

THE CRIMINAL'S CONFESSION

OR, SYBIL BERNER'S
VINDICATION

CHAPTER II.—(Continued).

Far too restless to keep still, he walked up and down the length of the chapel, until he was fairly tired out. Then he went to the front door and sat down, keeping his eyes upon the entrance of the little thicket path, by which he knew that Joe must return. And although he knew it was much too early to expect his messenger back, yet he still impatiently watched that path.

Presently the sound of approaching horsemen struck upon his listening ear. They were coming up the path through the thicket, and presently they emerged from it—not two or three, but couple after couple, until the old churchyard was filled with sheriff's officers and militiamen. Sheriff Bentwick himself was at their head.

In great surprise, as if they had come in quest of him, Mr. Berners went forward to receive the party.

Lyon Berners was known to have been the companion of his fugitive wife, and therefore a sort of an outlaw; yet the sheriff took off his hat, and accosted him respectfully.

"Mr. Berners, I am greatly surprised to see you here," he said.

"Not less than myself at seeing you," answered Lyon.

"We are here to seek out a set of burglars whom we have reason to believe have their lair in this chapel," said Mr. Bentwick.

"Then your errand is not to me," observed Lyon.

"Certainly not! Though, should I find Mrs. Berners here, as well as yourself, as I think now highly probable, I shall have a most painful duty to perform."

"Ah, sir! within the last terrible month, I have become all too much accustomed to the sight of friends with 'painful duties to perform,' as they delicately put it. But you will be spared the pain. Mrs. Berners is not here with me."

"Not here with you? Then where is she?"

"Excuse me, Mr. Bentwick," said Mr. Berners, gravely, "you certainly forget yourself; you cannot possibly expect me to tell you—even if I knew myself," he added, in an undertone.

"No, I cannot, indeed," admitted the sheriff. "Nor did I come here to look for Mrs. Berners, having had neither information nor suspicion that she was here; nevertheless, if I find her I shall be constrained to arrest her. Were it not for my duty, I could almost pray that I might not find her."

"I do not think you will," said Mr. Berners, grimly.

And meanwhile the officers and militiamen, at a sign from the sheriff, had surrounded the chapel so that it would be impossible for any one who might be within its walls to escape from it.

"Now, Mr. Berners, as you assure me that your wife is not within this building, perhaps you may have no objection to enter it with me," said the sheriff.

"Not the least in the world," answered Lyon Berners, leading the way into the chapel, as the sheriff dismounted from his horse, threw the bridle to an attendant, and followed.

The interior was soon thoroughly searched, having nothing but its bare walls and vacant windows, with the exception of Sybil's forsaken bed near the altar, the smouldering fire in what had once been the middle aisle, and the little pile of brushwood in the corner.

"There is certainly no one here but yourself, Mr. Berners; yet here are signs of human habitation," said the sheriff, significantly.

Lyon Berners laughed painfully. And then he thought it would be safest to inform the sheriff of some part of the truth, rather than to leave him to his own conjectures, which might cover the whole case. So he answered:

"I do not mind telling you, Mr. Bentwick, that myself and my injured wife took refuge in this place immediately after the terrible tragedy that so unjustly compromised her safety. We remained here several days, and then departed. These things that you notice have been brought for our accommodation, and were left here when we went away."

"So you were not at Pendleton's?"

"Not for an hour."

"That is strange. But how comes it that you are here now without your wife, Mr. Berners?"

"Sir, I have told you all that I mean to tell, and now my lips are sealed on the subject of my wife," said Lyon Berners, firmly.

"I cannot and do not blame you in the least," said the sheriff, kindly.

"All that we have to do now is to pursue our search for the burglars, and if in the course of it we should come upon Mrs. Berners, we must do our duty," he concluded.

To that proposition Mr. Berners assented with a silent bow and bitterly compressed lips. The sheriff then went to the door of the vault, and, stooping down with his hands upon his knees, peered through the iron grating, more in curiosity than in any hope of finding a clue to the robbers. And, in fact, he discovered nothing but the head of that narrow staircase whose foot disappeared in the darkness below.

"Phew! what a damp, deadly air

comes up from that foul pit; it hasn't been opened in half a century, I suppose," exclaimed Mr. Bentwick, taking hold of the rusty bars and trying to shake the grating; but, finding it immovable, he ceased his efforts and turned away.

Then he went to the chapel door, and called his men around him, saying: "There is no sign of the miscreants inside the ruin; we must search for them outside."

And he divided his party into four detachments; and one he sent up the narrow path leading to the fountain; another he sent up on the heights, and another down in the glen; while he himself led the fourth back upon the path leading through the thicket. And they beat the woods in all directions without coming upon the "trail" of the burglars. But Sheriff Bentwick, in going through the thicket with his little party, met a harmless negro on a tired horse, with a little dog before him. The sheriff knew the negro, and accosted him by name.

"Joe, what are you doing here, so far from your home?"

Joe was ready with his answer:

"If you please, marster, I am coming to fetch away some truck left here by a picnic party from our house."

"Ah! a picnic party! I know all about that picnic party! I have been up to the old ruin and had a talk with your master, and he has told me of it," said the sheriff, cunningly, hoping to betray the negro into some admissions that might be of service to him in tracing Sybil.

But his cunning was no match for Joe's.

"Well, marster," he said, "if Marse Lyon telled you all about that, you must be satisfied into your honorable mind, as I am a telling of the truth, and does come after the truck left in the chapel, which you may see my wagon a-standin' out there on the road beyant for yourself."

"Then, if you have a wagon, why do you come on horseback?"

"Lor's marster, I couldn't no ways get a wagon through this here thicket." The sheriff felt that that was true, and that he had been making a fool of himself. He made a great many more inquiries, but received no satisfaction from the astute Joe. He asked no question about the little dog, considering her of no importance. And, at length, having no pretext to stop the negro, he let him pass and go on.

Joe, glad to be relieved, touched up his horse and trotted briskly through the thicket, and through the graveyard, to the ruined door of the old chapel. Here he dismounted, tied his horse to a tree, and put down the little Skye terrier, who no sooner found herself at liberty than she bounded into the church and ran with joyous leaps and barks, and jumped upon her master, licking, or kissing, as she understood kissing, his hands and face all over with her little tongue, and assuring him how glad she was to see him.

"Nelly, Nelly, good Nelly, pretty Nelly," said Mr. Berners, caressing her soft, curly brown hair.

But Nelly grew fidgety; something was wanting—the best thing of all was wanting—her mistress. So she jumped from her master's lap, not forgetting to kiss him good-by, by a direct lick upon his lips, and then she ran snuffing and whining about the floor of the chapel until she came to the mattress and blankets, where she began wildly to root and paw about, whining piteously all the while.

"Nelly, good dog," said Mr. Berners, taking the blanket and holding it to her nose. "Sybil, Sybil! seek her, seek her!"

The little Skye terrier looked up with a world of intelligence and devotion in her brown eyes, and recommenced her rooting and pawing and snuffing around the bedding, and for some little time was at fault; but at length, with a quick bark of delight, she struck a line of scent, and, with her nose close to the floor, cautiously followed it to the door of the vault, at which she stopped and began to scratch and bark wildly, hysterically—running back to her master and whining, and then running forward to the door, and barking and scratching with all her might and main.

"There she is, marster. Mistress is down in that vault, so sure's I'm a livin' nigger," exclaimed Joe, who now came up to the door.

"Good Heaven! she could not live there an hour; the very air is death! But if there, with a breath of life remaining, she must hear and answer us," exclaimed Lyon Berners, in breathless haste, as he went to the door of the vault; and, putting his lips close to the bars, called loudly:

"Sybil, Sybil! my darling, are you there?"

But though he bent his ear and listened in the dead silence and dread suspense, no breath of answer came. And little Nelly, who had ceased her noise, began to whine again.

Lyon Berners soothed her into quietness and began to call again and again; but still no breath of response from the dark and silent depths below.

"If she is there, she is dead!" groaned Lyon Berners, in a voice of agony, as he thought of all Sybil had told him of



A WISE PRECAUTION.

New Dentist (in Frozen Dog)—Will you take gas?

Bronco Bill—Will it hurt much if I don't?

Dentist—It will!

Bronco Bill—Then, stranger, for your sake I think I'd better take it.

the open vault and the mysterious figures that had passed to and from it in the night, and which he had set down as so many dreams and nightmares, reverted to his memory. Oh, if this chapel were indeed the den of thieves; if they had some secret means of opening that vault; if they had come upon his sleeping wife while she was left alone in the chapel, and robbed her of the money and jewels she had about her person, and then murdered her, and taken her body down into the vault for concealment; or if, as was most likely, for there was no mark of violence or stain of blood about the place—they had taken her to the vault first, and robbed and murdered her there.

Oh, if these horrible fears should be realized!

With the very thought Lyon Berners went pale and cold as marble in an anguish such as he had never felt in the severest crisis of their sorely troubled lives.

"Joe!" he cried, "go search the wagon for that crowbar belonging to Captain Pendleton. It must be there somewhere. And I must break this vault door open, or break my heartstrings in the trial."

"The crowbar is all right, marster. And I'll go and fetch it as fast as I can. But we'll nebbber see mistress alive again! Nebber, marster, in this world!" sobbed Joe, as he arose from his knees near the door and went upon his errand.

Little Nelly renewed her passionate demonstrations of distress and anxiety; now furiously barking and scratching at the door, now jumping upon her master's breast, and looking up into his face and whining, as if telling him that her mistress was down there, imploring his human aid to free her, and wondering why it was not given.

"I know it, my poor little dog! I know it all!" said Lyon, soothingly.

But little Nelly was incredulous and inconsolable, and continued her hysterical department through the half hour which intervened between the departure and the return of Joe.

"Ah, give me the tool!" eagerly exclaimed Mr. Berners, snatching the crowbar from the negro, as soon as he saw him.

And he went and applied it with all his force to the door, straining his strong muscles until they knotted like cords, while Joe looked on in anxiety and suspense, and little Nelly stood approvingly wagging her tail, as if to say:

"Now, at last, you are doing the right thing."

But with all Lyon's training and wrenching, he failed to move the impassable door one hair's breadth.

Joe also took a turn at the crowbar, but with no more success.

They rested a while, and then united their efforts, and with all their strength essayed to force the door, but without the slightest effect upon its immovable bars.

"I might have known we could not do it this way, for neither Pendleton nor myself could succeed in doing so. Joe, we must take down the altar and take up the flag-stones; but that will be a work of time and difficulty and, you will have to go back home and bring the proper tools."

"But the day is most gone, marster, and it will take me most all night to go to Black Hall and get the tools and come back here. And is my poor mistress to stay down there into that dismal place all that time?" sobbed the negro.

"Joe! if she is there, as the little dog insists that she is, you know that she must be dead. And it is her body that we are seeking," groaned Lyon Berners, in despair.

"I know it, marster—I know it too well; but I can't feel as it is true, all the same. And oh! even to leave her dear body there so long!" said Joe, bursting into a storm of tears and sobs.

"That cannot be helped, my poor fellow. Besides, I shall sit at this door and watch till your return, and we can work down into the vault. She shall not be quite alone, Joe."

So persuaded, Joe, unmindful of fatigue, once more set out for Black Hall. But on this occasion he took another horse, which was fresher. The sun had now set, and the short winter twilight was darkening into night.

(To be continued.)

"Mark my words," declared Mrs. Ferme, laying down the law to her long-suffering husband, "by the end of the century woman will have the rights she is fighting for." "I don't care if she does," replied Ferme. "Do you mean it?" cried his wife. "Have I at last brought you round to my way of thinking? Won't you really care?" "Not a bit, my dear," returned her husband, resignedly. "I'll be dead then."

About the Farm

CONCERNING FARM HELP.

A growing demand for competent farm help prevails all over the country, and some people marvel at this state of affairs. It is well to remember however, that it takes brains for a hired man, even on the farm, to satisfy his employer in all ways, and that the one who does come up to the requisite standard is able sooner or later, to do better by striking out for himself.

Whereupon, rather than being any longer a man to hire out he becomes, perhaps, a man who wants to hire help.

The sum and substance of the matter is, the hired man is sometimes a treasure not highly enough esteemed. Particularly is this so if he has been at a place several years, where he has performed his duties faithfully, and then is turned off simply because he asks a few extra dollars a month, which would be more than repaid in the course of the year by the difference in the work between such a hand and an indifferent one, it costing about the same to board one as the other. A man, in truth, needs to stay longer than a single season to become familiar with his employer's methods of work, and the longer he remains the better hand, as a rule, will he be. Hence the reason why hiring by the month is in some respects the most advisable. But this cannot be done will all help, as, for instance, that required for extra work in the summer; still even then it is policy to secure the same hand, wherever practicable, for succeeding seasons, if a reliable one can be found.

The kind of man wanted is he whom the farmer is not afraid to leave in charge of things if he goes away from home occasionally; who makes him feel that the work will go on in his absence the same as if he were there; whom, if anything gives out, knows how to repair the breakage; whose judgment can be relied upon as to how much a team should do in a day, and who will see that they do it, although at all times kind and careful in handling horses, and, likewise, in caring for all other live stock on the farm; who will work cheerfully and heartily as long as nothing unreasonable is asked of him, and, if any little kindnesses from time to time are bestowed upon him, will in one way or another show his appreciation of them.

The fact is the hired man should be treated as well as if one of the regular members of the family. If he is not worthy of this, he is not desirable to hire at all. Indeed otherwise he will not be a hired man in the proper sense of the term, but merely a substitute; one who only performs his duties perfunctorily, shirking and slighting work wherever he can, and having but one object in view—to draw his pay as soon as possible. It is lamentable to relate, but this is what a large percentage of our hired help has fallen to, and to some extent the employer is to blame. Alas! too often he loses sight of his best interests by hiring what is called "cheap help," thereby driving the really good hands out of the field and prompting them to seek their fortune elsewhere.

KEEP SHEEP.

The sheep business is a safe investment every time. It provides the most profitable annual crop on the farm. A few years ago many farmers did not want sheep and some said land was too valuable to keep sheep, but now while the price of land is getting higher every year, nearly everybody wants them. They are considering everything except, perhaps, wool, no more profitable now than they were when nobody wanted them.

It appears to me that farmers do not realize what it requires to succeed with sheep. We base our claim for this as being the most profitable branch of animal industry, not wholly or the ordinary profit it brings the farmer, but in doing this we consider many things besides the mere returns that are received for the mutton and wool. Not least among these is the sheep's ability to turn to cash so much of the farm products that would otherwise be a waste, and also their ability to consume many noxious weeds, thus ridding the farm of them without any expense to the owner.

We also consider the fact that except during lambing time there is less work in caring for them than any other stock. In some localities there are fields where other animals could not live, but sheep would do well. In caring for sheep, if well bedded and kept dry as they should be, it is not necessary to clean the stable every day as it is for other animals.

For those that now contemplate going into the sheep business, I would say, do not be disappointed if you do not reach the top, but consider your gains as compared with other stock. Sheep should have salt before them at all times. A sheep will consume more feed as compared with its weight than a cow, but consider it is producing a crop of wool and lambs at the same time. Sheep should have exercise every day for some weeks before lambing time.

FEEDING SMALL PIGS.

I feed mostly chopped grain the whole year to small pigs, writes Mr. John S. Naugel. I use corn, oats and rye about equal parts, chopped together. This is mixed in a thin slop with about one-third bran. I also use buckwheat and wheat for chop when it is not too expensive. I generally let my pigs suck

until they are seven or eight weeks old. I let them have all the slop they want by giving them a small trough on the opposite side of the fence. I have my pens for brood sows on the southeast side of a building. By keeping them warm and dry, my hogs do well any part of the winter.

I have had sows farrow from October to April with good success. Each pen has a yard with about eight rods. I feed in the yard the year around. The pen is tight, except the entrance, and the pigs can go out and in at will. Brood sows do well by adding some pumpkins or beets of some sort to their feed once a day. I use a great many small apples and find the hogs like them. I believe they keep the animals in better trim when fed sparingly.

LIVE STOCK NOTES.

If well wintered, the horses will be better fitted for labor, or will sell for more money. It is not economy to skimp any animal.

There is no such thing as a really good scrub cow, but there are lots of poor thoroughbreds. Name does not always count. Buy for the sake of what the cow will do, and not because she has a high sounding name.

Treat a horse the best; give him a warm blanket in cold weather; give him a warm barn to sleep in when it is cold, a good bed of straw to lie on; in summer, a shade to sleep under, with green grass for a bed. Nothing is too good for the horse; it has served you well.

KAISER HAS GREAT ARMY

HAS SERVED AS A MODEL FOR OTHER COUNTRIES.

German War Lord Could Put Ten Million Men in the Field on Short Notice.

The German army of to-day is the largest and, on paper, the most efficient fighting organization that the world has ever seen, and it has served as a model for the armies of most other countries. The Australian army has been organized on methods copied exactly from the German system. The Japanese army also took its methods in organization as well as in strategy and tactics from Germany and German officers. The Chinese army has now adopted German methods. Nearly all the smaller countries of Europe with aspirations to military efficiency have borrowed officers from the German army to instruct their troops. The Turkish army was so organized.

TRAINED MILLIONS.

In the recent war the largest forces met which had ever opposed one another in any conflict. The German army, however, could put in the field a perfectly equipped military force eight times larger than the victorious Japanese army which gained the battle of Mukden. It consists of more than 4,000,000 soldiers. But in addition to 4,000,000 trained soldiers Germany could enrol 6,000,000 more men who, although not trained for service in the fighting line, would nevertheless form a valuable reserve for the protection of lines of communication and such duties. A large number of these reserves have had at least some military training and in case of necessity could also be employed in active service after a brief period of drill and military exercise. Thus the stupendous number of 10,000,000 able-bodied men could be mustered under the imperial banner of the German empire; hence the statement that all Germany is an "armed camp."

The German Emperor, who in times of peace shares the authority over the army with his fellow German sovereigns, the Kings of Bavaria, Saxony and Wurtemberg, becomes in time of war supreme and commander-in-chief or "war lord" of the entire military forces of the empire.

NEW AIR ENGINE WONDER.

Englishman's Invention May Do Away With Coal as Fuel.

Arrangements now are being made to test a new type of engine, which, if it proves successful, may cause a greater industrial revolution than that which resulted from the discovery of the steam engine or application of electricity to motive power.

The patentee, a Lancashire man, already has achieved some success as an inventor. This new production he describes as a triple economic air engine. If the inventor can justify all his claims the business of the coal miner will be practically gone so far as industrial requirements are concerned.

The summarized claims for the new engine are that it will save the use of coal, and all the cost of fuel. It will take the place of steam, which will not be required to keep the pressure of air constant; it will drive a locomotive, propel a steamship, work a mill, forge, etc., without using either gas, water, coal, electricity, or oil; it will prevent smoke.

The economic cylinder will be more powerful than any other type of cylinder of equal diameter. It will save the use of large boilers, and not more than two will be required for the large works. With two or more boilers filled with compressed air up to the pressure required in each boiler the economic cylinder will keep up the pressure of air. If set to work in locomotives and other high pressure steam boilers, where the wear is considerable, caused by fires and the use of dirty water, the constant changing of temperature and pressure at having a tendency to pull them to pieces, this wear and tear will be avoided by the use of the air engine.