

# The Destroying Angel

By LOUIS JOSEPH VANCE

THE PAUL OF FLAME THE BRONZE BELL THE BLACK DAG THE BRASS BONE

**D**ID you ever risk your life and come within a breath of losing it while trying to save a friend? There is a mighty thrilling episode pictured in this installment.

Taking up the thread of the story, you will recall that Hugh Whitaker, returning to New York five years after his supposed death, finds his wife, now a famous actress known as Sara Law, engaged to marry Drummond, his old partner. Drummond supposedly commits suicide. Sara Law disappears. Whitaker, assailed mysteriously, goes to the country place of Martin Ebmer.

He becomes acquainted with charming Miss Fiske, living near by, and discovers spies are watching her. One night she is abducted in a motor boat when Whitaker starts to make a call. He follows the kidnapers in another launch and sees their boat wrecked on a reef.

## CHAPTER XIII.

—15—  
Debate.

The Trouble, meantime, was closing in upon the scene of tragedy with little less than locomotive speed. Whitaker applied the reversing gear; then, while the engine reversed with a heavy and resentful pounding in the cylinder-heads, he began to strip off his coat. The boat, moving forward despite the resistance of the propeller, drove heavily against the wreck, broadside to its stern. As this happened Whitaker leaped to the wreck just in time to grasp the coaming and hold on against the onslaught of a hurtling comber. Thunderings benumbed him, and he began to strangle before it passed.

He found himself filling his lungs with free air and fighting his way toward the cabin doors through the water waist deep. In another breath he had torn them open, wide, discovering the woman, her head and shoulders showing above the flood as she stood upon a transom, near the doorway, grasping a stanchion for support. Her eyes met his, black and blank with terror. He snatched through sheer instinct at a circular life preserver that floated toward him, and simultaneously managed to crook an arm round her neck.

Again the sea buried them beneath tons of raging dark water. Green lightnings flashed before his eyes, and in his ears there was a crashing like the crack of doom. His head was splitting, his heart on the point of breaking. The wave passed on, roaring. He could breathe. Now if ever . . .

As if stupefied beyond sensibility, the woman was passive to his handling and he managed somehow to drag her from the cabin to the cockpit and to jam the life ring over her head and under one arm before the next wave bore down upon them.

They came to the surface in the hollow of a deep, gray swale, fully fifty feet from the wreck. Whitaker retained his grasp of the life-preserver line. The woman floated easily in the support. He fancied a gleam of livelier consciousness in her staring eyes, and noticed with a curiously keen feeling of satisfaction that she was not only keeping her mouth closed, but had done so, apparently, while under water.

Then suddenly, the lift of a wave discovered to him the contour of the shore. Instead of being carried in to the rock-strewn beach, they were in the grip of a backwash which was bearing them not only out of immediate danger, but at the same time along-shore toward a point under whose lee he hoped to find less turbulent conditions.

Three times he essayed to speak before he could wring articulate sounds from his cracked lips and burning throat.

"You . . . all right?"

She replied with as much difficulty: "Yes . . . you may . . . let go . . ."

To relax the swollen fingers that grasped the lifeline was pure torture. He attempted no further communication. None, indeed, was needed. It was plain that she understood their situation.

Some minutes passed before he became aware that they were closing in quickly to the shelving beach. He glanced over his shoulder. They were on the line of breakers. Behind them a heavy comber was surging in, crested with snow, its concave belly resembling a vast sheet of emerald. In another moment it would be upon them. It was the moment a seasoned swimmer would seize.

His eye sought the girl's. In hers he read understanding and assent. Of one mind, they struck out with all their strength. The comber overtook them, clasped them to its bosom, tossed them high upon its great glassy shoulder. They fought madly to retain that place, and to such purpose that they rode it over a dozen yards before it crashed upon the beach, annihilating itself in a furious welter of creaming waters. Whitaker felt land beneath his feet.

The rest was like the crisis of a nightmare drawn out to the limit of human endurance. The undertow tore at Whitaker's legs as with a hundred murderous hands. He came out of it eventually to find himself well up on the beach leaning against the careened hulk of a dismantled catboat with a gaping rent in its side. At a little distance the woman was sitting in the sands, bosom and shoulders heaving convulsively, damp, matted hair falling her like a curtain of sunlit seaweed.

He moved with painful effort toward her. She turned up to him her pitiful, writhen face, white as parchment.

"Are you—hurt?" he managed to ask.

"I mean—injured?"

She moved her head from side to side, as if she could not speak for panting.

"I'm—glad," he said dully. "You stay—here . . . I'll go get help."

He raised his eyes, peering inland.

Back of the beach the land rose in long, sweeping hillocks, treeless but green. His curiously befogged vision made out a number of shapes that resembled dwellings.

"Go . . . get . . . help . . ." he repeated thickly.

He started off with a brave, staggering rush that carried him a dozen feet inland. Then his knees turned to water, and the blackness of night shut down upon his senses.

When Whitaker awoke the afternoon was cloudy-warm and bright, so that his eyes were grateful for the shade of a white parasol that a girl was holding over him. He grew suspicious of his senses; and when the parasol was transformed into the shape of a woman wearing a clumsy jacket of soiled covert cloth over a nondescript garment of weirdly printed calico—then he was sure that something was wrong with him.

Besides, the woman suddenly turned and bent over him an anxious face, exclaiming in accents of consternation: "O dear! If he's delirious—!"

His voice, when he strove to answer, rustled and rattled so that he barely managed to say: "What nonsense! I'm just thirsty!"

"I thought you would be," said the woman, calmly; "so I brought water. Here . . ."

She offered a tin vessel to his lips. He sat up suddenly, seized the vessel and buried his face in it, gradually tilting it, while its cool, delicious sweetness irrigated his arid tissues, until every blessed drop was drained. Then, and not till then, he lowered the pail and with sane vision began to renew acquaintance with the world.

He was sitting in the lee of the beached catboat. The woman he had rescued sat quite near him. The gale was still booming overhead, but now with less force (or so he fancied); and the surf still crashed in thunders on the beach a hundred feet or more away; but the haze was lighter, and the blue of the sky was visible, if tarnished.

The sands curved off in a wide crescent, ending in a long, sandy spit. There was a low, ragged earth bank rising from the sands. Midway between the beach and where the hazy uplands lifted their blurred profile against the faded sky, stood a commonplace farmhouse, in good repair, strongly constructed and neatly painted; with a brood of out buildings. Here and there, in scattered groups and singly, sheep foraged.

With puzzled eyes Whitaker sought counsel and enlightenment of the wom-

an, and found in her appearance quite as much to confound anticipation and deepen perplexity. What she had worn the night before he could not say; but it certainly could have had nothing in common with the worn, stained, misshapen jacket covering her shoulders, beneath it the calico wrapper scant and crude beyond belief, upon her feet the rusty wrecks that once had been shoes.

As for himself, his once white flannel trousers were precious souvenirs, even though the cloth had contracted to an alarming extent—uncomfortable as well; while his tennis shoes remained tolerably intact, and the canvas brace had shrunk upon his ankle until it gripped it like a vise.

But these details he absorbed rather than studied, in the first few moments subsequent to his awakening. His chiefest and most direct interest centered upon the woman. There was warm color in the cheeks that he had last seen livid, there was the wonted play of light and shadow in her fascinating eyes; there were gracious rounded curves where had been sunken surfaces, hollowed out by fatigue and strain; and there remained the ineluctable allurement of her tremendous vitality.

"You are not hurt?" he demanded.

"You are—all right?"

"Quite," she told him with a smile significant of her appreciation of his generous feeling. "But you? Haven't you slept at all?"

"Oh, surely—a great deal. But I've been awake for some time—a few hours."

"But I—! What time is it?"

"I haven't a watch, but late afternoon, I should think—going by the sun. It's nearly down."

"Good heavens!" he muttered, dashed. "I have slept!"

"You earned your right to. . . . You needed it far more than I." Her eyes shone warm with kindness.

She swayed almost imperceptibly toward him. Her voice was low pitched and a trifle broken with emotion:

"You saved my life—"

"I—? Oh, that was only what any other man—"

"None other did!"

"Please don't speak of it—I mean, consider it that way," he stammered. "What I want to know is, where are we?"

Her reply was more distant. "On an island, somewhere. It's uninhabited, I think."

He could only echo in bewilderment: "An island . . . ! Uninhabited . . . !" Dismay assailed him. He got up, after a little struggle overcoming the resistance of stiff and sore limbs, and stood with a hand on the coaming of the dismantled catboat, raking the island with an incredulous stare.

She stirred from her place and offered him a hand. "Please help me up."

He turned eagerly, with a feeling of chagrin that she had needed to ask



The Backwash of the Surf Had Them in Its Grip.

him. For an instant he had both her hands, warm and womanly, in his grasp, while she rose by his aid, and for an instant longer—possibly by way of reward. Then she disengaged them with gentle firmness.

She stood beside him so tall and fair, so serenely invested with the flawless dignity of her womanhood that he no longer thought of the incongruity of her grotesque garb.

"You've been up there?" he asked, far too keenly interested to scorn the self-evident.

She gave a comprehensive gesture, embracing the visible prospect. "All over. . . . When I woke, I thought surely . . . I went to see, found nothing living except the sheep and some chickens and turkeys in the farmyard. And the farmhouse—apparently it's ordinarily inhabited. Evidently the people have gone away for a visit somewhere. It gives the impression of

being a home the year round. There isn't any boat—"

"No boat!"

"Not a sign of one, that I can find—except this wreck." She indicated the catboat.

"But you can't do anything with this," he expostulated.

The deep, wide break in its side placed it beyond consideration, even if it should prove possible to remedy its many other lacks.

"No. The people who live here must have a boat—I saw a mooring buoy out there"—with a gesture toward the water. "Of course. How else could they get away?"

"The question is, how we are to get away," he grumbled, morose.

"You'll find the way," she told him with quiet confidence.

"I'll find the way? How?"

"I don't know—only you must. There must be some way of signaling the mainland, some means of communication. Surely people wouldn't live here, cut off from all the world . . . Perhaps we'll find something in the farmhouse to tell us what to do. I didn't have much time to look round. I wanted clothing, mostly—and found these awful things hanging behind the kitchen door. And then I wanted something to eat, and I found that—some bread, not too stale, and plenty of eggs in the henhouse. . . . And you—you must be famished!"

What do you suppose Whitaker and Miss Fiske will find on the island—a solution of the whole mystery?

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

## OLD MINE RADIANT CAVERN

Shafts in Thuringian Forest Filled With Stalactites Are a Beautiful Sight.

An old abandoned mine near Saalfeld, in the Thuringian forest, which in the time of Luther was worked for silver, copper, alum and vitriol, has been discovered by a Berlin geologist to have developed into one of the most beautiful caverns. In the course of centuries the water percolating through the minerals has built up throughout the mine a wonderful labyrinth of stalactites and stalagmites, thrown together with a profusion and brilliance of color which is said to be without parallel.

Deep greens, vivid blues, the purest white, yellows of all shades—in fact, the entire scale of color is reproduced over and over again, and yet the colors melt into each other so gently that nowhere is the impression of disagreeable contrast produced.

Although unknown before the war, this fairy grotto has already become famous among the scientific men of Germany. The aged Haeckel has had himself carried through it in his invalid chair, and has agreed with other scientists that it is the most remarkable natural curiosity in Germany.

## On the Level.

At the Players' club in New York they were discussing the English poet, Alfred Noyes.

"Poor Noyes!" said an editor. "He used to make poetry pay, but the war has created a slump in the poetry market, and to get along today Noyes is writing advertising jingles. What a come down, eh?"

"A come down?" said a critic, his eyes twinkling humorously behind his pince-nez. "Humph. What kind of ads is he writing?"

"Sausage ads," said the editor.

"Then," said the critic, "it's no come down. Noyes always did write doggerel."

## Sincerity of True Forgiveness.

On the Chinese New Year old debts are paid, old enemies are reconciled. It is recorded in "The Memoirs of Li Yun Lung" that two notorious adversaries, Bu Nko and Chung Chong Hong, met formally on a New Year's day, shook their own hands—the artless custom of Cathay—and were profuse in their utterances of good will. The spectators were edified. Going out of the door, Bu, glaring, says to Chung, "I wish you the same you wish me." "You want to begin again, do you?" asks Chung, "livid with rage." This anecdote teaches us the sincerity of true forgiveness.

## Poor Outlook.

Cassidy (visiting sick friend)—Well, Mike, an' how are ye this mornin'?

O'Brien—Porely, Tim, porely. Shure I'm that wake ye'll be comin' to me wake before the end of the wake.—Boston Evening Transcript.

## The Special Way.

"Talking about ships and men—"

"Well?"

"When opposing ships meet they hall. When opposing men meet they storm."

## The Eternal Feminine.

Manager of 'Bus Company—And so you want to leave?

Conductorette—Not if you will put me on service 18. I'm tired of being asked if I'm 45!—London Opinion.

## The Kaiser's Busy Day.

8 a. m.—9 a. m. Morning hate (private).

9 a. m.—10 a. m. Morning hate (full dress).

10 a. m.—11 a. m. Thinks about Great German Sword.

11 a. m.—12 m. Congratulatory telegram to the sergeant-at-arms of the Landtag of Mecklenburg-Schwerin.

12 m.—1 p. m. Lunch.

1 p. m.—2 p. m. Lets heart bleed for Louvain.

2 p. m.—3 p. m. Has 60 great moments reverently admiring God's hand in history.

3 p. m.—4 p. m. Experiences horror at entente depravity.

4 p. m.—5 p. m. Tries not to think of the German navy.

5 p. m.—6 p. m. Wonders when the war will end.—New York Evening Post.

## Mark Twain's Childhood.

Mark Twain used to tell the pathetic story of his childhood. It seems, according to the story, that Mark was born twins. He and his twin looked so much alike that no one, not even their mother, could tell them apart. One day, while the nurse was bathing them, one of them slipped in the bathtub and was drowned. No one ever knew which twin it was that was drowned—and therein, says Mark, was the tragedy. "Everyone thought I was the one that lived," he said, "but I wasn't. It was my brother who lived. I was the one that was drowned."—Exchange.

## Sure! High Heels Cause Corns But Who Cares Now

You reckless men and women who are pestered with corns and who have at least once a week invited an awful death from lockjaw or blood poison are now told by a Cincinnati authority to use a drug called freestone, which the moment a few drops are applied to any corn or callous the soreness is relieved and soon the entire corn or callous, root and all, lifts off with the fingers.

Freestone dries the moment it is applied, and simply shrivels the corn or callous without inflaming or even irritating the surrounding tissue or skin. A small bottle of freestone will cost very little at any of the drug stores, but will positively rid one's feet of every hard or soft corn or hardened callous. If your druggist hasn't any freestone he can get it at any wholesale drug house for you.—Adv.

## Spring Chumps.

The man who rocks the boat.  
The fellow who didn't know it was loaded.  
The susceptible gink who went flower hunting with a girl and got engaged.  
The man who thought he was immune from poison ivy.  
The picnicker who sat on the ground before it was warm and was looked at sympathetically by his widow's relatives.—Richmond Times-Dispatch.

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

## The Object.

"Why do we have these meatless and wheatless days?" asked the selfish person.

"In order," replied Miss Cayenne, "that we may have a defeatless army."



## A WOMAN'S BURDENS

are lightened when she turns to the right medicine. If her existence is made gloomy by the chronic weaknesses, delicate derangements, and painful disorders that afflict her sex, she will find relief and emancipation from her troubles in Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription. If she's overworked, nervous, or "run-down," she finds new life and strength. It's a powerful, invigorating tonic and nerve which was discovered and used by an eminent physician for many years, in all cases of "female complaints" and weaknesses. For young girls just entering womanhood; for women at the critical "change of life;" in bearing-down sensations, periodical pains, ulceration, inflammation, and every kindred ailment, the "Favorite Prescription" will benefit or cure. Liquid or tablets. Tablets 60c.—Adv.

## She Knew Him.

Mab—I hear that you are going to marry Jack Swift? Congratulations! Ethel—But I'm not going to marry him.

Mab—Oh, then my sincere congratulations.—Boston Transcript.

## FOR COUGHS AND COLDS

—take a prompt and effective remedy—one that acts quickly and contains no opiates. You can get such a remedy by asking for

# PISO'S