

THE PRIVATE WAR

BY LOUIS JOSEPH VANCE "THE AUTHOR OF THE BRASS BOWL"

SYNOPSIS.
Gordon Trull, a young New York society favorite, and Captain Hans von Holzborn, attached to the German Embassy in London, are rival suitors for the hand of the widowed Lady Herbert. Formerly Julia Leigh, of Richmond, Va., the German is married to the widow, due to the fact that in the two years following the death of her husband Trull has remained in the United States.

Immediately upon Trull's arrival in London he is introduced to the German Embassy by the German ambassador, who is a friend of his father's. Trull is introduced to the German ambassador, who is a friend of his father's. Trull is introduced to the German ambassador, who is a friend of his father's.

CHAPTER XIX.
Mr. Trull a Conspirator.
TOWARD evening of a gray and chilly Thursday day—if I remember rightly, it was the fifth following the sealing of our compact with Von Holzborn; January 26—a fly drew up before the Pig and Whistle Tavern, on the Fliddon road, perhaps a mile out of Barmouth, and I was set down, shivering—nav, permeated to the very marrow of my bones with cold and anxiety.

The tavern stood in a desolate spot, removed some considerable distance from the main traveled road; a house little frequented in the winter months. Low hills the road about it, and a little stream crossed the highway some distance from the house. From the carriage block no other dwelling could be discovered; this I found much to my satisfaction.

My inspection of the surroundings, however, was not unnecessarily prolonged. A keen wind was blowing inland from the sea, seeking out the tender spots in my carcass without mercy, even through the protecting folds of a heavy overcoat. Overhead arched a sullen sky of a leaden color, and out of it came, at fitful intervals, little furies of hard and icy snow, with which the frozen earth was liberally powdered.

So I paid the driver of the fly, finding my money with numb fingers, surrendered my suitcase to an attentive hostler, and slipped indoors without undue delay, bending my head to pass beneath a low door lintel.

Within, to the comfortable contrary, there was warmth and a respectable air of cheerfulness. The taproom proved low-ceilinged and gloomy, having but little light from its mullioned windows, with their tiny panes of clouded glass, heavily leaded. But it was scrupulously tidy, and bright with a roaring wood fire that blazed in a huge, old-fashioned chimney corner. You may believe that I backed up to that beaming warmth without any hesitation at all. A barmaid bobbed a welcome from behind her counter and disappeared in search of the landlord, who presently appeared, seemingly more than delighted at the prospect of a paying guest.

"I shall want a room," I told him, feeling as though I had stepped back into the eighteenth century, and rather regretful that I sported no riding cloak with heavy cape, no top boots with spurs, no sugar-loaf hat with a cockade, to fit into the picture.

"You'll be staying, sir?" the landlord piped, rubbing his hands.

"A day or so—perhaps longer," I admitted loftily. "I am expecting a friend. It is possible that he is here now? A Mr. Anthony?"

"Not yet arrived, sir. Tom, bring the gentleman's luggage to the front parlor suite. You are cold, Mr.—now, what would the name be?"

"Gordon," said I, giving the pseudonym agreed upon with Sevrance. "There might be a letter waiting? No? Very well; I'll wait here till you warm my rooms."

"Very good, sir; yes, sir. Mary, take Mr. Gordon's order." The landlord bowed himself away.

I ordered a warm drink from the barmaid and stuck to my position by the fireplace. She served me, drew a mug of ale for a solitary guest who sat at another table, and vanished.

Sipping my drink slowly, gradually warming up, I eyed the other guest. At first glance, however, I absolved him of all suspicion of being a Nihilist agent. No Irishman could be accused of that, though I, and no man ever looked the Irishman bred in the bone more than this.

He was a tall, burly fellow, with the broadest pair of shoulders I have ever seen on human being; thin-limbed, with long and supple legs; his chest rounded out full and deep as a barrel. For the rest, he had a red-tanned face, set with two smallish blue and twinkling eyes; a head covered with close-cropped hair of a brilliant brick color; and he was royally full. Lolling over his table, he returned my scrutiny, glance for glance, with cheerful impudence.

"'Tis the divil an' all av a bitter da-ay," he advanced, seeming unprejudiced by what he saw of me.

I was surprised at the clearness of his diction; barring the burr of his brogue, he spoke steadily and distinctly, with intelligence. For all that, he was full as any tick.

"It is cold," I admitted cautiously.

He lurched in his chair and smiled benignly.

"Gordon—did I catch yer name correct, sor?" he pursued, looking me in the eye.

"You did."

"Faith, an' what d'ye thing av thot? Shure, now, d'ye know ye look the very spit an' image av a frind av mine?"

"Yes."

He drank deep, and put down his mug with a clatter. "'Tis laast th' daay," he said; "'tis business we'll be thrannactin' from now on. Ye do—'with conviction. 'His name wud be Grady? Wud ye be knowin' him, sor?"

I picked up my ears and buried my nose in my glass. This sounded promising. Putting down the glass—"What Grady? There are two or three in the world."

"Thrus for ye," he acquiesced with a chuckle. "But this felly I mane wud be a Grady from Cronstadt?"

"Cronstadt?"

"Where else? D'ye find annythin' strange in thot, now?"—he put it to me with owl gravity.

"No," I said, smiling in spite of myself. I appeared to search for my watch without success. "Do you happen to know the time?" I inquired.

He produced a huge silver turnip of a timepiece and read the dial with a look of surpassing wisdom.

"'Tis midnight," he announced.

Footsteps sounded in the hallway beyond the taproom, and the landlord appearing, announcing that my rooms were ready, I arose.

"If you have the time to spare, sir," I said clearly, "I should like to have a talk with you upstairs, at your convenience. It's a long time since I heard from Grady."

The fellow winked dully and I left him. Not five minutes later his knock resounded on the panels of my door and he entered with a lurch.

"Mister Gordon," he said severely.

"You're drunk," I stated. "How's that?"

"Me natural state, beggin' yer honor's pardon," he replied. "Shure, 'tis only me legs that arre intoxicated, sor. Me hid is thot clear—"

"You're from Sevrance?"

"The same. Me name is Callahan, sor. I'm engaged to be the engineer. There's no better in the business, if 'tis meself thot says it. 'Tis a letter I have for yer honor, sor."

He fumbled in the lining of his hat and produced a soiled and crumpled envelope. It was, indeed, from Sevrance.

"Dear Gordon," (I read): "The bearer, who will be drunk, is one Callahan, a highly efficient engineer. He will tell you, and with truth, that his legs are the only portions of himself that lose their bearings. Drunk or sober, we could get no man better suited to our uses. Grady recommended him."

"I have a brief note from Grady, stating that all is quiet. Fritz signaled once, night

of the 23d instant, and was answered. Nothing, however, followed. I think we can go ahead. For my own part, I am getting together a crew of choice and selected scoundrels. Upon my word, I verily believe that we could steal the vessel altogether and lead a life of piratical pleasure on the Spanish Main with them at our back.

"You will see Greer tomorrow and inform him that the business is scheduled for midnight of the 23th. Have all things prepared and don't look for me until the last instant. A."

"P. S.—I will wire Grady, morning of the 27th, to inform V. H. same evening and watch for signals; then to join you at earliest possible moment."

I dropped the note and envelope into the fire and turned again to Callahan.

"And what are your instructions?"

"I am to keep sober," he recited as by rote. "I'll take yer honor's orders."

"Well, you had better start right in, then. How long will it take you to sleep this off?"

"Two hours," he announced, after considerable mental computation. "Not wot minit' more."

"Very well. Go to the landlord and tell him to give you a room at my expense. Come back when you've slept it out."

"Ver' good, sor."

He saluted with intense solemnity, wheeled abruptly, almost dashed out his brains in attempting to open the door, and left. I heard him take the stairs to the lower floor in two leaps and a crash and a moment later his voice rose in pacific remonstrance with the landlord, whom he was earnestly assuring that he always came downstairs that way.

I dismissed him from my mind, nor counted upon seeing his face again before morning; to the contrary, he kept his word about waking to a minute; in two hours precisely he was back—quiet, reserved, a little damp as to his hair, but dignified; a capable and intelligent man.

I was up early the following morning, and by 10 had driven into Barmouth, going directly, neither courting nor evading observation, to the shipyards of Rogers & Greer, which were situated on the outskirts of the old town, occupying a large plot of land which ran down to the river.

On the threshold of a dingy office building a clerk took my name and retired to inform Greer. I stated my ostensible errand as a desire to inspect, perhaps to purchase, a small sloop yacht. This gained me prompt attention. Within a very few minutes I was admitted to the inner office.

Greer, a withered little man with shifty eyes and a generally shabby appearance, glanced me up and down without great cordiality. He invited me, however, to a seat by his private desk, and at once launched upon a general description of a certain vessel corresponding to my specifications.

Eventually, however, his customer rose to a desk, Greer swung about in his chair and said, in a voice palpably tremulous:

"Er—Mr. Rogers—I am in consultation with a customer from abroad."

The senior partner glanced at me as though my very appearance was a terrifying thing to him, and, without a word, turned and scurried out, snatching his hat from a convenient hook. Greer grinned amiably, somewhat reassured.

"Mr. Rogers is a very nervous man—nervous and conservative," he intimated. "I am obliged to undertake the transaction of all business out of the common run. You will have something to show me?"

I produced Von Holzborn's wallet, and handed him the specified papers. He glanced at them with a keen eye, satisfying himself, evidently, of their authenticity. Then, returning them with a little bow, "When is it to be?" he asked.

"Tomorrow, at midnight. You will have everything arranged?"

"Quite. You may rest assured of that."

"The Clymene is ready to sail?"

"At a moment's notice. Nothing has been neglected, down to the least detail. Come, I will show you."

He led me out into the shipyards, conducting me along what seemed to me a

path hedged about with innumerable dangers in the shape of swinging cranes, flying aerial tramways, falling timber and madly scurrying men, and through a clamorous din, quite deafening.

Standing there, on a gentle slope of bare ground, at the edge of which the river flowed, he pointed quietly to a little vessel that swung at anchor some distance out.

"The Clymene," he said briefly.

She proved to be a long, narrow-beamed, slate-colored craft, with much of the air of a rather sober private yacht. I remarked that she carried two slender, short spars, with less rigging visible than is ordinary. Two low, gray funnels slanted smartly toward the stern. I thought them somewhat large and heavy looking for the tonnage. Between them a brace of ventilators showed their red throats. Forward, about a quarter of the yacht's length from the bows, there rose a flimsy and unsubstantial-looking bridge. From there on to the stern the deck seemed to be hooded—hooded—resembling a section of a whaleback boat.

(CONTINUED TOMORROW.)

FARMER SMITH'S RAINBOW CLUB

WHAT IS YOUR NAME?
Dearest Children—When I take you out into the street and show you a long box with a pole reaching up to a wire, a long box running on two pieces of iron, and ask you what it is, you say, "It's a trolley car."

If I take you out on the farm and show you something walking around on four legs, one on each corner, with two big horns sticking out from its head, and ask you what it is, you say, "That's a cow."

Suppose a human being wearing trousers goes down the street and I ask you what it is, you say, "It's a man."

I ask you again what it is and you say: "I do not know. It's a man; that ought to be enough."

But it isn't.

The trolley car has a number. It is also marked "Spruce," "Fox Chase," "Willow Grove" or something else.

The cow is not merely a cow, but is "Bossie," "Mollie" or some other name. Do you have a NAME? Perhaps more than one name. John Jones is six feet tall and is called "Shorty." Bill Brown weighs 220 pounds and is called "Skinny." Edmund Whittemore Rhodes is called "Dusty Rhodes" or plain "Dusty."

Remember your name. Remember the names of OTHER people. I ask you to REMEMBER YOUR NAME, so that it will always be a good name.

FARMER SMITH,
Children's Editor, EVENING LEDGER.

Announcement of Prize Winners
The names of the PRIZE WINNERS in the P. E. T. SAFETY FIRST CONTEST will be ANNOUNCED in TOMORROW'S Rainbow Club News.

Our Postoffice Box
Hazel Nordman is a member of the West Berlin Rainbows. She was not able to pose in the group picture of the West Berlin Rainbows taken on the day of the picnic given by that branch and while her friends were busy with the festivities she was occupied at home caring for her mother, who was ill at the time. We do hope that the West Berlin Rainbows will plan another picnic very soon so that Hazel, too, many busy herself with a jolly time! We are glad to know that our Rainbow did not forget that mother comes first. The thought brings up about the point that Miss Irene Kohn brought up about duty and kindness. The question was, "Is it doing some kindness to do one's duty?" James Lawler, North Fifth street, thinks that "doing one's duty" means doing only the things we ought to do, such as helping parents, studying lessons, etc. He adds, "Kindness is only what we do out of the goodness of our heart." Catherine Miller, Frankford avenue, says, "I think it is our duty to help our mothers in every way that we can, so that can't be counted as kindness. I think if we want to be kind we must try to do little things that we don't positively have to do to make people happy." We would like to have more opinions on this interesting subject.

JIMMY HINTS FOR CURIOSITY
By Farmer Smith
"When you go home after eating all the ice cream you wanted, what did your mother do to you?" asked Jimmy of the Baby Baboon one day, when they were far away from home.

"I just would be telling," replied the Baby Baboon, cautiously.

"Oh, go on! Tell me what your mother did to you," pleaded Jimmy.

"You are getting nervous and nearer to something very dangerous," the Baby Baboon looked straight at Jimmy.

"What do you mean?"

"The Baby Baboon was very thoughtful for some time, and then he said:

"You know what killed a cat, don't you?"

"Yes, curiosity killed a cat," replied Jimmy.

FARMER SMITH.
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