

"AIN'T IT FINE TODAY?"

Sure, this world is full of trouble— I ain't said it ain't. Lord! I've had enough, an' double Reason for complaint. Rain an' storm have come to fret me, Skies were often gray; Thorns an' brambles have beset me On the road, but say, "Ain't it fine today?"

THE SAD END OF OF MR. WM. STARR

There were times when Benskin almost hated his profession, when he felt himself filled with an intense loathing of the sickening details of various crimes which he was called upon to investigate. The room in the Euston Road Temperance Hotel to which he had been summoned hastily, its barren disorder, the pitiful unclean meagerness of the whole setting, perhaps rendered more terrible still by the sight of the lifeless body crumpled up across the iron bedstead, at first glance filled him with nothing but disgust. Police Constable Collier, summoned from his beat to take charge of the room until one of his superiors should arrive, looked at the matter, however, differently. It was a gala morning for him, whose taste for sensation usually had to be appeased by the arrest of a pickpocket, or the stopping of a drunken brawl. "Copped it fair, he did, sir," he remarked as he pointed to the small blue hole in the man's forehead. "Was he dead when they fetched you?" Benskin asked. "Dead as mutton, sir."

ed nose, thinning gray hair and a tired stoop of the shoulders. He deposited his little black bag on the edge of the bed, greeted the proprietress and looked inquiringly towards Benskin. "Inspector Benskin of Scotland Yard," the latter announced. "I was fetched here by telephone call from the Constable on point duty here. You can see the cause." He indicated the figure upon the bed. The doctor put on a pair of horn-rimmed spectacles and made a brief but singularly cold-blooded examination. "Bullet shot through the head," he remarked. "Close quarters, I should say. Case of suicide, I suppose. Wait a moment." He unfastened the man's waistcoat. A little expression of surprise escaped him. "What is it?" Benskin asked, drawing nearer. The doctor pointed downwards. "The clothes of a poor man outside," he observed—"but pale blue silk underclothes. Seems quaint!" The detective leaned a little farther over the bed. The doctor was right. The man's undershirt was of thick spun silk. He felt the back of the neck. Inside was the name of a famous Bond Street hosier. "Someone in hiding, I imagine," the doctor propounded indifferently. "That's your job, not mine, anyway. Cause of death, that bullet wound, without a doubt." "How long should you say he had been dead?" The doctor occupied himself with the body for a few minutes. "About six hours," he decided. He took up the revolver, shook out the weapon to his own forehead. "Very simple," he observed. "I'll just do what's necessary, and then I suppose it will be the mortuary."

He bent over the bed once more, and Benskin continued his search of the room. The gold watch had the maker's name in it, and there were the torn fragments of several letters which he carefully placed in the breast pocket of his coat. The markings had been removed from the few other articles of clothing. There was nothing in the shape of cards or papers by which immediate identification was possible. The doctor stood up and wrote a few lines in his memorandum book. "Any fresh discoveries?" Benskin inquired. "Nothing to discover," was the wary reply. "I'll give you the certificate when necessary. I suppose my fee—"

"I'll stand you the best dinner I've ever ordered in my life." So, at the end of that dreary formal function which took place on the day arranged, a thunderbolt flashed into the court. The doctor's evidence followed by Miss Hammond's, seemed so conclusively to point to suicide that people took scant interest in the case. The general public deserted almost in a body before the coroner addressed himself to the jury. Then, quite unexpectedly, Benskin got up in his place and on behalf of the police made formal application for an adjournment. The coroner looked at him in amazement. "An adjournment?" he exclaimed. "But for what reason?" "The police have had very little time to make inquiries," Benskin pointed out. "They admit that the evidence as to suicide is, on the face of it, conclusive. On the other hand, they feel that in view of the fact that a large portion of the deceased's assets apparently have disappeared, they should like an opportunity of making a few inquiries before the matter is absolutely closed. A man who deals in large sums of money without keeping proper books in which their disposal could be traced, is, as you must admit, one of the most possible victims for a cleverly constructed crime."

The witnesses, Funnell, the doctor and Miss Hammond, were all seated in the well of the court, together with a lawyer who was understood to be representing them. The latter rose. "It has occurred very seldom in my lifetime, Mr. Coroner," he said, "that I have found myself in the position of protesting against such an application as has just been made, especially when it has been made under the auspices of Scotland Yard, but I cannot for the life of me see the use or the advantage to anybody of the proposed adjournment. A clearer case of suicide, I venture to say, never was laid before you, sir. Why should my witnesses be inconvenienced, the poor fellow's funeral postponed, for no reason whatsoever?" The coroner cleared his throat. "Mr. Ellis, I feel a considerable amount of sympathy with what you have just said," he admitted. "At the same time it never has been my custom to disregard an application made by a responsible person on behalf of the police. The inquest is adjourned until a week from today."

The few stragglers in the court rose to their feet and made towards the exit. The girl remained in her seat for a moment, her eyes upon Benskin. The doctor shambled up to him. "I can't imagine why you wish to waste our time in this manner, sir," he protested sharply. "The whole affair is so simple. From the moment I saw the body, I realized exactly what had happened, and the evidence has confirmed my conviction. Adjourn the inquest, indeed! I never have heard of anything so foolish! You police can't have enough to keep you busy."

- REAL ESTATE TRANSFERS. Belleville Trust company, Adm. to Bond M. Hartsock, tract in Patton Twp.; \$600. Eleanor R. Gettig to Harry C. Rothrock, et ux, tract in Port Matilda; \$1. Luther Strouse, et ux, to N. S. Jones, et ux, tract in Ferguson Twp.; \$709.60. D. P. Woodring, et ux, to Willis D. Woodring, tract in Port Matilda; \$500. Jacob Krumrine to Daniel A. Krumrine et ux, tract in State College; \$1. Susan Kerin, et al, to Thomas W. Kerin, et ux, tract in Snow Shoe Twp.; \$1. Hattie Miller to Witmer Steel Co., tract in Miles Twp., et al; \$300. George E. Stover, et ux, to A. S. Stover, tract in Haines Twp.; \$1. Olga K. Messmer, et bar, to Harold H. Shirk, et ux, tract in State College; \$8,400. H. W. Rote, et al, to John Rachau, tract in Gregg Twp.; \$565. John Rachau, et ux, to Roy R. Zettle, tract in Gregg Twp.; \$650. Lizzie Homan to J. L. Miller, tract in Penn Twp.; \$100. George Cartright, et ux, to John J. Cartright, et ux, tract in Snow Shoe Twp.; \$1. Senior (accidentally stepping on Sophomore's foot)—Pardon me, I didn't mean to walk on your foot." Sophomore—"Oh, that's all right; I walk on them myself." —"The Mountain Echo," Altoona.