

Literature.

GUILTY.

"We find the prisoner at the bar guilty." The deathlike silence which had prevailed the courtroom was broken by the sobs of women, and strong men made no effort to conceal their emotion.

The prisoner, a woman scarcely more than a girl, who had stood through it all like a graven image, gazing with a wide, horror-stricken eyes over that sea of faces turned and slowly raising her eyes looked up into the face of a young man standing beside her.

She had told her story simply when they came to her, reckless that each word she uttered was an added link in the chain of evidence they were forging about her.

"You think me guilty of this fearful deed," she said, "you who have known me from my childhood. I would not harm the tiniest of God's creatures, much less hurl a soul unprepared into the presence of its Maker. It is true, I have said I hated her and wished that she were dead, but oh, not this. She boasted of her power to win from me my lover, and when in my happy security I laughed her to scorn she turned her flashing eyes upon me and vowed to prove her words."

They shuddered, remembering how upon that fatal evening, as they sat underneath the wide spreading branches of the grand old trees watching the great moon rise in the east, Rose Carrington, springing to her feet, had said, "I claim your promise, Mr. Caren, to show me the view from the cliff by moonlight."

As Ralph Caren arose to comply with her request a tiny bunch of violets which his affianced had fastened in his button hole became detached and dropped to the ground. As he stopped to restore them to their resting place Rose had said, looking up at him with eyes soft and melting and with a strange tremulousness in her voice, "Why should you stoop to pluck a violet when you may wear a rose?" and from her bosom took a blood red rose and fastened it upon his breast.

Violet grew deadly pale, and as they slowly walked away she quietly withdrew and sought the privacy of her own apartment, where in very abandonment of grief and bounded love she sobbed: "Oh, why should she come here to spoil my life? I have never harmed her, and yet she steals from me my dearest treasure. I hate her, and I wish that she were dead."

And in the dewy freshness of a summer morning they had found her lying cold and still, her great, black eyes staring up into the azure depths of the sky, a look of unutterable horror frozen upon her face, while plunged into her heart was a tiny dagger upon whose quaintly carved hilt could be dimly traced the letters V. R.

Ralph Caren and Violet Ried had been lovers always.

Ralph was the only son and heir of the proprietor of the extensive woolen mills of which the little town of Lenox boasted and Violet, who was the petted darling of a widowed, childless aunt, had never missed a mother's love and care.

Each smiled approval, and life was a veritable Eden until the serpent found entrance there.

Ralph had no thought of disloyalty to his betrothed, but he was flattered by the evident preference of this beautiful woman, who had undoubtedly never been compelled to seek for lovers, and who claimed as if it were her right the admiration and devotion of all men with whom she came in contact. To onlookers it was evident that she was deeply in earnest, and determined to win the love of Ralph Caren at whatever cost to Violet.

From whence Rose Carrington had come no one knew. Beautiful, with unlimited wealth at her command, why she had not sought some popular resort and reigned an undisputed queen of beauty and fashion was an enigma too deep for solution.

Her maid had said, "Miss Carrington was weary of society and wished to pass the summer in restful quiet."

Of the last walk to the cliff Ralph spoke reluctantly. "An incident had occurred," he said, "which, although startling, could have no possible bearing upon the case. As we started on our homeward way and were entering the belt of timber which skirts the base of the cliff, a dark, sinister looking man stepped suddenly out from the shadows and placed himself directly in our path. Fixing his eyes insolently upon the face of Rose, he laughed sneeringly, and muttered something in a foreign tongue. I sprang forward to avenge the insult, but too late, the man had disappeared in the darkness. My first thought was of pursuit, but a strange cry from Miss Carrington brought me to her side. She stood with one arm upraised as if to ward off a blow. A deadly terror was in her eyes, a gasp-

ing, choking cry escaped her, and she tottered toward me and fell into my arms in a death-like swoon. I carried her to a little stream nearby, and bathed her forehead in its cooling waters. After a time she slowly opened her eyes and gazed about her in a bewildered manner. Then she caught her breath in a nervous gasp, and, rising to her feet, said: "It was the fright. Please take me home."

Violet, raving in delirium upon her prison cot, was blissfully unconscious of either joy or sorrow. Now she was a merry child, innocent and happy, now a loving maiden with a woman's hopes and longings, but never a shunned and guilty thing, crouching in her prison cell, torn by remorse, despairing and desolate. The good old doctor gravely shook his head as each day found her more pale and wan, and pitifully murmured: "It is better so. Poor child, if she could but die." At last the fever subsided, and she lay white and frail like a broken lily, her mind a blank. No memories of the past disturbed her. Life was to her only the present, with no past, no future, and so justice stayed her hand and forebore to pass the righteous sentence of the law upon this helpless one standing upon the borderland of eternity.

And thus matters stood when a fearful calamity overtook the quiet little town nestling among New England Hills. A terrific explosion had occurred at the mills, and dead and dying were lying in indiscriminate heaps. Ralph, with face white and stern, worked heroically. A hand was laid upon his arm. Turning, he saw standing beside him a boy, breathless and terror-stricken. "A man is dying at the hospital," he gasped, "and asks for you, and I am to bid you to make haste, before it is too late." Ralph followed his guide, who piloted him between the rows of dead and dying to the side of a hastily constructed cot somewhat apart from the rest.

"What can I do for you, my poor man?" Ralph said gently as he gazed upon the disfigured face.

"You do not recognize me sir," to Ralph "but perhaps you will remember one evening at the foot of the cliff the man who startled Rose Carrington by appearing suddenly before her. I am that man, and I confess now on my dying bed that it was my hand that plunged into her traitorous heart the blade which let her life blood out."

"My name is Vincent Reynolds, and Rose was my wife. Ah! how I loved her, but she never was true. She forsook me. She left her babe to die. I followed her, and on my knees I pleaded with her to return with me. I swore that if she did not I would kill her, and she knew that I would keep my vow. It was whispered to me that she had a wealthy lover, and it drove me mad. She told me that this was false, and with her soft words and caressing touch she cooled the fever in my brain and said to come tomorrow when I was calm, and she would talk to me. Tomorrow came but she had fled with him. Since that time I had sought for her with one purpose in my heart to take her life."

"She understood that night that she must meet me, and she stole out as I knew she would. She used all her arts upon me. She told me he was dead, that she was wealthy, and together we could be happy as in the olden time. My heart was still. She knelt to me, she prayed to me, she threw herself into my arms, and while I held her on my breast I plunged into her heart the blade which drank her blood and silenced her false tongue. Why was I so hard? I saw her in the moonlight when she flung herself at your feet, Ralph Caren, and begged you to love her. I saw her kiss your hands and bathe them with her tears. It turned my blood to fire and had you been less the man you were I should have killed you there and then, but you were honorable, and what I say to you now will make amends perhaps for what you and that poor girl who lies in yonder prison cell have suffered through me. Pray, pray, it is not too late!

For Violet the only hope of life had been quiet and absolute freedom from excitement but when Ralph came, his face beaming with happiness, presented himself and demanded admittance, a consultation was held, and it was decided that he was the proper person to carry to his affianced the glad news of her vindication.

Ralph had not seen Violet since the terrible day when the verdict was announced, and although he had sought admittance each day he had been steadily denied.

It was a subject of much doubt whether in her present condition Violet could be brought to recognize him or comprehend the object of his visit. They could but try, and a "sudden shock" had been known to restore a dormant intellect.

How frail she looked lying there with her transparent hands clasped upon her breast, her large eyes fixed in a vacant stare, taking no heed of passing events. As Ralph stepped across the threshold of the prison cell a wave of tenderest love and pity filled his heart.

Softly he approached the couch upon which Violet was reclining. He knelt beside her, and taking in his little hands, he stroked them tenderly, while great sobs shook his manly frame.

"Violet," he murmured, "do you not know me, dear? It is Ralph, Ralph Caren, who speaks to you."

Her gaze wandered to his face and settled there, at first vacant and unsee-

ing, but gradually growing more intent, and at last with an interest and questioning which all watched breathlessly.

"Violet I have come for you, dear, to take you away from this sad place, to take you home. Do you hear, Violet, to take you home?"

Like a great wave recollection swept over her. She turned her troubled eyes to the grated windows, of her prison and sobbed out weakly and faintly, "Ralph, oh, Ralph."

Holding her closely to his heart, Ralph slowly and cautiously told her the story of the crime. She listened, a look of ineffable peace upon her white face, and when he had finished she removed her eyes for the first time from his face and turned them towards Heaven.

Clasping her trembling hands upon her bosom, she murmured brokenly in a voice inaudible save to him who held her on his heart. "Dear Lord, I thank thee—for this—thy last—great—mer—cy."

She spoke no more. Her hands were still clasped, her eyes still looking heavenward.

"Oh, Violet!" moaned Ralph as he kissed her unresponsive lips, "my Violet."

She did not hear. Her ears caught but the welcoming chorus of angels, her eyes saw only the glories of the celestial city, a smile rested upon her parted lips, across her face a gray shadow crept, and, like a white dove, her pure soul spread its snowy pinions and soared upward toward the gates of heaven.

They carried her back to the home whose light and joy she had been for many happy years. In the darkened parlor, heavy with the fragrance of flowers, she lay, a slim, white shape. Upon her quiet breast pale lilies drooped their perfumed cups, and purple violets nestled lovingly against her marble cheek. As Ralph stood beside her, his heart bursting with grief, a ray of sunlight stealing through the half closed shutters rested like a benediction upon her shining hair.

Over his troubled spirit a sweet calm crept. He stooped and kissed her waxen cheek.

"Farewell, farewell, until I greet you in heaven, my Violet."

TEMPERANCE COLUMN.

Contributed by the I. O. G. T.

PROHIBITION.

By Rose Hartwick Thrope.

The Doctor rose, "Yes friends, I favor License for selling of rum. These fanatics tell us with horror Of the mischief liquor has done, I say as a man and physician, The system's requirements are such That, unless we, at times, assist nature Both body and mind suffer much. 'Tis a blessing when worn out and weary— A moderate drink now and then.' From the minister back behind the pulpit Comes an audible murmur, 'Amen.'

'Yes, true that many have fallen, Became filthy drunkards, and worse, Harmed others—no, I don't uphold them, They made their blessing a curse; Must I be denied for their sinning? Must the weak ones govern the race? Why! every good thing God has given Is a terror and curse out of place! 'Tis only excess that destroys us, A little is good now and then. From the gray-haired, pious old deacon, Comes a fervent, loud-spoken, 'Amen.'

A murmur arose from the people, From the lips of the listening throng, They came from their homes with a purpose To crush out, and trample out, wrong. But their time honored worthy, physician, Grown portly in person and purse, Had shown in the demon of darkness, A blessing instead of a curse. And now they were eager, impatient, To vote, when the moment should come, They feel it their right and their duty, To license the selling of rum.

Then up from a seat in the corner, From the midst of a murmuring throng, From among the people there gathered, To crush out, and trample out wrong, Rose a woman, her thin hands extended, While out from the frost covered hair, Gazed a face as if chiseled in marble; A face stamped in utter despair.

The vast throng grew hushed in a moment Grew silent with terror and dread. They gazed on the face of the woman As we gaze on the face of the dead. Then the hush and the silence was broken, And a voice so shrill and so clear Rang out through the room: 'Look upon me, You wonder what chance brought me here. You know me and now you all hear me, I speak to you, lovers of wine, For once I was young, rich and happy, Home, husband and children were mine.

'Where are they? I ask you where are they? My beautiful home went to pay The deacon who sold them the poison, That dragged them down lower each day. I plead, I besought, I entreated;

I showed them the path they were in, But the deacon said—they believed him, 'That only excess was the sin.'

'Where are they? I ask you where are they? False teacher of God's holy word, My husband, my kind loving husband, Whom my prayers and tears would have stirred, Remembered your teachings, turned from me, My kneeling and pleading with him, 'A God-given blessing,' you told him, 'And only excess was the sin.'

'And where are my boys? God forgive you, They heeded your counsels, not mine, You, doctor, beloved and respected Could see no danger in wine. For my boys, brave tender and manly, How could I hope ever to win? When the doctor said, 'Twas a blessing And only excess was the sin.'

'There were hands reached out for their ruin, Mine only was reached to save, The lie side by side in your churchyard, Each filling a drunkard's grave. I have come from the poor-house to tell you My story, and now it is done. Go on, if you will, in your madness, And license the selling of rum.'

'Before the great judgement eternal, When the last dread moment has come, They'll stand there to witness against you My dear ones, the victims of rum. When the shadows of earth are lifted, And life's secret thoughts are laid bare, By the throne of the great Eternal I shall witness against you there.'

This incident is true. When the woman had finished her story, the people including the minister, the doctor and the deacon, voted with one accord for prohibition.

COOK'S ANODYNE LINIMENT.

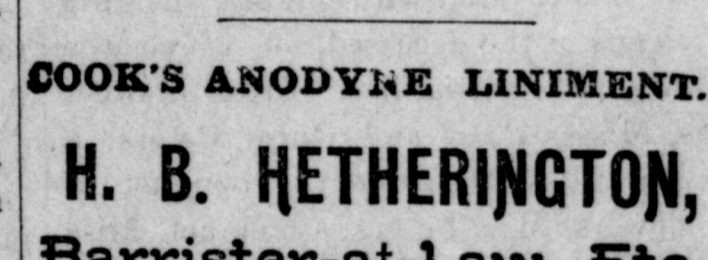
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