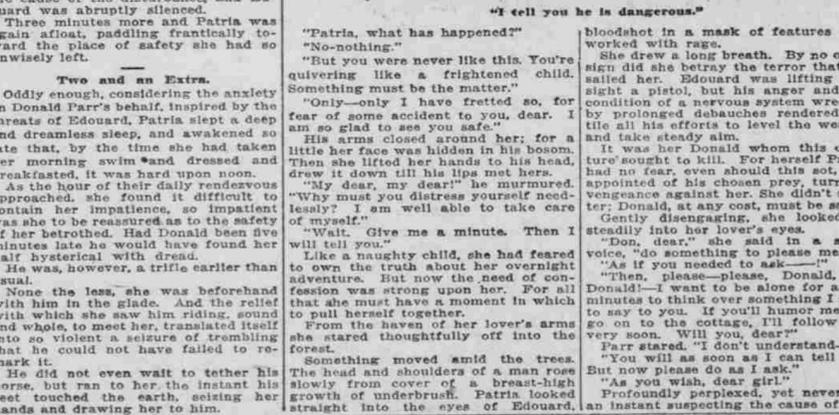


# STORY AND PROSE

by Louis Joseph Vance



## STORMY MARCH DRIVES NEW YORK SMART SET TO LESS RIGOROUS CLIMATE IN SOUTH

(Continued From First Page.)

all branches of the vast building industry in America, from every section of the country, and likewise every prominent member of the building industry, are pausing for the moment to consider the Rev. Bishop Lawrence, who now, after his year's leave of absence, has returned to his other duties, looking for a little while at the church, and then he has turned his attention to the safety of the building industry.

None the less, she was beforehand with him in the glade. And the relief of the name was his, riding, sound and whole, to meet her, translated itself into so violent a seizure of trembling that he could not have failed to remark it.

He did not even wait to tether his horse, but ran to her, the instant her hand touched the earth, and drawing her hands and drawing her to him.

The Chantry Shop inaugurated by Mrs. Benjamin Guinness has been such a success that a move will be made to larger quarters, at 535 Fifth avenue, Mrs. Guinness, who has a house in Burlingame, Cal., intends to establish a branch there, in April, when she will go West to pass most of the Summer. The fair society has become so interested in the venture that she is in the shop almost all day. In the new shop Miss Constance Collier will continue to be associate director, and there will be 15 assistants.

The gymnasium, which seats 2500, will be used for the performances.

Many surprises and new features are being added to the plans for the Actors' Guild. Recently Daniel Frohman, who is in charge, announced that if his duties did not interfere, President Wilson would open the fair. Miss Geraldine Farrar has promised to sing "The Star-Spangled Banner."

"The Awakening of Spring," Wedekind's drama, will be produced under the auspices of the Medical Review of Reviews' sociological fund committee, which also gave the first production of "Damaged Goods" in this country.

There are daily additions to the list of queer places, advertised as Continental restaurants in this city, which is not surprising considering the tremendous appeal that places of that description have for the general public this season.

Most of them are located in the Bohemian district, familiarly known as "The Village," which there are quite a number in the side streets of the 30s, 40s and 50s, on both sides of Broadway. The latest of these is the

singular request, Donald strode off briskly toward the shore.

Alone with the fear of death, Patria stole herself against the worst.

The man Edouard broke through the covert in murderous haste. Patria threw herself in his way without a thought of retreat. With an oath he struck down her imploring hands. But she would not be deterred; her arms clapped him; she exerted all her strength to hold him.

"Let go, you jade!" he rasped hoarsely. "Let me go! I promised to get him, and I will so help me, I will get him. Listen to me. You are mistaken."

"You lie! Get out of my way before you get hurt!"

"Gouard, please—please listen. I will do anything you wish—I will go back to New York—anywhere you say."

The man hesitated, looking down strangely at her.

"You promise that?"

"Then give me a kiss to prove it."

Instantly she offered her lips to his. He tightened an arm around her, eyed her steadily, and she felt a cold, planted an elbow against his chest with wicked force, fought wildly to break away and disarm him.

Edouard was so blurred with fear, desperation, panic-stricken struggling, that she retained no clear understanding of the affair.

She knew only that it culminated in the explosion of the pistol. She saw Edouard reel back, catching himself, and she stared incredulously at her hands that held the weapon. Instinctively she fled that place like a hunted thing.

**Bal Masque.**

Patria, alarmed by the pistol shot, ran back toward the glade to meet mid-way and receive in his arms the well-nigh comatose girl.

It was many minutes before he succeeded in gaining a disconnected account of what had come of Patria's intended attempt to sacrifice herself.

"And then," she wailed, "the pistol went off in my hands and he fell—dead, dead! I murdered him! I killed him! I killed him! I killed him!"

She could make out nothing more definite than a general movement of the crowd. Before she went back to her chair, however, she noticed a man standing in the shadows of the veranda and looking up at her—probably (she told herself) one of Donald's assistants. She sat down again.

Prefaced by scurrying footsteps in the hallway, the door was opened, Elaine flung herself excitedly into the room. Patria raised, but her back to the door, turned the key. Elaine swung sharply to confront her.

"Who the deuce are you?" she demanded.

Silently Patria removed her mask.

With a low cry that was half a groan, the dancing woman reeled back to the wall, her face ghastly beneath the rouge.

Dropping her beach wrap, Patria discovered her pistol.

"What makes you do that?" she said coldly. "Let me have that costume you are wearing. I give you this chance of escape, but warn you not to waste time. The police will be here in ten minutes!"

Dumb in despair, Elaine began to fumble with the fastenings of her attire.

The door was tried; from the hallway the voice of the maid became audible:

"Miss Channing! Do you need me?"

"Not in the least," Patria replied. "Go away and don't come back for half an hour."

Patria moved across the room and picked up the costume out of which Elaine had just stepped. A Spanish dancer's dress of black silk, girded with a ground of black silk. Since her bathing stockings were black silk, she needed only the little tulle in the neck and with the addition of the slippers which Elaine meekly discarded at her suggestion, counterfeit of the woman whom Newport had accepted as Patria Channing.

But it was far from easy to manage the change and she spent a tortuous and the same time. On sudden decision Patria unlocked the door.

"Put that beach cloak over your undergarments," she said, "and—"

"But I can't leave the house this way!"

"You had better—unless you prefer to go in handcuffs as well."

Submissively Elaine picked up the cloak and went to the door. Patria crossed to the chest of drawers on the side of the room, on the way putting down her pistol on a little table in the recess of the window. A moment later, while looking at the dress before the glass, she saw Elaine fling the door open and dart toward the table.

Patria turned and Elaine had moved too quickly for her. Her hand closed upon the pistol.

Simultaneously a man's hand was thrust in between the window draperies, holding a revolver. This last was discharged with what, in that small space, seemed a deafening detonation. Without as much as a sigh Elaine fell. She was dead before she lay at rest.

Thoughtless of danger, Patria reached the window in time to see a man leave the foot of a ladder whose topmost rung rested on the window sill, and descend in desperate haste round the house.

As she turned back she heard several people hurrying down the corridor, talking with the same animation. "The suave accents of Baron Huroki were distinguishable."

At her feet the pistol glistened temptingly; she rays it reflected struck fire from Patria's brain. Hastily she picked it up.

Followed by Fanny Adair and Juan de Lima, Baron Huroki unceremoniously entered the room.

"The maid said she was afraid you were in some sort of trouble—"

he began, and checked in stupefaction, staring down at the body of the dancer.

"Shut that door," Patria brusquely told de Lima.

He complied, agape.

"What does it mean?" Mrs. Adair whispered.

"With a hint of contempt Patria looked from face to face.

"Mean?" she said. "It means that Patria Channing is accounted for at last. Somebody had to do it—and you men bungled every time you tried it. Now I have done it myself. I'm going back to my guests before they miss me."

She left the three staring dumfounded, agape.

In the lower hallway she encountered Farr, drew him aside, told him what she had done.

"By what? To what end?" he stammered.

"As long as they think me Elaine, and therefore that Patria is in the room inside their councils," she explained. "I shall become intimate with all their schemes and disclose to you all I find out."

Farr shook a dazed head. "You incredible marvel!"

In the dim twilight of dawn the body of Edouard was found at the foot of the cliffs. It was surmised that—blinded by remorse and drink—he had been called by a well-known hotel city, where innumerable social affairs have been given in her honor and where her beauty and graciousness have been more commented on. At the last of this season's assembly dances, which took place recently, Mrs. Clark is said to have been one of the most admired of the young macons present.

This is the great romance of preparation, in which the role of Patria is played by Mrs. Vernon Castle, supported by Milton Sills as Donald Parr, Warner Oland as Baron Huroki, Dorothy Green as Fanny Adair, and a cast of exceptional merit. Read this story now, then see it all in motion pictures, produced by the International Film Service, Inc., under the direction of Wharton, Inc. Copyright Star Company, 1916. All foreign rights reserved.

**INTRODUCTION.**

Patria, last of "The Fighting Channing," while on route to Newport, her Summer home, is thrown to seaward from a boat steamer by agents of Baron Huroki, chief of the Japanese Secret Service, who conspires to enslave the United States and Mexico, and to control the extensive Channing munition plants, owned by Patria. Her physical counterforce, Elaine, a notorious dancer in Huroki's pay, substitutes for the supposedly dead woman, and is captured and taken by Captain Donald Parr, late of the United States Secret Service, and secretly Patria's fiancé.

**EPISODE VI. "THE MASQUE."**

**Readers of Noon.**

**SUPERBLY** mounted though he was, the horseman rode with black rein and specious air of aimlessness. Suffered to select its own pace, his cob ambled indolently through the avenues of Newport, went out into the banking country, choosing a way along the eastern shore, often within sight of the Sakonnet River.

En route the equestrian betrayed every symptom of animated admiration for the beauties of Nature.

The trust of the other riders; for the beauties of nature in general, Captain Donald Parr cared no snap of his fingers; his thoughts, like his heart, were exclusively centered upon one single beauty. His purposeless posture, his semblance of aimless interest in the charming views was positively nil; but his interest in making certain that none followed him was intense.

He was in short, practicing what he never preached, an axiom distilled from long experience in the United States Secret Service, to wit: Never go about secret business stealthily and by night if you can possibly contrive to attend to it openly in broad daylight; for apparent invitation to a clandestine enterprise is a far better cloak for a clandestine enterprise than the deepest shadow of the blackest night.

A twitch at the rein with a touch of the spur swung his horse sharply aside into an almost imperceptible marked path. A sudden, sharp, metallic clink leaves muffled the hoofs beats of the now swiftly running animal. Only an eye-witness could that smartly executed maneuver could have been observed. The rider had not been magicked into this air.

Winding tortuously through the forest, the path presently debouched into a little glade from which, through a thinning growth of trees, the shimmer of sunlight watered the air.

Here Captain Parr pulled up, dismounted, tethered his horse to a sapling, and went on afoot, striding rapidly toward the beach, with a marked manner of eager anxiety.

Turn in the path, rounding a thick-barked tree, he saw a woman, whose face he had at once recognized as all his happiness and all his cares.

He stopped short.

"Patria!" he called in a voice vibrant with wonder that her loveliness never failed to rouse.

Clothed in the simplest of Summer fashions, she looked so softly inspired by foliage, the girl was awaiting him in a pose of unaffected gladness, a vision virginal, of course, but she offered her hands to his ardent clasp, her smile seemed a trifle wistful.

"Tom," she said—"at last! I knew you couldn't be late—but even when you're most punctual, it always seems so long a time of waiting."

"You're not waiting today," he said, falling in by her side as she turned back toward the shore, "but was unexpectedly and quickly with eyes filled with inquiry. He nodded affirmatively.

"What at the Casino. I was just about ready to start on my well-known morning ride—purely," he laughed, "in the interests of my health, of course, when the old man de Lima turned up with the Changelings."

"Elaine!"

"Your volunteer substitute. So I had to wait till they were otherwise occupied before I thought it wise to leave."

The two came out by the river's edge in a little, rock-bound cove with a sandy floor. Island, more than half-hidden among the trees, a modern, well-furnished loggia was visible—on its veranda the ample person of Anne, Patria's maid, placidly rocking and sewing.

"Sit down," the girl sank, feet crossed beneath her, to the beach. "Tell me about this creature. Does Elaine really—"

"Get away with it!" Parr laughed again. "I should say she did. The girl's a consummate actress, and her trick of your enunciation almost perfectly. And a dozen feet away, seeing her dressed from your wardrobe, even if sometimes when she is really you, after all—if all this dime-novel nonsense of the double masquerade as the original Elaine, who is a dream, or a nightmare, rather. Only a close observer can detect in Elaine's manner the inevitable, occasional gestures which betray the low to be aware out of her element, momentarily without Fanny Adair at her elbow to prompt her. As a diplomat, however, she is conspicuously in her fitness—either that, or she's wily ill-advised."

"How do you mean?"

"I mean she goes about ridding herself of dangerous encumbrances in the crudest fashion imaginable. When I think of the things she does on the spur of the moment, I can fancy Baron Huroki ready to blow up with annoyance. For that gentleman has more than boys in his cranium; he knows how she quarrels with Anne on the flimsiest pretext, and sent her packing; and how she couldn't resist the temptation to slap my face with the confidential announcement of her engagement, as Patria Channing, to Juan de Lima. And today, desiring to get rid of Mrs. Wrenn, she and Rodney, she has caused this announcement to be published, without saying a word to them. The newspapers have the first hint Mrs. Wrenn got of the affair."

Parr drew from his pocket a folded paper, and displayed to Patria a photograph of a woman, who had been reduced in half-tone, above a story outlined somewhat in this fashion:

**MISS PATRIA CHANNING**

(Multimillionaire Heiress Sires Newport Society by Announcing Her Engagement to Senator Juan de Lima, Wealthy Mexican Mine Owner.)

With a little exclamation of exasperation Patria read the article through, then angrily crumpled the paper in her two hands.

"And what came of it?" she asked.

"Oh, Mrs. Wrenn protested, of course

—insisted that 'Patria' retract the announcement. And the row Elaine had been spilling for was on, ending with her informing Mrs. Wrenn that, if she disapproved so strongly, Fanny Adair would relieve her of responsibility as 'Patria's' chaperon. So Rodney and his mother are leaving."

"What?"

"Today, I presume."

"Oh!" the girl declared in deepest indignation. "This is the first time I can't stand it. I won't, another minute! Don, you must let me come out of hiding and expose these impostors!"

"Please don't do that," Donald begged. "Give me another 36 hours; I'm watching them more closely than they suspect; they do nothing I don't know all about, either through personal observation or through my agents. I only want to spare you publicity and annoyance. For these fools rope enough and they will hang themselves as high as Haman, and spare us the trouble. But let them once suspect you live and your life is worth—Well, hardly that!"

"That" was a snap of Parr's fingers. "Don't let me alarm you with my exaggeration," he added with a reassuring smile. "I'll be with you in a moment as swiftly as a rattlesnake, when he wants to, and strike with as deadly effect. I'm confident that you, with every safeguard experience could suggest, but no more than any other Anglo-Saxon can I fear from the processes of an Asiatic mind. Huroki might strike from some wholly unforeseen quarter—And you don't want to die just as you're working."

Her hand stole into his. "I don't want to lose a lifetime of being in love with you," she corrected. "So—I'll do as you say."

Less than an hour later Parr left to return to Newport, and resume his task of espionage.

**Forebode by Moonlight.**

What little wind there was went down with the sun; imperceptibly the long twilight merged into moonlight of pellucid brilliance; night fell warm and still.

Only Patria was restless and ill-at-ease. Impatience and dissatisfaction with the lot imposed upon her by Donald Parr's arguments, prayers, will and wishes, raged in her bosom with a violence only heightened by contrast with the calm that enchanted all nature.

If he had been with her, all might have been well. But he was not, and Anne's gloomy, sullen, sullen, sullen, sullen alone was desperately lonely. And resentment of the fact that a pretender stood in her shoes and passed for Patria alone was a common-sense, coarse-bred intriguer, apt on any moment's wanton whim to besmirch the name of Channing, and to bring to the announcement of the betrothal of Patria to an enemy of her country.

At the hour of the disturbance, she had the true Patria almost beyond endurance.

Alone upon the little veranda, she fought temptation as long as she could, till suspense in inaction called her intolerably, then rose and stole into the house as noiselessly as any cat, to reappear after a lapse of time in a brief clothed in dark bathing suit and sandals, a light silken beach wrap covering her shoulders.

At the hour of the night she crept down to the beach and launched her canoe.

Stepped in this, she dipped a stealthy paddle, the buoyant little boat shot swiftly out upon those placid waters. But she checked it before it had gone far, and after a lapse of time in a brief clothed in dark bathing suit and sandals, a light silken beach wrap covering her shoulders.

Accident more than design directed her flight toward the cliff. Instinctively she turned to the right, and clumps of shrubbery till she had thrown Edouard completely off the trail. Pausing at the head of the steps, she heard him in the distance blundering blindly about and swearing loudly. Then came the sounds of servants' voices inquiring the cause of the disturbance, and Edouard was abruptly silenced.

Three minutes more and Patria was again aloft, padding frantically to the beach beneath the cliffs crowned by her Summer home.

Effecting a landing there as secret as a mouse, she slipped the oar, and stepped on the sands, hugged the cloak more tightly round her, and with a delicious shiver of draining sought the beach, where she was waiting for her. She was waiting for her. She was waiting for her. She was waiting for her.

None the less, she was beforehand with him in the glade. And the relief of the name was his, riding, sound and whole, to meet her, translated itself into so violent a seizure of trembling that he could not have failed to remark it.

He did not even wait to tether his horse, but ran to her, the instant her hand touched the earth, and drawing her hands and drawing her to him.

**He good enough to let me have that costume,"** demanded Patria. "And you've been by Donald Parr's arguments, prayers, will and wishes, raged in her bosom with a violence only heightened by contrast with the calm that enchanted all nature.

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**"I tell you he is dangerous,"**

"Patria, what has happened?"

"Nothing, what has happened?"

"But you were never like this. You're quivering like a frightened child. Something must be the matter."

"Only—only I have fretted so, for fear of some accident to you, dear. I am so glad to see you safe."

His arms closed around her; for a little her face was hidden in his bosom. Then she lifted her hands to his head, drew it down till his lips met hers.

"My dear, my dear!" he murmured. "Why must you distress yourself needlessly? I am well able to take care of myself."

"Wait. Give me a minute. Then I will tell you."

Like a naughty child, she had feared to own the truth about her overnight adventure. But now the need of confession was strong upon her. For all that she must have a moment in which to pull herself together.

From the haven of her lover's arms she stared thoughtfully off into the forest.

Something moved amid the trees. The head and shoulders of a man rose slowly from cover of a breast-high growth of ferns, and Patria looked straight into the eyes of Edouard.

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