

Life is getting to be just one hot spell after another.

One way to endure the heat is to think of pleasanter things.

A good rule to apply is, the hotter the weather the simpler the life.

That day on which a new aviation hero does not materialize need not be counted.

Until we have an official national flower perhaps the Mayflower will have to do.

With a microbe in every kiss how many narrow escapes do you suppose you have had?

Was it not lucky that the dear women got rid of their rats before the hot wave came along?

Some people do not believe in vacations. They needn't go to the school-boy for sympathy.

With the wider use of bubbly fountains nearly everybody will learn to drink like a horse.

A boy does not regard it as a hardship to have to take swimming lessons during his vacation.

No objection can be raised to the countless man unless he sheds his good manners with his coat.

They are breaking the bathing records in Boston. Hot weather will drive people to anything.

The fool that rocks the boat is with us in summertime, but the fool that speeds his auto is with us always.

All society is now divided into two parts—those who have and those who have not been up in an aeroplane.

One of the troubles about fly swatting is that where one fly is swatted two more appear to plague the swatter.

A newspaper devotes a page of type and pictures to showing how to manage a canoe. There is only one way. Walk.

A Philadelphia man has just sold his automobile to get money to buy a home. Just to be different, we presume.

What has become of all our American aviators? The foreign airmen are winning all the prizes and breaking all the necks.

One weather expert says the world is growing warmer, but he listens in vain for applause. Bring on the prophet who says the world is growing colder.

A man in California, saved from drowning, gave a dime to his rescuer. Hence, it is fair to conclude that no life of value to the world was saved to it.

A good many of our citizens are anxious to know whether the completion of the Panama canal will have any effect upon the price of Panama hats.

Surgery has restored his reason to an insane man. Surgery does many wonderful things, but it has not reached the point whence it can restore his money to a bankrupt.

One of the professors has been developing new kinds of potato bugs in order to prove the theory of evolution. Why not prove the theory with something that might become useful?

A Boston woman started out to do a man's work—but it rained and her back hair came down.

Catching a big fish caused one man to die of excitement. Perhaps you are lucky in that the big fish you hook always get away.

Manager Chance has been hit on the head with pitched balls thirty-eight times, but that is not what makes him so great a manager.

Some authorities hold that aviators are trespassers except over navigable waters. But no one can catch them in the act.

A street car motorman has been arrested in New York for exceeding the speed limit. Of course, there did not happen to be a coal wagon in the track.

A new operatic importation can sing in various languages, but speaks only Japanese. The accomplishment is of doubtful value, for it is at all times difficult to tell what tongue the grand opera star warbles with.

One of the aviators has succeeded in sailing under the upper bridge at Niagara; but this is not likely to help any more than Blondin did when he walked on a rope across the gorge.

A Boston teacher, who is retiring after a service of 40 years, advises young teachers to be "a live wire," and to rest their minds by flirting a little. There is nothing aged or decrepit in this gingery advice, and it ought to remove the reproach of prunes and prisms from the Boston teacher's reputation forever.

The BRONZE BELL

BY LOUIS JOSEPH VANCE
AUTHOR OF "THE BRASS BOWL" ETC.
ILLUSTRATIONS BY RAY WALTERS
COPYRIGHT BY LOUIS JOSEPH VANCE

SYNOPSIS.

David Amber, starting for a duck-shooting visit with his friend, Quail, comes upon a young lady equestrian who has been dismounted by her horse becoming frightened at the sudden appearance in the road of a burly Hindu. He declares he is Bohari Lal Chatterjee, "the appointed mouthpiece of The Bell," addresses Amber as a man of high rank and pressing a mysterious little bronze box, "The Token," into his hand, disappears in the wood. The girl calls Amber by name. He in turn addresses her as Miss Sophie Farrell, daughter of Col. Farrell of the British diplomatic service in India, and visiting the Quails. Several nights later the Quail home is burglarized and the bronze box stolen. Amber and Quail go hunting on an island and become lost and Amber is left marooned.

CHAPTER III. (Continued).

He had, then, these alternatives: he might either compose himself to hug the leeward side of a dune till day-break (or till relief should come) or else undertake a five-mile tramp on the desperate hope of finding at the end of it the tide out and the sandbar a safe footway from shore to shore. Between the two he vacillated not at all; anything were preferable to a night in the dunes, beaten by the implacable storm, haunted by the thought of Quail; and even though he were to find the eastern causeway under water, at least the exercise would have served to keep him from freezing.

Ten minutes after his last cartridge had been fruitlessly discharged, he set out for the ocean beach, pausing at the first dune he came upon to scrape a shallow trench in the sand and cache therein both guns and his game-bag. Marking the spot with a bit of driftwood stuck upright, he pressed on, eventually pausing on the overhanging lip of a 20-foot bluff. To its foot the beach below was aswirl knee-deep with wash of breakers.

Awed and disappointed, Amber drew back. The beach was impassable; here was no wide and easy road to the east, such as he had thought to find, to gain the sandbar he had now to thread a tortuous and uncertain way through the bewildering dunes.

A demon of anxiety prodded him on: he must learn Quail's fate, or go mad. Once on the mainland it were a matter of facility to find his way to the village of Shampton, telephone Tanglewood and charter a "team" to convey him thither. He shut his teeth on his determination and set his face to the east.

Beset and roughly buffeted by the gale; the snow settling in rippling drifts in the folds of his clothing and upon his shoulders clinging like a cloth; his face cut by clouds of sand flung horizontally with well-nigh the force of birdshot from a gun; he bowed to the blast and plodded steadily on.

Imperceptibly fatigue benumbed his senses, blunted the keen edge of his emotions; even the care for Quail became a mere dull ache in the back of his perceptions; of physical suffering he was unconscious. He fell a prey to freakish fancies. For a long time he moved on in stupid, wondering contemplation of a shining crescent of sand backed by a green, steaming wall of jungle. Many visions formed and dissolved in dream-like phantasmagoria; but of them all the strongest and most recurrent was that of the girl in the black riding-habit, walking by his side down the aisle of trees. So that presently the tired and overwrought man believed himself talking with her, reasoning, arguing, pleading desperately for his heart's desire; . . . and awakened with a start, to hear the echo of her voice as though she had spoken but the instant gone, to find his own lips framing the syllables of her name—"Sophia!"

Abruptly he regained consciousness of his plight, and with an effort shook his senses back into his head. It was not precisely a time when he could afford to let his wits go wool-gathering. Inflexible of purpose in the face of all his weariness and discouragement, he was on the point of resuming his march when he was struck by the circumstance that the whitened shoulder of a dune, quite near at hand, should seem as if trod with light—coldly luminous.

Staring, speculative, he hung in the wind—inquisitive as a cat but loath to waste time in footless inquiry. The snow-fall, setting in with augmented violence, decided him. Where light was, there should be man, and where man, shelter.

His third eager stride opened up a wide basin in the dunes, filled with eddying veils of snow, and set, at some distance, with two brilliant squares of light—windows in an invisible dwelling. In the space between them, doubtless, there would be a door. But a second time he paused, remembering that the island was said to be uninhabited. Only yesterday he had asked and been so informed. . . .

Odd! So passing strange he held it, indeed, that he was conscious of a singular reluctance to question the phenomenon. He had positively to force himself on to seek the door, and even when he had stumbled against its step he twice lifted his hand and set it fall without knocking. There was not a sound within that he could hear above the clamour of a goblin night.

In the end, however, he knocked stoutly enough.

CHAPTER IV.

The Man Perdu.

A shadow swept swiftly across one of the windows, and the stranger at the door was aware of a slight jarring, as though some more than ordinarily brutal gust of wind had shaken the house upon its foundation, or an inner door had been slammed violently. But otherwise he had so little evidence that his summons had fallen on aught but empty walls or deaf ears that he had begun to debate his right to enter without permission, when a chain rattled, a bolt grated, and the door swung wide. A flood of radiance together with a gust of heated air struck him in the face. Dazzled, he reeled across the threshold.

Three paces within the room, Amber paused, waiting for his eyes to adjust themselves to the light. Vaguely conscious of a presence behind him, he faced another—the slight, spare silhouette of a man's figure between him and the lamp; and at the same time felt that he was being subjected to a close scrutiny—Loth searching and, at its outset, the reverse of hospitable. But he had no more than become sensitive to this than the man before stepped quickly forward and with two strong hands clasped his shoulders.

"David Amber!" he heard his name pronounced in a voice singularly resonant and pleasant. "So you've run me to earth at last!"

Amber's face was blank with incredulity as he recognized the speaker. "Rutton!" he stammered. "Rutton—why—by all that's strange!"

"Guiltily," said the other with a quiet laugh. "But sit down." He swung Amber about, gently guiding him to a chair. "You look pretty well done up. How long have you been out in this infernal night? But never mind answering; I can wait. Doggott!"

"Yes, sir."

"Take Mr. Amber's coat and boots and bring him my dressing-gown and slippers."

"Yes, sir."

"And a hot toddy and something to eat—and be quick about it."

"Very good, sir."

Rutton's body-servant moved noiselessly to Amber's side, deftly helping him remove his shooting jacket, whereon snow had caked in thin and brittle sheets. His eyes, grey and shallow, flickered recognition and softened, but he did not speak in anticipation of Amber's kindly "Good evening, Doggott." To which he responded quietly: "Good evening, Mr. Amber. It's a pleasure to see you again. I trust you are well."

"Quite, thank you. And you?"

"I'm very fit, thank you, sir."

"And"—Amber sat down again, Doggott kneeling at his feet to unlace and remove his heavy pigskin hunting boots—"and your brother?"

For a moment the man did not answer. His head was lowered so that his features were invisible, but a dull, warm flush overspread his cheeks.

"And your brother, Doggott?"

"I'm sorry, sir, about that; but it was Mr. Rutton's orders," muttered the man.

"You're talking of the day you met Doggott at Nokomis station?" interposed his employer from the stand he had taken at one side of the fireplace, his back to the broad hearth whereon blazed a grateful driftwood fire.

Amber looked up inquiringly, nodding an unspoken affirmative.

"It was my fault that he—er—prevaricated. I'm afraid; as he says, it was by my order."

Rutton's expression was masked by the shadows; Amber could make nothing of his curious reticence, and remained silent, waiting a further explanation. It came, presently, with an effect of embarrassment.

"I had—have peculiar reasons for not wishing my refuge here to be discovered. I told Doggott to be careful, should he meet any one we knew. Although, of course, neither of us anticipated . . ."

"I don't think Doggott was any more dumfounded than I," said Amber. "I couldn't believe he'd left you, yet it seemed impossible that you should be here—of all places—in the neighborhood of Nokomis, I mean. As for that—" Amber shook his head expressively, glancing round the mean room in which he had found this man of such extraordinary qualities. "It's altogether inconceivable," he summed up his bewilderment.

"It does seem so—even to me, at times."

"Then why—in heaven's name—" "I see I must tell you something—a little; as little as I can help—of the truth."

"I'm afraid you must; though I'm damned if I can detect a glimmer of either rhyme or reason in this preposterous situation."

"In three words," Rutton said deliberately: "I am hiding."

"Hiding!"

"Obviously."

Amber bent forward, studying the elder man's face intently. Thin and dark—not tanned like Amber's, but with a native darkness of skin like

that of the Spanish—it was strongly marked, its features at once prominent and finely modeled. The hair intensely black, the eyes as dark and of peculiar fire, the lips broad, full, and sympathetic, the cheekbones high, the forehead high and somewhat narrow, these combined to form a strangely striking ensemble, and none the less striking for its weird resemblance to Amber's own cast of countenance.

Indeed, their likeness one to the other was nothing less than weird in that it could be so superficially strong, yet elusive. No two men were ever more unlike than these save in this superficial accident of facial contours and complexion. No one knowing Amber (let us say) could ever have mistaken him for Rutton; and yet any one, strange to both, armed with a description of Rutton, might pardonably have believed Amber to be his man. Yet manifestly they were products of alien races, even of different climes—their individualities as dissimilar as the poles.

"Hiding!" Amber reiterated in a tone scarcely louder than a whisper. "And you have found me out, my friend."

"But—I don't—"

Rutton lifted a hand in deprecation; and as he did so the door in the rear of the room opened and Doggott entered. Cat-like, passing behind Amber, he placed upon the table a small tray, and from a steaming pitcher poured him a glass of hot spiced wine. At a look from his employer he filled a second.

Amber lifted his fragrant glass. "You're joining me, Rutton?"

"With all my heart!" The man came forward to his glass. "For old sake's sake, David. Shall we drink a toast?" He hesitated, with a marked air of embarrassment, then impulsively swung his glass aloft. "Drink standing!" he cried, his voice oddly vibrant. And Amber rose. "To the king—the king, God bless him!"

"To the king!" It was more an exclamation of surprise than an echo to the toast; nevertheless Amber drained his drink to the final drop. As he resumed his seat, the room rang with the crash of splintering glass;

the flames. And silently studying his face—the play of light from lamp and hearth throwing its features in—salient relief—for the first time Amber, his wits warmed back to activity from the stupor the bitter cold had put upon them, noticed how time and care had worn upon the man since they had last parted. He had never suspected Rutton to be his senior by more years than ten, at the most; tonight, however, he might well be taken for fifty. Impulsively the younger man sat up and put a hand upon the arm of Rutton's chair. "What can I do?" he asked simply.

Rutton roused, returning his regard with a smile slow, charming, infinitely sad. "Nothing," he replied; "absolutely nothing."

"But surely—!"

"No man can do for me what I cannot do for myself. When the time comes—he lifted his shoulders lightly—"I will do what I can. Till then . . ."

He diverged at a tangent. "After all, the world is quite as tiny as the worn-out aphorism has it. To think that you should find me here! It's less than a week since Doggott and I hit upon this place and settled down, quite convinced we had, at last, lost ourselves . . . and might have peace, for a little space at least! And now," concluded Rutton, "we have to move on."

"Because I've found you here?"

"Because you have found me."

"I don't understand."

"My dear boy, I never meant you should."

"But if you're in any danger—"

"I am not."

"You're not! But you just said—" "I'm in no danger whatever; humanity is, if I'm found."

"I don't follow you at all."

Again Rutton smiled wearily. "I didn't expect you to, David. But this misadventure makes it necessary that I should tell you something; you must be made to believe in me. I beg you to; I'm neither mad nor making game of you."

There was no questioning the sane sincerity of the man. He continued slowly. "It's a simple fact, incredible but absolute, that, were my whereabouts to be made public, a great, a staggering blow would be



In the End, However, He Knocked Stoutly Enough.

Rutton had dashed his tumbler to atoms on the hearthstone.

"Well!" commented Amber, lifting his brows questioningly. "You are sincere, Rutton. But who in blazes would ever have suspected you of being a British subject?"

"Why not?"

"But it seems to me I should have known—"

"What have you ever really known about me, David, save that I am myself?"

"Well—when you put it that way—little enough—nothing." Amber laughed nervously, disconcerted. "But, seriously now, this foolish talk about hiding is all a joke, isn't it?"

"No," said Rutton soberly; "no, it's no joke." He sighed profoundly. "As for my recent whereabouts, I have been—ah—traveling considerably; moving about from pillar to post."

To this the man added a single word, the more significant in that it embodied the nearest approach to a confidence that Amber had ever known him to make: "Hunted."

"Hunted by whom?"

"I beg your pardon." Rutton bent forward and pushed the cigarettes to Amber's elbow. "I am—ah—so preoccupied with my own mean troubles, David, that I had forgotten that you had nothing to smoke. Forgive me."

"That's a matter, I—"

Amber cut short his impatient catechism in deference to the other's mute plea. And Rutton thanked him with a glance—one of those looks which, between friends, are more eloquent than words. Sighing, he shook his head, his eyes once more seeking

struck against the peace and security of the world. . . . Don't laugh, David; I mean it."

"I'm not laughing, Rutton; but you must know that's a pretty large order. Most men would—"

"Call me mad. Yes, I know." Rutton took up his words as Amber paused, confused. "I can't expect you to understand me; you couldn't unless I were to tell you what I may not. But you know me—better, perhaps, than any living man save Doggott . . . and one other. You know whether or not I would seek to delude you, David. And knowing that I could not, you know why it seems to me imperative that, this hole being discovered, Doggott and I must betake ourselves elsewhere. Surely there must be solitudes—!" He rose with a gesture of impatience and began restlessly to move to and fro.

Amber started suddenly, flushing. "If you mean—"

Rutton's kindly hand forced him back into his chair. "Sit down, David. I never meant that—never for an instant dreamed you'd intentionally betray my secret. It's enough that you should know it, should occasionally think of me as being here, to bring misfortune down upon me, to work an incalculable disaster to the progress of this civilization of ours."

"You mean," Amber asked uncertainly, "thought transference?"

"Something of the sort—yes." The man came to a pause beside Amber, looking down almost pitifully into his face. "I daresay all this sounds hopelessly melodramatic and neurotic and tommyrotic, David, but . . . I can

tell you nothing more. I'm sorry."

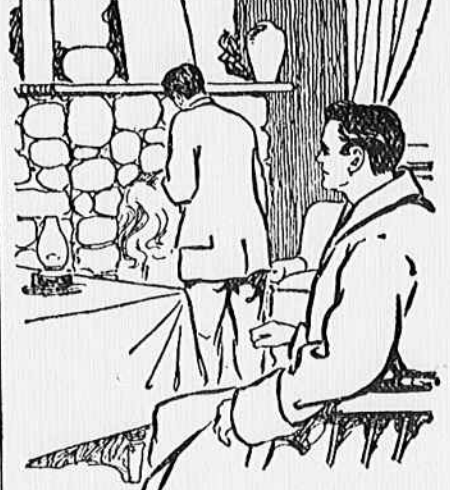
"But only let me help you—any way in my power, Rutton. There's nothing I'd not do. . . ."

"I know, David. I know it. But my case is beyond human aid, since I am powerless to apply a remedy myself."

"And you are powerless?"

Rutton was silent a long moment. Then, "Time will tell," he said quietly. "There is one way . . ." He resumed his monotonous round of the room.

Mechanically Amber began to smoke, trying hard to think, to penetrate by reasoning or intuition the wall of mystery which, it seemed, Rut-



Rutton Turned to the Fire, His Head Drooping Despondently.

ton chose to set between himself and the world.

Presently he grew conscious that Rutton was standing as if listening, his eyes averted to the windows.

"What is it?" he inquired at length, unable longer to endure the tensify of the pause.

"Nothing. I beg your pardon, David." Rutton returned to his chair, making a visible effort to shake off his preoccupation. "It's an ugly night, out there. Lucky you blundered on this place. Tell me how it happened. What became of the other man—your friend?"

The thought of Quail stabbed Amber's consciousness with a mental pang as keen as acute physical anguish. He jumped up in torment. "God!" he cried chokingly. "I'd forgotten! He's out there on the bay, poor devil!—freezing to death if not drowned. Our boat went adrift somehow; Quail would insist on going after her in a leaky old skiff we found on the shore . . . and didn't come back. I waited till it was hopeless, then concluded I'd make a try to cross to Shampton by way of the tidal bar. And I must!"

"It's impossible," Rutton told him with grave sympathy.

"But I must; think of his wife and children, Rutton! There's a chance yet—a bare chance; he may have reached the boat. If he did, every minute I waste here is killing him by inches; he'll die of exposure! But from Shampton we could send a boat—"

"The tide runs about midnight tonight," interrupted Rutton, consulting his watch. "It's after nine—and there's a heavy surf breaking over the bar now. By ten it'll be impassable, and you couldn't reach it before 11. Be content, David; you're powerless."

"You're right—I know that," groaned Amber, his head in his hands. "I was afraid it was hopeless, but—"

"I know, dear boy, I know!"

With a gesture of despair Amber resumed his seat. For some time he remained deep sunk in dejection. At length, mastering his emotion, he looked up. "How did you know about Quail—that we were together?" he asked.

"Doggott saw you land this morning, and I've been watching you all day with my field-glasses, prepared to take cover the minute you turned my way. Don't be angry with me, David; it wasn't that I didn't yearn to see you face to face again, but that . . . I didn't dare."

"Oh, that!" exclaimed Amber with an exasperated fling of his hand. "Between the two of you—me and Quail—you'll drive me mad with worry."

"I'm sorry, David. I only wish I might say more. It hurts a bit to have you doubt me."

"I don't doubt," Amber declared in desperation; "at least, I mean I won't if you'll be sensible and let me stand by and see you through this trouble—whatever it is."

Rutton turned to the fire, his head drooping despondently. "That may not be," he said heavily. "The greatest service you can do me is to forget my existence, now and henceforth, erase our friendship from the tablets of your memory, pass me as a stranger should our ways ever cross again."

He flicked the stub of a cigarette into the flames. "Kismet! . . . I mean that, David, from my heart. Won't you do this for me—one last favor, old friend?"

Amber nodded.

"Then . . ." Rutton attempted to divert the subject. "I think you said Quail? Any relation to Quail's 'Aryan Invasion of India'?"

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Ideals Always Important.

It is by believing in, loving and following illimitable ideals that a man grows great. Their very impossibility is their highest virtue. They live before us as the image of that which we are to grow for ever.—Stopford Brooke.

Height of Meanness.

"Our new neighbor must be a very suspicious character." "Why so?" "She employs a maid who is deaf and dumb, the mean thing!"