

The Long Arm

MARY E. WILKINS

I

(From notes written by Miss Sarah Fairbanks immediately after the report of the Grand Jury.)

As I take my pen to write this, I have a feeling that I am in the witness-box—for, or against myself, which? The place of the criminal in the dock I will not voluntarily take. I will affirm neither my innocence nor my guilt. I will present the facts of the case as impartially and as coolly as if I had nothing at stake. I will let all who read this judge me as they will.

This I am bound to do since I am condemned to something infinitely worse than the life-cell or the gallows. I will try my own self in lieu of judge and jury; my guilt or my innocence I will prove to you all, if it be in mortal power. In my despair I am tempted to say, I care not which it may be, so something be proved. Open condemnation could not overwhelm me like universal suspicion.

Now, first, as I have heard is the custom in the courts of law, I will present the case. I am Sarah Fairbanks, a country school-teacher, twenty-nine years of age. My mother died when I was twenty-three. Since then, while I have been teaching at Digby, a cousin of my father's, Rufus Bennett, and his wife have lived with my father. During the long summer vacation they returned to their little farm in Vermont, and I kept house for my father.

For five years I have been engaged to be married to Henry Ellis, a young man whom I met in Digby. My father was very much opposed to the match, and has told me repeatedly that if I insisted upon marrying him in his lifetime he would disinherit me. On this account Henry never visited me at my own home. While I could not bring myself to break off my engagement, finally I wished to avoid an open rupture with my father. He was quite an old man, and I was the only one he had left of a large family.

I believe that parents should honour their children, as well as children their parents, but I had arrived at this conclusion: in nine-tenths of the cases wherein children marry against their parents' wishes, even when the parents have no just grounds for opposition, the marriages are unhappy.

I sometimes felt that I was unjust to Henry, and resolved that if ever I suspected that his fancy turned toward any other girl, I would not hinder it, especially as I was getting older and, I thought, losing my good looks.

A little while ago, a young and pretty girl came to Digby to teach the school in the south district. She boarded in the same house with Henry. I heard that he was somewhat attentive to her, and I made up my mind I would not interfere. At the same time it seemed to me that my heart was breaking. I heard her people had money, too, and she was an only child. I had always felt that Henry ought to marry a wife with money, because he had nothing himself, and was not very strong.

School closed five weeks ago, and I came home for the summer vacation. The night before I left, Henry came to see me, and urged me to marry him. I refused again; but I never before had felt that my father was so hard and cruel as I did that night. Henry said that he should certainly see me during the vacation, and when I replied that he must not come, he was angry, and said—but such foolish things are not worth repeating. Henry has really a very sweet temper, and would not hurt a fly.

The very night of my return home Rufus Bennett and my father had words about some maple sugar which Rufus made on his Vermont farm, and sold to father, who made a good trade for it to some people in Boston. That was father's business. He had once kept a store, but had given it up, and sold a few articles that he could make a large profit on here and there at wholesale. He used to send to New Hampshire and Vermont for butter, eggs, and cheese. Cousin Rufus thought father did not allow him enough of his profit on the maple sugar, and in the dispute father lost his temper, and said that Rufus had given him underweight. At that, Rufus swore an oath, and seized father by the throat. Rufus's wife screamed, 'Oh, don't! don't! oh, he'll kill him!'

I went up to Rufus and took hold of his arm.

'Rufus Bennett,' said I, 'you let my father go!'

But Rufus's eyes glared like a madman's, and he would not let go. Then I went to the desk-drawer where father had kept a pistol since some houses in the village were broken into; I got out the pistol, laid hold of Rufus again, and held the muzzle against his forehead.

'You let go of my father,' said I, 'or I'll fire!'

Then Rufus let go, and father dropped like a log. He was purple in the face. Rufus's wife and I worked a long time over him to bring him to.

'Rufus Bennett,' said I, 'go to the well and get a pitcher of water.' He went, but when father had revived and got up Rufus gave him a look that showed he was not over his rage.

'I'll get even with you yet, Martin Fairbanks, old man as you are!' he shouted out, and went into the outer room.

We got father to bed soon. He slept in the bedroom downstairs, out of the sitting-room. Rufus and his wife had the north chamber, and I had the south one. I left my door open that night, and did not sleep. I listened; no one stirred in the night. Rufus and his wife were up very early in the morning, and before nine o'clock left for Vermont. They had a day's journey, and would reach home about nine in the evening. Rufus's wife bade father goodbye, crying, while Rufus was getting their trunk downstairs, but Rufus did not go near father nor me. He ate no breakfast; his very back looked ugly when he went out of the yard.

That very day, about seven in the evening, after tea, I had just washed the dishes and put them away, and went out on the north doorstep, where father was sitting, and sat down on the lowest step. There was a cool breeze there; it had been a very hot day.

'I want to know if that Ellis fellow has been to see you any lately,' said father all at once.

'Not a great deal,' I answered.

'Did he come to see you the last night you were there?' said father.

'Yes, sir,' said I, 'he did come.'

'If you ever have another word to say to that fellow while I live, I'll kick you out of the house like a dog, daughter of mine though you be!' said he. Then he swore a great oath and called God to witness. 'Speak to that fellow again, if you dare, while I live!' said he.

I did not say a word; I just looked up at him as I sat there. Father turned pale, and shrank back, and put his hand to his throat, where

Rufus had clutched him. There were some purple finger-marks there.

'I suppose you would have been glad if he had killed me,' father cried out.

'I saved your life,' said I.

'What did you do with that pistol?' he asked.

'I put it back in the desk-drawer.'

I got up and went around and sat on the west doorstep, which is the front one. As I sat there, the bell rang for the Tuesday evening meeting, and Phœbe Dole and Maria Woods, two old maiden ladies, dressmakers, our next-door neighbours, went past on their way to meeting. Phœbe stopped and asked if Rufus and his wife were gone. Maria went around the house. Very soon they went on, and several other people passed. When they had all gone it was as still as death.

I sat alone a long time, until I could see by the shadows that the full moon had risen. Then I went to my room and went to bed.

I lay awake a long time, crying. It seemed to me that all hope of marriage between Henry and me was over. I could not expect him to wait for me. I thought of that other girl; I could see her pretty face wherever I looked. But at last I cried myself to sleep.

At about five o'clock I awoke, and got up. Father always wanted his breakfast at six o'clock, and I had to prepare it now.

When father and I were alone, he always built the fire in the kitchen stove, but that morning I did not hear him stirring as usual, and I fancied that he must be so out of temper with me, that he would not build the fire.

I went to my closet for a dark blue calico dress which I wore to do housework in. It had hung there during all the school term. As I took it off the hook, my attention was caught by something strange about the dress I had worn the night before. This dress was made of thin summer silk; it was green in colour, sprinkled over with white rings. It had been my best dress for two summers, but now I was wearing it on hot afternoons at home, for it was the coolest dress I had. The night before, too, I had thought of the possibility of Henry's driving over from Digby and passing the house. He had done this sometimes during the last summer vacation, and I wished to look my best if he did.

As I took down the calico dress I saw what seemed to be a stain on the green silk. I threw on the calico hastily and then took the green

silk and carried it over to the window. It was covered with spots—horrible great splashes and streaks down the front. The right sleeve, too, was stained, and all the stains were wet.

‘What have I got on my dress?’ said I.

It looked like blood. Then I smelled of it, and it was sickening in my nostrils, but I was not sure what the smell of blood was like. I thought I must have got the stains by some accident the night before.

‘If that is blood on my dress,’ I said, ‘I must do something to get it off at once, or the dress will be ruined.’

It came to my mind that I had been told that blood-stains had been removed from cloth by an application of flour paste on the wrong side. I took my green silk, and ran down the back stairs, which lead—having a door at the foot—directly into the kitchen.

There was no fire in the kitchen stove, as I had thought. Everything was very solitary and still, except for the ticking of the clock on the shelf. When I crossed the kitchen to the pantry, however, the cat mewed to be let in from the shed. She had a little door of her own by which she could enter or leave the shed at will, an aperture just large enough for her Maltese body to pass at ease beside the shed door. It had a little lid, too, hung upon a leathern hinge. On my way I let the cat in; then I went to the pantry and got a bowl of flour. This I mixed with water into a stiff paste, and applied to the under surface of the stains on my dress. I then hung the dress up to dry in the dark end of a closet leading out of the kitchen, which contained some old clothes of father’s.

Then I made up the fire in the kitchen stove. I made coffee, baked biscuits, and poached some eggs for breakfast.

Then I opened the door into the sitting-room and called, ‘Father, breakfast is ready.’ Suddenly I started. There was a red stain on the inside of the sitting-room door. My heart began to beat in my ears. ‘Father!’ I called out—‘father!’

There was no answer.

‘Father!’ I called again, as loud as I could scream. ‘Why don’t you speak? What is the matter?’

The door of his bedroom stood open. I had a feeling that I saw a red reflection in there. I gathered myself together and went across the sitting-room to father’s bedroom door. His little looking-glass hung over his bureau opposite his bed, which was reflected in it.

That was the first thing I saw, when I reached the door. I could see

father in the looking-glass and the bed. Father was dead there; he had been murdered in the night.

II

I think I must have fainted away, for presently I found myself on the floor, and for a minute I could not remember what had happened. Then I remembered, and an awful, unreasoning terror seized me. 'I must lock all the doors quick,' I thought; 'quick, or the murderer will come back.'

I tried to get up, but I could not stand. I sank down again. I had to crawl out of the room on my hands and knees.

I went first to the front door; it was locked with a key and a bolt. I went next to the north door; and that was locked with a key and bolt. I went to the north shed door, and that was bolted. Then I went to the little-used east door in the shed, beside which the cat had her little passageway, and that was fastened with an iron hook. It has no latch.

The whole house was fastened on the inside. The thought struck me like an icy hand, 'The murderer is in this house!' I rose to my feet then; I unhooked that door, and ran out of the house, and out of the yard, as for my life.

I took the road to the village. The first house, where Phæbe Dole and Maria Woods live, is across a wide field from ours. I did not intend to stop there, for they were only women, and could do nothing; but seeing Phæbe looking out of the window I ran into the yard.

She opened the window.

'What is it?' said she. 'What is the matter, Sarah Fairbanks?'

Maria Woods came and leaned over her shoulder. Her face looked almost as white as her hair, and her blue eyes were dilated. My face must have frightened her.

'Father—father is murdered in his bed!' I said.

There was a scream, and Maria Woods' face disappeared from over Phæbe Dole's shoulder—she had fainted. I do not know whether Phæbe looked paler—she is always very pale—but I saw in her black eyes a look which I shall never forget. I think she began to suspect me at that moment.

Phæbe glanced back at Maria, but she asked me another question.

'Has he had words with anybody?' said she.

'Only with Rufus,' I said; 'but Rufus is gone.'

Phœbe turned away from the window to attend to Maria, and I ran on to the village.

A hundred people can testify what I did next—can tell how I called for the doctor and the deputy sheriff; how I went back to my own home with the horror-stricken crowd; how they flocked in and looked at poor father; but only the doctor touched him, very carefully, to see if he were quite dead; how the coroner came, and all the rest.

The pistol was in the bed beside father, but it had not been fired; the charge was still in the barrel. It was bloodstained, and there was one bruise on father's head which might have been inflicted by the pistol, used as a club. But the wound which caused his death was in his breast, and made evidently by some cutting instrument, though the cut was not a clean one; the weapon must have been dull.

They searched the house, lest the murderer should be hidden away. I heard Rufus Bennett's name whispered by one and another. Everybody seemed to know that he and father had had words the night before; I could not understand how, because I had told nobody except Phœbe Dole, who had had no time to spread the news, and I was sure that no one else had spoken of it.

They looked in the closet where my green silk dress hung, and pushed it aside, to be sure nobody was concealed behind it, but they did not notice anything wrong about it. It was dark in the closet, and besides, they did not look for anything like that until later.

All these people—the deputy sheriff, and afterwards the high sheriff, and other out-of-town officers, for whom they had telegraphed, and the neighbours—all hunted their own suspicion, and that was Rufus Bennett. All believed he had come back, and killed my father. They fitted all the facts to that belief. They made him do the deed with a long, slender screwdriver, which he had recently borrowed from one of the neighbours and had not returned. They made his finger-marks, which were still on my father's throat, fit the red prints of the sitting-room door. They made sure that he had returned and stolen into the house by the east door shed, while father and I sat on the doorsteps the evening before; that he had hidden himself away, perhaps in that very closet where my dress hung, and afterwards stolen out and killed my father, and then escaped.

They were not shaken when I told them that every door was bolted

and barred that morning. They themselves found all the windows fastened down, except a few which were open on account of the heat, and even these last were raised only the width of the sash, and fastened with sticks, so that they could be raised no higher. Father was very cautious about fastening the house, for he sometimes had considerable sums of money by him. The officers saw all these difficulties in the way, but they fitted them somehow to their theory, and two deputy sheriffs were at once sent to apprehend Rufus.

They had not begun to suspect me then, and not the slightest watch was kept on my movements. The neighbours were very kind, and did everything to help me, relieving me altogether of all those last offices—in this case so much sadder than usual.

An inquest was held, and I told freely all I knew, except about the blood-stains on my dress. I hardly knew why I kept that back. I had no feeling then that I might have done the deed myself, and I could not bear to convict myself, if I was innocent.

Two of the neighbours, Mrs Holmes and Mrs Adams, remained with me all that day. Towards evening, when there were very few in the house, they went into the parlour to put it in order for the funeral, and I sat down alone in the kitchen. As I sat there by the window I thought of my green silk dress, and wondered if the stains were out. I went to the closet and brought the dress out to the light. The spots and streaks had almost disappeared. I took the dress out into the shed, and scraped off the flour paste, which was quite dry; I swept up the paste, burned it in the stove, took the dress upstairs to my own closet, and hung it in its old place. Neighbours remained with me all night.

At three o'clock in the afternoon of the next day, which was Thursday, I went over to Phæbe Dole's to see about a black dress to wear to the funeral. The neighbours had urged me to have my black silk dress altered a little, and trimmed with crape.

I found only Maria Woods at home. When she saw me she gave a little scream, and began to cry. She looked as if she had already been weeping for hours. Her blue eyes were bloodshot.

'Phæbe's gone over to—Mrs Whitney's to—try on her dress,' she sobbed.

'I want to get my black silk dress fixed a little,' said I.

'She'll be home—pretty soon,' said Maria.

I laid my dress on the sofa and sat down. Nobody ever consults

Maria about a dress. She sews well, but Phœbe does all the planning.

Maria Woods continued to sob like a child, holding her little soaked handkerchief over her face. Her shoulders heaved. As for me, I felt like a stone; I could not weep.

'Oh,' she gasped out finally, 'I knew—I knew! I told Phœbe—I knew just how it would be, I—knew!'

I roused myself at that.

'What do you mean?' said I.

'When Phœbe came home Tuesday night and said she heard your father and Rufus Bennett having words, I knew how it would be,' she choked out. 'I knew he had a dreadful temper.'

'Did Phœbe Dole know Tuesday night that father and Rufus Bennett had words?' said I.

'Yes,' said Maria Woods.

'How did she know?'

'She was going through your yard, the short cut to Mrs Ormsby's, to carry her brown alpaca dress home. She came right home and told me; and she overheard them.'

'Have you spoken of it to anybody but me?' said I.

Maria said she didn't know; she might have done so. Then she remembered hearing Phœbe herself speak of it to Harriet Sargent when she came in to try on her dress. It was easy to see how people knew about it.

I did not say any more, but I thought it was strange that Phœbe Dole had asked me if father had had words with anybody when she knew it all the time.

Phœbe came in before long. I tried on my dress, and she made her plan about the alterations, and the trimming. I made no suggestions. I did not care how it was done, but if I had cared it would have made no difference. Phœbe always does things her own way. All the women in the village are in a manner under Phœbe Dole's thumb. Their garments are visible proofs of her force of will.

While she was taking up my black silk on the shoulder seams, Phœbe Dole said, 'Let me see—you had a green silk dress made at Digby three summers ago, didn't you?'

'Yes,' I said.

'Well,' said she, 'why don't you have it dyed black? those thin silks dye quite nice. It would make you a good dress.'

I scarcely replied, and then she offered to dye it for me herself.

She had a recipe which she used with great success. I thought it was very kind of her, but did not say whether I would accept her offer or not. I could not fix my mind upon anything but the awful trouble I was in.

'I'll come over and get it tomorrow morning,' said Phœbe.

I thanked her. I thought of the stains, and then my mind seemed to wander again to the one subject.

All the time Maria Woods sat weeping. Finally Phœbe turned to her with impatience. 'If you can't keep calmer, you'd better go upstairs, Maria,' said she. 'You'll make Sarah sick. Look at her! she doesn't give way—and think of the reason she's got.'

'I've got reason too,' Maria broke out; then, with a piteous shriek, 'Oh, I've got reason.'

'Maria Woods, go out of the room!' said Phœbe. Her sharpness made me jump, half dazed as I was.

Maria got up without a word, and went out of the room, bending almost double with convulsive sobs.

'She's been dreadfully worked up over your father's death,' said Phœbe, calmly, going on with the fitting. 'She's terribly nervous. Sometimes I have to be real sharp with her, for her own good.'

I nodded. Maria Woods has always been considered a sweet, weakly, dependent woman, and Phœbe Dole is undoubtedly very fond of her. She has seemed to shield her, and take care of her nearly all her life. The two have lived together since they were young girls.

Phœbe is tall, and very pale and thin; but she never had a day's illness. She is plain, yet there is a kind of severe goodness and faithfulness about her colourless face, with the smooth bands of white hair over her ears.

I went home as soon as my dress was fitted. That evening Henry Ellis came over to see me. I do not need to go into details concerning that visit. It seemed enough to say that he tendered the fullest sympathy and protection, and I accepted them. I cried a little, for the first time, and he soothed and comforted me.

Henry had driven over from Digby and tied his horse in the yard. At ten o'clock he bade me good-night on the doorstep, and was just turning his buggy around, when Mrs Adams came running to the door.

'Is this yours?' said she, and she held out a knot of yellow ribbon.

'Why, that's the ribbon you have around your whip, Henry,' said I.

He looked at it. 'So it is,' he said. 'I must have dropped it.' He put it into his pocket and drove away.

'He didn't drop that ribbon tonight!' said Mrs Adams. 'I found it Wednesday morning out in the yard. I thought I remembered seeing him have a yellow ribbon on his whip.'

III

When Mrs Adams told me she had picked up Henry's whip-ribbon Wednesday morning, I said nothing, but thought that Henry must have driven over Tuesday evening after all, and even come up into the yard, although the house was shut up and I in bed, to get a little nearer to me. I felt conscience-stricken because I could not help a thrill of happiness, when my father lay dead in the house.

My father was buried as privately and as quietly as we could bring it about. But it was a terrible ordeal. Meantime word came from Vermont that Rufus Bennett had been arrested on his farm. He was perfectly willing to come back with the officers, and, indeed, had not the slightest trouble in proving that he was at his home in Vermont when the murder took place. He proved by several witnesses that he was out of the State long before my father and I sat on the steps together that evening, and that he proceeded directly to his home as fast as the train and stage-coach could carry him.

The screwdriver with which the deed was supposed to have been committed was found, by the neighbour from whom it had been borrowed, in his wife's bureau drawer. It had been returned, and she had used it to put a picture-hook in her chamber. Bennett was discharged and returned to Vermont.

Then Mrs Adams told of the finding of the yellow ribbon from Henry Ellis's whip, and he was arrested, since he was held to have a motive for putting my father out of the world. Father's opposition to our marriage was well known, and Henry was suspected also of having had an eye to his money. It was found, indeed, that my father had more money than I had known myself.

Henry owned to having driven into the yard that night, and to having missed the ribbon from his whip on his return; but one of the hostlers in the livery stable in Digby, where he kept his horse and buggy, came forward and testified to finding the yellow ribbon in the carriage room that Tuesday night before Henry returned from his

drive. There were two yellow ribbons in evidence, therefore, and the one produced by the hostler seemed to fit Henry's whip-stock the more exactly.

Moreover, nearly the exact minute of the murder was claimed to be proved by the post-mortem examination; and by the testimony of the stableman as to the hour of Henry's return and the speed of his horse, he was further cleared of suspicion; for if the opinion of the medical experts was correct, Henry must have returned to the livery stable too soon to have committed the murder.

He was discharged, at any rate, although suspicion still clung to him. Many people believe now in his guilt—those who do not, believe in mine; and some believe we were accomplices.

After Henry's discharge I was arrested. There was no one else left to accuse. There must be a motive for the murder; I was the only person left with a motive. Unlike the others, who were discharged after preliminary examination, I was held to the grand jury and taken to Dedham, where I spent four weeks in jail, awaiting the meeting of the grand jury.

Neither at the preliminary examination, nor before the grand jury, was I allowed to make the full and frank statement that I am making here. I was told simply to answer the questions that were put to me, and to volunteer nothing, and I obeyed.

I know nothing about law. I wished to do the best I could—to act in the wisest manner, for Henry's sake and my own. I said nothing about the green silk dress. They searched the house for all manner of things, at the time of my arrest, but the dress was not there—it was in Phæbe Dole's dye-kettle. She had come over after it one day when I was picking beans in the garden, and had taken it out of the closet. She brought it back herself, and told me this, after I had returned from Dedham.

'I thought I'd get it and surprise you,' said she. 'It's taken a beautiful black.'

She gave me a strange look—half as if she would see into my very soul, in spite of me, half as if she were in terror of what she would see there, as she spoke. I do not know just what Phæbe Dole's look meant. There may have been a stain left on that dress after all, and she may have seen it.

I suppose if it had not been for that flour-paste which I had learned to make, I should have hung for the murder of my father. As

it was, the grand jury found no bill against me because there was absolutely no evidence to convict me; and I came home a free woman. And if people were condemned for their motives, would there be enough hangmen in the world?

They found no weapon with which I could have done the deed. They found no blood-stains on my clothes. The one thing which told against me, aside from my ever-present motive, was the fact that on the morning after the murder the doors and windows were fastened. My volunteering this information had of course weakened its force as against myself.

Then, too, some held that I might have been mistaken in my terror and excitement, and there was a theory, advanced by a few, that the murderer had meditated making me also a victim, and had locked the doors that he might not be frustrated in his designs, but had lost heart at the last and had allowed me to escape, and then fled himself. Some held that he had intended to force me to reveal the whereabouts of father's money, but his courage had failed him.

Father had quite a sum in a hiding-place which only he and I knew. But no search for money had been made, as far as any one could see—not a bureau drawer had been disturbed, and father's gold watch was ticking peacefully under his pillow; even his wallet in his vest pocket had not been opened. There was a small roll of banknotes in it, and some change; father never carried much money. I suppose if father's wallet and watch had been taken, I should not have been suspected at all.

I was discharged, as I have said, from lack of evidence, and have returned to my home—free, indeed, but with this awful burden of suspicion on my shoulders. That brings me up to the present day. I returned yesterday evening. This evening Henry Ellis has been over to see me; he will not come again, for I have forbidden him to do so. This is what I said to him:

'I know you are innocent, you know I am innocent. To all the world beside we are under suspicion—I more than you, but we are both under suspicion. If we are known to be together that suspicion is increased for both of us. I do not care for myself, but I do care for you. Separated from me the stigma attached to you will soon fade away, especially if you should marry elsewhere.'

Then Henry interrupted me. 'I will never marry elsewhere,' said he.

I could not help being glad that he said it, but I was firm.

'If you should see some good woman whom you could love, it will be better for you to marry elsewhere,' said I.

'I never will!' he said again. He put his arms around me, but I had strength to push him away.

'You never need, if I succeed in what I undertake before you meet the other,' said I. I began to think he had not cared for that pretty girl who boarded in the same house, after all.

'What is that?' he said. 'What are you going to undertake?'

'To find my father's murderer,' said I.

Henry gave me a strange look; then, before I could stop him, he took me fast in his arms, and kissed my forehead.

'As God is my witness, Sarah, I believe in your innocence,' he said; and from that minute I have felt sustained and fully confident of my power to do what I have undertaken.

My father's murderer I will find. Tomorrow I begin my search. I shall first make an exhaustive examination of the house, such as no officer in the case has yet made, in the hope of finding a clue. Every room I propose to divide into square yards, by line and measure, and every one of these square yards I will study as if it were a problem in algebra.

I have a theory that it is impossible for any human being to enter any house, and commit in it a deed of this kind, and not leave behind traces which are the known quantities in an algebraic equation to those who can use them.

There is a chance that I shall not be quite unaided. Henry has promised not to come again until I bid him, but he is to send a detective here from Boston—one whom he knows. In fact, that man is a cousin of his, or else there would be small hope of our securing him, even if I were to offer him a large price.

The man has been remarkably successful in several cases, but his health is not good; the work is a severe strain upon his nerves, and he is not driven to it from any lack of money. The physicians have forbidden him to undertake any new case, for a year at least, but Henry is confident that we may rely upon him for this.

I will now lay this aside and go to bed. Tomorrow is Wednesday; my father will have been dead seven weeks. Tomorrow morning I commence the work, in which, if it be in human power, aided by a higher wisdom, I shall succeed.

IV

(The pages which follow are from Miss Fairbanks' journal, begun after the conclusion of the notes already given to the reader.)

Wednesday night.—I have resolved to record carefully each day the progress I make in my examination of the house. I began today at the bottom—that is, with the room least likely to contain any clue, the parlour. I took a chalk line and a yardstick, and divided the floor into square yards, and every one of these squares I examined on my hands and knees. I found in this way literally nothing on the carpet but dust, lint, two common white pins, and three inches of blue sewing-silk.

At last I got the dustpan and brush, and yard by yard swept the floor. I took the sweepings in a white pasteboard box out into the yard in the strong sunlight, and examined them. There was nothing but dust and lint and five inches of brown woollen thread—evidently a ravelling of some dress material. The blue silk and the brown thread are the only possible clues which I found today, and they are hardly possible. Rufus's wife can probably account for them. I have written to her about them.

Nobody has come to the house all day. I went down to the store this afternoon to get some necessary provisions, and people stopped talking when I came in. The clerk took my money as if it were poison.

Thursday night.—Today I have searched the sitting-room, out of which my father's bedroom opens. I found two bloody footprints on the carpet which no one had noticed before—perhaps because the carpet itself is red and white. I used a microscope which I had in my school work. The footprints, which are close to the bedroom door, pointing out into the sitting-room, are both from the right foot; one is brighter than the other, but both are faint. The foot was evidently either bare or clad only in a stocking—the prints are so widely spread. They are wider than my father's shoes. I tried one in the brightest print.

I found nothing else new in the sitting-room. The blood-stains on the doors which have been already noted are still there. They had not been washed away, first by order of the sheriff, and next by mine. These stains are of two kinds: one looks as if made by a bloody garment brushing against it; the other, I should say, was made in the first place by the grasp of a bloody hand, and then brushed over with

a cloth. There are none of these marks upon the door leading to the bedroom—they are on the doors leading into the front entry and the china closet. The china closet is really a pantry, although I use it only for my best dishes and preserves.

Friday night.—Today I searched the closet. One of the shelves, which is about as high as my shoulders, was blood-stained. It looked to me as if the murderer might have caught hold of it to steady himself. Did he turn faint after his dreadful deed? Some tumblers of jelly were ranged on that shelf and they had not been disturbed. There was only that bloody clutch on the edge.

I found on this closet floor, under the shelves, as if it had been rolled there by a careless foot, a button, evidently from a man's clothing. It is an ordinary black enamelled metal trousers-button: it had evidently been worn off and clumsily sewn on again, for a quantity of stout white thread is still clinging to it. This button must have belonged either to a single man or to one with an idle wife.

If one black button had been sewn on with white thread, another is likely to be. I may be wrong, but I regard this button as a clue.

The pantry was thoroughly swept—cleaned, indeed, by Rufus's wife, the day before she left. Neither my father nor Rufus could have dropped it there, and they never had occasion to go to that closet. The murderer dropped the button.

I have a white pasteboard box which I have marked 'clues'. In it I have put the button.

This afternoon Phœbe Dole came in. She is very kind. She had recut the dyed silk, and she fitted it to me. Her great shears clicking in my ears made me nervous. I did not feel like stopping to think about clothes. I hope I did not appear ungrateful, for she is the only soul beside Henry who has treated me as she did before this happened.

Phœbe asked me what I found to busy myself about, and I replied, 'I am searching for my father's murderer.' She asked me if I thought I should find a clue, and I replied, 'I think so.' I had found the button then, but I did not speak of it. She said Maria was not very well.

I saw her eyeing the stains on the doors, and I said I had not washed them off, for I thought they might yet serve a purpose in detecting the murderer. She looked closely at those on the entry-door—the brightest ones—and said she did not see how they could help, for there were no plain finger-marks there, and she should think they would make me nervous.

'I'm beyond being nervous,' I replied.

Saturday.—Today I have found something which I cannot understand. I have been at work in the room where my father came to his dreadful end. Of course some of the most startling evidences have been removed. The bed is clean, and the carpet washed, but the worst horror of it all clings to that room. The spirit of murder seemed to haunt it. It seemed to me at first that I could not enter that room, but in it I made a strange discovery.

My father, while he carried little money about his person, was in the habit of keeping considerable sums in the house; there is no bank within ten miles. However he was wary; he had a hiding-place which he had revealed to no one but myself. He had a small stand in his room near the end of his bed. Under this stand, or rather under the top of it, he had tacked a large leather wallet. In this he kept all his spare money. I remember how his eyes twinkled when he showed it to me.

'The average mind thinks things have either got to be in or on,' said my father. 'They don't consider there's ways of getting around gravitation and calculation.'

In searching my father's room, I called to mind that saying of his, and his peculiar system of concealment, and then I made my discovery. I have argued that in a search of this kind I ought not only to search for hidden traces of the criminal, but for everything which had been for any reason concealed. Something which my father himself had hidden, something from his past history, may furnish a motive for someone else.

The money in the wallet under the table, some five hundred dollars, had been removed and deposited in the bank. Nothing more was to be found there. I examined the bottom of the bureau, and the undersides of the chair seats. There are two chairs in the room, besides the cushioned rocker—green-painted wooden chairs, with flag seats. I found nothing under the seats.

Then I turned each of the green chairs completely over, and examined the bottoms of the legs. My heart leaped when I found a bit of leather tacked over one. I got the tack-hammer and drew the tacks. The chair-leg had been hollowed out, and for an inch the hole was packed tight with cotton. I began picking out the cotton, and soon I felt something hard. It proved to be an old-fashioned gold band, quite wide and heavy, like a wedding-ring.

I took it over to the window and found this inscription on the inside: 'Let love abide forever.' There were two dates—one in August, forty years ago, and the other in August of the present year.

I think the ring had never been worn; while the first part of the inscription is perfectly clear, it looks old, and the last is evidently freshly cut.

This could not have been my mother's ring. She had only her wedding-ring, and that was buried with her. I think my father must have treasured up this ring for years; but why? What does it mean? This can hardly be a clue; this can hardly lead to the discovery of a motive, but I will put it in the box with the rest.

Sunday night.—Today, of course, I did not pursue my search. I did not go to church. I could not face old friends that could not face me. Sometimes I think that everybody in my native village believes in my guilt. What must I have been in my general appearance and demeanour all my life? I have studied myself in the glass, and tried to discover the possibilities of evil that they must see in my face.

This afternoon, about three o'clock, the hour when people here have just finished their Sunday dinner, there was a knock on the north door. I answered it, and a strange young man stood there with a large book under his arm. He was thin and cleanly shaved, with a clerical air.

'I have a work here to which I would like to call your attention,' he began; and I stared at him in astonishment, for why should a book agent be peddling his wares upon the Sabbath?

His mouth twitched a little.

'It's Biblical Cyclopædia,' said he.

'I don't think I care to take it,' said I.

'You are Miss Sarah Fairbanks, I believe?'

'That is my name,' I replied stiffly.

'Mr Henry Ellis, of Digby, sent me here,' he said next. 'My name is Dix—Francis Dix.'

Then I knew it was Henry's first cousin from Boston—the detective who had come to help me. I felt the tears coming to my eyes.

'You are very kind to come,' I managed to say.

'I am selfish, not kind,' he returned, 'but you had better let me come in, or any chance of success in my book agency is lost, if the neighbours see me trying to sell it on a Sunday. And, Miss Fairbanks, this is a bona fide agency. I shall canvass the town.'

He came in. I showed him all that I have written, and he read it carefully. When he had finished he sat still for a long time, with his face screwed up in a peculiar meditative fashion.

'We'll ferret this out in three days at the most,' said he finally, with a sudden clearing of his face and a flash of his eyes at me.

'I had planned for three years, perhaps,' said I.

'I tell you, we'll do it in three days,' he repeated. 'Where can I get board while I canvass for this remarkable and interesting book under my arm? I can't stay here, of course, and there is no hotel. Do you think the two dressmakers next door, Phæbe Dole and the other one, would take me in?'

I said they had never taken boarders.

'Well, I'll go over and enquire,' said Mr Dix; and he had gone, with his book under his arm, almost before I knew it.

Never have I seen any one act with the strange noiseless soft speed that this man does. Can he prove me innocent in three days? He must have succeeded in getting board at Phæbe Dole's, for I saw him go past to meeting with her this evening. I feel sure he will be over very early tomorrow morning.

V

Monday night.—The detective came as I expected. I was up as soon as it was light, and he came across the dewy fields, with his Cyclopædia under his arm. He had stolen out from Phæbe Dole's back door.

He had me bring my father's pistol; then he bade me come with him out into the back yard. 'Now, fire it,' he said, thrusting the pistol into my hands. As I have said before, the charge was still in the barrel.

'I shall arouse the neighbourhood,' I said.

'Fire it,' he ordered.

I tried; I pulled the trigger as hard as I could.

'I can't do it,' I said.

'And you are a reasonably strong woman, too, aren't you?'

I said I had been considered so. Oh, how much I heard about the strength of my poor woman's arms, and their ability to strike that murderous weapon home!

Mr Dix took the pistol himself, and drew a little at the trigger. 'I could do it,' he said, 'but I won't. It would arouse the neighbourhood.'

'This is more evidence against me,' I said despairingly.

'The murderer had tried to fire the pistol and failed.'

'It is more evidence against the murderer', said Mr Dix.

We went into the house, where he examined my box of clues long and carefully. Looking at the ring, he asked whether there was a jeweller in this village, and I said there was not. I told him that my father oftener went on business to Acton, ten miles away, than elsewhere.

He examined very carefully the button which I had found in the closet, and then asked to see my father's wardrobe. That was soon done. Beside the suit in which father was laid away there was one other complete one in the closet in his room. Besides that, there were in this closet two overcoats, an old black frock coat, a pair of pepper-and-salt trousers, and two black vests. Mr Dix examined all the buttons; not one was missing.

There was still another old suit in the closet off the kitchen. This was examined, and no button found wanting.

'What did your father do for work the day before he died?' he then asked. I reflected and said that he had unpacked some stores which had come down from Vermont, and done some work out in the garden.

'What did he wear?'

'I think he wore the pepper-and-salt trousers and the black vest. He wore no coat, while at work.'

Mr Dix went quietly back to father's room and his closet, I following. He took out the grey trousers and the black vest, and examined them closely.

'What did he wear to protect these?' he asked.

'Why, he wore overalls!' I said at once. As I spoke I remembered seeing father go around the path to the yard, with those blue overalls drawn up high under his arms.

'Where are they?'

'Weren't they in the kitchen closet?'

'No.'

We looked again, however, in the kitchen closet; we searched the shed thoroughly. The cat came in through her little door, as we stood there, and brushed around our feet. Mr Dix stooped and stroked her. Then he went quickly to the door, beside which her little entrance

was arranged, unhooked it, and stepped out. I was following him, but he motioned me back.

'None of my boarding mistress's windows command us,' he said, 'but she might come to the back door.'

I watched him. He passed slowly around the little winding foot-path, which skirted the rear of our house and extended faintly through the grassy fields to the rear of Phœbe Dole's. He stopped, searched a clump of sweetbriar, went on to an old well, and stopped there. The well had been dry many a year, and was choked up with stones and rubbish. Some boards are laid over it, and a big stone or two, to keep them in place.

Mr Dix, glancing across at Phœbe Dole's back door, went down on his knees, rolled the stones away, then removed the boards and peered down the well. He stretched far over the brink, and reached down. He made many efforts; then he got up and came to me, and asked me to get for him an umbrella with a crooked handle, or something that he could hook into clothing.

I brought my own umbrella, the silver handle of which formed an exact hook. He went back to the well, knelt again, thrust in the umbrella and drew up, easily enough, what he had been fishing for. Then he came bringing it to me.

'Don't faint,' he said, and took hold of my arm. I gasped when I saw what he had—my father's blue overalls, all stained and splashed with blood!

I looked at them, then at him.

'Don't faint,' he said again. 'We're on the right track. This is where the button came from—see, see!' He pointed to one of the straps of the overalls, and the button was gone. Some white thread clung to it. Another black metal button was sewed on roughly with the same white thread that I found on the button in my box of clues.

'What does it mean?' I gasped out. My brain reeled.

'You shall know soon,' he said. He looked at his watch. Then he laid down the ghastly bundle he carried. 'It has puzzled you to know how the murderer went in and out and yet kept the doors locked, has it not?' he said.

'Yes.'

'Well, I am going out now. Hook that door after me.'

He went out, still carrying my umbrella. I hooked the door.

Presently I saw the lid of the cat's door lifted, and his hand and arm thrust through. He curved his arm up towards the hook, but it came short by half a foot. Then he withdrew his arm, and thrust in my silver-handled umbrella. He reached the door-hook easily enough with that.

Then he hooked it again. That was not so easy. He had to work a long time. Finally he accomplished it, unhooked the door again, and came in.

'That was how!' I said.

'No, it was not,' he returned. 'No human being, fresh from such a deed, could have used such patience as that to fasten the door after him. Please hang your arm down by your side.'

I obeyed. He looked at my arm, then at his own.

'Have you a tape measure?' he asked.

I brought one out of my work-basket. He measured his arm, then mine, and then the distance from the cat-door to the hook.

'I have two tasks for you today and tomorrow,' he said. 'I shall come here very little. Find all your father's old letters, and read them. Find a man or woman in this town whose arm is six inches longer than yours. Now I must go home, or my boarding-mistress will get curious.'

He went through the house to the front door, looked all ways to be sure no eyes were upon him, made three strides down the yard, and was pacing soberly up the street, with his *Cyclopædia* under his arm.

I made myself a cup of coffee, then I went about obeying his instructions. I read old letters all the forenoon; I found packages in trunks in the garret; there were quantities in father's desk. I have selected several to submit to Mr Dix. One of them treats of an old episode in father's youth, which must have years since ceased to interest him. It was concealed after his favourite fashion—tacked under the bottom of his desk. It was written forty years ago, by Maria Woods—two years before my father's marriage—and it was a refusal of an offer of his hand. It was written in the stilted fashion of that day; it might have been copied from a 'Complete Letter-writer'.

My father must have loved Maria Woods as dearly as I love Henry to keep that letter so carefully all these years. I thought he cared for my mother. He seemed as fond of her as other men of their wives, although I did use to wonder if Henry and I would ever get to be quite so much accustomed to each other.

Maria Woods must have been as beautiful as an angel when she was a girl. Mother was not pretty; she was stout, too, and awkward, and I suppose people would have called her rather slow and dull. But she was a good woman, and tried to do her duty.

Tuesday night.—This evening was my first opportunity to obey the second of Mr Dix's orders. It seemed to me the best way to compare the average length of arms was to go to the prayer-meeting. I could not go about the town with my tape measure, and demand of people that they should hold out their arms. Nobody knows how I dreaded to go to the meeting, but I went, and I looked not at my neighbour's cold altered faces, but at their arms.

I discovered what Mr Dix wished me to, but the discovery can avail nothing, and it is one he could have made himself. Phœbe Dole's arm is fully seven inches longer than mine. I never noticed it before, but she has an almost abnormally long arm. But why should Phœbe Dole have unhooked that door?

She made a prayer—a beautiful prayer. It comforted even me a little. She spoke of the tenderness of God in all the troubles of life, and how it never failed us.

When we were all going out I heard several persons speak of Mr Dix and his Biblical Cyclopædia. They decided that he was a theological student, book-canvassing to defray the expenses of his education.

Maria Woods was not at the meeting. Several asked Phœbe how she was, and she replied, 'Not very well.'

It is very late. I thought Mr Dix might be over tonight, but he has not been here.

Wednesday.—I can scarcely believe what I am about to write. Our investigations seem to point all to one person, and that person—— It is incredible! I will not believe it. Mr Dix came, as before, at dawn. He reported, and I reported. I showed Maria Woods' letter. He said he had driven to Acton, and found that the jeweller there had engraved the last date in the ring about six weeks ago.

'I don't want to seem rough, but your father was going to get married again,' said Mr Dix.

'I never knew him to go near any woman since mother died,' I protested.

'Nevertheless, he had made arrangements to be married,' persisted Mr Dix.

'Who was the woman?'

He pointed at the letter in my hand.

'Maria Woods?'

He nodded.

I stood looking at him—dazed. Such a possibility had never entered my head.

He produced an envelope from his pocket, and took out a little card with blue and brown threads neatly wound upon it.

'Let me see those threads you found,' he said.

I got the box and we compared them. He had a number of pieces of blue sewing-silk and brown woollen ravellings, and they matched mine exactly. 'Where did you find them?' I asked.

'In my boarding-mistress's piecebag.'

I stared at him. 'What does it mean?' I gasped out.

'What do you think?'

'It is impossible!'

VI

Wednesday continued.—When Mr Dix thus suggested to me the absurd possibility that Phœbe Dole had committed the murder, he and I were sitting in the kitchen. He was near the table; he laid a sheet of paper upon it, and began to write. The paper is before me.

'First'—said Mr Dix, and he wrote rapidly as he talked—'Whose arm is of such length that it might unlock a certain door of this house from the outside?—Phœbe Dole's.

'Second, who had in her piecebag bits of the same threads and ravellings found upon your parlour floor, where she had not by your knowledge entered?—Phœbe Dole.

'Third, who interested herself most strangely in your blood-stained green silk dress, even to dyeing it?—Phœbe Dole.

'Fourth, who was caught in a lie, while trying to force the guilt of the murder upon an innocent man?—Phœbe Dole.'

Mr Dix looked at me. I had gathered myself together. 'That proves nothing,' I said. 'There is no motive in her case.'

'There is a motive.'

'What is it?'

'Maria Woods shall tell you this afternoon.'

He then wrote.

'Fifth, who was seen to throw a bundle down the old well, in the rear of Martin Fairbanks's house, at one o'clock in the morning?—Phœbe Dole.'

'Was she—seen?' I gasped. Mr Dix nodded. Then he wrote.

'Sixth, who had a strong motive, which had been in existence many years ago?—Phœbe Dole.'

Mr Dix laid down his pen, and looked at me again. 'Well, what have you to say?' he asked.

'It is impossible!'

'Why?'

'She is a woman.'

'A man could have fired that pistol, as she tried to do.'

'It would have taken a man's strength to kill with the kind of weapon that was used,' I said.

'No, it would not. No great strength is required for such a blow.'

'But she is a woman!'

'Crime has no sex.'

'But she is a good woman—a church member. I heard her pray yesterday afternoon. It is not in character.'

'It is not for you, nor for me, nor for any mortal intelligence, to know what is, or is not in character,' said Mr Dix.

He arose and went away. I could only stare at him in a half-dazed manner.

Maria Woods came this afternoon, taking advantage of Phœbe's absence on a dressmaking errand. Maria has aged ten years in the last few weeks. Her hair is white, her cheeks are fallen in, her pretty colour is gone.

'May I have the ring he gave me forty years ago?' she faltered.

I gave it to her; she kissed it, and sobbed like a child. 'Phœbe took it away from me before,' she said; 'but she shan't this time.'

Maria related with piteous sobs the story of her long subordination to Phœbe Dole. This sweet child-like woman had always been completely under the sway of the other's stronger nature. The subordination went back beyond my father's original proposal to her; she had, before he made love to her as a girl, promised Phœbe she would not marry; and it was Phœbe who, by representing to her that she was bound by this solemn promise, had led her to write a letter to my father declining his offer, and sending back the ring.

'And after all, we were going to get married, if he had not died,'

she said. 'He was going to give me this ring again, and he had had the other date put in. I should have been so happy!'

She stopped and stared at me with horror-stricken enquiry. 'What was Phœbe Dole doing in your back-yard at one o'clock that night?' she cried.

'What do you mean?' I returned.

'I saw Phœbe come out of your back shéd-door at one o'clock that very night. She had a bundle in her arms. She went along the path about as far as the old well, then she stooped down, and seemed to be working at something. When she got up she didn't have the bundle. I was watching at our back-door. I thought I heard her go out a little while before, and went downstairs, and found that door unlocked. I went in quick, and up to my chamber, and into my bed, when she started home across the fields. Pretty soon I heard her come in, then I heard the pump going. She slept downstairs; she went on to her bedroom. What was she doing in your back-yard that night?'

'You must ask her,' said I. I felt my blood running cold.

'I've been afraid to,' moaned Maria Woods. 'She's been dreadful strange lately. I wish that book-agent was going to stay at our house.'

Maria Woods went home in about an hour. I got a ribbon for her, and she has my poor father's ring concealed in her withered bosom. Again I cannot believe this.

Thursday.—It is all over; Phœbe Dole has confessed! I do not know now in exactly what way Mr Dix brought it about—how he accused her of her crime. After breakfast I saw them coming across the fields; Phœbe came first, advancing with rapid strides like a man; Mr Dix followed, and my father's poor old sweetheart tottered behind, with her handkerchief at her eyes. Just as I noticed them the front-door bell rang; I found several people there, headed by the high sheriff. They crowded into the sitting-room just as Phœbe Dole came rushing in, with Mr Dix and Maria Woods.

'I did it!' Phœbe cried out to me. 'I am found out, and I have made up my mind to confess. She was going to marry your father—I found it out. I stopped it once before. This time I knew I couldn't unless I killed him. She's lived with me in that house for over forty years. There are other ties as strong as the marriage one, that are just as sacred. What right had he to take her away from me and break up my home?'

'I overheard your father and Rufus Bennett having words. I thought folks would think he did it. I reasoned it all out. I had watched your cat go in that little door, I knew the shed-door hooked, I knew how long my arm was; I thought I could undo it. I stole over here a little after midnight. I went all around the house to be sure nobody was awake. Out in the front-yard I happened to think my shears were tied on my belt with a ribbon, and I untied them. I thought I put the ribbon in my pocket—it was a piece of yellow ribbon—but I suppose I didn't, because they found it afterwards, and thought it came off your young man's whip.

'I went round to the shed-door, unhooked it, and went in. The moon gave light enough. I got out your father's overalls from the kitchen closet; I knew where they were. I went through the sitting-room to the parlour. In there I slipped off my dress and skirts and put on the overalls. I put a handkerchief over my face, leaving only my eyes exposed. I crept out then into the sitting-room; there I pulled off my shoes and went into the bedroom.

'Your father was fast asleep; it was such a hot night, the clothes were thrown back and his chest was bare. The first thing I saw was that pistol on the stand beside his bed. I suppose he had had some fear of Rufus Bennett coming back after all. Suddenly I thought I'd better shoot him. It would be surer and quicker; and if you were aroused I knew that I could get away, and everybody would suppose that he had shot himself.

'I took up the pistol and held it close to his head. I had never fired a pistol, but I knew how it was done. I pulled. but it would not go off. Your father stirred a little—I was mad with terror—I struck at his head with the pistol. He opened his eyes and cried out; then I dropped the pistol, and took these—Phœbe Dole pointed to the great shining shears hanging at her waist—'for I am strong in my wrists. I only struck twice, over his heart.

'Then I went back into the sitting-room. I thought I heard a noise in the kitchen—I was full of terror then—and slipped into the sitting-room closet. I felt as if I were fainting, and clutched the shelf to keep from falling.

'I felt that I must go upstairs to see if you were asleep, to be sure you had not waked up when your father cried out. I thought if you had I should have to do the same by you. I crept upstairs to your chamber. You seemed sound asleep, but, as I watched, you stirred a

little; but instead of striking at you I slipped into your closet. I heard nothing more from you. I felt myself wet with blood. I caught something hanging in your closet, and wiped myself over with it. I knew by the feeling it was your green silk. You kept quiet, and I saw you were asleep, so crept out of the closet, and down the stairs, got my clothes and shoes, and, out in the shed, took off the overalls and dressed myself. I rolled up the overalls, and took a board away from the old well and threw them in as I went home. I thought if they were found it would be no clue to me. The handkerchief, which was not much stained, I put to soak that night, and washed it out next morning, before Maria was up. I washed my hands and arms carefully that night, and also my shears.

‘I expected Rufus Bennett would be accused of the murder, and, maybe, hung. I was prepared for that, but I did not like to think I had thrown suspicion upon you by staining your dress. I had nothing against you. I made up my mind I’d get hold of that dress—before anybody suspected you—and dye it black. I came in and got it, as you know. I was astonished not to see any more stains on it. I only found two or three little streaks that scarcely anybody would have noticed. I didn’t know what to think; I suspected, of course, that you had found the stains and got them off, thinking they might bring suspicion upon you.

‘I did not see how you could possibly suspect me in any case. I was glad when your young man was cleared. I had nothing against him. That is all I have to say.’

I think I must have fainted away then. I cannot describe the dreadful calmness with which that woman told this—that woman with the good face, whom I had last heard praying like a saint in meeting. I believe in demoniacal possession after this.

When I came to, the neighbours were around me, putting camphor on my head, and saying soothing things to me, and the old friendly faces had returned. But I wish I could forget!

They have taken Phœbe Dole away—I only know that. I cannot bear to talk any more about it when I think there must be a trial, and I must go!

Henry has been over this evening. I suppose we shall be happy after all, when I have had a little time to get over this. He says I have nothing more to worry about. Mr Dix has gone home: I hope Henry and I may be able to repay his kindness some day.

A month later: I have just heard that Phœbe Dole has died in prison! This is my last entry. May God help all other innocent women in hard straits as He has helped me!