



The THIRD DEGREE

A NARRATIVE OF METROPOLITAN LIFE

By CHARLES KLEIN AND ARTHUR HORNBLow

ILLUSTRATIONS BY RAY WALTERS

COPYRIGHT, 1909, BY G.W. DILLINGHAM COMPANY.



SYNOPSIS.

Howard Jeffries, banker's son, under the evil influence of Robert Underwood, 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 is out of work and in desperate straits. Underwood, who had once been engaged to Howard's stepmother, Alicia, is apparently in prosperous circumstances. Taking advantage of his intimacy with Alicia, he becomes a sort of social highwayman. Discovering his true character, Alicia denies him the house. He sends her a note threatening suicide. Art dealers for whom he acted as commissioner, demand an accounting. He cannot make good. Howard calls at his apartments in an intoxicated condition to request a loan of \$2,000 to enable him to take up a business proposition. Howard drinks himself into a maudlin condition, and goes to sleep on a divan. A caller is announced and Underwood draws a screen around the drunken sleeper. Alicia enters. She demands a promise from Underwood that he will not take her life. He refuses unless she will renew her patronage. This she refuses, and takes her leave. Underwood kills himself. The report of the pistol awakens Howard. He finds Underwood dead. Howard is turned over to the police. Capt. Clinton, notorious for his brutal treatment of prisoners, puts Howard through the third degree, and finally gets an alleged confession from the harassed man. Annie, Howard's wife, declares her belief in her husband's innocence, and calls on Jeffries, Sr. He refuses to help unless she will consent to a divorce. To save Howard she consents, but when she finds that the elder Jeffries does not intend to stand by his son, except financially, she accuses his help. Annie appeals to Judge Brewster, attorney for Jeffries, Sr., to take Howard's case. He declines. It is reported that Annie is going on the stage. The banker and his wife call on Judge Brewster to find some way to prevent it. Annie again pleads with Brewster to defend Howard. He consents. Alicia is greatly agitated when she learns that Brewster has taken the case and detectives are looking for the woman who called on Underwood the night of his death. Alicia confesses to Annie that she has a letter from Underwood threatening suicide.



CHAPTER XIV.—Continued.

"And you know what mine are!" exclaimed the banker, hotly. "I refuse to be engulfed in this wave of hysterical sympathy with criminals. I will not be stamped with the same hall mark as the man who takes the life of his fellow being—though the man be my own son. I will not set the seal of approval on crime by defending it."

The lawyer bowed and said calmly:

"Then, sir, you must expect exactly what is happening. This girl, whatever she may be, is devoted to your son. She is his wife. She'll go to any extreme to help him—even to selling her name for money to pay for his defense."

The banker threw up his hands with impatience.

"It's a matter of principle with me. Her devotion is not the question." With a mocking laugh he went on: "Sentimentality doesn't appeal to me. The whole thing is distasteful and hideous to me. My instructions to you are to prevent her using the family name on the stage, to buy her off on her own terms, to get rid of her at any price."

"Except the price she asks," interposed the lawyer, dryly. Shaking his head, he went on:

"You'll find that a wife's devotion is a very strong motive power, Jeffries. It will move irresistibly forward in spite of all the barriers you and I can erect to stay its progress. That may sound like a platitude, but it's a fact nevertheless."

Alicia, who had been listening with varied emotions to the conversation, now interrupted timidly:

"Perhaps Judge Brewster is right, dear. After all, the girl is working to save your son. Public opinion may think it unnatural—"

The banker turned on his wife. Sternly he said:

"Alicia, I cannot permit you to interfere. That young man is a self-confessed murderer and therefore no son of mine. I've done with him long ago. I cannot be moved by maudlin sentimentality. Please let that be final." Turning to the lawyer, he said, coldly:

"So, in the matter of this stage business, you can take no steps to restrain her?"

The lawyer shook his head.

"No, there is nothing I can do." Quickly he added: "Of course, you don't doubt my loyalty to you?"

Mr. Jeffries shook his head.

"No, no, Brewster."

The lawyer laughed as he said:

"Right or wrong, you know—'my country'—that is, my client—'tis of thee." Turning to Alicia, he added, laughing: "That's the painful part of a lawyer's profession, Mrs. Jeffries. The client's weakness is the lawyer's strength. When men hate each other and rob each other we lawyers don't pacify them. We dare not, because that is our profession. We encourage them. We pit them against each other for profit. If we didn't they'd go to some lawyer who would."

Alicia gave a feeble smile.

"Yes," she replied; "I'm afraid we all love to be advised to do what we want to do."

Mr. Jeffries made an impatient gesture of dissent. Scornfully he remarked:

"That may apply to the great generation of people, but not to me."

"It's Your Duty to Do It."

Judge Brewster looked skeptical, but made no further comment. The banker rose and Alicia followed suit. As he moved toward the door, he turned and said:

"Drop in and see me this evening, Brewster. Mrs. Jeffries will be delighted if you will dine with us."

Alicia smiled graciously. "Do come, Judge; we shall be all alone."

The lawyer bent low over her hand as he said good-by. Mr. Jeffries had already reached the door, when he turned again and said:

"Are you sure a very liberal offer wouldn't induce her to drop the name?"

The lawyer shook his head doubtfully.

"Well, see what you can do," cried the banker. To his wife he said: "Are you coming, Alicia?"

"Just a moment, dear," she replied. "I want to say a word to the judge."

"All right," replied the banker. "I'll be outside." He opened the door, and as he did so he turned to the lawyer:

"If there are any new developments let me know at once."

He left the office and Alicia breathed a sigh of relief. She did not love her husband, but she feared him. He was not only 20 years her senior, but his cold, aristocratic manner intimidated her. Her first impulse had been to tell him everything, but she dare not. His manner discouraged her. He would begin to ask questions, questions which she could not answer without seriously incriminating herself. But her conscience would not allow her to stand entirely aloof from the tragedy in which her husband's scapegrace son was involved. She felt a strange, unaccountable desire to meet this girl Howard had married. In a quick undertone to the lawyer, she said:

"I must see that woman, Judge. I think I can persuade her to change her course of action. In any case I must see her, I must—" Looking at him questioningly, she said: "You don't think it inadvisable, do you?"

The judge smiled grimly.

"I think I'd better see her first," he said. "Suppose you come back a little later. It's more than probable that she'll be here this afternoon. I'll see her and arrange for an interview."

There was a knock at the door, and Alicia started guiltily, thinking her husband might have overheard their conversation. The head clerk entered and whispered something to the judge, after which he retired. The lawyer turned to Alicia with a smile.

"It's just as I thought," he said, pleasantly, "she's out there now. You'd better go and leave her to me."

The door opened again unceremoniously, and Mr. Jeffries put in his head:

"Aren't you coming, Alicia?" he demanded, impatiently. In a lower voice to the lawyer, he added: "Say, Brewster, that woman is outside in your office. Now is your opportunity to come to some arrangement with her."

Again Mrs. Jeffries held out her hand.

"Good-by, Judge; you're so kind! It needs a lot of patience to be a lawyer, doesn't it?"

Judge Brewster laughed, and added in an undertone:

"Come back by and by."

The door closed, and the lawyer

CHAPTER XV.

Annie entered the presence of the famous lawyer pale and ill at ease. This sudden summons to Judge Brewster's private office was so unexpected that it came like a shock. For days she had haunted the premises, sitting in the outer office for hours at a time exposed to the stare and covert smiles of thoughtless clerks and office boys. Her requests for an interview had been met with curt refusals. They either said the judge was out of town or else that he was too busy to be seen. At last, evidently acting upon orders, they flatly refused to even send in her name, and she had about abandoned hope when, all at once, a clerk approached her, and addressing her more politely than usual, said that the judge would see her in a few minutes.

Her heart gave a great throb. Almost speechless from surprise, she stammered a faint thanks and braced herself for the interview on which so much depended. For the first time since the terrible affair had happened, there was a faint glimmer of hope ahead. If only she could rush over to the Tombs and tell Howard the joyful news so he might keep up courage! It was eight days now since Howard's arrest, and the trial would take place in six weeks. There was still time to prepare a strong defense if the judge would only consent to take the case. She was more sure than ever that a clever lawyer would have no difficulty in convincing a jury that Howard's alleged "confession" was untrue and improperly obtained.

In the intervals of waiting to see the lawyer, she had consulted every one she knew, and among others she had talked with Dr. Bernstein, the noted psychologist, whom she had seen once at Yale. He received her kindly and listened attentively to her story. When she had finished he had evinced the greatest interest. He told her that he happened to be the physician called in on the night of the tragedy, and at that time he had grave doubts as to it being a case of murder. He believed it was suicide, and he had told Capt. Clinton so, but the police captain had made up his mind, and that was the end of it. Howard's "confession," he went on, really meant nothing. If called to the stand he could show the jury that a hypnotic subject can be made to "confess" to anything. In the interest of truth, justice, and science, he said, he would gladly come to her aid.

All this she would tell Judge Brewster. It would be of great help to

him, no doubt. Suddenly, a cold shiver ran through her. How did she know he would take the case? Perhaps this summons to his office was only to tell her once more that he would have nothing to do with her and her husband. She wondered why he had decided so suddenly to see her and, like a flash, an idea came to her. She had seen Mr. Jeffries, Sr., enter the inner sanctum and, instinctively, she felt that she had something to do with his visit. The banker had come out accompanied by a richly-dressed woman whom she guessed to be his wife.

She looked with much interest at Howard's stepmother. She had heard so much about her that it seemed to her that she knew her personally. As Alicia swept proudly by, the eyes of the two women met, and Annie was surprised to see in the banker's wife's face, instead of the cold, haughty stare she expected, a wistful, longing look, as if she would like to stop and talk with her, but dare not. In another instant she was gone, and, obeying a clerk, who beckoned her to follow him, she entered Judge Brewster's office.

The lawyer looked up as she came in, but did not move from his seat. Gruffly he said:

"How long do you intend to keep up this system of—warfare? How long are you going to continue forcing your way into this office?"

"I didn't force my way in," she said, quietly. "I didn't expect to come in. The clerk said you wanted to see me."

The lawyer frowned and scrutinized her closely. After a pause, he said:

"I want to tell you for the fiftieth time I can do nothing for you."

"Fifty?" she echoed. "Fifty did you say? Really, it doesn't seem that much."

Judge Brewster looked at her quickly to see if she was laughing at him. Almost peevishly, he said:

"For the last time, I repeat I can do nothing for you."

"Not the last time, Judge," she replied, shaking her head. "I shall come again to-morrow."

The lawyer swung around in his chair with indignation.

"You will—?"

Annie nodded.

"Yes, sir," she said, quietly.

"You're determined to force your way in here?" exclaimed the lawyer.

"Yes, sir."

The judge banged the desk with his fist.

"But I won't allow it! I have something to say, you know! I can't permit this to go on. I represent my client, Mr. Howard Jeffries, Sr., and he won't consent to my taking up your husband's case."

There was a shade of sarcasm in Annie's voice as she asked calmly:

"Can't you do it without his consent?"

The lawyer looked at her grimly.

"I can," he blurted out, "but—I won't."

Her eyes flashed as she replied quickly.

"Well, you ought to—"

The lawyer looked up in amazement.

"What do you mean?" he demanded.

"It's your duty to do it," she said, quietly. "Your duty to his son, to me, and to Mr. Jeffries himself. Why, he's so eaten up with his family pride and false principles that he can't see the difference between right and wrong. You're his lawyer. It's your duty to put him right. It's downright wicked of you to refuse—you're hurting him. Why, when I was hunting around for a lawyer one of them actually refused to take up the case because he said old Brewster must think Howard was guilty or he'd have taken it up himself. You and his father are putting the whole world against him, and you know it."

The judge was staggered. No one in his recollection had ever dared to speak to him like that. He was astonished that he forgot to resent it and he hid his confusion by taking out his handkerchief and mopping his forehead.

"I do know it," he admitted.

"Then why do you do it?" she snapped.

The lawyer hesitated, and then he said:

"I—that's not the question." Annie leaped quickly forward, and she replied:

"It's my question—and as you say, I've asked it 50 times."

The lawyer sat back in his chair and looked at her for a moment without speaking. He surveyed her critically from head to foot, and then, as if satisfied with his examination, said:

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

What It May Come To.

"I've just thought of a brand-new philanthropy," said Mr. Dustin Stax. "What is it?" "I'm going to found a home for ex-billionaires who impoverish themselves by donations."

W. M. Langley & Son
Lawyers
Forest Grove, Ogn.

W. P. Dyke
Attorney-at-Law
and
Notary Public
Forest Grove Oregon

Hollis & Graham
Attorneys-at-Law
Forest Grove, Ogn.

J. N. Hoffman
Attorney-at-Law
EQUITY AND PROBATE ONLY
Office Hoffman Bldg. Pacific Ave.
Ind. Phone 502 Forest Grove

H. W. Vollmer, M. D.
Physician and Surgeon
Office in Abbott Bldg.
Both Phones Forest Grove, Ogn.

Ind. Phones
Residence 0332 Office 0331

DR. C. E. WALKER
Osteopathic Physician
Treatment by Special Appointment Only

W. Q. Tucker, M. D.
Physician and Surgeon
Calls answered promptly day or night
Phone: Office 271, Residence 288.

C. W. MERTZ **J. C. LATTA**

MERTZ & LATTA
Forest Grove Steam Laundry
Ice, Cold Storage, Wood and Coal

Both Phones Corner Fifth Avenue and Second Street

Central Livery Barns
Mc Namer & Wirtz, Proprietors
General Livery
and Tillamook Stage Lines.

PEERLESS CAFETERIA
104 FIFTH STREET Between Wash. and Stark 84 and 86 FIFTH STREET Between Stark and Oak
PORTLAND, OREGON

The Best Place in Portland to Eat and at Most Reasonable Prices

When in Need of Groceries

When in need of GROCERIES don't forget that we carry a full line of both Staple and Fancy.

THE RIGHT PRICE AND QUALITY

H. T. GILTNER
Phone 701 Main Street

Commercial Printing

W E are in a better position than ever to do all kinds of Fine Commercial Printing on short notice, having just recently installed new machinery and a complete line of the latest styles of type faces

BILL HEADS, LETTER HEADS, STATEMENTS, LEGAL BLANKS, POSTERS, BRIEFS, ENVELOPES, CALLING CARDS, ETC. Up-to-date work on short notice.

SATISFACTION GUARANTEED

Press Job Rooms
THE QUALITY SHOP