

The Blue Bird

BY LOUIS JOSEPH VANCE

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SYNOPSIS.

"Mad" Dan Maitland, on reaching his New York residence, finds an attractive young woman at the door. Janitor O'Hagan assures him no one had been within that day. The door opened and a woman's finger prints in dust on his door, along with a letter from his attorney, Maitland closed with Maitland. His attorney, Dan set out for Greenfields, to get his family jewels. During his walk to the country seat, he met the young woman in gray, whom he had seen looking his bachelor's club. Her auto had broken down. He fixed it. By a ruse she "lost" him. Maitland, on reaching home, surprised by the woman in gray, who was surprised to find Maitland, she opened her safe, took therefrom the jewels, and gave them to her, first forming a partnership in crime. The red Dan Anisty, sought by police of the world, appeared on the same mission. Maitland overcame him. He met the girl outside the house and they fled to New York in her auto. He had the jewels and she promised to meet him that day. Maitland received a "Mr. Smith," introducing himself as a detective. To shield the girl in gray, Maitland, about to show him the jewels, supposedly lost, was followed by a blow from "Smith's" cane. The latter proved to be Anisty himself and he secured the jewels, who was Maitland's double, masqueraded as the latter.

CHAPTER V.—Continued.

At sight of him the thief was conscious of an inward tremor, followed by a thrill of excitement like a wave of heat sweeping through his being. Instantaneously his eyes flashed; then were dulled. Imperturbable, listless, half-marked the prey of ennui, he waited, undecided, upon the stoop, while the watcher opposite, catching sight of him, abruptly abandoned his slouch and hastened across the street. "Excuse me," he began in a loud tone, while yet a dozen feet away, "but ain't this Mr. Maitland?"

Anisty lifted his brows and shoulders at one and the same time and bowed slightly.

"Well, my good man?"

"I'm a detective from headquarters, Mr. Maitland. We got a 'phone from Greenfields, Long Island, this morning—from the local police. Your butler—"

"Ah! I see; about this man Anisty? You don't mean to tell me—what? I shall discharge Higgins at once. Just on my way to breakfast. Won't you join me? We can talk this matter over at our leisure. What do you say to Eugene's? It's handy, and I dare say we can find a quiet corner. By the way, have you the time concealed about your person?"

Anisty was fumbling in his fob-pocket and inwardly cursing himself for having been such an ass as to overlook Maitland's timepiece. "Deuced awkward!" he muttered in genuine annoyance. "I've mislaid my watch."

"It's most one o'clock, Mr. Maitland."

Flattered, the man from headquarters dropped into step by the burglar's side.

CHAPTER VI.

Eugene's at Two.

"Since we don't want to be overheard," remarked Mr. Anisty, "it's no use trying the grillroom downstairs, although I admit it is more interesting."

"Just as you say, sir."

Awed and awkward, the police detective stumbled up the steps behind his imperturbable guide; it was a great honor, in his eyes, to lunch in company with a "swell." Man of stodgy common sense and limited education that he was, the glamour of the Maitland millions obscured his otherwise clear vision completely. And unceasingly he speculated as to whether or not he would be able to manipulate correctly the usual display of knives and forks.

An obsequious headwaiter greeted them, bowing, in the lobby. "Good afternoon, Mr. Maitland," he murmured. "Table for two?"

"Good afternoon," responded the masquerader, with an assumed abstraction, inwardly congratulating himself upon having hit upon a restaurant where the real Maitland was evidently known. There were few circumstances which he could not turn to profit, fewer emergencies to which he could not rise, he complimented Handsome Dan Anisty.

"A table for two," he drawled Maitland-wise. "In a corner somewhere, away from the crowd, you know."

"This way, if you please, Mr. Maitland."

"By the way," suggested the burglar, unfolding his serviette and glancing keenly about the room—which by good chance was thinly populated, "by the way, you know you haven't told me your name yet."

"Hickey—John W. Hickey, detective bureau."

"Thank you." A languid hand pushed the pink menu card across the table to Mr. Hickey. "And what do you see that you'd like?"

"Well . . . Hickey became conscious that both unwieldy feet were nervously twined about the legs of his chair; blushed; disentangled them; and in an attempt to cover his confusion, plunged madly into consideration of a column of table-d'hotel French, not one word of which conveyed the slightest particle of information to his intelligence.

"Well," he repeated, and moistened his lips. The room seemed suddenly very hot, notwithstanding the fact that an obnoxious electric fan was sending



"Good Afternoon," Responded the Masquerader.

a current of cool air down the back of his neck.

"I ain't," he declared in ultimate desperation, "hungry, much. Had a bite a little while back, over to the Gilsey house bar."

"Would a little drink—?"

"Thanks. I don't mind."

"Waiter, bring Mr. Hickey a bottle of No. 72. For me—let me see—cafe au lait, with a grand air, and rolls. . . . You must remember this is my breakfast, Mr. Hickey. I make it a rule never to drink anything for six hours after rising." Anisty selected a cigarette from the Maitland case, lit it, and contemplated the detective's countenance with a winning smile.

"Now, as to this Anisty affair last night."

Under the stimulus of the champagne, to say naught of his relief at having evaded the ordeal of the cutlery, Hickey discoursed variously and at length upon the engrossing subject of Anisty, gentleman-crackman, while the genial counterpart of Daniel Maitland listened with apparent but deceptive apathy, and had much ado to keep from laughing in his guest's face as the latter, perspiring earnest, unfolded his plans for laying the burglar by the heels.

From time to time, and at intervals steadily decreasing, the hand of the host sought the neck of the bottle, inclining carefully above the thimble glass that Hickey kept in almost constant motion. And the detective's fatuous loquacity flowed as the contents of the bottle ebbed.

Yet, as the minutes wore on, the burglar began to be conscious that it was but a shallow well of information and amusement that he pumped. The same, fascinating with its spice of daring as it had primarily been, began to pall. At length the masquerader calculated the hour as ripe for what he had contemplated from the beginning; and interrupted Hickey with scant consideration, in the middle of a most interesting exposition.

"You'll pardon me, I'm sure, if I trouble you again for the time."

The fat red fingers sought uncertainly for the timepiece; the bottle was now empty. The hour, as announced, was ten minutes to two.

"I've an engagement," invented Anisty, plausibly, "with a friend at two. If you'll excuse me—? Garcon, Faddition!"

"Then I understand, Mister Maitland, we can count on you?"

Anisty, eyelids drooping, tipped back his chair a trifle and regarded Hickey with a fair imitation of the whimsical Maitland smile. "Hardly, I think."

"Why not?"—traculently.

"To be frank with you, I have three excellent reasons. The first should be sufficient: I'm too lazy."

Disgruntled, Hickey stared and shook a disapproving head. "I was afraid of that; yeh swells don't never seem to think nothin' of yer duties to soci'ly."

Anisty airily waved the indictment aside. "Moreover, I have lost nothing. You see, I happened in just at the right moment; our criminal friend got nothing for his pains. The jewels are

safe. Reason No. 2: Having retained my property, I hold no grudge against Anisty."

"And as for reason No. 3: I don't care to have this affair advertised. If the papers get hold of it they'll cook up a lot of silly details that'll excite the cupidry of every thief in the country, and make me more trouble than I care to—ah—contemplate."

Hickey's eyes glistened. "Of course, if yeh want it kept quiet—" he suggested, significantly.

Anisty's hand sought his pocket.

"How much?"

"Well, I guess I can leave that to you. Yeh ought to know how bad yeh want the matter hushed."

"As I calculate it, then, fifty ought to be enough for the boys; and fifty will repay you for your trouble."

The end of Hickey's expensive pancake was tilted independently toward the ceiling. "Shouldn't wonder if it would," he murmured, gratified.

Anisty stuffed something bulky back into his pocket and wadded another something—green and yellow colored—into a little pill, which he presently flicked carelessly across the table. The detective's large mottled paw closed over it and moved toward his waistcoat.

"As I was sayin'," he resumed, "I'm sorry yeh don't see yer way to givin' us a hand. But p'rhaps yeh're right. Still, if the citizens 'd only give us a hand once in a while—"

"Ah, but what gives you your livin', Hickey?" argued the amateur sophist. "What but the activities of the criminal element? If society combined with you for the elimination of crime, what would become of your job?"

He rose and wrung the disconsolate one warmly by the hand. "But there, I am sorry to have to hurry you away. . . . Now that you know where to find me, drop in some evening and have a cigar, and a chat. I'm in town a good deal, off and on, and always glad to see a friend."

At another time, and with another man, Anisty would not have ventured to play his catch so roughly; but, as he had reckoned, the comfortable state of mind induced by an unexpected addition to his income and a quart of champagne, had dulled the official apprehensions of Sergt. Hickey.

Mumbling a vague acceptance of the too-general invitation, the exalted detective rose and ambled cheerfully down the room and out of the door.

Anisty lit another cigarette and contemplated the future with satisfaction. As a diplomat he was inclined to hold himself a success. Indeed, all things taken under mature consideration, the conclusion was inevitable that he was the very devil of a fellow. With what consummate skill he had played his hand! Now the pursuit of the Maitland burglar would be abandoned; the news item suppressed at headquarters. And it was equally certain that Maitland (when eventually liberated) would be at pains to keep his part of the affair very much in shadow.

The masquerader ventured a mystical smile at the world in general.

One pictured the evening when the infatuated detective should find it convenient to drop in on the exclusive Mr. Maitland.

"Mr. Anisty?"

CHAPTER VII.

Illumination.

In a breath was self-satisfaction banished; simultaneously the masquerader brought his gaze down from the ceiling, his thoughts to earth, his vigilance to the surface, and himself to his feet, summoning to his aid all that he possessed of resource and expedient.

Trapped—the word blazed incandescent in his brain. So long had he foreseen and planned against this very moment.

Yet panic swayed him for but a little instant; as swiftly as it had overcome him it subsided, leaving him shocked, a shade more pale, but rapidly reasserting control of his faculties. And with this shade of emotion came complete reassurance.

His name had been uttered in no stern or menacing tone; rather its syllables had been pitched in a low and guarded key, with an undertone of rallery and cordiality. In brief, the moment that he recognized the voice as a woman's, he was again master of himself, and aware that the result of his instinctive impulse to rise and defend himself, which had brought him to a standing position, would be interpreted as only the natural action of a gentleman addressed by a feminine acquaintance, he was confident that he had not betrayed his primal consternation. He bowed, smiled, and with eyes in which astonishment swiftly gave place to gratification and complete comprehension, appraised her who had addressed him.

She seemed to have fluttered to the table, beside which she now stood, slightly swaying, her walking costume of gray shot silk falling about her in soft, tremulous petals. Dainty, chic, well-poised, serene, flawlessly pretty in her miniature fashion; Anisty recognized her in a twinkling. His perceptions, trained to observations as instantaneous as those of a snap-shot camera, and well-nigh as accurate, had photographed her individually and deliriously upon the film of his memory, even in the abbreviated encounter of the previous night.

By a similar play of educated reasoning faculties keyed to the highest pitch of immediate action, he had difficulty as scant in accounting for her presence there. What he did not quite comprehend was why Maitland had used her so kindly; for it had been plain enough that that gentleman had surprised her in the act of safe-breaking before confining at her escape. But, allowing that Maitland's actions had been based upon motives vague to the burglar's understanding, it was quite in the scheme of possibilities that he should have arranged to meet his protegee at the restaurant that afternoon. She was come to keep an appointment to which (now that Anisty came to remember) Maitland had alluded in the beginning of their conversation.

Well and good; once before, within the past two hours, he had told himself that he was Good-enough Maitland. He was even better now.

"But you did surprise me!" he declared, gallantly, before she could wonder at his slowness to respond. "You see, I was dreaming."

He permitted her to surmise the object round which his dreams had been woven.

"And I had expected you to be eagerly watching for me!" she parried, archly.

"I was . . . mentally. But," he warned her, seriously, "not that name. Maitland is known here; they call me Maitland—the waiters. It seems I made a bad choice. But with your assistance and discretion we can bluff it out, all right."

"I forgot. Forgive me." But now she was in the chair opposite him, tucking the lower ends of her gloves into their wrists.

"No matter—nobody heard."

"I very nearly called you Handsome Dan!" She flashed a radiant smile at him from beneath the rim of her picture hat.

A fire was kindled in Anisty's eyes; he was conscious of a quickened drumming of his pulses.

"Dan is Maitland's front name, also," he remarked, absently.

"I thought as much," she responded, quietly speculative.

The burglar hardly heard. It has been indicated that he was quick-witted, because he had to be, in the very nature of his avocation. Just now his brain was working rather more rapidly than usual, even; which was one reason why the light had leaped into his eyes.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Good Times in Turkey.

"You people of the warmer climates have little idea of our exhilarating winter sports," said the tourist from New England.

"Oh, I don't know," responded the Turk. "We have some pretty lively little staying parties over in Armenia."

—Kansas City Times.

SUMMER WORK IN ORCHARDS

Clover is One of Best Crops for Conservation of Moisture—Tree Mulching is Essential.

(By M. J. KINGSBURY.)

Cover crops should be sown early in August. Clover is one of the very best cover crops that can be utilized as its roots penetrate deep into the soil to conserve moisture and to store up nitrogen.

The best orchardists sow from twelve to fifteen pounds of red clover to the acre as soon after haying as convenient. If the soil is so rich that a very rank growth of clover is secured, mow the clover just before apple picking and allow it to remain on the ground and be plowed under early the following year.

Buckwheat is recommended by many apple growers for a cover crop. This should be sown in July. When rye is used do not sow until later; last of August or the first week of September.

Cover crops serve as a mulch for the ground, to retain moisture, arrest plant food that would be wasted by soil erosion and leaching and as a source of nitrogen supply as in the case of clover and the other legumes.

Another essential to good crops of fruit is mulching the trees. Straw, swale grass or refuse fodder are excellent for mulching trees. Use a liberal quantity.

PREPARING THE OAT FIELD

Like All Other Small Grain Crops Firm Seed Bed is One of Essentials of Success.

(By R. M. LEONARD.)

With the oat crop the same as with all of the other small grain crops we find that the firm seed bed is one of the essentials of success.

Land that does not puddle and wash had best be plowed in the fall and disked both ways with the disk harrow, harrowed lengthwise with the spring tooth harrow and then harrowed crosswise with the same implement.

This gives the man who is drilling in the spring a clear field and he does not become confused with the ridges left by the harrow, as is the case when the field is drilled the same way as it is harrowed.

When grass seed is sowed the ground should be gone over with a smoothing harrow, so that all of the fine seed may be covered. Many farmers still cling to the old idea that the field should be gone over with a roller, but there are certain conditions of the soil when a roller will prove an actual detriment to the coming crop and for that reason we no longer make a practice of rolling our oat field after it is planted.

Feeding Molasses to Horses.

A sugar refinery in Brooklyn, N. Y., feeds molasses to its teams, giving each horse one-half quart corn meal, one quart wheat bran, three pints sugar house syrup, and seven pounds cut hay. At noon, five quarts oats. The night ration is the same as the morning, except five pounds of loose hay is fed in addition to the cut hay which is mixed with the grain. These horses weigh from 1,700 to 1,800 pounds and are fed at a cost of thirty-four cents per day. They are fine, sleek-looking animals, and attract attention of horsemen generally on account of their extremely well-fed appearance. According to experts the economy due to the molasses fed results in a saving of from 20 to 27 per cent. over the old system of maintaining on oats and hay entirely.

Setting Out Plants.

Nothing is gained by setting out plants too early in the spring, as the cold will give them a setback that they may never overcome. Plants may be seasoned by exposing them to the sun during warm days and giving them plenty of ventilation at night when not too cold. Much damage done to plants which is ascribed to frost is really caused by twisting, which the plant receives from the winds. A supply of little frames to protect them should be on hand. Tomatoes, peppers and eggplant are especially susceptible to injury by high winds.

Squab Broilers.

An authority claims that squab broilers for home consumption are easiest dressed by skinning. Slit the skin along the back, and taking off both skin and feathers is the work of only a minute, while picking the feathers and pin feathers of a lot of squab broilers is the work of hours. Broiled for a few minutes in salted water and fried in butter gives you a dish equal to frog's legs.

Sunflower Seed.

Sunflower seed contains about 16 per cent. of protein and 21 per cent. of fat. It is nearly four times as fattening for hens as corn, and must therefore be fed with extreme caution. A small per cent. of sunflower seed during the molting season, and in very cold weather is a good thing, but it does not do to overdo in feeding any good thing.

Don't Dose Animals.

Do not dose animals with any medicine unless they are really sick. In most cases a change of diet and rest will bring the animal back to normal condition.

Effect of Bad Roads.

It is estimated that the shipping cost of a ton one mile by wagon-road in America is between two and three times the cost in England, France and Germany.

UNIQUE TIME PIECE

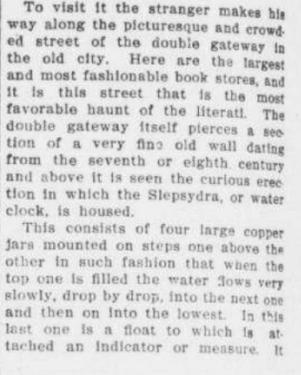
Cantonese Still Content With Archaic Water Clock.

Among the Quaint Survivors of Another Age is This Primitive Form of Time Register and Hour Glass.

Canton, China.—Threading the narrow, dark, winding streets of Canton it is easy for the traveler to imagine that he has been suddenly transported into some forgotten century. There is no large city visited by the tourist that is so entirely native in its aspect—that is so entirely immersed in its own peculiar civilization. Canton looks practically the same today as it must have looked nearly six centuries ago when the celebrated Venetian adventurer, Marco Polo, visited it and wrote his vivid descriptions of its many curiosities. Among the quaint survivals of another age the famous water clock must take a prominent place. This is a primitive form of time register and hour glass worked by water.

To visit it the stranger makes his way along the picturesque and crowded street of the double gateway in the old city. Here are the largest and most fashionable book stores, and it is this street that is the most favorable haunt of the literati. The double gateway itself presents a section of a very fine old wall dating from the seventh or eighth century and above it is seen the curious erection in which the Sisyphus, or water clock, is housed.

This consists of four large copper jars mounted on steps one above the other in such fashion that when the top one is filled the water flows very slowly, drop by drop, into the next one and then on into the lowest. In this last one is a float to which is attached an indicator or measure. It



Water Clock and Attendant.

takes exactly a day of 12 hours for the contents of the top jar to be emptied completely into the lowest. As the water steadily rises in this last receptacle the float points to the hour marked on the indicator.

The archaic time gauge was first erected about 1324 A. D. It has a history full of incidents; it has been destroyed many times during invasions from without and riots within the city. But it has always been restored, so that today, in spite of the advances made in mechanical methods of measuring time, we find the old water clock in practical use as it was 500 years ago. For at intervals during the day (more or less) correct time is exhibited on a board outside the building and the native Chinese are quite content to pin their faith to 'this unique servant of old Father time.'

More Dogs in France.

Paris.—There are more dogs in France than most countries. Thus it appears that to one thousand inhabitants there are 75 dogs in France and only 38 in England, 31 in Germany and 11 in Sweden. Still hydrophobia is extremely rare in the Department of the Seine, the last case observed dating back to the year 1905. Dr. Martel says this good state of things has been brought about by the law for killing not only every mad dog, but also for killing every dog any mad dog may have bitten or played with. But since this law cannot work out to perfection the French also exterminate all stray dogs.

No Longer Have Small Feet.

Boston, Mass.—Women's feet are growing larger. A Massachusetts shoe manufacturer is authority for the assertion. He says a few years ago the average feminine American buyer of footwear asked for a No. 5 or a No. 6, and in some cases, it is whispered, even larger sizes. The width is greater, too. The man of last and times thinks the increasing activity of women in the last few years and their taller stature, vouched for by investigators, responsible for the passing of small feet.