

# The White Cat

(BY GELETT BURGESS, AUTHOR OF "VIVETTE.")  
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Doctor Copin was tall and thin and younger than I had expected; and like most young doctors he attempted to make much of his years by a pointed, reddish beard. Nature had assisted him in this attempt, also, by removing enough of his hair to give him a shiny bald forehead almost to the crown of his head, and making him near-sighted enough to require strong eye-glasses. But all this could not induce me to think him more than twenty-seven or eight years of age. His eyes were of that China blue, which with red hair, is so apt to give a selfish, heartless expression, which went very well with his general bloodlessness. Except for the protruding blue eyes he might, with his yellow-brown suit and his slender, long hands, have been an animated caricature, done in red chalk. Worst of all, to my mind, he made puns.

He approached me with the jocular air affected by physicians, and looked me over with a grin. I could see, under his sparse beard, that he had a lizard chin receding comically.

"Well, Mr. Castle," he said, "I expect you haven't been climbing any more trees with your machine lately, have you? Feeling like Adam, after the creation of Eve, with that fourth rib of yours? Let me have a feel of it. Ah!"

He prodded me a little. "Well, we are doing so-so," he went on. "If you were a football player you'd be up in

five minutes. How's the head? I suppose you haven't had quite such a big once since you put on long pants. You're not having many long pants these days, I fancy, with that cracked bone in your chest, are you? And so on. I tried to smile and did not succeed until I had caught sight of Miss Fielding's face frowning over his shoulder.

"I was doing well it seemed. It was nothing but a matter of time and patience. The worst of it was the shaking up and for that rest was all that was necessary."

I answered his pleasantries, asked him the news of the town, and thanked him for what he had done, which indeed was not much. If I have given the impression that he was an ass, that was not at all how he impressed me. Though he persistently refused to talk sense, and turned everything I said into jest, I was ready enough to believe that he knew his business and stood well in the profession. I got little more than this, however, for he soon left for a talk—likely a professional one, I imagined—with my hostess. This lasted till after an early dinner, he left the house to be driven back to the station by Uncle Jordan. Idle and bored as I was, while alone I speculated upon his relations with Miss Fielding; but from what I had seen I could hardly regard him as a rival. Still I knew well enough that one could not predicate from a man's appearance how women might like him. Dr. Copin would not be here in attendance much less as a visitor unless there was some value in him. He evidently knew the place well enough to have been at Midmeadows often. It made me for no particular reason that I could name uncomfortable.

It was still and warm, the beginning of the hush of twilight, the birds' chattering quieted, when voices came plainly up to me through the open window beside my bed. Miss Fielding and the doctor were coming round a corner of the house on their way to the stable.

"I wish when she comes next time you'd have Leah let me know," I heard Dr. Copin say earnestly.

"I won't promise to do that," was her reply.

"Why not?" he asked sharply.

"Why do you want to know?" she asked.

"You know well enough. You know how interested I am in her."

"I wish I did."

This was the last I could make out, for they passed into the yard behind the house. I heard the carriage drive off, and soon after Miss Fielding's voice inside the house calling for Leah to come down. I thought that I detected a strain of excitement, even of alarm in her tones.

A half-hour afterward, she came in to my room with a chess board, and asked me if I played the game. I was delighted to try it with her, though I was poor enough at it, and she beat me easily.

She was quite as charming as ever, but as I studied my strategy, she had time in the silent pauses to fall into little moods of reverie, letting the talk drop naturally. I was not too absorbed in my play to notice it, and once or twice I looked up from the board to see her face show a tragic expression, clearing under my surveillance, with what seemed to be a forced smile. The little lines near her eyes seemed to have deepened since morning, and two vertical ones came at times, cutting upright clefts between her brows. Once or twice she put her hand to her head suddenly. Her listlessness accented her grace but she seemed distinctly older.

After she had announced mate in three moves she awaited my capitulation. Then she put the board on the floor and rose.

"You'll find it desperately stupid here, I know, Mr. Castle," she began, "I wish we could be more amusing, but I'm a bit blue tonight."

"I only reproach myself for not being able to make you forget it," I said. "As for myself, I always feel like the hero of a fairy tale when you're about."

She gave her head a quick, backward shake, as if to free her mind of some disturbing thought. "Oh, I told you I was the White Cat, you know!" she replied. "Can't you imagine how interesting it must be for you to have anyone here at all, and you most especially? Why, I feel that you are a friend, already. If it hadn't been so, I shouldn't have dared to confess so frankly that I'm depressed."

"What can I possibly say of you, then, who have proved yourself so friendly? I may be glad when it comes my turn to give, and yours to receive."

"Oh, that time will come soon enough, I'm afraid," she said, folding her hands in her lap and looking down at them.

"You make me quite long for it!" she exclaimed, and then rose nervously to stand facing the lamp with a fixed, entranced gaze. "It will mean, perhaps, that I shall need all your sympathy, all your charity," she added, turning ever so slowly to look down at me.

"I will give anything you ask—" "And I shall ask nothing," she put in quickly. Again she threw her head back with that quick, freeing gesture. I saw what she meant. It would be put to my tact and intuition.

She held out her hand impulsively and put it into mine. It seemed very small and slight and it was cold. Then summoning a smile so rapid that it came and went in a flash, she bade me good night and left the room.

For fully an hour after that I heard her voice and Leah's in a steady low conversation in the room across the hall. At nine, Leah came in to adjust the light and see that I want-

ed nothing. I fell into an uneasy sleep waking at early cock-crow.

## CHAPTER IV.

The next day was harsh and cloudy, there was a light fog in from the sea, enough to make it a little cold, and to depress my spirits. It was, therefore, with great impatience that I awaited the matutinal visit from my hostess. She was usually up betimes; today she slept late.

It had already become one of my chief diversions to listen for the little morning colloquy in the hall, but today I heard nothing till after eight o'clock, when Leah came upstairs, knocked on the opposite door, which was always half open at night, and put her usual question.

Miss Fielding's voice came sharp and clear, a little querulous.

"Oh, I'll have bacon and eggs, I think; but wait a while, Leah; I'm sleepy and I don't want to get up yet."

Leah closed my own door softly and went downstairs. I was disappointed. I hoped Miss Fielding was not in a bad humor, though that seemed impossible. When Leah came up with the tray and gave me a "good morning," I said:

"Leah, I wish you'd ask Miss Fielding if Nokomis can't come up into my room this morning, will you?"

She hesitated just long enough for me to notice that she was troubled; then she put down the tray, saying:

"Nokomis is a queer old dog, Mr. Castle, and I don't know that she'll come."

"Why, she was here all day yesterday and we had a beautiful time together."

"I know," Leah turned to leave. "I'll speak about it, of course, but—well, these dogs have all sorts of fancies, and you can't always depend upon them. They will and they won't." She did not look at me as she answered, and went out immediately.

I felt that I had somehow blundered into an indiscretion, though what it was I couldn't possibly see. It made me exceedingly uncomfortable, for I would have done anything rather than take advantage of the kindness and hospitality with which I had been treated. I remembered that I had not yet heard the dogs barking; that might possibly mean something, but it gave me no clue. I had to give it up and try to make amends as well as I might.

A little later I heard Miss Fielding's door slam, and her footsteps running down the stairs. That she had not come in to see me, even if for only a few words, did not decrease my annoyance. Shortly after came a chorus of barks, but I fancied that they were not of the same mood that I had noted before; there seemed to be something antagonistic in their protesting notes, as if some stranger had perhaps passed the house. I had got the idea that Midmeadows was a lonely place, though I had not yet seen the outside of the building, and no doubt the collies were distrustful of visitors. I waited expectantly to hear Miss Fielding call them, one by one, as she had before; but, if she did so, I missed it.

For half an hour or more there was a steady pattering downstairs, and when Leah came for my tray, I heard someone whistling, the least bit out of tune. Leah was silent and reserved. She asked how I had slept, and if I were better, and there the conversation ended.

Finally at about 11 o'clock, Miss Fielding came in. I looked up eagerly.

She wore a stiffly laundered shirt-waist, noticeably stained and soiled, though it had evidently been put on clean that morning. She wore no stock, and the neck was turned away in a V, carelessly, showing a little gold chain with a sapphire pendant, and the sleeves were rolled up above her dimpled elbows. She had a heavy walking skirt and heavy manish shoes whose soles projected a full half-inch beyond the uppers. Her hair, which before I had always seen exquisitely coiled high on her head, was done in a full pompadour, though now it fell in flat folds over her forehead and wisped out in the back of her neck.

She came up to my bedside and smiled frankly at me. I got a pronounced odor of Santal.

"Well, how are you today?" she said jovially. "Do you feel better?"

I said that I did, noting that she wore three rings on her left hand. It was good to see her so full of life and energy.

"You certainly were a sight when you were brought in," she went on; "I was frightened to death. I never saw anyone unconscious before, and I thought you were dead, for sure. Isn't it lucky the doctor was here? I'm awfully sorry your auto was smashed up so, for I'd like to try it myself. I've been wanting one. Yours is a foreign make, isn't it? I've been looking it over. It's a water-cooled engine I see. But I want a six-cylinder. I'm going to see Uncle Jordan and I can't patch it up so that it'll go."

"Fancy a girl's carling about machinery!" I said, smiling at her enthusiasm. "You're the last person in the world I'd ever think would have any interest in it."

"Why?" she said, sitting on the edge of the bed, and turning down her sleeves, covered her round, strong arms.

"I thought that you were more of the artistic temperament."

"Oh, I like to use my hands," she said. She held one out, its fingers stiffly opened, then clenched her fist firmly. "They're stronger than they look. Try it!"

She took my hand in hers and gave me a grip as strong as any ordinary man's.

"That comes from your violin practice, I suppose," I remarked.

[To be Continued.]

## AIMS A NEW BLOW AT OIL MONOPOLY

U.S. Will Push Efforts to Force Dissolution of Standard.

AFTER BIG OFFICIALS, TOO

Immunity Feature of Law Releases Rockefeller and Archbold, But Not Rogers and Others.

Washington, D.C., Sept. 3.—Successful in its anti-trust prosecutions of the Standard Oil Company, the United States Government will renew more confidently than ever its efforts to force dissolution of the trust. Out of the mouths of officials and employees the Government proposes to establish the monopolistic character of corporations. This proof will be secured from more than fifty witnesses, who will be examined in New York beginning Wednesday next.

Tremendous though the blow struck by Judge Landis at the Standard, it is really the anti-trust proceedings upon which the Government depends to destroy the monopoly and create a condition of fair competition. The policy to be pursued in the case has been named with the utmost care, the intent being not merely to dissolve the trust but to institute criminal prosecutions of men "higher up," who will be proven guilty of willful violation of the law.

John D. Rockefeller and John A. Archbold are entitled to immunity through appearance in Judge Landis' court, but Henry M. Flagler, Charles Pratt, O. H. Payne, William Rockefeller, H. H. Rogers, and others have no claim to Governmental consideration. Few, if any, of these men will be required to testify.

Will Put Burden on Magnates. The Government will rely upon subordinates to show conditions which exist and to make a chain which will convince an impartial jury that acts of minor officials are really care, initiated and directed by the oil magnates. The attendance of witnesses, of course, can be enforced by Government prosecutors. It is also claimed here that witnesses can be compelled to give evidence, even if their testimony might tend to incriminate them. Under the law, however, such witnesses would be immune from punishment as to matters of which they should testify.

A nice point of distinction as to what witnesses may take advantage of immunity of law has been raised at the department of justice, and will likely be given careful thought, because of the large number of witnesses summoned by the Government in the pending suit. The question of the statute, after declaring witnesses must testify, even if the evidence they give will incriminate them, goes on, "but no person shall be prosecuted or subjected to any penalty or forfeiture for or on account of immunity in the transaction, matter, or thing concerning which he may testify or produce evidence, excepting, of course, that a witness shall be guilty of perjury, for which offense he may be punished."

Intent of Law Shown. Some officials of the department of justice held that the obvious intent of the law was to get around that provision of the constitution which declares that no person shall bear witness against himself. They say that under the widest and most liberal interpretation of the law immunity can be claimed on the questions and matters upon which the witness is being examined or arising under the case at issue.

This question assumes much significance, and its determination is of large importance when it is recalled that John D. Rockefeller and other leading lights of the Standard professed ignorance as to the many matters of vital importance to their corporation when questioned concerning them by Judge Landis at Chicago. If it should develop in the present investigation that these men were not sincere or truthful in their declarations of ignorance it is contended in some quarters the Government would not be stopped by the immunity law from proceeding against them under the criminal features of the anti-trust law because they appeared before Judge Landis.

No Claim to Immunity. As Mr. Rockefeller and other witnesses knew nothing or claimed to know nothing as to matters concerning which they had been summoned to testify it is asserted they could have given no evidence tending to incriminate themselves. Hence the immunity which envelops witness coincident with the governing of incriminating testimony did not accrue to them because it was not needed.

It further is argued that Rockefeller and others are not entitled to any immunity because of proceedings before Judge Landis, in any matter, case, or as to any transaction, but simply as to the resources of the company convicted of violation of the anti-trust law. Frequent conferences of Special Counsel Morrison and Kellogg with Attorney General Bonaparte and President Roosevelt and repeated statements by the latter that some rich industrial gives color to the belief that startling developments are expected in investigations the Government has under way.

That the limitations of the immunity clause in law are appreciated by those with whom the Government is dealing is shown by the fact that Chicago and Alton authorities were careful to get personal pledges of immunity for themselves and their corporation from legal officers of the Government before they testified concerning the granting of rebates to the Standard.

Another point in reference to the operations of the immunity bath is that it applies only to individuals and not to corporations. Thus it is argued that while it applies to those officials of a corporation, giving testimony incriminating in character and exempting them from punishment it does not release the corporation which still con-

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the series of advertisements which will appear in this paper every other week, pointing out the many points in which our brands, "FIVE ROSES" and "HARVEST QUEEN," are superior to any ordinary bakers' flour, you will see that it will pay you to use these brands.

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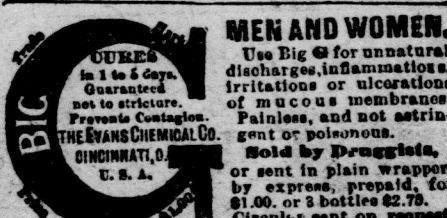
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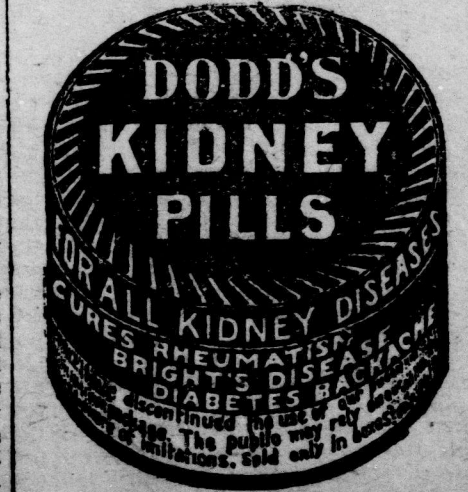
tinues to be liable to fine for violation of the law.

Should the Government be successful in its suit for dissolution of the Standard Oil Company of New Jersey, the effect would not be prejudicial to the other proceedings pending against the giant monopoly in various parts of the country. Suits have been instituted against the Standard Oil in New York, Missouri, Ohio, Illinois, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Tennessee. The Government has filed eight suits inclusive of one for dissolution of the monopoly. Most of these actions are simply to collect fines. The number of rebate indictments remaining against the corporation is 6,326, in addition to which there are thousands of state indictments.

### TIES ON THE TRACK

Fast N. Y. Central Train Has Narrow Escape From Being Wrecked.

Syracuse, N. Y., Sept. 3.—The police of this city have arrested two young foreigners, in connection with an attempt made early this morning to wreck the Buffalo Special, a fast passenger train on the New York Central, at Jordan, 20 miles west of here. Ties were placed on the track, but luckily the train was signaled to stop at distance from the station, because there was an excursion train carrying New Jersey people back to Hoboken from Niagara Falls, on the next block. The passenger train resumed its journey under slow speed, and when the obstacle was encountered the pony trucks of the locomotive were derailed, but there was no further



damage. A wrecking train and police- men went to the scene, and several hours afterward the two foreigners were seen loitering about the vicinity and arrested.

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