

SERIAL STORY

No Man's Land A ROMANCE

By Louis Joseph Vance

Illustrations by Ray Walters

(Copyright, 1910, by Louis Joseph Vance.)

SYNOPSIS.

Garrett Coast, a young man of New York City, comes 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.

CHAPTER I.—(Continued.)

He felt her eyes upon him, seriously sweet and questioning, and frowned slightly, wishing he had held his tongue, though aware that he could not have, caring the way he did.

"Why not tell me? I'm waiting, Garrett."

"Well . . . It was difficult; an impertinence; incredible, besides. But now that he had committed himself, he stiffened a resolve and plunged. "It was said that your engagement to this man Blackstock would be announced before long."

That out bluntly, he caught a long breath and, divided between fear and faith, sat watching her.

The seconds of her silence spun for him an hour of anguish.

"Katherine . . ."

She turned. "Yes?"

"Have you nothing to say?" he asked involuntarily, and at once regretted it.

"Either affirm or deny. You owe me that, at least."

"Do it!" She seemed surprised. "But what," she pursued, rousing, "does this man Blackstock?"

"You know I don't like him, Katherine. I can't."

"Put I can and do, Garrett."

There was simplicity in that, almost confessional. His fears assailed him more imperiously.

"Then it's true? Don't tell me that!"

"What does Mr. Blackstock say?"

"I haven't interviewed him, of course. I seemed too absurd—"

"Why?"

The only report he had at command was pitifully inadequate: "Because I love you."

"Is that any reason why Mr. Blackstock should not?"

"There are reasons why you shouldn't let your name be coupled with his."

"And they are—?"

She put it crisply. His heart sank, foreseeing defeat. He veered at a tangent, evasive. "You haven't answered me. Is there any truth in this rumor?"

"Not yet."

"You mean it may be true—later?"

"It's possible," she affirmed quietly. "Mr. Blackstock has asked me to marry him; he hasn't as yet had my answer."

"Katherine! . . . You can't really—care for him?"

"I'm trying to be sure, Garrett, before I tell him so—or you."

"But—but you mustn't! . . . The thing's impossible. . . . You—"

"You'll tell me why?"

Her composure was sobering. He got himself more in hand; she was not to be moved by storming, he knew. Reason, logic, an appeal to her intelligence: she would require these of him. Yet when put to it he could not bring himself to tell what he knew of the man by hearsay. If very credibly. Personal defects, lack of breeding, and the like were all unstable objections. In the end the best he could do, since some sort of an answer was essential, was to frame a halting, inconclusive: "He's not the sort . . ."

She misinterpreted his confusion. "I know what you're thinking: that he's not spoke in our particular social wheel; an outsider. Must I condemn him for that? Are there no right men, Garrett, but yourself and others of our 'set'?" I know he has his lacks; I fancy you'd call him crude, if you were candid with me. But men of his genius, his upbringing . . .

Not that I concede any crudity in him; it's hardly that; he merely lacks—something—difficult to name it; not cultivation, not sensibility, but, I'd say, friends."

"He has many . . ."

So she cared enough to fight for him! There was bitterness, surpassing the bitterness of aloes, in that discovery.

"I mean the right kind, yourself, for instance; friends to bring him out. He's quick, adaptable, of a good family—if not a wealthy one."

Coast fell back upon the one mentioned objection of which he had certain knowledge. "He's got a villainous temper."

"Friends would teach him to control it. And there are excuses for that: his sight—his eyes are in a bad way. He injured them seriously, somehow,

in his work—something about the spark, I believe."

"Those wireless experiments of his?"

"Yes. He's going to do great things, Garrett."

"Late in the field."

"He leads it today; they all look to him. His inventions, discoveries, improvements, will make wireless as every-day a thing as the telephone. I don't mean he couldn't win without friends; he's strong enough . . ."

"Men have little use for him, Katherine."

"Women have."

Coast strangled temptation . . .

"He has magnetism."

"That and strength, ambition, enthusiasm. He's worth being a friend to; I want you to know him better, to this—he's after your money, Katherine?"

"Her 'Yes!'" was absolute.

"Don't you see"—he hated himself for this—he's after your money, Katherine?"

"Garrett, that is unworthy of you."

He said nothing, doggedly taking what comfort he might from the knowledge that he was right.

Gradually he comprehended that in the course of their conversation the car had left Fifth Avenue at the Plaza and was crossing Central Park at the Seventy-second Street entrance.

"We're near the gate," he said abruptly. "If you'll drop me there, please—"

"Certainly. Tell Patrick."

Coast groped for the speaking tube and communicated with the driver. When he sat back he was conscious of the woman's softening regard.

"You're not angry, Katherine?"

"No, Garrett; but I'm very, very sorry."

"If I've seemed presumptuous—"

"To me, Garrett? Can you remem-

ber a cigarette and wandered round the dining-room of Blackstock's apartment, idly inspecting the half dozen hunting prints that adorned the green burlap walls.

Unspeckably bored, he went to the buffet, where he poured a very little Scotch into a tall glass, drowning it with icy charged water. He had refused to drink up to that moment, and was thirsty, but as he sat sipping and watching the players, Van Tuyl's un-

natural pallor, moist hair and fixed smile affected him with a faint disgust, and he put the glass aside, not halfemptied. His brows knitted in his concern for the man, who had been drinking heavily and would pursue that madness until satisfied or sudden: no influence that Coast knew of would restrain him; he was as unmanageable as a wild horse, and as spirited.

Slender, graceful, high lord of Devil-May-Care, Van Tuyl sober was imitable, more loved than feared in spite of, perhaps because of, the wit he wielded like a whip-lash. Excesses fanned that brilliancy to a burning frenzy; at such times he knew no friends, and those who knew him avoided him; his wits, submerged, frothed with a satiric humor that etched as indelibly as an acid when he did not lay on with a bludgeon of vituperation. . . . A dangerous foil to Blackstock, Coast thought, comparing them, wondering that they were so much together. Contrasting them he thought: fire and tow, rapier and broadsword!

Blackstock was the broadsword of that comparison, heavy and cumbersome if capable. Without an effort he dominated the others, Van Tuyl always excepted; the sheer weight of Blackstock's personality forced them into the background. Little Dundas, with his deferential smile, delicately pink face and permanently rounded shoulders, seemed the veriest shadow of a man: Blackstock's shadow he had apparently constituted himself. Trux, round of face and blandly prac-

COMMERCIAL

Weekly Review of Trade and Market Reports.

R. G. Dun & Co.'s weekly review of trade says:

"Reports from the principal trade centers are nearly satisfactory, indicating a fair volume of activity, and in the Northwest the feeling is that conditions in that section have fully recovered from the setback of last year."

"Limited stocks of cotton goods and woolens result in a prompt revival of consumptive demand and inducements are now offered for increased production. Favorable prices named on dress fabrics and men's wear are also stimulat-

ing factors. Immediate shipments are asked for and small orders are frequently repeated. Heavy brown and colored domestics are being ordered to the end of the year. In woolens there is an active demand for heavy weight men's wear and some lines of fancy worsteds have sold so well that advances have been obtained. Trading in footwear has been checked to some extent by higher quotations, but Eastern manufacturers are well employed on current orders. Leather continues firm."

Bradstreet's says:

"Trade displays little change, with perhaps a slightly greater tendency toward irregularity. Yet the consensus of reports from many markets, barring some at the South, indicate that retail trade has been materially helped by cooler weather. Proceeding to the larger lines, the reports, as a whole, do not indicate anything better than fair, though the low condition of retailers' stocks, coupled with the fact that final distribution is now likely to increase, may, and probably will, eventuate in much small-lot buying, as well as in the reinstatement of orders heretofore canceled by timid buyers."

"Trade displays little change, with perhaps a slightly greater tendency toward irregularity. Yet the consensus of reports from many markets, barring some at the South, indicate that retail trade has been materially helped by cooler weather. Proceeding to the larger lines, the reports, as a whole, do not indicate anything better than fair, though the low condition of retailers' stocks, coupled with the fact that final distribution is now likely to increase, may, and probably will, eventuate in much small-lot buying, as well as in the reinstatement of orders heretofore canceled by timid buyers."

"Trade displays little change, with perhaps a slightly greater tendency toward irregularity. Yet the consensus of reports from many markets, barring some at the South, indicate that retail trade has been materially helped by cooler weather. Proceeding to the larger lines, the reports, as a whole, do not indicate anything better than fair, though the low condition of retailers' stocks, coupled with the fact that final distribution is now likely to increase, may, and probably will, eventuate in much small-lot buying, as well as in the reinstatement of orders heretofore canceled by timid buyers."

"Trade displays little change, with perhaps a slightly greater tendency toward irregularity. Yet the consensus of reports from many markets, barring some at the South, indicate that retail trade has been materially helped by cooler weather. Proceeding to the larger lines, the reports, as a whole, do not indicate anything better than fair, though the low condition of retailers' stocks, coupled with the fact that final distribution is now likely to increase, may, and probably will, eventuate in much small-lot buying, as well as in the reinstatement of orders heretofore canceled by timid buyers."

"Trade displays little change, with perhaps a slightly greater tendency toward irregularity. Yet the consensus of reports from many markets, barring some at the South, indicate that retail trade has been materially helped by cooler weather. Proceeding to the larger lines, the reports, as a whole, do not indicate anything better than fair, though the low condition of retailers' stocks, coupled with the fact that final distribution is now likely to increase, may, and probably will, eventuate in much small-lot buying, as well as in the reinstatement of orders heretofore canceled by timid buyers."

"Trade displays little change, with perhaps a slightly greater tendency toward irregularity. Yet the consensus of reports from many markets, barring some at the South, indicate that retail trade has been materially helped by cooler weather. Proceeding to the larger lines, the reports, as a whole, do not indicate anything better than fair, though the low condition of retailers' stocks, coupled with the fact that final distribution is now likely to increase, may, and probably will, eventuate in much small-lot buying, as well as in the reinstatement of orders heretofore canceled by timid buyers."

"Trade displays little change, with perhaps a slightly greater tendency toward irregularity. Yet the consensus of reports from many markets, barring some at the South, indicate that retail trade has been materially helped by cooler weather. Proceeding to the larger lines, the reports, as a whole, do not indicate anything better than fair, though the low condition of retailers' stocks, coupled with the fact that final distribution is now likely to increase, may, and probably will, eventuate in much small-lot buying, as well as in the reinstatement of orders heretofore canceled by timid buyers."

"Trade displays little change, with perhaps a slightly greater tendency toward irregularity. Yet the consensus of reports from many markets, barring some at the South, indicate that retail trade has been materially helped by cooler weather. Proceeding to the larger lines, the reports, as a whole, do not indicate anything better than fair, though the low condition of retailers' stocks, coupled with the fact that final distribution is now likely to increase, may, and probably will, eventuate in much small-lot buying, as well as in the reinstatement of orders heretofore canceled by timid buyers."

"Trade displays little change, with perhaps a slightly greater tendency toward irregularity. Yet the consensus of reports from many markets, barring some at the South, indicate that retail trade has been materially helped by cooler weather. Proceeding to the larger lines, the reports, as a whole, do not indicate anything better than fair, though the low condition of retailers' stocks, coupled with the fact that final distribution is now likely to increase, may, and probably will, eventuate in much small-lot buying, as well as in the reinstatement of orders heretofore canceled by timid buyers."

"Trade displays little change, with perhaps a slightly greater tendency toward irregularity. Yet the consensus of reports from many markets, barring some at the South, indicate that retail trade has been materially helped by cooler weather. Proceeding to the larger lines, the reports, as a whole, do not indicate anything better than fair, though the low condition of retailers' stocks, coupled with the fact that final distribution is now likely to increase, may, and probably will, eventuate in much small-lot buying, as well as in the reinstatement of orders heretofore canceled by timid buyers."

"Trade displays little change, with perhaps a slightly greater tendency toward irregularity. Yet the consensus of reports from many markets, barring some at the South, indicate that retail trade has been materially helped by cooler weather. Proceeding to the larger lines, the reports, as a whole, do not indicate anything better than fair, though the low condition of retailers' stocks, coupled with the fact that final distribution is now likely to increase, may, and probably will, eventuate in much small-lot buying, as well as in the reinstatement of orders heretofore canceled by timid buyers."

"Trade displays little change, with perhaps a slightly greater tendency toward irregularity. Yet the consensus of reports from many markets, barring some at the South, indicate that retail trade has been materially helped by cooler weather. Proceeding to the larger lines, the reports, as a whole, do not indicate anything better than fair, though the low condition of retailers' stocks, coupled with the fact that final distribution is now likely to increase, may, and probably will, eventuate in much small-lot buying, as well as in the reinstatement of orders heretofore canceled by timid buyers."

"Trade displays little change, with perhaps a slightly greater tendency toward irregularity. Yet the consensus of reports from many markets, barring some at the South, indicate that retail trade has been materially helped by cooler weather. Proceeding to the larger lines, the reports, as a whole, do not indicate anything better than fair, though the low condition of retailers' stocks, coupled with the fact that final distribution is now likely to increase, may, and probably will, eventuate in much small-lot buying, as well as in the reinstatement of orders heretofore canceled by timid buyers."

"Trade displays little change, with perhaps a slightly greater tendency toward irregularity. Yet the consensus of reports from many markets, barring some at the South, indicate that retail trade has been materially helped by cooler weather. Proceeding to the larger lines, the reports, as a whole, do not indicate anything better than fair, though the low condition of retailers' stocks, coupled with the fact that final distribution is now likely to increase, may, and probably will, eventuate in much small-lot buying, as well as in the reinstatement of orders heretofore canceled by timid buyers."

"Trade displays little change, with perhaps a slightly greater tendency toward irregularity. Yet the consensus of reports from many markets, barring some at the South, indicate that retail trade has been materially helped by cooler weather. Proceeding to the larger lines, the reports, as a whole, do not indicate anything better than fair, though the low condition of retailers' stocks, coupled with the fact that final distribution is now likely to increase, may, and probably will, eventuate in much small-lot buying, as well as in the reinstatement of orders heretofore canceled by timid buyers."

"Trade displays little change, with perhaps a slightly greater tendency toward irregularity. Yet the consensus of reports from many markets, barring some at the South, indicate that retail trade has been materially helped by cooler weather. Proceeding to the larger lines, the reports, as a whole, do not indicate anything better than fair, though the low condition of retailers' stocks, coupled with the fact that final distribution is now likely to increase, may, and probably will, eventuate in much small-lot buying, as well as in the reinstatement of orders heretofore canceled by timid buyers."

"Trade displays little change, with perhaps a slightly greater tendency toward irregularity. Yet the consensus of reports from many markets, barring some at the South, indicate that retail trade has been materially helped by cooler weather. Proceeding to the larger lines, the reports, as a whole, do not indicate anything better than fair, though the low condition of retailers' stocks, coupled with the fact that final distribution is now likely to increase, may, and probably will, eventuate in much small-lot buying, as well as in the reinstatement of orders heretofore canceled by timid buyers."

"Trade displays little change, with perhaps a slightly greater tendency toward irregularity. Yet the consensus of reports from many markets, barring some at the South, indicate that retail trade has been materially helped by cooler weather. Proceeding to the larger lines, the reports, as a whole, do not indicate anything better than fair, though the low condition of retailers' stocks, coupled with the fact that final distribution is now likely to increase, may, and probably will, eventuate in much small-lot buying, as well as in the reinstatement of orders heretofore canceled by timid buyers."

"Trade displays little change, with perhaps a slightly greater tendency toward irregularity. Yet the consensus of reports from many markets, barring some at the South, indicate that retail trade has been materially helped by cooler weather. Proceeding to the larger lines, the reports, as a whole, do not indicate anything better than fair, though the low condition of retailers' stocks, coupled with the fact that final distribution is now likely to increase, may, and probably will, eventuate in much small-lot buying, as well as in the reinstatement of orders heretofore canceled by timid buyers."

"Trade displays little change, with perhaps a slightly greater tendency toward irregularity. Yet the consensus of reports from many markets, barring some at the South, indicate that retail trade has been materially helped by cooler weather. Proceeding to the larger lines, the reports, as a whole, do not indicate anything better than fair, though the low condition of retailers' stocks, coupled with the fact that final distribution is now likely to increase, may, and probably will, eventuate in much small-lot buying, as well as in the reinstatement of orders heretofore canceled by timid buyers."

"Trade displays little change, with perhaps a slightly greater tendency toward irregularity. Yet the consensus of reports from many markets, barring some at the South, indicate that retail trade has been materially helped by cooler weather. Proceeding to the larger lines, the reports, as a whole, do not indicate anything better than fair, though the low condition of retailers' stocks, coupled with the fact that final distribution is now likely to increase, may, and probably will, eventuate in much small-lot buying, as well as in the reinstatement of orders heretofore canceled by timid buyers."

"Trade displays little change, with perhaps a slightly greater tendency toward irregularity. Yet the consensus of reports from many markets, barring some at the South, indicate that retail trade has been materially helped by cooler weather. Proceeding to the