

# THE CRIMINAL'S CONFESSION

OR, SYBIL BERNER'S  
VINDICATION

## CHAPTER I.

When Sybil recovered from her deathlike swoon she felt herself being borne slowly on through what seemed a narrow, tortuous underground passage; but the utter darkness, relieved only by a little gleaming red taper that moved like a star before her, prevented her from seeing more.

A presentiment of impending destruction possessed her, and overwhelming horror filled her soul and held her faculties. Though her life had depended upon her speech, she could not have uttered a syllable. And no word was breathed by the mysterious beings who bore her on. Dumb as mutes at a funeral, they marched. Silent, breathless, as one on the brink of death, Sybil held her senses fast and prayed. And the little red spark moved through the darkness before her, like a malignant star leading her to doom. And how long drawn out the dreadful way! Minutes seemed months, and hours ages. The awful forms that held her in their hands; their monotonous tread as they bore her on; their utter silence; the deep darkness; the damp, earthy, stifling atmosphere; the agony of suspense; the horror of anticipation—all these must have sent her into another swoon, but that her vigilant mind still held her senses alert, and she prayed.

Who were these beings? Why had they abducted her? What would they do with her? She had asked herself these questions, but shrank appalled from any possible answer. Death? Dishonor worse than death? Oh that some miracle might save her in this tremendous peril! She prayed. And what a tedious anguish of anxiety! When would the end come?

At length a breath of fresh air as from the upper world was wafted past her face. Welcome as a drop of cold water to a parched palate was this breath of fresh air to her fevered lungs. But it passed, and all was close and suffocating again.

Next a faint gleam of pale light glanced through the darkness far ahead, but it vanished, and all was blackness again, but for the little red spark moving before her. All silent, suffocating, dark.

But presently there came another breath of air, together with a faint, fair, blue light, as of day, in the far distance. And soon the breath of air became a breeze, and Sybil drew in refreshing draughts that, in renewing her vitality, almost restored her courage.

And now they moved on faster, for the path was freer. And now also the dawning light enabled Sybil to see her captors; and if any circumstances could have increased her horror, the looks of these men must have done so. They were of almost gigantic height, and shrouded from head to foot in long, black gowns, with hoods that were drawn over their heads, while their faces were entirely concealed by black masks. A shudder ran through her frame as she looked upon them.

But soon the changing aspect of the subterranean passage forced itself upon her attention. It now seemed not so much a narrow passage as a succession of small caverns, one opening into another and every advanced one rather larger, lighter and more beautiful than the preceding; the walls, floor and ceiling being of bright red sandstone, and lighted here and there with sparkling stalactites. At last, through a narrower and more tortuous winding than any they had yet passed, they suddenly entered a spacious cavern of such exceeding beauty and splendor that for an instant Sybil lost sight of her terrors in her astonishment and admiration.

The walls and roofs of this dazzling place were completely covered with the purest pearl-like spar, and lighted with pendant crystals and stalactites that, as they caught the stray sunbeams, glowed, burned, blazed and sparkled like a million of pendant diamonds, rubies, emeralds and sapphires. The floor was thickly carpeted with living moss of the most brilliant hues of vivid green, soft grey, delicate rose, and cerulean blue. Into this enchanting palace of nature the light entered from many almost imperceptible crevices.

All this Sybil saw at a glance, and then her eyes settled upon a figure who seemed the sole occupant of the place.

This was a young girl, who, with her red cloak thrown matlike on the moss, was seated upon it cross-legged in Turkish fashion. Her elfin face, her malign eyes, her wild, black hair and picturesque costume, were all so in keeping with the aspect of the place, that one might have deemed her the spirit of the cavern.

Sybil had scarcely time to observe all this before her bearers stood her immediately in front of the seated girl, and saying:

"There she is, princess! So work your will upon her," they withdrew.

Now the worst of Sybil's terrors were over. Those dreadful men were gone. Before her was only a woman, a girl, whom she certainly had no reason to fear.

They looked at each other in silence for perhaps half a minute; then Sybil spoke:

"What place is this? Who are you? Why am I brought hither?"

"One question at a time," answered the girl. "What place this is concerns you little; 'who I am' concerns you less; 'why you are brought here,' all that concerns you very much! It concerns your liberty, and perhaps your life."

"I do not believe it! You have had me torn away from my husband! Where is he now?" haughtily demanded Mrs. Berners.

"He is likely in the hands of the constables, who are by this time in possession of the Haunted Chapel. But fear nothing! Him they will release again; for they have no right to detain him; but you they would have kept if they had caught you. Come, lady, do not resent the rough manner in which you were saved."

"I do not understand all this."

"It is scarcely necessary that you should."

"And my husband! When shall I see him?"

"When you can do so with safety to yourself, and to us."

"When will that be?"

"How can I tell?"

"Oh, Heaven! he will be half crazed with anxiety!"

"Better that he should be half crazed with anxiety, than wholly crazed by despair. Lady, had we not removed you when we did, you would certainly be in the hands of the constables before this day is over, probably before this hour."

"How do you know this?"

"From the information brought in by our spies."

"We came upon the Haunted Chapel by chance, in the dead of night. No one could have known so soon that we were there."

"No one did know it. The constables were coming there for us, but they would have found you, had we not brought you away with us. That was my doing. I made your removal the condition of my silence."

"Girl, who are you? I ask again; and why do you take this interest in me?"

"Lady, I am an outlaw like yourself, hunted like yourself, guiltless like yourself; the daughter, sister, companion of thieves. Yet, never will I become a thief, or the wife or the mother of one!"

"This is terrible!" said Sybil, with a shudder. "But why should this be so?"

"It is my fate."

"And why do you care for me?"

"I thought I had answered that question in telling you all that I have told about myself, for a fellow feeling makes us wondrous kind; but if you want another reason I can give it to you. I care for you because I know that you are guiltless of the crime for which you are hunted through the world. And I am resolved, come what may, that you shall not suffer for it."

"In the name of Heaven, what do you say?" exclaimed Sybil, in strong excitement. "If you know me to be guiltless, you must know who is guilty! Nay, you do know it! You cannot only save my life, but clear my fame."

(To be continued.)

## Marian Mayfield

### CHAPTER XXXVII.

Who shall follow them or intrude on the sacredness of their reconciliation, or relate with what broken tones and frequent sobs and tears and smiles and clinging embraces their mutual explanations were made?

At last Marian, raising her head from his shoulder, said:

"But I am come to you a bankrupt, dear Thurston! I have inherited and expended a large fortune since we parted—and now I am more than penniless, for I stand responsible for large sums of money owed by my 'Orphans' Home' and 'Emigrants' Help'—money that I had intended to raise by subscription."

"Now, I thank God abundantly for the wealth that He has given me. Your fortune, dearest Marian, has been nobly appropriated—and for the rest, it is my blessed privilege to assume all your responsibilities—and I rejoice that they are great! For, sweetest wife, and fairest lady, I feel that I never can sufficiently prove how much I love and reverence you—how much I would and ought to sacrifice for you!"

"And even now, dear Thurston, I came hither, bound on a mission to the Western prairies, to find a suitable piece of land for a colony of emigrants."

"I know it, fairest and dearest lady, I know it all. I will lift that burden from your shoulders, too, and all liabilities of yours do I assume—oh my dear Marian! with how much joy! and I will labor with and for you, until all

your responsibilities of every sort are discharged, and my liege lady is free to live her own life!"

This scene took place in the private parlor of the hotel, while Paul Douglass was gone to Colonel Thornton's lodgings, to carry the glad tidings to Miriam, and also to procure a carriage for the conveyance of the whole party to Dell-Delight.

He returned at last, accompanied by Miriam, whom he tenderly conducted into the room, and who, passing by all others, tottered forward, and sank, weeping, at the feet of Mr. Willcoxon, and clasping his knees, still wept, as if her heart would break.

Thurston stooped and raised her, pressed the kiss of forgiveness on her young brow, and then whispered:

"Miriam, have you forgotten that there is another here who claims your attention?" took her by the hand and led her to Marian.

The young girl was shy and silent, but Marian drew her to her bosom, saying:

"Has my 'baby' forgotten me? And so, you would have been an avenger, Miriam. Remember, all your life, dear child, that such an office is never to be assumed by an erring human creature. 'Vengeance is mine, and I will repay, saith the Lord.'" And kissing Miriam fondly, she resigned her to Paul's care, and turned, and gave her own hand to Thurston, who conducted her to the carriage, and then returned for little Angel, who all this time had sat demurely in a little parlor chair.

They were followed by Paul and Miriam, and so set forth to Dell-Delight.

But little more remains to be told.

Thurston resigned his pastoral charge of the village church; settled up his business in the neighborhood; procured a discreet woman to keep house at Dell-Delight; left Paul and Miriam and poor Fanny in her care, and set out with Marian on their western journey, to select the site for the settlement of her emigrant protégés. After successfully accomplishing this mission, they returned East, and embarked for Liverpool, and thence to London, where Marian dissolved her connection with the "Emigrants' Help," and bade adieu to her "Orphans' Home." Thurston made large donations to both these institutions. And Marian saw that her place was well supplied to the "Orphans' Home" by another competent woman. Then they returned to America. Their travels had occupied more than twelve months. And their expenses of all sorts had absorbed more than a third of Mr. Willcoxon's princely fortune—yet with what joy was it lavished by his hand, who felt he could not do too much for his priceless Marian.

On their return home a heartfelt gratification met them—it was that the parish had shown their undiminished confidence in Mr. Willcoxon, and their high appreciation of his services, by keeping his pulpit open for him. And a few days after his settlement at home a delegation of the vestry waited upon him to solicit his acceptance of the ministry. And after talking with his "liege lady" as he fondly and proudly termed Marian, Mr. Willcoxon was well pleased to return a favorable answer.

And in a day or two Thurston and Marian were called upon to give decision in another case, to wit:

Jacqueline had not returned to Bethlehem, nor renewed her vows; but had doffed her nun's habit for a young lady's dress, and remained at Luckenough. Cloudy had not failed to push his suit with all his might. But Jacqueline still hesitated—she did not know, she said, but she thought she had no right to be happy, as other people had, she had caused so much trouble in the world, she reckoned she had better go back to her convent.

"And because you unintentionally occasioned some sorrow, now happily over, to some people, you would atone for the fault by adding one more to the list of victims, and making me miserable. Bad logic, Lina, and worse religion."

Jacqueline did not know—she could not decide—after so many grave errors, she was afraid to trust herself. The matter was then referred—of all men in the world—to the commodore, who graciously replied, that they might go to the demon for him. But as Cloudy and Lina had no especial business with his Satanic Majesty they declined to avail themselves of the permission, and consulted Mrs. Waugh, whose deep, mellow laugh preceded her answer, when she said:

"Take heart, Lapwing! take heart, and all the happiness you can possibly get! I have lived a long time, and seen a great many people, good and bad, and though I have sometimes met people who were not so happy as they merited—yet I never have seen anyone happier than they deserved to be! and that they cannot be so, seems to be a law of nature that ought to reconcile us very much to the apparent flourishing of the wicked."

But Mrs. L'Oiseau warned her daughter not to trust to "Auntie," who was so good-natured, and although such a misguided woman, that if she had her will she would do away with all punishment—yes, even with Satan and purgatory! But Jacqueline had much less confidence in Mrs. L'Oiseau than in Mrs. Waugh; and so she told Cloudy, who thought that he had waited already quite long enough, to wait until Marian and Thurston came home, and if they thought it would be right for her to be happy—why—then—maybe—she might be! But the matter must be referred to them.

And now it was referred to them, by the sorely tried Cloudy. And they gave Jacqueline leave to be "happy." And she was happy! And as for Cloudy, poor, constant fellow! he was so overjoyed that he declared he would petition the Legislature to change his name as no longer appropriate, for though his morning had been Cloudy

enough, his day was going to be a very bright one!

When Mrs. L'Oiseau heard of this engagement, she crossed herself, and told her beads, and vowed that she could no longer live in it. And she commenced preparations to retire to a convent, to which, in fact, she soon after went, and where, in strict truth, she was likely to be much happier than her nature would permit her to be elsewhere.

Cloudy and Lina were very quietly married, and took up their abode at the pleasant farmhouse of Locust Hill, which was repaired and refurnished for their reception. But if the leopard cannot change his spots, nor the Ethiopian his skin—neither can the fairy permanently change her nature; for no sooner was Jacko's happiness secured, than the elfish spirit, the lightest part of her nature, effervesced to the top—for the torment of Cloudy. Jacko and Cloudy, even, had one quarrel—it was upon the first occasion after their marriage, of his leaving her to join his ship—and when the whilom Sister of Charity drove Cloudy nearly frantic by insisting—whether in jest or earnest no one on earth could tell—upon donning the little middy's uniform and going with him! However, the quarrel happily was never renewed, for before the next time of sailing there appeared a certain tiny Cloudy at home, that made the land quite as dear as the sea to its mother. And this little imp became Mrs. Waugh's especial pet. And if Jacqueline did not train the little scion very straight, at least she did not twist him awry. And she even tried, in her fitful, capricious way, to reform her own manners, that she might form those of her little children. And Mrs. Waugh and dear Marian aided her and encouraged her in her uncertain efforts.

About this time Paul and Miriam were united, and went to housekeeping in the pretty villa built for them upon the site of Old Field Cottage by Thurston, and furnished for them by Mrs. Waugh.

And a very pleasant country neighborhood they formed—these three young families—of Dell-Delight, Locust Hill and the villa.

Two other important events occurred in their social circle—first, poor harmless Fanny passed smilingly to her heavenly home, and all thought it very well.

And one night Commodore Waugh, after eating a goo' hearty supper, was comfortably tucked up in bed, and went into a sound, deep sleep from which he never more awoke. May he rest in peace. But do you think Mrs. Waugh did not cry about it for two weeks, and ever after speak of him as the poor, dear commodore?

But Henrietta was of too healthful a nature to break her heart for the loss of a very good man, and it was not likely she was going to do so for the missing of a very uncomfortable one; and so in a week or two more her happy spirits returned, and she began to realize to what freedom, ease and cheerfulness she had fallen heir! Now she could live and breathe; and go and come without molestation. Now when she wished to open her generous heart to the claims of affection in the way of helping Lapwing or Miriam, who were neither of them very rich—or to the greater claims of humanity in the relief of the suffering poor, or the pardon of delinquent servants, she could do so to her utmost content, and without having to accompany her kind act with a deep sigh at the anticipation of the parlor storm it would raise at home. And though Mrs. Henrietta still "waxed fat," her good flesh was no longer an incumbrance to her—the leaven of cheerfulness lightened the whole mass.

Mrs. Waugh had brought her old maid Jenny back. Jenny had begged to come home to "old mistress," for she said it was "stonishin' how age-able," she felt, though nobody might believe it, she was "gettin' oler and oler, every single day" of her life, and she wanted to end her days "long o' ole mistress."

Old mistress was rich and good, and Luckenough was a quiet, comfortable home, where the old maid was very sure of being lodged, boarded, and clothed almost as well as old mistress herself—not that these selfish considerations entered largely into Jenny's mind, for she really loved Mrs. Henrietta.

And old mistress and old maid were never happier than on some fine, clear day, when seated on their two old mules, they ambled along through forest and over field, to spend a day with Lapwing or with Hebe—or perhaps with the "Pigeon Pair," as they called the new married couple at the villa.

Yes; there was a time when Mrs. Henrietta was happier still! It was, when upon some birthday or other festival, she would gather all the young families—Thurston and Hebe, Cloudy and Lapwing, the Pigeons, and all the babies, in the big parlor of Luckenough, and sit surrounded by a flock of tiny lapwings, hebes and pigeons forming a group that our fairy saucily called, "The old hen and chickens."

And what shall we say in taking leave of Thurston and Marian? He had had some faults, as you have seen—but the conquering of faults is the noblest conquest, and he had achieved such a victory. He called Marian the angel of his salvation. Year by year their affection deepened and strengthened, and drew them closer in heart and soul and purpose. From their home as from a centre emanated a healthful, beneficent and elevating influence, happily felt through all their social circle. A lovely family grew around them—and among the beautiful children none were more tenderly nursed or carefully trained than the little waif, Angel. And in all the pleasant country neighborhood, the sweetest and happiest home is that of Dell-Delight.

The End.

Be good and you'll be happy—maybe.

## About the Farm

### CARE OF THE DAIRY COW.

Can it be truthfully said that the dairy cow receives at the hands of her owner or attendant that care which she deserves, and which will allow her to give the best returns? Though it is rather late to speak of it now, still we will take the fall season—when farmers are busy preparing for winter—is a time when dairy cows are apt to be neglected. Frequently they are left to pick up a scanty living from bare pastures and the fence corners of grain fields, exposed to all the inclemencies of the autumn weather. The highly organized dairy cow is very sensitive to sudden and extreme changes in the weather, and nothing could be more detrimental to economical milk production. The flow of milk is often so materially lessened that it cannot be brought back to the normal standard during the winter. Exposure to storm and lying on the cold, damp ground at night not only lead to a decreased flow of milk, but they are very apt to cause udder troubles, rheumatism, and other diseases, and in some cases even death.

It must be remembered that one night or even a few hours of cold rain causes an enormous shrinkage of milk. Food comfort and contentment are the prime factors in successful dairying, and it is not too much to say that comfort is the prime factor. To feed well but to disregard the bodily comfort of the cow is to court and insure disappointment. A cow will fail to elaborate a full quantity of milk if she is wet or shivering from cold.

Autumn is really a more critical period for a cow fresh in milk than winter. Cold rains and raw winds are fruitful causes of decreasing milk. The first makes inactive the muscular system while the latter so disturbs the nervous system that it fails to perform its work. Cows should therefore not be exposed to fall rains, left out during cold nights, or confined in muddy and wet yards at any time.

The proof of this was clearly demonstrated in an unintentional experiment carried out some time since. Some changes were being made in the cow barn, which made it inconvenient to stable the cows for a few days, and just then a cold rainy spell set in, to which the cows were exposed. There was not only a very marked shrinkage in milk and butter fat at once, but they failed to recover during the winter, though the feed was liberal and the care the best that could be given.

It was known when the shrinkage took place and why, but the attempt to recover it failed. The next year such an experience was guarded against, and the herd gave a daily average of 28.4 pounds of milk and 1.2 pounds of butter fat, as against 16.11 pounds of milk and .8 pounds of butter fat given the year before.

It may be asked what the cows did with their food, since they were fed liberally during the winter. They made beef or fat with it, for each gained an average of nearly half a pound a day, a gain that did neither the cows or the owner any good. During the two winters the herd was composed of the same cows, fed the same rations and received the same careful attention, and yet because of that mishap the herd failed by just fifty per cent. of doing its normal or possible work.

### A FEW DONT'S.

Don't fail to spray every season. It is impossible to determine in advance whether or not the plant or tree will be attacked. Proper spraying is never injurious.

Don't wait till the fungi have attacked plant or tree; the fungicide are merely preventatives and should be used early in the spring. After the disease has developed it may be too late to save the plant.

Don't spray during or just after a shower or when there has been a heavy dew. Much of the solution will be washed off or it will collect in spots. Wait till the leaves are dry. Poison is more effective when applied to the leaves when dry.

Don't spray the tops of the leaves only; spray the under sides where the pests hide, and be careful to keep your liquid thoroughly agitated.

Don't give up spraying because you do not see any benefit from your work. Perhaps you did not spray early enough to prevent the bugs, perhaps you did not use the right formula, or were not careful in its preparation, perhaps you did not spray thoroughly and often enough. Try again.

Don't buy a sprayer from an unknown manufacturer. If your sprayer gets out of order, or if you break some part, it may be difficult to get repaired. Good sprayers with proper care last for years and all parts are easily and quickly duplicated.

Don't buy a bucket sprayer and expect to spray an orchard with it. Buy a sprayer large enough to do your work quickly and easily and if you do not know the size you want, write us the acreage you want to spray and we will tell you.

Don't put your sprayer away after using it until you have thoroughly cleaned out all the spraying mixture. If left in the spray mixture the pump will be injured and the glands and valves clogged.

Don't leave your sprayer where it will freeze unless all the sprayer has been drained from it. If liquor is frozen in the pump it is liable to break iron cylinders or stretch brass cylinders, so the pump will not work.