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TRACKED BY A TATTOO
TRACTED
BY A TATTOO

A SYMPHONY

BY

P. ROBERT NURIE

LONDON
ERICKSON WARE & CO.
AND NEW YORK
TRACKED
BY A TATTOO

A MYSTERY

BY

FERGUS HUME

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

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CHAPTER I

THE CRIME.

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

This especial evening Rixton had cast off the name, clothes, and personality of Fanks; and in "proprià persona," he was about to treat himself to a melodrama
at the Adelphi Theatre. As he was passing through the vestibule, at a quarter to eight, a man came forward and touched him on the arm. To the surprise of Rixton he recognised Crate.

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

"What is the matter, Crate?"

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

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

"Down Tooley's Alley."

"Man or woman or child?"

"Man! I think a gentleman."

"When was the crime committed?"

"Between six and seven this evening."

"In a house or on the street?"

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

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

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

"I agree with you. Return to the Red Star, Crate, while I go to my rooms to change my clothes. I am Rixton at present, and I don't want to mix up my two personalities. Expect me in half an hour."
Crate departed with prompt obedience, and Rixton drove off in a swift hansom to his chambers in Duke Street, St. James. In ten minutes he had assumed his detective clothes and Fanks personality; in twenty he was returning eastward; and at the expiration of half an hour he was standing at the door of the house wherein the crime had been committed. Such promptitude was characteristic of the man.

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

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

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

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

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

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

“And most unexpected?”

“Certainly most unexpected, sir.”

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

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

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

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

“Where is the body?”
"Upstairs, in one of the bedrooms."
"Was the murder committed in one of the bed­rooms?"
"No, Mr. Fanks. It was committed in the room at the end of this passage."
"And why was the body removed out of that room?"
"I removed the body," said Mrs. Boazoph, in a low voice.
"You had no right to do so," rebuked Fanks, sharply. "It was your duty to leave things as they were, when you discovered that a crime had been committed, and to give immediate information to the police."
"I did do so, sir. The police were in this house ten minutes after I saw the dead body."
"Nevertheless, you found time to remove it in that ten minutes."
"I thought it best to do so," said Mrs. Boazoph, obstinately.
"No doubt. I shall not forget your zeal," was Fanks' rejoinder.

The woman could not repress a shudder at the ironi­cal tone of the detective, and her pale face turned yet paler. However, she passed discreetly over the remark and turned the conversation briskly.
"Shall I take you upstairs to see the body, sir?"
"No; I shall first examine the room. Afterwards I shall hear your story and inspect the corpse. Come with me, Crate."

Still preserving an impenetrable countenance, Mrs. Boazoph preceded the two men into the little room at the end of the passage. It was an apartment of no great size, furnished in a scanty, almost in a penurious fashion. A window draped with faded curtains of red rep faced the entrance. There was no fireplace,
and the furniture consisted of a mahogany horse-hair sofa placed against the right-hand wall looking from the door, a round table covered with a stained red cloth, which stood in the centre of the room, and on either side of this two chairs. A crimson felting carpeted the floor, and a few racing pictures, crudely coloured, adorned the salmon-tinted walls. Beyond this the room contained nothing, save an iron gas-pipe suspended from the roof, by which two jets flaring in pink globes lighted the apartment.

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

"What does this window look out on to?"

"A yard, sir."

"Is there any outlet from the yard?"

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

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

"Huddled up on yonder sofa, sir."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“The white man, sir."

“And the negro assassin; what of him?”

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

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

Not sufficiently clever to see the irony of this re-
mark, Crate looked surprised. But the woman was clearer sighted; and, seeing that she had over-reached herself by saying too much, she relapsed into silence. The detective, feeling that he had scored, smiled grimly, and went on with his examination of the room.

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

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

"And the glasses were on the table?"

"On the table and on the tray."

"Were there any signs of a struggle?"

"Not that I saw, Mr. Fanks."

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

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

"How was he dressed?"

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

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

"No, sir."

"Nor the white man?"

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

By this time the patience of Mrs. Boazoph was nearly worn out, and her self-control was gradually giving way. She evidently felt that she could hold out no longer, for, after replying to the last question, she left the room suddenly. But that Fanks interfered Crate would have stopped her.
"Let her go," said the former, "we can see her later on. In the meantime," he continued, pointing to the table, "what is all this?"

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Well?" said Crate, stolidly.

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

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

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

As he uttered the exclamation the match, still alight, dropped on the table among the black grains to which allusion has been made. There was a flicker, a sparkle
of light, and when Fanks struck another match the grains had disappeared.

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

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

A RECOGNITION.

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

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

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

"My regrets for the second accident," she re-
marked glibly, "but it is due to overstrung nerves. Put it down to that gentleman, if you please, and you will put it down to the right cause."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"You know all that I know," said Mrs. Boazoph. "The man who came here at six this evening—the man who lies dead upstairs, is a complete stranger to me. I caught only a glimpse of him as he entered; I did not speak to him. He asked for a private room in which to wait for a friend. He was shown into this room, and waited. The negro arrived ten minutes later. I saw him—I showed him into this room; but
indeed, Mr. Fanks, I never set eyes on him before. The pair—white and black—were together till close on seven. They had something to drink, for which the dead man paid. I did not enter the room; it was the barmaid who served them with drink. I did not know when the negro went; but, wanting the room for some other gentlemen, I knocked at the door at seven o’clock to ask if they had finished their conversation. I received no reply; I opened the door; I entered; I found the white man dead, the negro absent. After removing the body upstairs and covering it with a sheet, as any decent woman would, I sent for the police. That is all; I swear that it is the truth. Say what you please; do what you please; you cannot fasten this crime on to me.”

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

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

Mrs. Boazoph thrust the candle into his hands.

“I have seen It once; I refuse to look upon it again.”

She passed out of the room shaking as with the ague. Fanks nodded in a satisfied way, and beckoning to Crate, he went upstairs. A frightened housemaid on the landing indicated the room of which they were in search; and they entered it to come face to face with the doctor summoned by the zealous landlady. He introduced himself as Dr. Renshaw, and made this announcement with a bland smile and a condescending bow. Fanks eyed his tall and burly figure; his Napoleonic countenance; his smooth, brown beard and his perfect dress. There was a look about the man
which he did not like; and he mistrusted the uneasy glance of the hard, grey eyes. The detective relied largely on his instinct. In this case it warned him against the false geniality of Dr. Renshaw.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The doctor bent over the body, and rolled up the shirt sleeve of the left arm. Between elbow and shoulder there appeared a swollen mark in the shape of a rude cross, surrounded by a wheel; violet in colour,
and slashed across with a knife. To this he pointed in silence.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Renshaw drew back with a shudder.
“Is it necessary that I should go to the inquest?” he asked faintly.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Left alone with Fanks, the landlady drew a breath of relief, and addressed herself to the detective.
"Do you wish to know anything else, sir," she said coldly. "If not, with your permission, I shall retire to bed."

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

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

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

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

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

"No one at present, Crate."

"Oh! and what do you do next?"

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

Crate stopped in surprise.

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

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

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

And now the detective found himself at a standstill. No evidence had been brought forward implicating either Mrs. Boazoph or Dr. Renshaw; and, doubtful as was Fanks as to their honesty, he could gain no
clue from the one or the other of them likely to elucidate the mystery. Failing this, he had determined to learn if possible all about the previous life of the deceased, and in this way discover if anyone was likely to be a gainer by his death. Garth, who had known the late Sir Gregory intimately—who had been present at the inquest—was the most likely person to furnish these details; and Fanks was waiting for an opportunity of addressing him. On the result of the projected conversation would depend his future movements.

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

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

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

Garth looked up and turned round with alacrity.

"Is the case in your hands, Fanks?"

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

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

"Humph! and the name?"

"Ted Hersham, the journalist."

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

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

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

"Garth?" he said; "I say, Garth?"
"Yes! What's the matter?"
"Don't send that letter till after our conversation."
"Ah! You guess why I am writing to him."
"My remark of a few moments ago ought to have shown you that," said Fanks, dryly. "Yes; I guess your object, and I want you to leave the case in my hands. It is too difficult a one for you to manage alone."
"I know that it is difficult, Fanks, but I wish to solve this mystery."
"Because Fellenger was your friend?" asked Fanks.
"Because Fellenger was my cousin," replied Garth.
The announcement took Fanks by surprise, as he had not known of the relationship. He was aware that Fellenger and Garth had been close friends, but he knew little of the former, save as a club acquaintance, and the latter was very reticent about his private affairs, although he was curious concerning the affairs of others.
"So you wish to revenge the death of your cousin," he remarked after a thoughtful moment.
Garth shrugged his shoulders.
"Hardly that," he replied; "between you and me, I did not care overmuch for Fellenger. He was a bad lot, and we only held together because of our relationship. But I should like to find out what took him to Tooley's Alley and who killed him."
"A laudable curiosity. Do you suspect anybody?"
"Not a soul. I am as much in the dark as—you are."
"I may not be so much in the dark as you think," said the other.
"Then why did you ask me to assist you?" retorted Garth, sharply. "See here, Fanks, I'll tell you all
that I know if you will promise to keep me posted up concerning the progress of the case."

Fanks twisted his ring and reflected.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Come, now, old fellow," said Fanks, amiably, "we
have a hard task before us; so you must make it easier by answering my questions."

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

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

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

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

"You are Sir Gregory's cousin?"

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

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

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

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

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

"Where does he reside now?"

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

"Do you know Sir Louis intimately?"

"No. I have only seen him once or twice. He is
a bookish, scientific man, and an invalid;—at least," corrected Garth, "he has always a doctor living with him; a tall, fat brute, called Binjoy, who twists him round his finger. He has been with him for years."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"The property goes to the Crown," replied Garth. "Louis and I are the sole representatives of the Fellengers."
"The race has dwindled considerably. Now what about your dead cousin. He was a trifle rapid, I believe?"

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

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

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

"Did he behave as usual towards you?"

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

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

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

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

"I don't think it was that, either," demurred Garth.

"It was a man he met—a negro—not a woman."

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

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

"I saw you there in the crowd."

"You see everything, Fanks."

"It is my business to see everything, Garth. It is because you were at the inquest that I sought you out to-day. Now that you have explained to me your relationship to Sir Gregory I understand why you were present. But to return to the main point. You heard the theory of Dr. Renshaw?"
"Yes," replied Garth reflectively. "There might be something in that secret society business. Not, mind you, that Gregory was the man to meddle with rubbish of that kind. He was too much of a fool; but one never knows; a man does not have a cross tattooed on his arm for nothing."

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

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

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

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

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

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

"I intend to see him and find out. I noticed it long ago; but made no remark on it, thinking that it was the result of some school-boy freak. Now it has assumed a new importance in my eyes. Therefore you must let me interview Hersham, and choose my own time and place for doing so."
"I suppose you are right. Tear up that letter, please."
Fanks held out the letter.
"Tear it up yourself," he said.
This Garth did without further remark, and looked at his friend.
"What do you intend to do now?" he asked.
"Continue this conversation for a few minutes longer. You were intimate with the dead man, Garth. Did you ever notice this cross?"
"I did not," said Garth, promptly, "or I should have asked what it meant. By Jove!" he added, with a start.
"Then all that obliteration business must be nonsense."
"Of course," assented Fanks, smoothly. "I came to that conclusion long ago. Fellenger had no cross on his arm when he entered Tooley's Alley. It was tattooed that night by the negro."
"What makes you think that?"
"I found a few grains of gunpowder on the tablecloth of the room in which they were together; gunpowder is used in tattooing. Again, the arm, when Renshaw showed it to me, was raw, as though the operation had been done lately."
"But why should Gregory go to Tooley's Alley to be tattooed?"
"Tell me that, and the mystery of his death is at an end," said Fanks, significantly. "But I am certain that Fellenger voluntarily let this negro tattoo his arm; and so came by his death."
"Came by his death," echoed Garth in astonishment.
"What do you mean?"
"Why," answered Fanks, seriously, "I mean that the needle used for the tattooing was poisoned; and so—," he shrugged his shoulders, "—the man died."
CHAPTER IV.

ANOTHER DISCOVERY.

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

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

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

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

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

"Again, according to Mrs. Boazoph, there was no struggle; therefore the deceased must have passed away quietly. My inference is that this negro desired
to kill Sir Gregory—or else he was instructed to do so by
some one else who wished for the death of your cousin.
What then so easy, as for the negro to have a poisoned
needle prepared to execute the tattooing. Quite una­
ware of the danger, Fellenger—for some unknown rea­
son—would permit the insertion of the fatal needle.
As the work went on, he would gradually be inocu­
lated with the poison. When the gunpowder and
acids were applied the job would be finished, and
he would pull down his sleeve, quite ignorant
that to all intents and purposes he was a dead
man. Then he sat and chatted with the negro
till the end came; when he sank into a state of
coma and died. When certain that the death was
an assured fact, the negro took his departure. Oh,
it is all as plain as day to me;—all excepting one
fact."

"And that fact?"

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

Garth reflected.

"I can only conclude that a secret—"

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Surely you do not suspect Hersham?"

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

"Do you suspect anyone?"

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

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

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

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

"My friend," said Fanks, solemnly, "it is my experience that when the lower orders—to which this valet belongs—come into contact with a detective they are quite useless as witnesses, for the
very simple reason that the presence of the law paralyses them. To avoid this danger you must introduce me into the chambers as a sympathising friend only. You can question the servant in my presence, and having got rid of him in the meantime, we can search the chambers together."

"But the police may recognise you."

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Why with the latter gentleman?"

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

"You don't trust the man?"

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

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

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

Garth looked curiously at the detective.

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

"Do I? Then I should hold my tongue. There is no doubt that the negro committed the crime in the
way that I told you of. But I believe that he acted as the agent of a third party—not Mrs. Boazoph. I wish to find out that party to hang him or her as an accessory before the fact."

"You can't hang him or her."

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

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

Fanks reflected.

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

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

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

"Then how can the motive be found in—"

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

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

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

Garth walked along in silence, rather inclined to ridicule the apparent weakness of Fanks. However, he judged it wiser to keep these thoughts to himself,
and merely asked another question relative to the negro.

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

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

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

"How can you discover that?"

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

"The letter may have been destroyed."

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

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

"On what ground?" asked Fanks, eagerly.

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

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

"Chance again?"

"Yes; chance again," replied Fanks, good-humouredly. "How many men burn their letters; but
for the fortunate circumstance that your cousin saved his for a month it would be almost hopeless to think of gaining a clue; but now there is more than a hope."

"Provided that the appointment was made by letter."

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

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

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

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

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

For Garth was leaning against the iron railings of Green Park with a look of dread on his face.
"By heaven, Fanks, you may be right!"
"About what?"
"About Renshaw and Binjoy being one and the same man."
"Indeed; what makes you think so," asked Fanks, dryly.
"Because Binjoy has a negro servant who wears a green coat with brass buttons."
CHAPTER V.

THE RED STAR ADVERTISEMENT.

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

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

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

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

"Were I in your place, I should follow out the clue of the negro without delay," he said, as they rang the bell.
Were you in my place you would do as I am doing, and take time to consider your movements," retorted Fanks as the door was opened.

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

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

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

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

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

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

The officer started and looked at Fanks. Evidently he saw his orders in the face of the detective; for he at once moved aside and granted the desired permission. The valet Robert was astonished at this sudden yielding; but he entertained no suspicion that there was any understanding between the policeman and the fashionably-dressed young man who had been introduced as Mr. Rixton. At a glance the detective saw that he had to deal with a timid, simple creature, who might be trusted to tell the truth out of sheer nervous apprehension. The discovery afforded him satisfaction.
"I am much obliged to you, officer," said Garth, slipping a shilling into the policeman's hand. "We shall not stay long. Robert, show us into the sitting-room, if you please. I wish to ask a few questions."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Was she a lady, Maxwell, or an imitation of one?"
"A real lady, sir; she gave me half a sov., sir."

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

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

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

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

"Has he said much to you?"

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

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

"Where is Robert?" asked Fanks, sharply.

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

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

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

"Robert," he said, with great deliberation,"'how long have you been in the service of my cousin?"
"Four years, sir."
"Was he a kind master?"
"A very kind master, sir. I would not wish for a better place."
"Do you remember the twenty-first of June?" asked the barrister, in true police-court style.
"Yes, sir," replied the man with a shiver. "It was the night that my master was murdered."
"At what time did Sir Gregory leave the house?"
"I don't know, sir."
"You don't know," repeated Garth, while Fanks pricked up his ears. "Were you not in attendance on him?"
"No, sir. My master received a letter by the five o'clock post which seemed to upset him very much. After a time he recovered and sent me out to get seats for the theatre. When I got back at six he was gone. I never saw him again," declared the man in a shaking voice, "never again till I was called on to identify his dead body."
"You had no idea where your master was going?"
"No, sir! He did not tell me."
"When you left Sir Gregory to get seats for the theatre how was he dressed?"
"In a frock coat and light trousers, sir; but when I saw the body it was clothed in moleskin trousers and a flannel shirt."
"Did you ever see that disguise in his possession?"
"I can't say that I ever did, sir," replied the valet, hesitantly. "But the week before a parcel came for Sir Gregory, which he would not let me open. I was about to do so when he stopped me. I think the parcel contained the clothes—the disguise."
"Why do you think so?"
"Because the parcel was soft, and felt like clothes. Besides it came from Weeks and Co., of Edgware-road; and they sell more workmen's clothes than anything else."

"On what day did the clothes arrive?" asked Fanks, idly.
"On the fourteenth, sir. I am certain of the date, because Sir Gregory was taken ill in the morning."
"Taken ill!" repeated Garth. "At what time was he taken ill?"
"At breakfast, Mr. Garth, when he was reading the paper. He gave a cry and I came in to find him in a faint like. I got him a glass of brandy, and he dressed and went out. The parcel arrived in the afternoon."
"What paper did your master take in?"
"The 'Morning Post,' sir," replied the man, turning to Fanks, who had asked the question.
"The 'Morning Post' of the fourteenth. And where is the paper?"
"My master put it away, sir."
"Oh! Do you happen to know where he put it?"
"No, sir. I was out of the room at the time."
Fanks sank back in his chair and nodded to Garth to continue the conversation; which the barrister did at once.
"How long had your master been in town before the murder?" he asked.
"About a month, sir. Before that we were at Mere Hall in——"
"I know where it is," said Garth, impatiently. "But
about that letter which came by the five o’clock post on the day of the crime. Did you see it?”

“I saw the envelope when I brought it in, sir.”

“Was the handwriting a man’s or a woman’s?”

“It was in female handwriting I am certain, sir,”

“Your master was agitated when he opened it?”

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

“The letter was from a woman?”

“I supposed it was, sir, judging from the handwriting.”

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

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

“Not that I know of, sir,” he said hoarsely.

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

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

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

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

“Mrs. Boazoph?”

“No, a younger and a prettier woman than Mrs.
Boazoph. We will talk of that later. In the meantime I wish to see that letter and the advertisement."

"What advertisement?"

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The first printed slip, dated 14th June:

"Tattooed cross left arm. I alone know all. I alone
can save you. If you wish to feel secure, meet me when and where you please."

The second printed slip, dated 16th June:
"Tattooed cross left arm. I wish to feel secure. Name time and place, and I shall be there."

The cardboard star, painted red:
CHAPTER VI.

A STARTLING INCIDENT.

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

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

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

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

"No! The negro killed Sir Gregory; that is beyond
all doubt. But as I said before, it is my opinion that
the negro was inspired by a third party. Can't you
see that the address on that envelope is in female hand-
writing?"

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

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

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

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

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

"Most of the evidence in criminal cases is circum-
stantial and deductive. Another thing makes me
think that it is a woman. There is a great deal of use-
less mystery here. A man would not have troubled
about that. He would have inserted a third advertise-
ment appointing time and place; but this woman can't
resist a touch of the mysterious. Therefore she de-
vises this silly cardboard star; sends it through the
post; and so betrays herself,"
"How can she betray herself when there is no address?"

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Garth!" he cried eagerly, "give me that envelope. Ah, I thought so."
“What is the matter?” asked Garth, astonished at the excitement of the usually calm Fanks.

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

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

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

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

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

“You may judge him too harshly.”

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

They looked at one another, and back at the photograph. There was something sinister in the fact that
the two articles were inscribed in the same handwriting. The writing on the photograph recorded the decease of a pretty woman; that on the envelope had lured the baronet to his death. Was it possible that the follies of Sir Gregory had come home to him in so fearful a fashion. The two men could not but incline to this opinion.

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

"Very probably he knows nothing."

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

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

"No. I wish to wait and see—a girl."

"A girl! What girl?"

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

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

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

"And then?"

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

"Shall I question him?"
"If you please. I wish to remain incognito."

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

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

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

"Do you know Taxton-on-Thames?"

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Sir Gregory was connected with no woman at the time of his death," he said, doggedly.
"That may be; but was he connected with a woman in 1893?"

The valet started back with a gasp.

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

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

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

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

"I—I—promised never to speak of her."

"You must—for your own sake."

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

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

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

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

The sudden imperiousness in the detective's tone made Robert's heart sink within him. He was incapable of a prolonged struggle, and forthwith answered with all submissiveness—
"I—I—don't know her real name."

"What did she call herself?"

"Emma Calvert."

"Ah! And what did you call her, Robert?"

The valet looked at Garth with a look of malicious triumph. "I called her Lady Fellenger," he said slowly. Garth sprang up with a sudden exclamation, but he was stopped by Fanks, who rapidly questioned the valet. "Was Emma Calvert really and truly the wife of your master?"

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

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

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

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

"And where is she now?"

"Dead; she died in Paris."

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

"Yes."

"How did she die?"

"I can't answer you," burst out Robert, in a frenzy. "You will drive me mad. Night and day I have her
dead face before me. Look at me," he continued, holding out his trembling hands. "I am a wreck of what I was once. All through the death of Emma Calvert, of Lady Fellenger."

The two listeners arose to their feet. What dark mystery was connected with the death of this woman that could so move the man? In searching for one murder had they stumbled upon another?

"Did she meet her death by foul play?" asked Garth, sternly.

"No! No! I swear it was not that; but she did not get on well with my master. He wearied of her, he neglected her; she was very proud and impulsive; and one night after a great scene—she—she—"

"Well, man—well?"

"She—she destroyed herself."

"Great heavens!" cried Garth, confirmed in his worst fears. "Suicide?"

"She drowned herself in the Seine," said Robert, in a low voice.

As he spoke a woman appeared on the threshold of the open door. Robert gave one look at her, and raised his hands with a cry. "The dead!" he moaned, retreating from the woman. "The dead returned to life. I saw her laid out. I saw her buried; yet she is there—there!" and with a cry he fell on the floor in a fit.

The others made no attempt to assist him. They were staring spellbound at the woman. She was the original of the photograph which Garth held in his hand.
CHAPTER VII.

DIFFICULTIES.

The woman who had caused this commotion stood in the doorway, looking on in some surprise. She was dressed in the semi-masculine fashion now affected by the sex—a serge gown, short and smart in appearance, a natty jacket of the same material, worn over a black striped shirt, and a Tyrolean hat of brown felt. Her face was oval and waxen in its pallor, her eyes of a dark blue, and her hair black and luxuriant. A look of determination was impressed on lip and eye, but this gave place to an expression of surprise when she saw Robert fall on the floor. Finally, when her eyes met those of Fanks', she started and shrank back. Maxwell peered over her shoulder in gaping astonishment; and for quite half a minute there was a dramatic pause. It was broken by the woman, who stepped forward and addressed herself to Fanks.

"You see how the sight of me terrifies this wretch," she said, pointing to the man on the floor; "you shall hear from other lips than mine how he treated his master's wife. Wait, gentlemen, till I bring up my friend to confront this man."

And with these extraordinary words she pushed back Maxwell and disappeared.
Quite believing that she spoke in all good faith, Fanks made no sign that she should be stopped. Indeed, he was too dumbfounded by the strangeness of the situation to speak; and he looked helplessly at Garth.

That gentleman was, if possible, even more surprised than his friend. The sudden appearance of the presumably dead woman at once alarmed and astonished them both; and they knew not what to make of the matter.

"Do you believe that it is Emma Calvert?" asked Garth, who was the first to recover the use of his tongue.

"Emma Calvert, my friend?"

"Well, then, Lady Fellenger, if you prefer it."

"It doesn't matter what we call her," rejoined Fanks, with a shrug, "seeing that she is dead."

"But she is not dead."

Fanks again shrugged his shoulders, and pointed to the photograph. "The card says that Emma Calvert is dead," he remarked; "the valet says that Emma Calvert is dead. How then can this living woman be Emma Calvert, Lady Fellenger?"

"I can't explain," said Garth, obstinately, "but I am sure of one thing; that she is the original of this picture."

"It would appear so," said Fanks, looking puzzled; "and yet—upon my word, it is the most extraordinary thing I ever saw in life. Garth, for once you see me at my wit's end and thoroughly mystified."

"Wait, Fanks. Wait the explanation of this woman; hear the story of her friend. In the meantime, let us revive this wretched creature."

"He is in a kind of fit," said Fanks, kneeling down
and loosening the collar of the insensible man. "Get some water, Garth, and you, Maxwell, go down and see if that woman and her friend are coming up. We may as well see this business out."

These directions were obeyed, and Garth soon returned with a glass of water, while Fanks—always provided against emergencies—produced a smelling bottle and a flask of brandy. While thus employed they were interrupted by Maxwell, with a look of alarm on his face.

"Well!" said Fanks, sharply. "Where is this woman and her friend?"

"I don't know about her friend, sir; but she's gone off."

Fanks sprang to his feet. "Gone off!" he repeated. "What do you mean?"

"What I say, sir," said the policeman, doggedly. "I went down and could not see her. I asked the constable at the door, and he said as she had drove off in a hansom."

A look of mingled surprise and distrust settled on the face of Fanks. In a moment he guessed without much difficulty that the woman had tricked him, and he felt small in his own estimation at having been so neatly baffled. It was the most humiliating moment of his life.

"Attend to this man with Mr. Garth," he said roughly, "I shall see for myself;" and, blaming himself for his simplicity, he caught up his hat and took himself out of the chambers.

At the street door he looked up and down, but he could see no trace of the missing woman. A constable loitered on the pavement some distance away, and although he was a stranger to Fanks the detective
accosted him without the least hesitation. This was less the time for considering than for acting. Every moment was precious; every moment lessened the chance of tracking and discovering the woman. Fanks, as a rule, was one of the most self-contained of men, rarely losing his self-control or cool temper, but at this moment he could have sworn freely at his want of caution which had let a possible witness in the case slip through his fingers. But he hoped that there was yet time to retrieve his fault. "Officer," he said, walking quickly up to the constable, "did you see a lady come out of yonder door?"

"Yes, sir. The policeman upstairs just asked me about her. She went away in a hansom five minutes ago. I see it drive off like mad."

"Were you near at hand?"

"Just at her elbow, so to speak, sir."

"Did you hear what address she gave the cabman?"

"What do you want to know for, sir?" asked the policeman, in a gruff way.

"That is my business and not yours," retorted Fanks, unused to being thwarted by members of the force; "I am Fanks, the detective, and I am here on business. Quick, man, the address?"

As Maxwell had hinted that a detective was upstairs, the policeman at once believed this statement and saluted respectfully. "She didn't give no particular address, but she jest said Piccadilly promiscus."

"What part of Piccadilly?" demanded Fanks, hailing a hansom.

"Jest Piccadilly, and no more, sir," repeated the officer.

"Do you know the number of the cab?"
“No, sir; there weren’t no occasion of me to take it.”

“Of course, of course,” muttered Fanks, testily. “Can you describe the hansom? Was there any particular mark, by which I can recognise it?”

“Well, sir, I did note as it had a red, white, and blue suncloth over the roof, with a cabby as wore a white beaver, so to speak.”

“That will do,” cried Fanks, jumping into the vehicle which had driven up; “which way did the cab turn?”

“To the right, sir; down Piccadilly.”

“Cabby,” cried the detective, as the driver looked through the trap, “go down Piccadilly, and look for a hansom with a red, white, and blue suncloth. It’s a sovereign if you catch it.”

“That’s Joe Berners’ cab, that is,” said Jehu, and drove off briskly, with his fare in a fever of excitement.

Fanks had enough to think about during that drive, the material being amply supplied by the woman who had so cleverly tricked him. What motive had brought this woman to Fellenger’s chambers? For what reason had she taken her departure so suddenly? Was Emma Calvert dead? If so, who was the woman who bore so extraordinary a resemblance to her? If Emma Calvert were not dead, and this was she, why had she come to Half-Moon Street, and why had Robert fainted at the mere sight of her? All these questions presented themselves to the mind of the detective, and he found himself unable to answer any of them. If he discovered the mysterious woman there might be a chance of explanation; failing the woman, there remained the valet. But if the one was missing and the other was ignorant, Fanks knew not what he should do in so difficult a matter.
As it was the height of the season, Piccadilly was crowded with vehicles of all descriptions, and the rate of progress was slow. Far, very far, ahead Fanks thought that he could descry the noticeable suncloth described by the constable, but of this he was not quite sure; therefore he remained in his cab instead of alighting to make certain.

During a block caused by the congested state of the roadway it flashed into his mind that he had seen the woman’s face before. He was doubtful if this was so, and yet he had an uneasy feeling that it was. The features of this unknown woman were familiar to him; but, as the Americans say, “he could not fix her nohow.” It only remained for him to refresh his memory with a second glimpse; but at present he saw no chance of getting one. He despaired of finding the woman of whom he was in search.

The hansom showed no signs of moving on, and, finding that he could walk quicker than he could drive, Fanks paid his cabman, jumped out, and raced along the crowded pavement. He saw a number of people whom he knew, but paying no attention to these he rushed along, intent on getting to his goal. At length his exertions were rewarded, for by the Isthmian Club he saw the wished-for cab ahead. It was turning into Berkeley Square, and, as the throng was thinner in the side street, Fanks secured another hansom with a likely-looking horse, and followed in its wake. It struck him that he might as well find out where the woman lived; therefore he did not attempt to catch up, but directed his driver to keep persistently on the trail. It was his only chance of gaining his ends with so crafty an opponent.

Then commenced a long, long chase, which cost
Fanks the best part of a sovereign. He followed to Oxford Street, thence emerged into Regent Street; passed through Piccadilly Circus, down to Trafalgar Square. After proceeding along the Strand, the cabs dropped down Arundel Street to the Embankment, went up through Northumberland Avenue, Cockspur Street, Waterloo Place, and again doubled the trail in Piccadilly. Fanks began to weary of this interminable chase; he wondered where this woman intended to stop. Still he held on in a dogged fashion, determined to weary out his adversary, whom he began to consider a foeman—or rather a foewoman—not unworthy of his steel. He therefore kept up the chase on the doubled trail, and, to his surprise, he found that the cab which he had so persistently followed turned up Half-Moon Street, and stopped before the chambers of Fellenger.

"Good Lord!" said Fanks to himself, "surely she has not been so great a fool as to come to earth again, where she knows she will find me."

He was perfectly right in making this remark, for when he jumped out and ran up to the first cab he found it—empty. Fanks swore, whereat Joe Berners grinned.

"And it do serve y' right," said Joe, who was a surly person; "I never did 'old as young gents should persecute innocents. G' on wi' y'."

Fanks recovered his temper on hearing this speech. It was most humiliating to have followed an empty cab for so many miles; but it was rather amusing to be accused of being a profligate when he was ardently bent on doing his duty. The detective laughed, although the joke was against himself.

"The question of persecution will bear argument,
my friend," he said in a laughing tone. "In the meantime, perhaps you will tell me what you did with the young lady you picked up here?"

"Why!" said Mr. Berners, "she told me as you was after her for kisses an' such like; so she gives me a sov. to mislead you. She got out of my keb at the end of this street, she did; and told me to drive on an' on for an hour or so, while she got away. I done that," added Joe, with a grin, "an' you've bin follerin' a h'empty keb ever since I went up to Berkeley Square."

"You have acted according to your lights, my friend," said Fanks, when he realised how he had been tricked, "and I do not blame you. All the same I am not a profligate, but a detective."

"Lor!" said Joe, "has she done anything, sir?"

"What she has done is nothing to you. Can you tell me in which direction she went?"

"No, I can't, sir; and I don't bel've you, I don't," and so saying Joe Berners drove off in high dudgeon.

Fanks made no attempt to stop him; for he saw that the woman had defeated him, and the only thing left for him to do was to retire with the best possible grace. To this end he paid his cab, shrugged his shoulders, and went upstairs again. Since the woman had succeeded in escaping him, the solution of the problem lay entirely with Robert. Then a miracle. On the way up to the chambers the memory of that face flashed across the mind of Fanks.

"Ah!" he said, with a start, "I remember now. I saw that face in the crowd round the Red Star, on the night of the murder."
Before Fanks finally dismissed the matter of that futile chase he asked a question of his friend the constable. "Did you notice," said he, "if that young lady had a friend with her?"

"No, Mr. Fanks," said the other, promptly, "she was all alone."

"Humph! I thought so," meditated Fanks, as he ascended the stairs, "the accusing friend was a myth. Well, I guess there's a vacancy for a fool, and I'm elected. I've lost her once; but she won't escape me a second time. Taxton-on-Thames isn't London."

The links of the chain which brought forth this remark were as follows:—The postal mark on the envelope was Taxton-on-Thames; the handwriting thereon was the same as that on the back of the photograph—to all appearance that of the missing woman—therefore Fanks thought that he might gain some information about her in the village. The link of the writings connected her with the riverside town; and by following such clue he hoped to arrive at some knowledge of her identity.

With this resolution, he entered the chambers and found Robert restored to sensibility, sitting on the
sofa, with Garth and Maxwell in attendance. The latter looked up eagerly as the detective entered. But Fanks had no idea of letting an inferior into his methods of working, and he dismissed him forthwith.

"Maxwell, you can leave the room," he said sharply; and when the policeman had taken his departure he turned to Garth, and continued, "I lost her after all, my friend; she gave me the slip with singular dexterity. That going down to bring up a witness was all bosh; she told that story as a blind to get out of the room without suspicion."

"But who is she?" asked Garth, at this tale of failure.

Fauks smiled grimly, and looked at the valet. "No doubt Robert can tell us that, he said, significantly.

"I think she is Lady Fellenger—Emma Calvert," said Robert, faintly.

"That is all nonsense. You told us distinctly that Emma Calvert was dead; the inscription on the portrait affirms your statement. How then can this living woman be the lady in question?"

"It might have been her ghost."

"Rubbish! Ghosts don't appear in the daytime; and drive off in cabs; moreover there are no such things as ghosts. Your explanation is weak, Robert; try another story."

"It is the best that I can give, sir; if she isn't Emma Calvert; who is she?"

"That is what we wish to find out," said Garth.

"You say that Lady Fellenger—whom you will persist in calling Emma Calvert—is dead?"

"I saw her lying at the Morgue, sir," declared Robert, passionately. "I saw her placed in her coffin;
I saw her buried, and the earth heaped over her. She is dead; I swear that she is dead."

"Where is she buried?"

"In Pere la Chaise, in Paris."

Fanks began twisting his ring. "You say that she destroyed herself," he said; "had you anything to do with her death?"

The man broke down, and burst out weeping, exculpating himself between his sobs. "I had nothing to do with her death," he declared, "she was always a good mistress to me, but my master treated her shamefully. When he married her and first came to Paris they were quite happy. But Sir Gregory grew tired of her; he grew tired of everyone; and he began to neglect her for others. She was very proud, and she put up with it for a time. At last she got angry at him, and insisted that he should take her back to London and introduce her to his friends. This he refused to do, and he taunted her with having been in a shop. He called her Emma Calvert even before me."

"You are sure that she was his wife?" interrupted Fanks.

"I was present at the marriage myself, sir. It took place in a registry office. She was his wife and Lady Fellenger sure enough, but after some months he would not call her by that name. He knew that she was proud," added Robert, in a lower tone, "and I think he wished to drive her to her death."

"I always said that he was a bad lot," interposed Garth, in disgust.

"He was not a good man, sir, but he was a good master to me. But the end of it all was that one evening they had a terrible quarrel, and in a fit of rage she ran out of the house. I would have followed her, but
my master would not let me go. When next I saw her, she was lying dead in the Morgue."

"You think that she flung herself into the river?"

"I am sure of it, sir. Her body was taken out of the Seine. My master seemed to feel her death terribly, but all the same I think he was relieved that his marriage was at an end. He got it put about in somehow way that the death was an accident, and the body was buried in Pere la Chaise. After that he made me promise not to tell anyone that he had been married, and we returned to England. That is all I know, except that she has come back to haunt me."

Fanks stood biting his fingers. The servant was evidently in earnest, and according to his story the ill-fated wife of the late Sir Gregory was dead and buried; yet, going by the likeness of the portrait to the woman who had vanished, she was alive. Fanks had been engaged in several very difficult cases, but they were all child’s play compared to the intricacy of this problem. He was at his wits end, startled, mystified.

While the valet wept and Fanks thought, Garth broke the silence. "We are off the track," he said roughly; "we are seeking to solve the mystery of my cousin’s death, not to trouble about that of his unhappy wife."

"It is all of a piece," replied Fanks, "the one death is connected with the other; how, I am unable to say at present. In the face of it, I can hardly bring myself to believe that Emma Calvert is dead."

"Robert swears that she is," said Garth, with a shrug.

"I do, I do, I swear it," wailed the man. "I saw her buried."
The tones of the wretched creature were so heartrending that both his listeners believed that he spoke the truth. The detective placed the portrait, the pasteboard star, and the envelope containing the slips of print in his pocket, and beckoned to Garth. "We can do no more good here," he said in a low tone. "I must think out the matter by myself; let us go away."

"But Robert?"

"I shall stay here, sir," said the servant, rising; "Mr. Vaud said that I was to stay here until Sir Louis Fellenger came to town."

"Who is Mr. Vaud?" demanded Fanks.

"Oh, he is Fellenger's lawyer," explained Garth, quickly, "of the firm of Vaud and Vaud, of Lincoln's Inn Fields. I was wondering why my cousin had not come up to take possession of the property; but it appears that he is ill."

"Was he not at the funeral?"

"Yes, and mighty bad he looked; he must have taken to his bed since. I suppose that not finding himself able to come he sent for Mr. Vaud."

"Yes, sir," said the valet, "and Mr. Vaud came here to find the police in possession; so he told me to stay here."

"Quite right," said Fanks. "I shall see Mr. Vaud myself."

Before leaving the chambers Fanks told Maxwell to keep a sharp lookout on Robert, of whom he had some suspicion. Then with Garth he went down slowly, talking and thinking. Garth had asked him what was to be done next, and he did not know what to say. Ultimately he declared that he would interview Vaud.

"Why?" asked Garth, after a pause.
“Because if I do not see him, he will see me. I must explain why I wish the police to continue in possession of the dead man's chambers; and also I want a letter of introduction to the new baronet.”

“I can give you that; but I do not understand why you should wish to see him. He can do no good.”

“I am not so sure of that,” responded Fanks, dryly, “and in any case I must tell him what I am doing. As the heir he must be anxious to clear up the mystery of his cousin's death.”

“I don't think he'll trouble much,” replied Garth, doubtfully. “Gregory and Louis hated one another like poison. They had not met for ten years.”

“Why did they hate one another?”

“I don't know. Louis is a better man than Gregory. He was a scoundrel, as you have heard. An out-and-out scamp.”

“And something worse than a scamp,” said Fanks; “but about this introduction? Are you on good terms with your cousin Louis?”

“I don't like him,” answered Garth, after a pause, “he is a scientific prig. All the same there is no ill-will between us.”

“Very good. You can give me that introduction as soon as you like.”

“I'll write it to-day; and if you wish to see Vaud the elder you'll find him at Lincoln's Inn Fields, a pleasant old gentleman of the out-of-date school.”

“You emphasise the elder Vaud. Is there a son?”

“Yes, a fellow of thirty or thereabouts. He is the partner, but he has been ill of late, and has only returned from a tour of the world. But, I say—Hersham, you know.”
“I shall call on him to-morrow,” said Fanks, “and question him about the tattooed cross.”

“When shall I see you again?”

“Call to-morrow night at my Duke Street chambers. I may have some news for you.”

“About Emma Calvert?”

“About Dr. Renshaw.”

“Do you still connect him with the crime?”

“I connect him with Dr. Binjoy, and I connect Dr. Binjoy with his negro servant; and further I connect a black man wearing a green coat with brass buttons with the murder.”

“Then you suspect that the servant of Dr. Binjoy killed Fellenger, and that Binjoy in the disguise of Renshaw was at the Red Star to assure himself that his instructions had been carried out.”

“That is exactly what I don’t mean.”

“Then what are you driving at?”

“Ask me the same question in five weeks, and I’ll tell you.”

“Will it take you all that time to find out the truth?”

Fanks laughed at the implied sneer. “I am no miracle-monger, my dear sir,” he said; “I am groping in the dark; and a mighty hard task it is. I do not know in which direction to move at the present moment. If only some thing would turn up likely to point out a path. Renshaw, Mrs. Boazoph, and Robert are all sign-posts, but which to go by, I really cannot say. Five weeks, Garth, and then perhaps failure.”

All this time they were still standing at the door at the foot of the stairs. Now Fanks made a movement, but before he could step on to the pavement he was aware that Maxwell
A MYSTERIOUS PARCEL.

was coming down the stairs quickly. In another moment he was at the elbow of his superior officer, holding out a small packet wrapped up in brown paper. Fanks took it gingerly, and examined it with a thoughtful look on his face.

"Well, Maxwell," he said, "what is this?"

"I don't know, sir," said the breathless Maxwell. "I guessed that you mightn't be far away, so I took the liberty to come after you."

"To give me this packet?"

"Yes, sir. I found it a few minutes ago in the letter-box on the door."

"Ah!" said Garth, in a startled tone, "was it there last time you looked?"

"No, sir; not an hour ago. It ain't got no postmark or stamp."

"And it is addressed to Sir Gregory Fellenger," said Fanks; "I'll open it," and without further remark Fanks did so. Therein was a morocco case. When this was opened they saw lying on a bed of purple velvet a long and slender needle of silver. Garth would have picked it out, but Fanks stopped him with a shudder. "Don't touch it," he said; "there is death here."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean," said Fanks, "that I hold in my hand the poisoned needle with which your cousin was murdered."
Here, indeed, was food for reflection. That the instrument with which the crime had been committed should come into the detective’s possession was extraordinary; but that it should have been left anonymously at the rooms of the murdered man was inconceivably audacious. Fanks at once returned to the chambers, and closely questioned Maxwell and Robert. It struck him that the latter might have had a hand in placing the mysterious parcel in the letter box.

“I examined the box an hour ago, sir,” said Maxwell, “as you told me to look after all letters. There was nothing in it then. It must have been placed in it since.”

“While we were in the sitting-room, no doubt,” said Garth. “Do you know anything of this, Robert?”

“I, sir? Lord, no, sir; I never set eyes on it before.”

“We left ten minutes ago,” remarked Fanks. “What have you been doing since that time.”

“I have been with Mr. Maxwell, sir.”

“Was he with you all the time, Maxwell?”

“Yes, sir,” replied the policeman in great alarm. “He came out into the kitchen, and we was together for a chat; then I thought it was near post time, and
I goes to the box. I found that parcel, and as I knowed you couldn't be far off I ran down stairs."

This explanation was perfectly satisfactory, yet for the life of him, the detective could not help looking at Robert with suspicion. However, as he had not been out of Maxwell's company, he could not possibly have put the parcel in the box, therefore Fanks was reluctantly compelled to believe in his innocence.

"That will do," he said, at length, and drew Garth away. When they again descended the stairs, Garth began to ask him questions, but Fanks cut these short. "I must be alone to think it out," he said, in apologetic explanation. "Go away, Garth, and let me puzzle over the matter by myself."

The young lawyer was unwilling to do this as he was filled with genuine curiosity concerning the needle. However, he could suggest nothing, and he saw that his mere presence worried his friend. He therefore obeyed the request, and went off to meditate on his own account. As for Fanks, he repaired to his rooms, and with the needle before him he sat for considerably over an hour thinking what it all meant. The mystery was deeper than ever.

There was no doubt that someone had left the parcel in the letter box within the hour. According to Maxwell, it had not been there when he last looked in; according to Robert, he had not been out of the policeman's company since he left the sitting-room. Who, then, placed this damning evidence of the crime in the box? The assassin himself? But the assassin, as had been proved clearly, was a negro. A few questions to the constable stationed near the door had elicited the fact that no negro had gone up. In fact, the man had sworn that he had seen nobody ascend the stairs since
the time Fanks returned from his unsuccessful pursuit. So scanty were the facts which he had to go on, that Fanks could not even build up a theory. He was completely in the dark, and he seemed likely to remain so.

The instrument was of silver, the length of a darning needle, and while the point was as sharp as a lancet, it broadened gradually till when it passed into a slim, ebony handle, it was—for a needle, quite bulky. In this broad part the poison was doubtless contained, and thence it oozed, drop by drop, to the deadly point. Fanks shuddered at the sight of the piece of devilish ingenuity. The infernal dexterity of the thing gave him an idea.

"Must have been manufactured by a scientific man," he mused, touching the slender, silver line gingerly. "It's too clever for an amateur. Louis, the new baronet, is a man of science; he has succeeded to the title. Can it be that—but, no!" he added, breaking off abruptly, "he would not commit a crime in so obvious a fashion, much less, leave the means he used at the address of his victim."

Nevertheless, the idea lured him so far afield, into so many speculations that, finding they led to nothing, he locked up the poisoned needle, put it out of his thoughts, and paid a visit to New Scotland Yard. Here he explained to the person in authority, that, while he had every hope of capturing the assassin of the late Sir Gregory Fellenger, yet he was bound to point out that the expenses of the case would be considerable. To this, the person in authority replied by placing before Fanks a letter from Messrs. Vaud and Vaud, of Lincoln's Inn Fields. It stated that they had been directed by Sir Louis Fellenger—who was at present confined to bed through ill-health—to assure the authori-
ties that he wished every effort to be made to discover the murderer of his cousin; and that he would willingly bear the costs of the investigation. This communication concluded by requesting that the detective in charge of the case should call at the offices of the lawyers at his earliest convenience.

"Very meritorious of Sir Louis to save the Government expense," said the person in authority. "Use what money you require, Mr. Fanks, but be reasonable—be reasonable."

"I shall be as reasonable as I possibly can be, sir," replied Fanks; "but in my opinion, the case will be both long and expensive. It is the most complicated matter that I ever took in hand."

"The more difficulty, the more glory," said the person in authority. "Go on with the case, Mr. Fanks; act as you please, make use of all our resources. I have every confidence in you, Mr. Fanks; if anyone can lay his hand on the assassin of Sir Gregory Fel­lenger, you are the man. I wish you good day, Mr. Fanks."

Dismissed in this gracious manner, Fanks left the room with the intention of obeying forthwith the injunction of Vaud and Vaud. Before he could depart he was intercepted by Crate.

"A communication from Dr. Renshaw," said Crate, with an air of great importance. "He called here this afternoon with the intention of seeing you. In your absence, he saw me; and stated that he was leaving for India to-night by the P. and O. steamer 'Oceana.' Before leaving, he wished to see and speak with you."

"Before leaving, he has to see and speak with me," retorted Fanks, coolly. "I would have him arrested
on suspicion if he attempted to leave London without according me an interview."

"You have no evidence on which you can arrest him, Mr. Fanks."

"I have more evidence than you are aware of, Crate. If Dr. Renshaw could have defied me he would have done so; but he dare not. Where is he now?"

"He is still at Great Auk Street, where he has been watched ever since the night of the murder."

"When does the 'Oceana' leave the Docks?"

"To-night at ten o'clock. Dr. Renshaw goes down from Fenchurch Street by the eight train."

"It is now a quarter past five. Good! I shall call at Great Auk Street; in the meantime, I have to keep another appointment."

"Have you found out anything since I saw you last, Mr. Fanks?"

"I have found out that there is a woman in the case," said Fanks. "And that reminds me, Crate. You must go to Paris by to-night's mail. Are you busy with anything else?"

"No, Mr. Fanks. I shall be ready to start when you please. What am I to do in Paris?"

Fanks sat down at Crate's table and wrote a name and a date. "Get me a certificate of the death and burial of Emma Calvert, who died in Paris last year; she committed suicide, which was passed off as an accident, and was buried in Pere la Chaise. I do not know the month of the death, but you can do without that. Wire me all particulars. You can get the French police to help you. Ask in the office here for necessary credentials and authorisation. Don't spare expense, I have full power to draw all moneys I want."
After delivering these necessary instructions, Fanks drove off to Lincoln's Inn Fields, and presented his card at the office of Vaud and Vaud. He was at once shown up to the room of the senior partner, and found him as Garth said, a dignified gentleman of the old school. He was red-faced and white-haired; emphasised his remarks by waving a "pince-nez," and spoke with some of the magnificence of Dr. Renshaw.

"This is a most lamentable business, Mr. Fanks," he said, when the detective was seated. "I usually go home before five o'clock, but in the interests of our client, Sir Louis Fellenger, I remained, on the chance of seeing you. I am glad to see you."

"I came as soon as I was able, Mr. Vaud; but you only sent for me to-day. I wonder you did not wish to see me before."

"There was no necessity, my dear sir. We only heard from Sir Louis yesterday that he was prepared to bear all expenses connected with the investigation of the case."

"Sir Louis is ill, I believe, Mr. Vaud?"

"Sir Louis is never well, sir," said the lawyer impressively. "He is a delicate man, and he is given over to the arduous science of experimental chemistry. The earnestness with which he prosecutes his researches keeps him in a constant state of anxiety; and his health suffers accordingly. He is now at Mere Hall, attended by Dr. Binjoy."

"Is Dr. Binjoy with Sir Louis at Mere Hall at this present moment?"

"Certainly. Dr. Binjoy never leaves the side of Sir Louis. He has the greatest influence over him. Though I must say," added Vaud, "that even the influence of the doctor could not prevent his patient ris-"
ing from his sick-bed to attend the funeral of the late baronet."

"He must have been fond of his cousin," said Fanks, pointedly.

"On the contrary, the cousins had not seen one another for ten years and more," said Mr. Vaud, solemnly. "I do not wish to speak evil of the dead, but the late Sir Gregory was certainly a butterfly of fashion, while the present Sir Louis is a man of science. They never got on well together, and therefore kept out of each other's way."

"And very sensible, too," said Fanks, dryly. "Do you happen to know if Dr. Binjoy has been in London lately?"

"I happen to know on the best authority—that of Sir Louis—that Binjoy has not been in London for the last six weeks. Sir Louis has been ill for that period; the doctor has not left his bedside."

Fanks made a mental note of this answer, and turned the conversation in the direction of the crime. "You know that Fellenger died from poison?"

"From blood-poisoning," corrected Vaud. "So I saw in the papers. A most remarkable case, my dear sir. What took our late client to that locality, and why did he submit himself to the tattooing needle?"

"I can't say. Are you aware of any motive which might have induced the dead man to have a cross tattooed?"

"No, sir. As a matter of fact," continued Mr. Vaud, "the late Sir Gregory and myself were not on the best of terms. He was extravagant, and he resented my well-meant advice. I saw as little of him as of Sir Louis."

"Then you are not intimate with Sir Louis?"

"I cannot say that I am. Sir Louis has led a se-
cluded life at Taxton-on-Thames. I have only seen him once or twice."

"And Dr. Binjoy?"

"I have never seen him at all?"

"Was Sir Louis rich?"

"On the contrary, he was very poor. Five hundred a year only."

"Well, Mr. Vaud," said Fanks, rising. "I have to thank Sir Louis for his offer to bear the expenses of this case; and I shall do my best to bring the criminal to justice."

"Have you any clue, Mr. Fanks?"

"I have a variety of clues, but they all seem to lead to nothing."

"Do you think that you will be successful?"

"I can't say—yet. I hope so."

"I hope so, too, but I am doubtful; very doubtful. Well, good evening, Mr. Fanks. Do you want any money?"

"Not at present. I shall write to you when I do."

"That's all right. I trust you will succeed, Mr. Fanks. But in my opinion you are wasting time and money. The crime is a mystery, and for all that I can see, it will remain a mystery."
CHAPTER X.

EXIT DR. RENSHAW.

Fanks had gained some useful information from the lawyer, and it would appear that the conversation had settled, at least, two important points in the case. Of these the first was that Sir Louis could not have had anything to do with the commission of the crime, or the leaving of the parcel at the chambers in Half Moon Street. Yet the needle had been prepared by a man learned in experimental chemistry; and, as that was the special study of the new baronet, it might be that he was responsible for the preparation of that deadly instrument. By the death of his cousin he had gained a fortune; therefore that might stand as a motive for the committal of the crime. But Sir Louis had been ill for some months; he had been confined to bed, therefore he could not have been in London on the night of the murder; nor later on—being still in bed—could he have deposited the needle in the letter box. Clearly, the case against Louis broke down entirely.

As for Binjoy, he also had not been in town for six weeks. If this were so, he could not be identical with Renshaw, in which case the suspicions entertained by the detective could not fail to prove groundless. Then again, the fact that Binjoy had a negro servant habited
like the assassin—also a black man—was highly suspicious. Binjoy might have instructed the negro to slay, and himself have remained at Taxton-on-Thames in attendance on Sir Louis. But then what could be his motive for the perpetration of so terrible a crime? Fanks sought for this motive.

In the first place, he noted that the absence of Louis from town on that night was deposed to by Binjoy; in the same way Louis said that Binjoy had not left Taxton-on-Thames for six weeks. Both these statements had been made to Fanks by Vaud. It would then appear that Louis and the doctor were in collusion to obtain the property of Gregory by procuring his death at the hands of the negro. But even this theory failed to discover, or point out, who was the man who had called to leave the parcel at Half Moon Street. The constable had asserted positively that no negro had gone up the stairs. If then the messenger was not the negro, it was either Binjoy or Sir Louis. Mr. Vaud said that the one was ill, the other in attendance. Thus the case stood when Fanks left the office of Vaud and Vaud; and he felt utterly unable to cope with the intricacies which met him on every hand. There seemed no way in or out.

Yet in the face of the presumption that Renshaw was not the double of Binjoy, the detective determined to follow up that clue. He did not like the way in which the doctor had behaved, either in the chamber of death, or at the inquest; he was suspicious of his apparent intimacy with Mrs. Boazoph: therefore, for his own gratification, he went to Great Auk Street to interview the man, and to see whether his suspicions had any foundation in fact. On arriving at the
house he was unable to decide on his next action, but before he left it again he had determined what to do.

A stupid-looking man-servant received Fanks, and took him into a dull waiting room, while he went to inform Dr. Renshaw of the name of his visitor. In a few moments he returned and conducted the detective to the back of the house, where he found Renshaw waiting for him in the company of another man. This latter was Dr. Tumor, for whom Renshaw had been acting as "locum tenens;" a lean, little man with a ferret of a face, and a sharp, jerky way of speaking which must have been exceedingly irritating in a sickroom. Renshaw was more imposing in looks than ever, and, with habitual restlessness, combed his long, brown beard with his fingers; but in the badly-lighted room Fanks could not find out if the beard was false. So closely did Renshaw resemble Garth's description of Binjoy, that notwithstanding Vaud's evidence, Fanks was on the alert to discover if—as he truly believed—the two were one and the same. The ensuing conversation was likely to prove interesting in more ways than one.

After being introduced to Fanks, and acknowledging the introduction with a sour smile, Tumor arose to leave the room. He was stopped by Renshaw, who evidently did not relish the idea of facing a difficult interview by himself. Another proof, as Fanks considered, of his uneasy conscience.

"Pray do not depart, Turnor," he said, in his usual pompous manner. "I have no secrets from you. I trust, Mr. Fanks, that you see no objection in my adopting this course?"

"Certainly, I see no objection," replied Fanks,
quietly. "Let Dr. Turnor stay by all means. I have nothing particular to say."

Turnor, who had resumed his chair, looked up at this, and Renshaw stared at his visitor with pompous indignation.

"Then why are you here, sir?" he demanded in a more confident tone.

Fanks shrugged his shoulders. "Really, I cannot tell you, unless it is because you left a message at my office that you wished to see me."

"I did so in fulfilment of my promise to communicate with you before leaving London."

"Indeed! So you think of starting again on your travels? You will like that much better than staying in London."

"There is no reason why I should not like to stay in London," said Renshaw, with an angry glance.

"No reason in the world, that I can see."

"I am going out to India—to Bombay. I proceed to Aden by the 'Oceana,' and there I exchange into the 'Clyde.'"

"It is really very good of you to tell me all this, doctor," said Fanks, ironically; "I trust that you will have a pleasant voyage."

Renshaw looked nonplussed and a trifle disappointed at the coolness of the detective. It was Fank's intention to bring about this feeling; for if Renshaw had nothing to do with the crime, if he was not masquerading under a false name, the detective did not see that it was necessary to make these elaborate explanations.

It seemed to Fanks that Renshaw's anxiety to bestow gratuitous information as to his movements had its root in a design to mislead the police. Notwithstanding the assurances of Vaud, his suspicions of Renshaw
revived in full force under this clumsy diplomacy; and he bent his energies to get to the bottom of the matter. To this end he affected indifference, and gave Renshaw plenty of rope with which to hang himself.

"Am I to understand that I am free to go?" demanded the stout doctor, in a highly dramatic manner.

"I suppose so; this is a free country."

"You do not think—my friend—any knowledge—murder?" jerked Turnor, as he looked eagerly at Fanks.

The detective saw the eagerness and wondered.

"Hallo! my friend," he thought, "are you in this also?" However, he answered the question in the calmest manner. "I was not aware that I had made any accusation against Dr. Renshaw," was his suave reply.

"But I have been watched," cried Renshaw; "watched like a criminal."

"You don't say so," said Fanks, imperturbably.

"And who is watching you? And why have you been watched?"

The two doctors looked at one another, and, from a covert sign made by Turnor to Renshaw, the detective became convinced that there was an understanding between them. He guessed that the sign hinted at the conclusion of the interview, and this interpretation proved correct. Turnor rose and jerked out an apology.

"Mistake!" said the little man. "Told Renshaw—moonshine—no watching. Hope you'll catch—murderer."

"I have little hope of that," said Fanks, dolefully. "He has concealed his trail too cleverly," and he chuckled inwardly as he saw the two faces brighten.
"Well! well! well! We will say no more, Mr. Fanks," said Renshaw, in a patronising tone. I deemed it my duty to let you know that I go to India to-night. I shall not return to England for many years, as I propose exploring Thibet. Good evening; I am delighted that my fears that I was being watched have proved to be groundless."

But Fanks was not to be got rid of so easily. He wished to ask Turnor a few questions, for he believed that the little man knew all about this mysterious Renshaw. However, he made his examination carefully, as he did not wish to startle the pair, but rather to lull their suspicions, so that he might the more easily carry out his plans. He had already decided upon his next step.

"You were not in London at the time of the murder, Dr. Turnor?" he asked.

"No," replied the doctor, promptly. "If I had been, I should have been summoned by Mrs. Boazoph. As it was, Renshaw went."

"Yes, I saw Renshaw," said Fanks; "and I believe that he was right in his theory that the crime was due to a secret society."

"What makes you agree with my theory?" said Renshaw, quickly.

"Well," drawled Fanks, keeping an eye on both men, "you see I can't find out the meaning of that tattooed cross. It must be the work of a society, else it would not have been obliterated. If I could only find out what that cross means I would hang someone."

Renshaw wiped the perspiration off his bald forehead and laughed in an uneasy manner. "I wish I could help you," he said, "but I know nothing about the cross, or the society."
"And what do you say, Dr. Turnor?"

"Nothing—was away on that night. Read about cross—papers. Queer."

Fanks saw plainly enough that the pair were on their guard, and that there was nothing more to be got, out of them. The only thing to be done was to watch and wait the progress of events. With this idea he said good-bye, and took his departure. Once outside and he made up his mind that Renshaw should be tracked. His anxiety to show that he was leaving England appeared to be suspicious, and Fanks concluded that he did not intend to go as he had so emphatically declared.

"I shouldn’t be surprised to find that he was Binjoy after all," thought the detective. "He professes a deal too much, and his friend Turnor is a deal too eager. I shouldn’t wonder if the pair were in league. However, I have thrown them both off their guard. Now I’ll play my own game. I’ll find out the owner of that silver needle yet, and then I’ll punish its owner. I wonder," added Fanks, with a silent laugh, "I wonder whether the criminal will prove to be black or white?"

With this peculiar remark he went in search of the detective whose duty it was to guard the house, and rated himself severely. "You have let yourself be seen," said Fanks. "Have you not more sense than to play the fool? Keep yourself out of sight; remain here until I send another watcher, and report yourself at the Yard."

The detective, much abashed, tried to exculpate himself, but Fanks would not listen to his excuses. He hurried to New Scotland Yard, picked out a smart man, and instructed him to relieve the disgraced watcher, and to follow Renshaw to the Docks.
"And then, sir?" asked the man.

"Then if Renshaw goes on board the steamer you will report the fact to me without loss of time."

"Am I to come back here, Mr. Fanks?"

"No; I shall be at the Docks in disguise. If you see a clergyman holding a white handkerchief in his right hand you will see me. If you are doubtful ask the clergyman what the time is, and you will be safe as to my identity. Off with you, and send that fool back to Mr. Crate."

"What are you about to do, Mr. Fanks?" asked Crate, when the man had gone.

"Learn if Renshaw is lying or not. I'll see if he boards the steamer at the Docks, and find out if he has taken a passage to Bombay—a fact which at present I am much inclined to doubt."

"And if he goes on board the steamer?"

"In that case I'll follow him as far as Plymouth to make sure that he does not get off there."

"If he doesn't?"

"I shall know that he has nothing to do with this murder."

"And if he does get off at Plymouth?"

"Why," said Fanks, rubbing his hands, "I shall track him to Mere Hall in Hampshire."

Crate looked astonished, for he could by no means follow the thoughts of his superior. "How do you know that he will go there?" he demanded in a disbelieving manner.

"Because if Dr. Renshaw leaves the steamer at Plymouth under that name I shall find him at Mere Hall as Dr. Binjoy."
CHAPTER XI.

ANOTHER LINK IN THE CHAIN.

True to his appointment Garth called the next evening at the chambers in Duke Street, only to find that Fanks was absent, and that a note was awaiting him.

"Dear Garth," wrote the detective, "I have been called unexpectedly out of town and shall not return for at least three days. Visit me at the expiration of that time and prepare yourself for a surprise."

"A surprise," said Garth to himself, as he departed; "I wonder if he has found out about Emma Calvert, and if his discovery has anything to do with the death in Tooley's Alley."

Think as he might he could find no answer to this question, and he was forced to restrain his curiosity until such time as Fanks should return. In the meantime, out of curiosity, he called upon Mr. Vaud to learn what that gentleman thought about the position of affairs.

Mr. Vaud thought nothing about them. A detective had charge of the case, and, in Mr. Vaud's opinion, it would be better to wait the solution by him of this criminal problem. All this, as well as much more, was expressed to Garth by the pompous lawyer. "And
I should advise you, Mr. Garth," he concluded, "not to let this unhappy episode divert your energies from your business."

"As to that, I have precious little to do," retorted Garth, with some heat; "you do not put much in my way, Mr. Vaud. I am always hard up."

"I am aware of that," replied Vaud, ignoring the beginning of the speech, "and I am aware also that our late client assisted you several times."

"Because I was necessary to him," said Garth, bitterly. "And I'll tell you what, Mr. Vaud, had I known then what I know now about my cousin I should never have accepted his help."

"Oh, dear me!" said Mr. Vaud, "quite so. Sir Gregory had many faults; but are you a saint yourself, Mr. Garth?"

"I don't pretend to be one. Still, I never drove a woman to her death."

"Do you know what you are saying, Mr. Garth?"

"Do you know the name of Emma Calvert, Mr. Vaud?"

The lawyer paled and pushed his chair from the table. "I—I have—heard the—name," he stuttered.

"Then you have heard the name of a very injured woman, Mr. Vaud."

Before the other could reply a knock came to the door, and immediately afterwards it opened to admit a tall and handsome young man. He bowed to Garth and placed some papers before Mr. Vaud. "Will you please excuse this intrusion, father, and look over these?" he said quietly.

"My son Herbert, Mr. Garth," said the elder Vaud, and again the young man bowed. He rather resembled his father in appearance, but there was a
sternness about his manner which was wanting in that of the elder gentleman. He was dark-haired, dark-eyed, and clean shaven, with thin lips and a compressed mouth. There was a look of resolution and hard work about him which did not recommend his personality to pleasure-loving Garth. However, the latter bowed and smiled when introduced, and scribbled on a sheet of blotting-paper while Herbert spoke to his father. Still thinking on the subject of his discourse with Mr. Vaud he absently wrote the name of Emma Calvert. Young Vaud moved near him while looking for a special paper, and in doing so his eye fell on the name. With an ejaculation he drew back, and turned as pale as his father had done.

"What do you know of Emma Calvert?" he demanded abruptly; "why do you write down her name?"

"Herbert!" said the father, warningly—almost imploringly.

"I shall speak," said Herbert, his composure replaced by intense excitement. "What do you know of Emma Calvert, sir?"

Garth looked up surprised. "I know as much as Robert, the valet of Fellenger, could tell me."

"A scamp who served a scamp," muttered the young man.

"Sir Gregory was my cousin, Mr. Herbert."

"Then your cousin was a scoundrel, Mr. Garth."

"Herbert, leave the room," said his father, sternly

The son looked defiantly at his father, and turned away without a word. At the door he paused and addressed Garth. "I know that your cousin was murdered, Mr. Garth," he said savagely. "I am glad
that he met with such a death. He escaped me, but he could not escape punishment. I hated Sir Gregory and I bless the man who killed him."

He left the room, and in dumb astonishment Garth turned to the elder Vaud for an explanation. The old man had buried his face in his hands; but he looked up when Garth touched him, and groaned aloud.

"I am sorry you wrote down that name, Mr. Garth," he said at length. "Its effect on my unfortunate son is always terrible."

"But for what reason?"

"I did not intend to tell you, but as you know so much, you may as well know all. Herbert was in love with this girl. He wished to marry her, and it was he who introduced her to Sir Gregory. You can guess the rest."

"I can guess that my cousin married the girl and took her to Paris, where he neglected her and drove her to suicide."

"I know about the marriage," said Mr. Vaud. "I am glad that Sir Gregory did her that justice. I also know of the death. Sad, very sad."

"She must have been a pretty girl to have so strongly attracted two men."

"I never saw her," said Vaud. "I did not even know that Herbert was in love with her until she eloped with Sir Gregory. Then my son came with his broken heart and told me all. He would have followed Sir Gregory to Paris but that he fell ill of brain fever. Afterwards he was ordered on a sea voyage; and returned only six weeks ago. He heard of the death of Lady Fellenger in Paris, and——"

"Did he know that Fellenger had married her?"
"Afterwards; not at first. He discovered all about the marriage and death in Paris. How, I do not know. But he came back broken in health and heart. He will never be the same man again; and whenever the name of Emma Calvert is mentioned, the consequences are as you see."

Garth rose to go. "It is a cruel story," he said sadly, "but Fellenger's sins have come home to him in a terrible fashion. Good-bye, Mr. Vaud."

Then Garth took his leave; and withdrew to meditate on the villainy of his cousin, which had ruined two lives. Half-way along the Strand, he was struck by a sudden thought. If young Vaud had known and loved Emma Calvert, he would be the man to identify the woman who had presented herself at Fellenger's chambers. He believed Emma Calvert to be dead; brought face to face with the missing woman, and he would see that she was alive. "Though it will be difficult to find that woman," he said, resuming his walk, "she has given us the slip. Still she may call to see Robert again, and he is being watched by Maxwell; so the chances are that we may find out whether she is my cousin's wife or her ghost. If she is confronted with Herbert Vaud we may arrive at the truth. But will the truth lead to the detection of Gregory's assassin. I doubt it."

He thought of calling upon Herbert and telling him about the appearance and flight of the presumably dead woman; but the same reason which had prevented him from seeing Hersham, prevented this visit. "No!" he said, resolutely. "I must interview Fanks and ask his advice. The matter is too difficult for me to handle alone."

Having come to this sensible conclusion, he went
about his daily business and postponed moving in the matter until the return of Fanks from his mysterious journey. His appointment had been for the previous night; and Fanks had asked him to wait three days. As he had employed one day in seeing Mr. Vaud, he thought that he would utilise the second by interviewing Mrs. Boazoph. For this purpose he called at the Red Star, but he was disappointed. Mrs. Boazoph, the barmaid informed him, was out of town—on business. Garth left Tooley's Alley in a meditative mood. "Fanks has gone to the country on business; Mrs. Boazoph has gone to the country on business. I wonder if the same errand takes them there."

Nothing further transpired; and, on the evening of the third day, Garth presented himself at Duke-street. Fanks was within and received him in the most amiable manner. Garth noted that his friend looked weary, and ventured an opinion that Fanks had made a long journey that day.

"You are about right," said Fanks, indicating a seat. "I only got back three hours ago from Hampshire."

"You have been to Mere Hall?"

"I have been in the neighbourhood of Mere Hall. And I have also been to Plymouth," he added, after a pause.

"What have you been doing there?"

"Following our friend Renshaw, alias Binjoy."

"You don't mean to say that the two are one," cried Garth, jumping up.

"I do, and I can prove it by the clearest evidence you ever heard in your life. Sit down and listen."

Garth resumed his seat, and leaned forward with
much curiosity to hear the promised recital. It was well worthy of an attentive hearing.

"I told you that I suspected Renshaw to be Binjoy in disguise," said Fanks, "your description of the one fitted the other in many respects; and the eagerness with which Renshaw tried to impress me with the fact that he was going to India, roused my suspicions. I determined to see for myself if he was really leaving England, so I disguised myself as a parson, and went to the docks. Renshaw had been followed there by my emissary, and he duly went on board the P. and O. steamer 'Oceana.' Assured of this I dismissed the watcher, and took up the running to Plymouth."

"But how about your passage."

"Oh, I fixed that up all right; how, I need not stop to explain. You may be sure that I kept a watch on our friend; and confident in my disguise, I tried to get speech with him. This was impossible, as he remained in his berth the whole time. I discovered, however, that his passage was booked to Bombay, exchanging at Aden into the 'Clyde.' At Plymouth he feigned to be so ill as to be unable to proceed further on his journey, and rather than do so, he forfeited his passage money, and got off—"

"Then he did not go to India after all?"

"My dear sir; he had no intention of going to India. I followed him ashore; and then I am sorry to say that I lost him. It is not creditable to my intelligence," said Fanks, shrugging his shoulders.

"What did you do?"

"The best I could. I saw the local police, and had the railway stations and boats watched. He could not leave Plymouth either by land or water without my knowing it. To make a long story short, I was
informed that a stout gentleman, somewhat like my man, was awaiting a train at a certain station. I went there—"

"And you saw Renshaw?" interrupted Garth.

"Indeed, no. I saw a cleanshaven man much younger in appearance than Dr. Renshaw, and dressed differently. From your description I recognised him as Binjoy, and to clinch the matter, I followed him to Mere Hall."

"Then you are certain that Renshaw is Binjoy?"

"Positive. I made inquiries in the village, and I was informed that Sir Louis was ill, and that Binjoy was attending him. Of course I said nothing, for, to tell you the truth, I did not know what to say. But you will observe, Garth, that I have proved that these two men are one and the same."

"And the negro. Did you see Binjoy's negro servant?"

"I inquired about him, and I was informed that Binjoy had brought no negro servant with him. No doubt, he left him behind at Taxton-on-Thames."

"Then my idea is correct," said Garth, "the negro committed the crime at the instigation of Binjoy; and Binjoy in the disguise of Renshaw, went to the Red Star to see that it was accomplished. Now he has got rid of the negro and of his disguise; so cutting off every trace of his connection with the crime."

"A very plausible theory," said Fanks, shaking his head, "but the motive?"

"Motive? Why Binjoy wanted Louis to inherit the property. He has a great influence over Louis; what would benefit the one would benefit the other. Oh, depend upon it, Fanks, it is as I say."
"No!" said Fanks, "there is a third person in it. A woman!"

"Emma Calvert?"

"Mrs. Boazoph!"

"Oh, come now; she is out of town on business."

"I know that; and her business was at Mere Hall in Hants. I saw her there."