

NO ONE KNEW.

(From the Norwegian of Bjornstjerne Bjornson.)

BY NED P. MAH.

He hung o'er the back of a chair,
She danced, and was merry as fair.
She flirted and smiled,
And the young men beguiled,
Till his heart was near breaking in two,
But that there was no one who knew.

The night that he came P. P. C.
On the turf she lay prone as could be,
And she cried, and she cried,
For her life's love had died
And vanished in that last adieu!
But that there was no one who knew.

He found naught the time to beguile,
So he came back after awhile.
The solace had found,
Was plump, rosy and round,
Yet her heart to the last was still true.
But that there was no one who knew.

THE RECONSIDERED VERDICT.

True in substance, though I tell it from a memory not very retentive of details, and though true, probably new to many of my readers, is the story of the "Reconsidered Verdict."

Some sixty autumns ago the case was tried at Chester, before a Judge of great ability and eminence, and jury whose intelligence—but you shall hear. In the preceding spring—April I think was the month—there had been a bad case of burglary at a farmhouse in Cheshire. Three men had tied down and gagged the farmer and his two maid-servants, and had rifled the house at their leisure. The police were told of the matter, and pretty accurate descriptions were given of the men. There were two other clues. In the struggle one of the men had lost a button from his coat, which button he had left behind. Also the same man had had his face so severely scratched by one of the maids, that the girl said "she was sure she had left her mark upon him."

Weeks passed without any arrest being made and people began to forget the burglary, until one day a man was taken up at Liverpool on suspicion of being concerned in quite a different matter. He had with him a bundle containing some of the plunder of the farmhouse. More of the plunder was found at his lodgings. His face bore traces of scratching; and, to clinch the matter, his coat wanted a button, and the buttons on it corresponded exactly with that picked up at the scene of the burglary. His defence was very flimsy. "He knew nothing about the burglary, but had bought the coat and things very cheap from a man in the street." "Did he know the man?" "No, never saw him before, nor since." "How about the scratches?" "Well he was a sailor, and too much accustomed to big hurts to take any notice of scratches." Of course he was committed for trial, and the trial, as I said, came on at Chester.

It excited a great deal of interest, and the court was crowded. An invalid staying at the principal inn so far shaking off a touch of tropical fever as to send in his card to the judge, and ask for a place behind the bar. And yet, after all, there was very little to be said. The circumstantial testimony above mentioned, was overwhelming, and in addition to that, farmer and servants with one accord swore to the identity of the prisoner with the burglar. There was no defence; the jury found a verdict of "guilty" without leaving the box; and as burglary was a hanging matter in those days, it merely remained to pass sentence of death. Only a formula between him and judgment.

"Prisoner at the bar, you have heard the verdict of the jury? Have you anything to say why sentence of death should not be passed upon you?" Then the prisoner spoke for the first time. Just brushing his eyes with the cuff of his coat he began—

"Well, cap'n, it's hard to be hung for nothin', but I can see this is a yard-arm business. I know no more of this 'ere burglary nor a babby; but these witnesses ha'n't told no lies, I s'pose. And what can I say agin 'em? When this thing came off—April, didn't they say—I was fightin' the slavers on the Gold Coast. But you've got no call to believe that, and so there's an end to it."

There was something in the man's manner that impressed the judge; so he said not unkindly, "But surely, prisoner, if your story is true, you must have friends and comrades with whom you could have communicated. If you had thought they could do you good, you would have done this. It is too late now."

"You're right, cap'n; it's too late. But it's all very well to say 'let 'em know' when a man's locked up in gaol, and can't read nor write, and don't know where they are. They may be in America, they may be at the Cape, and how could I let them know—leastways, not in time? No, it's no use, and you'd better order me to be run up to the yard-arm at once."

"But," urged the judge, "the Court has no wish to hang a man who may be innocent. Is there no one who could speak for you?"

The prisoner looked in a hopeless sort of way round the court.

"No," he began; but just then his eye lighted on the stranger from the inn. "Yea," he added, pointing to him, "There is a gentleman who might speak for me if he would."

The judge turned round. "Do you know the prisoner?" he asked.

"No, my lord," was the reply, "I never saw him before in my life."

"Well, Captain Sharpe," said the prisoner. "If you put the rope round my neck I give in. Go on, my Lord."

"Stay," said the judge; "is your name Captain Sharpe?"

"Yea, my Lord." And "Captain Sharpe, R.N." was on the card he had sent in.

"Well, the prisoner seems to recognize you, so I will ask you to step into the witness box and be sworn, that he may ask you questions."

The captain went into the box, and the following dialogue ensued:—

"Are you Captain Sharpe, of His Majesty's ship *Vulture*?"

"Yea."

"Were you in command of her on the slave coast this spring?"

"I was."

"And wasn't I one of the crew?"

"Most certainly not."

"But cap'n, don't you remember the big slaver that gave you all the trouble, that you had to board?"

"Yea."

"And you yourself led the boarders?"

"Oh yea; but all that is nothing—you may easily have heard or read all about that."

"Well, but cap'n, once more, don't you remember the big nigger that was almost cutting you down? Don't you remember the man who stood between you and death, and what he got for it? Don't you remember that?"—and, brushing back his hair, the prisoner showed a great scar down one side of his head.

The whole Court looked on breathless, as the captain stared at the scar and at the man till his eyes seemed starting from his head. At length, as if in a dream, the captain muttered to himself, "Good God, is it possible?"

Then slowly and deliberately he got out of the witness-box and clambered into the dock, where he seized the prisoner's hand, and turning to the judge, said "My Lord, this was the best man in my crew, and he saved my life. Providence has sent me here to save his. He is so changed by illness and imprisonment that I could not recognize him. But there is no mistake now. If you hang the old bo'sun of the *Vulture*, you must hang the captain with him."

Then followed a scene rarely witnessed in a court of justice. Amid cheers and sobs that no one cared to suppress, the judge briefly directed the jury to reconsider their verdict, which they at once did, finding a unanimous "Not guilty." The prisoner was discharged, and left the dock arm in arm with the captain. They were hurried into a chaise, and drawn to the inn in a triumphal procession, and after a sumptuous lunch, they posted off together to London.

As they cleared the ancient town, Captain Sharpe might have been heard addressing his companion somewhat as follows:—"Well, old pal, we pulled through that business pretty well, I think. But it was a near go. That was a good notion of Willy Bob's to wait for the verdict before moving. We could never have touched that evidence."

"Yea," replied the innocent and long-suffering boatswain of the *Vulture*, "and if you had cottoned to me a minute too soon, the old beak would have been fly to the trick. Lord, I was fit to burst when the old boy began to cry!"

From which brief dialogue we gather that "Captain Sharpe" might have known more of the burglary than of the *Vulture*.

Nothing more was ever heard of either of them. Such is the story of "The Reconsidered Verdict."

LITTLE WOMEN.

The conventional idea of a brave, an energetic, or a supremely criminal woman is a tall, dark-haired, large armed virago, who might pass as the younger brother of her husband, and whom nature seemed to have hesitated before determining whether to make her man or a woman—a kind of debatable and, in fact, between the two sexes, and one almost as much as the other. Helen Macgregor, Lady Macbeth, Catharine di Medici, Mrs. Manning, and the old-fashioned murderers in novels, are all of the muscular, black-brigand type, with more or less regal grace superadded, according to circumstances; and it would be thought nothing but a puerile fancy to suppose the contrary of those whose personal description is not already known. Crime, indeed, especially in art and fiction, has generally been painted in very nice proportions to the number of cubic inches embodied and the depth of color employed; though we are bound to add that the public favor runs towards muscular heroines almost as much as towards muscular murderers, which, to a certain extent, redresses the over-weighted balance. Our later novelists, however, have altered the whole setting of the palette. Instead of six-foot-ten, of black and brown, they have gone in for four-foot-nothing, of pink and yellow; instead of tumbled masses of raven hair, they have shining coils of purest gold; instead of hollow caverns, whence flash unfathomable eyes, eloquent of every damned passion, they have limpid lakes of heavenly blue; and their worst sinners are in all respects fashioned as much after the outward semblance of the ideal saint as can well be managed. The original notion was a very good one, and the revolution did not come before it was wanted; but it has been a little overdone of late, and we are threatened with as great a surfeit of small-limbed, yellow-headed criminals as we have had of the man-like black. One gets weary of the most perfect model in time, if too constantly repeated; as now, when we have all begun to feel that the resources of

the angel's face and demon's soul have been more heavily drawn on than is quite fair, and that, given "heavy braids of golden hair," "bewildering blue eyes," "a small, lithe frame," and special delicacy of feet and hands, ere we looked for the companionship, through three volumes, of a young person to whom Mesalina or Lucrezia Borgia was a mere novice.

And yet, there is a physiological truth in this association of energy with a smallness; perhaps, also, with a certain tint of yellow hair, which, with a dash of red through it, is decidedly suggestive of nervous force. Suggestiveness, indeed, does not go very far in an argument; but the frequent connection of energy and smallness in woman is a thing which all may verify in their own circles. In daily life, who is the really formidable woman to encounter? The black-browed, broad-shouldered giantess, with arms almost as big in the girth as a man's; or the pert, smart, trim, little female, with no more biceps than a lady-bird, and of just about equal strength with a sparrow? Nine times out of ten, the giantess with heavy shoulders and broad, black eye-brows is a timid, feeble-minded, good-tempered person, incapable of anything harsher than a mild remonstrance with her maid, or a gentle chastisement of her children. Nine times out of ten her husband has her in hand in the most perfect working order, so that she would swear that the moon shone at mid-day, if it were his pleasure that she should make a fool of herself in that direction. One of the most obedient and indolent of earth's daughters, she gives no trouble to any one, save the trouble of rousing, exciting and setting her going; while, as for the conception or execution of any naughty piece of self-assertion, she is as utterly incapable as if she were a child unborn, and demands nothing better than to feel the pressure of the leading-strings, and to know exactly by their strain where she is desired to go and what to do.

But the little woman is irrepressible. Too fragile to come into the fighting section of humanity; a puny creature whom one blow from a man's huge fist could annihilate, absolutely fearless, and insolent with the insolence which only those dare show who know that retribution cannot follow. What can be done with her? She is afraid of nothing, and to be controlled by no one. Sheltered behind her weakness as behind a triple sheet of brass, the angriest dare not touch her, while she provokes him to a combat in which his hands are tied. She gets her own way in everything, and everywhere. At home and abroad she is equally dominant and irrepressible, equal free from obedience and from fear. Who breaks all the public orders in sights and shows, and in spite of king, kaiser or policeman, goes where it is expressly forbidden that she shall go? Not the large-boned, muscular woman, whatever her temperament, unless, indeed, of that exceptionally haughty type in distinctly inferior surroundings, and then she can queen it royally enough, and set everything at most lordly defiance. But in general the large-boned woman obeys the orders given, because near enough to the man to be on a par with him, she is still undeniably his inferior. She is too strong to shelter herself behind her weakness, yet too weak to assert her strength and defy her master on equal grounds. She is like a flying-fish, not one thing wholly; and while capable of the privileges of either. It is not she, for all her well developed frame and formidable looks, but the little woman, who laughs in your face, and goes straight ahead, if you try to turn her to her right hand or to the left, receiving your remonstrance with the most sublime indifference, as if you were talking a foreign language she could not understand. She carries everything before her, or wherever she is. You may see her stepping over barriers, slipping under ropes, penetrating to the green benches with a red ticket, taking the best places on the platform over the heads of their rightful owners, settling herself among the reserved seats, without an inch of pasteboard to float her. You cannot turn her by main force.

Modern chivalry objects to the public laying on of hands in the case of a woman, even when most recalcitrant and disobedient; more particularly if a small and fragile looking woman. So that, if it is only a usurpation of places specially masculine, she is allowed to retain what she has got amid the grave looks of the elders—not really displeased, though, at the flutter of her ribbons among them—and titters and nudges of the young fellows. If the battle is between her and another woman, they are left to fight it out as best they can with the odds laid heavily on the little one. All this time, there is nothing of the tumult of contest about her. Fiery and combative as she generally is, when breaking the law in public places she is the very soul of serene daring. She knows no heat, no passion, nor turbulence; she leaves these as extra weapons of defense to woman who are assailable. For herself she requires no such aids. She knows her capabilities and the line of attack that best suits her, and she knows, too, that the fewer points of the contest she exposes the more likely she is to slip into victory; the more she assumes, and the less she argues the slighter the hold she gives her opponents. She is either perfectly good-humored or blankly innocent; she either smiles you to indulgence, or wears you into compliance by sheer hopelessness to make any impression on her. She may, indeed, if of the very vociferous and shrill-tongued kind, burst into such a noisy demonstration that you are glad to escape from her, for meter what you leave on your hands; just as a mastiff will

ink away from a bantam hen all heckled feathers and screeching cackle, a tremendous assumption of doing something terrible if he does not look out. Anyway, the little woman is unconquerable; and a tiny fragment of humanity at a public show, setting all rules and regulations at defiance, is only carrying out in matter of benches, the manner of life to which nature has dedicated her from the beginning.—*Quiz*.

A BUSH-LAWYER AND HIS CLIENT.

"My wood-choppers captured a sloth this morning," said the judge, as we walked toward the ravine—"a big black sloth—a 'bush-lawyer,' as the Indians call them. They tied him to the stump of a tree, and what do you suppose I found, when I came out to fetch him? Here we are! Just look at this happy family!"

The old sloth lay on his back, near the stump where the wood-choppers had left him, but in his claws he held the strangest animal I ever saw in my life—a black, hairy little brute, about the shape of a young bear, but with a big tail that turned and twisted left and right like a snake.

"What in the world do you call that?" I asked—"a monkey or an overgrown squirrel?"

"No, it's a honey-bear," laughed the judge—"a kinkayou, as we call them. Just look up—there's half a dozen of them in that tree!"

On a catalpa-tree, near the stump, a whole family of these strange long-tails were eating their dinner, not in the least disconcerted by our presence, as it seemed, though two of them eyed us, with outstretched necks, as if they desired us to explain the purpose of our visit.

I stepped back to get a better look at them. They had snouts and paws like fat young bears, but in their movements they reminded me of a North American opossum; they could hang by their tails and use them as rope-ladders in lowering themselves from branch to branch. Now and then, one or two of them came down to take a look at their captive comrade, but the least movement of the old sloth would send them scampering up the tree with squeals of horror.

"That lawyer of yours has taken the law into his own hands," said I.

"Yea, I suspect those little imps kept fooling with him until he grabbed one of them," said the judge. "Let's set that thing free, or he will squeeze him to death."

The old sloth held his prisoner as a spider holds a fly, encircling him entirely with his long-clawed legs, and while the captive mewed and snarled, the captor uttered grunts that sounded like inward chuckles. It needed our combined efforts to unclasp his long grappling-hooks, and we were afraid the prisoner would die before we could liberate him, but as soon as his feet touched the ground, he bounced up the tree as if the fell fiends were at his heels.

"That fellow won't forget the day of the month," laughed the judge; "he will know better than to meddle with a lawyer the next time."—*St. Nicholas*.

WHY HE PUT THE LIGHT OUT.

William and John occupied separate beds in the same room. John was honest, but lazy. On entering their room to retire for the night, John, with his usual alacrity, undressed and jumped into bed, while William was pulling off his boots and deciding which side of the bed would most likely prove the softest.

After a few minutes' delay, William sprang into bed, placed his head upon two pillows, and doubled himself up, preparatory for a comfortable snooze, when what should he discover, when just ready to "drop off," but that he had carelessly left the fluid lamp burning. The discovery gave rise to the following soliloquy:

"Twont do to leave the lamp burning, but it's so very cold that I hate most awfully to get out on the floor; but still that lamp must be blown out. I wonder if I can't make John get out. I'll try. John!"

"Halloa!"

"Did you ever know Daniel Hoskins, foreman of engine thirty-seven?"

"No. Why?"

"Nothing; only I didn't know but that you knew him. I saw by the papers that his death was caused, last week, by inhaling the oxhargon fluid vapors from a lamp that he accidentally left burning in the room. After the fluid was all consumed, the chemist said the oxidal suction of the wick so consumed the onitrogen of the lungs, that the fluid vapors suddenly stopped the inspiration, and the heart ceased to beat."

John raised himself up in bed, gazed with a sternness indescribable on the reclining form of his room-mate, and in a stentorian voice exclaimed:

"Why, in thunder, don't you blow out that lamp?"

"Well, sure enough," was the reply; "it ain't out, is it? Well, never mind, John, it'll go out itself in a little while."

"No it won't go out itself in a room where I sleep." And in a twinkling of a cat's tail, John had extinguished the light and returned to his bed, muttering as he did so, "I'd rather get up a dozen times, than to die as Daniel Hoskins did."

In the morning John wanted to know all the particulars about the death of Mr. Hoskins; but William had no recollection of ever speaking of it, and accused the honest fellow of dreaming.