



## THE PINK MURDER CASE

By S. S. VEENDAM

Author of the "Green," "Canary," "Mauve," and "Beige Murder Cases"

## CHAPTER I

## THE HOUSE ON THE MARSH

(Tuesday, February 22, 1732; 1 A. M.)

**A**MONG all the vari-colored murder cases from which Philo Pants has derived his reputation and I my income during the last few years, certainly there was none more horrifying, nor, in its outcome, more astounding than the Pink one.

My friend Pants was, as I have often written, a young social aristocrat with carefully chiselled features, especially a fine, hand-engraved, aquamarine nose. His conversation was the most completely satisfying I have ever known. No one ever felt the need of a second dose.

He was a close friend of Barker,† the District Attorney, who entrusted to him the most interesting murder cases, much to my profit, since thus the murderer was given time to kill a whole book-full of people,‡ which is really necessary nowadays to keep the reader's interest. So it was that the frightful Pink holocaust was made possible. Pants had been for several days immersed in a Coptic translation of Schizzenheimer's "Nuovi Studi de la Physiologie des Heisshundes." He could not read Coptic, but was trying to decide which was the right side up of the fascinating volume, when Barker came in.

"A new murder for you, Pants," said Barker gloomily.

"Oh, I say, don't y' know, eh what?" drawled Pants. "How dashed amusin'. Most intriguing and all that sort of thing. I could bear to hear about the bally homicide, old bean, don't y' know."

Barker frowned, glowered, and gritted his teeth. Pants's parts of speech always had this effect on him.

"It's a Pink case this time," he grumbled. "They're bad enough plain, but when they come in colors they're devilish. Some day a Scotch plaid will turn up and finish me."

"Who's the jolly old victim of the distressin' crime? My flutterin' heart's anguished to know."

Barker tore his hair and spat through his teeth grudgingly. "Alonzo Pink," he said, with biting sarcasm.

"I say, y' know, you don't say so," drawled Pants. "Old pal of mine. Spent last evenin' with him, discussin' terra cotta ornamentation of renaissance patisseries and all that. Dead, eh? Amusin' predicament, eh what?"

"Know any other Pinks?" asked Barker in a rage.

"Whole dashed lot, Citronella and Palooka, sisters, Hercules, brother, contemp'ry offspring of heredit-ry sire, old Paresis Pink, bally old blighter."

"Come along, then," gargled Barker furiously.

## CHAPTER II

## SHRIEKS IN THE NIGHT

(Tuesday, December 25, 1929; 3 A. M.)

THE Pink mansion stood on Broadway three blocks south of the Battery, a gloomy pile, embowered in funereal yews and gaunt weeping willows. A foreboding of woe came over me as we neared its ghastly portal.

Snoot, the butler, admitted us. A man of more sinister aspect I have never seen. He had but one eye on each side of his nose and his mouth was practically horizontal. In a sepulchral voice, he told us he had found Alonzo dead in his bedroom, shot through the head, and that all the doors and windows were locked on the inside. A Colt .32 lay by his side. Then he took us to the chamber of death.

†George A. ("Gabby") Barker was the most efficient District Attorney of that name New York ever had. After retirement from office, he became a private citizen.

‡The Blue Murder Case (Scribblers, 1929; \$2.50).  
The Cardinal Murder Case (Scribblers, 1927; \$2.50).

"Oh, I say, my word!" drawled Pants. "How dashed amusin'!"

"What?" barked Barker.

"Don't notice anything funny, eh? Of course, you wouldn't. Why, man, the jolly old corpse is standin' on its head."

And so it was, but only the quick eye of Philo Pants had marked the fact.

"Now," drawled Pants, "we'll interview the caressin' family."

Citronella Pink met us in the library. She was gently but firmly dressed in a jade green bathing suit, a brown bowler, and white spats. She was a beautiful woman, but something about her made me think of either Lucrezia Borgia or Lizzie Borden or both.

"Ever do any shootin', Citronella?" drawled Pants.

"Lots," she said nonchalantly, whipping out a Colt .32.

"Ever shoot Alonzo?"

"Don't you wish you knew?" she said teasingly. "Ask Herc, he knows."

We found Hercules and his sister, Palooka, in the garage. They were shooting at each other with .32 Colts, but, as he had a hare-lip and St. Vitus's dance and she was cockeyed, neither had hit the other. Pants turned to Barker.

"Think I'll take on this amusin' pair after dinner," he drawled. "Give the servants jolly old once over now."

The entire staff was paraded for inspection. They all looked like jailbirds, and it was, indeed, found that they all were. Suspicion having thus been satisfactorily distributed, Pants dismissed Barker. "Run along, old fruit," he drawled. "I'll carry on with silly old Veendam."

## CHAPTER III

## GHOULS AND VAMPIRES

(Thursday, April 1, 1066; 4 A. M.)

AT 9:30 the next morning Pants, in purple velvet pajamas, was sipping his cognac as he idly turned the leaves of an illuminated copy of Teufelsdröckh's "Ichweissnicht Wassolles Bedeutendass Ichsottraurigbin," when our phone rang.

"Barker speaking," said an agitated voice. "Pink case again. Palooka and Hercules found dead in rooms. Doors and windows all locked inside. Colt .32 by side each. Come at once. Mother."

"How deuced annoyin'," drawled Pants. "Must go around to jolly old slaughter-house again."

We met Barker there. "Undoubtedly an inside job," said he, "though it probably started outside. Ku-Klux, I think, with a dash of Mafia and a sprinkling of Paprika. By their fingerprints I've identified Snoot as the late Belle Boyd, the Beautiful Rebel Spy, and the parlor maid as Jesse James."

Pants looked at him with pained surprise. "Listen, Barker," he said earnestly. "There's something terrible going on here. Can't you feel it? In this lonely old mansion—poor thing!—polluted with a miasma of corrupt and rotting ambitions, black hatreds, hideous impulses, rheumatism, catarrh, coughs, colds, and indigestion—in this loathly mansion three bozos have been bumped off. Deuced amusin', eh what? Must have little old parley-vo with Citronella. Roll along, old egg. Toodle-oo and all that sort of thing."

Gasping with rage, Barker left Philo Pants, the master-mind, to pursue his inquiries.

## CHAPTER IV

## RED DARRELL'S REVENGE

(St. Valentine's Day, 1444, 5 A. M.)

AT 9:30 the following morning Barker again appeared at our apartment. He was accompanied by Detective Bogan† and two policemen. Pants greeted the party with his usual charming insouciance.

"Ah, bobbies, what? Why the parade?"

"New development in the Pink case," said Barker in a tone of forbearance. "Citronella dead as per former plans and specifications."

"Pinks all wiped out, eh?" drawled Pants brightly. "No more cannon-fodder, crime wave will subside."

"Wait a bit," hissed Barker. "I've been studying this case and I've reached certain conclusions. First, these victims were all found dead in locked rooms,

†Thomas Aquinas Bogan was first on the scene of the murders of Elwell and Arnold Rothstein and in the Dorothy Arnold disappearance case. He is now raising turtle-doves in Hoboken.

shot through heads with .32 calibre bullets and—mark this hitherto disregarded fact—a .32 Colt was found by the side of each! Do you see what that means? I didn't until Bogan told me. It was in each and every case—suicide." His voice sunk to a whisper as he pronounced the unexpected and dreadful word.

"Very well," he went on. "Why?" I asked Bogan. He answered like a flash—"Bughouse." A logical working hypothesis, I said to myself. "Why bughouse?" I asked Bogan. He answered in two words. But before I tell you what they were let me ask you a few questions. Who was with Alonzo Pink the evening before he shot himself? Who questioned Hercules and Palooka the day before their fatal night? Who 'parley-voed' with Citronella before she shuffled off? The answer is in the two words of the astute Bogan—*Philo Pants!*

"It was you, Pants. Your blithering blah, your musical-comedy English accent drove these people mad, made them fly for relief to self-destruction. You are their murderer. And you, Veendam, were not only his wretched accomplice in this case, but your books, disseminating his words, have sowed the seeds of madness in many homes. Arrest these men!"

As the cops stepped forward, Philo Pants lightly laughed and, unscrewing the tip of his aquamarine nose, took from a cavity within two pellets.

"Catch, old dear," he drawled, as he tossed one to me. "Sorry to disappoint, old fruit," he said to Barker. "It's dashed distressin', but must say toodle-oo and all that sort of thing."

Then together we swallowed the pellets and in a moment we both lay dead upon the floor.

"As usual," said Barker resignedly, "cyanide of potassium."

CHRISTOPHER WARD.

## A Drifter

THE METHODIST FAUN. By ANNE PARRISH. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1929. \$2.50.

Reviewed by GRACE FRANK

**A**NNE PARRISH'S art has deepened. Her touch is as crisp and delicate as ever, but a new undercurrent of sympathy plays about her characterizations and flows, ever so gently, over the shining pebbles of her satire, washing them smooth. Into her acute sense of the futility of her nonentities, there obtrudes in her latest novel a consciousness that even insignificant people may be meet for compassion.

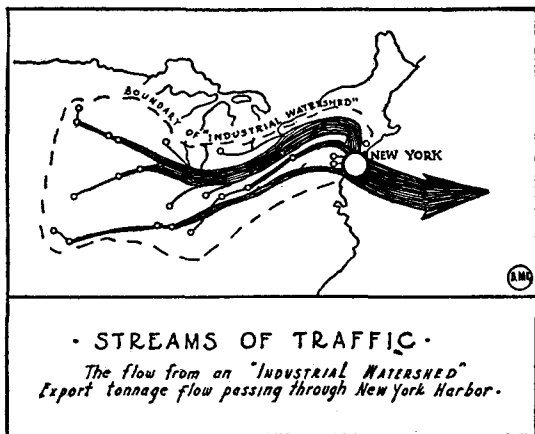
Clifford Hunter, groping, uncertain, most inarticulate when he rushes into speech to reveal himself, is a touching figure despite his weakness and banality. "When he was with people he could never be at his best, because he so desperately wanted to be." It was only when he was idling in the woods, restfully aware of the shapes and colors of trees and streams, or when he was talking to a common little piece of natural scenery like the tawdry Evie, that he lost his primness and became unselfconscious and happy. The sophisticated Cathleen King, upon whom he inflicted his devotion, felt this difference in "the poor little man," as she called him. Once when he talked to her about maiden-hair ferns and tropical plants, instead of trying, as usual, to impress her with his culture and knowledge of Freud, she actually found him neither commonplace nor ridiculous, but potentially pagan and exciting.

Most of the time, however, Clifford was unfortunately attempting to be someone that he could never be—a painter, a man of the world, a gay Bohemian, a faun at a Methodist entertainment—and then he ran foul of his limitations, his environment, or of both together. He drifted to New York, where he lost both Cathleen and his hope of being an artist. He drifted home again, where he lost the little liberty that remained to him by walking blindly into a marriage with a seemingly sympathetic but essentially frigid woman whose immaculacy smothered him.

Without Miss Parrish's humorous knowingness, her detached sense of the incongruous, and her shrewd revelation of the pretenses and pretensions of her various "show-offs," Clifford's story might be merely pathetic, his background merely dull. As it is, however, almost every page is quick with comedy, deft flicks of satire, and irrefutable bits of characterization.



# Our Iron Civilization



Where there is no vision the people perish.  
Proverbs 29:18.

WITH his index finger pointing to this text, Herbert Hoover on March fourth last took his oath to perform the duties of President of the United States. What text more appropriate for our first engineer President? And what is Mr. Hoover hinting at? Does he refer to his own vision or the people's? How may the people perish—physically or spiritually? Does our chief engineer foresee, like Noah of old, some deluge to be visited upon a short-sighted populace? Is it a deluge of water or some other element? (Iron perhaps?) Is it through the eyes of Noah that Mr. Hoover sees America overwhelmed by what he calls "an agglomeration of factories, of railways, of ships, of dynamos?" Perhaps the President as engineer thinks of some new problem of "flood control" within the eddies of our civilization. Perhaps he foresees a danger of perishing (culturally if not industrially) in a flood of iron instead of water. And this, indeed, is our greatest engineering problem—the protection, on the map of America and the world, of the growth of human culture by dyking the inroads of iron civilization. Can the vision of the engineer control the excesses of science?

What is engineering? Controlling the Mississippi River. This is engineering. And President Hoover is (ultimately) the chief engineer of the project. This is a project in control; the control of a flow; the control of a flow of *water*. The Mississippi River project is a diversion of a flow of water from destructive to constructive ends. It is a diversion—and hence a conversion—of flood waters into navigable waters, and into irrigation waters. It is a conversion ultimately of flood and calamity into navigation and commerce, and irrigation and agricultural produce. It is a guiding of inevitable flow from channels of calamity to those of welfare.

Harnessing Muscle Shoals is another project in controlling a flow—the flow not of water but of *power*. To what ends? (Always the first question of the engineer). The Muscle Shoals project converts water to power by diverting the water from cascade to turbine, and the immediate objective, therefore, is power. But the ultimate ends are something else—light and comfort in the home, a substitute for human physical effort, a load off the back of the housewife and the farmer, a shortening of the day's work, and a lengthening of the day's play. The Muscle Shoals project is a conversion of water into power and of power into leisure.

Cutting the Panama Canal, was another project in controlling a flow—not of water and not of power but of *commodities*. To what ends? The immediate end of saving distance; the ultimate end of securing the blessings of food, clothing, and other useful material in proper distribution to the peoples of the world. The saving of distance was accomplished through the physical cutting of the waterway from ocean to ocean. The final objective, which is the proper control of commodity flow to achieve the blessings of civilization through this particular crossroad, is a longer quest. It presents an engineering problem at once vast and complex, but one which is perfectly definite: to convert decrease of distance into decrease of labor, to make a saving in world industry a releasing of world culture. The chief engineer at present on this job is Mr. Hoover.

Some may object perhaps to the use of the concrete term of "engineering" for commodity flow and

its world-wide alliances. Two problems usually embraced in economics do, however, come under engineering. One of these concerns "consumption of goods," which refers merely to such commodities as foods, textiles, household goods, and the million and one material things which clutter up the modern civilized home in America and Western Europe. The other is "capital goods," which refers to the home structure itself as a stationary plant, together with the assemblage of industrial plants—the "factories, railways, ships, and dynamos"—which constitute the outward shell of modern western civilization. Both species of "goods" (or the ingredients thereof) flow through the Panama Canal.

It is the flow of these "capital goods" that forms Mr. Hoover's biggest engineering problem—not alone through Panama and the gateways of the world but within America herself: for this flow once out of hand, would undermine civilization's base and purpose. The flow of "capital goods" (of factories and buildings and gas stations) is intermingled inseparably with the flow of population and the population's culture. Witness the eating stands and tenements, the garages and soap factories which spring up along our American waysides. This combined movement of things and folk is nothing less than the flow itself of a particular species of civilization. Before we can understand this greatest of engineering problems we must better understand the nature of the stream to be controlled.



This stream is one of blood and iron, of man and mechanism, of population and capital goods. The population is composed of human beings; the goods (regardless of their shapes) are composed of a very few ingredients, the most important of which are iron ore, wood, copper, rubber, coal, and petroleum. Of these *iron ore*, with the needed coal to smelt it, forms the nucleus of the entire composition. Without the other ingredients, to be sure, we do not get the particular civilization to which we have referred; but where iron ore and coal beds lie together—there lie the springs and sources of this civilization. From these sources flow the streams of our "iron civilization." These sources happen to lie in the west (in Europe and America) and so the streams of iron and mechanism spreading from these continents, with their accompanying culture and influence, have come to be known collectively as "Western Civilization."

The coal supply of China is almost as great as that of the United States, but the iron ore reserves of China and all Asia are trivial. The world's greatest single supply of iron ore is found in Brazil, but the coal supplies of South America are negligible. Iron and coal must *go together* to be a source of mechanical civilization. The significance of petroleum as a basis for modern mechanism lies in its convenience and not in its ultimate power; and the main supplies lie close to the western centers—in Baku and in Mexico. If a temperate climate is the key to modern progress, then we find it coincident with the regions of iron and coal, for the most temperate climates occur in western Europe and in the eastern United States.

If the material power of civilization should be measured in terms of all its natural resources, its ores, soils, waters, forests, the relative strengths of the world civilizations would be about as follows: the United States nearly a third of the world's total strength; Western Europe (outside of Russia) about one sixth; China and India, one fifth; the southern hemisphere and the equatorial regions, one fifth. Thus the strength in resources of the United States is about twice that of the whole of Western Europe (including the British Isles); the iron ore supply of the United States is four fifths that of Europe, and the coal supply is three times greater. The flow of the European half of Western civilization is in the hands of many nations: so there is *no* chief engineer. But the flow of the American half is in the hands of one nation—with *one* chief engineer.

Mr. Hoover occupies a strategic position among the world leaders. The office of President of the United States gives the engineering type of mind the most potent single influence over the control of

the flow of iron civilization:—and the present incumbent of that office has an engineering mind. To what ends will this mind seek to control this flow? Industrial or cultural? Toward an existence merely, or a complete living? Toward a mechanical expansion only, or a full human growth? Into what molds, concretely, will Mr. Hoover seek to guide the flow of American men and mechanism—of population and capital goods?

I have mentioned projects for molding the flow of civilization already in the public mind which an expert may emphasize as especially worthy, such as Muscle Shoals and the Mississippi River; there is also Boulder Dam and there is the St. Lawrence Waterway. Three of these apply to the flow of water or of water power; the St. Lawrence project would govern the flow also of commodities. All would influence indirectly the flow of American civilization. But there are other projects designed to influence this civilization directly.

ONE of these projects is the recently announced "Regional Plan of New York and Environs" made by the Russell Sage Foundation. This gives the specifications for a definite type and habitat—namely, the metropolitan mold. It suggests lines of least resistance for the present tendencies of metropolitan expansion. It makes no effort to get behind the tendencies themselves and to judge their net effect on human kind. Present flows of goods and population demand certain channels—belt lines, subways, vehicular tunnels: hence these channels must be provided without thought of a substitute for the metropolitan mold itself.

This principle of guiding a flow is directly contrary to that employed in guiding the flow of water, where everything but the tendency to run down hill is changed with reference to the effect on mankind. The demand to flow over the waterfall is deliberately curbed and made to seek its outlet through the penstock and the turbine. The tendency for Lake Erie to flow into Lake Ontario is not questioned but its demand to flow via Niagara Falls is definitely checked and could be checkmated.

Another set of projects designed to mold portions of American civilization is well known under the inclusive term of "conservation" and here the principle employed in controlling the flow of water is applied to the flow of development and population. The tendency of population to seek an outlet toward the open lands and the primeval spaces is not to be questioned. But the attempt of real estate developers and other elements in the population to commercialize the primeval setting and reduce its area through inappropriate building is deliberately checked; and the "streams" of metropolitan development along the motor ways crossing a public area are "dyked" and "damned" as literally as the streams which form the Mississippi. A "dam" of this kind occurs on the Mohawk Highway where it crosses the eastern slope of Hoosac Mountain, Massachusetts. This dam consists of a State Forest through which the highway and its stream of motor traffic pass untrammelled; but not the stream of metropolitan agglomeration! No bill-board, dog-stand, tenement, nor factory! Instead the primeval mold and setting is retained. But just outside the Forest, on the top and west side of the range, where the State neglected to purchase a protecting belt, the highway is lined with the typical metropolitan slum. Thus on one side of the mountain the tendency of the metropolitan stream to run wild along its channel is unchecked; but on the other side it is checked deliberately and the stream prevented from intruding within a setting not its own.

This principle of checking the tendencies of metropolitan flow is being applied in certain sections within the very area itself claimed for New York's metropolitan expansion. The little city of Radburn, near Paterson in New Jersey, being built by the City Housing Corporation, consists of a community unit designed deliberately and successfully to divert the flow of population from Manhattan Island away from its customary metropolitan agglomeration and to lead it into a preconceived mold designed to obtain an organic unit of human contacts. As the flow of civilization is definitely checked in order to