



The Great Laroche by Sidney Horder. Author of "Tiger Standish," "The Evil Chateau," Etc. Published by Special Arrangement Copyright

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Employment Office to Sign Relief Cards

All Who are Able to Work Must Visit Employment Office Before Eligible for Relief.

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Branch Office: Reed Block, Timmins, R. C. MORTSON, Manager

There are lots of men in Timmins who, during the winter months, make no attempts to secure even odd jobs...

At present there are few employables on the relief list of the town. But within a month or so, the roll will begin to lengthen and it is then the department of welfare's new scheme will come into action.

For those at the town relief office, it will mean little extra work. All they need do is insist that each employable present his card before giving him vouchers.

The card idea will increase materially the number of registrations at employment offices throughout the province...

Newspaper Work To-day and Hundred Years Ago

One hundred years ago events happening on the continent did not reach the London newspaper offices for several years.

To-day, much of the news is telephoned. Three of the London dailies are employing the "Telediffusion" of which you probably have not heard before.

As soon as one cylinder has been completed, it is removed from the machine and placed on another machine which reverses the process...

The previous method was for a stenographer to take down the messages as they were dictated.

Pembroke Standard:—Bears are becoming too plentiful in this district, and as they are by no means a domestic animal, parents may become alarmed about their children attending school.

Said to be Lots of Places in Sudbury Selling Liquor

A taxi driver charged with assaulting and robbing a fare at Sudbury told the Sudbury police court this week that there were lots of places in that city where a man could buy liquor after hours...

Huntingdon Gleaner:—Soniya Nichevich, who was believed to be the world's "most married" woman, is dead. She was married 18 times and divorced 15 times.

CHAPTER XIV ELSIE BREAKS DOWN

Peter's embarrassment was almost overwhelming; this was the last thing he had expected would happen.

"It's all right," he said in an attempt to soothe the sobbing girl.

"I can't stand any more," she replied. "My uncle knew what he was doing when he came to London, but I never thought I should bring all this trouble on you."

"Stop that crying!" ordered Renton in a tone of semi-humorous rebuke.

"Yes... I think so. He must be almost as weary of me as you are."

"You haven't put it into words, I know—but your face showed it when you came in just now."

"I think it's a very nice face," was the unexpected comment; and then, as though this spontaneous remark had caused her acute confusion...

"Exactly! That's just what this place is for—to help people in difficulties." He was thankful the Mole wasn't within earshot.

When he had told the story of the two voices on the telephone the right before, Bellamy frowned.

"Where are you going?" He felt he had to know this, however. During the

last few minutes he had seen another side to this girl. Before, she had infuriated him on occasion...

"Back to the nursing home; my uncle is dying."

"Dying? Surely not!" She bit her lip.

"The specialist they called in says there is no hope. Sir Harker practically told me so before we came along here this morning."

"Thank you." By this time she was at the door.

"Can I come with you?" he proffered.

"She shook her head. 'Sir Harker will be wanting to talk to you... Goodbye.' She was gone before he could say anything in reply to this."

"Bellamy returned so quickly that he might have been an actor waiting in the wings for his cue."

"Where's that girl?" he snapped. "She seemed to have the idea that you wanted her out of the way, sir..."

"At the moment she's an infernal nuisance," was the older man's retort. "She's no information worth a damn regarding the work her uncle may or may not have been engaged in, and what is to happen to her when he dies—as he may do at any moment, according to Sir Robert Pertwee, the specialist who has been called in—I do not know."

Before Peter could answer the speaker's manner had changed yet again. There was no hint of humour in Bellamy's voice as he went on: "But you came here to tell me about Susan. Have you heard anything?"

"Yes, sir—something pretty damnable, too."

When he had told the story of the two voices on the telephone the right before, Bellamy frowned.

"Jacquard may be right," he stated. "In any case I will have Soho combed to-day for this man Horst. And now go away and rest—if any news should come in on either side we will let each other know."

When he had told the story of the two voices on the telephone the right before, Bellamy frowned.

"What could she do? She wanted to do something very badly—but the sense of futility was overwhelming."

It was whilst she was still walking in this kind of dream-state that, unnoticed by her, a car drew up at the kerb.

A man without a hat jumped out and caught her by the arm.

"Excuse me Miss Norris—you are Miss Norris, aren't you?" he enquired anxiously.

"Yes—I'm Elsie Norris."

"I'm from the nursing home; we knew you'd been to see Sir Harker Bellamy and—"

"What's the matter? Is my uncle—" "That's why I've come in this car," pointing to it. "I'm Dr. Martin, one of the consultative medical staff. Sir Robert Pertwee, who is still at the home, is afraid that the end is quite near. That's why I came to fetch you."

In spite of her prostrating sense of grief, Elsie found time to murmur her thanks.

"That's most awfully kind of you, doctor." Behind her back the man flashed the driver of the car a significant smile.

Once the door had closed behind her, the car shot off at a tremendous speed. Elsie might have wondered at this dangerous haste had not an explanation been rendered beforehand.

Yet it was not until she felt a sharp prick in her arm and turned quickly to see "Dr. Martin" leaning at her in a suggestive manner that she realized that the world had turned upside down; instead of being a friend, this man was an enemy!

Then the powerful drug which had been sent into her body through the hypodermic needle, began to take effect and within a few seconds she was unconscious.

She awoke to find a face that filled her with fear staring inflexibly at her. By what calamitous mishap had she fallen again into the hands of her uncle's enemy she did not know—it was sufficient that this appalling truth was brought home to her.

You have given me a great deal of trouble, young lady, and for that, of course, you must expect punishment. But in the first place I want you to tell me exactly what has happened to you since you were on my houseboat. Omit nothing; I want to hear every detail."

What was the use of her holding out? That would not do any good. So, quite simply and as clearly as her still befogged brain would permit, she narrated the chain of incidents that had occurred since the escape from the hideaway on the River Hamble.

And she wound up with these words: "I know nothing about my uncle's work, as I told Sir Harker Bellamy this morning. Consequently, I could not give you his secrets even if I wanted to. As for my uncle, he is in a dying condition—but you must have known that yourself, otherwise you would not have been able to play off that trick on me. What worries me more than anything is the fact that Mr. Renton's sister has been kidnapped by one of your men."

Laroche, who had been playing with some pencils on the table before him now stopped this activity.

"What's that you say?" he demanded. Elsie repeated what she had previously said.

"I know nothing about this," replied the man to her astonishment, "but I will make inquiries. In the meantime you will stay here."

"But why? I've already told you I don't know anything."

"I have heard you," was the answer. "But that is not to say I believe you."

It was useless for Elsie to protest, but before she could say anything more, a man had entered in response to a summons from Laroche, caught her by the arm and dragged her out of the room.

The ex-priest scowled as he continued to sit at his desk. His reaction to the last item of news that the prisoner had given him was extremely annoying.

"Yes, boss?" said the villainous-looking man who appeared so quickly he might have been shot out of a trap door.

"What's the last you heard about that swine Horst?" inquired his superior.

Stokes (Stowsky in the original) scratched his head.

"Last I heard, boss, was that he'd gone across to Paris."

"It's a lie! I don't believe it. He's in London somewhere and you've got to find him! Don't let him know you're trailing him—but telephone directly you have any news. And don't forget this is important."

"O.K. boss."

CHAPTER XV "THE TRAVELLER IN SILK GOODS"

Meanwhile, at that other headquarters of criminal activity run by the renegade Edward Horst, an animated discussion was proceeding between the former lieutenant of Laroche and Ruby Frost, that aged adept in crime, who was devoting her few remaining years to acting as Horst's "housekeeper"—at least, that's what she called herself to the still recalcitrant Susan.

She might have spared herself the trouble; although Susan was not very

familiar with criminal argot, she sensed sufficient about this dreadful old woman to know that the term "housekeeper" was the term usually used by white slavers to denote the women who kept the poor unfortunate girls safely under cover until they were shipped abroad...

But that knowledge was mercifully hidden from her.

"What's the good of holding out for this so-called information which you say the girl's got—but which she won't give you?" Ruby Frost was now demanding. "Far better to get a good price for her—as you would do—and get her out of the country as soon as possible. That would mean real money!"

The crore spat contemptuously as she finished her brief harangue.

Horst, reaching to take a cigarette out of a tin by his side, did some reflecting.

The prisoner had been extremely obstinate; even the threat of torture had not moved her in the least.

Her attitude had been summed up in the one phrase: "I'll see you in hell first!" That was what she had told him at the beginning of the interview—and that was what she repeated when this exhausting talk was concluded.

She had courage, this chit, and Horst, who admired courage above any other human quality, found himself in the embarrassing position of mentally applauding this girl's stamina. But admiration was one thing; turning something to good account in the shape of hard cash was an entirely different matter. A man had to live.

It was in the endeavour to break his prisoner's spirit that he had done that telephoning trick the previous night.

"We will see what your brother has to say on the subject," he had threatened, and, taking off the receiver, had asked for Peter's number. Meanwhile, Ruby Frost had stood over the girl, revolver in hand.

When he had first mimicked the voice of a young girl beside herself with anxiety—he prided himself that he had never brought off a better impersonation—and had followed it up with a statement in his own natural voice to the effect that the price was ten thousand pounds, he turned to the girl expecting to see her ready to admit defeat.

But on the contrary, Susan Renton was smiling—yes, smiling!

"You won't be able to kid my brother with any stuff of that sort," she told him. "He hasn't got ten thousand pennies, the poor darling, let alone ten thousand pounds!"

He threatened to lose his temper completely.

"Are you or are you not going to give me the information I want?" he shouted.

Still she only smiled.

"The answer's in the negative," was the reply.

It really seemed that she would continue to hold out no matter what threats he made; and, after all, the stuff she knew—even assuming she was willing to pass it on—was probably of indifferent value. A man like Bellamy would not be fool enough to entrust her with any valuable secrets.

No, Ruby was right.

Horst looked up at his hideous hand-maid and nodded.

"Glad to see you've come to your senses at last," she said. "I'd better ring up Laidley, eh?"

"Yes—tell him there's something very special in the market."

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Note:—The characters in this story are entirely imaginary. No reference is intended to any living person or to any public or private company.



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CHAPTER XV "THE TRAVELLER IN SILK GOODS" Meanwhile, at that other headquarters of criminal activity run by the renegade Edward Horst...