

ALICE THORNTON, ACQUITTED, SOBS

"Can't Tell How Happy I Am," Says Girl in Bergen Murder Case

THREE DEFENDANTS FREED

By a Staff Correspondent
Hackensack, N. J., Oct. 26.—Accused of the charge, which she shared with two other persons, of the murder of her sweetheart, Jack Bergen, nineteen-year-old Alice Thornton faced the world today, free in name only.

"What is there left for me in life?" she had asked pitifully, a short time before she was brought to trial four days ago. "Even if I am acquitted, and freed once more, the terrible shadow will always hang over me."

And it was this realization, as well as relief from the tension of doubt and uncertainty, which caused the girl to break down in the courtroom yesterday afternoon as she heard the verdict of the jury.

Huddled up in her chair, sobbing, almost fainting, at first she could not speak, and the haltingly with faint hint of a smile struggling with her tears, she said:

"I can't tell you how happy I am. I want to thank my lawyer—the jury and all those who have befriended me."

But the smile was washed away in tears and she shook back from the curious glances which were turned back upon her as the spectators left the courtroom.

Spends the Night in Jail

She was taken immediately to the jail where she spent the night.

There were hundreds of persons surrounding the jail and the courthouse waiting for Miss Thornton and George Cline to make their appearance and it was hours after the trial was over, and the courtroom emptied before the last stragglers drifted away.

"He cried, didn't he?" said a small boy, not scornfully, but wonderingly as if it must be "somebody's terrible" to make a man cry.

And every Cline did, as he buried his face in his hands and said, "Thank God," and then in a whirl of joy grabbed Howard Mackay, Senator William Mackay, his counsel's brother, and hugged him.

Mrs. Cline had gone to her home as soon as she could get away from the courthouse, but only after the automobile she was in had threaded its way among the people who crowded around, thrusting their hands through the windows, rattling her arm, congratulating her and wishing her happiness and joy in the future.

Her hat was off, and her dark hair hung loosely about her face, and her eyes so pinched, exhaustion so plainly written upon it as to be almost visible like a veil clinging to it, but shy gratitude and a happiness beyond describing as to be almost unrealized as yet, shining in her eyes.

Taunted by Voice in Crowd

"Would you want to go home to wait for your husband if your husband had been forced into killing the man who betrayed you?" whispered one of the crowd. But Mrs. Cline was above the barbed arrows of unfavorable criticism—only one thing mattered to her, it was clear. Her husband was free, and so she was happy with the happiness that comes only with the sliding away of a great burden and haunting fear.

And her husband was freed on the first ballot cast by the jury of six women and six men who tried the case, as was Alice Thornton and Charles Scallion, the fate of the three being decided separately.

Before returning to the court the members agreed not to talk of the evidence presented by the Prosecutor the State did not prove its case.

They refused to discuss the unwritten law in deciding what the verdict would be, though one of the women jurors was afterward heard to remark: "My husband would have shot him, too, if he had been in Cline's place."

The Cline residence in Edgewater, in a second-story room of which the meeting of Bergen occurred just two months ago to a day, was the scene of a party last night as friends and members of their families welcomed the acquitted trio home.

Trial Was Unusual

The trial was unusual in several respects. For the first time in the history of judicial practice in New Jersey, a verdict in a murder trial was handed up by a woman, Miss Susan Squires. The evidence, which resolved itself largely into a series of moral problems, was passed upon by a jury composed equally of men and women.

And finally, it was one of the speediest trials ever held in a State noted for the rapidity of its judicial machinery.

The trial began Friday, a Sunday the defense opened and called but one witness, besides Cline and Miss Thornton, who testified in their own defense.

Court then was adjourned and the jury was taken to Edgewater for an examination of the Cline house, where it was alleged Bergen was summoned on the night of August 25 to account for his conduct toward Cline's wife, and where Cline testified, he challenged the actor to a duel when he said that Mrs. Cline was "a bun, and all women are bad."

Yesterday the defense called five witnesses, four of them in rebuttal. Prosecuting and defense attorneys summed up briefly and Supreme Court Justice Spicer charged the jury at once. His summing up was regarded as strongly against the defendant. The jury retired at 1 o'clock, after an elapsed time of but fourteen hours from the seating of Juror No. 1. After one hour and forty minutes of deliberation the first ballot was taken and the jury sent word to Justice Parker that it had reached a decision.

The six men and six women jurors fled into the jury box a moment later. Miss Squires, a slip of a girl, rose in her place at the head of the jury.

"Have you agreed upon a verdict?" asked the Court.

The words of her answer, "We

have," were caught only by the clerk, despite the absolute silence which prevailed in the courtroom.

"Did you say 'guilty' or 'not guilty'?" asked the clerk.

Miss Squires cleared her throat with effort.

"Not guilty," she replied, and the words were now audible throughout the room.

BANKER IN DIVORCE RAID
Colonel Pohl Testifies of Helping Husband Surprise Wife
New York, Oct. 26.—The suit of George A. McCarroll, an architect, of Brooklyn, for divorce was heard yesterday by Supreme Court Justice Fawcett in Brooklyn.

Colonel A. W. J. Pohl, builder and banker, testified he and McCarroll went to Mrs. McCarroll's apartment September 1, forced entrance and found her and a man named Feeney, both scantily clad.

HOME ROBBED OF \$25,000
Morristown, N. J., Oct. 26.—Mrs. Peter Wikoff, mother-in-law of State Senator Arthur Whitney, attended a

political meeting. When she returned she found her home had been robbed of \$25,000 in jewels, she told the police. The loss is covered by insurance.

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