

The Black Cat

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The Lost Jurisdiction.*

BY ELLIS MEREDITH.



HE proprietor of the barnlike, ramshackle hotel looked uneasily across the dining room. It had but two occupants beside himself. One was a small, badly dressed woman. She was of middle age, but her shoulders seemed bent with some great burden of grief rather than the weight of years. Her eyes were dull and sunken as if from many tears. She was eating her breakfast perfunctorily, and reading some well-worn papers as she did so. The other lady had just entered the room, and was walking toward the table at which the little woman was seated. She was tall, and the pallor of her classic face, as well as her perfectly fitting gown, indicated that she was a newcomer in that wind-swept Western country. She had been ordered to "rough it" for a time, and was a comparatively new acquisition in this desolate border town. She was somewhat imperious in her demands, and she tipped the waiter and the chambermaid in a matter-of-fact way, to their undisguised amazement. Josiah Barnes looked on her as a godsend, a windfall, an oasis in the great American desert, that all for which his thrifty soul did

*This is one of the two stories that received the 5th prize of \$250 in THE BLACK CAT prize competition which closed March 31, 1898.

pine, a green isle in the sea, a fountain and a shrine, and various other desirable things.

Therefore the soul of the worthy Josiah was troubled when he saw her cross the dreary room and sit down within a yard or so of the other woman. He hesitated a moment only; duty was plain and fifteen dollars a week not to be jeopardized. He shuffled across the room and, leaning somewhat heavily on the back of Miss Vallery's chair, whispered in a wheezing and entirely audible voice:—

“P'raps ye'd ruther hev yer breakfast brung to the other table?”

“Why?” asked Miss Vallery languidly. The constantly displayed interest in her welfare was rather a bore.

“Well,—ye see, Miss, that's the mother of the murderer!” He made a poor attempt to lower his voice, but the small woman heard him, and the flush that mounted to the roots of her faded, nondescript hair was painful to see. She half rose, her eyes filled, and her tightly compressed lips twitched. Jean Vallery saw all this without looking up. She settled herself a little more comfortably, and said in a matter-of-fact way, as if answering a question, “Thank you, Mr. Barnes; I should like to have my mail, if you don't mind sending for it.”

With the air of having done his duty Mr. Barnes shuffled away, leaving Jean to her fried steak and reflections. First and last, she had heard a good deal about the murderer, Tom Rhoads, who seemed to surpass all the villains of history, according to the editorials in *The Clarion*, and the talk of the townspeople. The murder had been committed early in the summer, and it was now September, but the good people of that vicinity had not yet done talking of it. The trial was to come off within the next two weeks.

When Mr. Barnes returned with the mail he brought also a letter for Mrs. Rhoads; he returned to his post by the door rather slowly, watching to see the effect of this communication on his undesirable patron. The envelope bore the name of a law firm in one of the eastern towns of the State, and Mrs. Rhoads's face turned a ghastly gray as she opened it. The letter fell from her hands, and she hid her face in them for a moment.

Jean, who was watching her, rose hastily. "I fear you have had bad news, Mrs. Rhoads?" she said.

The older woman looked at her vacantly. No one had spoken kindly to her for two months. No one had spoken to her at all when it could be avoided. Something in Jean's eyes melted the icy reserve she had been cultivating all those dreary weeks. She picked up the letter and handed it to her. The gentlemen to whom she had applied declined positively, and in quite an unnecessarily curt manner, to have anything to do with the case.

"They was my last chance," said Mrs. Rhoads, the tears flowing freely down her weatherbeaten face. Several persons were watching the two women from the doorway, and commenting curiously on them.

"Come," said Jean. "Come right up to my room, and we can talk there." She put her arm about the other woman's shoulders and led her away, past Mr. Barnes, and up the narrow stairs.

"There!" he said discontentedly. "Miss Vallery didn't half eat her breakfas'. I hadn't never ought to a took that Rhoads woman in."

Jean seated her guest in the best chair her room afforded, and said gently, "Now tell me all about it."

"You heard what he called me?" said Mrs. Rhoads fearfully.

"Oh, yes," said Jean lightly. "Never mind that. Tell me about your trouble, and what you meant by saying those men were your last chance."

"I don't like for to trouble you, Miss. Seems 's if the Lord forgot His servants sometimes. I've done all I know how, and if there is such a thing as prayin' without ceasing, I've done it the last two months. An' now my boy's like to be hung without no one to say a word for him. You see, I went first to the few men we've known here, that might a been willing to help; Squire Horney said he was too old, and Joe Brown, he said he didn't feel like he'd had experience enough to take such a case; then I went to a man named Shaw an' a lot more, but they all of 'em wanted more money than I could raise, or had been hired by the other side. I tried to get a morgidge, but that's slow work, so then I got desprite an' I

offered the hull place to these men if they'd defend him. I don't know nobody else to go to. It ain't a murder, Miss. I know it's against scripture for to take life, but a man's got to look after his own. If my Tom *is* a murderer, them other men ain't no better, besides being thieves. But 'pears like it's all one way here, an' a poor man can't get justice, leastways when he's got into trouble with them that's got the money."

"How did he come to do it?" asked Jean. The incoherent story touched her. It was quite different from that told by *The Clarion*.

"He was drove to it, that's how I an' him as peaceable a boy as you ever seen. We've had hard times, him an' me, but this is the hardest."

"Tell me," said Jean. "Begin at the very beginning."

"Mr. Rhoads an' me come West when the children was little," she began. "We went to Californy; my little boy's buried there. We didn't have no luck, and we come back to Utah, but it was too lonesome, an' too far from anybody to do anything for you. My little girl died of diptheria, and no doctor within fifty mile. Then we went to Colorado, an' the hoppers eat us out three seasons runnin'. Mr. Rhoads was always kind a peaked, and he couldn't stand adversity. He took the mountain fever an' died there. There was only Tom an' me left. Tom, he farmed, an' I helped him part of the time, and part of the time I went out canvassin'."

"Canvassing?" repeated Jean vaguely.

"Yes, Miss; I was an agent, you know. Sometimes it was for books, and sometimes it was for wringers. I mostly found the wringers paid best. Then I had a self-wingin' mop that I did reel well with. I've been pretty nigh all over this country west of the Mizzoury. When the crops had been good I'd get a good many orders, but crops is most generally bad. Or if the crops isn't bad the prices is. It comes to the same thing."

"But how did you come to move here?" asked Jean.

"Oh, yes; I forgot to tell you there was a mortgidge. There is most generally, an' Tom an' me didn't seem able to raise it no-how. When we found we was goin' to lose the place we up an' sold for a little more'n the mortgidge, and then we come here."

"Was that long ago?" asked Jean.

"Only a matter of two year. You don't get much acquainted in that time when your neighbors is fifteen or twenty mile away. Still, we had been doin' right well. The range was good, an' Tom had a nice little bunch of cattle; the ranch lays close to water, an' Tom's corn was mighty fine. He allowed he'd have as much as sixty bushel to the acre this fall. Of course it was lonesome, but there's always something, an' lonesomeness ain't nigh so tryin' as a mortgidge. Everything was goin' all right enough till the rustlers come."

"What's a rustler?" asked Jean curiously.

"A rustler?" Mrs. Rhoads looked up in surprise, that any one should be ignorant of the nature of a creature so well known to the ranchmen of the Western States. "Why, a rustler's a man that's hired by the big cattlemen, men that's got thousands of head of cattle, for to keep settlers off the range. You see when the country gets settled up it takes away their pasture. Sometimes they keep 'em off one way, an' sometimes another. Sometimes they bring in a big herd of steers an' eat up all the grass, an' sometimes, an' not infrequent either, they round up all the little bunches of cattle an' drive 'em off. Then, again, they'll throw things into the wells, an' cut the fences. Oh, they can think of all kind of meanness. I s'pose I hadn't ought for to blame them for doing what they're hired to, but when I think of the men that hires 'em, it dooes seem like the wicked spread like green bay trees for an awful long time without bein' cut down."

"How did they molest your son?" asked Jean.

"Every way. They began by grazing round us till there wasn't no grass left for Tom's cattle, to speak of. Then they left a warning on the door; it was stuck on with a knife." She fumbled in her pocket and drew forth a shabby purse, so worn and flat it made Jean's heart ache. She took from it a scrap of paper containing these words, printed in irregular characters:—

<p>No Kattl Theves wanted. This Rang is OURn. Move awn an save TrubBle.</p>

"They left this one night last June. That's one way they

have ; when they want to get rid of a man they accuse him of stealin' their cattle. Well, we couldn't move. Tom hadn't proved up, an' we hadn't nowhere to go. I didn't believe they'd do anything worse than they had done. I've always been a believer, an' it seemed to me like there was a God in Israel. Tom, he said that wouldn't do us no good s' long as there wasn't no law for poor folks in this State. Then one night they come an' cut the fences, an' the end of that week they come up with the herd. The steers eat or trampled every blade of corn. In the morning, — they brought the herd up at night, — in the morning two of 'em come up toward the house. One man begun throwin' things into the well. I was mightily afraid Tom would shoot, for it's hard to be angry an' sin not, so I leaned out of the window an' called to 'em to quit or they'd git into trouble. The man used an ugly cuss word at me, an' before I knew what he was up to, Tom fired. I ran right out when I seen the man fall, but he was dead. The other man seemed kind of decent ; he didn't say nothing till I began to cry, thinking of Tom, then he spoke quick like ; 'Stow that,' he says ; 'you hain't got time for no waterworks now. The crowd'll be tendin' to a lynchin' mighty soon, 'less he can get off.' Just then I seen two of the rustlers comin' toward us. They'd heard the shot. 'For the love of heaven,' I says, 'an' the mother that's prayin' for you somewhere, take our horse and ride fer Lone Tree an' get word to the sheriff. You can keep the horse, but help me save my boy an' I'll bless' — but he interrupted me. 'There,' he says, 'cut an' run 'fore they git here. Where's the horse?' Seems like it takes a long time to tell it, but it didn't take but a mighty few minutes to live it all. Tom had been kind a stunned like when he seen what he'd done, or he'd never a let me go out. When I run back in he was trying to fasten the doors and barricade the windows somehow. We fastened 'em as good as we could, an' he stood at one of 'em with the rifle, and I was at the window in the leanto — there wasn't but one room and the shed kitchen — with the shotgun. I couldn't never a had the courage to fire, but Tom, he said they wouldn't be so likely to come close if they seen the gun stickin' out.

“ They didn't do nothing for awhile but ride round the house to make sure we couldn't get away; excepting they took off the

body of the man that was killed. Tom said they was waiting to rest their horses, because when they got through with him they'd want to hit the trail right lively. There was a little cottonwood down in the arroya back of the house; they took a rope an' went down there. Seems like they didn't notice the other man being gone. Then they lay down an' rested a spell, two of them keepin' watch. About the middle of the afternoon they took the wagon-bed off the wheels an' hid behind it, an' come up close to the house an' called to Tom to come out. He just shoved the rifle a little further through the window. Then they began shooting in at the windows and swearing just awful." She wrung her gaunt, knotted brown hands at the memory, but displayed no emotion otherwise.

"I should have thought," said Jean, "they would have tried to set fire to the cabin."

"They would have gladly, Miss," answered Mrs. Rhoads with unconscious irony, "but you see it's a sod house. Well, all afternoon they kept that up." One of them nearly shot me, firing through the window that way, an' then Tom shot him through the right arm. He could have killed him easy, but Tom ain't no murderer. Toward dusk they rigged up the wagon tongue for a kind of battering ram. I thought I heard a call somewhere off on the range, but Tom thought I was mistaken. They were just making a rush at the door, when I heard it again, and a couple of quick shots. That stopped 'em. It was the sheriff. If he'd a been ten minutes later it wouldn't a been any use."

"What became of the man you gave the horse to?" asked Jean, who had not struggled over a thesis on "Evidence" for nothing.

"I wish I knew," sighed Mrs. Rhoads. "You don't know how I feel to that man. He wasn't just like what you'd expect a ministering angel to be, but that's what he was to me. I hain't never seen him since. Most always seems like, when I can't bear it no longer, the Lord raises up somebody to restore my soul, just like He did then. But oh, Miss, the trial comes off in ten days, an' there ain't nobody'll defend him!"

"You don't mean to say they call that murder out here?" demanded Jean incredulously.

"Yes, Miss," said the little woman patiently. "There's some of the settlers might feel like Tom didn't do wrong, but they don't dare say anything, an' all the other folks are against us. *The Clarion* says it was 'A cold-blooded and atrocious murder, committed without provocation or any action which could justify it.' The paper over to Lexington said, 'The entire State should demand the execution of this man who has thus attacked the peaceful guardians of one of our main industries.' I went clear to Aberdeen to get a lawyer for Tom, an' the papers there said dreadful unkind things about me, — of course I know I'm poor an' homely an' old, — an' then it said it spoke well for the moral sense of the legal fraternity that I hadn't been able to get any one to look after my case." She had evidently gotten the cruel words by heart.

"And there is absolutely no one?" Jean asked. "You know the court will have to appoint some one to defend him." She was hesitating in her own mind over a plan. Its audacity fairly took her breath. She had been sent West to take a much-needed rest after the study and overwork incident to her admission to the bar in her own State. Although she had not intended doing anything for some time yet, she felt instinctively that her first client was before her, her first case about to begin.

"The court!" Mrs. Rhoads almost sniffed. "The court may go through the motions, Miss, but he'll get no real defense in this county."

"That's as may be," said Jean. "Mrs. Rhoads, I'll take this case."

"But you're a woman," said Mrs. Rhoads blankly.

Jean laughed. "Yes," she said, "I'm a woman, but I'm a lawyer, too."

Jean Vallery's first case absorbed her entire attention. She complied with the necessary formalities at once, and set about posting herself in many minor particulars ordinarily left by the chief counsel to assistants. She inserted advertisements in all the principal papers of the State in the hope of finding the missing rustler. At one time it seemed to her that it would be impossible to secure a jury, so general was the prejudice against her client. And yet, having read many of the State newspapers, she

could not divest herself of the idea that the sentiment was largely manufactured. There was a similarity not to be explained on any other hypothesis.

It was a campaign year, and the cattle men, whose interests were endangered by actual settlers, were depicted as the benefactors of the State, men whose money had made it, and whose interests must be protected at all hazards. Several gentlemen, candidates for office, lost no opportunity to inflame the public mind against Tom Rhoads, and called on "the good people of Cheyenne" to "prove themselves a law-abiding community by avenging the murder of the unfortunate cattle herders."

When the case was called the courthouse was packed. Jean knew something of nearly every talesman brought into court, and sat imperturbably challenging "for cause," showing the connection of this would-be juror and that with the cattle men who were paying the lawyers, who were much in evidence as consulting counsel for the prosecuting attorney. She used her peremptory challenges very sparingly, and long before a jury was secured the gentlemen who had been disposed to amuse themselves with quips at the expense of "their learned sister-in-law" had grown almost deferential in their manner.

The attention of those present was divided pretty evenly between the prisoner and his counsel. Jean sat by herself, a little in front of Tom and his mother, her papers on a table before her. Mrs. Rhoads's hand rested on Tom's arm, and her patient, wistful face was turned pleadingly to the jury. The prisoner was a handsome young man, under thirty years of age, quiet and contained in his manner, and dignified in spite of his shabby garments. He had lost many coats of tan during his long confinement, and in contrast with his jet-black hair his face looked almost pallid. Jean did not look at or speak to him until at the close of the charge. When the usual question was asked, "Guilty or not guilty?" he took a long breath and, looking full in the judge's eyes, answered, "Not guilty."

The trial proceeded in the usual way. The witnesses for the prosecution had been carefully drilled, and did not deviate a hair's breadth in their story. They swore they had no evil intent toward the prisoner; they were driving their herd to a new pasture; two

of their number went to a ranch for water; one of them was shot down. The cross-examination failed to materially shake their testimony. None of them knew of any warning left at the ranch in question; none of them had cut any wire fences; none of them saw anything unusual in driving the herd by night. There was no intention of violence in their proceedings before the arrival of the sheriff; they were merely guarding the prisoner until his arrival. This claim brought out the question from Jean, "Who notified the sheriff of this shooting?"

For a moment the rustler was nonplussed, then he answered with the utmost *sang-froid*, "One of our men; he was goin' East, an' it was in his way."

"He went at the request of your party?" asked Jean.

"Sure thing," said the man impudently.

When the prosecution closed, the general impression seemed to be that the county had a very strong case. In opening the defense Jean did not make any very extended statement. She stated the facts she expected to prove by her witnesses, and then called for John Burns. There was something of a sensation when he took the stand, for in him the prosecution recognized the missing "rustler," on whose absence they had counted quite certainly. After various preliminary questions, Jean said, holding up a buck-horn-handled hunting knife, "Witness, do you recognize this knife?"

"Yes, Miss," he answered.

"When did you see it last?"

"I disremember the exact date, Miss, but last June, the fore part of the month sometime."

"Is it your knife, and if so did you lose it?"

"It's my knife all right, Miss, but I didn't lose it exactly. I left it fer a feller to remember me by."

"Did you leave anything else with it?"

"Ye'h; I left a scrap of paper."

"Is this it?"

"I reckon so. The last time I seen it, my knife was pinnin' it to the door of him as is the prisoner."

"Did you put them there?"

"Yes, Miss. I didn't do the writin', not bein' no scholar."

Our Captin done that, but I put it up while the other fellers was cuttin' the fence."

"Tell what you know about this case, briefly," said Jean.

"Well, Miss, 'tain't to say a heap, an' yet it's a right smart chance too much. After we put up the notice an' cut the wires we went back to the herd and waited fer to see what they'd do. We gin 'em four days, an' then we moved up with the herd. Them steers didn't wait for no invitation when they seen the corn. Long about sun-up me an' the Captin went up toward the house. He began to throw things inter the well. A woman up to the house sung out to quit or there'd be trouble. Well, there was trouble. He answered her right sassy, an' a minit later he was dead with his boots on. It was a mighty purty shot. He never knew what struck him."

"What happened next?"

"The woman come out fer to see if he was dead. I knew as she hadn't done the shootin' herself, an' not wanting to finish my airthly career so almighty suddint, I didn't go fer to make her no trouble. She said they'd give up to the sheriff, and seemed mightily broke up."

"What did she ask you to do?"

"Well, when she seen there wasn't no chance of gettin' him off, she asked me reel urgent like if I wouldn't go fer the sheriff myself; I didn't have no very pressin' engagement, an' I thought there might be some more shootin' if I was unaccomodatin', so I went."

"What inducement did the lady offer you?" asked the prosecuting attorney.

"The unusual pleasure of the sense of havin' done my duty," answered the rustler with a sweeping bow. "I ain't above herdin' cattle, but I ain't jinin' in no murderin' necktie parties."

"How about the murder of your captain at your side?" asked the lawyer.

"Wa'll, ye see, pardner," drawled the witness, "I'm from Texas; down there, when a feller don't do as he's axed by a lady, we don't think shootin's any too good fer him."

By putting Mrs. Rhoads on the stand Jean proved the receipt of the warning and the cutting of the fences; also that Burns went

for the sheriff before the arrival of the rest of the rustlers. The jurymen handed the warning from one to the other, examining it curiously. Mrs. Rhoads was not entirely unknown, and her simple story told with the audience; Jean wished that she felt equally sure of the jury. When she rose to make her defense there was instant silence. She was facing the judge and jury, and did not see two gentlemen who made their way into the crowded room and remained standing near the door. She was a beautiful woman, with a clear, ringing voice, which she knew how to control perfectly. She was well gowned, confident that no matter how the case might go, she had right on her side, and,—it was her first case. She began her plea simply, telling the story of the struggle of this woman and her son for a livelihood. She spoke of their hardships, the weary years of wandering, the faith in a new State that made them cast in their lot with her, believing in her protection to even the poorest of her citizens. Then, when the good times which had been so long coming seemed at last near at hand, came this infamous notice to leave the little home, and, relinquishing the work of years, go forth once more penniless. The destruction of the fences, the ruin wrought by the herd, the insolent vandalism of the leader of the rustlers, the attempted lynching, prevented by the arrival of the sheriff sent for by the man accused of murder, all this was depicted in a masterly fashion that fairly carried the people away for the time being. Jean forgot herself, the crowd about her, the slurs of the townspeople, the innuendos of the newspapers, the prejudice against her client, the grimy building, the ugly town, the coming election; she forgot everything except the judge and jury, and the strained, tearless face of the little woman sitting back of her. Women sniffed audibly, and men sat with open mouths. The judge leaned forward, and the jury, knowing already the verdict that was to be brought in, regarded her uneasily. The older of the two men by the door watched her proudly. The face of the younger was beaming when she sat down.

“It’s a clear case,” he said softly.

“Yes,” answered Judge Vallery. “It’s a clear case, Henry, but she’s lost it.”

The prosecution went over the old ground, and closed an im-

passioned appeal to the jury with a demand for the observance of the old law, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." The jury filed out, and there was a little hum of conversation in the courtroom. Some time passed. It grew dusk, yet but few persons quitted the room. The clerk of the court tiptoed out and returned with a smoky kerosene lamp which he placed on the judge's desk. It burned feebly, seeming rather to increase the darkness by contrast. The jury remained longer than the judge anticipated. He had certainly made clear the verdict he expected in his charge. His forehead was gathering an ominous expression when the sheriff announced that the jury was agreed. Jean's face flushed and then grew pale; she knew the inevitable result, and braced herself to meet it, but as she turned to Mrs. Rhoads and saw the look of perfect confidence with which the frail little creature regarded her, a lump came into her throat.

She had only time to whisper, as the jurors filed in amidst a general buzz of excitement, "Don't be alarmed, Mrs. Rhoads; I know this jury has been tampered with. We shall have to move for a new trial."

The jurors answered to their names, and the foreman handed the verdict to the judge. The wrinkles left his forehead as he read it, but as he looked up and caught Jean's indignant gaze, he colored hotly, and returned the slip of paper to the foreman. He read it, — "Guilty, as charged," and almost before he had seated himself Jean had moved for a new trial. There was no outbreak of applause in the courtroom, and Tom received the verdict with composure. But Mrs. Rhoads could bear the strain no longer; with a half-suppressed cry she lost consciousness. The sheriff was leading Tom away. Jean stooped and gathered the little woman up in her strong young arms, and stood facing them all. "She is a widow," she said in her vibrant voice, "and he is her only son." The crowd made way for her respectfully.

When it was learned that the attorney for the defense in the case of the State *vs.* Rhoads was the daughter of the celebrated Judge Vallery, the press of that and adjoining States wrote her up, interviewed her, advertised her ability far and wide, and she had many offers of assistance in the new trial which was set for

an early date. She declined them all graciously. Much to the public surprise, she managed to have the trial postponed for some time. Her father was somewhat annoyed at her failure to push the case, and wrote her toward the end of the winter: "If you go to trial now, with all this sentiment stirred up over you and Mrs. Rhoads, even with the sympathy against the son, you will be able to get a light sentence. If the cattle men have the power you believe, you can never clear him entirely. Don't have too many of 'the law's delays.'"

Jean only smiled when she read this letter, and wrote back: "My client is going to be set free without ever seeing the inside of the penitentiary. There is absolutely no chance with a jury, for it will be impossible to impanel one that cannot be bought up. These people are poor; many of them owe money to these rich men now. Neither is it any use to appeal to the Governor; he has senatorial aspirations, and would not offend the powers that be. This isn't a contract, but time is its very essence, nevertheless. I have secured another stay of proceedings, and shall go to trial just as soon as the legislature adjourns. *By that time Cheyenne County, as it is now, will have ceased to exist.*"

Judge Vallery read this letter a second time carefully. "By Jove," he said, "what a head that girl's got! Technicalities are to blame for most of the injustice in this country. It's a pity if they can't be used on the side of justice once in awhile!"

Among the laws enacted by the legislature of the State during that session, not the least important was the division of Cheyenne County into half a dozen new ones. It was upon this fact that Jean now relied. The second trial, which came off in May, was held in one of these divisions, the Rhoads homestead being situated within the boundaries of the new Flag County.

Jean expected nothing different and appealed the case, securing in addition to filing her brief an oral hearing. The case was vital to her, although she did not in the least realize that it was destined to give her a national reputation. She thought only of the little woman in rusty black to whom it meant life or death, and this unselfish aim, making itself felt through her impassioned appeal, disarmed prejudice and secured the close attention of the judges.

Realizing that it was impossible to get justice in the spirit of the law, Jean appealed only to the letter, citing from her brief certain undeniable facts that sent a bombshell into the camp of the enemy.

"My client," she said, *"is entitled to a jury drawn from the county in which the alleged crime was committed. That county in its entirety is a thing of the past. The newly enacted law affords no means by which a jury can now be secured from that territory, no saving clause having been inserted in the division bill providing for a contingency of this nature. Therefore the prisoner must be set free."* She concluded with the well-remembered words of Lear: "Shall we take his life without a form of justice?"

Two days later the Supreme Court handed down its decision. Mrs. Rhoads alone, desolate and despairing, waiting in the barren little hotel where she had met Jean, hardly understood the purport of the telegram Mr. Barnes placed in her hands:—

"Lower court reversed. Your son is free."

She repeated the words mechanically. Then their meaning flashed across her bewildered brain, and she dropped on her knees sobbing out the old words that have brought comfort to so many hearts: "He watching over Israel slumbers not nor sleeps."

