

NO MAN'S LAND A ROMANCE

By LOUIS JOSEPH VANCE
ILLUSTRATIONS BY RAY WATERS
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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 Tassel. There is a quarrel, and Blackstock shoots Dundas. Coast is arrested for the 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 sails, seeing 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. She explains that her husband, under the name of Black, has bought the island. He is a stationer, a witness and a man who has murdered Van Tassel. Coast is horrified and some time later, burying a man. They fire at him, but he is rescued by Appleyard, who gets him to the E-house and tells him that he is a secret service man and has been watching the crowd on the island, suspecting that the man Coast is anxious to fathom the mysteries of "No Man's Land," and is determined to save Katherine. Black and his gang make a shield of the station station to conduct a smuggling business. Coast penetrates to the heart of Blackstock's disguise.

CHAPTER XIII.—(Continued.)

Blackstock spoke abruptly the instant Coast succeeded in forcing the door to—abruptly and harshly, but with a certain jerky intonation that betrayed jangled nerves: an involuntary confession most welcome to his hearer; this was, after all, with all its viciousness, a human being—no such nerveless monster of blood and iron as Appleyard had pictured in his narrative of the hour of the assassination, or even as Coast had come to figure the man in his long days of hopeless brooding.

"Who's that?" he cried. "Who's there? What the devil—"

He paused to control his agitation. But Coast withheld his reply an appreciable moment. Then, "Mr. Black, I believe," he said quietly.

"Black?" The man started at sound of an unfamiliar voice, and Coast saw his great frame quiver—slightly, indeed, but perceptibly. "That's my name," he continued hoarsely. "But you mean by coming in here without knocking?" he added with a show of bluster.

"I knocked—several times," Coast lied steadily. "The wind, doubtless—"

"Sorry I started you; thought you'd be expecting me."

"Expecting you!" Blackstock moved impatiently. "But, damn it, who are you? Can't you give yourself a name?"

"Why, Handside, of course." Coast's tone was a perfection of polite surprise. "Surely," it seemed to say, "you must've been looking for me!" Distrusting deliberately artificial inflections, he was at pains to speak crisply, as was not his habit; such being the only way he could think of to disguise his voice. He was watching Blackstock closely, alert for a sign of recognition in the man's expression. Somewhat to his surprise he detected none. "I got orders to come here and relieve Power last night," he continued. "Come down this morning to New Bedford and—"

The words froze upon his lips. A door to his left had opened; Katherine stood there, watching, listening. Apparently she had started to enter without any suspicion that her husband was not talking to one of the servants, and in her astonishment had stopped. The figure of the man by the door could not but be strange to her, masked as its every line and contour was by clumsy and flimsy collars and the deep shadow cast by the broad turned-down brim of a sou'wester. "Set Coast thought to discern a deathless apprehension in her pose, a mute but infinitely pitiful question in her eyes. And his heart stood still, for the crucial instant was imminent; in another minute, at the most, she would be his. And then—"

"Well!" Blackstock roused him. "What you stopping for? I'm listening!"

"I beg pardon," Coast tugged at the button on the chin-strap of his sou'wester. "The lady there— I didn't know—"

Blackstock turned his head impatiently, moving his sightless eyes in the direction of Katherine. "Oh," he said, "my wife—"

The woman moved quickly into the room. "Yes," she said, still with her eyes to the stranger. "It is I, Douglas. I didn't know—I fancied one of the servants."

"This is Mr. Handside," Blackstock told her sharply, as if irritated by the interruption; "he's to take Power's place—"

Coast removed his sou'wester and came forward a pace, so that the light was strong upon his face. "Yes, ma'am," he said, "I'm the new operator. 'How do you do?'" He contrived to keep his tone coolly respectful and impersonal, but his eyes were pleading with her, and he hung upon the issue of her response as a condemned man lives in the hope of a reprieve. She knew him now; his action in discovering his features had but hastened slightly the confirmation of her most dread premonition. And of a sudden her face was a mask of chagrin set with eyes that blazed with cold fires of terror. Coast saw her sway, but though he feared she was about to faint, dared not move to her assistance. Indeed, there was no need; she was fashioned of sterner stuff; though every atom of her being shuddered, she remained mistress of herself. An instant's delay would have been damning; she knew that—and her answer fell pat as he ceased to speak.

"Good evening," she said so admirably that there was even a hint of languid indifference in her voice. "You have surprised me, Mr. Handside."

"It's hard to believe. D'you mean to tell me you made the run through this storm?"

The blood flowed back into Coast's heart. He flashed the woman a look of thanks, but her gaze was blank as she met his, and he knew that as yet she existed and guided her actions automatically. The real awakening to the situation was yet to come—nor with her would it be long delayed.

The crisis was not yet past. "Well," he said, with a careless half-laugh, "I'm here, you see. It is a blow, that's a fact. Had me frightened; I've seen some storms—but they were from the decks of steamships." He began to unfasten the oilskin coat. "Lucky to get here at all, I guess."

"That's true, or I'm no judge of weather. I wonder you managed to get Finn and Hecksher to take the chance."

"They didn't want to." Coast offered up a fervent prayer of gratitude for the fortuitous turn of the conversation that had supplied him with the names of Mr. Handside's traveling companions. "But I was told to hustle because Power was leaving you practically without notice, so I insisted. Of course the fog held us up all morning; and then we had to have an accident."

"How's that?" Blackstock sat down heavily, still with his staring eyes turned toward Coast, his face clouded

with thoughtfulness. "Where are they, anyway?" he continued without pause, as one reminded of an oversight. "Finn—Hecksher—why aren't they with you?"

"Oh, they're all right," Coast parried, making time for Katherine, whose struggle to retain her poise and comprehend just what it all meant was engaging his attention to such a degree that he had to force himself to give heed to Blackstock. "You don't need to worry about them."

Blackstock leaned forward, scowling intently. "What d'you mean by that? Didn't they bring you here?"

"Only part way; you see, this accident I mentioned—"

"What sort of an accident? Hang it, if they didn't bring you— Where'd you leave them?"

"Safe enough—high and dry—aground in Quick's Hole."

"The devil you say! How'd Finn come to run the Corsair aground? Why, he knows more about this coast—"

"Not his fault. It came about kindness of some amateur asses—beg pardon, Mrs. Black; I'm quoting Mr. Finn—in a cabotage. . . . They almost ran us down when we were about midway through the Hole—didn't seem to know what they were doing; and in trying to avoid a collision we piled up on a shoal on the leeward side of the channel—forgot the name of the island it makes off from."

Coast hesitated in assumed perplexity, in actual trepidation more acute

edly upon the table beside him, moved it to and fro, found the edge of the whisky tray, and grasped the neck of the decanter. "You've earned a drink, Handside?"

"Thank you," he said, "but I'm on the wagon."

Blackstock chuckled. "That's your affair," he said. "I'm not." There was a grain of combative bravado in the latter words. He splashed whisky into a tumbler and diluted it with a little water, finding the objects with an adroitness on a par with that which had excited Appleyard's interest.

"Health," he said, tersely, and drank. The woman roused herself. "Perhaps Mr. Handside will sit down," she suggested in a toneless voice.

Her eyes challenged Coast's. He looked away, unable to endure their pitiful defiance. The drama of her life had needed but this last heart-rending touch. There are tragedies in women's life beside which death itself is trifling.

"No, thanks; I'm all wet." He wondered to hear his own voice so steady and in character with his impersonation. "About done up, too. If you don't mind, I'd like to turn in."

"I'll show you the way," Blackstock rose. "You're to have Power's room."

Coast's glance was instant to the woman's face and found it inscrutable. Did she or did she not suspect? "Power won't mind?" he asked quickly; and still she showed no sign.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)



"Lucky to Get 'ere at All, I Guess."

Swordfish and Beer Keg

New York Judge Tells a Lurid Tale of Adventure Off Black Island.

Judge Tom Dineen is back with his good ship Nomad after a cruise in which he had some rare adventures, says the New York Times. Here's one as he tells it himself with his well known regard for veracity:

"We were fifteen miles off Block Island in the dusk of the day when we came on a school of salt mackerel. First thing we knew a swordfish butted in and there was a wild scramble among the mackerel. The swordfish filled up on the school and then like an overfed hog took a nap on the surface of the water. My engineer used to be a New Bedford whaler and he carries a lot of old-time tackle on the Nomad. He went forward and heaved a harpoon into the small of the swordfish's back. He had al-

ready secured an empty beer keg—got that empty?—to the end of the harpoon line. Mr. Swordfish as soon as the harpoon got into him took it on the run with the beer keg trailing along. He dived and tacked and doubled on his tracks, but the keg was ever on the job. Finally his despair and exhaustion did the trick. He gave a feeble flicker with his tail and he hauled him aboard. He was six feet two inches long and weighed four hundred pounds, and say—he was fine eating."

Properly Punished. "I refuse to pay. If I do, I hope my arms will drop off," declared a man recently when summoned by the Stourbridge (Eng.) Guardians for declining to pay for a week towards the maintenance of his mother. A startling sequel to his oath occurred the other day when he became paralyzed.

than he cared to acknowledge even to himself. "Pasque, you mean?" "That's it." But though his story seemed to be credited, the tension held unrelaxed; Katherine was recovering from her shock and . . . What would she do when she had had time to take second thought? Would her primal impulse shield him, to further his deception, prevail? Or would some mad concept of duty force her to expose him and bring ruin down upon them both?

He could not keep his eyes from her. Not a detail of her attitude escaped him, not a convulsive movement of her hand (in whose resplendent lay his life and hers). She stood unmoving by the table, one hand touching it for support.

Meanwhile he heard himself talking, responding glibly to Blackstock's testy catechism. "But how the devil'd you get here, then?"

"Pure luck. We'd been stuck about half an hour when a fisherman—fellow named Wise, from Vineyard Haven—came along, trying to beat the storm home. We hailed him and he luffed up to us—he could do that with his boat, a light-draught Cape Cod cat; and I offered him a ten-spot to bring me on. You see, I understood it was an emergency case. He held back a bit, but the sight of the money fetched him; and he earned it. I wouldn't take that trip again for a hundred dollars."

"Well, then . . . But what's become of him?"

"Oh, he went back to his boat—said he didn't dare to leave her for fear she'd drag and come up on the beach. Besides, he said his wife'd be fretting about him and he wanted to be ready to beat back the first sign of a let up."

"I see," Blackstock nodded slowly. "You must be pretty well touched up." He laid his hand as if abstract-

The pleas of those after a "loan" are in many cases both heartrending and plausible. A cable message is often displayed which may read: "Sorry delay. Draft for thousand first mail." Who could refuse a clean-cut young fellow from Milwaukee after he had told you of the clothing locked up at his hotel, of two sleepless nights passed in walking the streets of Paris? With tears in his eyes he assures you that not a morsel of food has he swallowed in eight and forty hours; then he exhibits the cable message, and you part with 50 or 100 francs—never to see it again.

The beggars are a nuisance, the borrowers are a pest, but the so-called American "guides" of the great French city are most unquestionably the worst of the lot, in that their dealings with American visitors, while apparently straightforward, are as crooked as the proverbial ram's horn. Graft, under a thousand different cloaks, enters into their propositions. They toll not, nor do they spin, yet few tourists eat better food, drink better wine or wear more fashionable attire than do these buccaners of the boulevards.

They pounce upon you as you leave your train at the Gare St. Lazare; they scan the columns of the newspapers for the names and addresses of the newly arrived Americans; they haunt the vicinages of the Grand hotel; they hail you as you leave the Credit Lyonnais after cashing a draft; but possibly of all places their favorite stamping ground is along the northern side of the Boulevard des Capucines. Here, upon every hand, particularly during the late afternoon and evening, you will encounter the American "guide" airily swinging his rattan stick, his shifty eyes looking for the telltale American derby.

Naturally, if it be your first visit to Paris, you desire to see all Paris, both before and after dark. He will help you. You hail with delight the coming of the Interpreter-guide who speaks your language, for are not the sights and mysteries of Paris as an open book to him?

His rates are only a lous a day and expenses, but even this sum can be shaded should you plead your inability to afford that sum. Should you be unable to afford a half-lous, or even a measly five-franc piece, it is more than likely that the guide will yawn, gaze up and down the boulevard, and then deliver himself substantially as follows:

"Well, I'm sorry. Times are pretty slow over here and I'm not very busy. But look a-here—I'll tell you what I'll do: I've nothing on today or tonight, and seeing that you're from Little Old New York—my home town—I'll show you around for nothing, just for the sake of passing away the time. You pay the cab fares, the lunch, the supper, and I'll show you everything which appeals to the inner man."

Even should you venture into a place where your guide is personally unknown to the management he still obtains his commission, for when you enter his first move is to whisper to the proprietor or manager these four magic words: "Je suis l'interprete." The commission is added to the price, and rare indeed are the shops or resorts which do not make it "worth

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Good blood, then, is the prime necessity for keeping all the organs and muscles in strong and healthy condition, and the breathing of pure air, together with the assimilation of a sufficient quantity of the proper kind of food, is necessary for good blood.

Political Breakers Ahead. Parties are an essential part of representative government, and can be effective only by organization; but when organization degenerates into a brutal machinery that stifles intelligence and true patriotism, the republic is moribund. As the perfunctory and bigoted exercise of the suffrage has gradually extinguished much of the manhood of American citizenship, so the restoration of intelligence, conscience and individual independence in this prime duty will be the sole effective means of eradicating many existing evils and preventing others that might be equally dangerous.—Silas W. Burt.

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AMERICAN GRAFTERS IN PARIS

By STEPHEN ALLEN REYNOLDS

LONG the boulevards between the Madeleine and the Place de la Republique, along the Champs Elysees from the Arch to the Obelisk, in little braseries along the Seine, in the so-called "American bars" of the Opera quarter, in the pastry shops along the Rue de Faubourg St. Honore, at the

prix fixe tables d'hotel along the Boul' Mich of the Latin quarter—in fact, in almost any of the twenty arondissements within the fifty-six gates of the French capital, will be found the ubiquitous American grafter.

Attracted to you by either the American roll to the brim of your derby or your Brockton made shoe, he will unerringly single you out as a fellow-countryman abroad on pleasure bent, therefore fish for his net. He may be working on one of the three common "lays"—the "touch," the "loan" or the "guide." In other words, he may brazenly ask you for a small sum of money with which he may obtain food or lodging, he may tell you a hard luck story about a mythical deified draft and ask you for a loan to tide him over, or he may offer to guide you around and about Paris at so much an hour or a day.

The pleas of those after a "loan" are in many cases both heartrending and plausible. A cable message is often displayed which may read: "Sorry delay. Draft for thousand first mail." Who could refuse a clean-cut young fellow from Milwaukee after he had told you of the clothing locked up at his hotel, of two sleepless nights passed in walking the streets of Paris? With tears in his eyes he assures you that not a morsel of food has he swallowed in eight and forty hours; then he exhibits the cable message, and you part with 50 or 100 francs—never to see it again.

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while" for the man who accompanies you.

Indeed, some of these self-styled "interpreter-guides" have been residents of Paris for such short space that their French vocabulary is practically limited to those four words.

In the early hours of the morning, after the guide has shaken hands with the last cocher in front of your hotel, you thank your companion for his kindness in helping you to pass an enjoyable evening. You may even take pity on him on account of the dull state of his business and surreptitiously slip a half-louis into his receptive palm. He will not object. He has spent twelve hours, more or less, with you, and seems to have been well acquainted wherever you went. You are confident that he has saved you money, and naturally you feel grateful toward him.

The fact of the matter is that he has been driven all over the city at your expense; he has lunched and dined with you, to say nothing of the midnight bite at the Cafe Weber; and if you have spent the sum of 200 francs during the afternoon and evening you may rest assured that gold and silver amounting to some 80 or 100 francs—once yours—is safe in one of the pockets of the guide's fashionably cut trousers.

It was one of the privileges of the writer to listen to the abstruse inspired confidences of a number of American "guides" and panhandlers. A young man wearing a frock coat and well ironed silk topper approached the table and begged for the privilege of a few words with me. His linen was spotless—his story seemed flawless.

He had, so he said, been robbed in Montmartre while seeing the town a few nights before. He had called for funds, but a heartless landlord had locked up his ten suits of clothing and turned him into the street. Would I kindly come to his relief with a small loan for a few days until the arrival of his draft? He exhibited a typewritten cable message which looked promising, and the tears came to my eyes as I thought of his predicament and overpeppered my bouillon.

"I'm sorry I can't help you out," I told him. "You see, this happens to be my third visit to Paris, and I've heard all about these heartless landlords and delayed drafts before. Those sleeve buttons of yours ought to fetch enough at the Mont de Piete to tide you over for a few days should you be on the level."

The man in the frock coat was about to sink away, when I asked him to join me and have an apertif. Over an absinthe-au-sure he waxed confidential and told me his story.

"You're wise," said he, as he surveyed the opalescent contents of his glass. "There sure is a bunch of American grafters over here having a pretty soft time. I've only been over here two months, but some of the push have been here for years."

He helped himself to my cigarettes and continued:

"Paris is a cheap place to live in. A perfect dinner costs very little. The rent of a nice room is about half what you have to pay in New York, less than that once you can speak French and know how to make a bargain. Nothing of the best sort can be had for a song, and a two-horse carriage can be hired for about twice the price of a carfare in the states."

"Pickings are good during the tourist season, and the only kick that the boys have is on the French shoes and cigarettes. Several of the bunch import their own smokes. Of course, the favorite graft is the American tourist. He always has money, and is over here to spend it and have a good time. If we spin a good yarn about hard luck it's pretty easy to make a 'touch' for a lous, and 'most any New Yorker will fall for a five-franc piece."

"I used to keep a set of books in Cleveland," another American grafter told me over a glass of Algerian "Bordeaux" in a little braserie in the Rue Vierge. "I'd saved a bit of money and felt too strong to push a pen any longer, so I came over here to take in the sights. I went broke the third day after my arrival, and as I found so many people willing to help me I've stayed here ever since. Paris is all right after you've lived here awhile and know the ropes. I'm here going on seven years now, and I expect to live here the rest of my life."

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Natural Avoidance.
Mayor Gaynor of New York was defending his anti-suffrage views: "Woman has her place and man has his," he said, "and when I think of the confusion that would come from intermingling their places, I am reminded of an anecdote about Lady Holland. Lady Holland once said to Lord John Russell: 'Why hasn't Lord Holland got a post in the cabinet?'" "Well, if you must know," Lord John answered, "it is because nobody would work in a cabinet with a man whose wife opens all his letters."

Wheat Goes Down.
De Broker—Hear about De Curbb? De Ledger—No. What's happened to him?
De Broker—Knocker, flat.
De Ledger—You don't say? Was he caught by the drop in wheat?
De Broker—Well, yes; something like that. A barrel of flour fell on him.

Positively Brilliant.
"Did you hear young Pouders playing on the piano just now?"
"Yes, I consider him a remarkable performer."
"How is that?"
"He can hit more wrong keys in less time than any other person I ever saw."

When Your Eyes Need Care
Try Murine Eye Remedy. No Smarting—Feels Fine—Acts Quickly. Try it for Red, Weak, Watery Eyes and Granulated Eyelids. Illustrated Book in each Package. Murine is compounded by our Oculists—not a "Patent Medicine"—but used in every case of Itching, Bleeding, or Prolonging of Eyes in 6 to 14 days. Sold by Druggists at 25c and 50c per Bottle. Murine Eye Salve in Aseptic Tubes, 25c and 50c. **Murine Eye Remedy Co., Chicago**

Out of Date.
"Every time he opens his mouth he puts his foot in it."
"That's a great pity. Cont