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Clinton, S. C.
JUNE 19 TO 24

A PARDON REFUSED FOR G. C. BIGHAM

Governor Blease Turns Down Plea of Dr. Bingham's Mother, Whose Son Was Convicted of the Murder of His Wife, a Laurens County Woman.

(From News and Courier.)
A mother's pitiful plea was turned down by Governor Blease, when he refused to pardon G. C. Bigham, the young Georgetown doctor, who, with W. B. Avant, his close friend, was convicted at the fall term of Court in 1909, of the killing of young Mrs. Bigham, and each sentenced to a term of three years and a half in the State Penitentiary, both Bigham and Avant escaping from the community and being still at large.

This is the second petition presented to the Governor, this, however, being the first formal petition. When it was sought some time ago to have Avant pardoned, Governor Blease said that before he would consider the papers even, the man would have to be in the hands of the law. He takes the same position with regard to Bigham.

An Old Mother's Prayer.
The following is the petition of Dr. Bigham's mother:

"The humble petition of M. Medora Bigham respectfully shows that she is the mother of Dr. G. C. Bigham, who was convicted in Georgetown County, charged with the killing of his wife, on or about September 3, 1909, and sentenced to 3 1-2 years in the Penitentiary; that his wife was Ruth Crisp, of Laurens County; that she knew the relationship between her son and his wife and knows that her son would not have wilfully and knowingly killed his wife or been a party thereto; that she is the widow of the Hon. L. S. Bigham, who was a member of the State Legislature with your Excellency during the eighth decade of the nineteenth century; that her husband was instrumental in the passage of a certain fish law that very materially affected the fishers in and around Georgetown, and the people of Georgetown County have ever since been very bitter against her husband and family, and this was the prime cause of the conviction of her son, Dr. G. C. Bigham; that she humbly petitions your Excellency to grant to her son, Dr. G. C. Bigham, a full and free pardon, and your petitioner will ever pray. Mrs. M. M. Bigham.

"February 24, 1911."
From the daughter:
"I, Margie Bigham, am the daughter of the petitioner. I have lived and taught school near Georgetown and know that the above petition is true and join in it."

"Am Just Wild to See You."
A card is attached with the petition, this card being not admitted as evidence at the trial. The News and Courier correspondent at the time, attending the trial, printed a portion of this card. The card addressed to Dr. G. C. Bigham from his wife while she was visiting her relatives in Laurens County just prior to the killing, reads as follows:

"Look for me tomorrow, Friday. Will be there sure. Am just wild to see you.

"Ruth."
From Senator Tillman.
Senator Tillman wrote the following letter under date of March 30, 1911, from Trenton:

"Mrs. L. S. Bigham, 567 Buncombe Street, Greenville, S. C.—My Dear Madam: I have your letter of March 27. There is a mistaken impression going the rounds that I have become influential with the Governor in the matter of pardons. I presume this is due to the desire of the newspapers to couple Governor Blease and myself together. I have asked for only one pardon and that was for a white boy at Clemson, whose stepfather, according to the boy's story, was whipping his mother and he shot him.

"I remember your husband very pleasantly in the days that are past and would be glad to help you. I will take pleasure in signing a petition for your son, if you will send it to me. I think Avant the guilty man and ought to be punished.

Very sincerely yours,
"B. R. Tillman."

Came in Person.
The old mother of Dr. Bigham came in person to the Governor's office bringing her son's petition for pardon with her. She sat with others awaiting their turn in the outer room of the executive offices and finally, tiring of the long wait, left the papers at the office and went home. It was she who also sat through the three days' trial in Georgetown, and when the verdict was announced appeared to be the most affected of all in the Court room.

Governor Blease did not consider the petition long. He had announced his determination not to take up this case unless the fugitives were in the hands of the law.

Killed Young Woman.
Mrs. Ruth Crisp Bigham, a young woman 23 years old, the wife of Dr. G. C. Bigham, was killed at sundown on September 4, 1909. There were no witnesses to the deed other than the

principals, and the lonely beach twenty-five miles from Georgetown on Murrell's Inlet.

It appeared for awhile as if no trial would be had, the death being shrouded in mystery.

But on October 31, 1909, the two men, G. C. Bigham and W. B. Avant, faced a jury.

The husband and his friend sought to show that they were sitting on the porch of the cottage on the inlet, and that they saw an "object" some distance from them coming around the house; that they hailed this "object" and not receiving any response Avant fired. Relying upon the section of the code where it is stated a fleeing person may be hailed and if no response, dealt with, the defendants sought to show that this was what happened at that close of day when pretty Ruth Crisp Bigham went to her death.

The State was handicapped, as much could not be brought out at the trial that was whispered around the community.

Verdict of Manslaughter.

After a trial of nearly three days, at 4:10 o'clock in the afternoon of the third day the jury returned a verdict of guilty of manslaughter; there was added thereto the effect of recommendation to mercy, when the two defendants were each sentenced to three and a half years behind prison bars. It was recognized at Georgetown during the trial that a clear case of murder had not been made out, even though in the minds of many people that was what the two defendants were guilty of. The one possible motive was advanced that Mrs. Bigham knew too much about a case in Florence that Avant was involved in and that it was desired that she be out of the way.

Never Served Sentence.

Released on \$1,500 bond, pending appeal, the defendants have never gone within the Penitentiary save for a short while. Avant was there for safe keeping, being later released on habeas corpus proceedings, and his bond increased to \$3,000.

The Supreme Court confirmed the verdict of the lower Court.

Where Dr. Bigham and Avant are is not known here. At least one of their bonds was estreated.

Mysterious Case.

This was a most mysterious case. From the very moment that Mrs. Bigham drew her last breath as she lay on the beach at Murrell's Inlet to this day, the case has been enveloped in unexplainable circumstances.

As a new chapter is written in the case one cannot help going back and wondering a bit why Dr. Bigham, to whom his beautiful young wife a few days before had written, "Am just wild to see you," should have wished to put her out of the way. That he did so desire was proved by the admission that he stood beside Avant as the fatal shot was fired and then he cried out: "You've killed my little wife." And Ruth Crisp Bigham was said to have been a pretty girl. She was just 23 years of age, a graduate of one of the leading female colleges of the State, and was said to have been possessed of a charming manner.

The refusal of Governor Blease to pardon Bigham at this time, in the circumstances, does not at all mean that the case would receive favorable action if Bigham were in the State. As a matter of fact, Governor Blease intimated to the contrary. He made no definite statement as to this, however, as the case was not before him in that light.

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N. M. PALLES, Proprietor

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COASTER-BRAKES. Made in all sizes. It is a single wheel, imported roller chains and pedals, parts, repairs and equipment of all kinds at half the regular retail prices.

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The regular retail price of these tires is \$10.00 per pair, but we introduce them at \$4.80 per pair, for a limited time only. **NO MORE TROUBLE FROM PUNCTURES!** MILB, Yokes, or Glass will not let the air out. A hundred thousand pairs sold last year. Made in all sizes. **DESCRIPTION:** It is lively and easy riding, very durable and lined inside with a special quality of rubber, which never becomes porous and which closes up small punctures without allowing the air to escape. We have hundreds of letters from satisfied customers stating that their tires have only been pumped up once or twice in a whole season. It gives by several layers of this, specially prepared fabric on the tread. The regular price of these tires is \$10.00 per pair, but for advertising purposes we are making a special factory price to the rider of only \$4.80 per pair. All orders shipped same day letter is received. We ship C. O. D. on approval. You do not pay a cent until you have examined and found them strictly as represented. We will allow a cash discount of 5 per cent (thereby making the price \$4.56 per pair) if you send **FULL CASH WITH ORDER** and enclose this advertisement. You run no risk in sending us an order as the tires may be returned at **OUR** expense if for any reason they are not satisfactory on examination. We are perfectly reliable and money sent to us safe as in a bank. If you order a pair of these tires, you will find that they will ride better, run faster, wear better, last longer and hold their air than any tire you have ever used or seen at any price. **IF YOU NEED TIRES** don't buy any kind at any price until you send for a pair of Hedgethorn Puncture-Proof tires on approval and trial at the special introductory price quoted above, or write for our big Tires and Sundry Catalogue which describes and quotes all makes and kinds of tires at about half the usual price. **DO NOT WAIT** but write us a postal today. **DO NOT THINK OF** "RIG" a bicycle or a pair of tires until you have seen our new and wonderful offers we are making. It only costs a postal to learn everything. Write it **NOW!**

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