

The Robe of Lucifer

By FRED. M. WHITE, Author of "The Robe of Lucifer," etc.

A story of a novel type, stirring, fascinating, the most striking success in recent fiction.

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CHAPTER XXXVI.—(Continued.)

"How came Ruth Gates to remember it so clearly?" "Well, she did it herself. She was rubbed some specks of the case at the last moment, and the scratches were made accidentally with the stones in one of her rings."

table with ticket-of-leave men. Your friend has 'convict' writ large upon his face." "He has been in jail, of course," Chris admitted, cheerfully. "Then let me prophesy, and declare that he will be in gaol again. Why bring him here?" "Because it is absolutely necessary," Chris said, boldly. "That man can help me—help you, Lord Littimer. I am not proud of my house, compared with whom James Merritt is an innocent child. That scoundrel has blighted my life and the living of your family, he has blighted mine."

my life. And so for Littimer, why, he has just made a fresh will in my favor. But the old one. But I'll find out. I'll get to the bottom of this business if it costs me a fortune." "He frowned moodily at his boots; he turned the thing over in his mind until he had it by heart. He was puzzled. The Rembrandt had been stolen, and yet there was the Rembrandt in its place. Was anything more amazing and puzzling than that he called today?" "I must watch my eyes open," he said. "I must watch night and day. Do you suppose Miss Lee noticed anything when she called today?" "Not a bit of it," said Merritt, confidently. "She came to see me; she had no idea who I was, or that I was in the house."

were to be told at once that Van Sneek had gone." "Bell echoed, blankly. "What do you mean by that?" "He has disappeared from the hospital at Brighton today. Mr. Steel thinks that he has been taken away by some one of the kind. Anyway, Van Sneek got up and dressed himself and left the hospital without being observed. It seems extraordinary."

me at the first opportunity. Besides, I wanted to get to the bottom of his connection with Reginald Henson. Mr. Steel's plan may be bizarre, but it is a plan. "I never thought of that," Bell admitted. "I begin to imagine that you are more astute than I gave you credit for, which is saying a great deal." "Chris was down early the following morning, only to find Bell at breakfast with every sign of making an early departure. He was very sorry, he explained, to his loss and Chris, but his letters gave him no option. He would come back in a day or two if he might. A moment later Henson came in to the room, ostensibly studying a Broadview."

"I had thought of it," Chris said, with a pretty assumption of distress. "But, but—Mr. Merritt, I have a terrible confession to make. It was not I who started the police; it was somebody else. I—I got it in London." "Mr. Merritt looked up with involuntary admiration. "You don't mean to say as you nicked it," he asked. "Well, well." "Chris bent her face lower to conceal her agitation. Her shoulders were heaving, but not with emotion. The dragged back Merritt's admiration had moved her to silent laughter, and she had made the exact impression that she had desired. "I have telegraphed to the lady, who is more or less a friend of mine," she said. "I have urged her to take no further steps in the matter. I fancy that she is a good and kind girl and that—but a reply might come at any time." "There was a reply on the way now, as Chris knew perfectly well. The whole thing had been carefully arranged and planned to the moment by Steel and the others."

You, as cool as possible, and me with my heart in my mouth all the time. And there ain't going to be no trouble; no sort of bother over the ticket." "You hand over that ticket to me," Chris smiled, "and there will be an end of the matter. And if you try to play me false in any way, it will be my bad day for you. Give me your assistance, and it will be the best day of your work ever did in your life!" "Merritt's heart was gained. His pride was touched. "Me go back on you?" he cried, hoarsely. "After what you've done?" Only the word, one word, gave old Jim Merritt a call, and it's pitch-and-toss to mannafter for those pretty eyes of yours. Good day your work! Ave, for ye be of us." "And Chris thought so, too."

CHAPTER XL

A Useful Discovery. Wailing with the eagerness of the grey-hound in leash, David Steel was more annoyed and vexed over the disappearance of the wounded Van Sneek than he cared to admit. He had an uneasy feeling that the unseen foe had checkmated him again. And he had built up so many hopes upon this strange and unexplained event. If that man spoke he could tell the truth. And both Cross and Bell had declared that he would not do it.