



# The THIRD DEGREE

A NARRATIVE OF METROPOLITAN LIFE  
By CHARLES KLEIN AND ARTHUR HORNBLAW  
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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. A former college chum makes a business proposition to Howard which requires \$2,000 cash, and Howard is broke.

### CHAPTER II.—Continued.

"You know I wouldn't, Annie," he said earnestly. "Not one second have I ever regretted marrying you—that's honest to God!"

A faint flush of pleasure lit up the young wife's face. For all her assumed lightheartedness she was badly in need of this reassurance. If she thought Howard nourished secret regrets it would break her heart. She could stand anything, any hardship, but not that. She would leave him at once.

In a way she held herself responsible for his present predicament. She had felt a deep sense of guilt ever since that afternoon in New Haven when, listening to Howard's impertinences and obeying an impulse she was powerless to resist, she had flung aside her waitress' apron, furtively left the restaurant and hurried with him to the minister who declared them man and wife.

Their marriage was a mistake, of course. Howard was in no position to marry. They should have waited. But what was done could not be undone. She realized, too, that it was worse for Howard than it was for her. It had ruined his prospects at the outset of his career and threatened to be an irreparable blight on his entire life.

She realized that she was largely to blame. She had done wrong to marry him and at times she reproached herself bitterly. There were days when their union assumed in her eyes the enormity of a crime. She should have seen what a social gulf lay between them. All these taunts and insults from his family which she now endured she had foolishly brought upon her own head. But she had not been able to resist the temptation. Howard came into her life when the outlook was dreary and hopeless. He had offered to her what seemed a haven against the cruelty and selfishness of the world. Happiness for the first time in her life seemed within reach and she had not the moral courage to say "No."

If Annie had no education she was not without brains. She had sense enough to realize that her bringing up or the lack of it was an unsurmountable barrier to her ever being admitted to the inner circle of Howard's family. If her husband's father had not married again the breach might have been crossed in time, but his new wife was a prominent member of the smart set, a woman full of aristocratic notions, who recoiled with horror at having anything to do with a girl guilty of the enormity of earning her own living. Individual merit, inherent nobility of character, amiability of disposition, and a personal reputation untouched by scandal—all this went for nothing—because unaccompanied by wealth or social position. Annie had neither wealth nor position. She had not even education. They considered her common, impossible. They were ever ready to lend an ear to certain ugly stories regarding her past, none of which were true. After their marriage, Mr. Jeffries, Sr., and his wife absolutely refused to receive her or have any communication with her whatsoever. As long, therefore, as Howard remained faithful to her, the breach with his family could never be healed.

"Have some more stew, dear," she said, extending her hand for her husband's plate.

Howard shook his head and threw down his knife and fork.

"I've had enough," he said despondently. "I haven't much appetite."

She looked at him with concern. "Poor boy, you're tired out!"

As she noted how pale and dejected he appeared, her eyes filled with sympathetic tears. She forgot the appalling number of cigarettes she smoked a day, nor did she realize how abuse of alcohol had spoiled his stomach for solid food.

He was self-indulgent. He made many good resolutions and broke them. But he was not really vicious. He had a good heart. With some one to watch him and keep him in the straight path he would still give a good account of himself to the world. She was confident of that. She recognized many excellent qualities in him. They only wanted fostering and bringing out. That was why she married him. She was a few years his senior; she felt that she was the stronger mentally. She considered it was her duty to devote her life to him, to protect him from himself and make a man of him.

It was not her fault, she mused, if she was not a lady. Literally brought up in the gutter, what advantages had she had? Her mother died in childbirth and her father, a professional gambler, abandoned the little girl to the tender mercies of an indifferent neighbor. When she was about eight years old her father was arrested. He refused to pay police blackmail, was indicted, railroaded to prison and died soon after in convict stripes. There was no provision for Annie's maintenance, so at the age of nine she found herself toiling in a factory, a helpless victim of the brutalizing system of child slavery, which in spite of prohibiting laws still disgraces the United States. Ever since that time she had earned her own living. The road had often been hard, there were times when she thought she would have to give up the fight; other girls she had met had hinted at an easier way of earning one's living, but she had kept her courage, refused to listen to evil counsel and always managed to keep her name unsullied. She left the factory to work behind the counter in a New York dry goods store. Then about a year ago she drifted to New Haven and took the position of waitress at the restaurant which the college boys patronized.

Robert Underwood was among the students who came almost every day. He made love to her from the start, and one day attempted liberties which she was prompt to resent in a way he did not relish. After that he let her alone. She never liked the man. She knew him to be unprincipled as well as vicious. One night he brought Howard Jeffries to the restaurant. They seemed the closest of cronies and she was sorry to see what bad influence the elder sophomore had over the young freshman, to whom she was at once attracted. Every time they came she watched them and she noticed how under his mentor Howard became more hardened. He drank more and more and became a reckless gambler. Underwood seemed to exercise a baneful spell over him. She saw that he would soon be ruined with such a man as Underwood for a constant companion. Her interest in the young student grew. They became acquainted and Howard, not realizing that she was older than he, was immediately captivated by her vivacious charm and her commonsense views. They saw each other more frequently and their friendship grew until one day Howard asked her to marry him.

While she sometimes blamed herself for having listened too willingly to Howard's pleadings, she did not altogether regret the step she had taken. It was most unfortunate that

there must be this rupture with his family, yet something within told her that she was doing God's work—saving a man's soul. Without her, Howard would have gone swiftly to ruin, there was little doubt of that. His affection for her had partly, if not wholly, redeemed him and was keeping him straight. He had been good to her ever since their marriage and done everything to make her comfortable. Once he took a position as guard on the elevated road, but he caught cold and was forced to give it up. She wanted to go to work again, but he angrily refused. That alone showed that he was not entirely devoid of character. He was unfortunate at present and they were poor, but by dint of perseverance he would win out and make a position for himself without his father's help. These were their darkest days, but light was ahead. As long as they loved each other and had their health what more was necessary?

"Say, Annie, I have an idea," suddenly blurted out Howard.

"What is it, dear?" she asked, her reveries thus abruptly interrupted.

"I mean regarding that \$2,000. You know all about that \$250 which I once lent Underwood. I never got it back, although I've been after him many times for it. He's a slippery customer. But under the circumstances I think it's worth another determined effort. He seems to be better fixed now than he ever was. He's living at the Astoria, making a social splurge and all that sort of thing. He must have money. I'll try to borrow the \$2,000 from him."

"He certainly appears to be prosperous," replied Annie. "I see his name in the newspapers all the time. There is hardly an affair at which he is not present."

"Yes," growled Howard; "I don't see how he does it. He travels on his cheek, principally, I guess. His name was among those present at my stepmother's musicale the other night." Bitterly he added: "That's how the world goes. There is no place for me under my father's roof, but that backward is welcomed with open arms!"

"I thought your father was such a proud man," interrupted Annie. "How does he come to associate with people like Underwood?"

"Oh, pater's an old dolt!" exclaimed Howard impatiently. "There's no fool like an old fool. Of course, he's sensible enough in business matters. He wouldn't be where he is to-day if he weren't. But when it comes to the woman question he's as blind as a bat. What right had a man of his age to go and marry a woman 20 years his junior? Of course she only married him for his money. Everybody knows that except he. People laugh at him behind his back. Instead of enjoying a quiet, peaceful home in the declining years of his life, he is compelled to keep open house and entertain people who are personally obnoxious to him, simply because that sort of life pleases his young wife."

"Who was she, anyway, before their marriage?" interrupted Annie.

"Oh, a nobody," he replied. "She was very attractive looking, dressed well and was clever enough to get introductions to good people. She man-

aged to make herself popular in the smart set and she needed money to carry out her social ambitions. Dad—wealthy widower—came along and she caught him in her net, that's all!"

Annie listened with interest. She was human enough to feel a certain sense of satisfaction in hearing that this woman who treated her with such contempt was herself something of an intriguer.

"How did your stepmother come to know Robert Underwood?" she asked. "He was never in society."

"No," replied Howard with a grin. "It was my stepmother who gave him the entree. You know she was once engaged to him, but broke it off so she could marry dad. He felt very sore over it at the time, but after her marriage he was seemingly as friendly with her as ever—to serve his own ends, of course. It is simply wonderful what influence he has with her. He exercises over her the same fascination that he did over me at college. He has sort of hypnotized her. I don't think it's a case of love or anything like that, but he simply holds her under his thumb and gets her to do anything he wants. She invites him to her house, introduces him right and left, got people to take him up. Everybody laughs about it in society. Underwood is known as Mrs. Howard Jeffries' pet. Such a thing soon gets talked about. That is the secret of his successful career in New York. As far as I know, she's as much infatuated with him as ever."

A look of surprise came into Annie's face. To this young woman, whose one idea of matrimony was steadfast loyalty to the man whose life she shared and whose name she bore, there was something repellent and nauseating in a woman permitting herself to be talked about in that way.

"Doesn't your father object?" she asked.

"Pshaw!" laughed Howard. "He doesn't see what's going on under his very nose. He's too proud a man, too sure of his own good judgment, to believe for a moment that the woman to whom he gave his name would be guilty of the slightest indiscretion of that kind."

Annie was silent for a minute. Then she said: "What makes you think that Underwood would let you have the money?"

"Because I think he's got it. I obliged him once in the same way myself. I would explain to him what I want it for. He will see at once that it is a good thing. I'll offer him a good rate of interest, and he might be very glad to let me have it. Anyhow, there's no harm trying."

Annie said nothing. She did not entirely approve this idea of her husband trying to borrow money of a man in whom his stepmother was so much interested. On the other hand starvation stared them in the face. If Howard could get hold of this \$2,000 and start in the brokerage business it might be the beginning of a new life for them.

"Well, do as you like, dear," she said. "When will you go to him?"

"The best time to catch him would be in the evening," replied Howard.

"Well, then, go to-night," she suggested.

Howard shook his head. "No, not to-night. I don't think I should find him in. He's out every night somewhere. To-night there's another big reception at my father's house. He'll probably be there. I think I'll wait till to-morrow night. I'm nearly sure to catch him at home then."

Annie rose and began to remove the dishes from the table. Howard nonchalantly lighted another cigarette and, leaving the table, took up the evening newspaper. Sitting down comfortably in a rocker by the window, he blew a cloud of blue smoke up in the air and said:

"Yes, that's it—I'll go to-morrow night to the Astoria and strike Bob Underwood for that \$2,000."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)



"Not One Second Have I Regretted Marrying You—That's Honest to God!"

### BLAME PHYSICIANS FOR GROWTH OF DOPE HABIT

Druggists Say Prescriptions and Patent Medicines the Cause.

New York.—Blame for the prevalence and growth of the morphine habit was placed on the shoulders of physicians, who prescribed the drug, at a meeting of druggists here to-night to protest against the recently enacted city ordinance prohibiting the sale at retail of any preparation containing morphine or its salts except upon a doctor's prescription.

The ordinance is aimed primarily at paregoric and at stomach remedies, according to members of the board of health who were instrumental in obtaining its passage. Caswell Mayo, one of the druggists, said he had made a canvass by mail of several sanitariums and the replies convinced him 90 per cent. of the victims of drugs formed the habit as a result of using prescriptions given by physicians and only 8 per cent. from using proprietary medicines.

### A LOST ART.



"It seems to me that our new maid ought at least to know how to serve water, if she was six years with her last employer."

"Well, it's not surprising, dear. I know her last employer."

### ECZEMA GONE, BOILS CURED

"My son was about three weeks old when I noticed a breaking-out on his cheeks, from which a watery substance oozed. A short time after, his arms, shoulders and breast broke out also, and in a few days became a solid scab. I became alarmed, and called our family physician, who at once pronounced the disease eczema. The little fellow was under his treatment for about three months. By the end of that time, he seemed no better. I became discouraged, and as I had read the advertisements of Cuticura Remedies and testimonials of a great many people who had used them with wonderful success, I dropped the doctor's treatment, and commenced the use of Cuticura Soap and Ointment, and in a few days noticed a marked change. The eruption on his cheeks was almost healed, and his shoulders, arms and breast were decidedly better. When he was about seven months old all trace of the eczema was gone.

"During his teething period, his head and face were broken out in boils which I cured with Cuticura Soap and Ointment. Surely he must have been a great sufferer. During the time of teething and from the time I dropped the doctor's treatment, I used the Cuticura Soap and Cuticura Ointment, nothing else, and when two years old he was the picture of health. His complexion was soft and beautiful, and his head a mass of silky curls. I had been afraid that he would never be well, and I feel that I owe a great deal to the Cuticura Remedies." (Signed) Mrs. Mary W. Ramsey, 224 E. Jackson St., Colorado Springs, Colo., Sept. 24, 1910.

The manly man makes altogether the best woman's man.



### A Mother's Love

wisely directed, will cause her to give to her little ones only the most wholesome and beneficial remedies and only when actually needed, and the well-informed mother uses only the pleasant and gentle laxative remedy—Syrup of Figs and Elixir of Senna—when a laxative is required, as it is wholly free from all objectionable substances. To get its beneficial effects always buy the genuine, manufactured by the California Fig Syrup Co.



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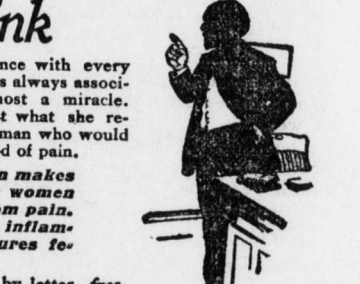
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