NYPL RESEARCH LIBRARIES
3 3433 07487249 4

TRACKED BY A TATTOO

FERGUS HUME

Digitized by Google
Original from NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

1. Fiction, English.

Digitized by Google

Original from
NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

Digitized by Google

Original from
NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

Digitized by Google

Original from
NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

SOME OPINIONS OF THE PRESS

ON

"The Carbuncle Clue."

BY FERGUS HUME.

UNIFORM WITH THIS VOLUME.

"Everywhere throughout its source there is evident the same wonderful originality that distinguished his first success. It is as clever a piece of detective story writing as 'The Leavenworth Case.'"—*Dundee Advertiser.*

"To say that Mr. Fergus Hume's 'The Carbuncle Clue' is one of his best stories hardly does justice to its merits. Very clever must be the reader who, in the earlier chapters, finds even a faint clue in this labyrinth of crime and intrigue."—*Morning Post.*

"It is in all truth a mystery, and one which when dipped into will be followed with the greatest interest in all its maze of detail. There is scarcely one of the opening chapters that does not reveal some new, startling, and apparently inexplicable fact."—*The Scotsman.*

"Among the more successful of the purveyors of the detective order of fiction is Mr. Fergus Hume. All who love mystery will find his last story exactly to their taste."—*Publishers' Circular.*

"We were becoming afraid that Mr. Hume was over-producing—a fear greatly allayed by 'The Carbuncle Clue.' Mr. Hume keeps his story well in hand, and although the mystery changes its aspect many times, he never allows it to drag; and in the end he springs the secret on us in a way that effectually discounts any feeling of superiority we may have cherished as to our powers of playing the amateur detective."—*Literary World.*

"Apart from the author's reputation, 'The Carbuncle Clue,' standing on its own undoubted merits, will commend itself to those of the reading public who can admire a clever plot, with just a sufficient dash of sensationalism. The skilful manner in which the plot is evolved and the machinations of the conspirators disclosed, place the work on a much higher level than the average detective story."—*Chester Courant.*

"A capital story, one that will hold its reader enthralled to the end. The clever detective—Mr. Fanks, alias Rixton—is, we think greatly superior to Mr. Sherlock Holmes and his many followers, inasmuch as he is not omniscient, and is quite capable of making mistakes and getting exasperated over them. He follows the slender clue with the sagacity and patience of a bloodhound, and the mystery is so well maintained that its solution only breaks on us as we turn the last page.—*Pall Mall Gazette.*

Digitized by Google

Original from
NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS—*continued.*

"Mr. Hume is great in mysteries, but almost excels himself in the complications of this carbuncle clue. It is brightly and briskly written, and goes on without a hitch or momentary loss of interest from beginning to end. The actors are admirably described. It is the ordinary man and woman that Mr. Hume brings on the stage, and he pulls the wires so deftly that it is with a sigh of regret that we close the book. The publishing world has been inundated with detective stories recently, but if all were so good as 'The Carbuncle Clue' there would not be much reason to complain of the fashion."—*Manchester Courier.*

"One of the best detective stories that have appeared for a long time."—*Manchester Guardian.*

"The whole plot is very ingeniously contrived. The interest never flags, and, together with the mystery, is kept up to the very end of the story."—*Glasgow Herald.*

"In 'The Carbuncle Clue' the author elucidates with his accustomed skill a highly mysterious murder. The story is thrilling and ingenious."—*Yorkshire Post.*

"Mr. Fergus Hume is a wonderful producer of books, and he proves himself the possessor of considerable resource, while he is also very versatile. 'The Carbuncle Clue' will be read with avidity by lovers of this particular class of work, while it will also be found to contain a goodly share of attraction for the general novel reader."—*Western Daily Mercury.*

"For some time past the feeling has been that the detective story has had its day, living only in the memory of the immortal Sherlock Holmes. After perusing the mystery of 'The Carbuncle Clue,' however, we feel inclined to change our mind. Mr. Fergus Hume has a more than ordinary talent for the making and unravelling of enigmas."—*Liverpool Mercury.*

"There are few weavers of mystery like Mr. Fergus Hume. In 'The Carbuncle Clue' his best qualities as an adept in the art of mystification are apparent. He is a magician in mystery and a wizard in working up a sensation without divulging the *dénouement* until the opportune moment."—*Newsagent.*

"A splendid story, and the identity of the murderer of the unknown man so mysteriously found stabbed to death in the chambers of a man about town is cleverly concealed until the last. There is not a dull line in the book, and the interest is never for a moment allowed to flag."—*Blackburn Times.*

"A story replete with sensational excitement from the first to the last. In our opinion it is one of the best novels he has yet produced."—*The People.*

"A peculiar faculty is necessary for the composition of a really ingenious story of the detective type, and Mr. Fergus Hume undeniably possesses it in an unusual degree. 'The Carbuncle Clue' is a really clever piece of work of its school. The mystery suffices to keep the reader on the alert till he comes to the final page."—*Court Journal.*

London: FREDERICK WARNE & CO., and New York.

Digitized by Google

Original from NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

TRACKED BY A TATTOO

Digitized by Google

Original from
NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

Digitized by Google

Original from
NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

TRACKED BY A TATTOO

A MYSTERY

BY

FERGUS HUME

AUTHOR OF

"THE MYSTERY OF A HANSOM CAB," "MONSIEUR JUDAS,"
"THE CARBUNCLE CLUE," "THE WHITE PRIOR,"
ETC.

LONDON
FREDERICK WARNE & CO.
AND NEW YORK

Digitized by Google
Original from NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY
869949 A
ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS
R 1936 L

Copyright.

Entered at Stationers' Hall.

NEW WORK
BY JOHN
WESLEY

Digitized by Google

Original from
NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	The Crime	9
II.	A Recognition	20
III.	The Result of the Crime	29
IV.	Another Discovery	38
V.	The Red Star Advertisement	48
VI.	A Startling Incident	57
VII.	Difficulties	66
VIII.	A Mysterious Parcel	74
IX.	Vaud and Vaud	82
X.	Exit Dr. Renshaw	90
XI.	Another Link in the Chain	98
XII.	The Intervention of Chance	107
XIII.	The Tattooed Cross	116
XIV.	Fanks Makes Up his Mind	125
XV.	Coming Events	134
XVI.	Unhappy Lovers	142
XVII.	Two against One	151
XVIII.	On the Twenty-first of June	160
XIX.	The Defiance of Anne Colmer	169
XX.	The Green Overcoat	177
XXI.	The Eight Bells Enigma	186

Digitized by Google

Original from NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

CHAPTER		PAGE
XXII.	Mrs. Boazoph Receives a Shock. . .	195
XXIII.	The Confession of Hersham . . .	203
XXIV.	The Club of the Handwriting . . .	212
XXV.	At Mere Hall, Hants	221
XXVI.	Mrs. Prisom's Story	230
XXVII.	Mrs. Prisom's Story—*continued* . . .	238
XXVIII.	Sir Louis Explains	247
XXIX.	Dr. Binjoy Protests	255
XXX.	A Letter from Hersham, Senior . .	265
XXXI.	The Secret is Revealed	275
XXXII.	Mrs. Boazoph Tells the Truth . . .	284
XXXIII.	How and Why the Deed was Done . .	293
XXXIV.	The Same	301
XXXV.	The Opinion of Octavious Fanks . .	311

Digitized by Google

Original from
NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

Tracked by a Tattoo.

CHAPTER I.

THE CRIME.

On the twenty-first of June, in the year one thousand eight hundred and ninety-four Mr. Fanks, of New Scotland Yard, detective, was walking down the Strand, between the hours of seven and eight in the evening, in the character of Octavius Rixton, of the West End, idler. It may be as well to repeat here, what is no doubt already known—that this individual led a dual existence. He earned his money as a detective, and spent it as a man about town. East of Trafalgar Square he was called Fanks ; westward he was known by his real name of Rixton. But few people, were aware that the idler and the worker were one and the same. Nevertheless of necessity four or five persons possessed this knowledge, and of these one was Crate, a brother officer of Fanks, who had worked with him in many cases, and who had a profound respect for his capabilities. Fanks had obtained this ascendancy over Crate's mind by his skilful unravelling of the Chinese Jar mystery.

This especial evening Rixton had cast off the name, clothes, and personality of Fanks; and in "propriâ personâ," he was about to treat himself to a melodrama

Digitized by Google
Original from NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

at the Adelphi Theatre. As he was passing through the vestibule, at a quarter to eight, a man came forward and touched him on the arm. To the surprise of Rixton he recognised Crate.

"You mentioned that you were coming here this evening, Mr. Rixton," said this latter, who had been instructed to so address his chief on particular occasions. "And I have been waiting for the last half hour to see you."

"What is the matter, Crate?"

The subordinate beckoned Rixton to a quiet corner, and in a low tone said one word, which made him dismiss from his mind the idea of attending the theatre on that evening. The whispered word was "murder."

"Where?" asked Fanks, assuming the detective on the instant.

"Down Tooley's Alley."

"Man or woman or child?"

"Man! I think a gentleman."

"When was the crime committed?"

"Between six and seven this evening."

"In a house or on the street?"

"In a house. The Red Star public-house."

"I know it," said Fanks, with a sharp nod, "a cut-throat place at the bottom of Tooley's Alley. The assassin chose an excellent locality. Poison, steel, or bludgeon?"

"The first I fancy; there are no marks of violence on the body. But you had better come and see for yourself."

"I agree with you. Return to the Red Star, Crate, while I go to my rooms to change my clothes. I am Rixton at present, and I don't want to mix up my two personalities. Expect me in half an hour."

Digitized by Google

Original from NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

Crate departed with prompt obedience, and Rixton drove off in a swift hansom to his chambers in Duke Street, St. James. In ten minutes he had assumed his detective clothes and Fanks personality; in twenty he was returning eastward; and at the expiration of half an hour he was standing at the door of the house wherein the crime had been committed. Such promptitude was characteristic of the man.

Tooley's Alley is a narrow zig-zag street, which, beginning at a point in Drury Lane, twists its way through a mass of malodorous houses until blocked finally by the Red Star Hotel. It is a famous Rialto of rogues and vagabonds, for here "they most do congregate;" and here come the police, when any especial criminal is wanted by the law. An evil district with an evil name; a plague spot, which cannot be eradicated either by law or by religion. There are many such in London, and of all Tooley's Alley is the worst. It was plausible enough that a gentleman should be trapped, robbed, and murdered in this quarter; but it was more difficult to surmise what errand had brought a gentleman into so dangerous a neighbourhood. A gentleman done to death in Tooley's Alley! Fanks scented a mystery.

The Red Star was a gorgeous gin-palace, all gas, and glare, and glitter. It was licensed to Mrs. Boazoph, a widow, whose character was more than suspected by the police; but who contrived by a circumspect demeanour to keep on the right side of the law. By virtue of her position, her supposed wealth, and above all by reason of her talents, she was quite the queen of Tooley's Alley. Why she should have been permitted to hold her disreputable court in this hotbed of crime was best known to the authorities;

Digitized by Google Original from NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

but hold it she did, and made money out of her ragged subjects. In the neighbourhood she was popularly known as Queen Beelzeebub.

Attracted by the news of the murder, a mob of raffish men and slatternly women had collected round the Red Star, but the presence of four policemen prevented them from entering the bar and drinking, as they desired to do.

Fanks had no need to push through the crowd, for on recognising him they fell to right and left to leave him a free passage. Under his keen gaze a quiver of fear passed over many of the brutalised faces; and here and there some especial rogue, scared by the memory of lately committed crimes, shrank back into the shadows, lest this man, who personified the law, should discover and punish. Fanks was the Nemesis of Tooley's Alley; the god they desired to propitiate, and he was at once hated and feared by his debased worshippers.

After exchanging a few words with the guardian policemen, Fanks entered the house, and was met in the passage by Crate and by Mrs. Boazoph. This latter, who appeared to be between forty and fifty years of age, was a slender and pallid-faced woman, with almost white hair smoothed back from her high forehead. She spoke habitually with folded hands and downcast eyes, and her voice was low and soft, with a refined accent. One would have taken this demure figure, clad in a plain dress of lustreless black, for an hospital nurse, or for a housekeeper. Yet she was—as the police asserted—the most dangerous woman in London, hand and glove with thieves and rogues; not for nothing had she gained her reputation and queenly title.

Digitized by Google

Original from NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

"Well, Mrs. Boazoph," said Fanks, abruptly, "this last scandal will add largely to the excellent reputation already gained by your house."

"No doubt of it, sir," replied the landlady, without raising her eyes; "it is most unfortunate."

"And most unexpected?"

"Certainly most unexpected, sir."

The detective looked at her sharply, and noticed that her fingers played nervously with the stuff of her gown. Also he heard a tremor in her voice as she answered. Now Mrs. Boazoph was not easily upset; yet, as Fanks well saw, only her unusual self-control prevented her from having an attack of hysteria. To many men the circumstance of the crime having been committed in the house would have accounted for this. Fanks was too well acquainted with Queen Beelzeebub to give her the benefit of the doubt. She was disturbed by something more than the mere fact of the murder.

"Do you know the man?" he asked, keeping his eyes fixed on her face.

"No!" retorted Mrs. Boazoph, with suspicious promptitude. "I never set eyes on him until this evening."

And with this hinted defiance she stared Fanks boldly in the face. When she saw that he was watching her twitching fingers, they became motionless on the instant. Only one conclusion could the detective draw from this behaviour; she knew more than she would own to, and she was afraid lest he should find it out. After another look, which discovered nothing—for she was now on her guard—Fanks turned sharply to Crate.

"Where is the body?"

Digitized by Google Original from NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

"Upstairs, in one of the bedrooms."

"Was the murder committed in one of the bedrooms?"

"No, Mr. Fanks. It was committed in the room at the end of this passage."

"And why was the body removed out of that room?"

"I removed the body," said Mrs. Boazoph, in a low voice.

"You had no right to do so," rebuked Fanks, sharply. "It was your duty to leave things as they were, when you discovered that a crime had been committed, and to give immediate information to the police."

"I did do so, sir. The police were in this house ten minutes after I saw the dead body."

"Nevertheless, you found time to remove it in that ten minutes."

"I thought it best to do so," said Mrs. Boazoph, obstinately.

"No doubt. I shall not forget your zeal," was Fanks' rejoinder.

The woman could not repress a shudder at the ironical tone of the detective, and her pale face turned yet paler. However, she passed discreetly over the remark and turned the conversation briskly.

"Shall I take you upstairs to see the body, sir?"

"No; I shall first examine the room. Afterwards I shall hear your story and inspect the corpse. Come with me, Crate."

Still preserving an impenetrable countenance, Mrs. Boazoph preceded the two men into the little room at the end of the passage. It was an apartment of no great size, furnished in a scanty, almost in a penurious fashion. A window draped with faded curtains of red rep faced the entrance There was no fireplace,

Digitized by Google

Original from NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

and the furniture consisted of a mahogany horse-hair sofa placed against the right-hand wall looking from the door, a round table covered with a stained red cloth, which stood in the centre of the room, and on either side of this two chairs. A crimson felting carpeted the floor, and a few racing pictures, crudely coloured, adorned the salmon-tinted walls. Beyond this the room contained nothing, save an iron gas-pipe suspended from the roof, by which two jets flaring in pink globes lighted the apartment.

Fanks glanced slowly round, taking in every detail, and walked across to the window. It was locked, the curtains were drawn, the blind was down. As it was too dark to see the outlook, Fanks turned to Mrs. Boazoph for information.

"What does this window look out on to?"

"A yard, sir."

"Is there any outlet from the yard?"

"No, sir, excepting through the kitchen where the servants have been all the evening."

"When you entered the room and discovered the fact of the murder, where was the body?"

"Huddled up on yonder sofa, sir."

"Was the room in the same state as it is now?"

"In precisely the same state, Mr. Fanks."

"Wait a moment," interposed Crate; "you told me that you took some glasses out of the room."

Mrs. Boazoph darted a tigerish glance at the detective, which revealed the hidden possibilities of her nature. However, she replied with all possible meekness—

"I quite forgot that, sir I did take two glasses off that table."

Recalling Crate's remark that the deceased had pro-

Digitized by Google Original from NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

bably been poisoned, Fanks was rendered angry and suspicious by this action; but as it was mere folly to quarrel with so clever a woman as Mrs. Boazoph he made light of the circumstance, and observed casually that no doubt the glasses had been washed and put away.

"Yes, sir," assented the landlady, "they were washed and put away by my own hands."

"I have always known you to be an extremely tidy woman," said Fanks, ironically. "Two glasses, you say? Then there were two gentlemen in this room between six and seven?"

"There were two men in this room between six and seven," replied Mrs. Boazoph, making the correction with emphasis.

"Two men, you say? And they came to have a chat—by appointment?"

"I think so, sir. The white man came at six, and the black man arrived an hour later."

"Ho! ho!" said Fanks, rather taken by surprise; "so one of the men was a negro. I see. And who lies dead upstairs?"

"The white man, sir."

"And the negro assassin; what of him?"

"We have no proof that the negro committed the crime, Mr. Fanks," protested Mrs. Boazoph, forgetting her caution for the moment. "There are no marks of violence on the body."

"Of course not," said Fanks, with grim humour "No doubt the white man died a convenient and natural death, while the negro, for no reason, fled in alarm. I am obliged to you for the suggestion, Mrs. Boazoph. Probably it is as you say."

Not sufficiently clever to see the irony of this re-

Digitized by Google
Original from NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

mark, Crate looked surprised. But the woman was clearer sighted; and, seeing that she had over-reached herself by saying too much, she relapsed into silence. The detective, feeling that he had scored, smiled grimly, and went on with his examination of the room.

"The body was on the sofa, you say?" he said after a pause.

"Yes; it was tumbled in a heap against the wall."

"And the glasses were on the table?"

"On the table and on the tray."

"Were there any signs of a struggle?"

"Not that I saw, Mr. Fanks."

"Can you describe the appearance of the white man; no, stop, I'll see his body when I go upstairs. What of the black man?"

"He was a tall, burly, fat creature, sir, just like any other negro."

"How was he dressed?"

"In a black opera hat, dark trousers, brown boots, and a long green overcoat with brass buttons," said Mrs. Boazoph, concisely.

"Rather a noticeable dress," said Fanks, carelessly; "had you ever seen the negro before?"

"No, sir."

"Nor the white man?"

"I never saw white or black man in my life till this evening."

By this time the patience of Mrs. Boazoph was nearly worn out, and her self-control was gradually giving way. She evidently felt that she could hold out no longer, for, after replying to the last question, she left the room suddenly. But that Fanks interfered Crate would have stopped her.

Digitized by Google Original from NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

"Let her go," said the former, "we can see her later on. In the meantime," he continued, pointing to the table, "what is all this?"

Crate bent forward, and on the dingy red table-cloth he saw a number of tiny black grains scattered about.

"It is a powder of some sort," he said; "I told you that I thought the man had been poisoned."

Even as Crate spoke the gaslight went out, leaving them in complete darkness.

"Ah!" said Fanks, rather startled by the unexpected incident; "Mrs. Boazoph is fiddling with the meter."

"What the deuce did she do that for?" asked Crate, as his superior struck a match.

"Can't you guess? She saw these black grains on the table-cloth, and wants to get rid of them. That was why she left the room and turned off the gas. She hopes that the darkness will drive us out. Then she will explain the incident by a lie, and enter before us to relight the gas."

"Well?" said Crate, stolidly.

"Well!" repeated Fanks, crossly. "I shall never make you understand anything, Crate. Before lighting the gas she will pull off the table-cloth and scatter the grains."

"Do you think she's in this, Mr. Fanks?"

"I can't say—yet. But she knows something. You get a candle, and—hang this match," cried Fanks, "it has burnt my fingers."

As he uttered the exclamation the match, still alight, dropped on the table among the black grains to which allusion has been made. There was a flicker, a sparkle

Digitized by Google

Original from NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

of light, and when Fanks struck another match the grains had disappeared.

"Gunpowder!" said the detective, in a puzzled tone; "now, what possible connection can gunpowder have with this matter?"

To this there was no answer; and by the glimmer of the single match, the two men looked blankly at one another.

Digitized by Google

Original from NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

CHAPTER II.

A RECOGNITION.

Topping this discovery came the return of Mrs. Boazoph with a candle and an apology. Her procedure was so exactly the same as that suggested by Fanks that Crate could not forbear from paying the tribute of an admiring chuckle to the perspicuity of his chief. Only in her action with the table-cloth did Mrs. Boazoph vary from the prescribed ritual.

"My regrets and apologies, sir," she said, addressing Fanks, with a side glance at the table; "but one of the servants—an idle slut, whom I have now discharged—turned off the gas at the meter by accident. I hope that you were not alarmed by the sudden darkness. Permit me to relight the burners."

And with this neat speech she mounted a chair with the activity of a girl. Having remedied the accident she stumbled—or seemed to stumble—in descending, and caught at the table to save herself, thereby dragging the cloth on to the floor. Then it was that Crate chuckled; whereupon Mrs. Boazoph was on her feet at once, with a look of startled suspicion. However, as she had accomplished her object, she recovered her equanimity speedily and made another apology, with a lie tacked on to it.

"My regrets for the second accident," she re-

Digitized by Google

Original from NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

marked glibly, "but it is due to overstrung nerves. Put it down to that gentleman, if you please, and you will put it down to the right cause."

"Pray do not mention it, Mrs. Boazoph," said Fanks, significantly; "I have already examined the cloth. And now, if you please, we will go upstairs."

The woman drew back and bit her lip. She guessed that Fanks had seen through her stratagem, and for the moment she was minded to excuse herself. Fortunately her habitual caution saved her from a second blunder; and she strove to conciliate Fanks by a piece of news.

"I trust that you will not think me presuming, sir," she said, "but in the hope that there might be some chance of life remaining in It, I sent for a doctor. He is now upstairs with It."

"Your kindness does you great credit," said Fanks, seeing his way clear to a thrust, "you could not have behaved better if you had known this man."

Holding the candle before her face, Mrs. Boazoph drew back a step, with one hand clutching the bosom of her dress. Her composure gave way.

"In one word, you suspect me," she cried with a glitter in her eyes.

"In one word, I suspect nobody," retorted Fanks. "I have not yet heard all your story, remember."

"You know all that I know," said Mrs. Boazoph. "The man who came here at six this evening—the man who lies dead upstairs, is a complete stranger to me. I caught only a glimpse of him as he entered; I did not speak to him. He asked for a private room in which to wait for a friend. He was shown into this room, and waited. The negro arrived ten minutes later. I saw him—I showed him into this room; but

Digitized by Google Original from NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

indeed, Mr. Fanks, I never set eyes on him before. The pair—white and black—were together till close on seven. They had something to drink, for which the dead man paid. I did not enter the room; it was the barmaid who served them with drink. I did not know when the negro went; but, wanting the room for some other gentlemen, I knocked at the door at seven o'clock to ask if they had finished their conversation. I received no reply; I opened the door; I entered; I found the white man dead, the negro absent. After removing the body upstairs and covering it with a sheet, as any decent woman would, I sent for the police. That is all; I swear that it is the truth. Say what you please; do what you please; you cannot fasten this crime on to me."

Fanks listened to this speech with great imperturbability, and made but one comment thereon.

"I took you for a clever woman, Mrs. Boazoph," he said, "evidently I have been wrong. Will you be so kind as to light us upstairs."

Mrs. Boazoph thrust the candle into his hands.

"I have seen *It* once; I refuse to look upon it again."

She passed out of the room shaking as with the ague. Fanks nodded in a satisfied way, and beckoning to Crate, he went upstairs. A frightened housemaid on the landing indicated the room of which they were in search; and they entered it to come face to face with the doctor summoned by the zealous landlady. He introduced himself as Dr. Renshaw, and made this announcement with a bland smile and a condescending bow. Fanks eyed his tall and burly figure; his Napoleonic countenance; his smooth, brown beard and his perfect dress. There was a look about the man

Digitized by Google
Original from NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

which he did not like; and he mistrusted the uneasy glance of the hard, grey eyes. The detective relied largely on his instinct. In this case it warned him against the false geniality of Dr. Renshaw.

"The representatives of the law, I believe," said the medical man in a deep and rolling voice. "I was about to take my departure; but if I can be of service in the interests of justice, pray command me."

"I suppose there is no doubt that our friend there is dead," said Fanks.

"Dead as Caesar, sir," said the magnificent doctor, waving his arm.

"Caesar died by steel," remarked Fanks significantly. "It appears that this man died in an easier manner."

"There is another parallel," said the doctor, condescending to add to the historical knowledge of the detective. "If we may believe Brutus, the great Julius was slain as a traitor to the republic. This unknown man," added Renshaw, pointing to the body, "also died the death of a traitor."

"If, as you say, the dead man is unknown," said Fanks quickly, "how can you tell that he was a traitor?"

"By inference and deduction," was the reply. "You can judge for yourself. Far be it from me that I should set my opinion against that of the law; but I have a theory. Would you care to hear it? If I may venture on a jest," said Renshaw with ponderous playfulness, "the medical mouse may help the legal lion."

"Let us hear your theory by all means," said Fanks easily, "but first permit me to speak with my assistant."

The doctor bowed and passed over to the other side

Digitized by Google Original from NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

of the bed; while Fanks went with Crate to the door. Here he hesitated, glanced at the doctor, and finally led his subordinate into the passage.

"Crate!" he said in a rapid whisper, "I mistrust that man. He will shortly leave this place. Follow him and find out where he lives. Then set someone to watch the place, and return to me."

"Do you think that he has anything to do with it?" asked Crate.

"I can't say at present. I may be wrong about him and about Mrs. Boazoph; all the same I mistrust the pair of them. Now off with you."

When Crate departed to watch for the outcoming of the doctor, Fanks re-entered the chamber of death. Renshaw still stood beside the bed, and seemingly had not moved from that position. Nevertheless, a mat placed midway between bed and door, was rucked up. By the merest accident Fanks had previously noticed that it was lying flat. Thence he deduced that Renshaw had crossed to the door. In plain words, Renshaw had been listening. Fanks was confirmed in this opinion by the complacent smile which played round the lips of the doctor.

"Now for your theory, Doctor," said Fanks, noting all, but saying nothing.

"Certainly, sir. As a detective you know, of course, of the existence of secret societies."

"I do; and I know also that those who reveal the doings of such societies are punished. Go on, Doctor."

"First you must inspect the body," replied Renshaw.

He drew down the sheet which concealed the face of the dead. In the cruel glare of the gaslight, Fanks beheld a countenance discoloured and distorted. The head was that of a young man with brown

Digitized by Google
Original from NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

and curly hair, well-marked eye-brows, and a moustache of the same hue as the hair. The body was clothed in moleskin trousers, and a flannel shirt. From the bedpost hung a rough, grey coat, and a cloth cap. A glance assured Fanks that these clothes of a working man were perfectly new; another glance confirmed his first belief that the dead man was a gentleman. On looking intently into the face he started back in surprise; but recovering himself, said nothing. If the doctor had observed his action, he made no pointed remark thereon; but set it down merely to a natural feeling of repulsion.

"I do not wonder that the state of the body revolts you, sir," he said. "The corpse is swollen and discoloured in a terrible manner. Of course, I can say nothing authoritatively until the post mortem has been made; but from all appearances I am inclined to ascribe the death to poison."

"Ah; then it is a case of murder?"

"So you say, sir; the secret society to which this man belongs, would call it a punishment."

"How do you know that this man belongs to a secret society. Do you recognise the body?"

"No, sir. The man is nameless so far as I am concerned. There are no marks on his linen or clothes; and there are no papers in his pockets likely to identify him. Oh, believe me, sir, the society has done its work well."

"You seem to be very confident about your secret society?"

The doctor bent over the body, and rolled up the shirt sleeve of the left arm. Between elbow and shoulder there appeared a swollen mark in the shape of a rude cross, surrounded by a wheel; violet in colour,

Digitized by Google Original from NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

and slashed across with a knife. To this he pointed in silence.

"I see what you mean," said Fanks, twisting his signet ring; always a sign of perplexity with him. "The secret mark of the society has been obliterated."

"Precisely. Now you can understand, sir, why I infer that this man was a traitor. Evidently the negro —of whose presence Mrs. Boazoph informed me—was the emissary of the society, and killed this traitor by poison. Afterwards, as was natural, he obliterated the secret mark by drawing his knife across it."

"He did not do his work thoroughly then, Doctor. The secret mark is a cross."

"The secret mark is more than a cross, sir," replied the doctor, "else you may be sure that the negro would have obliterated it more perfectly."

The detective replaced the sheet over the face of the dead: and prepared, as did the doctor, to leave the room. They turned down the gas and departed; but while descending the stairs, Renshaw asked Fanks a question.

"Are you satisfied that my explanation is a correct one?" he demanded.

"I am perfectly satisfied," said Fanks, looking directly at the man.

Strange to say, this unhesitating acceptance appeared to render Renshaw uneasy; and the flow of his magnificent speech broke up in confusion.

"I may be wrong," he muttered. "We are all liable to error; but such as it is, that is my opinion."

"You would be willing to repeat that opinion at the inquest, Doctor?"

Renshaw drew back with a shudder.

Digitized by Google

Original from NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

"Is it necessary that I should go to the inquest?" he asked faintly.

"I think so," replied Fanks significantly. "You were the first to see the corpse. You will have to describe the state in which you found it. Your address if you please?"

"Twenty-four, Great Auk Street," said Renshaw, after some hesitation. "I am staying there at present."

"Staying there?"

"Yes! I—I—do not practise in London. I do not practise at all, in fact. I travel—I travel a great deal. In two weeks I go to India."

"You must go first to the inquest," responded Fanks dryly. "But if you do not practise in London, how comes it that Mrs. Boazoph sent for you?"

"She did not send for me," explained the doctor. "but for my friend, Dr. Turner; he is absent on a holiday, and I am acting as his locum tenens for a short period."

"Thank you, Doctor; that is a thoroughly satisfactory explanation; quite as satisfactory as your theory of the death. Good evening. I should recommend a glass of brandy; you look as though you needed it."

"Weak heart!" muttered Renshaw in explanation, and took his departure with evident relief. But before he left the hotel, he acted on the detective's suggestion. Mrs. Boazoph gave him the brandy with her own hands. The action afforded her an opportunity of exchanging a few words with him. Fanks thwarted her intent by also entering the bar, and asking for refreshment; whereupon, the doctor finished his liquor and departed.

Left alone with Fanks, the landlady drew a breath of relief, and addressed herself to the detective.

Digitized by Google Original from NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

"Do you wish to know anything else, sir," she said coldly. "If not, with your permission, I shall retire to bed."

"I have learned all I wish to know at present, thank you, Mrs. Boazoph. Go to bed by all means. I am sure that you need rest after your anxiety."

The landlady, looking worn out and haggard, retired, and Fanks went to the door to wait for Crate's return. In the meantime he made notes and formed theories; these will be revealed hereafter, but in the meantime the case was in too crude a state for him to come to the smallest conclusion. However, he had already decided on the next step. In the chamber of death he had made an important discovery which enabled him to move in the matter.

In half an hour Crate returned with the information that Dr. Renshaw had entered No. 24, Great Auk Street; and that he had set a detective to watch the house. Fanks smiled on receiving this report.

"He is cleverer than I thought," he murmured; and left Tooley's Alley with Crate.

"Well, Mr. Fanks, whom do you suspect?"

"No one at present, Crate."

"Oh! and what do you do next?"

"Make certain of the dead man's identity."

Crate stopped in surprise.

"Do you know who he is, Mr. Fanks?"

"Yes! He is a friend of my own. Sir Gregory Fellenger, Baronet."

Digitized by Google

Original from NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

CHAPTER III.

THE RESULT OF THE CRIME.

A week after his discovery of the identity of the dead man, Fanks, having slipped his detective skin for the time being, was seated in the writing room of the Athenian Club, with the "Morning Planet" newspaper on his knee. He was not reading it, however, but was looking absently at a long and lean young man, who was writing letters at a near table.

Francis Garth, of the Middle Temple, barrister and journalist, was one of the few West End men who knew the real profession of Rixton, alias Fanks. In fact, there was very little he did not know; and Fanks —as it will be convenient to call the detective—was debating as to whether he should question him about the Tooley Alley crime. He was urged to this course by the remembrance that he had seen Garth at the inquest. This had been held on the previous day. The jury had brought in a verdict of wilful murder against some person or persons unknown, and the conduct of the case had been placed officially in the hands of Fanks. So far all was ship-shape.

And now the detective found himself at a standstill. No evidence had been brought forward implicating either Mrs. Boazoph or Dr. Renshaw; and, doubtful as was Fanks as to their honesty, he could gain no

Digitized by Google
Original from NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

clue from the one or the other of them likely to elucidate the mystery. Failing this, he had determined to learn if possible all about the previous life of the deceased, and in this way discover if anyone was likely to be a gainer by his death. Garth, who had known the late Sir Gregory intimately—who had been present at the inquest—was the most likely person to furnish these details; and Fanks was waiting for an opportunity of addressing him. On the result of the projected conversation would depend his future movements.

"I say, Garth," said Fanks, "how much longer will your correspondence take?"

"I shall be at your service in ten minutes," replied Garth, without desisting from his occupation. "What do you wish to talk about?"

"About the death of your friend, Sir Gregory Fellenger."

Garth looked up and turned round with alacrity.

"Is the case in your hands, Fanks?"

"Yes; and I want some information from you."

"I shall be happy to give it. But wait for a few minutes; I am just writing about it to a friend of mine—and yours."

"Humph! and the name?"

"Ted Hersham, the journalist."

They looked at one another, the same thought occupying both their minds.

"Has your reason for writing anything to do with the left arm of our friend?" asked Fanks, after a pause.

Garth nodded and returned to his work. When he had sealed, directed, and stamped the letter Fanks spoke again.

"Garth?" he said; "I say, Garth?"

Digitized by Google

Original from NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

"Yes! What's the matter?"

"Don't send that letter till after our conversation."

"Ah! You guess why I am writing to him."

"My remark of a few moments ago ought to have shown you that," said Fanks, dryly. "Yes; I guess your object, and I want you to leave the case in my hands. It is too difficult a one for you to manage alone."

"I know that it is difficult, Fanks, but I wish to solve this mystery."

"Because Fellenger was your friend?" asked Fanks.

"Because Fellenger was my cousin," replied Garth.

The announcement took Fanks by surprise, as he had not known of the relationship. He was aware that Fellenger and Garth had been close friends, but he knew little of the former, save as a club acquaintance, and the latter was very reticient about his private affairs, although he was curious concerning the affairs of others.

"So you wish to revenge the death of your cousin," he remarked after a thoughtful moment.

Garth shrugged his shoulders.

"Hardly that," he replied; "between you and me, I did not care overmuch for Fellenger. He was a bad lot, and we only held together because of our relationship. But I should like to find out what took him to Tooley's Alley and who killed him."

"A laudable curiosity. Do you suspect anybody?"

"Not a soul. I am as much in the dark as—you are."

"I may not be so much in the dark as you think," said the other.

"Then why did you ask me to assist you?" retorted Garth, sharply. "See here, Fanks, I'll tell you all

Digitized by Google Original from NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

that I know if you will promise to keep me posted up concerning the progress of the case."

Fanks twisted his ring and reflected.

"I agree," he said briefly, "but you must not meddle—unless I tell you to do so."

"Agreed!" And the pair shook hands on the bargain.

"And now," said Fanks, grimly, "that letter, if you please."

After a moment's hesitation Garth handed it over. He had a great respect for the mental capacity of his friend, and on the whole he judged it advisable to carry out the agreement which had been concluded.

"Though I would send that letter if I were you," he expostulated; "Hersham has——"

"I know what Hersham has," interrupted Fanks; "but I want him to see me, not you. Wait till we know how we stand at the present moment. Come into the smoking-room and answer my questions."

"What a peremptory chap you are," grumbled Garth, as they left the room. "Evidently you don't confide in my discretion."

"I am about to do so," said Fanks, who understood the art of conciliation; "we will work together, and all that I know you shall know. But you must let me manage things in my own way."

In his heart Garth was flattered that Fanks should have chosen him as his coadjutor, and, dominated by the stronger will of the detective, he quietly took up the position of an underling. Garth was self-willed and not usually amenable to reason; but Fanks had the law at his back, without which Garth could not hope to do anything. Hence his acquiescence.

"Come, now, old fellow," said Fanks, amiably, "we

Digitized by Google
Original from NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

have a hard task before us; so you must make it easier by answering my questions."

"Go on," said Garth, lighting a cigar; "I always give in to a man who has had more experience than myself."

Fanks laughed at this delicate way of adjusting the situation, but as he wished to keep on good terms with the touchy lawyer he let the remark pass in silence. When they were fairly settled, and he saw that they had the smoking-room to themselves, he took out his pocket-book and began his examination as to the past of the dead man.

"The Fellengers are a Hampshire family, I believe?"

"Yes," replied Garth, with a nod; "Sir Gregory was the fourth baronet and only son. The family seat is Mere Hall, near Bournemouth."

"You are Sir Gregory's cousin?"

"I am, on the mother's side."

"Who is the present baronet? Yourself or somebody else?"

"Somebody else," said Garth, with a sigh. "I should have told you if I had been his heir. I wonder at so clever a man as you asking so very frivolous a question."

"I have my reasons," said Fanks calmly. "Well, and who is the heir?"

"My cousin, Louis Fellenger; he is twenty-five years of age, and as great a prig as ever lived."

"Where does he reside now?"

"I believe that he has gone to Mere Hall to take possession of the property. But he did live at Taxton-on-Thames, a village near Weybridge."

"Do you know Sir Louis intimately?"

"No. I have only seen him once or twice. He is

Digitized by Google Original from NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

a bookish, scientific man, and an invalid;—at least," corrected Garth, "he has always a doctor living with him; a tall, fat brute, called Binjoy, who twists him round his finger. He has been with him for years."

"A tall, fat brute," repeated Fanks, smiling at this amiable description. "Has the gentleman in question a long, brown beard?"

"No, he is clean shaven. A pompous creature, fond of using long words, and proud of his voice and oratorial powers. Something like 'Conversation Kenge' in 'Bleak House.'"

"Humph!" said Fanks, rather struck by the description, which was not unlike that of Renshaw, "we will discuss Dr. Binjoy later on. In the meantime, just enlighten me as to your precise relationship with the present baronet."

"It's easily understood. Gregory's father, Sir Francis—after whom I was named—had a brother and sister. She married my respected father, Richard Garth, and I am the sole offspring."

"And the brother was the father of the present Sir Louis?"

"Exactly. There is a great deal of similarity between all three cases. Gregory was an only child and his parents are dead; Louis is an only child, and his parents have also gone the way of all flesh; I am an only child, and I am likewise an orphan."

Fanks made a note of the family tree in his book.

"So far so good," he said, with a nod. "Sir Gregory is dead and Sir Louis has succeeded him; if Louis dies without issue, you are the heir. And failing you?"

"The property goes to the Crown," replied Garth. "Louis and I are the sole representatives of the Fellengers."

Digitized by Google

Original from NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

"The race has dwindled considerably. Now what about your dead cousin. He was a trifle rapid, I believe?"

"A regular bad lot; but I kept in with him because —well, because he was useful to me. Understand?"

"Perfectly," replied Fanks, who knew of Garth's financial difficulties. "We will pass that. Have you any idea what took him to Tooley's Alley?"

"Not the slightest. I saw him two days before his death—on the nineteenth—and he said nothing about going there then."

"Did he behave as usual towards you?"

"No. He was out of sorts. He had lost a lot of money at cards, I believe, and he was crabbed in consequence."

"There was no other trouble; no financial difficulty?"

"Not that I know of. Fast as he was, he could not get through ten thousand a year before the age of twenty-eight."

"I have known men who have done so," said Fanks dryly. "However, if it was not a question of money, what about the inevitable woman?"

"I don't think it was that, either," demurred Garth. "It was a man he met—a negro—not a woman."

"True. Well, you were at the inquest?"—

"How do you know?" asked Garth, starting.

"I saw you there in the crowd."

"You see everything, Fanks."

"It is my business to see everything, Garth. It is because you were at the inquest that I sought you out to-day. Now that you have explained to me your relationship to Sir Gregory I understand why you were present. But to return to the main point. You heard the theory of Dr. Renshaw?"

Digitized by Google Original from NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

"Yes," replied Garth reflectively. "There might be something in that secret society business. Not, mind you, that Gregory was the man to meddle with rubbish of that kind. He was too much of a fool; but one never knows; a man does not have a cross tattooed on his arm for nothing."

"Do you think that it is the mark of a revolutionary society?"

"I can't say; I should like to know. That is why I was writing to Hersham. Of course you know that he——"

"I know that he has a cross tattooed on his arm also. And it is for that reason that I reject your secret society business."

"It isn't mine. I am merely following the lead of Renshaw."

"Then you are following a will-o-the-wisp," retorted Fanks. "See here, Garth. I have known Hersham for a long time; he is the son of a clergyman in the Isle of Wight. He was brought up to the law like yourself; and also like yourself, he left it for journalism. As you know, he is a merry, open-minded creature, who could not conceal a secret if his life depended upon it. Do you think that if he had been mixed up with secret societies that he would have been able to conceal the fact from me?"

"Then why is there a cross tattooed on his left arm?" asked Garth.

"I intend to see him and find out. I noticed it long ago; but made no remark on it, thinking that it was the result of some school-boy freak. Now it has assumed a new importance in my eyes. Therefore you must let me interview Hersham, and choose my own time and place for doing so."

Digitized by Google

Original from NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

"I suppose you are right. Tear up that letter, please."

Fanks held out the letter.

"Tear it up yourself," he said.

This Garth did without further remark, and looked at his friend.

"What do you intend to do now?" he asked.

"Continue this conversation for a few minutes longer. You were intimate with the dead man, Garth. Did you ever notice this cross?"

"I did not," said Garth, promptly, "or I should have asked what it meant. By Jove!" he added, with a start. "Then all that obliteration business must be nonsense."

"Of course," assented Fanks, smoothly. "I came to that conclusion long ago. Fellenger had no cross on his arm when he entered Tooley's Alley. It was tattooed that night by the negro."

"What makes you think that?"

"I found a few grains of gunpowder on the tablecloth of the room in which they were together; gunpowder is used in tattooing. Again, the arm, when Renshaw showed it to me, was raw, as though the operation had been done lately."

"But why should Gregory go to Tooley's Alley to be tattooed?"

"Tell me that, and the mystery of his death is at an end," said Fanks, significantly. "But I am certain that Fellenger voluntarily let this negro tattoo his arm; and so came by his death."

"Came by his death," echoed Garth in astonishment. "What do you mean?"

"Why," answered Fanks, seriously, "I mean that the needle used for the tattooing was poisoned; and so—," he shrugged his shoulders, "—the man died."

Digitized by Google

Original from NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

CHAPTER IV.

ANOTHER DISCOVERY.

Informed of this astounding fact, Garth stared at his friend in blank astonishment. The detective resumed his cigar, and waited.

"You cannot be in earnest," said the barrister after a pause.

"Why not? The theory is feasible enough. It was proved at the inquest that the man died from blood-poisoning."

"Yes. But it might have been administered in the liquor. The pair had drinks, remember."

"I have not forgotten," said Fanks quietly, "but on your part remember that no trace of poison was found in the stomach; while the blood was so corrupted, as to show that the deceased had been inoculated with some powerful vegetable poison. There was no mark on the body, save the cross on the left arm; and, by your own showing, it was not there when Fellenger went to Tooley's Alley. The assumption is that it was done there; as is more than confirmed by the presence of gunpowder."

"Again, according to Mrs. Boazoph, there was no struggle; therefore the deceased must have passed away quietly. My inference is that this negro desired

Digitized by Google
Original from NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

to kill Sir Gregory—or else he was instructed to do so by some one else who wished for the death of your cousin. What then so easy, as for the negro to have a poisoned needle prepared to execute the tattooing. Quite unaware of the danger, Fellenger—for some unknown reason—would permit the insertion of the fatal needle. As the work went on, he would gradually be inoculated with the poison. When the gunpowder and acids were applied the job would be finished, and he would pull down his sleeve, quite ignorant that to all intents and purposes he was a dead man. Then he sat and chatted with the negro till the end came; when he sank into a state of coma and died. When certain that the death was an assured fact, the negro took his departure. Oh, it is all as plain as day to me;—all excepting one fact."

"And that fact?"

"Why did Fellenger get a negro in Tooley's Alley to tattoo him."

Garth reflected.

"I can only conclude that a secret—"

"Rubbish!" said Fanks, contemptuously, "you and your secret societies. I tell you that is all nonsense. Even assuming that the cross is an emblem of some association—which I do not grant for a moment—we have proved that it was not tattooed on your cousin's arm when he went to keep his appointment; therefore he could not at that time have been a member of your mythical society. If, on the other hand, he was being made a member—a ceremony which would not have taken place in a low pot-house—why should he be killed? These societies admit living men to work their ends; they have no use for dead bodies."

Digitized by Google
Original from NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

"That is all true enough, Fanks. We must reject the idea of a secret society. But in an affair of robbery and murder—"

"In such an affair, the method of procedure would be different. A bludgeon—a sand-bag—a knife—any of these weapons if you please. But if this negro had designed to rob Fellenger, he need not have ingratiated himself into his confidence to permit the performance of so delicate an operation as that of the poisoned needle. No. We must reject that theory also."

"Then what do you think was the motive of the murder?"

"I am not a detective out of a novel, Mr. Garth. Ask me an easier question."

He rose from his seat and began to walk to and fro. "The whole mystery lies in the tattooing," he muttered to himself. "If I can only find out why Sir Gregory permitted that cross to be tattooed; and why he went to Tooley's Alley to have it done, I shall discover the assassin."

"Hersham has a tattooed cross on his left arm," said Garth, "perhaps he can explain the riddle."

"Perhaps he can; perhaps he can't," returned Fanks, sharply. "The coincidence is certainly curious. I shall see and question Hersham; but there is much to be done before then. You must help me, Garth."

"I am willing to do whatever you wish, my friend."

"Ah," said Fanks with a smile, "you have a touch of detective fever. I suffer from it myself notwithstanding my experience. The unravelling of these criminal problems is like gambling; a never-failing source of excitement; and, like gambling, chance enters largely into their solution."

"I don't see much 'chance' in this case."

Digitized by Google

Original from NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

"Don't you think again. Why, the very fact that you and I should know that Hersham has a tattooed cross on his left arm is a chance. Such knowledge—which is mere chance knowledge—might lead to nothing; on the other hand, it may help to find the man who killed your cousin."

"Surely you do not suspect Hersham?"

"Certainly not. Why should I suspect him on the evidence of the tattooed cross. For all I or you know, it may be a simple coincidence, such as crops up constantly in real life. No. I don't suspect Hersham."

"Do you suspect anyone?"

"I don't suspect any special person of committing the murder; but I suspect some people, and particularly one individual, of knowing more than they chose to say. But this is beside the point. I wish you to help me."

"By all means. What is it you want me to do?"

"You know the chambers of your cousin; by my desire they have been in the hands of the police since his death. Fellenger's valet is also there—detained by my desire. Now I wish to search the chambers for possible evidence and to examine him. You must take me there at once."

"Is it necessary when, by your own showing, you are all-supreme already?"

"My friend," said Fanks, solemnly, "it is my experience that when the lower orders—to which this valet belongs—come into contact with a detective they are quite useless as witnesses, for the

Digitized by Google Original from NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

very simple reason that the presence of the law paralyses them. To avoid this danger you must introduce me into the chambers as a sympathising friend only. You can question the servant in my presence, and having got rid of him in the meantime, we can search the chambers together."

"But the police may recognise you."

"The police have their instructions; they will recognise me as Mr. Rixton, of the West End."

Garth fell in readily with this scheme, and together the two men left the club. As they proceeded along Piccadilly—the dead man's chambers were in Half-Moon Street—Fanks resumed the conversation from the point where it had been broken off.

"You have answered my questions capitally, Garth. Now, as we are working together, I shall reply to anything you like to ask me."

The barrister, restored to a sense of importance by the thought of the part he was about to play in the forthcoming interview with the valet, availed himself readily of the opportunity of learning the plans of the detective. Fanks had no hesitation in confiding them to him, as, foreseeing that Garth would be necessary to the elucidation of the mystery, he wished to interest him in the case as much as possible. He was well aware that Garth was not the man to give up an idea when once it had fixed itself in his head, and his present idea was to investigate the mystery of his cousin's death. With characteristic wisdom Fanks, who never wasted a person or an opportunity, made use

Digitized by Google
Original from NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

of this new factor in the case to further his own ends. Such economies aided his frequent successes in no small degree.

"What are your plans?" asked Garth, taking advantage of the permission.

"As yet I cannot be certain of them; but, so far as I can see at present, they include the search and examination of chambers and valet, a conversation with the landlady of the Red Star, a visit to Taxton-on-Thames, and an interview with Dr. Renshaw."

"Why with the latter gentleman?"

"Because Renshaw is too confidential with Mrs. Boazoph, because he was too conveniently on the spot at the time of the murder for my liking; and, finally, because Renshaw had a cut-and-dried theory of the motive of the crime prepared on the instant."

"You don't trust the man?"

"I think that his conduct is suspicious; but I do not accuse him of anything—as yet."

"He does not look a man to be feared," said Garth, disbelievingly; "he was very timid in giving his evidence at the inquest."

"That is one reason why I mistrust him. Dr. Renshaw is acting a part, but I am unable to say whether he is mixed up in this especial affair. I have my suspicions, but, as you know, I never like to speak unless certain."

Garth looked curiously at the detective.

"You hint at the guilt of Mrs. Boazoph," he said, doubtfully.

"Do I? Then I should hold my tongue. There is no doubt that the negro committed the crime in the

Digitized by Google Original from NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

way that I told you of. But I believe that he acted as the agent of a third party—not Mrs. Boazoph. I wish to find out that party to hang him or her as an accessory before the fact."

"You can't hang him or her."

"Perhaps not; but I can imprison him or her."

"Do you think that Mrs. Boazoph knows the motive of the crime?"

Fanks reflected.

"Yes, I think she does," he said, quietly; "it is my belief that the motive for which you and I are searching is to be found in the past life of Mrs. Boazoph."

"Her past is known to the police, is it not?"

"It is known for the last twenty years only. She appeared in London twenty-one years ago, but who she is and where she came from, the police know no more than you do."

"Then how can the motive be found in——"

"Garth," said Fanks, pausing and touching the other with his finger, "I have presentiments and premonitions; these rarely deceive me. In this instance they point to Mrs. Boazoph. Do not ask me why, for I can tell you no more. But I am sure that we are going forward on a dark path; at the end of that path we will find—Mrs. Boazoph."

"I never thought that you were so superstitious, Fanks."

"I do not regard myself as so, I assure you. But," and here Fanks became emphatic, "I believe in my instinct, in my presentiment."

Garth walked along in silence, rather inclined to ridicule the apparent weakness of Fanks. However, he judged it wiser to keep these thoughts to himself,

Digitized by Google
Original from NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

and merely asked another question relative to the negro.

"I am at a loss about the negro," said Fanks, "as I do not know where to search for him. Under these circumstances I think it necessary to follow the clue I hold in my hand. The going of your dead cousin to Tooley's Alley to keep his appointment."

"How do you know that it was an appointment?"

"I learnt that much from Mrs. Boazoph. She said that the white man came first and was asked for by the black man. That is an appointment, and I wish to find out who made it."

"How can you discover that?"

"Well, I hope to do so by searching the chambers of your cousin. There must be a letter or some sign whereby Fellenger knew where to meet the negro."

"The letter may have been destroyed."

"Possibly. From your knowledge of your cousin's character would you think it probable that he would destroy the letter making the appointment?"

"No," said Garth, after a moment's thought. "If the appointment was made within the last month I should think that the letter was still in existence."

"On what ground?" asked Fanks, eagerly.

"Well, Gregory used to read all his letters and then drop them into the drawer of his desk. At the end of the month he went through the pile, and the letters that were worth nothing were destroyed. So if that letter making the appointment is in existence it will be in the drawer of the desk."

"Good! This is a chance I hardly hoped to have."

"Chance again?"

"Yes; chance again," replied Fanks, good humouredly. "How many men burn their letters; but

Digitized by Google Original from NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

for the fortunate circumstance that your cousin saved his for a month it would be almost hopeless to think of gaining a clue; but now there is more than a hope."

"Provided that the appointment was made by letter."

"Of course," assented Fanks, gravely; "we must always take that into consideration. But a question on my side. Did it strike you at the inquest that there was a resemblance between Doctors Renshaw and Binjoy?"

"I can't say that it did. Renshaw is much older than Binjoy, and he wears a full beard, whereas Binjoy is shaven clean. Still they are both burly; both have fine voices, and indulge in long words and stately Johnsonian dialogue. You surely do not think the two men are one and the same?"

"I have such an idea," said Fanks, dryly, "strange as it may appear. But as my opinion is mainly founded on your description I may be wrong. At all events Renshaw goes to India next week. If I find Binjoy in the company of Sir Louis Fellenger after Renshaw's departure, I shall admit my error. Otherwise—well, I must get to the bottom of the matter."

"I have only seen each of them once," said Garth, "so do not depend altogether on my powers of description."

"I won't. I depend on nothing but my own eyesight. For instance, if I see a black man wearing a green overcoat with brass buttons, I shall have a reasonable suspicion that I see the assassin of your cousin. Hullo! what is the matter?"

For Garth was leaning against the iron railings of Green Park with a look of dread on his face.

Digitized by Google

Original from NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

"By heaven, Fanks, you may be right!"

"About what?"

"About Renshaw and Binjoy being one and the same man."

"Indeed; what makes you think so," asked Fanks, dryly.

"Because Binjoy has a negro servant who wears a green coat with brass buttons."

Digitized by Google

Original from NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

CHAPTER V.

THE RED STAR ADVERTISEMENT.

Greatly to the surprise of Garth, the detective appeared to be decidedly disappointed at this announcement.

"You don't seem to be overpleased at what I have told you," he said in a tone of pique. "Yet it makes the case easier to you."

"I confess that I do not think so," was Fanks' reply. "I shall give you my reasons after I have examined your cousin's rooms. At present I must say that you have puzzled me."

Fanks' refusal to discuss the subject of the negro did not at all please Garth; especially as he considered that his discovery had placed the solution of the case in their hands. But to his protestations the detective only reiterated his determination to keep silent, until the rooms had been searched. With this Garth was forced to be content; although he could not conceive the reason of such extraordinary conduct; and he ascended the stairs with an ill-grace.

"Were I in your place, I should follow out the clue of the negro without delay," he said, as they rang the bell.

Digitized by Google

Original from NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

"Were you in my place you would do as I am doing, and take time to consider your movements," retorted Fanks as the door was opened.

Venturing on no further remonstrance Garth walked into the chambers, followed by his friend. The servant who admitted them was a light-complexioned, light-haired young fellow, who appeared to be thoroughly frightened. His first remark exposed the reason of his terror.

"I am afraid you can't come in, sir," he said to the cousin of his late master, with a backward glance, "the police are here."

As he spoke a policeman made his appearance overflowing with official importance. Prompted by Fanks the barrister at once addressed himself to this Jack-in-office.

"I am the cousin of the late Sir Gregory Fellenger," he said, "and I wish to go into the sitting-room for a few minutes."

"You can't enter, sir," said the policeman, stolidly.

"Why not; my friend here, Mr. Rixton——"

The officer started and looked at Fanks. Evidently he saw his orders in the face of the detective; for he at once moved aside and granted the desired permission. The valet Robert was astonished at this sudden yielding; but he entertained no suspicion that there was any understanding between the policeman and the fashionably-dressed young man who had been introduced as Mr. Rixton. At a glance the detective saw that he had to deal with a timid, simple creature, who might be trusted to tell the truth out of sheer nervous apprehension. The discovery afforded him satisfaction.

Digitized by Google
Original from NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

"I am much obliged to you, officer," said Garth, slipping a shilling into the policeman's hand. "We shall not stay long. Robert, show us into the sitting-room, if you please. I wish to ask a few questions."

A terrified expression flitted across the face of the mild valet, but like a well-trained servant, he merely bowed and preceded Garth along the passage. Fanks lingered behind.

"Maxwell!" he said to the policeman, "has anyone been here this morning?"

"Yes, sir!" replied the man, in a low tone. "A young lady, sir; very pretty, with dark 'air and blue eyes. She asked to see Robert, sir."

"Oh, indeed! And how did you act?"

"I wouldn't let her see him, sir. He don't know she called."

"Quite right. What did she say when you refused?"

"She was upset, Mr. Fanks, and insisted on seeing him. I said as he was out, so she said as she would call this afternoon at three o'clock."

Fanks glanced at his watch. It was a quarter past two, so this unknown woman might be expected in a short space of time. Fanks was curious to see her and to learn the reason of her coming; as it might be that she was indirectly connected with the case. As yet there was no woman mixed up in the matter with the doubtful exception of Mrs. Boazoph; but from long experience Fanks was sure that the necessary element would yet appear. It seemed as though his expectations were about to be realised.

"Was she a lady, Maxwell, or an imitation of one?"

Digitized by Google

Original from NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

"A real lady, sir; she gave me half a sov., sir."

"You had no business to take the money," he said, half smiling at Maxwell's definition of what was a real lady.

"I couldn't help it, sir," said Maxwell, piteously, "she would give it to me, sir. I am ready to return it, sir, if she should come back."

"Well! We shall see; show her into the sitting-room if she calls again; has that valet been out to-day?"

"No, sir; he seems too frightened to go out. He does nothing but go about the 'ouse 'owling. A poor miserable thing, Mr. Fanks."

"Has he said much to you?"

"Never a word, sir; he 'olds his tongue and 'owls; that's all."

This behaviour of the servant struck Fanks as strange; but he did not make any comment thereon to the policeman. Again desiring Maxwell to show the young lady into the room when she called, he went in search of Garth. To his surprise he found the barrister alone.

"Where is Robert?" asked Fanks, sharply.

"I sent him out; thinking that we would search the room first."

"That won't do; we shall want his assistance, call him in at once."

Garth nodded and rang the bell. In a few minutes Robert, looking more terrified than ever, made his appearance. With a glance at Fanks to bespeak his attention—for the detective was lounging idly in a chair—Garth began his interrogation at once.

"Robert," he said, with great deliberation, "how long have you been in the service of my cousin?"

Digitized by Google Original from NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

"Four years, sir."

"Was he a kind master?"

"A very kind master, sir. I would not wish for a better place."

"Do you remember the twenty-first of June?" asked the barrister, in true police-court style.

"Yes, sir," replied the man with a shiver. "It was the night that my master was murdered."

"At what time did Sir Gregory leave the house?"

"I don't know, sir."

"You don't know," repeated Garth, while Fanks pricked up his ears. "Were you not in attendance on him?"

"No, sir. My master received a letter by the five o'clock post which seemed to upset him very much. After a time he recovered and sent me out to get seats for the theatre. When I got back at six he was gone. I never saw him again," declared the man in a shaking voice, "never again till I was called on to identify his dead body."

"You had no idea where your master was going?"

"No, sir! He did not tell me."

"When you left Sir Gregory to get seats for the theatre how was he dressed?"

"In a frock coat and light trousers, sir; but when I saw the body it was clothed in moleskin trousers and a flannel shirt."

"Did you ever see that disguise in his possession?"

"I can't say that I ever did, sir," replied the valet, hesitatingly. "But the week before a parcel came for Sir Gregory, which he would not let me open. I was about to do so when he stopped me. I think the parcel contained the clothes—the disguise."

Digitized by Google

Original from NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

"Why do you think so?"

"Because the parcel was soft, and felt like clothes. Besides it came from Weeks and Co., of Edgeware-road; and they sell more workmen's clothes than anything else."

"On what day did the clothes arrive?" asked Fanks, idly.

"On the fourteenth, sir. I am certain of the date, because Sir Gregory was taken ill in the morning."

"Taken ill!" repeated Garth. "At what time was he taken ill?"

"At breakfast, Mr. Garth, when he was reading the paper. He gave a cry and I came in to find him in a faint like. I got him a glass of brandy, and he dressed and went out. The parcel arrived in the afternoon."

"What paper did your master take in?"

"The 'Morning Post,' sir," replied the man, turning to Fanks, who had asked the question.

"The 'Morning Post' of the fourteenth. And where is the paper?"

"My master put it away, sir."

"Oh! Do you happen to know where he put it?"

"No, sir. I was out of the room at the time."

Fanks sank back in his chair and nodded to Garth to continue the conversation; which the barrister did at once.

"How long had your master been in town before the murder?" he asked.

"About a month, sir. Before that we were at Mere Hall in——"

"I know where it is," said Garth, impatiently. "But

Digitized by Google Original from NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

about that letter which came by the five o'clock post on the day of the crime. Did you see it?"

"I saw the envelope when I brought it in, sir."

"Was the handwriting a man's or a woman's?"

"It was in female handwriting I am certain, sir,"

"Your master was agitated when he opened it?"

"Very agitated, sir He had an attack like that of the previous week when he was reading the paper."

"The letter was from a woman?"

"I supposed it was, sir, judging from the handwriting."

"Had Sir Gregory anything to do at that time with any particular woman?"

Robert grew even paler than usual, and placed his hand on his throat with a nervous gesture. He replied with difficulty, his eyes on the ground.

"Not that I know of, sir," he said hoarsely.

Fanks was satisfied that the servant was lying, but he made no attempt to intervene. On the contrary, he signed to Garth to conclude his examination and to let the man go. This the lawyer did forthwith.

"That is all, Robert; you can go. I shall remain here with Mr. Rixton for a few minutes longer."

When the servant had taken his departure, Garth turned eagerly to his friend. "Well, Fanks, and what do you think of all this?"

"I think that there is a woman at the bottom of it as usual."

"Mrs. Boazoph?"

"No, a younger and a prettier woman than Mrs.

Digitized by Google Original from NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

Boazoph. We will talk of that later. In the meantime I wish to see that letter and the advertisement."

"What advertisement?"

"The one in the 'Morning Post' which upset your cousin on the fourteenth; in which drawer does he stow his letters?"

Garth went to the desk. He tried the middle drawer, but it was locked; as were the other drawers. "He used to place his papers in the middle drawer," said Garth, "but you see that it is closed."

"I thought it might be," said Fanks, producing a bunch of keys, "so I brought these with me."

"No good. No skeleton keys will open these locks. They are of special construction, and Gregory was very proud of them."

"These are the keys of the desk, Garth. They were found in the dead man's pockets; and I brought them with me, in case the drawers should be locked. I was right, it seems. And now let us make our search."

He opened the middle drawer and revealed a mass of letters all in the envelopes in which they had come.

The two men went carefully through the pile; and in ten minutes they were rewarded by finding the object of the search. The envelope, the address of which, as had been stated by Robert, was in female handwriting, contained three documents. Two printed slips cut from a newspaper; a piece of cardboard in the shape of a five-rayed star, painted red, and inscribed with some writing. Slips and star read as follows:

The first printed slip, dated 14th June:

"Tattooed cross left arm. I alone know all. I alone

Digitized by Google

Original from NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

can save you. If you wish to feel secure, meet me when and where you please."

The second printed slip, dated 16th June:

"Tattooed cross left arm. I wish to feel secure. Name time and place, and I shall be there."

The cardboard star, painted red:

Digitized by Google
Original from NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

CHAPTER VI.

A STARTLING INCIDENT.

"Good!" said Fanks, surveying this documentary evidence with much satisfaction. "We have more than hearsay to go on now. The case is shaping better than I expected."

"You were right about an appointment having been made," said Garth. "These slips and that star prove it."

"Yes! He who runs may read—now; but you were not so confident of my foresight a few minutes ago. Well, we have made a step forward. Here is the slip asking for the appointment; here is your cousin's reply, leaving the question of the appointment to the first advertiser: and finally here is the ingenious pictorial information indicating the Red Star in Tooley's Alley, as the meeting-place. Sir Gregory disguised himself in the workman's clothes bought from Weeks and Co., on the day that the first notice appeared; kept the appointment between six and seven; and so walked blindfolded into the trap of the Red Star, where he met with his fate. The assassin laid his plans uncommonly well; but she made one mistake."

"She! You don't mean to say that the murderer is a murderess?"

"No! The negro killed Sir Gregory; that is beyond

Digitized by Google
Original from NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

all doubt. But as I said before, it is my opinion that the negro was inspired by a third party. Can't you see that the address on that envelope is in female handwriting?"

"Certainly I can. But that does not prove that a woman inspired the crime; you go too fast, Fanks."

"Perhaps I do, and, after all, I may be mistaken. But that address is in no feigned hand; it was written by a woman. If a woman had nothing to do with this death why should she bait the trap to lure the man to his doom. And again, the directions on the cardboard star are in an angular female hand. Both address and directions are in the handwriting of an elderly woman."

"Come now!" cried Garth, disbelievingly. "You can't tell the woman's age from her handwriting."

"I can tell that she is elderly. These angular, spiky letters were formed by a woman who learned to write in early Victorian days. Female handwriting has altered of late, my friend. The new woman goes in for masculine handwriting, as well as for masculine dress. If a girl of the present day had written this address, it would have been in a bold and manly hand. As it is, I bet you five pounds that it was scribbled by a woman over fifty."

"It may be so; but this is all deduction."

"Most of the evidence in criminal cases is circumstantial and deductive. Another thing makes me think that it is a woman. There is a great deal of useless mystery here. A man would not have troubled about that. He would have inserted a third advertisement appointing time and place; but this woman can't resist a touch of the mysterious. Therefore she devises this silly cardboard star; sends it through the post; and so betrays herself."

Digitized by Google

Original from NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

"How can she betray herself when there is no address?"

"There is no address; but there is a post-mark. Look at the envelope."

Garth picked up the paper, and saw that the post-mark was Taxton-on-Thames.

"Why!" he cried in astonishment, "that is where my cousin Louis lives."

"Yes, and it is where Dr. Binjoy lives, which is more to the purpose," said Fanks, dryly. "Did I not tell you that I was right to doubt that gentleman."

Garth looked again at the envelope. "You say that this handwriting is that of an elderly woman. I suppose you are thinking of Mrs. Boazoph?"

"Indeed I am not. I give Mrs. Boazoph more credit than to murder a man in her own hotel and advertise the fact so openly. She is not a fool. But patience, Garth, we are not yet at the end of our discoveries."

He again searched the drawers. In many of them there was nothing likely to attract his attention; but in the lowest drawer on the right hand side, Garth made a discovery. It was that of a pretty girl's photograph, and this he showed to Fanks with a laugh.

"Gregory always had a weakness for pretty faces," he remarked. "Do you not think that his taste was good?"

Fanks looked reflectively at the picture. It was that of a girl just budding into womanhood, with a delicate face, and rather sad eyes. The name of the artist was not printed at the foot, as is usual, nor was the address of the studio inscribed thereon. Nevertheless, on the back of the photograph the detective found writing which startled him.

"Garth!" he cried eagerly, "give me that envelope. Ah, I thought so."

Digitized by Google

Original from NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

"What is the matter?" asked Garth, astonished at the excitement of the usually calm Fanks.

"Look at the envelope; look at the back of the photograph; compare the handwritings."

Fanks placed them side by side on the desk. On the envelope was the address of Sir Gregory in Half-Moon Street; on the photograph, an inscription which ran as follows: "Emma. Born 1874; died 1893." The handwriting on both was one and the same. Garth drew a long breath.

"By George, that is strange," he said, after a pause, "the woman who wrote the one, wrote the other; there isn't a shadow of difference between the writings. You are right, Fanks, the penmanship is that of an elderly woman; no doubt the mother of the girl."

"That is my opinion also; but the girl, Garth? Who is she?"

The lawyer reflected and frowned. "I did hear that my cousin was entangled with some woman," he said with reluctance. "But that was many months ago. In fact, there was a rumour of a marriage. I asked Gregory if this was so, and received a prompt denial. But for all that," added Garth, looking at the portrait, "there might have been some truth in the rumours. I never saw this lady; but my cousin could be very secretive when he liked. Seventy-four to ninety-three; just nineteen. Poor creature! Whosoever she was, I am certain that he treated her badly."

"You may judge him too harshly."

Garth shook his head with a gloomy air. "I knew my cousin well," he said. "He would have killed any woman with unkindness."

They looked at one another, and back at the photograph. There was something sinister in the fact that

Digitized by Google
Original from NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

the two articles were inscribed in the same handwriting. The writing on the photograph recorded the decease of a pretty woman; that on the envelope had lured the baronet to his death. Was it possible that the follies of Sir Gregory had come home to him in so fearful a fashion. The two men could not but incline to this opinion.

"Well!" said Fanks, after a long pause, "I should like to ask Robert what he knows about this woman."

"Very probably he knows nothing."

"I am not so certain about that," replied Fanks, coolly. "When you asked him about a woman—about a possible entanglement, he could hardly speak for fear; and he told a lie about it. He is a servile hound, that fellow, and I daresay he did all Fellenger's dirty work for him. We must have him in and force the truth from his unwilling lips."

"Will you go away after you have seen him?" said Garth, who was beginning to weary of the matter.

"No. I wish to wait and see—a girl."

"A girl! What girl?"

"A young lady who called this morning to see Robert. Maxwell told her the necessary lie that Robert was out, so she said she would call again this afternoon at three."

"It is past three now," said Garth, glancing at the clock.

"All the better; she may appear at any moment. Maxwell has my orders to show her in here."

"And then?"

"And then I shall find out why a lady should call upon that miserable dog of a valet. In the meantime touch the bell and have him in."

"Shall I question him?"

Digitized by Google Original from NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

"If you please. I wish to remain incognito."

Robert answered the bell so promptly as to suggest the probability that he had been stationed at the key-hole. His face, however, was as vacant and miserable as ever, so even if he had overheard, Fanks did not think that he had sufficient brains to be dangerous. The valet waited mutely for orders, with a cowed look on his face, and rubbed one lean hand over the other. He was an uncomfortable creature in every respect.

"Robert," said Garth, in as mild a tone as was possible, "I was authorised by the police to look over my cousin's papers. I have done so with the assistance of Mr. Rixton, and we have made several discoveries."

"Yes, sir," said the man, moistening his dry lips.

"Do you know Taxton-on-Thames?"

"No, sir; I never heard of it."

Startled by this calm denial, Fanks bent forward to observe the man's face. He was satisfied by a glance that Robert had spoken the truth; he had never heard of Taxton-on-Thames. This discovery puzzled the detective.

"Did your master—your late master—know of it?" he interpolated.

"Not that I am aware of, sir; he never mentioned the name to me."

"Robert," said Garth, solemnly, "you denied some time ago that Sir Gregory was entangled with a woman. Think again and answer truly."

Robert shifted from one foot to the other and looked uneasily at his questioner. Then he made an evasive reply.

"Sir Gregory was connected with no woman at the time of his death," he said, doggedly.

Digitized by Google

Original from NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

"That may be; but was he connected with a woman in 1893?"

The valet started back with a gasp.

"How did you hear of that?" he asked, shaking in every limb.

"I heard it from no one; but I guessed it from this picture."

With a sudden movement he thrust the photograph under the eyes of the pale and trembling creature. After one glance Robert recoiled with an ejaculation of horror, and covered his face with his hands. Expecting revelations, Fanks waited and watched.

"Come!" said Garth, quietly, "I see that you recognise the woman. Her name, if you please?"

"I—I—promised never to speak of her."

"You must—for your own sake."

"I dare not. Let me go, Mr. Garth!"

He broke away from the lawyer, but before he could reach the door he was in the grip of Fanks. "Come, Robert," said the latter, soothingly, "you must make the best of a bad job. I know that you were devoted to your master. At the same time he is dead, and it is necessary that the mystery of his death should be cleared up. On the whole," added Fanks, looking into the eyes of the servant, "I think it advisable that you should confess."

"The woman you speak of had nothing to do with the death of my master."

"I am not asking you that. I am inquiring her name. Answer!"

The sudden imperiousness in the detective's tone made Robert's heart sink within him. He was incapable of a prolonged struggle, and forthwith answered with all submissiveness—

Digitized by Google
Original from NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

"I—I—don't know her real name."
"What did she call herself?"
"Emma Calvert."
"Ah! And what did you call her, Robert?"
The valet looked at Garth with a look of malicious triumph. "I called her Lady Fellenger," he said slowly.

Garth sprang up with a sudden exclamation, but he was stopped by Fanks, who rapidly questioned the valet. "Was Emma Calvert really and truly the wife of your master?"

"Yes, sir; they were married quietly in a Hampstead church. She was in a dressmaker's shop, and my master was very much in love with her. I heard that she was engaged to another gentleman, but she threw him over, and married Sir Gregory before they went to Paris."

"So rumour was right for once," said Garth, shrugging his shoulders. "Well, whether Gregory was married or single matters little to me. I am not the heir."

"It may matter a great deal to the case," remarked Fanks, dryly. "Perhaps, Robert, you can tell me where Emma Calvert came from?"

"I do not know; my master knew, but he never told me. Lady Fellenger did not speak of her past in my presence."

"And where is she now?"

"Dead; she died in Paris."

"I see that you are telling the truth. She died in 1893."

"Yes."

"How did she die?"

"I can't answer you," burst out Robert, in a frenzy. "You will drive me mad. Night and day I have her

Digitized by Google
Original from NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY