

VITRIOL

BY
ELLIS EATON

Wm. Eaton

You say I may speak in my own defense,
I, on trial today,
Then I will tell my story,
In my own peculiar way.

Not as the cunning lawyers,
Have planned what I shall say,
Gentlemen of the Jury,
I'll tell the truth, if I may.

He'd been coming home later and later;
Not a suspicion had I
He always had plausible reasons,
And I never questioned why.

Women, he said, knew nothing,
Of the work that men must do,
To earn the money to keep them,
"As I am keeping you"?

And he said he must be at the office,
For things were not running right,
And he found it most expedient
To work at his desk at night.

And so though I missed him sorely,
I believed every word he said,
I sat at my lone dinner,
And I went to my lone bed.

Then came the morning in April,
He had been out all night
And, anxious I called his office,
He answered, that "All was right, "

He was "detained ---would be home soon,
Things were a bit a-wry,
And I was not to worry,
And a foolish girl to cry.

They say the last to learn the truth,
Is the simple, guileless Wife,
And my faith was such in my husband,
I'd have trusted him with my life.

Unsuspecting and faithful
With a child's blind innocence
Snug in my fool's papadise,
There was "bliss in my ignorance!

But it happened that day at

It happened that day at the telephone,
 I saw my maid's sly eye,
 Drop in a wink to the other girl,
 Who chanced to be passing by.

And something significant in that smile,
 Caused my heart to stand still,
 For all of a sudden I realized
 That they were suspecting Will.

Suspecting my husband untrue to me!
 I was stunned at the idea,
 But all day long I saw their smile,
 And fought the encroaching fear.

I went through his things like a thief in the night,
 Fearing I might be caught,
 Yet digging about with a frantic fear,
 Till at last I found what I sought.

A note on the back of a photograph,
 A kodak of him and her,
 And across the card she had scribbled:
 "Your pet stenographer".

They have picked me a jury of married men,
 But it may be that some of you,
 Are leading lives of deception
 And to your wives are untrue.

I hope if you are you will suffer---
 Yes, suffer, even as he---
 That man over there, with his face in his hands.
 He is nothing now to me!

But I'll go ahead with my story.
 I was up to that April day,
 The day when I was arrested.
 I had gone quite mad they say.

You see, we had had a baby,
 He lived till he was four.
 His room was just as he left it.
 We never once opened the door.

But I thought of his favorite treasure,
 A small toy pistol, like this---
 Jimmy would fill it with water,
 Press the rubber bulb, and---sizz !

The water would squirt in your face,
And Jimmy would scream with delight.
Ah, many's the time, I scolded,
For he played with it even at night.

And it seemed very strange at that moment,
I should think of that little toy,
And how the water spluttered,
And gave my baby such joy.

Then I opened the door of that long locked room
And I found the little gun,
And I filled it full of vitriol,
The toy of my baby son.

I went down town in a taxicab,
And I laughed as I hugged to my breast,
The thing that I knew would avenge me-----
I think you know all the rest!

There! I am rested. Thank you.
Yes, I'll go on with my tale.
Excuse my voice --it trembles,
And I know that my face is pale.

You see, I've had so much trouble,
And this is the worst of all,
For theres no disgrace in dying,
But black deeds no words may recall.

Well, well, you are waiting my story,
And I'm rambling on so slow.
I don't like to look at that bandaged snake!
Move her away! Or I go!

There was an outer office,
With many girls and men,
And I fancied a look went wavering,
As I entered the room just then.

I scanned each face to find her,
Whose pictured one I knew.
She was not there. A pert girl spoke:
"What can we do for you?"

"Mr Lorne?" "He's busy just now, "
She languidly fixed her hair,
"--dictating in his office.
We never disturb him there".

"I am Mrs. Lorne" I whispered.
"Indeed! Well, you don't say!
I'm thinking that the boss will want
To see you right away".