

# Ghost STORIES

Vol. 7

AUGUST, 1929

No. 2

## Contents

- My Phantom Pal** . . . . . NICK SANFORD, *Movie Stunt-Flyer* 6  
*This Daredevil Aviator Faced Death—and a Ghost—6,000 Feet in the Air!*
- The Woman at Seven Brothers** . . . . . WILBUR DANIEL STEELE 12  
*Out of the Stormy Sea Her Phantom Came—to Claim the Lad She Loved*
- Kidnapped by a Wraith** . . . . . GILBERT DRAPER 16  
*Some Unseen Monster Lurked in the Old French-Canadian Inn—but How Could IT Abduct a Living Woman?*
- The Specter in the New Hotel** . . . . . A True Story by STUART PALMER 20  
*What Uncanny Thing Haunted the Sixteenth Floor of This Broadway Skyscraper?*
- Vengeance of the Dead** . . . . . HUGH WALLACE 24  
*Was Dan Murdered by a Crooked Political Ring? It Took a Ghost to Reveal the Truth*
- My Strange Adventure with a Vampire** . . . . . W. ADOLPHE ROBERTS 30  
*The Girl from Prague Cast an Unholy Spell Over Men. Here is the Weird Story of One of Her Victims*
- The Inexperienced Ghost** . . . . . H. G. WELLS, *Famous English Author* 36  
*Clayton "Caught" a Ghost—"a Poor, Weak Thing," He Said. Read of the Horror that Followed!*
- A Cloud of Witnesses** . . . . . FRANCIS GILBERT 42  
*Annie Crehan Was a Murderess—but the Other World Befriended Her. Why?*
- Haunted Hollywood** . . . . . WILBERT WADLEIGH 48  
*The "Scorpion" Strikes Again! Its Tentacles Reach Out to Seize a Beautiful Actress and a Great Director*
- David Keeps His Word** . . . . . THELMA JOHNSON 58  
*This Wise Little Girl "Faked" a Miracle—Only to Discover the Awful Power of the Unseen!*
- Spirit Tales** . . . . . COUNT CAGLIOSTRO 65  
*Can Mortal Eyes Look into the Future? Read the Facts*
- The Mystery of the Dancing Coffins** . . . . . ROBERT W. SNEDDON 66  
*What Mysterious Force Could Animate a Row of Coffins—in a Sealed Vault?*
- Bewitched Love Letters** . . . . . GUY DE MAUPASSANT 70  
*A French Marquis Performs a Ghastly Service for a Phantom Woman*
- The Meeting Place** . . . . . ROBERT NAPIER 73  
*How Science Tested Margery, the Famous Medium—and Other True Stories by Our Readers*
- The Man with the Sabre Cut** . . . . . ALAN SCHULTZ 76  
*A Boy Battles Against Occult Forces—to Save a Night-Club Dancer!*
- Were You Born in August?** . . . . . STELLA KING 83  
*What the Stars Foretell for Every Day This Month*

Published Monthly by THE CONSTRUCTIVE PUBLISHING CORPORATION, Washington and South Aves., Dunellen, N. J.  
Editorial and General Offices, Macfadden Building, 1926 Broadway, N. Y.  
Charles Mendel, President William Thompson, Secretary

Gilbert L. Parks, Advertising Manager, Graybar Building, 420 Lexington Ave., New York, N. Y.  
Entered as second class matter April 30th, 1926, at the Post Office at Dunellen, N. J., under the act of March 3rd, 1879. Additional entry at New York, N. Y.  
Copyright, 1929, by THE CONSTRUCTIVE PUBLISHING CORPORATION. Copyright also in Canada and Great Britain. All rights reserved.

Price 25c a copy in U. S.—30c in Canada. Subscription price \$2.50 a year in the United States and its possessions; also Cuba, Mexico and Panama. All other countries including

Chicago Office: 168 North Michigan Blvd., C. H. Shattuck, Manager.

London Agents: Atlas Publishing & Distributing Co., Ltd., 18 Bride Lane, London, E.C.

Contributors are especially advised to be sure to retain copies of their contributions; otherwise they are taking an unnecessary risk. Every possible effort will be made in our organization to return unavailable manuscripts, photographs and drawings, but we will not be responsible for any losses of such matter contributed.

PRINTED BY THE ART COLOR PRINTING CO., DUNELLEN, N. J., U.S.A.

# A CLOUD of

*Is murder  
ever justified?  
Annie Crehan  
killed—to save  
the only thing  
that loved her.*

*Read  
how the  
Other World  
played an  
astounding part  
at  
her trial*

**T**HERE was something about the prisoner, Annie Crehan, which baffled the Judge. It was as though some secret, some unexpected and inexplicable goodness lay behind the somber mask of her crime. But it was a mere suggestion, some silent, psychological force that made itself evident without sound or form. All afternoon Judge Carew had been watching her furtively; puzzled, worried, unwilling to inflict ultimate, painful judgment where ultimate, painful judgment was demanded.

The heat in the courtroom was intense. The air seemed a tangible thing—a curtain of murkiness and suffocation that might be pushed back with the hands. Flies droned against the bare, yellow walls, upon which hung spotted portraits of past dignitaries of the country's justice. The faded eyes in the pictures seemed to watch. . . .

The jury wore a sullen look—a look almost menacing. The crowded room seethed with restless, sweating, acrid humanity. In the tense faces dwelt a fierce thirst of hate. Their eyes leered with a morbid vengeance as they settled on the prisoner at the bar. Their fingers clenched now and again as though they longed to take punishment out of the hands of the law and into their own.

The Judge was a firm, gray-faced statue, the lines of whose naturally kind mouth, between the thick gray mustaches, had



*I hit him on the head  
with a brass kettle. . . .  
I only meant to stun  
him*

deepened and hardened to granite through his years of knowledge and judgment of other men's sins. He was aware, suddenly, of an almost subconscious wish to stay the mob's cruelty.

There was something about the woman that belied everything that had been said against her—something appealing, intangible. . . .

The Judge looked down at her.

**T**HE prisoner was the one quiet figure in the room. Her whole attitude was one of apathy. Perhaps, thought Judge Carew, she had passed beyond thought and feeling. She sat motionless, her thin hands hanging loosely against her coarse black dress, her face expressionless. Hers was the primitive,

# WITNESSES

By  
FRANCIS  
GILBERT



*He just lay there, not moving. His face frightened me*

and unselfishly wrought, at some unguessed time. Behind the weariness of them, their haggard pain, lived an inner, eternal light. Again Judge Carew was seized with the longing to deal sentence less harshly upon this criminal than the enormity of her crime seemed to make necessary. He had a weird, swift feeling that she was fenced about on all sides by a protecting throng of invisible presences. . . .

The trial wore on. Witness after witness was sworn to the stand and heard. The evidence was damning. There was no mercy in it. All the forces at work were forces of condemnation. It seemed a fixed certainty that before Annie Crehan yawned a black gulf of punishment—final, irrevocable, horrible. She was a murderess.

stoic calm of the savage who, having asked no quarter, expects none.

As a younger woman, she must have been refined, he decided, with possibilities even of beauty. The features of her face were regular still, but the skin was sallow and coarse, the mouth hard. Below the eyes were the dark, sagging pockets of flesh that vice and misery weave, while the rest of the face was deeply lined. The Judge, with his shrewd understanding of humanity, could read the whole sordid story in those lines. There were seams of drink, of drugs, of manifold petty crimes, and their attendant shames and defiances. The black, badly-done hair had the same faded weariness about it that characterized her general appearance. But her eyes—

Judge Carew looked again at the eyes, and yet again. Dark they were, and long-lashed, with a shadow like a smudge of soot beneath them; not vicious eyes, nor despairing. And they were filled, even as are the eyes of the very noble, with the memory of gentle courtesies and gracious deeds, silently

Buck Crehan, her brother, had been seen to stagger, laughing drunkenly, into her presence at five in the afternoon. An hour later he had been found lying dead in her room, a hideous, jagged wound across his head. Annie Crehan had not confessed, but neither had she denied. She remained always the same—mute, stunned, careless of her fate, a hard little smile touching the corners of her lips, as though she mocked death itself. It was impossible to tell anything definite from her face or her attitude. They were entirely noncommittal. They might mean everything—or nothing.

STILL tense, feverish, malignant, the court finally adjourned until the morrow. And—contrary to precedent—Judge Carew came to stand beside the woman whom he expected presently to be forced to condemn to a shameful death. He began to speak harshly to her because—as he was sure she would immediately divine—custom had taught him that was the way to conquer any trace of personal feeling.

"The evidence is all against you," he said briefly, "and public opinion runs high. But just for a moment during

the trial today it occurred to me to wonder if you were ready to die?"

She smiled up at him, weary, dispassionate; then she spoke:

"I am not afraid to, I think. But why should you wonder about it, Your Honor? You know my reputation. The very way people speak my name is a brand. I'm considered vile."

He caught her by surprise with his answer: "But you were not always considered vile."

For an instant she was startled from her habitual lethargy. "No, I . . . oh, no! That is, of course—no one is. But if you once begin crime—if you make a mistake, and Society gets its heel on your throat. . . . Well, after that. . . ."

Her unuttered words spoke volumes. They moved the man of the courts, grown gray and wearily wise in their service. His voice softened. The woman had pierced the surface of his usually veiled personality.

"Tell me about the beginning," he commanded. "There's a sort of indefinable good, under your apparent badness, which makes me deplore your condemnation."

She looked at him sharply. "You mean you feel I'm being watched over somehow—by invisible guardians—isn't that it?"

He nodded. "Possibly—if you choose to put it that way. Doubtless it's some trick of your power of mind. Some mentalities, in extremity, can rise to extraordinary heights. Now, answer my question."

"It goes back a long while," she began hesitantly, "through a good many years—that first turning point. I struck a woman—an influential woman of the community. Struck her hard, so that her face was scarred afterward. She was abusing a cat, horribly. To investigate its habits, she said. No one would interfere but me. I lost control of myself. I could never endure the sight of dumb suffering. So I hit out at her. That was the beginning. She had me arrested. I had no proper defense against one in her position. I was sent up."

"And then?" the judge urged tactfully. There was just a chance that, in talking about herself like this, the woman might in some way reveal the key to the goodness he felt lay concealed in her soul.

"When I got out I tried to get work. But it was the old story. Every one was afraid to hire me. Thought I was a loose woman, I suppose. Then I got sick. The dampness in the cells brings that—bad lungs. Had to have food and medicine. I began to steal for them. I got caught. And there was my other jail record behind me. I went over the road again."

She shuddered and went on: "When I'd done my time I came back to find I was in the dregs. Then I began to take drugs, to drink—anything so's not to remember. Then Buck got hold of me. He was in the gutter by that time. You know the rest. More crime. And now. . . ."

Her voice trailed monotonously away. Judge Carew shook his head. The clue he sought had not been unearthed. And yet. . . . Suddenly, against all judicial precedent, he leaned forward, compelling her with his shrewd eyes.

"But why did you kill Crehan?"

Her voice was instantly wary. "It hasn't been proved that I did."

"But it will be proved."

"I'll wait for that time."

Her tone was matter-of-fact. He looked at her incredulously.

"See here," he asked in a low, strained voice, "if you've no fear of the court or death, isn't there at least enough decency left in you to make you fear some sort of higher power? Don't you believe in *something*?"

Her eyelids twitched. "I believe in Life," she answered. The Judge stared.

"Life! Just what do you mean by that?"

She shrugged her wasted shoulders as if at the futility of words.

"Sometime you'll know that for yourself. I think every one does—even if it's at the very last. It's the one thing—Life."

"And yet—you killed Crehan."

Her mouth sagged. She leaned back on the prisoner's bench and looked up directly into his probing eyes. It was almost as though she were suddenly at peace. Not a muscle of her face moved. Her voice came evenly.

"But I didn't mean to. Not that anyone will believe that, least of all a judge. I wouldn't expect it. I hit him on the head with a brass kettle—the edge of it. A heavy thing. The first thing I could reach. I only meant to stun him. But he just lay there, not moving. His face frightened me. He was drunk that night—and I couldn't stand his hurting Tan so. The little fellow was suffering with a broken leg. And he was the only thing that loved me. And when Buck struck him like that, and twisted him, and he gave that awful cry—"

Moaning, she hid her face with shaking hands.

"Tan? Who's Tan?"

Here, at last, was a light in the vast darkness surrounding the prisoner.

"My dog."

And Annie Crehan crumpled up like a stricken thing. The terrible sound of her crying echoed through the empty courtroom—the crying of a hardened woman, to whom tears have long been foreign.

She looked up at last, her face haggard.

"I'M glad I've spoken," she said. "It's a sort of relief, after all. I didn't mean to kill. The people in our street could have told you things. I only wanted to save Tan. And I think somehow, somewhere, Buck knows I didn't mean to do what I did. He knows—"

"You think that? You believe in immortality, then?"

"I believe in Life," she repeated. "You can kill flesh or minds, or even souls perhaps. But not Life. Life can't be killed."

Judge Carew moved uneasily.

"I am not sure that I understand."

"No. Probably not. But sometime you will. Everyone does. What are you going to do now? Tell them tonight? I almost wish you would. I want to have it over. Death will be easier than waiting. Will they electrocute me right off? Or what?"

He shook his head.

"No," he replied quite unexpectedly. "Yours is an unusual confession—outside the ordinary court precedents. I'm going to see what sort of defense can be made for you. Your case is in the hands of Attorney White—Seymour White. He'll make your fight for you."

She made a single weary gesture.

"What's the use? It's too late, Your Honor. No one would want to help me now. I'm down and out. It would be kinder just to let the end come as quickly as possible."

"But," he argued, "I want to help you. A really bad woman would not have fought as you did for the life of a dog. And, by the way, where is your dog now?"

She crouched lower.

"He died that night."

Judge Carew looked away for a moment, then back at the limp black figure. He was conscious of a sense of oppression, of suffocation almost.

He put out his hand and took hers.



"I don't know where you found your strange theory of Life," he said gently, "but it's a rather wonderful one. If nothing else can help you, perhaps Life itself will. There is always some hope left."

With a resignation that was somehow terrible she rose and let him lead her to the door where a guard was waiting to take her in charge.

All the way home the judge could think of nothing but the woman—her eyes, and the terrible sound of her crying. She was not utterly depraved. He found himself wondering, heavily, which was blacker, crime or hardness of heart. Love had been known to "cover a multitude of sins." This woman had loved only a dumb thing, it is true, but she had been loved in return. . . .

He had an intuition, as he drove on, that the wheel of Destiny was turning between Annie Crehan and the electric chair; that Life was withholding her from the whip of the law.

Later, in the privacy of his garden, Judge Carew smoked restlessly, waiting for the night. Dusk came on velvet feet, a slow, soft presence that shed peace about him. The moon was not yet risen. One big white star burned on the horizon. The smell of dew-drenched roses drifted on the night wind. The fountain laughed and gurgled, its silver voice like the voice of a nymph at play. Judge Carew tugged at his cigar without pleasure, his face furrowed. He was looking at the loney star. He was thinking of Annie Crehan. And he was very tired.

**S**UDDENLY he felt that he was not alone in the garden. He was conscious of eyes that watched. He told himself that it was a ridiculous fancy. Who could be here at this hour? He was over-tired, that was all, and stirred by Annie Crehan's curious talk of the afternoon.

What strange faiths the prisoner had! They were almost incredible in one of her type. He wished, recalling her vividly, that she had not had that haunted look in her dark eyes; wished that she had not told him about little Tan—and had not cried so bitterly. Years of judicial experience had never armed him fully against the strength of a woman's tears. They always unmanned him completely.

But again something stirred in the dim end of the garden. He heard a sigh. It was unmistakable. He sat up sharply and listened.

"Is anyone there?" he called nervously.

The hush which answered him was louder than sound. The silence was throbbing with inaudible vibrations. Then . . . the lilac bushes moved. There was a sound in the twilight of the pathway—a sound as of many little feet, marching, marching. . . . They were coming toward him. It was a procession. No, an army!

The judge stood up, breathless.

"Who's there?" he cried hoarsely. "Answer me! Who's moving there? What do you want?"

Silence.

Then, on the soft wind, came an answer. It was a chanting, as of many small voices!

"We are the lives that Annie Crehan tried to save. We are her friends who are coming to help her. We are her invisible protectors, her 'cloud of witnesses.' We are coming to help you to save her from the law. If you don't, *we* will! We will take her away—away with us."

And then he saw—as one sees shadow-shapes sometimes between waking and sleeping—the phantom forms of those who chanted. And their song was now:

"We are Life! We do not die. We are Life . . . Life . . . Life!"

The motley little group tramped past him, bandaged and splinted, their wounds stanching with white cloths of mercy, their dumb agony lessened by the tenderness of pitying hands.

There was a robin with a broken wing, a sparrow with a torn throat, a humming-bird with a wound in its tiny side, a pigeon stoned.

"It was Annie Crehan who saved us," they whispered, soft as the night wind in their passing. "Annie Crehan, who believes in Life. She healed all our sickness. She protected us and watched over us when there was no one else who would. *Annie Crehan!*"

---

*"He prayeth best who loveth best  
All things both great and small,  
For the dear God who loveth us  
He made and loveth all."*

**Thus spake the poet.**

**And Annie Crehan, who had  
loved and protected the dumb,  
helpless creatures of the city—  
sparrows with torn wings, horses  
starved and beaten, dogs with  
broken legs—found strange solace  
in her bare prison cell, even  
though the Law sentenced her  
to death as a murderess!**

---

**A**ND then came a cat with its breast rent asunder, another dragging a broken limb, a third whose eyes had been injured, a horse beaten nigh unto exhaustion. And behind them the procession stretched back to the very gates of the garden: dogs with torn flesh, bandaged eyes and battered limbs; horses starved and beaten and frozen—all of them rescued from death. The line of march seemed endless. And all the little spirit creatures seemed to lift beseeching eyes to the man who stood there a-tremble. They sang with love and gratitude of Annie Crehan, the savior of Life; of Annie Crehan, who had taken a life unwittingly, to save one of theirs.

And then walked at the feet of Judge Carew the figure of Tan. By the marking of his coat, the bandage on his shaggy leg, and the almost human love of his pleading eyes, did the judge know him.

Tan stopped. And, clearer than any mortal speech, Judge Carew heard and understood the tongue of the spirit within the

dumb thing. He listened with fast-beating heart. . . .

"Buck Crehan was a fiend," said Tan, "and Annie Crehan killed him only because he was killing me. He had beaten me until my body was almost dead. I was so little—and my leg was broken. I could not help myself. Buck Crehan has taken life over and over again. There was a murder on the pier once . . . Annie Crehan never told. She saved Buck Crehan's life by keeping still. Even when she killed him herself, she never meant to. He was a beast. Don't kill Annie Crehan for the thing she never meant to do!"

And suddenly it seemed to the Judge that there walked with Tan the Life that had been Buck Crehan himself. It was as though shadowy hands stretched out to him from every side—pleading, exhorting, demanding.

"Don't kill Annie Crehan!" ghostly voices cried. "She is not a bad woman. She is good. Her crimes were crimes of love—committed to save something or someone else. And

all the little lives she has saved surround her like a cloud. They are her witnesses. They protect her with an unseen veil. And the man that tears down that veil—must pay the price! His crime is greater than all of hers."

Moonlight silvered the rim of the world. The scent of roses—the little yellow roses shining like tiny moons along the outer wall of the darkened garden—was almost unbearably sweet. It was a fragrance compelling, forcing the Judge's attention like a presence. Across the black, wet grass, he saw the phantom army marching, marching—away from him—back into Eternity. Their wounds were healed now, their sorrows gone. They were strong and upright and at peace. And their chanting was borne back to him still.

"We are Life! We are Life . . . Life . . . Life!"

Judge Carew came to himself with a shock of surprise. A cold sweat dampened his face. Those little mites with their solemn chant—poor little beggars—why, they might actually have hobbled there before him! Annie Crehan's "Cloud of Witnesses"!

He sat down shakily. His limbs were cramped with mental tension, and he was conscious of a deep exhaustion. But some profound pulse of his being had been quickened. Material things had grown suddenly insignificant. The world was less to him than it had been.

**S**OMEONE touched his shoulder, and he found himself welcoming to the solitude of the garden his friend, Seymour White, the brilliant young lawyer who had undertaken the difficult defense of Annie Crehan.

White took off his hat. The moonlight silvered his strong face against the darkness. The wind lifted his hair as he bent to light a cigar.

"I'm tired," he said, throwing himself on the low bench beside the Judge. "This trial seems to pull me, somehow. Queer thing, the whole case. Can't seem to find any real means of defense. But neither can the other side condemn. There's something about the woman. . . . Have you noticed?"

"Yes. But to-morrow the wheel must turn, White."

"Turn? How?" The lawyer looked at him quickly, every professional faculty alert.

"She's confessed."

White's eyes closed, as though he had been struck. His voice returned on an indignant cry.

"Confessed! Good God! To whom? She's my client."

Judge Carew sat quietly.

"To me," he said. "I broke every custom and precedent of the profession and stayed to talk with her to-night. She's moved me out of all proportion to her case. As you say, there's something about her—"

White leaned forward and gripped the older man's hand. "Yes. Listen! It's madness, but I have an uncomfortable feeling all the time that she's being protected by some higher force than I, some force that no court in the world will be able to stand against, whatever its decision. It's uncanny. I've never handled any case like it. It makes me feel like a superstitious, sentimental fool. I can't understand myself. What did she have to say to you?"

Slowly Judge Carew told him. White seemed to turn to stone as he listened.

"Strange!" he declared again. "All very strange. And I can't help feeling sorry. Crehan was a curse to society, in every way. She's relieved us of him. And now," he shrugged, "we must kill her for doing us a good deed, for relieving us of a public menace."

But Judge Carew interrupted: "She won't be killed." The words were unexpected, and his tone carried conviction as he added: "She's protected."

"By whom?" A great astonishment was in White's voice.

"There are forces. . . ." The Judge hesitated and groped for the right words. "White, do you believe in life after death? No—I mean, do you believe there isn't any death? That everything has an undying spirit?"

White was slow to answer.

"I don't know," he confessed. "It isn't easy to feel sure of those things, however much one would like to. It would seem a sensible theory on the whole, though, that the Spark in us is above death. Science tells us positively that nothing is ever lost. Then why should the Life that is in us be?"

"Us!" echoed Judge Carew. "Have we the monopoly on Life, then? If we survive, why shouldn't all created things? Animals, for instance?"

He felt that White was smiling in the darkness, but the lawyer's voice was earnest.

"I don't know that either. But the essential idea isn't so bad, Judge. There are sects that hold to it. It's an old belief, perhaps as old as the race. And it's quite possible."

"White—" Judge Carew choked for a second, "I've never been anything but a practical man. You know that. I've never had time for fads and psychic phenomena; I've been too busy upholding the law. And, besides, I've never put much stock in those things. . . . I'm beginning to believe I may have been wrong, though. Time may prove that they've really been leading slowly to something higher all the while, and that we were still too near them, in our generation, to see it. But it's my sincere belief that this Annie Crehan is being helped by invisible intervention of some sort."

"But if she's confessed—if to-morrow the confession's known? Her past is all against her, you know. And I'm afraid her record is a pretty black one, for a woman, even though I'm fighting for her and want to see her win."

Again Carew cut in sharply: "You're mistaken, in one way. Her past is all *for* her—if we can get the jury to look at it rightly. Her crimes have all been crimes of love. I'd like to see you, as her lawyer, open some way for her real story to be told."

"And then?" White was interested with a more than merely professional interest.

Carew explained. "With men of reputation backing her, it can be proved that some abnormal impulse of the brain, or some physical cause in the body was responsible for the killing of Buck Crehan. Instead of the electric chair, the woman would get medical attention and rest, and a fresh chance in the world."

White was profoundly moved. The judge had edged close to one of his own unique theories pertaining to crime. His hand tightened against the back of the bench.

"**I** WISH it could be so," White said. "It's always been my firm belief—though I realize that it's a theory many years ahead of my generation—that crime can't be cold-blooded. There isn't any such thing. Not in *any* case. Crime of any sort seems to me an outward expression of some inner maladjustment. A normal and healthy person can control himself. He is not destructive, but constructive. I've walked through the prisons many times just to study faces in their relation to crime. And in every face, whatever the age or class of the individual, I've never failed to find the clue. There is always that little mark of betrayal. Crime is either insanity or physical abnormality. Go through the prisons some day, Judge, with just that in mind and make a study for yourself. It will convince you far better than words."

But the Judge replied: "I don't need to look outside of my courtroom. I've made my own little study there for years. And I want to help this prisoner on trial now. I've never been strong for the electric chair on circumstantial evidence. There's too much uncertainty about it, and too much of good in every human composition, if that good can only be reached. If it can't be reached, then, as you believe, there is need for medical treatment somewhere."

Silence fell again in the dim garden. The wind crept lightly among the trees. The fountain was as the voice of an oracle in the stillness. And to the melody of it Judge Carew still seemed to hear the marching of countless little feet.

Back from the moonlit horizon came the psalm of Annie

Crehan's dumb witnesses: "We are Life . . . Life . . . Life."

He wished that he could put his revelation into words—could tell White of it. But there are some things which defy communication, even to an old, tried friend.

Judge Carew awakened at dawn to a sense of impending ill. The premonition of approaching failure oppressed him like an actual weight. He rose and made ready to drive into town early. He felt a consuming desire to speak to White again before the doors of the court should open for the day.

When he reached the steps of the rambling brick building he saw that a little knot of women was gathered there before him. It was a pitiful little band; the kind of women who somehow manage to live on in unabating misery, and yet keep the truest instincts of womanhood.

ONE of them stepped up to the magistrate as he approached. She was a stout, puffy figure with wispy hair and sallow skin, her body swathed in a faded dress. A tousled, overgrown infant whined and fretted in her arms. The woman's face was filled with a stony look of worry. She accosted him in a terror of confusion—the confusion of the ignorant in the presence of those whom they have been taught to look upon as omniscient.

"Judge Carew—sir," she began breathlessly, "I've come a long way to tell you, sir, that I've knowed the prisoner, Annie Crehan, for years—and so's all these other women here. And she ain't guilty. We've knowed that from the first. She couldn't be. She's that kind, Judge Carew! Her sort don't take life. They couldn't kill a flea if they was to try. Why, I've see her time and time again, settin' and nursin' sick dogs and cats and birds and things. Always doin' for somethin' she was, and goin' without herself to do it. And when my young one was born . . . why, she come and set with me like a Sister of Mercy, so she did. And scrubbed and baked and did for my man. And this Buck Crehan—he was a brute. Ever'body our ways knows that. And knows how 'twas him as killed Dago John on the docks two years ago come Christmas. And Annie done white by him. She never made no fuss. 'Twas her keepin' a still mouth that's saved him more'n once. And the way he'd curse and beat and bully her quick's there was a drink in him! I've seen him try to drive her on the streets to git him drink money. She'd have to run to my man for help. She ain't guilty, Judge Carew. It ain't in her. All of us her's ready to swear the good we always see her do—if that'll help her any."

A gray, steely mask seemed to drop over the features of Carew's face. If this evidence had only been gathered earlier! If the woman had gone to White with this same story, something might have been done. But now—

"Unfortunately," he said crisply, "you've come too late, my good woman. The prisoner has already confessed. And we must accept the verdict of the law."

He pushed by and shut himself up alone in the court house.

The trial went against Annie Crehan. The heat had touched a sullen, responsive chord in the breasts of the mob that pushed its way into the court. They were inflamed. Their wrath had in it a quality of passion—for sensation, for conviction, for death.

White fought a good fight—so good that the jury and his opponents watched him with wondering eyes, and the whisper went around the court:

"If you didn't know who and what White was, you'd think he'd some connection with this Crehan woman, the way he's battling to get her clear."

He was pale to the lips and dripping perspiration. The moving power of his voice stirred tears more than once.

Annie Crehan herself was white and motionless. Once, as the jury filed out, she turned almost imperceptibly in her seat, and glanced up at Judge Carew. Her eyes were like bottomless pools in which Eternity was reflected. Then she looked away again—and it seemed to him that she smiled.

When the verdict was brought in, there was no outcry, no scene of violence. Annie Crehan accepted it silently. Her face did not change color. She sat a little straighter in her chair, that was all, and, reaching up, quietly arranged a pin in her hair. A shadow of horror crept over the room. That a woman could commit murder and be sentenced to execution and yet sit there quietly, in the sight of them all, smiling wordlessly and fixing her hair! The frenzied populace of an hour ago trooped away, cowed and silent. They were quelled by something unseen—something they felt, but could not pretend to understand.

White and the Judge went to speak to the condemned woman later on.

"There isn't much," Carew told her, "that anyone can say now. If there's anything we can do . . ."

White struggled with his collar.

"This heat!" he managed to mutter to Annie Crehan. "If it hadn't been for that, the mood of the crowd . . . I thought we'd win out for you. It doesn't seem yet that you— It's like a nightmare."

She smoothed the seam of her dress. Some of the haggardness had left her face. There was something almost rapt now about her smile.

"It's no matter," she said. "I never expected anything else. And now—there's something to look forward to at last. I'll be seeing Tan again. He was the only living thing that ever really loved me—that understood. I've had a feeling all last night that something, someone, was close to me. I shall be quite all right. I'm not afraid."

Her voice failed her for a moment.

Judge Carew's lips twisted with grim pain.

"If there's anything anyone can do for you—" he fretted.

She stood up and walked across the cold little cell and back again.

"If I could have a little bunch of yellow roses," she said unexpectedly, her words scarcely above a whisper. "I used to love them so when I was a little, clean thing, before—all this. They seem nearer than anything else I know to the sunshine. I think I dread leaving the sunshine most of all. I'm not afraid of dying. It's not that. Not really. But when I think of all the light and warmth and the goldenness of the sun—I get hurting, somehow, inside. Things *live* in the sunshine. You can't think much about death where sunlight is."

OUTSIDE, in the passage, both men were silent for a moment. Judge Carew, privileged as an older man, openly wiped his eyes.

"I'm going to drive out to the old garden," he said, striving to make his voice sound natural. "I never thought much about those little yellow roses along the back wall. I'm used to them. But now that I think of it, they *are* like sunshine—sunshine given form."

An hour later the two men returned, laden with fragrant sheaves of yellow-petaled roses to be sent in to Annie Crehan for the night. The matron, an old friend of both Judge and lawyer through years of association, took the golden burden from their arms and went in with it at once. The men's unusual sympathy for Annie Crehan had awakened in her a curiosity that deepened speedily to pity. She hoped that the flowers might bring a little comfort to those haunted eyes. Annie Crehan seemed to her a brave soul to face death without horror or protest. There had been others who had created scenes of panic—wild, primitive, and terrible, like animals caught in a death-trap. And the matron had heard the story of Tan. . . .

She was some little time in coming back. When she did, her face was contorted, her eyes wide. Her customary professional calm had been shattered like a glass veneer.

"Judge Carew," she stammered, "— Mr. White . . . I—something has happened. The nurse went right up. I took your roses in and I noticed—something—oh, I don't know! . . . She was lying on the (Continued on page 94)

## A Cloud of Witnesses

(Continued from page 47)

pallet with her hands flung out, and she was smiling. And in front of her, right up against her arm, there was a *dog!* As God is my judge, I'm telling you the truth. There was a dog there—and he was—just like the Tan she talked about. And the most terrible feeling came over me. I can't tell you—I felt as though her cell was full of living things. I could almost see their eyes watching me from somewhere—and then I ran out! *The woman is dead!*"

"If we could go up—" White suggested uncertainly.

In the dim cell they found Annie Crehan, smiling and at peace. All the sorrow and shame of her life had been washed from her face by the mysterious hand of Death, as a false sum is wiped from a slate. Her dark hair was loosened at one side and a stray wisp of it lay across her forehead, making her seem almost young. Her coarse dress was open at the throat, and beneath it the flesh shone smooth and white. About her neck hung a tarnished cross.

And in one thin hand, as though the

dead woman meant never to let it go, something of leather and metal was clutched.

In her excitement the matron had flung the judge's roses heedlessly across the inert figure, and now, sweet and yellow, they streamed over the hard floor of the cell, gleamed against the dull black dress of Annie Crehan, and lay like a caress on her calm face. The petals of one were close to her lips.

Judge Carew moved across the room on tip-toe, reverently. He bent to examine the thing in her hand.

It was a narrow, leathern collar, and on its mounted plate was engraved a single word—the word which told Annie Crehan's tragic story: *Tan*.

And suddenly to Judge Carew a Seymour White and to the matron the prison, there came from a distance a far sound, growing steadily fainter and further away.

It was the sound of little feet marching . . . marching. And as they marched, soft voices chanted, now in triumph, the Hymn of Life.