# THE DESTROYING ANGEL

## By LOUIS JOSEPH VANCE

CHAPTER XV—Continued.

—18—

Hastening back to the farmstead, he secured a spade from the barn and made his way quickly down to the beach by way of the road through the cluster of deserted fishermen's huts.

Fifteen minutes' walk brought him to the pool. Ten minutes' hard work with the spade sufficed to excavate a shallow trench in the sands above high-water mark. He required as much time again to nerve himself to the point of driving off the gulls and moving the body. There were likewise crabs to be dealt with. . . .

When it was accomplished, and he had lifted the last heavy stone into place above the grave, he waded out into the sea and cleansed himself as best he might, then lay down for a time in the strength-giving light, feeling giddy and faint.

What the gulls and the crabs and the shattering surf had left had been little, but enough for indisputable identification.

Whitaker had buried Drummond.

By the time he got back to the farm-house, the woman was up, dressed in the rent and stained but dry remnants of her own clothing (for all their defects, infinitely more becoming than the garments to which she had been obliged to resort the previous day) and busy preparing breakfast.

"Well, sir!" she called heartily over her shoulder. "And where, pray, have you been all this long time?"

"I went for a swim," he said evasively—"thought it might do me good."

"You're not feeling well?" She turned to look him over. He avoided her eye. "I had a bad night."

"Still got the hump, eh?"

"Still got the hump," he assented, glad thus to mask his unhappiness.

"Breakfast and a strong cup of tea or two will fix that," she announced with confidence.

His stout attempts to match her cheerfulness during the meal fell dismally short of conviction. After two or three false starts he gave it up and took refuge in his plea of indisposition. She humored him with a covert understanding that surmised more in a second than he could have compressed into a ten-minute confession.

The meal over, he rose and sidled awkwardly toward the door.

"You'll be busy for a while with the dishes and things, won't you?" he asked with an air meant to seem guileless.

"Oh, yes; for some time," she replied quickly.

"I—I think I'll take a stroll round the island. There might be something like a boat hidden away somewhere along the beach."

"You won't go out of sight?" she pleaded through the window.

"It can't be done," he called back, strolling out of the dooryard with much show of idle indecision.

His real purpose was, in fact, definite. There was another body to be accounted for.

To his intense relief, he made no further discovery other than a scattering drift of wreckage from the motor-boats. He turned at length and trudged wearily back toward the farm-house.

Since breakfast he had seen nothing of the girl; none of the elaborately casual glances which he had from time to time cast inland had discovered any sign of her. But now she appeared in the doorway, and after a slight pause, as of indecision, moved down the path to meet him.

He was conscious that, at sight of her, his pulses quickened. Something swelled in his breast, something tightened the muscles of his throat. The way of her body in action, the way of the sun with her hair . . !

Dismay shook him like an ague; he felt his heart divided against itself; he was so glad of her, and so afraid . . . He could not keep his eyes from her, nor could he make his desire be still; and yet . . . and yet . . .

They paused beside one of the low stone walls and the girl sat down upon the lichened stones, then looked up to him with a smile and a slight movement of the head that plainly invited him to a place beside her.

"I watched you, off and on, from the windows. You might have been looking for a pin, from your painstaking air, off there along the cliffs."

He nodded again, gloomily. Her comment seemed to admit of no more compromising method of reply.

"Then you've nothing to tell me?"

He pursed his lips, depreciatory, lifted his shoulders not quite happily, and swung one lanky leg across the other as he slouched, morosely eying the sheets of sapphire that made their prison walls. There was a little silence. She watched him askance with her fugitive, shadowy, sympathetic and shrewd smile.

"Must I make talk, then?" she demanded at length.

"If we must, I suppose—you'll have to show the way. My mind's hardly equal to trail-breaking to-day."

"So I shall, then. Hugh . . ." She leaned toward him, dropping her hand over his own with an effect of infinite comprehension. "Hugh," she repeated, meeting his gaze squarely as he looked up, startled—"what's the good of keeping up the make-believe? You know!"

The breath clicked in his throat, and his glance wavered uneasily, then steadied again to hers. And through a long moment neither stirred, but sat so, eye to eye, searching each the other's mind and heart.

At length he confessed it with an uncertain, shamefaced nod.

"That's right," he said: "I do know—now."

She removed her hand and sat back without lessening the fixity of her regard.

"When did you find it out?"

"This morning. That is it came to me all of a sudden—" His gaze fell; he stammered and felt his face burning.

"Hugh, that's not quite honest. I know you hadn't guessed, last night—I know it. Hugh, look at me!"

Unwillingly he met her eyes.

"How did you find out?"

He was an inexpert liar. Under the witchery of her eyes, his resource failed him absolutely. He started to repeat, stammered, fell still, and then in a breath capitulated.

"Before you were up—I meant to keep this from you—down there on the beach—I found Drummond."

"Drummond!"

It was a cry of terror. She started back from him, eyes wide, cheeks whitening.

"I'm sorry . . . But I presume you ought to know. . . . His body . . . I buried it. . ."

She gave a little smothered cry, and seemed to shrink in upon herself, burying her face in her hands—an incongruous, huddled shape of grief, there upon the gray stone wall, set against all the radiant beauty of the exquisite, sun-gladdened world.

"Don't Come Near Me, Hugh! It's Death."

He was patient with her, though the slow-dragging minutes during which she neither moved nor made any sound brought him inexpressible distress, and he seemed to age visibly, his face, settling in iron lines, gray with suffering.

At length a moan—rather, a wail—came from the stricken figure beside him:

"Ah, the pity of it! the pity of it! . . . What have I done that this should come to me!"

He ventured to touch her hand in gentle sympathy.

"Mary," he said, and hesitated with a little wonder, remembering that this was the first time he had ever called her by that name—"Mary, did you care for him so much?"

She sat, trembling, her face averted and hidden.

"Don't blame him," she said softly. "He wasn't responsible."

"I know."

"How long have you known?" She swung suddenly to face him.

"For some time—definitely, for two or three days. Ember took him away, meaning to put him in a sanitarium. I don't understand how he got away—from Ember. It worries me—on Ember's account. I hope nothing has happened to him."

"Oh, I hope not!"

"You know—I mean about the cause—the morphine?"

"I never guessed until that night, after he had come down into the cabin to—to drug himself. . . . It was very terrible—that tiny, pitching cabin, with the swinging, smoking lamp, and the madman sitting there, muttering to himself over the glass in which the morphine was dissolving. . . . It happened three times before the wreck; I thought I should go out of my own mind."

She shuddered, her face tragic and pitiful. For a little she sat, head bowed, brooding.

"Hugh!" she cried, looking up to search his face narrowly—"Hugh, you've not been pretending—?"

"Pretending?" he repeated, thick-witted.

"Hugh, I could never forgive you if you'd been pretending. It would be too cruel . . . Ah, but you haven't been! Tell me you haven't!"

"I don't understand . . . Pretending what?"

"Pretending you didn't know who I was—pretending to fall in love with me just because you were sorry for me, to make me think it was me you loved and not the woman you felt bound to take care of, because you'd—you had—"

"Mary, listen to me," he interrupted. "I swear I didn't know you. Only, that night on the stage, as Joan Thursday, you were that girl again. I never dreamed of associating you with my wife. Dear, I didn't know, believe me. It was you who bewitched me—not the wife for whose sake I fought against what I thought infatuation for you. I loved—I love you only, you as you are—not the poor little girl of the Commercial House."

"I have loved you always," she said softly between barely parted lips—"always, Hugh. Even when I thought you dead . . I did believe that you were drowned out there. Hugh! You know that, don't you."

"I have never for an instant questioned it."

"It wouldn't be like you to, my dear; it wouldn't be you, my Hugh. No other man I ever knew—no, let me say it!—ever measured up to the standard you had set for me to worship. But Hugh—you'll understand, won't you?—about the others—?"

"Please," he begged—"please don't harrow yourself so, Mary!"

"No; I must tell you. . . . The world seemed so empty and so lonely, Hugh: I tried to lose myself in my work, but it wasn't enough. And those others came, beseeching me, and—and I liked them. I was starving for affection. Each time, Hugh, it was the same. One by one they were taken from me, strangely, terribly. . . Poor Tom Custer, first; he was a dear boy, but I didn't love him and couldn't marry him. I had to tell him so. He killed himself. . . . Then Billy Hamilton; I became engaged to him; but he was taken mysteriously from a crowded ship in mid-ocean. . . . A man named Mitchel Thurston loved me. I liked him; perhaps I might have consented to marry him. He was assassinated—shot down like a mad dog in broad daylight—no one ever knew by whom, or why. He hadn't an enemy in the world we knew of. . . . And now Drummond . . .!"

"Mary, Mary!" he pleaded. "Don't—don't—those things were all accidents—"

She paid him no heed. She didn't seem to hear. He tried to take her hand, with a man's dull, witless notion of the way to comfort a distraught woman; but she snatched it from his touch.

"And now"—her voice pealed out like a great bell tolling over the magnificent solitude of the forsaken island—"and now I have it to live through once again; the wonder and terror and beauty of love, the agony and passion of having you torn from me! . . . Hugh! . . . I don't believe I can endure it again. I can't bear this exquisite torture. I'm afraid I shall go mad! . . . Unless . . . unless"—her voice shuddered—"I have the strength, the strength to—"

"Stop!" he cried in desperation. "You must not go on like this! Mary! Listen to me!"

This time he succeeded in imprisoning her hand. "Mary," he said gently, drawing closer to her, "listen to me; understand what I say. I love you; I am your husband; nothing can possibly come between us. All these other things can be explained. Don't let yourself think for another instant—"

Her eyes, fixed upon the two hands in which he clasped her own, had grown wide and staring with dread. Momentarily she seemed stunned. Then she wrenched it from him, at the same time jumping up and away.

"No!" she cried, fending him from her with shaking arms. "No! Don't touch me! Don't come near me, Hugh! It's . . . it's death! My touch is death! I know it now—I had begun to suspect, now I know! I am accursed—doomed to go through life like pestilence, leaving sorrow and death in my wake. . . . Hugh!" She controlled herself a trifle: "Hugh, I love you more than life; I love you more than love itself. But you must not come near me. Love me if you must, but O my dear one! keep away from me; avoid me, forget me if you can, but at all cost shun me as you would the plague! I will not give myself to you to be your death!"

Before he could utter a syllable in reply, she turned and fled from him.

CHAPTER XVI.

Capitulation.

Grimly Whitaker sat himself down in the kitchen and prepared to wait the reappearance of his wife—prepared to wait as long as life was in him, so that he were there to welcome her when, her paroxysm over, she would come to him to be comforted, soothed and reasoned out of her distorted conception of her destiny.

He pondered the situation for hours then he rose, ascended the stairs, tapped gently on the locked door.

"Mary," he called, with his heart in his mouth—"Mary!"

Her answer was instant, in accents sweet, calm and clear.

The breathless seconds spun their golden web of minutes. They did not move. Round them the silence sang like the choiring seraphim. . . .

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

## LOVE'S CODE BY SEARCHLIGHT

### Ferryboat Captain Nightly Signals Little Deaf and Dumb Daughter.

Searchlight flashes, mysterious and baffling, seen nightly for several weeks off the Richmond and Berkeley water fronts, which have puzzled East Bay residents and even made them uneasy, are now explained. They indicate no fell plot; they reveal no piratical activities. They are simply a "love code" between a lonesome daddy and his lonesome little girl, the San Francisco Chronicle states.

The daddy is Capt. H. F. Dunningan of the Santa Fe ferryboat San Pedro, and the girl is his twelve-year-old daughter Florence, a patient in the State Institute for the Deaf, Dumb and Blind at Berkeley. Happily she retains the faculty of sight, and nightly she sits, her nose flattened against the pane of her window, waiting for the messages that come to her across miles of land and water.

There appears a finger of light, painting a half-circle against the clouds; daddy is saying: "Hello." Three short flashes, "Love from daddy." Then, as the San Pedro swings out of range, the light sweeps the sky; that means "Good-night, with love and kisses."

But the most welcome of all the signals is the stream of light held steadily against the window, through which peers the little face. That indicates that daddy is coming on his weekly visit, and then little Florence is in the height of bliss.

### Dog Too Intelligent.

Tommy Howard is no better and no worse than the majority of men of his age, but his maiden aunt, who keeps him in supplies at Oxford and to whom he looks to leave him something worth while, takes for granted that he is the embodiment of all the virtues.

She went to see him recently and the dutiful Tommy took her and his dog for a walk through the city. Tommy hadn't given a thought to the intelligence of the canine creature, but, as the event proved, the dog nearly upset the whole business. For he trotted ahead, stopped at the door of the Brown Cow and looked around as if expecting his master to follow.

"Thomas," said his aunt, "what does this mean?"

"Mean," said Tommy, "why, aunty, you see, my dog is a wonderfully intelligent beast. Saw the sign of that horrid place, thinks it's a dairy, and, liking milk, wants me to buy him some."

Explanations accepted, but it was a close touch.—London Answers.

### Words of Wisdom.

If light is in a man, he shines; if darkness, he shades; if his heart glows with love, he warms; if frozen with selfishness, he chills; if corrupt, he poisons; if pure-hearted, he cleanses.


## COMB SAGE TEA IN HAIR TO DARKEN IT

### It's Grandmother's Recipe to keep her Locks Dark, Glossy, Beautiful.

The old-time mixture of Sage Tea and Sulphur for darkening gray, streaked and faded hair is grandmother's recipe, and folks are again using it to keep their hair a good, even color, which is quite sensible, as we are living in an age when a youthful appearance is of the greatest advantage.

Nowadays, though, we don't have the troublesome task of gathering the sage and the mussy mixing at home. All drug stores sell the ready-to-use product, improved by the addition of other ingredients, called "Wyeth's Sage and Sulphur Compound" for about 50 cents a bottle. It is very popular because nobody can discover it has been applied. Simply moisten your comb or a soft brush with it and draw this through your hair, taking one small strand at a time; by morning the gray hair disappears, but what delights the ladies with Wyeth's Sage and Sulphur Compound, is that, besides beautifully darkening the hair after a few applications, it also produces that soft lustre and appearance of abundance which is so attractive. This ready-to-use preparation is a delightful toilet requisite for those who desire a more youthful appearance. It is not intended for the cure, mitigation or prevention of disease.—Adv.


### The Bishop's Parable.

Bishop Paul Jones of Utah was asked by a committee the other day to support a rather extreme Sunday ordinance.

"Gentlemen," said the bishop, "the wife of one of my ministers saw her little boy last Sunday morning chasing the hens all over the farmyard with a club.

"'I'll learn you,' he was shouting, 'I'll learn you to lay eggs on the Sabbath!'"


### Pimply Rashy Skins

Quickly soothed and healed by Cuticura often when all else fails. The Soap to cleanse and purify, the Ointment to soothe and heal. For free samples address, "Cuticura, Dept. X, Boston." At druggists and by mail. Soap 25, Ointment 25 and 50.—Adv.


### Dutiful to the Last.

"Daughter, did you give back that young man everything he gave you, as I told you?"

"Yes, pa, I did exactly as you told me—even his kisses."—Exchange.

### Early Training.

"When the bank was struggling in the teeth of the financial storm, that financier advocated their filling with gold."

"He must have started life as a dentist."—Exchange.


Dr. Pierce's Pellets are best for liver, bowels and stomach. One little Pellet for a laxative—three for a cathartic.


### Her Class.

"A woman once came stealing silently into my life——"

"I know. It was the girl you want to marry."

"Not much. It was a female pickpocket."—Exchange.

### Source of Pleasure.

"Bliggins entertains a good opinion of himself."

"No," replied Miss Cayenne; "his good opinion of himself entertains Mr. Bliggins."—Exchange.


## THIS WOMAN SAVED FROM AN OPERATION

### By taking Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound, One of Thousands of Such Cases.

Black River Falls, Wis.—"As Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound saved me from an operation, I cannot say enough in praise of it. I suffered from organic troubles and my side hurt me so I could hardly be up from my bed, and I was unable to do my housework. I had the best doctors in Eau Claire and they wanted me to have an operation, but Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound cured me so I did not need the operation, and I am telling all my friends about it."—Mrs. A. W. Binzer, Black River Falls, Wis.

It is just such experiences as that of Mrs. Binzer that has made this famous root and herb remedy a household word from ocean to ocean. Any woman who suffers from inflammation, ulceration, displacements, backache, nervousness, irregularities or "the blues" should not rest until she has given it a trial, and for special advice write Lydia E. Pinkham Medicine Co., Lynn, Mass.