

Linked by Fate

BY CHARLES GARVICE

Author of "The Verdict of the Heart," "A Heritage of Hate," "Nell of Shorne Mills," "Paid For," "A Modern Juliet," etc.

(Continued.)

Even at the most public moments he had this habit of "dropping out," and away soared his thoughts, and his spirit, to a certain nameless isle, where moved the slim, graceful figure of the girl he had loved—and lost. The voices round the dinner table smote vaguely on his ear, for he was listening to that clear, girlish voice which haunted him, sleeping or waking.

"Oh, my lost love! I held you in my arms but once. And then lost you!"

He awakened with a sigh and passed the port to Sir Chandos. The ladies had gone to the drawing-room, and when Sir Chandos had drunk his usual, too liberal, allowance, Vance rose.

"Come and sing to us, Julian," he said; "no mournful ditty to-night, but something that will cheer us." And he put his hand on Julian's slight shoulder.

Julian smiled at him, as Jonathan might have smiled at David, and when he had finished his coffee, went to the piano. He did not ask Judith to play for him that night, and he sang the "Yeoman's Wedding Song" with a verve and swing which seemed to set every piece of china on the Chippendale cabinets ringing.

"Bravo!" said Vance. "Splendid, isn't it?" he demanded of Lady Fawcett.

"Splendid," she answered duly, with a glance at the handsome face of the singer, now thrown back with parted lips and flashing eyes. "Do you take him with you where you go? By the way, where do you go?"

"I don't know," he said. "I shall stay here for a few days; a week, perhaps. Oh, yes; Julian will go with me, I've no doubt."

"My poor Vane!" she murmured; but he did not hear her.

Bridge was started, but Vane did not play. The Fairy Isle was haunting him presently that night and he could not settle down. He lit a cigar and paced up and down the terrace. Later on the bridge players ceased, and, after the usual wrangling review of the game, went up to bed. Vane, looking in at the drawing-room door, saw Julian and Judith standing by the fire. They were apparently engaged in the usual commonplace which are uttered before parting for the night, and he did not see the sombre fire that glowed in Julian's eyes as he murmured:

"You will not wait?"

"No," she said.

"But you will keep your promise?"

"Yes," she answered in the same tone.

Nothing more. So are most of the tragedies of life preluded. He opened the door for her and she passed out and he went on to the terrace, meeting Vane face to face.

"Julian!" said Vane. "Is—is it all right? Have you asked her? Oh, I know your secret, my dear fellow!" Julian hesitated for a moment, then he said:

"Yes, I have asked her. And it is 'yes.'"

"I congratulate you with all my heart!" said Vane. "Love—well, love is the one thing Judith wanted. And she has got that, I now. Splendid! I'm glad! Where are you going?"

"To my den," said Julian. His lips were dry, and he thought his voice was hoarse; but it was not. Vane saw nothing but the lover's dreaminess and embarrassment.

"I'll come to you—let me finish this cigar in the open air. I want to talk over our plans," he said.

CHAPTER XXI.

Julian nodded and went to the laboratory. He looked round the room that, notwithstanding its luxurious appointments, was still suggestive of mystery, and, gliding to the wall on which the ropes of the curious ventilator were hung, nearly severed the already frayed strands. Then he closed the door that led to the ladies' garden and drew the portiere curtain over it. The spirit furnace was in its place, but unlit, and he lighted it and placed beside it, but not upon it, an iron pot containing a bluish liquid. Then he lit a cigarette and, opening a book, sat at the table as if reading; but the printed lines danced before his eyes and he did not turn a page.

Presently there came a knock at the door. Vane's quick, sharp knock, and he entered. He had exchanged his dress coat for an old smoking jacket, a thick, comfortable jacket, with heavy brass buttons.

"No stink on to-night, Julian," he said, pleasantly. "Now, about our plans, old man." He took out his pipe and filled and lit it. "What do you say to Monte Carlo and then, when we are bored of it, Egypt? Or would you rather stay on here and go in for hunting and the rest of it? You have only to say, I don't care. It's all one to me. But I ought to mention that Judith is going South."

Julian nodded. "I know. I want to tell you all about it, Vane," he said, hesitatingly.

Vane laughed. "You need not, Man, do you think I haven't eyes? Or course I've seen how it is with you! And, by George, I'm not surprised! There isn't a more beautiful woman in the world, or one better worth the winning. Julian, did I ever tell you—" He paused and puffed at his pipe.

"That you were once in love with

her yourself?" said Julian, placidly enough; but his lips twitched as they smiled.

Vane nodded. "I wondered whether she'd tell you," he said, simply. "I'm glad if she has. It wasn't to be, no matter. I can still wish you luck, old chap. What are you going to do?"

Julian had got up and, as if mechanically, had put the iron pot on the spirit furnace.

"An experiment," he said, in a casual kind of way. "I'm trying for this new color. I've got it in my head. You don't mind, do you?"

"No; not if you don't make too much of a froust," said Vane. "Well, what do you say to my plans? We could join the Grimes at Monte Carlo—thaw, that staff's beginning to smelt already!"

"It will be over in a minute," said Julian. "You leave it to me, as usual! You don't seem to care, Vane."

"That's just it," said Vane. "I don't care. It's all one to me where I am. Few places or things hold any charm for me."

Julian looked at him with a strange mixture of curiosity and aloofness, as if his mind were preoccupied. Then he turned to the furnace again.

"Better!" he said. "I shall have to get more spirit. Do you mind?" He looked over his shoulder at Vane, and the bluish flames cast a ghastly light on his pale face—"do you mind stirring this stuff while I'm gone? I shan't be more than a minute or two. I keep it outside—"

Vane got up from his chair and shrugged his shoulders good-humoredly. "All right; but I hope I shan't spoil it; I'm not used to this game."

"Oh, no," responded Julian, casually. "Just keep it stirred."

As he opened the door he glanced over his shoulder again at Vane; and surely if Vane had seen the expression in the black eyes shining forth from the dark shadows surrounding them, he would have felt some presentiment of coming ill; but all his attention was fixed on the task he had undertaken.

Julian's glance lasted but a moment, and he went out and closed the door softly behind him. He did not turn the key, for the door which led by a spring, as did that which led to the ladies' garden, and to both doors only he and Deborah had keys. Outside the door he paused a moment, biting his lips and driving the tell-tale expression from his eyes, then he went slowly, and humming the air he had sung a little while ago, into the hall. Prance, the butler, was standing there and Julian went up to him.

"Oh, Prance," he said, "I've run out of methylated spirits; do you think you could get me some?"

"Yes, Mr. Julian, I generally keep some by me in my pantry. Shall I bring it to your room?"

"Oh, don't trouble; I'll wait here, thanks," said Julian. He sang rather more loudly as Letchford came down the stairs.

"Seen Vane?" he asked. "If he hasn't gone to bed I want him to come and have a pipe. I can't sleep, somehow," he laughed shamefacedly. "Usually drop off as soon as my head's on the pillow."

"Vane's in my den—writing letters. We were making our plans for abroad. I'll tell him when I go back."

"Oh, don't bother him if he's writing," said Letchford, and he went on to the smoking-room.

Prance came back with the spirit-can in his hand.

"Very sorry, Mr. Julian," he said, "but I've run out. Some of the maids must have been at it for their curling tongs. I daresay I could get some from one of them."

Julian thought swiftly. "Ah, yes," he said. "I wish you would. I want it particularly. Send up to Miss Orme's maid and ask her."

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

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Australian Immigration Act Works Curiously.

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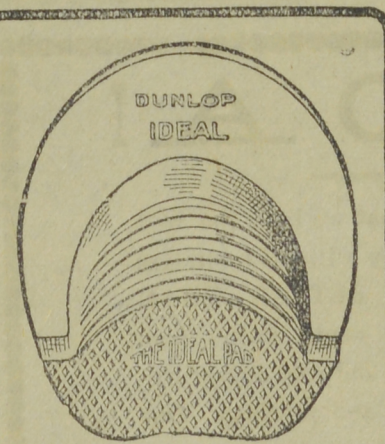
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7.30 a. m.—Mixed, via Gibson Branch, for Woodstock, Presque Isle, Edmundston and intermediate stations. Leaves St. Mary's 8.10 a. m.

9.50 a. m.—For St. John and East.

5.50 p. m.—For St. Stephen, Houlton, Woodstock, Boston, etc. Montreal and West. Palace Sleeper Fredericton Jet to Montreal. Pullman Sleeper Fredericton Jet to Boston.

9.00 p. m.—For St. John and East.

ARRIVE AT FREDERICTON

9.20 a. m.—From St. John and points east. 11.45 a. m.—From Boston, Montreal, St. Stephen, Houlton and Woodstock, etc.

5.40 p. m.—From Woodstock and all points north as far as Perth and Plaster Rock via Gibson Branch. Arrives at St. Mary's 5.07 p. m.

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" 321 Suburban for Marysville.....	11.15
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" 325 Suburban for Marysville.....	17.10
" 327 Suburban for Marysville.....	18.25
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No. 318 Suburban from Marysville.....	8.15
" 320 Suburban from Marysville.....	11.00
" 322 Suburban from Marysville.....	14.25
" 324 Suburban from Marysville.....	17.05
" 326 Suburban from Marysville.....	18.20
" 328 Suburban from Marysville.....	19.15

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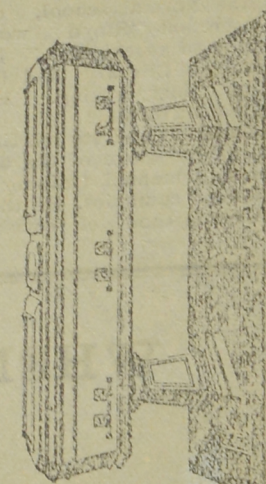
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