

# A Celebrated Case.

IN the early history of Kentucky, when the state was almost rent asunder by two political factions, the "Relief" and "Anti-Relief" parties—merged finally into the "Old" and "New Court" parties, a profound sensation was created by the assassination (so called) at midnight, at his own door of the Attorney General of the state.

In the chronological table which prefaces Collier's recital of the important events in the early history of Kentucky, may be found two short notices, the only allusion made by the historian to this tragedy, which so shocked the sensibilities of the people of that state, famed from its earliest day, for the fairness of its women, and the chivalry of its men. The first of these records, reads as follows:

Nov. 6th, 1825, Col. Solomon P. Sharps assassinated at his own door in Frankfort, by Jeroboam O. Beauchamp. Nov. 10th, the Legislature offers a reward of \$300 for the detention, apprehension and conviction of the assassin. In the succeeding year, is found this memorandum:

"July 7, 1826. Jeroboam O. Beauchamp hung at Frankfort, for the murder of Solomon P. Sharp. He and his wife, who stayed with him in jail, at 11 o'clock attempted to commit suicide by stabbing themselves with a case-knife. Her wound was mortal, and she was removed to the jailor's house where she died in three hours. They were determined to die together and had taken laudanum on the night of the 5th, but without success, and took no nourishment afterward."

In these few sentences is summed up the tragic ending of these two unhappy lives. Upon all else, save these bare facts, the chronicles of Kentucky are silent. The historian throws no side lights upon the story leading up to this denouement. No motive is given for an act so dreadful as the killing of a man at his own door at the dead hour of night. This absence of all detail seems strangely significant of an underlying mystery unexplained; significant of some cause, some motive so strong, that to the loving wife it stood like a frightful phantom beckoning, and calling her to lay aside pride, ambition, honor—all things that make great and beautiful the character of woman,—even life itself to follow him,—her husband.

"Unto the awful and dishonored shades  
Of the accursed land that's peopled with  
Those unhappy spirits who have leaped  
From life to death with lawless violence  
Unsummoned by their Maker."

Though no further light is thrown upon the tragedy, a few brief sentences here and there in the regular annals of the state make honorable mention of the participants, Sharp and Beauchamp, deepening thereby the mystery.

Of Col. Solomon P. Sharp, it is chronicled that he represented Kentucky in Congress for two terms—1813-17. It is also recorded that he was an ardent advocate of the "Relief Party" from its first inception, and classed with "the brilliant members of the bar" who supported the measure and advocated it. He was a candidate for the Legislature in 1824, upon the ticket with Gen. Desha for Governor, and was his ardent supporter—both of them elected upon the Relief ticket. For his fealty to Desha, Solomon P. Sharp was rewarded by appointment to the office of Attorney General for the state. He was the incumbent of that office when killed.

Of Jeroboam O. Beauchamp, the court records of the trial show that in the absence of law schools in the state, he studied law,—as was the custom of that day,—in the office of an able lawyer. He was classed as a brilliant young attorney, scarcely past his majority, when the financial disorder began. It is also shown that he promptly arrayed himself with the "Anti-Reliefs." That he became an able champion of the cause throughout the various campaigns, was brought out in his trial for the assassination of Col. Sharp, as may be found in the court records. Everything seemed to be pointing to a splendid future for him, when Col. Sharp was killed by some person unknown, and a price was set upon the apprehension and conviction of the slayer.

Beauchamp was arrested upon the mute witness of a blood-stained handkerchief left in the room which he had occupied for a few days at the time of the tragedy,—which somehow found its way to a conspicuous place near the scene. It was claimed that it had been overlooked in the first search for clues, when it was produced later.

Upon circumstantial evidence of the flimsiest character, supported by charges of political animosity, he was quickly tried and convicted, while partisan excitement was at its height, and condemned to death on the scaffold. In the second memorandum, already given, it is shown that Beauchamp's faithful wife, innocent of any crime; hundreds of miles away in her country home at the time of the tragedy; innocent of any expressed political animosity, with no charge whatever brought against her, was permitted to occupy with him his prison, even after the death watch was set. On the night before the day appointed for his death, they both attempted suicide, she succeeding, dying in the early hours of the day which brought death to her husband.

No explanation is given of this unheard of infringement of the law which condemns a man guilty of murder to solitary confinement. No cause was assigned for the virtual imprisonment of the wife without due process of law. Upon all of these points history and the records are silent. But since Rumor has a hundred tongues, there was no lack of surmises and theories and gossip concerning the mysterious affair.

## Beauchamp's Ante-mortem Statement.

It is not generally known; indeed, it is known to very few persons, that while imprisoned awaiting death, Beauchamp prepared a careful and detailed statement of his life from his early manhood; his marriage, and all of the circumstances leading to his imprisonment and approaching death. In this document he exposed the entire falsity of the charge brought against him—*assassination*; the falsity of the motive assigned—*political animosity*; the entire lack of any proof connecting him with the deed. The falsity, the flimsiness of the circumstantial evidence by which he was condemned was exposed. After his condemnation this statement was prepared, and while awaiting the execution of his death sentence, he signed, sealed and delivered it to his attorney, who accepted it with that credence which is usually accorded to the ante-mortem statement of a dying man; its deliverance to the public to be withheld until after the death of his beloved wife.

As their deaths were almost simultaneous, the paper was quietly and quickly prepared for distribution to the public, now wrought up to the highest pitch of excitement over the double tragedy, and the flying rumors of the cause; his adherents of the Anti-Relief party eagerly clamoring for his vindication.

Rumors of the forthcoming pamphlet reached the executive, and was suppressed so promptly that only a few copies were preserved. This statement of the prisoner was the outpouring of the heart of the doomed man, sitting in the shadow of the scaffold, with his faithful wife at his side, a voluntary prisoner. It is the true story of two unhappy victims of cruel circumstances, and the political frenzy of the times, prepared and signed by the condemned man.

"After the fleshly mists which lie  
Betwixt us and our God"—  
had all been cleared away. And its deliverance to the world was so conditioned that the wife's bleeding heart would suffer no pain from the exposure of her story, and his vindication by the *Unwritten Law*.

In the tense political situation from which this tragedy was seemingly evolved; in the tragedy itself; in the failure of the historian to accord it more than passing mention—strangely significant of an underlying mystery unexplained—Mrs. Pittman has found the suggestion for her new story, "*The Heart of Kentucky*." Only a suggestion, upon which to build a *suppositious story*, as do the lawyers, to serve as a plea—not for the vindication of "*the higher*," or the "*unwritten law*,"—but as a plea for the enactment of such *stringent laws* as would minimize such crimes as those for which the law does not, *can not afford redress*, since only death effaces the dishonor.

This story is a strong study from the inside of two people so circumstanced as to develop clearly the underlying theme receiving so much attention at this time from all classes of society,—that instinct known to man as "*the unwritten law*." Stripped of all political entanglements and subterfuges, the story *does not end unhappily*, for the condemned man was adjudged "*not guilty*" by—

## "The Heart of Kentucky."

This story has been secured by this paper and will begin running as a serial within a few weeks. Illustrations are now being made.

## UNCLE VEREMS' LETTERS.

Continued from page 10.

But I stuck. I was from Missouri and I said *show me*. And I want to tell you now the fellow who can look back over a willingness to be *shown*, can also look over the pathway to success, for he has *arrived*. Do you know there is a big difference in where you place the circumflex? Clear-sighted and ready observation denote the "*show me*" man. He is ever on the lookout for the best things. Though full of faith in himself, he knows that chance may give good ideas to any man. Lay a plan before such a man, and you will find him



"Not necessarily for publication."

courteously non-committal, but willing to be *shown*. The "*show me*" man boasts a broad freedom from prejudice, but points to his success as due not to any favorable circumstance; but entirely to his own prowess and infallibility. He takes pride in his much-heralded progress. His vanity turns the same "*show me*" man into the mockery of a bigoted "*show me*."

Yes, I was literary, and I was imaginative. Think of a young man who had never had a love affair worth chronicling or a disappointment bigger than a hill of bum navy beans writing this:

Had I met thee in all thy beauty—  
When thy hand and heart was free—  
When no other claimed the duty  
Which thy soul would yield to me;  
Had I wooed thee; had I won thee;  
Ah, how blest had been my fate—  
But thy sweetness hath undone me;  
I have found thee—but too late.  
Like the fawn that finds the fountain  
With the arrow in his breast;  
Or like light upon the mountain  
Where the snow must ever rest;  
I have met thee, but forget me,  
For I feel that ill's await.

Oh, 'tis madness to have met thee—  
To have found thee—but too late.

Sometimes I think there is a good "*story*" left in the old man yet and mayhaps I will grind it out if I get tired of everything else—or my brain slips a cog.

But to get back to your boarding house friends. Do you know, Dick, I am a small bit sorry you struck that prune dispensary. It seems to me that fellow is too much nothing. Those pleasant things you say about him are "*coppered*" to me. You can't depend so much on appearance. Many a woman who wears an automobile veil has never seen a gasoline can. The fact you haven't got a job yet doesn't prove much; you may have struck the wrong beat; but you've got to look out for your associates; and utilizing the parlor piano to the tune of "*not because your hair is curly*," does not fit you to make the world sit up and take notice. In fact, it's more likely to get your name in the sporting edition of some "*Yellow Journal*." Because I want you to make a mark, don't put your foot in the warm asphaltum. There are marks and Marks as the Jew said.

Get started right, and if its in you you'll progress no matter what you "*meet up with*" as the old lady said. Progress depends upon what you are not what you may encounter. One man is stopped by a sapling lying across his path; another picks up the sapling and converts it into a help in crossing the brook. People are too apt to think their progress will depend solely upon the obstacles they may run against; it is more likely to depend on who runs against the obstacles.

Now Richard, my boy, I have given you a double helping of advice and become too reminiscent, also. Your aunt is writing you some good truths, so I guess you'll get your waistband full of advice.

I enclose you check for the clothes you want—to show the old boy sympathizes with you; but I don't renig on the things I said about your friend. The more I think of this fellow, the less I think of him.

You dig in and get hold of a job you can tell me about; and keep the upper part of your mouth stiff. Fortitude is your only hope in the desert of trial. Remember that.

UNCLE VEREMS.