

# FOLLIES OF THE PASSING SHOW—By Hanlon

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Clothes and the Woman

## The World's Greatest Detective Cases

### Dancing Master's Slayes Makes Fatal Blunder in Singing Favorite Song of Victim.

Thomas Hocker planned the murder of his friend most cleverly, but just when he thought discovery was impossible a button revealed his guilt and he was arrested.

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By NAZARIENE DAAN KANNBELLE.

When Thomas Hocker decided to murder his friend, James Delarue, he determined not to make any mistake that would lead to his detection. He was well aware that many clever murderers had proved themselves no match for the emissaries of the law, but he was young and vain enough to believe that he was going to be one of the very few criminals to escape justice.

The idea came to him one January evening when, after leaving the booth in which he was employed, he met Delarue at the end of the rather dreary London street. All that week Hocker had been haunted by impetuosity. He owed his brother money, and his wages were too small to satisfy his tastes, and then there was Sarah Philip, the pretty little dressmaker, with whom he was very much in love. He wanted to make her presents in order to impress her with his importance. As he had told her that he was a gentleman of independent means, it was not surprising that she should expect to be taken to the best seats in the theaters and the most expensive restaurants, and Hocker was quite conscious of her surprise when he led her into cheap eating houses. He was now feeling certain that she would refuse to have anything more to do with him, not because he was poor, but because he had lied to her, unless he could raise sufficient capital to continue his deception.

As he was busy with his thoughts he heard his Christian name pronounced affectionately, if chaffingly, by Delarue.

"Day-dreaming again, Tommy?" exclaimed the dandified teacher of music, who was proud of his reputation as a lady-killer.

Hocker laughed and took his friend's arm.

"I'm glad to see you, Jim," he said warmly. "You're the best friend I've got, and I don't know what I should do without you."

It was the sort of remark that Delarue liked. In his own circle he was treated as a nobody, for few persons took the overdressed coxcomb seriously, and it was only his undoubted cleverness as a teacher that

enabled him to retain his pupils. Outside the music room they ignored him, and Delarue was forced to seek his society among shop assistants, persons for whom he pretended to have the profoundest contempt, although he was really their inferior. But he regarded himself as a professional man, and he liked to pose as rich and benevolent. It was noticed, however, that he seldom gave away a dollar.

The "Hanger-On."

The friendship with Hocker had come about as the result of a chance meeting, and the young shoemaker had from the first openly shown his admiration for the music teacher. Hocker had been trained to be a schoolmaster, and therefore was quite well educated. Failure to pass his examinations had, however, prevented his obtaining a position, and he had had to go into trade, but he was intelligent and good-looking, and Delarue was only too pleased to accept him as a hanger-on and friend. Such was the position of the two men who now took a stroll together towards the west end of London.

"Where are you going, Jim?" Hocker asked when they came in sight of Piccadilly Circus.

"Oh, I thought of a little dinner, with a bottle of wine," his friend answered lightly.

"Well, you'll have to pay for it," remarked the younger man with a certain grimness, "for I'm absolutely broke."

Delarue came to a stop, and stared at him.

"I'm sorry to hear that," he said, and thrust his hand into his pocket and produced a quantity of gold coins. "Take one," he continued, with unusual generosity. "You can repay me when it suits you; I won't be a hard creditor. And now we'll have that dinner I spoke of."

Hocker trembled with greed as he touched the nearest \$20 gold piece, for he was dazzled by the display, never having imagined that such riches came the way of James Delarue.

"You must be making a fortune, Jimmy," he remarked enviously, when they were seated at the corner table in the restaurant.

"Oh, I do pretty well," answered Delarue, who was a born boaster. "I have more pupils than I can possibly manage properly. That was a lie, but Hocker believed it. And although I recently doubled my fees they won't keep away. Yesterday I was paid six of my accounts, and that's why I have so much cash on me."

"Isn't it rather dangerous?" asked the shoemaker, who was so excited that he could hardly eat, and fully believing all he heard. "You might be robbed!"

"I can look after myself," said the music master confidently. "And I

trust the banks. Come now, Tommy, guess how much I have on me intended, and that was the reason why he cheerily greeted Delarue, and refused to share the latter's depression borne of the darkness and the cold.

"I know every inch of the Heath," said Hocker confidently when his friend nervously expressed a wish to know where they were going. "Trust to me—I'll take you by a short cut."

Twenty minutes later they were walking side by side in a narrow path leading towards the most deserted part of Hampstead Heath. The two men might have been quite alone in the world, for the silence that prevailed was uncanny, and it was difficult to see more than a yard ahead.

"It's horrible!" muttered Delarue, pausing. He turned and saw Hocker raise his right hand, and then suddenly realizing his danger shrieked "murder!"

He never spoke again, for the next moment something crashed down on his head, and he was hurled to the ground. As he fell he clutched wildly at his assailant, and caught him by the overcoat, but his feeble fingers almost instantly relaxed, and he lay on his back dead.

Without the slightest compunction Hocker knelt beside the corpse and searched the pockets frantically. He found about \$25 in bills and some small change, and these, with a gold watch and chain, he concealed about his own person, muttering curses at his ill-luck in not finding more, but he did not know until later that Delarue had lied to him about his takings, and that the handful of money he had displayed four days previously had belonged to a relative, for whom he had collected it. Thus it may be said that Delarue's habit of boasting was mainly responsible for his violent end.

When the murderer had satisfied himself that he had obtained all the plunder he rose and walked away. He had not gone a hundred yards, however, when in the act of glancing back, he was startled to see a policeman's lantern flashing amongst the bushes, and a little later a cry of amazement proclaimed the fact that the corpse of James Delarue had been found.

The Problem.

What ought he to do now? Hocker stood and pondered the problem in the icy darkness. His first decision was to fly, but an insatiable curiosity drew him back to the fatal spot.

"Hello, what's up?" he asked, starting when he found a stalwart officer standing beside the body.

"A bad business, sir," answered the constable, who was glad to have some one to talk to just then. "A gentleman has been murdered. The

figure was his friend; it was a night made for such a crime as Hocker intended, and that was the reason why he cheerily greeted Delarue, and refused to share the latter's depression borne of the darkness and the cold.

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sergeant has gone for assistance, but he'll be back presently.

Hocker was sympathetic, and offered the man a sip from his brandy flask, but it was declined, and a few minutes later the sergeant, accompanied by two civilians and a stretcher.

Without wasting a moment, the body was reverently placed on the stretcher, and with Hocker in attendance, conveyed to the nearest inn, but the murderer did not enter with it. Here the body was searched, and the letter "planted" on it by Hocker recovered by the senior policeman present.

The murderer watched the officer from the gravel path outside the window of the room in which the little scene was taking place, and he chuckled from sheer relief when he overheard his exclamation, "Here's the solution!" and saw the other cluster eagerly around him.

The murderer was so cool and confident that he went straight from the Heath to visit Sarah Philip, the girl he loved. She commented on the fact that his clothes were not so tidy as usual, but she was satisfied with the explanation that the weather was responsible for that, and for more than an hour he remained with her. His first act on reaching home was to repay his brother the money he owed him, and he astonished his father by making him a present of a dollar. Then he went to bed and slept soundly until he was roused and reminded that he would lose his job, if he did not hurry, as he was due at the shop in less than half an hour.

The Letter.

The letter found by the police in Delarue's pocket was addressed "James Cooper, Esq.," and it read as follows:

"My Dearest James—I have so often resigned myself to your will and embrace that I find myself in the situation which makes it necessary for me to leave home shortly. I would rather die than doubt either your love or your honor, yet do not—oh, do not be ashamed to own me. If you cannot at present give me the title of wife, conceal me from the cruel finger of scorn. Heaven has been my witness that I have loved you, but too dearly. Let me be happy in the conviction that one day you will restore me to your arms forever. Ease my suspense by meeting me tomorrow at the place where, alas! you have always made me happy. Yet not so if you will not put one smile of hope and comfort on my countenance. You can render me forever light-hearted and happy, or forever heart-broken and conscience-stricken. Oh, that a bended knee might procure the former lot!—Ever yours, Caroline."

"That points to a woman he has betrayed and deserted taking the

law into her own hands," said the sergeant eagerly.

An inspector standing by sniffed contemptuously.

"A woman who commits murder from motives of revenge doesn't rob her victim," he remarked curtly. "I believe this is the doing of a man. No girl could have killed a powerful man such as James Cooper evidently was."

The inspector's pronouncement created a sensation, and he intensified it when he ordered the sergeant and two constables to return to the spot where the body had been found and make a thorough search. They did so, and some hours afterwards reported that all they had found was a large button. The inspector seized it triumphantly.

"This was torn from a man's coat," he cried decidedly. "Now we only get some one to tell us who James Cooper was, and the rest ought to be easy if only we have a little luck."

Thrill of Horror.

The news of the crime caused a thrill of horror, and Hampstead immediately became the destination of thousands of curious Londoners who wished to view the spot where the crime had been committed. The papers published columns dealing with the affair, and the police circulated a description of the corpse all over London, and asked help towards identifying it. They had long to wait before they obtained the assistance they wanted, for an uncle of Delarue's at once missed his nephew, and went to the police station to give information, and there he was requested to view the body. When he did he instantly pronounced it to be that of James Delarue.

"Delarue? Are you sure?" exclaimed the inspector in charge. "You're not mixing him up with a man called James Cooper?"

"I'd know my nephew anywhere, sir," said the old gentleman, testily. "And that's Jim's body right enough."

The inspector, however, was not satisfied until half a dozen other relatives swore positively that it was Delarue, and it was only then that the letter addressed to "James Cooper, Esq.," was shown to the family. A cousin nervously examined it.

"I'm afraid it was addressed to Jim," he said, slowly. "He was in the habit of passing under the name of Cooper, so that certain ladies of his acquaintance should not be able to discover who he really was if ever they had a quarrel with him."

"I understand," remarked the officer, quietly, and there and then was satisfied that the Hampstead Heath mystery would only be solved when "Caroline" was found and arrested.

Thomas Hocker duly read about the identification of the body, and he was overjoyed when he saw the

police notice inquiring for "Caroline." Doubtless he congratulated himself on his cleverness.

Two nights after the murder Hocker was invited to a musical party, and he had no hesitation in accepting. All those present were friends, and when he was asked to contribute to the general entertainment he sat down at the piano and sang a song which Delarue had taught him! It was a callous act, which was destined to bring its own punishment, for some one in the room identified the tune with the murdered man and began to talk of the mystery, and before Hocker quite knew what was happening, the whole party, with the sole exception of himself, was loudly and excitedly discussing the crime.

A fierce argument raged round the "Caroline" letter.

"I don't believe it's genuine; it was written by a man!" some one cried, and Hocker trembled and was glad no one was looking at him.

"Why, how pale you are, Tommy!" said a girl-friend, and her remark drew everybody's attention to him.

Losing his temper, he clenched his fists.

"I'm sick of this!" he cried, angrily. "I came for music, and all I get is a lot of chatter about an important matter!"

"But he was your friend," his host protested.

"Well, what of that?" Hocker shouted, defiantly. "I'm off."

His departure caused the party to break up, and two young men walking home together discussed the queer scene.

"I wonder if Hocker murdered Delarue," said the younger, suddenly.

"I've been wondering, too," his friend whispered. "But keep your thoughts to yourself, for there's no proof against him."

Of course, they could not be expected to know of the clue of the button which at that moment was in the pocket of the detective who had been commissioned to solve the Hampstead Heath murder mystery—if he could!

A Button.

It was the button from a man's overcoat that inspired the sleuth to forget all about the mysterious "Caroline" for a time, and turn his attention to male friends of the late James Delarue. With the aid of the relatives of the victim he composed a list, and at the top stood the name of Thomas Henry Hocker.

"I'd like to see Mr. Hocker," said the officer to a colleague. "Will you bring him to me?"

Of course, they could not arrest him, but it was easy enough to arrange a meeting, and in a quiet saloon the detective shook hands with Hocker.

"You were a friend of Mr. De-

larue's, I believe?" he remarked, with a sympathetic glance.

"Yes," said Hocker blandly. "He was one of my best pals, and his death was quite a blow to me."

"When did you first hear of it?" asked the officer, pretending to be absorbed in the quality of his drink.

"When I read about it in the papers," was the immediate reply. This was a lie, because the inspector knew that Thomas Hocker had been on Hampstead Heath on the Thursday night, and had known of the murder then. An officer had identified him as the man, muffled up to the neck, who had paused on the roadway to light a cigar, but if it had not been for that act Hocker's identity would have been very difficult to establish.

The next day there was a conference at the police headquarters, when it was decided that an effort must be made to find the overcoat from which the button had been torn. Everything pointed to the garment being in Hocker's possession, but the police hesitated to arrest him. However, late that night an important piece of evidence came into their possession—a written account by Sarah Philip of her sweetheart's interview with her on the night of the murder.

Arrest of Hocker.

Early the following morning two detectives entered the room where Hocker was still in bed, and informed him that they had a warrant for his arrest. In vain did he protest against what he termed an "outrage." They insisted on taking him to the station, and he had not been there two hours when the detectives returned with an overcoat.

"Is this yours?" he was asked in the presence of witnesses.

"It is," he replied unsuspectingly.

All present save the prisoner looked again at the place where the second button ought to have been. It was missing, and the fact that it was indicated that the mystery had been solved.

Before the accused was placed in the dock at the old Bailey the authorities accumulated further evidence which established beyond a doubt that Thomas Hocker had accompanied Delarue on the Heath, and when counsel for the prosecution had spoken everybody in the crowded court waited expectantly to hear the defense. Greatly to the surprise of judge, jury and audience Hocker conducted his own defense, and delivered a long and passionate harangue, protesting his innocence with elaborate ingenuity.

But the jury's verdict was "guilty" and a few weeks later Thomas Henry Hocker was hanged for the murder of his friend.