

The Counsel For Defence

The great counsel sat in his solitary chambers and looked at a photograph. It was a portrait of a girl with a flower-like face and eyes that might have influenced the life of a man from birth to death. Those eyes had looked into the eyes of him who now held that portrait, and the lips of their owner had given him his answer.

"I esteem you, Sir Robert, and I think very, very much of you, but I cannot marry you, for I love another man."

Sir Robert Herrick had bowed his head humbly on hearing his dismissal, and had gone away bearing in his heart and brain the image of the girl whom he had loved and whom he had lost.

"By heavens!" he murmured, as he glanced at the portrait. "I think I would give up all my honors, all my wealth, everything that I have won, and begin life again as a poor clerk if I might hold her in my arms and have her with me to guide me on."

But the dream had worn to an end now, he told himself, and nothing remained save the dust and ashes of what had been a rose-tinged hope. He must put Beryl out of his memory for ever, and find distraction in the work that lay before him.

Even as this resolution flashed into the great barrister's heart the door opened and his clerk entered bearing a slip of paper.

"Great powers, it is her writing," he muttered, and then read the written words in a low tone:

"Am in terrible trouble. Can you see me for a few minutes?—B. H."

"Ask the lady to come in at once, Simonds," he said, quickly, and a moment later Beryl Harding stood before him.

The girl was deadly white, but her face was as beautiful as ever. She came towards him with outstretched hands.

"This is indeed a surprise," said the barrister, endeavoring to speak calmly. "I am very glad to see you. Will you sit down?"

"No, no; I am too agitated—too anxious to remain still for a moment," she replied. "Nothing but the direst necessity, Sir Robert, would have brought me here to see you, for I cannot forget the circumstances under which we said good-bye."

"We will try and forget," he said, kindly. "Tell me how I can serve you."

For answer she snatched a newspaper from her pocket and pointed to a paragraph headed "Strange Forgery Case." The paragraph stated that a young man of good family called Richard Hope had been charged at a West London police court with having forged an acceptance for a very large sum.

"That man is my accepted lover," she said, huskily, "and if he is convicted I shall die of grief."

So this, then, was his rival, pondered Robert Herrick. It was for this young, irresponsible madman that she had abandoned the true and deep affection which he had placed at her feet.

"Why do you show me this paragraph?" he asked at length, in a cold tone.

"Because I want you to undertake his defence when the case comes on at the Criminal Court. I saw Dick an hour ago, and he said, solemnly, 'There is only one man in Great Britain who can get me off, and that man is Robert Herrick.'"

"Does he admit his guilt?" asked the lawyer after a short pause, during which he had stood regarding the girl with intent eyes.

"He does, but only to me—for, as you will have seen from the paper, he pleaded 'Not guilty' when the question was put to him by the magistrate."

"I see—I see. And so you want me to undertake his defence, do you?"

"Yes; save him from penal servitude, and I will bless you as long as life lasts."

"Suppose I refuse? Suppose I say to you that I consider myself the last barrister on earth to whom you should have come on such an errand? Suppose I remind you that this man has taken the place which I might have held in your heart, and that I cannot bring myself to defend my rival? Suppose I say all this—what then?"

"Ah, but you will not say it," she moaned, throwing herself at his feet with a low cry. "You would not be so cruel."

"There is no alternative. Go to some other counsel, for I absolutely refuse to undertake this defence."

"You refuse?"

"Yes."

His steel-like lips closed firmly and his eyes grew hard with decision. Robert Herrick had a will of iron, and none knew that fact better than the girl who knelt before him. She rose slowly and gazed at him with despairing eyes.

"You tell me to go to some other counsel," she exclaimed, bitterly. "But I know quite well that there is no barrister in London half as clever as you. Dick admits that he is a very, very weak case, and that

only a man of genius can save him from being convicted."

"I am not responsible for Mr. Richard Hope's views as to my talents. He must either rely upon some other counsel's services or go undefended."

"And that is your last word?"

"Yes, that is my last word, unless—"

"Unless what?"

"Unless you consent to abandon this man and to marry me in the event of my obtaining an acquittal."

"Oh, can you be so base—so cruel?"

"Yes, I both can and am. Love has torn out all mercy from my heart, Beryl, and has made me what you see. I swear to you that I will go heart and soul into this affair and will save this man from prison if you will put your hand in mine and say that you will be my wife."

"And say that you will be my wife."

The words rang in Beryl's ears throughout her dreary journey home. At first she had been inclined to dismiss the proposal with anger, but second thoughts showed her that perhaps, after all, it would be better to accept Robert Herrick's offer than to allow the man she loved to go to a convict's cell.

Dick was not strong. Only too well did the girl realize that the hardships of prison would snap the frail thread whereon his life hung, and tears rose to her eyes as she thought of Dick, lying dead within a gaol infirmary, rose to her fevered brain.

"Yes, the life would kill him—kill him," she murmured, "and it would be my fault, for if Robert Herrick undertakes the defence some instinct tells me Dick will be acquitted."

Yes; that was the chief consideration when all was said and done. The sacrifice of her own life and happiness seemed trivial when weighed against the life of dear, dear Dick; and if Dick could be saved from penal servitude by her marriage to the great counsel, then perhaps she might bring herself to speak the word which would wrench her sweetheart from the prison cell and give him back his freedom.

For three days of quivering doubt she debated the question. During that period she endeavored to ascertain from Dick's solicitor whether the services of any other skillful barrister could be secured for him, but it transpired that the three counsels whose talents in the direction of forgery cases were considered to be on a level with those of Herrick were far too busy to assume further duties.

At the end of the three days the girl hesitated no longer, and one evening when Herrick returned to his chambers, after a heavy day in court, the following note lay upon his table:

"Yes, I accept your terms. On the day that Dick is acquitted I will promise to be your wife.—B. H."

A smile of triumph flitted over the barrister's worn features.

"Heaven bless her," he murmured. "I will make her happier than that fellow would have done, and this night I am the happiest man in England."

Next morning he sent for the solicitor who was entrusted with Richard Hope's defence, and conferred with that gentleman for nearly an hour.

"A bad case, Sir Robert, I'm afraid," observed Mr. Parchment, ruefully.

"Not at all—not at all. I have got off men whose cases were ten times as feeble, and if nothing goes wrong at the final moment I shall get this man acquitted as well."

He spoke with the calm confidence of one to whom defeat is practically an unknown guest, and to whom success is as common as his daily bread.

"But—but he admits his guilt," replied the solicitor, in a pessimistic tone.

"My dear, good sir, what on earth does that matter? He is to plead 'Not guilty,' and therefore it is simply a matter of convincing the jury that he is innocent."

"And if any man on earth can do that you are the man," cried Parchment, looking at the mighty counsel with eyes that held very deep admiration. "I shall never forget how you got off that man Despard in face of the most incriminating evidence ever offered against a prisoner in the dock."

"A mere trifle," returned Herrick, quietly. "I cross-examined the witnesses for the Crown so brutally that they didn't know whether they were standing on their head or their feet. I succeeded accordingly in making them say whatever I chose, and the result was a verdict of 'Not guilty' without a single jurymen leaving the box."

Then he turned towards some papers that lay upon his desk as a hint that the interview was ended, and the lawyer withdrew far more hopeful than he had entered. Meantime, the girl had given her sweetheart no information concerning the bargain into which she had entered.

"If—if the worst should come to the worst and he should be condemned," she pondered, "then he need never know at all."

But as the days that elapsed between the committal of Dick for trial and the opening of the Sessions flew by her heart beat with passionate pain, and she asked herself a hundred times what Fate held in store for her.

"The Central Criminal Court was

crowded to excess with a mass of dingy, perspiring humanity made up of all sorts of men and women, whose chief amusement in existence seems to consist in attending courts where their fellow-creatures are being weighed in the balance. Beryl was accommodated with a seat at the solicitors' table, and from this coign of vantage she was able to send many looks of encouragement to her white-faced lover in the dock.

The evidence for the prosecution was very heavy. Witness after witness went into the box and gave testimony which seemed at first blush to indicate the youth's guilt, but the cross-examination to which each witness was subjected by Sir Robert Herrick worked wonders. The most cool and collected business man seemed like children in his facile hands; he caused them to grow confused, to stammer, to hesitate, and to contradict themselves until they well-nigh utterly collapsed.

No witnesses were called for the defence save witnesses as to character, and these did all in their power to aid the young fellow's case. His uncle declared that if he were acquitted he intended giving him a fresh start in Australia, and this assurance seemed to make a considerable impression on the jury.

Robert Herrick's speech for the defence was a masterpiece. The very pressmen, accustomed to his eloquence looked up from their note-books in amazement, wondering why on earth Herrick was taking so much trouble over what seemed to them a very ordinary and very trumpery trial. Little did the knights of the pen guess that behind the dingy precincts of the court there stood the shadow of love, and that in the presence of that shadow the great barrister was able to surpass even his own record.

For three-quarters of an hour he spoke, and when at length he sat down a great storm of applause swept the court.

His lordship proceeded to sum up. He began by congratulating both counsel on their speeches, but begged the jury to weigh the facts for themselves, and to acquit or condemn the prisoner on the evidence that had been put before them.

The foreman rose as the judge concluded.

"My lord," he said, "we have already come to our decision. We find the prisoner not guilty."

His lordship nodded blandly.

"You hear the verdict, prisoner," he said. "You are discharged."

Two minutes later Dick Hope stepped out of the court a free man.

That night a hansom conveyed Sir Robert Herrick to Kensington Court, where Beryl Harding lived. He was about to realize the greatest happiness which could come to the heart of a man, and his blood danced with joy as the vehicle sped on, bearing him nearer to the woman he loved.

"I have done my part," he murmured, "and now she must do hers."

The servant who opened the door to the great barrister conducted him to the drawing-room.

"I will tell Miss Beryl you are here, sir," he said, quietly.

"Er—is anybody with her?" he asked, awkwardly.

"Only Mr. Hope, sir, but I think he's going almost directly. They're in the summer-house in the garden."

The quick brain of the barrister guessed what was passing in that summer-house. He inferred that the sweethearts had met there to exchange their last farewell.

Even as he sat there the voice of Beryl floated to him from the garden and he could hear every halting word she spoke.

"Dearest, it was the only way," she murmured, brokenly. "Had I refused to be his wife, where would you be now?"

"Yes, yes," came the voice of the young fellow in reply. "He worked like a hero for me, I'll admit, and but for him I should have been convicted as sure as death. But, oh, darling, it seems hard to have to give you up."

"Life is always hard when we love," replied the girl, in a choking tone, and every syllable sounded like a sob. "But there is one thing greater than love, and that thing is duty. My duty lies away from you, and so—and so, we must say good-bye."

"Yes," he echoed, bitterly. "We must say good-bye. Herrick behaved like a brick, and I cannot blame him for holding you to your promise. Were I in his place, Heaven knows I should be selfish enough to act even as he has done."

Then he paused, unable to trust himself to further speech. Presently he continued:

"Beryl, you know that I am going away. My uncle is going to help me to begin life afresh in the Colonies, and I had hoped—hoped so much to have taken you with me as my wife. But since this promise to Herrick stands between you and me I must try and bear my sorrow like a man, but remember that your image will stand unrivalled in my heart until it beats no more."

He broke down utterly. Thick, choking sobs issued from his lips, and every sob went straight to the heart of Robert Herrick as he sat in that solitary room and contemplated the work which he had wrought.

The instincts of this man were noble. Passion had weakened that nobility for a time, but now the inherent splendour of his nature asserted itself, and a great revulsion began to work within his blood.

Could he bring himself to hold Beryl to her promise? Could he

About the ...House

DOMESTIC RECIPES.

Pancakes Made of Shorts.—Mix 1 pt. shorts, 1 pt. flour, a little salt and 1 teaspoon soda. Add enough buttermilk to make a batter. Bake on a hot griddle.

Steamed Brown Bread.—One cup of wheat flour, two each of graham flour and cornmeal, one cup molasses, three and a half cups sour milk or buttermilk, a teaspoonful of soda, or enough to sweeten the milk, and a little salt. Beat thoroughly, fill into baking-powder cans, steam two hours, and serve hot. Sweet milk and baking-powder may replace the sour milk if necessary. This is a southern recipe and comes well recommended.

Cheese and Celery Sandwiches.—Whip a gill of thick, sweet cream, and add enough freshly-grated cheese to make a stiff paste. Spread dry bread with this, and sprinkle thickly with very finely minced white stalks of celery. Meat or nuts may be used instead of celery if preferred.

Steamed Pudding.—Half a cup of sugar, one cup of good, rich buttermilk, a tablespoonful of thick cream or butter, a cup of any kind of dried fruit, chopped, and flour to make a batter a trifle stiffer than for cake. Steam an hour and a half or bake half an hour. Serve with cream and sugar.

Chocolate Bread Pudding.—Take some scraps of bread, break up small, and set in a basin with sufficient milk to just cover. Put a plate over the basin, and set it on the stove till the milk is quite warm. Then beat all finely with a fork, and if you have sufficient to fill a quart pie-dish add two beaten eggs and ½ oz. of butter. Have some chocolate powder at hand, and work it into the butter until all is nicely flavored and a good color. Add a few drops of vanilla essence, and set in a pie-dish. Scatter some bits of butter on the top. Bake in a steady oven till set and nicely puffed. A little flour may be added to the mixture if it is thought too wet.

A Cheese Savory.—Put 6 ozs. of grated cheese and a tablespoonful of cornflour into a basin, mix thoroughly, flavor with a pinch each of ground mace and cayenne. Add the yolks of two eggs, a tablespoonful of cream and 1 oz. of oiled butter; work the mixture till smooth, pour into a saucepan, and stir over the fire until it begins to thicken, then let cool. Take some light rough paste, roll it out into two even-sized pieces, spread one with the mixture, moisten the edges, brush over with beaten egg, cut into even-sized squares, and bake for fifteen minutes. Serve hot.

Oatmeal Biscuits.—Seven ounces of

bring himself to part these lovers, whose hearts were knit together for all eternity?

For one quivering instant love of Beryl surged up in the great counsel's soul and caused him to waver.

"Oh, Heaven!" he murmured, huskily; "I love her! I love her! I love her!"

And then, even as that cry left his lips, his thoughts flew back to a book by a certain author which he had read the night before, and here he called to mind how the great love of Sydney Carton had caused him to prove that love by the best proof of all—the test of sacrifice.

In that instant decision came to him. He rose and went towards a writing-desk that stood in a corner of the room. Seating himself at the desk he wrote a few hurried words. Then, taking his hat and stick, he quitted the great house as silently as he had entered it.

"Sir Robert has gone, Miss Beryl. He went off without saying a word."

"Perhaps he has left a message," said the girl, in a low, miserable tone, as she took her steps to the drawing-room and glanced around.

Of a sudden she espied an envelope on the mantelpiece. She flew towards the spot and tore open the missive.

Then a low, tremulous cry of joy escaped her lips, and she kissed the scrap of paper with passionate gratitude, crying brokenly:

"Ah, Heaven bless him! Heaven bless him! He was noble after all."

For the letter ran thus:—
"My Own Darling,—I heard what passed this evening in the garden, and hearing it I awoke suddenly to the base deed that I was about to commit. Thank Heaven I have awakened in time, and then I have realized before it was too late how evil a thing I was endeavoring to accomplish."

"Good-bye, dearest and best. For some time I have been thinking of taking a holiday from my work, and this very night I shall go away to the South of France. Long before I return I hope to hear that you are married to the man you love—the man whom I defended to-day—and who I know will prove himself worthy of you after all. Good-bye.

"R. H."

That was all; and the mail train rushing down to the coast that night bore with it a man who had gained the greatest of human victories—the victory over Self!—London Tit-Bits.

oatmeal, 5 ounces flour, 4 ounces butter, one heaped teaspoonful of baking powder, one egg, pinch of salt, a little milk. Mix oatmeal, flour, and salt together. Rub in butter, then well mix baking powder with ingredients. Beat the egg, add little milk to make the consistency of pastry, roll to about ¼-inch thickness, cut into squares, and bake in a moderate oven for about ten minutes or a quarter of an hour (add six ounces sugar, if liked).

Stuffed Potatoes.—Wash and bake two or more large potatoes in their "jackets." Try them with a skewer. If soft, cut off the top of each, scoop out all the inside with a teaspoon. Mash the potato you have scooped out, add to each tablespoonful half a tablespoonful of chopped tongue, half a teaspoonful of chopped parsley, a piece of butter the size of a walnut, and a good dust of pepper and salt. If liked, one well-beaten egg may be added also. Now carefully refill the skins. Rebake till very hot. Serve.

Turkey Soup.—Ingredients—Turkey bones and scraps, forcemeat, etc. (if any), two quarts stock (or water), salt, pepper, celery, onions, carrots, 2 ozs. ground rice or arrowroot, vegetables, or macaroni. Take the turkey bones and any trimmings, break them up small, put into dry saucepan with any dry forcemeat or sauce you may have left. Pour in two quarts stock (or water), bring gradually to the boil, skim it, adding salt, pepper, celery, onion and carrot, all to be simmered until the bones are clean. Strain and carefully free the soup from fat, thicken with 2 ozs. ground rice or arrowroot made into paste with some stock (or water), and boil with the soup. Drop in some vegetables or macaroni, boil a few minutes, and serve.

A BOOK-CASE CURTAIN.

A pretty and durable curtain for a book-case may be made of burlap. One noticed recently was light brown, with trimming of red. A brass rod was fastened to the top of the book-case, and the drapery was thrown over it so as to form a deep lamberquin at the top. Burlap was lined throughout with Turkey-red. Red felt was used for a border across the top and bottom. This was feather-stitched to the burlap with red worsted in clusters of six quite long stitches, the middle stitch being the longest, and were graduated toward each end, with a space of about an inch between each cluster.

The border of felt across the lamberquin end of the curtain was about eight inches deep. Across the bottom of the curtain the border was a little deeper, and was set up from the bottom, leaving about five inches of the burlap below it.

It was an extremely effective curtain, and was made very quickly and with little expense by a busy house-keeper.

The use of burlap is being revived for a number of purposes. It is often used as a substitute for wall paper—sometimes in the form of a deep frieze with the paper below; or a figured burlap is used upon the walls, with plain burlap for frieze and dado, or frieze only. It comes in green, blue, red, and brown; in fact, nearly every color may be produced.

HOUSEHOLD HINTS.

The inside of glass water-bottles or carafes often gets dirty and the glass does not look clear. It is difficult to clean them. Try putting some potato parings cut rather fine in the bottle, with a little lukewarm water. Let stand an hour, and then shake well for several minutes. Empty, and fill up with warm soapy water, shaking well. Rinse in clear water and turn upside down to dry.

To cut new bread smoothly warm the bread-knife.

If the handle has come off a steel knife, pour a little powdered resin in the cavity in the handle; heat that part of the knife that fits it red-hot and thrust quickly in place. When cold it will be perfectly firm.

The latest "wrinkle" in roasting turkeys and chickens is to omit the stuffing and lay a couple of stalks of celery in the cavity. It is said this renders the flesh sweeter, as the stuffing absorbs so much of the juices of the meat. To most, however, the stuffing is a tid-bit much enjoyed.

A nice way of using up left-over pieces of wall paper is by covering goods boxes to keep the firewood in. These look so much neater if the paper matches that of the walls of the room to which they belong.

Before using lemons roll them awhile under the hand on a hard surface. The quantity of free juice will be much increased.

Try cleaning the whole house at one time. Get the men to move things out and clean carpets while you are scrubbing. Then as fast as the rooms are ready have them lay the carpets. Perhaps they won't dread housecleaning quite so much as usual under this arrangement.

Curious ideas about anatomy prevail in the Press. It was stated the other day that a colonel was recently "shot in the ticket-office." Another paper says a man was "shot in the suburbs." "He kissed her passionately upon her re-appearance," "He whipped him upon his return," "He kissed her back," "Mr. Jones walked in upon her invitation," "She seated herself upon his entering," "We thought she sat down upon her being asked," "She fainting upon his departure."