

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 Clue," "Dangerous Ground," "Against Odds," Etc., Etc.

(Continued)

"The handkerchief was precisely like the mutilated one used with the chloroform. This might be a coincidence—plain white handkerchief with wide borders were not uncommon, but this handkerchief was marked!

"I could scarcely wait until Sir Clifford should show me to my room, so anxious was I to compare the two pieces of linen. The whole one bore the initials F. L., on the raw, torn edge of the half square was a black dot that was undoubtedly the fragment of a letter, or name, that had been torn hastily off. It corresponded exactly with the lower end of the letter L upon the whole handkerchief given me by Sir Clifford.

"This might be a coincidence, but it is one of my rules to suspect two coincidences coming close together; and I had already discovered three remarkable ones in this case.

"Sitting alone in my room, I reflected thus—

"Take it for granted that this robbery was perpetrated by the Diamond Coterie, what are the facts?

"The robbers knew where to enter, and where to look for plunder; ergo, they must have known the premises.

"They administered the deadly chloroform with nicest calculation; ergo, they must have known Miss Wardour.

"One of them was something of a dandy—witness the superfluous bit of cambric, and the print of jaunty boots where he leaped the garden fence.

"The next morning I took unceremonious leave of my host, and set out on my explorations. As I approached Wardour Place I met a man, who immediately drew my interest to himself.

"This man was Jerry Belknap. He wore a disguise quite familiar to me, and I recognized him easily. He entered at the Wardour gate, and I sauntered on, having found new food for thought.

"Now, a word concerning this man Belknap.

"At one time he was an honorable member of the best detective force in the city; but he had too much cupidity, and not enough moral firmness. Twice he allowed himself to be bribed into letting a case fall through, and finally I caught him in secret conclave with a gang of bank burglars, who were conspiring to raise a fortune for each, and escape with their booty through the connivance of our false detective.

"I exploded this little scheme, and compelled Belknap to withdraw from the force. Imagine my surprise when, a little later, Miss Wardour told me that Mr. Belknap was the detective sent down from the city by Mr. Lamotte!

"Well, Mr. Belknap went to work upon the case, and Miss Wardour concealed me near her dining room so that I might have the pleasure of listening to his first report.

"That was a fortunate ambush for me. Mr. Belknap's deductions were as diametrically opposite to mine as if he had purposely studied out the contrast; and I was shaking my sides with the thought of how all this plausibility must be puzzling Miss Wardour and her aunt, when a new element was introduced into the programme.

"Mr. Frank Lamotte, fresh from an amateur robber hunt, came into the room. It had been arranged that Mrs. Alston should break to this young man the news that his sister had that day eloped with John Burrill; but first, he was to relate his adventures, and this he did.

"If I can hear a voice, before seeing the face, I can usually measure its truth or falsity. Now, I had not seen Mr. Frank Lamotte, but his voice told me that he was rehearsing a well studied part; and, furthermore, I was assured that Belknap knew this, and purposely helped him on.

"By and by Miss Wardour withdrew, and Mrs. Alston fulfilled her mission. Then I was more than ever convinced of the fellow's insincerity. I heard how he received the news of his sister's flight; and when Mrs. Alston went, in a panic, to call her niece, I heard him, when he fancied himself alone.

"It seems he had been the bearer of a note from his sister to Miss Wardour, and he was now intent upon learning if that note had contained anything damaging to himself. This much I learned from his solitary mutterings, and then Miss Wardour re-entered the room. He was half wild, until she had assured him that the note contained nothing that could injure him; and then he became calmer, and went out into the air to recover his breath.

"Miss Wardour made haste to release me, and I came out of my concealment congratulating myself that I had been so lucky.

"And now I found myself compelled to leave W— just as things were growing very interesting; I had made my flying visit in a moment of leisure, but my vacation had run out; duty, honor and interest alike impelled me in another direction.

"I left my address with Miss Wardour, and I promised myself that at the first opportunity I would return to W— and take up my abode here for a time.

"I had been in W— not quite three days. I had not seen Jasper Lamotte, I had barely seen Frank, and I had added to my deductions made on the night of my arrival, until the case stood like this in my mind:—

"First. They knew Miss Wardour, and her sensitiveness to the effects of chloroform.

"3rd. One of them was a man of gentlemanly propensities, and probably young.

"4th. They or a part of their number approached by the river, using a boat with muffled oars.

"So much for my deductions. Now for some coincidences.

"It was a coincidence that the handkerchief I got from Sir Clifford should bear Frank Lamotte's initials, and should be precisely like the one left behind by the robbers.

"It was a coincidence that Frank Lamotte should be a student of medicine, who might have been quite as capable of administering chloroform as was the burglar himself.

"It was a coincidence that Miss Sybil Lamotte should have eloped on the very day when her best friend was robbed, and that father, mother and brother were all absent in behalf of the robbed friend, thus leaving the way open to the fugitives, and giving them plenty of time to escape.

"Now for some facts that looked strange.

"It was strange that Sybil Lamotte should leave her home to marry a man like John Burrill, when she was known to have bestowed her heart elsewhere.

"It was strange that Jasper Lamotte, going to the city to employ a detective, should so soon have stumbled upon Jerry Belknap, who was identified with no agency, and could only be reached through private means.

"It was strange that Frank Lamotte should set himself up as an amateur detective, and should bring back a report that tallied so perfectly with the deductions of Jerry Belknap.

"It was strange that Miss Wardour, having just been robbed of jewels to the amount of fifty thousand dollars, should be so little distressed, so little agitated by her loss.

"From deductions, coincidences and strange facts, I evolved the following theory, which certainly looked well from my standpoint, but might not hold water. You will see, that from the first I connected the Wardour robbery and the Lamotte elopement.

"Now, Sybil Lamotte's strange flight gave proof that there was a skeleton in the Lamotte closet. I said—

"If this unseen Mr. Lamotte had planned this robbery, and if for some reason he seemed good that his daughter should elope, how well all was arranged.

"His son assisting him, they could drop down from Mapleton in their row boat; come up from the river, and with their plans all laid, and knowing their ground, could make quick headway. Frank Lamotte's boot heel would leave just such a print as one of the robbers left in the loose dirt beside the garden fence. Frank Lamotte would know just how to administer the chloroform. Then, Mr. Lamotte, in going to the city, ostensibly to procure the services of a detective, could easily take the spoils along; and his wife also, that she might be well out of his daughter's way. Such a man would naturally select a fellow like Jerry Belknap, who would keep up a farce of investigation, and keep away all who might, perhaps, stumble upon the truth.

"Frank's eagerness to be absent on this day of his sister's flight, and to assist in the search for the robbers, would be thus explained; and his anxiety concerning the contents of his sister's letter might be easily traced to a guilty conscience.

"But my theories were doomed to be laid aside for a time. Other duties claimed me and it was four weeks before I could turn so much as a thought toward W—.

"Before leaving the city, however, I had placed my wax cast of the chloroform bottle in the hands of one of my best men, and had also given him a clue upon which to work.

"My agent was wonderfully successful. He found the counterparts to the chloroform bottle, and then he began shadowing the owner of said vials. It proved to be a young woman who had formerly lived in W—, as a factory hand, but who had been transplanted to the city by Frank Lamotte.

"It is not necessary to enlarge upon the story of this girl as connected with Lamotte; but this must be borne in mind. During the time that my agent had this girl under surveillance Frank Lamotte visited her, and it is supposed that he removed the remaining bottles of the set, for one was afterward exhumed, in fragments, from Doctor Heath's ash heap, by the industrious Jerry Belknap, and the others have disappeared."

CHAPTER XLVI

"From the moment when I appeared among you as Brooks, my work was double. I was bent upon posting myself thoroughly in regard to Jasper Lamotte, and day by day I became more interested in the career of this remarkable man.

"Step by step, I trod backward the path of his history, since his advent in W—, gathering my information from many sources.

"It would be tedious to enter into details; suffice it to say that while I worked here, two others, trained to such research, were beating up the past I was so anxious to become familiar with. And a third, across the water, was gathering

up the history of JOHN BURRILL, another object of interest to me at that time.

"And now I will reverse the order in which we made our search, and begin with where my man left off, give you, in brief, the history of a remarkable man.

"The man we know as Jasper Lamotte figured in various cities, twenty-five years ago, and still earlier, as Lucky Jim, a handsome, well educated, sharp witted, confidence man.

"He seldom gambled, and made his swindling operations of various sorts reap him a rich harvest; and, by his unvarying good luck in escaping the dragons of the law, as well as because of his lucky ventures, he became known to his intimates as Lucky Jim.

"In these days, Miss Sybil Schuyler, the daughter of a wealthy old Maryland aristocrat, came to the city to reside with an aunt, while she completed her musical education. Lucky Jim saw her, and fell in love with her beautiful, haughty face.

"He contrived to make her acquaintance, and the rest was easy; it was a repetition of the old story; he was handsome and fascinating, she young and unsophisticated, with plenty of headstrong Southern blood and self will.

"After a brief courtship, Lucky Jim married the Maryland heiress. Her father, as may be supposed, repudiated the marriage, but she clung to her scamp, and so the old Maryland aristocrat sent her a small fortune, which was her's, inherited from her mother's mother, and beyond his control; and bade her consider herself no more a Schuyler, of the Schuylers.

"For a time, Lucky Jim rode smoothly on the top wave of prosperity; his wife easily duped, believed him a Wall street operator. Frank was born, and then Sybil, and the Maryland beauty queened it in an elegant and secluded little home.

"But the crisis came. The silver cloud turned its dark side.

"Lucky Jim played a losing game one day, and his wife suddenly found herself face to face with the truth.

"They lived through stormy times, but Jim had, in his palmy days, left his wife's fortune intact, and now it proved an anchor to windward.

"They absented themselves from this country for more than two years; when they came back, and Lucky Jim brought his family, which now included Evan, to W—.

"The Maryland fortune enabled them to set up as aristocrats, and Lucky Jim seems to have aspired to become a power in the community.

"I don't think he often attempted any of his old confidence and swindling games; but, during his absences from home, which were frequent, during his earlier residence here, he made a study of the burglary.

"I can fancy how carefully he put his new schemes in practice, and how he passed himself off upon W— as a rising speculator.

"He probably spent years in gathering together that select society, known as the Diamond Coterie.

(To be Continued.)

Baby's Own Soap

IS NOT, as most soaps, made from "soap fat," the refuse of the kitchen or the abattoir.

VEGETABLE OILS supply the necessary ingredients — one of the reasons why it should be used in nurseries and for delicate skins.

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It is STRONG, EVEN, RELIABLE

WILL NOT BREAK NOR SNARL

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UNWHOLESALE

Unwholesome Mysteries of the Article Called Laddled Butter.

In the wholesale butter trade there is an odorous product quoted in the market reports as "laddles." In all parts of this fair land there are women who own two or three cows and make butter as their grandmothers did, if not more so. They take their little rolls, two and three pounds apiece, to the country store and trade them for goods. The country storekeeper dare not refuse the stuff or the fair trader would go to his hated rival across the way. The chances are ten to one that he cannot sell the grease. Nobody with a nose or tongue would want to touch it. What does he do with it to get his money back?

The following extract from United States dairy bulletin No. 16, by Mr. J. H. Monrad, will perhaps open the eyes of certain ladies who make butter as their grandmothers did, only worse:

The local storekeepers take butter in exchange for goods. The price allowed all producers at any one store is the same, quite regardless of the quality of the butter. It is necessary to treat all the farmers alike. As a rule merchants sell what they can of the best received without any profit or at an advance of 1 or 2 cents. The remainder, which in most cases constitutes much the greater part of the receipts, is dumped into receptacles of all kinds, and periodically sent off to the centers for laddling. Flour barrels, starch boxes, shoe boxes and soap boxes have been indiscriminately utilized for this purpose. Much of this so called laddled butter is of such character that it makes little difference how it is neglected. The carelessness and indifference shown in some places is shocking.

The receptacles are left open, no attention is paid to the mixed contents, and they are not sent away until full, or until the mixture becomes so offensive that it must be got rid of. The one requirement of the package has been that it should not leak and waste too much if the contents melted to oil in transit. Economical motives alone seem to have led to a reform in this regard. The ladders now send out what are called butter stands to their regular sources of supply. These are large oak tubs or barrels, generally somewhat conical, with large bottoms to prevent overturning, tight covers and strong handles. These are shipped to the factory when filled at the store. The contents of some of these tubs upon arriving at the laddling establishment is simply indescribable. The many small lots of butter—as the material was probably at one time entitled to this name—differ in color, salt, texture, age and other respects, and sometimes the tubs contain articles quite foreign to the dairy, like bacon rind and mutton chop bones. In cold weather it is possible to measurably separate and sort the different lots. In hot weather it is simply a mass of grease, not sufficiently melted to be homogeneous, but so far advanced as to make it impossible to vouch for all being originally butter fat.

The profit of the ladders lies in intelligent grading and increase in weight by salting, washing and reworking, also more or less in the success of the various processes used in eliminating rancidity and restoring the semblance of grain and flavor to the mass. The article resulting is called butter and goes into the butter market, but it may well be doubted whether, as a food product, it is as good as average butterine. As a rule "laddles" are quoted in the Chicago market at about two-thirds the price of creamery butter and about four-fifths the price of dairy butter of like grade, extras, firsts or seconds. What is known as "imitation creamery" is as a rule nothing but selections of the best laddled goods.

Alfalfa Is the Best.

Here are some tables showing the value of corn for ensilage, of oats and peas, and particularly of alfalfa, of which four crops may be cut in a season, besides another small crop in October. There is no food better relished by animals. The following table shows the value of alfalfa and the comparative yield of digestible dry matter in several crops used as cattle food:

	Yield green per acre.	Tons.
1894.....	5,104	19.9
1895.....	4,552	18.5
1896.....	4,552	17.5
Average.....	4,736	17.6

This contains about 25 per cent of dry matter.

17.6x0.25=4.4 tons dry matter per acre, or 8,800 pounds.

8,800x0.58=5,104 pounds digestible matter per acre.

The first cutting was May 12 to 15 during the three years. The last cutting was in October.

Comparative yield of digestible dry matter in different crops:

	Pounds.
Alfalfa.....	5,104
Corn, New York, 1896.....	4,552
Corn, South Carolina, average 3 years.....	3,521
Corn, Flint, average 3 years.....	3,070
Hungarian, average 3 years.....	2,847
Rutabagas, average 3 years.....	2,673
Oats and peas, cut green, average 3 years.....	1,762
Oats and peas, matured, average 3 years.....	2,521

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

Count Nicholas Esterhazy, who died recently at Tetis in Hungary, was well known on the turf in England, France and Austria. He gave orders that he should be buried in a red hunting coat with all the honors of the chase.



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Sold in lead packets to keep their fragrance.

That is, Tea leaves, scientifically prepared, from early pickings, off well cultivated plants—is a wholesome, invigorating drink.

Few people, however nervous, are otherwise than pleasantly affected by drinking properly prepared

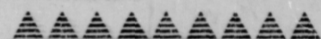
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Have you heard the news? We have the goods that lead the list. Use them and you will laugh and be happy, and not swear and be mad.

Provincial Cemical Fertilizers

Give full satisfaction, the largest crops at the smallest cost for fertilizers. Use the high grade complete Fertilizers. We do not keep the "cheapest" goods, but the best, and give the most value for the money. The Dominion Chemist on his Fertilizer Bulletin shows this.

These goods can be ordered of our agents in all parts of the Province they are soluble, active, sure. Give them a trial.

WE STILL have a small stock of Seed Wheat, Barley, Buckwheat, Ensilage Corn, Peas, Vetches, Horse Beans, Timothy Seed, Clover Seed, Mangel Seed, Carrot Seed, Turnip Seed, Calf Meal, Oil Cake, etc., which we are clearing out very cheap. ARE HE-RE-WHAT? Our stock of the Tudhope Carriage Co's high grade vehicles in 36 different styles. Also a very fine line of single and double Harness in solid nickel, nickel plate, and black mountings. Call or write us before buying.

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CHARLOTTETOWN