

The Pool of Flame

by LOUIS JOSEPH VANCE

ILLUSTRATIONS BY ELLSWORTH YOUNG

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BACKACHE AND ACHING JOINTS

Together Tell of Bad Kidneys. "Every Picture Tells a Story" Much pain that masks as rheumatism is due to weak kidneys—to their failure to drive off uric acid thoroughly. When you suffer aching, bad joints, backache, too; with some kidney disorders, get Doan's Kidney Pills, which have cured thousands.

A Maine Case
S. C. Verrill, Old Town, Me., says: "I was confined to bed two years and the doctors did not know what ailed me. My back pained intensely and kidney secretions were very irregular. The doctor said I would never walk again. After taking Doan's Kidney Pills I rapidly improved, until once more in good health I cannot express my gratitude." Get Doan's at any Drug Store, 50c. a Box
Doan's Kidney Pills

Pimples

blackheads and oily skin may be quickly overcome by the frequent use of

Glenn's Sulphur Soap

Sold by druggists. Hill's Hair and Whisker Dressing, black or brown, 50c.

THICK, SWOLLEN GLANDS

that make a horse wheeze, hoarse, have thick wind or choke-down, can be removed with

ABSORBINE

also any Bunch or Swelling. No blister, no hair gone, and horse kept at work. Get bottle delivered. Book 3 E free. A BOTTLE 15c. 5 for \$1.00. Reduces Gout, Rheumatism, Painful, Varicose Veins, Lice, \$1.00 and \$2.00 a bottle as dealers or delivered. Book with testimonials free. W. F. YOUNG, P. O. F., 310 Temple St., Springfield, Mass.

A man has no use for a woman who attempts to convince him that he is wrong and succeeds in doing it.

Appropriate.
"We call that girl 'Juarez'."
"Why?"
"She's been captured six times already this season."

No Chance.
Officer—What's the trouble here?
Mrs. Roney—There's no trouble! Me old man started in to try and make some, but he found he could not do it!

PROOF.

Higson—He's a pretty high authority on appendicitis, isn't he?
Digson—High! Well, I should say so. Why, he charges \$700 for each operation he performs.

THIRTEEN YEARS

Unlucky Number for Dakota Woman.

The question whether the number "13" is really more unlucky than any other number has never been entirely settled.

A So. Dak. woman, after thirteen years of misery from drinking coffee, found a way to break the "unlucky spell." Tea is just as injurious as coffee because it contains caffeine, the drug in coffee. She writes:

"For thirteen years I have been a nervous wreck from drinking coffee. My liver, stomach, heart—in fact, my whole system being actually poisoned by it.

"Last year I was confined to my bed for six months. Finally it dawned on me that coffee caused the trouble. Then I began using Postum instead of coffee, but with little faith, as my mind was in such a condition that I hardly knew what to do next.

"Extreme nervousness and falling eyesight caused me to lose all courage. In about two weeks after I quit coffee and began to use Postum I was able to read and my head felt clear. I am improving all the time and I will be a strong, well woman yet.

"I have fooled more than one person with a delicious cup of Postum. Mrs. S. wanted to know where I bought my fine coffee. I told her my grocer had it and when she found out it was Postum she has used it ever since, and her nerves are building up fine.

"My brain is strong, my nerves steady, my appetite good, and best of all, I enjoy such sound, pleasant sleep." Name given by Postum Co., Battle Creek, Mich. Get the little book in pkgs., "The Road to Wellville."

"There's a reason."

Ever read the above letter? A new one appears from time to time. They are genuine, true, and full of human interest.

battle, whether for or against his brethren. The stabbing of Quick seemed to have been accidental, or necessary under circumstances unforeseen.

As a matter of fact, the remainder of the lascars were thoroughly cowed and proved unbelievably docile for the balance of the trip.

Thus it was that the voyage of the Rancee from Aden to Bombay was pushed through without further fatality. To the Irishman, however, must go more than half the credit; for forty-eight hours he never left the bridge nor once closed his eyes in slumber.

It was not indeed until the Rancee, on the stroke of the hour, the evening of the fifteenth day of June, walked smartly into Bombay harbor, the international code signal "NJ" fluttering from her peak, rounded Colabra and dropped anchor off the point; not until Danny and Dravos, free at length from their toil in the broiling engine-room, came on deck to relieve him, that O'Rourke collapsed—stumbled down the bridge ladder and lurched drunkenly down the saloon companionway. His head humming with sleep, his brain bemused with fatigue and pain, his eyes heavy, he brushed by Mrs. Pryne without seeing her or even hearing her low cry of pity and solicitude; and so entering the first stateroom that he came to, threw himself, already asleep, into the berth.

As he did so a loaded revolver dropped from his numb fingers. . .

CHAPTER XXVI.

It was night when O'Rourke awoke; he found himself staring wide-eyed at the ceiling of the stateroom, upon which rippled wavering lines of light reflected through the porthole by the waters without. His mind for the time was a blank; he was merely conscious that he was rested and very thirsty, and that the ship was motionless.

Then in a blinding flash memory returned to him. He rose, curiously light-headed and strangely weak, pushed open the door and stepped into the saloon.

It was lighted, if poorly, by a smoky kerosene lamp dependent from a beam above the center-table, and wore a hollow, dingy air of desolation for all that Danny slept there, his vivid head pillowed on arms crossed before him on the table. The ship was utterly silent, and the O'Rourke's sensitive instinct told him that it was tenanted only by himself and the servant.

He clapped a hand on Danny's shoulder and shook him into wakefulness. The boy leapt to his feet with a cry and, seizing O'Rourke's hand, began to sob upon it—a touching but disconcerting performance, to the last degree exasperating to a man thirsting and famished.

O'Rourke, as gently as he could, disengaged his hand and thrust Danny away, at the same time indicating in no uncertain tones that he preferred meat and drink to emotional crisis. Provided with a duty, Danny's sentimental nature was diverted; he bustled away and returned with an excellent cold meal—sandwiches, a salad, cheese, and other edibles upon a tray graced likewise by a bottle of champagne. And you are to believe that the master fell to and wolfed it all, to the last crumb and the last drop.

A new man, refreshed, he demanded a pipe, and, with his head cocked on one side and something of his old humor twinkling in his eye, what time it was not clouded with bewilderment and concern at the answers he received, cross-examined his valet.

"How long," was his first question, "will I have slept now, Danny ye divvle?"

"Wan complete round av the clock, yer honor."

"Where are we?"

"At anchor, sor, off the Fort in Bombay harbor."

"Umm-hm. I'm by way of remembering something of that. What of the captain?"

"Raymored, yer honor, to a horse-pittle ashore, sor, to convalesce. At laste, I'm thinking 'thot's the word the doctor used, sor."

O'Rourke pulled at his cigar, regarded regretfully the empty glass before him, and with some visible reluctance put the question that, more than aught else, he had wished to put ever since he had eaten.

"And Mrs. Pryne?"

"Aw, yer honor!"

"What's the matter, Danny?"

"Sure, sor, and axin' yer pardon for spakin' so, and manin' no manner of disrayspict whatsoever—"

"What the divvle, Danny!"

Danny drew himself up with an air, bristling indignation. "Sure, and 'tis meself never seen the loike av thim winnin for rank ingratchude, sor. And after all 'thot meself had said to 'thot black-eyed Frinch vixen—"

"Danny!"

"No, sor, not wan word av it will I widdor, not if yer honor discharges me wid me usual month's no'ice, sor, this minute. Faix, didn't I see? No more and the anchor was down, sor, and yerself did to the world in yer berth, sor, thin thim two does be after hallin' a boat and intendin' to go ashore, widout so much as a fare-yewell, and me meanin' the most honorable intentions in the world toward the maid—"

"Have your intentions ever been aught else toward any woman ye ever won a smile from, spalpeen?"

"Aw, now, yer honor—"

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Just Dying to Do It.
Servant—No, the vicar is not in just now. Is there any message?

Old Woman (cheerfully)—Well, tell him that Martha Higgins would like to be buried at two o'clock tomorrow afternoon!—London Opinion.

SYNOPSIS.

The story opens at Monte Carlo with Col. Terence O'Rourke, a military free lance and something of a gambler, in his hotel. Leaning on the balcony he sees a beautiful girl who suddenly enters the elevator and passes from sight. At the gaming table O'Rourke notices two men watching him. One is the Hon. Bertrid Glynn, while his companion is Viscount Des Trebes, a duelist. The viscount tells him the French government has directed him to O'Rourke as a man who would undertake a secret mission. At his apartment, O'Rourke, who had agreed to undertake the mission, finds a mysterious letter. The viscount arrives, hands a sealed package to O'Rourke, who is not to open it until on the ocean. A pair of dainty slippers are seen protruding from under a doorway curtain. The Irishman finds the owner of the mysterious feet to be his wife, Beatrix, from whom he had run away a year previous. They are reconciled, and opening the letter he finds that a Rangoon law firm offers him 100,000 pounds for a jewel known as the Pool of Flame and left to him by a dying friend, but now in keeping of one named Chambret in Algeria. O'Rourke worships the nobleman in a duel. The wife bids O'Rourke farewell and he promises to soon return with the reward. He discovers both Glynn and the viscount on board the ship. As he finds Chambret here is an attack by bandits and his friend dies telling O'Rourke that he has left the Pool of Flame with the governor general, who at sight of a signet ring given the colonel will deliver over the jewel. Arriving at Algeria the Irishman finds the governor general away. Des Trebes makes a mysterious appointment, and tells O'Rourke that he has gained possession of the jewel by stealing it. In a duel O'Rourke masters the viscount, secures possession of the Pool of Flame and starts by ship for Rangoon. He finds the captain to be a smuggler who tries to steal the jewel. It is finally secured by the captain and O'Rourke escapes to land. With the aid of one Danny and his sweetheart, O'Rourke recovers the Pool of Flame. On board ship once more, bound for Rangoon, a mysterious lady appears. O'Rourke comes upon a lascar about to attack the lady, who is Mrs. Pryne, and kicks the man into the hold. Mrs. Pryne claims she is en route for Indiana on a mission for the king. O'Rourke is attacked by the lascar.

CHAPTER XXIV.—(Continued.)

She came directly to the adventurer, without so much as a glance for the group of lascars or the grim evidences of tragedy upon the deck. O'Rourke shut his teeth with exasperation. Whatever he decided to believe of the serang, whether his judgment said of the man, "Guilty," or "Not Guilty," he dared risk nothing with the woman present. He could not tell what hell of murder and mutiny he might not let loose upon the Rancee, did he make one ill-advised or hasty move. Alone, he could have faced the situation with equanimity; with the woman by his side, he felt as though handcuffed.

"You are hurt, Colonel O'Rourke?"

"A mere scratch, madam—an inch of skin shaved off me arm. Be good enough to return to the saloon, waken Danny and send him to me."

She ignored the curtness of his tone, even as she ignored his wish. "What has happened?" she demanded, ranging herself by his side. "Who is that—there on the deck?" Her voice rising a note, foreboding hysteria.

"Quick—stabbed. I didn't want ye to see. A lascar ran amok, cut down the captain, was killed himself—kindness," the irrepressible humorist broke out, "of our little brown brother, the serang."

His eyes never left the latter; not an instant did he take his attention from the cluster of dark figures; he was more than every ready to defend himself should they make any overt move, deeming his attention distracted.

"What will you do?"

"How can I say? Do ye, for the love of God, get below and leave me to deal with these fiends in me own fashion."

"Which," she returned equably, "is precisely what I shall not do."

"If that's the case," he said brusquely, "have the kindness to hand me the revolver by the captain's side, and—ye might see if the poor fellow still lives."

He heard a quick rustle of skirts and the woman's hand closed over his, pressing into his palm the weapon he had desired. As promptly, without further words, she turned to Quick.

The adventurer deliberated briefly, while she bent over the captain, making a hurried examination. "He is badly wounded," O'Rourke heard her say, as he arrived at his decision, "but not dead."

"Praise God for that! . . . I must ask ye, madam, to back me up. It is necessary to clear the decks. Are ye ready?" He saw, out of the tail of his eye, that she had sprung to her feet. "Now, ye curs," he thundered, with a menacing pistol in either hand, "get forward, the lot of ye. Move, ye blackguards!"

They went expeditiously, crowding between the deck-house and the rail, huddling together as if for mutual protection. The serang was the last to move, and went reluctantly, or seemed to.

Yet that was no time to judge him for a minor fault. O'Rourke herded the pack before him, watched them scramble down the ladder to the fore-deck, then backed to the spot where

the woman stood above the captain. His arm was paining him somewhat, with the irritating, stinging ache that such wounds produce, and he thrust one revolver into his pocket, clasping a hand above the hurt.

In a flash realization of his loss came to him; he clutched the rail with a cry. The Pool of Flame, his sacred trust, was gone! His eyes searched the deck wildly, but found no trace of the round leather bag with its precious burden. Despair gripped his heart in a clutch of ice, and for a space the ship reeled about him.

He found himself gazing blankly into the woman's solicitous eyes. "What is it? What is it?" he heard her voice repeating breathlessly. He knew that his own lips moved for some seconds without sound as he strove to answer her. The words, when they came, should have been quite unintelligible to her; he realized this almost as soon as he had uttered them: "The Pool of Flame!"

Then he stumbled forward, crying aloud for the serang. Half-way to the ladder he halted; that individual's head and shoulders were lifting above the level of the deck. O'Rourke covered him and called him aft as he again retreated to the scene of the tragedy.

Had he been in a condition to think coherently, he might have acted more prudently. But maddened, he was able to grasp but one fact; that the Pool of Flame was gone and must be recovered at whatever hazard.

The lascar came with what might have seemed suspicious alacrity, considering the fact that he was coerced, that O'Rourke held him at the pistol's point. Gaunt and sombre in the moonlight, moving noiselessly in his bare feet, head up and arms swinging

The serang stiffened, his eyes glistening in the moonlight. "Sahib!" he cried as if in supplication.

"No words, dog!" cried O'Rourke sternly. "Do as I bid ye, or abide the result of disobedience!"

"The sahib," said the serang slowly, "is full of eyes and wisdom. He sees what no man would believe he could see. I am content." He bowed his head with curious submissiveness, stretching forth his palms as if in token of surrender.

O'Rourke caught at his breath. He had scarcely hoped for this; he had merely called the serang aft as the leader of the lascars, hoping to frighten him into revealing whichever of his comrades had stolen the great ruby—if he knew.

"Ye have, then, the leather bag?" he demanded, exultation in his voice.

"Aye, sahib; or, if not that, I have that which was therein."

"The stone?"

"Aye, sahib."

"Then give it me."

"I am the sahib's slave." The serang flashed a strange smile at the revolver in O'Rourke's hand. His attitude puzzled O'Rourke; he would hardly have believed this of the man; rather he could have conceived of him as denying the theft to the last and fighting like an unchained fiend to retain his booty. His present pose was out of character, or the Irishman misjudged him.

Out of character or no, it was comfortable. The serang, with head bent, was fumbling in the folds of his sash; O'Rourke thought him over long about it, yet was inclined to give him time in view of his abject surrender.

At length, still smiling oddly, the man lifted his eyes and stretched forth a hand tight closed. "The sa-



Flung the Pool of Flame With All His Might.

limp, he advanced without a pause until about six feet from the Irishman; at which distance O'Rourke, collecting his wits, found voice enough to bid the fellow, "Stop!"

The serang halted, impassive, unmoved.

"The sahib has called," he said in an even voice. "I am come. What is the sahib's will with me?"

His words, together with his half-indolent, half-defiant, wholly contemptuous bearing, supplied the one thing needful to restore to the adventurer his self-control. O'Rourke drew himself up, master of self once more, and looked the lascar in the eye.

"You stand," he said slowly, choosing his words, "on the edge of the grave. Do you comprehend that, dog?"

"Aye, sahib!"

"I have called ye, then, to demand back that which is mine, the leather bag which ye stole when ye slew your brother, pretending falsely it was he who had slain the captain. I counsel ye, speak truth and render back to me that which ye have stolen."

hib," he said gently, "shall see that his servant spoke truth. Let this weigh with the sahib for mercy. Behold!"

The brown fingers unclosed and in the hollow of his palm trembled that which seemed a ball of crystallized rose fire, the stone that man has named the Pool of Flame. O'Rourke uttered a low cry of satisfaction, stepping forward to snatch up the jewel. Simultaneously he was aware of a quick gasp from the direction of the woman, followed, ere he could account for them, by two pistol shots.

The adventurer groaned, pitching forward blindly, one side of his head, from the ear to the temple, a quiver with an agony as if a white-hot iron had seared him there. He stretched forth an arm aimlessly and gripped an iron stanchion, stopping his fall, and hung there for what seemed an eon, sea and skies swimming blood-red before his eyes, in his ears a thunderous rushing as of mighty waters.

By a supreme effort of will he kept himself half-erect, clinging to the rail, and opened his eyes. So briefly had