

EUSTACE BALL

TRAFFIC IN SOULS: A
NOVEL OF CRIME AND
ITS CURE

Eustace Ball

**Traffic in Souls: A Novel
of Crime and Its Cure**

«Public Domain»

Ball E.

Traffic in Souls: A Novel of Crime and Its Cure / E. Ball — «Public Domain»,

Содержание

| | |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| CHAPTER I | 7 |
| CHAPTER II | 16 |
| CHAPTER III | 21 |
| CHAPTER IV | 27 |
| Конец ознакомительного фрагмента. | 31 |

Eustace Hale Ball

Traffic in Souls: A Novel of Crime and Its Cure

*"What has man done here? How atone,
Great God, for this which man has done?
And for the body and soul which by
Man's pitiless doom must now comply
With lifelong hell, what lullaby
Of sweet forgetful second birth
Remains? All dark. No sign on earth
What measure of God's rest endows
The Many mansions of His house.*

*"If but a woman's heart might see
Such erring heart unerringly
For once! But that can never be.*

*"Like a rose shut in a book
In which pure women may not look,
For its base pages claim control
To crush the flower within the soul;
Where through each dead roseleaf that clings,
Pale as transparent psyche-wings,
To the vile text, are traced such things
As might make lady's cheek indeed
More than a living rose to read;
So nought save foolish foulness may
Watch with hard eyes the sure decay;
And so the lifeblood of this rose,
Puddled with shameful knowledge flows
Through leaves no chaste hand may uncloze;
Yet still it keeps such faded show
Of when 'twas gathered long ago,
That the crushed petals' lovely grain,
The sweetness of the sanguine stain,
Seen of a woman's eyes must make
Her pitiful heart, so prone to ache,
Love roses better for its sake: —
Only that this can never be: —
Even so unto her sex is she!*

*"Yet, Jenny, looking long at you,
The woman almost fades from view.
A cipher of man's changeless sum
Of lust, past, present, and to come,
Is left. A riddle that one shrinks
To challenge from the scornful sphinx.*

*"Like a toad within a stone
Seated while Time crumbles on;
Which sits there since the earth was curs'd
For Man's transgression at the first;
Which, living through all centuries,
Not once has seen the sun arise;
Whose life, to its cold circle charmed,
The earth's whole summers have not warmed;
Which always – whitherso the stone
Be flung – sits there, deaf, blind, alone; —
Aye, and shall not be driven out
'Till that which shuts him round about
Break at the very Master's stroke,
And the dust thereof vanished as smoke,
And the seed of Man vanished as dust: —
Even so within this world is Lust!"*

– From "Jenny," by Dante Gabriel Rosetti.

CHAPTER I

NIGHT COURT

Officer 4434 beat his freezing hands together as he stood with his back to the snow-laden north-easter, which rattled the creaking signboards of East Twelfth Street, and covered, with its merciful shroud of wet flakes, the ash-barrels, dingy stoops, gaudy saloon porticos and other architectural beauties of the Avenue corner.

Officer 4434 was on "fixed post."

This is an institution of the New York police department which makes it possible for citizens to locate, in time of need, a representative of the law. At certain street crossings throughout the boroughs bluecoats are assigned to guard-duty during the night, where they can keep close watch on the neighboring thoroughfares. The "fixed post" increases the efficiency of the service, but it is a bitter ordeal on the men.

Officer 4434 shivered under his great coat. He pulled the storm hood of his cap closer about his neck as he muttered an opinion, far from being as cold as the biting blast, concerning the Commissioner who had installed the system. He had been on duty over an hour, and even his sturdy young physique was beginning to feel the strain of the Arctic temperature.

"I wonder when Maguire is coming to relieve me?" muttered 4434, when suddenly his mind left the subject, as his keen vision descried two struggling figures a few yards down the dark side of Twelfth Street.

There was no outcry for help. But 4434 knew his precinct too well to wait for that. He quietly walked to the left corner and down toward the couple. As he neared them the mist of the eddying snowflakes became less dense; he could discern a short man twisting the arm of a tall woman, who seemed to be top heavy from an enormous black-plumed hat. The faces of the twain were still indistinct. The man whirled the woman about roughly. She uttered a subdued moan of pain, and 4434, as he softly approached them, his footfalls muffled by the blanket of white, could hear her pleading in a low tone with the man.

"Aw, kid, I ain't got none ... I swear I ain't... Oh, oh ... ye know I wouldn't lie to ye, kid!"

"Nix, Annie. Out wid it, er I'll bust yer damn arm!"

"Jimmie, I ain't raised a nickel to-night ... dere ain't even a sailor out a night like dis... Oh, oh, kid, don't treat me dis way..."

Her voice died down to a gasp of pain.

Officer 4434 was within ten feet of the couple by this time. He recognized the type though not the features of the man, who had now wrenched the woman's arm behind her so cruelly that she had fallen to her knees, in the snow. The fellow was so intent upon his quest for money that he did not observe the approach of the policeman.

But the woman caught a quick glimpse of the intruder into their "domestic" affairs. She tried to warn her companion.

"Jimmie, dere's a..."

She did not finish, for her companion wished to end further argument with his own particular repartee.

He swung viciously with his left arm and brought a hard fist across the woman's pleading lips. She screamed and sank back limply.

As she did so, Officer 4434 reached forward with a vise-like grip and closed his tense fingers about the back of Jimmie's muscular neck. Holding his night stick in readiness for trouble, with that knack peculiar to policemen, he yanked the tough backward and threw him to his knees. Annie sprang to her feet.

"Lemme go!" gurgled the surprised Jimmie, as he wriggled to get free. Without a word, the woman who had been suffering from his brutality, now sprang upon the rescuing policeman with the fury of a lioness robbed of her cub. She clawed at the bluecoat's face and cursed him with volubility.

"I'll git you broke fer this!" groaned Jimmie, as 4434 held him to his knees, while Annie tried to get her hold on the officer's neck. It was a temptation to swing the night-stick, according to the laws of war, and then protect himself against the fury of the frenzied woman. But, this is an impulse which the policeman is trained to subdue – public opinion on the subject to the contrary notwithstanding. Officer 4434 knew the influence of the gangsters with certain politicians, who had influence with the magistrates, who in turn meted out summary reprimands and penalties to policemen un-Spartanlike enough to defend themselves with their legal weapons against the henchmen of the East Side politicians!

Annie had managed by no mean pugilistic ability to criss-cross five painful scratches with her nails, upon the policeman's face, despite his attempt to guard himself.

Jimmie, with tactical resourcefulness, had twisted around in such a way that he delivered a strong-jaw nip on the right leg of the policeman.

4434 suddenly released his hold on the man's neck, whipped out his revolver and fired it in the air. He would have used the signal for help generally available at such a time, striking the night stick upon the pavement, but the thick snow would have muffled the resonant alarm.

"Beat it, Annie, and git de gang!" cried out Jimmie as he scrambled to his feet. The woman sped away obediently, as Officer 4434 closed in again upon his prisoner. The gangster covered the retreat of the woman by grappling the policeman with arms and legs.

The two fell to the pavement, and writhed in their struggle on the snow.

Jimmie, like many of the gang men, was a local pugilist of no mean ability. His short stature was equalized in fighting odds by a tremendous bull strength. 4434, in his heavy overcoat, and with the storm hood over his head and neck was somewhat handicapped. Even as they struggled, the efforts of the nimble Annie bore fruit. In surprisingly brief time a dozen men had rushed out from the neighboring saloon, and were giving the doughty policeman more trouble than he could handle.

Suddenly they ran, however, for down the street came two speeding figures in the familiar blue coats. One of the officers was shrilly blowing his whistle for reinforcements. He knew what to expect in a gang battle and was taking no chances.

Maguire, who had just come on to relieve 4434, lived up to his duty most practically by catching the leg of the battling Jimmie, and giving it a wrestling twist which threw the tough with a thud on the pavement, clear of his antagonist.

4434 rose to his feet stiffly, as his rescuers dragged Jimmie to a standing position.

"Well, Burke, 'tis a pleasant little party you do be having," volunteered Maguire. "Sure, and you've been rassling with Jimmie the Monk. Was he trying to pick yer pockets?"

"Naw, I wasn't doin' nawthin', an' I'm goin' ter git that rookie broke fer assaultin' me. I'm goin' ter write a letter to the Mayor!" growled Jimmie.

Officer Burke laughed a bit ruefully.

He mopped some blood off his face, from the nail scratches of Jimmie's lady associate, and then turned toward the two officers.

"He didn't pick my pockets – it was just the old story, of beating up his woman, trying to get the money she made on the street to-night. When I tried to help her they both turned on me."

"Faith, Burke, I thought you had more horse sense," responded Maguire. "That's a dangerous thing to do with married folks, or them as ought to be married. They'll fight like Kilkenny cats until the good Samaritan comes along and then they form a trust and beat up the Samaritan."

"I think most women these days need a little beating up anyway, to keep 'em from worrying about their troubles," volunteered Officer Dexter. "I'd have been happier if I had learned that in time."

"Say, nix on dis blarney, youse!" interrupted the Monk, who was trying to wriggle out of the arm hold of Burke and Maguire. "I ain't gonter stand fer dis pinch wen I ain't done nawthin."

A police sergeant, who had heard the whistle as he made his rounds, now came up.

"What's the row?" he gruffly exclaimed. Burke explained. The sergeant shook his head.

"You're wasting time, Burke, on this sort of stuff. When you've been on the force a while longer you'll learn that it's the easiest thing to look the other way when you see these men fighting with their women. The magistrates won't do a thing on a policeman's word alone. You just see. Now you've got to go down to Night Court with this man, get a call down because you haven't got a witness, and this rummie gets set free. Why, you'd think these magistrates had to apologize for there being a police force! The papers go on about the brutality of the police, and the socialists howl about Cossack methods, and the ministers preach about graft and vice, and the reformers sit in their mahogany chairs in the skyscraper offices and dictate poems about sin, and the cops have to walk around and get hell beat out of 'em by these wops and kikes every time they tries to keep a little order!"

The sergeant turned to Maguire.

"You know these gangs around here, Mack. Who's this guy's girl?"

"He's got three or four, sergeant," responded the officer. "I guess this one must be Dutch Annie. Was she all dolled up with about a hundred dollars' worth of ostrich feathers, Burke?"

"Yes – tall, and some fighter."

"That's the one. Her hangout is over there on the corner, in Shultberger's cabaret. We can get her now, maybe."

The sergeant beckoned to Dexter.

"Run this guy over to the station house, and put him down on the blotter for disorderly conduct, and assaulting an officer. You get onto your post, Maguire, or the Commish'll be shooting past here in a machine on the way to some ball at the Ritz, and will have us all on charges. You come with me, Burke, and we'll nab that woman as a material witness."

Burke and his superior crossed the street and quickly entered the ornate portal of Shultberger's cabaret, which was in reality the annex to his corner barroom.

As they strode in a waiter stood by a tuneless piano, upon which a bloated "professor" was beating a tattoo of cheap syncopation accompaniment of the advantages of "Bobbin' Up An' Down," which was warbled with that peculiarly raucous, nasal tenor so popular in Tenderloin resorts. The musical waiter's jaw fell in the middle of a bob, as he espied the blue uniforms.

He disappeared behind a swinging door with the professional skill of a stage magician.

Sitting around the dilapidated wooden tables was a motley throng of red-nosed women, loafers, heavy-jowled young aliens, and a scattering of young girls attired in cheap finery; a prevailing color of chemical yellow as to hair, and flaming red cheeks and lips.

Instinctively the gathering rose for escape, but the sergeant strode forward to one particular table, where sat a girl nursing a bleeding mouth.

Burke remained by the door to shut off that exit.

"Is this the one?" asked the sergeant, as he put his hands on the young woman's shoulder.

Burke scrutinized her closely, responding quickly.

"Yes!"

"Come on, you," ordered the roundsman. "I want you. Quick!"

"Say, I ain't done a thing, what do ye want me fer?" whined the girl, as the sergeant pulled at her sleeve. The officer did not reply, but he looked menacingly about him at the evil company.

"If any of you guys starts anything I'm going to call out the reserves. Come on, Annie."

The proprietor, Shultberger, now entered from the front, after a warning from his waiter.

"Vot's dis, sergeant? Vot you buttin' in my place for? Ain't I in right?" he cried.

"Shut up. This girl has been assaulting an officer, and I want her. Come on, now, or I'll get the wagon here, and then there will be trouble."

Annie began to pull back, and it looked as though some of the toughs would interfere. But Shultberger understood his business.

"Now, Annie, don't start nottings here. Go on vid de officer. I'll fix it up all right. But I don't want my place down on de blotter. Who was it – Jimmie?"

The girl began to cry, and gulped the glass of whiskey on the table as she finally yielded to the tug of the sergeant.

"Yes, it's Jimmie. An' he wasn't doin' a ting. Dese rookies is always makin' trouble fer me."

She sobbed hysterically as the sergeant walked her out. Shultberger patted her on the shoulder reassuringly.

"Dot's all right, Annie. I wouldn't let nodding happen to Jimmie. I'll bail him out and you too. Go along; dot's a good girl." He turned to his guests, and motioned to them to be silent.

The "professor," at the piano, used to such scenes, lulled the nerves of the company with a rag-time variation of "Oh, You Beautiful Doll," and Burke, the sergeant and Annie went out into the night.

The girl was taken to the station. The lieutenant looked questioningly at Officer 4434.

"Want to put her down for assault?" he asked.

Burke looked at the unhappy creature. Her hair was half-down her back, and her lips swollen and bleeding from Jimmie's brutal blow. The cheap rouge on her face; the heavy pencilling of her brows, the crudely applied blue and black grease paint about her eyes, the tawdry paste necklace around her powdered throat; the pitifully thin silk dress in which she had braved the elements for a few miserable dollars: all these brought tears to the eyes of the young officer.

He was sick at heart.

The girl shivered and sobbed in that hysterical manner which indicates weakness, emptiness, lack of soul – rather than sorrow.

"Poor thing – I couldn't do it. I don't want to see her sent to Blackwell's Island. She's getting enough punishment every day – and every night."

"Well, she's made your face look like a railroad map. You're too soft, young fellow. I'll put her down as a material witness. Go wash that blood off, and we'll send 'em both down to Night Court. You've done yourself out of your relief butting in this way. Take a tip from me, and let these rummies fight it out among themselves after this as long as they don't mix up with somebody worth while."

Burke wiped his eye with the back of his cold hand. It was not snow which had melted there. He was young enough in the police service to feel the pathos of even such common situations as this.

He turned quietly and went back to the washstand in the rear room of the station. The reserves were sitting about, playing checkers and cards. Some were reading.

Half a dozen of the men, fond of the young policeman, chatted with him, and volunteered advice, to which Burke had no reply.

"Don't start in mixing up with the Gas Tank Gang over one of those girls, Burke, for they're not worth it."

"You'll have enough to do in this precinct to look after your own skin, and round up the street holdups, or get singed at a tenement fire."

And so it went.

The worldly wisdom of his fellows was far from encouraging. Yet, despite their cynical expressions, Burke knew that warm hearts and gallant chivalry were lodged beneath the brass buttons.

There is a current notion among the millions of Americans who do not know, and who have fortunately for themselves not been in the position where they needed to know, that the policemen of New York are an organized body of tyrannical, lying grafters who maintain their power by secret societies, official connivance and criminal brute force.

Taken by and large, there is no fighting organization in any army in the world which can compare with the New York police force for physical equipment, quick action under orders or upon the initiative required by emergencies, gallantry or *esprit de corps*. For salaries barely equal to those

of poorly paid clerks or teamsters, these men risk their lives daily, must face death at any moment, and are held under a discipline no less rigorous than that of the regular army. Their problems are more complex than those of any soldiery; they deal with fifty different nationalities, and are forced by circumstances to act as judge and jury, as firemen, as life savers, as directories, as arbiters of neighborhood squabbles and domestic wrangles. Their greatest services are rendered in the majority of cases which never call for arrest and prosecution. That there are many instances of petty "graft," and that, in some cases, the "middle men" prey on the underworld cannot be denied.

But it is the case against a certain policeman which receives the attention of the newspapers and the condemnation of the public, while almost unheeded are scores of heroic deeds which receive bare mention in the daily press. For the misdeed of one bad policeman the gallantry and self-sacrifice of a hundred pass without appreciation.

There have been but three recorded instances of cowardice in the annals of the New York police force. The memory of them still rankles in the bosom of every member. And yet the performance of duty at the cost of life and limb is regarded by the uniformed men as merely being "all in the day's work." The men are anxious to do their duty in every way, but political, religious, social and commercial influences are continually erecting stone walls across the path of that duty.

Superhuman in wisdom, thrice blest in luck is the bluecoat who conscientiously can live up to his own ideals, carry out the law as written by his superiors without being sent to "rusticate with the goats," or being demoted for stepping upon the toes of some of those same superiors!

Officer Bobbie Burke betook himself to the Night Court to lodge his complaint against Jimmie the Monk. The woman, Dutch Annie, sniveling and sobbing, was lodged in a cell near the gangster before being brought before the rail to face the magistrate.

Burke saw that they could not communicate with each other, and so hoped that he could have his own story accepted by the magistrate. He stood by the door of the crowded detention room, which opened into a larger courtroom, where the prisoners were led one by one to the prisoner's dock – in this case, a hand-rail two feet in front of the long desk of the judge, while that worthy was seated on a platform which enabled him to look down at the faces of the arraigned.

It was an apparently endless procession.

The class of arrests was monotonous. Three of every four cases were those of street women who had been arrested by "plain clothes" men or detectives for solicitation on the street.

The accusing officer took a chair at the left of the magistrate. The uniformed attendant handed the magistrate the affidavits of complaint. The judge mechanically scrawled his name at the bottom of the papers, glanced at the words of the arraignments, and then scowled over the edge of his desk at the flashily dressed girls before him. They all seemed slight variations on the same mould.

Perhaps one girl would simulate some hysterical sobs, and begin by protesting her innocence. Another would be hard and indifferent. A third, indignant.

"What about this, officer?" the judge would ask. "Where did you see this woman, what did you say, what did she say, and what happened?"

The detective, in a voice and manner as mechanical as that of the judge, would mumble his oft repeated story, giving the exact minute of his observations, the actions of the woman in accosting different pedestrians and in her final approach to him.

"How many times before have you been arrested, girl?" the magistrate would growl.

Sometimes the girls would admit the times; in most cases their memories were defective, until the accusing officer would cite past history. This girl had been arrested and paroled once before; that one had been sent to "the Island" for thirty days; the next one was an habitual offender. It was a tragic monotony. Sometimes the magistrate would summon the sweet-faced matron to have a talk with some young girl, evidently a "green one" for whom there might be hope. There was more kindness and effort to reform the prisoners behind those piercing eyes of the judge than one might have supposed to hear him drone out his judgment: "Thirty days, Molly"; "Ten dollars, Aggie – the Island next time,

sure"; "Five dollars for you, Sadie," and so on. There was a weary, hopeless look in the magistrate's eyes, had you studied him close at hand. He knew, better than the reformers, of the horrors of the social evil, at the very bottom of the cup of sin. Better than they could he understand the futility of garrulous legislation at the State Capitol, to be offset by ignorance, avarice, weakness and disease in the congestion of the big, unwieldy city. When he fined the girls he knew that it meant only a hungry day, one less silk garment or perhaps a beating from an angry and disappointed "lover." When he sent them to the workhouse their activities were merely discontinued for a while to learn more vileness from companions in their imprisonment; to make for greater industry – busier vice and quicker disease upon their return to the streets. The occasional cases in which there was some chance for regeneration were more welcome to him, even, than to the weak and sobbing girls, hopeless with the misery of their early defeats. Yet, the magistrate knew only too well the miserable minimum of cases which ever resulted in real rescue and removal from the sordid existence.

Once as low as the rail of the Night Court – a girl seldom escaped from the slime into which she had dragged herself. And yet *had* she dragged herself there? Was *she* to blame? Was she to pay the consequences in the last Reckoning of Accounts?

This thought came to Officer Bobbie Burke as he watched the horrible drama drag monotonously through its brief succession of sordid scenes.

The expression of the magistrate, the same look of sympathetic misery on the face of the matron, and even on many of the detectives, automatons who had chanted this same official requiem of dead souls, years of nights ... not a sombre tone of the gruesome picture was lost to Burke's keen eyes.

"Some one has to pay; some one has to pay! I wonder who?" muttered Officer 4434 under his breath.

There were cases of a different caliber. Yet Burke could see in them what Balzac called "social coördination."

Now a middle-aged woman, with hair unkempt, and hat awry, maudlin tears in her swollen eyes, and swaying as she held the rail, looked shiftily up into the magistrate's immobile face.

"You've been drunk again, Mrs. Rafferty? This is twice during the last fortnight that I've had you here."

"Yis, yer honor, an me wid two foine girls left home. Oh, Saint Mary protect me, an' oi'm a (hic) bad woman. Yer honor, it's the fault of me old man, Pat. (Hic) Oi'm *not* a bad woman, yer honor."

The magistrate was kind as he spoke.

"And what does Pat do?"

"He beats me, yer honor (hic), until Oi sneak out to the family intrance at the corner fer a quiet nip ter fergit it. An' the girls, they've been supportin' me (hic), an' payin the rint, an' buyin' the vittles, an' (hic) it's a dog's life they lead, wid all their work. When they go out wid dacint young min (hic), Pat cusses the young min, an' beats the girls whin they come home (hic)."

Here the woman broke down, sobbing, while the attendant kept her from swaying and falling.

"There, there, Mrs. Rafferty. I'll suspend sentence this time. But don't let it happen another time. You have Pat arrested and I'll teach him something about treating you right."

"My God, yer honor (hic), the worst of it is it's me two girls – they ain't got no home, but a drunken din, the next thing I knows they'll be arristed (hic) and brought up before ye like these other poor divvels. Yer honor, it's drunken Pats and min like him that's bringin' these poor girls here – it ain't the cops an' the sports (hic), yer honor."

The woman staggered as the magistrate quietly signaled the attendant to lead her through the gate, and up the aisle of the court to the outer door.

As she passed by the spectators, two or three richly dressed young women giggled and nudged the dapper youths with whom they were sitting.

"Silence!" cried the magistrate tersely. "This is not a cabaret show. I don't want any seeing-New-York parties here. Sergeant, put those people out of the court."

The officer walked up the aisle and ordered the society buds and their escorts to leave.

"Why, we're studying sociology," murmured one girl. "It's a very stupid thing, however, down here."

"So vulgar, my dear," acquiesced her friend. "There's nothing interesting anyway. Just the same old story."

They noisily arose, and walked out, while Officer Burke could hear one of the gilded youths exclaim in a loud voice as they reached the outer corridor:

"Come on, let's go up to Rector's for a little tango, and see some real life..."

The magistrate who had heard it tapped his pen on the desk, and looked quizzically at the matron.

"They are doubtless preparing some reform legislation for the suffrage platform, Mrs. Grey, and I have inadvertently delayed the millennium. Ah, a pity!"

Burke was impatient for the calling of his own case. He was tired. He would have been hungry had he not been so nauseated by the sickening environment. He longed for the fresh air; even the snowstorm was better than this.

But his turn had not come. The next to be called was another answer to his mental question.

A young woman with a blackened eye and a bleeding cheek was brought in by a fat, jolly officer, who led a burly, sodden man with him.

The charge was quarreling and destroying the furniture of a neighbor in whose flat the fight had taken place.

"Who started it?" asked the magistrate.

"She did, your honor. She ain't never home when I wants my vittles cooked, and she blows my money so there ain't nothing in the house to eat for meself. She's always startin' things, and she did this time when I tells her to come on home..."

"Just a minute," interrupted the magistrate. "What is the cause of this, little woman? Who struck you on the eye?"

The woman's lips trembled, and she glanced at the big fellow beside her. He glowered down at her with a threatening twist of his mouth.

"Why, your honor, you see, the baby was sick, and Joe, he went out with the boys pay night, and we didn't have a cent in the flat, and I had to..."

"Shut up, or I'll bust you when I get you alone!" muttered Joe, until the judge pounded on the table with his gavel.

"You won't be where you can bust her!" sharply exclaimed the magistrate. "Go on, little woman. When did he hit you?"

The wife trembled and hesitated. The magistrate nodded encouragingly.

"Why weren't you home?" he asked softly.

"My neighbor, Mrs. Goldberg, likes the baby, and she was showing me how to make some syrup for its croup, your honor, sir. We haven't got any light – it's a quarter gas meter, and there wasn't anything to cook with, and I had the baby in her flat, and Joe he just got home – he hadn't been there ... since ... Saturday night ... I didn't have anything to eat – since then, myself."

Joe whirled about threateningly, but the officer caught his uplifted arm.

"She lies. She ain't straight, that's what it is. Hanging around them *Sheenies*, and sayin' it's the baby. She lies!"

The little woman's face paled, and she staggered back, her tremulous fingers clutching at the empty air as her great eyes opened with horror at his words.

"I'm not *straight*? Oh, oh, Joe! You're killing me!"

She moaned as though the man had beat her again.

"Six months!" rasped out the magistrate between his teeth. "And I'm going to put you under a peace bond when you get out. Little woman, you're dismissed."

Joe was roughly jostled out into the detention room again by the rosy-cheeked policeman, whose face was neither so jolly nor rosy now. The woman sobbed, and leaned across the rail, her outstretched arms held pleadingly toward the magistrate.

"Oh, judge, sir ... don't send him up for six months. How can the baby and I live? We have no one, not one soul to care for us, and I'm expecting..."

Mercifully her nerves gave way, and she fainted. The gruff old court attendant, now as gentle as a nurse, caught her, and with the gateman, carried her at the judge's direction, toward his own private office, whither hurried Mrs. Grey, the matron.

The magistrate blew his nose, rubbed his glasses, and irritably looked at the next paper.

"Jimmie Olinski. Officer Burke. Hurry up, I want to call recess!" he exclaimed.

Burke, in a daze of thoughts, pulled himself together, and then took the arm of Jimmie the Monk, who advanced with manner docile and obsequious. He was not a stranger to the path to the rail. Another officer led Annie forward. Burke took the chair.

"Don't waste my time," snapped the magistrate. "What's this? Another fight?"

Officer 4434 explained the situation.

"Do you want to complain, woman?" asked the magistrate.

"Complain, why yer honor, dis cop is lyin' like a house afire. Dis is me gent' friend, an' I got me face hoit by dis cop hittin' me when he butted into our conversation. Dis cop assaulted us both, yer honor."

"That'll do. Shut up. You know what this is, don't you, Burke? The same old story. Why do you waste time on this sort of thing unless you've got a witness? You know one of these women will never testify against the man, no matter how much he beats and robs her."

"But, your honor, the man assaulted her and assaulted me," began Burke.

"She doesn't count. That's the pity of it, poor thing. I'll hold him over to General Sessions for a criminal trial on assaulting you."

In the back of the room a stout man in a fur overcoat arose.

It was Shultberger. He came down the aisle.

As he did so, unnoticed by Officer 4434, three of Shultberger's companions arose and quietly left the courtroom by the front entrance.

"Oxcuse me, Chudge, but may I offer bail for my friend, little Jimmie?"

He had some papers in his hand, for this was what might be called a by-product of his saloon business; Shultberger was always ready for the assistance of his clients.

The magistrate looked sharply at him. "Down here again, eh? I'd think those deeds and that old brick house would be worn out by this time, Shultberger, from the frequency with which you juggle it against the liberty of your friends."

"It's a fine house, Chudge, and was assessed."

"Yes – go file your papers," snapped the magistrate. "You can report back to your station house, officer. There is no charge against this girl – she is merely held as material witness. She'll never testify. She's discharged. Take my advice, Burke, and play safe with these gun-men. You're in a neighborhood which needs good precaution as well as good intentions. Good night."

The magistrate rose, declaring a recess for one hour, and Officer 4434 left the court through the police entrance.

As he turned the corner of the old Court building, he repeated to himself the question which had forced itself so strongly upon him: "Who is to blame? Who has to pay? The men or the women?"

Again he saw, mentally, the sobbing, drunken Irish woman with the two daughters who had no home life. He saw the brutal Joe, and his fainting wife as he cast the horrible words "not straight"

into her soul. He saw that the answer to his question, and the shallow society youngsters, who had left the courtroom to see "real life" at Rector's, were not disconnected from that answer.

But he did not see a dark form behind a stone buttress at the corner of the old building. He did not see a brick which came hurtling through the air from behind him.

He merely fell forward, mutely – with a fractured skull!

CHAPTER II

WHEN LOVE COMES VISITING

It was a very weak young man who sojourned for the next few weeks in the hospital, hovering so near the shadow of the Eternal Fixed Post that nurses and internes gave him up many times.

"It's only his fine young body, with a fine clean mind and fine living behind it, that has brought him around, nurse," said Doctor MacFarland, the police surgeon of Burke's precinct, as he came to make his daily call.

"He's been very patient, sir, and it's a blessing to see him able to sit up now, and take an interest in things. Many a man's mind has been a blank after such a blow and such a fracture. He's a great favorite, here," said the pretty nurse.

Old Doctor MacFarland gave her a comical wink as he answered.

"Well, nurse, beware of these great favorites. I like him myself, and every officer on the force who knows him does as well. But the life of a policeman's wife is not quite as jolly and rollicking as that of a grateful patient who happens to be a millionaire. So, bide your time."

He chuckled and walked on down the hall, while the young woman blushed a carmine which made her look very pretty as she entered the private room which had been reserved for Bobbie Burke.

"Is there anything you would like for a change?" she asked.

"Well, I can't read, and I can't take up all your time talking, so I wish you'd let me get out of this room into one of the wards in a wheel-chair, nurse," answered Burke. "I'd like to see some of the other folks, if it's permissible."

"That's easy. The doctor said you could sit up more each day now. He says you'll be back on duty in another three weeks – or maybe six."

Burke groaned.

"Oh, these doctors, really, I feel as well now as I ever did, except that my head is just a little wobbly and I don't believe I could beat Longboat in a Marathon. But, you see, I'll be back on duty before any three weeks go by."

Burke was wheeled out into the big free ward of the hospital by one of the attendants. He had never realized how much human misery could be concentrated into one room until that perambulatory trip.

It was not a visiting day, and many of the sufferers tossed about restless and unhappy.

About some of the beds there were screens – to keep the sight of their unhappiness and anguish from their neighbors.

Here was a man whose leg had been amputated. His entire life was blighted because he had stuck to his job, coupling freight cars, when the engineer lost his head.

There, on that bed, was an old man who had saved a dozen youngsters from a burning Christmas tree, and was now paying the penalty with months of torture.

Yonder poor fellow, braving the odds of the city, had left his country town, sought labor vainly, until he was found starving rather than beg.

As a policeman, Burke had seen many miseries in his short experience on the force; as an invalid he had been initiated into the second degree in this hospital ward. He wondered if there could be anything more bitter. There was – his third and final degree in the ritual of life: but that comes later on in our story.

After chatting here and there with a sufferer, passing a friendly word of encouragement, or spinning some droll old yarn to cheer up another, Bobbie had enough.

"Say, it's warm looking outside. Could I get some fresh air on one of the sun-porches?" he asked his steersman.

"Sure thing, cap. I'll blanket you up a bit, and put you through your paces on the south porch."

Bobbie was rolled out on the glass protected porch into the blessed rays of the sun. He found another traveler using the same mode of conveyance, an elderly man, whose pallid face, seamed with lines of suffering, still showed the jolly, unconquerable spirit which keeps some men young no matter how old they grow.

"Well, it's about the finest sunlight I've seen for many a day. How do you like it, young man?"

"It's the first I've had for so many weeks that I didn't believe there was any left in the world," responded Burke. "If we could only get out for a walk instead of this Atlantic City boardwalk business it would be better, wouldn't it?"

His companion nodded, but his genial smile vanished.

"Yes, but that's something I'll never get again."

"What, never again? Why, surely you're getting along to have them bring you out here?"

"No, my boy. I've a broken hip, and a broken thigh. Crushed in an elevator accident, back in the factory, and I'm too old a dog to learn to do such tricks as flying. I'll have to content myself with one of these chairs for the rest of my worthless old years."

The old man sighed, and such a sigh!

Bobbie's heart went out to him, and he tried to cheer him up.

"Well, sir, there could be worse things in life – you are not blind, nor deaf – you have your hands and they look like hands that can do a lot."

His neighbor looked down at his nervous, delicate hands and smiled, for his was a valiant spirit.

"Yes, they've done a lot. They'll do a lot more, for I've been lying on my back with nothing to do for a month but think up things for them to do. I'm a mechanic, you know, and fortunately I have my hands and my memory, and years of training. I've been superintendent of a factory; electrical work, phonographs, and all kinds of instruments like that were my specialty. But, they don't want an old man back there, now. Too many young bloods with college training and book knowledge. I couldn't superintend much work now – this wheel chair of mine is built for comfort rather than exceeding the speed limit."

Burke drew him out, and learned another pitiful side of life.

Burke's new acquaintance was an artisan of the old school, albeit with the skill and modernity of a man who keeps himself constantly in the forefront by youthful thinking and scientific work. He had devoted the best years of his life to the interests of his employer. When a splendid factory had been completed, largely through the results of his executive as well as his technical skill, and an enormous fortune accumulated from the growing business of the famous plant, the president of the company had died. His son, fresh from college, assumed the management of the organization, and the services of old Barton were little appreciated by the younger man or his board of directors. It was a familiar story of modern business life.

"So, there you have it, young man. Why I should bother you with my troubles I don't quite understand myself. In a hospital it's like shipboard; we know a man a short while, and isolated from the rest of the world, we are drawn closer than with the acquaintances of years. In my case it's just the tragedy of age. There is no man so important but that a business goes on very well without him. I realized it with young Gresham, even before I was hurt in the factory. They had taken practically all I had to give, and it was time to cast me aside. As a sort of charity, Gresham has sent me four weeks' salary, with a letter saying that he can do no more, and has appointed a young electrical engineer, from his own class in Yale, to take my place. They need an active man, not an invalid. My salary has been used up for expenses, and for the living of my two daughters, Mary and Lorna. What I'll do when I get back home, I don't know."

He shook his head, striving to conceal the despondency which was tugging at his heart.

Burke was cheery as he responded.

"Well, Mr. Barton, you're not out of date yet. The world of electricity is getting bigger every day. You say that you have made many patents which were given to the Gresham company because you were their employee. Now, you can turn out a few more with your own name on them, and get the profits yourself. That's not so bad. I'll be out of here myself, before long, and I'll stir myself, to see that you get a chance. I can perhaps help in some way, even if I'm only a policeman."

The older man looked at him with a comical surprise.

"A policeman? A cop? Well, well, well! I wouldn't have known it!"

Bobbie Burke laughed, and he had a merry laugh that did one's soul good to hear.

"We're just human beings, you know – even if the ministers and the muckrakers do accuse us of being blood brothers to the devil and Ali Baba."

"I never saw a policeman out of uniform before – that's why it seems funny, I suppose. But I wouldn't judge you to be the type which I usually see in the police. How long have you been in the service?"

Here was Bobby's cue for autobiography, and he realized that, as a matter of neighborliness, he must go as far as his friend.

"Well, I'm what they call a rookie. It's my second job as a rookie, however, for I ran away from home several years ago, and joined the army. I believed all the pretty pictures they hang up in barber shops and country post-offices, and thought I was going to be a globe trotter. Do you remember that masterpiece which shows the gallant bugler tooting the 'Blue Bells of Scotland,' and wearing a straight front jacket that would make a Paris dressmaker green with envy? Well, sir, I believed that poster, and the result was that I went to the Philippines and helped chase Malays, Filipinos, mosquitoes, and germs; curried the major's horse, swept his front porch, polished his shoes, built fences and chicken houses, and all the rest of the things a soldier does."

"But, why didn't you stay at home?"

Burke dropped his eyes for an instant, and then looked up unhappily.

"I had no real home. My mother and father died the same year, when I was eighteen. I don't know how it all happened. I had gone to college out West for one year, when my uncle sent for me to come back to the town where we lived and get to work. My father was rather well to do, and I couldn't quite understand it. But, my uncle was executor of the estate, and when I had been away that season it was all done. There was no estate when I got back, and there was nothing to do but to work for my uncle in the store which he said he had bought from my father, and to live up in the little room on the third floor where the cook used to sleep, in the house where I was born, which he said he had bought from the estate. It was a queer game. My father left no records of a lot of things, and so there you know why I ran away to listen to that picture bugle. I re-enlisted, and at the end of my second service I got sick of it. I was a sergeant and was going to take the examination for second lieutenant when I got malaria, and I decided that the States were good enough for me. The Colonel knew the Police Commissioner here. He sent me a rattling good letter. I never expected to use it. But, after I hunted a job for six months and spent every cent I had, I decided that soldiering was a good training for sweeping front porches and polishing rifles, but it didn't pay much gas and rent in the big city. The soldier is a baby who always takes orders from dad, and dad is the government. I decided I'd use what training I had, so I took that letter to the Commissioner. I got through the examinations, and landed on the force. Then a brick with a nice sharp corner landed on the back of my head, and I landed up here. And that's all there is to *my* tale of woe."

The old man looked at him genially.

"Well, you've had your own hard times, my boy. None of us finds it all as pretty as the picture of the bugler, whether we work in a factory, a skyscraper or on a drill ground. But, somehow or other, I don't believe you'll be a policeman so very long."

Bob leaned back in his chair and drank in the invigorating air, as it whistled in through the open casement of the glass-covered porch. There was a curious twinkle in his eye, as he replied:

"I'm going to be a policeman long enough to 'get' the gangsters that 'got' me, Mr. Barton. And I believe I'm going to try a little housecleaning, or white-wings work around that neighborhood, just as a matter of sport. It doesn't hurt to try."

And Burke's jaw closed with a determined click, as he smiled grimly.

Barton was about to speak when the door from the inner ward opened behind them.

"Father! Father!" came a fresh young voice, and the old man turned around in his chair with an exclamation of delight.

"Why, Mary, my child. I'm so pleased. How did you get to see me? It's not a visiting day."

A pretty girl, whose delicate, oval face was half wreathed with waves of brown curls, leaned over the wheeled chair and kissed the old gentleman, as she placed some carnations on his lap.

She caught his hand in her own little ones and patted it affectionately.

"You dear daddy. I asked the superintendent of the hospital to let me in as a special favor to-day, for to-morrow is the regular visiting day, and I can't come then – neither can Lorna."

"Why, my dear, where are you going?"

The girl hesitated, as she noticed Burke in the wheel-chair so close at hand. By superhuman effort Bobbie was directing his attention to the distant roofs, counting the chimneys as he endeavored to keep his mind off a conversation which did not concern him.

"Oh, my dear, excuse me. Mr. Burke, turn around. I'd like to have you meet my daughter, Mary."

Bobbie willingly took the little hand, feeling a strange embarrassment as he looked up into a pair of melting blue eyes.

"It's a great pleasure," he began, and then could think of nothing more to say. Mary hesitated as well, and her father asked eagerly: "Why can't you girls come here to-morrow, my dear? By another visiting day I hope to be back home."

"Father, we have – " she hesitated, and Bobbie understood.

"I'd better be wheeling inside, Mr. Barton, and let you have the visit out here, where it's so nice. It's only my first trip, you know – so let me call my steersman."

"No secrets, no secrets," began Barton, but Bobbie had beckoned to the ward attendant. The man came out, and, at Burke's request, started to wheel him inside.

"Won't you come and visit me, sir, in my little room? I get lonely, you know, and have a lot of space. I'm so glad to have seen you, Miss Barton."

"Mr. Burke is going to be one of my very good friends, Mary. He's coming around to see us when I get back home. Won't that be pleasant?"

Mary looked at Bobbie's honest, mobile face, and saw the splendid manliness which radiated from his earnest, friendly eyes. Perhaps she saw just a trifle more in those eyes; whatever it was, it was not displeasing.

She dropped her own gaze, and softly said:

"Yes, father. He will be very welcome, if he is your friend."

On her bosom was a red rose which the florist had given her when she purchased the flowers for her father. Sometimes even florists are human, you know.

"Good afternoon; I'll see you later," said Bobbie, cheerily.

"You haven't any flowers, Mr. Burke. May I give you this little one?" asked Mary, as she unpinned the rose.

Burke flushed. He smiled, bashfully, and old Barton beamed.

"Thank you," said Bobbie, and the attendant wheeled him on into his own room.

"Nurse, could you get me a glass of water for this rose?" asked Bobbie.

"Certainly," said the pretty nurse, with a curious glance at the red blossom. "It's very pretty. It's just a bud and, if you keep it fresh, will last a long time."

She placed it on the table by his cot.

As she left the room, she looked again at the rose.

Sometimes even nurses are human.

And Bobbie looked at the rose. It was the sweetest rose he had ever seen. He hoped that it would last a long, long time.

"I will try to keep it fresh," he murmured, as he awkwardly rolled over into his bed.

Sometimes even policemen are human, too.

CHAPTER III

THE TRAIL OF THE SERPENT

Officer Burke was back again at his work on the force. He was a trifle pale, and the hours on patrol duty and fixed post seemed trebly long, for even his sturdy physique was tardy in recuperating from that vicious shock at the base of his brain.

"Take it easy, Burke," advised Captain Sawyer, "you have never had a harder day in uniform than this one. Those two fires, the work at the lines with the reserves and your patrol in place of Dexter, who is laid up with his cold, is going it pretty strong."

"That's all right, Captain. I'm much obliged for your interest. But a little more work to-night won't hurt me. I'll hurry strength along by keeping up this hustling. People who want to stay sick generally succeed. Doctor MacFarland is looking after me, so I am not worried."

Bobbie left the house with his comrades to relieve the men on patrol.

It was late afternoon of a balmy spring day.

The weeks since he had been injured had drifted into months, and there seemed many changes in the little world of the East Side. This store had failed; that artisan had moved out, and even two or three fruit dealers whom Bobbie patronized had disappeared.

In the same place stood other stands, managed by Italians who looked like caricatures drawn by the same artist who limned their predecessors.

"It must be pretty hard for even the Italian Squad to tell all these fellows apart, Tom," said Bobbie, as they stood on the corner by one of the stalls.

"Sure, lad. All Ginnies look alike to me. Maybe that's why they carve each other up every now and then at them little shindigs of theirs. Little family rows, they are, you know. I guess they add a few marks of identification, just for the family records," replied Tom Dolan, an old man on the precinct. "However, I get along with 'em all right by keeping my eye out for trouble and never letting any of 'em get me first. They're all right, as long as you smile at 'em. But they're tricky, tricky. And when you hurt a Wop's vanity it's time to get a half-nelson on your night-stick!"

They separated, Dolan starting down the garbage-strewn side street to chase a few noisy push-cart merchants who, having no other customers in view, had congregated to barter over their respective wares.

"Beat it, you!" ordered Dolan. "This ain't no Chamber of Commerce. Git!"

With muttered imprecation the peddlers pushed on their carts to make place for a noisy, tuneless hurdy-gurdy. On the pavement at its side a dozen children congregated – none over ten – to dance the turkey trot and the "nigger," according to the most approved Bowery artistry of "spieling."

"Lord, no wonder they fall into the gutter when they grow up," thought Bobbie. "They're sitting in it from the time they get out of their swaddling rags."

Bobbie walked up to the nearby fruit merchant.

"How much is this apple, Tony?"

The Italian looked at him warily, and then smirked.

"Eet's nothing toa you, signor. I'ma da policeman's friend. You taka him."

Bobbie laughed, as he fished out a nickel from his pocket. He shook his head, as he replied.

"No, Tony, I don't get my apples from the 'policeman's friend.' I can pay for them. You know all of us policemen aren't grafters – even on the line of apples and peanuts."

The Italian's eyes grew big.

"Well, you'ra de first one dat offer to maka me de pay, justa de same. Eet's a two centa, eef you insist."

He gave Bobbie his change, and the young man munched away on the fresh fruit with relish. The Italian gave him a sunny grin, and then volunteered:

"Youa de new policeman, eh?"

"I have been in the hospital for more than a month, so that's why you haven't seen me. How long have you been on this corner? There was another man here when I came this way last."

"Si, signor. That my cousin Beppo. But he's gone back to It'. He had some money – he wanta to keep eet, so he go while he can."

"What do you mean by that?"

"I don'ta wanta talk about eet, signor," said the Italian, with a strange look. "Eet'sa bad to say I was his cousin even."

The dealer looked worried, and naturally Bobbie became curious and more insistent.

"You can tell me, if it's some trouble. Maybe I can help you some time if you're afraid of any one."

The Italian shook his head, pessimistically.

"No, signor. Eet'sa better I keep what you call de mum."

"Did he blow up somebody with a bomb? Or was it stiletto work?" asked Bobbie, as he threw away the core of the apple, to observe it greedily captured by a small, dirty-faced urchin by the curb.

The fruit merchant looked into Officer Burke's face, and, as others had done, was inspired by its honesty and candor. He felt that here might be a friend in time of trouble. Most of the policemen he knew were austere and cynical. He leaned toward Burke and spoke in a subdued tone.

"Poor Beppo, he have de broken heart. He was no Black Hand – he woulda no usa de stiletto on a cheecken, he so kinda, gooda man. He justa leave disa country to keepa from de suicide."

"Why, that's strange! Tell me about it. Poor fellow!"

"He'sa engag-ed to marry de pretty Maria Cenini, de prettiest girl in our village, back in It' – excepta my wife. Beppo, he senda on de money, so she can coma dis country and marry him. Dat wasa four week ago she shoulda be here. But, signor, whena Beppo go toa de Battery to meet her froma da Ellis Island bigga boat he no finda her."

"Did she die?"

"Oh, signor, Beppo, he wisha she hadda died. He tooka de early boat to meeta her, signor, and soma ona tella de big officier at de Battery he'sa da cousin of her sweeta heart. She goa wid him, signor, and Beppo never finda her."

"Why, you don't mean the girl was abducted?"

"Signor, whatever eet was, Beppo hear from one man from our village who leeve in our village dat he see poor Maria weed her face all paint, and locked up in de tougha house in Newark two weeks ago. Oh, *madre dio*, signor, she's a da bad girl! Beppo, he nearly killa his friend for tell him, and den he go to Newark to looka for her at de house. But she gone, and poor Beppo he was de pinched for starting de fight in de house. He pay twanty-five de dols, and coma back here. De nexta morning a beeg man come to Beppo, and he say: 'Wop, you geet out dis place, eef you tella de police about dees girl,' Dassal."

Burke looked into the nervous, twitching face of the poor Italian, and realized that here was a deeper tragedy than might be guessed by a passerby. The man's eyes were wet, and he convulsively fumbled at the corduroy coat, which he had doubtless worn long before he ever sought the portals of the Land of Liberty.

"Oh, signor. Data night Beppo he was talk to de policaman, justa like me. He say no word, but dat beega man he musta watch, for desa gang-men dey busta de stand, and dey tella Beppo to geet out or dey busta heem. Beppo he tell me I can hava de stand eef I pay him some eacha week. I take it – and now I am afraid de busta me!"

Bobbie laid a comforting hand upon the man's heaving shoulder.

"There, don't you worry. Don't tell anyone else you're his cousin, and I won't either. You don't need to be afraid of these gang-men. Just be careful and yell for the police. The trouble with you Italians is that you are afraid to tell the police anything when you are treated badly. Your cousin should have reported this case to the Ellis Island authorities. They would have traced that girl and saved her."

The man looked gratefully into Burke's eyes, as the tears ran down his face.

"Oh, signor, eef all de police were lika you we be not afraid."

Just then he dropped his eyes, and Burke noticed that his hand trembled as he suddenly reached for a big orange and held it up. The man spoke with a surprising constraint, still holding his look upon the fruit.

"Signor, here's a fine orange. You wanta buy heem?" In a whisper he added: "Eet is de bigga man who told my cousin to get outa da country!"

Bobbie in astonishment turned around and beheld two pedestrians who were walking slowly past, both staring curiously at the Italian.

He gave an exclamation of surprise as he noticed that one of the men was no less a personage than Jimmie the Monk. The man with him was a big, raw-boned Bowery character of pugilistic build.

"Why, I thought that scoundrel would have been tried and sentenced by this time," murmured the officer. "I know they told me his case had been postponed by his lawyer, an alderman. But this is one on me."

The smaller man caught Burke's eye and gave him an insolent laugh. He even stopped and muttered something to his companion.

Burke's blood was up in an instant.

He advanced quickly toward the tough. Jimmie sneered, as he stood his ground, confident in the security of his political protection.

"Move on there," snapped Burke. "This is no loafing place."

"Aaaah, go chase sparrers," snarled Jimmie the Monk. "Who ye think yer talking to, rookie?"

Now, Officer Burke was a peaceful soul, despite his military training. His short record on the force had been noteworthy for his ability to disperse several incipient riots, quiet more than one brawl, and tame several bad men without resorting to rough work. But there was a rankling in his spirit which overcame the geniality which had been reigning in his heart so short a time before.

He was tired. He was weak from his recent confinement. But the fighting blood of English and some Irish ancestors stirred in his veins.

He walked quietly up to the Monk, and his voice was low, his words calm, as he remarked: "You clear out of this neighborhood. I am going to put you where you belong the first chance I get. And I don't want any of your impudence now. Move along."

Jimmie mistook the quiet manner for respect and a timid memory of the recent retirement from active service.

He spread his legs, and, with a wink to his companion, he began, with the strident rasp of tone which can seldom be heard above Fourteenth Street and east of Third Avenue.

"Say, bo. Do you recollect gittin' a little present? Well, listen, dere's a Christmas tree of dem presents comin' to you ef ye tries any more of dis stuff. I'm in *right* in dis district, don't fergit it. Ye tink's I'm going to de Island? Wipe dat off yer memory, too. W'y, say, I kin git yer buttons torn off and yer shield put in de scrap heap by de Commish if I says de woid down on Fourteenth Street, at de bailiwick."

"I know who was back of the assault on me, Monk, and let me tell you I'm going to get the man who threw it. Now, you get!"

Burke raised his right hand carelessly to the side of his collar, as he pressed up close to the gangster. The big man at his side came nearer, but as the policeman did not raise his club, which swung idly by its leather thong, to his left wrist, he was as unprepared for what happened as Jimmie.

"Why you – " began the latter, with at least six ornate oaths which out-tarred the vocabulary of any jolly, profane tar who ever swore.

Burke's hand, close to his own shoulder, and not eight inches away from Jimmie's leering jowl, closed into a very hard fist. Before the tough knew what had hit him that nearby fist had sent him reeling into the gutter from a short shoulder jab, which had behind it every ounce of weight in the policeman's swinging body.

Jimmie lay there.

The other man's hand shot to his hip pocket, but the officer's own revolver was out before he could raise the hand again. Army practice came handy to Burke in this juncture.

"Keep your hand where it is," exclaimed the policeman, "or you'll get a bullet through it."

"You dog, I'll get you sent up for this," muttered the big man.

But with his revolver covering the fellow, Burke quickly "frisked" the hip pocket and discovered the bulk of a weapon. This was enough.

"I fixed the Monk. Now, you're going up for the Sullivan Law against carrying firearms. You're number one, with me, in settling up this score!" Jimmie had shown signs of awakening from the slumber induced by Burke's sturdy right hand.

He pulled himself up as Burke marched his man around the corner. The Monk hurried, somewhat unsteadily, to the edge of the fruit stand and looked round it after the two figures.

"Do youse know dat cop, ye damn Ginnie?" muttered Jimmie.

"Signor, no!" replied the fruit dealer, nervously. "I never saw heem on dis beat before to-day, wenna he buy de apple from me."

Jimmie turned – discretion conquering temporary vengeance, and started in the opposite direction. He stopped long enough to say, as he rubbed his bruised jaw, "Well, Wop, ye ain't like to see much more of 'im around dis dump neither, an' ye ain't likely to see yerself neither, if ye do too much talkin' wid de cops."

Jimmie hurried up the street to a certain rendezvous to arrange for a rescue party of some sort. In the meantime Officer 4434 led an unwilling prisoner to the station house, one hand upon the man's right arm. His own right hand gripped his stick firmly.

"You make a wiggle and I'm going to give it to you where I got that brick, only harder," said Burke, softly.

A crowd of urchins, young men and even a few straggling women followed him with his prisoner. It grew to enormous proportions by the time he had reached the station house.

As they entered the front room Captain Sawyer looked up from his desk, where he had been checking up some reports.

"Ah, what have we this time, Burke?"

"This man is carrying a revolver in his hip pocket," declared the officer. "That will take care of him, I suppose."

Dexter, at the captain's direction, searched the man. The revolver was the first prize. In his pocket was a queer memorandum book. It contained page after page of girls' names, giving only the first name, with some curious words in cipher code after each one. In the same pocket was a long, flat parcel. Dexter handed it to the captain who opened it gingerly. Inside the officer found at least twenty-five small packets, all wrapped in white paper. He opened two of these. They contained a flaky, white powder.

The man looked down as Sawyer gave him a shrewd glance.

"We have a very interesting visitor, Burke. Thanks for bringing him in. So you're a cocaine peddler?"

The man did not reply.

"Take him out into one of the cells, Dexter. Get all the rest of his junk and wrap it up. Look through the lining of his clothes and strip him. This is a good catch, Burke."

The prisoner sullenly ambled along between two policemen, who locked him up in one of the "pens" in the rear of the front office. Burke leaned over the desk.

"He was walking with that Jimmie the Monk when I got him. Jimmie acted ugly, and when I told him to move on he began to curse me."

"What did you do?"

"I handed him an upper-cut. Then this fellow tried to get his gun. Jimmie will remember me, and I'll get him later, on something. I didn't want to call out the reserves, so I brought this man right on over here, and let Jimmie attend to himself. I suppose we'll hear from him before long."

"Yes, I see the message coming now," exclaimed Captain Sawyer in a low tone. "Don't you open your mouth. I'll do the talking now."

As he spoke, Burke followed his eyes and turned around. A large man, decorated with a shiny silk hat, shinier patent leather shoes of extreme breadth of beam, a flamboyant waistcoat, and a gold chain from which dangled a large diamond charm, swaggered into the room, mopping his red face with a silk handkerchief.

"Well, well, captain!" he ejaculated, "what's this I hear about an officer from this precinct assaulting two peaceful civilians?"

The Captain looked steadily into the puffy face of the speaker. His steely gray eyes fairly snapped with anger, although his voice was unruffled as he replied, "You'd better tell me all you heard, and who you heard it from."

The big man looked at Burke and scowled ominously. It was evident that Officer 4434 was well known to him, although Bobbie had never seen the other in his life.

"Here's the fellow. Clubbing one of my district workers – straight politics, that's what it is, or I should say crooked politics. I'm going to take this up with the Mayor this very day. You know his orders about policemen using their clubs."

"Yes, Alderman, I know that and several other things. I know that this policeman did not use his club but his fist on one of your ward heelers, and that was for cursing him in public. He should have arrested him. I also know that you are the lawyer for this gangster, Jimmie the Monk. And I know what we have on his friend. You can look at the blotter if you want. I haven't finished writing it all yet."

The Captain turned the big record-book around on his desk, while the politician angrily examined it.

"What's that? Carrying weapons, unlawfully? Carrying cocaine? Why, this is a frame-up. This man Morgan is a law-abiding citizen. You're trying to send him up to make a record for yourself. I'm going to take this up with the Mayor as sure as my name is Kelly!"

"Take it up with the United States District Attorney, too, Mr. Alderman, for I've got some other things on your man Morgan. This political stuff is beginning to wear out," snapped Sawyer. "There are too many big citizens getting interested in this dope trade and in the gang work for you and your Boss to keep it hushed any longer."

He turned to Burke and waved his hand toward the stairway which led to the dormitory above.

"Go on upstairs, my boy, and rest up a little bit. You're pale. This has been a hard day, and I'm going to send out White to relieve you. Take a little rest and then I'll send you up to Men's Night Court with Morgan, for I want him held over for investigation by the United States officers."

Alderman Kelly puffed and fumed with excitement. This was getting beyond his depths. He was a competent artist in the criminal and lower courts, but his talents for delaying the law of the Federal procedure were rather slim.

"What do you mean? I'm going to represent Morgan, and I'll have something to say about his case at Night Court. I know the magistrate."

Sawyer took out the memorandum book from the little parcel of "exhibits" removed from the prisoner.

"Well, Alderman," Burke heard him say, as he started up the stairs, "you ought to be pleased to have a long and profitable case. For I think this is just starting the trail on a round-up of some young men who have been making money by a little illegal traffic. There are about four hundred girls' names in this book, and the Chief of Detectives has a reputation for being able to figure out ciphers."

Alderman Kelly dropped his head, but gazed at Sawyer's grim face from beneath his heavy brows with a baleful intensity. Then he left the station house.

CHAPTER IV

WHAT THE DOCTOR SAID

Officer Bobbie Burke found the case at the Men's Night Court to be less difficult than his experience with Dutch Annie and her "friend." The magistrate disregarded the pleading of Alderman Kelly to show the "law-abiding" Morgan any leniency. The man was quickly bound over for investigation by the Grand Jury, upon the representations of Captain Sawyer, who went in person to look after the matter.

"This man will bear a strict investigation, Mr. Kelly, and I propose to hold him without bail until the session to-morrow. Your arguments are of no avail. We have had too much talk and too little actual results on this trafficking and cocaine business, and I will do what I can to prevent further delays."

"But, your honor, how about this brutal policeman?" began Kelly, on a new tack. "Assaulting a peaceful citizen is a serious matter, and I am prepared to bring charges."

"Bring any you want," curtly said the magistrate. "The officer was fully justified. If night-sticks instead of political pull were used on these gun-men our politics would be cleaner and our city would not be the laughing-stock of the rest of the country. Officer Burke, keep up your good work, and clean out the district if you can. We need more of it."

Burke stepped down from the stand, embarrassed but happy, for it was a satisfaction to know that there were some defenders of the police. He espied Jimmie the Monk sitting with some of his associates in the rear of the room, but this time he was prepared for trouble, as he left. Consequently, there was none.

When he returned to the station house he was too tired to return to his room in the boarding-house where he lodged, but took advantage of the proximity of a cot in the dormitory for the reserves.

Next day he was so white and fagged from the hard duty that Captain Sawyer called up Doctor MacFarland, the police surgeon for the precinct.

When the old Scotchman came over he examined. Burke carefully and shook his head sternly.

"Young man," said he, "if you want to continue on this work, remember that you have just come back from a hospital. There has been a bad shock to your nerves, and if you overdo yourself you will have some trouble with that head again. You had better ask the Captain for a little time off – take it easy this next day or two and don't pick any more fights."

"I'm not hunting for trouble, doctor. But, you know, I do get a queer feeling – maybe it is in my head, from that brick, but it feels in my heart – whenever I see one of these low scoundrels who live on the misery of their women. This Jimmie the Monk is one of the worst I have ever met, and I can't rest easy until I see him landed behind the bars."

"There is no greater curse to our modern civilization than the work of these men, Burke. It is not so much the terrible lives of the women whom they enslave; it is the disease which is scattered broadcast, and carried into the homes of working-men, to be handed to virtuous and unsuspecting wives, and by heredity to innocent children, visiting, as the Bible says, 'the iniquities of the fathers unto the third and the fourth generation.'"

The old doctor sat down dejectedly and rested his chin on his hand, as he sat talking to Burke in the rear room of the station house.

"Doctor, I've heard a great deal about the white slave traffic, as every one who keeps his ears open in the big city must. Do you think the reports are exaggerated?"

"No, my boy. I've been practicing medicine and surgery in New York for forty years. When I came over here from Scotland the city was no better than it should have been. But it was an *American* city then – not an 'international melting pot,' as the parlor sociologists proudly call it. The social evil is the oldest profession in the world; it began when one primitive man wanted that which he could

not win with love, so he offered a bribe. And the bribe was taken, whether it was a carved amulet or a morsel of game, or a new fashion in furs. And the woman who took it realized that she could escape the drudgery of the other women, could obtain more bribes for her loveless barter ... and so it has grown down through the ages."

The old Scotchman lit his pipe.

"I've read hundreds of medical books, and I've had thousands of cases in real life which have taught me more than my medical books. What I've learned has not made me any happier, either. Knowledge doesn't bring you peace of mind on a subject like this. It shows you how much greed and wickedness and misery there are in the world."

"But, doctor, do you think this white slave traffic is a new development? We've only heard about it for the last two or three years, haven't we?"

The physician nodded.

"Yes, but it's been there in one form or another. It caused the ruin of the Roman Empire; it brought the downfall of mediaeval Europe, and whenever a splendid civilization springs up the curse of sex-bondage in one form or another grows with it like a cancer."

"But medicine is learning to cure the cancer. Can't it help cure this?"

"We are getting near the cure for cancer, maybe near the cure for this cancer as well. Sex-bondage was the great curse of negro slavery in the United States; it was the thing which brought misery on the South, in the carpet-bag days, as a retribution for the sins of the fathers. We cured that and the South is bigger and better for that terrible surgical operation than it ever was before. But this latest development – organized capture of ignorant, weak, pretty girls, to be held in slavery by one man or by a band of men and a few debauched old hags, is comparatively a new thing in America. It has been caused by the swarms of ignorant emigrants, by the demand of the lowest classes of those emigrants and the Americans they influence for a satisfaction of their lust. It is made easy by the crass ignorance of the country girls, the emigrant girls, and by the drudgery and misery of the working girls in the big cities."

"I saw two cases in Night Court, Doc, which explained a whole lot to me – drunken fathers and brutal husbands who poisoned their own wives – it taught that not all the blame rests upon the weakness of the women."

"Of course it doesn't," exclaimed MacFarland impetuously. "It rests upon Nature, and the way our boasted Society is mistreating Nature. Woman is weaker than man when it comes to brute force; you know it is force which does rule the world when you do get down to it, in government, in property, in business, in education – it is all survival of the strongest, not always of the fittest. A woman should be in the home; she can raise babies, for which Nature intended her. She can rule the world through her children, but when she gets out to fight hand to hand with man in the work-world she is outclassed. She can't stand the physical strain thirty days in the month; she can't stand the starvation, the mistreatment, the battling that a man gets in the world. She needs tenderness and care, for you know every normal woman is a mother-to-be – and that is the most wonderful thing in the world, the most beautiful. When the woman comes up against the stone wall of competition with men her weakness asserts itself. That's why good women fall. It's not the 'easiest way' – it's just forced upon them. As for the naturally bad women – well, that has come from some trait of another generation, some weakness which has been increased instead of cured by all this twisted, tangled thing we call modern civilization."

The doctor sighed.

"There are a lot of women in the world right now, Burke, who are fighting for what they call the 'Feminist Movement'. They don't want homes; they want men's jobs. They don't want to raise their babies in the old-fashioned way; they want the State to raise them with trained nurses and breakfast food. They don't see anything beautiful in home life, and cooking, and loving their husbands. They want the lecture platform (and the gate-receipts); they want to run the government, they want men to be breeders, like the drones in the beehive, and they don't want to be tied to one man for life. They

want to visit around. The worst of it is that they are clever, they write well, they talk well, and they interest the women who are really normal, who only half-read, only half-analyze, and only get a part of the idea! These normal women are devoting, as they should, most of their energies to the normal things of woman life – children, home, charity, and neighborliness. But the clever feminist revolutionists are giving them just enough argument to make them dissatisfied. They flatter the domestic woman by telling her she is not enough appreciated, and that she should control the country. They lead the younger women away from the old ideals of love and home and religion; in their place they would substitute selfishness, loose morals, and will change the chivalry, which it has taken men a thousand years to cultivate, into brutal methods, when men realize that women want absolute equality. Then, should such a condition ever be accepted by society in general, we will do away with the present kind of social evil – to have a tidal wave of lust."

Bobbie listened with interest. It was evident that Doctor MacFarland was opening up a subject close to his heart. The old man's eyes sparkled as he continued.

"You asked about the traffic in women, as we hear of it in New York. Well, the only way we can cure it is to educate the men of all classes so that for reasons moral, sanitary, and feelings of honest pride in themselves they will not patronize the market where souls are sought. This can't be done by passing laws, but by better books, better ways of amusement, better living conditions for working people, so that they will not be 'driven to drink' and what follows it to forget their troubles. Better factories and kinder treatment to the great number of workmen, with fairer wage scale would bring nearer the possibility of marriage – which takes not one, but two people out of the danger of the gutter. Minimum wage scales and protection of working women would make the condition of their lives better, so that they would not be forced into the streets and brothels to make their livings.

"Why, Burke, a magistrate who sits in Night Court has told me that medical investigation of the street-walkers he has sentenced revealed the fact that nine of every ten were diseased. When the men who foolishly think they are good 'sports' by debauching with these women learn that they are throwing away the health of their wives and children to come, as well as risking the contagion of diseases which can only be bottled up by medical treatment but never completely cured; when it gets down to the question of men buying and selling these poor women as they undoubtedly do, the only way to check that is for every decent man in the country to help in the fight. It is a man evil; men must slay it. Every procurer in the country should be sent to prison, and every house of ill fame should be closed."

"Don't you think the traffic would go on just the same, doctor? I have heard it said that in European cities the authorities confined such women to certain parts of the city. Then they are subjected to medical examination as well."

"No, Burke, segregation will not cure it. Many of the cities abroad have given that up. The medical examinations are no true test, for they are only partially carried out – not all the women will admit their sinful ways of life, nor submit to control by the government. The system prevails in Paris and in Germany, and there is more disease there than in any other part of Europe. Men, depending upon the imaginary security of a doctor's examination card, abandon themselves the more readily, and caution is thrown to the winds, with the result that a woman who has been O.K.'d by a government physician one day may contract a disease and spread it the very next day. You can depend upon it that if she has done so she will evade the examination next time in order not to interfere with her trade profits. So, there you are. This is an ugly theme, but we must treat it scientifically.

"You know it used to be considered vulgar to talk about the stomach and other organs which God gave us for the maintenance of life. But when folks began to realize that two-thirds of the sickness in the world, contagious and otherwise, resulted from trouble with the stomach, that false modesty had to give way. Consequently to-day we have fewer epidemics, much better general health, because men and women understand how to cure many of their own ailments with prompt action and simple methods.

"The vice problem is one which reaps its richest harvest when it is protected from the sunlight. Sewers are not pleasant table-talk, but they must be watched and attended by scientific sanitary engineers. A cancer of the intestines is disagreeable to think about. But when it threatens a patient's life the patient should know the truth and the doctor should operate. Modern society is the patient, and death-dealing sex crimes are the cancerous growth, which must be operated upon. Whenever we allow a neighborhood to maintain houses of prostitution, thus regulating and in a way sanctioning the evil, we are granting a sort of corporation charter for an industry which is run upon business methods. And business, you know, is based upon filling the 'demand,' with the necessary 'supply.' And the manufacturers, in this case, are the procurers and the proprietresses of these houses. There comes in the business of recruiting – and hence the traffic in souls, as it has aptly been called. No, my boy, government regulation will never serve man, nor woman, for it cannot cover all the ground. As long as women are reckless, lazy and greedy, yielding to temporary, half-pleasant sin rather than live by work, you will find men with low ideals in all ranks of life who prefer such illicit 'fun' to the sweetness of wedlock! Why, Burke, sex is the most beautiful thing in the world – it puts the blossoms on the trees, it colors the butterflies' wings, it sweetens the songs of the birds, and it should make life worth living for the worker in the trench, the factory hand, the office toiler and the millionaire. But it will never do so until people understand it, know how to guard it with decent knowledge, and sanctify it morally and hygienically."

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

Текст предоставлен ООО «ЛитРес».

Прочитайте эту книгу целиком, [купив полную легальную версию](#) на ЛитРес.

Безопасно оплатить книгу можно банковской картой Visa, MasterCard, Maestro, со счета мобильного телефона, с платежного терминала, в салоне МТС или Связной, через PayPal, WebMoney, Яндекс.Деньги, QIWI Кошелек, бонусными картами или другим удобным Вам способом.