

# The THIRD DEGREE

A NARRATIVE OF METROPOLITAN LIFE

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## SYNOPSIS.

Howard Jeffries, banker's son, under the evil influence of Robert Underwood, a fellow-student at Yale, leads a life of dissipation, marries the daughter of a gambler who died in prison, and is disowned by his father. He tries to get work and fails.

## CHAPTER I.—Continued.

"I wish I could help you, old man. As it is, my own salary barely serves to keep me in neckwear. Wall street's great fun, but it doesn't pay much; that is, not unless you play the game yourself."

Howard smiled feebly as he replied:

"Nonsense—I wouldn't accept help of that sort. I'm not reduced to soliciting charity yet. I guess I'd prefer the river to that. But if you hear of anything, keep me in mind."

The athlete made no response. He was apparently lost in thought when suddenly he blurted out:

"Say, Jeffries, you haven't got any money, have you—say, a couple of thousand dollars?"

Howard stared at the questioner as if he doubted his sanity.

"Two thousand dollars!" he gasped. "Do you suppose that I'd be wearing out shoe leather looking for a job, if I had \$2,000?"

Coxe looked disappointed as he replied:

"Oh, of course, I understand you haven't it on you, only I thought you might be able to raise it."

"Why do you ask?" inquired Howard, his curiosity aroused.

Coxe looked around to see if any one was listening. Then in a whisper he said:

"It's a cinch. If you had \$2,000, you and I could make a snug little fortune. Don't you understand? In my office I get tips. I'm on the inside. I know in advance what the big men are going to do. When they start to move a certain stock up, I'm on the job. Understand? If you had \$2,000, I could raise as much, and we'd pool our capital, starting in the business ourselves—on a small scale, of course. If we hit it right we might make a nice income."

Howard's mouth watered. Certainly that was the kind of life he liked best. The feverish excitement of gambling, the close association with rich men, the promise of a luxurious style of living—all this appealed to him strongly. But what was the use? Where could he get \$2,000? He couldn't go to his father. He shook his head.

"I'm afraid not, old sport," he said as they left the saloon and he held out his hand to say good-by. "But I'll bear it in mind, and if things improve, I'll look you up. So long!"

Climbing wearily up the dirty stairs of the elevated railroad, he bought a ticket with one of the few nickels remaining in his pocket, and taking a seat in a north-bound train started on his trip back to Harlem.

The day was overcast, rain threatened. A pall of mingled smoke and mist hung over the entire city. From the car window as the train wound its serpentine course in and out of blocks of grimy offices, shops and tenements, everything appeared drab, dirty and squalid. New York was seen at its ugliest. Enconced in a cross-seat, his chin leaning heavily on his hand, Howard gazed dejectedly out of the window. The depressing outlook was in keeping with his own state of mind.

How would the adventure end? Reconciliation with his father was out of the question. Letters sent home remained without response. He wasn't surprised. He knew his father too well to expect that he would relent so soon. Besides, if the old man was so infernally proud, he'd show him he had some pride, too. He'd drown himself before he'd go down on his knees, whining to be forgiven. His father was dead wrong, anyway. His marriage might have been foolish; Annie might be beneath him socially. She was not educated and her father wasn't any better than he ought to be. She did not talk correctly, her manners left much to be desired, at times he was secretly ashamed of her. But her bringing up was her misfortune, not her fault. The girl herself was straight as a die. She had a heart of gold. She was far more intelligent, far more likely to make him a happy home than some stuck-up, idle society girl who had no thought for anything save money, dress and show. Perhaps if he had been less honorable and not married her, his father would have thought more highly of him. If he'd ruined the girl, no doubt he would have been welcomed home with open arms. Pah! He might be a poor, weak fool, but thank God, they couldn't reproach him with that. Annie had been loyal to him throughout. He'd stick to her through thick and thin.

As the train swept round the curve at Fifty-third street and started on its long, straight run up the West side, his mind reverted to Robert Underwood. He had seen his old associate only once since leaving college. He ran across him one day on Fifth ave-

nue. Underwood was coming out of a curio shop. He explained hurriedly that he had left Yale, and when asked about his future plans talked vaguely of going in for art. His matter was frigid and nervous—the attitude of the man who fears he may be approached for a small loan. He was evidently well aware of the change in his old associate's fortunes, and having squeezed all he could out of him, had no further use for him. It was only when he had disappeared that Howard suddenly remembered a loan of \$250 which Underwood had never repaid. Some time later Howard learned that he occupied apartments at the exclusive and expensive Astoria, where he was living in great style. He went there determined to see him and demand his money, but the card always came back "not at home."

Underwood had always been a mystery to Howard. He knew him to be an inveterate gambler and a man entirely without principle. No one knew who his family were or where he came from. His source of income, too, was always a puzzle. At college he was always hard up, borrowing right and left and forgetting to pay, yet he always succeeded in living on the fat of the land. His apartments



"I Wish I Could Help You, Old Man."

in the Astoria cost a small fortune; he dressed well, drove a smart turnout and entertained lavishly. He was not identified with any particular business or profession. On leaving college he became interested in art. He frequented the important art sales and soon got his name in the newspapers as an authority on art matters. His apartment was literally a museum of European and oriental art. On all sides were paintings by old masters, beautiful rugs, priceless tapestries, rare ceramics, enamels, statuary, antique furniture, bronzes, etc. He passed for a man of wealth, and mothers with marriageable daughters, considering him an eligible young bachelor, hastened to invite him to their homes, none of them conscious of the danger of letting the wolf slip into the lambs' fold.

What a strange power of fascination, mused Howard as the train joggled along, men of Underwood's bold and reckless type wield, especially over women. Their very daring and unscrupulousness seems to render them more attractive. He himself at college had fallen entirely under the man's spell. There was no doubt that he was responsible for all his troubles. Underwood possessed the uncanny gift of being able to bend people to his will. What a fool he had made of him at the university! He had been his evil genius, there was no question of that. But for meeting Underwood he might have applied himself to serious study, left the university with honors and be now a respectable member of the community. He remembered with a smile that it was through Underwood that he had met his wife. Some of the fellows hinted that Underwood had known her more intimately than he had pretended and had only passed her on to him because he was tired of her. He had called that as a lie. Annie, he could swear, was as good a girl as ever breathed.

He couldn't explain Underwood's influence over him. He had done with

him what he chose. He wondered why he had not tried to resist. The truth was Underwood exercised a strange, subtle power over him. He had the power to make him do everything he wanted him to do, no matter how foolish or unreasonable the request. Every one at college used to talk about it. One night Underwood invited all his classmates to his rooms and made him cut up all kinds of capers. He at first refused, point blank—but Underwood got up and, standing directly in front of him, gazed steadily into his eyes. Again he commanded him to do these ridiculous, degrading things. Howard felt himself weakening. He was suddenly seized with the feeling that he must obey. Amid roars of laughter he recited the entire alphabet standing on one leg, he crowed like a rooster, he hopped like a toad, and he crawled abjectly on his belly like a snake. One of the fellows told him afterward that he had been hypnotized. He had laughed at it then as a good joke, but now he came to think of it, perhaps it was true. Possibly he was a subject. Anyway he was glad to be rid of Underwood and his uncanny influence.

The train stopped with a jerk at his station and Howard rode down in the elevator to the street. Crossing Eighth avenue, he was going straight home when suddenly he halted. The glitter and tempting array of bottles in a corner saloon window tempted him. He suddenly felt that if there was one thing he needed in the world above all others it was another drink. True, he had had more than enough already. But that was Coxe's fault. He had invited him and made him drink. There couldn't be any harm in taking another. He might as well be hanged for a sheep as a lamb. By the time he emerged from the saloon his speech was thick and his step uncertain. A few minutes later he was painfully climbing up the rickety stairs of a cheap-looking flat house. As he

The box-like ho'e where Howard sat awaiting his meal was the largest room in a flat which boasted of "five and bath." There was a bedroom of equally diminutive proportions and a parlor with wall paper so loud that it talked. There was scarcely enough room to swing a cat around. The thin walls were cracked, the rooms were carpetless. Yet it showed the care of a good housekeeper. Floors and windows were clean, the cover on the table spotless. The furnishings were as meager as they were ingenious. With their slender purse they had been able to purchase only the bare necessities—a bed, a chair or two, a dining room table, a few kitchen utensils. When they wanted to sit in the parlor they had to carry a chair from the dining room; when meal times came the chairs had to travel back again. A soap box turned upside down and neatly covered with chintz did duty as a dresser in the bedroom, and with a few photographs and tacks they had managed to impart an aesthetic appearance to the parlor. This place cost the huge sum of \$25 a month. It might just as well have cost \$100 for all Howard's ability to pay it. The past month's rent was long overdue and the janitor looked more insolent every day. But they did not care. They were young and life was still before them.

Presently Annie came in carrying a steaming dish of stew, which she laid on the table. As she helped Howard to a plate full she said: "So you had no luck again this morning?"

Howard was too busy eating to answer. As he gulped down a huge piece of bread, he growled:

"Nothing, as usual—same old story, nothing doing."

Annie sighed. She had been given this answer so often that it would have surprised her to hear anything else. It meant that their hard-mouth struggle must go on. She said nothing. What was the use? It would never do to discourage Howard. She tried to make light of it.

"Of course it isn't easy, I quite understand that. Never mind, dear. Something will turn up soon. Where did you go? Whom did you see? Why didn't you let drink alone when you promised me you would?"

"That was Coxe's fault," blurted out Howard, always ready to blame others for his own shortcomings. "You remember Coxe? He was at Yale when I was. A big, fair fellow with blue eyes. He pulled stroke in the 'varsity boat race, you remember?"

"I think I do," replied his wife, indifferently, as she helped him to more stew. "What did he want? What's he doing in New York?"

"He's got a fine place in a broker's office in Wall street. I felt ashamed to let him see me low down like this. He said that I could make a good deal of money if only I had a little capital. He knows everything going on in Wall street. If I went in with him I'd be on Easy street."

"How much would it require?"

"Two thousand dollars."

The young wife gave a sigh as she answered:

"I'm afraid that's a day dream. Only your father could give you such an amount and you wouldn't go to him, would you?"

"Not if we hadn't another crust in the house," snapped Howard savagely. "You don't want me to do you?"

"No, dear," she answered calmly. "I have certainly no wish that you should humble yourself. At the same time I am not selfish enough to want to stand in the way of your future. Your father and stepmother hate me, I know that. I am the cause of your separation from your folks. No doubt your father would be very willing to help you if you would consent to leave me."

Howard laughed as he replied:

"Well, if that's the price for the \$2,000 I guess I'll go without it. I wouldn't give you up for a million times \$2,000!"

Annie stretched her hand across the table.

"Really?" she said.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

## Engineering in Hospitals.

Practically all the important infirmaries and hospitals in England have their own electric generating stations, and the size of the installations would surprise the majority of engineers. The equipment has to be designed with unusual care, owing to the special conditions which prevail in hospital work. Even where a public supply is available, the use of an independent system is justified on account of the security which it gives against failure of current at a critical moment. The installations are used for lighting, heating, ventilating, telephoning and other purposes, and many hospitals have laundries operated electrically. One county asylum has its own private electric railway for conveying supplies from the nearest railway station.

## The Duration of Dreams.

Something regarding the duration of dreams can be gathered from this experience of a man who, on sitting down for a dental operation, took gas and dreamed. He saw himself finish his work, go to the club, leave for the station, run for the train and miss it. He returned to his club and reclined on a settee in the library. There he passed a miserable, restless night, getting gradually colder and colder as the fire died down, and with a pain gradually growing about his head and face from the hardness of his couch. Five o'clock in the morning came, and the steward roused him to say that the club must now be closed. The sleeper got up feeling very stiff—to find that the steward was his dentist, and that the night's adventures had lasted exactly 42 seconds.

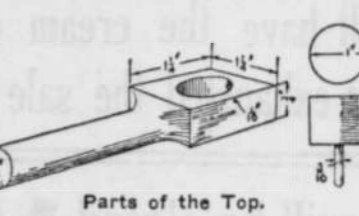


Said Lazy Louis I must say - I wish I were a Flower - For they stay in their Beds all day - And never heed the Hour

## TO MAKE AN AUSTRIAN TOP

Not Difficult to Put Together and Can Be Cut From Ordinary Broomhandle—How It Is Worked.

All parts of an Austrian top are of wood and they are simple to make. The handle is a piece of pine 5/4 inches long, 1 1/4 inches wide and three-fourths inch thick. A handle, three-



Parts of the Top.

fourths inch in diameter, is formed on one end, allowing only 1 1/4 inches of the other end to remain rectangular in shape. Bore a three-fourths inch hole in this end of the top. A one-sixteenth inch hole is bored in the edge to enter the large hole as shown, says a writer in Popular Mechanics. The top can be cut from a broom handle or a round stick of hardwood.

To spin the top take a piece of stout cord about two feet long, pass one end through the one-sixteenth inch hole and wind it on the small part of the top in the usual way, starting at the bottom and winding upward. When the shank is covered, set the top in the three-fourths inch hole. Take hold of the handle with the left hand and the end of the cord with the right hand, give a good quick pull on the cord and the top will jump clear of the handle and spin vigorously.

## VEHICLE PROPELLED BY HAND

Wheels for Common Cart Can Be Secured at Any Junk Shop at Slight Expense—Makes Lever Auto.

Any boy following the directions given here can convert a common four-wheeled cart into a hand propelled vehicle.

If you would like to own a lever auto like this one and do not happen to have a cart, you can get wheels at a junk yard at slight expense. The beginning of your work will be to take out the rear axle and substitute for it the crank-shaped one shown in the



Hand-Propelled Vehicle.

drawing. The best place to obtain a rod long enough to be shaped into the crank is the junk yard.

Before you put your new axle in place make a wooden lever similar to the one shown under the wagon. It is made of two small blocks nailed to the sides of a longer stick near the end of the latter. Another lever comes up through a hole in the bottom of the cart and has a cross piece nailed on the upper end for a handle. Two blocks like the one shown in the cut are fastened under the wagon and a bolt is driven through them and through the upright lever to act as a pivot.

## Puzzler for Little Fay.

Little Fay had been given a ten-cent piece and sent to buy a postage stamp. The clerk gave her the stamp, and eight pennies in change. Fay counted the pennies twice. Then she said, with a puzzled look, "I don't think this is right. How much did you say a two-cent stamp cost?"

# CAP and BELLS



## WRONG DIAGNOSIS IS MADE

Physician, After Careful Examination of Patient, Prescribes Fresh Air for Aviator.

He was ill, or at least said that he was, and the other day he entered the house of a well-known physician and sank into a leather-covered arm-chair in the ante-room waiting his turn on the list.

At last it came, and the doctor examined his tongue critically, felt his pulse, inquired as to the symptoms of his illness, and then looked wise. Taking a pad from the table he wrote a prescription calling for bread pills and distilled water, or something of that sort. Then, turning in his chair, the physician said, "I cannot say anything serious is the matter with you. What you need is plenty of air—"

The patient smiled a broad, bland smile, but said nothing.

"Take this prescription regularly every night, but above all things get plenty of air. Good, wholesome, outdoor atmosphere, that is what you need more than anything else."

"Ha, ha, ha! I need air, do I?" shouted the man. "Well, that is funny."

"Why, what do you mean?" inquired the doctor.

"Mean? Why, I'm an aviator."

## Not Hitting the Pressman.

The complaint editor was trying to pacify an indignant contributor who was scolding him through the telephone.

"We printed your communication the day after it was received," he said.

"I didn't see it and I looked all through the paper."

"It was on the page where we always run such things. Didn't you notice a blur at the bottom of the fifth column that you couldn't make anything out of?"

"Yes."

"Well, that was it."

## Love and a Looking Glass.

They had been married in November.

"Did you see anything that particularly struck your fancy when you were looking around the shops today, sweetheart?" asked the young husband on his wife's return from a round of Christmas shopping.

"Well," she replied, "I saw something extremely pretty in looking glasses."

"I have no doubt you did," he observed. "If you looked into them."—Liverpool Mercury.

## GOOD MOSQUITOES.

The Summer Boarder—Are the mosquitoes and flies very bad here? Hiram Harrick—Nope. You'll find some of 'em in church every Sunday.

## And Then—!

A woman who does her own housework was invited out to dinner the other night, and when she rose from the table, remarked:

"Well, it is pleasant to eat something that I didn't cook."

"Indeed it is," said her husband, before he bethought himself of consequences.

## A Depressing Experience.

"Did you ever long in vain for a single pleasant word or kind look?" said the sentimental soul.

"Yes," replied the practical person, "when I tried to get by a swell waiter with a 25-cent tip."

## Explained.

Patience—I see England has twenty-eight railway tunnels a mile or more long.

Patience—That explains why so many girls want to go there on their wedding tri