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The Watchman-Warder
THURSDAY, MAY 25th, 1899

BY WHOSE HAND

(Concluded from last week.)

Helen went home with a lighter heart. The detective's theory seemed very probable to her, and the lawyer's admission strengthened it. She did not believe that any man would persist in a denial that might cost another his life, and she felt sure that O'Gorman could be induced to confess. If the shooting was accidental, it seemed more likely that the officer who drew the revolver should be responsible for it, more than Wilmot, and that Wilmot need not feel in doubt as to his agency in the accident, as the detective imagined to be the case.

When she reached home she was surprised to find that Mr. Roberts had preceded her, and was awaiting her coming in the library. "Miss Folsom," he said, "is it your wish that I should find this woman?" "I suppose Mr. Alston knows best," she answered.

"I will show you that he does not," said Roberts. "Why was your father at the office that night, contrary to his usual custom?" "He told me that he had an appointment there," answered Helen. "It must have been with Harry."

"Pardon me for asking a very disagreeable question," said Roberts. "Was your father interested in any way in any woman?" "I know that he was not," answered Helen, haughtily.

"If that woman could be found," said Roberts, "she could undoubtedly account for her presence in the neighborhood. But she will not come forward of herself, and it will not do to attach too much importance to the incident. If it leaks out that there is a mysterious woman in the case, your father's memory will suffer."

"That must not be," cried Helen. "I see the danger and thank you for your thoughtfulness, although at first, not understanding, I resented it." "But Mr. Alston insists," said the detective.

"I will go to the office to-morrow," said Helen, and persuaded him to give up the idea. Meet us there at eleven in the morning. I am confident that he will see matters as we do, and withdraw his precious instructions."

When the detective made his appearance at the office the next day, the old lawyer turned upon him angrily and cried—

"Well, sir, it seems that you have convinced this young lady that the mysterious woman must be permitted to remain a mystery."

"I think it's best so," said the detective, calmly.

"I don't like this meddling on your part," said the lawyer.

"Meddling?" cried the detective, angrily.

"Yes, meddling. You are a detective. It is your business to do certain things; when you have any suggestions as to the conduct of the case you should make them to counsel, not to clients. I asked you to find that woman. If you knew you could not

do it, why didn't you own up like a man instead of speaking to Miss Folsom and frightening her to save your credit?"

The detective's face grew purple with rage. He half rose, then sank back in his chair.

"The presence of this young lady prevents me from answering you as you deserve," he said. "As to saving my credit, there is no doubt; Pinkerton rates my services high. I have never failed in a case yet."

"You have failed in this, if you don't find that woman," said the lawyer.

"I don't choose to find her," said the detective, "and the young lady doesn't wish me to."

"Oh!" said the lawyer, with a sneer. "You don't choose to find her! Who is she, for of course you know?"

"Since you will have it, she is the Signorina Creppi."

"Tell it all," said the lawyer, cool in a moment.

"There isn't much to tell," said the detective, more calmly. "A man so muffled up as to be, practically disguised, called at the stage entrance of the opera house to see the Signorina on the night of the shooting. She was taken conveniently ill and did not appear in the last scene. The woman whom the officer met was undoubtedly Signorina. I have not tried to find out who the man was. Shall I?"

"You are keeping something back," said the lawyer.

"I would like to spare the young lad," said the detective.

"Never mind me, I can bear anything now," said Helen, weeping softly.

"The Signorina has disappeared," said the detective, "but from one of the company I have learned something of her past history. I have also—pardon me—made some inquiries in regard to Mr. Folsom. Four years ago he went to Lumber City, which was then little more than a logging camp, to arrange for the cutting and shipping of lumber for the firm. Although it was a very uninviting place he remained there more than a year. Were you with him, Miss Folsom?"

"No," replied Helen. "I wished to go out to him, but he did not think it best."

"Well," said the detective, "the Signorina was there, and I have learned from a member of the company that Mr. Folsom showed her a good deal of attention. She is said to be a very attractive woman."

"What is your theory now?" said the lawyer.

"I think," said the detective, "that Mr. Folsom's interest in the woman cooled after a time, and that when she came here she threatened to blackmail him, and that he was so far intimidated that he went to see her at the stage entrance and arranged for an interview with her at his office, to make some kind of terms with her. It was a mere confidence, although an unfortunate, that Wilmot chose the same night for his interview."

"If your theory is sound," said the lawyer, "I suppose it will be best not to look for the woman, and proceed upon the theory that the shooting was accidental, making O'Gorman confess."

"That's about it," said the detective. The lawyer mused awhile.

"Well," he said at last, "I will undertake the defence. The government has got to prove its case, and we can furnish it some work to do. It will have to account for the missing weapon and for O'Gorman's empty revolver chamber. There are other points which I cannot discuss now."

He held out his hand to the detective, and said pleasantly—

"Excuse my gruffness, please. Let me atone for it by admitting that you would make quite a lawyer if you should care to take up my line of work."

Nothing more of importance occurred before the trial. O'Gorman was summoned by both sides. A summons had been issued for the Signorina, but it was understood that she could not be found. For the prosecution O'Gorman testified to the facts as recorded. Upon the cross-examination Mr. Alston, to the surprise of Mr. Roberts and to Helen's chagrin, made much of the incident of the mysterious woman and tried to identify her with the Signorina. The prosecuting attorney made light of Mr. Alston's mysterious woman.

"It is not denied," he said, "that there was a woman on the street the night of the murder, but it does not appear that she had any connection with that affair. Very likely this Michigan Signorina cannot be found; such a woman, for a consideration, could be induced to keep out of the way to enhance an artificial mystery."

The case was fought stubbornly, point by point.

Helen was obliged to testify that there had been a conditional engagement between her and the prisoner, and that her father had not approved of it.

"Mr. Folsom must have known of something detrimental to the prisoner," said the attorney, triumphantly, "to have opposed his daughter's wishes so determinedly."

O'Gorman accounted for the empty chamber of his revolver. "Ever since I was charged with shooting too quick," he said, "I have left one chamber empty with the hammer down at that point, that it might not

be said that I wanted to shoot the first thing."

This testimony was fully corroborated. Mr. Alston seemed content, but the case seemed to be going against Wilmot. Helen was in despair, and Roberts, who was present, but not as a witness, looked puzzled. When O'Gorman took the stand for the defence there was much speculation as to what was to come.

The first point established was that the shot could not have been fired at close range—there was no blackening or burning with powder. There was a great sensation when Mr. Alston produced a revolver and offered to prove that it was the weapon with which the deed had been committed. Mr. Roberts leaned forward and tried to see it. He appeared to be greatly surprised. There was a long argument as to whether it should be admitted in evidence.

"Where did it come from?" demanded the prosecution.

"From behind the billboard, where it was found some days after the shooting," replied Mr. Alston.

"Then Wilmot threw it over the board when he ran across the street, as testified by O'Gorman," cried the attorney, triumphantly, "or it has been placed there since."

The court decided that evidence as to the finding of the weapon might be offered.

"At the request of Mr. Alston," said O'Gorman, "accompanied by officers Brown and Farrar, I made a search for five hundred yards in every direction possible from the office. In a pile of refuse lumber behind the billboard I found this revolver, with one chamber empty. We also discovered that a crack between two boards had been enlarged, and found fine chips and shavings on the ground just below."

A package of these were offered in evidence. Continuing, the witness said—

"The hole in the billboard was directly opposite the door of the office, and the paper around it black and scorched as with fire."

In seemingly great excitement, Roberts leaned forward and whispered to Mr. Alston—

"What are you trying to prove?" "That the shot came from behind the billboard," said Mr. Alston. "I'm something of a detective myself, if I am not a Pinkerton man."

"You've beaten me," said Roberts, looking about him.

When O'Gorman was turned over to the Government for cross-examination, and the attorney said, "That's all, there was a distinct revulsion in favor of the prisoner."

The next name called was, "Signorina Creppi." All eyes were strained as a woman heavily veiled, came forward and sworn. She spoke in a low tone, with downcast eyes.

"My name is Esther Auldfeet. I am known, professionally, as Signorina Creppi."

"Where were you when Mr. Folsom was shot?" "Behind the billboard."

"The witness is yours," said Mr. Alston, turning to the prosecuting attorney.

The excitement in the crowded court room was intense. Helen's thought was, "Harry will be proven innocent!" She was nearly overcome with happiness. She looked at Harry, expecting him to meet her eyes with a triumphant gaze. But his face was downcast, his attitude one of hopeless dejection.

"What relation do you sustain to the prisoner?" "I am his sister."

The prisoner groaned. He had seen her go behind the billboard before the fatal shot was fired, and had resolved to sacrifice himself, if need be, to save her from the consequences of what he believed to have been her mad act. Everything in his behaviour that had seemed incompatible with innocence, was now explained.

Again the prosecution seemed to make a point. Many thought that the woman was trying to save her brother. But Helen's thought was, "Harry's sister a murderer! Can there ever be happiness for us with such a terrible thing to think of?" But there was worse to come.

"What were your relations with Mr. Folsom?" was the next question. Everyone waited in painful silence for the next question. But there was a pause in the proceedings. The prosecuting attorney held a private conversation with the judge; then Mr. Alston was invited to join in it. At last the judge said to the witness—

"Do you wish to make a statement? You need not commit yourself."

"I am here for that purpose," was the answer. "Proceed."

"When I married Mr. Folsom," said the witness, "I thought my husband was dead. The evidence was not conclusive to my brother's mind, and I hesitated long. But the evidence satisfied Mr. Folsom, and he overcame my scruples and we were married privately. A week later my husband appeared and obtained a secret interview with me. He proposed a scheme for blackmailing Mr. Folsom and wanted me to join with him in it. I refused. He then demanded that I should live with him, or he would denounce me to Mr. Folsom. In despair, I fled without a word of explanation, preferring that Mr. Folsom should think me false rather than that he should know the truth. My husband pursued me, but Wilkes protected me, taking me into his company. My brother came on from the West, or my advice, to see Mr. Folsom in regard to Helen, and I gave him permission to tell the truth about me, if necessary."

have his interview with Mr. Folsom my husband came to see me at the stage entrance, so disguised that I knew him only by his voice. Again he urged me to live with him, and when I refused, taunted me with loving Mr. Folsom and of being in Waterford to see him. I admitted that I loved Mr. Folsom, but protested that I had not seen him, and would not. He left me in a rage, swearing he would kill the man I loved. I caught up a shawl and followed, but soon lost sight of him. "When I got to the office, Harry was there, and I hid behind the billboard, intending to overtake him when he came out and get him to warn Mr. Folsom. In a few moments some one else came behind the billboard, and began to cut a hole through it. At first I was frightened and did not understand. Then I realized what was about to happen, and knew that the man was my husband, and ran and caught him by the arm—a moment too late."

"When he saw who I was he hurried me away. He told me that he had known all along that I was hiding near him, and that he had fired the shot to frighten me, purposely missing. I was half wild with terror, and he made me believe what I wanted to believe. He found lodgings for me with some people who seemed to be in league with him. I was ill for a week from the nervous shock I had received, and he managed to keep all news from me. By accident I learned the truth that my brother was accused of murder. I communicated with Wilkes, and through him with Mr. Alston, who instructed me as to the course to pursue. Wilkes brought me here to-day. I have told the truth; there is no more for me to say."

Everybody believed that the woman spoke the truth, and there was an outburst of sympathetic applause which was permitted to pass unrebuked by the court. When it had subsided, Mr. Alston asked permission to put a question to the witness. The request being granted, he suddenly stepped aside, and pointing to Roberts, the supposed detective, said—

"Who is that man?" The Signorina raised her veil, and looking at him for a moment, shrieked—

"Robert Auldfeet, the murderer!" Robert Auldfeet escaped the gallows, dying of quick consumption after making a full confession. A year after, Helen and Harry were married. Either would have done away, that she might not be a constant reminder of a tragic event; but the young people would not permit it. They, and all right minded people, held her guiltless of wrong in marrying Mr. Folsom, and commended her for saving her brother's life. By love and devotion the young people are trying to make the remainder of her life happy, despite the shadow of a painful past.

Courts of Revision

Courts of revision will be held in the following places on the dates mentioned: For the village of Beaverton, on Monday evening, May 29th, at 7 o'clock.

For the township of Thorax, on Monday, May 29th, at 10 a.m. at Beaverton.

For the village of Woodville, in the town hall, Woodville, on Tuesday, May 30th, 1899, at 8.15 p.m.

For the township of Brock, in town hall, Sunderland, on Saturday, May 27th, 1899, at 10 a.m.

For the township of Eldon, at Gusty's hotel, Kirkfield, on Thursday, May 25th, 1899, at 10 a.m.

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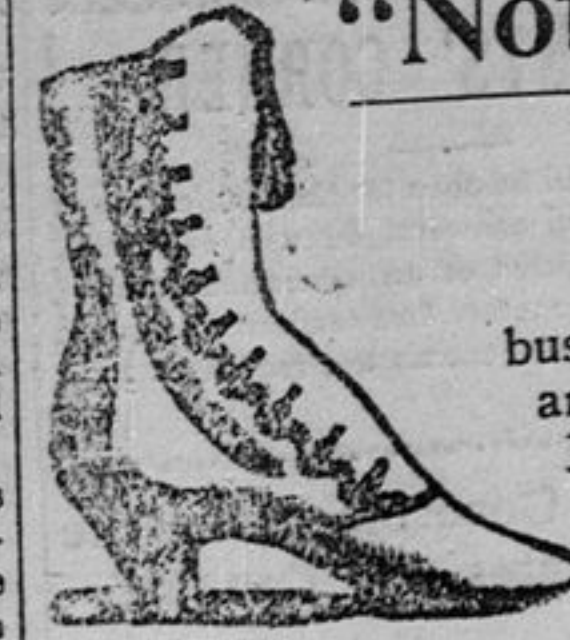
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