

THE ROMANCE OF AN INSURANCE OFFICE.

The chaplain who had attended Frank Trestrail in his last moments took an early opportunity of delivering the dying man's message to Doggett, in person. It was an impressive meeting that took place between the two men, who, beside the actual cults...

hand—and it was done. I was sorry for it. But it was done in self-defence. I was securing my own. Bear in mind that there was the will in the safe. Never mind what was in it. My own was not in it. No yours! But it is gone now. He had written it in his own hand-writing, sly old devil!

"Oh don't," Nancy cried, putting up her hands and heaving the air as though she would drive away the vision that Bradburn's words conjured up before her imagination. "Don't! William, I cannot bear it. I have seen it every night I have lain on that bed. Oh God! it is awful. My love a murderer! and the wretched girl covered her eyes with her thin transparent hands and wept convulsively. Presently she grew calmer and spoke again."



about him, that her mind might take hold of it. In spite of all, there is some right to seize on my own by the strong hand of force. It came to a struggle between us—and he died. That is all. His blood be upon his own head."

hoped for intelligence arrived. It took a form that had scarcely entered into Doggett's calculations, but he thought that his way to put his information to good use.

"The same week that saw Doggett arrive in Liverpool saw him establish himself in the business here. He heard Doggett refer to Mrs. Bradburn's murder, and before the month was out the embryo-detective reckoned Mrs. Nicholson among his best customers. In answer to Nancy's startled look when she recognized him, he replied that he had retired from the force."

"'Innocent' cried Nancy, now thoroughly alarmed, but mastering her emotion by a supreme effort, determined now to hear everything that the ex-policeman had to say. But, at the critical moment, a customer entered the green-grocer's bumble shop and the explanation had to be postponed. Doggett followed Nancy to the door as she took up her basket."

"'I am sorry I told you, Miss Baddy, but don't be alarmed. It was all a mistake. Do you think that, having helped to hang one who was innocent, I am going to hunt another down? Let him live, and he can do his best. This shall be a little secret between you and me.' Nancy, after recovering her composure, would have questioned Doggett further, but the detective kept his eye so strictly on the game he was playing to let her walk into it without him."

ery as he had ever gone in and out among his fellow men. It is not so much to say that when the blow fell upon him like a thunder-clap, so little had he concerned himself with Nancy's warning.

"The little church was thronged with village sightseers—for the bride and groom were the parish—and William Bradburn smiled with contentment as he entered the sacred building and noticed the crowd that filled the pew. Presently a merry peal from the bells announced the approach of the bride, and the marriage ceremony began."

"'The truth is,' exclaimed Doggett, 'I have known it these 18 months past, and here is the warrant for your arrest. William Bradburn, you are my prisoner.' Amid an indescribable scene of excitement Bradburn was led away and hurried into one of the wedding coaches and driven back to Cross Hall."

"'No, of course not,' Doggett answered. 'You have destroyed that, along with everything else, that was of no value except to the rights of justice. At the ensuing Chester Assizes, William Bradburn was tried and found guilty, and soon afterwards expiated his crimes on the scaffold.' About the same time the directors of the Universal decided that the frequency with which frauds were attempted on them justified the permanent engagement of a private inquiry agent, and the man who was chosen was the officer who had succeeded in bringing William Bradburn to the doom he so richly merited coming to the ears of Mr. Webber in connection with the missing policy on Mr. Timothy Bradburn's life. The policy was offered to Mr. Doggett and accepted by him."

The Strange Disappearance of Mr. Constam. FUGACIOUS SCISSORS.