with the greatest care before I purchased it. Since then it has never left this box, which hasn't been out of my care an instant except when in the purser's safe."

"I'm sorry, but I know what I know. If you're the judge you think yourself, ma'am, I can only suggest that you take this to the light and—here, I'll lend you my magnifying glass."

"Thank you, I sha'n't require it." With a gesture of rage, Mrs. Merrilees snatched the case from the appraiser's hands and moved toward the patch of sunlight. Before she had reached it, studying the collar attentively on the way, Lydia saw her slacken pace and falter.

One short minute in that strong glare sufficed. As pale in mystification as she had previously been with wrath, Mrs. Merrilees returned.

"I owe you an apology," she informed the appraiser in a shaking voice. "It's a palpable imitation."

The box slipped from her grasp and went to the floor with a bump, spilling its trashy contents, and Mrs. Merrilees flopped inconspicuously to a convenient trunk—Lydia's ready arm round her shoulders.

"But, my dear!" Betty wailed. "It's perfectly preposterous!"

The appraiser looked at once bored and dubious. Peter Traft batted bewildered eyes, then with a helpful air picked up the box and replaced its contents. The inspector swung sharply round and made off, with every evidence of inspired haste, toward a distant quarter of the pier.

"Let me think!" Mrs. Merrilees said in a stifled voice. Indenting her lower lip with a knuckle, she fastened an abstracted stare on the polished tips of her shoes.

Lydia, at a loss, found nothing to

say. She couldn't decently express too great concern over the disappearance of something that had been dedicated to her on her wedding day—however remote that event. Yet she was gravely if unintelligibly distressed. Beneath her ready sympathy stirred a qualm of peculiar uneasiness.

Distracted by the rumble of men's voices, she looked up, to find that Quoin had added himself to the group and was studiously attending to Peter's account of the counterfeit collar. Their eyes met presently, and Lydia was surprised by the look he bent upon her, a regard somehow faintly reminiscent of their parting subsequent to her adventure of the night before last.

She favored him with her shadowy, enigmatic smile, now vaguely tinted with solicitude.

Nodding briefly, with a thoughtful air, Quoin returned his consideration to Peter and the article de Paris.

"I simply cannot understand it!" Betty declared, abandoning the puzzle as hopeless. Then, catching sight of the detective, she hailed him. "Quoin, do come here at once!" and immediately, heedless of bystanders, began to detail her perplexity in a high, querulous voice.

After a moment or two Lydia rose and joined Peter Traft. "Poor dear!" she said gently, with a slight nod to



"Then You Have Been Shamefully Cheated, Mrs. Merrilees," the Inspector Put In.

correct any possible misconception as to the object of her sympathy. "I'm so sorry for her!"

"Well," said Peter, impressively judgmental, "of course Betty can afford to lose these trinkets by the gross; but, granted she isn't faking, it's a pretty puzzle, isn't it?"

"Faking!" Lydia echoed resentfully. "Now don't get huffy—please! Betty's a darling, and everything like that; but she's got no conscientious scruples about smuggling—none that you'd notice—and I don't mind telling you she isn't above turning a trick like this—acting up to it too. She's one wonderful young comedienne, if you don't know it."

"Turn a trick like this! What does that mean?" Lydia demanded stiffly. "Have her dog collar duplicated in paste and fish scales, substitute it for the original article, and pretend she's been jockeyed like one o'clock. Mind you, I don't say she has done that; but the little devil's got it in her."

"I don't believe you!"

"There!" Peter complained. "Now you're sore. Didn't I tell you the other day the foolish thing a chap could

do was to take things seriously, especially out loud?"

"You're—horrid!"

The adjective was childish; but Lydia wasn't in a mood to search for one more dignified. She turned a frosty shoulder to the young man; but the seed of suspicion had been planted in the mind of one who couldn't forget how lightly Betty had confessed to prior exploits in the gentlemanly art of smuggling, and her laughing confession that nothing but sheer fright would prevent her attempting again to outwit the custom house.

And even while this memory was troubling her the affair took a turn to fix doubt of Betty firmly in Lydia's mind.

It began with the return of the inspector, accompanied by the custom house official in charge of the pier—a middle-aged man, this one, with a rather consequential manner, gold-rimmed eyeglasses, and a not unkindly expression.

"Mrs. Merrilees, I believe?" he asked with much urbanity.

Mrs. Merrilees interrupted herself abruptly to turn and examine the deputy with the eye of disfavor. "Yes?" she asked brusquely.

The deputy introduced himself. "The inspector has just informed me of this—er—unfortunate matter," he pursued. "And I thought I might possibly be able to help straighten it out."

"Kind of you, I'm sure." But the tone of Mrs. Merrilees completely belied this statement. "Have you anything to propose?"

"If I might have the privilege of a word in private—" the deputy suggested blandly.

Quoin made as if to withdraw. "Wait, please. This is Mr. Quoin. You may have heard of him."

"Who hasn't?" the deputy returned pleasantly. "Proud to meet you, sir." "Mr. Quoin has kindly volunteered to help me in this—outrage. Anything you wish to say he may hear."

"As you please, madam, but—" The glance of the deputy veered significantly to Peter and Lydia.

"No!" Mrs. Merrilees insisted warmly. "You can have nothing to say that any of my friends may not hear."

"Then, madam—permit me to advise you, in all deference—"

"Well?"

"It will save you a great deal of trouble to produce the original collar, pay the duty on it, and—"

"Quoin!" Betty exclaimed in a tone of irritated perplexity. "What can this person mean?"

Quoin was silent.

"I don't mean," the deputy pursued, unabashed, "to be offensive; but—the inference is unavoidable. You are known to have purchased a valuable pearl collar in Paris—"

"I believe I declared it!"

"But upon examination you produce only a comparatively worthless imitation, and assert that you have been robbed of the original."

"I assert! I have asserted nothing." Mrs. Merrilees drew a long breath, closed her teeth with a vindictive snap, and reopened them to observe with withering distinctness, "Go away! You are insolent! You presume—oh, you annoy me! Do go—before I forget myself!"

"We can't assess an imitation at the value of the real necklace, of course, and yet we know that the original is coming into this country by this boat."

"Then permit me to recommend the other passengers to your attention."

"We'll do our best to overhaul them all, I promise you. But if the goods don't turn up, we'll feel reluctantly compelled to make a thorough search, not only of your luggage but of yourself as well, Mrs. Merrilees."

"Quoin!" Mrs. Merrilees appealed. The investigator shook his head.

"It's too bad; but I really don't see what's to be done about it. These people have the power to make things mighty unpleasant for you unless—"

"What, you too?" she hissed, with vast dramatic expression.

"No, no!" Quoin protested hastily. "Don't misunderstand me. I'm only afraid that, unless the necklace shows up, you'll have to submit."

"Very well!" With a shrug of defiance, Mrs. Merrilees showed Quoin an ungracious back. To the deputy she added with blighting disdain, "Go ahead. And while you're finding nothing in my trunks you may as well send for a female inspector to search me. But every one of you will suffer for this—or I'll know the reason why!"

"I'm sorry, madam."

But there wasn't much uneasiness betrayed in the deputy collector's man-

ner as he signed to the inspector to do his hateful duty.

The three friends of Mrs. Merrilees, on the other hand, were acutely uncomfortable—Quoin in disgrace, Peter Traft firmly convinced that the deputy was right and consequently afraid to meet Betty's eyes, and Lydia not only sore distressed with misgivings, but repelled by Betty's attitude.

And this was the phase of the affair disclosed to Craven when he bustled up, aglow with satisfaction.

"Hello, people! I'm all clear. Had the deuce of a time—the silly ass wanted to rook me for duds I brought in as long ago as 1908; but—What's the row?"

This last was in a tone radically changed, and at the same instant his fiancée decided to acknowledge him on probation, however rigidly she might elect to deny the rest of humanity. So she unbent enough to beckon him with a nod; and Craven hurried on to get his answer from the one most concerned.

What is your solution of the mystery? Do you think that Mrs. Merrilees is trying to put over a trick? Some mighty queer happenings are described in the next installment.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

MARCH FIRST MONTH OF YEAR

Was So Placed in Roman Calendar and Continued Until Comparatively Recent Times.

March was the first month in the Roman year, and since the Romans were a warlike people, they honored Mars, the god of war, by naming the first month Martius. It was the first month in many parts of Europe until a comparatively recent date, even in England the year beginning March 26 until 1752.

The Saxons called it Lenet Monat—length month—because in March, the days become noticeably longer, and this was the origin of the name "Lent."

The English have a proverb, "A peck of March dust is worth a king's ransom," and another, "A dry March never begs its bread," which express their faith in the belief that a dry March means a prosperous year. This is explained by the fact that they do most of their planting in March, and unless the soil is dry, planting often is delayed.

It's different in America. In the middle West more rain falls in March than in April ordinarily and almost as much in March as in May.

Almost universally in the North Temperate zone, March is regarded as the windy month. Normally it marks the transition from winter to spring.

Curing By Electric Shocks.

From time to time news has come of a new electrical treatment in use in the French army by which men, apparently hopeless cripples, have been cured by giving them very powerful shocks of electricity. The details of this treatment came out in a recent military trial. So painful are the shocks used in the cure that many of the soldiers refused to submit to the treatment, preferring to remain crippled. At the trial of these men it developed that the new treatment is being used in cases of psychic shock, where the chief injury is to the nervous system or to the will power. Men may be partially paralyzed from such purely nervous shocks, and in such cases the new treatment has restored the use of the affected limbs. Its acceptance has now been made compulsory in some of the military hospitals, a commission of physicians having vouched for its harmlessness, in spite of its unpleasant nature.

Credit Man's Hard Lines.

When the credit man makes a mistake it is "good night," says the Pittsburgh Credit Bulletin. But when a plumber makes a mistake he charges twice for it; when the lawyer makes a mistake, it's just what he wanted, because he has a chance to try the case again; when the carpenter makes a mistake, it's just what he expected, because the chances are ten to one he never learned his trade; when a doctor makes a mistake, he buries it; when a judge makes a mistake, it becomes the law of the land; when a preacher makes a mistake nobody knows the difference, and when an electrician makes a mistake he blames it on the induction, the meaning of which nobody knows. But the poor credit man has no excuse.

Within Hospitality's Limits.

"Willie, you are going out to dinner. You may ask for a second piece of cake if you really want it, but there's one thing I wish you to remember."

"Yep, ma."

"Whatever you do, don't ask for a second helping of potatoes."

Not Strong on Work.

"Some men treats deir country an' deir families de same way," said Uncle Eben. "Dey loves 'em, but dey doesn't care much 'bout workin' for 'em."

FOLLOW UP.

By GEORGE M. ADAMS.



How common it is in games of football and other sports, some quick-thinking player dashes off a thrilling play, only to fall back for the remainder of the game into obscurity and be forgotten—and for no other reason than that he failed to—Follow Up.

Periodic Brilliancy is not Success.

Follow Up. When you think a Worthy Thought, follow it up. When you do a Useful Thing, follow it up. When you strike an effective blow for a Right Cause, follow it up. It's the man with the Courage, first to start a thing and then follow it up, that after a while, has an accumulation of points that stamp him Great and Masterful. Follow up or else you will fall back.

Periodic Brilliancy is not Success.

The Great man is simply the Small man become great. Every Great man at some time or other is the unknown, obscure man. Make your life count by compelling every single effort to figure in the final summing up. For after all, Success itself is nothing more nor less than work well performed and Followed Up day after day, year after year.

Periodic Brilliancy is not Success.

Facts in Figures.

Hawaii has two mountains 14,000 feet high.
United States received 298,000 immigrants last year.
Turlock, Cal., will can 25,000 tons of peaches this year.
Wilmington, Cal., is to have a \$5,000,000 shipbuilding plant.
United States in 1916 exported \$150,000,000 worth of leather.
Southern California is gathering \$1,000,000 a day from tourists.
United States last year exported glass bottles valued at \$2,500,000.
Glen county, California, will devote 14,123 acres of land to rice-growing.

War Service of Y. M. C. A. Requires Vast Expenditure

The service which the Y. M. C. A. is planning to give the selective national army in its cantonments is going to require 1,100 secretaries and \$3,000,000 of which nearly \$2,000,000 has already been paid in or pledged. It is to be noted that an army of 1,000,000 men, which the 200 buildings of the Y. M. C. A. proposes to erect will accommodate, will require an equipment of 200 pianos and piano players, 268,000 feet of films a day, 3,000,000 sheets of writing paper daily, 10,000 pens a day and a barrel of ink, 95 automobiles and trucks, 200 moving-picture machines, 200 graphophones and 10,000 records, 40,000 pounds of ice per day, a Bible to every man, magazines by the hundred tons.

Iced Cocoa.

Boil a half cupful of cocoa, three-quarters of a cupful of sugar, and one cupful of water to make a rich syrup. Put this in a jar on ice and it is ready to serve at a moment's notice. Add a tablespoonful of the syrup to a glass of cold milk.

Mint Jelly Sauce.

Combine a cupful of currant or any tart jelly, beaten with the juice of one orange and a half cupful of finely minced mint. Let stand in a cold place for an hour before using.

Strawberries Preserved Whole.

Crush two quarts of strawberries, using the small ones, and simmer gently for twenty minutes, then strain. Allow a pound of sugar to a pint of juice. Heat the sugar and add the juice as soon as it is strained. Return to the stove and boil until thick, skimming carefully when necessary. Fill hot glasses with hulled fine berries and cover with the boiling syrup, then put on the sterilized covers.

Pineapples and strawberries is a combination well liked. Cut the pineapple in dice and add twice as many strawberries. Fill the jars with this mixture using the usual amount of sugar in cooking.

Nellie Maxwell

One Iron mine only has been discovered in Egypt which was worked by the ancients.