

SERIAL STORY

No Man's Land

A ROMANCE

By Louis Joseph Vance

Illustrations by Ray Walters

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CHAPTER I

A gentleman, who, leaving his office on lower Broadway a trifle after four, presently encountered himself in a corner seat of a Subway express and opened before him a damp afternoon paper (with an eye for the market reports) was surprised, when the train crashed heavily into the Fourteenth Street station, to find himself afoot and making for the door; this although his intention had been to alight at Grand Central. That it may be, that trickster in us all, which we are accustomed vaguely to denounce as the subconscious mind, directs our actions to an end predestined and foreseen.

Surprised, he hesitated, and for that was rewarded by having his heels trodden by the passenger behind. This decided him, absurdly enough, and he went on and out, selecting himself with a mutter something, hardly definite, about a stroll, bemoaning, so, transferring to a local train, he alighted at Twenty-third Street, climbed the stairs and proceeded briskly west, buffeted by a rowdy wind.

Striking diagonally across Madison Square Park, past the drearily jetting fountain and between arrays of empty benches scarcely beggarly (since that class had deserted them for warmer lounging places) he turned northward on Fifth Avenue, threading the early evening throngs with a spring of impatience in his stride to distance casual conversation, and received upon a mind still impressionable for all that it had ample food for meditation and nursed a private grievance, a variety of pleasurable suggestions.

Dusk, the early violet dusk of late November, brooded over the city, blurring its harsh contours, subduing its too blatant youth, lending an illusion resembling the dim enchantment of antiquity.

Near Twenty-ninth Street he checked sharply and stood briefly debating something suggested by sight of a shop window well known to him: "It might save time: one may as well be sure."

"Turning, he descended a pair of stone steps and crossed a flagged area to a door set at one side of a window dressed with a confusion of odd, enticing things: a display that tempted the eye with the colors of the rainbow, fainting under weight of years and dust. A bell tinkled overhead, as he opened and shut the door, letting himself into a deep and narrow room crowded with a heterogeneous assemblage of objects that glimmered with weird splendor in a semi-gloom made visible by half a dozen electric bulbs generously spaced. In the rear, beyond a partitioning screen, shone a warmer light.

For the moment he saw no one. Advancing a few paces he halted, waiting. From behind the screen, at the back of the shop, the proprietor appeared, soft, smiling, smiling to greet a good customer of discerning taste. The latter went to meet him with a pleasant air of liking.

"Good evening, Mr. Miller—" "Good evening, Mr. Coast. Something I can show you this evening?" "The telephone, if you please." Coast laughed a little and was answered cheerfully.

"Certainly, this way." He was conducted behind the screen, where, beneath a strong light, an assistant at a jeweler's bench sat laboriously occupied with some task of delicate artifice. He looked up at Coast returned, with a greeting cordially entered. Coast went directly to the telephone, a wall instrument, unhooked the receiver and dialed a number to Central. The proprietor disappeared into an adjoining room. An instant later Coast spoke again.

"That you, Soames? ... This is Mr. Coast. Is Miss Katherine at home? Then tell her I am here, and ask her to come for a few moments before dinner. ... Very well."

There was a lengthening pause, during which the antique and dusty, returned, his genial eye alternating between Coast and a crystal decanter he had fetched.

"Yes, Central, waiting." Coast put his hand over the transmitter and wagged a reproving hand. "Going to try to poison me, Miller?" "Just a drop of old brandy," Mr. Coast—very old, from my home in France."

Coast nodded, recalled to the telephone. "Hello, Soames. ... Very well. Tell her I called, please. No! no message, thank you, Goodby." As he hung up the receiver, a steaming distillation sounded at the front door. Miller, busy with glasses,

looked to his assistant. "See who that is, Charles," he said. The assistant slipped from his seat, switched on more light in the front of the shop, and vanished round the screen. As he did so, Coast heard the rumble of a motor boat, followed by a woman's ringing laugh, a thought too loud.

Miller was offering him a glass. He bowed, took it and held it to his lips for a moment without tasting, inhaling the mellow bouquet of the liquor. "That is good," he said, and slipped critically.

"The very best, Mr. Coast. There's little like it out of France." "I'm glad I thought of imposing on your good nature."

"Why, so am I. My friends are always welcome. ... Your health, Mr. Coast."

"And yours, Mr. Miller." "They drank ceremoniously. Coast put down an empty glass. "That," he declared from the bottom of a congratulated heart, "was delicious."

"Another drop?" "No. Absolutely not. It would inspire me to try to buy out the shop." He offered his hand. "Good night, and thank you."

"On his way out, Mr. Coast," "Good night out, Coast had an indifferent glance for the customers at a show case near the window. The woman stood with her back turned, chattering volubly to the assistant in indifferent French: a small, slight figure with arms uplifted, holding a chain of gold and imperial lade to the light. Beside her the man loomed solidly, his heavy proportions exaggerated by a full-lined coat, his attentive pose owning a trace of proprietary interest. As Coast drew near he looked up and faced about, stripping off a glove.

"Why, h'ar'ye, Coast?" "Tone and manner proclaimed the

"I'm promising myself the pleasure."

"Well, when you come, just let me know."

"I want forget," Coast assured her vaguely. "But now I must run along. Miss Fancher—Blackstock—good night."

He escaped to open air with a sensation of relief and perturbation oddly commingled. Instead of soothing, the brandy warmed his grievance until it turned writhing in his bosom, and stung him like an adder. So that was the man! ... He pressed forward more rapidly, but now in an introspective mood, oblivious of all that so recently had gratified him.

At Fortieth Street he pulled up on the southern corner, over across from the dull grey colonnade of the new Public Library, awaiting a break in the stream of traffic.

A policeman presently made a way for him, holding back the press of vehicles to permit a string of their counterparts to break through. Coast stepped down from the curb and in another minute would have been across, but stopped in mid-stride to hear himself named in a voice unforgettable, to him inexpressibly sweet.

Startled, he halted beneath the nose of a pair of handsome horses champing in tail-reined restraint, and glanced at random right and left. Then as again he was called—"Garrett! Garrett Coast!"—out of the corner of an eye he detected the uplifted salutation two figures of the driver of a town-car at half in the outer line of north-bound traffic. In the window of the car a white glove fluttered, moth-like.

Beside the door, with a hand on the handle, he spoke through the lowered window. "May I beg a lift, Katherine?" "Indeed you may. Didn't I call you, Garrett?"

"Good of you. I am fortunate. I've

"I'm a Persistent Beggar, You Know, Katherine."

encounter of old friends. Perforce Coast took his hand, pausing, then dropped it, with a grave "Good evening, Blackstock." His distaste for the man affected him intensely, but he tried to conceal it beneath a forced banality: "Early Christmas shopping, eh?"

"Not exactly." Blackstock sturred explanations. "I've just been trying to get you on the telephone."

Coast's eyebrows underlined his surprise. "What of clock?" "Yes. Thought you might care for a hand at bridge tonight; just a few of us at my rooms: Van Tuyl, Trux, Dundas, yourself and me. We'll cut in and out. What d'ye say?"

Coast's acceptance followed an instant's consideration. "Had the invitation been extended him at any time before noon of that same day, his refusal would have been prompt if qualified by an incoherent engagement. Now, however, after what the day had rumored of the man, he was inclined to grasp an opportunity to study him, to see as much of him as possible—little as he cared to see anything of him."

"What o'clock?" "Oh, between nine and ten—any time. You know where I hang out? We'll count on you." Blackstock beamed, his eyes shining behind thick glasses. "I'll be there, Mr. Coast. A signal conquest. An additional trace of affable effusiveness oiled his eyes slightly overpowering manner. Then doct moderated it, and he had an irresolute eye for his companion.

She had turned away from the case, with an assured attitude imperious of an introduction. Coast bowed to Blackstock's constrained words of pretension.

"Miss Fancher—my friend, Mr. Coast."

She nodded, giving him a small hand whose pressure was a thought too frank. "I've heard about you," she said, nodding emphatically. "Glad to know you."

"And I've enjoyed your dancing many times, from the far side of the footlights," he told her pleasantly. "Nice of you to say that. I'm with the Katharine Girl now, you know. Have you seen it?"

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

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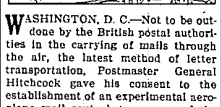
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WASHINGTON GOSSIP

Mail Dispatched by Aviator Carriers



WASHINGTON, D. C.—Not to be outdone by the British postal authorities in the carrying of mails through the air, the latest method of letter transportation, Postmaster General Hitchcock gave his consent to the establishment of an experimental airplane mail route between one of the outlying branches of the Brooklyn, N. Y., postoffice and the aerodrome at Nassau boulevard, Long Island, during the International aviation meet held there.

Aviators and their employees who were stationed on the field through-out the meet were able thereby to receive their mail almost as quickly as though they were in one of the large cities. A special postal station was established at the aviation field and a temporary postmaster appointed by the department to conduct the business of receiving and dispatching mails and selling postage stamps. During the time of the meet officials of the postoffice department will watch with close interest the experiments

of carrying mail by aeroplanes.

This is not the first instance in which United States mails have been officially authorized to be carried by aeroplanes. In November of last year Postmaster General Hitchcock formally approved arrangements for the carrying of a pouch of mail from the trans-Atlantic steamer Kaiserlin Auguste Victoria, enroute to Europe, back to New York city while the vessel was off the Long Island coast. Aviator J. A. D. McCurdy was to have attempted this first official aerial transmission of mails, but because of stormy weather the attempt was not made.

The first successful aeroplane letter route was that opened recently by the British postal administration, which began a series of experiments in the carrying of mails by aeroplane from Hendon, England, to Windsor Castle, a distance of almost twenty miles. Four aviators with two bi-planes and two monoplanes were engaged in the work and about one hundred thousand letters constituted the first delivery. These experiments have been watched with considerable interest by the United States postoffice authorities, who are of the opinion that the day when letters will be forwarded from city to city by airships is not far distant.

Peace Reigning Among Chinese Tongs

ACCORDING to Washington officials, for eight months not a shot has been fired and not a knife brandished by a member of any of the Chinese societies, or tongs, in the United States. There is a truce among these feudists who have for years spread terror among the Chinese districts of the large cities. Since the week of the Chinese peace banquet in New York, where Chiao Chung-tan, first secretary of the Chinese legation in Washington, expounded his peace doctrine there has been no long war.

Mr. Chiao, before coming to this country, was a schoolmaster in an obscure district in China. He has been educated in the United States, and he is distinctly a man of the people, and his hold on all classes is little short of wonderful. Mr. Chiao attended the peace banquet in New York as the special emissary of the emperor. At that time the agitation in favor of cutting off the queue was at its height in China. Mr. Chiao favored the adoption of western dress and mode of living, particularly in this country, believing that it would



weaken the hold of secret societies on the Celestian mind.

In his address Mr. Chiao urged his views on the bandits, and at the conclusion of his remarks one of the leaders came forward with a pair of shears and requested him to cut off the "pigtail." Mr. Chiao complied, and before the evening was over, he had amputated about 50 of the queues, each man carrying his switch away with him.

They were wars in this country, more than anything else, have been responsible for the hostile legislation in this country. From the legation in Washington, men have been sent to the various gang headquarters, who, as official representatives of the Chinese government have been sent out for conferences with tong leaders. But they effected little. Then the Chinese government assumed the former schoolmaster to the task of peacemaker.

Uncle Sam Has Glut of Gold on Hand



Supposing you had a billion dollars in gold in a vault. Well, if you were as rich as you, Uncle Sam, and you would feel satisfied if your wife paid more than \$195 for a new "lid" and bought more than one each season. And you probably would feel just as secure as Sam, for he feels that he is not going to "go broke" for at least twenty years.

Your governmental uncle has a billion dollars in gold stored away, and he is buying gold at the rate of about \$20,000,000 a year, on the average, that, at the end of twenty years for which he feels assured of having all the coins he needs, he should have at least \$4,500,000,000 in gold on hand, subject to your call. He feels complacent over the outlook.

George Roberts says the government has a thousand million gold

coins in its vaults, and George Roberts knows because he saw 'em count. He says it's enough to last us for a generation and he and Uncle Sam are not going to make any more gold coins until the twenty years are up and the present stock of coins are so badly used up that it will be time to call them in and send them to the melting pot.

That's the reason, also, why the mints of the country were closed in some instances and in others restricted to the making of pennies and the smaller coins. The new policy of the government, issuing certificates against the bullion in the mints instead of making the money out of the gold, has saved the government \$100,000, according to Director of the Mint Roberts, and one of the reasons for this is that the people prefer the paper money for actual use and for circulation.

"We have enough gold coins now for a generation to come," said Director Roberts. "When there is any considerable demand on the treasury it is always for foreign exports, and the bullion is always preferred to the coin for this purpose."

New Ships Veritable Floating Forts

THE sister dreadnaughts, Florida and Utah, the mightiest warships in the American navy, will soon be in fighting trim, according to the calculations of the navy's experts. The Utah, just placed in commission, will shortly enter the docks of the New York navy yard to receive her finishing touches. This work involves the installation of counting towers and the rigging of her guns. As much secrecy surrounds these devices, they are invariably constructed at a government yard instead of in a plant of a private builder. The Florida is already in commission and will be ready for active service simultaneously with the Utah.

These two floating fortresses will be attached to the first division of the regular fleet, the Florida becoming the regular flagship of the division and the Utah occupying that signal role whenever her sister goes to dock for overhauling. Capt. Harry S. Knapp will command the Florida and Capt. Henry S. Benson the Utah. Greater in every respect, size, armor and armament, the Florida and Utah will



went from the Delaware and North Dakota the honor of being the most powerful war vessels afloat.

The displacement of the two new dreadnaughts is 21,825 tons each. Ten 13-inch guns distributed in five turrets and 16 five-inch rifles constitute the main batteries. The hulls are belted with armor ranging from 9 to 11 inches in thickness, while steel walls, a full foot thick, protect the turrets. The ships are 521 feet long and are equipped with turbine engines, generating 28,000 horsepower, which is expected will drive them at a speed greater than the 20.75 knots required by the navy department's specifications. Each of these castles of the sea will be manned by a crew of 50 officers and 655 men.

Transfer Now! Transfer Now!

Class One Members

Knights of the Modern Maccabees

Are requested to transfer at once to the new schedule of rates.

The K. O. T. M. M., by almost unanimous action of the Special Grand Camp Review, is now on an

ABSOLUTELY SAFE AND ADEQUATE BASIS OF RATES

Don't neglect to provide for your wife and children. Transfer at once. Consult your Officers or

GEORGE S. LOVELADE A. M. SLAY
Grand Counselor Grand Recorder
Muskegon, Mich. Port Huron, Mich.

A Preference.

"Marriage is a lottery," said the ready-made philosopher.

"No, it isn't," replied Mr. Groverhewer.

"Is a lottery you can lose once and forget about it, instead of having to put up all money?"

About the Size of It.

"Why is it?" queried the youth, "that so many people fail to mind their own business?"

"There may be one or two reasons, or both," answered the home-grown philosopher. "They may have no mind or no business."—Philadelphia Press.

Failed to Scare Tim.

A plan was formed to scare a certain Tim Casey, living in a village near Belfast, on his returning from market by night past the churchyard. As he went by, the usual turnip, white sheet, and lantern of the conventional ghost were submitted to his gaze, with the customary wailing howl. Tim, however, simply looked fixedly at the apparition for a moment and remarked: "Arrah, now, and is it a general resurrection, or are ye just taking a walk by yourself?"

HIGHLY AMUSED.



Hiram Greene—What did your sister say when you told her I was going to make a speech in the town hall tonight?

"Willie—She didn't say nothing," she just laughed until she had hysterics.

SOUND SLEEP

Can Easily Be Secured.

"Up to 2 years ago, a woman writes, 'I was in the habit of using both tea and coffee regularly.'

"I found that my health was beginning to fail, strange nervous attacks would come suddenly upon me, making me tremble so excessively that I could not do my work while they lasted; my sleep left me and I passed long nights in restless discomfort. I was filled with a nervous dread as to the future."

"A friend suggested that possibly tea and coffee were to blame, and I decided to give them up, and in casting about for a hot table beverage, which I felt was an absolute necessity, I was led by good fortune to try Postum."

"For more than a year I have used three times a day and expect, so much good has it done me, to continue its use during the rest of my life."

"Soon after beginning the use of Postum, I found, to my surprise, that instead of tossing on a sleepless bed through the long, dreary night, I dropped into a sound, dreamless sleep the moment my head touched the pillow."

"Then I suddenly realized that all my nervousness had left me, and my appetite, which had fallen off before, had all at once been restored so that I ate my food with a keen relish."

"All the nervous dread has gone. I walk a mile and a half each way to my work every day and enjoy it. I find an interest in everything that goes on about me that makes life a pleasure. All this I owe to leaving off tea and coffee and the use of Postum, for I have taken no medicine." Name given by Postum Co., Battle Creek, Mich.

"There's a reason," and it is explained in the little book, "The Road to Wellville," in 16 pgs.