

# The Diamond Coterie

By LAWRENCE M. LYNCH

(E. M. Van Deventer)

Author of "A Woman's Crime," "John Arthur's Ward," "The Lost Witness," "A Slender Case," "Dangerous Ground," "Against Odds," Etc., Etc.

(Continued)

"There's Belknap, and not a minute ago I see. I'll go meet him," and he hurried out, wearing a look of relief, mingled with expectancy.

In a moment he returned, closely followed by the smiling detective.

"Quick, Belknap," said Frank, closing the door, carefully, "give us the important points. The carriage will be here in a short time, to take the old man to town, and he must be on time, for trains won't wait."

"True," said Mr. Belknap, seating himself near the table. "I should have reported to you last evening, but thought it best to remain about town, and let myself be seen by the hotel loungers; people in a place like this, are curious about a man who keeps too much to himself, and one must always conciliate suspicion."

"True," from Mr. Lamotte. "I saw Miss Wardour yesterday, gentlemen; she entirely withdraws the case."

"What! entirely?" asked Frank. "Entirely; she asked for my account, paid it, and dismissed me, saying, that she should not resume the search, but should double the reward."

"Double the reward!" repeated Frank. "Yes, provided both the diamonds and the thieves were found."

A moment's silence and then the elder Lamotte emptied his glass and set it down, saying as he did so—

"Well, but the point is not yet reached. Did you explain the necessity you were under if the case left your hands?"

"I did. She was surprised, of course, and incredulous, but she made no remarks, and seemed not at all discomposed at the danger menacing Doctor Heath. After we had settled our business, she asked me if I should now drop the case and let the authorities work it out, or if I would continue to work independent of her."

"And you said what?" asked Frank. "I said that circumstances must decide that."

"And she was not disturbed about Heath?"

"Evidently not; she was as cool as myself."

Frank drew a long breath of relief. "And now, Mr. Lamotte," said the private detective, "what is the next move?"

"Perfect quiet for the next two or three days; like Miss Wardour, we will take time to consider. I am going to the big city to-day, Mr. Belknap, if you need any funds before I return, call on Frank. I shall be back in two days, and then we will decide upon our next move. Is that the carriage, Frank?"

It was the carriage, and almost before Mr. Belknap could realize it or gather together his scattered forces, Mr. Lamotte had shaken hands with him, nodded to Frank, donned his hat, gathered up his traveling coat, cane, and gloves, and was on his way to the carriage, followed by a servant, who carried his traveling bag.

As may be seen, Mr. Belknap had made his "reports" according to his own lights, as for instance, giving his first interview with Constance in brief, on the same day it took place, merely stating

that Miss Wardour requested time to consider, and reserving all that portion concerning Doctor Heath, until to-day, when he gave that too, in brief, and with many "mental reservations."

Mr. Belknap was a little bit non-plussed at this sudden journey of Jasper Lamotte's; he did not like to be so widely separated from his patron, even for a few days, and especially now; but it was too late to make an amendment to this state of affairs, so he contented himself with a cigar and Frank's society. Not finding the latter of the best, and being able to enjoy the former anywhere, he soon took his leave, and drove back to his hotel, the best in W—, where he went straight to his room, ordered up a hot brandy, complained of a slight indisposition, and spent the remainder of the day and the entire evening in and about the hotel, lounging, smoking, reading, chatting and always visible.

Meantime, Mr. Lamotte, arriving ten minutes early at the W— depot, sauntered out among the people swarming about, and waiting the arrival of the fast express.

There was always a bustle about the W— depot at this hour of the day, and Mr. Lamotte nodded graciously here and there, and stopped to extend a patronizing hand to a chosen and honored few. Presently he came face to face with a man who, with hands in his pockets, was watching the unloading of a belated train.

"How do you do, Brooks," said he, glancing at the hands and face that were a little cleaner than usual, and at the pretence of a toilet that made the awkwardness of the fellow unusually apparent. "You seem taking a holiday. Are you bound to leave us?"

"That's what I am, sir," said the man, touching his hat. "Work's too scarce for me, sir, and bad company's too plenty. I've said I would go a dozen times, sir; and now I'm off."

"I am sorry we could not keep you on at the mills, Brooks; but—you know who was to blame."

"Oh it was me, sir; I don't deny that. It's hard for me to keep away from the liquor. But look here, Mr. Lamotte, sir; if you ever see me again, you'll see me sober."

Mr. Lamotte uttered a skeptical laugh and turned away. The train was there

and it bore cityward the gentlemanly Mr. Lamotte, and the half-intoxicated loafer, Brooks.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

All that day, or what remained of it after his father's departure, and the almost simultaneous withdrawal of the private detective, Frank Lamotte passed in an uneasy reverie. He had much at stake; and now that the crisis of his fortunes was so near at hand, he began to review his ground, and every word, look, and tone of Constance Wardour, as he recalled them, one by one, was to him a fresh puzzle.

Six months ago, Frank Lamotte would have scoffed at the suggestion of a refusal even from the proud Constance. Now, somehow, he had lost his self-confidence. Again and again he imagined the words that he would say, and the words he hoped, that she would answer. Then, as he forced himself to face the possibility of defeat, the veins upon his temples swelled out, his teeth clenched, and one of those "attacks," to which he was subject, and against which Doctor Heath had warned him, seemed imminent.

Again and again he gazed, with proud satisfaction, upon his reflected image, in the full length drawing-room mirror, and turned away, vowing himself a fitting mate for any woman. Again and again, when the image of his own physical perfections had ceased to dazzle his vision, his heart sank within him, and a dismal foreboding put his courage to flight.

"Confound it all," muttered he, as he wandered aimlessly from one deserted room to another; "the very house seems under a spell. Sybil, sitting like a recluse in her own rooms, growing pale, and wild-eyed, and spectre-like, every day. Evan, in his room, sick with drink, and verging on the D. T. Mother, gliding like a stately ghost from one to the other, or closeted in her own room; she has not been down stairs to-day. Burrill, the devil knows where he is, and what took him out so unusually early this morning. He's been cutting it worse than ever for the past week; the fellow, seemingly, can't find company low enough for him, in one stage of his drunkenness, nor high enough for him in another. It's fortunate for us that liquor has at last relaxed his vigilance; the old man has taken a leading trick by the means. Curse the brute! Why won't he die in a drunken frenzy, or from over-feeding, but he won't!" Thus soliloquizing, he lighted a cigar and went out into the grounds.

"I'll try the effect of a little sunshine," he muttered; "for the house feels like a sarcophagus; one would think the family pride was about to receive its last blow, and the family doom about to fall."

So, restless and self-tormented, Frank Lamotte passed the long afternoon, in the double solitude of a man deserted, alike by his friends and his peace of mind.

"We make our own ghosts," said somebody once. Frank Lamotte's phantoms had begun to manifest themselves, having grown into things of strength, and become endowed with the power to torture; thanks to the atmosphere into which he had plunged himself and them.

Late in the afternoon, John Burrill came home, but Frank avoided him, not caring to answer any questions at that time.

Burrill seemed to care little for this, or anything; he was in a wonderfully jubilant mood. He rambled through the tenantless rooms, whistling shrilly, and with his hands in his pockets. He commanded the servants like a Baron of old. He drank wine in the library, and smoked a cigar in the drawing room, and when these pleasures palled upon him, he ascended the stairs, and went straight to the room occupied by Evan.

For some time past, Jasper Lamotte had made an effort to break the bond of good fellowship, that, much to the surprise of all the family, had sprung up between the wild young fellow, and the coarser and equally or worse besotted elder one. How even reckless Evan Lamotte could find pleasure in such society, was a mystery to all who knew the two. But so it was, and Jasper Lamotte's interdiction was not strong enough to sever the intimacy. John Burrill responded to his exhortations with a burst of defiance, or a volley of oaths; and Evan received all comments upon his choice of a companion, with a sardonic smile, or a wild mocking laugh.

They had not been much together for the past few days, owing to the indisposition which had kept Evan away from their favorite haunts, but had not kept him away from his favorite beverage.

As Burrill entered his room, Evan received him with an hour of welcome, and for more than an hour they were closeted there, some times conversing in low, guarded tones, and sometimes bursting into roars of laughter, that penetrated even through the shut doors of Sybil's rooms, causing her to start nervously, and shiver as with a chill.

A little before sunset the carriage from Wardour deposited Constance and Mrs. Alston at the door of this home of little harmony, and even Constance noted the unusual stillness, and whispered to her aunt, as they waited in the drawing room the appearance of Mrs. Lamotte:—

"Bah! I sniff the ogre here, auntie. 'The trail of the serpent' is over the entire house."

"I sniff the dead odor of a vile cigar," retorted Mrs. Alston. "As for the ogre

—if he won't appear in person, I'll try and survive the rest."

"I am very glad you have come, Constance," said Mrs. Lamotte, entering at this moment. "We are so dull here, and Sybil has wished much to see you." And then she extended a courteous but more stately greeting to Mrs. Alston.

"It grieves me to hear that Sybil is not so well, dear Mrs. Lamotte. Does she employ a physician?" asked Constance, presently.

"She will not have a physician called, much to my regret. The very suggestion make her wildly nervous."

"And—she keeps her room too much. I think Frank told me."

"Yes, recently. But, Constance, go up to her; Mrs. Alston and I will entertain each other for awhile, and then we will join you. Sybil heard you announced, and will expect you."

Thus commended, Constance lost no time in making her way, unattended, to Sybil's room.

In the upper hall she met Frank, who started, and flushed at sight of her, and then hurried forward, with extended hand.

"Constance," he exclaimed, eagerly, "how glad I am to see you."

"I'm such an uncommon sight!" she laughed, too much absorbed with thoughts of Sybil, to notice the extra warmth of his greeting, or a certain change of manner, that was a mingling of boldness, bashfulness, humility and coxcombry.

"How do you do, Frank?"

"Well in body, Constance—"

"Oh! then we can easily regulate your mind. I'm going to see Sybil, and I don't want your company; so adieu, Frank."

"One moment, please. I want to— I must see you, this evening. Shall you remain with us?"

"No. Aunt Honor is below; we go home, soon."

"Then—may I call, this evening, Constance?"

"What a question! as if you did not call whenever the spirit moved you so to do; come, if you like, child; I shall have no better company, I am afraid," and on she swept, and had vanished within his sister's room, before Frank could decide whether to be chagrined, or delighted, at so readily given, carelessly worded, a consent.

The start, the nervous tremor, the terrified ejaculations, with which Sybil greeted, even this expected and welcome guest, all told how some deadly foe was surely undermining her life and reason. And Constance noted, with a sinking heart, the dark circles around the eyes that were growing hollow, and heavy, and full of a strange, wild expectancy; the pale cheeks, thinner than ever, and the woful weariness of the entire face.

Greeting her tenderly, and making no comments on her changed appearance, Constance chatted for a time on indifferent subjects, and noted closely, as a loving friend will, the face and manner of her listener. Sybil sat like one in a trance, rather a nightmare, her eyes roving from her visitor's face to the door, and back again, and this constantly repeated; her whole attitude and manner, that of one listening, rather for some sound, or alarm, from afar, than to the words of the friend beside her.

At last, Constance finding commonplace about exhausted, said:—

"Congratulations, child! I have thrown off a burden from my shoulders; I have brought my diamond investigations to a close."

"Ah! diamonds!" Sybil almost started from her chair, and the exclamation came sharply from lips white and trembling.

"Yes, my lost diamonds, you know; I have dismissed Mr. Belknap."

"Belknap!" an unmistakable look of horror crossed her face. "Dismissed him; oh, I wish I could!"

Sorely at a loss, yet thinking it best not to seem surprised at what she believed to be the efforts of a wandering mind to grasp and master the subject under discussion, Constance talked on, answering questions and making observations, without allowing Sybil to see the surprise and sorrow that filled her heart; and, not until many days later did she recall her friend's wild words, to see how much of method there might be in this seeming madness.

"Mr. Belknap was conducting the search for the diamonds, you know, Sybil?"

"Yes, yes, Conny, go on," she whispered.

"I have paid him off and am done with him; that's about all, dear."

"Conny," in a half whisper, "is he gone?"

"I don't know about that; he said something about remaining here for a time."

"Oh!" ejaculated Sybil, and then, under her breath, "My God!"

Constance shuddered as she looked upon the shivering figure before her, the wavering eyes, the hands clenching and unclenching themselves; she found conversation difficult, and began to wonder how she could avoid subjects that brought painful thoughts or suggestions. But suddenly a change came over Sybil; sitting erect, she looked fixedly at her friend, and asked:—

"Conny, has he tormented you of late?"

"He! Sybil; you mean—"

"I mean my curse! has he dared to annoy you? He has sworn that he will be accepted and recognized as your friend."

Constance laughed a short, sarcastic laugh.

"Be at rest, Sybil; he never will."

"No," with a strange dropping of her voice, "He never will!"

Again she seemed struggling to recover herself, and to recall some thought; then she looked up and asked abruptly:—

"Conny, have you promised to marry me—Frank Lamotte?"

(To be Continued.)

**THE ONLY True Blood Purifier prominently in the public eye to-day is Hood's Sarsaparilla. Therefore get Hood's and ONLY HOOD'S.**

## NURSING THE SICK.

This is the title of a most valuable and concise treatise on the art of nursing the indisposed. It deals with nursing at home, ventilation of the sick room, bathing the patient, arranging the bed, etc., etc. It also gives several receipts for liquid and solid foods, and tells the kind that can be used for the different diseases. It also enumerates the several diseases in which special nursing is a necessity, and explains in plain words the directions for the performance of these offices. Altogether the book is very handsomely gotten up, and is illustrated with a reproduction from photograph of the Royal Victoria Hospital, Montreal, on the cover, and interior views of the hospital in the body of the book. The publishers, Messrs. Davis & Lawrence Co. Ltd., Montreal, will gladly mail this book to any one sending them a one cent stamp.

## Experience Has Proved It.

A triumph in medicine was attained when experience proved that Scott's Emulsion would not only stop the progress of Pulmonary Consumption, but by its continued use, health and vigor could be fully restored.

Big lot of handsome dress stuff—worth up to 45c—on the bargain counter at 25c per yard.—Moore & McLeod.

## Ladies!

You will save time and patience if you

## USE Glapperton's Thread



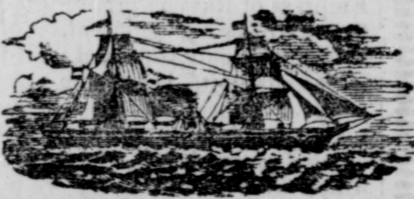
ALL DEALERS SELL IT.

## DR CLIFT

treats Chronic Diseases by the Salisbury method of persistent self-help in overcoming past errors and Removing causes from the blood. Catarrh, Bronchitis, Asthma, Shortness of Breath, Pleurisy, Tuberculosis Consumption of Lungs or Bowels, Indigestion, Dyspepsia, Gastritis, Ulcer, Cancer, Dropsy, Diarrhoea, Dysentery, Constipation, Piles, Fissures, Fistula. Diseases of Heart—Valvular, Fatty Enlargement, Palpitation. Of Liver—Jaundice, Diabetes Cirrhosis, etc. Of Kidneys—Albuminuria Bright's Disease, etc. Of Spleen and Bladder—Cystitis. Of the Blood—Anæmia, Chlorosis, Scrofula, Malaria, Rheumatism, Gout, Sciatica, Scurvy, Purpura. Of Female Organs—Inflammations and Displacements of Womb, Ovaries, Bladder or Bowels. Menstrual irregularities of Sexual Organs. Of Nerves and Spine—Nervous Prostration, Sleeplessness, Decline, Hysteria, Tremors, St. Vitus' Dance, Chorea, Epilepsy, Convulsions, Paralysis, Locomotor Ataxia. Paralysis, Agitans, Softening of Brain. Some forms of Insanity—Dementia, Mania, Hypochondria, Melancholia. Failure of Vision and Voice, Deafness. Of Skin—Eczema, Salt Rheum, Erysipelas, Syphilis. Tumors, Glandular Fatty, Fibroid, Uterine, Ovarian and Cancer, Goitre, Cretinism, Obesity, Corpulency. Drug and Liquor Habits—Opium, Morphine, Chloral, Cocaine, Tobacco. Stimulants. Of Bones and Joints—Deformities, Curvatures, and Pott's Disease of Spine, Paralysis, Hip Disease, Knock-knee, Bow Legs, Club and Flat Foot, Wry Neck, Rickets, Scrofula, Sore Legs, Varicose Ulcers, etc. Continuous intelligent treatment insures Minimum of suffering and Maximum of Cure, possible in each case. Avoid attempts unaided or under blind leaders.

## DR. CLIFT

Graduate of N Y University and the N Y Hospital. 21 years' practice in N Y City. Diploma registered in U S and Canada. Address:—Charlottetown, P. E. I. Office:—Victoria Row. Telephone Call. Accommodations Reserved for patients. References on application. 94—2&w 1yr.



## DOBELL LINER.

S.S. Gretlands is due here from Montreal Friday, the 28th inst., and sails for St. John's, and Salmon Cove, Nfld, carrying produce under deck and live stock on deck at lowest rates.

For further information apply to N. RATTENBURY, Agent

# ENGLISH MIXED PAINT

If you don't use all the paint, you can close the package and save the remainder for further use.

For sale only by

## FENNELL & CHANDLER

HIGH GRADE

# English Manures

Landing to-day ex Steamer "Irene Morris," direct from Liverpool, Eng

SUPERPHOSPHATES, NITRATE OF SODA, MURATE OF POTASH, BONE MEAL, ETC.

All genuine, and of guaranteed analysis. The only reliable, best, and at least 20 per cent the cheapest fertilizer on the market.

AULD BROS.



## BLOUSES, SHIRT WAISTS.

All new, fresh stock, not an old one in the place. Ladies' Kid Gloves, Tan shades, at seventy-five cents; should be \$1.25 Ladies Black Ribbed Wool Hose, a special lot at twenty cents.

T. J. HARRIS.

LONDON HOUSE

## Our Ever Increasing

Watch repairing trade is the best evidence of the kind of work we do. If you want satisfactory work and satisfactory prices, please let me hear from you.

G. F. HUTCHESON

Jeweler and Optician. Opposite J. D. McLeod's

## We Do Claim

To be able to suit all who are suffering with their eyes, but we know of a good many people who have suffered incessant headache, pain in the eyes, etc, who attribute their relief to the wearing of properly fitted glasses. We are here to help you if possible.

G. H. TAYLOR

Jeweler and Optician, North Side Queen Square.

## FARRINGFORD

The above desirable property, residence of the late Mrs. Lowden, on Dundas Esplanade, is offered for sale.

Also the residence of the undersigned, situate on corner Kent and Cumberland Sts.

Either of the above properties with large grounds attached, and each possessing new and modern conveniences, will be open for inspection from Tuesday to Friday of each week after 2 p. m. Apply to

I. L. BEER, Administrator Estate late Mrs. Lowden 98 14

# Planet Flour.

about Lumber. We can supply you with anything in that line—prices and quality suitable—prices to the hard times, and quality—you've heard of. It no use to get

As Thin as a Bath.

(Our baths are a good thickness.) Running from one place to another when you can get everything you want at Barrett's. We will be glad to sell you any thing from one board to a house

JAMES BARRETT.

CONNOLLY'S WHARF

200 bbls. just arrived. No better Flour on P. E. Island.

Horace Haszard.

Charlottetown, May 17, '97. 117—2w 135