

CHRISTABEL

by PEARL BELLAIRS



You can start the story right here. **Synopsis of Previous Chapters**
The story is about Christabel Milson a young lady of twenty-five whose husband, Keith Milson had persuaded her to assist in the sale of a house and then under a plausible story had taken her on a sea voyage. The money secured from the fraudulent sale of the house being carried in Christabel's luggage. Christabel, Keith and a man named Thomas Craigie are arrested on charges of conspiring to defraud a wealthy man. Keith shoots himself and Christabel is left to stand his trial alone with Craigie. Sir Ross Barnes is engaged to defend Christabel, while the prosecution is in charge of a brilliant young K.C., Grant Hewitson.

Now Read On
Henry Goring decided that the house was cheap at a thousand pounds, even though "Mr. West" wanted cash for it. On the 22nd of August Keith went to Henry with documents which poor Henry understood to be the title deeds of the house; he handed over a cheque made out to Keith. Keith immediately put it through his own bank account, got it cleared up by the following afternoon, gave four hundred to Craigie, and kept six hundred himself.

A bad point against Mrs. Milson, because if she were not a writing party to the conspiracy, why was not the money divided fifty-fifty between Milson and Craigie?
Craigie went to Birmingham and took a room there under a false name; Keith bought a passage to Rio de Janeiro for himself and Christabel, on a passport on which he had altered their name to "Lorraine"; and exchanged the rest of Henry's money for foreign currency at several different travel agencies.

Henry, in the meanwhile, was kept happy with a letter from "Mr. West" acknowledging the receipt of the cheque, promising to send the keys on the following day. But the whole thing fell through because the police already had their eye on Craigie as a suspected character, and early on the morning of August, the 24th a detective called on Henry Goring to make inquiries. Craigie was arrested in Birmingham, and Keith and Christabel were traced to the "River Plate"; and by piece of fast work on the part of the police they were arrested off Dungeness later in the day.

By the time the prosecution was half-way through its case, it was obvious that there was going to be no difficulty in proving the fraud; what was not so easy to prove was the actual fact of conspiracy between the two accused.
In evidence Thomas Craigie admitted that Keith Milson had told him that Mrs. Milson could "twist Goring round her little finger"; and that she would be the best person to put the proposition to the plaintiff. But that was as much as Hewitson could get out of him. Craigie was not going to talk. He did not know by what technical legality he might be pinned down on the actual point of conspiracy. He was going to be sentenced on what they could collect in the way of facts, and not on anything they could get out of Thomas Craigie.

Opportunity to have conspired was proved. Sir Ross Barnes's defence of Mary Christabel Milson was that the conspiracy had been between Keith Milson and Craigie alone; Craigie's counsel hoped to get his client off on the same technical point with Christabel as the conspiring party.
The case resolved itself, finally into a dispute over Mary Christabel Milson's character; whether she was a writing

party to the conspiracy, or a innocent tool in the hands of her husband—a strong plea in view of the fact that it was what the court tended to assume. But she was up against a relentless prosecution.

WHEN COUNSEL COMBAT
It was a gradual but devastating revelation to Christabel, as the case dragged on, to realize exactly how relentless the prosecution was.

"This man, this Hewitson, K.C., didn't regard her as human being at all; in spite of the fact that his face and his manner had appealed to her at first, he was her implacable enemy; implacable, because he was so utterly indifferent."
Afterwards they told her that he had come into court with the intention that Sir Ross Barnes should not get out of it without a smashing defeat; which accounted for the fact that, as a person, she herself hardly entered into the contest.

But at the time she was bewildered by a fancy that there must be something personal in it; as through hour after hour in the witness box, under his cross-examination, he pursued her with abominable questions and a nightmarish disbelief of her answers.
The prosecution not only had her letter to Henry Goring asking for the loan of twenty-one pounds as Keith did not know that she had over-spent her allowance; but a bombshell to Sir Ross Barnes, was the fact that Hewitson had also got hold of a letter from Keith Milson written three days before to another man in his office, asking for a loan of the same amount, proving conclusively that he did know.
Hewitson examined her energetically on the point.

"You admit that the letter was a lie?"
"Yes, it wasn't true, but—"
"Never mind. You admit it to have been a lie?"
"Yes."

"You thought it more likely that the plaintiff would be more willing to pay your dressmaker's bill for you if he thought that he was sharing this deception of your husband with you?"
"No!" It was torn from Christabel in desperate indignation.

"No?"
"I've already told you that my husband said I mustn't let Mr. Goring know we were hard up."
"Quite."

The K.C., standing before her in his flowing gown, his face alive with intelligence, looking almost sympathetic as her breathless voice fell into silence. Her heart seemed to swell with the momentary fancy that she was believed.
"That would coincide, would it not, with your decision to pay back the plaintiff's money when he did?"
"I wanted to pay it back as soon as possible."

"Let me put it another way. Was it before or after the plaintiff had said that he wanted to buy a house that you returned his money to him?"
"I don't remember."
"Think again, please."
"It was after."

"Exactly; it was a week afterwards. And I suggest that you returned the plaintiff's loan because as soon as the house was discussed you wanted to have his confidence in order to use it to greater profit than you had already done!"
He did not give her time to protest, but began at once on something else: "On the twelfth of August you had a conversation with the plaintiff in the sitting room of your flat. You told him I believe," Hewitson's voice dropped to

a more kindly note, "about the loss of your child in the previous year."
She turned a shade paler, and could not speak at all. Faces stared at her in painful reflection. A K.C. in one of the seats reserved for his kind, murmured to his neighbour:
"There's no chance of a conviction. Hewitson hasn't a hope!"
His tone still respectful, Hewitson repeated:
"Do you, or do you not remember the occasion?"
"I do."

He allowed a second's pause in which the sympathy of the court for her could go far enough before he said with sudden force:
"Is it, or is it not true, that within five minutes of discussing your loss with the plaintiff, you told him that if he wanted to buy a house, the male accused—Craigie—whom you referred to as Mr. West—had a house for sale in Ealing?"
"Yes; but I tell you I know nothing about Craigie!" Her voice ran up the scale of agony as she protested it.
But there was only her own word. There was only her own word to explain the fact that she had started for South America with Keith under an assumed name, and had had Henry Goring's money in her possession when she was arrested. When she told the court the story he had told her about the job he had got in the Argentine, she felt a sickly wonder at herself. It was difficult to make it sound credible. How could she under all those eyes, feeling so exhausted that her palms were damp with nervous strain, feeling so near to indifference to what anyone believed, do her best to convince the court...?

PENAL SERVITUDE
Sir Ross Barnes became heated; he objected not once but half a dozen times to Hewitson's questions in cross-examination. He addressed the jury movingly at the end, though he was really thoroughly ruffled by Hewitson and the way the case had gone.
When he sat down a glimmer of returning strength made Christabel look round the court to see what impression he had produced. She saw the jury solemnly impressed, the old judge watching with his hooded eyes, expressionless as an old owl. She saw her solicitor nodding his head, satisfaction, triumph even, in his face—a sick relief came over her as she realized that the court was on her side.

The case for the defence was concluded. Hewitson rose to have his final say.
In matter of fact tones which had the effect of bringing his hearers quietly to earth, he took every point that Sir Ross had made, and put it the other way about. His eyes searched the court like the eye of conscience, chilling all the warm sentiments Sir Ross had made. He took every reply that Christabel had made from a box, and gave it what seemed to her a diabolically plausible explanation. And yet he did it without giving any impression of being too clever.
He produced at first a sort of restless tension in court, which gradually gave way to a hush of utter silence; every eye was fixed on him as he carried his hearers irresistibly along with him on his own chain of logic.
Christabel, sitting there in an excitement of voiceless protest, did not believe that anyone of his obvious intelligence could really be convinced that she was a mean and deliberate criminal. Stunned and distraught, she could not believe it. But like most of a lady she did not understand that an advocate must not consider whether what he says is true, but only whether it is relevant.

At last, and it seemed to her that he had left her no shreds of decency to cover her pilloried character, he sat down.
Mr. Justice Tolmer had a lengthy style which made his summing up rather difficult to understand; he was apt to be severe, and it was said that a higher premium—for litigants can insure themselves against losing a case—was demanded in cases tried before him than in those tried before all but one other judge.
However that may have been, it was noticeable that the jury could not keep its attention on him, and while he was speaking Hewitson's clear and forceful exposition of the case held the court.

The jury was absent for two hours and returned with a verdict of guilty on both prisoners; adding a recommendation for mercy in the case of Mary Christabel Milson.
Mr. Justice Tolmer said that it was impossible for him to take a light view of the case, and passed a sentence of five years' penal servitude on Thomas Craigie and three years on Mary Christabel Milson.

The judge had finished speaking. Realization was more a physical thing

Promise to Re-build School at Hanbury

Structure Destroyed by Fire Last Month to be Replaced.

New Liskeard, Feb. 25.—A new school is to be erected at Hanbury, on the main north highway six miles north of here, to replace the building destroyed by fire on the afternoon of January 27 last, shortly after classes had been concluded for the week, according to information obtained from W. L. Lovell, public school inspector, at Hanbury this week. Mr. Lovell said construction work will be started as soon as weather conditions will permit, and that meantime classes will continue to be held in the Hanbury United Church, secured as temporary quarters by the trustees following the fire.

Slightly smaller than the former building, the new school will have several changes also in the general plan. Its one class room will be lighted from the east instead of from the north, and entrance will be from the west end of the structure. Provision is being made for a kitchen—the school serves also as a community centre for Harley township—two cloak rooms and a combined teacher's room and library. The material of which the outside walls will be constructed will be decided upon shortly, but will be fireproof in composition, and both walls and ceiling will be insulated. The building will be an up-to-date model, the inspector indicated.

Dealing with other school matters, Inspector Lovell spoke of what he termed the inadequacy of artificial lighting systems as one of the worst features of educational affairs in his district. The standard for schools is "20 foot candles," which means that lighting equal to 20 candles at a distance from the pupils' desks of one foot is the ideal, but in many cases it falls below the power of one candle on dull days, the inspector said. He declared he had been trying to impress on school boards the necessity of better artificial lighting for short winter days and said there are times even in the summer when it is one of the big problems.

Inspector Lovell added that improvements in his district are gradually going into effect, as trustees are co-operating as their financial resources permit in this phase of school work. He pointed out that Matachewan school was one of the best in the matter of artificial lighting, with a new school at New Liskeard one of the worst, Cobalt public school far below standard and Hanleybury showing some improvement through larger light globes, but still short of the goal. Inspector Lovell been abnormal in his territory in January, with stormy weather contributing said loss of time through sickness had to some extent, although not seriously.

\$500 Bail in High Grade Case of Larder Lake Man

Kirkland Lake, Feb. 25.—Harold Newton, of Larder Lake, was given an adjournment of a week on the charge of illegally having high-grade ore in his possession, when he appeared before Magistrate Atkinson on Thursday. He was allowed his freedom in the meantime on \$500 bail. Newton was taken into custody during the week at Larder Lake, on a complaint issued by W. S. Rowe, manager of the Kerr-Addison Mine, from which property it is alleged the ore had been taken. The ore alleged to have been found in Newton's possession is said to be valued at \$63.68.

than a mental one to Christabel. It spread through her body in paralyzing waves, numbing her.

Many faces were staring at her; the hum and stir of conclusion passed through the court.

"This way!" The wardress touched her on the shoulder.
Christabel hesitated; her eyes sought one person, and one person only—Hewitson. He was looking at her, too, questioning, considering her as an individual for the first time.

Her inward comment was:
"As I am judged, so God will judge you!"
With no more strength to feel, only enough to move, she turned and followed the wardress. Stairs, a paneled passage-way, and the court was behind her.

It was over.
She saw her solicitor in a little room where she was waiting to be taken away. Her hand shook as she sipped a glass of water which the wardress had given to her.

The solicitor seemed more agitated than she was.
"It's utterly unexpected—utterly unexpected, Mrs. Milson. If we had had a more lenient prosecution things would never have gone this way."
"I suppose not." She smiled tremulously.

"If only we had been up against a different man! Until Hewitson's final address Sir Ross had the jury with him. I'm convinced of that. But Hewitson wouldn't let it go at that—he was out to win the fight; he's had a brush with Sir Ross in court before, you know. What could one expect? Of course, we shall appeal. We shall do everything we can—you may rest assured of that!"
Christabel thanked him. But what was there to be done in such a world? That was how Christabel felt. It was as though something had crept upon her unawares, tripped her, and flung her down into the lowest dust. Where chance was capable of such enormities, and men, apparently, of such pitiless inhumanity, what was there to be hoped for?

To Be Continued

Powassan News: A writer says that a man should be the master in his own home, or know the reason why. Most married men know the reason why.

Funeral at Wolf Lake, Que., of J. McKenny, Last Week

Wolf Lake, Que., Feb. 25.—Many paid tribute on Tuesday to the memory of John McKenny, well-known resident of the district, who died at Shawville Hospital on Friday.

The funeral was held from the family home where Mr. McKenny was born, to St. Francis Church, Wolf Lake, where requiem high mass was chanted by Rev. Father Pontbriand. Interment was at Onslow cemetery.

Born at Aidesfield, Que., 73 years ago, he was the son of the late Mr. and Mrs. Patrick McKenny, pioneers of the district. He was a man of sterling qualities and his kind sympathetic nature endeared him to all. Mr. Kenny was an ardent hunter and fisherman as well as a fine shot.

Surviving in addition to his wife, the former Mary Helen O'Gorman, are seven sons, Edward, of Hearst; Dennis, of Vancouver; Charles, of Flint, Mich.; David, of Sudbury; Nicholas, of South Porcupine, and Thomas and Frank, at home; two daughters, Mrs. Frank Foran, of Aidesfield, and Esther, at home; one brother, Charles McKenny, of Aidesfield; one sister, Mrs. P. Murdoch, of Ottawa, and several nieces and grandchildren.

Lions Hear Reports; Honor New Members

Five Pairs of Glasses Issued and Seven Examinations Made, Eye Report Shows.

The monthly reports were received and two new members initiated into the Lions Club at its regular monthly meeting in the Empire Hotel on Thursday evening.

The two new members received into the club were Leo Laporte and Len Cousins. Mr. Laporte was sponsored by Stan Fowler and Mr. Cousins by Walter Greaves.

Acting President William Wren welcomed the new members to the club. They were also welcomed by "Chip" Ball, a member of the District Board of Governors. The ceremony by which the new members were initiated was a new one, used for the first time by the local club.

The Eye Committee report was given by Dr. Ray Hughes. He said that five pairs of glasses had been issued in January and that seven eye examinations had been made.
A report from the Boys and Girls Committee showed that sweaters had been given the hockey team of Boy Scout Troop No. 6, which is competing for the Kiwanis Cup in the T.P.A. league and which has reached the semi-finals.

Announcement was made by Secretary Harold Pirie that the new constitution and bylaws of the club had been submitted to the Board Directors and would be ready for adoption by the club in a couple of weeks.

Plan for Control of Destitute Jobless

Suggestions Made by the Canadian Welfare Council.

Ottawa, Feb. 25.—A detailed plan for control of the problem of destitute unemployed without established residence is advanced by the Canadian Welfare Council in the report of a national committee on non-residence and migrancy published this week.

The plan includes proposals for uniform residence legislation and inter-provincial agreements. Dominion acceptance of responsibility for a "small residual group" of migrant men for whom there will be in established residence in any province, farm hostels for the unemployable older men, central registry bureaux for control of "drifters," and routing of men to rehabilitative training and voluntary outdoor work centres for young men.

In connection with the last proposal, the council emphasizes: "Civilian relief and re-establishment is one problem, concerning primarily the employment and welfare authorities, and preparation for defence is quite a different one, resting on the military authorities. The two should not be confused."

The council recommends that these work centres should be under civil administration and offer specific training for which young men 18 to 30 might enroll voluntarily for a limited period. Care should be taken against men becoming "institutionalized" and losing contact with normal community life; it adds. To that end, it suggests maximum continuous participation for six months, with re-enrolment only after absence of three months, with sufficient pay for incidental personal expenses and sufficient pay withheld to provide maintenance for three months after training.

The report notes that two-thirds of Canada's export trade depends on key primary industries engaging more than one-third of the working population.

"Therefore the Canadian worker in the primary industries is a particularly valuable factor in our economic life, but he works under peculiarly hazardous circumstances of employment," the report says.
"He must not only be free to follow labor wherever it may be found but

Four-Year-old Strangled in Noranda Fire Escape

One of the most unusual tragedies occurred last week at Noranda when the 4-year-old son of the caretaker of the Separate school was strangled in the steps of the fire escape of the school. The youngster had been playing on the fire escape as he has done many a time when in some manner or another he got his head caught between the steel steps of the fire escape in such a way that the weight of his body kept tightening the grip on his neck. Some other youngsters eventually noticed the little lad's predicament and promptly notified his mother, the family occupying quarters in the school building. The mother rushed to rescue the child and a doctor was summoned, but the little lad was dead and medical aid could not bring back life. The youngster had not been away from his mother more than ten minutes before she rushed to his assistance in response to the call from the other children, only to find the child dead.

Larder Lake Man Fined for Not Having Permit

At Kirkland Lake on Thursday, Magistrate Atkinson imposed a fine of \$50 and costs on Claire Ball for an infraction of Larder Lake's transient traders' by-law. This by-law has a license fee of \$250 for transient traders. At the trial it developed that Ball had been conducting a mail order business at Larder Lake for which it was understood that no transient traders' license was required. However, more recently he started out in another line and after he commenced this new line of business the charge was laid by the town authorities. Magistrate Atkinson in imposing the fine of \$50 and costs, said that it might easily be thought that the fee of \$250 was somewhat steep, and so he would not make the fine as high as the license fee. Instead, he was making a fine \$50 and costs which would be a small fee in comparison to the one which Ball should have paid to run the business for the past eight months as he apparently had done.

He must be encouraged to seek it out. He should not be subject to the loss of his established legal residence and at the same time prevented from acquiring a new one within a reasonable period of self-supporting labor in another area."

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