

MANY CRIMINALS.

By EDITH V. ROSS.

One day Jaharia, a little maiden of Siam, while walking in a public garden passed a dark eyed youth. Their eyes met, and the flame of love was kindled in the maiden's breast. She was then only fifteen, but the image of the young man remained photographed indelibly upon her brain.

The time soon came when she should be married. But, though she was pretty and attractive, no suitor appeared for her hand. The truth is that she gave none of the young men any encouragement. One day her father, who was a mathematician, so absorbed in his figures that he took little note of anything else, said to her:

"Jaharia, how old are you?"
"Nineteen."
"What! Nineteen and not married! What does it mean?"
"There are no suitors," said the girl.
"No suitors! Surely you are comely."
"I am your daughter, and you see me through a father's eyes."
"I wonder if that is so. Perhaps it is. At any rate, you must have a husband. I will attend to the matter tomorrow."

Now, this is what the old man meant by "attending to the matter." In Siam every woman who has reached a certain age without securing a husband may, if she choose, be registered as one of the younger daughters of the king. This places her under the king's protection and compels him to find a husband for her. These husbands, however, are all lawbreakers. They are not sent to prison or fined or executed, but are condemned to marry one of the king's adopted younger daughters. The condemned men are allowed to make their own selection, but with certain limitations. Those whose offenses are light are permitted to choose from among the better grade of women, the most attractive in physical appearance and amiability, while the grave offenders must marry the ugliest and worst tempered.

So it was that the poor girl, cherishing in her memory the youth she had seen in the park, with plenty of young fellows anxious to marry her, was to be given to a malefactor. It was her misfortune to have a father who, if far penetrating in the problem of mathematics, on ordinary matters was inordinately stupid.

The registry had scarcely been made when a young man who had borne an excellent character—a student in the university—was caught pilfering. Everybody was astonished. He was tried, but the judge, considering that it was his first offense, gave him a fatherly admonition and let him off. To the surprise of every one, two hours after his discharge he was again arrested for a similar offense. This time the judge condemned him to marry one of the king's daughters.

Within a few days there was another case of a young man of good reputation becoming a lawbreaker. This case was the more remarkable because he was of noble family. On account of his rank he would not have been prosecuted had he not repeated his offense a number of times. He, too, at last was convicted of crime. One morning when the judge went to court he saw in the prisoners' dock no less than six young men of the best families—some of them noble—who were to be tried for petty offenses. "There is an epidemic of crime among our youth," said the judge to himself. "I must stamp it out." Thereupon he convicted every one of the lawbreakers of an offense of the highest grade and sentenced each to marry one of the ugliest and most frascible of the king's daughters.

Nevertheless the epidemic spread. Young men of every grade were caught openly committing offenses, and all were convicted without mercy. Finally one morning when the judge took his seat on the bench he was astonished to see in the prisoners' dock the son of the prime minister. The young man, whose name was Karkalo, pleaded guilty to stealing the purse of the minister of finance.

The judge, not daring to sentence so high a personage, was about to discharge the young man, but the latter said that he would prefer to suffer as a lawbreaker and should be obliged if the judge would give him an opportunity to expiate his offense, whereupon he was sentenced as one of the better grade of malefactors.

On the day when the criminals were brought forth to select their wives all these better class young men were among the number. Among the women to be chosen was Jaharia. Twelve of the young men of birth were obliged to select wives from among the homely and vicious. They were all in despair. Little Jaharia stood mute, with downcast eyes, equally despondent. Presently an attendant told her that she had been chosen and led her to the man who had chosen her. When she stood face to face with him she looked up.

It seemed to her that the people, the walls, the furniture, were swimming about her, all tinged with the colors of the rainbow, while an ecstatic happiness welled up in her heart. She saw the young man she had several years before met in the public garden.

"I have demeaned myself," he said, "to gain you for my wife. I never chanced to see you after the first time till I learned that a certain lovely girl had become a king's daughter and found that she was the one I had so long dreamed of."

He was the king's son and secured a pardon for the others.

In reading store ads most people are looking for definite information about some particular article—hence merchants should quote prices always.

Cure For Disconsolate Lovers.
Somebody has dug out of an old book of the time of Queen Elizabeth the following advice to a slighted and despondent lover:
Tye one end of a rope right over a beam and make a slippe noose at the other extreame. Just under the beame lett a bucket be sett; On it lett the lover most manfully gett. Right over his head be lett the snicket be gott. And under his care well fastened the knot. The bucket kicked cleare, lett him take a full swinge. And leave alle the reste of the worke to the stringe!

Trusting the Dog's Judgment.
Friend—What on earth are you doing to that painting of yours? Dauber—Can't you see? I'm rubbing a piece of raw meat over the rabbit in the foreground. Mrs. Alshodde will be here today, and when she sees her pet dog smell of that rabbit she'll buy it.—Judge.

A Witty Widow.
A widow of the name of Rugg, having taken Sir Charles Price for her second husband, was asked by a friend how she liked the change.
"Oh," she replied, "I parted with my old Rugg for a good Price."

The Missing Part.
Landlady—You say the chicken soup isn't good? Why, I told the cook how to make it. Perhaps she didn't catch the idea. Boarder—No; I think it was the chicken she didn't catch.

Try a Star Business Local

She Is So Sensitive.
"I wish some persons weren't so all-fired sensitive and ready to see an insult when none is intended," remarked the man with the troubled look, looking for sympathy. "Now, last night I got myself into an awkward fix just trying to be agreeable and to please everybody. I went to see a young lady I think a great deal of—yes, I do think a great deal of her, but I wish she would be more sensible. Girl friend of hers was there, and it was her first visit since she'd sent a crazy looking, good for nothing decorated cup and saucer with scalloped edges as a birthday gift."
"When I was out shopping," the girl friend explained, "and saw that cup and saucer I just thought of you, Marguerite."
"How? Hand painted, isn't it?"
"Now, the recipient's complexion is natural, as any one can see, and there was no reason for her to be so ch'fy toward me the rest of the evening. Hang such sensitiveness!"—New York Telegram.

Transmigration of Souls.
First Johnnie—What caused him to renounce theosophy? The last time I saw him he was claiming to be the reincarnation of his grandfather. Second Johnnie—Yes. He firmly believed that he was the reincarnation of his grandfather, but people began dunning him for money they had lent the old gentleman fifty years ago, and he dropped the theory like a hot potato.—Puck.

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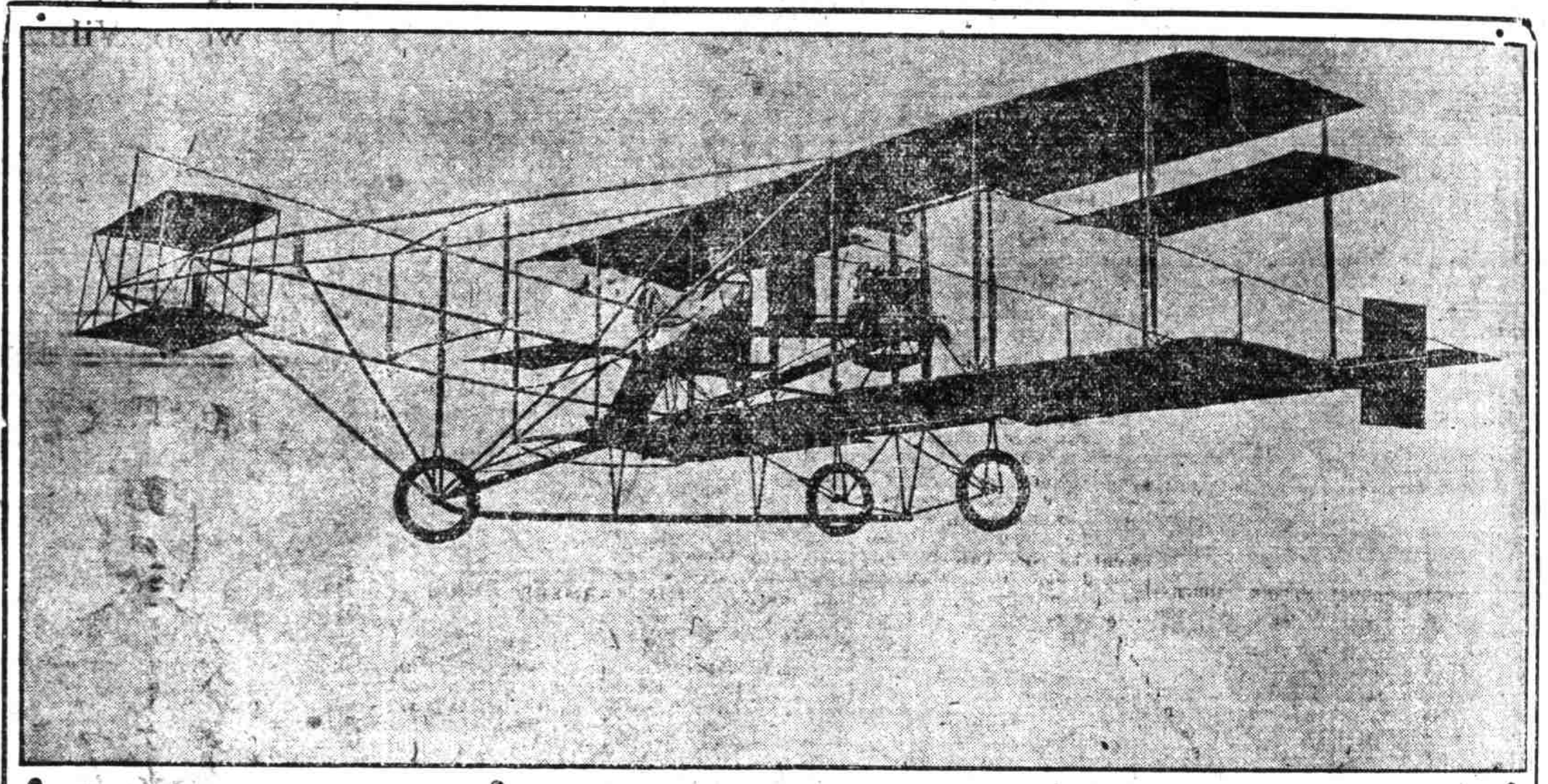
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