Legendary Women Detectives

Jean Stine

SHERLOCK HOLMES' FEMALE RIVALS! This unique collection for connoisseurs of detection done female style brings back six of the greatest fictional women sleuths of the era of gaslights and horseless carriages. Fans of Kinsey Milhone and other contemporary women detectives, as well as of Agatha Christie and Honey West, will love this collection featuring the foremothers of today's fictional female crime-fighters. Long out of print and unobtainable, these celebrated women 'tecs -Baroness Orczy's Lady Molly of Scotland Yard, Anna Katharine Green's Violet Strange, Arthur B. Reeve's Constance Dunlap, C. L. Pirkis' Loveday Brooke, Valentine's Daphne Wrayne, and Edgar Jepson and Robert Eustace's Ruth Kelstern – were once nearly as famous as fictional sleuth of Baker Street himself. Their fame waned in the long decades of the 1930s through the '80s, when female sleuths took a backseat to Sam Spade, Nero Wolfe, and the like. But, they are back to baffle and thrill contemporary readers in The Legendary Women Detectives edited by Jean Marie Stine. Six Classic Novelettes Featuring The World’s Greatest Female Super-Sleuths

INTRODUCTION

In the mystery field, women have always led and men followed, ever since Anna Katherine Green penned one of the earliest detective stories, The Levenworth Case, in 1878 (nine years before Sherlock Holmes 1887 debut). Though men always stole their thunder – until recently, all the famous of detectivedom were of the male ilk, Sherlock Holmes, Perry Mason, Nero Wolf – the dames have always been right there, detecting along side the dicks (public and private), if overshadowed by them. Thank heaven all that has changed! Now many of the most popular, bestselling detective characters are female,

and about time. When readers today are asked to name a famous fictional private eye, they are more likely to reply “Kinsey Milhone” or “V. I. Warshawski” than “Mathew Scudder” or even the ubiquitous “Spencer.”Meanwhile, let us not neglect their nearly-forgotten foremothers and grandmothers in the celebrated cannons of fictional crime. In days of yore, when the great Sherlock still strode London’s foggy streets, Lady Molly, Violet Strange, Constance Dunlap, Ruth Kelstern, Solange Fontaine, Madame Storey, and a legion of their sisters in the detection of crime were on the trail, and like their masculine counterparts, they always got their man – and often with considerably more aplomb and adroitness. Later, in the 1930s and “40s, their successors, like Dol Bonner and Amy Brewster (available in PageTurner e-book editions), performed the honours with equal success and skill.This collection resurrects six of the most memorable of the legendary women detectives, in six of their most memorable cases. Here is crime in the day of the Hansom cab, the horseless carriage, the gaslight and the sputtering new electric kind. You’ll find police detectives, private detectives, even scientific detectives among these turn-of-the last century female felon-catchers. You’ll also find hours of true mystery reading pleasure as well. Instead of the old cry in mysteries of “Find the woman!” this is strictly a case where the Women do the finding.Jean Marie Stine4/6/2003

THE MAN IN THE INVERNESSCAPE by Baroness Orczy

(Sleuth: Lady Molly)Lady Molly is one of three great detectives created by the legendary author of the Scarlet Pimpernel novels. Her most famous mystery creation is undoubtedly the Old Man in the Corner (see The Legendary Detectives Vol. I-II.). But Lady Molly Robertson-Kirk runs him a close second and is one of the earliest and most intrepid of women detectives. Lady Molly joined Scotland Yard to prove the innocence of her husband, who had been framed for murder and languished in Dartmoor Prison, and to capture the real killer. Along the way she solved a number of cases which stumped the collective male force of the CID. Her investigations were collected as Lady

Molly of Scotland Yard (1910).Well, you know, some say she is the daughter of a duke, others that she was born in the gutter, and that the handle has been soldered onto her name in order to give her style and influence.I could say a lot, of course, but “my lips are sealed,” as the poets say. All through her successful career at the Yard she honoured me with her friendship and confidence, but when she took me in partnership, as it were, she made me promise that I would never breathe a word of her private life, and this I swore on my Bible oath “wish I may die,” and all the rest of it.Yes, we always called her “my lady,” from the moment that she was put at the head of our section; and the chief called her “Lady Molly” in our presence. We of the Female Department are dreadfully snubbed by the men, though don’t tell me that women have not ten times as much intuition as the blundering and sterner sex; my firm belief is that we shouldn’t have half so many undetected crimes if some of the so-called mysteries were put to the test of feminine investigation.Many people say – people, too, mind you, who read their daily paper regularly – that it is quite impossible for any one to “disappear” within the confines of the British Isles. At the same time these wise people invariably admit one great exception to their otherwise unimpeachable theory, and that is the case of Mr. Leonard Marvell, who, as you know, walked out one afternoon from the Scotia Hotel in Cromwell Road and has never been seen or heard of since.Information had originally been given to the police by Mr. Marvell’s sister Olive, a Scotchwoman of the usually accepted type: tall, bony, with sandy-coloured hair, and a somewhat melancholy expression in her blue-grey eyes.Her brother, she said, had gone out on a rather foggy afternoon. I think it was the third of February, just about a year ago. His intention had been to go and consult a solicitor in the City-whose address had been given him recently by a friend – about some private business of his own.Mr. Marvell had told his sister that he would get a train at South Kensington Station to Moorgate Street, and walk thence to Finsbury Square. She was to expect him home by dinnertime.As he was, however, very irregular in his habits, being fond of spending his evenings at restaurants and music halls, the sister did not

feel the least anxious when he did not return home at the appointed time. She had her dinner in the table d'hote room, and went to bed soon after ten.She and her brother occupied two bedrooms and a sitting room on the second floor of the little private hotel. Miss Marvell, moreover, had a maid always with her, as she was somewhat of an invalid. This girl, Rosie Campbell, a nice-looking Scotch lassie, slept on the top floor.It was only on the following morning, when Mr. Leonard did not put in an appearance at breakfast that Miss Marvell began to feel anxious. According to her own account, she sent Rosie in to see if anything was the matter, and the girl, wide-eyed and not a little frightened, came back with the news that Mr. Marvell was not in his room, and that his bed had not been slept in that night.With characteristic Scottish reserve, Miss Olive said nothing about the matter at the time to any one, nor did she give information to the police until two days later, when she herself had exhausted every means in her power to discover her brother's whereabouts.She had seen the lawyer to whose office Leonard Marvell had intended going that afternoon, but Mr. Statham, the solicitor in question, had seen nothing of the missing man.With great adroitness Rosie, the maid, had made inquiries at South Kensington and Moorgate Street Stations. At the former, the booking-clerk, who knew Mr. Marvell by sight, distinctly remembered selling him a first-class ticket to one of the City stations in the early part of the afternoon; but at Moorgate Street, which is a very busy station, no one recollected seeing a tall, red-haired Scotchman in an Inverness cape – such was the description given of the missing man. By that time the fog had become very thick in the City; traffic was disorganized, and every one felt fussy, ill-tempered, and self-centred.These, in substance, were the details which Miss Marvell gave to the police on the subject of her brother's strange disappearance.At first she did not appear very anxious; she seemed to have great faith in Mr. Marvell's power to look after himself; moreover, she declared positively that her brother had neither valuables nor money about his person when he went out that afternoon.But as day succeeded day and no trace of the missing man had yet been found, matters became more serious,

and the search instituted by our fellows at the Yard waxed more keen.A description of Mr. Leonard Marvell was published in the leading London and provincial dailies. Unfortunately, there was no good photograph of him extant, and descriptions are apt to prove vague.Very little was known about the man beyond his disappearance, which had rendered him famous. He and his sister had arrived at the Scotia Hotel about a month previously, and subsequently they were joined by the maid Campbell.Scotch people arc far too reserved ever to speak of themselves or their affairs to strangers. Brother and sister spoke very little to any one at the hotel. They had their meals in their sitting room, waited on by the maid, who messed with the staff. But, in face of the present terrible calamity, Miss Marvell's frigidity relaxed before the police inspector, to whom she gave what information she could about her brother."He was like a son to me," she explained with scarcely restrained tears, "for we lost our parents early in life, and as we were left very, very badly off, our relations took but little notice of us. My brother was years younger than I am – and though he was a little wild and fond of pleasure, he was as good as gold to me, and has supported us both for years by journalistic work. We came to London from Glasgow about a month ago, because Leonard got a very good appointment on the staff of the Daily Post."All this, of course, was soon proved to be true; and although, on minute inquiries being instituted in Glasgow, but little seemed to be known about Mr. Leonard Marvell in that city, there seemed no doubt that he had done some reporting for the Courier, and that latterly, in response to an advertisement, he had applied for and obtained regular employment on the Daily Post.The latter enterprising halfpenny journal, with characteristic magnanimity, made an offer of 50-pound reward to any of its subscribers who gave information which would lead to the discovery of the whereabouts of Mr. Leonard Marvell.But time went by, and that too remained unclaimed.Lady Molly had not seemed as interested as she usually was in cases of this sort. With strange flippancy – wholly unlike herself – she remarked that one Scotch journalist more or less in London did not vastly matter.I was much amused, therefore, one morning about three weeks after the mysterious disappearance

of Mr. Leonard Marvell, when Jane, our little parlour-maid, brought in a card accompanied by a letter.The card bore the name Miss OLIVE MARVELL. The letter was the usual formula from the chief, asking Lady Molly to have a talk with the lady in question, and to come and see him on the subject after the interview.With a smothered yawn my dear lady told Jane to show in Miss Marvell."There are two of them, my lady," said Jane, as she prepared to obey."Two what?" asked Lady Molly with a laugh."Two ladies, I mean," explained Jane."Well! Show them both into the drawing-room," said Lady Molly, impatiently.Then, as Jane went off on this errand, a very funny thing happened; funny, because during the entire course of my intimate association with my dear lady, I had never known her act with such marked indifference in the face of an obviously interesting case. She turned to me and said:"Mary, you had better see these two women, whoever they may be; I feel that they would bore me to distraction. Take note of what they say, and let me know. Now, don't argue," she added with a laugh, which peremptorily put a stop to my rising protest, "but go and interview Miss Marvell and Co."Needless to say, I promptly did as I was told, and the next few seconds saw me installed in our little drawing room, saying polite preliminaries to the two ladies who sat opposite to me.I had no need to ask which of them was Miss Marvell. Tall, ill-dressed in deep black, with a heavy crape veil over her face, and black-cotton gloves, she looked the uncompromising Scotchwoman to the life. In strange contrast to her depressing appearance, there sat beside her an over-dressed, much behatted, peroxided young woman, who bore the stamp of the theatrical profession all over her pretty, painted face.Miss Marvell, I was glad to note, was not long in plunging into the subject which had brought her here."I saw a gentleman at Scotland Yard," she explained, after a short preamble, "because Miss – er – Lulu Fay came to me at the hotel this very morning with a story which, in my opinion, should have been told to the police directly my brother's disappearance became known, and not three weeks later."The emphasis which she laid on the last few words, and the stern look with which she regarded the golden-haired young woman beside her, showed

the disapproval with which the rigid Scotchwoman viewed any connection which her brother might have had with the lady, whose very name seemed unpleasant to her lips.Miss – er – Lulu Fay blushed even through her rouge, and turned a pair of large, liquid eyes imploringly upon me.“I – I didn’t know. I was frightened,” she stammered.“There’s no occasion to be frightened now,” retorted Miss Marvell, “and the sooner you try and be truthful about the whole matter, the better it will be for all of us.”And the stern woman’s lips closed with a snap, as she deliberately turned her back on Miss Fay and began turning over the leaves of a magazine which happened to be on a table close to her hand.I muttered a few words of encouragement, for the little actress looked ready to cry. I spoke as kindly as I could, telling her that if indeed she could throw some light on Mr. Marvell’s present whereabouts it was her duty to be quite frank on the subject.She “hem”-ed and “ha”-ed for a while, and her simpering ways were just beginning to tell on my nerves, when she suddenly started talking very fast.“I am principal boy at the Grand,” she explained with great volubility, “and I knew Mr. Leonard Marvell well – in fact – er – he paid me a good deal of attention and-”“Yes – and-” I queried, for the girl was obviously nervous.There was a pause. Miss Fay began to cry.“And it seems that my brother took this young – er – lady to supper on the night of February 3rd, after which no one has ever seen or heard of him again,” here interposed Miss Marvell, quietly.“Is that so?” I asked.Lulu Fay nodded, whilst heavy tears fell upon her clasped hands.“But why did you not tell this to the police three weeks ago?” I ejaculated, with all the sternness at my command.“I – I was frightened,” she stammered.“Frightened? Of what?”“I am engaged to Lord Mountnewte and-”“And you did not wish him to know that you were accepting the attentions of Mr. Leonard Marvell – was that it? Well,” I added, with involuntary impatience, “what happened after you had supper with Mr. Marvell?”“Oh! I hope – I hope that nothing happened,” she said through more tears. “We had supper at the Trocadero, and he saw me into my brougham. Suddenly, just as I was driving away, I saw Lord Mountnewte standing quite close to us in the crowd.”“Did the two men know one another?” I asked.“No,”

replied Miss Fay. "At least, I didn't think so, but when I looked back through the window of my carriage I saw them standing on the curb talking to each other for a moment, and then walk off together towards Piccadilly Circus. That is the last I have seen of either of them," continued the little actress with a fresh flood of tears. "Lord Mountnewte hasn't spoken to me since, and Mr. Marvell has disappeared with my money and my diamonds.""Your money and your diamonds?" I gasped in amazement."Yes; he told me he was a jeweller, and that my diamonds wanted resetting. He took them with him that evening, for he said that London jewellers were clumsy thieves and that he would love to do the work for me himself. I also gave him two hundred pounds which he said he would want for buying the gold and platinum required for the settings. And now he has disappeared – and my diamonds and my money! Oh! I have been very – very foolish – and-"Her voice broke down completely. Of course, one often hears of the idiocy of girls giving money and jewels unquestioningly to clever adventurers who know how to trade upon their inordinate vanity. There was, therefore, nothing very out of the way in the story just told me by Miss – er – Lulu Fay, until the moment when Miss Marvell's quiet voice, with its marked Scotch burr, broke in upon the short silence which had followed the actress's narrative."As I explained to the chief detective inspector at Scotland Yard," she said calmly, "the story which this young – er – lady tells is only partly true. She may have had supper with Mr. Leonard Marvell on the night of February 3rd, and he may have paid her certain attentions; but he never deceived her by telling her that he was a jeweller, nor did he obtain possession of her diamonds and her money through false statements. My brother was the soul of honour and loyalty. If, for some reason which Miss – er – Lulu Fay chooses to keep secret, he had her jewels and money in his possession on the fatal February 3rd, then I think his disappearance is accounted for. He has been robbed and perhaps murdered."Like a true Scotchwoman she did not give way to tears, but even her harsh voice trembled slightly when she thus bore witness to her brother's honesty, and expressed the fears which assailed her as to his fate.Imagine my plight! I could ill forgive my dear lady for leaving me in

this unpleasant position – a sort of peacemaker between two women who evidently hated one another, and each of whom was trying her best to give the other “the lie direct.”I ventured to ring for our faithful Jane and to send her with an imploring message to Lady Molly, begging her to come and disentangle the threads of this muddled skein with her clever fingers; but Jane returned with a curt note from my dear lady, telling me not to worry about such a silly case, and to bow the two women out of the flat as soon as possible and then come for a nice walk.I wore my official manner as well as I could, trying not to betray the “prentice hand. Of course, the interview lasted a great deal longer, and there was considerably more talk than I can tell you of in a brief narrative. But the gist of it all was just as I have said. Miss Lulu Fay stuck to every point of the story which she had originally told Miss Marvell. It was the latter uncompromising lady who had immediately marched the younger woman off to Scotland Yard in order that she might repeat her tale to the police. I did not wonder that the chief promptly referred them both to Lady Molly.Anyway, I made excellent shorthand notes of the conflicting stories which I heard; and I finally saw, with real relief, the two women walk out of our little front door.Our fellows at the Yard were abnormally active. It seemed, on the face of it, impossible that a man, healthy, vigorous, and admittedly sober, should vanish in London between Piccadilly Circus and Cromwell Road without leaving the slightest trace of himself or of the valuables said to have been in his possession.Of course, Lord Mountnewte was closely questioned. He was a young Guardsman of the usual pattern, and, after a great deal of vapid talk which irritated Detective Inspector Saunders not a little, he made the following statement:“I certainly am acquainted with Miss Lulu Fay. On the night in question I was standing outside the Troc, when I saw this young lady at her own carriage window talking to a tall man in an Inverness cape. She had, earlier in the day, refused my invitation to supper, saying that she was not feeling very well, and would go home directly after the theatre; therefore I felt, naturally, a little vexed. I was just about to hail a taxi, meaning to go on to the club, when, to my intense astonishment, the man in the Inverness cape came

up to me and asked me if I could tell him the best way to get back to Cromwell Road.""And what did you do?" asked Saunders."I walked a few steps with him and put him on his way," replied Lord Mountnewte, blandly.In Saunders's own expressive words, he thought that story "fishy." He could not imagine the arm of coincidence being quite so long as to cause these two men – who presumably were both in love with the same girl, and who had just met at a moment when one of them was obviously suffering pangs of jealousy – to hold merely a topographical conversation with one another. But it was equally difficult to suppose that the eldest son and heir of the Marquis of Loam should murder a successful rival and then rob him in the streets of London.Moreover, here came the eternal and unanswerable questions: If Lord Mountnewte had murdered Leonard Marvell, where and how had he done it, and what had he done with the body?I dare say you are wondering by this time why I have said nothing about the maid, Rosie Campbell.Well, plenty of very clever people (I mean those who write letters to the papers and give suggestions to every official department in the kingdom) thought that the police ought to keep a very strict eye upon that pretty Scotch lassie. For she was very pretty, and had quaint, demure ways which rendered her singularly attractive, in spite of the fact that, for most masculine tastes, she would have been considered too tall. Of course, Saunders and Danvers kept an eye on her – you may be sure of that – and got a good deal of information about her from the people at the hotel. Most of it, unfortunately, was irrelevant to the case. She was maid-attendant to Miss Marvell, who was feeble in health, and who went out but little. Rosie waited on her master and mistress upstairs, carrying their meals to their private room, and doing their bedrooms. The rest of the day she was fairly free, and was quite sociable downstairs with the hotel staff.With regard to her movements and actions on that memorable 3rd of February, Saunders – though he worked very hard – could glean but little useful information. You see, in a hotel of that kind, with an average of thirty to forty guests at one time, it is extremely difficult to state positively what any one person did or did not do on that particular day.Most people at the Scotia remembered that Miss

Marvell dined in the table d'hote room on that 3rd of February; this she did about once a fortnight, when her maid had an evening "out."The hotel staff also recollected fairly distinctly that Miss Rosie Campbell was not in the steward's room at suppertime that evening, but no one could remember definitely when she came in.One of the chambermaids who occupied the bedroom adjoining hers, said that she heard her moving about soon after midnight; the hall porter declared that he saw her come in just before half-past twelve when he closed the doors for the night.But one of the ground-floor valets said that, on the morning of the 4th, he saw Miss Marvell's maid, in hat and coat, slip into the house and upstairs, very quickly and quietly, soon after the front doors were opened, namely, about 7:00 A.M.Here of course, was a direct contradiction between the chambermaid and hall porter on the one side, and the valet on the other, whilst Miss Marvell said that Campbell came into her room and made her some tea long before seven o'clock every morning, including that of the 4th.I assure you our fellows at the Yard were ready to tear their hair out by the roots, from sheer aggravation at this maze of contradictions which met them at every turn.The whole thing seemed so simple. There was nothing "to it" as it were, and but very little real suggestion of foul play, and yet Mr. Leonard Marvell had disappeared, and no trace of him could be found.Every one now talked freely of murder. London is a big town, and this would not have been the first instance of a stranger – for Mr. Leonard Marvell was practically a stranger in London – being enticed to a lonely part of the city on a foggy night, and there done away with and robbed, and the body hidden in an out-of-the-way cellar, where it might not be discovered for months to come.But the newspaper-reading public is notably fickle, and Mr. Leonard Marvell was soon forgotten by every one save the chief and the batch of our fellows who had charge of the case.Thus I heard through Danvers one day that Rosie Campbell had left Miss Marvell's employ, and was living in rooms in Findlater Terrace, near Walham Green.I was alone in our Maida Vale flat at the time, my dear lady having gone to spend the weekend with the Dowager Lady Loam, who was an old friend of hers; nor, when she returned,

did she seem any more interested in Rosie Campbell's movements than she had been hitherto.Yet another month went by, and I for one had absolutely ceased to think of the man in the Inverness cape, who had so mysteriously and so completely vanished in the very midst of busy London, when, one morning early in January, Lady Molly made her appearance in my room, looking more like the landlady of a disreputable gambling house than anything else I could imagine."What in the world-" I began."Yes! I think I look the part," she replied, surveying with obvious complacency the extraordinary figure which confronted her in the glass.My dear lady had on a purple-cloth coat and skirt of a peculiarly vivid hue, and of a singular cut, which made her matchless figure look like a sack of potatoes. Her soft-brown hair was quite hidden beneath a "transformation," of that yellow-reddish tint only to be met with in very cheap dyes.As for her hat – I won't attempt to describe it. It towered above and around her face, which was plentifully covered with brick-red and with that kind of powder which causes the cheeks to look a deep mauve.My dear lady looked, indeed, a perfect picture of appalling vulgarity."Where are you going in this elegant attire?" I asked in amazement."I have taken rooms in Findlater Terrace," she replied lightly. "I feel that the air of Walham Green will do us both good. Our amiable, if somewhat slatternly, landlady expects us in time for luncheon. You will have to keep rigidly in the background, Mary, all the while we are there. I said that I was bringing an invalid niece with me, and, as a preliminary, you may as well tie two or three thick veils over your face. I think I may safely promise that you won't be dull."And we certainly were not dull during our brief stay at 34, Findlater Terrace, Walham Green. Fully equipped, and arrayed in our extraordinary garments, we duly arrived there, in a rickety four-wheeler, on the top of which were perched two seedy-looking boxes.The landlady was a toothless old creature, who apparently thought washing a quite unnecessary proceeding. In this she was evidently at one with every one of her neighbours. Findlater Terrace looked unspeakably squalid; groups of dirty children congregated in the gutters and gave forth discordant shrieks as our cab drove up.Through my thick veils I thought that, some distance down the

road, I spied a horsy-looking man in ill-fitting riding-breeches and gaiters, who vaguely reminded me of Danvers.Within half an hour of our installation, and whilst we were eating a tough steak over a doubtful table cloth, my dear lady told me that she had been waiting a full month, until rooms in this particular house happened to be vacant. Fortunately the population in Findlater Terrace is always a shifting one, and Lady Molly had kept a sharp eye on No. 34, where, on the floor above, lived Miss Rosie Campbell. Directly the last set of lodgers walked out of the ground-floor rooms, we were ready to walk in.My dear lady's manners and customs, whilst living at the above aristocratic address, were fully in keeping with her appearance. The shrill, rasping voice which she assumed echoed from attic to cellar.One day I heard her giving vague hints to the landlady that her husband, Mr. Marcus Stone, had had a little trouble with the police about a small hotel which he had kept somewhere near Fitzroy Square, and where "young gentlemen used to come and play cards of a night." The landlady was also made to understand that the wordily Mr. Stone was now living temporarily at His Majesty's expense, whilst Mrs. Stone had to live a somewhat secluded life, away from her fashionable friends.The misfortunes of the pseudo Mrs. Stone in no way marred the amiability of Mrs. Tredwen, our landlady. The inhabitants of Findlater Terrace care very little about the antecedents of their lodgers, so long as they pay their week's rent in advance, and settle their "extras" without much murmur.This Lady Molly did, with a generosity characteristic of an ex-lady of means. She never grumbled at the quantity of jam and marmalade which we were supposed to have consumed every week, and which anon reached titanic proportions. She tolerated Mrs. Tredwen's cat, tipped Ermyntrude – the tousled lodging-house slavey – lavishly, and lent the upstairs lodger her spirit-lamp and curling-tongs when Miss Rosie Campbell's got out of order.A certain degree of intimacy followed the loan of those curling tongs. Miss Campbell, reserved and demure, greatly sympathized with the lady who was not on the best of terms with the police. I kept steadily in the background. The two ladies did not visit each other's rooms, but they held long and confidential conversations on the landings, and I

gathered, presently, that the pseudo Mrs. Stone had succeeded in persuading Rosie Campbell that, if the police were watching No. 34, Findlater Terrace, at all, it was undoubtedly on account of the unfortunate Mr. Stone's faithful wife.I found it a little difficult to fathom Lady Molly's intentions. We had been in the house over three weeks, and nothing whatever had happened. Once I ventured on a discreet query as to whether we were to expect the sudden re-appearance of Mr. Leonard Marvell."For if that's what it's about," I argued, "then surely the men from the Yard could have kept the house in view, without all this inconvenience and masquerading on our part."But to this tirade my dear lady vouchsafed no reply.She and her newly acquired friend were, about this time, deeply interested in the case known as the "West End Shop Robberies," which no doubt you recollect, since they occurred such a very little while ago. Ladies who were shopping in the large drapers' emporiums during the crowded and busy sale time lost reticules, purses, and valuable parcels without any trace of the clever thief being found.The drapers, during sale time, invariably employ detectives in plain clothes to look after their goods, but in this case it was the customers who were robbed, and the detectives, attentive to every attempt at "shop-lifting," had had no eyes for the more subtle thief.I had already noticed Miss Rosie Campbell's keen look of excitement whenever the pseudo Mrs. Stone discussed these cases with her. I was not a bit surprised, therefore, when, one afternoon at about tea-time, my dear lady came home from her habitual walk, and, at the top of her shrill voice, called out to me from the hall:"Mary! Mary! They've got the man of the shop robberies. He's given the silly police the slip this time, but they know who he is now, and I suppose they'll get him presently. "Tisn't anybody I know," she added, with that harsh, common laugh which she had adopted for her part.I had come out of the room in response to her call, and was standing just outside our own sitting-room door. Mrs. Tredwen, too, bedraggled and unkempt, as usual, had sneaked up the area steps, closely followed by Ermyntrude.But on the half-landing just above us the trembling figure of Rosie Campbell, with scared white face and dilated eyes, looked on the verge of a

sudden fall.Still talking shrilly and volubly, Lady Molly ran up to her, but Campbell met her half-way, and the pseudo Mrs. Stone, taking vigorous hold of her wrist, dragged her into our own sitting-room."Pull yourself together, now," she said with rough kindness. "That owl Tredwen is listening, and you needn't let her know too much. Shut the door, Mary. Lor" bless you, m'dear, I've gone through worse scares than these. There! You just lie down on this sofa a bit. My niece'll make you a cup o' tea; and I'll go and get an evening paper, and see what's going on. I suppose you are very interested in the shop-robbery man, or you wouldn't have took on so."Without waiting for Campbell 's contradiction to this statement, Lady Molly flounced out of the house.Miss Campbell hardly spoke during the next ten minutes that she and I were left alone together. She lay on the sofa with eyes wide open, staring up at the ceiling, evidently still in a great state of fear.I had just got tea ready when Lady Molly came back. She had an evening paper in her hand, but threw this down on the table directly she came in. ""I could only get an early edition," she said breathlessly, "and the silly thing hasn't got anything in it about the matter."She drew near to the sofa, and, subduing the shrillness of her voice, she whispered rapidly, bending down towards Campbell:"There's a man hanging about at the corner down there. No, no; it's not the police," she added quickly, in response to the girl's sudden start of alarm. "Trust me, my dear, for knowing a "tec when I see one! Why, I'd smell one half a mile off. No; my opinion is that it's your man, my dear, and that he's in a devil of a hole.""Oh! He oughtn't to come here," ejaculated Campbell in great alarm. "He'll get me into trouble and do himself no good. He's been a fool!" she added, with a fierceness wholly unlike her usual demure placidity, "getting himself caught like that. Now I suppose we shall have to hook it – if there's time.""Can I do anything to help you?" asked the pseudo Mrs. Stone. "You know I've been through all this myself, when they was after Mr. Stone. Or perhaps Mary could do something.""Well, yes," said the girl, after a slight pause, during which she seemed to be gathering her wits together. "I'll write a note, and you shall take it, if you will, to a friend of mine – a lady who lives in the Cromwell Road. But if you still see a man lurking about

at the corner of the street, then, just as you pass him, say the word ”Campbell,“ and if he replies ‘Rosie,” then give him the note. Will you do that?““Of course I will, my dear. Just you leave it all to me.”And the pseudo Mrs. Stone brought ink and paper and placed them on the table. Rosie Campbell wrote a brief note, and then fastened it down with a bit of sealing-wax before she handed it over to Lady Molly. The note was addressed to Miss Marvell, Scotia Hotel, Cromwell Road.“You understand?” she said eagerly. “Don’t give the note to the man unless he says ”Rosie‘ in reply to the word “ Campbell.”““All right – all right!” said Lady Molly, slipping the note into her reticule. “And you go up to your room, Miss Campbell; it’s no good giving that old fool Tredwen too much to gossip about.”Rosie Campbell went upstairs, and presently my dear lady and I were walking rapidly down the badly lighted street.“Where is the man?” I whispered eagerly as soon as we were out of earshot of No. 34.“There is no man,” replied Lady Molly, quickly.“But the West End shop thief?” I asked.“He hasn’t been caught yet, and won’t be either, for he is far too clever a scoundrel to fall into an ordinary trap.”She did not give me time to ask further questions, for presently, when we had reached Reporton Square, my dear lady handed me the note written by Campbell, and said:“Go straight on to the Scotia Hotel, and ask for Miss Marvell; send up the note to her, but don’t let her see you, as she knows you by sight. I must see the chief first, and will be with you as soon as possible. Having delivered the note, you must hang about outside as long as you can. Use your wits; she must not leave the hotel before I see her.”There was no hansom to be got in this elegant quarter of the town, so, having parted from my dear lady, I made for the nearest Underground station, and took a train for South Kensington.Thus it was nearly seven o’clock before I reached the Scotia. In answer to my inquiries for Miss Marvell, I was told that she was ill in bed and could see no one. I replied that I had only brought a note for her, and would wait for a reply.Acting on my dear lady’s instructions, I was as slow in my movements as ever I could be, and was some time in finding the note and handing it to a waiter, who then took it upstairs.Presently he returned with the message: “Miss Marvell says

there is no answer."Whereupon I asked for pen and paper at the office, and wrote the following brief note on my own responsibility, using my wits as my dear lady had bidden me to do.Please, madam, I wrote, will you send just a line to Miss Rosie Campbell? She seems very upset and frightened at some news she has had.Once more the waiter ran upstairs, and returned with a sealed envelope, which I slipped into my reticule.Time was slipping by very slowly. I did not know how long I should have to wait about outside in the cold, when, to my horror, I heard a hard voice, with a marked Scotch accent, saying:"I am going out, waiter, and shan't be back to dinner. Tell them to lay a little cold supper upstairs in my room."The next moment Miss Marvell, with coat, hat, and veil, was descending the stairs.My plight was awkward. I certainly did not think it safe to present myself before the lady; she would undoubtedly recollect my face. Yet I had orders to detain her until the appearance of Lady Molly.Miss Marvell seemed in no hurry. She was putting on her gloves as she came downstairs. In the hall she gave a few more instructions to the porter, whilst I, in a dark corner in the background, was vaguely planning an assault or an alarm of fire.Suddenly, at the hotel entrance, where the porter was obsequiously holding open the door for Miss Marvell to pass through, I saw the latter's figure stiffen; she took one step back as if involuntarily, then, equally quickly, attempted to dart across the threshold, on which a group – composed of my dear lady, of Saunders, and of two or three people scarcely distinguishable in the gloom beyond – had suddenly made its appearance.Miss Marvell was forced to retreat into the hall; already I had heard Saunders's hurriedly whispered words:"Try and not make a fuss in this place, now. Everything can go off quietly, you know."Danvers and Cotton, whom I knew well, were already standing one each side of Miss Marvell, whilst suddenly amongst this group I recognized Fanny, the wife of Danvers, who is one of our female searchers at the Yard."Shall we go up to your own room?" suggested Saunders."I think that is quite unnecessary," interposed Lady Molly. "I feel convinced that Mr. Leonard Marvell will yield to the inevitable quietly, and follow you without giving any trouble."Marvell, however, did make a bold dash

for liberty. As Lady Molly had said previously, he was far too clever to allow himself to be captured easily. But my dear lady had been cleverer. As she told me subsequently, she had from the first suspected that the trio who lodged at the Scotia Hotel were really only a duo – namely, Leonard Marvell and his wife, Rosie Campbell. The latter impersonated a maid most of the time; but among these two clever people the three characters were interchangeable. Of course, there was no Miss Marvell at all! Leonard was alternately dressed up as man or woman, according to the requirements of his villainies.“As soon as I heard that Miss Marvell was very tall and bony,” said Lady Molly, “I thought that there might be a possibility of her being merely a man in disguise. Then there was the extraordinarily suggestive fact – but little dwelt on by either the police or public – that no one seems ever to have seen brother and sister together, nor was the entire trio ever seen at one and the same time.“On that 3rd of February Leonard Marvell went out. No doubt he changed his attire in a lady’s waiting-room at one of the railway stations; subsequently he came home, now dressed as Miss Marvell, and had dinner in the table d’hote room so as to set up a fairly plausible alibi. But ultimately it was his wife, Rosie Campbell, who stayed indoors that night, whilst he, Leonard Marvell, when going out after dinner, impersonated the maid until he was clear of the hotel; then he reassumed his male clothes once more, no doubt in the deserted waiting-room of some railway station, and met Miss Lulu Fay at supper, subsequently returning to the hotel in the guise of the maid.“You see the game of crisscross, don’t you? This interchanging of characters was bound to baffle every one. Many clever scoundrels have assumed disguises, sometimes impersonating members of the opposite sex, but never before have I known two people play the part of three! Thus, endless contradictions followed as to the hour when Campbell the maid went out and when she came in, for at one time it was she herself who was seen by the valet, and at another it was Leonard Marvell dressed in her clothes.”He was also clever enough to accost Lord Mountnewte in the open street, thus bringing further complications into this strange case.After the successful robbery of Miss Fay’s diamonds, Leonard Marvell and

his wife parted for a while. They were waiting for an opportunity to get across the Channel and there turn their booty into solid cash. Whilst Mrs. Marvell, alias Rosie Campbell, led a retired life in Findlater Terrace, Leonard kept his hand in with West End shop robberies.Then Lady Molly entered the lists. As usual, her scheme was bold and daring; she trusted her own intuition and acted accordingly.When she brought home the false news that the author of the shop robberies had been spotted by the police, Rosie Campbell's obvious terror confirmed her suspicions. The note written by the latter to the so-called Miss Marvell, though it contained nothing in any way incriminating, was the crowning certitude that my dear lady was right, as usual, in all her surmises.And now Mr. Leonard Marvell will be living for two years at the tax-payers' expense; he has "disappeared" temporarily from the public eye.

THE PROBLEM OF THE SECOND BULLET by Anna Katherine Green

(Sleuth: Violet Strange)Even if she hadn't penned one of the very first detective novels, The Levenworth Case (1878), Anna Katherine Green would have earned her place to detective immortality with her creation of Violet Strange. Violet made her debut in a collection of her cases titled The Golden Slipper (1915). Violet is a daughter of wealth and privilege, who turns her talents to crime detection solely for the mercenary motive of making money – money she needs to pay off he family's debts. She is also very young, and though she often succeeds where the police are stumped, she often doubts her ability to handle the cases brought to her."You must see her.""No.""She's a most unhappy woman. Husband and child both taken from her in a moment; and now, all means of living as well, unless some happy thought of yours – some inspiration of your genius – shows us a way of re-establishing her claims to the policy voided by this cry of suicide."But the small head of Violet Strange continued its slow shake of decided refusal. "I'm sorry, but it's quite out of my province. I'm too young to meddle with so serious a matter.""Not when you can save a bereaved woman the only possible compensation left her by untoward fate?""Let the police try their hand at that.""They have had no

success with the case.”“Or you?”“Nor I either.”“And you expect-”“Yes, Miss Strange. I expect you to find the missing bullet which will settle the fact that murder and not suicide ended George Hammond’s life. If you cannot, then a long litigation awaits this poor widow, ending, as such litigation usually does, in favour of the stronger party. There’s the alternative. If you once you saw her-”“But that’s what I’m not willing to do. If I once saw her I should yield to her importunities and attempt the seemingly impossible. My instincts bid me say no. Give me something easier.”“Easier things are not so remunerative. There’s money in this affair, if the insurance company is forced to pay up. I can offer you-”“What?”There was eagerness in the tone despite her effort at nonchalance. The other smiled imperceptibly, and briefly named the sum.It was larger than she had expected. This her visitor saw by the way her eyelids fell and the peculiar stillness which, for an instant, held her vivacity in check.“And you think I can earn that?” She looked up, her eyes fixed on his in eagerness as honest as it was unrestrained.He could hardly conceal his amazement, her desire was so evident and the cause of it so difficult to understand. He knew she wanted money – that was her avowed reason for entering into this uncongenial work. But to want it so much! He glanced at her person; it was simply clad but very expensively – how expensively it was his business to know. Then he took in the room in which they sat. Simplicity again, but the simplicity of high art – the drawing-room of one rich enough to indulge in the final luxury of a highly cultivated taste, viz.: unostentatious elegance and the subjection of each carefully chosen ornament to the general effect.What did this favoured child of fortune lack that she could be reached by such a plea, when her whole being revolted from the nature of the task he offered her? It was a question not new to him; but one he had never heard answered and was not likely to hear answered now. But the fact remained that the consent he had thought dependent upon sympathetic interest could be reached much more readily by the promise of large emolument – and he owned to a feeling of secret disappointment even while he recognized the value of the discovery.But his satisfaction in the latter was of very short duration. Almost

immediately he observed a change in her. The sparkle that had shone in the eye whose depths he had never been able to penetrate, had dissipated itself in something like a tear and she spoke up in that vigorous tone no one but himself had ever heard, as she said: “No. The sum is a good one and I could use it; but I will not waste my energy on a case I do not believe in. The man shot himself. He was a speculator, and probably had good reason for his act. Even his wife acknowledges that he has lately had more losses than gains.”“See her. She has something to tell you which never got into the papers.”“You say that? You know that?”“On my honour, Miss Strange.”Violet pondered; then suddenly succumbed. “Let her come, then. Prompt to the hour. I will receive her at three. Later I have a tea and two party calls to make.”Her visitor rose to leave. He had been able to subdue all evidence of his extreme gratification, and now took on a formal air. In dismissing a guest, Miss Strange was invariably the society belle and that only. This he had come to recognize.***The case was, in the fewest possible words, as follows: On a sultry night in September, a young couple living in one of the large apartment houses in the extreme upper portion of Manhattan were so annoyed by the incessant crying of a child in the adjoining suite, that they got up, he to smoke, and she to sit in the window for a possible breath of cool air. They were congratulating themselves upon the wisdom they had shown in thus giving up all thought of sleep – for the child’s crying had not ceased – when (it may have been two o’clock and it may have been a little later) there came from somewhere near, the sharp and somewhat peculiar detonation of a pistol-shot.He thought it came from above; she, from the rear, and they were staring at each other in the helpless wonder of the moment, when they were struck by the silence. The baby had ceased to cry. All was as still in the adjoining apartment as in their own – too still – much too still. Their mutual stare turned to one of horror. “It came from there!” whispered the wife. “Some accident has occurred to Mr. or Mrs. Hammond – we ought to go-”Her words – very tremulous ones – were broken by a shout from below. They were standing in their window and had evidently been seen by a passing policeman. “Anything

wrong up there?" they heard him cry. Mr. Saunders immediately looked out. "Nothing wrong here," he called down. (They were but two stories from the pavement.) "But I'm not so sure about the rear apartment. We thought we heard a shot. Hadn't you better come up, officer? My wife is nervous about it. I'll meet you at the stair-head and show you the way."The officer nodded and stepped in. The young couple hastily donned some wraps, and, by the time he appeared on their floor, they were ready to accompany him.Meanwhile, no disturbance was apparent anywhere else in the house, until the policeman rang the bell of the Hammond apartment. Then, voices began to be heard, and doors to open above and below, but not the one before which the policeman stood.Another ring, and this time an insistent one – and still no response. The officer's hand was rising for the third time when there came a sound of fluttering from behind the panels against which he had laid his ear, and finally a choked voice uttering unintelligible words. Then a hand began to struggle with the lock, and the door, slowly opening, disclosed a woman clad in a hastily donned wrapper and giving every evidence of extreme fright."Oh!" she exclaimed, seeing only the compassionate faces of her neighbours. "You heard it, too! A pistol-shot from there – there – my husband's room. I have not dared to go – I – I – Oh, have mercy and see if anything is wrong! It is so still – so still, and only a moment ago the baby was crying. Mrs. Saunders, Mrs. Saunders, why is it so still?"She had fallen into her neighbour's arms. The hand with which she had pointed out a certain door had sunk to her side and she appeared to be on the verge of collapse.The officer eyed her sternly, while noting her appearance, which was that of a woman hastily risen from bed."Where were you?" he asked. "Not with your husband and child, or you would know what had happened there.""I was sleeping down the hall," she managed to gasp out. "I'm not well – I – Oh, why do you all stand still and do nothing? My baby's in there. Go! Go!" and, with sudden energy, she sprang upright, her eyes wide open and burning, her small well-featured face white as the linen she sought to hide.The officer demurred no longer. In another instant he was trying the door at which she was again pointing.It was locked.Glancing

back at the woman, now cowering almost to the floor, he pounded at the door and asked the man inside to open.No answer came back.With a sharp turn he glanced again at the wife.“You say that your husband is in this room?”She nodded, gasping faintly, “And the child!”He turned back, listened, then beckoned to Mr. Saunders. “We shall have to break our way in,” said he. “Put your shoulder well to the door. Now!”The hinges of the door creaked; the lock gave way (this special officer weighed two hundred and seventy-five, as he found out, next day), and a prolonged and sweeping crash told the rest.Mrs. Hammond gave a low cry; and, straining forward from where she crouched in terror on the floor, searched the faces of the two men for some hint of what they saw in the dimly-lighted space beyond. Something dreadful, something which made Mr. Saunders come rushing back with a shout:“Take her away! Take her to our apartment, Jennie. She must not see-”Not see! He realized the futility of his words as his gaze fell on the young woman who had risen up at his approach and now stood gazing at him without speech, without movement, but with a glare of terror in her eyes, which gave him his first realization of human misery.His own glance fell before it. If he had followed his instinct he would have fled the house rather than answer the question of her look and the attitude of her whole frozen body.Perhaps in mercy to his speechless terror, perhaps in mercy to herself, she was the one who at last found the word which voiced their mutual anguish. “Dead?”No answer. None was needed.“And my baby?”That cry! It curdled the hearts of all who heard it. It shook the souls of men and women both inside and outside the apartment; then all was forgotten in the wild rush she made. The wife and mother had flung herself upon the scene, and, side by side with the not unmoved policeman, stood looking down upon the desolation made in one fatal instant in her home and heart.They lay there together, both past help, both quite dead. The child had simply been strangled by the weight of his father’s arm which lay directly across the upturned little throat. But the father was a victim of the shot they had heard. There was blood on his breast, and a pistol in his hand.Suicide! The horrible truth was patent. No wonder they wanted to hold the young widow

back. Her neighbour, Mrs. Saunders, crept in on tiptoe and put her arms about the swaying, fainting woman; but there was nothing to say – absolutely nothing.At least, they thought not. But when they saw her throw herself down, not by her husband, but by the child, and drag it out from under that strangling arm and hug and kiss it and call out wildly for a doctor, the officer endeavoured to interfere and yet could not find the heart to do so, though he knew the child was dead and should not, according to all the rules of the coroner's office, be moved before that official arrived. Yet because no mother could be convinced of a fact like this, he let her sit with it on the floor and try all her little arts to revive it, while he gave orders to the janitor and waited himself for the arrival of doctor and coroner.She was still sitting there in wide-eyed misery, alternately fondling the little body and drawing back to consult its small set features for some sign of life, when the doctor came, and, after one look at the child, drew it softly from her arms and laid it quietly in the crib from which its father had evidently lifted it but a short time before. Then he turned back to her, and found her on her feet, upheld by her two friends. She had understood his action, and without a groan had accepted her fate. Indeed, she seemed incapable of any further speech or action. She was staring down at her husband's body, which she, for the first time, seemed fully to see. Was her look one of grief or of resentment for the part he had played so unintentionally in her child's death? It was hard to tell; and when, with slowly rising finger, she pointed to the pistol so tightly clutched in the other outstretched hand, no one there – and by this time the room was full – could foretell what her words would be when her tongue regained its usage and she could speak.What she did say was this: “Is there a bullet gone? Did he fire off that pistol?” A question so manifestly one of delirium that no one answered it, which seemed to surprise her, though she said nothing till her glance had passed all around the walls of the room to where a window stood open to the night, – its lower sash being entirely raised. “There! Look there!” she cried, with a commanding accent, and, throwing up her hands, sank a dead weight into the arms of those supporting her.No one understood; but naturally more than one rushed to the

window. An open space was before them. Here lay the fields not yet parcelled out into lots and built upon; but it was not upon these they looked, but upon the strong trellis which they found there, which, if it supported no vine, formed a veritable ladder between this window and the ground.Could she have meant to call attention to this fact; and were her words expressive of another idea than the obvious one of suicide?If so, to what lengths a woman's imagination can go! Or so their combined looks seemed to proclaim, when to their utter astonishment they saw the officer, who had presented a calm appearance up till now, shift his position and with a surprised grunt direct their eyes to a portion of the wall just visible beyond the half-drawn curtains of the bed. The mirror hanging there showed a star-shaped breakage, such as follows the sharp impact of a bullet or a fiercely projected stone."He fired two shots. One went wild; the other straight home." It was the officer delivering his opinion.Mr. Saunders, returning from the distant room where he had assisted in carrying Mrs. Hammond, cast a look at the shattered glass, and remarked forcibly: "I heard but one; and I was sitting up, disturbed by that poor infant. Jennie, did you hear more than one shot?" he asked, turning toward his wife."No," she answered, but not with the readiness he had evidently expected. "I heard only one, but that was not quite usual in its tone. I'm used to guns," she explained, turning to the officer. "My father was an army man, and he taught me very early to load and fire a pistol. There was a prolonged sound to this shot; something like an echo of itself, following close upon the first ping. Didn't you notice that, Warren?""I remember something of the kind," her husband allowed."He shot twice and quickly," interposed the policeman, sententiously. "We shall find a spent bullet back of that mirror."But when, upon the arrival of the coroner, an investigation was made of the mirror and the wall behind, no bullet was found either there or any where else in the room, save in the dead man's breast. Nor had more than one been shot from his pistol, as five full chambers testified. The case which seemed so simple had its mysteries, but the assertion made by Mrs. Saunders no longer carried weight, nor was the evidence offered by the broken mirror considered as

indubitably establishing the fact that a second shot had been fired in the room.Yet it was equally evident that the charge which had entered the dead speculator's breast had not been delivered at the close range of the pistol found clutched in his hand. There were no powder-marks to be discerned on his pyjama-jacket, or on the flesh beneath. Thus anomaly confronted anomaly, leaving open but one other theory: that the bullet found in Mr. Hammond's breast came from the window and the one he shot went out of it. But this would necessitate his having shot his pistol from a point far removed from where he was found; and his wound was such as made it difficult to believe that he would stagger far, if at all, after its infliction.Yet, because the coroner was both conscientious and alert, he caused a most rigorous search to be made of the ground overlooked by the above mentioned window; a search in which the police joined, but which was without any result save that of rousing the attention of people in the neighbourhood and leading to a story being circulated of a man seen some time the night before crossing the fields in a great hurry. But as no further particulars were forthcoming, and not even a description of the man to be had, no emphasis would have been laid upon this story had it not transpired that the moment a report of it had come to Mrs. Hammond's ears (why is there always some one to carry these reports?) she roused from the torpor into which she had fallen, and in wild fashion exclaimed: "I knew it! I expected it! He was shot through the window and by that wretch. He never shot himself." Violent declarations which trailed off into the one continuous wail, "O, my baby! my poor baby!"Such words, even though the fruit of delirium, merited some sort of attention, or so this good coroner thought, and as soon as opportunity offered and she was sufficiently sane and quiet to respond to his questions, he asked her whom she had meant by that wretch, and what reason she had, or thought she had, of attributing her husband's death to any other agency than his own disgust with life.And then it was that his sympathies, although greatly roused in her favour began to wane. She met the question with a cold stare followed by a few ambiguous words out of which he could make nothing. Had she said wretch? She did not

remember. They must not be influenced by anything she might have uttered in her first grief. She was well-nigh insane at the time. But of one thing they might be sure: her husband had not shot himself; he was too much afraid of death for such an act. Besides, he was too happy. Whatever folks might say he was too fond of his family to wish to leave it.Nor did the coroner or any other official succeed in eliciting anything further from her. Even when she was asked, with cruel insistence, how she explained the fact that the baby was found lying on the floor instead of in its crib, her only answer was: "His father was trying to soothe it. The child was crying dreadfully, as you have heard from those who were kept awake by him that night, and my husband was carrying him about when the shot came which caused George to fall and overlay the baby in his struggles.""Carrying a baby about with a loaded pistol in his hand?" came back in stern retort.She had no answer for this. She admitted when informed that the bullet extracted from her husband's body had been found to correspond exactly with those remaining in the five chambers of the pistol taken from his hand, that he was not only the owner of this pistol but was in the habit of sleeping with it under his pillow; but, beyond that, nothing; and this reticence, as well as her manner which was cold and repellent, told against her.A verdict of suicide was rendered by the coroner's jury, and the life-insurance company, in which Mr. Hammond had but lately insured himself for a large sum, taking advantage of the suicide clause embodied in the policy, announced its determination of not paying the same.Such was the situation, as known to Violet Strange and the general public, on the day she was asked to see Mrs. Hammond and learn what might alter her opinion as to the justice of this verdict and the stand taken by the Shuler Life Insurance Company.* * *The clock on the mantel in Miss Strange's rose-colored boudoir had struck three, and Violet was gazing in some impatience at the door, when there came a gentle knock upon it, and the maid (one of the elderly, not youthful, kind) ushered in her expected visitor."You are Mrs. Hammond?" she asked, in natural awe of the too-black figure outlined so sharply against the deep pink of the sea-shell room.The answer was a slow lifting of the veil which shadowed

the features she knew only from the cuts she had seen in newspapers."You are – Miss Strange?" stammered her visitor; "the young lady who-""I am," chimed in a voice as ringing as it was sweet. "I am the person you have come here to see. And this is my home. But that does not make me less interested in the unhappy, or less desirous of serving them. Certainly you have met with the two greatest losses which can come to a woman – I know your story well enough to say that-; but what have you to tell me in proof that you should not lose your anticipated income as well? Something vital, I hope, else I cannot help you; something which you should have told the coroner's jury – and did not."The flush which was the sole answer these words called forth did not take from the refinement of the young widow's expression, but rather added to it; Violet watched it in its ebb and flow and, seriously affected by it (why, she did not know, for Mrs. Hammond had made no other appeal either by look or gesture), pushed forward a chair and begged her visitor to be seated."We can converse in perfect safety here," she said. "When you feel quite equal to it, let me hear what you have to communicate. It will never go any further. I could not do the work I do if I felt it necessary to have a confidant.""But you are so young and so – so-""So inexperienced you would say and so evidently a member of what New Yorkers call "society." Do not let that trouble you. My inexperience is not likely to last long and my social pleasures are more apt to add to my efficiency than to detract from it."With this Violet's face broke into a smile. It was not the brilliant one so often seen upon her lips, but there was something in its quality which carried encouragement to the widow and led her to say with obvious eagerness: "You know the facts?""I have read all the papers.""I was not believed on the stand.""It was your manner-""I could not help my manner. I was keeping something back, and, being unused to deceit, I could not act quite naturally.""Why did you keep something back? When you saw the unfavourable impression made by your reticence, why did you not speak up and frankly tell your story?""Because I was ashamed. Because I thought it would hurt me more to speak than to keep silent. I do not think so now; but I did then – and so made my great mistake. You must remember not only the

awful shock of my double loss, but the sense of guilt accompanying it; for my husband and I had quarrelled that night, quarrelled bitterly – that was why I had run away into another room and not because I was feeling ill and impatient of the baby's fretful cries.""So people have thought." In saying this, Miss Strange was perhaps cruelly emphatic. "You wish to explain that quarrel? You think it will be doing any good to your cause to go into that matter with me now?""I cannot say; but I must first clear my conscience and then try to convince you that quarrel or no quarrel, he never took his own life. He was not that kind. He had an abnormal fear of death. I do not like to say it but he was a physical coward. I have seen him turn pale at the least hint of danger. He could no more have turned that muzzle upon his own breast than he could have turned it upon his baby. Some other hand shot him, Miss Strange. Remember the open window, the shattered mirror; and I think I know that hand."Her head had fallen forward on her breast. The emotion she showed was not so eloquent of grief as of deep personal shame."You think you know the man?" In saying this, Violet's voice sank to a whisper. It was an accusation of murder she had just heard."To my great distress, yes. When Mr. Hammond and I were married," the widow now proceeded in a more determined tone, "there was another man – a very violent one – who vowed even at the church door that George and I should never live out two full years together. We have not. Our second anniversary would have been in November.""But-""Let me say this: the quarrel of which I speak was not serious enough to occasion any such act of despair on his part. A man would be mad to end his life on account of so slight a disagreement. It was not even on account of the person of whom I've just spoken, though that person had been mentioned between us earlier in the evening, Mr. Hammond having come across him face to face that very afternoon in the subway. Up to this time neither of us had seen or heard of him since our wedding-day.""And you think this person whom you barely mentioned, so mindful of his old grudge that he sought out your domicile, and, with the intention of murder, climbed the trellis leading to your room and turned his pistol upon the shadowy figure which was all he could see in the

semi-obscurity of a much lowered gas-jet?""A man in the dark does not need a bright light to see his enemy when he is intent upon revenge."Miss Strange altered her tone. "And your husband? You must acknowledge that he shot off his pistol whether the other did or not.""It was in self-defence. He would shoot to save his own life – or the baby's.""Then he must have heard or seen-""A man at the window.""And would have shot there?""Or tried to.""Tried to?""Yes; the other shot first – oh, I've thought it all out – causing my husband's bullet to go wild. It was his which broke the mirror.""And what happened then?" Violet's eyes, bright as stars, suddenly narrowed. "Why cannot they find the bullet?""Because it went out of the window – glanced off and went out of the window." Mrs. Hammond's tone was triumphant; her look spirited and intense.Violet eyed her compassionately. "Would a bullet glancing off from a mirror, however hung, be apt to reach a window so far on the opposite side?""I don't know; I only know that it did," was the contradictory, almost absurd, reply."What was the cause of the quarrel you speak of between your husband and yourself? You see, I must know the exact truth and all the truth to be of any assistance to you.""It was – it was about the care I gave, or didn't give, the baby. I feel awfully to have to say it, but George did not think I did my full duty by the child. He said there was no need of its crying so; that if I gave it the proper attention it would not keep the neighbours and himself awake half the night. And I – I got angry and insisted that I did the best I could; that the child was naturally fretful and that if he wasn't satisfied with my way of looking after it, he might try his. All of which was very wrong and unreasonable on my part, as witness the awful punishment which followed.""And what made you get up and leave him?""The growl he gave me in reply. When I heard that, I bounded out of bed and said I was going to the spare room to sleep; and if the baby cried he might just try what he could do himself to stop it.""And he answered?""This, just this – I shall never forget his words as long as I live – "If you go, you need not expect me to let you in again no matter what happens."""He said that?""And locked the door after me. You see I could not tell all that.""It might have been better if you had. It was such a

natural quarrel and so unprovocative of actual tragedy."Mrs. Hammond was silent. It was not difficult to see that she had no very keen regrets for her husband personally. But then he was not a very estimable man nor in any respect her equal."You were not happy with him," Violet ventured to remark."I was not a fully contented woman. But for all that he had no cause to complain of me except for the reason I have mentioned. I was not a very intelligent mother. But if the baby were living now-oh, if he were living now – with what devotion I should care for him."She was on her feet, her arms were raised, her face impassioned with feeling. Violet, gazing at her, heaved a little sigh. It was perhaps in keeping with the situation, perhaps extraneous to it, but whatever its source, it marked a change in her manner. With no further check upon her sympathy, she said very softly: "It is well with the child."The mother stiffened, swayed, and then burst into wild weeping. "But not with me, not with me. I am desolate and bereft. I have not even a home in which to hide my grief and no prospect of one.""But," interposed Violet, "surely your husband left you something? You cannot be quite penniless?""My husband left nothing," was the answer, uttered without bitterness, but with all the hardness of fact. "He had debts. I shall pay those debts. When these and other necessary expenses are liquidated, there will be but little left. He made no secret of the fact that he lived close up to his means. That is why he was induced to take on a life insurance. Not a friend of his but knows his improvidence. I – I have not even jewels. I have only my determination and an absolute conviction as to the real nature of my husband's death.""What is the name of the man you secretly believe to have shot your husband from the trellis?"Mrs. Hammond told her.It was a new one to Violet. She said so and then asked: "What else can you tell me about him?""Nothing, but that he is a very dark man and has a club-foot.""Oh, what a mistake you've made.""Mistake? Yes, I acknowledge that.""I mean in not giving this last bit of information at once to the police. A man can be identified by such a defect. Even his footsteps can be traced. He might have been found that very day. Now, what have we to go upon?""You are right, but not expecting to have any difficulty about the insurance money I thought it

would be generous in me to keep still. Besides, this is only surmise on my part. I feel certain that my husband was shot by another hand than his own, but I know of no way of proving it. Do you?"Then Violet talked seriously with her, explaining how their only hope lay in the discovery of a second bullet in the room which had already been ransacked for this very purpose and without the shadow of a result.A tea, a musicale, and an evening dance kept Violet Strange in a whirl for the remainder of the day. No brighter eye nor more contagious wit lent brilliance to these occasions, but with the passing of the midnight hour no one who had seen her in the blaze of electric lights would have recognized this favoured child of fortune in the earnest figure sitting in the obscurity of an up-town apartment, studying the walls, the ceilings, and the floors by the dim light of a lowered gas-jet. Violet Strange in society was a very different person from Violet Strange under the tension of her secret and peculiar work.She had told them at home that she was going to spend the night with a friend; but only her driver knew who that friend was. Therefore a very natural sense of guilt mingled with her emotions at finding herself alone on a scene whose gruesome mystery she could solve only by identifying herself with the place and the man who had perished there.Dismissing from her mind all thought of self, she strove to think as he thought, and act as he acted on the night when he found himself (a man of but little courage) left in this room with an ailing child.At odds with himself, his wife, and possibly with the child screaming away in its crib, what would he be apt to do in his present emergency? Nothing at first, but as the screaming continued he would remember the old tales of fathers walking the floor at night with crying babies, and hasten to follow suit. Violet, in her anxiety to reach his inmost thought, crossed to where the crib had stood, and, taking that as a start, began pacing the room in search of the spot from which a bullet, if shot, would glance aside from the mirror in the direction of the window. (Not that she was ready to accept this theory of Mrs. Hammond, but that she did not wish to entirely dismiss it without putting it to the test.)She found it in an unexpected quarter of the room and much nearer the bed-head than where his body was found. This, which might seem to

confuse matters, served, on the contrary to remove from the case one of its most serious difficulties. Standing here, he was within reach of the pillow under which his pistol lay hidden, and if startled, as his wife believed him to have been by a noise at the other end of the room, had but to crouch and reach behind him in order to find himself armed and ready for a possible intruder.Imitating his action in this as in other things, she had herself crouched low at the bedside and was on the point of withdrawing her hand from under the pillow, when a new surprise checked her movement and held her fixed in her position, with eyes staring straight at the adjoining wall. She had seen there what he must have seen in making this same turn – the dark bars of the opposite window-frame outlined in the mirror – and understood at once what had happened. In the nervousness and terror of the moment, George Hammond had mistaken this reflection of the window for the window itself, and shot impulsively at the man he undoubtedly saw covering him from the trellis without. But while this explained the shattering of the mirror, how about the other and still more vital question, of where the bullet went afterward? Was the angle at which it had been fired acute enough to send it out of a window diagonally opposed? No; even if the pistol had been held closer to the man firing it than she had reason to believe, the angle still would be oblique enough to carry it on to the further wall.But no sign of any such impact had been discovered on this wall. Consequently, the force of the bullet had been expended before reaching it, and when it fell-Here, her glance, slowly travelling along the floor, impetuously paused. It had reached the spot where the two bodies had been found, and unconsciously her eyes rested there, conjuring up the picture of the bleeding father and the strangled child. How piteous and how dreadful it all was. If she could only understand- Suddenly she rose straight up, staring and immovable in the dim light. Had the idea – the explanation – the only possible explanation covering the whole phenomena come to her at last?It would seem so, for as she so stood, a look of conviction settled over her features, and with this look, evidences of a horror which for all her fast accumulating knowledge of life and its possibilities made her appear

very small and very helpless.A half-hour later, when Mrs. Hammond, in her anxiety at hearing nothing more from Miss Strange, opened the door of her room, it was to find, lying on the edge of the sill, the little detective's card with these words hastily written across it:I do not feel as well as I could wish, and so have telephoned to my driver to come and take me home. I will either see or write you within a few days. But do not allow yourself to hope. I pray you do not allow yourself the least hope; the outcome is still very problematical.* * *When Violet's employer entered his office the next morning it was to find a veiled figure awaiting him which he at once recognized as that of his little deputy. She was slow in lifting her veil and when it finally came free he felt a momentary doubt as to his wisdom in giving her just such a matter as this to investigate. He was quite sure of his mistake when he saw her face, it was so drawn and pitiful."You have failed," said he."Of that you must judge," she answered; and drawing near she whispered in his ear."No!" he cried in his amazement."Think," she murmured, "think. Only so can all the facts be accounted for.""I will look into it; I will certainly look into it," was his earnest reply. "If you are right – but never mind that. Go home and take a horseback ride in the Park. When I have news in regard to this I will let you know. Till then forget it all. Hear me, I charge you to forget everything but your balls and your parties."And Violet obeyed him.Some few days after this, the following statement appeared in all the papers:"Owing to some remarkable work done by the firm of – -, the well-known private detective agency, the claim made by Mrs. George Hammond against the Shuler Life Insurance Company is likely to be allowed without further litigation. As our readers will remember, the contestant has insisted from the first that the bullet causing her husband's death came from another pistol than the one found clutched in his own hand. But while reasons were not lacking to substantiate this assertion, the failure to discover more than the disputed track of a second bullet led to a verdict of suicide, and a refusal of the company to pay."But now that bullet has been found. And where? In the most startling place in the world, viz.: in the larynx of the child found lying dead upon the floor beside his father, strangled as was

supposed by the weight of that father's arm. The theory is, and there seems to be none other, that the father, hearing a suspicious noise at the window, set down the child he was endeavouring to soothe and made for the bed and his own pistol, and, mistaking a reflection of the assassin for the assassin himself, sent his shot sidewise at a mirror just as the other let go the trigger which drove a similar bullet into his breast. The course of the one was straight and fatal and that of the other deflected. Striking the mirror at an oblique angle, the bullet fell to the floor where it was picked up by the crawling child, and, as was most natural, thrust at once into his mouth. Perhaps it felt hot to the little tongue; perhaps the child was simply frightened by some convulsive movement of the father who evidently spent his last moment in an endeavour to reach the child, but, whatever the cause, in the quick gasp it gave, the bullet was drawn into the larynx, strangling him."That the father's arm, in his last struggle, should have fallen directly across the little throat is one of those anomalies which confounds reason and misleads justice by stopping investigation at the very point where truth lies and mystery disappears."Mrs. Hammond is to be congratulated that there are detectives who do not give too much credence to outward appearances."A spokesman for the police stated that they expect soon to capture the man who sped home the death-dealing bullet."

THE SHOPLIFTERS by Arthur B. Reeve

(Sleuth: Constance Dunlap.)Arthur B. Reeve carved out a niche all his own in the mystery hall of fame when he created the first scientific detective, Craig Kennedy, who applied newly emerging discoveries to crime fighting in the age of the horseless carriage. Unfortunately, the demand for Kennedy tales kept Reeve so busy that he only found time to write one volume of stories featuring his female sleuth, Constance Dunlap: Woman Detective (1916). This is a shame, for unlike most masculine detectives, whose interest in crime and criminals ends with its detection, Ms Dunlap remains concerned for fate of criminal and victim alike after the crime is solved, often effecting the

reformation and rehabilitation of a former miscreant."Madam, would you mind going with me for a few moments to the office on the third floor?"Constance Dunlap had been out on a shopping excursion. She had stopped at the jewellery counter of Stacy's to have a ring repaired and had gone on to the leather goods department to purchase something else.The woman who spoke to her was a quietly dressed young person, quite inconspicuous, with a keen eye that seemed to take in everything within a radius of a wide-angled lens at a glance.She leaned over and before Constance could express even surprise, added in a whisper, "Look in your bag."Constance looked hastily, then realized what had happened. The ring was gone!It gave her quite a shock, too, for the ring, a fine diamond, was a present from her husband, one of the few pieces of jewellery, treasured not only for its intrinsic value but also as a remembrance of Carlton and the supreme sacrifice he had made for her.She had noticed nothing in the crowd, nothing more than she had noticed scores of times before. The woman watched her puzzled look."I've been following you," she said. "By this time the other store detectives must have caught the shoplifter and bag-opener who touched you. You see, we don't make any arrests in the store if we can help it, because we don't like to make a scene. It's bad for business. Besides, if she had anything else, we are safer when the case comes to court, if we have caught her actually leaving the store with it. Of course, when we make an arrest on the sidewalk, we bring the shoplifter back, but in a private, back elevator."Constance was following the young woman mechanically. At least there was a chance of recovering the ring."She was standing next to you at the jewellery counter," she continued, "and if you will help identify her, the store management will appreciate it – and make it worth your while. Besides," she urged, "It's really your duty to do it, madam."Constance remembered now the rather simply but richly gowned young woman who had been standing next to her at the counter, seemingly unable to decide which of a number of beautiful rings she really wanted. She remembered because, with her own love of beauty, she had wanted one herself, in fact had thought at the time that she, too, might have difficulty in

choosing.With the added feeling of curiosity, Constance followed the woman detective up in the elevator.In the office, apart in a little room curiously furnished with a camera, innumerable photographs, cabinets, and filing cases, was a young woman, perhaps twenty-six or seven. On a table before her lay a pile of laces and small trinkets. There, too, was the beautiful diamond ring which she had hidden in her muff. Constance fairly gasped at the sight.The girl was sitting limply in a chair crying bitterly. She was not a hardened looking creature. In fact, her face bore evident traces of refinement, and her long, slender fingers hinted at a nervous, artistic temperament. It was rather a shock to see such a girl under such distressing circumstances.“We’ve lost so much lately,” a small ferret-eyed man was saying, “that we must make an example of some one. It’s serious for us detectives, too. We’ll lose our jobs unless we can stop you boosters.”“Oh – I – I didn’t mean to do it. I – I just couldn’t help it,” sobbed the girl over and over again.“Yes,” drawled the man, “that’s what they all say. But you’ve been caught with the goods, this time, young lady.”A woman entered, and the man turned to her quickly.“Carr – Kitty Carr. Did you find anything under that name?”“No, sir,” replied the woman store detective. “We’ve looked all through the records and the photographs. We don’t find her. And yet I don’t think it is an alias – at least, if it is, not an alias for any one we have any record of. I’ve a good eye for faces, and there isn’t one we have on file as – as good looking,” she added, perhaps with a little touch of wistfulness at her own plainness and this beauty gone wrong.“This is the woman who lost the ring,” put in the other woman detective, motioning to Constance, who had accompanied her and was standing, a silent spectator.The man held up the ring, which Constance had already recognized.“Is that yours?” he asked.For a moment, strangely, she hesitated. If it had been any other ring in the world she felt sure that she would have said no. But, then, she reflected, there was that pile of stuff. There was no use in concealing her ownership of the ring. “Yes,” she murmured.“One moment, please,” answered the man brusquely. “I must send down for the salesgirl who waited on you to identify you and your check – a mere formality, you know, but necessary to keep things straight.”Constance

sat down.“I suppose you don’t realize it,” explained the man, turning to Constance, “but the shoplifters of the city get away with a couple of million dollars’ worth of stuff every year. It’s the price we have to pay for displaying our goods. But it’s too high. They are the department store’s greatest unsolved problem. Now most of the stores are working together for their common interests, seeing what they can do to root them out. We all keep a sort of private rogue’s gallery of them. But we don’t seem to have anything on this girl, nor have any of the other stores who exchange photographs and information with us anything on her.”“Evidently, then, it is her first offence,” put in Constance, wondering at herself. Strangely, she felt more of sympathy than of anger for the girl.“You mean the first time she has been caught at it,” corrected the head of the store detectives.“It is my weakness,” sobbed the girl. “Sometimes an irresistible impulse to steal comes over me. I just can’t help it.”She was sobbing convulsively. As she talked and listened there seemed to come a complete breakdown. She wept as though her heart would break.“Oh,” exclaimed the man, “can it! Cut out the sob stuff!”“And yet,” mused Constance half to herself, watching the girl closely, “when one walks through the shops and sees thousands of dollars’ worth of goods lying unprotected on the counters, is it any wonder that some poor woman or girl should be tempted and fall? There, before her eyes and within her grasp, lies the very article above all others which she so ardently craves. No one is looking. The salesgirl is busy with another customer. The rest is easy. And then the store detective steps in – and here she is – captured.”The girl had been listening wildly through her tears. “Oh,” she sobbed, “you don’t understand – none of you. I don’t crave anything. I – I just – can’t help it – and then, afterwards – I – I HATE the stuff – and I am so – afraid. I hurry home – and I – oh, what shall I do – what shall I do?”Constance pitied her deeply. She looked from the wild-eyed, tear – stained face to the miscellaneous pile of material on the table, and the unwinking gaze of the store detectives. True, the girl had taken a very valuable diamond ring, and from herself. But the laces, the trinkets, all were abominably cheap, not worth risking anything for.Constance ’s attention was

recalled by the man who beckoned her aside to talk to the salesgirl who had waited on her.“You remember seeing this lady at the counter?” he asked of the girl. She nodded. “And that woman in there?” he motioned. Again the salesgirl nodded.“Do you remember anything else that happened?” he asked Constance as they faced Kitty Carr and he handed Constance the ring.Constance looked the detective squarely in the face for a moment.“I have my ring. You have the other stuff,” she murmured. “Besides, there is no record against her. She doesn’t even look like a professional bad character. No – I’ll not appear to press the charge – I’ll make it as hard as I can before I’ll do it,” she added positively.The woman, who had overheard, looked her gratitude. The detectives were preparing to argue. Constance hardly knew what she was saying, as she hurried on before any one else could speak.“No,” she added, “but I’ll tell you what I will do. If you will let her go I will look after her. Parole her, unofficially, with me.”Constance drew a card from her case and handed it to the detective. He read it carefully, and a puzzled look came over his face. “Charge account – good customer – pays promptly,” he muttered under his breath.For a moment he hesitated. Then he sat down at a desk.“Mrs. Dunlap,” he said, “I’ll do it.”He pulled a piece of printed paper from the desk, filled in a few blanks, then turned to Kitty Carr, handing her a pen.“Sign here,” he said brusquely.Constance bent over and read. It was a form of release:“I, Kitty Carr, residing at – East – Third Street, single, age twenty-seven years, in consideration of the sum of One Dollar, hereby admit taking the following property… without having paid therefore and with intent not to pay therefore, and by reason of the withdrawal of the complaint of larceny, OF WHICH I AM GUILTY, I hereby remise, release, and forever discharge the said Stacy Co. or its representatives from any claims, action, or causes of action which I may have against the Stacy Co. or its representatives or agents by reason of the withdrawal of said charge of larceny and failure to prosecute.”“Signed, Kitty Carr.”“Now, Kitty,” soothed Constance, as the trembling signature was blotted and added to a photograph which had quietly been taken, “they are going to let you go this time – with me. Come, straighten your hat, wipe your eyes. You

must take me home with you – where we can have a nice long talk. Remember, I am your friend."On the way uptown and across the city the girl managed to tell most of her history. She came from a family of means in another city. Her father was dead, but her mother and a brother were living. She herself had a small annuity, sufficient to live on modestly, and had come to New York seeking a career as an artist. Her story, her ambitions appealed to Constance, who had been somewhat of an artist herself and recognized even in talking to the girl that she was not without some ability.Then, too, she found that Kitty actually lived, as she had said, in a cosy little kitchenette apartment with two friends, a man and his wife, both of whom happened to be out when they arrived. As Constance looked about she could see clearly that there was indeed no adequate reason why the girl should steal."How do you feel?" asked Constance when the girl had sunk half exhausted on a couch in the living room."Oh, so nervous," she replied, pressing her hands to the back of her head, "and I have a terrible headache, although it is a little better now."They had talked for perhaps half an hour, as Constance soothed her, when there was the sound of a key in the door. A young woman in black entered. She was well-dressed, in fact elegantly dressed in a quiet way, somewhat older than Kitty, but by no means as attractive."Why – hello, Kitty," she cried, "what's the matter!""Oh, Annie, I'm so unstrung," replied the girl, then recollecting Constance, added, "let me introduce my friend, Mrs. Dunlap. This is Mrs. Annie Grayson, who has taken me in as a lodger and is ever so kind to me."Constance nodded, and the woman held out her hand frankly."Very glad to meet you," she said. "My husband, Jim, is not at home, but we are a very happy little family up here. Why, Kitty, what is the matter?"The girl had turned her face down in the sofa pillows and was sobbing again. Between sobs she blurted out the whole of the sordid story. And as she proceeded, Annie glanced quickly from her to Constance, for confirmation.Suddenly she rose and extended her hand to Constance."Mrs. Dunlap," she said, "how can I ever thank you for what you have done for Kitty? She is almost like a sister to me. You – you were – too good."There was a little catch in the woman's voice. But Constance could not

quite make out whether it was acted or wholly genuine."Did she ever do anything like that before?" she asked."Only once," replied Annie Grayson, "and then I gave her such a talking to that I thought she would be able to restrain herself when she felt that way again."It was growing late and Constance recollected that she had an engagement for the evening. As she rose to go Kitty almost overwhelmed her with embraces."I'll keep in touch with Kitty," whispered Constance at the door, "and if you will let me know when anything comes up that I may help her in, I shall thank you.""Depend on me," answered Mrs. Grayson, "and I want to add my thanks to Kitty's for what you have done. I'll try to help you."As she groped her way down the as yet unlighted stairs, Constance became aware of two men talking in the hall. As she passed them she thought she recognized one of the voices. She lowered her head, and fortunately her thin veil in the half-light did the rest. She passed unnoticed and reached the door of the apartment.As she opened it she heard the men turn and mount the stairs. Instinctively she realized that something was wrong. One of the men was her old enemy, Drummond, the detective.They had not recognized her, and as she stood for a moment with her hand on the knob, she tried to reason it out. Then she crept back, and climbed the stairs noiselessly. Voices inside the apartment told her that she had not been mistaken. It was the apartment of the Graysons and Kitty that they sought.The hall door was of thin, light wood, and as she stood there she could easily hear what passed inside."What – is Kitty ill?" she heard the strange man's voice inquire."Yes," replied Mrs. Grayson, then her voice trailed off into an indistinguishable whisper."How are you, Kitty?" asked the man."Oh, I have a splitting headache, Jim. I've had it all day. I could just get up and – screech!""I'm sorry. I hope it gets better soon.""Oh, I guess it will. They often go away as suddenly as they come. You know I've had them before."Drummond's voice then spoke up."Did you see the Trimble ad tonight?" he asked, evidently of Annie. "They have a lot of new diamonds from Arkansas, they say, one of them is a big one, the Arkansas Queen, I believe they call it.""No, I didn't see the papers," replied Annie.There was the rustle of a newspaper."Here's a picture of it. It must be

great. I've heard a good deal about it.""Have you seen it?" asked Annie."No, but I intend to see it."They had passed into the next room, and Constance, fearing to be discovered, decided to get away before that happened.Early the next morning she decided to call on Kitty, but by the time Constance arrived at the apartment it was closed, and a neighbour informed her that the two women had gone out together about half an hour before.Constance was nervous and, as she left the apartment, she did not notice that a man who had been loitering about had quickened his pace and overtaken her."So," drawled a voice, "you're travelling with shoplifters now."She looked up quickly. This time she had run squarely into Drummond. There was no concealment possible now. Her only refuge was silence. She felt the hot tingle of indignation in her cheeks. But she said nothing."Huh!" exclaimed Drummond, walking along beside her, and adding contemptuously, "I don't know the young one, but you know who the other is?"Constance bit her lip."No?" he queried. "Then I'll show you."He had taken from his pocket a bunch of oblong cards. Each bore, she could see from the corner of her eye, a full face and a profile picture of a woman, and on the back of the card was a little writing.He selected one and handed it to Constance. Instantly she recognized the face. It was Annie Grayson, with half a dozen aliases written after the name."There!" he fairly snorted. "That's the sort of people your little friend consorts with. Why, they call Annie Grayson the queen of the shoplifters. She has forgotten more about shoplifting than all the rest will ever know."Constance longed to ask him what had taken him to the Grayson flat the night before, but thought better of it. There was no use in angering Drummond further. Instead, she let him think that he had succeeded in frightening her off.She went back to her own apartment to wait and worry. Evidently Drummond was pretty sure of something, or he would not have disclosed his hand to her, even partially. She felt that she must see Kitty before it was too late. Then the thought crossed her mind that perhaps already it was too late. Drummond evidently was working in some way for an alliance of the department stores outside.Constance had had her own ideas about Kitty. And as she waited and

watched, she tried to reason how she might carry them out if she had a chance.She had just been insured, and had been very much interested in the various tests that the woman doctor of the insurance company had applied to her. One in particular which involved the use of a little simple instrument that fitted over the forearm had interested her particularly. She had talked to the doctor about it, and as she talked an idea had occurred to her that it might have other uses than those which the doctor made of it. She had bought one. While she was waiting it occurred to her that perhaps it might serve her purpose. She got the instrument out. It consisted of a little arrangement that fitted over the forearm, and was attached by a tube to a dial that registered in millimetres a column of mercury. Would it really show anything, she wondered?There was a quick call on the telephone and she answered it, her hand trembling, for she felt sure that it was something about the little woman she had befriended.Somehow or other her voice hardened as she answered the call and found that it was from Drummond. It would never do to betray even nervousness before him.“Your friend, Miss Carr,” shot out Drummond with brutal directness, “has been caught again. She fell into something as neatly as if she had really meant to do it. Yesterday, you know, Trimble’s advertised the new diamond, the Arkansas Queen, on exhibition. Well, it was made of paste, anyway. But it was a perfect imitation. But that didn’t make any difference. We caught Kitty just now trying to lift it. I’m sorry it wasn’t the other one. But small fry are better than none. We’ll get her, too, yet. Besides, I find this Kitty has a record already at Stacy’s.”He added the last words with a taunting sneer. Constance realized suddenly the truth. The whole affair had been a plant of Drummond’s!“You are at Trimble’s?” she inquired quickly. “Well, can you wait there just a few minutes? I’d like to see Miss Carr.”Drummond promised. His acquiescence in itself boded no good, but nevertheless she decided to go. As she left her apartment hurriedly she picked up the little instrument and dropped it into her hand-bag.“You see, it’s no use,” almost chortled Drummond as Constance stepped off the elevator and opened the door to a little room at Trimble’s much like that which she had

already seen at Stacy's. "A shoplifter becomes habitual after twenty-five. They get to consorting with others of their kind."Kitty was sitting rigidly motionless in a chair, staring straight ahead, as Constance entered. She gave a start at the sight of a familiar face, rose, and would almost have fainted if Constance had not caught her. It seemed as if something had snapped in the girl's make-up. For the first time tears came. Constance patted her hand softly. The girl was an enigma. Was she a clever actress – one minute hardened Miss Sophisticated, the next appealing Miss Innocence?"How did you – catch her?" asked Constance a moment later as she found an opportunity to talk to Drummond alone."Oh, she was trying to substitute a paste replica for the alleged Arkansas Queen. The clerk noticed the replica in time, saw a little spot of carbon on it – and she was shadowed and arrested just as she was leaving the store. Yes, they found the other paste jewel on her. She was caught with the goods.""Replica?" repeated Constance, thinking of the picture that had appeared in the papers the night before. "How could she get a replica of it?""How do I know?" shrugged Drummond coldly.Constance looked him squarely in the eyes."What about Annie Grayson?" she asked point-blank."I have taken care of that," he replied harshly. "She is already under arrest, and from what I have heard we may get something on her now. We have a record against the Carr girl. We can use it against her friend. We're just about taking her to the flat to identify the Grayson woman. Would you like to come along?" he added in a spirit of bravado. "I think you are a material witness in the Stacy case, anyhow."Constance felt bitterly her defeat. Still she went with them. There was always a chance that something might turn up.As they entered the door of the kitchenette loud voices told them that some one was disputing inside.Drummond strode in.The sight of a huge pile of stuff that two strange men had drawn out of drawers and closets and stacked on the table riveted Constance 's eyes. Only dimly she could hear that Annie Grayson was violently threatening Drummond, who stood coolly surveying the scene.The stuff on the table was, in fact, quite enough to dazzle the eyes. There were articles of every sort and description there – silks, laces, jewellery and trinkets, little antiques,

even rare books – everything small and portable, some of the richest and most exquisite, others of the cheapest and most tawdry. It was a truly remarkable collection, which the raiding detectives had brought to light.As Constance took in the scene – the raiding detectives holding the stormy Annie Grayson at bay, Drummond, cool, supercilious, Kitty almost on the edge of collapse – she wondered how Jim Grayson had managed to slip through the meshes of the net.She had read of such things. Annie Grayson was to all appearances a “fence” for stolen goods. This was, perhaps, a school for shoplifters. In addition to her other accomplishments, the queen of the shoplifters was a “Fagin,” educating others to the tricks of her trade, taking advantage of their lack of facility in disposing of the stolen goods.Just then the woman caught sight of Constance standing in the doorway.In an instant she had broken loose and ran toward her.“What are you,” she hissed, “one of these department store Moll Dicks, too?”Quick as a flash Kitty Carr had leaped to her feet and placed herself between them.“No, Annie, no. She was a real friend of mine. No – if your own friends had been as loyal as she was to me this would never have happened – I should never have been caught again, for I should never have given them a chance to get it on me.”“Little fool!” ground out Annie Grayson, raising her arm.“Here – here – LADIES!” interposed Drummond, protruding an arm between the two, and winking sarcastically to the two other men. “None of that. We shall need both of you in our business. I’ve no objection to your talking; but cut out the rough stuff.”Constance had stepped back. She was cool, cool as Drummond, although she knew her heart was thumping like a sledge-hammer. There was Kitty Carr, in a revulsion of feeling, her hands pressed tightly to her head again, as if it were bursting. She was swaying as if she would faint.Constance caught her gently about the waist and forced her down on the couch where she had been lying the night before. With her back to the others, she reached quickly into her hand-bag and pulled out the little instrument she had hastily stuffed into it. Deftly she fastened it to Kitty’s wrist and forearm.She dropped down on her knees beside the poor girl, and gently stroked her free hand, reassuring her in a low tone.“There, there,” she

soothed. “You are not well, Kitty. Perhaps, after all, there may be something – some explanation.”In spite of all, however, Kitty was on the verge of the wildest hysterics. Annie Grayson sniffed contemptuously at such weakness.Drummond came over, an exasperating sneer on his face. As he looked down he saw what Constance was doing, and she rose, so that all could see now.“This girl,” she said, speaking rapidly, “is afflicted with a nervous physical disorder, a mania, which is uncontrollable, and takes this outlet. It is emotional insanity – not loss of control of the will, but perversion of the will.”“Humph!” was Drummond’s sole comment with a significant glance at the pile of goods on the table.“It is not the articles themselves so much,” went on Constance, following his glance, “as it is the pleasure, the excitement, the satisfaction – call it what you will – of taking them. A thief works for the benefit he may derive from objects stolen after he gets them. Here is a girl who apparently has no further use for an article after she gets it, who forgets, perhaps hates it.”“Oh, yes,” remarked Drummond, “but why are they all so careful not to get caught? Every one is responsible who knows the nature and consequences of his act.”Constance had wheeled about.“That is not so,” she exclaimed. “Any modern alienist will tell you that. Sometimes the chief mark of insanity may be knowing the nature and consequences, craftily avoiding detection with an almost superhuman cunning. No; the test is whether knowing the nature and consequences, a person suffers under such a defect of will that in spite of everything, in the face of everything, that person cannot control that will.”As she spoke, she had quickly detached the little instrument and had placed it on Annie Grayson’s arm. If it had been a Bertillon camera, or even a finger-print outfit, Annie Grayson would probably have fought like a tigress. But this thing was a new one. She had a peculiar spirit of bravado.“Such terms as kleptomania,” went on Constance, “are often regarded as excuses framed up by the experts to cover up plain ordinary stealing. But did you wiseacres of crime ever stop to think that perhaps they do actually exist?“There are many things that distinguish such a woman as I have described to you from a common thief. There is the insane desire to steal –

merely for stealing's sake – a morbid craving. Of course in a sense it is stealing. But it is persistent, incorrigible, irrational, motiveless, useless."Stop and think about it a moment," she concluded, lowering her voice and taking advantage of the very novelty of the situation she had created. "Such diseases are the product of civilization, of sensationalism. Naturally enough, then, woman, with her delicately balanced nervous organization, is the first and chief offender – if you insist on calling such a person an offender under your antiquated methods of dealing with such cases."She had paused."What did you say you called this thing?" asked Drummond as he tapped the arrangement on Annie Grayson's arm.He was evidently not much impressed by it, yet somehow instinctively regarded it with somewhat of the feelings of an elephant toward a mouse."That?" answered Constance, taking it off Annie Grayson's wrist before she could do anything with it. "Why, I don't know that I said anything about it. It is really a sphygmomanometer – the little expert witness that never lies – one of the instruments the insurance companies use now to register blood pressure and discover certain diseases. It occurred to me that it might be put to other and equally practical uses. For no one can conceal the emotions from this instrument, not even a person of cast-iron nerves."She had placed it on Drummond's arm. He appeared fascinated."See how it works?" she went on. "You see one hundred and twenty-five millimetres is the normal pressure. Kitty Carr is absolutely abnormal. I do not know, but I think that she suffers from periodical attacks of vertigo. Almost all kleptomaniacs do. During an attack they are utterly irresponsible."Drummond was looking at the thing carefully. Constance turned to Annie Grayson."Where's your husband?" she asked offhand."Oh, he disappeared as soon as these department store dicks showed up," she replied bitterly. She had been watching Constance narrowly, quite nonplussed, and unable to make anything out of what was going on.Constance looked at Drummond inquiringly.He shook his head slowly. "I'm afraid we'll never catch him," he said. "He got the jump on us – although we have our lines out for him, too."She had glanced down quickly at the little innocent-looking but telltale sphygmomanometer."You lie!" she exclaimed suddenly, with all the

vigour of a man.She was pointing at the quivering little needle which registered a sudden, access of emotion totally concealed by the sang-froid of Drummond's well-schooled exterior.She wrenched the thing off his wrist and dropped it into her bag. A moment later she stood by the open window facing the street, a bright little police whistle gleaming in her hand, ready for its shrill alarm if any move were made to cut short what she had to say.She was speaking rapidly now."You see, I've had it on all of you, one after another, and each has told me your story, just enough of it for me to piece it together. Kitty is suffering from a form of vertigo, an insanity, kleptomania, the real thing. As for you, Mr. Drummond, you were in league with the alleged husband – your own stool pigeon – to catch Annie Grayson."Drummond moved. So did the whistle. He stopped."But she was too clever for you all. She was not caught, even by a man who lived with her as her own husband. For she was not operating."Annie Grayson moved as if to face out her accusers at this sudden turn of fortune."One moment, Annie," cut in Constance."And yet, you are the real shoplifter, after all. You fell into the trap which Drummond laid for you. I take pleasure, Mr. Drummond, in presenting you with better evidence than even your own stool pigeon could possibly have given you under the circumstances."She paused."For myself," she concluded, "I claim Kitty Carr. I claim the right to take her, to have her treated for her – her disease. I claim it because the real shoplifter, the queen of the shoplifters, Annie Grayson, has worked out a brand-new scheme, taking up a true kleptomaniac and using her insanity to carry out the stealings which she suggested – and safely, to this point, has profited by!"

THE MURDER AT TROYTE'S HILL by C. L. Pirkis

(Sleuth: Loveday Brooke)Loveday Brooke's career begins almost with the beginning of the detective novel – The Experiences of Loveday Brooke appearing in 1893, not long after the debut of Violet Strange. Originally written under the genderless cognomen of C. L. Pirkis, they were eventually discovered to be the work of Catherine Louisa Pirkis. Unlike many other women

detectives, Ms Brooke generally solved her cases by insinuating herself into the midst of the suspects in a suitable disguise – maid, cook, nurse, etc.“ Griffiths, of the Newcastle Constabulary, has the case in hand,” said Mr. Dyer; “those Newcastle men are keen-witted, shrewd fellows, and very jealous of outside interference. They only sent to me under protest, as it were, because they wanted your sharp wits at work inside the house.”“I suppose throughout I am to work with Griffiths, not with you?” said Miss Brooke.“Yes; when I have given you in outline the facts of the case, I simply have nothing more to do with it, and you must depend on Griffiths for any assistance of any sort that you may require.”Here, with a swing, Mr. Dyer opened his big ledger and turned rapidly over its leaves till he came to the heading “Troyte’s Hill” and the date “September 6th.”“I’m all attention,” said Loveday, leaning back in her chair in the attitude of a listener.“The murdered man,” resumed Mr. Dyer, “is a certain Alexander Henderson – usually known as old Sandy – lodge-keeper to Mr. Craven, of Troyte’s Hill, Cumberland. The lodge consists merely of two rooms on the ground floor, a bedroom and a sitting-room; these Sandy occupied alone, having neither kith nor kin of any degree. On the morning of September 6th, some children going up to the house with milk from the farm, noticed that Sandy ’s bed-room window stood wide open. Curiosity prompted them to peep in; and then, to their horror, they saw old Sandy, in his night-shirt, lying dead on the floor, as if he had fallen backwards from the window. They raised an alarm; and on examination, it was found that death had ensued from a heavy blow on the temple, given either by a strong fist or some blunt instrument. The room, on being entered, presented a curious appearance. It was as if a herd of monkeys had been turned into it and allowed to work their impish will. Not an article of furniture remained in its place: the bed-clothes had been rolled into a bundle and stuffed into the chimney; the bedstead – a small iron one – lay on its side; the one chair in the room stood on the top of the table; fender and fire-irons lay across the washstand, whose basin was to be found in a farther corner, holding bolster and pillow. The clock stood on its head in the middle of the mantelpiece; and the small vases and ornaments, which flanked it on

either side, were walking, as it were, in a straight line towards the door. The old man’s clothes had been rolled into a ball and thrown on the top of a high cupboard in which he kept his savings and whatever valuables he had. This cupboard, however, had not been meddled with, and its contents remained intact, so it was evident that robbery was not the motive for the crime. At the inquest, subsequently held, a verdict of ”wilful murder‘ against some person or persons unknown was returned. The local police are diligently investigating the affair, but, as yet, no arrests have been made. The opinion that at present prevails in the neighbourhood is that the crime has been perpetrated by some lunatic, escaped or otherwise, and enquiries are being made at the local asylums as to missing or lately released inmates. Griffiths, however, tells me that his suspicions set in another direction.““Did anything of importance transpire at the inquest?”“Nothing specially important. Mr. Craven broke down in giving his evidence when he alluded to the confidential relations that had always subsisted between Sandy and himself, and spoke of the last time that he had seen him alive. The evidence of the butler, and one or two of the female servants, seems clear enough, and they let fall something of a hint that Sandy was not altogether a favourite among them, on account of the overbearing manner in which he used his influence with his master. Young Mr. Craven, a youth of about nineteen, home from Oxford for the long vacation, was not present at the inquest; a doctor’s certificate was put in stating that he was suffering from typhoid fever, and could not leave his bed without risk to his life. Now this young man is a thoroughly bad sort, and as much a gentleman-blackleg as it is possible for such a young fellow to be. It seems to Griffiths that there is something suspicious about this illness of his. He came back from Oxford on the verge of delirium tremens, pulled round from that, and then suddenly, on the day after the murder, Mrs. Craven rings the bell, announces that he has developed typhoid fever and orders a doctor to be sent for.”“What sort of man is Mr. Craven senior?”“He seems to be a quiet old fellow, a scholar and learned philologist. Neither his neighbours nor his family see much of him; he almost lives in his study, writing a treatise, in seven or

eight volumes, on comparative philology. He is not a rich man. Troyte's Hill, though it carries position in the county, is not a paying property, and Mr. Craven is unable to keep it up properly. I am told he has had to cut down expenses in all directions in order to send his son to college, and his daughter from first to last, has been entirely educated by her mother. Mr. Craven was originally intended for the church, but for some reason or other, when his college career came to an end, he did not present himself for ordination – went out to Natal instead, where he obtained some civil appointment and where he remained for about fifteen years. Henderson was his servant during the latter portion of his Oxford career, and must have been greatly respected by him, for although the remuneration derived from his appointment at Natal was small, he paid Sandy a regular yearly allowance out of it. When, about ten years ago, he succeeded to Troyte's Hill, on the death of his elder brother, and returned home with his family, Sandy was immediately installed as lodge-keeper, and at so high a rate of pay that the butler's wages were cut down to meet it."“Ah, that wouldn't improve the butler's feelings towards him," ejaculated Loveday.Mr. Dyer went on: “But, in spite of his high wages, he doesn't appear to have troubled much about his duties as lodge-keeper, for they were performed, as a rule, by the gardener's boy, while he took his meals and passed his time at the house, and, speaking generally, put his finger into every pie. You know the old adage respecting the servant of twenty-one years' standing: ”Seven years my servant, seven years my equal, seven years my master.“ Well, it appears to have held good in the case of Mr. Craven and Sandy. The old gentleman, absorbed in his philological studies, evidently let the reins slip through his fingers, and Sandy seems to have taken easy possession of them. The servants frequently had to go to him for orders, and he carried things, as a rule, with a high hand."“Did Mrs. Craven never have a word to say on the matter?"“I've not heard much about her. She seems to be a quiet sort of person. She is a Scotch missionary's daughter; perhaps she spends her time working for the Cape mission and that sort of thing."“And young Mr. Craven: did he knock under to Sandy 's rule?"“Ah, now you're hitting the bull's

eye and we come to Griffiths ' theory. The young man and Sandy appear to have been at loggerheads ever since the Cravens took possession of Troyte's Hill. As a schoolboy Master Harry defied Sandy and threatened him with his hunting crop; and subsequently, as a young man, has used strenuous endeavours to put the old servant in his place. On the day before the murder, Griffiths says, there was a terrible scene between the two, in which the young gentleman, in the presence of several witnesses, made use of strong language and threatened the old man's life. Now, Miss Brooke, I have told you all the circumstances of the case so far as I know them. For fuller particulars I must refer you to Griffiths. He, no doubt, will meet you at Grenfell – the nearest station to Troyte's Hill, and tell you in what capacity he has procured for you an entrance into the house. By-the-way, he has wired to me this morning that he hopes you will be able to save the Scotch express tonight."Loveday expressed her readiness to comply with Mr. Griffiths' wishes."I shall be glad," said Mr. Dyer, as he shook hands with her at the office door, "to see you immediately on your return – that, however, I suppose, will not be yet awhile. This promises, I fancy, to be a longish affair?" This was said interrogatively."I haven't the least idea on the matter," answered Loveday. "I start on my work without theory of any sort – in fact, I may say, with my mind a perfect blank."And anyone who had caught a glimpse of her blank, expressionless features, as she said this, would have taken her at her word.Grenfell, the nearest post-town to Troyte's Hill is a fairly busy, populous little town – looking south towards the black country, and northwards to low, barren hills. Pre-eminent among these stands Troyte's Hill, famed in the old days as a border keep, and possibly at a still earlier date as a Druid stronghold.At a small inn at Grenfell, dignified by the title of "The Station Hotel," Mr. Griffiths, of the Newcastle constabulary, met Loveday and still further initiated her into the mysteries of the Troyte's Hill murder."A little of the first excitement has subsided," he said, after preliminary greetings had been exchanged; "but still the wildest rumours are flying about and repeated as solemnly as if they were Gospel truths. My chief here and my colleagues generally adhere to their first

conviction, that the criminal is some suddenly crazed tramp or else an escaped lunatic, and they are confident that sooner or later we shall come upon his traces. Their theory is that Sandy, hearing some strange noise at the Park Gates, put his head out of the window to ascertain the cause and immediately had his death blow dealt him; then they suppose that the lunatic scrambled into the room through the window and exhausted his frenzy by turning things generally upside down. They refuse altogether to share my suspicions respecting young Mr. Craven."Mr. Griffiths was a tall, thin-featured man, with iron-grey hair, cut so close to his head that it refused to do anything but stand on end. This gave a somewhat comic expression of the upper portion of his face and clashed oddly with the melancholy look that his mouth habitually wore."I have made all smooth for you at Troyte's Hill," he presently went on. "Mr. Craven is not wealthy enough to allow himself the luxury of a family lawyer, so he occasionally employs the services of Messrs. Wells and Sugden, lawyers in this place, and who, as it happens, have, off and on, done a good deal of business for me. It was through them I heard that Mr. Craven was anxious to secure the assistance of an amanuensis. I immediately offered your services, stating that you were a friend of mine, a lady of impoverished means, who would gladly undertake the duties for the munificent sum of a guinea a month, with board and lodging. The old gentleman at once jumped at the offer, and is anxious for you to be at Troyte's Hill at once.Loveday expressed her satisfaction with the programme that Mr. Griffiths had sketched for her, then she had a few questions to ask."Tell me," she said, "what led you, in the first instance, to suspect young Mr. Craven of the crime?""The footing on which he and Sandy stood towards each other, and the terrible scene that occurred between them only the day before the murder," answered Griffiths, promptly. "Nothing of this, however, was elicited at the inquest, where a very fair face was put on Sandy 's relations with the whole of the Craven family. I have subsequently unearthed a good deal respecting the private life of Mr. Harry Craven, and, among other things, I have found out that on the night of the murder he left the house shortly after ten o'clock, and no one, so far as I

have been able to ascertain, knows at what hour he returned. Now I must draw your attention, Miss Brooke, to the fact that at the inquest the medical evidence went to prove that the murder had been committed between ten and eleven at night.""Do you surmise, then, that the murder was a planned thing on the part of this young man?""I do. I believe that he wandered about the grounds until Sandy shut himself in for the night, then aroused him by some outside noise, and, when the old man looked out to ascertain the cause, dealt him a blow with the bludgeon or loaded stick, that caused his death.""A cold-blooded crime that, for a boy of nineteen?""Yes. He's a good-looking, gentlemanly youngster, too, with manner as mild as milk, but from all accounts is as full of wickedness as an egg is full of meat. Now, to come to another point – if, in connection with these ugly facts, you take into consideration the suddenness of his illness, I think you'll admit that it bears a suspicious appearance and might reasonably give rise to the surmise that it was a plant on his part, in order to get out of the inquest.""Who is the doctor attending him?""A man called Waters; not much of a practitioner, from all accounts, and no doubt he feels himself highly honoured in being summoned to Troyte's Hill. The Cravens, it seems, have no family doctor. Mrs. Craven, with her missionary experience, is half a doctor herself, and never calls in one except in a serious emergency.""The certificate was in order, I suppose?""Undoubtedly. And, as if to give colour to the gravity of the case, Mrs. Craven sent a message down to the servants, that if any of them were afraid of the infection they could at once go to their homes. Several of the maids, I believe, took advantage of her permission, and packed their boxes. Miss Craven, who is a delicate girl, was sent away with her maid to stay with friends at Newcastle, and Mrs. Craven isolated herself with her patient in one of the disused wings of the house.""Has anyone ascertained whether Miss Craven arrived at her destination at Newcastle?"Griffiths drew his brows together in thought."I did not see any necessity for such a thing," he answered. "I don't quite follow you. What do you mean to imply?""Oh, nothing. I don't suppose it matters much: it might have been interesting as a side-issue." She broke off for a moment, then

added:“Now tell me a little about the butler, the man whose wages were cut down to increase Sandy ’s pay.”“Old John Hales? He’s a thoroughly worthy, respectable man; he was butler for five or six years to Mr. Craven’s brother, when he was master of Troyte’s Hill, and then took duty under this Mr. Craven. There’s no ground for suspicion in that quarter. Hales’ exclamation when he heard of the murder is quite enough to stamp him as an innocent man: ”Serve the old idiot right,“ he cried: ‘I couldn’t pump up a tear for him if I tried for a month of Sundays!” Now I take it, Miss Brooke, a guilty man wouldn’t dare make such a speech as that!““You think not?”Griffiths stared at her. “I’m a little disappointed in her,” he thought. “I’m afraid her powers have been slightly exaggerated if she can’t see such a straightforward thing as that.”Aloud he said, a little sharply. “Well, I don’t stand alone in my thinking. No one yet has breathed a word against Hales, and if they did I’ve no doubt he could prove an alibi without any trouble, for he lives in the house, and everyone has a good word for him.”“I suppose Sandy ’s lodge has been put into order by this time?”“Yes; after the inquest, and when all possible evidence had been taken, everything was put straight.”“At the inquest it was stated that no marks of footsteps could be traced in any direction?”“The long drought we’ve had would render such a thing impossible, let alone the fact that Sandy ’s lodge stands right on the gravelled drive, without flower-beds or grass borders of any sort around it. But look here, Miss Brooke, don’t you be wasting your time over the lodge and its surroundings. Every iota of fact on that matter has been gone through over and over again by me and my chief. What we want you to do is to go straight into the house and concentrate attention on Master Harry’s sick-room, and find out what’s going on there. What he did outside the house on the night of the 6th, I’ve no doubt I shall be able to find out for myself. Now, Miss Brooke, you’ve asked me no end of questions, to which I have replied as fully as it was in my power to do; will you be good enough to answer one question that I wish to put, as straightforwardly as I have answered yours? You have had fullest particulars given you of the condition of Sandy ’s room when the police entered it on the morning after the murder. No doubt, at the

present moment, you can see it all in your mind's eye – the bedstead on its side, the clock on its head, the bed-clothes half-way up the chimney, the little vases and ornaments walking in a straight line towards the door?"Loveday bowed her head."Very well. Now will you be good enough to tell me what this scene of confusion recalls to your mind before anything else?""The room of an unpopular Oxford freshman after a raid upon it by under-grads.," answered Loveday promptly.Mr. Griffiths rubbed his hands."Quite so!" he ejaculated. "I see, after all, we are one at heart in this matter, in spite of a little surface disagreement of ideas. Depend upon it, by-and-bye, like the engineers tunnelling from different quarters under the Alps, we shall meet at the same point and shake hands. By-the-way, I have arranged for daily communication between us through the postboy who takes the letters to Troyte's Hill. He is trustworthy, and any letter you give him for me will find its way into my hands within the hour."It was about three o'clock in the afternoon when Loveday drove in through the park gates of Troyte's Hill, past the lodge where old Sandy had met with his death. It was a pretty little cottage, covered with Virginia creeper and wild honeysuckle, and showing no outward sign of the tragedy that had been enacted within.The park and pleasure-grounds of Troyte's Hill were extensive, and the house itself was a somewhat imposing red brick structure, built, possibly, at the time when Dutch William's taste had grown popular in the country. Its frontage presented a somewhat forlorn appearance, its centre windows – a square of eight – alone seeming to show signs of occupation. With the exception of two windows at the extreme end of the bedroom floor of the north wing, where, possibly, the invalid and his mother were located, and two windows at the extreme end of the ground floor of the south wing, which Loveday ascertained subsequently were those of Mr. Craven's study, not a single window in either wing owned blind or curtain. The wings were extensive, and it was easy to understand that at the extreme end of the one the fever patient would be isolated from the rest of the household, and that at the extreme end of the other Mr. Craven could secure the quiet and freedom from interruption which, no doubt, were essential to the due

prosecution of his philological studies.Alike on the house and ill-kept grounds were present the stamp of the smallness of the income of the master and owner of the place. The terrace, which ran the length of the house in front, and on to which every window on the ground floor opened, was miserably out of repair: not a lintel or door-post, window-ledge or balcony but what seemed to cry aloud for the touch of the painter. "Pity me! I have seen better days," Loveday could fancy written as a legend across the red-brick porch that gave entrance to the old house.The butler, John Hales, admitted Loveday, shouldered her portmanteau and told her he would show her to her room. He was a tall, powerfully-built man, with a ruddy face and dogged expression of countenance. It was easy to understand that, off and on, there must have been many a sharp encounter between him and old Sandy. He treated Loveday in an easy, familiar fashion, evidently considering that an amanuensis took much the same rank as a nursery governess – that is to say, a little below a lady's maid and a little above a house-maid."We're short of hands, just now," he said, in broad Cumberland dialect, as he led the way up the wide staircase. "Some of the lasses downstairs took fright at the fever and went home. Cook and I are single-handed, for Moggie, the only maid left, has been told off to wait on Madam and Master Harry. I hope you're not afeared of fever?"Loveday explained that she was not, and asked if the room at the extreme end of the north wing was the one assigned to "Madam and Master Harry.""Yes," said the man, "it's convenient for sick nursing; there's a flight of stairs runs straight down from it to the kitchen quarters. We put all Madam wants at the foot of these stairs and Moggie comes down and fetches it. Moggie herself never enters the sick-room. I take it you'll not be seeing Madam for many a day, yet awhile.""When shall I see Mr. Craven? At dinner tonight?""That's what naebody could say," answered Hales. "He may not come out of his study till past midnight; sometimes he sits there till two or three in the morning. Shouldn't advise you to wait till he wants his dinner – better have a cup of tea and a chop sent up to you. Madam never waits for him at any meal."As he finished speaking he deposited the portmanteau outside one of the many

doors opening into the gallery.“This is Miss Craven’s room,” he went on; “cook and me thought you’d better have it, as it would want less getting ready than the other rooms, and work is work when there are so few hands to do it. Oh, my stars! I do declare there is cook putting it straight for you now.”The last sentence was added as the opened door laid bare to view, the cook, with a duster in her hand, polishing a mirror; the bed had been made, it is true, but otherwise the room must have been much as Miss Craven left it, after a hurried packing up.To the surprise of the two servants Loveday took the matter very lightly.“I have a special talent for arranging rooms and would prefer getting this one straight for myself,” she said. “Now, if you will go and get ready that chop and cup of tea we were talking about just now, I shall think it much kinder than if you stayed here doing what I can so easily do for myself.”When, however, the cook and butler had departed in company, Loveday showed no disposition to exercise the “special talent” of which she had boasted.She first carefully turned the key in the lock and then proceeded to make a thorough and minute investigation of every corner of the room. Not an article of furniture, not an ornament or toilet accessory, but what was lifted from its place and carefully scrutinized. Even the ashes in the grate, the debris of the last fire made there, were raked over and well looked through.This careful investigation of Miss Craven’s late surroundings occupied in all about three quarters of an hour, and Loveday, with her hat in her hand, descended the stairs to see Hales crossing the hall to the dining-room with the promised cup of tea and chop.In silence and solitude she partook of the simple repast in a dining-hall that could with ease have banqueted a hundred and fifty guests.“Now for the grounds before it gets dark,” she said to herself, as she noted that already the outside shadows were beginning to slant.The dining-hall was at the back of the house; and here, as in the front, the windows, reaching to the ground, presented easy means of egress. The flower-garden was on this side of the house and sloped downhill to a pretty stretch of well-wooded country.Loveday did not linger here even to admire, but passed at once round the south corner of the house to the windows which she had

ascertained, by a careless question to the butler, were those of Mr. Craven's study.Very cautiously she drew near them, for the blinds were up, the curtains drawn back. A side glance, however, relieved her apprehensions, for it showed her the occupant of the room, seated in an easy-chair, with his back to the windows. From the length of his outstretched limbs he was evidently a tall man. His hair was silvery and curly, the lower part of his face was hidden from her view by the chair, but she could see one hand was pressed tightly across his eyes and brows. The whole attitude was that of a man absorbed in deep thought. The room was comfortably furnished, but presented an appearance of disorder from the books and manuscripts scattered in all directions. A whole pile of torn fragments of foolscap sheets, overflowing from a waste-paper basket beside the writing-table, seemed to proclaim the fact that the scholar had of late grown weary of, or else dissatisfied with his work, and had condemned it freely.Although Loveday stood looking in at this window for over five minutes, not the faintest sign of life did that tall, reclining figure give, and it would have been as easy to believe him locked in sleep as in thought.From here she turned her steps in the direction of Sandy 's lodge. As Griffiths had said, it was gravelled up to its doorstep. The blinds were closely drawn, and it presented the ordinary appearance of a disused cottage.A narrow path beneath the over-arching boughs of cherry-laurel and arbutus, immediately facing the lodge, caught her eye, and down this she at once turned her footsteps.This path led, with many a wind and turn, through a belt of shrubbery that skirted the frontage of Mr. Craven's grounds, and eventually, after much zigzagging, ended in close proximity to the stables. As Loveday entered it, she seemed literally to leave daylight behind her."I feel as if I were following the course of a circuitous mind," she said to herself as the shadows closed around her. "I could not fancy Sir Isaac Newton or Bacon planning or delighting in such a wind-about-alley as this!"The path showed greyly in front of her out of the dimness. On and on she followed it; here and there the roots of the old laurels, struggling out of the ground, threatened to trip her up. Her eyes, however, had now grown accustomed to the half-gloom, and not a detail

of her surroundings escaped her as she went along.A bird flew out the thicket on her right hand with a startled cry. A dainty little frog leaped out of her way into the shrivelled leaves lying below the laurels. Following the movements of this frog, her eye was caught by something black and solid among those leaves. What was it? A bundle – a shiny black coat? Loveday knelt down, and using her hands to assist her eyes, found that they came into contact with the dead, stiffened body of a beautiful black retriever. She parted, as well as she was able, the lower boughs of the evergreens, and minutely examined the poor animal. Its eyes were still open, though glazed and bleared, and its death had, undoubtedly, been caused by the blow of some blunt, heavy instrument, for on one side its skull was almost battered in.“Exactly the death that was dealt to Sandy,” she thought, as she groped hither and thither beneath the trees in hopes of lighting upon the weapon of destruction.She searched until increasing darkness warned her that search was useless. Then, still following the zigzagging path, she made her way out by the stables and thence back to the house.She went to bed that night without having spoken to a soul beyond the cook and butler. The next morning, however, Mr. Craven introduced himself to her across the breakfast table. He was a man of really handsome personal appearance, with a fine carriage of the head and shoulders, and eyes that had a forlorn, appealing look in them. He entered the room with an air of great energy, apologized to Loveday for the absence of his wife, and for his own remissness in not being in the way to receive her on the previous day. Then he bade her make herself at home at the breakfast-table, and expressed his delight in having found a coadjutor in his work.“I hope you understand what a great – a stupendous work it is?” he added, as he sank into a chair. “It is a work that will leave its impress upon thought in all the ages to come. Only a man, who has studied comparative philology as I have for the past thirty years, could gauge the magnitude of the task I have set myself.”With the last remark, his energy seemed spent, and he sank back in his chair, covering his eyes with his hand in precisely the same attitude at that in which Loveday had seen him over-night, and utterly oblivious of the fact that breakfast was before him and

a stranger-guest seated at table. The butler entered with another dish. “Better go on with your breakfast,” he whispered to Loveday, “he may sit like that for another hour.”He placed his dish in front of his master.“Captain hasn’t come back yet, sir,” he said, making an effort to arouse him from his reverie.“Eh, what?” said Mr. Craven, for a moment lifting his hand from his eyes.“Captain, sir – the black retriever,” repeated the man.The pathetic look in Mr. Craven’s eyes deepened.“Ah, poor Captain!” he murmured; “the best dog I ever had.”Then he again sank back in his chair, putting his hand to his forehead.The butler made one more effort to arouse him.“Madam sent you down a newspaper, sir, that she thought you might like to see,” he shouted almost into his master’s ear, and at the same time laid the morning’s paper on the table beside his plate.“Confound you! Leave it there,” said Mr. Craven irritably. “Fools! Dolts that you all are! With your trivialities and interruptions you are sending me out of the world with my work undone!”And again he sank back in his chair, closed his eyes and became lost to his surroundings.Loveday went on with her breakfast. She changed her place at table to one on Mr. Craven’s right hand, so that the newspaper sent down for his perusal lay between his plate and hers. It was folded into an oblong shape, as if it were wished to direct attention to a certain portion of a certain column.A clock in a corner of the room struck the hour with a loud, resonant stroke. Mr. Craven gave a start and rubbed his eyes.“Eh, what’s this?” he said. “What meal are we at?” He looked around with a bewildered air. “Eh! – who are you?” he went on, staring hard at Loveday. “What are you doing here? Where’s Nina? – Where’s Harry?”Loveday began to explain, and gradually recollection seemed to come back to him.“Ah, yes, yes,” he said. “I remember; you’ve come to assist me with my great work. You promised, you know, to help me out of the hole I’ve got into. Very enthusiastic, I remember they said you were, on certain abstruse points in comparative philology. Now, Miss – Miss – I’ve forgotten your name – tell me a little of what you know about the elemental sounds of speech that are common to all languages. Now, to how many would you reduce those elemental sounds – to six, eight, nine? No, we won’t discuss the matter here,

the cups and saucers distract me. Come into my den at the other end of the house; we'll have perfect quiet there."And utterly ignoring the fact that he had not as yet broken his fast, he rose from the table, seized Loveday by the wrist, and led her out of the room and down the long corridor that led through the south wing to his study.But seated in that study his energy once more speedily exhausted itself.He placed Loveday in a comfortable chair at his writing-table, consulted her taste as to pens, and spread a sheet of foolscap before her. Then he settled himself in his easy-chair, with his back to the light, as if he were about to dictate folios to her.In a loud, distinct voice he repeated the title of his learned work, then its subdivision, then the number and heading of the chapter that was at present engaging his attention. Then he put his hand to his head. "It's the elemental sounds that are my stumbling-block," he said. "Now, how on earth is it possible to get a notion of a sound of agony that is not in part a sound of terror? Or a sound of surprise that is not in part a sound of either joy or sorrow?"With this his energies were spent, and although Loveday remained seated in that study from early morning till daylight began to fade, she had not ten sentences to show for her day's work as amanuensis.Loveday in all spent only two clear days at Troyte's Hill.On the evening of the first of those days Detective Griffiths received, through the trustworthy post-boy, the following brief note from her:I have found out that Hales owed Sandy close upon a hundred pounds, which he had borrowed at various times.I don't know whether you will think this fact of any importance.L.B.Mr. Griffiths repeated the last sentence blankly. "If Harry Craven were put upon his defence, his counsel, I take it, would consider the fact of first importance," he muttered. And for the remainder of that day Mr. Griffiths went about his work in a perturbed state of mind, doubtful whether to hold or to let go his theory concerning Harry Craven's guilt.The next morning there came another brief note from Loveday which ran thus:As a matter of collateral interest, find out if a person, calling himself Harold Cousins, sailed two days ago from London Docks for Natal in the Bonnie Dundee?To this missive, Loveday received, in reply, the following somewhat lengthy dispatch:I do not quite see the drift of

your last note, but have wired to our agents in London to carry out its suggestion. On my part, I have important news to communicate. I have found out what Harry Craven's business out of doors was on the night of the murder, and at my instance a warrant has been issued for his arrest. This warrant it will be my duty to serve on him in the course of today. Things are beginning to look very black against him, and I am convinced his illness is all a sham. I have seen Waters, the man who is supposed to be attending him, and have driven him into a corner and made him admit that he has only seen young Craven once – on the first day of his illness – and that he gave his certificate entirely on the strength of what Mrs. Craven told him of her son's condition. On the occasion of this, his first and only visit, the lady, it seems, also told him that it would not be necessary for him to continue his attendance, as she quite felt herself competent to treat the case, having had so much experience in fever cases among the blacks at Natal.As I left Water's house, after eliciting this important information, I was accosted by a man who keeps a low-class inn in the place, McQueen by name. He said that he wished to speak to me on a matter of importance. To make a long story short, this McQueen stated that on the night of the sixth, shortly after eleven o'clock, Harry Craven came to his house, bringing with him a valuable piece of plate – a handsome epergne – and requested him to lend him a hundred pounds on it, as he hadn't a penny in his pocket. McQueen complied with his request to the extent of ten sovereigns, and now, in a fit of nervous terror, comes to me to confess himself a receiver of stolen goods and play the honest man! He says he noticed that the young gentleman was very much agitated as he made the request, and he also begged him to mention his visit to no one. Now, I am curious to learn how Master Harry will get over the fact that he passed the lodge at the hour at which the murder was most probably committed; or how he will get out of the dilemma of having repassed the lodge on his way back to the house, and not noticed the wide-open window with the full moon shining down on it?Another word! Keep out of the way when I arrive at the house, somewhere between two and three in the afternoon, to serve the warrant. I do not wish your

professional capacity to get wind, for you will most likely yet be of some use to us in the house.S.G.Loveday read this note, seated at Mr. Craven's writing-table, with the old gentleman himself reclining motionless beside her in his easy-chair. A little smile played about the corners of her mouth as she read over again the words – "for you will most likely yet be of some use to us in the house."Loveday's second day in Mr. Craven's study promised to be as unfruitful as the first. For fully an hour after she had received Griffiths ' note, she sat at the writing-table with her pen in her hand, ready to transcribe Mr. Craven's inspirations. Beyond, however, the phrase, muttered with closed eyes – "It's all here, in my brain, but I can't put it into words" – not a half-syllable escaped his lips.At the end of that hour the sound of footsteps on the outside gravel made her turn her head towards the windows. It was Griffiths approaching with two constables. She heard the hall door opened to admit them, but, beyond that, not a sound reached her ear, and she realized how fully she was cut off from communication with the rest of the household at the farther end of this unoccupied wing.Mr. Craven, still reclining in his semi-trance, evidently had not the faintest suspicion that so important an event as the arrest of his only son on a charge of murder was about to be enacted in the house.Meantime, Griffiths and his constables had mounted the stairs leading to the north wing, and were being guided through the corridors to the sick-room by the flying figure of Moggie, the maid."Hoot, mistress!" cried the girl, "here are three men coming up the stairs – policemen, every one of them – will ye come and ask them what they be wanting?"Outside the door of the sick-room stood Mrs. Craven – a tall, sharp-featured woman with sandy hair going rapidly grey."What is the meaning of this? What is your business here?" she said haughtily, addressing Griffiths, who headed the party.Griffiths respectfully explained what his business was, and requested her to stand on one side that he might enter her son's room."This is my daughter's room; satisfy yourself of the fact," said the lady, throwing back the door as she spoke.And Griffiths and his confreres entered, to find pretty Miss Craven, looking very white and scared, seated beside a fire in a long flowing robe de

chambre.Griffiths departed in haste and confusion, without the chance of a professional talk with Loveday. That afternoon saw him telegraphing wildly in all directions, and dispatching messengers in all quarters. Finally he spent over an hour drawing up an elaborate report to his chief at Newcastle, assuring him of the identity of one Harold Cousins, who had sailed in the Bonnie Dundee for Natal, with Harry Craven, of Troyte's Hill, and advising that the police authorities in that far-away district should be immediately communicated with.The ink had not dried on the pen with which this report was written before a note, in Loveday's writing, was put into his hand.Loveday evidently had had some difficulty in finding a messenger for this note, for it was brought by a gardener's boy, who informed Griffiths that the lady had said he would receive a gold sovereign if he delivered the letter all right.Griffiths paid the boy and dismissed him, and then proceeded to read Loveday's communication.It was written hurriedly in pencil, and ran as follows:Things are getting critical here. Directly you receive this, come up to the house with two of your men, and post yourselves anywhere in the grounds where you can see and not be seen. There will be no difficulty in this, for it will be dark by the time you are able to get there. I am not sure whether I shall want your aid tonight, but you had better keep in the grounds until morning, in case of need; and above all, never once lose sight of the study window. [This was underscored.] If I put a lamp with a green shade in one of those windows, do not lose a moment in entering by that window, which I will contrive to keep unlocked.Detective Griffiths rubbed his forehead – rubbed his eyes, as he finished reading this."Well, I daresay it's all right," he said, "but I'm bothered, that's all, and for the life of me I can't see one step of the way she is going."He looked at his watch; the hands pointed to a quarter past six. The short September day was drawing rapidly to a close. A good five miles lay between him and Troyte's Hill – there was evidently not a moment to lose.At the very moment that Griffiths, with his two constables, was once more starting along the Grenfell High Road behind the best horse they could procure, Mr. Craven was rousing himself from his long slumber, and beginning to look around him. That slumber,

however, though long, had not been a peaceful one, and it was sundry of the old gentleman's muttered exclamations, as he had started uneasily in his sleep, that had caused Loveday to pen, and then to creep out of the room to dispatch her hurried note.What effect the occurrence of the morning had had upon the household generally, Loveday, in her isolated corner of the house, had no means of ascertaining. She only noted that when Hales brought in her tea, as he did precisely at five o'clock, he wore a particularly ill-tempered expression of countenance, and she heard him mutter, as he set down the tea-tray with a clatter, something about being a respectable man, and not used to such "goings on."It was not until nearly an hour and a half after this that Mr. Craven had awakened with a sudden start, and, looking wildly around him, had questioned Loveday who had entered the room.Loveday explained that the butler had brought in lunch at one, and tea at five, but that since then no one had come in."Now that's false," said Mr. Craven, in a sharp, unnatural sort of voice; "I saw him sneaking round the room, the whining, canting hypocrite, and you must have seen him, too! Didn't you hear him say, in his squeaky old voice: "Master, I knows your secret-'?" He broke off abruptly, looking wildly round. "Eh, what's this?" he cried. "No, no, I'm all wrong – Sandy is dead and buried – they held an inquest on him, and we all praised him up as if he were a saint.""He must have been a bad man, that old Sandy," said Loveday sympathetically."You're right! you're right!" cried Mr. Craven, springing up excitedly from his chair and seizing her by the hand. "If ever a man deserved his death, he did. For thirty years he held that rod over my head, and then – ah, where was I?"He put his hand to his head and again sank, as if exhausted, into his chair."I suppose it was some early indiscretion of yours at college that he knew of?" said Loveday, eager to get at as much of the truth as possible while the mood for confidence held sway in the feeble brain."That was it! I was fool enough to marry a disreputable girl – a barmaid in the town – and Sandy was present at the wedding, and then-" Here his eyes closed again and his mutterings became incoherent.For ten minutes he lay back in his chair, muttering thus; "A yelp – a groan," were the only words Loveday could

distinguish among those mutterings, then, suddenly, slowly and distinctly, he said, as if answering some plainly-put question: “A good blow with the hammer and the thing was done.”“I should like amazingly to see that hammer,” said Loveday; “do you keep it anywhere at hand?”His eyes opened with a wild, cunning look in them.“Who’s talking about a hammer? I did not say I had one. If anyone says I did it with a hammer, they’re telling a lie.”“Oh, you’ve spoken to me about the hammer two or three times,” said Loveday calmly; “the one that killed your dog, Captain, and I should like to see it, that’s all.”The look of cunning died out of the old man’s eye – “Ah, poor Captain! splendid dog that! Well, now, where were we? Where did we leave off? Ah, I remember, it was the elemental sounds of speech that bothered me so that night. Were you here then? Ah, no! I remember. I had been trying all day to assimilate a dog’s yelp of pain to a human groan, and I couldn’t do it. The idea haunted me – followed me about wherever I went. If they were both elemental sounds, they must have something in common, but the link between them I could not find; then it occurred to me, would a well-bred, well-trained dog like my Captain in the stables, there, at the moment of death give an unmitigated currish yelp; would there not be something of a human note in his death-cry? The thing was worth putting to the test. If I could hand down in my treatise a fragment of fact on the matter, it would be worth a dozen dogs’ lives. So I went out into the moonlight – ah, but you know all about it – now, don’t you?”“Yes. Poor Captain! Did he yelp or groan?”“Why, he gave one loud, long, hideous yelp, just as if he had been a common cur. I might just as well have let him alone; it only set that other brute opening his window and spying out on me, and saying in his cracked old voice: ”Master, what are you doing out here at this time of night?“”Again he sank back in his chair, muttering incoherently with half-closed eyes.Loveday let him alone for a minute or so; then she had another question to ask.“And that other brute – did he yelp or groan when you dealt him his blow?”“What, old Sandy – the brute? He fell back – Ah, I remember, you said you would like to see the hammer that stopped his babbling old tongue – now, didn’t you?”He rose a little unsteadily

from his chair, and seemed to drag his long limbs with an effort across the room to a cabinet at the farther end. Opening a drawer in this cabinet, he produced, from amidst some specimens of strata and fossils, a large-sized geological hammer.He brandished it for a moment over his head, then paused with his finger on his lip."Hush!" he said, "we shall have the fools creeping in to peep at us if we don't take care." And to Loveday's horror he suddenly made for the door, turned the key in the lock, withdrew it and put it into his pocket.She looked at the clock; the hands pointed to half-past seven. Had Griffiths received her note at the proper time, and were the men now in the grounds? She could only pray that they were."The light is too strong for my eyes," she said, and rising from her chair, she lifted the green-shaded lamp and placed it on a table that stood at the window."No, no, that won't do," said Mr. Craven; "that would show everyone outside what we're doing in here." He crossed to the window as he spoke and removed the lamp thence to the mantelpiece.Loveday could only hope that in the few seconds it had remained in the window it had caught the eye of the outside watchers.The old man beckoned to Loveday to come near and examine his deadly weapon. "Give it a good swing round," he said, suiting the action to the word, "and down it comes with a splendid crash." He brought the hammer round within an inch of Loveday's forehead.She started back."Ha, ha," he laughed harshly and unnaturally, with the light of madness dancing in his eyes now; "did I frighten you? I wonder what sort of sound you would make if I were to give you a little tap just there." Here he lightly touched her forehead with the hammer. "Elemental, of course, it would be, and-"Loveday steadied her nerves with difficulty. Locked in with this lunatic, her only chance lay in gaining time for the detectives to reach the house and enter through the window."Wait a minute," she said, striving to divert his attention; "you have not yet told me what sort of an elemental sound old Sandy made when he fell. If you'll give me pen and ink, I'll write down a full account of it all, and you can incorporate it afterwards in your treatise."For a moment a look of real pleasure flitted across the old man's face, then it faded. "The brute fell dead without a sound," he answered; "it

was all for nothing, that night's work; yet not altogether for nothing. No, I don't mind owning I would do it all over again to get the wild thrill of joy at my heart that I had when I looked down into that old man's dead face and felt myself free at last! Free at last!" his voice rang out excitedly – once more he brought his hammer round with an ugly swing."For a moment I was a young man again; I leaped into his room – the moon was shining full in through the window – I thought of my old college days, and the fun we used to have at Pembroke – topsy-turvy I turned everything-" He broke off abruptly, and drew a step nearer to Loveday. "The pity of it all was," he said, suddenly dropping from his high, excited tone to a low, pathetic one, "that he fell without a sound of any sort." Here he drew another step nearer. "I wonder-" he said, then broke off again, and came close to Loveday's side. "It has only this moment occurred to me," he said, now with his lips close to Loveday's ear, "that a woman, in her death agony, would be much more likely to give utterance to an elemental sound than a man."He raised his hammer, and Loveday fled to the window, and was lifted from the outside by three strong pairs of arms.* * *"I thought I was conducting my very last case – I never had such a narrow escape before!" said Loveday, as she stood talking with Mr. Griffiths on the Grenfell platform, awaiting the train to carry her back to London. "It seems strange that no one before suspected the old gentleman's sanity – I suppose, however, people were so used to his eccentricities that they did not notice how they had deepened into positive lunacy. His cunning evidently stood him in good stead at the inquest.""It is possible," said Griffiths thoughtfully, "that he did not absolutely cross the very slender line that divides eccentricity from madness until after the murder. The excitement consequent upon the discovery of the crime may just have pushed him over the border. Now, Miss Brooke, we have exactly ten minutes before your train comes in. I should feel greatly obliged to you if you would explain one or two things that have a professional interest for me.""With pleasure," said Loveday. "Put your questions in categorical order and I will answer them.""Well, then, in the first place, what suggested to your mind the old man's guilt?""The relations that subsisted between him and

Sandy seemed to me to savour too much of fear on the one side and power on the other. Also the income paid to Sandy during Mr. Craven's absence in Natal bore, to my mind, an unpleasant resemblance to hush-money.""Poor wretched being! And I hear that, after all, the woman he married in his wild young days died soon afterwards of drink. I have no doubt, however, that Sandy sedulously kept up the fiction of her existence, even after his master's second marriage. Now for another question: how was it you knew that Miss Craven had taken her brother's place in the sick-room?""On the evening of my arrival I discovered a rather long lock of fair hair in the unswept fireplace of my room, which, as it happened, was usually occupied by Miss Craven. It at once occurred to me that the young lady had been cutting off her hair and that there must be some powerful motive to induce such a sacrifice. The suspicious circumstances attending her brother's illness soon supplied me with such a motive.""Ah! that typhoid fever business was very cleverly done. Not a servant in the house, I verily believe, but who thought Master Harry was upstairs, ill in bed, and Miss Craven away at her friends' in Newcastle. The young fellow must have got a clear start off within an hour of the murder. His sister, sent away the next day to Newcastle, dismissed her maid there, I hear, on the plea of no accommodation at her friends' house – sent the girl to her own home for a holiday and herself returned to Troyte's Hill in the middle of the night, having walked the five miles from Grenfell. No doubt her mother admitted her through one of those easily-opened front windows, cut her hair and put her to bed to personate her brother without delay. With Miss Craven's strong likeness to Master Harry, and in a darkened room, it is easy to understand that the eyes of a doctor, personally unacquainted with the family, might easily be deceived. Now, Miss Brooke, you must admit that with all this elaborate chicanery and double dealing going on, it was only natural that my suspicions should set in strongly in that quarter.""I read it all in another light, you see," said Loveday. "I seemed to me that the mother, knowing her son's evil proclivities, believed in his guilt, in spite, possibly, of his assertion of innocence. The son, most likely, on his way back to the house after pledging

the family plate, had met old Mr. Craven with the hammer in his hand. Seeing, no doubt, how impossible it would be for him to clear himself without incriminating his father, he preferred flight to Natal to giving evidence at the inquest.""Now about his alias?" said Mr. Griffiths briskly, for the train was at that moment steaming into the station. "How did you know that Harold Cousins was identical with Harry Craven, and had sailed in the Bonnie Dundee?""Oh, that was easy enough," said Loveday, as she stepped into the train; "a newspaper sent down to Mr. Craven by his wife, was folded so as to direct his attention to the shipping list. In it I saw that the Bonnie Dundee had sailed two days previously for Natal. Now it was only natural to connect Natal with Mrs. Craven, who had passed the greater part of her life there; and it was easy to understand her wish to get her scapegrace son among her early friends. The alias under which he sailed came readily enough to light. I found it scribbled all over one of Mr. Craven's writing pads in his study; evidently it had been drummed into his ears by his wife as his son's alias, and the old gentleman had taken this method of fixing it in his memory. We'll hope that the young fellow, under his new name, will make a new reputation for himself – at any rate, he'll have a better chance of doing so with the ocean between him and his evil companions. Now it's good-bye, I think.""No," said Mr. Griffiths; "it's au revoir, for you'll have to come back again for the assizes, and give the evidence that will shut old Mr. Craven in an asylum for the rest of his life."

THE MAN WHO SCARED THE BANK by Valentine

(Sleuth: Daphne Wrayne)In the history of British male mystery fiction there are countless heroes of distinguished parentage and sporting nature, who put natural gifts to use detecting crime – Reggie Fortune and Peter Wimsey to name several. On the distaff side, there is Daphne Wrayne. The brainchild of the prolific and pseudonymous Valentine (Archibald Thomas Pechey), Daphne Wrayne is the youngest of all the female sleuths in this volume, whom the author describes in The Adjusters (1930), as "barely out of her teens." But, she

is no Nancy Drew – she is an adult detective and so are the cases that challenge her.The editor of the Daily Monitor rang his bell.“Send Mr. Mannering to me at once,” he said when the boy appeared.He sat drumming on the table with his fingers and frowning at the letter in his hand until a knock sounded on the door. Then:“Come in, Mannering. Read that letter-” thrusting it at him.The other took it, scanned it, whistled softly.“I know the Duchess, sir,” he said.“Exactly. That’s why I sent for you. Go up and see her at once. Find out all you can about this story. Maybe she’ll get you an interview with these Adjusters people. Hitherto no one’s been able to get one. Get hold of every bit of news you can lay your hands on… The moment we publish the fact that they’ve recovered her necklace the public will be on its toes to know who and what they are. It’s over three months since the necklace was stolen from Hardington House, and the police have owned themselves beat.”For four weeks the Adjusters had been intriguing public curiosity.Who and what they were no one seemed to know. Four times had a full-page advertisement appeared in the Daily Monitor:IF THE POLICE CANNOT HELP YOUTHEADJUSTERSCAN179, CONDUIT STREET, W.Just that and no more. Interviewers and reporters had called, but had come away empty-handed. All that they could say was that the Adjusters occupied the whole of the first floor at 179, Conduit Street, that a stalwart commissionaire – an ex-army man with a string of ribbons across his chest – replied to all callers that “Miss Wrayne could see no one except by appointment, and no pressmen in any circumstances whatever.”Now he gave the same reply when Mannering presented his card. But Mannering merely smiled and produced a letter.“Perhaps you will be good enough to give that to Miss Wrayne,” he said. “It’s from the Duchess of Hardington.”Five minutes later the commissionaire came back.“If you will come this way, sir, Miss Wrayne will see you,” he said.The next morning the Daily Monitor brought out flaming headlines announcing that the Duchess of Hardington’s world-famous pearl necklace had been recovered by “The Adjusters of 179, Conduit Street.” But it was what followed that made the public rub its eyes in astonishment.Armed with a letter

of introduction from the Duchess of Hardington I succeeded in gaining an interview with Miss Daphne Wrayne, the secretary of the Adjusters. To comment on that interview is impossible. I can merely state what Miss Wrayne told me and leave the public to judge for themselves. Probably they will be as bewildered as I was – and still am.Followed then an account of a lavishly furnished suite of offices and a beautiful young girl who called herself the secretary, who declined to give the names of her associates, but who said that the Adjusters came into being for the "adjustment of the inequalities that at present exist between the criminal and the victim." Asked to explain this a little more fully Miss Wrayne said that where the police were chiefly interested in the capture and punishment of the criminal, the Adjusters were solely concerned with the restoration to the victim of the money, or property, out of which he or she had been defrauded. She added, furthermore, that they had unlimited money behind them and charged no fees whatsoever! Then the Monitor man went on:But, frankly, to me Miss Daphne Wrayne is the most amazing part of this amazing firm. It is well-nigh impossible to believe that this singularly lovely girl, barely out of her teens, who looks as if she had just stepped out of a Bond Street modiste's, is really in control of an enterprise of this kind. I say "in control" for even if she is not, she is, on her own statement, the only one whom the public will see, and behind the very up-to-date exterior, with its dainty Paris frock, silk stockings, etc., there is obviously a brain out of the ordinary.I was bewildered at the rapidity with which this pretty, laughing-eyed schoolgirl who smoked cigarettes and used slang, changed into an earnest young woman, with the criminal life of London at her slim fingers' ends.I came away from Conduit Street trying to tell myself that it was foolish, impossible, ridiculous. And yet there is Miss Wrayne herself. I can still see those clear hazel eyes of hers, and hear her final words: "Is it so strange that some who have unlimited money and brains should want to help their less fortunate brethren?"One week later, when Sir John Colston – the interview had been arranged that morning by telephone – was ushered into Daphne's private room, he was conscious of a slight sense of annoyance. To,

discover that he, Sir John Colston, the head of one of the biggest banks in London, had to lay his difficulties at the slim feet of a lovely, hazel-eyed girl hardly out of her teens – a girl who coolly waved him to a chair as she lighted another cigarette – it was almost preposterous!“Well, Sir John, what can we do for you?”Just as if he were nobody and his affair a trivial matter!“I understand from the Duchess of-” he began stiffly, but Daphne Wrayne’s eyes narrowed a little as she cut in on him.“I know, and you’re surprised at finding me so young.” She leant forward suddenly in her chair. “Forgive me for saying so, but you’re a little behind the times. You are obviously in trouble or you wouldn’t be here. If you want my services they are at your disposal. But in that case it will be very much better, both for you and for me, if you will forget that I am a girl and not yet twenty-one. You will excuse my plain speaking, won’t you?”A little smile curved her lips, but her eyes were steady on his.“You’re not the first, you know, Sir John,” she went on. “It’s a bit of a handicap sometimes, being a girl!”His resentment vanished from that moment. Her ingenuousness disarmed him.“I’m sorry, Miss Wrayne,” he said. “I’m an old man – a bit old-fashioned, I’m afraid, too. You – this place-” he waved a hand “rather took me by surprise.”“Of course-” sweetly. “Now, let’s get to business. You, I take it, are the head of the Universal Banking Corporation of Lombard Street?”“I am. I have a client of the name of Richard Henry Gorleston.”“The bookmaker?”“I begin to see that what the Duchess told me about you was true,” he smiled. He was becoming more impressed now every minute.“I have a good memory for names,” she replied.“He has been a client of mine for nearly three years. His father, I may tell you, left him fifty thousand pounds. The son has banked with us ever since, and until this week has been a trusted client.“I must tell you,” he went on, “that ever since he opened an account with us it has been his habit to draw out large sums of money in notes and to replace them within a few days. He told me from the start that he lived by gambling.“On numerous occasions he has presented checks for five or ten thousand pounds, and drawn the money out in notes. Then a few days later he would come and pay it all back, perhaps a little more, perhaps a little less.“Ten days ago he called at the bank

and came into my private room – nothing unusual in that, though. He often does. Now, the moment he came in I noticed that he was wearing horn-rimmed spectacles, a thing which he has never done before. I commented on it and he said that he'd had trouble with his eyes, and had been to an oculist."“Mention his name?” casually.“He did. James Adwinter, of Queen Anne Street.”Daphne Wrayne made a note of it.“Please go on, Sir John.”“I asked him if he was drawing out any money and he said he was – would I tell him what his balance was. I sent out and found it was about thirty thousand pounds. In front of me he took his check-book and wrote a check for twenty-five thousand pounds. I sent for one of my cashiers and we paid it over to him in thousand pound notes. Now comes the amazing part of the story. Two days ago he came into the bank and presented a check for fifteen thousand pounds. The cashier told him he hadn't got it, and reminded him of the twenty-five-thousand-pound one. He indignantly denied it – said he'd been out of town for nearly a fortnight, and he could prove it. Declared that some one must have impersonated him. This morning we received a letter from his solicitors threatening us with an action.”“But the signature, Sir John? If it was Richard Henry Gorleston's usual signature with no irregularity-”“That's the trouble, Miss Wrayne. This-” handing her a check “-is his usual signature. This-” handing her another-“is the disputed check.”Daphne Wrayne's eyebrows went up as she scanned it.“How did you come to pass this check without comment?” she queried. “The difference is not very great, I admit, but still-”“Miss Wrayne, I put it to you! You have an old client whom you know well. He comes in, sits down and talks to you, writes out a check. You send for your cashier who knows him equally well. You've seen him write the check. You're satisfied. You cash it without question.”“Oh, I know. But will the law exonerate you?”“I'm afraid it won't,” a little ruefully.“Tell me, Sir John-” after a slight pause “-had you any shadow of doubt when this man presented that twenty-five-thousand-pound check but that he was Richard Gorleston?”“Not the faintest, Miss Wrayne.”“When he came in two days ago was he wearing spectacles?”“He wasn't. He said he'd never worn them in his life, and never heard of

Adwinter.""What was his manner like?""Oh, he was naturally very upset, but he quite appreciated our position, though he said, of course, that we should have noticed the difference in the signature. He went on to say that he'd known for some time that he had a "double," but he'd never been able to run him to earth."The girl wrinkled her forehead thoughtfully."He told you he'd been out of London all the time. Did he say where?""Yes. He gave me his address. "The Golden Crown, Portworth, Tavistock" – trout fishing. Incidentally I have verified this by one of our local branches. He was there the whole time.""Well, Sir John, in about a week's time I'll report to you. In the meanwhile say nothing to anybody.""What am I to tell my solicitors to do?" a little perplexedly.She laughed merrily."Oh, come, Sir John, you don't want to throw in your hand yet! Instruct "em to say that you repudiate all liability. After all, if you have to climb down – still, let's hope you won't!"In a comfortably furnished room in the Inner Temple four men sat round a table talking. Just an ordinary room, but certainly no ordinary men, these four. Actually, you could have found them all in Who's Who.The big, tanned, curly-haired, merry-eyed giant, who sat next to the empty chair at the head of the table, was none other than James Ffolliott Plantagenet Trevitter, only son of the Earl of Winstanworth – Eton and Oxford, with half a page of athletic records added. Next to him, lounging a little in his chair, thin, lean, bronzed, almost bored-looking, with his gold-rimmed monocle, sat Sir Hugh Williamson, most intrepid of explorers. Opposite to him, elderly, grey-haired, almost benevolent-looking, Allan Sylvester, the best-loved actor-manager in England. And lastly, leaning forward talking, a smile on his clean-cut handsome face, Martin Everest, K. C., the greatest criminal barrister in England.And these were the four Adjusters…The clock on the mantelpiece chimed out the hour, and as it did so the door opened and the four men rose to their feet, as Daphne Wrayne stood in the doorway."Well, Peter Pan!" exclaimed Sylvester."Well, you dear Knights!"Very lovely she looked as she came forward, and her eyes were for all of them. But it was Lord Trevitter who, as if by tacit understanding, helped her off with her cloak and put her into her chair. Very naturally, yet

quite openly too, she slipped her hand into his and let it stay there. But the other three only smiled indulgently though their smiles spoke volumes. You felt, somehow, that they had known her from childhood – looked on her now almost as a beloved child. That even if she had singled out Trevitter – as indeed she had – she loved none of them less dearly for that.“Oh, it’s great to be here!” she exclaimed with shining eyes. “I can still hardly believe it’s true.”“It’s a wonderful stunt,” murmured Everest thoughtfully.“We’ve been lucky, Martin,” answered the girl. “If it hadn’t been for the Duchess’s pearls-”“And then you giving an interview to the Monitor,” chimed in Lord Trevitter. “That was the master stroke, Daph.”“Well, it was just the right moment, Jim. Having had a big success it seemed to me to be the very wisest thing to do.”“By Jove, it was, my dear,” chuckled Sylvester. “It couldn’t have come at a better time. If you’d given it before, the public would only have scoffed. But as we had recovered that necklace they couldn’t afford to scoff.”“Incidentally,” remarked the girl, “the Duchess sent us a check for five hundred pounds.”“Good for her,” said Lord Trevitter. “I suppose you’ve – oh, of course, Jim! Anonymously, needless to say.”“Quite right,” murmured Everest. “Well, what’s the big idea this evening?”“How do you know I’ve got one?”“Listen to her!” exclaimed Williamson. “Breaking off a dance at twelve o’clock and keeping us out of our beds-“But it’s rather a puzzling one, Hugh-” interrupting him. “We shall want all our ingenuity to get home this time.”“Splendid! Let’s have it, my dear.”Leaning forward in her chair, slim hands clasped, Daphne Wrayne outlined the story to them. Then, as she came to the end:“But I can add a good deal to this. It seemed obvious to me from the start that there was no double at all – it was just a ruse, carefully planned.”“Particularly why, Daph?” queried Lord Trevitter.“The signature, Jim, alone. In a forgery of this size your forger never makes a mistake with the signature. It’s miles too risky. Besides, assuming that it was Gorleston himself, look at all there is to support the idea. If they detect the flaw in the signature they can’t collar him – it’s merely a slip. But if it gets by, what happens then? Why the bank’s in the cart and they’re liable for carelessness.”“You’re a true woman, my dear,” smiled Everest. “Jump

to a conclusion first and fit your facts to it afterwards.”Daphne pouted adorably.“I hate you, Martin,” she said. “Still, I was right.”“You’re sure?” demanded Williamson.“Absolutely. All the same, as my legal friend here will tell you – laying her hand on Everest’s arm with a smile – ”it’s going to be very difficult to prove. However, let me first give you all the facts I have.“She paused for a moment to light a cigarette, and they all waited eagerly.“I sent Rayte up to interview Adwinter,” she went on, “and established pretty satisfactorily that a man wearing glasses and answering in all other descriptions to Gorleston called there recently in the name of John Elwes, of 124, Unwin Street, Bloomsbury. He wanted new glasses and got them. So to Unwin Street, where apparently John Elwes has had a bedroom and sitting-room for over a year. Now, according to his landlady he is a man of no occupation who used to come once or twice a week and stay the night there. He turned up there, on the day the forgery was committed, at two-fifteen in the afternoon – note the time – stayed a few minutes, during which he told his landlady he was going to the bank, got into his taxi saying he’d look in in a few days’ time. He has never been near there since.”She paused a moment to relight her cigarette which had gone out. Then she went on.“Now as regards Gorleston. Gorleston’s been stopping, as he declared, at the Golden Crown, Portworth, two miles out of Tavistock. Every morning he’s breakfasted at eight and gone out, with his lunch, till ten o’clock at night. Now on the day that this forgery is supposed to have been committed, Gorleston swears he was fishing all day. But the curious fact turns up that a ticket collector at Tavistock – who is a fisherman himself, and who had apparently seen Gorleston fishing there that week – swears that he saw him on that particular day going up to London on the nine-eleven. The booking clerk can’t help us, but it’s funny that there was only one return ticket to London issued that day. Funnier still that the return half should have been given up that evening, and funniest of all that Gorleston should have come in on that night – the only one – to say that he had had a blank day.”“How can you fix the day, Daph?”“It was a brilliantly fine day, Martin, and the people at the Inn remember it as strange because two other

men staying there had had big catches.""And the trains? How do they fit in?""The nine-eleven gets to town at one-fifty-six. A taxi would take him to Bloomsbury at 2:15 P.M.; would get him to the bank at two-thirty – the time we know he was there. While another one would give him the three-sixteen to land him at Tavistock at eight-forty-one.""If you could only find the taxi man who drove him-" began Sylvester, but Daphne cut him short."Oh, I have, Allan! He remembers it well. Described his fare as tall and thin, wearing horn-rimmed glasses. Drove him to Unwin Street and waited a few minutes. Then to the bank, where he was given a ten-shilling note and dismissed.""Seems to me," said Lord Trevitter, "that you've proved it up to the hilt."But Everest shook his head."Circumstantially, Jim," he said, "it's excellent. But it's not a good case to go to a jury with. Brief me for Gorleston and I'll find a hundred flaws.""I was afraid you'd say that, Martin," said Daphne, a little ruefully."I don't want to say it, dear, but I must. Mind you, I haven't the slightest doubt from all you've told me that John Elwes has never existed, but I'm equally certain that even with the evidence you've got, it's going to be hard to establish. You see, who's going to prove that the taxi man's passenger was Gorleston from Tavistock? It might have been John Elwes from, say, Surbiton! Frankly, it's a very clever fraud that has got home and looks like staying home. He's got overwhelming evidence that he was at Tavistock, and all that we can produce is a ticket collector who's only seen him once or twice. While he, Gorleston, can produce a hundred intimate pals who will swear that he has never worn spectacles, and a thousand or two checks all bearing his accurate and original signature. No, no, it won't do!""Of course there is another way," murmured Daphne thoughtfully, "but the question is, will you agree to it?"The four men exchanged glances."It's one of Peter Pan's very choicest, right off the ice!" smiled Sylvester. "Now I'll lay any one a quid-""Oh, Allan-" laughing and blushing- "don't be a beast! All right, I'll tell you then. You can laugh at me afterwards."But there was little laughter in their faces as she talked.When she had finished, Lord Trevitter threw back his head and laughed like a schoolboy."Daphne, you're a marvel!" he exclaimed. "my dear, how do you

think of these things?""Is it good, Jim?""Good?" echoed Everest. "It's glorious, magnificent! Of course, he may not fall for it, but if he's guilty I believe he will. If, on the other hand, he's innocent, well – we're no worse off than we were before.""I'm in this, mind!" exclaimed Williamson."We're all in it, the four of us!" answered Lord Trevitter, with his boyish laugh. "Another success for the Adjusters!""Oh, I'm so glad you like my ideal" exclaimed the girl. "Let's thrash it out!"Richard Henry Gorleston was entirely pleased with himself. As he sat in a West End restaurant eating his dinner he smiled complacently to himself. Twenty-five thousand pounds for nothing, he told himself, was the finest day's work he had ever done. His solicitors, furthermore, had hinted to him that the bank, rather than court publicity, would settle with him. He signed to his waiter and ordered himself another bottle of champagne and a Corona."Have you any objection to my sitting here?"A suave, smiling, elderly gentleman with white hair and gold-rimmed pince-nez was standing at the table, hesitating, but Gorleston answered his smile cheerfully."Not a bit in the world. Crowded here tonight.""Somewhat. I don't know my London well. I'm from the country – North Wales. My annual trip to London. I come up once a year, I see all the sights. And-" with a smile "-I have a little opportunity to indulge my pet hobby – billiards."Gorleston was interested in a moment."Funny that," he said. "It's a particular hobby of mine." And they were hard at it in a moment. Finally, when the stranger, who volunteered his name as Professor Lucas, called for his bill, Gorleston ventured to suggest that he and his new friend should adjourn for a game.They played several games. The professor was charmed with his new acquaintance and pressed him to dine with him the following evening. Gorleston accepted with alacrity.The following evening they met again, but soon after the meal had started the professor was claimed by three friends of his. He expressed extraordinary surprise at seeing them, introduced them to Gorleston, and insisted on their dining with him. It was a merry dinner, and a considerable amount of wine was consumed. Later on the quintet adjourned – this time it was to a pet place of the professor's. They had a private room there, and Gorleston trounced the professor soundly. Then, in boisterous

mood, he took on his three friends and administered severe hidings to each of them. So pleased was he that he sent for two magnums of champagne and after trying ineffectually to play with the rest, which he had previously chalked, he subsided gracefully onto the couch. Eventually Gorleston, hopelessly drunk, was assisted into a taxi. The professor gave the driver the address of 124, Unwin Street, Bloomsbury.Inside the taxi the behaviour of the four men was a little strange, for they proceeded to extract a good many things from the drunken man's pockets. They also carefully placed a pair of horn-rimmed spectacles on his face."Capital!" murmured the professor as he gazed at the unconscious man. "John Elwes, surely?""We'll hope so," replied one of the others. "We'll knock up his landlady and if she greets him as such we're home.""When will he wake up?""About eleven tomorrow," replied the other. "I got that drug from the natives on the West Coast, and I know it backwards. Still, we'll be on the safe side and turn up at ten o'clock tomorrow."One hour later the landlady, profuse in her thanks for bringing Mr. Elwes home, showed the four men out of 124, Unwin Street. In a quiet street they proceeded to remove beards, moustaches and wigs – the professor becoming Allan Sylvester and his three companions – Martin Everest, Sir Hugh Williamson and Lord Trevitter!"It was a brain-wave of Daphne's!" chuckled Everest as he lit a cigarette. "We know he's Gorleston, he knows he's Gorleston, but his landlady and Adwinter are prepared to swear he's John Elwes. Besides, he's in Elwes's rooms in Elwes's bed, all his clothes are marked with Elwes's name, and even his cards are in the name of John Elwes. If I were on the bench," thoughtfully, "I should have to come to the conclusion that he was Elwes.""Of course, the amusing thing to me," said Williamson, "is that we've done it so carefully that even if he can prove he's Gorleston, he's in a worse mess. For that establishes definitely that he's been runnin" a dual personality in order to defraud the bank.""Ali, but his attitude tomorrow morning will decide that. If he refuses to give in, we may be wrong. But he won't. He'll throw up the sponge. You see if he doesn't."When Richard Henry Gorleston awoke the next morning he stared dazedly round the room. Then with a startled cry he leapt out of bed. But he

stopped short, for at that moment the door opened and two men, complete strangers to him, came into the room, and locked the door.“Well, John Elwes – the game’s up!”“Wh – wh – what d’you mean? My name’s not John Elwes!“Really! Then may I ask what you’re doing in John Elwes’s room, sleeping in John Elwes’s bed?” He took a quick step forward, picked up a coat which lay on a chair, glanced at it. “And how come you to be wearing John Elwes’s clothes?”The other gasped.“John Elwes’s – clothes?”“See for yourself! Name in coat – name on the shirt – name on the collar – card-case here on the dressing-table-” he took it up and examined it, “-with John Elwes’s cards in it! If you’re not John Elwes perhaps you’ll not only tell us how you come to be in possession of all his things, but who you are and how you are here.”For a space of seconds Gorleston glared at him like a rat caught in a trap.“My name’s Gorleston,” he blurted out desperately. “Richard Henry Gorleston. How I got here I don’t know.”The taller of the two men smiled pityingly.“Come again, sonnie,” he answered. “We’re acting on behalf of the Universal Banking Corporation who are rather interested in getting hold of John Elwes for forging Gorleston’s signature to a twenty-five-thousand-pound check. Adwinter, of Queen Anne Street, will swear to you anywhere, and so will your landlady.”Gorleston moistened his dry lips.“It’s going to trouble you to prove I’m Elwes,” he said.“It’s going to trouble you to prove you’re not,” laughed the other easily. “We’ve got your four pals of last night who swear that while you were drunk you let out the whole story.”“It’s a plant!” Gorleston muttered at length. “A frame-up! You know!”“Try that on the magistrate,” smiled the other. “Of course, it’s always open to you, when you get to Bow Street, to subpoena Gorleston himself. If there is such a strong likeness between the two of you, you might get off that way.”“My dear Allan,” chimed in his friend sarcastically, “do think of what he’s told us! He is Gorleston. Though if he can prove it, then Heaven help him, because we can quite easily establish that he is Elwes as well. So all the bank does is to charge him with trying to obtain twenty-five thou” by means of a trick.““Well, hop it and call a policeman,” replied his friend. “I’m sick of all this cackle.”But as the other moved over to

the door Gorleston sprang up trembling.“Can’t we – can’t we settle this?” he exclaimed desperately.The man at the door smiled.“There’s Gorleston to be considered,” he replied.“I tell you I am Gorleston.”The other strode back, his hands clenched.“Yes,” he snapped, his voice like a whiplash, “and John Elwes as well! Don’t you dare to interrupt me-” as Gorleston made as if to speak. “What about the nine-eleven up to London from Tavistock on the day the forgery was committed? What about the chauffeur who drove you here the moment you arrived so that your landlady could prove that John Elwes was in town that day? What about your telling her that you were in a hurry to get to the Universal Bank to cash a check? Excellent corroborative evidence, eh, that John Elwes was a real live person? And then you drove on to the bank, gave the chauffeur ten shillings and walked in as Richard Henry Gorleston – and caught the three-sixteen back to Tavistock, picked up your fishing rod en route to Portworth and walked into the hotel and said you’d had a blank day. Want any more, you lying devil?”But evidently Gorleston didn’t. He fell back in his chair the picture of absolute rage and despair.“I – don’t know – who on earth you are-”“And you won’t!” interrupted the other. “Now, then, which is it to be – the police, or a confession?”“A con – con – confession!” stammered Richard Henry Gorleston.Once more Sir John Colston sat opposite Daphne Wrayne in her private room.“You will probably agree with me, Sir John,” she began in her cool little voice, “that if Richard Henry Gorleston decided to drop his action, gave you a written undertaking to that effect, agreed furthermore to accept the loss and never proceed against you on the same count – you would then, I think, be quite satisfied? In other words, you would sooner let the matter drop – providing your bank didn’t suffer – rather than he should get, say, seven years, and the public should know that although you had been swindled, you had been just a little careless?”“Why, of course, my dear young lady. Publicity is the thing we’re most anxious to avoid. But you don’t mean to say that Gorleston will do that?”Daphne Wrayne unlocked a drawer in her table and drew out a paper.“Please listen to this, Sir John,” she said:“I, Richard Henry Gorleston, of 849, The Albany, London, W., being of sound mind, do declare as

follows that the check for twenty-five thousand pounds, cashed under my signature at the Universal Banking Corporation, of 99, Lombard Street, in the City of London, on June 15th, 1927, was written by me, and that the error in the signature was made wilfully by me with intent to deceive. Furthermore, that the name of John Elwes was invented by me, and the person and identity of John Elwes was no other than myself.""Great Heavens! May I – may I see it?""Sir John!" Daphne Wrayne leant forward in her chair and her hazel eyes were earnest on his. "You have perhaps a right to ask to see this paper, but I am going to ask you as a gentleman not to exercise that right. This paper bears the signatures, as witnesses, of two men whose names are household words for uprightness, and integrity, throughout England – two of my colleagues – the Adjusters!"Just for a moment silence, while he gazed at her spellbound. Then she went on:"In asking you not to insist on seeing this paper. I know that I am asking you a favour. But so that there shall be no uneasiness in your mind, I will give you a letter which will no doubt satisfy you equally."Daphne took out of her drawer a sealed envelope and handed it to him. He slit it open. Then:"Do you know what is in this letter, Miss Wrayne?""Well, I think I do," with a smile."It is from Gorleston's solicitors! In it they say that he has discontinued his action against us, that he exonerates us from all liability, and that no further proceedings will be taken over this matter.""And you can go on cashing his checks, Sir John," she added sweetly, "and can henceforward reckon him the most scrupulously honourable client – so far as you're concerned – whom you have on your books. You see, he knows that if he tries such a thing again well, we produce this paper!"For some moments he gazed at her, too bewildered to speak."Miss Wrayne," he said at length, "words simply fail me. How on earth have you managed this?"For answer she lay back in her chair, merriment dancing in her hazel eyes."Ever play poker, Sir John?""Why, certainly, Miss Wrayne-" surprised."Ever been bluffed out and induced to chuck in a good hand?""Afraid I have once or twice," he admitted, "and been a bit mad afterwards."Smiling she put out a slim hand to him."Oh, Sir John," she exclaimed merrily, "if Richard Henry Gorleston ever knows what

a good hand he threw in on, he'll be a million times madder than you've ever been!"

THE TEA-LEAF by Edgar Jepson And Robert Eustace

(Sleuth: Ruth Kelstern)Ruth Kelstern is one of the few women ranked among the scientific detectives like Craig Kennedy, Dr. Thorndike, and Luther Trent. Her creators, Edgar Jepson and Robert Eustace, were both prolific. Eustace collaborated with Dorothy L. Sayers on The Documents in the Case, and with L. T. Meade dozens of stories and novels, including Bell: Master of Mysteries (1898); Jepson, famous in his day for the "Lady Noggs" and "Poolyooly" wrote more than seventy-five books. Jepson's son, Selwyn, a successful mystery author in his own right, also created one of the legendary women detectives, Eve Gill, who brings criminals to justice in such novels as The Golden Dart (1949) and The Hungry Spider (1950).Arthur Kelstern and George Willoughton met in the Turkish bath in Duke Street, St. James's, and rather more than a year later in that Turkish bath they parted. Both of them were bad-tempered men, Kelstern cantankerous and Willoughton violent. It was indeed difficult to decide which was the worse-tempered; and when I found that they had suddenly become friends, I gave that friendship three months. It lasted nearly a year.When they did quarrel they quarrelled about Kelstern's daughter Ruth. Willoughton fell in love with her and she with him and they became engaged to be married. Six months later, in spite of the fact that they were plainly very much in love with one another, the engagement was broken off. Neither of them gave any reason for breaking it off. My belief was that Willoughton had given Ruth a taste of his infernal temper and got as good as he gave.Not that Ruth was at all a Kelstern to look at. Like the members of most of the old Lincolnshire families, descendants of the Vikings and the followers of Canute, one Kelstern is very like another Kelstern, fair-haired, clear-skinned, with light blue eyes and a good bridge to the nose. But Ruth had taken after her mother: she was dark with a straight nose, dark-brown eyes of the kind often described as liquid, dark-brown hair, and as kissable lips as ever I saw. She was a proud,

rather self-sufficing, high-spirited girl, with a temper of her own. She needed it to live with that cantankerous old brute Kelstern. Oddly enough in spite of the fact that he always would try to bully her, she was fond of him; and I will say for him that he was very fond of her. Probably she was the only creature in the world of whom he was really fond. He was an expert in the application of scientific discoveries to industry; and she worked with him in his laboratory. He paid her five hundred a year, so that she must have been uncommonly good.He took the breaking off of the engagement very hard indeed. He would have it that Willoughton had jilted her. Ruth took it hard too: her warm colouring lost some of its warmth; her lips grew less kissable and set in a thinner line. Willoughton's temper grew worse than ever; he was like a bear with a perpetually sore head. I tried to feel my way with both him and Ruth with a view to help to bring about a reconciliation. To put it mildly, I was rebuffed. Willoughton swore at me; Ruth flared up and told me not to meddle in matters that didn't concern me. Nevertheless my strong impression was that they were missing one another badly and would have been glad enough to come together again if their stupid vanity could have let them.Kelstern did his best to keep Ruth furious with Willoughton. One night I told him – it was no business of mine; but I never did give a tinker's curse for his temper – that he was a fool to meddle and had much better leave them alone. It made him furious, of course; he would have it that Willoughton was a dirty hound and a low blackguard – at least those were about the mildest things he said of him. It struck me of a sudden that there must be something much more serious in the breaking off of the engagement than I had guessed.That suspicion was strengthened by the immense trouble Kelstern took to injure Willoughton. At his clubs, the Athenaeum, the Devonshire, and the Savile, he would display an astonishing ingenuity in bringing the conversation round to Willoughton; then he would declare that he was a scoundrel and a blackguard of the meanest type. Of course it did Willoughton harm, though not nearly as much harm as Kelstern desired, for Willoughton knew his job as few engineers knew it; and it is very hard indeed to do much harm to a man who really knows his job.

People have to have him. But of course it did him some harm; and Willoughton knew that Kelstern was doing it. I came across two men who told me that they had given him a friendly hint. That did not improve Willoughton's temper.An expert in the construction of those ferroconcrete buildings which are rising up all over London, he was as distinguished in his sphere as Kelstern in his. They were alike not only in the matters of brains and bad temper; but I think that their minds worked in very much the same way. At any rate both of them seemed determined not to change their ordinary course of life because of the breaking off of that engagement.It had been the habit of both of them to have a Turkish bath, at the baths in Duke Street, at four in the afternoon on the second and last Tuesday in every month. To that habit they stuck. The fact that they must meet on those Tuesdays did not cause either of them to change his hour of taking his Turkish bath by the twenty minutes which would have given them no more than a passing glimpse of one another. They continued to take it, as they always had, simultaneously. Thick-skinned? They were thick-skinned. Neither of them pretended that he did not see the other; he scowled at him; and he scowled at him most of the time. I know this, for sometimes I had a Turkish bath myself at that hour.It was about three months after the breaking off of the engagement that they met for the last time at that Turkish bath, and there parted for good.Kelstern had been looking ill for about six weeks: there was a greyness and a drawn look to his face; and he was losing weight. On the second Tuesday in October he arrived at the bath punctually at four, bringing with him, as was his habit, a thermos flask full of a very delicate China tea. If he thought that he was not perspiring freely enough he would drink it in the hottest room; if he did perspire freely enough, he would drink it after his bath. Willoughton arrived about two minutes later. Kelstern finished undressing and went into the bath a couple of minutes before Willoughton. They stayed in the hot room about the same time; Kelstern went into the hottest room about a minute after Willoughton. Before he went into it he sent for his thermos flask which he had left in the dressing-room and took it into the hottest room with him.As it happened, they were the only two people in the hottest room; and

they had not been in it two minutes before the four men in the hot room heard them quarrelling. They heard Kelstern call Willoughton a dirty hound and a low blackguard, among other things, and declare he would do him in yet. Willoughton told him to go to the devil twice. Kelstern went on abusing him and presently Willoughton fairly shouted: “Oh, shut up, you old fool! Or I’ll make you!”Kelstern did not shut up. About two minutes later Willoughton came out of the hottest room, scowling, walked through the hot room into the shampooing room and put himself into the hands of one of the shampooers. Two or three minutes after that a man of the name of Helston went into the hottest room and fairly yelled. Kelstern was lying back on a blood-drenched couch, with the blood still flowing from a wound over his heart.There was a devil of a hullabaloo. The police were called in; Willoughton was arrested. Of course he lost his temper and, protesting furiously that he had had nothing whatever to do with the crime, abused the police. That did not incline them to believe him.After examining the room and the dead body the detective-inspector in charge of the case came to the conclusion that Kelstern had been stabbed as he was drinking his tea. The thermos flask lay on the floor in front of him and some of the tea had evidently been spilt, for some tea-leaves – the tea in the flask must have been carelessly strained of the leaves by the maid who filled it – lay on the floor about the mouth of the empty flask. It looked as if the murderer had taken advantage of Kelstern’s drinking his tea to stab him while the flask rather blocked his vision and prevented him from seeing what he would be at.The case would have been quite plain sailing but for the fact that they could not find the weapon. It had been easy enough for Willoughton to take it into the bath in the towel in which he was draped. But how had he got of it? Where had he hidden it? A Turkish bath is no place to hide anything in. It is as bare as an empty barn – if anything barer; and Willoughton had been in the barest part of it. The police searched every part of it – not that there was much point in doing that, for Willoughton had come out of the hottest room, and gone through the hot room into the shampooers’ room. When Helston started shouting murder, Willoughton had rushed back with the shampooers

to the hottest room and there he had stayed. Since it was obvious that he had committed the murder, the shampooers and the bathers had kept their eyes on him. They were all of them certain that he had not left them to go to the dressing-rooms; they would not have allowed him to do so.It was obvious that he must have carried the weapon into the bath, hidden in the folds of the towel in which he was draped, and brought it away in the folds of that towel. He had laid the towel down beside the couch on which he was being shampooed; and there it still lay when they came to look for it, untouched, with no weapon in it, with no traces of blood on it. There was not much in the fact that it was not stained with blood, since Willoughton could have wiped the knife, or dagger, or whatever weapon he used, on the couch on which Kelstern lay. There were no marks of any such wiping on the couch; but the blood, flowing from the wound, might have covered them up.There was no finding the weapon; and its disappearance puzzled the police and later puzzled the public.Then the doctors who made the autopsy came to the conclusion that the wound had been inflicted by a circular, pointed weapon nearly three-quarters of an inch in diameter. It had penetrated rather more than three inches and supposing that its handle was only four inches long it must have been a sizeable weapon, quite impossible to overlook. The doctors also discovered a further proof of the theory that Kelstern had been drinking his tea when he was stabbed. Half-way down the wound they found two halves of a tea-leaf which had evidently fallen on to Kelstern's body, been driven into the wound and cut in half by the weapon. Also they discovered that Kelstern was suffering from cancer. This fact was not published in the papers; I heard it at the Devonshire.Willoughton was brought before the magistrates and to most people's surprise did not reserve his defence. He went into the witness box and swore that he had never touched Kelstern, that he had never had anything to touch him with, that he had never taken any weapon into the Turkish bath and so had had no weapon to hide, that he had never even seen any such weapon as the doctors described. He was committed for trial.The papers were full of the crime; every one was discussing it; and the question which occupied

every one’s mind was: where had Willoughton hidden the weapon? People wrote to the papers to suggest that he had ingeniously put it in some place under everybody’s eyes and that it had been overlooked because it was so obvious. Others suggested that, circular and pointed, it must be very like a thick lead pencil, that it was a thick lead pencil; and that was why the police had overlooked it in their search. The police had not overlooked any thick lead pencil; there had been no thick lead pencil to overlook. They hunted England through – Willoughton did a lot of motoring – to discover the man who had sold him this curious and uncommon weapon. They did not find the man who had sold it to him; they did not find a man who sold such weapons at all. They came to the conclusion that Kelstern had been murdered with a piece of a steel, or iron, rod filed to a point like a pencil.In spite of the fact that only Willoughton could have murdered Kelstern, I could not believe that he had done it. The fact that Kelstern was doing his best to injure him professionally and socially was by no means a strong enough motive. Willoughton was far too intelligent a man not to be very well aware that people do not take much notice of statements to the discredit of a man whom they need to do a job for them; and for the social injury he would care very little. Besides, he might very well injure, or even kill, a man in one of his tantrums; but his was not the kind of bad temper that plans a cold-blooded murder; and if ever a murder had been deliberately planned, Kelstern’s had.I was as close a friend as Willoughton had, and I went to visit him in prison. He seemed rather touched by my doing so, and grateful. I learnt that I was the only person who had done so. He was subdued and seemed much gentler. It might last. He discussed the murder readily enough and naturally with an harassed air. He said quite frankly that he did not expect me, in the circumstances, to believe that he had not committed it; but he had not, and he could not for the life of him conceive who had. I did believe that he had not committed it; there was something in his way of discussing it that wholly convinced me. I told him that I was quite sure that he had not killed Kelstern; and he looked at me as if he did not believe the assurance. But again he looked grateful.Ruth was grieving for her father; but

Willoughton's very dangerous plight to some degree distracted her mind from her loss. A woman can quarrel with a man bitterly without desiring to see him hanged; and Willoughton's chance of escaping hanging was not at all a good one. But she would not believe for a moment that he had murdered her father."No; there's nothing in it – nothing whatever," she said firmly. "If Dad had murdered Hugh I could have understood it. He had reasons – or at any rate he had persuaded himself that he had. But whatever reason had Hugh for murdering Dad? It's all nonsense to suppose that he'd mind Dad's trying all he knew to injure him, as much as that. All kinds of people are going about trying to injure other people in that way, but they don't really injure them very much; and Hugh knows that quite well.""Of course they don't; and Hugh wouldn't really believe that your father was injuring him much," I said. "But you're forgetting his infernal temper.""No: I'm not," she protested. "He might kill a man in one of his rages on the spur of the moment. But this wasn't the spur of the moment. Whoever did it had worked the whole thing out and came along with the weapon ready."I had to admit that that was reasonable enough. But who had done it? I pointed out to her that the police had made careful enquiries about every one in the bath at the time, the shampooers and the people taking their baths, but they had found no evidence whatever that any one of them had at any time had any relations, except that of shampooer, with her father."Either it was one of them, or somebody else who just did it and got right away, or there's a catch somewhere," she said frowning thoughtfully."I can't see how there can possibly have been any one in the bath, except the people who are known to have been there," said I. "In fact, there can't have been."Then the Crown subpoenaed her as a witness for the prosecution. It seemed rather unnecessary and even a bit queer, for it could have found plenty of evidence of bad blood between the two men without dragging her into it. Plainly it was bent on doing all it knew to prove motive enough. Ruth seemed more upset by the prospect of going into the witness-box than I should have expected her to be. But then she had been having a very trying time.On the morning of the trial I called for her after breakfast to drive her

down to the New Bailey. She was pale and looked as if she had had a poor night's rest, and, naturally enough, she seemed to be suffering from an excitement she had to control. It was not like her to show any excitement she might be feeling.We had of course been in close touch with Willoughton's solicitor, Hamley; and he had kept seats for us just behind him. He wished to have Ruth at hand to consult should some point turn up on which she could throw light, since she knew more than any one about the relations between Willoughton and her father. I had timed our arrival very well; the jury had just been sworn in. Of course the Court was full of women, the wives of Peers and bookmakers and politicians, most of them overdressed and overscented.Then the judge came in; and with his coming the atmosphere of the Court became charged with that sense of anxious strain peculiar to trials for murder. It was rather like the atmosphere of a sick room in a case of fatal illness, but worse.It was unfortunate for Willoughton that the judge was Garbould. A hard-faced, common-looking fellow, and coarse in the grain, he has a well-founded reputation as a hanging judge and the habit of acting as an extra counsel for the prosecution.Willoughton came into the box, looking under the weather and very much subdued. But he certainly looked dignified and he said that he was not guilty in a steady enough voice.Greatorex, the leading Counsel for the Crown, opened the case for the prosecution. There was no suggestion in his speech that the Police had discovered any new fact.Then Helston gave evidence of finding the body of the dead man and he and the other three men who had been with him in the hot room gave evidence of the quarrel they had overheard between Willoughton and the dead man, and that Willoughton came out of the hottest room, scowling and obviously furious. One of them, a fussy old gentleman of the name of Underwood, declared that it was the bitterest quarrel he had ever heard. None of the four of them could throw any light on the matter of whether Willoughton was carrying the missing weapon in the folds of the towel in which he was draped; all of them were sure that he had nothing in his hands.The medical evidence came next. In cross-examining the doctors who had made the autopsy, Hazeldean, Willoughton's counsel,

established the fact quite definitely that the missing weapon was of a fair size; that its rounded blade must have been over half an inch in diameter and between three and four inches long. They were of the opinion that to drive a blade of that thickness into the heart, a handle of at least four inches in length would be necessary to give a firm enough grip. It might have been a piece of a steel, or iron, rod sharpened like a pencil. At any rate it was certainly a sizeable weapon, not one to be hidden quickly, or to disappear wholly in a Turkish bath. Hazeldean could not shake their evidence about the tea-leaf; they were confident that it had been driven into the wound and cut in half by the blade of the missing weapon, and that that went to show that the wound had been inflicted while Kelstern was drinking his tea.Detective-Inspector Brackett, who was in charge of the case, was cross-examined at great length about his search for the missing weapon. He made it quite clear that it was nowhere in that Turkish bath, neither in the hot rooms, nor the shampooing room, nor the dressing-rooms, nor the vestibule, nor the office. He had had the plunge bath emptied; he had searched the roofs, though it was practically certain that the skylight above the hot room, not the hottest, had been shut at the time of the crime. In re-examination he scouted the idea of Willoughton's having had an accomplice who had carried away the weapon for him. He had gone into that matter most carefully.The shampooer stated that Willoughton came to him scowling so savagely that he wondered what had put him into such a bad temper. In cross-examining him Arbuthnot, Hazeldean's junior, made it clearer than ever that, unless Willoughton had already hidden the weapon in the bare hottest room, it was hidden in the towel. Then he drew from the shampooer the definite statement that Willoughton had set down the towel beside the couch on which he was shampooed, that he had hurried back to the hot rooms in front of the shampooer; that the shampooer had come back from the hot rooms, leaving Willoughton still in them discussing the crime, to find the towel lying just as Willoughton had set it down, with no weapon in it and no trace of blood on it.Since the Inspector had disposed of the possibility that an accomplice had slipped in, taken the weapon from the towel, and slipped out

of the bath with it, this evidence really made it clear that the weapon had never left hottest room.Then the prosecution called evidence of the bad terms on which Kelstern and Willoughton had been. Three well-known and influential men told the jury about Kelstern's efforts to prejudice Willoughton in their eyes and the damaging statements he had made about him. One of them had felt it to be his duty to tell Willoughton about this; and Willoughton had been very angry. Arbuthnot, in cross-examining, elicited the fact that any damaging statement that Kelstern made about any one was considerably discounted by the fact that every one knew him to be in the highest degree cantankerous.I noticed that during the end of the cross-examination of the shampooer and during this evidence, Ruth had been fidgeting and turning to look impatiently at the entrance to the Court, as if she were expecting some one. Then, just as she was summoned to the witness box, there came in a tall, stooping, grey-headed, grey-bearded man of about sixty, carrying a brown-paper parcel. His face was familiar to me; but I could not place him. He caught her eye and nodded to her. She breathed a sharp sigh of relief and bent over and handed a letter she had in her hand to Willoughton's solicitor and pointed out the grey-bearded man to him. Then she went quietly to the witness box.Hamley read the letter and at once bent over and handed it to Hazeldean and spoke to him. I caught a note of excitement in his hushed voice. Hazeldean read the letter and appeared to grow excited too. Hamley slipped out of his seat and went to the grey-bearded man who was still standing just inside the door of the Court and began to talk to him earnestly.Greatorex began to examine Ruth; and naturally I turned my attention to her. His examination was directed also to show on what bad terms Kelstern and Willoughton had been. Ruth was called on to tell the jury some of Kelstern's actual threats. Then – it is astonishing how few things the police fail to ferret out in a really important case – the examination took a curious turn. Greatorex began to question Ruth about her own relations with Willoughton and the plain trend of his questions was to bring out the fact that they had not merely been engaged to be married but had also been lovers.I saw at once what the prosecution was aiming at. It was

trying to make use of the tendency of a British jury and a British judge, in a natural effort to champion morality, to hang a man or a woman, who is on trial for murder, for behaving immorally in relations with the other sex. There was no better way of prejudicing Willoughton than by proving that he had seduced Ruth under the promise of marriage.Of course Hazeldean was on his feet at once protesting that this evidence was irrelevant and inadmissible; and of course Garbould was against him – he does not enjoy the nickname by which he is known to the junior bar for nothing. Hazeldean was magnificent. He had one of the worst rows with Garbould he had ever had; and he has had many. Garbould is a fool to let him have these rows. Hazeldean always gets the better of him, or seems to; and it does him good with the jury. But then Garbould was raised to the bench not for intelligence but for political merit. He ruled that the questions were admissible and put one or two to Ruth himself.Then Willoughton lost his temper and protested that this had nothing to do with the case and that it was an outrage. Willoughton has a ringing voice of considerable volume. He is not at all an easy man to hush when he does not wish to hush; and they were some time hushing him. By the time they succeeded, Garbould was purplish-red with fury. Anything that he could do to hang Willoughton would certainly be done. But, observing the jury, my impression was that Willoughton's outburst had done him good with it and that Hazeldean's protests had ended its confidence in Garbould. When I looked at the faces, just a trifle sickly, of the counsel for the prosecution, I felt sure that the Crown had bungled this business rather badly.Greatorex, assisted by Garbould, went on with his questions; and Ruth defiant rather than abashed, and looking in her flushed animation a more charming creature than ever, admitted that she and Willoughton had been lovers; that more than once when he had brought her home from a dance or a theatre he had not left her till the early morning. One of the maids had spied on them; and the Crown had the facts.I was afraid, in spite of Hazeldean's protests, that the fact that Willoughton had seduced her under the promise of marriage, as Greatorex put it, would do him great harm with the jury – very likely it would hang him.Then

Ruth, still flushed, but not greatly discomposed, said: “That would be a reason for my father’s murdering Mr. Willoughton, not for Mr. Willoughton’s murdering my father.”That brought Garbould down upon her like a ton of bricks. She was there to answer questions, not to make idle remarks and so forth and so on.Then Greatorex came to the breaking off of the engagement and put it to her that Willoughton had broken it off, had in fact jilted her after compromising her. That she would not have for a moment. She declared that they had had a quarrel and she had broken it off. To that she stuck and there was no shaking her, though Garbould himself took a hearty hand in trying to shake her.In the middle of it Willoughton, who was looking quite himself again, now that the atmosphere of the Court might be said to be charged almost with violence, said in a very unpleasant, jeering voice: “What she says is perfectly true – what’s the good of bothering her?”Again Garbould was to the fore, and angrily reprimanded him for speaking, bade him keep silent, and said that he would not have his Court turned into a bear-garden.“With the bear on the bench,” said Hazeldean to Arbuthnot in a whisper that carried well.Two or three people laughed. One of them was a juryman. By the time Garbould had finished with him I did not think that that juryman would have convicted Willoughton, if he had actually seen him stab Kelstern.Willoughton was writing a note which was passed to Hazeldean.Hazeldean rose to cross-examine Ruth with a wholly confident air. He drew from her the facts that her father had been on excellent terms with Willoughton until the breaking off of the engagement; that in that matter he had taken her part warmly; and that when the maid who had spied upon them had informed him of her relations with Willoughton he had been very little more enraged than he was already.Then Hazeldean asked: “Is it a fact that since the breaking off of your engagement the prisoner has more than once begged you to forgive him and renew it?”“Four times,” said Ruth.“And you refused?”“Yes,” said Ruth. She looked at Willoughton queerly and added: “He wanted a lesson.”“Did he then beg you at least to go through the form of marriage with him, and promise to leave you at the church door?”“Yes.”“And you refused?”“Yes,” said Ruth.Garbould bent

forward and said in his most unpleasant tone: “And why did you reject the opportunity of repairing your shameful behaviour?”“It wasn’t shameful,” Ruth almost snapped; and she scowled at him frankly. Then she added naïvely: “I refused because there was no hurry. He would always marry me if I changed my mind and wanted to.”There was a pause. To me it seemed clearer than ever that the Crown had bungled badly in raising the question of the relations between her and Willoughton since he had evidently been more than ready to save her from any harm that might come of their indiscretion. But then, with a jury, you can never tell. Then Hazeldean started on a fresh line.In sympathetic accents he asked: “Is it a fact that your father was suffering from cancer in a painful form?”“It was beginning to grow very painful,” said Ruth sadly.“Did he make a will and put all his affairs in order a few days before he died?”“Three days,” said Ruth.“Did he ever express an intention of committing suicide?”“He said that he would stick it out for a little while and then end it all,” said Ruth. She paused and added: “And that is what he did do.”One might almost say that the Court started. I think that everyone in it moved a little, so that there was a kind of rustling murmur. Garbould threw himself back in his seat with a snort of incredulity and glowered at Ruth.“Will you tell the Court your reasons for that statement?” said Hazeldean.Ruth seemed to pull herself together; the flush had faded from her face and she was looking very tired; then she began in a quiet, even voice: “I never believed for a moment that Mr. Willoughton murdered my father. If my father had murdered Mr. Willoughton it would have been a different matter.”Garbould leaned forward and snarled that it was not her beliefs or fancies that were wanted, but facts.I did not think that she heard him; she was concentrating on giving her reasons exactly; she went on in the same quiet tone: “Of course, like everybody else I puzzled over the weapon: what it was and where it had got to. I did not believe that it was a pointed piece of a half-inch steel rod. If anybody had come to the Turkish bath meaning to murder my father and hide the weapon, they wouldn’t have used one so big and so difficult to hide, when a hat-pin would have done just as well and could be hidden much more easily. But what puzzled me most was the tea-leaf in the

wound. All the other tea-leaves that came out of the flask were lying on the floor. Inspector Brackett told me they were. And I couldn't believe that one tea-leaf had fallen on to my father at the very place above his heart at which the point of the weapon had penetrated the skin and got driven in by it. It was too much of a coincidence for me to swallow. But I got no nearer understanding it than anyone else."Garbould broke in in a tone of some exasperation and told her to come to the facts. Hazeldean rose and protested that the witness should not be interrupted; that she had solved a mystery which had puzzled some of the best brains in England, and she should be allowed to tell her story in her own way.Again Ruth did not appear to listen to them, and when they stopped she went on in the same quiet voice: "Of course I remembered that Dad had talked to putting an end to it; but no one with a wound like that could get up and hide the weapon. Then, the night before last I dreamt that I went into the laboratory and saw a piece of steel rod, pointed, lying on the table at which my father used to work.""Dreams now!" murmured Garbould contemptuously; and he leaned back and folded his hands over his stomach."I didn't think much of the dream, of course," Ruth went on. "I had been puzzling about it all so hard for so long that it was only natural to dream about it. But after breakfast I had a sudden feeling that the secret was in the laboratory if I could only find it. I did not attach any importance to the feeling; but it went on growing stronger; and after lunch I went to the laboratory and began to hunt."I looked through all the drawers and could find nothing. Then I went round the room looking at everything and into everything, instruments and retorts and tubes and so on. Then I went into the middle of the floor and looked slowly round the room pretty hard. Against the wall, near the door, lying ready to be taken away, was a gas cylinder rolled it over to see what gas had been in it and it had no label on it."She paused to look round the Court as if claiming its best attention; then she went on: "Now that was very queer because every gas cylinder must have a label on it – so many gases are dangerous. I turned on the cylinder and nothing came out of it. It was quite empty. Then I went to the book in which all the things which come in are

entered, and found that ten days before Dad died he had had in a cylinder of CO_2 and seven pounds of ice. Also he had had seven pounds of ice every day till the day of his death. It was the ice and the CO_2 together that gave me the idea. CO_2, carbon dioxide, has a very low freezing-point – eighty degrees centigrade – and as it comes out of the cylinder and mixes with the air it turns into very fine snow; and that snow, if you compress it, makes the hardest and toughest ice possible. It flashed on me that Dad could have collected this snow and forced it into a mould and made a weapon that would not only inflict that wound but would disappear instantly!"She paused again to look round the Court at about as rapt a lot of faces as any narrator could desire. Then she went on: "I knew that that was what he had done. I knew it for certain. Carbon dioxide ice would make a hard, tough dagger, and it would melt quickly in the hottest room of a Turkish bath and leave no smell because it is scentless. So there wouldn't be any weapon. And it explained the tea-leaf too. Dad had made a carbon dioxide dagger perhaps a week before he used it, perhaps only a day. And he had put it into the thermos flask as soon as he had made it. The thermos flask keeps out the heat as well as the cold, you know. But to make sure that it couldn't melt at all he kept the flask in ice till he was ready to use the dagger. It's the only way you can explain that tea-leaf. It came out of the flask sticking to the point of the dagger and was driven into the wound!"She paused again and one might almost say that the Court heaved a deep sigh of relief.Then Garbould asked in an unpleasant and incredulous voice: "Why didn't you take this fantastic theory straight to the police?""But that wouldn't have been any good," she protested quickly. "It was no use my knowing it myself; I had to make other people believe it; I had to find evidence. I began to hunt for it. I felt in my bones that there was some. What I wanted was the mould. I found it!"She uttered the words in a tone of triumph and smiled at Willoughton; then she went on: "At least I found bits of it. In the box into which we used to throw odds and ends, scraps of material, damaged instruments, and broken test tubes, I found some pieces of vulcanite; and I saw at once that they were bits of a vulcanite container. I took some wax and rolled

it into a rod about the right size and then I pieced the container together on the outside of it – at least most of it – there are some small pieces missing. It took me nearly all night. But I found the most important bit – the pointed end!”She dipped her hand into her handbag and drew out a black object about nine inches long and three quarters of an inch thick and held it up for every one to see.Someone, without thinking, began to clap; and there came a storm of applause that drowned the voice of the Clerk calling for order and the bellowing of Garbould.When the applause died down, Hazeldean, who never misses the right moment, said: “I have no more questions to ask the witness, my lord,” and sat down.That action seemed to clinch it in my eyes, and I have no doubt, it clinched it in the eyes of the jury.The purple Garbould leant forward and almost bellowed at Ruth: “Do you expect the jury to believe that a well-known man like your father died in the act of deliberately setting a dastardly trap to hang the prisoner?”Ruth looked at him, shrugged her shoulders, and said with a calm acceptance of the facts of human nature one would expect to find only in a much older woman: “Oh, well, Daddy was like that. And he certainly believed he had very good reasons for killing Mr. Willoughton.”There was that in her tone and manner which made it absolutely certain that Kelstern was not only like that but that he had acted according to his nature.Greatorex did not re-examine Ruth; he conferred with Hazeldean. Then Hazeldean rose to open the case for the defence. He said that he would not waste the time of the Court, and that in view of the fact that Miss Kelstern had solved the problem of her father’s death, he would only call one witness, Professor Mozley.The grey-headed, grey-bearded, stooping man, who had come to the Court so late, went into the witness-box. Of course his face had been familiar to me; I had seen his portrait in the newspapers a dozen times. He still carried the brown-paper parcel.In answer to Hazeldean’s questions he stated that it was possible, not even difficult, to make a weapon of carbon dioxide hard enough and tough enough and sharp enough to inflict such a wound as that which had caused Kelstern’s death. The method of making it was to fold a piece of chamois leather into a bag, hold that bag with the left

hand, protected by a glove, over the nozzle of a cylinder containing liquid carbon dioxide, and open the valve with the right hand. Carbon dioxide evaporates so quickly that its freezing-point, 80 degrees centigrade, is soon reached; and it solidifies in the chamois-leather bag as a deposit of carbon dioxide snow. Then turn off the gas, spoon that snow into a vulcanite container of the required thickness, and ram it down with a vulcanite plunger into a rod of the required hardness. He added that it was advisable to pack the container in ice while filling it and ramming down the snow, then put the rod into a thermos flask; and keep it till it is needed.“And you have made such a rod?” said Hazeldean.“Yes,” said the Professor, cutting the string of the brown-paper parcel. “When Miss Kelstern hauled me out of bed at half-past seven this morning to tell me her discoveries, I perceived at once that she had found the solution of the problem of her father’s death, which had puzzled me considerably. I had breakfast quickly and got to work to make such a weapon myself for the satisfaction of the Court. Here it is.”He drew a thermos flask from the brown paper, unscrewed the top of it, and inverted it. There dropped into his gloved hand a white rod about eight inches long. He held it out for the jury to see.“This carbon dioxide ice is the hardest and toughest ice we know of; and I have no doubt that Mr. Kelstern killed himself with a similar rod. The difference between the rod he used and this is that his rod was pointed. I had no pointed vulcanite container; but the container that Miss Kelstern pieced together is pointed. Doubtless Mr. Kelstern had it specially made, probably by Messrs. Hawkins Spender.”He dropped the rod back into the thermos flask and screwed on the top.Hazeldean sat down. The juryman who had been reprimanded by Garbould leaned forward and spoke earnestly to the foreman. Greatorex rose.“With regard to the point of the rod, Professor Mozley: would it remain sharp long enough to pierce the skin in that heat?” he asked.“In my opinion it would,” said the Professor. “I have been considering that point and bearing in mind the facts that Mr. Kelstern would from his avocation be very deft with his hands, and being a scientific man, would know exactly what to do, he would have the rod out of the flask and the point in position in very little

more than a second – perhaps less. He would, I think, hold it in his left hand and drive it home by striking the butt of it hard with his right. The whole thing would not take him two seconds. Besides, if the point of the weapon had melted the tea-leaf would have fallen off it.""Thank you," said Greatorex, and turned and conferred with the Crown solicitors.Then he said: "We do not propose to proceed with the case, my lord."The foreman of the jury rose quickly and said: "And the Jury doesn't want to hear anything more, my lord. We're quite satisfied that the prisoner isn't guilty."Garbould hesitated. For two pins he would have directed the case to proceed. Then his eye fell on Hazeldean, who was watching him; I fancied that he decided not to give him a chance of saying more disagreeable things.Looking black enough, he put the question formally to the Jury, who returned a verdict of "Not Guilty," and then he discharged Willoughton.I came out of the Court with Ruth, and we waited for Willoughton.Presently he came out of the door and stopped and shook himself. Then he saw Ruth and came to her. They did not greet one another. She just slipped her hand through his arm; and they walked out of the New Bailey together.We made a good deal of noise, cheering them.***