

# THE CRIMINAL'S CONFESSION

OR, SYBIL BERNER'S  
VINDICATION

## CHAPTER VI.

While the walls of the cavern seemed wheeling around Sybil, the robber captain calmly came up to her, lifted his hat, and said:

"Spirit of Fire, I am happy to welcome you to your own appropriate dwelling-place. Behold!"

And he waved his hat around toward the stalactite walls and ceiling of the cavern, now burning, sparkling, blazing, in the reflected light of the candles.

"Death!" uttered Sybil, under her suspended breath.

"Yes, Death! I told you, Spirit, that Death and Fire were often allies! But now, as we are no longer masquerading, permit me, Mrs. Berners, to present myself to you as Captain Inconnu," he said, with another and a deeper bow.

"That name tells me nothing," replied Sybil.

"What name does more?" inquired the stranger; and, then, without expecting an answer, he turned to Moloch and said in his smoothest tones:

"Be so good as to give me this seat, sir."

But Sybil saw that the giant turned pale and trembled like the fabled mountain in labor, as he left the seat by her side, and slunk into another at some distance; and she felt far more fear of the graceful "Captain Inconnu," who now placed himself beside her, and behaved with so much deference, than she had felt of the brutal "Moloch," who had treated her with the rudest familiarity. And this fear was not at all modified by a whisper that reached her acute ears, from the man at whose side the giant had now seated himself.

"I could not tell you what you'd get, if you meddled with the captain's gall! Now look out."

But the "captain" conducted himself with the greatest courtesy toward his guest.

"Come here, princess!" he said, addressing the girl, "come here and place yourself on the other side of this lady. If you are princess, she is queen."

The girl immediately came around and seated herself. And the master of the house helped his guests to the most delicate morsels of the viands before him.

Sybil, though in deadly fear of every gentlemanly attendant, accepted every one of his attentions with a smile. She knew, poor child, to whom she was now obliged to pay court. Her one idea was her husband; her one want, to be reunited to him, at all risks or costs to liberty or life; and she knew that this man, the autocrat, as well as the captain of his band, had the power to restore her to her husband, and so she exerted all her powers of pleasing to win his favor.

Poor Sybil! if she was rather ignorant of books (for a gentleman's daughter), she was still more ignorant of mankind. She might have learned something from the case of Rosa Blondelle, but she did not. And now no guardian spirit whispered to her:

"You saw how the blandishments of a beauty affected even your own true-hearted husband; and yet, with the best intentions, you are using the same sort of blandishments upon a brigand. What can you expect but evil?"

No; the voice of her guardian angel was silent; and the beautiful, honorable lady continued to smile on the robber captain, until his head was turned.

Near the conclusion of the feast, he filled a goblet to the brim with wine, and rising in his place, said:

"Fill high your glasses, men! Let us drink to the health of our new sovereign. Dethroned and outcast by the law, we will enthroned her and crown her the Queen of Outlaws! Fill to the brim with this best of wine. And mind, this cup is a pledge of amnesty to all offenders, of union among ourselves, and of devotion to our queen!"

The toast was honored by full glasses and loud cheers. And none filled higher or cheered louder than the giant Moloch, who now felt himself secure from the captain's vengeance by virtue of the general proclamation of amnesty.

The long-protracted feast came to an end at last.

The robber captain was not an impetuous brute like the giant Moloch. He was a refined and cultivated being, who could bide his time, and enjoy his happiness by anticipation.

So at the end of the supper, seeing that his guest was very weary, he signed to the girl to rise. And then he took the lady's hand, pressed it most respectfully to his lips, and placed it in that of the girl, saying:

"See your queen to her apartments and serve her royally."

Poor Sybil! In her infatuation she smiled upon the brigand, with a look that deprived him of the last remnant of reason, and then she followed her conductor from the room.

The girl led the lady to the same cavern chamber where she had before slept, and then said:

"Listen to me. Satan is not himself to-night. Satan is in love. That is a mere fatal intoxication than any produced by wine; and when the devil is drunk with love or wine, he is very dangerous. You must stay with me to-night."

"Your eyes are wide open, and as bright as stars! You are not sleepy at all," said the girl, gazing upon Sybil's excited face.

"How can I be, when I slept so long to-day, and when I have so much to occupy my thoughts besides?" sighed Sybil.

"Do you wish to sleep?"

"Indeed I do; to sleep and forget."  
"Here, then," said the girl, taking a full bag from a corner, and drawing over it a clean pillowcase. "Here is a sack of dried hop-leaves. It is as soft as down, and soporific as opium. Put this under your head, and you will find it to be a magic cushion that will convey you at once to the land of Nod."

Sybil took her advice and soon grew calm, and soon after lost all consciousness of her troubles in a deep repose, which lasted until morning.

The glinting of the sun's rays through the crevices in the cave, and the sparkling of the stalactites on the walls, first awakened Sybil. She saw that her hostess was already up and dressed; but had not left the cave. She was in truth setting the place in order after her own toilet, and laying out fresh towels for that of her guest.

Sybil watched her in silence some time, and then spoke:

"I have been with you twenty-four hours, and yet do not know your name. Will you never tell it to me?"

"Yes, my name is Gentiliska, but you may call me Iska."

"Iska? Gentiliska? Where have I heard that singular name before?" inquired Sybil of herself; for in fact so many startling incidents had happened to her lately, that her mind was rather confused. She reflected a moment before she could recall the idea of the Gypsy girl in the legend of the "Haunted Chapel." She turned and gazed at her hostess with renewed interest. A superstitious thrill ran through her frame. Yes; here were all the points of resemblance between this strange being and the spectral girl of the story! Here were the gypsy features, the long, black elf-locks, the jet-black eyes, and arch eyebrows depressed toward the nose and lifted toward the temple, the fish expression, the manner, the dress, the very name itself!

"Why do you look at me so strangely?" inquired the girl.

"Gentiliska!" repeated Sybil, as in a dream.

"Yes, that's it! Most of the girls of my race have borne it; but my great-grandmother was the last before me."

"Your great-grandmother?" echoed Sybil, still in a dream.

"Yes; she had no daughter or granddaughter, else they also would have been Gentiliskas. She had only a son and a grandson, and her grandson had only me," calmly replied the girl.

Sybil gasped for breath; and when she recovered her voice, she exclaimed:

"But you have another name—a family name!"

"Oh, to be sure; those people have."

"Would you—would you tell it to me?" inquired Sybil, hesitatingly.

The girl looked at her quizzingly.

"Believe me, I do not ask from idle curiosity," added Sybil.

"Oh, no; to be sure not. We are not a bit curious—we!"

"You needn't tell me," said Sybil.

"Oh, but I will. My family name? It is not a very noble one. It is indeed a very humble one—Dewberry."

"Dewberry!" exclaimed Sybil, catching her breath.

"Oh bother, no. I wish it was. That was the name of the great family who once owned all this great manor, which went to wreck and ruin for want of an heir!—oh, no; my name is Dewberry—the little fruit vine, you know, that runs along the ground, and takes its name from its cool berries being always found deep in the dew. Besides, I am English, and descended through my great-grandmother Gentiliska from the English gypsies. She was a gypsy queen."

"Gentiliska," said Sybil, "tell me something about your great-grandmother. I feel interested in all that concerns gypsies."

"Well, but get up and dress for breakfast. I can talk while you are making your toilet."

"Certainly," said Sybil, immediately following the advice of her hostess, who with nimble fingers began to help her to dress.

"My ancestress, Gentiliska, was the daughter of a long line of gypsy kings. On the death of her father, she became the queen of the tribe."

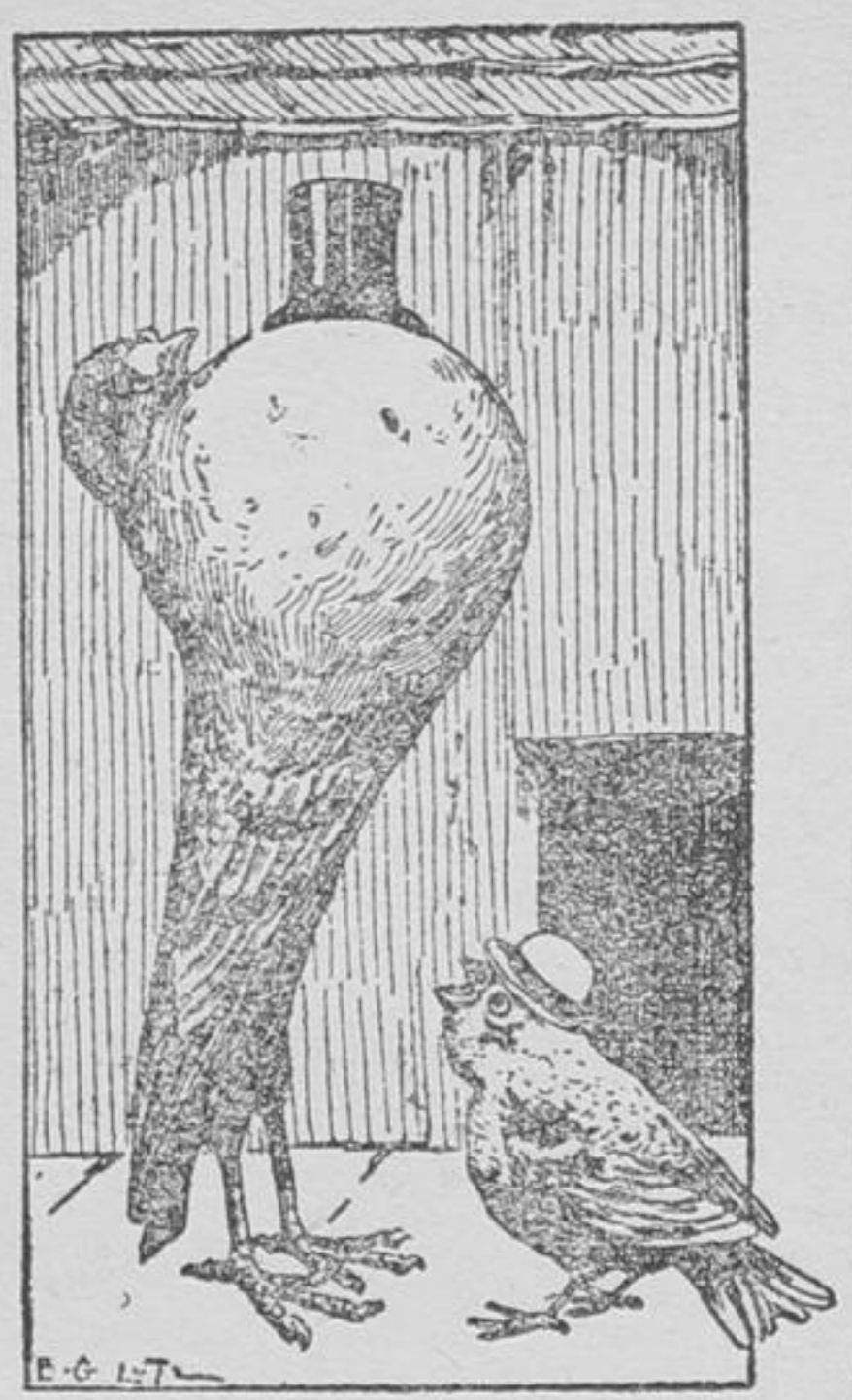
"Her father had no sons?"

"Oh, yes, he had. But his daughter was made queen I don't know why. She was very beautiful, and she sang and danced as charmingly as that beautiful Jewish princess, who danced off the head of holy John the Baptist. She was an astute reader of human nature, and, therefore, a successful fortune-teller. She always promised love to youth, money to the mature, and long life to the aged. One day at the races she told the fortune of a rich young man, in return for which he made hers."

"How?"

"He married her."

"He did really marry her? You are sure?"



Sparrow—Ha! ha! what a funny place for your hat!  
Pouter—Yes, but whenever I put it on my head, it falls off.

The girl flared up. "He took her abroad with him; and of course he married her."

"Of course he should have done so," sighed Sybil, as the fairy castle she had built for the girl fell like a house of cards.

"I tell you he not only should have done so, but he did so. My ancestress was no fool. She was married by special license. I have the license in a silver casket. It was the only heirloom she left her descendants, and they have kept it in the family ever since. They had a notion, I think, that there was wealth or honor hung on to it," laughed the girl.

"Honor certainly, wealth possibly."

"Ha! ha! ha! I don't see how. Little good for one or the other it ever did us. My father was a tramp; my grandfather a tinker."

"But how was that? Your ancestress married a gentleman?"

"Yes, she married a gentleman, and her tribe discarded her when she deserted them. They would have discarded her all the same if she had married a king who was not of her race. She went abroad with her husband, and visited, I have heard, the four quarters of the globe. She returned after two years, bringing with her a dark infant boy. She was about to go with her husband on another long, long voyage. He refused to allow her to take her child, but said, for the little lad's own sake, he must be left at nurse in England. The only point she could get him to yield was this, that the child should be left with her tribe until it should be five years old, when they would reclaim it."

"That was a very strange disposition for a gentleman to make of his son."

"It would have been, if he had cared a snap for his son, which he didn't, as after events proved. The gypsy wife sought out her own grandmother, who was a famous doctress of the tribe. In the beldame's care she left the babe. Then with her husband she slipped away to sea, and neither the one nor the other was ever seen or heard of afterwards. The boy, deserted by his father and his mother, grew up a poor degraded little half-breed among the gypsies, scarcely tolerated by them, but loved and petted by his foster-mother, whose great power in her tribe only sufficed for his protection. When at length the old crone lay upon her deathbed, she called the youth to her side, and placed in his hand the silver casket, saying:

"Take it my lad. It was put in my hands by your mother, when she left you with me. Take it, then; guard it as the most sacred treasure of your life; for it may bring you to wealth and honor yet."

"And then she died, and the lad, with the casket for his only fortune, left the tribe, and took to the road alone, mending pots and kettles for a living, often suffering hunger and cold, but never, under any stress of poverty, parting with the silver casket." The girl paused for a moment and then resumed:

"But poverty never yet prevented a gypsy from taking a mate. He found one in the daughter of another travelling tinker, poorer, if possible, than himself. She lived only long enough to bring him one child, and then died, it is said, from the hardships of her life."

"That was miserable," sighed Sybil.

"It was so miserable that her widowed husband never tried marriage any more; but he brought up his son to his own trade—that of a travelling tinker. And when the time came for him to give up the ghost, he placed the casket in the hand of the boy, saying:

"Your mother died of want rather than let it be sold for a sum that might have saved her life and made her comfortable; because she said that it was her child's destiny. Keep it and guard it as you would guard your heart's blood."

"And so the old tinker died, and the young tramp, with the heirloom in his possession, set out to seek his fortune."

"But he did not go upon the quest alone. Like most improvident young tramps, he took a mate. His wife was my mother. I remember both my parents while they were yet young and handsome, and very happy despite their poverty. My father—But let me stop! Before I go any further, I wish to ask you a question."

"Ask it."

"Do you believe that any one may become so maddened with causeless jealousy as to commit a crime?"

"I not only believe it, but know it."

"Then I will go on. My father doted

on my mother—just doted on her! But my poor mother had a friend and benefactor, of whom my father grew insanely, furiously, but causelessly jealous.

"One day he did a cruel murder, and found out when it was too late that he had slain the father of his wife, who, in coming after her at all was only looking to the interests of his poor, unowned daughter. Ah! a volume might be written on that tragedy; but let it pass! My mother died of grief. But long ere that my father had fled the country, an outlaw and the companion of outlaws.

"Once his still absorbing love for his wife drew him back to England at the imminent risk of his life. His wife was dead, and his daughter was a little wretched child, knocked about among beggars and tramps, and in extreme danger of that last evil—that last and worst evil that could befall her—being taken care of by the parish!"

"That is a very severe sarcasm," said Sybil, rebukingly.

"Is it? If ever you are free again, lady, visit the most destitute homes in the world, and then the best almshouses in your reach, and find out for yourself whether it is not better to die a free beggar than to live an imprisoned pauper. The manner in which workhouse Charity 'whips the devil round the stump' by satisfying its conscience without benefiting its object, is one of the funniest jokes, as well as one of the most curious subjects of study that can be found in social life."

"I am sorry to hear you say so; but go on with your story."

(To be continued).

## About the Farm

### SUMMER CARE OF HENS.

While it is desirable that hens should have considerable exercise and a chance to get some green forage and insects, etc., in summer, it is not necessary that they be allowed to become a nuisance and have the range of the farm and the garden and destroy more crops than their heads are worth, writes a correspondent. It is just as desirable to control hens as it is to control cows or hogs, or any other kind of stock. Neither do I believe in having large runs fenced in for farm poultry. Small yards are all right, but, one can get along, even without small yards, and keep hens healthy and in good condition.

My practice is to keep the hens confined to their coops until about 4 p.m., then they are let out to have free range. After crops are well started in the spring, hens that are not allowed to run until this time of day will do little damage. They simply make a business of foraging, realizing that there is little time to get into mischief and they practically have no time for scratching and destroying garden stuff generally. We have practiced this method of handling farm poultry for years and find it entirely satisfactory.

Another point to be considered in this system of handling hens is the fact that the eggs are all laid in the coop. Where hens are allowed to roam all day, it is a difficult problem to get all the eggs. The hens steal their nests and the eggs cannot be gathered regularly, and, consequently, cannot be depended upon for private customers. When laid in the coop they are all gathered every day. If one will stop to consider this point, he will see that much is saved from the eggs alone. Many farmers do not receive the highest price for their eggs simply because these are not gathered fresh every night. They find nests full of eggs, some of which have been laid several days and are stale and undesirable for eating. No one can get a fancy price for such.

### HANDLING GROWING CHICKENS.

It is a little more difficult to control growing chickens than the laying hens, because they really need more exercise. However, early in the season when crops are getting started the chickens are small and must necessarily be confined. As they grow older I allow them larger range in the plum orchard, and, finally, after the cereal crops are gathered

and the early vegetables gone from the garden, I simply fence against garden products like tomatoes and cabbage which are readily destroyed by chickens, then allow the growing chickens a free range.

Most people make a mistake in not separating the young pullets, intended for winter layers, from the cockerels and putting them in their winter quarters until late in the season. They ought to be separated, surely as early as September. If they are allowed to run in their summer quarters until November and are then put into winter quarters, my experience is that it takes a long time for them to get accustomed to their winter quarters. They rarely lay as well as they do when placed in winter quarters earlier, even though confined more than one would think advisable.

Unless the cockerels are intended to be sold for breeding purposes, and unless kept for capons or for roasters, they should have been sold long before this time. In such cases they can be allowed to run until one wishes to put them up for fattening for market. Hens that have proved unprofitable, and those that have reached the age limit, should be disposed of every fall and their places filled with young pullets.

Many people make a mistake in not providing enough grit for poultry in the summer time. They seem to think that as long as young chickens and old hens run out of doors, even for a portion of the time, they can help themselves to all the grit necessary.

### VERMIN EXTERMINATOR.

The best method of exterminating rats is by the use of carbon bisulphide. The fumes from this are heavier than air, and thus its tendency is to settle down instead of rising, as do most gases. It is cheap, and safe to use when its properties are understood.

Put about a tablespoonful into the mouth of each rat hole in the cellar and close up the entrance tightly with an old rag; do not go near the place for a while, say twelve hours, with a lighted lamp. The fumes are a sure but painless death when thus confined. This is surer than trapping and more humane than poisoning. We are in no danger of losing the family cat by having her discover and eat one of the dead bodies, as has occurred with us three times in succession. Carbon bisulphide is also the cheapest and best way of ridding the farm of woodchucks. Close each hole with a big stone or sod. It is the surest and most popular method of ridding seed peas and beans of weevils.

It is also valuable for ridding poultry and stock houses from lice, always remembering in using it for this purpose to expose it in shallow vessels located at the topmost parts of the room, giving it a chance to settle. If exposed on the floor the fumes might not reach the top of the room. All animals or poultry should be excluded, and lights, also, until the house has been thoroughly aired. The Government furnishes a free bulletin telling of the best ways to use this agent, which is well worth the trouble of asking for.

### CARE OF SOWS AND PIGS.

I would not breed a sow in winter until late so that the pigs would be farrowed about the opening of spring, writes Mr. S. R. Hawks. Then with proper feeding one can gain 60 days on the pigs farrowed in midwinter. Feed the sow lightly on corn and wheat middlings just enough to keep her strong and healthy until arrival of pigs. Continue the same feed and increase slightly until she has three times each day what she cares to clean up. Let the increase in feed be largely the middlings. Mix them with water until a very thin slop is made. A little corn soaked until soft for the little ones, after they begin to eat, is well, but is more inclined to fatten than to grow. In the meantime feed liberally of the middlings and there will be no check to growth.

In my opinion there is no other feed so good for pigs or so near the same as their mother's milk. Do not keep hogs in too close buildings, they require ventilation. Almost any kind of house that is dry will do, give plenty of straw for bedding, but change it every ten days. If possible, have something green for them. They will eat almost any growth; never let them have access to matured grass.

The pessimist is a misfortune teller



### AN ANGLO-MANIAC

Ethel (sweetly)—Never mind, Albert, dearest! He's a real English Bulldog and direct from London. He was formerly owned by the Duke of Clarence, and—