

The VALIANTS of VIRG

SV HALLIE ERMINIE RIVES ILLUSTRATIONS 65 LAUREN STOUT



SYNOPSIS.

John Vallant, a rich society favorite, suddenly discovers that the Vallant corporation, which his father founded and which was the principal source of his wealth, has failed. He voluntarily turns over his private fortune to the receiver for the corporation. His entire remaining possessions consist of an old motor car, a white buil dog and Damory court, a neglected estate in Virginia. On the way to Damory court he meets Shirley Dandridge, an auburn-haired beauty, and decides that he is going to like Virginia immensely. Shirley's mother, Mrs. Dandridge, and Major Bristow exchange reminiscences during which it is revealed that the major, Valiant's father, and a man named Sassoon were rivals for the hand of Mrs. Dandridge in her youth. Sassoon and Vallant fought a duel on her account in which the former was killed. Vallant finds Damory court overgrown with weeds and creepers and the buildings in a very much neglected condition.

CHAPTER IX .- Continued. He trudged away into the shadows, but presently as the new master of Damory Court stood in the gloomy hall, he heard the shambling step again behind him. "Ah done neglect-

uated ter ax yo' name, suh. Ah did, fo' er fac'." "My name is Valiant. John Valfant."

Uncle Jefferson's eyes turned upward and rolled out of orbit. "Mah Lawd!" he ejaculated soundlessly. And with his wide lips still framed about the last word, he backed out of the doorway and disappeared.

Alone in the ebbing twilight, John Valiant found his hamper, spread a napkin on the broad stone steps and took out a glass, a spoon and part of a loaf of bread. The thermos flask was filled with milk. It- was not a splendid banquet, yet he ate it with a great content as the bulldog at his feet gnawed his share of the crust. He broke his bread into the milk as he had not done since he was a child. and ate the luscious pulp with a keen relish bred of the long outdoor day.

It was almost dark when the meal was done and, depleted hamper in hand, he reentered the empty echoing house. He went into the library, lighted the great brass lamp from the motor and began to rummage. The drawers of the dining-room sideboard yielded nothing; on a shelf of the butler's pantry, however, was a tin box which proved to be half full of wax

"The very thing!" he said triumphantly. Carrying them back, he fixed several in the glass-candlesticks and set them, lighted, all about the somber room till the soft glow flooded its every corner. "There," he said, "that is as it should be. No big blatant search-light here! And no glare of modern electricity would suit that old wainscoting, either."

He dragged the leather settee to the porch and by the light of the motorlamp dusted it thoroughly, and wheeling it back, set it under the portrait which had so attracted him. He washed the glass from which he had dined and filled it at the cup of the garden fountain, but into it the rose from his hat and set it on the reading-stand. The small china dog caught his eye and he picked it up casually. The head came off in his hands. It had been a bon-bon box and was empty save for a narrow strip of yellowed paper, on which were writ. ries his fate * * on a riband ten some meaningless figures: 17-28. about his neck," he muttered drowsily 94-0. He pondered this a moment, then thrust it into one of the empty pigeonholes of the desk. On the latter stood an old-fashioned leaf-calendar; the date it exposed was May

14th. Curiously enough the same date



He Shuddered as He Stooped to Pick Up the Weapon.

would recur tomorrow. The page bore a quotation: "Every man carries his fate on a riband about his neck." The line had been quoted in his father's letter. May 14th-how much that date and that motto may have meant for him!

He rose to push the shutter wider and in the movement his elbow sent a yo'se'f er man, yo' triffin' recon- heavy portieres of rose-damask, tableshallow case of morocco leather that had lain on the desk crashing to the object rolled almost to his feet. He saw at a glance that it was an old-

fashioned rusted dueling-pistol. The box had originally held two

touch of firearms. There had been mo- | gingham apron. "Yo' sho' is up early, | done the work, too, for there's not a | With a final effort, it gained the porch soning shrinking had filled him with a blind fury, had driven him to strange back directly." self-tests of courage. He had never been able to overcome it. Analyza- his head into the cool water and theretion had told him that his peculiar by sharpen the edge of an appetite abhorrence was no mere outgrowth of that needed no honing. this. It lay far deeper. He had rarely, of recent years, met the test. Now, as he stood in these unaccustomed surroundings, with the cold touch of the metal the old shuddering held him, and the sweat broke in beads on his forehead. Setting his teeth hard, he crossed the room, slipped the box with its pistol between the volumes of the bookcase, and returned to his seat

The bulldog, aroused from a nap. thrust a warm muzzle between his knees. "It's uncanny, Chum!" he said, as his hand caressed the velvety head. "Why should the touch of that fool thing chill my spine and make my flesh tiptoe over my bones? Why should I hate a pistol? Do you suppose I was shot in one of my previous existences?"

For a long while he sat there, his pipe dead, his eyes on the moonlighted out-of-doors. The eery feeling that had gripped him had gone as quickly as it had come. At last he rose, stretching himself with a great boyish yawn, put out all save one of the candles and taking a bath-robe, sandals and a huge fuzzy towel from the steamer-trunk, stripped leisurely. He donned the bath-robe and sandals and went out through the window to the garden and down to where lay the little lake ruffling silverly under the moon. On its brink he stopped, and tossing back his head, tried to imitate one of the bird-calls but was unsuccessful. With a rueful laugh he threw off the bath-robe and stood an instant glistening, poised in the moonlight like a marble faun, before he dove, straight down out of sight.

Five minutes later he pulled himself up over the edge, his flesh tingling with the chill of the water, and threw the robe about his cool white He Craned His Neck, but It Had shoulders. Then he thrust his feet into his sandals and sped quickly his hand, then leaped up and snuggled down close to his feet.

John Valiant's thoughts had fled a thousand miles away, to the tall girl who all his life had seemed to stand ten. out from his world, aloof and unsurful and gracious as a tall, white, splenseemed still to throb with living pas- | nin'." sions. But the picture subtly eluded blanket.

After a time his hands stretched out some help with the cleaning?" to the reading-stand and drew the mingled with the dew-wet scent of the honeysuckle from the garden. At gwineter go fo' dat house mahse'f 'fo' and then, "Roses . . red roses . . . "

And so he fell asleep.

CHAPTER X.

The Hunt. and chirping, to find the sun pouring into the dusty room in a very glory. He rolled from the blanket and stood upright, filling his lungs with a long deep breath of satisfaction. He felt singularly light-hearted and alive. The bulldog came bounding through the window, dirty from the weeds, and

canine rapture. "Get out!" quoth the latter, laughing. "Stop licking my feet! How the dickens do you suppose I'm to get into my clothes with your ridiculous antics going on? Down, I say! Hark!" He broke off and listened. "Who's that singing?"

The sound drew nearer-a lugubrious chant, with the weirdest minor reflections, faintly suggestive of the rag-time ditties of the music-halls, yet with a plaintive cadence.

"Good morning, Uncle Jefferson." The singer broke off, set down the twig-broom that he had been wielding and came toward him. "Mawnin', suh. Mawnin'," he said, "Hopes yo'-all slep' good. Ah reck'n dem ar birds woke yo' up; dey's makin' seh er 'miration."

"Thank you. Never slept better in my life. Am I laboring under a delusion when I imagine I smell coffee?" Just then there came a voice from the open door of the kitchen: "Calls structed niggah! W'en marstah gwineter git he brekfus' wid' yo' ramshack-Gawd's-blessid mawnin'? Go fotch folds and sifted thickly over with the tached. some mo' flah-wood dis minute. Yo' sparkling white powder. At the bot-

heah?" A turbaned head poked itself found a half-dozen thin, Persian praypistols. He shuddered as he stooped through the door, with a good-natured er-rugs. to pick up the weapon, and with the leaf-brown face beneath it, which "Phew!" he whistled. "I certainly and, on looking to see whence the crawling repugnance mingled a pang- broadened into a wide smile as its ought to be grateful to that law firm sound came, he observed that one of a lot of money." ing anger and humiliation. From his owner bobbed energetically at Vavery babyhood it had always been so liant's greeting. "Fo' de Lawd!" she the things lying here all these years! cord evidently to attract attention. As "I we discovered that your last win-

ments in his youth when this unrea; but Ah got yo' brekfus' ready, suh."

He sped down to the lake to plunge

He came up the trail again to find the reading-stand transferred to the porch and laid with a white cloth on which was set a steaming coffee-pot, with fresh cream, saltless butter and crisp hot biscuit; and as he sat down, with a sigh of pure delight, in his dressing-gown - a crepy Japanese thing redeemed from womanishness by the bold green bamboo of its design-Uncle Jefferson planted before him a generous platter of bacon, eggs and potatoes. These he attacked with a surprising keenness. As he buttered his fifth biscuit he looked at the dog, rolling on his back in morning ecstasy, with a look of humorous surprise. "Chum," he said, "what do you think of that? All my life a single



Passed the Line of His Vision.

back. He rubbed himself to a glow, roll and a cup of coffee have been and blowing out the remaining can- the most I could ever negotiate for dle, stretched himself luxuriously be- breakfast, and then it was apt to taste tween the warm blankets on the like chips and whet-stones. And now couch. The dog sniffed inquiringly at look at this plate!" The dog ceased winnowing his ear with a hind foot and looked back at his master with much the same expression. Clearly his own needs had not been forgot-

"Reck'n Ah bettah go ter git dat ar passed-Katharine Fargo. He tried to machine thing," said Uncle Jefferson picture her, a perfect chatelaine, grace- behind him. "Ol' 'ooman, heah, she 'low ter fix up de kitchen dis mawndid lily, in this dead house that in en we begin on de house dis eve-

"Right-o," said Valiant, "It's all uphim and he stirred uneasily under the hill, so the motor won't run away with you. Aunt Daphne, can you get

"He'p?" that worthy responded with issue trash det ain' wu'f killin'! Ah gleaming like tarnished gold. up!"

"Splendid! My destiny is in your you, Uncle Jefferson; the run will do him good."

When the latter had disappeared and truculent sounds from the kitchen indicated that the era of strenuous cleaning had begun, he reentered the He awoke to a musical twittering library, changed the water in the roseglass and set it on the edge of the shady front porch, where its flaunting blossom made a dash of bright crimson against the grayed weather-beaten brick. This done, he opened the one large room on the ground-floor that he had not visited

It was double the size of the library, flung himself upon his master in a a parlor hung in striped yellow silk vaguely and tenderly faded, with a tall plate mirror set over a marbletopped console at either side. In one corner stood a grand plano of Circassian walnut with keys of tinted mother-of-pearl and a slender musicrack inlaid with morning-glories in the same material. From the center of the ceiling, above an oval table, depended a great chandeller hung with glass prisms. The chairs and sofas were covered with dusty slip-covers of muslin. He lifted one of these. The tarnished gold furniture was Louis XV, the upholstery of yellow brocade with a pattern of pink roses. Two Japanese hawthorn vases sat on teakwood stands and a corner held a glass cabinet containing a collection of

small ivories and faience. He went thoughtfully back to the great hall, where sat the big chest on which lay the volume of "Lucile." He pushed down the antique wroughtiron hasp and threw up the lid. It was filled to the brim with textures: covers of faded soft-toned tapestry, window-hangings of dull green-all tom, rolled in tarry-smelling paper, he

-that unconquerable aversion to the exclaimed, wiping floury hands on a And that powder everywhere! It's no immediate notice was taken of its ter's overcoat will do again this year."

sign of moth. If I'm not careful, I'll and crouched down in its corner, an "All right, Aunt Daphne. I'll be stumble over the family plate-it abject, sweated, hunted morsel, at seems to be about the only thing want- hopeless bay.

> He thought a moment, then went the shivering thing by the scruff, and quickly into the library and began to as its snapping jaws grazed his thumb, ransack the trunk. At length he found dropped it through the open window a small box containing keepsakes of behind him: "Sanctuary!" quoth he, various kinds. He poured the medley and banged the shutter to. on to the table-an uncut moonstone, At the same instant, as the place an amethyst-topped pencil that one of overflowed with a pandemonium of his tutors had given him as a boy, a nosing leaping hounds, he saw the tiger's claw, a compass and what not. golden chestnut reined sharply down Among them was a man's seal-ring among the ragged box-rows, with a with a crest cut in a cornelian. He shamsfaced though brazen knowledge looked at it closely. It was the same that the girl who rode it had seen. device.

I clinge.

slope when the encircling forests had chiefly gasps and giggles. rung with war-whoop and blazed with The elder of the two men pulled up torture-fire. They had held on through | beside the leader, his astonished eyes Revolution and Civil war. Good and sweeping the house-front, with its bad, abiding and lawless, every gener- open blinds, the wisp of smoke curling ation had cleaved stubbornly to its from the kitchen chimney. He said acres. I clinge. His father had clung something to her, and she nodded. through absence that seemed to have The younger man, meanwhile, had been almost exile, and now he, the last | flung himself from his horse, a wild-Valiant, has come to make good the eyed roan, and with his arm thrust

spurt of something dashing and vivid, thither, yelping and eager. that grazed the corner of a far-off trailing on the satiny stillness the him, Bulger! Bring him here!" high-keyed ululation of a horn, and an He glanced up, and for the first time yelps.

across the fresh green of a wheat boots to waving brown hair. field, behind a spotted swirl of hounds.

belligerently; "they're on my land!" They were near enough now for him to hear the voices of the men, calling encouragement to the dogs, and to see scarlet-coated feminine rider, detached from the bunch, had spurred in ad- occupy it?" vance and was leading by a clean hundred yards, bareheaded, her hat fallen glass with its vivid blossom nearer, fine scorn. "No, suh. Moughty few, back to the limit of its ribbon knotted till, in his nostrils, its musky odor in de town 'cep'n low-down yaller new- under her chin, and her waving hair

"How she rides!" muttered the solilast his eyes closed. "Every man car- long, hammah en tongs, en git it fix' tary watcher. "Cross-saddle, of course, -the sensible little sport! She'll never in the world do that wall!-Yes. hands. You might take the dog with by George!" John Valiant's admiration turned to delight. "Why," he said, "it's the Lady-of-the-Roses!"

He put his hands on the sill and vaulted to the porch.

CHAPTER XI.

Sanctuary.

Like a flash, Vallant stooped, caught

She sat moveless, her head high,

The ring had been his father's, one hand on the hunter's foam-flecked Just when or how it had come into neck, and their glances met like his possession he could never remem- crossed swords. The look stirred ber. It had lain among these keep something vague and deep within him. sakes so many years that he had al. For an unforgettable instant their most forgotten its existence. He had eyes held each other, in a gaze rigid, never worn a ring, but now, as he challenging, almost defiant; then it went back to the hall, he slipped it broke and she turned to the rest of on his finger. The motto below the the party spurring in a galloping zigcrest was worn away, but it showed | zag: a genial-faced man of middle age clear in the marble of the hall-mantle: in khaki who sat his horse like a cavalryman, a younger one with a His eyes turned from the carven reckless dark face and straight black words and strayed to the pleasant sun- hair, and following these a half-dozen ny foliage outside. An arrogant boast, youthful riders of both sexes, one of perhaps, yet in the event well justi- the lads heavily plastered with mud fled. Valiants had held that selfsame from a wet cropper, and the girls

through its bridle, strode forward His gaze wavered. The tail of his among the welter of hounds, where eye had caught through the window a they scurried at fault, hither and

"What rotten luck!" he exclaimed. field. He craned his neck, but it had "Gone to ground after twelve miles! passed the line of his vision. The After him, Tawny! You mongrels! next moment, however, there came Do you imagine he's up a tree? After

instant later a long-drawn hallo-o-o! saw the figure in tweeds looking on. mixed with a pattering chorus of Valiant was attracted by his face, its dash and generosity overlying its in-He went close, and leaning from the herent profilgacy and weakness. Dark sill, shaded his eyes with his hand, as the girl was light, his features had The noise swelled and rounded in vol- the same delicate chiseling, the inume; it was nearing rapidly. As he breeding, nobility and indulgence of looked the hunt dashed into full view generations. He stared a moment, between the tree-boles-a galloping and the somewhat supercilious look melee of khakl and scarlet, swarming traveled over the gazer, from dusty

"Oh!" he said. His view slowly "Confound it!" said John Vallant took in the evidences of occupation. "The house is open, I see. Going to get it fit for occupancy, I presume?" "Yes."

The other turned. "Well, Judge the white ribbons of foam across the Chalmers, what do you think of that? flanks of the laboring horses. One The unexpected has happened at last." He looked at the porch. "Who's to

"The owner." (TO BE CONTINUED.)

Worth Knowing. Suppose a man leaves New York at noon on a given date and travels westward at such a rate of speed that the sun will always be directly overhead. After making a circle of the globe he will reach the starting point in New York just 24 hours after he left it. The question presenting itself is, at which one of his different stopping places while making the circuit of the globe in 24 hours, carrying noon with him to every station, was he first informed that it was noon of the following day. As he crossed the me-The tawny scudding streak that led ridian of 180 degrees east, or west, of that long chase had shot into the yard, Greenwich the day would change. His turning for a last desperate double. Inst stop after crossing the meridian It saw the man in the foreground and would be Yokohama, perhaps; there its bounding, agonized little wild heart he would learn that it was the next



SHOWED INSTINCT OF SWANS efforts, the impatient bird continued

Birds Had Learned the Trick of Ringing a Bell to Get Their Supply of Food.

During a recent visit to the cathedral city of Wells, in Somersetshire, a of this interesting episode, the corre-Scotsman correspondent was witness spondent was told that a number of of a curious incident. The Episcopal years ago a daughter of the bishop of palace is surrounded, just as in olden Wells, being much interested in the times, by a wall and a moat, the haunt birds inhabiting the moat, taught the of swans, ducks, and other aquatic swans to ring the bell at feeding-time, birds. The most is crossed at the en. at five o'clock in the afternoon. This trance to the palace grounds by a practice has been continued by succesdrawbridge with a battlemented gate- sive families of swans down to the way with towers, in one of which is present day, and it would seem, therethe gatekeeper's lodge. From a fore, as if the birds transmitted to bracket fixed in the wall of one of their offspring the knowledge that these towers overlooking the moat a when the cord was pulled the bell floor. It opened and a heavy metallic lin' eroun' wid dat dwag all dis with tobacco-leaves laid between the bell is suspended, with a cord at would ring and that food would follow.

One afternoon about five o'clock, while watching the movements of the various birds in the water, the corre- for you." spondent heard the ringing of a bell.

to ring the bell violently until there appeared at the window of the tower the wife of the gatekeeper, who threw out a quantity of food to the expectant waterfowl.

On making inquiries as to the origin

"Oh, George, I've got splendid news

"That so?" "Yes, something that will save you

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