



CHAPTER XXIX. The Police Are at Fault.

Ambler Jevons read the letter, then handed it to me. It was written upon the note paper I knew so well, stamped with the neat address 'Neneford' in black, but it bore no date. What I read was as follows: 'Sir: I fail to comprehend the meaning of your words when you followed me into the train at Huntington last night. I am in no fear of any catastrophe, therefore, I can only take your offer of assistance as an attempt to obtain money from me. If you presume to address me again I shall have no other course than to acquaint the police. Yours truly,

"MARY COURTEYAN." "Ah!" I exclaimed. "Then he warned her and she misunderstood his intention." "Without a doubt," said Ambler, taking the letter from my hand. "This was written probably only a few days before her

the most poisonous of substances are of unstable composition and are readily altered by chemical reagents; to this group belong many vegetable and most animal poisons. These, therefore, must be treated differently from the more stable inorganic compounds. With an inorganic poison we must destroy all organic materials mixed with it, trusting to find the poison still recognizable after this process; not so with an organic substance; that must be separated by other than destructive means.

Through the whole evening we tested for the various groups of poisons—curatives, simple irritants, specific irritants and neurotics. It was a long and scientific search. Some of the tests with which I was not acquainted I watched with the keenest interest, for of all the medical men in London Tatham was the most up-to-date in such analysis.

At length, after much work with acids, filtration and distillation, we determined that a neurotic had been employed, and

the papers, and created considerable sensation. An old gentleman was murdered under remarkable circumstances. Well, sir, the gentleman in question was Mrs. Courtney's husband."

"The coroner sat back in his chair and stared at the officer who had spoken, while in the court a great sensation was caused. Mention of the Kew mystery brought his details vividly back to the minds of everyone. Yes, after all, the death of that poor costermonger, Lanky Lane, was of greater public interest than the representatives of the press anticipated.

"Are you quite certain of this?" the coroner queried. "Yes, sir. I am here by direction of the chief inspector at Scotland Yard to give evidence. I was engaged upon the case at Kew, and have also made inquiries into the mystery at Neneford."

"Then you have suspicion that the deceased was—well, a person of bad character?" "We have."

"Fools," growled Ambler. "Lane was one of their informers, and often obtained payment from Scotland Yard for information regarding the doings of a certain gang of thieves. And yet they actually declare him to be a bad character. Preposterous!"



"WHEN I GIVE UP YOU SHALL STEP INTO MY SHOES, BOYD, AND IT WILL BE A GOOD THING FOR YOU."

death. That man, and he glanced at the prostrate body, "was the only one who could give us the clue to unravel the mystery."

But the dead man's lips had closed and his secret was held forever. Only those letters remained to connect him with the river tragedy, or rather to show that he had communicated with the unfortunate Mrs. Courtney.

In company we walked to Leman Street police station, one of the chief centers of the metropolitan police in the East End, and there, in an upper office, Ambler had a long consultation with the sergeant of the criminal investigation department on duty.

I described the appearance of the body, and stated my suspicions of poisoning, all of which the detective carefully noted before going forth to make his own examination. My address was taken so that I might assist at the post-mortem, and then shortly after midnight I drove back westward through the city with Ambler at my side.

He spoke little and when in Oxford street, just at the corner of Newman street, he descended, wished me a hurried goodnight and disappeared in the darkness. He was often given to strange vagaries of erratic movement. It was as though some thought had suddenly occurred to him, and he acted at once upon it.

That night I scarcely closed my eyes. My brain was whirled with thoughts of all the curious events of the past few months, the inexplicable presence of old Mr. Courtney and the subsequent death of Mary and the only man who, according to Ambler, knew the secret.

Ethelwyn's strange words worried me. What could she mean? What did she know? Surely hers could not be a guilty conscience. Yet, in her words and actions I had detected that cowardice which a heavy conscience always engenders. One by one I dissected and analyzed the Seven Secrets, but not in one single instance could I obtain a gleam of truth.

While at the hospital next day I was served with a notice to assist at the post-mortem of the unfortunate Lane, whose body was lying in the Shadwell mortuary, and that same afternoon I met by appointment Dr. Tatham of the London hospital, who, as is well known, is an expert toxicologist.

To describe in technical detail the examination we made would not interest the general reader of this strange narrative. The average man or woman knows nothing or cares less for the duodenum or the pylorus; therefore it is not my intention to go into long and wearying detail. Suffice it to say that we preserved certain portions of the body for subsequent examination, and together were engaged the whole evening in the laboratory of the hospital. Tatham was well skilled in the minutiae of the tests. The exact determination of the cause of death in cases of poisoning always depends partly on the symptoms noted before death and partly on the appearances found after death. Regarding the former neither of us knew anything; hence our difficulties were greatly increased. The object of the analyst is to obtain the substances which he has to examine chemically in as pure a condition as possible, so that there may be no doubt about the results of his testing, also, of course, to separate active substances from those that are inert, all being mixed together in the stomach and alimentary canal. Again, in dealing with such fluids as the blood, or the tissues of the body, their natural consistency must be got rid of before the foreign and poisonous body can be reached. There is this difficulty further to contend with—that some of

that its action on the vasomotor system of the nerves was very similar, if not identical, with nitrate of amyl.

Further than that, even Tatham, expert in such matters, could not proceed. Hours of hard work resulted in that conclusion, which it felt we were compelled to be satisfied.

In due course the inquest was held at Shadwell, and, with Ambler, I attended as a witness. The reporters, of course, expected a sensation; but, on the contrary, our evidence went to show that, as the poisonous substance was found in the "quarters" bottle on deceased's table, death was in all probability due to suicide.

Some members of the jury took an opposite view. Then the letters we had found concealed were produced by the police, and, of course, created a certain amount of interest. But to the readers of newspapers the poisoning of a costermonger at Shadwell is of little interest as compared with a similar catastrophe in the quarter of London vaguely known as the West End. The letters were suspicious, and both coroner and jury accepted them as evidence that Lane was engaged upon an elaborate piece of blackmail.

"Who is this Mary Courtney, who writes to him from Neneford?" inquired the coroner of the inspector.

"Well, sir," the latter responded, "the writer herself is dead. She was found drowned a few days ago near her home under suspicious circumstances."

Then the reporters commenced to awake to the fact that something extraordinary was underlying the inquiry.

"Ah!" remarked the coroner, one of the most acute officials of his class. "Then in fact of his letter seems to be more than curious. For aught we know the tragedy at Neneford may have been willful murder, and we have now the suicide of the assassin."

"That, sir, is the police theory," replied the inspector.

"The police theory be hanged!" ejaculated Ambler, almost loud enough to be heard. "The police know nothing of the case, and will never learn anything. If the jury are content to accept such an explanation, and brand poor Lane as a murderer, they must be allowed to do so."

he deceased committed suicide by poisoning white of unadvised mind."

CHAPTER XXX. Sir Bernard's Decision. For fully a week I saw nothing of Ambler.

Sir Bernard was unwell and remained down at home; therefore I was compelled to attend to his practice. There were several serious cases, the patients being people of note; thus I was kept very busy.

My friend's silence was puzzling. I wrote to him, but received no response. A wire to his office in the city elicited the fact that Mr. Jevons was out of town. Probably he was still pursuing the inquiry he had so actively taken up. Nevertheless, I was dissatisfied that he should leave me so entirely in the dark as to his intentions and discoveries.

Ethelwyn came to town for the day and I spent several hours shopping with her. She was strangely nervous and all the old spontaneous gaiety seemed to have left her. She had read in the papers of the curious connection between the death of the man Lane and that of her unfortunate sister, and our conversation was mainly upon the river mystery. Sometimes she seemed ill at ease with me, as though she feared some discovery. Perhaps, however, it was merely my fancy.

I loved her. She was all the world to me, and yet in her eyes I seemed to read some hidden secret which she was endeavoring with all the power at her command to conceal. In such circumstances there was bound to arise between us a certain reserve that we had not before known. Her conversation was carried on in a mechanical manner, as though distracted by harrier thoughts; and when, after having tea done in Bond street, we drove to the station, and I saw her off on her return to Neneford, my mind was full of dark apprehensions.

Yes, that interview convinced me more than ever that she was in some manner cognizant of the truth. The secret existence of old Mr. Courtney, the man whom I myself had pronounced dead, was the crowning point of the strange affair; and I felt by some inward intuition that this fact was not unknown to her.

All the remarkable events of that moonlit night when I had followed husband and wife along the river bank came back to me, and I saw vividly the old man's face, haggard and drawn, just as it had been in life. Surely there could be no stranger occurrence of events than those which formed the Seven Secrets. There were beyond explanation—all of them. I knew nothing. I had seen results, but I knew not their cause.

Nitrate of amyl was not a drug which a costermonger would select with a view to committing suicide. Indeed, I scarcely few of my readers, unless they are doctors or chemists, have ever before heard of it. Therefore my own conclusion, fully endorsed by the erratic Ambler, was that the poor fellow had been secretly poisoned.

Nearly a fortnight passed, and I heard nothing of Ambler. He was still "out of town." Day by day passed, but nothing of the erratic Ambler, was that the poor fellow had been secretly poisoned. I found him confined to his bed, grumbling and peevish. He was somewhat eccentric in his miserly habits and his hatred of society, beyond doubt; and the absurdities which his enemies attributed to him were not altogether unfounded. But he had at all events the rare quality of profiting for his profession a respect nearly akin to en-

thusiasm. Indeed, according to his views, the faculty possessed almost infallible qualities. In confidence he had more than once admitted to me that certain of his colleagues practicing in Harley street were amazing donkeys; but he would never have allowed anyone else to say so. From the moment a man acquired that diploma which gave him the right over life and death, that man became in his eyes an august personage for the world at large. It was a crime, he thought, for a patient not to submit to his decision, and certainly it must be admitted that his success in the treatment of nervous disorders had been most remarkable.

"You were at that lecture by Deboutin of Paris the other day?" he exclaimed to me suddenly, while I was seated at his bedside describing the work I had been doing for him in London. "Why didn't you tell me you were going there?"

"I went unexpectedly—with a friend."

"With whom?" "Ambler Jevons."

"Oh, that detective fellow!" laughed the old physician. "Well," he added, "it was all very interesting, wasn't it?"

"Very—especially your own demonstrations. I had no idea that you were in correspondence with Deboutin."

He laughed; then with a knowing look said: "Ah, my dear fellow, nowadays it doesn't do to tell anyone of your own researches. The only way is to spring it upon the profession as a great triumph; just as Koch did his cure for tuberculosis. One must create an impression nowadays. If only with a quick remedy. The day of the steady plodder is past; it's all hustle, even in medicine."

"Well, you certainly did make an impression," I said smiling. "Your experiments were a revelation to the profession. They were talking of them at the hospital only yesterday."

"H'm. They thought me an old fogey, eh? But, you see, I've been keeping pace with the times, Boyd. A man to succeed nowadays must make a boom with something, it matters not what. For years I've been experimenting in secret, and some day I will show them further results of my researches—and they will come upon the profession like a thunderclap, staggering belief!"

The old man chuckled to himself as he thought of his scientific triumph and how one day he would give forth to the world a truth hitherto unsuspected. We chatted for a long time, mostly upon technicalities which cannot interest the reader, until suddenly he said: "I'm getting old, Boyd. These constant attacks I have render me unfit to go to town and sit in judgment on that pack of silly women who rush to consult me whenever they have a headache or an erasing husband. I think that very soon I ought to retire. I've done sufficient hard work all the years since I was a 'locum' down in Oxfordshire. I'm nearly worn out."

over to me I had never contemplated. Hence I thanked him most heartily. Yes, Sir Bernard had been my benefactor always.

"All the women know you," he went on in his snappy way. "You are the only man to take my place. They would come to you, but not to a new man. All I can hope is that they won't bore you with their domestic troubles—as they have done me," and he smiled.

"Oh," I said. "More than once I, too, have been compelled to listen to the domestic secrets of certain households. It really is astonishing what a woman will tell her doctor, even though he may be young."

The old man laughed again. "Ah!" he sighed. "You don't know women as I know them, Boyd. You've got your experience to gain. Then you'll hold them in abhorrence—just as I do. They call me a woman-hater," he grunted. "Perhaps I am—for I've had cause to hold the feminine mind and the feminine passion equally in contempt."

"Well," I laughed, "there's not a man in London who is more qualified to speak from personal experience than yourself. So I anticipate a pretty rough time when I've had years of it, as you have."

"And yet you want to marry?" he said, looking me straight in the face. "Of course, you love Ethelwyn Mivart. Every man at your age loves. It is a malady that occurs in the teens and declines in the thirties. I should have thought that your affection of the heart had been about cured. It is surely time it was."

"It is true that I love Ethelwyn," I declared, rather annoyed, "and I intend to marry her."

"If you do, then you spoil all your chances of success. The class of women who are my patients would much rather consult a confirmed bachelor than a man who has a jealous wife hanging to his coat-tails. The doctor's wife must always be a long-suffering person."

I smiled, and then our conversation turned upon his proposed retirement, which was to take place in six months' time. I returned to London by the last train, and on entering my room found a telegram from Ambler making an appointment to call on the following evening. The message was dated from Eastbourne, and was the first I had received from him for some days.

Next morning I sat in Sir Bernard's consulting room as usual, receiving patients, and the afternoon I spent on the usual hospital round. About 5 o'clock Ambler arrived, drank a brandy and soda with a reflective air, and then suggested that we might dine together at the Cavour, a favorite haunt of his. At table I endeavored to induce him to explain his movements and what he had discovered, but he was still disinclined to tell me anything. He worked always in secret, and until facts were clear said nothing. It was a peculiarity of his to remain dumb even to his most intimate friends concerning any inquiries he was making. He was a man of moods, with an active mind and a still tongue—two qualities essential to the successful unravelling of mysteries.



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OVER DAILY NEWS OFFICE. Office Hours—8 a. m. to 8 p. m. Sun days, 10 a. m. to 12:30 p. m.

in bed on the previous night, had returned to town suddenly, but was engaged. Ambler waited in the hall, while I passed along to the door of the consulting room with the intention of asking permission to enter, as I always did when Sir Bernard was engaged with a patient. On approaching the door, however, I was startled by hearing a woman's voice raised in angry, reproachful words, followed immediately by the sound of a scuffle and then a stifled cry. Without further hesitation I turned the handle. The door was locked. (To be Continued.)

LABOR AND INDUSTRY. New York buys sausage casing in Argentina. The American sewing machine is popular in Mesopotamia. The English people are the greatest consumers of the child labor law of Louisiana by a test case at New Orleans. The United States now uses more raw silk for manufacturing than France. Of the 47,000 miners of Great Britain, 347,000 are members of the union in good standing. Rhode Island factories employ \$1,325 per person, 467 of whom are children. Total increase of 4.26%. The tobacco trust is contesting the constitutionality of the child labor law of Louisiana by a test case at New Orleans. State Labor Commissioner Varney of North Carolina is strongly recommending the enactment of stringent laws in relation to the employment of child labor. The legislature of Pennsylvania is considering a bill to raise the age of boys permitted to work in the coal mines from 14 to 16, and in the breaker from 12 to 14 years. There is also a provision which forbids the

Varicocele Hydrocele Blood Poison Piles Stricture Rupture

employment of girls and women between the hours of 9 p. m. and 1 a. m. The Amos J. Cummings Memorial committee of the International Typographical union is summoned to meet at Washington to begin the effort of erecting a monument to that late champion of trade unionism. The 80,000 employees of the Pullman Car company at Pullman, Ill., who are thoroughly organized, are preparing to request shorter hours and no Sunday work. The corporation is aware of the complete organization. The Canadian Niagara Falls Power company expects to have \$5,000,000 horse power available by August, and so great has been the demand for power that they will begin an extension of the wheel pit, which will add 60,000 horse power more. During the ten months ended October, 1902, the value of electrical instruments exported was \$1,446,396, as compared with \$1,227,064 in 1901. That is a very healthy showing of electrical machinery in the same period, there was exported \$1,248,720, as against \$2,061,520.

Mr. Barnes, the engineers' delegate who came from England to America with Mr. Moseley's industrial commission, having arrived, gives this summary of the conclusions he came to in the course of the inquiry into American "push" machinery: More used than at home. Sanitation. Not so good. Hours of work: Longer. Work: Not so good. Wages: Higher. Cost of living: Higher still. Trades unionism: Not so strong. Providing England used the best machinery he thinks Britain has nothing to fear from America and is quite able to hold its own.

Irregularities

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