

NO MAN'S LAND A ROMANCE

By LOUIS JOSEPH VANCE
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SYNOPSIS.

Garrett Coast, a young man of New York City, meets Douglas Blackstock, who invites him to a card party. He accepts, although he dislikes Blackstock, the reason being that both are in love with Katherine Thaxter. Coast fails to convince her that Blackstock is unworthy of her friendship. At the party Coast meets two named Dundas and Van Tuyl. There is a quarrel, and Blackstock shoots Van Tuyl dead. Coast struggles to wrest the weapon from him, thus the police discover them. Coast is arrested for murder. He is convicted, but as he begins his sentence, Dundas names Blackstock as the murderer and kills himself. Coast becomes free, but Blackstock has married Katherine Thaxter and fled. Coast purchases a yacht and while sailing sees a man thrown from a distant boat. He rescues the fellow who is named Appleyard. They arrive at a lonely island, known as No Man's Land. Coast starts out to explore the place and comes upon some deserted buildings. He discovers a man dead. Upon going further and approaching a house he sees Katherine Thaxter, who explains that her husband, under the name of Black, has bought the island. He is blind, a wireless operator and has a station there. Coast informs her that her husband murdered Van Tuyl. Coast sees Blackstock and some Chinamen burying a man. They fire at him, but he is rescued by Appleyard, who gets him to the Echo in safety, and there he reveals that he is a secret service man and has been watching the crowd on the island, suspecting they are criminals. Coast is anxious to fathom the mysteries of No Man's Land, and is determined to save Katherine. Appleyard believes that Black and his gang make a shield of the wireless station to conduct a smuggling business. Coast penetrates to the lair of Blackstock's disguise. Katherine enters the room and passes him a note which tells Coast that neither his life or her own are safe. Coast feels that Blackstock suspects him. Appleyard and the Echo disappear.

CHAPTER XV.—(Continued.)

It was as if she had been expecting him; she seemed not at all surprised. But there was no light of welcome in her look, nor any trace of welcome in her greeting as he stopped before her, hat in hand and heart in his throat, with something in his bearing that called to mind a child convicted of transgression and pleading for suspension of judgment.

"I came out here to think," she said—"at least to try to think. But I hoped that if you saw me you would follow."

"I'm glad," he said, "though I didn't know you were here. It's hardly likely we'll have so good a chance to talk again."

"Yes," she admitted simply. There was a little catch in her voice and she fancied her lips quivered like the lips of a tired child as she looked away from him, seeking again the sight of the sea as if she drew from it some solace, some sorely needed strength against her trials. "We must talk, of course. . . . I have been trying all night to think . . . but everything seems so. . . ."

She left the sentence incomplete, raising her hands to press them against her temples and then dropping them with a gesture of utter weariness.

"Oh," she cried, "why did you come back? You promised, you went away, and I—I was sorry for you and prayed you might find happiness, Garrett. You promised, and—you came back—came back like a ghost to haunt me with memories and regrets." Her voice rose to a pitch of wildness. "Sometimes, last night, I thought that surely you must be a ghost—that you had been executed, killed and buried, and were come back to be his punishment and mine, and mine!"

"His punishment—his?" he echoed. "Then, Katherine, then you do believe—!"

"Ah, how do I know? What do I believe—what can I believe? I don't know. I can't think right; it's all so—so terrible." Her tone fell to a low pitch of fatigue, dejection and bewilderment. She leaned heavily against the wall, watching the sullen, interminable succession of the surges. "You sowed doubt in my mind and fear in my heart when you bade me weigh what I once knew of the good in you against what I have learned of him. I tried—so hard!—to do so justly and still believe you the guilty one. . . . You swept the ground from under me with arguments, your attitude, your explanations; and though they were your unsupported words. . . . I never knew you to lie to me, Garrett, and I couldn't, can't believe you would bring me a lie to torture me, just for revenge. You made me think, and—at times I feared I should go mad, and then again I was afraid I wouldn't. . . . She turned suddenly to him and grasping his arms, lifting frantic, piteous eyes to his. "Oh, Garrett, Garrett!" she pleaded, half hysterically, "tell me you lied, tell me it isn't true, tell me it was you—!"

He shook his head sorrowfully, and with a short dry sob she released him and fell back against the wall, shaken and trembling.

"If," he said, slowly—"if I thought it would make you happy if I believed that any good of any sort could come

of it to you, Katherine, if I could even think it safe, I would lie—I'd lie with a clear conscience and tell you it was I who killed Van Tuyl. I've taken time to think it over and I've tried to think straight, to think the way that would be best for you, and . . . Well, I've come back."

"But why?" she repeated abruptly. "Why? What good-can you do? Can you lift this weight from my heart, can you right the wrong to yourself, by being here? Can you bring Van Tuyl back to life or make my—the man—I married less than a murderer—?"

"I came to protect you; you were alone and friendless."

"He would not harm me," she said in an uncertain voice.

"Do you believe that? Do you expect me to believe it when I have seen the marks of his brutality upon your arm?"

"He didn't mean it, Garrett. He has his temper and—sometimes he forgets and doesn't realize his strength—but he would never do worse. If it's true—and, oh, I know it must be!—that he did—what you were accused



"I'll Tell You in a Moment," He TempORIZED.

of—it has been a lesson to him. I'm sure it has. He—"

Garrett shook his head. "Then what made you write that message last night?" he asked.

"What do you mean? . . . Oh, I don't know. I was afraid. . . ."

"And I was afraid," he said gravely, "and still am. That's why I couldn't stay away. The only man you could turn to in case of need was gone."

"Mr. Power?" She flashed him a startled look.

"How did you know that yesterday? And how did you find another man to take his place—his name, and everything? So that you dared come here in his stead. . . ."

"I found it out before I left the island yesterday morning," he said slowly, wondering how much he dared tell her.

It seemed needlessly cruel to shock her with the story of the murder on the island at that time; some hours must surely elapse before Appleyard could return; indeed, Coast did not expect him till the evening. And until then matters must stand as they were; nothing must be allowed to happen to rouse Blackstock's suspicions. But if she knew that Power had been assassinated—could existing conditions continue to obtain? Would she be able to continue to bear herself toward Blackstock as she had theretofore?

He decided to keep her in the dark as long as possible. He continued: "There were two of us ashore, you know—my companion as well as myself. It seems he stumbled upon the bungalow in the fog and accidentally overheard a part of Power's final quarrel with Blackstock. Then he—learned"—Coast sturred the ex-

planation, but she forgot to question it—"that a man named Handyside was to replace Power. So we thought it over and decided I was to be Handyside."

She was facing him squarely now, eyes wide with interest and alarm. "But—but how can you? What do you know about the work? The minute he" (she could no longer name Blackstock intimately, it seemed) "asks you to send or take a message—"

"I will cheerfully comply, if required," he assured her. "You see, I know enough about the system to make a stagger at operating. You forget my experience with the signal corps in the Spanish war—that taught me Morse; and it also interested me enough in such things to make me spend a good deal of time in the wireless room every time I crossed the water. I couldn't help picking up a working knowledge of the system under such circumstances. Don't worry; I'll make good when the call comes."

"But this Mr. Handyside—he may arrive at any time now; and then—"

"I doubt if he ever sees the island," Coast interrupted, smiling. "You see, the Corsair did run aground in Quick's Hole; we were the amateur asses that got in her way. And we left her there. Now Appleyard—that's my companion—has gone back to see that Messrs. Finn and Hecksher and Handyside do nothing rash."

"He can prevent them?" A pucker of perplexity gathered between her brows. "How?"

"He'll manage somehow; he's very clever, Appleyard is—"

"But he must have some plan," she

do I understand that no one ever visits the island except your weekly boat from New Bedford?"

"No one. . . . That is, sometimes, fishermen—"

"For what purpose?"

"I don't know; there was once quite a settlement of them down there, you know; and I understand they still use some of the buildings to store dried fish in. I'm afraid that never interested me much."

"You never watched them—?"

"No; generally they come to anchor after nightfall and are gone before daylight the next morning. Sometimes he has gone down to the beach to talk to them, but as a rule Mr. Power went with him."

"Their visits are fairly regular?"

"I think so; the schooner comes about once a month, I should say. But—"

"And between whiles smaller boats call?"

"Now and then, yes."

"Do you recall when the schooner was here last?"

"About a month ago, I think. But, Garrett—"

"Just a minute, and then I'll explain what I'm driving at. . . . Now isn't it a fact that Blackstock and Power were busiest with the wireless as a rule for a few days before the schooner showed up?"

She nodded thoughtfully. "I never connected the two; but it was so. How did you know?"

"I merely guess. Now I'm going to guess again, in another direction. . . . You didn't inherit much from your aunt, did you?"

"Why . . . a few keepsakes only. You see, she disapproved of my engagement to Mr. Blackstock, Garrett, and when I—was stubborn, she changed her will, just a little while before she died. She left everything in trust to me, but I was to receive nothing until I divorced my husband, or he died. The house is mine, but not to rent or sell, nor may I live in it except alone or with a woman companion only."

"I thought—something of the sort. . . . Your private fortune wasn't large, was it?"

"Not large—between sixty and seventy thousand dollars."

"And you let Blackstock take care of it?"

"Of course. He was my husband, I loved and trusted him—then." The last word fell with a bitter accent.

"And while abroad—he gambled pretty extensively?"

TALES OF KINGS' CROWNS

Alfred the First English Monarch to Wear One—Richard II. Once Pawned His.

The first English king who wore a crown was Alfred, A. D. 871. Long prior to that date we know that a crown was worn by the Roman king, Tarquin. And in the Bible it is told how the Amalekites brought Saul's crown to David.

But the early crowns were not as they are now. At first merely a flet of cloth was used, then a garland, and, later on, cloth adorned with pearls.

The popes gradually developed this emblem of kingship, and in A. D. 925 Athelstan, king of England, wore a modern earl's coronet. In 1066 William the Conqueror added a coronet, with pearls, to his ducal cap. The crosses on the crown of England were introduced by Richard III, and the "arches" were added by Henry VII. in 1485.

Richard II., as most people know, was at one time in such a needy condition that he pawned his crown and regalia to the city of London for \$10,000.

The Black Hand.

"Our whole neighborhood has been stirred up," said the regular reader. The editor of the country weekly seized his pen. "Tell me all about it," he said. "What we want is news? What stirred it up?"

"Flowing," said the farmer.—Driftwood.

Romance Is Not Yet Dead

Little Incident of the Streets of San Francisco Shows That It Still Lives.

At the corner of Twenty-second and Guerrero streets a young man waited for a car. Out of the corner of his eye he saw two other people waiting—a boy just out of his teens and a young girl. A suit case stood near them. The boy leaned against a plate glass window and looked impatiently up the street.

"I wish that car would hurry!" murmured the girl in a tone of voice low, but not so low that the near-by young man could hear.

"What if your father should come along!" the boy muttered. "Gee, if your father should come along before the car gets here!"

"Oh, he won't," the girl said, with a

simulation of unconcern. "He never walks along here where the cars go. He doesn't like the noise."

"If your father should come along first!" muttered the boy. That was evidently the thing uppermost in his mind.

And the young man who stood near by smiled to himself to know that romance is not dead, but still lives—in the mission!

And he smiled again to think that of the two the girl seemed the cooler. —San Francisco Chronicle.

Good Thing to Do.

Telegraph poles are lined up so that their crooks are turned in and not seen as you look along the line. Turn your twists away from people and not at them.

WHO CAN DOUBT SWORN TESTIMONY OF HONEST CITIZENS?

Some time ago I began the use of your Swamp-Root with the most remarkable results. For years I was almost a wreck and was a great sufferer. The doctors who treated me made me believe that my great sufferings were due to female trouble. I was so bad at times I would faint away and had sinking spells. Finally a new doctor was called in and he said that I had kidney trouble and gave me medicine, of which I took several bottles. I obtained some relief from this, but I was getting weaker all the time; I could not sleep and suffered so much pain that my husband and children had to lift me in and out of bed. After this time two friends sent me word to try Swamp-Root, which I did, and I am glad to state that the first dose gave me great relief. After taking the third dose I was helped into bed and slept half of the night.

I took several bottles of Swamp-Root and I feel that I owe my life to this wonderful remedy. The two family doctors said that I could not live three months. I would have to be helped in and out of bed ten to twenty times every night. After taking Dr. Kilmer's Swamp-Root for two days I was entirely free from getting up and could sleep soundly.

MRS. D. E. HILEMAN,
Tunnelton, W. Va.

Personally appeared before me, this 11th of September, 1909, Mrs. D. E. Hileman, who subscribed the above statement and made oath that the same is true in substance and in fact.

JOSEPH A. MILLER,
Notary Public.

Letter to
Dr. Kilmer & Co.,
Binghamton, N. Y.

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Wheat Goes Down.

De Broker—Hear about De Curb?
De Ledger—No. What's happened to him?

De Broker—Knocked flat.
De Ledger—You don't say so. Was he caught by the drop in wheat?

De Broker—Well, yes; something like that. A barrel of flour fell on him.

After 10 Years of Suffering, Show Man Finds Relief in Tetterine.

"I have been troubled with a severe case of Tetter for ten years. In Columbia last week a druggist recommended Tetterine. I bought a box; it gave me relief, so I bought another and am entirely well."—Law Wren, Chicago.

Tetterine cures Eczema, Tetter, Itching Piles, Ring Worm and every form of Scalp and Skin Disease. Tetterine 50c; Tetterine Soap 25c. Your druggist, or by mail from the manufacturer, The Shuptrine Co., Savannah, Ga.

With every mail order for Tetterine we give a box of Shuptrine's 10c Liver Pills free.

The longing of the moment always seems the great essential. We are apt to forget the long eternity of regret.—Corelli.

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