

SHEEP'S CLOTHING

By LOUIS JOSEPH VANCE
Author of
"THE LONE WOLF," "THE BRASS BOWL,"
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CHAPTER XIII.—Continued.

"Peter is hedging about referring to the fact that Craven put up a very prompt protest when you told me to take the necklace into the sunlight and satisfy myself."

"Yes," Peter admitted gloomily. "Is the evidence complete enough?" Mrs. Beggarstaff questioned gently. "We didn't want to tell you this, Betty. For my own part, I'd rather you had conspired with Tad to smuggle—"

"Don't!" pleaded the unhappy woman. Bending forward, elbows on knees, she stared somberly at the carpet. "But how," she asked after a moment, "do you account for that perfect counterfeit?"

"Simply," Quoin replied, "after that affair of Thursday night, on my own responsibility I sent a wireless to Paris, to Cottier's, in Betty's name. The answer came through Friday night, saying that the original owner had sold a paste duplicate to a dealer in articles de Paris, which he in turn had sold to a chance customer—definite description unavailable—the same day that the real necklace was taken from Cottier's by your agent."

"It seems incredible. Of all men—Tad Craven!"

"You forget how little we know of him," the Dowager Dragon put in.

"Know of him?" Betty protested, looking up. "Why, everybody knows Tad Craven! Go out among our friends and try to find one who believes he would do anything dishonest."

"And still, I insist, you forget how little we know of him. Hark back into your memory, my dear. How long have we known him? Twelve or fifteen years at most. How did he come to know us? Through introductions to a few clubs, indorsed by Lord Evesden—who was later drummed out of town for card cheating, and never came back. But Tad Craven stuck. He didn't cheat, and he was amusing, and as long as he was personable, agreeable and seemed to have money nobody bothered about his pedigree."

"I've been looking Craven up," Quoin supplemented. "Listen!" He began to read from a tiny memorandum book: "Came to New York in '93 with a British musical comedy company. His wife, Letty Craven, fell ill during the run of the piece and died in a public hospital of quick consumption. After that Craven got a job with some show which perished on the road. When he turned up again he was training with a gang of professional sharpers with whom he played a few turns on the transatlantic ferry route as capper. But he dropped that before he became known to the police. Later he was running with a gay Lord Evesden; but shook him as soon as he felt solid in New York and those ugly whispers began to go round about Evesden's play. The rest is mainly circumstantial damnation."

Quoin put away his notebook and began to tick off his points on his fingers.

"It may not have escaped you that there've been some pretty stiff burglaries among our friends in the last twelve years or so. They weren't frequent; but they were all big hauls, and everyone was well planned and culminated in a clean getaway. And it so happens, when one comes to look into it, that Craven was especially thick with all the people victimized. The biggest coup was the theft of the Joachim collection, worth several hundred thousand dollars. Now Lydia Craven, when she came aboard the Alsatia, was wearing a cameo from the Joachim collection which she said her father had given her on her fifteenth birthday. Discreet pumping on the part of Mrs. Beggarstaff has shown that date to have fallen just three months after Joachim was robbed. Incidentally, the cameo disappeared as soon as Lydia and Craven met on board. There's a sinister thread running all through the history of Thaddeus Craven."

His voice trailed off into silence. Mrs. Merrilees was eyeing him steadily.

"You never got all that information together since morning?" Mrs. Beggarstaff prompted.

"No," Quoin admitted. "I've had my eye on Craven for some time."

"Why?" the old woman demanded bluntly. "What made you first suspect him?"

"Well," replied Quoin, "he never rang true to me; and when it began to be rumored that he was a candidate for Betty's hand—I felt sure he wasn't worthy of her, and made up my mind to be sure before forbidding the bans."

After a pause Betty looked up de-

antly. "It does make me out a bit of an idiot, doesn't it?"

"Nonsense! We were all taken in," Peter protested. "Look how I've always stuck up for Tad! But there's one thing I want to say: He may be a rotter, and all that sort of thing; but that girl of his is as straight and fine a proposition—"

"Do hush, Peter! We all know you're in love with her. But what is all this to me?" Betty protested with a break in her voice. "I hope you're right, Peter, and I hope if you are you may be happy. But what about me? To you, all old friends, I can talk about this terrible thing. But what about the outsiders? My name linked with that of a common criminal's—oh, I am ashamed, ashamed!"

Unknown to her, the Dowager Dragon was nodding vigorously to Quoin. This last rose awkwardly, and spoke with a hesitation uncommon in him.

"If you'll leave it to me, Betty," he suggested almost timidly, "I think I can arrange matters with Craven and recover your necklace tonight, quite without publicity. And"—he glanced at his watch—"it's a quarter of eleven. If I'm to do anything, I have no time to lose."

CHAPTER XIV.

True to her instinct for the dramatic moment, when the telephone interrupted Mrs. Beggarstaff answered with no apparent emotion and nothing more than a noncommittal "Yes?" followed at a brief interval by "Yes, if you please, at once." Then, hanging up the receiver, she set herself artfully to delay Mrs. Merrilees. "This is all very well," she announced with complacent determination; "but I want to know what real evidence you have got against Craven."

"Nothing," Quoin admitted, "beyond circumstantial evidence, which, however well grounded, wouldn't hold together a minute under the analysis of any able-bodied criminal lawyer."

"No actual proof?"

"Not a whit. You may be sure Craven never took an active hand in any of these affairs; merely engineered them with his inside information and superior intelligence. Be sure, too, that whenever a job was pulled off he was always conspicuously somewhere else."

"Then what do you propose doing?"

"Why—Betty permitting—scare him silly and run him out of town. I don't think we want more than that—aside from the necklace."

"That will content me," Mrs. Merrilees affirmed.

Here a knock fell on the door, and the Dowager Dragon, for all her protested infirmity, rose with the spryness of youth.

"No, don't go yet. It's only something I've been expecting. And I want one word more with you—about the girl Lydia. Whatever you do, understand, I won't have her run out of town, or annoyed, or frightened, or ill-treated in any way."

With this she disappeared down the hallway. Followed a sound of voices murmuring.

Quoin and Mrs. Merrilees lingered in doubt and silence, the gaze of each seeking the other's; while, to one side, by these two forgotten, Peter Traft waited, watching, some little sadness and envy in his heart.

Not that he grudged Quoin the guerdon of a lifetime's unselfish devotion; but he felt quite justified in envying them the happiness that was to be theirs. If he could ever hope to see Lydia Craven look up into his face as Betty Merrilees was just then looking up at Quoin—

Betty, in a melting humor and a gown representing the finest flower of the Rue de la Paix, to Peter's fancy cut a figure that filled your eye. And in such matters Peter esteemed himself a distinguished amateur.

But once Lydia Craven had entered the drawing room Peter no longer cared to look at Betty. A fellow's got only a certain limited amount of eyesight, after all, and it's no good wasting it on anything he isn't really crazy about.

In the severity of her street dress the girl's figure had a graciousness that even Betty's couldn't shadow. And Lydia's face, set against the darkness of one of those trim little hats which in those days were just beginning to oust the art-nouveau-coal-hod enormities—Lydia's ruddy hair, the transparent pallor of her brow, the fine glow in cheeks fresh from the rainy night, her dark and animated eyes brightening with surprise and half-timid pleasure—taken altogether Peter thought Lydia's fairness was to Betty's as sun to candlelight.

But with delight apprehension was mixed in his mind. There were still some phases of life Peter hadn't fathomed; for one, the antagonism within the sexes—within the sex, rather; for it was the attitudes often adopted toward one another by the most amiable and delightful of women that perplexed his understanding.

Now, with real provocation on her side, what would be Betty's attitude toward this rival beauty?

His solicitude was wasted. Either he underestimated the generosity of Betty, or Lydia's ingenuousness dis-

armed. Constraint was absent from their meeting; they went at once to each other's arms.

"It's so good to find you here, Betty. Oh, good evening, Mr. Quoin—Mr. Traft, good evening. The best part is, I thought you were stopping here, and was in despair when I found you weren't."

"It's dear of you; but—"

"I was so anxious to give you—this!" As she spoke the puzzle box left Lydia's keeping finally and for all time.

Betty Merrilees uttered a low cry. "This?" she questioned in a strange voice. "What?"

"Must I say?" Lydia laughed. "I don't believe you really want me to—"

"Not my necklace!" the woman gasped.

"There! I didn't tell—did I, Mrs. Beggarstaff?"

"No, dear child; but we knew all the time."

Incontinently Lydia was overwhelmed by a very unexpected, un-called-for, motherly and protracted embrace; which, while it didn't lack affection, served as well the diplomatic purpose of preventing the girl from noticing Betty's half-hysterical attempts to open the puzzle box and that the Dowager Dragon was making significant faces at Quoin over her shoulder.

"Permit me, Betty," Quoin suggested. "I think I know the trick—"

In another breath the box was open. The necklace in its owner's hands.

"Merely my foolish delight to see you again so soon, my dear." A hand patted affectionately one of Lydia's flushed cheeks as, released, breathless, and wondering, she stepped back to readjust her hat.

"You're awfully good to me, Mrs. Beggarstaff. But I can't stop a minute. I've another errand to run for father—he's very busy tonight—"

"Another errand?" Betty Merrilees parroted out of a mind perhaps pardonably confused.

"Yes—I sha'n't be long. Father asked me to bring that to you; but promised to call for me within an hour. So I was to attend to the other errand first, and wait here with you for him. But my taxicab broke down and—"

"Craven coming here?" Betty interrupted incredulously, but checked suddenly at a look from Quoin.

"As soon as he can get away," Lydia affirmed. "I mean, of course, wherever you're really stopping—"

"The Plaza."

"That's just across the way, isn't it? It's odd of him to make such a mistake. He said the Margrave distinctly. But I'll ask for you at the Plaza in half an hour, if you don't mind."

"Mind! On the contrary," Mrs. Merrilees said pleasantly, "I'll be delighted. Tad, too. That will be fun—rather! We'll have supper together—all of us."

"And so—good night for thirty minutes," Lydia laughed. "I must hurry."

"Wait a minute," Peter put in. "I'm off too, you know, and going your way."

"How do you know you are?" Lydia demanded, smiling back from the doorway.

"Because that's the way I'm going."

"But I don't want you now, Mr. Traft—though I shall hope to see you again in half an hour. Good-by."

The hall-door closed, leaving Peter as dashed as Betty Merrilees was thunderstruck, as Quoin was thoughtful, as the smile of the Dowager Dragon was satiric.

There was a little pause.

"What," Peter demanded, "what do you know about that?"

"After her, you loon," Quoin snapped, waking up with a start. "If Craven told her to go somewhere else first, be sure he never meant her to bring that necklace here. Don't you see?"

"Ass!" Peter groaned, smiting his forehead. "Why didn't I think?" Seizing hat and coat, he threw open the door even as the elevator gate clanged.

The car had dropped from sight before he reached the shaft. Planting a thumb on the push-button, he euded only a thin, persistent grumble from the annunciator bell, steadily diminishing in volume as the car continued willfully to descend.

Infuriated, the young man committed the soul of the elevator attendant to the nethermost depths of damnation, and turning to the stairway, plunged down the flights in breakneck haste, three steps at a time.

Across the lobby he sped as one hounded by furies, and gained the carriage entrance barely in time to see a taxicab pulling away from the curb.

Peter gave chase, affording midnight wayfarers the diverting spectacle of a beautifully arrayed young man—coat-tails flat to the wind and rain, top coat streaming wildly from one arm, the other brandishing the darning cri in toppers—in mad, mute pursuit of a self-contained taxicab proceeding stolidly about its business.

Happily for Peter, its business involved observance of traffic regulations; and when it paused to give precedence to a Fifty-ninth street cross-town car Peter caught up—if something more rudely than he had thought to. Unable to check quickly on the greasy asphalt, he skidded against the door with a crash.

"Hold hard!" he begged between breaths. "Give me a chance!"

"What the—" commented the chauffeur suspiciously.

But at the same time Peter jerked the door open, and—a crawly, sinking sensation deserted his midst: the fare was Lydia, after all!

She greeted this breathless apparition with an inarticulate cry.

"You forgot something," Peter gasped in response, climbing in.

"What?"

"Me!" he declared settling into the place by her side; then thrust his head out of the door and panted, "It's all right, driver. Cut along—and don't go too fast—slippery pavements—"

"But, Mr. Traft—" Lydia expostulated.

Peter shut the door with a bang, and the car, with an unobstructed way, picked up wary heels and stole on up Fifth avenue.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

MIGHT GET TWO EXTRA HOURS

Advocates of Daylight Saying Could Do it by Setting Alarms Ahead as Well as Clocks.

One good thing about compensations is that they are always ready to change to suit circumstances. That is, of course, what compensations are for. We have, therefore, no sooner made up our minds that we shall have to stay at home with our back-yard gardens this summer than we are confronted by the suggestion that our clocks may be set ahead in order to give us an extra hour in the garden every evening, says a writer in the Indianapolis News.

It is easy enough to understand that an hour in the garden every evening is worth many a day at a summer resort. There is, to be sure, the difficulty of getting up an hour earlier every morning, but it would not really seem an hour earlier. Most of us do not like getting up in the morning, no matter what time it is, and an hour or so makes no noticeable difference at that time of day. As far as all that is concerned there may be some difference of opinion as to whether the clocks should be set ahead in order to give us that hour in the evening or whether the alarms on our clocks should be set ahead in order to give us the extra hour in the morning. It looks on the face of it as though it might be possible to get two extra hours out of our days.

Plants Arm Themselves.

Many plants protect themselves from their enemies by the use of spikes or prickles, and venom, just as certain animals do. Of those using the first-named device to make themselves "armed to the teeth" the bramble, the gorse, and the holly are familiar instances. Among those which protect themselves with venom as reptiles do are the deadly nightshade, or belladonna, and the nux vomica. Less destructively inclined are those plants which are simply protected by their disagreeable taste. The common buttercup, which is one of these, is generally shunned by horses and cattle. A plant which, like the skunk, is protected by a disagreeable smell is the figwort. Only that hardy and insensitive animal, the goat, will touch it.

Bleeding Useful at Times.

For ages one of the customs of Chinese physicians has been to thrust fine needles into the body to let out pains and various maladies and it appears that bleeding in this way is often really useful. After long observation in China Dr. James Cantile reports himself so much impressed with the results that he has adopted the procedure himself for certain cases. Needling seems to lessen the tension in the inflamed part and to relieve neuralgic and rheumatic pains, swelling and stiffness from sprains and fractures, and especially the indefinite hip pains usually called sciatica.

Freshet Preceding Drought.

"There seemed to be general rejoicing over prohibition in Crimson Gulch."

"Yes," replied Broncho Bob; "the boys looked forward to it with great enthusiasm. They figured that there'd be a tremendous amount of liquor that the saloons would have to give away just before they closed."

Value of Lightning.

Bacon—It has been estimated by a Berlin scientist that the commercial value of the electricity in a flash of lightning lasting one thousandth of a second is 29 cents.

Egbert—And yet I guess if it struck you there'd be considerably more in it for the doctor.

Her Retort.

"When Lear took his daughter to task for her treatment of him, she answered him with a popular saying."

"What was it?"

"She said: 'Then go, father, and fare worse.'"

Cuckoo Calls and Wedding Rings.

For a girl to dream of hearing the cuckoo is said to be a means whereby she may ascertain how many years will elapse before she will wear a wedding ring. The number of years will answer to the number of times the bird is heard calling in her dream.

DADDY'S EVENING FAIRY TALE

BY MARY GRAHAM BONNER

DOGS' PARTY.

"Bow-wow," said Pat, the Dog.

"Bow-wow," barked Gyp, another Dog.

"I am wagging my tail," said Pat. "I would like so much to play with you."

"And I am shaking my paw at you," said Gyp. "I would like to play with you just as much as you would like to play with me."

"Good-good-good," barked Pat.

And Gyp danced around very happily. They were both young dogs and they loved to play and frisk about.

It was a snowy day, and the snow was soft and light. Gyp and Pat were both white fox terriers; Pat had one black spot on his back, and Gyp had a brown spot over one eye. But in the snow they looked almost as white as the snow did.

"Let's play snowballs," said Pat.

"Do you mean throw snowballs?" said Gyp.

"That's just what I mean," said Pat. So they began lifting the soft snow with their paws and throwing it at each other. Such fun as they had! They frolicked in the snow, and they put their heads right into the snowbanks.

Then they would take turns in playing Dead Dog, and one would lie down while the other covered him up with a little snow.

Then he would stay quite still until the dog who had covered him up would bark.

"Wake up, wake up you sleepy head, we're all through playing that you are dead."

With a bound they'd both start playing and frisking in the snow again. Such a time as they had. Soon two little girls came walking by. They were both carrying books and pencil boxes, for they had been to school.

"There's Pat," said the little girl, named Helen.

"And there's my Gyp," said the second little girl, whose name was Dorothy.

"How did they ever happen to be together I wonder?" asked Helen.

For while Helen and Dorothy were the very best of friends, and their dogs loved to play with each other, still they lived quite far apart. They didn't usually go to each other's homes unless Dorothy and Helen were going to play together.

"Well," said Helen. "I say we'll have a tea party. I'm sure mother will be willing. She said I could ask you very soon. That was this morning, and this afternoon means very soon."

"All right," said Dorothy. "I'd love to come."

"And of course the Dogs will play together," said Helen.

"As they've found each other now I don't suppose they would enjoy any-



Two Little Girls Came Walking By.

thing better than a tea party, for I've a new set of dishes for Gyp and Pat," added Helen.

So the little Girls and the Dogs all played together. The Dogs did their tricks and the little Girls laughed and clapped.

Then the Dogs played with balls while the little Girls played with their Dolls.

When it came time for the tea-party, the little Girls sat by a small blue painted table, and the Dogs had cushions to sit on.

They had tea, which was mostly sugar and milk, but it was good and hot and it had a very pretty tea color. Then they had delicious bread and butter and jam. And large bowls of milk for the Dogs. Gyp and Pat also had a fine chop bone apiece.

It was certainly a very jolly little tea party, and when Dorothy had to leave she said, "It was all because our Dogs were playing together that we decided to have this little party, and it has been such fun."

"Yes," said Helen. "Our Dogs know when it's time to have a party, don't they?"

And the Dogs wagged their tails and barked as though to say, "We know when to have parties."