

The Destroying Angel

By LOUIS JOSEPH VANCE

THE PAUL OF FLAME THE BRIDGE FELL THE BLACK MAG THE SEASIDE HOME

EMINENT surgeons tell Hugh Whitaker that six months is his life limit. Peter Stark, intimate friend, finds him stunned by the news and arranges to take Whitaker on a long South sea yacht trip. The sick man sneaks off to a country hotel, intending to kill himself, but surprises a young girl in the act of drinking poison. She is Mary Ladislav, love-starved daughter of a New York plutocrat, deserted by the man with whom she planned clandestine marriage. To save her good name, Whitaker marries the girl (knowing that six months is his limit), gives her money and puts her on a train for home. He runs plump into Stark, hunting him. Months later, the yacht burns at sea. All hands die but Whitaker, who is reported lost. A delicate operation restores his health, and after five prosperous years in Australia, he returns to New York—one back from the dead! We find him—in this installment—talking with his old law partner, Drummond, about the prospects of finding that little girl wife. A beautiful actress enters the story.

CHAPTER IV—Continued.

"Would you know her if you saw her?"

"I don't know," Whitaker frowned with annoyance. "She's six years older."

"Well, but what was she like?" Drummond pursued curiously.

Whitaker shook his head. "It's not easy to remember. Matter of fact, I don't believe I ever got one good square look at her. It was twilight in the hotel, when I found her; we sat talking in absolute darkness, toward the end; even in the minister's study there was only a green-shaded lamp on the table; and on the train—well, we were both too much worked up. I fancy, to pay much attention to details."

"Blonde or brune?"

"I swear I don't know. She wore one of those funny knitted caps, tight down over her hair, all the time."

Drummond laughed quietly.

"I don't feel in a joking humor," Whitaker said roughly. "It's a serious matter and wants serious treatment. . . . What else have we got to mull over?"

Drummond shrugged suavely. "There's enough to keep us busy for several hours," he said. "For instance, there's my stewardship."

"Your which?"

"My care of your property. You left a good deal of money and securities lying round loose, you know; naturally I felt obliged to look after 'em. There was no telling when Widow Whitaker might walk in and demand an accounting. I presume we might as well run over the account—though it is getting late."

"Half-past four," Whitaker informed him, consulting his watch. "Take too long for to-day. Some other time."

Drummond's reply was postponed by the office boy, who popped in on the heels of a light knock.

"Mr. Max's outside," he announced. "O the deuce!" The exclamation seemed to escape Drummond's lips involuntarily. He tightened them angrily, as though regretting the lapse of self-control, and glanced hurriedly askance to see if Whitaker had noticed. "I'm busy," he added, a trace sullenly. "Tell him I've gone out."

"But he's got 'appointment,' the boy retorted. "And besides, I told him you was in."

"You needn't fob him off on my account," Whitaker interposed. "We can finish our confab later—Monday—any time. It's time for me to be getting up-town, anyway."

"It isn't that," Drummond explained doggedly. "Only—the man's a bore, and—"

"It isn't Jules Max?" Whitaker excitedly. "Not little Jules Max, who used to stage manage our amateur shows?"

"That's the man," Drummond admitted with plain reluctance.

"Then have him in, by all means. I want to say howdy to him, if nothing more. And then I'll clear out and leave you to his troubles."

Drummond laughed a trifle sourly. "Max has developed into a heavy-weight entrepreneur, you know."

"Meaning theatrical manager? Then why not say so? But I might've guessed he'd drift into something of the sort."

A moment later Whitaker was vigorously pumping the unresisting—indeed the apparently boneless—hand of Jules Max. The hat that had made Hammerstein famous Max had appropriated—straight crown, flat brim and immaculate gloss—bodily. Beneath it his face was small of feature, and fat,

A pince-nez sheltered his near-sighted eyes. His short, round little body was invariably by day dressed in a dark gray morning-coat, white-edged waistcoat, assertively-striped trousers, and patent-leather shoes with white spats. He had a passion for lemon-colored gloves of thinnest kid and slender malacca walking-sticks. His dignity was an awful thing, as ingrained as his strut.

He reasserted the dignity now with a jerk of his maltreated hand, readjusted his glasses, and resumed his stare.

"Either," he observed, "you're Hugh Whitaker come to life or a deuced outrage."

"Both if you like."

"You sound like both," complained the little man. "Anyway, you were drowned in the Philippines or somewhere long ago, and I never waste time on a dead one. . . . Drummond—"

He turned to the lawyer with a vastly business-like air.

"No, you don't!" Whitaker insisted, putting himself between the two men. "I admit that you're a great man; you might at least admit that I'm a live one."

A mollified smile moderated the small man's manner. "That's a bargain," he said, extending a pale yellow paw; "I'm glad to see you again, Hugh. When did you recrudescence?"

"An hour ago," Drummond answered for him; "blew in here as large as life and twice as important. He's been running a gold farm out in New Guinea. What do you know about that?"

"It's very interesting," Max conceded. "You've asked him, of course?" he demanded of Drummond, nodding toward Whitaker.

Drummond flushed slightly. "No chance," he said. "I was on the point of doing it when you butted in."

"What's this?" inquired Whitaker.

Max delivered himself of a startling bit of information: "He's going to get married."

Whitaker stared. "Drummond? Not really?"

Drummond acknowledged his guilt brazenly: "Next week, in fact."

"But why didn't you say anything about it?"

"You didn't give me an opening. Besides, to welcome a deserter from the great beyond is enough to drive all other thoughts from a man's mind."

"There's to be a supper in honor of the circumstances, at the Beau Arts tonight," supplemented Max. "You'll come, of course."

"I'll be there—and furthermore, I'll be waiting at the church a week hence—or whenever it's to come off. And now I want to congratulate you," Whitaker held Drummond's hand in one of those long, hard grips that mean much between men. "But mostly I want to congratulate her, who is she?"

"Sara Law," said Drummond, with pride in his quick color and the lift of his chin.

"The greatest living actress on the English-speaking stage," Max announced, preening himself importantly. "My own discovery."

"Of course I've heard—but I have been out of touch with such things," Whitaker apologized. "When shall I see her?"

"In honor of her retirement," Max answered, fussing with a gardenia on his lapel. "She retires from the stage finally, and forever—she says—when the curtain falls tonight."

"Then I've got to be in the theater tonight—if that's the case," said Whitaker.

"'Fraid you won't get in, though," Drummond doubted darkly. "Everybody's in the house for this final week

was sold out a month ago. Even the speculators are cleaned out."

"Tut!" the manager reproved him loftily. "Hugh is going to see Sara Law act for the last time from my personal box—aren't you, Hugh?"

"You bet I am!" Whitaker asserted with conviction.

"Then come along," Max caught him by the arm and started for the door. "So long, Drummond."

CHAPTER V.

Nothing would satisfy Max but that Whitaker should dine with him. He consented to drop him at the Ritz-Carlton, in order that he might dress, only on the condition that Whitaker would meet him at seven, in the white room at the Kulkickerbocker.

"Just mention my name to the head waiter," he said with magnificence; "or if I'm there first, you can't help seeing me. Everybody knows my table—the little one in the southeast corner. . . . Shoot, James!"

The latter phrase was Max's way of ordering the driver to move on. The car snorted resentfully, then pulled smoothly and swiftly away. Max waved a jaunty farewell with a lemon-colored hand, over the back of the tonneau.

Whitaker went up to his room in a reflective mood in which the theatrical man had little place. Since his arrival in New York he had fallen into the habit of seeking the view from his window when in meditative humor. A view of ten thousand roofs, inexpressibly enchanting. . . . Somewhere—perhaps—in that welter of steel and stone, as eternal and as restless as the sea, was the woman Whitaker had married, working out her lonely destiny. A haphazard biscuit tossed from his window might fall upon the very roof that sheltered her; he might search for a hundred years and never cross her path.

He wondered.

The possibility that she might have married a second time did not disturb his pulse by the least fraction of a beat. He even contemplated the chance that she might be dead with normal equanimity. Fortunate, that he didn't love her. More fortunate still, that he loved no one else.

Incontinently he wrote and dispatched a long, extravagant cablegram to Mrs. Pettit in care of the American embassy, little doubting that she would immediately answer.

When eventually he strode into the white room, Max was already established at the famous little table in the southeast corner. Whitaker was conscious of turning heads and guarded comment as he took his place opposite the little fat man.

"Make you famous in a night," Max assured him importantly. "Don't happen to need any notoriety, do you?"

"No, thanks."

"Dine with me here three nights hand-running and they'll let you into the Syndicate by the back door without even asking your name. P. T. A's one grand little motto, my boy."

"P. T. A.?"

"Pays to advertise. Paste that in your hat. Look me over," he requested abruptly, leaning back. "I guess I'm some giddy young buck, what?"

Whitaker reviewed the striking effect Max had created by enosing his brief neck and double chin in an old-

fashioned high collar and black silk stock, beneath which his important chest was protected by an elaborately frilled shirt decorated with black pearl studs. His waist was strapped in by a pique waistcoat edged with black, and there was a distinctly perceptible "invisible" stripe in the material of his evening coat and trousers.

"Dressed like a fool," Max summed up the ensemble before his guest could speak. "Would you believe that despair could gnaw at the vitals of anyone as wonderfully arrayed?"

"I would not," Whitaker asserted. "Yet, I'm down in the mouth, because this is Sara's last appearance," Max motioned the waiter to remove the debris of a course. "I've got it in my knob that she's my mascot. If she leaves me, my luck goes with her. I made her, all right, but she made me, too; and it sprains my sense of good business to break up a paying combination like that."

"Nonsense," Whitaker contended warily. "If I'm not mistaken, you were telling me this afternoon that

AS PHILOSOPHER SAW LIFE

Walter Pater's Idea of Success Was Hardly That Held by the Modern Business Man.

The service of philosophy, of speculative culture, toward the human spirit is to rouse, to startle it to a life of constant and eager observation. Every moment some form grows perfect in hand or face; some tone on the hills or the sea is choicer than the rest; some mood of passion or insight or intellectual excitement is irresistibly real and attractive to us—for that moment only. Not the fruit of experience but experience itself, is the end. A counted number of pulses only is given to us of a variegated, dramatic life. How may we see in them all that is to be seen in them by the finest senses? How shall we pass most swiftly from point to point and be present always at the focus where the greatest number of vital forces unite in their purest energy?

To burn always with this hard gem-like flame, to maintain this ecstasy, is success in life. . . . Great passions may give us this quickened sense of life ecstasy and sorrow of love, the various forms of enthusiastic activity, disinterested or otherwise, which come naturally to many of us. Only be sure it is passion—that it does yield you this fruit of a quickened, multiplied consciousness.—Walter Pater.

Had No Gift for It.

"Did yez say yer health is bad, Mr. Donovan?"

"Yis, ol' ve bin walkin' in me slape."

"Och, begorra, if Ol' cu'd only have done that same, Ol' wouldnt be off the force now."

you stand next to Belasco as a producing manager. The loss of one star isn't going to rob you of that prestige, is it?"

"You never can tell," the little man contended darkly; "I wouldn't bet thirty cents my next production would turn out a hit. I've had several close calls with Sara—she's threatened to chuck the stage often before this; but every time something happened to make her change her mind. I've got a hunch maybe something will happen this time, too. If it does, I won't want any partners."



How much information do you wager that Max is in a position to give Whitaker if he were of a mind to do so?

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Overworking the Czar.

To the true Scot there is no place like his land and no people like his people. Not that he doesn't get away from both as soon as he can. But the pride is still there.

When the Royal Scot Greys were honored by having the czar appointed as their honorary colonel, an officer in the regiment told the news to his servant.

"Donald," he said, "the czar of Russia has been appointed colonel of our regiment."

"Indeed, sir, an' is that so?" exclaimed Donald. "It's a verra fine thing fur him." Then a puzzled expression stole over his face, and he scratched his head thoughtfully. "Beg pardon, sir," he added, "but will he be able to keep bath jobs?"

Cow's Variable Thirst.

Somebody rises to inquire how much water a cow will drink during warm weather. Well, that depends, replies the Coffeyville Journal. Where a hydrant is handy, a tubful a day is plenty for her. If her owner is obliged to draw it from a well with a bucket and rope, she will drink from half a barrel to a barrel. If the water must be hauled her thirst increases according to the distance traveled to get it. Water brought from two miles away will be consumed at the rate of three barrels a day, three miles five barrels, and above that distance no practical test has ever been made, as no means has ever been provided to get the water fast enough.—Kansas City Star.

Usual Thing.

"Why didn't you interfere when the cook chased the waiter with a cleaver and the waitress yelled murder?"

"I thought it was an ordinary cabaret feature."

SAGE TEA BEAUTIFIES AND DARKENS HAIR

Don't Stay Gray! It Darkens So Naturally that Nobody can Tell.

You can turn gray, faded hair beautifully dark and lustrous almost overnight if you'll get a 50-cent bottle of "Wyeth's Sage and Sulphur Compound" at any drug store. Millions of bottles of this old famous Sage Tea Recipe, improved by the addition of other ingredients, are sold annually, says a well-known druggist here, because it darkens the hair so naturally and evenly that no one can tell it has been applied.

Those whose hair is turning gray or becoming faded have a surprise awaiting them, because after one or two applications the gray hair vanishes and your locks become luxuriantly dark and beautiful.

This is the age of youth. Gray-haired, unattractive folks aren't wanted around, so get busy with Wyeth's Sage and Sulphur Compound to-night and you'll be delighted with your dark, handsome hair and your youthful appearance within a few days.

This preparation is a toilet requisite and is not intended for the cure, mitigation or prevention of disease.—Adv.

Tough Luck.

Old Man (to crying boy)—What's the matter, my little man?

Boy—I'm lost. Boo-hoo!

Old Man—Lost? Nonsense! We mustn't give up hope so soon. Where do you live?

Boy—Don't know, sir. We've just moved, and I can't remember the address.

Old Man—Well, what's your name?

Boy—D-don't know, sir. M mother got married again this morning.—Exchange.

ALL MEN AT HOME SHOULD PREPARE FOR WAR.

The first test a man is put thru for either war or life insurance is an examination of his water. This is most essential because the kidneys play a most important part in causing premature old age and death. The more injurious the poisons passing thru the kidneys the sooner comes decay—no says Dr. Pierce of Surgical Institute, Buffalo, N. Y., who further advises all people who are past thirty to preserve the vitality of the kidneys and free the blood from poisonous elements, such as uric acid—drink plenty of water—sweat some daily and take Anuric, double strength, before meals.

This An-uric is a late discovery of Dr. Pierce and is put up in tablet form, and can be obtained at almost any drug store. For that backache, lumbago, rheumatism, "rusty" joints, swollen feet or hands, due to uric acid in the blood, Anuric quickly dissolves the uric acid as hot water does sugar. Take a little Anuric before meals and live to be a hundred. Send 10 cents to Dr. Pierce for trial package of Anuric.—Adv.

The Only Way.

"I have a friend who kept a cook for nearly a year."

"What jail is he in charge of?"—Boston Transcript.

Take care of your health and wealth will take care of you. Garfield Tea promotes health.—Adv.

An Unexpected Answer.

"Polly, want a cracker?"

"No; I am conserving food," replied the intelligent bird.—Louisville Courier Journal.

ALLEN'S FOOT-EASE FOR THE TROOPS.

Shaken into the shoes and sprinkled in the foot, bath it gives rest and comfort, takes the friction from the shoe and prevents blisters and sore spots. Makes walking easy. Accept no substitute! Sold everywhere, 25c.

A Marital Handicap.

"The girl is neither pretty, talented nor rich. What is her attraction for you?"

"A great and lasting one. She's tongue-tied."—Exchange.

For a disordered liver, take Garfield Tea, the Herb laxative. All druggists.—Adv.

Unsubstantial Returns.

"Did you raise anything on your promise to pay?"

"Oh, yes; I raised a smile."—Baltimore American.

Coated tongue, vertigo and constipation are relieved by Garfield Tea.—Adv.

YES! MAGICALLY! CORNS LIFT OUT WITH FINGERS

You corn-pestered men and women need suffer no longer. Wear the shoes that nearly killed you before, says this Cincinnati authority, because a few drops of freezone applied directly on a tender, aching corn or callous stops soreness at once and soon the corn or hardened callous loosens so it can be lifted out, root and all, without pain.

A small bottle of freezone costs very little at any drug store, but will positively take off every hard or soft corn or callous. This should be tried as it is inexpensive and is said not to irritate the surrounding skin.

If your druggist hasn't any freezone tell him to get a small bottle for you from his wholesale drug house. It is fine stuff and acts like a charm every time.—Adv.