

# The Primordial

BY LOUIS JOSEPH VANCE

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## SYNOPSIS.

"Mad" Dan Mattland, on reaching his New York bachelor club, met an attractive young woman at the door. Dan, who had been waiting for her, discovered a woman's finger prints in dust on his desk, along with a letter from his attorney, Mattland dined with Hannerman, his attorney. Dan set out for Greenfield, to get his family jewels. During his walk to the country seat, he met the young woman in gray, whom he had seen leaving his bachelor's club. Her auto had broken down. He met her by a "lost" him. Mattland, on reaching home, surprised lady in gray, cracking open a safe, containing his jewels. She, apparently, took him for a well-known crook, Daniel Anstey. Mattland, who had seen her safe, took them to her, first forming a partnership in crime. She, apparently, sought by police of the world, appeared on the same night, and followed Mattland. He met the girl outside the house and they sped on to New York in her auto. He had the jewels and she promised to meet him that day. Mattland received a "Mr. Smith," introducing himself as a detective. To shield the girl in gray, Mattland, about to show him the jewels, supposedly by a letter, followed her from "Smith's" car. The letter proved to be Anstey himself and he secured the jewels, masqueraded as the latter. The criminal kept Mattland's engagement with the girl in gray. He gave her the gems, after falling in love at first sight. They were to meet and divide the loot. Mattland revived and regretted missing his engagement. Anstey, masquerading as Mattland, narrowly avoided capture through mysterious tip. The girl in gray visited Mattland's apartment during his absence and returned gems.

**CHAPTER VIII—Continued.**  
But where to put them, that he might find them without delay? It must be no conspicuous place, where O'Hagan would be apt to happen upon them; doubtless the janitor was trustworthy, but still . . . Misplaced opportunities breed criminals.

It was all a risk to leave the treasure there, without the protection of nickel-steel walls and ironlocks; but a risk that must be taken. She dared not retain it longer in her possession; and she would contrive a way in the morning to communicate with Mattland and warn him.

Her gaze searched the area where the lamplight fell soft yet strong upon the dark shining wood and heavy brass desk fittings; and paused, arrested by the unusual combination of inverted bowl and super-imposed book. A riddle to be read with facility; in a twinkling she had uncovered the incriminating hand-print, incriminating if it could be traced, that is to say.

"Oh!" she cried, softly. And laughed a little. "Oh, how careless!"

Fine brows puckered, she pondered the matter, and ended by placing her own hand over the print; this one fitted the other exactly.

"How he must have wondered!"

"He is sure to look again, especially if—"

No need to conclude the sentence. Quickly she placed bag and case surreptitiously on top of the lamp, the bowl over all, and the book upon the bowl; then, drawing from her pocket a pair of long gray silk gloves, draped one across the book; and, head tilted to one side, admired the effect.

It seemed decidedly an artistic effect, admirably calculated to attract attention. She was satisfied to the point of being pleased with herself; a fact indicated by an expressive flutter of slim, fair hands. And now to work!

Time pressed, and a cloud dimmed the radiance of her eyes; irresolutely she shifted in her chair, troubled, frowning, lips woefully drooping. And sighed. And a still small whisper, broken and wretched, disturbed the quiet of the study.

"I can not! O, I can not! To spoil it all, now, when—"

Yet she must. She must forget herself and steel her determination with the memory that another's happiness hung in the balance, depended upon her success. Twice she had tried and failed. This third time she must succeed.

And bowing her head in token of her resignation, she turned back squarely to face the desk. As she did so the toe of one small shoe caught against something on the floor, causing a dull jingling sound. She stooped, with a low exclamation, and straightened up, a small bunch of keys in her hand; eight or ten of them dangling from a silver ring; Mattland's keys.

He must have dropped them there, forgetting them altogether. A find of value and one to save her a deal of trouble; skeleton keys are so exasperatingly slow, particularly when used by inept hands. But how to bring herself to make use of those? All's fair in war (and this was a sort of war, a war of wits at least); but one should fight with one's own arms, not pilfer the enemy's and turn them against him. To use these keys to ransack Mattland's desk seemed an action ever more blackly dishonorable than this clandestine visit, this midnight foray.

Swinging the notched metal slips from a slender finger, she contemplated them; and laughed ruefully. What qualms of conscience in a burglar, self-confessed! She was there for a purpose, a recognized, nefarious purpose. Granted. Then why quibble? She would not quibble. She would be firm, resolute, determined, cold-blooded, unimpaired of all kindness and courtesy and— She would use them, accomplish her purpose, and have done, finally and for ever, with the whole hateful business!

There was a bright spot of color on either cheek and a hot light of anger in her eyes as she set about her task. It would never be less hideous, never less immediate.

The desk drawers yielded easily to the eager keys. One by one she had them open and their contents explored—vain repetition of yesterday afternoon's fruitless task. But she must be sure, she must have no stone unturned. Mattland Manor was closed to her for ever, because of last night. But here she was safe for a few short hours, and free to make assurance doubly sure.



Registering Under the Name of "Mr. Daniels."

the black japanned tin box which had proved obdurate yesterday. She had come prepared to break its lock this time, if need be; Mattland's carelessness spared her the necessity.

She lifted it out of a lower drawer, and put it in her lap. The smallest key fitted the lock at the first attempt. The lid came up and—

Perhaps it is not altogether discredit that one should temporarily forget one's compunctions in the long-deferred moment of triumph. The girl uttered a little cry of joy.

Crash!—the front door downstairs had been slammed.

She was on her feet in a breath, flung with fear. Yet not overcome that she forgot her errand, her success. As she stood up she dropped the dispatch box back into the drawer, without a sound, and, opening her hand-bag, stuffed something into it.

No time to do more; a dull rumble of masculine voices was distinctly, frightfully audible in the stillness of the house; voices of men conversing together in the inner vestibule. One laughed, and the laugh seemed to penetrate her bosom like a knife. Then both strode across the tiling and began to ascend, as was clearly told her by footsteps sounding deadened on the padded carpet.

Panic-stricken, she turned to the student lamp and with a quick twitch and upward jerk of the chimney-cowl extinguished the flame. A reek of smoke immediately began to foul the close, hot air; and she knew that it would betray her, but was helpless to stop it. Besides, she was caught, trapped, damned beyond redemption, unless—unless it were not Mattland after all, but one of the other tenants unexpectedly returned and bound for another flat.

Futile hope. Upon the landing by the door the footsteps ceased; and a key grated in the wards of the lock.

Blind with terror, her sole thought an instinctive impulse to hide and so avert discovery until the last possible instant, and on the bare chance of something happening to save her, the girl caught up her skirts and fled like a hunted shadow through the alcove, through the bed chamber, thence down the hall toward the dining room and kitchen offices.

The outer door was being opened ere she had reached the hiding place she had in mind—the trunk closet—from which, she remembered remarking, a window opened upon a fire-escape. It was barely possible, a fighting chance.

She closed the door, grateful that its latch slipped silently into place, and fairly flung herself upon the window, painfully bruising her soft hands in vain endeavor to raise the sash. It stuck obstinately, would not yield. Too late, she remembered that she had forgotten to draw the catch—fatal oversight! A sob of terror choked in her throat. Already footsteps were hurrying down the hall; a line of light brightened underneath the door; voices, excitedly keyed, banded question and comment, an unmistakable Irish brogue mingling with a clear enunciation which she had but too great reason to remember. The pair had passed into the next room. She could hear O'Hagan announcing: "No way here, sor."

"Then it's the dining room, or the trunk closet. Come along!"

One last, frantic attempt! But the window catch, rusted with long disuse, stuck. Panting, sick with fear, the girl leaped away and crushed herself into a corner, crouching on the floor behind a heavy box, her dark cloak drawn up to shield her head.

And the door opened.

A flood of radiance from the registered student lamp fell athwart the door. The girl lay close and still, holding her breath.

Ten seconds, perhaps, ticked on into eternity; seconds that were in themselves eternities. Then: "No one here, O'Hagan."

The door was closed, and through its panels more faintly came: "Faith, and the murdering divyle must 've flew 't' coop afore ye come in, sor."

The girl tried to rise, to make again for the window; but it was as though her limbs had turned to water; there was no strength in her; and the blackness swam visibly before her eyes, radiating away in whirling, streaky circles.

Even such resolution and strong will as was hers could not prevail against that numbing, deadly exhaustion. Her eyes closed and her head fell back against the wall.

It seemed but an instant (though it was in point of fact a full five minutes) ere the sound of a voice again roused her.

She looked up, dazzled by a gush of warm light.

He stood in the doorway, holding the lamp high above his head, his face pale, grave, and shadowed as he peered down at her.

"I have sent O'Hagan away," he said, gently. "If you will please to come, now—"

## CHAPTER IX.

### Procrastination.

The cab which picked Mattland up at his lodgings carried him but a few blocks to the club at which he had, the previous evening, entertained his lawyer. Mattland had selected it as one of all the clubs of which he and Hannerman were members, wherein he was least likely to meet the latter.

Neither frequented its sober precincts by habit. Its severe and classical building on a corner of Madison avenue overlooking the square, is but the outward presentment of an institution to be a member of which is a duty, but emphatically no great pleasure, to the sons of a New York family of any prominence.

But in its management the younger generation holds no suffrage; and is not slow to declare that the Primordial is rightly named, characterizing the individual members of the board of governors as antidivilians, prehistoric monstrosities, who have never learned that laughter lends a savor to existence. And so it is that the younger generation (which is understood to include Mattland and Hannerman), while it religiously pays its dues and has the

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

name of the Primordial engraved upon its cards, shuns those deadly respectable rooms and seeks its comfort elsewhere.

Mattland found it dull and depressing enough, that same evening, something before seven. The spacious and impressive lounging rooms were but sparsely tenanted, other than by the ennobled corps of servants; and the few members who had lent the open doors the excuse of their presence were of the elderly type that hides itself behind a newspaper in an easy chair and snorts when addressed.

The young man strolled disconsolately enough into the billiard room, thence (dogged by a specter of loneliness) to the bar, and finally, in sheer desperation, to the dining room, where he selected a table and ordered an evening paper with his meal.

When the former was brought him, he sat up and began to take a new interest in life. The glaring headlines that met his eye on the front page proved as bracing as a slap in the face.

"The Mattland Jewels," he read, half aloud: "Daring Attempt at Burglary. 'Mad' Mattland Catches 'Handsome Dan' Anstey in the Act of Cracking His Safe at Mattland Manor. Which Was Which? Both Principals Disappear."

The news-story was exploited as a "beat"; it could have been little else, since nine-tenths of its "exclusive details" had been born full-winged from the fecund imagination of a busy reporter to whom Mattland had refused an interview while in his bath, some three hours earlier. Mattland discovered with relief that boiled down to essentials it consisted simply of the statement that somebody (presumably himself) had caught somebody (presumably Anstey) burglarizing the library safe at Mattland Manor that morning; that one of the somebody (no one knew which) had overpowered the other and left him in charge of the butler, who had presently permitted his prisoner to escape and then talked for publication.

It was not to this so much that Mattland objected. It was the illustrations that alternately saddened and madly delighted him; the said illustrations comprising blurred halftone reproductions of photographs taken on the Mattland estate; a diagram of the library, as fanciful as the text it illuminated, and two portraits, side by side, of the heroes, himself and Anstey, excellent likenesses both of the originals and of each other.

Mr. Mattland did not enjoy his dinner.

Anxious and preoccupied, he tasted the dishes mechanically; and when they had all passed before him, took his thoughts and a cigar to a gloomy corner of the smoking room, where he sat for two solid hours, debating the matter pro and con, and arriving at no conclusion whatever, save that Hig gins was doomed.

At 10:15 he began to contemplate with positive pleasure the prospect of discharging the butler. That, at least, was action, something that he could do; wherever else he thought to move he found himself baffled by the blank darkness of mystery, or by his fear of publicity and ridicule.

At 10:20 he decided to move upon Greenfields at once, and telephoned O'Hagan, advising him to profess ignorance of his employer's whereabouts.

At 10:22, or in the midst of his admonitions to the janitor, he changed his mind and decided to stay in New York; and instructed the Irishman to bring him a suit case containing a few necessities; his intention being to stay out the night at the club, and so avoid the matrimonial sieges of his lodgings by reporters and detectives.

At 10:45 a club servant handed him the card of a representative of the Evening Journal. Mattland directed that the gentleman be shown into the reception room.

At 10:46 he skulked out of the club by a side door, jumped into a cab and had himself driven to the East Thirty-fourth street ferry, arriving there just in time to miss the last train for Greenfields.

Denied the shelter alike of his lodgings, his club, and his country home, the young man in despair caused himself to be conveyed to the Bartholdi hotel, where, possessed of a devil of folly, he preserved his incognito by registering under the name of "M. Daniels." And straightway retired to his room.

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## ARMISTICE IS NEAR.

Mexican Rebels Propose Terms Which Are Favored.

City of Mexico, April 19.—A proposition for an armistice pending negotiations for a settlement of Mexico's internal troubles was received by the department of foreign relations today from Washington, presumably from Dr. Vasquez Gomez.

A reply was returned in which it was indicated the government looked with favor upon the suggestion.

The armistice proposal appeared to be an outgrowth of the battle at Agua Prieta and the loss of life and bodily injury in Douglas by the fire from the Mexican side. It points to the dangers of international complications which might follow a continuance of the fight.

Minister de la Barra sent to Washington the answer to the proposal made by the agent of the revolutionists. In it he stipulated minor terms, to which it is believed there will be no objection. It may be assumed that before a full agreement is entered into every detail of the proposal will be submitted to Francisco I. Madero, Jr.

So far have negotiations now gone that it is not expected Madero will longer oppose the overtures his agents have made for peace.

It is believed no time will be lost either by the rebels or the government in concluding arrangements for the armistice, and that as soon thereafter as possible the drafting of terms for permanent peace will begin. It is conceded both sides realize the war is costing too much in money and lives.

## HEARST ALLEGED TO BE IN PLOT TO UNSEAT CANNON.

Danville, Ill.—Sensational charges that William Randolph Hearst is at the head of a gigantic plot to unseat Joseph G. Cannon in congress and in the furtherance of his plans he has "subsidized" the grand jury now investigating Vermillion county's corrupt electorate, are made in the news columns of the Commercial News, the Cannon organ in Danville.

The article, which appears under a "sacred head," says that Hearst has already spent \$15,000 in the eighteenth congressional district in obtaining evidence and has a swarm of detectives in the district.

## TACOMA RECALLS MAYOR

Activity of Women Voters Believed to Be Responsible.

Tacoma, Wash.—Mayor A. V. Fawcett, of this city, was recalled Tuesday in one of the most hotly contested municipal elections ever held in this city. W. W. Seymour is the new mayor elect.

The election was the second mayoralty recall contest within two weeks, Seymour and Fawcett being the two high candidates at the first election, when a Socialist was also in the race.

An election will be held May 3 for the purpose of recalling the four city commissioners.

## Imported Filipinos Break Agreement.

San Francisco—It is unlikely that the steamer Senator of the Pacific Coast Steamship company's fleet, will engage in any further attempts to bring Hawaiian and Filipino laborers here from Honolulu for transshipment to Alaska for work in the Alaska Packers' association canneries. Under charter to the Alaska Packers' association, the senator sailed from this port for Honolulu, March 28, last, equipped to carry 1,000 laborers here. She returned last Sunday with 145.

She left the steamer Wednesday afternoon, after refusing to take passage on the Star of Italy for Bristol Bay.

## Hope of Break Wanes.

Denver—Predictions are common that the deadlock on the United States senatorship will remain unbroken, and that the present session of the legislature will adjourn soon without electing a successor to the late Senator C. J. Hughes, Jr. The action of the reconvened Pueblo Democratic county convention, in reconstituting the Pueblo legislative delegation for export Governor Alva Adams, and opposing further cannauses, has destroyed, it is believed, all chances for an election at this session.

## Salmon Prices Advanced.

Astoria, Or.—The Columbia River Fishermen's Protective union, at a special meeting held here, has fixed the rate to be paid for raw salmon during the fishing season, which opens May 1, at 6 cents a pound for small or canyon fish, and 8 cents a pound for large, or cold storage salmon, those weighing 25 pounds or over. These rates are an advance of 1 cent a pound on each class of fish over the prices that prevailed last season.

## Anarchist is Arrested.

Bordeaux, France.—The police arrested Fernandez Francisco, alleged to be a Spanish anarchist, at the railway station here just before the arrival of the train on which King Alfonso was to leave the city. Since the arrival here of the Spanish monarch every precaution has been taken to secure his safety. In anticipation of seeing the king, many persons had gathered at the railway station. King Alfonso came here to see Professor Moore, who has frequently treated him for an affection of the nasal organs.

## Iroquois Master Blamed.

Victoria, B. C.—A verdict of manslaughter was returned against Captain A. A. Sears, master of the steamer Iroquois, which foundered off Sidney last week. The evidence given at the inquest was to the effect that Captain Sears, who was the first man to reach shore, deserted the ship while passengers were aboard and that he did not make every effort to rescue those struggling in the water. Captain Sears will be arraigned Thursday.

## INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AND PROGRESS OF OUR HOME STATE

### AMENT DAM IS RUSHED.

Lower Rogue River Valley May Get Water This Season.

Grants Pass—Work is rushed on the Ament dam preparatory to furnishing water for this season in the lower part of Rogue river valley. Eleven hundred barrels of cement have been ordered and a large concrete mixer will be delivered at the works this week. This machine has a capacity of 30 cubic yards a day.

A professional diver has been employed to search the river bed for the big pump that went down stream in the flood last winter and was lodged in a deep hole just below the dam site. The fishway put in recently by the state is said to be a hindrance to building a cofferdam in the progress of the work under way.

There was at first some doubt about delivery of water this year to the farmers but it is now believed that all obstacles have been overcome and that the work will be completed sufficiently to pump water to the Highland ditches each side of Rogue river. This will mean that the districts of Fruitdale on the south and the territory lying in the valley northeast of town will be supplied.

### OREGON LEADS IN MOHAIR.

Industry Started In 1867 Now One of Most Important.

Portland—"The Angora Goat and Mohair Industry of the Pacific Northwest" is the title of a book recently issued by Alva L. McDonald, secretary of the Northwest Angora Goat association. It contains the full report of the convention of the association which was held in Portland in connection with that of the woolgrowers in January last, and much valuable information relative to the industry, including a historical sketch of its growth. The first Angora goats brought to Oregon were imported by A. Cantral from California about 1867, according to this publication. Oregon is now first in its industry in the number of Angora goats and the production of mohair in the United States. The value of the annual clip approximates \$50,000. The value of the yearly increase is approximated at \$400,000. Oregon mohair commands the highest market price.

### WILL HAVE MONSTER PARADE.

Portland Rose Festival Pageant Will Break All Records.

Portland—The novel street spectacle called the "Shower of Roses" which is to be a part of the next Portland Rose Festival in the week of June 5-10, will cover more than 50 city blocks or nearly three miles in the central business district of the city. While the train of six cars is moving through the main thoroughfares, the 100 young women and girls in white will keep up a continuous bombardment of roses, showering them upon spectators along the way. Specially adapted cars will be used in this train so that the thrilling spectacle can better be observed from the street. Heretofore closed cars have been used and the fair rose throwers have labored under a handicap and part of the beauty of the spectacle has been lost.

### Olcott Assumes His Duties.

Salmon—Ben W. Olcott was sworn in Monday morning as secretary of state to succeed Frank W. Benson and shortly afterward took charge of the office. At noon the first full board meeting of the new administration was held, when Governor West, State Treasurer Kay and Secretary Olcott met to consider minor details of the plan Governor West has been fathering in using the labor at the state institutions.

"I will devote my time to learning the details of the office and not to hiring or discharging employes," said Secretary Olcott. "Whether changes will come in the future is for future to say as at present I am endeavoring to learn the business of the office."

"Now that I have received the appointment I desire to confirm the report that the state board will work in harmony so far as I am concerned. I view the state of Oregon as a large business proposition. If private business cannot be conducted successfully where harmony does not exist, no more can public business."

### Siuslaw Would Learn to Spray.

Eugene—J. Beebe, county fruit inspector, is in receipt of a letter from Secretary Waite, of the Siuslaw Fruit and Produce association, with headquarters at Acme, asking him to instruct Siuslaw valley growers in the law pertaining to the spraying of their orchards and in methods of bettering production. The Siuslaw valley raises fruit that is almost free from the pests that infect Willamette valley orchards. The deepening of the bar at Florence promises them a better market.

### Klamath Owners Instructed.

Klamath Falls—Director F. H. Newell, of the United States reclamation service, has sent a circular letter to land owners of the Upper Klamath subproject setting forth what they will have to do to get that part of the great Klamath project completed, and estimating the probable cost. He declares that owners of the land must sign an irrevocable contract to pay all costs, regardless of what they may be. The letter is in response to inquiries.

### Fraternal Orders Will Participate.

Portland—Every fraternal organization and secret society in the city is planning to have representation in the big demonstration which is to be held on one of the evenings of the forthcoming Rose Festival, June 5-10, in this city. Scores of these bodies which have uniform rank and trained drill teams will be found in the line of march.

### Albany College Gets \$5,000 Gift.

Albany—News of another good donation to the endowment fund of Albany College has reached here. The donor was Ellen S. James, of New York, and the gift \$5,000.

### REPLANT OREGON FORESTS.

O. A. C. to Solve Problem of Continual Revenue From Timber.

Corvallis, Ore.—The solution of the problem of making the timber lands of the state continuously remunerative, which also means the preservation of the water powers, seems at present to have been found by the Oregon Agricultural college. When the work in forestry was separated from that in botany and made a distinct department under Prof. George W. Peavy and E. O. Siecke, of the U. S. government forest service, was added to the faculty, the facilities for instruction and for practical work by the students were greatly increased, and some immensely valuable experimental work in silviculture has since been started on Mary's peak and elsewhere.

A small forest nursery has been started on the campus at the south of the horticultural greenhouses, where the classes in silviculture have practical work in growing the young forest trees to solve reforestation problems. They are taught how to grow the seedlings, and how to transplant them successfully, with all the methods of reforestation in cut-over or burned-off districts. The Australian pine, Norway spruce, European larch, Scotch pine, white pine, Western red pine, Western red cedar, black locust, and the Gerald pine, an important timber pine of India which is of considerable commercial value, all are being grown in this nursery plot.

On Mary's peak valuable experimental work to determine the relative merit of fall and spring planting of various kinds of timber was begun last fall, and is being continued this spring. Experimental plots have been sown, both fall and spring, to Austrian pine, Norway spruce, European larch, and Scotch pine. Careful record will be kept of the December and March plantings, through which it is hoped to obtain information which will prove which is preferable for the different varieties.

### SMUDGE POTS SAVE FRUIT.

Temperature Sinks to 25—Little Loss Over Northwest.

Medford—General firing throughout the orchards of the Rogue River valley is saving this year's fruit crop from the ravages of Jack Frost. In places the temperature has been as low as 26 degrees, but for a short time only. The orchard men are still on the lookout for frost and fuel in the smudging pots is kept replenished.

### Milton—No Frost has harmed this section at any time this season. Fruit prospects are fine.

La Grande—Thanks to a drop in the temperature several days ago, no harm whatever has been done to orchards by the recent storm; in fact, orchard men agree that it has helped to retard the budding. At this time the trees have not reached a stage of development that frosts will injure. A canvass of the fruit districts of the valley reveals confidence for a big crop.

### SHEEPMEN ASKED TO PROTEST

Dan Smythe Says Change in Schedule K May Ruin Them.

Pendleton—Dan P. Smythe, secretary of the Oregon Woolgrowers' association, is sending letters and night letter blanks to 1,000 sheep men throughout the Northwest, urging them to telegraph immediately to Senators Bourne and Chamberlain, protesting against any change in tariff schedule, and asking that the question of revision of the wool tariff not be considered until at least after tariff commission reports.

He insists that Western wool growers realize their responsibility and awake to the realization that any reduction in this tariff will mean great damage to the industry.

He urges also that the sheepmen be prepared when the tariff commission calls upon them within the next few weeks to furnish data on the exact expense of running their sheep and the amount of profits they receive from the sale of sheep and wool, showing that