

# The Social Pirates :-:

Plot by George Bronson Howard

Novelization by Hugh C. Weir :: Copyright Kalem Company

## Story No. 8—Sauce for the Gander

It was a cherrily stimulating scene—and certainly one less calculated to serve as the background of tragedy could hardly have been conceived. A bright mid-morning sun splashed down upon the shimmering asphalt of the fashionable avenue, thickly dotted with a stream of richly appearing vehicles. The past three or four days had been dimly threatening, and the lure of the cheery morning had appealed to hundreds of shoppers of the smart set.

Mary Burnett leaned back in the cushions of her taxicab, and drew a long breath of luxurious enjoyment as her glance wandered back from the scene before her to the face of her chum, Mona Hartley, by her side.

"Isn't it just—just heavenly?" she cried. "There is no more beautiful scene in the world to me than Fifth avenue on a spring morning!"

Mona laughed.

"It is because we happen to have a fairly good purse, my dear! If you didn't have money in your pocket, I fancy you will find Fifth avenue just the reverse of beautiful!"

"You are growing cynical!" retorted Mary. "And just to prove to you that the store windows have no attraction for me, I'll walk down the street while you do your shopping, and spend your money to your heart's desire! How is that?"

"But that is just what I'm not going to do," returned Mona, more thoughtfully. "Do you know, dear, that I'm coming to take our work more and more seriously? At first, I think we were both a bit selfish in our belief that because men had tried to wrong our sex we had a right to make them pay the debt in any way possible. And then when we saw just how much we could do, and how easy it was for a woman with youth and a fair share of good looks, to snare the average masculine pursuer, and when we made up our minds to use these weapons for the good of others as well as our own, we both had a new viewpoint. And it was good for us, not to mention the sundry services we were able to do for those more unfortunate than ourselves. But lately I have thought we could do even more, and go even farther. Why, we can make of ourselves soldiers for the common good. We can be modern Joan of Arc."

Mona stopped, with a bright blush on her cheeks, and quite out of breath from her unusually long and vivacious speech. Mary surveyed her wonderingly, and then caught her hand.

"That is simply splendid! Why, I am proud of you! And, of course, we shall do just as you say. You are making me crazy to start. When are we going to begin, and how?"

Mona smiled at the other's enthusiasm.

"We will have to wait for circumstances to give us the cue, as we have always done. I don't think we shall have long to wait."

The girl smoothed back her hair and straightened her hat as the motor came to a whirlwind pause before the sober front of the exclusive Farnam's outfitting stores—one of those great establishments of Fifth avenue which never by any chance display to the curious public anything so vulgar as a price tag behind their window-plate glass windows. Mona waved her hand to Mary and, crossing the walk, was ushered by a liveried attendant through a richly curtained entrance.

Mary prepared for an indefinite wait and settling herself more comfortably on the seat resumed her study of the passing throng on the walk. In the back of her mind were still running the impetuous words of Mona, and the girl's face clouded thoughtfully as she scanned the possibilities which they opened up. And then quite suddenly she was brought sharply upright and found herself bending forward through the door of the motor, watching a drama on the walk before her. Into the cheery panorama of Fifth avenue a suggestion of incongruous tragedy had thrust itself.

As Mary sat waiting outside, a fashionably dressed young man, with a sensual, rather supercilious face, who was ambling idly down the walk, had been brought to a sudden check by a shabby youth of not more than 19 or 20, whose gaunt face bore striking evidence of either great privation or great mental shock. The youth apparently had been trailing the man, perhaps trying to brace his shattered nerves to the point of an interview. Now, with his fingers gripping an arm of the dandy before him, he stood confronting him like some haggard Nemesis.

"Please, Mr. Laidlaw, listen to me! I have been following you for an hour! I knew you wouldn't see me at your office, and I have simply got to speak to you!"

The young man addressed as Laidlaw struggled angrily, and one of those crowds, which in New York seem to spring up like magic, began to surround the pair. Mary found her view for the moment blocked, but over the heads of the curious onlookers she could hear the frenzied voice of the shabby youth raised in shrill appeal and then the sound of a violent struggle. Finally an officer, attracted by the light on the walk, came showing through with a line disregard of the anatomy of those who blocked his path. The officer pounced upon the figure of the young man.

Mary divined from the sudden movement of the spectators that the policeman had taken the shabby youth into custody, and left a swift wave of pity sweep through her. And then, as the crowd parted, she saw with surprise that the supercilious young man was bidding the officer to release his prisoner. As the officer complied, and the young fellow started off, Mary raised her voice, as she caught the wandering glance of the ill-dressed young man, who seemed the commoner.

"Won't you please come here a moment?" she asked, smiling down at him.

The other hesitated, flushing awkwardly.

"Perhaps I can help you," Mary continued persuasively, "that is, if you care to tell your story to a stranger."

The youth shuffled over to the edge of the motor and flung at his hat. On a closer view Mary could see that his face was more to an unusual thinness and pallor and that in his

to have a better opportunity to land old Laidlaw.

It was shortly before noon the following day that Mary, attired in a trimly fitting tailored suit for the occasion ascended the steps of the Laidlaw residence and rang the bell. She was admitted to see Laidlaw after some ceremony.

"I—I have come on a rather embarrassing interview, Mr. Laidlaw," began Mary, timidly. She flashed a bewitching glance at him from her downcast eyes, and smiled again as she saw the other's thin lips part in a deprecatory grimace.

"Surely you can have no embarrassment in speaking to me, Miss—"

Peter Laidlaw glanced at the card in his hand, and finished with a little bow, "Miss Davenport, I assure you that you can speak with the utmost frankness and confidence to me on any subject."

"Thank you," said Mary. She hesitated again, fumbling with her handkerchief. "The fact of the matter is, Mr. Laidlaw," she continued nervously, "I have come to you about your son and my sister."

"My son?" Mr. Laidlaw frowned. "And what has the youngster been up to, now?"

"Oh, he isn't to blame, not in the least," said Mary quickly. "I—I am afraid the fault is with my sister. You see, he is infatuated with her, and she wants to marry her, and—"

"Isn't the kind of a girl that ought to marry your son and heir, Mr. Laidlaw?" The girl's head sank and she burst into tears.

"Please don't think harshly of me for this confession. If you only knew how I have pleaded with my sister to mend her ways, I know that you would sympathize with me! She is an adventurous, a fortune hunter and an adventurer, and she is determined to marry your son for his money. It is hard—hard, Mr. Laidlaw, to have to say such things about one's own sister, but I could never rest easily if I felt that I had allowed an innocent young man to be trapped by her. And she is beautiful—much more so than I am. I am the plain one of the family."

"I don't believe it!" said the elder Mr. Laidlaw emphatically. "If your sister is superior to you in looks, my dear young friend, she is not. You are just saying that to get my mind off my troubles!" chided Mary. "But you must take me seriously, or it will be too late, and we shall both be sorry. You see, I had to leave my sister some time ago. We were living together, but when I saw that she was persisting in the habits I was warning her against, and that my pleadings were of no avail, I had to part with her, hoping against hope that the fact might help me to make her see the error of her ways, and induce her to repent and reform. But so far, she has paid absolutely no attention to my urgings, and although we occupy apartments in the same building, we see little of each other. I wish it might be different. I would give half my life to make it otherwise, but I have done all that I could do, and—"

Peter Laidlaw rose from his chair just in time to catch the girl's hysterical sobs. He stepped forward and himself up to a flood of rocking water. He soothed her with petting and promised to call on her next day, bestowing an admiring glance on her as she left.

Peter Laidlaw, quite evidently, was a man of direct methods. It was not yet 11 o'clock of the next morning when, watching from the sitting room window of the apartment, now given over exclusively to the occupancy of Mona, Mary saw the limousine of the elder Laidlaw draw up at the curb. Mona let the bell ring for a full minute before she answered. The first, of course, was the quite natural wish to keep Laidlaw fuming below. The second was the need of time to complete a striking change of costume.

Laidlaw paused stock still in the doorway of Mona's sitting room, and caught his breath quickly at the vision lounging on a window seat before him. Mona turned her head listlessly.

"Come in," she said indifferently.

"Are—are you Miss—er Davenport?" stammered Laidlaw.

"Right!" agreed the girl. "And what can I do for you?"

"I believe that you are the young woman to whom my foolish son has been paying some slight attentions." His voice was cold and cutting. "We will get to business at once. What do you want?"

"I don't get you!" Mona deliberately extended her feet so as to expose another inch of her silken ankles. "If you are Peter Laidlaw you must be Dick's governor. He has spoken to you about me. Since you are to be my father-in-law, you can come over and kiss me!"

Laidlaw glared.

"Kiss you!" he snapped. "You vision. You are just the type of woman that a foolish, headstrong boy would make a fool of himself over. And now, let us understand one another: What is your price? How much do you want to let my son go?"

Mona's hand reached deliberately toward an electric push button at her side. The man saw that she was about to have him ejected. With a muttered imprecation, he turned short, and strode toward the door.

Mona was still busy with hot water and powder rag effacing the paint when the electric bell of her apartment rang again. But this time she did not answer, even when it repeated its summons a second and a third time. Silence. And then quick, impatient steps sounded in the hall outside and the door was thrown open. On the threshold stood young Dick, flushing, his eyes glittering. For a moment he stood surveying the room silently. And then with a quick cry he sprang into the apartment toward the window seat, heaped with pillows, on which was huddled a girl's sobbing form.

"Mona! Mona, darling! What is it? What has happened?" He tried to put his arm around the other's shoulders, but she pushed him away, and sat erect.

"You can go, too!" she gasped. "You are just like your father. I don't want to see either of you again!"

"My father?" Dick's eyes glittered even more dangerously. "I saw him on the walk, and wondered what he was up to—but I kept away from him until I could see you first. So he has been over—and what has he dared to say to you?"

"He—he wants to pay me money

to give you up," sobbed Mona. "He thinks I am an adventuress, and a vampire, and says you are another silly boy who has been caught in my toils!"

Dick's hands clenched.

"He shall eat those words! So he came here to insult you, did he? We shall see!" He paced back and forth over the room, his face working.

"Even if he is my father, he has no right to insult the woman to whom I have given my love!"

"I can never forget it!" snapped Mona. "Under the circumstances, Dick, it is far better that we part." She slipped off the diamond ring, which had been his latest gift, and held it out to him. "I am speaking for the best!" she insisted.

In answer young Laidlaw caught her passionately in his arms, but she drew away. His hot breath repelled her. She sent him away. He was to call again on the morrow.

Before the afternoon was over the elder Laidlaw called at Mary's apartment, with the story of his visit to the supposedly erring sister, and how he had been received. Father and son had a stormy interview as the result and Mary was in tears before the elder Laidlaw tore himself away.

Again the man tried to comfort her, and again she permitted him to take her into a paternal embrace, snatching herself away, however, when she realized the situation. Peter Laidlaw tried to renew the embrace, but something in her attitude warned him not to attempt it again.

The next day he called again, attired as before in extreme fashion, and this time offered a large bouquet of orchids in the hope that the gift would help his young friend to forget her troubles. She accepted it with a gratitude that amply repaid the donor, and permitted the interview to approach a deger intimate enough for her to smooth the elder Laidlaw's grizzled hair, and straighten his purple necktie. It was too much. Again Laidlaw's arms were about her, and this time all suggestion of the paternal comforter had fled. Mary snatched herself away, and for a moment stared at him in seeming unbelief.

"What have you done? Oh, what have you done?" she gasped.

Peter Laidlaw's glance fell, and his hands opened and closed nervously. The girl really loved him! He drew himself more stiffly erect and cleared his voice.

"I am older than you, my girl—old enough to be your father. But I am a lonely man and need youth and gaiety. If you will take me for a husband you shall never regret it."

"You—marry you?" the girl gasped. "You mistake yourself, Mr. Laidlaw! I am afraid you put the wrong construction on my loneliness and heart hunger. I could never think of marrying you."

Laidlaw stared in genuine amazement. She was actually refusing to be his wife—and the chance for a fortune!

"But I really mean it, Mary—Miss Davenport, I am in earnest!"

"So am I!" said the girl. And Peter Laidlaw was forced to depart with his mind in a chaos, and realizing that the girl had grown so temptingly alluring that he would sacrifice half his money if she were really his.

"He will be back," said Mary, confidently, as she told Mona of the interview. "Mark my words!"

And again she was right. The next day the elderly suitor called again, only to be met with the same rebuff—if a trifle less pronounced. By this time father and son were completely estranged, and Dick confided to Mona his intention of leaving the paternal roof and moving into independent quarters.

"The time has come for our crisis," said Mary, thoughtfully, when she heard of this development. "I shall accept Peter Laidlaw when he calls again—and I'll leave the rest to you, Mona."

Mary was as good as her word. She sent the elder Laidlaw away jubilant—so jubilant that he promptly sought out his son, and informed him of the glad news that he was soon to have a young and beautiful stepmother. Dick received the intelligence in dismay, and an hour later was excitedly pouring out the story to Mona's sympathetic ears.

"Think what it will mean to us, dear! Some designing woman has trapped the old governor. She will waste all his money and there won't be a dollar left for us!"

"Why not follow your father's tactics to me—and try to buy her off," suggested the quick-witted Mona. "Such women always have a price. Show her the money, real money—not a check!"

"By Jove, I'll do it! You are a wonder, little one!"

An hour later young Laidlaw, with his wallet newly replenished, climbed out of a taxicab before the apartment house. As he did so he caught sight of a familiar figure just disappearing through the entrance. It was his father. Young Laidlaw ground his teeth, and strolled thoughtfully around the block, feeling sure that he had the cash arguments at hand to play his game.

Meanwhile the elder Laidlaw, in Mary's apartment was shipping an expensive diamond engagement ring on the girl's finger in spite of her protests that the gift was much too valuable. As he stepped back into the hall, the door of Mona's flat opened, as though by accident, and that saucy young woman, attired for the street, stood confronting him.

"Oh, Mr. Laidlaw," she said sweetly. "I have been thinking over your visit to me, and I have come to the conclusion that you are right in your arguments to me that a marriage with your son would only result in unhappiness to both of us."

"In other words," said Peter Laidlaw eagerly.

"In other words, if your offer to take care of me still holds good, I am prepared to accept it! But remember, it must be cash. If I am going to sell the only happiness I have ever known, I will not barter myself for a check!"

"You shall have the cash!" said Peter Laidlaw, grimly, as he hurried from the house, so occupied with his thoughts that he did not see the dodging figure of his son behind the corner of the building.

Five minutes later Dick Laidlaw was pressing the bell of Mary's flat. The interview was short, and if not sweet, at least was eminently satisfactory to both parties. When the younger Laidlaw took up his hat, Mary held twenty crisp \$100 bills.

At about the same minute another interview of much the same nature, and terminating in an equally satisfactory manner, was taking place in the apartment of Mona just across the corridor.

"Understand," finished the elderly Laidlaw, "that you relinquish all claims to my son—that henceforth you will see nothing of him under any circumstances!"

"Quite right," agreed Mona, as she softly rustled the newly minted bills which her caller had pressed on her. "And now, is there anything further?"

"I think not!" said Peter Laidlaw deliberately, as he stepped to the door. The girl accompanied him sweetly, saw him safely into the corridor, and then started forward with distended eyes. At practically the same moment the door of Mary's apartment had also opened for her visitor. Father and son stood staring at one another, and at their shoulders the two girls.

For a tense moment the tableau continued.

And then Mary whirled toward Mona. "You—lussy!" she snapped. "You vixen!" retorted Mona.

The Laidlows said nothing. Without a word, Dick clapped his hat down onto his head, and strode toward the stairs. His father hesitated for a moment, and then followed more slowly, his face contracted thoughtfully.

An hour later parent and son, in the privacy of the former's innermost office, took reflective and melancholy notes. The result left them staring at each other blankly.

"It looks, governor, as though they played you for the goat!" said Dick with a groan.

In Mary's apartment the two girls were busily engaged in arraying themselves for the street.

"We win!" said Mona, for the twentieth time. "We win, girlie! And now—"

"What?" asked Mona, pinning on her hat.

"Now, to give back the money to the rightful owners. I have a list of over twenty of the recent victims of the Laidlaw loan office. Counting the proceeds of the presents we have received, we should net something over \$7,000. Not bad work at all, eh?"

THE END.

If They Told the Truth.

"Mr. Chairman, I'm glad to say that I can't make an interesting speech, but even if I could I wouldn't waste it on so much intelligence as I see before me this evening—sitting, as you are, half dazed with food, alcohol and tobacco."

"Well, good-by, Mrs. Diamondback. I've had a dull week-end. But I expected it, anyway. One of the things we have to endure, isn't it? Hope you'll get a better cook the next time I come."

"You'd never know this was a second-hand car, would you? The engine hasn't been touched for five years, but a new coat of paint has given it a fine appearance, hasn't it? Worth \$15. Sell it to you for \$90."—Life.

### Astonishing Power of Iron to Give Strength to Broken Down Nervous People

Physician Says Ordinary Nuxated Iron Will Increase Strength of Delicate Folk 200 Per Cent in Two Weeks' Time in Many Instances.

New York, N. Y.—In a recent discourse Dr. E. Bauer, well known specialist and studied widely both in this country and Europe, said: "If you were to make an actual blood test on all people who are ill you would probably be greatly astonished at the exceedingly large number who lack iron and who are ill for no other reason than the lack of iron. The moment iron is supplied to their multitude of danger, their symptoms disappear. Without iron the blood at once loses the power to change food into living tissue, and therefore nothing you eat does you any good; you don't get the strength out of it. Your food merely passes through your system like corn through a mill with the rollers so wide apart that the mill can't grind. As a result of this continuous blood and nerve starvation, people become generally weak, nervous and all run down, and frequently develop all sorts of conditions. One is too thin, another is burdened with unhealthy fat, some are so weak they can hardly walk; some think they have dyspepsia, kidney or liver trouble; some can't sleep at night; others are sleepy and tired all day; some fussy and irritable; some skinnier and bloodless, but all lack physical endurance. In such cases it is worse than foolishness to take stimulating medicines or narcotic drugs, which only whip up your lagging vital powers for the moment, maybe at the expense of your life later on. The matter, when one tells you, if you are not strong and well you owe it to yourself to make the following test. See how long you can work or how far you can walk without becoming tired. Next take two five-grain tablets of ordinary nuxated iron three times per day after meals for two weeks. Then test your strength again and see for yourself how much you have gained. I have seen dozens of nervous, run-down people who were ailing all the time double, and even triple their strength and endurance and entirely rid of their symptoms of dyspepsia, liver and other troubles in from ten to fourteen days' time simply by taking iron in the proper form, and this after they had in some cases been doctoring for months without obtaining any benefit. You can talk as you please about all the wonders wrought by iron, but the fact is there is nothing like good old iron to put color in your cheeks and good, sound, healthy flesh on your bones. It is also a great nerve and stomach strengthener and the best blood builder in the world. The only trouble was that the old forms of iron pills, like tincture of iron, iron acetate, etc., often rubbed people's teeth, upset their stomachs and were not assimilated, and for these reasons they frequently did more harm than good. But with the discovery of the newer forms of organic iron all this has been overcome. Nuxated Iron, for example, is pleasant to take, does not injure the teeth and is almost immediately beneficial."

NOTE—The manufacturers of Nuxated Iron have such unbounded confidence in its potency that they authorize the announcement that they will forfeit \$100.00 to any man or woman under sixty who lacks iron and increase their strength 200 per cent or over in four weeks' time, provided they have no serious organic trouble. Also they will refund your money in any case in which Nuxated Iron does not at least double your strength in ten days' time. It is dispensed in this city by Sherman & McDonald Drug Store and all other druggists.—Advertisement.

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| 30 to 34 | 1.00 " "          | 2.00 " "          |
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