



The THIRD DEGREE

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CHAPTER I.

"I'm N. G.—that's a cinch! The sooner I chuck it the better!" Caught in the swirl of the busy city's midday rush, engulfed in Broadway's swift moving flood of hustling humanity, jostled unceremoniously by the careless, indifferent crowds, discouraged from stemming further the tide of pushing, elbowing men and women who hurried up and down the great thoroughfare. Howard Jeffries, tired and hungry and thoroughly disgusted with himself, stood still at the corner of Fulton street, cursing the luck which had brought him to his present plight.

It was the noon hour, the important time of day when nature loudly claims her due, when business affairs, no matter how pressing, must be temporarily interrupted so that the human machine may lay in a fresh store of nervous energy. From under the portals of precipitous office buildings, mammoth hives of human industries, which to right and left soared dizzily from street to sky, swarmed thousands of employees of both sexes—clerks, stenographers, shop girls, messenger boys—all moved by a common impulse to satisfy without further delay the animal cravings of their physical natures. They strode along with quick, nervous step, each chatting and laughing with his fellow, interested for the nonce in the day's work, making plans for well-earned recreation when five o'clock should come and the uptown stampede for Harlem and home begin.

The young man sullenly watched the scene, envious of the energy and activity of all about him. Each one in these hurrying throngs, he thought bitterly to himself, was a valuable unit in the prosperity and welfare of the big town. No matter how humble his or her position, each played a part in the business life of the great city, each was an unseen, unknown, yet indispensable cog in the whirling, complicated mechanism of the vast world metropolis. Intuitively he felt that he was not one of them, that he had no right even to consider himself their equal. He was utterly useless to anybody. He was without position or money. He was destitute even of a shred of self-respect. Hadn't he promised Annie not to touch liquor again before he found a job? Yet he had already imbibed all the whisky which the little money left in his pocket would buy.

Involuntarily, instinctively, he shrank back into the shadow of a doorway to let the crowds pass. The pavements were now filled to overflowing and each moment newcomers from the side streets came to swell the human stream. He tried to avoid observation, fearing that some one might recognize him, thinking all could read on his face that he was a sot, a self-confessed failure, one of life's incompetents. In his painful self-consciousness he believed himself the cynosure of every eye and he winced as he thought he detected on certain faces side glances of curiosity, commiseration and contempt.

Nor was he altogether mistaken. More than one passer-by turned to look in his direction, attracted by his peculiar appearance. His was a type not seen every day in the commercial district—the post-graduate college man out at elbows. He was smooth-faced and apparently about 25 years of age. His complexion was fair and his face refined. It would have been handsome but for a drooping, irresolute mouth, which denoted more than average weakness of character. The face was thin, chalk-like in its lack of color and deeply seamed with the tell-tale lines of dissipation. Dark circles under his eyes and a peculiar watery look suggested late hours and overfondness for alcoholic refreshment. His clothes had the cut of expensive tailors, but they were shabby and needed pressing. His linen was soiled and his necktie disarranged. His whole appearance was careless and suggested that recklessness of mind which comes of general demoralization.

Howard Jeffries knew that he was a failure, yet like most young men mentally weak, he insisted that he could not be held altogether to blame. Eagerly, too, he despised these sober, industrious people who seemed contented with the crumbs of comfort thrown to them. What, he wondered idly, was their secret of getting on? How were they able to lead such well regulated lives when he, starting out with far greater advantages, had failed? Oh, he knew well where the trouble lay—in his damnable weakness of character, his love for drink. That was responsible for everything. But was it his fault if he were born weak? These people who behaved themselves and got on, he sneered, were calm, commonplace temperaments who found no difficulty in controlling their baser instincts. They did right simply because they found it easier than to do wrong. Their vir-



He Was a Type Not Seen Every Day in the Commercial District.

tuety was nothing to brag about. It was easy to be good when not exposed to temptation. But for those born with the devil in them it came hard. It was all a matter of heredity and influence. One's vices as well as one's virtues are handed down to us ready made. He had no doubt that in the Jeffries family somewhere in the unsavory past there had been a weak, vicious ancestor from whom he had inherited all the traits which barred his way to success.

The crowds of hungry workers grew bigger every minute. Every one was elbowing his way into neighboring restaurants, crowding the tables and buffets, all eating voraciously as they talked and laughed. Howard was rudely reminded by inward pangs that he, too, was famished. Not a thing had passed his lips since he had left home in Harlem at eight o'clock that morning and he had told Annie that he would be home for lunch. There was no use staying downtown any longer. For three weary hours he had trudged from office to office seeking employment, answering advertisements, asking for work of any kind, ready to do no matter what, but all to no purpose. Nobody wanted him at any price. What was the good of a man being willing to work if there was no one to employ him? A nice look-out certainly. Hardly a dollar left and no prospect of getting any more. He hardly had the courage to return home and face Annie. With a muttered exclamation of impatience he spat from his mouth the half-consumed cigarette which was hanging from his lip, and crossing Broadway, walked listlessly in the direction of Park place.

He had certainly made a mess of things, yet at one time, not so long ago, what a brilliant future life seemed to have in store for him! No boy had ever been given a better start. He remembered the day he left home to go to Yale; he recalled his father's kind words of encouragement, his mother's tears. Ah, if his mother had only lived! Then, maybe, everything would have been different. But she died during his freshman year, carried off suddenly by heart failure. His father married again, a young woman, 20 years his junior, and that had started everything off wrong. The old home life had gone forever. He had felt like an intruder the first time he went home and from that day his father's roof had been distasteful to him. Yes, that was the beginning of his hard luck. He could trace all his misfortunes back to that. He couldn't stand for stepmother, a haughty, selfish, supercilious, ambitious creature who had little sympathy for her predecessor's child, and no scruple in showing it.

Then, at college, he had met Robert Underwood, the popular upper classman, who had professed to take a great fancy to him. He, a timid young freshman, was naturally flattered by the friendship of the dashing, fascinating sophomore and thus commenced that unfortunate intimacy which had brought about the climax to his troubles. The suave, amiable Underwood, whom he soon discovered to be a gentlemanly scoundrel, borrowed his money and introduced him into the "sporty" set, an exclusive circle into which, thanks to his liberal allowance from home, he was welcomed with

open arms. With a youth of his proclivities and inherent weakness the outcome was inevitable. At no time overfond of study, he regarded residence in college as a most desirable emancipation from the restraint of home life. The love of books he considered a pose and he scoffed at the men who took their reading seriously. The university attracted him mostly by its most undesirable features, its sports, its secret societies, its petty cliques, and its roguism. The broad spirit and the dignity of the alma mater he ignored completely. Directly he went to Yale he started in to enjoy himself and with the sophisticated Underwood as guide, went to the devil faster than any man before him in the entire history of the university.

Reading, attendance at lectures, became only a convenient cloak to conceal his turpitudes. Poker playing, automobile joy rides, hard drinking became the daily curriculum. In town rows and orgies of every description he was soon a recognized leader. Scandal followed scandal until he was threatened with expulsion. Then his father heard of it and there was a terrible scene. Jeffries, Sr., went immediately to New Haven and there followed a stormy interview in which Howard promised to reform, but once the parent's back was turned things went on pretty much as before. There were fresh scandals, the smoke of which reached as far as New York. This time Mr. Jeffries tried the plan of cutting down the money supply and Howard found himself financially embarrassed. But this had not quite the effect desired by the father, for, rendered desperate by his inability to secure funds with which to carry on his spree, the young man started in to gamble heavily, giving notes for his losses and pocketing the ready money when he won.

Then came the supreme scandal which turned his father's heart to steel. Jeffries, Sr., could forgive much in a young man. He had been young himself once. None knew better than he how difficult it is when the blood is rich and red to keep oneself in control. But there was one offence which a man proud of his descent could not condone. He would never forgive the staining of the family name by a degrading marriage. The news came to the unhappy father like a thunder-clap. Howard, probably in a drunken spree, had married secretly a waitress employed in one of the "sporty" restaurants in New Haven, and to make the mesalliance worse, the girl was not even of respectable parents. Her father, Billy Delmore, the poolroom king, was a notorious gambler and had died in convict stripes. Fine sensation that for the yellow press. "Banker's Son Weds Convict's Daughter." So ran the "scare heads" in the newspapers. That was the last straw for Mr. Jeffries, Sr. He sternly told his son that he never wanted to look upon his face again. Howard bowed his head to the decree and he had never seen his father since.

All this the young man was reviewing in his mind when suddenly his reflections were disturbed by a friendly hail.

"Hello, Jeffries, old sport! Don't you know a fellow frat when you see him?"



face, was standing at the news stand under the Park place elevated station. Quickly Howard extended his hand.

"Hello, Cox!" he exclaimed. "What on earth are you doing in New York? Whoever would have expected to meet you in this howling wilderness? How's everything at Yale?"

The athlete grinned. "Yale be hanged! I don't care a d— You know I graduated last June. I'm in business now—in a broker's office in Wall street. Say, it's great! We had a semi-panic last week. Prices went to the devil. Stocks broke 20 points. You should have seen the excitement on the exchange floor. Our football rushes were nothing to it. I tell you, it's great. It's got college beaten to a frazzle!" Quickly he added: "What are you doing?"

Howard averted his eyes and hung his head. "Nothing," he answered gloomily. Cox had quickly taken note of his former classmate's shabby appearance. He had also heard of his escapades.

"Didn't you hear?" muttered Howard. "Row with governor, marriage and all that sort of thing? Of course," he went on, "father's damnably unjust, actuated by absurd prejudice. Annie's a good girl and a good wife, no matter what her father was. D—n it, this is a free country! A man can marry whom he likes. All these ideas about family pride and family honor are old world notions, foreign to this soil. I'm not going to give up Annie to please any one. I'm as fond of her now as ever. I haven't regretted a moment that I married her. Of course, it has been hard. Father at once shut down money supplies, making my further stay at Yale impossible, and I was forced to come to New York to seek employment. We've managed to fix up a small flat in Harlem and now, like Micawber, I'm waiting for something to turn up."

Coxe nodded sympathetically. "Come and have a drink," he said cheerily.

Howard hesitated. Once more he remembered his promise to Annie, but as long as he had broken it once he would get no credit for refusing now. He was horribly thirsty and depressed. Another drink would cheer him up. It seemed even wicked to decline when it wouldn't cost him anything.

They entered a bar conveniently close at hand, and with a tremulous hand Howard carried greedily to his lips the insidious liquor which had undermined his health and stolen away his manhood.

"Have another?" said Coxe with a smile as he saw the glass emptied at a gulp.

"I don't care if I do," replied Howard. Secretly ashamed of his weakness, he shuffled uneasily on his feet.

"Well, what are you going to do, old man?" demanded Coxe as he pushed the whisky bottle over.

"I'm looking for a job," stammered Howard awkwardly. Hastily he went on: "It isn't so easy. I'd get only myself I wouldn't mind. I'd get along somehow. But there's the little girl. She wants to go to work, and I won't hear of it. I couldn't stand for that, you know."

Coxe feared a "touch." Awkwardly he said:

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Illusions.

It is true we labor under many illusions, but if these were to be done away with we should hardly deem it worth our while to labor at all.

Almost none of the things which man so ardently pursues in the belief that they will make him happier is really capable of doing so, and yet it is needful that he keep up the pursuit for the sake of what he incidentally achieves in behalf of destiny.

The illusions we labor under partake, in fine, of the nature of sanitary conditions, though they chiefly affect the health of the spirit, and by that have no municipal functionary appointed to look vigilantly after them. Nor, in fact, do they need any such, since providence has been so kind as to see to it that illusions we shall always have.—Puck.

Being Natural.

Can you, if you be the gentler sex, walk down the street behind an elegantly gowned woman and restrain the impulse to imitate her pose of head, her carriage and the fascinating ways she possesses? Have you ever been in a crowded room where one woman was the center of attraction and seen someone trying to imitate her? A woman is most charming when she is natural. A woman who is natural, even in her erratic moods, does not give offense. One cannot imitate the ways, manners and style of another without appearing ridiculous. The nicest women we meet are those who do not pose or seek to imitate some one else.

The KITCHEN CABINET



HALF the cost of life is the price of food. The seat of civilization is the stomach.

Omelets Galore.

"To make an omelet, you must first break eggs."

An omelet that is tender, puffy and well seasoned and cooked is not an easy thing to prepare. The cook who is able by practice and skill to produce the edible variety is certainly worthy of praise.

The French cook says that no liquid should be added to the omelet; in America some add milk, others water. It is generally accepted that water is better than milk, as it makes a more tender omelet. Use as many tablespoonfuls of water as eggs, separating the yolks from the whites and beating the yolks until thick and lemon-colored. Another secret of a tender omelet is in the whites of the eggs. If they are beaten until dry, the omelet will not be as tender. Stop beating when the egg stands up well.

A steel frying pan is best in which to cook the omelet. See that the pan is perfectly smooth, as a little roughness will often catch and spoil an omelet. A good plan is to scour out the pan with salt before using.

Have the pan smoking hot and add a tablespoonful of butter, greasing the sides of the pan well. Combine the whites and yolks with seasoning and pour into the pan. Slide a spatula around under the edge as it is cooking, so that the center will have a chance to cook. When well cooked on the bottom, set a moment in the oven to cook on top, then fold and serve.

Chopped chives and parsley are added to omelets for flavor.

A sweet omelet is a favorite with many for luncheon. Just before pouring the omelet into the pan, put a handful of blanched almonds into the pan, and pour over the egg, cook carefully not to scorch the nuts. Set in the oven as usual, fold on the platter and pour over the omelet a half cup of hot maple syrup.

Tomato may be spread over the omelet just before folding, or a little apple jelly or any sweet jelly or preserves, too small in amount to use otherwise. In fact, almost anything eatable may be used in, on or around an omelet.



THE tender waffle hearts are set upon Is either crisp or soggy, and Anon Like Maple Syrup made of Corn and Cobs Lasts but a scant five minutes and is gone.

Breakfast Dishes.

Most housekeepers will agree that breakfast is the most difficult meal to provide variety. Here are a few unusual dishes which may suggest others and thus furnish a change.

Bacon Scramble.—Fry several slices of bacon until about half done; drain off part of the fat, and add six eggs well beaten; stir constantly until well cooked. A little grated onion may be added for flavor. Season while cooking.

Southern Buckwheat Cakes.—Four cupfuls of buckwheat flour sifted, one-half a compressed yeast cake dissolved in a little lukewarm water, one teaspoonful of salt and one tablespoonful of molasses. Mix with enough warm water to make a thin batter and set to rise over night.

For a breakfast fruit, grape fruit is one that is both appetizing and medicinal; a fresh apple or one baked and served with cream is another good dish. Stewed prunes, or a few dates steamed with the oatmeal are another favorite combination.

Codfish Balls.—Take a cup of shredded codfish, after soaking, two cups of mashed potatoes, one beaten egg, one and a half teaspoonfuls of butter, pepper to taste. Mold into cakes three-fourths of an inch thick and saute in bacon fat. Serve a poached egg on each and garnish with fried bacon.

The omelet is a breakfast dish that should have a chapter to itself, as they are legion. However, all omelets are only variations of the plain omelet.

Beat three eggs, whites and yolks separately; add three tablespoonfuls of water to the beaten yolks, season with salt and pepper, cut and fold in the white and turn into a smoking-hot omelet pan that has been well buttered. Lower the heat at once, and when the bottom is browned, set in the oven to finish the top. Cut the edge on opposite sides and carefully fold and roll on the heated serving platter. Garnish with parsley.

Nellie Maxwell.

To Encourage the Stork.

A rich resident of Paris with a view to checking the decline in the birth-rate, has left under his will \$1,000 to each head of a family in the neighborhood where he resides who, having been married within the five years preceding his death, shall have five legitimate children living.

A Matter of Sex.

"What is the difference between firmness and obstinacy?" asked a young lady of her fiancé. "Firmness," was his gallant reply, "is a noble characteristic of women; obstinacy is a lamentable defect in men."—Stray Stories.

The Place to Buy Cheap
—OR AT—
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CURES
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KIDNEY TROUBLE

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If it's hot weather, advertise cool things. If it's cold, advertise warm. You know what people want when they want you.

Profit thereby. Send your copy to-day for your ad in this paper.

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