

The DESTROYING ANGEL

By Louis Joseph Vance

A new mystery develops in this installment of "The Destroying Angel." Whitaker finds much in Miss Fiske's manner to puzzle him and make him wonder if—well, read for yourself.

You will recall that Whitaker, returning to New York several years after his supposed death, discovers his wife, now a famous actress known as Sara Law, about to marry Drummond, his old partner. Drummond disappears, supposedly a suicide, and Sara, asking her husband to agree to a divorce, also drops out of sight. Whitaker, mysteriously assaulted, goes to the country home of his friend Martin Ember.

He makes the acquaintance of pretty Miss Fiske, a neighbor, finds spies are watching her, and follows her abductors when they kidnap her in a motor boat. Both crafts are wrecked on a reef. Whitaker and the girl are tossed upon an island lately abandoned.

CHAPTER XIII—Continued.

The reminder had an effect singularly distressing. He turned a little faint, was seized with a slight sensation of giddiness, at the thought of food, so that he was glad of the catboat for support.

"Oh, you are!" Compassion thrilled her tone. "I'm so sorry. Come—if you can walk." She caught his hand as if to help him onward. "We can build a fire and have something hot; there's plenty of fuel."

"But—what did you do?"
"I—oh, I took my eggs as natural—barring some salt and pepper. I was in too much of a hurry to bother with a stove."

"Why in a hurry?"
She made no answer for an instant. He turned to look at her, wondering. To his unutterable astonishment she not only failed to meet his glance, but tried to seem unconscious of it.

The admirable ease and gracious self-possession which he had learned to associate with her personality as inalienable traits were altogether gone, just then—obliterated by a singular, exotic attitude of constraint and diffidence, of self-consciousness. She seemed almost to shrink from his regard, and held her face a little averted from him, the full lips tense, lashes low and trembling upon her cheeks.

Halfway up to the farmhouse a memory shot through Whitaker's mind as startling as lightning streaking athwart a peaceful evening sky. He stopped with an exclamation that brought the girl beside him to a standstill with questioning eyes.

"But the others—!" he stammered.
"The others?" she repeated blankly.
"They—the men who brought you here—?"

Her lips tightened. She moved her head in slow negation.
"I have seen nothing of either of them."

Horror and pity filled him, conjuring up a vision of wild, raging waters, mad with blood-lust, and in their jaws, arms and heads helplessly whirling and tossing.

"Poor devils!" he muttered.
She said nothing. When he looked for sympathy in her face, he found it set and inscrutable.

He delayed another moment, thinking that soon she must speak, offer him some sort of explanation. But she remained uncommunicative. And he could not bring himself to seem anxious to pry into her affairs.

He took a tentative step onward. She responded instantly to the suggestion, but in silence.

The farmhouse stood on high ground, commanding an uninterrupted sweep of the horizon. As they drew near it, Whitaker paused and turned, narrowing his eyes as he attempted to read the riddle of the enigmatic, amber-tinted distances.

There was not a sail visible in all the blue cup of the sea.

"I don't know," said Whitaker slowly, as much to himself as to his companion. "It's odd . . . it passes me . . ."

"Can't you tell where we are?" she inquired anxiously.

"Not definitely. I know, of course, we must be somewhere off the south coast of New England. There are islands off the south coast of Massachusetts—a number of them: Nantucket, you know, and Martha's Vineyard. This might be either—only it isn't, because they're summer resorts. That—he swept his hand toward the land in the northeast—"might be either, and probably is one of 'em. At the same time, it may be the mainland. I don't know."

"Then . . . then what are we to do?"

He looked round, shaking a dubious head. "Of course there's nothing like a flagpole here. We might nail a plank to the corner of the roof and a table cloth to that, I suppose."

"And build fires, by night?"
He nodded. "Best suggestion yet. I'll do that very thing tonight—after I've had a bite to eat."

She started impatiently away. "Oh, come, come! What am I thinking of, to let you stand there, starving by inches?"

They entered the house by the back

door, finding themselves in the kitchen—that mean and commonplace assembly room of narrow and pinched lives. The immaculate cleanliness of decent, close poverty lay over it all like a blight. Whitaker busied himself immediately with the stove. There was a full woodbox near by; and within a very few minutes he had a brisk fire going. The woman had disappeared in the direction of the barn. She returned in good time with half a dozen eggs. Foraging in the pantry and cupboards, she brought to light a quantity of supplies; a side of bacon, flour, potatoes, sugar, tea, small stores of edibles in tins.

"I'm hungry again, myself," she declared, attacking the problem of simple cookery with a will and a confident air that promised much.

The aroma of frying bacon, the steam of brewing tea, were all but intolerable to an empty stomach. Whitaker left the kitchen hurriedly and, in an endeavor to control himself, made a round of the other rooms. There were two others on the ground floor; in the upper story, four small bedchambers; above them an attic, gloomy and echoing. Nowhere did he discover anything to moderate the impression made by the kitchen. It was all impeccably neat, desperately bare.

Depressed, he turned toward the head of the stairs. Below a door whined on its hinges, and the woman called him, her voice ringing through the hallway with an effect of richness, deep-toned and bell-true. He was staggered by something in the quality of that full-throated cry, something that smote his memory until it was quick and vibrant, like a harp swept by an old familiar hand.

"Hugh?" she called; and again: "Hugh! Where are you?"

He paused, grasping the balustrade, and with some difficulty managed to articulate:
"Here . . . coming . . ."

"Hurry. Everything's ready."

Waiting an instant to steady his nerves, he descended and re-entered the kitchen.

The meal was waiting—on the table. The woman, too, faced him as he entered, waiting in the chair nearest the stove. But, once within the room, he paused so long beside the door, his hand upon the knob, and stared so strangely at her, that she moved uneasily, grew restless and disturbed. A gleam of apprehension flickered in her eyes.

"Why, what's the matter?" she asked with forced lightness. "Why don't you come in and sit down?"
He said abruptly: "You called me Hugh!"

She inclined her head, smiling mischievously. "I admit it. Do you mind?"

"Mind? No!" He shut the door, advanced and dropped into his chair, still searching her face with his troubled gaze. "Only," he said—"you startled me. I didn't think—expect—hope—"

"On so short an acquaintance?" she suggested archly. "Perhaps you're right. I didn't think . . . And yet—I do think—with the man who risked his life for me—I'm a little justified in forgetting even that we've never met through the medium of a conventional introduction."

"It isn't that, but . . ." He hesitated, trying to formulate phrases to explain the singular sensation that had assailed him when she called him, a sensation the precise nature of which he himself did not as yet understand.

She interrupted brusquely: "Don't let's waste time talking. I can't wait another instant."

Silently submissive, he took up his knife and fork and fell to.

CHAPTER XIV.

The Beacon.

The girl was the first to finish. She had eaten little in comparison; chiefly, perhaps, because she required less than he. She rested her elbows easily on the table, cradled her chin between her half-closed hands. Her eyes grew dark with speculation, and oddly lambent. He ate on, unconscious of her attitude. When he had finished, he leaned back a little in his chair, sur-

prised her intent gaze, laughed sheepishly, and laughing, sighed with repletion. A smile of sympathetic understanding darkened the corners of her lips.

"It's coming on night," said he. "You haven't forgotten our signal fires? I've got my work cut out for me, to forage for fuel. I must get right at it."

The girl rose quickly. "Do you mind waiting a little? I mustn't neglect my dishes."

She worked rapidly above the steaming dish-pan, busy and intent, the fair head bowed, the cheeks faintly flushed. Whitaker lounged, profoundly intrigued, watching her with sober and studious eyes. What did it mean, this impression that had come to him so suddenly, within the hour, that he had known her, or someone strangely like her, at some forgotten time—as in some previous existence?

It was her voice that had made him think that, her voice of marvelous allure, crystal-pure, as flexible as tempered steel, strong, tender, rich, compassionate, compelling. . . . Where had he heard it before, and when?

"It's almost dark," her pleasant accents broke in upon his reverie. "I'm quite finished." The girl scrubbed her arms and hands briskly with a dry towel and turned down her sleeves, facing him with her fine, frank, friendly smile. "If you're ready . . ."

"Whenever you are," he said with an oddly ceremonious bow.

To his surprise she drew back, her brows and lips contracting to level lines, her eyes informed with the light of wonder shot through with the flashings of a resentful temper.

"Why do you look at me so?" she demanded sharply. "What are you thinking . . .?" She checked, her frown relaxed, her smile flickered softly. "Am I such a fright—?"

"I beg your pardon," he said hastily. "I was merely thinking, wondering . . ."

She seemed about to speak, but said nothing. He did not round out his apology. A little distance apart, they stood staring at one another in that glow, unnatural light, wherein the world from the lamp contended garishly with the ebbing flush of day. And



There Was Not a Sail Visible.

again he was mute in bewildered inquiry before that puzzling phenomenon of inscrutable emotion which once before, since his awakening, had been disclosed to him in her mantling color, in the quickening of her breath, and the agitation of her bosom, in the timid, dumb questioning of eyes grown strangely shy and frightened.

And then, in a twinkling, an impatient gesture exorcised the inexplicable mood that had possessed her, and she regained her normal, self-reliant poise as if by witchcraft.

"What a quaint creature you are, Hugh," she cried, her smile whimsical. "You've a way of looking at one that gives me the creeps. If you don't stop it, I swear I shall think you're the devil! Stop it—do you hear me, sir? And come build our bonfire."

She swung lithely away and was out of the house before he could regain his wits and follow.

Off in the north, where Whitaker had marked down the emurpled headland during the afternoon, a white light lanced the gloom thrice with a sweeping blade, vanished, and was replaced by a glare of angry red, which in its turn winked out.

"What is it?" the girl asked. "A ship signalling?"

"No; a lighthouse—probably a first-order light—with its characteristic flash, not duplicated anywhere along

this section of the Atlantic coast. If I knew anything of such matters, it would be easy enough to tell from that just about where we are. If that information would help us."

"But, if we can see their light, they'll see ours,—won't they?—and send to find out what's the matter."

"Perhaps. At least—let's hope so. They're pretty sure of it, but they may think the natives here are merely celebrating their silver wedding, or Roosevelt's refusal of a third term, or the accession of Edward the Seventh—or anything."

"Please don't be silly—and discouraging. Do get to work and build the fire."

He obeyed with humility and expedition.

Where do you think Miss Fiske learned her rescuer's first name? Do you believe she knows more about the kidnapers and their intention than she wishes Whitaker to know?

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

PROPULSION BY HAND POWER

Ingenious Citizen of Far West Not Bothered by Cost of Gasoline—Uses Novel Device.

When a certain ingenious citizen of the far West goes for a jaunt with his little canoe he forgets all about the rising cost of gasoline and engine trouble and propels himself up and down stream with a hand and foot-operated boat of his own construction.

Hand levers are connected with a crank which carries a gear, and this meshes with another gear which drives the propeller shaft.

Pedal cranks are connected with the same crank which is operated by hand levers, so that the boat can be driven by foot as well as by hand power. In this way the operator can use either one hand or two hands or both feet alone, or both hands and feet together. The apparatus weighs about forty pounds.

Nitrates From Air.

When the thirteenth annual convention of the American Electro-Chemical society is held in New York city from September 27 to September 30, members will discuss the problem of obtaining nitrates from the atmosphere.

Nitrates are not only important as fertilizers, but they are a basic ingredient in the manufacture of explosives. The world has been depending upon Chile for its supply, and the deposits there will probably last 50 years longer, but the United States is endeavoring to make itself independent of any foreign source of supply, and the electro-chemists are endeavoring to find a practicable method of extracting the nitrates from the nitrogen gas which forms 80 per cent of the air. The first plant for the manufacture of nitrates was erected at Niagara Falls.

Exercise and Good Nerves.

A certain world's champion may be seen sometimes jogging at a dog trot, like a prizefighter, around Central park, New York city. You might guess that he was a lightweight pugilist or a "distance man," but the match for which he is training is a test of nerves more than of strength, for all he wields is a 15-ounce cue, Charles P. Cushing writes in the World's Work. His name is Willie Hoppe, the champion billiard player of the world. He knows well what he is about; steady nerves and confidence keep company with good health; and one of the best ways to win such boons, the experts say, is to peel off your coat and go after them.

A Natural Condenser.

The rain tree of Colombia measures about 50 feet high when at maturity and about three feet in diameter at the base. It absorbs a immense quantity of moisture from the atmosphere, which it concentrates, and subsequently sends it forth from its leaves and branches in a shower, in some instances so abundantly that the ground in its vicinity is converted into a quagmire. It possesses this curious property in its greatest degree in the summer, precisely when the rivers are at their lowest and water most scarce.

Think for Yourself.

Some people are so undecided that when they think they want to do a certain thing they hesitate to do it until they have assurance from others that it's all right to do it, and when they have such assurance they still remain in doubt.

Rely Upon Slides.

Panama Official (to friend who has been taken with cramps while bathing in the canal)—Keep up for five minutes, Bill! Something will slide in by then and you can walk out!

The Usual Way.

Henderson—For five years I was on the lookout for a wife.
Williamson—How did you come to find her?
Henderson—She saw me first.

POULTRY FACTS



IDEAL HOUSE FOR CHICKENS

Wherever Possible Building Should Have Southern Front—Fresh Air and Sunshine Help.

Plenty of fresh air and sunshine, along with freedom from drafts and dampness, are the requisites of the ideal poultry house, yet there are many poultrymen who build expen-



House With Open Front.

sive houses for their fowls without giving a thought to the real needs of the hen. Nothing plays a more important part in regulating the condition of the house than does location. Wherever possible the house should be built on a southern slope and it is better if there is some protection, as a grove of trees, to the north. This will give the house plenty of sunlight during the greatest possible time and will also protect it from the cold winter winds.

GET EGGS AND MEAT FROM KITCHEN WASTE

(Prepared by The United States Department of Agriculture.)

In every household, no matter how economical the housewife, there is a certain amount of table scraps and kitchen waste which has feeding value, but which if not fed, finds its way into the garbage pail.

Poultry is the only class of domestic animals which is suitable for converting this waste material, right where it is produced in the city, into wholesome and nutritious food in the form of eggs and poultry meat.

Each hen in her pullet year should produce ten dozen eggs. The average size of the backyard flock should be at least ten hens. Thus each flock would produce in a year 100 dozen eggs which, at the conservative value of 25 cents a dozen, would be worth \$25.

By keeping a back-yard poultry flock the family would not only help in reducing the cost of living but would have eggs of a quality and freshness which are often difficult to obtain.

Remember that eggs produced by the back-yard flock cost very little, as the fowls are fed largely upon waste materials.

EARLY HATCHING IS DESIRED

It will Increase Number and Size of Fowls and to Farmer It Means Much Larger Profits.

(Prepared by the United States Department of Agriculture.)

To the country at large early hatching by every chicken raiser means much. Early hatching will increase the number and size of fowls and the number of eggs produced next year. It will mean bigger birds and birds that will lay in the winter months. To the individual farmer it means more profit. He will get more chickens, as a larger proportion will live; he will get more actual meat, not only because more will live but because his chickens will be larger; and he will get more eggs, when eggs are scarce, for early hatched pullets will lay in the winter.