

POETRY.

CHICKENS HOME TO ROOST.

The world is wide and the faithful tide Returns to the welcome sands; It's often true that the work we do Comes back to its maker's hands.

SELECT STORY.

BERYL BRENTANO

THE SAPPHIRE OF THE SOUTH.

CHAPTER VI.

"I think I must have been only half awake, and with my mind fixed on my dream, I ran out in front of the station-house. An old negro man limping down the track was the only person visible, and while I watched him he suddenly vanished."

CHAPTER VII.

THE WARDEN'S WIFE.

In ante bellum days, when States' Rights was a sacred faith, a revered and precious palladium, state pride blossomed under southern skies, and state officers overflowed with the abundance whereof God blessed the land."

Those who watched her so closely, saw the blood ebb from cheeks and lips; noted the ashy pallor that succeeded, and the strange groping motion of her hands. She staggered toward the platform, and when the magistrate caught her arms, she fell against him like some tottering marble image, entirely unconscious."

So prolonged and death-like was the restoration, and so futile the usual methods of resuscitation, that the prisoner was carried into the small ante-room, and laid upon a wooden bench; where a physician, who chanced to be in the audience, was summoned to attend her. Finding restoratives ineffectual, he took up his lancet."

"No, doctor; cut out the sleeve, if necessary, but don't touch her otherwise." "Let me assist you; I can easily bare the arm."

"Just hold the hand, Dunbar, so as to keep it steady." Clasp closely the hand, which the physician laid in his palm, the attorney noted the exquisite symmetry of the slender fingers and oval nails. He bent forward and watched the frozen face. When the heavily-lashed lids quivered and lifted, and she looked vacantly at the grave, compassionate countenance leaning over her, a certain tightening of the hold upon her fingers drew her attention. Her gaze fastened on the lawyer's blue eyes as if by a subtle malign fascination. The veil that shrouded consciousness was read, not fully raised; and as in some dream the solemn eyes appeared to search his. A strange, shivering thrill shot along his nerves, and his quiet, well-regulated heart, so long the docile, obedient motor, fettered vassal of his will, bounded, strained hard on the steel cable that held it in thrall."

"You feel better now?" asked the physician, who was stanching the flow of blood. Still her gaze seemed to penetrate the inmost recesses of the lawyer's nature, calling into sudden revolt dormant elements that amazed and defied him.

wrenching herself free, she struggled into a sitting posture, then staggered to her feet. The heavy coil of hair, loosened when they bore her from the court-room, now released itself from restraining pins, and fell in burnished waves to her knees, clothing her with a glory, such as the world's great masters in art reserve for the beautiful. Had all the blood that fed her heart been drained, she would not have appeared more dead than pale; and in her wide eyes was the desperate look of a doomed animal, that feels the hot fangs of the hounds and the cold steel of the hunters."

"Be persuaded, for your own sake, to swallow some stimulant, of which you are sadly in need. You will require all your strength, and as a physician, I insist upon your taking my prescription."

"What will be done now?" "Every eye fell to the floor, and after a painful silence Judge Dent said very gently: "For the present, the magistrate will retain you in custody, until the action of the grand jury, should they fail to indict you, then you will at once be released."

"I am to go to prison? I am to be thrust among convicts, vile criminals! I—? My father's Beryl? O, righteous God! where is Thy justice? O Christ! Is Thy mercy a mockery?"

She stood, with her chin resting on her clinched hands, and twice a long violent shudder shook her from head to foot. I hope your imprisonment will be only temporary. The grand jury will be in session next week. Meantime diligent search may discover the persons whose consideration you overheard at the station; and if you be innocent, we are all your friends, and the law, which now seems so stern, will prove your strongest protector and vindicator."

Judge Dent stood beside her, as he essayed these words of comfort, and saw that she caught her breath as though in mortal agony. Her face whitened, and she shut her eyes, unable to contemplate some hideous apparition. He suspected that she was fighting desperately an impulse that suggested murder; and he was sure she had strangled it, when her hands were still and she started up, and she raised her bowed head. If the finger of paralysis had passed over her features, they would not have appeared more hopelessly fixed. Mechanically she twisted and coiled her hair, and took the hat and shawl which the officer held out to her."

"If I can assist you in any way, you have only to send for me." She looked at Judge Dent intently for an instant, then shook her head. "No one can help me now."

She died, her veil over her face, and silently followed the deputy sheriff to a carriage that stood near the pavement. When he would have assisted her, she haughtily repelled him. "I will follow you, because I must; but do not put your hands on me."

CHAPTER VII. THE WARDEN'S WIFE. In ante bellum days, when States' Rights was a sacred faith, a revered and precious palladium, state pride blossomed under southern skies, and state officers overflowed with the abundance whereof God blessed the land. During that period, when it became necessary to select a site for a penitentiary, the authority and central location of X— had so strongly commended it, that the spacious structure was erected within its limits, and regarded as an architectural triumph of the old state might justify boast. Some after this had been completed, the old county jail was burned one windy March night. Thus it came to pass that, with the exception of a small lookout, attached to police headquarters, X— had failed to rebuild its jail, and domiciled its dangerous transgressors in the great stone prison; paying therefore to the state an annual amount per capita. Built of grey granite, which darkened with time and weather stains, its massive walls, machicolated roof, and tall, arched clock tower lifted their leaden outlines against the sky, and cast a brooding shadow over the town lying below; a grim, peering flanking the main edifice east and west resembled the trailing wings of some vast bird of prey, an exaggerated simulacrum of a monstrous grey condor perched on a "coigne of vantage," waiting to swoop upon its victims. Encircled by a tall brick wall, which was surmounted by iron spikes, and with a chain of barbed casicles, the grounds extended to the verge of the swift stream in front, and stretched back to the border of a heavily timbered tract of pine land, a bit of primeval forest left to stare at the encroaching armies of Philistinism.

Within the precincts of the yard, the tender conservatism of our great-hearted mother Nature gently toned the savage, stony features; and even under the chill frown of iron barred windows, golden sunshine bravely smiled, soft grasses wove their emerald velvet tapestries starred and flushed with dainty satin petals, which late autumn roses showered in munificent contribution, to the work of pitying love. In a comfortably furnished room situated in the second story of the main building, sat a woman, apparently thirty-five years old, who was singing to a baby lying face downward on her lap, while with one hand she rocked the wicker cradle beside her, where a boy of four years was tossing. Her hazel eyes were full of kindly light, the whole face eloquent with that patient, limitless tenderness, which is the magic charm of maternity, wherewith Lucia and Cuba abundantly anoint motherhood. The blessed and infallible nepenthe for all childhood's ills and aches, mother touch, mother song, soon held soothing sway; and when the woman held the sleeping babe on her own bed, and covered her with a shawl, she saw her husband leaning against the partly-open door.

"Come here, Susie. The kids are snug and safe for the present, and I want you." "For shame, Ned! To call our darlings such a beastly name! Kids, indeed! My sweetest, loveliest hands!" "There! Here yourself! If I can see any choice of respectability between kids and lambs, may I turn to a thorough-bred Southdown, and take the blue ribbon at the next fair. Beasts of the field, all of them. The alway-awake-contrariness of womankind is a curious and fearful thing."

He put his hands on his wife's shoulders, shook her, and kissed her. "What do you want of my 'alway-awake-contrariness? I have half a mind not to help you out of your scrape; and you are making me miserable somewhere. What is the matter now, Ned?" "Yes; stuck hard and fast. So my dear little woman, don't you go back on your wedding-day promises, but just lend a helping hand. I don't know what is to

be done with that poor young woman in No. 19. One of the under-wardens, Jarvis, sleeps this week right under her cell, and he tells me that all night long she tramps up and down, without cessation, like some caged animal. This is her third day, and she has not touched a morsel; though, at Judge Dent's request, I ordered some extras given her. Jarvis said she would not sullen, but he thought it proper to report to me that she seemed to eat very strangely, so I went up to see after her. When I opened the door, she was walking up and down the floor, with her hands locked at the back of her head, and I declare, Susie, she looks five years older than when she came here. There are great dark hollows under her eyes, and two red spots like coals of fire on her cheeks. I said, 'Are you sick that you reject your meals?' To which she replied, 'Don't trouble yourself to send me food; I cannot eat.' Then I told her I understood that she was restless at night, and I advised her to take a mixture which would quiet her nerves. She shook her head, and I could not bear to look at her; the eyes seemed so like a wounded fawn's, brimful of misery. I asked her if there was anything I could do, to make her more comfortable, or if she needed medicine. All this time she kept up her quick walk to and fro, and she answered, 'Thank you; I need nothing—but but, and that will come soon.' Now what could I say? I felt such a lump in my throat, that if Solomon had whispered to me some kind speech I could not have uttered it; so I got out of the room just as fast as possible, to dry the tears that somehow would blur my eyes. When they are early or snappish, or violent, or insolent, I know exactly what to do, and have no trouble; but hang me if I know what to do with this lady—there she is out! She is a lady, every inch, and as much out of place here as I should be in Queen Victoria's drawing-room. Men are clumsy brutes, even in kid gloves, and bridle much other than their heads. Whenever I am in the girl's presence, I have a queer feeling that am walking on eggs, and tip-toe as I may, shall smash things. If something is not done, she will be ill on our hands, and a funeral will walk the bloodhounds."

"Oh, hush, Ned! You give me the shivers. My heart yearns toward that beautiful young creature, and I believe she is as innocent as my baby. It is a burning shame to send her here, unless there is no doubt of her guilt. Judge Dent is too shrewd an old fox to be baited with chaff, and I am satisfied, from what he told you, that he believed her innocent. There is nothing I would not do to comfort her, but I would rather have my ears boxed than witness her suffering. The day I carried to her a change of clothes, until her own could be washed, and sewed up her dress sleeve, I did nothing but cry. I could not help it when she massed and wrung her hands, and said her mother's heart would break. I have heard all my life that justice is blind; I have learned to believe it, for it stumbles and gropes, and lays iron claws on the wrong person. As for the lawyers? They are fit pilots; and the courts are a like better than blind man's bluff. Don't stand chewing your moustache, Ned. Tell me what you want me to do, while baby is asleep. She had a vexatious habit of taking cat naps."

"Little woman, I turn the case over to you. Just let your heart loose and follow it." "If I do, will you endorse me?" "Till the stars fall." "Can you stay here awhile?" "Yes, if you will tell Jarvis where he can find me." "Mind you, Ned, you are not to interfere with me." "No; I swear I won't. Hurry up, or there will be much music in this bleating fiddle; and you know I am as utterly useless with a crying child as an armed man in a concert of fiddlers." "The cell which I have assigned to the warden's wife, is in the centre of a line, which reaches above tier, like the compartments in a pigeon-hole, or the sombre caves hewn out of rock-ribbed cliffs, in some lonely Laura. Iron stairways conducted the unfortunate to these stone cages, where the dim cold light filtered through the iron lattice work of the upper part of the door, made a perpetual crepuscular atmosphere within. When Mrs. Singleton stopped in front of No. 19, and looked through the grating, Beryl was standing at the extremity of the cell, with her face turned to the wall, and her hands clasping the back of her neck. The ceiling was so low she could have touched it had she lifted her arms, and she appeared to have retreated as far in the gloomy den as the barred allowance. Thinking that perhaps the girl was praying, the warden's wife waited some minutes, but no sound greeted her; and so motionless was the figure, that it might have been only an alto-relievo carved on the wall. Pushing the door open, Mrs. Singleton entered, and deposited on the iron bed a water covered with a snowy napkin. At the sound Beryl turned, and her arms fell to her sides, the shawl and back against the wall as if solitude were her only solace, and human intrusion an added torture. Mrs. Singleton took both hands and held them firmly. "Do you believe it right to commit suicide?" "I believe in everything but human justice and Divine mercy." "Your conscience tells you that—"

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be done with that poor young woman in No. 19. One of the under-wardens, Jarvis, sleeps this week right under her cell, and he tells me that all night long she tramps up and down, without cessation, like some caged animal. This is her third day, and she has not touched a morsel; though, at Judge Dent's request, I ordered some extras given her. Jarvis said she would not sullen, but he thought it proper to report to me that she seemed to eat very strangely, so I went up to see after her. When I opened the door, she was walking up and down the floor, with her hands locked at the back of her head, and I declare, Susie, she looks five years older than when she came here. There are great dark hollows under her eyes, and two red spots like coals of fire on her cheeks. I said, 'Are you sick that you reject your meals?' To which she replied, 'Don't trouble yourself to send me food; I cannot eat.' Then I told her I understood that she was restless at night, and I advised her to take a mixture which would quiet her nerves. She shook her head, and I could not bear to look at her; the eyes seemed so like a wounded fawn's, brimful of misery. I asked her if there was anything I could do, to make her more comfortable, or if she needed medicine. All this time she kept up her quick walk to and fro, and she answered, 'Thank you; I need nothing—but but, and that will come soon.' Now what could I say? I felt such a lump in my throat, that if Solomon had whispered to me some kind speech I could not have uttered it; so I got out of the room just as fast as possible, to dry the tears that somehow would blur my eyes. When they are early or snappish, or violent, or insolent, I know exactly what to do, and have no trouble; but hang me if I know what to do with this lady—there she is out! She is a lady, every inch, and as much out of place here as I should be in Queen Victoria's drawing-room. Men are clumsy brutes, even in kid gloves, and bridle much other than their heads. Whenever I am in the girl's presence, I have a queer feeling that am walking on eggs, and tip-toe as I may, shall smash things. If something is not done, she will be ill on our hands, and a funeral will walk the bloodhounds."

"Oh, hush, Ned! You give me the shivers. My heart yearns toward that beautiful young creature, and I believe she is as innocent as my baby. It is a burning shame to send her here, unless there is no doubt of her guilt. Judge Dent is too shrewd an old fox to be baited with chaff, and I am satisfied, from what he told you, that he believed her innocent. There is nothing I would not do to comfort her, but I would rather have my ears boxed than witness her suffering. The day I carried to her a change of clothes, until her own could be washed, and sewed up her dress sleeve, I did nothing but cry. I could not help it when she massed and wrung her hands, and said her mother's heart would break. I have heard all my life that justice is blind; I have learned to believe it, for it stumbles and gropes, and lays iron claws on the wrong person. As for the lawyers? They are fit pilots; and the courts are a like better than blind man's bluff. Don't stand chewing your moustache, Ned. Tell me what you want me to do, while baby is asleep. She had a vexatious habit of taking cat naps."

"Little woman, I turn the case over to you. Just let your heart loose and follow it." "If I do, will you endorse me?" "Till the stars fall." "Can you stay here awhile?" "Yes, if you will tell Jarvis where he can find me." "Mind you, Ned, you are not to interfere with me." "No; I swear I won't. Hurry up, or there will be much music in this bleating fiddle; and you know I am as utterly useless with a crying child as an armed man in a concert of fiddlers." "The cell which I have assigned to the warden's wife, is in the centre of a line, which reaches above tier, like the compartments in a pigeon-hole, or the sombre caves hewn out of rock-ribbed cliffs, in some lonely Laura. Iron stairways conducted the unfortunate to these stone cages, where the dim cold light filtered through the iron lattice work of the upper part of the door, made a perpetual crepuscular atmosphere within. When Mrs. Singleton stopped in front of No. 19, and looked through the grating, Beryl was standing at the extremity of the cell, with her face turned to the wall, and her hands clasping the back of her neck. The ceiling was so low she could have touched it had she lifted her arms, and she appeared to have retreated as far in the gloomy den as the barred allowance. Thinking that perhaps the girl was praying, the warden's wife waited some minutes, but no sound greeted her; and so motionless was the figure, that it might have been only an alto-relievo carved on the wall. Pushing the door open, Mrs. Singleton entered, and deposited on the iron bed a water covered with a snowy napkin. At the sound Beryl turned, and her arms fell to her sides, the shawl and back against the wall as if solitude were her only solace, and human intrusion an added torture. Mrs. Singleton took both hands and held them firmly. "Do you believe it right to commit suicide?" "I believe in everything but human justice and Divine mercy." "Your conscience tells you that—"

yet; the grand jury may not find a true bill. "Yes, that tiger-eyed lawyer will see that they do. He knows that the law is a cunning net for the feet of the innocent and the unwary. He sets his snare deviously, and he will not fail to watch it." "You mean Mr. Dunbar? Yes, you certainly have cause to dread him; but even if you should be indicted, you have twelve human hearts full of compassion to appeal to—and I can't think it possible a jury of sane men could look at you and condemn you. You must fight for your life; and what is far more to you than life, you must fight for your good name, for your character. Suspicion is not proof of crime, and there is no taint on you yet; for sin alone stains, and if you will only be brave and clear yourself as I know you can, what a grand triumph it will be. If you starve yourself you seal your doom. An empty stomach will do you more harm than the grand jury and the law; for it utterly upsets your nerves, and makes your brain whirl like a top. For three days and nights you have not tasted food; now just to please me, since I have taken so much trouble, sit down here by me, and eat what I have brought. I know you would rather not; but I don't want it, but my dear child, take it like any other dose, which will strengthen you for your battle. It is very fine to rant about heroism, but starvation is the best factory for turning out cowards; and even the courage of old Greece would have had the 'dwindles,' if he had been starved in his ration." She removed the napkin, and displayed a tempting luncheon, served in pretty-gilt-edged white china. What a contrast it presented to the steaming tin plates and dull tin quart cups carried daily to the adjoining cell! Beryl laid her hand on Mrs. Singleton's shoulder, and her mouth trembled. "I thank you, sincerely, for your sympathy—and for your confidence; and to show my appreciation of your kindness, I wish I could eat that dainty luncheon; but I don't think I could. I have such a ceaseless aching here, in my throat. I feel as if I should die."

"See here! I brought you some sweet rich milk in my little boy's cup. He was my first-born, and I lost him. This was his christening present from my mother. It is very precious, for only the good will only drink what is in it, I shall be satisfied. Don't slight my angel baby's cup. That would hurt me." Mrs. Singleton took the cup, looked wistfully at it, and kissed the name engraved on the metal. "You know now I must thank you pure and worthy. I have given you the strongest possible proof, for only the good could be allowed to touch what my dead boy's lips have consecrated. Now come out with me, and get some pure, fresh air." Beryl shook her head. "These cold walls seem a friendly shelter from the horrible faces that cluster round you. You can't see how I dread contact with the vile creatures, whose crimes have brought them here for expiation. The thought of breathing the same atmosphere pollutes me. I think the loathsomeness of perdition must consist in association with the depraved and wicked. You can't see how I dread contact with the vile creatures, whose crimes have brought them here for expiation. The thought of breathing the same atmosphere pollutes me. I think the loathsomeness of perdition must consist in association with the depraved and wicked. You can't see how I dread contact with the vile creatures, whose crimes have brought them here for expiation. The thought of breathing the same atmosphere pollutes me. I think the loathsomeness of perdition must consist in association with the depraved and wicked. You can't see how I dread contact with the vile creatures, whose crimes have brought them here for expiation. The thought of breathing the same atmosphere pollutes me. I think the loathsomeness of perdition must consist in association with the depraved and wicked. 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