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Only a baby, with winsome face,
Daintily showing each baby grace,
Only filling a baby's place—
Yet the dear Lord sent it here.

Only a child with golden hair,
Gathering sunshine, instead of care,
Followed by many an earnest prayer,
And many an anxious fear.

Only a maiden, loving and true,
Waiting for some great work to do;
Looking forward, the long years through—
But the Lord was over all.

Only a mother, with patient feet,
With tender love for her little one sweet,
Praying for wisdom to guide her feet,
And the dear Lord heard the call.

Only a woman, faded and old,
With hair of gray, instead of gold;
With the years of her life a sum all told,
And finished the work begun.

Only a coffin, with flowers dressed;
Only a patient face at rest,
With folded hands on a peaceful breast,
For the Lord hath said, "Well done."

Only a grave, in a churchyard cold,
With the pale moon shining in beams of gold,
For the Lord hath gathered safe into the fold
His child—all labor past.

Over the river, where angels dwell,
Where songs of praises raise and swell,
Where Christ is King, and all is well,
She met her Lord at last.

A QUEER CLUE.

IN TWO CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER I.

As an ex-detective, I am often asked to relate my adventures, and at one time I was ready enough to do so; but I soon found that my tales were looked upon as dull, prosy things, and not at all like what detectives ought to have to say for themselves. Everybody seemed to think that detectives ought to find things out by a sort of magical divination; but I was reckoned a pretty good one, and I have known some of our greatest celebrities; and the only way any of us ever found anything out was by inquiring of everybody who was likely to know a little, keeping our eyes on any probable party, holding our tongues, and putting all the scraps together. Now and then we are befriended by a lucky chance; and when this happens we get a hundred times more praise than when we puzzle out the darkest and toughest cases. The last affair I was ever engaged in was of this kind. I was first concerned in it two years before I left the Police—after, by-the-bye, I had quite given up the detective branch; and I resumed it three years afterward, that is three years after I had left the Police; and this is how it occurred. I must say, however, that I don't at all regard this as one of the dull, prosy cases I referred to; in fact, it was the most exciting business I was ever engaged in.

I had left the detective work, as I said, and indeed had left London, for when I grew a little tired of the business I was recommended to the authorities of Combestead, a thriving market-town in one of the home counties; and I had a very comfortable situation there, having little to do, very good pay, and being head of the borough Police. Of course there is a great deal of difference between life in the country and life in town, and from a policeman's view it perhaps appears greater than it does to anybody else; and whereas I had often wondered how anybody could be detected in London, I was equally surprised to think how anybody could hope to escape in the country; for, excepting when strangers came down on some carefully planned burglary, we could nearly always tell where to look for our men if anything went wrong; in short, I knew everybody. As a matter of course, everybody knew me.

There was a middle-aged party lived in a quiet row of houses in Orchard-street—which ran parallel with our High-street—a Miss Parkway, who was reputed to be pretty well off, although not extremely rich, and reputed also to be rather eccentric. She lived by herself, in the sense of having none of her relatives with her; but there were other persons, although not many, in the large house where she lodged. I had my attention drawn to her by seeing her walking repeatedly in company with a young man of no very good character, who was fully 20 years her junior, and at last I heard she was going to be married to him. All the town professed to be surprised and shocked at this, but I wasn't. Whether detectives get hard of heart in such things or not I can't say, but nothing in the way of a woman of five-and-forty marrying a man of five-and-twenty would ever surprise me, nor should I be surprised at the man marrying the woman if she had money, as in this case. After all, although I have said John Lytherly—that was his name—was of no very good character, yet there was nothing serious against him. He was a good-tempered, good-looking, easy sort of a fellow, with a lot of cleverness about him, too, that always showed itself when it wasn't wanted; and never showed itself when it might be of service. He now called himself a photographer; but had been a solicitor's clerk, an actor, a traveler for a wine-merchant, a barman, and had once, before his mother died, been bought out of the lancers. However, it was now pretty well known that John was going to marry Miss Parkway, and half the young chaps in Combestead ridiculed and envied him by turns.

Matters progressed so far that it was known the lady had given orders to Bunnyman and Company, our chief bankers, to call in a thousand pounds of her money which was out on mortgage; and it was said she intended to buy one of the houses in the High-street and fit it up as a photographer's. It was also reported that old Mr. Bunnyman said: "I hope, Miss Parkway, that whatever you do with your money, you will do nothing that you have not well considered." And it is also said that Miss Parkway replied: "If I wanted to be preached to, Mr. Bunnyman, I should go to your brother, the Ranter"—perhaps because Mr. Bunnyman had a brother who preached, though he wasn't a ranter at all. However, as these two were by themselves, I don't see how any one could have known what passed; and these confidential conversations in books and histories are certainly things I don't believe in.

It was known for certain, however, that she had not only given notice, but had actually withdrawn the money; and among other things it was said that she had admitted to her landlady, Mrs. Ambliss, that the match with Lytherly would break off all intimacy with her friends. She only had one relative who came to see her, and that was a gentleman living some 40 miles away, but he had not been to Combestead lately. Whether he was offended or not, neither the landlady nor lodger could say; but the latter feared it was, as she had written told him exactly how affairs stood and what steps she had taken, but had received no reply to her letter. Lytherly seemed, very naturally, to be brightening up and took our jocular congratulations—for I had my say as well as the others—in a good-tempered although rather a conceited style. One annoyance he felt, which was that everybody to whom he owed money—which was every one who would trust him—was anxious to be the first paid; and, thinking that a little gentle pressure might help them, two or three of the tradesmen took out County Court summonses against him; and this, as he said, was very hard on him and very selfish. However, there seemed a little chance that they would defeat themselves, for, harassed and worried by these doings, he was forced to ask Miss Parkway for an advance of money, being the first time he had ever done so. He had received money from her, but she had always offered it, and pressed it upon him when he made a show, if he was not actually in earnest, of wishing to refuse it. Whether she was in a bad temper at the time, or whether she was hurt at his making such a request, Lytherly could not say, but she refused to make the advance, and they parted worse friends than they had been for some time.

All this the young fellow let out at the Bell on the Saturday, as the refusal happened on the Friday. A great part of it in my hearing, for I generally took my pipe and glass at the Bell, and I saw that he was well on for tipsy. He had indeed been drinking there some hours, and would perhaps have stopped longer, but that the landlord persuaded him to go home. He was hardly able to walk, and as I did not wish him to get into any trouble, which might mean also trouble to me, I followed him to the door, determined I would see him to his lodgings if necessary; but just then his landlady's son happened to come by. The poor chap, as I well remember, had been to the dentist's to have a tooth drawn, but his face was so swollen that Mr. Clawes would not attempt to draw it till daylight, and the poor fellow was half distracted with pain. He offered to see Lytherly home, and as he lived in the same house and slept in the same room, of course he was the fittest party to do so; and so off they went together, and in due course of time I went home too.

Next day was Sunday, and a quiet day enough it always was in Combestead. Younger men might have thought it dull, but it suited me. I had lived fifty years in London, and did not object to the steady-going ways of the little town; in fact I took to going to church, and all sorts of things. Well, the day passed by without anything particular, and I was really thinking of going to bed, although it was only 9:30, for I felt sleepy and tired, when I heard somebody run hurriedly up our front garden, and then followed a very loud double knock at the door. I lived, I should mention, at a nice house in Church-street, which was a turning that led from the High-street into Orchard-street, where, as I have said, Miss Parkway lived. I was just about to drink a glass of egghot, which is a thing I am very partial to when I have a cold, and this was Winter-time; but I put the tumbler down to listen, for when such a hurried step and knock came, it was nearly always for me; and sure enough, in another half-minute the door was opened, and I heard a voice asking if the Superintendent was in; then, without any tapping or waiting, my door was thrown open, and I saw a young woman whom I knew as servant to Mrs. Ambliss. The moment I saw her I knew something serious was the matter; long experience enabled me to decide when anything really serious was coming.

"Now, Jane," I said, "what is it?"

"Oh, Mr. Robinson!" she exclaimed, (I forget whether I have mentioned before that my name is Robinson, but such is the fact;) "come round at once to missus's, for we have found poor Miss Parkway stone-dead and murdered in her room!"

And with that, as is a matter of course with such people, off she went into strong hysterics. I couldn't stop with her; so I opened my door, and equally, as a matter of course, there I found the landlady and her servant listening. "Go in and take care of that girl," I said; "and one of you bring her round to Orchard-street as soon as she can walk." I didn't stop to blow them up, and they were too glad to escape to say a word; so off I went, and found a little cluster of people already gathered round the gate of the house I wanted. "Here is the Superintendent!" I heard them say as they made way for me. I hurried through, but had no occasion to knock at the door, for they were on the watch for me. Mr. and Mrs. Ambliss were in the passage, and a neighbor from next door; all looked as pale and flurried as people do under the circumstances.

"This is a most terrible affair, Sir," says poor old Ambliss, who was a feeble, superannuated bank clerk. "We have sent for you, Sir, and the doctor, as being the best we could do. But perhaps you would like to go into her room at once?"

I said I should, as a matter of course, and they led me to her room. There was a light there, and they brought more up, so that everything was plainly visible. The people had not liked, or had been afraid to disturb anything, so the room was in the same state as when they had entered it. It appeared they had not been surprised at Miss Parkway not coming down in the morning, for this was not uncommon with her; but when the afternoon and evening passed away and she did not appear, and no answer was returned to their rapping at her door, they grew alarmed, and at last forced an entrance, when they found the furniture in confusion, as though a struggle had taken place, and poor Miss Parkway in her night-dress lying on her face quite dead. They had lifted her on to the bed, and from the marks on her throat had judged she died from strangulation. As I could do no good to her, I noticed as closely as I was able the appearance of the room, and especially looked for any fragments of cloth torn from an assailant's clothes, which often remain after a struggle; or a dropped weapon, or any unusual marks. But I could see nothing. There was no difficulty in deciding how the assassin had entered the apartment and how he had left it, for the room was on the ground floor, and the lower sash of one of the windows was thrown up, although the blind was drawn fully down. The furniture was knocked over and upset; the wash-stand, which was a large and somewhat peculiar one, of a clumsy and old-fashioned description, had been overthrown, and had fallen into the fire-place, where it lay resting on the bars in a very curious manner; while the jug had fallen into the grate, deluging the fire-place with water, but, extraordinary to relate, without being broken; not broken to pieces, at any rate, although badly cracked. A great deal of noise had probably been made, and cries for help probably uttered; but Ambliss and his wife were both deaf, and they and the servant all slept at the top of the big house in the front, while poor Miss Parkway slept at the bottom at the back, and in a room which was built out from the house itself.

I had time to hear and notice all this before the doctor came, and his attendance was, of course, a mere matter of form. No one could help or harm the poor woman now; so, with the information I had gained, I went to the house of the nearest magistrate, a very active gentleman and a solicitor. I ought to have mentioned that the drawers in which Miss Parkway kept her money and jewelry were forced open and every valuable abstracted, the only trace of them being a few links of a slight chain of a very unusual pattern, which, with a curious stone, the lady generally wore round her neck. This chain had evidently been broken by the violence used and parts of it scattered about; the stone was gone.

Information was of course sent to Miss Parkway's relative who came sometimes to visit her. And the result of all the inquiries made was to make things look so very suspicious against young Lytherly, and so much stress was laid upon his quarrel with Miss Parkway upon her refusal to lend him money—which seemed known to everybody—that I was obliged to apprehend him. I didn't want to hurt his feelings; so I went myself with a fly, although his lodgings were not half a mile from the town hall, so as to spare him from walking in custody through the streets. I found him at home, looking very miserable, and when he saw me he said: "I have been expecting you all the morning, Mr. Robinson; I am very glad you have come."

"Well, I'm sorry," I answered. "But you may as well remember that the least said is soonest mended, Mr. Lytherly."

"Thanks for your caution, old friend," he says with a sickly smile; "but I shan't hurt myself, and I feel sure no one else can do so. Why I said I was glad you had come, was because from Sunday night, when the murder was found out, until now, middle day on Tuesday, everybody has shunned me and avoided me as if I had the plague. I know why, and now it will be over."

I didn't put handcuffs on him or anything of that; and when we got into the street he saw the fly, round which there had already gathered at least a score of boys and girls, who had, I suppose, seen me go in. He looked around, and said: "This was very thoughtful of you, Mr. Robinson; I shall not forget it." We drove off, and spoke no more until we arrived at the town-hall. Here the magistrates were sitting; and here I found a tall, dark, grave-looking gentleman talking very earnestly to Mr. Wingrave, our chief solicitor. I soon found this was Mr. Parkway, the cousin of the murdered lady. He was giving instructions to the lawyer to spare no expense; to offer a reward if he thought it necessary; to have detectives down from London, and goodness knows what. Mr. Wingrave introduced me, and was kind enough to say that there was no necessity for detectives to be brought, as they had so eminent a functionary as myself in the town.

It was supposed that this would be merely a preliminary examination, but it turned out differently. A few of Lytherly's companions—although, as it transpired afterward, they fully believed him guilty—were yet determined he should have a chance, and so subscribed a guinea for old Jemmy Crotton, the most disreputable old fellow in the town, but a very clever lawyer for all that; and Jemmy soon came bustling in. He had a few minutes' conversation with Lytherly, and then asked that the hearing might be put off for an hour. This was of course granted, and by the end of that time he had overwhelming evidence to prove an alibi, for the landlady's son hadn't slept a wink for his toothache, and he was with Lytherly until dinner-time on Sunday; and then the accused went for a walk with a couple of friends, and did not return until after dark, having spent two or three hours at a public house some miles off, as the landlord, who happened to be in the town, it being market-day, helped to prove; the rest of the time he was in the Bell, as was usual, poor fellow.

There was no getting over this. There was not a shadow of pretense for remanding him, and so—much to Mr. Parkway's evident annoyance—Lytherly was discharged. He became more popular than ever among his associates, although the respectable people of the town looked down upon him, and they had a supper in his honor that night, at which old Jemmy Crotton presided. In default of Lytherly, no clue could be found. Not a shilling of Miss Parkway's money was ever discovered in her apartments; so her murderer had got clear away with his booty. Many wiseacres said we should hear of Lytherly quietly disappearing after things had settled down.

Some little excitement was created by Lytherly attempting to get into the sole funeral carriage that attended the hearse; but Mr. Parkway would not permit such a thing, and was himself the only follower. It was very clear that the stranger, in common with many others, was not half satisfied with the explanation which had secured Lytherly's escape, and as I was on the ground at the funeral, I saw, as did everybody else who was there, the frown he turned on the young man, who, in spite of his rebuff, had gone on foot to the church-yard.

Mr. Parkway left that evening, having placed his business in the hands of Mr. Wingrave; for as there was no will, he was the heir-at-law. Now this was a very curious affair about the will, because Miss Parkway had told her landlady not many days before, that she had made her will, and in fact had shown her the document as it lay, neatly tied up in her desk. However, it was gone now; and she had either destroyed it, or the person who had killed her, had taken that as well as the money; and even if the latter was the case, it was hardly likely to turn up again. So, as I have said, Mr. Parkway went home. The solicitor realized the poor lady's property; and all our efforts were in vain to discover the slightest clue to the guilty party. As for Lytherly, he soon found it was of no use to think of remaining in Combestead, for guilty or not, no one of any respectability cared to associate with him; and, as he owned to me, the worst part of it all was that old Crotton, the lawyer, whenever they met at any tavern, would laugh and wink and clap him on the shoulder, and call upon every one present to remember how poor old Jemmy Crotton got his young friend off so cleverly; how they "flummoxed" the magistrates and jockeyed the peelers, when it was any odds against his young friend.

So he went; and a good many declared he had gone off to enjoy his ill-gotten gains; but I never thought so; and one of our men going to Chatham to identify a prisoner, saw Lytherly in the uniform of the Royal Engineers, and, in fact, had a glass of ale with him. The young fellow said it was his only resource—dig he could not, and to beg where he was known would be in vain. He sent his respects to me, and that was the last we heard for a long time of the Combestead murder.

CHAPTER II.

I had left the Police altogether, and was living very comfortably, my good lady and I, up at Islington, in the same street with my married daughter, who was doing very comfortably too, her husband having a good berth in the city. I had always been of a saving turn, and had bought two or three houses; so with a tidy pension, which I had earned by 30 years' service, I could afford to go about a bit and enjoy myself. Of course in all that time I had made the acquaintance of a good many professional people; and there were very few theatres or exhibitions that I couldn't get admission to. We—my wife and I, I mean—made it a rule to go everywhere that we could get tickets for; and whether it was the launch of a ship, the charity children at St. Paul's, or Sam Cowell at the Canterbury Hall, it didn't matter to us; we went. And it was at the Canterbury I first had the Combestead murder more particularly recalled to my mind.

I was there myself, the old lady not being willing to leave my married daughter—because, well, it was in consequence of her being a married daughter—so I went by myself. There was a young woman who sang a comic version of "There's a Good Time Coming," splendidly; and as I always was of a chatty turn, I couldn't help remarking to the person that was sitting next to me how first-class she did it, when he exclaimed: "Hollo! why, never! Superintendent Robinson!" And then he held out his hand.

It was young Lytherly, but so stout, and brown, and whiskery—if I may say so—that I didn't know him.

"Mr. Lytherly!" I exclaimed, "I didn't expect to see you; and you're right as to my being Robinson, although Police officer no longer. Why, I thought you were in the army."

"So I was," he returned; "but I'm out of it now, and I'll tell you how it was."

It seems he had been to India, and got some promotion after three years' service; and had the good fortune to save his Colonel from drowning, or what was more likely in those parts, being taken down by a crocodile, under circumstances of extraordinary bravery. He did not tell me this last bit, but I heard so afterward. Lytherly was always a wonderful swimmer, and I remembered his taking a prize at London. The exertion or wetting brought on a fever, and he was recommended, for his discharge. The Colonel behaved most liberally. But what was the best of all, the old fellow who kept the canteen at the station died about this time, and Lytherly had been courting his daughter for a good bit, more to the girl's satisfaction than that of her father; so then they got married, and came to England, and he was tolerably well off. He naturally talked about the Combestead murder, and said frankly enough, that—except the people with whom he lodged, and they were suspected, he said, of perjury—he thought I was the only person in town who did not believe him guilty of the murder.

"But murder will out, Mr. Robinson," he said, "and you will see this will be found out some day."

"Well, I am sure I hope it will, Mr. Lytherly," I answered him. "But as for 'murder will out' and all of that, I don't think you will find any policeman or magistrate who will agree with you there; and there was less to help us when you had got out of the scrape in this Combestead business than any affair I was ever concerned in."

"I don't care," he says; "it will come out, Mr. Robinson. I dream of it almost every night; and my wife consulted some of the best fortune-tellers in India, and they all told her it would be discovered."

"Hum!" I said; "we don't think much of fortune-tellers here, you know."

"I am perfectly aware of that," he says; "and I shouldn't give them in as evidence; but if you had lived three years in India with people who knew the native ways, you might alter your mind about fortune-tellers. Anyway, you will remember when it's found out, that I told you how it would be."

I laughed, and said I should; and after we had another glass together, and he had given me his address and made me promise to call on him, we parted.

I told my wife all about it; and it is very curious to see how women are all alike in curiosity and superstition and all that; for although my wife had been married to me for 30 years, and so had every opportunity of learning better, yet she caught at what young Lytherly—not so very young now, by the by—had said about these fortune-tellers, and was quite ready to believe and swear that the murder would be found out. It's no use arguing with a party like that; so I merely smiled at her and passed it off.

It was the very next day that Mrs. and myself had agreed to go and see a new exhibition of paintings which some one was starting in London, and tickets were pretty freely given away for it; but the same reason which stopped my wife from going to the Canterbury, stopped her from going to the exhibition. I went, of course, because I couldn't be of any use, under the circumstances, to my married daughter; and a very good exhibition it was too. There were plenty of paintings, and I had gone all through all the rooms and entered the last one. There were very few persons, I was sorry to see in the place, so that you could have an uninterrupted view of any picture you pleased. After glancing carelessly round the room, for one gets a kind of surfeited with pictures after a bit, I was struck by a gloomy-looking painting to the left of the doorway, which I had not noticed on my first entry. When I came to look closer into it, I was more than struck—I was astounded. It was a picture representing the finding of old Trapbois, the miser, in the *Fortunes of Nigel*. The heavy dull room was lighted only by the candle which the young nobleman held above his head; and it appeared to be excellently painted. But what drew my attention was that, as a part of the confusion in which the struggle between the old man and his murderers had placed the room, the washstand had been upset, had fallen into the fire-place, and the ewer had rolled into the grate, where it was shown as unbroken, although the water was flooding the boards—all exactly as I had seen the same things five years before—so exactly, that I was perfectly sure no chance coincidence had produced the resemblance, but that whoever had painted this picture had seen the room where Miss Parkway was murdered, and had had the features of the scene stamped on his memory. Who so likely to have the scene so stamped. I instantly thought, as the murderer himself? As this rushed on my mind, I could not repress an exclamation, although pretty well guarded as a rule. The only other person in the room heard me, and came to see what had excited me so strongly. Apparently, he was disappointed, for he looked from the picture to his catalogue, then to the picture again, then at me, back to his catalogue, and then went away with a discontented grunt. I did not move, however, but remained quite absorbed in the study of this mysterious painting; and the more I looked the more convinced I became that it was copied from the scene of Miss Parkway's murder. There were several little points which I had not at first noticed, and in fact had quite forgotten; such as the position of the fire-irons, the direction in which the water had run, &c., which were all faithfully shown in the picture. To be brief, I had made up my mind before I left the room that I had at last found the real clue to the Combestead murder.

The artist's name was Wyndham; and I determined that I would very soon, as a natural beginning, make some inquiries about this Mr. Wyndham; and, indeed, I began before I left the exhibition. I engaged the hall-keeper to have a glass with me at the nearest tavern, and when I got fully into conversation with him, asked carelessly where Mr. Wyndham lived, as I thought I had known him many years ago, giving a description of some entirely imaginary person. The hall-keeper said no: "No, that was not the sort of man at all. Mr. Wyndham was" (here he described him;) "and he doesn't live at the west end of London, as you said, Sir, but at a place in Essex, not very far from Colchester." He knew where he lived, because he had several times posted letters to him at "The Mount." This was about all I got from the hall-keeper, but it was as much as I wanted.

I am not greatly in the habit of taking other people into my confidence, but this was altogether an exceptional case; so, after a little reflection, I went straight to the address John Lytherly had given me, and told him what I had seen. He of course introduced me to his wife, a very pretty dark-eyed young woman; and when I had told all they exchanged looks less of surprise than triumph. "Oh, it is coming all right!" he exclaimed. "I knew the murder would cry out some day. And now you will have a little more respect for Indian fortune-tellers."

"I am not quite sure about that," I said. "But don't you go making so certain that we are going to find out anything, Mr. Lytherly; this may be only an accidental resemblance." Because, as you may suppose, I had not told them how confident I felt in my own mind.

"Accidental! Nonsense!" was all he said to that; and then he asked me what was the first step I proposed to take. I told him that I thought we ought to go down to this village and see if we could learn anything suspicious about Mr. Wyndham; and by my old detective habits, and the way in which the officers about would be sure to help me, I thought we might reckon on finding out what was was wanted. He was delighted, and asked when we should start, and when I said that very night, he was more delighted still.

It is always my rule to strike the iron while it's hot, and nothing could possibly be got by waiting now; so I had made up my mind just to run home, get a few things in my bag, and go down by the 10 o'clock train. My wife, you may be sure, was very much astonished; but, as I expected she would be, was just as confident in the murder being found out as young Lytherly himself. Of course the latter was ready. And we were put down at our destination about 12 o'clock; too late for anything that night, but still we were on the spot to begin the first thing in the morning.—And accordingly directly after breakfast we began. John Lytherly would have begun before breakfast, but as an old hand I knew better than that; because the party we were after, allowing he was the right party, after a five years' rest, wasn't going to bolt now; so it was no case for hurrying and driving. Well, soon after breakfast, I sauntered into the bar, and began talking with the landlord, who was an elderly sort of party about my own age, and who bragged—as if it were a thing to be proud of—before we had talked three minutes, that he had lived, man and boy, in Chumply, which was the name of the lively place, for more than 50 years.

"Then you're just the fellow for me," I thought; and then began talking of an old master of mine who was now living somewhere down in this neighborhood, by the name of Wyndham.

"Wyndham? Let me see; Wyndham!" says the landlord, putting on his wisest look. "No; I can't remember any party of that name. There's Wilkinson and Wiggins: perhaps it's one of them."

I told him they would not do; and then added that the party I meant was something of an artist, painted pictures partly for pleasure and partly for profit. This was only a guess of mine, but it was a pretty safe one.

"Oh! there's lots of them about here!" exclaims the old boy, grinning very much, as if it was a capital idea. "There's Mr. De Lancy Chorkle, Miss Belvedera Smith, Mrs. Galloon Whyte, Mr. Hardy Canute, and a lot more; but I don't think there's a Wyndham."

"Ah, well, it don't matter," I said, very carelessly still; "I may be mistaken. I heard, however, he lived down here at a place called the Mount. Is there such a place?"

"Is there such a place!" says the landlord, with as much contempt in his voice as if I ought to be ashamed of myself for not knowing. "Yes, there is; and a first-rate gentleman artist lives there too; but his name ain't Wyndham; his name happens to be Parkway, Sir, Mr. Philip Parkway; though I have heard that he is too proud to paint under his own name."

"I think, landlord," I said, "that I'll have just three-penn'orth of brandy cold;" which I took, and left him without another word, for when I heard this name I felt struck all of a heap, because it made a guess into a certainty, though in a way I had never dreamt of. I couldn't even go back to Lytherly for a little while; it was all so wonderful; and I was so angry with myself for never having thought at the time that the man who, of all others in the world, had the most to gain by the poor woman's death, might have been the one who killed her. In the bitterness of my feeling I could not help saying that any one but a detective would have pounced upon this fellow at the first. However, I got over the vexation, and went back to Lytherly to tell him my news. We were each very confident that we had the right scent now; but yet it was not easy to see what we were to do. I could not very well apply for a warrant against a man because he had painted a picture; and so we walked and talked until we could think of nothing better than going down to Combestead, and with our fresh information to help us, seeing if we could not rake up something there.

We came to this resolution just as we reached a toll-gate, close by which stood a little house, which appeared to be the beer shop, baker's, Post Office, and grocer's for the neighborhood. Not much of a neighborhood, by the bye, for, excepting a few gentlemen's seats, there was hardly another house within sight. One small but comfortable-looking residence, we were informed by the chatty old lady who owned the "store," was the Mount, where Mr. Parkway lived. He was a very retired, silent sort of a gentleman, she said, and people thought his wife didn't have the happiest of lives with him. He had been married for a few years, the old lady went on; soon after a relation had died, and left him a good bit of money. Before that he only rented apartments in the village; but then he married Miss Dellar, who was an orphan, with a good bit of money too, but quite a girl to him, and they went to live at the Mount. At this point the old lady broke suddenly off, and said: "Here they are!" going to the door immediately, and dropping her very best courtesy. We followed her into the little porch; and there, sure enough, was a large carriage, drawn by one horse, and in it sat a gloomy, dark man, whom I had no difficulty in recognizing, and by his side a slight, very pretty, but careworn-looking young woman. Mr. Parkway looked coldly enough at us, and we as carelessly returned his glance, for we were both so much changed since the Combestead days, that there was little fear of his remembering us.

It seemed that they had called about a servant, which the Post Office keeper was to have recommended, and Mrs. Parkway alighted from the carriage to write some memorandum on the business. Parkway had never spoken, and I thought I could see in his harsh features traces of anxiety and remorse. Lytherly had followed Mrs. Parkway into the shop, and as I could see from where I stood, on the lady asking for a pen, he drew his gold pencil-case from his pocket, and offered it, as probably containing a better implement than any the Post Office could afford. The lady stared, looked a littled startled, but after a moment's hesitation accepted it with a very sweet smile. While Mrs. Parkway was engaged in writing her letter, Lytherly stood by her side, and sauntered out after her. I had been waiting in the porch, watching her husband, whose face was so familiar to me that I half expected to see a look of recognition come into his eyes; but nothing of the sort happened. Lytherly watched them drive off, then turning suddenly round, exclaimed: "It's as good as over, Robinson! We've got them!"

"Why, what is there afresh?" I asked.

"Just sufficient to hang the scoundrel," said Lytherly. "You, remember, of course, that among other things which were stolen on the night of the murder was a curious locket which poor Miss Parkway used to weary, and that some fragments of the chain were afterward found."

I remembered this very well, and told him so.

"Very good," he continued. "I gave that locket and chain to the poor old girl; it was the only valuable I possessed in the world; and Mrs. Parkway has the central carbuncle in her brooch now."

"Nonsense!" I exclaimed, not knowing exactly what I dare say at the moment.

"It is a fact," he said, "and I can swear to it. What is more to the point, perhaps, is that although the stone is in a strange setting, and no one but myself, probably, could recognize it, yet I can identify it. On the one side are my initials cut in almost microscopical characters. If they are there, that settles it; if they are not, put me down as an impostor, and fix the murder on me if you like."

There was a good deal more said after this, but the upshot of it is that we went over to Colchester, and laid the matter before the authorities; when after a little hesitation, a warrant was granted for the apprehension of Mr. Philip Parkway; and two officers, accompanied by Lytherly and myself, went over to execute it.

It was after nightfall when we arrived at the Mount and on knocking at the door, we found that Mr. Parkway was in; but his wife was out, having gone out, (so the elderly woman that was called by the foot boy informed us,) to play the harmonium at the weekly rehearsal of the village choir. "About the only amusement she has, poor thing," the woman muttered, and she seemed in a very bad temper about something. We said we wanted to see her master, and that she need not announce us. And, as I live, I believe that woman guessed directly who we were, and what we had come for. At any rate quite a glow of triumph came into her face, and she pointed to a door nearly opposite to where we stood. We opened it, and found ourselves in a sort of large study, where, seated at a table, reading, was the man we wanted. He looked up in surprise as we entered, and the light falling strongly on his face, while all the rest of the room was in darkness, I thought I saw a paleness come and go on his gloomy features; but that might have been fancy.

"What is your business?" he began; but Mr. Banes, the chief constable, cut him short.

"I am sorry to inform you, Mr. Parkway," he said, "that I hold a warrant for you arrest, and you must consider yourself in custody."

Parkway stared at him, mechanically closed the book he was reading, and said: "On what charge, Sir?"

"For murder," says Banes; and then I was sure Parkway did turn very white. "For the murder of Miss Parkway, at Combestead, in 186—"

Parkway looked from one to the other of us for a few seconds without speaking; at last his eyes settled for an instant on Lytherly; then turning to Banes, he said, pointing straight at Lytherly: "It was that man, I have no doubt, who set you on."

"You had better not say anything, Sir," said the chief constable, "but just give your servants what orders you wish, and come with us, as we cannot stop."

"I dare say it was he," continued Parkway, not answering Mr. Banes, but seeming to go with his own thoughts. "I fancied he was dead, for what I took to be his ghost has been seen in my room every night for this month. Where is my wife?