

# The Case of the Lilies

BY ARTHUR HENRY VANCE  
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**CHAPTER XX.**—Continued.

I looked up. Well, perhaps, Locke had my attention placed with good content.

"That was my plan," repeated Helena, in wonder.

"Have I robbed my gallant countryman of your gratitude, Miss Brett?" he demanded carelessly.

"Then it was you who rushed down the stairway?" I stammered, my face hot with shame.

"Yes, sir," he said, sternly. "It was I. It is not a pleasant duty to expose the cowardice of an acquaintance, Miss Brett. I could have forgiven him his terror. But that he should masquerade as a hero when I was vainly attempting to pursue the blackguard who tried to murder you—that is a little too much."

I confronted him, my hands clenched in my rage. But I did not speak a word. I had asked her to trust me, but I had not looked for a situation like this. Her eyes fell before mine and they had told me nothing.

"I shall leave you to your interview with Mr. Locke," she said quietly.

**CHAPTER XXI.**

I Am Truited Until Midnight.

"Now, Haddon, what is the game?" Locke had seated himself. He had selected with care a cigar from his case (which he did not offer to me), and was regarding me with the brutal amusement of one who is in the position of one who beseeches—of one who explains, only to be doubted after all.

The episode in the porter's lodge was even now far from clear. I have already said that I knew that Helena's escape was not due to any heroism of mine.

Dr. Starva had concealed himself behind the glass partition of the porter's lodge in the landing. Unobserved, he had stood fat against the wall, watching him.

I had seen Helena coming up the stairs; I had seen Mr. Starva take his revolver at her; I had heard the crash of glass and the report of a revolver. I had supposed that Starva had fired and missed.

Now it appeared that Locke's shot had shattered the glass of the lodge, while Starva had not fired at all. But with Locke should have been in the stairway—why he should have been concealed there—was not so clear. Certainly I had intention of humiliate myself further by asking for an explanation.

"Come, I'm waiting," he cried sharply.

"You are waiting for what?" I demanded with an assurance I did not feel. I was playing for time. Should I, or should I not, try to make plain to Locke my own course? That was the question I was asking myself over and over.

"You remember I warned you, I told you you were a pawn in the clever hands of Countess de Varner. I offer to think that you are her tool rather than her accomplice. But if you have been fool enough to allow yourself to be caught in the net of her intrigue, if you have made your interests at one with hers, you must expect to pay the piper as well as she."

"I see. You are Nemesis dogging me to justice?"

I had guessed. No matter what happened, I would keep my own course for the present. I was not to be bullied into a confession.

"So you admit that the law has its terrors for you," cried the arch fiend. "And are you a Justice of the Law in disguise? By heaven, you are assuming the devil's high-handed manner. What the devil is your right to play the part of inquisitor?"

"Gently, gently," I said, nothing about my right.

"Then I might ask what is your game?"

"I make no pretense to say right. I carried out plans to a successful conclusion, the result would justify my actions; if I failed, I should at least have held my purpose.

you have had two and two together and made the sum of five. Well, perhaps I may your arithmetic is at fault, and perhaps I don't choose to enter into an argument to enlighten you."

"We shall see," said Locke quietly.

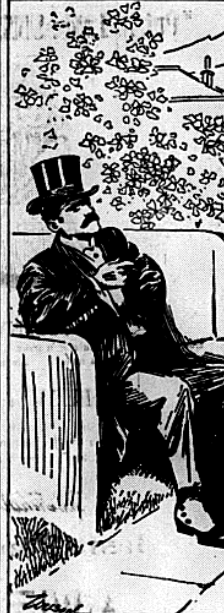
"Now, Haddon, don't think that I am simply amusing myself. I am only too willing to give you every benefit of the doubt. You are an American; you have been at the same university as myself; you have suffered from an unpleasant notoriety the past week or two. Will you not let me at Lincoln and offered you my friendship?"

"And you come as a friend now? Secretly, you will admit that."

"I offered you my friendship. I showed my sincerity by taking you more or less into my confidence. I gave you a chance to confide in me in return. I had seen you fascinated by a woman whom I knew to be a dangerous companion. When I warned you, you were clever enough to affect a disingenuous innocence."

"What advised observers you newspaper men are!"

"That very evening," continued Locke, frowning, "you dine with her and her accomplice—not openly in the restaurant, but in her own sitting room. Late that evening, in company



"What the Devil is Your Right to Play the Part of Inquisitor?"

Dr. Starva, you take the boat of Vitruvian. You install yourself with him in the suite of Sir Mortimer Brett. You assume his character; more than that, you don his very cloak and hat. As Sir Mortimer, then, you have access to his rooms."

"Let me compliment you on the admirable manner in which you have played the spy. You traced me, then, from the hotel to the boat, and thence to the hotel?"

"Not at all. I preferred to keep an eye on the big fish in the puddle. It was Madame de Varner, alias the Countess Sarahole whom I was watching. I knew that the moth would follow the flame. When I had assured myself that our beautiful adventuress had played the spy, I returned to the company of Dr. Starva and myself; he would doubtless have observed the episode of the brandy, and drawn his conclusions. His attitude toward me would then have been very different. He would have seen for himself that the comedy I enacted was for the benefit of Dr. Starva. If I ignored Locke's suspicions of me even now, I gave to him my confidence at this late date, would he believe that? Impossible!"

I raged at the network of chance that enmeshed me, but I did not attempt to extricate myself. I had laid plans too big. I was trusting blindly to fortune. More than ever I was determined to wait my own time before I made my position clear. If I carried out my plans to a successful conclusion, the result would justify my actions; if I failed, I should at least have held my purpose.

"Having seen Dr. Starva and pursued safety landed in Sir Mortimer's rooms," continued Locke. "I am one to join my acquaintance, Captain Forbes, in the garden, meanwhile keeping an inquisitive eye cocked toward the shutters of Sir Mortimer's salon. Presently I saw Captain Forbes, as well as myself, has his own interests in the missing Sir Mortimer. Presently he sees the light shining through the shutters of Sir Mortimer's salon. He is observing that Sir Mortimer is returned, and more than overjoyed that he can at last rid himself of the burden of his dispatches. You know how he did that, even better than myself."

"And you are waiting for me to enlighten you?"

"All in good time, my dear Mr. Haddon. But I have not yet shown you all my hand. Were I to call your game now, you might think I had a couple of aces at the most. I am going to show you that I have a royal flush."

"It is hard to beat a royal flush, I admit," I said lightly.

"I await developments, then, in the garden. My vigilance is soon rewarded. The shutters are thrown stealthily back, my dramatic Helen tips onto the balcony; he listens outside the shutters of the salon."

"And does it not seem to you strange that the partner of Madame de Varner's intrigues should distrust her to the extent of spying on her movements?"

Locke pulled at his cigar thoughtfully. I waited his answer not without interest.

"It did indeed raise the faint hope in my breast," he returned cynically, "that my friend Haddon perhaps was not so badly as the circumstances had proved him to be. But when I remember that Captain Forbes was insisting on his right to see Sir Mortimer, I could understand that my quondam friend Haddon was anxious for his

course for him. He snatched a slight quill as much as a love feast, perhaps better."

"To resume my narrative," drawled Locke, "you disappear within the chamber. My friend Forbes is having his little interview with you. But presently I see you reach the window, packet in hand. You lean far out; you toss the packet into the basin of an empty fountain. The shutters are closed. Your work is finished for the night. And so it is mine—that is, after I have receded from the empty fountain the packet."

"Which you promptly returned to Captain Forbes?"

"Who has a greater right to it? Returned Locke coolly."

But he had not returned it to Forbes; I was sure of that. Locke was a newspaper man trained in the school of modern journalism. He had determined on a grand coup for his paper. If the sealed dispatch promised to give assistance to him he would break the seal.

"That would not suit me at all. My task was to hush up the scandal of Sir Mortimer Brett and his mistress. I was to give to the world the fullest picture. Our end was utterly at variance. Every sentence of his recital made me see that more clearly."

I saw, too, that the object of his story was to give to the world the certainty that I must make a full confession to him or suffer those consequences. My one hope was to avert those consequences until my interests were clear.

I hoped everything from that.

For the present I need fear nothing from Forbes. Helena had given me the word that she would trust me until midnight. I would have Helen and Forbes was useless unless Locke also was silent. I awaited the rest of his narrative with anxious concern.

The next morning he arrived early. I was sure to see that Captain Forbes' rest had been equally perturbed. Together we discover the startling fact that, early as we had aroused our curiosity with his nurse and physician had been even more energetic. But my discovery is of a nature more dramatic than that of the king's messenger. He imagines that in Sir Mortimer's room he has found I am forced to the reluctant conclusion that it is Mr. Ernest Haddon, American tourist, masquerading as the diplomatist, Sir Mortimer Brett. It is necessary that I enter into explanations for this discovery, or shall we take the fact for granted?"

"Take it for granted by all means, since you have already taken so much for granted."

"I shall not bore you much longer. Captain Forbes and myself join forces. I needed but one argument to persuade my friend to enter into a denouement where Madame de Varner and her fellow conspirators were bound; Captain Forbes did not."

"And Mrs. and Miss Brett—did you reveal your position to them?"

"So far," Locke looked at me significantly, "I have revealed them to no one. We arrive at Altamont, then, the four of us. Captain Forbes insists on stopping in the chamber. Who was the result you know better than I. As for myself, I prefer to keep my counsel, and, first of all, to give my friend Haddon a lesson in the art of discretion. I write on the servant at the castle to convey a note to him requesting the honor of an interview at ten this morning. My friend Haddon denies me the honor of an interview, but I am sure that he will not come to Mohammed, Mohammed must go to the mountain."

"I am directed to the castle by the stairway that leads to the village street. I have not done that. I descend the gloomy stairway when I hear some one coming up them in feeble haste. Naturally, I pause; and quite as naturally I take the precaution of slipping my revolver into my hip pocket, which I carry with me; I have revealed them to no one. My acquaintance, Captain Forbes, is not so far from me as you think. To my surprise the person in this extraordinary situation places himself in the little glass-covered room at the angle of the stairs. I descend the steps cautiously and curiously. There are two persons waiting for me. First of all the second figure stands fat against the wall. As my eyes become accustomed to the darkness I am surprised to discover that the man concealed in the logs has a revolver in his hand. For the moment I think he is lying in wait for me. But almost immediately I hear some one below. There is a click as the trigger is pulled, and a bullet strikes the pane of glass and diverts his aim."

Now for my last surprise. The assassin, rather tardily I must say, has been grappled with by the man who had concealed himself against the wall. I return suddenly to the hotel to find—my friend Haddon receiving the warm thanks of the heroine for saving her life."

"A great deal of this is ancient history," I said, my voice trembling with shame and rage, "such of it as is not fiction. You return, then, to unmask the would-be hero. And now, what?"

"As you said, Locke, in a deep voice, his face flushed with anger, "I want to know this: Why did you stand there passively while the man was coming the end of your nose before your eyes? Why did you pretend to struggle with the assassin, pretend to struggle, I say?"

"Even a coward will fight, I suppose, when he is cornered," I muttered, (TO BE CONTINUED.)

own neck. I guessed that he was listening to the futile attempts of the adventurers to save Captain Forbes admission to the bedchamber of the pseudo Sir Mortimer."

"You are an answer for every question."

"I can put two and two together and make four," returned Locke complacently.

"But if one of those numbers is the unknown quantity? The addition is then not quite so simple."

"And the American tourist, Mr. Haddon, is the great unknown quantity, I suppose."

He looked at me with cool, level eyes. A big man, in body, brain and heart. Locke had both the virtues of bigness and intelligence. To create a standard that he was his method. He despised. He went to the end in view in a direct line, ruthlessly throwing aside any obstruction, physical or moral, that hindered.

Such a man arises infrequently. He is not to be denied. But he hinders often. He arouses in some natures an instinctive antagonism—a latent objection—against his method. He is quiet, but determined. He makes an enemy when he might have made a friend.

For example, Locke has made up his mind that an American, a man of his own nationality, could not in the nature of things be a coward. Very well, he offers him his friendship in blind faith. But presently this man interposes with his plans—goes his way without consulting the newly acquired friend. When, therefore, circumstances place this acquaintance in an ugly light he is quite as ready to believe that he is as he had been ready to believe the word.

In a word, Locke imagined that he had done more than his duty in offering his friendship and confidence. When he made up his mind that this friendship and confidence was not returned, his friendship turned to intense dislike. There was no middle

# Illinois State News

Recent Happenings of Interest in the Various Cities and Towns.

## SOCIETY SHOCKED AT WHEATON.

Wheaton.—From the moment when they saw her swing into the saddle and dash boldly into the ring for the running race, Ellen Raasmussen Tullie was the sensation at the Wheaton fair.

There was an "ah" of appreciation from the men, a dainty but distinct "ooh" from the women, and then everyone settled down to watch eagerly the slender, boyish figure astride the chestnut horse, in the most daring costume yet seen at a gathering of Chicago's fashionable society.

"It may be all correct in cut," murmured one, "but—"

"And she rides against a negro jockey."

"I think it is really dreadful!"

"There was a pistol shot, and they were off with the white figure of the woman in the lead, leading low over her horse. After that everybody lost his head, for they all came to their feet to watch the three spinning figures as they circled the course on the far side. Mrs. Tuttle led the race all around the course and the competition was never greater even at the quarters.

But it was the finish that drew the cheers. Mrs. Tuttle came down the stretch leaning far over the neck of her horse in true Tom Sloan fashion, her fair cheek fairly hugging its mane as she whistled to it, at all times sparing the whip. She was standing in the stirrups and her competitors were bewildered.

"Miss—Mrs. Raasmussen wins. Time —1:51!" the judge announced.

## CHURCH CONVENTION ENDS.

M. L. Willitt Chosen President—Next Convention in Chicago.

Jacksonville.—The largest state convention of the Christian churches of Illinois closed its sessions here. A. L. Cronin of Indianapolis, C. S. Weaver of Methodist, James, and James H. Shields of Chicago were the principal day speakers. Oliver W. Stewart of Chicago delivered an address on "The Growth of Denominations." Chicago was selected as the next place of meeting, and the following officers were chosen: President, H. L. Willitt, Chicago; vice president, Edgar D. Jones, Bloomington; recording secretary, H. G. Waggoner, Hamilton; directors, J. P. Darr, Peoria; J. A. Harrison, Bloomington, and C. G. Kindred, Kankakee.

**DARE DEVIL MAY DIE.**

"Bliss of Death" Ends Close to Fact When Performer Falls.

East St. Louis.—In the presence of a big crowd that included many names, Herbert Thompson, 23 years old, fell 100 feet from a slack rope in Central park, near the new bridge, to a free fall, "The Slide of Death," and was badly injured.

His left arm was broken in two places, his back was broken and he suffered internal injuries. He was taken to St. Mary's hospital.

"Hundreds witnessed the fall, and women fainted when the limp form of the athlete was carried to an ambulance."

## Masons Elect Officers.

Alton.—The Illinois grand council, Royal and Select Masters, Masonic, adjourned at Alton to meet at Clinton next year. The retiring grand master, Albert T. Hay, of Springfield, received a gold jewel in behalf of the grand council. The following officers were elected: Will C. Clark of Chicago, grand master; Chester D. Rookwood of Peoria, deputy grand master; Henry T. Hubbard of Urbana, principal conductor of work; J. C. Smith of Chicago, treasurer; Gill W. Barnard of Chicago, recorder; Henry R. Hopkins of Chicago, captain; M. M. Ford of Chicago, secretary; Edwin A. Vaughan of Princeton, chaplain of the guard; A. A. Roe of Chicago, grand conductor; G. H. Vassell of Chicago, grand marshal; G. J. Durney of Chicago, steward; W. S. Johnson of Centralia, sentinal.

## Peppers Go to Jail.

Clinton, Mo. Willard Noble Davis, colored, were tried in the county court here. These men, who are strangers here, claimed they were only looking into the windows of a drug store. They were found guilty of disorderly conduct and were fined \$10 and costs. Being unable to pay the fine they were committed to the county jail. The men were released on \$1000 bonds of late by appealing all residence windows.

## Wrongful Girl Attempted Suicide.

Taylorville.—Lena Decker, domestic, attempted to take her life by taking poison Monday morning. She was well enough to swear out a warrant against her husband, a coal miner, employed in Taylorville, charging him with being the father of her unborn child. It was despair over her condition that prompted her attempt.

## Pastor's Son Attacks Girl.

Rockford.—Joseph McKay, a son of Rev. E. M. McKay, pastor of Embury Methodist church here, was arrested, held on the grand jury under a bond of \$5,000 on his admission that he had attacked Miss Hazel Bristol, aged 16. When the girl defended herself McKay struck her in the face with his fist and foot.

## Strike Gas at Atlanta.

Atlanta.—An order at the Atlanta volunteer fire department may reach fires more speedily the city council has passed a resolution that each member be furnished a bicycle.

## Pastor Becomes an Editor.

Kewanee.—Rev. George Brodfield, of Chicago, was elected office editor of the church paper, with headquarters at Chicago, at the Illinois conference of the Free Methodist church.

## Another Deacon Elopement.

Decatur.—Benjamin F. Moore and Miss Kate Shively, both of this city, eloped to Mattoon, where they were married.

## Plumbers' Mother Made Guardian.

Bloomington.—It was necessary for Ferdinand Kroulitz to have his protective mother-in-law appointed his guardian before he could procure a license to wed Harriet Wheeler. Kroulitz is 20 and Miss Wheeler 17.

## Goos to Visit Uncle in Dead.

Kankakee.—Ernestus Wells, an aged farmer, who resided six miles east of Momence, was found dead in his home by his nephew, Fremont Wells, who was coming the end of a week from the city. The man had been dead two days.



JOHN C. SPARKS

Letter to Roosevelt by Water.

Alton.—C. F. Sparks, of this city, has been commissioned by the St. Louis River Boat Association to take charge of a letter to President Roosevelt on the occasion of his river visit next month. The letter will be sent by fast boat from Moredonia, Ill. to St. Louis, where it will be delivered to the president. Fast boats will carry the letter from Chicago to Peoria, Ill. and thence it will be taken to Moredonia on boats of the Illinois Yacht club.

## Bicycles for Firemen.

Harvard.—An order at the Harvard volunteer fire department may reach fires more speedily the city council has passed a resolution that each member be furnished a bicycle.

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