THE THIRD DEGREE

When Mr. Klein Wrote "The Lion and The Mouse," It Was Said He Had Reached the 87th Degree of Success, But The Third Degree Carried Him Farther Up the Ladder of Fame and It Is Conceded that He Has Reached, at Last, the North Pole of Dramatics

Annie Jeffries and Mrs. Jeffries in "The Third Degree"

(Continued.)

INNOCENT AND GUILTY.—ACT. III.

A month later, in a little flat in Harlem, Annie is preparing breakfast for Howard, who slumbers in an adjoining room, when Dr. Bernstein makes a call. He comes to tell Annie that her husband needs a change of the scene, is worrying over his condition, and the fainting spell he had the night before is a bad symptom. He has been talking with Mr. Jeffries, Sr., who wishes to take his son abroad for a few months, thinking it will benefit him. If everybody would leave them alone, Annie tells him, Howard might forget his trouble and the things people were saying about her. It was great of him to stand by her in spite of the evidence produced at his trial and the Underwood letter. Perhaps a change would do him good—any way. She doesn't want to stand in his light, and she will have a talk with him. Then Howard makes his appearance and sits down to breakfast and Dr. Bernstein, after making inquiry as to his health and passing the time of day, takes his leave. "What did he want?" Howard asks when he is gone. "To see you," she answers.

Howard—About last night? Oh, that was nothing—just a little spell. You're the one that needs tuning up—I heard you crying last night. You thought I was asleep, but I wasn't.

Howard—Let them say what they like—why should we care as long as we're happy.

Sooner or later, she tells him, he will be asking himself the question his friends are now asking. Yesterday a gentleman called to know if it were true they were going to be divorced. She asked him who wanted information on the subject and he answered over a million people—the readers of his paper. What does he care, Howard argues, what a million or eighty million think. Suppose she did get letters from Underwood, suppose she did go to him and beg him not to kill himself—she is the dearest girl in the world and nothing can make him think otherwise—he has tried to and can't. He is just splendid, she answers, but what of the future—she has thought about it and he has too—he can't hide it from her. Then she tells him his father wants him to go abroad. "You're going to accept his offer, Howard—you owe it to your family," she continues. "Annie, why do you work against yourself all the time?" he asks.

Annie—I want you to be happy—you can't be happy under these conditions—how! be honest with me. Can you? Howard—Can you?

"Not unless you are," she replies. "Whatever happiness I've had in life I owe to you, and God knows you've had nothing but trouble from me. You must do what's best for yourself, in doing that you'll do what is best for me. * * * * And so she urges him on until he begins to think perhaps she is right and consents to go and 'phone his father. "That's right, I'm glad it's settled," she laughs as he starts for his hat, but no sooner is he out of the room than she gives way to her grief and sitting down in his empty chair, she buries her head in her arms and sobs. But she is not allowed to indulge her grief for many minutes, for there is a knock at the door and Mr. Brewster is announced. It seems he has been away for some time, and the first question he asks, after a profuse greeting, is when Howard is going to leave.

Annie—How do you know that?

Brewster—Hadn't been back in New York an hour when his father's lawyer asked me for all the evidence I had. They want to use it against you—the idea is that he shall go abroad with his father and that divorce proceedings will be begun during his absence.

Howard knows nothing about it and she is sending him away, she tells Mr. Brewster. But the latter has something to say. He blames himself for violating his oath as a lawyer and tells her he has been a very unpleasant companion for himself of late. In trying to get Howard's divorce the attorneys will bring in all the false evidence in connection with the Underwood affair, and he will have to go before the grand jury and tell all he knows.

Annie—I don't believe Howard's father will go that far.

Brewster—Oh, Howard's father is a—a—

And he hesitates for a word. Annie leans forward on the table. "Won't you please say it?" she urges, and when he does it is not strong enough to please her. If they succeed in influencing Howard to bring suit against her, and she won't defend it, she says. "Perhaps not, but I will," declares Brewster.

Annie—Let me tell you something, Mr. Brewster. I deceived Howard as to my age; I'm older than he is. He thinks I am younger.

Brewster—Well, you're not the first woman who has done that; believe me, however, you'll look 25 when he's 40, and that's extenuating circumstances.

Annie—Itook advantage of his inexperience, Mr. Brewster, and I'm not going to let this one mistake ruin his career.

Brewster—He's 25, and if boys at that age are not men, they never will be. Upon my word, if I was 25 I'd let this divorce go through and marry you myself.

"But I'm not," he adds quickly, "so we won't discuss it. Now, don't pretend to be pleased. As compliments are passing, Howard comes back. After greeting Brewster he informs him he is going abroad—has just telephoned his father. "Well, don't approve of it," Brewster replies. "Don't interrupt me, young man. I don't approve of it, and you can tell your father I said so." Annie tried to stop him as Howard insists upon knowing why he doesn't approve.

Brewster—Your wife's conduct is a topic of conversation among your friends.

Howard—I neither know nor care what they say.

Brewster—And that's the reason you leave her to fight the battle alone.

Howard begins to realize. "I never thought of that," he says. "I wanted to get away from it all. Father offered me the chance. * * * * Mr. Brewster, you've gone far enough." Annie intervenes. But Howard understands. He is not going away, he declares, and now Brewster asks Annie's permission to tell her husband the truth, which she refuses to grant. "Then I'll tell him without your permission," he answers, and proceeds to inform Howard that it was the other Mrs. Jeffries who visited Underwood the night of the suicide. "Then I did hear her voice," the boy muses, and turning to Annie asks why she could not trust him, and as it dawns clearly upon his mind what she had done for her father and stepmother, he cries: "It was splendid—splendid, Annie."

Annie—What of the future?

Brewster—(To Howard) You'll come come into my office and study law.

Howard—Thank you, Mr. Brewster. (To Annie) You'l forgive me for wanting to leave you, won't you, old girl?"

"Don't call me 'old girl' Howard," Annie begs, as she drops her head, "because it's true."

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NOVEMBER 1, 1909

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FOR WASHINGTON, via Harlem River—*12:30 (daily) A. M.; *1:18 P. M.

FOR NEW HAVEN—*12:32, *1:41, 6:50, 7:56, *9:31, 9:25, *10:43, *11:23 A. M.—12:16, *12:30, 1:50, *2:29, *5:29, *3:46, *4:25, 4:57, 5:37, *6:30, *6:54, 7:10, *7:32, *9:41 †11:54 P. M. SUNDAYS—*12:32, *1:41, 8:13, 9:43, *10:43, *11:33 A. M.—*2:29, *4:25, *6:32, *6:54, 7:18, *7:32, 8:47, *10:02 P. M.

FOR BOSTON, via New London and Providence—*1:41, 6:50, *11:33 A. M.—*2:29, *3:46, *4:25, *6:54 P. M.—SUNDAYS—*1:41, *11:33 A. M.—*2:29, *4:25, *6:54 P. M.

FOR BOSTON via Hartford and Willimantic—*9:21 A. M.—*3:39 P. M.

FOR WINSTED and Intermediate Stations—5:00, 7:00, 9:35 †11:40 A.M.—2:35, *5:51, 7:40 P. M.—SUNDAYS—8:30 A. M.—6:45 P. M.

FOR WATERBURY, ANSONIA, DERBY and Intermediate Stations—5:00, 7:00, 8:00, 9:35, 11:40 A. M.—2:35, †5:54, 7:40 P. M.—SUNDAYS—8:30, 10:50 A. M.—6:45, 8:50 P. M.

FOR GT. BARRINGTON, LENOX, PITTSFIELD, ETC.—7:00, 9:30 A. M.—4:33 P. M.—SUNDAYS—8:30 A. M.

FOR DANBURY, NEW MILFORD, ETC., via Brookfield Junction—7:00, 9:50 A. M.—4:33, 5:36 P. M.—SUNDAYS—8:30 A. M. (to New Milford).

FOR LITCHFIELD, ETC.—9:50 A. M.—4:33 P. M.—SUNDAYS—8:30 A. M.

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