

SERIAL STORY

No Man's Land A ROMANCE By Louis Joseph Vance

Illustrations by Ray Walters

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 pursues 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.

CHAPTER XI.—(Continued.)

"A change has come over the spirit of our dream—yes?" Appleyard inquired. "Nothing like food on the human stomach to make the skies seem brighter. Not that it seems to affect this weather any; it's thick as curds. We ought to pick up that buoy before long—won't be happy till I get it."

"You're sure about this thing?" asked Coast, perhaps not quite coherently. The other seemed to understand him, none the less.

"As-solut-lully," he returned. "I know where we started from and what we're aiming for; this is a perfectly good compass, so long as you keep it from flirring with the coil; and I've made allowance for a lee-tide. You watch!"

Coast sat down. "Well?" he said, with the air of one no longer to be denied.

"Well," said the little man reluctantly, "if you must know all . . ." Coast received an amused glance. "I read the papers."

"What's that go to do—?"

"So, when you were kind enough to tell me your real name, after your gallant rescue yesterday morning, I knew at once just who and what you were."

"O!" said Coast, a thought blankly. "Just so. It never occurred to you that you were a public character, in a way? I noticed that. And your lack of self-consciousness interested me. Also the aroma of mystery you exhale, intrigued (if I may coin the word) my romantic imagination."

Coast flushed. "The deuce it did!" he exclaimed angrily.

"Don't lose your temper—please. I know I sound impertinent, but I don't mean to be so; it's just my temprement makes me such a cut-up. . . ."

When I waked up before you did yesterday, I thought it all out, and I set to myself, sez I: 'His biography ain't half-written yet; and unless I'm mistaken something grievous, Romance is a-leadin' of him by the hind, like a little che-did. If I can work it, I'm goin' to stick round and see what happens next.' You see, it's my business to go about nosing into other people's."

"I see," said Coast curtly, with a feeling of contempt which he took no trouble to disguise.

"Yes," assented Appleyard serenely. "I make my living that way. Government pay me a handsome salary for doing it."

"What!" A light was beginning to dawn upon Coast.

The little man nodded gravely. "The U. S. Secret Service," he affirmed.

"Let us begin at the beginning, for clearer understanding," Appleyard continued. "I'm not here for my health—I'm on the job; and things have shaped round so that I want your help temporarily—while you certainly need mine. That's why I'm letting you in by the basement door and speaking in stage whispers. You get me? What I'm telling you is to be kept under your hat."

"Certainly, that's understood."

"Right you are. Now, the particular phase of lawless industry at present engaging my distinguished professional attention is—be allowed himself the dramatic pause—"smuggling. For some time the Treasury Department has been aware that a very considerable quantity of highly dutiable goods was finding its way into the country—mainly for the New York markets—without paying toll. A syndicate of Maiden Lane jewelers has been reaping most of the profit, although other goods have been coming through; but that's by the way. Now the Customs net is fine enough to assure us that no such heavy im-

portations could have been sneaked in through any regular port of entry. All we were certain of was that it was getting in duty free—though we couldn't prove even that. . . . So then, I was turned loose on the problem, and I've been puzzling over it for six months."

He was briefly silent, apparently in reminiscent mood. "Early in the game," he resumed, "I had cause to believe that most of the stuff was seeping in through New England. So I sat me down and tried to figure it out from the other side's point of view—supposing I wanted to turn the trick on my own account. See?"

"Clearly. Go on."

"Being a product of this neck o' the woods made it some easier; I know the coast pretty thoroughly. It struck me how all-fired easy it would be to establish a depot for the reception of goods on one of these little islands hereabouts—or even at some retired point on the mainland. Then one could ship the stuff over by any old unlikely tramp, trans-ship it to a smaller vessel at some agreed point off the coast, and stow it away for distribution practically at one's own convenience. With such a central station, the stuff could be smuggled to the railroad through any number of small harbors—a trunkful here, a trunkful there, all disguised as passenger baggage; and these waters are so thick with small craft that their comings and goings attract practically no attention. . . . Plausible, feasible—yes?"

"Ingenious, certainly."

"To cut it short, I finally satisfied myself that the schooner employed for the trans-shipment was the fisherman that, as you saw, preferred my room to my company. I took a chance there. Like a fool—lucky to get off

of the main-traveled routes; finally, I knew that, once south of Devil's Bridge, the set of the tide would snake us out toward No Man's Land. So, when we ran aground and I went ashore, leaving you asleep, I wasn't surprised to recognize the place."

"You could—in that fog?"

"I've an excellent memory, and had visited the island a good many times on fishing trips when I was a boy in these parts. That abandoned fishing village made me sure of my ground; in the days when the bluefish ran in these waters there used to be quite a settlement there. . . . However, I'm fortunate in the possession of a sense of locality something above the average, and though it was pitch dark, at first, and thick as mud, I wasn't afraid of losing myself. So I struck out boldly, and by daylight had made a number of interesting discoveries. . . . Hello! . . . Good morning, Twenty-seven!"

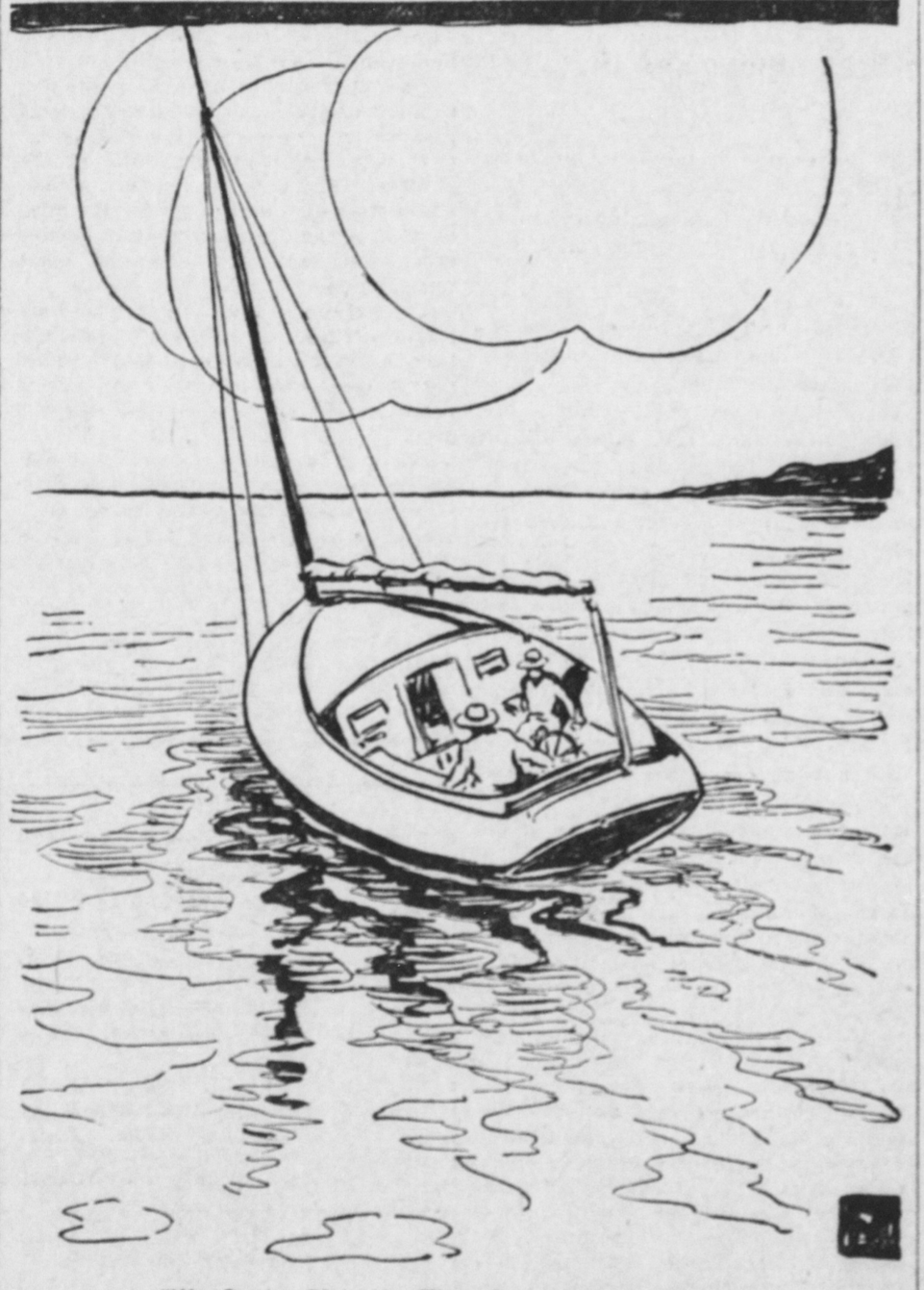
The little man got up and bowed profoundly, as to a valued acquaintance, to a black can buoy conspicuously numbered "27," swimming past in a grey wash of seas to starboard.

"Some navigatin', that!" Appleyard observed complacently. Coast watched Appleyard shift; the spokes until the Echo swung upon a course at a saintly angle to that which she had been holding. "And now where?"

Appleyard looked up from the binnacle. "Noth by east," he said abstractedly; then, rousing: "Quick's Hole, and it please you, I venture to recommend the spot. It's quiet, retired, charmingly salubrious; quite a cosy corner for a day's loaf."

"Loaf!" exclaimed Coast in exasperation.

"Tut," said the little man in a tone of mild reproof; "and again tut. Eff-soons I will a tale unfold that'll shed



"We Ought Pick Up That Buoy Before Long—"

with a whole skin. But by the time I hit the water I felt pretty sure you had some sure-enough good reason for not wanting any strangers hanging round."

"I'd think you justified in assuming that much."

"The worst of it was, that mishap made me a marked man; I'd been a wee mite too indiscreet. For a while I thought I'd have to fade into the background and let one of my brother sleuths polish off the job. You can fancy how that would have galled. Fortunately you offered yourself—"

"I like that," Coast commented.

"Anyway, my magnificent imagination offered you to me," Appleyard pursued without loss of countenance. "I began to see how easy it would be to snoop along the coast as your crew—inconspicuous, unsuspected. You seemed to have only the vaguest idea of what you wanted to do, where you wanted to cruise. And I'd begin to suspect myself of failure of the parts of speech if I couldn't insidiously talk you into going where I wanted to—No Man's Land, Muskeget, Tucker-nuck, Chappaquiddick, or wherever."

"I'm ready to certify you're qualified to talk the hind legs off the domestic mule," Coast averred with enthusiasm.

"Don't worry; I'm a merciful man. . . . Rather cheap, that—what?"

"Extremely."

"Your fault: you fed it to me. I'm beginning to think you must be the only original, perfectly-pasteurized mascot. Since we met the very stars have seemed to battle in their course for me. Even the fog helped—shunting us off to No Man's Land."

"Yes—?"

"I had no particular notion of investigating that island first of all; but a number of circumstances made me suspect we were in its neighborhood. I had figured it out that the variation of the magnetized compass must have carried us sou'west, for one thing; and the absence of fog signals made me think we must have got well south

of a heap of light upon the plot of this issue of the Half-Dime Library. Know you not that Desmond the Dachshund Detective is on the scene? . . . Let's see: where'd I get off?"

"You were on the point of making some interesting discoveries," Coast prompted patiently.

"To be sure. . . . As I was about to say, I felt my way along, lost it, and presently stumbled onto what seemed a pretty raw slice of melodrama. . . . The first thing I struck for was the farmhouse. Last I heard of the island, it was inhabited by a single family, a farmer, his wife and a couple of kids. Must've been a bit lonesome, but they didn't seem to mind. They do say the man once petitioned the State Legislature to build a school-house on the island to educate his offspring on the ground that as a taxpayer he was entitled to the Commonwealth. Shrewd customer; as I recall it he nominated himself for the job of janitor and his wife to be school-mistress, both on salary! . . . I had it in mind to pump him, you see, but somehow I missed the farmhouse, the first cast. And when I pulled up to take soundings I heard a curious sort of noise—singular in that locality, at least: one of those noises that, once heard, is never forgotten; as nearly as I can describe it, a sort of ripping crash—very irregular in duration and much muffled by distance and fog. I picked up my ears and tried to mark down the quarter it came from. Then I followed it up as best I could. After two or three false turns I fell over what seemed to be a wire stay, groped round and found a mast. The noise had stopped by this time, but I knew what had made it without doubt; that mast was an aerial, and I'd been listening to somebody operating a wireless station. Next thing, I made out a glow of light that led me to a window. By now I was interested and laying very low.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

HENRY ATTACKS MONEY POWER

Says Financial Mafia Exists in This Country.

MOVING HEAVEN AND EARTH

The Texan in a Declamatory Address Launches into a Fierce Denunciation of the Methods of the Financiers.

Washington. — Representative Henry, of Texas, chairman of the House Rules Committee, made a sensational speech in the House in which he attacked the money power in Wall Street and demanded an inquiry into "the Black Hand methods of the Financial Mafia in this country." He counseled a thoroughgoing investigation before Congress accepted the Aldrich plan of currency reform.

Chairman Henry was the author of a money trust investigation resolution, which was beaten in caucus by Democratic Leader Underwood and Speaker Clark. A substitute by Chairman Pujol, of the House Banking and Currency Committee, which was opposed by the Bryan Democrats, Chairman Henry and William J. Bryan himself, was agreed upon.



ROBERT L. HENRY, Congressman from Eleventh District of Texas.

Some portions of Mr. Henry's speech were very spirited—almost bitter.

He attacked the alleged money monopoly in Wall Street, and assumed that "no effective investigation can be made into the ramifications of either currency legislation, the trusts and interstate commerce corporations until Congress understands the methods of the insidious and almost supreme money power."

"Shouldn't we know something of the depth of villainy to which this financial Mafia will descend," Mr. Henry continued, "before we rewrite our currency laws? Wouldn't it be better to probe deeply into that hidden and mysterious side before we swallow the Aldrich plan?"

"Let me warn the American people that we will be groping in the dark and will do gow to their pitfalls unless we have a thorough congressional investigation and unearth their system, their villainy and the secret methods of their combined moneyed monopoly. While we are grappling with this momentous problem, this money power is moving heaven and earth to circumvent us."

"More than 75 per cent. of our financial resources, industrial and railroad corporations is now dominated and controlled by not more than four small groups of financiers. This financial oligarchy has now within its grasp, resources, deposits and funds with the powers that paralyze competition and destroy competitors."

"It is certain that these same financial interests of New York have a close community of interest with the bankers of the money centers of Europe and act together in protecting one another and destroying competition."

WOULD MAKE IT FREE.

Move To Have Government Secure Mount Vernon.

Washington.—A campaign looking to the purchase by the government of Mount Vernon, George Washington's estate on the Potomac, and its maintenance as a free public memorial to the first president was started here by Representative Cary (Rep., Wis.), in introducing a resolution of inquiry. Ever since Mount Vernon passed out of the family of Washington an association of women has kept the stately old mansion in order, charging a small fee to defray a part of the expenses. The Mount Vernon Antifreeze Association wants Congress to authorize government purchase.

Lyle Carr, Artist, Dead.

New York.—Lyle Carr, one of the best known of American painters, died suddenly in his studio here. Mr. Carr was best known for his landscapes and pictures of mountain passes. He decorated the town house of Thomas F. Ryan and had recently completed the designs for the new Newark Courthouse. He was a personal friend of James A. Patten, the grain operator at Chicago, who bought many of his pictures. He was unmarried.

TERMS.—The terms of subscription to the *Register* are one dollar per year in advance.

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