

SUNDAY CALL

BONNY RILEY HER FATE

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A FEW months ago there were advertisements in many of the leading papers of our large cities for the heirs of Bonny Riley, formerly of Portland, Or., who killed herself in Paris.

Her history is interesting, not alone because of its variety but as a study of a "degenerate", and to prove the truth of the old adage "the wages of sin is death," which purport is that it usually comes in some sudden and terrible form, such as suicide, accident under some awful circumstance, or assassination; and the man or woman who leads an adventurous life and then dies peacefully in bed, surrounded by friends and relatives, is the exception that proves the rule to the contrary. Bonny Riley was not one of these. An intimate acquaintance with one who knew her well as a child and lived neighbor to her for years while she was young, even then showing a tendency to throw all thought of honor to the winds, and who met and remonstrated with her later, gives me an opportunity to throw more light on her life and character and trace at intervals her career from childhood to the grave.

R. R. Riley was one of the pioneers of Portland, his family being among the early settlers of Eugene, Or. His wife was a woman of high temper, which she did not make any noticeable effort to govern.

Both Mr. and Mrs. Riley were of north of Ireland birth. Mr. Riley was in the wood business and made a comfortable living for his family, who resided in a nice home and enjoyed all the comforts but few of the luxuries of life.

There were three children—Bonny and two brothers. The father was easy going and indulgent, none too strict with either himself or others. The mother was high-strung and imperious. Bonny must have inherited her mother's qualities, together with her father's self-indulgent disposition and tendency to condone his own faults whatever they might be.

When her mother would send her to the grocery or bakery or on any errand to make a purchase she would always appropriate to her own use, for candy or cake, five or ten cents and pretend to her mother that she had spent it for the purchases for which she was sent; and when remonstrated with by her conscientious little playmates would laugh at them and say that her mother didn't give her as much spending money as she should and so the only way was to help herself, which she did with considerable sang froid. I think Mr. Nordau would call this an early and conclusive mark of degeneracy. But Bonny, even in her childhood, was not without her attractions; and al-

though her playmates would not follow suit and flinch from their mothers they nevertheless were not so shocked at Bonny but that they would play with her. She wielded sufficient influence among them to hold her place. One little girl of a pious temperament, who was fond of her and even worried over her shortcomings, tried to induce her to go to Sunday-school and be honest and mind her mother; but Bonny took all these admonitions good-naturedly while not in the least profiting, or caring to profit, by their beneficence.

She was bright and bold and, like gay Robin Hood, even those who were shocked at her sins were not blind to her attractions.

She was concisely described as "an attractive girl with reddish brown hair, hazel eyes and clear and creamy skin. She was tall and well proportioned and had a dash in appearance as well as in her ways and conversation."

After her mother's death she was sent to the convent only later to be expelled as incorrigible. Then St. Helen's Hall was tried with like results, and later her father sent her East to school, from which she was also expelled. By this time she had reached 15 years and had her first scandal. Reports would reach her old Portland friends, sometimes of her gay escapades, lavish display of jewels and elegant costumes; again Bonny would be hard pressed for money; but most of the time she was basking in the sunshine of some rich man's favor.

Then she entirely dropped from view, only to turn up again as a Countess, having been abroad a few years and added to her name another and with a prefix.

Bonny did not bring the Count with her to America, nor offer any proof of the Count's existence other than the claim to the title and two babies, which she said were in Australia awaiting the poor mamma's return. Bonny had come to Portland to replenish her pocketbook at the expense of her father, who was daily making the distance between himself and a drunkard's grave grow beautifully less.

Old Mr. Riley was as wax in Bonny's hands; she urged on him the necessity of immediate funds to permit her to return to Australia to her darlings, and the upshot of Bonny's persuasions, which she did not hesitate to use on her father in the absence of a better subject, was that his

last piece of property, except one of small value, was mortgaged and \$4000 handed over to his gay and festive daughter, who promised to provide for him. She probably cajoled him by promises of returning more than she borrowed later on, and so beguiled the helpless old man into parting with nearly all he had.

A well known business man in Portland fell under the spell of her fascinations and danced attendance to her, regardless of the scandal created. One of her old friends happened into an ice cream parlor as the two were taking refreshments, and despite her sister's advice went over to Bonny and spoke, feeling, as she afterward said, that she would be moved by the sight and recognition (in spite of her unsavory reputation) of an old friend of her innocent days; but Bonny was not made of impressionable material; she was moved only to irritation and did not hesitate to show it.

She turned with a stony stare and with the coldness of a duchess offered the tips of her fingers.

Her friends, however, made one final effort. They sent for her, argued, reasoned, begged for her mother's sake, if not for her own, to turn to a new life. They offered her a home until she could secure employment, promised her she should not be snubbed, and that they, respectable people, would go out with her and try to reinstate her with those who had not stepped from the narrow path. But all appeals were useless; nothing was further from her mind than seeking employment and reformation, with attendant humiliations. Finally after much persuasion and

arguing she was prevailed upon to promise to consider it. And that night she slipped out of the back door and was gone with questionable companions, of course. Whether she had cultivated depravity until it was a habit that only herculean efforts could break, or whether it was in-born, only a Nordau could decide; but her downward course was not stayed for a day.

The children in Australia were most likely mythical offspring, and Bonny was not in the least likely to have so sacrificed herself and time. They were probably fictitious, manufactured to play on the sympathy of her father, in which capacity they served effectively, for the loan was negotiated and Bonny was the happy possessor of four thousand dollars in cash, with which amount she proceeded to San Francisco, where money could be spent to advantage. Many there will probably re-

member a rather handsome, fleshy woman who boarded at a leading hotel and tipped the waiters as they had never been tipped before with 45 gold pieces. Bonny played her cards well, and spent her four thousand dollars to advantage; before a week was out every man in San Francisco who was a "high flyer" knew her, and Bonny wine and dined to her heart's content, and old man Riley continued to pour down the whiskey, while his daughter did likewise with champagne.

The four thousand was dwindling, but its lavish display had served her purpose, brought her into prominence and enabled the flame to attract another moth, this time in the shape of a wealthy young man who was engaged to an estimable roun-

down, while from the other end of the block her old friend watched her and felt the last spark of Bonny's fascination for her dim and then die. Bonny suspected what had been done and sent word to that effect, but no reply or satisfaction was vouchsafed her, so Bonny left, to turn up a few months later in Paris, the admired of all admirers, with her carriage rolling along the Bois de Boulogne, a coterie of rich fast young men in attendance, and she again bedecked in jewels, laces and velvets.

Again talked about; again with a sut-ferting of moths around the flame, and man after man singed his heart, burnt his bank notes, and did not even get "thank you" for it.

At last the flame commenced to consume itself. Bonny really had a heart, and one of the numerous lovers had found it, had calmly pierced it deeper than his own was pierced.

Then the rest of the story he told. She who had found so many men tiresome—when the money was gone, O, the humiliation of it!—had grown tiresome to the one man she loved! Her dashing, bold beauty had grown wearisome, her cute ways had palled, and her fascination was waning. How to get rid of her was the question. He had engaged himself to a good woman of aristocratic family, and Bonny must be put away like any other vice of his youth.

There was a grand dinner and party to be given, to which they were going. Here, he thought, was a good place to break the news to her. In the presence of so many people she would have to control herself and be calm. Besides, there were several there who had shown her attention, and she would naturally turn, through pique, if not preference, and accept the inevitable—simply a change of lovers. It goes on all the time in Paris, and Bonny was used to it. It would be nothing new to her.

So when they were ready for the banquet, and Bonny smiling beside him, he broke the news and told her of his approaching marriage. She started, recoiled, begged in a few words, but to no purpose. He was as calm and determined to throw over her love as she herself had been many times before to another.

So they reached the table. She laughed and chatted, drank and joked. Ah, Bonny was gay! She was richly named.

The party was at its full height—laughter, gaiety, wine; yes, "wine, women and song."

Then a thud from one of the balconies on the street below two stories down, the cries of the passersby, and a crowd of the curious and sympathetic lifting up the bruised, crushed form of the once pretty Bonny—dirt on the face, the red-brown hair matted with dust and blood, crushed almost beyond recognition, the dainty, delicate satin gown besmeared and sticky, the bones broken and the life almost extinct. She lingered in delirious agony nearly four days. The revelers returned to their homes. The lover dashed up his affair d' amour. The bride-eloped, in ignorance of her fiancé's part in the tragedy, went sweetly and peacefully to the altar and promised to "love, honor and obey," and no vision of a crushed, bedraggled, blood-stained woman in a gown as delicate as her own darkened her day dreams of a happy married life. Nor did the man whom she promised to love attend the funeral where the flowers were heaped high and many a man, yes, and some women who had felt the fascination of Bonny Riley laid their tributes on her grave.

And now they advertise for her heirs. But no claimant appears. No father, for he has long since filled a drunkard's grave; no children in Australia, and no kith nor kin the wide world over.

Somebody has asked whether a duel has ever been fought in the air.

One of the most curious of duels, says Tit-Bits, was the balloon duel in France, which was fought in 1838. The combatants were M. de Grandpre and M. le Pique, who had quarreled—about a lady, of course. This lady was one Mlle. Trevit, an actress at the Imperial Opera. On the appointed day M. de Grandpre entered the car of one balloon, with his second, and M. le Pique, with his second, mounted the other in the garden of the Tuileries, before an immense crowd of admiring spectators. When all was ready the ropes were cut and the balloons shot upward for a distance of about half a mile above the earth. The wind being light they were able to keep the distance of about eighty yards between each other with which they started. On reaching the agreed altitude the signal was given to fire. M. le Pique missed, but M. de Grandpre's ball went through the silk of the other balloon, which immediately collapsed. The victor descended with frightful velocity and both M. le Pique and his second were dashed to pieces. The balloon of the victor continued to ascend and M. de Grandpre came back to earth some leagues from Paris.

BONNY SHOWS HER FRIENDS THE CASH SHE HAS BOUGHT WITH STOLEN MONEY

HER FATHER'S MORTGAGE

STOLEN FROM HOME

GIVES A TIP TO PALACE HOTEL WAITERS

DOES THE WATERING COURSE

CUTS A BIG DASH IN PARIS

TRIES TO RAILROAD HER FATHER TO SALEM

THE END