PRISON REFORM.

Continuation of the Problem of Criminal Faithfulness

BY THE WIVES AND WOMEN

Of Professional Criminals and a Lady's Solution of Why the Accidental Criminal's Wives Divorce Them—Murder Trials and How They are Conducted—A Novel Would-be Criminologist—Traits of Criminals.

Tenth Paper.

(The writer of the following was sentenced to life imprisonment in the Ohio Penetentiary for fighting a street duel in which the defamer of his family was killed. Pardoned after eight years imprisonment, he proposes in the columns of the Globe to tell "a plain, unvarnished tale" of life in a modern penitentiary. —EDITOR.)

Now, the question we intended to raise, that some one might find the solution which baffled us in prison, and which we are yet unable to satisfactorily solve ourself, is, "Why are the women of criminals more loyal, faithful and devoted to their male protectors in prison than their more sensitive, refined, educated and emotional sisters of the better and the non-criminal class?"

A lady once attempted for our benefit to solve this problem. Here is what she said:

"The reputable wife of an honest merchant or professional man does not look for nor expect the development of any criminal trait in her husband. She may have lived with him for years and not having discovered nor expected any weakness in his character which would lead him to the commission of any kind or character of crime, she is so shocked when he does do so that she rarely recovers from the effect, and the consequence may and usually is that her ideal being destroyed she separates herself by divorce or coldness from her erstwhile honored and respected husband.

On the other hand, the women of the criminal class, or those women who themselves free from crime ally themselves with criminals, naturally expect or look forward to periods when their husbands must become involved with the authorities. They are prepared at all times for the arrest and imprisonment of their husbands, and are not shocked, though they may be grieved, at his arrest, which was expected sooner or later, and consequently they continue regarding him with the same feelings they were accustomed to feel and manifest during the periods of his liberty. If a decent woman of the better class detected in her husband a weakness or a trait which her instinct or intuition admonished her might lead to his downfall, the chances are she would pity and stick to him in misfortune."

But we are still unsatisfied, and feel that the full solution of this devotion and loyalty of the burglar's or thief's wife for her husband, and the selfish and cruel abandonment by the wife of the farmer, lawyer, editor and honorable but accidentally fallen citizen is not embodied in this lady's answer. Of one thing we are convinced, however, that the criminal is never entirely forsaken by the most loyal and devoted women when the crime is the outcome of their husbands' brothers, fathers or other kinfolks. And this we have seen practically demonstrated by more than ten thousand females during the long period of our observation. Will Professor Lombroso make a note of this phase of criminal life?

We had scarcely concluded writing the foregoing when one of the most striking acts of devotion by a criminal's wife was flashed over the wires and printed in the daily press, and in susbstance as follows:

"Mrs. Edwin Ruthven, wife of the Cleveland murderer who was put to death in the electric chair, made a last effort early in the evening to save the life of her husband.

"In the presence of Rev. W. M. Langford and others she made an alleged confession that she and not her husban killed Policeman Shipp. Mrs. Ruthven declared that on the night of the murder she and Ruthven quarreled; that she left the house, met Charles Jacobs, a mysterious individual of whom Ruthven frequently spoke, and that he asked for Edwin, saying he had a job on hand. She told him her husband was not at home, but that she would help. She donned her husband's clothing and assisted Jacobs in the burglary. Policeman Shipp appeared and Jacobs fled. She used her revolver and Shipp was killed.

"Ruthhven, when told of the confession, declared it was not true. Mrs. Ruthven is serving a sentence for receiving stolen property."

Here is confirmatory evidence, if any were needed, to demonstrate the superior devotion of at least the professional criminal's wife over that of the wife of the "accidental" criminal. What banker's wife, or lawyer's, or editor's, would come forward and, to save her guilty husband's life, take the crime upon herself and even go smiling to the electric chair, as we believe Mrs. Ruthven would do for her burglar and murderous husband?

Ruthven himself was not without a species of chivalry, or at least manhood, notwithstanding his depraved criminal nature and the life he followed. Imagine a man within a few hours of the dreaded ordeal, sitting in the death cell awaiting the summons to the electric chair. All hope is gone, and the grave is open to receive him, yet, as "Death is the King of Terrors," he would live if he could and take any desperate chance to save his life. In the female department of the prison he knows that his faithful wife is counting the minutes, and that she, too, has abandoned all hope. They will never meet again on earth, and she is now to him nothing more than any one of the millions of women inhabiting the earth. She will serve her sentence, be discharged, and, no doubt, get another "man" or husband and forget that such a man as himself ever lived.

In the Ohio penitentiary, where Ruthven was thus spending the last moments of his life, condemned men are executed a few minutes after 12 o'clock midnight. The "Annex," as it is called, where the murderers are confined pending their execution, is an adjoining apartment to the death chamber. In this death chamber is the fatal chair, and the prisoner, when the moment arrives, has but to walk a few paces from his cell in the Annex to reach the door of this dreaded chamber.

Ruthven's door opens and in steps the warden and the clergyman mentioned. Ruthven knows that it is not time for the fatal march, and looks at his visitors. Perhaps the governor has reprieved him. His heart beats stronger than ever, and he licks his fevered lips with his almost parched tongue. The clergyman looks at him kindly, and then, in a few words, explains to him the situation. Mrs. Ruthven has confessed that she was the slayer. Ruthven is staggered at such deathless devotion. He knows it is a lie. He knows, also, that by confirming his wife's statement, he will live, and there is now but an hour or two between him and the chair. He weakens for a moment only, as his pale face flushes with hope, and then, with sublime courage he exclaims:

"My wife is innocent; she has made this confession to save me. I also am innocent."

Thus Ruthven, burglar and murderer, signs his own death warrant, and within the hour passes to immortality.

Ruthven deserved death. There is no question about it. A burglar, an outlaw, and a murderer. Society in its own defense, and for its own protection, could do nothing else; but we may be permitted to truly say of this criminal, "Nothing in his life became him as his taking off." He died game, of course; such a man as Ruthven had no fear of death when the "jig was up." He philosophically, like all professional criminals, "took his medicine," and there is hardly a doubt that Ruthven found consolation, or, if not consolation, extra nerve in dying when he might have saved himself by sacrificing his wife or "woman."

There is a thought in this connection which may startle the criminologist in his future researches into the degeneracy of the criminal, and that is supposing, after all, that Mrs. Ruthven told the truth, and that she and not her husband committed the murder? This is possible, nay, it is probable. What then? Did not humanity and justice alike demand the suspension of the arm of the executioner? Are men to be put to death by law on whose guilt rests a doubt? Why all these hysterics about Judge Lynch? Is not the cold-blooded official—who is governor of Ohio—equally as sanguinary and impatiently thirsty for blood as Judge Lynch? If not, why was Ruthven's life taken on his own testimony as against that of his wife's? Was she not as worthy of belief as her burglar husband? If Ruthven was guilty, he deserved death, but if his wife, as she says, committed the murder, the State is guilty of a grave crime.

The following is a sample case of these murder trials and the methods and manner of securing verdicts against accused criminals. Our editorial last Sunday on this subject is more than substantiated by this excerpt from the said murder trial, which was brought to a close last week in the State of Indiana:

Samuel S. Harmon, who shot and killed Charles Reynolds October 27, 1900, was given a life sentence by the jury for his crime. The trial, which has been on in the Clay county court for the past week, ended Saturday afternoon.

The jury announced that they had agreed upon a verdict shortly before midnight, after being out from 4 o'clock in the afternoon. When Harmon heard the verdict finding him guilty and providing a life sentence, he did not show the least sign of breaking down. His face was as placid and his manner as indifferent as it had been throughout the trial. If the verdict surprised him he did not show it. He was evidently prepared to expect anything.

A great many people who have been in attendance at the trial are greatly surprised at the verdict. The testimony of the defense was so convincing that Reynold's companions had rocked the house and that they had thrown at Harmon that a great many expected him to be acquitted. It was the general talk Saturday that at most Harmon would get but an indeterminate sentence for manslaughter.

Attorney A. W. Knight, for the defense, decelares that the verdict is the result of the jury allowing public sentiment to unduly influence them. It is well remembered that immediately after the killing of Reynolds, a mob was organized to lynch him and that he was hurriedly taken to Terre Haute for safety. Since there has been some talk around the courtroom that there was a probability of Harmon being acquitted, Attorney Knight says that these same people made threats that they would lynch Harmon if he was acquitted.

He says that they had all arrangements made for a mob Saturday night, and that if the jury had turned Harmon loose they would have attacked him with the intention of taking his life.

These threats, with the vengeance the mob would also take on the jury, Mr. Knight says, made the jury afraid to bring in any other verdict than that of life sentence.

While the indictment was for murder in the first degree, the jury found that the defendant was guilty of murder in the second degree and gave him the extreme penalty—imprisonment for life.

Five of the jurors for several ballots voted to hang Harmon. The ballots stood five for hanging, six for imprisonment and one for manslaughter. The five jurors for hanging gradually came over to life imprisonment, but the one voting for manslaughter hung out until the last ballot.

At the convening of court Monday morning, Attorney Knight gave notice that they would apply for a new trial for Harmon. Judge Colliver allowed the attorneys for the defense six days in which to prepare their exceptions and the application for a new trial.

Following the usual procedure in such cases, the new trial will be denied by the trial judge. Then, if the convicted man can raise any more money to fee his lawyer and pay the costs of an appeal, it is taken to a higher court, and ninety to one the decision is affirmed and the convicted man immured in a penitentiary. And that is generally the end of him.

In concluding this paper, as a problem for the Lombrossos and "others of his ilk" to solve, the writer, in addition, saddles the problem with this criminal nut, which he hopes the professor will also crack to the satisfaction of a public interested in these criminal matters.

From Reynolds' London, England, newspaper, issue to hand:

"A novel defense to a charge of felony was offered by Frank Henry Sutton, thirty-eight, of the London Hotel Long-acre, who appeared before Mr. Fenwick at Marylebone on Wednesday. He was accused of stealing from the grand hall at Euston Station an umbrella belonging to Matilda Sayer, of Wigan Cottage, Watford. In defense prisoner said he was a journalist and desired to write a book about prison life. But his difficulty was how to get into a prison that he might study its life at first hand. First of all he endeavored to induce his own friends to charge him with some offence, but they chance of gaining his object was to commit a felony, he took the umbrella. Two gentlemen then came forward and testified to his honesty and straightforwardness during the past two years, and in the end he was remanded, the magistrate directing that the prison surgeon should report as to the state of his mind."

This man's mind may or may not be normal, but one thing is sure and certain as that the sun will rise to-morrow, and that is, he discovered the only sure method of writing intelligently on crime and criminals.

(To be continued.)

MANIFEST DESTINY.

A Very Able Article by Mr. J. A. Gilkey.

TOLD IN ALLEGORY WITH EFFECT

The Ship of State Flies the Pirate's Flag Above the Stars and Stripes, and Men are Shot to Death by Americans Who, as They Expire, Cry "Liberty or Death"—Rattle of Musketry and the Sabre Stroke Drown Their Cries.

Mr. J. A. Gilkey, Montesaur, Washington, thus addresses the public on our "Manifest Destiny:"

"Less than fourteen decades ago the parliament of England passed a law to tax the American colonies, explaining in justification of the act, that the proceeds of the taxation would be used in and for the benefit of the colonies.

"The world knows the result. The colonies repudiated the act as an unwarranted usurpation of power, declared that 'taxation without representation is tyranny,' and fought one of the fiercest wars of history in defense of the principle that all men are entitled to self-government.

"By a series of acts, culminating in the recent decision of the supreme court, the present Administration and the court have approved the action of a tyrannical parliament; cast aside the declaration of independence; asserted that one race may govern another without that other's consent; denied the right of all men to self-government; declared that they may be 'subjects' of America, yet not be entitled to the protection guaranteed by the Constitution.

"By these acts they have 'drawn the black bar sinister of tyranny' across the national escutcheon. Vandal hands have desecrated the graves of the nation's noblest dead.

Humanity with all its fears,
With all its hopes of future years,
Is hanging breathless in thy fate!

"The fatal word has been spoken; the order has been given; the ship of state has been turned adrift upon an unknown sea. The anchor has been thrown overboard; the chart has been left in port; the compass, no longer deemed of any importance, is broken in fragments, which is scattered upon the deck.

"A dark and awful storm is gathering; not a sail has been furled; the masts seem ready to break as they bend before the fury of the storm; the maddened wind howls through the rigging; the ship reels and plunges; she seems to be sinking. Where is the crew in this hour of peril? We hear their voices—oaths and blasphemy—and yonder in the forecastle we look upon a vile scene of drunken revelry, as they stake their all upon the turn of a card.

"We seek the captain; with hurried steps we fly to the wheel; near it he stands, but his hands do not grasp the spokes; they hang listlessly by his sides. We hear his voice; breathlessly we listen; we hear the words:

"'Manifest destiny! Plain duty! Conquest!'

"By the dim light of a lantern hanging near we can see that his restless eye scans the distant horizon. We follow his gaze. In the distance we see a faint light which seems to rise and fall upon the dark, heaving sea. He sees it; his hands grasp the wheel, and, with a mighty effort, the bow is turned toward the new-found light. It seems to be a vessel in distress, and as our ship speeds on we shout: 'Bravo!' for she is surely going to the aid of the stranger ship. How grandly she defies the storm, one moment in the trough of the sea, the next plowing majestically through the angry waves, but ever nearing the struggling vessel!

Again we hear the captain's voice in measured, solemn tones:

"'Duty! Destiny! Conquest!'

"We come nearer. We see her signal of distress. She is almost under our bow, oh, horror! Will there be a collision? She strikes. There is consternation and alarm on the stricken ship, but the shock brings every one of our sailors to the deck, and involuntarily we applaud, for they have surely come to aid the unfortunate crew.

But above the storm's roar the voice of the captain is heard as he shouts:

"'Is there any valuable cargo aboard?'

"'Yes,' comes the answer; when, to our dismay he gives the order:

"'Lash the ships together; spring upon her deck; kill or capture every sailor that resists! The ship is ours by right of conquest! Fate has brought us here. Our manifest destiny is to rule. Take everything of value.' Then, in lower tones, as if speaking to himself:

"'Benevolent assimilation! Plain duty! Destiny! Conquest!'

"A vivid flash of lightning reveals what we had not seen before. Above the stars and stripes floats a black flag, and the hull of our ship has been painted the same somber hue.

"The awful truth dawns upon us. Our once noble craft, the hope of humanity, has become a pirate ship; with no destination but that determined by the storm of fate; with no mission but pillage and murder, and no code of morals but might.

"Bravely the strangers defend their sinking vessel, but they read their doom in the greater number and superior equipment of the pirate crew. Still they fight on, shouting:

"'Liberty or death.'

"The rattle of musketry, the saber's stroke, the shriek of the wounded and the groans of the dying are mingled with the roar of the pitiless storm as we turn away from the scene of awful carnage, and are greeted again by those incoherent mutterings like a funeral dirge:

"'Ours by right of conquest! Benevolent assimilation! Destiny! American empire!'"

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