POOR DOCUMENT

MC 2033



# THE LAW OF THE LAND

By FRED M. WHITE

Copyright, 1907, by Fred M. White

CHAPTER XV—(Continued.)

"Not at all, my dear fellow. Speaking from actual knowledge, I should say that if Kingsmill had to choose between us for a friend he would find me in the long run less expensive and less dangerous than yourself. Do you suppose I don't know that you are after no good here? Oh, it is no use looking at me like that."

Barca controlled himself with a strong effort.

"If your purpose is to annoy me, you are not likely to succeed," he said. "You came down here to ask me certain questions, which I may or may not be prepared to answer. Be good enough to put the question so that I can get rid of you and go to bed."

"It all resolves itself into one thing," Clarkson replied. "I asked you just now what had become of Stephen Holt. The man was to have journeyed to London with me not so long ago, and, indeed, we did get as far as Stonehouse Junction together. Holt left the train to send off a telegram, and since then he has not been seen. Come, you don't mean to tell me you are not aware of this fact?"

The question was a pointed one, and for the life of him Barca did not see how to answer it. He was wondering how much this man knew, and whether his errand was a blackmailing one, or whether he was working on behalf of someone else.

"I don't quite know what you mean," Barca said.

"Oh! yes, you do. You know what I mean perfectly well. This man has vanished, leaving no trace behind him. As yet, the matter has not been put into the hands of the police, for the simple reason that no one troubles about the fellow. But, mind you, the thing won't be allowed to drop like this. A man like Holt has plenty of difficulties and not a few enemies. I have my own reasons for wishing to know what has become of him, and those reasons don't concern anybody but myself. Besides, if he knew it, he is in grave danger. Therefore, I ask you, if you know where he is to be found to tell me at once."

Barca hesitated, he was by no means getting the best of the encounter, and the knowledge irritated him. He was about to make some vague reply when from the room above there came a gentle whistle and Barca's name was uttered in a hushed voice. Only for a moment did his face betray signs of confusion.

"Don't let me detain you," Clarkson said politely. "Your friend upstairs wants something."

"Cigarettes," Barca muttered. "If you will excuse me for a moment I will go and see to his requirements."

Clarkson smiled in an irritating manner, but made no reply. Barca came back a few minutes later with a cigarette case in his hand. He had quite recovered himself, his face was smiling and almost pleasant to look upon.

"I have been thinking about what you said just now," he remarked. "Of course, it is no business of mine to know what you want Stephen Holt for, and I don't care. He is a sorry blackguard, and the less anybody has to do with him, the better. So far as I am concerned, I have not the least idea where he is. Now before you go, will you take something? Just give it a name."

All this time, Barca was gazing intently into Clarkson's face as if trying to read the latter's inmost thoughts. But he was not to be drawn, he did not betray himself in the least. He pointed his finger in the direction of the whisky decanter and said that he would take a little of that with some soda-water.

"That's right," Barca said cheerfully. "I think I'll join you. You needn't trouble to get up. I'll do the mixing if you don't mind. Say when I have poured in enough."

Barca had his back half turned to Clarkson during the operation, and the intruder appeared to be looking the other way. Barca was ignorant of the fact that Clarkson was watching him in the mirror at the other side of the room. When the man of science turned round he had the two glasses in his hand, one of which he proferred to Clarkson. With a meaning smile, Clarkson shook his head doubtfully.

"No, thanks," he said; "I'll take the other one. My head is not so strong as it used to be, and I prefer the smaller quantity."

"This one is rather the weaker of the two," Barca said.

"Never mind about that. I have made my choice."

As Clarkson spoke he shot his hand out quickly and took the glass from Barca's left hand. He bowed almost mockingly as he raised it to his lips and drank down half the contents.

"Well, get on, my friend," he cried. "How slow you are! I want to see you finish your drink. Come, I'll give you a toast. Here's to scientific experiments in general, and Kate Lingen in particular. After that you cannot refuse."

A queer almost troubled smile flickered on Barca's lips. He appeared as if about to raise the glass to his mouth, then the tumbler slipped from his fingers and the contents were scattered all over the carpet. He muttered to himself for his clumsiness.

"My hand is not so steady as it used to be," he said.

"It would be a wonderful thing if it were," Clarkson said. "I suppose even a cool hand like yourself has some pangs of conscience, I am certain now that you can tell me more than I know about Stephen Holt. You know all about him."

"And what makes you so sure?" Barca said quietly. "My friend, you are treading on rather dangerous ground."

"I was," Clarkson said coolly, "but I have only got to be careful. You couldn't murder me here, because that would be far too dangerous, but you would like to do so as I saw by the expression on your face just now. It never occurred to you that I could see all that was going on by watching your movements in the mirror opposite. What did you expect to gain by putting that powder in my glass?"

"You are dreaming," Barca said hoarsely. "I am prepared to swear that I put nothing whatever in your glass."

"That is a silly lie and utterly unworthy of you," Clarkson responded. "I tell you I saw the whole thing, and your face was a perfect study when I insisted upon taking the drink that was not intended for me. Oh! you are a clever fellow, Dr. Richard Barca, but you must not make the mistake of believing that the wrold does not contain people with as much brains as you have. I have learnt a great deal more than you imagine during the last few minutes, and lest worse befalls me, I think I'll wish you good night. No, you need not trouble to come to the door."

Barca rose to his feet and walked off with a call. On the whole, he had to feel dissatisfied with his [illegible] had carried out Charteris' instructions to the letter, and had ascertained that Barca could have said a great deal about Holt if he liked. Clarkson felt in a reckless mood now and ready for any adventure. He had a strong desire to know the identity of the man whom he had seen with Barca in the park. The man was in the house, as evidenced by the fact that he had asked for some cigarettes.

How to manage this Clarkson did not quite know. Then a wild idea seized him. He opened the front door and closed it again none too gently, but he did not close it on the outside. On the contrary, he slipped into an adjoining room, leaving Barca to suppose that he had quitted the premises. Clarkson was not long in doubt as to whether Barca took his view or not, for, a minute or two later, the latter came into the hall and proceeded to bolt and bar the front door.

Clarkson smiled to himself as he heard his late antagonist muttering. The doctor appeared to be put out about something, if his dark face and scowling brows afforded any indication. Clarkson instinctively knew that the lights were going out, and from his hiding place he heard Barca creeping up the stairs.

"I begin to wish I hadn't stayed," he told himself. "I daresay that rascal has got some scheme of his own on which does not concern me in the least. I might just as well have got away back to town and earned my money. Well, since I am here I'll see the whole thing out to the finish. The first thing is to get upstairs without being heard or seen by my friend."

It was by no means an easy matter, but it was accomplished at length. Clarkson had to feel his way along in the darkness. More than once he stumbled against unseen objects, but, by great good fortune, he upset nothing, and presently his eyes became more accustomed to the gloom. He found himself now on a broad landing, with, as far as he could judge, bedroom doors giving upon it in all directions. Then he noticed a thin slit of light coming from under one of the doors, and this, as he rightly judged, was Barca's bedroom. The atmosphere was slightly tinged with the suggestion of cigarette smoke, by which Clarkson knew that Barca had not yet retired for the night.

He crept close to the door and laid his ear to the keyhole. It was just possible to catch the sound of voices and a few words here and there, though it was almost impossible to follow the conversation in its entirety. Clarkson managed to make out that Kate Lingen was the theme of comment, for her name was mentioned more than once. The other man's voice was so indistinct that there was nothing to be made of it at all. It was very like listening to a man holding a conversation over the telephone. Then, suddenly, Barca flamed out as if a remark of the other man had greatly angered him.

"You are a fool and more than a fool," he cried. "Do you suppose she is going to sit quietly down and put up with a trick like that? Those letters were worth any amount of money to her, and in your hands have proved absolutely worthless."

The other man said something which Clarkson could not follow, and then Barca went on again.

"Why, of course," he said, "anybody could see that, besides a besotted fool like you. And what would have happened if I had not been present to take advantage of the situation? You would either have prosecuted him, in which case he would have got off with a fine, or you have compromised the affair for money. And now, after all I have done, you want to spoil everything by your headstrong folly."

The second voice spoke again, but the only words that Clarkson could catch were "tired" and tomorrow." Barca appeared to be impatiently pacing up and down the room, for Clarkson could hear his quick footsteps and noted how the voice rose and fell as Barca came near to or receded from the door.

"Perhaps by the end of the week," he said. "My good fellow, you are as safe here as if you were on the Continent. You have the best of everything to eat and drink, and there is not a soul here who dreams that you are on the premises. Besides, you shall have your share of the money when the bloodletting process sets in. From first to last there is a matter of over two hundred thousand pounds in this. That is, of course, if you lie low and keep out of the way. I don't see why you should not be just as happy in Paris as you are in London. I know I should, because one doesn't really live in England. No place like Paris when you are in funds."

The other man apparently made some long reply, for Barca was silent for the best part of five minutes. Then he broke into a laugh as if something pleased him.

"The easiest thing in the world," he exclaimed. . . . "I managed it in such a way that Kingsmill never suspected anything. . . . Oh, yes, that was a comparatively trifling matter. . . . Up in the attic. . . . . I'll show it you if you like."

Clarkson started back from the door, feeling by instinct that Barca was coming out. Just for the moment he did not know which way to turn, and therefore made a dart up a flight of steps in front of him. He stood there for some seconds while the door of Barca's room was flung open and a stream of light cut into the darkness of the corridor. Presently Barca's form appeared, he ran up the stairs in the direction of the attics with the air of a man who knows every inch of his ground, almost touching Clarkson as he passed. It was all over in a minute or two and Barca was back in the bedroom again. Filled with a certain vague curiosity, Clarkson climbed to the top of the stairs and turned into the big attic.

CHAPTER XVI.

A Warm Reception.

The intruder had no time to look about him, he had hardly set foot on the solid oak floor before a figure loomed up before him and a strong sinewy hand gripped him by the throat. Utterly taken by surprise, Clarkson reeled back and fell heavily upon a pile of some soft carpet material with which the floor was more or less covered. He felt now as if he was fighting for his life, he struggled to get that tight grip from his throat. Already the blood was beginning to rush to his head, and his heart commenced to beat like a hammer. It was time for a desperate effort, and he made it. His knee came up suddenly, there was a grunt from his antagonist and the iron grip relaxed. Clarkson rolled over and over till he came under a window where the light of the moon streamed in. Then, as his antagonist followed him, he saw his face for the first time.

"For Heaven's sake, don't throttle me, Mr. Charteris," he gasped. "You very nearly did for me that time."

"Why, it's Clarkson," Dick said. "I am sure, I beg your pardon. You see, I had forgotten all about you for the moment, and I took you for a burglar or one of those ruffians downstairs, who had unluckily detected my presence in the house. But what are you doing up here?"

"I am here more or less by accident," Clarkson explained. "The fact is, I was listening at Barca's door, and as he came out unexpectedly I had to bolt somewhere. You see, he does not know that I am in the house."

"That's rather clever of you," Dick said. "How did you work that? It is no easy matter to deceive Barca."

"Well, I deceived him easily enough. I pretended to go off in a huff and shut the front door behind me. As a matter of fact, I shut it on this side and hid myself in one of the rooms till Barca had gone to bed. For some reason or another, he tried to drug me. When I saw what he was doing I refused to take the glass he had intended for me. Goodness only knows what he expected to gain by serving me in that way. But I daresay he had some cunning scheme in his mind. Perhaps he was under the impression that I know a great deal more than I do."

Dick chuckled to himself, as if pleased with what he was hearing.

"Have you made any discoveries?" he asked. "Now tell me exactly what has taken place between you. I daresay you wonder what I am doing down here, but there is something that I forgot, and it is imperative that I should see Kingsmill before morning. I want to know what you saw and did from the time that you reached here till this present moment. Don't omit any details."

Clarkson gave a concise and graphic account of the evening's adventures. Dick followed carefully, asking questions from time to time, until at length he appeared to be quite satisfied.

"You have done very well, indeed," he said. "And I have every reason to be pleased with you. There is one thing more that I should like to see done, though I am bound to admit there is an element of risk about it. I want you to leave the house at once and go round the terrace till you come under Barca's bedroom window. You can throw some gravel up there to attract his attention, and when he shoves his head out you can tell him that you are very sorry to trouble him again but that you dropped a pocketbook on the hall floor. It doesnt' matter what you drop, perhaps you haven't got a pocketbook? If so, I can lend you one."

"Oh, I have got a pocketbook right enough," Clarkson said. "But I don't quite see what you are going to gain by this."

"It doesn't matter what you think so long as I am satisfied," Dick said. "Drop the pocketbook on the hall floor and let yourself quietly out. I'll slip down a moment later and fasten the hall door, so that Barca will have no suspicion that anything is wrong."

"But how did you get in yourself?" Clarkson asked.

"Ah, that is a different matter," Dick replied. "That must remain a secret between the master of the house and myself. Now go and do exactly as I tell you. I am greatly pleased with what you have done tonight, and you shall not suffer any loss. I would like to give you a helping hand, even if it is only for the sake of that little girl of yours. My word, if I only had a child like that and I were leading your sort of life, I wouldn't dare to look her in the face."

"It is easy to talk," Clarkson said huskily. "Only give me a chance a bit later, and if I don't take it—but this is no place to talk sentiment. I'll go and do what you want if you will only tell me what is the next move after I have attracted Barca's attention. What shall I have to do next?"

"You will simply have to go straight to the station and take the midnight train back to town. After that you can return to your rooms and wait till I see you again, which will be probably be some time tomorrow afternoon. I think that will do."

Clarkson slipped off obediently, and presently Dick heard the front door softly open. There was just a touch of air on his cheek, then the draught passed as the door closed again. A few minutes later bars and bolts were once more drawn, and then Dick crept up the stairs and waited patiently for the result of his experiment.

It was not difficult for Clarkson to find his way round to the terrace, and it was easy enough to pick out Barca's window as it was the only one in which a light was burning. Two or three handfuls of gravel tinkled on the glass before the blind was pulled up with a jerk and Barca's dark head was thrust impatiently out.

"Who the deuce are you, and what do you want?" he demanded. "Don't you know that it is past eleven o'clock?"

"It's me," Clarkson said, in a humble voice. "I am sorry, doctor, but I have lost my pocket book and all my money. I recollect now that I heard something drop as I left the house. I took my handkerchief out of my pocket and I suppose that the pocket book came out with it. At any rate, I shall be greatly obliged if you will look whether it is lying in the hall. If you find the confounded thing, you can throw it out of the window to me."

Barca promised with no particularly good grace, and Clarkson stood there awaiting the course of events. Suspicious as ever, Barca was half inclined to believe that some trick was being played upon him, but he complied with the request and came back to the window presently with the pocketbook in his hand. He tossed it contemptuously to Clarksoq.

"There you are, you careless lout," he said. "And now, go about your business and don't worry me any more. I warn you that if you come back again you can keep on throwing gravel at the window till all is blue, for I shan't pay the slightest attention."

Meanwhile, Dick had been waiting patiently on the stairs to see the result of his stratagem. Barca rushed impetuously out of his bedroom leaving the door wide open. No sooner had he vanished down the stairs than Dick advanced rapidly in the direction of the light. His face was eager and questioning, he had all the air of a man on the verge of a great discovery. Another moment and he would have satisfied himself in one way or another when a totally unexpected figure appeared on the landing. It was Ralph Kingsmill, pale and distracted, and looking almost like a ghost in his white sleeping suit. He had no light in his hand, so that he could make out Dick clearly and distinctly against the band of flame that streamed from Barca's open door. A little cry escaped him.

"Dick," he exclaimed, "what are you doing here?"

Charteris choked down something that sounded very like an oath. There was not a second to lose now, as Barca was already coming back up the stairs. Before Ralph could speak again, Dick jumped at him and clapped a hand over his mouth. Then he fairly ran Kingsmill into his bedroom and closed the door behind him. He had barely done so before he heard Barca's door close also.

"That was a close call," Dick said as he sat panting on the bed. "I wouldn't have had that fellow see me now for ten thousand pounds. My dear Ralph, what evil fortune led you to come out on the landing just at that moment?"

Ralph passed his hand over his face wearily. He fumbled along the wall for the switch of light like a man who dreams. In the bright rays his face had a terribly tired look upon it as if he had not slept for days.

"I couldn't rest," he said. "I never can rest now. Since that horrible thing happened I have not had one single hour of honest sleep. But tell me, my dear Dick, what are you doing here at this time? And how did you get into the house?"

"It does not in the least matter how I got into the house," Dick said. "I am here, and there is an end of the matter. Now tell me, have you had anything unpleasant in the way of an interview with Barca today? I know he came down on purpose, because, indirectly, I was the means of sending him back again. What I mean is has the man shown his hand in any way?"

"I am afraid I don't follow you," Ralph said wearily. "There are so many strange and underhand things going on in this house now that I am utterly puzzled and bewildered. As a matter of fact, I did not expect to see Barca here this evening. If you could only get rid of him for me altogether I should be under an obligation to you that I could never repay. He is a nightmare to me."

"Oh, you'll get rid of him sooner or later," Dick said cheerfully. "For the present you will have to put up with him. As I said just now, I was the means of his coming back; in fact, I worked the whole thing to fit in with my plans, although, of course, Barca does not know it. You may not believe me, but everything is going splendidly, and before long I shall have a surprise for you beyond anything you ever dreamt of in the realms of romantic fiction. Not but what I am enjoying the thing thoroughly—it is good to be able to make puppets of such people as Kate Lingen and Richard Barca. And they are puppets, too. They have to dance exactly as I pull the string—but I fear that you will think me egotistical. You are quite sure that Barca said nothing to you tonight? He made no attempt to blackmail you, for instance? He did not try to get a lot of money out of you?"

"No," Ralph said, "I can't say that he did. I didn't like his manner when he got down here, and he more or less frightened me by certain vague hints. But, of course, I ignored all those. He certainly told me he wanted to have a little private chat with me after dinner, but I took very little notice of that. Indeed, I have never seen him quite so cheerful and frank as he was. He was quite entertaining."

"And did that last through dinner?" Dick asked.

"Well, no, it didn't. When he came downstairs again he seemed to be disturbed about something. He hardly ate any dinner, and the meal proceeded in moody silence. Not that I minded in the least, for I have little disposition to talk. As soon as we had finished, Barca said that he had to go out for an hour, and I told him I was going to bed early."

"Let me hazard a guess," Dick said. "Unless I am greatly mistaken our friend Barca was not at all displeased to hear you say that. Am I not right?"

"When I come to think of it, he was not," Ralph said. "It did not occur to me at the time, but now I recollect that he seemed relieved at my statement. More than that, he came into my room after I had gone to bed to see if there was anything that I wanted."

"Ah, and incidentally to make sure that you were really between the sheets. Ah, well, it is only a case of patience. I very nearly got to the bottom of it when you appeared on the landing. But I shall have to wait till I can know for certain who it is that Barca is hiding in the house."

"Hiding in the house?" Ralph cried. "Who is it?"

"Wait," Dick said mysteriously. "When he comes to speak, then all your troubles will be at an end."

CHAPTER XVII.

A Note of Alarm.

Dick Charteris was seated at the breakfast table as if he had nothing in the world to occupy his attention beyond his amusements and his appetite. He did not look in the least like a man who is up to his neck in a dangerous intrigue, and upon whose shoulders the happiness of two people rested. He nodded brightly to Sir Charles as the latter came in.

"Where have you come from?" the head of the household asked. "And how long have you been here? You don't mean to say you have come down from town this morning?"

"Not at all," Dick said. "I came late last night. I got into the house by means of the leade over the billiard room just as I used to do in the old days when there were poachers about and I didn't want you to know I was anxious to join the fun. As a matter of fact, I was at Abbey Close till after midnight."

A slight frown came over Sir Charles's genial face. He appeared to be anxious and uneasy. He turned to see that he and Dick were alone in the room.

"Iam not a suspicious man," he said, "but I am sure there is something very wrong in that quarter. Ralph hardly ever comes here now. In fact, I haven't seen him for days. And there is Enid wandering about the house like a troubled spirit. She is a queer girl, and when anything is wrong with her it is not the slightest use asking what is the matter. Do you happen to know what the trouble is, Dick?"

"Well, I do, sir," Dick admitted. "Though I can't say anything about it because the secret is not mine. But this I can safely promise, that the whole matter will be cleared up in a day or two and you won't have to complain about any more melancholy looks so far as Enid is concerned. She and Ralph have had a bit of a misunderstanding, and, to tell you the truth, there are faults on both sides. But don't worry about it."

Sir Charles proceeded with his breakfast, his brow, once more clear and unruffled. Like the typical Englishman that he was, he hated fuss and bother of any kind, especially where the emotions were concerned. He had made up his mind that it was his duty to speak to Enid. He was glad to discover now that he was saved that unpleasant task. Nevertheless, his conscience smote him a little as Enid crept into the room. She was looking pale and distracted, deep rings were under her eyes, and her movements were listless. All the same, a little animation crept into her face as she saw Dick sitting there. He gave her a careless nod.

"I am glad you have come back," she said. "I hope you are going to stay a few days now you are here."

"Can't possibly manage it," Dick said with a businesslike air. "I must get back to town this afternoon."

The speaker strolled out presently on to the terrace, and Enid followed him. She seemed to have something on her mind.

"Well, what is it?" Dick asked. "You can speak quite freely to me, you know. Upon my word, my dearest girl, you look like a ghost. Even the governor notices the change in your appearance and is quite concerned about it. He was going to speak to you, but I persuaded him that there was no occasion to do anything of the kind, at which he was naturally relieved. What do you want to know."

"I want to know how long this is going to last," Enid said passionately. "How much longer am I to be kept in this humiliating position? After that distressing interview the other day, it was my plain duty to break off my engagement with Ralph Kingsmill and let the whole world know it. I could not marry him now after what has happened, as you must see for yourself."

"Oh, yes, you will," Dick said coolly. "My dear Enid, pray have a little more patience. You promised me you would take no steps one way or the other until I had had a proper opportunity of putting matters right. When I do put things right you will be glad of the chance of going to Ralph and begging his pardon. There is nothing the matter with the poor chap at all, and I am genuinely convinced of the fact that you are the only girl he ever really cared for. Can't you see that that affair with Kate Lingen was a mere boyish indiscretion, which Ralph deemed forgotten long ago? The poor fellow is the victim of one of the vilest conspiracies that ever came under my notice. If you knew everything you would be profoundly sorry for him."

"Then why can't I know everything" Enid demanded. "Surely I have a right to. I am still engaged to Ralph, and therefore I ought to share his secrets."

"I can't tell you anything," Dick said, "Indeed, I wouldn't if I could. But this much I promise you—you shall hear the whole wicked business from the lips of Kate Lingen herself. You shall hear her confess how the whole thing was planned, you shall know beyond a doubt what a clever actress she is and how delightfully she fooled you the other day. I am not going to say any more, except to tell you to keep your heart up and trust in me. Otherwise, you will be sorry for your want of faith as long as you live. Now walk with me as far as the station and let us talk about more pleasant things."

It was useless, as Enid knew from past experience, to try to coerce Dick when he took a line like this. She could only possess her soul in patience and hope for the best. Dark as the prospect was, and dreary as the outlook seemed, it was impossible to glance at Dick's buoyant face and believe that he had not some ground for his sanguine hopes. He was so cheery and full of spirit that Enid caught the contagion. Indeed, by the time the station was reached the giri was almost herself again. As they emerged from the woods into the high road, they came face to face with Ralph, who was sauntering along. He seemed distracted and gloomy, then his face flushed as Enid bowed coldly to him. So far as Dick was concerned, he appeared to ignore the fact that anything was wrong between the others. He shook Ralph's hand cheerfully.

"Hallo," he said, "where have you been? And how is friend Barca this morning? You don't happen to have had a conversation with him, I suppose? You know what I mean."

"I had no chance," Ralph explained. "Barca went off to town by an early train directly he had seen his letters. And between ourselves, my dear Dick, if you can find some way of preventing him from coming back I shall be exceedingly grateful. The man is getting on my nerves."

"But he will come back," Dick said significantly; "and probably this very night. Indeed, I shall be greatly disappointed if he doesn't. Something must have happened to upset his plans, but he will return as sure as you are standing there. But it will be for the last time, Ralph. After his next visit he will never set foot in Abbey Close again. Now don't forget what I told you. Whatever that man says or does, you are to follow without question."

"But why this mystery?" Enid asked. "Really, Dick, this amnia of yours for cheap melodrama is becoming a vice."

"All right," Dick said cheerfully. "Now I'll leave you two to your own devices, for I think I hear the bell at the station."

Dick spurted on ahead, leaving Ralph and Enid together. It was lonely and secluded, and no one was likely to interrupt them. Ralph was first to speak.

"Enid," he said, "have you nothing to say to me?"

"What should I have to say to you?" the girl responded in a voice that shook a little. "I am sorry you ever came here, sorry you ever crept into my life. I was happy before."

"Maybe you will be happy again," Ralph said. "I cannot believe it myself, though Dick is so sanguine. But we cannot go on like this."

"That is true," Enid said, with some scorn in her voice. "I ought to give you back your freedom. The world ought to know that everything is at an end between us. I would have written you to that effect today had not Dick turned up in his eccentric way. He has made me promise that I will do nothing for the next few days, and until then——"

"I may come and see you?" Ralph asked eagerly. "Let me come to the house as if nothing has happened. If you only knew what a life I am leading and how near I am to utter despair, I am sure you would——"

"No, no," Enid cried. "You have stretched my patience and forbearance as far as they will go. I could not have you at the house. Indeed, I forbid you to come. It may be that, sooner or later, things will become clear between us. It may be that I shall have to ask your pardon for the harsh way in which I have judged you, and I will do so gladly. I would do anything to relieve this intolerable strain and know that I have not been deceived."

"May I walk a little way with you?" Ralph asked humbly.

"No, not even that. I cannot. I dare not—oh, don't you see how I am suffering?"

Enid turned away, for her eyes had filled with unbidden tears and she was anxious that Ralph should not see her agitation. But there was no occasion for her to say any more. He turned aside and walked down the road, leaving her to cross the fields alone. The day was bright and fair, but Enid could see nothing of it for the mist that dimmed her eyes.

Meanwhile, all unconscious of what he had left behind him, Dick went blithely back to town. Everything was working out to his expectations. Indeed, there was only one thing that puzzled him. He knew perfectly well that Barca had gone down to Abbey Close the day before to make certain proposals to Ralph Kingsmill. Dick was all the surer of it, because he himself had forced matters forward, using Barca and Mrs. Lingen as pawns in the ingenious game he was playing. Why, then, had not Barca boldly tackled Ralph and started the scheme of blackmailing, which in the end was to deprive Ralph of his fortune? Why had he gone off to town again without showing his hand? So far as Dick could see, the mysterious stranger whom Barca had concealed in his bedroom was at the bottom of it. As Dick rode back to town, he thoughtfully turned over in his mind the story which he had heard from Clarkson's lips the night before. Once he arrived at his destination Dick went straight away to Clarkson's flat, and fortunately found the latter at home. He was occupied in building a fort for little Nellie, which she was promptly demolishing with the aid of some toy cannons.

"I am glad to see you, engaged like this," Dick said. "Indeed, I am glad that my adventures brought me here at all. I have been thinking a good deal about you this morning, and if you really want a chance, I am disposed to help you. But, first of all, tell me what you have done with the jewels which you stole from the residence of Mr. Jacob Vandernort the other night."

"For Heaven's sake, don't talk like that before the child," Clarkson whispered. "She does not know——"

"I beg your pardon," Dick cried. "I had quite forgotten her for the moment. But it is entirely for her sake that I am going to give you a chance. Of course, I know how you impersonated Holt the other night, and what the result of your visit to the house in London Gardens was. If you have disposed of all that stuff—"

"Only one article, I give you my word," Clarkson said. "And that was only a matter of about two hundred pounds. I wanted the ready money to pay three months' rent of this place and get my wardrobe out of pawn. I yielded to a sudden temptation—the temptation to try to be respectable again. I thought that if I could manage it I might be able to do better in my profession. . . . But all this is by the way. Already I have returned the great bulk of those stones to Mr. Vandernort anonymously, with the exception of one article of jewelry which I have mislaid. Of course, I really haven't mislaid it, and I honestly mean to return it as soon as possible. The child has done all this for me. During the last few months, as she is getting older and more like her mother, my contempt for myself has deepened and deepened, until I resolved to try to get back into the world of honest men again. I daresay I should have fallen if I had not met you, but there is something about you that braces a man up to do better things. If you will help me, I promise you—"

(To be continued.)


## THROW AWAY LINIMENTS

### Here's the Prescription to Cure Rheumatism.

Liniments only reach the skin and the muscles directly under the skin. Now, liniments can't cure Rheumatism. They simply deaden the nerves for a time. When the effect wears away the pain returns worse than ever.

If the bowels do not move regularly—if the kidneys are strained or weak—if the skin is dry or harsh—the blood is sure to be filled with impurities or urea. This urea is changed into uric acid which is the poison that causes rheumatism.

Now, the only possible way to cure Rheumatism is to prevent uric acid from being formed. Logically, the only way to do this is to keep kidneys, bowels and skin in good working order, and prevent the stomach from being too acid. And the only way to do this is to take "Fruit-a-tives."

These marvelous tablets of fruit juices and tonics act directly on the three great eliminating organs—bowels, kidneys and skin—and put them in perfect condition. That is the only secret of their great success in curing rheumatism, sciatica and lumbago.

50c. a box—6 for $2.50. "Fruit-a-tives," Limited, Ottawa.


## NEW YORK NEWSPAPER PRINTS PRESCRIPTION

### Directions to Prepare Simple, Yet Remarkable Home Mixture.

A well-known authority on Rheumatism gives the readers of a large New York daily paper the following valuable, yet simple and harmless prescription, which any one can easily prepare at home:

Fluid Extract Dandelion, one-half ounce; Compound Kargon, one ounce; Compound Syrup Sarsaparilla, three ounces.

Mix by shaking well in a bottle, and take a teaspoonful after each meal and at bedtime.

He states that the ingredients can be obtained from any good prescription pharmacy at small cost, and being of vegetable extraction, are harmless to take.

This pleasant mixture if taken regularly for a few days, is said to overcome almost any case of Rheumatism. The pain and swelling, if any, diminishes with each dose, until permanent results are obtained, and without injuring the stomach. While there are many so-called Rheumatism remedies, patent medicines, etc., some of which do give relief, few really give permanent results, and the above will, no doubt, be greatly appreciated by many sufferers here at this time.

Inquiry at the drug stores of this neighborhood elicits the information that these drugs are harmless and can be bought separately, or the druggists here will mix the prescription for our readers if asked to.

## GIRL OF 13 STEALS $1,500 IN DAY FROM POCKETS OF WOMEN SHOPPERS

### Explaining Her Methods to Police, She Uses Language of Professional Criminal and Gives a Remarkable Exhibition of Dexterity When Taken Into Custody--Uses Smaller Half-Sister as a Blind.

(New York Herald).

Though only thirteen years old Anna Smith, who lives in Camden (N. J.), and is under arrest in Philadelphia, is held to have established a new record for New York's shoplifters and to have led a life which reflects the episodes of those days when Oliver Twist was the tool of Fagin and Bill Sikes. Using her golden haired little half-sister as a blind she stole $1,300 from nine women shoppers in New York city's department stores last Friday morning within one hour, according to her confession to the Philadelphia police.

Her thefts, according to the police, stamp her as the cleverest pickpocket in the United States. In this criminal record she was unconsciously assisted by her half-sister, Mary Ross, who is only five years old. Both children, who had been sought as runaways by their mother, Mrs. Mary Ross, of 444 North Seventh street, Camden, were taken into custody in Philadelphia, and there it was that the story of this infantile Oliver Twist was recited.

Two of the alleged instructors of the child—Stella Johnson, twenty-two years old, and Michael Taylor, the alleged husband of Yetta Smith, of 444Seventh street, Camden—are being sought by the police. Another man whose name has not been made public, also is wanted. The mother of another girl, Minnie Kirk, also is suspected.

Money and candy were the prizes the child says she sought through her dexterity. She was arrested in a Philadelphia department store after several bold thefts. Minnie Kirk store after several bold thefts. Minnie Kirk was involved in the first arrest, and a search of her room revealed eighty-two pocketbooks said to have been taken from women shoppers. The mother of this girl was sent to prison as a result of these arrests, her daughter was committed to a reformatory and the Smith girl would have been made an inmate of the same institution had not her English parentage interfered. She was ordered deported, as an alternative, and was supposed to have been placed in the custody of an aged relative residing in Liverpool (Eng.)

Several months ago the little girl returned to her mother's home, in Camden. On Friday last she and her five-year-old sister disappeared. The arrest followed. In telling the story to the police the child said in part:

"I promised my little sister that if she would go with me I would buy her a lot of nice clothes. Oh, yes, she was vain enough to desire nice dresses. We went to the home of Mr. Taylor and Mrs. Yetta Smith. I told Mrs. Smith my mother had removed to a town up in Jersey, and she took us in. We stayed there six days, and there we met Stella Johnson. She is a thief, but a 'bum' one. She fixed up out visit to New York city, and we went there Friday on a morning train. We had something to eat, and then we started in.

"I took sister by the hand and started through one of the stores when it was crowded with shoppers. I edged up to the counters and within five minutes I had opened three bags women shoppers carried. I got two purses. The third woman had no purse in her bag. We went across the street then to another store, as there wasn't much doing in the one in which we had been operating. I 'touched up' two women in this second store and got two purses. One of these purses, I learned later, had $221 in it, though I didn't know it at the time.

"Say," continued the child, "that woman discovered her loss almost immediately. She cried so that I felt sorry for her. I even helped to search around the floor for her missing purse. She seemed like an awfully nice woman, and she thanked me very much for aiding her in the search. My little sister knew nothing about it, but I had attached the purse to her undergarments. Sister was carrying a little 'teddy bear,' and that aided in diverting suspicion from us. I was so sorry for that woman that I had half a mind to slip the purse back to her.

"We then went to another store and there we got five other purses. Some of these had only a few pennies in them, while others had sums ranging up to $200.

"We got just about $1,300 out of the day's work. I got eight or ten diamond rings along with the money. But," continued the child, "the Johnson woman, who had been hovering about and waiting for us, gave me a 'bum' deal, for she kept all the money but $50. Why, all I got out of that $221, where I came very nearly handing the purse back to the poor lady, was $21. I had that money when the police arrested me after we had gone back to Philadelphia. Our clothing was awfully shabby. After the various pocketbooks had been taken by me I insisted on buying sister a lot of new clothes.

"We got back to the Broad street station in Philadelphia by 8 o'clock that evening. We then went to Camden. That Johnson woman gave me a bad deal, I can tell you. It isn't hard to steal a woman's purse, you know," the child added. "You just push up toward them and use your fingers, and that's all there is to it, see," and the child deftly opened a bag which was held by an officer. "Oh, it's easy. But we got a 'bum' deal, that's all."

The children were held by Magistrate Gallagher, of Philadelphia, pending search for the others who are implicated.

### Equity Court.

The monthly sitting of the St. John Equity Court was held Tuesday morning, Chief Justice Barker presiding.

The case of the Attorney General of New Brunswick vs. The St. John Lumber Company, was stood over.

In re Cummings vs. Gibson—P. Hughes moved to continue the injunction; order made.

In re Anderson vs. Isaacs—H. Forbes had it stood over.

In re City of St. John vs. Douglas—H. Forbes had it stood over.

In re Isaac B. Murray vs. Wm. J. Harding—T. P. Regan moved for a writ of possession. Order granted.

In re Young vs. Harding—T. P. Regan moved to confirm the referee's report order granted.

In re Boone et al vs. Haley—P. Hughes of Fredericton, made application for an injunction to restrain the sale of property; order made.

In re Ayre vs. Estabrooks—J. D. Lewin, for Powell & Harrison, moved for the payment of $107.85 now in possession of the court to the infant, Mabel Bowes; order granted.

In re Chisholm vs. Porter—J. D. Lewin, on behalf of M. G. Teed, asked for a week's postponement. Mr. Hughes, of Fredericton, consented on behalf of the defendant; postponement granted.


## Girls Earning Their Living Should Read This Carefully

One of the marvellous developments of modern life is the advent of woman as a co-laborer with man throughout the entire industrial field.

It follows then that woman must adapt herself to new conditions. But this can't be done in one generation, nor in ten. In consequence she lives in an environment of unhygienic conditions, unsuited to her temperament and constitution.

The incessant strain upon her nervous system by reason of the new vocations she has taken up, strikes at the very foundation of her nervous system.

Very complex in her physical relations to life, disease early seizes upon the woman who works, and she must therefore guard jealously anything that would tend to destroy her vitality or health.

Probably nothing is of more service than Dr. Hamilton's Pills, and every girl and woman can employ this grand remedy with gratifying results.

As a system tonic and blood renovator, no treatment gives such results.

For maintaining good digestion, healthy appetite and the proper performance of the duties of the liver and kidneys, it is impossible to equal Dr. Hamilton's Pills.

Dusky, sallow complexion is changed to a healthy, ruddy glow, which proves that Dr. Hamilton's Pills circulate blood that is rich and nourishing.

Weak organs are filled with new life and vitality; weakness, irregularities and common ills are prevented, and this much to those who have lived in the shadow of sick, half-well condition that seems so hard to overcome.

When you feel poorly, when the aches, back feels lame, and a dragging feeling creeps through you—that tells of the need of Dr. Hamilton's Pills. Try them.

Sold in yellow boxes, 25c. each, or 5 for $1.00, at all dealers, and satisfaction guaranteed.