

Hand and Ring

Reading of this last slip of paper had caused all movement and remained as nothing as though it had been paralyzed. A charge which, as yet, is nothing but a charge, observed the coroner. But evidence is not wanting. he went on, "that Mr. Hildreth is not at home at this present time, but is somewhere in this region, as will be seen by the following telegram from the superintendent of the Toledo police."

He took her received from the coroner and was convinced that policy can be carried too far. "And now," said Dr. Trevellick, "what sort of a man is this Clement Smith?" He is a gentleman, sir, and not at all the sort of person with whom you would be likely to connect any unpleasant suspicion.

"To Albany, where I left my traps." "You took the noon train, then?" "Yes, sir." "Which leaves precisely five minutes after 12?" "I do not see why it can interest you to know, the witness retorted; "but since you insist, I will tell you that it was just going out, and that I had to run to reach it, and only got a foothold upon the platform of the rear car at the look of my life."

But, lest I do seem too nice in my calculations, the coroner incoherently pursued. "I will take the trouble of putting it another way. At what time did you leave the hotel, Mr. Hildreth?" "I don't know," was the testy response. "Well, sir, call it you, the witness assumed him. "It was about twenty minutes to twelve, or possibly earlier, but no later. My reason for saying this is that Mrs. Dayton's children next door were out playing in front of this house for my own diversion, at the time the tramp came into the lane. As you did not see them, you must have arrived here before they began their game, and that, at the least calculation, would make the time as early as 12:10."

Not that Mr. Byrd ever allowed his generous heart to blind him to the plain language of facts. His secret and not to be mothered doubts in another direction were proof enough for this. But with those doubts still holding possession of his mind, he could not feel so sure of Mr. Hildreth's guilt. "If only the superintendent had not left it to my judgment to interfere," thought he, "pacing the streets with ever-increasing uneasiness, the responsibility would have been laid from my shoulders, and I would have left the young man to his fate in peace. But now I would be criminally fault if I were to let him drift hopelessly to his doom, when by a lift of my finger I might possibly turn the attention of justice toward the real culprit."



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CHAPTER IX. CLOSURE CALCULATIONS.

CHAPTER X. THE FINAL TEST.

[To be continued.]