CHAPTER XXIV.

THE CLUE OF THE HANDWRITING.

On concluding the recital of his movements on the night of the twenty-first of June, Hersham looked anxiously at Fanks to see what the detective thought of the matter. The latter made no immediate comment, whereupon the journalist, impatient of the silence, made the first observation.

"I have told you all," he said; "now what is your opinion?"

"Let me think for a minute or two," replied Fanks, holding up his hand. "I must consider."

Thereupon he thrust his hands into his pocket and strolled to the window, where he stood looking absently at the adjacent chimney-pots. Hersham eyed him with continued anxiety, but he did not dare to interrupt, so that Fanks had ample time to reflect over the strange story which had been related to him.

He had heard the main facts of it before from Berry Jawkins, and these corresponded entirely with the narrative of the journalist. Still, the additional evidence concerning Anne Colmer disquieted Fanks not a little. Her behaviour was strange, to say the least of it, and far more suspicious than that of Hersham.
Why had she sent a telegram to withdraw her lover from London at the very time of the committal of the crime? And why had she—so to speak—nullified that telegram by going herself to town almost immediately after she had despatched it. Such conduct was decidedly suspicious; and it looked as though she was implicated in the matter in some underhand way. Why had she behaved in so mysterious a fashion, and why had she refused to reveal her reason for so acting to Hersham?

So far, so good; but there remained a greater mystery. It was Anne Colmer herself who had instructed Hersham to confess to Fanks; yet she must have known that her very extraordinary conduct would need explanation. But would she explain? Fanks thought not. He recalled his conversation with her; how she had refused to speak lest her evidence—whatever it was—should be detrimental to an innocent person. Clearly that innocent person could not be Hersham, for he had established his innocence in the eyes of the detective. Then if the person in question was not Hersham, who could he—or she—be? Mrs. Colmer, Dr. Binjoy, Anne, or Caesar, the missing negro?

Not the first, thought Fanks, decidedly not the first, for Mrs. Colmer was confined to her room by paralysis, and could not take an active part in the business. Scarcely the second, for Anne could have no reason to screen the doctor—at least no reason that Fanks could even guess at. If the third—and seeing that Mrs. Boazoph was her aunt it might be so—the motive might be that Anne desired aid to carry out a scheme of revenge against the destroyer of her sister. As to Caesar, Fanks had quite settled in his own mind that
the negro was innocent, and that his personality was being made use of merely to screen the chief actor or actors in the tragedy.

The result of Fank's meditations therefore resulted in his having an increased suspicion of Mrs. Boazoph. Her behaviour at the time of the discovery of the murder, her visit to Mere Hall, and her fainting at the mention that Hersham was the probable criminal—all these things were suspicious; and now the probable visit of Anne Colmer to her aunt—although such visit was not yet proved—clinched the matter. All the interest of Fanks now centred in Mrs. Boazoph; and he addressed himself again to Hersham in the hope of learning something tangible, likely to connect her more intimately with her niece either in London or at Taxton-on-Thames. He was right to act in this way; an indefinable instinct had placed him on the right path.

"I wish you had told me of this before," he said to Hersham, as he resumed his seat. "It would have saved me a lot of trouble."

"I did not wish to tell you. I was afraid to speak lest I should incriminate myself. I am sure my movements on that fatal night must appear very suspicious to you. What is your opinion of me now?"

"The same as before. I am satisfied that you have told me the truth. No, Hersham, it is not you whom I suspect."

"Then who is it?" asked the young man, eagerly.

"I'll tell you that later on," replied Fanks. "In the meantime you must answer a few more questions. I am not yet quite clear on some points. How did you obtain your disguise?"

"Oh, that was Miss Colmer's suggestion."
"The deuce it was!" said Fanks, rather startled at this admission.

"Yes! I told her of my idea to disguise myself in order to obtain a thoroughly realistic description of street music, and of those who make it. I asked her how she thought I should dress. In a half-laughing way she advised me to take Binjoy's servant Caesar as my model."

"Which you did?"

"Certainly. I thought the suggestion a good one. Caesar was rather an oddity in his way, and dressed with that mixture of vivid colours which is so dear to the black race. When off duty he usually wore a red neck scarf, a brown felt hat, black trousers, and a long green coat with large brass buttons, quite a noticeable garb in fact. He had several of these quaint garments, and he had brought one to Anne's establishment to get yellow velvet cuffs and collar sewn on to it. On the promise that I would not keep it more than a fortnight Anne lent me the coat, which I wore for my purpose."

"Strange," said Fanks, thoughtfully. "So you wore the very coat of the man whom we suspected in the first instance?"

"I did. It is odd now that you mention it."

Fanks considered. "Did anyone suggest your disguising yourself as a negro for this street music business, or was it your own fancy?"

"It was the suggestion of Dr. Binjoy."

"Oh, was it? Humph! I am beginning to see daylight."

"Why, you don't think——?"

"I think nothing at present," said Fanks, quickly; "matters are in too crude a state."

This observation was hardly true, for Fanks was
beginning to think that the affair of the green coat looked singularly like a conspiracy. He was unwilling to communicate his suspicions to Hersham, because of necessity they included Anne Colmer; therefore he passed the matter off as before mentioned. Nevertheless, he thought it doubtful that the disguise was the result of an accident. That Binjoy should suggest the idea of blackening the face, that Anne should induce Hersham to dress up in the very clothes of Caesar, both these things seemed suspicious and quite impossible to understand. He could guess Binjoy’s object, presuming that Binjoy had designed the murder—it was to avert suspicion from himself and servant by throwing it on Hersham. But what Fanks could not see was why Anne should act as she did, when Hersham was her lover. She surely did not wish to implicate Hersham in the matter—if it could be presumed that she was connected with it herself, of which Fanks was by no means sure—and yet Fanks was honestly puzzled to understand the action, so at variance with her position. With his usual sense he therefore abandoned the subject for the present, and re-addressed himself to the examination of Hersham.

"Did you know Dr. Binjoy?"

"I did, and disliked him greatly. I don’t think he liked me either," added Hersham, smiling, "for I was his successful rival."

"With Miss Colmer?"

"Yes! Fancy, that old man fell in love with Anne and wished to marry her; asked her to be Mrs. Binjoy four or five times, in fact. Like his impudence, wasn’t it? However, Anne told him that she was engaged to me, and sent him off with a flea in his ear. I don’t think he liked me any better for my triumph,"
"No," said Fanks, dryly. "I have no doubt he would do his best to injure you."

"Fanks, do you think he designedly induced me to act as a duplicate of Caesar?"

"That I can't say. It looks suspicious. His being at the Red Star on the night of the murder under an assumed name is still more suspicious. All the same he has managed the business so cleverly that I can bring nothing home to him."

"Do you think that he designed the murder of Fellenger so as to get the estates for Sir Louis?"

"His actions bear that interpretation," said Fanks, scratching his chin; "but I have no proof as yet. I may find out at Mere Hall."

"Are you going there?"

"Next week. I wish to see my employer, Sir Louis, and tell him what I have done; at the same time I intend to observe Binjoy. By the way," added the detective, "did you like Sir Louis?"

Hersham shrugged his shoulders. "So, so," he replied. "He is a dry stick, wrapped up in his scientific studies. He passes most of his days with Binjoy in the laboratory making experiments. A tall, stout fellow, he is, not at all like a dry-as-dust savant."

"Humph!" said Fanks, twisting his ring; "a tall stout creature. Dr. Binjoy is also tall and stout?"

"Yes! and so is the negro, Caesar. The trio are all fat and healthy."

"Humph!" said Fanks again. "I wonder—but that is impossible."

"What is impossible?"

"Something that came into my head. What it is, does not matter. I shall no doubt prove its impossi-bility at Mere Hall."
"You suspect Sir Louis?"

"Such a suspicion did cross my mind. But, as Sir Louis is employing me to hunt down the murderer, he would hardly act in such a way. Never mind that at the present moment, Hersham, but tell me if you have written to your father?"

"About the tattooed cross? No, I have not done so yet. I don't see how my father can help you."

"I am of another opinion," said Fanks, dryly. "It is my firm conviction that the whole secret of that murder in Tooley Alley lies in the explanation of that tattooed cross. Do not look so scared, Hersham. I do not suspect your father."

"I should think not," said Hersham, fiercely.

Fanks laughed indulgently, in nowise offended with the indignant tone adopted by the young man. Indeed, he rather admired him for being so ready to take up the cudgels on behalf of his parent. Nevertheless, he stuck to his point, as he was determined to fathom the meaning of the tattooed cross, and he saw no one was so likely to help him to an interpretation as the Rev. George Hersham, Vicar of Fairview, Isle of Wight.

"You must do as I ask," he said, "and write to your father. I must know why he had that cross tattooed on your arm."

"I don't believe my father had anything to do with it," said Hersham, angrily. "However, as you insist on it, I shall go home and see him. If he tells me, I shall tell you. If he refuses, as he has done before—"

"In that case I'll come down to Fairview and see him myself."

"As you please," said Hersham, with a feigned air of indifference, but real vexation. "I'll do my best; I can do no more."
"Don't be angry, old fellow. I don't wish to vex either you or your father, but you must see that it is important that I should know the meaning of this cross. You will go and see Mr. Hersham?"

"Yes; before the end of the week. Will that content you?"

"Yes," replied Fanks, in his turn. "And now, before you go, just tell me if you received a letter from Mrs. Boazoph, and if you have brought it with you?"

"Now it is strange that you should have guessed that," said Hersham, in astonishment. "I did get a letter from Mrs. Boazoph; I brought it to see what you thought of it. It quite slipped my memory till you spoke of it. Here it is. Came yesterday from Fairview."

"From Fairview!" repeated Fanks, making no attempt to take the letter which Hersham held towards him. "Was it sent to that address?"

"Yes, care of my father, who forwarded it on to me. See for yourself."

"Did Mrs. Boazoph know of your address in the Isle of Wight?"

"No, that's odd," added Hersham, staring at Fanks. "How did she get it?"

"From Miss Colmer."

"I have never given any but my London address to Miss Colmer. I had my reasons for not doing so."

"So Mrs. Boazoph knew of your address without your telling her," said the detective, stretching out his hand for the letter. "Quer! If I am not mistaken I—By Jove!"

"What is the matter?"

“Let me read the letter first. My word, here is a discovery.”

“What discovery?” asked Hersham, staring at the letter.

But Fanks paid no attention to him. He was already devouring the communication from the landlady of the Red Star, which ran as follows:

“Dear Mr. Edward Hersham,—Come and see me at once. Important business, and, in the meantime, hold no communication with the man who calls himself Fanks. I will explain when we meet.—Yours, Louisa Boazoph.”

“I wish you had shown me this before,” said Fanks.

“I was so anxious about what I had to confess, that I forgot, Fanks. Is it important?”

“I should think so. You must see her at once, and tell me what she says. We may find the key to the whole business in her conversation.”

“Do you think Mrs. Boazoph has anything to do with it?”

For answer, Fanks got out the photograph of the dead Emma Calvert, and the envelope which had contained the red star. He pointed out the handwritings on both to Hersham.

“You see that,” he said, eagerly. “The handwriting on the back of the portrait, and that on the envelope are the same as that on your letter.”

“True enough,” said Hersham, examining the three objects closely, “but what of that?”

“Only this. That Mrs. Boazoph addressed the envelope, and enclosed the red cardboard star, which lured the late Sir Gregory Fellenger to his death on the evening of the twenty-first of June.”
CHAPTER XXV.

AT MERE HALL, HANTS.

Fanks was rather astonished when he learned that Mrs. Boazoph had contrived the lure which had drawn Fellenger to his death. He had given the landlady credit for more cleverly concealing her scheme, and that she should have carried out a plan so compromising, in so open a manner, seemed to him to be the height of folly. Nevertheless, he was pleased that he had discovered who had directed the fatal envelope; and he was still more pleased that Mrs. Boazoph had sent for Hersham. If possible he intended to learn her reason for seeking an interview, and to ascertain why she had fainted at the intelligence that Hersham was likely to be arrested for committing the crime. A true report of that conversation—and Fanks had no doubt that Hersham would repeat it faithfully to him—might afford the clue to the mystery. At the present moment Fanks was convinced that the landlady of the Red Star could unravel the riddle if she chose, and he was resolved to force her to do so. But here an element on which Fanks had not calculated came into play.

As instructed by the detective, Hersham duly called at the Red Star only to be informed that Mrs. Boazoph
was dangerously ill, and could not see him. This he reported to Fanks, and at first the detective deemed the illness an excuse to postpone the interview, the more especially as Dr. Turnor was the medical man in attendance. He mistrusted Turnor as much as he did Binjoy, and thought that the former had persuaded Mrs. Boazoph to relinquish the idea of seeing and confiding in Hersham. Such confidence might prove as fatal to Turnor as to Binjoy; and if so there was no doubt that Turnor had compelled Mrs. Boazoph to hold her tongue lest she should compromise him. Thus Fanks argued out the situation; and he sought Tooley's Alley to ascertain if Mrs. Boazoph was really ill, or merely feigning at the order of Turnor.

A view of the sick woman showed him plainly that he was wrong. Mrs. Boazoph was laid on a bed of sickness, incapable almost of speech, and Fanks concluded promptly that there was no chance of learning anything until she recovered. The result of the last interview had shaken her terribly, and she was thoroughly worn out with nervous prostration. Turnor, more like a ferret than ever, eyed Fanks complacently, and seemed relieved that things were going so badly for the case. Fanks questioned him, but could learn nothing definite, for, if the detective was clever, the doctor was cleverer, and defeated Fanks on every point. Indeed, he carried the war into the camp of the enemy.

"I suppose I am right in ascribing this illness to you, sir," he said, with a sly smile. "It seems that my patient fainted at her last interview she had with you."

"She did. I said something which startled her."

"That was very wrong of you, Mr. Fanks."
Boazoph is a woman of delicate organisation, and a sudden shock might bring about her death. She has a weak heart."

"I am sorry to hear so, sir," retorted Fanks, gloomily. "I counted on gaining some information from her. Do you think she will soon recover?"

"Not for some time," said Turnor, in a satisfied tone. "I presume you wish to learn something from her, relative to the case you have in hand?"

"You are quite right. I do wish to learn something relative to the murder which took place in this hotel. But if Mrs. Boazoph cannot tell me what I wish to know, you may be able to do so."

Dr. Turnor spread out his hands in a deprecating manner. "I, my dear friend," he said, "what can I know about the case?"

"As much as Dr. Renshaw could tell you," retorted Fanks, fixing Turnor with his keen eye.

"Dr. Renshaw told me nothing, because he knew nothing."

"I have my own opinion about that, Dr. Turner."

"Really; I thought you were satisfied that my friend had nothing to do with the matter. He went to India, you know."

"Are you sure he went to India, Dr. Turnor?"

"Oh, yes; he will be soon be at Bombay. I got a letter from him at Aden, where he changed into the 'Clyde.'"

"No doubt," said Fanks, affably, "I expect you will hear from him when he is settled in Bombay."

"Certainly; Renshaw and I are great friends."

"I am sure of that. You confide your secrets to one another, and work in unison."
"What do you mean by working in unison, Mr. Fanks?" said Turnor, drawing himself up.

"I don't think I need afford you any explanation, Dr. Turnor. You are playing a dangerous game, sir."

"You insult me, sir."

"Is it possible to insult you, Dr. Turnor?" sneered Fanks.

"I'll make you prove your words," said Turnor, with rather a pale face.

"There will not be much difficulty in doing that—at the proper time."

The ferret of a man eyed Fanks nervously and savagely. "Do you think I have anything to do with the matter of Sir Gregory's death?" he burst out.

"I'll tell you that when I return from Mere Hall," was Fank's reply.

"Mere Hall?" repeated Turnor, betraying himself, which was the reason Fanks had mentioned the name; "what do you know of Mere Hall?"

"That is just what I wish to ask you. What do you know of Mere Hall, sir?"

"Nothing, nothing. I merely repeated your words."

"In a very singular fashion, doctor."

The little man turned away with a scowl. "I shall defend myself from your insinuations," he said, in a stifled voice, "if you suspect me, say so."

"Suspect you of what?" asked Fanks, innocently; "you speak in riddles."

Turnor pointed to the woman lying on the bed. "Perhaps Mrs. Boazoph can solve them," he said.

"Perhaps she can," retorted Fanks, with equal coolness; "and I trust it will not be to your disadvantage when the answers come."

"I can look after myself, Mr. Fanks," said Turnor,
and left the room without the detective making any effort to detain him.

Fanks was suspicious of Turnor, from his connection with the so-called Renshaw; and this conversation went a long way towards confirming these suspicions. However, as he wished to go to Mere Hall and follow up the Binjoy clue, he had no time to attend to the Turnor matter. Nevertheless, on leaving Tooley's Alley he sought out Crate, and instructed him to look after the doctor.

"Find out his financial position," said Fanks; "what kind of practice he has, how he lives, what kind of character he bears, and all about him."

"Very well, Mr. Fanks," said Crate, noting the instructions down, "and what about Mrs. Boazoph?"

"Keep an eye on her, and should she recover so far as to see Mr. Hersham or to journey to Taxton-on-Thames, let me know. You can write or wire me at the Pretty Maid Inn, Damington."

"That's near Mere Hall, ain't it, sir?"

"A quarter of a mile away. I shall stay there some time to watch Binjoy and Sir Louis Fellenger."

"Do you suspect him, Mr. Fanks?"

"If you remember the name I mentioned, you would not ask me that, Crate."

The underling was abashed and said no more, but turned the conversation to the subject of Garth. "What am I to do about him, sir?"

"Oh," said Fanks, dryly, "you think he is guilty, so I will leave him to you. But do not neglect my interests to look after that business. I tell you, Crate, the man is innocent."

"I have my own opinion about that."
“Then keep to your opinion, but mind my instructions.”

“Well, I will tell you one thing, sir,” said Crate.

“Mr. Garth has left town.”

“You don’t say so,” said Fanks, frowning, “he did not say that he was going away. Where has he gone to?”

“I can’t tell you that, sir, I lost him. But I’ll tell you where he hasn’t gone—and that is to Taxton-on-Thames.”

“I didn’t expect he would go there, but it does not matter. I have my hands full without thinking of Garth. I leave him to you. In the meantime, good-bye; I am off to Hampshire.”

Fanks arrived at Damington about five o’clock, and put up at The Pretty Maid Inn as he had done before when following Binjoy in the disguise of a parson. But thanks to his cleverness in “making up,” no one at the inn suspected that he was the same man. The landlady—a genial soul with a plump person and a kindly face, quite an ideal landlady of the Dickens type—welcomed him without suspicion, as a gentleman come down for the fishing, and detailed all the gossip of the neighbourhood. She was especially conversant with the affairs of Sir Louis Fellenger.

“Such a nice gentleman,” said Mrs. Prisom, “rather melancholy and given to hard study, which ain’t good for a young man. But he comes here and takes a glass with a kind word and a smile always.”

“Does Dr. Binjoy come over with him?” said Fanks.

“Oh yes, sir; I am sorry to see that the doctor ain’t well lately, he looks pale and mopey-like. Seems as if he had something on his mind.”

“And what do you think he has on his mind, Mrs. Prisom?”
"Well, it ain't for me to say, sir; but I should think as he was sorry he and Sir Louis did not get on so well as they might."

"What makes you think they do not get on well?" said Fanks, pricking up his ears.

"It is the way they look at one another," said Mrs. Prisom, reflectively. "And they say Dr. Binjoy is going away; though what Sir Louis will do without him, I don't know."

"Dr. Binjoy going away," murmured Fanks, rather startled, "now what is that for?"

Mrs. Prisom could not tell him; she could only say that the doctor was departing from Mere Hall that day week; and that it was reported in the village that he had quarrelled seriously with Sir Louis. "Though of course," added Mrs. Prisom, "it may not be true."

"I must see to this," thought Fanks. "I wonder if this sudden departure has anything to do with the murder. Is it a case of thieves falling out; I must keep my eyes open." After which resolution, he asked the landlady if she was well acquainted with the Fellenger family.

"I should think so," said Mrs. Prisom, with pride, "I knew that poor, young man who was murdered in that wicked London, as well as I know myself. A noble gentleman, but wild; ah me!" sighed Mrs. Prisom, "just like his father."

"Did you know Sir Gregory's father?"

"Did I know Sir Gregory's father," echoed Mrs. Prisom, contemptuously, "do I know the nose on my face, sir? The late Sir Francis and myself were playmates. Yes, you may well look astonished, sir, but it is the truth. I was the daughter of the steward at Mere Hall, and I was brought up with the late Sir Francis
almost like brother and sister. I could tell you many a good story of him," finished Mrs. Prisom, with a nod and a smile.

"You must do so," said Fanks, returning the smile, "I am fond of stories."

The fact is, he was wondering if he could find the motive for the murder in the family history of the Fellengers. Many great families had secrets, which, if divulged, might lead to trouble; and it might be that the Mere Hall folk’s secret had to do with the tattooed cross. If it proved to be so, then Fanks thought there might be a chance of penetrating the mystery of Sir Gregory’s death. The family secret and the death in Tooley’s Alley were widely apart; but there might be a connecting link between them, at present hidden from his gaze. At all events, it was worth while examining Mrs. Prisom, and hearing her story.

This Fanks resolved to do that evening; but in the meantime he left the garrulous landlady, and went out for a stroll in the direction of Mere Hall. It was not his intention to see Sir Louis on that evening but rather to wait till the morning. Nevertheless, he had a desire to look again at the splendid mansion of the Fellengers, more to pass away the time than with any ulterior motive. In the calm twilight he strolled along, and soon left the village behind him. His way lay through flowery hedges, bright with the blossoms of summer; and, under the influence of the hour and the beauty of the landscape, Fanks quite forgot that he was at Damington for the purpose of unmasking a murderer. From his dreams he was rudely awakened, and brought back to real life.

As he sauntered along, swinging his stick, he saw a man ahead, whose figure and gait seemed to be
familiar. In the clear, brown twilight he could see fairly well; and so it appeared could the man he was looking at; for the figure made a pause and jumped over the hedge. Fanks wondered at this, for he had noted that the figure was that of a gentleman, or, at all events, someone other than a labourer. With his usual suspicion, and as much out of curiosity as anything else, Fanks jumped over the hedge also; whereupon the stranger began to run across the fields. By this time, Fanks was thoroughly convinced that something was wrong; so he gave chase at once, with a chuckle of delight at the excitement of the adventure.

Across the green meadow they raced, and Fanks saw the man fading into the dim twilight. He redoubled his sped; so did the fellow, but in the next field Fanks found that he was gaining. The fugitive sprang over another hedge; with Fanks close on his heels. But when the detective landed he could see nothing of the stranger. A backward glance showed him that the man had doubled, and was running along beside the hedge. The next instant, Fanks was following on his trail; and, although the mysterious figure made the greatest efforts to escape, Fanks drew closer. Then an accident brought the race to an end, for the man stumbled over a clod, and rolled on the grass. The next moment Fanks, panting for breath, stood over him.

The detective peered down to see who it was he had caught, and, to his surprise, he recognised Garth.
CHAPTER XXVI.

MRS. PRISOM'S STORY.

"What the deuce are you doing here?" asked the detective, angrily, "and why did you run away when you saw me?"

"As to my being here," replied Garth, sitting up and wiping his face, "I came down to watch my cousin, of whom I was suspicious; and I ran away because, on catching sight of you in the twilight, I took you for Louis Fellenger."

"Oh! And for what purpose are you down here?"

"I have told you, I suspect that my cousin, through his medical friend, is concerned in the murder of Sir Gregory."

Fanks frowned, and Garth having got on his feet, they walked on together. He wished that Garth would leave the case to him, and resented the presence of the young lawyer on the spot. "Where are you staying?" he asked, abruptly.

"At the Pretty Maid Inn. I suppose you are there also, as it is the only comfortable lodging in the village."

"Yes, I am there, and, now as I have dropped across you, we may as well go back to supper. I had intended having a look at the Hall, but on second
thoughts I shall go back with you to pump Mrs. Prisom."

"I know Mrs. Prisom very well," said Garth; "she is an old servant of our family, but I do not see what you can learn from her."

"I may learn nothing, on the other hand I may hear a great deal. She was well acquainted with the father of the late baronet."

"And she was well acquainted with my mother, and with the father of the present baronet. But in what way do you expect her to help you?"

"Well, I'll tell you. I want to find out if there is anything in the family history of the Fellengers likely to have induced Sir Gregory to submit to that tattooing."

"I am a member of the family, and I don't know of any reason," said Garth.

Mrs. Prisom belongs to a generation before you," replied Fanks, "and it is possible that she may know something. Of course, it is only fancy on my part. Still, a drowning man clutches a straw, and I am clutching at this. We may learn something."

Garth shook his head. He knew the history of his family, and there was nothing he could recall likely to touch on the subject of a tattooed cross.

Mrs. Prisom received them both with great dignity, and in half an hour they were seated at a well-spread table. Both did justice to the viands set before them; and during the progress of the meal they chatted about the case. While they were thus conversing Fanks elicited an important fact concerning Sir Louis.

"I don't know why you should suspect your cousin," he said, in reply to a remark of Garth's. "Mr. Vaud told us that both Sir Louis and Binjoy were at Taxton-
on-Thames on the night of the murder. The first was ill, and the second was in attendance."

"True enough," replied Garth, frankly; "all the same, you proved that Binjoy was masquerading in London on the evening of the twenty-first."

"Yes; it is strange that Sir Louis should say that Binjoy never left his side. I suppose you suspect your cousin on that account?"

"By no means. I suspect my cousin because he was himself in London on that night."

Fanks leaned back in his chair, and stared at the barrister. "What is that you say?" he cried. "Was Sir Louis in Tooley's Alley on that evening?"

"Oh, I won't go so far as that. But Louis certainly went up to London on that night. I found that out from Mrs. Jerusalem."

"And who is Mrs. Jerusalem?"

"She was the housekeeper of Sir Louis at Taxton-on-Thames. When he came in for the title he brought her here. I saw her yesterday, and she inadvertently admitted that much."

"How did you get that out of her?"

"Well, it was a fluke. She is an old servant of our family, like Mrs. Prison. I met her while out walking, and she recognised me. I made her promise not to tell Sir Louis that I was here."

"But what excuse did you make?"

"None," said Garth, coolly. "I'll tell you a secret, Fanks. Mrs. Jerusalem likes me and hates Sir Louis. She was a foster-sister of my mother's, and she desires to see me in the place of my scientific cousin."

"Indeed," said Fanks, eyeing Garth in a strange manner; "and has she done anything likely to forward your interest in that respect?"
"I suppose you mean to hint that she would like to clear Sir Louis out of my path by accusing him of the murder?" said Garth, coolly; "well, you are about right. Mrs. Jerusalem connects the absence of Sir Louis from Taxton-on-Thames with the death of Sir Gregory. She saw the report of the inquest, you know; she recognised—as she thinks—the description of Binjoy's servant Caesar, and, by putting two and two together, she told me yesterday that it is her firm conviction—on the slightest of proofs, remember—that Louis killed Gregory by means of the black man."

"Humph!" said Fanks, thoughtfully; "I must see this lady. But if she dislikes Sir Louis and Binjoy why does she stay in the service of the former?"

Garth shrugged his shoulders. "One must live," he said, "and Mrs. Jerusalem has a very easy time of it with my cousin. When my mother died, and we were as poor as rats, my father got Louis's father to take Mrs. Jerusalem into his service, and she has been there ever since. Oh, she will not tell my cousin that I am here," concluded Garth, with a satisfied nod.

"Mrs. Prisom may," suggested Fanks. "You may be sure that a good deal of gossip goes on between inn and Hall. How long have you been here?"

"About three days."

"Then you may be certain that your cousin knows of your presence in the village. If he has any danger to fear from you he will take his measures accordingly. I don't like your Mrs. Jerusalem, Garth; she ought to be true to her salt."

"I can't help that," retorted Garth, sulkily. "She would willingly keep house for me if I had a house to keep, but as I have not she stays where she is.
But what do you think of her suspicions? Do yours point in the same way?"

"They did not," replied Fanks, promptly; "but your discovery of Sir Louis's visit to town on that night puts quite a different complexion on the case. All the same, I can come to no conclusion until I see this spy of yours."

"She isn't a spy," said Garth, gloomily. "I did not drag the information out of the creature. She thought that she was doing me a good turn by betraying my cousin. She thinks that if he killed Gregory he ought to suffer, and let me have the property."

"And what do you think?" asked Fanks, with a keen glance.

"I don't want to build up my life on the ruins of another man's; it is a bad foundation. I know you believe that I wish to get my cousin into trouble, but you are wrong. I would help Louis to escape if I could."

"There may be no necessity for that; we have proved nothing against him as yet. I hardly think that a man who has committed a crime would put down money to hunt out himself, and thereby lose the benefit he gained by his wickedness. No, no, Garth, I do not believe Sir Louis is such a guilty fool. However, I shall give my opinion when I see him and question Mrs. Jerusalem."

"Will you tell my cousin that I am here?"

"Certainly. There is nothing to be gained by concealment. You only place your honour in the hands of that Jerusalem creature, and make yourself her accomplice. However, I am ready to bet you that Sir Louis knows you are here through Mrs. Prisom."

Garth made no reply, but stating that he was weary, went off to bed. The detective, left alone, thought over
what he had been told, and found himself unable to come to any conclusion. He did not like the way in which Garth was acting, but, all the same, he believed that the lawyer had no ill intentions towards his cousin, despite Crate's opinion to the contrary. The young man laughed as he thought how he had picked up the trail of Garth when it had been lost by the astute Crate. "I am afraid that Crate will never make a success of the detective business," thought Fanks, lighting his pipe. "But I don't agree with him about Garth; and I don't agree with Garth about Sir Louis. Certainly, it is strange that Sir Louis should have feigned illness, and shielded Binjoy, and then have gone up to town on that night. What the deuce were he and his medical friend doing there? Dr. Turnor knows; I believe that Sir Louis was alone with Binjoy in the Great Auk Street house. It is odd, to say the least of it. I wonder if that negro was the actual Caesar, or Binjoy or Sir Louis in disguise. At all events, he wasn't Hersham, for that young man has exonerated himself clearly enough. H'm. I'll reserve my decision as to Mrs. Jerusalem's story till I see Sir Louis. Perhaps the secret of the crime is to be found at Mere Hall, after all. No, no, no!" said Fanks, getting on his feet with an emphatic stamp. "The secret is connected with that tattooed cross. I wonder who can tell us about it."

At this moment, as if in answer to his query, the door opened, and Mrs. Prisom came in to clear away the dinner things. As a rule, she left this duty to the parlour maid, but as Garth, an offshoot of the great Fellenger family, was dining under her roof, she would let no one but herself attend to him. She looked surprised when she saw that Garth was not in the room. At once Fanks explained the absence of his friend.
"Mr. Garth has retired to bed," he said, "as he is very tired. I shall go myself soon, as your country air makes me sleepy, but at present I should like to have a chat with you, Mrs. Prisom."

Mrs. Prisom smiled in an expansive manner, and expressed the honour she felt at such a request, adding that she dearly loved a chat.

"All the better," thought Fanks, as she cleared away the dishes. "You will be the more likely to tell me what I want to know."

In a few minutes the table was tidy, and Mrs. Prisom, at Fanks' request, had brought in her knitting. He guessed that she would talk better with the needles clicking in her active hands, and herein he judged wisely, for thus employed Mrs. Prisom would gossip for hours, provided she had a good listener.

"I suppose you knew the mother of Mr. Garth?" said Fanks, plunging at once into the history of the Fellenger family.

"Miss Eleanor? Ah, that I did; but she was a proud young lady, and didn't care to play with me, even as a child, because I was the daughter of the steward. They were all proud, the Fellengers, except Sir Francis."

"That was Sir Gregory's father?"

"Yes. There was Sir Francis, the eldest and the merry one; Mr. Michael, the father of the present Baronet, Sir Louis, he was proud, too; and then Miss Eleanor, who married Mr. Garth. But I liked Sir Francis the best of all," concluded the old lady, with a sigh.

There was a look in her eyes as she said this, which made Fanks think that she had been in love with the gay baronet, in the old days.
"He was a bonny man, Sir Francis Fellenger," she resumed. "Never a maid but what he had a smile for, and many a kiss did he take without the asking," laughed Mrs. Prisom. "Oh, he was a merry blade. But all sailors have those ways."

"Was Sir Francis a sailor?" asked Fanks, suddenly.

"He was a Captain in the Navy before he came into the title," said Mrs. Prisom, "then he settled down and married Miss Darmer, a Shropshire lady. But she died, poor soul, when Sir Gregory was born, and it was five weeks after her death, that Sir Francis was killed by being thrown from his dogcart."

"Sir Francis was a sailor?" asked Fanks, abruptly.

"I suppose when he went to sea and came home a middy, he had anchors, and ships, and true lovers' knots, and such like things tattooed upon his skin."

"He just had," replied Mrs. Prisom, laughing. "He had quite a fancy for that sort of thing. He told me he learnt how to do it in Japan."

"He learnt how to do it," echoed Fanks, leaning forward in his excitement.

"Yes, yes; and very clever he was at drawing such pictures on the skin. I shall never forget how angered my mother was when Sir Francis—Master Francis he was then—insisted on pricking those blue marks on my arm."

"Did he do that?" demanded the detective, little expecting what would follow.

"He did, sir; the mark of it remains to this day," and Mrs. Prisom drew up the sleeve of her left arm. Fanks bent forward, and saw tattooed thereon—a cross. Was he then about to unravel the mystery of the tattooed cross which had puzzled him for so long?
CHAPTER XXVII.

MRS. PRISOM'S STORY.—CONTINUED.

Fanks restrained his joy at this important discovery; he was afraid lest Mrs. Prisom should cease to speak should she think that the revelation was of consequence to him. That she should have the same symbol as that possessed by Hersham, as that attempted on Sir Gregory, appeared to hint at its owning a certain significance. What that significance might be he now set himself to discover.

"Why did Sir Francis choose a cross to tattoo on your arm, Mrs. Prisom," he asked, as the old lady pulled down her sleeve.

"I cannot say, Mr. Fanks. I fancy it was because he could draw a cross better than anything else. You see it is St. Catherine's cross, with four arms and a wheel—at least, that is what Sir Francis called it."

"It is St. Catherine's cross," said Fanks, recalling the mark on Hersham's arm. "Perhaps Sir Francis attached some meaning to it. Do you know if he tattooed anyone else with the same symbol?"

At this remark Mrs. Prisom suddenly desisted from her occupation, and not only refused to speak but taxed Fanks with trying to fathom her meaning for
some ill purpose. "Why should you come down here, and ask questions about Sir Francis Fellenger?" she asked, with a troubled look; "why do you wish to know all these things?"

There was no help for it. If Fanks wished to learn the truth he would have to tell her the real purpose of his visit; and then out of love for the memory of Sir Francis she might do what she could to aid him to discover the person who had murdered Sir Gregory. Resolving to risk all on the casting of this die, he spoke out boldly and to the point. Yet he approached the old lady with a certain amount of caution.

"I have an important reason for asking you these questions," he said, in an earnest tone, "and I shall tell you my reason shortly. But first say if you regretted the death of Sir Gregory."

"I regretted it because he was the son of his father, but I did not care very much for him. He was a bad man, Mr. Fanks, a very bad man. I loved the father as an old playmate, and as one who was always kind to me and mine; but the son—ah!" Mrs. Prisom shook her head and sighed.

"You know that he was murdered?"

"Yes; but they never found out who murdered him."

"No; they are trying to find out now. You may be able to help me to do so."

"Help you?" said the old lady, in a frightened tone. "Who are you, sir?"

"My name is Fanks, as you know, Mrs. Prisom. But what you do not know is that I am a detective, anxious to learn who killed Sir Gregory."

"I know nothing of the murder, sir. I am a simple old body, and cannot help you in any way."
"Oh, yes, you can, Mrs. Prisom. You can help me by relating all you know about this tattooing."

"But what can the death of Sir Gregory have to do with an old story of man's treachery and woman's folly?"

"More than you think. The whole secret of the death lies in the explanation of that tattooing. Come, Mrs. Prisom, you must tell me all you know."

Mrs. Prisom thought for a moment, and then made up her mind. "I'll do what I can," said she. "Those who are concerned in this tale are dead and gone; and, so long as it does not hurt the living, I see no reason why I should not gratify your curiosity; but I must ask you not to repeat what I tell you, unless you are absolutely obliged to do so. It is no good spreading family scandals, but as you have appealed to me to help you to revenge the murder of my old play-fellow's son, I will confide in you."

Fanks assured Mrs. Prisom that he would be as reticent as possible about her forthcoming history, and would not use it unless compelled to do so. Satisfied on this point, Mrs. Prisom commenced; at the same moment Fanks took out his note-book to set down any important point.

"The other person who was tattooed," said Mrs. Prisom, "was Madaline Garry." Fanks whistled softly and made a note in his book. "Only a thought which struck me," he explained. "Madaline Garry; was she also tattooed with a cross?"

"Yes, sir. Madaline and Jane Garry were the daughters of old Captain Garry, a retired naval officer, who lived in Damington. I knew them both very well, as we used to meet on terms of equality in parish work. Jane was the quiet one, but Madaline was a
flighty girl, fond of admiration and dress. She attracted the attention of Sir Francis, and it was thought at one time that he would marry her. However, he did not do so, but brought home the lady from Shropshire to Mere Hall. Still, Madaline must have been fond of him, for she let him tattoo on her arm a cross similar to this one of mine. I saw it one day while she was changing her dress, and remarked it. She said Sir Francis had pricked it on her arm as a sign that she was engaged to him, and that it was like a wedding ring. I warned her against Sir Francis, and mentioned the lady of Shropshire to whom he was said to be paying his addresses. She laughed at this, and said Sir Francis would marry her. ‘If he doesn’t,’ she added, ‘I shall know how to avenge myself.’”

“Did she know that you had a cross on your arm also?”

“Oh, yes, I told her; but I never expected to marry Sir Francis, and he did me no harm. I can’t say the same of Madaline. He acted badly towards her. I don’t say that Sir Francis was a good man,” added Mrs. Prisom, in a hesitating manner; “but he was good to me. He certainly should have married Madaline Garry.”

“Did he go about tattooing all the girls he was in love with?”

“He was not in love with me,” rejoined Mrs. Prisom, with dignity, “and I only let him tattoo me because I was a schoolgirl and his old playfellow. I knew no better then; but Madaline was a grown woman when he loved her, and marked her with the cross. I suppose it was to bind her to him;—not that it did much good, for shortly afterwards he married Miss Darmer, and in a rage at his desertion Madaline took up with
an old admirer—Luke Fielding was his name—and she married him almost on the same day that Sir Francis led his bride to the Hall."

"Did she ever forgive him?"

"She said she did," replied Mrs. Prisom, with hesitation; "but I have my doubts of that. At all events, she was stopping at the Hall within the year of her marriage."

"How was that?"

"Well, you see, sir, in nine months after the marriage Mr. Fielding died, leaving Madaline with no money and a little child. About the same time Lady Fellenger died at the birth of the dead Sir Gregory. Somebody was wanted as a nurse, and Madaline asked Sir Francis if she could come. She was poor, you see, and wanted money, although after the death of her husband she was living with her father. At first Sir Francis would not let her come—feeling ashamed-like, no doubt—but in some way she prevailed against him, and went to the hall as the nurse to the heir."

"And what about her own child?"

"She took him also, by permission of Sir Francis."

"Oh! was the child of Madaline a son?"

"Yes. Her son and that of Sir Francis were born almost on the same day; she insisted that her son should come to the Hall also, so Sir Francis agreed in the end."

"And Madaline Garry nursed the heir—that is, the late Sir Gregory?"

"She did," assented Mrs. Prisom. "Till Sir Francis was killed, as I told you, five weeks after the death of his wife. His body was brought home and buried; but, almost immediately after the funeral, Madaline
disappeared with her child. She was never heard of again; and I have no doubt that by this time she is dead."

"How long ago is it since she disappeared?" asked Fanks.

"Twenty-eight years, sir. Where she and the child went, I do not know; for she had no money. Poor soul; I was sorry for her."

"And her sister and Captain Garry?"

"Captain Garry died soon after. Madaline was his favourite child; he never held up his head after she disappeared. When the Captain died, Miss Jane went to some relatives in Scotland."

"And the heir?"

"Sir Gregory? Oh, Dr. Binjoy got another nurse for him."

Fanks glanced up in astonishment. "Dr. Binjoy!" he repeated. "Was he here?"

"Of course he was, sir," replied Mrs. Prisom, with a slight shade of surprise, "he was at the births of both Madaline's child and Sir Gregory. Afterwards, when the father of Sir Louis died, he asked Dr. Binjoy to look after his son, who was sickly. The doctor agreed; and he has been with Sir Louis ever since."

"Yet now they are about to part."

"It seems strange, doesn't it, sir?" said Mrs. Prisom. "but ever since Dr. Binjoy has been here with Sir Louis, they have got on badly. I think it was the chemistry which kept them together; for their characters are quite unlike one another."

"You like Sir Louis?"

"Yes. But I don't like Dr. Binjoy. No. Not though I have known him for so many years. He was a lover of Madaline Garry also, but she would have
nothing to do with him. I am glad he is leaving Sir Louis."

"Was Binjoy friendly with Sir Gregory?"

"I can't say, sir. I do not think he had much love for him; because he was the heir and kept Sir Louis out of the property."

"Oh; and no doubt Binjoy wanted Sir Louis to have the property, so that he could get a share of the money."

"I think so, sir. They said that Dr. Binjoy was always very gay; and used to go to London to lead a fast life."

"Who said that? Did you ever go to Taxton-on-Thames?"

"No, Mrs. Jerusalem told me. You know she was the housekeeper of the late Mr. Garth; and, after his death, she went to keep house for Sir Louis at Taxton-on-Thames. When Sir Louis came in for the property he brought her here."

"Is she a native of this village?"

"Oli, yes; she was a school friend of mine, though I never liked her over much. I believe she was in love with the late Mr. Garth. At all events, she is devoted to his son. I wonder she left him to keep house for Sir Louis. But, as poor, young Mr. Garth had no money, I suppose she had to do the best she could for herself."

In Fanks' opinion, the love of Mrs. Jerusalem for the late Mr. Garth explained why she was so anxious to benefit the son; but it did not indicate why she should hate Sir Louis. Mrs. Prisom's next words enlightened him on this point.

"It is more strange," pursued Mrs. Prisom. "Because Mr. Michael, the father of Sir Louis, treated Mrs.
Jerusalem very badly. Yes, almost as badly as Sir Francis did Madaline Garry."

"I wonder Sir Francis was not afraid that Madaline Garry would avenge herself for his treatment," said Fanks, now satisfied as to the cause of Mrs. Jerusalem's hatred for Sir Louis.

"I think he was afraid," replied Mrs. Prisom, rising and rolling up her work. "I can't explain what he said to me in any other way."

"What was that?" said Fanks, eagerly.

"I was at the Hall one day, shortly after the death of Lady Fellenger," said the landlady, "and I saw him in his study. He was grieving greatly for the death of his wife; but he also told me how pleased he was at the birth of an heir. While he was talking, Madaline entered, and spoke about something; then she nodded to me, and went away. As the door closed after her, Sir Francis looked anxious. 'Nancy,' he said, turning to me—he always called me 'Nancy,'" said Mrs. Prisom, in parentheses. "'Nancy,' he said, all in a flutter like, 'if it should chance as I die, and anything goes wrong about my son, remember that cross I tattooed on your arm; and if you want any further proof, look in this desk.' Just then, we were interrupted, and he did not say any more. I never saw him again," added Mrs. Prisom, with emotion, "for he was brought home dead that day week."

"Can you understand what he meant?"

"No, sir," said Mrs. Prisom, rising. "I can only say from the look he gave the door, that he was afraid of Madaline. What he meant by the cross and the desk I know no more than you do. But he was wrong in thinking that Madaline would harm his child—for that was what he thought, I'm sure—for she
went away a week after his death with her own, and Sir Gregory grew into a fine, young gentleman, though wild, very wild."

After which speech, Mrs. Prisom, exclaiming that it was close on ten o'clock, left the room; and Fanks sat meditating over the strange history he had heard, far into the night. Already he saw a connecting link between the story of Madaline Garry and the tragedy of Tooley's Alley.
CHAPTER XXVIII.

SIR LOUIS EXPLAINS.

The outcome of Fanks' midnight meditations, was that he resolved to devote himself entirely to following the clue afforded by Mrs. Prisom's story of the tattooed cross. The dead father had chosen the symbol of St Catherine's martyrdom for some unknown purpose; the murdered son had perished while the same emblem was being tattooed on his arm. For some reason he had wished to be marked in such a way, and the murderer had taken advantage of the wish to inoculate the blood of his victim with a deadly poison. If then, Fanks could learn the significance of the cross, he might be able to fathom the mystery of the death. The question he asked himself was, whether he could find out the truth concerning the cross in the study of the late Sir Francis.

The warning which the dead man had given to Mrs. Prisom, seemed strange to the detective. That it was dictated by fear of Madaline Garry, he felt sure; but as she had passed away, and had foregone her vengeance it would seem that the warning was useless. Nevertheless, Fanks resolved to see the desk referred to by Mrs. Prisom, and to search for the evidence hinted at by Sir Francis. Also, for reasons of his own, which
the reader may guess, he wired to Hersham at the Fairview vicarage, to seek an explanation from his father relative to the cross tattooed on his arm. The tale of the Reverend Hersham might show why the special symbol of Sir Francis was figuring on the skin of a young man who had nothing to do with the Fellengers and their mad freaks. After concluding the first part of his scheme by despatching this letter, Fanks proceeded to the second, and walked to Mere Hall to see the desk referred to by Mrs. Prisom. Garth had refused to accompany the detective to the Hall; and gave his reason for such refusal. "It is no good my going," he said, "I don’t wish to see my cousin; and if, as you think, he knows that I am here, there is no longer any reason why I should stay in Damington. I shall go up to town by the midday train, and leave you to find out if he has anything to do with the crime."

"Well, as I know all you know, and a great deal more besides, I don’t think it is necessary for you to stay," said Fanks, dryly. "I’ll follow up the clue afforded by the malice of Mrs. Jerusalem. Return to town by all means, and if you want anything to do, just join Crate in watching the Red Star Hotel in which Mrs. Boazoph lies ill."

This Garth promised readily enough, much to the amusement of Fanks, as the latter was simply throwing him into the society of Crate in order to afford that person a chance of learning the connection—if any—of Garth with the crime. He was assured in his own mind that Garth was innocent, but he was willing to afford Crate some innocent amusement, by setting him to find the mare’s nest of his own imagination. When Garth, therefore, departed, Fanks smiled in his own
quiet way; and went off to solve the more difficult riddle which awaited him at Mere Hall.

When he was nearing the Hall, a woman stepped out of a gap in the hedge almost in front of him. She was dressed in a black silk dress with lavender coloured shawl over her shoulders; and she wore also a bonnet of grey velvet made Quaker fashion, and close fitting over the ears. But it was not at her dress that Fanks looked; he was staring at the most malignant countenance he ever saw in his life. She was pale and thin-lipped; her hair and eyes and eyebrows were of a light, sandy hue; and she had a stealthy, observant way with her, which made Fanks mistrust her on the instant. Like an apparition she arose from the ground; and laid one thin hand on his breast to detain him.

"One moment, Mr. Fanks," she said, in a perfectly unemotional voice. "You must speak to me before you go to Mere Hall."

"Why must I?" demanded Fanks, with a stare, "and how is it you know my name?"

"Mr. Garth told me your name and your errand."

"Oh!" cried Fanks, remembering Garth's excuse for retiring to bed on the previous night. "So you are Mrs. Jerusalem?"

"That is my name; and I wish to tell you—"

"I wish to hear nothing," said Fanks, roughly. "Mr. Garth had no business to speak about me. What is there between you and him that he should act in this underhand way without telling me? He said he was going to bed last night. Instead of that, he sneaks out and sees you."

"There you are wrong," replied Mrs. Jerusalem, still without a trace of emotion. "Mr. Garth did not come to me. On the contrary, it was I who came to
him at the inn while you were talking to Mrs. Prisom. He came out of his bedroom to see me for a few moments; and then I went away."

"And why did he not tell about this meeting?" asked Fanks, angrily.

"Because I asked him not to. I wished to take you by surprise. If you had heard of my midnight visit, you might mistrust me; as it is—"

"As it is, I mistrust you still. Well, Mrs. Jerusalem, we will waive the point. I know you accuse Sir Louis of this murder. Is it to betray the master whose bread you eat, that you have sought this meeting?"

"That is just why I am here," was the quiet reply. "I hate my master—"

"Because his father, Michael Fellenger, treated you ill. I know all about that, Mrs. Jerusalem."

"Ah!" said the woman, coldly. "I see you employed your time with Mrs. Prisom to good purpose. Well, you can understand that I hate Sir Louis, and I would gladly see Francis Garth sit in his place?"

"And for this purpose you have concocted a story against Sir Louis."

"I have concocted no story. I tell the truth. Sir Louis and Dr. Binjoy went up to London on the night of the murder; although they now pretend that the one was ill, and the other attended him. They sent me out of the house on that night; but I suspected, I watched, I discovered. Do you know why the pair went up to London?" she continued, grasping Fanks by the arm. "To kill Sir Gregory. Do you know why they killed Sir Gregory? To get money for their scientific experiments. Do you know how they killed Sir Gregory? Ask them about the poisoned needle."
Yes. They made use of their scientific knowledge to slay the man whose money they wanted.”

“Who put the advertisement in the paper?”

“Ask Mrs. Boazoph, she knows.”

“Does she?” said Fanks, disgusted with her malignity, “and perhaps you know about the tattooed cross?”

“No, I don’t know about the tattooed cross,” said Mrs. Jerusalem, “but I daresay Madaline Garry can tell you.”

“Madaline Garry? Do you know her? Is she still alive?”

“I know her, she is still alive. See Sir Louis, Mr. Fanks,” said the woman, stretching out her lean hand, “tear the mask off the lying face of Dr. Binjoy who loved Madaline Garry and ask him where she lives; and what evil he has worked with her aid?”

More Fanks would have asked, but with a sudden movement she eluded his detaining hand, and before he could recover from his astonishment she was far down the road to the village, gliding like an evil shadow into the sunny distance. Fanks thought of following her, but on second thoughts he pursued his journey to the Hall. “Sir Louis and Binjoy first,” he muttered, “afterwards Mrs. Jerusalem and Madaline Garry.”

Despite his belief in the evidence of Mrs. Jerusalem, which was obviously dictated by a malignant spirit, he caught himself wondering if she was really right, and if, after all, Sir Louis was guilty. But the moment afterwards he rejected this idea, as it was incredible that Sir Louis would commit a crime and then offer a reward for the detection of the assassin. Still Fanks admitted to himself that if Sir Louis was not frank,
he would find it difficult to come to a decision touching his innocence or guilt.

On sending in his card at Mere Hall, the detective was admitted into the study of Sir Louis Fellenger. Here he found not the baronet but his old acquaintance Dr. Renshaw, who advanced boldly and introduced himself as Dr. Binjoy. In place of wearing a thick brown beard he was clean shaven, and his face looked young, fresh-coloured, and smooth. For the rest he was as tall and burly as ever, as unctuous in his speech; and to complete the resemblance between himself and the doctor of Tooley’s Alley, there lurked an unmistakeable look of anxiety in his grey eyes. It was impossible to think how he hoped to deceive so clever a man as Fanks by so slight a change in his personal appearance; but he evidently thought Fanks knew nothing of the truth, for he came forward with a bland smile, prepared to carry on the comedy.

“My dear sir,” said Binjoy, with magnificent pompousness, “your card was brought to Sir Louis, but he has been busy in his laboratory, and is rather untidy in consequence; he deputed me to receive you. Pray be seated.”

Fanks smiled slightly and sat down, while Dr. Binjoy, rendered uneasy by the silence, carried on a difficult conversation.

“I presume, Mr. Fanks, that you have come to report your doings to Sir Louis touching this unfortunate death of my friend’s predecessor in the title. May I ask if you have any clue to the assassin?”

“Oh, yes,” said Fanks, quietly; “you will be pleased to hear, Dr. Binjoy, that I have every hope of arresting the right man.”

Binjoy turned grey and looked anything but de-
lighted. Indeed an unprejudiced observer would have said that he looked thoroughly frightened. But he controlled himself so far as to falter out a question as to the name of the guilty man. Fanks mentioned the name of Renshaw, and thereby reduced his listener to a state of abject terror.

"Renshaw is innocent, sir," said the doctor, tremulously, "I would he were here to defend himself; but he is in India at present, at Bombay. I received a letter from him, dated from Aden."

"How strange," said Fanks, innocently; "Dr. Turnor got a letter from him also."

Binjoy saw that he had over-reached himself, and bit his lip. "We need discuss Renshaw no longer," he said, coolly. "Let us talk of other matters till Sir Louis enters."

"By all means," said Fanks. "Let me ask you, Dr. Binjoy, what you were doing at Dr. Turnor's in Great Auk Street on the night of the twenty-first?"

Binjoy went pale again, and stammered out a denial. "I was not in town on that night," he protested. "I was attending on Sir Louis, who was ill. I never left the house at Taxton-on-Thames."

"Oh, yes, you did. You went up with Sir Louis."

"Prove it, prove it," gasped Binjoy, with white lips. "I can prove it by the mouth of Mrs. Jerusalem. She saw you leave; she saw Sir Louis return alone."

"A lie! A lie!"

"It is not a lie, and you know it. It is time to have done with this farce, Dr. Binjoy. I know who you are. I know all about your impersonation and disguise. I know why you called yourself Renshaw. I traced you to Plymouth and saw you disembark; I followed you to this place, and now I have you."
Binjoy stared wildly for a moment at seeing his mask of lies fall away from him, and then sank back in his chair with a shiver, moaning and crying. "It is a lie, a lie," was all he could gasp.

"It is not a lie," said a voice at the door, and Fanks turned to see Sir Louis. "It is not a lie," repeated the baronet. "Binjoy is Renshaw; he went up with me to town on the night of the twenty-first. If you want to know who killed my cousin, Mr. Fanks, there is the assassin."
CHAPTER XXIX.

DR. BINJOY PROTESTS.

Silence ensued after this astounding statement had been made by Sir Louis, during which time Fanks narrowly observed the personality of the speaker. The baronet was a tall, and rather stout young man, with a round face, destitute of beard and moustache. He was shabbily dressed in an old tweed suit. He wore spectacles, and his shoulders were slightly bowed as from constant bending over a desk. His appearance was rather that of a studious German than that of a young Englishman, but Fanks, from this hasty observation, judged him to be of a sensible and reflective nature. Such a man would not make so terrible an accusation unless he was able to substantiate it on every point.

Binjoy arose to refute the accusation of his quondam pupil. "That man," he said, pointing an unsteady hand at the baronet, "is lying. He hates me because I know his secrets. For their preservation he seeks to destroy me. But if I fall he falls also; if I am guilty he is doubly so. Let him speak and admit that our sin is mutual."

"I admit nothing of the sort," retorted Sir Louis, coming forward. "You tell your story, and I shall tell mine. Mr. Fanks can judge between us."
"You had better be careful, Louis," said Binjoy, with an attempt at bravado. "I hold you in the hollow of my hand."

"We will see," said Fellenger, coldly. "Be seated, Mr. Fanks. Before you leave this room you shall hear my story, and decide as you think best. I refuse to be the accomplice of that man any longer."

"Louis, I implore you."

But Fellenger turned a deaf ear to the voice of the charmer, and sat down near Fanks, to whom he addressed himself. "For the sake of Binjoy I concealed the truth; out of pity for him I held my tongue; but when he strives to make me an accomplice in the crime, when he attempts to blackmail me by threatening to inform you of our doings on the night of the twenty-first of June, I prefer to forestall him, and let you know the worst of myself."

"You were listening to our conversation, Sir Louis?" said Fanks.

"I was," replied the baronet, coldly. "I know what Mrs. Jerusalem thinks; I know how Binjoy has been lying to you; and I am sick of living on the verge of a precipice, over which that man and my housekeeper threaten to push me. At any cost you shall hear the truth so far as I am able to tell it to you. Ask what questions you like, Mr. Fanks, and I shall answer them; when I fail no doubt the worthy doctor there will come to my aid, and shield himself if possible at my expense."

"I shall say nothing," said Binjoy, wiping his lips. "My only desire is to save myself from the consequences of your falsehoods. I wish you no harm."

"Just hear him!" cried Louis, in a mocking tone.
“Would you believe that my friend there threatened to blackmail me last week by saying he would denounce me to the police. Well, Binjoy, here is a representative of the law. You can now speak. I give you full power to do so.”

Binjoy did not accept this challenge. He sat back in his chair to listen to the forthcoming conversation, and to defend himself if necessary.

“Well, Sir Louis,” said the detective, “I have heard your accusation and the denial of Dr. Binjoy. Until I hear your story and his I attach no value to either.”

Binjoy drew a long breath of relief. “I can defend myself,” he said, in a defiant tone. “I can prove to you that Louis lies.”

“You shall have ample opportunity of doing so,” replied Fanks, coldly; “in the meantime I shall hear what Sir Louis has to say.”

“I must begin at the beginning,” said Louis, quietly. “That man Binjoy was the doctor in this village of Damington. When my father died leaving me an orphan—for my mother had died some years before—he asked Binjoy to look after me.”

“And I have done so,” broke in Binjoy, “and this is my reward.”

“This is your reward for trying to blackmail me,” said Fellenger, dryly. “You did your best to ruin me, and to put bad thoughts into my heart as to Gregory’s wealth and my own poverty. See here, Mr. Fanks,” added Louis, turning to the detective, “I am a man of science; I am devoted to my work. I wanted neither money nor title, and I would not have lifted a finger to obtain either. I did not like Gregory; he was a brutal and wicked boy, and when we were playmates together he treated me like a dog. I never saw him
for years. We never corresponded or treated each other as relatives, but for all that I did not wish him evil; I did not desire his death; least of all did I desire to rob him of his titles and lands. Do you believe me, sir?"

Fanks looked at the open face of the young man, and glanced at the scowl which rested on the countenance of Binjoy. Drawing his own conclusions, he replied quietly, "I believe you, Sir Louis; proceed, if you please."

"Binjoy," pursued Louis, "was always lamenting that I was not the owner of the Fellenger estates; and now that I am he hopes to make me pay him large sums of money to purchase his silence."

"What does he threaten to accuse you of?" said Fanks.

"Of murdering my cousin under the disguise of the negro Caesar, but I am innocent, Mr. Fanks, as I hope to prove to you. I was trapped by that man and his accomplice, Dr. Turnor."

"Ah!" murmured Fanks, while Binjoy scowled. "I was sure that the ferret had something to do with the matter."

"Of that you shall judge for yourself," said Fellenger. "Have you heard of Mithridates, Mr. Fanks?"

The detective was rather astonished at this apparently irrelevant question; but, having some knowledge of ancient history, he said that he had heard of the monarch. "He was a king of Pontus, wasn’t he; who lived on poisons?"

"Exactly. He accustomed himself to taking poisons for so long that in the end the most deadly had no effect on him. I always thought that this was a fable
and I wanted to see if I was right. For this purpose, I tried experiments on dogs. I inoculated an animal with a weak poison, and gradually increased the dose. Whether I was successful does not matter; it has nothing to do with my story. But I may tell you this, that, with the aid of Binjoy, I prepared a very powerful vegetable poison for my final experiment; with this I impregnated a needle."

"Oh!" said Fanks, "now I am beginning to see. Was it an ordinary needle?"

"No, it was not an ordinary needle," replied Fel­lenger. "In the first place it was silver; in the second, it was hollow; in the third, it was filled with this deadly vegetable poison, of which I told you."

"Prepared by Dr. Binjoy?"

"Prepared by both of us," said Binjoy, savagely. "Let him take his share of the guilt."

"I am not guilty. Mr. Fanks can judge of that for himself when I tell him what I know," retorted the baronet. "Well, Mr. Fanks, we prepared this needle and placed it in a case; for the least prick with it meant death by blood poisoning. We intended to use it on the dog, when the animal was sufficiently saturated with weaker poisons to admit of the experiment being made. You may be sure, sir, that I was very careful of that needle; I placed it in my cabinet. Dr. Binjoy had access to that cabinet."

"I had not," contradicted Binjoy.

"Yes, you had; you possessed a key as well as my­self," retorted Sir Louis, sharply.

"I did not," said the doctor, obstinate in his denial. "Don't lie, Binjoy, I found you with it opened one day; the day Anne Colmer was with you, and I was so angry."
"Oh, Anne Colmer knew about this needle?" said Fanks.

"I can't say," said Fellenger. "While I was living at Taxton-on-Thames, Miss Colmer sometimes came to the house. But I was angry at Binjoy for opening that cabinet in her presence, as there were a lot of dangerous drugs in it."

"She touched none of them," growled Binjoy.

"Oh!" said Fanks, sharply. "Then you admit that you showed Miss Colmer the cabinet of poisons."

Binjoy scowled, and grew a shade paler; as he saw that he had overreached himself. However, he said nothing, lest he should make bad worse; and, with a significant glance at Fanks the baronet resumed his story.

"One day, in the middle of June," said Fellenger, "I found the needle missing; and Binjoy told me he had given it to Turnor."

"I did not say that," exclaimed Binjoy, wrathfully. "I said that I missed it one day when Turnor was in the laboratory; and I thought that he might have taken it. As it proved, he did not. I know no more than yourself who took it."

"We will see," said Louis. "I was ill at the time: and when Binjoy hinted that Turnor had it, I determined to go up to London, and get it again. I rose from my bed of sickness and went up to London on the evening of the twenty-first."

"But was it necessary that you should have gone up?" said Fanks, "would not a line to Dr. Turnor have done?"

"Probably. But the preparation of the poison was a secret, and when I heard that the needle was in Turnor's possession, I was afraid lest he should analyse
the preparation. I went up to town with Binjoy post haste to recover it again. This haste may appear strange to you, Mr. Fanks; but you do not know how jealous we men of science are of our secrets. But, at all events, we went up to town that evening. Do you deny that, Binjoy?"

"No, I don't deny it," retorted Binjoy, gloomily. "Mr. Fanks tracked me to Plymouth; he knows that I am Renshaw."

"I do. May I ask, Dr. Binjoy, why you took a false name?"

Binjoy pointed to his friend. "It was to save that ungrateful man," he said, in a tragic voice. "When I saw you at the Red Star, and found out that it was Sir Gregory who had been murdered, I foresaw how you might suspect Louis as the cousin of the dead man. Mrs. Boazoph sent for Dr. Turnor, I came instead of him, leaving Turnor with Louis. I had been to the Red Star before, and Mrs. Boazoph knew me as Renshaw."

"And you wore a false beard. How was that?"

"I used to go up to London to enjoy myself," said Binjoy, apologetically, "and I did not want any rumours to creep down to Taxton-on-Thames concerning my movements. This is why I adopted the false name; and disguise."

"Did you know of this?" said Fanks, turning to Louis.

"I do now, I did not then," said he, promptly. "When I arrived in town, I went with Binjoy to Dr. Turnor's house in Great Auk Street. Turnor denied possession of the needle. Shortly afterwards, a message came that the landlady of the Red Star wanted Turnor. I would not let Turnor leave the room; as I felt sure that he had the needle, and thought that he
might make away with it. Binjoy went in his place; but he had no disguise on when he went out of the house."

"I put it on outside," explained Renshaw, alias Binjoy. "I did not tell you all my secrets, as you were always so straight-laced, you might have objected to my enjoying myself."

"I should certainly have objected to your disguising yourself, and going under another name," said Louis, coldly, "I do not like such underhand doings. I did not know that you went to the Red Star as Renshaw; when you came back I had gone."

"Ah!" murmured Fanks, "that accounts why we didn't catch you. The house was not watched till Binjoy came back. Did you return to Taxton-on-Thames?"

"Yes. I returned without the needle, which Turnor denied having. I felt very ill, and got into bed at once."

"Was Mrs. Jerusalem in the house, then?"

"Yes. Binjoy, as I afterwards learned, had sent her out. It was part of the trap. He wanted to make out that I had got rid of the woman so that I could go up to town and kill my cousin."

"When did you hear of your cousin's death?"

"The next day. Turnor came down; and said that Binjoy could not return as he was being watched by detectives."

"Quite so. And Turnor told you about your cousin's death?"

"He did; and then he said that if I did not hold my tongue, and pretend that I had not left Taxton-on-Thames that night, I should be in danger of being accused of the crime. What could I do, Mr. Fanks; I saw my danger, I held my tongue."
"Yes," said Fanks. "I can see why you were afraid. You were in a dangerous position."

"I was in a trap," retorted Louis. "Can't you see, Mr. Fanks. Gregory was killed with a poisoned needle. I had talked about that needle to many people. Many scientific men knew that I was experimenting with it. I was in Turnor's house at the very time that the crime was committed."

"And you were thereby able to prove an alibi."

"Indeed, no. Turnor told me that he needed money; and he swore that he would deny that I had been in his house; that he would denounce me as the murderer of my cousin, if I did not give him a cheque. I could do nothing; I was afraid; the circumstances were too strong for me. I would have told the police; but in the face of Turnor's denial; in the face of Binjoy's treachery in luring me into that house at the very time of the murder, I dreaded lest I should be arrested and condemned on circumstantial evidence. And the negro, Binjoy's servant, was smuggled off to Bombay by Binjoy, to close the trap more firmly on me."

"That's a lie," said Binjoy. "I sent the negro away to Bombay to avert suspicion. I feigned a voyage to Plymouth for the same reason. I ordered Caesar to meet me at Plymouth; and sent him to Bombay in my place."

"I know you did," said Fanks, "you no doubt did that when I lost you in the town after you disembarked."

"Well, you see, Mr. Fanks," said Louis, "that I am innocent. I held my tongue, and lied about Binjoy, because I was afraid of the circumstantial evidence which might be brought against me. Thanks to Binjoy
and Turnor, I was in a trap; I was at their mercy. I have told you all because Binjoy tried to blackmail me last week. Now what do you say?"

"Say, Sir Louis. I believe that you have told the truth. You are innocent of this crime. But the question is, what does Dr. Binjoy say?"

"I say that there is not one word of truth in the whole story," said the doctor, with a scowl.
Upon hearing this untruthful and obstinate denial of the baronet's story, Fanks wheeled round his chair, until it directly faced that of Binjoy. At the sullen creature he looked sternly, and shook an emphatic forefinger in his face.

"Now look you here, Dr. Binjoy, or Renshaw, or whatever you choose to call yourself," he said, sternly. "I believe that Sir Louis has spoken the truth about this matter. I have not the least doubt that you and your accomplice, Turnor, lured him into the Tooley Alley crime, with which, to my belief, he has nothing to do whatever. You laid a trap, and he fell into it—unluckily for him; but for his wise resolution to confess his doings on that night to me, I have no doubt that you would have blackmailed him."

"I did not want to blackmail him," said Binjoy in a low voice. "I did not lure him into a trap. On the contrary, when I found out that it was his cousin who had been murdered, I did all I could to save him—to draw suspicion on to myself. I feigned the voyage to Plymouth; I made use of my false name; I sent off Caesar to Bombay; and I closed the mouth
of Dr. Turnor. What more could you expect me to do?"

"I quite believe that you did all these things; and for why? Because you wished to rivet your chains more securely on your victim. When you found that he was in possession of the property, you resolved to get whatever money you wanted out of him in order to lead a debauched life in town. Oh, yes, Doctor, I quite believe you changed your name and assumed a disguise while in London. You did not wish that the scampish Renshaw of the Red Star should be identified with the respectable Dr. Binjoy, late of Taxton-on-Thames, and now of Mere Hall in Hampshire. I can understand that, and I can understand that you designed the murder so that Sir Louis could become possessed of money which you intended to spend."

"I did not design the murder," said Binjoy, in a hoarse voice. "I swear I do not know who committed the crime. When I was called in by Mrs. Boazoph, I was as ignorant as anyone that Gregory Fellenger had been murdered. I only acted as I did because I saw how dangerous it was that Louis should be suspected. He was in the neighbourhood—"

"Lured there by yourself?"

"No! No! I did not lure him there. That we should be at Tumor's house, so near to Tooley's Alley, at that time, was quite an accident."

"Was it an accident that Dr. Turnor came down to Taxton-on-Thames, and threatened to blackmail me," broke in Louis.

"I know nothing of what Turnor said or did. It was not because you paid him money that he held his tongue; but because I told him to do so."
"You tried to blackmail me, also. That was why we quarrelled; that was why you were going away next week. And I dare swear, Binjoy," added Sir Louis, quietly, "that had you gone, you would have found means to betray me to the police. That is why I have told Mr. Fanks everything. You cannot harm me now."

"Don't you be too sure of that," growled Binjoy; "you have got to clear yourself of suspicion."

"Sir Louis has cleared himself in my eyes," said Fanks. "But you have yet to explain what became of the poisoned needle."

"I do not know; I missed it as did Sir Louis, but I do not know who took it. You can't prove that I committed the crime."

"I am not sure of that," said Fanks, coolly. "See here, Dr. Binjoy, you wanted Sir Louis to get the Fellenger estates so that you could handle the money. Sir Louis can prove that much. You had access to this poisoned needle with which the crime was committed; you went up to London on the evening of the twenty-first of June; you repaired to the Red Star about the time the deed was committed; you lied about your name; you took a pretended voyage; you sent your negro to Bombay in order to thrown the suspicion on him. Now you attempt to blackmail Sir Louis—you and Turnor—by threatening to accuse him of committing a crime of which he is guiltless. From my own soul I believe that he is the victim of conspiracy; I believe that you lured him up to Great Auk Street to entangle him in the matter. And," added Fanks, rising, "I believe that you, in disguise of a negro, killed Sir Gregory Fellenger with that poisoned needle."
"I did not. I swear I did not. It is all a mistake," gasped the wretched man. "Ask Turnor."

"The other blackguard, the other blackmailer? No, thank you. He would only lie to me as you are doing. You are guilty. Confess your share in this crime. Confess the mystery of the tattooed cross."

"The tattooed cross? What do you know about the tattooed cross?"

"More than you think," returned Fanks, significantly. "What about Madaline Garry and her revenge?"

Binjoy's eyes seemed to be starting out of his head with terror and surprise. His face was of a deathly paleness, and great drops of perspiration rolled down his cheeks. He tried to speak, but the words rattled in his throat, and with a gasp the man, strong as he was, fainted quietly in the chair. He had been struck down by his own terrors; rendered insensible by an instinctive knowledge of his danger.

"What do you intend to do, Mr. Fanks?" asked Louis, looking at the inanimate form of Binjoy with strong distaste. "Arrest this man?"

"I do. I shall send a telegram to London to get a detective down. In the meantime I shall stay here so as not to lose sight of him."

"You don't think that I would help him to escape?" said Louis, indignantly. "I am only too glad to see the scoundrel captured. He has been the curse of my life ever since my father placed me in his care; he spoilt my nature, he half ruined me, but I stood it all until he tried to blackmail me. Then I revolted against his tyranny. If you had not appeared here so opportunely I should have written for you to come and hear my confession. I admit that I was afraid to
speak before, for these villains had laid their plans so skilfully that I was afraid my tale would not be believed. But now the scamp has been caught in his own trap, and I am glad of it.”

“All the same, I am not sure that he killed your cousin.”

“Why not? All the circumstances seem to point to his having done so.”

“No doubt. But some time ago I thought I had spotted the person who had executed the crime. From that opinion I am not inclined to depart. Evidently, Binjoy knows all about the affair, and possibly he may be brought in as the accessory before the fact, but you can see for yourself that the man is a rank coward. He has fainted. No man of his timid nature would be brave enough to commit so daring a crime, and then face me within an hour of such commission. No, Sir Louis, we have not yet caught the assassin.”

“Then why arrest Binjoy?”

“Because he knows who is guilty, and I wish to force him into confession. Just send the servant with this telegram, will you, and tell him to ask if there are any letters for me at the Pretty Maid Inn?”

“What about Binjoy?”

“Leave him here with me for a time. Should I get a letter I may ask you to take me over the house. Till then I shall watch my man.”

“What is this letter you expect?” demanded Louis, with curiosity.

“I’ll tell you that when I have despatched my telegram. Send a groom with it at once, please.”

Sir Louis obeyed and left the room, while Fanks remained to revive the insensible Binjoy. He threw water on his face, loosened his collar, but the doctor
still continued insensible. Becoming alarmed, Fanks rang the bell, and sent for a medical man. The upshot of the affair was that Binjoy was put to bed in high fever. The shock inflicted on him by the detective had unsettled his brain; and when Crate arrived at Mere Hall there was no question of arresting the guilty man. Binjoy was dangerously ill, and suffering from an attack of brain fever. What with the doctor ill in the country and Mrs. Boazoph ill in town, Fanks began to grow uneasy. If all the principals of the case were rendered incapable of confession in this manner, he did not see how he was to arrive at any solution of the riddle. He was two days meditating over the next move in the game. "Mrs. Boazoph knows something," said Fanks, to himself, "and Dr. Binjoy knows more; but if both are ill and incapable of confession, what am I to do?"

There was no answer to this question, but later on the detective's hands were full in elucidating the mystery of the tattooing. He asked the baronet if he knew anything about the fancy Sir Francis had for pricking crosses on the arms of women whom he loved.

"I never heard of it," said Louis. "I did not know much about my uncle Francis, and still less about my cousin, his son Gregory. I am afraid we are a singularly unamiable family, Mr. Fanks, for we all seem to quarrel."

"Have you quarrelled with Garth?"

"Not exactly. But we do not get on well together. He used to come and see me at Taxton-on-Thames, but I am afraid he thought me a scientific prig. Indeed, he hinted so much."

Fanks laughed at this, remembering how Garth had made use of the words attributed to him by Sir Louis.
However, he did not explain the reason of his laughter, but asked the baronet about Madaline Garry. To this also he received a denial. Sir Louis knew nothing about the lady or her connection with the late Sir Francis.

"All these things were before my time," he said, shaking his head. "If you want to know about our family secrets, ask Mrs. Prisom, at the inn. I believe she is a perfect book of anecdotes regarding the Fel­lenger family."

"I have asked her," said Fanks, quietly. "She told me a great deal; but not all I wish to know. Is there anyone else?"

"Well, there was Mrs. Jerusalem," said Sir Louis. "But she has walked off. I intended to tell you, since you referred to her."

"Where has she gone?"

"I do not know. On that day you met her she went off and never came back. I can’t say I am sorry, as I feel, from your description, she bore me ill-will. Per­haps on account of the way my father treated her; but you must ask Mrs. Prisom to tell you that story."

"I don’t need to do that," replied Fanks. "I know that Mrs. Jerusalem hated you, and that is enough. She must have intended to bolt the day I met her; but I thought she would have waited with the amiable in­tention of assisting you into trouble. I wish I knew where she had gone."

"Perhaps she will come back?"

"Let us hope so. Now that Binjoy is ill, and she hates him, I should like to know what she can say about him. By the way, there is a question I wish to ask you. Why was it, when you were afraid of being
implicated in the crime, that you offered to supply the money for me to hunt down the criminal?"

"Well, that was Binjoy's idea. You see he thought that he had completely destroyed the trail likely to bring you across my track; so he said it would still further avert suspicion if I offered that reward. I did so, but, to tell you the honest truth, if I had not intended to confide in you in order to stop the blackmailing of Messrs. Binjoy and Turnor, I should not have risked doing so. By the way, are you going to arrest that atrocious little scamp?"

"Not yet. Binjoy is ill, and cannot have warned him; Mrs. Boazoph is in the same plight; no, I will let him wait. He has no idea that he is in any danger. When the time comes, I will pounce on him, if necessary; though I hope he will not take a fit also. I can get nothing out of Binjoy or Mrs. Boazoph, while they are ill."

"You may not need to do so. You may find out the truth when the letter comes from Hersham."

"I wish it would come," said Fanks. "I want to know why he has the same symbol on his arm as that on the arms of Mrs. Prisom and Madaline Garry."

"You speak as if Madaline Garry were still alive?"

"Mrs. Jerusalem says she is. That is why I want to trace Mrs. Jerusalem; she might help me to learn where I can find Madaline Garry. The clue to the mystery of the cross lies with her; or else," added Fanks, "it is hidden in the desk of the late Sir Francis. You remember I told you his parting words to Mrs. Prisom?"

Two days after this the long expected letter came from Hersham. And not only from him, but one from
his father, was enclosed also. The contents caused Fanks surprise; and yet, he half expected to read what he did. He was beginning to guess the mystery which filled Dr. Binjoy and Mrs. Boazoph with such fear. After all, he would be able to discover the truth without them; although their testimony would be necessary to confirm it.

"Dear Fanks" (wrote Hersham). "When you read the enclosed, you will be astonished, as I was. I have not yet recovered from the shock of learning the truth; but, as you will see, the mystery of the tattooed cross is a greater one than ever. I can give you no assistance—all is told in the enclosed letter, which I particularly asked to be written for you. I cannot say if it will solve the Tooley Alley riddle, but it has certainly invested my life with a mystery which I shall not rest until I solve. I can write no more, for my head is in a whirl. Tell me what you think of enclosed. And believe me, yours, Ted Hersham (as I suppose I may still sign myself)."

The enclosed was a letter from the Rev. George Hersham, to the effect that Ted was not his son; that he was no relation to him.

"I am a bachelor" (wrote Mr. Hersham). "I adopted Ted from motives of pity, and a desire to cheer my lonely life. Nearly twenty-eight years ago, a poorly clad woman came to my door. She was starving, and carried an infant in her arms. I gave her succour, and procured her work. After a time, she grew restless, and wished to go away, but in that time I had become fond of the child. In the end, I offered to adopt it. To this she consented, rather to my surprise; though, indeed, she did not seem at any time very much attached to the babe. However, she gave me the child,
and went away with a little money I had given her. I afterwards received a letter from her in London, but she then stopped writing, and for years I have never heard anything about her. The child—now my son, Ted—was marked with a cross on the left arm, when I adopted him. The woman never told me why he had been so tattooed. I knew nothing of the woman's history, save that her name was—Madaline Garry."
CHAPTER XXXI.

THE SECRET IS REVEALED.

On receipt of Mr. Hersham's letter, Fanks sought out Sir Louis, and showed him the communication. He had told the baronet all that he had heard from Mrs. Prisom; for, without permission, he could not hope to examine the desk of the late Sir Francis. If he did not do so, he would not be able to discover the secret of the tattooed cross; therefore, for the gaining of his ends, and also with a belief in Fellenger's good sense, he made him his confidant, and finally placed the letter in his hands. Louis read it carefully; and, knowing all that had gone before, he understood it partially. Nevertheless, he was puzzled as to the real meaning of the affair; and looked to Fanks for an explanation.

"What do you think of that?" asked Fanks, when the baronet gave back the letter in silence. "Can you understand it?"

"I do not think it is very difficult to understand," said Fellenger, with a shrug of his shoulders, "Madeline Garry went from the Isle of Wight; she was starving, and she met with a good Samaritan, who took her in. Afterwards, she sought London, and left her child
behind to be adopted. That child is your friend, Edward Hersham. The story is plain enough."

"It is so far as you have related it. But Hersham has the cross of St. Catherine tattooed on his arm. Why should the child of Madaline Garry be marked in that way?"

"Perhaps my uncle marked the child. He seemed to have had a passion for tattooing."

"Why should Sir Francis mark the child of Fielding?"

There was something so significant in the tone of the detective that Sir Louis looked at him intently. What he saw in his face prompted his next remark. "You don't think Hersham is illegitimate, do you?" he asked.

"Indeed, that is my opinion," returned Fanks. "Why was Sir Francis afraid of Madaline Garry? Because he had done her a wrong. Why did she marry Fielding, almost on the same day that your uncle married Miss Darmer? Why did Sir Francis tattoo the child with his favourite cross? The answer to all these questions is—to my mind—to be found in the fact that the child of Madaline Garry was also the child of Sir Francis Fellenger. I feel convinced that Hersham is the half-brother of the man who was murdered at Tooley's Alley."

"It seems likely," assented Louis, nursing his chin with his hand. "But how can you establish the truth of your statement?"

"There are two ways. One is by asking Binjoy. He may know as he was in attendance both at the birth of Gregory, and at that of Hersham. He may tell the truth; but as he is delirious, there is no chance of getting any information from him. The second way is to
find out Madaline Garry, and force her to own up. But
the only person who knows where she is, is Mrs. Jeru­
salem, who has vanished. If I find Mrs. Jerusalem, I
may find the other woman. But at present that is
impossible also.”

“Quite impossible. I do not see what you can do.”

“Do you remember what Mrs. Prisom said about the
desk in the study of your late uncle?”

“Yes. She alluded to some secret in connection
with the desk, which was to be used for the benefit of
Gregory, should Madaline Garry attempt to revenge
herself.”

“Exactly. Well, we must examine the desk. I
fancy that Sir Francis, dreading the anger of the
woman whom he had wronged, wrote out a full account
of his sin; and of the reason why he tattooed the cross
on the arm of the child. If we can find that paper—
which Sir Francis plainly hinted was in the desk, we
may discover why your cousin was murdered.”

“I cannot conceive what you mean.”

“You will know soon enough,” replied Fanks, a trifle
sadly. “I have a very shrewd idea of what will be
the outcome of my search. If things are as I think, it
will not be long before I run down the assassin of Sir
Gregory. I have an instinct—and more than an in­
stinct—that the clue to the mystery which has eluded
me so long, is about to be placed in my hand. I
shall be pleased for my own sake; I shall be sorry
for yours.”

Explain yourself, Mr. Fanks.”

“No,” replied Fanks, shaking his head. “I may be
wrong, and I do not wish to cause you unnecessary
pain. Let me examine the desk. If I am wrong, all
the better for you; all the worse for the case. If I am right, I had rather you learned the truth without my intervention. Come, Sir Louis, let us seek the study of your late uncle. Do you know where it is?"

"Oh, yes," said Sir Louis, leading the way. "It has been shut up since his death. You know my cousin was not a man of books, so he did not use it. As for myself, I am always in my laboratory in the old wing. If Sir Francis left any secret paper in his desk, it will be there still. Unless," added Louis, with an afterthought, "unless it was taken away by the woman he feared."

"No. If the paper had given Madaline Garry power to revenge herself on the heir of her old lover, she would have used that power; and then Mrs. Prisom might have interfered by acting on the last request of Sir Francis. Nothing of this has happened; so I am sure that if the paper is in that desk, we shall find it; if we find it we shall learn the truth about this tattooed cross; and, consequently, discover the motive which prompted the murder of your cousin."

After which speech, the detective went with Sir Louis to the study of the late Sir Francis Fellenger.

Sir Louis unlocked the door; and they entered into the long-disused room. It had been shut up for many years, the atmosphere was dusty and musty, with a chill smell of decay. Fanks opened the shutters, and the strong sunlight poured into the apartment; it illumined the dusty carpet on which their feet made marks; it gleamed on the old-fashioned furniture, cumbersome and comfortless, such as was used in the early days of the Victorian era; and—to the satisfaction of the detective—it revealed a mahogany escritoire, all drawers and pigeon-holes, and brass handles.
The key, massive and rusty, was still in the lock; and Louis, turning it over with a harsh creak, threw open the heavy sheet of mahogany which covered the writing cloth. This was lined with dingy green cloth, ink-stained and dusty, but on it there rested no papers nor pens nor ink. Evidently the papers had been arranged before the desk had been closed, and left to its many years' solitude.

Fanks bent down and unlocked the drawers one after the other. These contained nothing but masses of newspaper, everyone of which they examined carefully, but without finding any writing referring to the cross. There were also bundles of old letters; and musty accounts, and ancient records of ships, and stores, and divers expenses; doubtless remnants of Fellenger's naval days. In another drawer they found sea-shells, and seaweed mounted on cardboard; while some shallow repositories contained pictures, and small charts. But nowhere could they discover the paper to which Sir Francis had referred in that last long conversation with Mrs. Prisom.

"Well, it is not in any of these," said Fanks, rising with a look of disappointment. "I wonder where it can be?"

"Perhaps there is a secret drawer," suggested Sir Louis.

"It is not unlikely; and no doubt the paper would be hidden in such a receptacle out of fear of the woman. I believe you are right, Sir Louis; let us look for a secret drawer. If there is one I shall find it; I have been at this sort of work before; and I have an idea how to go about it."

Fanks made no vain boast, for after a hard search of an hour or more; after sounding with the knuckles
and measuring with a tape, they stumbled across a hiding-place, contrived in the thickness of the wood at the back of the desk. Herein was a paper yellow with age, which Fanks drew slowly out; for it was so fragile with time that he thought it would crumble in his hand; carrying this to the strong light of the window he read carefully, while Sir Louis waited for a revelation of its contents. The face of the detective paled when he read it; and he glanced pityingly at the baronet, when he finished his perusal.

"It is the paper I hoped to find," he said, slowly, "and it clears up the most important point of the case. But I told you, Mr. Fellenger, that the contents would give you pain. Read them for yourself."

"Why do you call me Mr. Fellenger?" asked Louis, quietly.

"You will find the answer to that question in this paper," replied Fanks, and passed it to the baronet. After a pause, and a sharp glance at the detective, Fellenger took the thin yellow sheet, and read it slowly. This was what he read, in the faded handwriting of Sir Francis:

"I have deceived Madaline Garry; I am the father of the child born to her about the same time that my heir, Gregory, was born. Madaline wished me to marry her; but, for reasons which I need not explain here, I was unable to do so. She married Luke Fielding, and he is supposed to be the father of her child. This is not so; the boy is mine. When my wife died, Madaline insisted on coming to the Hall and nursing Gregory. For obvious reasons I could not refuse her; she would have revealed the truth, and have disgraced me and her family, had I not yielded to her wish. She came to the Hall with her own child and nursed that of
my late wife. But I was afraid that she would change the children so that her son should enjoy what rightfully belonged to his half-brother. I was twice nearly sending her away on account of this fear; but she threatened to disgrace me by revealing the truth; so I let her stay. But, to avert the danger, I one night tattooed on the left arm of my son, Gregory, the cross of St. Catherine, which I had already tattooed on the arm of Madaline and of Nancy Prisom. Should the children be changed, and I die, the truth can be ascertained by the tattooed cross. The child marked with the cross is my son and heir, Gregory Fellenger; the other is his brother, Edward, the son of myself and Madaline Garry. I hope, in this way, that I shall prevent Madaline from revenging herself on me, as I feel sure she intends to do.

(Signed), Francis Luddham Fellenger.”

On reading this extraordinary document, Louis felt the room whirl round him, and he was fain to be seated. Fanks turned silently towards him and received back the paper—the paper which robbed the young man at one sweep of title and property. Louis recovered himself, and smiled faintly. “I understand,” he said, in a low tone, “Sir Gregory enjoyed the title and estates wrongfully; Hersham is the rightful heir.”

“Yes. Madaline Garry fulfilled her vengeance. She put her child in the place of the real heir, after the death of Sir Francis, and took away the son of Lady Fellenger. That was why she came to the Hall to be the nurse; she wanted her child to enjoy the property. Owing to the tattooing and the father being alive, she could not change the children; but when Sir Francis was killed she did so, and therefore secured the title for her son. I now understand why she parted so
readily with Hersham so that he should be adopted by the Vicar of Fairview; he was not her child, but that of her rival in the affections of Sir Francis; I can see all this; so can you; but," added Fanks, with hesitation, "can you guess how this discovery affects you?"

"Certainly," replied Louis, calmly, "I shall have to give the property up to my cousin, who now goes by the name of Hersham. I assure you, I shall not mind the loss so much as you seem to think. As I told you, I care nothing for money, and everything for science. Oh, believe me, Mr. Fanks, I am quite content to surrender title and estates, and go back to Taxton-on-Thames, as plain Louis Fellenger."

"You can contest this matter?"

"I shall not contest the matter. I believe that paper to be true. We found it together; and it proved beyond a doubt—by the evidence of the cross tattooed on Hersham's left arm, that he is the rightful Sir Gregory, and the owner of these estates. Let him have them; I shall not raise one finger to prevent his enjoying what is rightfully his own. Besides, I like Hersham—as I may still call him—he is a good fellow. I used to meet him at Taxton-on-Thames. Let him marry Anne Colmer, and take up his position; he will make a much better baronet than I."

They left the room, and went downstairs again to the library. In there Louis asked Fanks a question which had been in his mind for some time.

"I say, Mr. Fanks," he said, "what makes you say that this tattooed cross clears up the mystery of Tooley's Alley?"

"Well," said Fanks, "someone must have known this story; and have told it to Sir Gregory. That was why he allowed the cross to be tattooed on his arm."
"I don't see that."

"Why, the person who told him the story assured him that the only chance he had of keeping the property was to be tattooed with the mark, which Sir Francis said was on the arm of his real heir."

"Oh, I understand now. But who was the person who told Sir Gregory the secret of that cross and tattooed it on his arm?"

"Ah," said Fanks, "tell me the name of that person, and I'll tell you the assassin of the son of Madaline Garry, who wrongfully bore the title and name of Sir Gregory Fellenger."
CHAPTER XXXII.

MRS. BOAZOPH TELLS THE TRUTH.

Immediately after this great discovery, Fanks received a letter from Garth informing him that Mrs. Jerusalem was in London, located at the Red Star. "Mrs. Boazoph," said the writer, "is much better, and is now permitted to leave her bed; rather I fancy to the disappointment of Turnor. Should you want to get any information out of Mrs. Boazoph now is the time to do so." The result of this communication was that Fanks resolved to go at once to town and interview the landlady.

"You see that I want to get something out of Mrs. Boazoph," he said to Louis. "I want her to tell me who killed Sir Gregory."

"Do you think she knows that?"

"I think she has known it all along," retorted Fanks. "You can take it from me, Fellenger, she recognised the negro when he entered the hotel on that night. For some reason, which I mean to discover, she has held her tongue. I intend to force her to reveal the name by threatening to arrest Hersham, in the event of her refusing to speak."

"Will she tell in order to save Hersham?"

"I think so; and for more reasons than one. You
MRS. DOAZOPH TELLS THE TRUTH. 225

see she fainted when I told her that I could prove the crime against that young man. It may be that she knows how hardly he has been dealt with by Madaline Garry, and therefore she may be anxious to save him further trouble.”

“But how could she learn the story of Madaline Garry and the changing of the children,” objected Fellenger.

“From Anne Colmer, who must have learned it from Dr. Binjoy. I believe he is at the bottom of the whole affair. I do not say that he killed Gregory; but he can tell us who did.”

“How can you prove that?”

“Well, the person who killed Gregory must have known that story of the changing of the children, so as to induce him to let the cross be tattooed on his arm. Dr. Binjoy must have told that person; Dr. Binjoy must have supplied that needle; Dr. Binjoy, my friend, is at the bottom of the whole devilish affair.”

“You forget Madaline Garry; she might have told the murderer about the changing of the children.”

“I don’t think so. Madaline would not have been likely to reveal anything detrimental to her son; and on the face of it she could not have obtained access to the poisoned needle. No, I suspect Binjoy as an accessory before the fact. I shall see Mrs. Jerusalem, and force her to tell me where to find Madaline Garry; though to be sure I have a pretty good notion of where to find her as it is.”

“What! Do you know who Madaline Garry is?”

“I think so. A speech of Mrs. Prisom’s put me on her track; but I may be wrong so I shall say nothing as yet.”
"You are clever in guessing things, Mr. Fanks. Perhaps you can tell me who killed Gregory?"

"Well," said Fanks, looking straight at his questioner, "I might even go as far as that. I do not know for certain who is the assassin; but I have a shrewd notion. I shall have my doubts set at rest on that point when I see these women in town. I shall interview Mrs. Boazoph, take down her confession, and make her sign it. I shall act in the same way with Binjoy, with Anne Colmer, with Robert, the valet of the dead man, and with Turnor, the accomplice of your medical friend."

"Do you think they are all in it?"

"I am more than certain they are," said Fanks in a confident tone. "Well, Mr. Fellenger, will you come up with me and see the last act of the comedy?"

"No, I shall stay here with Mr. Crate; and keep an eye on Dr. Binjoy. But you must write me all that befalls you at the Red Star. Do you really think that you will find the truth in that house?"

"I am certain of it. Believe me the tragedy will end as it began—in the Red Star in Tooley's Alley. I hope all will go as I wish," added Fanks with a gloomy air. "I have had no end of trouble with this case. And although I think I see daylight at last, I must not be too confident. The whole proving of my theory lies with Mrs. Boazoph."

Having thus settled his plans, Fanks left Crate at Mere Hall to look after Dr. Binjoy, and repaired to town. Immediately on his arrival, which took place about noon, he sent for Garth, and questioned him concerning Mrs. Jerusalem. Having received satisfactory replies, he entrusted a special commission to the lawyer, and, with a detective, he went himself to
the Red Star. That short conversation with Fanks so astonished Garth, that he went on his errand—which had to do with such conversation—in a state of great surprise and no little nervousness.

At the Red Star Fanks inquired for Mrs. Jerusalem, and was confronted by Dr. Turnor. The ferret looked rather disconcerted as the detective appeared; and tried to dissuade him from seeing Mrs. Boazoph as he wished to do. "She is yet weak," he urged, "and I do not think it will be wise of you to talk with her as yet."

"I don't care how weak she is," said Fanks, grimly. "I intend to talk to her, and to you too."

"What can you have to say to me?" demanded Turnor, with an attempt at bravado.

"I'll tell you that after I have seen Mrs. Boazoph and Mrs. Jerusalem," was the reply. "I know all your doings on the night of the twenty-first, Dr. Turnor; and I am aware of your attempt to blackmail Sir Louis Fellenger."

After which speech Fanks went upstairs to the room occupied by Mrs. Boazoph. At the door he met with Mrs. Jerusalem. She looked at him in an expressionless way, and spoke in her usual cold and unmotional manner. Her first question was of Fanks' visit to Mere Hall.

"Did you find out the truth, sir?" she asked.

"I found out the truth; but not the particular truth you wished for," replied Fanks, who disliked this woman immensely. "Your master is not guilty."

"Then who is guilty if he is not?"

"I'll reveal that in a few moments, Mrs. Jerusalem. I may tell you that I know all about Madeline Garry and the tattooed cross, also about Mr. Louis Fellenger."
The woman drew back, and for the first time since Fanks had known her, an expression of surprise flitted across her face. "He said Mr. Louis," she said to herself. "How much does he know?"

"He knows most of the circumstances which led to the murder in this house," retorted Fanks, moving towards the door, "and now with your assistance he is about to learn the rest."

"At all events the truth will be bad for Louis Fellenger," muttered Mrs. Jerusalem. "If it was to benefit him I would not move a step. As it is," she added, throwing open the door, "come in, Mr. Fanks, and ask Mrs. Boazoph to tell you the story she related to me this morning."

Fanks nodded, and without saying a word entered the apartment. In spite of the warm weather there was a fire burning in the grate, and beside it crouched Mrs. Boazoph. She was seated on the carpet warming her thin hands at the blaze; and she turned her face as the detective entered. He was astonished at the change wrought in her by illness. Her face was lined and drawn with pain; her hair was falling about her ears in rough masses; and the looseness of her dress showed how emaciated she had become. The poor creature was but a shadow of the notorious woman who had defied the police for so long; and at the first glance Fanks saw that death was written on her haggard face. If there was anything to be learned from this wreck there was no time to be lost in hearing it. Nemesis had claimed at least one victim for the death of Sir Gregory Fellenger;—or rather Edward Fielding.

"Have you come here to see me die, Mr. Fanks?" asked Mrs. Boazoph, with a faint smile.
"I hope it is not so bad as that," replied Fanks gently, for he pitied the exhaustion of the poor creature. "You may get better."

Mrs. Boazoph shook her head. "I think not," she said quietly. "The end is coming fast. I do not care; my life has been none so happy that I should wish to live. I am anxious to die."

"Are you anxious to make reparation for your crimes?"

With a start Mrs. Boazoph looked at the other woman, who still stood at the door. "What have you told him?" she asked in a hoarse voice.

"I have told him nothing," replied Mrs. Jerusalem, coldly, "but he knows all."

"That is impossible," muttered Mrs. Boazoph, with a shiver. "He cannot know all. Who is there to tell him?"

"I was told by the dead."

"The dead? What dead?"

"By your dead lover, on whose son you avenged your betrayal, Mrs. Bryant."

She shivered, and looked up angrily. "Not that name, I am not Mrs. Bryant."

"I can give you another name if you like," said Fanks, pointedly. "Shall I say Mrs. Fielding or—Madaline Garry?"

The woman rose to her knees with an effort; and parting the tangled mass of her grey hair she looked at Fanks in a terrified manner. "Madaline Garry is dead," she said, in a low voice. "She died when she married Luke Fielding. Neglect and dishonour killed her."

"Madaline Garry did not die then," said Fanks, determinedly. "She lived to avenge herself on her lover by exchanging his child for that of her own."
"They were both his children," cried Mrs. Boazoph, with sudden fury, "I see you know all; so I can speak as I choose. I loved Francis Fellenger, and he betrayed me. I should have been his wife, but, like the coward he was, he married another woman. I became the wife of Luke Fielding, of the man I hated, in order to conceal the truth from my father. The child I bore was not his. It should have borne the title of the Fellengers."

"And it did bear the title of the Fellengers," said Fanks, in an impressive voice. "It took the place of the real heir, thanks to your schemes. And you, Madeline Garry, deserted the infant of your rival, after you had robbed him of his birthright. Wretched woman; make reparation while you can; give back his name to Edward Hersham, before it is too late, or" added Fanks, drawing nearer, "keep silence to the end; and let him suffer on the gallows for the murder of your son."

"No! No!" shrieked Mrs. Boazoph, clutching at her chair to raise herself, "not that, anything but that. He is innocent. I tell you that he is innocent!"

"If he is innocent, who then is guilty?" asked Fanks.

Mrs. Boazoph reeled, and would have fallen but for the arm of Mrs. Jerusalem, who sprang forward to catch her. A draught of brandy brought back her strength, and she sat in the chair by the fire, rocking herself to and fro, with heart-rending sobs. Fanks approached to speak to her, but she waved him off.

"Do not touch her yet," said Mrs. Jerusalem, in a low tone, "she will recover soon."

Quiet as was the whisper, Mrs. Boazoph heard it, and moaned. "Never, never on this side of the grave,"
she wept. "My race is run; and weary have been my
days. I never had a chance like other women. Once
I was Madaline Garry, the darling of her father, the
prettiest girl in Damington. But Francis Fellenger
made me what I am. I curse him, living or dead, I
curse him." She broke into hysterical laughter. "I
revenged myself well. I put my child and his in the
place of the heir. It was my son who reigned at Mere
Hall; it was my son who spent the moneys of that
evil family, and bore their title. I am glad of it;
I am glad of it. The real heir—her child—had to work
for his bread; but mine reigned in his place; he took the
seat of his father. Of what use was it that Francis
marked his son as he marked me? See," she cried, pull­
ing up the sleeve of her dress. "Do you see this cross
on my skin, you bloodhound of the law? Francis Fel­
lenger marked me like that to show that I was his wife;
yet he married another. Francis marked his legitimate
son like that, yet the son ate the bread of strangers, and
another sat in his seat. I have done my work, I have
had my revenge, I am willing to die."

"Are you willing that the son whom you disinherited
should die at the hands of justice?"

Mrs. Boazoph moaned, and hid her face in her hands.
"Ah, no!" she said, in a plaintive voice. "He has
suffered enough. My son is dead, so let the other take
back his name and estates. My son is dead; he perished
in the house of his mother; the mother who was too
cowardly to avenge him, who was afraid to reveal the
name of the assassin. My son is dead, but not by the
hand of his half-brother did he meet with his death."

"Then who killed him. Tell me," cried Fanks,
eagerly. "You have sinned. Make what reparation
you can for your sins while there is yet time. Look up,
Madaline Garry, and tell me if that man slew your son?"

While Fanks had been speaking, the door had opened softly, and Garth in the company of another man appeared on the threshold. The two stood spell-bound when they heard this speech of the detective; and Mrs. Boazoph turned her face slowly towards them. Suddenly she crushed down her weakness, and arose to her feet with miraculous strength. Stretching out her hand at the man who stood terror-stricken awaiting her words, she cried out in a shrill and triumphant voice:

"Yonder is the man who killed my son; yonder is the man who must suffer in the place of Edward Hersham. You wish to know who came here as a negro and killed my son? There he stands—Herbert Vaud!"

"I thought so," murmured Fanks, and the next instant he had the handcuffs on Vaud's wrists.
CHAPTER XXXIII.

HOW AND WHY THE DEED WAS DONE.

The evidence of Mrs. Boazoph:—

"My name is Madaline Garry. I was born in the village of Damington, where my father lived for years after his retirement from the navy. I have one sister, Jane, now Mrs. Colmer, of Taxton-on-Thames. We lost our mother at an early age, and, being without maternal care, we grew up to be rather more independent than most young women. Jane was always much quieter than I, and she was not considered so beautiful. Yes, I am now an old woman, and I can speak without vanity; I was considered very beautiful, in my youth, and I had many lovers who wished to marry me. Luke Fielding especially was in love with me, but I refused to marry him as, in my turn, I was in love with Sir Francis Fellenger. He had then lately given up the sea on his accession to the title; but still retaining his pleasure in his old profession he was accustomed to visit my father, and the two would talk over naval matters together.

"At first he came solely for these chats, but afterwards he came because he was in love with me. Had I played my cards well, I might have been Lady Fel-
lenger; but in my love and weakness I trusted too much
to his honour, and I learned, too late, that he had none.
He had promised to make me his wife; but he after­
wards told me that the fortunes of his family were at a
low ebb; that if he did not make a rich marriage he
should be forced to sell the Hall. He swore that he
loved no one but me, and said that although he mar­
rried another woman I should always be his real wife.
Again I yielded to his cunning, and held my peace
about his villainy. Nay, more, to hide his wickedness,
I married my old admirer, Luke Fielding, almost at
the same time that Francis brought home Miss Darmer
to take the place which should have been mine. I
should have been Lady Fellenger, and not that puHing
minx. Afterwards, I discovered that he loved
her—loved her, the villain, after all the lies he
had told to me. I swore to be revenged, and I told
him so.

"Then my husband died, and I was left penniless, as
Luke had been trying to increase his fortune by specu­
lation. I became a mother, and the son born of me
had the right to call Sir Francis Fellenger father. In
my destitution I went back to my father, and nursed
my boy, while I watched events at the Hall. There
the punishment of Francis had already begun. His
wife, for whose sake he had forsaken me, died at the
birth of her son. So matters stood. The two children,
both of Francis Fellenger, although but one was
acknowledged, had been born within a few days of
one another. A nurse was wanted at the Hall. I
required money; and I saw an opportunity of working
out my revenge by changing the children. I insisted
that I should come to the Hall as the nurse of the heir.
Francis resisted, until I swore to reveal all his vil­
lainsy. Then he yielded, and I attained my end; I was established at Mere Hall as the nurse of the heir, and my child, Edward Fielding—falsely so called—was in the nursery with me.

"The two children lay side by side in the cradle. I could have changed them then, but I was unable to do so with safety; for, guessing my purpose, Francis had marked his son with the St. Catharine’s Cross, which he had long before pricked on my arm. I could not, therefore, change the children with safety while Francis lived, and I began to think that I should not succeed in my revenge. Then the powers above us intervened. Francis, while driving home one stormy night, was thrown out of his dog-cart and killed. I saw my opportunity, and I took it. Nobody knew of the tattooed cross on the skin of the real heir, save myself and Dr. Binjoy, who had been attending on both children. He was in love with me, and I made him promise to be silent. When I had secured his promise, which I did by saying that I would marry him, I changed the children; in the cradle of the heir I placed my own child, and with the son of my rival I left the village.

"I never intended to marry Binjoy, whom I hated, and when I fled he was forced to hold his tongue, lest he should be accused of complicity in the abduction. I went to London, but my money came to an end; I travelled to the Isle of Wight, where my sister was staying. She had left Ryde, I found out, and had gone to Scotland. I had no money, I was hungry, and perishing with cold, when I was rescued by that good Samaritan, the Vicar of Fairview. He wished to adopt the child, and, as I hated it, as being the son of my rival in the affections
of Francis, I let him take it. Then I went to London, afterwards to Scotland, where I lived with my sister, who married Mr. Colmer. Later on I became the wife of a drunken and wealthy brute called Bryant. Then came misfortune. My sister's husband lost his money, and died of broken heart. She took her little girls, Emma and Anne, and set up in Taxton-on-Thames as a dressmaker.

"I came South with my husband. He lost his money also, but he was set up by his friends in the Red Star public-house in Tooley's Alley. We took the name of Mr. and Mrs. Boazoph, so as to cut off all links with our former lives. My husband drank, and ultimately he died of drink. As Mrs. Boazoph I carried on the business and drifted into evil ways. I assisted thieves and rogues. If you wish to know my history for twenty years ask the police; they will tell it to you. My sister had become paralytic and never knew me as Mrs. Boazoph. To her I was Mrs. Bryant, living on the little money left to me by my good husband. I hope she may die in that belief, so that I may retain at least one person's respect.

"All this time I had watched the fortunes of the two children. The false Sir Gregory had grown up to be a wicked young man, fast and dissolute, the true Sir Gregory, passing under the name of Edward Hersham, had become a journalist, and was reported steady and clever. Dr. Binjoy had left Damington, and was living at Taxton-on-Thames with Louis, the son of Michael Fellenger. Then my niece Emma came to London to enter a dressmaker's establishment. She found out the truth about my life, and
told her sister. I asked them to keep the knowledge from their mother.

"Binjoy also found out where and how I was living. He used to come up to town and stay at Dr. Turnor's or with me as Dr. Renshaw, hoping by a feigned name to hide the iniquitous life he led while in town. He wanted to oust my son and get Sir Louis to hold the Fellenger estates. I refused to let him do this, and threatened to produce the real heir should he attempt to do so. Young Vaud used to come to my hotel. He saw Emma and fell in love with her. I was glad of this, as I knew that the young fellow was good and true, much better than my wretched son, for whom I had sinned. Vaud became engaged to Emma. He went to Taxton-on-Thames and saw my sister; she gave her consent to the match. All was going well, when Emma, who had become acquainted with my son, the false Sir Gregory, went off with him to Paris. He married her and neglected her. She destroyed herself, as was confessed to me by the valet Robert, a dog of a creature.

"I was distracted when I learned all this. I went to my sister and I told her that the false Sir Gregory was my son. I returned to town to find that young Vaud was seriously ill. Afterwards he was sent on a sea voyage, and he went over to Paris when he got back to rescue Emma from my miserable son. She was dead, and he returned to see if he could take vengeance on her murderer. He told me that he would kill Sir Gregory, but I thought that it was an idle threat. Afterwards I saw nothing more of him for some time. My sister asked for the address of Sir Gregory, as she wanted a photograph
of Emma which had been taken at Taxton-on-Thames.

"When I went to Gregory's rooms in Half-Moon Street to tell him the truth, I saw the photograph. I wrote on it the date of the birth and death of his victim. I told him about the tattooed cross, and how I could prove that he was not the real Sir Gregory, because he had not that mark on his arm. He did not believe me, and turned me out of his rooms, me—his mother. At that moment I hated him for his likeness to his father who had wronged me. But I could not harm him. I went to Taxton-on-Thames; I said nothing. I wrote on an envelope the address of Sir Gregory, and gave it to my sister, so that she could write to him for the photograph, on the back of which I had written. All this took place before the murder.

"Then Gregory came to my hotel on the evening of the twenty-first of June. I did not see him, but I saw Vaud, who entered afterwards, disguised as a black man. I recognised him at once, and asked him why he was dressed up like the servant of Binjoy. He said it was to play a trick on the doctor, who was in the inner room waiting to see him. I believed him, although I thought his behaviour strange. But I knew that he had not been quite right in his head since his illness, so that I thought his dressing-up was a freak, and let him pass into the inner room, where I presumed he was about to see Binjoy. I went back to my own room, and never dreamt that the supposed doctor was my son in disguise. Had I known I would not have left the half-crazed Vaud go into him, knowing how he hated my son as the destroyer of Emma."
"I know nothing more. I saw Binjoy later on. I asked him if he had seen Vaud; he said no, that he had just come to the hotel. I went into the inner room and found my son dead. I did not know how he died till Binjoy told me about the blood-poisoning. Then I sent for the police, and Mr. Fanks arrived. I saw the grains of gunpowder. I thought they were the evidence of some drug which had destroyed my son. I got rid of them by pulling off the table-cloth. I did not tell the truth or speak out, because I was afraid of being inculpated in the crime. My character was so bad that I knew the police would have no mercy if they thought I was mixed up in the murder. I did not want to disgrace my sister, or let her know my real life, my feigned name. I afterwards went down to Mere Hall and saw Binjoy. I said I would put the rightful heir in his own place, and oust Louis. Binjoy said if I did he would tell my story, and that with his evidence I would be accused of the murder. I therefore held my tongue; I could not bring back my son to life. He had treated me badly, and I did not want to get Vaud into trouble, as I knew that he was mad with grief and rage, and was not responsible for his actions. On the whole I thought it best to hold my tongue, and for the above reasons I did so.

"I have now spoken because Edward Hersham, the rightful heir, is accused of the crime. He has suffered enough injustice, and I do not wish to see him hanged. Binjoy can tell his own story of how he came to the hotel on that night and met with Mr. Fanks. Vaud can confess if he will as to how he plotted and carried out the crime. For myself, I have said all I have to say. What is set down here
is the truth. I am deeply sorry for my evil ways, but I am paying for my follies with my life; all I ask for is forgiveness and forgetfulness. I have sinned, I am punished. All good Christians pray for the soul of a wicked but deeply wronged woman.

(Signed), Madaline Bryant (better known as Louisa Boazoph)."
CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE SAME.

The evidence of Theophilus Binjoy:—

"I am a medical man; and in my early manhood, I practised in the village of Damington. I was present at the birth of Edward Fielding, and of Gregory Fellenger. I know about the mark on the arm of the real heir. Madaline changed the two children, and I said nothing as she promised to marry me. I was madly in love with her. She left the village, and deceived me. Afterwards I held my tongue lest I should get into trouble; also I hoped when the false Sir Gregory grew up, to have a hold on him. I was prevented from doing this by Madaline (whom I had discovered in Tooleys Alley, under the name of Mrs. Boazoph). She threatened to reveal the name of the true heir if I meddled with her son. I therefore did nothing. I saw the poisoned needle which Louis had made ready for an experiment. It was in a cabinet in the laboratory. Young Vaud came to Taxton-on-Thames nearly crazed with the death of Emma Colmer, whom he had courted as Emma Calvert. She had been driven to her death by her husband, the false Sir Gregory, and had killed herself in Paris. Vaud asked me about poisons. He said nothing to me about killing Sir Gregory, or I
should have dissuaded him from doing so wicked and rash an action.

"I swear I did not wish the death of the young man. What I said to him in the laboratory, was purely without ulterior motives.

"I admit I showed him the poisoned needle. I was interested in the experiment, and, being full of it, I spoke of our intention of trying the poison on the dog. When Vaud left the laboratory, I did not miss the needle; I did not miss it until Louis spoke to me about it. As Turnor had lately been in the laboratory, and we had been speaking about the experiment, I thought he had taken the needle. It never struck me that Vaud had benefited by my explanation, and had stolen the needle to kill Gregory. With Louis I went up to town on the twenty-first of June, to see Turnor, and ask him for the needle; I had no motive in taking Louis to Turnor's. If Turnor attempted to blackmail Louis, I knew nothing about it. I repel with scorn the insinuation that I purposely inveigled Louis to Great Auk Street to entangle him in the crime, and so blackmail him. I never heard of the murder until I went to the Red Star, according to my usual custom of an evening. Madaline asked me if I had seen Vaud, who was disguised as a negro. I said I had not.

"We went into the room; and found the body of Sir Gregory; he was disguised as a working-man; Vaud had disappeared. I ordered the body to be taken upstairs, and made an examination. I then saw that Gregory had been killed by being inoculated with the poison which Louis and I had discovered. I recognised the cross of St. Catherine, half tattooed on the arm; and I guessed from that how Vaud had induced Gregory to let himself be pricked with the poisoned
needle. I showed the mark to Fanks when he came upstairs. But before doing so, I obliterated it with a cut of the knife. I did this because I thought I might be inculpated with the crime. I remember advising Hersham (who I did not know was the real heir) to disguise himself as a negro so as to gain realistic descriptions of street music. I did not do so with any wrongful intention of connecting him with the murder. Madaline had told me how Vaud was dressed as my negro servant; I saw that the death had been brought about by the poisoned needle stolen from our laboratory by Vaud; and with these two things in my head I recognised my danger at once. I gave my feigned name to Fanks; I suggested that the crime was the work of a secret society. Then I went back to Turnor, and I was aware that I was being watched and could not return to Taxton-on-Thames without being discovered.

"I consulted Turnor; he advised the voyage to Bombay, and said I ought to send Caesar in my place, in order to get rid of him, since the murderer of Gregory had been disguised in his livery; and also that Caesar could send letters (already written by me) from India, in order to keep up the deception, and baffle the police. I adopted the idea, and, assisted by Dr. Turnor, I carried it out with great success. I had an interview with Fanks in the character of Dr. Renshaw, and I told him that I was going to Bombay. I then took a passage to India in the P. and O. steamer 'Oceana'; and wired to Caesar to meet me at Plymouth.

"Thither I went and gave the letters (purporting to be written by myself from Bombay) to Caesar and sent him off in my place. Afterwards, I took off my disguise, and went back to Mere Hall. I had no idea that I had been followed by Mr. Fanks, and thinking that I
had destroyed all links with the crime in Tooley's Alley, likely to endanger Louis and myself, I advised him to offer a reward so as to still further avert suspicion.

"This he did, and I thought all was well, till Madaline came from Mere Hall to warn me against Fanks, and to threaten to put the real Gregory in the place of Louis. I stopped her doing this, and defied Fanks. How he over-reached me; how I was betrayed by Louis, has been told by others. I can swear with a clear conscience that I acted throughout in the interests of Louis, who has treated me with the basest ingratitude. I have no more to say, save to express my pleasure that Mr. Hersham has recovered his real name in the world. I hope he will remember that it was indirectly through me that he was re-instated in his estates; by my confirming the statements of Madaline, and that of the late Sir Francis, his father. I think that he should reward me. In this hope I take my leave.

(Signed), Theophilus Binjoy."

The evidence of Anne Colmer:—

"I am the daughter of Mrs. Colmer, of Taxton-on-Thames, the sister of Emma Colmer, who died in Paris under the name of Emma Calvert, and the niece of Madaline Garry, better known as Mrs. Boazoph. I saw the letter—or rather the envelope—which she directed for my mother, to get back the photograph of my sister from Sir Gregory. It was taken out of our house by Herbert Vaud, and I believe he sent it to Sir Gregory with the cardboard star, making the appointment in Tooley's Alley. I had no idea that Vaud contemplated revenging the death of my sister on Gregory. I knew that he hated him, and that he would do him
harm if he could, but I did not know that he would go so far as murder.

"I wired to Ted Hersham on the twenty-first, as my mother told me that she suspected that Vaud had taken the envelope, and that he contemplated harm to Sir Gregory. I wanted Ted to get back the envelope. Afterwards, I thought that I would see my aunt in Tooley's Alley, as I knew she had great influence with Vaud. I sent the telegram, and immediately, without returning to the house, I went up to town. I was detained by the train breaking down, and I did not arrive in town till nearly seven o'clock. I went to the Red Star, where I saw Mr. Fanks; and then heard of the crime. I fancied that Vaud might have committed it, but I was not sure. I was afraid lest my mother should be implicated in it; as she informed me that she had told Vaud about the substitution of the false Sir Gregory, and about the tattooed cross. This story had been related to her by Mrs. Boazoph, when we learned that Sir Gregory had caused the death of his wife, my sister.

"I determined to recover the envelope, in case my aunt should get into trouble, and to obtain the photograph, lest the police should trace the connection of the so-called Emma Calvert with myself and my mother. I went up to the chambers in Half-Moon Street. There I saw Mr. Fanks, and I recognised him as a detective. I had seen him and heard his name when I had been at the Red Star, shortly after the committal of the crime. I was afraid we would all get into trouble, therefore, I took advantage of Robert's faint to leave the room. I got into a cab, and told the man that I was being followed by a gentleman. He assisted me to escape by dropping me in
Piccadilly, and afterwards—as I learned—he misled Mr. Fanks, who followed me.

"I know nothing about the poisoned needle, or how the crime was accomplished. I heard afterwards about the tattooed cross from my mother. It was with no intention of getting Ted into trouble that I told him to assume the dress of Caesar. When the detective suspected it, I advised him to make a clean breast of it, which he afterwards did. I did not tell Mr. Fanks what I knew, as I was afraid of getting my mother and aunt into difficulties. All this is true, I swear, and I know no more about the matter.

(Signed), Anne Colmer."

The evidence of Mrs. Colmer:

"I told Vaud about the substitution of Gregory for Edward Hersham. My sister, Mrs. Bryant, had confessed it to me. I was mad with rage and grief at the way in which my girl had been treated by Gregory, and I thought Vaud might see about getting him turned out of the place he wrongfully occupied, and so punish his wickedness. I had no idea that Vaud intended to kill Sir Gregory. Bad as he was, I did not wish to go that far. I only wanted him to be deprived of his estates and title, so that he should suffer. I gave the envelope, which had been written by my sister, Mrs. Bryant, with the address in Half-Moon Street, so that Vaud should call on Sir Gregory, and tell him the truth, and should get back the photograph of my poor girl.

"I knew nothing of the murder, which took place in a low hotel in Tooley's Alley, and which was kept by a notorious woman called Mrs. Boazoph. I also told Vaud that Ted Hersham was writing articles on street music, and that, to study the subject, he was going
about London in the guise of a negro. I only told him this in the course of conversation, and without any motive. This is all I know about the affair.

(Signed), Jane Colmer."

The evidence of Dr. Turnor: —

"I did not take the poisoned needle. I knew nothing of such an instrument. Louis and Binjoy came up to me on the twenty-first to ask me about it. I denied having it, but Louis did not believe me. When I was called in by Mrs. Boazoph he would not let me go out of the room. Binjoy went under the name of Renshaw. He used that name and a disguise in order to enjoy himself in London. After he left, Louis, finding, that I had not the needle, returned to Taxton-on-Thames. Binjoy came back; he told me that Gregory Fellenger was dead, and that he was being watched. I saw his danger, and advised him to keep up his fictitious character so as to deceive the police. I suggested the voyage to India; I helped to carry out the plan.

"He got away to Mere Hall safely, as we thought. When Fanks asked me questions, I did my best to baffle him for the sake of Binjoy. I had no other motive. I was ignorant of the tattooed cross, of the changing of the children. I saw Sir Louis when he succeeded to the estates by the death of his cousin. I did not blackmail him. The sum of money he gave me was a reward for my helping Binjoy to escape. I know nothing of the murder save what I read in the newspaper. I consider that I have been ungratefully treated by Mr. Louis Fellenger, and most insolently by the man who calls himself Fanks. I have nothing more to add.

(Signed), Walter Turnor."
The confession of Herbert Vaud:—

"I killed Gregory Fellenger. I am glad that I killed him. When I found out in Paris how he had deceived and slain the woman I loved, I determined to make him pay for his wickedness. 'An eye for an eye,' that is Scripture. I wished to kill Gregory without harm to myself; and an opportunity soon occurred. I was at Mrs. Colmer's, at Taxton-on-Thames, commiserating with her on the death of her daughter and my affianced wife. I did not tell her I wished to kill the scoundrel; I told nobody. She related to me the history of the changing of the children, which had been told to her by her sister, Mrs. Bryant, whom I knew as Mrs. Boazoph. She wanted to avenge the death of her daughter on Gregory by depriving him of his title and estates. Also, she gave me the address of Gregory, written on an envelope by Mrs. Boazoph, and asked me to call upon him for the double purpose of telling him what he really was, and also, to get the photograph which had been seen and written upon by Mrs. Boazoph, in Gregory's chambers.

"I took the envelope, but at that time I did not design the murder. I wanted to kill Gregory, but I could not see how to do it with safety to myself. I afterwards went to Mrs. Boazoph, and learned from her that she had told her son about the tattooing, and the falseness of his position. She implored me not to see him about his relationship to her. I agreed; for I wished to kill him, and make him suffer. The taking away of his property was not good enough in my eyes to punish him for his wickedness.

"Afterwards I went to Taxton-on-Thames to see Binjoy. I knew that he was a chemist, and I desired to ask him about a poison to kill Gregory. He told me
about the poisoned needle, and showed it to me. Whether he did so in order to put the idea into my head I do not know. I did not tell him that I intended to kill Gregory; so far he is guiltless; but he certainly showed me the way—innocently, perhaps—to kill Gregory. When I came back from Taxton-on-Thames I had the poisoned needle in my possession, and saw how to carry out my plan. I remembered the tattooed cross on the arm of the rightful heir, and I resolved to make use of that to induce Gregory to let me tattoo his arm with the poisoned needle.

"I placed the advertisement in a paper, which I knew he took in. I saw his answer, and I then sent him the cardboard star appointing the meeting-place in Tooley's Alley. I imitated the writing on the envelope when designing a star, so that, if necessary, the blame might rest on Mrs. Boazoph, his mother. For the same reason I chose the Red Star as the meeting-place. To make things doubly sure, I made use of Hersham's masquerade as a negro; and I adopted his disguise to implicate him. Moreover, I thought that, failing Hersham, I might be able to throw the blame on Binjoy and his negro servant. In every way I thought that I was safe.

"I went to the Red Star on the twenty-first; I met Mrs. Boazoph, and made an excuse to her for my disguise (which she penetrated) that I was about to play a trick on Binjoy. She thought that I was mad, and I let her remain in that delusion. But I here state that I am quite sane; that I killed Gregory with the greatest deliberation, and that I do not regret what I have done. I went into the room; I met Gregory. He took me for the negro of Dr. Binjoy, whom he had never seen. The lights were low, and I said little;
also I disguised my voice. Gregory was a remarkably stupid creature, else I should never have succeeded in my plan; also he was rather drunk. I counted on his density in coming into his presence. At all events he did not know me; and when I told him that the rightful heir must have the cross pricked on his arm—a fact which I said I had heard from Binjoy—he let me tattoo it in his arm. I did so with the poisoned needle, and in a short space of time he became insensible; afterwards he died. Then I pulled down his sleeve and left the hotel. The gunpowder scattered on the table was used by me as a device to make Gregory think that I was really tattooing him.

"Afterwards I left a parcel containing the poisoned needle at his chambers, to rid myself of all evidence of the crime. Well, I killed him and went away. No one else is guilty of the crime but me. I conceived it without assistance. I alone committed the crime in Tooley's Alley and killed Gregory Fellenger, or, rather, Edward Fielding, the son of Madaline Garry and Sir Francis. I am not sorry. I glory in having punished a villain. I am sorry that I was found out, but I was not surprised when Mrs. Boazoph betrayed me. I wondered that she did not do so long ago. When this is read I shall be dead.

(Signed), Herbert Vaud."
CHAPTER XXXV.
THE OPINION OF OCTAVIUS FANKS.

A few months after the confession of Vaud and the end of the Tooley Alley case, Fanks was seated with Louis Fellenger in the house of the latter at Taxton-on-Thames. Louis had surrendered the estates to Hersham, who was now known by his rightful title of Sir Gregory Fellenger. Mrs. Boazoph was dead; Anne Colmer contemplated marriage with the new Sir Gregory; and Mr. Fanks was having a chat with Fellenger about the extraordinary matters in which they both had been concerned.

"When did you get back to town, Fanks?" asked Louis, when they were comfortably seated.

"Last week, old fellow. I have been enjoying myself in Italy, and I assure you that I needed it after the wear and tear of the Tooley Alley affair. I came down to have a chat with you about it."

"I am glad you have. There are one or two points about those confessions which I do not understand. That case was a hard nut to crack, Fanks."

Fanks looked up from the pipe he was filling. "Hard?" he echoed; "you may well say that, Fellenger. I have had many hard cases in my time, but the Tooley Alley mystery was the hardest of them all."
The affair of Monsieur Judas was difficult; so was the Chinese Jar Puzzle. The Carbuncle Clue gave me some trouble; but all these were child's play compared to the mystery of your cousin's death. I thought I should never get a hold of the rope with which I designed to hang Vaud."

"You didn't hang him, however."

"No; he managed to hang himself before his trial. I was not sorry, poor devil."

"Nor was I," said Louis; "and I think that Vaud was mad when he killed Gregory, mad with despair and grief at the end of Emma Calvert. The old man has gone abroad, I hear."

"Yes; I met him in Italy. He is quite broken down, as he was very proud of his son Herbert. But he told me that he always thought Herbert would do something rash, although he never suspected that he killed Gregory. How could he when the young man conducted himself so circumspectly? I don't think Herbert was insane," said Fanks, decisively; "he acted too cleverly and cunningly for that. He killed Gregory in cold blood with the greatest determination. Besides, look at the measures he took to secure his safety. No, no, my friend; Vaud was not mad."

"Crate told me that you suspected him for some time before you found out the truth."

"Yes, I did. I suspected him without any evidence to go on. But he protested so much, and behaved so queerly, that I thought he was the man I wanted. All the same, as I had no evidence to go on, I held my tongue until I was certain. When I left Binjoy ill at Mere Hall I could think of no one so likely to have committed the crime as Vaud; so, on the chance that Mrs. Boazoph would tell the truth, I sent
Garth for him. When he came into the room at the Red Star Mrs. Boazoph spotted him at once. I knew that the woman was aware of the real murderer. I saw that on the night the crime was committed. Her action with the gunpowder gave me that tip."

"And Mrs. Boazoph, alias Mrs. Bryant, alias Mrs. Fielding, alias Madaline Garry, is dead also. I was sorry for that woman, Fanks."

"So was I," said the detective, promptly. "She had a hard time of it. I don't think that she was naturally bad, and in happier circumstances she might have been a decent member of society. But look at the training and misfortunes she had. Sir Francis, a fool of a first husband, a brute of a second, and all the temptations at Tooley's Alley to contend against. I wonder she was as decent as she was. I am a deal sorrier for her than for your friend Binjoy, who got off scot-free."

"Don't call him my friend," said Louis, with a shudder. "I hate the very name of the man. It was only out of respect for my father that I bore with him for so long. I was glad when he went away. Did you ever see so insolent a confession as he made?"

"Oh, I was prepared for anything from a scoundrel like Binjoy. He gave me a rub for myself; and so did his friend, Turnor. 'Arcades Ambo.' Blackguards both," quoted Fanks, smiling. "But Hersham did not remember him as he expected him to."

"No, the present Sir Gregory, whom you will call Hersham, sent Binjoy away pretty sharply, I can tell you. Binjoy and Turnor actually had the cheek to call on him at Mere Hall, and ask him for money in order to leave England; on the plea that their substantiation of Mrs. Boazoph's evidence had gained him the estate,"
I think it was your decency in letting Hersham have the estates without going into Court that made things so smooth, Fellenger. Do you regret the loss?

"No, I assure you I do not. I was satisfied that Hersham was truly the heir; the evidence of that paper we found, and of Mrs. Boazoph, was quite enough. I was glad to come back here, and go on with my experiments in peace. I accepted a thousand a year from Hersham, which he insisted on giving me; so you see I am fairly well off."

"And you are good friends with Hersham—I beg his pardon—Sir Gregory Fellenger, of Mere Hall, in the county of Hants?"

"I am excellent friends with him and with his future wife, Anne Colmer. You know, of course, that they are going to be married in a month or so, that is, if Mrs. Colmer does not die in the meantime?"

"From what I hear from Garth, it is likely that she will die," said Fanks. "I expect the poor woman will be glad to go now that she sees her daughter will make a good marriage."

"Garth came to see me the other day," said Louis, "and he told me that at one time he thought I had committed the crime."

"I thought so, too," said Fanks, quietly. "Mrs. Jerusalem did her best to make me suspect you."

"I am glad you found that I was guiltless. By the way, where is Mrs. Jerusalem?"

"She is keeping house for Garth. I hear that Hersham gave Garth some money, knowing how hard-up he was, so he has set up a house on the strength of it. I don't envy Garth his housekeeper."

"Oh, she loves him in her own savage way," said Louis, coolly. "I daresay when he marries he will
give her the go-by. I am sure she deserves it for the
double way in which she treated me. Then she will
go to the Union, or become an emigrant to America,
like Messrs. Binjoy and Turnor."
"Why America?"
"She has a sister there. I wonder what those two
scoundrelly doctors are doing in the States?"
"Evil, you may be sure of that," replied Fanks.
"Let us hope that they will be lynched some day. I
am sure that they deserve it."
"They do," assented Fellenger. "I am sorry they
did not get into trouble."
Fanks laughed. "That was certainly your own
fault, my dear fellow," he said.
"Well, I was unwilling to prosecute for that black-
mailing, because I did not want the public to know
more of our family scandal than was necessary. I was
sorry to let the blackguards go, but, after all, it is best
so. Don't you think so yourself?"
"No, I don't," said Fanks. "You are too full of
the milk of human kindness, my dear Fellenger. I
should have punished the rascals."
"I am sure you would not if your family had been
involved in such a business. I am glad you kept so
much from the public ear; there are quite enough
scandals as it is. Well, we have discussed the case a
good time, so suppose you come inside and have some
luncheon."
"I'm agreeable," was Fanks' reply, and he got up to
follow his friend. "By the way, can I take any
message from you to Hersham and Miss Colmer? I
am going down to Mere Hall next week."
"Tell them I hope they will ask me to dance at the
wedding."
“Of course they will. I shall dance also,” added Fanks, with a smile. “I deserve to, for I danced enough after the evidence of this Tooley Alley case. May I never have such another; it was more like a detective novel than a story in real life. But it is over now, thank Heaven. We have acted our several parts; the bad have been punished and the good rewarded, so we can drop the curtain on the Tragedy of Tooley’s Alley.”

THE END.
FREDERICK WARNE AND CO.'S PUBLICATIONS.

Price 2s. 6d. each.

THE LIBRARY OF FICTION.

A Series of Copyright Works by well-known Authors.

In crown 8vo, cloth gilt.

The Queen of Bedlam. By Captain Charles King.
The Gargrave Mystery. By Hugh Coleman Davidson.
The Fatal Request. By A. L. Harris.
Charlie Kingston's Aunt. By Sir Henry Thompson, F.R.C.S.
At Bay. By Mrs. Alexander.
Struck Down. By Hawley Smart.
Marie May. By Mrs. W. K. Clifford.
Sir Jeffrey's Wife. By A. W. Marchmont, B.A.

Price 2s. each,

In crown 8vo, picture boards.

Through One Administration. By Frances Hodgson Burnett.
Sylvester Sound, the Somnambulist. By Henry Cockton.
Guenn. By B. W. Howard.
Aulnay Tower. By B. W. Howard.
The Queen of Bedlam. By Captain Charles King.
Philip Mordant's Ward. By Marianne Kent.
The Knight's Ransom. A Tale of the Crusades. By Mrs. L. Valentine.
The Captain-General. By W. J. Gordon.
That Lass o' Lowrie's. By Frances Hodgson Burnett.
Valentine Vox, the Ventriloquist. By Henry Cockton.
Handy Andy. By Samuel Lover.
Rory O'More. Samuel Lover.
The Fatal Request. By A. L. Harris.

He Would Be a Gentleman. By Samuel Lover.
Jack Hinton, the Guardsman. By Charles Lever.
In the Sunlight: A Tale of Mendip. By Angelica Selby.
Harry Lorrequer. By Charles Lever.
The Collegians; or, The Colleen Bawn. By Gerald Griffin.
Jan Vedder's Wife. By Amelia F. Barr.
A Plunge into Space. By Robert Cromie.
Charley Kingston's Aunt. By Sir Henry Thompson, F.R.C.S.
At Bay. By Mrs. Alexander.
Marie May, By Mrs. W. K. Clifford.
On the Edge of the Storm. By Author of "Mademoiselle Mori."
Sir Jeffrey's Wife. By A. W. Marchmont, B.A.
Price 1s. each.

THE LONDON LIBRARY.

A Popular Series of Original Copyright Novels and Stories by Well-Known Authors.

In small crown 8vo, sewed, artistic picture covers.

A Fair Barbarian. By F. Hodgson Burnett.
A Woman's Will. By F. H. Burnett.
Natalie. By Frances Hodgson Burnett.
Theo. Ditto.
A Wilful Young Woman. By A. Price.
The Fortunes of Philippa Fairfax. By F. H. Burnett.
That Lass O' Lowrie's. By F. H. Burnett.
Paul Jones. By Alexandre Dumas.
DunRaven Ranch. By Captain Charles King.
Tide on the Moaning Bar. By F. H. Burnett.
Kathleen: A Love Story. Ditto.
Dolly: A Love Story. Ditto.
Lindsay's Luck. Ditto.
Pretty Polly Pemberton. Ditto.
Miss Crespigny. Ditto.
Emeralda. Ditto.
Surly Tim. By Mrs. F. H. Burnett.
Forty Thousand Pounds. By L. Walker.
Ruy Blas. By Victor Hugo.
By the World Forgot. By E. J. Clayden.
The Police Minister. By J. S. Borlase.
Frances Kane's Fortune. By L. T. Meade.
For True Love's Sake. By J. S. Borlase.
Lord Lynn's Wife. By the Author of "Lady Flavia."
Harvest. By John Strange Winter.
Dinna Forget. Ditto.
For the Defence. By E. L. Farjeon.
The Pretty Sister of José. By F. H. Burnett.
A Dead Man's Story. By Henry Herman.
The Postman's Daughter. Ditto.
A Pastor's Vengeance. By Walter Wood.
Cecile. By A. Rudolph.

Note.—Mrs. Burnett's and John Strange Winter's Stories included in this Series can also be had bound in cloth gilt, price 1s. 6d. each. See page 27.

The Shadows of Life: A Series of True Detective Stories. By Charles Meyer, Author of "Detectives as They Are," 256 pp., crown 8vo, picture cover.

"Told with spirit and cleverness. All are readable and fascinating."—Morning Leader.
FREDERICK WARNE AND CO.'S PUBLICATIONS.

Price 1s. each.

THE POPULAR LIBRARY.

A MISCELLANEOUS SERIES OF WELL-KNOWN AND SUCCESSFUL AUTHORS

In crown 8vo, sewed picture cover.

1 JOHN WARD, PREACHER. By MARGARET DELAND.
2 ENGLAND AS SHE SEEMS. By E. LESTER ARNOLD.
3 FROM LOG CABIN TO WHITE HOUSE. By W. M. THAYER.
4 BEN-HUR. By Gen. Lew WALLACE.
5 THE RABBI'S SPELL. By STUART CUMBERLAND.
6 THE RUSSIANS AT THE GATE OF HERAT.
7 HOW MEN PROPOSE. Ed. by A. STEVENS. And 2s. cloth.
8 SOUTHEY'S LIFE OF NELSON. Illustrated.
9 CESAR'S COLUMN. By I. M. DONELLY.
10 MRS. CAUDLE'S LECTURES. By DOUGLAS JERROLD.
11 DUNWELL PARVA. By REGINALD LUCAS.

† Also bound in cloth, price 1s. 6d. each.

LIBRARY OF CONTINENTAL AUTHORS.

A SERIES OF COPYRIGHT WORKS OF SOME OF THE BEST-KNOWN CONTINENTAL AUTHORS.

In crown 8vo, sewed, enamelled covers, artistic vignette style.

ALIETTE (LA MORTE). By OCTAVE FEUILLET.
EDMÉE (LES DAMES DE CROIX MORT.) By GEORGES OHNET.
IRÉNE. By the Princess OLGA CANTACUZÈNE-ALTIERI.
HÉLÈNE (MADAME VILLEFERN JEUNE). By LÉON DE TINSEAU.
HARLETTE. By the Countess * * *.
ZYTE. By HECTOR MALOT.
CÔUSIN PONS. By BALZAC.
THE IRONMASTER. By GEORGES OHNET.
A VILLAGE PRIEST. By HENRI CAUVAIN. Translated from the French by ALBERT D. VANDAM, Author of "An Englishman in Paris."
IN LOVE WITH THE CZARINA, and other Tales. By MAURICE JOKAI, Poet Laureate of Hungary. Translated from the Hungarian by LOUIS FEILBERMANN. With a Portrait and Biography.

"Jokai's stories prove an irresistible fascination to old and young."—Chronicle.

In demy 8vo, sewed, picture covers.

TEN THOUSAND A YEAR. (Complete Vol.) By SAMUEL WARREN.
DIARY OF A LATE PHYSICIAN. (Complete Vol.) Ditto.
Price 1s. each.

THE STANDARD NOVELS.

In medium 8vo, sewed, artistic picture covers.

An Entirely New Series of Finely Printed Popular Editions of Celebrated Works by Well-Known Authors.

Vanity Fair. By W. M. Thackeray.
David Copperfield. By Charles Dickens.
Pendennis. By W. M. Thackeray.
My Novel. By Lord Lytton.

Price 6d. each.

Shirley. By Charlotte Brontë.
Jane Eyre. Ditto.
The Caxtons. By Sir E. Bulwer Lytton.
Ditto. Part II. Ditto.
Westward Ho! By Charles Kingsley.
Hereward the Wake. Ditto.
Two Years Ago. Ditto.
Hypatia. Ditto.
Alton Locke. Ditto.
Yeast. Ditto.
David Copperfield. Part I. By Dickens.
David Copperfield. Part II. Ditto.
Old Lieutenant and His Son. By Norman Macleod.
Ditto. Part II. Ditto.
Esmond. Ditto.
Villette. By Charlotte Brontë.
My Novel. Part I. By Lord Lytton.
Ditto. Part II. Ditto.

WARNE'S POPULAR BOOKS.

A Series of Popular and Successful Volumes of the Day.

Small crown 8vo, paper cover.

Looking Backward, 2,000—1887. By Edward Bellamy.
Dr. Heidenhoff's Process. By Edward Bellamy.
Miss Ludington's Sister. By Edward Bellamy.
Caesar's Column. By I. M. Donnelly. This book is an answer to Mr. Bellamy's "Looking Backward," showing a darker though equally probable side of the question.
John Ward, Preacher. By Margaret Deland.